

## **DESIGN NOTES FOR SCENARIOS IN ODE TO PANZER LEADER V**

**By**  
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Again the conversion of the scenarios of Panzer Leader to West Front continues. In this set are the six scenarios from the article “The Paths of Rommel: New Scenarios for Panzer Leader 1940” by Daniel Helmbrecht, which were published in the General Vol.22, #3. These scenarios when originally published were some of the strangest organized ones ever published in the General. Most of this was due to the multiple errors that occurred in transcribing the original manuscript to the printed page. In four of the scenarios, the mapboard configurations were incorrect. These errors were not discovered until the issue was about to go to press. It was too late to change the artwork (which the mapboard configurations were) so the editors changed the set up instructions so that the respective sides were set up or entered where the author originally intended. This led to some strange things happening such as the Germans advancing from west to east across the board, whereas they should be advancing east to west as would be appropriate in 1940. Another problem came from the author himself. In all of the scenarios the Germans are short of transport units. The author only supplied enough to transport the guns, the infantry was left without. Of course the author was relying on the Panzer Leader rule that allowed German infantry units to ride on any German AFV unit (except SPA’s). However, he must of wrote and submitted his article before the ruling came out that German infantry units may not ride on non-transport AFV units in Panzer Leader 1940 due to the fact that Germans did not adopt this tactic until after they invaded Russia later in the war and saw the Russians regularly employing it. Another fault of his was the inclusion of Pz III tanks in the German orders of battle. Anyone with even a basic knowledge of the France 1940 Campaign knows that the German 7<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division never had Pz III tanks. The point of the matter is that all of the previously mentioned faults had to be corrected before converting the Panzer leader scenarios into ones for West Front.

As usual these scenarios were converted to the same standard as those ones in previous parts of the “Ode to Panzer Leader” series. Again, as usual, refer to the original Design Notes for “Ode to Panzer Leader” to see what those standards are. One special note, since all of these scenarios have to do with the German 7<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division, I have made the top German leader General Rommel himself, since he usually preferred to lead from the front, and the rest of the leaders in the various German orders of battle the actual commanders who led the units in question during the actual engagements. Most of the scenarios have a low to medium units count and can be completed in a short amount of time.

### **Scenario #41**

Scenario #41 is supposed to depict Rommel’s crossing of the Meuse River on 13 May 1940. Actually the scenario really depicts his division’s movement up to the river the day before and then its crossing on the following day. In the General this scenario is actually

listed as number #42. The mapboard is corrected to its originally intended set up versus what one sees in the original General article. The North-South River running the width of the board is supposed to represent the Meuse River. The scenario is fifteen turns long.

The French are set up on the board, with the 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division units set up west of the Meuse and the units of the 1<sup>st</sup> Light Cavalry Division set up on the east side of the river. The only exception is that the Tank Battalion assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Light Cavalry is stationed over on the west side of the board, acting as a divisional reserve. Although the French can set up anywhere on the board in the original scenario, I set them up in a historical fashion. The French did not have any cavalry units per say in the original Panzer Leader 1940 counter set, so they were represented by linking up a rifle unit with a wagon unit. As there were six wagons in the order of battle for this scenario, I gave the French two reduced cavalry squadrons. The three 81mm Mortar units (18 mortars) I broke up into eight different mortar units. The 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division did not have any 60mm mortars during the campaign but did have a surplus of 81mm mortars which they would sometimes spread out among the line rifle companies. Being on the defensive the French get Improved Positions.

The German force, which enters on the eastern edge of the board, is a combined arms force. It has two reduced tank battalions, a reduced infantry battalion, an artillery battalion, a reduced Flak battalion, and some recon and engineer units. The original SdKfz 231-6 armored car unit I broke down into three units in the scenario, one three strength point unit and two two-strength point units. The original halftrack units I converted into the non-armored types for towing artillery. The three original Pz III units I converted to Pz 38a units. The German infantry and engineers have sufficient truck units for transport purposes.

The original victory conditions were based on how many towns the Germans controlled at the end of the game. I gave each town an objective hex of 100 points each. The scenario also has the usual victory points for unit elimination for both sides.

There is a lot of room for variation in the French set up. However I feel that the historical set up should be stuck to as the Germans must have a chance to get across the river if they are to have an even chance of winning. Not much to change on the German side except the order of entry for the units coming on the east side of the board.

## **Scenario #42**

Scenario #42 depicts Rommel's advance to the immediate west near Philippenville after the conclusion of the engagement at Flavion (see the original Flavion scenario that comes with the game). In the General this scenario is listed as #43. This scenario also had a screwed up mapboard diagram in the original article and to correct I had to completely turn it around to get it right. Both sides enter on opposite sides of the board, thus making this a meeting engagement, which means that neither side receives Improved Positions at the start of this scenario. Due to having to travel the length of the board, both sides will

meet in the middle about Turn 3, with the action starting on Turn 4. The scenario is ten turns long.

The French enter first on the west side of the board. The force consists of an armored battalion and part of an armored infantry battalion from the 1<sup>st</sup> DCR, and a reduced infantry battalion, an artillery battalion, and a divisional recon squadron from the 4<sup>th</sup> North African Division. The force is only partially mobile, with the line infantry reduced to walking to the action and due to the distance and time involved, may not get into the action before the game is over. Again I converted three of the rifle platoons and three of the wagons into cavalry. The two 81mm Mortar units in the original scenario I broke up into four mortar units in this scenario, while the original three 25mm ATG units I broke also into four units.

The German side enters on the east side of the board. The force consists of one panzer battalion, a reduced motorcycle battalion, a reduced artillery battalion, a reduced engineer company, an armored car company, and the usual leader and headquarters units. The Germans receive four airstrikes in this scenario. In the original scenario the Germans received two halftrack units. In this scenario I made one of them into the non-armored type to tow the artillery units and the other I used as a regular standard halftrack units to transport the engineer elements. (The 7<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division had few, if any, armored halftracks during this campaign and what few that they did have went to one of the engineer companies.) As usual I converted the three Pz III units in the original scenario into three more Pz 38a units in this one. As noted from the force composition, I made the rifle units into a reduced motorcycle battalion and supplied them with enough trucks and motorcycle units to transport them.

The original victory conditions were based on German control of the town of Wiln. This was based on the historical premise that the French were supposed to use the town as a staging area for a counterattack. In this scenario, as happened historically, the Germans get to the town first and then meet the French further west as they moving towards the town, thus the scenario replicates the real action rather well. I made the two hexes in Wiln into French controlled objective hexes for the Germans to capture. This scenario also awards both sides the usual victory point for enemy unit elimination.

As this is a meeting engagement, there is not much variation possible for either side, just changing the order of entry for the various units on both sides of the board.

### **Scenario #43**

This scenario depicts Rommel's advance to the town of Clairfayts, where units of the French North African Division manned a northern extension of the Maginot Line. In the General this scenario is listed as #44. Again, as with the previous two scenarios, this one had a screwed up mapboard in its original form, and again, I had to switch it around to its proper orientation and correct the set up instructions to reflect this. This scenario is small in size in terms of the mapboard and is twelve turns long.

The French are set up on the board west of the north-south river and thus are the defenders in this scenario, which means they will receive Improved Positions. The French have a reduced infantry battalion backed by an artillery battalion, plus some additional divisional support units. In addition to these, the French also have three Blocks, two Minefields, and two Forts from the original scenario. However, the minefields are only of the 1-1 attack type and the forts are only worth 10 in their defense factors, not the usual 40. To simulate this I gave the French two Strength 1 Minefields and two Trenches in their set up. The support weapons I broke down as follows; the three 25mm ATG units (total 12 guns) I made into four units three-gun units, the 25mm AA unit (total 6 guns) I made into two three-gun units, the 37mm IG unit (total 3 guns) I made into one two-gun and one single-gun units, and the three 81mm Mortar units (total 18 mortars) I made into four four-mortar and one two-mortar units.

The Germans enter on the east side of the mapboard. They consist of a reduced panzer regiment, a reduced motorcycle battalion, a reduced artillery battalion, a reduced engineer company, and elements of a flak battalion which includes a battery of those deadly 88's. Of course the usual leaders and headquarters units are included as well. Again I converted three Pz III units in the original scenario into three more additional Pz 38a units in this one. As before, I made sure that all of the infantry and gun units had enough non-armored halftracks, trucks, and motorcycles to insure their transport needs.

The original victory conditions were based on how many units the Germans could exit off of the west edge of the board by the end of the game. To simulate this I gave the Germans two exit hexes on the west edge of the board. There are no other objective hexes in this scenario and enemy unit elimination will supply the remainder of the victory points for both sides to score in this scenario.

The French have a lot of variation possible in their set up but they must stay on the west side of the north-south river. The only variation possible for the Germans is in the order of unit entrance on the east edge of the mapboard.

## **Scenario #44**

This scenario depicts Rommel's attack on elements of the French 4<sup>th</sup> North African Division and the 3<sup>rd</sup> DLM near Pommerville in an attempt to capture the city of Cambrai. The scenario is listed as #45 in the General. For once the mapboard configuration diagram in the original scenario was correct so I did not have to make any changes to the board or the set up instructions. This is a large scenario as it uses three of the Panzer Leader boards and it is fifteen turns long.

The French force consists of four battalions of armor, an infantry battalion, an artillery battalion, an armored infantry company, an anti-aircraft battalion, and an engineer platoon. These set anywhere west of Hexline xx,10. Three of the tank battalions are equipped with H35 tanks and have two organizations here in this scenario. One has the

four platoon companies, characteristic of the DLM tank battalions, and the three platoon companies, characteristic of the independent tank battalions. The fourth tank battalion featured is a reduced one equipped with FT-17 tanks. The French force is under two commands, one is the 4<sup>th</sup> North African Division which controls the infantry battalion, the reduced tank battalion, the anti-aircraft battalion, and is under control of a regimental headquarters. The rest is under control of the 3<sup>rd</sup> DLM which has a divisional headquarters to control it. As the French are on the defensive, they receive Improved Positions in their set up. The support guns were broken down as follows; the two mortar units in the original scenario (12 mortars) were broken down into three four-mortar units, the two artillery units (12 guns) were broken down into three four-gun units, and the three 25mm AA units (18 guns) were broken down into six three-gun units.

The German force consists of a reduced panzer regiment of two battalions, a motorized infantry battalion, an artillery battalion, elements of a flak battalion, and the obligatory engineer and recon elements. These set up anywhere east of Hexline xx,10. Again three of the Pz III units in the original scenario have been converted to Pz 38a units in this one. The halftrack units are all the non-armored type for towing guns and all of the infantry and support units have enough trucks for transport purposes. The single mortar that the Germans have in this one I have kept as a single six-mortar unit.

The original victory conditions were based on control of the town of Grancelles (which is supposed to represent Cambrai in this scenario) at the end of the game. Control was determined by possession of the individual town hexes in Grancelles. To duplicate this I made each town hex in Grancelles an objective hex. Besides these the only other source of victory points are those from enemy unit elimination.

There is a lot of variation possible for the French given that they set up on two-thirds of the mapboard, but the German have less as they are only one third and they are moving out anyway to get to Grancelles.

## **Scenario #45**

This scenario depicts Rommel's attack across the La Basse Canal at the town of Cruinchy. The scenario is listed as #47 in the General. The reason for the skipped number is that this scenario historically occurs the day before #46 and I wanted to keep the scenarios in chronological order in each set. Not only that, but the original author screwed up the title and description of the scenario. He listed it as "Cruinchy: Bridgehead on the Somme. Cruinchy is nowhere on the Somme River, in fact the 7<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division wasn't even close to the river on the day of this battle. If that was not bad enough, the original author had the wrong Allied units listed in the scenario description. He listed the British 5<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and the French 3<sup>rd</sup> DLM. In fact it was the British 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division that was engaged that day along the La Basse Canal. This was the last scenario that had a screwed up mapboard orientation diagram in the original article. As usual I corrected it and changed the set up instructions accordingly. This is another small scenario that last for ten turns.

The British start the game set up north of the east-west river. Their force contains an infantry company backup by battalion and regimental assets, an armored squadron, and an anti-aircraft battery. They also receive a block which must be placed on the road hex on the south side of the main bridge across the river. As they are on the defensive they receive Improved Positions in their set up. If the British seem rather sparse it must be remembered that the British 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division was spread out all along the La Basse Canal defending the Dunkirk bridgehead and was under pressure the day of the battle from four panzer and one motorized divisions all along its length.

The Germans start the game set up south of the east-west river and must be at least three hexes away from the nearest British unit. They have a reduced recon battalion, a elements of a Flak battalion, and a reduced panzer battalion in their force. The Germans also have a heavy bridge set up across the river between hexes 7,1 and 8,1. This represents a pontoon bridge that is in the original scenario. (Pontoon bridges can not be placed across river hexsides in West Front so the substitution was necessary.) With two armored car companies I divided up the SdKfz 231-6 armored car units between the companies, with one getting a three-vehicle unit and the other getting the two two-vehicle units. Each company received one three-vehicle and one four vehicle units of the SdKfz 221 armored cars. In the supporting guns I kept the 88mm AA gun and the 81mm mortar units together as single units but the two 20mm AA units in the original scenario I broke up into four three-gun units. As there were only enough halftracks (of which I made two into the non-armored types) and trucks for the guns and engineers, I supplied motorcycles for the rifle units as this would be appropriate for infantry in the recon battalion of 1940.

The original victory conditions were based on possession of the town of Artain at the end of the game. To simulate this I made each hex in the town an objective hex, starting the game in British control. The only other source of victory points is in enemy unit elimination for both sides.

While there can be variation in each side's setup, the British do not have a lot of space on the mapboard to do so and the Germans do not need the vast amount of the space that they have. It is possible to change the location of the heavy bridge that the Germans have but to be fair, the Germans should change the location of the bridge, let the British set up their units, and then finish up the set up of the rest of their forces.

## **Scenario #46**

This scenario depicts the attempted breakout of the French 1<sup>st</sup> Army from the pocket at Lille that they were in. This scenario is listed as #46 in the General. This is the other scenario whose original map configuration and set up instructions were correct so I did not have to make any changes. This is a large as it again uses the three Panzer Leader mapboards in the square configuration but it only has a game length of ten turns.

The Germans are the defenders in this one for once so they get the Improved Positions in their set up. The German force consists of a much reduced panzer battalion (not even two companies worth of tanks), a motorcycle battalion, a reduced artillery battalion (this one equipped with 75mm field guns instead of the usual 105mm howitzers), elements of a flak battalion, an anti-tank company, an engineer platoon, and two armored car companies. What is striking about this scenario is the lack of transport vehicles for the Germans. The original author was deliberate in this, leaving only one halftrack unit to tow the 88mm gun unit around. The assumption is that the rest of the transport units are located just off of the board in the rear. The Germans are set up anywhere west of Hexline xx,10. The 88mm gun and the 81mm mortar units I left intact but the 37mm AT gun and 20mm anti-aircraft gun units in the original order of battle I broke down into three-gun units in this scenario. The 75mm artillery unit I broke down into two three-gun batteries.

The French have a very large force with elements from five different divisions all under a combined command under the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Mechanized Division. It consists of three tank battalions, one reduced armored infantry battalion, one reduced motorized infantry battalion (minus its trucks), two divisional recon groups (one mechanized and one cavalry), two reduced artillery battalions, and two anti-aircraft squadrons. These are set up east of Hexline xx,10. For the supporting gun units in the original scenario I broke them down as follows. The three 75mm artillery units (18 guns) I broke down into six three-gun units. The two 81mm mortar units (12 mortars) I broke down into two four-mortar and two two-mortar units. The three 25mm anti-aircraft units (18 guns) I broke down into six three-gun units. I used the six wagon and six rifle units to make six cavalry units.

The original victory conditions were based on how many unit the French could exit off of the west edge of the mapboard by the end of the game. I duplicated this by placing an exit hex for the French in Hex 16,30. The only other source of victory point is the elimination of enemy units. To be honest, given the limited number of turns in the scenario, it is doubtful that the French will get many, if any, units off of the board by the end of the game. Thus they will have to score the majority of their victory points killing Germans.

There is a lot variation possible for the Germans, given the large space they have to set up on. The French have less variation possible, given their smaller set up space and large force.

## **Conclusion**

This concludes another set of West Front conversions of Panzer Leader scenarios. I hope that players find them enjoyable. Look forward to the last set to come next year (2009).