Operation Battleaxe, 1941
A *Flames of War* Mega-Game Scenario

After the arrival of Rommel and the Afrika Korps the British and Commonwealth forces in North Africa had been pushed back across the frontier between Libya and Egypt, leaving a strong garrison holding the critical port fortress of Tobruk, behind Axis lines and cut off by land. Anxious to turn the tables once again, Churchill gambled by sending strong reinforcements to Egypt and urging General Wavell to launch an offensive to relieve Tobruk quickly. After a failure of his initial probing attack (Operation Brevity), he launched his strengthened forces against the frontier area in Operation Battleaxe.

This scenario uses a large tabletop to show a scaled down version of the area around the frontier over which the forces clashed. This area saw extensive fighting, back and forth throughout the Desert War. Battleaxe provides an opportunity to field a wide variety of interesting and unique Early War desert units.

Special Terrain rules:
- Buildings – the few buildings present in the area were used by both sides for defensive cover. Any stand touching a building should be treated as in concealing terrain and bulletproof cover.
- Escarpment – the escarpment areas dominated the areas near the coast. Escarpment vertical areas are impassable to vehicles, except at gaps (passes and wadis). The area above the escarpment (within 4") provides concealment to any team on them, and no team may see or be seen from the other side of the escarpment unless it is touching the edge. Stands touching the edge may see and be seen from the lower level.
- Halfaya Pass – a critical feature in the frontier area, this was one of only two ways up and down the escarpment in this area. Halfaya is passable to vehicles but only in single file.
- Ridges – as most of the terrain above the escarpment was quite flat and open, small elevations and ridges assumed a high level of tactical importance. Line of sight stops at a ridge line that neither the spotter nor target are adjacent to. Fire crossing a ridge gives the target concealment.
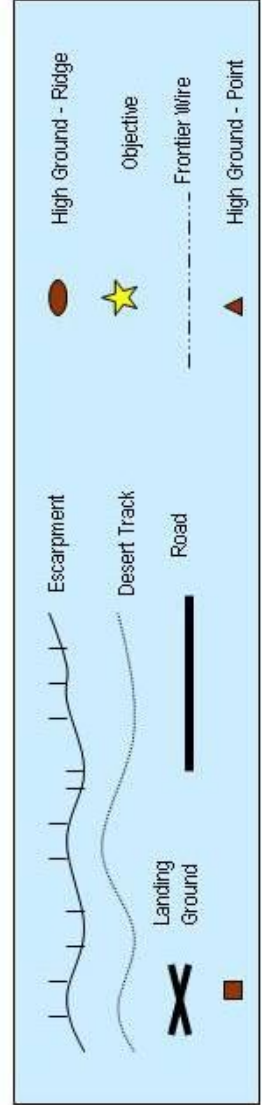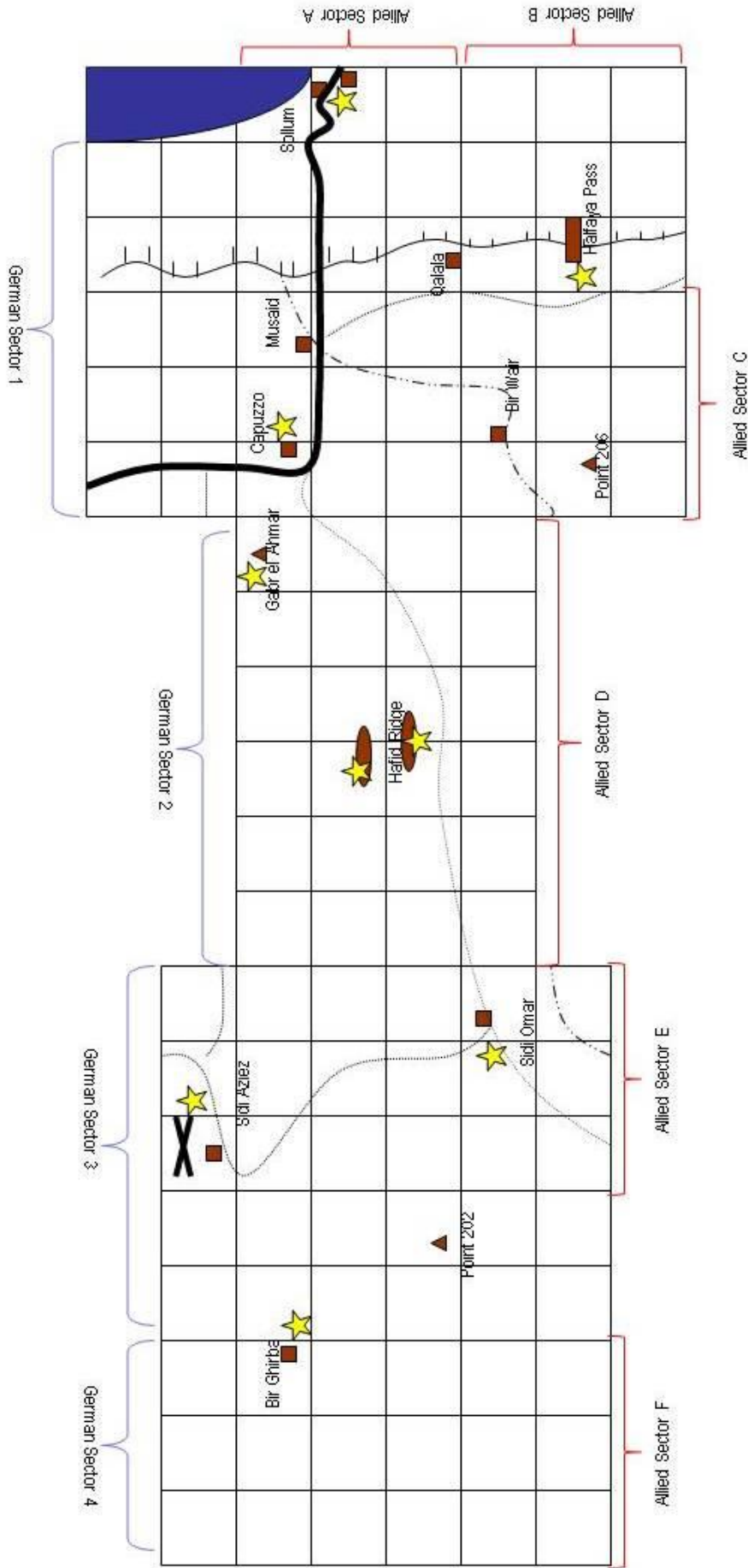
Deployment:
As the game starts with Axis forces dug in but not expecting an assault, while the British and Commonwealth are ready to cross the frontier, hoping to cut through the Axis defenses and relieve Tobruk.

The Axis forces are deployed on table first, as noted in each force's deployment.

The Allied forces then take the first turn, entering the table from their designated arrival sectors.

Map:

FOW Mega-Game
Battleaxe, 1941

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Locations: Sollum, Halfaya Pass, Qalala, Musaid, Bir Wair, Capuzzo, Point 206, Gabr el Ahmar, Hafid Ridge, Sidi Azeiz, Sidii Omar, Point 202, Bir Ghirba

German Sectors: German Sector 1, German Sector 2, German Sector 3, German Sector 4

Allied Sectors: Allied Sector A, Allied Sector B, Allied Sector C, Allied Sector D, Allied Sector E, Allied Sector F

Legend:
- High Ground - Ridge
- Objective
- Frontier Wire
- High Ground - Point
- Escarpment
- Desert Track
- Road
- Landing Ground

Axis Forces:

Frontier Command / Halfaya Garrison –

Rating: units are rated as specified in the list
Core List: Stutzpunkt list from Hellfire and Back
Points: 2000
Added units: 2 additional minefields at no points cost, may field Gefreiter Hubner at no additional points cost if one or more 88 Flak Nests are purchased
Prohibited units: no captured vehicles
Deployment: all fortified platoons (and any infantry platoons at player's option) are deployed at start anywhere within 12" of Halfaya Pass; other units enter on turn 2 from German sector 1

[Frontier Command] _____

Trento Division –

Rating: units are rated as specified in the list
Core List: Bersaglieri Company list from Hellfire and Back
Points: 1500
Added units: none
Prohibited units: none
Deployment: deployed at start anywhere within 12" of Musaid or Capuzzo

[Trento Division] _____

15th Panzer Division –

Rating: units are rated as specified in the list
Core List: Leichte Panzer Kompanie list from Hellfire and Back
Points: 2000
Added units: none
Prohibited units: no captured vehicles
Deployment: up to ½ of total platoons, rounded down, may be deployed at start anywhere within 12" of Hafid Ridge. The remaining platoons enter from German sector 2 on turn 2.

[15th Panzer] _____

5th Light Division –

Rating: units are rated as specified in the list
Core List: Leichte Panzer Kompanie list from Hellfire and Back
Points: 1500
Added units: none
Prohibited units: no captured vehicles
Deployment: arrive at the start of turn 2, anywhere within German sector 3.

[5th Light] _____

33rd Recon Battalion* –

> **Rating:** units are rated as specified in the list
> **Core List:** Kradschutzenkompanie list from Hellfire and Back
> **Points:** 1000
> **Added units:** none
> **Prohibited units:** no captured vehicles
> **Deployment:** arrive at the start of turn 2, anywhere in German sector 4

[33rd Recon] _____

British and Commonwealth Forces:

22nd Guards Brigade –

> **Rating:** units are rated as specified in the list
> **Core List:** Guards Rifle Company list from Hellfire and Back
> **Points:** 1500
> **Added units:** none
> **Prohibited units:** no Valentine tanks
> **Deployment:** enter the table on turn one from Allied Sector A

[22nd Guards Brigade] _____

18th Indian Brigade –

> **Rating:** units are rated as specified in the list
> **Core List:** Indian Rifle Company list from Hellfire and Back
> **Points:** 1500
> **Added units:** none
> **Prohibited units:** no Valentine tanks
> **Deployment:** enter the table on turn one from Allied Sector B

[18th Indian Brigade] _____

4th RTR –

> **Rating:** units are rated as specified in the list
> **Core List:** British Infantry Tank Company list from Hellfire and Back
> **Points:** 2000
> **Added units:** none
> **Prohibited units:** no Valentine tanks
> **Deployment:** enter the table on turn one from Allied Sector C

[4th RTR] _____

2nd RTR –

Rating: units are rated as specified in the list
Core List: British Armored Regiment list from Hellfire and Back
Points: 1500
Added units: none
Prohibited units: Humber Armored Cars, Honey Stuart Platoons
Deployment: enter the table on turn one from Allied Sector D

[2nd RTR] _____

6th RTR –

Rating: units are rated as specified in the list
Core List: British Crusader Armored Squadron list from Hellfire and Back
Points: 1500
Added units: none
Prohibited units: Humber Armored Cars, Honey Stuart Platoons
Deployment: enter the table on turn one from Allied Sector D

[6th RTR] _____

7th Support Group –

Rating: units are rated as specified in the list
Core List: British Jock Column list from Hellfire and Back
Points: 1500
Added units: none
Prohibited units: Humber Armored Cars, Honey Stuart Platoons
Deployment: enter the table on turn one from Allied Sector E

[7th Support Group] _____

Screening Force* –

Rating: units are rated as specified in the list
Core List: Armored Car Squadron list from Hellfire and Back
Points: 1000
Added units: none
Prohibited units: Humber Armored Cars
Deployment: enter the table on turn one from Allied Sector F

[Screening Force] _____

Optional Forces (*):

For a more "loads of tanks" action, replace both of the recon forces (noted with an * in the OOB) with an additional 1500 point armored force – a leichte panzerkompanie for the Axis, and an Armored Regiment or Crusader Armored Squadron for the Allies. This assumes the recon screens for each side were pushed further west, allowing a larger field for the armored forces to clash.

Split Tables (*):

If you are space constrained, or simply want to reflect the relative separation of the action along the coast from that in the interior, you can split the eastern end of the battlefield off as a separate table.

If you do so forces may still transfer between the two tables. A transferring unit that exits an adjoining table edge will enter the other table within 12" of the corresponding point at the beginning of their side's next turn on that table.

Frontier Defenses:

The frontier was marked by an extensive line of wire, erected by the Italians to limit tribal forces crossing during the Senussi campaigns. Wire is deployed as shown on the map, it is treated as normal barbed wire.

Airpower:

At this stage of the war, neither side had sufficient airpower to dominate the skies above the desert. No forces receive airpower in this scenario.

Weather:

The weather did not play a role of any significance in the Battleaxe fighting.

Winning the Game:

Much blood has already been spilled over control of the crucial border area. The Allies were desperate inflict a significant defeat on the Axis forces, which they hoped would allow them to raise the siege of Tobruk. The Axis forces needed to hold their positions until enough power could be assembled to seize the Tobruk fortress. To reflect this, there are 9 objectives on the tabletop:

- The Allied side will win a strategic victory as soon as they hold any 4 objectives at the start of their turn.
- If the Allies do not win a strategic victory, the game will end after 10 turns. If at that point the Allies hold any 3 objectives they win a tactical victory. If they hold any 2 objectives then the result is a draw.
- Any other result is a German tactical victory.