

THE BATTLE FOR EASY GREEN

In the early morning hours of 6 June German soldiers of 352. *Infanteriedivision* peer anxiously out to sea from *Widerstandnest 66* (Strongpoint 66). A myriad of ships fills the horizon as far as their eyes can see. Frantic calls flood the telephone switchboards as the beach defences report the massive invasion fleet to a disbelieving headquarters. Bright flashes pick out the warships. Seconds later deafening explosions rock the ground. The invasion is happening, now!

Soldiers of the 116th Regiment, 29th Infantry Division clutch their weapons, shifting nervously, lost in their thoughts within their LCV landing craft, the small steel boats pitching and bouncing in the rough surf. Their first combat of the war weighs heavily upon these uncertain men. With a final roar of engines, the hulls scrape on the sand as the landing craft drop their ramps into the foaming surf.

Seasick soldiers awkwardly clamber down the ramps, assault vests weighing 60lbs (30kg) strapped to their backs. They have come for battle, loaded with ammunition and explosives, flame-throwers and Bangalore Torpedoes. Trudging through the surf to the soft sand, the soldiers drop to a knee at the first obstacle belt, waiting for their leaders, surveying the bare beach. Fully a quarter of a mile (400m) away the shingle bank is the first available cover. Something doesn't look right, but given the lack of fire perhaps the Germans have fled as many have said they would.

Up on the bluffs the gunners finger the triggers of their MG42 machine-guns, waiting, watching, while the American soldiers below form their skirmish lines and the landing craft

begin to withdraw. First one fires, then all at once, filling the air with bullets, scything down the *Amis* at 1200 rounds per minute. Soldiers fall here and there upon the beach and still they fire.

Leaders go down in a hail of angry lead. Explosions fill the air with saltwater and sand. Everywhere at once men scream in pain as they fall. The beach becomes a killing ground. One by one the soldiers dash or crawl to the relative safety of the shingle bank. The remaining leaders of Fox and George Companies look around and realize they are on the wrong beach. The assault wavers in the face of destruction—the men disorganized, shocked by the death and destruction littering the beach behind them.

More LCV landing craft are coming ashore. Fresh troops spill out, running, dying, struggling through the bullet-torn hell to the shingle bank. Even there soldiers are dying as machine-guns fire along the length of the beach ripping into the bodies huddled behind the meagre cover.

In the midst of the carnage some men rise to the occasion. Major Sidney Bingham, commanding officer of 2nd Battalion, finds himself a squad leader. With a small group of men he storms a machine-gun nest in the basement of a three-story house, opening the way forward. Four Sherman DD tanks of the 743rd Tank Battalion lend a hand. One by one, they silence the machine-gun bunkers. Slowly, the American infantry climb the steep bluffs, moving through the thin crust of defences and into the French countryside.

HIT THE BEACH MISSION

The Easy Green scenario uses the Hit the Beach mission.



EASY GREEN, 6 JUNE 1944

BEACH DEFENCES

The defences of *Widerstandnest 66* (Strongpoint 66) are still under construction. Even so, much of the work is done, providing the soldiers with a very defensible position.

The completed defences consist of one pedestal mounted 5cm KwK in an open bunker just off the beach. Three heavy machine-guns in open Tobruk-style bunkers provide enfilade fire support for the 5cm KwK and the obstacle belt. In the actual strong point a *Panzerstellung* tank-turret provides further firepower. Communication trenches ring the entire strongpoint behind strong barbed wire obstacles.

At the top of the draw is another defensive network of trenches and wire. These defences protect the 28cm sWG41 rocket launchers aimed at the beach.

LES MOULINS OR D3 DRAW

The gully known to the Americans as the D3 Draw is the only way off the beach for motorized traffic. The steep bluff behind the beach stops all vehicle movement up its' face.

Realizing the importance of the draw and its road the Germans blocked the way up it with minefields and anti-tank obstacles effectively making it impassable without considerable engineering work.

The bluffs are Very Difficult Going and are Impassable to all vehicles.



GERMAN FORCES AT EASY GREEN

BACKGROUND

In May 1944, the 5th Company, 916. Grenadierregiment, relieved a platoon of the second-rate 10th Company of 726. Grenadierregiment manning Strongpoint 66 east of Les Moulins draw (overlooking the beach known as Easy Green to the US Army.) When the battle started the quality of these troops would be the biggest surprise inflicted on the Americans.

Despite Rommel's orders, only one platoon actually occupies the beach defences, the rest of the company making up a reserve to the rear, ready to support both Strongpoint 66 and Strongpoint 68 (on the opposite side of the draw) as the situation dictates.

Further to the rear, in Strongpoint 67, a static rocket launcher battery provides heavy and immediate fire support.

FORCE TACTICS

While your defences look sparse at first glance, they provide a rock-hard defence. The bunkers and fortifications deny the enemy troops the easy way off the beach by going up the road. Instead the enemy will have to advance slowly through your defences, each turn fighting to gain a few metres of terrain.

Your advantage is that the enemy has to continually advance, and in so doing loses all cover and concealment. To win, all you need to do is keep your opponent pinned down on the beach, preventing him from moving forward. The static rocket launchers are excellent for this.

Once this is accomplished you will have time to get your reserves up and into position to deny him the objectives. Your men have prepared their positions, trained hard, and are now ready to fight.

GERMAN 352. INFANTERIEDIVISION

WIEDERSTANDNEST 66

5. Kompanie, 916. Grenadierregiment

1. Zug, 5. Kompanie

84. Nebelwerfer Abteilung

VERSTÄRKUNGEN

3. Zug, 5. Kompanie, 916. Grenadierregiment

FESTUNGSKOMPANIE (CONFIDENT VETERAN)

(PAGE 26 OF ATLANTIK WALL)

Company HQ, trained as Panzerknacker SMG teams, at **A**

Omaha Wiederstandnest (at **A**) containing:

One Command Panzerknacker SMG team, four MG teams, one 5cm KwK nest, one APX turret, three HMG Tobruk nests.

Four 28cm sWG41 Nests

RESERVES

352. Füsilier platoon with one Command Panzerknacker SMG team and six MG teams.

Much to the surprise of the 116th Infantry Regiment, the German defenders at *Wiederstandnest 66* are men from 5. Kompanie, 916. Grenadier Regiment of 352. Infanteriedivision. This newly formed division is far better equipped and trained than the static coastal divisions they expected to find. Although the defences are only manned by a single platoon, of infantry, they are led by veterans of the Eastern Front with plenty of machine-guns and ammunition. Without a doubt, *Wiederstandnest 66* will cause heavy losses to the troops landing in front of it.

WHAT IF BATTLES

Flames Of War gives you an excellent forum to test out not only what happened in the battle for Easy Green, but what might have happened as well.

An example of this is to take the German reserves and drop the reserve infantry platoon, replacing it with two StuG assault guns, to represent *Kampfgruppe Meyer* coming to the beach instead of wandering in the countryside for the whole battle.

You can play the scenario with other forces entirely as well. If you do so, the attacking force consists of 1500 points while the defending force should consist of 1200 points. Any motorised, self-propelled gun, or tank platoon should be the last to arrive for the defending force.

US FORCES AT EASY GREEN

BACKGROUND

Major Bingham's 2nd Battalion 116th Infantry Regiment was supposed to land in the Dog Red sector of Omaha Beach just after dawn on D-Day, 6 June 1944. Plans have a way of not working out once the battle begins.

The trouble started early. A strong current was running up the Channel from the south, pushing the landing craft off course. Fox and George Companies landed in the Easy Green sector, a more heavily defended portion of the beach.

The trouble continued as heavy seas made it unsafe to launch the Sherman DD tanks to swim ashore ahead of the infantry. Instead they landed directly onto the beach from their landing craft—in hindsight the correct decision, but one that would leave the infantry unsupported for the first critical minutes ashore.

Wading ashore, the troops found themselves on an unfamiliar beach under heavy fire. Soon the tanks would join them, only to be stopped by the combination of the anti-tank obstacles and the high bluffs.

Forced to stay on the beach, the tanks provided what fire support they could as the infantry advanced up the bluffs, attacking the strongpoints from the rear.

FORCE TACTICS

Easy Green sector is well defended. You will have to use each of your units' capabilities to their best if you are going to win. But always remember, you are there to attack, and attack again. A timid nature will get you nowhere.

Each boat section contains a great deal of capability packed in a small force. They have weapons for every eventuality, along with specialised equipment like Bangalore Torpedoes to blow gaps in barbed wire and demolitions to destroy bunkers. These men are your assault troops. Get them in close as fast as possible and use their flame-throwers and demolitions to take apart the enemy defences. Don't forget to use your light mortars and machine-guns to pin the enemy first.

The Sherman DD tanks give you the capability to keep bunkers pinned down until the infantry can close with and destroy the bunkers. Then they climb off the beach and move up the road. If the bunkers are still fighting when your anti-aircraft artillery half-tracks land, they can be very effective in pinning down bunkers as well.

Finally, don't forget your naval fire support. A well-placed barrage can turn the tide of battle.

US 29TH INFANTRY DIVISION

II/116TH RIFLE BATTALION

Battalion HQ
Fox Company, 2 Boats
George Company, 4 Boats
2nd Platoon, Able Company, 743rd Tank Battalion
2nd Platoon, Charlie Company,
112th Engineer Combat Battalion
Able Battery, 111th Field Artillery Battery
1st Platoon, Baker Battery,
467th Anti-aircraft (AW) SP Battalion
USS Carmick

ASSAULT COMPANY (CONFIDENT TRAINED) (PAGE 208 OVERLORD)

Company HQ
2 Boat Sections (at Full Strength)
4 Boat Sections (at Full Strength)
DD Tank Platoon (with four M4 Sherman DD tanks)
Assault Engineer Combat Platoon
(at Full Strength with four Bazooka teams and M4 Sherman dozer)
Field Artillery battery (at full strength with DUKW trucks)
Corps Anti-aircraft Artillery (Self-propelled) Platoon
(with two M16 MGMC and two M15 CGMC half-tracks)
Naval Gunfire Support (see page 25)

The first wave ashore is not Easy Company of the 116th Infantry Regiment as planned. Instead, due to the strong crosscurrent, the first troops ashore on Easy Green are elements of Fox and George Companies. As the DD tanks disembark from their landing craft directly on to the shore, having chosen not to attempt to swim ashore in the heavy seas, they bring the defences under fire. With their support, the infantry wade ashore and fight their way off the beach.