

East of Orne

a Panzer Battles AAR

By zax (zaxhutchinson@gmail.com)

TURN 1

June 6th - 00:00

*Boots hit dirt in Normandy.
And the dirt hits back.*

SITUATION

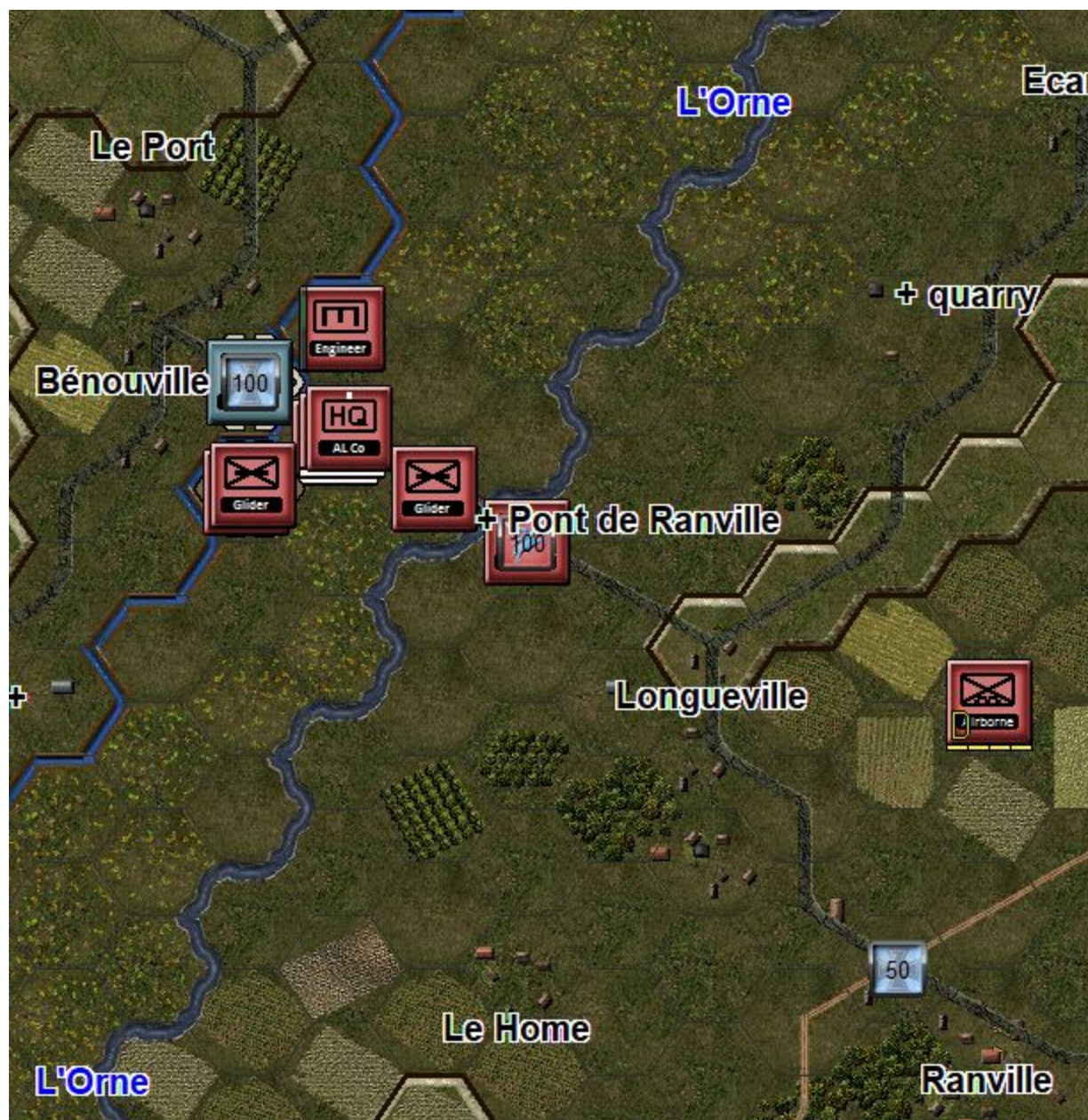
D Company of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire battalion, along with a band of engineers, landed between the Canal de Caen and the Orne. One element, C/No. 2 Wing, arrived torn to shreds, presumably by flak. Only ten men, less than twenty percent of its full strength, remained.

Three platoons from the 22nd Independent Paras arrive scattered over six or seven kilometers east of Pegasus Bridge. All show disruption. 1st platoon, southeast of Le Mesnil, has been reduced to nine men. As pathfinders, it is their job to be exposed and exposed they have landed. 3rd platoon waits four clicks to the northeast around Petiville. The landings are good, placing the elements near major roads; however, I see little effect if strength is encountered before reinforcements arrive

PLANNING

D company has orders to occupy both bridges and they attempt this forthwith. The pathfinders will largely stay put with the exception of 2nd platoon. As it is closest to the Orne crossing, it will move on the road junction at Longueville in an attempt to disrupt any German units attempting to reinforce the bridges.

OUTCOME



Pegasus Bridge

Allied turn

Fox's platoon took the bridge over the Orne unopposed. Sweeny will join him next turn and begin setting up defensive positions. At the opposite end of the road, along the Canal de Caen, Brotheridge knocked out a single gun emplacement clearing the road for Woods and Smith to assault the bridge. Their initial attempt was light on casualties in spite of my decision to rush them over without first probing the defense. We traded corpses but it did little to impoverish either side. The engineers moved up to offer fire

support next turn. And the remnants of C/No. 2 Wing joined Brotheridge south of the canal bridge.

The pathfinders did not have it in them to move on the cross roads. The thought is now to move 2nd platoon south toward Ranville in the hopes of eventually linking up with the much reduced 1st.

German turn

Artillery (originating closer the coast) hit the Brits clustered around the Pegasus bridge, killing four. Defensive fire from the entrenched Germans had little effect. British return fire caused several casualties.

PROGRESS & LOSSES

Allied Losses

Men: 74 (all but one were a result of the hard landings)

German Losses

Men: 1; Guns: 1

Victory

VP: 88 - Allied Major Defeat

TURN 2

June 6th - 01:00

Arrival

SITUATION

Troopers are out and down in force, but will it be enough. Our sticks are scattered but we have seen little of the enemy.

The Germans seem sparse in this area east of the Orne. An anti-aircraft unit was discovered near Breville and a machine gun platoon occupies Amfreville's square. Allied troops on the ground remain largely disoriented and disrupted. German anti-aircraft fire took its toll. Most units arrived in decent shape, but a few were particularly hard hit. A platoon of Royal Engineers was reduced to five men. Two battalion HQs (7th and 8th) are at 50% strength. The 5th bde HQ suffered 80 percent casualties.

Of 5th Brigade

7th btn's HQ and remaining units landed less than a click and half east of Pegasus. 12th btn came down in a tight circle north of Le Mesnil. The 3rd is in a good spot several clicks east of Pegasus.

Of 3rd Bridge

The 8th btn landed furthest south and is scattered over two kilometers between Escoville and the road between Touffreville and Cuverville. 9th btn came down in a wide circle touching Beauvais in the south and La Cour in the north. The 1st Canadian btn landed in overlap just to their south.

PLANNING

The main reason for us being here is to protect the flank and ass of those swimming to France. To that point, the bridges over the Canal de Caen and Orne must be taken and cannot be lost. I am most concerned about an attack coming either from the west or from the direction of Caen itself. Or from both.

The entirety of 5th brigade will move southwest, pushing out a line running from the Orne to the Bois de Bavent. There are no objectives beyond Ranville, but the 5th must occupy enough real estate to protect the bridge's rear. Ranville is just too close for first contact. Unfortunately they will need to move onto the higher ground and away from the protection of the trees and houses near Ranville to accomplish this task. Failing to do so will blind us and we won't see what's coming until it comes.

As to the 3rd, its 8th btn will shift east toward Troarn, but I suspect they will meet resistance before long and be forced to fall back into the forest. The 9th is tasked with watching the coast. It will set up a thin perimeter to delay anything south. Finally, the Canadians will provide assistance to the 9th and watch the wetlands to the west, but largely, I hope to keep them disengaged and in reserve.

This turn will be spent reorganizing, I'm afraid. I hope we can get kitted out and on the path before the Germans circle. We must capture Pegasus this turn or risk it being reinforced. Our return fire last turn whittled them down to a handful. When in doubt, fire everything.

OUTCOME

Allied turn

Brotheridge and the Royal Engineers poured heat on the Germans holding Pegasus, reducing them to less than five. Woods, with more men and less combat fatigue, took his men over first but was repulsed. Smith followed in a

separate assault killing the last two defenders. Mission accomplished; let's go home.

Sadly, they stirred up a few hornets from the 716. ID at the western end of Benouville. Howard himself joined them over the river. Hopefully they can hold their end of the town for the enemy's half turn. On the other side, Sweeny reinforced Fox and both moved out a quarter click from the bridge where they'll set up a perimeter until the rest of 5th bde gets the lead out.

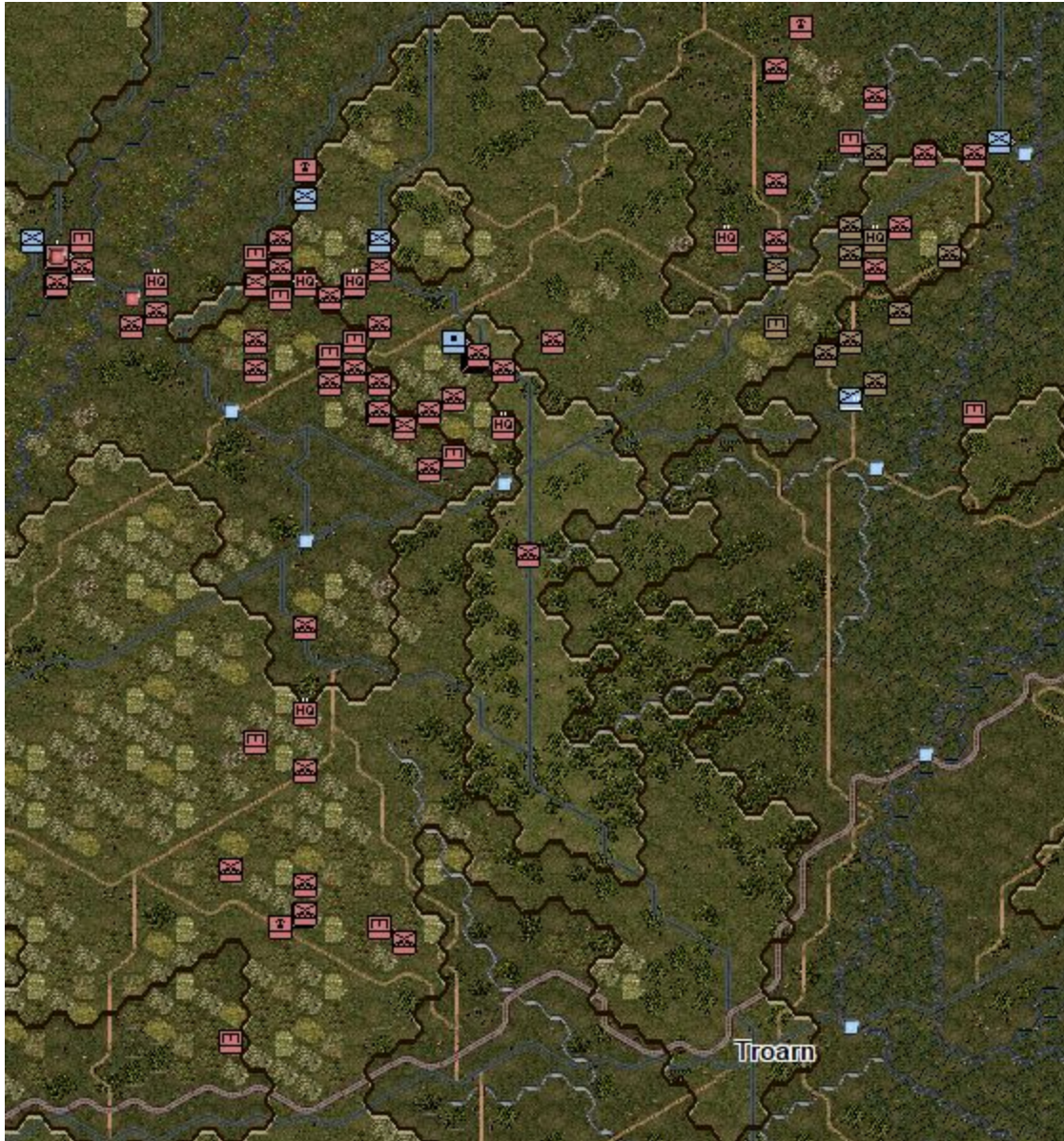
German turn

Here and there, German units stumbled into our men still recovering from the drop. At Ecarde a platoon of the 716. ID stumbles into 7th btn's mortar element, disrupting it and destroying a gun.

The German AA and artillery outside Breville fired on a cluster of units from 12th btn, killing a few. As luck would have it, return fire destroyed the AA gun.

More men from the 716. appear to be occupying Varaville in the east. Finally, the Canadians surprised 30-odd men of appears to be the 711. ID moving north toward Petiville.

PROGRESS & LOSSES



View of the Battlefield

Allied Losses

Men: 705; Guns: 5

German Losses

Men: 15

Guns: 1

Victory

VP: 66 - Allied Major Defeat

TURN 3

June 6th - 02:00

Move out

SITUATION

The situation remains largely unchanged. The sparse German resistance has not forced a radical change of plan. A few units land among those already present.

PLANNING

Of 5th Brigade

Enough elements recovered this turn that a southward probe of Ranville and Le Mesnil is possible. Elements of 7th btn. will be forced to respond to the German units in Amfreville and Ecarde. I suspect the 7th will not move south but clear a kilometer or two toward the coast until 3rd Brigade can take over.

Pegasus Bridge will attempt to take Benouville proper and reinforce as a counter attack is expected from the west.

Of 3rd Brigade

8th btn, situated far to the south, has been ordered to regroup south of Escoville. Since most of its platoons did not recover this turn I fear a quick move on Troarn is out of the question. Instead, they will regroup and push on Troarn from the northwest.

The Canadians also failed to recover. Those that did will move south.

9th btn is tasked with taking Varaville and spreading out to the west.

OUTCOME

Allied turn

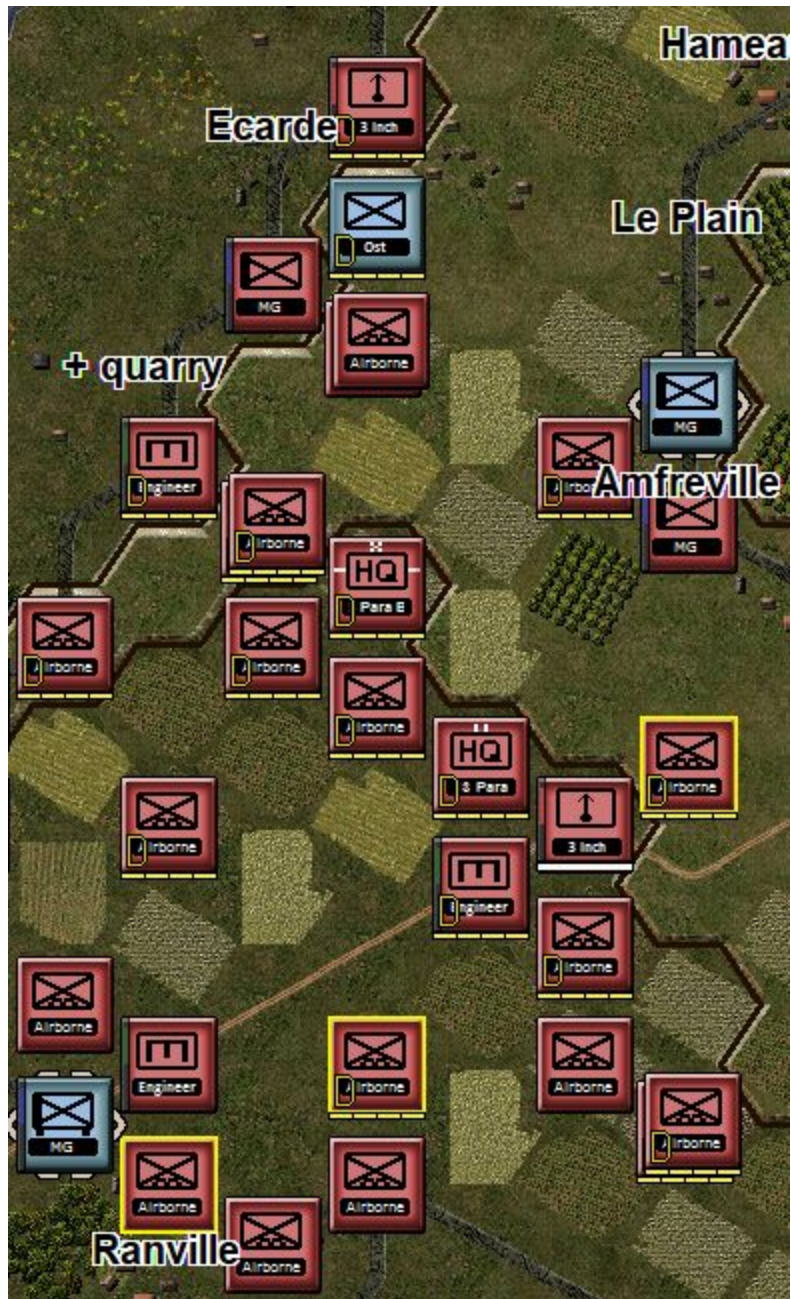
The 10cm German guns south of Breville sent shells screaming down on the Pegasus Bridge the moment our boys stuck their heads out. It became obvious they must be wiped out. Elements of 12 btn's A and B Companies moved in destroying two guns; however, they were driven back before they could finish the job.

7th btn's attempt to clear our rear made some progress. A Company assaulted the German platoon near Ecarde, killing 26 men and disrupting the rest. At Amfreville, machine gun platoons traded fire with little effect.

Elements of 13th btn moved on Ranville and blundered into a motorized platoon from the 21. Panzer Division. B and C Companies will move on them next turn while A Company explores the right flank.

Further east, 12th btn uncovered men from the 711. ID holding Le Mesnil. With help from the battered pathfinders, forward elements are attempting to surround the defenders for an assault next turn.

The Canadians ran into two platoons blocking either end of Bavent but have yet to fully engage either as most of their force is disrupted. The Germans at Varaville were disrupted after minimal fire. Two platoons from the 9th are poised to attack next turn barring reinforcements from the east.



Ranville, Ecarde and Amfreville



Breville and Le Mesnil



The Canadian push south

German turn

More German platoons bump into my forces. Another platoon of the 716. ID emerged from the darkness south of Ecarde. Three 2cm anti-aircraft guns popped up on the road running from Breville to Ranville. A second understrength platoon met the Canadian advance east of Bavent.

The 21. Pz machine gun platoon tore into the Royal Engineers occupying the northeast road out of Ranville. Coupled with artillery from somewhere, they lost ten good men.

Oddly, the 8th btn had another quiet turn. I imagined to see some German reinforcements bumping into them. Perhaps the Germans to the south have not been released just yet.

PROGRESS & LOSSES

The attack on the guns could have gone better, but overall I am satisfied with the state of the map. Casualties have been light and I am poised to capture one or two objectives next turn.

Allied Losses

Men: 808; Guns: 5

German Losses

Men: 53; Guns: 3

Victory

VP: 54 - Allied Major Defeat

THOUGHTS

Nothing conclusive has happened. If Howard manages to take Benouville west of Pegasus Bridge, I'm in good shape. Having played Panzer Campaigns Normandy, I have a good idea what might move on me from the south. It is imperative I eliminate all German resistance in the heart of my drop zone that I might shift strength south. If a Panzer Division shows up in force before I can sort myself, life will go to shit real quick.

TURN 4

June 6th - 03:00

No Light. White heat.

SITUATION

I am struck by the need to "link up" the various drops before the Germans accidentally split my forces. 8th btn should connect with the main body around Herouvillette or Le Hamet. The crossroads at Le Bas de Breville are the key to keeping 3rd and 5th Brigades in contact.

Resistance has stiffened against the 7th as it holds the back of the drop zone. It is the one place I wish I had not seen more troops. There is no great threat this way...just harassment.



The Link up between 3rd on the right and the 5th on the Left.

PLANNING

Of 5th Brigade

Howard will make another attempt to capture greater Benouville. I am not sure what to do with the glider troops once the immediate area around the Orne bridge is secure. For now they will be kept in reserve to counter a strike either down the Orne or out of the west.

The 5th must dismantle the initial resistance in its rear and at Ranville and Le Mesnil. I am concerned about the casualties suffered last turn by the Royal Engineers outside Ranville. Their fatigue is noticeable and they will be pulled back. I have it in my mind that force protection, at least in the early part of this scenario, is vital. More than men, fatigue must be carefully managed. I am also considering digging in early and playing the southern flank conservatively.

Of 3rd Brigade

Most of the 8th btn in the south has activated and will proceed to the high ground south of Escoville. For the Canadians, speed is important. I face the choice of spreading out to link up with 5th Brigade or running south to capture as much ground as possible. It will be important to give the Germans a broad target at which to aim. The west side of Bois de Bavent seems to me a good place for a diversion. If the 8th sees little action over the next hour

or two, I might utilize a company for the same purposes and push them down the highway to Le Maizeret.



The diversion

9th btn's area of concern now includes Le Bas de Breville. It is tasked with securing the link between 3rd and 5th.

OUTCOME

Allied turn

After a bombardment from btn mortars, two platoons from 9th btn drove the Germans out of Varaville suffering one casualty but inflicting six. Guarding the bridge itself is another platoon of Germans and an unknown number of 45mm AT guns. 9th btn continued to spread out to the west finding only quiet countryside. A platoon from C Company scouted an objective south of Merville. So far, so quiet.

More troopers land as well as several elements of AT.

The Canadians made little headway. They managed to disrupt one of the two German units blocking the road and caused a few casualties. A kilometer to the west no attacks were made against the German machine gunners. Two following Canadian platoons arrived to block the Germans while the Pioneers took Bavent. From the fortifications found there, it would appear the MG unit had been garrisoning this village.



Bavent & Canadian Operations

12th btn surrounded Le Mesnil and shot up the garrison there, but they appear to be holding steady. A mish-mash company moved left around the village but found nothing. The guns of Breville were destroyed and the town taken. No other Germans were seen on the roads but that doesn't mean much when you can't see shit.

Ranville is a bloody affair. The Royal engineers pulled back to take a breath while two platoon shot up the town from both ends. The German MG cut down five men in one pass but our fire is having an effect. Two parts of A Company moved left around Ranville and interrupted a platoon of panzer grenadiere on the way to reinforce their comrades.



Ranville & 13th btn

8th btn's attempt to fall back to surer footing dug up a group of German mortars outside Escoville. Our own mortars are lagging behind and I wonder if a more suitable objective is the high ground to their west.

Benouville remains in contention. I'm moving one of the newly arrived AT guns to the bridge. When dawn breaks I'd love to shoot up any tanks breaking for the beach.

Lastly, the 7th btn made some headway but failed to dislodge the MG from Amfreville.

German turn

A tracked flak element of the 21. PzD rolled into Benouville and shot at the bridge without much effect. Scattered German artillery fell without much effect. Across the map we traded shots and casualties; I feel I came out ahead.

Canadian return fire cut up the two platoons blocking the road south. I can see the benefits of surrounding a location for this reason alone. They fire once and receive it back five fold. They are isolated and with a little luck we should be able to dislodge them next turn. The MG unit to the west vanished into the darkness. I suspect they'll turn up outside Le Mesnil behind the advancing 12th btn.

The low point was Ranville. Two fresh grenadier platoons showed up. Their MG continued to shoot up my platoons, disrupting one and mowing down four men in another.

The forward platoon of 9th btn's C Company found their objective crawling with Germans: AA, artillery and a platoon from the 716. They'll retreat to the woods while battalion mortars soften them up and reinforcements can move in.

PROGRESS & LOSS

I didn't expect to see the grenadiers this soon. Howard's inability put some room between the Germans and Pegasus Bridge is disconcerting. For the most part, Allied troops are giving more than they're taking. I'm worried about the late game. I might have to content myself with limited objectives if an operation gets too costly too early.

Allied Losses

Men 970; Guns 6

German Losses

Men 137; Guns 6

Victory

VP 38 - Allied Major Defeat

TURN 5

June 6th - 04:00

Here they come.

Here come the bastards.

SITUATION

The German grenadiers of the 21. PzD should have protected Ranville's flank. Unless another company materializes this turn, the town will be surrounded. The map is fluid and I am making progress. Pegasus is probably in more peril than I have realized.

PLANNING

Of 5th Brigade

Take Benouville and take it now. The flak vehicles have not situated themselves completely. I've ordered Howard to push his men out at "almost" any cost.

13th btn will isolate Ranville. The glider troops will move forward to protect its flank. Herouvillette needs scouting as it forms the dividing line between the 12th's and the 13th's area of operations.

7th btn can begin to move units coastward up the highway running through Ecarde now that the Germans have been pushed eastward. I have reservations as to the necessity of clearing much beyond Ecarde and Hameau Oger.

12th btn has orders to shift right after it takes Le Mesnil and dig in around Herouvillette. 8th will take its place on the high ground west of the forest.

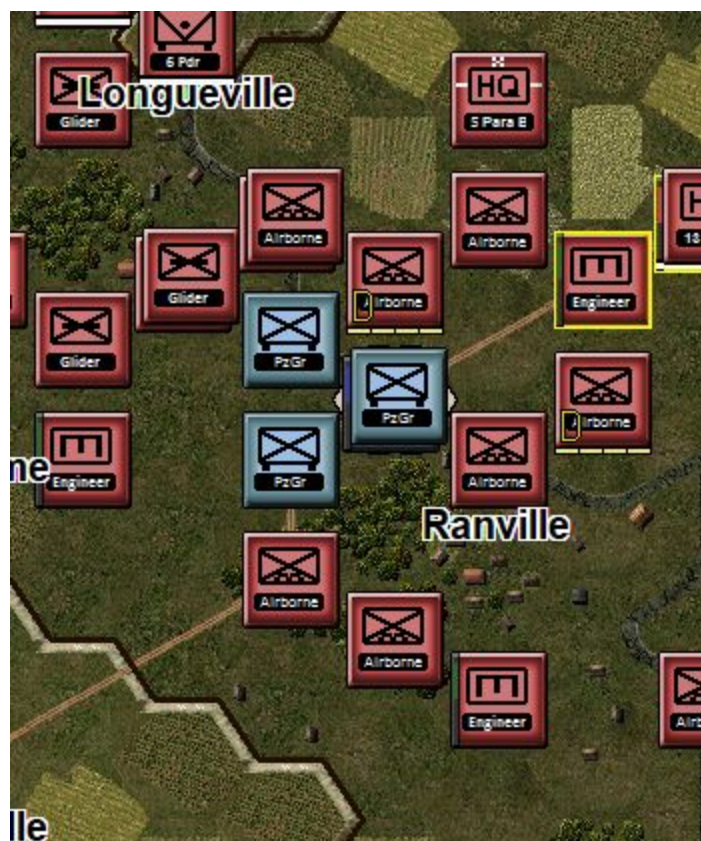
Both platoons guarding Varaville are understrength and are two kilometers from the nearest reinforcements. I intend to keep the pathfinders in the area in the event more Germans appear out of the wetlands.

OUTCOME

Allied turn

Howard's men assaulted the German held end of town, losing three men while taking with them two men and a vehicle. I wonder now if this is an unnecessary fixation that will leave me ripe for counterattack. The AT gun setup along the eastern side of the river.

A fourth element from the 21. PzD lingers behind Ranville. The 13th btn has them all but surrounded; however, they cannot put a dent in them. I would like to hope isolation will knock them down a few pegs, but I fear more will arrive and reopen the road before much can be done.

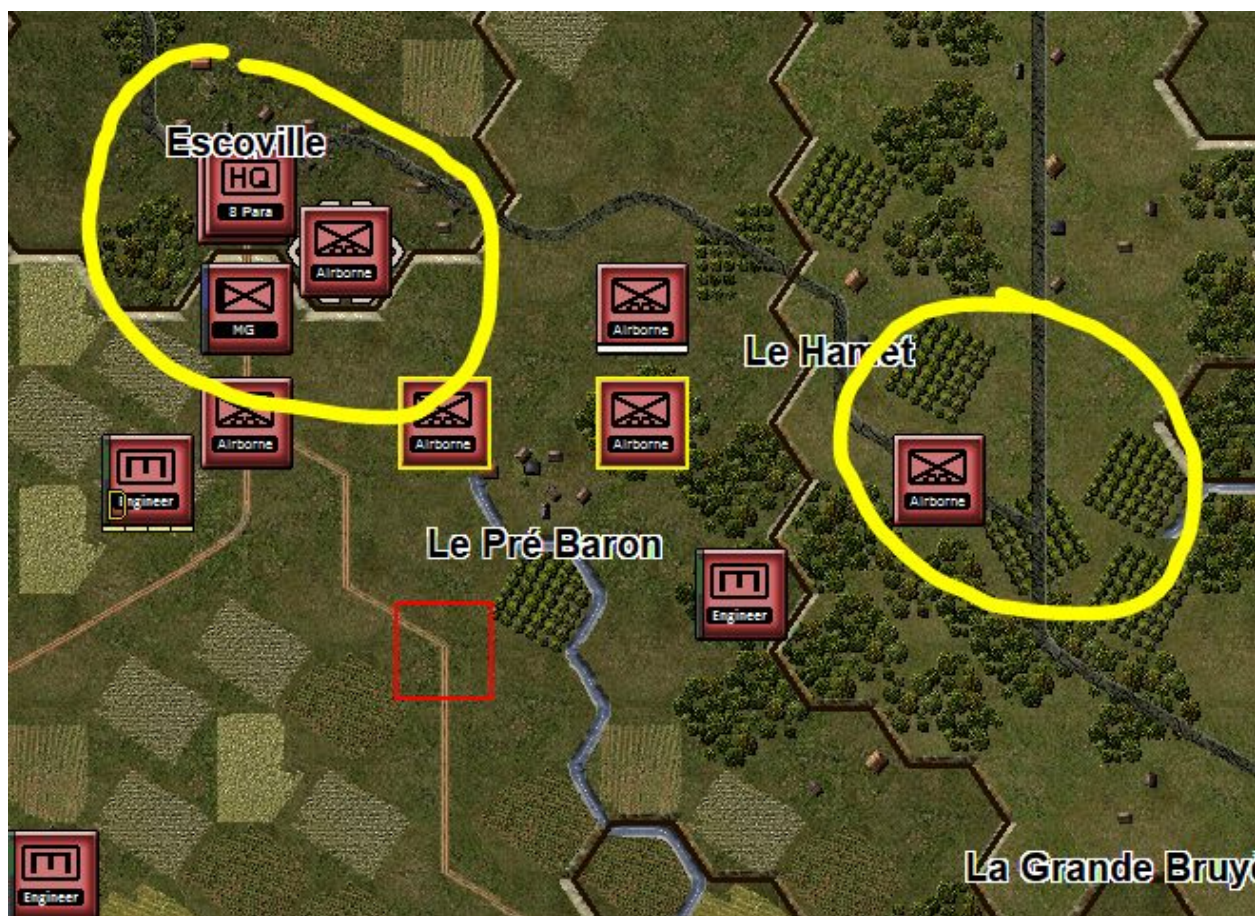


Ranville Kessel

The 7th btn made a poor assault against the two units between Ecarde and Amfreville. One, to my surprise, has 80+ men. Machine guns and another platoon were sent down the highway to flank the German position. And I have only now realized that the 13th btn's MG platoon is dicking around with the German MG in Amfreville when it should be laying down fire at Ranville. Luckily, they were able to disrupt them and a following assault by the 7th pushed them from the village. Now the 13th's MG can move south where it has been sorely missed.

12th btn made an assault on Le Mesnil, and, in spite of inflicting serious casualties on the defender (16 men lost), they were unable to take the village. Advance elements of the 12th wandered into Herouvillette apparently believing it empty, which it was not.

The 8th btn eliminated 6 mortars south of Escoville and began shifting east. I believe the smart thing to do over the next turn or two is divide the 8th. Half will occupy Escoville and the other will watch the highway junction east of Le Hamet. They will be responsible for the our underbelly until the 12th is free.



8th btn plans

The Canadians were again unsuccessful at opening the road south. The Germans traded equal casualties and despite one unit suffering from disruption, they managed to hold.

North, at Varaville, I am recalling the 9th's MG element and the local pathfinders. They should reach the town next turn and begin to lend aid the turn after. The two platoons in Varaville are understrength and insufficient to kick out the Germans. If reinforcements show up, our guys will be outmatched.

German turn

Vicious was the fire. They didn't hold back. Two German units exhausted themselves counterattacking, evaporating into the June night. The grenadiere at Ranville fell back onto the road and counterattacked the platoon attempting to tie off the encirclement. Our men got caught out in the open and six fell. Four more fell to the MG still holding the city.

Surprise! A second German unit showed up south of Le Mesnil. However it will be too late. Those in the town are down to less than ten men. To the east, two Canadian units continue to play tag with a German MG unit as it makes a fighting withdrawal toward Le Mesnil.

Curiously, the AA dug in south of Merville crawled from its hidey-hole to attack 9th btn's engineers.

PROGRESS & LOSS

Happily, the 7th's opposition is fading away and I am keen to turn them 180 to join the fight against 21. PzD. Very little previously unseen made itself known. I am happy 8th btn has regrouped without German harassment. I am most worried about losses as I believe the Germans have superior numbers. I see far too many platoons down to 40-50%.

Allied losses

Men 1045; Guns 7

German losses

Men 226; Guns 15; Vehicles 1

Victory

VP 42 - Allied Major Defeat

TURN 6

June 6th - 05:00

It was like that when I landed.

SITUATION

We're still killing them faster than they're killing us. The General just arrived, barely. I hope that means something. Ranville is the only place they seem capable of stopping our troopers. The 716. ID and 711. ID don't stand up well in a stiff English (and Canadian) wind. But the fighting is wearing us thin and we're barely 1/4 done. The panzer grenadiere are now isolated and more haven't shown. We'll try tightening the screws. If I can clear out Le Mesnil and Herouvillette and if the 12th and 8th don't get hit, anything coming down the road to Ranville will have a flank exposed to bored, vengeful troopers.

It is still dark but not for very long. I wonder what we'll see when the sun rises.

PLANNING

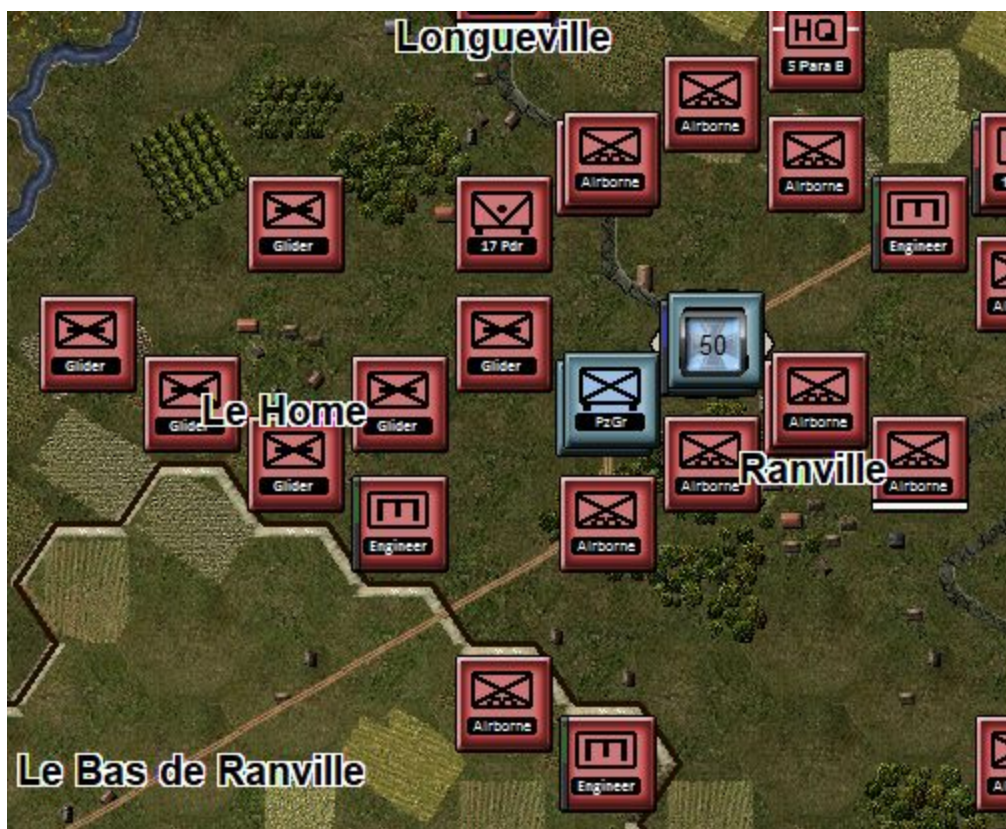
Mostly more of the same. Le Mesnil should fall this turn. And the Canadians should be able to free themselves. I will be looking to reorganize the 7th and move them in reserve behind the 13th. I don't have much hope Howard can gain ground in Benouville but the Royal Engineers are now flanking the defenders. The 9th will continue to gear up to assault the defenders near Merville...unless this foray by their AA is prelude to a counterattack.

OUTCOME

Allied turn

Howard ordered his men to the bar at the other end of town. After the Royal Engineers shot up the place, they made a go of it. Nothing doing, I'm afraid. The Germans hold fast with only a little spilled beer.

Another bloody hour at Ranville. I pushed the front lines further away from the pocket, replaced a few tired platoons and took a few shots at the defenders. For every one of theirs I kill, they take three. I'm sticking to the trees and buildings but it does little good. I have no less than 100 men bottled up here. It could be 140. If they decide to attack, I'll be forced to watch.



Ranville Bloody Ranville

An assault on Herouvillette killed 12 Germans. In total, the defenders were reduced by 15-18 and left disrupted.

At long last, the 12th has taken Le Mesnil in two separate assaults. The first was repulsed by the platoon's last two soldiers. Hats off.

The Canadians retook the initiative and made it as far as the bridge leading to Bricqueville, a crucial objective as it is one of the few bridges over La Divette that could threaten our flank. A reinforced company will attempt to take the objective while another moves over the bridge at Bavent.



The Canadians

Lastly, the 9th at Varaville drove back the German platoon they uprooted two turns ago. Now, two disrupted platoons and an AT section guard the objective bridge. The pathfinders and MG arrived to assist next turn. And, at Longuemare, having secured the link point at Le Bas de Breville, two platoon ran into the a Battalion HQ of the 716. Most likely it was coordinating the scattered forces closer to the coast. Battalion engineers managed to take out one AA gun at Merville but otherwise we wait and build.

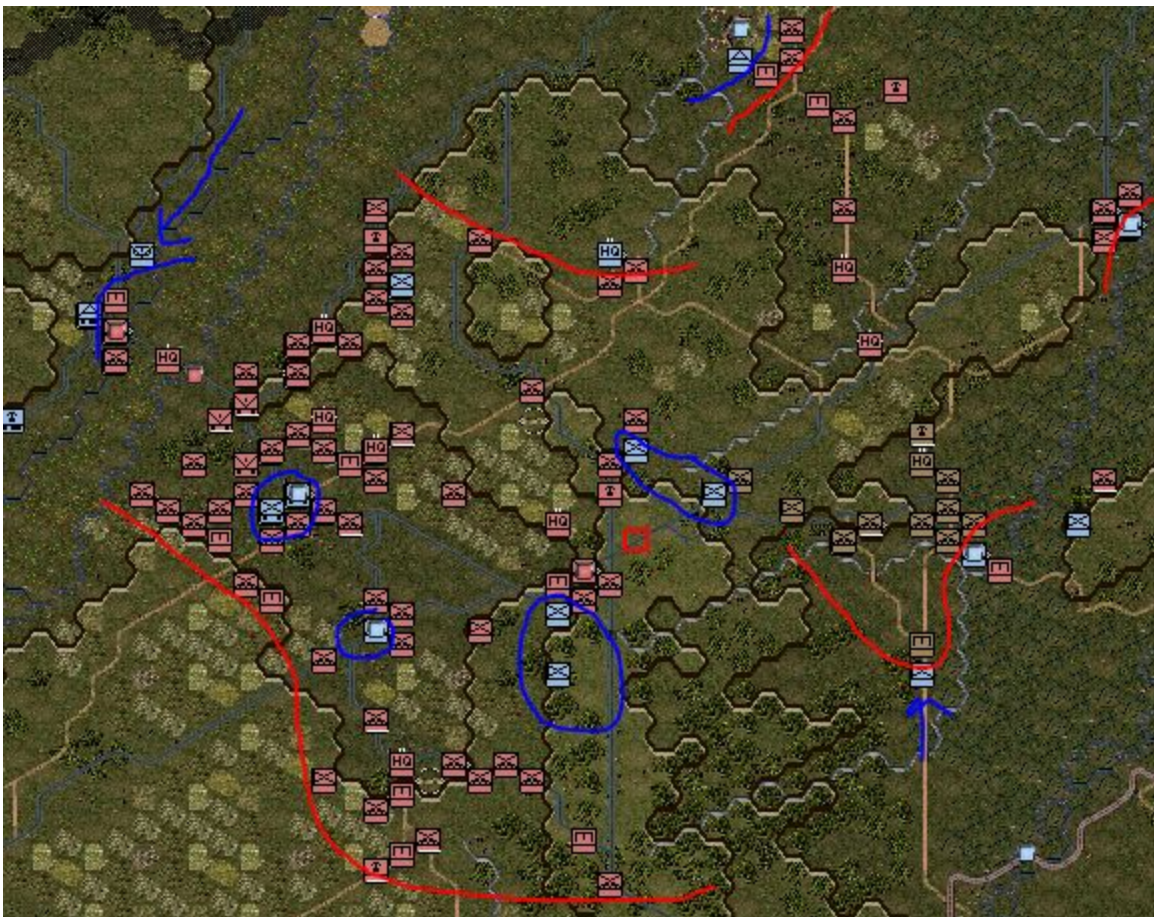
German turn

I spotted the tracked artillery that has been pounding the Pegasus defenders, but it is well out of reach. The Royal Engineers spotted three vehicles rolling in from the beach.

Ranville just gets worse. Upwards of 15 troopers were lost in one half turn. A glider platoon from No. 1 Wing's D Company repulsed an assault by the rear-ward grenadiers, which are all isolated but that doesn't seem to phase them.

As rosy-fingered dawn grasped the blood-strewn countryside, those Germans lurking in the trees are showing their faces. An MG platoon was spotted south of Le Mesnil. Another can be seen near Robehomme in the eastern polder. A lost platoon from the 9th has been struggling to get back in line. I fear with renewed visibility, these gunners will cut down those muddy, exhausted men.

Two high points: Return fire disrupted the bridge/objective defenders near Bricqueville. The same happened for the last undisrupted German unit near Varaville.



The field of battle with pockets of resistance and front lines identified

PROGRESS & LOSSES

Ranville festers in my mind. Dawn frightens me; I worry that if I don't pull my troopers back from this face-to-face confrontation with the demon-willed and god-strong 21. PzD, they will annihilate us one-by-one. I do have two AT units facing them from which they retreated in the night. Perhaps firing these at half a kilometer will do the trick.

The victory points are turning in my favor. I suspect at the end of turn 7, I will have crossed over into a minor defeat. Will I be able to hold all that I have purchased given this currency of hacked arms by which the 6th Airborne pays for land?

Allied Losses

Men 1122; Guns 7

German losses

Men 325; Guns 16; Vehicles 2

Victory

VP 92 - Allied Major Defeat

TURN 7

June 6th - 06:00

Oh great, they can see us now.

SITUATION

Now that everyone is here, we can make our Doomsday Book. In it we write our strength of 2,528 Men and 35 Guns. It would seem we've lost a third of the men who were brave enough to climb aboard a plane yesterday. It is true that most of those were lost in flight, but we must give the Germans some credit.

The situation has not changed for the most part. The tracked AT moving south from the beach worries me, but until more grenadiere show up, I am content to crack on.

PLANNING

I would like to eliminate the Varaville and Bricqueville bridge defenders this turn, or at least shove them into the water. The same goes for Herouvillette. I pushed the portside Ox & Buck platoon too far from the opposing bridge. Several will need to return in order to shore up Pegasus whose defenders are less than half strength.

OUTCOME**Allied turn**

A company-sized assault was repulsed by the two German platoons half a click west of Le Plain. Although we had to fall back, we inflicted 37 casualties at the cost of two.

Pegasus has been reinforced with a 6 pounder beachside and 39 men from No. 1 Glider wing. The other AT gun put a hurtin' on the Nebelwerfer near the Benouville Chateau, eliminating one and disrupting the unit. At the bridge we traded shots and men. I was leary of a direct assault given the strength of the two platoons stationed there.



Pegasus Situation

The German HQ withstood an assault at Longuemare.

The 12th took Herouvillete, destroying the defenders. Elsewhere, they pushed the stragglers left over from Le Mesnil further into the countryside.



The push out of Le Mesnil

It has taken them all night, but the 8th btn is in position at Le Hamet and Escoville.

The Canadians were unable to take their objective this turn but they managed to down 16 Germans in the attempt. The company I sent around to the right now finds itself under fire from the bridge and an MG unit perching pretty in a clump of trees.

The 9th is earning its pay. The assault on Varaville failed to take the bridge, but like our other attacks this turn, it inflicted horrendous casualties. 42 Germans went down, along with the remaining guns, to the cost of 2 Allied soldiers. While down at Merville, a reinforced company charged the pillbox. One platoon wandered into a minefield. Two others waded into enemy fire in preparation for next turn's assault. The Royal Engineers pushed back the AA but had little effect otherwise. Without a lucky break, this one is going to chew us up.



The Merville Pillbox & supporting mortars

German turn

Fire and return has become more dynamic in the dawn light. Now that line of sight travels further afield I cannot find anything I wish I'd set up differently. But it will affect how I approach new situations.

21. Panzer sent one platoon (its strongest, if I'm not mistaken) toward the encircling line. They managed to disrupt the Royal Engineers functioning as the keystone. My casualties weren't as bad as they have been; however, my return fire was largely ineffective.

Pegasus spotted four more tracked AT vehicles rolling in from Caen.

An MG unit moved in behind the pillbox and west of Merville. From its position it can rake fire over part of the assaulting team. We have neither the manpower nor the route to take it on. I am completely unwilling to push 7th btn toward Sallenelles and the coast. If another company of grenadiere show up, I'll need them.

The Canadians can't buy a break. Joining the MG unit is a German platoon. I did not expect this back road east of Bois de Bavent to see so much traffic. At this rate, they will not have the men to take the objective at Bures.

PROGRESS & LOSS

So far so good. More Germans have not materialized from the direction of Caen. Neither has the 8th btn been tested by reinforcements rolling in from Troarn. We continue to take objectives, one per turn.

Allied losses

Men 1,180; Guns 7

German losses

Men 504; Guns 18; Vehicles 3

Victory

VP 151 - Allied Major Defeat

TURN 8

June 6th - 06:30

Dig ye dwarves!

SITUATION

The Germans are putting pressure on Pegasus. But I am encouraged by the nature of the pressure. That I'm seeing AT vehicles and Nebelwerfers and not boots, means the Germans don't have the means to counterattack.

I believe the 21. PzD grenadiere are beginning to chafe.

Our interior lines are finding fewer Germans. Soon, I hope, I can shift the bulk of the troopers fighting on the inside to points south. The Canadians are being whittled down to a nub. I'm worried the 9th might expend the better part of a company and not destroy the pillbox.

PLANNING

The attack at Merville cannot be put off. Someone will have to make an assault this turn. I have two engineer platoons ready but neither is in good shape.

The German armor surrounding Pegasus seems standoffish. I am content with that situation. Our AT can trade shots until kingdom come. Bricqueville and/or Varaville should be cleaned up this turn.

The 13th btn will start digging in as best it can. I will move up to the high ground to gain southern visibility and dig. Shovels at the ready, men!

OUTCOME

Allied turn

At long last, Howard's men have cleared the air around Pegasus. Two platoons and the Royal engineers destroyed the remaining AA vehicle and killed six men. Less than 10 men remain of the defenders. Likewise, the supporting AT has been brilliant. The six pounder section beachside took down two vehicles, while the Caen side knocked out one. Both units were fatigued and disrupted. Brotheridge's 30 men, fresh-faced and ready, reinforce the bridge.



Pegasus rises

No effect at Ranville. I ordered half the defenders to dig in and pulled back from most face-to-face contact. Wait and see.



The Ranville ring

The German remnants west of Le Plain have evaporated under two Allied assaults. I'm of a mind to keep one company strung between Ecarde and Hameau Oger and send the remainder of the battalion south.

Another assault on the German HQ at Longuemare blasted 10 men out of existence, but they held on for another turn.

The first assault on Merville was not as brutal as I expected: 3 lost to 1 taken; however, both engineer platoons were left in a state of disruption.



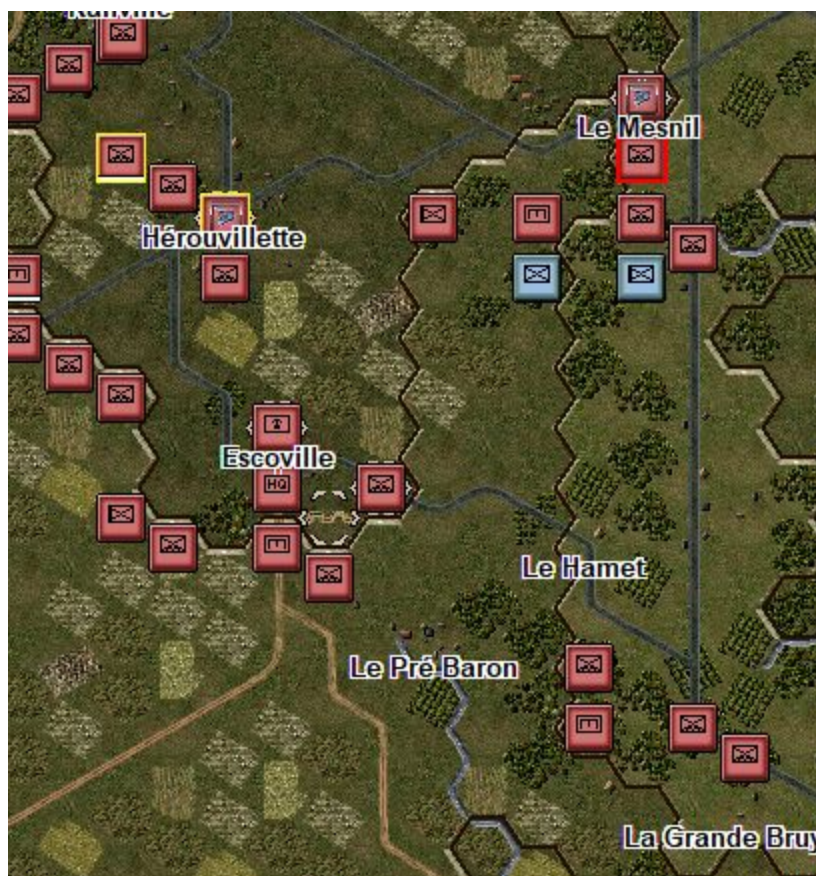
Merville

Another assault at Varaville killed 17 Germans but failed to take the objective. The Canadians on the other hand took the objective west of Bricqueville after two assaults. A joint effort between the Canadians and 12th btn have cornered two German units near Chateau Venoix.



Cornered at the Chateau

Last, the 8th has been asked to spread out further to defend the approaches to Herouvillette. The 12th is too spread out and still engaged in two separate battles to manage the proper front. A company of the 12th remains in Herouvillette in case the 8th's B company is attacked. C company and staff holds Escoville. A company is digging in at the crossroads to the east.



8th btn Operations

German turn

At Pegasus, return AT fire destroyed one armor unit and drove off the other. More than 100 pioniere have appeared on the high ground southwest of the bridge. Thankfully, the Germans are committing reserves piecemeal. But I don't like the looks of this. A company of engineers. They know things about bridges.

North of Ecarde, a second German battalion appeared in the tall grass of the lower Orne. 7th's MG and mortar are keeping them at bay. I wonder if they're trying to sneak up to the bridge.

The Canadians spotted a battalion HQ and mortar just over the next bridge north of Bures.

One of the grenadiere at Ranville ended the turn disrupted. This is the first sign this bullet rain might clear for the 13th.

PROGRESS & LOSS

Allied losses

Men 1,225; Guns 8

German losses

Men 611; Guns 18; Vehicles 9

Victory

VP 259 - Allied Minor Defeat

TURN 9

June 6th - 07:00

Stop Breaking Down

SITUATION

Largely unchanged. The Pioniere have me worried. I am not sure what to do about Merville. The forces arrayed almost certainly cannot take the pillbox; they are too diminished. Given a few turns, I can move in another company to take over. The immediate question is, do I try one more time or fall back. The troopers want to go again...naturally.

PLANNING

Hold and fire. Once the Canadians move on Bures, I'll release the 8th to move on Troarn. By then, hopefully, the 12th will have cleared their backfield and can take over the defense of Herouvillette.

OUTCOME**Allied turn**

Howard took the initiative and pushed half a kilometer off the bridge. They will begin digging in next turn. Until the Germans can bring in more units, I believe it is secure.



Pegasus and the Pioniere

No change at Ranville. More digging in.

The 9th fell back from Merville. I didn't see a point in throwing more bodies on that fire. I will begin scavenging the field for platoons. The last defenders at Varaville were annihilated, so some of them can transition. Hopefully, by mid morning we can mount another assault. More Germans appear on the highway to the north, but I doubt they can reinforce the pillbox or counterattack effectually. The HQ unit at Longuemare persists in spite suffering seven more dead this turn. The two German units at Chateau de Venoux have been pinched into a single hex and disrupted.



Merville

Less than 10 men remain in the forests south of Le Mesnil. We eliminated the machine gun. All that remains are the original garrison of Le Mesnil.

The Canadian 1st platoon has taken up a position north of the bridge to block further reinforcements and isolate the two Germans already engaged. Hopefully its presence will drive off the HQ and mortar.



Canadian right hook

German turn

The Pioniere crashed into our lines west of Pegasus. Brotheridge took the brunt, losing 16 men. The remaining 9 managed to foil the assault. Woods or Smith will have to reinforce. This is bad. Unless we can disrupt or effectively whittle down their numbers, Howard's men will take a beating.

No new German arrivals. I believe the two German platoons near the Orne are trying to move on the bridge. They'll never make it. Much of 7th btn is arrayed to form a one-sided gauntlet through which they would need to pass.

The rest of the map could be summarized as, "They shot. We shot." The Germans beyond Pegasus don't seem inclined to maneuver.

PROGRESS & LOSS

Only Ranville's objective of 50 VPs is within our grasp and I'm not sure we hold it if counterattacked. That would give us a draw. Merville, Bures and Troarn are worth 100 each. I can envision Bures falling; however, we have yet to see a significant German counter attack. My gut tells me the next ten turns will see 6th Airborne hard pressed to hold what it has facing Caen.

Allied losses

Men 1,270; Guns 10

German losses

Men 679; Guns 19; Vehicles 9

Victory

VP 356 - Allied Minor Defeat

TURN 10

June 6th - 07:30

Stop engineering us, please.

SITUATION

The pioniere threaten Pegasus with over 100 fresh men. Their first attack last turn reduced a platoon to nine men. The clean up operation north and south of Le Mesnil continues. The Canadians press on. I moved their HQ too close last turn and it came under fire. I'll remove it to Bavent this turn.

Two German platoons flank the 7th's roadblock. So far, we've traded ineffective fire.

Our strength is now 2,380 men on map.

PLANNING

At Pegasus, we must rain hell on the German engineers. I can tolerate their fire, but given their numbers and a chance to assault, they can wipe out entire platoons even if they fail.

It is imperative we begin operations against Ranville. I can smell the Germans coming from Caen. We'll lose any chance of taking it if they show up before progress is made.

I'll begin reorganizing 9th btn for a future attack on the Merville pillbox.

The Canadians will press on.

OUTCOME

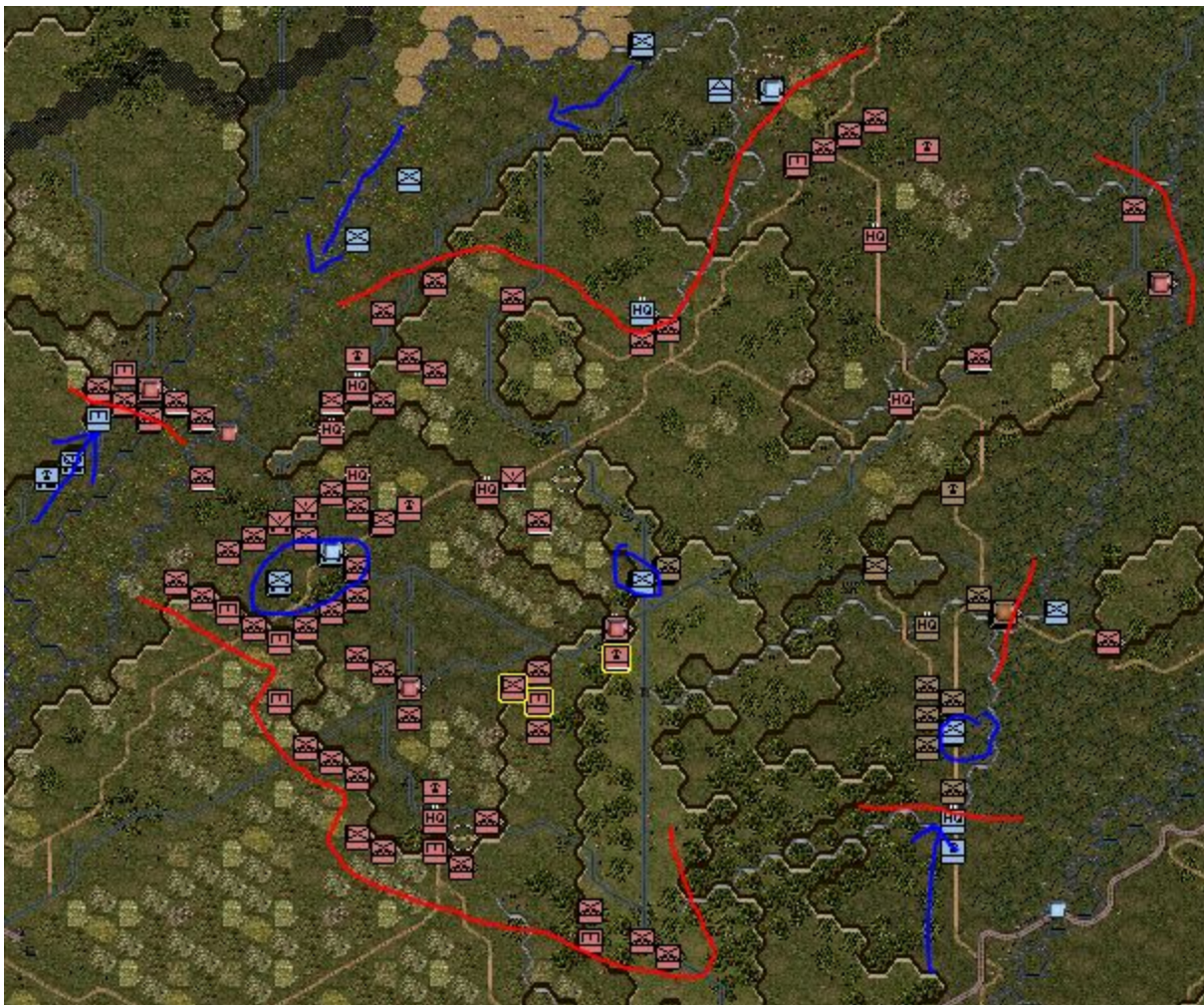
Allied turn

Howard's men beat on the German engineers and doubled down on their defense of Benouville. The Germans still number over 100 and picking them off one at a time is like swatting mosquitoes in the swamp. I'm order 7th btn's MG and mortar unit to redeploy ASAP to the Canal opposite. It's a tall order to make it in time, but what can I do. I've also ordered D platoon of No. 1 Wing to head over the bridge.

Two platoons were ordered to assault the Germans at Ranville. Losses were even and we came away with one disrupted unit. I'll consider any activity a success that hurts them as much as us.

The Canadians exchanged fire and encircled the Germans on the road. It will take a few turns to dislodge and run them off. At the bridge north of Bures, we shot up the German HQ.

Clean up continues around Le Mesnil.



East of Orne

German turn

Pegasus remains hot. The pioniere hit again taking 14 more. Brotheridge is down to a single man. Last turn's reinforcing platoon now has less than 10. More reinforcements will move over the bridge next turn, so I am not terribly worried. But so many dead.

Nothing unexpected happened. The Germans charged the Canadian lines but didn't break through. I'm not sure that was the purpose. The six men I lost have turned 4th platoon into an exhausted shell.

Counter fire took out a gun at Merville. The 7th btn managed to disrupt one of the German platoons playing hide and seek in the tall grass. I have lost sight of two German units on the highway to the coast that appeared to be heading toward Sallenelles.

PROGRESS & LOSS**Allied losses**

Men 1,328; Guns 11

German losses

Men 751; Guns 20; Vehicles 9

Victory

VP 354 - Allied Minor Defeat

TURN 10

June 6th - 08:00

*France is a nice place,
but I wouldn't want to fight here.*

SITUATION

What's the solution to all of life's problems? If you answered, "Beer", you're wrong. It's men. Gender doesn't really matter. It has more to do with mobile targets. The idea is, the more we give them to shoot at, the less they will hit. I'm skeptical, but the brass claim they have a mathematical proof.

So it is with Pegasus. The 7th's B company, mortar and MG are on their way to shore up the bridge. I believe a few turns ago, I stated that I was in no danger of losing the bridge. I still believe that; however, it won't be retained through valiant and brilliant combat, but rather because the Germans won't be able to drive over the mound of bodies they create before them.

Aside from Pegasus Bridge, the Canadian sector, Ranville and a bit of mopping up north of Le Mesnil, the situation is quietly fubar.

PLANNING

Mostly unchanged. Hold and sit pretty. I'm still expecting a significant German counterattack from Caen. There are no objectives in the fields past Ranville, Herouvillette and Escoville, so why bother?

The 9th still has not managed to overrun the 716. ID battalion HQ at Longuemare. We attack each half hour like clockwork, bury a mess of Germans and fall back. Once the 9th does blast them to hell one platoon will remain at Le Bas de Breville while the other joins the parade south of Merville.

OUTCOME

Allied turn

Attacks at Pegasus and Ranville chip away. I've sent well over 100 men to Pegasus to wrangle the German bull. Showing my skill level, I rolled in a platoon opposite the German engineers in marching formation. That cost them eight men. At Ranville, follow up assaults have been delayed due to a reorganizing platoon. However, the ring poured fire into the beleaguered German platoons, killing a few.



Pegasus Jumble

The death of the HQ unit at Longueville is in sight as it appears the most recent attacks reduced them to under 10 men.

Both German platoons skirting 7th btn along the Orne have been disrupted.

Four Canadian platoons assaulted the Germans north of Bures. They managed to destroy the MG section but failed to impress the infantry platoon. Follow up fire garnered a stiff retaliation resulting in enough Canadian casualties that the destruction of the MG felt Pyrrhic.

German turn

Oh bother. Here they come. Nebelwerfers, mortars and tracked AT have been spotted on the secondary road passing through Le Bas de Ranville. I knew I should have attempted to shift my own AT out to the high ground.



Mortars, Nebelwerfers and AT, Oh my!

Worse, I count 150+ Germans, grenadiere no less, three quarters of a click from 8th btn lines outside Escoville. And there's more on the way. Another MG unit, 50-strong, is seen in the distance beyond Touffreville. The 8th is going to have its work cut out for it.



gut.check.time@escoville.screwed

The pioniere slammed into our lines again, taking down 14 and losing 7. Woods' platoon has two men. Brotheridge and Woods can't even play doubles tennis at this point.

PROGRESS & LOSS

I'm tempted to rename this section "Lack of Progress and Loss".

Allied losses

Men 1,398; Guns 12

German losses

Men 822; Guns 20; Vehicles 9

Victory

VP 349 - Allied Minor Defeat

June 6th - 08:30

It isn't necessary to say, "I told you so." -- CO

It is when you're about to die. -- Private

SITUATION

Ominous, I would say. I'll jinx myself again by saying the lack of boots at Le Bas de Ranville is hopeful. The Zug marching down on Escoville is another matter and something to behold. The 8th's MG is out of place; however, A company, on the high ground to the east, is poised to harass from a safe(?) position.

PLANNING

Do I fire or wait? I think fire. Anything I can do to slow down the German Companies, the better. Once they get in close, their assaults will shred my lines. If they do not spread out, I will fall back in and through Escoville, giving the platoon's entrenched on the high ground time to fire as they move on Herouvillette.

Rather than shift 8th's B company, the 12th will now function as a reserve and take up flanking positions around Escoville.

The Canadians will press on as if nothing has changed. If I'm to pull out more than a minor defeat or draw, I'll have to take the bridge outside Bures.

As for the Ranville area, I cannot say. I still need to focus on the trapped grenadiere. Their offensive will have to do what it can. For Ranville itself, I'm afraid it is time to rush their defenses.

OUTCOME

Allied turn

I don't know if this is a curse or a blessing. 1st platoon of No. 1 gliders disrupted the pioniere at Pegasus Bridge. Two platoons from B company, seeing the confusion, charged the Germans, driving them back with even casualties. I can see this going both ways. If the Germans recover next turn, they'll counterattack. If not, what do I do? Keep attacking until my troopers evaporate with the morning mist?



Benouville

At last the German HQ at Longuemare has been dislodged. Its two remaining men are running for a clump of trees they will never make.

The Canadians sling themselves at the Germans again with some success. The HQ units is disrupted by Allied fire. If it remains so I might assault it next turn.

The assault on Ranville was renewed disrupting the German MG. More units will join the attack next turn. I am learning about distance in this game. Twice now I've moved HQ or mortars too close to the front. This time it cost the 12th two guns. They haven't been that effective against the Germans, but still, I hate to lose toys due to carelessness.

German side

The newly arrived Germans creep forward, firing. The 8th's engineers suffered eight casualties from two shots. They might assault our lead position next turn. The artillery southwest of Ranville dropped a few shells on our lines but did not press forward.

Remember back when I said, the Germans creeping up the Orne wouldn't make it to Pont de Ranville. Well, they might if I don't engage them. Fire and move,

and they are doing it well. 7th's A Company was on its way to the front, but it seems I'll have to divert them to cover the bridge. The two German units I lost track of down near Merville have reappeared on the same beeline to the Orne crossing.

For some reason, the artillery at Merville is being relocated. Unfortunately for them, it is happening in plain sight of Allied troopers.

The Canadians suffered more casualties in another assault on 4th platoon. It is down to four soldiers. Time for them to fall back.

PROGRESS & LOSS

I am asking myself if I can harass the Germans out of their prize. Without a lucky disruption I don't see myself stopping them from anything they want in the immediate vicinity of the front.

Allied losses

Men 1,459; Guns 15

German losses

Men 888; Guns 21; Vehicles 9

Victory

VP 345 - Allied Minor Defeat

TURN 13

June 6th - 09:00

Breakfast at Escoville

SITUATION

The power of concentrated fire from an entire PzGr Company has been duly noted. I have a lot of strength surrounding their avenue of attack but little of it is focused. The situation is bad but not dire. Anything else added to this front and that will change.

The Canadians are petering out. I believe they will make it to Bures; however, depending on German strength, they might not make the objective.

The German pioniere at Pegasus remain disrupted.

PLANNING

Something occurs to me that should have occurred to me long ago. To stop the grenadiers I might need to overstack a well-chosen hex. 8th's A Company will harass their flank. I've moved in an AT section to the high ground south of Le Hamet. Sadly, the fallback into Escoville will begin this turn.

With Ranville's defenders partially disrupted, the 12th will renew its attack. I expected more than just Nebelwerfers on the road from Caen.

I feel I have little recourse but to continue pressing the pioniere at Pegasus. So long as they are disrupted they cannot attack. If we fail, we can fall back. The only concern is the chance an attack comes from the west or north.

The 7th's A Company will move to block the German advance up the Orne River. Once they pass, two parts of C Company will move in behind in order to keep the following units separate from their comrades.

Near Merville, the 9th will strike out at the artillery fleeing the scene. I suspect, striking out will result in an impromptu second assault on the pillbox.

OUTCOME

Allied turn

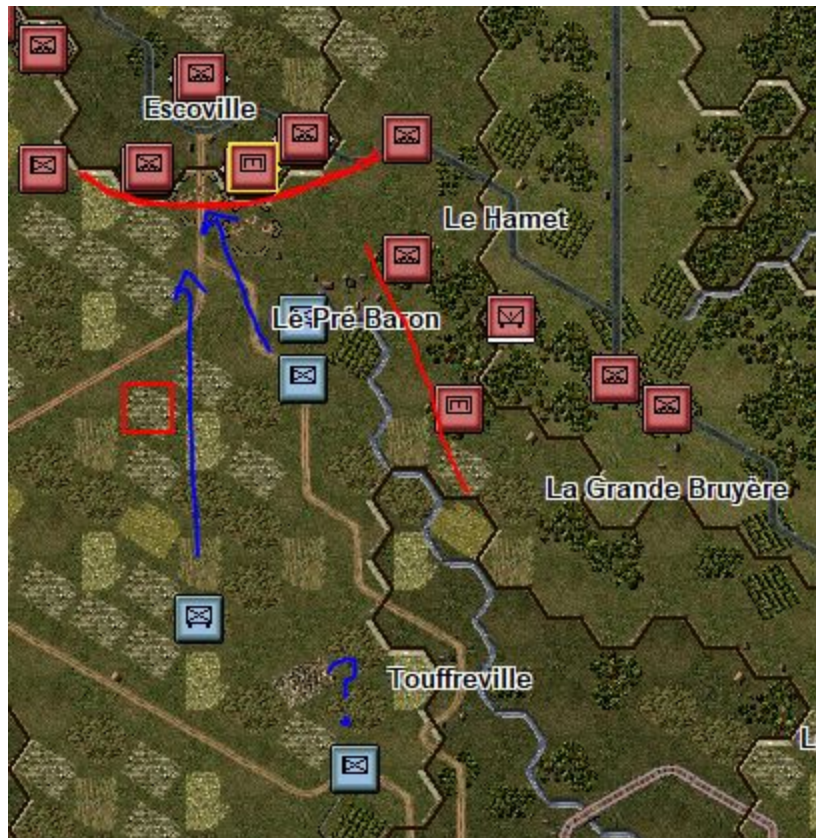
Renewing my assault on the pioniere was costly. The Germans retreated and lost four men, but it cost the Brits eleven. Estimates suggests the pioniere numbers are below 100. When they strike back (and they will), I have little left to stop them.

Like Pegasus, the 12th renewed their attacks at Ranville, trading seven for twelve. Four other sorely understrength platoons moved in on the two German platoons southwest of Ranville. Not one has 40% of its OOB.



Ranville, full on

I have doubled up platoons to create three strong points just south of Escoville. A single platoon is no match for a grenadier company. Hopefully this will improve their chances. A Company is moving in to harass the Germans from behind as they pass Le Pre Baron. The AT gun on the ridge will be ready next turn. A second company of grenadiers is making its way over the field where 8th btn landed.



Escoville defense

The Canadians, head down and in spite of it all, charged the German roadblock. It yielded on two counts. What I thought was an understrength platoon turned out to be 50 men. The attack pushed them back but cost me dearly. Further south I sent 1st platoon over the bridge driving the HQ back into their mortars.



The Canadians

The 9th pushed on the fleeing artillery and, like I thought, drove on toward the pillbox. Out in the open, the guns fell with one kick. I do not have visibility on the numbers remaining in the pillbox. I can only proceed if I tell myself the number is not great.

German loss

The Le Pre Baron ruse proved both useful and deadly. The grenadiers whirled to meet 3rd platoon sneaking down their flank and fired twice felling ten. The MGs following behind laid down fire toward the four 17 pounders setting up on the high ground, destroying two. I believe the cost worth the lives if it keeps them from moving down the hill toward Escoville.

Oddly, the second company of grenadiers and second collection of machine gunners kept their distance.

The grenadiers south of Ranville set up an assault. The resulting fire from surrounding Brits caused them to cancel. It appears slightly more than 20 remain.

The German engineers at Pegasus cut down more troopers but remain disrupted and unable to attack.

PROGRESS & LOSS

Allied losses

Men 1,528; Guns 17

German losses

Men 942; Guns 23; Vehicles 9

Victory

VP 340 - Allied Minor Defeat

TURN 14

June 6th - 09:30

Punch and run

SITUATION

Every turn A Company keeps the German attack from turning north we are farther from defeat. The situation at Pegasus is tenuous. I still doubt the Pioniere, even if they get their shit together this turn, can retake the bridge. But they can pulp the defenders.

It will take several turns for the Canadians to reduce the fifty disheveled Germans pushed up against the polder. I am beginning to suspect the road south is open. That none have come to aid the HQ says to me something.

Escoville is a dance. In order to keep the Germans occupied, A company will have to take a beating.

PLANNING

No new plans at this point except to carry on previous ideas.

OUTCOME

Allied turn

Outside Benouville, the two platoons responsible for driving back the Germans retreated, opening the lines for the MG and AT. The 17-pounders smoked two vehicles, one from each group. Fire against the German engineers was less

satisfactory. 5th platoon moved forward along the opposite bank of the Canal. With any luck it will distract the forward movement of the Germans.



Benouville

The 12th hitched up its britches and tried again. Both pockets of Germans resisted bitterly. Between the two, we lost ten to their fifteen.

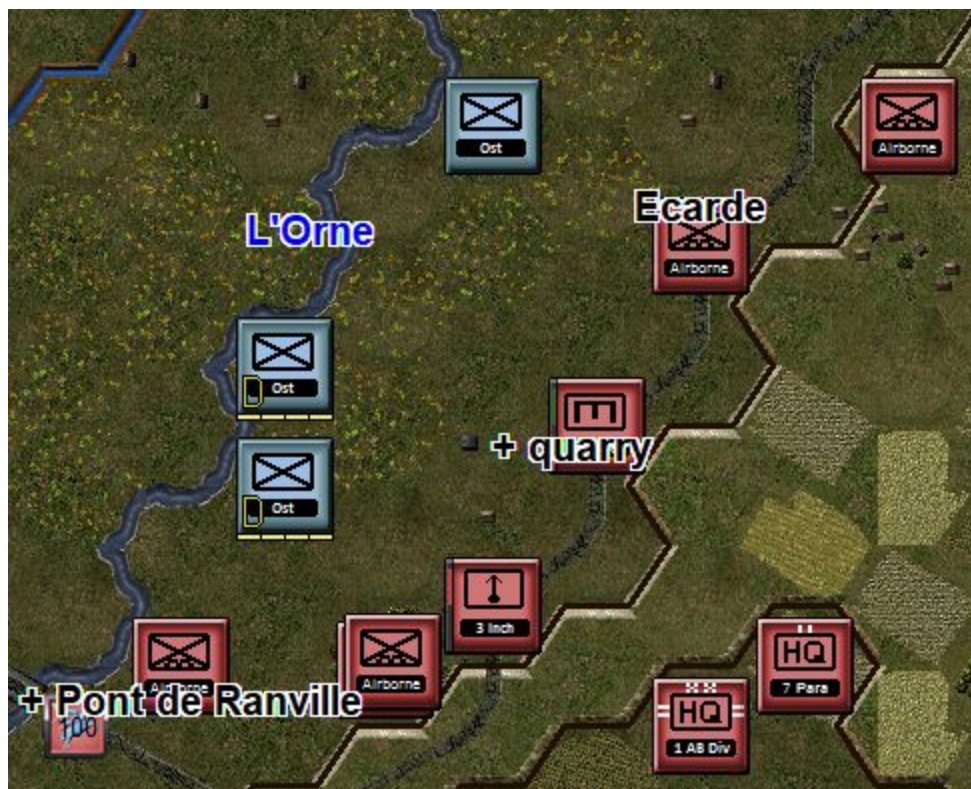
Other than pepper the grenadiere from afar, there is little the combined 8th and 12th btns can do. The lead platoon has fallen back behind the woods and while they are only ten men, perhaps the 100-odd Germans will give chase.

The Canadians drove the Germans over the stream to their backs and into the waterlogged fields. Every Canadian soldier on the road is now throwing Hell their way. At the bridge, we tried again and failed. The HQ and mortar stood their ground.

At Merville an assault traded three for three. Something tells me, I will get this objective before long.

German turn

The Germans are within three quarters of a kilometer of the Orne bridge. 7th btn HQ has ordered a full counterattack for next turn.



One bridge too far

More (and worse) has materialized around Cuverville and Touffreville. An Aufklaerungs platoon was seen racing toward Escoville from Cuverville. Behind it, we spotted mortars and a regimental HQ. To the east, a company of mechanized infantry crests the high ground. In a few turns, they will be on us and no amount of footwork will keep them from our deaths.

The lead German unit forsook A Company's diversion and renewed the attack on Escoville. Eight men were lost when they opened fire.



German counterattack. Full view.

The machine gunners left at Varaville were disturbed by 30 fresh Germans on bicycles charging out of the marsh. I hope they are the whole party for there is no one to come to their aid otherwise.

PROGRESS & LOSS

Allied losses

Men 1,586; Guns 17

German losses

Men 1,008; Guns 23; Vehicles 11

Victory

VP 342 - Allied Minor Defeat

TURN 15

June 6th - 10:00

I wish we had bicycles.

SITUATION

I suppose it is time to start accessing which objectives I might still take and which I might lose.

The pioniere have yet to reorganize and are three quarters of a kilometer from the bridge. It would take quite a miracle for them to throw me back over the Canal.

I believe I can take Ranville; it might be with just one man left, but I believe it is possible. Four tracked AT vehicles are moving toward my lines. It is a valiant effort but it comes too late.

Herouvillette is most in danger; however, my instincts are, the Germans won't reach it. They are moving too slowly and would have to trash (not that they aren't trashed already) two battalions to get there. Escoville will fall unless they sidestep.

Alternatively, the 21. PzD could turn north for Le Mesnil but there are no direct roads. No, I think not.

Sadly, I do not believe the Canadians will make it Bures. It is not impossible, but the Germans are almost certainly to have left a platoon either in the town or on the objective. Or both.

Lastly, I think the objective outside Merville is achievable. I have no less than two companies, supporting engineers and mortars.

PLANNING

At Ranville, attack.

At Pegasus, delay.

At Escoville, survive.

At Bures, charge.

At Merville, obliterate.

These are the orders. The forces are engaged and there is little room for tactics. I should consider Escoville lost and play for time. Deny the powerful 21. PzD a chance to assault. Only from a distance will the men be permitted to fire. Close order return fire is too deadly.

OUTCOME

Allied turn

7th btn's A Company drove the lead German platoon away from the Orne bridge inflicting fifteen to one casualties. The battalion's engineers fell in behind in order to keep them from being reinforced.



Orne denied

At Ranville, everything has changed. And nothing has changed. The German MGs are down but the platoon remains. I still cannot tell how many are left. 10? 20? 30? On the other hand, the second pocket of grenadiere are close to destruction. Between the two platoons, seven men are left.

At Escoville, we fire and fall back. I am gambling that I won't be surprised by another prong emerging from the orchards at Ste-Honorine la Chardonnette. On that gamble, two-thirds of B Company are falling back to protect against the possibility the 21. Pz moves around my left flank.

The Canadians have managed to disrupt the mortars barring the road to Bures. One of theirs also remained disrupted this turn. If fate smiles, next turn they will advance.

As I expected, 9th btn took the objective outside Merville. A concentrated attack by five elements drove them out. Royal Engineers first cleared the minefield north of the bunker making way for an attack from two directions. I

have ordered two platoons to return to Varaville just in case something goes wrong.



Merville bunker is ours!

German turn

A vicious turn. Half-tracked flak drove right up to the line outside Ranville and opened fire. The trapped grenadiere suffered tremendous counter fire but persisted nonetheless.

As I feared the 21. Pz veered to the northeast of Escoville. It is unclear if they are flanking me or mean to break for Le Mesnil. Neither is a particularly happy prospect.



German attack

By sheer luck we disrupted the MG unit they moved in on Escoville. More Germans appear on the roads to Escoville: AT, Engineers and half-tracked infantry.

The mortars north of Bures recovered. The 9th's MG at Varaville began chewing through the cyclists when a second showed up on the road. They, too, received a hot lead welcome.

PROGRESS & LOSS

Allied losses

Men 1,631; Guns 17

German losses

Men 1,106; Guns 24; Vehicles 13

Victory

VP 448 - Draw

TURN 16

June 6th - 10:30

*Four platoons enter,
one platoon leaves.*

SITUATION

The German pioniere remain disrupted. The Ranville defenders can be counted on two hands. If I can take Ranville and hold what I have, an Allied Minor Victory will be decided on casualties. That fact is not in my favor given I have yet to weather the storm coming up the Escoville road.

PLANNING

Where are they going? I've given them that opening to the north. I can close it but that will remove some of the depth assembled to defend against a frontal attack. I will have to meet them in the fields. No doubt. Where we go from there is up to them. I am incapable of leading in this dance. All I can do is smile and keep my feet out of the way.

OUTCOME

Allied turn

The Nebelwerfers south of Benouville broke after the last volley from our 17-pounder. The German engineers seem a little lifeless in their response to our fire. They have been under attack continuously since showing their faces. They must be fatigued.

I recombined 7th's A Company and charged the Germans trapped against the Orne. Twenty-three of them fell before we called it quits.

At Merville, the German platoon, now trapped in its own No Man's Land of obstacles and minefields, has been reduced to eight men.

The Canadians destroyed two mortars and killed two men from the HQ but could not proceed.

Ranville falls as the last man collapses. This is no victory. The four platoons that removed the last defenders consist of: 8 men, 10 men, 12 men and 13 men.

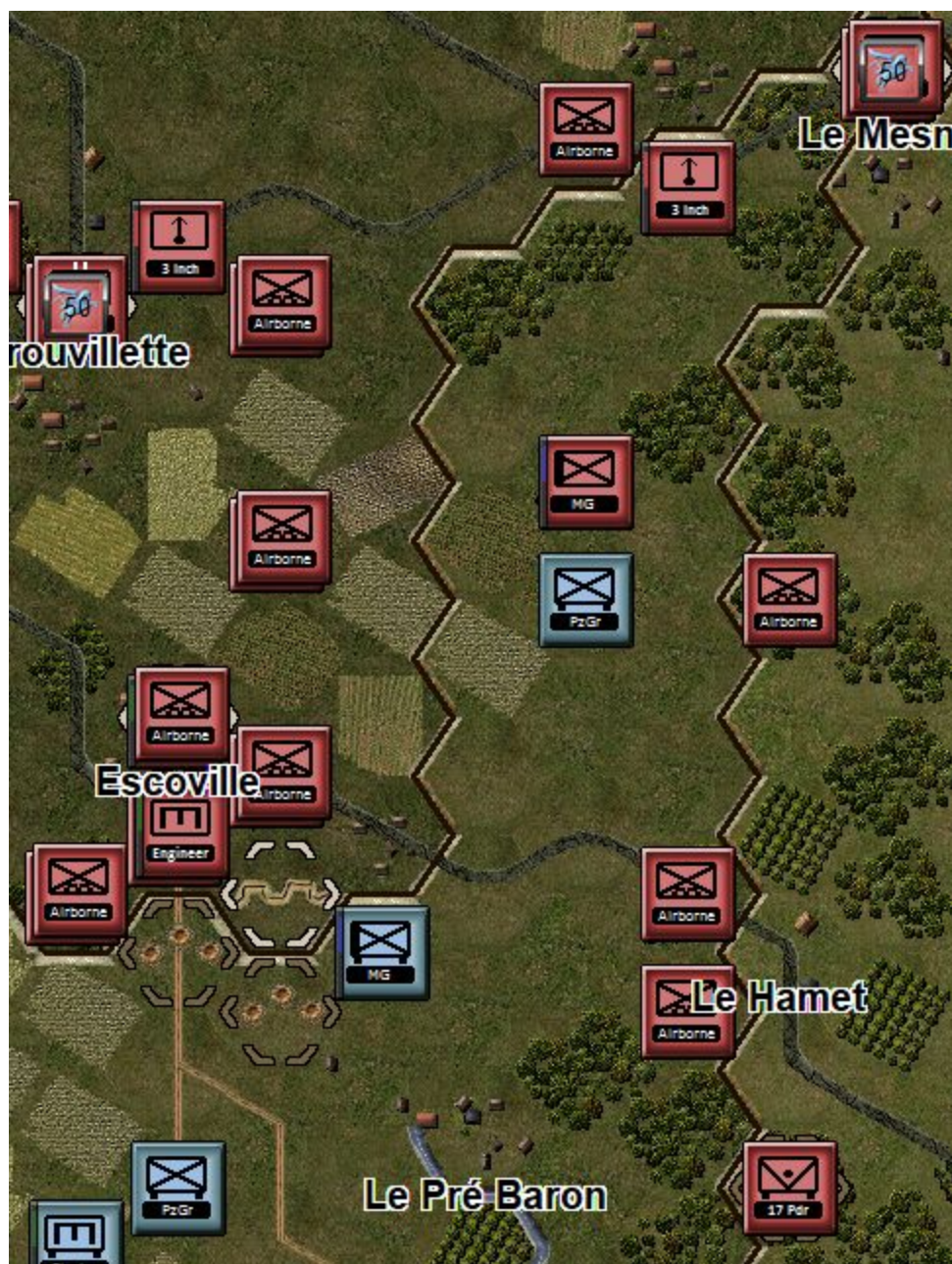


It is finished. And so are we.

8th's A Company pushes into the orchards west of Le Hamet hoping to draw the ire of the grenadiere. A single volley from them drops five troopers. We trade machine gun fire and shift our secondary lines to meet a hook around Escoville. Hold, damn it!

German turn

The German advance appears bound for Le Mesnil. The lead grenadier company continued north engaging 12th's machine gunners, circumventing Escoville completely. The rest are moving slowly north, too slowly to do much harm at this point. With three turns left, they could very well kick in the front door, but they won't have time to rob the place. To boot, I have lost track of at least one very powerful German unit. I assumed it had vanished beyond line of sight into the river valley near Touffreville. But that was two turns ago.



The threat du jour

A third bicycle platoon rolled up outside Varaville. That makes nearly ninety Germans on bikes. The first two have been disrupted and have been unsuccessful in causing us any harm. However, all it would take is an unlucky shot.

The rest of the map, while not quiet, maintained status quo. For the record, every turn I'm losing one or two men to unidentified artillery fire.

PROGRESS & LOSS

Allied losses

Men 1,690; Guns 17

German losses

Men 1,185; Guns 26; Vehicles 15

Victory

VP 502 - Allied Minor Victory

TURN 17

June 6th - 11:00

You call this winning?

SITUATION

All eyes are on Le Mesnil and Escoville. The remainder of the map is contained for now. The Canadians insist they aren't done but I wonder if further effort is worth the loss of life. Varaville is under attack.

PLANNING

I must shift forward, toward the Germans themselves. Do not anticipate. Go straight for the eyes and heart. Engage. Do not let them be coy and win. I will give the Canadians a final chance to make Bures; it is worth it. Elsewhere I mean to minimize casualties.

OUTCOME

Allied turn

The Germans guarding Bures would not budge. The Canadians failed to have an impact; they are exhausted. Everyone is. I will order them next turn to fall back behind the river and wait.

Another chance shell from the 17-pounder above Le Pre Baron sent the same MG unit into a state of disruption. It had pulled back from a confrontation at Escoville. I am unsure if it will follow the grenadier company's lead or strike toward the town.

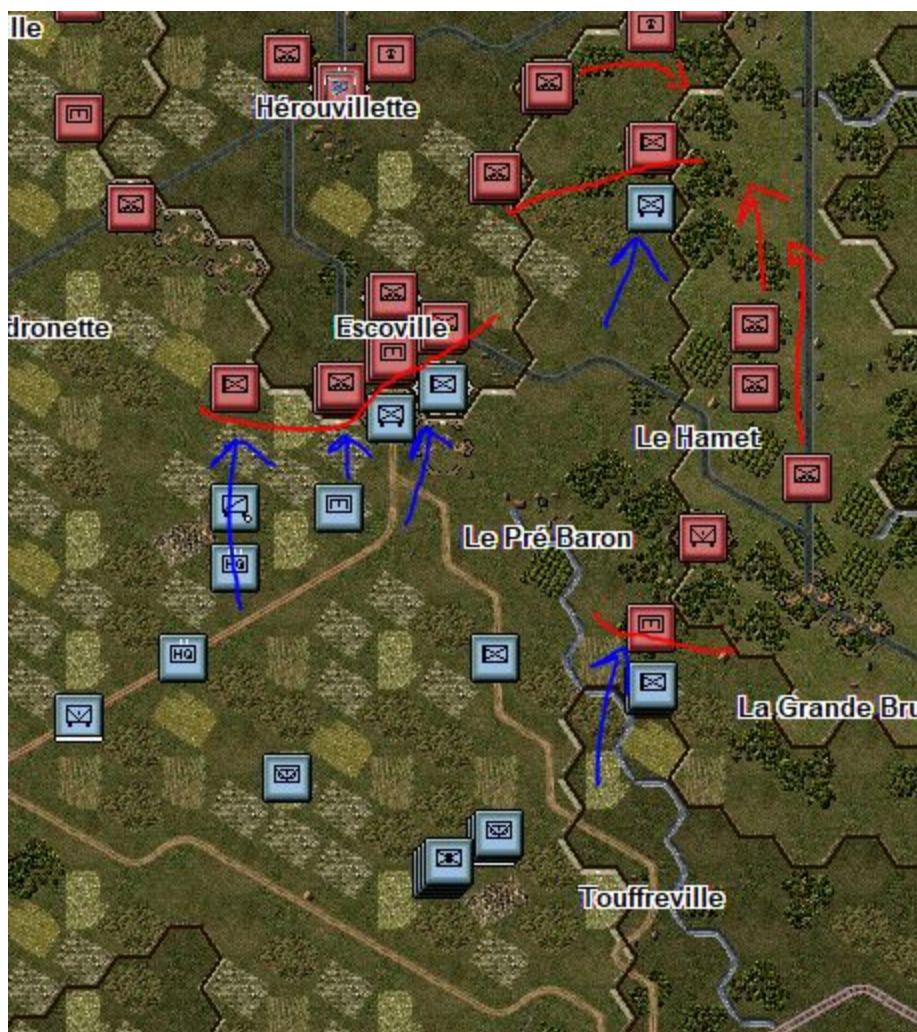
7th's A Company destroyed one of the two German companies cowering along the Orne. This threat has fizzled. The accompanying machine gunners are keeping their distance.

German turn

An astounding amount of armor just drove onto the field outside Touffreville. I witnessed several Allied platoons losing four men to a barrage. Again, nothing I can conceive, can be done.

The Germans are making a solid move on Escoville. Machine gunners and grenadiere have engaged our front. Aufklaerung and pioniere are moving toward our right flank.

150 Germans emerged from the riverbank north of Touffreville and smacked into the Royal engineers. I suspect they mean to clear the hill of my AT gun that has now for the third time disrupted a German unit.



German movements

PROGRESS & LOSS

Allied losses

Men 1,740; Guns 18

German losses

Men 1,245; Guns 26; Vehicles 16

Victory

VP 501 - Allied Minor Victory

TURN 18

June 6th - 11:30

"Stay on target."

SITUATION

The Germans, after a few turns creeping forward, appear ready to take Escoville. An oversized force moves to take the high ground overlooking their approach. The rest of the map is predictable. The German engineers outside Benouville remain locked in a firefight with Allied defenders; however, both sides are so exhausted the casualties inflicted have been minimal. The same can be said for the Canadians.

The cyclists are still a threat but only twenty start the turn ready to fight.

PLANNING

Unchanged. Minimize casualties. Only the lead German grenadier company is within reach of taking an objective. I have enough to keep it busy for a while. Since I won't be taking Bures, if I lose two more VPs, I'll drop to a draw.

OUTCOME**Allied turn**

The Canadian MG disrupted the mortars allowing the infantry to push back the HQ and destroy the remaining guns. Bures is out of reach but I can go out on a win. Go Canada.



Canada & Bures

Thirty more Germans were wiped out on the banks of the Orne river.

In the center, I fell back toward Le Mesnil. Those in Escoville have no intention of leaving...ever.

German turn

Less maneuvering and more fire. A lot more fire.

The 8th's MG covering Escoville's right flank was wiped out. The engineers guarding the AT south of Le Hamet were blasted off the face of the Earth by German AT guns. The German counterattack made two assaults. Both barely broke even on casualties. I didn't expect that. The first drove toward downtown Escoville. Barely six soldiers remained but they kept the Germans out of town.

PROGRESS & LOSS**Allied losses**

Men 1,811; Guns 19

German losses

Men 1,341; Guns 28; Vehicles 16

Victory

VP 499 - Draw

TURN 19

June 6th - 12:00

TANSTAAFL

SITUATION

Largely unchanged due to the clock running out. I've fallen back to a draw due to casualties and I doubt it'll improve.

PLANNING

Run out the clock.

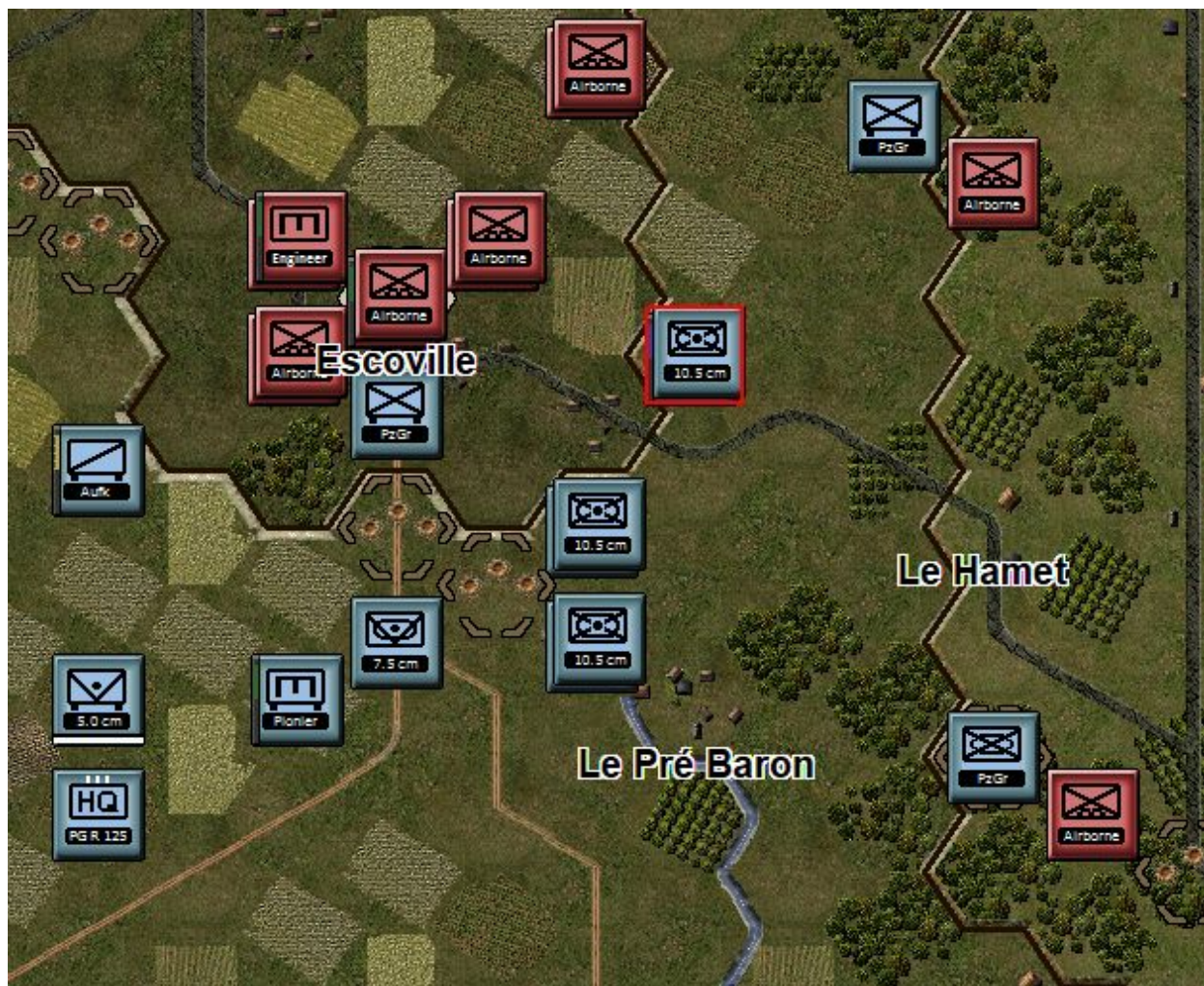
OUTCOME**Allied turn**

Return fire destroyed the last gun I had on the hill above the German advance. Maneuvering near Le Mesnil cost me seven more men. After that I ordered a halt to all movement.

German turn

German armor moves east around Escoville. The surrounded German grenadiers south of Le Mesnil retreated to better footing. The motorized grenadiers reached the top of the hill and threw back the last of 8th's A Company defending it.

The German poured on the heat but made half-hearted attempts to dislodge any of my positions.



Escoville and surrounding area

PROGRESS & LOSS

Allied losses

Men 1,864; Guns 20

German losses

Men 1,396; Guns 28; Vehicles 16

Victory

VP 495 - Draw

TURN 20

June 6th - 12:30

Done, and done.

SITUATION

Unchanged

PLANNING

Unchanged

OUTCOME**Allied turn**

Reinforcements reached Varaville preventing any last turn antics. The Canadians wipe out the remnants of the German HQ that were so effective in wasting time, bullets and men. A few lucky shots across the map manage to destroy several StuGs.

German turn

The German armor drove right up into my lines northeast of Escoville. Had they come around to the west this little blitz might have reached Herouvillette. Close fighting with the armor allowed the troopers to down a few.

An MG unit showed up at Varaville and was immediately disrupted by MG fire.

The scenario ended with the Germans throwing everything left at me. In the end, they gained very little in their counter attack that I did not first give up. They drove me from the heights overlooking Le Pre Baron, but at Escoville and the woods south of Le Mesnil I retreated before they could do much damage.

PROGRESS & LOSS (FINAL)**Allied losses**

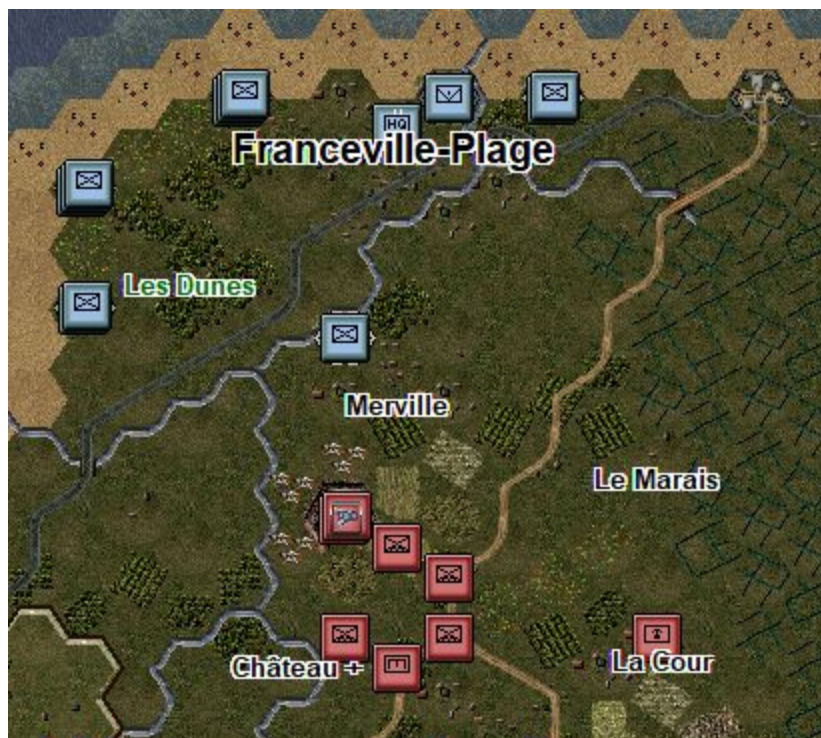
Men 1,915; Guns 20

German losses

Men 1,418; Guns 29; Vehicles 21

Victory

VP 498 - Draw



Franceville-Plage

This threat never materialized and I wonder why. The units seen along the coast are not fixed. They could have posed a serious threat to the troopers at Merville. Perhaps having them attack inland is ahistorical. I do not know.



Escoville

Here is the final view of the main German counterattack. Their prevarication cost them even the chance to take Escoville properly. I did enjoy watching them charge up to the crossroads to dislodge me and destroy my AT. You can see a dense stack of StuGs northeast of Escoville. They charged right into my infantry on the last turn and lost one or two vehicles in the process.



The Canadian AOP

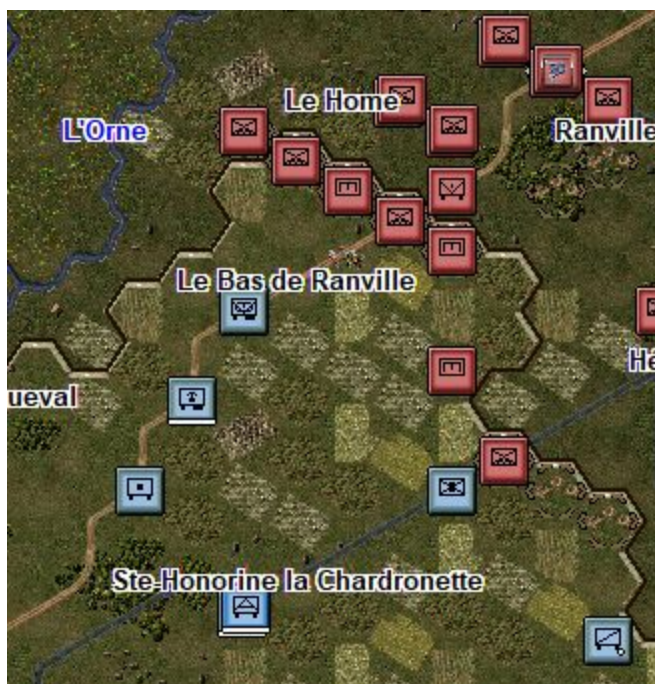
Bures is empty. Almost there, Canada. One more turn and they would have turned this around.

Troarn on the other hand was unrealistic from the start. Even at the end, there are two German platoons, an MG unit and an HQ guarding it.



Pegasus

After the German engineering company disrupted, they never recovered. They continued to bleed me dry but could not gain ground as they were unable to assault. Moving two AT guns to the bridge really helped. They cut down everything on wheels without breaking a sweat.



Ranville sector

Armor and artillery. I managed to destroy a motorized AA unit that strayed too close to my lines but the others kept their distance doing considerable damage via long-range and indirect fire. I now think I should have either

fallen back over the crest or charged them. I feel uneasy at having been so passive.

ALLIED REMAINING TO&E

3rd Brigade

8th btn: 163 men, 9 guns
 9th btn: 266 men, 2 guns
 1st Can: 248 men, 4 guns
 3 Roy Eng: 40 men

5th Brigade

7th btn: 375 men, 2 guns
 12th btn: 247 men, 1 gun
 13th btn: 208 men, 1 gun
 4 AL AT: 9 guns
 591 Roy Eng: 37 men

Misc

22 Ind Para: 40 men
 Glider Reg: 45 men

Total

1,735 men, 22 guns

NOTE: At the beginning of Turn 7, after the last chute opened, I remarked my total strength was 2,528 men and 35 guns.

ASSESSMENTS

PANZER BATTLES

Let me start by saying I had a blast playing this scenario. For the para operations, the Panzer Battles' scale works nicely. I intend to play through all the opening invasion scenarios and write AARs for each, so I hope the smaller scale benefits the beach landings, too.

I came into this scenario having played the Panzer Campaigns Normandy '44. I enjoyed that game but I felt the action missed a lot of important detail. There are a number of stories from those initial days in France where a single tank, infantry or MG platoon fouled up much wider operations.

Likewise, a single tank, infantry or MG platoon created positive situations. This is what the level of Panzer Campaigns misses somewhat and what this offers while maintaining a scale that larger operations can be modeled. I would love to see the battles of Stalingrad, Market Garden, Anzio (and Italy as a whole), Sicily, and Berlin '45 using this engine...just to name a few.

Second, I like the smaller scale because you care more about the numbers. Even in wargames, it is true that large numbers of deaths are just statistics. When a unit has just thirty men and your actions cost five, you feel it. It is so satisfying to open up with a 17-pounder on four armored elements and smoke two of them in a single turn. This is far more fun than larger scales where combat feels like whittling a log. With larger numbers, the casualties effect gameplay more like a changing tide than, here, like a damn breaking.

SCENARIO

Because I knew a strong German counter attack would likely come in the second half of the scenario, I projected more tension into the first half than was warranted by the actual experience. The Germans of the 716. ID and 711. ID are no match for the British and Canadian paratroopers, but they can foul things up.

I definitely made a huge error in not, when facing German companies, recombining my platoons. Doing so in the opening turns would have been difficult. Often it was necessary to respond hastily to new threats with units at hand. Some battalions never managed to sort their companies. However, I could have done it easily with two that mattered: the 13th at Ranville and the 8th who faced the German counter attack. I can't say if it would have helped, but it couldn't have made things worse.

The Pegasus Bridge was particularly fun. I knew I had to capture it right away. Even the slightest German reinforcement of the bridge would prove catastrophic.

Also, I enjoyed the Canadian failed push on Bures. They fought for each and every kilometer. As soon as they cleared one threat, a new would appear. Worst of all, I was able to get a single Canadian platoon adjacent to the objective, and as I suspected, it was empty. One more turn...

Another unsung fun bit was the coastward action. It was fun pondering and planning for what might retreat into our lines heading south. Merville's bunker would not have been taken had the AI not pulled out the AA and artillery stationed there.

What about the 21. PzD? They were mighty and a bunker unto themselves. They chewed up an entire battalion. Could that have been avoided by attacking with full companies? Or are they overpowered? I'm not sure. I can see how an entrenched platoon of grenadiere and MGs in the center of town could stop any advance. Regardless the point about combining my platoons, I did make a mistake in not assaulting right away. It might have completely destroyed the first platoons on the job but I feel the results would have been better. That is what I think cost me the minor victory.

Last, I would like to say something about objectives. I don't know what the reach of the historical objectives were for 6th Airborne. As you can tell from the last few turns, I had no incentive to hold any of my outer lines. Maybe having just a few objectives is better for the AI; however, I would like to see the monolithic objects broken up and the points scattered to some of the smaller points on the map and those somewhat further afield. This is a subjective judgment based on one game and how it developed, I admit. Unless the German AI sat around playing marbles to several turns before attacking (which it might have), the German AI (not necessarily a human player) does not have adequate time to push in much beyond Herouvillette, Ranville and Escoville.

AAR

I haven't written an AAR in ages. It has been on my mind to do one for a while now. I enjoy watching Let's Plays of wargames of which there are sadly few. And for a little while I considered going that route. However, I decided a more traditional route would serve me better. Here I can collect my thoughts and consider what I will do next without the pressure of subjecting an audience to silence.

The format of the AAR changed somewhat over the course of its writing and my playing. I tried to provide a decent mix of pictures, action and my own thoughts, but in going back through it to edit, I get a sense it could use more screenshots--particularly the opening turns. I began writing this in LaTeX. Transferring the screenshots and getting them coded proved too time consuming. By turn 4 or 5 I transitioned to a Google Document. If you have any suggestions for future AARs, please feel free to write. To collect the screenshots and mark them up I used Window's Snipping Tool.

As you can tell, I am far from the perfect player and, frankly, I like to keep it that way. I have always eschewed worrying too much about the equations under the hood. I like the mystery. Don't get me wrong; I don't

want to be an ignorant player, but I find engines get boring once you are able to make the calculations for any given battle in your head.

Since renewing my passion for AARs was inspired by Let's Players, I will offer this comment and excuse. While it is far less prevalent in pure wargame Let's Players of the grognard-type, I have noticed a tendency in strategy-focused Let's Players to put on display their prowess with certain, often triple-A, engines. They play through on the hardest difficulty and rarely lose. In that, there is no mystery. There is no drama. Without the ability to lose and lose completely, there is no story.

For this game, I believe by turn 15 there was little chance for even a minor defeat. However, I did lose my minor victory by two points due to the ferocity of the German counterattack.

I hope you enjoyed this. I did.