

Airborne Assault on the Merville Battery
6th June, 1944
(NORMANDY, FRANCE)

A Rapid Fire 2 Scenario V1.1.6 (1/12/07)
By Mark Piper

Background

In the early hours of June 6th 1944 the British 3rd Airborne Brigade was tasked with destroying both the gun emplacements of the Merville battery and the vital bridges near Varaville. German local forces were poorly equipped and dispersed but as luck would have it the British forces were also widely dispersed. For the British commander the key was to quickly marshal available forces and complete both tasks as soon as possible.

The Wargame Scenario

The game is played on an approximately 8' X 6' table. All *buildings* start intact. The *Merville Battery* is treated as a four "bunkers". Each bunker is prepared defences. The whole battery is surrounded by 1" of wire. *Woods* are a continuous feature for movement, provide soft cover and restrict visibility. *Flooded areas* are a continuous obstacle for infantry and impassable to vehicles. *Elevations* are a continuous feature for movement and block line of sight. Hedges, Barbed wire and mines are treated as detailed in Rapid Fire. Instead of a turn to cross barbed wire treat as a linear obstacle (i.e. roll D6) for both British attackers and German battery defenders (i.e. if counter-attacking). Turns 1-4 are night. Use the night fighting rules from the Rapid Fire rule book. The game length is 8 moves.

To win the British must destroy the gun in the Merville Battery AND destroy the Varaville bridge. The Germans win if they prevent the destruction of both the Merville battery AND the Varaville bridge. Any other result is a draw.

Sources

Orne Bridgehead (Battle Zone Normandy Series) - Lloyd Clark

The Big Drop - John Golley.

Pegasus Bridge / Merville Battery - Carl Shilleto

The Red Devils - From Bruneval to the Falklands - G.G. Norton

D-Day 1944 (3) Sword Beach & British Airborne Landings - Osprey Campaign - Ken Ford

Operation Market-Garden supplement - Colin Rumford.

D-Day 6th June 1944 Campaign Guide - Colin Rumford.

The Assault by 9th Parachute Bn on the Merville Battery

(Wargames Illustrated # 183, December 2002) - David Bickley

The Penguin Atlas of D-Day - John Man.

British Order of Battle [all elite]

3rd Parachute Brigade (-), 6th British Airborne Division

22nd Independent Parachute Company

2 x detachments (each 4 figures - no morale test required)

1st Canadian Parachute Battalion (morale test @ 50% survivors)

HQ CO + 5 figures, PIAT, 2" mortar (turn 1)

2 x rifle companies each 8 figures (turn 1)

support company 6 figures, Vickers MMG, 3" mortar, Horsa glider,
6 figures, jeep + trailer, flamethrower, PIAT (turn 3)

9th Parachute Battalion (morale test @ 50% casualties)

HQ CO + 5 figures, PIAT, 2" mortar (turn 2)

2 x rifle companies each 8 figures (turn 2)

support company 6 figures, Vickers MMG, 3" mortar, Horsa glider, (turn 4)
6 figures, jeep + trailer, flamethrower, PIAT

Brigade HQ *

Horsa glider, 6 figures, 2 X jeep & trailer (turn 3)

*highest level HQ for morale purposes

HMS Arethusa

6 x 150mm (turn 5)

British airborne forces were widely dispersed. Instead of the standard rules use the following. Two markers are placed on the table to mark the two drop zones (DZs). These are used for reference points and represent the Eureka beacons and marker panels placed by the pathfinders. Place the grid over the beacon (facing north). Roll D10 for direction (on a "0" roll again) and then for each element or crew served weapon & crew roll a D6 for dispersal (1 = on target, 2,3 = 12", 4,5 = 24", 6 = 36"). If an element lands in a flooded area it is lost. If it lands in woods or a building roll a D6 (The score = # casualties. Throw a second D6 for each support weapon, 6 = destroyed. In the case of the building the survivors are placed in the open adjacent to the building. The element may not move during the turn that it is dropped. Gliders may land anywhere on the board that is clear as per the standard rules.

On turn 5 HMS Arethusa will automatically fire upon the Merville battery. Place the IDF template over the battery and roll 6 x 150mm guns. To destroy either the Merville gun or the Varaville bridge, any British element adjacent and stationary to the target may roll a D6. The bridge is destroyed on a 3,4,5 or 6. British airborne troops are equipped with Bangalore torpedoes. Likewise the German defenders would be aware of lanes in the wire. The British Player moves first.

**German Order of Battle [all regular]
Elements 716th Infantry Division**

3rd Battalion, 736th Infantry Regiment (-) (morale test @ 15 casualties)
HQ CO + 6 figures (VARAVILLE)
Rifle coy 11 figures, Panzerfaust, MMG (VARAVILLE)
Rifle coy 11 figs, Panzerfaust, MMG (MERVILLE BATTERY)

1st Battalion, 1716th Regiment

4 gunners, 1 x 100mm Skoda (Czech) leFH 4/19 field gun, 3 figures, MMG, 8 figures
(MERVILLE BATTERY * fixed 180 degree arc to the front)
*Merville Battery is treated as a 4 "bunkers"

642nd Ost Battalion (-) (morale test @ 15 casualties)

HQ CO + 6 figures (SALLENELLES)
Rifle company 11 figures, Panzerfaust, MMG (SALLENELLES)
Rifle company 11 figures, Panzerfaust, MMG (FRANCEVILLE PLAGE **)

** German troops in Franceville Plage may enter at either point A or B on the next German turn following the first shots by either side.

German forces set up first as indicated. German forces may not move or fire during turn one. The German player moves second.

More sources

Merville Battery scenario - Nap Nuts Singapore Gamers

http://napnuts.tripod.com/cf_merville.htm

The Battle for the Village of Varaville

<http://www.junobeach.org/e/4/can-tac-par-willes-e.htm>

Merville Battery (Neil Barber)

<http://freespace.virgin.net/ian.bayley/ARTICLES/military/merville/merville.html>

Canadian Army HQ Report No. 26, The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion in France
(June 6th - September 6th, 1944),

<http://www.forces.gc.ca/hr/dhh/downloads/ahq/ahq026.pdf>

Deployment & arrivals

