

The Battle For Ingouf Farm

11th June 1944

By Andy Parkes

Overview

Having fought its way down "Purple Heart Lane" and across the final of four bridges the III Bn 502nd PIR found itself scattered along the roadside ditches waiting for the Artillery bombardment to soften up the defences of what was later to be found as Von de Heydte Regimental HQ. Cole was crawling in the ditch, looking for his forward artillery observer, Captain Julian Rosemund. When he found him, he barked, "Get some shellfire on the farmhouse and the hedges." Rosemund called back with the request and reported to Cole that the guns could not fire until an absent artillery commander assented.

Cole, in the middle of a desperate fight for survival, had no patience for such command niceties. "God damn it! We need artillery, and we can't wait for any general."

He got what he wanted. For nearly half an hour artillerymen firing from St.-Côme-du-Mont dropped shells among the hedgerows and farm buildings. Cole watched the friendly artillery crashing in, but he was dismayed to hear no slackening in the enemy fire. If anything, it was heavier. Cole slid back down into the ditch and wondered what to do next. He looked across the road and saw Major Stopka lying in a ditch on the other side. He got his executive officer's attention. "Hey!" he shouted, "we're going to order smoke from the artillery and then make a bayonet charge on the house."

"OK!" Stopka replied. Since Cole had not expressly told the major that he wanted him to pass the order on to the rest of the scattered force — having assumed that Stopka would do so — Stopka told only the men immediately adjacent to him.

A few minutes later, smoke shells began exploding in front of the farm buildings and in a wide circle from the edges of Carentan (to Cole's left) and the Madeleine River. At 6:15 a.m. the smoke shells stopped and the U.S. artillerymen shot several high-explosive rounds at presumed German positions beyond the farm buildings.

Cole had a whistle in one hand and a pistol in the other. He put the whistle to his lips, blew, got up out of the ditch and trotted forward. Only the 20 men immediately around him followed. As Cole's men headed into the smoke, Stopka realized that he had failed to adequately communicate his commander's orders. The major raced around rallying as many men as possible. "Come on! Let's go!"

Cole was considerably ahead of everyone else. When he got to the middle of the open field, he glanced back and saw almost no one following. For a second, he thought his men had failed him. He took a knee, peered in the direction of the ditches and sized up the situation. Now he saw several men trying to make it across the field. Bullets and shrapnel filled the air and zipped through the grass at the colonel's feet.

Most of the men of the 3rd Battalion had no idea what was going on. They either had not heard the order to charge or had received confused commands. When they saw what was unfolding, the majority of the soldiers understood that they were supposed to assault the German positions and, acting on their own or in small clusters, rose up and rushed into the storm of enemy fire.

The smoke was clearing now, and just ahead they could see the buildings. Cole tried to keep up with Stopka. He jumped a low hedge and splashed into a ditch with water up to his neck. In an ironic twist, contrary to the famous infantry slogan, he hollered to his radioman, "Don't follow me!"

American Deployment, Notes & Special Rules

Mission

To clear the Ingouf farm complex and its surrounding fields and hedgerows, and hold until reinforcements arrive.

Turn 1

Discipline Rating

All MEs are VET.

Off board Artillery

General Fire Support originates from the North i.e top of the map.

Transport

There is no transport available.

Hidden Unit Status

No American units count as hidden units at the start of the game.

Flares and Smoke

A smoke barrage will be laid on turn one consisting of six large templates and can be laid anywhere between the US start line and the farm complex. It cannot be stoked so on turn 2 will become a dissipating smoke screen.

Sniper Activity

Nil

Game Length

Will last for 8 turns when I Bn turned up A coy deployed in the cabbage patch along the main road and B coy supported the III Bn in the farm.

BATTLE GROUP



III Bn 502nd PIR (Lt-Col Robert Cole) (Vet)

HEADQUARTERS ELEMENT



Command
x1 Commander US-19



ME-25
x2 Parachute Infantry Company ME-25

ATTACHMENTS



General Fire Support
x2 81mm Mortar US-25



MANEUVER ELEMENT-25

G Company (Vet)

(Capt Robert Clements)



Command
x1 Commander US-19



x4 Parachute Infantry US-33



x1 Light Machine Gun US-22



MANEUVER ELEMENT-25

H Company (Vet)

(Capt Cecil Simmons)



Command
x1 Commander US-19



x5 Parachute Infantry US-33



x2 Light Machine Gun US-22

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- **Overview**

On June 9th, German regulars along with many Fallschirmjäger abandoned positions in Pont du Douve.

They had done well to hold the American advance for so long but under heavy pressure from strong probing assaults they were forced to move south. After destroying their heavy weapons they used explosives to destroy the most northerly of the 4 bridges over the Douve. They then headed south to join the new front line. It was now a waiting game to see when the Americans would try and take the Carentan causeway.

In an old wine cellar on the outskirts of Carentan was the Regimental dressing station. It was here that the Regimental Doctor, Dr. Roos and the Battalion doctors of the 2nd & 3rd Battalions operated around the clock. Along with two captured American doctors they treated more than 1000 wounded American, German, Georgian soldiers and French civilians in a 24 hour period.

The regiment held its new front line without artillery, tank or Luftwaffe support. Ammunition became scarce, in particular Mortar and machine-gun ammo. Artillery ammo was plentiful but they had no guns.

The thinly spread Fallschirmjäger defended their positions north of Carentan with what ammo they had left. Mines were hastily placed to try and slow the probing attacks by American forces who were poised to breakthrough to Carentan, their next objective.

In early hours of June 10th, US Paratroops reconnoitered the flooded marshland either side of the causeway to find weaknesses in the German defences. Many casualties were caused by MG and sniper fire from the isolated groups in the marshland, from Ingouf Farm and from Fallschirmjäger dug into the southern end of the causeway.

In the morning of June 10th, Ingouf farm and its surrounding buildings were subjected to a massive artillery barrage. This appeared to VDH to be the prelude for an assault but nothing happened. Only an American offer of surrender was forthcoming to which he replied "what would you do in my place".

A supply column from 84 Korps brought in French mortar ammo late on June 10th, but it was the wrong calibre. During the night of June 10th/11th, JU52's dropped Mortar and MPi ammunition. Even re-supply could not stop the inevitable.

In the morning of June 11th, US Paratroops who had successfully traversed the causeway under the cover of darkness waited for the order to attack FJR6 positions. After a massive artillery barrage, the men of 101st Division charge the positions around Ingouf Farm. The former HQ of FJR6 was soon in the hands of US 101st and after an unsuccessful counterattack, VDH withdrew his men to the south west. Other elements of FJR6 attacked from the north of Carentan but were also beaten back. The americans now set up an east-west defensive and by midday US troops had reached the outskirts of Carentan and had settled in the houses, gardens and hedges in front of the town.

German Deployment, Notes & Special Rules

Mission

To defend the Ingouf farm complex and deny the Americans from taking it until reinforcements' from the rest of the III Bn arrive.

Turn 1

All troops can be in improved positions anywhere along and behind the starting line.

Discipline Rating

All MEs are EXP.

Off board Artillery

Organic Fire Support originates from the South of the map.

Transport

There is no transport available.

Hidden Unit Status

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

Flares and Smoke

Nil

Sniper Activity





Nil

Game Length

Will last for 8 turns when I Bn turned up A coy deployed in the cabbage patch along the main road and B coy supported the III Bn in the farm.



MANEUVER ELEMENT-24
Fallschirmjaeger Company (Exp)

-  Command
x1 Commander GE-46
-  x6 Fallschirmjaeger GE-44
-  x3 Light Machine Gun GE-49
-  Organic Fire Support
x1 8cm Mortar GE-52



Terrain

Is low lying with marshy areas in light blue, all hedges are low hedges providing soft cover. The grey lines at rear of farm represent low walls and in front of the farm is covered in light undergrowth and trees.

The Orchard to the rear of map is a light orchard. The dark blue areas are what's left of a canal and the river Madeleine and is impassable.

Map size 3'x2'

Both BUS are stone.

The farm complex is the farm itself the and the surrounding hedges and walls to the rear.

The brown area is a cabbage field and is considered clear.

Historical

With Stopka at his side Cole charged the Germans firing his pistol wildly, they closed with the Germans in the farm and either killed them or caused them to flee. Dead of both sides lay everywhere the majority had been killed by grenade or bullet, very few had died by the bayonet. Lieutenant Edward Provost, a diminutive man regarded by Cole as an ineffective runt, had led one of the few actual bayonet charges. He was tingling with excitement, walking around saying, "They squeal when you stick 'em!" Private Bernard Sterno, wounded several times that day, watched Provost carry on: "He was kind of bloodthirsty." The battle for the farm was over on just under an hour, but the battle for the fields and orchards lasted all day apart from a brief respite to evacuate wounded. Lt-Col Patrick Cassidy's I Bn arrived and reinforced the III Bn, A company took up positions in the Cabbage patch while B Company reinforced Coles Right flank and stopped further counter attacks by the III Bn FJR6. But artillery changed everything. For much of the day, Captain Rosemund had been out of communication with the batteries near St.-Côme-du-Mont. When he finally got through to them, he learned that the artillerymen were low on ammunition. "Then for God's sake, get some!" he pleaded. "Get it! Please get it! We must have some!" Like a scene from a movie, trucks laden with ammunition arrived at the batteries just in time. Rosemund got all the artillery support he could handle. He called the fire down on the Germans, who were now less than 100 yards away. The supporting artillery was so close that everyone in the CP could tell it was arcing over the roof of the house, landing just beyond in the apple orchard. The fire killed some Americans, but it stopped the Germans cold.

Lt-Col Cole received the Medal of Honour while his Executive Officer Major John P Stopka received the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), Cole never received the medal as he died three months later in Holland from