

Blood & Honour – Hitlerjüngend in Normandy

The Battle for Cristot

11th June 1944

Scenario written by Andy Parkes, Paddy Green and Richard de Ferrars

Historical Overview

The allied assault on the Normandy beaches had been a success although, in retrospect, the move inland had not been as incisive as it could have been. All along the British & Canadian sector, the fighting on D-day had left the German coastal defence divisions badly smashed. However, the delays in exploiting this success had allowed the Germans to establish a thin defensive crust a few miles inland – albeit a line that was being manned by the Panzer Divisions that should have been launching the coordinated German counterattack – Panzer Lehr, 12SS Panzer Division (Hitlerjüngend) and 21 Panzer Division. This battle focuses on one of the attacks that was made to try and break this line. In the first week after the invasion, each side had made local attacks along this line with small gains but neither had been able to achieve a significant breakthrough. The Germans were successfully kept on the defensive and their coordinated armoured counterattack would never materialise. The British would make the first major breakthrough when they launched *Operation Epsom* towards the end of the month.

The high ground around Audrieu and Cristot was ideally suited for defence with its small villages, farms narrow lanes, bocage hedges, woods and orchards. Not the ground that the Reconnaissance Battalion of an armoured division would have chosen to fight its first battle. However, the 12SS Aufklarungs Abteilung was the only force available to provide the link between Panzergrenadier Regiment 26 at Brouay and Panzer Lehr at St Pierre. They had started to take up positions on the afternoon on June 7th and initially played a “cat and mouse” game with the British whilst the front line was established. Due to the length of their line and the closed-in nature of the terrain, the Germans were manning a line of strongpoints covering the most likely avenues of advance rather than forming a genuine line of positions.

In the first week after the invasion, the main focus for XXX Corps was to seize the high ground around Villers-Bocage. Optimistic plans had even envisaged taking this area on D+1. The deployment of the Panzer Divisions had ended any hope of an immediate breakthrough. During June 8th-10th, there had been hard fighting around Tilly-sur-Seulles and St Pierre as the British tried to open the road to Villers-Bocage. By the 11th June they had succeeded in pushing south from Audrieu, through point 103 and into the northern half of St Pierre. Tilly-sur-Seulles, however remained in German hands and the British were looking for other routes south. The road from Cristot over point 102 to Fontenay and on Tessel-Bretteville looked promising. Seizing this area would also provide flank protection for the forces battling for St Pierre.

During the morning of June 11th, a strong reconnaissance by B squadron 4th /7th Royal Dragoon Guards had swept through the area south of Cristot, almost reaching the top of point 102. They had met only light resistance. Whether they had found a path through the strongpoints, or whether German fire discipline had stopped the troops from revealing their positions to a squadron of tanks unsupported by infantry, is unclear. Either way, the commanders returned to the British positions at Audrieu, confident that an infantry assault could easily take control of point 102 and the villages of Les Hauts Vents and Cristot. The task was given to 69th Infantry Brigade and the assault was set for that afternoon.

Lacking time to prepare a heavy artillery barrage, the 6th Green Howards, together with support from the 4th / 7th RDG set off into the bocage around Cristot. Initial progress was good but then the attack ran into strong German positions around the “White House” and the “sunken lane” south of Cristot. After several hours of confused fighting, it was clear that the assault was not going to secure its objectives. As night fell, the British forces withdrew back into Audrieu.

British Player Briefing

I could see these two Germans who were getting up, firing a burst down that side of the lane and then getting down. I watched them for - I suppose it was only a few seconds. It seemed quite a long time. They would bob up, fire and get down. Bob up, fire and get down. So I thought, "well, we will have to see what we can do about it", and I turned round to the chaps and I said "I am going to have a try at this". I turned round to the chap behind me. You know "for Christ's sake give me a grenade", and I waited until I got the rhythm of what they were doing - bobbing up and down and shooting. Bobbing up and down and shooting. And then the last time they bobbed up I threw this grenade and I could never throw a grenade like the Army taught you. I used to throw them like a cricket ball. So I threw the grenade. The Germans saw it coming and got down. Well I followed the grenade up straight away. I ran right behind the grenade. When it landed I hadn't pulled the bloody pin out. Now, of course, the Germans didn't know that and they kept down waiting for it to go off. By the time they had realised it wasn't going to go off, I was on top of them and I had shot them both.

CSM Stan Hollis VC, personal account of fighting in the sunken lane

Situation

Lt-Col Hastings, Commander 6th Green Howards, 16:00 June 11th 1944, Audrieu

You landed on King Sector of Gold beach, at 0737. The lead element of the 6th Green Howards, A and D Companies, waded ashore under heavy mortar and MG fire. At 7.50, B and C Companies landed. 19 Sherman DD tanks of B Squadron 4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards were able to land alongside the first troops from 6th Green Howards. A Company, supported by three AVRE's and a Sherman, overran a strongpoint at Le Pont Chaussé, while B and D Companies attacked uphill towards the Meuvaines ridge and Mont Fleury respectively. At Mont Fleury, Company Sergeant Major Hollis of D Company attacked a bunker with grenades, the first of two actions that day which won him the Victoria Cross. By 1030, 6th Green Howards held the high ground overlooking King. They then advanced on Crepon, while 7th Green Howards, supported by a pair of Churchill Crocodile flamethrower tanks, advanced through Ver-sur-Mer. The follow-up formation, 151st Brigade, had begun landing on King at 1030 and were preparing to move inland.

The 6th Green Howards reached Crepon at around 1300, where CSM Hollis again distinguished himself rescuing two of his men after a probing attack failed. A Squadron of 4th/7th RDG pressed ahead with 7th Green Howard's reaching Creully in mid-afternoon. As the 7th Green Howard's advanced into the village from the west, they came under fire, but it was quickly established that their opponents were in fact Canadians of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, who had entered from the eastern end; Gold and Juno Beaches had made contact. However, the Germans were mustering for a major counter-attack and 5th East Yorks. and 6th Green Howards ran into this force at Villiers-le-Sec. The village was taken by the British infantry, and the 4th/7th RDG lost six tanks in a fight with German assault guns, knocking out four of their opponents near Fresnay-le-Crotoeur. Unfortunately, naval gunfire from HMS *Orion* was misdirected onto the British troops, causing some casualties. 69th Brigade ceased its advance around Brecy, while 151st Brigade, consisting of three battalions of the Durham Light Infantry, took up overnight positions to the west around Vienne-en-Bessin, despite the unfortunate loss of its Brigadier, captured in an ambush when his jeep ran into an isolated pocket of Germans.

Your Battalion, the 6th Green Howards, moved towards St-Gabriel-Brecy where it stayed for the evening. The following morning, the battalion moved out and passed through Rucqueville en-route to Ducy-Ste-Marguerite. You have remained there since June 7th, taking in reinforcements and actively patrolling the closed-in countryside that runs towards Cristot. On June 8th, the 8th Armoured Brigade, under Brigadier Cracroft, came ashore and, as planned, has been cooperating closely with various units from 50th Division as you try and find a way forward towards Villers-Bocage. At present, you are under direct command of Brigadier Cracroft. It has been decided that point 102 is critical to this area so you have been ordered to advance and hold this feature, and dominate all movement from the east to point 103. The tanks from 4/7th Dragoon Guards will lead the advance and hold point 102 for your infantry to follow and consolidate.

Mission

- To advance and hold point 102, securing the flank for advance on point 103 and St Pierre
- To drive the enemy further away from this area and relieve pressure on 151st Brigade

British Deployment, Notes & Special Rules

• Deployment and Reinforcement

Turn 1: 1700 Hrs Start of scenario, start line Le Haut de Audrieu.

All British troops deploy on table. Reserve Forces must deploy at least 12 inches back from the limit of deployment line. They may not cross the deployment line until assault companies are in combat and have taken at least one of the stated objectives in the victory conditions (Les Hauts Vents, Cristot or Point 102) **or** on turn 10 whichever is the earlier. They may however emplace and fire if desired and/or the Germans are stupid enough to give them a target. The British player moves first.

• Starting Status

- No British units deploy in IP, dug in or hull-down
- No British units count as hidden units at the start of the game.

• Discipline Rating and Reconnaissance

- All MEs are Veteran.
- Note that discipline rating is reduced by one factor during night time.
- Only FOOs, the Carrier Platoon and the troop units marked as "Recon" count as reconnaissance for spotting purposes.

• Infantry/Armour Co-operation and Manoeuvre

- The tank squadrons must roll on manoeuvre table and move first before the Infantry.
- Infantry may follow on foot but cannot act as tank riders.

• Off board Artillery

- Fire Support from **147th Field Regt (Essex Yeomanry)** originates from NE corner of the table.
- All 3 batteries of 147th Field Regt will fire a preliminary barrage ahead of your advance.
 - This should be designated prior to the start of the game and must be either a rolling barrage or a lifting barrage
 - The centre of the beaten zone must be placed in the line of sight of a FOO at angle up to 45° to the line of fire of the artillery (i.e. direction of movement in the arc between due east and due south)
 - The beaten zone comprises 6 templates, either 6 wide and 1 deep or 3 wide and 2 deep
 - There is an automatic danger-close 1 template deep
 - The barrage must last at least three turns but no more than four turns. The final turn may be smoke or mixed
- After the barrage has lifted, fire support is from 1st Battery only. Each FOO can call his own troop as organic FS or the whole battery as direct FS. Other units call-for-fire as direct fire support.
- The British have no pre-registered fire.

• Transport

- All transport must be deployed on table.
- Please note that the Orbat reflects the optional rule of increasing transport capacity by 1. This means that a Universal Carrier transports 2 infantry units. This intentionally reduces the number of Universal Carriers in the British Orbat
- Unarmoured transports do not count towards calculating initial ME size for casualty determination but loss of transports does count towards casualties when calculating modifiers.

• Flares and Smoke

- 2" Mortars have no limitations on the amount of smoke they may fire but all 2" mortar smoke missions count as dissipating smoke on the turn it is laid and disappear on the subsequent turn.
- 3" Mortars, Commanders and Direct Fire Support elements may fire flares once during the game.
- Any smoke capable units may only fire smoke once during the game.
- Off board artillery may not fire smoke or mixed missions

- **Night Time Rules**

- The battle around Cristot died off as night fell but had the battle hung in the balance then it is probable that the fighting would have continued into the night. This is allowed for by the 2 turns of Dusk and a further 2 turns of Night time Good Visibility at the start and end of the game.
- However these may be dispensed with by mutual agreement of the players.

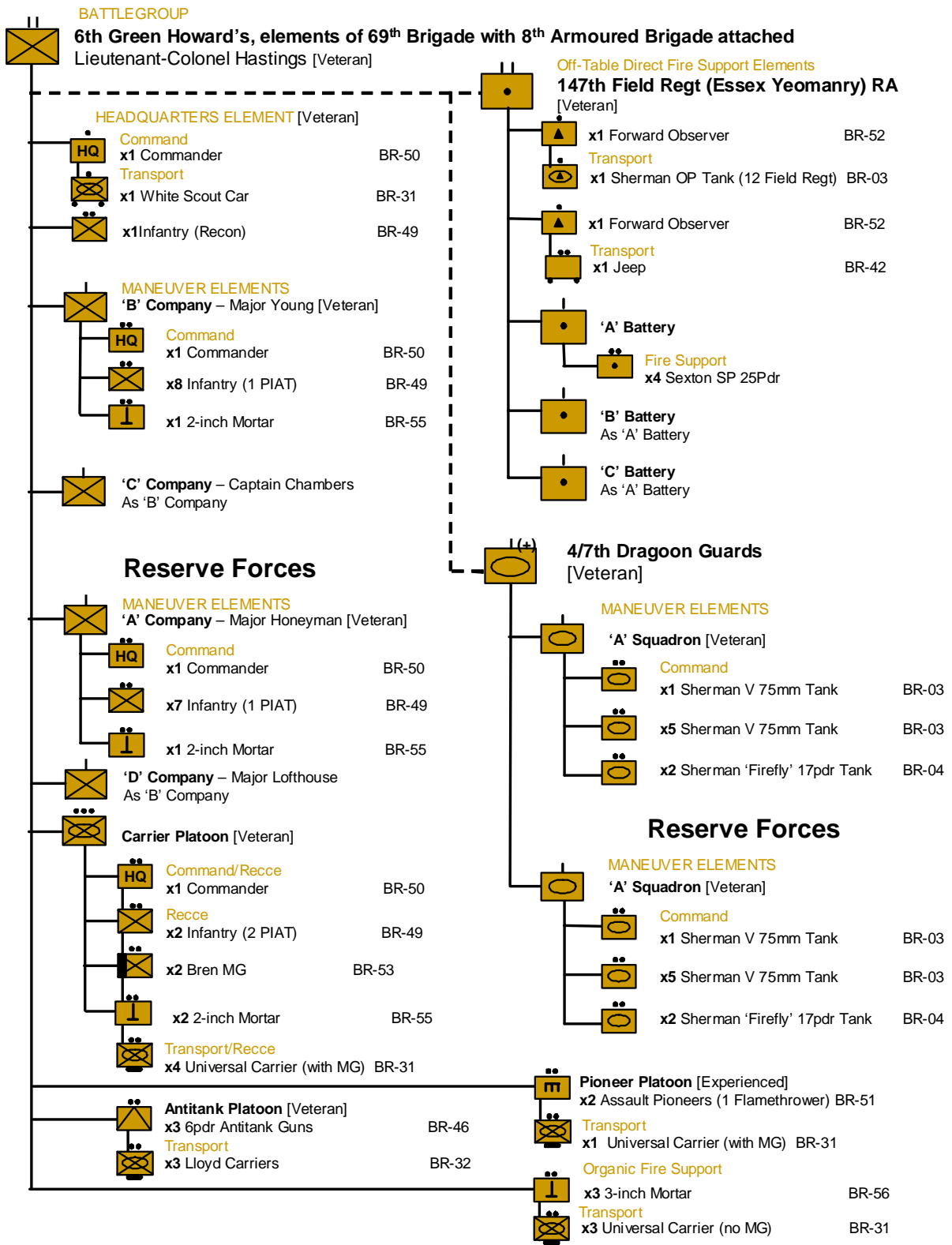
- **Sniper Activity**

- There is heavy sniper fire from the German positions forcing all tank commanders to advance closed down. All British tanks count as suppressed for spotting purposes.

- **Stan Hollis**

- Optional. During the game if the British player rolls a 1 on an infantry close combat die he may claim a re-roll for one and only one unit. The base is marked and may continue to re-roll close combat die rolls every time it rolls a 1 for close combat.

Allied Assault Forces – 6th Green Howard's



German Player Briefing

A scouting party of the Aufklarungsabteilung was sent out to determine enemy location and intentions. After 150metres they came under fire and the commander dropped to the ground, hit in the stomach. The Panther continued to advance in order to get out of the hollow. At a bend in the path, the Panther's gun became entangled with that of a Sherman tank. Neither tank could knock out the other. The English tank commander had left his tank and was bending over the badly wounded scouting party commander. He said, in German, "You're alright now,now; you'll be going home to hospital. For you, this bloody war is over"

Standarten-oberjunker Dienemann, Personal Account.

Situation

SS-Sturmbannfuhrer Bremer, Commander Aufklarungsabteilung 12, 16:00 June 11th 1944, Cristot

The men of the Aufklarungs Abteilung of a Panzer Division are "the elite of the elite". You have spent months in training with your Bataillon, bringing them to peak effectiveness, waiting for the opportunity to strike against the invading armies from Britain and America. Last week that opportunity finally arrived. However, the sheer scale of the assault on France has left the German forces struggling to contain the invaders. You had hoped that you would be leading the way as the 12SS Hitlerjüngund assaulted and pushed the invaders back into the sea. However, the coastal divisions have given way and allowed the enemy to forge several miles inland. The Division's Panzergrenadiers have fought bitter battles against the Canadians and British and stabilised the front line. However, a large gap remained between the main positions of Panzer Lehr and 12SS Hitlerjüngund.

The Divisional Commander was rapidly been running out of reserves and has been forced to commit your Bataillon to fill this gap. Since the afternoon of June 6th, the Bataillon has been succeeded in holding over 6 km of the line, stretching from the Panzer Lehr positions around St Pierre in the west, over the high ground around Cristot, down to Siebken's II Bataillon, Pz-Gren Regt 26 at Brouay in the east. For five days, you have been subjected to local attacks, major attacks and murderous artillery barrages. You have been forced out of all positions north of the railway and out of Audrieu. But, you continue to hold the villages of Les Hauts Vents and Cristot and most of the high ground. You are promised some support from Wünsche's Panthers if necessary and these are deployed in ambush positions to your rear. However this closed-in farmland, their effectiveness may be limited. Furthermore, with attacks raging across the front, Max Wünsche will want to keep them in reserve for as long as possible.

This morning, the enemy started another push south towards St Pierre. Worryingly, a strong tank force moved through your positions between Les Hauts Vents and Cristot. Your forward outposts report enemy troops moving through Audrieu. Another attempt to rupture your line appears to be imminent.

Mission

- To hold the villages of Les Hauts Vents and Cristot
- To deny the enemy possession of the dominating point 102 high ground feature

German Deployment, Notes & Special Rules

• Deployment and Reinforcement

Turn 1: 1700 Hrs Start of scenario.

All troops deploy on table east of the blue line. None are revealed until spotted or suspected. Panthers must deploy east of the orange line in ambush positions and may not move (although they may fire) until released for action (see below).

• Dug In Status

All German units may deploy in IP or dug in, or in hard cover if applicable. They may not be entrenched or in pill boxes. Vehicles may start in hull-down positions.

- **Discipline Rating and Recon**

- As given in ORBAT German MEs are Veteran except the Panthers which are elite.
- Note that discipline rating is reduced by one factor during night time.
- All German troops (except the Panthers) count as Recon for spotting purposes.

- **Hidden Unit Status**

- All German units count as hidden units at the start of the game.

- **Panthers**

- The Panthers nominally allocated to you form Max Wünsche's strategic reserve. They will only be released into combat if you are facing an overwhelming and determined attack that threatens the existence of the front line. They will only be released if (whichever is earliest):
 1. fired at using direct fire
 2. the turn after British forces have taken at least one of the 3 stated objectives in the victory conditions (Les Hauts Vents, Cristot or Point 102)
 3. on turn 12

- **Support Weapons**

- If desired, the German player may exchange any of his support weapons (i.e. PaK 40s, IeIG37s or armoured cars) for an Infantry (GE-44) stand (on a one for one basis) prior to the start of the game (up to half the infantry stands so replaced may have panzerfaust). They may not be changed back during the course of the game.

- **Off board Artillery**

- The German artillery was in high demand on Sunday June 11th (this battle was fought at the same time as Rots and Le Mesnil-Patry). To reflect this, the German off-board artillery has -1 modifier on call-for-fire on dice rolls (i.e. it is more difficult to call for fire.)
- Direct Fire Support originates from the South table edge.
- Organic Fire Support is given by your own support weapons and is on-table.
- The Sdkfz 250/9s from 2 Kompanie each represent 2 Sdkfz 250/9s and a Sdkfz 250/5. As a result of the additional radios carried in these vehicles, these units call for fire support with a +1 modifier (i.e. it is easier to call for fire.) but are limited to calling for organic fire support. The modifier does not apply if these vehicles are exchanged for infantry.
- The Sdkfz 250/5 transporting the Commander of 2 Kompanie and the Sdkfz 251/3 of the Battalion Commander each represent vehicles with extensive radio fits. These also call for fire support with a +1 modifier (i.e. it is easier to call for fire.) however, they may also call for Direct fire support from off-board assets. The modifier does not apply if these commanders are dismounted from their vehicles or if the vehicle is destroyed and command reassigned.
- The Germans have no pre-registered fire.

- **Transport**

- All transport must be deployed on table.
- Please note that the Orbat reflects the optional rule of increasing transport capacity by 1. This means that a Sdkfz 250 transports 2 infantry units. This intentionally reduced the number of Sdkfz 250s in the German Orbat
- Unarmoured transports do not count towards calculating initial ME size for casualty determination but loss of transports does count towards casualties when calculating modifiers.

- **Flares and Smoke**

- 81mm Mortars, Commanders and Fire Support elements may fire flares once during the game.
- Any smoke capable units may only fire smoke twice during the game.
- All off board artillery may fire two smoke or mixed missions.

- **Night Time Rules**

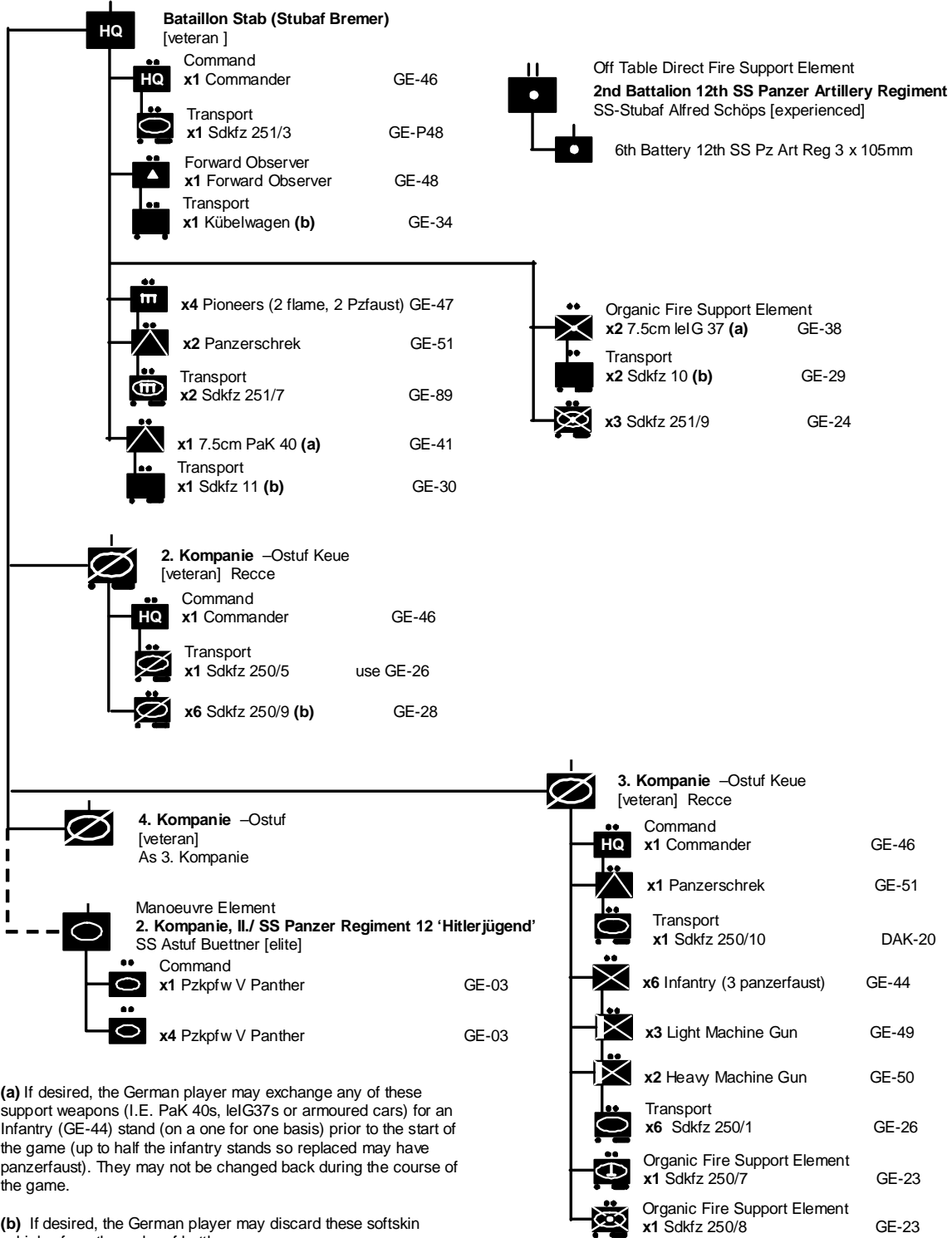
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- However these may be dispensed with by mutual agreement of the players.

German Forces – Elements, 12. SS Panzer Division ‘Hitlerjügend’



BATTLE GROUP

12th SS SS Panzer Aufklarungs Abteilung - SS-Sturmbannführer Gerd Bremer



(a) If desired, the German player may exchange any of these support weapons (I.E. PaK 40s, IeIG37s or armoured cars) for an Infantry (GE-44) stand (on a one for one basis) prior to the start of the game (up to half the infantry stands so replaced may have panzerfaust). They may not be changed back during the course of the game.

(b) If desired, the German player may discard these softskin vehicles from the order of battle.

Map & Terrain



Level 0



Level 1



Level 2



Level 3



Cleared Wood



Orchard



Tall Crops



Tall Hedge



Bocage



Paved Road



Unpaved Road



Built-up Sector



Terrain Notes

The battle area was close bocage-style countryside dotted with many farms, villages, crops and orchards.

- The playing area is 8' x 5' and north is the left long side of the map.
- All buildings are stone. Buildings marked "1" or "2" etc, are multi-level structures.
- At the start of the scenario all BUS west of the red line are considered under British control and all BUS east of the blue line under German Control. Thereafter, a BUS is controlled by the last player to have occupied it with a non-panicked unit. The BUS marked with "x" or "2" show those that the player must control at the end of their phase for that village to be considered "under player control".

Victory Conditions

	British	German
Total	Occupy Point 102 and clear all units from Les Hauts Vents and have possession of Cristot by end of game.	Have control of Cristot, Le Hauts Vents and Point 102 by end of game, and have more victory points than British.
Major	Occupy Point 102 and one of Cristot or Les Hauts Vents	Have control of Cristot, Le Hauts Vents and Point 102 by end of game.
Minor	Occupy Point 102	Anything else.

To occupy Point 102, there must be no German units (in good order) left in the orchard on both sides of the road that contains Point 102.

Optional Rules

The following optional rules are recommended:

- Grazing Fire
- Sneak Manoeuvre Action
- Replacement of FOO Casualties
- Multi-Level BUS
- Knocked Out Vehicle Table
- Fire
- Destroying BUS and Rubble
- Paul Bernadino's Engineering Manoeuvre Rules covering:
 - Engineering Actions
 - Laying Mines
 - Barbed Wire
 - Roadblocks
 - Increased Troop Carrying Capacity
 - Minefield Rules
 - Clearing Mines
 - Bocage Hedgerows

Selected Bibliography & Sources

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Blood and Honour: The History of the 12th SS Panzerdivision "Hitler Youth," 1943-45 - Craig Luther Grenadier – Kurt Meyer
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Steel Inferno – I SS Panzer Corps in Normandy – Michael Reynolds