

# STRING OF PEARLS

Our orders say to keep on pushing forward but it seems we are still caught in the hurry up and wait of all army operations. When we started out a week ago we gained some good ground in the first day, but then we ran into enemy roadblocks. There wasn't much there to stop us but it sure slowed us down.

The Lieutenant keeps telling us to bypass them or knock them out but he's not the one looking for the ambushes. The Germans hide their guns in the bushes and it's tough to see until they fire which generally hits one of our tanks or half-tracks. Then we have to stop, find the position, dig them out, check to make sure they're all gone, and then start moving again. It takes the better part of the day to get everything coordinated.

Four days ago the column got ambushed by three tanks. Two of them were dug in like pill boxes. Lost some good men that day and nearly a dozen vehicles. We spent all afternoon killing the two dug in tanks before we saw the third hightailing it down the road.

Two days ago we ran into two anti-tank guns. We lost two tanks and a half-track before we finally silenced them with tank fire and infantry support. The damn bocage keeps us from outflanking them even with the hedge-cutters, mainly because we don't know where they are hiding.

Today was a lot of screw-ups as usual. Sent the recon boys out down the road and within

20 minutes they were on the horn screaming for armoured support. Three M4's went up and within a half hour two were knocked out by tank fire. They then sent the armoured rifle platoons out into the sticks to try and outflank the enemy tanks. They ran into machine gun fire and starting yelling for artillery. After the artillery started up, the recon guys came back and said we could get through as they spotted the Krauts pulling back through the town.

Finally, we moved into the town and now it's getting dark. We spent the whole day waiting for someone to do something and we only covered about four miles. How the hell can we keep going when two German tanks and a platoon of infantry hold up a whole column? If we could catch them in the open we could manoeuvre to bypass them or knock them out. Hopefully tomorrow will go better. Heard the Lieutenant say that we have air support tomorrow, so maybe we won't get hung up all day by just a few Krauts.

Sarge says we're doing okay though. He says that both us and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armor are doing this all through the sector. Says our constant moving keeps the Krauts so busy they don't have time to dig in. He also said the infantry divisions are right behind us and keeping the Germans from doing anything funny like mounting a heavy counterattack. Just seems like a whole lot of effort for not much gain.



## STRING OF PEARLS

General Bayerlein once described his defences as 'a string of pearls'. Each key road junction held by a small group of men backed up by a few Panzers with just a string of weak units holding the line between them. This worked because, hindered by the thick Bocage hedgerows, the Americans were unable to manoeuvre around the roadblocks. The invention of the hedgerow cutter spelled the end for the thin German defensive line. Now a fighting retreat is the only option.

The String of Pearls scenario uses the **Escape**, **Prepared Positions**, and **Scattered Reserves** rules.

### YOUR ORDERS

#### GERMAN

Under massive bombardment, the line has broken. A US armoured division is on the loose. Your force has been ordered to form a roadblock and stop them long enough for other units to retreat to safety.

#### AMERICAN

Operation Cobra is under way. The Germans have almost nothing left to stop your onslaught. You must advance quickly into the German rear area and destroy the retreating troops before they can reach a new defensive position.

### PREPARING FOR BATTLE

1. Set up the terrain as shown on page 72. The table is 4'/120cm by 6'/180cm.
2. The German player places their troops in the fields or village as indicated. The Panzer Platoon is held in Scattered Reserve. In the dense Bocage hedgerows, the platoon must arrive from reserve along the road rather than anywhere on the table edge.
3. The German player places five vehicles, either overloaded trucks or horse-drawn wagons (the American objectives) in a column nose-to-tail along the road at **1**.
4. The American player places their starting troops in the indicated fields. The third Tank Platoon is held in Reserve.

### ESCAPE

The majority of the German Army relies on slow-moving horse-drawn wagons and dangerously overloaded trucks to move its heavy weapons. Now, in retreat, only a stubborn defence will allow the Army's transport time to get away.

*The German player starts the game with five Trained trucks or horse-drawn wagons at **1**. These vehicles must escape the advancing US forces by exiting the table at either **2** or **3**.*

*These vehicles are so heavily laden that they can only move down the road at 6"/15cm each turn. They cannot move At the Double, although they can make Stormtrooper moves.*

### BEGINNING THE BATTLE

1. The German troops begin the game in Prepared Positions, so the infantry and guns are in foxholes and all Concealed teams are Gone-to-Ground.
2. The American player has the first turn.

### ENDING THE BATTLE

The battle ends when all of the German wagons are destroyed or have left the table.

### DECIDING WHO WON

The German player wins if they get more than half of the vehicles off the table at **2** or **3**. Otherwise the American player wins. The following table shows the outcome.

Vehicles Escaping	Result
Five vehicles	Stunning German victory
Four vehicles	Major German victory
Three vehicles	Minor German victory
Two vehicles	Minor US victory
One vehicles	Major US victory
No vehicles	Stunning US victory

### BREAKOUT MINI CAMPAIGN

The String of Pearls scenario can be played as part of a mini campaign with the Barkmann's Corner and Roncey Pocket scenarios. Play the Barkmann's Corner scenario on page (45) first, then this scenario.

If the German player won the Barkmann's Corner scenario, the Americans are held up in their advance. The Americans fight the String of Pearls scenario with the two platoons that deploy at **A** held in Reserve.

If the American player won the battle, they advance so fast that the German supply wagons are not yet ready to march. The German horse-drawn wagons cannot move at all in their first Movement Step.

### OTHER PLACES, OTHER TIMES

Once the Americans and British broke out of the Bocage area of Normandy, the German rearguards faced a much more difficult task. Try refighting the String of Pearls scenario in more open terrain to see why the American and British forces advanced hundreds of miles in a couple of weeks just a month after Operation Cobra.

While the US Army was busy chasing the German Army out of Normandy, the Red Army had the Germans on the run in Byelorussia. The String Of Pearls scenario could be used to recreate these battles. Change the terrain from Bocage hedgerows to a wooded stream (rated as Very Difficult Going) running along the German front line. The remainder of the table is mixed swamps and woodlands with intermittent clearings.

## GERMAN KAMPFGRUPPE MAITRÉ

By the end of July, the battalions of the Der Führer Regiment had the fighting strength of a weak company. Their ability to

stop the American advance was limited to delaying actions as the rest of the army retreated behind their shield.

### II BATAILLON, 4. 'DER FÜHRER' SS-PANZERGRENADIERREGIMENT

SS-Hauptsturmführer Emil Maitré

- 5. 'Der Führer' SS-Panzergrenadierregiment
- 5. 'Das Reich' SS-Panzerregiment
- 6. 'Der Führer' SS-Panzergrenadierregiment
- 7. 'Der Führer' SS-Panzergrenadierregiment
- 16. 'Der Führer' SS-Panzergrenadierregiment

### VERSTÄRKUNGEN

- 5. 'Das Reich' SS-Panzerregiment

### SS-PANZERGRENADIERKOMPANIE (FEARLESS VETERAN)

Company HQ (both teams equipped with Panzerfaust, and two Panzerschreck teams, at **C**)

SS-Panzergrenadier Platoon (with two squads, HQ equipped with Panzerfaust, and one attached 7.5cm Pak40 anti-tank gun, at **C**)

SS-Panzer Platoon (with one Panzer IV tank at **C**)

SS-Panzergrenadier Platoon (with two squads, HQ equipped with Panzerfaust, and one attached 7.5cm Pak40 anti-tank gun, at **D**)

SS-Panzergrenadier Platoon (with two squads, HQ equipped with Panzerfaust, and one attached 7.5cm Pak40 anti-tank gun, at **E**)

SS-Panzerpionier Platoon (with two squads, HQ equipped with Panzerfaust, at **F**)

### RESERVES

SS-Panzer Platoon (with two Panzer IV tanks)

## US DOG COMPANY, 66<sup>TH</sup> ARMORED REGIMENT

Brigadier General Maurice Rose's Combat Command A led the advance with its 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 66<sup>th</sup> Armored Regiment supported by a company from the 41<sup>st</sup> Armored Infantry Regiment.

Passing through the 30<sup>th</sup> 'Old Hickory' Infantry Division, the spearhead raced south through sporadic German opposition, overrunning supply columns as they went.

As the leading tanks located roadblocks, they engaged them frontally while following elements flanked them and cleared the route.

The new Rhino tanks fitted with hedgerow cutters made manoeuvre through the Bocage possible and the tank telephones allowed the tanks to give the infantry precision support.

### DOG CO. 66<sup>TH</sup> ARMORED REGIMENT

Dog Company, 66<sup>th</sup> Armored Regiment

1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Dog Company

1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Easy Co., 41<sup>st</sup> Armored Infantry Regiment

2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, Dog Company

2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, Easy Co., 41<sup>st</sup> Armored Infantry Regiment

### RESERVES

3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, Dog Company

### TANK COMPANY (CONFIDENT VETERAN)

Company HQ (with two M4 Sherman tanks (2iC with Dozer) and one M4 (105) Sherman tank, at **A**)

Tank Platoon (with five M4 Sherman tanks, two tanks equipped with Hedgerow Cutters, all tanks equipped with Tank Telephones, at **A**)

Armored Rifle Platoon (at full strength, at **A**)

Tank Platoon (with five M4 Sherman tanks, two tanks equipped with Hedgerow Cutters, all tanks equipped with Tank Telephones, at **B**)

Armored Rifle Platoon (at full strength, at **B**)

### RESERVES

Tank Platoon (with five M4A1 (76) Sherman tanks, two tanks equipped with Hedgerow Cutters, all tanks equipped with Tank Telephones)

## TERRAIN

The Bocage country of Normandy is crisscrossed with high Bocage hedgerows and small woods. The roads are narrow, overhung on both sides by the high banks. They are too confined for two tanks to pass, or even to shoot past each other. A small farming village at a road intersection provides a good point for a roadblock to delay the American advance.

With a hastily laid minefield blocking the way into the village, the best approach for Dog Company will be a flanking attack using their hedgerow cutters for mobility.

## BOCAGE HEDGEROWS

All hedgerows on 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 adjacent to a Bocage hedgerow to cross it. The full Bocage rules are provided in more detail in the *D-Day* campaign book or on our web page, [www.FlamesOfWar.com](http://www.FlamesOfWar.com).

