



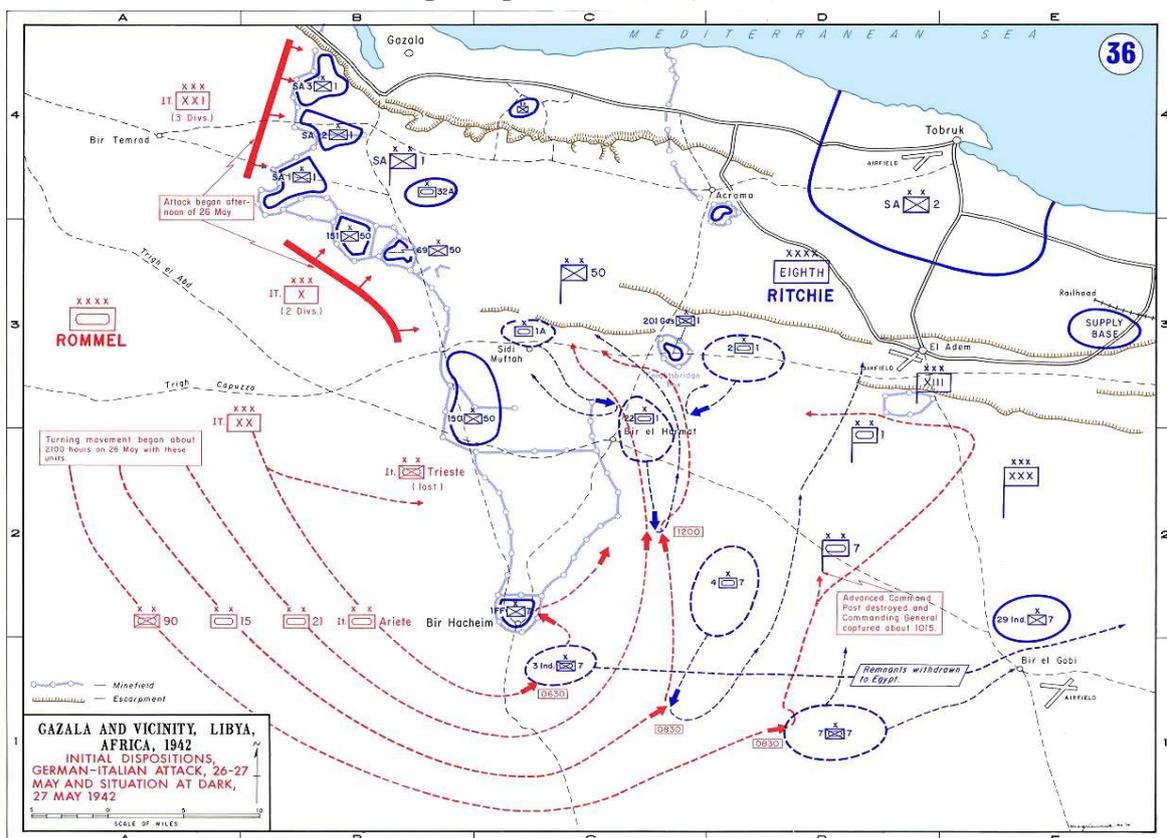
Battle of Gazala

In May 1942, after Rommel had recaptured the Cyrenaica, Axis troops were stopped in front of the Gazala line firmly defended by several brigades of the British Eighth Army. Rommel thought up a new offensive with a bypass of his armored units by the desert in the south of the line and then to come back to the sea in order to encircle the British units, it was Operation « Venezia ». The offensive began in the night 26 to 27 of May 1942. In spite of several successful first fights, the Rommel's plan failed, mainly because of the strong resistance of the 1st Free French Brigade at Bir Hakeim, and so the Axis armoured divisions were stuck in the so-called « Cauldron », surrounded by the British units. Nevertheless, despite this bad situation, Rommel kept the initiative by the capture of the « box » of Got El Ualeb while his antitank guns made a shield against all attacks by the British armoured units. Opening a logistical road across the minefields to resupply his own tanks units, he could resist to the British counter-attack, operation Aberdeen and then he finally capture the box of Bir Hakeim. In a last tank battle near « Knightsbridge » on the 12th of June, he won the superiority in number of tanks. At that time, the battle was virtually lost for the British, their troops withdrew, abandoning the Gazala line. The last task for Rommel was to capture the fortified camp of Tobruk, his objective of the previous year. The attack was made on the 20th of June and Tobruk was captured on the 22nd. Then Rommel launched his troops to the pursuit of the British forces in Egypt, but exhausted by one month of fighting, the Axis troops were stopped in front of El Alamein.

This mega-campaign of 28 scenarios (including one Overlord and one Overthrough), depict all the battles that occurred in this part of the western desert between Axis troops and the British Eighth Army until the fall of Tobruk which gave to Rommel his marshall's baton.

Jdrommel.

Map of operations (May 1942)





Campaign notes

Expansions needed with the base game:

Desert map, expansions « Terrain Pack », « Mediterranean Theater », « Winter Wars » (for several badges) or « Equipment Pack » for the equivalent figures (SWAs and heavy anti-tank guns).

This large campaign of 28 scenarios (including 1 Overlord and 1 Overthrough) is subdivided in five mini-campaigns of four to six scenarios each :

Unternehmen Venezia, the Cauldron, Operation Aberdeen, Axis recover the initiative, Rommel's victory.

The mini-campaign about Bir Hakeim, created some years ago, is now included in this campaign, but it is always possible to play it alone. The Overthrough (double-Breakthrough) scenario is chronologically situated in the first mini-campaign but could be played separately. For that scenario, at least one expansion « Breakthrough Kit » and another « Mediterranean Theater » is necessary. For the Overlord, scenario, a second Desert map is useful.

Unternehmen Venezia :

- Unpleasant surprise at Point 171 27/05/1942 (n°18623)
- Bir Hakeim – Action 1 27/05/1942 (n°8210)
- The clash of tanks – Action 1 27/05/1942 (n°18633)
- The « box » of Retma 27/05/1942 (n°18647)
- The clash of tanks – Action 2 27/05/1942 (n°18649)
- Crossing the minefields 27/05/1942 (n°18709)
- Counter-attack on Bir El Harmat (Overthrough) 27/05/1942 (n°18659 & 18660)

The Cauldron :

- Commonwealth Keep 28/05/1942 (n°18734)
- The Trigh El Abd 28/05/1942 (n°18901)
- Division Sabratha attack 29/05/1942 (n°19099)
- Got El Ualeb 30/05/1942 (n°6692)
- Bir El Aslagh 30/05/1942 (n°19167)
- Eluet El Tamar 02/06/1942 (n°19327)

Operation Aberdeen :

- Dahar El Aslagh Ridge 05/06/1942 (n°19381)
- Sidra Ridge 05/06/1942 (n°19813)
- Destruction of British HQ 05/06/1942 (n°19839)
- Cleaning operation in the desert 06/06/1942 (n°19426)
- Attack of the South African Division 06/06/1942 (n°19780)

Axis recover the initiative :

- Bir Hakeim – Action 2 06/06/1942 (n°8241)
- Bir Hakeim – Action 3 08/06/1942 (n°8283)
- Bir Hakeim – Action 4 10/06/1942 (n°8303)
- Ariete strong resistance 10/06/1942 (n°20219)
- Gazala : the decisive day (Overlord) 12/06/1942 (n°20257)
- Maabus Er Ragle 13/06/1942 (n°20295)

Rommel's victory :

- British breakthrough 14/06/1942 (n°20338)
- El Hatian 16/06/1942 (n°20357)
- Gambut 17/06/1942 (n°20366)
- The fall of Tobruk 20/06/1942 (n°20388)

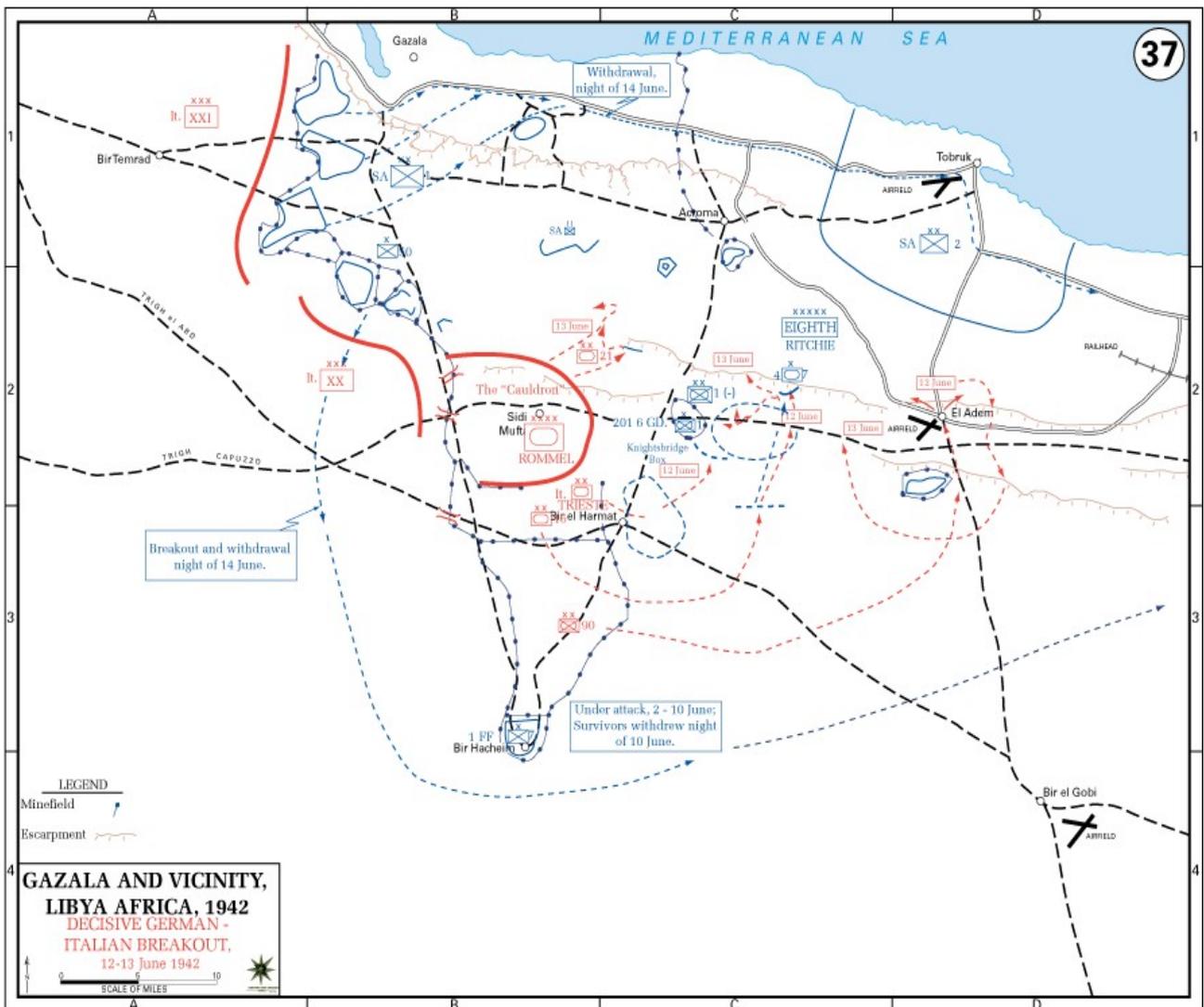


Who wins the battle of Gazala ?

In accordance with history, Axis forces under the command of Rommel won the battle by the fall of Tobruk and the withdrawing of the British Eighth Army in Egypt. But on the ground, the Allied troops often made a strong resistance against Axis, the better example was the battle of Bir Hakeim by the Free French. But finally, General Rommel was a better strategist than the British generals and kept the initiative of the battle even when he was surrounded in the Cauldron.

In this campaign, each scenario is well-balanced to give a chance to win to the two players. The winner will be the one who implements the better strategy (or who have the best fortune with dices).

Map of operations (June 1942)





Bibliography

- « Tobrouk » - Michaël Carver.
- « La guerre sans haine » - Maréchal Rommel.
- « Rommel - la fin d'un mythe » - Dominique Lormier.
- « Rommel in the desert » - Volkmar Kühn.
- « Panzers en Afrique » - Jean-Marie Fitère.
- « Rommel as military commander » - Ronald Lewin.
- « Rommel » - Desmond Young.
- « Afrika Korps » - Paul Carell.
- « Afrika Korps, Rommel et ses hommes » - K.J. Macksey.
- « La 21. Panzer Division » - Album Historique – Ed. Heimdal.
- « Bir Hakeim » - Erwan Bergot.
- Magazine Batailles & Blindés hors-série n°6 - Afrika Korps, tome 2.
- Militaria Magazine hors-série n°6 - La guerre du désert (II).
- Magazine Troupes d'élite volume 11 - les 3 médailles d'or de l'Ariete.

Victory conditions

Counting up the Victory points:

- 1 VP by full ENY unit destroyed,
- 1 additional VP by medal token gained,
- 1 VP by scenario won.



Counter sheet

SCENARIO	ALLIES	AXE
Unpleasant surprise at Point 171		
Bir Hakeim – Action 1		
The clash of tanks - Action 1		
The «Box » of Retma		
The clash of tanks – Action 2		
Crossing the minefields		
Counter-attack on Bir El Harmat		
Total 1st mini-campaign	VP	VP
Commonwealth Keep		
The Trigh El Abd		
Division Sabratha Attack		
Got El Ualeb		
Bir El Aslagh		
Eluet El Tamar		
Total 2nd mini-campaign	VP	VP
Dahar El Aslagh Ridge		
Sidra Ridge		
Destruction of British HQ		
Cleaning operation in the desert		
Attack of the South African Division		
Total 3rd mini-campaign	VP	VP
Bir Hakeim – Action 2		
Bir Hakeim – Action 3		
Bir Hakeim – Action 4		
Ariete strong resistance		
Gazala : the decisive day		
Maabus Er Rigle		
Total 4th mini-campaign	VP	VP
British breakthrough		
El Hatian		
Gambut		
The fall of Tobruk		
Total 5th mini-campaign	VP	VP
Total Mega-campaign	VP	VP