

CONTACT IN THE ARDENNES. OURTHE RIVER VALLEY May 10th 1940.

A scenario for BLITZKRIEG COMMANDER, by Mal. Wright. Adaptable to most WW2 rules.

SCENARIO BACKGROUND.

German movement through the forests of the Ardennes was a major surprise for most of the Allies. However, the Belgian 1st *Chasseurs Ardennais* had been on alert for some weeks. These troops were all totally familiar with the region and were called to arms via a 'war warning' at 11pm the night before the Germans attacked. This enabled most of them to take up pre-planned positions defending the roads the attackers would need to use. One of these areas was the Ourthe River valley where bunkers had been prepared pre-war, with the centre on the Ville la Boissone. Defences were mostly set to protect individual key points and towns, but in this instance they were set one behind the other along a narrow valley road. The objective here was to delay road movement in an area where off road movement was only possible on foot, or in some limited instances, by full tracked vehicles.

Use of the road was vital for the attackers. Panzer units were waiting to break through into the open ground of Belgium and France, but such columns required large numbers of wheeled support vehicles carrying fuel, supplies and supporting elements. In the pre-hostilities period Germans disguised as tourists had visited the area and some idea of the likely resistance established. This information was easier to obtain in the main areas of concentrated defence, particularly around Neufchâteau, St-Hubert, and Recogne. However the picture was incomplete in the more remote areas.

A task force has been set up to locate the expected Belgian forces and eliminate them. Air reconnaissance has been of limited assistance due to the density of the terrain. It is known that Belgian defenders will comprise units of the "Chasseurs Ardennes" a specialist light infantry force very familiar with the territory. As a rule they are a mixture of Motorized and Bicycle troops with some mountain artillery, but they were quite at home on foot in the rugged terrain. It is possible they may have very light armour in support. No other Belgian forces are expected.

Most Luftwaffe support has been directed to the invasion of Holland and the rest to other areas in Belgium. Rommel's column through the Ourthe River Valley has plenty of artillery, but would mostly be required to deploy on the roads, thereby causing further blockages.

In the immediate advance at dawn, the way was led by German Motor Cycle troops to clear the border and villages near it. Once this was completed the Motor Cycle troops were rested and the Armoured cars continued the job. In the mid afternoon the Motor Cycle Troops resumed point duty and were the first to encounter the bunkers near the Ville la Boissone, which was sighted opposite the village of Bergueme. The three bunkers covering the road were all of the smaller machinegun type and were concealed in forest, on the opposite side of the river, but set such that they commanded the road. Each was covered by other Chasseurs.

An attacker proceeding down the valley road would need to cross the river and attack up hill to take out the first bunker and there was no bridge nearby. In the case of the other two there were small bridges but they were covered by the bunkers. The second bunker was concealed in the grounds of the Chateau, and the bridge leading too it was quite long. The third was in a wet area and an attacker had to first get past it, in order to reach the bridge that led too it.

SCENARIO SPECIFICS.

The scenario commences four moves before dark, with the fourth move being dusk with reduced visibility. The Belgians are totally familiar with the area and may move as normal after dark. The German troops are unfamiliar with the area and the terrain. They will move at half speed during night moves, regardless of on foot or in vehicles.

As well as the 3 moves before dark, there will be four moves of darkness, followed by 12 of daylight. It will be an exceptional difficulty for the German offensive if they require all those moves to complete the mission and Rommel will be most unhappy!

Because the bunkers and prepared infantry positions are so well hidden normal German infantry bases cannot see them to return fire unless within 150m. However all HQ bases, the German CO base, and FAO, can roll to see them using optical instruments. 4.5.6 to sight them while firing. Roll of 6 to sight them after firing. Only one of the relevant bases can test to sight per turn. Once sighted there location can be marked by calling for a smoke round, flare etc. (Automatic) If this is done bases can fire on them at their maximum range.

Note...the Belgian machinegun bunkers are invulnerable to infantry and machinegun fire, but can be suppressed by them. The Bunkers can only be knocked out by guns, or satchel charges. 20mm cannon count as guns for this purpose. The BKC defence factor for each bunker will be 5 hits with 5-6 save roll.

BELGIAN troops must fire before they can be tested for being seen. German forces must proceed along the road as if they do not know where the bunkers are, until firing commences.

The German player/s should not be told that the Belgians have no artillery, mortars, or anti tank guns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS.

Victory. German units knock out all three bunkers and open the road to traffic by move 8. (First morning move day)

Limited Victory. German units knock out all three bunkers and open the road to traffic by move 13. (Midday day 2)

Belgian limited victory. German units knock out all three bunkers and open the road to traffic by move 16. (Day 2)

Belgian victory. German units delayed until move 18. (Dusk day 2)

In the event of a Belgian limited victory the German commander is reprimanded by Rommel.

In the event of a Belgian victory the German commander is sacked by Rommel and sent home in disgrace.

GERMAN ORDERS.

The German force will be led by the 7th Motorcycle battalion. The 1st infantry battalion is following them with its troops on foot and the support elements horse towed.

Having refuelled and rested, Reconnaissance Rgtr.8 can move on via the German start point, but only if the units in front of them make room for them to use the road. Except for within the village of Bergueme, wheeled units may not deploy off the valley road other than to park. If they do park off road it must be with one edge of the unit touching the road because of the difficulty of the terrain. Infantry can march on the verges or deploy to allow the reconnaissance to pass.

Knocked out transport can be pushed off the road using the engineer rules. 1-2 not successful, 3-6 successful. It can be tried on successive moves if it fails at first.

If the field artillery is deployed it will be off table but still considered blocking the road. From when it is called for, no other German troops may enter the tabletop area. If the infantry guns deploy on the tabletop they can use direct fire if in range. They will block the road to transport and other vehicles at that point, but infantry can move past them.

GERMAN ORDER OF BATTLE

Reconnaissance Rgtr. 7.

HQ. 1 x SdKfz224 HQ radio armoured car.
1st company. 2 x SdKfz222 Armoured cars.
2nd company. 3 x SdKfz15 armoured cars.
3rd. (Heavy) Company. 1 x SdKfz 231 Armoured car. 2 x SdKfz230 armoured cars.

Motor cycle Battalion Nr 7.

HQ. Base plus VW car. + Medic.
1st Company. 2 x Motorcycle outfits. 1 LMG base. 1 ATR base.
2nd Company. 2 x Motorcycle outfits. 2 LMG bases.
3rd Company. 2 x Motorcycle outfits. 2 LMG bases.

Infantry Rgtr. 98.

RHQ CO base. + Medic. +
Communications. All horse towed.

Battn. Nr. I

HQ Base.
Coy I. 3 Bases of infantry.
Coy II.. 3 Bases of infantry.
Coy III. 3 Bases of infantry.
Heavy coy IV. MG base. 1 x 7.5cm IG. (Horse tow)

Battn. Nr. II

HQ Base.
Coy I. 3 Bases of infantry.
Coy II.. 3 Bases of infantry.
Coy III. 3 Bases of infantry.
Heavy coy IV. MG base. 1 x 7.5cm IG. (Horse tow)

Battn. Nr. III

HQ Base.
Coy I. 3 Bases of infantry.
Coy II.. 3 Bases of infantry.
Coy III. 3 Bases of infantry.
Heavy coy IV. MG base. 1 x 7.5cm IG. (Horse tow)

Rgtr Support.

HQ Base.
Rgtr Heavy company. 1 x 15cm IG. 1 x 37mm PaK 36.
(Both Horse tow)
1 x Mortar. 1 x Base Engineers. (Horse tow)

ATTACHED FIELD ARTILLERY.

HQ. Horse drawn. One FAO. (Mounted).
1st battery. 2 x 10.5 cm. (Horse towed)
2nd Battery. 2 x 10.5 cm. (Horse towed)
3rd Battery. 2 x 15cm. (Horse towed)
Train. 6 wagons. (Horse towed)

BELGIAN FORCES.

All are from the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Chasseurs Ardennais Regiment.

Bunkers 1, 2 and 3 each have a single machinegun. Increase BKC firepower from 3 to 4 die. This is to allow for each bunker having a large amount of ammunition available, for all areas in front being well known to the gunners and the ranges to them also known. Even in darkness the second and third can fire on the bridges by using fixed point fire. Any unit passing across must test for casualties unless the bunker concerned is firing at another target. However as if it is using fixed fire on a bridge EVERY base passing through that fire must check for casualties. The same applies if the Belgian player nominates a point on one of the roads before each German move.

All three bunkers can reach and cover the road. Each has a 45-degree firing arc of centre. Bunker 1 should be slightly tilted so it can cover the side roads that lead out of Wiompont. Bunker 2 covers the L shaped bridge as well as the road into Bergueme.

Bunker 3 covers the small bridge leading too it, and the road between Bergueme and the side road to that bridge.

CO base is established at the Ville la Boissone. It can disregard the usual command range under BKC because it has direct (buried) telephone contact with each bunker, which is highly unlikely to be knocked out.

In addition to the bunkers he has three (3) units each of 3 infantry bases and a HQ. These can all act independently and can be placed as wished. They are dug in with log and earth protection making them hard to see as well as to hit. Firepower of each base is increased by 1 from the BKC rules for Belgians to reflect their higher status and marksmanship.

The Belgian player has no artillery, anti tank guns or mortars available.

BELGIAN ORDERS.

Belgian troops were put on standby at 11pm on the 9th of May. After dawn telephone reports have warned that German forces crossed the border at dawn and hostilities have commenced.

In the event of an invasion by Germany, the French and British armies are committed to the defence of Belgium. As in WW1 the army is expected to delay the enemy advance long enough for the allied armies to enter Belgium and turn back the invasion forces.

The 3rd Battalion is tasked to slow the German advance through the Ourthe river valley for the minimum of 32 hours. (16 moves), with 36 hours (18 moves) preferred. Support infantry units are under orders to fall back from their positions if about to be over-run and continue to engage the enemy in firefights. It is of extreme importance to avoid a hand-to-hand action which might lead to the loss of infantry bases. It is preferred to engage in a running battle, rather than a suicidal defence. However the bunkers are under strict orders not to be vacated unless they are knocked out or no longer able to fire.

Red line indicates battle area 1500yds long x 1000yds wide.

