

# VILLERS BOCAGE, 13 JUNE 1944

## PANZER LEHR ARRIVES

After his Tiger tank was damaged during his solo attack on Villers-Bocage, *Obersturmführer* Wittmann retired with his crew on foot. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Wittmann headed directly to the headquarters of the *Panzer Lehr* Division where *Generalleutnant* Fritz Bayerlein was scrounging together a force of Panzer IV tanks to take on this threat to his rear.

Wittmann immediately headed back to Point 213 in a *Schwimmwagen* amphibious jeep to brief the gathering forces of *101. schwere SS-Panzerabteilung*. Meanwhile a *Kampfgruppe* of fifteen Panzer IV tanks and a small group of infantry under the command of *Major* Helmut Ritgen advanced towards Villers-Bocage. Their mission was to seal off the exits from the town to the west and south. The *Kampfgruppe* soon came under fire from hidden anti-tank guns and began to skirt the defences, moving southeast. Near Point 213 they linked up with the SS Tiger tanks.

## THE BRITISH DIG IN

After running Wittmann out of Villers-Bocage, the British begin organising an attempt by B and C Squadrons 4 CLY to rescue A Squadron trapped on Point 213. But long before they are ready, A Squadron sends its last frantic message and then all contact is lost. With the fall of Point 213, the fighting moves to Villers-Bocage.

While the armour seeks a way forward, the infantry of 1/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion of The Queen's Royal Regiment prepares to hold Villers-Bocage against the inevitable counterattack. The railway yard is secured by A Company, while B and C companies take up positions in the town guarding the main approaches. D Company is placed in reserve covering the

western flank. The battalion's 6 pdr anti-tank guns are concealed throughout the town. All around the British troopers can be heard the clank of heavy steel tracks advancing down the roads towards the town. The battle is about to begin.

## THE TIGERS ATTACK

After conferring with Wittmann and Ritgen, *Obersturmführer* Möbius leads his eight remaining Tiger tanks from *1. Kompanie, 101. schwere SS-Panzerabteilung* towards Villers-Bocage supported by some of his own infantry. Ritgen takes the tanks of *Panzer Lehr* off to the flank. The Germans advance quickly, but in a fragmented manner, with small groups of tanks moving along streets of the town centre and the railway station area.

In the close confines of the streets Tiger, Panzer IV, Cromwell and Firefly tanks all stalk one another in a furious game of cat and mouse. The longer-ranged guns of the German Panzer IV and Tiger tanks are largely negated by the close-in fighting, giving the agile British Cromwell tanks a chance.

The light 6 pdr anti-tank guns engage the heavy Tiger tanks from the sides and rear as they pass. At this very close range, even their small 57mm round, with a bit of luck, can penetrate a Tiger. One by one the large cats are damaged and abandoned, left behind until recovery crews can retrieve them.

British infantry move about in the buildings, waiting for the chance to ambush tanks with their dreaded (or is that dreadful) PIAT anti-tank projectors. The tranquil French town of Villers-Bocage becomes a killing field of great steel behemoths. Even the dreaded Tigers are not immune to death in this place of hewn stone and timber.



## GERMAN PANZER LEHR DIVISION

After finishing off the British tanks on Point 213, *Obersturmführer* Rolf Möbius led an ad-hoc group of eight Tigers and supporting troops from the *101. schwere SS-Panzerabteilung* down towards Villers-Bocage. *Obersturmführer* Wittmann had bought them valuable time with his actions. While the true strength and intentions of the British forces in Villers-Bocage are unknown, they must be dislodged from the town to free the main supply route for the *Panzer Lehr* Division.

The division was well aware of the problem on their flank. All morning the armoured cars had been watching. Even before *Obersturmführer* Wittmann arrived at the headquarters of *Panzer Lehr*, troops were moving to deal with the threat. But with all of their *Panzer Grenadiers* committed against the British 50<sup>th</sup> Division to their front, the only force available is a few Panzer IV H tanks and a small band of infantry.

*Major* Helmut Ritgen, deputy commander of *II. Panzerabteilung*, collected every available tank and headed south to seal off the east and west exits out of Villers-Bocage. Running into a screen of heavy anti-tank guns, he quickly realised that the British were there in force. Ritgen ordered his tanks to break off and concentrate for a thrust into the centre of Villers-Bocage to evict the British.

*Major* Ritgen meets briefly with *Obersturmführer* Möbius to plan their joint attack. The plan is simple. Both companies will send a small force south to the railway station area to clear the British forces there. Meanwhile, the main battle-group will thrust straight for the town centre using speed and shock to compensate for their lack of infantry and throw the British forces out of the town.

The battle for the town of Villers-Bocage has begun. Only time and your skill will determine the victor.

### 5. KOMPANIE, 130. PANZERREGIMENT

Kompaniegruppe

1. Zug, 5. Kompanie
2. Zug, 5. Kompanie
3. Zug, 5. Kompanie

II/130. Aufklärungszug

### 1. KOMPANIE, 101. S SS-PZABT

*Obersturmführer* Möbius

1. Zug, 1. Kompanie
2. Zug, 1. Kompanie

Aufklärungszug

### PANZER IV TANK COMPANY (PAGE 44 D-DAY: GERMAN)

Panzer IV Tank Company HQ (2x Panzer IV)

Panzer IV Tank Platoon (3x Panzer IV)

Panzer IV Tank Platoon (3x Panzer IV)

Panzer IV Tank Platoon (3x Panzer IV)

Reconnaissance Platoon (7x MG42 team)

### TIGER SS TANK COMPANY (PAGE 17 D-DAY: WAFFEN-SS)

Tiger SS Tank Company HQ (1x Tiger)

Tiger SS Tank Platoon (2x Tiger)

Tiger SS Tank Platoon (2x Tiger)

SS Reconnaissance Platoon (7x MG42 team, 7x Sd Kfz 250 (MG) half-track)



## BRITISH 7<sup>TH</sup> ARMOUR'D DIVISION

With a long list of battle honours, The Queen's Royal Regiment was a source of pride for those that served in its ranks. For the 1/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, yet another honour would be added for their part in the fight for Villers-Bocage.

The 1/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Queen's Royal Regiment, following the advancing 4<sup>th</sup> County of London Yeomanry, set about securing Villers-Bocage. At the same time tanks of 4 CLY attempted to link up with A Squadron on Point 213. Each attempt was rebuffed by the intervening enemy forces.

In a final act of desperation, Lieutenant Cotton of 4 Troop, B Squadron was sent to find a route around Villers-Bocage. 4 Troop slowly made its way down narrow winding roads anxiously seeking a way through. The rail line to the south-east blocks their way and forces them north, back into Villers-Bocage.

In the meantime, Lieutenant Colonel Desmond Gordon, commanding 1/7 Queen's, positioned his troops. A Company took responsibility for the railway station in the south with C Squadron, 4 CLY. B and C Companies set up with the anti-tank platoon in the solid buildings of the town centre, supported by B Squadron. D Company was placed in reserve holding the western part of the town against German attempts to outflank them.

As the advancing of Germans push into the town from the east, Lieutenant Cotton returns to the centre of the town, taking up ambush positions with the infantry. The British are ready and waiting.

For the next six hours the battle rages as the two forces clash in the narrow streets and buildings of the town.

### **B COMPANY, 1/7<sup>TH</sup> QUEEN'S (PAGE 62 D-DAY: BRITISH)**

- B Company HQ
- 10 Platoon, B Company
- 11 Platoon, B Company
- 12 Platoon, B Company
- 5 (Anti-tank) Platoon
- Battery B, 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Horse Artillery Regiment

### **B SQUADRON, 4<sup>TH</sup> CLY**

- B Squadron HQ
- 1 Troop, B Squadron
- 2 Troop, B Squadron
- 3 Troop, B Squadron
- 4 Troop, B Squadron
- Recce Troop

### **DESERT RATS RIFLE COMPANY (PAGE 62 D-DAY: BRITISH)**

- Desert Rats Rifle Company HQ (2x Sten SMG team)
- Desert Rats Rifle Platoon (7x Bren Gun & SMLE rifle team, 1x PIAT anti-tank team, 1x 2-inch mortar team)
- Desert Rats Rifle Platoon (7x Bren Gun & SMLE rifle team, 1x PIAT anti-tank team, 1x 2-inch mortar team)
- Desert Rats Rifle Platoon (7x Bren Gun & SMLE rifle team, 1x PIAT anti-tank team, 1x 2-inch mortar team)
- Desert Rats 6 pdr Anti-tank Platoon, (4x 6 pdr guns)
- Sexton Field Troop (Command Card, 4x Sexton)
- Sherman OP Observation Post (1x Sherman OP)

### **DESERT RATS CROMWELL ARMOUR'D SQUADRON (PAGE 54 D-DAY: BRITISH)**

- Desert Rats Cromwell Armour'd Squadron HQ (2x Cromwell (75mm), 2x Cromwell CS (95mm))
- Desert Rats Cromwell Armour'd Troop (3x Cromwell (75mm), 1x Firefly (17 pdr))
- Desert Rats Cromwell Armour'd Troop (as 1 Troop)
- Desert Rats Cromwell Armour'd Troop (as 1 Troop)
- Desert Rats Cromwell Armour'd Troop (as 1 Troop)
- Desert Rats Stuart Recce Patrol (3x Stuart (37mm))



## THE BATTLE FOR VILLERS-BOCAGE

The town of Villers-Bocage sits upon a major road hub. This road hub contains one of the only north-south roads in the area, while the east-west roads lead directly to Caen in one direction and Avranches in the other. This road structure is critical to supplying the German troops engaged with the British Army.

This scenario is designed to allow 2 to 4 players to have a game with a larger number of points than normal. So get together with some friends and have a blast!

The Villers-Bocage scenario uses the **Ambush** and **Meeting Engagement** special rules.

### YOUR ORDERS

#### GERMAN

You must clear the village of Villers-Bocage in order to remove the threat of allied action against the rear area of Panzer Lehr Division. This will also secure the supply lines being used by units in the sector. Failure is not an option.

#### BRITISH

You must hold the town so that the attack may be renewed at a later date. Inflict as many casualties on the enemy as possible while limiting your losses.

#### PREPARING FOR BATTLE

1. Set up the terrain as shown on page 5. Place Objectives at the indicated points. The table is 4'120cm x 6'180cm.
2. The British player sets up their force in area **A** within 36"/90cm of the table edge. 4 Troop and 5 (Anti-tank) Platoon may be held in Ambush.
3. The German player now deploys their forces in area **B** within 12"/30cm of the table edge.

### VILLERS-BOCAGE CAMPAIGN

This is the last battle in the Villers-Bocage Campaign. Whichever side wins this battle wins the campaign. The outcome of the Battle for Point 213 scenario has an effect on the forces available for this battle.

If the Germans won the Battle for Point 213, then the deployment area of the British force is halved in this scenario. They must deploy within 18"/45cm of the table edge. The Panzers have raced forward putting pressure on the British forces as they enter the town.

If the British won the Battle for Point 213, then the Germans have lost the race and the entire Tiger SS Tank Company is placed in Reserve instead of deploying on the table, allowing the British build up to continue before the Germans can muster all of their force. The Tiger SS Tank Company enters from the their deployment zone board edge.

#### BEGINNING THE BATTLE

1. All Spearhead Units make their Spearhead moves starting with the British player.
2. The German force has the first turn.

#### ENDING THE BATTLE

The battle ends:

- At the start of the British turn 11, or
- Whenever one side has no Formation in Good Spirits.

#### DECIDING WHO WON

The player or group of players who controls the most objectives wins. If neither player controls any objectives, or they control one objective each, then the game is a draw with neither side able to gain control of the town.

#### HISTORICAL OUTCOME

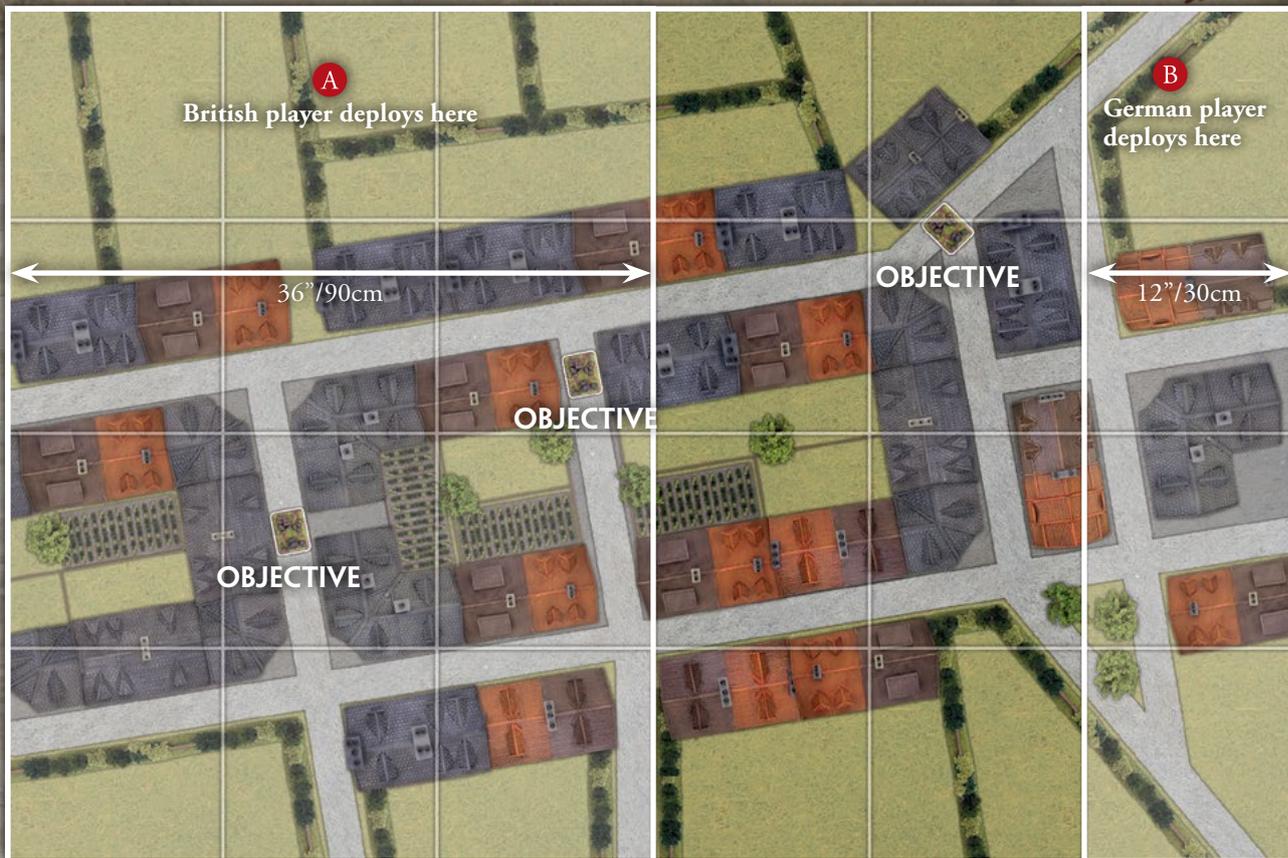
*Wittmann would become famous all across Germany for his destruction of the British column and the stopping of the Desert Rats. His company on Point 213 would soon be joined by Möbius' 1. Company and together they would destroy A Squadron 4 CLY upon the point. Soon afterwards the Panzer IV tanks and 1 Company would advance into Villers-Bocage. This time the British forces would be waiting. After a hard fight and three more destroyed Tigers the Germans would retreat. Yet as more German forces arrived the pressure upon the defenders grew. Finally, the British pulled back out of Villers-Bocage, not to set foot in the town again for many weeks.*

### OTHER TIMES AND PLACES

Once again, one could fight this battle with other forces. If the US 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division had made the dash to Villers-Bocage, they would have been fighting with a Sherman Tank Company equipped entirely with M4 Sherman tanks with 75mm guns and an Armoured Rifle Company supported by a weak Armoured Field Artillery Battery.

If you decided to fight this battle on the Eastern Front, the Soviet force could be a T-34 Tank Battalion and a Motor Rifle Battalion supported by a IS-2 Guards Heavy Tank Company or a ISU-122 or ISU-152 Heavy SP Battery.

Of course, you could also try the battle with the roles reversed. Take an allied tank force and attack into a mixed German tank and infantry force. Anything is possible!



## VILLERS-BOCAGE TERRAIN

### ROADS

Being on several major road networks has given the town of Villers-Bocage very modern and wide paved roads.

All roads on the map are wide enough to allow vehicles to pass with plenty of room to spare.

### BOCAGE HEDGEROWS

All hedgerows on the table are Bocage hedgerows. Bocage hedges are Tall, Bulletproof, Difficult Terrain, so require a Cross Test to get through. They are Tall, blocking fields of view, and their stony base gives teams hiding behind them Bulletproof Cover.

The Bocage rules are on pages 78 to 79 of the *D-Day: British* book and on our website: [www.FlamesOfWar.com](http://www.FlamesOfWar.com).

### BUILDINGS

The main streets of Villers-Bocage were lined with rows of terraced houses and businesses, each a separate building unto its own.

Buildings depicted on the map are rows of terraced houses. As such there are no doors in the shared connecting walls to go from one to the next. In order to move from one to the other Infantry Teams must move through the openings in the front or back of each house.

