

BOCAGE

The *Bocage* is an area covering the southern and western part of Normandy. It is made up of many small irregular fields bordered by the hedgerows that give the area its name. Bocage hedgerows have thick stone banks, formed when the fields were cleared in antiquity, topped by dense hedges of trees and bushes. While the hedgerows are excellent for keeping cattle from straying, they are almost impassable to vehicles and even to troops on foot they present a major obstacle.

The area is rural, so most roads are small lanes designed for horse-drawn carts, barely wide enough for a motorised vehicle. The main roads between the towns are wider and more modern, but few and far between. Roads are usually banked up on both sides and lined with trees.

The farmers of the area mostly raise cattle to make the famous cheeses of the region and grow apples to make into potent Calvados brandy. Crops like corn and wheat are mainly restricted to the flatter open areas around Caen.



BOCAGE IN FLAMES OF WAR

The *Bocage* extended 60 miles (100 km) from north to south, and over half of that east to west. Apart from farmhouses, small villages, enclosed orchards, and occasional woods, the entire area of a battle fought in the *Bocage* should be covered in bocage hedgerows.

In *Flames Of War*, bocage fields are typically 6-12"/15-30cm across by 8-16"/20-40cm long. They are usually entirely surrounded by bocage hedgerows with few gates through the banks. Some fields do not have a gate at all, just an opening barely wide enough to pass a wheelbarrow or cow.



Apart from a few wider main roads, most of the roads in the bocage are narrow lanes. Typically they have bocage hedgerows pressing in from both sides and are not wide enough for anything bigger than a jeep to pass another vehicle. Often the trees from the sides of the lane meet overhead.

The farm buildings are usually made of the same grey stone as the hedgerow banks. The tile-roofed houses are rather plain with little in the way of decoration to break their square lines.

BOCAGE RULES

Fighting in bocage is essentially the same as fighting anywhere else. However, the restricted fields of fire and the difficulty of manoeuvre require careful tactics to overcome.

HEDGEROWS

Hedgerows are the defining feature of the bocage. They make cross-country movement a nightmare and give the enemy plenty of cover and concealment.

CROSSING BOCAGE

The banks of bocage hedgerows are stone walls 6 feet (1.8m) or more tall and up to twice that thick. The roots of the trees growing on the banks bind them together into an impenetrable mass.

Bocage hedgerows are Very Difficult Going, but are Impassable to Cavalry and teams with Remote-control Demolition Carriers. This means that only troops on foot and Fully-tracked armoured vehicles can cross them at all, although Fully-tracked armoured vehicles need a Skill test to do so. Overloaded vehicles must re-roll successful Skill tests to cross Bocage hedgerows.

In addition, the hedgerows are so overgrown that teams must start their movement adjacent to a bocage hedgerow to cross it, and must stop their movement on reaching a bocage hedgerow. This can result in disjointed movement with a platoon taking several turns to cross a hedgerow as each echelon moves up to the hedgerow and crosses in turn.

Teams cannot end a Step sitting on a bocage hedgerow. They must be on one side or the other and clearly either adjacent to the hedgerow or back from it.

GATES

While gates are much easier to travel through, they are narrow and overgrown, making negotiating them tricky.

Gates in bocage hedgerows are Difficult Going. Like the hedgerows, teams must start their movement adjacent to a gate to use it, and must stop their movement on reaching a gate.

BELLY UP!

Tanks stuck on Bocage hedgerows usually found themselves stranded with their nose pointing to the sky—and their belly pointing to the enemy!

Any Armoured vehicle Bugged Down on a bocage hedgerow uses its Side armour rating as its Front armour rating when hit from the front. The hit still counts as being on the Front armour, just with a lower armour rating.

SEEING THROUGH BOCAGE

Bocage hedgerows are very tall and thick, totally blocking vision. Everything on the other side is hidden from view.

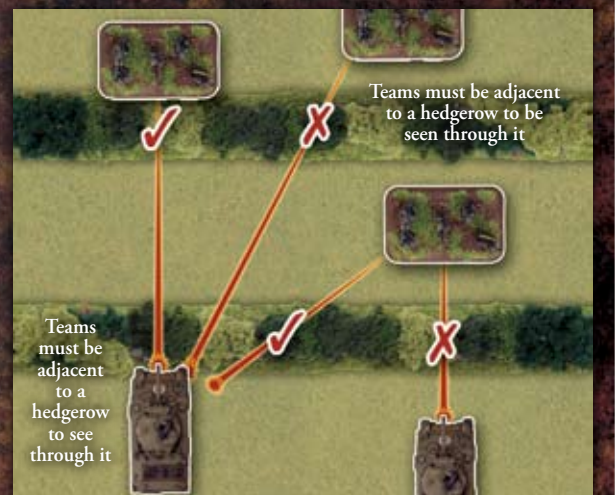
Since Bocage hedgerows are taller than any tank, only teams adjacent to a Bocage hedgerow can see or be seen through it. Bocage hedgerows provide Concealment for any team seen through them, except by a team that is itself adjacent to the same hedgerow. Even the gates tend to be overgrown and block visibility in the same manner as the hedgerow.

A team adjacent to a bocage hedgerow can see anything on the other side of the hedgerow, even if the enemy are adjacent to the same hedgerow further along it. A team adjacent to the intersection of two hedgerows can see across either of them as well as across the intersection into the field diagonally across from itself.

CROSSING BOCAGE



SEEING THROUGH BOCAGE



LOOKING ALONG HEDGEROWS



TALL BUILDINGS

The limited fields of vision in bocage country make elevated positions useful for artillery observers. They also make them prime targets for counter-fire.

Teams in raised positions such as church steeples can see over nearby bocage hedgerows. As with any high ground, you will need to look from the miniature's position to determine what is visible. Remember, a team that is at least half hidden by terrain is Concealed.

CONCEALMENT FROM AIRCRAFT

Even from above, the tree-lined hedgerows make it difficult to find targets in the bocage.

Teams adjacent to bocage hedgerows are Concealed from aircraft coming from any direction.

ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE

Not only do bocage hedgerows conceal troops from aircraft, they also hide incoming aircraft from anti-aircraft guns.

Anti-aircraft weapons cannot fire at aircraft on the far side of bocage hedgerows that are within 4"/10cm of the weapon.

TAKING COVER

Thick bocage hedgerows are pretty much bulletproof, although foxholes dug into the side are still useful when the artillery starts falling.

Bocage hedgerows provide bulletproof cover against shooting from the other side, but no protection against artillery fire, aircraft, or fire from teams adjacent to that hedgerow. Gates provide no protection at all.

SHOOTING OVER BOCAGE

The height and thickness of bocage hedgerows causes problems for low slung guns as their crews must painstakingly break a gap for them to shoot through. On the other hand, most other weapons can see over the bank or climb up it far enough to shoot.

Any team can shoot through a distant bocage hedgerow at a team adjacent to that hedgerow, or shoot through Bocage hedgerows they are adjacent to.

ARTILLERY

Because of the risk of their rounds hitting the trees along the bocage when they fire, gunners need to give some leeway between themselves and a bocage hedgerow when choosing firing positions.

Teams firing an Artillery Bombardment must be at least 4"/10cm back from a hedgerow to fire a bombardment over it.

ASSAULTING IN BOCAGE

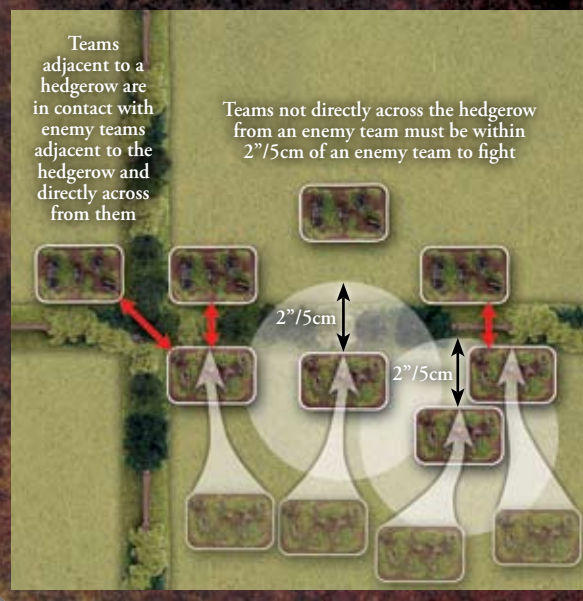
Assaults in bocage country are not bayonet charges, but rather close-range grenade battles. The impenetrable hedgerow between you and the enemy makes sure of this.

ASSAULTING A DEFENDED HEDGEROW

The most common form of assaults in bocage country are assaults against defended hedgerows.

The key to this type of assault is to remember that teams in contact with a bocage hedgerow are deemed to be in contact with enemy teams immediately across the hedgerow from them. This sort of fight tends to be messy as it can be difficult to mass against the enemy as the width of the hedgerow will mean that teams not in contact with the enemy will probably be more than 2"/5cm from them and unable to fight.

ASSAULTING A DEFENDED HEDGEROW



ASSAULTS ACROSS HEDGEROWS

Less commonly, troops will find themselves assaulting across a hedgerow into an open field.

Here it is important to remember that teams that cannot be seen do not restrict movement. If an enemy team is not adjacent to a hedgerow, it cannot prevent teams from moving up to that hedgerow where they can see it and launch an assault.

Sometimes when launching an assault across a wide obstacle like a hedgerow, there isn't enough space to fit an assaulting team between the enemy team and the hedgerow. In this case, place the team somewhere convenient (such as on the hedgerow) until it clears space to advance or falls back across the hedgerow.

As the first line of troops goes over the hedgerow, the following troops will move up so as to be adjacent to it, and thus able to cross the hedgerow, when the time comes for you to continue the assault by counterattacking.

One thing to be aware of is that unless you are adjacent to a hedgerow, you cannot cross it when breaking off. This can leave you trapped if you are not careful.

TANKS ASSAULTING IN BOCAGE

Bocage is totally unsuited to tank assaults. Not only are tanks likely to be ambushed at short range, but they have great difficulty in crossing the hedgerows to get at the enemy. Once they clear a section of hedgerow and cross however, tanks can rampage along the enemy side almost at will.

Tanks fighting across the hedgerow will need to make a Skill Test each round of the assault to avoid Boggling Down as normal for assaulting across Very Difficult Going.

Remember, it is also possible to push into the enemy positions if you are victorious allowing your troops to force their way across the hedgerow and fight on the enemy side. Once across your tanks will no longer need to make Skill Tests to assault.

ASSAULTING ACROSS HEDGEROWS



NARROW LANES

The narrow lanes often found in bocage country are easier going than the hedgerows, but are dangerous as any advance must be on a one team frontage. They present additional problems for vehicles as they can neither pass nor turn in them.

A team in a narrow lane is considered to be adjacent to the hedgerows on both sides of the road.

A team cannot shoot past another friendly team down a narrow lane. A vehicle in a narrow lane can only fire hull-mounted weapons at targets on the same road or adjacent to the hedges bounding the road.

Vehicles must face along a narrow bocage lane and cannot turn their hull to the side without crossing the hedgerow into the adjacent field.

GAPPING HEDGEROWS

PIONEERS

The most obvious method of gapping a hedgerow is blowing a hole in it with a large explosive charge.

Pioneer teams may demolish a section of hedgerow creating a Difficult Going gap 2"15cm wide. Gaps in hedgerows are not subject to any of the rules for bocage hedgerows and do not provide either concealment or bulletproof cover. To create a gap a Pioneer team must start the turn adjacent to the hedgerow and not Pinned Down. They do not move in the Movement Step, but count as moving. Instead of shooting they roll a Skill Test to create the gap. Due to limited supplies of explosives, a platoon may only attempt to create one gap per turn, but an additional team on each side of and adjacent to the gapping team may also roll Skill Tests to create the gap. If any team succeeds, then the gap is created.

BULLDOZERS

Tank-mounted dozer blades were found to be a quick and effective way of gapping hedgerows.

Bulldozers use the rules on page 215 of the Flames Of War rulebook to gap bocage hedgerows.

DEMOLITION CARRIERS

Although the Germans rarely used them for this purpose, their demolition carriers could have blasted gaps if needed.

A Remote-Controlled Demolition Carrier (see page 216 of the rulebook) detonated adjacent to a Bocage hedgerow that makes a successful Firepower Test using its second firepower rating creates a 2"15cm wide gap that is Difficult Going.

MODELLING BOCAGE

A model bocage hedgerow should have a bank of stones and tree roots about $\frac{5}{8}$ "/15mm high topped with dense vegetation and trees. The overall height should be $1\frac{1}{4}$ -2"/30-50mm tall with some taller trees higher than this.

To provide the maximum flexibility in the layout of your bocage terrain, you should make your hedgerows in several sections. You'll probably need to make four different types of hedgerow section: L-shaped, X-shaped and T-shaped hedgerow corners, and of course straight sections of hedgerows. The straight sections can be any length you like but the corners must all be the same size so the whole will fit

together neatly. You might also need some hedgerow sections that are angled slightly to allow for corners and roads etc.

MATERIALS USED

MDF board or plywood ($\frac{3}{16}$ - $\frac{3}{8}$ "/4-8mm thick), 16 gauge (1-2mm) wire, model trees 2-4"/5-10cm tall with detachable bases, aluminium tubing, clump foliage in multiple shades, static grass, ready-mix filler putty, PVA wood glue, hot glue gun, sand, kitty litter or small pebbles, balsa wood, hobby knife, brushes and paint.

STEP 1



Mark out the sections on a board about $1\frac{1}{2}$ -2/4-5cm wide and as long as required. Cut them out and bevel the edges. Sand any rough edges. Lay all the sections out to ensure that they fit neatly next to one another to form a network of hedgerows. If there is anything wrong, it's easier to fix it at this stage, rather than later.

Mark gaps for gates while you have the hedgerows laid out to make sure you have the right number of them. Construct the gates using balsa wood. Make them about $\frac{3}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ "/10-12 mm high and $\frac{3}{4}$ - $1\frac{1}{4}$ "/20-30mm wide.

STEP 2



Build up the pile of stones at the base of the hedgerows with layers of kitty litter. Place short sections of aluminium tubing amongst the kitty litter to mount the trees in. Leave gaps for gates. The banks should be about the height of a standing infantryman and should slope inwards at a 45-degree angle, flattening out at the top.

After the first layer of kitty litter start putting tree roots into the stones. Twist some wire together, bend and shape it to look like a tree root, then place and glue. Continue building the stones, then glue the gates in place.

STEP 3



Paint very watered-down ready-mix filler putty over the kitty litter to fill in any gaps. When this is dry, paint the ground around the stones to match your tabletop terrain, then sprinkle with sand and leave to dry. Dry brush with a lighter shade of the base colour. Paint the stones and root system and then dry brush.

When all of the painting is complete you'll need to use a needle file, or similar tool, to clean out the tubes so that the bases of your trees fit into them.

STEP 4



Hot glue the clumped foliage directly onto the top of the stones, leaving small gaps around the slots for the trees. Using multiple shades of foliage adds variety. This foliage should be around the height of an infantryman, making the total height of the hedgerow around twice the height of a standing infantryman.

It is best not to glue the trees into their tubes, as leaving them separate will make the hedgerow easier to store and transport. Apply the static grass to the ground surface to finish.

FIGHTING IN THE BOCAGE

CLOSE-IN FIGHTING

The bocage country of Normandy severely limited the ability of the Allies to manoeuvre. With the field of vision limited to the next hedgerow, battles devolved into a series of platoon-sized actions fought independently of neighbouring units. Each hedgerow had to be cleared in a pitched battle removing any prospect for large-scale manoeuvres.

Battles fought in bocage country should have the whole table covered in small fields surrounded by bocage hedgerows. Because of the close-in nature of the fighting, you should use a half-sized table (4'x3'/120cm x 90cm or 4'x4'/120cm x 120cm).

Treat tables narrower than 4'/120cm wide as being 4'/120cm wide when determining how many Fortification points the defender has available.

DEPLOYMENT

With a smaller arena and limited fields of view, battles in bocage country tend to start at much shorter ranges than normal.

Halve all distances measured from the table centre, table centre line, or the enemy when placing objectives and deploying troops at the start of the game, e.g. in Free-for-all players must place objectives at least 8"/120cm from the centre line and must deploy at least 6"/15cm from the centre line. Distances measured from the table edges remain unchanged.

This does not affect special rules like Reconnaissance Deployment or the British Advance Under Darkness special rule, nor deployments such as ambushes made later in the game.



ARTILLERY

In the close bocage country, artillery is less useful close to the front lines and the small tables used limit the space to deploy them.

You may deploy artillery platoons that would normally be on the table using the Across the Volga special rule (page 225 of the Flames Of War rulebook) when fighting in Bocage country. Platoons arriving from Reserve may deploy using the Across the Volga special rule when they arrive. Remember, platoons deployed using the Across the Volga special rule are not counted as being on the table for any purpose.

RESERVES

While the bocage hinders the attacker's attempts to move forward and mass their troops, it also hinders the defender's ability to monitor the battle and bring forward reserves at the critical moment in the battle.

In battles that do not use the Fair Fight special rule, the defender's reserves arrive on die rolls of 6 instead of the usual 5+.