

TOBRUK

STARTER SET

BATTLE OF EL AGHEILA
SCENARIO



FLAMES OF WAR
THE WORLD WAR II MINIATURES GAME

THE SECOND BATTLE OF EL ALAMEIN – 23 OCT 1942

Again, both sides dug in and rebuilt their strength. Montgomery was under pressure to launch an attack as soon as possible—before the planned Operation Torch landings in November at the latest. The Eighth Army spent six weeks resupplying and rigorously training, each unit carefully rehearsing their part of the upcoming attack. Under the lend-lease programme, President Roosevelt ordered every spare tank to be sent to North Africa. By the start of the battle, Eighth Army had over 1000 tanks, almost double the armoured strength of *Panzer Armee Afrika*.

The Second Battle of El Alamein began on the evening of 23 October. It started with a heavy artillery bombardment all along the line, with almost a thousand guns pounding the German and Italian front lines for half an hour. At zero-hour, 10pm, the attack began. The artillery bombardment did not cease, but instead crept back across the deeper defences, advancing ahead of the attacking infantry—a perfecting of the rolling barrage tactic developed in the First World War.

The Axis defences stretched back up to 7km (4.5 miles) behind their front lines. The British plan was to attack with infantry, forcing narrow corridors through the deep Axis minefields, then progressively widening the breach by ‘crumbling’ the defences on either side. When the German armoured reserve came to the aid of the defenders, the British tanks would be ready to pounce, destroying the outnumbered panzers and breaking out behind enemy lines.

The main thrust would be against the north of the line, with four divisions pushing forward towards Tel el Eisa and Miteiriya Ridge. Simultaneous diversionary attacks were launched by the Indians at Ruweisat Ridge and the 7th Armoured Division, supported by the Free French Brigade, at Qaret el Himeimat in the south, aimed at keeping some of the Axis reinforcements away from the main attack.

For several days, the Eighth Army failed to make significant headway. The first, lightly-held, Axis defensive line collapsed quickly, and the infantry were mostly able to push forward to their objectives as planned. However, while the British fought to ‘crumble’ the successive lines of Axis defences with artillery and localised infantry attacks, their armour repeatedly failed to push through the minefields and anti-tank guns to open ground, where they would be free to manoeuvre.

The British persevered, launching attack after attack in the north, forcing *Panzer Armee Afrika* into a battle of attrition. They began to push a large ‘bulge’ into the Axis line, centred around a low geographical feature known as ‘Kidney Ridge’. Rommel kept up a spirited mobile defence, carefully committing his dwindling panzers wherever they were most needed. A strong Axis counterattack was stopped just south of Kidney Ridge at a position codenamed Outpost Snipe, with two days of desperate defence by the 2nd Battalion of the Rifle Brigade, which destroyed over 50 armoured vehicles at close range with their 6 pdrs.

As the infantry attacks kept up the pressure and continued to crumble the defences, Montgomery began assembling a strong armoured reserve behind the front line, preparing for

one last big push, which he hoped would ‘hit Rommel for six, right out of Africa’.

This final attack, Operation Supercharge, was launched on 2 November. Again, an overwhelming artillery barrage preceded an attack by the motorised infantry. This time the attackers succeeded in blasting a hole in the exhausted Axis lines, and the next day 1 Armoured Division pushed forward 8km (5 miles) to the Tel El Aqqaqir ridge. There it smashed the last German counterattack. Within days, Rommel ordered a retreat.

Following the pattern of the previous two years, the pursuit quickly pushed Rommel out of Egypt and retook Tobruk. Halting at El Agheila, Rommel received new tanks, but Allied landings in Morocco and Algeria drew away most of the planned replacements to Tunisia. After a month’s preparation at Tobruk, Montgomery attacked again, outflanking the El Agheila position and taking the British forces further west than they had managed in their two previous offensives.

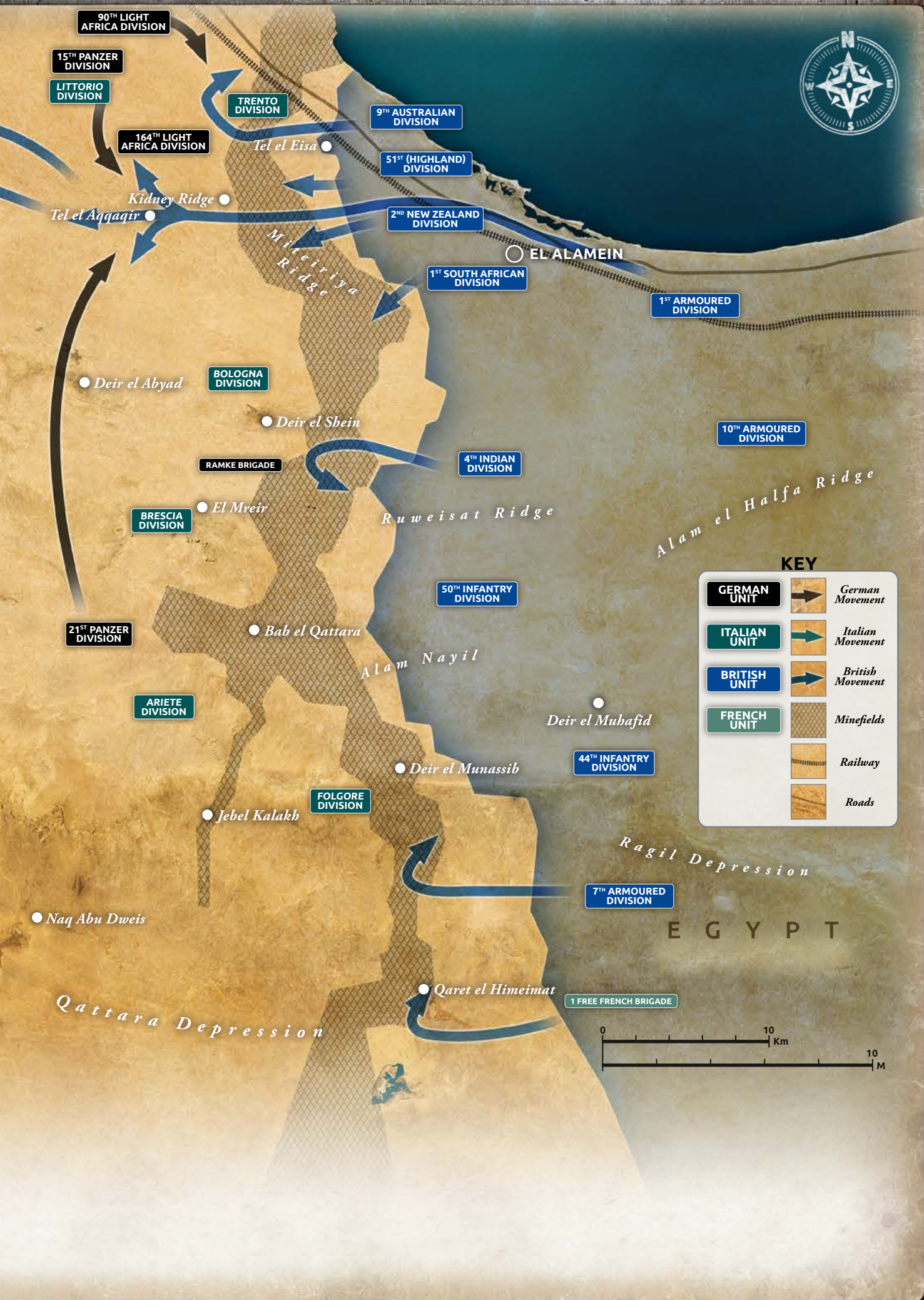
Evading the trap, Rommel broke away, retiring to another defensive position astride the Wadi Zem Zem at Buerat. Despite a lengthy supply line, Montgomery’s preparations paid off and Buerat fell to another ‘left hook’ through the difficult going of the Wadi Zem Zem. Once again Rommel retreated, abandoning the port of Tripoli, and took up positions along the Mareth Line, the old French fortifications along the Tunisian border. Following up, Montgomery halted and regrouped, bringing up supplies for the next stage.

El Alamein eradicated the myth of Rommel’s invincibility, and it established Montgomery’s reputation as a smart, adaptable commander, and a master of the meticulously planned set-piece battle. Churchill finally had the victory he had been waiting for, assuring the British public, ‘This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.’

EL AGHEILA

On 13 December, Axis reconnaissance aircraft discovered the Axis forces were in the danger of being outflanked. Rommel could not launch a counterattack with his remaining armour at this outflanking force due to lack of fuel. However, an attack by the British 7th Armoured Division was repulsed in a rearguard action by the Italian Tactical Group Ariete. Rommel wrote in his diary:

Late in the morning, a superior enemy force launched an attack on Tactical Group Ariete, which was located south-west of El Agheila, with its right flank resting on the Sebcha Chebira and its left linking up with 90th Light Division. Bitter fighting ensued against 80 British tanks and lasted for nearly ten hours. The Italians put up a magnificent fight, for which they deserved the utmost credit. Finally, in the evening, the British were thrown back by a counter attack of the Centauro’s armoured regiment, leaving 22 tanks and two armoured cars burnt out or damaged on the battlefield. The British intention of cutting off the 90th Light Division had been foiled.



KEY

GERMAN UNIT		German Movement
ITALIAN UNIT		Italian Movement
BRITISH UNIT		British Movement
FRENCH UNIT		Minefields
		Railway
		Roads

WAR IN THE DESERT

EL AGHEILA SCENARIO

ITALIAN ORDERS

You have been ordered to protect the rear of the withdrawing Axis forces after the Battle of El Alamein. The sudden appearance of pursuing British armour has you quickly manning your guns and calling up your armoured reserves.

BRITISH ORDERS

Your force is pursuing the retreating Axis forces after your victory at El Alamein, you have found an Italian blocking positions protecting the flanks of the withdrawing Afrika Korps's 90th Light Division. You must punch through the Italians to open the way to cut off the Germans.

SPECIAL RULES

- Ambush (Italian)
- Immediate Reserves (Italian)

SETTING UP

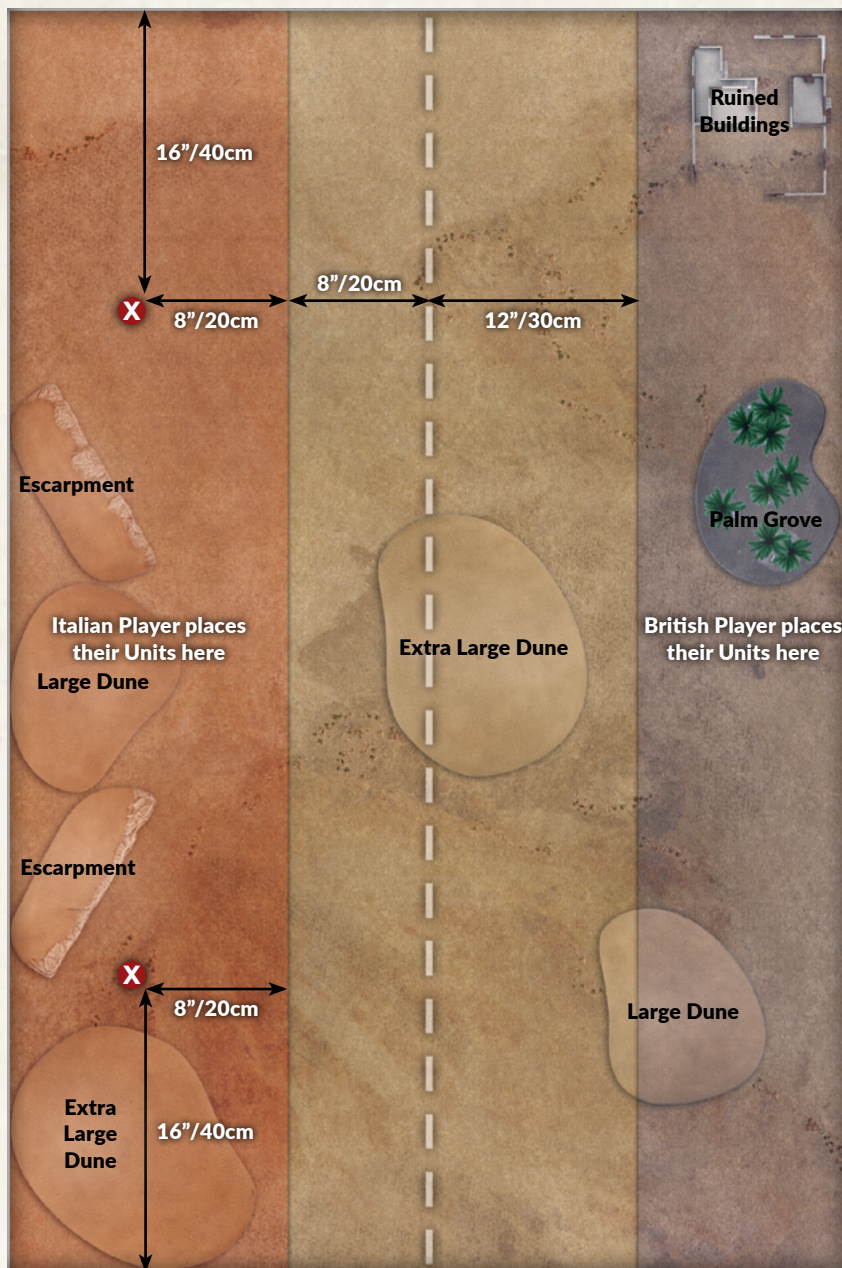
1. Lay out the terrain on a 6' x 4' (180cm x 120cm) table as shown on the map opposite. Place two Objectives on the spots marked **X**.

DEPLOYMENT

2. Starting with the Italian Player, the players place Ranged In markers for all of their deployed (including in Ambush) Artillery Units.
3. The Italian Player must hold 1x M14/41 Tank Platoon (M1102) in Immediate Reserves. If playing with the suggested larger forces the Italian Player must hold 2x M14/41 Tank Platoon (M1102) in Immediate Reserves.
4. The Italian Player may hold one of their Units in Ambush.
5. The Italian Player then places all of their remaining Units in their table half at least 8"/20cm from the table centre line.
6. The British Player places their Units in their table half at least 12"/30cm from the table centre line.
7. All Infantry and Gun Teams start the game in Foxholes.

STARTING THE GAME

The British Player has the first turn.



WINNING THE GAME

- The British Player wins if they end their turn Holding an Objective.
- The Italian Player wins if they end a turn on or after the sixth turn with no Attacking Tank, Infantry, or Gun teams within 8"/20cm of the Objectives.

TERRAIN

The terrain used in this Scenario can all be found in the new Desert Terrain bundles. For the above table we have used items from:

- BB951 Gaming Mat – Grassland/Desert
- FW256-BB05 Desert Features Bundle
- 2x FW256-BB06 Desert Hills Bundle
- FW256-BB03 Desert Ruins Bundle

SCENARIO FORCES

Playing this Scenario using forces from *Tobruk: Complete World War II Starter Set*.



BRITISH FORCE 7TH ARMoured DIVISION

CRUSADER ARMoured SQUADRON HQ (MB103)

- 1x Crusader II (2 pdr)
- 2x Crusader CS (3-inch) 5 points

CRUSADER II & III ARMoured TROOP (MB105)

- 1x Crusader II (2 pdr)
- 2x Crusader III (6 pdr) 7 points

GRANT ARMoured TROOP (MB102)

- 3x Grant (37mm & 75mm) 18 points

SHERMAN ARMoured TROOP (MU132)

- 3x Sherman (75mm) 27 points

TOTAL 57 POINTS



ITALIAN FORCE TACTICAL GROUP ARIETE & CENTAURO'S TANK BATTALION

TANK COMPANY HQ (MI101)

- 1x M14/41 (47mm) 2 points

M14/41 TANK PLATOON (MI102)

- 4x M 14/41 (47mm) 9 points

SEMOVENTE SP BATTERY (MI103)

- 5x Semovente(75mm) 20 points

88MM ANTI-TANK BATTERY (MI118)

- 2x 88mm guns 12 points

TOTAL 43 POINTS

SCENARIO FORCES MORE OPTIONS

If you want to play a larger game you can also add to the *Tobruk: Complete World War II Starter Set* forces by adding these units from the *British Crusader Armoured Squadron* (BRAB15) and *Italian M14/41 Tank Company* (ITAB03).



CRUSADER II & III ARMoured TROOP (MB105)

- 1x Crusader II (2 pdr)
- 2x Crusader III (6 pdr) 7 points

CRUSADER II & III ARMoured TROOP (MB105)

- 1x Crusader II (2 pdr)
- 2x Crusader III (6 pdr) 7 points

GRANT ARMoured SQUADRON HQ (MB101)

- 3x Grant (37mm & 75mm) 18 points

VALENTINE II ARMoured TROOP (MB126)

- 3x Valentine (2 pdr) 11 points

DAIMLER ARMoured CAR TROOP (MB136)

- 2x Daimler (2 pdr)
- 1x Dingo (MG) 3 points

25 PDR FIELD TROOP (MB116)

- 4x 25 pdr gun 14 points

TOTAL 117 POINTS

M14/41 TANK PLATOON (MI102)

- 5x M 14/41 (47mm) 12 points

M14/41 TANK PLATOON (MI102)

- 5x M 14/41 (47mm) 12 points

88MM ANTI-TANK BATTERY (MI118)

- 4x 88mm guns 24 points

100MM HOWITZER BATTERY (MI115)

- 4x 100mm howitzers 12 points

47MM ANTI-TANK PLATOON (MI106)

- 4x 47mm gun 8 points

TOTAL 111 POINTS