

East of the Vire Report

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The East of the Vire campaign was playtest by two groups, one on the Yorke Peninsula and the other in Blackwood, Adelaide, South Australia. The official record of the Yorke Peninsula campaign is available on the A Stout Ensign website. What follows is a report by Norm Blunden of his experiences in the Blackwood campaign.

East of La Meauffe (Area B1)

0700 hrs, 11th July,

Strength: PL +1, PL +0, RO, 3 x SLs, 3 x BARs, 30 men

Support: MMG plus three crew, 60mm mortar plus two crew and Bazooka plus one assistant

I positioned one squad in the area adjacent to the railway line. The other two squads with the PL were in the area near the orchard. The support weapons were positioned between them. One group advanced into then through the orchard and took heavy fire from a MMG when they emerged. Three men went down. I then moved up two more groups after pinning the MMG with fire from my own MMG. These two groups then advanced and took fire from a rifle group and a SMG group but took no casualties. Having no fire card but plenty of movement cards I then assaulted all the German groups and killed enough figures to break them. I took no losses in the assaults.

The fight lasted an hour, and my force regrouped by 0900 hrs. Losses were three riflemen in my second squad. A rifleman in the 1st squad became a hero.



Area B2

1200 hrs, 11th July,

Strength: PL +1, PL +0, RO, 3 x SLs, 3 x BARs, 27 men

Support: MMG plus three crew, 60mm mortar plus two crew, Bazooka plus one assistant and a pre-bombardment

Most of my force was deployed on my right, away from the buildings and woods. I sent forward two groups of two men and one group of three riflemen to probe the enemy positions. One of the groups of two on the far right was ambushed by half a dozen Germans with an LMG. They were both killed outright. I sent the group of three to move up on the flank of the Germans (and to see if they had any supporting groups). They were ambushed by a five-man SMG group with a platoon leader. Two died instantly but the third survived.

Now that I had found a significant force of Germans, I moved up two groups each of five riflemen, a BAR and a squad leader to fire on the SMG squad at medium range. They went to ground but one was killed by a sniper. I also moved up my MMG group to also engage the SMG group. The SMG group fired at the MMG as it was setting up but merely pinned two crewmen. The original enemy group now moved behind the SMG group and took up positions along the hedgerow 90 degrees to their right.



This gave me the opportunity to shoot both my large groups at the SMG group while they were not “gone to ground”. Despite using the two best fire cards in the deck they did nothing other than pin three men. This was the last time I held a 5/4 fire card in the game.

While this was occurring, I had moved my remaining seven-man group up to flank the large enemy group. The single figure left from my three-man group fired at them and pinned another one. I had no fire cards but three movement cards in my hand.

I moved up my 60mm mortar and my Platoon commander with five riflemen to the road (drawing enemy fire that did nothing due to the range) then launched my seven-man squad in an assault on the large enemy group. There were only three unpinned men against my seven men with only a strength one rifle attack shooting as I went in. It was a disaster for the US as his pinned men all won their combats, including killing my squad leader (who was being rather badly assisted by the BAR gunner). Luckily though I still had three unpinned men to the Germans two, so I won the fight killing the pinned Germans.

More Germans now appeared and a good burst of fire from the assault survivors killed several as they took up firing positions.

Luckily the German fire over the next few turns did no more damage other than a few pins which were rallied off. A German assault then went in against the three victors of my assault. Two of my men retreated (one of them being a hero) but the third was captured as he was pinned at the time.

Eventually this perceived threat forced the SMG troops to retire at which point I used the only fire card I had. This pinned several SMG men. The single survivor of my three-man group leapt over the bocage to assault the pinned SMG men but was cut down. Eventually I picked up a fire 1 card which the Squad leader used to direct the 60mm mortar killing one of the pinned SMG men. German resistance then collapsed, and the field was ours. Our losses were 12 riflemen and 1 squad leader. One rifleman fled. One of my on-table riflemen had a hero card played on him so will replace the squad leader.

East of Ledfie (B3)

0600 hrs, 12th July,

Strength: PL +1, PL +0, RO, 3 x SLs, 3 x BARs, 30 men

Support: none

My forces were deployed in the following manner:

1st Squad: a group of two riflemen, a SL, a BAR and 4 riflemen, and a group of four riflemen

2nd Squad - ditto

3rd Squad: a group of two riflemen, a SL, BAR and three riflemen.

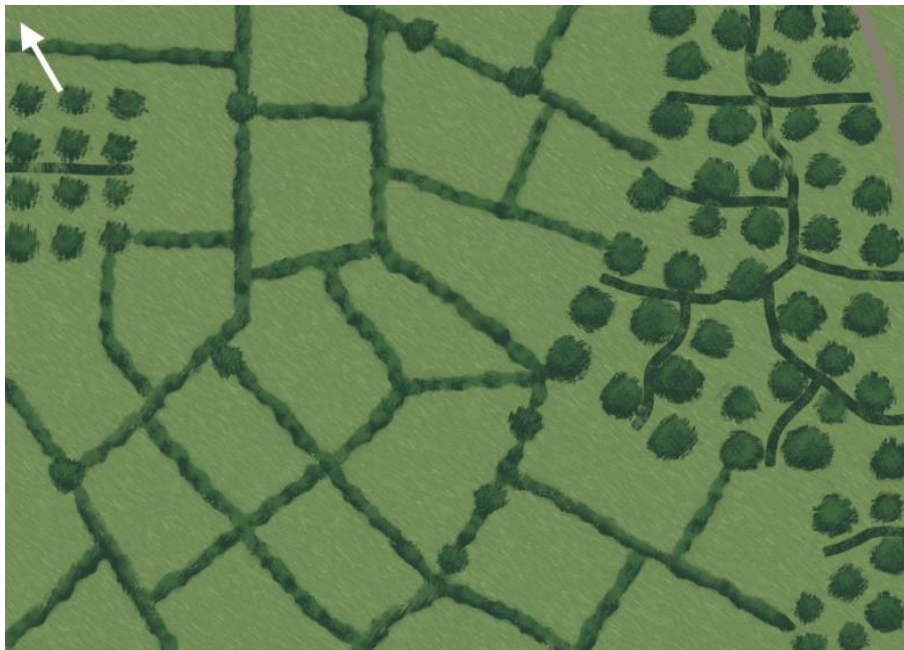
Arriving 0900 five riflemen.

The PL joined the SL group from the 1st squad.

Initially each squad sent out their two-man groups to locate the enemy front line units, avoiding the wooded area on my left. The right most group located a five-man enemy group but was then cut down by two bursts of fire. However, I had several movement cards in hand and moved up all three BAR squads to fire on the enemy. Vast amounts of ammunition were expended for little effect (ALL the 4/5 cards in the deck were used over several turns). A time check came up as the second last card, but the die roll was negative.

Straight away the American shooting became more effective, and three enemy were killed.

Another group of Germans opened fire from the edge of the wood as I moved up one of the BAR squads to occupy the former German position. A lucky shot killed the SL. The other two BAR squads returned fire and over two fire turns they killed one enemy and pinned three others leaving a just two Germans unpinned. One of my two-man groups was in an adjacent area and charged the Germans. They were not fired on and both passed their morale. The German morale rolled was poor and all three pinned figures were captured and the two unpinned figures fled without a fight.



The German platoon commander now appeared, grabbed the two fleeing Germans and added them to another group and counterattacked. One of the Americans was killed but the other survived. Fierce fire from the US BAR groups killed several Germans (one of the riflemen becoming a Hero) and forced the German platoon commander to leave the group to find a safer place to command from. A sniper killed another German at which point the Germans hastily withdrew from the field leaving us in charge.

Our losses were four riflemen and a SL (who will be replaced by the Hero)

The battlefield was secured by 0700 hrs.

When the second battle for the day commences the recon group will still be absent until 0900 hrs.

La Vengerie (B4)

0900 hrs, 12th July,

Strength: PL +1, PL +0, RO, 3 x SLs, 3 x BARs, 25 men

Support: MMG and three crew, 60mm mortar and two crew and Bazooka and one assistant

Norm left no record of this fight. The action lasted four hours and the platoon regrouped at 1700 hrs. They lost nine riflemen.

East of Coquet (B5)

1700 hrs, 12th July,

Strength: PL +1, PL +0, RO, 3 x SLs, 3 x BARs, 16 men

Support: MMG and three crew,

Three scout teams of two men each were sent out and one of them located a group of Germans that fired at them, killing one. The MMG group and a rifle/BAR group were brought forward and killed the Germans. A time passage occurred.

Another scout team found a group of six Germans who charged them. My defensive fire killed two Germans and pinned the rest. The Germans then called in a mortar that killed both scouts.

The MMG and three rifle/BAR groups moved forward and one of them spotted a German group moving into position in the hedgerows. They fired and killed one pinning three others. They then surged forward to assault and captured five Germans without loss.



Another group of rifle/BAR moved up and yet another German group opened up on them in the open at close range. Three Americans ran off over several fire rounds but when the MMG moved up it killed several more Germans and resistance completely collapsed. No more time passages had occurred. Total US casualties were three killed and three that ran off.

East of Pont-Hebért (B6) 0800 hrs, 13th July,

Strength: PL +1, PL +0, RO, 3 x SLs, 3 x BARs, 30 men
Support: MMG and three crew, pre-bombardment,

At first light the platoon moved into their start off positions. Three squads evenly spread across the front, although the left-hand squad was still missing its recon group. The MMG was positioned slightly right of centre.

A two-man scout teams were sent forward by each squad. Those on the left and centre found nothing in the first hedgerows. The right-hand patrol found a German squad with an LMG which opened fire on our MMG squad. Repeated German HE strikes were made on our MMG group, which in conjunction with the fire from the enemy LMG squad caused casualties to the MMG crew.

The platoon commander grabbed the two-man scout squad and combined it with the remaining MMG crew. Unfortunately, at this moment another burst of fire hit the group and he was instantly killed along with one of the reinforcing group.



This seemed to inspire the platoon sergeant who also grabbed a nearby group of riflemen and reinforced the MMG crew. Fire continued to rain down on them from HE

bombardments and the LMG squad so one of the squad leaders bravely led his rifle/BAR group across the open field towards the LMG group.

They were stopped by a minefield. When they extricated themselves from this, they were fired upon by a second LMG group. It was looking grim but luckily the fire just pinned three men and killed one.

A second SL/rifle BAR group opened fire on the new LMG squad and pinned them all. A second round of fire killed several and routed two. Meanwhile the initial advancing group had rallied and managed to kill or pin most of the initial LMG group.

A general advance then ensued with four US groups taking the enemy hedgerow line without loss. The German groups had now lost 12 men between them, and the OP radio operator had also been killed. The OP and the last remaining LMG gunner retreated to the group of houses to their right rear.

At this point my plan was to encircle the houses and bring overwhelming fire to bear on them. To this end I sent several groups forward on my right to attempt to bring flanking fire on the buildings. They encountered no enemy and continued to advance to the wood at the far right of the battlefield without opposition. I now deduced that all the remaining Germans were hunkered down in and around the buildings so decided to bypass them.

This took a great deal of time but in the end most of the platoon was able to exit the battlefield forcing the Germans in the houses to quit the battlefield.

Our losses were my PL, three of the MMG crew, and five men (4 of them while attached to the MMG). No one ran.

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Norm was the only American player to reach the last row of the map, the Pont-Hebért row, (row 6) and he did so with a day and a half to spare. He scored 1,432 victory points 1,000 points clear of the other American players. As a result, out of the American players he was the clear winner but overall, the German player, Mark Cook, won a major German victory.