

OBERSCHARFÜHRER ERNST BARKMANN



NEAR LE LOREY, JULY 1944

Barkmann wipes the back of his hand across his forehead before lowering his cap back on his sweat-soaked hair. He watches the company supply sergeant run back from the corner ahead, as a dust cloud creeps closer on the horizon.

“American tanks on the road at 500 metres,” *Hauptscharführer* Heinz pants, looking up at Barkmann leaning from the command hatch of their Panther tank.

“Excellent,” Barkmann replies. “We will attack.” He switches his throat mike on. “Driver, forward, halt under the next large tree. That should stop the aircraft from finding us and give us an excellent place to ambush the column from.”

The wait is not long, as Panther 424 idles in position, unnoticed by the slowly advancing Americans. Barkmann scans the road ahead, the thick Bocage creating a narrow lane. “Poggendorf, target *Ami Panzer*, 200 meters. Fire,” he orders.

The heavy Panther rocks back with a roar as the 7.5cm round flies towards its target. A second later the lead M4 Sherman tank explodes in a dazzling display of sparks, even before the dust from the muzzle blast clears. Time stands still as the loader rams round after round into the smoking breech, each shot rocking their tank as enemy tank after tank explodes just to his front. Return shots bounce off the thick steel of the Panther, the American guns unable to score a kill. Carefully,

he pulls back to the next tree, resuming the fight from there.

Hearing the scream of aircraft engines in a steep dive, Barkmann drops into the turret, just as the tank is lifted into the air on the blast of the first bomb. The Panther is sprayed with bomb fragments. Moans come from his headphones and daylight streams through a crack in the side of the tank.

“Heinz,” Barkmann calls to his driver, his own voice lost in the ringing of his ears, “Can we still move? Can you get us out of here?”

As the Panther tank’s fire slackens, the American fire redoubles. A round clangs against the armour. Another smashes the track damaged by the bomb, forcing 424 to slew violently to the left. The tank lurches again, and then grinds back around the corner, grunts of pain accompanying every movement of the vehicle.

“Poggendorf, see what you can do for Heinz,” Barkmann orders. “We must get back to the workshop so we can fight again tomorrow.”

“Don’t worry, *Oscha*,” Heinz breathes through gritted teeth, “I’m not leaving 424 for the Americans. We’ll make it home.” The Panther pulls out for home under the fading sun, leaving behind nine smouldering Sherman tanks on the field of battle: not a bad day’s work!

BARKMANN'S CAREER

Ernst Barkmann was a farmer's son born in Holstein, Germany, on 25 August 1919. At the age of sixteen he joined the elite *Waffen-SS*, the armed force of the Nazi Party.

Barkmann first saw action as a machine gunner with the *Germania* regiment in Poland. Distinguishing himself, he was promoted to *Rottenführer* (corporal) and received the Wound Badge. In 1940, he earned the Infantry Assault Badge for three days of battle during the invasion of France. Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, saw *Rottenführer* Barkmann seriously injured near Dnepropetrovsk. He spent the next year recovering and training *SS* volunteers.

Late in 1942 he returned to the Eastern Front where he was assigned to the '*Das Reich*' *SS-Panzerregiment* as a gunner. He was promoted to *Unterscharführer* (sergeant) and given command of his own Panzer III just in time for the Third

Battle of Kharkov. He continued to distinguish himself in the mammoth tanks battles around Prokhorovka during the Kursk offensive. In August 1943, Barkmann was given a new Panther D tank for the defensive battles in Southern Russia where he was awarded both classes of the Iron Cross.

In January 1944, *Das Reich* was ordered to southern France for refit and Barkmann's battalion was upgraded to the new model Panther. A month after D-Day, elements of the division went into action against American forces near St. Lô. Here, the legend of Barkmann's Corner was born and he received the Knight's Cross and a promotion to *Oberscharführer* (senior sergeant) for his actions.

During the Ardennes Offensive in December 1944, Barkmann spearheaded the main attack against the US 2nd Armored Division. He finished the war knocking out Soviet T-34 tanks near Stuhlweissenburg in March 1945.

CHARACTERISTICS

Oberscharführer Barkmann is a Warrior Command Panther A tank team rated as **Fearless Veteran**.

Barkmann replaces the Command tank of an SS-Panther Platoon for +60 points in an SS-Panzerkompanie (page 184).

Alternatively, he may join a Gepanzerte SS-Panzergrenadierkompanie (page 188), SS-Panzergrenadierkompanie (page 196), or SS-Panzerpionierkompanie (page 200) for +275 points in place of an SS-Panther Platoon support choice.

ACE

Barkmann makes smoking wrecks of many more enemy tanks than he ever loses himself.

Barkmann always re-rolls failed To Hit rolls with his Panther's 7.5cm KwK42 gun.

STALKER

Barkmann is able to use the terrain and find ways to attack his enemy from concealed positions, remaining virtually undetected while he destroys tank after tank.

If Barkmann is shot at he is counted as Gone to Ground if he is Concealed and did not move in his own turn, even if he did shoot in his turn.

BARKMANN'S WORKSHOP

Barkmann repeatedly brought his badly battered tank back to the workshops when other commanders would have abandoned it for later recovery. His most famous battles were fought while returning to the front after having emergency repairs made to his tank.

At the same time as Warrior teams are deployed, place a Workshop in your deployment area. The Workshop must be in German hands for Barkmann's Panther tank to be repaired. If the enemy take the Workshop (in the same manner they would take an Objective, see page 258 of the rulebook), they capture it and the Workshop is removed from the game.

If Barkmann is Destroyed while mounted in a Panther tank, place his Panther tank adjacent to the Workshop (see above) instead of leaving it where it was destroyed.

His platoon may appoint a new Platoon Command team using the Mission Tactics special rule as usual when they lose their Platoon Command team and continue to operate without him.

In each Starting Step when you would roll for Reserves to arrive, if there are no enemy teams within 4"/10cm of Barkmann's Panther tank or the Workshop, roll a die.

- *On a roll of 5+, his vehicle is repaired and is ready for battle. It is no longer Destroyed. Remove the Workshop when Barkmann's tank is repaired. Barkmann and his repaired Panther A tank are no longer part of his SS-Panther Platoon.*
- *Otherwise, the repairs are still progressing.*

If the Workshop has been removed or captured, and Barkmann is Destroyed, leave his model on the Table as a Destroyed Armoured Vehicle (see page 103 of the rulebook).

As a Warrior, Barkmann will normally attempt to take over another tank if he survives when his tank is Destroyed. You may choose not to do this and have him Destroyed in his own tank to take advantage of the Barkmann's Workshop rule if you prefer.