

Dragoons at Haut-le-Wastia



SETTING

Date: 14 May 1940, 0500 hours

Location: At the village of Haut-le-Wastia, west of the Meuse River, about three miles north of Onhaye.

History: A major French counter-attack against the German crossing at Houx was planned for the afternoon of 13 May. A battalion from the 129th Regiment of the 5th Motorized Division (General Boucher) was to hit Haut-le-Wastia, while motorcycle troops supported by machine-gun carriers were to support the 39th Regiment, which was on the front line along the Meuse (contact between the divisional headquarters and the 39th Regiment had been lost). A tank detachment was also allocated for the attack. A series of delays resulted in the action amounting to little more than a minor probe, with the captured ground relinquished at nightfall (the tanks actually advanced without infantry support, and did succeed in taking some prisoners, but had to fall back with the approach of darkness). With the action planned for 13 May a failure, plans were quickly made to use the 14th Regiment of Motorized Dragoons and the 1st Divisional Reconnaissance Group (5th Motorized Division), to retake Haut-le-Wastia early on 14 May. On the German side, the bridgehead across the Meuse was tenuous at best for 7th Panzer. Very little in the way of heavy weapons or tanks had been brought across. Haut-le-Wastia, taken by a group of motorcycle troops, was the northern limit of the bridgehead. Holding it was critical not only to protect the bridgehead, but also to protect the flank of Onhaye, through which Rommel planned to break out into the open terrain of the Franco-Belgium plain. For the French, any operation which could delay the German timetable gained time for preparing further counter-attacks or for preparing defensive positions to contain the German bridgehead.

German Orders: Avoid the French victory conditions.

French Orders: Capture two buildings.

Game Length: 8 Turns.

SCENARIO RULES

1. The buildings are a mix of single and multi-story stone and wood frame houses. One of the buildings at the crossroads should be a large stone building and one should be a two story wood frame building. The buildings may be partially damaged.
2. The field has low crops and is soft and very muddy. Vehicles should take bog checks.
3. The vineyard should be treated as light woods for movement and cover purposes. It has a pedestrian gate facing the road. The fence around the vineyard is stone.

AFTERMATH

The Dragoons surprised the German defenders and briefly re-captured Haut-le-Wastia. Unfortunately, they did not have adequate reinforcements or support, and had to abandon the town when heavier German forces, now moving across the Meuse on pontoon bridges, arrived to secure the area. During the day on 14 May Rommel consolidated his bridgehead and prepared for the break-out on the next day. By the morning of 15 May the time for a French counter-attack at the Meuse had passed, and time was running out for forces caught and by-passed by the panzer spearheads.

SCENARIO OPTIONS

Night Attack: The historical French attack commenced at 0445. Players may play the scenario as a night action.

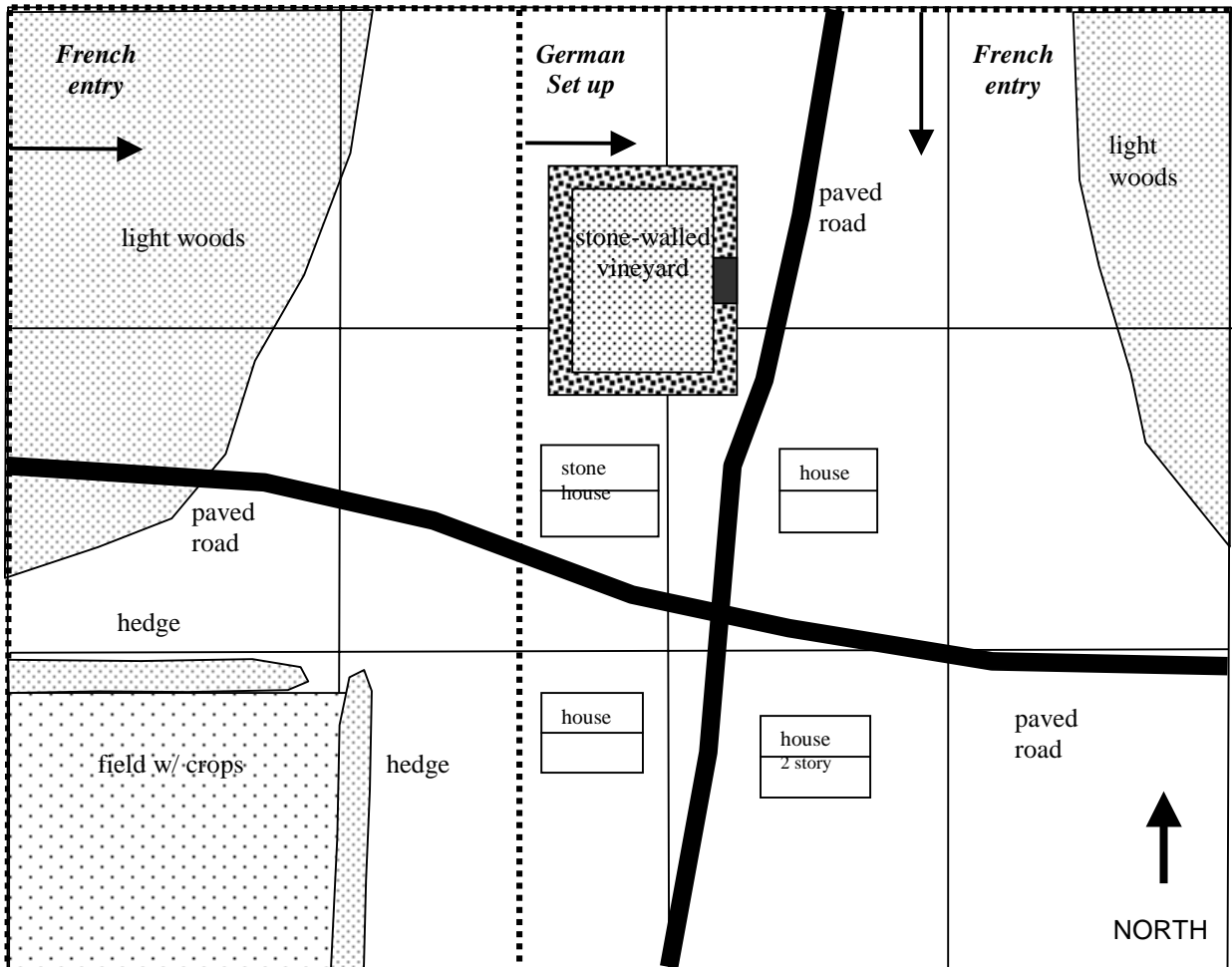
French halftracks: Players may substitute Citroen Kegresse P19 halftracks for the infantry squad trucks.

Dismounted Motorcyclists: The Germans were holding the town. Players may assume that the German troops are deployed dismounted and eliminate all German vehicles.

SCENARIO NOTES

Both sides have good firepower given the small number of soldiers engaged. The scenario is very likely to feature a significant volume of close range fire from automatic weapons, so players need to carefully select defensive positions and movement routes. This is especially true for the French player when assaulting forces move across the open to buildings. In addition to good quality troops and good firepower, the French also benefit from excellent mobility, but given the short combat ranges, they must be careful when moving into assault positions. Their movement and disembarkation for combat must be coordinated and covered by other forces as the French cannot afford a piece-meal attack that will allow the Germans to sequentially engage each attacking group. However, the Germans lack the troops to adequately cover all the buildings, leaving holes in their defense.

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German Forces

BASE FORCE	VARIABLE ATTACHMENTS																																																														
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OOB- Roll (d20) for Variable Attachments to determine additions to your Base Force. 2. Set Up- Set up anywhere within 30 inches of the east board edge. All starting positions must be recorded prior to play. 3. Germans start with 2 stick grenades each. 																																																															

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French Forces

BASE FORCE	VARIABLE ATTACHMENTS
<p>Elements of the 14th Motorized Dragoon Regiment, 5th Motorized Division</p> <p>1x Motorized Infantry Platoon HQ Squad (T3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Lt. with Ruby & 1907/15 Berthier A** 1 Sgt. with Ruby & 1907/15 Berthier A* 1 Grenadier with 1907/15 Berthier-GL B 1 Asst. Grenadier with 1907/15 Berthier B 2 Riflemen with 1907/15 Berthier B 1 truck <p>2x Motorized Dragoon Infantry Squad (T3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Squad Leader w/ Ruby & 07/15 Berthier A* 1 Asst. Squad Leader with 07/15 Berthier B 1 Gunner with FM24/29 LMG B 1 Asst. Gunner with 1907/15 Berthier B 1 Grenadier with 1907/15 Berthier-GL B 1 Asst. Grenadier with 1907/15 Berthier B 4 Riflemen with 1907/15 Berthier B 1 truck <p>1x Motorcycle MMG Team (T3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Team Leader w/ Ruby & Berthier carbine A* 1 Gunner with Hotchkiss MMG B 1 Asst. Gunner with Berthier carbine B 1 Rifleman with Berthier carbine B 2 motorcycles with sidecars 	<p>Elements of the 14th Motorized Dragoon Regiment, 5th Motorized Division</p> <p><u>Roll</u> <u>Attachment</u></p> <p>1-14 1x Motorized Infantry Squad (T3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Squad Leader w/ Ruby & 07/15 Berthier A* 1 Asst. Squad Leader w/ 1907/15 Berthier B 1 Gunner with FM24/29 LMG B 1 Asst. Gunner with 1907/15 Berthier B 1 Grenadier with 1907/15 Berthier-GL B 1 Asst. Grenadier with 1907/15 Berthier B 4 Riflemen with 1907/15 Berthier B 1 truck <p>15-19 1x Motorcycle Squad (T3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Squad Ldr w/ Ruby & Berthier carbine A* 1 Asst. Squad Leader w/ Berthier carbine B 2 Gunners with FM24/29 LMG B 2 Asst. Gunners with Berthier carbine B 1 Grenadier with 1907/15 Berthier-GL B 1 Asst. Grenadier with Berthier carbine B 2 Riflemen with Berthier carbine B 5 motorcycles with sidecars <p>20 1x Canon de 75 mle 1897 (T3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Team Leader w/ Ruby & 07/15 Berthier A* 1 Gunner with 1907/15 Berthier B 1 Asst. Gunner with 1907/15 Berthier B 2 Loaders with 1907/15 Berthier B 1 truck

1. OOB- Roll (d20) for Variable Attachments to determine additions to your Base Force.
2. Set Up- All forces enter from the north or west board edges. All entry positions must be recorded prior to play.
3. All French start with one grenade each.
4. Instead of normal grenades, the Rifle Grenadier and Assistant Grenadiers in French squads carry two rifle grenades. These rifle grenades may only be fired by the Grenadier's Berthier-GL.
5. The 75mm field gun has d8 rounds of smoke.