THE BATTLE FOR UTAH BEACH

A navigational error has landed the US amphibious assault force on the wrong sector of Utah Beach. Will this spell doom for the landings? Or will it be a blessing in disguise?

H-Hour 0630 hours: Following a heavy naval and aerial bombardment the first assault waves of the 8th RCT from the US 4th 'Ivy' Division hit the beach at Utah. The landings were timed to take advantage of a low tide exposing the German beach obstacles. First ashore were Companies B and C under Lieutenant Colonel Conrad Simmons, at the sector code-named Tare Green, and E and F under Lieutenant Colonel Carlton MacNeeley, at Uncle Red. The Assistant Divisional Commander Brigadier-General Theodore Roosevelt, son of the former US President of the same name, landed in the first wave. He would be awarded the Medal of Honour for his part in the assault that day. A few minutes after the first infantry landings, Sherman DD Tanks of 70th Tank Battalion arrived on the beach.

Once ashore the assault troops discovered that rough seas and a strong current had pushed them some 2000 metres south of the intended landing site at les Dunes de Varraville. Luckily, this area of the beach, around La Grande Dune, was actually more lightly defended than the intended landing site. The German resistance nest in the area, WN 5, was manned by a single platoon of *919. Grenadierregiment* under *Leutnant* Jahnke, a veteran of the Eastern Front. The preliminary bombardment had severely damaged the German defences, knocking out most of their anti-tank guns, and the US infantry and tanks quickly overwhelmed the position.

The assault troops moved inland and captured the fortified hamlet at La Madeleine, guarding the entrance to the causeway known as Exit 2. The causeway crossed marshland deliberately flooded by the Germans to bar the way inland for an invasion force. At 0900 hours troops began moving inland, some of the infantry wading through the marshes. After engineers had cleared the German minefields, four Sherman DD Tanks lead the advance down the causeway. The first Sherman foundered on a demolished section of the road and a German anti-tank gun knocked out the second tank, but by 1100 hours the advance had linked up with paratroopers of the 101st Airborne who had seized the other end of the causeway.

The landings had been successful, with remarkably light casualties for the attacking Americans. On D-Day, more than 20,000 troops and 1700 vehicles along with thousands of tons of supplies were landed at Utah Beach.

REFIGHTING UTAH BEACH

While Utah Beach was the most lightly defended of the invasion beaches, the speed with which the US troop landing there got off the beach and through the marshes beyond is a testament to their courage and training. Use the Hit the Beach mission on page 16 to refight this battle in conjunction with the table layout on page 23 that shows the salient features of Utah beach, and the list on page 24 giving the forces from the 4th Infantry Division and *919. Hessian-Thüringian Grenadierregiment* that fought there. To reflect the unique circumstances of the battle for Utah Beach, the following special rule applies.

PRELIMINARY AIR STRIKE

The Allied air forces had the skies all to themselves on D-Day, although the rough weather and low cloud conspired against them. However, at Utah Beach, American aircraft followed up the devastating naval bombardment with a highly effective air strike that wreaked further havoc on the defenders.

The US player may make one free air strike by a flight of one to three Ground-attack Aircraft after deployment, but before the game begins.
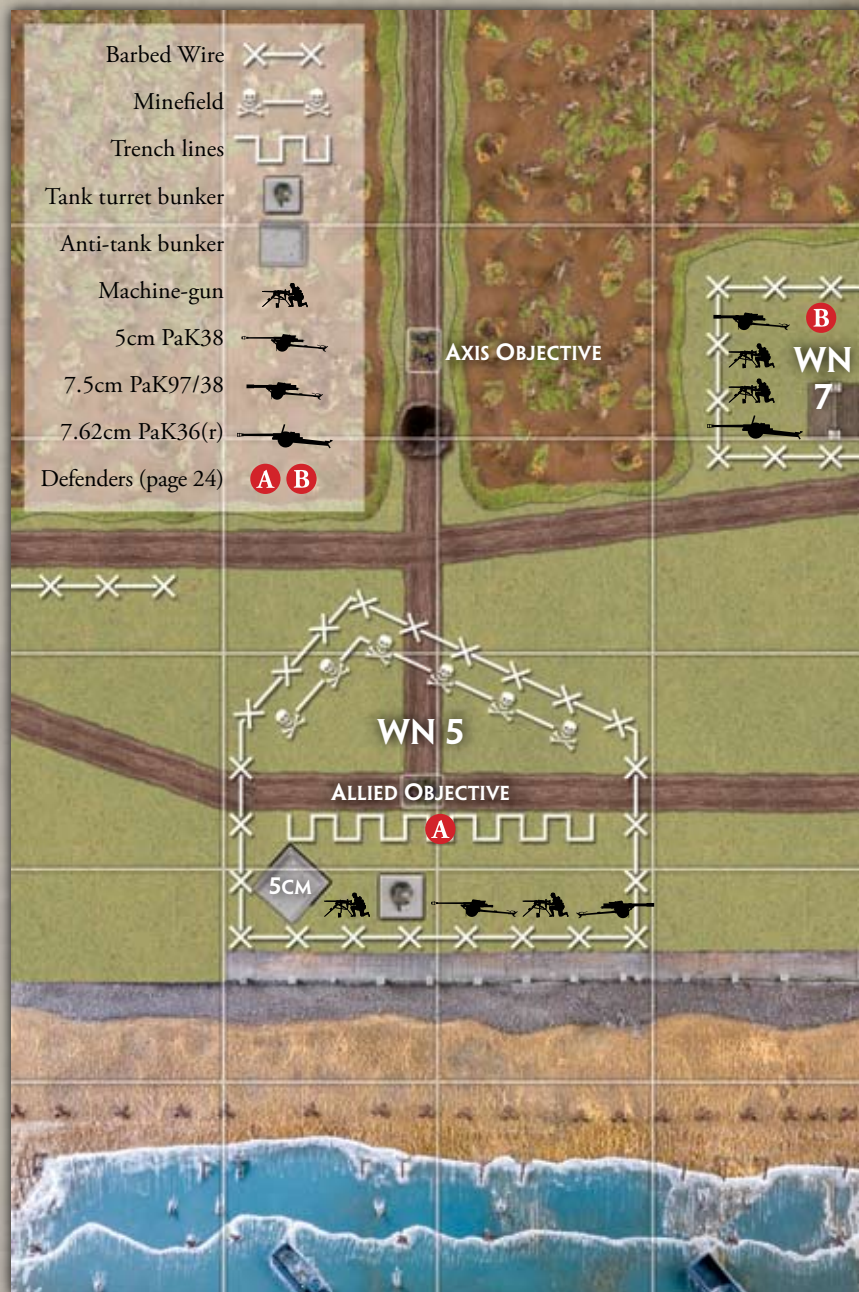
BEACH DEFENCES

The defences of Strongpoint 5 (*Wieder-standnest 5* or *WN 5* in German) are much weaker than those further along the beach at Strongpoint 9. A type H667 casemate housing a 5cm KwK gun is positioned to enfilade the beach. At the front centre of the strongpoint is an old Renault FT-17 tank turret mounted on a concrete bunker. Two MG42 heavy machine-guns in gun pits facing the sea sit alongside an old French 47mm anti-tank gun (treated as a 5cm Pak38) and a 75mm field gun (treated as a 7.5cm PaK97/38). Communication trenches span the defences. The resistance nest is ringed with barbed wire, and a minefield guards the rear of the position.

Exit 2

Inland from WN 5 is the entrance to Exit 2, a causeway across the marshes. This is guarded by WN 7, a resistance nest set up around the little hamlet of La Madeleine. At the southeastern end of the hamlet covering the causeway, the Germans have mounted a pair of MG42 heavy machine guns, another 75mm field gun, and a Russian 7.62cm PaK36(r). Barbed wire guards the perimeter of the resistance nest. The building shown is the chapel of La Madeleine.

A huge crater blocks the causeway. This, like the marshes surrounding it, is rated as Very Difficult Going in *Flames Of War*. It is impossible to entrench in the marshes.

Map legend:
- Barbed Wire
- Minefield
- Trench lines
- Tank turret bunker
- Anti-tank bunker
- Machine-gun
- 5cm PaK38
- 7.5cm PaK97/38
- 7.62cm PaK36(r)
- Defenders (page 24) — A B

AXIS OBJECTIVE

WN 7 — B

WN 5
ALLIED OBJECTIVE — A

5CM

US 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION

CHARLIE COMPANY, 1/8ᵀᴴ RCT	RIFLE COMPANY (CONFIDENT TRAINED)
Company HQ	Company HQ (with two Bazooka teams)
1ˢᵗ Rifle Platoon	Rifle Platoon (at full strength)
2ⁿᵈ Rifle Platoon	Rifle Platoon (at full strength)
3ʳᵈ Rifle Platoon	Rifle Platoon (at full strength)
Weapons Platoon	Weapons Platoon (with one Machine-gun Section)
3ʳᵈ Platoon, Dog Company	Mortar Platoon (with three Mortar Sections)
1ˢᵗ Platoon, Baker Company, 237ᵗʰ Engineer Combat Battalion	Engineer Combat Platoon (with two Operating Squads with M4 Sherman Dozer tank)
2ⁿᵈ Platoon, Able Company, 65ᵗʰ Armoured Field Artillery Battalion	Armoured Field Artillery Battery (with one Gun Section)
1ˢᵗ Platoon, Able Company, 70ᵗʰ Tank Battalion	Tank Platoon (with five Sherman DD tanks)
395ᵗʰ 'Panzer Dusters' Fighter Squadron, USAAF	Priority Air Support – P47 Thunderbolt

The first wave ashore on Utah Beach consisted of troops from the 8ᵗʰ Regimental Combat Team (RCT) of the US 4ᵗʰ 'Ivy' Infantry Division. During the run in to the beach artillery support was provided by M7 Priest HMC self-propelled guns of 65ᵗʰ Armoured Field Artillery Battalion firing from their landing craft. As the infantry landed, the amphibious Sherman DD tanks of the 70ᵗʰ Tank Battalion came ashore to give immediate tank support.

GERMAN 709. INFANTERIEDIVISION

3./919. GRENADIERREGIMENT	GRENADIERKOMPANIE (CONFIDENT TRAINED)
2. Grenadierzug, 3./919 GR	Grenadier Platoon (at full strength, at Ⓐ)
1. Maschinegewehrzug 4./919 GR	Machine-gun Platoon (with two HMG teams, one 5cm PaK38 and one 7.5cm PaK97/38 attached, at Ⓐ)
3. Panzerjägerzug 919 GR	Light Anti-tank Gun Platoon (with one 7.5cm PaK97/38 and one 7.62cm PaK36(r), two HMG teams attached, at Ⓑ)
ALARMEINHEITEN	**RESERVES**
Kompaniegruppe	Company HQ (attached to 1. Grenadierzug)
1. Grenadierzug, 3./919 GR	Grenadier Platoon (at full strength)
3. Grenadierzug, 3./919 GR	Grenadier Platoon (at full strength)
1. Pionierzug, 919 GR	Pioneer Platoon (at full strength)
2. Granatwerferzug, 4./919 GR	Mortar Platoon (with three Mortar Sections)

The German defenders were from *III. Bataillon, 919. Grenadierregiment* of *709. Infanteriedivision*. A platoon of infantry held the WN 5 resistance nest. They were supported by anti-tank guns in a wide variety of calibres positioned in WN 5 and further back at WN 7 guarding the entrance to the causeway. A few platoons of grenadiers and pioneers supported by mortars, formed the local counterattack reserve.

WHAT IF BATTLES

While the forces shown above represent the forces that actually landed on Utah Beach and those that opposed them, you can also play the scenario with different forces to see how the battle would have turned out if the commanders had committed different forces to the battle.

An Allied force attacking at Utah Beach should consist of 1750 points based on an Infantry Company.

An Axis force should consist of 1000 points based on an Infantry Company. Any tank or self-propelled gun platoons should be the last to appear from reserve.