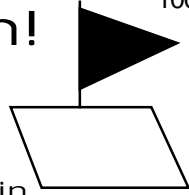


Panzer Marsch!

100



by Kurt Martin

The quality of the Panzer unit faced by the troopers of the 82nd Airborne in *Against All Odds* is indicated by its name: Ersatz. The definition of *ersatz* is *substitute or spare*. The use of the Panzer Ersatz und Ausbildungs Abteilung 100 in the front line actions following D-Day is indicative of the state of German arms in June 1944.

The Abteilung was formed in April 1941 as a training unit, getting new recruits inside of tanks without tying down front line panzers. The unit had to make due with whatever tanks it could be spared. By the time the Abteilung collided with Gavin's men on 6 June, its TO & E consisted of a motley collection of French armor of the Hotchkiss and Renault marks, plus one Somua. Theoretically, one Panzer III (likely of Battle of France 1940 vintage) was on the unit strength chart. See the TO & E table for a breakdown of the composition of the Abteilung on D-Day.

In the spring of 1942 the Abteilung began serving as an anti-partisan unit on the Western Front. Under the command of the Kommandant Gross Paris (Greater Paris), the panzer unit maintained regular rounds to guard the rail lines around Paris and the Metro. Increasing acts of sabotage required such a posting. A detachment was later taken from the unit for assignment to Vercors in south-east France near Grenoble to fight the *Maquis*, active in that area.

The Western Front anti-partisan posting was a far cry from the action most of the unit's officers were used to. Most of the Abteilung's officers were convalescing from wounds suffered on the Eastern Front. These were men experienced in battle, albeit away from front line action to retain their combat effectiveness. And their assigned weapons systems did little to fill the gap likely left in their elan and health. The tanks were ex-French tanks, as previously stated—some of which ran on coal gas or lacked turrets—useful for training their troops in the bare essentials of panzer warfare but lacking in utility to get soldiers ready for actual combat.

The Germans made some efforts to improve these tanks. In 1940, the French tanks were helpless in the face of German tactical superiority, much of it due to the use of radio communications between the Panzers, in 1940. The French tanks were radioless. The French tanks in German service were retrofitted with radios, and a 2 meter rod aerial on the front fender. The commander's cupola was modified with a German split hatch. And in the case of the 37mm gun, a recent piece of information based on German records is that an Armor Piercing Composite Rigid, or "Arrowhead" round was developed and provided for this weapon. (It is this round that is depicted in the GFET tables in the game. Ed.) The round was not a success. Despite the harder warhead on the APCR round compared to the

portion of the Cotentin Peninsula. There was little time for additional training, the men of the unit joined French laborers in the frenzied construction of Rommelspargel, 'Rommel's Asparagus', glider impediments ordered planted in the fields in the final weeks before D-Day.

Oberleutnant Weber, in charge of 1. Kompanie, is quoted reassuring his men on the night of 5 June that the tracers that lit the sky seeking the Allied aircraft were, 'Zirkus! Nicht für uns bestimmt.' It was only a circus display, not to worry. Men of the unit went about their business, apparently unconcerned, the following morning. It would be the unfortunate fate of the poorly trained and armed Abteilung to face one of the most elite units in all the Allied armies. On the morning of 6 June, parachutes were seen hanging from the trees and the fields were dotted with the wreckage of Allied gliders. The invasion had begun!

Weber would be proved wrong and his life cut short by the very paratroopers that came to Normandy during his 'circus display'. During his normal rounds on the morning of 6 June Weber was killed. Meanwhile, dispatch riders raced around the unit. No radios were used. The Abteilung did not go over to battle readiness until 9.00 a.m. Major Bardenschlager promptly set off from the Château de Francquetot, toward headquarters of 91. Infanterie Division about a kilometer away, in Houtteville. He was never seen again (This command paralysis also affected the unit the Abteilung was attached to; the commander, Wilhelm Falley, was also killed by paratroopers before ever returning to his HQ from the exercise in Rennes).

After losing two important leaders, the unit was collected during the evening of 6 June to form a roadblock across the N803 running from Baupte to Carentan. The following morning the unit was sent piecemeal to various parts of the Cotentin front. No. 1 Platoon of 1. Kompanie went towards St. Lô and No. 2 toward Carentan. We now know the unit engaged the men of the 82nd Airborne in their strongholds along the Merderet River in the days that followed.

The Abteilung would be decimated during the Normandy battles. With so few tanks on its roster, and no replacements to be had, the Panzer Ersatz und Ausbildungs Abteilung 100 was reduced to the on-paper strength of an anti-tank company. Its sole anti-tank weaponry was the panzerfaust and the remaining Panzer soldiers made their way on bicycles. On 7 July, OB West disbanded the unit.

We move forward fifty-five years. The

TO & E of Panzer Ersatz und Ausbildungs Abteilung 100 on 6 June 1944

Battalion HQ	5 x 35R
Sicherung Platoon	3 x 35R
1. Kompanie	
1 st Platoon	
1 x Pz III (mark D?)	
4 x Pzkw 38H (Hotchkiss 35H)	
2 nd Platoon	
1 x Pzkw B-2 (Renault B1-bis)	
4 x Pzkw 38H (Hotchkiss 35H)	
3 rd Platoon	
1 x 35-S (Somua 35)	
4 x 35R (Renault R-35)	
2. Kompanie	
1 st Platoon	
5 x 35R (Renault R-35)	

standard solid shot ammunition, low muzzle velocity led it to shatter upon impact with Allied armor plate.

With only these minor improvements and limited combat experience against the *Maquis*, the Abteilung, consisting of some 25 operational Panzers was sent to Normandy in May 1944. Under the command of Major Bardenschlager, the Abteilung was deployed between Carentan and Ste. Mere Eglise. The unit was tactically responsible to the 91 Infanterie Division, which covered the central

clanking of tracks in Normandy has been replaced by the quiet repose of dead heroes and the hearty greetings to one another of returning veterans. The actions of Petersen and his bazooka and the Panzers of Panzer Ersatz und Ausbildungs Ateilung 100 can only take place again on the maps of *Against All Odds* and in the mist of veterans' memories. In the game, the armor of the Abteilung makes a number of appearances. Its maximum strength in any one scenario is a platoon, consisting of four 'Pzkw 35R' (the Renault) and one 'Pzkw 35-S' (the Somua). In each case the Panzers play a supporting role for infantry. Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to consider the use of the counter-attack by German infantry, the bedrock of their tactics in 1944. Combine this thought with the fact that Guderian's initial concept for the panzer division, as stated in *Achtung! Panzer!*, was primarily as a weapon of defense. The German battle in Normandy depicted in *AAO* lacks the sweep of the early-war period. It's a small unit defensive battle, fought field by field.

The question is how to use these armored assets on the *ATS* battlefield to best effect. Later, we can discuss if their depiction in the game is historically accurate. The Pzkw 35R presents three weapons systems for consideration: its 37mm gun can fire HE at infantry; its machine-guns can use fire against personnel, and most importantly, its mobility can be used to influence enemy use of the battlefield. This AFV has its limitations. Its one man turret, a major weakness when the tank was used against German opponents in 1940, also hampers its use in Normandy 1944. The commander must also serve as gunner and may only use his turret-mounted armament or machine-guns in one Phase. The machine-gun is best used for close-in work, using its firepower at close range, usually limited by the hedgerow terrain. The main gun, delivering 2 Gunfire Factors on the Casualty Table when achieving a hit, has a more effective range. It has a 50% chance to deliver its HE payload out to 16 hexes (a '5' HPN at a range of 9-16 hexes for a 'D' gun; chances improve at closer range, noting the terrain of the target hex will play an important role in changing these percentages), based on the target being in open ground. Cover diminishes this probability, of course, but acquisition can bring the probabilities back up again after a couple of shots.

We can conclude pretty quickly that the 35R is not much of an anti-infantry weapon taken at face value. It's thickly armored, though. The most common anti-tank weapon in the paratroopers arsenal, the bazooka, has slightly less than a 20% chance of delivering the K-KILL if it hits that '6' TURRET armor

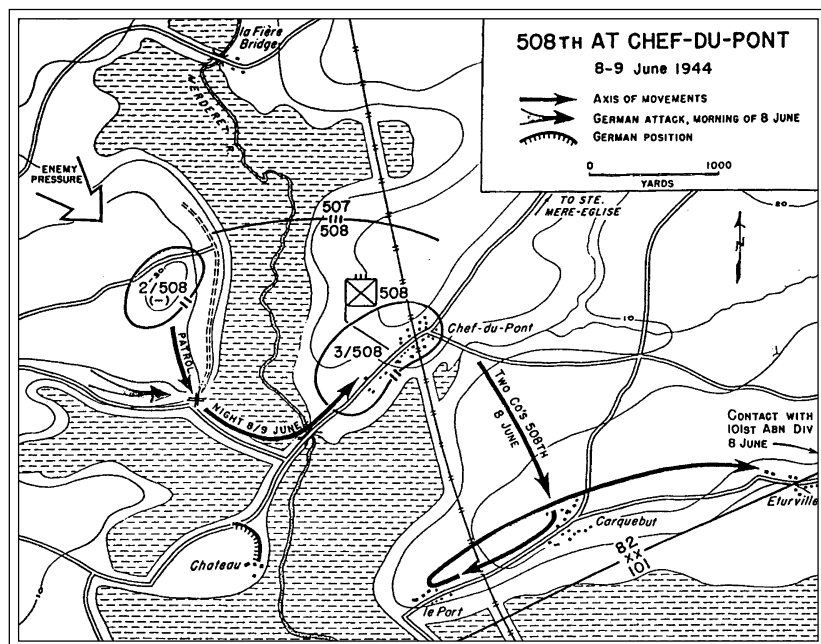
of the tank (a '2' on the K-KILL Table for a '+1' DIFF, taking into account the slight chance of an F-KILL). It can 'mission kill' the tank from the front if it achieves an F-KILL, and stop it in its tracks with an immobilizing M-KILL. If you are the German player, it is advised you keep the front of your tank facing its anti-tank antagonists and the odds will be strongly in your favor to shake off hit after hit. The odds move even more in your favor as range increases since the Bazooka uses the SCW Hit Probability Table, and HPN's drop off dramatically with range. At a range of '1', the HPN is '7'. Add just one more hex of range and it falls off to a '5', and '4' at three hexes, finally dropping off to '3' at four hexes, the maximum range of the Bazooka. The numbers are all there, out front, since the *ATS* system uses ten-sided dice. The reader can break out his calculator to boil down the final odds of an R-35 vs. Bazooka confrontation to decide who will have the upper hand.

So what does the cardboard tank commander do with this particular piece of armor in this, the *bocage* warfare setting? This question brings us back to the potential of this weapons system based on its mobility. Tanks can move quickly about the battlefield, using their full allotment of Cross Country movement points each turn or a lower amount when using Assault Movement. A quick review of our Normandy battlefield reveals that men, moving cross-country between the villages and hamlets can either stick to the roads or cross a series of fields. It is in the thick borders to these fields, the hedges and hedgerows, that the *bocage* country gets its name. Many an

Against All Odds scenario has turned on the fighting between hexrows H-R. Here one finds a series of hedgerowed-in fields around the hamlet of Cauquigny. The fight often boils down to the domination of each individual field (e.g., hexes K1-K2-K3-L1-L2-L3-L4-M2-M3-M4-N2-N3-N4 equal one 'field').

The side that can put fire into the open ground portion of a 'field' surrounded by hedgerows, the essence of fighting in the *Bocage*, can gain the upper hand. The mobility provided by tanks can assist in this pursuit by literally getting there first. Tanks can also be used to break the enemy stronghold on a field by working down the roads or open ground positions behind the hedges and bocage, disrupting the defenders ability to put fire into the field.

The threat of, as well as the actual use of, AFV overrun attacks can unhinge an American defense line. In open ground (non-building), a 35R can overrun a defender or stack of defenders, causing Casualties or breaking men in preparation for following waves of German infantry. Mobility is a real threat in the form of repeated overruns against defenders that find themselves in open ground hexes within Assault Movement range of enemy tanks. Picture an American 'platoon' line of personnel, a squad in each hex F4 and I6, plus a machine-gun team in G5. Certainly a strong group, well equipped to stop any movement from the south across the field with hex E7 as its center. Even without friendly armor support, a line like this can be difficult and time consuming to overcome.



A pair of 35Rs, one starting in H1 and another in J7 are out the LOS of the defenders, out of harm's way. They represent a major threat. The AFV in H1 can use Assault Movement to reach F4, Overrunning it. The AFV in J7 is even more dangerous as it can Overrun hexes I6 and G5.

In the above example the tanks may be attacked by surviving defenders during the Close Assault Segment *if* the battlefield *only* contained these German tanks. We assume some supporting infantry is also on the move and the American defenders will have their hands full staving of a total rout.

Use your 35-S the same way. Your Somua is simply more dangerous, with more MP and a bit more HE punch from its 47mm gun. In

the above example, if your Somua was in J7, it could have continued the Overrun right into F4 due to its '5' Assault Movement allotment.

On a more subtle level, the above scenario may not actually be acted out during any part of *your* battle. The mere threat of this kind of maneuver in the hands of the experienced commander should be enough to convince the paratroop platoon leader it's time to "bug out" before the enemy armor comes swinging around the bend at I7 or F2. Or at least get a bazooka team up front to cover that platoon. And note we haven't discussed the threat the remainder of your tank platoon represents working down the other side of the field, from D3 to A5. The theory works the same and should make the American commander think twice before leav-

ing his men out on the road.

Our discussion ends here. The astute student of armored warfare will note this all represents the use of armor in a purely infantry support role. No slashing through the lines, disrupting headquarters and artillery battles in what is known in modern-day parlance as 'deep battle'. This is the use of armor more along French lines in World War II, exactly the kind of fighting they were designed for. It also highlights one of the uses of the ATS system—*modelling* the use of individual weapons-systems like AFVs—in real detail, down to the maneuvering of individual tanks in one-minute time-slices.

82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION

The division was activated during WW I and nicknamed the "All American" because it had members from all 48 states. It spent more days at the front than any other American division and was the home of such heroes as Alvin York and Jonathan Wainwright. After WW I, the division was inactivated.

1942: The 82nd Infantry Division was reactivated under the command of Major General Omar Bradley. Division reorganized and redesignated as the Army's first Airborne Division. The Division moved to Fort Bragg, under the command of Major General Matthew Ridgway to train for parachute and glider operations.

1943: In April, the 82nd began deployment to North Africa for airborne assaults into Sicily. July, the 505 and 504 Regimental Combat Teams made parachute assaults against German and Italian forces—the first major combat jumps of an American division. In September, the 504 and 505 Combat Teams jumped into the Allied beachheads at Salerno, Italy. This airborne reinforcement saved the US 5th Army's foothold in Italy. In November, the division (less the 504) embarked for the United Kingdom to begin training for the invasion of Normandy.

1944: In January, the 504 Combat Team participated in assault landings at Anzio in Italy. The 504 would rejoin the division in April. On 6 June, the 82nd, using parachutes and gliders, made a combat assault against German forces in Normandy. Thirty-three days of unrelenting combat followed, bringing great battle honors to the division, as well as a 49% casualty rate. 17 September, the 82nd landed in Holland, some 50 miles behind enemy lines, by parachute and glider. Now fighting under the command of Brigadier General James Gavin, the 82nd captured key river and canal bridges in the vicinity of Nijmegen. This was the division's fourth and last airborne assault of the war. In December, the division was directed to move from base camp to the Ardennes region in Belgium, where the Germans had broken through the American lines. This began the Battle of the Bulge, a titanic struggle which saw the 82nd stop the elite German armor divisions cold in the fight to restore the American battle lines.

1945: The new year began with the 82nd's defeat of the German 62nd Volksgrenadier and 9th Panzer Divisions and the capture of some 2,500 prisoners. By the end of January, All-American troopers penetrated the Siegfried defense line and attacked into Germany, fighting fierce battles with the enemy until late February. Late March saw the 82nd begin the final campaign of the war which culminated on 2 May with the surrender of the German 21st Army to then Major General Gavin—145,000 enemy troops and all their equipment. From July to December, the 82nd occupied Berlin, earning the nickname "America's Guard of Honor" from General George Patton.

1946: On 12 January, the 82nd marched down Fifth Avenue in New York City in a colossal WW II Victory celebration. The Division then returned to Fort Bragg.



D-Day at la Fi re and Chef du Pont, an excerpt from...

NO BETTER PLACE TO DIE

Robert M. Murphy

I was among the fortunate paratroopers and glidermen of the World War II era 82nd Airborne Division that survived the war and returned home from Europe. 3,228 of my comrades were killed in action. Another 12,604 wounded in action. Most were killed in Normandy. Among the survivors, little was spoken or written by the average soldier regarding his personal combat experience. During the conflict his mail was censored by higher ranking officers. Few front line combat soldiers kept a diary memorializing their day to day combat experiences. The only written records were kept by the Division and Regimental headquarters staffs. These reports were prepared on a daily basis and are readily available at the U.S. National Archives in Washington D.C.

The U.S. Army Historical Division has a detailed and thorough summary of the Normandy battles by all Airborne and Utah Beach landing Divisions. These summaries named "Utah Beach to Cherbourg" were originally published in 1948 and provide detailed maps prepared by the Cartographic Division. These maps are phenomenal and priceless and selected ones are re-produced in this book. Many of the details on these maps come from officers that made personal notes and official entries in order to refresh their recollection years later when writing books or assisting military historians. These map records have great value in telling the story of the 82nd "All American" Division in Normandy.

But it was the low-ranking soldiers, the privates, sergeants and junior officers who fought the war in the front lines. These were the men who fired the rifles, bazookas and cannons and who were

wounded and bled. They endured the cold or fever and lived from hour to hour, rather than day to day. These young combat soldiers were not taking notes or keeping diaries. They weren't writers or correspondents. Most were in their early twenties with no more than a high school diploma.

These men did not write about history, they made it. Here is a small part of their story.

la Fi re Bridge Defense 1600H 6 June

After an extremely heavy artillery bombardment the Germans became very aggressive and at 1600 hours three tanks moved forward very slowly along the causeway. The panzers were followed by approximately 200 infantrymen, many of whom were intermingled with and between their supporting armor. The enemy lifted his artillery fire as his tanks and men approached our position. After the enemy barrage lifted, the men of First Battalion 505 fired their small arms and machine-guns at the attacking German infantry. The first tank rolled within forty yards of the la Fi re bridge, apparently spotting the mines out in front of the disabled German flat-bed truck. The tank hatch opened and the commander stood up for a quick look. That was the last look he ever had.

A bazooka team from either "B" or "C" Company was also on the south shore. Three hours before the tank attack, a 57mm cannon arrived and Dolan put it at the bend of the roadway above the Manoir. He positioned Elijah Starr and Harold Rose with a .30 caliber machine-gun right next to the 57mm gun. The cannon fired at the tanks until it ran out of ammunition. This 57mm gun had a direct view down the hill

but its view was partly obscured by the top of the truck on the bridge. The Germans also had a direct view of our gunners operating the cannon. Private Clarence Becker, on the left flank, fired his machine-gun at the exposed German tank commander. Every other rifleman took advantage of this stupid blunder and opened up on him and the infantry also. The bazooka-men held their fire until that moment because the tree foliage at the bend of the causeway kept them from getting a clear view of the oncoming column.

The first two tanks were some 15 or 20 yards from each other with the third tank 50 yards to their rear. When the lead tank approached to within forty yards of the bridge the two "A" Company bazooka teams manned by Private First Class Lenold Peterson with assistant gunner Private Marcus Heim, Jr. on the left and Private First Class John D. Bolderson with his assistant Gordon C. Pryne on the right, got up and fired rockets from the edge of the road. They were under the heaviest small arms fire from the other side of the causeway as well as from cannon and machine-gun fire from the tanks. Nevertheless, their bazooka fire had a training-camp calm and accuracy about it. After being hit, the lead tank fired its cannon at the Peterson/Heim team and snapped a concrete pole in front of them, sending flying chunks of concrete in the air. Peterson now ran 20 feet to get an unobstructed shot at the tanks with Heim beside him carrying a bag of extra rockets.

To this day, I cannot understand why all four of them were not killed. They fired

and reloaded with the precision of well-oiled machinery. I don't think that either team wasted a shot. The first tank received several direct hits. A tread was knocked off and within a matter of minutes it was on fire. This tank tried to get off the causeway by going to its left while the second tank tried to get around it. During all this bazooka action, our 57mm gun was firing from up on the hill and the tanks were returning fire on it.

The bazooka-teams soon went to work on the second tank. Within 30 seconds it too was on fire. Peterson put another round into the tank's turret as it swung around to take a pot shot at him. As Peterson was running out of rockets he sent Marcus Heim over the other side of the bridge to get extra ammunition. Heim ran through a hail of enemy bullets only to find the Bolderson bazooka with a hole blown through it. He picked up a bag of rockets he found and ran back to Peterson's side. They then hit the second tank seven more times. As the panzer crew tried to back away, their tank burst into flames, incinerating the crew. After firing every rocket they had, Peterson and Heim jumped into the cover of their fox-holes. In the meantime, the 57mm continued firing and eventually knocked out the last tank. All four men of the bazooka teams were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for this action.

Captain Arthur M. Stefanich and Lieutenant Gerald N. Johnson, both of Company C 505, (Sicily and Italy combat veterans) along with seventy men who dropped some distance northeast of the 505 DZ picked up their para-bundles and made a forced march directly for the la Fiére bridge, their assigned D-Day mission. They spread out and got in a quick lick against the enemy that morning by destroying a German armored truck with a Gammon grenade. They also took two prisoners along the way. When they reached the bend in the road near the la Fiére Bridge they heard the pitched battle and machine-gun fire from several different directions. Stefanich went off to find Battalion Headquarters or anyone in command. He returned about an hour later and said Major McGinity had been killed and that they better move forward. At the bend of the road where John Dolan had set up the 57mm gun they crossed over and were immediately fired upon. They escaped into

a deep roadside ditch along the hedgerow. Johnson yelled to 'Stef' that he was on fire and the Captain jumped on top of him to put out the flames. A bullet had pierced a smoke bomb in Stefanich's pocket, wounding him. Johnson had to toss his smoke bomb in the roadway as a screen to get his company commander back to C/505 troops and a medic.

Upon returning to the la Fiére upper roadway near the 57mm gun, Lieutenant Johnson noticed there was no men manning the gun. He thought that odd as he didn't see any dead gunners or men near it. He dashed over to it. He had previous artillery school training and knew he could fire the weapon if there were shells nearby. Upon examination of the cannon, he found the firing pin missing, standard procedure by artillery-men if a gun is abandoned. It was obvious that this gun had been in use and fired. There were no 57mm shells around it. The gun was now useless but it would do great service the next day (on D+2). Johnson and his C/505 men fought on the top of the hill and placed a lot of 60mm mortar and machine-gun fire down on the causeway. They also protected the "A" Company flanks from any infiltration attack which might come from the north or south side of the bridge.

When the two bazooka-teams called for more ammunition, Major Kellam, Captain Roysdon and Frank Buck went hunting for extra rockets. While they were gathering ammunition the Germans opened up with more mortar fire on the whole perimeter. Major Kellam was killed and Captain Roysdon was severely wounded and rendered unconscious from the concussion. Lieutenant Dolan took over command of the First Battalion as he was the senior officer present. Dolan and a Lieutenant Weir (Regt. HQ.) carried Roysdon back to an aid station but he died late that evening. Francis Buck stayed on until ordered out with shrapnel wounds.

During the close-up fight at the bridge, the men of Company "A" in the main line of fire along the embankment had concentrated on the large group of German infantry which had come along behind the tanks. From their dug-in positions the paratrooper's guns were able to put a grazing fire on the bridge and causeway. The result was like mowing hay. The leading files of enemy soldiers fell in their tracks

along the causeway embankment. Those Germans still beyond the bend in the causeway managed to retreat west to the vicinity of the Cauquigny church. The infantry did not attempt to force the la Fiére Bridge crossing again during the evening or the night of D-Day. The first battle for this bridge was won by our men, but at a great cost. And the Germans still owned the west side of the "bridgehead".

Company "B" 505 PIR was put into reserve in the perimeter of Company "A" so that we had an almost 360 degree defense-line. The rest of the evening we spent under heavy mortar and machine-gun fire. The mortar fire was very effective against the two forward platoons because of tree bursts. It took very little imagination on the part of the Germans to figure out just where we would be dug-in. As Dolan later recalled, "there was less than a seventy five yard frontage on either side of the bridge from where we could effectively defend. Accordingly, they could throw their mortar fire in our general direction with good results. During the night the fire let up slightly but they started early the next morning and kept it up." Dolan's third platoon took the worst beating, as they were in a heavily wooded area.

General Gavin was on a reconnaissance mission to Chef-du-Pont with Lieutenant Colonels Maloney and Ostberg along with Gavin's aide Captain Olson. The bitter fight in that area had not started by mid afternoon so Gavin left Ostberg and his 507 men to attack the bridge and the Chef-du-Pont causeway as Maloney saw fit. Gavin returned to the la Fiére Bridge late in the evening and after the battle, to find almost all the officers dead or badly wounded and the senior ranking officer in command of the First Battalion, namely, First Lieutenant John J. Dolan. Gavin sent for Lieutenant Colonel Mark Alexander, a very courageous combat leader, to take over command of the First Battalion. General Gavin was of the correct opinion that the Germans would not mount another attack that night and the Final Battalion men were now secure in defensive positions backed up by Colonel Lindquist's 508 force at the rear railroad embankment. All the American dead and wounded were being carried out under darkness with assistance of stretchers and jeeps beyond the bend of the road. While enemy artil-

lery and rifle fire was peppering the area, Private First Class Thomas A. Bresch, a company clerk, volunteered to remove the seriously wounded in a jeep he recovered from a glider. He drove it to the spot hidden by the easterly bend in the road above the Manoir and he heroically evacuated 18 men during the battle. The field at the road bend was the first aid station administered by a medical orderly and hero, Private Kelly W. Byars of A/505. The field was also the holding spot for our men killed in action. The most seriously wounded men who needed immediate attention were the first to be transported out by the jeep to the Battalion or Regimental doctors and senior Sergeant Fred Morgan.

General Gavin went back to the railroad crossing and set up his "Force A" command post for the night. Unfortunately for him, a messenger woke him and said General Ridgway wanted to see him. Gavin and his aide walked in moonlight back to the Division CP, outside Ste. Mere Eglise, and found it was a wasted trip as Ridgway was asleep. After awakening the General, he passed on the message that everything was under control, and "just do what has to be done". No doubt some nervous staff officer wanted Brigadier Jim Gavin back at the Division CP and sent the message in Ridgway's name. The astonishing occurrence was that Gavin, and his aide Olson, while heading to see Ridgway, passed a German battalion moving between Ste. Mere Eglise and the la Fiére Bridge (probably heading to Neuville au Plain after the battle with Lieutenant Turner Turnbull's heroic D/505 platoon).

It may have been Gavin's battle-hardened sixth sense that led him to place most of Colonel Lindquist's 508 Battalion 800 yards to the rear of the Manoir at the railroad embankment that first afternoon. In any event, the choice was fortuitous. The 505 First Battalion, or what remained of it, could have been wiped out by another frontal attack across the causeway while simultaneously being hit from the rear if it was not so-positioned. One 82nd man, Captain Miller, (who spoke German) did run into the German infiltration group that General Gavin missed by so few yards. Miller was taken prisoner (he escaped two days later).

The 507 force of 121 men and 21 officers pinned down with Lieutenant Colonel



Timmes' north of Cauquigny now included the Marr and Schwarzwald group that arrived after crossing the causeway when the Manoir was captured. Their location, was in the "Orchard" about one mile northwest of the la Fiére bridge and 1100 yards from the Cauquigny bridgehead. The Germans knew there was a sunken road right behind the orchard, through the marsh, and over to the east side of the Merderet. They undoubtedly felt that Timmes' men were an advance party that would attack them, so they kept constant pressure on the orchard positions. Although this group of soldiers was never charged by the enemy, they were kept under constant rifle, mortar and machine-gun fire for the next two days. Thirty five of their numbers became battle casualties during that time. Although neither force attacked the other, they kept each other in check.

One can theorize that if Timmes' men were not defending that orchard perimeter the German 1057th Grenadiers could have crossed over the marsh on the northern sunken-road at night and attacked the 505 men dug in at la Fiére from the rear as well as the 508 troopers back at the railroad embankment. Although no one on either side knew it at the time, a better strategic location for Timmes' force couldn't have been planned. Once again luck, or the intuition of veteran small unit commanders, broke our way.

Chef Du Pont on D-Day - the 'other'

bridge

After General Gavin arrived at Chef-du-Pont he and his group had a firefight about 1030 hours with a stopped armed train and its German guards. After repulsing this force, Gavin immediately went to find the other bridge running over the same Merderet River. He found the Chef-du-Pont Bridge and raised causeway over the flooded marsh one half mile outside of town, to the southwest. From there, Gavin could see Hill 30 over to his right about one mile away. It looked as if it was surrounded by the marsh (although it wasn't on the northwest side). During the original approach to Chef-du-Pont, Gavin and Maloney split up into two forces of about seventy-five men each, later meeting up at the bridge. General Gavin, Lieutenant Colonel Ostberg and their seventy-five 507 men went straight down the railroad tracks. A Frenchmen along the way said there were no Germans in Chef-du-Pont. He was wrong. There were roughly forty Germans in and around the houses but after a short skirmish the enemy took off for the causeway with the paratroopers in pursuit. General Gavin left Ostberg to seize the bridge at about 1100 hours (D-Day) as opposition seemed very light. However, outside of town the enemy had a solid defense line dug in at the Chef-du-Pont bridge and all along the causeway with machine-gun emplacements and riflemen in foxholes. Some fleeing Germans dove into their dugouts east of the bridge but most got across to the other side.

Ostberg and his men stopped firing and waited a few minutes on the east side of the bridge. A German soldier got up out of his hole with his hands in the air and called "*Kamerad*". He was shot dead from 20 feet. Another minute passed and another German from the same dugout stood up with his hands in the air. He was also shot dead. While there was no excuse for our actions, the remaining Germans could now only do one thing: fight to the finish. And that they did because they could neither escape nor surrender.

The troopers then went ahead and picked off all the enemy on their (east) side of the bridge. As the bridge rose up from the road there was no way of seeing the enemy on the other side. However, the Germans on the causeway ramp apparently saw the paratroopers as they, in turn, were picked off if they raised their heads out of the dugouts formerly occupied by the Germans.

Ostberg and a small group of his men tried to rush the bridge with bursts of machine-gun and rifle fire. Ostberg was wounded in the charge but fortunately fell into the safety of the marsh. While the afternoon wore on with continuing grenade duels and pot shots traded, Lieutenant Colonel Maloney and all of his men (except 34 troopers) were ordered to get back to the la Fiére Manoir and bridge as quickly as possible. General Gavin was afraid that a massive attempt by German artillery and tanks may carry that bridge into enemy hands. He needed every man he could collect in case of a second charge at la Fiére.

With Ostberg out of action Captain Roy E. Creek C/507 took command of the remaining defenders. The Germans, with all their 91st Division armaments in place or on call, moved up a light cannon within 600 yards of our lines. Shell fire from this enemy infantry gun took out fourteen of our troopers. While the shelling and harassing from deadly rifle fire poured in on the 507 men, some of the troopers called out to Captain Creek to look to the rear. Creek saw a line of enemy infantry to the north of him deploying 300 yards away amid the outer village farm buildings. He had to deal with an attack from the rear as well as incoming artillery with an obvious attack coming at him from across the bridge to his front. Creek figured those Germans behind him must have hidden in

the buildings and stayed there when the larger 507 Maloney-Ostberg force first arrived that morning and attacked the train and the village of Chef-du-Pont, bypassing them during the fight down to the bridge.

Like manna from heaven that evening (though it was still daylight) a glider landed intact at 2110 hours right in the middle of Creek's men. The glidermen from Battery "C" of 80th Airborne Anti-Aircraft Battalion brought forth a 57mm cannon which was quickly turned against the German gun, putting it out of action with two rounds. Meanwhile, more help arrived in the form of a Division staff officer, who earlier ran as fast as he could to get help for Ostberg and Creek, returning at the same time as the glider arrival with a platoon of troopers who systematically routed the 1057th Grenadier attacking infantry. The Germans ran and took positions all along the causeway in their dugouts. The 507 men, with their newly arrived backup force stayed on their side of the bridge. Roy Creek took a walk north along the Merderet River, now that it was getting dark, in hopes of finding a better defensive position. He found a spot where the lay of the land provided him a clear field of fire west across the marsh. His men jumped at this opportunity to redeploy to better firing positions. They could see every German in their foxholes and after ten minutes of weathering machine-gun fire across the marsh they killed or wounded all the enemy defenders except two soldiers who fled as fast as they could run.

Creek and his men moved across the Chef-du-Pont Bridge and settled in to defend it. It had taken the entire day to seize the crossing with the small force at hand. As this causeway was at least 700 yards distant to the other end they had a wide open shot at any tanks or infantry that might attack them that night or in the morning. There were 40 dead Germans in their holes or laid out on the embankment compared to 13 dead and 23 wounded Americans. The 507 PIR paratroopers succeeded in seizing the second bridge, one of the priority D-Day missions of the 82nd Airborne Division.

The 507 PIR was first into Chef-du-Pont and seized the east side of the bridge on D-Day. Clearly that honor belongs to the 507 men under Lieutenant Colonel Arthur

Maloney of the 507 PIR along with Lieutenant Colonel Ostberg and Captain Roy Creek. There might have been a few 508 troopers that the Gavin force picked up along the way, but the 507 boys took Chef-du-Pont and held that little bridge over the Merderet all day and night of D-Day. In fact, there are two interesting stories about Chef-du-Pont. There's the one account of the men with Roy Creek being "saved by the bell" by the glider that floated in with the 57mm cannon (recounted above). The other incident concerns Maloney, who was a big 230 pound six-footer. He was fighting his way to the Chef-du-Pont Bridge on the afternoon of D-Day. Under cover of a white phosphorus grenade he got onto the bridge. A German threw a potato masher grenade at him. He turned and ran to get out of harm's way but the enemy grenade exploded and threw Maloney up into the air. While up in the air his legs were still running, causing the men to laugh at the "old man" running like hell in mid air.

On 7 June, Colonel Lindquist and his 508 force relieved Captain Creek and all his 507 men at about 1600 hours. The 508 men continued the Chef-du-Pont Bridge seizure and then began the attack mission across the causeway. They were successful by the night of 8 June. The 508 had forced the Germans across the Chef-du-Pont causeway.

The D-Day action was concluded with the 505 Parachute Infantry Regimental Combat Team securely dug in at their triangular positions in the Ste. Mere Eglise area. The First Battalion was dug in at the la Fiére Bridge after their fight for the Manoir and their man-versus-tank battle. Most of the battalion officers that were in this area were killed or so severely wounded to be out of action. "Red Dog" Dolan of A/505 was in command of the First Battalion until late in the day when Lieutenant Colonel Mark Alexander decided, along with Major John Norton, an S3, to get down to the Manoir, take command and hold that bridge at all costs after the death of most First Battalion officers.

Lieutenant Turner Turnbull (D/505) and his few brave troopers, who fought almost as a lost patrol for most of the day, had stopped the Germans from getting into Ste. Mere Eglise from the main Cherbourg-Paris Route 13 highway on the

Neuville au Plain north side. They were attacked by tanks, a self-propelled gun (SP) from 500 yards range (that got a direct hit on our bazooka man), heavy and light machine-guns, mortars and 88's. Even though outnumbered four to one, not including German tanks and cannons, Turnbull and the Second Battalion were not about to back down. And they didn't.

The 505 Third Battalion that earlier rolled into the center of the town at 0400 hours, killing eleven enemy and taking 30 prisoners, later suffered the brunt of the efforts from those Germans who had managed to flee out of town. The Third Battalion was required to defend an attack coming from the south later that day by as the Germans attempted to re-capture Ste. Mere Eglise.

Finally, at 2100 hours as darkness was approaching, General Ridgway got a radio message, in the clear, to the 4th Division to get their tanks and infantry off the beaches and give the 82nd some large 75mm and 155mm artillery support as well as ammunition. At the end of D-Day, while

still broad daylight between 2110h and 2120h, 75 "Mission Elmira" gliders landed in Ste. Mere Eglise area. Both the Waco CG4A and British Horsa type also arrived after dark at 2300h and 2310h with another 100 gliders flying in, some 175 gliders arriving in two hours. Along came additional artillery-men of the 80th Airborne Anti-Aircraft Battery, 82nd Division Artillery, 307 Medical company, A/307 Engineers, 319th and 320th Glider Field Artillery, 82nd HQ with vehicles, the 82nd Signal Company with much needed communication gear, and the 82nd Reconnaissance platoon and other units. These gliders had no better luck than those that came in before daylight on D-Day at 0400 hours. The short fields led to many crashes into or through the hedgerows. But a good deal of their precious cargo was recovered and moved out to strategic points under the cover of night. Of the 175 gliders landing between those hours, 137 gliders were damaged or destroyed with death or serious injury to the soldiers on board.

At 0130 hours on 7 June the 80th AAA Battalion official log shows that they had two 57mm guns from "C" Battery in position at the la Fiére Bridge and one 57mm at the Chef-du-Pont Bridge (presumably from the Horsa glider No. IG887 that landed in the midst of Captain Creek's battle for the Chef-du-Pont Bridge). The 80th AAA Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Raymond E. Singleton landed at 0700 hours on 7 June and reported in with the 508 PIR Battalion dug in at the railroad crossing.

Except for the platoon outpost guards and the medical doctors most 82nd warriors were tucked in about as deep down as they could shovel, getting what rest they could after practically no sleep for over forty-four hours. They would need the rest. The next morning the boys at la Fiére would take part in one of the worst battles that "A" Company and the First Battalion would ever experience.

R.M.M



The detailed diorama at the MUSÉE des RANGERS at Pointe du Hoc.



Le Manoir du St. Pierre, found in hex N16/N17 on our game map. as seen from hex L16 from along the hexspine.

Our on-site research mapping heroes Phil Nobo (left) and Alan Yates, at Pointe du Hoc working for Critical Hit to create the RANGERS game map. Phil states that Mr. Yates (father of Phil's fiancé) considered their week at the Pointe, the "trip of a lifetime".



All photos by Phil Nobo.

You are invited to pay a visit to 'hex' AA15



from: Ian Daghish
*posted from, La Fiere, Normandy

Postmark - LA FIERE MANOIR

Players of *Against All Odds*: will recognize hex AA15 on the *Against All Odds* map as a vital position in many of the scenarios.

The manor house and its outbuildings stand at a site that has been of strategic importance since prehistoric times—with traces of occupation going back over one thousand years. In the age of the Viking raiders, sturdy earthen ramparts sheltered the people of the community (and, no less important, the community's cattle!) The present manor buildings date from around the sixteenth century.

On June 5th, 1944, around 11:00 P.M., a detachment of engineers from the Grenadier Regiment 1057 arrived at the manoir, demanding accommodation. This was no surprise to Monsieur Louis Leroux and his family. Life under the occupying force was no picnic, but the people of the area had been spared the worst excesses of the *Heerenvolk*, and never before had German troops been billeted at the *Manior*. Some time later, a small ammunition truck arrived, laden with German casualties, who were accommodated on the stone floor of the huge ground floor kitchen. The truck itself later became part of the barricade thrown across the causeway by elements of the Ameri-

can 307th Parachute Engineers, assigned to the 505 Parachute Infantry Regimental Combat Team.

The following days were to witness the partial destruction of the manoir: the western walls of the house reduced to rubble; the thatch roofs of the outhouses burned and their walls pitted by bullet and shell.

The present owners, Yves and Chantal Poisson, took over the manoir in 1973. While Chantal has overseen the conversion of the former bake-house into two self-contained guest rooms, Yves has maintained the collection of artifacts thrown up by the soil. No less important, Yves is a link with all the 82nd veterans who have visited: many seeking to locate the spot they landed on that fateful night; all keen to tell their particular story. Yves has a French language edition of S.L.A. Marshall's classic 'Night Drop' in which all the names are highlighted, and many countersigned and annotated by the men of the 82nd mentioned.

Every month brings a new story. Exactly where did PFC Peterson stand to fire his bazooka at the advancing German tanks? Now we know, courtesy of Marcus Heim, who was loading for him at the time. Not long ago, Yves

Poisson showed an 82nd veteran up the circular stairway inside the turret of the manor house. The aging veteran stopped by a small window and pointed at the stone pillar opposite the window. Taking a knife, he scratched away plaster from the pillar. He revealed, lodged deep in the stone—the bullet which fifty years ago had whistled past his head as he mounted the stairs. Friendly fire, 1944 style!

Yves and Chantal Poisson extend a welcome to any travelers who wish to visit their *Chambres d'Hote*: two comfortable accommodations, each with television and bathroom, one with kitchen facilities. Their address is: Ferme La Fiere, 50480 Sainte Mere Eglise, FRANCE (telephone 33 41 31 77 [from the USA add 011]).

IRON MIKE AT LA FIERE:

At the time *Against All Odds* was first being researched, plans were afoot for a memorial to mark the site of the actions depicted. Previously, there had been only a token sign by a roadside ditch in hex DD13 boasting that 'General Gavin fought here'. It is reported that the General himself did not recall fighting in the hole, but that he might have used it for another purpose!

The local Friends of the 82nd Airborne (and there are many!) were determined to create some mark of respect that would be a focal point for visitors. Many options were considered: from a full-blown heritage center to something less dominating. In the end good taste prevailed, and the decision was made to erect a dignified statue. But not just any statue! This was to be an exact replica of the statue of

'Iron Mike' that stands at Fort Bragg.

Permission having been willingly granted by the Commandant and by the sculptor's next of kin, work commenced. Iron Mike's original cast was unusable, so hundreds of photographs recorded every aspect of the striking figure.

Finally, dignified by the presence of a sizeable contingent of 82nd Airborne soldiers, past

and present, the work was unveiled. Today, as the manoir buildings in AA15 maintain the guard of ten centuries over the causeway, across the road in hex BB6 of our game map 'Iron Mike' also watches over the crossing, a lasting reminder of the men who came from thousands of miles away to defend La Fiere.

Busting the Bocage continued from page 24 of the D-DAY RANGERS GAMERS GUIDE...

three engineer teams rehearsed the new tactics during several simulated attacks. Lessons learned during the exercise helped improve the effectiveness of the hedgerow tactics. The infantry discovered a light machine gun could not be moved quickly enough to keep up with their advance. Instead, the infantry preferred to use Browning automatic rifles to provide suppressive fire. Infantrymen also learned to coordinate their attack with tankers by using rear-deck telephones mounted on the backs of the Shermans. Mortar observers discovered that by standing on the Sherman's rear deck, they could see the next hedgerow and adjust rounds onto the German positions. Mortar crews also learned they could help protect the assaulting infantry squad by obscuring German observation with smoke shells. The tankers found out that crew members had to dismount and cut away vegetation to clear adequate fields of fire and observation. The rehearsals made tank commanders realize they had to control their machine-gun fire closely to avoid hitting friendly infantrymen.

After the rehearsal on 24 June, the 29th Division's operations staff prepared diagrams and explanatory notes outlining the new hedgerow tactics in detail. The operations section then distributed the information as a training memorandum to all regiments within the division. Units in the 29th Division practiced and rehearsed the new tactics in preparation for their next bout with the Germans. On 1 July, General Cota summed up the 29th Division's tactical experience in France:

What held us up at first was that we

originally were organized to assault the beach, suffered a lot of casualties among key men, then hit another kind of warfare for which we were not organized. We had to assemble replacements and reorganize. Now we have had time to reorganize and give this warfare some thought. I think we will go next time.

The 29th Division did not have to wait long for an opportunity to use its new combined-arms tactics.

On 11 July, XIX Corps attacked southward toward Saint-Lo as part of a First Army offensive to push the German Seventh Army out of Normandy. The XIX Corps ordered the 29th Division to attack and seize key terrain east of Saint-Lo. As part of the division's attack plan, General Gephardt ordered the 116th Infantry to conduct the main attack and capture Saint-Andrew-de-L'Epine, then swing westward and attack along a major ridge-line to take the village of Martinville. The regimental commander then ordered the 2nd Battalion, 116th Infantry, to lead the attack with the other battalions following in column. Company 'B' of the 121st Combat Engineer Battalion and Company 'A' of the 747th Tank Battalion supported the 2nd Battalion. The lead battalion planned to execute the attack with two rifle companies that had been trained and organized to execute the 29th Division's new hedgerow tactics.

The attack started at 0600 on 11 July after a furious twenty-minute preparatory bombardment by five battalions of artillery. Initial progress was slow and discouraging. The 2nd Battalion advanced with two companies abreast and encountered determined resistance from enemy positions in the first hedgerows. The tank-infantry-engineer teams, however,

continued to push forward, and by 1100 hours they finally broke through the organized German defense, which eased and then collapsed. The 2nd Battalion then made rapid progress, seized the ridge-line to its front, wheeled to the right, and continued to move. Before nightfall, the 2nd Battalion advanced another mile toward Martinville and was in an excellent position to continue the attack toward Saint-Lo.

The 116th Infantry's attack demonstrated the effectiveness of the 29th Division's hedgerow tactics. Compared to other operations in the Bocage, the 2nd Battalion's advance made spectacular progress. The battalion achieved a major penetration of the enemy line and completely ruptured the main line of German resistance. General Gephardt attributed the success to tank-infantry-engineer teamwork. Mortars delivered fire on the German positions, tanks provided suppressive fire, engineers breached the hedgerows, and infantry assaulted the Germans while protecting the Shermans against antitank fires. Infantry casualties were relatively light during the attack, and not one Sherman was lost.

Editor's Note: To our valued readership we point out the above material was to be included in the D-DAY RANGERS GAMERS GUIDE. We conclude the article excerpt here, and to 'balance' out our error, include TWO new scenarios for SCOTTISH CORRIDOR on cards and another bonus scenario within the pages that were NOT originally intended for inclusion with this publication. Mea culpa and enjoy the extra material coming your way!