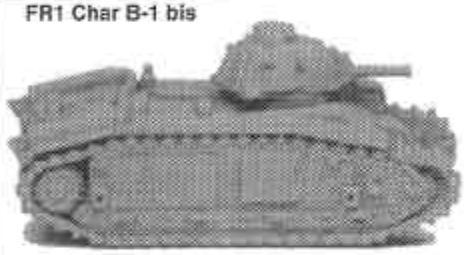
TAC NEWS

November-December 1994 Celebrating GHQ's Twenty Six Years of Modeling Excellence

!NEW RELEASES!

FR1 Char B-1 bis



N110 LAV Recovery

N111 M998 Avenger

Photographs appearing in Tac News are not necessarily to scale

N112 VAB VCI 4x4

UK50 Daimler Dingo Scout Car

G129 SdKfz 251 D/21

GWB9 "M" Class DD

1943 Panzergrenadier Battalion (Armored)

German armored divisions took a tremendous beating during the heavy fighting of 1943. For various reasons, these losses were not made good. To compensate for their lack of tank strength, the Germans introduced more powerful weaponry, new equipment, and innovative tactics. These factors, combined with strategic reality, forced a fundamental reorganization of the Wehrmacht on Sept 21, 1943.

The 1943 reorganization particularly impacted the mechanized infantry. The "traditional" blitzkrieg role of armored infantry was the close-support of tanks. But, as the war ground on, armored panzergrenadiers were frequently used in place of tanks simply because they were the only mobile forces on hand. Thin-skinned halftracks stood little chance against heavy tanks and the panzergrenadiers suffered horrible losses. To give mechanized infantry a chance, the Germans considerably beefed-up its firepower. Close support heavy weapons, such as short-barrelled 75mm howitzers, were installed on halftracks and distributed down to the company level. (A concept abandoned by the Americans early in 1943)

The 1943 Panzergrenadier Battalion (Armored) consisted of a head-quarters detachment, three armored infantry companies, and a heavy company. Each of these units, save the headquarters detachment, had enough organic firepower to allow limited periods of independent action. This self-sufficiency was particularly important in the small-unit operations used by the Germans late in the war.

In Russia, the Germans stretched limited resources over vast expanses of terrain by patrolling small combat teams behind the front in the role of "fire brigades." In the west, where enemy air superiority prohibited massed formations, small combat teams were used in both the offensive and defensive roles.

1943 PANZER GRENADIER BATTALION (Armored)

Battalion HQs & HQs Detachment

Headquarters Section

- Motorcycle 3
- Volkswagen 3
- Kettenkrad 2
- SPW 251/3 1
- SPW 251/8 1
- Battalion Command Stand 1

Signal Section

- SPW 251/3 2
- SPW 251/11 2

Three Panzer Grenadier Infantry Companies (Armored); each

Headquarters Section

- Company Command Stand 1
- SPW 251/3 2
- Kettenkrad 3
- Motorcycle 2
- Volkswagen 1

Antitank Section

- Infantry Squad Stand 1
- SPW 251/1 1

Three Infantry Platoons; each

- Platoon Command Stand 1
- Infantry Squad Stand 3
- SPW 251/10 1
- SPW 251/1 3
- Light MG 6

Heavy Platoon

- Platoon Command Stand 1
- Platoon Headquarters: SPW 251/1 3; Hvy MG 3
- Section Command Stand 1
- Mortar Section: SPW 251/2 2; Mortar 81mm 2
- Section Command Stand 1
- Infantry Gun Section: SPW 251/9 2

Panzer Grenadier Heavy Company (Armored)

Company Headquarters

- Kettenkrad 2
- Motorcycle 2
- SPW 251/3 1
- SPW 251/11 1
- Company Command Stand 1

Light Infantry Gun Platoon

- Platoon Command Stand 1
- SPW 251/4 4
- Infantry Gun 2 75 mm

Infantry Gun Platoon

- Platoon Command Stand 1
- SPW 251/3 1
- SPW 251/1 1
- SPW 251/9 6

Antitank Gun Platoon

- Platoon Command Stand 1
- SPW 251/1 1
- SPW 251/4 4
- ATG 3 75 mm

Heavy Mortar Platoon

- Headquarters Section: Platoon Command Stand 1; SPW 251/1 1; Kettenkrad 2
- Two Heavy Mortar Sections; each: SPW 251/1 2; Mortar 2 120 mm

Engineer Platoon

- Headquarters Section: Kettenkrad 1; Platoon Command Stand 1
- SPW 251/7 1
- Truck (3 ton) 1
- Three Engineer Squads; each: SPW 251/7 2

STATS, SPECS, AND FACTS

G129 SdKfz 251/21 mittlerer Schützenpanzerwagen

SPECIFICATIONS

WEIGHT:	8.9 tons
HULL ARMOR:	Front 14.5mm, side 8mm
SPEED:	33 mp/hr (road speed)
RANGE:	200 kilometers
MAIN GUNS:	Three 1.5 or 2.0cm cannon
MACHINE GUN(S):	None

As the Luftwaffe lost air superiority, German mechanized ground forces had to increase their allotments of antiaircraft vehicles and weapons. The SdKfz 251/21 entered production in August 1944 as a replacement for the 251/17. The 251/21 carried three 1.5cm or 2.0cm aircraft machine-cannons on a triple pedestal mount. Each cannon was belt fed from a separate ammunition box. The 251/21's rate of fire was 700 rpm, with a total of 2,000 rounds carried.

As with other German self-propelled AA guns, the 251/21 was a lightly armored and open-topped. As such it was highly vulnerable to air attack. Nonetheless, the 251/21's multiple-barreled AA gun mount made ground attack a risky business for Allied aviators.

FR1 Char B-1 bis (on US quarter)

SPECIFICATIONS

WEIGHT:	31.5 tons
HULL ARMOR:	65mm front and 14mm side
SPEED:	28 km/hr (road speed)
RANGE:	180 kilometers
MAIN GUN:	75mm and 47mm guns
MACHINE GUN(S):	Two 7.5mm machine guns

The Char B1 was built from a 1921 requirement specifying a 75mm gun set in a hull embrasure. The French started building the Char series in 1930. A lengthy development period followed, leading to the introduction of the Char B1 in 1935. The Char B1 was a powerful tank for its time, but its design contained fundamental flaws. Internal communication was difficult for the four man crew and the 47mm gun was mounted in a restrictive one-man turret.

By 1940 the French had some 400 Char B1 tanks in service. Most of these either broke down or ran out of gas en route to the battlefield. Those that made it to the front were penny-packeted into local defense groups. Captured Char Bs were converted to training vehicles, Flamm tanks, and self-propelled artillery carriages.

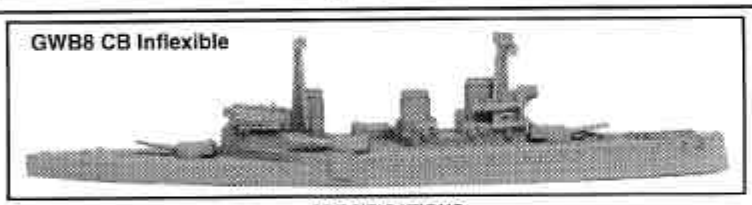
FR5 Renault R 35

SPECIFICATIONS

WEIGHT:	8.8 tons
HULL ARMOR:	40mm front
SPEED:	20 km/hr (road speed)
RANGE:	140 kilometers
MAIN GUN:	Short-barreled 37mm gun
MACHINE GUN(S):	One 7.5mm machine gun

The Renault R35 was produced as a replacement for the WWI era Renault FT 17s. It was rushed into production during 1935 because war with Germany seemed eminent. Some 1,600 were built, making the R35 the most numerous French infantry tank.

The tank had a two-man crew, with the driver positioned forward and the commander squeezed into a tiny one-man turret. The R35's frontal cast armor was capable of deflecting German 37mm antitank rounds, but the R 35's own short barreled 37mm gun proved equally ineffective against German tanks. With the fall of France the Germans acquired a large number of R35s. These served the Wehrmacht in a variety of roles, including artillery tractors and gun schleppers.



GWB8 CB Inflexible

SPECIFICATIONS

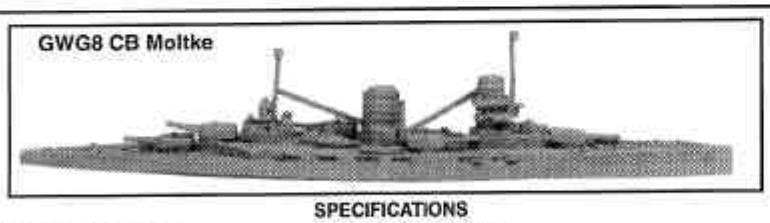
DISPLACEMENT:	17,330 tons
SPEED:	26.6 knots
RANGE:	15,000 nautical miles at 15 knots

ARMAMENT

Eight 12-inch twin guns, sixteen 4-inch guns, and five 18-inch torpedo tubes

The two paramount concerns of post-*Dreadnought* construction were speed and firepower; armor protection was always subordinated to these two offensive factors. The *Invincible* Class combined the agility of a cruiser with the firepower of a capital ship. To gain this speed, however, armor protection was pared to a bare minimum.

The *Invincible* and her sister ships, *Indomitable* and *Inflexible*, were widely used in the opening phases of World War I. Following the *Invincible's* loss at Jutland both *Indomitable* and *Inflexible* had their armor belts increased. Dispite this modification, the ships' shortcomings were considered systemic and thereafter they saw limited service. Both were scrapped in 1922.



GWG8 CB Moltke

SPECIFICATIONS

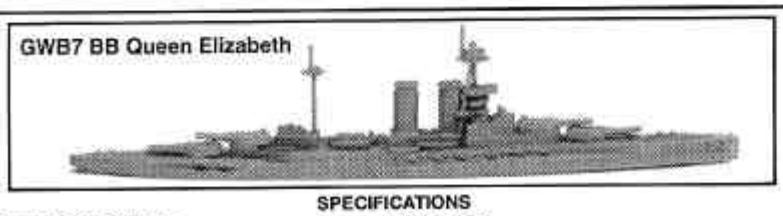
DISPLACEMENT:	22,616 tons
SPEED:	25.5 knots
RANGE:	4,120 nautical miles at 14 knots

ARMAMENT

Ten 11-in guns, twelve 5.9-in guns, twelve 3.5-inch guns, and four 19.7-in torpedo tubes

The *Moltke* and *Goeben* were enlarged versions of the *Von der Tann*. The increased size allowed the fitting of a fifth twin 11-inch turret aft. While the *Moltke* was scuttled at Scapa Flow in June 1919, the *Goeben* had a much longer and storied career.

The *Goeben* and light cruiser *Breslau* entered the Mediterranean in 1914. They successfully evaded British pursuit and made Constantinople that August. They were then "sold" to Turkey as a condition for the Turks to enter the war as a German ally. From Constantinople the *Goeben* often engaged the Russian Black Seas' Fleet. In January 1918, she sank the British monitors *Raglan* and *M28*. Renamed the *Yavuz*, she served into the 1960s.



GWB7 BB Queen Elizabeth

SPECIFICATIONS

DISPLACEMENT:	27,500 tons
SPEED:	23 knots
RANGE:	7,500 nautical miles at 12.5 knots

ARMAMENT

Eight 15-inch guns. Secondary armament; Sixteen 6-inch guns, two 3-inch guns, and four 21-inch torpedo tubes

As foreign ships began to mount 14-inch guns, the British started working on a 15-inch gun vessel. The result, based on the *Iron Duke*, represented a quantum leap in capital warship design. The 15-inch guns of the *Queen Elizabeth* Class could hurl a 1,920lb shell over 35,000 yards with great accuracy. She was the first battleship built around oil-fired boilers. The weight thus saved was used to increase the thickness of the armor belt.

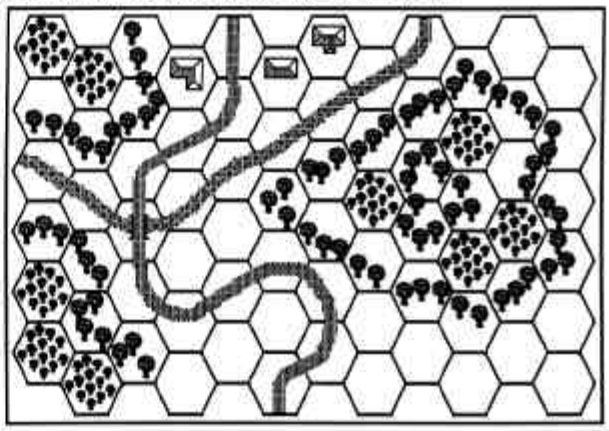
The *Queen Elizabeth, Warspite, Valiant,* and *Barham*, were intended to serve in a four-ship squadron. A fifth ship, the *Malaya*, was added when the Federated Malay States contributed her construction funds as a gift. All QEs, save the *Queen Elizabeth* herself, fought at Jutland.

Shermans on the Rocks

Tac News Scenario #5

San Pietro Italy, December 15 1943: The 1st Armored Division landed in Italy during October of 1943. Since then the division stood idle awaiting a suitable engagement. This was embarrassing. First Armor was in Italy at Gen. Mark Clark's personal insistence. If he didn't use the division, and use it soon, it was going to be taken from him. Desperate for an armored demonstration of some sort, Clark seized on San Pietro.

The San Pietro battlefield was anything but favorable for tanks. The only viable road leading to the village crossed three small bridges. These potential choke points were no doubt mined and covered by antitank guns. Offroad approaches were blocked by rocky ravines and terraced vineyards. Both armored and infantry field commanders argued against using tanks, but Clark was adamant. Company A of the 753rd Independent Tank Battalion was thus ordered to take San Pietro.



SET-UP AND SUGGESTED VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Germans set up anywhere except for the first two hex rows on southern edge. The Americans enter along the southern edge. Americans must capture and hold buildings to win.

TIME CHART

Battle runs from 11:00AM to 7:00PM

ELEMENTS OF 29TH PANZERGRENADIER DIVISION

One complete Panzergrenadier Infantry Company (Motorized)

(For details see the enclosed table of organization)

Reinforced by a five-vehicle platoon of MkIII Sturmgeschütz

COMPANY A OF 753RD INDEPENDENT TANK BATTALION (reinforced)

SUGGESTED SPECIAL RULES

1. The Germans are veteran troops with superior commanders.

2. The Americans are veteran troops with superior commanders.

3. Terraced hexes delineate elevations. Terraces consisted of a tree studded stone wall, running between three to seven feet tall. Terrace hexes stop vehicular movement. To cross a terrace, a vehicle must wait until its next movement phase and roll a three or less on a ten-sided die. If it fails, it must wait until the next movement phase, when it must roll a six or less. Failing that attempt, a nine or less on the next movement phase. Each time a terraced hex is crossed, there is a 20% chance of throwing a track. Infantry cross terraces at no penalty.

AFTERMATH: The attack commenced on December 15. Company A split itself into two pincers. One arm swung west to interdict German reinforcing attempts; the other, supported by infantry, took a direct route into San Pietro. As the shooting started both pincers began to fragment. The lead tank heading directly into San Pietro crossed the first bridge, but the following tank hit a mine. This side tracked the next three Shermans into an ambush and they were knocked out by sturmgeschütz. Tanks attempting to bypass these hulks hit mines in the road shoulder. Others trying offroad approaches either threw tracks or turned turtle in ravines. By day's end, Company A was reduced to just two tanks.