

Celles After-Action Report

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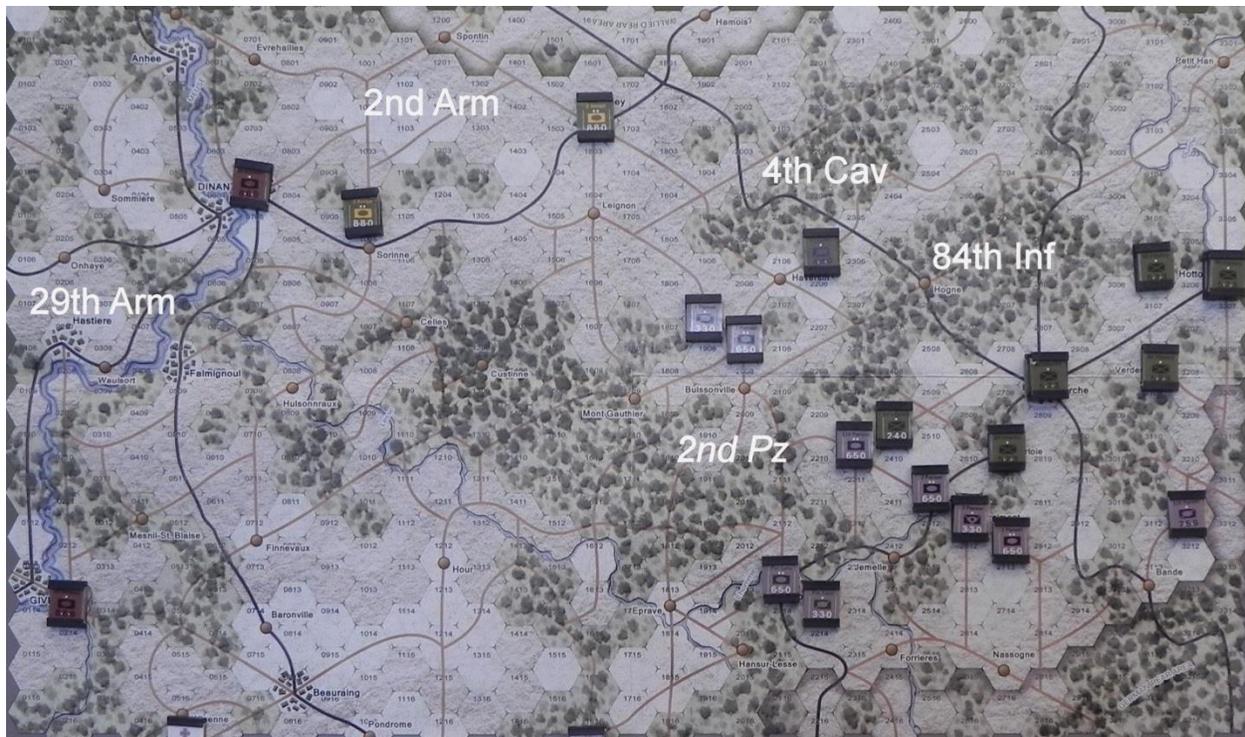
This is an after-action report of a solitaire play-through of Revolution Games' *Celles*, about the German attempt to cross the Meuse River during the Ardennes offensive, December 23-27, 1944. This document is meant to be read along with "Race to the Meuse and Celles," my comparison of those two games.

December 23 Night

2nd Panzer gets the first activation. They move hell for leather down the road towards the Meuse.

The Allies draw their Extra Move chit and then 2nd Armor (the only formation that can activate this turn). The two entering 2nd Armor units are limited to 6 movement points. One occupies Ciney to keep *2nd Panzer* away from the highway, and the other moves towards Sorinne but doesn't get all the way there. The Allies use their extra move to shift one of the 84th Infantry battalions out of Mariole in order to throw a ZoC onto the road that the *2nd Panzer* forces are taking (which will be only a slight impediment in this game).

The Germans draw all of their action chits before they get to activate *Panzer Lehr*. They can't use the replacement chit, because they have suffered no losses yet. *Panzer Lehr* makes use of the combat chit and the fact that it is a night turn to eliminate the 84th Infantry battalion in Rochefort and occupy the town. The Germans use their Extra Move to activate a *116th Panzer* unit, which moves adjacent to the infantry unit that the Allies had just moved, in hopes of setting up an attack next turn.

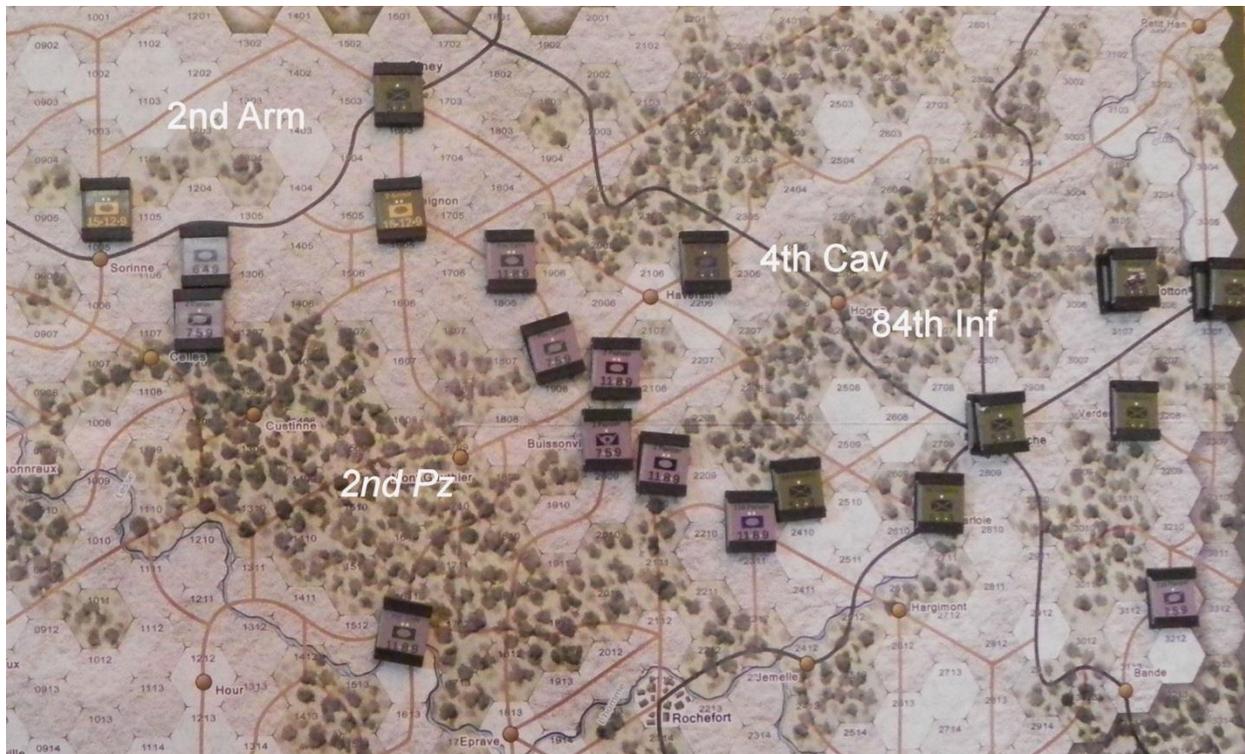


End of December 23 night

December 24 Day

Americans get the initiative. They draw 84th Infantry, which gives the one that moved last turn the opportunity to flip to its active side before being attacked by *116th Panzer*. They also get their trucks, which they assign to the battalion in reserve west of Hotton. Other than that, they just sit tight, rather than move and expose their flipped sides to German attack.

The Germans draw *2nd Panzer*. They continue their drive for the Meuse. The spearheads wind up just east of Sorinne/Celles, while the follow-on units are in the vicinity of Buissonville.



2nd Panzer on its way

The Americans draw all of their tactical chits before finally drawing 4th Cavalry's action chit. They use their replacement chit to put the infantry battalion back on the board. Given that the other locations are already stacked to the maximum, they place it at Ciney. The Americans use the air chit to attack the lead *2nd Panzer* armored unit near Sorinne, which loses a step. (The play of this chit also reduces German actions available by one.) They use their extra move chit to move the 2nd Armor unit in Ciney to Leignon, to block the road junction. They then exercise the rule that allows a substitute activation. Instead of activating 4th Cavalry, they activate the same 2nd Armor unit again, turning it back onto its active side. This will allow it better to withstand any attempts by the Germans to dislodge it. The downside of this is that the 2nd Armor unit just north of Sorinne is still on its moved side, but at least it's in somewhat better terrain. The Americans still have their combat chit available if the Germans do attack something this turn.

The Germans have one more activation (after the air chit's reduction). They get *Panzer Lehr*. This unit is tasked with screening the rear of *2nd Panzer* as it makes its dash. So it goes pounding up the now-congested road between Buissonville and Leignon. The entering reinforcement unit detours a bit to the west to avoid the traffic.

December 24 Night

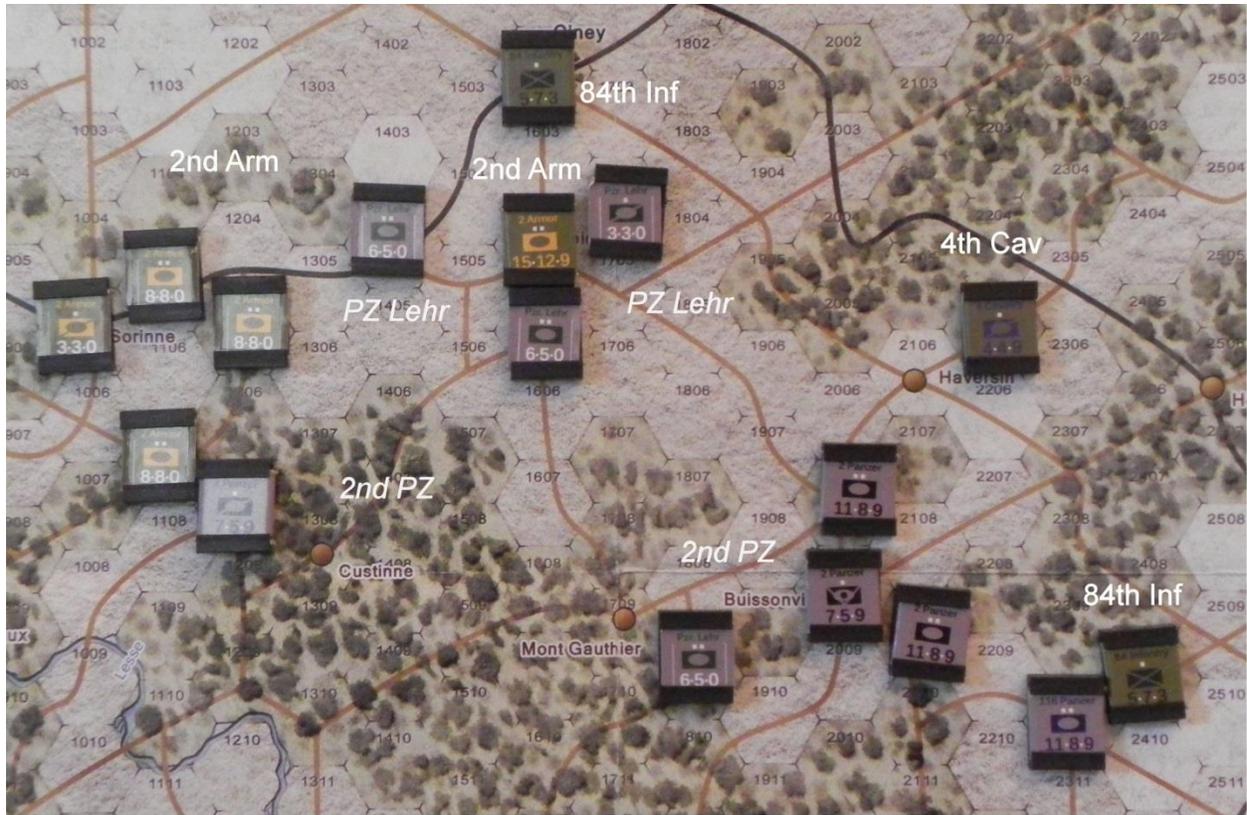
Even though it's a night turn, the Americans get the initiative. They draw the 2nd Armor activation chit, which allows them to bring in their reinforcement units (two armor and one recon). One of these moves to the hex northeast of the reduced *2nd Panzer* unit near Sorinne. Then the armor unit that had been just north of that village moves to attack the *2nd Panzer*, supported by the unit that just moved in. It's a 5:1 attack into woods, but it just results in a

retreat. The German unit moves two hexes south, into the same hex as its division's recon unit (just east of Celles). Another of the entering 2nd Armor units occupies Celles, while the recon unit occupies Sorinne. The 2nd Armor unit that started in Leignon does not move and so stays on its unactivated side.



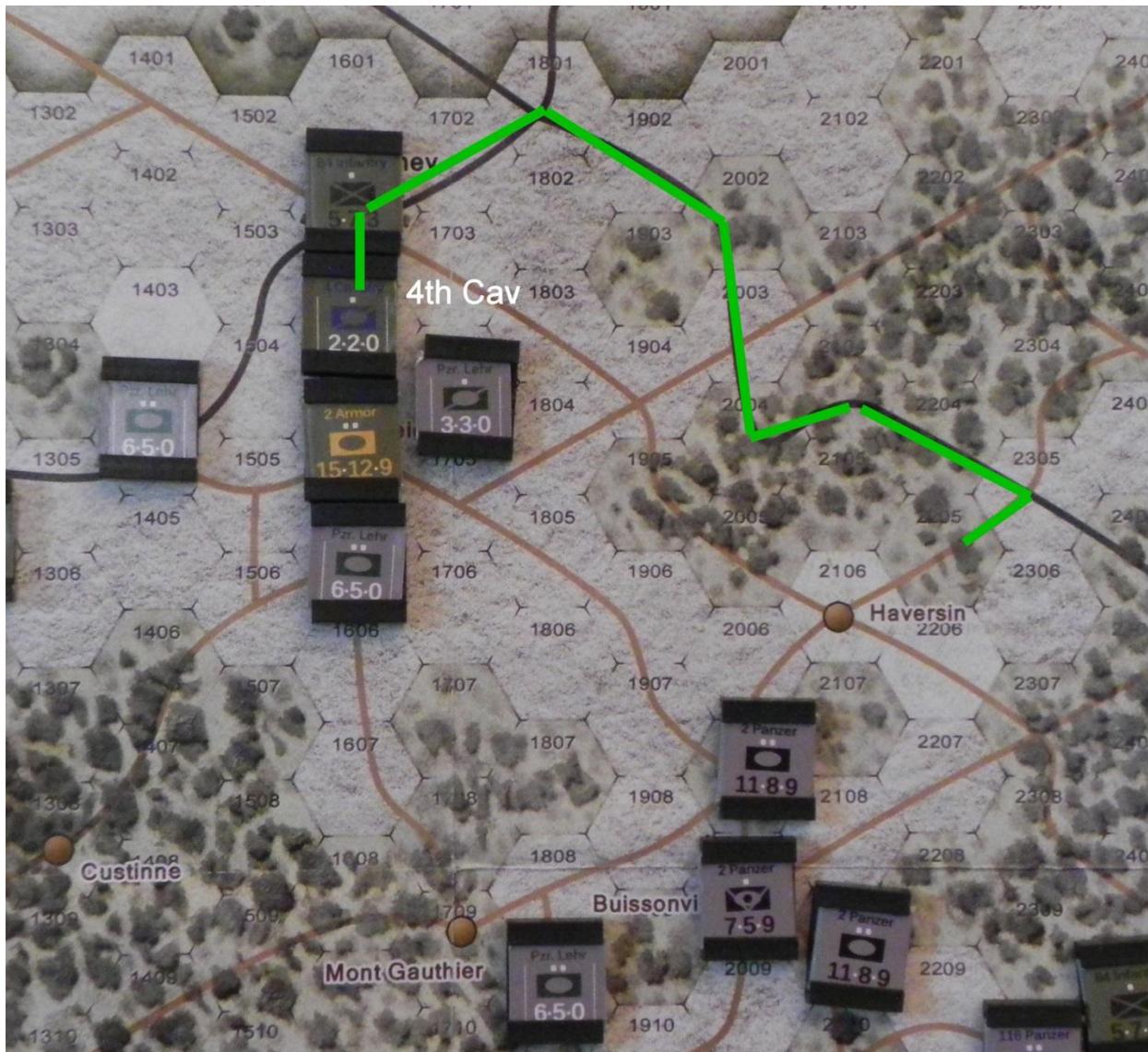
End of 2nd Armor Activation

The Germans draw the *Panzer Lehr* chit. This allows them to bring on their reinforcement unit, although it has to cover too much country to be of much use this turn. The two armor and one recon units already on the board move to surround Leignon, which will put the 2nd Armor unit there out of supply next turn and help to screen *2nd Panzer's* anticipated dash for the Meuse.



End of *Panzer Lehr* first activation

The Americans draw 4th Cavalry. It swings along the highway through Ciney and then off-road to the south in order to reestablish the supply line to Leignon.



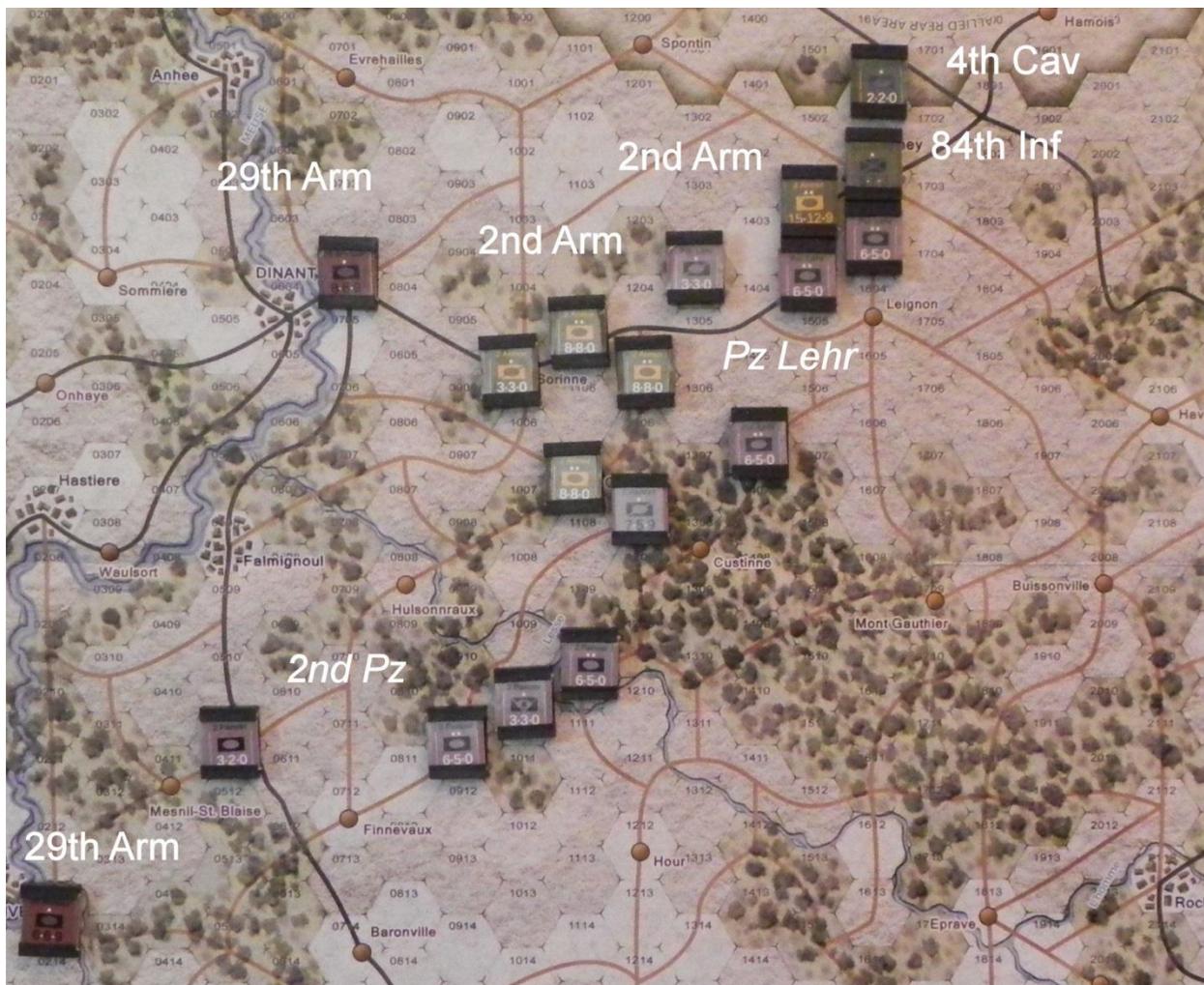
4th Cavalry activation

The Germans draw the second *Panzer Lehr* chit. The reinforcing unit move adjacent to Leignon. The unit that had been northwest of the village moves adjacent and mounts a medium attack, supported by the other two armor units. 2nd Armor suffers a retreat result and is pushed out. Fortunately, 4th Cavalry provides a retreat path through the enemy ZoCs. One of the inactive German units enters the village, while the active German unit pursues 2nd Armor. Then it's 4th Cavalry's turn for attention, as the German unit in Leignon activates and mounts a heavy attack. Even though it's 5:1 with bonuses for night attack and heavy, the result is only a retreat. 4th Cavalry retreats north through Ciney. The activation ends by having the German recon unit sweep around the south of the action into the woods west of Ciney, to discourage any rescue attempts by the bulk of 2nd Armor on the next turn.



Panzer Lehr 2nd activation

The Germans draw Extra Move, Replacements, and then *2nd Panzer*. They can't use the replacement chit, because the only depleted unit is stacked with *2nd Panzer's* recon unit outside Celles, and the replacement would cause overstacking. Using strategic movement, most of *2nd Panzer* streams towards the Meuse along the southern road, bypassing *2nd Armor*. The Germans use Extra Move to activate a *Panzer Lehr* unit so that it can move west and maintain contact between that division and *2nd Panzer*.



2nd Panzer activation

December 25 Day

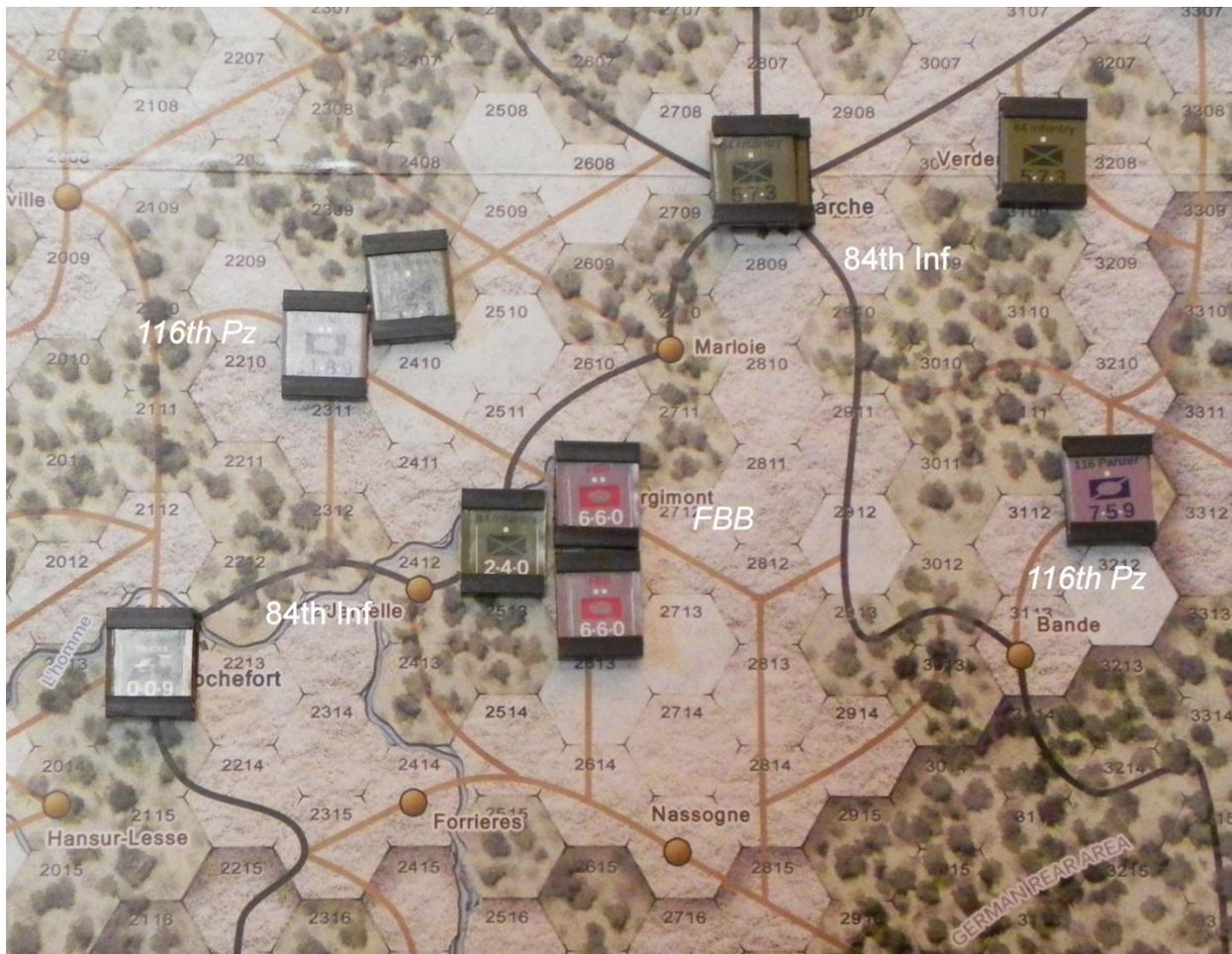
Things are starting to shift in the Allies' favor, as they now get five activations to the German three. The Allies also get the initiative.

The Allies draw the 84th Infantry chit. They bring in their reinforcement battalion at Givet, with the idea that this will allow the British unit there to move north and join its fellow. The rest of the division, out in the east, works to block the road net for German reinforcements. The truck-mounted infantry in hex 3006 zooms down the highway to Rochefort. The battalion at Mariole occupies the woods between Hargimont and Jemelle. That's all that can move, as the 84th is limited to moving three units per activation.



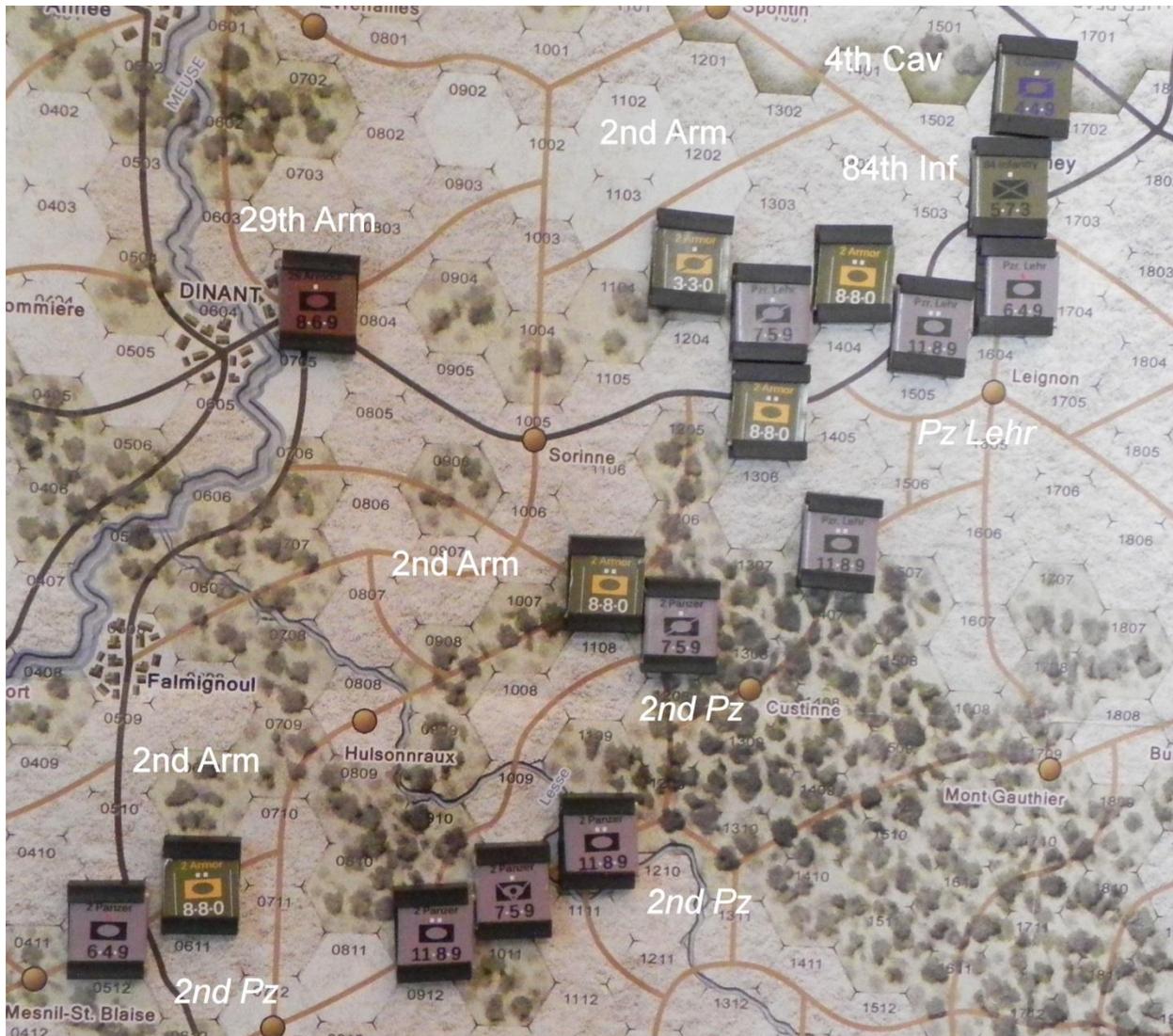
84th Infantry activation

The Germans activate *Fuhrer Begleit Brigade*, which enters the map from the east edge. They advance as far as Hargimont and threaten to blow away the newly moved infantry, but they don't have enough movement points to mount an attack this turn.



Furher Begleit Brigade Activation

The Allies draw their air, replacements, and combat chits, and then 2nd Armor. They immediately play the air chit, which reduces German actions by one and allows an air attack. The target of the attack is the *Panzer Lehr* unit just south of Ciney, which loses a step. The division's recon and two armor units surround *Panzer Lehr's* recon, but the result of the attack is no effect. Another armor races after the *2nd Panzer* unit approaching Mesnil-St. Blaise, but, again the result is no effect. This leaves the division in a precarious position, with its units strung out and on their activated sides.



2nd Armor activation

The Allies worst fears come true, as the *2nd Panzer* activates. The bulk of the division sweeps around the 2nd Armor unit outside Mesnil-St Blaise. The Allies use their combat chit to soften the blow, but the result is still a step loss and retreat. Because the defender must retreat through an enemy ZoC, it is disrupted as well. Then the remaining unactivated *2nd Panzer* unit pursues the retreating unit, attacks, and eliminates it. It then occupies Falmignoul, becoming the first German unit to reach the Meuse.

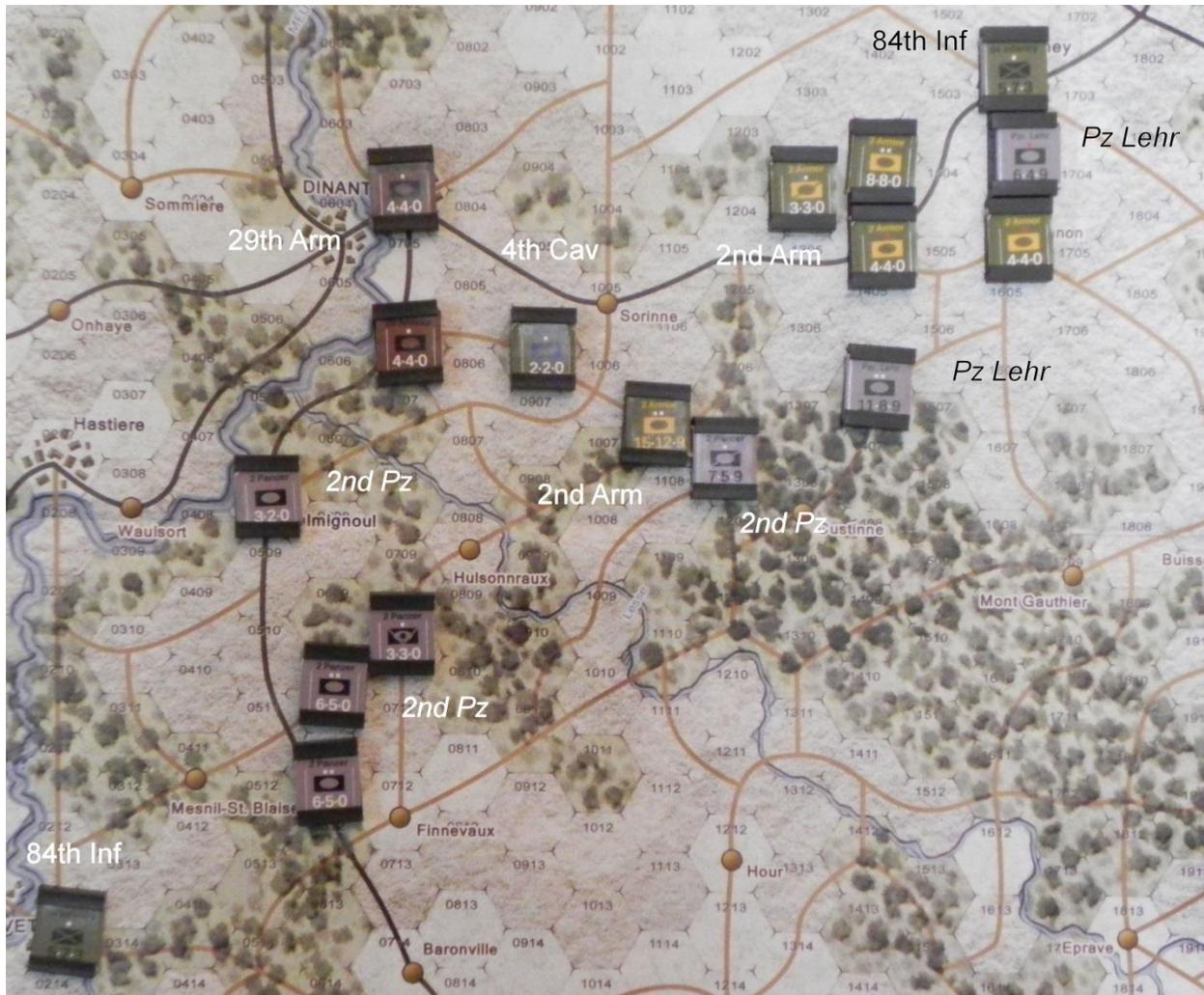


2nd Panzer activation

Fortunes change again dramatically, as the Allies draw the extra move chit and then the second 2nd Armor chit. All units are flipped back to their inactive sides, and the replacements chit is used to place the just-eliminated unit at Ciney (in reduced state). That unit sweeps around the roads and winds up at Legion, behind the *Panzer Lehr*. Meanwhile, the units that had been attacking the *Panzer Lehr* recon during their previous activation are in a position to make a heavy attack on that unit (lead by 2nd Armor's recon), and this time they eliminate it. One of the armor units that were involved with that attack then moves and conducts a medium attack on the full-strength *Panzer Lehr* armor southwest of Ciney, aided by another full strength armor and the reduced unit in Legion. The result is a step loss on both sides. However, the remaining unactivated 2nd Armor unit in the scrum then initiates a heavy attack on the reduced unit, aided by the two activated units. This is finally too much, and the German unit is completely eliminated. The Allies then use the extra move chit to activate 4th Cavalry, which moves from the Allied rear area to just north of Sorienne.

Since the Germans no longer have any activations, the Allies draw again, this time getting 4th Cavalry. The unit flips back to its inactive side and moves to the woods southwest of Sorienne in order to protect the flank of the 2nd Armor unit at Celles.

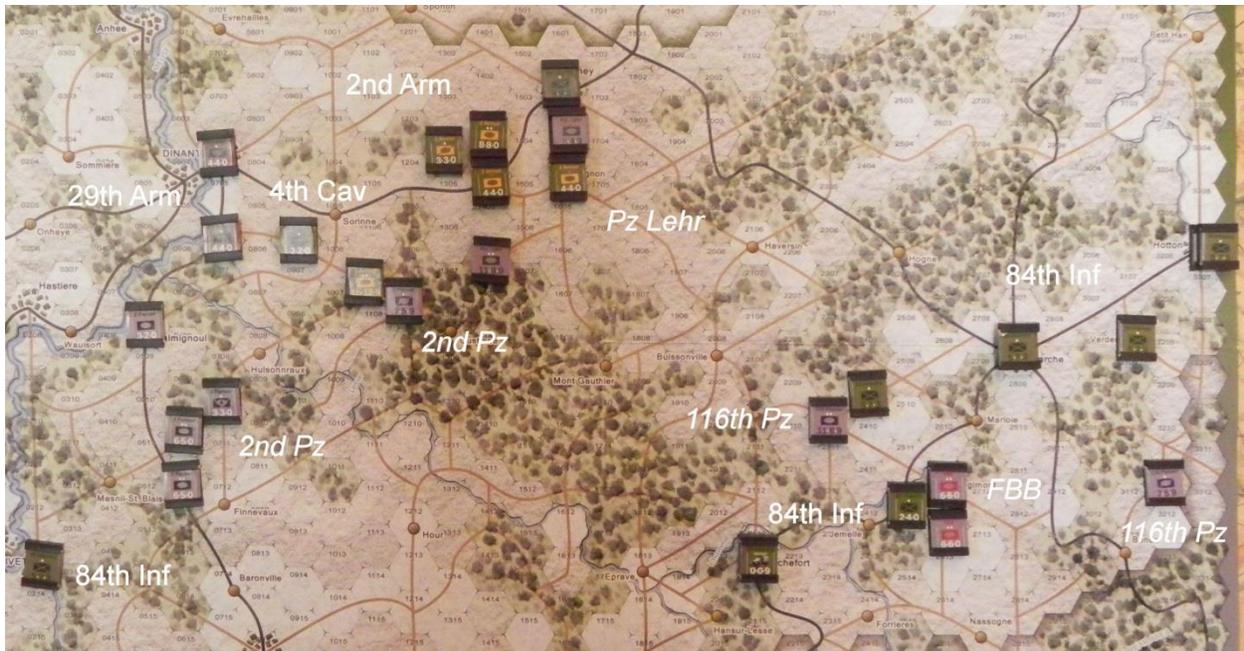
The final chit is the British 29th Armour. The unit in Givet uses the highway west of the Meuse to move up to Dinant. The one in Dinant moves south into the woods in order to link up with 4th Cavalry.



After 29th Armor activation

At the end of the turn, the Germans gain one victory point for their unit adjacent to the Meuse.

This turn really illustrates the fluidity of this game. Units can attack several times, as long as they activate only once. Under the right circumstances, as in the attacks on *Panzer Lehr*, defenders can be hammered by several attacks in a row without the opportunity to recover. Note also that the Germans are building up a backlog of reinforcements offmap, because they haven't drawn the chits to bring them on.



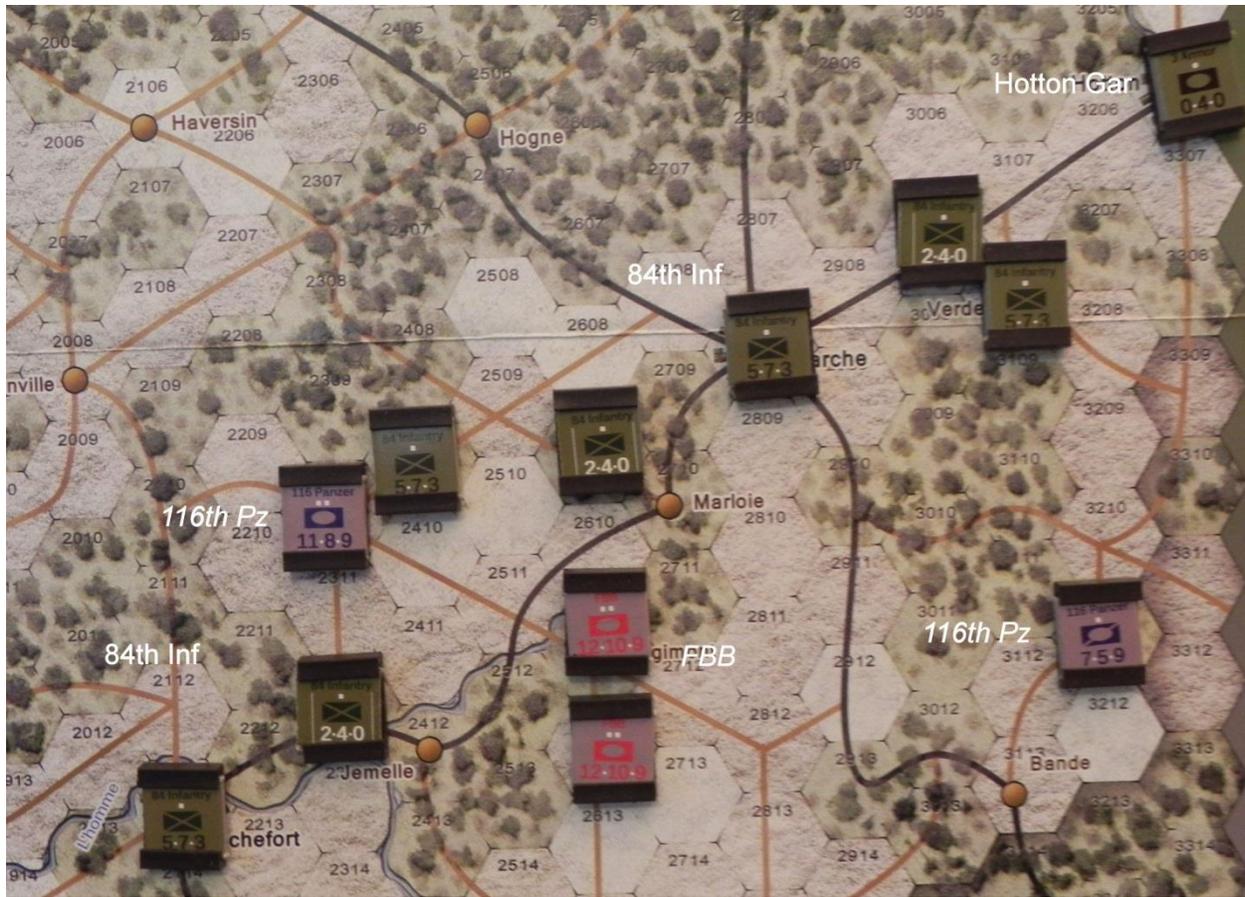
End of Dec 25 day turn

December 25 Night

It's a night turn, which favors the Germans. They get five activations to the Allied three. The Germans have one unit out of supply, the reduced *Panzer Lehr* between Ciney and Leignon. The Germans get the initiative.

The Germans draw the *Panzer Lehr* chit. With only one full-strength unit and another reduced and out of supply, there isn't a lot that this division can do. The full strength unit attacks the reduced 2nd Armor unit in Leignon in an effort to free its trapped comrade. The ratio is 3:2, with the German night bonus balancing the village terrain. The result is a step loss on both sides. The 2nd Armor unit is eliminated. The now-reduced *Panzer Lehr* unit uses the rest of its movement allowance to pull back to Custinne, rather than trying to hold Leignon and face the rest of 2nd Armor. The out of supply *Panzer Lehr* unit, now freed, also moves to Custinne.

The Americans draw 84th Infantry. Since the unit in Rochefort is probably going to stay put for a while, the truck counter is placed on the turn record track so that it can be redeployed next turn. The unit northeast of Jemelle pulls back to northwest of that village, in order to deny *Fuhrer Begleit* the opportunity for a heavy attack against it. One of the units in Marche moves to northwest of Mariorie in order to plug a hole in the line. The unit in Hotton moves down the road in order to serve as a more centrally placed reserve.



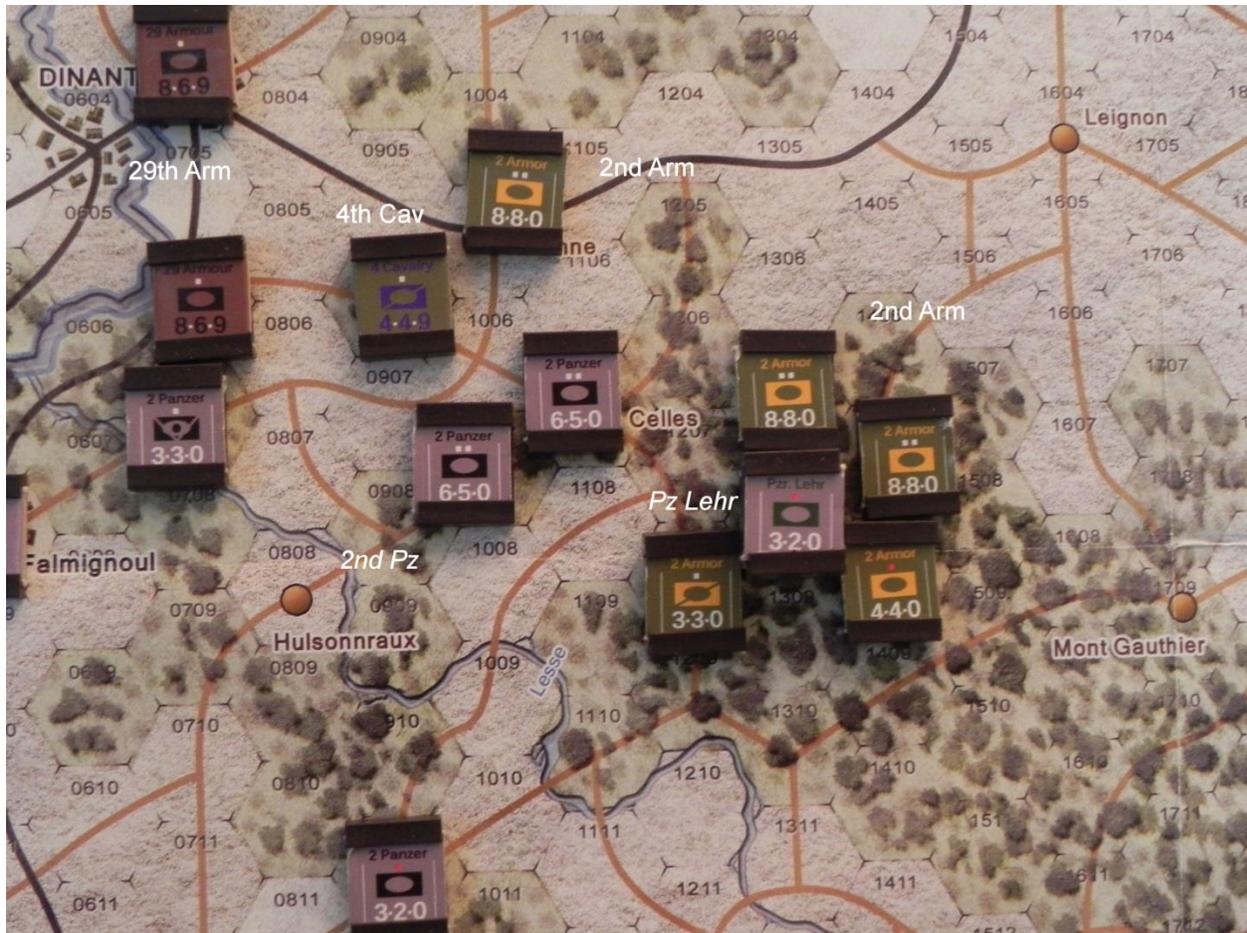
84 Infantry activation

The Germans activate *2nd Panzer*. They have a unit adjacent to the Meuse at Falmignoul, which is good, but they have to do something to blunt 2nd Armor's drive from the northeast. Two armor units and the recon unit drive 2nd Armor out of Celles, and then the recon pulls back to act as reserve. Meanwhile, the antitank unit moves northeast of Falmignoul to screen it from the British.



2nd Panzer activation

Next comes 2nd Armor's activation. They concentrate on the remains of *Panzer Lehr*, throwing their recon unit around the German's open right flank to seal Custinne from the rear while the bulk of the division assaults from the north and east. However, the die roll is terrible, and the result of the attack is no effect. The final reinforcing unit enters from the north and moves to Sorinne.



2nd Armor activation

2nd Panzer gets its second activation. Its two remaining full-strength armor units turn against *2nd Armor's* recon unit, eliminating it. One *Panzer Lehr* unit that assisted in the combat advances southwest out of Custinne. The division then moves south of the Lesse, with one unit occupying Hour to discourage another flanking sweep from the Americans.



2nd Panzer second activation

The tables turn again as 2nd Armor gets another activation. One unit launches a heavy attack against the remaining *Panzer Lehr* unit in Custinne, eliminating it. A second attack against the other unit merely retreats it behind *2nd Panzer*'s lines. (It's also disrupted, but it will be able to recover before the Americans can move against it.)



2nd Armor second activation

The Germans next draw the *116th Panzer* chit, which finally lets them bring on the reinforcements from the previous turn. Because those won't be available for an attack this turn, they concentrate on setting up an assault on Marche for the next one.



116th Panzer activation

Since the Americans have used up all their activations, the Germans draw again. They get their replacement chit. (This is the only tactical chit drawn in this whole turn!) Then they pull *Panzer Lehr*. The replacement chit goes to rebuild the remaining *Panzer Lehr* unit to full strength, but it's still disrupted. The Germans choose to use the activation chit to reactivate one of the *116th Panzer* chits and stage an early attack on Marche. Although the night combat bonus and heavy attack modifier cancel out the effect of the town, all they do is disrupt themselves.

With all the activations used, we now go to the recovery phase, where all of the units are flipped back to their unused sides and the disruptions are removed. *9th Panzer* is still offmap, having failed to activate two turns in a row.

The Germans gain one more victory point for their unit on the Meuse.



End of December 25 night turn

December 26 Day

This is a day turn. The Americans get 5 activations, and the Germans get 3. All of *9th Panzer* is now waiting to enter as reinforcements. *2nd Panzer* now has only 1 activation chit in the cup. Despite it being a day turn, the Germans win the initiative die roll.

The Germans draw the Extra Move chit, which they set aside to use later. Then they draw *9th Panzer*. The division's four units enter at 3316, on the southeast corner of the map, and stream up the road. They are too far in back to make contact this turn (no strategic movement for Germans in the daytime).

The Americans draw 2nd Armor. In a slam-bang attack, two units launch heavy attacks against a single *2nd Panzer* unit. The first results in mutual step losses. The second retreats and disrupts the German unit. Meanwhile, a reduced American unit launches an attack at the depleted German unit holding the right flank. However, the Americans are forced to retreat.



2nd Armor activation

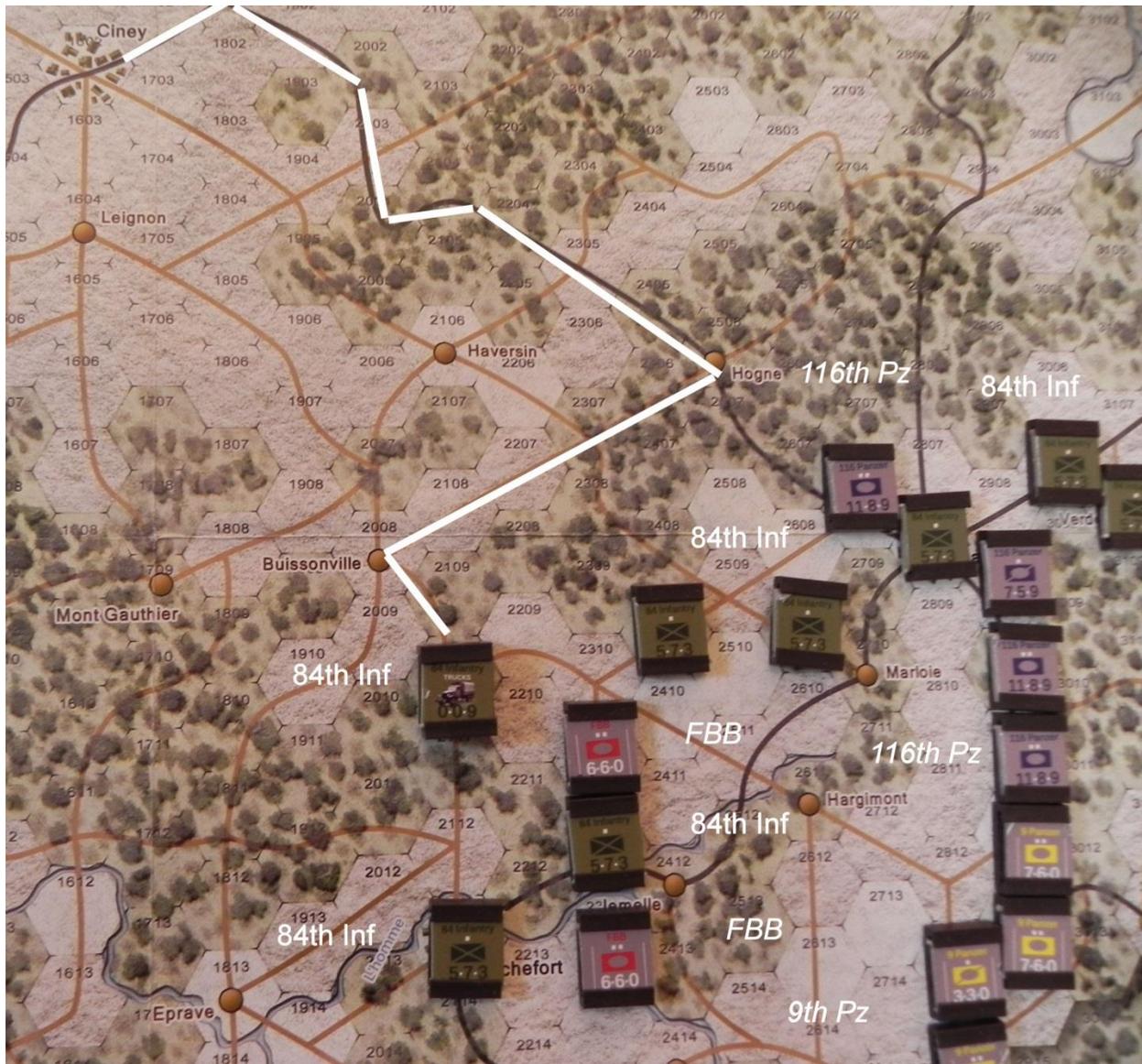
The Germans activate *Fuhrer Begleit*. They are trying to prise the door open so that *9th Panzer* can go sailing through. The unit at Hargrimont infiltrates behind the 84th Infantry battalion northwest of Jemelle. The second unit of the division moves directly south of the enemy, thus surrounding it. However, that uses up all the movement points, and so it can't attack yet.



FBB activation

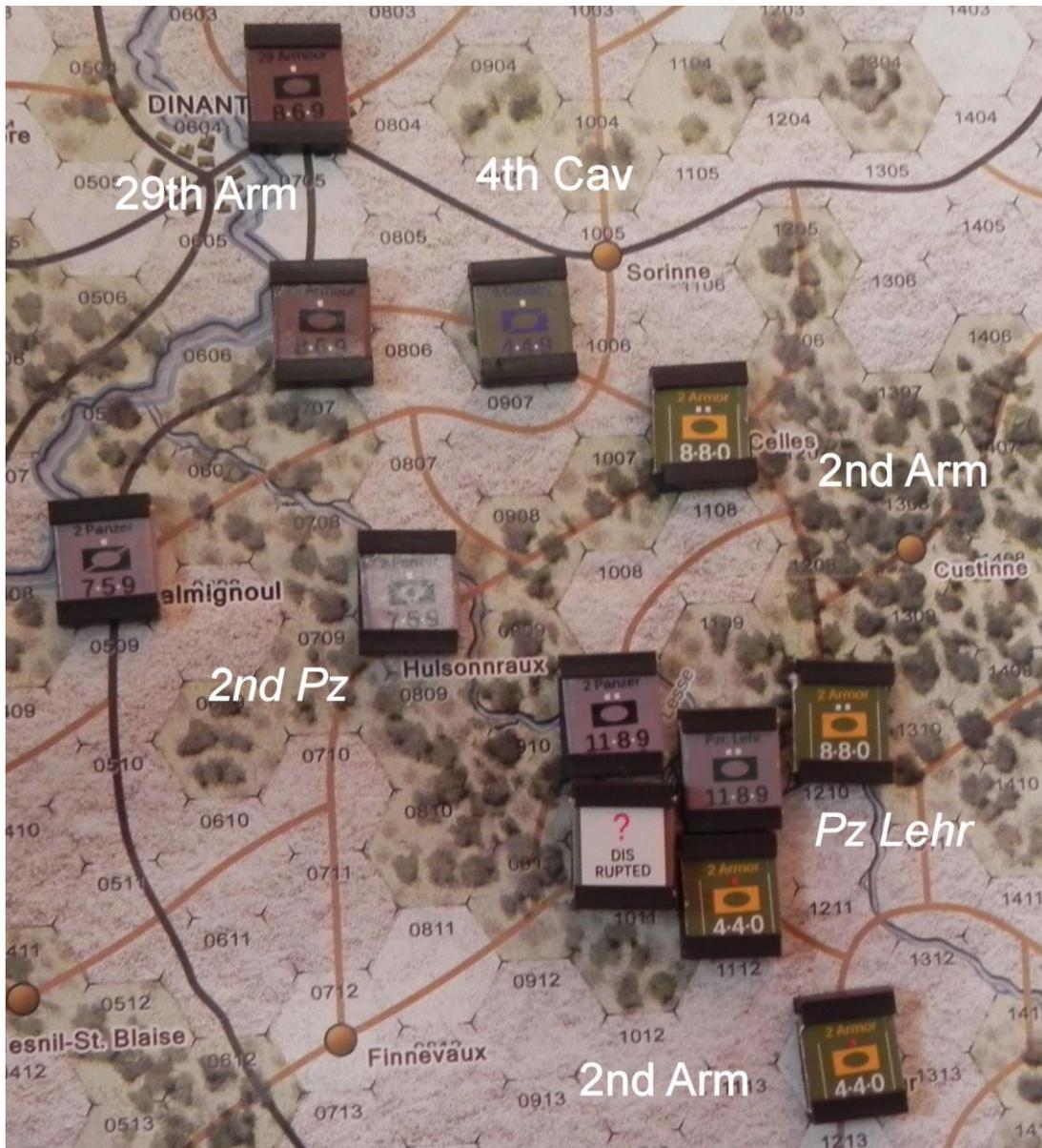
The Americans draw Replacements, Extra Move, and then 2nd Armor (again). They use their replacements to bring one 2nd Armor unit back to full strength.

They use the Extra Move to assign the trucks to the 84th Infantry in Ciney and run it down past Buissonville so that the *Furher Begleit* unit that infiltrated in the last activation is now itself surrounded by ZoCs. The reasoning is that a) if the Germans don't use their extra move to complete that *FB* assault, then that unit will be vulnerable to an infantry attack if the division can activate, or b) if the Germans do activate and *FB* unit with the extra move, at least that one will be in trouble if it has to retreat.



American extra move

The depleted 2nd Armor unit on the left of the line skirts around its German counterpart to make contact from the south. Then the newly-replenished unit hits that unit from the north. The result is mutual step losses, which depletes the Americans again but eliminates the Germans. The inactive American unit occupies the village of Hour while the active one moves northwest, placing it south of *Panzer Lehr*'s remaining unit. Then the full-strength 2nd Armor unit east of *Panzer Lehr* launches a heavy attack, but the result is no effect. Finally, the remaining uncommitted 2nd Armor unit attacks the *2nd Panzer AT* unit at Huissonnraux, but it is repulsed and retreats to Celles.



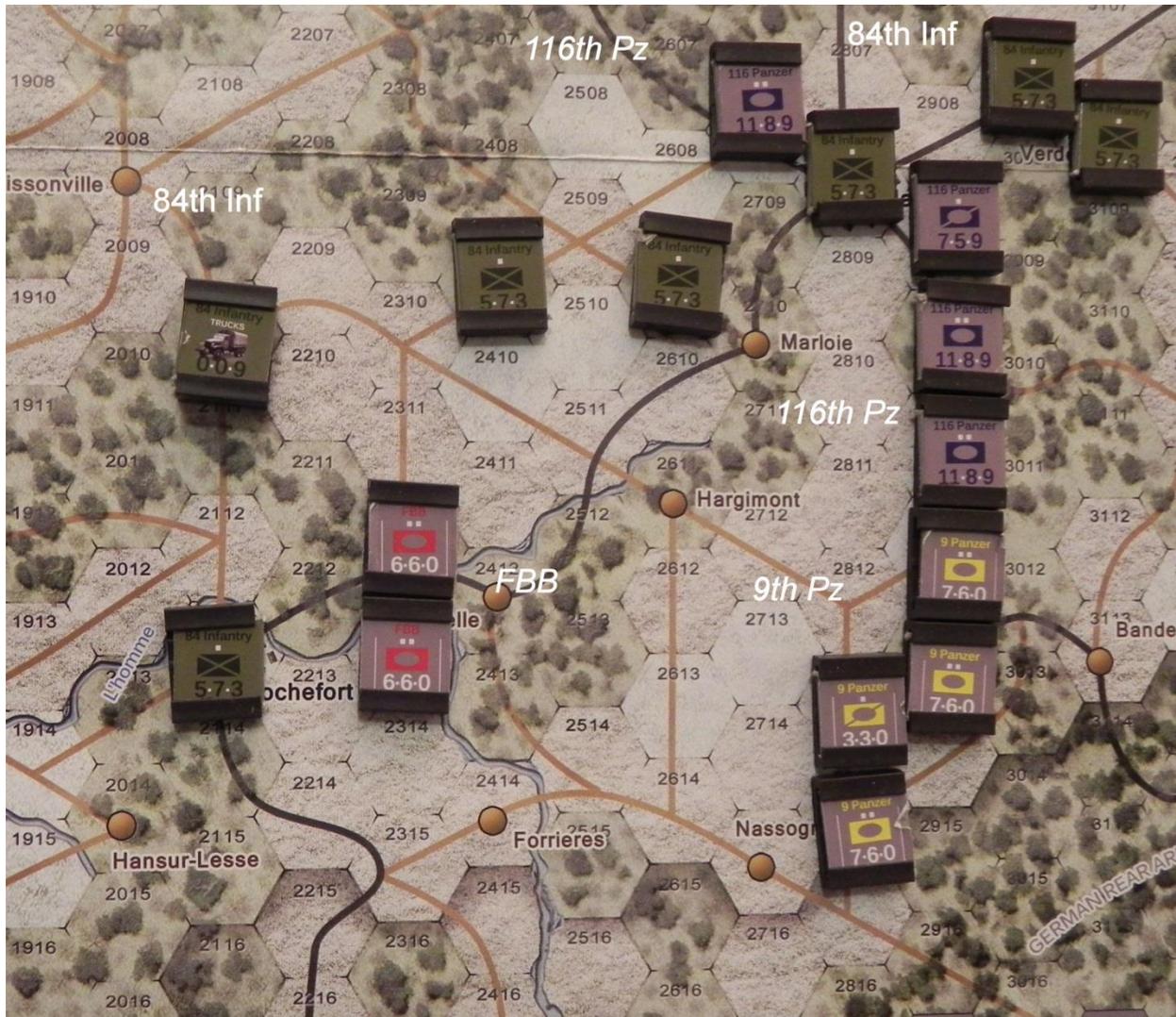
2nd Armor second activation

The Germans, for their last activation of the turn, draw *2nd Panzer*. This division is also pretty battered, with only one good *kampfgruppe* left, plus a couple of support units and a depleted, disrupted *kampfgruppe*. It's pretty clear that they aren't going to accumulate the 20 victory points needed to cross the Meuse with so few turns remaining. The good *kampfgruppe*, added by the remains of *Panzer Lehr*, attack one of the depleted 2nd Armor units. The main purpose of this is to open up some room to prevent *Panzer Lehr* from being encircled in the next turn. They succeed in retreating and disrupting the American unit. The German support units fall back to the south in order to block the roads and prevent encirclement from that direction. That still leaves the south wide open, but 2nd Armor has used up its activations for this turn. The Germans are hoping to be able to move again during the night, before the Americans have a chance.



2nd Panzer activation

The Germans use their Extra Move chit to activate a *Furher Begleit* unit to attack the encircled American infantry. They succeed in eliminating the enemy, and the northern German unit advances to the south.



German Extra Move

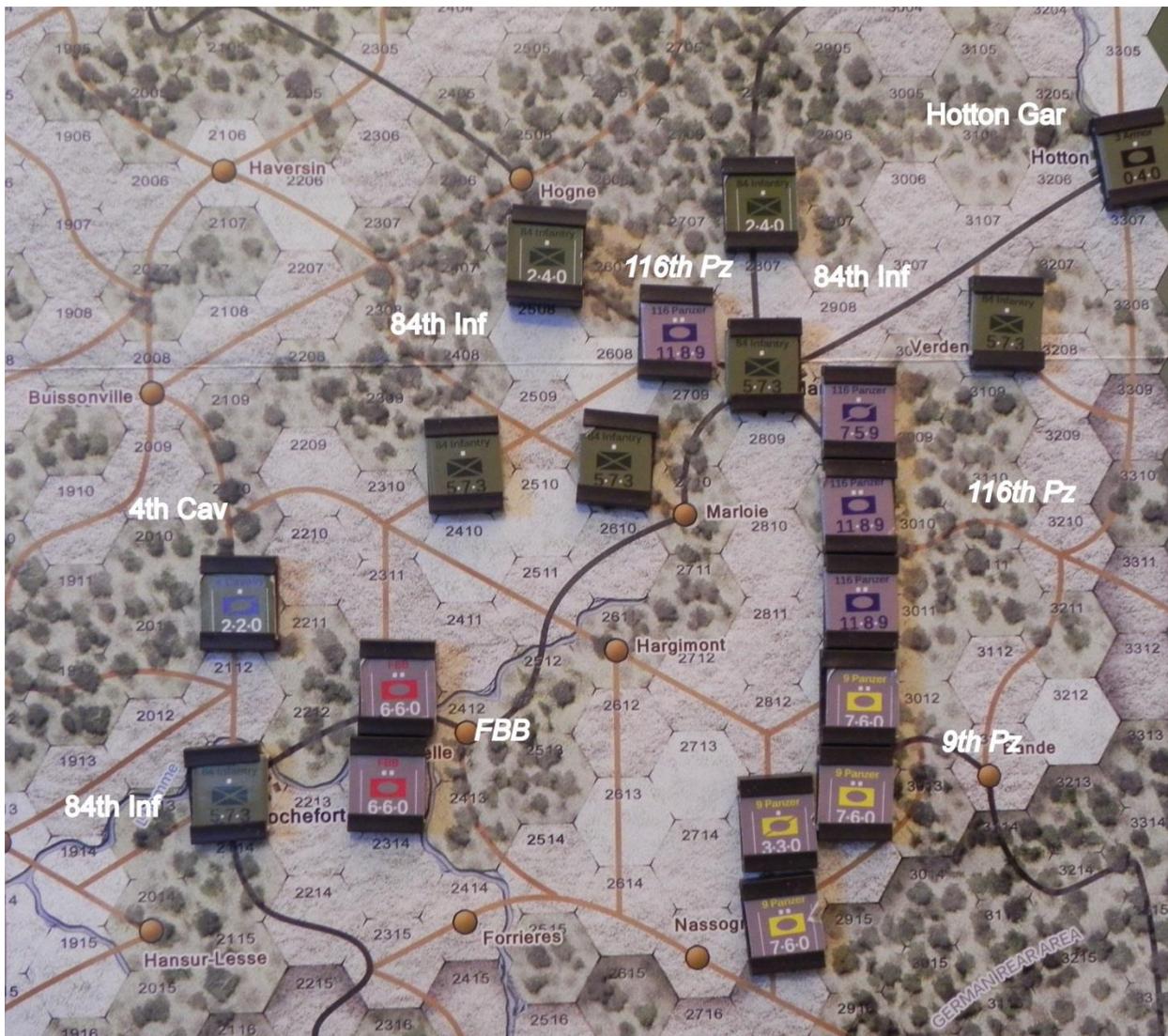
The Americans have three activations left. The first one they draw is 29th Armour. The two companies combine to attack the depleted and disrupted *2nd Panzer* unit holding the road to Finnevaux. The result is a disappointing /RD, which means the Germans escape destruction, retreating into the village. One British unit pursues while the other takes the southwestern fork in the road to put the German recon unit in its ZoC. This is either aggressive mobile warfare or putting their heads into a noose.



29th Armour activation

The Americans draw 4th Cavalry. Here is a question. This unit is currently part of the Meuse contingent, helping to contain *2nd Panzer*. On the other hand, the infantry is facing three panzer divisions on its own. Do we use them to stiffen the infantry or keep battering the panzers? With some trepidation, the Americans send the cavalry to the east, to the same hex as the truck-borne infantry just north of Rochefort. The hope is that they may pick up some tactical chits before the next activation, and then the trucked units could participate in a counterattack against the Germans.

Alas for American hopes, the next chit drawn activates 84th Infantry. The infantry is really too weak to mount a decent attack against panzers without help from tactical chits. Instead, the trucks move the infantry around through Buissonville and Hogne. One of the other infantry units near Verdennes moves northwest, and together they place the *116th Panzer* unit northwest of Marche out of supply. That may impede the attack on Marche somewhat as the night gathers.



4th Cavalry activation



End of 26 December Day

December 26 Night

Operations are going to slow down this turn. The U.S. gets only two chit draws, while the Germans get three.

The *116th Panzer* unit northwest of Marche is out of supply, and so is the 84th Infantry unit in Marche.

Initiative: Despite their die roll bonus, the Germans lose the initiative roll.

The Americans (I should say Allies) draw 29th Armour. The two companies combine to attack the depleted *2nd Panzer* unit at Finnevaux, forcing the Germans to retreat to Baronville. A follow-on attack by a single company is unsuccessful, and the British unit retreats to the woods southeast of Mesnil-St. Blaise.



29th Armour activation

The Germans activate *Panzer Lehr*, which has only one unit left. It moves southeast of Finnevaux, in the hopes of being able to support a *2nd Panzer* attack on the British later in the turn.



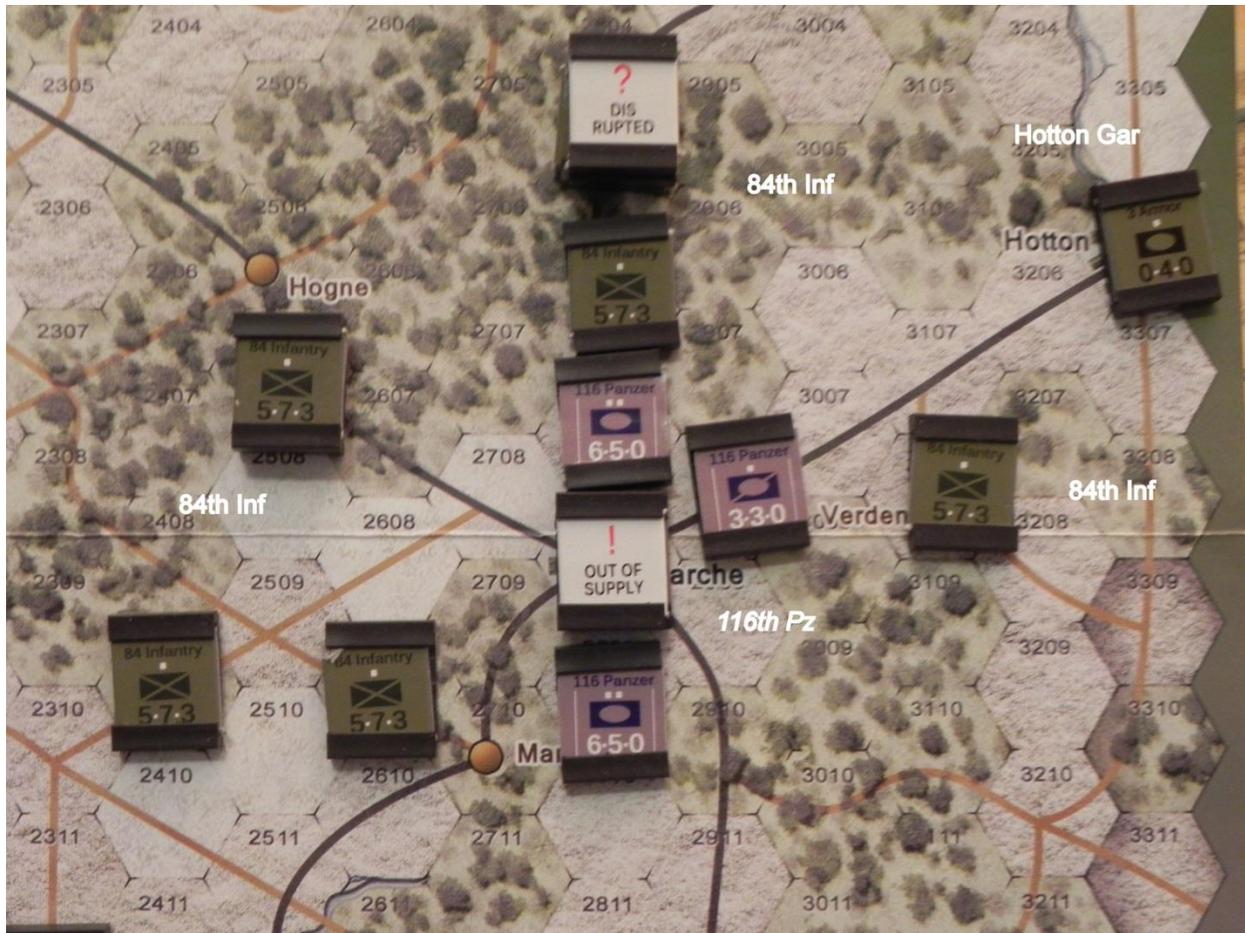
Panzer Lehr activation

The Americans draw 4th Cavalry. Instead of activating that unit, they choose to reactivate the 29th Armour unit in Finnevaux, moving it southwest to a point in the woods where it will be harder to surround. The British now have formed a weak screen in front of Givet, one of the victory point hexes.



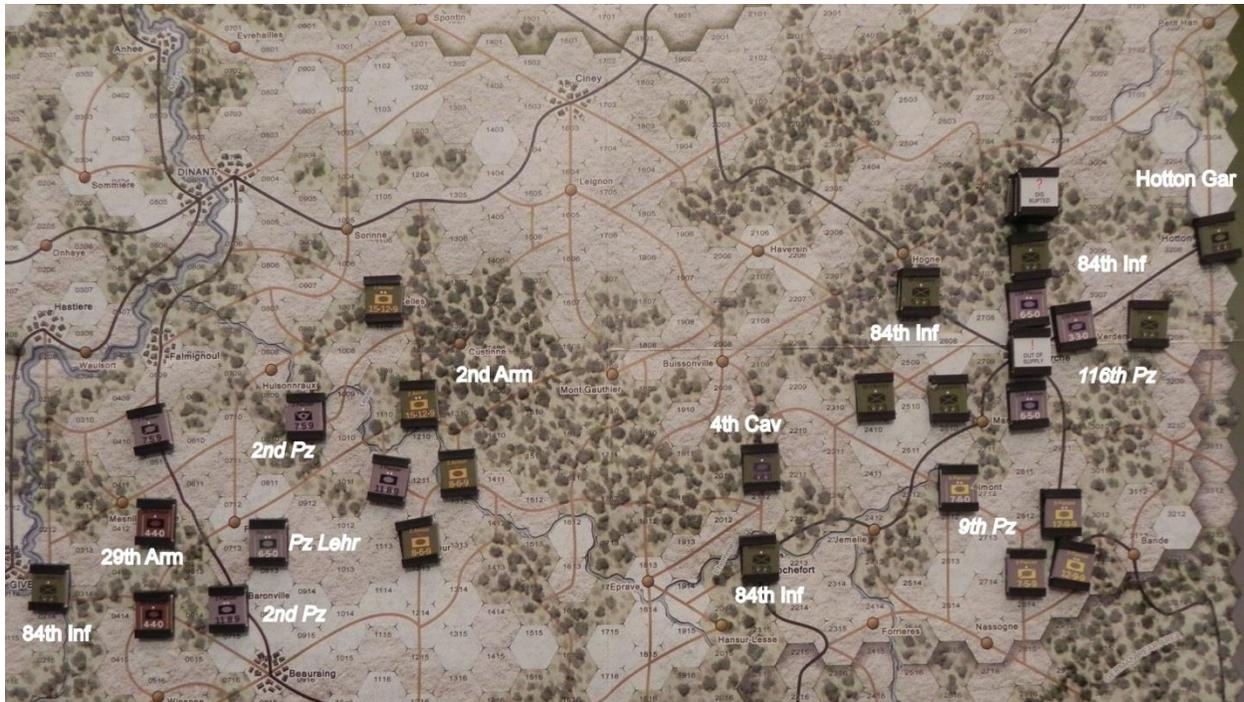
29th Armour extra move

The Germans draw Combat, Extra Move, and then *116th Panzer*. They throw an armor unit and their recon into an attack on Marche. The Combat chit and their night bonus counteract the terrain effect of the town, but they are still rebuffed with a “no effect.” They then infiltrate their recon unit north one hex and bring in another armor unit to attack again. This time they get lucky. Surrounded by enemy units, the American infantry are disrupted as they retreat out of the city. The active German unit occupies Marche and then moves one hex north to put it into contact with an undisrupted American infantry unit. The out of supply armor unit then moves into Marche.



116th Panzer activation

The Germans draw Replacements and then *Furher Begleit*. However, on this turn that means that the brigade has to withdraw, and this counts as activation. Before that happens, the Germans are allowed to play their tactical chits. They use Replacements to replenish the *2nd Panzer* unit at Baronville. They use Extra Move to bring in their remaining reinforcement, a *9th Panzer* unit, which advances to Hargimont. Then *FBB* disappears, and the turn ends.



End of December 26 night turn

December 27 AM

The Americans get three activations this time, and the Germans get two. *2nd Panzer* and *Panzer Lehr* get no activation chits. The *FBB* chit is still in the cup. If drawn, it allows the activation of any one German unit.

The Americans get the initiative.

The first chit drawn is *2nd Armor*. Since *2nd Panzer* and *Panzer Lehr* will at best be able to activate only one unit at a time, the two depleted American units are sent to occupy Beuraing and Dinant, to keep the Germans from waltzing in and grabbing the victory points. The two full-strength units surround and attack *2nd Panzer's* antitank unit in the woods southeast of Hulsonnraux, but the result is no effect.



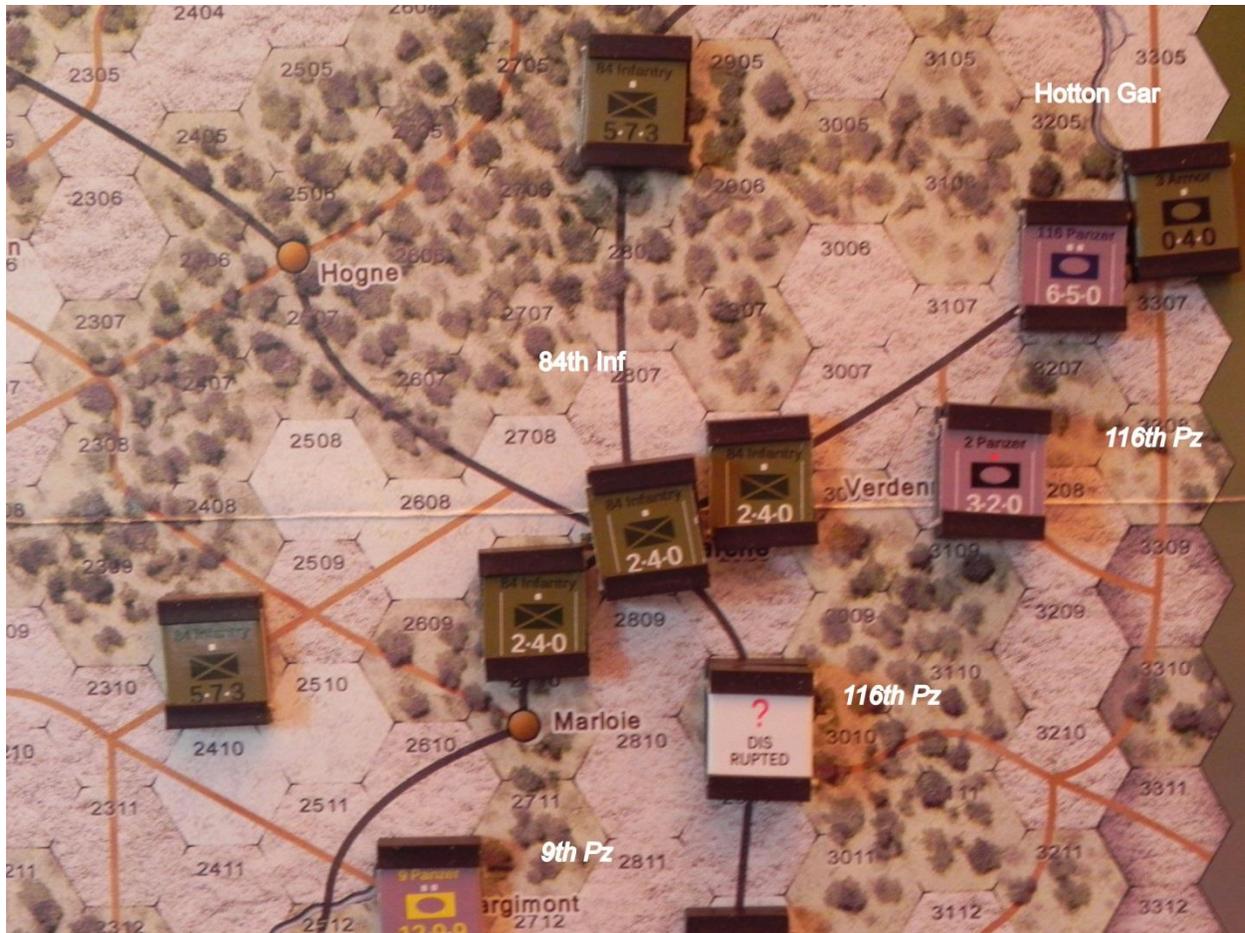
2nd Armor activation

The Germans draw *116th Panzer*. While it seems unlikely that they can take Hotton this turn, they decide to give it a try. The first step is to get past the 84th Infantry unit in Verdenne. An attack with the division's recon unit and one armor unit results in an exchange. The Germans take the loss from the armor unit, and the survivors occupy the village. Now that the road is clear, another armor unit assaults Hotton, but the result is no effect. The remaining unit occupies Marche to hold it against the Americans.



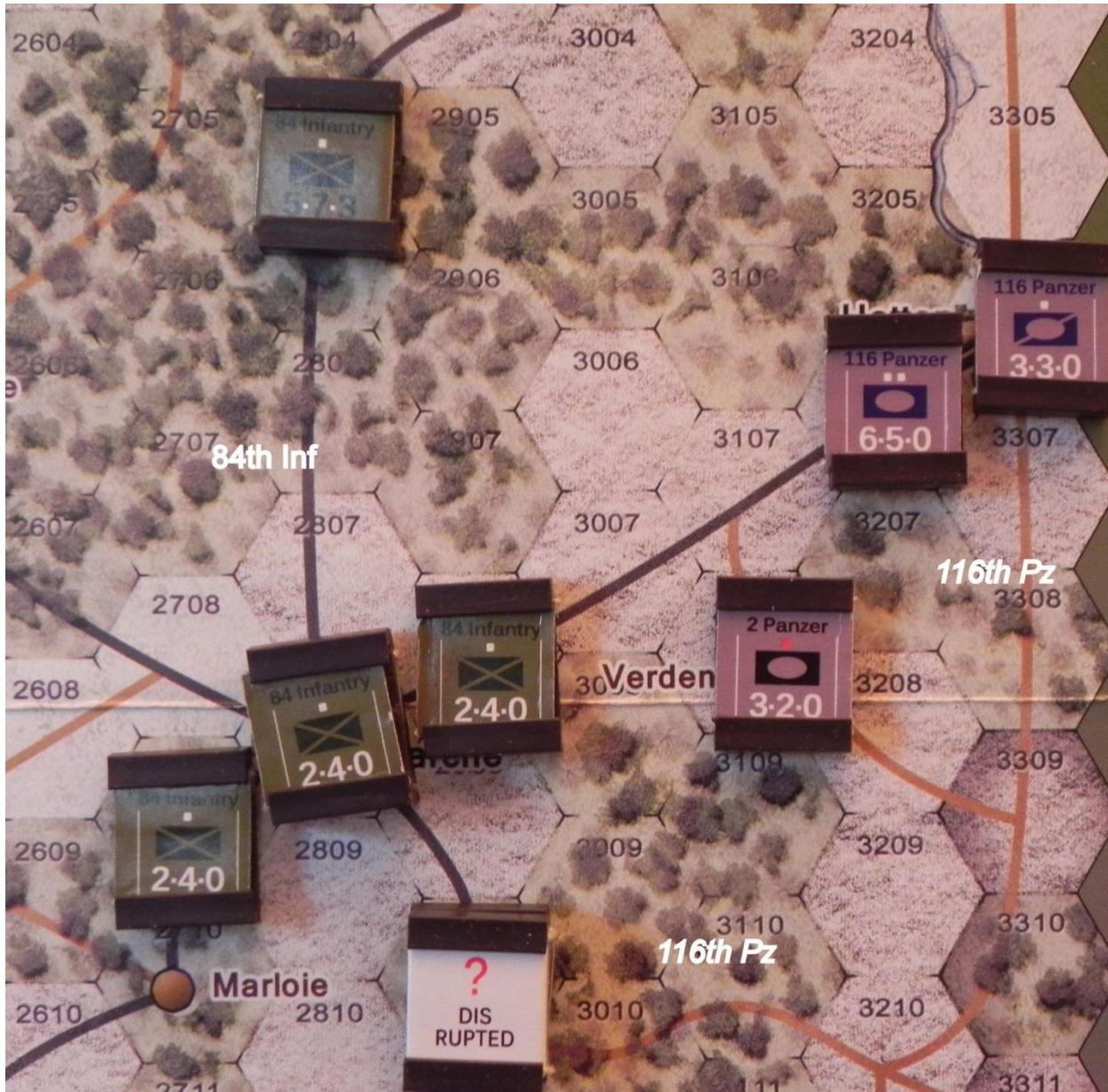
116th Panzer activation. (Note: the 2nd Panzer counter was the result of a mistake while placing replacements.)

The Americans next activate 84th Infantry. They send two battalions to surround Marche and then use their truck-mounted unit to spearhead the attack, using their combat chit. This low-odds attack (3:2) succeeds in forcing *116th Panzer* to retreat, disrupting it as it moves through the American ZoC to do so.



84th Infantry activation

For their last draw of the game, the Germans get *Furher Begleit*. As noted above, the only way they can use this is to activate a single unit of another formation. They choose to activate *116th Panzer's* recon unit and use it to renew the attack on Hotton, with the help of the previously activated unit that is already there. This time they eliminate the Hotton garrison unit and occupy the town.



116th Panzer Recon extra activation

The Americans draw Allied Air, Extra Move, Replacements, and 29th Armour. They use the Replacements to undeplete the 2nd Armor unit at Beauring (it won't help this turn, but replacement means one fewer step lost for victory point purposes). One important effect of Allied Air is to reduce the German total actions by one. That is irrelevant, because the Germans don't have any left. The Allies launch a strike against the *2nd Panzer* recon unit, which is in clear terrain. It is disrupted.

The Americans use Extra Move to activate one of the 2nd Armor units surrounding the *2nd Panzer* antitank unit and then launch a major assault. They get a retreat result. The German unit is disrupted by retreating through a ZoC, but that isn't going to make any difference now.

29th Armour launches an attack against the disrupted recon unit. The attack is lucky and eliminates the unit outright.

Thus endeth the game.



Last moves by the Meuse



End of the game

Results

The Germans got 2 VP for units adjacent to the Meuse during the game. They get 2 for occupying Hotton and another 7 for eliminating Allied steps. Their total is 11.

The Allies get 2 VP each for Marche and Rochefort. They get 9 VP for eliminating German steps. Their total is 13. Thus, the Allies eke out a win.