



The Setting

The Dulles War-gaming Club, sponsored by Britton Publishers, met to play-test “Counter Attack on Ste Mere Eglise.” This is a 25mm WWII skirmish scenario written by Steve Fliss using the Final Combat rules system. The club will present this game at Cold Wars and Little Wars in the weeks to come.

The game begins on June 6, 1944 with the 82nd Airborne having taken control of the town. The Germans recognize the importance of the strategic crossroads and they launch an immediate counter attack.

Although the U.S. player begins with its forces hidden from view, the challenge is to predict the German point of attack and place an extremely limited force in such a manner as to delay the assault until reinforcements can arrive. Conversely, the German player must act aggressively from the opening chit and not allow the airborne troopers to prevent them from their objective, which is the capture of any three buildings.



The Battle Plan

The German battle plan was simple. After identifying the logical entry point, the Germans reckoned the closest buildings would surely be the most heavily defended. A scenario option provided a special entry rule on turn two for one German squad. It gave them an opportunity to quickly capture a farm house with little resistance. The Germans were fairly certain, the U.S. players would not risk defending this building as it was isolated and offered no chance for escape. In addition to the platoon of infantry, the Germans had one Marder III and two 8.0cm mortar missions. The German commander gathered his officers and issued orders. Squads one and two would attack the manor house with support from the Marder while the third squad would delay for one turn and enter near the farm house. Emphasis was placed on speed.

The scope of the game left most of the buildings beyond German reach. However, with only fifteen men, positions were carefully selected on the basis for potential enfilading fire. In support, the Americans also had four missions of 60mm mortars. Reinforcements consisted of seven men in two fire teams, but they were at the mercy of the dice for their time of entry.



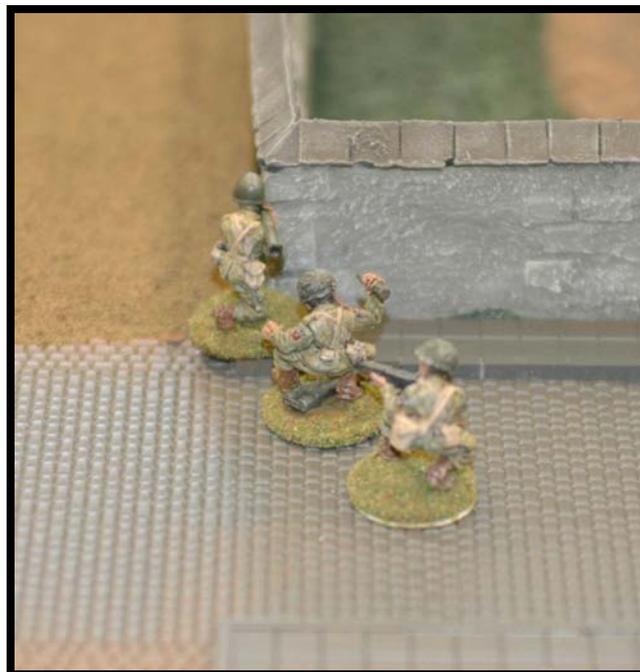
The Assault

The Germans positioned their Marder so that it could provide support without placing it in jeopardy from the U.S. bazooka. As the attack began, the Marder opened up on the manor house and sent a 7.5cm projectile crashing through the second floor window. The reaction of the U.S. players indicated that something important was hit. The crew began to frantically reload the gun. Meanwhile, the German infantry charged the manor house with two full squads. Unfortunately, one fire team dashed across an open road into a hail of U.S. small arms fire. A .30 caliber M1919 opened up prematurely, revealing its position. However, it did manage to claim an enemy machine gunner. The Leutnant panicked and the HQ unit was momentarily halted. After a short while, he gained his composure and rejoined his team. After the first turn, the German attack began to bog down as men scrambled for cover. The leader of the German players scolded them for cowering and ordered them to continue without delay.



The Germans Press On

The Germans attempted to cover their assault by using smoke for the first of two 8.0cm mortar fire missions. Failing in that attempt, the Marder continued to pound away at the suspected U.S. positions. An airborne bazooka team tried to get into position for a shot at the Marder, but found the going tough and withdrew.





The initial success the Germans experienced bolstered their morale. However, the airborne troopers called in accurate fire from their own 60mm mortars. The Marder III was vulnerable to the artillery and ultimately succumbed to its relentless pressure.





Meanwhile, the lone German squad assigned to take the farmhouse found it abandoned and decided to advance to the next building. The Germans tried to throw smoke grenades to conceal their approach, but it was not well placed. A menacing American machine gun nest held up the advance. Shortly, thereafter, the U.S. reinforcements arrived and the German position became more precarious. A grenadier fired a panzerfaust which came crashing through the wall of the U.S. position. One man was killed and several others were suppressed. Unfortunately for the Germans, the American reinforcements arrived just in time to thwart their counter attack against the manor and the other building.

