

Christmas on the Rhine

by Dean Morgan

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It is December 24, 1944, Christmas Eve. Earlier in the day, an American B-17 is shot down over a wooded area of the Rhine. Other American pilots report seeing four parachutes visible from the shot down aircraft. Nearby American ground forces are quickly dispatched to rescue the downed airmen. However, soldiers of the Wehrmacht, occupying the ruins of an old, Medieval castle, saw the American bomber crash to the ground in a ball of fire. The German troops also observed the four survivors of this aircraft parachute into the nearby woods. The Germans have intelligence that one of the members of this downed aircrew has valuable information on the location and strength of Allied airbases, and this information is vital to the advancing Wehrmacht in this, the beginning stages of the Battle of the Bulge.

Soldiers of both armies deploy into the woods along the Rhine as the sun sets in the west. A light snow begins to fall, adding to the blanket of white already covering the ground. Gripping rifles in cold hands, the thoughts of German and American troops alike turn to home as they begin their trek into the eerily silent forests of Germany. On this,

Christmas Eve, the soldiers long for the cheer of a good fire, the comforting glow of a Christmas tree, and old carols whose words lift the soul. Instead they are engaged in a bitter war, stalking through a cold wilderness where death can lurk behind every tree. In the distance the still burning wreckage of the downed B-17 can be seen between the towering, white pines. As your unit cautiously approaches the wreckage, the silence is pierced by gunfire, and the muzzle flashes of enemy rifles can be seen in the distance. On this night, when men should embrace peace and goodwill, the world is at war. The lonely soldiers, German and American, advance through the snow, surrounded by smoke and flame. This once silent night is now filled with the screams of the dying, and the white landscape is soon spattered red with blood.

Non-historic.

OBJECTIVE:

The objective marker represents the surviving airmen from the downed B-17. Once a nation controls the space with the objective marker at the end of a round, the marker is removed from the board.

Once the objective marker is removed from the board, the nation controlling the marker may control the American airmen. The American airman may change hands during play. If, at the end of any given turn, a nation controls the space occupied by the American airmen, that nation then gains control of the airmen (refer to "Special Rules" for details).

The Americans immediately win if they exit the American airmen squad off the board from the light blue shaded bridge hex.

The Germans immediately win if they exit the American squad off the board from the dark blue shaded hex.

"Just now the master sergeant told me I cannot go home for Christmas. I told him that he has to keep his promise, and he sent me to the captain. The captain told me that others had wanted to go leave for Christmas too, and that they too had promised it to their relatives without being able to keep the promise. And so it wasn't his fault that we couldn't go. We should be glad we were still alive, the captain said, and the long trip wouldn't be good in the cold winter anyhow."

--An unknown German soldier

Rounds: 8

Starting Initiative

German

Actions

3

Terrain

The stream is flooded. The Heavy Fog operations card represents the darkness and snowy conditions of the battlefield.

Reinforcements

None

Special Rules

At the start of the game, place a squad consisting of four American regular infantry in the hex containing the objective marker. This squad represents the American airmen, and should be of a different color than the other American units used in this mission. This squad may not be activated while the objective marker is present.

At the end of any round that a nation occupies the space with the objective marker, remove the marker from play. At the beginning of the next round, the nation controlling the objective marker can control the American airmen.

The American airmen can change hands during play. At the end of any round, a nation that occupies the same hex as the American airman, will control the airmen at the beginning of the next round. A

nation can occupy a hex with the airman during the course of a round, but the nation that controlled the airmen at the start of the round retains control of the airmen. Control of the airmen only changes at the end of a round, wherein control goes to the nation occupying the hex the airmen are in.

When the Germans control the airmen: The German player moves the airmen, and the airmen cannot make an attack of any type. The airmen do not benefit from any kind of bonus granted by German troops if they are in a hex with German troops (for example, the airmen do not receive +1 cover if they are in a hex with a German officer). The airmen can be transported in a vehicle, however, as per the rules, if a vehicle is destroyed, the units in the vehicle are destroyed. When the Germans control the airman, the airmen can only take advance actions.

When the Americans control the airmen: The American player moves the airmen, and the airmen can attack as per the normal rules governing regular infantry. The American airmen do benefit from bonuses provided by allied units in the same hex. The airmen can be transported in a vehicle, however, as per the rules, if a vehicle is destroyed, the units in the vehicle are destroyed. When the Americans control the airmen, the airmen can take advance, fire and movement, concentrated fire, op fire, and assault actions.

Special rules regarding the airmen: Prior to the objective marker being removed, the airman cannot do anything. The airmen can occupy a hex by themselves and they are still considered under the control of the nation that had them at the beginning of the round. However, at the end of the round, the airmen are controlled by the nation that has a unit occupying the same hex as the airmen. If the airmen are alone in a hex at the end of a round, no nation controls them. The airmen are lost, wounded, and fatigued, and without being under the control of a nation,

they will remain stationary in the hex they are in, doing nothing (not attacking, not moving, not combining fire, etc.). Airmen may die in the course of this mission, but for a nation to achieve victory, at least one airman must survive to exit the board. If, during the mission, all four airmen are killed, the mission immediately ends as a draw. It is obviously in the interests of both nations to keep the airmen alive. The airmen benefit from cover from terrain regardless of which nation controls them. The airmen expend movement points as per the normal rules. The normal rules regarding hex stacking limits apply to the airmen. When the airmen are under German control, they can move through a hex with other German units, but not hexes with American units. When the airmen are under American control, they can move through a hex with other American units, but not hexes with German units. The Germans or the Americans can conduct normal attacks or suppressive attacks against the airmen (though a normal attack would be counterproductive in this scenario, a suppressive could be very beneficial). The airmen cannot be part of a specialized squad, nor can they be a concealed squad. When transferring squads between bases, the airmen can never transfer into another squad, and neither can a squad transfer to their base. The airmen are effected by area attack as per the normal rules.

Special rules governing assault attacks: The normal assault attack rules apply to the airmen when they are under American control. The airmen can take part in an assault attack, and when defending against an assault attack, they contribute attack dice. However, when the airmen are under German control and they are in a space assaulted by Americans, the airmen do not contribute attack dice. Damage from an assault attack must first be distributed to the nation controlling the airmen at the time, and if this damage exceeds the number of units that nation has in that hex, then damage is applied to the airmen. If a

nation controlling the airmen is pushed out of a hex from an assault, the airmen stay in the hex they were in. However, as stated above, the nation controlling the airman still control the airmen unless it is the final turn of a round.

Operations Cards: The Germans benefit from the Camouflage Operations Card. The Germans and Americans use the Heavy Fog, Clear Tank Traps, and Clear Minefield Operations Cards. Place these three cards in a central area to reflect this.

Victory: The Germans win if they have the airmen exit the map from the dark blue hex before the end of round eight. The Americans win if they have the airmen exit the map from the light blue hex before the end of round eight. Once the airmen reach one of these hexes, they can spend one movement point to exit the board. However, prior to doing this, a unit from the controlling nation must also be in this hex. If this condition is not met, the airmen stop in that hex and can only exit the board when a unit of the controlling nation occupies the hex with them. For example, if the Germans have the airmen as POWs and the airmen use 3 movement to get to the dark blue hex, the German player can claim victory by spending the airmen's last movement point to exit the board. However, the airmen can only move off the board if the nation controlling them has a unit occupying the same space, so in this instance, for the German player to claim victory, he would need a German unit in the same space as the airmen before the airmen can exit the board.

Side 1

Division One

- 6 Squad Bases
- 7 Regular Infantry
- 7 Elite Infantry
- 2 Officer
- 2 Mortar Crew
- 2 Machine Gun Crew



Division Two

- 0 Squad Bases
- 2 M3A1 Half Track

Starting Strategy Cards: 1
Strategy Decks
 - Morale I

Deployment Zone

U.S. forces can set-up on any of the green shaded hexes on map pieces 3B and 12B.

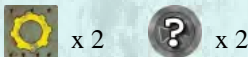
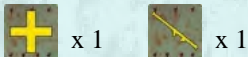
Special Rules

Remove the Take Down the Beast cards from the Morale Deck I.

Side 2

Division One

- 6 Squad Bases
- 7 Regular Infantry
- 7 Elite Infantry
- 2 Officer
- 2 Mortar Crew
- 2 Machine Gun Crew



Division Two

- 0 Squad Bases
- 2 M3A1 Half Track
- 1 GMC CCKW 353 Truck

Starting Strategy Cards: 1
Strategy Decks
 - Ground Support I

Operations Cards

- Camouflage

Deployment Zone

German forces can set-up on any of the gray shaded hexes on map pieces 1B and 2B.

Special Rules

Remove the Anti-Air Support cards from the Ground Support Deck I.

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December 24, 1944

