

navalgunfire.txt

Artillery support in Normandy  
Author: Simon Alderson ( )  
Date: 06-23-04 13:41

Could someone tell me how long it was before allied artillery units were in action after D Day. Were artillery battalions disembarked on D Day and were available for action on D Day?

How long did the Allies rely on naval gunfire for support?

How would you represent naval gunfire support?

Can a warship use time on target fire missions for example?

Answers to these questions would be appreciated.

Thanks

Simon

Reply To This Message

Re: Artillery support in Normandy  
Author: Mark Hayes ( )  
Date: 06-23-04 15:04

Simon,

I can give you some short answers now. Others will likely respond and I'll try to expand my remarks later.

1) Some self-propelled artillery were part of the assault waves, and even fired from the landing craft on the way in.

2) The Allies used naval gunfire support (NGFS) well into the campaign. A salvo from a battleship's main guns can make an impression on the enemy significantly greater than explosions from 25-pdrs, however numerous they may be.

3) There has been a lot of discussion on representing NGFS earlier in the forum. Scroll back several months. There may also be some ideas on the Pacific Playtest forum.

4) Good question. I would say yes, especially if the ship is serving as its own spotter. The 5-inch fire from the destroyers on D-Day would be considered this. With regard to indirect fire called in by a naval gunfire liaison team, ships are certainly capable of directing every battery on a point target. However, I'm not sure what the actual practice was.

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: Artillery support in Normandy  
Author: Mark Piper ( )  
Date: 06-24-04 08:01

Further to this discussion - how did the allies (especially British and Canadians) use artillery OP aircraft like the Auster ? How should they be treated in the rules ? Were they affected by enemy ground fire ? What actions did they feature in Normandy or NWE campaign ?

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Any suggestions would be appreciated.

Reply To This Message

Re: Artillery support in Normandy  
Author: Roger Kumferman ( )  
Date: 06-24-04 10:17

Mark Piper -

I can speak to US Army ETO methods regarding spotter aircraft. They generally flew at about 2000 feet, just this side of the front line. This kept them out of effective small arms/MG fire, and outside close range for light flak. German flak generally didn't bother them at these ranges, since the chance of a kill was not high, and firing would reveal the flak position. If you don't have an actual model aircraft for use on table, the effect of airborne observation can be easily simulated by allowing spotting attempts from anywhere along the designated "start line" of your game. The air observer should always gain at least the spotter and height advantage benefit shifts when calculating spotting attempts. Each and every US Army artillery battalion had 2 spotter aircraft as part of its TO&E. Note that because of the relatively low level and slow speeds they fly at, spotter aircraft could (and did) fly even when the weather otherwise precluded air operations. Only storms, extremely low cloud cover, or heavy fog would prevent air observation from being used.

Of course, there were instances where spotter aircraft maneuvered around the battlefield. For example, in the US 4th Armored Division, spotter pilot Major Charles "Bazooka Charlie" Carpenter rigged 6 bazookas to the wing struts of his Piper Cub and went tank busting. To simulate this kind of action would really require a model aircraft on table. For the Piper L4 or Stinson L5 (the two US types used in combat; the British Auster AOP was similar) I use an "armor" rating of 0. I allow the aircraft unlimited movement on the table. If you use spotter aircraft in this way, then German flak must be taken into account as per the normal rules.

Reply To This Message

Re: Artillery support in Normandy  
Author: Iain (213.86.213.---)  
Date: 06-24-04 11:10

I would have thought that overwhelming Allied Air Supremacy in North-West Europe would have mitigated against the need for spotter aircraft to behave in what is clearly highly dangerous behaviour.

Had "Bazooka Charlie" been thwarted in his desire to become a Mustang pilot, or would "Mad" have been a more suitable epithet?

Does history record whether he scored any kills, and was this a Bulge period aberration?

Reply To This Message

Re: Artillery support in Normandy  
Author: Roger Kumferman ( )  
Date: 06-24-04 13:28

Iain -

There was of course no "need" for armed liaison aircraft but highly motivated individuals - and the 4th Armored had more than its share - sought every opportunity

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to get at the enemy. The following is taken from "The Fighting Grasshoppers" by Ken Wakefield:

"[On 17 July, 1944] Major Chuck Lefever, [12th US] Army Group Air Officer, arrived in Normandy in his L-5, routing from Heston to Ibsley via the Tactical Air Depot at Grove to test-fly an L-4 fitted with Bazooka rocket launchers. Major Lefever was asked to approve this modification, proposed by [then] Captain Charles Carpenter of the 4th Armored Division, but having understandable reservations about the suitability of the unarmored L-4 as a ground attack aircraft, he declined to do so. However, as Major Lefever found that the rockets could be aimed with some accuracy, he neither formally approved nor disapproved the installation, thereby leaving the way open for those hardy - some would say foolhardy - L-4 pilots who felt the need to use their unarmored, slow aircraft in this manner. Satisfied with this outcome, rocket enthusiast Captain (later Colonel) Carpenter, soon to game fame as "Bazooka Charlie", equipped his L-4 Rosie The Rocketeer with six Bazooka launchers and later knocked out a number of German tanks, armored cars and other vehicles. Incredibly, despite the hail of flak, machine guns and small arms fire that such attacks generated, Charles Carpenter survived the war and returned to civilian life with a Silver Star among his many well earned decorations."

A picture of Carpenter with his aircraft, along with a brief eyewitness account of one of his missions, can be found here:

<http://www.thetroubleshooters.com/br136.html>

Reply To This Message

Re: Artillery support in Normandy  
Author: Roger Kumferman ()  
Date: 06-24-04 15:28

Simon Alderson -

I would add the following to Mark Hayes' response:

Although, as Mark stated, some artillery battalions were detailed to land as soon as 2 hours after the assault waves hit the beach, at Omaha, these personnel found they would be unable to function as artillery units upon reaching shore, due to the still unchecked German fire - they became infantrymen. I don't believe there was any artillery unit capable of IDF on Omaha during the day of June 6.

The vast majority of NGFS that would be seen in a normal BFWW2 game (given its scale) would be provided by destroyers. Generally speaking, cruiser and battleship fire was directed at targets well inland; although after the initial landings, this heavy ship fire might be seen as part of a pre-game planned bombardment.

Most US destroyers mounted four to five 5" guns (125mm) with semi-automatic loading (thus their rate of fire was higher than a comparable army field piece). In our games, for each destroyer present, Matt and I give it two large templates, with IDF ratings of +1 vs. Armor and +2 vs. T/G/SV.

For games involving landing operations, consideration should be given to Direct Fire naval support. At Normandy, this was mostly provided by destroyers (in several instances these vessels closed to within 800 yards of the beach - 20 inches range in BFWW2), but there were also a host of small gunboats (mostly modified landing craft like LCIs) that mounted various combinations of 20mm/40mm/3"-5" cannon that were, because of their shallow draft, able to get in quite close to the beach and deliver direct fire upon observed positions.

Besides NGF shore party observers that might be present with the ground troops, there were also Naval observation aircraft; these normally worked with the bigger ships, but were capable of calling upon destroyers as well. For the Normandy

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landings, US Navy observation pilots used loaned British Spitfires as their platforms.

Reply To This Message

Re: Artillery support in Normandy  
Author: R Mark Davies ( )  
Date: 06-24-04 17:46

For the actual landings themselves, primary direct gunfire support was given by the LCGs (Landing Craft Gun), which came in various types - armed with turreted 17pdrs or 4-inch guns, plus 20mm Oerlikons and 40mm pompoms.

Forward of the first assault waves on D-Day were OP motor launches, containing forward observers for the SP artillery regiments belonging to the assault divisions. These would direct the SP artillery fire, plus that of the Royal Marine Armoured Support Regiments.

Following the 'Funnies' and the assault infantry, came a wave of LCT(A)s, containing the Centaurs and Shermans of the Armoured Support Regiments, Royal Marines. In theory, these would be firing indirect as they came in, though the poor sea-keeping of the specially-armoured LCT(A) meant that this was impossible on the day and they were landed to fight as tanks.

Alongside the LCT(A)s were a few LCT(CB)s each containing the 'CB' (Coastal Bombardment) Troop of each DD Sherman squadron - consisting of 2x Fireflies. I don't know what the LCT(CB) looked like, but it was arranged to somehow allow the two Fireflies to directly engage shore targets from the craft.

Following this wave, came the division's Field Artillery Regiments - converted from 25pdrs to Priests for the operation (and back to 25pdrs afterwards), who fired from their landing craft during the run-in and were therefore landed on the beaches very early in the operation. Inevitably, some of these were used in the direct-fire role against hold-out strongpoints, but they were very quickly ready for action in support of the landing troops.

As for heavier AGRA artillery, I'm afraid I've no idea as to when they landed, but elements of Medium Regiments must surely have been landed by the end of D+1.

As for NGFS, all British/Canadian assault elements on D-Day had Bombardment Observation Parties, Royal Navy attached. This even included the 6th Airborne Division. In the Commandos they were allocated at a ratio of one team per Commando (i.e. battalion), but I've no idea how many were allocated elsewhere.

Oh, and I forgot to mention that the beaches were also hit just before the landing by 4.5-inch rockets, fired from LCT(R)s (though due to the rough seas, at least one salvo landed short onto landing craft and DD tanks).

Cheers,

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: Artillery support in Normandy  
Author: Simon Alderson ( )  
Date: 06-25-04 08:48

All

Thanks so far for your ideas.

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I am interested in the days after D Day as well. How far into the campaign did the allies use naval gun fire support?  
I note you comments about about it would form part of the pre game bombardment. I must admitt that I presumed that army formations would use their own artillery first before resorting to naval fire, mainly because of communication difficulties and you have more faith in someone from your own organisation (misplaced as this can be?

Thanks

Simon

Reply To This Message

Re: Artillery support in Normandy  
Author: Iain (213.86.213.---)  
Date: 06-25-04 09:48

Simon,

My Uncle, sadly recently deceased, served aboard HMS Roberts during the war. Roberts was an RN monitor and was present at a number of seaborne landings during the war. The two 15" guns she carried, one of which can be seen outside the Imperial War Museum in London, were capable of firing a 2,000lb HE shell more than 20 miles (although I'm not sure how accurate they were at long ranges and you clearly wouldn't want one of them dropping short).

Being fortunate enough never to have been on the wrong end of any kind of artillery, I'm not sure what kind of bang such a round makes when it arrives, suffice to say that if Jack's descriptions of the concussion from the guns as they fired are anything to go by "massive" would appear to be the appropriate word.

I'm not quite sure what the fire rating or template size for such fire would be, but even at a round a minute from each gun (and I've a feeling the nominal ROF at least was greater than this) that would be 20 rounds in total, delivering 40,000lbs of HE. From the British / Allied pov at least this might be quite fun (HMS Rodney - the perfect antidote to SS Tiger Battalions), but would probably lead to a rather one sided, not to mention ahistorical, game.

Your last point is interesting - namely how might such fire be called in (as I understand it was when II SS Pz Corps attacked at the end of June). I've read lots of accounts of Forward Air controllers being attached to tank and infantry units, but apart from D-Day itself I can't recall Naval observers being present. Does any body know how such fire was directed.

Regds.

Reply To This Message

Re: Artillery support in Normandy  
Author: R Mark Davies ()  
Date: 06-25-04 10:20

Aside from dedicated BOPRNs, most NGFS was allocated via RA fire direction centres - for example, the NGFS allocated to support 70th Brigade's defence of the Rauray spur against II. SS-Panzer-Korps on 1st July arrived as a result of a call for a 'Victor' target by a lowly FOO of 185th Field Regiment RA.

There was always a dedicated Bombardment Force on standby. This almost always contained at least one monitor (usually HMS Lord Roberts) and a load of cruisers (so the majority of naval shells flying around were 6-, 8- or 9-inch), with maybe a

battleship if you were lucky.

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: Artillery support in Normandy

Author: Roger Kumferman ( )

Date: 06-25-04 10:48

Simon -

As for the length of time NGF was available in Normandy, here is a sampling of USN cruiser and battleship deployments taken from the "Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships" (available on the web at: <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/index.html>) -

Battleship Texas:

"At about 0440 on the morning of the 6th, the battleship closed the Normandy coast to a point some 12,000 yards offshore near Pointe du Hoc. At 0550, Texas began churning up the coastal landscape with her 14-inch salvoes. Meanwhile, her secondary battery went to work on another target on the western end of "Omaha" beach, a ravine laced with strong points to defend an exit road. Later, under control of airborne spotters, she moved her major-caliber fire inland to interdict enemy reinforcement activities and to destroy batteries and other strong points farther inland. By noon, she closed the beach to about a range of 3,000 yards to fire upon snipers and machinegun nests hidden in a defile just off the beach. At the conclusion of that mission, the warship took an enemy antiaircraft battery located west of Vierville under fire.

The following morning, her main battery rained 14-inch shells on the enemy-held towns of Surrain and Trevieres to break up German troop concentrations. That evening, she bombarded a German mortar battery which had been shelling the beach. Not long after midnight, German planes attacked the ships offshore, and one of them swooped in low on Texas' starboard quarter. Her antiaircraft batteries opened up immediately but failed to score on the intruder. On the morning of 8 June, her guns fired on Isigny, then on a shore battery, and finally on Trevieres once more. After that, she retired to Plymouth to rearm, returning to the French coast on the 11th. From then until the 15th, she supported the Army in its advance inland. However, by the latter day, the troops had advanced beyond the range of her guns; and the battleship moved on to another mission."

Battleship Nevada:

"In action from 6 to 17 June, and again 25 June, her mighty guns pounded not only permanent shore defenses on the Cherbourg Peninsula, but ranged as far as 17 miles inland, breaking up German concentrations and counterattacks."

Heavy Cruiser Quincy:

"At 0537, 6 June 1944, she engaged shore batteries from her station on the right flank of Utah Beach, Baie de la Seine. During the period 6 through 17 June, in conjunction with shore fire control parties and aircraft spotters, Quincy conducted highly accurate pinpoint firing against enemy mobile batteries and concentrations of tanks, trucks, and troops. She also neutralized and destroyed heavy, long range enemy batteries, supported minesweepers operating under enemy fire, engaged enemy batteries that were firing on the crews of Corry (DD-463) and Glennon (DD-620) during their efforts to abandon their ships after they had struck mines, and participated in the reduction of the town of Quineville 12 June 1944."

Heavy Cruiser Tuscaloosa:

"On 3 June, Tuscaloosa steamed in company with the task force bound for the Normandy beaches. At 0550, 6 June 1944, she opened fire with her 8-inch battery; and, three minutes later, her 5-inch guns engaged Fort He de Tatihou, Baye de la Seine. For the remainder of D-day, coast defense batteries, artillery positions, troop

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concentrations, and motor transport all came under the fire of Tuscaloosa's guns which were aided by her air spotters and by fire control parties attached to Army units on shore. Initial enemy return fire was inaccurate, but it improved enough by the middle of the day to force the cruiser to take evasive action.

On the afternoon of 9 June, Tuscaloosa returned to Plymouth to replenish her depleted ammunition. Back in the vicinity of He St. Marcouf on the evening of the 11th, she remained on station in the fire-support area until the 21st, providing gunfire support on call from her shore fire control party operating with Army units. She then returned to England.

Five days later, on 26 June, the Army's 7th Corps mounted a landward assault against Cherbourg, supported by ships of the covering force from the seaward side."

Information on NGF control from "United States Naval Administration in World War II Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe, Volume V: Operation NEPTUNE" available on the web at: <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/Admin-Hist/147.5-ComNavEu/index.html>

"As this fire had to be delivered in close support of the army and would fall very close to positions occupied by allied forces, careful arrangements were required to observe targets and the fall of shot. Three types of spotters were used; (1) Shore Fire Control Parties (SFCP); (2) Air Spotters; (3) Air Observation Posts (Air OP). Shore Fire Control Parties were allotted on the basis of one party per assault battalion. In the U.S. Sector 27 Shore Fire Control Parties were organized, of which nine were assigned to each assault infantry division. In addition, nine naval gun fire spotting teams, consisting of one Army Paratroop Officer and two enlisted men, were dropped by parachute with the 101st Airborne Division. The personnel of each shore fire control party was one Army Officer, one Naval Officer, and twelve enlisted men. Each party was supplied with a Jeep, an M.14 Half-track, and had both a frequency modulated and an amplitude modulated radio transmitter-receiver. In the British Sector, 39 F.O.B. Parties were provided, one accompanying each British Army battalion. In both Sectors, a Naval gun fire liaison officer was attached to each regimental fire control center in order to direct the activities of the three shore fire control parties in his section. In addition, a Naval gunfire officer was attached to each divisional headquarters in charge of all shore fire parties in his division.

Every firing ship was provided with an army artillery officer, charged with maintaining up-to-date information about the position of allied troops and with determining the desirability of firing at any given target. The organization worked as follows:

The Shore Fire Control Party made contact with his firing ship by radio link and designated a target by reference to a grid;

The Army liaison officer decided whether it was safe to fire at that target;

The ship itself controlled the fire.

The Shore Fire Control Party observed the fall of shot and corrected fire by a means of a clock code.

Shore Fire Control Parties were sent on to the beaches as early as H plus 30 minutes. As a result of landing so early, their equipment suffered considerable damage. It was not until Regimental Headquarters were established ashore and the early confusion and fluid conditions on the beaches had been stabilized, that their parties were able to do their job effectively. Even then they were subject to interruption. The Germans possessed and used extremely effective D/F equipment. They were able to locate key radios, particularly in the medium frequency band, and take them under fire in a matter of seconds.

The second form of bombardment spotting was by aircraft. Spotting was carried out by 104 single seater aircraft operated by the R.A.F., Royal Navy, Fleet Air Arm, and U.S. Naval pilots in British planes. Single seaters were used because it was

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believed by the A.E.A.F. that high casualties would result if aircraft of low speed were employed. The ordinary two seater observation plane was so slow that it was easily put out of action by enemy anti-aircraft guns or fighters.2 Spotting by single seater aircraft had never before been undertaken on a large scale, but none the less, it was very successful. These spotting aircraft operated in pairs, one plane acting as a spotter and one as escort. Planes were capable of doing either job interchangeably. Both planes operated on the same radio frequency and in contact with the same ships. Spotting aircraft were formed into a pool which was situated at Lee-on-Solent. No attempt was made to attach individual pilots to individual ships, because of the limited availability of both pilots and ships for training, and because of the much larger number of aircraft which would have been required. The organization employed was changed during the course of the Operation. It was originally intended that spotting aircraft would be retained on call at Lee-on-Solent and that the pilots should be briefed before taking off on two targets. The initial targets were those laid down in the fire plan, and at a later date those specially requested by the Army. In practice, it was found, after the pre-arranged targets had been dealt with, that most shots were impromptu. Pilots, were briefed in the air on the way to the assault area. Even when pilots were briefed on specific targets before they left the ground, it was found that they were required afterwards to observe on different targets. The policy was therefore adopted of reducing delay by maintaining a few aircraft continuously in the air over the assault area, instead of keeping them on call at Lee-on-Solent. This required that every ship should be capable of working with any aircraft, and radio crystals for all bombarding frequencies were provided to each vessel. When a ship required air spot, it made radio contact with a plane in the area. The plane then located the target and gave the exact location to the ship by means of a grid reference, on a pre-arranged gridded map, from which the ship directed its own fire. The plane then observed the fall of shot and gave corrections as required on the basis of the clock code. Owing to the shortage of aircraft, one plane was often employed to spot for two or more ships.

The third method of observing fire was by the employment of Army Air Observation posts. These were small light aircraft, usually Piper Cubs or Austers, which spotted for the shore fire control party, which in turn relayed the information back to the ships. In all cases, it was the responsibility of the ship to determine whether any given shoot would endanger allied personnel or positions. To enable the ship to do this, each ship was provided with an Army officer who was kept up to date on the positions of allied forces ashore."

Reply To This Message

Re: Artillery support in Normandy  
Author: Ken Natt ( )  
Date: 06-25-04 12:22

During OP Jupiter - 10th July 44 the arty plan included naval fire support, so it was available for a long time after the invasion - IIRC the targets in this case were 23 miles inland.

ken

Reply To This Message

Re: Artillery support in Normandy  
Author: Mark Hayes ( )  
Date: 06-25-04 13:31

INVASION EUROPE, published by Her Majesty's Stationary Office for the 50th anniversary in 1994, has some basic information that I will summarize here. Naval gunfire support was available to the forces ashore until the storms blew in on June 19. Around this time the task forces reorganized with the British ships



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concentrating more on Le Havre and the Americans forming TF-129 to support the U.S. attack on Cherbourg, which climaxed on June 25. Because of the E-boats at Le Havre, the British used a strong screen of light forces to engage the Germans on the eastern flank.

Throughout this period, the bombardment force had to balance the needs of the troops for support with the need to knock out or suppress strong shore batteries. Here are some quotes from INVASION EUROPE that may give a sense of what type of bombardment support was available.

". . . bombarding ships supported the army as and when required. Naturally, as the army advanced further inland, calls became less frequent and after about D+4 (10th June) bombardment was mainly confined to support the left flank of the British 1st Corps in front of Caen, where the enemy concentrated the bulk of his armour, and counter-battery fire at enemy positions east and south-east of the River Orne within range of "Sword" area and beaches."

Here are some excerpts from the chronology for Operation Neptune provided as Appendix Q in INVASION EUROPE:

June 8

GOLD - army advanced beyond range of cruisers.

JUNO - HMS BELFAST supported 3rd Canadian Division.

SWORD - HMS RODNEY, RAMILLIES, and 3 cruisers supported 3rd Division against enemy counter-attacks.

June 9

SWORD - Enemy mobile batteries move into range: 5 destroyers provide constant fire support.

June 10

Heavy bombardment by HMS ORION and ARGONAUT of enemy forces near Tilly sur Souilles.

June 11

SWORD - HMS WARSPITE, NELSON, ROBERYTS, and USS NEVADA supported 50th Division at long range. HMS RAMILLIES bombarded bridge at Caen. HMS EMERALD and destroyers fired on motorised columns and troops.

June 12

HMS NELSON, RAMILLIES, cruisers and destroyers supported left flank with good results.

Night 12th/13th June

HMS NELSON and RAMILLIES bombarded throughout night in support of offensive by 1st Corps.

June 13

Bombarding ships carried out a large number of shoots.

Night 13th/14th June

HMS NELSON and RAMILLIES bombarded throughout night in support of 1st Corps.

June 14

HMS BELFAST and cruisers fired on enemy batteries and concentration.

June 15

All cruisers engaged throughout the day.

June 16

HMS RAMILLIES engaged enemy armour N.E. of Caen.

June 18

Cruisers supported army east of Orne River and North of Caen.

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June 22

HMS ROBERTS and cruisers engaged enemy troops in Troarn and Dives area.

June 25

HMS RODNEY supported army offensive in Caen area.

June 30

HMS RODNEY engaged concentration of enemy armour and motorized troops in St. Andre-sur-Orne and Fougerolles-sur-Orne. HMS ARGONAUT and BELFAST engaged enemy batteries.

As mentioned above, the Marines and Paras east of the Orne did make considerable use of naval gunfire as tactical fire support - the cruiser HMS Arethusa was a regular culprit. This support was called in by the RN BOPs - class as direct fire support if you have a BOP on table - not available if you don't.

Reply To This Message

NGFS in Normandy  
Author: Mark Hayes ()  
Date: 06-25-04 13:35

Here are some comments I made on the forum a couple of years ago on the subject.

Mark

NGFS was available to support the troops on shore until June 18. US V Corps had advanced beyond range and RADM Kirk suspended NGFS for 1st Army on June 18. The British and Canadians probably still had NGFS because they had not advanced very far inland. <Just kidding! ><G> 1st Army regained support from the ships when the Americans advanced on Cherbourg.

Samuel E. Morison uses a number of stories to show that NGFS played a significant role in 1st Army's success (not to mention survival). On June 16, a German military journal contained the following excerpt. SHAEF obtained a copy and sent a translation to the ships of the bombardment groups:

<The fire curtain provided by the guns of the Navy so far proved to be one of the best trump cards of the Anglo-United States invasion Armies. It may be that the part played by the Fleet was more decisive than that of the air forces [my favorite part of the quote] because its fire was better aimed and unlike the bomber formations it had not to confine itself to short burst of fire. . . .>

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS in Normandy  
Author: Mark Hayes ()  
Date: 06-25-04 13:47

Here is some info on inland fire that I gathered from Samuel E. Morison's History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, vol. XI, The Invasion of France and Germany, 1944-1945. Where I could I included whether or not the fire was controlled by air spot or SFCP.

USS Texas - June 6, 5 inland shoots before noon; 6 14-inch shells into German strongpoints at Vierville exit; on three other occasions, with air spot, she fired on enemy troops and vehicles near Longueville and Formigny, several miles inland; June 7, with air spot "laid waste" to targets at Formigny and Trevieres.

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USS Arkansas - June 6, with air spot destroyed mobile anti-aircraft battery on Bayeux-Isigny road; June 7, destroyed train and tracks at La Plaise on the Caen-Cherbourg line; engaged battery southeast of Trevieres and troop concentrations on main road south of Vierville; June 8, with SFCP (then 7 miles inland) engaged troops, tanks, batteries, and vehicles; June 13, with SFCP engaged tanks southwest of Isigny.

USS Nevada - June 7, with air spot, broke up troop concentration with 43 rounds of 14-inch shell; with SFCP demolished 155mm batteries with 34 rounds; with air spot fired 70 14-inch shells at 23,500 yards on a concentration of 90 tanks and 20 vehicles in the woods along a road half a mile west of Montebourg; June 11, answered 5 calls for fire on artillery positions near Quineville Ridge; June 12, answered 5 more calls including one with air spot on group of 40 tanks northwest of Saint-Vaast.

HMS Glasgow - June 6, with air spot, expended hundreds of 6-inch shells on targets south of Grandcamp-les-Bains; June 7, received 13 calls to fire at enemy batteries, troop concentrations and vehicles.

USS Quincy - June 7, day-long bombardment of Douve River bridges near Carentan; fired on transport columns and troop concentrations; June 14, with SFCP destroyed German pillbox near Quineville.

USS Tuscaloosa - June 7, with SFCP fired on German infantry in front of 4th Division for one hour, SFCP reported, "You knocked the hell out of them!"; June 14, destroyed pillboxes at Quineville.

USS Walke - June 7, with SFCP broke up German counterattack

USS Laffey - June 8, with SFCP answered 11 calls in assisting 4th Division's advance toward Montebourg, expending 610 5-inch shells.

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS in Normandy  
Author: MudCrab ( )  
Date: 06-25-04 20:06

As a side note about 15in shells if you read the 9RTR accounts that we were talking about 2 weeks ago (and if not then WHY NOT ? :P ) there is a story about a night advance somewhere near Caen. The tail lights of the Churchill they were following suddenly disappeared followed shortly afterwards by the ground suddenly pointing 45 degs downwards.

The second tank ended up with its nose resting on the rear engine deck of the first Churchill as they realised they had driven into a 15in shell hole.

As for accuracy of these larger guns, remember what they were designed to do. Their normal role in life was to sit on a large ship travelling at about 50 kph thru the ocean (while heaving, rolling and pitching) and fire shells some 30 to 40 km at other large ships (also moving at 50kph) AND actually hit that target at that range with at least one or more rounds per salvo.

I vaguely remember reading something that the larger the gun the more accurate it is (something to do with the heavier round being more consistent through the air I guess) but I would say that battleship fire against land targets (with correct spotting of course) would be very accurate even 20+ km inland.

boom

Craig

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS in Normandy  
Author: Mark Hayes ( )  
Date: 06-25-04 23:15

A USMC friend of mine (and fellow wargamer) served in an ANGLICO, attached to the Saudi Marines during Desert Storm. On the first day of the ground offensive Doug responded to the Saudi commander's request for fire support to prep an Iraqi-held village that would be the target of an assault. The Saudi advance was along the coast, so Doug was able to call on the 16-inch guns of USS WISCONSIN. The Saudis were really impressed when the village was obliterated with the first salvo, and their commanding officer said that now he knew they were going to win the war. We had come a long way in maximizing the effectiveness of WWII gun technology. Doug's story is told in SHIELD AND SWORD by Ed Marolda and Bob Schneller.

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS in Normandy  
Author: Matt Laing ( )  
Date: 06-26-04 14:06

For those who don't know what ANGLICO means, Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company. The ANGLICO is the product of evolution and its predecessors of WW2 were the JASCO, and then the ASCO, ((Joint) Assault Signal Company).

Here is a good site on the ANGLICOs and some historical info as well.

<http://www.anglicoassociation.org/Home%20page.htm>

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS in Normandy  
Author: R Mark Davies ( )  
Date: 07-05-04 10:23

Coming back to how soon artillery was disembarked - I was reading an account on Thursday, which mentioned a US 155mm Field Artillery Battalion being disembarked on Gold Beach on D-Day and in action on the same day in support of 50th (Northumbrian) Division.

If you have a look at my Breville scenario, you'll see that the entire AGRA for I Corps (that's one field regiment, four medium regiments and one heavy regiment), plus the six field artillery regiments of 3rd Division & 51st (Highland) Division were certainly in action inland from Sword by D+6 (and probably even earlier than that).

On the subject of Air OPs, the Army Air Corps operated one flight of Auster OPs in each AGRA, with additional flights in reserve at Army and Army Group level. I'll try to find exact numbers.

Mark

Reply To This Message

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Re: NGFS in Normandy  
Author: BigMark (162.116.29.---)  
Date: 07-06-04 16:41

Hi guys, a little late to the discussion, but I bought the Osprey Omaha book, and it is very helpful. The best campaign book I've seen from them.

well, SP & towed arty actually did land on DDay, in later waves. when the fiasco happened to the 1st & 2nd waves, they had to delay the arty & vehicles to land more infantry. But the arty did come in before nightfall.

During the critical first hours, when the DD's were blasting strongpoints on Omaha, very few of the DD's were being directed from shore parties (due to casualties). So the DD's would go back & forth, & spot what the surviving Shermans were shooting at, then blast that spot with 5 inch.

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS in Normandy  
Author: Matt Laing ()  
Date: 07-06-04 20:36

Two battalions of 105mm howitzers, The 7th and the ? were embarked upon DUKws and were supposed to have landed on Omaha Beach in support of the 1st Div with the first waves. Don't know exactly what time. Eighteen of the 24 guns were lost due to enemy fire, or were otherwise unable to get ashore. The 7th battalion did eventually manage get a seven gun battery sorted out but they did not fire their first rounds until 4pm or so.

Matt

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS in Normandy  
Author: Peter Fett (66.153.28.---)  
Date: 10-26-06 14:08

well, this is an old thread but if you've gotten this far the here's my input.

Our Club used the rules to put on Blood Omaha at HISTORICON 2006. After much research we had these speacial rules to simulate NGFS.

1) On this beach 12 destroyers came in close over the course of the day. Several eye witness accounts attribute the days success to these ships knocking out many Artillery and MG emplacements (however the hardened emplacements with earthen berms that fired parallel down the beach were not effected by any naval fire. These must be close assaulted or fired upon by landed units.). we used the German Maus cards fire factors at range 10-20 for the Destroyers (Veterans Status) and allowed each half of the beach 1 Ship each every turn once units were on the beach (1 for the 16th Inf. front and 1 for the 116th inf. front) The ships could fire on overwatch during the US Phasing turn and defensively during the German phasing turn. No units were allowed to fire back at the Destroyers but told to concentrate on the landings. The emplacements were all +3 Concrete so the Ships had a -1, break even or +1 chance to hit the target. In order to see the troops or guns the krauts had to have fired or the landed units had to have fired at the targets first (they being in visual range). This is actually how the ships were able to spot the emplacements historically.

2) At least on this beach all of the Rockets landed short so we elected not to deal with it. Keep the game moving.

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3) The fire from the artillery in the approaching landing craft was ineffectual and so we did not use it. Keep the game moving.

Pete Fett

NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: PABLO GONZALEZ ()  
Date: 08-03-02 19:42

I am working on a scenario, GERMAN COUNTER-ATTACK for the BRIDGES AT BENOUVILLE, WEST OF THE RIVER ORNE JUNE 6,1944  
I will like to know how is the mechanics between the Naval FO and the DESTROYERS. For example, I will like to know if ten minutes are enough time for the NAVAL FO to communicate with the DESTROYER and the battleship deliver the ordnance (all in one turn of 10 minutes).  
Also what types of fire missions for indirect fire ?  
The size of the template for 12-16" guns and the die roll modifiers for vehicles, troops and guns?

THANKS IN ADVANCE  
PABLO

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: Rob Wubbenhorst ()  
Date: 08-04-02 21:19

Pablo,

Search this forum for "16 inch guns". We had some discussion on this in Feb. 02. I proposed a +3/+6 for V/TG targets. Use the large template per turret on the ship (3-4 tubes).

We ran a Carpiquet scenario with Canadians assaulting an airfield outside Caen. HMS Rodney's 16" guns got a pre-game bombardment of a bunker/barbwire area. It was very effective in destroying a HMG unit that would've caused our assault tremendous difficulty. Thanks to the Royal Navy in that game!

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: R Mark Davies ()  
Date: 08-05-02 05:56

The British/Canadians normally did not use anything heavier than the 6- or 8-inch guns of a single cruiser or a couple of destroyers as tactical fire support, and then only if the unit had a Bombardment Observation Party, RN attached (these were attached as FOOs to the Commandos and corps or higher headquarters, as well as some teams that flew in with 6th Airborne Division). That would be equivalent to a single four-template battery of 7.2"/155mm as per the rules (see the British Artillery Tutorial page on this website). Heavier naval support (up to 16") would only be added to the very heaviest ('William' or 'Yoke') AGRA missions - either as thickening for preparatory barrages or preregistered Defensive Fire (DF) missions and this was available to Royal Artillery FOOs. Tactical naval fire support should not therefore normally be available to RA FOOs.

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Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: R Mark Davies ()  
Date: 08-05-02 05:58

PS

Pablo, do want some notes and stuff for Sword Beach? what's your e-mail address?

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: Dave Choat ()  
Date: 08-05-02 14:25

8 inch is 203mm. At that level the craters are becoming soft cover.

I mean AFTER the bombardment ends of course. The modern FO equivalent in VN was the ANGLICO units. Army Navy Gun Liaison Company.

Dave

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: matt laing ()  
Date: 08-05-02 16:32

Not trying to be picky but ANGLICOs are Marine units. Air & Naval Gunfire Liaison Company. They had the same function as the WW2 JASCO, and ASCO units ((Joint) Assault Signal Company).

On call IDFS from battleships is way beyond the scope of BF. Firstly the template size for a fire mission from a battleship would measure approx. 25 x 75 inches, based on a blast radius of around 1000 yards per shell. If you reduce the area by half this would still be plausible considering that the lethality radius is usually about half of the overall blast radius. Secondly, IDFS from battleships is (generally) always part of a pre-planned bombardment since IDFS requests must be made 48 hours in advance. Remember that battleships are IDF platforms as a result of evolution not design. IDFS from destroyers is generally able to respond rather quickly and effectively to an on call request providing that the request is, in BF terms, made by the naval observer. I would treat each 5" turret as a section. There would be IIRC, 3 to 5 sections available for each destroyer. The template size would be the large template and I would use the same values as any other 120-130 mm gun. If you are doing a Pacific battle, the line of fire from the destroyers may not necessarily originate from your table edge.

Matt

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: Mike Pierce ()  
Date: 08-05-02 20:13

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Matt,

why each destroyer turret as a section? IIRC, each turret was a single 5" (approx 150mm) rifle. And, if I'm not mistaken, all would usually fire at a single target. So that would be 2 or at most 3 templates?

Now cruisers are another story with their multi-gun turrets. Did they ever fire IDFS other than a barrage?

Mike

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: Rob Wubbenhorst ()  
Date: 08-05-02 22:23

The scenario I mentioned in my post (Carpiquet) was researched by Phong Nguyen, who now resides in Toronto. Phong found that HMS Rodney made a pre-assault bombardment of the target area, and incorporated it into the scenario. It was not called in, but made a special scenario prep-fire.

In WWII, USN DDs up to the Fletcher class had 4-5 single 5" mounts that would all fire together as one battery. I would give them 3 large templates as a rule. The GEARING class was the first to have the dual barrel mounts.

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: Mark Hayes ()  
Date: 08-06-02 00:11

Somewhat off topic, but . . . A USMC friend of mine (and fellow wargamer) served in an ANGLICO, attached to the Saudi Marines during the Gulf War. On the first day of the ground offensive Doug responded to the Saudi commander's request for fire support to prep an Iraqi-held village that would be the target of an assault. The Saudi advance was along the coast, so Doug was able to call on the 16-inch guns of USS WISCONSIN. The Saudis were really impressed when the village was obliterated with the first salvo, and their commanding officer said that now he knew they were going to win the war. We had come a long way in maximizing the effectiveness of WWII gun technology. Doug's story is told in SHIELD AND SWORD by Ed Marolda and Bob Schneller.

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: R Mark Davies ()  
Date: 08-06-02 04:17

Gents,

As mentioned above, the Marines and Paras east of the Orne did make considerable use of naval gunfire as tactical fire support - the cruiser HMS Arethusa was a regular culprit. This support was called in by the RN BOPs - class as direct fire support if you have a BOP on table - not available if you don't.

Naval gunfire support was not therefore merely limited to preparatory barrages. One



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of its greatest successes in Normandy was thickening the Defensive Fire missions called in by the 49th Division at Rauray and thus helping to break up the attack by II SS Panzer Korps on 1st July 1944. This proves that it could be available in large quantities in surprisingly quick time through the Royal Artillery net. However, naval gunfire in this instance would usually only be added to preparatory or DF missions AFTER every available AGRA had been thrown into it as well! I don't really think we need model this, unless you've got a specific scenario where ONLY naval fire support was used (otherwise it'll never end - before you know it, we'll be modelling preparatory saturation bombing!). In my Rauray scenario, I considered that to add naval gunfire would be overkill after firing four field artillery regiments, four medium regiments and a heavy regiment in the same mission!

Cheers,

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: matt laing ()  
Date: 08-06-02 16:39

My proposal to make each 5" turret equal to one section was just to get an idea out there. There is no hard and fast rule concerning division of weapons into BF terms. For example, the total number of MGs available to the Germans and Americans are divided by two in order to derive a BF equivalent. However Russian tanks and MGs are divided by three. My thought was if each 5" turret is equal to a land based section, this would help to illustrate the effectiveness of the naval gun over the land based gun while retaining similar statistics to a land based gun of similar caliber.

Matt

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: Mark Hayes ()  
Date: 08-06-02 20:04

Matt,

Far be it from me to question an assertion that navy guns are more effective, but I'm confused by your last sentence. Can you elaborate?

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: matt laing ()  
Date: 08-07-02 08:43

Mark,

What... you can't read my mind? :-) Sorry, I am not a very good writer. The nearest real life equivalent to the 5"/38 Mark 12 naval gun is the Russian M1937 122mm field gun.

The Mark 12 naval gun was the standard 5" naval gun and was found on nearly every major warship built in the US between 1934 and 1945. The 5" gun is 127mm in Dia. It fired a 55 pound shell at a muzzle velocity of 2,600 FPS and had a range of about

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17,000 yards. The rate of fire is (depending on the type of mount) 12-15 or 15-22 rounds per minute. The Russian M1937 122mm field gun fired a 55 pound shell at a muzzle velocity of 2400 fps and had a range of 23,000 yards. The rate of fire is about 6-8 rounds per minute.

As you can clearly see, the ROF of the 5" naval gun is double the ROF of the Russian 122mm gun, or equal to the ROF of a section of these guns. By comparasin, the ROF of the naval gun is 20 times the ROF of one US M1A1 155mm Long Tom.

We could easily adopt the characteristics of the Russian 122mm field gun for the 5"/38 except that we would show one 5" gun as being equivalent to a section of the 122mm gun due to the much higher ROF.

In addition, there are several advantages that a naval gun has over a land based equivalent. First, the loading process for a land based gun was done entirely by hand whereas the the same process was somewhat automated with the naval guns.

Secondly, the naval guns were able to sustain fire on a target longer than land based artillery could since the ammunition supply was virtually unlimited. Each gun had available to it between 300 and 500 rounds of ammunition. At least 50 rounds were always immediately available and ready to fire. It would be impracticable to have this many rounds stockpiled near a land based gun except in static conditions. Even if the guns did have a large stock pile, the majority of the ammo will remain in some type of packaging until needed. In which case the rounds would have to be unpacked by hand. Additionally, in general, the naval gun crews were not subject to counter battery or small arms fire and were able to go about there business in near complete safety.

Hope this helps

Matt

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: Dave Choat ( )  
Date: 08-07-02 09:31

Wasn't there some direct fire support at Anzio as well? I recall somewhere a US destroyer shooting up some tanks on a road somewhere in there.

Nice to see the 5.38 data. That was my fathers first job on the USS Bremerton, being a director on a dual 5.38 turret at Inchon. He has some great firsthand accounts of naval fire support from Korea AND Viet Nam.

(If I screwed up the ANGLICO reference, that was my fault, not his.)

Dave

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: Tom Schumacher ( )  
Date: 08-07-02 10:03

I have a cousin that was on a minesweeper in Korea that when they were sweeping a bay for mines a T-34/85 came down to the beach and put a round through the cabin. At that time a destroyer started to fire at the tank, which promptly retreated. I guess that would be a "fall back" or "panic" on the tank's part. This is from memory as he passed away several years ago, but we had some great talks about the war.

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Tom

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: Mark Hayes ()  
Date: 08-07-02 10:42

Matt,

Thanks, that clarifies it for me. ROF seems to be the biggest issue, but I would emphasize the "somewhat" in the "somewhat automated." Carrying shells from the magazine to the lower hoist is still by hand. IIRC, ready service ammunition in the turret also was loaded by hand. The amount of ammunition is certainly important, but it might be best to represent it in the scenario design, such as making missions available for the entire game, planning barrages that last most or the entire game, or a liberal definition of "prominent terrain features" that could be fired on with there being a spotted or suspected target. I think I might make the scale: one gun section represents one to two real guns. We assign templates by battery, so we define battery in the game as all the guns of the same caliber on a ship, and give a Fletcher class destroyer of five 5-inch guns three templates. Thoughts?

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: matt laing ()  
Date: 08-07-02 10:44

Mike,

I am not sure whether the dual mounts were used for on call IDFS purposes or not. I'll have to do some more digging to find out. If they were, and you accept my above proposal, then a dual mount would equate approximately to two sections of land based guns. We could double the gun ratings or give it two templates. Doubling the gun rating seems more appropriate to me.

Dave,  
Not a big deal about the ANGLICO. The Army did adopt the JASCO, at least in the Pacific. The Army JASCO was virtually identical to the Marine JASCO. The only major difference as far as I know concerned unit designation, the Army JASCOS were identified by a two or three number designation where the Marine Jascos were numbered for their parent division ie 1st through 6th JASCO.

Matt

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: matt laing ()  
Date: 08-07-02 11:19

Mark,

I agree that the ROF is the big factor here. It is due to the limited automation of the 5" gun that allowed for such a high rate of fire. Yes the ready rounds were loaded by hand but they were power rammed. The earlier pedestal mount 5" guns had a hoist system that was located behind the gun requiring physical labor to bring the shell to the breech. The ring mount 5" guns had an integral hoist that lifted a

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shell directly to the breech. This is represented by the two different ROF in my previous post.

If you want to stick with a 2 gun to a section principle, then I would suggest doubling the stats for the Russian 122 and using that as the stats for the 5"

Matt

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: Mark Hayes ( )  
Date: 08-07-02 17:06

Matt,

well, I don't think the 122mm is going to change. Maybe the scale should be weighted more toward the "1" than the "2". Normally we don't consider ROF, but we've never rated a weapon with such a higher ROF than the norm. I don't have a more specific recommendation for playtesting at this point.

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: Mike Pierce ( )  
Date: 08-07-02 17:31

Great discussion about NGFS. Matt makes some good points about naval gunfire and its advantages over ground artillery not in a static barrage mode. However, we should also think about some ship limitations, too.

A ship in the crowded confines off Normandy beaches would have to maneuver to avoid ships, boats, etc. As it does so, it may mask some of its turrets, it may get too close to another ship, get into a position where it might be firing over another ship, etc. All of these things would tend to reduce its effective ROF, esp a DD or CL, maybe not so much CA or BB.

I'm sure naval planners tried to assign ships to stations to minimize those things. Anybody have some reference matl showing where the ships were off Normandy?

Oh, and what about the German NGFS over in the Baltic---recall their cruisers were used in 44 along the Polish coast---can't remember the city---Konigsberg?

Regards,

Mike

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: R Mark Davies ( )  
Date: 08-07-02 18:35

Mike,

I've got charts showing the preparatory bombardment plan, listing the ships involved, if your interested - they did give them rigidly strict lanes to sail through, as well as 'orbit' patterns to keep them moving in order to dodge coastal

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battery fire (while keeping clear of the landing ships). The destroyers were positioned on the left and right flanks of each main beach - I've got a diagram showing the support fire plan for the left flank of Sword Beach as well, again if you're interested.

Of course, this only applies to D-Day itself - what happened after that (or in real life!) is anyone's guess.

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: R Mark Davies ()  
Date: 08-08-02 07:51

Hi Mike,

Here's the ship information for D-Day. Note that as my Jan's has been pinched, I can't tell you whether these were DDS, CLS, CAS, BBS, MLS or bleedin' SSNs! Nor can I tell you what nationality they were, though I'm sure you can figure it out! You'll also have to excuse my spelling on some of them, as the information I've got is overprinted onto a map, which makes some of the unfamiliar names difficult to read - I'll annotate these with a (?).

Right then, from the left (Eastern) flank:

Heavy support off Sword & Band ('Band' was the beach codename for the beaches east of the Orne Estuary, as far as Houlgate, including the 6th Airborne Division DZs):  
(from the left)

Warspite (bombarding Band Beach targets)

Ramillies (as above)

Roberts (as above)

Mauritius (as above - Bombardment Squadron Flagship)

Arethusa (as above)

Frobisher (bombarding Sword Beach targets)

Dragon (as above)

Danae (as above)

Scylla (Eastern Task Force Command Ship - Rear Admiral Sir Phillip Vian)

Largs (Sword Beach Command Ship - Rear Admiral Talbot)

Destroyers giving close support off Sword & Band: (from the left)

Saumerer (?) (Sword - Roger)

Swift (as above)

Scourge (Sword - Queen)

Stord (?) (as above)

Scorpion (as above)

Middleton (as above)

Slatzak (?) (as above)

Virago (Sword - Peter)

Verulam (as above)

Serapis (as above)

Kelvin (Sword - Oboe)

Eglinton (as above)

Heavy Support off Juno: (from the left)

Hilary (Juno Beach Command Ship - Commodore Oliver)

Heavy Support to both Gold and Juno: (from the left)

Diadem

Belfast (Bombardment Squadron Flagship)

Flores

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Destroyers providing close support to Juno: (from the left)

Algonquin (Juno - Nan)  
Sioux (as above)  
Kempenfeldt (as above)  
Vigilant (a above)  
Stevenstone (Juno - Mike)  
La Combatante (as above)  
Bleasdale (as above)  
Gleasdale (as above)  
Faulkner (Juno - Love)  
Fury (as above)  
Venus (as above)

Heavy Support off Gold: (from the left)

Baldo (Gold Beach Command Ship - Commodore Douglas-Pennant)  
Orion  
Emerald  
Argonaut  
Ajax

Destroyers providing close support to Gold Beach: (from the left)

Ulster (Gold - King)  
Urchin (as above)  
Undaunted (as above)  
Ursa (as above)  
Pytchky (Gold - Jig)  
Cettistock (as above)  
Cottesmore (as above)  
Koskowisk (?) (as above)  
Granville (Gold - Item)  
Jervis (as above)  
Undina (as above)  
Urania (as above)  
Ulysses (as above)

Heavy Support off Omaha Beach: (from the left)

Ancon (Omaha Beach Command Ship - Rear Admiral Hall)  
Augusta (Eastern Task Force Command Ship - Rear Admiral Kirk)  
Arkansas  
Montcalm  
Georges Legues  
Texas (Bombardment Squadron Flagship)  
Glasgow

Destroyers giving close support to Omaha Beach: (from the left)

Harding (Omaha - George)  
Melbreak (?) (as above)  
Tanatside (?) (as above)  
Emmons (?) (Omaha - Fox)  
Baldwin (as above)  
Doyle (as above)  
Carmicks (Omaha - Easy)  
Setterlee (Omaha - Dog)  
Talybont (as above)  
Thompson (as above)  
McCook (as above)

Heavy Support off Utah: (from the left)

Soemba  
Enterprise  
Hawkins  
Bayfield (Utah Beach Command Ship - Rear Admiral Moon)

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Nevada  
Quincy  
Tuscaloosa (Bombardment Squadron Flagship)  
Black Prince  
Erebus

Destroyers providing close support to Utah Beach & Pointe du Hoc: (from the left)  
Herndon (?)  
Shubrick  
Hobson  
Corry  
Fitch

Hope this helps,

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: R Mark Davies ()  
Date: 08-08-02 07:53

Forgot to mention that the battleships all had mine-swept 'racetrack' circuits to operate in, while the destroyers had to take their chances in the largely unswept gaps between the landing flotillas.

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NAVAL GUNFIRE AS SUPPORT  
Author: Dave Choat ()  
Date: 08-08-02 09:32

Nice post RMD.

Reply To This Message

Bombardment Groups on D-Day  
Author: Mark Hayes ()  
Date: 08-08-02 10:02

RMD,

I can assure you that none of the vessels you mentioned are SSNs. <g>

I can provide the composition for the bombardment groups for UTAH (TF-125) and OMAHA (TF-124) - even ship type and nationality:

UTAH - RADM Morton Deyo, USN  
Battleship  
USS NEVEDA  
Monitor  
HMS EREBUS  
Heavy Cruisers  
USS TUSCALOOSA  
USS QUINCY  
HMS HAWKINS  
Light Cruisers

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HMS ENTERPRISE  
HMS BLACK PRINCE  
Gunboat  
HNMS SOEMBA (Dutch)  
Destroyers  
USS FITCH  
USS FORREST  
USS CORRY (lost in operation)  
USS HERNDON  
USS SHUBRICK  
USS BUTLER  
USS GHERARDI  
Destroyer Escorts  
USS BATES  
USS RICH (lost in operation)

OMAHA - RADM C. F. Bryant, USN  
Battleships  
USS TEXAS  
USS ARKANSAS  
Light Cruisers  
HMS GLASGOW  
HMS BELLONA  
MONTCALM (French)  
GEORGES LEYGUES (French)  
Destroyers  
USS FRANKFORD  
USS CARMICK  
USS DOYLE  
USS EMMONS  
USS BALDWIN  
USS HARDING  
USS SATTERLEE  
USS THOMPSON  
HMS TANATSIDE  
HMS TALYBONT  
HMS MELBREAK

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: Bombardment Groups on D-Day  
Author: Mark Hayes ()  
Date: 08-08-02 10:05

Oops. Add one American destroyer to the Omaha Bombardment Group: USS MCCORMICK

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: Bombardment Groups on D-Day  
Author: R Mark Davies ()  
Date: 08-08-02 10:12

Hi Mark,

Looks like I'm missing a few ships - so much for the Public Records Office!

Mark



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Reply To This Message

Re: Bombardment Groups on D-Day  
Author: R Mark Davies ( )  
Date: 08-08-02 10:17

Looks like my list of Admirals is bollocks as well!

:o)

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: Bombardment Groups on D-Day  
Author: R Mark Davies ( )  
Date: 08-08-02 10:21

Aha! Of course, my documents are pre-D-Day mission-planning diagrams - hence the changes by the time of the actual operation. My honour is recovered!

Mark

Reply To This Message

NGFS after D-Day  
Author: Mark Hayes ( )  
Date: 08-08-02 10:37

Morison describes many actions after D-Day in which Allied ships engaged targets on shore. The ships rotated out to refuel and replenish ammunition at Portsmouth, but NGFS was available to support the troops on shore until June 18. US V Corps had advanced beyond range and RADM Kirk suspended NGFS for 1st Army on June 18. The British and Canadians probably still had NGFS because they had not advanced very far inland. <Just kidding! ><G> 1st Army regained support from the ships when the Americans advanced on Cherbourg.

Morison uses a number of stories to show that NGFS played a significant role in 1st Army's success (not to mention survival). On June 16, a German military journal contained the following excerpt. SHAEF obtained a copy and sent a translation to the ships of the bombardment groups:

<The fire curtain provided by the guns of the Navy so far proved to be one of the best trump cards of the Anglo-United States invasion Armies. It may be that the part played by the Fleet was more decisive than that of the air forces [my favorite part of the quote] because its fire was better aimed and unlike the bomber formations it had not to confine itself to short burst of fire. . . .>

So, scenarios designed for the first week or so after the landing should consider that NGFS may be available.

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS after D-Day  
Author: Mark Hayes ( )  
Date: 08-08-02 12:25

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Mark,

Your list of admirals is OK, (at least for UTAH and OMAHA) but it looks like you accidentally labelled RADM Kirk as in command of the EASTERN Naval Task Force. The organization of TF 122 (Western Naval Task Force) is as follows:

TF 122 Western Naval Task Force - RADM Alan Kirk

-----TF 125 Assault Force U (UTAH beach) - RADM Don Moon  
-----Minesweeper Group - CDR M. H. Brown, RN  
-----Beach Green Assault Group - CDR A. L. Warburton  
-----Beach Red Assault Group - CDR E. W. Wilson  
-----Escort Group - CDR W. W. Outerbridge  
-----Bombardment Group - RADM Morton Deyo

-----TF 124 Assault Force O (OMAHA beach) - RADM John Hall  
-----Minesweeper Group - CDR J. S. Cochrane, RN  
-----Assault Group O-1 - CAPT E. H. Fritzsche, USCG [Hey Mike! This could be you had been born 60 years earlier]  
-----Assault Group O-2 - CAPT W. O. Bailey  
-----Assault Group O-3 - CAPT L. B. Schulten  
-----Assault Group O-4 - CDR S. H. Dennis, RN  
-----Escort Group - CAPT Harry Sanders  
-----Close Gunfire Support Group\* - CAPT L. S. Sabin  
-----Bombardment Group - RADM C. F. Bryant

\*The CGSG consisted of 1 LCH, 7 LCRs, 5 LCGs, 9 LCT (R)s, 28 LCPS, 9 LCT (A)s, and 10 LCT (HE)s. For key to these abbreviations go to:  
<http://www.history.navy.mil/books/OPNAV20-P1000/L.htm>

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS after D-Day  
Author: James Baker ( )  
Date: 08-08-02 17:03

30 replies with tons of good info. Does someone want to digest all this and come up with some formal procedures that I can post on the extras page as a playtest rule? I am willing.

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS after D-Day  
Author: Ken Natt ( )  
Date: 08-08-02 18:48

I would be interested to know how many targets the NGS can engage in a turn - ie assuming it is being called in by a FOO rather than point targets designated by the ship. Are we saying that all the guns engage the same target area? (I suspect they do)

There are also numerous examples of direct fire from Destroyers - how would that be handled?

On the rate of fire question I would suggest that it would be quite high in comparison with ground mounts. An awful lot of sweat goes into pushing a 5" shell around, but at sea they are doing so in a specially designed area with a lot of mechanical aids, and there tends to be more available gunners and spare hands. with

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the bigger guns the process becomes much more power assisted as well.

Ken

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS after D-Day  
Author: matt laing ()  
Date: 08-08-02 20:36

James,

I would be more than happy to make a formal proposal. However my proposal would be based almost entirely on NGFS as it pertains to the PTO. What do you think?

Matt

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS after D-Day  
Author: Mark Hayes ()  
Date: 08-08-02 23:31

Ken,

I don't know for certain, but I strongly doubt that a ship of any size would conduct more than one indirect fire mission at a time. Direct fire is a different story because, theoretically each mount could fire under local control. More likely, they would be limited to the number of directors on board (usually 2 for larger ships). The most common practice would be to fire all guns at one target in salvo, because all directors and main gun mounts would be working off information kept on a single plot in the Combat Information Center (or whatever its called during WWII). I need to study WWII NGFS in more detail.

Would NGFS be practiced differently in the PTO?

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS after D-Day  
Author: matt laing ()  
Date: 08-09-02 00:36

Practice? Not sure depends on what you mean I guess. There were some differences I think that would alter the response ratings and who could call in NGFS depending on theatre. Not entirely sure though.

Matt

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS after D-Day  
Author: matt laing ()  
Date: 08-09-02 01:19

One difference is that during some landings, Tarawa for example, the Marines only (in general) on call fire support was from NGF. The Marine Corps planned for this and had more personnel dedicated and continually refined the coordination of NGF as

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the war went on. In contrast the allies in the ETO had little need for extensive NFGS coordination and training. I don't know, this may make a difference in BF.

Matt

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS after D-Day  
Author: R Mark Davies ( )  
Date: 08-09-02 01:49

Hi Mark,

You might be kidding, but there's a lot of truth in what you say - don't forget that the left flank of 21st Army Group remained on the coast until it reached Antwerp in September. 49th Div received large amounts of NGFS at Rauray (my favourite battle :o) on 1st July - and that's a long way inland! What is more, the Paras and Commandos on the left flank were still calling fire from cruisers such as HMS Arethusa well into mid-July. There is also one report of the Belgian Brigade 'Piron' (right on the coast) receiving NFGS (of the preparatory bombardment variety) during Operation 'Paddle' - the breakout by I Corps - in late August.

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS after D-Day  
Author: Irondog ( )  
Date: 08-14-02 10:38

A US Battle ship had 9 (3 per turret) 16/50 on the Iowa class and 16/48 on the other fast BB and older 16 inch armed ships (Armor penetration only difference) So you should get 9 guns on a fire mission. Also You would really need a extra large templant since the weight of the shell was that of a volkswagon beetle (just a little bit heavier than any other shell. More than likely you would get DD or CA support. which would be between 5 and 8 tubes (depending on class). All guns would be used in a mission and you should get double the fire power (10 to 16 shots) This is due to the 5/38 power ram devoleped for rapid fire against air targets. And yes the ROF is fast. I could get the ROF for the 5/38 and 16/50 along with the 8 inch. I have all the Naval Institute books on this.

Irondog

NGFS in Normandy  
Author: Mark Hayes ( )  
Date: 08-07-02 11:13

I looked up what S.E. Morison says about naval gunfire support during the Normandy Campaign and I thought I would share it here.

The U.S. title for the forward observer groups that could call in NGFS was "shore fire control party" or SFCP. One of these groups was assigned to each infantry battalion with the landing force on D-Day. Also, nine parties (one per rifle battalion) dropped with the 101st on the first night. The battleship USS NEVADA was available after her 50-minute pre-landing bombardment. SFCPs directed most NGFS against German gun positions, but response time was such that even mobile targets could be engaged. USS QUINCY responded eight times on June 6 to fire on German troop concentrations spotted along the road running between Carentan and

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Sainte-Mere-Eglise. USS NEVEDA, with 14" guns, answered a call from a party with the paratroopers and destroyed a group of tanks and field artillery.

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS in Normandy  
Author: Dave Choat ()  
Date: 08-08-02 09:36

Better response times than we had in the Gulf...

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS in Normandy  
Author: Mark Hayes ()  
Date: 08-08-02 11:09

Dave,

I don't know about that. You must be thinking of some specific complaints (no doubt by some disgruntled army guys :-)

I have read accounts where the battleships were quite responsive and appreciated.

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: NGFS in Normandy  
Author: R Mark Davies ()  
Date: 08-09-02 01:53

An associate of mine (a former Navy SEAL and P-3 pilot) managed to get NFGS on the first call from some bloody-great BB (Iowa?) in Vietnam - once he'd called it in, the sign-off from the BB's radio operator was 'Start digging - out.' Apparently this was VERY good advice :o)

Mark

16 inch guns  
Author: Phong (raiznerf1141)  
Date: 02-19-02 10:48

Hi all,

For off-shore preplanned bombardment by a battleship, what attack ratings would be appropriate for the 16 inch guns on the HMS Rodney against troops, vehicles, and fortifications?

Thanks,  
Phong

Reply To This Message

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Re: 16 inch guns  
Author: Rob Wubbenhorst (---.houston.rr.com)  
Date: 02-19-02 22:30

As a naval gamer, let me run some figures and propose something.

Stats from Command at Sea (CaS) by Clash of Arms:

Rodney had Mk I 16in/45 guns. 16" is 406mm.

In a 3 min. tactical turn in CaS, 63 damage points are scored with the HE shells. This damage factor includes provision for max range firing and rate of fire.

For comparison to BF, use the US 155mm artillery mentioned on page 37. 155mm=6.1" so I will use the US 6in/47 naval gun for comparison.

The US 6in/47 does 10 damage points against an unarmored target at max range in a 3 minute tactical turn.

By simple comparison of the 155mm with a 406mm in naval game stats, the factor of damage is 6x greater.

With the US 155mm at +1/+2 V/TG already, the 6x multiplier would be +6/+12 which is silly. I propose tripling the values of the 155mm for the 406mm 16in guns of Rodney.

Proposed:  
Large template per triple-barrel mount (Rodney has 3).  
+3/+6 V/TG

Does this sound right?

Regards,

Rob

Reply To This Message

Re: 16 inch guns  
Author: R Mark Davies (---.proxy.aol.com)  
Date: 02-21-02 11:29

It's worth noting that Allied forces in Normandy used a lot of naval fire support throughout the campaign and not just in the D-Day landings. The 1st & 4th Special Service Brigades had dedicated Royal Navy Bombardment Observation Parties (BOPs) attached to each Commando (i.e. battalion) HQ. Regular Royal Artillery FOOs could also call in naval fire support on occasion (such as in the case of 6th Airborne's defence of the Orne Bridgehead, or 49th Division's defence against II SS Panzer Corps). It was most commonly used as a thickening asset for corps, army and army group target missions, such as 'Victor' and 'Yoke'.

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: 16 inch guns  
Author: Greg Lyle (---.proxy.aol.com)  
Date: 02-22-02 17:01

Looking at the shell throw weights and ROF between the 16" and the 155mm (in this theater) I agree that a 3/6 should be awarded to the ships, with a large templet.

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Reply To This Message

Re: 16 inch guns (long and wandering a bit OT)  
Author: Ken Natt (---.server.n1.com)  
Date: 02-23-02 01:37

Rates of fire are low, what you are representing is the arrival on target of a salvo once every minute or two. Judging from the reports and photos - upturned and buried tanks etc, you could probably use a blanket factor against everything and not bother with the V\T,G&SV split. Against true fortifications rather than battlefield bunkers and the like they would be less effective - there are no examples of 20thC warships actually destroying true coastal fortifications with gunfire - sometimes they silence the battery for a short time, but that's it.

I am a volunteer on a project to restore the Heugh Battery at Hartlepool. This was attacked in December 1914 by the Battlecruisers of the High Seas Fleet (which partly explains my concrete fetish). The Heugh and its sister Lighthouse Battery only mounted 3 x 6" guns, but although the battery area was hit repeatedly by 11 inch shells, and the battery itself was not exactly Atlantik wall standards as the guns are in open sunken concrete pits, no actual damage was done. The problem was that all the German shells were arriving on too flat a trajectory and were skipping off the glacis and sadly into the town. There is a plaque commemorating the first British soldier to be killed on British soil in WW1. The similar battery at Tynemouth that was not involved in the action has been partly restored and anyone passing should have a look if interested. Actually the Tynemouth site gets you a medieval castle with 16th C additions, a 12th C monastery, WW1\2 Coastal Battery and a fantastic view of the North Sea - but wrap up warm.

We aim to have the Heugh open to the public but it will take a few years to get right. Anyone know where we can lay our hands on a pair of 26cwt 6"?

Ken

Reply To This Message

Re: 16 inch guns (long and wandering a bit OT)  
Author: R Mark Davies (---.proxy.aol.com)  
Date: 02-23-02 07:41

Something I forgot to mention was that the majority of naval tactical fire support was done by cruisers with 6" guns, while their big brothers generally only got involved in the larger AGRA shoots.

Mark

Reply To This Message

Re: 16 inch guns (long and wandering a bit OT)  
Author: Robert Patrick (---.rina.org.uk)  
Date: 02-25-02 06:53

HMS Ajax did knock out a gun emplacement at Normandy landings with a 6 inch shell. Admittedly it was a fluke as the shell went straight through the gun casement aperture.