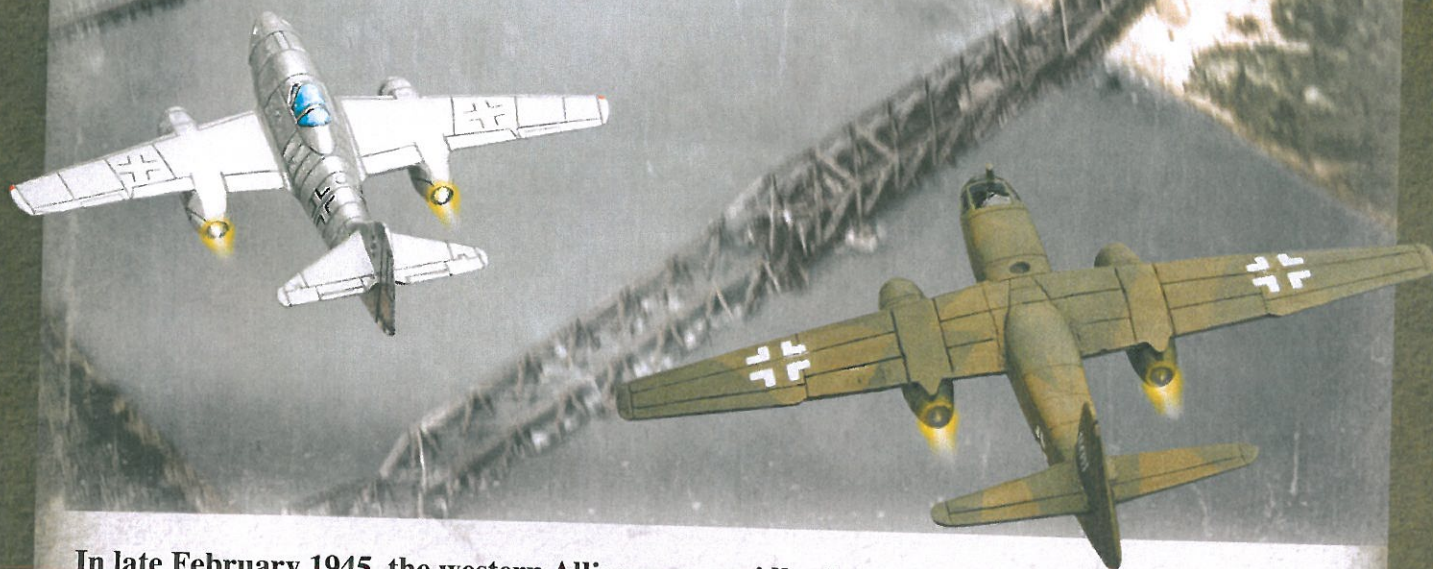


THE BATTLE FOR THE LUDENDORFF BRIDGE

A FLAMES OF WAR SCENARIO

BY MIKE HAUGHT AND DR. MICHAEL MCSWINEY 



In late February 1945, the western Allies were rapidly closing in on the Rhine, the gateway to Germany's heartland. Eisenhower authorized Operation Lumberjack to supplement other operations further north moving forward on a broad front. By 5 March, the American 104th Infantry Division and 3rd Armored Division had secured Köln (Cologne), but as expected, the bridges across the Rhine itself had been destroyed with demolition charges. Intelligence from aerial reconnaissance indicated that there were, however, several intact bridges further south.

NEXT STEPS

With the fall of Köln, the Germans presumed that the city of Bonn would be the next target. Field Marshal Model, commanding Army Group B, allowed various German units to fall back toward the city even though Hitler had insisted that the Westwall fortifications be held to the last man. The Americans, however, had decided to bypass and isolate Bonn and concentrate their forces further south.

DESTINATION: REMAGEN

By 7 March, Combat Command B of the American 9th Armored Division under Brigadier General Hoge entered the city of Remagen. Though the Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen was known to have been standing that morning, it was presumed that the bridge would be demolished as the Americans reached the bridge. However, Task Force Engeman was ordered to push across the bridge if it was intact.

GERMAN SITUATION

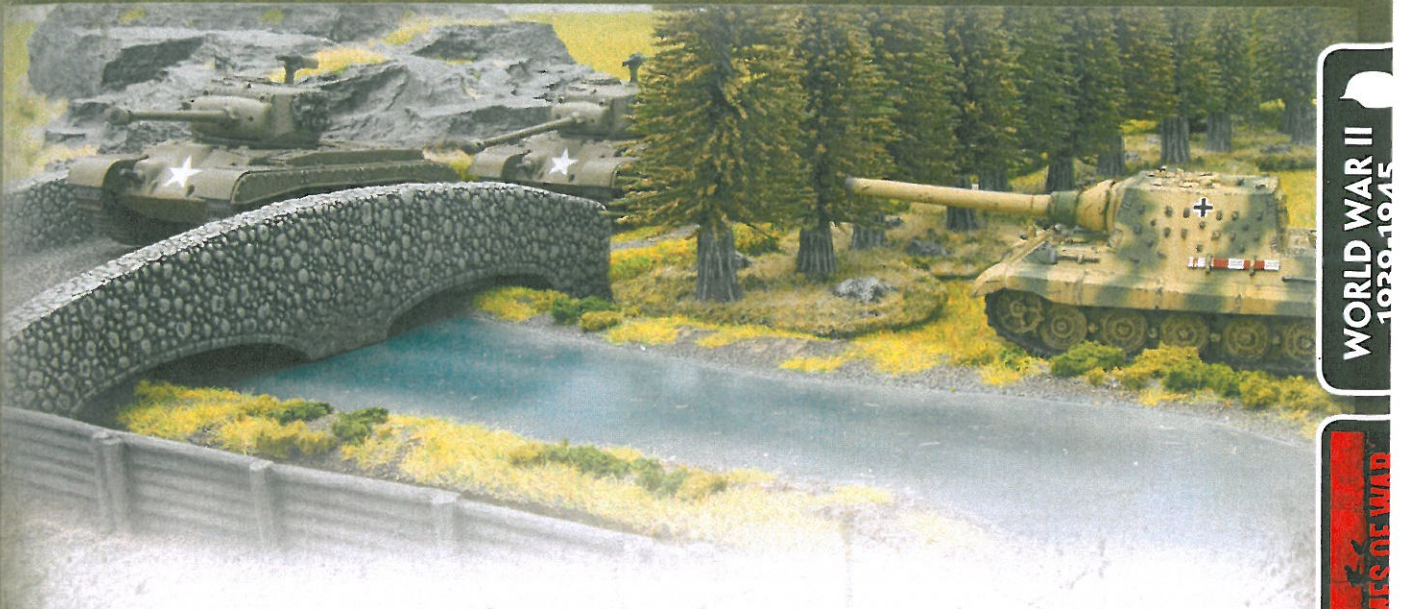
Commanding the overall Remagen sector was General Otto Hitzfeld, who placed Major Hans Scheller in command of Remagen itself. Scheller's orders were to keep the bridge open for as long as possible to ensure Hitzfeld's 67 Corps, which was fighting west of the Rhine, had a clear path back across the river. Scheller didn't arrive at the bridge until 7 March at roughly 1100 hrs - just as American armour was nearing Remagen itself.

As the Germans were not expecting an attack in the vicinity of Remagen, few forces were stationed in the area. The defenders consisted of a few unit-less support troops, three flak batteries on the eastern side of the river, *Volksturm* (People's Militia), Hitler Youth, and a few workers. The bridge itself was wired for demolition, but following normal practice the charges themselves were not placed to prevent accidental detonation.

By order of the previous commander, placement of the charges on the Ludendorff bridge had been started, but was far from complete. With the Americans rapidly approaching the bridge Scheller's subordinates, including Captain Friesenhahn, in command of the bridge itself, recommended immediate demolition of the bridge. Scheller directed that the remaining charges be placed, which took until 1400 hrs. However, by that time American armour and infantry had been pouring into the city for an hour.

THE FIRST SKIRMISH

With the bridge nominally secured, Scheller and Friesenhahn crossed to the west side of the bridge to inspect the city's defences. Upon reaching the west bank they encountered lead elements of the American 27th Armored Infantry Battalion preparing to assault the bridge itself. In response, Friesenhahn



ordered the bridge's western approach demolished. The resulting crater and wreckage closed the bridge to armour, but not infantry.

The German commanders retired to the eastern bank, but the order to destroy the bridge was not immediately given. Finally Scheller gave the order to destroy it at 1520 hrs, but the primary detonation circuit failed.

A company of American infantry commanded by Lt. Karl Timmermann supported by combat engineers was preparing to assault the bridge when a small German unit under *Feldwebel* (Sergeant) Anton Faust detonated the secondary circuit. The secondary circuit damaged but did not destroy the bridge. Realizing that the bridge was still passable, Timmermann ordered his men across.

FIGHT FOR THE BRIDGE

With the Americans coming across, the Germans desperately tried to stem the tide. The eastern approach was defended by two machine gun towers. Flak batteries on the ridge above also tried to engage, but frequently lacked the depression to engage the American

infantry. As the infantry advanced, the American engineers dropped unexploded demolition charges into the river, and armour on the western bank provided fire support against the defending Germans.

Despite intense fire, the Americans reached the far side with only one man wounded. American Sergeant Alex Drabik was officially the first American across the bridge itself and the first onto the eastern bank of the Rhine. Once across, the resistance by the German infantry crumbled, but the Flak towers on the ridge above put up a fight. Taking the ridge resulted in far more casualties than taking the bridge itself.

SECURING THE BRIDGEHEAD

With the Americans firmly across, General Hoge realized the opportunity the intact Ludendorff bridge represented, Hoge sent a now historic message to headquarters:

"We have a bridge intact across the river at Checkpoint 15 [Remagen]. Shall I continue to hold this bridgehead in view of the new mission south? We have one company across at 1610."

Hoge's commander, Major-General Leonard, concurred, cancelled all orders for any further drive south, and ordered the bridge be repaired so armour could cross. The repairs went relatively quickly and the first Sherman tanks crossed the Ludendorff bridge at 0015 hrs on 8 March.

HOLDING THE BRIDGE

The Americans quickly consolidated a bridgehead across the Rhine at Remagen. Field Marshal von Rundstedt was dismissed by Hitler for his failure to hold the Rhine and was replaced by Kesselring.

For over a week, the Germans threw everything they had at the American bridgehead and the Ludendorff Bridge itself, including jet bombers, artillery, V2 rockets, and a direct assault by the heavy tanks of *Schwere Kampfgruppe Hudel*. However, it was too little, too late. The American bridgehead was entrenched. Though the heavily damaged Ludendorff Bridge finally fell into the Rhine on 17 March, by this time the Americans had constructed their own bridges across the Rhine, and the breakout into the heart of Germany was underway within days.



BRIDGE DEMOLITION SCENARIO RULES

In this scenario the bridge is rigged for demolition. It begins the game as an intact bridge and becomes more damaged as the game continues.

During the first three turns the Germans are furiously trying to connect the last wires and prepare the bridge for demolition.

During turns one to three, the bridge remains intact.

DAMAGED!

At the start of German Turn 4, if the German player has a team within 6"/15cm of the bridge, the explosives are detonated and fire and smoke consumes the bridge. However, as the smoke clears, the bridge remains standing!

At the start of German Turn 4, the bridge explodes. Both players immediately roll a die for each Infantry and Man-packed Gun team on the bridge:

- *On a result of 5+ the team somehow manages to survive the blast and remains in play.*
- *Otherwise the team is immediately Destroyed.*

All other teams on the bridge that are not Infantry or Man-packed Gun teams are immediately Destroyed.

Remove the intact bridge and replace it with a damaged version (or otherwise mark that it is damaged). The bridge is rated Difficult Going to all teams trying to cross it.

AS THE DUST SETTLES

As the dust settles, the Germans spend a few moments trying to figure out how to finish the demolition, while the Americans regroup and push forward, wary of a second explosion.

The bridge remains damaged during turns five and six.

DESTROYED!

At the start of German Turn 7, if the German player has a team within 6"/15cm of the bridge, the secondary explosives are detonated and bridge is utterly destroyed and collapses into the Rhine.

All teams on the bridge are immediately Destroyed.

Remove the damaged bridge and replace it with a destroyed version (or otherwise mark that it is destroyed). The bridge is rated Impassable to all teams except for Infantry and Man-packed Gun teams that treat the wreckage as Slow Going instead.

DELAYING DEMOLITION

If the German player does not have a team within 6"/15cm of the bridge on turns 4 or 7, the demolition process is delayed to the following turn and so on until the game ends or the bridge is destroyed.

HASTENING DEMOLITION

Starting on German Turn 5, if the German player has a team within

6"/15cm of the centre of the bridge, they may attempt to manually detonate the bridge's explosives.

At the start of the German turn, after any Company Morale Checks, the German player rolls a die:

- *On a result of 6 the German player manually detonates the secondary explosion and the bridge is utterly destroyed and collapses into the Rhine. (Follow the procedure described in Destroyed! above.)*
- *Otherwise, the German player fails to detonate the secondary explosions and will have to try again next turn.*

BOMBING THE BRIDGE

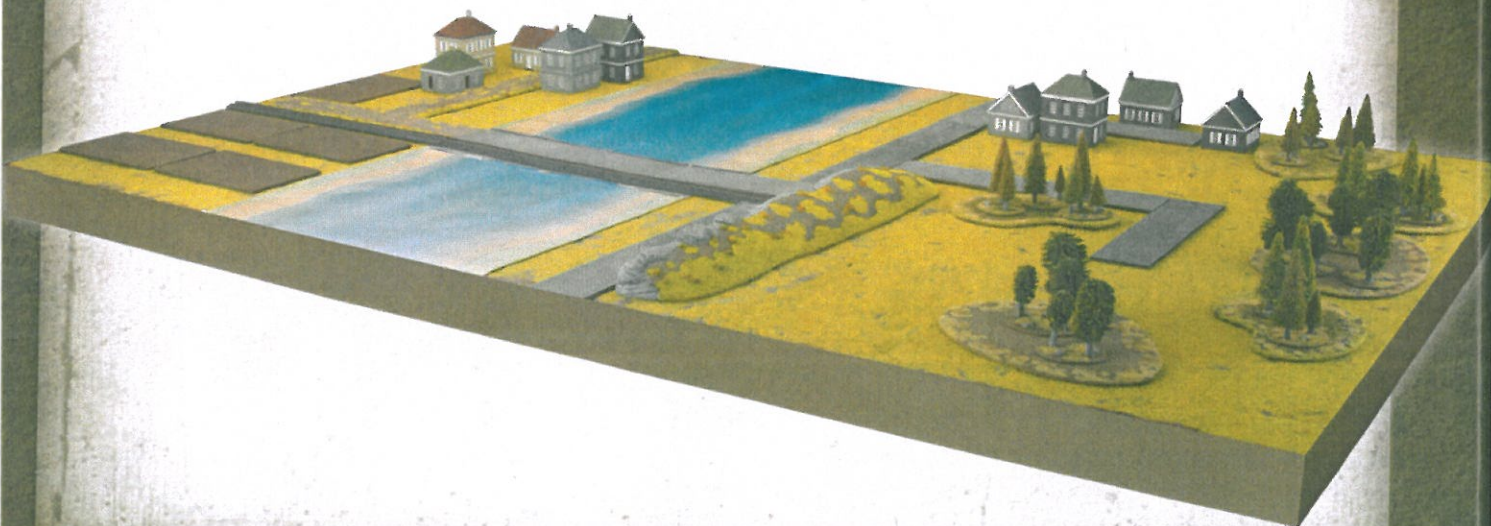
Starting on the German Turn 7, the German player may attack the bridge with Arado 234 B aircraft. The aiming point is the centre of the bridge.

A successful Hit from the Arado sets off a secondary explosion. The bridge is utterly destroyed and collapses into the Rhine. (Follow the procedure described in Destroyed! above.)

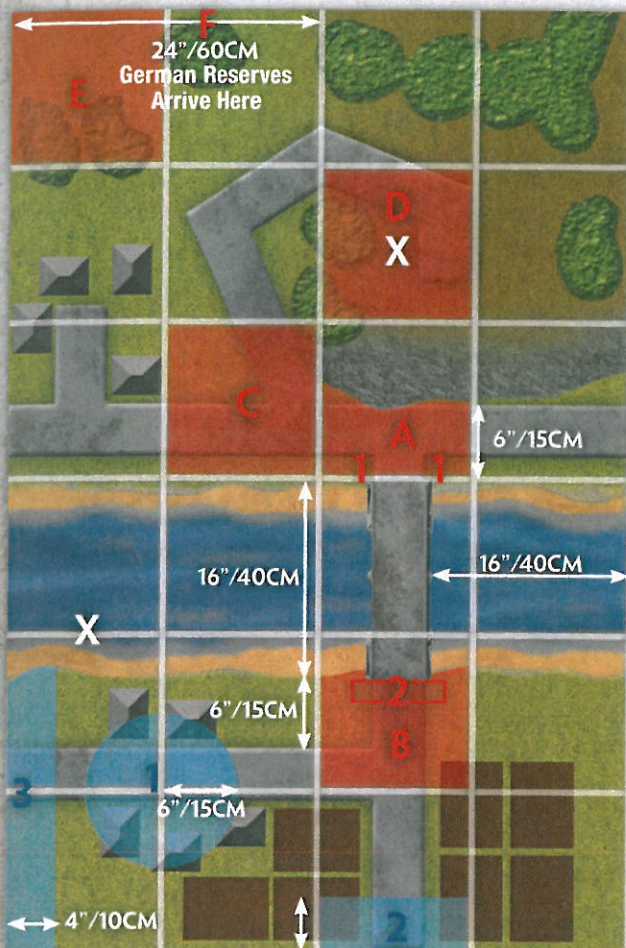
If unsuccessful, the Arado must try again next turn.

A RACE AGAINST TIME

TURN	DEMOLITION	EFFECT
4	Damaged!	Replace bridge with a damaged version.
7	Destroyed!	Replace bridge with a destroyed version.



BRIDGE AT REMAGEN SCENARIO



The Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen is one of the last remaining crossings over the Rhine. Expecting it to be demolished, a US task force has discovered it remains intact. A hasty attack is launched to secure the vital crossing, while the German defenders scramble to demolish it before the Americans can get across.

BRIDGE AT REMAGEN SCENARIO RULES

The Bridge at Remagen scenario uses the **Bridge Demolition** (see previous page), **Major River Crossing** (see below), **Prepared Positions** (page 264 of the rulebook), and **Delayed Reserves** (page 269 of the rulebook) special rules.

YOUR ORDERS

US TASK FORCE

The bridge at Remagen still stands. We must take it quickly before the Germans can demolish it! You must capture the bridge and secure the far side so that we can pour reinforcements across into the German heartland.

GERMAN BRIDGE DEFENDERS

The Americans are here! After days of trying to keep the bridge open to let the last of our comrades across, it must not be allowed to fall into enemy hands. Crush the American task force and demolish the bridge as quickly as possible!

PREPARING FOR BATTLE

Set up the terrain as shown on the scenario map to the left.

1. Place an Objective at both points marked X.
2. The German player deploys the two HMG nests at the points marked 1 and the Anti-tank obstacle at the point marked 2.
3. The German player now places their forces on the map as described in the German Scenario Force on page 25.
4. The German player holds their designated platoons in Delayed Reserve.
5. The American player now places their forces on the map as described in the US Scenario Force on page 24.

BEGINNING THE BATTLE

1. The German player's teams start the game in Prepared Positions.
2. The US player has the first turn.

ENDING THE BATTLE

The battle ends when either:

- the US player holds any of the objectives at the start of their turn,
- OR**
- the German player starts any of their turns from turn six with no attacking teams on the defender's side of the river.

DECIDING WHO WON

The US wins if the game ended because they started one of their turns holding an objective. They have captured the bridge and established a perimeter. Reinforcements are on the way!

Otherwise, the Germans win. The American task force has failed to secure the bridge, which has been demolished. The Germans can now fortify the Rhine and hold out against the Allied offensives.

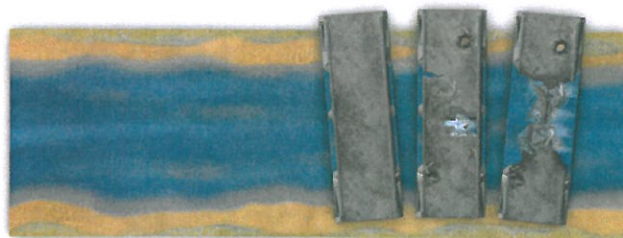
RIVER AND BRIDGES MAT SET

Contains:

- River Mat, measuring 48"x16" / 120cm x 40cm
- Intact Bridge Mat, measuring 6"x16" / 15cm x 40cm
- Damaged Bridge Mat, measuring 6"x16" / 15cm x 40cm
- Destroyed Bridge Mat, measuring 6"x16" / 15cm x 40cm

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US SCENARIO FORCE

TASK FORCE ENGEMAN: 27TH ARMORED RIFLE BATTALION, 9TH ARMORED DIVISION

CONFIDENT VETERAN

TASK FORCE LEAD ELEMENTS

Platoons from the Task Force Lead Elements are deployed within the designated areas as marked on the scenario map.

- Armored Rifle Company HQ (Dismounted) with one Company Command Carbine team and one 2iC Command Carbine team (deployed within 6"/15cm of **1**).
- Armored Rifle Platoon (Dismounted) with one Command Rifle team, five Rifle teams, five Bazooka teams, two M1919 LMG teams, one M2 60mm Mortar team (deployed within 6"/15cm of **1**).
- Heavy Tank Platoon with one Command M26 Pershing and one M26 Pershing (deployed within 4"/10cm of the table edge marked **2**).

TASK FORCE BACK UP

Task Force Back Up platoons are deployed within 4"/10cm of the table edge marked **3**.

- Armored Rifle Platoon (Dismounted) with one Command Rifle team, five Rifle teams, five Bazooka teams, two M1919 LMG teams, one M2 60mm Mortar team (deployed at **3**).
- Recon Platoon (Dismounted) with one Command Rifle team and two Rifle teams (deployed at **3**).
- Medium Tank Platoon with one Command M4A3E8 Sherman (Easy Eight), one M4A3E8 Sherman (Easy Eight), and two M4A3 (late) Sherman (deployed at **3**).
- Engineer Combat Platoon with one Command Pioneer Rifle team, four Pioneer Rifle teams, two Pioneer M1917 HMG teams, and one M4 Sherman Dozer (deployed at **3**).
- Anti-aircraft Artillery (Self-propelled) Platoon with one Command M16 MGMC (Quad .50 cal) and one M15 CGMC (37mm) (deployed at **3**).





GERMAN SCENARIO FORCE

REMAGEN AND LUDENDORFF BRIDGE DEFENDERS

RELUCTANT TRAINED

BRIDGE DEFENDERS

Platoons from the Bridge Defenders are deployed within the designated areas as marked on the scenario map.

- Bridge Defense Force HQ with one Company Command Panzerfaust SMG team and one 2iC Command Panzerfaust SMG team (deployed within the 12"/30cm box marked **A**, excluding the portion containing the hill), and two Sniper teams.
- Volksgrenadier Platoon with one Command Panzerfaust SMG team, six Panzerfaust Rifle/MG teams (deployed within the 12"/30cm box marked **A**, excluding the portion containing the hill).
- Volkssturm Platoon with one Command Panzerfaust Rifle team, six Panzerfaust Rifle teams (deployed within the 12"/30cm box marked **B**, excluding the portion containing the bridge).

RELUCTANT CONSCRIPT

- Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (3.7cm FlaK43) with Command SMG team and eight 3.7cm FlaK43 anti-aircraft guns in Gun Pits (deployed within the 12"/30cm box marked **C**).
- Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (2cm FlaK38) with Command SMG team and eight 2cm FlaK38 anti-aircraft guns in Gun Pits (deployed within the 12"/30cm box marked **D**).
- Volks Artillery Battery with Command SMG team, Staff team, and six 10.5cm leFH18/40 howitzers (deployed within the 12"/30cm box marked **E**).
- Ludendorff Bridge Fortifications two HMG nests (deployed at **1**) and one anti-tank obstacle (deployed at **2**).
- Sporadic Air Support with Arado 234 B

DELAYED RESERVES - SCHWERE PANZERKAMPFGRUPPE HUDEL

Platoons held in Delayed Reserves will arrive along the table edge marked **F**.

- 506. Schwere Panzer Platoon with one Command Königstiger (Henschel)
- 654. Schwere Panzerjäger Platoon with one Command Jagdpanther and one Jagdpanther
- 512. Schwere Panzerjäger Platoon with one Command Jagdtiger

RELUCTANT VETERAN

RELUCTANT VETERAN

RELUCTANT TRAINED



RIVER CROSSING MISSION

Forced river crossings were common operations during World War II. Using the scenario above as a template, here is a generic River Crossing Mission for you to use with any of your *Flames Of War* forces. This mission can represent your Polish paratroopers crossing the Rhine to

relieve the British 1st Airborne Division during Operation Market Garden, or Patton's Third Army crossing the Moselle in 1944. It could form the basis of a Soviet crossing of the Vistula or the Oder on the Eastern Front as they grind their way to Berlin in 1945. You can

use it with your early or mid war forces to represent the crossing of the Somme by the German blitzkrieg in 1940 or the battles for the crossings over the Dnieper in 1942.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Major rivers, such as the Rhine, are serious obstacles to an advancing army. They are very wide and deep, making them impossible to cross without considerable preparation and careful execution. Crossing a large river in *Flames Of War* is a unique event and requires a few special rules to help reflect the nature of forced crossing operations.

When crossing a major river, such as the Rhine, use the following rules rather than the standard Crossing Rivers rules in the rulebook (see page 56).

MAJOR RIVERS

In *Flames Of War*, a major River is defined as one that is more than 8"/20cm across.

A major River is Impassable to all teams.

ASSAULT BOATS

A major River is normally Impassable. However, Infantry and Man-packed Gun teams can use assault boats to cross Impassable Rivers that are 12"/30cm wide or more. To do so, an Infantry or Man-packed Gun team must begin its Movement Step square against the edge of the River.

IN THE RIVER

In the Movement Step the team moves directly into the River and ends its movement in the middle of the River to show that it is in the process of crossing.

NO SHOOTING OR ASSAULTING

While crossing the River, teams may not shoot, move, assault, or be assaulted, and take no part in any assault happening around them.

SITTING DUCKS

Teams cannot be Concealed in the Open or Gone to Ground while in the River. The exception to this is that Smoke markers have their normal effect of making teams seen through them Concealed and Gone to Ground (see pages 107 and 137 of the rulebook).

Teams crossing a River do not have their normal Infantry or Gun Save. Instead, roll a die for each hit:

- *If the result is 5+, the team manages to avoid any casualties despite their exposed position.*
- *Otherwise, the team has been cut down during the crossing and is Destroyed.*

PIONEERS

Pioneer Infantry teams ignore the Sitting Ducks rule, and retain their normal 3+ Infantry Saves.

TO THE FAR BANK

A team that has spent its previous turn In the River, now moves directly across the

River and ends its movement touching the opposite bank.

If crossing to the opposite bank would put the team within 2"/5cm of an enemy team, the team cannot move to the opposite bank. The team must wait until the enemy is cleared from the far bank to complete its crossing in a subsequent turn.

LANDING ON THE OTHER SIDE

In the turn after moving to the far bank, a team that starts its Movement Step touching the far bank completes its crossing. The team moves as normal from its landing point on the River bank.

AMPHIBIOUS VEHICLES

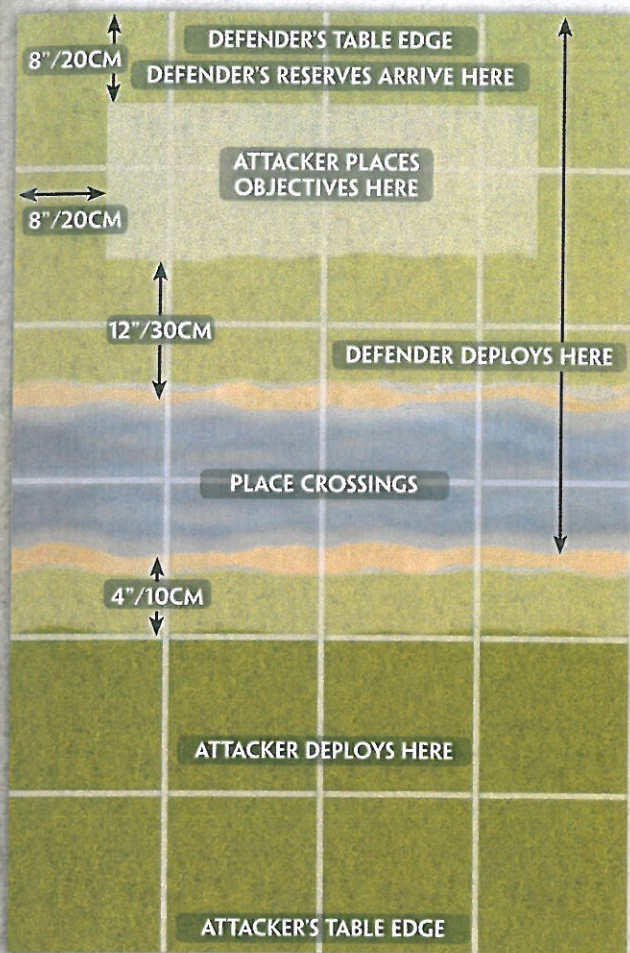
Amphibious vehicles are built for this very type of operation. As such they do not have to begin their Movement Step adjacent to the River and can proceed to enter it straight away (remember, they still treat it as Difficult Going and must take the required Bogging Check when entering the River).

SO, WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

You might be wondering what makes this sort of crossing different to the normal one found on page 56 of the rulebook. Basically your troops crossing the river will spend an extra turn, for a total of three, in the river while trying to cross, rather than two.

RIVER CROSSING MISSION

(DEFENSIVE BATTLE)



Battles to take and retake river crossings were a regular occurrence on both the Eastern and Western Fronts. Although some were well-planned and executed operations, others became vicious ad hoc fights based on circumstance.

MAJOR RIVER CROSSING

If you are using a major River (one that is more than 8"/20cm wide), River Crossing uses the **Major River Crossing** (see previous page), **Prepared Positions** (page 264 of the rulebook), and **Delayed Reserves** (page 269 of the rulebook) special rules.

YOUR ORDERS

ATTACKER

Your company has been ordered to secure a river crossing and establish a bridgehead on the other side.

DEFENDER

The enemy is expected to assault your positions and attempt to force a bridgehead across the river. You must hold the river until reinforcements arrive.

PREPARING FOR BATTLE

1. Set up the terrain with a river running from one long edge to the other near the centre of the table.
2. Place a single one-lane road or rail bridge or Very Difficult Going ford for each 24"/60cm to 36"/90cm of table width and at least 12"/30cm apart.
3. The defender decides which short end of the table they will defend.
4. The attacker places three objectives on the defender's side of the river no closer than 12"/30cm to the river's edge and at least 8"/20cm from all table edges.
5. The defender nominates at least half their platoons to be held off the table in Reserve (if this is a Normal River Crossing) or Delayed Reserves (if this is a Major River Crossing).

6. The defender places their remaining platoons in their deployment area, which extends from 4"/10cm beyond the river's edge back towards the defender's end of the table.
7. The attacker now removes one of the objectives.
8. The attacker Deploys all of their platoons on their side of the river at least 8"/20cm from any defending platoons.

BEGINNING THE BATTLE

1. Both sides start the game in Prepared Positions.
2. Starting with the Defender, both players make Reconnaissance Deployment moves for any Recce teams they have on the table. Teams cannot enter or cross the river in this movement.
3. The attacking player has the first turn.

ENDING THE BATTLE

The battle ends when either:

- the attacking player holds any of the objectives at the start of their turn.
- OR**
- the defending player starts any of their turns from turn six with no attacking teams on the defender's side of the river.

DECIDING WHO WON

The attacker wins if the game ended because they started one of their turns holding an objective. They have broken the defensive position and secured a bridgehead over the river.

Otherwise the defender wins. The attack has been beaten and the defender can now prepare their counter stroke.

Calculate your Victory Points using the Victory Points Table on p.275 of the rulebook.