FIRE & MOVEMENT FOLIO GAME EXCLUSIVE RULES
MORTAIN COUNTERATTACK

EXCLUSIVE RULES

10.0 INTRODUCTION

Mortain Counterattack is a simulation of the German counterattack after the Allied breakout from the Normandy beachhead. The 47th Panzer Corps was to drive toward the city of Avranches to cut off George Patton's US Third Army from its supply lines. Under direct orders from Hitler, the Germans had assembled the best of their remaining panzer divisions—2nd, 1st SS, 17th SS and 2nd SS—to break through the Allied lines around Mortain, opening the route to Avranches. Facing these veteran German units is the exhausted but reinforced US 30th Infantry Division. Its defense was centered in Mortain and the nearby Hill 317, the dominant height in the area. A quick German victory would have potentially severe repercussions for the Allies; anything less would be just anther lost German opportunity.

10.1 First Player
The German player is the first player throughout the game (see 3.0).

11.0 REINFORCEMENTS
Enter reinforcements in the hexes listed, or in any hexes within the hex-range listed (inclusive) at the beginning of each respective player's movement phase or mobile movement phase. A unit may move immediately during the same turn it arrives on the map; however, no unit may arrive and end its movement stacked in the same hex with any other unit.

11.1 Quantity of Reinforcements
German reinforcements arrive during game turn 2 (Aug 7th).

GERMANY

GAME TURN ONE	
Unit Type	**Hexes**
3-3-10 (I/2)	3201-3221
3-3-10 (I/304)	3201-3221
1-2-16 (2)	3201-3221
2-3-7 (II/2)	3201-3221
2-3-7 (2/304)	3201-3221
1-5-7 (2)	3201-3221
4-4-10 (I/3)	3201-3221
3-4-10 (38)	3201-3221
2-5-10 (38)	3201-3221
3-3-10 (II/3)	3201-3221
2-2-10 (III/3)	3201-3221
3-3-10 (1/2)	3201-3221
3-3-7 (I/D)	3201-3221
3-4-10 (2)	3201-3221
1-3-16 (2)	3201-3221
3-3-7 (II/D)	3201-3221
3-3-10 (II/F)	3201-3221
3-3-7 (III/F)	3201-3221
1-5-7 (273)	3201-3221
1-2-5 (983)	3201-3221
1-2-5 (984)	3201-3221

Unit Type	Hexes
2-2-7 (2/Ulrich)	3201-3221
3-2-10 (Ernst/Ulrich)	3201-3221
2-2-7 (37/Fick)	3201-3221
3-2-10 (37/Fick)	3201-3221

GAME TURN TWO

Unit Type	Hexes
3-4-10 (I/1)	3201-3221
3-3-10 (I/2)	3201-3221
3-3-10 (II/2)	3201-3221
3-3-10 (III/2)	3201-3221
2-1-7 (Pio)	3201-3221

11.2 Allied Replacements

Once per game, during his own movement phase, the US player automatically receives one replacement, which may be used to bring any eliminated unit onto the map (as depleted), or rebuild any depleted unit already on the map (even if within an enemy ZOC). The US player is not required to utilize his eligible replacement during any particular game turn, but once he does so, no further replacements are afforded to the US player throughout the remainder of the game. An arriving US replacement must arrive on the US supply symbol hex on the northwestern map-edge (0102) but may only arrive if that hex is not presently occupied by any German unit or within any German unit's ZOC.

11.3 German Replacements

Once per game, during his own movement phase, the German player automatically receives one replacement, which may be used to bring any eliminated unit onto the map (as depleted), or rebuild any depleted unit already on the map (even if within an enemy ZOC). The German player is not required to utilize his eligible replacement during any particular game turn, but once he does so, no further replacements are afforded to the German player throughout the remainder of the game. An arriving German replacement must arrive on the German supply symbol hex on the eastern map-edge (3212) but may only arrive if that hex is not presently occupied by any US unit or within any US unit's ZOC.

12.0 LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Each side has a supply symbol along the edge of the map, representing their lines of communication to rear areas off the map. There is one US supply symbol (hex 0102), and one German supply symbol (hex 3212); if any supply symbol hex is currently occupied by an enemy unit, the side that lost its supply symbol will lose half (rounded down) its support fire marker allotment for each

subsequent turn's allotment while that supply symbol hex is occupied by any enemy unit.

13.0 THE START LINE (SET-UP)

The red hex line running across the center of the map represents the general positions of the US forces prior to the German assault, and serves as the set-up boundary for the US side. No Germans set up on the map, as they all enter the map via the east map edge. The US player may only set up his units northwest of the start line, per the following parameters.

US 9th Infantry units (1/39, 2/39, 3/39): Must set up in any hexes north of the See River, west of the set-up line.

US CCB units (1/33, 1/36, 2/33, 2/36, 3/33, 2/119, 703/CCB, Various/CCB (Engineer), Various/CCB): Must set up in any hexes within three (3) hexes of any Cuves town hex(es).

US 30th Infantry units (1/119, 3/119, 1/120, 2/120, 1/117, 2/117, 3/117, 105, 30, 823, 743): Must set up in any hexes northwest of the start line

14.0 UNIQUE TERRAIN

14.1 Hedgerows

Hedgerows are a terrain feature that affect movement and combat normally. In addition, zones of control do not extend into any hedgerow hex unless a road or trail is also present in that hedgerow hex. Any other type of terrain is irrelevant in this regard; for example, a zone of control does not extend into a hex that is a hedgerow and also woods.

Any attacks on an enemy unit in a hedgerow hex must be resolved using the "Hedgerow" terrain type on the Combat Results Table (regardless of which direction the attack is from; Hedgerows in this game, being in-hex instead of hexside, are not nullified by attacks from any other particular direction or multiple directions).

14.2 See River

No movement or attacks are permitted across any See River hexside, except across a hexside that is bridged (assuming that bridge has not been demolished). Bombardment is permitted normally, however, against any unit occupying a hex adjacent to the See River.

15.0 HILL 317

Hill 317 was the dominant height in the area (rising to over 1,000 feet) and was the ideal vantage point to call in artillery and direct airstrikes, especially against enemy positions

that were otherwise obscured by hedgerows. To represent the importance of Hill 317 (hex 2815), the allotment of US support fire indicated on the turn track is doubled during each game turn in which any US unit (even if depleted) began that turn occupying the Hill 317 hex (2815).

> **Example***: If a US unit is present on Hill 317 at the beginning of the "Aug. 6th" game turn, the allotment of US support fire for that turn is thus increased from "6" to 12 instead.*

This doubling of the US support fire allotment applies throughout each game turn that any US unit begins that turn in hex 2815, even if that occupying US unit is eliminated or subsequently departs that hex during that same game turn. A doubling of the US support fire allotment does not automatically carry over into any subsequent turn (unless a US unit is present in hex 2815 at the beginning of each subsequent game turn).

If the US support fire allotment has been halved per 12.0, that *halved* allotment is doubled per 15.0 normally.

16.0 SUPPORT FIRE RANDOM DRAW

Instead of the normal procedure of selecting Support Fire markers (per rule 8.1), each player must draw his eligible allotment of Support Fire markers *randomly* from his own Support Fire chit pool.

17.0 THE 116TH PANZER DIVISION

The commander of the 116th Panzer Division (Gen. von Schwerin) refused to order an attack in support of the German assault towards Avranches, thereby disjointing the entire start of the offensive. Moreover, the commander of 116th had been ordered to detach a battalion of his few remaining tanks to join up with the 2nd Panzer Division, but refused to do so, delaying the jump-off timetable. As such, during the first game turn (only), no German unit of any type may end its movement adjacent (regardless of ZOC) to any other German unit.

This penalty only applies to the German player during the Aug. 6th game turn, and is never reinstated thereafter.

> **Designer's Note:** *The 116th Panzer Division is not featured in the game. The division was reported as being "ridiculously understrength," and did npt participate in the offensive until General Schwerin was relieved and replaced. When 116th did begin to attack, all surprise had been lost, and no progress was achieved.*

18.0 SURPRISE

During the first game turn (Aug. 6th), no US unit may move from its current set-up hex.

19.0 VICTORY CONDITIONS

To win the game, the German player must exit at least five full-strength mobile units (any German unit with printed movement allowance of 10 or more) off of any west edge map hex(es), as well as capture all three Mortain town hexes (2514, 2515 and 2414). To qualify as "captured," a German unit must either currently occupy or be the last to have occupied hexes 2514, 2515 and 2414. Each captured Mortain hex must not be within any enemy unit's zone of control.

> **Note:** *German units may not exit the map as a result of any retreat combat result; a retreating unit doesn't qualify as an exited unit for purposes of determining victory.*

If the German player fails to achieve both victory conditions before the last game turn, the game is a US victory.

Designer's Note: *These victory conditions would not have culminated in a German operational victory, historically (that is to say, the Germans could not have reached—much less captured—Avranches, even if they had swept aside all resistance in the Mortain area), but a German victory in the game is gauged as having at least defeated US Combat Command B's attempt to stop the offensive.*

19.1 Exiting the Map

A German unit that exits the map must expend movement points to enter an imaginary hex presumed to be adjacent to the map's edge. The terrain is assumed to be identical to the terrain in the German unit's last hex before it exits the map, and it must pay the movement point cost in the imaginary hex as in that last occupied hex. A unit moving along a trail or road leading off of the map is assumed to be moving into an imaginary trail or road hex, per the road movement cost.

A German unit may only exit the map during the German Movement or Mobile Movement Phase, not during any combat phase.

Any US unit's zone of control is assumed to be projected into the imaginary hex normally for purposes of movement.

Once any German unit exits the map, it may not return for any reason.

19.2 US Victory

The US player wins the game by simply preventing the German player from achieving his victory conditions as outlined above (19.0).

20.0 SCENARIOS

Mortain Counterattack has one historic scenario of the German attempt to overrun the American positions in the Mortain region.

Set-up (Germans): No German units are set up on the map; all German units enter via the east edge of the map.

Set-up (US): The US player sets up second, and he must set up per the stipulations of 13.0.

21.0 GAME NOTES

The German plan, conceived by Hitler personally, had no chance to achieve the ambitious goal of cutting off Patton's Third Army supply lines at Avranches. Ultra intelligence had tipped off the Americans about the impending assault, and Gen. Bradley had held back two divisions to the west in the event of a German penetration. Even assuming the Germans had swept aside the 30th Infantry Division, they would have eventually encountered the entirety of 3rd Armored Division. Assuming the Germans could have overrun the 3rd without enduring onerous casualties, they would have eventually encountered the 4th Armored Division in defensive positions around Avranches.

Besides this, the German columns would have been harried incessantly by prowling Allied fighter-bombers, and Gen. Bradley could have brought other units into the area if needed. Even if the four participating German panzer divisions (2nd, 1st SS, 2nd SS, and 17th SS) had been at full strength, the prospects were dubious because the nature of the offensive was a deep penetration strike, meaning there were flanks and supply lines to protect, diminishing the Germans' strength in direct proportion to the depth of the penetration. On paper, the odds may have appeared favorable to Hitler, but the panzer divisions were so understrength as to be nothing more than the equivalent of a *kampfgruppe*. Only the Panther tanks gave the Germans any kind of advantage at all, but this was more than offset by Allied air cover.

In game terms, this scenario simulates a foregone conclusion. A German victory within the scope of the game would have had no prospects to actually achieve the capture of Avranches, but the German player is nevertheless provided with the challenge of outperforming his historic counterpart. This may not be too difficult when you consider the Germans' poor showing at Mortain. They only penetrated about six or seven miles, and never

captured Hill 314 (allowing the Americans to direct artillery with exacting precision). Considering that the panzer battalions were already well below strength and being steadily depleted by Typhoons and P-47s, the German excursion was preordained to fail. However, the German plan was supposed to account for this by relying on a heavy fog that had rolled in the night before to prevent any such harassment. Unfortunately for the Germans, the fog burned off much earlier than anticipated, exposing the offensive to constant strafing. To make matters worse, one of the German armored regiments was in column along a road and became delayed when an Allied plane that was shot down by AA fire crashed into the column's lead panzer and blocked the road (just one example of what an unlucky die roll may represent in real life).

With regards to the design itself, it's always a challenge to simulate a battle with no real prospects for success for one side. Even if the fog had lain heavy throughout most of the day, driving on to Avranches was still never going to happen. Ironically, a more interesting game may be a hypothetical scenario that presumes that the four German panzer divisions (five if you include the 116th, which did not participate) are not squandered at Mortain, but are instead used in a defensive role (where you can imagine how much more effective well-emplaced Panthers would be). This is not a war-winning alternative by any measure, but it may have made the Allied liberation of France more costly, or given the German spearheads during the Ardennes Offensive more punch. Of course, this also assumes the Germans didn't fritter away their strength elsewhere, such as at Arracourt, as they often did.

Such alternative scenarios would be speculative particularly because there is no definitive source as to how many German panzers participated in the Mortain counterattack. Even the Germans didn't know precisely how many panzers were available due to the variances of combat from day to day. Still, intensive research was devoted to this game (including a very detailed study by the US Army), and *Mortain Counterattack* probably features the most accurate accounting of unit strength of any other scenario on the subject. The US order-of-battle is particularly accurate, since detailed information about American units—even the ad hoc formation that comprised Combat Command B—was easy to obtain. In the end, all of this extensive detail serves to underscore the futility of the German operation, and it prompts us to wonder how much longer the war would have been prolonged if the Germans had not squandered their forces in this and other forlorn counterattacks.

—*Eric Harvey*

INTEGRATED COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

Terrain Type	Combat Differential (attacking strength minus defending strength)											
Peak (Hill 317), Woods-Hill	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10				
Hill (non-woods), See River (bridged)	-2	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10			
Town, Woods, River (non-bridged)	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10		
Hedgerow, River (bridged)	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10	
Road, Trail	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10
Die Roll	Result											
1	(A)	A3	A2		Ex	Ex	D2	D2	D2	D3	De	De
2	(A)	(A)	A3	A2		Ex	Ex	Ex	D2	D2	D3	De
3	(A)	(A)	(A)	A3	A2		Ex	Ex	Ex	D2	D2	D3
4	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	A3	A2		Ex	Ex	Ex	D2	D2
5	Ae	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	A3	A2		Ex	Ex	Ex	D2
6	Ae	Ae	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	A1		Ex	Ex	Ex

De = The defending unit is eliminated.

D3 = The defending unit must retreat three hexes (or deplete one unit of the defending player's choice, instead; see 7.8).

D2 = The defending unit must retreat two hexes (or deplete one unit of the defending player's choice, instead; see 7.8).

Ex = One attacking unit and one defending unit must be flipped to their depleted side (or eliminated if already depleted).

A1 = The attacking unit(s) must retreat one hex (or deplete one unit of the attacking player's choice, instead; see 7.8)
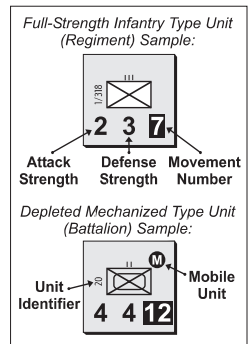
A2 = The attacking unit(s) must retreat two hexes (or deplete one unit of the attacking player's choice, instead; see 7.8)

A3 = The attacking unit(s) must retreat three hexes (or deplete one unit of the attacking player's choice, instead; see 7.8)

(A) = One attacking unit must be depleted (or eliminated if already depleted).

Ae = All attacking units are eliminated.

• = No effect.

Full-Strength Infantry Type Unit (Regiment) Sample:

1/318 — Attack Strength **2**, Defense Strength **3**, Movement Number **7**

Depleted Mechanized Type Unit (Battalion) Sample:

Unit Identifier — **4 4 12** — Mobile Unit (M)