

# The Maginot Line

*By Greg Moore*

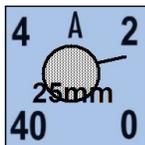
Built from 1930 to 1940 and at a cost of over 5 billion French Francs, the Maginot Line was a fortified line in depth, usually 25 to 25 kilometers deep. It consisted of an intricate system of strong points, fortifications, and military facilities such as border guard posts, communications centers, infantry shelters, barricades, artillery, machine gun, anti-tank gun emplacements, supply depots, infrastructure facilities, observation posts, etc. Most of each structure was underground with only the fighting elements exposed. The line was intended to be an unassailable defensive barrier which would deter Germany from attacking France. In the end, the Germans sent most of their assault against France around the line. These counters and scenarios are intended to give us a chance to game historical and what-if attacks on the line itself. The parts which concern us for Panzer Leader purposes are the front line fortified strong points consisting of turrets, cupolas, and embrasures.

## Turrets

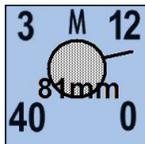
There were 154 turrets in the Maginot line. These turrets were alloy steel and would retract into the ground until almost flush. They would pop up to fire and could rotate 360 degrees. They were armed with a variety of weapons. The various types are represented in this counter set as follows:



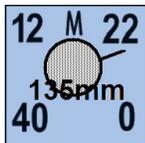
**Reibel Jumelage Mitrailieuse** (Reibel Twin Machine Gun)  
Twin mount drum-fed Reibel 7.5mm machine guns



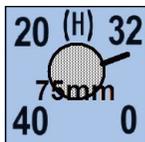
**Arme Mixte** (Mixed Weapon)  
25mm anti-tank gun, 2 machine guns, 50mm mortar



**81mm Mortar**  
Breech loading 81mm mortars firing at a fixed angle of 45 degrees. Range was set by adjusting the number of charges and the amount of gas vented.



**Lance-Bombe** (bomb thrower) **135mm Howitzer**  
A very short-barreled howitzer with the characteristics of a heavy mortar.



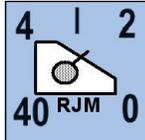
**75mm Canon-Obusier** (gun-howitzer)  
75mm gun/howitzer. With plenty of ammo nearby and mechanisms to get it to the gun quickly, each of these had the rate-of-fire of two field pieces.

## Cupolas

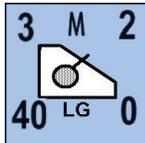
Often called “cloches”, which is French for “bell” due to the bell shape that most of these had, these were made of alloy steel but were fixed fortifications which did not rotate or pop up. Because of this, they tended to have limited fields of fire. There were more than 1500 of this type of structure in the line and they were armed with a variety of weapons. They are represented as follows:



**Guet et Fusil Mitrailleur** (Guet and Rifle Machine gunner)  
Automatic rifles firing from fixed mounts to provide close in defense.



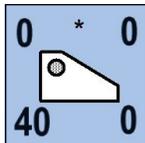
**Reibel Jumelage Mitrailleur** (Reibel Twin Machine Guns)  
Twin mount drum-fed Reibel 7.5mm machine guns



**Lance Grenades** (Grenade Launcher)  
Grenade launchers for close defense.



**Arme Mixte** (Mixed Weapon)  
25mm anti-tank gun, 2 machine guns, 50mm mortar



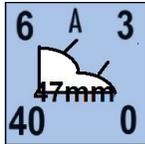
**VP and VDP Cupolos (Vision Periscope and Direct Vision Periscope)**  
For observation only, some had periscopes and some had vision slits and periscopes.

## Embrasures

Embrasures were reinforced concrete casemates with limited fields of fire. They often contained the larger weapons. They are represented as follows:

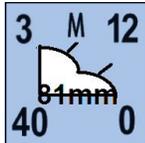


**Reibel Jumelage Mitrailleur** (Reibel Twin Machine Gun)  
Twin mount drum-fed Reibel 7.5mm machine guns



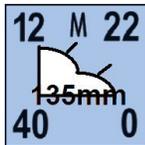
### **47mm Anti-Tank Gun**

A 47mm anti-tank gun in a fixed mounting.



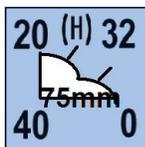
### **81mm Mortar**

Breech loading 81mm mortars firing at a fixed angle of 45 degrees. Range was set by adjusting the number of charges and the amount of gas vented.



### **Lance-Bombe (bomb thrower) 135mm Howitzer**

A very short-barreled howitzer with the characteristics of a heavy mortar.



### **75mm Canon-Obusier (gun-howitzer)**

75mm gun/howitzer. With plenty of ammo nearby and mechanisms to get it to the gun quickly, each of these had the rate-of-fire of two field pieces.

This article and counter graphics by Greg Moore and posted at [gregpanzerblitz.com](http://gregpanzerblitz.com). Maginot Line concept, counters, and scenarios by *Peirce Eichelberger*.

#### *Sources for this article*

**The Maginot Line 1928-1945** by *William Allcorn*, - Osprey Fortress Book 10

**Maginot Line at War 1939-1940** website at <http://mysite.verizon.net/vzev1mpx/maginotlineatwar>

**Wikipedia** at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maginot\\_Line](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maginot_Line)