Sedan: The Decisive Battle of France, May 1940

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Sedan 1940 looks at a key battle in the German attack on France in 1940. It simulates the attack to and across the Meuse River from 10-17 May. Though the French are eventually going to get run over, to win they ‘merely’ have to slow the German advance enough to knock it off its historic timetable. This system centers on the use of formation activation chits drawn randomly from an opaque container. Each turn represents one day, and the units of maneuver are mostly battalions and regiments.

I’m playing the first scenario, which runs from 10 through 13 May. The Germans need to have an eight-point VP advantage to win. The German player obtains victory points by getting units across the Meuse. Two VP are awarded for each unit across. Additionally, the Germans collect one VP for each French unit they destroy. The French play receives two VP for each German mechanized unit destroyed and one VP for each mechanized unit that ends the game with a step loss.

Turn One
10 May 1940

The turn opens with a supply check. At this time the French units are deployed such that they’re all in supply; however, there’s an added wrinkle in the supply rules for the French. Each turn the French player checks for fuel shortages. They have the effect of putting some French units out of supply even if though they may otherwise have a valid supply line. The French player will check for that as he begins to move his units.

The French player pulls activation chits and a close support chit. The Germans obtain part of XIX Motorized Corps plus two fighters and two close support units. The first command activation is the French 2A Cavalry Corps. There are no fuel shortages this time.

The French player advances to the Semois River. The 11th Cuirassiers and the 12th Chasseurs secure the bridges west of Bouillon. The 5th Armored Recon covers the bridge at Bouillon, and the 15th Infantry Regiment grabs a position at the He Beaumont Bridge. The Brigade de Cavalerie maneuvers to Florenville, and the DLC covers the area near the Virton.

Next the French XLI Corps activates. The units of 61st Division redeploy to guard the Meuse River near...
Revin, though only the 337th Infantry Regiment gets to the river bank. The 61st Division is unwieldy due to low movement rates. The 102nd Division remains passive at Charleville-Mezieres. Then French X Corps activates. That allows 55th Division to occupy Sedan while the Infanterie Nord Afrique moves to Carignan.

German XIX Motorized Corps begins to move onto the map. Elements of the GD Regiment, 1st, 2nd and 10th Panzer Divisions arrive and advance to the Semois River. Those units have no HQ with them as yet; so they are unable to attack. Regardless, 1st Panzer enters Bouillon. The 10th Panzer is in Herbeaumont, and the 2nd Panzer moves to the bank of the Semois near Florenville.

French XVIII Corps activates last and positions itself in the Maginot Line.

**Turn Two**
11 May 1940

Supply isn’t a problem for either player at this time. The French player receives the 246/71 Infantry Regiment as a reinforcement along with another fighter unit. The German receives a fighter and two close support units along with the rest of 1st, 2nd and 10th Panzer Divisions. The 36th Infantry Division is also available.

The French move first again. Their first activation is XLI Corps. Those units are along the northwest, heading for the Meuse River at Revin and Charleville-Mezieres. French 61st Infantry Division occupies Revin and lines the western bank of the Meuse River. French 42nd Colonial Regiment attempts to blow the bridge at Montherme but fails.

German VII Corps begins to march onto the map. The entire formation marches along the road. Those units make contact with the French in Virton, where 36th Division attacks the French 5th Cuirassiers. As a result that French cavalry regiment is eliminated. French XVIII Corps meanwhile maneuvers with little effect. Then German XIX Motorized Corps activates.

The 1st Panzer Division moves into Beatrix. Then 10th Panzer advances, but it runs into traffic congestion near Beatrix with 1st Panzer. The 2nd Panzer crosses the Semois near Rossignol and makes contact with the French on the western side. German 2nd Panzer runs over an exposed French cavalry regiment near the Semois.

The French cavalry near Florenville is forced to retreat in front of 2nd Panzer.
The Decisive Battle of France, May 1940

Fighting erupts at Herbeaumont, where both sides have allocated air units in support. The Luftwaffe has three fighters against one French fighter. All of the fighters abort, which allows the Stukas to barrage. The 15th Infantry Regiment suffers heavy losses and retreats. That allows 10th Panzer to gain a toehold across the Semois.

The French Cavalry Corps activates. There’s no fuel shortage for the mechanized units. The activation allows 12th Cuirassiers to blow the bridge along the Semois north of Sedan. Another one is blown nearby.

Turn 3
12 May 1940

The French add more airpower: one more fighter unit and a close support unit are added. Then X Corps receives 71st HQ and 240th Infantry Regiment.

The 53rd Infantry Division also enters the map. The Germans receive three infantry divisions: 3rd, 23rd and 68th. The 6th Panzer Division also enters the map.

German III Corps enters. The 23rd Infantry Division marches along the road toward Virton, followed by 3rd Division. They’re using the road to march through the forested area, but they encounter traffic congestion.

Next, French XLI Corps moves across the Meuse to slow the German advance. The 265th Regiment advances to Gedinne, which is a critical road junction on the French left. The 337th Infantry Regiment covers the next junction a few miles away. The 61st Division HQ moves to the river with the 248th Infantry Regiment. The 53rd Infantry Division enters and uses road movement to go toward the Meuse.

The Brigade de Spahis cavalry create road blocks near the Semois River. The 102nd does the same. (Road blocks prohibit road movement; so they’re a valuable part of French strategy.

French 2nd Army Cavalry activates and there’s no fuel shortage. The French player focuses on creating more road blocks; otherwise, there’s little action. German 6th Panzer Division enters near St. Hubert and races along the roads until it comes across a French road block. The motorcycle unit hits the obstacle and stops.

German XIX Motorized Corps activates and continues to press into the French position. The 1st Panzer Division encounters a blown bridge near Bouillon. That’s across the Semois, but it doesn’t present too much of a problem. The French have their 5th Armored Cavalry defending. It’s a powerful unit, but the Germans overwhelm it.
Next, 10th Panzer Division attacks the 15th Motorized Infantry Regiment. That French unit is also destroyed with no loss to the Germans. The 2nd Panzer launches an attack against the French position near Florenville. Both sides use air support, and a dogfight breaks out in which the French fighters are destroyed. Then 2nd Panzer rolls over the French 15th Infantry Regiment.

German VII Corps moves against the French position in the Maginot Line. Its 36th Infantry Division attacks the 18th Chasseurs. The French unit has to retreat but has been cut off. It’s therefore eliminated in place. Part of French 71st Division arrives and marches toward the Meuse. They’re leg units, and they move slowly.

**Turn 4**  
**13 May 1940**

Both sides have maintained their supply lines. The French player adds some reinforcements. The Germans...
also receive their remaining reinforcements, including close support air squadrons and fighters as well as three divisions.

French XLI Corps is the first activation. Those units hold the French left and work on laying road blocks. Several are placed that will hinder German movement and supply. Meanwhile 53rd Infantry Division advances along the road toward Charleville-Mezieres. Then French 2nd Cavalry activates, but its 3rd Motorized Regiment suffers from fuel shortages.

German VI Corps enters the map. Though they use road movement, they remain out of contact with the enemy.

Next the French player gets XVIII Corps activated. Those units concentrate in the Maginot Line to provide further strength against the Germans attacking the French right. Then XXIII Corps activates. It only has one unit available at this time; so it moves to the Meuse behind the town of Stenay.

German XXXXI Motorized Corps enters and moves past the Maginot Line and into contact with the 14th Algiers Colonial Regiment. The 8th Panzer Division attacks while 2nd Division holds the road to the rear against any French attempts to cut off the corps. The air combat results in aborted missions; then the panzers go into action. The battle forces the 14th Algiers Infantry Regiment to retreat. Since the Germans have surrounded the unit, it’s destroyed in place.

German VII Corps attacks the French at Montmedy. That’s a Maginot Line area. The Germans force a retreat, but the French survive due to the protection of the fortifications. A French infantry step is lost, however. Then German III Corps advances toward the Meuse, though it’s still out of contact with the French.

French X Corps marches toward Sedan and then prepares to defend it against potential German crossings. The Germans counter with the activation of the XIX Motorized Corps.

The Germans still don’t have enough VP to win the scenario: eight are needed. The 1st Panzer Division is confronted with the French covering the left near Sedan. Two French units defend in a wooded area where they’ve created a roadblock. The 1st Panzer attacks, using up the remaining artillery. They’re also supported by the Luftwaffe. French airpower also provides close support. The battle results in a French retreat, but little in the way of casualties.

The 10th Panzer maneuvers along the Meuse toward Sedan, remaining out of enemy ZOC until it reaches
that place. The 17th Pioneer Battalion deploys a pontoon bridge across the Semois, where the bridge at Bouillon has been destroyed. Then the 10th assaults the city. Neither side has any air support, and the Germans are also out of artillery support. A 3:1 attack is launched, and the French lose two steps. The garrison is destroyed, and the Germans capture Sedan.

That ends the turn and the scenario. The Germans have failed to cross the Meuse anywhere, and so receive no VP for that. The French have lost eight units in combat, however, which gives the Germans eight VP. The French player has not reduced any German mechanized units, and so doesn’t receive any VP. That gives the Germans a plus-eight VP advantage, which is just enough for a victory.