

HONDEGHEM

27TH MAY 1940

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

As 143rd Brigade headed for Cassel, 5th Field Artillery Regiment, an Army asset assigned to the defence of the town, was intercepted by a staff officer en route and ordered to send a troop of its 18 pdrs to hold the village of Hondeghem. The four guns of F Troop/K Battery were selected and the battery commander went with them. Infantry support for the guns came in the form of detachments from 2nd Troop, 2nd Searchlight Regiment. As at Calais, the underused searchlight personnel were again making up for the dire shortage of infantry.

The intention was presumably similar to the garrisoning of the closer outlying villages to the south west of Cassel, being to give advanced warning of the German advance and help break up the attacking formations; in this case to the south east and further away from the hilltop town.

Arriving in the village, the guns were positioned to cover the main routes into Hondeghem. The searchlight detachments and spare artillery personnel, armed only with rifles and anti-tank rifles, occupied buildings to form a defensive perimeter and three road blocks were constructed.

BATTLE IS JOINED

At approximately 08.15 a 6th Panzer Division battle group, most likely consisting of the 3rd Company of 65th Panzer Battalion and the 2nd Company of 1st Battalion, 4th Motorised Rifle Battalion, approached the British roadblock barring the main road that passed through the southern edge of Hondeghem. The J section gun behind the roadblock opened fire with some success but was soon hit and disabled, closely followed by the I gun that was positioned behind it further down the same road.

As the Panzer 35t's and Panzer IIs (possibly accompanied by one or two Panzer IVs) cautiously held back, the infantry of 2nd Company drove into the village and were halted short of the central square by artillery fire from 5th Field Regiment's D Troop on distant Mont Récollets, its indirect fire being observed from the tower of Hondeghem's Church. The German infantry were also taken under direct fire by the L section gun positioned in the south west corner of the square and by the searchlight men and F Troop 'odds and sods' concealed in the buildings at the edge of the village.

As the German infantry slowly infiltrated into the centre of Hondeghem the L and K guns were manhandled into new fire positions to meet the threats. When an enemy machine gun opened up from the building on the edge of the square that had served as F Troop's cookhouse, a shell swiftly demolished its hiding place.

As the battle progressed, reinforcements arrived in the shape of a much reduced B Squadron of the 1st Fife and Forfar Yeomanry, with MkVI light tanks and scout carrier mounted infantry. The latter debussed to help clear the village, but found that the enemy infantry had withdrawn and tanks were starting to tentatively advance up the surrounding roads and lanes.

By now 6th Panzer Division had had enough and the church tower observation position was destroyed by artillery in preparation for another attack. F Troop and 2nd Searchlights had suffered significant casualties and with ammunition running low the K Battery commander, Major Rawdon Hoare, ordered a two stage retreat just after 16.00, sending casualties and the guns first towards St Sylvestre, followed by the rest using a different route.

The mini epic of Hondeghem was over, but provided a morale-boosting tale of British defiance that was well publicised in the press.

THE GAME

This represents the attempt by F Troop/K Battery/5th Field Artillery Regiment and 2 Troop/2nd Searchlight Regiment to deny the village of Hondeghem to elements of Kampfgruppe Ravenstein, 6th Panzer Division. The figure and vehicle scale is 1:1.

TABLE SIZE

6' x 4'

BRITISH ORDERS

Hold Hondeghem.

GERMAN ORDERS

Capture Hondeghem.

BRITISH VICTORY CONDITIONS

To win: Still hold seven buildings in Hondeghem at the end of 15 moves.

GERMAN VICTORY CONDITIONS

To win: Hold seven or more buildings in Hondeghem by the end of 15 moves.

BRITISH FORCES

F Troop and 2 Troop/2nd Searchlights battlegroup.

GERMAN FORCES

3rd Company/65th Panzer Battalion and 2nd Company /4th Motorised Rifle Regiment/6th Panzer Division battlegroup.



SPECIAL RULES

Morale

- If playing with the *Reloaded* rules use the optional Large Tank Battles rule for platoon morale in *Reloaded Extra* (page 15).
- All German tank units are elite. Other units are regular. If playing with *RF2* treat all tanks as independent.

Observation and Cover

- Road blocks offer soft cover for infantry and support weapons, but do not block anti-tank fire.

Movement

- All units entering the table may move a maximum of 12" on their first move. The British guns may be manhandled at the normal rate and fired in the same move without penalty (unless the target moved). Dug in guns will take one full move to remove from their gun pits if manhandled. The British player may deploy two road blocks that are impassable to vehicles. These can be removed by one AFV in contact for one full move.

Firing

- The British artillery on table may only use direct fire. The British OP is linked by radio to two guns off table near Cassel and tests for contact. A throw of 1 or 2 is a fail. The OP may only observe two successful moves of fire during the game. Manhandled guns are not classed as moving targets.

Front cover: The 18 pounder field gun was a World War One veteran that was mounted on a variety of new carriages so it could be towed into action by mechanised tractors in 1940. These included the Morris Mk 1 Quad pictured, as well as the Guy Quad and the 1930s Morris CDSW 6-wheeler. Limbers also varied.

Above: 3rd Light Panzer Company breaks into the village square and 1st Troop of the 1st Fife and Forfar rushes to support the surviving British gun.

BATTLE MAP



I, J, K and L = Historic Gun Positions

- TERRAIN**
- All buildings are intact.
 - All woodland is impassable to vehicles.
 - The church tower offers an advantage for observation.



BRITISH AT HONDEGHEM

BRITISH DEPLOYMENT

Move 1 Two of the four guns must begin the game deployed in two of the historic locations occupied by the British artillery at the beginning of the battle, as shown on the battlemap.

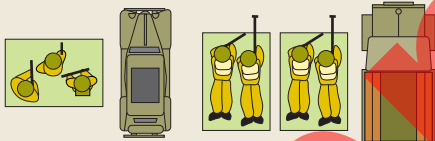
The other guns may be deployed anywhere, outside of buildings, east of the Limit of British Deployment line and may be dug-in if not on roads. Infantry and anti-tank rifles may be deployed in buildings or dug-in.

Move 10 The 1st Fife and Forfar Yeomanry enter between the two houses on the eastern table edge.

2nd Troop/5th Battery/ 2nd Searchlight Regiment

HQ

CO + 6 figures, 2 x anti-tank rifle, car, 15 cwt truck



1st and 2nd Detachments

16 figures, 3 ton searchlight truck



3rd and 4th Detachments

16 figures, 3 ton searchlight truck



5th and 6th Detachments

16 figures, 3 ton searchlight truck

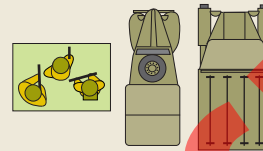


Morale: CO + 54 figures (regular)

F Troop/K Battery/ 5th Royal Horse Artillery (Major Robert Rawdon Hoare)

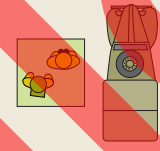
HQ

CO + 2 figures, Austin Tilly, 15 cwt wireless truck



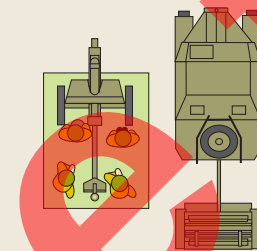
OP

2 figure OP team, Austin Tilly



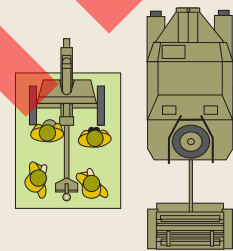
I Subsection

4 figures, 18 pdr, Quad tow



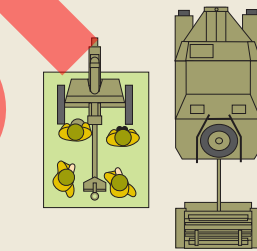
K Subsection

4 figures, 18 pdr, Quad tow



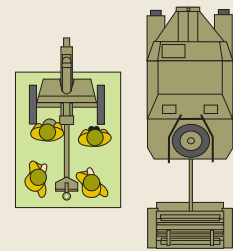
J Subsection

4 figures, 18 pdr, Quad tow



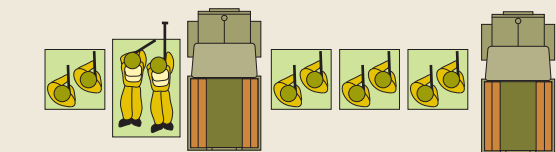
L Subsection

4 figures, 18 pdr, Quad tow



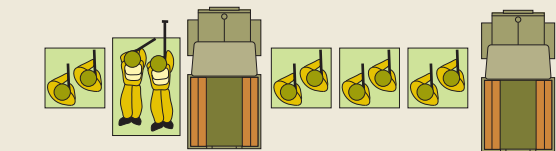
Troop Personnel ('Odds and Sods') Section

10 figures, anti-tank rifle, 2 x 15 cwt truck



Section

10 figures, anti-tank rifle, 2 x 15 cwt truck



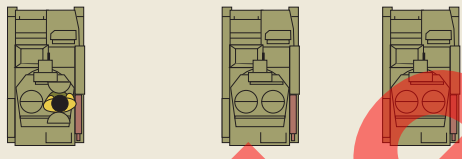
Morale: CO + 40 figures (regular)

From Move 10

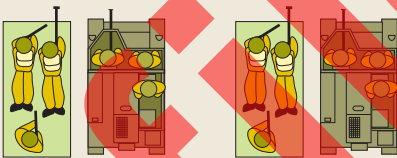
**B Squadron/
1st Fife and Forfar Yeomanry**

HQ
Mk VI (VMG and HMG) CO

3rd Troop
2 x Mk VI (VMG and HMG)



1st Troop
6 figures, 2 x AT rifle, 2 x Scout Carrier



* Dismounted Carrier crew may fire as an AT rifle + 1 x D6 small arms effect or 2 x D6 small arms effect.

Morale: CO + 14 figures including 3 independent AFVs (regular)

BRITISH VEHICLE AND GUN CHART

Vehicle	Speed	Target Class	Main Weapon	2nd Weapon
Vickers Mk VI (HMG/VMG)	30 / 15	5	HMG (or AT class 6)* and VMG	-
Scout carrier (AT rifle/VMG)	30 / 15	5	AT class 6 (or VMG)**	-
Guns				
Anti-tank rifle		AT class 6		
25mm anti-tank gun (French)		AT class 5		
18 pdr field gun		AT class 4 / HE 4 x D6		

* Use AT rifle ranges: short up to 6", medium up to 14", long up to 24".

** Can only fire weapon if carrying all passengers.

Below: The L subsection 18 pounder prepares to batter any panzer that attempts to take on the log road block.





GERMANS AT HONDEGHEM

Elements of Kampfgruppe Ravenstein / 6th Panzer Division

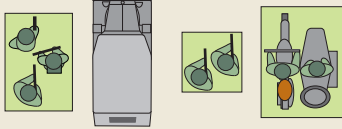
GERMAN DEPLOYMENT

Move 1 Elements of Kampfgruppe Ravenstein enter between G-G.

2nd Company/1st Battalion/ 4th Motorised Rifle Regiment

HQ

CO + 5 figures, heavy car, motorcycle combination

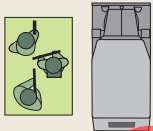


Morale: Force CO

1st Platoon/2nd Company

HQ

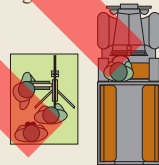
CO + 2 figures,
heavy car



**Light Mortar
Section**
2 figures,
50mm mortar
(in heavy car)

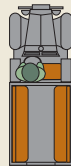


**Machine Gun
Section (attached)**
3 figures, MMG,
light truck



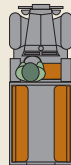
Rifle Section

10 figures, light truck



Rifle Section

10 figures, light truck



Rifle Section

10 figures, light truck



Morale: CO + 37 figures (regular)

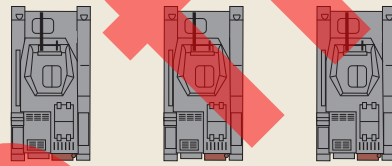
3rd Light Panzer Company/ 65th Panzer Battalion (Hauptmann Erich Lowe)

3rd Light Panzer Company HQ
Panzer 35t command (37mm) CO



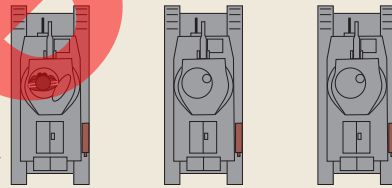
1st Platoon

3 x Panzer II (autocannon)



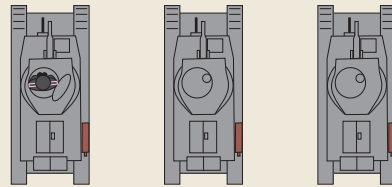
2nd Platoon

3 x Panzer 35t (37mm)



3rd Platoon

3 x Panzer 35t (37mm)



Morale: HQ - CO AFV (elite)

1st Platoon - CO AFV + 2 AFVs (elite)

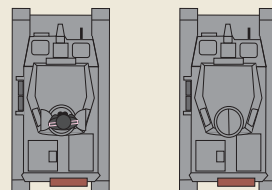
2nd Platoon - CO AFV + 2 AFVs (elite)

3rd Platoon - CO AFV + 2 AFVs (elite)

4th Medium Panzer Company/ 65th Panzer Battalion

2nd Platoon

2 x Panzer IV (short 75mm)



Morale: CO AFV + AFVs (elite)