

# STORM OVER ARNHAM

## VARIANT

# THE CROSSING

By Courtney Allen and Don Greenwood  
Updated 2005 – COUNTER-MOVES

This article is undoubtedly a first in wargame publication history. Never before, at least in our recollection, has a game been published with all the parts necessary for a variant style of play except the rules. Oh, one could make an argument that *PANZERBLITZ* or even *SQUAD LEADER* provided extra counters which the players could plug into the system for "Design Your Own" scenarios; but, those were primarily game systems utilizing scenario formats and typical terrain map configurations. In *STORM OVER ARNHAM* the mapboard is extremely accurate and the order of battle has been structured as closely as possible on that of the actual participants, whereas in the former games one can only hope to capture the feel of the battle by using fractions of the actual forces and loosely representative terrain. So, in *SOA* we were definitely covering new ground. How would players react to having their Time Track actually contain two extra turns that they knew nothing about? And wouldn't they be irritated to have a dozen extra counters without knowing what to do with them?

The jury is still out on those questions; as this is being written, we still haven't received substantial feedback on the game itself from the general public. But perhaps some background is in order. Those who have not yet seen *STORM OVER ARNHAM* should be appraised that the game depicts a set-

piece battle without scenarios. In essence this means that, like the "classic" games of a bygone era, there is only one version of the battle portrayed in the game. It is a throwback to the days of *D-DAY* and *STALINGRAD* in that the appeal of the game is not in how many different versions or scenarios there are to play, but in the challenge of playing the basic game itself as flawlessly as possible. In developing the game, we decided to temper this sameness of situation by including a Random Events Table to introduce a certain degree of variation to each game. Although the Random Events Table is based on probability (the Germans did receive reinforcements throughout the battle and had access to even more had their commanders so chosen), it also introduces a touch of what might have been. The British reinforcements cited in the table did indeed exist—in fact, the British Reformed Units rule is based on the remnants of such forces as did manage to filter into the bridge positions. More importantly, however, it adds variation to the play of the game in an attempt to keep it from becoming stereotyped and vulnerable to "perfect plan" types of analysis. Even so, if *SOA* has a fault it is probably in the type of battle it portrays. A siege does not present much opportunity for the ebb and flow of battle and the initiative is usually one-sided. The turning points are rarely as dramatic as

the swing from defense to offense by the Americans in *BATTLE OF THE BULGE* or the Russians in *TRC*. Consequently, when the game was well along in the development stage we decided to design an extension to the game which would give the British the opportunity to play the attacker and recreate the actual seizure of the bridge before going over to the defensive.

There were many positive features to the decision. Besides giving the British the chance to actually portray their taking of the bridge, it also brought on the opportunity to simulate probably the most famous engagement at the bridge—the massacre of Captain Grabner's 9th SS Recon Battalion in its attempted crossing of the bridge on the 18th. Forever immortalized by Cornelius Ryan's *A BRIDGE TOO FAR* and the subsequent screenplay thereof, this action is by far the most vivid public remembrance of the battle and doubtless will salve the average player's obligatory need to synchronize the recognizable sub-battles in his game with the chronological events of the battle as he remembers them. Indeed, the most frequently asked question by our playtesters was why the Germans couldn't attempt a crossing of the bridge since in play it was seldom heavily guarded. A recreation of what happened to Grabner's column will serve as a vivid reminder of why the Germans were loathe to try

crossing the bridge a second time. Equally important is the opportunity it gives the British player to take history in his own hands, ignore the historical perimeter, and set up his own bastion. The question of whether the basic game's historical position, an expanded perimeter at the expense of additional unit vulnerability, or a contracted initial defense is the best course to pursue is not answered without considerable thought.

Then why, you might well inquire, didn't we include these initial goings on in the basic game? Well, contrary to the opinion of at least one of our playtesters, it was not just a cheap scheme to get players to fork over a few bucks more to buy the *GENERAL*. The primary reason was play balance. The paramount consideration in a simple game such as *SOA* is play balance. A game whose main emphasis is perceived realism and detail to the nth degree can get away with a lack of balance. To simulation enthusiasts lost in a sea of details, a lack of play balance is excusable and can even be chalked up to recreation of the real life challenge of winning as the underdog. In a game whose forte is playability, lack of play balance can be a crippling and most damning flaw. Appending the two turn extension onto our game at the midpoint of our development would have thrown months of concentrated playtesting out the window and may have done irreparable damage to the play balance. *SOA* underwent extensive playtest even before it went out to the by-mail testers. Even so it defied our best efforts to declare it balanced. Virtually every time we played it, we changed our mind as to which was the favored side. Our by-mail testers had similar problems—half proclaiming that the Germans had no chance, while the others declared that the British

were dead meat. Only with repeated play and constant minor adjustments did these claims later start to meet in the middle. We just didn't dare fool around with the play balance by making such a major addition to the game at that stage of the development.

Almost as important a consideration was the effect the extension would have on playing time. *SOA* was already taking too long to play for a "beer and pretzels" type game with an emphasis on enjoyment and playability. Adding two turns would certainly have taken it out of the time frame of a comfortable afternoon's play for many slower players.

And finally, to someone just learning the game those two first turns couldn't have been very exciting. The reason why they weren't included in the first place was due to the lop-sided nature of the circumstances. The German garrison had no chance to seriously impede the British advance at the outset—not if the game was to be true to history. In essence, those first few turns would have been very boring, and done little to help the new player get into the flow of the game quickly. Only with the advantage of hindsight could an experienced player appreciate the opportunities those first few turns of maneuver offer.

However, none of this prevented us from knowing what the OB for the variant extension would be, and as long as there was room on the counter sheets for additional counters why not include the actual pieces in the game with a reference to the issue of the *GENERAL* which would contain rules for their use? By the time that issue went to press we would have time to playtest the variant rules. And by planning ahead, we were able to schedule a *STORM OVER ARNHEM* feature presentation

for that same issue. The casual player who was interested in picking up a copy of the variant rules would also get the latest errata on the game [at this writing there is none], articles on strategy and an illustrated sample game to help him comprehend the game or show him where he's going wrong if he's unable to win with a particular side. It was a revolutionary concept and one that appears to make a lot of sense to me. For those who feel they have been ripped off for the price of the magazine I can only say that the alternative would have been no game extension at all, because I would not have included an untested scenario in the game. *GENERAL* readers would then have eventually been treated to such a variant with no die-cut counters. [We look forward to your response to this variant and the concept behind it—including extra counters in the counter-mix for such later-published variants. Your opinions will determine whether this type of approach will be used again.]

Thus was the decision made to limit the extension of the game to variant status. The variant was not included in the game itself simply because we had not yet had time to playtest it. Only after the basic game was published in December did we begin to playtest the variant with the same by-mail playtest crews, and only now are we satisfied that its effects on the basic game's play balance are minimal. However, we are happy to report that it does change play of the game considerably and many of our test groups reported that they prefer the variant version to the basic game as it gives each player a sort of "free" setup. So, now we can happily tell you all to finally punch out those die-cut counters you've been saving, read on, and get set to play . . .

## PLAYER AID CHARTS

### Reinforcements & Reformed units

Only scheduled reinforcements are Tiger tanks in Zone C on turn 5

Roll needed to make 1 elim. 

1
---

 2 elim. 

1
---

2
---

 etc 6 elim. =

1 reformed unit

unit

1

units

1

2

etc

units

REF  
UNIT  
3-6-3

*Units that sustained 2 casualty points or couldn't retreat count as 2 units*

*Units that sustained 4 casualty points are discarded*

### Random Events

British player rolls dice, adjusts for:

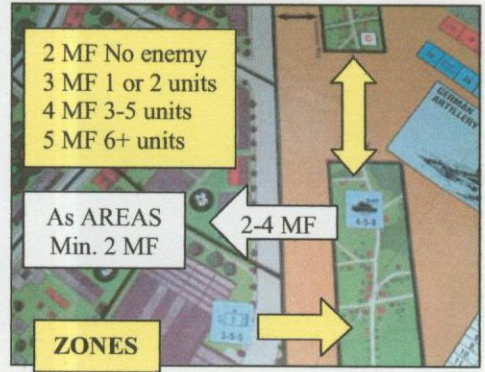
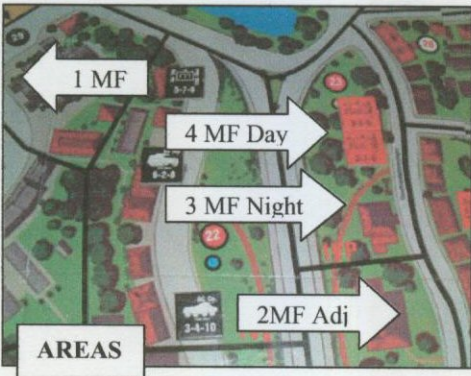
**Tactical Advantage** (ability to re-roll dice) German -1 / British +1

**Occupation of Zones D & E** for every 5 German units -1 / for every 3 British units +1

*1-3 German / Armour reinforcements start in zones A-E (1-5) or committed in any zone (6)*

*1-3 British reinforcements start in zones D or E, 1 Bren Carrier starts in zone D or E*

# Move or Fire (same or adjacent areas) or Set Fires (German player)



## Highest Attack Factor

- Turn 6: -1 for Brits
- Turn 8: -2
- + dice roll
- + 1 for each extra unit
- + 1 if 3 units with the same lower organisation
- Bren Carrier = +1 each if in VP area

## Lowest Defence Factor

- + dice roll
- + 1 if fired on from adjacent area
- + 2 if fired on from adjacent area at night
- If  $AV > DV$  then difference = casualty points

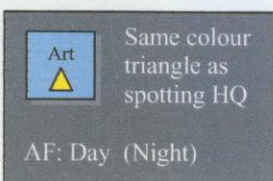
**AT Guns** Only attack armour, not infantry  
 Can fire as a separate attack in addition to a normal impulse  
 Cannot retreat or block an infantry retreat  
 Defend at 6 in close combat (even against infantry)  
 Are eliminated at end of close combat if only unit in area

**Max. Attack / impulse:** 6 Inf (incl HQs) + 1 HQ + 3 Arm

**Casualty Points:** 1 Retreat & committed 3 Infantry eliminated 4 Armour eliminated

**Artillery** AF + 2 dice vs DF + 2 dice



*British need roll of 1 - 4 to call up artillery*





Enemy-free area



**Fires set** if die roll is equal or less than the # of German units involved (Engineers = 3 units)

eg  +  Fire starts on roll of 

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

 placed or upgraded to 

# of British units committed: 1 2 3 4 *Markers increase the chance of further fires being set as shown*

## Close Combat

Line up opposing units within each **area or zone**. Use **AFs** except when attacking armour. **Infantry** may attack unscreened armour. Each **extra unit** increases the chance to hit by 1. Eliminated units flipped face down but can **return fire** before being removed.

Attackers:	Defenders:	Defender eliminated on die roll of:
3-5-5	4-7-5	6
4-7-5	3-5-5	5, 6
4-7-5 + 2-8-5	3-5-5	4, 5, 6
6-3-10 + 3-5-5	4-7-5	3, 4, 5, 6
6-X-1 + 2-8-5 + 4-7-5	4-5-8 [A]	3, 4, 5, 6
3-7-5	6-2-8 [A]	5, 6
6-X-1	4-5-8 [A]	5, 6
Any unit	6-X-1	6
Any 2 units	6-X-1	5, 6

## Roll to Extinguish Fires (British player)

Regardless of occupancy of area

= 



 removed      



 = 



 removed

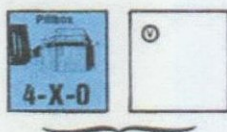
## Victory Points (German player) & Turn Marker

Perimeter areas score only on Turn 2 or 3  
Victory point areas score every turn

# THE CROSSING A STORM OVER ARNHEM VARIANT

The variant starts during Sunday night, September 17th with the turn marker on Turn A and the British player in possession of the Tactical Advantage. If he does not use the Tactical Advantage, the British will control it until the start of turn 3 when it will once again switch to the Germans automatically. The Germans are in control of all Victory Point Areas at start and may receive Victory Points for any areas they still control at the end of turns A and/or B, but cannot receive points for reducing the British perimeter until Turn 1.

## 1. ADDITIONAL UNITS—



**1.1 PILLBOX [4-X-0]:** The pillbox counter is setup in Area 4 to start the game. The pillbox may only attack/be attacked during the Close Combat Phase. Only those units in Area 4 which are designated to attack it may be attacked by the pillbox. Therefore, regardless of who controls the Tactical Advantage the British player must designate his Close Combats first. The pillbox does not affect enemy movement or stacking limits in any way. The pillbox does count as a German unit for control of Victory Point areas.



**1.2 ARNHEM GARRISON:** The Arnhem Garrison consists of two 3-5-5 infantry units and a 2-6-5 HQ unit which start the game in Area 23. If all three units fire together they do receive a +1 DRM for platoon integrity. During the A game turn only, these units do not affect enemy movement costs into adjacent areas (i.e.: 8.22 case B does not apply).



**1.3 9th SS RECON:** The 9th SS Recon consists of two 3-3-10 PSW 231 Armored Car and four 3-2-8 SPW 250 Halftrack units. The one 9th SS Armored Car unit in the Basic Game German setup is removed and must enter the game instead with the 9th SS Recon units on turn B at the bridge as per rule 3.4. At the end of any game turn after they enter the board, any halftrack counter of the 9th SS Recon Battalion may be replaced by a 4-6-6 infantry recon counter of the 9th SS. Once this substitution is made it may not be reversed. The 9th SS Recon infantry do not qualify for platoon integrity.

## 2. VARIANT SETUP—

**2.1 TURN A:** All British Basic Game initial placement units except Company B setup in zones D and/or E. The German player sets up his pillbox and three Arnhem Garrison units in areas 4 and 23 as outlined previously.

**2.2 TURN B:** The British player brings on Company B in zone E and is now able to attempt to use his artillery for the first time. The German player places his 10th SS Recon Bn in zones A, B, and C with a maximum of eleven units per zone and is now able to attempt to use his artillery for the first time. The 9th SS Recon Bn must enter at the bridge per rule 3.4.

**2.3 TURN 1:** The German Bocholt Training Battalion is placed in zones A and/or B as in the Basic Game.

## 3. SPECIAL VARIANT RULES—

**3.1** All British units (except AT units) have one additional MF during turn A. British AT units have a MF of 6 during this game turn. After turn A, all units are reduced to their normal Basic Game movement rates. The requirement for the British to setup at least three units in each Victory Point area at the start of Game Turn 1 is waived in the variant.

**3.2** Neither side may enter a perimeter zone during turn A.

**3.3** The Random Events Table and Setting Fires rules may not be used before turn 1.

**3.4** The German 9th SS Recon Bn elements must enter together in one impulse during turn B as follows:

**3.41** Before every German M/F Impulse during Turn B the German player must roll a die. If the die roll is a 1 or 2 the entire German 9th SS Recon Bn must enter the game during that Movement Impulse. If the die roll is not a 1 or 2 the German may move or fire normally or even Pass, but the turn will not end even if the British follow with a Pass of their own. If the British and German players do pass consecutively, the 9th SS Recon Bn automatically enters and the phase ends with that impulse unless the German player has the Tactical Advantage and wishes to continue the turn by using it.

**3.42** When the 9th SS Recon Bn enters the game, all six units must be placed at the bridge on the area dividing line between areas 4 and 5. Any uncommitted British units occupying areas 4 and 5 which wish to do so must now fire as one combined group (even if that group exceeds the basic game maximum fire limits) at all the German units occupying the border as if they were occupants of their own area. No AT units may fire at this time, even if they occupy areas 4 and/or 5. German casualty points must be expended by unit elimination only (up to 4 casualty points per unit). All firing British units become committed.

**3.43** Any surviving units on the border are then advanced to the area dividing line between areas 18 and 17. Any uncommitted British units occupying areas 18 and 17 which wish to do so must now fire as one combined group (even if that group exceeds the basic game maximum fire limits) at all German units occupying the border. Any uncommitted AT units occupying areas 18 and/or 17 may also fire, but as a separate attack. German casualty points must be expended by unit elimination only after both the infantry attack and any AT unit attack(s) have been resolved. All firing British units become committed.

**3.44** If any 9th SS Recon units still remain, they may move into areas 18 and/or 17, or continue on to the border between areas 22 and 23. Those units choosing to move into areas 18 or 17 must end their move there if British units are present in the area moved into. At that point they would have been susceptible to a maximum of two combined fire group attacks plus up to one or two separate AT gun attacks. If there are no British units present in the area moved into, they may continue movement normally, and are considered to have expended 3 MFs before leaving the bridge to enter areas 18 or 17. Any surviving 9th SS Recon units which do not wish to enter areas 18 and/or 17 must be placed on the border of areas 22 and 23 and receive fire from any willing and eligible British units in those areas as per 3.43, except that the German player may elect to satisfy casualty point losses by retreating if otherwise able to do so.

**3.45** Any 9th SS Recon units which have survived border fire in areas 22 and 23 must enter area 22, 23, and/or 28. They may continue moving as usual (having already expended 4 MFs on the bridge to that point) if the area entered is unoccupied by British units. If the area entered is occupied by British unit(s), the German unit(s) must stop in that area.

**3.46** It costs 1 MF to enter the game via the bridge plus 1 MF for each border ramp moved onto. No unit may end this special Movement/Fire impulse on a border. It must pay normal MF cost to enter a specific area when leaving the ramp border. All surviving 9th SS Recon units become committed at the end of this impulse and the game then converts back to the normal M/F impulse sequence with the British player in control of the next impulse.

**3.47** British artillery may not be used against the 9th SS Recon units on the ramp. Neither artillery nor Anti-Tank Guns may be used against the pillbox.

**3.5** At the start of turn 1 the six British perimeter control counters are placed by the German player on any six areas currently occupied by the British. These areas cannot be Victory Point areas but may contain German units if there are not enough areas solely occupied by British units. If the British player does not currently occupy six such areas, the German player may select other areas which are currently unoccupied but were last transited by the British to fulfill the limit of six perimeter areas. If the German player is still unable to specify six perimeter areas, he receives two victory points for each counter not placed. Under no circumstances may the German specify more than six perimeter areas.

**3.6** The game continues normally from turn 1 as per the Basic Game rules. Only the special provisions for the German pillbox not affecting British movement rates could conceivably alter play from the Basic Game norm.

**3.7 VICTORY CONDITIONS:** The Germans begin the variant with their Victory Point marker in the -2 block as a play-balance adjustment.