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Throughout the month of July 1944, as Montgomery sought to tie down the German Panzer divisions against the British forces in Normandy, Hill 112 was to become a focal point of some of the bloodiest fighting of the campaign.

### Operation Epsom and the Scottish Corridor

Operation Epsom was Montgomery's third attempt to take Caen. The plan was to envelop the town from the West and threaten to break out into the more open ground to the south of the city. The attack would be led by the 49th "West Riding" Division, supported by the 15th Scottish Division with the 11th Armoured Division was to, once bridges over the Odon River had been seized, advance into the open tank country beyond the river.

The attack began on 25 June and drove a salient into the German lines that became known as the Scottish corridor. The corridor was narrow and the British, hemmed in by German troops on either side, were unable to gather much momentum. However, in the gathering gloom of the evening of the 27th of June a small, but vital, bridge over the River Odon was seized by the 2/Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders of 227 Brigade and establishes a bridgehead beyond.

The next day the 11th Armoured Division, led by the 23rd Hussars of 29th Brigade captured the summit of Hill 112 and then held off determined counter-attacks by the 12th SS Division.

However, over 40 British tanks were lost in the fierce fighting and the troops on the hill were surrounded on three sides. The following morning (June 29th) the Germans released II SS Panzer Korps to attack the Scottish Corridor and everywhere along the corridor the British were put under immense pressure. The corridor was too long and narrow. The 11th Armoured Division was urgently needed elsewhere and the hill could not be held, so the order came to abandon it. Not realising Hill 112's significance it was abandoned. A decision for which many young men were to pay with their lives the following month...



### Operation Jupiter: 10 July 1944

On 10 July 1944 the British launched Operation Jupiter the goal of which was to recapture Hill 112. The operation was divided into three phases and the attack was to be undertaken by the 43rd Wessex Division. The objectives of the operation were as follows:

**Phase 1:** 130 Brigade supported by the 9 RTR (Churchills) were to clear the German salient near les Duanes, which was held by a company of SS panzer grenadiers, and then capture Chateau de Fontaine. 129 Brigade was to capture Hill 112.

**Phase 2:** 129 Brigade was to hold a defensive flank on the hill while 130 Brigade, supported by 9 RTR and crocodile tanks were to attack Eterville and Maltot and if possible advance to the high ground to the south-east of Hill 112.

**Phase 3:** 129 Brigade was to continue to hold its positions while 130 brigade established defences between Eterville and Maltot facing the open eastern flank. 214 Brigade and 4th Armoured Brigade were to establish a bridgehead across the River Orne between 129th and 130th Brigades.



## Allied Briefing

The British and Canadian forces have finally driven the Germans out of Caen, now Montgomery has his eyes firmly set on his next objective, Hill 112 which dominates the skyline and which both sides have recognised as being the key to Normandy. Your mission is simple, advance onto Hill 112, capture it and the Orne river crossings beyond.

## Axis Briefing

The Allied invasion is in full swing. Numerically we are outnumbered by the ever-increasing material advantage of the Allies but our panzer divisions are fighting hard and our equipment, and training, is superior to that of the enemy. Hill 112 is a cornerstone of our defence as it offers clear observation to the beaches. We need to hold this feature to allow reinforcements to be brought forward to throw the enemy back into the sea. The fatherland depends on you!



## Situation Report

At the start of the campaign the British forces are striking out from the Odon River towards Hill 112.

The campaign utilises the Axis of Attack rules, which can be downloaded [here](#).

## Allied Forces

British Rifle Companies are appropriate for the British players as are squadrons of Sherman tanks. It is recommended that infantry forces are used, or if 2 or 3 players per side then 1-2 infantry forces for each armoured squadron. The infantry were also supported by Churchill's of the 31 Tank Brigade as well as crocodiles of 141/RAC of the 79th Armoured Division so it is appropriate that tank platoons (Churchills) support the infantry.

The troops of the 43rd Wessex Division are probably best represented by standard British forces in the *D-Day: British* book and you can also add their Cautious Not Stupid Command Card. If using large forces you may like to try the Churchill Armoured Squadron with your Rifle Company.



## German Forces

As with the British the battle for hill 112 was an infantry action. Motorised Panzergrenadiers, supported by panzers (including Panzer IVs, Panthers and Tigers) stubbornly held the hill against the British.

It is recommended that Panzergrenadier companies be used with panzer support. As with the British, Panzer Companies can be used if battles are multi-player. Forces can either be Heer 21. Panzerdivision or Panzer Lehr from *D-Day: German* or from Waffen SS forces from *D-Day: Waffen-SS*.

## Hill 112 - Terrain

Hill 112 was a gently sloping hill of waist high cornfields and compared to the dense bocage of other parts of Normandy, quite open with good fields of fire. The gently sloping hill should dominate the table, and provide the high ground for the defenders to overlook the attackers as they advance.

## Beginning the Campaign

[Download the Axis of Attack Campaign rules...](#)

The campaign begins with the British attack on the Evrecy- Caen Road or the attack on Chateaux de Fontaine. If there are four players then one British player can take each axis of the attack. All battles must continue down the same axis of attack.

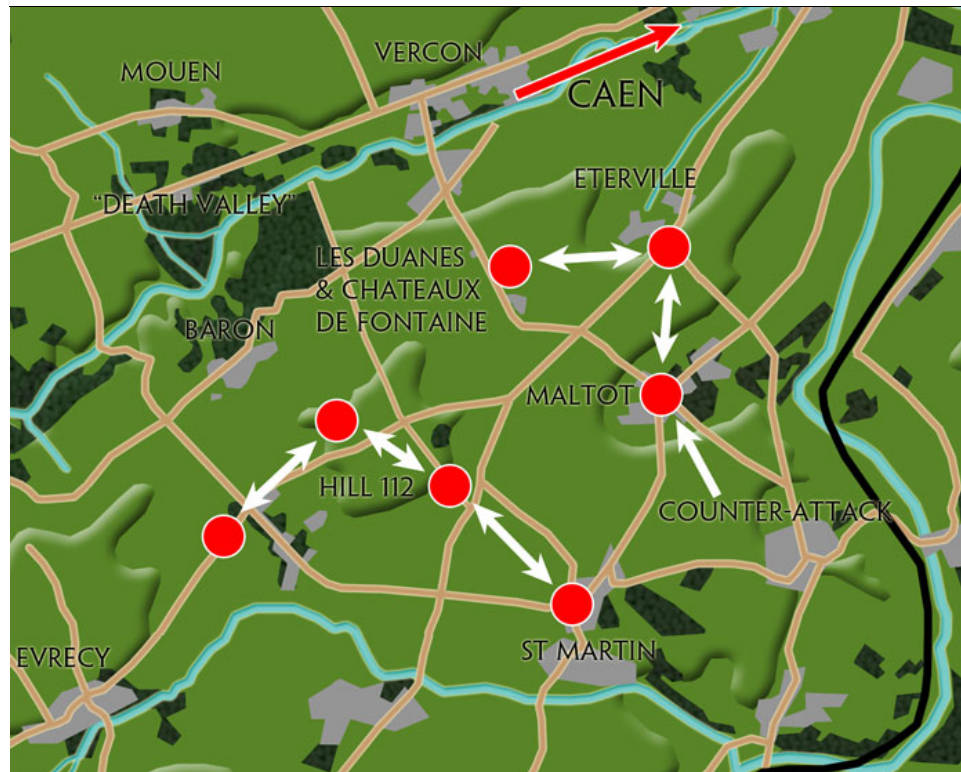
The campaign can also use multiple players per battle, for example three players per side, in which case it is suggested that one armoured company support one to two infantry companies.

### 29th Brigade's Axis of Attack

1. Evrecy-Caen Rd
2. Hill 112 and the Orchard
3. Counter-Attack on Hill 112
4. St Martin

### 30th Brigade's Axis of Attack

5. les Duanes & Chateaux de Fontaine
6. Eterville
7. Maltot
8. Counter-Attack at Maltot



### 1. Evrecy-Caen Road

The Evrecy- Caen road was the first objective of the 4th Somerset Light Infantry's attack on Hill 112. The main German positions were sited along the line of a hedged bank bordering a field immediately north of the road. After bitter fighting the 4 Somersets captured the area and dug in, seeing off several determined counter-attacks throughout the remainder of the day.

**Terrain:** The Evrecy-Caen road was lined with poplars during the war and had ditches on both sides and flanking cornfields.



The old Roman Road should run down the length of the table from the higher ground of the German end to the lower slopes where the British advance from. The road should be in the defender's half of the table and both objectives should be placed on it.

Recommended Mission: No Retreat.

### Should the Germans win

If the Germans win the first battle then Montgomery orders a repeat the attack the next day. If this too is a failure then the attack is assumed to have been stalled. To finish off the campaign in this case you could have the British retreat back across the Odon and have them defend against a German attack.

### Death Valley & the Odon Crossing

The 43rd Wessex Division dubbed the Odon Valley 'Death Valley.' The unspectacular stream was a major obstacle for wheeled and tracked vehicles. The bridge over the river was in no-man's land at the start of the battle. The British also established several other crossing points prior to the commencement of the attack.

**Terrain:** The tree-lined stream was quite deep and steep-sided and should provide the centrepiece of the battle. There should be a single bridge crossing it and the stream is Impassable to all vehicles. The river should form the edge of the defenders deployment zone.

Suggested Mission: No Retreat

### 2. Hill 112 and the Orchard

An ancient Roman Road crossed the summit of Hill 112 from north to south. There were three woods and a paddock around the summit. The one nearest the British lines was known as 'Small Orchard', the wood on the German side of the hill was known as Small wood and the third that covered the crest was known as 'the Orchard'. The two orchards were surrounded by banks of trees and bushes (treat as bocage).

**Terrain:** The Roman Road running lengthwise across the centre of the table and woods as the main features. Various cornfields and a few fields and a building or two should complete the terrain.

*Notes: 29th Brigade captured the Evrecy- Caen Road but took heavy casualties in doing so. At 3pm Major General*

Thomas threw his last reserves, the 5th Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry of 214th Brigade, into the attack. The infantry formed up behind the 4/Somerset Light infantry and supported by tanks of the 7th RTR (Churchills) set out for the orchards and crest of hill 112 that lay some 400 yards beyond the Somerset's positions.



### 3. Counter-Attack on Hill 112

After successfully capturing the hill the 5th Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry were subject fierce counter-attacks by Panzergrenadiers of 21st Panzergrenadier regiment of the 9th SS Panzer Division and Tigers of the 102nd SS Heavy Tank Battalion.

To represent this the battle following the capture of the hill should be a German counter-attack (Bridgehead, Encounter, Counterattack, or No Retreat would be appropriate missions).

**Night-fight:** The first counter-attack occurred in the failing light of evening, to represent this use the night fighting rules. As the battle begins it is daylight, but roll each player's turn from turn 2 (as per the night fighting rules, p 113 *Flames Of War*, adding one more die each turn), a roll of 5 or 6 indicates that night has fallen and the rest of the battle is fought in darkness.

### 4. St Martin

St Martin was a village about two kilometres to the south east of Hill 112. Securing this feature would ensure that the British were firmly ensconced beyond Hill 112 and would provide a jumping off point for the assault on the Orne river. At the start of the battle the village contained elements of 102nd Heavy Tank Battalion. If this British capture this town they have succeeded in all their objectives.

### 5. Les Duanes & Chateaux de Fontaine

The Les Duanes farm complex and nearby ruins of Chateaux de Fontaine was one of the forward German strong points and was defended by 7 Company 2/22 SS Panzergrenadier Regiment. This farm was the objective of the 5th Dorsets and was captured by C Company.

The ruined chateaux was the main objective of the 5th Dorsets and contained the Battalion HQ for the 2/22 SS Panzergrenadier Regiment. Again this objective had to be secured to allow the advance to continue towards Eterville and Maltot.

Mission: No Retreat

Should The Germans win- see the box above for how to deal with this eventuality.

**Terrain:** The 2-3 building Les Duanes farm complex surrounded by fields should be the focal point of the table, and the other objective of the attackers should be the ruined châteaux.



### 6. Eterville

The main feature of the village of Eterville was an eighteenth century châteaux de Eterville and farm complex. To the east of the village was another large farm and spread around the village were smaller dwellings, trees and a cider orchard. A ridge extended from the edge of the village in a northeasterly direction.

Notes: The village was defended by 1/22 Panzergrenadier Regiment and a company of SS pioneers.

### 7. Maltot

Orchards surrounded the village of Maltot. The village should be placed in the defenders half of the board.

#### Notes

The British believed that the village was lightly held and thus did not fire a barrage before attacking it. Maltot became a focal point of the fighting and the village was seriously damaged in the ensuing battle.

*"The tanks reached the orchards surrounding the village and the infantry entered. At this stage everything seemed to go wrong. The tanks were caught in a murderous cross-fire from beyond the river on their left and from, the woods on the reverse slope of Hill 112..." (Saunders, p100).*



**Ambush:** To represent the unexpected ferocity of the German defence of the village the German defenders get to have one more unit than usual in ambush.

Should the British successfully capture Maltot the Germans immediately launch a counter- attack to recapture it (see below).

## 8. Counter-Attack at Maltot

To represent this the battle following the capture of the village should be a counter-attack (Bridgehead or a Noo Retreat would be appropriate). It is suggested that most of the buildings in the village be replaced by ruins for this battle.

Should the Germans recapture Maltot: If the Germans successfully drive the British out of Maltot they continue towards Eterville in the gathering gloom. The following attack on Eterville takes place at night so use the night fighting rules.

## ENDING THE CAMPAIGN

Maximum Number of Battles: 5

**Victory:** The German player wins a major victory if he wins the battle for Death Valley and pushes the British back beyond the Odon River Bridge.

The British win if they capture Maltot, Hill 112 and the village of St Martin beyond.

## Campaign Result:

**Stunning German Victory:** The German drive the British back to the Odon River or beyond.

**Major German Victory:** British hold the Evercy-Caen road or Les Duanes and the Châteaux de Fontaine.

**Minor German Victory:** British hold Hill 112 and Eterville at the end of the campaign.

**Minor British Victory:** British hold hill 112 after the German counter- attack, or hold Eterville at the end of the campaign.

**Major British Victory:** British drive off the counter attack on hill 112 and/or Maltot but do not successfully recapture/hold St Martin or Maltot afterwards.

**Stunning British Victory:** British hold St Martin and/or Maltot at the end of the campaign.

## THE END OF OPERATION JUPITER

*The 5th Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry (5 DCLI) attacked the summit of the hill on the afternoon of July 10th and after capturing held it versus numerous counter-attacks by Panzergrenadiers is supported by Tiger tanks. Late the following afternoon, after surviving numerous counter-attacks, survivors of the 5 DCLI withdraw from the hill. Only 60 soldiers making back from the summit.*

*Hill 112 had not been held, nor had the crossing over the Orne been captured, but no less than four SS panzer divisions had been engaged in the battle and the Germans were hard pressed to stop the offensive. The II SS Panzer Korps losses could never be made good and it was never again able to marshal the combat power it had had enjoyed on the morning of the 10th of July. Thus although not a tactical success the British had pinned down the German panzer divisions on their front and in so doing continued to wear them down in a battle of attrition.*

*Hill 112 became no-man's land for the next month. The hilltop was too important for either side to allow the other to control. Artillery, mortars and machine guns swept the crest of the hill and ensured that neither side was able to control it although isolated pockets of troops still existed on the hilltop after the battles of July 10th and 11th.*

*At the end of July the Americans launched Operation Cobra and broke out of the Normandy beachhead and II SS Panzer Korps was moved to counter the growing British threat around Mount Pincon to the west. On the 4th of August, after so much blood having been spilt earlier on the campaign, the hill was captured by the 53rd Welsh Division with hardly a shot being fired.*

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