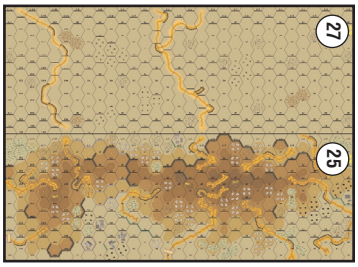
Deadly Message

DL 16.4 Scenario by David Lamb

Victory Conditions: The Germans win if at the game's end they Control at least two of the following hexes 25-BB5, P6, and L6. They also win if they Control all building hexes within two hexes of 25-W3. The Germans lose automatically if all three PzKw VI E are eliminated, immobilized, or recalled.

Pont Du Fahs, Tunisia, 18 January 1943:

In January, General von Arnim, who had just taken command in Tunisia was directed to implement Operation 'Eilbote I' (Special Messenger 1). The German plan of battle was to seize all five passes through the Tunisian eastern Dorsal, thus gaining control of all entrances to the Tunisian plain as well as the plateau beyond. This would further safeguard the communications between his army in the north and that of General Rommels in the south, as well as protect the airfields in the coastal plain. To accomplish this end, Kampfgruppe Weber - comprising elements of the crack 334th Infantry Division and the 501st Heavy Tank Battalion - attacked the positions of the Moroccan Infantry Division and elements of the French XIX Corps. The French for their part, were not surprised by the attack, but they were unprepared. They lacked sufficient reserves and they suffered from being poorly equipped with largely obsolete arms and equipment. The Germans mastery of the air further hampered the French by preventing Allied aerial reconnaissance and by severely interdicting the supply routes along which Allied supplies and reinforcements traveled. On the morning of the 18th of January, following a short but intense barrage, the Germans attacked under a persistent winter drizzle against French positions near Pont du Fahs.



Only hexes B-FF are in play

☆ Allies set up first

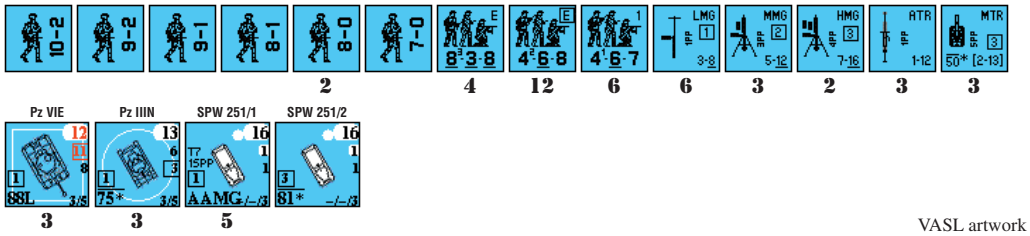
✚ Germans move first

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Balance:
German: The Germans have Plentiful Ammo for their OBA.
French: Delete SSR 6.

GERMAN

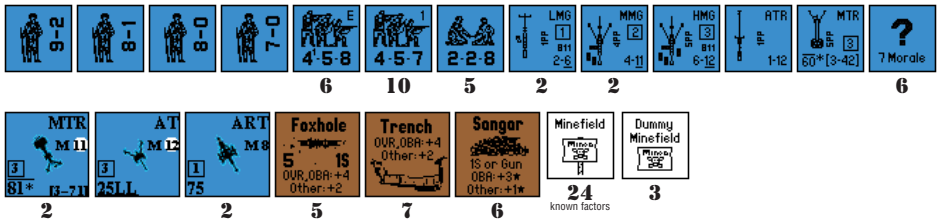
Elements of Kampfgruppe Weber [ELR: 4] - Enter Turn 1 on North Edge: {SAN: 3}:



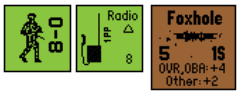
VASL artwork used with permission of Rodney Kinney

ALLIES

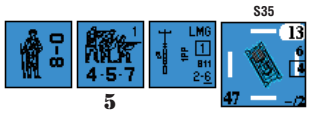
Elements of the Barre Group's Moroccan Infantry Division (French) [ELR: 3] - Set up on hill hexes of board 25 {SAN: 4}:



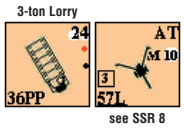
Barre Group's US II Corps Artillery Liaison (US) [ELR: 3]
Set up on any hill hex of board 25 (See SR 4):



Elements of the Barre Group (French) - Enter Turn 4 on South Edge:



Elements of the 72nd RA Anti-Tank Rgmt. (British) - Enter Turn 6 on the South Edge:



SSR:

1. EC is Wet with a Mild Breeze blowing from the North East. The Weather is Overcast with Mud (Fl1.8) and Lt. Rain in effect. All Orchards are Olive Groves (Fl3.5); all Scrub is Brush; all Wadis are treated as Shallow Streams for movement purposes only. An unpaved road exists from 27-Y1 to Y-10. Place Overlays as follows: **W3** on 27AA7-AA6; **O5** on 27X6-X7; **W2** on 27R5-Q5; **O4** on 27L4-L5; **O3** on 27T3-S3; **O2** on 27X1-W2. No Trench may set up on a road hex.
2. The Germans have one Module of 100+ OBA (Smoke/HE) with one Pre-Registered hex. It is directed by an Offboard Observer at Level 3 on a secretly recorded east edge board hex.
3. All Allied Units, Fortifications, and buildings on board 25 are subject to a Bombardment (C1.8) [EXC: A third die is rolled during each bombardment attack DR; a dr ≥5 results in that hex being immune to attack].
4. The American 8-0 SMC is an observer for a Module of US 100+ OBA (Smoke/HE). Fire Direction (A7.53), LLMC/LLTC, Rallying French units, or assisting in MC/PTC is NA. Remove the 8-0 SMC from play as soon as the radio is eliminated or the second Red battery access chit has been drawn. Only this SMC may operate the radio.
5. German 8-3-8 squads are Sappers (Hl.23).
6. Bore Sighting is NA.
7. AP Mines may not be exchanged for AT Mines.
8. This 6pdr Gun and Vehicle are en portee and are treated exactly as the 2pdr Portee in Chapter H (British vehicle note 77 and ordnance note 6).

Aftermath: The Germans spearheaded their battlegroups attack with the Tiger Tanks of the 501ST 'Stalking Tiger' Heavy Tank Battalion. These tanks terrified the French, whose anti-tank equipment proved to be wholly inadequate to stopping these 'Goliaths'. One battlefield record reported a gun duel between a Tiger tank and a 75-mm anti-tank gun, in which the gun opened fire at point-blank range and had eight shells bounce harmlessly off the Tiger before the Tiger returned fire - destroying the gun and killing or wounding the crew. The Moroccan Infantry Division was badly shaken by this powerful offensive. Counterattacks were easily crushed, so General von Arnim tried to exploit this success by pushing south and southwest to roll up the French XIX Corps positions facing east. However, a counterattack by the US II Corps, as well as a reinforcement of the French lines by 6-Pounder anti-tank guns of the 72nd RA Anti-Tank Rgt. prevented von Arnim from exploiting at the strategic level his tactical success. It was also during this action that the first two Tigers in North Africa were knocked out by the 6-Pounders. In addition to occupying the positions between Pont du Fahs and Zaghouan, the success of Special Messenger I netted 4,000 prisoners for von Arnim.