







BATTLE OF THE BULGE: THE ARDENNES OFFENSIVE

DATE: DECEMBER 16 1944 – JANUARY 25 1945

Belligerents	
 United States	 Germany
 United Kingdom	
 France	
 Canada	
 Belgium	
 Luxembourg	

The Battle of the Bulge, also called the Ardennes Offensive, was the last major German offensive on the Western Front during World War II - an unsuccessful attempt to push the Allies back from German home territory. The name Battle of the Bulge was appropriated from Winston Churchill's optimistic description in May 1940 of the resistance that he mistakenly supposed was being offered to the Germans' breakthrough in that area just before the Anglo-French collapse; the Germans were in fact overwhelmingly successful. The "bulge" refers to the wedge that the Germans drove into the Allied lines.

After their invasion of Normandy in June 1944, the Allies moved across northern France into Belgium during the summer but lost momentum in the autumn. Apart from an abortive thrust to Arnhem in the Netherlands, the efforts of the Allied armies in Western Europe during September and October 1944 amounted to little more than a process of nibbling. Meanwhile, the German defense was being continuously strengthened with such reserves as could be relocated from elsewhere and with the freshly raised forces of the Volksturm ("home guard"). German numbers were also bolstered by those troops who had managed to withdraw from France. A general offensive launched in mid-November by all six Allied armies on the Western Front brought disappointingly small results at a heavy cost; continued efforts merely exhausted the attacking troops.



In mid-December Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the supreme commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, had at his disposal 48 divisions distributed along a 600-mile front between the North Sea and Switzerland. For the site of their counteroffensive, the Germans chose the hilly and wooded country of the Ardennes. Because it was generally regarded as difficult country, a large-scale offensive there was likely to be unexpected. At the same time, the thick woods provided concealment for the massing of forces, whereas the high ground offered a drier surface for the maneuvering of tanks. An awkward feature from an offensive point of view, however, was the fact that the high ground was intersected with deep valleys where the through roads became bottlenecks where a tank advance was liable to be blocked. The aims of the German counteroffensive were far-reaching: to break through to Antwerp, Belgium, by an indirect move, to cut off the British army group from American forces as well as from its supplies, and then to crush the isolated British. Overall command of the offensive was given to Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt.

Hitler believed that he could force the western Allies to negotiate a peace treaty in the Axis' favor. He also believed that such factors as bad weather, bad terrain, and the Christmas holiday would help him catch the Allies by surprise. In other words, he anticipated it to be a decisive battle to win. After all, the Allies were very much inferior to the Germans as far as their military strength was concerned. At the battle's beginning, the U.S. Army was equipped with 80,000 men, 400 tanks, and 400 artillery pieces, while the Germans had 200,000 men, 600 tanks, and 1,900 guns.





The Fifth Panzer Army was to break through the U.S. front in the Ardennes, swerve westward, and then wheel northward across the Meuse, past Namur to Antwerp. As it advanced, it was to build up a defensive flank barricade to shut off interference from the U.S. armies farther south. The Sixth Panzer Army, under SS commander Sepp Dietrich, was to thrust northwestward on an oblique line past Liège to Antwerp, creating a strategic barrier astride the rear of the British and of the more northerly American armies. To these two panzer armies the Germans gave the bulk of the tanks that they could scrape together. To minimize the danger from a speedy intervention of Anglo-American air power, which was vastly greater than their own, the Germans launched their strike when the meteorological forecast promised them a natural cloak; indeed, for the first three days, mist and rain kept the Allied air forces on the ground.

The night before the battle began, Hitler sent in soldiers to infiltrate the front. Some were dropped by parachute; others came in driving captured American jeeps. These German soldiers spoke fluent English and wore U.S. uniforms; therefore they managed to spread confusion by giving false directions, changing road signs, and cutting telephone lines.

Aided by its surprise, the German counteroffensive, which started before dawn on December 16, 1944, made menacing progress in the opening days, creating alarm and confusion on the Allied side. The German army managed to push American forces back nearly to the Meuse River and surround the town of Bastogne in Belgium. At that time, when ordered to surrender Bastogne, Brig. General Anthony C. McAuliffe famously replied: "Nuts!" The Germans did not understand the answer so Joseph Harper, the US Army errand had to explain it to them and to make it a little more obvious to the German commanders answered with "Go to hell." That same day, reinforcements were sent by airdrop and Allied airplanes began their attack on German tanks.



Much of the battle was affected by the weather. Great snowstorms were a big problem. Trucks had to be run every half hour to keep the oil in them from freezing. Weapons froze, so men urinated on them to thaw them. The temperature during January 1945 was the coldest on record, and casualties from exposure to the cold grew as large as the losses from fighting. The Germans attacked in white uniforms to blend in with the snow.

THE MALMEDY MASSACRE

On December 17, 1944, the 1st SS Panzer Division of the Sixth Panzer Army, commanded by Colonel Joachim Peiper, was heading west from Büllingen, Belgium. This movement was part of the general German advance during the Battle of the Bulge. At the same time, a US convoy of thirty vehicles and nearly 140 men of Battery B of the 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion were heading south from Hürtgen Forest toward Ligneuville.

The two forces converged just before noon at the crossroads hamlet of Baugnez, two and a half miles south of Malmedy. Kampfgruppe Peiper immediately began firing upon Battery B. The US troops panicked. Those who did not escape, including medical personnel, quickly surrendered. After being searched and relieved of their personal possessions, the US troops were lined up in eight rows in a field at the crossroads. Then for reasons that are unclear, Combat Group Peiper opened fire on the GIs. German troops walked among the bodies and shot any that appeared to be still alive. Survivors of the atrocity recalled being fired upon several times, and even hearing laughter as the Waffen SS troops killed the Americans. When the Germans left the site, at least 84 US soldiers were dead. Just over 40 Americans survived the incident, now known as the Malmedy Massacre, either by fleeing into the woods or pretending to be dead.



The Malmedy Massacre was one of a series of atrocities committed by Peiper's division. US prosecutors later claimed that Kampfgruppe Peiper was responsible for killing some 350 unarmed American soldiers and about 100 Belgian civilians over a one-month period in Belgium, as well as other atrocities on the Eastern Front.

It is not known why the massacre happened - there is no record of an order by an SS officer. The shooting of POWs was common on the Eastern Front, but rare on the Western Front. In mid-January, American forces recaptured the site where the killings took place and recovered the bodies of the murdered soldiers. After the war, the SS soldiers met justice in the controversial Malmedy Massacre Trial. Forty-two former SS officers were sentenced to death, although no death penalty was ever carried out. Most served sentences varying from 10 years to life imprisonment. The Malmedy Massacre is regarded as the worst atrocity committed against American troops during the course of the war in Europe.

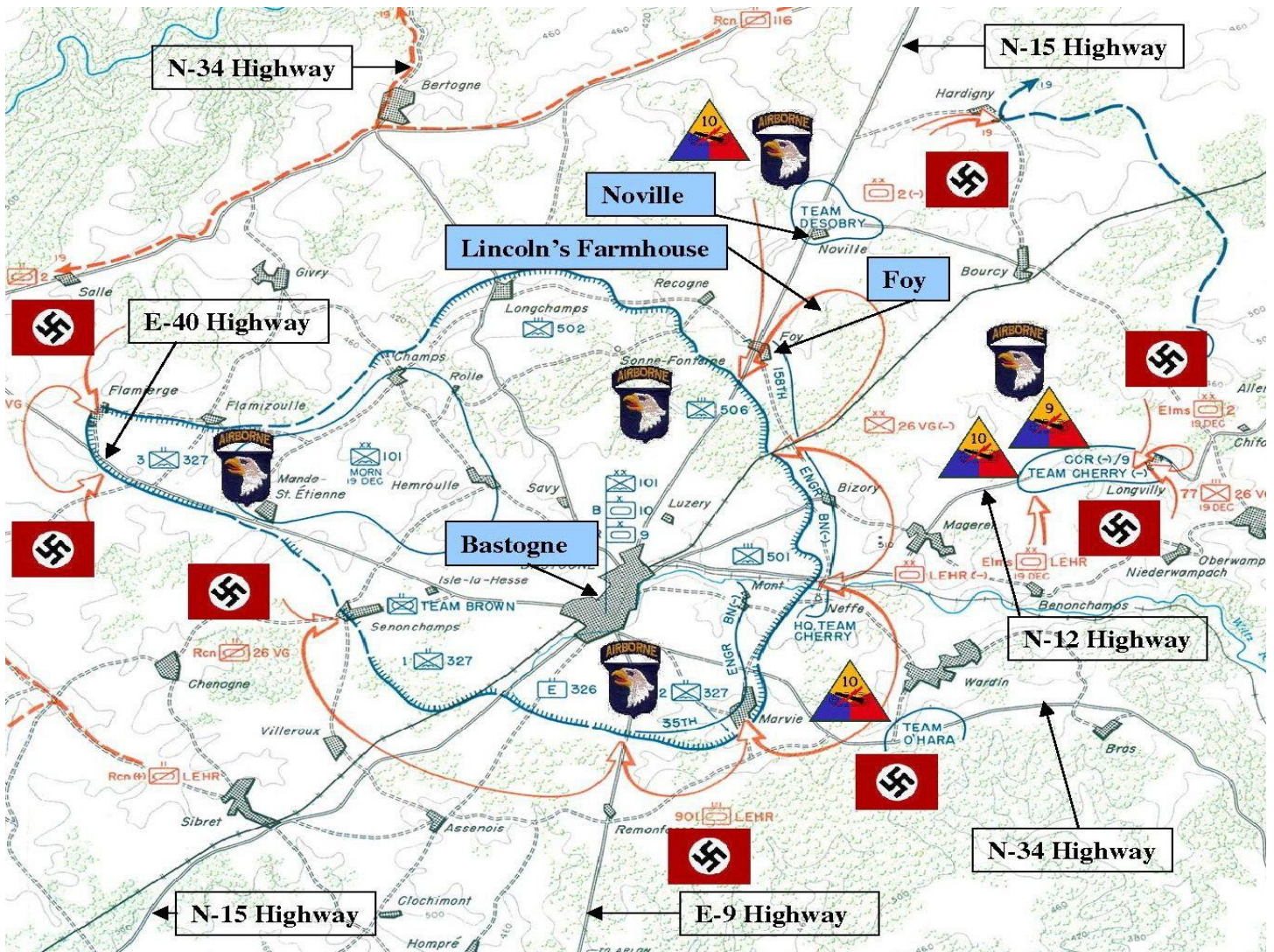




By December 24 the Germans had advanced to within 4 miles of the Meuse River. Time and opportunities were lost, however, through gasoline shortages resulting from the severe winter weather and from growing Allied air attacks, and the German drive faltered. This frustration of the German advance was largely due to the way in which outflanked U.S. detachments held Bastogne and several other important bottlenecks in the Ardennes, as well as to the speed with which British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, who had taken charge of the situation on the northern flank, swung his reserves southward to forestall the Germans at the crossings of the Meuse.

Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army relieved Bastogne on December 26, and on January 3 1945, the U.S. First Army began a counteroffensive. Between January 8 and January 16 the Allied armies concentrated their strength and attempted to pinch off the great German wedge driven into their front, but the Germans carried out a skillful withdrawal that took them out of the potential trap. Judged on its own account, the Battle of the Bulge had been a profitable operation for Germany, for, even though it fell short of its objectives, it upset the Allies' preparations and inflicted much damage at a cost that was not excessive for the effect. Viewed in relation to the whole situation, however, the counteroffensive had been a fatal operation.





While the Allies suffered some 75,000 casualties, Germany lost 120,000 men and stores of matériel that it could ill afford to replace. Germany had thus forfeited the chance of maintaining any prolonged resistance to a resumed Allied offensive. It brought home to the German troops their incapacity to turn the scales and thereby undermined such hopes as they had retained. Their losses were critical. The last of the German reserves were gone, the Luftwaffe had been broken, and the German army in the west was being pushed back. Most importantly, the Eastern Front was now ripe for the taking by the Soviets. With the majority of its air power and men lost, Germany had few forces left to defend the Third Reich. Germany's final defeat loomed just a few months away.





M'44 SCENARIOS FOR THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE: THE ARDENNES OFFENSIVE

The Battle of the Bulge campaign includes 54 scenarios: 39 standard scenarios, 11 Breakthrough (BT) scenarios and 4 Overlord (OL) maps. These scenarios chronicle the major engagements of the Ardennes offensive, and include only the best available in the Scenarios from the Front (SFTF) files section on the DoW website, and 13 official scenarios by Richard Borg and jdrommel.

No campaign rules are included; not all M'44 players have access to the Campaign books. Instead, simply tally up the number of medals won in each scenario after playing both sides. Medal tally tables for all scenarios are included below.

The Battle of the Bulge campaign is broken down into 4 smaller campaigns and 5 separate medal tally tables for ease of keeping track of the overall campaign.

THE ARDENNES PART 1

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| 1. DEC 16: The Sideshow | 8. DEC 16 – DEC 19: Autumn Mist BT |
| 2. DEC 16: Weiler-Putsheid | 9. DEC 16 – DEC 20: The Crossing of Sure River |
| 3. DEC 16: The Battle of the Bulge | 10. DEC 16 – DEC 23: Battle of the Bulge BT |
| 4. DEC 16 – DEC 17: Battle of Lanzerath Ridge | 11. DEC 16 – DEC 24: The Bulge Pushes Out OL |
| 5. DEC 16 – DEC 17: Clervaux – The Road to Bastogne | 12. DEC 16 – JAN 20: Bastogne |
| 6. DEC 16 – DEC 17: Battle in the Schnee Eifel | 13. DEC 17: Holding the Fort at Clervaux |
| 7. DEC 16 – DEC 18: The Bulge Breaks Through BT | |

There are a total of 199 medals if all scenarios are played, 176 medals without the Overlord map, and 111 medals if only the standard scenarios are used.

SCENARIO (+ total medal count)	P1.....	P2.....
1. The Sideshow (12)		
2. Weiler-Putsheid (10)		
3. The Battle of the Bulge (14)		
4. Battle of Lanzerath Ridge (10)		
5. Clervaux – Road to Bastogne (16)		
6. Battle in the Schnee Eifel (12)		
7. The Bulge Breaks Through (BT) (12)		
8. Autumn Mist (BT) (29)		
9. The Crossing of Sure River (12)		
10. Battle of the Bulge (BT) (24)		
11. The Bulge Pushes Out (OL) (23)		
12. Bastogne (13)		
13. Holding the Fort at Clervaux (12)		
TOTAL MEDAL TALLY		

THE ARDENNES PART 2

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|--|---|
| 1. DEC 17 – DEC 18: Twin Villages | 8. DEC 19: Neffe and Bizroy |
| 2. DEC 17 – DEC 18: Peiper at Stavelot | 9. DEC 19: Longvilly Trap |
| 3. DEC 17 – DEC 17: Air Landing in the Hohe Venn | 10. DEC 19: Wardin |
| 4. DEC 17 – DEC 22: Panthers in the Woods! OL ** | 11. DEC 19: Firefight in Neffe OL |
| 5. DEC 18 – DEC 21: Drive on Bastogne BT | 12. DEC 19 – DEC 20: Peiper at Stoumont BT |
| 6. DEC 19: Ambush at Bertogne | 13. DEC 19 – DEC 21: The Bridge over the Amblieve |
| 7. DEC 19: Hellcats Race to Noville | 14. DEC 19 – DEC 27: Siege of Bastogne |

** Scenario notes:

1. Panthers in the Woods!: if you win by Sudden Death score the full 13 medals.

There are a total of 212 medals if all scenarios are played, 158 medals without the 2 Overlord maps, and 116 medals if only the standard scenarios are used.

SCENARIO (+ total medal count)	P1	P2
1. Twin Villages (12)		
2. Peiper at Stavelot (12)		
3. Air Landing in the Hohe Venn (12)		
4. Panthers in the Woods! (OL) (26)		
5. Drive on Bastogne (BT) (20)		
6. Ambush at Bertogne (10)		
7. Hellcats Race to Noville (12)		
8. Neffe and Bizroy (10)		
9. Longvilly Trap (10)		
10. Wardin (14)		
11. Firefight in Neffe (OL) (28)		
12. Peiper at Stoumont (BT) (22)		
13. The Bridge over the Amblieve (14)		
14. Siege of Bastogne (10)		
TOTAL MEDAL TALLY		

THE ARDENNES PART 3

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|--|---|
| 1. DEC 20: Attack on Foy | 8. DEC 21: The Battle for Malmedy |
| 2. DEC 20: Counter Attack on Noville-Foy | 9. DEC 21 – DEC 22: Relief of Peiper |
| 3. DEC 20: Battle of Manhey | 10. DEC 22: Peiper's Last Gasp |
| 4. DEC 20 – DEC 22: St. Vith, Ardennes | 11. DEC 23: Escape along Salmchateau BT |
| 5. DEC 20 – DEC 23: Baraque de Fraiture | 12. DEC 23 – DEC 24: Resistance at Marvie BT |
| 6. DEC 20 – DEC 26: Tigers on the Ridge! BT ** | 13. DEC 24 – DEC 26: Battle in the Celles Pocket BT |
| 7. DEC 20 – DEC 27: Relief of Bastogne | |

** Scenario notes:

1. Tigers on the Ridge!: if you win by Sudden Death score the full 13 medals.

There are a total of 184 medals if all scenarios are played and 110 medals if only the standard scenarios are used.

SCENARIO (+ total medal count)	P1.....	P2.....
1. Attack on Foy (8)		
2. Counter Attack on Noville-Foy (12)		
3. Battle of Manhey (12)		
4. St. Vith, Ardennes (12)		
5. Baraque de Fraiture (12)		
6. Tigers on the Ridge! (BT) (26)		
7. Relief of Bastogne (18)		
8. The Battle for Malmedy (12)		
9. Relief of Peiper (12)		
10. Peiper's Last Gasp (12)		
11. Escape - Salmchateau (BT) (18)		
12. Resistance at Marvie (BT) (18)		
13. Battle in Celles Pocket (BT) (12)		
TOTAL MEDAL TALLY		

THE ARDENNES PART 4

- [1. DEC 25: Champs and Hemroulle](#)
- [2. DEC 25: Race to Bastogne](#)
- [3. DEC 26: Patton's Counter Attack](#)
- [4. DEC 30: Bastogne Corridor East](#)
- [5. DEC 30: Bastogne Corridor West](#)
- [6. DEC 30: Bastogne Overlord OL](#)
- [7. DEC 30: Battle of the Bulge **](#)

- [8. DEC 30: The Final Counter Attack BT](#)
- [9. JAN 02 – JAN 13: Attack on Foy & Noville BT](#)
- [10. JAN 03 – JAN 05: Bure](#)
- [11. JAN 05: The Breaking Point **](#)
- [12. JAN 11: The Battle of La Roche](#)
- [13. JAN 11 – JAN 12: Surprise – Night Attack](#)
- [14. JAN 21: Liberation of Wiltz](#)

** Scenario notes:

- 1. Battle of the Bulge: if you take the village of Houffalize score the full 6 medals.
- 2. The Breaking Point: if you win by Command Cards running out while playing the German side score the full 7 medals.

There are a total of 197 medals if all scenarios are played, 173 medals without the Overlord map, and 139 medals if only the standard scenarios are used.

SCENARIO (+ total medal count)	P1.....	P2.....
1. Champs and Hemroulle (12)		
2. Race to Bastogne (12)		
3. Patton's Counter Attack (12)		
4. Bastogne Corridor East (12)		
5. Bastogne Corridor West (12)		
6. Bastogne Overlord (OL) (24)		
7. Battle of the Bulge (12)		
8. The Final Counter Attack (BT) (22)		

9. Attack on Noville & Foy (BT) (12)		
10. Bure (14)		
11. The Breaking Point (15)		
12. The Battle of La Roche (12)		
13. Surprise – Night Attack (14)		
14. Liberation of Wiltz (12)		
TOTAL MEDAL TALLY		

There are a grand total of 792 medals if all scenarios are played, 691 medals without the 3 Overlord maps, and 476 medals if only the standard scenarios are used.

BATTLE OF THE BULGE	P1.....	P2.....
1. The Ardennes Part 1		
2. The Ardennes Part 2		
3. The Ardennes Part 3		
4. The Ardennes Part 4		
FINAL MEDAL TALLY		



There are 2 additional official M'44 scenarios that are not included in this Campaign booklet that you may wish to include if you have access to them:

1. Noville to Foy – Breakthrough Maps booklet
2. Twin Battles at Warnach and Bigonville – Equipment Pack expansion

Acknowledgments to the authors of the scenarios that make up this Battle of the Bulge: the Ardennes Offensive compilation:

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