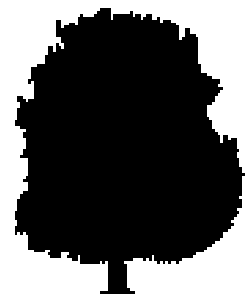




# *Military Muddling*



Volume 16 Issue 7

Chestnut Lodge Wargames Group Newsletter

July 2005

## **Editorial**

Waterloo Day, 18<sup>th</sup> of June, was celebrated by a Study Day at the National Army Museum. Family commitments prevented me from attending in the morning, but I was able to catch the last two sessions: an examination of Napoleon's Grand Battery at Waterloo by Major Mark Adkin, author of *The Waterloo Companion*, and a summary of his latest book on William Siborne and his Waterloo model, *Wellington's Smallest Victory*, by Peter Hofschroer. The former was, to some extent, a lesson in how *not* to give a talk as it was impossible to see the detail or read the captions on the majority of the slides projected upon the screen. Major Adkin did, however, succeed in demonstrating that the Grand Battery was not comprised of the same number of guns as Napoleon had deployed in previous battles, although it might have been more appropriate to have considered the percentages of available guns used upon each occasion. He also showed that, although it was sited opposite the most lightly held part of the Anglo-Dutch position, the fire of the Grand Battery was rendered largely ineffective by the Wellington's use of the reverse slope to conceal his infantry. Peter Hofschroer gave a very professional and well-illustrated presentation, showing that Wellington's egotistical claim to be the sole victor of Waterloo led him to deny the historical accuracy of both Siborne's model and his History of the Waterloo Campaign. The BBC avoided such controversy by ignoring the anniversary and showing a documentary about the Battle of Trafalgar the following Wednesday...

**Arthur Harman**

### **Contributions for Military Muddling**

To: Arthur Harman, preferably as Word attachments in Times New Roman font, point 12, by e-mail to [arthur1815@lineone.net](mailto:arthur1815@lineone.net) but you can also send paper or disks to me at:  
115 Kenley Road, Merton Park, Wimbledon, London SW19 3DP



**DEADLINE FOR AUGUST ISSUE: 16<sup>th</sup> July 2005**

## **Officers**

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## **Forthcoming Events**

**Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2005, from 11 am, at Dave Boundy's home**

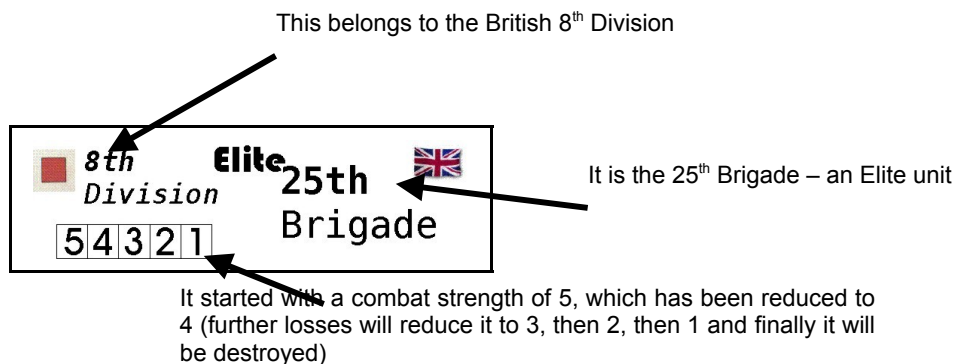
**Dave has sent out a reminder of his address and travel advice on the CLWG Yahoo discussion group  
Please remember, when members are kind enough to allow CLWG to use their homes for meetings,  
to show them the simple courtesy of informing them by telephone or email that you will be attending!**

## Muck and Bullets – a Somme Game (onside report from Dave Boundy)

I teach at a school in Orpington. Year 9 (about age 14) kids from my school go to Ypres and the Somme in May every other year (in May of the other year, they visit Normandy). They are taken around the battlefield sites by guides, but after running a battle game of the Normandy invasion last year, we thought it would be a good idea to “do” the Somme before their trip this year. Actually, I say that we thought it was a good idea – that is not strictly true. Rather, Bernie Ganley thought it was a good idea, closely followed by Jim Wallman. Personally, I thought it was lunacy – I thought that a WW1 game would be a boring slug-fest. Well, I was half-right – it was lunacy, but not for that reason and surprisingly, the game worked really very well.

Game mechanics were intentionally simple. We might have lost some of the tactical decision-making by being very broad-brush, but we were able to build in sufficient to keep it interesting. The playing surface was based on the Ordnance-Survey contemporary map, superimposed with movement areas meant to reflect the movement of a brigade/regiment. An extract from the playing area is shown here. This shows the trench lines (British – blue, German – red for those of you on the e-mail version of this, the rest will just have to imagine it) swinging through the village of Hardecourt-aux-Bois. Movement areas were arranged to force linear movement through and adjacent to trenches, but a certain limited lateral movement elsewhere.

Counters represented the British brigades and German regiments as well as divisional artillery. The main organisational unit was the division while resolution was at brigade level.



Combat represented about 10 day's action. The rules were adjusted to make movement rates and casualties realistic. The turn represented a 10-day period, but the player actions were those which could be expected in a much shorter time. The player actions were just taken as representative of a whole series of things going on over the ten days. The rules for this were designed to fit on one sheet, so I can reproduce them here (we had to cheat a bit by putting definitions on the reverse side, but I have left those off for you experienced gamers):

### Muck and Bullets Rules Summary

#### 1. British Place *Artillery Target Markers*

(if defending you may hold back *Divisional Artillery* for later if you want, otherwise all markers must be placed). Where “British” are referred to, that includes French.

#### 2. Germans Place *Artillery Target Markers*

(if defending you may hold back *Divisional Artillery* for later if you want, otherwise all markers must be placed).

#### 3. British Move *Brigades* forward.

You can move 4 *areas* straight ahead or back only if it is in the *Tactical Zone*. No more than 2 units can

end up in the same area. *Artillery Units* can only move 1 in the *Tactical Zone*.

#### **4. Germans Move Regiments forward.**

You can move 4 areas straight ahead or back only if the unit is in the *Tactical Zone*. No more than 2 units can end up in the same area. *Artillery Units* can only move 1 in the *Tactical Zone*.

#### **5. Defender Places Unused Artillery Markers (Divisional Artillery Only)**

**6. IF you have placed Artillery Markers on Enemy Artillery Units.** Roll 1d6 per artillery marker - score 5 or 6 to stop the enemy unit from firing this turn. (A d6 is a six-sided die)

**7. Cutting the Wire:** IF you have placed *Corps Artillery Markers* on enemy *trenches*, roll 5,6 and the trench system's barbed wire is destroyed.

#### **8. Killing The Enemy With Artillery**

IF you have placed an Artillery Marker on enemy in trenches, roll for each enemy unit in the area and score 6 to *inflict a loss*

IF you have placed an Artillery Marker on enemy in the open, roll for each enemy unit in the area and score 3,4,5 to inflict one loss – a 6 inflicts 2 losses.

If the target is in woods, a 5 or 6 inflicts 2 losses.

**9. Remove Artillery Markers** and place them back on their Artillery Unit counter.

#### **10. British Attacking**

IF Your Brigade movement reaches the enemy defenders, roll one die per side for combat:

*Highest score wins.*

BUT Modify the die roll for each side as follows:

+1 if the enemy are not in trenches  
-1 if the enemy have intact barbed wire  
-2 if any of your units involved took losses from artillery this turn

+1 if any of your units involved are *elite*.  
+4 if any of your units involved is a Tank Company  
+1 if you have more units involved in this combat than the enemy.  
-1 for each *unengaged enemy unit* on your *flank*.

The *difference in scores* tells you how great the victory was:

**A difference of 0 or less :** means no result, and the attack is *stalled* in front of the enemy. The defender takes no loss and the attacker takes one loss per unit involved. If the defender was *in the open* then they take one loss per unit involved.

**A difference of 1-3** means the attack was successful and the defenders are pushed back to the *next area* and take one loss per unit. The attacker takes one loss per unit and may occupy the area abandoned by the defender.

**A difference of 4 or more** means that the defenders are *routed* and must retreat 4 areas and lose 2 per unit. The attacker takes one loss per unit and may occupy the area abandoned by the defender.

#### **11. Germans Attacking**

Repeat the process as for '10. British Attacking'

#### **12. Building Trenches**

IF the unit has not moved at all, it is in an area that has not been attacked or shelled, and it is more than 1 area away from the nearest enemy then it can build trenches in that area.

#### **13. Repairing Defences**

IF the unit has not moved at all, it is in an area that has not been attacked or shelled, and it is more than 1 area away from the nearest enemy then it can repair the wire in that area.

#### **14. Both sides Moves Units in Non-Tactical Zone.**

You can move unlimited distance outside the *Tactical Zone* only if the unit did **not** move during steps 3 or 4.

I can claim very little credit for the rules – they were mainly devised by Jim and revised by Mukul and Bernie. At the Games Weekend, we tried them out with the CLWG players there. I was very pleasantly surprised at the “feel” of the game at that point. I know next to nothing about WW1 apart from my reading for this game, but it felt right to me and appeared to give a fair amount of interest even to hard-bitten gamers like Trevor, Jerry, Andrew and Arthur. They all made a number of good points and I hope they can see the way they were taken into account.

What I can claim credit for is the physical production of the game. The main issue was one of size. With 120 kids involved, the game needed to be big (otherwise you could not get them around the playing area). Add to this the fact that a large number of units were involved and the chosen resolution level demanded units that were a fair size, so they could be seen and read which in turn dictated a large playing surface. Finally, I settled on a playing area about 24 foot square (yes 24 foot square, not 24 square feet), split into 6 sections i.e. each section was 24 feet by 4 feet. The playing pieces were strips of 18mm MDF about 3 inches by 1 inch, painted the national colour and with unit details on a label stuck to the face. I hope you can get the idea from the next few photos:

We started the day with a bombardment. I had produced a short video of WW1 guns firing. It lasted for about ten minutes and was played quite loudly as the kids came in.

We started very slowly, so that the kids could get used to the game mechanics. By the end of the day each turn was taking about 15 minutes. I started each turn with a double whistle-blow and an announcement “Over the Top”. Operational players then made their way to the playing area and went through the combat. The umpires helped a lot to start with but a lot of the combat resolution was carried out by the kids.

We started the day with a bombardment. I had produced a short video of WW1 guns firing

Players were organised into Army HQ (staffed by 6<sup>th</sup> form), Corps HQ and Operational HQ teams. Each Operational HQ team started with one division and was given extra divisions as they became available from Army through Corps. Teams had more colourful maps (a mate produced some really nice background showing the height of the land as relief colours – all produced by some nifty software from satellite data giving height at 50m intervals) which had normal grid references but no movement areas. Each team player had a specific set of tasks to fulfil. One of the tasks of the staff officers in the operational and Corps teams was to produce a war diary. As you can imagine, the quality of these was rather variable, but several seemed very good. An extract from one gives some idea of how the kids felt it was going. I have changed absolutely nothing from his report.

37<sup>th</sup> Division attacked the German positions outside of Nienvillers au Bois. The 110<sup>th</sup> Brigade and the 112<sup>th</sup> Brigade destroyed the enemy trenches barbed wire. 110<sup>th</sup> Brigade took light casualties from artillery, but the 111<sup>th</sup> Brigade soon counter-attacked the Germans and broke through their trenches. However, the 110<sup>th</sup> took more casualties, with the 112<sup>th</sup> and 111<sup>th</sup> receiving some as well. Total casualties 2,000 men.

Reserves from the 38<sup>th</sup> Division moved into Bienvillers au Bois. The 37<sup>th</sup> Division attacked, but the 112<sup>th</sup> and 111<sup>th</sup> Brigades sustained casualties. The 110<sup>th</sup> and 115<sup>th</sup> from the 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Divisions broke through the trenches and forced their opposing German regiments to retreat. Total casualties 1,000 men.

38<sup>th</sup> Division remained in their positions and the 37<sup>th</sup> Division moved up into the trenches. 111<sup>th</sup>, 112<sup>th</sup> and 113<sup>rd</sup> Brigades moved into the trenches with the 111<sup>th</sup> Brigade receiving casualties. The 112<sup>th</sup> and 113<sup>th</sup> destroyed the opposing Germans, but 111<sup>th</sup> Brigade was destroyed. 110<sup>th</sup> and 115<sup>th</sup> moved forward into the empty trenches. Total casualties 1,000.

No movement or casualties.

Elite units from the 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division have arrived and moved into position behind the 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Division.

Received casualties from artillery. 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> moved into Monchy au Bois and destroyed the enemy. 110<sup>th</sup>, 115<sup>th</sup>, 112<sup>th</sup> and 113<sup>th</sup> moved up into new positions. The 37<sup>th</sup>, 38<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Australian artillery moved up into the trenches. Total casualties 1,000.

Broken the line with strong artillery fire. 112<sup>th</sup> and 113<sup>th</sup> Brigade completely destroyed. Casualties 1,000 however tank reinforcements have arrived.

All divisions moved out of enemy artillery fire. However the 111<sup>th</sup> Brigade was completely destroyed and the 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division received heavy damage. Total casualties 4,000.

Received Elite 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division reinforcements. Total casualties 1,000

Break – (Re-arranged) *[over lunch, the umpires consolidated and changed some of the positions, reflecting an additional few weeks of fighting – this gave a better game in the afternoon]*

3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian, 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian, 5<sup>th</sup> Australian and 38<sup>th</sup> Divisions in an area near forest between Monch au Bois and Douchy-les-Aye. New line of trenches. All artillery units in front of the trenches outside of Bienvillers au Bois with supporting 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade (Canadian).

5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division artillery was disabled. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division routed the enemy from their trenches and followed through the defences. The 38<sup>th</sup> Division received losses as the 114<sup>th</sup> and 113<sup>th</sup> Brigade attacked. The 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division also sustained some light casualties, losing them in their attack. Total casualties 2,500.

114<sup>th</sup> Brigade was wiped out by enemy artillery fire. 15<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Brigades received damage with the 38<sup>th</sup> Brigade receiving some as well. 115<sup>th</sup> Brigade and B company tanks were destroyed. Total casualties 4,000.

4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division received losses in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Brigades. The 15<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Brigades from 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division also sustained losses. Total casualties 2,000.

The kids became more aware as the day went on. In particular, they developed a healthy respect for artillery. Infantry started by being rather gung-ho in some parts and very timid in others. By the end of the day, much more preparation by artillery took place and players used the advantages of the trenches more.

Overall progress was less than in reality. Casualties were also less than reality, but on a similar scale. I think this was just a case of the kids being more careful than their real counterparts, but it is possible that the game mechanics might need a little adjustment as well. The French made laudable progress throughout the day – the game mechanics seemed to work there as well, but I think (to be honest, I am a little hazy on most of this) that they slowed rather later – I suspect they were attracting more German attention.

As far as I am concerned, the whole thing was a success. It has left the kids with a better understanding of the Somme than they could possibly have achieved any other way, it was an enjoyable day for them, it was an enjoyable day for those of us running the day (Jim, Mukul, Bernie and me) and it worked as a game.

What next? Well, Andy Grainger has decided to take this and turn it into a Megagame, so a version of this will appear in October of next year – I hope you will play it.

### **Onside Report for “Muck & Bullets” by Bernard Ganley**

I think Dave’s report does full justice to the effort he has put in on this school project and for which the rest of us provided a sounding board, source of historical info and from Jim the very elegant combat system. I say elegant as it was very much a game made for gamers in that they had to make “big decisions” and not

just monitor and calculate their way through a long drawn out combat system. When up to full speed the turn could be completed within 10 minutes on each set of tables – say 6-8 divisions worth of combat,

For many of the boys this elegance might have been lost on them, as they were not regular wargamers, for those that are this game could have been an exhaustive daylong gruelling match of calculations. Instead it was a daylong gruelling battle of wills. The boys began to enter the spirit of the game as shown by Dave's comments on some of the written orders. We "frontswine" had the benefit of the more verbal repartee as well: "I know you will take heavy losses but there is no option" "Corps team doesn't understand what is happening to us" "If they want us to attack we need more guns" etc.

Like any Megagame you did not see all that was happening, but would have liked to have been in a position to understand how the Year 12-13/VI Form (who were the army command teams) read the battle and how they responded to pressure of the game? Beyond a 10-minute operational level brief I gave the German team at the start, I did not have an opportunity to return to them during the day. With Andy Grainger's Megagame this is perhaps an area we can improve on by have a large and fractious Higher Command.

The Great War is in a lively condition re analysis of command ability with the revisionist school in full control at the moment. One of their key tenets is the "Learning Curve" that somehow the experience of battle made a command system better. Whether your view is that this is automatic or has to be worked on is the big question. I did note during the day the following features of this: 1) Doing a full bombardment of the next line but not attacking straight away to suck in reserves and gain attention of the enemy. 2) Germans abandoning trench line just as attacks were prepared to give ground but gain time. 3) German counterattacks petered out early on as they were so wasteful of men under the Allied artillery. The most amusing tactical feature was first use of tanks, which despite their bonus were not a success, so after that most teams in my sector lost interest in them.

Dave's school project has also given birth not only to a Megagame, but also a figure game! I am now working on for "Real Time Wargamers"/Realistic Modelling. The scale is dropped to battalion resolution, but due to the narrow frontages and use of 10mm is still aimed at doing corps level battles of 3+ attacking divisions and 1-2 defending. As they say see us at one of the shows.

All in all an excellent project that has spawned an interest not only in gaming at different levels and audiences, but has opened my eyes to a fascinating period of military history.

### ***Puissant Pike: Offside Report by Trevor Duguid Farrant***

This was a playtest of Arthur's English Civil War (ECW) game that had to be abandoned due to unforeseen circumstances at the Games Weekend. The attendees at Mukul's house were Mukul, myself, James, Jerry, Arthur, William and a rare appearance by Colin Watts.

This ECW tactical game involved playing Order Cards and moving figures to try and out-manoeuvre your opponents. The doctrine of the day and the quality of the units meant there was a limited amount of orders a unit could successfully perform, but sufficient to make it better than 'scissors, paper, stone'. Wizard wheezes weren't really the done thing and Arthur did well to keep Jerry in check whilst his enthusiasm ran wild!

The system on the whole worked well; the only awkward part was when two units were fighting one (who gets involved, where should the damage be applied, interpretation and resolution). This situation is difficult (it arises in many different figure games) and to write rules that cope with all eventualities would be a weighty tome. *Grand Manner* for Napoleonic springs to mind (and even that doesn't cover everything) but certain players can be really anal about the interpretation (not CLWG members I hasten to

add!). Since whenever Arthur is going to run this he will be on hand to umpire then he can make rulings on a case by case basis.

The system is not slow - we resolved the battle in under an hour. The game had a good feel to it and was fun to play. Colin was very complimentary and stated that the results produced were very reminiscent of the period. Since Colin has developed a substantial campaign system for ECW figure games then this can be taken as a high level of praise. Well done, Arthur.

### ***Puissant Pike: Report by Arthur Harman***

I am very gratified by Trevor's and Colin's comments. Prior to the meeting at Mukul's home, I had played two battles with pupils in Year VI who had studied the English Civil war in their History classes the previous term, which had been quite successful in that the children enjoyed themselves, and – with a few exceptions, such as the cavalry charge off the table away from the enemy! – managed to manoeuvre their troops in a reasonably historical fashion. As Trevor rightly points out, the system is designed for the classroom where I can always act as umpire and resolve any awkward situations, but I also believe that any wargamer with a reasonable knowledge of ECW tactics, or someone who had been in an ECW reenactment society, would be able to run the game successfully.

I have since used the system to resolve a battle in a map *Kriegsspiel* of Waller's campaign in the winter of 1643/4 with Bill Leeson and members of his group, who usually play a very different style of game – and have a much higher average age! – without this level of tactical detail, when it produced an equally entertaining and realistic battle.

### **Breaking the Panzers, the Bloody Battle for Rauray, Normandy 1 July 1944 by Kevin Baverstock, reviewed by Andy Grainger**

Published by Sutton ISBN 0-7509-2895-6; pp192 £25.00 (£20 from Amazon).

Due to an unusual combination of circumstances this book is perhaps the most detailed account of a tactical action in Normandy, or maybe anywhere else, in WW2. The author has intended that the action be described by the participants, which has been done before. But Kevin Baverstock has been able to link their accounts to the Battalion Signals Log and then to illustrate the action with coloured overlays on a series of contemporary air photographs. "*As well describe a battle as describe a ball,*" said the Iron Duke. Well, one cannot follow all the steps but one can certainly follow the dances, of which the author has identified twelve.

In doing so, we not only discover a remarkable story epitomising the British infantryman in defence but learn a lot about the parts played by the different elements of the battalion and their supporting arms.

"Breaking the Panzers" concerns the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Tyneside Scottish (1TS) in a single day of battle when the IISS Panzer Corps tried to cut off the Scottish Corridor formed by Operation Epsom a few days before.

That the author is able to write such a detailed and comprehensible account of a battle is due to three factors. First, immediately after the battle, the Battalion Signals Log was preserved and the Intelligence Officer compiled a special report; another was prepared by the Division – 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Infantry Division. Secondly, in the 1980's, a retired officer issued questionnaires about the battle to all the survivors whom he could trace although he died before being able to pursue his project further. And thirdly, the author, whose father served in 1TS and took part in the battle, is a professional cartographer and was persuaded to write this account.



Those who have trawled through battalion war diaries at the Public Record Office will know that it is unusual for any of these three sources to be present at all; for all three to be at hand may indeed, as the author suggests, be unique. To amplify the story he has conducted some further interviews and consulted the war diaries of the supporting arms such as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kensingtons (Machine Gun) Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Lancers (Sherman tanks) and the various Regiments comprising the Divisional Artillery. He has been especially fortunate in the witnesses available from the Support Company in 1TS and so we get a very good idea of what the Carrier Platoon actually did and how the Anti-tank platoon deployed their guns. Indeed, he reveals not only where each of the six 6pdrs was on the ground but how they were fought, with the benefit of the new Discarding Sabot round. (Excellent round – shame no-one told the gunners they needed to adjust their sights).

The author uses the 100 messages in the Battalion Signals Log as the skeleton on which to hang his personal accounts. Then he plots the positions of the sub-units and the incidents onto a series of contemporary air photographs with coloured graphics. These are augmented where possible by photographs. In this way it is possible to follow the fighting almost from platoon position to position, hedgerow to hedgerow and field to field. There are, of course, a few inconsistencies. For example, on page 98, I simply could not understand how 18 Platoon could be working with No.5 Detachment of the anti-tanks but even in this book, the fog of war must perhaps be allowed to descend occasionally.

The outline of the battle is perhaps not dissimilar to a score of others over those few days as the Germans hurled their tanks at the Scottish Corridor. Two companies are driven back, one holds its ground. Artillery fire falls from both sides, casualties mount, there is much heroism in battle, in supplying ammunition, in rescuing wounded and then, finally, counterattacks restore the position. Some men make their excuses, officers and Military Police rally stragglers, even the cooks and clerks are brought up at the end. But here, 60 years on, when few of us have much concept of the underlying, and unspoken, niceties of battle in general war, we get a little closer to understanding the real thing. A Company commander reports the diminution of fire from one of his platoons when its leader is evacuated; later he assembles 30 men from two platoons which have supposedly been completely overrun. We see the MP's in action manning their Straggler Collection Point. Towards the end we read of the concern at B Echelon when a 3 tonner arrives to collect the lightly wounded, the cooks, bottlewashers and 40 entirely unprepared replacements for defence at the last ditch. It really does not get much more dramatic.

We also see the flow of the battle over twenty two hours from 0005 to 2210 on 1 July. Short periods of incredibly intense activity are followed by much longer periods when men are just waiting, brewing up or eating a meal. It is almost as if the attacking soldiers need to be wound up tight like rubber bands over an hour or two and their energy and courage is then hurled in, to be consumed within minutes.

There is another point worth making on the subject of historical evidence. The reason that the questionnaires were issued by that retired officer in the 1980's was because a prominent book, published in about 1984, quoted an eye-witness from a neighbouring battalion as saying that the Tynesiders just ran away. Clearly they did not. Equally, however, there was enough rearward movement (and almost certainly some in the neighbouring battalion) to allow such an impression to be formed. It is, of course, from such impressions that commanders on the spot, indeed all of us, make their judgements on units, people and life generally. Food for thought.

“Breaking the Panzers” is a striking book in a big, almost A4 format. There is a lot of colour, Sutton Publishing have certainly done their author proud. At £20 it is very good value. For the student of WW2 tactics or anyone interested in the campaign in Normandy it is very highly recommended.