

When the Allies planned the Normandy landings, they knew they would have to destroy the German gun batteries at Merville in the British sector and Pointe du Hoc in the US sector. Both were capable of wreaking serious damage on the invasion fleet.

Thus an epic tale of luck and tenacity was written. For Pointe du Hoc, the story was one of bravery, courage, and a great deal of luck. Without any one of these the mission of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion to destroy the cliff-top guns might have turned out very differently.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Rangers planned to send their Dog, Easy, and Fox Companies in as the first wave. Charlie Company would go in with 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division to destroy another battery. This left Able and Baker Companies in reserve. These companies would reinforce the rangers if signalled to do so, otherwise they would reinforce the landings at Omaha. Disregarding the direct orders of his superior officer, Lieutenant Colonel Rudder accompanied his men in their assault.

Prior to the landing, the *USS Texas* brought its 14-inch guns to bear on the defences, its huge shells carving out a moonscape of giant craters. Promptly at 0630hrs the 'Old Battleship' shifted its fire to new targets to allow the rangers to land. Unfortunately though, the rangers' landing craft had run off course and were struggling against the current to make their way back along the coast.

The German defenders were not idle. With the bombardment over long before the rangers arrived, they reoccupied their positions. The rangers finally arrived at the beaches below the cliffs half an hour late. The reserve was already on its way to Omaha Beach. Firing machine-guns and lobbing grenades down the cliff, the defenders struck at the rangers as they landed. Despite the heavy fire, the rangers began firing rockets trailing ropes up the cliffs and began climbing.

After reaching the cliff-top, small groups of rangers set about carrying out their mission without waiting for the soldiers struggling up the ladders behind them. Hopping from crater to crater, they advanced under heavy German fire. Reaching their objectives, they found that the guns were no longer there! Weeks before, the Germans had repositioned the guns to save them from the Allies' incessant aerial bombardments.

Colonel Rudder then sent his men out to find the guns. Following wheel tracks in the soft mud, a pair of rangers came upon the guns in positions further inland, ready to fire. Working frantically and with the explosives they had with them, they disabled a single gun. Running back to their unit they grabbed all the thermite grenades available and returned to the guns. From the other edge of the clearing German voices drifted over to the two men. Quickly they placed the charges destroying the remaining guns.

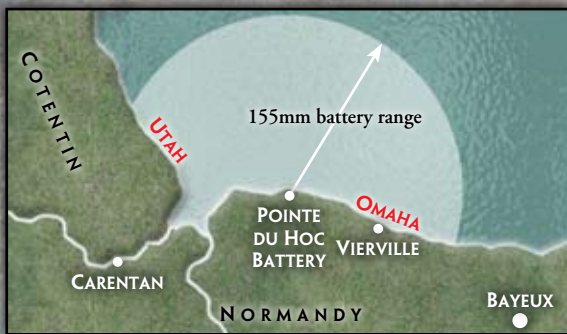
At almost the same time a large explosion rocked the ground and a tremendous fireball filled the sky—another team of rangers had discovered the ammunition dump and finished it off. With the mission complete the rangers awaited the inevitable counterattacks and their relief.

German reinforcements from *II Bataillon 914 Grenadier-regiment* descended on the ranger's positions. Over and over the ever thinning ranks of rangers beat them off. Soon the poorly-motivated *439. Ost Bataillon* joined the fray. The rangers withdrew behind the fortifications of the base perimeter, prepared to make a final stand. After two days of relentless assaults, the relieving force finally arrived.

Despite bad luck leading them astray and landing late only to find the guns moved, the rangers had succeeded through desperate bravery and courage. The cost was high. By the time relief arrived two days later, of the more than 200 rangers that landed, only 50 were still capable of combat.



# POINTE DU HOC MAP



Pointe du Hoc provided the German gunners with an easily defended vantage point with which to engage any Allied fleet, making it a prime target on D-Day.

### LCA (Landing Craft, Assault) Roster

- LCA668 D Company    LCA861 E Company    LCA883 F Company
- LCA858 D Company    LCA862 E Company    LCA884 F Company
- LCA722 E Company    LCA888 E Company    LCA887 F Company
- LCA860 D Company, became swamped and sunk before landing.

### LEGEND

- 155mm gun emplacement
- Shelter
- Barbed wire
- Minefields
- Trench
- MG bunker
- 2cm FlaK bunker
- Ranger movement
- German movement



# POINTE DU HOC, 6 JUNE 1944

The defences of the Pointe Du Hoc battery use the terrain well. Situated on a point jutting into the English Channel atop sheer cliffs, the battery appeared impervious to attack from the sea. A series of barbed wire obstacles protect against attack from its landward side.

The defences are held by a platoon of infantry with two heavy machine-guns covering the sea approach and two more facing landward. Three 2cm anti-aircraft guns in concrete pits have recently been added to deal with the constant Allied air attacks.

## CLIFFS

The cliff is sheer and tall making communication up and down impossible.

*Teams on the beach may not assault or be assaulted, nor shoot or be shot at. Teams at the top of the cliff are never within Command Distance of those at the bottom.*

## SHELL CRATERS

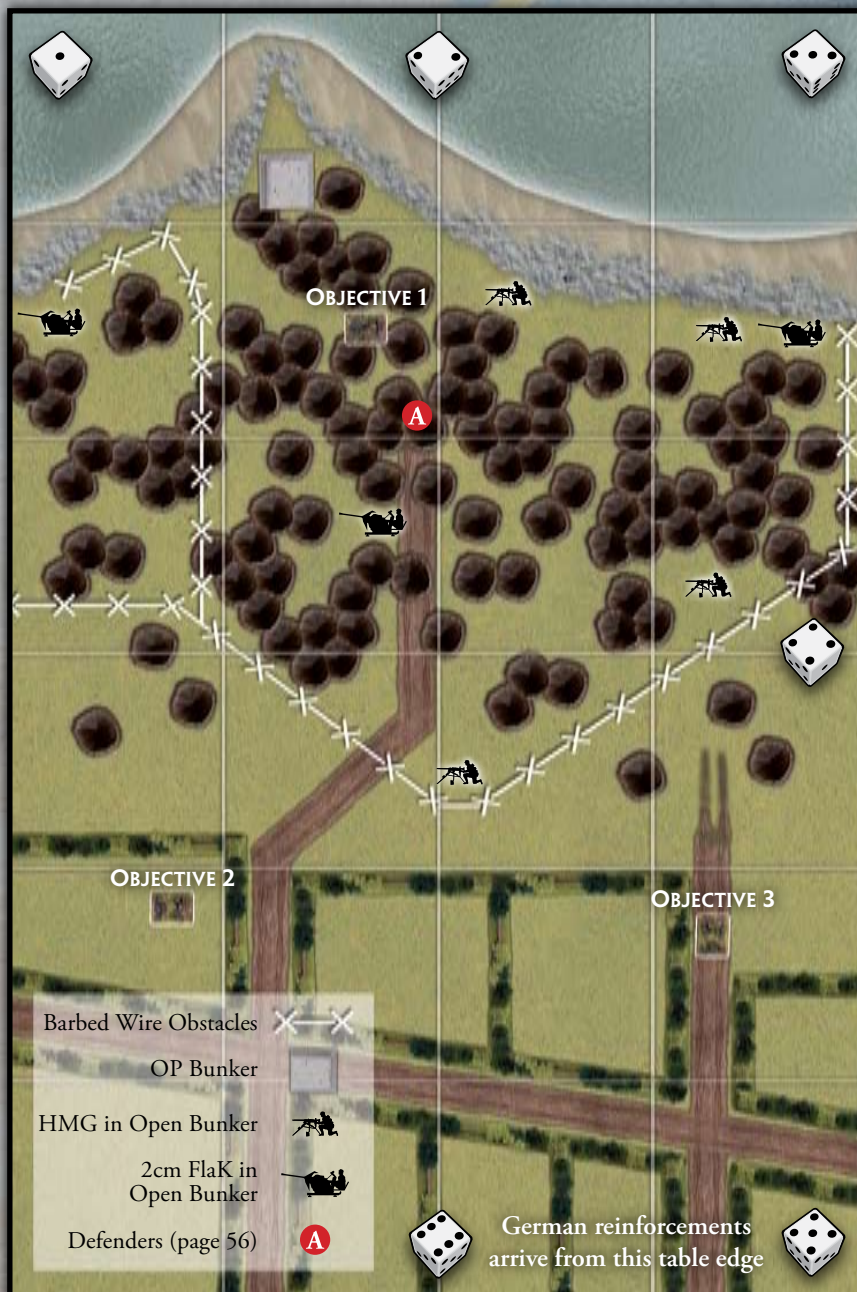
Previously trenches linked the bunkers and shelters. Now the entire area looks like a moonscape.

*The entire area between the cliffs and the hedgerows is covered in shell craters. These give teams Concealment. Teams in shell craters also gain Bulletproof Cover except from Defensive Fire.*

## OP BUNKER

The OP bunker on the point would have controlled the guns had they fired, but played no part in the battle.

*The OP Bunker is Impassable and cannot be occupied.*



# THE BATTLE FOR POINTE DU HOC

The Pointe du Hoc scenario recreates this battle. With so many things that could have and did go wrong for the rangers, and no few that went right too, this scenario has a large element of chance in it, much like the real thing. Luck will play a large part setting the scene for the battle, but it is your skill as a commander that will determine the outcome.

The Pointe du Hoc scenario uses the **Colonel Rudder**, **Delayed Reserves**, **Don't Wait for Me**, **Preliminary Bombardment**, **Prepared Positions**, **Protect the Guns**, **Random Objective**, **Ranger Reserves** special rules.

## YOUR ORDERS

### US

You must climb the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc to find and destroy the guns before they can bombard the invasion fleet. Living to tell the tale would be a nice bonus!

### GERMAN

You must stop the rangers from destroying the guns and then wipe them out to the man for daring to invade Fortress Europe.

## PREPARING FOR BATTLE

1. Set up the table as shown on page 55, including placing the Random Objective.
2. The German player deploys their garrison platoon (see below) inside the barbed wire perimeter. The remaining forces are held off table in Delayed Reserve.
3. The US player now places Colonel Rudder and the landing force on the beach against the cliff. The Reserve Force will arrive during the game using the Ranger Reserves special rule.

The Rangers will climb the cliff using their Mountaineers special rule (see page 46 of the rulebook).

## BEGINNING THE BATTLE

1. The German player starts the game in prepared positions, so their troops are Entrenched in foxholes, trenches and craters, and are Gone to Ground.
2. The US player conducts a Preliminary Bombardment on the defending German forces.
3. The US player takes the first turn.

## ENDING THE BATTLE

The battle ends when either:

- The US force has been destroyed or
- On the beginning of the US player's 13<sup>th</sup> turn.

## DECIDING WHO WON

Due to the chaotic nature of the fight and the variable objectives and reinforcements, it is impossible to clearly define victory or defeat for either side.

The US rangers' goal is to destroy the guns and limit their losses so they may fight another day. If things go well, destroying the guns should be easy, and keeping the whole force alive until relieved will be the main goal. If the guns turn out to be hard to find, simply destroying them with the last surviving rangers will be a major achievement.

The German defenders must protect the guns at all costs, or failing that, destroy the invaders, or at least inflict significant casualties on them. Depending on where the guns are, the first may prove impossible, making revenge and killing as many rangers as possible the order of the day.

## BOCAGE HEDGEROWS

The hedgerows at the south end of the table are bocage hedgerows. These are taller than a tank, Very Difficult Going, and provide Bulletproof Cover to troops sheltering behind them. Teams must start their movement adjacent to a bocage hedgerow to cross it. The full Bocage rules are provided in more detail in the D-Day book.

## GERMAN 352. INFANTERIEDIVISION

### SICHERHEITZUG

2. Zug, 1. Kompanie, 726. Grenadierregiment

### VERSTÄRKUNGEN

1. & 3. Zug, 3. Kompanie, 914. Grenadierregiment

1. Zug, 4. Kompanie, 914. Grenadierregiment

2. Zug, 1. Kompanie, 439. Ost Bataillon

### FESTUNGSKOMPANIE

Grenadier Platoon (at full strength, rated as Confident Trained, at **A**)

### RESERVES

2 Grenadier Platoons (at full strength, with MG teams, HQ trained as Panzerknacker teams, rated as Confident Veteran)

Machine-gun Platoon (with 2 Machine-gun Sections, rated as Confident Veteran)

Grenadier Platoon (at full strength, rated as Reluctant Trained)

## SCENARIO SPECIAL RULES

### COLONEL RUDDER

Lieutenant Colonel Rudder led his men ashore on D-Day where he discovered that all of the radios operating on navy frequencies were dead. However, one of his men had brought along an old signalling lamp. Through him, Rudder controlled the fire of the *USS Satterlee* by Morse Code.

*Colonel Rudder is a Higher Command Carbine team and the Observer team for the Naval Gunfire Support.*

### DON'T WAIT FOR ME

The Pointe du Hoc raid was carefully planned. Every ranger knew what needed to be done and had memorised the photographs and sand tables showing their objectives. The first troops up the cliff lead the way, regardless of rank.

*When a platoon climbs the cliff using the Mountaineers special rule, the first team up the cliff will always be the Platoon Command team. If the Platoon Command team does not pass its Skill Test to climb the cliff, swap the Platoon Command team with a team that did climb the cliff. In addition, Ranger Platoon Command teams do not need to keep half of their platoon In Command when they move. They can move off with whatever force they have available.*

### RANDOM OBJECTIVE

The rangers were surprised to find the gun positions empty and had to search for the guns. Likewise the German reserves had no idea that they had been moved.

*At the start of the game neither player knows which of the Objectives on the table is actually the guns. Before the game take two pieces of paper. Mark one of them and then randomly place a piece of paper under each of Objectives 2 and 3. The marked Objective represents the guns. Neither player should know which is the marked Objective.*

*The rangers must take Objective 1 before they can take Objectives 2 or 3. When the rangers take Objective 2 or 3, they reveal the piece of paper under it. If it is the marked paper, they have found the guns and destroyed them. The German player is not allowed to look at the piece of paper until the Ranger player reveals it by taking the Objective (having already taken Objective 1).*

### RANGER RESERVES

Rangers from everywhere tried to get to the battle. Some arrived by boat, others by land after a difficult journey.

*Rangers follow the normal Delayed Reserves and Scattered Reserves special rules with the following changes:*

*The Ranger player only rolls one die to receive Reserves each turn, rather than increasing the number of dice each turn, and requires a roll of 6 to receive Reserves, instead of the usual 5+.*

*When reserves arrive roll another die, consult the map and place the reserves on that appropriate table edge or corner based on the die roll. If reserves arrive from a corner, they must enter the table within 16"/40cm of the corner.*

*The Tank Platoon must be the last to arrive from Reserve. In addition, if the Scattered Reserve roll to find out where it arrives is a 1, 2, or 3, they do not arrive this turn. Instead, they roll again for their arrival point next turn.*

### PROTECT THE GUNS

The German defenders have lost all communications and are fighting in a moonscape out of touch with friendly troops. Unaware of what is happening elsewhere on the battlefield, they will fight until they themselves are defeated.

*There is no German Company Command team in this scenario. However, the German force will always pass any Company Morale Check it is required to take.*

## US 2<sup>ND</sup> RANGER BATTALION

### 2<sup>ND</sup> RANGER BATTALION

Colonel Rudder  
Mortar Platoon  
Dog Company  
Easy Company  
Fox Company  
USS Satterlee

### RESERVE FORCE

Able Company  
Baker Company  
Charlie Company  
3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, Able Co., 743<sup>rd</sup> Tank Battalion

### RANGER COMPANIES (FEARLESS TRAINED)

Higher Command Carbine and NGFS Observer team  
Ranger Mortar Platoon (at full strength)  
Ranger Company (with two platoons and two bazookas)  
Ranger Company (with two platoons and two bazookas)  
Ranger Company (with two platoons and two bazookas)  
Naval Gun Fire Support (Colonel Rudder is the Observer team)

### RESERVES

Ranger Company (with two platoons and two bazookas)  
Ranger Company (with two platoons and two bazookas)  
Ranger Company (with two platoons and two bazookas)  
Tank Platoon (with 3 M4 Sherman tanks)

The need for specially-trained troops to conduct dangerous missions in difficult terrain was not lost upon the US Army. Learning from their allies and enemies alike the Army began to create new elite ranger battalions in Scotland in early 1942. As the fighting was anticipated to shift from the Mediterranean to northern France, the need for more ranger units also grew. Thus the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Ranger Battalions were formed in April and September 1943 at Camp Forrest, Tennessee. These two battalions embarked on the now legendary ranger training program to get them ready for combat.

With their training complete, they headed for England. Their arrival in September of 1943 was just in time to begin immediate preparation for Operation Overlord, the invasion of France. The higher command had the perfect target for the rangers. They would destroy the coastal gun battery at Pointe du Hoc.

Come D-Day it would be 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion that became famous for their exploits against this gun battery. There in the early morning hours Dog, Easy, and Fox Companies scaled the cliffs, and against overwhelming odds fought their way through the defences to destroy the guns, despite them having been moved from their positions to a location away from the strongpoint. By doing so they become the first United States unit to fulfil its D-Day mission. Individual courage, guts and determination allowed the rangers to accomplish the task at hand, a testament to their training.

Elsewhere, Able, Baker and Charlie Companies of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion and the 5<sup>th</sup> Ranger Battalion landed with the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at Omaha beach. Pinned down by the horrendous fire coming from the bluffs above the seawall the Rangers waited with the rest of the survivors of the 116<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. Their wait would not be long.

Walking up the beach with a purpose, General Cota surveyed the soldiers huddled against the sea wall and still standing addressed them as hot lead flew all around. Lieutenant Colonel Max Schneider of the 5<sup>th</sup> Rangers stood up to receive his orders. Only later would he explain why he did so, saying 'You can't very well take orders sitting down.' General Cota asked which unit this was. On being told 5<sup>th</sup> Rangers, he said, 'Well then rangers, lead the way'.

With General Cota's words still in their heads the rangers scrambled over the seawall and through the wire obstacles to scale the bluffs. They led the way into the French countryside and all the way to the town of Vierville, helping to take the draw that would allow vehicular traffic to begin to flow into France from the beaches. This effort would save Omaha Beach, and allow the Allies to begin the buildup that would make Operation Overlord successful.

To this day the motto of the Rangers remains the famous words of General Cota, 'Rangers, lead the way.'

## RANGER BATTALION



*Battalion Strength: 538 soldiers in 6 companies, 18 mortars, 12 bazookas.*