

# WAVE OF STEEL

A TIDE OF IRON™ JOURNAL

ISSUE 1



1st Pz Corps 47 Pz Corps 244 Pz Corps 1st Pz Corps



# WAVE<sup>OF</sup>STEEL

A Tide of Iron<sup>TM</sup> Journal

Issue 1

## CONTENTS

Welcome to Wave of Steel .....	3
by Barry Doyle	
The Normandy Campaign: A Brief Overview .....	4
by Barry Doyle	
A Grade-A Stinker of a Job: The Merville Battery Assault .....	5
by Barry Doyle	
Scenario: The Merville Battery .....	6
by Barry Doyle	



For the Latest Tide of Iron Products and Information  
**WWW.FANTASYFLIGHTGAMES.COM**

**Editing and Graphic Design**  
Barry W. Doyle

**Contributors**  
Barry W. Doyle

**Scenario Playtesters**  
Allan Doyle, Malcolm Green

If you are interested in contributing, or have a question, please contact Barry Doyle at [doyle\\_bw@yahoo.com](mailto:doyle_bw@yahoo.com).

All original Wave of Steel content is Copyright © Barry Doyle and/or the contributor, and may not be reproduced without express written permission.

Wave of Steel is an unofficial, independent journal for the Tide of Iron<sup>TM</sup> game system. Fantasy Flight Games<sup>TM</sup>, Tide of Iron<sup>TM</sup>, and all Tide of Iron<sup>TM</sup> supplements, expansions, and components are trademarked properties of Fantasy Flight Games<sup>TM</sup>. All rights reserved. Use of the Fantasy Flight Games<sup>TM</sup> company name, or any of the Tide of Iron<sup>TM</sup> product names, components, images or artwork without the trademark symbol is not a challenge to the legal status, or intellectual property rights, of Fantasy Flight Games<sup>TM</sup>.



## WELCOME TO WAVE OF STEEL

Welcome to the premiere issue of *Wave of Steel*, a history and gaming journal for *Tide of Iron*, the board game of World War II tactical combat from Fantasy Flight Games. My goal is to bring you a high-quality publication as often as time, or content, permits.

Like many of you, I love games, and particularly wargames. My fascination with military history and wargaming started at a young age when I discovered those wonderful Marx toy soldiers. They were, and still are, some of the finest toy soldiers ever produced.

To further my interest in history, and more specifically World War II history, my grandfather served on the Western Front as an Army Engineer. He never spoke much about it, but knowing that he had served inspired me to learn more about the war.

Finally, to drive the nail home, *A Bridge Too Far*—one of the best World War II movies ever made, in my humble opinion—was usually shown on television once a year. Most kids looked forward to their favorite holiday cartoon or movie, but I really looked forward to *A Bridge Too Far*.

In my early teen years, during one of the frequent visits to a local hobby shop, I spotted a yellow and black box with a Tiger tank illustration on the front. I pulled it from the shelf, and after reading the description on the back I was immediately—and forever—transformed into a wargamer. It was Avalon Hill's venerable *Panzer Leader*, and to this day remains one of my favorite wargames.

I've always preferred tactical wargames, and for many years I wished someone would produce a tactical level game with toy soldiers. Alas, Fantasy Flight Games answered the call with *Tide of Iron*, and they have produced an exceptional game. *Tide of Iron* has quickly become a perennial favorite, and I'm looking forward to what the future holds for the system.

Each issue of *Wave of Steel* will contain insightful articles into the fascinating history of World War II, as it relates to *Tide of Iron*. In addition, *WOS* will provide you with new scenarios, scenario analysis, tactics articles, after-action reports, reviews, and much more. I hope *Wave of Steel* will—in some small way—contribute to, and enhance, the *TOI* gaming experience.





# THE NORMANDY CAMPAIGN

## A BRIEF OVERVIEW



“Believe me, Lang, the first twenty-four hours of the invasion will be decisive. The fate of Germany depends on the outcome. For the Allies, as well as Germany, it will be the longest day.”

—Field Marshal Erwin Rommel

Bunker infested beaches, dense hedgerows, and occupied French villages await you in *Normandy*, the latest campaign expansion for the *Tide of Iron* game system. *Normandy* allows you to recreate the epic battles of D-Day, and the ensuing Allied breakout into France.

## THE COMPONENTS

*Normandy* comes in Fantasy Flight Games’ standard square box. The components—as usual—are top-notch, and there are plenty of them.

The box contains a 20-page rulebook and scenario guide, a 16-page campaign book (featuring the American 29th Infantry), two reference sheets, 62 plastic figures, 14 British squad bases, three sheets of markers, tokens and map overlay tiles, 110 cards, and nine map boards.

The rulebook, scenarios and campaign guide are clear and concise, and after the first reading I was well on my way to storming the beaches of Normandy.

The figures are comprised of 42 British infantry and heavy weapons, 16 German tanks (four each of the StuG III, Panther, Jagdpanzer IV, and King Tiger), and four American M10 tank destroyers. The figures are nicely detailed and clean, and are outstanding overall.

The map boards and tiles are beautifully rendered by Tim Arney-O’Neil, the same artist who provided the stunning boards for *Days of the Fox*. The boards and tiles provide for a variety of terrain types, from beaches, to villages, to the infamous hedgerow fields.

The rest of the components are all well-presented, and of the highest quality.

## THE GAME

*Normandy* adds some interesting new rules, terrain, and equipment to the game. The inclusion of weather is a nice touch, and fitting for the setting, but the campaign rules are the biggest—and most rewarding—addition to the system. Commanders are also introduced, and (if used) allow players to replace a Strategy deck with a Leadership deck.

The new terrain types are beach, bunker, hedgerow, swamp, graveyard, supply depot, road over stream, and forest stream. The new terrain tokens are crater, ruin (for buildings), and breach (for hedgerows).

*Normandy* introduces players to the Demolitions specialization (allowing the use of Demolition Charges), and the campaign system introduces campaign specializations. Campaign specializations are standard specializations (e.g. Engineer or Medic) marked with a Bronze Star, Silver Star, or Medal of Honor, each granting additional special abilities. As a unit progresses through the campaign game it may advance its campaign specialization to the next level.

The game includes eight scenarios (four standard and four campaign) of various sizes, featuring beach assaults, airborne engagements, and breakout actions. The campaign scenarios can be played as part of the 29th Infantry Campaign, or as stand-alone scenarios. With each new release the scenarios have improved, and *Normandy* is no exception. The beach assault scenarios are particularly fun and challenging.

## OVERALL

*Normandy* is a fabulous expansion to the *Tide of Iron* game system, and a fine addition to any wargamer’s collection. It does an outstanding job of presenting the epic struggle and desperation of the D-Day operations and subsequent breakout. The replay value is high, and the campaign system alone lends itself to unlimited possibilities—I highly recommend *Normandy*.



## A GRADE-A STINKER OF A JOB!

### THE MERVILLE BATTERY ASSAULT • JUNE 6, 1944

Shortly after 2300 hours on June 5, 1944, Lieutenant Colonel Terence Otway departed the Broadwell airfield with the British 9th Parachute Battalion. His task was a daunting one—destroy the big guns at the Merville Battery, capable of inflicting devastating damage on the landings at Sword Beach.

On April 2, Brigadier Hill informed Otway of the top-secret assignment, and after doing so he told the Lieutenant Colonel the mission “would be a Grade-A stinker of a job.” The battery’s guns were housed in four reinforced concrete casemates, surrounded by machine gun emplacements, barbed wire, and mines. Even with the warning, though, Otway’s mission turned out far worse than expected.

While the main force was in the air the plan was already unraveling; the Eureka transmitters of the pathfinders were smashed upon landing, cutting communication with the transport aircraft. The pathfinders resorted to green signal lamps to mark the drop zones, but dust and smoke from a massive Lancaster bombardment around the battery obscured the lanterns.

The ensuing drop, like many of the Normandy drops, was a disaster. High winds, heavy antiaircraft fire, and an obscured drop zone led to the paratroopers—and their heavy equipment—being scattered over a 50 square mile radius. When Otway finally arrived at the rendezvous he realized the magnitude of the situation; only 110 of the battalion’s 750 men had arrived.

A few more paratroopers wandered in shortly thereafter, but most of the unit was lost in the night. To make matters worse, there was no sign of the jeeps, guns, mortars, or antitank weapons, and the only demolitions available were a few lengths of Bangalore torpedoes. Under the circumstances, Otway could have scrubbed the mission, leaving the job for the planned bombardment from the *Arctura* if the paratroopers failed to signal success. Instead, after a brief discussion with his officers and NCOs, he assembled his meager force of 150 men and proceeded to the objective.

While marching towards the battery, Otway revised his plan to a much simpler version. He would breach two paths through the wire, with two assault teams charging through

each gap. A much smaller diversionary party, composed of only one weakened squad, would attack the main gate.

Just as the assault was about to begin, two delayed gliders swooped low over the battery igniting a forceful response from the Merville garrison. Seizing the opportunity as the German troops focused on the gliders, Otway ordered his teams to begin their assault. After the Bangalores exploded, he yelled: “Everybody in! We’re going to take this bloody battery!”

The paratroopers charged through the gaps, Sten guns blazing. All around them chaos erupted, as mines exploded and the German positions opened fire. Some of the paras threw themselves on the barbed wire, allowing their comrades to use them as bridges to spring over the tangled obstacles.

After about 20 minutes of fierce fighting, including bloody hand-to-hand combat, the Merville battery’s defenders slowly fell silent. The paratroopers spiked the guns—which turned out to be 100mm Czeck guns instead of 150mm howitzers—and Lieutenant Dowling reported to Otway: “Battery taken as ordered, sir. Guns destroyed.” Bleeding profusely from his side, Dowling died shortly thereafter.

A yellow signal flare was fired, indicating to a circling RAF spotter that the battery had been taken, and the men began moving out. Only half of the original assault force survived intact, and the wounded were left with the battalion’s medical officer in a nearby barn. The assault on the Merville Battery was over for the 9th Battalion, but the valor shown by Lieutenant Colonel Otway and his brave young paratroopers would never be forgotten.





# THE MERVILLE BATTERY

**June 6, 1944 • Merville, France.** Lieutenant Colonel Terence Otway, leading the paratroopers of the 9th Battalion, is tasked with destroying the guns at the Merville Battery. The guns, if operative, could significantly jeopardize the landings at Sword Beach. After a disastrous para drop, scattering most of his units and equipment over a vast area, Otway organizes a meager force of just 150 men and begins his desperate assault.

## OBJECTIVE

If the British have 8 or more VPs at the end of round 7, they win. Otherwise, the Germans win.

The British earn VPs at the end of round 7 as follows:

- 2 VP for each Victory Objective marker taken. The British take a Victory Objective marker by entering a pillbox, thus destroying the gun housed therein.
- 1 VP for each German squad destroyed.



**BRITISH  
SETUP**



### DIVISION 1

- 7 Squad Bases
  - 19 Regular Infantry
  - 5 Elite Infantry
  - 2 Officers
  - 1 Machine Gun Crew



x2

### DIVISION 2

- 3 Squad Bases
  - 8 Regular Infantry
  - 1 Elite Infantry
  - 1 Officer
  - 1 Machine Gun Crew

- Starting Strategy Cards: 2

- Strategy Decks
  - Command I

- Operations Cards
  - Seize the Initiative

- Deployment Zone
  - Division 1 may set up in any of the hexes on board 8B. Division 2 must place one to three squads in any of the hexes on board 11B. Any remaining squads must be placed with Division 1 on board 8B.



**GERMAN  
SETUP**



### DIVISION 1

- 3 Squad Bases
  - 9 Regular Infantry
  - 1 Officer
  - 1 Machine Gun Crew

### DIVISION 2

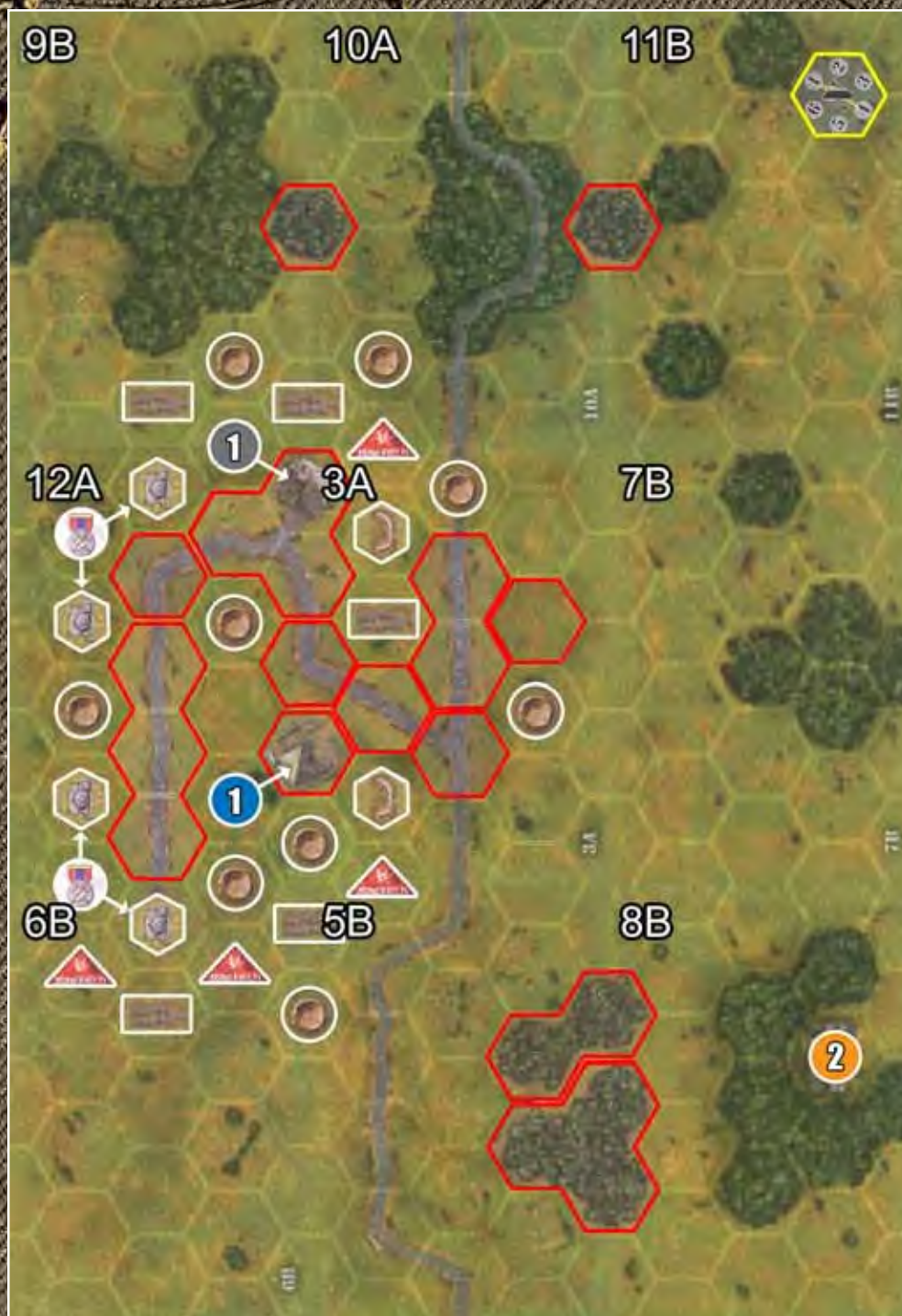
- 3 Squad Bases
  - 9 Regular Infantry
  - 1 Officer
  - 1 Machine Gun Crew

- Starting Strategy Cards: 2

- Strategy Decks
  - Ground Support I

- Deployment Zone
  - Any of the hexes on boards 12A and 3A, north of the road.





## SCENARIO DETAILS

- **Rounds:** 7
- **Starting Initiative:** British
- **Actions per Turn:**  
British 3, Germans 2

## REINFORCEMENTS

- None.

## SPECIAL RULES

- None.

## TERRAIN FEATURES

- 9 Crater Tokens
- 5 Razor Wire
- 2 Entrenchments
- 4 Pillboxes
- 4 Minefields

## WEATHER DECK

The weather is considered “Clear Skies” for this scenario. No weather checks are made.

## GAME REQUIREMENTS

- *Tide of Iron*
- *Normandy*



Scenario Design  
Barry Doyle





## **IN THIS ISSUE**

Welcome to Wave of Steel

The Normandy Campaign: A Brief Overview

A Grade-A Stinker of a Job: The Merville Battery Assault

Scenario: The Merville Battery

