

# The Triptych

Late last year we were sitting, in the local pub, discussing our wargaming and what we did and what enjoyment or end purpose it gave us. When I say we I mean the usual group of people I game with who have all been doing this longer than we care to remember (or admit!). Well, we all agreed that we enjoyed our Monday night gaming but they were invariably one-off's and although we try and work out a scenario in advance there was still an element of Gung-Ho about the game, which in reality there isn't. So what could we do to improve our lot?

After a lengthy debate we hit upon the idea (not new) of planning three linked games with predetermined forces, a map and an objective. We agreed that the general principle could be adapted from a Roman Legion advance to a modern armour advance, and most things in-between. So I foolishly agreed to organise the first one for early 1999.

I have been gaming WWII for 20 years now (old age creeps in) and have amassed a reasonable collection of most things but still have a special place for my 1940 French Army, so I decided they would get the ball rolling. The opposition was, obviously, German, but I did not want an armoured advance so I opted for a Motorised Infantry Brigade from a panzer division, plus artillery and a company of tanks. The map was drawn in three linked tables based around a map of an area of France in 1940 with the objective to get the Germans across the Meuse. All organisations were from the Command Decision Armies of WWII book and all players were happy with these.

The Organisations, for those interested were: -

**German;** Motorised Infantry Brigade  
Light Artillery Battalion  
Motorised Engineer Co.  
Co.Light Tanks (38t)  
Co.Med Tanks (PzIIIE)  
Luftwaffe support on call

*Mike Evans, Iain Borthwick, Mark Fisher in command.*

**Allied;** Table 1; Dismounted Dragoon Batt.  
H35 Tank  
2 Panhard Armoured Cars  
Table 2; Dismounted Dragoon Batt.  
2 S35 Tanks  
2 Batt.Light Artillery

Table 3; BEF Inf Batt.  
2pdr AT Gun  
Matilda II Tank  
Engineer Field Squadron  
Air Support, on call.

*Mike McNally in sole command.*

The players were given the map with their OB (obviously not the enemies) and the table objectives. The Allied player had restrictions placed on his initial deployment and was not allowed to transfer troops forward, although he could withdraw (my French do not retreat).

### **Table 1**

The German Command decided to advance along the top half of the table towards Vierville with a complete Battalion, the Pz III Co and part of the Motorcycle Battalion. They advanced a Battalion through the centre, supported by another M/C Co and the 38ts. The infantry advanced on foot with their trucks following at a safe distance. The German right flank was covered by the remaining M/C Co and its battalion support. The French defended Vierville but were eventually forced back towards the river with minimal losses. The French force in the south were relatively unscathed and managed to withdraw to Chalot.

### **Table 2**

The Germans now switched their advance south, to avoid crossing the open ground, and made a concerted attack on Chalot, where they thought the French had retreated to. In doing this they met the S35s which were in the forward wood and thH35 which was in the village, together with its accompanying infantry. A fierce fight ensued in which a 38t was lost and other German vehicles damaged. At the end of the fight they had lost half a battalion of infantry, but pushed the French back to Rochelle, which was then attacked with fresh infantry, m/c batt. and supporting artillery. The Germans also got a radio signal through and JU87s were sent in against the defenders. Eventually some of the French got away and headed for the river and Table 3.

### **Table 3**

Here the Allies had set strong defences and the RE had laid mines around the approach to the bridge. Unfortunately they had not informed the French and they drove a truck and H35 straight over the minefield and lost a company of infantry (sorry Mike) and blocked the bridge!. The Germans continued their advance from Rochelle, as well as through the centre wood. Eventually they reached the hill line by the river and discovered that this was where the French Artillery were. However the artillery crew were not enthusiastic about their position and some did a

very hasty retreat towards the bridge, the river being too wide to swim in a greatcoat. The M/C Batt. wrapped around the hill and took the remaining gun position. The Alliea at last got some air support, in the shape of a MS406 which prompted the arrival of the Luftwaffe's finest ME109 pilot, who sadly failed to spot the Lewis mount AAMG on the edge of the wood and was forced away with damaged engine as he flew directly over the AA position (silly billy). The Germans established enough force on the west bank but would have found getting across a very bloody, and costly, affair. So a marginal German victory with everyone getting a little glory through their games.

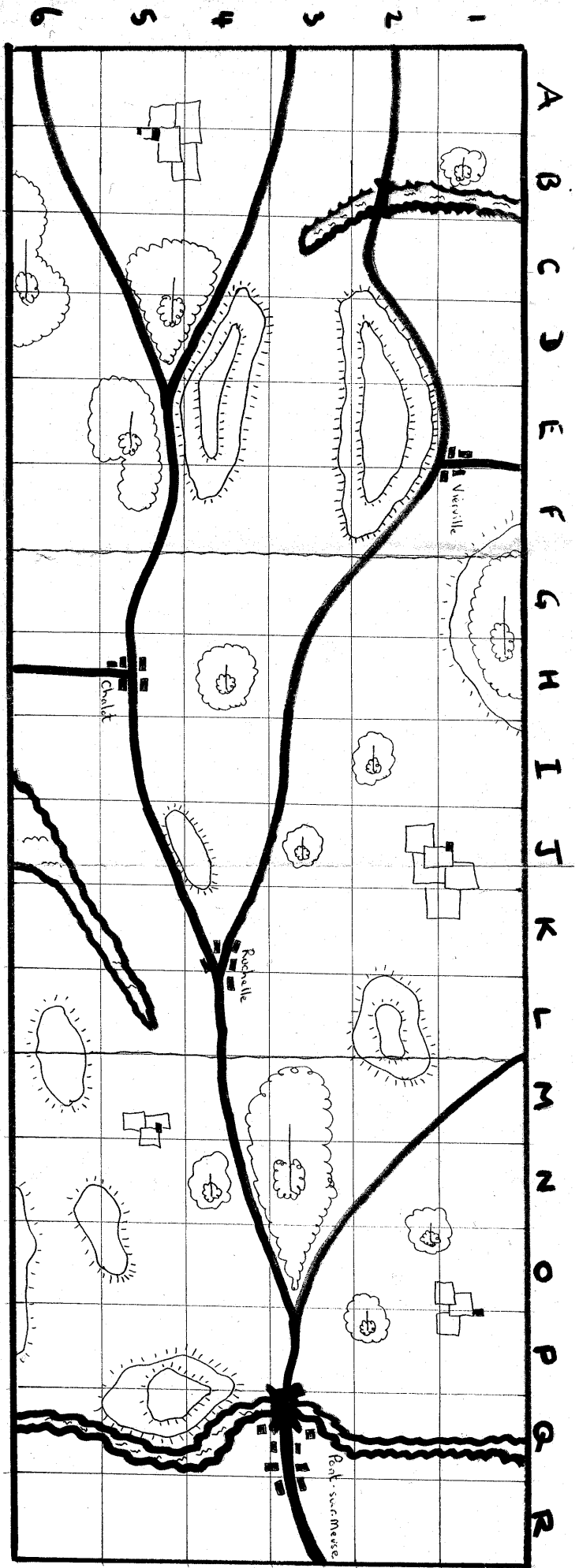
Was it a worthwhile exercise? Was it worth the effort? Will we do it again?

**Yes** it was.

It gave the games a meaning and certainly stopped the Gung-Ho approach, as all commanders were aware that there were no reinforcements or re-supply. It was worth the effort of organisation as we all learnt something (I think Mike learnt how good French 1940 armour was?) and it improved our understanding of the rules.

**Yes** we will do it again.

I would recommend the system as an interesting way of improving your games at the club, why not a linked Ancients game? Can you do



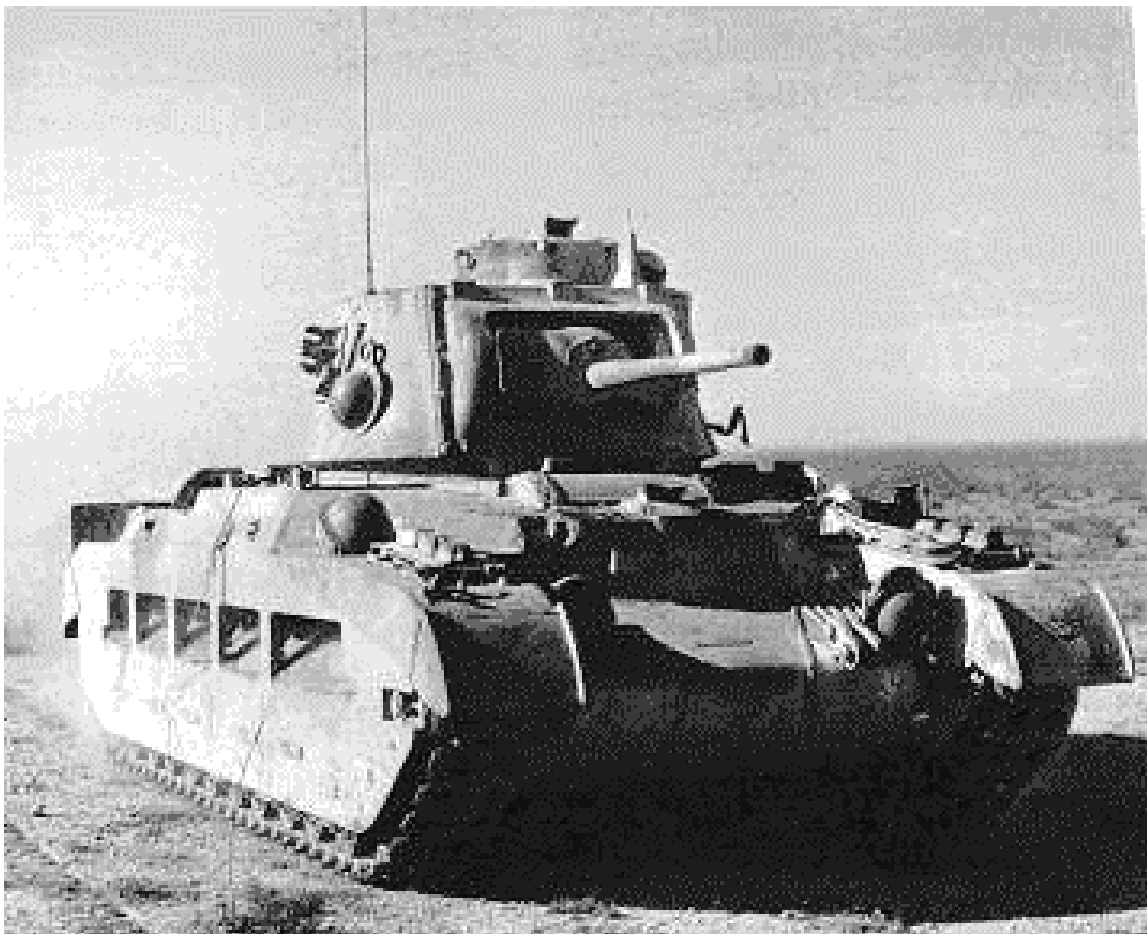
linked Warhammer? Does anyone want to try developing the system?.

We are very happy to find a role for anyone who wants to try Command Decision III. The new sets are faster, more playable and very realistic (dare I say more realistic than some rule sets on the market?).

So fellow gamers, who is organising the next one?

A **Triptych** is a three panelled screen depicting a story (usually found in churches), I thought it an appropriate name for these games, anyone got a better idea?.

## Ian Spence



Matilda II