

The Bridge Game

This small game was played over 7 turns on a board measuring 4ft x 2ft. The central feature was the modified Airfix bridge (see the photos on the website).

A German company comprising 8 figures plus a MMG is holding the Western end of the bridge. At the start of the game, the bridge guard comprises 4 figures of 1st Abteilung whilst the remainder are shown as “resting”.

The British assault party comprises a CO plus 4 companies of 8 figures. The CO’s defence company also has a 2” mortar. His tactics are to use A and D Companies to secure the Eastern end of the bridge with B and C companies mounting a frontal assault across the bridge. D Company will move up to support the attack if required.

The British CO is above average but the German CO is below average. Each side has a spread of bold and regular officers. All troops are regular.

Apart from the resting defenders, the opening bound does not get off to a great start for the Germans. The bridge guard spot the British approaching but decide not to send a runner across to their colleagues to alert them. As a result, by bound 3, the Germans have taken casualties from the rapidly approaching attackers and are now due their first 2 Casualty Milestone tests.

But in bound 5, the British, who until now have had it all their own way, are hit by a reverse. B Company open fire on the MMG crew and supporting infantry before crossing open ground to assault them. They lose 2 figures to return fire but then have their assault repelled by the few Germans that remain! The German CO goes to Strategic Condition yellow as a result of his casualties. At the foot of the ramp of the bridge meanwhile, C Company are having more success and over-run the bridge guard’s position, wiping out the defenders.

By bound 6, the only German resistance remaining is the MMG with a 2-man crew. The British CO moves A and D companies onto the bridge in support as B company seek shelter behind the steel sides of the bridge, licking their wounds. But the end is not far away and the German CO moves to Strategic Condition red before bound 7 – his remaining figures surrendering to the nearby British attackers.

Conclusion

Tactically, the game showed that is much merit in keeping units supported. When B Co suffered its defeat during it’s assault, Momentum Test numbers were reduced by the close proximity of C Co. Similarly, they benefited from further reductions by having a decent Officer.

The Germans were really unlucky at the outset to have over half of the garrison resting and then again not to have the bridge guard pass a Leadership Test to activate them. On the other hand, their throw to win the assault compensated for this.

Momentum Test numbers were high at a number of times during the game but this is the whole point! The bridge guard dived for cover when they took their first casualty and the British B Co acted similarly when repelled by the MMG located in hard cover – assaults over open ground are perhaps not a good idea!

This is the game that (in test mode) led to the clarification of the rules regarding units under fire. When the British mortar opened fire on the bridge guard, there were potentially 3 outcomes;

Miss – the dice throw indicated that the shot had missed. This should NOT constitute being under fire as the shell has had no impact on the German troops.

Hit/no effect – the shot has hit the target but the effects throw reveals no casualties. This DOES constitute being under fire as clearly the shot is close enough to have caused damage. Momentum tests will therefore accrue.

Hit/casualties – Momentum Tests are due as casualties have been taken. For a small mortar, these are assessed depending on the available cover between the defenders and the firer. Note that larger mortars attract a greater Momentum Test charge.

The game also led to the idea that smaller mortars (with faster rates of fire and therefore more shots per bound) could inflict a series of hits and a high number of Momentum Tests – useful if you are trying to suppress your enemy.



British infantry start out to cross the bridge