

DESIGN NOTES FOR SCENARIOS IN ODE TO PANZER LEADER IV

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This continues the further conversion of scenarios of Panzer Leader to West Front. The scenarios presented here are from the articles “Para-Leader” by Oscar Oates, in the General magazine Volume 20, #2 and from “Dieppe: Canadians Under Fire” by Mark L. Shannon, in the General magazine Volume 21, #3. Nine of the scenarios presented here feature paratroop operations and the other features the great raid at Dieppe. Most of these scenarios have a counterpart among the regular scenarios for West Front, either as part of the game or as a down load from one of the scenario repositories on the Internet. Still these conversions of the Panzer Leader scenarios can make for some interesting games, even if they are not totally accurate, and it should be remembered that they are usually nothing more than caricatures of the real battles being depicted.

As usual, these scenarios are being converted to the same standards as the previous scenarios in this series. For the original design notes refer to those that came with the original “Ode to Panzer Leader”. One important note here; in the paratroop scenarios I deliberately set the scatter distance for paratroops and gliders to one hex, for purposes of uniformity among the scenarios. Variables such as changing the environmental conditions, morale, or changing the orders of battle for one or both sides, I leave to the discretion of the individual players.

One will note that most of these scenarios range from a low to mid counter number count. Most of these are big boards so there is a lot of maneuvering room and the scenarios will be fast and furious.

Scenario #31

This scenario simulates one of the surprise paratroop drops in Norway in April of 1940. This is an infantry fight with the only support coming from the few support weapons in the Norwegian battalion, plus some anti-aircraft guns around the airfield. The airfield on the board is where the town of Sambleau should be. In the special rules in the original scenario, the town of Sambleau was considered to be non-existent as there was an airfield there. Instead of leaving that area blank on the map, I created an airfield on the board as it is the primary objective in this scenario. The scenario is twelve turns long.

The Norwegians basically have a garrison battalion, for which I used one of their standard infantry battalions to represent. The hodge-podge of anti-aircraft units around the airfield consists of British, French, as well as Norwegian units. (The Norwegians bought a bunch of weapons from the Western Allies in the early months of the war. Unfortunately, few had arrived and were emplaced by the time the Germans arrived.) The Norwegians may set up anywhere on the board, but I have them garrisoning the towns on the map as they would be normally required to do. Besides, the Norwegians

were not expecting a paratroop drop and would have no reason to station the whole garrison at the airfield. Of course being the defender, the Norwegians get Improved Positions. The Germans have a standard paratroop battalion landing on Turn 1. On Turn 5 a regular infantry battalion starts to land at the airfield as reinforcements. Historically, the battalion arrived in transport planes. However, West Front does not provide a mechanism to duplicate this exactly. So I have brought them in on gliders, landing on the runway, in this scenario. Because of this, the regular infantry battalion lands over a period of several turns and because these are supposed to represent powered aircraft, have zero scatter when landing.

In the original scenario, the victory conditions required possession of the airfield by the Germans by the end of the game in order to win. In this scenario, I placed objective hexes on each hex of the runway and of course, the main airfield building. The only other source of victory points is through unit elimination for both sides.

There is a lot of room for variation for the set up of the Norwegians, however they should not be placed anywhere near the airfield as previously noted, with the exception of the anti-aircraft units. The Germans can be set to land anywhere on the map but need to be close to the airfield in order to capture it quickly.

Scenario #32

This scenario simulates one of the surprise German paratroop drops in Holland on 10 May 1940. In truth, this scenario is really a combination of two separate events. One is the actual paratroop drop itself, and the other is the relief of those paratroops by an armored column which occurred on 13 May 1940. Therefore this scenario is a-historical. In the original scenario the mapboard is weirdly shaped and I have recreated that here. Also on the major north-south stream running across the main part of the map (through Grancelles), all of the bridges, except the one crossing hexside 10,6/11,7, have been changed to light bridges. Thus only light vehicles and dismounted units may cross them. This is commensurate with the special rules in the original scenario. The scenario is fifteen turns long.

The Dutch have an infantry battalion strung out in company size groups across the board to stop the inevitable advance of the panzers when they arrive on the board, backed up by a regiment of 40mm anti-aircraft guns, which are largely set up to cover the possible landing sites around Grancelles. Because they are the defender, the Dutch receive Improved Positions. The Germans have a paratroop battalion which drops in on Turn 1 and the panzer column which enters the board along the east edge on Turn 5. All were standard conversions from the units in the original scenario with no special substitutions.

The victory conditions in the original scenario depended on control of the bridge on hexside 10,6/11,7 and on the amount of units that the Germans exit off of the west edge

of the map by the end of the turn. I have duplicated these in this scenario. Also there are the usual victory points from the elimination of enemy units.

There is a lot of variation possible in the Dutch set up, based on what the player's defensive priorities are. The Germans still have variety of places to drop his paratroops at but must keep in mind that their primary objective is the main bridge at hexside 10,6/11,7.

Scenario #33

The scenario simulates the German assault on the Belgian Eben-Emael fortress complex. Now there are at least two other scenarios on Games Depot that deal with the Eben-Emael assault in a more realistic and historical manner. But remember that the Panzer Leader versions are caricatures of the original battles and are easier and faster to play. Anyway, in the original scenario, the Allies were given five fort counters to be placed in five specific hexes. I have duplicated this and placed them in the same corresponding hexes in the West Front board as they are in the Panzer Leader. Because Eben-Emael was a full fledged fortress, I made the forts into pillboxes. The original scenario also had six block counters which I made into six blocked hexes blocking access to the fort complex from the east, north, and south which is historical. The scenario is ten turns long.

The Belgians have a garrison composed of four infantry companies (one of which is a machine gun company), an MP platoon (which I used bicycle troops to represent), three batteries of field canon., three batteries of anti-tank guns, and five batteries of anti-aircraft guns (two of which are of French manufacture). In the original scenario this whole force was to be placed inside the five fort counters and could. I was able to do this in the West Front version too. The Germans have an assault group consisting of a paratroop battalion reinforced by two engineer companies, two mortar platoons, and an infantry gun section. The paratroop battalion drops normally but the rest have to land by glider. The Germans also have one airstrike, in this case being a Stuka dive bomber.

In the original scenario the victory conditions were based on the possession of the fort counters at the end of the game. I have made each fortress hex an objective hex to duplicate this. As always in West Front unit elimination also provides victory points for both sides.

There is a lot of variation for the German set up given the big board. However the Germans must keep in mind the limited time that they have in the game. The Belgian set up is pretty much fixed into the five pillbox hexes although the units can be switched around within this limit. The block hexes can be switched around provided that they remain adjacent to the pillbox hexes.

Scenario #34

This scenario simulates the German airdrop on Maleme, Crete. There are also several scenarios of this battle, both in the game and in the Game Depot website. Still this is yet another version based on the Panzer Leader scenario of that battle. The scenario last for fifteen turns.

The Allied force consists of a New Zealand infantry battalion, backed by a field artillery battery and a reduced tank squadron of Matilda tanks, plus a reduced Greek infantry battalion with some anti-aircraft elements. These start the game set up on the board. They may set up anywhere, except the Matilda tanks which must be set up north of hexline xx,10. As they are the defender in this scenario, the Allies receive Improved Positions in their set up. The Germans receive the standard paratroop battalion, plus an airlanding infantry battalion, both which arrive on Turn 1. The Germans also have five airstrikes in the form of Stuka dive bombers.

The victory conditions in the original scenario were based on possession of series of hilltop hexes on southern half of the board, which represent a ridgeline overlooking the Maleme airfield, which is located on the northern half of the map. I did not place an airfield on this board like in Scenario #31 because it was not an objective in this scenario. Anyway I have placed a series on objective hexes on these hilltop hexes to simulate the ridgeline that the Germans must capture. Also as usual, unit elimination provides for even more victory points for both sides in this scenario.

There is a lot variation possible in the set up of the Allies but it must be remembered that the Allies were set up to repel a possible sea invasion as well as an air drop of paratrooper so they would logically not be all set up on the ridgeline as they would not know of the objectives of the specific German units represented in the game. While the Germans have a variety of landing areas to choose from they must remember what their objectives are and the limited amount of time that they have to take them.

Scenario #35

This is another scenario that really combines two separate events into one. Its main event is the British landing of units of its 1st Air Landing Brigade on the Syracuse coastal defenses in Sicily on 10 July, 1943. But it also includes part of the British paratroop drop that occurred several days later further up the coast. This is a night scenario but is actually occurring in the early pre-dawn hours so I made the maximum sighting distance four hexes to match that in the original scenario. This scenario lasts for ten turns.

In the original scenario, the defenders were weak German units but this is because this was all that the original designer had to work with. In truth the Syracuse coastal defense units were Italian in composition. Thus I used equivalent Italian units in place of the German, except where an actual German weapon was called for. (The Italians by this time were using a lot of German guns and artillery in many of their units.) These are set up anywhere on the board, but I chose to place them near the coast as it is a coastal

defense unit. Being the defender, the Italians receive Improved Positions. The Allied force consists of a British paratroop battalion and an air-landing battalion reinforced with some anti-tank and anti-aircraft units. Both of these battalions land on Turn 1. The Allies also get five airstrikes in the form of Typhoon fighter bombers.

In the original scenario the victory conditions were dependent on control of a section coastal road running from hex 17,8 to hex 28,7. I have duplicated this by placing a series of objective hexes along this section of road from which either side can control it either by the physical presence of units and/or by their respective lines of fire. As usual the destruction of enemy units also adds victory points to the point totals of both sides as well.

While there is plenty of set up and landing room on the board for both sides, the local objective sort of compacts the battle to one part of the board. In fact the Italian set up reflects this. Thus again the Allies must land close enough to be able to achieve their objectives in time.

Scenario #36

This scenario simulates the midnight drop of an American Air Landing Battalion (Reinforced) in order to stop the advance of German reinforcements from the 15th Panzergrenadier Division towards the American bridgehead at Gela, Sicily. It is a full night scenario with a maximum visibility of one hex. The map is a long skinny map going from north to south. The scenario is twelve turns long.

The Germans have three forces. The first force, which is set up anywhere on the board, are various anti-aircraft units plus some security forces. These are set at various choke points along the main north-south road that traverses the length of the board, in Improved Positions. Unfortunately, they can not cover them all. The other two forces, representing the lead reinforcements from the 15th Panzergrenadier, enter on the northern edge of the board, one on Turn 1, the other on Turn 3. This amounts to two reduced panzergrenadier battalions and supporting forces, plus a reduced tank company. I had to make some changes to the units from the original scenario. In the first group of German forces that enters the board on Turn 1, there were originally two Wirblewind units. However the Wirblewind was not in existence in 1943 so I replaced them with two Sd Kfz 7/1 units. The dismounted 20mm AA Gun units I replaced with Sd Kfz 10/4 units. I also replaced one of the 81mm Mortars with Sd Kfz 251/2 units. The American airlanding battalion is reinforced with extra machine gun, mortar and anti-aircraft units. These may drop anywhere on the board but preferably near an unoccupied choke point so they can set up in time to slow down the Germans.

The victory conditions in the original scenario were dependent on how many units the Germans exited off the southern edge of the board by the end of the game versus how many German units the Americans can eliminate by the end of the game. These were easily duplicated. I placed two exit hexes for the Germans on the southern edge of the

board. Also the Germans get points for eliminating American units as is usual in West Front. One may wonder about the way the victory levels are arranged point wise. I did this deliberately to prevent the German player from not traversing the length of the board in order to deny the American player victory points.

Due to the size and length of the board there are plenty of areas for both the Germans to set up in and for the Americans to land in. The Germans do not have enough units set up at the beginning to cover every choke point, but then the Americans are not exactly the best force to delay the German armored advanced across the board. The Germans for their part must break though fast or go around the choke point that the Americans defend at as they only have twelve turns to move across the board.

Scenario #37

This scenario simulates the German attack on the Salerno bridgehead and the airborne reinforcement to help stem the tide of battle. The attacking force is a *kampfgruppe* of the German 29th Panzergrenadier Division. The defending force is an infantry regiment of the US 45th Infantry Division. (In the original scenario the American force is identified as being from the US 36th Infantry Division but this is in error, it was the 45th Infantry that bore the brunt of the attack.) The Americans are reinforced by an American paratroop battalion from the 82nd Airborne Division which is dropped behind friendly lines at the beginning of the scenario. The mapboard comprises all four boards from the Panzer Leader game. This is a night scenario, actually occurring in the early pre-dawn hours so there is some minimal light, to a maximum sighting range of four hexes. The scenario lasts for fifteen turns.

Both sides have some pretty hefty forces in this scenario. On the German side they have a two battalion panzergrenadier regiment from the 29th Panzergrenadier Division, reinforced with some divisional artillery and a reduced panzer battalion from the 26th Panzer Division. This entire force sets up anywhere east of hexline xx,10. I had to make some substitutions between the original counters in Panzer Leader and those of West Front. I took one of the SG IIIg counters in Panzer Leader and substituted three Sd Kfz 250/9 sections which went into the halftrack companies. I also took the four 20mm AA and four truck counters from the original and substituted eight truck mounted 20mm AA units.

On the American side, they have two infantry battalion plus the infantry regiment HQ and supporting elements. In addition, they have an attached tank battalion, a tank destroyer company, and a reinforcing airborne infantry battalion which lands on Turn 1. All of this is set up in-between hexlines xx,11 and xx,31, however the airborne battalion may land anywhere on the board. Being the defender in this scenario, the Americans get their Improved Positions, except the airborne battalion which will be landing on first turn. The Allies receive five airstrikes in this scenario in the form of P-40E ground attack fighter. I made some substitutions for the Allies also. In the original scenario there were two 76mm AT Gun platoons. As these guns were not in service at the time the scenario I

substituted two M3 self-propelled 75mm gun platoons for them. The original tank battalion had six M-4/75mm, three M-4/76mm, and three British M-4 platoons in it. As the M-4/76mm and the British M-4 (with the Firefly tank in it) were not in service yet I substituted three more M-4 platoons for the British ones and three M-10 tank destroyers for the M-4/76mm platoons. The 105mm artillery unit in the original scenario was substituted by an M-3 105mm cannon company for the infantry regiment.

The victory conditions in the original scenario were based on control of Board C, D, and the town of Grancelles at the end of the game. I duplicated this by placing objective hexes in all of the towns in the eastern three quarters of the board. As always the elimination of enemy units also gives victory points for both sides.

There is not much variation for the German area, given their compressed set up area. The Americans have more variety because they have a greater set up area. Finally, the airborne battalion may land anywhere on the board, although I have them landing near Grancelles as they did indeed historically land in the rear areas that night.

Scenario #38

Scenario #38 is in reality two different scenarios combined together. In the article “Para-Leader” scenarios #38 and #39 were actually two parts of the same battle. In the first part the American paratroop battalion had to secure a landing zone for the follow up forces. In the second part, American reinforcements arrive by air to take Grancelles and hold it against a counterattack by late arriving German forces. They used the same board and the surviving units from both sides in Scenario #38 were also used in #39. So it made sense to combine the two in this one scenario for West Front. In this combined scenario the initial American paratroop battalion lands and tries to secure a landing zone against local German forces. Later on Turn 9 another American paratroop battalion arrives and then the two battalions try to take the town of Grancelles, which is this scenario represents the town of St. Mere-Eglise. On the same turn German reinforcements arrive along the northern edge of the board. On Turn 16 an American glider battalion arrives as the final American reinforcement. The scenario occurs at night, thus visibility is down to a maximum of one hex. The mapboard is a standard square with three Panzer Leader mapboards in it. The scenario lasts for 23 turns.

The German side has two forces. The first force is the on-board force which consists of a reduced infantry battalion, reinforced by various anti-aircraft units. The second force is a two battalion infantry regiment with supporting elements. Conversion of these forces from Panzer Leader to West Front was pretty much standard. Being the defender, the Germans get their Improved Positions. The Americans have three battalions plus a company from a fourth battalion, with some artillery, mortars, anti-aircraft units and the regimental HQ. There was one discrepancy in the original American order of battle. The author had British mortar units with the paratroop battalions. I looked into this and found that these were to represent the 60mm mortars that are part of the paratroop companies.

Since the paratroop companies already have 60mm mortars as part of their normal set up I was able to ignore these British mortars.

Because this is a combined scenario, we have to use the victory conditions from the second scenario. In the original scenario, victory was based on the number of town hexes in the town of Grancelles that each side controlled at the end of the game. I duplicated this by making every hex in Grancelles an objective hex. As usual, unit elimination also provides victory points for both sides.

There is certainly much variety possible in the set up of both sides. However, the victory conditions require both sides to set up or land near Grancelles as that town is the bone of contention in this scenario.

Scenario #39

This scenario is actually listed as #40 in the General magazine. It simulates the seizure of the Groesbeek Heights in Holland during Operation Market-Garden by American paratroopers and the early attempts by the scattered German forces to take them back. The Germans have scattered infantry and anti-aircraft artillery units set up all over the board with no overall commander, as was the case in the early part of the battle. The Americans have a paratroop and a parachute artillery battalion landing, quickly followed by a support force consisting of engineer and anti-tank units landing by gliders. The mapboard is the standard Panzer Leader three-board square. The scenario lasts for twelve turns.

The Germans have what amounts to a collection of small independent units consisting of garrison, regular, and SS troops, plus a bunch of AA batteries scattered across the area. The conversion of the Panzer Leader units to West front was pretty straight forward. The original scenario used the rifle units from Panzer Leader 1940 to represent most of the second line troops in the scenario. I used the regular rifle units to represent them. Being the defender, the Germans get their Improved Positions in their set up. The Americans have a standard paratroop battalion, a parachute field artillery battalion, most of an airborne engineer battalion, and an anti-tank company. Again the conversion of these troops was straight forward.

In the original scenario, the victory is determined by possession of the road running from St. Athan to the south edge of the board. The Americans must control it along its length and the Germans got to create a three hex corridor across it by the end of the game. To simulate this I created a series of objective hexes along key points on the road for the Americans to capture. The Germans must quickly bring up their scattered units to take back enough of the road, in the form of objective hexes, to block the inevitable advance of the British armored force moving north along the road days later. As usual unit elimination also provides victory points for both sides.

While there is certainly a lot of variation on where the Germans can set up, they can not be set up on the road except in the town of Wiln at the game's beginning. The Americans must land close to the road, in a big enough area to accommodate the landing of the entire force the is close enough to the road to capture it quickly, given the short game time.

Scenario #40

This scenario is actually listed as #41 in the General magazine. It simulates the British raid on Dieppe. Yes there is already a scenario for that battle in the Games Depot website, so why do it again? Well, this is a simpler version that is based on Panzer Leader and of course much faster to play. In the original scenario, there were instructions for changes in the mapboard. I have incorporated them into the design of the mapboard here. These included the big city of Dieppe and changes in the where the cliff hexsides are facing the beach, plus a torpedo dump placed to the east of the city. The Germans have various elements of the 302nd Infantry Division, plus units from three different flak battalions defending the map. They also have a small kampfguppe from the 10th Panzer Division that is available for reinforcement starting on Turn 11, although it only has a 10% chance of arrival. In addition, the Germans get four forts, which I made into pillboxes (early vestiges of the Atlantic Wall), and eight blocks. The Allies are invading by landing craft. They consist of two infantry battalions of the Canadian 2nd Infantry Division, supported by a battalion of heavy tanks. The mapboard is only a two board square, which includes the beach board. The scenario lasts for twenty turns.

The conversion of the German units from Panzer Leader to West Front was pretty much straight forward. There were no substitutions to be made. On the map the torpedo dump I made into a large single building. In the original scenario it was supposed to be a cave of sorts but unfortunately caves are not available in West Front. Being the defender, the Germans got their Improved Positions to use on units not set up in the pillboxes. The Allies only had one substitution. Two of the original engineer units were converted to commando units, but this is based on previous published errata for the original scenario. The Allies also receive five airstrikes. Historically these were Hurricane Mk IIbs, but these were not available in West Front so I used five Typhoon fighter bombers in their place.

The original victory conditions were based on the following objectives, the city of Dieppe itself, the torpedo dump, the town of Fratelle (which represents a radar site) and the town of Wiln (location of a small airfield). The Allies received victory points for destroying or occupying these by the end of the game. Both sides also got points for enemy unit elimination. The Germans got points for British units still on the board by the end of the game. The Allies got points for friendly unit evacuated by landing craft by the end of the game. For West Front I established objectives hexes in Dieppe, Fratelle, Wiln, and the torpedo dump. I also included the usual unit elimination points into the victory levels. I did not include the other original victory conditions as the original scenario was compressing the battle into a two hour block of time. Since it lasted over four hours I am

making the assumption that if the Allies control an objective hex at the end of the game, they will have time to destroy it before having to leave when they historically did.

There is a lot of variety possible in the German set up, although they will most undoubtedly concentrate in the objective hexes. The only variation possible in the Allied set up is in the changing of the placement of the units on their entry hexes.

Conclusion

It is my hope that players enjoy these new scenarios in the Panzer Leader series. Look forward to more to come later this year.