

# NORMANDY: Game and Reality

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*Normandy* is a simulation of the first six days of the Allied invasion of France in June, 1944, during which the Allies gained a firm foothold on the continent and sealed the German fate. It is reasonable to ask how well the game mirrors reality and, if the game is realistic, what may we learn from it?

## SCENARIOS

*Normandy* provides six different German Orders of Battle. The German strength on the board is similar in all scenarios, but the reinforcement rates vary greatly. The scenarios provide for the following options:

- A. Permit Allies to land, meet them inland.
- B. Historical deployment and reinforcements; most effort on beaches but reserves maintained inland.
- C. Historical deployment but with quicker reaction to invasion.

D. Germans guess Normandy as the area, have greater strength in the area.

E. Much greater mobile response available.

F. Everything close to the beaches. Presumes instant response of all mobile forces to the invasion area.

I shall comment on the possibilities presented by these options later, but first I shall match these set-ups against six specific Allied plans. The strength of the Allied attack is the same for all the following plans; only the landing locations vary.

1. Similar to the actual landing. Use beaches 5-6-7-9-10-12-14-15. Paratroops used as in actual invasion, all at western or eastern edges of the invasion area.

2. Concentration in east. Use beaches 1-2-3-4-6-8-9-10. Paratroops used in shallow penetration, between landing beaches and Caen.

3. Same as #2 except paratroops in deeper penetration to try to seal off German reinforcements.

4. Like #2 and #3, no invasion at Utah beach. Use beaches 2-4-6-9-10-11-12-13. Shallow paratroop penetration.

5. Concentrate more to center and west. Use beaches 9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16. Some paratroops used to screen eastern beaches, some to aid in exiting from Utah beach.

6. Concentration to the west. Use beaches 10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17. All paratroops used to seal northern exits.

It should be noted that the original Allied plan, before Montgomery's revisions, was for a three division landing (not five, as actually occurred) and did not include Utah beach.

The German deployment in the 36 contests matching these plans was normal. All the fortifications were used and excess troops were used to attempt to seal beach and road exits.

The German player could, of course, "guess" the Allied plan and amass all possible units in one area. This possibility in the game was most unlikely historically, but would, of course, greatly affect play.

Outcomes of any game are, of course, subject to luck, but there are some definite

conclusions that can be drawn from the scores.

1. The actual Allied plan is successful against German plans "A" and "B," but fails against the quicker German responses.
2. Plans #3 and #6, concentrating in either the east or the west, give the best results for the Allies. Plan #3, with deeper paratroop penetration, is generally better than plan #2.
3. German plans "E" and "F" are best and can only be combatted by the Allies massing all their units in the east or in the west.
4. The actual German deployment and response is the least effective.
5. In terms of scoring for the game, where the Allies get additional Victory Points when the German uses options, plans A and C are best for the Germans to use in setting up. I prefer C, because any slip in Plan A for the Germans results in disaster.

**TACTICS**

The German, in his original position, should split his units into the smallest possible formations and concentrate on controlling roads. Each road should be held by two units to prevent Allied breakout in the second Movement Phase. Allied paratroops should be concentrated to achieve a specific objective, such as exiting from the north or east side of the board. Carentan is a vital point for the German Player. Holding it for the duration of the game usually results in a split beachhead for the Allies. Although the Allies cannot use their armor in the far west, this area cannot be effectively reinforced by strong German units. It is impossible for the German to drive the Allies into the sea once they get ashore.

**HISTORICAL AND GAME RESULTS**

Normandy gives the Allies Victory Points for achieving certain geographic objectives and for penetrating as deeply as possible into France. In history, the Allied objective was to establish a firm base in Europe from which to defeat the German army. In order to achieve this, the Allies needed a good seaport. Cherbourg, their goal, is located to the north. That is why the Allies get a 12 point bonus for exiting from the north side.

In the actual campaign, the game score would have been: north side = 12; Bayeux = 2; depth of penetration = 5; Total = 19 Victory Points (a marginal German victory). Carentan was taken the morning of 12 June, one day after the game ends. In the game between Allied plan 1 and German plan B, the Allies received 29 points as well as control of Caen and Carentan.

In reality, although the Allies had not achieved as large a bridgehead as planned, and had not taken Caen, they were firmly ashore and were well on the way to taking Cherbourg after six days. Whatever the game score, they had scored a victory that would be culminated five weeks later by the breakout. Rommel was probably right: the only German victory was a complete one at the beaches. Some of the stronger German plans give a chance of attaining this result. But given the Allies complete control of the air, how could the Germans have achieved this?

In the actual campaign, although there was some hesitation in the German command, the first reinforcing division (12SS) arrived on 7 June. Panzer Lehr arrived on 9 June and 17SS arrived on 11 June. All arriving units were greatly delayed by air power and the French Resistance movement. The only real hope for

**Raw Comparison Table**

This table cross-references the results of thirty-six Normandy games played in a random sequence. Read vertically the table records the effectiveness of each of the six German OB options. Horizontally the table measures the effectiveness of each of the six Allied deployment options outlined in this article. Each of the thirty-six results details the Allied victory point total

(unadjusted regardless of German OB) as well as the territorial objectives achieved by the Allied. On the far right is recorded the total victory points achieved employing each Allied deployment plan against the series of German OB options. Across the bottom, the total victory points achieved against each German OB option utilizing the entire range of Allied deployment plans is noted.

		German Orders of Battle						Deployment Effectiveness
		A	B	C	D	E	F	
Allied Landing Plans	1	[E]B,Cr 18	[N]Ca,B,Cr 29	B 3	2	1	B 3	56
	2	[E]Ca,B 23	[E]Ca,B 22	[E]B 16	[E]B 12	[E] 14	[E] 11	98
	3	[E]Ca,B 23	[E]Ca,B 22	[E]Ca,B 26	[E]Ca 21	[E] 12	[E]B 17	121
	4	(E)B 16	(E)Ca,B 22	B 7	Ca 11	B 6	B 6	68
	5	[N]B,Cr 23	Ca,B,Cr 16	[N]B 14	B 4	B 4	B,Cr 8	69
	6	[N]B,Cr 28	[N]B,Cr 22	[N] 14	[N] 13	[N]Cr 15	[N] 14	106
OB Effectiveness: 131			133	80	63	52	59	

**VICTORY POINT CODES**

- [E] = East Side of Mapsheet
- [N] = North Side of Mapsheet
- B = Bayeux
- Ca = Caen
- Cr = Carentan

**Adjusted Comparison Table**

This table adjusts the Allied victory points score to compensate for each of the six German OB options as detailed in the game rules.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	Deployment Effectiveness
1	13	29	8	12	16	23	101
2	18	22	21	22	29	31	143
3	18	22	31	31	27	37	166
4	11	22	12	21	21	26	113
5	18	16	19	14	19	28	114
6	23	22	19	23	30	34	151
OB Effectiveness:	101	133	110	123	142	179	

the Germans to stop the invasion was to guess or learn the invasion area and time, and to transfer units secretly in the previous weeks. A game variant, with three Panzer divisions on the board at the start and three more arriving the first day, could simulate this. If the Allies learned that the Germans were concentrating in Normandy, what would they have done?

Another possible variant would be the smaller Allied invasion on a three division, five

regiment front with scaled-down reinforcement rates.

Normandy certainly raises some interesting questions on what might have been on June 6, 1944.

