

NORMANDY TO THE RHINE



TOAW-IV

NORMANDY TO THE RHINE

START DATE: July 10th, 1944

MAP SCALE: 5-km

TIME UNIT: Half-Week

UNIT SCALE: Regiment/Brigade/Battalion

LENGTH: 75 Turns

TOAW-IV - V 4.1.0.40 – PBEM

“The unequal struggle is approaching its end...”

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, teletype to Führerhauptquartiere, 15th July 1944

“This thing has busted wide open...”

Major General Leland S. Hobbs, message to US VII Corps Tactical HQ, 26th July 1944

Normandy to the Rhine is a what-if scenario covering the North-West Europe campaign of 1944-45. It pits a historically accurate SHAEF against a hypothetical OB-West force.

Turn-1 deployments are based on the recommendations Field Marshals Rommel and Von Rundstedt presented to Adolf Hitler as the Normandy Campaign turned against Germany.

Opponents can explore hypothetical approaches to the classic breakout-and-pursuit evolution of the historic campaign:

- Can SHAEF achieve its historic mission if opposed by a more competently organized, cohesive, and freely deployable OB-West?
- Can OB-West, freed of Hitler’s meddling and hold-at-all-costs mantra, hold the Allies inside France, thus compromising Allied unity with respect to President Roosevelt’s Unconditional Surrender formula?

As the SHAEF commander, the Allied player confronts a more challenging opponent than General Eisenhower faced. OB-West has been allowed to withdraw from its exposed positions in Normandy and is freed from Hitler’s incessant operational-level meddling.

For the OB-West commander, units of the Heer and Waffen-SS reorganize in a manner consistent with early-war Ersatzheer doctrine. **The resulting hypothetical force is no larger than the one the Germans actually deployed, but is modified in composition and reinforcement schedule. As a result, it maintains potentially greater cohesion.**

The scenario blends realism with plausible alternate history.

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PBEM RULES PRIMER

The following comprises a PBEM rules primer of those rules recommended for human-versus-human play in *Normandy to the Rhine*:

1. TOAW's Air Staff Assistant should be turned off (**Menu->Play->Player Options**).
2. With the exception of Allied Strategic Bomber units, the mission assignments of SHAEF's air forces must be set either as per their scenario start missions (i.e., Turn 1) or to 'REST'. **They may not be manually assigned to attack individual target hexes.**
3. Only SHAEF's US IX Fighter Command, RAF 83rd, and RAF 84th Group air units may conduct transfer missions between friendly-controlled airfields during the scenario.
4. When SHAEF Strategic Bomber units are activated (via the available Theater Options), they may only be used for direct bombardment of individual target hexes for a SINGLE combat round (of any duration) within each single turn of their use.
5. SHAEF may receive up to ten Port Opening theater options. A maximum of five of these (ONLY) may be exercised during the scenario.
6. SHAEF may undertake a maximum of two Amphibious Assaults throughout the scenario, commencing on turn 15 to the end of the scenario – **refer to detailed rules, page 14.**
7. Units of SHAEF's airborne formations may each conduct a maximum of three airborne assaults per scenario – **refer to detailed rules, page 16.**
8. Units that participate in airborne or amphibious assaults **must commence the turn of their air or sea movement in Britain** and have achieved 100% supplied status.
9. SHAEF units are free to return to Britain via sea movement, and deployed US and British airborne units must return to Britain to participate in airborne operations, but there are limits on which units may conduct amphibious operations – **refer to detailed rules, page 14.**
10. Reflecting the heavily bombed state of the French rail network of Northern France, a modest SHAEF rail capacity **commences on turn 16.**
11. OB-West units may use their limited Sea Transport capacity to move units between friendly-controlled port hexes **above hex-row 84 only.**
12. On turn 33, the OB-West player will receive a theater option denoted "German Offensive." If exercised, this provides three turns of increased OB-West force supply.

SCENARIO PREMISE

Concerned at alarming situation reports from Normandy, Hitler met with Field Marshals Rommel and Von Rundstedt at the Führer's French headquarters, Wolfsschlucht II, near the ancient French town of Soissons on June 17th, 1944.

Rommel had telegraphed warnings of imminent German collapse along the Invasion Front, where increasing Allied pressure raised grave concerns. According to Rommel, Hitler's insistence on massed German counterattacks was misguided in the face of Allied air superiority and naval gunfire. Heeresgruppe B was being ground into the Norman chalk.

Faced with an obvious military imbalance, Rommel proposed that OB-West withdraw behind the Orne River. Beyond this, the younger Field Marshal boldly proposed that Hitler approve defensive works along the Seine and prepare to abandon Brittany and the Channel Islands.

Rommel's view? The Allies would simply bypass those well-defended ports they didn't need.

Not renowned for supporting his younger subordinate, the aging Field Marshal went bravely further, advocating that Germany abandon North-Western France entirely, with a withdrawal to delaying positions along the Loire and the Seine. From such new positions, von Rundstedt asserted that OB-West might maximize Allied casualties and give Germany time to restore the Westwall, a barrier of uncertain military value, sitting mostly abandoned.

His Marshal's positions were supported at Margival in part or in whole by all present save Hitler, whose reaction was the by-now predictable refusal to heed their advice. There was nothing new in this; the Führer simply reverted to his insistent "hold-at-all-costs" mantra that had frustrated the Wehrmacht's operational freedom since the Battle for Moscow.

In a private moment, Hitler curtly ordered Rommel to focus on the Invasion Front.

The two field marshals met Hitler again at Berchtesgaden on June 29th, in the confronting setting of a Führerhauptquartiere dominated by the dire news of Army Group Center, which was in headlong retreat in Byelorussia. News of the loss of Cherbourg and the blunting of an SS Panzer Korps attack along the Odon could not ease the tension. Once again, his Western marshals urged withdrawal and consolidation behind barriers away from the coast, where it might be possible to nullify the Allies' marked naval and air superiority.

Once again, von Rundstedt and Rommel came away with nothing beyond 'hold fast.'

Von Rundstedt and Rommel's strategic advice govern the hypothetical setting for the assumed German strategy within *Normandy to the Rhine*.

SCENARIO ASSUMPTIONS

Several key assumptions allow us to model the hypothetical parameters of *Normandy to the Rhine*:

1. Visibly shaken by Wehrmacht reverses on the Eastern Front and intelligence reports pointing to imminent Allied landings in Southern France, Hitler reluctantly accepts Von Rundstedt's strategic recommendations.
2. A conciliatory Führer Directive of June 30th arrives at OB-West Headquarters. This acknowledges the potential for a second Allied landing to outflank OB-West in northern France and endorses a planned withdrawal to improve the strategic position. Crucially, it delegates operational matters to OB-West, with von Rundstedt authorized to conduct strategic maneuver, provided all such actions are consistent with:
 - i. Avoiding being outflanked,
 - ii. Ensuring the integrity of the Reich's western approaches, while
 - iii. Creating conditions in which the Western Allies might relax President Roosevelt's unconditional surrender edict.
3. Armed with this new authority, OB-West acts decisively, ordering:
 - i. A coordinated and staged withdrawal from the Normandy Front,
 - ii. Immediate evacuation of all Wehrmacht units from Brittany, the Channel Islands, South-Western and Southern France,
 - iii. The transfer of units of Heeresgruppe G, required to seal off potential Allied crossings into the Ligurian Alps (i.e., units historically transferred to the remarkably successful German-Italian Armee Ligurian).
 - iv. The comprehensive blocking and destruction of all significant ports and related transport infrastructure in Western Europe (mirroring the historic destruction achieved at Brest and Cherbourg).
4. A supplementary Führer Directive of July 3rd orders immediate conversion of the Reich to a "Total War" economy, accompanied by substantive military reforms, including:
 - v. Ruthless standardization of military production in proven designs, with emphasis on the rehabilitation of Panzer, Motorized, and Jagdgeschwader formations,
 - vi. Reinstatement of the Ersatzheer as the central force-sustainment organization of the Heer, with a return to the early-war TO&E, formation, and training,
 - vii. Absorption of all non-essential SS, Heer, Kriegsmarine, and Luftwaffe ancillary military and paramilitary forces into the replacement pool of the Heer,

- viii. Strict standardization of divisional TO&E, into the triangular structure that prevailed in the early war years, combined with orders to commence rebuilding formations to their authorized strengths.

The impact of these assumptions will be felt throughout the scenario, generally boosting OB-West's prospects relative to historic patterns.

Designer's Note: Keen students of military history will note that the scenario's assumption of the drastic standardization of divisional TO&E removes the historically failed expedients of Volksgrenadier Divisions and Panzer brigades from the scenario's German OoB.

The trade-off of this hypothetical reorganization is that the OB-West player's reinforcements arrive later than their historical arrival dates, reflecting the assumption that German leadership commits to early-war TO&E and training doctrines. **Most arriving formations will be delayed by four to six turns compared to their historic arrival.**

While OB-West grows no larger than its historical composition, the OB-West player commands a more cohesive force and enjoys operational freedoms denied to Hitler's commanders throughout the war.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Victory from Normandy to the Rhine is based on a combination of the number of objectives occupied and relative force losses. In most cases, victory will be determined at the end of the scenario.

SHAEF's task is to liberate objectives on dates that approximate those achieved historically, while inflicting losses on OB-West and avoiding unacceptable losses itself.

OB-West's task is to defend against a SHAEF advance into Germany, while inflicting losses and preserving its own forces.

All objectives are located east of the German Westwall fortifications and are distributed on BOTH sides of the Rhine River.

Players should note that SHAEF is unlikely to achieve victory in *Normandy to the Rhine* without capturing at least some objectives located to the east of the Rhine.

If SHAEF occupies all the objectives on the western side of the Rhine, it is possible to achieve victory, but this is unlikely without SHAEF incurring excessive losses on OB-West.

Sudden-death victory conditions can arise if the SHAEF player fails to occupy at least some of the objective locations before the end of December 1944 (Turn 50).

The following table summarises objective-only (i.e., ignoring loss penalties) victory points:

SHAEF VP	OB-West VP	Differential	RESULT
0–199	1,000–801	-1,000 to -602	OB-West overwhelming victory
200–299	800–701	-600 to -402	OB-West significant victory
300–399	700–601	-400 to -202	OB-West marginal victory
400–599	600–401	-200 to +198	Draw
600–699	400–301	+200 to +398	SHAEF marginal victory
700–799	300–201	+400 to +598	SHAEF significant victory
800–1,000	200–0	+600 to +1,000	SHAEF overwhelming victory

Scenario objective allocation: 1,000 VP total — 400 VP in Germany west of the Rhine and 600 VP east of the Rhine.

Accordingly, a SHAEF score of 400 VP broadly represents possession of all western German objectives, while a SHAEF marginal victory requires meaningful penetration east of the Rhine.

Designer's Note: In *Normandy to the Rhine*, TOAW's Attrition Divider has been set at 30 with a view to striking a balance between territorial achievement and battlefield losses.

VICTORY PREMISE

Three months prior to D-Day, President Roosevelt received a memorandum from the Allied Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) expressing concern at his demand for Germany's unconditional surrender. The memorandum asserted that the President's doctrine "enabled the Nazis to invoke the specter of annihilation and thus has stiffened the German will to resist."

While Unconditional Surrender had its supporters, few of those tasked with bringing about Germany's defeat shared the President's enthusiasm for the clause. In fact, senior figures outside the JCS thought it unnecessarily inflexible, including General Eisenhower, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and the architect of the U.S. Victory Program, General Albert Wedemeyer.

Prominent British detractors included advisers to Prime Minister Churchill: Chief of British Intelligence, Sir Stewart Graham Menzies, Air Marshall Sir John Slessor, and the Prime Minister's senior diplomatic advisor, Lord Hankey¹.

The English historian, Michael Balfour, writing in 1970, asserted that “every senior American except Roosevelt” was thought to have “doubted its wisdom.”²

While the President saw the doctrine as underpinning Allied unity and deterring Soviet unilateralism, it carried the risk of strengthening German resolve at a time when military defeats threatened to weaken it. Worse, Nazi exploitation of the policy could serve to harden the resolve of the Wehrmacht, whose leaders it might encourage to fight on alongside Hitler's inner circle, who could discern no obvious option save to gamble, risking Götterdämmerung.

And exploiting it to Nazism's advantage was precisely what Josef Goebbels elected to do.

While *Normandy to the Rhine* explores the purely military equation of whether a more cohesively organised OB-West could have stopped the Allies before or near the Westwall, it is clear that by 1944, Germany had run out of realistic military or political options. OB-West could only play for time and hope that one of Germany's opponents might offer an 11th-hour negotiated settlement.

As fanciful as this hopeful calculus might seem,³ Roosevelt did come under military and diplomatic pressure after D-Day, with calls to modify the presentation and psychological impact of unconditional surrender⁴ in order to weaken German resolve and encourage the separation of the Wehrmacht from the Nazi regime. In the event, by late 1944, with the Allies having advanced deep inside Germany, the policy had hardened into accepted wisdom, and steadily, even sceptics increasingly treated it as an immovable political constraint.

The victory premise for *Normandy to the Rhine* is therefore based not on whether German arms could ultimately prevail, averting the looming disaster of Götterdämmerung, but on whether the Joint Chiefs could have prevailed upon President Roosevelt to relax or modify unconditional surrender. In effect, the OB-West player in *Normandy to the Rhine* is trading space and time for the receipt of surrender terms acceptable to the German General Staff.

¹ See Fleming, T. *Unconditional Surrender, The Policy that Prolonged World War II*, New Word City, 2011.

² Balfour, M. *Another Look at 'Unconditional Surrender.'* *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) Vol. 46, No. 4 (Oct. 1970). Oxford University Press.

³ By September 1944, U.S. policymakers had formally approved the German unconditional-surrender instrument through the European Advisory Commission process.

⁴ Foreign Relations of the United States, [Diplomatic Papers, 1944, General, Volume I](#), and Hassell & Macrae, [Unconditional Surrender: Questioning FDR's Prerequisite for Peace](#).



SHAEF

“...the rate at which the small American Army of only a few hundred thousand men, not long before the war, created the mighty force of millions of soldiers is a wonder in military history”.

Winston Churchill, speech to US forces chiefs, Washington DC, 1946

While the Wehrmacht force in *Normandy to the Rhine* has been reorganized and its combat potential enhanced, SHAEF formations generally follow their historic order-of-battle, both at scenario start and within the subsequent reinforcement schedule.

SHAEF TURN-1 DEPLOYMENTS

Allied units commence the scenario deployed in their approximate positions on July 10th, 1944, with their historical strength and supply approximated.

Units of British 2nd Army that historically participated in Operation Charnwood commence the scenario at slightly reduced readiness levels and with lower supply than neighboring units. This is to reflect their participation in Field Marshal Montgomery’s effort to secure the Norman capital, Caen.

The German 12. SS-Panzer-Division “Hitlerjugend” and 16. Luftwaffen-Feld-Division are both assumed to have retired from the northern suburbs of Caen *prior* to the opening of Charnwood, with the 12. SS having withdrawn from Normandy entirely. As a result, the SHAEF player controls all of the hexes above the Orne River at Caen, with British and Commonwealth units deployed accordingly.

Units of the US 1st Army that had been engaged in the “Battle of the Hedgerows” (the “July Offensive”) commence the scenario with similarly reduced readiness and supply levels.

In both the British and US sectors, German forces commence the scenario in a significantly weakened state, with most intact units having been withdrawn. In some sections of the front, the Germans have withdrawn from exposed positions (e.g. St Lo), and in others, Kampfgruppen, deployed as rear-guards, are all that remains to limit SHAEF gains.

Allied intelligence, including Ultra decrypts and aerial reconnaissance, has identified long traffic jams of Wehrmacht vehicles heading east along major and minor routes exiting Normandy. These long lines marking the cream of the Wehrmacht’s strength are observed to converge on known crossings of the Seine.

ALLIED TACTICAL AIR FORCES

Allied airpower in *Normandy to the Rhine* is modeled to balance scenario realism with the limits of the TOAW system.

To ensure scenario balance, the SHAEF player must adhere to the following PBEM rules:

1. With the exception of Allied Strategic Bomber units (see below), no SHAEF air unit may conduct individual player-determined ground or airfield attacks.
2. With the exception of 'REST' mission orders, which may be in force at any time, units of the SHAEF's air forces must maintain their 1st-turn mission orders throughout the scenario, with TOAW's Air Staff Assistant left to allocate mission orders as follows:
 - a. US VIII Fighter Command – **Air Superiority**
 - b. US IX Fighter Command – **Combat Support**
 - c. RAF 83rd Group – **Combat Support**
 - d. RAF 84th Group – **Combat Support**
 - e. RAF 2nd Group – **Interdiction**
 - f. US IX Bombardment Command – **Interdiction**
3. Units of SHAEF's US IX Fighter Command and RAF 83rd and 84th Group air units (only) may transfer freely between friendly-controlled airfields, subject to then reverting to the Air Staff Assistant mission orders as outlined in clauses 1 and 2.

ALLIED STRATEGIC BOMBER UNITS

SHAEF has SIX theatre options that, when triggered, make Allied Strategic Bomber units available for use in the scenario *on the following turn*.

Three options release USAAF heavy bomber units, while a further three release RAF bombers only. The SHAEF player may select any release they deem necessary for the bombardment purpose in mind, bearing in mind that combined RAF and USAAF operations hold the greatest bombardment potential through sheer force of numbers.

The heavies can be identified by their bomber-unit silhouettes.

When activated, Strategic Bomber units may ONLY be used for direct bombardment of specific target hexes for a SINGLE combat round within the turn of their deployment. They may NOT be used in support mode (i.e., denoted "S"), nor may they be used for interdiction missions.

Designer's Note: Heavy bomber units were repeatedly called upon to commit their payloads in the role of airborne artillery throughout the Northwest Europe Campaign. This was contentious, since air force planners and the senior leadership of both the RAF and the

USAAF held strong opinions about the optimal use of strategic bombers. Only General Eisenhower's direct intervention proved sufficient to divert the bombers from their strategic purpose.

While Allied airpower dominated Western battlefields, Allied air force commanders were extremely critical of generals who proved unable to exploit the advantages gained by those risking their lives in the air; hence, Allied ground commanders were never able to secure support for heavy bomber deployment at will and/or ad nauseam.

SHAEF PORT CAPACITY

Subject to their success in capturing ports, SHAEF can receive a total of eleven Port Opening theatre options, ONLY five of which may be exercised during the scenario (Honor Rule).

Each option permits SHAEF to open the corresponding port if they elect to do so.

When a Port Opening theatre option is exercised, the corresponding port will open in a randomly determined number of subsequent turns.

To assist players in determining the relative value of port opening and defense, an approximate supply capacity for the relevant ports is displayed in the following table:

Antwerp	100
Le Havre	40
Brest	25
Chastity	25
Rouen	20
St Nazaire	20
Boulogne	10
Calais	10
Dieppe	10
Lorient	10
St Malo	10

Each option will appear on the turn following each individual port's successful capture.

Designer Note: Logistics issues plagued SHAEF throughout the NW-Europe campaign and had been a particular focus of pre-invasion planning. Aside from port capture, port capacity was the central issue, coupled with the need to truck supplies to a front expected to move steadily eastward, away from the very ports SHAEF expected to capture most easily.

In the period between D-Day and Operation Cobra, SHAEF's logistics plan was thrown into disarray by the nature of the fighting, the stubborn German defense of Cherbourg, and a mid-summer storm that destroyed the US artificial harbor, "Mulberry A", located near Saint Laurent on Omaha Beach.

By the start of Cobra, the actual supply discharge amounted to only 65% of planned tonnage.

ANTWERP

Normandy to the Rhine assumes that SHAEF's decision to open Europe's second-largest port (Antwerpen – 146:83) was never in question. Hence, Antwerp's port capacity will automatically open after a variable time delay once the Scheldt River estuary is cleared.

To clear the Scheldt, SHAEF must occupy all hexes within three hexes of Hex 133:76 on Walcharen Island.

Antwerp does not count towards SHAEF's five-port opening limit.

OPERATION CHASTITY

While Antwerp eventually became the focus of post-invasion strategy, pre-invasion planning devoted considerable attention to the capacity of Atlantic ports dotted down the coast from Brittany to the Loire estuary. Allied planners also expected the French rail network to be sufficiently intact to assist in hauling supplies along the Loire River junction lines.

In addition to Brest and Lorient, attention became focused on railheads at the mouth of the Auray River (see Hex 32:159), where a deep-water channel opens into the sheltered waters of Quiberon Bay. It was at this site that Allied engineers recognized the potential to build an artificial anchorage.

This proposal, codenamed Operation Chastity, was abandoned only after the US 3rd Army was committed to pursuing the retreating Wehrmacht toward the Moselle.

Designer Note: Players should note that while Chastity and the various deep-water ports in adjacent areas lie to the west of scenario victory locations, the combined supply potential of Brest, Lorient, and Chastity would add substantially to SHAEF's supply sources.

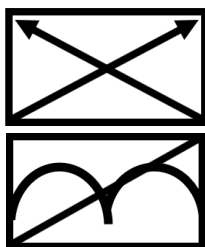
AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT

Normandy to the Rhine is calibrated such that OB-West must consider the risk of an amphibious assault and can't ignore the threat of a post-Overlord follow-up invasion.

To simulate ongoing OB-West invasion paranoia (promoted by Operation Fortitude), units of OB-West's AOK 15, positioned along the English Channel, are held in static deployment for a period from the start of the scenario. Aside from Wehrmacht units based on the Dutch coast, these will progressively be released from garrison mode between turns 3 and 12.

SHAEF *Amphibious Assaults* are permitted, starting turn 15, subject to the following rules:

1. Commencing turn 15, SHAEF may undertake a maximum of two individual *Amphibious Assaults* to the end of the scenario (**Honor-Rule**).
2. An individual *Amphibious Assault* is defined as one where SHAEF units either assault or simply move into single or multiple adjacent *enemy-occupied or enemy-held* hexes with any single unit within a three-hex radius. Other naval transport (for example, sea-movement of reinforcements to France, or airborne units to England) is irrelevant for the purposes of this definition.
3. While SHAEF commands significant naval capacity, the SHAEF player may convey a **maximum of seven units of regiment or brigade-equivalent scale in the assault phase of a single *Amphibious Assault***, subject to the following limitations:
4. Only the following SHAEF formations may deploy amphibiously in the **assault phase**:
 - US 5th Infantry Division
 - US28th Infantry Division
 - UK 52nd Infantry Division (deployed in the infantry role via a Theatre Option)
 - And/or units with the following unit typology:



5. In the turn that an *Amphibious Assault* is made, follow-up movement of units by sea transport is permitted after the assault phase, but is limited to the SHAEF player's total per-turn sea movement, which **approximates three infantry divisions**.

6. In the event of successful assault and/or occupation of enemy-held anchorage hexes during the initial phases of a single turn, follow-up forces may comprise any type with the attack and/or subsequent turns.
7. All amphibious assaulting units must commence the turn of the operation at 100% supply and embark from anchorage hexes located in Britain.
8. A minimum of *nine turns must elapse between each successive SHAEF Amphibious Assault* as defined herein.

Designer's Note: While Operation Dragoon had originally been planned to coincide with the Overlord landings, limited Allied naval capacity necessitated a late-stage delay of the second landing. This was driven by SHAEF's decision to expand the Overlord assault phase, which demanded a substantial increase in the number of specialist landing vessels used, in numbers that exceeded the production capacity of Allied slipways.

Eisenhower's advisors warned the General that he could have Overlord *followed* by Dragoon, but he could not have simultaneous assaults.

By mid-July, substantial Allied landing and naval capacity had been diverted to the Mediterranean in keeping with the Dragoon plan. Against much pleading from Churchill, the decision was set in stone with Roosevelt and General Marshall coming down in support of Eisenhower's firm commitment to the assault on the French Mediterranean coast.

Given this, the scope for Allied follow-up landings in the Pas-De- Calais or elsewhere along the North Sea coastal areas was virtually nil until specialist craft could be returned to Channel operations in sufficient numbers to make new landings feasible.

Normandy to the Rhine assumes such specialist craft have returned to British Channel ports by August 28th.

Aside from the amphibious capability of Ranger and Royal Marine Commando units, the SHAEF formations assumed capable of amphibious operations are as follows:

- i. The US 28th Infantry Division conducted its amphibious assault training in 1943, before deploying to Europe. This training was conducted through elite amphibious centers such as Camp Gordon Johnston in Florida and Camp Bradford in Virginia.
- ii. The US 5th Infantry Division was the first US division to deploy overseas, spending over a year on garrison duty in Iceland. The training there was defined by arduous construction, stevedoring, road-building, and the manning of observation posts, not by fleet-integrated beach landings. After moving to Great Britain (October 1943), the division was stationed in Northern Ireland for advanced pre-invasion training, which was more than that received by some newly established divisions but less extensive than that conducted by the 28th.

- iii. The British 52nd (Lowland) Infantry Division was at times referred to as the "Mountain Division" and by 1944 was one of the most uniquely specialized and heavily trained formations in the British Army. By D-Day, it had spent years training for highly technical operations, including mountain warfare training. In *Normandy to the Rhine*, the amphibious training this division undertook between August and September 1944 is assumed to have been brought forward to allow it to participate in amphibious ventures from Turn 15.

1ST ALLIED AIRBORNE ARMY

Formed on August 2nd, 1944, under USAAF Lieutenant General Lewis Brereton, the subordinate US and British airborne units appear in (or must be transported by Sea Movement to) England, and thereafter may be used in SHAEF airborne offensives subject to the following constraints:

1. Any airborne drop of parachute-capable SHAEF units of any size or type is considered an *'airborne operation'* – the exception being the air transport of units of the UK 52nd Division.
2. With the exception of units of the SAS, no single parachute-capable formation, *whether in whole or part*, may be air-dropped more than **three times** through the course of the scenario. **This honor rule encourages SHAEF to deploy whole formations in each operation.**
3. Only parachute units with a supply of 100% or more (i.e., Green Icon status), and located in England, may be used in any air-drop in any turn.
4. A minimum of twelve consecutive turns must elapse between each *airborne operation*.

Composite units of the US 82nd and 101st Airborne, and the UK 6th Airborne Division, begin the scenario on-map and in-play, serving as regular infantry formations at scenario start. **While these units are based on the continent, they are not capable of airlift.**

SHAEF must first withdraw these units to England (i.e., via Sea Transport) before they may participate in subsequent airborne commitments, **subject to the requirement that they be 100% supplied at the start of any subsequent airborne operation.**

UK 52ND INFANTRY DIV – THEATRE OPTION

The air-landing-trained UK 52nd Division deploys in England at the start of the scenario.

At Turn-2, a SHAEF player theatre option will permit the division to be "Released to British 2nd Army." If exercised, this option removes the unit's ability to participate in subsequent

air-landing operations, but it is free to enter combat as a reinforcing unit or conduct Amphibious Assaults as outlined above.

If retained as an air-capable formation, units of the 52nd may only be air-transported to friendly-controlled airfield hexes. They may not be dropped as with regular parachute units, and their air movement does not constitute an airborne operation within the constraints outlined above.

SHAEF parachute and/or ground formations must first capture and hold airfields for this unit's use in an air-transported capacity.

US 6TH ARMY GROUP

Both players should note that units of the US 6th Army Group begin to deploy along the southern edge of the map (in Prohibited Area 1) from Turn-14.

Normandy to the Rhine assumes Dragoon's August attack date has been maintained to conform to Eisenhower's July 14th decision confirming the assault. However, the on-map arrival of a full-strength US 6th Army Group is advanced relative to its historical arrival to model the absence of German opposition along the Riviera coast and the Rhône valley.

Designer's Note: Formed on Corsica in July 1944 under the command of US General Jacob Devers, the 6th Army Group invaded Southern France on August 15th, 1944, in landings that maintained faith with planning that had originally envisioned concurrent assaults on Occupied France. These took the form of Operation Sledgehammer, which became Overlord-plus-Anvil, and eventually resulted in the much-delayed Operation Dragoon, with the landing taking place on D+70.

In the original planning, Dragoon was to be launched in the wake of the cross-channel attack. It was ultimately delayed due to late-stage planning changes that demanded an increase in Overlord's landing-craft requirements. These could only come at the expense of Dragoon, which became an on-again-off-again proposition.

Eisenhower, realizing the inadequacies of Normandy's port capacity, finally committed the Allies to the Dragoon assault on July 14th 1944.

FRENCH 1ST ARMY - 1RE ARMÉE

Originally known as "Armee B," General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny's 1st French Army retains its historic order of battle in *Normandy to the Rhine*. As such, the Army is free to deploy in the same manner as any national grouping.

The French 19th Infantry Division, composed of resistance fighters of the Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur (FFI), arrives in Rennes on Turn-20, subject to that town's prior liberation.

Designer's Note: Constituted as "French Army B" for its participation in Operation Dragoon, the French 1st Army was placed under the command of the highly decorated General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny in April 1944. de Lattre's command comprised two corps (French I and II) with a preponderance of units drawn from what had been the French Colonial Army of Africa.

In keeping with its North African origins, the force that disembarked on the Riviera comprised both Free French veterans of 8th Army fame and hard-fighting Maghrebi formations.

Once large areas of the French interior were secure, the 1st Army was expanded as recruitment in newly liberated areas enabled the incorporation of the unorthodox units of the Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur (FFI). While equipping new troops posed significant challenges, most recruits brought the advantage of experience gained within the FFI, and de-Lattre's Army could play its role as the clever device through which de-Gaulle neutralized the lingering threat posed by militia bands, many of which were of uncertain loyalty.

One of several formations created during the rapid reconstitution of the French Army, the French 19th Infantry Division was formed following the liberation of Brittany and Western France in late 1944. Unlike the veteran formations of First French Army, the 19th Division was formed largely from personnel drawn from the Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur (FFI). Beginning in September 1944, these irregular resistance fighters were progressively concentrated, screened, equipped, and reorganized along conventional military lines, receiving former resistance cadres as well as regular officers and NCOs.

Encouraged by de-Gaul, de Lattre moved quickly to incorporate select FFI groups and infuse a greater proportion of French European manpower into his army. In doing so, he was able to change its ethnic composition; retiring long-serving North Africa veterans who were not expected to perform well in the challenging winter warfare that was expected in Alsace, Lorraine, and in the Vosges.

While 1^{re} Armée expanded markedly as the campaign moved east, it is likely de Gaulle would have ordered greater recruitment efforts in the western and southern regions and permitted a widening recruitment across the liberation zone had circumstances dictated.

MAQUIS

A range of rural hexes in German-occupied Western France are under SHAEF ownership at the commencement of the scenario. The attendant increase in movement costs for German units reflects the impact of FFI or Maquis forces' various efforts to disrupt and delay German transport and supply columns.

Designer's Note: Organized French resistance to Nazi rule began in the earliest days of France's occupation and became increasingly threatening with support from specialist French sections of the British SOE and the London HQ of the Free French.

By D-Day, various loosely connected militia bands had grown to an estimated 100,000 maquisards, organized almost exclusively into rurally-based groups. These resembled independent armed bands more than a cohesive force, but as Operation Cobra began, the Maquis is estimated to have grown to 400,000 irregulars; a staggering feat in the circumstances.

While such numbers suggest the Maquis posed a serious threat to German arms, the reality of occupation, with its limits on how to arm and supply a guerrilla force, the difficulty of coordinating groups with disparate aims and loyalties, and the sheer size of rural France, all limited the military effectiveness of a hastily assembled and poorly equipped force.

Whatever their actual numbers, the effectiveness of the Maquis lay more in its ability to disrupt rather than to fight set-piece engagements in the conventional sense.

While it is tempting to add speculative Maquis formations to the SHAEF Order of Battle, the presence of organized French forces in the interior of France is modeled via Turn-1 SHAEF ownership of hexes in German-occupied areas and a lower per-hex occupation cost for forces entering enemy-controlled hexes.

SAS

Units of the historic SAS Regiments of mid-1944 have been modeled in *Normandy to the Rhine*, and become available for deployment at the SHAEF player's discretion after Turn-2.

Of these, three units commence the scenario deployed behind German lines:

- i. 1st/1st SAS at hex 138:167 in Central France
- ii. 2nd/1st SAS at hex, 82:175, north of Poitiers
- iii. 4th French at hex 38:156, northeast of Vannes

Though they were historically organized into squadrons reporting to a regiment-level headquarters, the British and Belgian SAS have been modeled as nine maneuver units with company-level NATO icons. 3rd and 4th French SAS have retained battalion-level icons.

Designer's Note: By July 1944, Allied Special Air Service (SAS) formations were conducting a range of ground operations behind German lines in occupied France. British, French, and Belgian SAS units had been deployed to support Overlord, disrupting communications, attacking transport, gathering intelligence, and assisting the French Resistance. Many areas of rural France had become danger zones for small Wehrmacht units.

During the weeks following D-Day, small teams from the British 1st and 2nd SAS Regiments were active in Brittany and central France, while French SAS formations of the 3rd and 4th SAS (later redesignated as the 2e and 3e Régiments de Chasseurs Parachutistes) operated extensively alongside Maquis groups. Belgian SAS detachments were largely retained in Britain during the early stages of the campaign, preparing for later employment.

The strategic significance of these formations extended well beyond their modest numbers, and their activities were particularly influential in Brittany. There, and in central France, German commanders were forced to commit substantial forces to anti-partisan operations at a time when troops were urgently needed elsewhere.

In *Normandy to the Rhine*, the SAS offer SHAEF opportunities to disrupt German movement and rear-area security in ways that cannot be measured by conventional combat power.

SHAEF DISBANDS

In *Normandy to the Rhine*, the SHAEF player is free to disband formations and/or sub units if, as, and/or when they see fit at any time.

This would typically be a decision made to maintain certain units at full strength via the replacement pool rather than retaining a collection of weak formations.

Designer's Note: As the campaign to liberate France unfolded, several British 2nd Army formations were cannibalized due to manpower shortages. The heavy fighting around Caen in July and August saw 21st Army Group infantry casualties run 35% higher than Overlord planning forecast.

With looming infantry shortages, Montgomery chose to disband the UK 59th Infantry Division in late August and the UK 50th in early December.

In the hypothetical setting of *Normandy to the Rhine*, we cannot ex-ante predict the losses of either side; hence, modeling that simply forces a particular historical expedient is illogical.

PARIS

Approximately two turns post the liberation of Paris, SHAEF supply stockpiles will fall for approximately four turns.

Designer's Note: Liberated Paris, a city of 2.8 million in mid-1944, became a logistical burden for the Allied armies due to the substantial food, fuel, and essential supplies that had to be transported over strained lines of communication.



OB-WEST

“Himmler would come in with a beaming face to say, “Heil mein Führer, I wish to report the establishment of a new division...” Colonel Gerhard Wilk, commander
246th Volksgrenadier and final Commandant of Aachen,
quoting an unnamed Führer adjutant.

Normandy to the Rhine assumes the German High Command has opted to retain the Heer (German Army) in its historic role, with commensurate streamlining of the Wehrmacht force and command structure such that OB-West is delegated full theatre responsibility for the Western Front.

The Wehrmacht force that eventually comes into play is no larger than that deployed during the historic Miracle in the West period of late 1944, but there are key differences in its organizational makeup adapted for use in the scenario.

OB-West’s initial dispositions are based on the premise that the strategic options posed by Rommel and Von Rundstedt to Hitler at Margival on June 17th have been embraced as a strategic priority. The broad acceptance of the Margival options has necessitated OB-West's withdrawal from the western and southern maritime regions of France, an acknowledgment that Allied isolation of these areas would become a *fait accompli*.

Players should familiarise themselves with the critical strategic assumptions of the scenario, outlined on Page 6.

Designer’s Note: In almost five years of war, the Wehrmacht proved itself capable of both metering out and being on the receiving end of truly enormous punishment. By mid-1944, it was a force of compositional complexity, defending multiple fronts, all of them precariously, and it had become uncharacteristically disorganized in both field organization and logistics. Nevertheless, to Adolf Hitler’s advantage, it retained a deep cadre of experienced officers and NCOs and had maintained a substantial training establishment within the highly reliable Wehrkreis system.

As the war progressed, military reverses deepened an evolving paranoia in Hitler’s mind and among his closest coterie, leading to a steady erosion of their trust in Germany’s traditional defender, Das Heer.

As a result, by 1944, the Nazi leadership was actively encouraging a panoply of new military organizations, notably within the SS, but also in new politically indoctrinated units.

These new organizations were assumed to be more politically reliable and more fanatical, but while expedient in the search for a political and military payoff, their presence created a significant opportunity cost ultimately borne by the Heer.

OB-WEST TURN-1 DEPLOYMENTS

As *Normandy to the Rhine* commences, OB-West is in full retreat, with rear-guards left attempting to hold the Invasion Front. Formations in Brittany are attempting to escape to the southeast; units diverted from their road march across the Loire are attempting to head due east; various units of what had been Panzergruppe West are attempting to escape Normandy via the main traffic routes toward Rouen and Paris.

Players should note that:

1. The first few player turns are crucial, largely determining which Wehrmacht formations become trapped on the western side of the Seine.
2. Retreating German formations have done so in reasonable order (compared to their historic flight), but are growing short of supplies and have low readiness levels.
3. Subject to weather conditions, Allied airpower (modeled to recreate the historic battlefield dominance of the tactical air forces) will tend to dominate German movement in Northwestern France, forcing the OB-West player to consider individual formation march paths and their overall scenario strategy.

Should OB-West try to hold at the Seine? This is perhaps OB-West's first crucial question.

Designer's Note: OB-West gains significant operational freedom in *Normandy to the Rhine*, but the OB-West player must ultimately decide where they are going to take a stand and/or counter their opponent.

Early turn scenario modeling includes a turn 1 situation consistent with von Rundstedt's advice of June 17th:

- All units of AOK 7 and all Luftwaffe assets are deemed free to move from turn 1.
- Units of AOK 15 based along the Pas-de-Calais will be progressively released for free deployment from around turn 4, modeling lingering High Command concerns that the Normandy landings were diversionary.

- The Wehrmacht 319th Infantry Division is assumed to be in the process of abandoning the Channel Islands, with heavy infantry losses and the complete loss of heavy equipment as the conduct a reverse-Dunkirk.
- Shore-based units of Marinegruppenkommando West are assumed to be disbanded and are cannibalized as replacement assets. These are assumed to be directed as cadres to building or rebuilding standard Heer infantry formations.
- The critical decision to evacuate Southern and South-Western France has been taken in a timely manner. Units of Armeegruppe G arrive between five and seven turns ahead of their historic arrival, and in largely intact form, a reflection of the insignificant losses suffered through light engagements with Maquis bands operating in the Limousin region and Maritime Alps.
- The early arrival of formations of Heeresgruppe G precedes the more timely arrival of near-full-strength Allied formations of 6th Army Group, simulating SHAEF's freedom to advance formations up the Rhône and Saône valleys uncontested.

WEHRMACHT OB

Normandy to the Rhine assumes the Heer has been directed to standardize formations along early-war lines and has settled upon a reversion to the pre-Barbarossa triangular standard, of typically three regiments, each of three battalions.

This standardization does not override the broadly historic order of battle modeled throughout the scenario, but it does ensure that:

- Certain German formations that were not rebuilt after the Battle of the Falaise *do* arrive as reinforcements in the *Normandy to the Rhine* OB,
- Many exotic expedients of the late war German OB *do not* appear at all; however, their subordinate assets *are* reassigned within the standardized OB.
- Luftwaffe field divisions, Heer panzer brigades, and Volksgrenadier divisions play no role in the German OB, with the exception that 16th LW Feld Division does appear (holding the lines at Caen), but will not regenerate if destroyed.

The approximate 1944 composition of subordinate units below battalion level is assumed to have been retained, with units retaining organic heavy weapons, mortar, machine-gun, and recon elements somewhat similar to those found in the Type-44 infantry division.

Consolidation of the divisional artillery regiment is assumed with the disbandment of the previously standard fourth medium battalion. Thus, three retained battalions are composed of three 5-gun batteries each, the third battalion equipped with standard 150mm sFH 18's. This reduces overall divisional tube count by three, from 48 to 45, but increases the number

of heavies by an equivalent amount, with a reduction in battalion HQ, logistics, and support complement.

Designer's Note: By 1944, the fielding of a hodgepodge of exotic and worn-down formations became something of an absurd feature of late-war German arms and a marker of Nazi desperation. While the raising of entirely new formations was a source of political currency among hopefuls in the German leadership, expanding divisional flag numbers couldn't miraculously expand the Wehrmacht's military potential. In fact, many of the hopeful expedients served to undermine the Heer.

Hastily organized divisions fielding one-third fewer grenadier battalions of poorly trained recruits could not reduce their unit's call upon higher headquarters, logistics, training, or administrative establishments. Equally, new raisings could only add new burdens to the logistical and line-of-communications burdens of the already overtaxed Wehrkreis system.

The expansion of the Wehrmacht through successive wartime mobilization waves placed increasing strain on Germany's training, replacement, and administrative systems. While the pre-war triangular infantry division represented a proven balance of maneuver, firepower, and support, late-war efforts to maximize the number of divisions in the field often came at the expense of combat effectiveness. The Type-44 concept, particularly the reduction of infantry regiments to two battalions, allowed additional division headquarters to be created but did little to reduce the command, logistical, and support burden associated with maintaining them. The result was an increasing proliferation of under-strength formations whose apparent numerical strength often masked their limited ability to sustain operations.

By the summer of 1944, many divisions in the West were heavily depleted, while others existed in a bewildering variety of organizational forms. Some formations were too heavily engaged to permit reorganization; others were rebuilt using whatever personnel and equipment were available locally. Meanwhile, worn-out divisions were frequently left in the line beyond sensible military limits, steadily losing their veteran cadres and specialist support elements.

Post-war studies have consistently demonstrated that combat effectiveness declines sharply once formations become excessively depleted and/or exhausted, and that the rehabilitation of such units becomes increasingly difficult the longer they remain committed to front-line service.

Normandy to the Rhine assumes that a more rational German command structure would have prioritized maintaining existing formations rather than creating additional weak ones. Accordingly, OB-West has been reorganized around a standardized nine-battalion "Triangular-44" infantry division, while avoiding the proliferation of ad hoc Heer and Luftwaffe formations.

The Wehrkreis replacement system is assumed to focus on sustaining established formations within existing mobilization waves rather than continually creating new

divisions. Under these assumptions, and provided the disasters of Mortain and Falaise are avoided, the Wehrmacht gains an opportunity to rebuild a force capable of conducting a more coherent defense during the autumn and winter of 1944.

Several organizational adjustments have been made to support this approach. For instance, German artillery regiments have been rationalized to reflect the reality that many divisions in Normandy lacked the full artillery establishment prescribed by the Type-44 KStN. Although German artillery production peaked in 1944, enormous losses on the Eastern Front severely constrained the availability of equipment.

The scenario therefore assumes a deliberate effort to concentrate available artillery and transport resources within fewer, more sustainable formations.

OB-WEST REINFORCEMENTS

OB-West reinforcements typically enter at scenario-standardized organization (a hypothetical Wehrmacht KStN), or will rebuild to that organization via the replacement pool.

In most cases, reinforcement arrival dates are later than the historical dates, reflecting the additional training time required to revert to the early-war Wehrmacht's training and reorganization schedules.

In some cases, for example, the 3rd, 15th, and 25th Panzergrenadier formations, the delayed arrival is quite modest, whereas for wholly rebuilt formations, the delay can be prolonged.

A significant number of hastily formed and/or ad-hoc formations, historic expedients made available in the West, have been deliberately omitted from the OB-West order of battle in *Normandy to the Rhine*. Their omission is a sine qua non for the scenario.

Designer's Note: As the war's demands grew, Wehrmacht recruit training was reduced from the pre-war induction period of 16 to 18 weeks to as little as 6 weeks by late 1944. While shortened training schedules enabled the rapid creation of wholly new formations, they did so at considerable cost to unit proficiency.

Normandy to the Rhine assumes that the Heer returns to a more disciplined replacement policy, providing 14 weeks of combined basic and specialist training before recruits are committed to field formations.

OB WEST SUPPLY

If German forces are pushed back toward Germany, OB-West supply depots progressively adjust to prevailing circumstances in any game. This progression occurs automatically.

For example, initial OB-West supply points at Amiens, Soissons (east of Paris), and Neufchateau are replaced by depots near Antwerp, Liege, Metz, and Strasbourg.

An initial OB-West supply point at Belfort is replaced at Frieberg in the turn following Belfort's liberation.

LUFTWAFFE

OB-West controls 15 units (Geschwader) of Luftlotte 3 throughout the scenario and is free to deploy these units as deemed appropriate.

Units of Luftlotte 3, which commence the scenario, are in a heavily disrupted state, have low effectiveness, and are a token force compared to the combined Allied air forces.

Designer's Note: Such was the state of late-war German arms and the strategic imbalance that even if Luftlotte 3 resources are carefully husbanded into an effective force, they are still unlikely to achieve very much beyond an occasional random success.

SONDERKOMMANDO

On turn 38, OB-West receives a single paramilitary reinforcement, denoted as Sonderkommando Kdo. KG200. This is a freely deployable, hypothetical, company-sized formation capable of operating in the style of early-war Brandenburg detachments. It may be deployed via air movement at any time.

Designer's Note: The almost entirely fictitious Sonderkommando Kdo. KG200 has been included in the OB-West battle order to model, at roughly Brandenburg-company-equivalent scale, the various Commando-style units formed in late 1944 during planning for Wacht-Am-Rhine.

GERMAN OFFENSIVE – THEATER OPTION

From turn 33, the OB-West player will receive a single "German Offensive" theater option that may be exercised at any time thereafter. If exercised, this option increases OB-West unit supply modestly for three turns.

SCENARIO Q&A

How long does a *Normandy to the Rhine* turn take to play?

Playtesters have found that a single-NTTR turn takes around 45 minutes. Of course, turns with multi-phase offensives can take longer, but the scenario is designed to be enjoyable.

Both sides seem to have to maneuver a LOT in the first few turns?

This is entirely deliberate. As a hypothetical simulation, the opening deployments leave all options open to the opposing players.

There are just too many units.

At 1,826 units, NTTR may be telling you to try something less taxing. If you're new to *The Operational Art of War*, there are plenty of excellent smaller scenarios to earn your spurs on here: <https://forums.matrixgames.com/viewtopic.php?t=318742>.

OB-West's units attract a lot of Allied interdiction. Is this historically accurate?

Much has been written about the effect of Allied air power in the Northwest Europe campaign, and many accounts sensationalize its impact. More recent research (for example, *Normandy 1944: German Military Organization, Combat Power and Organizational Effectiveness* by Dr. Niklas Zetterling) indicates that German countermeasures (for example, night movement) limited losses more than sensationalist accounts admit. In NTTR, Allied air supremacy has been modeled to ensure balance. German units face significant interdiction risk while moving in northern France but can move more freely inside Germany itself, where substantial Luftwaffe fighter and flak assets provided a ground-movement umbrella.

Why are my units all exhausted and out of supply?

TOAW penalizes armies driven continuously at maximum effort, and NTTR offers many opportunities for all-in offensives, particularly in the opening few turns. Movement consumes supply and readiness, as does combat, so units repeatedly pushed to their maximum can deteriorate quickly. Units deployed in boondock locations are similarly penalized. Once Unit Supply falls below one-third, unit recovery becomes prolonged. Players are encouraged to periodically rest tired units, and allow logistics to catch up. As a practical rule, 40% Unit Supply should be treated as a warning to rest a formation.

Why no Red Ball Express?

A questionable SHAEF expedient, the achievements of the soldiers who sustained the Red Ball Express in 1944, nonetheless, became legendary. Operating from late August to mid-November 1944, the Red Ball Express used 132 US trucking companies, alongside 61 16-truck companies commandeered from US infantry divisions. With nearly six thousand vehicles, the Red Ball moved over 400,000 tons of supplies between Normandy and the front. While it became a source of national pride and tallied remarkable achievements, it is less clear that the Express was worth its opportunity costs. To realize its potential, Red Ball required vast stocks of fuel and the commandeered transport assets of six divisions (US 26, 84, 94, 95, 102, and 104), thus delaying their deployment. NTTR assumes that OB-West is

withdrawing in good order and that General Lee of COMZ is broadly adhering to the original SHAEF phase-lines and logistics plans. While the supply mechanics of NTTR are modeled to depict the logistics hurdles of the campaign, they include no Red Ball trigger event.

Why no Maquis formations?

As contemporary German accounts attest, the Maquis's impact in post-invasion France was constrained by their dispersion into thousands of small armed cells, often with diverging allegiances. These rarely grew into conventional maneuver units, but when significant formations did develop, as at the Massif du Vercors in July 1944, the results were catastrophic. For Maquis effects on German communications lines, see page 18.

Why no Tiger IIs?

A number of OB-West units actually do begin NTTR with Tiger IIs; for example, Heavy Panzer Battalion 503, assigned to the 5th Panzer Army, starts the scenario with 15. However, the scenario assumes an ahistorical German reinforcement schedule that directs German super-heavy panzer reinforcements to the Eastern Front (to counter the Soviet heavy tank threat).

What are all these Kampfgruppen doing in my beloved Panzer divisions?

To their credit, many TOAW scenario designers faithfully include the TO&E of the actual regiments that fought in the campaigns their scenarios cover. In NTTR, Panzerwaffe formations are organized into hypothetical Kampfgruppen to a) model the combined-arms reality of German panzer formations in 1944, b) give them a slight operational edge in the interests of scenario balance, and c) reflect the fact that every text on the Northwest Europe campaign describes the Panzerwaffe's phenomenal staying power.

Why no Volksgrenadier Divisions?

On July 10th, 1944, the German High Command issued the first formal order to create new 29th Wave divisions, initially called Sperr-Divisionen ("Blocking Divisions"). On July 17th, Hitler directed that the proposed Sperr-Divisionen be renamed "Grenadier-Divisionen," largely for propaganda purposes. Only after the July 20th Bomb Plot were these new formations brought under Himmler's control for organization and political indoctrination, and eventually renamed "Volksgrenadier-Divisionen." Fragmentary evidence (across multiple post-war memoirs) suggests that senior Wehrmacht officials wanted to restore existing Heer divisions by absorbing the new wave's replacements into experienced cadres rather than feeding them into hastily formed Volksgrenadier-type units. As a hypothetical scenario, NTTR assumes that Hitler heeds his generals' advice.

Why no Panzer Brigades?

The formation of Panzer Brigades (Panzerbrigaden 101–113) in the summer of 1944, like the creation of Volksgrenadier divisions, was an emergency measure born of Germany's deteriorating strategic position. On July 2, 1944, Hitler first instructed Inspector-General of Panzer Troops, General Heinz Guderian, to investigate forming independent armored brigades that could serve as a strategic reserve. This expedient drew immediate and widespread criticism from senior commanders, including Guderian, who was probably the leading critic. Although he obeyed Hitler's directive, he consistently argued that Germany's scarce Panthers, experienced crews, and their experienced officers should instead be used to rebuild existing Panzer divisions. NTTR assumes that Hitler accepts Guderian's advice.

Why no von der Heydte Fallschirmjäger unit?

Operation Stösser's Kampfgruppe von der Heydte has not been treated as a separate formation in NTTR. This reflects the assumption that, without Hitler's meddling, a) OB-West would have been unlikely to attempt large-scale Fallschirmjäger operations given overwhelming Allied air supremacy, and b) the necessary Luftwaffe assets were too thoroughly disorganized to mount such an effort. Historically, Colonel von der Heydte's hastily assembled force was intended to seize key road junctions during the opening phase of Wacht-am-Rhine, but poor navigation and widely dispersed drops reduced the effective force to a few hundred stragglers who failed to achieve anything beyond surrendering.

Why the 319th Infanterie?

A Bodenständig division of the 13th Wave, the 319th became the sole garrison on the Channel Islands from April 1941. It remained there, isolated, in the only British Crown dependency occupied by Germany throughout the war. Augmented by specialist battalions, the massively overstrength division was abandoned for reasons of prestige. In NTTR, infantry elements of the 319th are deemed to have been ordered to evacuate the island chain, using M-Class minesweepers and Marinefahrprahm artillery barges, thus sustaining losses of between 20% and 50% of their standard TO&E. Likewise, all the division's transport assets and heavy weapons are deemed abandoned. The 319th's surviving units arrive at St Malo (49:137) by turn 3; others arrive as replacements in hex 209:109 on turns 5 and 9.

Where are the Ostruppen?

In perhaps the ultimate Nazi expedient, around 60 'Eastern-Battalions' (Ost-Bataillone) were deployed by OB-West in France by July 1944. Composed of volunteers from former Russian states, typically with questionable allegiance to Germany, the Ost-Bataillone were armed and supplied but required support from regular Heer formations to deploy coherently. They proved exceptionally low in motivation beyond the instinctive motives of the individual soldiery; a fact that became apparent in the earliest hours of the Normandy campaign. When Eastern troops assigned to the 716th Infantry Division (439 and 642 Battalions) witnessed the Allied naval and air bombardment, they mostly took flight. The German High Command deemed the risks of their deployment too high and withdrew them into non-combat auxiliary formations. As a result, they play no role in NTTR.

Why Sonderkommandos?

By the summer of 1944, Germany's Brandenburg special forces had largely ceased to exist as an independent strategic organization. Brandenburg battalions had been absorbed into conventional formations, transferred to Panzergrenadier-Division Brandenburg, or dispersed among other commands. Meanwhile, the Luftwaffe's special operations organization, Kampfgeschwader 200, increasingly focused on clandestine aviation tasks, including agent insertion, special transport, reconnaissance, and unconventional operations. On July 21, 1944, during Germany's anti-partisan offensive (Operation Bettina) against the French Resistance on the Vercors Massif plateau, Luftwaffe special forces carried out a highly successful tactical airborne operation in support of ground troops. Rather than modeling the numerous small commando detachments that survived within the Heer, the Luftwaffe, and the SS, NTTR represents Germany's residual capability as a single company-sized specialized Fallschirmjäger unit, the Sonderkommando, Kdo. GK200. This formation should be viewed as an abstraction of Germany's remaining unconventional capability.

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