

AAR – “Curiosity Killed the ...?”



Bridge and Stream Viewed From the West

This past Saturday, our gaming group play-tested a new four-player Micro Melee scenario entitled “Curiosity Killed the...?” in 6mm scale that we will be running at Cold Wars. This meeting engagement features reinforced recon patrols of the US 80th ID and German 3rd PGD tasked with determining the enemy’s intentions on the eve of Patton’s first attempt to cross the Moselle River at Pont-a-Mousson, France in early September 1944. There are two players to a side, each of whom controls a reinforced infantry platoon comprising a platoon HQ, three squads, a MMG team, and an AT team as well as one armored recon AFV variable-arrival reinforcement. The side with the most VPs at the end of the game wins – VPs are gained by having un-suppressed infantry units and operable AFVs on the enemy side of the stream that runs down the middle of the board and by destroying enemy units. The scenario is four turns long and has five action impulses per turn.



Key Terrain Features and Unit Entry Areas

The game began with both sides entering the board and setting up a platoon in over-watch on wooded high ground near their entry edges. Each side’s 2nd platoon entered the board and began maneuvering across slightly rolling farmland and orchards toward the stream. Both over-watch platoons initially held fire to focus on spotting the moving enemy. The German 1st platoon MMG on the hill opened fire first,

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disclosing its position in the tree-line, but encouraging the moving US platoon to take cover in an orchard where they established a firing line along the stone wall nearest the stream’s bank. As the German 2nd platoon advanced unmolested toward the South Woods along the stream bank to cover the nearby stone bridge, the German 1st platoon double timed two squads and the platoon HQ down the open hill to the stream bank under the covering fire of their MMG and third squad. The US 1st platoon MMG in over-watch opened fire on the running Germans but missed; the rest of the US platoon held fire to continue spotting new targets and to remain concealed in the woods.



US 1st Platoon MMG Overwatch Position

The US MMG on the hill shifted fire to the German 2nd platoon, which had begun dashing to the South Woods near the bridge when their 1st platoon comrades came under. The 2nd platoon suffered a couple of casualties, but reached the woods and set up positions covering the bridge to their north and the stream. The MMG and two squads of the US 2nd platoon in the orchard fired on the German 1st platoon elements on the hill without effect. This platoon’s third squad and bazooka team dashed to the North Woods near the stream to cover the bridge from the US side. The maneuvering elements of the German 1st platoon disregarded the US fire to move into the stream and reached the opposite bank safely.



German 1st Platoon Maneuver Element Crawls Up to the Hedge

The German SdKfz-234/3 was the first AFV to arrive and sped along the road to the bridge to take up position next to it. The US M8 Greyhound and M8 Scott GMC arrived together second. The Scott advanced to a curve in the road where it could cover the bridge from a distance and out of LOS/LOF of

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the SdKfz-234/3. The Greyhound maneuvered into position to fire on the German units on the high ground across the stream in support of the US 2nd platoon in the orchard. When the German SdKfz-234/1 arrived, it moved into position near the bridge out of LOS of the Scott to bring fire on the US 1st platoon MMG on the hill.



German 2nd Platoon Takes Up Position in South Woods To Cover Bridge and Stream

The volume of fire on both sides of the stream increased significantly. North of the bridge the German 1st platoon maneuver elements crawled up the bank to a hedge 40 yards from the US-occupied orchard and were greeted by a hail of small arms fire. Due to the poor cover provided by the hedge, German casualties rose quickly and the units became suppressed. The Greyhound fired HE rounds at the German 1st platoon units on the hill and quickly suppressed them with heavy casualties. The SdKfz-234/3 beside the bridge fired HE at the US units in the woods across the stream causing casualties, but the US squad passed morale and silenced the armored car with a well placed AT rifle grenade.



German 1st Platoon Over-Watch MMG and Squad Suppressed by HE Fire

South of the bridge, the US 1st platoon MMG concentrated fire on the German 2nd platoon in the South Woods, suppressing a squad. The German 2nd platoon MMG and the SdKfz-234/1 20-mm auto cannon fired on the US 1st platoon MMG and despite suffering casualties the MMG continued to engage the

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Germans in the woods, eventually suppressing the MMG. Noting the slackened enemy fire, the US 1st platoon commander ordered his still unspotted squads down the hill to cross the stream and moved his bazooka team to a hedge to the left for a shot at the SdKfz-234/1. The US 1st platoon HQ remained on the hill to provide leadership to the now hurt MMG team. The German 2nd platoon leader observed the US movement down the hill and shifted a squad to the south side of the South Woods, leaving one squad and the panzerschreck team on the north edge to cover the bridge.



German SdKfz-234/3 Advances to the Bridge To Attack US Squad in North Woods

The German situation north of the bridge began to deteriorate as casualties mounted and the suppressed 1st platoon was unable to return effective fire. Unaware that the German platoon leader had been killed and the HQ unit destroyed, the US 2nd platoon commander took advantage of the desultory German return fire to send the two squads in the orchard to reinforce the platoon's third squad and bazooka team in the North Woods near the bridge.

While the SdKfz-234/1 continued to fire on the pesky US 1st platoon MMG on the hill, the platoon's bazooka team moved into position behind the hedge and scored a long-range hit on the hull-down AFV's turret causing the ammunition to explode. Using good tactical spacing, the three US 1st platoon squads made it down the hill in succession to the stream bank. The lead squad crossed and veered to its right using the concealment of a hedge to flank the Germans in the South Woods, and moved into position to provide covering fire for the two trailing squads when they crossed.



AFV Carnage at the Bridge

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Inspired by the destruction of the second German AFV, the Scott rolled forward to cross the bridge. As it reached the crest of the bridge, a panzerschreck rocket from the South Woods streaked past, barely missing it. The Scott's luck failed as it slowed at the other end of the bridge to navigate the two burning AFV's. It was hit by a second panzerschreck rocket from the German AT team and a volley of two panzerfausts from the squad in the woods. Vehicle passage across the bridge was now effectively blocked by three burning vehicles.



US 2nd Platoon Crosses the Stream North of the Bridge

North of the bridge, the two surviving German 1st platoon squads on the US side of the stream succeeded in rallying, but not quickly enough to prevent the US 2nd platoon's three squads and bazooka team in the North Woods to cross the stream. Meanwhile south of the bridge, the German 2nd platoon MMG and squad on the south edge of South Woods were suppressed by the intrepid US 1st platoon MMG on the hill and the squad in the hedge, allowing the two other US 1st platoon squads to cross the stream safely.



The Greyhound Ends the Game in Position To Support US 2nd Platoon's Crossing

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Turn 4 concluded at this point with the Americans scoring a 3.5:1 VP ratio. This was a thrilling game that was close and well fought throughout, but things began to unravel for the Germans toward the end of Turn 3. The key turning points were the loss of the German 1st platoon HQ, the very effective suppressive fire of the Greyhound and US 2nd platoon orchard position, the incredible morale of the US 1st platoon MMG team on the high ground (every member received the Silver Star for this action, the majority posthumously or in hospital), and the incredible long-range bazooka shot that took out the German SdKfz-234/1.



Looking NE From US-Controlled High Ground