

# Beach

by

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## Strategy in *BREAKOUT: NORMANDY*

### Part 2: Gold, Juno and Sword

By Alan Applebaum

*Here we continue Alan's in-depth strategic analysis (Part 1 is found in volume 31, number 6 of The GENERAL).—SKT*

#### **GOLD BEACH—STRATEGY**

According to the Allied plan set forth in Part 1 of this article, the Gold Beach group must take only Bayeux to achieve its "par." Any further progress into Foret, Tilly, Villars or Balleroi should be regarded as a bonus. The German should be content with making the Allies spend two or three impulses taking Bayeux. The German is in good shape, if Balleroi, Tilly and Foret are all adequately defended at the time of the loss of Bayeux. The German should prefer a defense in depth to an all-out defense.

The British should avoid the trap of heading down the Verson-Evercy corridor. Aunay-sur-Odon, a Bocage area, is easily defended, as is Bourguébus (an unbridged river defended by the 12th SS). Any spent British units in Verson and Evercy are vulnerable to counterattack. The Allies cannot afford to enter areas with terrain effects modifiers (TEM) of "+1" without overwhelming force, because a small force risks unit losses to a German counterattack. Any impulses available are better spent elsewhere, as the Verson-Evercy corridor may yield no victory points (VPs), while it is guaranteed to cost a lot of supply and spread the British thin, at least until reinforcements arrive on June 9. An Allied plan to surround Caen is doomed to fail against any competent German defense.

#### **GOLD BEACH—BRITISH TACTICS**

The initial amphibious assault here, as described by Maly, seems to be best and almost universal—attack with the three infantry regiments of the 50th Division, even against interdiction. This "+2" attack has a healthy 44 per cent chance to clear the beach against the spent Arromanches CA, and has only a 24 per cent chance of losing the battle. Even an outright loss is no disaster, because only three units are disrupted and 8 Armor still gets to attack at 7-6. As indicated previously, the Advantage should never be used on this beach. With both 8 Armor and 56 Infantry available to exploit, the capture of Bretteville and Villars or Tilly is a real possibility. The beachhead is quite safe from counterattack, even if all amphibious assaults fail, because the Ger-

man 21 Pz/192, the only serious threat, is two areas away.

If the beach falls on the first assault, the German will presumably move 21 Pz Flak and PAK into Bretteville on Impulse 0. If 8 Armor doesn't move on Allied Impulse 0, the German may blow the Gold-Bretteville and Juno-Bretteville bridges, putting a big crimp in the British plans (but a follow-up assault on Omaha against a fresh 352/xx is more urgent for the Allies). A conservative course of attempting to seize the bridge before entering Bretteville seems best. If 8 Armor overruns Bretteville without seizing the bridge, it has two MF left to advance into Villars or Tilly, but this is a pipe-dream at 5.4 per cent. Even if it works, the German may eventually sprint into Bretteville, cutting off supply to 8 Armor. Stick to clearing Bretteville. The German doesn't have the units to garrison both Villars and Tilly against 56 Infantry. The German's only hope in this position is to blow both bridges out of Bretteville (25 per cent). Therefore, the Allies should use the 8 Armor in a 7-5 attack after a successful seizure of the Gold-Bretteville bridge. The Allies need only contest Bretteville on June 6. If this fails, the German line is too short and easily defended, while both Gold and Juno remain exposed.

Maly is too pessimistic about the difficulty of taking Bayeux once the entire Gold assault force is ashore and fresh. The solution is to slide the Canadians over from Juno, hit Bayeux with air bombardment (and, if that fails, Corps Artillery on June 8) and attack with an attack value (AV) of at least 15 (Armor, two regiments of the 50th, two Canadian regiments, two divisional artillery, two divisional integrity bonuses and air support). If Bayeux is defended with only two spent units, the defense has a defense value (DV) of 7, even with the Gold-Bayeux bridge German-controlled. The attack at 15-7 (+8) has a 76 per cent chance to take the area and a 66 per cent chance for an overrun. British corps artillery may also be available, and an additional British infantry unit or two may join the attack across the river or through Port-en-Bessin.

The British have one other job which cannot be ignored. They must try to force Panzer Lehr to move on June 7. This means that clearing Bretteville may have a higher priority than assaulting Bayeux. If Lehr is

permitted to move to Zone C, refit free, and regroup to Aunay sur Odon, the Germans have a much easier time stabilizing the center and improving their supply position significantly.

#### **JUNO BEACH—STRATEGY**

Juno is more of a liability than an asset to the British, even when cleared. Its forces can mount only a 12-AV attack into Caen, even in clear weather. It is risky to make a full-division assault from Juno into Bretteville or assist with the capture of Bayeux until Caen is contested, and by then the Germans will probably have garrisoned Tilly and Villars well enough to prevent their capture without a concerted effort by the British on June 8, and probably not even then. It may seem tempting to advance through Bretteville into Verson and Evercy, but as mentioned above, this too is a dangerous trap for the British. In sum, the Canadians are best used to assist the British in taking Bayeux, as described above, or as a backup force to assault Caen, as described in the discussion of Sword beach below.

#### **JUNO BEACH—CANADIAN TACTICS**

On June 6, Juno is almost exactly analogous to Gold. The initial wave is a "+3" assault (assuming no successful interdiction) with the three Canadian infantry units. If the assault wins or stalemates but does not clear the beach, 2 CA can assault accompanied by 3 CA/xx, because it is not a Mandatory Assault. Nevertheless, 3 CA/xx is not disrupted if 2 CA loses the assault, because it is not participating in the assault.

The British should not spend an entire impulse capturing Douvres with 2 CA. This unit should be used in Bretteville, unless impossible due to blown bridges. Douvres is best taken from Sword in conjunction with an assault on Caen, as set forth below.

If necessary, the Canadians can be used to assault Caen on June 7, but this should be attempted only if assault from Sword fails or is impossible.

If the German garrisons Tilly and Villars, I suggest that you only try to take them if something has gone wrong with the basic plan and you need them. Perhaps Utah is shut down, or the 12th SS got a weather change and cleared Merville. With only 1



VP to recover under the plan, a prolonged assault on Tilly or Villars may be the answer—but not as late as June 11, when German reinforcements will make these areas invulnerable. If these two areas are equally well defended, you should prefer Villars to stretch the German front.

### GERMAN TACTICS— GOLD AND JUNO

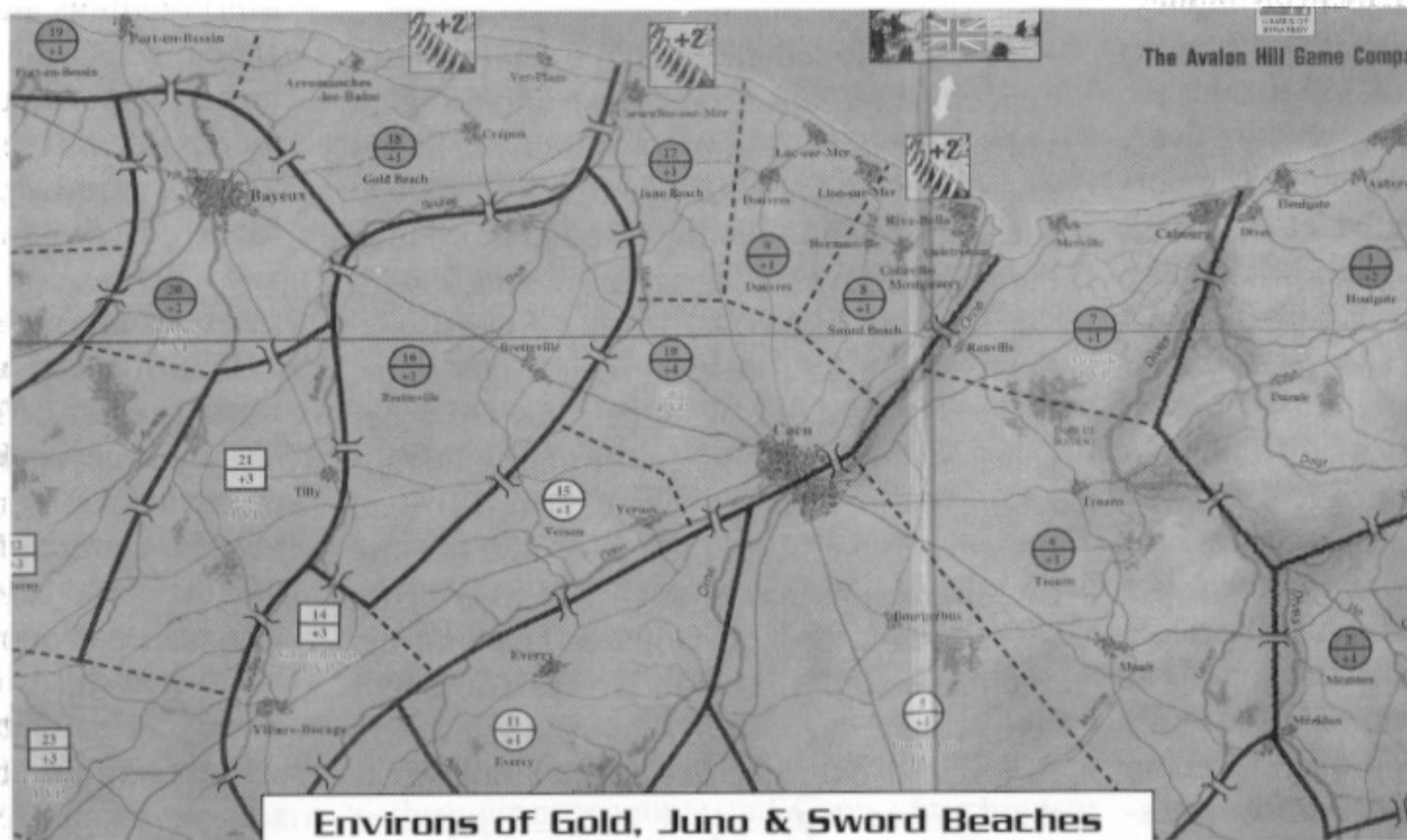
In most cases, you need only a simple plan for June 6. If either beach falls on Impulse 0, 21 Pz FLAK and PAK have to go to Bretteville, as Greenwood notes. If neither beach is cleared, the German may decide to gamble on Impulse 0 by attempting to blow both bridges from the beaches into Bretteville, a 26-to-10 chance. If it works, 21 Pz/192 is freed to attack a beach. Bretteville may not fall for a long time. On the other hand, if one bridge remains standing and a British armor unit gets an overrun on Gold or Juno on Impulse 0, Bretteville falls and the two remaining fresh British point units may get to waltz into Tilly, Villars or both. Consistent with my aggressive German/conservative Allies theory, I think the bridge-blowing gamble is worth it, particularly if the Germans have the Advantage to use to re-roll the demolition attempt which failed, or both the Gold and Juno amphibious assaults failed so that the Impulse 0 British attack on either beach is only at 7-6.

If Bretteville is contested, blow all the bridges leading out of it. The best time to blow bridges is when the Allies contest, rather than control, an adjacent area. Your odds are high and the Allies cannot repair it on the same impulse in which they clear it (unless they take a Double Impulse). They can't overrun out of the contested area. With the bridges blown from a contested Bretteville to Tilly and Villars, you have a little breathing space and don't have to move Panzer Lehr on the first impulse of June 7.

The idea in Bayeux is delay, not victory. This means a garrison of exactly two units, including 1 FLAK. The German could add more units to the defense at the risk of losing three or more units in an impulse and the total collapse of the central sector. This would depend on whether Panzer Lehr arrived on the scene in good order and in time. As Bayeux is five areas away from Zone C, Panzer Lehr will have a hard time assisting without a weather change. An

overrun into empty areas is devastating, but the loss of additional units and multiple Sunset DRMs may be worse. If the Allies are having average luck, the only realistic German defense (absent a weather change) is blowing the bridges into Bayeux and falling back to the Tilly-Balleroi-Foret line.

Start Panzer Lehr in Zone C—don't think about it, just do it. In an ideal world, some or all of Panzer Lehr can be moved to Zone D on June 7, refitted free, and regrouped into Aunay sur Odon that night.



Yet, more often than not, Bretteville will fall on June 6 or early on June 7, and most or all of Lehr will have to march the "Trail of Tears" in clear weather from Zone C through Thury-Harcourt, Aunay, Villars and Tilly. There is nothing Lehr can do from Zone B that can't be done better by "Big Black"—the 12th SS and its friends. I would not follow Greenwood's suggestion to move Lehr Flak ahead of the rest of the group to provide a screen against air interdiction on the following turn. This uses an impulse, and may require a supply depot all to itself to refit, just to reduce the air interdictions in one area by 50 per cent.

Greenwood's suggestion of moving disrupted units off board for a free refit is somewhat dubious, as well. If the unit is disrupted on June 7, it regroups to a zone on the night of June 7, becomes spent on the night of June 8, becomes fresh on the night of June 9, and can move back to the action on June 10 (subject to air interdiction). Having moved, it is spent and won't be fresh in its new position until dawn on June 11. Assuming the Germans can't afford to refit the unit with a depot, they can surely find a better use for a disrupted unit than putting it totally out of action for three full days. The "Free Refit" substantially benefits only those units which move from zone to zone or fail an assault out of a zone.

The German faces an excruciating decision when, on the first impulse of June 7, Bretteville has fallen to the British, either Tilly or Villars are vacant, the Omaha-Trévières bridge is not blown, and the Germans own the Montebourg-Ste. Mère-Eglise bridge. If the German moves Panzer Lehr, the Americans may clear Ste. Mère or overrun Omaha and Trévières while scoring a "hat trick." On the other hand, not covering Tilly and Villars is totally suicidal, because the British will pour through the gap. To avoid this dilemma, if Bretteville is contested or lost on June 6, the German should move 30 Infantry and 752 Infantry from Coutances as far toward Caumont as possible on June 6, from which they can regroup into Tilly and Villars. If they get disrupted along the way, they may provide just enough defense to prevent the British from taking Tilly or Villars on the first impulse of June 7.

### SWORD BEACH—STRATEGY

The Sword assault force provides the British with their best offensive group—14 AV after the Artillery lands. The Sword group is charged with the tasks of taking Merville and contesting Caen. Although Merville is an easy prize on June 7 (assuming the Allies won the amphibious assault on Sword), priority should be given to a maximum assault on Caen. Until Caen is contested, both Sword and Juno remain vulnerable to German counterattacks. British advances past Merville should be viewed with suspicion, despite the possibility of achieving a breakout. The 12th SS and the Zone A reinforcements on June 8 and 9, along with the Le Havre Battery, are more than adequate to defend against any advance beyond Troarn, while threatening to counterattack.

### SWORD—BRITISH TACTICS

Sword, like Omaha, is not favored to fall on June 6. The stakes are high, because Caen may become impossible to contest, if the Germans have an extra day to prepare. Also, the British paratroopers in Merville start to become vulnerable if they can't be reinforced from Sword. The longer Caen is uncontested, the greater the danger of a weather change leading to a devastating German counterattack on Sword or Juno, with bombardment support by 21 Pz/xx out of Caen.



Assuming that both German units on Sword are spent by bombardment, but the Merville artillery remains fresh following the 3-3 attack by one of the British paratroopers, the Allies should send all of their available units into the amphibious assault. If all six units survive coastal interdiction, the 13-8 assault yields a solid 44 per cent chance to clear the beach of two spent units (as opposed to a 34 per cent chance with the Ranger left behind). If a couple of units are spent or disrupted by German coastal fire and the assault becomes closer to even money, the extra unit is very significant. An exploiting Ranger lacks the required MF to advance into Merville against a fresh unit anyway, and capturing Douvres is of minimal importance at this stage. Leaving an infantry unit behind is even worse, because it reduces the initial assault by two AV. A second wave beach assault is unattractive here, because the spent Oustreham CA defends at 6 DV even without the fortification bonus.

If the Merville CA is spent or disrupted by the British paratroops during the night of June 5/6, it's a closer question whether to assault the beach with all units, because a Ranger can now exploit into Merville if Sword is cleared. Nonetheless, I still favor the conservative approach. Taking Merville on June 6 is good but not necessary. You can't really exploit beyond Merville (usually a bad idea anyway) until you contest Caen, because Sword will be too vulnerable, and the Sword force is the best British force to contest Caen. Merville can wait as long as German artillery attacks are not weakening the paratroops to the point where they may be driven out or destroyed. The German cannot afford to reinforce Merville significantly because of the low TEM.

As long as you win the assault, all Sword units will be fresh on June 7, because the Germans have no artillery in range. Make sure 3/xx gets ashore on June 6. Very early on June 7, bombard Caen with ETF. If one of the German 5-6-5 units remains fresh (as probable), Caen defends with at least 10 DV. You don't have the time or resources at this point to capture Caen. Overrun the beach and exploit into Caen. Your attack has only 12 AF, because the Rangers lack the MF to join the overrun attack. You should leave one Ranger fresh on Sword for defensive purposes. The other Ranger can enter Douvres or, if the Merville CA is spent, attack there. As the attack into Caen is only "+2" or "+1," you may lose—be prepared to use the Advantage. If you assault Caen before Omaha, as I recommend, you can regain the Advantage via the "hat trick." If the British lose the assault on Caen and lose the re-roll, you are in a fair amount of trouble, but could

still be saved by an assault from Juno. If you successfully contest Caen, you are right on schedule.

After the ETF bombardment, I disagree with Maly's suggestion to bombard a fresh 5-6-5 unit in Caen with the air unit or 3 CA/xx prior to the assault. The air unit will probably fail in Caen and is best used against Bayeux, while 3 CA/xx will fail 44 per cent of the time and uses an impulse. If the Germans already had the Advantage, however, a "conservative" extra round of prep fire is reasonable.

If ETF flipped all units in Caen (a 34 per cent chance against three fresh and no spent units—the most common defense), life is good. The defense of Caen is reduced to seven and cannot be improved to more than eight. Moreover, you can now attack with the Rangers after overrunning Sword, and the German can only absorb eight steps. Your threatened 14-7 attack has a 34 per cent chance to take Caen, virtually guaranteeing victory in the game. The German must reinforce. As a little added bonus, the 27 Armor now has enough MF to overrun Sword, pass through Douvres and join the overrun assault on Caen. If you like, a unit can peel off to assault Merville following the Sword overrun, saving an impulse. If the German leaves you a 20-25 per cent chance to take Caen with a double impulse, you should try it, but realize that failure means that Bayeux and Merville (both vital) will be safe for at least one more day and possibly two.

Once you have contested Caen, follow Maly's advice and regroup all but three units out of Caen. If you don't have Douvres, you may have to leave your armor unit in Caen to prevent German armor from moving out of Caen through Douvres onto a beach. Go back to Sword and take Merville on June 8, or go to Juno to help defend the Bayeux-Bretteville region. It is no tragedy to wait for the June 9 reinforcements to take Merville. Wait until you have overwhelming force, or until all three British paratroopers are fresh for defending the area. By June 9, the British will probably be facing an impenetrable line consisting of Caen, Bocage areas and the Verson-Evercy "trap," so the British June 9 reinforcements won't have much else to do anyway.

This is about all you can ask of the Sword force. An attempted advance through Troarn is fraught with danger. Groups of one, two or even three spent British units are vulnerable to counterattack in low TEM areas. Once the Zone A reinforcements arrive on the evening of June 8, Houlgate is pretty much impenetrable. By June 8, Big Black will be hanging out in Potigny, ready to punish any indiscretion.

A breakout to the east is a pipe dream with the Le Havre battery ready to pulverize any British units foolhardy enough to enter Houlgate or Mezidon.

If Sword is still contested on June 6, your best use of air supply is probably Merville, even though you need a "5" to refit a spent unit and a "6" to refit a disrupted unit. Merville, Pont l'Abbe and Ste. Mére are likely to be the only areas on the board containing Allied units which cannot be refit from depots on June 6. The Merville units are the only ones in immediate danger. If the 6/6 glider is the only fresh unit in Merville on June 7, Merville is very vulnerable to bombardment by 711/xx. An average bombardment roll at "+3" leaves Merville with two spent and one D2 unit and a defense of four DV. With only seven steps to absorb, Merville now offers the 12th SS group a 13-4 attack in overcast weather with a 76 per cent chance to clear the area and a 66 per cent chance for an overrun. In either case, Merville will probably be German for the rest of the game.

One could argue that using air supply in a free area is more efficient since each unit has a two-thirds chance to refit on a completely clear day. If this is a concern, the Allies should calculate their expected reserve supply level before attempting air supply to determine if successful air supply will enable them to buy an additional turn. If so, that probably outweighs the chance of strengthening Merville. Later in the game, when you can supply all units from depots, it's probably best to use air supply in free areas only.

## **SWORD—GERMAN TACTICS**

The German's best hope in this sector is to prevent the British from contesting Caen. This is usually hard to do, but every reasonable effort must be made. On June 6, move 21 Pz/125 to Bourguébus and attempt to move 21 Pz/22 there as well. If Sword looks like it will fall on June 6 or 7, retreat 716/736 into Caen if its undisrupted status can be preserved. In any event, 716/736 should leave during the night, to avoid permitting a Sword-Merville "hat trick" on June 7.

The extra fresh units in Caen at the start of June 7 are huge. They just about guarantee that ETF's bombardment on June 7 will not flip both 21 Pz/125 and 21 Pz/192. If you can get five units in Caen fresh on June 7, one of which will absorb three bombardment factors, you are probably going to be defending Caen with 11 or 12 DF even after ETF bombards. Since the British Corps Artillery can't fire on June 7, if the Allies want to further "prep" Caen they have to use either 2 TAF (44 per cent chance to flip another non-Armor unit) or a Divisional Artillery (55 per cent chance). The Allies



can't afford to spend impulses on moves with an even chance of success.

Big Black starts in Zone B. If an impulse is available, Big Black may prepare to enter the action by moving its two artillery units and the Flak unit into Potigny on June 7, regrouping to Troarn. This provides plenty of artillery for either bombardment or support of an assault into Merville on June 8 and a partial flak screen for a clear-weather attack. I would send the Flak to Bourguébus to provide cover for units reinforcing Caen only if Caen were seriously threatened. In keeping with the "aggressive German" philosophy, I want the Allies to be constantly worrying about defense. However, beware of attacking Merville while ETF is fresh. It will be Big Black's last significant action of the game if you do. If you clear Merville, it may be worth it. Otherwise, you have weakened the entire sector, possibly permitting the British June 9 reinforcements to destroy large numbers of German units, if not additional VP areas.

If a big assault on Merville is not feasible, the Germans should be careful about reinforcing it. A second unit may help save the area temporarily, but it's a low-priority move. Three units would be offering the British a three-unit kill. You can't really afford the units from Houlgate or Troarn until June 8 or 9. A defense in depth is always better than a loaded defense in a low TEM area that will probably fall anyway.

## COMPENSATION FOR THE GERMANS?

Although I believe that the Allies are favored, their advantage is far from overwhelming.

*Random Results.* The limited number of impulses available makes each Allied failure extremely costly. The randomness of combat results works against the Allies. On virtually every day, at least one high-odds attack will fail and throw the Allied plan off schedule. Finally, large attacks are risky because all units become disrupted if they lose, even if they attacked with overwhelming odds. Small attacks not only risk failure but may provide counterattack targets.

On the other hand, the Allies have more supply and units than they need. Time is their only shortage. One example of this was described in Part 1 in the discussion of Utah Beach. If the Germans reinforce Ste. Mère-Eglise, the US player can't really do much about it directly, but can shift resources away from Utah. Similarly, if a contested Omaha or Sword Beach contains a mixture of fresh and spent Allied units, your best course may be to ignore that beach for the rest of the day rather than make an attack which is not certain to succeed. As long as you

have some fresh units, the German is not likely to keep you spent permanently. If you wait until the following day when all your units will be fresh, you not only guarantee success on the beach but may wind up equal to or ahead of where you would have been by attacking the day before, because you get a better overrun. Overruns are to be treasured, because they effectively double the value of the units involved for a turn. The availability of overruns means that the schedule for the Allies is not quite as tight as Greenwood and Maly suggest. If the Allies were planning to take an area on a particular day but merely contest it, they may be able to "catch up" by overrunning it the next day. This has the paradoxical effect of allowing the Allies to shrug off bad luck at certain points in the game.

*Weather Changes.* This is the biggest German advantage in the game. Even if no weather change actually occurs, the threat of one will seriously limit Allied options, particularly on the early turns. A weather change early on June 7, before Lehr and the 12th SS group have moved, is particularly devastating for the Allies. The Germans have all kinds of delectable options: blowing the British out of Merville, charging through an uncontested Caen onto Juno or Sword, or simply spreading reinforcements across the entire front to stabilize the defense. This weather change would be a good time for the Allies to use the Advantage for a re-roll.

The threat of counterattack means that the Allies must beware of leaving an all-spent force in a low TEM area throughout the game, because losing an area while also losing units is a crushing blow. In many circumstances the extra MF required to enter an area containing a fresh unit may be the only Allied defense against a crushing counterattack. If Caen is uncontested, for example, the Germans can reach Juno and Sword all the way from Zones B and C against spent units, but not against fresh units.

Another good German tactic in cloudy weather is to contest an area behind the Allied front line to hinder Allied re-supply efforts. The British must be wary of overextending their lines with futile forays down the Verson-Evercy corridor or into Troarn. Similarly, US forces must avoid fatally weakening Ste. Mère while attacking Carentan.

*Short Days.* Short days are another bane of the Allies' existence, but the game mechanics work to somewhat compensate for them. Frustratingly for the Allies, clear and cloudy days alternate beginning on June 8, so that the Allies can generally use their supply advantage on clear days only to lengthen cloudy days.

However, do not lose sight of the fact that the Allies are guaranteed two air bombardments and four additional impulses if the day started on Impulse 0, with only a 3 per cent chance of getting less than five impulses. By restricting themselves to high-odds attacks in the early impulses of the turn, the Allies ensure that they will have accomplished most of their goals for the day, even if it ends early. Also, if a short, clear day occurs, the 2-to-1 Allied supply advantage will enable them to regain some of the lost impulses on a later turn. The Allies should at least plan to use their air bombardments early in the day to take the three-unit kills.

## GENERAL TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Greenwood and Maly provided much sound, general advice about how both sides should handle their forces tactically. I would like to make a couple of additional observations, however.

*Initiative. BREAKOUT: NORMANDY (BKN)* is more similar to Chess than most other wargames in that you do not move all your forces on your turn, but only one group at a time. This establishes an "initiative." The player making threats has the initiative; the player responding to threats does not. The initiative can be held by either player or by neither player (for example, late in a day when neither player has a credible threat. Even though the Allies are always the attacker in the strategic sense, the Germans move first each turn. Yet, the Allies usually begin the game (that is, Impulse 0 of June 6) with the initiative because the German must respond to a threat—namely, British exploitation through Bretteville. If both the Gold and Juno initial assaults fail, the Allies are in danger of losing the initiative. If the follow-up assaults fail as well, the Allies have lost the initiative, because the German can pursue his own agenda with no need to respond to an immediate threat.

The threat creating the initiative need not involve an attack—for example, if the Germans threaten to blow a key bridge and have a high probability of success, the Allies must respond by crossing the bridge immediately, even if they would rather bombard first.

As long as the Allies maintain the initiative, they can keep to the schedule set forth in the "basic plan" and should be able to acquire 10 VP by June 12. Therefore, the German must aim to take the initiative away from the Allies. One of the key advantages of a weather change is that, even if the Germans have no devastating attack to make immediately, they may be able to seize the initiative by making suc-



cessful bombardments. Sometimes the Germans can force the Allies to activate an area at an inconvenient time. For example, if 101 NW is fresh in Pont l'Abbe on Impulse 0 of June 9, and the German can afford to start the day with a bombardment of the 82nd Airborne contesting the area, the Germans will have the initiative for at least one impulse by threatening to clear the area with an assault. The Allied player, having cleared Ste. Mére, wants to bombard Carentan before launching an assault, but because he must activate Ste. Mére to reinforce Pont l'Abbe, he may be hustled into making an attack on Carentan at much lower odds than he hoped.

As in chess, the best way to seize the initiative is to make a move that accomplishes two tasks—defending against a threat and making its own threat. If your opponent has made a minor threat, you may be able to seize the initiative by ignoring his threat and making a bigger one yourself.

You keep the initiative by generating a threat on each impulse. If possible, you want to create two major threats in one impulse, only one of which your opponent can defend, much like a fork move in Chess.

*Allied Mistakes.* The most common subtle Allied mistake is becoming distracted from the easiest path to 10 VP and changing priorities. I believe that the “distraction” factor accounted for the fact that the Germans won a majority of the games at AvalonCon'95, even though they “bid” less than 10 VP in most cases.

Another subtle Allied mistake is giving up the Advantage too easily. The most important uses of the Advantage are to prevent your opponent from re-rolling your big rolls or to re-roll his big rolls. The worst use is to re-roll your bad assaults. If you make an unexpected, game-winning overrun, you don't want to lose it to a re-roll. On the other hand, losing a single assault (other than the initial assaults on Omaha and Sword) will rarely merit a re-roll no matter how big the attack was (unless you have an obvious way to regain the Advantage). After the first two days, the Germans should have their forces organized well enough that it will be difficult to regain the Advantage by killing units. Thus, giving the Advantage to the Germans may amount to conceding a VP.

Another tempting Allied mistake is to try to make “efficient” attacks—that is, attacks with less than the maximum force available, in order to save supply and maintain additional threats. In general, this is a losing tactic. The Allies have enough time to accomplish their goals, if they can limit their failed moves to approximately one per day. They do not

have enough time to be making marginal moves (55 per cent or even 66 per cent chance of success) on a regular basis. Assaults which are expected to clear an area but fail to do so are extremely expensive, even if the assault “wins,” because supply must come from outside the area at two supply points per unit. Also, bridges bordering the contested area cannot be repaired unless adjacent to a friendly area. Throw in that extra unit to raise the odds. The Allies really do have more than they can use. On most days, the Allies will run out of impulses before they have made all reasonable moves. The “saved” units may be wasted. With a “+2” or “+3” Sunset DRM in hand, however, the situation changes and the Allies can shift to making smaller attacks, because they can now afford to lose some assaults.

*German Mistakes.* Most of the more subtle German mistakes fall into one of two categories: trying to defend an area with too many units or getting overactive in trying to counterattack. A good German player must cultivate the art of knowing when to cut and run. Take additional CPs in the form of retreats to evacuate a contested area except for one hapless D2 unit. Then, blow the bridges surrounding the area (only “1”s fail), and live to fight another day. The German has lots of units, but not where or when he needs them. He really needs to avoid getting units killed in this game. You should have no qualms about giving up 9 VPs without a fight as long as you have a clear idea about how you will prevent the Allies from getting that tenth one.

My second category of German mistakes seems somewhat contradictory in light of my earlier advice that the Germans must take some chances. However, I'm probably more conservative than Maly or Greenwood with the Germans on June 6—I rarely find myself counterattacking (or even reinforcing) beaches in clear weather. However, I'll consider an even-odds counterattack with a single unit, when there are no emergencies that need to be managed. Multiple-unit German attacks should be avoided except at high odds, because failure disrupts multiple units. The German, unlike the Allies, needs units for defense and has supply problems.

It is futile to launch a campaign of low-odds bombardments of fresh Allied units undertaken in clear weather in the faint hope that an Allied-held area will eventually be weakened enough to counterattack following a weather change. This uses impulses and supplies that the German cannot afford. It is much better to wait for the overcast weather to arrive, and then make bombardments that will compel an Allied

response. In any case, the German should always look at the localized nature of his supply usage. A bombardment by an artillery unit in a region of the board that will not see any other action uses only one supply point, but requires use of a depot to refit. In practice, the unit may remain spent for several turns if all depots are needed elsewhere.

*Defense of the Front.* Unlike hex-map wargames, *BKN* features areas of irregular size and shape, with (for most practical purposes) no stacking limitations in each area. Therefore, each player should give attention to shortening his front whenever possible, as this increases the number of units available for defense of each area. The classic example of this is the British contestation of Caen, which shortens their front by two areas. Similarly, the Americans need to contest Foret de Clerisy as well as Isigny so that they need not garrison Trévières, Columbières and Omaha Beach. On the German side, you should be more reluctant to abandon an area if your line will be lengthened, but cheerfully retreat from an area if you will thereby shorten your line.

*Double Impulse.* This is the “wonder weapon” of the campaign. The Allies should use it in only three instances: when it provides a reasonable opportunity to take Caen, when the Allies can blow a hole in the German line in two places, and where part of the front line is a contested area which has vacant or very weakly defended areas behind it. In this last case, the first impulse is used to assault and clear the contested area from another area. The second impulse is used to exit the formerly contested area into the empty German rear. In all three of these situations, the use of the Double Impulse should be a game-winning move if successful. Otherwise, the Advantage is too valuable to risk.

## SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

As game master of the *BREAKOUT: NORMANDY* tournament at AvalonCon'95, I advised players not to use cards or chits instead of dice to resolve assaults and bombardments (an optional rule). After seeing the large swings of luck created by dice in many of the games, I have changed my mind about this. While cards/chits permit card counting, the balancing of the luck factor weighs heavily in favor of this option.

*BREAKOUT: NORMANDY* is one of Avalon Hill's finest designs. I have not played any other game which combines so well playability, excitement, analytical depth and realistic military “feel” into a four-hour game.