



## Project OMAHA Off to Printers

### Home for Christmas

In the period following the landings on D-Day, the watchword of every soldier, officer and general was to get the boys 'home for Christmas'. The year was 1944 and this earnest desire was forestalled by operational realities and finally, by a little problem the Germans entitled, *Wacht Am Rhein*., Hitler's last offensive in the West of 16-25 December. The war went on another five months until victory was obtained in the form of an unconditional surrender of all German forces.

Fast forward 64 years and the \$64 thousand dollar question has been, and rightly so, 'when will the boys be home in my mailbox?' with the 'boys' in this case represented by a foot-locker full of cardboard soldiers. In this version getting their collective feet wet at places such as Dog Green, Charlie sector, and up the Vierville and Les Moulins draws.

To answer that question every member of the development staff at CH went into high gear with the express goal of concluding 'Project OMAHA' with a Christmas 2008 delivery. Midnight oil was burned, in abundance, and the men stepped up. In the end, their hours of work, provided on a volunteer basis, resulted in getting the final game components out for printing by

Christmas, which we're happy to report. And with the sending of counters and maps for color printing and other vendor services that are required, the final leg of the journey is upon us and finally we can say shipment is firm for both editions of OMAHA in January 2009.

### Project Omaha Genesis

The genesis of the what became Project Omaha began innocently enough when a gentleman named Greg Sarnecki entered our tradeshow booth at Origins, in Columbus, Ohio. Under his arm was tucked a prototype map. Greg had an idea and arrangements were made to roll with it.

In a CH sense, 'rolling' meant a crew of die-hards would jet themselves to Omaha Beach and flesh out the map. Kurt Martin, Pedro Ramis and others literally walked the bluffs, checked LOSs, waded in tides. Aerial photos were consulted, as was the impressive Allied TOP SECRET - BIGOT map sets and overlays.

The resulting game map aims to be accurate for all of Omaha West through a portion of Omaha East, covering the landings and fight inland between *Easy Green* and *Charlie* sector beaches. Adjusted for the requirements of a hexagon based wargame map, we're satisfied with the result and

in playtesting it plays eerily like the war movies that have depicted the battle, such as *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Longest Day*. We dare say that there is no other simulation on the market that recreates the tumultuous landing due to the 50 yards-per-hex scale of this product and the individual landing craft, vehicle, weapon, crew, officer, and squad presentation.

### Expansion, Never Contraction

Critical Hit products have a habit of expanding during production in that they always far exceed original specifications and components. What that means in a real sense is that gamers that purchased the popular ASLComp title, GENESIS '48 on one of our old game 'plans', paid less than twelve bucks (!) for a product that eventually went for four times that amount—it was originally submitted as a large overlay and some scenarios. No customer was asked to pay the difference, including the addition of the Jerusalem map, two sheets of counters, and so on. It represented a windfall for their support.

The ATS OMAHA project grew in production too. And yes, advance order customers won't pay another nickel. Many of them also took us up on our offer for free personal leader counters, duly added to the game. It was our pleasure to add these items,

needless to say, as a token of our thanks for their extreme patience!

In the end, ATS OMAHA grew to a total of TEN sheets of counters...yes, you read that right: 10. And with this large collection, new ground is broken in the system, some of which will be discussed later in this newsletter.

The ASLComp edition was also augmented recently in the form of an additional sheet of 140 die-cut counters, bringing the total for that product to six sheets. Due to the smaller size of MMC in that line (1/2" compared to 5/8" per counter), more infantry and weapons come on each sheet such that the total number of counters provided is comparable between the two products.

### **A Footlocker of Counters**

A new system game would not be complete without some new toys! Here are some of the highlights.

The ATS edition provides a bevy of new Personnel counters breaking down the squad into various weapons teams. Each is treated in a similar manner to the BAR Gunner already found in the system, but in this case each team consists of 2-4 men and the weapons carried include Bazookas, Flamethrowers, and demolition equipment, and the like. There are also new rifle teams, medics, Bangalore volunteers, and other unique new units.

Both system versions include a counter for General Norman 'Dutch' Cota, a difference-maker on Omaha Beach if there ever was one. We don't want to give away the farm, suffice it to say 'Dutch' can rally soldiers with the best of them!

A new squad type representing American engineers makes its appearance. Like all the infantry counters in Project OMAHA, the fine work of artist Alan H. Archambault is featured. Many readers are likely familiar with Alan's published art collections such

as *A Sketchbook of the Union Infantryman*. The only regret we have is such fine work needs to be reduced to fit on wargame counters.

The Infantry presentation in the ASLComp version of OMAHA is intended to get the most out of that system while ruffling few feathers on the most ardent purist. To that end, familiar entities such as the 6-6-7 and 6-6-6 American squad hit the beach with the addition of a new 5-5-7 Engineer squad and 6-6-8 Rangers. No Bar Gunners to jiggle the psyches of internet denizens, just some common-sense special rules to bring it all together.

One special feature of the ASLComp edition is the reduction in required components, treating a situation wholly outside the control of our 'ready room'...namely, out of print modules. If you have a pile of standard markers, fortifications and the like, plus some American and German '?' counters, you are all set to play this game. Everything else is provided, including esoteric markers for 'tide lines', new, stylized snipers, LC status markers, and all the men, tanks, guns and weapons you need. Ownership of any edition of the ASLRB is required.

The ATS edition is a complete game, nothing more is needed to experience the invasion. A new version of the stable ATS rulebook, opened up to two-column to provide more 'white space' for easier reading, plus the latest charts and tables, comes with the game. Warning: the box is heavy, and uses a new, deeper ATS box, created just for this title. Please *bend your knees* when lifting, we don't need any wargamer hernias on resulting from the purchase of this game.

### **Documentation and Solo Play**

There are 16 scenarios provided, with fifteen of them varying in size from very small to large. At the heart of the

game is 'Scenario 16', the monster. This is more than just another scenario, as it brings the entire OOB for both sides into play, from the initial landings in D-Day through victory...or defeat...on 6 June.

What makes Project OMAHA special is contained in the numerous Play Aid Cards that are provided for use in Scenario 16. The American side alone receives TEN cards, with boxes for EACH game piece to be plopped down on to ease entry. These cards take the American player from the first landing of Company F, 116th Infantry Regiment, through the USS McCook and USS Carmick pulling up close to shore to provide direct fire support.

A special twist comes in the form of the Play Aid Cards for Hitler's *Widerstandsnester Europa*. The 'Atlantic Wall' as constituted along the frontage of Omaha Wests consisted of a series of *Widerstandsnester* (Resistance Nests). The weaponry contained in each is documented by many different sources, with many discrepancies between weapons type, locations, and type of fortification. Enter Pedro Ramis, CH's resident genius. Pedro brought together every extant source, in multiple languages, and the resulting Project OMAHA brings it all together with the hex location of each weapon, bunker and so on, in a fresh take on the battle.

A major benefit of Pedro's work on the *Widerstandsnester* portion of the game is in hand. In addition to each Wn being marked off with boundaries, minefields, wire, anti-tank ditches and walls, on the map, the cards provide the historical hex location for each weapon, bunker, and fortification. The result is solo-play heaven!

Just think, solo gamers can literally plop down the entire German OOB, noting the close-defense platoon of each Wn must set up within the cozy

confines of each—and begin the invasion. Sure, the option exists to vary the entire German set up...but we feel strongly the historical option will get solo gamers into the action without missing its flavor, as well as clubs and gaming groups. And do it *mucho pronto!*

### **Just Enough Water**

Another facet of the Project OMAHA design is the limited amount of water depicted on the map. There is every depth depicted, from shingle to deep water. But what is NOT depicted is the stretch of water that would involve a long and tedious open water ‘approach march’ in game terms. In this product the designers envisioned the opening sequence in *Saving Private Ryan* and sought to recreate it. Gamers are literally thrust into the action at the height of the landing.

With the absence of open water comes another facet of the design: accuracy. The American Play Aid Cards bring each unit in where it landed on D-Day, i.e., not where it was meant to land. With this historicity comes a feel for the chaos that ensued, where one unit could hit the beach fortuitously free of enemy fire in front of the Les Moulins draw...while others were wiped out one after another at Dog Green. And whatever units did not make it to the hexes of our game map never enter. The game plays faster and is more accurate, both goals of the design and development team.

### **Art Matters**

We feel Alan’s ‘retro’ line-art is perfectly evocative of the period and we’re proud to use it on our counters for both editions of the game. So much new art has been created for this game.

Some of the new counters have been enlarged to show them off to best effect (see the examples provided). In comparison to the presentation of



*An aerial view of OMAHA WEST. The game map rotates the above aerial counter-clockwise to provide a straight hexrow for the beach.*

some other systems, we prefer an entire soldier for a leader, instead of a 'giant head'. A factor of three soldiers for a 'squad', two for a 'crew' and one for a 'leader' seems just about right, and beats a NATO symbol any day...as well as the depiction of a squad, or group of soldiers, by one soldier on a counter. But in any event, art is totally in the eye of the beholder and we greatly respect all other presentations...noting we have the opportunity to act on our own tastes as creatives...and a hope that you agree with our choices (and thus the samples!)

*Note: The same art is used for counters in both editions, with different values reflected.*

### ASLComp Edition Counter Samples



The Bangalore Hero joins his brethren in ASLer lore, the Tank Hunting Hero and the DC Hero...on Omaha Beach.

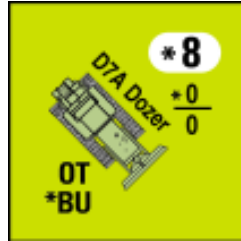


Who doesn't want a snazzy American AFV crew to come out of their wreck hell bent for leather if lucky enough to roll Crew Survival?



Who doesn't want an SCR 609 on hand to dial up the battleship Texas for a little shore fire control?

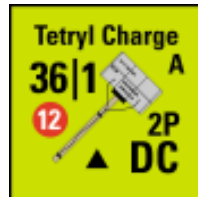
### ASLComp Edition Counter Samples



An armored dozer, the Caterpillar D7A, was used on Omaha Beach in later waves.

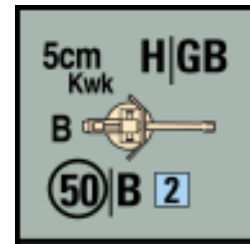


Mark cleared on-map obstacles with the new marker shown above.

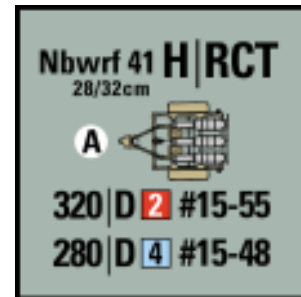


Two new Demolition Charges are provided for use in OMAHA, the Tetryl Charge and the Bangalore Torpedo.

### ATS Edition Counter Samples



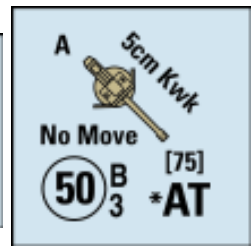
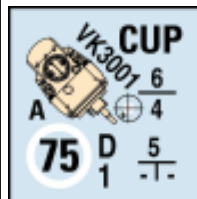
The pedestal-mounted 50mm gun was used inside bunkers as well as in open concrete platforms.



Our research indicates that the trailer-mounted Nebelwerfer 41 weapons indeed fired from Wn 67.

**The ASLComp edition of OMAHA is now available to order at [www.Criticalhit.com](http://www.Criticalhit.com).**

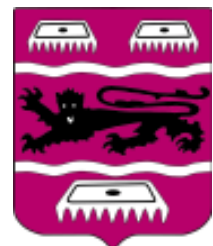
### ASLComp Edition Counter Samples



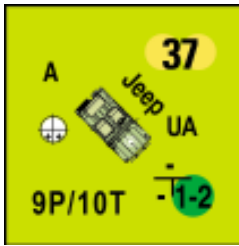
The infamous pillbox at the Vierville Draw is depicted in ultimate detail using the above counters. On the left is the Vf01 pillbox, able to fire out of both sides with a pedestal-mounted 50L gun, the 5cm KwK. With a 3 ROF and relative invulnerability, it's crew could and did wreak havoc on the broad expanse of Omaha Beach its LOS covered. In addition to the KwK, a 75\* turret was mounted in the Vf01 pillbox, capable of firing to both side and rear covered arcs. The VK3001 was an experimental Panzer turret that was used on the Atlantic Wall.



Soldiers of the 146th Combat Engineers Battalion (shoulder patch at right) required their own 5-5-7 squad type (at left). They have a Smoke Exponent of '5', are Elite, underlined morale (signified by '\*'), and capable of Assault Fire (but not Spraying Fire, signified by the SMG icon over the orange circle).



## ASLComp Edition Counter Samples



CH variant vehicle counters, so easy to read, even a caveman, er basement denizen...uh, cave dweller...can read them. Here we have a rather unusual vehicle known as a 'Jeep'. The two circles under the 37 MP signify wheeled. 9 Portage points, Towing of '10', and a '2' FP AAMG with a ROF of '1'. White reticle with two '+' = double small target and UA = Unarmored.



Okay, we admit to being 'free chrome' hounds so here are two separate sets of art for 2-2-7 crews...one depicted firing a machine-gun and the other a Gun. They are identical in game terms.



Army Rangers had a lot to do with avoiding disaster at Omaha and get their own 6-6-8 MMC. On the right is a firing-from-the-hip Hero counter!



Who's to say those 'devils in baggy pants' don't make an OPT arrival from off-map and OMAHA provides new counters with accurate uniform art right down to their brown boots.

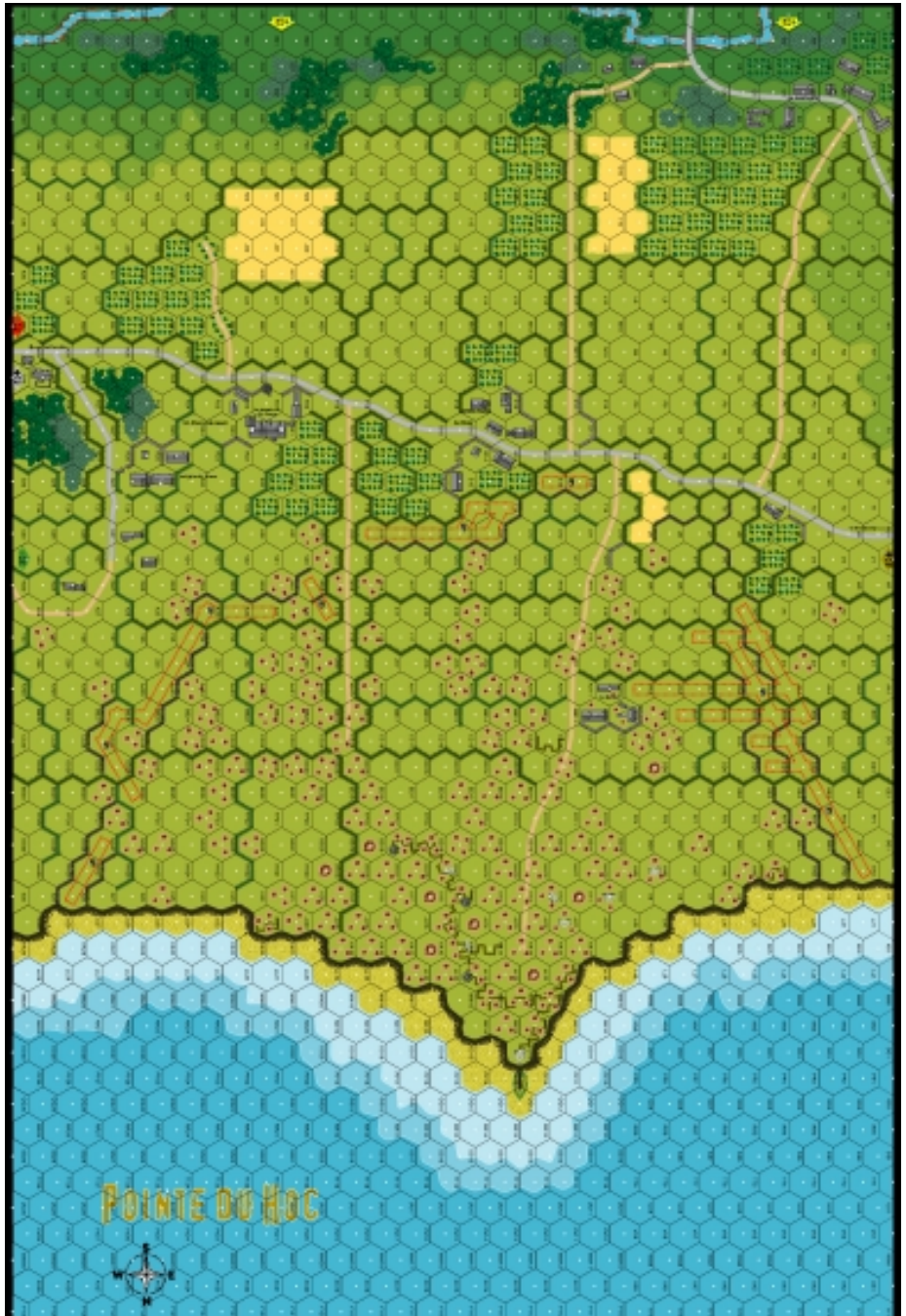
## ATS Edition Counter Samples



Individual soldiers manning Bangalore Torpedoes (left) may crawl forward to breach obstacles.



General Norman 'Dutch' Cota (right) makes a personal appearance on Omaha Beach to get the men moving!



*A new print run of ASLComp Pointe du Hoc is out of print already but a new map has been remastered and we're going to allow our customers to vote it into print, complete with ATS scenarios and an upgrade option for ASLComp customers.*

## ATS Edition Counter Samples



Not every Bailed Out American tank crew fails to take counter form any longer.



A new ATS Personnel counter, the medical corpsman, makes an appearance in OMAHA.



The odds of a sortie from a cannon-armed Focke Wulf 190 are slim...very slim.



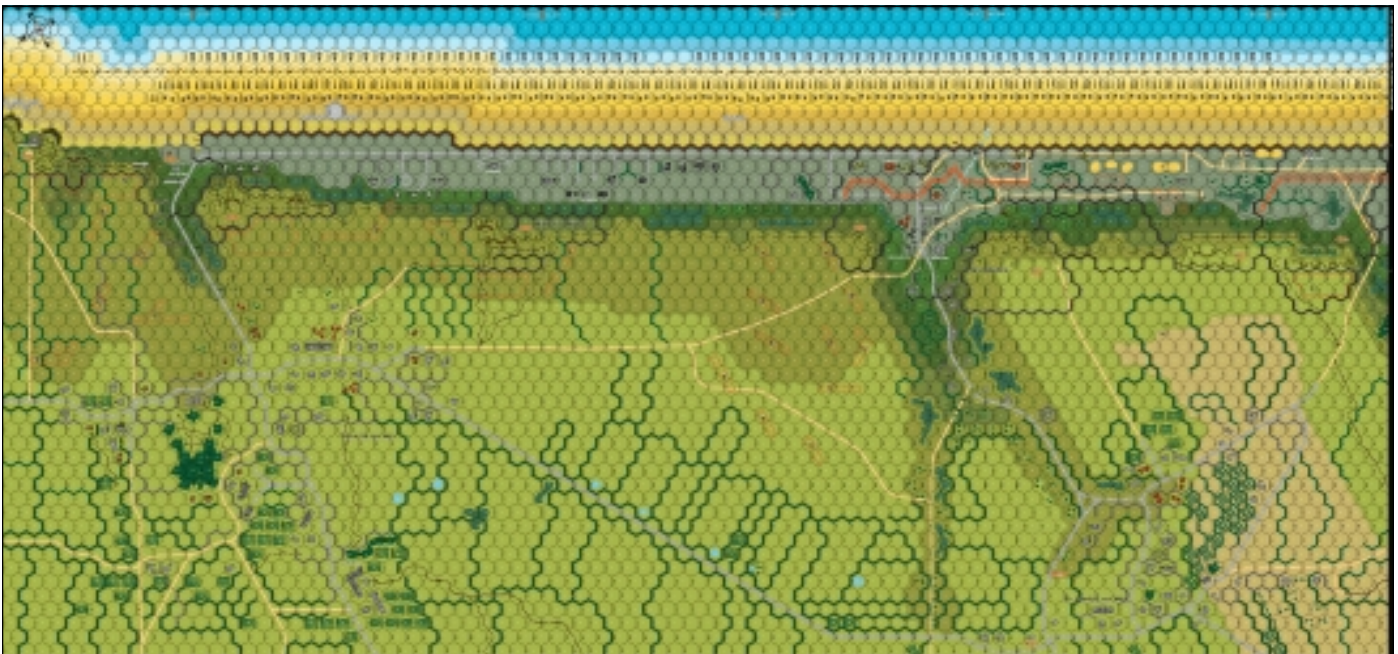
A new ATS Personnel counter, the beachmaster team, makes an appearance in OMAHA.



This massive 'barn door' PaK 43/41 AT gun dominated Omaha Beach from within an H677 casemate.



A new ATS Personnel counter, the wire cutting team, with large 'searchnose' cutters, makes an appearance in OMAHA.



*The entire map area for OMAHA is six feet in length. However, many of the 16 scenarios included use one mapsheet at a time for a manageable playing experience when you are not ready to roll out the monster beach-landing. New scenarios are coming in the OMAHA Gamers Guide for both systems!*