

TAC NEWS

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SAINT BARTHELEMY - AUGUST 7, 1944

INCLUDES A MICRO SQUAD® SCENARIO!



By the end of July 1944, the Americans had successfully broken through the choking hedgerows of Normandy and were engaging the Nazis in the open country north of the Seine. An exultant George Patton was leading the newly activated US Third Army as it poured south through the narrow corridor at Avranches into the Brittany peninsula and southeast toward the heart of France. Fearing Patton's breakout would precipitate a general collapse of German forces on the western front, Hitler ordered his overall commander in France, Field Marshal von Kluge, to assemble a powerful armored strike force to launch a counteroffensive toward Avranches. If successful, this counteroffensive, dubbed "Operation Luttich," would split the Third Army in two, stop the Allied breakout in its tracks, and restore the German strategic position in the west.

By August 6th, preparations for Operation Luttich were complete. The operation was doomed almost from the start. Instead of the eight Panzer and Panzergrenadier divisions originally slated for the

operation, von Kluge was able to assemble only parts from some five divisions. 116th Panzer was positioned north of the Sée River, so as to attack the northern shoulder of the American penetration. To its immediate south, 2nd Panzer and 1st SS Panzer (*Liebestandarte*) were to attack along the Sée valley and drive directly toward Avranches. 2nd SS Panzer (*Das Reich*), reinforced by elements of the 17th SS Panzergrenadiers, was to seize the vital crossroads town of Mortain and continue to drive southwestward.

Defending Mortain and the Sée River valley was the veteran 30th Infantry Division, commanded by Major General Leland Hobbs and subordinated to VII Corps, U.S. 1st Army. Hobb's division had only relieved 1st Infantry Division on August 6th, and had not completed deploying in its new positions before the Germans struck just after midnight on August 7th. Although caught by surprise due to tardy warning by "Ultra" of the impending German attack, Hobb's command was deployed in depth. The division's 119th Regiment was situated well to rear of the front lines straddling the main roads leading west from St. Barthelemy. Divisional artillery occupied positions several miles west of the north-south road between Mortain and St. Barthelemy.

The 120th Regiment was positioned in and around Mortain. The majority of 2/120th occupied the dominating high ground to the east, Hill 314. Despite being completely surrounded and assaulted by elements of 2nd SS Panzer and 17th SS Panzergrenadier divisions during the next several days, the 2/120th gave better than it got, calling down murderous artillery fire that stopped several

determined German assaults cold. However, the cost to the battalion was high. Over 300 men of the original 700 caught on the hill were casualties by the time the unit was relieved on August 12th.

Two platoons of Company F, along with a platoon of 3-inch anti-tank guns of the 823rd Tank Destroyer battalion, and a platoon of 57mm anti-tank guns from the regimental anti-tank company manned a roadblock immediately north of Mortain at L'Abbaye Blanche. This small force dominated the only two roads connecting the north and south wings of the German counterattack, causing a disruption to the German plan totally out of proportion to its strength. Hill 285, west of Mortain, was controlled and retained by the 1/120th throughout the battle despite repeated attempts by Kampfgruppe Ullrich, formed from elements of the 2nd SS Panzer Division, to dislodge it. 3/120th was positioned southwest of Mortain, controlling the road leading east from Mortain to Saint Hillare.

To the north, the first battalion of the 117th Regiment was positioned in and around St. Barthelemy, another vital crossroads town the Germans would have to capture in order to drive west along the Sée River valley. Company A was positioned the northern outskirts of the town, opposite the 2nd Panzer Division, which assembled directly to the northeast. Company B was deployed to the northwest, covering the road from St. Barthelemy northwest to Le Mesnil-Tove. Company C was deployed south of the town with Company A of the division's 105th Engineer Battalion tied into its left flank. The remainder of the 117th Regiment was located roughly a mile east of the town.

The intermittent shelling of their positions and the sounds of tanks and halftracks assembling into their attack positions alerted American units in and around St. Barthelemy to the impending German attack. The southern element of 2nd Panzer Division, reinforced by units from 1st SS Panzer, did not begin its advance until 0500 hours. This delay allowed a platoon of 3-inch anti-tank guns from the 823rd Tank Destroyer battalion, commanded by Lieutenant George Greene, to deploy on the southern and southeastern outskirts of the town. Panthers of the 1st SS Panzer advanced from the south and southwest, overrunning a weakly held roadblock and headlong

into the positions held by C/117 and A/105. Simultaneously, PzKfz IVs belonging to 2nd Panzer division advanced from the northeast against Company A.

Attacking the town from three directions, German tanks and infantry encountered fierce resistance including small arms mortar, and anti-tank fire from both 57mm and 3-inch anti-tank guns. Firing at point blank range, often hidden behind hedgerows, and obscured by dense fog, more than a few Panthers and MkIVs were destroyed before the defenders were either killed, forced to surrender or retreat. Several German vehicles were destroyed in the resulting chaos by American infantry armed with bazookas, lying in ambush or actively hunting German tanks and halftracks. The 3-inch anti-tank guns commanded by Lieutenant Greene wreaked havoc among those German tanks advancing from the northeast and south, but, Panthers belonging to 1st SS Panzer advancing from the southwest were able to turn the American positions.

Although fighting against the equivalent of an entire Panzer division, troops of the 1/117 grudgingly gave ground, delivering a bloody account of themselves and imposing a serious delay on the German timetable. By the time the Germans had cleared the town and resumed their advance, the fog was starting to lift, allowing Allied fighter-bombers to make their presence felt.

- George Chrestensen



SAINT BARTHELEMY

U.S. FORCES

Cohesion = 16

ELEMENTS, 30TH INFANTRY DIVISION

Company C, 117th Infantry Regiment

1st Platoon: 3 x Infantry '43

2nd Platoon: 3 x Infantry '43

3rd Platoon: 2 x Infantry '43

Support Platoon: 1 x 60mm Mortar (3), 1 x MMG

Company HQ: 1 x Infantry HQ (+0 GHQ),
1 x Infantry '43

Company A, 105th Engineer Battalion

1st Platoon: 3 x Engineer Infantry '43

2nd Platoon: 2 x Engineer Infantry '43

3rd Platoon: 2 x Engineer Infantry '43

Company HQ: 1 x Infantry HQ, 1 x MMG

Elements, Regimental ATG Company, 117th Infantry Regiment

3 x 57mm ATG, 3 x Light Truck

Elements, 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion

2 x 76mm ATG,

2 x M3 Halftrack (.30 cal)

GERMAN FORCES

Cohesion = 15

ELEMENTS, 1ST S.S. PANZER DIVISION

Elements, S.S. Panzer Regiment 1

1st Platoon: 4 x PzV Panther

2nd Platoon: 3 x PzV Panther

Company HQ: 1 x PzV Panther HQ

Elements, S.S. Panzergrenadier Regiment 1

1st Platoon: 4 x P/G Infantry '44,
4 x SdKfz 251/1

2nd Platoon: 4 x P/G Infantry '44,
4 x SdKfz 251/1

3rd Platoon: 3 x P/G Infantry '44,
3 x SdKfz 251/1

Support Platoon: 2 x SdKfz 251/2,
2 x SdKfz 251/9

Company HQ: 1 x Infantry HQ,
1 x SdKfz 251/1

Kampfgruppe Headquarters

1 x Infantry HQ (+1 GHQ),

1 x SdKfz 251/1,

1 x SdKfz 10/20mm

INITIAL DEPLOYMENT:

Units belonging to Company C/117th Infantry Regiment are placed in U.S. setup area 1. Units belonging to Company A/105th Engineer Battalion are placed in U.S. setup area 2 (see map). Units belonging to the regimental ATG platoon and 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion may be placed in either setup area or anywhere north. The U.S. player may deploy up to 26 light improved positions and 2 roadblocks.

German units enter the map anywhere along the south edge of the map in the German entry area on game turn 1 (see map).

VICTORY CONDITIONS:

German Victory: Exit at least twelve (12) or more stands off the north edge of the map by the end of turn 20. Suppressed and/or Disorganized stands may be used to fulfill this requirement. Empty halftrack stands do not count towards this requirement.

American Victory: Eliminate 12 or more German stands before the German player achieves his victory conditions.

OPTIONAL RULES:

Refer to Micro Squad: The Game - WWII, 2nd Edition

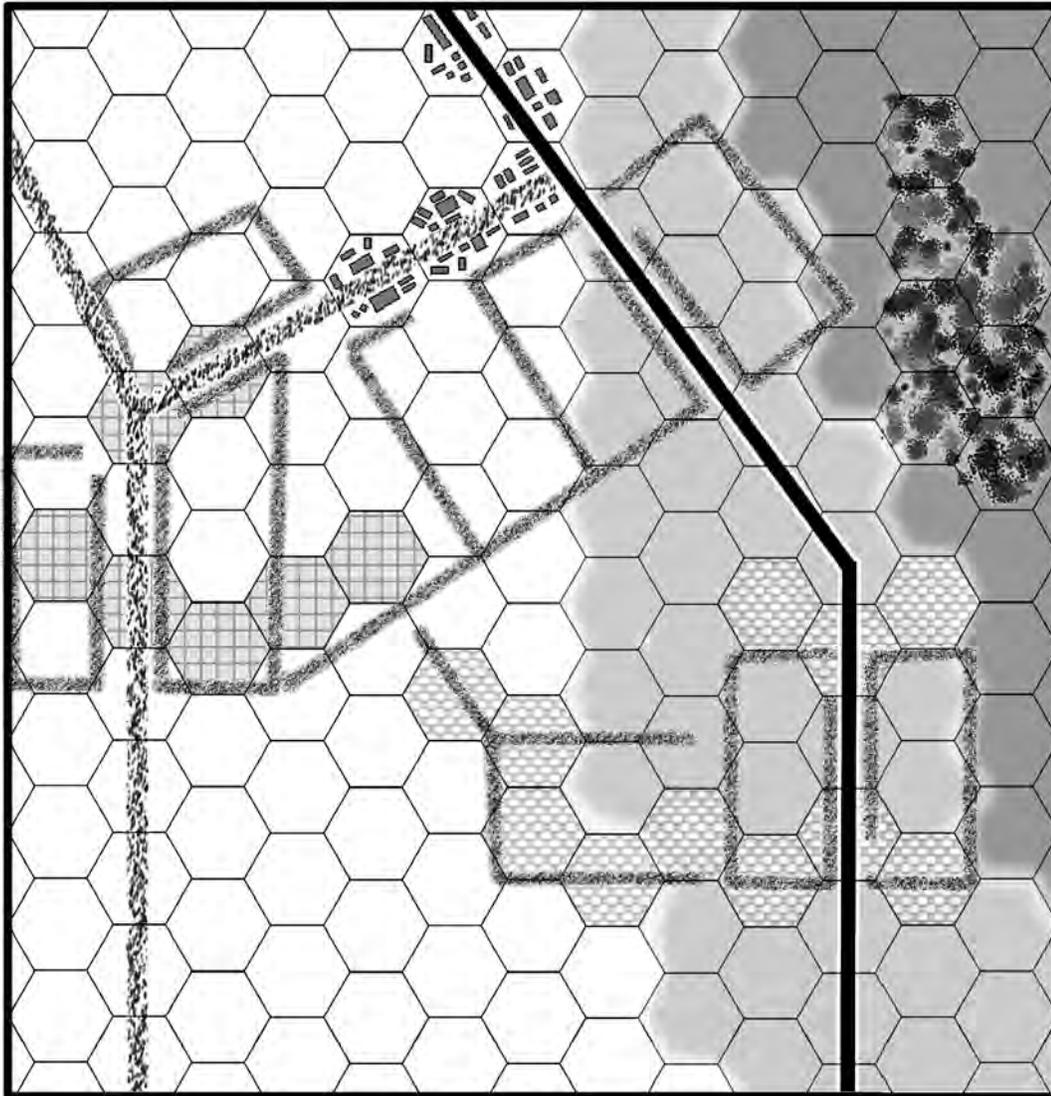
The Hot Shot!- Rule 12.2, p.24

Intuitive Action- Rule 12.3, p.24

This battle occurred during the foggy morning hours of August 7th. Therefore, sighting distance is limited to 200 yards (8 inches). Movement allowances are halved, round down any fractions. Machine gun area fire is limited to 8 inches as well (see rule 7.5, p.6).

SCENARIO LENGTH - 20 TURNS

TERRAIN: The map should be approximately 46" (East to West) x 48" (North to South)



-  Clear Level 1
-  Clear Level 2
-  Clear Level 3
-  Slope
-  Woods
-  Hedgerows
-  Poor Road
-  Good Road
-  Light Buildings
-  US Set Up Area 1
-  US Set Up Area 2

GERMAN ENTRY AREA

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sWS with
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