



Juno Beach

Volume 1, Issue 1

6th June 1944
(replayed 19th April 2013)

Rules - BKC II
Scenario - AR
Host - BM
Scale - 15mm

The Battle for St Aubin-sur-mer

The Canadian North Shore Regiment landed just to the west of St Aubin-sur-mer at 0800 on the 6th June 1944 as part of Operation Overlord, commonly known in England as D-Day. The plan called for the first wave (2 companies) to clear a resistance nest and secure the only exit within 45 minutes of landing. Armoured support was provided by the Fort Garry Horse who landed just behind the first wave. The following troops avoided the beach fighting and pushed inland to secure further objectives.

On D-Day the Canadians fought very well and, despite encountering stiffer resistance than expected, achieved most of their objectives for the day whilst incurring relatively light numbers of casualties.

Our playing of this scenario aimed to give us an insight into the challenge these brave men faced on that famous day.



Above is our version of Juno beach.

In the foreground the beachfront houses of la Rive and the sole gap in the sea wall.

In the distance the village of St-Aubin-sur-mer including a bunker overlooking the beach.

Notice the beach is littered with anti-tank obstacles.

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Turn by Turn 2

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House Rules:-

- * Troop Quality determines Suppression roll needed. Green 4, Average 5, Veteran 6
- * 15mm game so all distances and ranges +50%
- * One turn = 15 minutes
- * All commands get at least one action unless a blunder is rolled

Background

After playing the existing Juno Beach scenario by Bob Barnetson and being inspired by an ex-work colleague (Canadian) and a visit to the Normandy beaches, I decided to research the battle further. I concluded

that Bob had made an excellently balanced scenario but I wanted one that was more historically accurate. The bonus, the historic link, the downside, only one side were ever going to win.

After finding a volunteer to be the German player, sourcing the figures from various players stock-piles and building masses of beach defenses, we were ready to play.

Turn 1—0810—The First Wave Lands

Able & Baker Companies form the infantry of the first wave. After reaching the beach without drama A Company HQ rolls a command bonus and charges up the beach. Unfortunately German opportunity fire and failing further command rolls leaves them stranded. Baker company fares little better.

The armour arrives at the end of the turn



Able Company (nearest) are pinned down amongst the beach defences

ready to move up the beach on turn 2.

The German CO had communications with all of this troops provided they stayed in defences. He took full advantage this turn making 5 command rolls, suppressing several Canadian units

and “accidentally” killing some others.

The German player later admitted his aim was to suppress as many units as possible and keep them on the beach.

The only good news for the Canadian players was that the German artillery were not listening to the FAO.

At the end of the turn, our Canadians had taken more casualties in the first 15 minutes than the historic guys took all day! A worrying start!

Turns 2 & 3—0825—Advance (or maybe not)

Able and Baker Companies continue to try to reach the safety of the seawall. However the A Company HQ rolls a blunder, he abandons his troops and runs back to the shore (fortunately the landing craft had already left). B Company only manage one action which, coupled with more withering fire from the Germans hiding in the fortified houses, results in barely any significant movement from the infantry.

The Fort Garry Horse (FGH) do however start to advance but discover the anti-tank hedgehogs are in the way. With again only one successful command roll their progress is slow.

The German CO however continues to look like he’s on vacation from the Eastern Front. 4 more actions mean even more casualties for the Canadian infantry.

“Come back, I left my wallet on the landing craft!”

Looks like the second wave are going to be needed after all.

Turn 4—0855—The arrival of Charlie & Dog

The Canadians change tactics. This turn the tanks start to try to shoot up the emplaced Germans and manage to suppress 2 units. This allows Able and Baker Co’s to finally get some troops to the seawall.

Charlie Company’s disembarkation doesn’t however go to plan. They charge up the beach on the first action, then blunder and incur casualties from friendly fire!

Dog company don’t even get that far.

A mix up on the run into the beach sees the HQ out of command range and another craft delayed. The one action gets half the company into the open but no more.

The German FAO also gets through to the 105mm battery and calls down fire on the Firefly. It misses but hits



Able company (typical!). It does however also take out a section of barbed wire near the seawall.

Turns 5 & 6—0910—Stuck at the Wall

The Canadians continue to try and use the tanks to shield the infantry in order to get more troops up to the sea wall. However when 24 dice from the tankers produce no hits you know it's not going your way. When the FGH HQ then blunders and runs back down the beach it just gets worse!

Despite the tanks failings more infantry do reach the sea wall and those there start to put suppressing fire into the German positions. Elements of Baker company climb the wall and....run straight into a minefield. Luckily they realize their error



The race for the sea wall

quickly and suffer minimal casualties. Time to call for that flail tank!

The German ATG opens up from the bunker enfilading Baker and Dog companies. This worries the Canadians more than it should as their intelligence has told them it's a 75mm, in truth it's only 50mm.

The rest of the German defence is less effective with several units unable to return effective fire. The mortars are still raining down but without the small arms fire they are struggling to stop the tide of infantry.

Turn 6 (continued)—0925—Where are those Commandos going?

Being behind timetable now throws up a problem. The Commandos arrive in their unarmoured, wooden craft directly in front of the village and it's bunker. Fortunately the ATG doesn't have a line of sight, the bunker was designed to fire along the beach not out to sea, and the craft pilots avoid the obstacles and get them safely ashore.

This still leaves the troops in the village but the Commandos charge straight up the beach to the cover of the sea wall. For once the German opportunity fire fails to pin troops down and it starts to feel like the Allies are going to move inland.



St-Aubin-sur-mer and the charge of 48 Commando

"Charge to the wall!"

Turn 7—0940—The tanks roll inland

With infantry finally at the sea wall the tanks roll inland. The AVRE pounds the round pill box putting the defenders out of action. The flail rolls into the minefield clearing the path for the infantry and the crocodile (looking like a bulldozer, we didn't have a croc) heads for the second pillbox.

The infantry start to cross the sea wall and the German defence of the la Rive collapses.



With the west secure the Commandos don't want to miss out on the

action. They launch an assault on the bunker, capturing the gun intact, despite the covering fire. Meanwhile the support companies land.

The German CO sends a panzerfaust section to attack the unsupported tanks, however by only getting a single action they are unable to launch the attack before the infantry move up and wisely return to the village through the tunnels (tunnels you say! Sneaky Germans!)

Turn 8—0955—Through the crust

All of the Canadians push forward and meet only light resistance. Able secure la Rive, Baker start to open fire into St-Aubin whilst Charlie and Dog push inland to their next objectives. The FGH crocodile incinerates the pill box.

The newly arrived Canadian FAO decides to get into the action and calls down naval gunfire on the edge of St-Aubin, much to the consternation of the Commando HQ. The deviation however moves the fire deeper into town and directly onto the German trench network causing many casualties.

The Commando add to the fire and suppress further defenders but fail to charge.

At this point the German CO recognizes he fighting a losing battle, the sheer weight of numbers against him is starting to tell. Even the FAO can't get a response from the artillery and it's just a matter of time before they are overrun.



At this point an end is called and all of the players agree an Allied victory though a little tense early on.

After actions

One thing we always like to do is consider what happened next. No dice rolls, just looking at the positions and the commanders declaring their intentions. At Juno..

Able Company—Given the level of casualties sustained they were holding ground and licking wounds.

Baker Company—Pushing into St-Aubin alongside 48 Commando.

Charlie Company—So far unscathed and pushing inland to Tailleville. However they were about to walk into an unmarked minefield, just off table but clearly marked on the map they weren't reading!

Delta Company—Also heading inland

Fort Garry Horse—Heading inland with the infantry support

48 Commando—Assaulting the Germans in St Aubin

Germans—Nearing breakpoint and under naval gunfire chances were they wouldn't be fighting for long.

Conclusions

The scenario played very well. The Canadians were always going to find reaching the seawall difficult if the Germans could get enough fire onto them early. That's what happened.

Changes for a rerun?

Possible lower the German CO to CV8 when commanding via telephones, otherwise as is.

Reduce the number of troops in certain fortified positions and they could put down too much fire at times.

Play again? Yes!



Communications from the beach

0600—Dear Mr Churchill,
Here is brief report on the assault on Juno Beach.

Attached are recon photos of the location strong points east and west with a single bunker in the centre. The plan is to assault through the single bunker and swing east and west to assault the strong points while the main invasion goes straight through to the rear defences. Germans have one artillery piece in the village east. Should be a piece of cake sir, send tea and biscuits at 9am as it will all be over.

0825—Dear My Churchill,

The preliminary bombardment seems to have missed but it isn't going to be a problem. Able and baker companies will sweep them away.

Able and baker have landed too far west.. they will have to direct assault the strong point.

Gosh sir there is a lot of fire... they must have been expecting us! gosh sir ...Able and Baker pinned down taking heavy casualties. Let's get back on the boats... Able company runs back to the boats....the boats pull out leaving them to fight.

Able company crosses the ground again. Baker company mostly still pinned down but advancing in rushes.

Hold the tea sir we are busy at the moment.

0840—Hi Mr Churchill...may I call you Sir,
The next wave comes in Charlie and Dog companies pour onto the beaches.

Let's Blunder againand again. Charlie and dog both manage to misdirect fire onto friendly forces. The engineers are still pinned down. Dog company in the open receiving deadly mortar fire.

German artillery locate the beach....ouch.

Have to report attack not going well sir all now pinned on the beach

0900—Dear My Churchill,

Pleased to report that while German units were reloading we rushed to the sea wall. Unable to get over as Engineers are all pinned down

0915—Dear My Churchill,

Have to report,
The tanks have turned up on the beach sir all will go well now. If they stop blundering...
The tanker CO was so shocked by the scene he retreated to the landing craft which again refused to lift off units and withdrew.
This left the tanks out of command and firing to no effect(24 dice no hits)...or was it 124 dice.
German artillery found the tanksbut mostly missed and hit the sea wall....still it cleared the barbed wire.

0955—Dear My Churchill,

Pleased to Report.
The commandoes have turned up...where are the rest half seem to be missing,
They mounted a stunning and surprise attack on the east strong point and took out the forward German artillery bunker.
5 casualties but now engaged in a serious fire fight against the other German units in the area.

1000—Dear My Churchill,

Sir urgent communication...
...Naval artillery are targeting the east village while the commandos are engaged inside....

1100—Dear My Churchill,

The funnies sweep forward and blast the bunkers away and the flail tanks sweep the minefields away at double speed(bonus dice rolls double 1's). This gives the infantry confidence and they all rush forward.
It turns out that the Germans in the east village have either been silenced or have fled down tunnels under the houses and bunkers.

Dear Winston,
Pleased to report
The armoured thrust moved in land about 2 hours late,
West village in our hands and the east village soon to be captured.

Send tea and biscuits... less tea is needed than planned

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Lead Commanders

Wargamers from Derbyshire who aim to have fun, and the odd glass of wine or beer, whilst exploring the art of war from ancient naval battles to the imagination of a modern British Civil War.

All figures and scenery featured are from the collections of group members or kindly borrowed from Hinds Figures Limited.

Many thanks to Steve Hibbert for the loan of the landing craft

Next time....

The Canadians advance inland.

Our next outing sees the North Nova Scotia Highlanders and the Sherbrooke Fusiliers advancing on Carpiquet, through the villages of Buron and Authie, on the 7th June 1994.

Having smashed through the Atlantic Wall and decimated the 716th Infantry the race is now on for Caen. With the British attacking from the north the Canadian's task is to secure the road and rail links to the west.

Can the forces continue to advance before the Germans can assemble a second line of defence?

Can the British and Canadians coordinate their attacks?

Oh my! What big tanks you've got!

Only time will tell if history is repeated or rewritten.

