

CRUSADER: BATTLE FOR TOBRUK

ERRATA: The U.K. Support Fire counter mix should include one additional "+6" Support Fire chit.

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10.0 INTRODUCTION

Crusader is a simulation of the battle in Libya between forces of the British Commonwealth and those of Germany and Italy (known as Operation Crusader, named after the British Crusader tank). The British were attempting to relieve Tobruk from the ongoing German siege.

10.1 FIRST PLAYER

The British player is the first player throughout the game (see 3.0).

11.0 REINFORCEMENTS

The British player receives five specific reinforcement units during the game (see 11.1).

The German player receives no reinforcements.

11.1 QUANTITY OF REINFORCEMENTS

GAME TURN TWO

Unit Type:	Hexes:
1-1-15	1523, 1524
3-4-9	1525, 1625
GAME TURN SIX	
3-3-9	3921

11.2 REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE

At the end of the movement phase (reinforcements may not move during the turn they arrive). Mobile units that arrive at the end of the movement phase may not move during the mobile movement phase.

11.3 WHERE REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE

In the hexes listed under 11.1 only.

11.4 REINFORCEMENTS AND COMBAT

Reinforcements may participate in combat normally during the combat phase of the same turn they arrive, if they arrive in a hex adjacent to an accessible enemy unit. If a reinforcement unit's arrival hex is occupied by any enemy unit, the reinforcement may not arrive until a game turn wherein that hex is no longer occupied by any enemy unit.

12.0 LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Each side has supply symbols along the edge of the map, representing their lines of communication to rear areas off the map. There are four British supply symbols (hexes 3915, 3919, 3921 and 3924), and two German supply symbols (hexes 0102, 0103); if a supply symbol hex is currently occupied by an enemy unit, the side that lost its supply symbol will lose half (rounded down) of its support fire marker allotment of each subsequent turn's allotment (while that supply symbol hex is occupied by an enemy unit). If enemy units currently occupy two supply symbol hexes, that side loses its support fire allotment.

13.0 ENEMY ZONES OF CONTROL

Reinforcements may be placed in an enemy zone of control, but must abide by the normal rules (see 6.0).

14.0 MINEFIELDS

Axis and Allied minefield hexsides are represented on the map, and are considered permanent terrain features that can neither be created nor destroyed during the course of the game. A minefield friendly to a player at the beginning of the game remains friendly throughout the game. Likewise, enemy minefields do not become friendly when captured; rather, their effects remain throughout the game.

All of the minefield symbols within three hexes of Tobruk, as well as the minefield symbols within one hex of the eastern map edge are assumed to be U.K. minefields when the game begins.

All of the minefield symbols within three hexes of Bardia (3409), Hellfire Pass (3414) or Libyan Omar (2816) are assumed to be German minefields when the game begins.

14.1 FRIENDLY MINEFIELDS

Friendly minefields have no combat effects on friendly units, though friendly units must expend +2 movement points to cross a friendly minefield hexside, even via a trail or a road.

14.2 ENEMY MINEFIELDS

A unit may only move across an enemy minefield hexside if it occupies an adjacent hex at the beginning of its

movement. A unit that moves across an enemy minefield hexside must expend all of its movement allowance to do so, even via trail or road, and stop in the entered hex.

A unit may retreat through an enemy minefield, but is depleted as a result (or eliminated if already depleted or a one-sided unit).

NOTE: zones of control extend into enemy minefield hexes normally. No unit (except commando units) may move from EZOC to EZOC across a minefield hexside.

Any attacks on any enemy unit across a minefield hexside must be resolved using the minefield terrain type on the Combat Results Table (unless that attack also involves a German engineer unit; see 14.3). Attacks on any enemy unit across a friendly minefield hexside (friendly to the attacker) suffer no penalty.

14.3 GERMAN ENGINEERS

If any German engineer unit participates in an attack against an enemy occupied minefield hex, that attack is resolved as if a rough hex instead (not a minefield hex) on the Combat Results Table; however, immediately after that attack, that engineer unit must be depleted (or eliminated if already depleted), regardless of the outcome of the attack. If multiple engineer units were participating in the same attack, only one is required to be depleted, though the mandatory depletion is in addition to any depletion inflicted on the German player by the Combat Results Table.

Use of an engineer in this manner is voluntary; the German player is not required to adjust the Combat Results Table, though he must declare his intention before resolving the combat in that hex.

14.4 FORITIFIED BOXES

The two belts of British minefield hexes around Tobruk are considered fortified boxes. They are minefields per 14.0, except any British unit occupying a fortified box may ignore any retreat result (whether a defender retreat or an attacker retreat). Any retreating British unit that is outside a fortified box must continue its retreat normally; its retreat is not cancelled by moving into or through a fortified box.

German engineers do not nullify the retreat abrogation of any fortified box. Further, fortified boxes may not be destroyed during the course of the game.

German units never derive any benefit for occupying a fortified box.

15.0 SIDI REZEGH AIRFIELD

If the airfield in hex 1509 is currently occupied by a British unit, the German player loses one support fire marker out of each subsequent turn's allotment while that airfield hex is occupied by a British unit.

16.0 ESCARPMENT HEXSIDES

Movement across escarpment hexsides is prohibited except via trail or road; however, movement within an escarpment hex is unaffected, and is considered to be desert terrain.

No units may attack across an escarpment hexside except via trail or road (in which case, combat is resolved using the escarpment terrain type listed on the Combat Results Table).

17.0 VICTORY CONDITIONS

The British player wins the game if he can, at any time (even if only momentarily), demonstrate a path of uninterrupted hexes (neither occupied by enemy units nor within any enemy unit's ZOC) from Tobruk (1103) to any of the British supply symbol hexes on the east edge of the map. The German player wins the game if any German or Italian unit captures Tobruk, even if only momentarily. If neither side is able to achieve its victory conditions, the game is a draw.

If either player has lost twice as many or more units (eliminated) than the other as of the end of the last game turn, the victory condition is downgraded. (That is, if he has won the game per the above paragraph, his

victory is downgraded to a draw instead. Or, if the game ended as a draw, that draw is downgraded to a defeat instead.)

17.1 SUDDEN BATTLE CONCLUSION

To represent the confusion that abounded among both sides during the battle, the last turn of the game may be Game Turn 18, 19 or 20. Beginning at the end of Game Turn 18, both players roll a die; the player with the higher die roll may declare the game to end immediately, and thus institute the prevailing victory condition. If the higher-rolling player declines to declare the game ended, the game continues onto the next (19th) game turn, when both players roll again at the end of the turn, allowing the higher-rolling player to declare the game to end. If the higher-rolling player declines to declare the game ended, the game then continues into the last (20th) game turn.

18.0 SCENARIOS

Crusader has one historic scenario of the British attempt to relieve the vital port of Tobruk in Libya, and Gen. Rommel's counterstroke to repel them while maintaining his siege of Tobruk.

Set-up the following units in the hexes indicated below. The map is printed with the set-up locations of each starting unit. The set-up locations have no other impact on play.

GERMANY

Unit Type:	Hexes:
5-4-11	1605, 1805, 2610, 2510
3-4-11	1606, 2108, 3515
3-3-14	2215, 2516, 1914
2-2-11	1806, 2106, 1506
1-2-14	1906
1-2-11	2005, 1706, 3614, 3415, 2409, 1405, 3409, 1305, 3513, 1306, 1406

ITALY:

Unit Type:	Hexes:
2-2-9	1314, 1115, 1114
1-1-13	2917
3-3-9	1215
2-3-9	0614
3-4-7	0112
2-3-7	0114
2-2-3	1205, 1106, 0908,

	1007, 0703, 0704, 0805, 0906, 2816, 3116
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UNITED KINGDOM:

Unit Type:	Hexes:
4-5-9	3220, 1005, 0802
3-4-9	3121, 3122, 0804, 1204, 3920, 3118
4-4-9	3624, 3915
1-2-11	3224, 3325, 3223
2-3-9	1104, 0904, 0803
5-3-9	3419
4-3-9	3218
3-2-10	3423, 3323
3-2-11	3324, 3025, 3126, 3125
3-2-12	3222, 3123, 3124
1-1-15	3024, 3023, 3022, 3717, 3019

19.0 GAME NOTES

Though the game appears to have near parity for both sides (that is, about the same number of units and support fire markers allotted for each side), the Commonwealth actually possesses a significant advantage in the Axis siege of Tobruk. The German player is faced with a difficult decision: whether to use his strongest units (the panzer regiments) to confront the British relief force across the desert, or use them to attack the defensive belt surrounding Tobruk. (Historically, Rommel chose the former strategy, believing Tobruk's defenses to be too strong to assault at that time.) Both strategies are susceptible to failure because the German player's panzers can become depleted through repeated combat. Even an exceptionally skilled player is susceptible to occasional "Ex" results; so attrition is to be expected sooner or later. In fact, attrition eventually became Rommel's primary problem, despite the heavy losses he inflicted on the British. (By the third week of November, the British had lost more than 500 tanks; Rommel had lost far fewer, only about 100, but his losses were relatively more wrenching to the supply starved Afrikakorps).

Another consideration for the German player is his overall operational posture (defensive or offensive). He can attempt to form a line of units and simply withstand the British assault, or he can opt to meet the British head-on. Rommel chose to challenge the British assault directly, and nearly succeeded; such was his dynamism as an operational commander. Nevertheless, he had to contend with the fog of war as well as Allied numerical superiority; so it's difficult to speculate with any assuredness which strategy is ultimately superior. It can be said with certainty Crusader is tactical in some regards, and how each player chooses to allocate his resources each turn is as important as his overall posture. Historically, Gen. Cunningham didn't concentrate his tank units as did Rommel; so he couldn't present an "armored fist" to help him maintain the initiative. When Cunningham eventually did attempt to concentrate his armor, the Desert Fox had already seized the initiative. Cunningham was thus replaced by Gen. Ritchie by the end of November.

It can also be said Rommel could've probably blunted the British drive if the Germans had been better supplied. (German units were frequently short of petrol during the battle.) Cunningham was among the least adroit British generals, but the British had already been winning the struggle for North Africa out in the Mediterranean Sea by reducing Axis supplies to a trickle, which is why the Germans receive no reinforcements during the game. British reinforcements are meager, but the British player may find he can make good use of them near the end of the game, especially if he's been suffering a high volume of losses.

Supply lines aren't a feature of the system for the sake of simplicity; the folio games were designed to allow players to focus on the battle without worrying about the nuances of supply lines weaving between zones of control. Besides that, each game turn in Crusader only represents about a day; so it's conceivable for an isolated unit to subsist well enough throughout the remaining game turns. Further, the attritional nature of the Combat Results Table also represents the effect of supply shortages. At the same time, though, the line of communication rule (12.0) shouldn't be overlooked by either player: units aren't required to trace supply lines to the supply symbols, but the loss of a supply symbol can be disastrous, potentially enough to ensure defeat. The penalty may seem harsh, but the supply symbols represent each side's only lifeline through the barren desert to the supply depots off of the map edge. The loss of support fire markers is meant to represent the loss of substantial supplies, but also a diversion of resources to areas off map in response to the enemy's sudden appearance in those rear areas. It's advisable for both players to retain a small reserve to cope with possible incursions; even a single low-value unit may be enough to ward off any 'rat patrols.'

The desert terrain presents a dichotomy in that it will slow down the British player (each desert hex requires two MP), but also lacks defensive value (notwithstanding the German mines that stretch from Libyan Omar to the coast), thereby preventing any Axis units from becoming too strongly entrenched anywhere south of Sidi Rezegh. As a result, the trails become important to the British advance, either forcing the that player to divert the weight of his assault (and thereby allowing the German player to concentrate his defense), or compelling him to plod across the sand at a slower pace. Fortunately for the British player, most of his units are mobile types that can achieve reasonable progress while moving across the Sahara.

Considering the overall comparison of Allied to Axis forces in the game: the British field a total of 38 units with an aggregate of 203 combat points (that is, the attack and defense strength points of each unit); the Axis field a total of 42 units with an aggregate of 196 combat points. That's only a minus-seven point deficit compared to the British; however, a dozen or so Axis units are occupied with the siege of Tobruk, which reduces the combat power available to the German player to actually confront the British advance. Moreover, the British player enjoys a critical support fire advantage, which magnifies the German player's deficiencies. (Though the German player is allotted more support fire markers each turn, the British player's support fire markers are generally more powerful.) Because of the attritional nature of the Combat Results Table, the German player must avoid losses that don't achieve a positional advantage or some other operational benefit. If the casualties on both sides remain roughly even throughout the game, the British player will be able to eventually push on towards Tobruk, at which time his support fire advantage will become pronounced.

The various support fire markers represent gun sizes or types relative to each one's "combat modifier" (the "+" value). For example, "+2" support fire markers represent smaller caliber weapons, such as those from a regiment's organic mortar company. Stronger markers represent things such as a battery of 88s, while the largest are representative of bombers or naval gunfire from ships offshore, etc. Some of the markers may also be taken to represent extra ammunition allotted to a battery of artillery.

Regarding the Combat Results Table, note the outcomes are especially unpredictable because any calculated differential can be offset substantially by the addition of support fire from either player. At the same time, the differential combat mechanic allows even two small opposing units to skirmish. Most traditional Combat Results Tables utilize ratios that necessarily require the attacker to muster several of his units so as to accrue sufficient odds against an enemy hex. That disallows the ability of most individual units to attack single enemy units because odds in such engagements are usually unfavorable. Of course, historically, combat during the Second World War was often typified by engagements between individual units. Such individual engagements can occur in Crusader with a reasonable potential for success, assuming the attacking unit is somewhat stronger or is augmented by sufficient support fire. During one playtest, for example, a British armored regiment encountered an Italian mechanized battalion defending a trail near the southwest corner of the map. Due to the larger battle raging elsewhere, the German player couldn't afford to assign any support

fire to the Italian mechanized battalion, but the British player could supplement his regiment's attack with a "+2" or a "+4" support fire marker. The German player therefore retreated the Italian battalion to more defensible terrain (hex 0521), and the small encounter became an interesting contest between two individual units far from the primary front. In short, Crusader does well at simulating skirmishes between individual units; thus small unit engagements tend to occur more frequently and historically,

"I see you whittled them down a bit," Bruce Bennett said in the film *Sahara*. "Yeah," Humphrey Bogart replied, "they whittled us down too."

— Eric Harvey

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