

BARKMANN'S CORNER

The homeland gets occasional details of the heroic defensive battle our soldiers are waging in the East. Names like Stalingrad, Welikje-Luki, Rschew, Illmensee and others have become symbols of the unbelievable heroism of German soldiers and their allies. We hear also of the heroism of individual soldiers, in comparison to whom all former military exploits pale. There is no point in giving the details of every individual act of heroism and bravery, for in the end all those fighting to stop the bestial foe are heroes. Like wolves in the forest, the enemy attacks only with overwhelming number. Every day, positions held by a few troops must withstand steady attacks by enemy masses. Yet they hold firm.

Heldentum! Normandie, 6 August 1944

On a hill overlooking the fields of Normandie, Panther 424 prowls the woods hunting its prey. Barkmann, a hero of many battles in the East, prepares his brave crew to hunt the wolves from the West. Skilled mechanics work through the whole night to repair the damage inflicted by a wandering Jabo fighter-bomber. By daybreak Panther 424 is once again fully operational and now rushes to rejoin its unit. Years later they would call his great stand "Barkmann's Corner".

Moving ever forwards, the sounds of battle grow closer. Friendly infantry upon the road wave down and warn Barkmann of a large American armour column approaching. Moving carefully under the open sky, Barkmann moves from position to position until he sees the swirling dust. He scans the surrounding area, and picks the place of the fight. Groves of large oak trees offer cover from the air, and concealment from the ground, the perfect position.

On this day, at an unnoticed little corner in Normandie, Panther 424 will pass beyond the sum of its leader, crew and armour. It will become the spirit of the German Army.

Barkmann and his brave crew's gallant actions have succeeded in single-handedly delaying an entire American armoured division's advance, allowing the rest of the division to establish a new defensive line. The weight of enemy material thrown against them takes

their toll on the gallant man, crew, and tank. Several of the crew suffer light wounds. For the tank, one track is blown off, the drive sprocket is damaged, and the internal ventilation system fails. The great Panther licks its wounds and retires to a nearby village for repairs. He has stopped the wolves' attack, and will return again to unleash his fury.

As they move back to take their place in the new battle line, Barkmann pauses to take two disabled Panthers in tow. Passing through Countances, they find more Americans. One of the towed Panthers is destroyed by surprise anti-tank fire, but Barkmann pushes on, leaving more smouldering enemy armour in his wake. His band of survivors, including the crews of the two disabled Panthers, again come under concerted air attack and Barkmann himself suffers a wound to the calf.

Breaking through the enemy encirclement, often crossing the path of advancing American armour under the shadow of darkness, they are finally forced to destroy the towed Panther. Soon after, fire breaks out in Panther 424, and Barkmann and his crew watch as their great beast explodes in a fiery funeral pyre worthy of the warriors of old. Bowed but not beaten, Barkmann leads fourteen weary and wounded survivors through seven kilometres of hostile, enemy-held terrain to their own lines. There, he is received with a hero's welcome.



BARKMANN'S CORNER

Barkmann's Corner refights Barkmann's famous battles where he almost single handedly stopped columns of American tanks with his Panther, then somehow nursed his stricken vehicle back to the workshops.

The Barkmann's Corner scenario uses the **One-road Advance** (below) and **Prepared Positions** (page 264 of the rulebook) special rules.

YOUR ORDERS

GERMAN

The Americans have broken through. You must delay them in order to give *OB West*, the German High Command, time to prepare a cohesive defensive position from which the *Amis* can be stopped.

AMERICAN

You must attack and destroy all resistance to clear the way for follow on forces. The time is now. Any delay will result in the German units being able to pull back and organise another defensive line.

PREPARING FOR BATTLE

1. Set up the table as shown on the next page. The table is 4'/120cm square.
2. The American player now places the leading Tank Platoon and the Company HQ on the road at **A**. The remaining tanks will arrive along the road as the game progresses using the One-road Advance special rule.
3. The German player places Barkmann and his accompanying Panzergrenadier Platoon at **B** on the map. Barkmann does not have his Workshop in this scenario.

BEGINNING THE BATTLE

1. The German troops begin the game in Prepared Positions, so the Infantry teams are Dug In and all Concealed teams are Gone to Ground.
2. The American player has the first turn.

ENDING THE BATTLE

The battle ends when:

- the American player captures the objective at **C**,
- the American company is destroyed, or
- at the end of the American player's turn 12.

DECIDING WHO WON

The American player wins if they take the objective. They have broken through the last German defences.

Otherwise the German player wins. The *Amis* have been delayed long enough for a new defensive line to be formed.

SPECIAL RULES

ONE-ROAD ADVANCE

The American advance is restricted by the Bocage. Movement across the hedgerows is so slow that only an advance along the roads can achieve a breakout.

*On each of turns 2 and 3 another US Tank Platoon arrives along the road at **D**.*

OTHER PLACES, OTHER TIMES

Barkmann fought a similar battle just two weeks later. Once again he faced the spearhead of the 3rd Armored Division with just some infantrymen and a light anti-tank gun for support. This time the Americans had the additional advantage of hedgerow cutters. While Barkmann and his crew survived, his tank was badly damaged and barely limped away to safety.

You could refight this battle giving the US tanks the hedgerow cutters option and adding a 7.5cm PaK40 anti-tank gun to the Panzergrenadier Platoon (see page 163 *Earth & Steel*).



GERMAN 4. KOMPANIE, 2. SS-PANZERREGIMENT

KAMPFGRUPPE BARKMANN

4. Kompanie, 2. SS-Panzerregiment
3. Kompanie, 3. SS-Panzerregiment

BATTLEGROUP BARKMANN (FEARLESS VETERAN)

SS-Unterscharführer Ernst Barkmann (page 182 of *Atlantik Wall*)
SS-Panzergrenadier Platoon (with two squads)
(page 197 of *Atlantik Wall*)

Barkmann checked the camouflage on his Panther tank parked under a roadside tree. Giving a *Jabo*, one of those *verdammte* fighter-bombers, an easy target would be the last thing you did here in Normandy.

The sound of American tank engines revving could be heard clearly in the summer air. The *Amis* would be here soon. There is only one way they can come—straight down the road. Settling down in his seat, Barkmann waits.



US 32ND ARMORED REGIMENT, CCA, 3RD ARMORED DIVISION

DOG COMPANY, 32ND ARMORED REGIMENT

Dog Company HQ
1st Platoon, Dog Company
2nd Platoon, Dog Company
3rd Platoon, Dog Company

TANK COMPANY (CONFIDENT TRAINED) (PAGE 233 OVERLORD)

Company HQ (with two M4A1 Sherman tanks)
Tank Platoon (with 4 M4A1 Sherman tanks including Staff Sergeant Lafayette G Pool)
Tank Platoon (with 5 M4A1 Sherman tanks)
Tank Platoon (with 5 M4A1 Sherman tanks)

As the experiments with hedgerow cutters are still Top Secret your company does not have any fitted.

The 30th 'Old Hickory' Division have opened a gap in the German lines and CCA has been thrown in to get this campaign moving. Things were looking good for Dog Company leading II/32 Armored Regiment down the road to Périers until the lead tank burst into flames. It's another ambush!

As usual, the Krauts have thrown together a small delaying force. In open terrain, it would be an easy matter to outflank them, clean up and keep moving. In the Bocage it's a different story. There will be plenty of work for the chaplain tonight.



TERRAIN

The battle at Barkmann's Corner was fought in the heart of the Bocage country. The dominant terrain is the Bocage hedgerows. Their six foot high banks are topped with thick bushes and trees creating an almost impassable obstacle to tanks.

NARROW ROADS

Both the main road and the side roads are narrow roads. They are too narrow for two tanks to pass, or even to shoot past each other. With a knocked-out tank blocking the road ahead of the column, the only option for the Americans is to force their way through the Bocage hedgerows into the adjacent fields and seek to outflank the Panther.

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 on pages 58 to 59 of the rulebook.