



WITTMANN'S SWORDS AT VILLERS BOCAGE



This CMBN scenario – “Wittmann’s Swords at Villers Bocage” is number one in a two part series that recreates two actions which were key to creating the myth of German Panzer Ace Michael Wittmann.

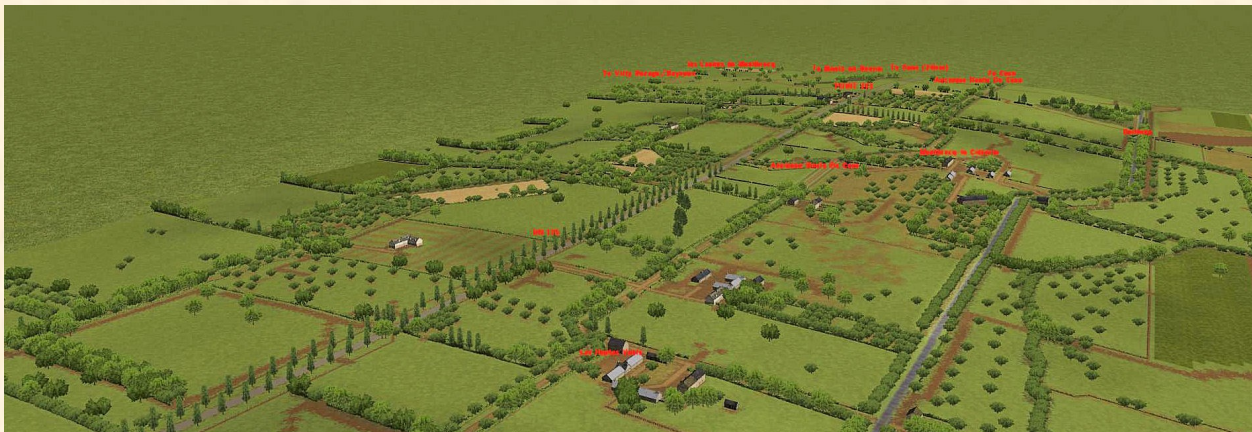
This scenario recreates the battlefield and OOB around his daring, oft discussed, criticised and very much mythologised attack against the spearhead of 7th Armoured Division at Point 213 just west of Villers Bocage. For his part in this action Wittmann was awarded the Swords to his Knight’s Cross with Oak Leaves (He’d won the Knights Cross and the Oak Leaves for destroying 117 Soviet tanks whilst serving on the Eastern Front in early 1944).

The following scenario – “[Wittmann’s Demise](#)” recreates Wittmann’s final action which saw him and his crew killed whilst attacking Allied armour near Gaumesnil.

You can read a short bio of the life and career of Michael Wittmann [HERE](#)

Map Size: 1.5km wide x 3km long

Best Played: H2H or German Vs Allied AI



Playing the Scenario

Loading Times

This is a very large map (around 1.5km wide by nearly 3km long). Loading times are around 5 to 8 minutes depending on your machine. PLEASE BE PATIENT. Start it up then go make a drink!

Players with lower spec machines may struggle to play this.

Play As

Due to the nature of this scenario and the terrain it's been designed as either playing H2H (although not sure how 'balanced' this is as it's a semi-historical type scenario) or Human versus Allied AI.

There is a German AI plan so you can play as the Allies against the German AI BUT given the limitations of the AI this, at best, provides an interesting insight into the initial experience of the Allied tankers.

I'd appreciate any feedback if like you can email georgemc@blowtorchscenarios.com



Wittmann's Tigers were positioned on the Old Caen Road



Allied armour exiting Villers Bocage

First off possible SPOILER ALERT....

The map is as faithful a recreation of the environs around Villers Bocage as I could make given the confines of the Combat Mission game engine, limitations of the aerial images and maps available. I've also tweaked history a little bit. The first 30 odd minutes of this action (arguably the most famous part) gives you, the gamer, a chance to emulate Wittmann's attack. As you'll find, recreating this on the digital battlefield illustrates just how lucky he was on the day. It's tough to pull it off on the CMBN battlefield – more often than not your Tiger will be shot up, immobilised or have it's main gun/optics knocked out.

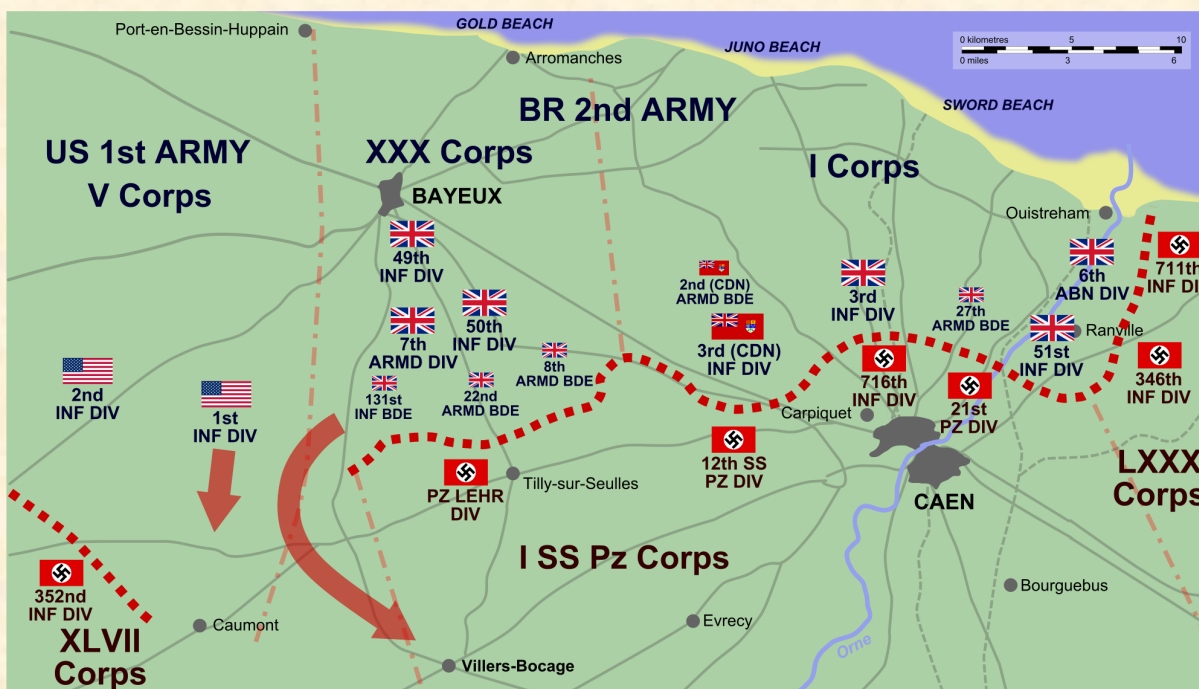
From around 30 minutes on the latter part of the action makes the assumption that Bill Cotton from B Squadron managed to find a way through Villers Bocage on it's southern side. This bit of pathfinding allows the rest of B Squadron to follow and attempt a counterattack against the Germans.

Prelude

After the D-Day landings the Allied forces had managed to secure their lodgement on the beachhead. At the eastern end of the D-Day bridgehead the British and Canadian forces were facing determined German opposition. The Germans perceived this as the main threat. From the 8th June onwards both 12th SS Panzer Division and Panzer-Lehr, sometimes supported by the 21st Panzer Division had mounted fierce counter attacks, with limited local success, in an effort to drive the British back. However by the 12th June both the British and Canadian forces had regained the initiative with British and Canadian forces from 2nd Army pushing further inland. This pressure being exerted on the German lines attracted newly arriving German panzer divisions to the invasion front in an effort to defend Caen. This was done mainly due to the risk of the British expanding their lodgement area into the better tank country to the south.

As the pressure mounted some German infantry units began to crack. The 352nd Infantry Division, which had been in continuous combat for over a week, with little reinforcement and no armoured support, began to collapse and as it withdrew opened up a gap with Panzer-Lehr to its right. This gap was identified by the British and it was this gap that the desert veterans of 7th Armoured Division were hoping to exploit.

Brigadier Hinde's 22nd Armoured Brigade, supported by the 131st (Queen's) Infantry Brigade under Brigadier Michael Ekins, was the point unit of 7th Armoured Division's attack. His orders of the 12th June were to disengage 7th Armoured and to move down the right flank, bypassing the enemy positions on the line La Belle Epine-Tilly-Fontenay, to strike towards, and if possible take, Villers Bocage. By this manoeuvre, the enemy's flank would be turned and operations kept fluid.



So it was after some light opposition, a worrying bivvy in enemy territory and a wary advance in the gloom of the early dawn on the 13th June that the leading elements of the main column, 'A' Squadron, 4th County of London Yeomanry (4th CLY) 'The Sharpshooters', pulled out of the eastern end of Villers, and cautiously advanced east along RN175 to POINT 213, their objective, where they started to take up defensive positions just before 0900Hrs. Just behind them were their supporting infantry in their half-tracks from the 1st Rifle Brigade's 'A' Company. They halted further back down the road and pulled up nose to tail to allow following units to pass to the front. The plan was for 'A' Company to make way for another squadron of 'The Sharpshooters' and for the lead battalion of the Queen's Brigade to come forward before retiring to allow the Queen's to prepare firm positions for defence of this useful tactical position on POINT 213.

As the column began its final approach to Villers, the platoon and company commanders of 'A' Company, 1st Rifle Brigade were summoned to an 'O' Group at the objective POINT 213. Several half-tracks picked up the officers and started driving up to POINT 213. Meanwhile at the eastern exit of Villers Bocage the CO of the 'Sharpshooters' Colonel Cranley was an unhappy man. He was concerned his unit was out on a limb, advancing blind into a vulnerable position. Brigadier Hinde came up in a scout car to encourage Cranley on. As the objective had been reached, Hinde dismissed Cranley's concerns and ordered him to POINT 213 to ensure that the lead group was sited in a good defensive position.

Cranley headed on up to POINT 213. Once there he discussed the situation with Major Peter Scott, the CO of 'A' Squadron and called an 'O' Group, which pulled in the troop commanders from his lead squadron. Cranley briefly discussed the position with Major Wright (of 'A' Company) as he waited for the Rifle Brigade platoon commanders.

Throughout the morning the column had been maintaining radio silence. As the Rifle Brigade platoon commanders in their half-tracks drove up the RN176 towards POINT 213, passing the sign for Caen, Sergeant O'Connor of 1st Platoon broke radio silence shouting 'For Christ's sake get a move on! There's a Tiger running alongside us 50 yards away.'

The Actual Action

The following [Wikipedia account](#) gives as good a version (it uses all the sources I used) as anything (and it's free!) so it's worth reading if you have an interest in the actual action.



Acknowledgements

I owe a huge debt of thanks and gratitude to the following guys who have provided advice, suggestions and playtesting.

Charlie Meconis; Gregory 'Snake Eye' Keller; Jacob 'Aragorn 2002' van Limpt.

Thanks again guys – yer a' stars :)

Sources

The following were the main sources used to create this scenario:

Books

After The Battle Number 132

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Daniel Taylor

Villers-Bocage Through The Lens

Daniel Taylor

Villers-Bocage: Normandy 1944

Henri Marie

Michael Wittmann and the

Tiger Commanders of the Leibstandarte

Patrick Agte

Internet

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Villers-Bocage

http://www.panzerace.net/english/pz_vil.asp?page=3

Maps

<http://aerial.rcahms.gov.uk/>

Aerial photos (for topo features)

<http://www.geoportail.gouv.fr/accueil>

IGN Maps (for contours)

