



Syria campaign (Operation Exporter)

In April 1941, a coup d'etat made by pro-German rebel forces under Rashid Ali forced British general Wawell to engage a military campaign to regain control in Irak. Durant this conflict, the rebel forces were supported by the German Luftwaffe which needed the use of French airfields in Syria to pass in transit to Irak. This was enough to be a threat for the British army in the Middle East, so Churchill decided to intervene militarily in Syria. But French general De Gaulle didn't want that the British controlled this part of Middle East because Syria and Lebanon were an old French SDN Mandate, so he ordered to the 1st Free French Division to participate in the invasion of Syria in order to perpetuate the presence of France in this area. Allied troops (British, Australians, Indians and Free French) hoped that Vichy French Army gave only a symbolic resistance. Not at all, it was a hard military campaign with several fierce battles, without any concession, particularly between Vichy French and Free French. After some days of defensive fighting, the Vichy French Army made a counter-attack to destabilize the Allied forces. But because no reinforcement was possible for General Dentz Army, the victory was impossible and the battle of Damascus in late June was the swan song to the Vichy French Army. The battle continued until the 12th of July, date of the ceasefire. The Armistice was signed on the 14th of July at Saint Jean d'Acre. After the campaign, a deep resentment separated the French soldiers of the two sides, even after the raising of the French Army in 1943.

This campaign composed of 20 scenarios describes the battles between Vichy French troops and Allied troops in Syria and Lebanon in 1941. This 34 days' campaign, is an unrecognized part of the World War II because it was hidden during the war by Allied countries then after war by official historians. But from the two sides, thousands of men lost lives or were injured in this incomprehensible campaign. These men deserved to be known and recognized by History as well as those of Stalingrad or Omaha Beach.

Jdrommel.





Campaign Notes

Expansions needed to play the campaign:

- 1 base game,
- 1 Mediterranean Theater expansion for tiles and British figures,
- 1 Terrain Pack for some special tiles,
- 1 Equipment Pack for French infantry figures, cavalry special weapons and so on.
- 1 Winter / Desert Board for 2 scenarios

Special adaptations to the campaign :

1) Terrain

The mixing of desert tiles and campaign tiles was knowingly chosen to represent the particular ground typical of Mediterranean countries (villages and palm grove).

2) Figures

To differentiate Vichy French troops and Free French troops (at that time, they wore, more or less, the same battle dress uniform), I choose to use « French Army » figures (from the Equipment Pack expansion) for the Vichy French troops and the standard Allied figures (US of the base game) with French Resistance badge for the Free French troops. In case of you don't have the Equipment Pack expansion, you can use the Axis figures of the base game for the Vichy French troops (but personally, I don't like).

3) Special rules

The « French army » rules is used as well for the Vichy French troops (Axis) as for the Free French troops (Allied).

The « French Resistance » rules, generally attached to the « Croix de Lorraine » badge, are not used in this campaign.

4) Gaming

This campaign could be played in the chronological order of the scenarios or in five different mini-campaigns. There are no advanced rules.





Chronological order of the scenarios:

- 15826 – Merdjayoun – Action 1 – 08/06/1941
- 15895 – Cheik Meskine – 08/06/1941
- 15567 – Battle of Litani river – 09/06/1941
- 15717 – Fierce resistance at Kasmiyeh – 09/06/1941
- 15846 – Merdjayoun – Action 2 – 11/06/1941
- 15905 – Djebel Maani – 11/06/1941
- 15734 – Battle of Adloun – 12/06/1941
- 15760 – The defense of Saïda – 13/06/1941
- 15900 – Battle of Kissoueh – 15/06/1941
- 15884 – Merdjayoun – Action 3 – 15/06/1941
- 15170 – Counter-attack at Kuneitra – 16/06/1941
- 15948 – Battle of Jezzin – 17/06/1941
- 15927 – Recapture of Ezraa – 17/06/1941
- 15960 – Djebel Kelb – 17/06/1941
- 15936 – Carnage at Mezzé – 19/06/1941
- 15965 – Battle of Kadem – 21/06/1941
- 15976 - Siege of Palmyra – 22/06/1941
- 16000 – Battle of Nebek – 29/06/1941
- 16031 – Battle of Damour river – 05/07/1941
- 16179 – Djebel Habil – 11/07/1941

Mini-campaigns:

1) The coastal road

- 15567 – Battle of Litani river – 09/06/1941
- 15717 – Fierce resistance at Kasmiyeh – 09/06/1941
- 15734 – Battle of Adloun – 12/06/1941
- 15760 – The defense of Saïda – 13/06/1941

2) The Lebanese mountains

- 15826 – Merdjayoun – Action 1 – 08/06/1941
- 15846 – Merdjayoun – Action 2 – 11/06/1941
- 15884 – Merdjayoun – Action 3 – 15/06/1941
- 15948 – Battle of Jezzin – 17/06/1941

3) The right flank

- 15895 – Cheik Meskine – 08/06/1941
- 15905 – Djebel Maani – 11/06/1941
- 15170 – Counter-attack at Kuneitra – 16/06/1941
- 15927 – Recapture of Ezraa – 17/06/1941

4) The road to Damascus

- 15900 – Battle of Kissoueh – 15/06/1941
- 15960 – Djebel Kelb – 17/06/1941
- 15936 – Carnage at Mezzé – 19/06/1941
- 15965 – Battle of Kadem – 21/06/1941

5) The swan song

- 15976 - Siege of Palmyra – 22/06/1941
- 16000 – Battle of Nebek – 29/06/1941
- 16031 – Battle of Damour river – 05/07/1941
- 16179 – Djebel Habil – 11/07/1941



Who wins the Syria campaign?

In accordance with history, the Allied won the Syria campaign, but the Vichy French army got some tactical victories during several battles, highlighting to the world the value and the courage of its troops. But 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).

Counting up the Victory Points:

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

Bibliography

- « Syrie 1941, la guerre occultée, Vichystes contre Gaullistes » - Henri de Wailly ;
- Historica Magazine n°50 – De l'Irak à la Syrie ;
- Wikipedia, Operation Exporter ;
- www.la légion se bat pour l'honneur ;
- Dictionnaire de la Seconde Guerre mondiale.



Victory Points Counter Sheet (available VP).

<i>SCENARIO</i>	<i>ALLIES</i>	<i>AXE</i>
Battle of Litani River	(6+2+1)	(6+1)
Fierce resistance at Kasmiyeh	(6+1)	(6+1)
Battle of Adloun	(6+1)	(6+1)
The defense of Saida	(6+1)	(6+1)
The coastal road		
Merdjayoun – Action 1	(6+1)	(6+1)
Merdjayoun – Action 2	(6+1+1)	(6+1+1)
Merdjayoun – Action 3	(6+1+1)	(6+1+1)
Battle of Jezzin	(6+1+1)	(6+1+1)
The Lebanese mountains		
Cheik Meskine	(5+1)	(5+1)
Djebel Maani	(6+1)	(6+1)
Counter-attack at Kuneitra	(6+1)	(6+1+1)
Recapture of Ezraa	(6+1)	(6+1)
The right flank		
Battle of Kissoueh	(7+1)	(7+1)
Djebel Kelb	(6+1)	(6+1)
Carnage at Mezzé	(6+1)	(6+1+1)
Battle of Kadem	(6+1)	(6+1)
The road to Damascus		
Siege of Palmyra	(6+1+1)	(6+1)
Battle of Nebek	(6+1+1)	(6+1+1)
Battle of Damour River	(7+1+1)	(7+1)
Djebel Habil	(7+1)	(7+1)
The swan song		
Total	(151)	(148)
	VP	VP

