

Death From Above

This game pitted two equal forces of American and German Airborne formations against one another in a fight for control of the town square. Each team had eighteen infantry troops and several armored fighting vehicles. The U.S. player's order of battle included two M4A3 Sherman tanks and one M5A1 Stuart. The Germans fielded one Panther G, a Sturmgeschütz III and one Sd Kfz 222.



The game began with both sides maneuvering into position. The U.S. players split their forces as one group rushed to the Farmhouse while another one moved through some bocage into the Priory yard. The Germans split their forces into three fire teams. One group moved into an over-watch position in some buildings that provided a view of the main road. The second group dashed straight for the church while a third group attempted to outflank the enemy.



The *German* flanking element moves through a courtyard.



A Sherman chooses not to expose itself to German fire.

As the German flanking element attempted to cross an alley, they came under withering fire from U.S. Airborne troops hiding in a facing hedge. A Sherman tank joined in and the Germans ran for cover. As they reach a bombed out foundation, the Sherman pictured above opened up with its 75mm gun and sent an armor piercing round through the thin wall. The German fire team had moved into a hornets nest and began to withdraw.

The German armored car rushed to challenge the Americans and found them already entering the Priory. It opened up with a hail of 20mm high explosive fire and wounded several defenders. As an American bazooka trooper emerged to fire on the armored car, he was killed by a sharpshooter in the facing building.



The Sturmgeschütz has the U.S. player bottled up.

A stalemate had developed and the U.S. player decided to make a daring move with the sandbagged M4A3. Using smoke for cover, the Sherman moved out. As fate would have it, the Sturmgeschütz had been scanning that spot and saw the Sherman as he entered the road. He fired, and a 75mm projectile pierced the Sherman's turret face igniting the stored ammunition.

The second Sherman had been playing "cat and mouse" with the armored car, but while the Sturmgeschütz was reloading, it attacked. Both of the German vehicles were burning.



A Sherman knocks out two German vehicles.

Now the only German armored asset remaining was the Panther. Its tank commander was killed in the early stages of the battle when a BAR gunner spotted him as the tank moved into the church ruins. A short burst caught the German in the head and shook the remaining crew.

A vicious fight ensued for control of the Priory and with the help of the armored car, the American's were pushed back. A pesky Stuart tank managed to unleash one HE shell into the church and killed a hapless German. The Stuart's luck held as another German missed with a panzerfaust. Then the Panther decided to take control. However, as it pursued the Stuart, it became mired in the rubble. This allowed the Stuart to escape. The Panther came out of the rubble and the Stuart nailed it in the flank. Fortunately for the Panther, the angle was such that the 37mm projectile bounced off.



The Panther is not fast enough to catch the Stuart.

Finally, the German player conceded that the U.S. had gotten the best of them. The Germans controlled the church and the top floor of the prior, but the U.S. had the 2½ buildings required for a win. Although the Panther was still operational, the loss of its commander reduced its effectiveness.

Models Used

The miniatures pictured are Conte Collectibles, Old Northwest Trading Company and William Britain. The vehicles are by Forces of Valor and 21st Century.