

THE BATTLE FOR SWORD BEACH

Will the British 'Funnies' give the men of Yorkshire the edge they need to overcome the tough German fortifications?



Sword Beach was on the eastern flank of the D-Day landings just west of the Orne River. The British 3rd Division, General Montgomery's own division in the Battle of France in 1940, was assigned the task of landing on Sword Beach and fighting its way inland to link up with the airborne operations across the Orne River and, if possible, capture Caen.

An off-shore reef limited the assault to a single brigade frontage at *La Brèche*, 'the Breach'. The divisional commander, Major-General Tom Rennie, selected 8 Brigade as his assault force with Lieutenant-Colonel C F Hutchinson's 2nd Battalion, The East Yorkshire Regiment landing on Queen Red (as the eastern sector was called). The 1st Battalion, The South Lancashire Regiment was to land on Queen White to the west. The reserve battalion landing behind them as the second wave was the 1st Battalion, The Suffolk Regiment.

The brigade was well supported with specialised assault armour from the 79th Armoured Division and the DD swimming tanks of 27th Armoured Brigade. The 1st Special Service Brigade of four Commandos landed in the following waves to capture the strong points either side of the landing area and push inland to the Orne bridges to link with the paratroops that had captured them during the night.

Facing the landings was *Generalleutnant* Wilhelm Richter's 716. *Infanteriedivision*. Although the division has been in Normandy for more than two years, its troops have spent most of their time labouring on fortifications and little time on combat training. Sword Beach fell in the sector of 736. *Grenadierregiment*, in particular *Hauptmann* Heinrich Kultz's 10th Company.

The defenders were well dug in and well supported with machine-guns, mortars and artillery (every gun in the division was sited to fire on the beaches), but would need immediate reinforcement to prevent the enemy getting ashore. Unfortunately, the division lacked any form of motorised reserve. Worse, the closest reserve to hand was 642. *Ost Bataillon*, a battalion of Russian 'volunteers' recruited from the prisoner of war camps.

The nearest armoured troops were 21. *Panzerdivision* south of Caen. This division was fairly well equipped and trained,

but could not be expected to reach the beach in strength until late in the afternoon.

Whatever the outcome, Sword Beach was looking to be a hard fight and the troops knew it. Major 'Banger' King commanding A Company of the East Yorks, like Wolfe at Quebec, read to his men as the landing craft approached the beach. Shakespeare's stirring speech from King Henry V echoed in their ears as they stormed ashore.

*'On, on, you noblest English!
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof,
Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,
Have in these parts from morn till even fought,
And sheath'd their swords for lack of argument: ...
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot:
Follow your spirit, and upon this charge
Cry 'God for Harry, England, and Saint George!'*

REFIGHTING QUEEN RED

The battle for Queen Red Beach was a dramatic example of courage under fire and the value of specialised assault armour in amphibious assaults. The the Amphibious Assaults rules on pages 98 to 109 of *D-Day: American* are ideally suited to refighting this battle in miniature.

Although the assault was made by a full battalion of infantry, it is easiest to scale the battle down to a company-sized action with each platoon in the game standing in for a full company in the historical battle. Obviously the battlefield has to be scaled down to match as well.

The following pages give a table layout covering all of the important features of Queen Red Beach and strongpoints Cod and Sole (Daimler remains off the table to the east of Sole) and a list of the forces from 3rd Division and 716. *Infanteriedivision* that were engaged in the fighting there.

QUEEN RED, 6 JUNE 1944

SPECIAL RULES

- Amphibious Assault (Attacker) (Pages 104 to 106 *D-Day: American*)
- Deep Delayed Fortified Reserves (Defender) (Page 104 *Flames Of War* rulebook and page 103 *D-Day: American*)
- Driven from the Skies (Defender) (Page 103 *D-Day: American*)
- Fortified Defence (Defender) (Page 103 *D-Day: American*)
- Overwhelming Force (Attacker) (Page 103 *D-Day: American*)
- Preliminary Bombardment (Attacker) (Page 106 *D-Day: American*)
- Relief Reserves (Attacker) (Page 101 *D-Day: American*)
- The Longest Day (Both Players) (Page 103 *D-Day: American*)

SETTING UP

1. Set up the terrain on a 48"/120cm x 72"/180cm table following the map on page 3. Objective and Fortification positions are marked on map.

DEPLOYMENT

1. The Defender's Units marked as Reserves arrive as Deep Delayed Reserves. Reserves arrive from their short edge at the rear of the table.
2. The Defender then places their deployed Units Inside Strongpoint Sole and COD according to the table map and force list.
3. The Attacking player's Units marked as Reserves are held as Relief Reserves. These Reserves arrive within 16"/40cm of either table corner at the rear of the table.
4. The Defender places a Ranged In marker for their off-table 10.5cm Artillery Battery. The off-table Artillery range is measured from German short table edge and Unit can only fire as Artillery.
5. The Attacker selects their First Wave from the troops making the Amphibious Assault, leaving the rest of the Amphibious Assault troops in Floating Reserve.
6. The Attacker places their Landing Craft in the Sea Zone.
7. The Attacker then resolves the Preliminary Bombardment.
8. All Defending Infantry and Gun Units begin the game Pinned Down and in Foxholes.

WHO GOES FIRST

The Attacker has the first turn.

WINNING THE GAME

The game ends at the end of the twelfth turn, or sooner if:

- the Attacker ends their turn Holding *both* Objectives.

Consult the FUBAR Victory Points Table to see the outcome of the assault on page 103 of *D-Day: American*.

ADDITIONAL FORTIFICATION RULES

TRENCH LINES

Teams entirely within Trench Lines are Concealed and in Bulletproof Cover. Teams spending their entire turn in a Trench Line without shooting are Gone to Ground in the opponent's next turn, even if they moved.

QUEEN RED, 6 JUNE 1944



STRONGPOINT COD

The defences of Strongpoint Cod (known as *Widerstandnest 20* or *WN 20* to the Germans) are formidable. Only the eastern part of Strongpoint Cod is shown as the rest faces Queen White beach where the 1st Battalion, The South Lancashire Regiment is landing.

The anchor of Strongpoint Cod is an 8.8cm PaK bunker sited to fire along the beach. This is supported by a 5cm KwK bunker sited to fire along the beach to each side and inland, but completely protected from attacks coming directly off the beach by an impenetrable wall that covers its beach frontage. East of this the sea wall is covered by a Tank Turret bunker mounting an old Renault R-35 turret.

Cod is protected by mines, barbed wire and trenches making it almost impervious to frontal assault.

Further inland beyond the flooded marshes, Strongpoint Sole (*WN 14*) is the company HQ position. This strongpoint is mainly a command centre and has little in the way of defences aside from barbed wire.

Strongpoint Daimler (*WN 12*) houses four artillery pieces in formidable emplacements sited to fire out to sea and also cover the landing beaches at Sword Beach. Daimler is positioned off the table just east of Sole, but can fire artillery bombardments to anywhere on the table.

THE BATTLE FOR SWORD BEACH



BRITISH 3RD DIVISION

2ND BN, EAST YORKSHIRE REGT, 8TH BDE

Battalion HQ
 A Company
 B Company
 C Company
 D Company
 6th (Pioneer) Platoon

A Company, 2nd Bn, The Middlesex Regt
 B Squadron 13/18th Hussars

A Squadron, 22nd Dragoons

77th Assault Squadron, RE

45th Battery, 20th Anti-tank Regt, RA
 76th (Highland) Field Regt, RA
 2 Troop, 4 Commando

RIFLE COMPANY (PAGE 30 D-DAY: BRITISH) AMPHIBIOUS FORCE

Rifle Company HQ (2x Sten SMG team)

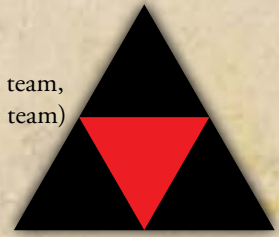
Rifle Platoon (7x Bren Gun & SMLE rifle team, 1x PIAT anti-tank team, 1x 2-inch mortar team)

Rifle Platoon (as above)

Rifle Platoon (as above)

Rifle Platoon (as above)

Assault Pioneer Platoon (6x Bren Gun & SMLE rifle team, 1x Flame-thrower team, 1x PIAT anti-tank team, 1x 2-inch mortar team, as Assault Pioneer Platoon command card)



Vickers Machine-gun Platoon (4x Vickers MMG teams)

Sherman DD Armoured Troop (3x Sherman (75mm) with Sherman DD command card)

Sherman DD Armoured Troop (3x Sherman (75mm) with Sherman Mineflails command card)

AVRE Assault Section (2x AVRE (Petard))

4x Landing Craft

RELIEF FORCE

M10 SP Anti-tank Troop (4x M10 (3-inch))

Priest Field Troop (4x Priest (105mm))

Commando Section (7x Bren Gun a& SMLE rifle team, 1x PIAT anti-tank team, 1x 2-inch mortar)

The first wave ashore on Queen Red Beach was made up of soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, The East Yorkshire Regiment with armoured support from 13/18th Hussars, 22nd Dragoons, and 77th Assault Squadron. Following waves came from the 1st Battalion, The Suffolk Regiment supported by the machine-gunners of the 2nd Battalion, The Middlesex Regiment.

GERMAN 716. INFANTERIEDIVISION

III/736. GRENADIERREGIMENT



Bataillongruppe (Strongpoint Sole)
Granatwerferzug (Strongpoint Cod)
10. Kompanie (Strongpoint Cod)

736. Panzerjägerzug (Strongpoint Cod)
4/1716. Artillerieregiment (Strongpoint Daimler)

12. Kompanie (Strongpoints Cod and Sole)
Strongpoint Cod

ALARMHEITEN

4. Kompanie, 736. Grenadierregiment
3/642. Ost Bataillon

736. Sturmzug

3. Kompanie, 22. Panzerregiment, 21. Panzerdivision

BEACH DEFENCE GRENADIER COMPANY (PAGE 18 D-DAY: GERMAN)

Beach Defence Grenadier Company HQ
8cm Mortar Platoon (2x 8cm mortar, at **B**)
Beach Defence Grenadier Platoon
(7x MG42 & K98 rifle team, at **B**)
Beach Defence Anti-tank Platoon (2x 7.5cm guns, at **C**)
10.5cm Artillery Battery (off table, Observer K98 rifle teams
at **A** & **B**)

FORTIFICATIONS

1x MG Tobruk Pit (at **A**) 3x MG Tobruk Pit (at **B**)
1x 8.8cm Bunker
1x 5cm Bunker
1x French Turret (4.7cm)

RESERVES

Beach Defence Grenadier Platoon (as above)
Beach Defence Grenadier Platoon (as above with the Ost
Battalion command card ratings applied)
Scout Platoon (As Beach Defence Grenadier Platoon but with 3x MG42
& K98 rifle team with Panzerfaust and the Scout rule)
Panzer IV Tank Platoon (4x Panzer IV)
The Panzer Platoon must be the last reserve platoon to arrive.

The German defenders were from *III. Bataillon, 736. Grenadierregiment* of *716. Infanteriedivision*. All of the division's guns were deployed well forward where they could fire on the defenders as they landed. The immediately available reserves were mainly unsupported infantry, although the tanks of *21. Panzerdivision* arrived towards the end of the day.

OBSERVER K98 RIFLE TEAMS

Observer K98 rifle teams are Independent Infantry Teams with the Observer, Stormtrooper, and Scout specials rules.

They are armed with a K98 rifle with Range 16"/40cm, Halted ROF 1, Moving ROF 1, AT 2, FP 6, and have Slow Firing.

They are rated Motivation Confident 4+, Skill Veteran 3+, Assault 5+, and IS Hit On 4+.