

# TAC NEWS

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## BLOODY BURON

### The First Battle of the 9th Canadian Brigade in Normandy: 7 June 1944

**T**he Royal Canadian Army's contribution to the campaign in Northwest Europe consisted of the 2nd and 3rd Infantry Divisions, the 4th Armoured Division and the 2nd Armoured Brigade. Of these formations, however, only the 3rd Infantry Division and the 2nd Armoured Brigade were present from the D-Day landings on the 6th of June until the end of the war.

The composition of these formations can be found on page 2.

Because of their participation in the assault from the sea both these units were equipped somewhat differently from the usual War Establishment (or TO&E in American parlance).

In the 3rd Infantry Division these differences were found primarily in the use of American M-7 Priests instead of the 25 pdr. howitzer by the artillery regiments, which were increased in number to include a fourth regiment. The light anti-aircraft regiment utilized only self-propelled instead of towed Bofors anti-aircraft guns and the anti-tank regiment was restructured to use a mixture of 6lbr anti-tank guns and M-10s armed with the 3" gun.

The 2nd Armoured Brigade had two squadrons in each of two of its three armoured regiments armed with Sherman V DD tanks for the D-Day land-

ing. The balance of the brigade used Sherman III tanks, which soon also replaced the DD tanks as these became casualties in the first few days of fighting. The initial assault on the 6th of June went more or less to plan, although the unavoidable frictions of war meant that the final objectives for the first day were not met. Nevertheless, the two assault brigades successfully consolidated the beachhead and the reserve brigade, the 9th under the command of Brigadier General D. G. Cunningham, was leapfrogged forward to take up the advance. By evening the advance guard of the 9th Brigade, the North Nova Scotia Highlanders under Lt. Col. C. Petch, accompanied by the 27th Armoured Regiment (The Sherbrooke Fusiliers) commanded by Lt. Col. M. B. K. Gordon, had taken up a position around Villons-les-Buissons.

At 0745 on June 7 the advance was resumed, using the same tactical order as it had used on the day before. In front, the Reconnaissance Troop of the 27th Armoured Regiment probed with their Stuart tanks. Next came "C" Company of the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, mounted on the carriers of the regiments Carrier Platoon. Behind them was a Machine Gun Platoon of "C" Company of the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (M.G.), a troop of M-10s from the 3rd Anti-Tank Regiment, and the balance of

the North Nova Scotia Highlanders Support Company. Following this vanguard was the advance guard riding on the tanks of the 27th Armoured Regiment: "A" Company on the right, "B" Company on the left and "D" Company in the rear.

Apart from several anti-tank guns that were quickly knocked out, the initial advance encountered only light opposition. By noon the village of Buron was secured by "C" Company. After a brief pause, "C" Company, accompanied by the rest of the vanguard, moved forward to take Authie. After its capture this force then proceeded to dig in south of the village. The German opposition now began to make itself felt with heavy mortar fire from the vicinity of St. Contest. Accordingly, the remaining infantry was dismounted from the tanks, "A" Company digging in southeast of Gruchy, and "B" and "D" Companies taking cover in Buron. The armour subsequently deployed between the towns of Buron and Authie, with the Reconnaissance Troop's Stuarts far in advance in Franqueville.

Problems arose. The advance had outrun its artillery support, the 14th Field Regiment, which was moving forward to new fire positions. Naval fire support also became unavailable because of a radio failure.

While the advance guard of the 9th Brigade was in this dangerously exposed position, the 12th SS Panzer Division (*Hitlerjugend*) launched a counterattack. The leading echelon of the division, under the command of *Standartenfuhrer* Kurt Meyer, consisted of the three battalions of his 25th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment, the 2nd Battalion of the 12th SS Panzer Regiment and the 3rd Battalion of the 12th SS Artillery Regiment. Meyer's Kampfgruppe moved into the Caen area in the early afternoon of June 7, its march having been delayed by the attentions of the Allied air forces. It was deployed with all three infantry battalions in line: the 1st on the right, the 2nd in the center in the vicinity of St. Contest, and the 3rd just to the south of Meyer's command post in the Ardenne Abbey. Two companies of the panzer battalion were placed in support of the 1st Panzer Grenadier Battalion and two companies took up positions on either flank of the 3rd Panzer Grenadier Battalion. The

artillery was located just to the north of the city of Caen, the 7th 8th and 9th Batteries each respectively supporting the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Panzer Grenadier Battalions. The 10th Battery, armed with long-range 100-mm guns, could be called upon by any of the three battalions.

Meyer's orders called for a northward advance, with the attack led by the 3rd Panzer Grenadier Battalion on the left. At 1500 the attack left its start line. Preceded by the two panzer companies, the 3rd Panzer Grenadier Battalion moved forward with two companies to the front and the third in support. The leading companies bypassed Authie, leaving it to the third company. The elements of the North Nova Scotia Highlanders and the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa in Authie fought hard but were overrun. "A" Company, to the north of Authie, held off the German assault for a considerable time but under a barrage of artillery and mortar shells it

too was overrun. The tanks of the Sherbrooke Fusiliers clashed with the panzers of the 12th SS south of Buron with losses to both sides.

The German attack then pushed into Buron. Two waves of German infantry, followed by tanks, pressed into the town and forced the Canadians to retreat. By this time, however, artillery support was again available and a counterattack, aided by tanks from the 27th Armoured Regiment, succeeded in recapturing the town. Nevertheless, at dusk Buron was abandoned and the Canadians fell back to a position around Villons-les-Buissons. The Germans in turn dug in on a line running south of Buron and through St. Contest.

The other two battalions in Meyer's Kampfgruppe had a similar story to tell. The 1st and 2nd Battalions were drawn into a struggle with the lead elements of the 9th British Infantry Brigade for the villages of Galmanche and Cambes to the

*continued on page 4*

## Canadian Forces: D-Day

### 2nd Armoured Brigade

6th Armoured Regiment (1st Hussars)  
 10th Armoured Regiment (The Fort Garry Horse)  
 27th Armoured Regiment (The Sherbrooke Fusiliers)

### 3rd Infantry Division

7th Reconnaissance Regiment (17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars)

The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (M.G.)

7th Infantry Brigade

The Royal Winnipeg Rifles  
 The Regina Rifle Regiment  
 1st Battalion, The Canadian Scottish Regiment

8th Infantry Brigade

The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada  
 Le Regiment de la Chaudiere  
 The North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment

9th Infantry Brigade (Highland Brigade)

The Highland Light Infantry of Canada  
 The Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders  
 The North Nova Scotia Highlanders

Artillery

12th Field Regiment  
 11th, 16th, 43rd Field Batteries  
 13th Field Regiment  
 22nd, 44th, 78th Field Batteries  
 14th Field Regiment  
 34th, 66th, 81st Field Batteries  
 19th Army Field Regiment  
 55th, 63rd, 99th Batteries  
 3rd Anti-Tank Regiment  
 4th, 52nd, 94th, 105th Anti-Tank Batteries  
 4th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment  
 32nd, 69th, 100th Light Anti-Aircraft Batteries

Engineers

3rd Field Park Company  
 6th, 16th, 18th Field Companies

### Bloody Buron Normandy Campaign: June 7, 1944

Having consolidated their D-Day beachhead, the Canadian 9th Bde. was leap-frogged forward to spearhead the drive west of Caen. They advanced south, occupying Buron and Authie. Their van reached out toward Franqueville. Just as the Canadian artillery was repositioning, the SS struck.

Sensing the vulnerable flank of their enemy, Kampfgruppe Meyer of the 12th SS Hitlerjugend Division savagely counterattacked. Many Canadian positions were overrun before the front could be stabilized. Both units were in their first battle: this game recreates their baptism of fire and blood.



	<b>German</b>	<b>Elements</b>	<b>Cohesion</b>
		Kampfgruppe Meyer	<b>17</b>
12th SS Panzer Division			
Regimental HQ			
25th SS PzGren Rgt		1xGHQ (+1) (FO)/Kubelwagen	
3rd Bttn			
25th SS PzGren Rgt		1xInf. HQ (FO)/ Kubelwagen	
9th Company		3xInfantry '44	
		1xInfantry Support	
10th Company		3xInfantry '44	
		1xInfantry Support	
11th Company		3xInfantry '44	
		1xInfantry Support	
12th Company		3x8cm Mortar (3)	
		1x75mm PAK40 ATG/Light Tractor	
		1x 75mm Infantry Gun/Light Truck	
2nd Bttn/12th SS Panzer Rgt.			
		1xPz IV HQ	
5th Company		4xPz IV	
6th Company		4xPzIV	
3rd Bttn/12th SS Artillery Rgt.			
9th Battery		1x150mm Field Gun (2) OFF MAP	
10th Battery		1x100mm sFK18 (2) OFF MAP	

	<b>Canadian</b>	<b>Advance Guard</b>	<b>Cohesion</b>
		9th Canadian Infantry Brigade	<b>15</b>
Advanced Guard HQ			
		1xGHQ(+1)(FO)/Jeep	
Vanguard		1xInfantry HQ (FO)/Jeep	
Recce Trp/ 27th Arm. Rgt		2x Stuart V [R]	
C Co./ NNS Highlanders		3xInfantry/Carriers	
Support Co./ NNS Highlanders		1x3" Mortar(3)/Carrier	
		1xEngineer/Carrier	
		1x6lbr ATG/Carrier	
MG Pltn/C Co/ CHO		1xInfantry Support/Carrier	
Troop/ 3rd Anti-Tank Rgt.		1xM-10	
NNSHighlanders			
		1xInfantry HQ (FO)/Jeep	
A Company		3xInfantry	
B Company		3xInfantry	
D Company		3xInfantry	
27th Armoured Regiment (HQ)			
		1xSherman (HQ)	
AA Troop		1xCrusader II AA (20mm)	
A Squadron		3xSherman, 1xFirefly	
B Squadron		3xSherman, 1xFirefly	
C Squadron		3xSherman, 1xFirefly	
14th Field Artillery Regiment			
34th Battery		2x105mm Priest (2) OFF MAP	
66th Battery		2x105mm Priest (2) OFF MAP	
81st Battery		2x105mm Priest (2) OFF MAP	

**SCENARIO LENGTH: 20 TURNS**

### SPECIAL RULES:

The Canadian artillery support is not available until after turn 10.

The two additional weapons used in this scenario have the following values:

Vehicle/weapon	Points	Firepower AP / HE	Range AP / HE	Defense [armoured]	Speed W/T/F	Cargo Capacity	Transport Requirement
Crusader II AA (20mm)	32	2/4	10/10	[4]	12T	-	-
100mm sFK18	183	4/8	152/152	3	0	-	14

**INITIAL DEPLOYMENT:**

The Canadian player deploys first as follows:

- The Advance Guard HQ and B & D Cos, North Nova Scotia Highlanders deploy within 4" of Buron.
- A Company, North Nova Scotia Highlanders deploys within 4 inches of Gruchy.
- The Vanguard, except for the Recce Troop of the 27th Arm. Rgt., deploys within 4" of Authie. The Recce Troop deploys within 3" of Franqueville.
- The 27th Armoured Regiment deploys between Buron and Authie.

The German player deploys secondly as follows:

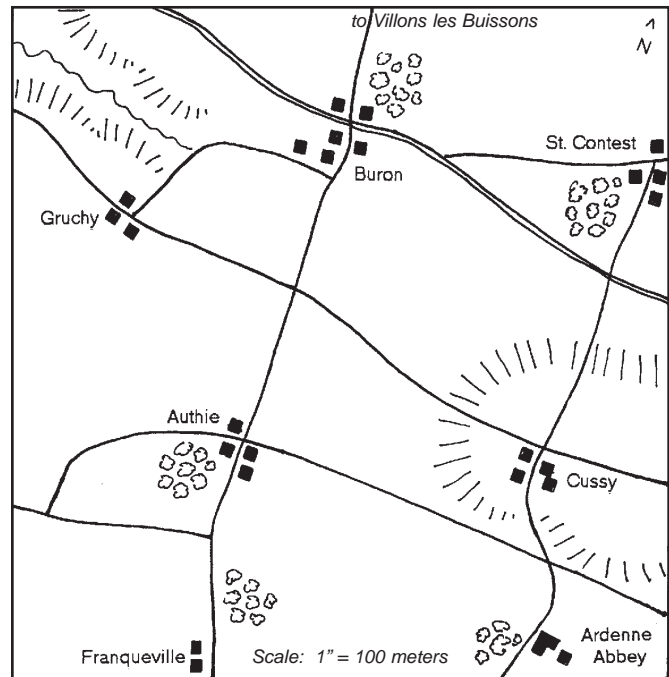
Rgt HQ/25th SS Pz Gren Rgt. is located in the Ardenne Abbey. The 3rd Bttn/ 25th SS Pz Gren Rgt. and the two Cos. of the 2nd Bttn/12th SS Panzer Rgt. all deploy within 14" to the southwest of the Abbey. Historically, the panzers were deployed with one company on either flank of the infantry.

**VICTORY CONDITIONS:**

Victory goes to whichever player holds the majority of the towns of Authie, Gruchy, and Buron.

**TERRAIN SUGGESTIONS:**

- The map should measure approximately 36" by 36".
- Terrain is Open and maximum sighting distance is 40".
- The east-west road through Buron is a good road, the other roads should be considered to be poor.



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north of St. Contest. The fighting finally died out at dusk when Meyer ordered these formations to go "over from attack to defense".

Casualties were heavy on both sides. The North Nova Scotia Highlanders lost 242 men, of which 84 were fatalities and 128 prisoners. The Sherbrooke Fusiliers had 21 tanks destroyed and 7 damaged. The records of German losses are somewhat less exact. The Canadian tankers claimed to have knocked out 31 tanks, although the Germans only admitted to a loss of 6. No figures on the casualties sustained by the German infantry are available but anger at their losses may be responsible for the subsequent murder of 23 Canadian prisoners of war on the evening of June 7.

The 9th Infantry Brigade had not fought its first battle well. Although it fought bravely it had been caught off balance and had not coordinated its various components efficiently. This was especially evident in the lack of support offered by the artillery early in the battle. In contrast the German attack, also

their first fight, was well coordinated and carried out. Fortunately for the Canadians the German attack was not strong enough to achieve more than a successful local counterattack. Nevertheless it would be more than a month before the ground lost to the 12th SS would be recovered by the Canadians.

by Ryan Toews

**Sources:**

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