

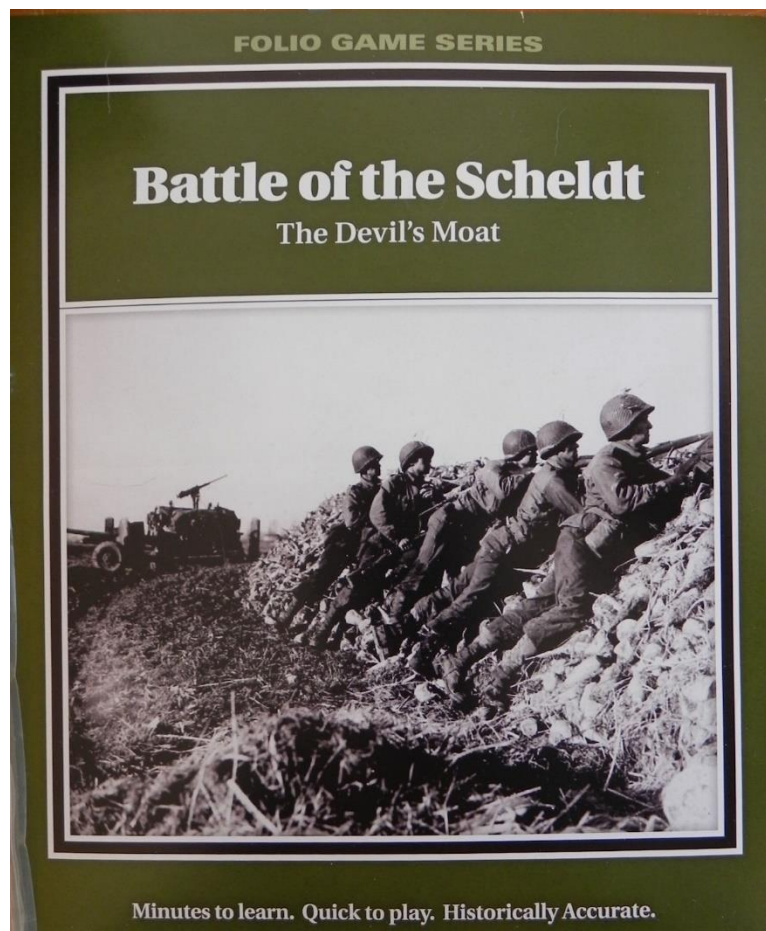
Battle of the Scheldt AAR

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This is an after-action report of a solitaire play-through of *Battle of the Scheldt*, a Folio Series game published by Decision Games in 2013. I provide a brief discussion of the historical situation, a summary of the game features, a turn-by-turn account of the play-through, with pictures, and a final evaluation. This document is intended as part of a survey of games about this battle, including MDG's *The Scheldt Campaign* (<http://grogard.com/replayaar/scheldt-campaign-aar.pdf>) and 3W's *Tide of Fortune* (forthcoming—I hope!), followed by a comparison article (forthcoming).



The historical battle was fought in October and November 1944. Its purpose was to clear the Scheldt Estuary, in the Netherlands, of German shore batteries and minefields so that the port of Antwerp, Belgium could be used to supply the Allied forces in northwest Europe. Antwerp had been captured in September. However, Field Marshal Montgomery was preoccupied with Operation Market Garden, which, if successful, might end the war quickly. After that operation failed to achieve its objectives, it became apparent that the Allies would need to keep their ever-expanding forces in supply into 1945. General Eisenhower directed Montgomery to clear the

Scheldt. The job fell to the Canadian 1st Army, which included British and Polish troops as well as Canadian. Later in the battle, an American division would also participate. The battle was fought in rainy weather and terrible terrain, as both sides deliberately flooded parts of the area to impede the movements of the other. While some of the opposing German forces consisted of static and reserve units, paratroopers, assault guns, and regular infantry also participated.

The folio series of games is aimed at the audience for simple, playable games. While history and realism are not ignored, they take a back seat to gameplay. They feature a small map, a small number of counters, and brief rules. Most folio games are based on a game system, with a 4-page standard rulebook and another 4-page set of exclusive rules. These games are viewed as the descendants of the SPI quad games, and, indeed, many of the games in the series are explicit remakes of SPI's offerings. *Battle of the Scheldt* uses the Fire and Movement standard rules, which are intended for operational games set in World War II and later. However, SPI never published a game on this battle.

Most wargamers will feel right at home with the Fire & Movement standard rules, and the *Battle of the Scheldt* exclusive rules yield few surprises. Here is a brief summary, divided into familiar elements, minor variations, and chrome:

Familiar Elements

- **Sequence of play:** Game turns divided into two player turns, with movement and then combat.
- **Counters:** NATO symbols with attack-defense-move ratings. All are two-step, double sided units, representing regiments, brigades, or divisions. They have historical designations that do not affect play.



- **Stacking:** There isn't any.
- **Movement:** Pretty much what you'd expect.
- **Zones of control:** Stop movement but don't force combat. Block retreats.
- **Combat:** Differential CRT. Terrain is integrated into the CRT as different column headers (essentially, defensible terrain gives column shifts to the left). Results are retreats, elimination, exchange.
- **Supply rules:** There aren't any.
- **Command control rules:** There aren't any.
- **Reinforcements:** Both sides have some, arriving on a fixed schedule. The Allies also have some that arrive after they've taken certain geographic objectives.
- **Replacements:** Both sides have a limited ability to flip depleted units back to full strength. Eliminated units are gone.

Minor Variations

- **Mobile phases:** Some units (in this game, all are armor brigades) have a red “M” for mobile. If they sit out the regular movement and combat phases, they get their own phases after the regular ones.
- **Infiltration:** All units have an ability to move from one ZoC hex to another. It costs mobile units half their movement allowance; other units pay all.
- **Support units:** Instead of artillery and air units, each side gets an allocation of support units at the beginning of the game turn, by random draw. The number of units each side may draw is indicated on the turn record track. Support units have icons of weapons systems (which are just decoration) and values ranging from +2 to +8. Players may apply up to two of them to aid in combat on attack or defense. They apply just like ground combat units. The phasing player may also use up to two units to bombard an enemy unit within three hexes of one of his own, and the non-phasing player may use his for “counter-battery fire.” Bombardment is resolved on the same CRT as ground attacks.¹
- **Combat results:** Units that can’t retreat take a step loss. Retreating units may displace friendly units while retreating. Attacking units may advance along the path of retreat.

Chrome

- **Flooded hexes:** Mobile units can’t enter flooded hexes, but they can attack into them. Other units use their full movement allowance to enter. Engineer units nullify the terrain advantage.
- **Breskens Pocket:** The area in the southwest corner of the map is the Breskens Pocket. Units on both sides there are frozen in place for the first three turns. On turn 4, Allied units can cross all-sea hexes (representing the use of amphibious vehicles).
- **Special support units:** The Germans have a +5 support unit representing antitank fire. They may use it once per turn when attacked by Allied armor, in addition to the two support units that may normally be applied. The Allies have two +10 support units representing naval gunfire. Each may be used only once per game, to support an attack or bombard within three hexes of a sea hex. Use of naval gunfire counts against the two-unit limit.
- **Amphibious assaults:** The conditional Allied reinforcements arrive by amphibious assault. They may land in unoccupied hexes or assault enemy-occupied hexes.²

The game is 20 turns long. The Allies win the game if they eliminate all of the German units west of the victory line, which runs near the east side of the map. Basically, it means keeping the Germans away from the Scheldt and Antwerp.

Note that the appendix contains reference map images free of counters.

¹ The rules state that the players may examine their support units after drawing them and then apply them as they see fit. In order to add some extra uncertainty in my solitaire play-through, I randomly chose the units at the time of use.

² There are assault boat counters to mark assault hexes. These seem superfluous, as the landings are obvious, and there is no lasting significance to the “beachhead” locations.



Initial Setup. Note that the counters are fitted with magnetic clips for vertical play.
Keep in mind that the map is oriented with east to the top and north to the left.

Turn 1, October 2-3

Support Units: 11 Allied, 6 German.

Allied Movement Phase

The three brigades of 15th Division move into position to attack 712th Division at Brasschaet, supported by 5/2 Infantry. The rest of 2nd Division maneuvers to attack 346th Division in Kapellen next turn. 5/1 Polish Infantry stays in reserve, while the two armoured brigades do not move, hoping to have an opportunity in the mobile phase.

Allied Bombardment

Because the Allies have support to burn right now, they bombard both German divisions with two support units each. The Germans do not respond with counterbattery fire.

The bombardment of 712th Division draws +2, +8, yielding a +3 combat differential and an Ex result. The division is depleted.

The bombardment of 346th Division draws +6, +7, yielding a +6 combat differential and another Ex, again depleting the unit.



Turn 1 Allied combat phase.

Allied Combat Phase

In the combat phase, both sides supply the maximum support. The Allies attack with 4x5 from ground units, plus +6 and +8 support. The Germans have 4 plus +4 and +3. The differential is +23 in a city, resolved in the +10 column, with a result of D2. Unable to retreat, 712th Division is eliminated. 45/15 Infantry occupies Brasschaet.

Allied Mobile Movement Phase

In the mobile movement phase, 4/4 and 10/1 Polish Armour race through Brasschaet to surround Kapellen.

Allied Mobile Combat Phase

The armoured brigades attack 346th Division, with full support. The Germans also have full support, plus their A/T support unit. The Allies have 2x6, +6, +3. The Germans have 4, +3, +3, +5. The differential is +6, with result of Ex. The depleted 346th is eliminated, and the Allies flip 4/4 Armour. 10/1 Polish Armour occupies Kapellen.

Allied Replacement Phase

The Allies flip 4/4 Armour Brigade back to its full-strength side.

German Reinforcement Phase

The Germans receive *711th Division* at 2717.

German Movement Phase

245th Division moves from Esschen to Woensdrecht. *711th Division* skirts around the Allied forces and moves to 2021, blocking the road to Woensdrecht.

The German units are further than 3 hexes from the Allied units, and so the Germans cannot bombard. The remaining phases in the German turn are skipped.



Turn 1 German movement phase.

Turn 2, October 3-4

Support Units: 11 Allied, 6 German

Allied Movement Phase:

2nd Division moves into position to attack *711th Division*. Two brigades of *15 Division* skirt the Germans to the east in order to outflank Woensdrecht. *44/15* and *3/1* Polish infantry brigades provide flank security against German reinforcements. The armoured brigades skirt around Woensdrecht to the east.



Turn 2 Allied movement phase.

Allied Bombardment

The Allies bombard 245th and 711th Divisions. This time, the Germans provide full counterbattery fire for both.

Against 711th, the Allies draw +8, +2; the German defense is 7, and they draw +6, +5. The differential is -8, which is automatically no effect.

Against 245th, the Allies draw +6, +6; the German defense is 9, and they draw +3, +8. The differential is again -8, no effect.

Allied Combat

2nd Division attacks 711th Division. Both sides have full support. The Allies have 3x5, +6, +2. The Germans have 7, +7, +5. The differential is +4 in clear terrain. The result is no effect.

Allied Mobile Movement Phase

The armour brigades have already moved.

Allied Mobile Combat Phase

No combat. Although the Allies have plenty of support units, the rules do not permit bombarding an enemy unit more than once per game turn.

German Movement Phase

719th Division enters at 2517, because 2717 is in an EZoC. It then moves northwest one hex, which is as far as it can get because of blocking Allied units. *711th Division* infiltrates one hex west, to a flooded hex that will be more easily defended.

The Germans take no more actions in this game turn.

Turn 3, October 5-6

Support Units: 11 Allied, 6 German.

Allied Movement Phase

44/15 and 3/1 Polish Infantry surround *719th Division*. 4/2 Infantry infiltrates one hex south in preparation of an attack on *711th Division*, joined by 5/2 Infantry and 2 Engineers. 247/15 and 46/15 Infantry circle around Woensdrecht to attack it from the north, while 6/2 Infantry attacks from the south.

Allied Combat Phase

The Allies bombard *245th* and *711th* Divisions with two support units each, and the Germans respond with one unit of counterbattery fire each. The attack on *245th* draws +7, +8 for the Allies and +8, with a differential of -2, an automatic “no effect.” The attack on *711th* draws +2, +8 for the Allies and +3 for the Germans. The differential is +1, and the result is no effect.

The Allies attack all three German divisions with full support. The Germans give full support to *711th Division* and one unit each to the other two.

The units attacking *719th Division* have 2x5, +3, +2, for a total of 15. The Germans have 7, +5, for a total of 12, for a differential of +3. The result is Ex. *719th Division* and 3/1st Polish are depleted.

The units attacking *245th Division* in Woensdrecht have 3x5, +3, +8. The Germans have 9, +6. The differential is +11 in a city. The result is De. *245th Division* is eliminated. 45/15 occupies Woensdrecht.

The units attacking *711th Division* have 2x5, 6, +7, +6, for a total of 29. The defenders have 7, +8, +8, for a total of 23. The differential is +6. Because the engineers are participating in the attack, it is resolved as if on clear terrain. The result is Ex. *711th Division* and 5/2 Infantry are depleted.

Allied Mobile Movement Phase

The Allied armoured brigades move through Woensdrecht to attack *711th Division* from the north, hoping that the remaining Allied support unit will be enough to compensate for the German antitank fire.



Turn 3 after Allied combat phase.

Allied Mobile Combat Phase

The Allies have 2x6, +8, for a total of 20. The Germans have 6 +5, for a total of 11. The differential is +9, resolved on the flooded row of the CRT. The result is D2. Unable to retreat, *711th Division* is eliminated.

The Allies rebuild 5/2 Infantry. They may not rebuild 3/1 Polish Infantry because it is adjacent to *719th Division*.

German Movement Phase

The Germans get reinforcements in the form of *59th Division* and *1st* and *2nd* AG, entering at Roosendaal. They use these to mount a counterattack against 247/15 Infantry, knowing that the Allies have used up all of their support units this turn. Meanwhile, *719th Division* infiltrates to

the south of 44/15. *1020th Regiment* moves from Goes to Krabbendijke in order to block the Allies from advancing into South Beveland.



Turn 3 after Allied mobile combat phase

German Combat Phase

In the attack on 247/15, the Germans have 2x6, 8 for 20 against the Allied 4, for a differential of +16, resolved on the +10 column of the clear terrain row. The result is D2. 247/15 retreats, forcing 4/4 Armour and 5/2 Infantry to displace. The Germans advance along the line of retreat to block the route into the isthmus.

Meanwhile, *719th Division* executes a +0 attack against 44/15 Infantry in the hopes of being able to disengage and retreat back towards the rest of the German forces. However, the result is No Effect.

The Germans take no more actions in the game turn.



Turn 3 After German combat phase

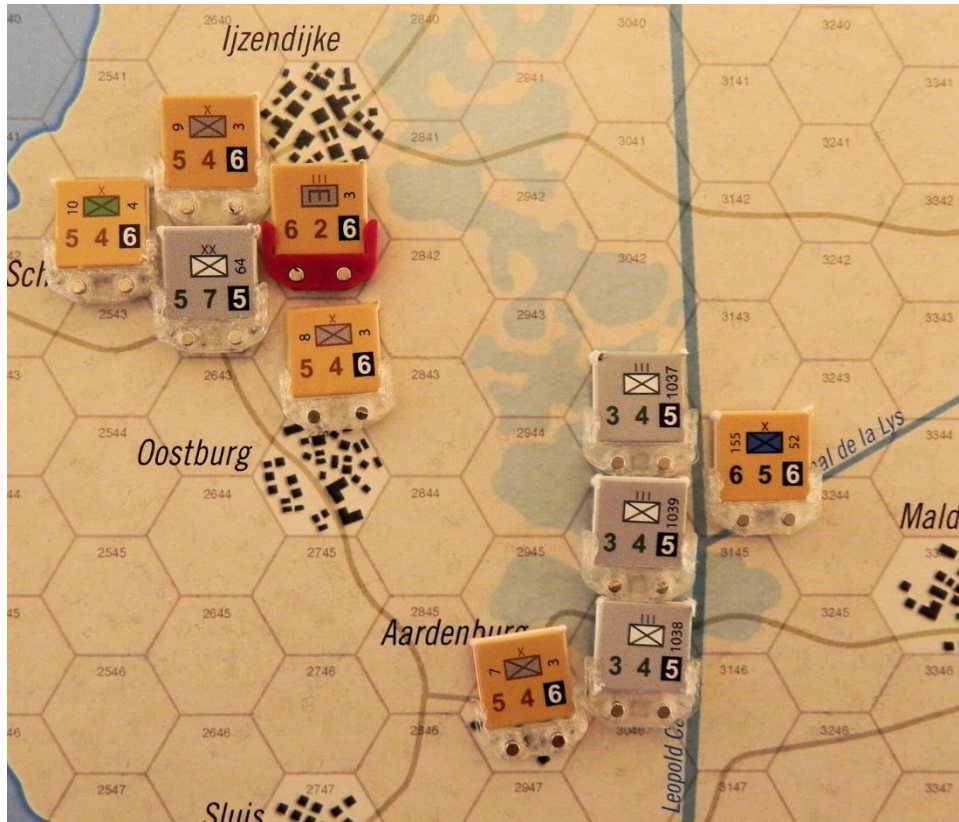
Turn 4, October 7-8

Support Units: 10 Allied, 6 German.

Allied Movement Phase

The Breskens Pocket is now open for operations. Most of the units assigned to that area gang up on *64th Division* in Schoondijke, while 7/3 and 155/52 Infantry maneuver to prevent the units along the Leopold Canal from going anywhere.

In the vicinity of Woensdrecht, 10/1 Polish Armour moves into contact with *1020th Regiment* in Krabbendijke. This frees up room for 46/15, 247/15, and 4/2 Infantry to mount an attack on *59th Division*. 5/2 Infantry moves west in order to help 44/15 and 3/1 Polish Infantry to finish off *719th Division*. 6/2 Infantry moves to screen the gap between Woensdrecht and the units operating to the west.



Turn 4 Allied movement phase, Breskens Pocket.

Allied Combat Phase

The Allies bombard *59th Division* with two support units, met by one from the German side. The Allies draw +6, +8. The Germans have 9, +6. The differential is -1 in clear terrain. The result is No Effect.

The Allies attack *59th Division*, adding two support units. The Germans also apply two support units. The Allies have 3x5, +3, +2, for a total of 20. The Germans have 9, +3, +4, for a total of 16. The differential is +4 in clear terrain. The result is Ex. *59th Division* and 247/15 Infantry are depleted.

The Allies attack *719th Division* using two support units. The Germans apply one unit in support. The Allies have 2x5, 4, +7, +8, for a total of 29. The Germans have 6, +7, for a total of 13. The differential is +16, resolved on the +10 column of the CRT, using the clear terrain row. The result is De, and *719th Division* is eliminated.

The attack on *64th Division* involves 10/4, 9/3, and 8/3 Infantry, plus 3 Engineer. The Allies add two support units, as do the Germans. The Allies have 3x5, 6, +6, +3, for a total of 30. The Germans have 7, +3, +4, for a total of 14. The differential is +16, resolved on the +10 column of the CRT, using the city row. The result is D2. Unable to retreat, the German unit is depleted.



Turn 4 Allied movement Woensdrecht

Allied Mobile Phase

4/4 Armour moves to 2120 to provide backup for the infantry guarding the Allied flank.

Allied Mobile Combat Phase

The Allies take no action.

The Allies rebuild 3/1 Polish Infantry.

German Movement Phase

The Germans decide that they have to keep attacking in order to keep the Allies off balance. 59th Division exfiltrates to the northeast, while the assault gun units push around Woensdrecht. The three units prepare to attack 45/15 Infantry in the city, despite the Allies having unused support units.



Turn 4 German movement Woensdrecht

In the Breskens Pocket, *1038th Infantry Regiment* crosses the Leopold Canal in order to set up an attack of the three regiments against *155/52 Infantry*.

German Combat Phase

The Germans attack Woensdrecht with 2x6, 7, for a total of 19. The Allies get lucky in their support draw. They have 4, +7, +8, for a total of 19. The combat is resolved at +0 on the city row, resulting in an (A). *1st AG Brigade* is depleted.

In the Breskens Pocket, the Germans have 3x3, for 9, and the Allies have 5. The combat is resolved at +4 on the canal row of the CRT. The result is Ex. *155/52 Infantry* and *1037 Infantry* are depleted.

This ends the German turn, as their mobile units have already moved. They cannot rebuild any units because the depleted units are all adjacent to the enemy.



Turn 4 after German combat Breskens Pocket

Turn 5, October 9-10

Support Units: 10 Allied, 6 German

Allied Movement Phase

The Allies need to do three things at once: First, they need to clear the Breskens Pocket. Second, they need to push down South Beveland towards Walcheren. Third, they need to screen against a counterattack from the German reinforcements expected on Turn 6.

In the east, 49/15 Infantry occupies Esschen to anchor the line. The bulk of the Allied force is committed to an attack on 2nd AG Brigade, but 2nd Division is positioned for an attack on Krabbendijke in the next turn.

The Breskens Pocket, the siege of 64th Division in Schoondijke continues. 155/52 and 7/3 Infantry gang up on the exposed 1038th Infantry.

Allied Combat Phase

The Allies forego bombardment in order to preserve support for possible defensive needs.

The big attack is on 2nd AG, which both side support fully. Because the Allies have committed their armour, the Germans are also able to use their A/T support unit. The Allies have 2x6, 3x5, +8, +6, for a total of 41. The Germans have 6, +4, +5, +8, for 23. The attack is resolved on the +10 column and the clear terrain row. The result is D2. Unable to retreat, 2nd AG is depleted.



Turn 5 Allied movement Woensdrecht

In the attack on Schoondijke, the Allies have 3x5, 6, +6, +6, for a total of 33. The Germans have 6, +6, +4, for a total of 16. The differential is 17. It is resolved on the +10 column of the city row. The result is D2. Unable to retreat, the already-depleted 64th Division is eliminated. 10/4 Infantry advances into Schoondijke.

In the attack on 1038th Infantry, the Allies have 4, 5, +7, +2, for 18. The Germans have 4, +5, +5, for 14. The attack is resolved on the +4 column of the clear terrain row. The result is Ex 1038th Infantry and 7/3 Infantry are depleted.



Turn 5 after Allied combat Breskens Pocket

The Allies have no units eligible to move in the mobile phases.

The Allies rebuild 247/15th Infantry.

German Movement Phase

The Germans stage a general withdrawal, in hopes of rebuilding and linking up with their reinforcements.

In the Breskens Pocket, the Germans have the choice of clinging to defensible terrain in order to delay their eventual elimination or trying to eliminate some Allied units before they go. They choose the latter. The three infantry regiments (two depleted) surround the depleted 155/52 Infantry, in the hopes that an exchange or retreat result will eliminate the Allied unit.

German Combat Phase

The unsupported German attack has 2x2, 3, for a total of 7. The Allies have 4, +8, +3, for a total of 15. The differential is -8, resolved on the -5 column of the clear terrain row. The result is Ae, and the Breskens Pocket is cleared.

The Germans rebuild 1st AG Brigade.



Turn 5 German withdrawal



Turn 5 German Breskens Pocket attack

Turn 6, October 11-12

Support Units: Allied 10, German 5.

Allied Movement Phase

155/52 Infantry is removed from the map, to return later with its division as a reinforcement.

The units in the Breskens Pocket hit the road and head east.

2nd Division deploys for the push down South Beveland. 15th Division and 3/1 Polish Infantry form a defensive line anchored on Esschen and Bergen op Zoom. The armoured brigades hold their positions in case an opportunity presents itself in the mobile phase.

Allied Combat Phase

The Allies bombard 2/AG *Brigade* with two support units, and the German respond with one. The Allies have +6, +3, for a total of 9. The Germans have 5, +4, for 9 as well. The bombardment is resolved on the +0 column of the clear terrain row. The Allies get a lucky Ex, eliminating the depleted German unit.

The Allies bombard 59th *Division* in Roosendaal with two support units. The Germans again respond with one unit for counterbattery fire. The Allies draw a paltry +2, +3, while the Germans have 8, +5. The -8 differential is automatically no effect.

4/2 and 6/2 Infantry, plus 2nd Engineers and two support units, attack *1020 Infantry Regiment* in Krabbendijke. The Germans provide two units in support. The Allies have 2x5, 6, +6, +7, for a total of 29. The Germans have 5, +6, +7, for 18. The differential is +11, resolve on the +10 column of the city row of the CRT. The result is Ex. *1020 Infantry* and 6/2 Infantry are depleted.



Turn 6 Allied movement phase

Allied Mobile Movement Phase

10/1 Polish Armour occupies Woensdrecht, while 4/4 Armour moves east to backstop 15th Division.

Allied Mobile Combat Phase

No activity.

The Allies rebuild 7/3 Infantry.

German Movement Phase

The Germans get six reinforcements: two assault gun and four *fallschirmjägers*. The latter are slow and much better at defense than attack. It's not an impressive force to blunt the Allied drive. However, they can't afford to dawdle. The Allies will get stronger when the Breskens Pocket units redeploy, and another Allied division is on the reinforcement schedule.

The Germans go for an attack on 247/15 Infantry. *1 AG Brigade* infiltrates between the target and 46/15 Infantry. *59th Division* and *4 AG Brigade* join the attack. The *fallschirmjäger* provide flank security. *3 AG Brigade* stays in reserve, in case an opportunity develops in the mobile phase.

In South Beveland, *1020 Infantry Regiment* falls back to Schore. It will take the Canadians some time to deploy into the flooded areas before they can attack in force.



Turn 6 German combat phase

German Combat Phase

The Germans attack, using their remaining support unit. The Allies provide two support units in defense. The Germans have 2x6, 7, +8, for a total of 27. The Allies have 4, +6, +8, for 18. The

attack is resolved on the +9 column of the clear terrain row. The result is Ex—a disappointment for the Germans. 4 AG and 247/15 are depleted.

German Mobile Phase

Without a breakout, the Germans leave 3 AG *Brigade* in reserve at Roosendaal.

Turn 7, October 13-14

Support Units: Allied 9, German 5.

Allied Movement Phase

The Allies receive the three regiments of the U.S. 104th Division at Antwerp. They set off on the road towards Woensdrecht.

The Breskens Pocket force continues to move east on the road towards Antwerp.

2nd Division chases 1020th *Infantry Regiment*. 4/2 Infantry makes contact with the Germans at Schore.

The depleted 247/15 Infantry switches places with 44/15 Infantry occupying Esschen.



Turn 7 Allied combat.

Allied Combat Phase

The Allies decide to try an infantry-only attack on 1 AG *Brigade*, which has trapped itself inside their ZoCs. First, they try a preliminary bombardment with two support units. The Germans

respond with one unit of counter-battery fire.³ The Allies have +3, +8; the Germans, 6, +3. The bombardment is resolved at +2 on the clear terrain row. The result, A1, is no effect for bombardment.

Now 44/15 and 46/15 assault the German unit, aided by two support units. The Germans allocate two of their own. The Allies have 2x5, +6, +8; the Germans, 6, +3, +5. The attack is resolved at +10 on the clear terrain row. The result is Ex. *I/AG* and 46/15 are depleted.

The Allies decide to try to bounce *1020th Infantry Regiment* out of Schore with only 4/2 Infantry and support units. The Germans also commit two support units. The Allies have 5, +6, +8; the Germans have 3, +8, +5. The combat is resolved at +3 on the city row. The result is No Effect.



Turn 7 First attack on Schore

Allied Mobile Movement Phase

The Allies release their two armour brigades to have another go at the now-depleted *I/AG Brigade*.

Allied Mobile Combat Phase

The Allied tanks attack, accompanied by two support units. The Germans have no support units left, but they do have their antitank fire. The Allies have 2x6, +3, +8; the Germans, 5, +5. The attack is resolved at +10 on the clear terrain row. The result is Ex. *I/AG* is eliminated, and the Allies deplete 4/4 Armour. The Allies choose not to advance after combat.

At the end of the turn, the Allies rebuild 46/15 Infantry and 4/4 Armour.

³ I randomly choose between one and two support units, just to keep the game interesting.



Turn 7 Allied mobile combat phase

German Movement Phase

The Allies have only one support unit left, and so the Germans can plan some attacks with more confidence of knowing the differential. They surge forward to attack two of 15th Division's brigades. On South Beveland, 1020th Infantry Regiment decides to hold on a Schore for one more turn, despite the certainty of a stronger attack developing.

German Combat Phase

3 AG and 4 AG Brigades attack 44/15 Infantry. Neither side provides support. The Germans have 5, 6; the Allies, 4. The combat is resolved on the +7 column of the clear terrain row. The result is Ex. 4/15 Infantry and 3 AG Brigade are depleted.



Turn 7 After German combat phase

59th Division, *1/3 FJ*, and *1st HG* attack 46/15 Infantry. The Allies provide their last support unit. The Germans have 7, 2x3; the Allies, 4, +2. The combat is resolved on the +7 column of the clear terrain row. The result is D2. The Allies retreat southwest through Woensdrecht. *59th Division* advances to occupy the town, and *1/3 FJ* advances behind them.

Turn 8, October 15-16

Support Units: Allied 9, German 5.

Allied Movement Phase

Most of the Breskens Pocket force is traveling through Antwerp.

2 Engineers swings into line next to 4/2 Infantry for the next assault on Schore. The rest of 2nd Division shuffles west behind them.

46/15 Infantry infiltrates to the northwest around Woensdrecht, allowing the Americans to swing into position. The armour brigades slip through a gap in German lines to set up an attack on *3 AG Brigade*.

Allied Combat Phase

2 Engineer and 4/2 Infantry make another attempt to evict *1020th Infantry* from Shore. Both sides are supported by two units. The Allies have 6, 5, +2, +6; the Germans, 3, +4, +5. The combat is resolved on the +7 column of the city row. The result is No Effect.



Turn 8 Second attack on Schore

44/15 Infantry and the three regiments of *104th Division* attack *59th Division* in Woensdrecht. The Allies provide two support units, and the Germans one. The Allies have 3x5, 3, +3, +6; the Germans have 8, +4. The combat is resolved on the +10 column of the city row. The result is D2. With no retreat route, the depleted *59th Division* is eliminated. 414/104 Infantry advances into Woensdrecht.



Turn 8 Allied combat phase

4/4 and 10/1 Polish Armour, plus the depleted 46/15 Infantry, attack 3 AG *Brigade* with two support units. The Germans also provide two support units in defense. The Allies have 2x6, 3, +7, +8; the Germans have 5, +8, +3. The combat is resolved on the +10 column of the clear terrain row. The result is D3. 3 AG *Brigade* retreats into Roosendaal, pursued by 4/4 Armour and 44/15 Infantry. 10/1 Polish Armour advances into the battle hex.

There is no activity in the mobile phases.

At the end of the turn, the Allies rebuild 44/15 and 6/2 Infantry.

German Movement Phase

In Schore, 1020th *Infantry Regiment* sits tight. It will be one more turn before their retreat route is cut off.

In the east, the Germans have lost most of their offensive power, three of their units are cut off, and the Allies still have some support units up their sleeve. This is tricky. They can mount a strong attack on 44/15 Infantry, but only by surrounding it with zones of control. That means a retreat result will deplete the unit in place instead of forcing it to retreat—which would open up the pocket. If the Germans leave the Allies a retreat route, they risk an unsuccessful attack in the face of enemy firepower. They decide to throw everything they have into two attacks, on 4/15 Infantry and 10/1 Polish Armour.

1/3 FJ, 1st HG, and 4 AG attack 10/1 Polish Armour. The Allies provide one support unit. The Germans have 2x3, 5; the Allies have 3, +3. The attack is resolved at +5 in clear terrain. The result is No Effect.



Turn 8 German combat

1/1 FJ, *1/2 FJ*, and *1 AG* attack *44/15 Infantry*. The Allies support with two units. The Germans have *2x3*, *5*; the Allies have *4*, *+2*, *+6*. The attack is resolved at *-1* in clear terrain. The result is *Ex*. *1/2 FJ* and *44/15 Infantry* are depleted.

Turn 9, Oct 17-18

Support Units: Allied *9*, German *5*.

Allied Movement Phase

The situation is confused, as both sides have some of the other surrounded.

4/4 Armour infiltrates to the southeast, allowing the battered *44/15 Infantry* to take its place in Roosendaal, where it can better withstand German attacks. *10/1 Polish Armour* swings northwest of Esschen, to join those units in an attack on *1/2 FJ*. Its compatriots in *3/1 Polish Infantry* move into line next to them, aimed at *4 AG Brigade*. In this they are joined by *46/15 Infantry*. Meanwhile, the Americans swing around Bergen op zoom for an attack on *1/3 FJ*, to keep the Germans distracted.

The Breskens Pocket force is now reaching the outskirts of Woensdrecht, except for *3/7 Infantry*, which is now approaching Antwerp.

In South Beveland, *2 Engineers* infiltrates to the northwest, progressively encircling Schore. *4/2 Infantry* discovers that there is room to infiltrate west, completing the investment of the city. The rest of *2nd Division* now swings into position. It looks like *1020th Infantry Regiment* waited a little too long.



Turn 9 Third attack on Schoore

2nd Division makes its third assault on Schoore, with maximum support. The Germans also give 1020nd Infantry Regiment two support units. The Allies have 3x5, 6, +6, +3; the Germans have 3, +5, +6. The combat is resolved at +10 on the city column. The result is D2. With no retreat route, 1020 Infantry Regiment is eliminated. 6/2 Infantry enters the city.

3/1 Polish Infantry and 46/15 Infantry attack 4 AG Brigade. Both sides give full support. The Allies have 2x5, +2, +7; the Germans have 5, +7, +8. The combat is resolved at -1 in clear terrain. The result is A2, and the Allied units retreat.



Turn 9 Allied combat phase

44/15 Infantry, 4/4 Armour, and 10/1 Polish Armour attack 1/2 FJ with two support units. The Germans provide one support unit plus their free antitank support. The Allies have 2x6, 4, +2, +2; the Germans have 5, +5, +8. The combat is resolved at +2 in clear terrain. The result is D1. 1/2 FJ retreats one hex west (the only way it can go), displacing 4 AG Brigade to the northwest. 10/1 Polish Armour advances.

The Americans attack *1/3 FJ*. The Allies have 2x5, 3; the Germans, 6. The attack is resolved at +7 in clear terrain. The result is D3. Unable to retreat, *1/3 FJ* is depleted.

There is no activity in the mobile phases.

At the end of the turn, the Allies rebuild 247/15 Infantry.

German Movement Phase

1019th Infantry Regiment deploys from Flushing (where it has been the whole game thus far) to cover the Walcheren Island causeway against the 2nd Division's advance. In the east the Germans slip *1st/HG* into Bergen op Zoom and establish a line from there to Steenberg. Most of their units are committed to attack on 413/104 Infantry, in order to free *1/3 FJ* from entrapment.



Turn 9 German combat phase

German Combat Phase

3 AG, 4 AG, *1/3 FJ*, and *1/2 FJ* attack 413/104 Infantry, which is supported by two units. The Germans have 2x5, 3, 2; the Allies have 6, +3, +6. The combat is resolved at +0 in clear terrain. The result is A2. The German units all retreat, but that leaves *1st/HG* stuck on its own.

Turn 10, October 19-20

Support Units: Allied 8, German 4.

Allied Movement Phase

Now that the road between Woensdrecht and Schore is clear, the Walcheren Island assault group is eligible to make its landing. Two brigades of 49th Division (147/49 and 148/49) land on either side of 119th *Infantry Regiment* holding the causeway. Another (146/49) lands at a coastal road hex on the north side of the island, while 2 Armour lands at Flushing. All of the landings are unopposed.



Turn 10 Amphibious assault

2nd Division races down the road through Goes to meet the amphibious force, with 2 Engineers taking the lead at the causeway.

In the east, most of the arriving 3rd Division deploys to dig 1st/HG out of Bergen op Zoom. 104th Division chases after 1/3 FJ. 15th Division moves around to flank the German position from the east. 4/4 Infantry holds Woensdrecht, while 3/1 Polish Infantry holds the line between the Americans and 3rd Division. The armour brigades remain in reserve. 3/7 Infantry passes through Antwerp.

Allied Combat Phase

On Walcheren Island, 147/49 and 2 Engineers attack 1019th *Infantry Regiment*, using two support markers—one of which is naval gunfire. The Allies have 5, 6, +10, +6. The Germans allocate two of their precious support units to the defense, giving them 4, +6, +7. The attack is resolved at +10 in clear terrain (noting that 147/49 has outflanked the causeway). The result is D2. Unable to retreat, 1019th *Infantry Regiment* is depleted.



Turn 10 Combat on Walcheren Island



Turn 10 Allied combat phase

3rd Division's attack on Bergen op Zoom gets two support units, and so the forces are 2x5, 6, +3, +6. The Germans add one support unit, making their defense 6, +5. The combat is resolved at +10 on the city row of the CRT. The result is D2, and 1st/HG is depleted.

Turn 11, October 21-22

Support Units: Allies 8, Germans 4.

Allied Movement Phase

All of the units on Walcheren congregate for an attack on *1019th Infantry Regiment*. Most of 2nd Division is still backed up on the road to the causeway.

15th Division positions itself for an attack on Steenberghe from the north. The Poles and the Americans prepare to attack *1/2 FJ*. 3rd Division occupies Bergen op Zoom and moves into contact with the assault gun brigades. 10/4 Infantry moves up to the vicinity of Roosendaal to finally reunite with its divisional armour brigade. The two armour brigades stay in reserve, looking for an opportunity in the mobile phase.

Allied Combat Phase

The attack on Walcheren Island involves all of the units of 49th Division, 2 Engineers, and 2 Armour. The Allies apply two support units. The Allies have 3x5, 2x6, +3, +3. The Germans add two support units plus their antitank fire, giving them 3, +8, +5, +5. The attack is resolved at +10 using the clear terrain row, because the engineers negate the flooded terrain. The result is D2, which eliminates the surrounded, depleted German unit.



Turn 11 Walcheren Island combat

The attack on Roosendaal involves the entire 15th Division against the reduced *1/1 FJ*. The Allies add two support units, while the Germans add none. The Allies have 3x5, +7, +8. The Germans have 5. The attack is resolved at +10 on the city row. The result is D2, which eliminates the German unit. 46/15 Infantry advances into the city.

Two American regiments and the Poles attack *1/2 FJ*. The Americans add two support units, while the Germans add 1. The Allies have 3x5, +8, +6, while the Germans have 6, +3. The attack is resolved at +10 in clear terrain. The result is D2. Unable to retreat, the German unit is depleted.



Turn 11 Allied combat

9/3 and 7/3 Infantry attack 4/AG *Brigade* with the help of two support units, including the remaining naval fire. The Germans provide one support unit. The Allies have 2x5, +10, +6, while the Germans have 5, +6. The attack is resolved at +10 in clear terrain. The result is Ex. 3/7 Infantry is depleted, and 4/AG is eliminated.

Allied Mobile Movement Phase

4/4 Armour moves through Roosendaal and positions itself to surround the remaining German units with zones of control. 10/1 Polish Armour moves through Bergen op Zoom and occupies the hex formerly held by 4/AG.

The Allies rebuild 415/104 Infantry.

At this point, the Allies have achieved their victory condition of eliminating all German units west of the victory point line. While it's not clear whether that condition is a "sudden death" victory or applies at the end of the final game turn, it is very clear that the Germans aren't going to be able to reverse it. The game is over.

Final Thoughts

Whenever I sit down to play one of these Decision folio games, I'm a little skeptical. The rules are so generic and retro—how good could it be? Well, once you get started, they are fun to play. On a local, turn-by-turn basis, you have interesting choices to make. There are attacks to arrange and support to allocate. You have to think about what the enemy will do if you slip through the ZoC in order to surround that unit. You have to consider how you can further your long-term

goals. There aren't that many pieces, and it moves along quickly. You don't have to spend much time thumbing through the rulebook, because you've played this kind of game so many times before. This game isn't a deeply immersive experience, but it was designed to emphasize fun and playability. It meets those objectives.

The play balance certainly favors the Allies. I can't see how the Germans can win. They have to keep a presence west of the victory line for a long twenty turns. They don't start out with much over there. Their reinforcements all arrive from the east, and the Allied player will be able to seal off South Beveland before substantial German forces are on the map. After that, it's a question of holding off German thrusts while they mop up the remaining regiments. In the game I played, the Germans were in danger of being wiped out, with almost half of the game turns left to play. The best advice for someone playing the German side is to have fun with each turn's activity, because you're eventually going to lose.

Support units are the dominant feature of this game. As a rule of thumb, each support unit adds as much strength to a combat as a ground unit. Thus, an attack on a single unit is really an attack on three, if the defender is prepared to give full support. If you don't have support units and the enemy does, attacking is a dangerous activity—as the Germans found out in the play-through. The Allied player starts out his turn with his full allocation of support units, but he has to consider how many it is prudent to hold for defensive purposes. His units can get pretty banged up if he gets too aggressive. Bombardment can be effective if there is no counterbattery support. However, if the defender allocates at least one unit for that purpose, the bombardment will probably have no effect. Indeed, it seemed that the best use of bombardment was to force the Germans to allocate their scarce support units defending against it. With those units accounted for, the Allied player had less worry about how they would be used later in the turn. That works in this game because the Allies have such an advantage in support. If the allocations were more balanced, the two-for-one tradeoff would not be worthwhile.

The special German antitank support unit means that the two Allied armour brigades⁴ must attack together or not at all. The Allied units have attack strengths of 6, and the German support unit is a +5. Thus, it can essentially neutralize one Allied brigade. If the two brigades attack together, they can be confident of adding a net 7 to the combat.

The game is designed for fun, but the cover sheet does say “historically accurate.” Is it? Well, no. The map is reasonable. The unit counters have the right designations—although I confess I'm not an expert on this campaign's order of battle. However, if we consider that the objective of the campaign was to clear the Scheldt of German shore batteries, one is surprised that there are no such batteries in the game. The victory conditions require eliminating the German field forces. I suppose that must be an abstraction for clearing the fortifications, but the game could easily accommodate a requirement to occupy fixed locations on the coast.

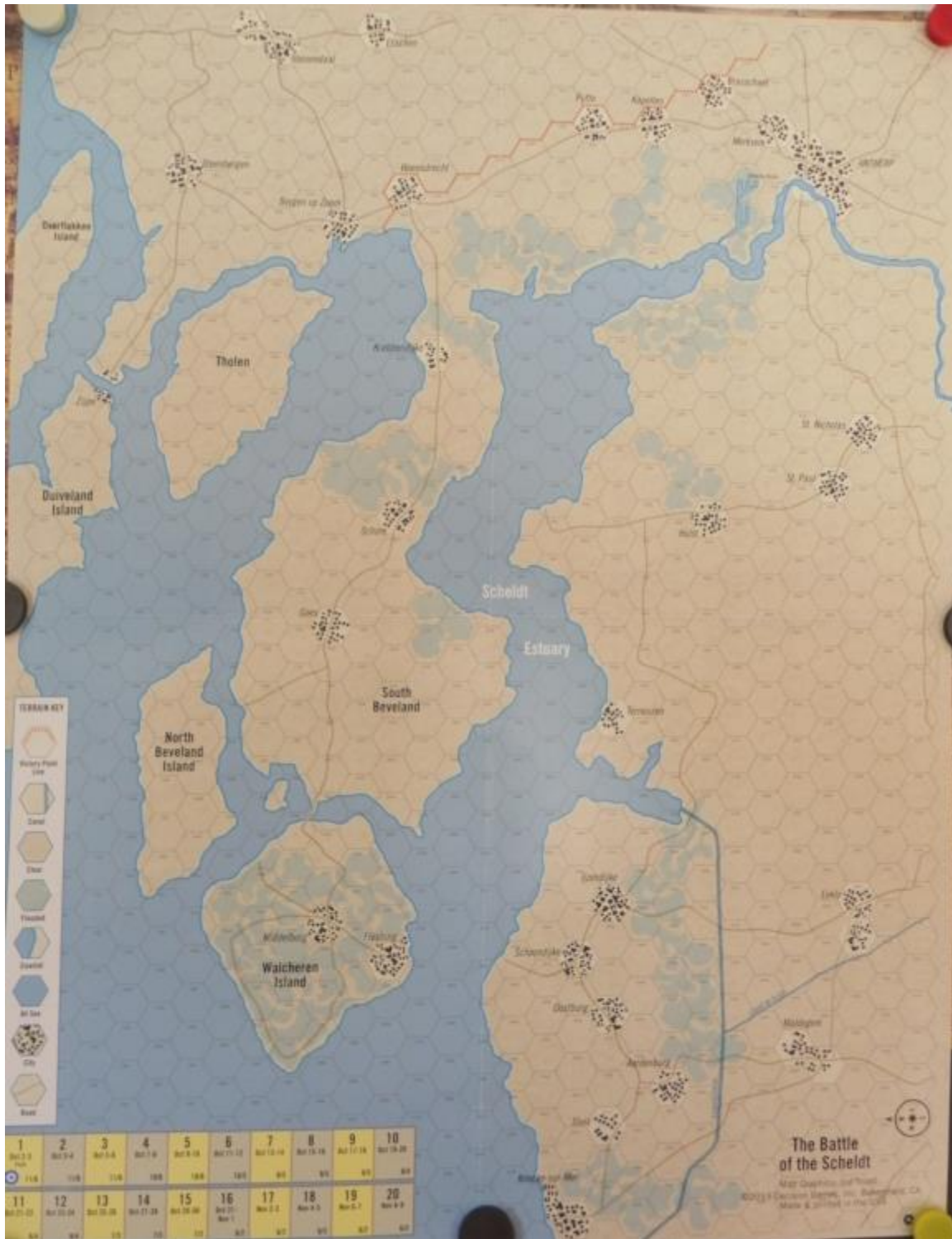
Many of the troops who participated in the landings on Walcheren (Operation Infatuate) were veterans of Normandy. They said that the former landings were worse. Sixteen of 26 vessels in the support group were sunk by shore batteries, drawing fire from the landing craft. In the game,

⁴ There's a third one, but it doesn't enter until late in the game.

there is only one regiment on the island. It's physically impossible for it to defend more than three coastal hexes, counting its own hex and its ZoC. The Allies will always land unopposed.

To summarize, *Battle of the Scheldt* is similar to many of the games in Decision's folio series. It is easy to set up and play. The actual play is fun. The map and counters are reasonably accurate. However, the progress of the game and its victory conditions have little resemblance to the historical campaign or its objectives.

Appendix: Reference Maps



Complete map sheet. North is to the left.



Breskens Pocket



Walcheren Island & South Beveland



Eastern area. Note dashed victory line.