

Combat Mission: Battle for Normandy

Battlepack 1: The Great Swan

Northern France and Belgium

September 1944

In the two months between D-Day and mid August the Allied armies in Normandy destroyed the cream of the 1944 German Army. Exploiting this resounding victory the Allies bounded across France in just a few days. It is during this period of stunning advance that *Battlepack 1: The Great Swan* is set, following the advance of the British 2nd Army from the Seine River, through Belgium, and all the way to the high water mark of the advance along the Meuse and lower Rhine.

The first phase of the Great Swan occurred when the 43rd Wessex Division seized a crossing over the Seine at Vernon in an opposed assault crossing. The battle here lasted several days, with the bridgehead in grave danger for the first 24 hours. However the situation was stabilised and then room made for follow-on forces. **Prelude**, the first battle of the *Amiens Tonight* campaign, is a semi-historical look at the difficulties of pressing back a determined German resistance able to make good use of the thick forests along the Seine river banks.

Shortly afterwards the British forces exploded out of the bridgehead and began racing across Northern France and into Belgium. German resistance to the breakout was weak and disorganised - they were too busy fleeing back towards Germany to form a cohesive front. Engagements during this period tended to be small scale, and highly confusing. **The Copse** is a tiny scenario that takes a hypothetical look at one of these minor engagements. Overnight the advancing Allies generally rested, and prepared for the next day's advance, while the Germans continued their helter-skelter withdrawal. **Celer et Audax** and **Nulli Secudus** look at what happens when small British force disposed in hasty defence finds itself in the path of withdrawing Germans either in the middle of a rainy night or on a misty morning.

During the advance to Amiens the 11th Armoured Division was ordered to advance through the night without rest, culminating in an astonishing advance of 48 miles in just 24 hours. **Tallyho**, the second of the campaign scenarios, follows the vanguard of this drive as they approach the location of a temporary halt at dusk. The next day 11th Armoured was embroiled in bitter city fighting at Amiens (**The Somme**), then pushed out of the city into the open ground east of the river (**To the green fields beyond**). This was not the end of the war, and the Division soon found itself advancing towards Germany once more (**And the beat goes on**).

Within days the lead elements of XXX Corps, made up as always of the armoured cars from the Recce Corps, found themselves in the region known as 'the Crossroads of Europe', a place where famous battles to decide the fate of nations have been fought since time immemorial (**A crossroads near Brussels**).

Soon after reaching Antwerp and the Belgian border The Great Swan petered out, stopped more by the logistical strain of leaping forward 200 miles in a few days than by any German resistance. Field Marshal Montgomery famously tried to kick-start the stalled advance with the world's greatest airborne assault. Those battles have been dealt with in the Combat Mission Market Garden module. However in the weeks prior to the launch of Market Garden there were about a dozen planned airborne operations, all of which were cancelled when their proposed landing zones were overrun by the advancing British. But what if that advance had been halted in the vicinity of Brussels?

One of the planned - and cancelled - airborne operations was LINNET II, which was to seize bridges over the Meuse west of Aachen and open a route into Germany. A group of "what if?" fictional scenarios looks at how this never-fought battle might have played out. The flat ground between the Meuse River and Albert Canal would have provided excellent landing grounds (**Drop Zone CHARLIE**), while securing the river crossings was dependant on holding the high ground just east of the Meuse against German counter attacks (**LINNET II**). Since this operation was never launched, the exact details of Operation Linnet II are vague, and this vagueness has been exploited to look at the effect of differences in the detailed organisation of British and American ground and airborne forces when given the same ground and objectives, fighting against the same enemy.

Following the failure of Market Garden the British made a concerted effort to close up to the Rhine along its lower reaches before the onset of winter. This phase of the campaign saw a partial reversion to positional warfare, and the re-emergence of deliberate attacks against strong defences (**Swansong**). Often these attacks were supported by the specialist armour of the 79th Armoured Division (**Hobart's Funnies**). With the onset of bad weather at the end of September the frontlines became static, and the heady days of The Great Swan became an increasingly distant memory.

In total *Battlepack 1: The Great Swan* contains over 25km² of brand new, highly detailed handcrafted mapping, scenarios ranging from tiny to immense, and a wide variety of forces and challenging tactical situations.

Jon Sowden
Wellington
January 2016

Battlepack 1 Scenario Timeline

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 Aug 44	28 Aug 44	29 Aug 44	30 Aug 44	31 Aug 44	1 Sep 44	2 Sep 44
Prelude <c>			Nulli Secundus Tallyho! <c>	The Somme <c> The copse To the green fields beyond <c>	And the beat goes on <c> Celer et Audax	
3 Sep 44	4 Sep 44	5 Sep 44	6 Sep 44	7 Sep 44	8 Sep 44	9 Sep 44
A crossroads near Brussels						
10 Sep 44	11 Sep 44	12 Sep 44	13 Sep 44	14 Sep 44	15 Sep 44	16 Sep 44
				DZ Charlie (a) DZ Charlie (b)		Linnet II (a) Linnet II (b) Linnet II (c) Linnet II (d)
17 Sep 44	18 Sep 44	19 Sep 44	20 Sep 44	21 Sep 44	22 Sep 44	23 Sep 44
24 Sep 44	25 Sep 44	26 Sep 44	27 Sep 44	28 Sep 44	29 Sep 44	30 Sep 44
				Swansong Hobart's Funnies		

<c> : *campaign scenario*

(a) (b) (c) (d) : *scenario variants featuring significantly different forces*

Battlepack Contents

- 12 standalone scenarios
- 1 campaign (5 scenarios)
- 20 Quick Battle maps

Battlepack Prerequisites

- *Combat Mission Battle for Normandy v3.12* base game
- *Combat Mission Battle for Normandy – Commonwealth Forces* module
- *Combat Mission Battle for Normandy – Market Garden* module
- *Combat Mission Battle for Normandy – Vehicle Pack*

Goodies and Extras

A zip file containing

- Scenario loading screen mod, showing the front line in North West Europe on a day-by-day basis from 6 June through to the end of September
- Topographical maps and aerial photos for scenarios, used for the creation of the scenarios in Battle Pack 1, and usable as planning tools while playing
- PDF copy of *The story of the 23rd Hussars, 1940-1946* unit history

The *Goodies and Extras* file is offered as a separate 300MB download, available from

<https://battlefront.sharefile.com/share#/view/s960db757bdc49e3a>

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