



Rommel (far right), overlooking the defenses of Normandy.

# IN DEFENSE OF NORMANDY

By Don Greenwood

There is no such thing as too much playtesting. Some games get tested more than others because they need it more. Others are just too enjoyable to put in the "Out" basket. **BREAKOUT: NORMANDY (BKN)** fell in the latter category for me. Primary tester Andy Maly and myself must have played it 50 times in all of its variations. We debated the play balance pros and cons while inventing, improving and discarding one strategy or tactic after another. Yet, somehow, no two games ever played alike. The varying degrees of success in the Allied landings coupled with the uncertainties of the unpredictable weather combined for a fresh challenge every time.

During the evolution of the game we often argued the relative merits of play balance—changing sides on occasion depending on who had been humbled last. Whatever our opinions at the time, however, we always noted that they varied considerably from those of relative newcomers whose tactics we recognized from failed attempts of games past.

This dual primer on strategy is our attempt to help you learn from our errors. If, however, you are one of those intrepid souls who enjoys learning by making his own mistakes, then read no further.

Although our opinions on play balance have evolved considerably with added experience, I believe it's safe to say that Andy and I agree that the Germans have the better of the victory conditions. Despite that, we always fought for the chance to command the Allies because it is they who dictate the action. In short, the Allies are more fun to play. The Germans need a punching bag mentality and must be content to trade turf and units for time. If they do it well, the increasing time pressures brought to bear on the Allies by the burden of the Victory Conditions will open opportunities for crippling German coun-

terattacks. We're not talking another Dunkirk here, but enough satisfying mayhem and victory nonetheless.

I advocate no "perfect plans" here. Such are not possible in *BKN*. Like chess, the game is one of constant action and reaction. There are no set moves. Rather, there are constant needs and opportunities, but only one can be addressed at a time. Then the opponent takes his impulse to counter your last move or present you with problems elsewhere. Thus, the game is a never-ending series of decisions in which the player must prioritize his needs and address them one at a time. Player interaction and the increasing time pressure of an indeterminate length of day serve to keep this priority list ever-changing. In simple terms, the game becomes one of constantly deciding which of endless itches to scratch next.

Although the Allies get to dictate the action, they are hampered by Victory Conditions which leave them little time to exercise caution. It is our job, with apologies to Rommel, not to throw them back into the sea, but to distract them from their game plan at every opportunity. Time is the real Allied opponent. Every impulse spent outside their main path of advance is a minor German victory. Run the Allies out of time and you'll be able to effectively counterattack their overextended forces.

Because the game is one of reaction to alternating impulses, sketching a detailed defensive plan is pure folly. One can only react to the situation as it unfolds, basing one's decisions on the present circumstances. Nevertheless, as a primer on German defense, we can analyze our initial positions and discuss the most common June 6th options available to the forces therein for a typical game. My recommendation will take three forms:

☉ The circled number indicates the priority I usually give that move in the average game, the

lower-numbered moves being the impulses I most need to implement before the day ends. Naturally, circumstances—especially an unforeseen change in the weather—will alter these priorities drastically. The player must make his own decisions rather than follow these by rote, but they nonetheless offer a good starting point from which to analyze the most important opening moves. The black circled numbers are for Clear Weather impulses; the white circled numbers for Overcast impulses.

● The sun symbol indicates a move predicted on Clear Weather.

◆ The diamond symbol indicates a move in Overcast Weather.



**A. Rouen: Reinforcements** in the east are scarce on June 6th. The novice player may over-react to the scarcity by bringing on the 711th during the day. This is almost always a mistake. Allied chances are almost directly proportional to the number of units disrupted by air interdiction. The less the German moves in Clear Weather, the better. Even if disruption is not a factor, impulse movement uses scarce supplies and should not be used to accomplish what a night Regroup can do for free. In short, an impulse move that stops in Houlgate is a complete waste.

● Regroup both units to Houlgate (1)  
◆ Reinforce Merville (7) with 731. If Sword appears secure through June 7, reinforce Caen (10) with both units.

**1. Houlgate:** The typical first reaction to reading the Breakout Sudden Death Victory Conditions

is to notice how close Rouen is to the British Airborne in Merville. Only Houlgate separates the Allies from instant victory. Consequently, it's easy to get paranoid about fortifying Houlgate. Fortunately, Breakout wins are very rare. I have seen only two. The combination of flooded terrain protecting Houlgate, the LeHavre Batteries, free German supply in the zones, frequent reinforcements in Rouen, and the lack of Allied Air Cover and artillery support for an assault into a zone make Rouen very difficult to reach. The threat it poses is bothersome, but on the whole, I've seen more promising Allied positions ground into mediocrity by sudden excursions into Houlgate. In short, I find it better to tempt the Allies toward Houlgate than to overdefend it at the expense of Caen.

◆◆ Regroup 744 to Troam (6). Barring a British debacle on Sword, Troam must be occupied.



**3. St. Pierre sur Dives:** The 22nd Pz Regiment is about it as far as the eastern reinforcements are concerned, so it invariably braves the RAF in an attempt to reach Caen. Note that it stops in Bourguebus to refit, and regroups into Caen at night to lessen the exposure to air interdiction.

●● Move to Bourguebus (5); Regroup to Caen (10).  
◆◆ Reinforce Juvo (17) or Sword (8) if possible.



**5. Bourguebus:** Caen is not a particularly good place for German artillery since once the British contest it, its firing opportunities are very bleak. However, as one of the few available reinforcements on June 6th, it has little choice but to sit tight and regroup into Caen at night.

◆◆ Regroup to Caen (10).

**6. Troarn:** It is tempting, especially if the weather breaks, to attack Merville with the 125th but I think this is a mistake. Regardless of who controls Merville on the sixth, it is probably destined to change hands at least once by the end of the week. The presence of the 125th in Merville won't change that, but in Caen it may alter the Allied strategy. Even if overcast skies allow interdiction-free movement into Caen, consideration should be given to the most economical place to refit. If other units have already stopped in Bourguébus, it makes sense to stop there also and regroup into Caen during the night. Before making any move, always ask yourself if you can accomplish the same thing by regrouping.

②● Move to Bourguébus; Regroup to Caen.

④◆ Reinforce Gold (18), Juno (17), or Sword (8), if possible.

**7. Merville:** Merville's one Victory Point is often the difference between victory and defeat. Seemingly within easy reach, the British often relegate its capture to secondary forces while pressing harder elsewhere. The Germans, similarly distracted by the need to defend Caen, likewise pay it scant attention early. Consequently, this ripe fruit often teeters precariously between two masters and draws increasing attention as the game progresses. Regardless of who controls it on June 7th, it is likely to change hands at least once before the week is out.

Any competent British opening will seize the Orne River bridge and attack the Merville Coastal Artillery at 3:3. Assuming the Coastal Artillery survives this attack, an 84% probability, what then? Obviously, the Orne River (7-8) bridge should be blown if still in German hands, but what of the Dives River bridge (7-1)? Germans often regret having blown this bridge when they want to counterattack out of Houlgate, and they regret it sooner if they want to refit in Merville from a depot in Houlgate. Consequently, I advocate letting it stand unless the right flank is in serious jeopardy—even if Merville is in imminent danger of capture.

Any reinforcement should be limited to one unit since the Germans should avoid concentrations of three or more units in a +1 TEM area lest they be eliminated and thereby deliver the Advantage and/or Sunset DRMs to the Allies. Anytime you stick three or more units in a +1 TEM area you better be prepared to pay whatever it costs to hold it until nightfall. In deciding whether to reinforce Merville, consider whether your force has at least a 50% chance of surviving the most likely British counterattack. If the answer is no, you're better off shoring up defenses elsewhere.

**8. Sword Beach:** This is the second-best defended beach after Omaha and the most likely place for the British to run into trouble. It is always advantageous to hold the beaches through June 6th if possible. A German-controlled beach denies the Allies any chance to build an early supply reserve or to refit an expanding bridgehead. The choice of whether you will attempt to hold Sword should be made for you by the degree of success of the Allied first wave and the extent of his follow-up waves. Obviously

with a stalemate or British defeat, you're holding at the shoreline for all you're worth. But when you're paying out CPs, how long do you wait before giving up the ghost? You'll decide that by how you pay those CPs. If you're going to surrender the beach, take CPs with the Coastal Artillery up to D2 and retreat the infantry. If you intend to fight, take CPs with the infantry, and reinforce as soon as possible. Plan to refit Coastal Artillery to fresh status for its naval interdiction value. Disrupted Coastal Artillery should be left disrupted unless an attempt is being made to actively hold the British. There is little point to wasting supply on a disrupted Coastal Artillery battery that will be overrun in the morning anyway.



**10. Caen:** The key to victory lies in Caen which is no surprise given its four Victory Points. More surprising perhaps is that those four Victory Points seldom find themselves among the ten needed for an Allied win. Despite its importance and proximity to the British beaches, Caen rarely falls in the first week and almost never to a frontal attack. Unless the British can reach Bourguébus (5) and Evercy (11) to cut supply and reinforcement to Caen, it is relatively secure with competent play.

Yet, the British cannot ignore it. Uncontested, it remains a threat to the British beaches, committing scarce British forces to defenses which are needed elsewhere in attack. In addition, a British presence in Caen achieves four of the seven points needed for the Contesting Areas Victory Point. In short, the Allies need not control Caen but they must contest it—and as soon as possible.

Knowing this, you must do everything possible to frustrate the British attempts to gain a presence in Caen. Usually it will not be possible to deny determined efforts to contest the city. However, a solid defense can often force the Allies to squander the Advantage for a Double Impulse. That, in itself, is a major achievement. Every impulse spent hammering the +4 TEM of Caen is one less available to inflict more telling blows elsewhere.

Consequently, Caen has a pressing need for as many fresh defenders as possible by dawn of June 7th. Armor is especially valuable to soak up APs from preparatory bombardments. Artillery and Flak units also serve to bolster the defense against Field Artillery and Air bombardments, although there is no defense against Naval Bombardment which is the main concern.

As in the real campaign, the Germans must exercise extreme artillery fire control discipline. They are out-gunned and out-supplied. It seldom pays them to attack first. Their smaller attack factors will often cost more supply to refit than any damage they can hope to inflict against fresh defenders. Consequently, they must be content to absorb the sledgehammer blows of Allied bombardments in relative silence. Adding their counterbattery factors to the defense is their best employment until the Allied forces expose Spent targets without fresh counterbattery protection. Caen on June 7th is one of the few exceptions to

this doctrine. If a successful pre-emptive strike against British armor on either Sword or Juno will reduce the chances of the British to clear either area or successfully continue on into Caen to near 50% or less, it is worth firing first. A 5:1 attack on Sword by the 21st Pz Artillery has a 66% chance (55% at 5:2) of neutralizing the British Armor and reducing their Attack Total by three.

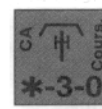
Usually, the British will succeed in contesting Caen despite your best efforts. When that occurs, they will probably Regroup all but a small defensive force out of the area for offense chores elsewhere and be content with a stalemate at Caen. You must anticipate this and regroup your own excess forces—particularly artillery and spent/disrupted units—out of Caen first.

With all this concern over the importance of Caen, the last thing you would expect me to advocate is leaving it. Unfortunately, the Gold and Juno Beach garrisons invariably are not up to the task of defending their own turf. If the British clear either area in the Amphibious Assault Phase, the 21st Panzer in Caen is the only thing available to prevent a second wave from dashing through Bretteville to take both Tilly (21) and Villars-Bocage (14). By sending two units to block Bretteville (16) the chances of an overrun by a lone armor brigade are reduced to 9% and any lesser attack is self-healing as the defenders split and retreat into Tilly and Villars-Bocage. The following impulse can be spent blowing the Bretteville bridges. Should the Allies be repulsed or intimidated into declining the attack, the FLAK unit should regroup back into Caen.

①◆◆● Move 21 FLAK and 21 PAK to Bretteville (16).

**17. Juno Beach:** The most likely Amphibious Assault on Juno Beach will be a 9:6 by all three brigades of the Canadian 3rd Division against the Spent Coastal Artillery. This assault has a 55% chance of clearing Juno Beach. When that happens there is nothing left to do but sigh and move part of the Caen garrison to Bretteville, leaving the 192nd to hold Caen. The lone Canadian armor unit in the second wave has only a 7:10 assault against Caen which provides a 23% chance of a Stalemate (or better) to successfully contest Caen. Most British players will shy away from an 85% chance of disrupting their armor unit and go elsewhere. Even though this move fails three out of four times, it is probably a good gamble. A British presence in Caen on June 6th is enormous trouble because it prevents any German Regroup into Caen. Consequently, the moves of the 22nd Panzer and 125th Panzer Grenadiers should wait until the Canadian Armor is committed. This rapidly becomes a game of chicken to see who blinks first. Unfortunately, if the day ends before those moves are made, the German is the loser so he can't be too patient. This is one of the few occasions where time is on the Allied side.

A bold British player may attempt the Juno Amphibious Assault with one or two brigades, trusting his following waves to clear the beach. Such a courageous move, accompanied by less than a complete success on Gold Beach, should be rewarded by an immediate counterattack from Caen. Once a beach is cleared by the



Germans it cannot be amphibiously assaulted again as subsequent waves are reinforcements which can only make optional assaults in the landing area. Clearing a beach is thus an enormous Allied debacle.

There are far too many variations of possible situations to cover here. The situation on the neighboring beaches and the results of previous impulses will make each scenario unique and deserving of its own analysis. For example, assume the Cours. Coastal Artillery has managed to remain fresh while stalemating the Canadian assault. Gold Beach is still German, but hanging by a thread. It may well be worth foregoing the Bretteville move to reinforce Juno. Although Gold is subject to overrun and Bretteville will fall automatically, the British armor will lack the MF to reach the Victory Point areas in its next impulse. By reinforcing Juno, you not only stand to hold it through June 6th, but will be able to interdict British reinforcements to Gold and Juno. For that reason, it is wise to use the Grenadiers or PAK as your Forward Unit and screen the Coastal Artillery.

**18. Gold Beach:** There are many variations of the British Amphibious Assault on Gold Beach, but the most likely is an 8:6 by the 3rd Infantry Division against the spent Arrom. Coastal Artillery. This attack has a 44% chance of taking Gold Beach. Strengthening the first wave by adding the 56th Brigade, the 8th Armored Brigade, or both increases the likelihood of taking Gold Beach to 55%, 66%, or 76% respectively assuming no coastal interdiction. However, Gold Beach cannot be counterattacked without facing air interdiction and is thus far safer for the British than Juno. Consequently, this is the beach on which they can most afford the luxury of followup waves.

Occasionally, the British will foul themselves so badly that you may consider reinforcing Gold with the 1st FLAK Regiment from Trévières. Usually, however, German decisions on Gold Beach will be restricted to when, or even if, to blow bridges.

If the British have shot their wad getting ashore and have no reinforcements capable of penetrating to the interior, blowing bridges does them a favor. Instead of passing for the remainder of the day, they can repair bridges. However, if the Germans are sure to retain control of a beach throughout the day, blowing bridges becomes a great move since they can only be repaired in controlled areas. On the other hand, if the British have many Point Units available to exploit through gaping holes, bridge demolition can save the day. Activating Bretteville gives two demolition opportunities (Gold & Juno), while activating Gold provides three (Bayeux, Bretteville, Juno). Demolition is best done before the Allies totally control the other side, but can still be attempted by activating an enemy-controlled area.

**19. Port-en-Bessin:** The German has very few decisions to make in this area. The coastal guns can interdict two beaches and are therefore an almost automatic Air Bombardment target. Consequently, they have a 76% likelihood of beginning the Amphibious Assault Phase spent.

What happens afterwards is entirely up to the Allied player's discretion. Usually, it is overrun by reinforcements from Gold Beach which try to seize one of the Bayeux bridges in the process. This can be a mixed blessing for the Germans because its elimination now prevents it from being part of an easy three-bagger overrun off Omaha Beach on the 7th. Should it survive the 6th in spent condition, refit it. Fresh Coastal Artillery is always a plus—especially between two beaches. If disrupted, let it rot.

**20. Bayeux:** The 915th sees little action on the first day as it is sufficiently strong behind the Aure River to discourage British attack. Even a successful seizure of the Bayeux-Gold bridge by the 8th Armor and 56th brigade would yield only an 8:7 assault and would require leaving the Longues coastal battery intact. But unless the Americans are being hammered on Omaha, that's not such a bad thing. The 8:7 has a 66% chance of achieving the stalemate it needs to prevent German Regroups into the area, but otherwise achieves little. Despite its two Victory Points, Bayeux is seldom crucial. It falls to the Allies with regularity—the only question is how many impulses its capture will require. If the Arrom. Coastal Artillery on Gold Beach is still fresh, reinforcing Gold with the 915th becomes a worthwhile move. Screening the Arrom. Coastal Artillery enables it to continue annoying Allied reinforcements on two beaches. This is well worth the 9% chance of an Overrun by the Armor Brigade and the insulating loss of Bayeux. Of course, if that does happen, you've got major problems in the Tilly-Villars-Bocage gap.

◆ Regroup to Tilly (2).

**27. St. Lô:** The 84th Corps, due to the dearth of units in the German center, is an important piece but it plays virtually no role on the 6th. St. Lô must be strongly held, but it is not threatened before mid-game at the earliest. Eventually, the Allies must take Isigny and when they do they must be made to pay the price by artillery in St. Lô. Until then, it should regroup forward to provide covering fire on spent Americans as they advance.

◆ Regroup to Foret de Cerisy (28) or Isigny (33).

**29. Trévières:** This area plays a crucial role on June 7th, but none on the 6th. The Omaha bridge must be blown before Omaha falls but the need to evacuate the 352nd's Artillery usually means this chore is performed as the first impulse of June 7th. Book the führer's voyage to Buenos Aires if you roll a "1."

◆ Regroup to Bayeux

**30. Omaha Beach: Bloody Omaha.** The scene of the near American debacle. Can the Germans really expect to turn the tables and kick some but themselves? Maybe.

The astute Allied player always faces Omaha with more than a little trepidation. An unscathed defense can muster ten defense factors to a top American assault of 14. However, the presence of three Coastal Artillery units within range of the beach makes the American assault a very

iffy proposition. Suffice it to say that the prudent Allied player will save the Advantage for use on Omaha unless he has been very fortunate with his bombardments.

Consequently, although the Allies seldom clear Omaha on the 6th, they can usually get ashore in reasonable shape. The German should fill his losses by disrupting the Vierville Coastal Artillery and retreating the infantry. If necessary, disrupt the infantry before taking any losses from the artillery. If the Americans have landed everything in the first wave, you may even consider retreating spent infantry unnecessarily to save supply.

The 352nd Artillery is the key to really ruining the American day. With a 4:1 bombardment it has a 15% chance of disrupting all seven American units. Waiting for the American artillery to land to include them in the target is preferable, but not worth risking the loss of the attack altogether to a short day. If the bombardment is successful, holding Omaha through the 7th becomes a worthwhile possibility. Otherwise, it should be abandoned in the Regroup Phase save for the remnants of the Vierville battery. The Germans are too weak in the center to allow the majority of their mobile units to be pinned on the beach by naval gunfire.

Very successful Naval and Air Bombardment Phases may allow the Allies the luxury of attacking in waves. Faced by two more six-factor assaults, the German may need to reinforce Omaha from Grandcamp to hold it through the sixth. However, he should not remain in Omaha or Grandcamp through the night against an undisrupted American force.

◆◆◆ 352nd Artillery bombards Omaha at 4:1.

**31. Grandcamp:** Unless spared the distinction by a poor naval bombardment on Omaha or Sword, this area is usually the target of the American air bombardment. The 5:2 attack will take out the coastal artillery 55% of the time, a second unit 44% of the time, and all three 23% of the time. Regardless, dawn should not find these units still in Grandcamp. Any grouping of three units in a +1 TEM area is just asking to be pinned by artillery and then overrun to regain the Advantage or Sunset DRMs. This is especially true within range of naval gunfire. The Germans should mass three or more units in a +1 TEM area only if the game depends on holding that area or the Allies are unable to bring enough force to bear to dislodge them before nightfall. Anything else is a major mistake.

Even the best German play cannot completely prevent such opportunities. When Omaha falls on June 7th, it is often just part of an overrun assault that splits to also take in the coastal batteries at Grandcamp and Port-en-Bessin. With luck and good German play, however, the Allies may not regain the Advantage again.

◆◆ Move to Caumont (23); Regroup to Tilly (21) and Villars-Bocage (14).


◆◆ Assault Omaha at 4:3 or move to Caumont.

**41. Coutances:** Ultimately, these two units are destined to be grist for the mill in Carentan.

Unless things go very poorly in Ste. Mère-Eglise they will arrive on station in adequate time on June 8th via two Regroups. Desperate events in the center or a weather change may justify sending them east instead.

● Regroup to Périers (43).


◆ Move to Isigny (33) and/or Caumont (23).

 44. **Carentan:** When all is said and done, Carentan is the battlefield that will decide the game. Even if its two victory points were not essential to the Allied total, linkup of the American forces to reduce the Utah supply problem is. And linkup must go through Carentan. Unless faring very well elsewhere, the Germans must hold Carentan to the last man.


Any competent Allied invasion will secure the Carentan, Pont l'Abbe, and Montebourg bridges into Ste. Mère-Eglise leaving the Germans with only a 16% chance of seizing the Montebourg bridge. As poor as these odds are, the reward is so great that the Germans are justified in squandering numerous impulses attempting to roll that elusive "6." Just how many they should waste in the attempt depends on how much pressure the Allies can exert elsewhere.

Despite the importance of Carentan, I like to Regroup the 6 FS unit to Catz as soon as the Carentan garrison is adequate. This spares it the preliminary bombardment Carentan invariably receives while keeping a strong counterattack force nearby to threaten spent Americans entering either Carentan or Isigny.

◆ Seize 44-50 bridge if possible.

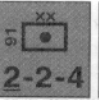

 45. **St. Jores:** Due to flooding and the lack of bridges into Ste. Mère-Eglise and St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte, St. Jores is just the place between Pont l'Abbe and Carentan that makes getting to these places more difficult. Ultimately, the 100 Pz Rn must sit in Carentan to absorb artillery Attrition Points. If it can seize the bridge in the process, so much the better.

◆ Move to 44; seize 44-50 bridge if possible.

 47. **Barneville:** The Carteret battery, like most of the coastal artillery in the Cotentin Peninsula (Areas 53, 56, 57, 58, 60) serves no purpose save garrison duty should an American breakthrough develop. The infantry unit should gradually make its way to Carentan.

● Regroup to La Haye-du-Puits (46).


◆ Move to Carentan; seize 44-50 bridge, if possible.

  48. **St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte:** The phrase "middle of nowhere" comes to mind when assessing the merits of this little garrison. The artillery would be useful for potshots into Ste. Mère-Eglise if it could be in position before the Americans gain control. Knocking out a fresh airborne unit could improve the chances of seizing a bridge, thereby rushing the Americans into attacking prematurely. Unfortunately, it can't regroup into firing position in less than two days and risking daytime movement is not worth the cost. Overcast impulses are too valuable to waste on a move that doesn't even yield a bridge seizure attempt due to not having a Point Unit. To make matters worse, the 91st Division is hard to group into a workable assault because any

move south towards Carentan separates the infantry from their support elements. Moving into Pont l'Abbe to combine with the 1057th consumes too much supply so these units are destined to provide fodder for Carentan.

A second option is to bombard Pont l'Abbe to reduce the fresh airborne unit there. The 2:3 attack has a 23% chance of success which will allow the 101st Nebelwerfer Brigade the chance to reach Pont l'Abbe in clear weather.

● Move to La Haye-du-Puits (46); Regroup to St. Jores (45) or Bombard Fresh unit in Pont l'Abbe (49) at 2:3.

 49. **Pont l'Abbe:** The 1057th is destined to spend most of the game as the German half of the grand stalemate. Too strong to be attacked by the airborne, and too weak to evict them. The 1057th just stays put until the cavalry arrives. The cavalry, in this case, is the 101st Nebelwerfer Brigade from Cap de la Hague. Once its firepower is brought to bear, the stalemate is over. The Americans will either have to withdraw the airborne or reinforce it. Either is good news. A withdrawal shortens the German lines and congests Ste. Mère-Eglise with disrupted units at a time when it is trying to storm Carentan. Reinforcement uses scarce supply from Utah, badly needed for the drive on Carentan.

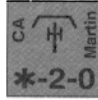
On those all too rare occasions when the Martin battery still clings to Ste. Mère-Eglise, withdrawal may not be an option. The 82nd Airborne then gets to earn the distinction of highest Allied mortality rate. Allied unit eliminations are rare. The Allies can lose a game without losing a unit. However, the timing of the attack can be more important than the physical loss of a unit. If the Allies have the Advantage, almost any time is the right time to deprive them of it. However, if the Germans hold the Advantage already, all they stand to gain is a Sunset DRM.

In general, the Germans want short days. Time is their strongest ally. However, when the weather turns overcast, the Germans can do some damage of their own and the temptation to lengthen the day will be strong. Resist it. I recall one game when my Germans eliminated three Allied units with one attack. Flushed with visions of rolling the Allies back into the sea, I opted for a +3 DRM on the Sunset DRM to prolong that gloomy weather. The next Allied impulse drew a weather change and my troops battled under clear skies for the rest of a very long day. The moral of this story is that the German should think long and hard about opting to lengthen any day save the first.


Shortening a day is another matter altogether. Despite your preference for Overcast weather, shortening such a day has a hidden advantage. As long as the negative Sunset DRM is in effect the weather cannot change. Of course, shortening a Clear day has the same effect, but the Allies can hardly afford to sacrifice impulses of any kind. All of which brings up the question of whether you always want to shorten a Clear day. Suppose you have just eliminated an Allied unit in your seventh impulse of the day. Do you take the -1 Sunset DRM? Doing so increases the chance of the day ending in the next Allied impulse from 16% to 58%. But it also eliminates the 16% chance of a weather change at the very time when that possibility is the most likely. What you should do depends on how badly you

need the extra six supply points such a change would generate and how much damage the Allies can do at this particular point in the game with another impulse.

The point of all this is that if control of an area is not of primary concern, the timing of the elimination of an Allied unit can be more important than actually killing it. If you already have the Advantage, killing a unit late in the day, with dusk in the offing, gains you little. The same deed done earlier in the day nets far more value.

 50. **Ste. Mère-Eglise:** Rarely has so much depended on so little. The Martin battery is all that stands between Utah Beach and an American linkup in Carentan. But unless the American has the balls and luck of a riverboat gambler, the Martin battery will retain control of Ste. Mère-Eglise throughout June 6th because the 101st airborne will content itself with controlling the bridges into the area. Some Americans may seize the Utah bridge as well. While this improves the chances of the Allies taking Ste. Mère-Eglise on June 6th, I believe it risks more than it gains. Taking this bridge makes the second wave attack off Utah a 7:5 optional assault rather than a 7:8 Mandatory Assault. Given the protective benefits of bocage, the 7:5 assault will succeed in clearing the area only 23% of the time—assuming it survives the naval interdiction fire of two coastal batteries with a 33% chance of preventing the attack. This means the area will fall on June 6th less than 16% of the time. To achieve this lofty chance of success, the Americans must use another airborne regiment to seize the bridge—leaving them only one Fresh unit to fend off German bridge seizures. That makes the Carentan bridge vulnerable to a 16% seizure attempt and the Montebourg bridge to a 33% chance. This is too high a price to pay.

Defending in the +3 TEM and bocage of Ste. Mère-Eglise is eminently preferable to the +2 TEM of Carentan. This is true even before one considers the limited supply capacity of Utah Beach and the vulnerability of Carentan to assault from two directions. In short, the Germans should do everything possible to reinforce Ste. Mère-Eglise before the Americans on Utah can overwhelm the Martin battery. If successful, Utah Beach will be little more than a P.O.W. camp. The supply and impulses required to clear a reinforced Ste. Mère-Eglise would be better spent increasing Allied pressure elsewhere.

 51. **Utah Beach:** Talk about your sacrificial lambs. This battalion will rarely outlive the Amphibious Assault Phase, let alone the first day. However, the presence of two fresh Coastal Artillery units providing interdiction fire will neutralize a one-unit assault 33% of the time and a two-unit assault 11%. So, survival is possible, if unlikely. When it happens, forget your conscience and blow the bridge. The battalion will be isolated and subject to surrender, but it increases the chance of a successful demolition from 16% to 50%. The delay is worth the sacrifice.

In the more likely event that the battalion has been eliminated or forced to retreat, the German must weigh the small likelihood of success of a 16% demolition attempt against pressing needs elsewhere. The number of likely Allied impulses



8  
remaining available for bridge repair should also influence the decision.

◆◆ Blow bridge 50-51.

**52. Montebourg:** Due to the American supply problems on Utah before linkup, a northern advance towards Cherbourg is unlikely as long as the region is adequately garrisoned. Montebourg tends to become the magnet for this garrison because it is the most vulnerable path to successfully reinforcing Ste. Mère-Eglise. Any Point Unit which can reach the Area with an extra MF gets a 16% shot at the Keys to the Kingdom. Such a prize is worth risking air interdiction. The Allies will rarely spare an impulse to harass Montebourg, but if they do, every consideration should be given to refits for the Marcouf battery to maintain its supply interdiction on Utah.

◆◆ Seize bridge 50-52.

**54. Valognes:** The 1058th serves one of two functions. It can either regroup south to provide the lead unit in the eventual assault group that clears Pont l'Abbe, or it can join the migration to Montebourg in the quest for the Holy Bridge. In the latter course it is better moved later than sooner since a weather change and an earlier bridge seizure will allow it to actually enter Ste. Mère-Eglise on the sixth.

◆◆ Move to Montebourg and seize 50-52, or Regroup to 48.



**56. les Pleux:** With overcast, the 922nd can join the migration to Montebourg. Otherwise, just more grist for the Carentan mill.

◆◆ Regroup to Barneville (47).

◆◆ 922 to Montebourg (52) and seize 50-52, Artillery to St. Jores (45).

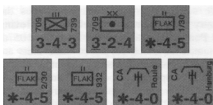


**57. Cap de la Hague:** Nebelwerfers, for all their power, are hard to use because they must occupy the Area they attack. The Germans, lacking firepower, have little choice but to find ways to employ them. On this flank, that spells Pont l'Abbe. The sooner they reach it, the earlier the airborne will make their exit. Knowing this, a smart American will leave a Fresh airborne regiment in Pont l'Abbe and forego seizing the Volognes bridge which can be easily retaken with a 50% chance by many units including some who can do it on their way to the Montebourg bridge. The Fresh unit prevents the entry of the Nebelwerfer on the 6th barring overcast weather.

So barring a successful bombardment by the 91st Artillery out of St. Sauveur, the American deployment and the weather will determine the reaction in Cap de la Hague. As long as the weather holds, so does the garrison. Should the American in Pont l'Abbe become spent, the Nebelwerfer should risk the 16% chance of disruption to air interdiction to reach it.

◆◆ Regroup to Cherbourg (58).

◆◆ 101 NW moves to 49, 920 moves to 52 and seizes 50-52.



**58. Cherbourg:** The greatest source of immediate German reinforcement is usually held motionless by the weather. Even if the German was willing to risk air interdiction with this group, he shouldn't do so before the Nebelwerfer passes through. Doing so eliminates the flank corridor which guarantees safe passage to Volognes for the Nebelwerfers. Thus restricted, this group should settle for regrouping to the south. This will preserve the Flak corridor into Pont l'Abbe for the Nebelwerfers on June 7th. Ultimately, the 709th should concentrate in St. Sauveur to gain Division integrity for the assault that clears Pont l'Abbe. The flak units should disperse to form a larger Flak corridor.

◆◆ Regroup to Valognes (54).

◆◆ 739 to Montebourg (52) to seize 50-52; Artillery to St. Jores (45); Flak to 54, 48, and 45.

**59. St. Pierre-Eglise:** The 729th is another unit which can brave air interdiction in an attempt to take the Montebourg bridge. Afterwards, it should regroup to Valognes to eventually form up with the 709th in St. Sauveur for the push on Pont l'Abbe.

◆◆ Move to Montebourg (52) to seize 50-52.

**60. Barfleur:** The AOK7 battalion is the last shot at the Montebourg bridge. It is saved for last since its mobility allows it to actually reinforce Ste. Mère-Eglise on the 6th in overcast weather if the airborne has become spent following the loss of the bridge.

◆◆ Move to Montebourg (52) to seize 50-52.

### Reinforcements:

It is impossible to predict the circumstances under which the reinforcements will arrive. The variables of the Amphibious Assault Phase alone, not to mention all of the impulses of the first day, make any suggestions pointless conjecture. However, there are some general truths that can be observed.

The longer reinforcements can be left unused without endangering Victory Point areas, the better for the Germans. Premature commitment of his reinforcements not only expose them to disruption by air interdiction, but allows the Allies to change the direction of their offensive once the German reserves are committed. Waiting for a weather change to allow safe passage across the battlefield has its virtues, but you must constantly weigh the possibility of that break in the weather never occurring. You must ask yourself, if the day ends before I get another impulse can I survive not having these units in position in the morning? Above all, you must avoid the situation of having to use your first impulse to bring in reinforcements to fill a gap at the expense of crucial moves elsewhere such as blowing the bridge off Omaha Beach.

I position Lehr in Lemans and the 12SS in Chartres for best access to Caen and coverage of

the Tilly—Villars-Bocage gap. The artillery remains in Rouen where it can regroup into a firing position in Houlogue without using either supply or an impulse. In those games where an appearance on the 7th is not mandated by events, partial entry by the Flak elements of these divisions into Thury-Harcourt (12) and Potigny (4) from where they can regroup into Aunay sur Odon (13) and Bourguebus (5) is advisable. This provides FLAK corridors into Caumont (23) and Caen (10) on the 8th. Moving Lehr to Laval (D) is not without its uses should the center require major help since the zones refit their contents for free. Lastly, units disrupted at board edge by air interdiction should consider Regroup back to the zones for free refit.

### Artillery Doctrine:

As touched upon earlier, the German must observe strict fire discipline. German artillery must be hoarded for defensive counter-battery purposes until Allied artillery in the area has been expended. The German artillery is too weak to engage in a battle of attrition which it will surely lose. Its fire missions must be saved for those occasions when success will do more than simply flip a fresh unit. Negative or even attacks against fresh units will often consume more supply than their Allied targets will need to refit. Consequently, the German Primary Target should be a spent unit since it is not only an easier target to hit, but a more expensive one to refit.

Like every rule, this one has exceptions. There will be times when a fresh unit must be the Primary Target to decrease the strength of a pending offensive or pave the way for a German assault. There will also be opportunities to disrupt a lone spent Corps artillery unit by targeting a fresh screening unit and hoping for an odd number of Attrition Points which can only be fulfilled by including the lone spent unit as a secondary target.

But on the whole, German artillery must bear the brunt of the Allied offensive in silence. Clear impulses must be spent harassing the Allied flanks and preparing for the assault and movement opportunities that Overcast impulses generate.

### Supply:

Disdaining daytime movement for night regroup whenever possible saves not only casualties to air interdiction but supply as well. Daylight moves and retreats should consider the most efficient depot locations and use night regroup to scatter as necessary.

By observing strict movement restrictions, the German should be able to hoard supply reserves sufficient to neutralize most Allied impulse purchases. Keep a close eye on the Supply Track. If you have nine points in reserve, it may be worth foregoing refit of another unit to buy an impulse instead in a Clear Weather day. Shortening a day with an Overcast forecast is less worthwhile. Save your reserves for the next Clear weather forecast.

Lastly, weigh the value of refitting disrupted units. Will they be fresh again in time to make a contribution or are the supplies spent in their refit

(Continued on pg. 43)

where this rule applies are successful German counterattacks, Weather Changes, and failed critical attacks. One factor which must weigh in on this decision is the probability that the reroll will result in a situation more acceptable to the Allied player.

A second factor which needs to be considered when rerolling any die roll to offset an unacceptable situation is the negative impact any reroll would have. This second factor is largely dependent upon the Impulse in which the Advantage will be used for the purpose of offsetting the negative event.

For example, if the German player achieves an Overrun versus a lone Allied unit, the Advantage, by default, will be lost. If a reroll also results in a German Overrun, then the Sunset DRM can be modified to end the day. In this situation, if the German player takes the Advantage on Impulse 2, then the -1 Sunset DRM will apply through a significant portion of the Turn. In this case, it is probably better to surrender the Advantage without a reroll. On the other hand, if the German player takes the Advantage on Impulse 9, any negative Sunset DRM will probably not have any great impact on the length of day remaining. The logic used in the example also applies in deciding if Weather Changes should be rerolled.

There are cases where the Advantage should probably not be used. Examples are stalemates during the initial landings or failed bridge repair attempts.

A stalemate during the initial landing may be viewed as detrimental to the Allied effort, as much as a failed initial landing. This, however, is not the case. A stalemate during the initial landing does succeed in negating the German fortification bonus for that beach, and all but one of the landed units, barring counterattack, will be available for action on the June 7th Turn. Rerolling the attack may result in a lost battle. This would set back the Allied cause, as all units which landed would be Disrupted at level 1, and the earliest these units would be available for action would be the June 8th Turn. Further, such units will likely be the target of determined German attacks. Thus, the Allied player should learn to accept his fate on a stalemated initial landing.

Failed bridge repair attempts should rarely, if ever, be rerolled. This goes against the stated premise that no Allied Impulse should be dependent upon a successful bridge repair.

Rerolling a failed, but expected, Overrun is a nebulous condition, because a successful Overrun yields definite advantages, which can, hopefully, be exploited in future Impulses. However, yielding the Advantage for this purpose suffers from allowing the German to be able to react to the Allied threat, and to hold the Advantage to potentially thwart Allied exploitation moves.

This discussion of the Advantage has provided only general direction on its use, as no discussion could be comprehensive. The bottom line is that the current situation is a primary factor which weighs heavily on deciding to use the Advantage. Although two changes have been made to increase the importance of the Advantage, the Allied player should not be afraid to use it, but neither should he squander it.

**CONCLUSION**

While this article has gone to some length about specific strategies which should lead to an Allied victory, there are numerous strategies and concepts which have not been covered. Those are left for players to discover themselves and to discuss in future issues. However, there are several concepts which apply to any strategy the Allied player adopts. First and foremost, be aggressive and keep the tempo of the game on your terms. The only successful Allied offensive is one which requires the German player to react to Allied moves. Second, develop a plan, but be flexible enough to adapt to the changing battlefield. The Allied player's attack should take the path of least resistance toward achieving victory. Finally, the Allied player should remain flexible to deal with setbacks, and to seize any opportunities which present themselves. While following these guidelines will not necessarily assure an Allied victory, applying them will definitely enhance the chance of success.



**IN DEFENSE OF NORMANDY**

(Continued from pg. 8)

largely wasted? Can they be regrouped to a zone or Cherbourg for free refit? Are they the type or strength that justifies extra consideration?

**The Advantage:**

Possession of the Advantage in *BKN* is even more important than in the preceding games of this series. That statement is obvious on the basis of its value as a victory point alone. More important, however, is its ability to forgive a losing assault and a weather change or short day in a single usage.

The importance of this to the Allied player is enormous. Therefore, the Advantage is worth no less to the German simply to deny its use to the Allies. Consequently, the German will be less prone to temptation to use it and should hoard the Advantage as long as possible. However, in this game the Advantage can be forcibly taken without consent of the owner. Indeed, much of the strategy of the game revolves around those possibilities. So both players must be aware of the opportunities to gain or lose the Advantage in the near term and consider that too when weighing the decision to spend it. Despite its obvious importance, I can't recall a single game in which the Advantage did not change hands several times. I cannot say that about any of the other games in this series.

**ARTICLES WANTED**

We need all the articles we can get on Avalon Hill's more recent games of strategy. If you have an idea, no matter how far-fetched it may seem, we want to see it. Below is a list of the games we would like to cover in the next year.

The new Avalon Hill computer games:

*KINGMAKER*  
*OPERATION CRUSADER*

also

*BLACKBEARD*  
*BREAKOUT: NORMANDY*  
*GUERRILLA*  
*HISTORY OF THE WORLD*

*MAHARAJA*  
*ROAD KILL*  
*TYRANNO EX*  
*WRASSLIN'*  
*NEW WORLD*

(in particular, Series Replays and Variants)

**Civil War Series:**  
*STONEWALL JACKSON'S WAY*  
*HERE COME THE REBELS*  
*ROADS TO GETTYSBURG*

**Smithsonian Series Games:**  
*D-DAY*  
*MUSTANG*  
*BATTLE OF THE BULGE*  
*GETTYSBURG*  
*WE THE PEOPLE*

We'll look at any kind of article you'd like to send (series replays, variant rules, scenarios, rules analysis). However, try to keep your articles to under 10 pages (double-spaced) in length. And as always, if you've got maps or other graphics to support your idea, send them also. If these games are unfamiliar to you, now is your chance to go out and buy them. If you are the more traditional "wargamer" and none of these titles interest you, consider this: You could write a game analysis article on how these games are better or worse than our older systems. Literally, anything goes. You won't scare us with a strange idea.

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