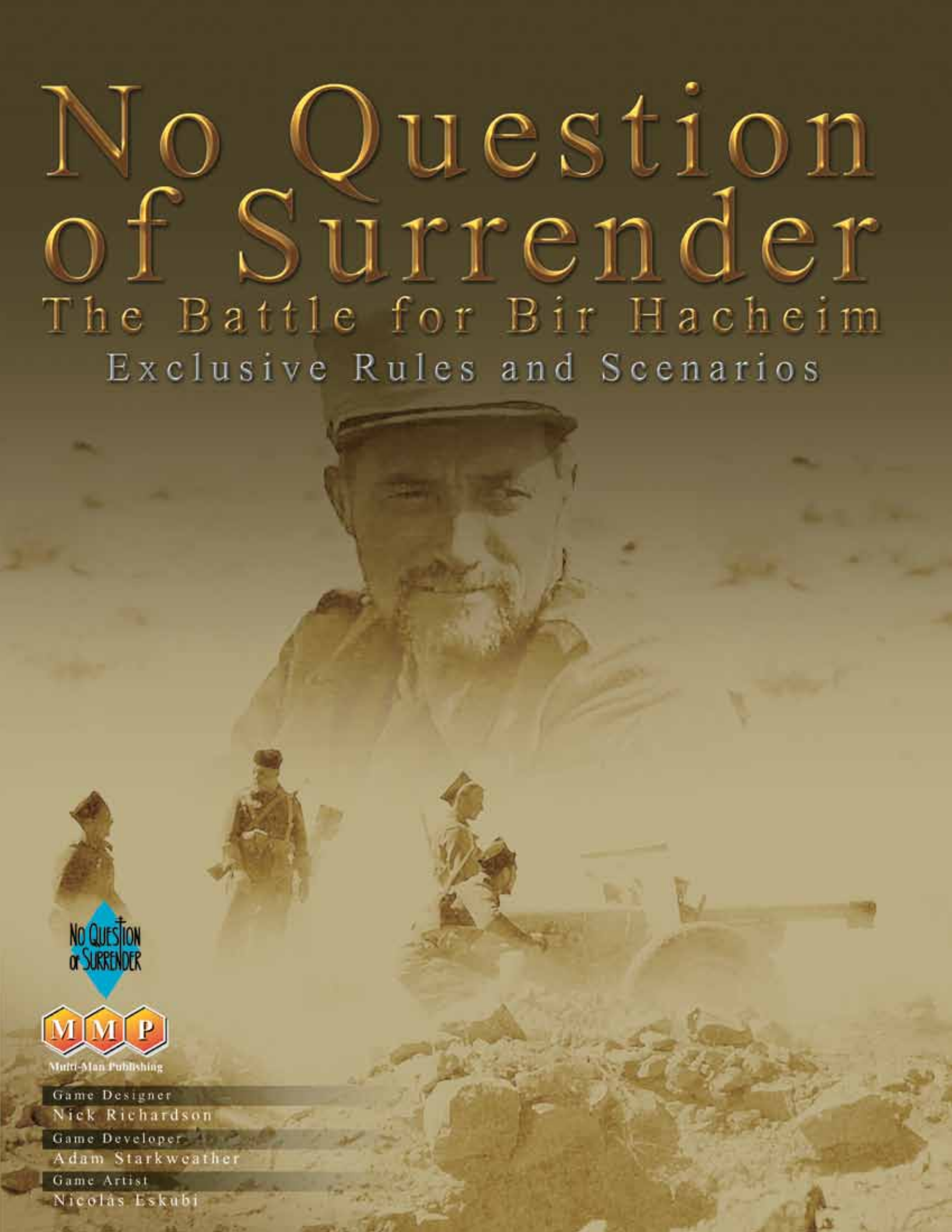


# No Question of Surrender

The Battle for Bir Hacheim

Exclusive Rules and Scenarios



NO QUESTION  
of SURRENDER



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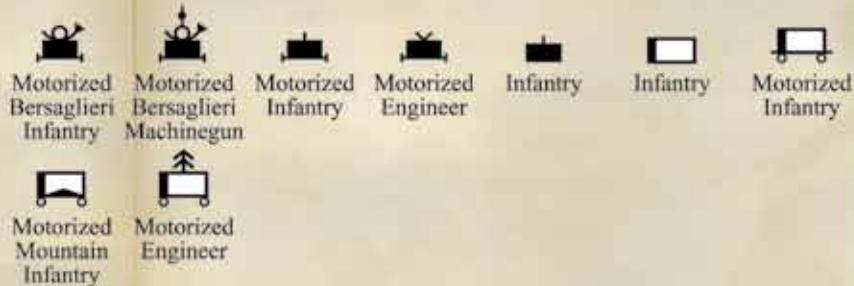
Nicolas Eskubi

# Counter Symbols

## Free French

## Axis

### Leg Infantry



### Wheeled



### Tracked



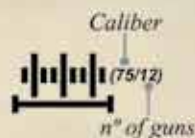
### Guns



### Others



### Italian Gun Number Key



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## Components

- Series Rulebook
- Series Rules Summary
- Exclusive Rulebook
- 4 Player Aid Cards
- 2 Charts and Tables Cards (identical)
- 1 Map Sheet
- 3 Counter Sheets
- 4 Ten-sided Dice

## Counter Symbols

The Unit counter symbols are shown on page two. The only Unit counter symbol that has any effect on the game is the engineer symbol. All other symbols are for historical interest only because the values, the colors of the values, and the colors around the values define all the other game functions. Each Leg Unit is company size.

The background color of each Unit counter shows the Division the Unit belongs to. The colors are blue (French, 1re Brigade Française Libre), light green (Italian, 103 Ariete Divisione), dark green (Italian, 101 Trieste Divisione), grey (German, 90. leichte Afrika Division).

## Exclusive Rules

### 1.0 What Scale is This Game?

The scale for *No Question of Surrender* is 333m per hex. Due to this change from the series rules of 500m, the following modifications are in effect:

The maximum stacking in a hex is 4 Units, 3 not in Column and 1 in Column.

No Unit may move within 3 hexes of an enemy reinforcement hex.

The maximum Line of Sight is 12 hexes during a day turn, and 3 hexes during a night turn or when the weather is mist, and is reduced to 2 hexes during sand storms. For Units in an observation post, the maximum Line of Sight is 20 hexes during a day turn, is reduced to 3 hexes for night turns or when the weather is mist, and is reduced to 2 hexes during sand storms.

Indirect HE Units perform Direct Fire at a range of 4 hexes, and perform Indirect Fire with a minimum range of 5 hexes.

The range modifiers have changed, and are given on the Combat Results Table.



## 2.0 What Times Does Night Start and Day Begin?

The Night turn begins the turn after the 1900 turn. The first daylight turn is 0500.

## 3.0 How is Weather Determined?

On the 0500 turn of each day in the Special Weather and Airpower Phase, a roll is made on the weather table. The result determines the weather type for the day.

Die Roll	Weather
0	Sand storm 4
1	Sand storm 2
2	Clear
3	Clear
4	Clear
5	Clear
6	Clear
7	Mist
8	Mist
9	Mist

### 3.1 Mist

On any day where the weather is mist, roll a die at the start of each turn after the 0500 turn. If the result is a 4 or less, the mist lifts and the weather changes from mist to clear for the rest of the day. If by the start of the 1100 turn the mist has not lifted, it lifts automatically and the weather is clear for the rest of the day. The effects of mist are the same as fog as detailed in the Series Rules, except the maximum Line of Sight is 3 hexes.

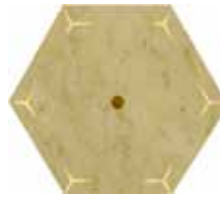
### 3.2 Sand Storms

On any day where the weather is determined to be sand storms, the weather will fluctuate between sand storms and clear. Roll a die at the start of every turn (including the 0500 turn) to determine the current weather for that turn. If the roll is less than or equal to the sand storm number (either 2 or 4), there are sand storms for that turn. If the roll is greater than the sand storm number, the weather is clear for that turn. Sand storms reduce the maximum Line of Sight to 2 hexes, Fire and Assault Ratings are reduced by 2, and terrain costs are doubled. No air strikes can be performed during a sand storm.

## 4.0 What Terrain Types Are There?

The types of terrain in the game are Desert, Trails, and Minefield.

### 4.1 Desert



Desert terrain is indicated by a brown circle in the center of its hex. A Leg Unit can enter the hex for 2 movement points if not in Column, or 1 movement point if in Column. Wheeled Units can enter the hex for 5 movement points if not in Column, 3 movement points if in Column. Tracked Units can enter the hex for 3 movement points if not in Column and 2 movement points if in Column.

Desert terrain hexes do not block Line of Sight, and do not modify the Fire Rating of Units firing into the hex.

### 4.2 Trail



Trail allow Tracked and Wheeled Units in Column to move at faster rates. Any Tracked or Wheeled Unit in Column that enters a hex along a trail does so for a cost of 1 movement point.

When leaving a hex on a trail, it must be the same trail that the Unit came in on, unless the trail connects to other trails in the hex, in which case the Unit can leave on one of those trails. The Unit cannot jump from one trail to another in the hex if they are not connected in the hex.

Trails have no effect on Line of Sight, and do not modify the Fire Rating of Units firing into the hex.

### 4.3 Minefield (Light or Heavy)



Any Wheeled or Tracked Unit that attempts to enter a minefield hex or attempts an Assault into a minefield hex will become Suppressed upon a die roll result that is equal to or less than the minefield number. For a light minefield (green center circle) the number is 1, and for a heavy minefield (red center circle) the number is 4. If Suppressed, the Unit does not enter the hex it was trying to move into and instead remains in its current hex. This Suppression cannot be converted into a Cohesion Hit.

Leg Units do not have to make a roll, as they cannot be Suppressed by a minefield.

If a Wheeled or Tracked Unit is leaving an enemy Fire Zone as it tries to enter the minefield hex, Opportunity Fire is performed before the Suppression die roll takes place. If the Unit becomes Suppressed due to Opportunity Fire, the Unit does not need to roll for minefield Suppression. For assaults into a minefield hex, the roll for possible Suppression due to the minefield takes place before Opportunity Fire is performed by the defending unit(s). **All**

**Opportunity Fire against Units entering or assaulting into a minefield applies an additional +1 modifier.**

If a stack of Units is involved in the Assault, and some become Suppressed due to the minefield, the remaining Units must continue with the Assault.

The movement cost for all Units to enter a minefield is the same as desert terrain. Minefield hexes do not block Line of Sight, and do not modify the Fire Rating of Units firing into the hex.

When leaving a minefield, the costs for all Units (Leg, Wheeled or Tracked) to enter the next hex are doubled (and if the weather is mist, increase the movement cost by 1 before doubling the movement cost). A Unit in a minefield hex may perform any other Movement Actions (e.g. dismounting) as normal, with no additional penalty.

**4.3.1 What Does a Minefield Door Do?**



All French Units can ignore the effects of a minefield in the hex containing a minefield door, and can treat the hex as a desert hex. These hexes are 14.11, 15.18, and 27.13.

**4.3.2 Minefield Removal/Addition**



An Engineer Unit not in Column in a minefield hex can reduce the effectiveness of the minefield by passing a Troop Quality Check. This is an Engineer Action, and it provokes Opportunity Fire. If the check is successful, the minefield is reduced in quality. Heavy minefields become light minefields and light minefields are removed. Place either a "Light Minefield" or "Minefield Removed" marker in the hex. If the check is not successful, place a Men at Work marker on the Engineer Unit. A heavy minefield can be removed with two successful Engineer Actions, which can occur in the same Activation if two Engineer units both pass the required Troop Quality Check.

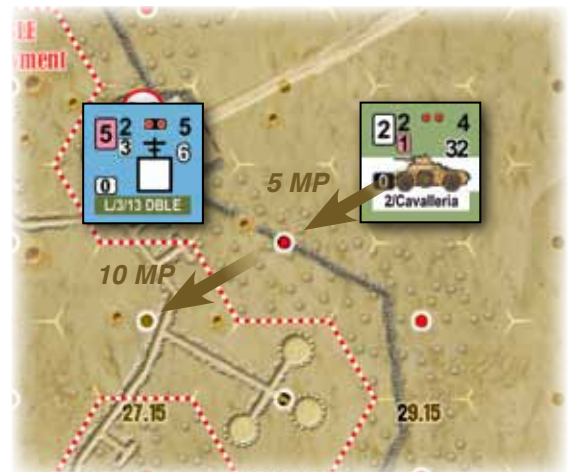
If a minefield has been reduced or removed, an Engineer Unit not in Column within the hex can attempt to add mines to the minefield by passing a Troop Quality Check. This is an Engineer Action, and it provokes Opportunity Fire. If the check is successful, increase the Minefield value of a desert hex to a light minefield and a light minefield to a heavy minefield. A minefield cannot be created where one does not exist at the start of the game, and a light minefield at game start cannot become a heavy minefield.

**5.0 Dispatch Points**

In *No Question of Surrender*, 2 additional Dispatch Points are received if the Divisional Activation Chit is drawn on the 1700 turn not on the 1900 turn as stated in the Series Rules.

**Minefield Movement Example**

In the example on the right, the Italian armored car has been activated under a Direct Command Activation. It first tries to move into the heavy minefield hex. This will first provoke Opportunity Fire from the French Unit, and then (if the armored car isn't Suppressed) a minefield Suppression roll will be performed. The French Unit rolls a Troop Quality Check, and with a die roll of "5" passes, so it will take the Opportunity Fire shot. The Fire Rating is a base 5, +3 for Fire Zone to Fire Zone movement, -2 for Range against an armored target, +1 for entering a minefield, giving a total Fire Rating of 7. The die roll is a "1", which is an "S?" result. The Italian player spends 1 Command Point to automatically pass the Troop Quality Check. The armored car now rolls for the minefield Suppression. If he rolls a "4" or lower, he will become Suppressed and stay in the current hex. The roll is a 6, so the minefield has no effect. It costs 5 MP to enter this hex (a wheeled Unit not in Column).



The armored car now tries to leave the minefield and enter the next hex. There is no minefield Suppression die roll, but it will trigger Opportunity Fire again, and the movement costs to enter the next hex are doubled (from 5 to 10). The French unit rolls his Troop Quality Check for the Opportunity Fire attempt and rolls a "1", so he takes the shot. The Fire Rating is a base 5, +3 for Fire Zone to Fire Zone movement, 0 for Range against an armored target, (there is no +1 for leaving a minefield, only entering), giving a total Fire Rating of 8. The roll is a "9", an automatic miss. The armored car now enters the hex, for a cost of 10MP (5 MP doubled for leaving a minefield).

## Special Rules

### S1.0 Airpower Determination



Both players have airpower available to them. For the French player, airpower is used to attack Axis Units, whereas the Axis player uses airpower to reduce the number of French Dispatch Points (and remember, the number of Dispatch Points cannot be less than zero).

During the Special Weather and Airpower Determination Phase at the start of each day, both players roll a die. The Axis result is subtracted from the French result to give a die roll differential. Use the Airpower Table below to determine the effect. If the French player is under Diminished or Emergency Supply, subtract 2 from the final differential.

Die Roll Differential	Effect
-11 to -9	French Lose 2 Dispatch Points
-8 to -4	French Lose 1 Dispatch Point
-3 to +1	No effect
+2 to +4	1 RAF Air Strike
+5 to +7	2 RAF Air Strikes
+8 to +9	3 RAF Air Strikes

If the result is a number of RAF attacks, roll that number of dice. The numbers rolled correspond to the turn in which the airpower is available.

Die Result	Turn Air Strike Available
0	0500
1	0700
2	0900
3	1100
4	1300
5	1500
6	1700
7	1900
8, 9	Night

If the air strike cannot be performed due to weather or the turn being a night turn, then that air strike is lost for the day. Air strikes may target any Axis Unit except those in a Reinforcement entry hex or an Artillery Park.

*Example: If The French player (under Full Supply) rolls a "7", and the Axis player rolls a "4", the differential is 3. This means the French player will receive 1 RAF air strike. He rolls a die and the result is "1", so the air strike will take place during the 0700 turn. The weather for the day is sand storm 2. Each turn that day a die is rolled to see if there are sand storms that turn or not. If the die roll on*

*the 0700 turn is "2" or less, there will be sand storms that turn, and the air strike will be lost. If the die roll is "3" or more, the weather is clear that turn, and the air strike will take place.*

### S2.0 Counterbattery Fire



When an enemy Indirect HE Unit performs Indirect Fire, you may try to perform Counterbattery Fire. Once the enemy Unit has completed its Indirect Fire, announce that you wish to attempt Counterbattery Fire. Select one of your Indirect HE Units that does not currently have a Counterbattery Fired marker on it. In order to spot the enemy Unit it must pass a Troop Quality Check (no Command Point may be spent in order to pass this check). No Line of Sight is needed. If successful perform Indirect Fire against the spotted enemy Indirect HE Unit. The Company Bonus never applies to Counterbattery Fire, and no Barrage marker is placed.

Performing Counterbattery Fire does not cause the loss of an In Contact marker, unless a "9" is rolled on the Counterbattery Indirect Fire die roll (not the spotting Troop Quality Check die roll).

A Unit under a Counterbattery Fired marker may still perform Indirect or Direct Fire as normal.

Whether or not the Troop Quality Check was successful, place a Counterbattery Fired marker on the Indirect HE Unit. These markers are all removed at the end of the turn, when the Barrage markers are removed.

If the weather for the turn is sand storms or mist there is a +3 modifier to the die roll for the Troop Quality Check in order to spot the Indirect HE Unit.

### S3.0 Random Events



For Scenario 4, each turn, place the Random Event chit into the mug, along with all the other chits. If it's the last one pulled for the turn, play it as the first chit next turn.

When the chit is played, roll a die. On a 1 through 9, there is no event. Nothing happens at all. On a roll of 0, roll the die again, and the numbered event below happens. Events will state if they can occur multiple times or not.

#### 0. Rommel Arrives



Rommel is unhappy with the progress thus far, and wants to "assist" the Axis player. For the remainder of the day, the Rommel counter is stacked with any single Axis Leader (it may not be transferred to another Axis leader this day).

All Units of that Formation can ignore the Axis Withdrawal rule (S5.3) if they lose a step. At the end of the night turn, remove the Rommel marker. This event may occur multiple times, but only once per day (if rolled for a second time on the same date, treat it as no event).

### 1. Ammo Dump Hit

The French ammunition dump has been hit by artillery fire! The Axis player selects a hex within Bir Hacheim. All Units in that hex take an "S?" result. This event may happen multiple times.

### 2. 7th Motorized Brigade Column Relief #1

The 7th Motorized Brigade attempts to help relieve the siege. Roll a die. The German player must withdraw enough Formations to give at least this many steps (see S5.3 for the withdrawal procedure). These Units return the next day at 0700. This event may occur only once in the game, and if this event is selected again, treat as no event.

### 3. 7th Motorized Brigade Column Relief #2

The 7th Motorized Brigade attempts to help relieve the siege. The German player must withdraw the KG Wolz Formation (see S5.3 for the withdrawal procedure). These Units return the next day at 0700. This event may occur only once in the game, and if this event is selected again, treat as no event.

If KG Wolz is not on the map, treat this as no event, and the event may still occur at a later time.

### 4. Wrong Ammo



The French artillery receives only AP ammo! Until the next time the French player receives supplies (see S4.2), the French Indirect HE Units are limited to Direct Fire only, and use the Blue line of the CRT for AP ammo. Place a "wrong ammo" marker on each French Indirect HE unit. French Indirect HE may not perform Counterbattery Fire until the French player receives supplies. When supplies are received, remove the "wrong ammo" markers. This event may only happen once and if this event is selected again, treat as no event.

### 5. Indian Gun Recovery



AT Guns have been recovered from the 3rd Indian Motor Brigade and put into commission. Place the Indian Gun Unit within any non-mine-field Bir Hacheim hex that is not in an enemy Fire Zone. This event may only happen once and if this event is selected again, treat as no event.

### 6. Radio Lines Cut

Artillery fire cuts the radio lines used for keeping the French artillery Units in contact with their spotters. All the French Indirect HE units have lost contact. Turn the contact marker to the contact pending side and return it to its Indirect HE Unit. This event may happen multiple times.

### 7. Susan Travers Injured



Susan Travers (General Koenig's driver) is injured by shrapnel. Until the end of the night turn of the current day, the French Dispatch Rating is reduced to 1. Place the Travers Injured marker on the French division player aid chart, showing the "Dispatch Rating = 1" side for the rest of the day. This event may only happen once and if this event is selected again, treat as no event.

### 8. Italian Artillery Leader Killed



Colonnello Gallone, the Italian artillery Leader, is killed in combat. The Troop Quality Rating of the Italian Indirect HE Units is reduced by 2 until the end of the night turn of the current day. Place the Artillery Leader Killed marker on the 101 Trieste player aid chart for the rest of the day. This event may only happen once and if this event is selected again, treat as no event.

### 9. Surrender Requested

The Axis demands surrender! The French player rolls a die. If the roll is higher than the current French Morale Level, then all the Units of a French Formation, chosen by the French player, surrender, and are all removed from play: the French player immediately reduces his Morale Level to 0. If the roll is equal to or lower than the current French Morale Level, the French player haughtily responds that "there will be no question of surrender". This event may happen multiple times (and the French player should become more indignant each time).

## S4.0 French Special Rules

### S4.1 French Units Within Bir Hacheim



Bir Hacheim hexes are indicated on the map by the fortified hexes with a white ring around the terrain hex dot.

Due to these fortifications within Bir Hacheim, French Leg and Gun Units are considered to be in superior defensive positions except when performing Actions that provoke Opportunity Fire (such as moving, mounting or Engineer Actions) or Assaulting. These Units have their

Defense Ratings lowered by 2 and are considered armored/entrenched targets for the CRT (though the range modification is still for an unarmored target), their Troop Quality Ratings are increased by 1, and both their Fire and Assault Ratings are increased by 1. French Units within Bir Hacheim are unable to build Improved Positions or Entrenchments. If Axis Units perform an Assault against French Units in Bir Hacheim, The Axis Units do not have to pass a Bravery Check.

French Units within Bir Hacheim do not need to perform an Action to leave or enter these defensive positions, they simply leave or enter them when they start or stop their Activation as need be.

Remember, when performing Actions that trigger Opportunity Fire, the French Units do not receive the benefits of the defensive positions and when Assaulting (but not being Assaulted), the French Units receive no benefits from the defensive positions at any point in the Assault procedure.

### S4.2 French Supply Determination.

At the start of each night turn, the French player rolls a die to determine if any supplies arrive. On a roll of 3 or less, supplies do arrive, and the Supply marker is moved

to the Full Supply status. On a roll of 4 or more no supplies arrive via the 7th Motorized Brigade move the Supply marker down one level (so if currently on Reduced Supply, move the marker down to Diminished Supply), and if already at Emergency Supply, leave the status unchanged.

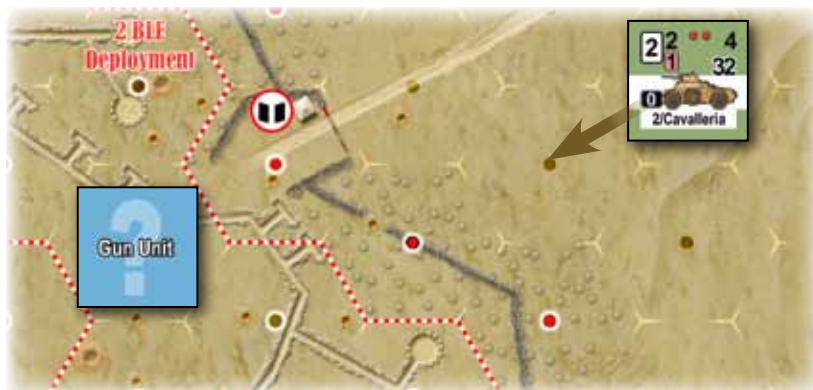


The Supply marker has 4 stages: Full Supply, Reduced Supply, Diminished Supply, and Emergency Supply. Full Supply and Reduced Supply have no effect on gameplay.

If the supply is reduced to Diminished Supply, immediately reduce French Morale by 1. If the Supply is reduced to, or stays at, Emergency Supply, immediately reduce French Morale by 3.

While the French player is under Diminished supply, all Troop Quality Ratings are reduced by 1, and there is a -2 modifier to the Airpower Determination result.

If the French player is under Emergency Supply, all Troop Quality Ratings are reduced by 2, and there is a -2 modifier to the Airpower Determination result.



#### Hidden French AT Gun Example

In the example on the left, the Italian armored car has been activated under a Division Activation, and as his first Action it will move into an adjacent hex as indicated. At this point (during the middle of the armored car's Action) the French player flips over the Gun Unit marker, and reveals 1/1 Antichar. on the back. This Unit is now placed on the map in the hex the Gun Unit marker was in.



The French AT gun does not get to Opportunity Fire at the Italian armored car, as the Fire Zones that the AT gun projects did not exist until the AT gun was revealed. The armored car now has to end its Action at this point, as any additional movement it would make would now be into an enemy Fire Zone, which is not allowed during a Division Activation First Action. If it was in Command, a second action could be performed (for the cost of 1 Command Point), but a Movement Action could not be selected as the first Action was a Movement Action. The final situation is shown on the left.



### S4.3 Hidden French AT Guns



There are 10 “Gun Unit” markers for the French AT Guns. Six of these are actual Gun Units, and 4 are Dummy Units. The French player places all 10 counters on the map with the “Gun Unit” side up. If a hidden Unit fires, or is assaulted or moves, then the Unit must be immediately flipped to reveal the Gun Unit identity, and is replaced by the appropriate counter (or if a dummy counter, simply remove it from play). A hidden AT Unit may be voluntarily flipped at any time by the French player, even during an enemy Unit’s Action.

Until the Unit is flipped, it projects no Fire Zones onto the map. As soon as it is revealed it projects Fire Zones as normal. If the hidden AT Unit is revealed as an enemy Unit is moving towards it, it does not get to perform Opportunity Fire, as it was not projecting any Fire Zones before it was revealed.

“Gun Unit” markers may not be the target of Direct or Indirect fire, but should a “Gun Unit” marker be stacked in a hex with another Unit that is fired upon by Indirect Fire, the “Gun Unit” marker would take the normal “S?” result if the target Unit suffers a combat result, or takes an “S?” result and fails the Troop Quality Check (see Series Rules 16.4.1). Apply the result of the “S?” check to the “Gun Unit” markers as normal (and if the unit later becomes revealed, any markers are transferred to the revealed Unit). “Gun Unit” markers have a Troop Quality Rating of 5 (including the +1 for being in a Bir Hacheim hex) for this Troop Quality Check and for any Rally attempts.

The only restriction on setup is that no two “Gun Unit” markers can be adjacent to each other or in the same hex, and all “Gun Units” markers must setup within a Bir Hacheim hex.

### S4.4 French Artillery Spotting

French Indirect HE Units may not self-spot for Indirect Fire missions, and must always used spotted fire.

For Direct Fire, the Indirect HE Unit must self-spot as usual.

### S4.5 Jock Column



The French Jock Column Unit (Jock Colonne) can be freely deployed during any French Division Activation, French Direct Command, or the 13 DBLE Formation Activation for a cost of 1 Command Point. Simply place the Unit in one of the minefield door hexes or in hex 20.10, so long as the hex is not in an enemy Fire Zone.

This zero-step Unit is considered to always be In Command.

If the Unit ends an activation in one of the minefield door hexes or hex 20.10, it can be removed from the map. The Unit can come in and out of play as often as the French player wishes, even if it has been previously eliminated.

Jock Columns were used primarily to patrol and harass Axis vehicles, and were composed of a few Bren carriers and 75mm guns. Primarily “Region V” was patrolled most often.

### S4.6 French Morale



At the start of the siege (scenario 4), the French Morale starts at 30 points, and can never go above this value. During the course of the siege, this value will decrease or increase (to a maximum of 30) based upon events:

- 5: Each French Step lost, or Jock Column eliminated
- 3: French Supply at Emergency Supply status
- 1: French Supply at Diminished Supply status
- +2: Each Axis Step lost

Should the number fall below 1 at any point in the game, the French will need to perform a withdrawal at the next night turn. If the current turn is a night turn, the withdrawal takes place immediately (see the Victory Conditions of Scenario 4 for details).

## S5.0 Axis Special Rules

### S5.1 Reinforcement Entry Hexes

German or Italian Units placed in a Reinforcement entry hex that do not leave their Reinforcement entry hex may be removed from the map at the end of the turn. Two turns later, they come back into the game and can be placed in any available Reinforcement entry hexes (the Units can be placed in the same or different Reinforcement entry hexes.)

Reinforcement entry hex G is only available for use starting on June 7th. Before that time, it is not in play.

### S5.2 Artillery Parks

When Italian and German Indirect HE Units arrive as reinforcements, they will either be placed in Artillery Park A or Artillery Park B. All Units in these parks have a Fire Range that covers the entire map. Artillery Parks provide a -1 Terrain Modifier if a Unit in the park is targeted by

Counterbattery Fire, and are considered armored/en-trenched targets for the CRT.

Units in an Artillery Park Box may never perform Direct Fire. Units in an Artillery Park Box are always In Command. Units in an Artillery Park Box may never be targeted by either Direct Fire or Indirect Fire, but they can be targeted by Counterbattery Fire. French Indirect HE Units may always perform Counterbattery Fire on Indirect HE Units in Park A, but may only perform Counterbattery Fire on Indirect HE Units in Park B if they are:

1. north of hexrow xx.15; and
2. east of hexrow 25.xx; and
3. **not** in a Bir Hacheim hex

### S5.3 Axis Withdrawal

Whenever a non-Independent Unit of a German Formation loses a step, roll a die for each step that was lost. If the result is 0 or 1, all Units of that Formation, plus any German Independent Units in range of the Leader (and not in range of any other Leader of the same nationality) withdraw for the remainder of the day. These Units return at the 0700 turn of the next day as reinforcements. Any steps that have been lost by the Units withdrawing remain lost when the Units return. All other markers are discarded. The Axis player may spend 1 Command Point to add 1 to the die roll (so only a roll of 0 leads to a withdrawal).

Anytime a non-Independent Unit of a Trieste Italian Formation loses a step, roll a die for each step that was lost. If the result is 0, 1 or 2, all Units of that Formation, plus any Italian Independent Units in range of the Leader (and not in range of any other Leader of the same nationality) withdraw for the remainder of the day. These Units return at the 0700 turn of the next day as reinforcements. Any steps that have been lost by the Units withdrawing remain lost when the Units return. All other markers are discarded. The Axis player may spend 1 Command Point to add 1 to the die roll (so only a roll of 0 or 1 leads to a withdrawal).

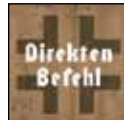
### S5.4 Trieste Division Formation Activation Chits

The cost of the Italian Trieste Division Formation Activation chits costs double the normal costs. To buy a Formation Activation chit for the next turn costs 2 Dispatch Points, and to buy a Formation Activation chit for the current turn costs 4 Dispatch Points.

### S5.5 Axis Artillery Spotting

Italian 101 Trieste Division Units may not act as spotters for German 90. leichte Afrika Division indirect HE Units, and vice versa.

### S5.6 Axis Direct Command Chit



There are two Axis Direct Command chits included in the game. Only one should be used, and the Axis player can decide to use either the Italian version (“Ordine Directo”) or the German version (“Direkten Befehl”). It’s recommended to use the Italian version for scenarios 1 and 2, and the German version for scenarios 3 and 4. Remember that when a Direct Command chit is drawn, all Units of that side may be activated; there is no nationality restriction.

## Scenarios

### General Comments

For the scenarios, please remember the following:

All Units start at full strength, unless otherwise noted.

Leaders stack with any of their Units at setup, unless otherwise noted.

All Units may setup mounted or not, in Column or not (observing stacking limits) at the owning player’s choice, except when otherwise noted.

No Indirect HE contact markers are placed at setup, unless otherwise noted.

Reinforcements may arrive overstacked.

Leaders arrive with the first Unit of their Formation.

The last chit drawn for a turn becomes the first chit in play the next turn, except when otherwise noted.

### Scenario 1

#### “The Italians Attack”

#### Historical, May 27th

### Description

This scenario is short, and is designed for those learning the rules of the game. It’s the actual attack by the Ariete Division on the morning of May 27th 1942. Only one battalion of Italian tanks attacked Bir Hacheim, with predictable results. In order for the Italian player to be successful in winning this scenario, he will need to have luck on his side. To give the Italian player of the scenario a sporting chance, the number of French AT guns has been limited to a single Unit. If players wish to replay the actual attack, the 1/1 Antichar Unit can be added to the French setup. Once players have completed this scenario, and are com-

fortable with the game mechanics, it's suggested that they play scenario 2 in order to explore the possibility of the intended, coordinated, Italian attack.

## Setup

Play begins with step 5 of the sequence of play, and steps 1 through 4 do not apply throughout this scenario. The weather is clear for the entire scenario.

Dispatch Points are not used in this scenario, only Command Points. No Activation chits will be purchased.

The 1re Brigade Française Libre has 2 Command Points. The 103 Ariete Divisione has 6 Command Points.

For the 1re Brigade Française Libre, the Command Rating is 3 and for the 103 Ariete Divisione, the Command Rating is 2.

Place the French and Italian Direct Command Chits and the 1re Brigade Française Libre and 103 Ariete Division Activation Chits in the mug. The 132 Corazzato Formation Activation Chit is the first chit in play. The first turn ends when the last chit is drawn (and it is the first chit in play on the second turn). No other Formation Activation chits, or the Random Event chit, are used in this scenario.

For the second turn, place the 4 chits played on the first turn back into the mug. Note that this will include the 132 Corazzato Formation Activation Chit.

## Scenario Length

The scenario length is 2 turns (0900 to 1100), and ends when the last chit is drawn on turn 2 (this chit is not played).

## French Setup

**1re Brigade Française Libre, 13 DBLE:** 5/2/13 DBLE; 6/2/13 DBLE; 7/2/13 DBLE; L/2/13 DBLE; M/2/13;DBLE (placed within the 2 BLE deployment area on the map).

**1re Brigade Française Libre, Independent:** 3/1 Antichar "Gun Unit" marker and one dummy "Gun Unit" marker are placed in any non-minfield Bir Hacheim hex, and must observe the S4.3 setup restrictions.

Leader Amilakvary stacks with any Unit of his command.

The French are in Full Supply.

## Axis Setup

None

## Reinforcements

### French Reinforcements

None

### Axis Reinforcements

#### 0900

**103 Ariete, 132° Reggimento Corazzato:** 1/VIII/132; 2/VIII/132; 3/VIII/132 plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex B).

## Special Scenario Rules

The Italian Units can not move north of hexrow XX.10 or south of hexrow XX.17.

## Special Rules in Effect

S4.1 French Units within Bir Hacheim

S4.3 Hidden French AT Guns

## Victory Conditions

If at the end of the scenario there is an unsuppressed Italian Unit within the setup area of the French Units, the Italian player wins. All other results are a French victory.

## Scenario 2

### "The Italians Really Attack"

### Ahistorical, May 27th

## Description

Suppose the Ariete Division had coordinated a complete attack on Bir Hacheim on the first day (as Rommel intended), rather than calling off the attack and bypassing the fortress to head north. This scenario examines this possible turn of events by allowing the full weight of the Ariete Division to be brought to bear on the Free French.

## Setup

Play begins with step 4 of the sequence of play, and steps 1 through 3 do not apply throughout this scenario. The weather is clear for the entire scenario.

The 1re Brigade Française Libre has 4 Command Points and 0 Dispatch Points. The 103 Ariete Divisione has 8 Command Points and 3 Dispatch Points.

For the 1re Brigade Française Libre, the Command Rating is 5 and a Dispatch Rating of 2, and for the 103 Ariete Divisione, the Command Rating is 3 and a Dispatch Rating of 2.

Place the French and Italian Direct Command Chits and the 1re Brigade Française Libre Activation Chit in the mug. The 103 Ariete Division Activation Chit will be the first chit put into play. In addition, the Italian player selects one Formation Activation chit for free to be placed in the mug. The Italian player may also purchase additional Formation Activation Chits for the first or the second turn. The Random Event chit is not used in this scenario.

### Scenario Length

The scenario starts on the 0900 turn of May 27th. The scenario ends when the last chit is drawn on the 1900 turn (this chit is not played).

### French Setup

**1re Brigade Française Libre, 13 DBLE:** 5/2/13 DBLE; 6/2/13 DBLE; 7/2/13 DBLE; L/2/13 DBLE; M/2/13 DBLE (placed within the 2 BLE deployment area on the map).

**1re Brigade Française Libre, 2nd DBS:** 1/BP1; 2/BP1; 3/BP1; Mortier BP1; 1/BIM (placed within the BP 1 deployment area on the map).

**1re Brigade Française Libre, 2nd DBS:** 5/BM2; 6/BM2; 7/BM2; Mortier BM2 (placed within the BM 2 deployment area on the map)

**1re Brigade Française Libre, Artillery:** 1/1 RA FFL; 2/1 RA FFL; 3/1 RA FFL; 4/1 RA FFL (placed in any non-minefield Bir Hacheim hex).

**1ere Division FFL, Independent:** 22 CNA; 17 Sapeurs; 10 "Gun Unit" markers (all placed in any non-minefield Bir Hacheim hex, but the setup restrictions for the AT guns must be observed).

Leaders Amilakvary, de Roux, Champrosay stack with any Unit of their command.

The French are in Full Supply.

### Axis Setup

None

### Reinforcements

#### French Reinforcements

None

### Axis Reinforcements

#### 0900

**103 Ariete, 132° Reggimento Corazzato:** 1/VIII/132; 2/VIII/132; 3/VIII/132; 1/IX/132; 2/IX/132; 3/IX/132; 1/X/132; 2/X/132; 3/X/132 plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex A, B, C or D, and they do not have to be placed in the same Reinforcement entry hex).

**103 Ariete, 8° Reggimento Bersaglieri:** ca/III/8; mg/III/8; morta/III/8; 1/V/8; 2/V/8; cc/V/8; 1/XII/8; 2/XII/8; cc/XII/8 plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex A, B, C or D, and they do not have to be placed in the same Reinforcement entry hex).

**103 Ariete, Independent:** XXXII Mis. Gen.; 1/Lancieri; 2/Lancieri; 1/Cavalleria; 2/Cavalleria; Autocannoni; II/24 (placed in Reinforcement entry hex A, B, C or D, and they do not have to be placed in the same Reinforcement entry hex).

**103 Ariete, Artillery:** 1/132; 2/132; 3/132; DLI (placed in Artillery Park A).

The Italian player may withhold any of these Units (either individual Units or entire Formations) he wishes, and bring them in at any Reinforcement entry hex (except G) on the 1300 turn. The reinforcement hex does not need to be determined before the start of the 1300 turn.

### Special Rules in Effect

S2.0 Counterbattery Fire

S4.1 French Units within Bir Hacheim

S4.3 Hidden French AT Guns

S4.4 French Artillery Spotting

S4.5 Jock Column

S5.1 Reinforcement Entry Hexes

S5.2 Artillery Parks

### Victory Conditions

At the end of the scenario, the Italian player receives 1 victory point for each French step eliminated, and each unsuppressed Italian Unit in a Bir Hacheim hex. If the Italian player has 14 or more points, the Italian player wins. All other results are a French victory.

## Scenario 3

### “Capture Point 186”

June 8–June 9

#### Description

A second mid-sized scenario. The Germans are trying to get a foothold within Bir Hacheim, in particular the pivotal Point 186 (hex 17.10).

#### Setup

Play begins with step 4 of the sequence of play. The weather is clear for the first day, and is rolled for on the second day (and treat a Sand Storm 4 weather result as a Sand Storm 2 result).

The 1re Brigade Française Libre has 10 Command Points and 2 Dispatch Points. The 90. leichte Afrika Division has 8 Command Points and 3 Dispatch Points.

For the 1re Brigade Française Libre, the Command Rating is 4 and a Dispatch Rating of 2, and for the 90. leichte Afrika Division the Command Rating is 3 and a Dispatch Rating of 2.

Place the French and German Direct Command Chits and the 1re Brigade Française Libre Division Activation Chit in the mug. Both players may purchase additional Formation Activation Chits for the first or second turn. The first chit in play is the 90. leichte Afrika Division Activation chit (this is not in the mug). The Random Event chit is not used in this scenario.

#### Scenario Length

The scenario starts on the 1900 turn of June 8th. The scenario ends when the last chit is drawn (this chit is not played) on the 1900 turn of June 9th.

#### French Setup

**1re Brigade Française Libre, 13 DBLE:** 9/3/13 DBLE; 10/3/13 DBLE; 11/3/13 DBLE; L/3/13 DBLE; M/3/13 DBLE (placed within the 3 BLE deployment area on the map).

**1re Brigade Française Libre, 2nd DBS:** 5/BM2; 6/BM2; 7/BM2; Mortier BM2 (placed within the BM 2 deployment area on the map or hexes 17.10 or 18.09).

**1re Brigade Française Libre, Artillery:** 1/1 RA FFL; 2/1 RA FFL (placed one in hex 19.17 and the other in 22.12).

**1re Brigade Française Libre, Independent:** 22 CNA (in hex 21.12); 3 randomly selected Antichar units (place one

in each of the following hexes 16.12, 17.11, and 20.10. These Units may not setup hidden).

The French start the scenario in Reduced Supply.

#### Axis Setup

None

#### Reinforcements

##### French Reinforcements

None

##### Axis Reinforcements

##### June 8

##### 1900:

**90. leichte Afrika Division, KG Wolz:** 1./I./Flak 43; 2./I./Flak 43; 3./I./Flak 43; 4./I./Flak 43; 5./I./Flak 43; 1./PzJg Abt. 33; 2./PzJg Abt. 33; 3./PzAufkl; 1./I./Flak 18; 2./I./Flak 18; 3./I./Flak 18; 4./I./Flak 18; 5./I./Flak 18, plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex G).

**90. leichte Afrika Division, KG Hecker:** 1./Pioneer 33; 2./Pioneer 33; 3./Pioneer 33; 1./Pioneer 200; 2./Pioneer 200; 3./Pioneer 200; 1./Pioneer 900; 2./Pioneer 900 plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex G).

**90. leichte Afrika Division, Artillery:** 1./Art.Abt. 361; 2./Art.Abt. 361; 3./Art.Abt. 361 (placed in Artillery Park A).

**90. leichte Afrika Division, Artillery:** 3./Küst.Art. 523; 1./Küst.Art. 533; 2./Küst.Art. 533; 3./Küst.Art. 533 (placed in Artillery Park B).

##### Night:

**90. leichte Afrika Division, KG Hecker:** 1/27 17° Pavia; 2/27 17° Pavia; 3/27 17° Pavia; 1/28 17° Pavia; 2/28 17° Pavia; 3/28 17° Pavia; 2./z.b.V.288; 5./z.b.V.288; StuG/z.b.V.288 (placed in Reinforcement entry hex F).

**90. leichte Afrika Division, KG Kiehl:** S. Flak Kiehl; Panzer Komp. plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex F).

##### June 9

##### 1500:

**90. leichte Afrika Division, KG Baade:** 1./I./115; 2./I./115; 3./I./115; 4./I./115; Gr. W./I./115; Pak/I./115; 5./II./115; 6./II./115; 7./II./115; 8./II./115; Gr. W./II./115; Pak/

II./115; 14./Pioneer 115; 13./IG 115 plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex F or G, and they do not have to be placed in the same Reinforcement entry hex).

### Special Rules In Effect

S1.0 Airpower Determination

S2.0 Counterbattery Fire

S4.1 French Units within Bir Hacheim

S4.2 French Supply Determination

S4.4 French Artillery Spotting

S4.5 Jock Column

S5.2 Artillery Parks

S5.3 Axis Withdrawal

Additionally, the French Units of 13 DBLE may not activate until a German Unit occupies the observation point (hex 17.10), but may Opportunity Fire and defend if Assaulted. The 13 DBLE Formation Activation Chit is not available for purchase until a German Unit occupies the observation point.

The German Units may not move south of row xx.12 or east of row 23.xx.

For special rule S5.3, the Axis player does not make a die roll for the first step lost for each formation in the scenario, but does make the withdrawal roll for each subsequent step lost. (*Optional*: inexperienced Axis players may wish to completely ignore rule S5.3.).

### Victory Conditions

The side that occupies, or was the last to occupy, the observation point (hex 17.10) at the end of the game wins.

## Scenario 4

### “The Siege of Bir Hacheim”

June 2 to June 10

#### Description

The entire siege of Bir Hacheim. How long can the Free French hold out?

#### Setup

Play begins with step 4 of the sequence of play. The weather is clear for the scenario for the first day, and is rolled for on the subsequent days during the Special Weather and Airpower Phase.

The 1re Brigade Française Libre has 10 Command Points and 2 Dispatch Points. The 101 Trieste Divisione has 3 Command Points and 1 Dispatch Point. The 90. leichte Afrika Division has 4 Command Points and 2 Dispatch Points.

For the 1re Brigade Française Libre, the Command Rating is 5 and a Dispatch Rating of 2; for the 101 Trieste Divisione, the Command Rating is 3 and the Dispatch Rating is 0; and for the 90. leichte Afrika Division, the Command Rating is 4 and a Dispatch Rating of 2.

Place French and German Direct Command chits, the 1re Brigade Française Libre, 101 Trieste Division Activation chits, and the Random Event chit in the mug. Both players may purchase additional Formation Activation chits for the first turn or second turn. The first chit in play is the 90. leichte Afrika Division Activation.

#### Scenario Length

The scenario starts on the 1300 turn of June 2nd. The scenario ends when the last chit is drawn (this chit is not played) on the 1900 turn of June 10th (or earlier).

#### French Setup

**1re Brigade Française Libre, 13 DBLE:** 5/2/13 DBLE; 6/2/13 DBLE; 7/2/13 DBLE; L/2/13 DBLE; M/2/13 DBLE (placed within the 2 BLE deployment area on the map).

**1re Brigade Française Libre, 13 DBLE:** 9/3/13 DBLE; 10/3/13 DBLE; 11/3/13 DBLE; L/3/13 DBLE; M/3/13 DBLE (placed within the 3 BLE deployment area on the map).

**1re Brigade Française Libre, 2nd DBS:** 1/BP1; 2/BP1; 3/BP1; Mortier BP1; 1/BIM (placed within the BP 1 deployment area on the map).

**1re Brigade Française Libre, 2nd DBS:** 5/BM2; 6/BM2; 7/BM2; Mortier BM2 (placed within the BM 2 deployment area on the map).

**1re Brigade Française Libre, Artillery:** 1/1 RA FFL; 2/1 RA FFL; 3/1 RA FFL; 4/1 RA FFL (placed in any non-minefield hex of Bir Hacheim hex).

**1re Brigade Française Libre, Independent:** 22 CNA; 17 Sapeurs; 10 "Gun Unit" markers (all placed in any non-minefield Bir Hacheim hex, but the setup restrictions for the AT guns must be observed).

Leaders Amilakvary, de Roux, Champrosay stack with any Unit of their command.

The French are in Full Supply.

#### Axis Setup

None

#### Reinforcements

##### French Reinforcements

None

##### Axis Reinforcements

##### June 2

##### 1300:

**101 Trieste, Reggimento Motorizzato 65:** 1/I/65; 2/I/65; 3/I/65; Contracarri/65; Mortai/65 plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex A).

**101 Trieste, Reggimento Motorizzato 66:** 1/I/66; 2/I/66; 3/I/66; Contracarri/66; Mortai/66 plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex A).

**101 Trieste, Independent:** 1/XI; 2/XI; 3/XI; 1/VIII Bers.; 2/VIII Bers.; ca/21; LII Mis. Gen. (placed in Reinforcement entry hex A).

**90. leichte Afrika Division, 155 Schützen:** 1./I./155; 2./I./155; 3./I./155; 4./I./155; Gr. W./I.155; PaK/I./155; 5./II./155; 6./II./155; 7./II./155; 8./II./155; Gr. W./II./155; PaK/II./155; 707 SIG; I./PzJg Abt. 605; 2./PzJg Abt. 605; 3./PzJg Abt. 605; 1./Flak Abt. 606; 3./Flak Abt. 606; 580. PzAufkl plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex B, C or D, and they do not have to be placed in the same Reinforcement entry hex).

**90. leichte Afrika Division, 200 Schützen:** 1./I./200; 2./I./200; 3./I./200; 4./I./200; Gr. W./I.200; PaK/I./200; 5./

II./200; 6./II./200; 7./II./200; 8./II./200; Gr. W./II./200; PaK/II./200; 708 SIG plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex B, C or D, and they do not have to be placed in the same Reinforcement entry hex).

**90. leichte Afrika Division, 361 Schützen:** 1./I./361; 2./I./361; 3./I./361; 4./I./361; Gr. W./I.361; PaK/I./361; 5./II./361; 6./II./361; 7./II./361; 8./II./361; Gr. W./II./361; PaK/II./361 plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex B, C or D, and they do not have to be placed in the same Reinforcement entry hex).

**90. leichte Afrika Division, Independent:** 1./PzJg Abt. 190; 2./PzJg Abt. 190; 1./Flak Abt. 612; 2./Flak Abt. 612; 3./Flak Abt. 612 (placed in Reinforcement entry hex B, C or D, and they do not have to be placed in the same Reinforcement entry hex).

##### 1500:

**101 Trieste, Artillery:** I/21; II/21; III/2; IV/21; 131/8; 148/8 (placed in Artillery Park A).

**90. leichte Afrika Division, Artillery:** 1./Art.Abt. 361; 2./Art.Abt. 361; 3./Art.Abt. 361 (placed in Artillery Park A).

##### June 3

##### 0700:

**90. leichte Afrika Division, Artillery:** 3./Küst.Art. 523; 1./Küst.Art. 533; 2./Küst.Art. 533; 3./Küst.Art. 533 (placed in Artillery Park B).

##### 0900:

##### 90. leichte Afrika Division, KG Wolz:

1./I./Flak 43; 2./I./Flak 43; 3./I./Flak 43; 4./I./Flak 43; 5./I./Flak 43; 1./PzJg Abt. 33; 2./PzJg Abt. 33; 3./PzAufkl; 1./I./Flak 18; 2./I./Flak 18; 3./I./Flak 18; 4./I./Flak 18; 5./I./Flak 18 plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex B, C or D, and they do not have to be placed in the same Reinforcement entry hex).

##### June 6

##### 1500:

**90. leichte Afrika Division, KG Hecker:** 1./Pioneer 33; 2./Pioneer 33; 3./Pioneer 33; 1./Pioneer 200; 2./Pioneer 200; 3./Pioneer 200; 1./Pioneer 900; 2./Pioneer 900 plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex A, B or F, and they do not have to be placed in the same Reinforcement entry hex).

**June 8****Night:**

**90. leichte Afrika Division, KG Hecker:** 1./27 17° Pavia; 2./27 17° Pavia; 3./27 17° Pavia; 1./28 17° Pavia; 2./28 17° Pavia; 3./28 17° Pavia; 2./z.b.V.288; 5/z.b.V.288; StuG/z.b.V.288 (placed in Reinforcement entry hex A, B, F or G, and they do not have to be placed in the same Reinforcement entry hex).

**90. leichte Afrika Division, KG Kiehl:** S. Flak Kiehl; Panzer Komp. plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex A, B, F or G, and they do not have to be placed in the same Reinforcement entry hex).

**June 9****1500:**

**90. leichte Afrika Division, KG Baade:** 1./I./115; 2./I./115; 3./I./115; 4./I./115; Gr. W./I./115; Pak/I./115; 5./II./115; 6./II./115; 7./II./115; 8./II./115; Gr. W./II./115; Pak/II./115; 14./Pioneer 115; 13./IG 115 plus Leader (placed in Reinforcement entry hex A, B, F or G, and they do not have to be placed in the same Reinforcement entry hex).

**Special Rules in effect**

All special rules are in effect.

**Victory Conditions**

Any day the French Morale falls below 1, or if the date is the 10th, the French must withdraw the upcoming night turn (or if the turn is currently a night turn, the withdrawal takes place immediately). The French player places the Susan Travers counter on one of the minefield door hexes, and then moves it, one hex at a time, to a German reinforcement hex, taking any route he wishes so long as the counter doesn't enter a hex with an Axis Unit. Count the number of hexes that are in Axis Fire Zones that the counter enters.

If the Withdrawal is taking place on June 7th or earlier, the game is an Axis victory.

If the Withdrawal take place on June 8th or 9th, and Susan Travers passes through 3 or fewer Axis Fire Zones, then it is a minor French victory. If Susan Travers cannot trace a route, or passes through 4 or more Axis Fire Zones, then it is a minor Axis victory.

If the Withdrawal takes place on June 10th, it is a French victory.

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**Special thanks to:** Brian Youse and Perry Cocke



## No Question of Surrender:

### Narrative of The Battle for Bir Hacheim

By *Hans Korting*

#### Introduction

Bir Hacheim (or Bir Hakeim) is a remote oasis in the Libyan desert, and the former site of a Turkish fort. In fact it is not much more than a crossing of several tracks in an almost barren desert. During the Battle of Gazala, the Free French of General Marie-Pierre Koenig defended the site from 27th May to 10th June 1942 against attacking German and Italian forces directed by General Erwin Rommel.

Rommel devised a plan for a sweeping flank attack around Bir Hakeim in order to destroy the British armor held in reserve and cut off the Commonwealth divisions defending the Gazala Line. To execute this offensive, he intended the Italian 132nd Armored Division Ariete to assault Bir Hacheim while the 21. and 15. Panzer Divisions swung around the Allied flank to attack their rear. This maneuver would be supported by the 90. leichte Afrika Division which was to move around the Allied flank to El Adem to block reinforcements from joining the battle. Resisting for 16 days, the Free French gave the retreating British Eighth Army enough time to reorganize and subsequently halt the Axis advance.

The Free French, around 3,700 men, consisted of a mixed force of two Foreign Legion battalions of the 13th Demi-Brigade and 4 battalions containing colonials, naval troops and Marines. The famous Foreign Legion, well known as a safe haven for men from all walks of life, was well represented here. Armed with 75mm guns, smaller guns and mortars, anti-tank rifles, some anti-aircraft guns, machine-guns and small arms these men would have to stand up to the storm that would hit them. Temperatures of 50°C/122°F, shortages of both water and sleep, and an abundance of noise and shelling, would prove to be a stern test of endurance.

The French position was heavily mined all around and divided into sectors which would allow for an all-round defense. The minefields were extensive and could only be crossed in a couple of places, which were covered effectively in other ways. In the center of the positions a "mobile reserve" position would allow support in case of a breakthrough.

#### Failure

On the morning of 27th May the Italian General De Stefanis of the Ariete Division received the order to attack the French from the southeast, the rear of the position. The M13/40's of the 132nd Regiment, some infantry and artillery hit the French. The Italian infantry however ran into trouble, hit hard by French artillery fire, and so the tanks had to continue on their own. All too soon, they ran into the minefield and were

decimated. As the Italians tried to gain access to the French positions from the north, the mines again took their toll on the attacking Italians. The few tanks that got close were dealt with by the 75 mm guns. The attack that started at 09:30 hours ground to a halt and at about 10:15 the retreat was sounded. 32 burning hulks were spread across the desert, a testament to Italian bravery.

In the meantime, further north, the Italians succeeded in decimating the neighboring British position, effectively isolating the French at Bir Hacheim.

The period of May 28th/29th saw only limited action, with the Italians trying to gain a foothold by small infiltration actions, all of which were repulsed. Rommel, in the meantime, had his hands full as the Allies counterattacked and isolated parts of his forces. With the Royal Air Force flying ground support missions they presented an unexpected danger to the French at Bir Hacheim. From the sky the Italian tanks destroyed during the first attack on Bir Hacheim looked like another armored column and were bombed. Some of these bombs hit the French positions and so General Koenig decided to set the wrecks on fire. This way they were more easily recognizable as being already destroyed, stopping the R.A.F. from maybe scoring an own goal.

The 29th presented a surprise to the French defenders in the form of about a hundred Indian soldiers who had been taken prisoner by the Germans at the start of their offensive. With their own supplies being low and a full offensive in progress, the Germans let the prisoners wander off, allowing them to turn up at Bir Hacheim. This "surprise" and the growing number of Axis prisoners stretched supplies in the French position to the limit.

The next two days, 30th/31st May were fairly quiet except for another attempt to infiltrate through the minefields. May 31st, however, did see a supply convoy with water reaching the positions, relieving some of the problems of water shortage. On their return trip the trucks took along the unexpected Indian visitors, the severely wounded and POWs, further relieving the supply pressure.

#### German intervention

With those pesky French still on his right flank, threatening his supply lines, Rommel decided to intervene. On 1st June he sent the 90. leichte Afrika Division to help the Italians and annihilate the Bir Hacheim hedgehog. To renew the attack the Luftwaffe was ordered to bomb the French position and Stukas started their attacks.

On 2nd June, at 08:00 hours, the attack resumed and the 90. leichte and Trieste attacked from two directions, supported by Stuka attacks from the air. Koenig's forces knew that they were isolated and could not count on support from any British units. The only support they could expect was from the

R.A.F., which attacked the enemy positions around Bir Hacheim. This did boost the morale of the French, seeing Italian and German armor reduced to burning hulks.

This same day the Axis invited General Koenig to surrender his forces; they did this again on the 3rd and the 5th, but to Koenig there was no question of surrender.

Over the next two days the shelling and bombing was intensified and several attacks followed, but the French held their positions, although this became harder each day.

Starting on the 6th of June the German pressure on the French perimeter started to increase and German engineers breached the minefields and entered the French positions. With the perimeter slowly shrinking, but the fort still in French hands, the Germans were prevented from expanding their foothold. Even the R.A.F., whose support was much appreciated by the French, started to attack the German positions inside the perimeter. With one final convoy able to breach German lines to supply the fort, the French knew that the end was near.

Rommel assembled his forces for another attack from the north on 8th June. This time he would personally lead the attack, which would be supported by artillery and a large commitment by the Luftwaffe. More dive-bombing Stukas attacked the Bir Hacheim position, but despite this bombing and shelling the French held firm. That night Koenig addressed his men and told them that he wanted to try to hold out until the 10th and break out of the encirclement the following night.

Water, food, and ammunition were running critically low but the French had to hold out one more day. The R.A.F., which had made its presence felt over many days already, dropped 170 liters of water on the position so the wounded could be taken care of. Had Rommel known that ammunition was almost exhausted, he would surely have ordered another attack, but he decided to reorganize his forces instead, and so in fact helped the French to prepare for the breakout.

With sappers clearing a way through the minefields, Koenig headed southwest, but all too soon the French evacuation was spotted by the Germans. Instead of an organized evacuation, the whole thing turned into a mad dash to freedom. Bren carriers were sent out to neutralize machine gun positions, hand-to-hand combat took place, and many a vehicle ended up hitting a mine.

By around 08:00 hours on 11th June, the majority of the Free French forces had been evacuated, but during the day many stragglers turned up at the British position that had been appointed as the rendezvous.

That same day the Axis forces conquered the Bir Hacheim positions that had held out for many more days than Rom-

mel had expected. They found around 500 French wounded and men who either were unable to evacuate or had chosen to stay behind to take care of the wounded. Around 2,600 men had been successfully evacuated from the Bir Hacheim hedgehog.

Despite being a hindrance to Rommel's supply lines, Bir Hacheim only delayed his conquest of Tobruk for a couple of days. It did not "rescue" the Commonwealth forces in Africa in the end. The time gained by the French was used by the British to take up heavily defended positions further north, but again, they surrendered the initiative to Rommel. With the southern part of the battlefield freed of opposition, he swooped north and decisively defeated the British armor.

What the battle for Bir Hacheim did show was that the French, and particularly the Foreign Legion, were not second-rate soldiers, a collection of no-goods who could not really fight and contribute to the Allied cause. They did more than just hold their ground against a well-trained foe, commanded by one of the top commanders of the German Reich. They fought gallantly in a position that had been surrounded, while running out of supplies and water, and even succeeded in breaking out of this situation.

## Biographies

By *Hans Korting*

### **Susan Travers (09/23/1909–12/18/2003)**

Being the only woman ever to have been inducted into the French Foreign Legion, Miss Travers found herself at Bir Hacheim after a trip as an ambulance driver. There she became General Koenig's driver and mistress. The daughter of a British Admiral, Susan Travers went to war in Finland serving as an ambulance driver, something she continued to do until the end of the war. After the successful German invasion of Scandinavia she returned to England to join the forces De Gaulle had been assembling there. Via the Syrian campaign she ended up at Bir Hacheim where she refused to leave with the other women. During the siege she drove General Koenig and Colonel Amilakvary around while shells came down all around the car and Stukas flew overhead. During the retreat she drove the car through the dark to get back to the British lines. The car was hit several times but they returned safely. Later in the war Susan Travers was wounded when the car she was driving hit a mine. She wrote her biography at the age of 91 after all the people involved had died. Miss Travers was awarded the Croix de Guerre.

### **General Pierre Koenig (10/10/1898–09/02/1970)**

Marie-Pierre Koenig served with distinction during the First World War but would stake his claim to fame in the Second World War during the fighting at Bir Hacheim. After the evacuation of the French forces from Norway, Koenig saw action in France against the German Blitzkrieg. When France fell he escaped to England and joined De Gaulle and his Free French forces. In 1941 he was involved in the campaigns in Syria and Lebanon before being transferred to Egypt. With his stand at Bir Hacheim, during which he rejected a request to surrender by Rommel personally, the French made it possible for the British forces to make a more orderly retreat and regroup in order to strike back at Rommel. After his return to England he was attached to Eisenhower's Allied Headquarters and was involved in preparations for the D-Day invasion. In June 1944 he stopped the internal power struggle between the French maquis groups, strengthening their contribution to the support of the Allied forces during their battles in France. After the war he went on to hold a number of high ranking positions until his death in 1970.

### **Generale Arnaldo Azzi (12/23/1885–11.25/1957)**

The 101st Motorized "Trieste" Division was commanded by Lieutenant-General Azzi from December 1941 until the end of July 1942. He next commanded an anti-partisan unit in the Balkans during 1944. He was removed from the ranks of the Italian army because he made some anti-monarchic speeches. Unfortunately little else is known about this commander.

### **Generale Guiseppe de Stefanis (1885-1965)**

An artillery officer before the war Giuseppe de Stefanis went to war in France, 1940, and Greece, 1941, commanding an infantry division. During the Greek 'tragedy' he won the highest Italian award, the Ordine Militare di Savoia. He next commanded the Motorized "Trento" Division before he took over command of the Armored "Ariete" Division. At the end of June 1942 he was given the command of XX Corpo d'Armata Corazzato that consisted of the Ariete, Littorio and Trieste Divisions. In November 1942 Rommel assigned him the task of preparing the Mareth line for the Panzerarmee Afrika. After his return to Italy he commanded LI Corps for just a short time before becoming involved in peace delegations.

### **General der Panzertruppen Ulrich Kleemann (03/23/1892–03/01/1963)**

Commanding the 90. leichte Afrika Division from April 10, 1942 to July 13, 1942 and during the period August 10, 1942 to November 1, 1942, Ulrich Kleemann was a daring commander leading this formation in some of the hardest battles in the desert campaign. He had been in the cavalry during the First World War and stayed with the colors after the war. This probably explains some of his daring exploits in the desert. First being engaged further north, Kleemann was directed south by Rommel to help the Italians deal with Bir Hacheim. In 1943 Kleemann commanded the Sturm Division Rhodos in the assault on his former Italian allies on the island Rhodes. In the latter stages of the war he became General der Panzertruppen and fought on the Eastern Front in Hungary.

# Terrain Legend



Desert



Minefield Door



Observation Post



Light Minefield



Heavy Minefield



Trail



Fortified



Deployment Area



Reinforcement Entry