

FORGOTTEN 2

HOPE

La Horgne Camouflage & Markings by Matt Baker

In the last dev blog, we took a look at the specific details that had gone into the camouflage and markings behind the vehicles that will be portrayed on our upcoming Stonne map in 2.6. In the one before that we went over a lot of the basic concepts that regulated the camouflage and markings of the French and German vehicles in 1940. If you haven't had a chance, give that first dev blog a read to understand how each army decided what to use when marking their tanks for battle.

Up next, we'll discuss the map La Horgne, made by LaHire and Cpt Bocquier that depicts the 1st Panzer Division's struggle for the village of La Horgne against the 3rd Spahi Brigade on the 15th of May, 1940.

Axis

We'll go over some of the main German vehicles portrayed on the La Horgne map below;

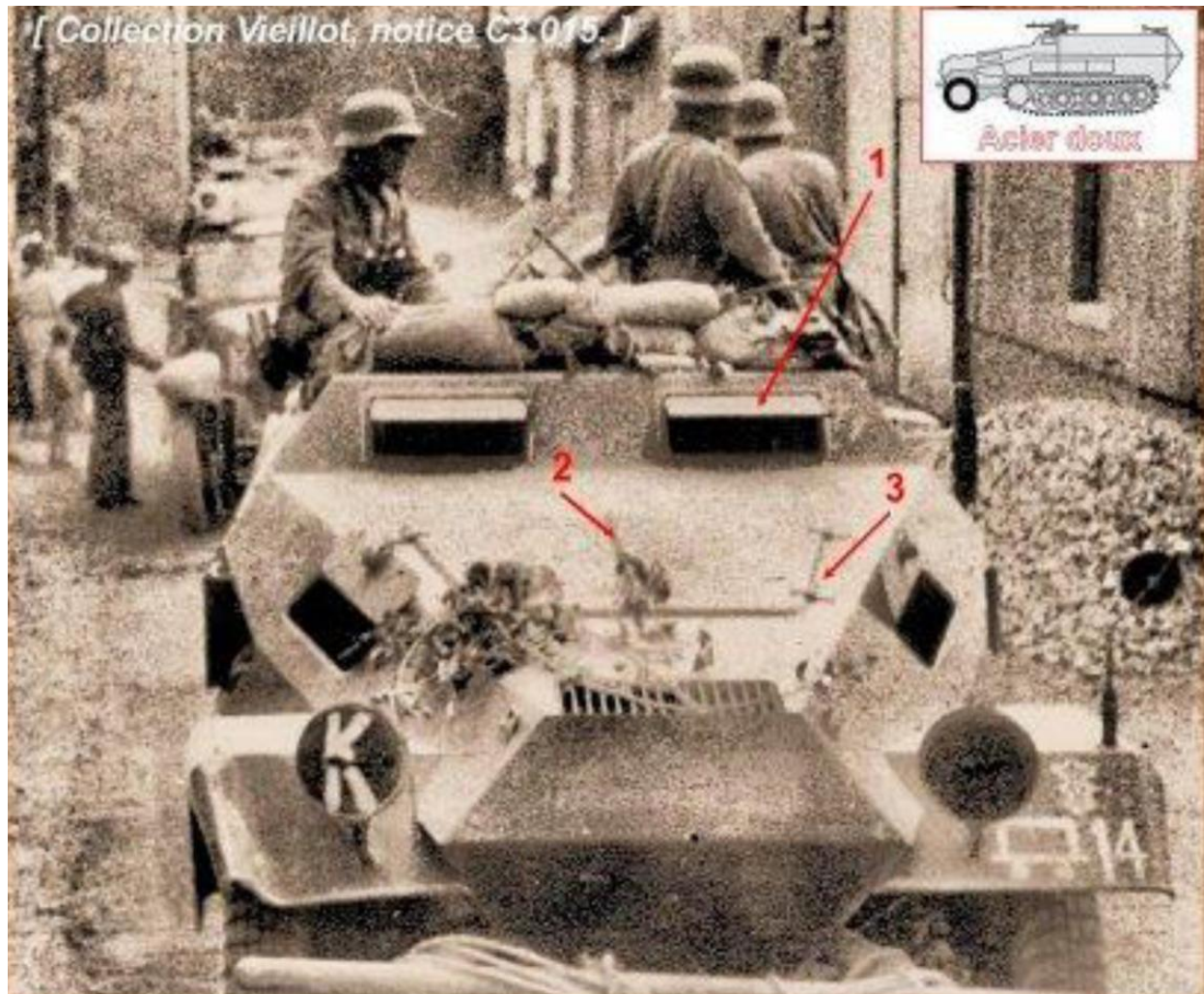
Sdkfz 251/1 Ausf. B





The Sdkfz 251 on this map belongs to the 14. Kompanie of the III. Bataillon of 1st Schützen Regiment of the 1st Schützen Brigade of the 1st Panzer Division.

This vehicle is marked after real photos of these vehicles in and around La Horgne in May of 1940;





The Schützen Regiments of the Panzer Divisions in 1940 were for the motorized infantry. They were made up of 3 Battalions. Each Battalion had a headquarters (stab), a Pioneer platoon, and 5 companies. The 5 companies were ordered numerically for each battalion;

I. Battalion - companies 1-5

II. Battalion - companies 6-10

III. Battalion - companies 11-15

Each company had its own role and in the III. Battalion, companies 11-13 were the Schützen (riflemen) companies while the 14th company was the MG company and the 15th was the schwere or heavy weapons company which typically included the 5cm mortars.

The 1st Schützen Regiment was the first unit to be equipped with the new Mannschaffs Transport Wagen (MTW) when In 6 provided orders to outfit them with 155 vehicles on the 18th of October 1939. 10 of these vehicles would go to the MG companies in each battalion.

Like many other vehicles, this halftrack is camouflaged in the 2-tone scheme laid out in the 1937 order.

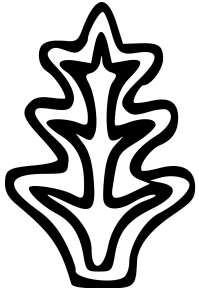
As per regulations, the Balkenkreuz is carried on the hull sides. It is also carried on the lower portion of the rear door.

The upper portion of the rear door has been chalked in white as an air recognition marking.

The license plate number specifies 'WH' for Wehrmacht, Heer (army) on the rear license plates of the vehicle.

On the front left bumper and the rear left quarter panel, this vehicle carries the Motorized Infantry Platoon map symbol of a square with two circles below it. The company number '14' is carried to the right.

Above this is carried the insignia of the 1st Panzer Division, the oak leaf (typically flipped upside down);



On the right front headlight, this vehicle carries a 'K' marking signifying Panzer Group Kleist, a Corps level unit commanded by Ewald von Kleist of which the 1st Panzer Division was a part during the Fall Gelb operation. This marking was common on many vehicles of this group.

While many of the vehicles in this company are Ausf. As (with 3 protected vision ports along each side of the rear crew compartment), there are also some photos of Ausf. B vehicles (without the vision ports) which is the type our vehicle represents.

Interestingly, there are also a few photos (including the one above of the front facing Sdkfz 251) that depict this unit as having some of the few "unarmored" half tracks. These were called ungepanzerte (unarmored) M.T.W.s and were made with thin steel sheets of 4mm unhardened carbon steel (as opposed to the typical 14.5mm) which were supposedly still proof against lead bullets fired from 7.92mm rifles and machine guns. 305 of these types of vehicles were created in 1939 due to an insufficient manufacturing capacity of armored plates. They can be distinguished by the reinforcement placed down the middle of the front engine hatch as well as the thinner Sehklappen (which is harder to spot in photos).

Although these thinner armored half tracks are not represented in Forgotten Hope 2, it is interesting to note that some of these vehicles still appeared in Panzer Divisions during the Operations in 1940.

Panzer II Ausf. C





The Panzer II on this map belongs to the 5th Tank of the leichte Zug of the 8th Kompanie, II. Abteilung, Panzer Regiment 2 of the 1st Panzer Division.

The markings are mainly copied from a real photo of a tank at La Horgne in 1940.





Like many other vehicles, this tank is camouflaged in the 2-tone scheme laid out in the 1937 order.

This Panzer II carries its Balkenkreuz on the superstructure sides and left rear as per regulations.

The air recognition marking on this tank is in the form of a flag tied down to the rear engine deck as can be seen in photos. Flags as a form of aerial recognition can be seen in many of the early German campaigns and was sometimes done by different armies throughout the war. The flags were mainly placed facing upwards for aircraft to identify them, and are typically seen during large offensives for the Germans (i.e. Fall Gelb or Operation Barbarossa) when coordinating between large formations of ground and air assets making big pushes into a country. As the campaigns wore on and fronts solidified, they started to get discarded.



The two regiments of the 1st Panzer Division (PzRgt 1 & 2) typically carried small to medium sized white numbers on the turret that identified the company number, followed by the platoon (zug) and the individual tank within the platoon. The tanks of PzRgt 2 carried a dot after the number to differentiate them from PzPgt 1.

The 8th company was the Mittlere Panzer Kompanie (Medium Tank Company) in the II. Abteilung, which also held the Panzer IV infantry support tanks. Per the table of organization, this Kompanie would be made up of;

- Kompanie Trupp with a PzBefh I command vehicle a Pz II and a Pz IV
- leichte Zug with (5) Pz II tanks
- 1.Zug with (4) Pz IV tanks
- 2.Zug with (3) Pz IV tanks

However, there is some evidence to suggest that the 1st & 2nd Zug only had (3) Pz IV tanks and (2) Pz II tanks were grouped into a 3rd Zug within the Kompanie. This may be possible considering the substantial changes that the Panzer Divisions were going through prior to Fall Gelb. This typically led to a mix of equipment and organization between old and new practices.

Both the Kompanie Trupp and the leichte Zug were considered part of the 'command section' and carried numbers starting with '80'. (the first company '81,' the second '82,' and the third '83,') This tank carries the number '805' which would put it as the 5th tank in the leichte Zug of the 8th company.

This tank also carried the 1st Panzer Division insignia on the front of the turret to the left of the main gun mount and a smaller one in the rear just above the rear vision port.

The Panzer II in the real life photo is an Ausf. a, as some of the Panzers in 1940 were a mix of older models. However the Ausf. C type that we have in-game, was very common and the markings of the company are typical as to what you'd see within that unit.

Panzer III Ausf. F





The Panzer III Ausf. F on this map belongs to the 3rd Tank of the 4th Zug of the 6th Kompanie, II. Abteilung, Panzer Regiment 2 of the 1st Panzer Division.

Again, the markings are mainly copied from a real photo of a tank at La Horgne in 1940.



It is camouflaged in the 2-tone scheme of dunkelgrau and dunkelbraun and carries a standard set of Balkenkreuz on the superstructure sides.

It also carries the oak leaf of the 1st Panzer Division in front of the tactical numbers on either side of the turret.

Like other PzRgt.2 tanks, it displays medium sized white numbers on the turret that identify the company number, followed by the platoon (zug) and the individual tank within the platoon with a dot after the number.

The 6th company (along with the 5th) in the II. Abteilung was under the Lichte Panzer Kompanie (Light Tank Company) tank establishment, which also held the Panzer III tanks. Per the table of organization, this Kompanie would be made up of;

- Kompanie Trupp with a PzBefh I command vehicle (2) Pz II and a Pz IV
- 1.Zug with (2) Pz I tanks and (3) Pz II tanks
- 2.Zug with (2) Pz I tanks and (3) Pz II tanks
- 3.Zug with (3) Pz III tanks
- 4.Zug with (3) Pz III tanks

The tactical number '643,' denotes this as the 3rd tank in the 4th Zug.

Panzer IV Ausf. D





The Panzer IV on this map belongs to the 2nd vehicle in the 3.Zug of the 8th Company of the II. Abteilung, 2nd Panzer Regiment of the 1st Panzer Division.

The markings are mainly copied from a real photo of the tank in France 1940.



It is again camouflaged in the 2-tone scheme of dunkelgrau and dunkelbraun.

This tank carries Balkenkreuz on the left and right superstructure side per regulation (the one on the left covered by stowage). It also has the older style of 'filled in' Balkenkreuz on the top of the turret underneath the commander's cupola as shown in photos.

This tank carried the 1st Panzer Division oak leaf on the front of the turret underneath the observation hatch.

The tactical number '832' is carried on the turret sides as well as the turret rear underneath the commander's cupola.

Again, it sports the dot after the number signifying 2.PzRgt and the number indicates the tanks position within the company.

The Panzer IV in the real life photo is an Ausf. B or C, as some of the Panzers in 1940 were still older models. However the Ausf. D that we have in-game, was very common and the markings of the company are typical as to what you'd see within that unit.

Allies

We'll go over each of the French vehicles portrayed on the La Horgne map below;

Citroën Type 23 U

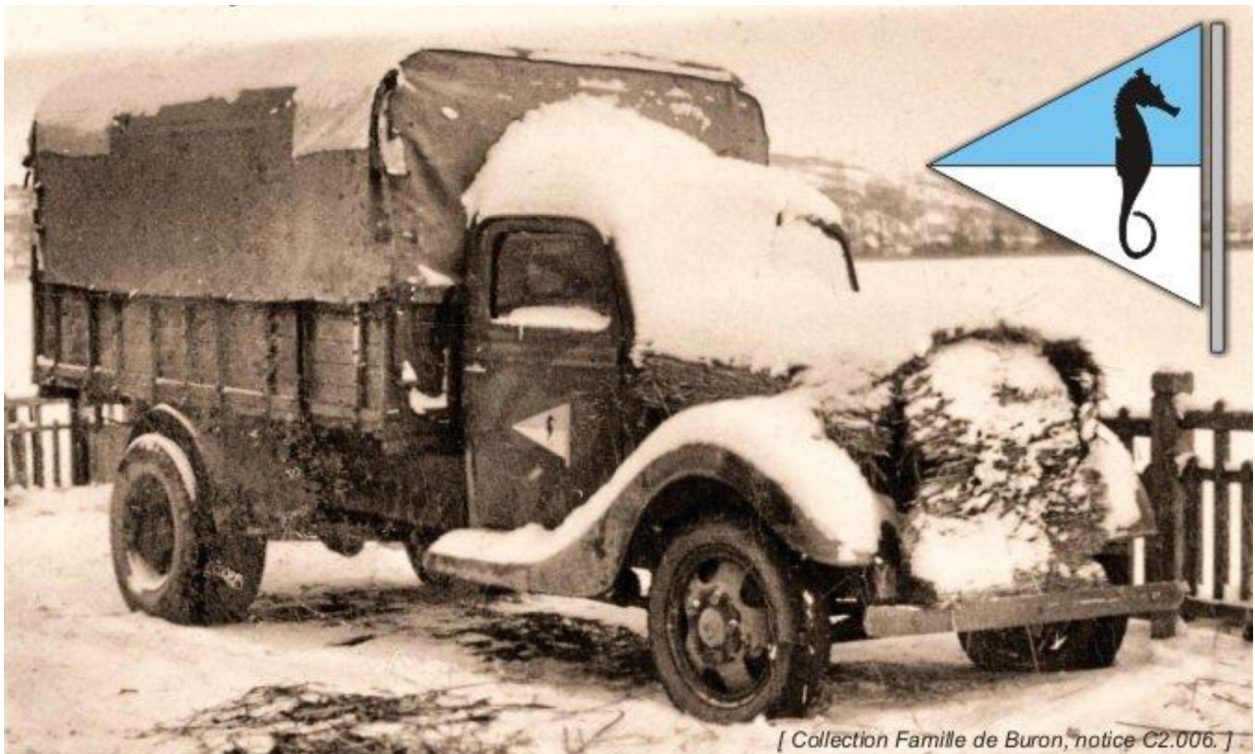




The Citroën Type 23 U on this map belongs to the 3rd Spahis Brigade.

This vehicle is painted in the standard military green with spots of ochre outlined in brown.

It's markings are taken from some real photos of Spahi vehicles around La Horgne;

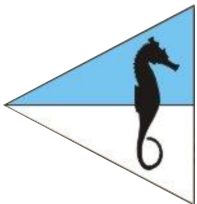




It carries the blue diamond of the cavalry carried inside a white rectangle on the front left fender as the Spahis were a cavalry unit.

The license plate marking has the French tricolor followed by an 'M' and the vehicle serial.

On each door of the cab is painted the insignia of the 3rd Brigade; the silhouette of a seahorse on a pennant in the blue and white colors of a cavalry brigade.



Hotchkiss 39





Both the short and long barrel Hotchkiss 39 on this map possibly belong to the 2nd Platoon of the 1st Company of either the 14e BCC or the 27e BCC.

This Hotchkiss was typically painted at the factory but could have sometimes been repainted in the field. This tank seems to be repainted with the colors that the 3rd Spahi Brigade had at hand while painting their trucks. It consists of a base of standard military green with a camouflage of ochre outlined in black.

The matricule (registration number) is carried on the front and rear of the vehicle in white and has the french tricolor followed by the number block in white.

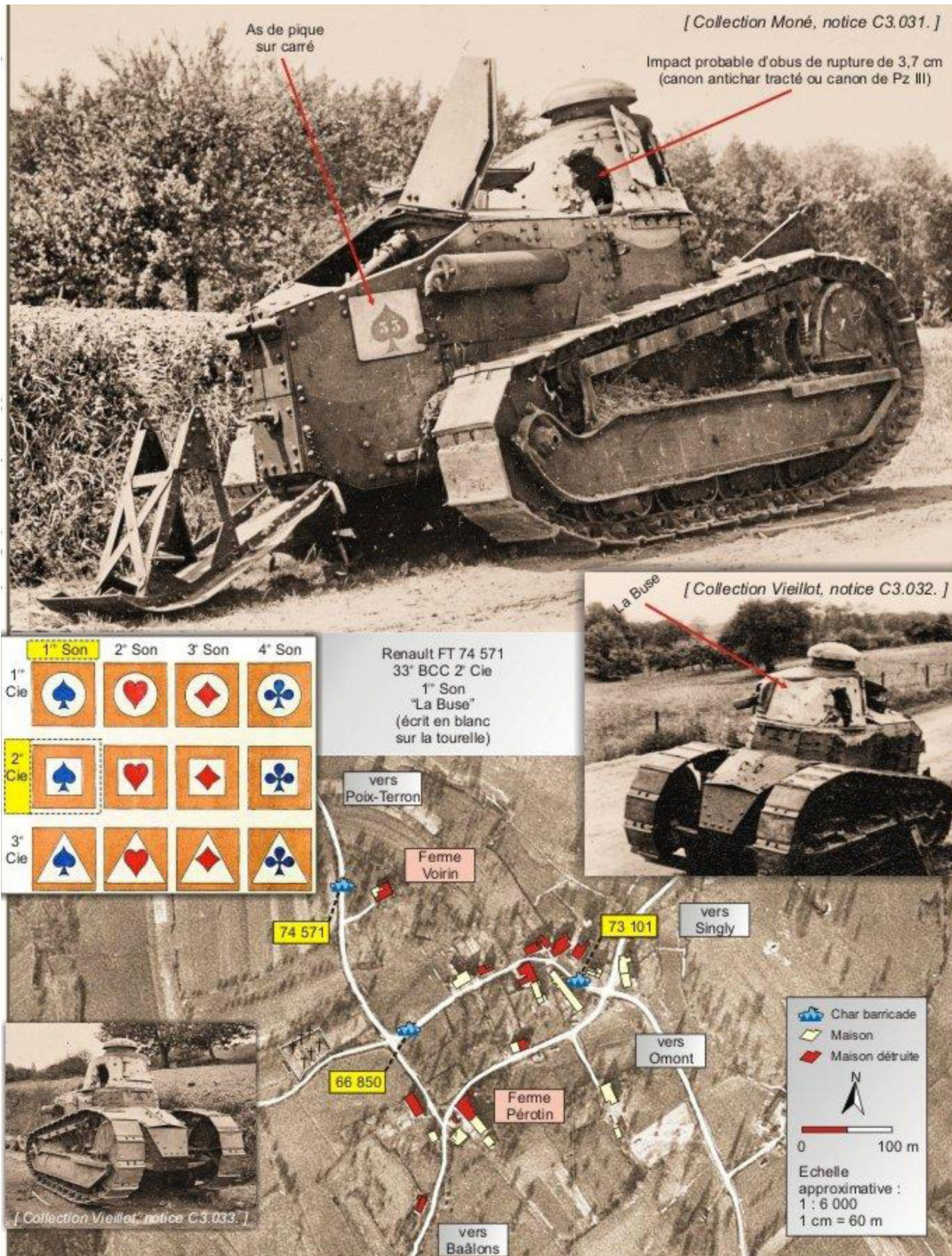
It is assumed that the tanks of this unit used the 'standard' playing card symbol system, making the blue heart a designator of the 2nd Platoon of the 2nd Company.

Renault FT



The Renault FT on this map belongs to the 1st Squadron of the 2nd Company and of 33rd Bataillon de Chars de Combat (BCC).

The markings were done based on a few real photos of other tanks in the squadron at the time of the battle of La Horgne.



Considering the age and effectiveness of the Renault FT at the time of the battle of France, the tanks of this battalion were mainly used as roadblocks within the town to help slow down the enemy.



The tank is painted in a scheme of brown, green and a light ochre in horizontal stripes ascending from darker to lighter. During many of the French's experiments with camouflage, this pattern displayed the idea that the darker 'earth' colors gave way to the lighter 'sky' colors from bottom to top to help the tank blend into the horizon from a distance.

The tank carries a serial number designated by the army on the lower suspension cover in white. These were given in blocks to the factories. The serial number suggests that the FT was built at the Berliet factory which typically had numbers in the 73000 range. Some of the manufacturers painted their own serial numbers on the left hull side under the turret, which is what the 'P71' might signify.

A French flaming bomb inscribed with the number '1' directly follows the serial number. The French flaming bomb is found in this location on many Renault FT tanks, and may have been a national identifier on older tanks like the French tricolor on WW2 tanks. The reasoning for the number inside the bomb is not known.

On the rear of the tank a white square carries a blue spade denoting the 1st Squadron of the 1st Company. The inscribed '33' denotes the 33e BCC. The 33e BCC used a variation on the playing card marking system that is broken down in the photo above.

Hopefully these marking dev blogs have been of interest to you, and will give you a new appreciation for the amount of time and effort that goes into our goal of making Forgotten Hope 2 the most immersive WW2 FPS ever. Hopefully, as we update old textures on existing maps, we can do more of these dev blogs to help further immerse you in this great mod.

We hope you enjoy! 'Till next time!

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