

# “Conceived in Sin and Born in Iniquity”<sup>1</sup>

## The Battle of Le Mesnil Patry

Sunday June 11<sup>th</sup> 1944

*Scenario written by Paddy Green and Richard de Ferrars and play tested with Mark Middleton.*

### Canadian Player Briefing

#### Situation

**Brigadier Robert Wyman, 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade, 13:00 June 11<sup>th</sup> 1944, le Haut de Bretteville.**

Your Headquarters began planning an assault by 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade (2CAB) south out of Norrey-en-Bessin into Le Mesnil Patry on 10 June. You had previously been informed that the attack was to be made on 12 June but in the early hours of this morning Major General Rod Keller advanced the timings in response to a decision taken by General Miles Dempsey at a conference yesterday. You have been told that it is all about supporting an attack by your neighbouring formations in 30th Corps, however, it doesn't make the attack any easier with little or no time for reconnaissance or to plan artillery support. At 8:00 a.m. you told Lieut. Col. Ray Colwell of the 6th Armoured Regiment and Lieut. Col. Jock Spragge of the Queen's Own Rifles that they would be going in at 1:00 p.m. today. They weren't best pleased and you felt bad sweeping away their objections by insisting that they crossed the start line at 13:00.

At 10:30 a.m. you held your "orders group" to outline the plan your HQ has been feverishly working on. Basically the Regina Rifles salient in Norrey-en-Bessin forms the firm base for the attack. 6th Armoured Regiment (1st Hussars) and The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada are to attack through this village with a view to seizing and holding the high ground south of Cheux by means of a right flanking movement through Le Mesnil Patry, Cheux itself being by-passed. The remainder of the armoured brigade would be prepared to join the 6th Armoured Regiment on the objective. Neither Ray Colwell or Jock Spragge liked the plan much and were very concerned about the very short notice. Both wanted more time to conduct preparations but you can't give them any. You have had no time was for reconnaissance, worse still there will be no artillery preparation though you suspect that Le Mesnil Patry will be strongly held. Spragge also didn't like the idea of his men riding on tanks through flat wheat fields where they would provide perfect targets for the Germans. You agreed with all their concerns but reiterated that the order had come from Corps and probably Dempsey himself. After much sucking of teeth they left for their units to hold their own "orders groups." You knew both men well and are certain that their doubts would not be passed on to their Company Commanders. However, the need for immediate action was highlighted at 1130 when the O Group was interrupted by Col Don Mingay with a personal message from Rod Keller directing that "it was imperative that the attack be mounted at the earliest moment."

The attack is due to begin shortly and you have just seen off the trucks of The Queen's Own Rifles en route to Norrey where they will meet up with the 1<sup>st</sup> Hussars, who you can hear them chattering away on the wireless net trying to net their tanks in. The attack will be spear-headed by D Company under Major J.N. Gordon with A Company, under Major Elliot Dalton following up to secure the road junction half a mile beyond the town. You remember that Elliot Dalton was nicknamed "Dalton Mark II" to distinguish him from his older brother Charles who fell on D-Day<sup>2</sup>. B and C Company are in reserve. You look at the faces of the infantry – they are smiling and waving – like they think it will be a walk in the park! Don't they know what awaits them? Have they been properly briefed? Why won't that damn tanker shut up now he's netted in!

#### Mission

- Your forces are to advance via Norrey and then take and hold Le Mesnil Patry.
- You are to exit at least 1 company of Infantry and 1 Company of tanks off the table via the Cristot road or the Fontenay track in the South West corner of the table.

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<sup>1</sup> Lt Col W.T Barnard, The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada 1860-1960 (Ontario: Ontario Publishing Company Ltd 1960)

<sup>2</sup> In fact Charles Dalton was lying wounded in an English hospital and would be found by a wounded Elliot a few days later. Arriving at the same hospital as his brother Elliot was wheeled to the bed marked Maj. Dalton only to find it already occupied. On questioning the patient lying there with the sheet pulled over his head as to why he was in Maj. Dalton's bed, Charles replied: "Because I'm Major Dalton."

- If you hit stiff resistance you must continue the attack to assist the 30th Corps attack.

## Canadian Deployment, Notes & Special Rules

### • Deployment and Reinforcement

- Turn 1** Start of scenario. C Company Regina Rifles start deployed anywhere within 6" of a building in Norrey may be in IP or dug-in if in the open. These forces may not move more than 1 normal move from their start position during the game, unless forced to do so by involuntary movement or unless any unit in the ME is closed to within 4 inches by undisordered German Forces.
- B Squadron 1st Hussars enter the table by the Station road (major road to Bretteville) with D Company the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada accompanying as tank riders.
- Turn 2** C Squadron 1st Hussars and then A Company the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada in Lorries enter the table by the Station road (major road to Bretteville). If the Canadian player wishes to mount A Company as tank riders then he will have to dismount them from lorries and mount them on tanks after they have entered the table.
- Turn 3** HQ elements of 2CAB, 1st Hussars and the HQ elements, Engineer platoon and 3" mortars of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada enter the table by the Station road (major road to Bretteville) in their own organic transport.
- Turn 4** Direct Fire Support of 3 Batteries of 4 x 25 lbr Field Guns becomes available.
- Turn 5 or 6** Roll at the start of turn 5, no modifiers. 1-5 forces enter on turn 5, 6-0 forces enter on turn 6. A Squadron 1st Hussars and B Company the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada enter the table by the Station road (major road to Bretteville) using organic transport.
- Turn 7 or 8** Roll at the start of turn 7, no modifiers. 1-5 forces enter on turn 7, 6-0 forces enter on turn 8. The remainder of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada of Queen's Own Rifles of Canada (including carrier platoon) enters the table by the Station road (major road to Bretteville) using organic transport.

### • Discipline Rating

- All MEs are Experienced. C Company Regina Rifles is Veteran but does not qualify for the +1 for nil casualties at any point during the game to reflect that it was exhausted by being under near constant shelling for the preceding 3 days.

### • Off board Artillery

- Direct Fire Support originates from the northern short table edge.
- This is classed as Direct Fire Support but to reflect the lack of preparation time all calls for fire are made with a -1 modifier. It may only be called for by a FOO (Rivas) or by Brig Wyman.
- Off board artillery and on board mortars may fire smoke or mixed missions once during the game.
- FOO (Rivas) may call his own battery as Organic Fire Support but this will also suffer a -1 modifier.

### • Transport

- All company transport **must** be placed on table.
- Soft-skin Transport does not count towards overall ME size but if destroyed does count as casualties. Armoured transport counts towards overall ME size and casualties if destroyed.
- Lorries may not voluntarily close within 8 inches of a spotted German unit and may move more than 8 inches from the Station road or Norrey Streets unless forced to do so by involuntary movement.
- Once infantry have been dismounted, their transport may leave the table but only via Station Road.

### • Hidden Unit Status

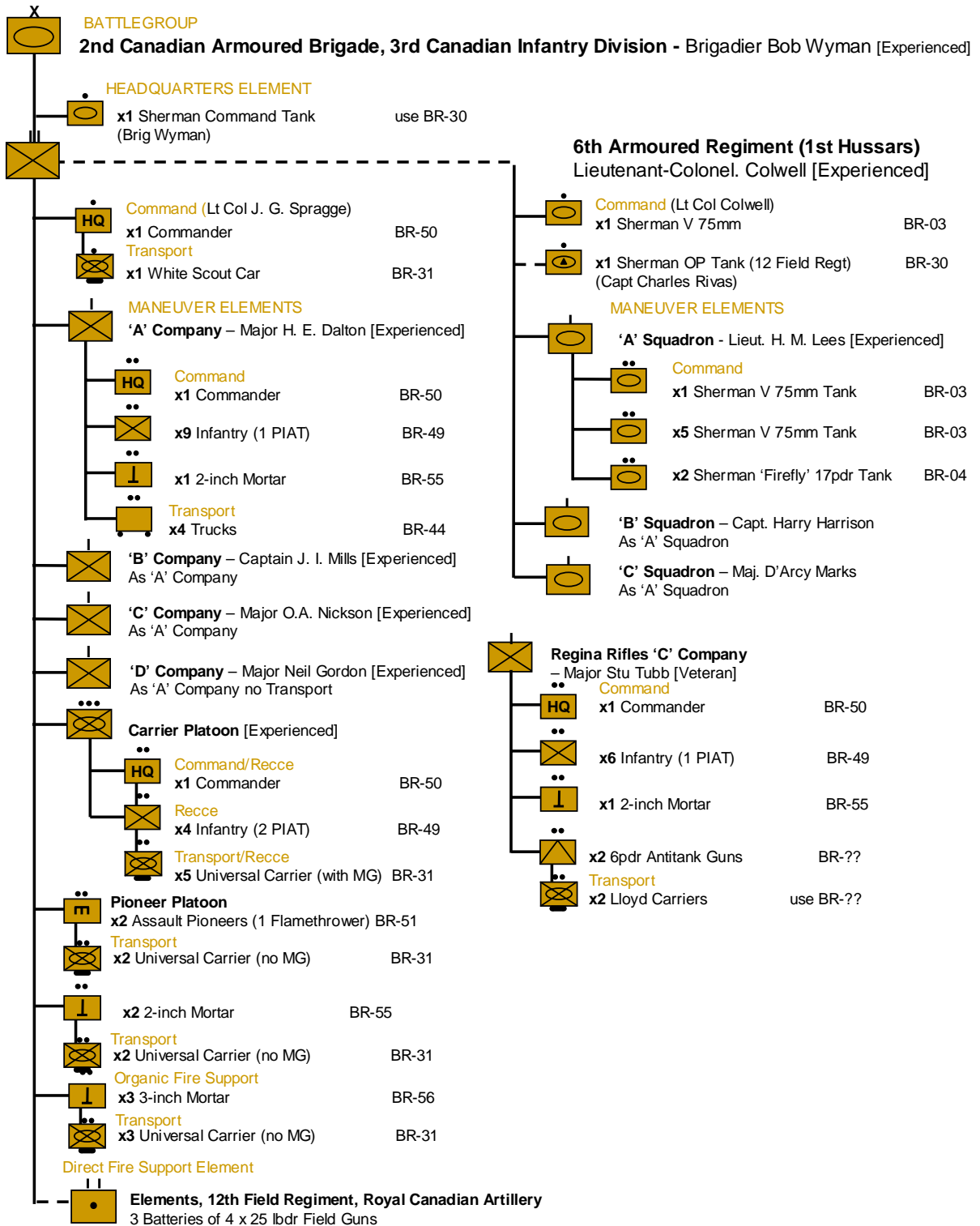
- C Company Regina Rifles count as hidden units before the game starts and companies deploy using hidden unit markers and in addition you may deploy 3 dummy markers. No other Canadian unit may claim hidden unit status.

### • Defensive Mining

- Outskirts of Norrey and the fields stretching towards Bretteville were heavily mined by the Regina Rifles during the preceding 3 days. Although this will act as a defensive barrier for the Allies it will also impede your movement in to, out of and around the village.

- If playing with an umpire the Canadian player should only be told about the existence of the defensive mining when one of his units moves adjacent to one of the areas or the turn his forces enter Norrey.
- All minefields are 1" wide, medium density mixed AT and AP minefields.
- **British "Ride in the Park" mentality and poor wireless discipline**
  - Because of the inadequate time to brief the troops for this assault there was a "ride in the park" mentality in existence. Most thought that they were advancing into unheld terrain to support an artillery shoot or, at worst, that any resistance would be light. This attitude, coupled with inadequate of training and lack of combat experience led to the advancing tank units indulging in unnecessary chatter while advancing, including an almost narrative account of their line of advance. All of this was intercepted by the 12<sup>th</sup> SS and to simulate this all British vehicles advancing in turns 1-4 are automatically suspected by all German Forces and must be placed on the table.
- **Narrow Streets in Norrey-en-Bessin**
  - The streets in Norrey were unusually narrow, especially around the church where the houses were very close to the road. Tanks had difficulty passing this point normally but when under fire or with rubble blocking the road, the defile became almost impassable. To represent this:
  - Road Speed and Paved Road bonus may not be used in Norrey Streets.
  - The move that a Tracked Large Vehicle passes point A must be done entirely at half speed. Wheeled, half-tracked, small or medium vehicles are unaffected.
  - If point A is partially blocked by 1 segment of rubble this forms an obstacle that needs to be breached by all vehicles. This is in addition to any half-speed movement.
  - If point A is fully blocked by rubble this forms an obstacle that is impassable to wheeled and half-tracked vehicles and requires a breach and bog-down check by tracked vehicles and a breach by infantry.

# Allied Forces – Queen's Own Rifles of Canada



# German Player Briefing

## Situation

**SS-Standartenführer Kurt "Panzer" Meyer, 13:00 June 11<sup>th</sup> 1944, L'Abbaye d'Ardennes, Caen.**

Over the last 2 days the battle lines have begun to harden. The Allies have failed to take Caen but equally, despite some heroic fighting, your young soldiers have failed to throw the Allies into the sea. The Hitler Youth Division has fought well during the last two days of combat. The attitude and spirit of your young grenadiers leaves you speechless. As you said the day before yesterday "We old soldiers are deeply affected by events, but not so the young grenadiers - for them the baptism of fire is what they imagined. They know that difficult days and weeks lay ahead but their morale was genuinely amazing."

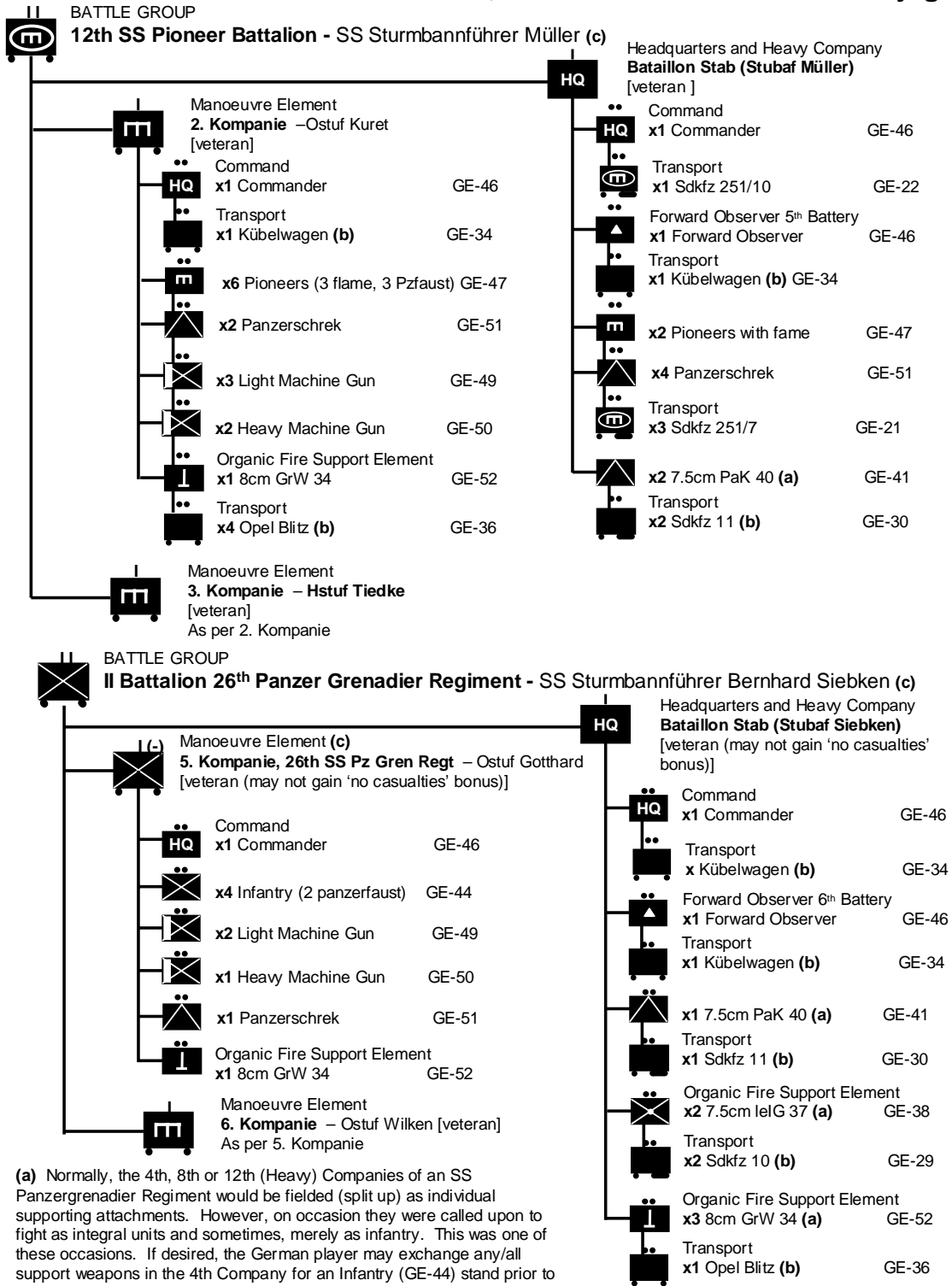
On 9<sup>th</sup> Jun the overall commander of Panzer troops in the West, General Geyr von Schweppenburg came to your headquarters at L'Abbaye d'Ardennes to discuss ways in which to break the relative stalemate. You were disillusioned by his negativity and lack of faith in the Fuehrer's leadership when he interrupted your situation report while you were emphasizing the crucial importance of immediate military action on a massive scale, to declare that "the war can only be won now by political means." However, maybe this was just a brief loss of confidence because afterwards he informed you that he was planning an attack involving Panzer Lehr lunging toward Bayeux, 21st Panzer moving out north of Caen and the 12th SS crossing the Caen-Bayeux road. Already, this attack was planned to begin in 3 days time but has already been delayed by a day because of Allied pressure across the sector and because of the difficulty of moving supplies under the constant threat of air attack. While you wait for the attack your boys are involved in prolonged vicious fighting, with the vastly outnumbered HJ Division fighting a bloody defensive battle lasting a whole month. Consequently, rather than being able to extricate your troops in preparation for the Counter Attack you have been forced to reinforce the line. Most recently the fighting centred on Mohnke's 26th Regiment to your left and caused high casualties. In order to rest some of Mohnke's units and prepare for the attack he recently shortened his line opening up a gap between your two regiments. Luckily you managed to convince Fritz Witt to plug the gap by deploying the 12<sup>th</sup> SS Pioneer Battalion. These elite troops had yet to be fully blooded would also be in a perfect position to spearhead the attack when it came.

Today, June 11, the 3rd Canadian Division, spearheaded by the 6th Canadian Armored Regiment and supported by the infantry of the Queen's Own Rifles, began clearing the Mue valley. After heavy fighting they have cleared a way into Bray and Rots and eliminated the salient. You expect the Canadians to use this as a spring board for other local offensives, maybe even a push towards the high ground around Cheux in an attempt to outflank Carpiquet. Recently you have seen a large amount of dust rising around Bretteville and have seen tanks and troop transports on the move south. You have radioed a warning to Hans Scapini of your 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and Müller of the pioneer battalion to expect a local attack and stressing that they must hold their ground at all costs in order to retain a springboard for tomorrow's offensive. But where will the Canadians attack? You have seen none of the usual reconnaissance, patrolling or preparatory barrages – surely the Canadians won't risk attacking out of their salient at Norrey blind – that would be suicide! You turn to your signaller and tell him to get Max Wünsche on the net to see if he can bring up any armour to bolster your defences and turn a Canadian defeat into a rout. Then you turn your binoculars on Norrey and start thinking of the disruption Canadian forces would cause funneling through that village and the possibilities of a counter-attack.....looks like Seibken and Müller should see some favourable action today!

## Mission

- Your forces are to hold Le Mesnil Patry.
- If you are attacked by overwhelming odds you must give ground grudgingly and cause maximum casualties to the Canadians.
- The last part of the mission is not a direct order but SS Sturmbannführer Müller can see that the Norrey salient is a thorn in your side. If he can stop a Canadian attack easily the retreating Canadian forces could cause disorder and chaos amongst the defending forces in Norrey. A swift counter-attack would have a good chance of success. Given Müller's delegated mission command he does not need orders to push home such a counter attack but will do so if the opportunity arises. You hope such a counter attack is both possible and successful and if so then certainly promotion for Müller or even a Knights Cross!

# Initial German Forces – Elements, 12. SS Panzer Division ‘Hitlerjüngend’

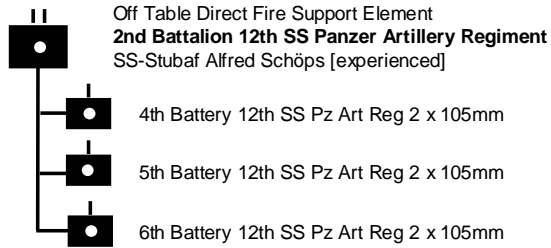


(a) Normally, the 4th, 8th or 12th (Heavy) Companies of an SS Panzergrenadier Regiment would be fielded (split up) as individual supporting attachments. However, on occasion they were called upon to fight as integral units and sometimes, merely as infantry. This was one of these occasions. If desired, the German player may exchange any/all support weapons in the 4th Company for an Infantry (GE-44) stand prior to the start of the game (up to half the infantry stands may have panzerfaust).

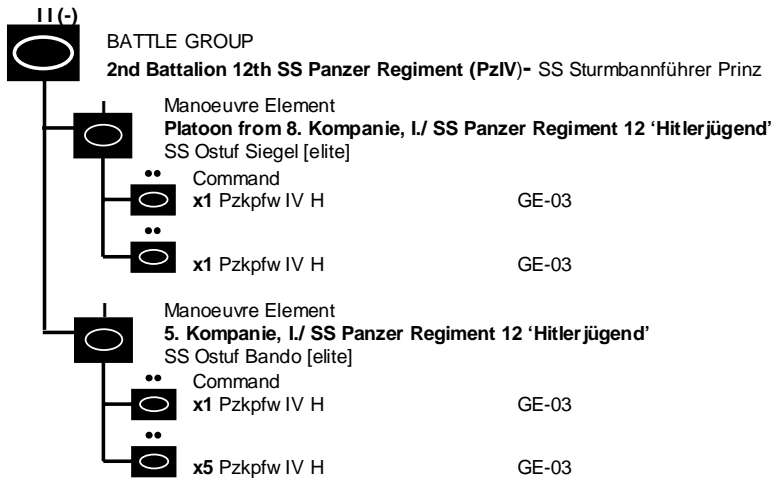
(b) The German player may discard these softskin vehicles. Any Kübelwagen may be replaced by a Schwimmwagn.

(c) These two battle groups have separate chains of command. MEs may not co-ordinate their actions. The German Player must fully resolve all MEs from one command before moving onto the next. However, armoured MEs may be selected for manoeuvre as required.

## Initial German Forces – Elements, 12. SS Panzer Division ‘Hitlerjügend’ (Continued)



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





## Deployment & Reinforcements

- Turn 1** Start of scenario. II/26th Pz Gren is deployed dug-in or in IP –within 12 inches of the railway line or northern table edge but outside 10 inches of Cardonville Farm or within 6 inches of the Chateau.
- 12th SS Pioneer Battalion deploys anywhere on table outside 18” of any building in Norrey may be in IP or dug-in if in the open west of Road AB.
- Turn 5** Platoon from 8th Company 12th SS Panzer enter the table by the Fontenay track (bottom right).
- Turn 7** 5th Company 12th SS Panzer enters the table by the Cristot road (bottom right).

### • **Discipline Rating**

- All MEs are Veteran except the tanks from 8th and 5<sup>th</sup> Companies 12th SS Panzer which are rated Elite. All companies from II/26th Pz Gren suffered high casualties on 8 Jun attacking Putot and subsequently while holding the line. They cannot claim the +1 for nil casualties at any point during the game.

### • **Off board Artillery**

- Direct Fire Support originates from the northern short table edge.
- German calls for fire affecting the 105mm artillery only suffer a -1 after the 8<sup>th</sup> successful call for fire to represent increasing ammunition shortages and the conservation policy applied.
- FOOs may call their own batteries as Organic Fire support. However, once broken down into battery fire German Artillery may not recombine into Battalion fire for the remainder of the game.
- Off board artillery and on board mortars may fire smoke or mixed missions twice during the game.
- There is a clear LOS from Mesnil-Patry church tower and the Chateau (both multi-level BUS) into the centre of Norrey. This should allow the Germans to direct fire into the centre of this village while the Allies are forming up for the attack.

### • **Transport**

- If desired, the German player may discard softskin vehicles from the order of battle.
- Soft-skin Transport does not count towards overall ME size but if destroyed does count as casualties. Armoured transport counts towards overall ME size and casualties if destroyed.

### • **Canadian Forces**

- The Canadian player is deployed in Norrey and are probably dug-in or in IP.
- Patrols report that there has been extensive mining of the area around Norrey.

### • **Hidden Unit Status**

- All German MEs count as hidden units before the game starts and companies deploy using hidden unit markers and in addition you may deploy 3 dummy markers per ME.

### • **German Spoofing of Allied Artillery**

- The Germans had recently captured an Allied Artillery code-book and understood their call for fire procedures. In this battle they used this intelligence to Spoof the Allied Artillery into firing onto their own troops. Therefore, if at any point in the game the Allied player fails a “Call for fire roll” the German player may declare that he is attempting to Spoof the Allied Artillery. To do this he re-positions the Allied players templates wherever he wishes. This must be spotted by a FOO who can do this even if he called for fire in the previous turn. The FOO calls for fire (as General Fire Support as a FOO using the British Table). If successful the indirect fire arrives and really rots up the Allied player’s day – but the German player cannot repeat the trick! If unsuccessful the trick may be repeated with a cumulative -1 modifier each time it is tried.

### • **British “Ride in the Park” mentality and poor wireless discipline**

- Because of the inadequate time to brief the troops for this assault there was a “ride in the park” mentality in existence. Most thought that they were advancing into unheld terrain to support an artillery shoot or, at worst, that any resistance would be light. This attitude, coupled with inadequate of training and lack of combat experience led to the advancing tank units indulging in unnecessary chatter while advancing, including an almost narrative account of their line of advance. All of this was intercepted by the 12<sup>th</sup> SS and to simulate this all British vehicles advancing in turns 1-4 are automatically suspected by all German Forces and must be placed on the table.

- **Narrow Streets in Norrey-en-Bessin**

- The streets in Norrey were unusually narrow, especially around the church where the houses were very close to the road. Tanks had difficulty passing this point normally but when under fire or with rubble blocking the road, the defile became almost impassable. To represent this:
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- If point A is fully blocked by rubble this forms an obstacle that is impassable to wheeled and half-tracked vehicles and requires a breach and bog-down check by tracked vehicles and a breach by infantry.

- **German Command Structure**

- Seibken and Müller's battle groups have separate chains of command. MEs may not co-ordinate their actions and are best represented by separate players. Regardless of this the German Player must fully resolve all MEs from one command before moving onto the next. However, armoured MEs may be selected for manoeuvre as required.

- **Haystacks**

- The fields around Mesnil-Patry were dotted with tall grain fields and haystacks that afforded excellent cover to defending infantry and guns.
- The German player may place a total of no more than 4 haystacks, large enough to totally enclose any one troop stand or gun stand or tank. For game purposes these haystacks are regarded as Thickets.
- Haystacks are not regarded as terrain features and can only be targeted if they are known to contain spotted or suspected units.

- **Defensive Mining**

- The German player may lay up to 5 defensive mine fields, mixed type normal density and up to 5 sections of wire.
- If desired 3 normal density minefields may be swapped for 4 sparse minefields or 2 high density ones.
- Outskirts of Norrey and the fields stretching towards Bretteville were heavily mined by the Regina Rifles during the preceding 3 days. Although this will act as a defensive barrier for the Allies it will also impede your movement in to, out of and around the village.
- If playing with an umpire the Canadian player should only be told about the existence of the defensive mining when one of his units moves adjacent to one of the areas or the turn his forces enter Norrey.
- All Canadian minefields are 1" wide, medium density mixed AT and AP minefields.

## Map & Terrain



The battle area was open countryside dotted with many farms, villages, crops and orchards.

- The playing area is 6ft x 4ft and north is the left long side of the map.
- All buildings are stone.
- At the start of the scenario, Norrey is considered under Canadian control and Mesnil-Patry 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 “2T” in each village show those that the player must control<sup>3</sup> at the end of their phase for that village to be considered “under player control”.
- Open ground may contain haystacks which are counted as thickets under the rules.

## Game Notes

The game starts at 1300 and lasts 18 turns or until mutually agreed by both players.

The Canadian player moves first.

The following optional rules are recommended:

- Grazing Fire
- Sneak Manoeuvre Action
- British Artillery – Replacement of FOO Casualties
- Multi-Level BUS

<sup>3</sup> Not the 2 “1C” level BUS representing Le Mesnil-Patry’s Chateaux.

- Knocked Out Vehicle Table
- Fire
- Destroying BUS and Rubble
- Lanes, Streets & Roads & Rubble
- Paul Bernadino's Engineering Manoeuvre Rules covering:
  - Engineering Actions
  - Minefield Rules
  - Laying Mines
  - Clearing Mines
  - Barbed Wire
  - Bocage Hedgerows
  - Roadblocks

### **Victory Conditions**

	<b><i>Canadian</i></b>	<b><i>German</i></b>
<b>Total</b>	Take and hold Le Mesnil-Patry and exit at least 1 company of tanks and 1 Company of Infantry via either the Fontenay track (bottom left) or the Cristot to Le Mesnil-Patry road regardless of casualties.	Hold Le Mesnil-Patry and take and hold Norrey-en-Bessin regardless of casualties.
<b>Major</b>	Take and hold Le Mesnil-Patry regardless of casualties.	Hold Le Mesnil-Patry without ever losing control of any BUS marked.
<b>Minor</b>	Take Control of at least 2 sectors marked "x" in Le Mesnil-Patry and retire to Norrey having lost no more than 50% casualties.	Hold Le Mesnil-Patry and cause at least 50% more casualties than taken.

### **Select Bibliography**

(Listed alphabetically by author)

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- 'Overlord' – Max Hastings
- 'Six Armies in Normandy' – John Keegan
- 'Panzers in Normandy, 1944' – Eric Lefèvre
- 'Grenadier' – Kurt Meyer
- 'Steel Inferno – I SS Panzer Corps in Normandy' – Michael Reynolds
- 'Normandy 1944 – German Military Organisation, Combat Power & Organisational Effectiveness' – Niklas Zetterling