

Chain of Command

CHAIN OF COMMAND WESTERN DESERT, 1941

DUEL IN THE DESERT THE RUINS AT EL PHARRT



WEHRMACHTBERICHT FROM THE REICHSMINISTERIUM
FÜR VOLKSAUFKLÄRUNG UND PROPAGANDA, (RMVP)

ARMED FORCES REPORT VOLUME 2.
PYRRHIC VICTORY AT THE RUINS AT EL PHARRT.

THE BRITISH

1ST PLATOON, 3RD BATTALION THE NORTH ESSEX REGIMENT

LIEUTENANT BRIAN SURBITON
GRAMMAR SCHOOL BOY, SENSIBLE, SPORTY
AND DEPENDABLE. RECENTLY MARRIED.
INTELLIGENT AND LOYAL, BUT CAUTIOUS.

SERGEANT JOHN BROWN
FARM BOY. UNIMAGINATIVE BUT TOUGH.
RESOLUTE AND LOYAL. FOLLOWS ORDERS -
THAT'S HIS JOB.

CORPORAL REG JENKINS
PRE-WAR SOLDIER. EXPERIENCED,
BUT NOT ONE FOR VOLUNTEERING

CORPORAL JEREMY STRAP
OFFICE CLERK CALLED UP AT THE BEGINNING OF
THE WAR. GOOD ON ADMIN AND CAN FOLLOW A
PLAN. ENDLESSLY ANNOYED AT HIS NICKNAME,
"JOCK"

CORPORAL PETER LE MANOIR
BOHEMIAN ARTIST. VEHEMENTLY ANTI-FASCIST,
FOUGHT IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR. INSPIRES
HIS SECTION WITH HIS GENUINE CONVICTIONS



OCH, THE NOO!



1ST PLATOON, 2ND BATTALION THE ROYAL HIGHLAND REGIMENT (THE BLACK WATCH)

LIEUTENANT MUNGO STRACHAN
HEIR TO THE IRN BRU EMPIRE, HE WAS
EDUCATED AT GORDONSTOUN SCHOOL AND
JOINED THE BRITISH ARMY AS A PROFESSIONAL
SOLDIER BEFORE THE OUTBREAK OF WAR.
RESPECTED AND LIKED BY HIS MEN HE WAS
EVACUATED AT DUNKIRK AND NOW SEEKS HIS
REVENGE AGAINST THE ENEMY AND RAPID
PROMOTION TO KEEP UP THE FAMILY NAME.
CAN BE RATHER RASH AND APPEARS TO FIND
MUCH INSPIRATION AT THE BOTTOM OF A
BOTTLE OF GOOD SINGLE MALT. SOME SAY
THAT THIS MAY HAVE IMPEDED HIS ARMY CAREER.
A SOCIALITE AND KEEN GAMBLER, HE PAINTS A
FINE PICTURE GALAVANTING ACROSS THE DANCE
FLOOR TO THE WHIRL OF THE PIPES.
INDEED, A MAN TO BE RECKONED WITH!

SERGEANT FULTON 'JOCK' MACKAY
A PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER AND FORMER
PRISON WARDEN. BROUGHT UP IN THE SLUMS
OF GLASGOW ON A DIET OF HAGGIS SUPPERS
AND PINTS OF 'HEAVY'.
DETESTS AND HATES THE NAZI REGIME HAVING
LOST HIS BROTHER EARLIER IN THE WAR.
ONE FOR THE LADIES AND ALWAYS A KEEN
VISITOR TO THE ENTERTAINMENT
ESTABLISHMENTS IN CAIRO.
RUMOUR HAS IT THAT HE TOOK OUT AN ENEMY
MACHINE GUN POSITION AT NADI AL KEBAB.

CORPORAL HAMISH (PREACHER) FERGUSON

A PIOUS MAN WHOSE FATHER IS A SENIOR
CLERGYMAN IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.
GOD FEARING AND FREE OF ANY BLASPHEMY HE
CARRIES A BIBLE EVERYWHERE AND CAN
FREQUENTLY BE HEARD QUOTING THE
SCRIPTURE'S DURING AN ATTACK.

CORPORAL TAM O'SHANTER

ORIGINALLY AN IRISH IMMIGRANT, HE FARMED
HIGHLAND CATTLE ON BUTE BEFORE THE WAR.
AN EXPERT SHOT AND AMATEUR POACHER AND
SPENT TWO MONTHS IN JAIL HAVING STOLEN
RABBITS FROM THE DUKE OF ARGYLE'S ESTATE.
A FARM BOY, TOUGH AND DETERMINED TO 'DO
HIS BIT'. HAS LITTLE TIME FOR THE SOFTIES
WHO LIVE SOUTH OF THE BORDER.

CORPORAL BEN DOON

DIFFERENT FROM HIS PEERS, AN INTELLECTUAL
AND QUIET YOUNG MAN WHO STUDIED AT
EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY. HIS INTEREST LIES IN
POLITICS RATHER THAN WITH THE ARMY. ALWAYS
TO BE FOUND ENGULFED IN A BOOK WHEN THE
BULLETS AREN'T FLYING AROUND.

THE AXIS

AFRICA KORPS 5TH LEICHTE DIVISION - RESERVE PLATOON

OBERLEUTNANT OTTO VON GENSCHLAND

4TH SON OF VERY MINOR BAVARIAN NOBILITY. ADVENTURER, PLAYBOY AND ALL ROUND CAVALIER ROISTERER, AGE 26.

1ST SQUAD - OBERGEFREITER JOHANN SCHMIDT

ARMY REGULAR, VETERAN OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, FROM A POOR UPBRINGING IN DUSSELDORF, GRIZZLED AND GNARLED, AGE 38

2ND SQUAD - OBERGEFREITER KARL HAGEN

HISTORY TEACHER FROM A SMALL TOWN OUTSIDE HAMBURG, STUDIOUS, CAREFUL PRECISE, AGE 31.

3RD SQUAD - OBERGEFREITER STEFAN WASSERLECHNER

FARM BOY FROM EAST GERMANY, STRONG AS AN OX, INDEFATIGABLE, WILL NOT QUESTION ANY ORDER, AGE 25.

ITALIAN PLATOON, 10TH ARMY, 63RD INFANTRY DIVISION, 157 REGIMENT.

COMMANDED BY TENENTE STEFANO VILLARI

24 YEARS OLD, FROM LUCCA IN TUSCANY, STUDIED ARCHITECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY IN PADUA BUT JOINED THE ARMY AMIDST THE SURGE OF ITALIAN NATIONALISM THAT COINCIDED WITH THE ITALO-ETHIOPIAN WAR. ITALIAN MORALE IS HIGH AFTER THE INITIAL SUCCESSES IN EGYPT AND STEFANO IS POPULAR WITH HIS MEN.

1ST SQUAD

SERGEANTE LUIGI GRIFFO

LUIGI TRAINED AS A PLUMBER BEFORE THE WAR, 30 YEARS OLD, HE IS TALL AND AS STRONG AS AN OX WITH A DISTINCTIVE BLACK MOUSTACHE.

CAPORALE POMPEO STROMBOLI

32 YEARS OLD, STROMBOLI WAS A PUPPETEER AND SHOWMAN BEFORE THE WAR, HE IS DARK AND SWARTHY WITH GYPSY HERITAGE. RATHER FUN BUT HAS A BIT OF A TEMPER.

2ND SQUAD

SERGEANTE FRANCESCO BERNOULLI

30 YEARS OLD, GREW UP IN THE SHADOW OF THE FAMOUS MONZA RACE TRACK, WAS MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF AS AN AMATEUR RACING DRIVER, LOVED BY THE LADIES, BUT FRANCESCO'S BIGGEST FAN IS HIMSELF, COCKY, BOASTFUL AND ARROGANT.

CAPORALE VINCENZO SANTORINI

34 YEARS OLD, SANTORINI IS A VETERAN OF THE ABYSSINIAN CAMPAIGN WHERE HE SERVED IN THE ARTILLERY, HE BECAME ADEPT AT BLOWING THINGS UP, UNFORTUNATELY FOR VINCENZO HE FREQUENTLY BLEW UP THE WRONG THINGS WHICH IS WHY HE IS STILL A CAPORALE. HIS PARENTS RAN A FLOWER SHOP IN NAPLES.



THE FIELD OF BATTLE SYSTEM FROM PLATOON FORWARD WAS ADAPTED FOR OUR DESERT TERRAIN.

1 D20 DIE ROLL PER SQUARE TO RANDOMISE TERRAIN. THEN 2D6 WITH A DIRECTION DICE TO RANDOMISE TERRAIN WITHIN EACH SQUARE.

D20 TERRAIN TYPE

- 1-8 - OPEN
- 9-11 - ROUGH TERRAIN - HARD
- 12-13 - BUILDINGS - HARD
- 14 - WADI - HARD
- 15 - OASIS - LIGHT
- 16-17 - HILL - LIGHT
- 18-19 - ROUGH HILL - LIGHT
- 20 - TRACK - OPEN

ROLL A D10 TO DECIDE WHERE THE RUINS ARE - HARD



THE RUINS AT EL PHARRT



THE 'GAZALA GALLOP'

HOW THE BRITISH ARMY GOT THE 'RUNS'

THE FIRST BLOODYING FOR THE BLACK WATCH, AND THEY HELD THEIR OWN DRAWING COPIOUS AMOUNTS OF FIRE FROM THE ITALIANS COVERING IN THEIR DEFENSIVE POSITION.

THE BULLETS FLEW, TOGETHER WITH ROCK FRAGMENTS AS MORTAR FIRE RAINED DOWN ON THE SCOTS. CORPORAL FERGUSON WHO WAS TWICE WOUNDED ENCOURAGED HIS MEN TO HOLD THEIR GROUND AND SUCCESSFULLY DIRECTED THE LAYING OF SMOKE DOWN UPON THE ENEMY POSITIONS.

UNFORTUNATELY 'JOCK' MACKAY'S MOTHER'S HOMEMADE HAGGIS PROVED TO HAVE GONE OFF, CAUSING THE ENTIRE PLATOON TO SUFFER FROM A DOSE OF THE 'GAZALA GALLOP'.

GUNNERS LEWIS HAMILTON AND JENSON BUTTON SUFFERED THE MOST, FORTUNATELY FOR THEM THEY WERE THE DRIVERS OF THE COMPANIES UNIVERSAL CARRIERS. WHILST SHELTERING FROM THE OVERWHELMING GERMAN FIRE, LIEUTENANT BRIAN SURBITON'S SENSE OF DIRECTION DESERTED HIM AS HE POINTED TO WHERE HE THOUGHT THE COMPANY LATRINES WERE LOCATED.

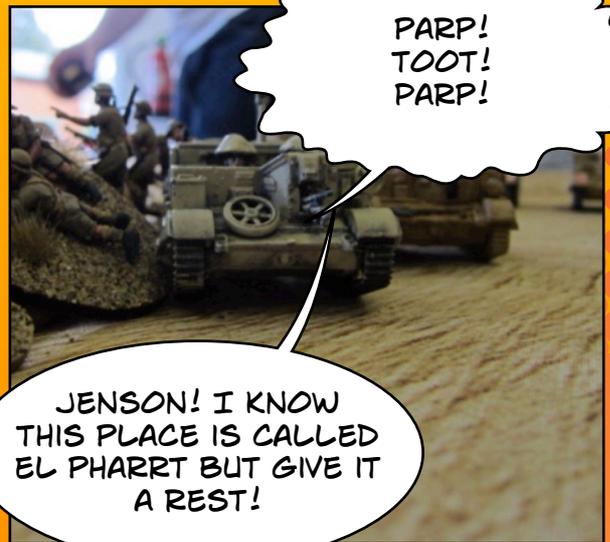
THE TWO DESPERATE GUNNERS DROVE OFF AT BREAKNECK SPEED IN SEARCH OF THE ELUSIVE KHAZI.

THEY HAVE NOT BEEN SEEN OR HEARD FROM SINCE. AFTER FOLLOWING THE CARRIER TRACKS IT IS PRESUMED THAT THEY HAVE BEEN CAPTURED BY THE GERMANS.



GOR, LEWIS MATE, MY GUTS DON'T FEEL SO GOOD!

WE NEED TO FIND THAT KHAZI...FAST. STEP ON IT!



PARP!
TOOT!
PARP!

JENSON! I KNOW THIS PLACE IS CALLED EL PHARRT BUT GIVE IT A REST!



STEP ON IT LEWIS...



ARE YOU SURE THIS IS WHERE THE LIEUTENANT SAID THE KHAZI WAS!



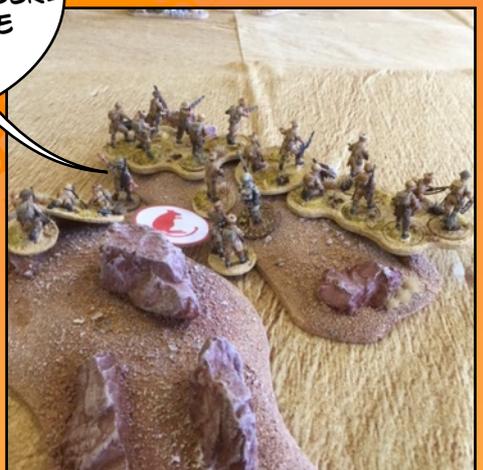
OBERLEUTNANT,
IS THIS THE DREADED
FOG OF WAR?

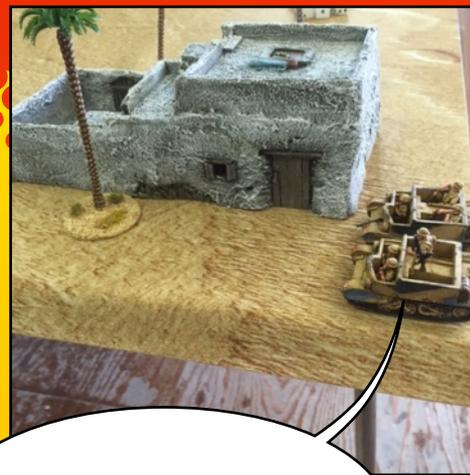


THE ITALIANS CONTENTED THEMSELVES WITH A
LONG RANGE MACHINE GUN DUEL AGAINST SOME
HAIRY FOREIGN SOLDIERS DRESSED IN SKIRTS.
UNDER THE CALM LEADERSHIP OF SERGENTE
LUGI GRIFFO THESE MEN PROVED TO BE NO
MATCH FOR THE BRAVE ITALIAN SOLDIERS



WHIT'S FUR YE'LL NO
GO BY YE!
LANG MAY YER LUM REEK-
YER BUM'S OOT THE
WINDAE.





THE ITALIAN PLATOON DEPLOY
IN THE VILLAGE, THE 1ST SECTION
SETS UP THE MOBILE PASTA
MACHINE.

HMMM, HAGGIS!



LIEUTENANT'S GENSCHLAND, VILLARI
AND SCHUMACHER WONDER IF THEIR
DICE ACTUALLY HAVE ANY G'S ON THEM



ACHTUNG!
TAKE COVER!





HAUD YER WHEESHT! I'LL GIE YE A SKELPIT LUG!

HERE COMES THAT DAMN FOG AGAIN!

SORRY ABOUT THE 'F' IN WOG

REPORT FROM THE ITALIAN PLATOON, 10TH ARMY, 63RD INFANTRY DIVISION, 157 REGIMENT.

TENENTE STEFANO VILLARI DEPLOYED HIS MEN IN A VILLAGE JUST SOUTH OF THE RUINS AT EL PHARR, THE MEN SOON HAD THE MOBILE PASTA MACHINE SET UP AND THE WATER WAS PUT ON TO BOIL.

THEIR AFTERNOON WAS SLIGHTLY DISTURBED BY A STRANGE AND ANNOYING FOG THAT WAFTED AROUND THE VILLAGE FROM TIME TO TIME. IN THE TIMES WHEN IT CLEARED SOME STRANGE MEN IN SKIRTS COULD BE SEEN OFF IN THE DISTANCE WHO INSISTED ON DISPLAYING THEIR PRIVATE PARTS AT THE BRAVE ITALIANS. SERGENTE LUIGI GRIFFO DEPLOYED HIS MG TEAMS TO DEAL WITH THE DISTINCTLY UNIMPRESSIVE MEMBERS OF THE SCOTTISH PLATOON - IT WAS AFTER ALL A VERY COLD DAY IN THE DESERT!

THE FIRE FROM THE MEN IN SKIRTS BECAME MORE AND MORE DESULTORY THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE AFTERNOON UNTIL SGT. GRIFFO CONCLUDED THEY WERE EITHER ALL DEAD OR HAD RUN AWAY.

THE ITALIANS SUFFERED ONLY MINIMAL CASUALTIES. THESE WERE CAUSED BY THE SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION OF THE WATER HEATER PUT ON TO BOIL TO COOK THE COMPANY PASTA RATION. FORTUNATELY THIS OCCURRED JUST AS THE PASTA WAS DEEMED TO BE 'AL DENTE' SO LUNCH WAS EATEN UNDISTURBED.



LEWIS AND JENSON RACE OFF INTO THE DISTANCE IN SEARCH OF THE ELUSIVE KHAZI...NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN...



REPORT FROM OTTO VON GENSCHLAND, AFRICA KORPS 5TH LEICHTE DIVISION - RESERVE PLATOON

HAVING WITNESSED THE FEEBLE ITALIAN DISPLAY IN THE PREVIOUS CLASH I INFORMED MAJOR LEDERHOSEN THAT I COULD NOT GUARANTEE SUCCESS IF I HAD TO RELY ON THOSE SOFT MEDITERRANEANS HOLDING DOWN A FLANK, BUT APPARENTLY THERE WAS NO ONE ELSE LEFT TO HOLD THE LINE WHILST KAMPFGRUPPE DIRNDL WAS RAPIDLY BEING FORMED TO STOP THE BRITISH ADVANCE. SO, TIME FOR VON GENSCHLAND, HERO OF THE REICH TO SHOW HIS QUALITY. I TOLD THAT MOUSTACHIOED BUFFOON VILLARI TO OCCUPY THE VILLAGE ON THE LEFT FLANK (EVEN HE COULDN'T FAIL TO DO THAT) AND SUPPRESS ANY TOMMY'S WHO POKED THEIR HEADS OVER THE DUNES.

DECIDING THAT THE WELL TO OUR FRONT WAS OVER EXPOSED I CUNNINGLY DEPLOYED IN THE ROCKY GROUND TO IT'S REAR, HOPING TO CATCH A BRITISH ADVANCE BY SURPRISE. BEFORE LONG THE ENEMY APPEARED IN THE SHIMMERING HAZE OF THE FAR DISTANCE, BUT NO PROBLEM FOR OBERGREFREITER HAGEN'S MG34'S TO SUPPRESS AND START TO DEMORALISE. THE FIREFIGHT WAS DECISIVELY OURS WHEN I COMMANDED SCHMIDT TO DEPLOY AND HAMMER HOME OUR ADVANTAGE.

NO SOONER WAS THE MIGHT OF THE FUHRER UNLEASHED WHEN SUDDENLY THE BATTLEFIELD WAS BEING BLANKETED WITH THICK SMOKE, THOSE DASTARDLY TOMMIES KNEW THEY COULDN'T WIN A STRAIGHT FIGHT AND WE WERE BLINDED WITH FEW OPTIONS. THEN SUDDENLY THE BASS ROAR OF ARMOURD VEHICLES PIERCED THE MIST IN FRONT OF US, BRITISH ARMOUR WAS RACING UP OUR RIGHT FLANK, THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO AMBUSH THE FOOLS WITH THE AT RIFLE, BUT THEY WERE ON US LIKE LIGHTNING, STRUDEL'S AIM WAS ATROCIOUS AND SUDDENLY, **DISASTER** OUR THIN LINES WERE BROKEN.

I'M SURE THE MAJOR WILL HAVE ARRANGED THOSE MARAUDING BREN CARRIERS A FRIENDLY RECEPTION WITH THE BATTALION 88'S BUT THE PLATOON'S STERLING PERFORMANCE WAS FOR NAUGHT. ROBBED OF GLORY BY UNDERHAND TACTICS AGAIN. VON GENSCHLAND WILL RETURN.

THE ITALIANS ARE BEGINNING TO WONDER HOW RELIABLE THE GERMAN FORCES ARE AS ALLIES!!!

CASUALTY RETURNS FOR THE CAMPAIGN SO FAR...

CURT JURGENS' GERMANS - ?
VON GENSCHLAND'S GERMANS - 1 (FLESH WOUND)
VILLARI'S ITALIANS - 2 DEAD +2 FROM 1ST GAME.

MUNGO STRACHAN'S SCOTS - 3 DEAD (HAMISH AND ONE OTHER CORPORAL WOUNDED). 2 WOUNDED WILL MISS NEXT GAME.
LT. SURBITON'S PLATOON - 3 DEAD. 2 WOUNDED WILL MISS NEXT GAME.
JIMMY WALKER'S PLATOON - ?

2 X BREN GUN CREWS ARE REPORTED AS MISSING PRESUMED DEAD.

