

Briefing for Major Helmut Kerutt, I. Bataillon/ Fallschirmjäger-Regiment 'Hoffmann'

Situation – Aalst, South of Eindhoven, 1000hrs 18th September 1944

The situation is pure chaos at present. What you do know is; at 1400hrs yesterday, your regiment was subjected to the worst bombardment you have ever witnessed. Heavy bombers and massed artillery pounded the positions flanking the highway to Eindhoven, annihilating the regiment's anti-tank company and throwing your leading elements into utter disorder. Behind this vision of hell came a column of British *panzers*, which were fought at close quarters with nothing heavier than grenades and *panzerfausts*. However, the *jabos* and British artillery were swift to exact retribution, and it wasn't long before *Fallschirmjäger-Regiment 'Hoffmann'* was pushed back to Valkenswaard and Aalst.

The 'crust' of *Kampfgruppe 'Walther'* is rapidly crumbling; *Fallschirmjäger-Regiment 'Hoffmann'* (including your battalion and Röstler's armour) is falling back toward Eindhoven, while Von Der Heydte's *Fallschirmjäger-Regiment 6* and *Fallschirmjäger-Streif-Abteilung 6* are rapidly falling back to the west, and *SS-Grenadier-Regiment 'Heinke'* is retreating to the east. The British *panzers* have driven a massive wedge into the front and the only unit between them and the Rhine is your battered command. It is absolutely imperative that you hold the British long enough for defences to crystallise on the canal and river lines between Eindhoven and the Rhine.

With the assistance of Röstler's *SS jagdpanzers*, a blocking action was fought in the woods south of Valkenswaard towards evening, but you fell back again last night to Aalst, where you have prepared another blocking position. Enemy armoured cars and patrols have been pressing you all night, and the British are guaranteed to launch another *panzer* assault in the morning. Even more disturbing however, are reports of British and American *fallschirmjäger* dropping to your rear. At present, these are just rumours, and in any case, you have more pressing problems!

Mission

You are to establish a blocking position at Aalst and are to inflict the maximum delay and damage possible to the attacking forces.

Execution

Your battalion consists of three understrength companies, though you have managed to scrape up some garrison anti-tank guns and flak in the area of Aalst. However, there are no vehicles available to tow the guns, so a flexible anti-tank defence is likely to be impossible. You will have to rely therefore, upon good, interlocking fields of fire and maximum concealment, as well as well-sited ambushes with *panzerfausts*. At least Röstler's surviving *jagdpanzers* are mobile – he has redeployed to the east of the highway during the night, and will engage the right flank of the British column once it emerges from the woods. The poor, soft nature of the ground will not allow Röstler to do much in the way of manoeuvre, however.

Additionally, you have managed to rally III. Bataillon of the regiment. You have no idea where Oberst Hoffmann and the II Battalion are, but you have managed to persuade III. Bataillon to stay for the time being (though they are not to be relied upon). Artillery support will be available in the form of a battery of Wespe SPs from *10. SS Panzer Division 'Fruntsberg'*. They were hit quite heavily yesterday, but the battery reports that it is two-thirds operational, and their forward observer has already pre-registered a defensive fire target [to be indicated secretly by the German player prior to the start of the game].

Enemy forces are expected to conform to the pattern set yesterday: a *panzer kampfguppe* in regimental strength, in a single column with *panzers* to the fore, loaded with infantry and supported by large quantities of artillery and air support. The poor nature of the ground ought to keep them fairly well confined to the highway, though their reconnaissance forces, having broken through the initial crust, are already working around behind your positions.

Victory Conditions

Prevent the British exiting units from the northern edge of the table at Point 'B'.

Aalst-German Map



Setup and Terrain

Starting Positions

Starting Positions Reinforcement Schedule

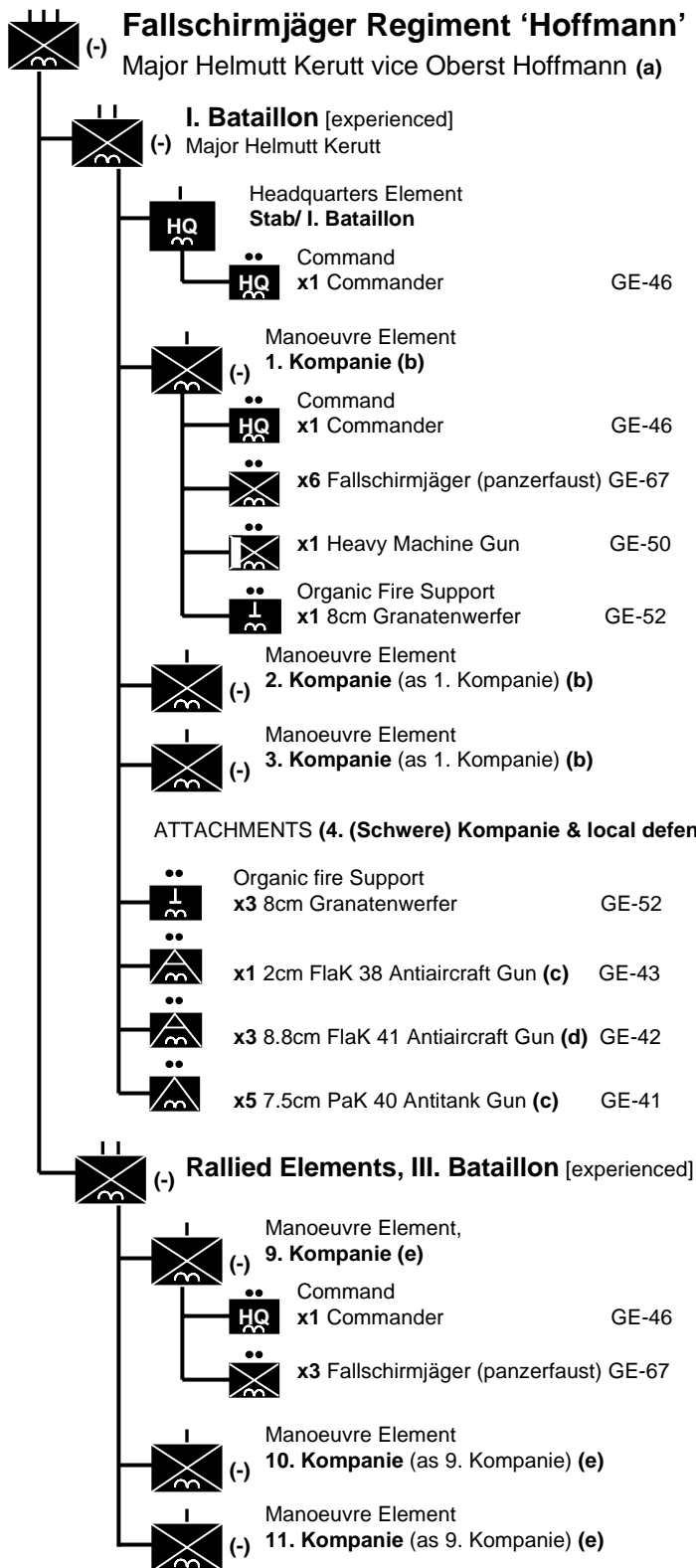
- Fallschirmjäger Regiment 'Hoffmann' is deployed anywhere north of Line 'X' in Improved Positions.
- Two PaK 40s must be deployed, in Dug-In Positions, within six inches of the highway bridge (Area 'Y'). The remaining PaK 40s and the 2cm FlaK may be deployed anywhere north of Line 'X' – in Improved Positions..
- The 88s must be deployed, in the open, on the highway north of the Tongelreep stream (Area 'Z')..
- SS Röstler may be deployed anywhere north of Line 'X', in Hull-Down Positions..
- 2. Kompanie, SS Panzer Artillerie Regiment 10, may be deployed anywhere north of Line 'X' in Hull-Down Positions, or alternatively off-table, with only the forward observer being deployed on table..
- All units may be deployed initially as Hidden Unit Markers. Up to 30 Dummy Unit Markers may also be placed.

Terrain and Scenario Notes

- Squares on the map are 480 yards wide (12 inches), giving a total table size of 4x6 feet.
- For the sake of clarity, I have not marked all hedges, ditches and field boundaries on the map.
- However, all roads should be bordered by low or high hedges or brick walls closer to the settlements. Similarly, the open spaces should be crisscrossed by numerous hedges – particularly in the area between the main villages and the Tongelreep stream, where fields and allotments were very densely packed. This was very close terrain!
- Roads are all paved
- Dark grey roads are classified as Streets – dense area concealment and soft cover.
- The Tongelreep Stream and the marshes in the southwest corner of the map are impassable.
- A large railway embankment defines the western table edge.
- Due to the plethora of small ditches in this low-lying area, troop stands (but not guns or vehicles) receive an additional +1 Improve Position modifier.
- All woodland is classed as Dense With Undergrowth and therefore necessitates a bog-down check for all vehicular movement.
- All open terrain is classified as Boggy and thus necessitates a bog-down check for all vehicular movement.
- The tower of Aalst Church (marked with a cross in the centre of Aalst) is classed as being two levels high and is therefore the only high point in the area.
- British move first. The game starts at 1000hrs (Turn 1) and finishes at the end of the British 1250hrs turn (Turn 18).

German Forces At Aalst: Elements, Kampfgruppe 'Walther'

Oberst Erich von Walther



Notes

(a) Major Kerutt actually commands I. Bataillon, but in the absence of Oberst Hoffmann, is presently the *de facto* commander of the regiment. Kerutt has managed to hold his own battalion together and has managed to rally elements of the shattered III. Bataillon and elements of 10. SS Panzer Division 'Frundsberg'. II. Bataillon however, has been pushed away to the west by the British advance.

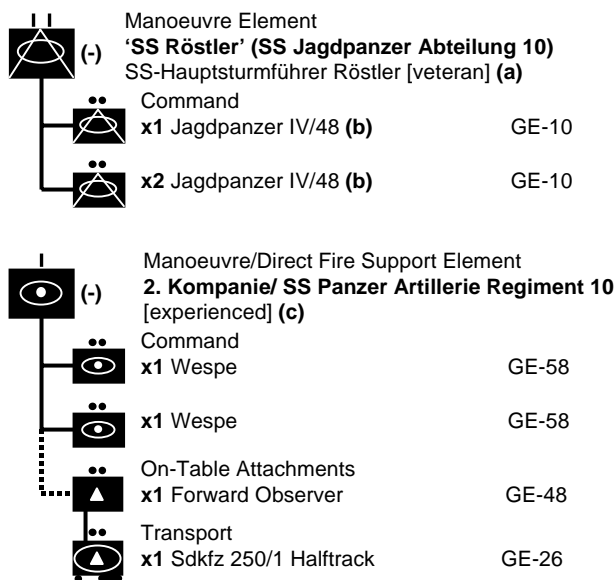
(b) 1., 2. & 3. Kompanien have already suffered in the previous 24 hours of fighting and may not claim the +1 'no losses' manoeuvre modifier.

(c) These guns may be attached to any manoeuvre or headquarters element in I. Bataillon, however they do not have towing vehicles. Two PaK 40s must be positioned, dug-in, within four inches of the highway bridge over the Tongelreep stream (Area 'Y'). The remaining PaK 40s and the FlaK 38 may be positioned anywhere within the German deployment area and may be in Improved Positions.

(d) The 88s may be deployed anywhere on the main highway, north of the Tongelreep (Area 'Z'). They have no towing vehicles and are not therefore capable of finding good positions. They may not therefore be in Improved Positions, nor may their positions be improved during the game.

(e) 9., 10. & 11. Kompanien have suffered enormous casualties in the last 24hrs. They therefore start the game with an automatic -1 manoeuvre modifier.

Elements, 10. SS Panzer Division 'Frundsberg'



Notes

(a) SS Röstler has already suffered casualties and may not therefore claim the +1 'no losses' manoeuvre modifier.

(b) Some sources describe these vehicles as StuG IVs. See the prototype card GE-P36 supplied.

(c) This unit may be used as off- or on-table Direct Fire Support. It has not so far suffered any casualties in this battle.