

PEIPER'S CHARGE

Running the Gauntlet in the Ardennes, 16-25 December 1944

By Mike Haught



The quintessential image we all see in our minds when someone mentions the Battle of the Bulge is that of a line of King Tigers with Fallschirmjäger troops riding atop and Jochen Peiper pushing them forward with words of 'encouragement'. With the release of Devil's Charge it is now possible to refight this epic story with this epic scenario!

PEIPER'S CHARGE: 16-25 DECEMBER

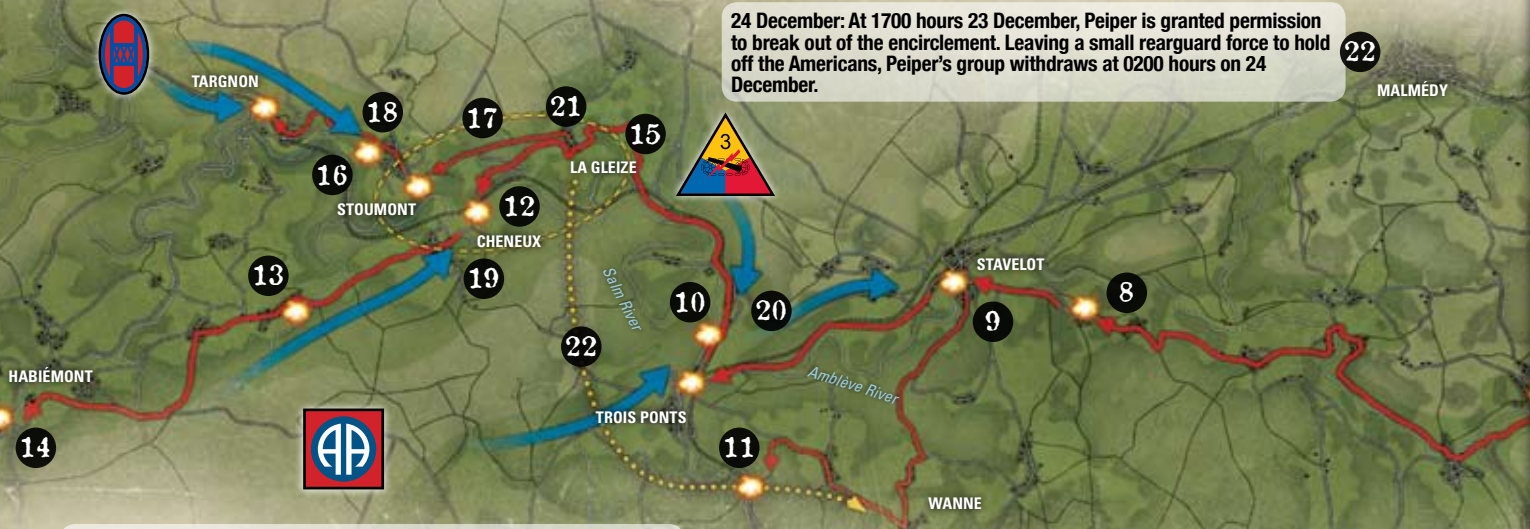
18 20 December, Midday-2000 hours: US Task Force Harrison (119th Infantry Regiment and 740th Tank Battalion, 30th Div) strikes Peiper's perimeter at the Stoumont Saint-Edourad Sanatorium. The building trades hands several times, but after the bloody fight, the Germans retain control.

19 20-21 December: The US 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment (82nd Airborne Division) attacks Cheneux. By nightfall, after a bloody fight the paratroopers only manage to grab a toehold in the town, only taking the rest on the following day.

20 December: US Task Force Lovelady (from the 3rd Armored Division) severs the road to Stavelot attacking Germans near Trois Ponts with the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (82nd Airborne). The task force moves on and links up with the Stavelot defenders, ending German hopes of reinforcing Peiper. **20**

21 December: Despite being outnumbered, low on ammo, fuel, and food, Peiper staves off several US attempts to take Stoumont and La Gleize. On 21 December, Peiper withdraws from Stoumont to consolidate his lines at La Gleize. **21**

24 December: At 1700 hours 23 December, Peiper is granted permission to break out of the encirclement. Leaving a small rearguard force to hold off the Americans, Peiper's group withdraws at 0200 hours on 24 December. **22**



15 19 December, Morning: SS-Kampfgruppe Knittel, the 1. SS-Panzerdivision's reconnaissance battalion, joins Peiper at La Gleize.

16 19 December, 0900-1100 hours: Peiper attacks Stoumont. After a fierce battle, Peiper wins the town, but supplies have run out and Peiper is forced on the defensive.

17 19 December, 2100 hours: Peiper pulls back and forms a perimeter around Stoumont, Cheneux, and La Gleize.

18 December, 1400-1600 hours: A massive air attack strikes the column stretched along a 30km (19 miles) piece of the road. Peiper's Wirbelwind anti-aircraft tanks knock down several P-47 fighters for the loss of two Panther tanks and a few other vehicles. **13**

18 December, 1430 hours: The nearby air attack alerts the engineers in Habiémont of Peiper's objectives and the bridge is blown. Peiper turns back to La Gleize. **14**

In December 1944, Hitler launched his last great offensives against the western Allies. The largest was *Wacht Am Rhein*, or Watch on the Rhine, and would be forever known to American historians as the Battle of the Bulge. The goal was simple, punch through to the Meuse River, then take Antwerp to encircle four Allied armies. This would hopefully force the Allies to the negotiating table and end the war on favourable terms for Germany.

To accomplish the offensive, Hitler gave the most critical task to his most trusted unit: the 1. *Liebestandarte SS-Panzerdivision*, which in turn gave its most important objective to its best panzer regiment led by *SS-Obersturmbannführer* (Lieutenant Colonel) Jochen Peiper. Peiper's epic drive is detailed below on the map.

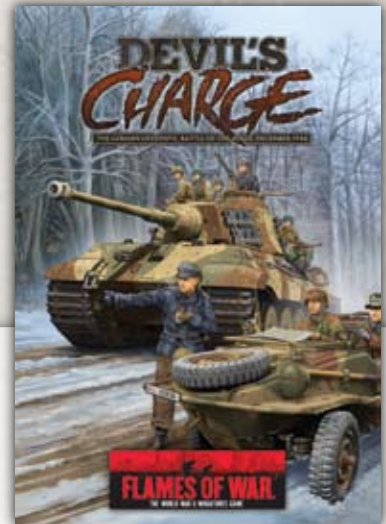
To recreate Peiper's daring march

to the Meuse, we've put together a scenario and battle report. The format is a gauntlet scenario where the German player starts the game with a seriously huge task force and tries to make it to the end of a long table through roadblocks and demolished bridges. The American player has a series of small forces to spring on the Germans.

The scenario is designed to be played along three tables which represents the path Peiper took in the cold winter of December 1944. It begins at Lanzerath, where the heroic stand of 18 men and four artillery observers from Lieutenant Lyle Bouck's Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon held up the entire 3. *Fallschirmjägerdivision* for 20 hours. Only the arrival of Peiper put the offensive back on the road. This is where our story and scenario begins.

It ends at Targnon and Habiémont. These small villages mark where Peiper's last obstacles stood before his goal along the Meuse. Securing these points would mean that the Germans had nearly unfettered access to the Meuse. The Americans knew this and poured everything they could into Stoumont and Cheneux. This was the defining moment for both sides of the fight.

Victor and I put that to the test further on in this issue. But for now, here's the scenario.



DEVIL'S CHARGE (FW222)

Devil's Charge (available 14 July) covers the fighting along the Northern Shoulder of the Battle of the Bulge. In it you will not only find the forces used here

in this scenario, but also Otto Skorzeny's 150. *Panzerbrigade*, US forces from the 2nd, 28th, and 99th Infantry Divisions, Cavalry squadrons, and, of course those 'Damned Engineers!'

- 6 17 December, 1200 hours: Peiper encounters the first serious American resistance. The US 9th Armored Division's CCB engages the battlegroup. Sherman tanks knock out one Panther, but the Germans destroy two Shermans and an M10 tank destroyer in return and press on to Stavelot.
- 7 17 December, 1500 hours: Following the spearhead through Baugnez, rear elements of the group encounter the US 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion, resulting in the Malmédy Massacre.
- 8 17 December, 1930 hours: Lead elements clash with a roadblock established by the 291st Engineer Combat Battalion. Convinced that the Americans strongly defended Stavelot, the Germans wait until morning to launch an all-out attack.
- 9 18 December, 0630-1100 hours: After a short artillery barrage, SS-Kampfgruppe Peiper charges into Stavelot, overruns the Americans guarding the stone bridge, and bypasses the town defenders.
- 10 18 December, 1115 hours: As Peiper reaches the Trois Ponts bridge, the structure explodes in a mess of wooden splinters and twisted metal. With the bridge went Peiper's only crossing over the Salm River, forcing him to travel north along the river until they find a ford near Cheneux.
- 11 18 December, 1300 hours: Peiper sends his 6th and 7th SS-Panzer Companies as well as some Panzergrenadiers to Wanne. From there the Panzer IV J tanks are to force a crossing south of Trois Ponts, but the engineers of the 291st demolish the crossing, forcing the panzers to return to Stavelot before rejoining Peiper.
- 12 18 December, 1400 hours: Peiper crosses the Salm River at Cheneux and leaves a detachment of 84. *Flaksturmbatterie* to guard the critical crossing.



- 1 16 December, 2200 hours: Peiper pushes through traffic jams and reaches Losheim.
- 2 16/17 December, Midnight: Peiper takes command of a battalion of idle paratroopers and pushes north.
- 3 17 December, 0600 hours: Peiper overtakes a column of retreating Americans.
- 4 17 December, 0800 hours: Kampfgruppe enters Büllingen and captures 50,000 gallons of fuel for their tanks.
- 5 17 December, Midday: The battlegroup reaches Thirimont. Poor roads force Peiper to redirect north and use the hard-surfaced road via Baugnez.

SS-KAMPFGRUPPE PEIPER - 3895 POINTS

HQ:

Peiper 235 points

Platoons:

Panzer Platoon (4x Pz IV tanks)	300 points	SS-Panzer Grenadier Platoon (full)	200 points
Panzer Platoon (4x Pz IV tanks)	300 points	SS-Panzer Grenadier Platoon (full)	200 points
Panzer Platoon (4x Panther tanks)	655 points	Fallschirmjäger Platoon (full)	205 points
Panzer Platoon (4x Panther tanks)	655 points	SS Panzer Anti-aircraft Platoon (4x Wirbelwind)	190 points
Schwere Panzer Platoon (2x Tiger II tanks)	590 points	SS-Self Propelled Infantry Gun Platoon (6x Grille)	365 points



**PEIPER
(PANTHER TANK)**

**PANZER PLATOON X2
(PANTHER TANKS)**



**PANZER PLATOON X2
(PANZER IV TANKS)**

**SCHWERE PANZER PLATOON
(TIGER II TANKS)**



**SS PANZERGRENADIER PLATOON X2
(FULL STRENGTH)**

**FALLSCHIRMJÄGER PLATOON
(FULL STRENGTH)**



**SS SELF-PROPELLED INFANTRY GUN PLATOON
(GRILLES)**

**SS PANZER ANTI-AIRCRAFT PLATOON
(WIRBELWINDS)**



US FORCES - 4055 POINTS



Table 1:

Roadblock Strongpoint (Confident Veteran) (1x Operating Squad, 1x Weapons Section)	170 points	Tank Destroyer Platoon (2x M10 3" GMC)	175 points
Rifle Platoon (Confident Trained) (2x Rifle Squads)	110 points	Subtotal	830 points
Tank Platoon (Confident Trained) (2x M4A3 76mm, 2x M4A3 (late))	375 points		



Table 2:

Roadblock Strongpoint (Confident Veteran) (1x Operating Squad, 1x Weapons Section)	170 points	Engineer Combat Platoon (Confident Veteran) (full, 4x Bazooka teams)	280 points
Armored Rifle Platoon (Confident Trained) (full)	225 points	Subtotal	870 points
Towed Tank Destroyer Platoon (Confident Trained) (4x M5 3in guns (late))	195 points		



Table 3:

Engineer Combat Platoon (Confident Veteran) (full, 4x Bazooka teams)	280 points	Scrapyard Tank Platoon (Confident Trained) (with 2x M4 Shermans, 1x M24 Chaffee, 1x M36 90mm GMC, and 1x M10 3" GMC (late))	335 points
Rifle Platoon (Confident Veteran) (full)	200 points	Subtotal	815 points



Reserve (1295 points):

Parachute Rifle Platoon (Fearless Veteran) (full)	265 points
Parachute Rifle Platoons (Fearless Veteran) (full)	265 points
Tank Platoon (Confident Veteran) (3x M4A1 Sherman, 2x M4A1 76mm (late))	515 points
Tank Platoon (Confident Veteran) (3x M4A1 Sherman, 2x M4A1 76mm (late))	515 points

Starting from Turn Three:

Priority Air Support (close Air Support and 5.5" HVAR rocket options)	245 points
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SCENARIO SPECIAL RULES

SCHEDULE TO KEEP!

The Ardennes offensive was timed to the hour. The German spearheads could waste no time getting to the Meuse. Any delay would give the Allies time to shift reinforcements into play.

*The German player has eight turns to get one of their teams to within 4"/10cm of the Objective marked **A**. If they fail to do so, the American player may immediately deploy up to two platoons from Reserve in their first turn once the Germans have moved onto Table 3.*

*The German player has sixteen turns to get one of their teams to within 4"/10cm of either Objective marked **B**. If they fail to do so, the American player may immediately deploy up to two platoons from Reserve in their first turn once the Germans have moved onto Table 3.*



ATTACK COLUMN

Peiper's column was over 30km (18 miles) long, making it a cumbersome formation on the narrow roads of the Ardennes. Still, Peiper always managed to get what he needed forward when needed it.

*Instead of rolling for Reserves as normal, the German player may select up to three of their platoons to arrive at the point marked **1** on the scenario map for Table 1.*

*When German platoons move off Table 3 at points **2** or **3**, they are not Destroyed. A platoon cannot drive off the table if it moved At the Double in the turn it attempts to leave the table.*

RUSHED TO THE FRONT

When the Germans attacked, the Allies lost no time in putting their most experienced troops into the rupture. Essential for stopping Peiper were the hardened veterans of the 30th Infantry and 82nd Airborne Divisions as well as the heavily armed 3rd Armored Division.

The American Player begins rolling for Reserves once the Germans have moved onto Table 3.

AT ALL COSTS

Both the Germans and the Americans fought to the bitter end. For the Americans it was a fight for survival. For the Germans the fight was an end-game gamble.

Neither player needs to roll a Company Morale Check.





TERRAIN SPECIAL RULES

BRIDGE DEMOLITION

American engineers earned the best compliment from Peiper when a bridge blew up in front of the frustrated German commander and he exclaimed 'The damned engineers!'

If at the beginning of their Movement Step, the American player has one or more Pioneer teams adjacent to a bridge that has been prepared for demolition, roll a die for each Pioneer team adjacent to the bridge:

- *If the result is 6, the bridge is demolished and collapses. Any teams on the bridge are immediately Destroyed.*
- *Otherwise the bridge was not ready for demolition and nothing happens this turn.*

A demolished bridge becomes Impassable for vehicles and Gun teams, however it is only Very Difficult Going for Infantry and Man-packed-gun teams.

ROLLBAHN

The attack road, or Rollbahn, was critical to the German attack. These roads sliced through an inhospitable world covered in mud, snow, and ice.

All terrain that is not a road is considered Slow Going and rivers are rated as Impassable.

GERMAN SPECIAL RULES

DEVIL'S CHARGE

Once SS-Kampfgruppe Peiper was free of traffic jams in Losheim, Peiper used his Panzer IV tanks and armoured infantry to lead the way through the American lines.

All German platoons may make Stormtrooper moves on a result of 3+.

FUEL DUMPS

The Germans were aware of several American fuel dumps in the Ardennes area and were taken into account when planning the mission of SS-Kampfgruppe Peiper.

A Fuel Dump is the same size as an Objective Marker. The German player Takes a Fuel Dump in the same way they Take normal Objectives (see page 258 of the rulebook).

When the German player Takes a Fuel Dump in the Starting Step, all friendly platoons may immediately move up to their full movement.

Once all of the teams have been moved, remove the Fuel Dump from the table.

AMERICAN SPECIAL RULE

WHY WE FIGHT

News of the infamous Malmédy Massacre spread fast, due in no small part to Eisenhower's order to make the incident public. From that moment on, the men gave no quarter to the notorious Waffen-SS.

All American platoons from a company with the Why We Fight special rule use the British Bulldog rule (see page 246 of the rulebook) in all Assaults involving any SS platoons.

PEIPER'S CHARGE SCENARIO



The Peiper's Charge scenario uses the **Attack Column**, **Bridge Demolition**, **Devil's Charge**, **Fuel Dumps**, **Prepared Positions**, **Rollbahn**, **Rushed to the Front**, **Schedule to Keep!**, and the **Why We Fight** special rules.

YOUR ORDERS

GERMAN

You have been placed in command of the single most important spearhead for the Ardennes Offensive. You have been chosen to lead an aggressive march through American lines to reach the Meuse River. From there we will march on Antwerp!

AMERICAN

The Germans have attacked! The situation is chaotic, but your mission is clear: stop the Germans from reaching the Meuse. You are placed directly in the path of the German panzer offensive. Corps is sending you everything they can, but try and hold the Germans as long as you can.

PREPARING FOR BATTLE

1. Set up the table according to the scenario maps on pages XX-YY.
2. Place three Objectives at **A**, **B**, and **C**.
3. Place Fuel Dumps at all points marked **X**.
4. The American Player now deploys all of their forces on the table in the area marked on the scenario maps on pages XX-YY.
5. The German Player now deploys their Fallschirmjäger Platoon in the area marked on the Map. The rest of their force is deployed using the Attack Column special rule.

BEGINNING THE BATTLE

1. American troops begin the game in Prepared Positions.
2. The German player has the first turn.
3. German platoons held off the table arrive at the place marked **1** on the Table 1 scenario map.

ENDING THE GAME

The scenario ends when either no German teams or no American teams remain on the table.

If no American teams remain on the table, the Germans have won and all remaining German platoons are counted as having left the table.

DECIDING WHO WON

The degree of success or failure of the Peiper's Charge depends on how many platoons have made it through to the Meuse by exiting Table 3 at points **2** and **3**. Use the following to determine the result of the scenario:

3 OR MORE GERMAN PLATOONS THROUGH

German Stunning Victory: The spearhead has broken through the Allied lines and secured a corridor to the Meuse River. Surviving American forces in the area are forced to fall back or be surrounded and destroyed by the weight of the German offensive.

2 GERMAN PLATOONS THROUGH

German Major Victory: Enemy resistance has dwindled your numbers, but you have managed to push through. Victory is certain as the German Sixth Army follows your path to the Meuse.

1 GERMAN PLATOON THROUGH

German Minor Victory: The fight was hard, but a small German contingent has made it to the Meuse. However, more work will need to be done to secure your achievement in the history books.

NO GERMAN PLATOONS THROUGH

The Americans have not only halted the German offensive, but Hitler's gamble has paid out grim dividend for the once illustrious German army. The spearheads were destroyed, and with it, any hope of a quick decisive German victory in the west.

PLAYING THE SCENARIO ON INDIVIDUAL TABLES

Ideally this scenario uses an 18' x 4' (550cm x 120cm) table. However, this can be impractical at times, especially if you don't have a room in your house to line up three tables! In this case, you can play this scenario in three parts, one for each table.

SETTING UP EACH TABLE

Instead of deploying all of the American platoons, only deploy the platoons available for the table you are playing on. Feel free to reuse some of the platoons from earlier tables, such as the Roadblock and Rifle Platoons.

ENDING THE BATTLE FOR THE TABLE

The game for each table ends when either no German teams or no American teams remain on the table. When no American teams remain in play, the German forces are considered to have instantly reached that table's objective in the same turn for the purposes of the Schedule to Keep!

special rule.

If there are no German teams left on the table the scenario is over as Peiper's column as been brutally crushed!

MOVING TO THE NEXT TABLE

Record which German platoons survive and move off of the table. These are the platoons that the German player uses on the next table. Ignore American teams left from previous tables. The American player only ever uses the teams on the current table.

When you start the second or third game, use the Attack Column special rule to bring the German platoons into play at Point A on Table 2 and Point B on Table 3. If the German player captures Point C on Table 2, they can use Point C on Table 3 as well to bring on their troops.

TABLE 1: BREAKTHROUGH



TABLE 2: THE BRIDGES



TABLE 3: TO THE MEUSE



ARDENNES BATTLEFIELDS

This scenario takes players through the wilderness that confronted Peiper in mid-December 1944. The weather and terrain played nearly as large a role as the men on the ground, confounding off-road mobility and blocking access routes. Many veterans of the battle called it a one-tank front,

referring to the narrow tracks and roads through the Ardennes.

In this scenario, we reflect this by rating everything off the road as Slow Going, encouraging German and American vehicles to stay on and fight for the road itself.

In your own Flames Of War battles, you can use some of the following guidelines to help recreate the challenges that Peiper and his opponents faces in those early days of the Battle of the Bulge.



STREAMS & RIVERS

Streams, canals, and small rivers flowed between the Meuse and Rhine rivers, creating a massive waterway network through the Ardennes. Streams are Difficult Going with Slow Going Fords where tracks cross. Rivers and canals are wider, and are Very Difficult Going.



SNOW-COVERED TERRAIN

Moving in the snow presents a lot of hazards to the unwary traveller. Deep snow impedes foot traffic as much as it does vehicle movement. All teams treat snow-covered Roads as Cross-country Terrain, and all other snow-covered Terrain as Slow Going.

FORDS AND BRIDGES

Fords and Bridges were vital objectives for armies moving across the Ardennes. Fords across Rivers are Difficult Going, but Bridges are rated as roads. For a bit of fun, feel free to use the optional Bridge Demolition special rules to represent old rickety structures and demolitions!

FORESTS

The Ardennes is a massive forested region, broken up in places by the occasional clearing. Large portions of the forest had been replanted in massive groves; the trees planted in long and precise rows with large gaps in between. The sandy soil of the northern forest prevents undergrowth, so it is easy to see long distances into the woods.

You can model this on your battlefield by covering a majority of your table with wooded areas. Rather than treating these forests as area terrain as usual, simply make the area they occupy conceal those teams inside. To represent the complications of manoeuvring vehicles in forests, they should be rated as Slow Going (rather than difficult or very difficult going as usual).

