FROM ST.LOUIS TO ST.LO

(Abridged)
A CAMPAIGN SYSTEM FOR NORMANDY 1944

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*No man crosses the same river twice, because
the river has changed and so has the man.*

Heraclitus

The **St. Louis to St. Lo** campaign allows you to follow the exploits of any real or fictional U.S. Army company/battalion task force from the assault landing at UTAH Beach on D-Day, June 6th, 1944, through the fall of *Festunga* Cherbourg, to the bitter close upfighting in the bocage and eventually the Cobra breakout and victory.

For additional historical flavour, the campaign has been focused on the operations of the U.S. VII Corps and divided into three distinct phases:

      1. Contentin   - D-Day to D+24 (June 6th - June 30th 1944)

      2. Bottleneck   - D+25 to D+50 (June 31st - July 24th 1944)

      3. Breakout   - D+51 to D+57 (July 25th - July 31st 1944)

I have chosen VIII Corps because it included a broad range of U.S.units from Infantry and Parachute to Glider and Ranger formations. Whilst the enemy they faced varied in the extreme, being a cross section of the German Army as it stood in 1944; from Waffen SS, Fallschrimjager and Luftwaffe combat formations, to Georgians, Poles and Cossacks in Wehrmacht service.

"THERE`S THE BIG RED ONE & THE REST OF THE U.S. ARMY"

As most wargamers have their own 'pet' units, I have decided against associating the campaign with any one particular US Army formation; creating instead the fictitious Company 'J'. As there was no Company 'J' in the US Army tables of organisation, our fictional outfit can be used to augment the strength of any real US Army Infantry, Airborne or Ranger battalion. This has the added bonus of allowing greater latitude when creating scenarios based on actual events from the fighting in Normandy.

CAMPAIGN DIARY

Running a wargames campaign requires a measure of book-keeping as casualties occur within the unit, replacements arrive, wounded men return for duty and events occur which alter the morale or efficiency of your outfit. If you own a Personal Computer then I recommend enlisting the aid of a commercial electronic diary or spreadsheet program, otherwise it's down to WH Smith for the bumper A4 refill pad.

Those 'thirty something' wargamers amongst you, who grew up in the golden years of Don Featherstone, may want to keep a scrapbook to record the history of the outfit and the individual characters that pass through it. This may include a 'Hall of Fame' of fallen or wounded C.O.'s, Bazooka 'aces', sketch maps of actions, citations for awards, promotions etc.

It is worth noting at this point that I don't expect you to follow all the rules. This game has been designed for your enjoyment. Feel free to add, amend or drop (but not steal or plagerise) any rules that you find too onerous or simply not to your liking.

MAPS

Don't get too hung up on maps. They should be there to aid rather than enslave you. I've drawn the map below as a representative section of Normandy terrain. Develop a holistic approach, use only portions in some scenarios, change one of the roads into a river or fast flowing stream and alter the lie of the land with rolls of undulating terrain and fingers of high ground. Even turn the fields around the village into urban development and create the outer suburb of a major town or city.

200 yds/mtrs

You may want to fight a campaign on a micro level for a localised objective. The U.S. Army's average rate of advance during the fighting in the bocage was around 300 yards a day and as General Omar Bradley summarised, "three fields a day and there are seven fields to the mile". In this case keep a note of the terrain layouts; if you push the Krauts back one day then you can start the next campaign day in their old positions (or further depending on the result). If you are pushed back, the reverse applies. So, you could find yourself fighting over Le Mesnil for several games.

A DAY IN THE LINE

The 'working day' started just before dawn at 05:00hrs. Usually the men had breakfast in their holes. Mostly it was cold C or K rations, sometimes the company cooks managed to get pancakes and hot coffee up to the

front lines. But this was the most dangerous time as German artillery and mortars would be waiting for this moment, as men got out of the holes in which they had spent the night in order to stretch, perform bodily functions or eat. This was known as '*The Morning Hate*'.

Planning for an attack would begin the night before with an officers 'O' group at battalion, or even company. The platoon leader would then go over the detail with his squad leaders.

> *"Here in NORMANDY the normal objective of each attack is the next hedgerow where there will be a pause for reorganization and for planning the next advance."*
>
> Headquarters, US XIX Corps

The objective might be as simple as the directive given above, or perhaps as succinct as Captain Glover S Johns' "*Ok guys, take the next hedgerow*". Nevertheless, an infantry company would still take one to two hours to organise for an attack, with armoured support maybe three, and a battalion as much as five hours. Given an hour or two for reorganisation once the objective was taken before starting the whole process over again and you can see that two to three hedgerows a day was a pretty normal advance.

Operations ceased about an hour before dark to allow troops time to organise a defensive line for the night and dig-in. After dark, hot chow would be brought up in Jeeps by the A&P platoons and patrols would slip past the front-line rifle pits, perhaps to make sure the enemy was still in the same positions or listen for signs of movement behind his lines which might indicate a withdrawal or preparations for a counter-attack. Occasionally the patrol would be armed to the teeth to catch an unwary Kraut patrol or snatch a prisoner for the G-2 boys at battalion to pump for intelligence. By one a.m. the patrols had returned and everyone could settle down to an uneasy night. Anyone out beyond the barrel of the sentry's Garand or .30 calibre now was hostile.

THE CAMPAIGN CLOCK

It would be wrong to assume that units fought in combat every day. Wherever possible the Americans tried to rotate units at the sharp end so that each company, battalion and regiment would bear it's share at the tip of the spear and equally have a turn as 'reserve'. There were also lulls when the fighting switched to other sectors or when the tempo of operations came to a natural stop. This allowed reinforcements to be incorporated build-up of supplies, ammunition and forces, supplies and a before the next push.

Rather than attempting to recreate the campaign on a day-by-day basis, it seems that a better way to mark the passage of days would be to utilise a method based upon **The Moving Clock** - Special Rule 4.0 in the *Crossfire!* Supplement *Hit The Dirt*. We'll call this the 'Campaign Clock' (unconscious shades here of that big clock measuring the German advance in the movie *The Battle of the Bulge*). So, every time your chosen U.S. outfit wins a scenario, roll 1xD6:

- '**1**' The campaign advances ½ day
- '**5**' The campaign advances 2 days
- '**6**' The campaign advances 3 days

This dice roll is modified as follows:

- ***Contentin*** Phase   **+2**
- ***Bottleneck*** Phase   **+1**
- ***Breakout*** Phase   **- 2**
- Resistance is ***Determined***   **- 2**
- Resistance is ***Sporadic***   **+2**
- Opposition is ***Fanatical***   **- 1**
  Results below '1' = 1.

All battles are assumed to take place in the morning unless specified by scenario. If the campaign clock advances by a ½ day then the next scenario is fought in the afternoon/evening, whilst a third advance of ½ day places the next scenario in the darkness of the early hours of the next morning. Obviously you are involved in some intensive fighting.

If the die roll is failed or the outfit fails to achieve it's victory conditions in the scenario, then the Campaign Clock advances one day only.

Another and quicker method of running a campaign is the 'episodic' approach whereby you simply select a series of interesting scenario. These can either be pre-programmed and perhaps based upon actual units and events or chosen randomly by rolling a dice on the Scenario Generator.

So, how does the campaign work? Well, once you have chosen the U.S. outfit as the subject of the campaign, it's pretty straightforward. Just follow the steps below:

1. Create a Mission using the *Scenario Generator*.

2. Determine the type of enemy opposition facing you and level of resistance using the *German Opposition Table*.

3. If the Germans have Panzers use the *Panzer Generator*.

4. Determine what friendly support your outfit can expect to receive using the *U.S. Friendlies Generator*.

5. Before the scenario begins, roll a dice for an event on the *Pre-Battle Events Table*. Apply the event and make any adjustments necessary.

6. Fight out the Scenario on the tabletop. Record the outcome, losses etc.

7. Use the Campaign Clock to determine how far forward time has moved.

8. If the Campaign Clock rolls forward 2 or 3 days, roll a dice on the *Outta the Line Table.*

9. **REPEAT steps 1 thru 8!**

"LET'S START THE WAR RIGHT HERE"

SCENARIO GENERATOR

DIE	CONTENTIN	BOTTLENECK	BREAKOUT	SCENARIOS
2	ADVANCE	LULL	ADVANCE	**ADVANCE:** Advance to combat. Must clear a road leading off table to enable the advance to continue
3	BOCAGE	SWAMP	ADVANCE	
4	STRONGPOINT	SWAMP	BOCAGE	**BOCAGE:** A straightforward slugfest amongst the hedgerows against an entrenched enemy
5	COUNTER ATTACK	COUNTER ATTACK	COUNTER ATTACK	
6	VILLAGE	STRONGPOINT	BOCAGE	**COUNTER ATTACK** The Krauts are doing what they do best, *ATTACKING!*
7	LULL	SWAMP	COUNTER ATTACK	**STRONGPOINT** An assault on a fortified locality such as Crisbecq or Azeville Batteries or blockhouses defending Cherbourg
8	ADVANCE	BOCAGE	BOCAGE	
9	BOCAGE	COUNTER ATTACK	ADVANCE	**SWAMP** As Bocage but many hedgerows replaced by small streams. Large swampy areas lay to front and flanks of attacking US forces.
10	BOCAGE	BOCAGE	ADVANCE	
11	STRONGPOINT	LULL	COUNTER ATTACK	**VILLAGE** Outfit must seize a village or objective in a larger town or city
12	VILLAGE	LULL	VILLAGE	

Modify Contentin & Bottleneck by +1 per week

See specific rules for Lull.

If you simply can't be arsed fighting a full historical campaign spanning two months of actual operations, and let's face it there are plenty of distractions these days, try the following:

Begin with *Advance* as your first scenario in the *Contentin* column of the table above. Using the rules for the Campaign Clock, if you win simply move down the column to the next scenario dictated by the dice, i.e. if you score '6' on the Campaign Clock die roll, you move down three spaces to *Counterattack*; if you lose the die roll move to the next adjacent scenerio below, *Bocage*. Once you have reached the bottom of the current column, move to the top of the next column to the right and work down that one in a similar manner.

The *Village* scenario at the bottom of the Contentin column should be the fall of Cherbourg. The similar *Village* scenario can be the capture of Villebaudon or Avranches, ending the COBRA offensive and the campaign as a whole as General Patton's 3rd Army sweeps past into Brittany and your outfit is taken out of the line for some much needed R&R, well, you hope . . .

GERMAN OPPOSITION TABLE

DIE	QUALITY	RESISTANCE	FORMATIONS
2	POOR	SPORADIC	**POOR** Fortress or Luftwaffe Field Units, Polish & Russian OST formations
3	POOR	STIFF	
4	EXPERIENCED	SPORADIC	
5	EXPERIENCED	DETERMINED	**EXPERIENCED** 6th Fallschirmjager Regt., 352nd, 91st, 77th and 275th Infantry Divisions
6	POOR	SPORADIC	
7	EXPERIENCED	DETERMINED	
8	HARDENED	SPORADIC	**HARDENED** Panzer Lehr, 2nd & 116th Panzer and 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division
9	HARDENED	STIFF	
10	HARDENED	DETERMINED	
11	FANATICAL	STIFF	**FANATIC** 2nd SS 'Das Reich' Panzer Division
12	FANATICAL	DETERMINED	

For a more historical result, roll the number of dice below and apply the modifier according to current phase of the campaign:

- **Contentin:** 1xD6+1
- **Bottleneck:** 2xD6+2
- **Breakout:** 2xD6+3

A few words of explanation might not go amiss regarding the **German Opposition Table**. Naturally it has been streamlined and the ratings are somewhat arbitrary.

The **QUALITY** ratings in part represent the morale, training and experience of a particular unit or groups of units, but also current combat effectiveness. For example, although the Panzer Lehr was still a strong formation, by the end of July 1944, it was considered to be "*not even Kampfwert IV*" which was the lowest combat efficiency rating in the German Army. Therefore a '*Poor*' rating is not inaccurate.

It is impossible to be precise when attempting to rate any given formation. For example, the 6th Fallschrimjager Regiment under the veteran paratroop commander Von der Heydte performed poorly throughout June 1944, in comparison with the die-hard performance exhibited by the 3rd Fallschrimjager Division defending St.Lo. Yet, units of the 6th Fallschrimjager Regiment demonstrated a complete fanatiscm and disregard for life in attempting to escape encirclement during the COBRA Breakout in the last week of July.

RESISTANCE is in part a reflection of the quality of the formation you are facing; but also it's an indication both of combat strength and their commitment to holding the objective or pushing home

an assault on your lines. Basically I guess we could say that resistance is a measure of their determination to die for their Fuhrer.

However, resistance may also be used to determine the tactical situation on the tabletop. For instance, the Germans created a defensive network in three lines, known as the Battle Outposts, Advance Position and the Main Position. The Battle Outposts were regarded as expendable, so a '*sporadic*' result may indicate that you have come up against this outpost line, which was lightly held with a "*minimum of men and a maximum of weapons*". Alternatively it could be small but determined band of rearguards possibly from a reconnaissance battalion fighting and then falling back. Whilst a '*determined*' defence by '*fanatical*' German troops means that you may be left with no option other than simply getting up close and burying them in their holes.

GERMAN PANZER GENERATOR		
DIE	MODEL	NOTES
2	French Renault FT or Char bis 1	The French tanks represent Panzer Ausbildungsund Ersatz-Abteilung 100.
3	French Renault or Hotchkiss	The StuG = Sturmgeschutz III's found in independent brigades, Infantry and Panzer Divisions.
4	StuG	
5	Marder	Marders and Hummels were widely used as an assault gun in Normandy.
6	Marder	
7	StuG	Panzer Lehr makes it's debut on the American front on 11 July 1944.
8	StuG	
9	Hummel or JagdPanzer	Armoured elements of 2 SS Panzer Division arrive in first week of July 1944.
10	Panther	The 2nd and 116th Panzer Divisions intervene during COBRA Breakout.
11	Panzer Mk IV	
12	Panzer Mk IV	

Roll 2xD6 dice and make the adjustments below:

- **Contentin**   2xD6- 4
- **Bocage**   2xD6+2
- **Cobra**   2xD6+3