

Operation Bluecoat 2 - 6 August 1944.

After weeks of hard fighting, the Americans launched their long awaited offensive (Cobra) on July 25th and broke through the German front around the Normandy bridgehead. Having closed down Operation Goodwood on July 1st, Montgomery has shifted the weight of the British 2nd Army towards his right flank next to the Americans.

On July 30th, two infantry divisions broke into the German positions, located in dense bocage country. Forty hours later, three armoured divisions were also committed. The 11th Armoured Division has pushed nearly 20 kilometres into the German rear, reaching the vicinity of Le Beny Bocage, where it is now consolidating.

This scenario portrays the operations of the 11th Armoured Division at the end of Operation Bluecoat. It is hoped to eventually add other parts of the whole operation, eventually leading to a mini-campaign game.

Game Length: 5 Days with 10 turns per day.

The Map.

The map for this part of Operation Bluecoat is taken from the British Official History of the campaign in Normandy (see references). It took place on the edge of the Bocage country. The only real unknown is the extent and density of the bocage. For simplicity, most of the open area of the map is considered bocage which covers the map area North of the road from Vire to Vassy. Instead of trying to place individual bocage features, and the multitude of small country lanes which define the *bocage*, I felt it best to define some generalised terrain type that limits visibility, reduces movement and restricts shooting for the area as a whole rather than relying on the effect of discrete obstacles. The result should be less sensitive to the placement and number of individual terrain pieces and results in a more enjoyable game.

The River Vire corresponds roughly to the inter-army boundary between the Americans and British.

Link for the battle [Map](#). The map can be downloaded by clicking on the link and saved using the right mouse button.

German Briefing.

On July 30th the enemy launched an attack which pushed the 326th Infantry and 21st Panzer Divisions back to the area around Montchauvet. They have lost contact with their left flank neighbours (3rd Parachute Division). The British have captured Le Beny Bocage and are expected to drive on Vire.

Supply: Poor

Friendly Edge: South

Activations: 12

Artillery: Experienced, 4 templates, 4 rounds, 1 replacement per day

Morale: Veteran

Air Support: None

9 SS Panzer Division:

C Ops and FUP

19 SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment

1 HQ Stand

1 Infantry Gun 75 mm (Light Gun)

2 Abteilung, each with

3 Rifle Stands

1 Hvy Wpns Stand

102 SS Heavy Panzer Abteilung

1 Pz VI A (Super Heavy Gun)

9 SS Reconnaissance Abteilung

1 A/C (Light Gun)

9 SS Panzerjaeger Abteilung

20 SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment

1 HQ Stand
1 Infantry Gun 75 mm (Light Gun)

2 Abteilung, each with

3 Rifle Stands
1 Hvy Wpns Stand

9 SS Panzer Regiment

1 HQ Stand

1st Abteilung, with

3 Pz V Stands

2nd Abteilung, with

3 Pz IV H Stands

3 PAK 40 (Heavy Gun)

Kampfgruppe Olboeter

1 HQ Stand

1st Abteilung (Provisional), with

1 Pz V Stand
1 StuG III Stand
1 Rifle Stand
1 Hvy Wpns Stand

Link to view the [9th SS Panzer Division Order of Battle](#), or its [attached formations](#) in diagram form.

Deployment:

The 9th SS Panzer Division C Ops and FUP must deploy in either Montchauvet, Montchamp or Estry. The Germans deploy second and move first. All troops, except those mentioned as reinforcements below, may deploy from the FUP as usual. They may not deploy from the friendly table edge. Instead, on the first dawn turn only, they may deploy from any of the three villages previously mentioned. The first battalion of each Panzer Grenadier regiment is in 1/2 tracks, the second in trucks. Others are mounted in trucks.

Reinforcements:

Kampfgruppe Olboeter may be deployed from Vassy on or after the dawn turn of August 3rd.

British Briefing.

Supply: Good

Friendly Edge: North

Activations: 15

Artillery: Experienced, 12 templates, 12 rounds, 6 replacements per day

Morale: Average

Air Support: 1 Rocket fighter template (Typhoon) per day

11 Armoured Division:

C Ops and FUP

29 Armoured Brigade Group

1 HQ Stand

23rd Hussars, 3rd Royal Tank Regiment, each with

159 Infantry Brigade Group

1 HQ Stand

1 Hvy Wpns Stand

Fife & Forfar Yeomanry, 2nd Northants Yeomanry,

3 Sherman Firefly Stands	each with
8 th Btn Rifle Brigade (Motorised), with	3 Sherman Firefly Stands
3 Rifle Stands	3 rd Monmouths, 1 st Herefords, each with
1 Hvy Wpns Stand	4 Rifle Stands
4 th King's Shropshire Light Infantry with	185 Infantry Brigade: (from 3 Division)
4 Rifle Stands	1 HQ Stand
Reconnaissance Battalion (Household Cavalry)	1 Hvy Wpns Stand
1 A/C Stand (Light gun)	(2 nd Warwicks, 1 st Norfolks, 2 nd Kings Shropshire
1 Rifle Stand (in Universal Carrier)	Light Infantry), each with
75th Anti Tank Gun Battalion	4 Rifle Stands
2 17 Pdr (Heavy Gun)	

Link to view the [11th Armoured Division](#) or [3rd Infantry Division](#) Orders of Battle in diagram form.

Deployment:

The British C Ops and FUP deploys within 6 inches of Le Beny Bocage. The troops of the 11th Armoured Division are deployed on the dawn turn following the usual rules. The British deploy first and move second. Only the 8th Btn the Rifle Brigade has transport (trucks), all other infantry units are on foot. Heavy weapons and AT guns have transport (truck or universal carrier). The Northants Yeomanry has been upgraded from Stuart tanks to Sherman for game balance. Those parts of the 3rd Infantry Division present use the 11th Armoured Division FUP and C Ops.

Reinforcements:

The British 185th Infantry Brigade is available for deployment from the dawn turn of August 4th.

Victory Conditions.

The German player must advance westwards, seal off the British penetration and establish a defensive line along the river Soulevre. The British player must advance southeast, and cut the main road from Vire to Vassy in the vicinity of Viesoix. Any other result is a draw.

Weather.

	1 - 6 or less	7 - 9	10 or more
	clear	Overcast	Drizzle
Air support	yes	No	No
Go to ground			+10 %
Visibility	12"	12"	6"
Modify next weather roll	-1		+1

The first day (2 August) is automatically clear.

Special rules.

- 1 All rivers can be forded by vehicles at a cost of one action. Vehicles crossing at a bridge in column formation do not require an extra action. Infantry are not affected by rivers. Rivers are 1" wide and treated as bad going.
- 2 The entire map, north of the road from Vire to Vassy, except for those areas marked as woods is "*bocage country*". All troops not moving along a road (not necessarily in column formation: Hint consider leading with a detachment) are considered in bad going. Furthermore, troops that moved or fired in their previous turn cannot be seen at a range of more than 6", while stationary troops that have not fired cannot be seen at a range of more than 3". Woods are bad going with the usual restrictions on visibility.
- 3 Alternatively, if the above proves too restrictive, treat the terrain on level 1 as good going and not restricting visibility. Treat the level 0 terrain as bad going for movement, also without restricting visibility. Add a 1" border of woods along both sides of all rivers, tracks, roads and railways. Roads and tracks are one element wide and are treated as good going for movement. Woods are bad going with the usual restrictions on visibility.
- 4 The railway embankment it is treated as a crest line for troops immediately behind it.
- 5 German battalions in reserve may be formed into ad-hoc *Kampfgruppen* during the night phase. The *kampfgruppe* must include a Regimental Headquarters stand. Battalions assigned to *Kampfgruppe*'s can be returned to the reserve individually during the night phase, but can only be added to other *Kampfgruppe*'s or returned to its regiment if those battalions are also in reserve. A *Kampfgruppe* is counted as a **Battlegroup** for the purposes of command and activation.
- 6 The 9th SS Panzer Division, together with the 10th SS Panzer Division, had recently seen heavy fighting on the Russian front. In spite of being reinforced and re-equipped during their transfer to Normandy, those losses and the harassment of Allied Fighter-Bombers resulted in the Division being under combat strength. Much of the *missing* armour was in fact in workshops and not destroyed. All battalions with a strength of more than one stand should begin the game with one stand lost.
- 7 The river Vire marks the inter-army boundary between the British and American armies. No British troops can voluntarily cross to the west of it. Neither may any British troops move to within 3" of the town of Vire, unless to engage enemy troops already in Vire and attacking British troops.
- 8 The usual rules describing *Firefly*'s are used.
- 9 The German artillery may be fielded as direct fire weapons if desired. By removing two templates from the stockpile, the German player may deploy one Wespe. Each shot removes one round of ammunition from the German supplies. Wespe's may only be restored to artillery during the night phase.

References.

1. Victory in the West, Vol 1: The Battle of Normandy, Maj. L. F. Ellis, HMSO London 1962.
2. <http://home.freeuk.net/henridecat/bluecoat/bluecoat.htm> (a *free kreigspeil* on operation Bluecoat)
3. <http://www.geocities.com/MotorCity/8418/9sspz.htm> (complete order of battle for 9 SS Panzer Division)
4. <http://www.geocities.com/MotorCity/8418/uk11ad.htm> (complete order of battle for 11 Armoured Division)

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