

The Bridges of Mechelen County Virtual Game

An alternate history WWII game

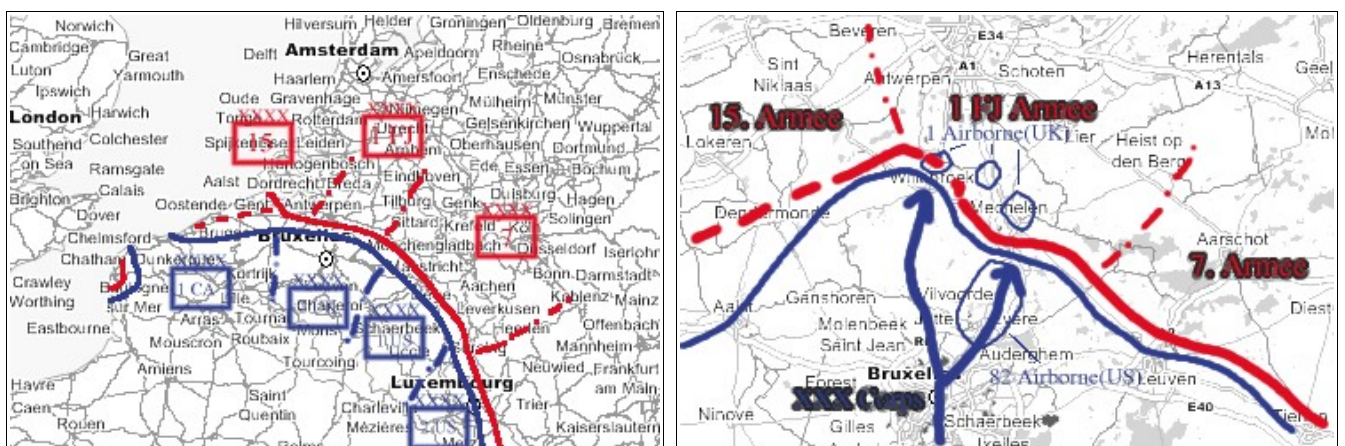
1 Introduction

It is September 1944, and the German Army has been driven from France by the victorious Allied armies after a long and hard struggle to break out of the Normandy hedgerows. The Allied drive has stalled of late however, due to logistics problems and stiffening German resistance. The Allied armies are halted on a crescent shaped line running roughly from Dunkirk over Brussels to Luxembourg.

In an effort to get the advance rolling again, SHAEF has initiated an ambitious airborne operation designed to get an allied army on the roll in the area to the northeast of Brussels. Two airborne divisions, one British and one American, have been dropped north of the Allied line. The American division, the 82nd “All American” Airborne, was dropped around Vilvoorde, 10 miles north of Brussels, with the aim of securing crossings across the canal there to provide easy lateral communications for the advancing armies.

The British 1st Airborne have been dropped in a wide area around Mechelen, halfway between Brussels and Antwerp, with the aim of securing bridges across the Leuven – Willebroek canal. The most important bridges are situated in Mechelen itself, so that town featured prominently in the Division's plans.

This game portrays the action in and around Mechelen.



2 Game play

The game is played with miniatures by the umpire only. The players only get written reports and photographs of the situation at the end of each turn. These reports are sent out in email by the

umpire.

Both sides (Allied and German) have an overall commanding officer and three subordinate commanders, all four played by players. The overall CO will not get direct situation reports from the umpire (but will occasionally receive other missives), but instead has to rely on what his subordinate commanders tell him. His job is to come up with a battle plan and coordinate his subordinate commanders' actions in achieving this plan.

The subordinate commanders will receive detailed reports and photographs at the end of each turn. The photographs are taken at the level of the miniatures on the table, so that they show what the miniatures can “see”. Each player will only get those photographs concerning his command. One or more photographs will be annotated by the umpire in order to convey extra information (e.g. *Heavy small arms fire coming from this building*) that would be available to his real life counterpart. These particular photographs may not be passed on to other players, unless specifically allowed by the umpire (e.g. They can be passed on to the CO if he is visiting the front). The other photographs may be passed on to *physically adjacent* players (as determined by the umpire).

When the players have received their reports, they have a number of days to submit new orders.

3 Orders

The subordinate commanders should provide orders to the umpire detailing what their units are doing. These orders should be stated in general terms (e.g. “A and B companies will advance cautiously on the woods in sector 45, deploying for combat when encountering enemy. Company C will remain in battalion reserve.”)