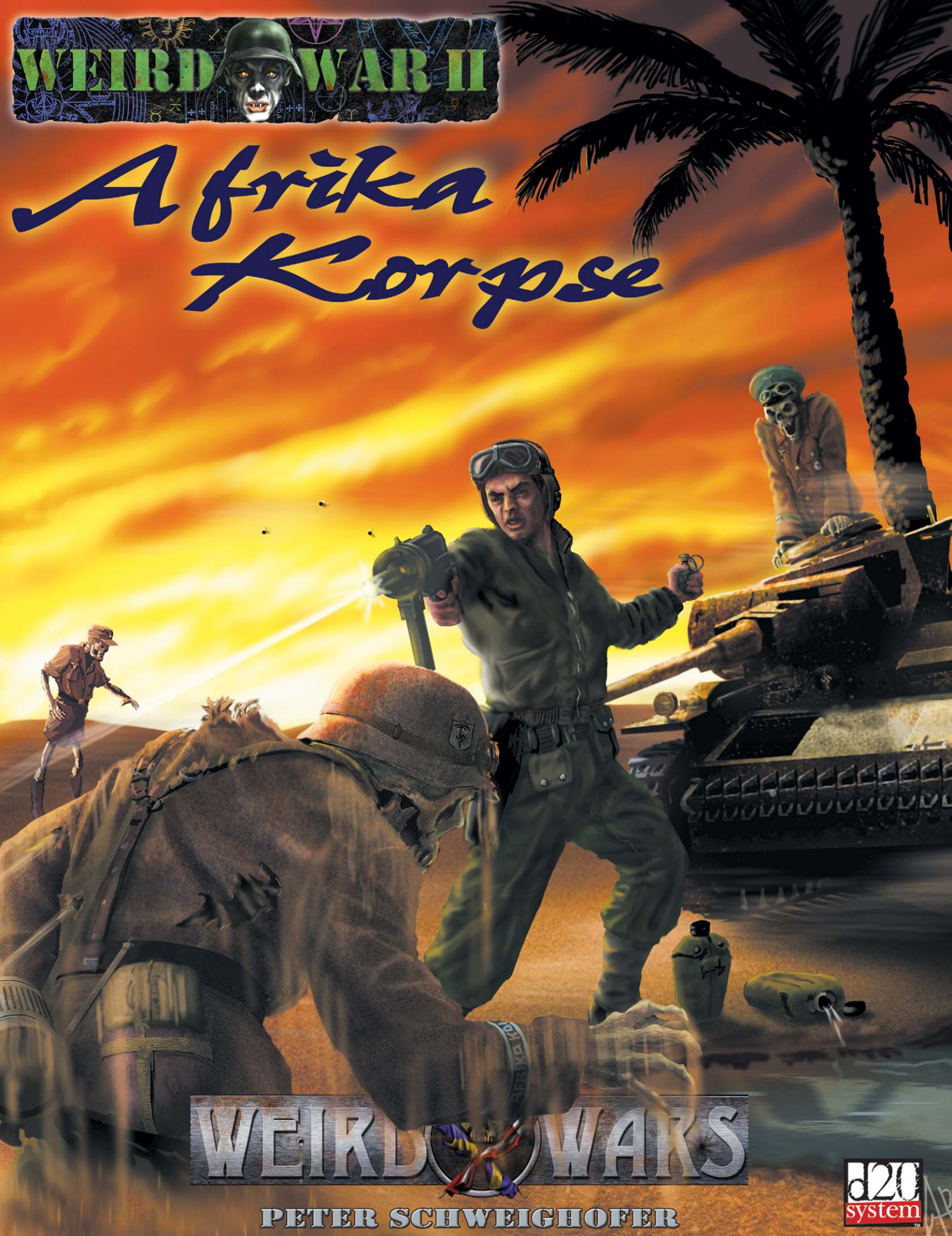




Afrika Korpsse



WEIRD WARS

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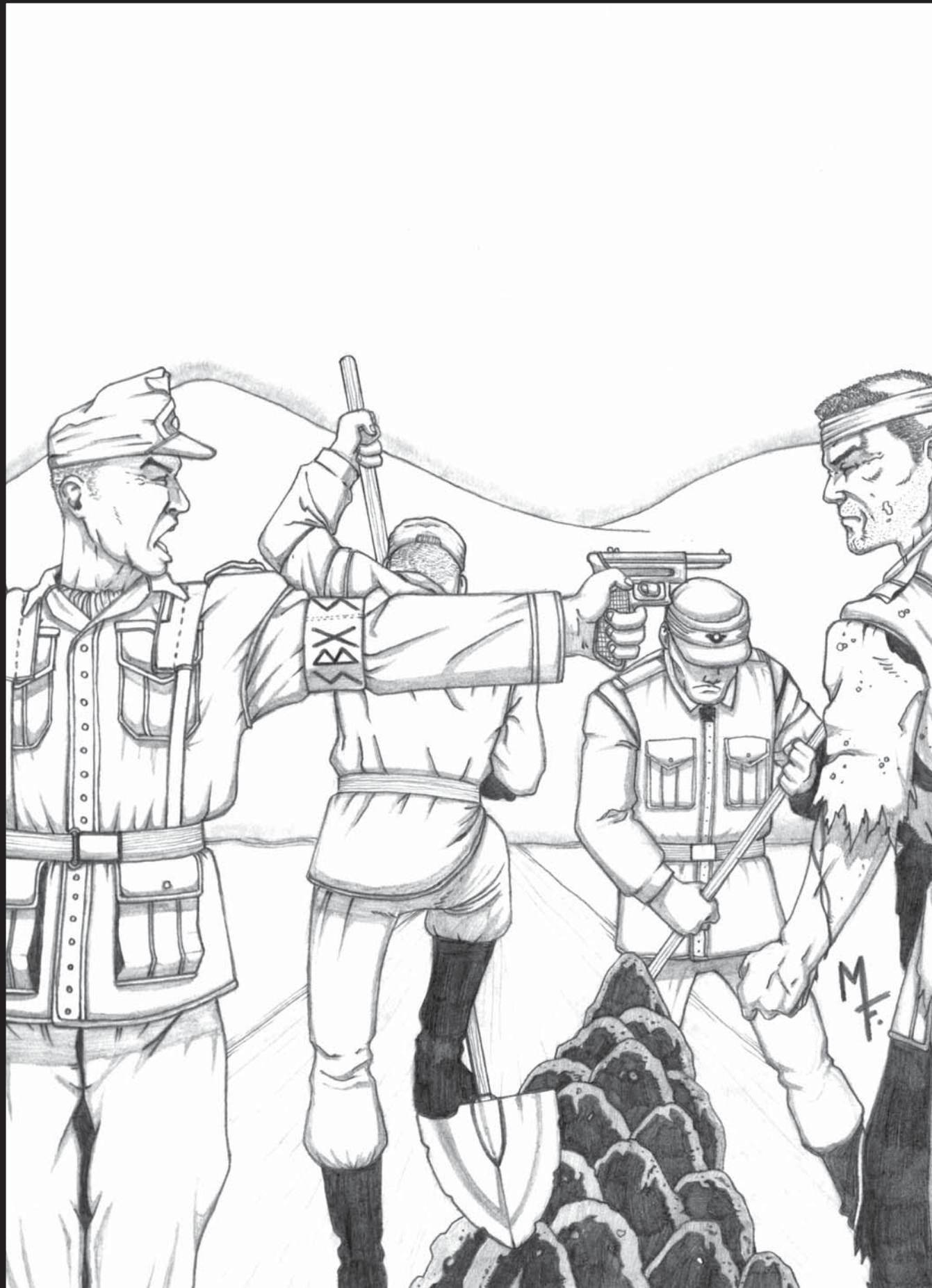


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For use with *Weird Wars: Blood on the Rhine*, available separately.





Prologue: To the Victor Goes the Salvage

"The German troops of the Panzer Army Africa, who are bearing the brunt of the war in Africa against the finest troops of the British Empire, must be provided with an uninterrupted flow of the supplies essential for life and battle."

—General Erwin Rommel to Adolf Hitler

Rommel peered out of the open-topped car as it raced down the bypass road from Tobruk. The driver sped by convoys of supply trucks, marching infantry columns, halftracks, towed artillery, and repaired tanks. Some were heading toward the fighting near Sollum, while others were returning to bolster forces besieging the stubborn British at Tobruk. The low rumble of combat at the dual fronts formed two ends of Rommel's balance—he was hurrying to ensure his plans were implemented.

At the sound of the approaching car, vehicles and men pulled to the roadside to let the general pass. He patted a hand on the driver's shoulder and the car slowed. Soldiers leaned from the trucks and halftracks to wave and cheer, the infantry halting their march and saluting. Rommel gave them a smile and a sharp

salute, nodding to some, calling greetings to familiar officers. His show of confidence would bolster their spirits, essential to a war in which they had little support from other quarters.

Rommel glanced into the back seat. His great coat covered a sack holding their daily rations and a spare can of water, just in case they hadn't reached command by lunchtime. Another package held dates, a small gift from Crüwell, his friend and right hand here in Africa, in case he got peckish on the drive to Sollum. He considered stopping to share some dates with the troops marching along the road, but decided they'd offer more cheer to battle-weary men at the front.

These soldiers were his friends and compatriots; but they were his tools and weapons, too, the means by which Afrika Korps would crush the British Eighth Army ahead of them and drive through Cairo to the Middle East, linking up with German armies now fighting in Russia to break through to the rich oil fields of the Caucasus.

This jaunt typified Rommel's life in Africa. It was all a delicate balancing act on many levels. If any balance swayed too far one way or the other, the entire German expedition in North Africa might wither and fold like a flimsy in fire.



Prologue

In one day he might drive to the front, make a flight in his Fieseler Storch to reconnoiter his and enemy forces, then spend the night on desert patrol in a panzer reconnaissance unit armored car, gathering information firsthand about British defenses. He had to juggle time on the road reviewing the troops and enemy disposition with time at headquarters planning the campaign's next phase and coordinating Afrika Korps' deployment. Rommel made sure he maintained his personal stability—remembering to eat and sleep would help stave off the numerous illnesses brought on by desert conditions, battlefield stress, and the filthy environment of war.

In the five months since arriving in Africa he'd quickly learned how to make do with what men and materiel he had, striking with lightning speed against the British, deceiving them with feints, penetrating their vulnerable points, and pushing them back toward Cairo.

His superiors didn't make this easy. Rommel fought constantly with Wehrmacht High Command, the Italian generals, and the Führer himself for promised supplies. He got little guaranteed support from Germany, whose Nazi leaders and stuffy armchair generals thought the Russian campaign more vital in their quest for oil and other resources. He got nothing but empty assurances from the Italians, through whom all supplies came. And if they finally dispatched any provisions his way, the RAF fighters and British submarines sent a good portion to the bottom of the Mediterranean. Rommel was lucky if Afrika Korps received half the materiel they needed to effectively hold the front, let alone penetrate farther into the Middle East.

The shortages forced the Africa Korps to use every resource at their disposal, including supplies, vehicles, and weapons the British had abandoned in their hasty retreat. It became clear to Rommel early in his thrust through Cyrenaica that whoever won each battlefield won the privilege of salvaging the spoils. For the British, such recovery efforts boosted morale and strengthened their already solid support. For Rommel, salvage would determine how long he could hold out in North Africa.

Now he raced toward Sollum to oversee execution of his plans there and modify them if necessary to take advantage of any momentary weakness in the British disposition.

The road ahead cleared of transport and the driver accelerated. The blasts from the mighty 88-millimeter artillery faded as they sped from Tobruk, while distant blasts heralded their approach to a battlefield near the line stretching from Sollum to Halfaya Pass. The desert scrub flashed by, nothing but a seemingly endless sea of sand, gravel, rock, and sickly thorn bushes. Rommel knew this was worthless land to fight for, but it was on the way to the rich oil fields of the Middle East. So far he'd rallied the Afrika Korps and cut right through the British in Cyrenaica. If he could capture Cairo, he could advance on the British colonies in Palestine, Trans-Jordan, Iraq, and Persia and provide Germany with a much-needed supply of petrol. He'd need every resource to achieve that goal. But Rommel had faith in his men, particularly their high spirits and their ability to press onward with limited supplies and machinery.

Rommel signaled for the driver to slow down as their car approached a scene blocking the road ahead. A platoon returning from the fighting at Sollum confronted a curious group of soldiers who'd parked their covered truck near an impromptu graveyard. A team of engineers scurried over a wounded Panzer Mk. III in a nearby ditch, rigging up a tow from a massive SdKfz 9 halftrack tractor.

As the car slowed, Rommel recognized the officer and soldiers near the truck. The men belonged to the *Sonderbergungsgruppe*, or Special Salvage Unit (SBG). Their leader, Captain Leiche, pointed his Luger at the bedraggled lieutenant at the head of the infantry platoon. Nobody else raised a weapon in reply, though the infantrymen gripped their rifles tightly. Everyone turned to Rommel as the car drew up to the crowd. The tires scratched against the gravel as the vehicle ground to halt.

Rommel glared at Captain Leiche, who was still brandishing the Luger, then at the soldiers. He stepped out of the car. "You are all German soldiers," he said. "Put away your weapons." The infantrymen obeyed immediately, slinging their rifles over their shoulders. Captain Leiche hesitated, then returned the Luger to its belt holster.

Rommel nodded at the officer in charge of the platoon. "Herr Leutnant," he said. "What's the problem here?"

"Leutnant Zweifel, 15th Panzer Division's Rifle Brigade. We're on our way back to the rear area from the Sollum front for relief," he said. Rommel preferred



To the Victors

to rotate his men, especially when they'd taken a beating in combat. From the looks of it, this unit had sustained some heavy casualties. The fellow scratched his cap, gathering his courage while looking at his boots, then glared up at the SBG officer before continuing. "We came upon these ghouls rooting about in the cemetery. Digging up bodies of friends who'd given their lives in Germany's service." He pointed to the rocky mounds clustered near the roadside.

Rommel stepped back and surveyed their surroundings. The graveyard and the nearby panzer reflected the results of a skirmish that occurred yesterday. Someone had buried the bodies in shallow graves, piling stones on them to keep the vermin and vultures away. About half the graves held Germans, acknowledged by simple crosses marked with names and unit numbers painted in hasty gothic letters. A few crosses had names and units of Italian origin. The other half of the mounds entombed British soldiers, identified by the upright rifles embedded barrel first into the sandy ground, with the Tommy's helmet perched on top and identification disks hanging from the trigger guard.

Three of Captain Leiche's cronies had already exposed five graves, and Rommel assumed the lieutenant's infantry platoon had come upon them as they loaded the corpses into the covered truck nearby. SBG pennons flew from short masts mounted above the truck's headlights.

The engineers hooking up the panzer tow looked on curiously but remained silent.

"We've heard rumors about these SBG men," the lieutenant continued. "That they take bodies and do things to them, unspeakable things, turning them into some kind of weapon to use against the British." He looked to Rommel for some kind of confirmation. "I don't know if it's true; but nobody deserves that, neither our men to have their bodies desecrated, or the British to face whatever these SBG people conjure up."

The infantrymen began grumbling their agreement with the lieutenant. The desert sun rose into the late-May morning, heating

the sand and rock, baking the men standing around in the open, and bringing tempers to the boiling point.

Rommel looked over at Captain Leiche, then glanced at his subordinates milling about near the back of their truck. He sniffed the air, relishing the smell of explosives and sweat wafting from the infantrymen, inwardly recoiling at the stench of death emanating from the back of the truck.

The SBG was an SS unit, but by Rommel's request they eschewed their usual SS uniforms and insignia for a standard Wehrmacht outfit and kit. The only difference was the *Sonderbergungsgruppe* armbands they wore and the unit shoulder flash.

They were Himmler's people, dabbling in the occult, indeed doing unspeakable things with corpses. They used arcane ceremonies to turn the dead into mindless zombies, living land mines, and other horrors. He'd seen it only because he had to, and so he'd know what to steer his regular troops away from. Rommel knew they'd turn these bodies into undead abominations: things that shambled across battlefields, absorbing machinegun fire as they advanced unfeelingly toward the enemy, or buried corpses packed with explosives, clawing up through the sand when they sensed a British patrol above.

Although it might be tactically sound to buttress his unappreciated troops with undead soldiers, it wasn't good for morale. He deployed these abominations in areas



Rommel stops to confer with some officers.





Prologue

regular troops couldn't cover: minefields, difficult terrain, and the southern desert, where enemy outflanking maneuvers were a constant threat. Rommel insisted they operate well away from regular units, and far from his headquarters. He had no stomach for such distasteful methods, but ultimately they were resources just like anything else—weapons that might help press the battle toward Cairo and valuable petrol.

Rommel surveyed the scene once more, then stepped off toward the halftrack crew. The soldiers and Captain Leiche peered after him with puzzled expressions their faces, then shuffled along after him.

"You there, Feldwebel," Rommel called.

The engineers sergeant looked up from the tow hook on the wounded panzer and exhibited a confused look. He soon found his wits and provided his name. "Schlaff, Herr General."

"Tell me, Feldwebel Schlaff, where is this tank's crew?"

The sergeant shrugged and pointed to the graveyard. "Over there. In the ground, in the truck." Rommel peered back at Captain Leiche, who glowered near his graves like a child guarding his toys.

"What are you doing with this tank?" Rommel asked confidently. "Look at that hit. Clearly you cannot put this heap of junk back into service." The blackened hole through the armor near the driver's visor gaped silently back at them in response.

Schlaff chuckled to himself. "Surely you're joking, Herr General. I can't just leave this panzer here. We're hauling it back to the 129th Mechanical Transport Workshops near El Adem. Give me a good supply of spare parts, men, and tools, and I could have her running in four days."

Rommel turned to Lieutenant Zweifel. "Next time you charge into battle, would you prefer to have one less tank on our side, engaging the enemy, and supporting your advance?" The lieutenant and his men looked glum, scratched at their dusty uniforms, and stared at their boots. "Your dead compatriots are like this panzer," Rommel continued. "If they could, would you not have them give their lives again so that you might live? Our very lives are tools and weapons with which we wage this war. Even I am a tool in the hands of my superiors. I'm no more a person to them than that rifle is to you. We all have a job to do out here. It's none too pleasant, but we go about it with whatever dignity we can muster. When we

die serving Germany, there's nothing more. We become refuse, corpses, the wasted, destroyed debris of battle."

While Rommel spoke Captain Leiche slowly crept closer, floating up to the general like some dark specter. The infantrymen were too transfixed by Rommel's words to notice.

"We need every soldier to win the fight in North Africa. You above all other people should know this," Rommel said. "These men have already given their lives. The SBG can use the empty husk of their bodies to aid the war effort. Some say they continue serving the Fatherland. I say they are helping to give living soldiers like you one more chance. If they can stop or slow a British advance, or deceive an RAF patrol to veer from attacking a live unit, do they not have some tactical value to a soldier?"

Rommel waited in the uncomfortable silence. Lieutenant Zweifel's men shuffled around, turning their embarrassed faces to stare at the ground. Someone coughed. Even Sergeant Schlaff's men had stopped their work to listen. Finally the lieutenant straightened his posture, saluted, and stared grimly at Rommel. "Thank you, Herr General, for reminding us of our duty as soldiers," Zweifel said. "We fight on knowing that you are behind us, supporting every action, and ahead of us, leading the way against the British."

Rommel returned the salute and smiled. "With men like you, Leutnant, I know we can fight the Allies all the way back to Cairo." He thought a moment, then turned to Sergeant Schlaff. "Feldwebel," he called. "Can you give this platoon a lift back to El Adem?"

The sergeant chuckled to himself again, then smiled like a generous host. "Certainly, Herr General. They can ride on the panzer as soon as we drag her from this ditch. Maybe even find some room in our halftrack. Plenty of room for everyone. Give us a few moments and we'll have her ready."

"Good," Rommel nodded. "Leutnant, tell your men to rest here until Feldwebel Schlaff finalizes your transport arrangements." Zweifel complied with a grateful smile, then gave the orders and settled down with his men beside the road. They began breaking out cigarettes and field flasks. "Don't waste your water, Leutnant," Rommel said. "One moment." He turned and strode off toward his car.

Captain Leiche scurried after Rommel, leaning to whisper in his ear. "General, they know too much. Let me dispose of them...."



To the Victors

"I know too much, Herr Hauptman," Rommel growled. "Are you going to dispose of me? Do we really need to waste time making more corpses when the British are more than willing to provide them for free?"

The captain shrank back, beaten. He winced at the insult. In the SS he was a Hauptsturmführer; to call him by his Wehrmacht equivalent reminded him that in Africa, under Rommel's orders, he was to have no special authority accorded his true position. His stare at Rommel gradually changed to a sneer that belied his intent to take revenge, slowly, carefully, but eventually.

"Return to your lorry," Rommel said. "You are finished here. From now on you work far from any regular units. I don't want to hear from anyone else that they've noticed your rather twisted activities. Am I understood?"

The captain grumbled agreement.

"You are to leave these honorable German soldiers in peace," Rommel said, gesturing to the roadside graves and speaking loud enough for the infantrymen to hear. "Leave the British bodies, too," he ordered, "They fought honorably in life. Let them rest in death. Their tenacious spirits would probably rebel despite all your hocus-pocus methods."

Captain Leiche sneered but did not disagree. He could withstand this embarrassment, even in the presence of insignificant Wehrmacht troops, but he'd repay these insults someday.

"And leave the Italians, too," Rommel continued. "They're probably as lazy in death as they were in life." The infantrymen chuckled at the jibe—although the Afrika Korps appreciated the assistance of Italian units, they were notorious for lethargy, unreliability, and overall indifference for the fighting to reclaim their colonial holdings here. To Rommel the Italian forces were valuable tools in the North African campaign, but right now he needed a little humor to distract the infantrymen and restore their spirits.

Rommel strode to his car and reached into the back seat. He retrieved the package of dates sheltered under his great coat, then spied the spare water can. He ordered the driver to take the can, fill up the troopers' drinking cups and field flasks. Rommel returned to Lieutenant Zweifel, tore open the package, and began passing out handfuls of dates to each soldier. "A treat from my friend General Crüwell," he explained. "And some water

to fill your empty flasks." The driver unscrewed the water can cap and began pouring into every drinking cup and flask the soldiers eagerly presented.

Lieutenant Zweifel stood after his own flask and cup were filled. "Herr General," he called. "Would you honor us by sharing a drink?"

Rommel turned and accepted the cup Zweifel offered him. He drank like they were having a friendly coffee in a café back home. He nodded his thanks and handed the cup back.

"Thank you, Herr General," Zweifel said, a tear welling up in his eye. "Even if Germany abandoned us here in the desert, we'd still fight on for you."

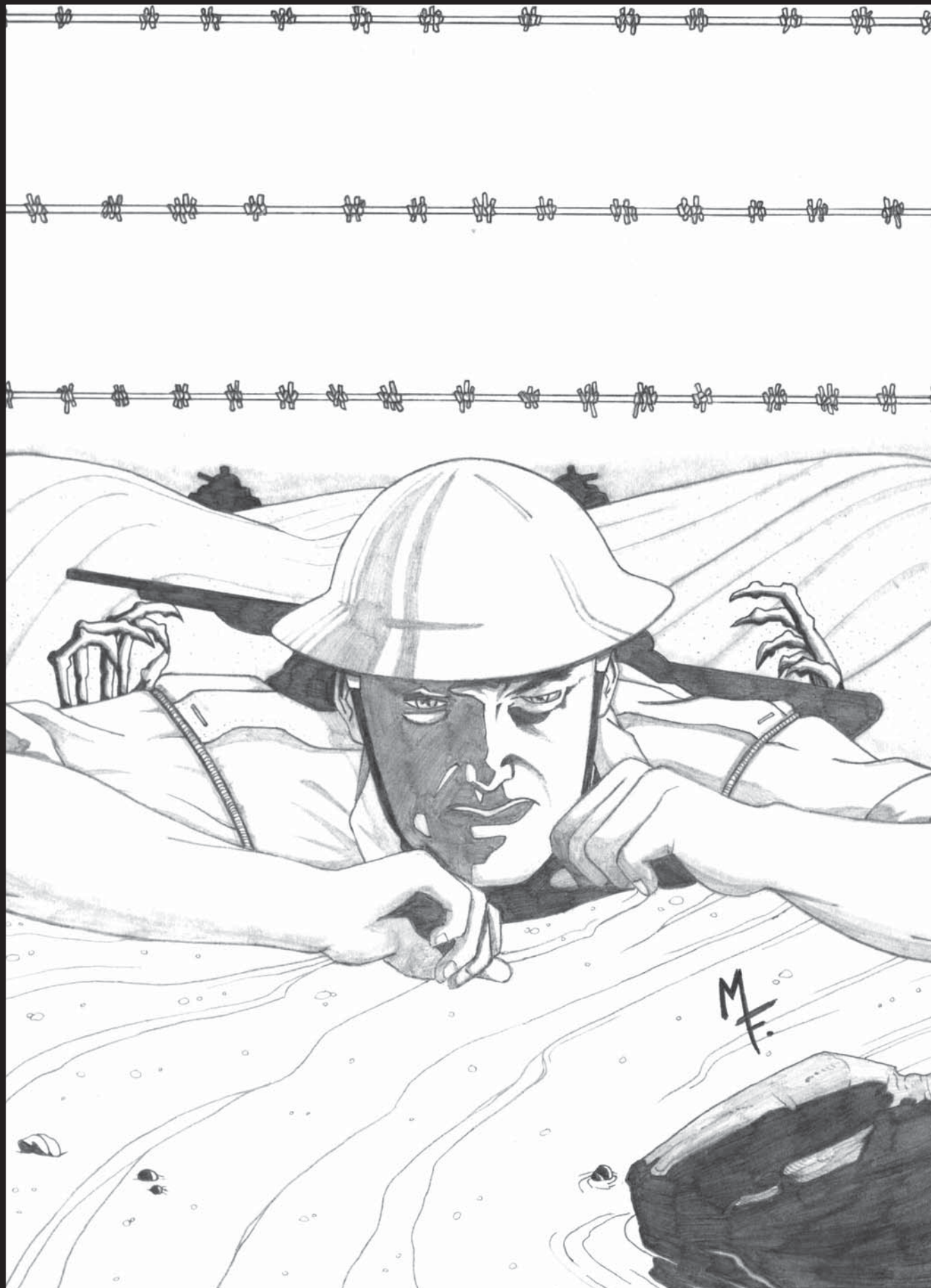
"Carry on, Leutnant," Rommel said, saluting. "You and your men represent the finest soldiers Germany has to offer."

Rommel slipped back into the car and ordered the driver to speed off to the Sollum front. He saluted the infantrymen, then nodded sternly at Captain Leiche. The car tore down the road, spraying loose gravel in its wake. Once again he'd managed to strike a balance with what meager and disparate resources he'd been given. This time it cost him a package of dates and his spare water can. Next time maintaining the delicate balance would cost him much more. The British Eighth Army had steady and plentiful supplies and high spirits. Rommel had to make do with what little he had. He didn't know how much longer he—or the Afrika Korps—could last.



Rommel at the controls of his personal Storch.





Chapter One:

Desert Training

“For a few days at Siwa we started various types of training. It consisted chiefly of practicing what we would do in all the imagined situations that might arise when on an operation.”

—Captain Alastair Timpson, LRDG

Welcome to North Africa, mate. You’ve just joined the most diverse army in His Majesty’s struggling empire. We have units from every nation in the Commonwealth: Aussies, New Zealanders, South Africans, Indians, and, of course, good upstanding Britons. The Free French and Poles even have a few battalions wandering out there in the hot wastes, holding key positions in the defensive line.

Look sharp there, soldier. Just because that ack-ack crew isn’t wearing their tunics doesn’t mean you can go about any way you like. This isn’t the beach at Brighton. No mollycoddling here. You’ll quickly learn how to operate in the desert, whether you’re fighting on the front lines against Rommel and the Italians, or scouting the wastelands with the LRDG and SAS.

The arid terrain throughout North Africa presents many problems. Vehicles easily get stuck in the vast sand seas or tumble over dune summits. The

mountains and deep ravines cut by water erosion (known as *wadis* among the natives) provide substantial cover for covert operations but difficult terrain for armies to traverse. Sand offers a good medium for digging in and creating defensive positions, but can also harbor hidden dangers such as mines and tank traps.

As for you Yanks, when you arrive at the party late as usual, you’ll find the North African terrain particularly demanding when opposed by Rommel’s boys. Combine their fabled Teutonic practicality with an obstinate fighting spirit and a few 88s and you have quite a challenge.

Training and resourcefulness are the keys to surviving desert combat. The German forces were ill-prepared for war in North Africa (just as they underestimated the power of the Russian winter). They paraded around in their fancy hats and heavy wool tunics. They thought they could just march their army across the desert like they rolled across the Polish plains or the Low Countries in Europe. Training prepares you, but you must quickly adapt to new conditions, using available resources, flexible tactics, and your good old British resolve to thrash the enemy.



Starting Packages

Desert training and brutal experience forge certain qualities in a soldier. You quickly learn how to become a survivor in this new environment—or you fail and become its victim. You can use the starting packages below to work up a ready-made 1st-level character, or take elements from them to embellish an original character you create.

War Masters can use these packages to quickly generate first-level non-player characters. Each lists its name, with parenthetical notations on class, branch, and specialization (if any), plus weapons, gear, feats, and a skill selection list.

American GI (Grunt: Army Infantryman)

You were swept up in the draft that brought young men like yourself into training camps across America. Some eventually shipped out to the Pacific Theater, but you headed to Hampton Roads, Virginia, and boarded a ship for a choppy voyage across the Atlantic. They dumped your unit on the North African coast, backed by friendly Free French, resistance fighters, and Berbers battling a handful of loyal Vichy forces. So far it hasn't been too bad, but you haven't run

into Rommel—the legendary Desert Fox—yet.

War can get pretty confusing, but you're determined to do your part. You combine your basic training with good old American know-how and a tenacity for getting things done—no matter the cost.

Weapons: M1903A3 rifle (2d8, PV -5, crit 19-20/x2, 120 ft., ammo 5S, 8 lb., Piercing), 3 Mk2 "Pineapple" frag grenades (6d6, PV 0, burst 4, 15 ft., 2 lb., Piercing/Fire).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Driving	4	Dex
Heal	4	Wis
Hide	4	Dex
Jump	4	Str
Listen	4	Wis
Search	4	Int
Spot	4	Wis
Swim	4	Str

Feats: Alertness, Firearms Proficiency, Improved Initiative, Light Armor Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Gear: Bedroll, canteen, entrenching tool, helmet, mess kit, overcoat, 4 pairs of socks, spare uniform.



A British 5.5" gun in action.





Bush Artillery Crew (Grunt: Army Artillerist)

You crew the artillery that supports the regular troops, keeping Jerry at bay and holding your own tenuous position. You often use artillery captured from the Italians who retreated when you overran their positions during Operation Compass, the Commonwealth counterattack and invasion of Cyrenaica. The Italians thought stripping the sights off the guns would render them useless, but you prove them otherwise on a daily basis. You take aim with cries of "Cock the bastard up a bit" and fire on orders of "Let 'er go mate!"

Weapons: Enfield No. 2 Mk1* (2d6+2, PV -10, crit 19-20/x2, 30 ft., ammo 6C, 2 lb., Piercing).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Artillery	4	Int
Climb	4	Str
Driving	4	Dex
Entrench	4	Wis
Heal	4	Wis
Hide	4	Dex
Mechanic	4	Int
Search	4	Int
Spot	4	Wis

Feats: Firearms Proficiency, Forward Observer, Great Fortitude, Gunnery Proficiency, Light Armor Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Gear: Bedroll, canteen, entrenching tool, helmet, mess kit, 4 pairs of socks, spare uniform.

Cromwell Crewman (Grunt: Army Tank Crewman)

You crew a Cromwell, a cruiser tank out to blast any panzers you encounter on the battlefield. The desert has little to offer but an uncomfortably bumpy ride and plenty of terrain where enemy tanks can go hull down.

Each engagement seems more desperate than the last, but you're willing to give it a go if it'll keep Jerry from reaching Cairo.

Weapons: Enfield No. 2 Mk1* (2d6+2, PV -10, crit 19-20/x2, 30 ft., ammo 6C, 2 lb., Piercing).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 4 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Driving	4	Dex
Heal	4	Wis
Hide	4	Dex
Jump	4	Str
Listen	4	Wis
Mechanic	4	Int
Search	4	Int
Spot	4	Wis

Feats: Firearms Proficiency, Gunnery Proficiency, Light Armor Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Tactics, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency.

Gear: Bedroll, canteen, mess kit, 4 pairs of socks, spare uniform, tanker's helmet.

Digger (Grunt: Army Infantryman)

Jerry's gone up and made a mess of Europe again, so it only makes sense to call in the Aussies to save the day. You don't mind people calling you a "Digger" because you're proud to come from down under.

Funny that you and your mates would go from the deserts of Australia to the deserts of Africa. Seems just like home sometimes—except for the bloomin' Germans shooting at you all the time. You don't care if there are five or 50 Jerries over that hill...you're still going to give them all a sound beating they won't soon forget.

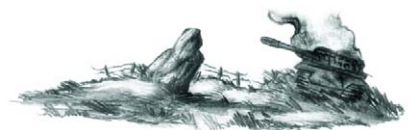
Weapons: No. 4 Lee-Enfield rifle (2d8, PV -5, crit 19-20/x2, 120 ft., ammo 10S, 9 lb., Piercing), Bayonet (1d6+1/x2, 1 lb., Piercing), 3 No. 23 Mk II grenades (6d6, PV 0, burst 4, 15 ft., 2 lb., Piercing/Fire).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Driving	4	Dex
Entrench	4	Wis
Heal	4	Wis
Hide	4	Dex
Jump	4	Str
Listen	4	Wis
Spot	4	Wis
Wilderness Lore	2	Wis

Feats: Desert Defenses, Élan, Firearms Proficiency, Great Fortitude, Light Armor Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Gear: Bedroll, canteen, entrenching tool, helmet, mess kit, 4 pairs of socks, spare uniform.



Chapter One

"I'm proud to be an Aussie; there's something different about them. The Hun fights with grim determination, the Tommies fight by numbers, but the Aussies tear about like kids at a picnic."

—Aussie Gunner Writing Home

Field Medic (Medic)

Your training prepared you to deal with battlefield injuries, but nothing could prepare you for the anxiety of waiting for Operation Torch to begin. Will the Vichy French forces aggressively oppose the beach landings? Will you keep your cool in combat, or are you going to faint at the first sight of a serious injury? How many lives can you save? Rommel and the Afrika Korps are in Tunisia, so they shouldn't be a problem just now. But sooner or later you're going to run up against the Desert Fox, and you fear the boys might find an entrenched enemy with a lot more combat experience than a bunch of kids fresh from the farm.

Weapons: None.

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Combat Medicine	4	Wis
Driving	4	Dex
Hide	4	Dex
Jump	4	Str
Listen	4	Wis
Move Silently	4	Dex
Spot	4	Wis
Entrench (cc)	2	Wis

Feats: Alertness, Light Armor Proficiency, Lightning Reflexes, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Gear: Armband with red cross, bedroll, canteen, entrenching tool, helmet with red cross, medical kit, mess kit, overcoat, 4 pairs of socks, spare uniform.

Free French Infantry (Grunt: Army Infantryman)

You followed General de Gaulle out of France with the Germans on your heels. You've bided your time in the desert, waiting for the right moment to strike. Your unit attached itself to the British Eighth Army, fighting alongside Commonwealth forces on the front lines and defending key posts. You don't have many resources, but you have that French pride that will not die. Once you destroy

the Huns in North Africa, you can start driving them out of France and liberate your homeland.

Weapons: M1903A3 rifle (2d8, PV -5, crit 19-20/x2, 120 ft., ammo 5S, 8 lb., Piercing). Bayonet (1d6+1/x2, 1 lb., Piercing).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Concentration	4	Con
Driving	4	Dex
Entrench	4	Wis
Heal	4	Wis
Hide	4	Dex
Jump	4	Str
Leadership	4	Cha
Listen	4	Wis
Spot	4	Wis

Feats: Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Élan, Firearms Proficiency, Iron Will, Light Armor Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Gear: Bedroll, canteen, entrenching tool, kepi, mess kit, overcoat, 4 pairs of socks, spare uniform.

HO Staffer (Officer: Army Infantryman)

You impressed your superiors so much that you were seconded to a headquarters staff at British Troops Egypt—as a subaltern at one of the battlefield commands or in the huge military bureaucracy in Cairo. Mostly you run errands, prepare messages, and liaise with other officers, but occasionally you get to see some action. You don't really command troops, just a staff, but the way the campaign is going, you know you won't remain behind the lines for long.

Weapons: Enfield No. 2 Mk1* (2d6+2, PV -10, crit 19-20/x2, 30 ft., ammo 6C, 2 lb., Piercing).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Diplomacy	4	Cha
Driving	4	Dex
Leadership	4	Cha
Observation and Assessment	4	Int
Profession	4	Wis
Search	4	Int
Sense Motive	4	Wis
Spot	4	Wis
Wireless Telegraphy	4	Int



Desert Training

Feats: Alertness, Firearms Proficiency, Iron Will, Light Armor Proficiency, Rank: 2nd Lieutenant, Simple Weapons Proficiency,

Gear: 20 rounds of ammo, canteen, map case, 4 pairs of socks, riding boots, spare uniform.

LRDG Driver (Grunt: Infantryman)

You've been transferred from your regular combat unit and assigned to the Long Range Desert Patrol as a driver and general soldier. You transport LRDG personnel across the sands and behind enemy lines to conduct road watches and ambushes on Jerry's rear areas. Although you're slowly learning the nuances of driving vehicles over dunes and rough desert terrain, you're also getting some good combat experience, raiding enemy installations and fending off the Luftwaffe with your truck's machineguns.

Weapons: No. 4 Lee-Enfield rifle (2d8, PV -5, crit 19-20/x2, 120 ft., ammo 10S, 9 lb., Piercing). Enfield No. 2 Mk1* (2d6+2, PV -10, crit 19-20/x2, 30 ft., ammo 6C, 2 lb., Piercing).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Driving	4	Dex
Entrench	4	Wis
Hide	4	Dex
Heal	4	Wis
Listen	4	Wis
Mechanic	4	Int
Search	4	Int
Spot	4	Wis

Feats: Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Firearms Proficiency, Lay of the Land (desert), Light Armor Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle proficiency.

Gear: Bedroll, canteen, entrenching tool, mess kit, overcoat, spare uniform, 4 pairs of socks.

LRDG Look-Out (Scout)

You served in various reconnaissance capacities with your combat unit all along the North African front. Now you've been reassigned to Colonel Pendergast's Long Range Desert Group. You prowl the desert in jeeps and light trucks, sneaking behind enemy lines to spy on transport, sabotage supplies, and escort SAS personnel on their way to daring raids. If the hazardous

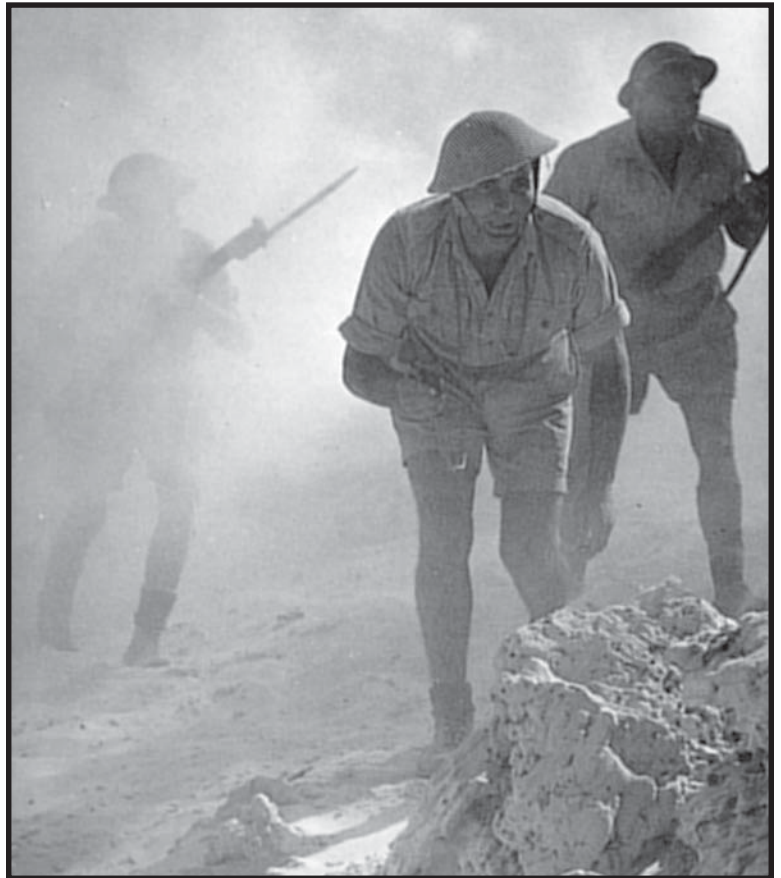
terrain doesn't get you, the German patrols and aircraft might pick you off. You need all your wits to observe the Nazi rear area and report your intelligence back to HQ.

Weapons: No. 4 Lee-Enfield rifle (2d8, PV -5, crit 19-20/x2, 120 ft., ammo 10S, 9 lb., Piercing).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Driving	4	Dex
Entrench	4	Wis
Hide	4	Dex
Heal	4	Wis
Listen	4	Wis
Move Silently	4	Dex
Observation		
and Assessment	4	Int
Spot	4	Wis
Wilderness Lore	4	Wis

Feats: Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Firearms Proficiency, Light Armor Proficiency, Mechanized Infantry, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Sneak Attack +1d6, Track.



A two-man patrol fails to notice the ghostly form shambling up behind them.





What is *She* Doing Here?

Nurses and other rear-area personnel (including the HQ staffer above) can take part in adventures set in Cairo or other areas far from the heat of battle. Frontline characters might team up with them while resting and recuperating during a brief leave. These characters are perfect for adventures with more emphasis on covert intelligence (see "Campaign Themes" in Chapter Three: Operational Overview). After a few opening escapades, War Masters could integrate them into frontline actions or operations with the OSI:

—A nurse comforting a dying patient receives a last request: give his ring (inscribed with strange symbols) to "Cyrus." Is this a relative, a friend from his old unit, or someone else? Or did he say "Osiris?" Some surreal ancient Egyptian-themed dreams might further induce the nurse and her friends to uncover the ring's true nature.

—A staff officer finds his superior sitting at his desk in a hypnotic stupor. Although the safe door is securely sealed, further examination reveals several sensitive papers and code books have gone missing. Is there a security leak in HQ or an enemy agent in Cairo? What did they do to the superior officer? Where are they, and where are they taking the stolen material?

—A mentally disturbed patient begins babbling incoherently in English and German, crying that his mind is spinning like a top, putting his hands to his ears, and screaming for someone to make the voices stop. Then he starts blathering odd bits about obviously classified information: German and British troop movements he couldn't possibly know, encoded commands to the front, and high-level communiqués. Is he a security risk, a Nazi spy, or a poor soul tormented by wireless transmissions? (Check out Radio Head under Weird Feats below.)

Gear: Bedroll, binoculars, canteen, entrenching tool, mess kit, overcoat, spare uniform, 4 pairs of socks.

Native Partisan (Resistance Fighter)

Although some Arabs resent the British for their overbearing policies toward your people, you welcome them as liberators from the tyrannical Italian colonists and innumerable German soldiers overrunning Cyrenaica. You know the deserts, mountains, coastal roads, and villages well because you grew up here. Now you're attached to an Allied unit, navigating for the Long Range Desert Group, gathering intelligence, or even advising frontline troops. Behind the lines or on the battlefield, you use your ingenuity and familiarity with the region to free your people from colonial powers.

Weapons: Enfield No. 2 Mk1* (2d6+2, PV -10, crit 19-20/x2, 30 ft., ammo 6C, 2 lb., Piercing), Knife (1d6+1/x2, 1 lb., Piercing).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Disable Device	4	Int
Disguise	4	Cha
Gather Information	4	Cha
Heal	4	Wis
Hide	4	Dex
Listen	4	Wis
Move Silently	4	Dex
Spot	4	Wis
Wilderness Lore	2	Wis

Feats: Firearms Proficiency, Gone Native, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Sneak Attack +1d6, Track.

Gear: Caftan (traditional native long robe), canteen, turban, knife, sash, soft boots.

Perimeter Patrol Soldier (Scout)

Whether guarding the border of besieged Tobruk or protecting the perimeter of your unit's current position, you're vigilant and determined. No Jerry's going to sneak through your wire without getting picked off like a desert snake. You probe enemy defenses, patrol your own perimeter, and sometimes sally forth to harass the Germans when they least expect it.

It's no full-blown battle, but every skirmish whittles away at Jerry's strength and morale.

Weapons: No. 4 Lee-Enfield rifle (2d8, PV -5, crit 19-20/x2, 120 ft., ammo 10S, 9 lb., Piercing), Bayonet (1d6+1/x2, 1 lb., Piercing).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Disable Device	4	Int
Demolitions	4	Int
Hide	4	Dex
Heal	4	Wis
Listen	4	Wis
Move Silently	4	Dex
Spot	4	Wis
Wilderness Lore	4	Wis

Feats: Alertness, Élan, Firearms Proficiency, Light Armor Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Sneak Attack +1d6, Track.





Desert Training

Gear: Bedroll, canteen, entrenching tool, helmet, mess kit, spare uniform, 4 pairs of socks.

RAF Airman (Pilot)

You're assigned to one of the squadrons covering the North African theater. You fly convoy escort for ships in the Mediterranean, support ground actions, make reconnaissance patrols, and harass enemy transport along the Via Balbia. Although your flight skills are solid, it's always good to know how to survive if you ever go down.

Weapons: Enfield No. 2 Mk1* (2d6+2, PV -10, crit 19-20/x2, 30 ft., ammo 6C, 2 lb., Piercing).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Bombardier	4	Int
Bluff	4	Cha
Heal	4	Wis
Intimidate	4	Cha
Piloting	4	Dex
Search	4	Int
Spot	4	Wis
Swim	4	Str
Wilderness Lore	2	Wis

Feats: Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Eagle-Eyed, Firearms Proficiency, Rank: 2nd Lieutenant, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Single-Engine Aircraft Proficiency, Snap Shot.

Gear: 20 rounds of ammo, warm boots, flight suit, flight tunic, 4 pairs of socks, spare uniform.

Rear-Area Nurse (Nurse)

You volunteered for military service, leaving the bombed out ruins of London for your assignment at a hospital in Cairo. Here you tend the broken men destroyed by Rommel's panzers in the desert. You can't imagine the horrors they've witnessed, but try to comfort them nonetheless. When you're not at the hospital, you're volunteering your time to pack medical

supplies bound for the front. You wish you could do more to stop the carnage—you believe one person, man or woman, can make a world of difference. You're just waiting for your chance to do even more.

Weapons: None.

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Combat Medicine	4	Wis
Driving	4	Dex
Hide	4	Dex
Listen	4	Wis
Move Silently	4	Dex
Search	4	Int
Spot	4	Wis
Diplomacy	2	Cha
Sense Motive	2	Wis

Feats: Eagle Eyed, Light Armor Proficiency, Natural Born Leader, Skill Focus (Combat Medicine)

Gear: Medical kit, nurse's smock.

Royal Engineer (Grunt: Army Combat Engineer)

The North African desert presents many challenges for a Royal Engineer: digging defenses, nipping through razor wire, and picking through seemingly endless minefields. You've managed to adapt quickly—because if you don't, you're likely to be overrun by some lumbering Jerry panzer.



Armorer for the RAF's Desert Air Force.





British Shermans advance near El Alamein.

Weapons: No. 4 Lee-Enfield rifle (2d8, PV -5, crit 19-20/x2, 120 ft., ammo 10S, 9 lb., Piercing),

Bayonet (1d6+1/x2, 1 lb., Piercing).

Small Satchel Charge (7d6, PV 0, burst 10, 10 ft., 4 lb., Fire).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Demolitions	4	Int
Driving	4	Dex
Entrench	4	Wis
Heal	4	Wis
Hide	4	Dex
Jump	4	Str
Listen	4	Wis
Mechanic	4	Int
Move Silently	4	Dex
Search	4	Int
Spot	4	Wis

Feats: Desert Defenses, Firearms Proficiency, Flamethrower Proficiency, Light Armor Proficiency, Scavenge, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Gear: Bedroll, canteen, entrenching tool, helmet, mess kit, 4 pairs of socks, spare uniform.

SAS Trooper (Grunt: Infantryman)

In the war's early years, SAS units consisted of trained troopers led by a commando officer. After hitching a ride with the LRDG "taxi service," you and your fellows wreak havoc behind enemy lines, demolishing aircraft, burning supply dumps, and sabotaging harbors.

You're best at sneaking around, dodging from one firefight to the next, displacing, regrouping, and striking at Jerry where he least expects it. Someday you might become a full-blown commando, but for now you at least get to play like one.

Characters that serve in this capacity often eventually join the Commando prestige class (see the *Weird Wars* rule book).

Weapons: Sten submachinegun (2d6, PV -10, crit 19-20/x2, 30 ft., ammo 32D, 8 lb., Piercing).

Knife (1d6+1/x2, 1 lb., Piercing).

2 No. 23 Mk II grenades (6d6, PV 0, burst 4, 15 ft., 2 lb., Piercing/Fire).

Small Satchel Charge (7d6, PV 0, burst 10, 10 ft., 4 lb., Fire).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.





Desert Training

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Demolitions	4	Int
Driving	4	Dex
Heal	4	Wis
Hide	4	Dex
Jump	4	Str
Listen	4	Wis
Move Silently	4	Dex
Search	4	Int
Spot	4	Wis

Feats: Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Firearms Proficiency, Furtive, Light Armor Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Gear: Bedroll, canteen, cloth cap, mess kit, 4 pairs of socks, spare uniform.

Sherman Tanker (Grunt: Army Tank Crewman)

Resistance was light on the North African beachhead. Now you and your crew race across the desert in your trusty M4 Sherman, working out the kinks as the sand finds its way into the tank's mechanical workings. The Sherman represents solid American know-how, practical common sense, and the unwavering determination to win this war. You can't wait to personally demonstrate that to Rommel's panzers and show those Brits that Americans know how to fight.

You have no use for those who claim that the German armor is superior to your equipment. You'll show the Jerries that it's all in how you use it.

Weapons: Colt M1911A1 (2d6+2, PV -10, crit 19-20/x2, 30 ft., ammo 7D, 2.5 lb., Piercing).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Driving	4	Dex
Heal	4	Wis
Hide	4	Dex
Jump	4	Str
Listen	4	Wis
Mechanic	4	Int
Search	4	Int
Spot	4	Wis

Feats: Firearms Proficiency, Gunnery Proficiency, Iron Will, Light Armor Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency.

Gear: Bedroll, canteen, entrenching tool, mess kit, 4 pairs of socks, spare uniform, tanker's helmet.

Tank Mechanic (Grunt: Army Mechanic)

Tanks are essential to war in the desert. While the loser retreats, the winner overruns his position—and lays claim to any abandoned material. You recover Allied tanks, quickly repairing most damage and sending them back into service. You scour derelict Nazi tanks for replacement parts, a scarce commodity on the front lines.

When the tankers rumble back into battle, you know you've done your part...desert warfare depends as much on supply and materiel as it does on courage and ingenuity in combat.

Weapons: No. 4 Lee-Enfield rifle (2d8, PV -5, crit 19-20/x2, 120 ft., ammo 10S, 9 lb., Piercing).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Concentration	4	Con
Driving	4	Dex
Heal	4	Wis
Hide	4	Dex
Listen	4	Wis
Mechanic	4	Int
Search	4	Int
Spot	4	Wis

Feats: Firearms Proficiency, Light Armor Proficiency, Scavenge, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency.

Gear: Bedroll, canteen, entrenching tool, helmet, mess kit, 4 pairs of socks, spare uniform, vehicle toolkit.

Tommy (Grunt: Army Infantryman)

England's the only bastion holding back the Nazis from conquering the entire world. Men like you form the backbone of His Majesty's forces fighting in the jungles of Asia, the beaches at Dunkirk, and here in the sands of the Sahara. You've kept your chin up despite defeats and setbacks—because if you fail here, if you let that fighting spirit dry up in the desert, that bloody Nazi menace will roll right over your home back in the green hills of England.

The civilians back at home suffered through Hitler's Blitz, now its time for make his troops pay. You won't be satisfied until all the Germans in Africa are dead or have surrendered.





New Skills

Every Tommy comes to the front with some basic training and a few skills to keep him from getting blasted to bits. Characters in North Africa may find the following skills particularly useful, though they also apply to other theaters of war. In addition to the standard information on skill checks, retries, and special circumstances, each shows what classes can use it a class skill.

Entrench (Wis)

Warfare in North Africa moves quickly, with advances and retreats requiring troops to hastily dig new defenses. Heroes use the Entrench skill for sighting and creating earthworks quickly—digging trenches, fortifying natural positions, and altering the terrain to their best advantage.

Check: On a successful check the hero finds a good position for hunkering down and quickly digs in or buttresses existing natural features. One man can dig adequate one-half cover for himself in 10 minutes, given the proper ground, entrenching tools, and siting; this provides a cover AC bonus of +4 and a cover Reflex save bonus of +2. In 20 minutes one person can dig sufficiently to provide three-quarters cover, giving him a +7 AC cover bonus and a +3 cover Reflex save bonus.

Remember that entrenched characters receive 9/10 cover against artillery attacks. This grants a +10 bonus to AC and +4 bonus to Reflex saves. These bonuses do not apply to artillery attacks that airburst (a rare occurrence in the desert). The WM may also rule that shells that land very close to a soldier's position may collapse his foxhole, particularly if dug in loose or wet soil.

The DC for an Entrench check is usually 10, modified by the terrain. Entrenching in desert, soil, and even rocky ground is easy. Trying to dig defensive positions in swamps, sand seas, and dense jungle requires a roll with a DC 15 or 20. A failed check results in inadequately prepared entrenched positions (and a lack of cover bonuses), a fact the character might not notice until he's under fire.

Retry: Assuming the character has enough time, he may retry his Entrench roll. The time invested in the initial check is lost and he must spend another 10 or 20 minutes to further bolster his defensive position.



British infantry take a quick breather on the battlefield.

Weapons: No. 4 Lee-Enfield rifle (2d8, PV -5, crit 19-20/x2, 120 ft., ammo 10S, 9 lb., Piercing).

Bayonet (1d6+1/x2, 1 lb., Piercing).

3 No. 23 Mk II grenades (6d6, PV 0, burst 4, 15 ft., 2 lb., Piercing/Fire).

Skill Selection: Choose a number of skills equal to 5 + your character's Intelligence modifier.

Skill	Ranks	Ability
Climb	4	Str
Craft	4	Int
Driving	4	Dex
Entrench	4	Wis
Heal	4	Wis
Hide	4	Dex
Jump	4	Str
Leadership	4	Cha
Listen	4	Wis
Move Silently	4	Dex
Search	4	Int
Spot	4	Wis
Swim	4	Str

Feats: Desert Defenses, Firearms Proficiency, Incoming!, Iron Will, Light Armor Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Gear: Bedroll, canteen, entrenching tool, helmet, mess kit, 4 pairs of socks, spare uniform.





Class Skill: Consider Entrench a class skill for the following classes: grunts, resistance fighters, scouts, minefield engineers, and LRDG officers.

Observation and Assessment (Int)

Personnel assigned to road watch duties must maintain a high level of awareness, recording, reporting, and advising on enemy transport activity in the area. Your hero possesses the skill to count and identify every vehicle passing through a given area. You can knowledgeably analyze the implications of troop movement to estimate the strength, composition, and purpose of armed forces building up behind enemy lines.

Check: A successful skill check gives the hero a sense of the overall enemy activity in the observed area. He can identify enemy vehicles, ordnance, and unit insignia, and make an educated guess based on their activity and numbers and how their actions fit into their overall strategy for the region.

Characters must make a DC 10 Observation and Assessment roll, modified by any enemy attempt to camouflage their activities. Failure results in gathering inaccurate information and drawing incorrect conclusions from it. The minimum time to effectively use this skill is three hours, though heroes may make rolls after one or two hours' observation with a -10 or -5 penalty respectively.

For instance, a patrol observing a column of German armor race across the desert could accurately estimate its strength, identify to which unit it belonged, and the type and condition of its equipment. On a successful check they could determine it was making a flanking maneuver that might cut off a friendly unit.

Heroes on road watch might observe a line of covered supply trucks heading along the Via Balbia toward the front. If they make a DC 10 Observation and Assessment roll, they can accurately count the trucks, identify the unit to which they belong, and guess how much freight they carry. Since the Germans covered the trucks, the characters must make a DC 15 roll to gain enough information to guess the nature of the cargo.

Characters must still use their Hide and Move Quietly skills to covertly position themselves to observe enemy forces and avoid detection.

Retry: Checks made to evaluate enemy forces cannot be retried. Once heroes record inaccurate information, their interpretations based on that data always contain some degree of error. Characters cannot precisely recount units moving beyond a stationary observation point once they have passed out of sight (at least not without some form of magical aid).

Class Skill: Consider Observation and Assessment a class skill for the following classes: officers, resistance fighters, scouts, commandos, LRDG officers, and signalers.

Wireless Telegraphy (Int; Trained Only)

Your hero is trained in all aspects of sending communications over radio waves. A skilled signaler knows Morse Code, can pick out a specific message from a cacophony of chatter on a radio frequency, and understands the general technical and operational practices associated with wireless telegraphy (required length of the aerial, best terrain to transmit or receive, "skipped" distance between transmission and reception points).

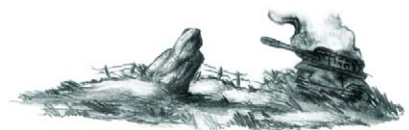
Check: A hero uses this skill when he transmits or receives a radio communication. The base DC for a check is 10, but this number can be increased at the WM's discretion (see below).

When sending, a successful check means the message was sent quickly, clearly, and accurately, and that those at the other end have a good chance of understanding it. A failed attempt garbles the communication—the character failed to take into account atmospheric conditions, sent the message too sloppily to be understood clearly, or spent too much time transmitting it (this can be very dangerous for reasons outlined below.)

A successful check when receiving indicates the radio equipment was positioned to catch the incoming transmission clearly.

Difficulties depend on atmospheric conditions (storms, sunspots, spiritual phenomenon), the positioning of equipment, and the skill of the signaler at the other end.

Characters can also use this skill when operating high-frequency direction-finding equipment (affectionately known as "Huff-Duff") to hone in on a radio transmitter's signal to locate the wireless set and its operator.





The Desert Fox himself, Erwin Rommel.

Retry: Sending or receiving a message only takes a few minutes, though setting up radio equipment in ideal locations for sending or receiving could take upwards of an hour. The more time one spends transmitting radio waves, the more chances the enemy has to use high frequency direction finding equipment to triangulate the transmitter's position (and possibly call in artillery or air strikes on him).

Special: This skill also encompasses the knowledge and ability to maintain and repair wireless equipment, assuming proper tools and replacement parts are available. A radio's delicate tubes and crystals are prone to breakage and deterioration in harsh conditions.

Wireless Telegraphy does *not* give users the ability to encrypt or encode their messages, or to decode or decrypt incoming communiqués. Only OSI Adepts, OSI Operatives, LRDG officers, and signalers can use codes and ciphers through the Decipher Script skill.

Class Skill: Consider Wireless Telegraphy a class skill for grunts, officers, resistance fighters, commandos, LRDG officers, and signalers.

New Feats

The following new feats embody qualities characteristic of desert warfare and the units fighting in North Africa. War Masters and players can use ones like Lay of the Land and Élan in other theaters of operation, and easily adapt others for use in other kinds of terrain. For instance, Desert Defenses could translate to Tropical Defenses for a Pacific Theater campaign.

Arid Acclimatization (General)

Your body's physiology has naturally adjusted to the more arid climates of North Africa. Unlike those from more temperate or humid environments, you feel right at home beneath the blazing Saharan sun reflecting off the bleak rocks and sand dunes.

Prerequisite: None

Benefit: You ignore the requirement of making a Fortitude save every hour in very hot conditions (those climbing above 90° F), even if carrying heavy gear or wearing bulky clothing. You treat extreme heat (above 110° F) as very hot conditions. (See "Desert Weather" in Chapter Three: Operational Overview, for more information about surviving in hot climates.)

Desert Defenses (General)

You have a knack for finding and using defensive terrain in the desert. You can better hide and detect mines in the sand, find cover under fire, and use natural features to their best advantage.

Prerequisite: Wisdom 13+

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all Demolitions, Hide, and Entrench rolls in desert terrain. You also gain a +2 bonus when making Search checks to find a hull down position for your vehicle.

Desert Fox (General)

Your senses are particularly honed to your surroundings in desert terrain.

Prerequisite: Wis 13+

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Spot, Listen, and Move Silently rolls in the desert. You can tell the difference between natural and unnatural sounds, observe carefully concealed positions, discern real objects from mirages, and move about with a minimum of noise.

Élan (General)

You possess a vivacious fighting spirit, a flamboyant confidence in your abilities, and a determination to triumph over all



Desert Training

obstacles. Sometimes this comes from within yourself, but often results from high spirits among you and your compatriots.

Prerequisite: None

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all Will saves. When charging, you gain a +4 melee attack bonus instead of only a +2 bonus, but you still suffer a -2 AC penalty. A character with this feat only has a -2 penalty when firing a pistol, submachinegun, or sawed-off shotgun in a melee.

Find Water (General)

You manage to find potable water in practically any environment, even in desert terrain where water seems scarce. You could find water through such ancient methods as dowsing, or you might simply have a better understanding of geology and hydrology than others, enabling you to look in the right places (in dried-up riverbeds, shaded sand, and desert plants).

Prerequisite: None

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Wilderness Lore and Intuit Direction checks when seeking water, a DC 15 task in most terrain, but a DC 20 task in deserts. This feat also cuts the time taken to find water in half. (See the section covering thirst in the "Desert Weather" portion of Chapter Three: Operational Overview, for more information about finding water.)

Furtive (General)

You possess a furtive demeanor and a natural knack for remaining unnoticed. You're more comfortable on the sidelines, in the shadows, and generally out of sight of everyone else.

Prerequisite: None

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus to Hide and Move Silently rolls.

Gone Native (General)

Your hero has become intimately familiar with the culture, customs, and language of a particular ethnic group native to the region. You exhibit an affinity for local customs, get along easily with natives, and know enough about their ways to pass yourself off as one of them, especially among those unfamiliar with their culture (although blonde hair and blue eyes might impose a penalty).

Prerequisite: Speak Language +4 in native tongue of particular ethnic group; the character must have spent at least one month living among the native culture.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, and Sense Motive when interacting with natives of the particular ethnic culture. Foreigners can often flatter members of many cultures by taking the time to appreciate or even adopt their practices. This bonus also applies when masquerading as one of these natives in the presence of others unfamiliar with the culture (those who do not have the Gone Native feat for that particular ethnic group).

Example: Captain Haselden has the Gone Native feat. Masquerading as a Senussi Bedouin—a tribe native to the region of Cyrenaica—he wanders near a German supply depot to reconnoiter their defenses. He gains a +2 bonus to his Disguise roll when dressing as a Bedouin. Any Germans spotting him probably assume he's just a native looking for handouts. If they accost him, the +2 bonus to his Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive skills would help him ensure his disguise. As mentioned earlier though, distinctive traits that mark the soldier as a non-native may partially or wholly negate this bonus at the WM's discretion.

Honest Face (General)

Your features and attitude project an air of honesty about you, inclining others to trust you more, listen to what you have to say, and consider your point of view.

Prerequisite: None

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus to Diplomacy and Gather Information rolls when interacting with others in a sincere manner; however, this benefit does not apply when you act in a dishonest fashion (using these skills while pretending to be someone else, acting against your better judgment, or attempting to deceive others).

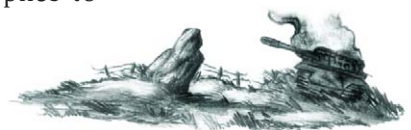
Lay of the Land (General)

Your character has a knack for traveling across certain types of terrain. He knows what natural features present the worst conditions for hikers and vehicles, and can identify safe paths across stable ground. You can optimize travel time by taking routes through the safest territory and avoiding hazards.

Prerequisite: None

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus to Driving, Intuit Direction, and Navigation rolls in a particular type of environment.

Special: You can take this feat multiple times, although its effects do not stack. Each time you gain this feat it applies to a new type of terrain.





Sahara Lore (General)

You have an interest in and affinity for legends, myths, and stories of the Sahara region, including its various peoples and cultures, past and present. You make a hobby of reading about and finding bits of trivia about ancient Egypt, lost Persian armies, and ruins of fabled Atlantean cities in the Tibesti Mountains.

Prerequisite: None

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Gather Information, Wilderness Lore, and Knowledge of arcana, history, and religion when the topic relates to strange stories and myths of the Sahara region. This is an important ability for OSI operatives working in this region.

Scavenge (General)

You have a knack for scrounging up material from the most unlikely places and putting it to practical use. Some uncharitable souls may refer to your "knack" as out-and-out thievery, but you know the truth.

Prerequisite: Int 13+

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Demolitions, Mechanic, and Search rolls when seeking and using junk left over from battles, supplies from abandoned outposts, and available materials for makeshift repairs, hastily erected defenses, and other functions other than the material's intended purposes.

Technically Adept (General)

You have a particular affinity for using and fiddling with various bits of technology, from automobiles and tanks to radio sets and personal gear.

Prerequisite: Int 13+

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus to Artillery, Driving, Mechanic, and Wireless Telegraphy rolls.

Weird Feats

Supernatural elements play a major roll in *Weird Wars* adventures. Most characters encounter monstrosities, arcane spells, and ancient relics—exterior threats they can often deal with through combat or ritual. Sometimes weirdness seeks characters out and finds a home inside them. Weird feats grant unnatural benefits to heroes, often with some disadvantage that adversely affects their performance when using the feat. They infuse the game with more weirdness at a terribly personal level for characters.

Players and War Masters should discuss using weird feats before introducing them into their campaigns. A player might feel his character needs more of a challenge, or a mysterious quirk to help develop his character further. Weird feats can become story elements that enhance the campaign's existing flavor. The War Master could easily create an adventure that centers around the circumstances through which the weird feat is acquired, discovered, and harnessed.

These feats all have the prerequisite of a "weird circumstance" through which the character gains the special abilities. The character could be struck by lightning, bitten by a scorpion, cursed by a mysterious native mystic, knocked unconscious from a near miss, or have survived stepping on a land mine. Descriptions below provide some appropriate examples. War Masters can also create their own weird feats to better suit their campaign's atmosphere and theme.

After the character uses the feat in a few intervening adventures, he might face a greater challenge tied to his new abilities. Others in his unit could begin viewing him with suspicion if he uses the feat too often or openly. If the feat's adverse effects increase with time, they might begin to impair his normal operation—the character could seek some way to rid himself of this weird feat "curse." Others in high places might hear of his supernatural powers. Maybe he

New Afrika Korpse Skills

Skill	Key Ability	Notes
Entrench	Wis	
Observation		
and Assessment	Int	
Wireless Telegraphy	Int	Trained Only

New Afrika Korpse Feats

Feat	Prerequisite
Arid Acclimatization	
Desert Defenses	Wis 13+
Desert Fox	Wis 13+
Élan	
Find Water	
Furtive	
Gone Native	Special
Honest Face	
Lay of the Land	
Sahara Lore	
Scavenge	Int 13+
Technically Adept	Int 13+





Desert Training

must avoid a special team of Nazi commandos bent on capturing him for experimentation.

Characters with weird feats eventually come to the OSI's attention and often find themselves seconded to that organization to put their special talents to use at a more covert and dangerous level. Although special talents are normally treated well by the OSI, in the end, they are simply just another tool to use against the Axis war machine, and like a tool, expendable.

War Masters can give enemy personnel weird feats, but must justify their existence. Although the SS could successfully deploy individuals with such feats against Allied forces, Nazi doctors would find greater benefit in experimenting on subjects with such feats in an effort to duplicate their effects in others. In most cases, a German soldier with a weird feat would hide his condition lest he find himself strapped to an SS doctor's dissection table.

Mine Feel (Weird)

You possess the uncanny ability to detect unexploded shells, mines, and other explosive booby traps buried in the ground. Somehow you instinctively know where mines were placed, and sense their presence as a foreboding heaviness on your mind. Unfortunately this feeling of utter dread paralyzes you with fright. You know exactly where the mine sits, but you can't move, even to disarm it, take cover, or alert your mates to its presence.

Prerequisite: Weird circumstance

Benefit: On a successful DC 15 Spot roll you sense any mine within 10 feet. You know exactly where it's buried. You must still make a DC 20 Demolitions roll to disarm it.

Disadvantage: Upon sensing a mine, you immediately freeze up with abject terror for one round. This combines your natural terror of imminent danger with an unnerving discomfort of actually

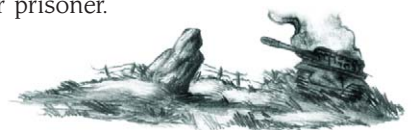
sensing the mine. After one round you must make a DC 15 Will save to snap out of it. A character who fails the save remains paralyzed with fear in his current position and stance until the next round, when he can attempt another DC 15 Will save.

Special: War Masters may decide that the detrimental effects of this feat increase or decrease with time. Some characters might easily overcome the discomfort of this feat, thus lowering the Will save DC to 10, while others might become more disturbed by it, increasing the DC to 20. A character who makes a point of avoiding mines for a time might be more unaccustomed to their presence should he encounter them later, requiring a higher DC Will save.

Example: Sergeant Cavendish, on patrol with his squad, walks within 10 feet of a buried mine. He instantly realizes the danger and knows the mine's exact position, but is frozen with fear for one round. During this time he's a clean target for any Germans in nearby trenches, but he also arouses the attention of his



A Tommy takes a German tanker prisoner.





Monty surveys his positions outside El Alamein.

mates, who wonder why Sergeant Cavendish suddenly stopped walking and broken out in a sweat, all while staring at the ground ahead with fear and dread in his eyes.

After one round, Cavendish rolls d20 plus his Will save base modifier of +1. He only gets a total of 13, so he remains paralyzed for another round. Since they're in the open, one of his mates tackles him to the ground so enemy spotters don't find him. The next round he rolls a Will save of 17 and snaps out of it. He points out the mine and someone in the squad uncovers and disarms it.

Radio Head (Weird)

You hear voices in your head. At first you thought it was just shell-shocked nerves, then you thought you might be going loony. Eventually you realized your brain had become a kind of living receiver.

Some "voices" you recognize as radio traffic between units at the front, while others are Morse Code messages tapping away in the ether. Sometimes you even intercept radio stations broadcasting from as far away as England. It all combines into a distracting cacophony in your mind, but now and then you can single out a particular frequency.

Prerequisite:

Weird circumstance

Benefit: You can intercept and listen in on radio communications as if you had the Wireless Telegraphy skill at +2 (those with the skill gain a +2 bonus). This bonus also applies to using your receiver abilities to locate a wireless set transmitting on a particular frequency. The range, clarity, and intensity varies according to a variety of factors—generally the longer you use this feat, the better you get at tuning into certain frequencies, extending its range, and filtering out garbage.

Disadvantage:

The voices in your head constantly distract you, giving a -2 penalty to all your Listen and Spot rolls. If you stand within 25 feet of any kind of transmitting radio, the signal overpowers your senses—you lose your ability to hear anything until the transmission stops or you move out of range. The noise from a radar transmitter is nearly overwhelming and doubles this penalty (although these should only be encountered under extraordinary circumstances).

Special: War Masters can vary this feat's effects with time. If the abilities increase with constant use, increase the Wireless Telegraphy bonus as high as +4—but don't forget to similarly increase the penalty to Spot and Listen rolls as high as -4. War Masters could also increase the range within which a transmitting radio impairs all hearing, and could even assess additional penalties against characters within than range, such as lost hit points or temporarily lowered Dexterity.

An extremely rare form of this feat might include the ability to decode and decipher messages in one's head, as if using the Decipher Script skill, with a +2 bonus. Any character with this variant who makes his powers known becomes a target of interest not only for the OSI but for the SS as well.





Rune Tattoo (Weird)

You have a mysterious symbol tattooed someplace on your body. You cannot recall how it got there—you just woke up one day and discovered it. Did it somehow appear while you were in hospital, or did those furtive Bedouin have something to do with it? Slowly you realize the rune grants you certain enhanced powers, though these seem fairly subtle and easy to conceal. Still, you notice others peering at you with suspicion or fearful looks in their eyes.

Prerequisite: Weird circumstance

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to one appropriate ability (other than Charisma) and all related skill, save, and attack rolls. The War Master determines the exact mythical symbol and its implications for your character. The symbol often reflects one aspect of the ability it enhances. For instance, if you found the ancient Egyptian *djed* hieroglyph tattooed to your chest, it might give you a +2 bonus to Constitution (*djed* represented stability and order to the ancients). The Elder Futhark rune Kenaz tattooed upon your forehead might grant you a +2 Wisdom bonus.

Disadvantage: Whether the symbol is tattooed in a visible or concealed part of the body, you suffer a -2 penalty on your Charisma and all related skill rolls. Others become visibly uneasy in your presence, and it subsequently becomes more difficult for you to relate to them successfully.

Special: The bonus and penalty may increase as the character uses the tattoo's benefits more often, as more time passes, or as the War Master thinks appropriate to the campaign. If the War Master thinks a simple bonus to an ability is inappropriate, he may substitute a minor spell-like effect—comprehend languages, mending, protection from evil—of no greater than first level.

Solar Healing (Weird)

You feel great when you're outside in the sunlight, even here in the dry Sahara desert. You never seem to suffer from the usual maladies that plague the common soldier. Then you took a hit during a skirmish and dropped to the sand, the scorching sun bearing down on you. The pain seemed unbearable, and you tried to will it away. You felt the warmth of the sun on the wound, and it seemed to partially heal right before your eyes! When you reached the casualty clearing station, they put your stretcher down outside for

you to wait your turn with a medic. You uncovered the wound and let it bask in the sun. It actually felt better! By the time you saw the doctor, you barely needed any attention. As long as you stay in the sun and keep your injuries exposed to its warm, benevolent light, you miraculously heal faster.

Prerequisite: Weird circumstance

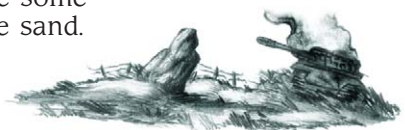
Benefit: As long as you or the injury is exposed to sunlight, you may make a DC 10 Constitution check to instantly heal 1d6 hit points once per day. After that, or if the roll fails, you naturally heal at twice the normal rate: 2 hit points per character level per day of rest. If you are under long term care and exposed to sunlight, you heal at 4 hit points per character level per day of supervised rest. You also gain a +4 bonus to any saving throw made to resist poison and disease when out in the sun.

Disadvantage: You cannot use the ability to instantly heal if the injury is not exposed to direct sunlight. It does not work at night, nor in shade, tents, tanks, or buildings. Bandages covering the wound negate any instant or natural healing. If someone denies you sunlight for 24 hours, you do not naturally heal at all. For instance, if the enemy captures you and imprisons you in a cave for three days, any injuries you've sustained will not heal naturally. Medical treatment still works if the injury is denied sunlight, though it is half as effective (half hit points regained through battlefield healing, only one hit point per character level gained through long term care).

Special: War Masters can vary the degree of immediate healing depending on the character's natural exposure to sunlight and his use (or overuse) of this feat. Instantly healed hit points may range from 1d4 to 1d8 or even 1d10. Using this feat may expose the character to other dangers, especially under combat conditions. Refusing medical attention and leaving a wound open to the elements might confuse some medical personnel and arouse their suspicion. Nazi doctors take particular interest in a character who exhibits this feat.

Trembling Hands (Weird)

You've developed a nervous tick in your hands, a trembling that at first seemed to come and go without reason. After a while you begin associating it with a sense of sadness and dread surrounding certain circumstances—just before an ambush, when you're about to drink tainted water, or when you handle some ancient artifact recovered from the sand.





Prerequisite: Weird circumstance

Benefit: You gain the ability to detect a certain kind of unnatural danger within 25 feet. For your senses to become aware of this threat you must make a DC 10 Wisdom check. These perils might include poison, a particular enemy, deadly animals, magic, or the undead. When you make the successful Wisdom check, your dominant hand begins shaking uncontrollably, dropping anything in its grasp at the moment. You immediately sense that danger is at hand, and have a general indication from which direction it comes.

Disadvantage: While within 25 feet of the specified menace, you suffer a -4 penalty to all rolls made for skills requiring use of the predominant hand, including combat rolls.

For ambidextrous characters, this penalty only impairs one hand. The trembling dissipates once the threat is dispatched, or the character moves 25 feet away from the danger.

Special: The War Master may increase the range if he feels the character has used this feat frequently enough. Should medical personnel notice the tremors, they may order the character out of action for rest and recuperation, psychiatric evaluation, or permanent disability discharge.

New Prestige Classes

The war in North Africa required several specialized talents, and a breed of men rose to fill the ranks of new units to ensure victory in this harsh environment. The prestige classes below—the fitter, LRDG officer, minefield engineer, native guide, and signaler—all played major roles in various operations against Rommel and the Afrika Korps.

You don't have to limit these prestige classes to personnel serving on the North African front. You can drop some right into other theaters, particularly the fitter, minefield engineer, and signaler. While the LRDG officer might seem out of place far from the desert, he represents a specialized kind of scout who might operate independently behind enemy lines on any number of fronts. You can customize the native guide for other regions where the enemy takes the local people for granted, particularly the Pacific and Asian theaters of war—the Filipino coast watchers, for instance.

Class Abbreviations: The prestige classes presented below are abbreviated as follows: Fit, fitter; Lof, LRDG officer; Eng, minefield engineer; Nat, native guide; Sig, signaler.

Fitter

"One of the Marmon-Herringtons cracked its main chassis member...I thought that we should have to abandon the broken vehicle where it was.... The next day we were washing at 'Ain Dalla when there was a distant roaring towards the eastern cliffs and out of the haze came the abandoned truck. McLeod had cut a bit off the tail of the chassis, plated the crack and hurried after us only a few hours behind."

—Captain W. B. Kennedy Shaw, LRDG

As a master mechanic, the fitter works miracles on machinery with limited time and resources. Whether working from a fully stocked fitter's truck or with a vehicle tool kit, a fitter can fix virtually any equipment that isn't destroyed. With frequent shortages on the desert front, a fitter must find the means to quickly repair vehicles, weapons, and armor before sending it back into combat. A good fitter has an eye for scavenging useful parts and an imagination for unorthodox but effective repairs.

During the siege of Tobruk fitters kept the garrison's antiaircraft guns repaired and in action despite heavy bombing from the Luftwaffe. Fitters assigned to the Long Range Desert Patrol managed to maintain vehicles during long periods away from bases with adequate repair facilities.

Most fitters rise from the other ranks of soldier already serving as mechanics (privates and noncommissioned officers from the grunt class). Some scouts become fitters after having learned self-reliance and the value of a good repair job while on extended patrol duty. Others with technical ability, a good eye for spare parts, and determination to get machinery working again also make good fitters. All that is needed to be a fitter is some ingenuity and determination.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

Nationality: British, Australian, New Zealander

Will Save: +2

Driving: 4 ranks

Mechanic: 4 ranks





Feats: Scavenge, Technically Adept, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Class Skills

The fitter's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Demolitions (Int), Disable Device (Int), Driving (Dex), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (Int), Listen (Wis), Search (Int), and Spot (Wis).

Skill points each additional Level: 4 + Int Modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the fitter:

Élan: The fitter automatically gains the Élan feat at 1st level if he doesn't already have it.

Fitter's Truck: At 1st level, the fitter has access to his unit's fitter's truck, a lorry whose covered payload houses folding work benches, racks of tools, boxes of spare parts, and drawers filled with smaller components. Since these provide more than adequate resources, working on repairs at a fitter's truck provides a +2 bonus to all Mechanic rolls.

Make Do: Fitters in the field quickly learn to make do with what supplies they have, substituting some parts to function as others, ripping off useless portions of a vehicle to repair a vital component, and fixing it all with makeshift tools. At 3rd level the fitter ignores the normal -5 penalty when effecting repairs without the proper tools and spare parts.

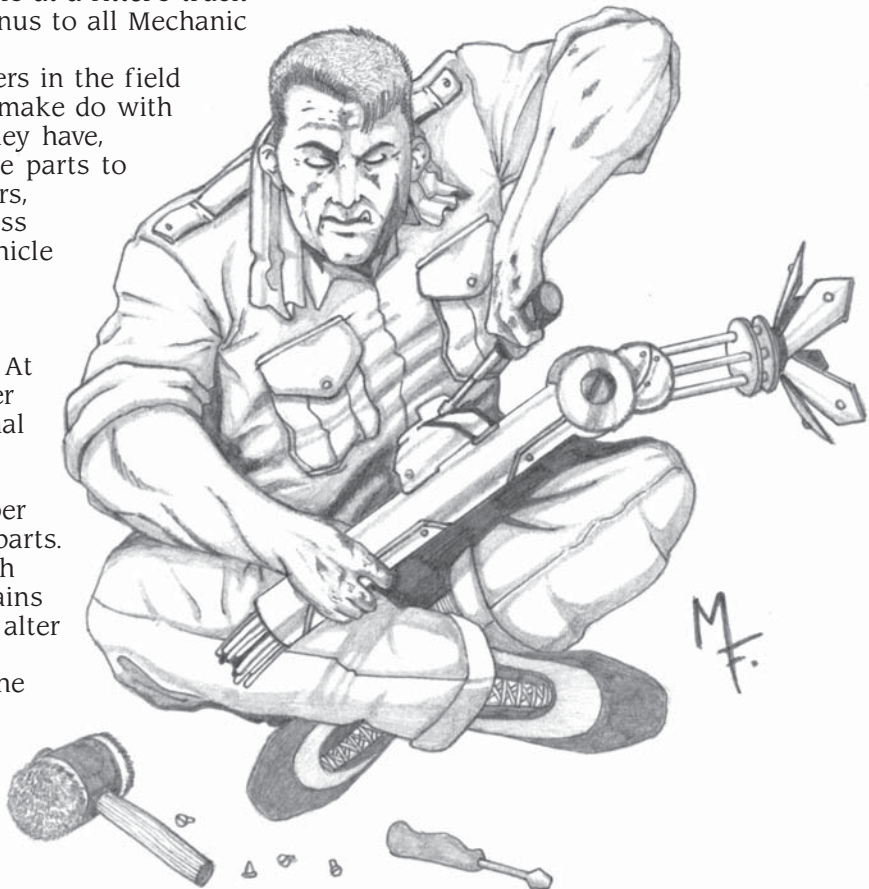
Retrofit: At 5th level the fitter gains ability to add or alter equipment on vehicles. While the Mechanic skill allows characters to repair damage, retrofit allows them

The Fitter

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+1	+1	+2	Fitter's Truck, Élan
2nd	+0	+1	+1	+2	
3rd	+1	+2	+1	+3	Make Do
4th	+1	+2	+2	+3	
5th	+1	+3	+2	+4	Retrofit
6th	+2	+3	+2	+4	Fixed This Before
7th	+2	+4	+3	+5	
8th	+3	+4	+3	+5	Last Legs
9th	+3	+5	+4	+6	
10th	+4	+5	+4	+6	

to modify machinery. For example, a fitter could remove the damaged turret from a Marmon-Herrington car, fashion an armored gun shield, attach it forward of the now-empty turret mount, and securely set a captured Italian 20mm antiaircraft gun in it.

The fitter still uses his Mechanic skill for the task, against a DC based on the complexity of the planned alteration and determined by the War Master. The modification to the Marmon-Herrington armored car, for instance, would probably





The LRDG Officer

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+1	+1	Bonus Feat
2nd	+1	+2	+1	+2	
3rd	+1	+3	+2	+2	Language Training
4th	+2	+3	+2	+3	Bonus Feat
5th	+2	+3	+3	+3	Aircraft Intuition, Language Training
6th	+2	+4	+3	+4	Bonus Feat
7th	+3	+4	+4	+4	Language Training
8th	+3	+4	+4	+4	Bonus Feat
9th	+4	+5	+5	+5	
10th	+4	+5	+5	+5	Bonus Feat

require a DC 20 Mechanic roll, plus all the parts and tools, and an amount of time determined by the War Master.

Fixed This Before: After a while fitters have seen every kind of damage on every kind of vehicle...twice. At 6th level they gain the ability to more efficiently effect repairs. This allows the fitter to restore the usual 2d20 damage points to a vehicle on a successful Mechanic roll, plus an additional 2 for every point by which the skill roll exceeds the DC. Making such a repair still requires adequate spare parts and tools.

Last Legs: A good fitter can take a vehicle on its last legs and give it just a little more life. At 8th level the fitter gains this ability, which allows him to repair certain kinds of critical damage to extend a vehicle's operational life.

The fitter can adequately repair only certain kinds of critical damage: turret jammed, engine damaged, running gear damaged, and immobilized. For a successful repair job the fitter must make a DC 25 Mechanical roll and take 1d20x10 minutes. The vehicle functions normally—ignoring the effects of the specific critical damage repaired—for a number of hours equal to the number of points by which the fitter's Mechanical roll exceeded the DC of 25.

For instance, if the fitter's Mechanical skill total comes to 30, the vehicle system he's working on functions properly for five more hours. The repairs and subsequent use of the damaged system wear down the vehicle, making it completely useless at the end of this extended operation. It is not possible to use this ability on the same vehicle system twice before the vehicle has been restored to its full damage points in the normal manner.

LRDG Officer

"What the French call *le sens du practicable*, and we call common sense, knowledge of what is and what is not possible.... These are the real foundations of military knowledge, not strategy and tactics as most people think."

—General Sir Archibald Wavell,
Commander in Chief, Middle East

It takes a certain kind of commander to serve as an officer in the Long Range Desert Group. One must feel at home in the desert wastes far south of the main fighting. He must exercise an independence of thought and action, combined with the ability to improvise with few supplies, a small force, and overwhelming odds.

The LRDG officer has more independence than those on the front lines; however, the repercussions of his decisions have a far greater impact on his small unit. Poor judgment, ill-conceived tactics, and simple dumb luck can wipe out his entire patrol without proper initiative and leadership.

An LRDG officer helps plan and execute patrols, often taking direct responsibility for various aspects himself. He drives, crews the guns, goes on road watch duty, and suffers the same desert hardships as the other men; but he must also stand above the rest as a pillar of courage, ingenuity, and action in the face of the enemy, giving direction to his men in dire situations.

The desert tests everyone. On the battlefields, one can find comfort in one's fellows, in the frequent supplies, and in the knowledge that command is right behind you supporting your unit. In the desolate wastes of the Sahara, the life of





Desert Training

a small patrol is dependent on careful planning, cautious action, and sound leadership.

Many in the early days came from the ranks of desert explorers who roamed the Sahara before the war. As patrols expanded, others were drawn from highly decorated units in the Eighth Army, including the Coldstream and Scots Guards. Men from the officer class become ranked officers in the LRDG, while grunts become noncommissioned officers ("other ranks" for British Commonwealth forces) in the unit. Medics with the Rank feat can also volunteer for assignments as medical officers in the LRDG.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Driving: 5 ranks

Leadership: 2 ranks

Navigation: 2 ranks

Wilderness Lore: 2 ranks

Feats: Arid Acclimatization, Lay of the Land (desert), Rank, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Class Skills

The LRDG officer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Decipher Script (Int), Demolitions (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Driving (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Intuit Direction (Wis), Leadership (Cha), Listen (Wis), Navigation (Int), Observation and Assessment (Int), Sense Motive (Cha), Spot (Wis), Wilderness Lore (Wis), and Wireless Telegraphy (Int).

Skill points each additional Level: 6 + Int Modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the LRDG officer:

Bonus Feats: At 1st level, the LRDG officer gains a bonus feat. The officers gets an additional bonus feat at 4th level and every two levels thereafter. He must choose these bonus feats from the following list: Combat Reflexes, Command (Command Voice, Int 12+, rank of Sergeant or higher), Command Voice (rank of Sergeant or higher), Desert Defenses (Wis 13+), Desert Fox (Wis 13+), Find Water, Gone Native (Speak Language, special), Mechanized Infantry (Simple Weapons), Natural Born Leader (Cha 13+), Sahara Lore, Scavenge, Tactics, Track.

Some of the bonus feats available to an LRDG officer cannot be acquired until he gains one or more prerequisite feats; these

feats are listed parenthetically after the particular feat. An LRDG officer must still meet all prerequisites for a feat, including ability score and base attack bonus minimums.

Language Training: At 3rd, 5th and 7th level the LRDG officer gains enough experience to learn a new language of his choice. The officer must choose the new language from the following list: Arabic, Senussi, Fezzani, German, Italian, and Tibbu. Knowing the enemy's tongue can help bluff your way out of tricky confrontations. Although most Muslim inhabitants of this region speak Arabic, many natives also keep their tribal languages alive. Those who inhabit Cyrenaica speak Senussi, nomads in the Fezzan speak Fezzani, and tribesmen living near the Tibesti mountains speak Tibbu.

Aircraft Intuition: Enemy aircraft pose a particularly deadly threat to LRDG patrols traversing the open, featureless deserts. A



patrol caught without cover quickly becomes prey to nimble Messerschmitts, Stuka dive bombers, and Italian Macchi. Reconnaissance aircraft can easily spot unsuspecting and unprepared patrols, radioing their position to ground units that can prepare devastating ambushes. After a while an LRDG officer becomes attuned to watching the skies and listening for aircraft engines while driving across the dunes. At 5th level, an LRDG officer gains aircraft intuition, giving him a +3 bonus to Listen and Spot checks when keeping an eye on the skies for aircraft.

Minefield Engineer

"I am sure that there should be a drill for this, just as there is a drill for loading and firing field guns.... When you have worked out a drill and I have approved it, you will form the Eighth Army School of Mine Clearance."

—Brigadier Kisch, Chief Engineer, 8th Army

Some compare the war in North Africa to war at sea: vast armies maneuver across the boundless desert, unrestricted except by islands of hazardous terrain. As in naval warfare, denying the enemy access to a particular route is a common tactic. Just as floating mines prohibit swift movement through parts of the sea, so do land mines restrict movement through the desert. Minefields create dangerous terrain, and form integral components of defensive positions stretching the length of the front.

A minefield engineer has special training in placing, detecting, and defusing mines. He's attended the Eighth Army School of Mine Clearance and moved on to the Minefield Task Force. If Montgomery's forces are to break through German lines, they must clear vast minefields peppered with explosives set for both personnel and armor. A minefield engineer possesses the courage to penetrate minefields day or night, search for buried mines, and disarm them. In this manner, he helps clear pathways for mechanized forces to break through enemy defenses and punch a hole in the line.



Most minefield engineers come from the grunt class (frequently combat engineers), though some come from the ranks of officers and scouts. Minefield clearing units often bring along medics, but they aren't necessarily true minefield engineers.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Demolitions: 5 ranks

Entrench: 2 ranks

Feats: Desert Defenses, Iron Will

Class Skills

The minefield engineer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Demolitions (Int), Disable Device (Int), Driving (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Leadership (Cha), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigation (Int), Search (Int), and Spot (Wis).

Skill points each additional

Level: 4 + Int

Modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the minefield engineer:

Personal Equipment:

At 1st level, a minefield engineer receives personal equipment to better aid his specialized duties. He receives a metal detector that gives him a +4 circumstance bonus to any rolls made to detect most mines with metal components (see page 67 in *Weird War II: Blood on the Rhine* for more information). He also gets





one Bangalore torpedo, a five-foot long tube filled with explosive which, when detonated, clears a 10-foot wide path through most obstacles, including minefields. Engineers can join several Bangalores together to clear a longer path (see page 66 in *Weird War II: Blood on the Rhine* for weapon details).

Nightvision: A minefield engineer frequently works at night, clearing a field for the inevitable armor assault at dawn. At 2nd level, the engineer receives enough training in nighttime operations to gain nightvision at half strength. He only has a 25% chance to miss in combat, loses only half (rounded down) his positive Dexterity bonus to AC, moves at one-quarter speed, and suffers a -2 penalty on most skills relying on Strength and Dexterity. He suffers a -4 penalty on Spot checks and any other activity that requires vision.

By 8th level, his familiarity with night operations allows him to operate to a greater degree with minimal light. He only suffers a -2 penalty on Spot checks and any other activity based on vision.

When sudden illumination (nearby artillery, flares, an exploding vehicle) interrupts darkened conditions, however, a minefield engineer who doesn't prepare by shielding his eyes becomes temporarily blinded for two rounds—he suffers a 50% chance to miss in combat, loses his positive Dexterity bonus to AC, moves at one-half speed, and suffers a -4 penalty on most skills relying on Strength and Dexterity. He cannot make Spot checks or undertake any other activity requiring vision. After two rounds, he can adjust his eyesight again to darkened conditions, or to the temporary illumination.

Nerves of Steel: At 4th level a minefield engineer acquires nerves of steel. He gains a +4 bonus to all Concentration rolls and a +2 Will save bonus. Once per day he gains charging bonuses like the Élan feat—when charging into close combat, he gains a +4 melee attack bonus instead of only a +2 bonus, but still suffers a -2 AC penalty; he only suffers a -2 penalty when firing a pistol, submachinegun, or sawed-off shotgun in a melee. These effects are not cumulative if the engineer already possesses the Élan feat.

The Minefield Engineer

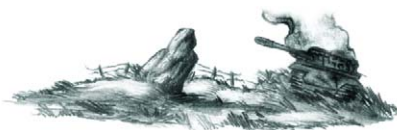
Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+1	+0	+1	Personal Equipment
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+1	Half Nightvision
3rd	+1	+2	+1	+2	
4th	+1	+3	+1	+2	Nerves of Steel
5th	+2	+3	+1	+3	Flail Tank
6th	+2	+4	+2	+3	Make Like A Rock
7th	+3	+4	+2	+4	Flail Tank
8th	+3	+5	+2	+4	Full Nightvision
9th	+4	+5	+3	+5	
10th	+4	+5	+3	+5	Flail Tank

Make Like A Rock: There's nothing worse than crawling through a field, probing for mines, and suddenly getting caught in the open under enemy guns. An engineer can't exactly dive through the minefield for cover (at least if he values his hide), so he just covers his head, stays prone, and makes like a rock. Maybe the enemy doesn't really see him, or passes him over for other, more inviting, targets. Getting out alive is part skill, part luck, and part providence. At 6th level, the minefield engineer gets a +4 AC bonus when totally prone and taking no actions other than hoping and praying he doesn't get hit.

Flail Tank: At 5th, 7th, and 10th level the minefield engineer can try using his influence, experience, and rank to call in one favor—getting a flail tank on the scene in relatively short order to clear a field quickly (though rather obviously) of mines. "Flail tank" in this sense represents any tank fitted with specialized mine-clearing apparatus: chain flails, rollers, or plow blades.

To influence his superiors to order a flail tank to the scene, the minefield engineer must make a Diplomacy or Charisma check the War Master sets to reflect battlefield conditions and the tank's availability.

If the engineer needs the tank to clear a path for an imminent armor thrust during a major battle, the War Master might set the DC at 10. Getting a flail tank out to clear a minefield for a routine LRDG mission might require a DC 20 check. If the attempt fails, the opportunity to call in a flail tank later is not wasted, but the engineer cannot try to requisition a tank for at least another week.





Native Guide

"He had trampled over [the Jebel] previously in the guise of a native, spoke Arabic and the dialect of Cyrenaica to perfection, and the natives, who seldom thought highly of white men, would do anything for John Haselden."

—Captain Alastair Timpson, LRDG

Native guides are Allied soldiers trained to work covertly behind enemy lines. They masquerade as local Arabs, and often gain support from that community. During their extensive time among these people, they have become intimately familiar with native customs, learned the language, and forged a deep friendship with many locals. These people often support their further operations in German rear areas.

A native guide's duties vary, but often mirror those of LRDG personnel, spies, and SAS commandos. He might spend one month gathering intelligence on German operations, monitoring road traffic, reconnoitering supply dumps, and noting units and commanders operating in the area. An LRDG patrol might require his services to lead them from the southern deserts into enemy territory to settle in road watch positions among native villagers in the Jebel Akhdar. The SAS might require his help to scout an enemy airfield and execute a sabotage raid.

Subtlety, deception, and diplomacy form the backbone of a native guide's methods of operating. He depends on locals for shelter, supplies, and a cover story. He uses their ubiquitous nature to

gain access to the enemy—many foreigners take Arabs for granted as harmless, idiotic beggars with no loyalties to either side in this war. The guide becomes a native to better blend in and get closer to sensitive information where uniformed military personnel could not.

Captain John Haselden was one of the more famous native guides working in the North African theater of operations. He gained the confidence of the locals so much that they named him the Mudir of Slonta and Tabir, and affectionately called him the King of the Jebel Akhdar (the mountains that run across the northern coast of Cyrenaica). He knew the local Senussi language and culture intimately, maintained a good rapport with the

Bedouin, and had friends throughout the region. In addition to gathering intelligence, Haselden assisted the LRDG and SAS on various missions in Cyrenaica. He attained the rank of colonel, but was killed during a failed SAS raid on the Tobruk harbor in September 1942.

Officers and scouts are best suited for this class. Others with the proper amount of experience can also become native guides, the important prerequisite being a familiarity with the local language and culture.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Charisma: 13+

Diplomacy: 4 ranks

Leadership: 4 ranks

Speak Language (native dialect): 5 ranks

Feats: Gone Native

Other: The character must have spent a significant amount of time behind enemy lines and interacting with locals in their native cultural setting.

Class Skills

The native guide's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Driving (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Heal





(Wis), Intuit
Direction (Wis),
Listen (Wis), Move
Silently (Dex),
Observation and
Assessment (Int),
Navigation (Int),
Spot (Wis), and
Wilderness Lore
(Wis).

Skill points
each additional

Level: 4 + Int
Modifier.

Class

Features

Sneak Attack:

At 1st level the native guide gains the sneak attack ability at +1d6. At 5th level he gain this ability at +2d6. It works just as described for rogues in the *Player's Handbook*.

Influence: At 2nd level, and every other level after that, the native guide can use his influence to call in one favor from the people among whom he works: local villagers, his commander at HQ, or groups he's guided in the past. This allows the guide to gather resources unavailable to others to aid his missions, maintain his cover, and move about the operational area unnoticed. He might use his influence to acquire special supplies, send an important message, get help for a seriously injured friend, or quickly gain information to plan a particularly daring attack.

To influence others, the native guide must make a Diplomacy check against a DC the War Master sets that reflects the favor's importance. A simple request might have a DC of 15—acquiring additional supplies and weapons from headquarters, finding a guide into an unfamiliar region or enemy installation, recruiting a few locals to help in noncombat situations. A more involved favor might require a Diplomacy check against a DC of 25—convincing command to order troops to make a feint to cover your own operations, acquiring large or expensive equipment and ordnance, requesting air cover for a ground assault, or using a village as a safe area until enemy activity dies down.

If the attempt fails, the influence becomes wasted, though it does not mean the native guide's rapport with the person he petitioned is tarnished. Some extremely difficult favors may be impossible: gaining intelligence from ultra

The Native Guide

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Sneak Attack +1d6
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+2	Influence, Lay of the Land
3rd	+1	+2	+1	+3	Native Disguise +2
4th	+1	+3	+1	+3	Influence
5th	+2	+3	+1	+4	Sneak Attack +2d6
6th	+2	+4	+2	+4	Influence
7th	+3	+4	+2	+5	Native Disguise +4
8th	+3	+5	+2	+5	Influence
9th	+4	+5	+3	+6	Native Disguise +6
10th	+4	+6	+3	+6	Influence

top-secret sources, or allowing an Arab woman to participate in any clandestine operation. The War Master might set a higher DC for such favors, or could simply deem that they are beyond the ability of anyone to grant.

The War Master should make sure a native guide does not abuse his influence during the game. It should never absolutely decide the outcome of an adventure, nor should it serve as a substitute for good roleplaying—in fact, War Masters should require a good degree of roleplaying for a native guide to call in a favor using his influence.

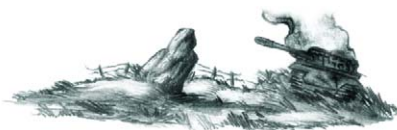
Native Disguise: At 3rd level the guide gains a +2 bonus to Disguise and Bluff when passing as a native around non-native people. For instance, a native guide would receive a +2 bonus when trying to bluff his way past an Italian patrol, but wouldn't gain the bonus if he were trying to pass himself off as a native Senussi tribesman among other Bedouin. This bonus increases to +4 at 7th level, and +6 at 10th level.

Lay of the Land: At 2nd level the native guide automatically gains the Lay of the Land feat for the particular terrain the locals inhabit.

Signaler

"We were far too unkind to the signalmen.... We scoffed at their atmospheric, skip-distances and interferences; we blamed them when they could not 'get through' and when the ciphers would not come out; we were impatient of their 'check and repeats,' forgetting the regularity with which they kept communication."

—Captain W. B. Kennedy Shaw, LRDG



Chapter One



A good signaler is essential in the far-ranging front of North Africa. An expert in wireless telegraphy, a signaler maintains contact with other units and headquarters on his radio. Whether calling in the location of an enemy unit to the RAF, getting through to Cairo for specific orders, or reporting intelligence gathered during LRDG road watch duty, a signaler deals with the most important weapon of this war: information.

While most platoons have men skilled at using radios for everyday communication, only larger units have dedicated signalers responsible for making and receiving high-priority radio transmissions. Besieged Commonwealth forces at Tobruk stay in touch with the outside world through signalers working from transmitters mounted in large trucks (affectionately known as "Bread Vans" for their boxy, loaf-like shape). Resistance fighters depend on operators using suitcase radios to call in intelligence, supply requests, and action reports. An LRDG signaler reports enemy traffic along roads, receives new orders and weather

reports, and analyzes updates on activities at the front that might affect on-going operations in the desert.

From the battles in coastal Cyrenaica and the bustle of Cairo to the distant Fezzan desert and Tibesti mountains, signalers maintain essential communications. A signaler knows the inner workings of his radio, how to best place the unit and aerial for optimum signal transmission and reception, how to "skip" a signal over ranges beyond the normal workings for the wireless, and how to maintain and repair the unit in the harsh desert conditions. A signaler also knows how to use basic codes and ciphers (represented by the class skill Decipher Script). Your average radio operator in the field transmits "in the clear," so any Jerry with a wireless set scanning the frequencies can pick up the message, jot it down, and hand it to his translator. British field radio procedure was sloppy enough that Rommel's *Fernmeldeaufklärung* Company (radio intercept group) could anticipate unit location, strength, and intention. Signalers can use basic codes and ciphers to encrypt their messages and decrypt incoming communiqués. Assuming a signaler knows the proper code and cipher and has the equipment to decipher it (onetime pads, stencils, and mechanical encryption machines) decoding and deciphering Allied messages requires a Decipher Script roll exceeding DC 10 or 15. For messages transmitted through adverse atmospheric conditions (or received on a failed Wireless Transmission roll), this DC increases by +10.

A signaler usually rises from the grunt, officer, or scout class, having some combat experience and technical know-how. Some resistance fighters become signals experts to better communicate with supporters outside occupied territories.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Driving: 3 ranks

Wireless Telegraphy: 5 ranks

Feats: Rank, Lay of the Land, Technically Adept, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Class Skills

The signaler's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int),





Disable Device (Int), Driving (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Intuit Direction (Wis), Listen (Wis), Navigation (Int), Observation and Assessment (Int), Sense Motive (Cha), Spot (Wis), and Wireless Telegraphy (Int).

Skill points each additional Level: 4 + Int Modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the signaler:

Radio: At 1st level, a signaler gains access to a radio, often mounted on one of his unit's vehicles (a truck or jeep). More compact suitcase radios were only issued to OSI operatives, resistance fighters, and other covert operations personnel working behind enemy lines. This allows the signaler to maintain contact with headquarters and other units. Should the radio or vehicle become damaged, it is replaced only when the signaler returns to his command base (although the signaler can attempt repairs on his own).

Lay of the Land: At 2nd level, the signaler gains an additional bonus from his Lay of the Land feat: it now provides a +2 bonus to Wireless Telegraphy skill checks. Having the feat allows you to find the best terrain from which to transmit or receive, giving the bonus to Wireless Telegraphy rolls made at a carefully considered location. Ignore the bonus when sending rushed messages from the most convenient spot, without taking time to find an optimal transmission location.

Fist Recognition: A signaler's Morse Code transmitting style—called a “fist”—is as distinct as a person's handwriting. At 3rd level, a signaler can recognize the Morse Code fist of various friendly and enemy operators. Based on the message's frequency and style, he can make an educated guess about the sender's nationality. Although he can't determine any other details about the transmitter without decoding his messages, the signaler can assign a familiar name to the sender for future reference: “Hans” might be a German signaler known to operate with a Panzer reconnaissance unit, while “Charlie” might be an LRDG radio operator on road watch duty in Cyrenaica.

The Signaler

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+1	+1	+2	Radio
2nd	+1	+1	+1	+2	Lay of the Land
3rd	+1	+2	+1	+3	Fist Recognition
4th	+2	+2	+2	+3	
5th	+2	+3	+2	+4	Huff Duff Intuition
6th	+2	+3	+2	+4	
7th	+3	+4	+3	+5	
8th	+3	+4	+3	+5	Huff Duff Requisition
9th	+3	+5	+3	+6	
10th	+4	+5	+4	+6	

Huff Duff Intuition: By 5th level, the signaler has spent so much time on the ether that he gains the ability to make educated estimates about the location of a transmitter on a particular frequency, similar to high frequency direction finding equipment (HF/DF, known as “Huff Duff”).

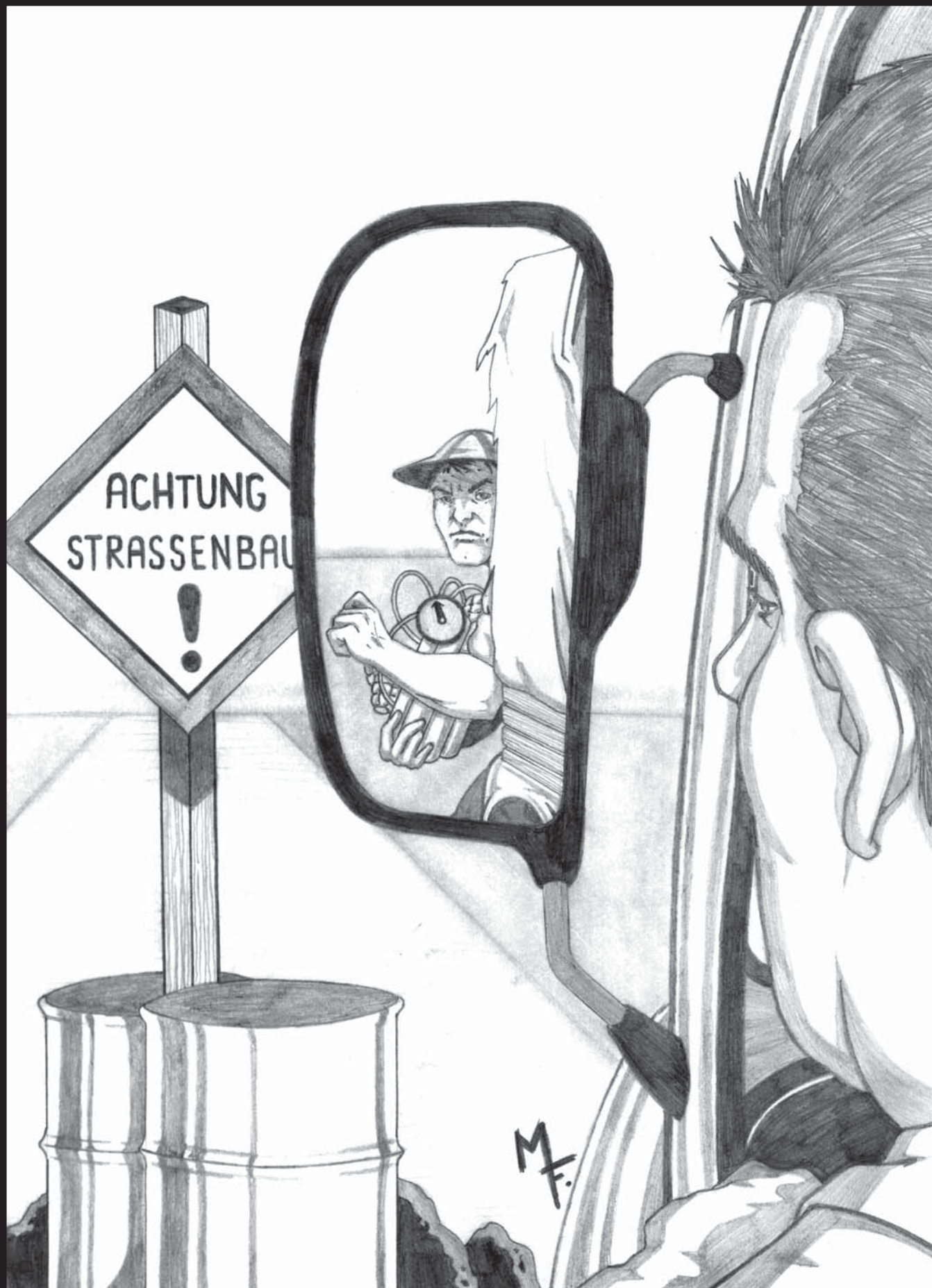
To do so, the signaler must monitor a particular frequency for 24–48 hours, moving his own location significantly during that period to better judge the increase or decrease in the other transmission's strength. He can also fiddle with his wireless unit's aerial placement to better judge a signal's power. Although he can't precisely pinpoint the transmission, he knows whether or not he's moving closer to or farther from it. This assumes the sender transmits from a stationary position. Broadcasts from moving points may further complicate the signaler's intuition about the transmitter's relative location.

This feature is not as accurate as operating Huff Duff equipment using the Wireless Telegraphy skill.

Huff Duff Requisition: At 8th level, the signaler gains the respect, experience, and authority to requisition Huff Duff equipment for his unit's use. He must still justify to his superiors why he needs such gear.

A Huff Duff set allows a signaler to better hone in on the location of other transmitters. Because of its size and power requirements, Huff Duff is often mounted in a truck or jeep. Using it gives a signaler a +2 bonus to any Wireless Telegraphy checks to locate a transmitter on a particular frequency. Short transmissions pose more of a challenge than long, talkative messages that continually broadcast signals along a particular frequency. The actual DC for the roll is set by the War Master.





Chapter Two: Ordnance & Equipment

The British are receiving large quantities of war materiel.... We, unfortunately, are not in that happy position. The supplies that are reaching us don't cover, by a long way, the minimum we need."

—General Georg Stumme

All combatants on the North African front began with equipment and vehicles already in service, including quite a few outdated pieces sent to the Sahara to cover a secondary frontier. The Italians and British, who'd maintained a military there the longest, depended primarily on armor developed on obsolete design principles and old modes of tactical warfare.

With the formation of Afrika Korps, Rommel pulled together armored divisions including Panzer Is and IIs that had proven themselves during the blitzkriegs across Poland and France. New model panzers primarily went to the Russian front to defeat the greater Bolshevik threat. While factories worked full-blast to turn out Spitfires to defend the skies over England, the RAF in North Africa initially depended on secondhand Hurricanes to oppose the Luftwaffe—

Spitfires only saw action over the Sahara much later in the North African campaign, once England repulsed the brunt of the Blitz.

Eventually new ordnance made its way into service in the desert war, mostly supporting Allied forces. American lend-lease efforts reinforced British armored divisions with new Lees, Shermans and Stuarts. American-built trucks and jeeps gave the LRDG and SAS reliable vehicles with which they could cross the sand seas and penetrate deep behind enemy lines. Newly designed British tanks appeared, and new aircraft filled the growing ranks of the RAF squadrons in North Africa.

The Axis forces weren't so fortunate. With Wehrmacht High Command focusing on the Russian front, Rommel made do with what few reinforcements made it past British aerial patrols over the Mediterranean. Advanced model panzers dribbled into his armored divisions, but they were still dependent on the unreliable fuel supply flowing from Italy. Rommel relied on his troops' ability to salvage and survive on what little they had or could capture, as well as the nefarious ingenuity of the SBG and its unnatural tactics.



Italian infantry make a hurried deployment under fire.

Infantry Weapons

"We have, without a doubt, often done our Italian allies an injustice.... We failed to consider that their weapons and armored cars were far from corresponding to the standard of those which we or our opponents employed in North Africa."

—Colonel Hans von Luck

Forces fighting in North Africa used all infantry weapons available by year until the campaign ended in mid-1943. Given the nature of armored warfare in the desert, War Masters should bear in mind the importance of anti-tank guns for both Axis and Allies, as well as the role the dreaded German Flak 36 played as an anti-tank weapon. For quick reference, the year a weapon entered service frequently appears as part of its make and model designation, particularly for German small arms. For instance, the Pak 40 was a common anti-tank gun in Afrika Korps, but the Pak 43 would only have played a role defending the Axis retreat after the beginning of 1943, if even then.

Italian Weapons

Although Italian troops in North Africa shared some ordnance with their Afrika Corps allies, they also relied on their own small arms, as well as Italian-manufactured machineguns for both infantry and armor. These often obsolete weapons often employed odd calibers or other elements that made them incompatible with similar German ordnance.

Pistols

Modello 89B Pistol: A standard sidearm issued to tank crews and officers, the Modello 89B is a six-shot, side-gate

revolver loading 10.35mm ammunition. A reliable weapon in the desert, it was easier to clean than semiautomatic pistols preferred by the Regia Aeronautica. **Damage:** 2d6+2, **PV:** -10, **Critical:** 19-20/x2, **Range Inc:** 30, **Ammo:** 6C, **Type:** 10.35mm, **Action:** Revolver, **Weight:** 2 lbs, **Damage Type:** Piercing.

Beretta M1934 Pistol (Cougar): Most pilots and high-level officers carried this Italian semiautomatic pistol manufactured by the world-renown Beretta company. The seven-round clip held .38 caliber ammunition. The complex semiautomatic action required constant cleaning in dusty desert conditions. **Damage:** 2d6-1, **PV:** -10, **Critical:** 19-20/x2, **Range Inc:** 30, **Ammo:** 7D, **Type:** .38, **Action:** Semi-auto, **Weight:** 2.25 lbs, **Damage Type:** Piercing.

Rifles

Carcano Modello 91/24: Italian infantry carried a 6.5mm bolt-action rifle that proved sufficient for both frontline fighting and sentry duty at rear-area supply dumps and airfields. **Damage:** 2d8, **PV:** -5, **Critical:** 19-20/x2, **Range Inc:** 120, **Ammo:** 6D, **Type:** 6.5mm, **Action:** Bolt, **Weight:** 9 lbs, **Damage Type:** Piercing.

Machineguns

Breda M38: The standard Italian 8mm machinegun was manufactured in Brescia by the Societa Anonima Ernesto Breda company. Besides providing fire support for infantry, it also served on mounts in Italian vehicles. **Damage:** 2d8, **PV:** -5, **Critical:** 19-20/x2, **Range Inc:** 120, **Ammo:** 50B, **Type:** 8mm, **Action:** Auto, **Weight:** 35 lbs, **Damage Type:** Piercing.

Breda M31: A heavier weapon than its 8mm counterpart, the 13.2mm Breda M31 provided protection for the Italian Carro Commando M41 command vehicle. The





few infantry units using this heavier machinegun frequently salvaged them from destroyed vehicles. **Damage:** 2d8+2, **PV:** -5, **Critical:** 19-20/x2, **Range Inc:** 160, **Ammo:** 50B, **Type:** 13.2mm, **Action:** Auto, **Weight:** 40 lbs, **Damage Type:** Piercing.

Grenades

SRC Modello 35: This can-shaped grenade uses an all-ways impact fuse to detonate its explosive charge and send shrapnel from its outer casing everywhere. Unlike other grenades employing fuses that burn down several seconds, the SRC 35 explodes on impact, eliminating any chance to throw it back. The impact fuse, however, requires careful handling once the pin is pulled and the grenade thrown. Users must make a DC 7 Reflex save to keep from mishandling the grenade (thus setting off the impact fuse) before tossing it. **Damage:** 5d6, **PV:** 0, **Primary Burst:** 4, **Range Inc:** 10, **Weight:** 2 lbs, **Type:** Piercing/Fire.

General Equipment

"The strong, unleaking, returnable 'Jerrican,' by contrast, is an outstanding example of intelligent design followed by good production."

—W. B. Kennedy Shaw, LRDG

Troops in North Africa used some equipment uncommon in other theaters of war, often specially suited for operating in the desert. Most of the equipment listed here found wide use with units working deep in the Sahara, like the LRDG and SAS.

Flimsies

Commonwealth forces used boxy, four-gallon cans for carrying petrol, water, and other fluids. These containers quickly garnered the nickname of "flimsy" from the thin metal from which they were made and the poor quality of the seams and seals. A factory in Alexandria supplied all British troops in North Africa with these unreliable containers. Although they didn't leak quite like a sieve, enough liquid seeped through the seams that personnel often transported them two to a wooden crate to soak up leakage. As the desert war waged on, wood became scarce and transports used cardboard cases that soaked up the liquid but became inadequate for carrying flimsies. The expendable containers frequently lost

Existing Ordnance

We've already seen much of the ordnance in the North African theater in previous *Weird War II* books: primarily *Weird War II: Blood on the Rhine* and *Dead from Above*. To make sure War Masters and players have a full arsenal at their disposal, check the lists below for armor, vehicles, and aircraft used in the desert. (Numbers refer to pages in *Blood on the Rhine* for armor and vehicles, and *Dead from Above* for aircraft.) Feel free to use other vehicles, being mindful that some (particularly German panzers and self-propelled guns) were not available in time for deployment to North Africa.

Consider any American equipment available by mid-1942 as being deployed in Operation Torch and the subsequent Yank campaign in North Africa.

British Ordnance

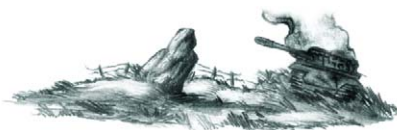
Churchill VII, VIII (p. 73 WW)
Cromwell VII (p. 74 WW)
Daimler Armored Car (p. 74 WW)
M5 Halftrack (p. 74 WW)
Sherman II (p. 75 WW)
Stuart V (p. 75 WW)
Universal Carriers (p. 75 WW)
Hurricane IIB (p. 22 DFA)
Mosquito (p. 23 DFA)
Spitfire (p. 23 DFA)

German Ordnance

Kubelwagen (p. 70 WW)
PzKpfw IVJ (p. 71 WW)
PzKpfw V Panther G (p. 71 WW)
PzKpfw VI Tiger (p. 71 WW)
SdKfz 234/1 (p. 72 WW)
SdKfz 234/2 (p. 72 WW)
SdKfz 234/3 (p. 72 WW)
SdKfz 251 (p. 72 WW)
Me Bf109G (p. 19 DFA)
Me Bf110C (p. 20 DFA)
Ju-52 (p. 20 DFA)
Ju-87 (p. 20 DFA)
Ju-88 (p. 21 DFA)

upwards of a quarter of their contents over extended transit. In a pinch they were more effective as practice targets and field stoves—the wooden or cardboard cases provided a ready source of fuel.

The infantry used flimsies to convey water to the front lines from tankers and provisions trucks. Motorized units used them for auxiliary water and fuel supplies. The LRDG used them early in the war, though they had priority in acquiring newly liberated and more efficient jerry cans.





US Shermans load up before moving out.

Jerry Cans

The Germans arrived in North Africa with a better method of transporting liquids: reusable, five-gallon metal cans with solid construction, excellent seals, and good pouring lips. The British immediately christened them “jerry cans.” Captured jerry cans became prized possessions among soldiers, though officers frequently received orders to turn them in for use in more pressing service.

The LRDG and desert raiding groups used these reliable fuel and water containers to survive long trips or establish dumps of provisions in the Sahara. Given their non-disposable nature, they were hauled everywhere, instead of discarded like the poor-quality flimsies. Eventually the Americans copied the container's design in an “American,” but the odd name never supplanted “jerry can.”

Magnetic Compass

A traditional compass relies on the earth's magnetic field to point north. Scouts, navigators, commandos, and officers often carry them to determine their bearings, especially in the confusing desert terrain. Unfortunately they don't provide very accurate readings in or near massive metal bodies like jeeps, trucks, and tanks. One must step out of and away from vehicles to take a reliable compass bearing.

Without a compass placed away from metal obstructions, characters have a -6 penalty to making Navigation rolls in the featureless Saharan landscape. Compasses within or near metal vehicles suffer a -3 penalty. This isn't as much a problem along the coast, where battles have shaped the rolling topography and

defensive positions create noticeable landmarks. In the bleak desert, however, one sand dune looks much like the next and a slight course error could put a patrol far from sight of its next supply dump, target destination, or oasis.

Sand Channels

Developed by earlier desert explorers, these long, steel channels are wide enough to accommodate a jeep or light truck's tires. When vehicles become stuck in the deep sand of the Sahara desert's endless dunes, the occupants dig just forward of the rear tires and maneuver a sand channel into place. Holes perforating the channels at intervals allow enough sand through to provide something for the tires to grip. When they start up again, the tires draw the channels beneath them, forming a firm base on which they can drive out of their stuck position.

Sand channels became standard equipment for LRDG patrols and SAS raiders crossing the vast sand seas, who could not afford to abandon a stuck vehicle and hitch a ride with the next truck in the convoy. Many military cars along the North African front also used them. They stowed the long channels along the sides of their vehicles for easy access.

If a jeep or truck becomes bogged down in the sand and the driver fails to extricate it using the normal procedures (see *Bogging* on page 101 of *Weird War II: Blood on the Rhine*), he may try freeing his vehicle using a sand channel. This requires the driver and at least two others to maneuver the sand channel into place. The driver must make a DC 20 Driving check to extricate the vehicle.

Sand Mats

Like sand channels, sand mats help free “stuck” vehicles from the sand. These consist of “rope ladders” constructed from bamboo runs tied with canvas into a long mat. With one end tucked beneath the stuck tire and one or two people providing tension at the other end, the tire found a firm enough base for the driver to maneuver the vehicle into the clear. Eventually, the Allies put this principle to greater use, deploying metal mesh netting along established beachheads to prevent heavy vehicles from sinking into the wet sand.

Sand mats were easier to maneuver under a stuck vehicle's tires than the heavier and inflexible steel channels, and were rolled into compact bundles for stowage—an appealing feature to the



LRDG, which had to pile its vehicles with numerous supplies for long desert expeditions.

The driver of a stuck jeep or truck can try freeing it using a sand mat as long as he has at least one other person to position and provide tension on the mat. With this arrangement in place, the driver must make a DC 15 Driving check to extricate the vehicle.

Sun Compass

Taking bearings while racing across the desert isn't easy—the metal vehicle interferes with a conventional compass's ability to accurately read the earth's magnetic field. Rather than stopping every few miles to take new bearings, the desert explorers who formed the LRDG relied on sun compasses to check their direction without slowing their progress. Often mounted on a jeep's dashboard, it consists of a horizontal circle divided into 360 degrees. By reading the shadow generated by the vertical needle along the markings, one can determine the vehicle's true bearing.

Using a sun compass allows one to make normal navigation rolls in the bleak, featureless desert as long as the sun is shining and isn't near zenith (when it's too vertical to cast an accurate shadow). Without a sun compass, characters suffer a -6 penalty to making Navigation rolls in the rolling desert terrain.

Explosives

"The enemy lorry was slowed up at a bogus roadblock while a man, leaping from behind in the roadside ditch, ran after it and lobbed a bomb into the back."

—W. B. Kennedy Shaw, LRDG

Desert raiders like the SAS, Penman's 1st Special Demolitions Squadron, and LRDG depended on new technology to harass Axis forces behind the lines. Since their duties included a good deal of sabotage and explosive mayhem, they employed state-of-the-art fuses to detonate their charges. This equipment was rarely available to the average infantryman in the field, but issued primarily to commandos, resistance fighters, and others involved in covert sabotage action in enemy rear areas or occupied countries.

Clockwork Detonator

More reliable than the "time pencils" (see below), clockwork detonators use precise mechanical principles to count

down time until detonation. Saboteurs can set these box-shaped clocks to strike the integrated percussion cap after a accurately timed delay. Most models allow a delay up to 24 hours, though a rare eight-day delay model is available through proper channels.

Although they don't tick as loudly as a conventional alarm clock, the inner workings still make a faint but ominous ticking sound that might give away their location to those actively searching for explosive charges.

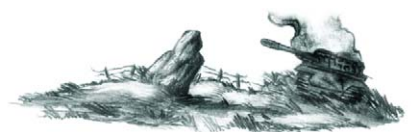
Clockwork detonators were issued to specialized commando units and saboteurs, while resistance fighters relied more on pencil fuses that were less accurate but more readily available.

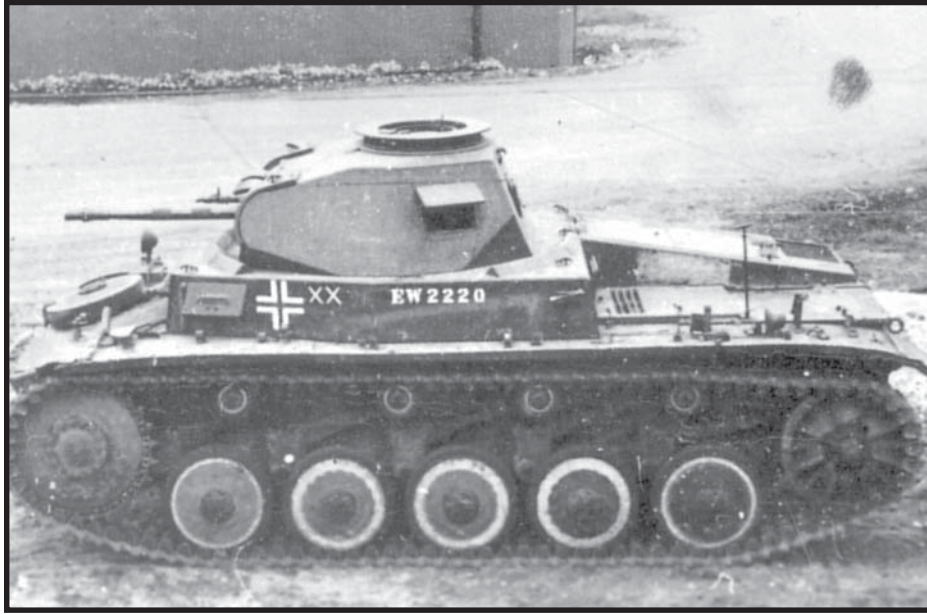
Pencil Fuses

These fuses gained their name from their long, slim, cylindrical shape, much like an oversized pencil. Saboteurs used them to detonate explosives after a set length of time, giving them an opportunity to escape before all hell broke loose. After sticking one end into the explosives (usually satchel charges of TNT), the user removes the safety strip and crushes the opposite end of the tube. This breaks a glass ampoule of acid that eats away at an inner wire holding a spring and striker assembly back from the percussion cap. Variations in the composition of the acid and retaining wire offer different times before detonation. Once the acid eats through the wire, it releases the spring, ramming the striker into the percussion cap and igniting the explosives.

A set of five pencil fuses comes in a flat metal box, offering a saboteur several timing options indicated by the color of the safety strip: 10 minutes (black), 19 minutes (red), 1 hour 19 minutes (white), 6 hours 30 minutes (yellow), and 14 hours 30 minutes (blue). The "time pencil" includes an integrated percussion cap assembly so users don't need to rig up additional caps on the explosives.

Since the fuse works on such imprecise principles as acid eating through metal, they are notoriously unreliable. Short fuses might go off prematurely or several minutes late, and longer fuses might never activate at all. Much of it depended on sheer luck. "Time pencils" are more widely available to resistance units and commandos than the more complex and reliable clockwork detonators (see above) demolitions experts prefer.





A PzKpfw II.

Vehicle Profiles

"It was heart-rending to have to witness how the Ariete Division (our most loyal allies) and the remains of the Trieste and Littorio Divisions, fought with death-defying courage; how their tanks (the "sardine tins" so often mocked by us) were shot up and left burning on the battlefield."

—Colonel Hans von Luck

The forces fighting in North Africa employed many older vehicles. These they modified for desert duty as best they could until newer models arrived at the battlefields in limited numbers. Despite support both from Britain and America, even the Allies scavenged wrecks for new parts, and made jerrybuilt modifications to make their vehicles more effective.

German Vehicles

The Afrika Korps deployed a full array of existing German ordnance as of 1941 and any new developments up to its withdrawal in 1942. These included older model panzers, standard halftracks and transport, plus artillery, anti-tank guns, recon vehicles, and anti-aircraft batteries. Many Panzer Is and IIs with their lighter armament proved inadequate for fighting pitched tank engagements in the desert, but Rommel used them as best he could. Wehrmacht High Command considered the Russian front more important for winning

the war. Instead of going south to bolster the more successful troops under Rommel's command, cutting edge developments from drawing boards and factories went east to support the war against the Bolsheviks.

PzKpfw IB

The Panzer I's twin machineguns proved ideal for fighting infantry, but had little tactical value in the wide-ranging tank battles of North Africa. In panzer divisions this light tank helped mop up stray enemy soldiers; it served as a command car and armored fire-support platform for infantry divisions.

Armor Class: 15, **Damage Points:** 50, **Size:** Large, **Cruising Speed:** 35, **Range:** 90 miles, **Weapons:** 2 MG34 (turret), **Ammo:** 7.92mm 2,250, **Crew:** 2 (Commander, gunner), **Armor—Turret:** 35/35/35, **Upper Hull:** 30/30/30, **Lower Hull:** 30/30/30, **Deck:** 6, **Suspension:** 30

PzKpfw IIC

This light tank and its variants served well on the flat plains of Poland and the battlefields of France. A 20mm cannon and coaxial machinegun provided adequate firepower against conventional forces. Although Panzer IIs weren't well-suited for head-to-head engagements with other tanks, Rommel deployed these castoffs of past campaigns as best he could against British forces. Their sheer numbers sometimes overwhelmed small detachments of Allied armor, or lured enemy tanks into the range of 88mm guns or their more powerful cousins, the Panzer IIIs and IVs.

Armor Class: 12, **Damage Points:** 50, **Size:** Large, **Cruising Speed:** 35, **Range:** 125 miles, **Weapons:** 20mm cannon (turret), MG34 (coaxial), **Ammo:** Max 180 (HE 50, AP 130), 7.92mm 2,250, **Crew:** 3 (Commander, gunner, driver), **Armor—Turret:** 25/25/25, **Upper Hull:** 25/25/25, **Lower Hull:** 30/30/30, **Deck:** 10, **Suspension:** 30

PzKpfw IIIG

This medium tank formed the backbone of Afrika Korps's armored divisions. While its cousins invading France employed 37mm cannon, the Panzer IIIs serving in North Africa carried a 50mm main gun, adequate for





confronting the British cruiser tanks designed for tank-to-tank combat. Combined with the Panzer IV and dreaded 88mm gun, it became an effective weapon in Rommel's hands.

Armor Class: 14, **Damage Points:** 75, **Size:** Huge, **Cruising Speed:** 35, **Range:** 100 miles, **Weapons:** 50mm cannon (turret), MG34 (coaxial), MG34 (bow), **Ammo:** Max 99 (HE 30, AP 69), 7.92mm 2,700, **Crew:** 5 (Commander, gunner, driver, assistant driver, loader), **Armor—Turret:** 70/70/70, **Upper Hull:** 80/80/80, **Lower Hull:** 80/80/60, **Deck:** 17, **Suspension:** 30

SdKfz 9

The Germans used this mammoth halftrack for engineering purposes—primarily towing disabled tanks from the battlefield for repair or scavenging. A rear payload bed with a canvas cover (like a lorry's) carried supplies for the crew, extra petrol and water, spare parts, and gear for rigging tows to stranded vehicles. It provided space for technical personnel to ride along, though the crews of damaged tanks often hitched rides back to their units.

Armor Class: 14, **Damage Points:** 75, **Size:** Huge, **Cruising Speed:** 35, **Range:** 125 miles, **Weapons:** None, **Ammo:** None, **Crew:** 2 (Driver, assistant driver), **Armor—Upper Hull:** 20/15/15, **Lower Hull:** 20/15/15, **Deck:** 0, **Suspension:** 30

Italian Vehicles

Italian forces in North Africa possessed few armored elements during their initial invasion of Egypt in 1940. Most of their tanks came over to try stopping the British counter-invasion into Cyrenaica, though more bolstered the famed Ariete and Littorio tank divisions that supported the Afrika Korps. Although poorly armored, outdated, and inferior to other designs in both the German and British ranks, these tanks formed the elite Italian units. Driven by courage and spirit, the tank crews of Ariete division saved Rommel at the Cauldron by breaking through British minefields and providing a protected supply route to get petrol to Afrika Korps' panzers.

Commando M41

This armored command and scout vehicle served in Italian infantry, reconnaissance, and armored units. It proved no match against enemy guns, but adequately protected Italian commanders and reconnaissance personnel in the field. The machinegun armament sufficed when confronting enemy infantry.

Armor Class: 10, **Damage Points:** 50, **Size:** Large, **Cruising Speed:** 30, **Range:** 125 miles, **Weapons:** Breda M31 MG (front), Breda M38 MG (pintle), **Ammo:** 13.2mm 420, 8mm 224, **Crew:** 4 (Commander, gunner, driver, assistant driver), **Armor—Upper Hull:** 35/25/25, **Lower Hull:** 35/25/25, **Deck:** 14, **Suspension:** 30

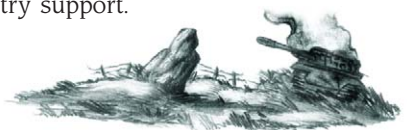
M13 Tank

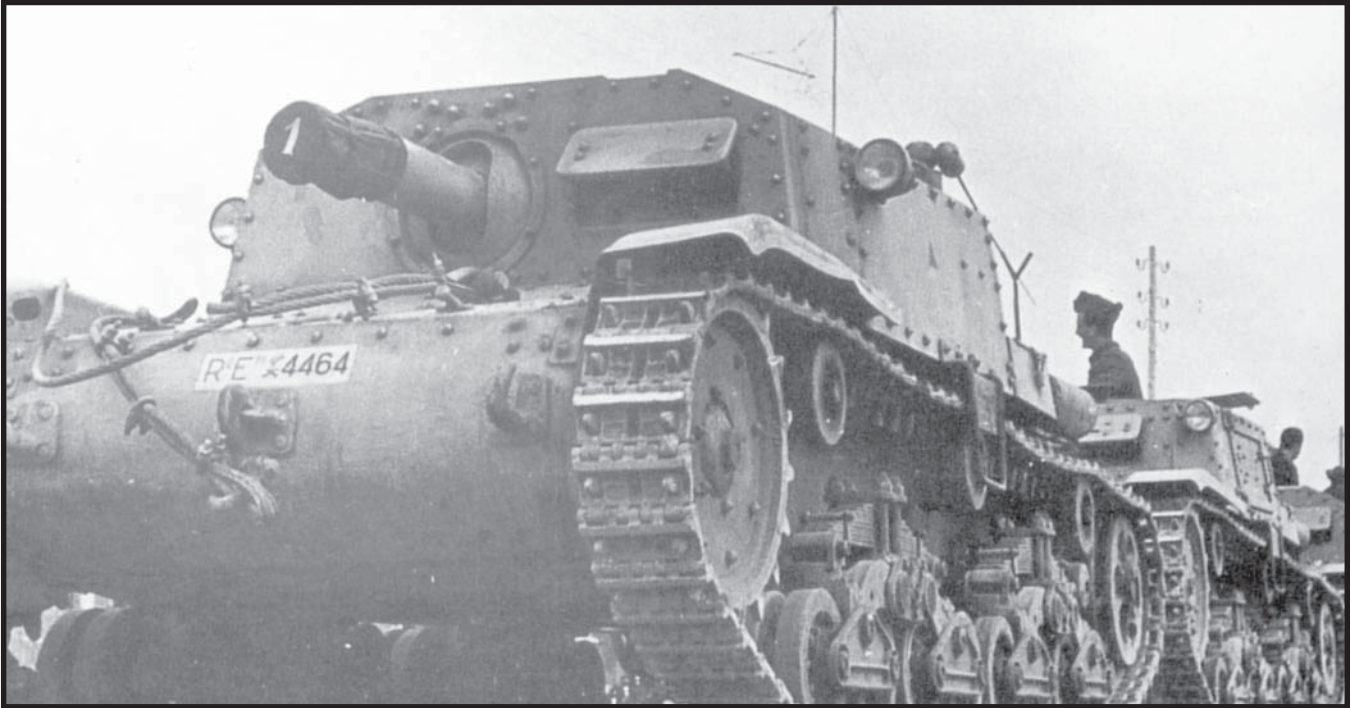
Although manufactured as late as 1941, this medium tank employed design principles far behind its time. Its riveted armor proved no match for British guns. The M13 was typical of the kind of tanks Italian armored divisions relied on in North Africa.

Armor Class: 10, **Damage Points:** 50, **Size:** Large, **Cruising Speed:** 30, **Range:** 125 miles, **Weapons:** 50mm cannon (turret), 4 Breda M38 MG (1 coaxial, 2 bow, 1 flexible mount at commander's hatch), **Ammo:** Max 104 (HE 50, AP 54), 8mm 3,048, **Crew:** 4 (Commander, gunner, driver, loader), **Armor—Turret:** 40/30/30, **Upper Hull:** 30/25/25, **Lower Hull:** 30/25/25, **Deck:** 14, **Suspension:** 30



A Panzer III moves out with infantry support.





A Semovente M40 rigged for rail transport.

Semovente M40

The M40 self-propelled assault gun fielded a 75mm cannon worthy of confronting British armor. Built on the same chassis as the M13 tank, it provided heavy fire support for Italian armored divisions. Although its gun was up to the job, the M40's armor was easily penetrated by the guns of British tanks.

Armor Class: 14, **Damage Points:** 50, **Size:** Large, **Cruising Speed:** 30, **Range:** 125 miles, **Weapons:** 75L70 cannon (upper hull), Breda M38 MG (flexible mount on upper hull), **Ammo:** Max 44 (HE 20, AP 24), 8mm 1,104, **Crew:** 3 (Commander, gunner, driver), **Armor—Upper Hull:** 70/50/25, **Lower Hull:** 25/25/25, **Deck:** 15, **Suspension:** 30

British Vehicles

Like the Axis forces in North Africa, the British initially relied on the somewhat outdated vehicles already serving in Egypt. They scrounged for spare parts and even salvaged German vehicles left behind during Rommel's first retreat in late 1941.

With fresh supplies from both England and America, however, the Allied forces soon deployed newer vehicles. With better designs and greater numbers than the Germans, British forces eventually turned the tide of battle on the North African deserts.

A13 Cruiser Tank

Designed specifically for confrontations against other armor, the A13 cruiser tank and its cousin, the Crusader I (the A15 cruiser tank), formed the backbone of British armored divisions for the early part of the desert war. Its cannon and armor could challenge early German panzers, but became increasingly inadequate as the North African campaign continued.

Armor Class: 11, **Damage Points:** 75, **Size:** Huge, **Cruising Speed:** 45, **Range:** 100 miles, **Weapons:** 40mm cannon (turret), Vickers MG (coaxial), **Ammo:** Max 87 (HE 30, AP 57), .303 3,750, **Crew:** 4 (Commander, gunner, driver, loader), **Armor—Turret:** 75/20/20, **Upper Hull:** 30/30/30, **Lower Hull:** 30/30/30, **Deck:** 14, **Suspension:** 30

Crusader I

Designated the A15 cruiser tank, the Crusader seemed a satisfactory solution for German innovations in panzer development. Although it looked intimidating and fast, it still failed to make a good showing against the armored divisions of Afrika Korps. Only the introduction of American-developed Shermans could turn the tide of armored warfare in North Africa.

Armor Class: 13, **Damage Points:** 75, **Size:** Huge, **Cruising Speed:** 40, **Range:** 200 miles, **Weapons:** 40mm cannon (turret),





Vehicle Weapons

British vehicles in North Africa employed several weapons not previously detailed in *Weird Wars* material:

Besa Mk III

A cousin to the Bren gun, the Besa Mk III was a British version of an air-cooled machinegun originally manufactured by the Czechoslovakian BRNO company. It saw wide service mounted in British tanks throughout the war, though the LRDG sometimes mounted these on their vehicles when available. **Damage:** 2d8, **PV:** -5, **Critical:** 19-20/x2, **Range Inc:** 160, **Ammo:** 50B, **Type:** 7.92mm, **Action:** Auto, **Weight:** 54 lbs, **Damage Type:** Piercing.

Boys Antitank Rifle

Developed in England in 1937 and named after a deceased designer (Captain Boys), this antitank rifle saw limited use during the war. It seemed adequate to take on tanks initially deployed in 1939, but quickly became obsolete as panzers shouldered more armor. In North Africa the Boys antitank rifle served as the primary armament of the Marmon-Herrington armored car. Although deployed in other campaigns (Norway, the Far East, and France), it saw limited use and was replaced by heavier antitank guns that could penetrate increasing armor thicknesses. **Damage:** 2d8+2, **PV:** 35, **Burst:** 0, **Critical:** x2, **Range Inc:** 125y, **Action:** Auto, **Type:** 13.9mm, **Action:** Bolt, **Type:** Piercing, **Weight:** 36 lbs.

Besa MG (coaxial, bow), Bren MG (flexible commander's hatch), **Ammo:** Max 110 AP, 7.92mm 4,500, .303 600, **Crew:** 5 (Commander, gunner, driver, assistant driver, loader), **Armor—Turret:** 40/30/30, **Upper Hull:** 60/30/30, **Lower Hull:** 60/30/30, **Deck:** 10, **Suspension:** 30

Fitters Truck

To effect repairs to equipment at the front, the British assigned a fitter's trucks to most units. With the payload's side panels raised the lorry turned into a miniature workshop complete with racks of tools, boxes of spare parts, drawers filled with small components, and folding work benches. These stations served vital roles in a campaign where supplies ran short and existing machinery depended on scavenged parts to keep running.

Fitters working from these mobile workshops receive a +2 bonus to all Mechanic rolls.

Armor Class: 12,

Damage Points: 40, **Size:** Huge, **Cruising Speed:** 50, **Range:** 300, **Weapons:** None, **Ammo:** None, **Crew:** 3 (Driver, 2 fitters), **Armor—Upper Hull:** 2/2/2, **Lower Hull:** 2/2/2, **Deck:** 2, **Suspension:** 20

LRDG Jeep

With its specialized mission, the Long Range Desert Group employed specialized vehicles modified for extended desert travel and defense against enemy aircraft patrolling the Sahara. The LRDG jeep typifies light reconnaissance vehicles used by command personnel. Thanks to lend-lease arrangements with the Yanks, the LRDG acquired several durable jeeps it



Australian troops operate a 6-pounder AT gun from the back of a truck.





A typical truck used by the LRDG.

proceeded to modify with an increased rear payload and a pintle-mount gun the passenger could fire.

Armor Class: 12, **Damage Points:** 40, **Size:** Large, **Cruising Speed:** 75, **Range:** 200 miles, **Weapons:** Twin Vickers MG (passenger pintle), **Ammo:** .303 1,000, **Crew:** 2 (Driver, gunner), **Armor—Upper Hull:** 2/2/2, **Lower Hull:** 2/2/2, **Deck:** 2, **Suspension:** 20

LRDG Truck

Standard British lorries quickly bogged down in the Saharan dunes. The LRDG used lighter trucks of the pickup variety graciously provided by the American lend-lease plan. After lowering the tire pressure for desert running and fitting sand filters on air intakes, the LRDG fitters welded pintles just forward of the payload. These mounted captured Breda M31 machinegun, but sometimes other machineguns as available (most typically the Bren gun and American M2). The gunner sat atop a pile of supplies (cans of water and petrol, foodstuffs, sand mats, ammunition) looking out for enemy aircraft or recce patrols. The LRDG also strapped sand channels alongside the payloads. At least one truck in each patrol carried a Number 11 wireless set so the signaler could stay in touch with headquarters.

Armor Class: 12, **Damage Points:** 40, **Size:** Large, **Cruising Speed:** 65, **Range:** 185 miles, **Weapons:** Breda M31 MG (pintle), **Ammo:** 13.2mm 1,200, **Crew:** 2 (Driver, gunner), **Armor—Upper Hull:** 2/2/2, **Lower Hull:** 2/2/2, **Deck:** 2, **Suspension:** 20

Marmon-Herrington Armored Car

The Marmon-Herrington car consisted of an armored chassis with a turret mount on top. Various companies pooled resources to create it: the transmission from the South African Marmon-Herrington company, the engine and chassis from the American Ford Motor Company, and the Boys and Bren armaments from Britain. The vehicle saw action primarily in the early stages of the North African campaign, often as a reconnaissance car or command vehicle. The Boys antitank rifle proved effective against only the lightest armor, and was soon phased out of service as new panzer models entered the field.

Armor Class: 12, **Damage Points:** 50, **Size:** Large, **Cruising Speed:** 75, **Range:** 200 miles, **Weapons:** Boys antitank rifle (turret), Bren MG (coaxial), **Ammo:** 90 AP, .303 1,000, **Crew:** 3 (Commander, gunner, driver), **Armor—Turret:** 30/20/20, **Upper Hull:** 15/15/15, **Lower Hull:** 10/10/10, **Deck:** 4, **Suspension:** 15

Matilda III

Originally designated as an infantry or I-tank, the Matilda saw action both in its heavy infantry support role and in its capacity in repelling enemy panzers. As newer tanks emerged in the Allied armored division later in the North African campaign, the Matilda served in a support role, often with variant designs for mine clearance duties (see sidebar).





Mineclearing Tanks

The British experimented on converting obsolete tanks into vehicles with more useful engineering functions. With the preponderance of high-density minefields protecting defensive lines throughout the North African front, converting tanks to mine-clearing duties became paramount.

Old I-tanks like Matildas and Valentines soon sported a variety of forward-mounted contraptions intended to safely remove or explode mines. These assemblies included girder braces that used chain flails, plow blades, and rollers to detonate personnel and antitank mines in their paths. The most effective included a broad plow blade that dug through the sand and pushed the mines aside. These efforts didn't begin bearing fruit until the Battle of El Alamein.

Modified tanks clearing minefields affect mines directly in their path. Each round the War Master rolls against the minefield density to see if the tank encounters any mines—to see if the tank's modifications detonate them, the War Master rolls a d20 against the minefield density again. If he rolls less than or equal to the minefield density this second time, the mines explode, automatically dealing their damage to the tank's front lower hull. Tanks fitted with plows push mines aside without threat of detonation unless the mines have secondary fuses meant to prevent tampering (like the German Tellermine 35).

Matildas in particular became guinea pigs for many experimental modifications, including equipment to deploy rolled fascines to cross trenches, heavy canvas "carpet" to lay over barbed wire, and metal ramps for vehicles to cross ditches. Historically none of these variants were deployed on the North African front with great frequency or effectiveness.

Armor Class: 10, **Damage Points:** 75, **Size:** Huge, **Cruising Speed:** 22, **Range:** 160 miles, **Weapons:** 40mm cannon (turret), Besa MG (coaxial), **Ammo:** Max 93 (HE 50, AP 43), 7.92mm 2,925, **Crew:** 4 (Commander, gunner, driver, loader), **Armor—Turret:** 75/75/75, **Upper Hull:** 50/40/40, **Lower Hull:** 70/50/50, **Deck:** 20, **Suspension:** 30

Signals Van

British mobile command operations depended on reliable wireless communication with frontline units and headquarters. Signals vans contained a miniature radio facility for quick deployment to battlefield command posts. A converted lorry, it replaced the canvas payload cover with sturdier sides and a solid roof.

When stationary, the van became a mobile wireless office. Rigging allowed the operators to raise an aerial atop the roof. The truck's idling motor provided power for the wireless units inside, where signalers sat at cramped stations sending and receiving messages. Some inevitably spent time coding and encrypting orders, though British radio protocol was notoriously lax in the early stages of the North African campaign.

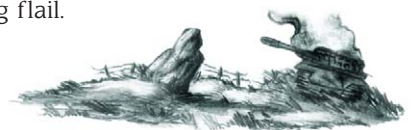
Armor Class: 12, **Damage Points:** 40, **Size:** Huge, **Cruising Speed:** 50, **Range:** 325, **Weapons:** None, **Ammo:** None, **Crew:** 5 (Driver, 4 signalers), **Armor—Upper Hull:** 2/2/2, **Lower Hull:** 2/2/2, **Deck:** 2, **Suspension:** 20

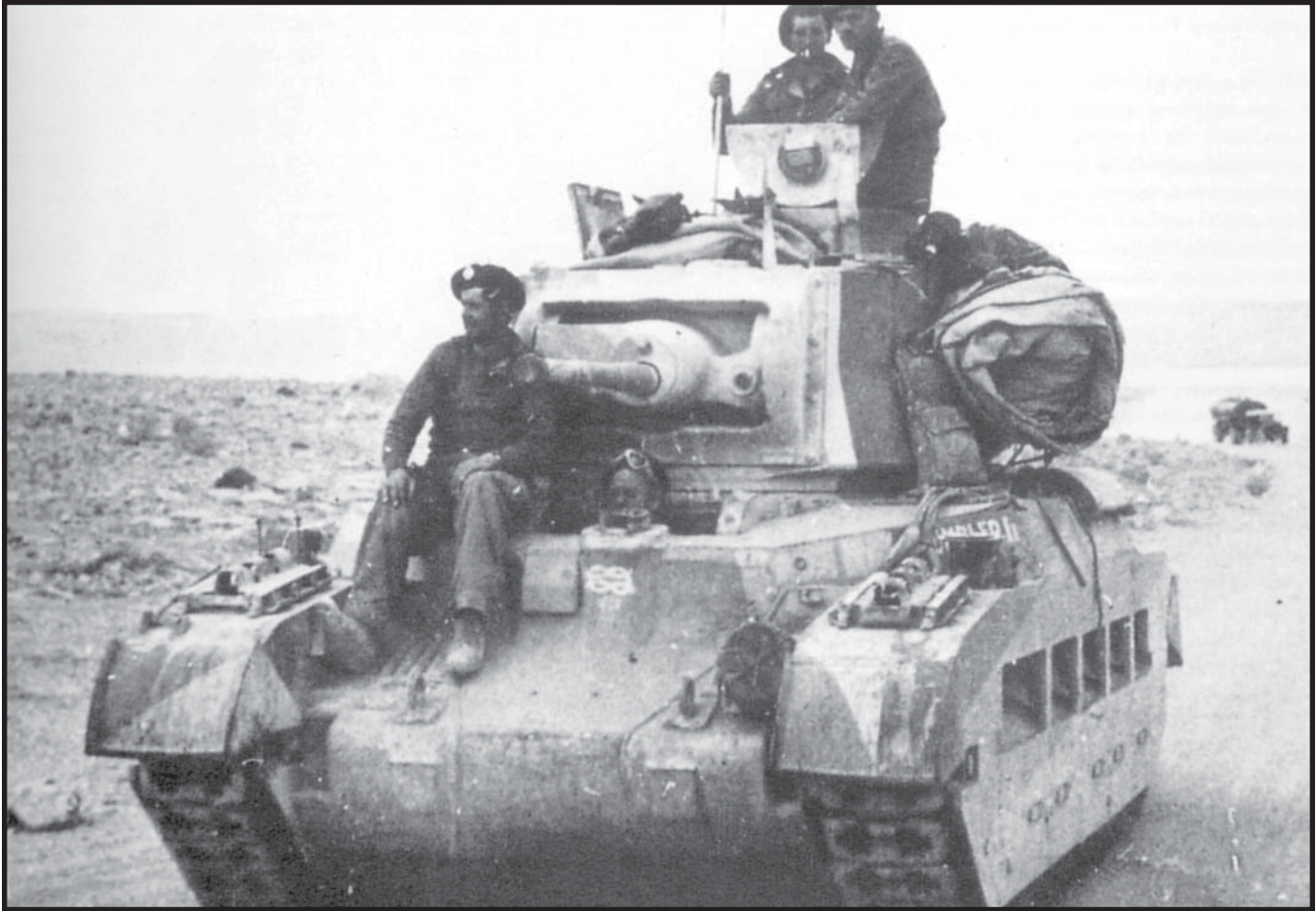
Valentine II

Another I-tank, the Valentine II provided heavy fire support for nearby infantry units. Although it held its own against light panzers, the Valentine proved marginally effective against heavier German armor. Like the Matilda, the Valentine later served as a test-bed for engineering developments while newer tanks took its place at the front.



A Matilda with mineclearing flail.





A Matilda rumbles toward the front.

Armor Class: 10, **Damage Points:** 75, **Size:** Huge, **Cruising Speed:** 22, **Range:** 110 miles, **Weapons:** 40mm cannon (turret), Besa MG (coaxial), **Ammo:** Max 60 (HE 30, AP 30), 7.92mm 3,150, **Crew:** 3 (Commander, gunner, driver), **Armor—Turret:** 65/60/65, **Upper Hull:** 60/60/60, **Lower Hull:** 60/35/35, **Deck:** 20, **Suspension:** 30

Vickers Light Tank

By the start of war in North Africa the Vickers light tank had already proven itself inadequate for modern armored warfare. The British relegated it to reconnaissance units, where its high profile provided a solid observation platform from which recon spotters could survey the surrounding desert. The tank also offered solid firepower to support other reconnaissance elements, particularly the under-gunned Marmon-Herrington armored cars that were also relegated to recon patrols.

Armor Class: 12, **Damage Points:** 55, **Size:** Large, **Cruising Speed:** 50, **Range:** 130 miles, **Weapons:** 20mm cannon (turret), Vickers MG (coaxial), **Ammo:** Max 100 (HE

60, AP 40), .303 2,500, **Crew:** 3 (Commander, gunner, driver), **Armor—Turret:** 30/30/30, **Upper Hull:** 30/10/10, **Lower Hull:** 30/10/10, **Deck:** 4, **Suspension:** 15

Aircraft Profiles

"Worst of all was the helplessness in the face of the RAF, which covered the one asphalt road with bombs and machinegun fire, not only by day but also by night."

—Colonel Hans von Luck

The campaign in the North African skies first depended on tried and true yet sometimes obsolete equipment, but later became a waiting game to see how long the poorly supported Luftwaffe could stand up against the well-supplied RAF. The Germans relied on proven machines—primarily the Bf 109, Bf 110, Ju-87 dive-bomber and the Ju-88 fighter. The British made do with what aircraft England could spare from home defense and others





flown in from various colonial holdings. The famous Spitfires didn't reach North Africa until later in the campaign, when increased manufacturing and a letup in the German Blitz freed some aircraft for other theaters of war. Yet with steady supplies, replacement aircraft, and a spirited air corps, the Allies inevitably won the skies and began harrying the German ground forces from above.

German Aircraft

Although the Germans relied heavily on their technically sound airplanes, they used them in various roles given the shortage of fuel, replacement parts, and new planes in North Africa. Stuka dive-bombers sometimes served as transport craft for high-ranking personnel, putting commanders in the gunner's seat for short hops across the desert. Any planes flying over enemy positions played a reconnaissance role, spotting British defensive formations and noting placement of rear-area supply depots.

Without proper support, however, the Luftwaffe couldn't maintain air superiority as it did early in the campaign. The RAF eventually overwhelmed the Germans, flying more patrols with better planes and plenty of fuel.

Fieseler Fi 156 Storch

The Storch served as a reconnaissance and personnel transport for high-level commanders. Rommel himself frequently flew one as he dashed to various points on the front to personally lead operations. The aircraft's landing and wing struts gave it a stork-like appearance (hence the German name *Storch*). Its ability to take

Stripping 88s

The Germans already knew how to turn their 88mm Flak 36 into an effective antitank weapon, as proven during the invasion of France. During the protracted conflict in North Africa, however, artillery crews more frequently depended on the 88mm guns in their antitank capacity. They stripped off the antiaircraft fire-control sights and welded simple blast shields to protect the crew—essentially turning the Flak 36 into what would become the Pak 43 (see page 61 in *Weird War II: Blood on the Rhine* for details). These modifications rendered the gun ineffective as an antiaircraft weapon.

Flak 36 cannon modified in this way from its original antiaircraft role cannot effectively create a flak barrier against aircraft overhead. Even if they have antiaircraft shells, their flak rating intensity drops by one level (for example, moderate flak intensity becomes light, and light becomes wholly ineffective).

off and land on short stretches enhanced its usefulness in a theater with such fluid advances and retreats as North Africa. The Storch also saw heavy use by commanders in Russia and later in the defense of Germany, when Allied armies overtook many airfields and forced prominent Nazis to rely on the Storch to make impromptu landings in short spaces.

Armor Class: 10 (-2 size, +2 speed),
Damage Points: 40, **Size:** Huge,
Maneuverability: +2, **Engines:** 1, **Range:** 630 miles, **Weapons:** 1 x 7.92mm MG (rear, 25 bursts), **Bombs:** None, **Crew:** 1 (pilot), 1 passenger, **Armor—Wing:** 2, **Fuselage:** 2, **Cockpit:** 2, **Engine:** 6



The HMS Nelson is sinking by the bow after being hit by a torpedo from an Italian bomber.





Italian Aircraft

Having spent more time fighting the air war in Africa, the Italians had several outmoded yet dependable planes flying with the Regia Aeronautica. Most carried the sand-and-spinach pattern camouflage of tan with green wavy lines. While the Luftwaffe undertook combat missions along the coast, the Regia Aeronautica guarded the desert wastes against raiders like the LRDG. On occasion, Italian fliers aided the Luftwaffe in transport duties or rear-area patrols.

Caproni Ca309 Ghibli

Often called the "Colonial" bomber by British troops, the Ghibli served as a slow-flying reconnaissance craft with occasional bomber duties throughout Italy's colonies and in the Spanish Civil War. Already obsolete when war in North Africa broke out, it lingered at airfields near Italian desert outposts.

Early LRDG operations claimed several grounded Ghiblis—the desert raiders quickly stripped mobile armaments and ammunition before destroying the airplanes. They then used the weapons against their former owners.

Armor Class: 10 (-4 size, +4 speed), **Damage Points:** 125, **Size:** Gargantuan, **Maneuverability:** -4, **Engines:** 2, **Range:** 750 miles, **Weapons:** 2 x 7.92mm MG (1 per wing, 25 bursts), 1 x 7.92mm MG (dorsal turret, 25 bursts), **Bombs:** Up to 800 lbs., **Crew:** 3 (pilot, co-pilot, gunner), **Armor—Wing:** 4, **Fuselage:** 6, **Cockpit:** 8, **Engine:** 8

Fiat BR20 Cicogna

Nicknamed "Stork" by the Italians, the BR20 served Italy's desert garrisons in Libya. Besides transporting supplies and personnel, it undertook bombing raids against Allied targets in the Sahara and the Mediterranean until their numbers dwindled and the German Fliegerkorps X arrived to dominate Axis aerial operations.

The Regia Aeronautical relegated the few left in North Africa to desert reconnaissance duties.

Armor Class: 11 (-4 size, +5 speed), **Damage Points:** 150, **Size:** Gargantuan, **Maneuverability:** -4, **Engines:** 2, **Range:** 770 miles, **Weapons:** 1 x 7.92mm MG (nose, 25 bursts), 1 x .50 cal MG (rear dorsal, 25 bursts), 1 x 7.92mm MG (ventral hatch, 25 bursts), **Bombs:** Up to 3,535 lbs., **Crew:** 5 (pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, 2 gunners), **Armor—Wing:** 4, **Fuselage:** 6, **Cockpit:** 8, **Engine:** 10

Macchi MC200 Saetta

Developed from racing seaplanes, the Saetta formed the core of Italy's Regia Aeronautica fighter squadrons. It saw extensive service throughout North Africa and the campaign against Allied shipping in the Mediterranean and the British base at Malta.

Despite its nickname (*Saetta* is Italian for "lightning"), the MC200 suffered from obsolete design concepts and an underpowered engine. The plane served well in the Sahara, where aerial attacks from any craft posed a serious danger to roving Allied patrols like the LRDG.

Armor Class: 14 (-2 size, +6 speed), **Damage Points:** 50, **Size:** Huge, **Maneuverability:** +2, **Engines:** 1, **Range:** 540 miles, **Weapons:** 2 x .50 cal MG (fuselage nose, 25 bursts), **Bombs:** None, **Crew:** 1 (pilot), **Armor—Wing:** 6, **Fuselage:** 6, **Cockpit:** 8, **Engine:** 8

SM79 Savoia Sparviero

The Italian Sparrowhawk reconnaissance bomber served throughout Italy's African campaigns, conducting bombing raids in Ethiopia after having proven its effectiveness in the Spanish Civil War.

Sparviero flew from North Africa to harass British shipping in the Mediterranean and support early Luftwaffe bombing raids on Tobruk and other Allied defensive positions. It also conducted desert reconnaissance flights and flew transport duty. The observer/bombardier worked from a ventral gondola on the underbelly of the trimotor craft.

Armor Class: 11 (-4 size, +5 speed), **Damage Points:** 150, **Size:** Gargantuan, **Maneuverability:** -2, **Engines:** 3, **Range:** 1,180 miles, **Weapons:** 1 x .50 cal MG (forward cockpit, 25 bursts), 1 x .50 cal MG (rear dorsal, 25 bursts), 1 x .50 cal MG (ventral gondola, 25 bursts), 1 x .30 cal MG (left beam, 25 bursts), 1 x .30 cal MG (right beam, 25 bursts), **Bombs:** Up to 2,750 lbs., **Crew:** 6 (pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, 3 gunners), **Armor—Wing:** 4, **Fuselage:** 6, **Cockpit:** 8, **Engine:** 8

British Aircraft

While the Allies feared Axis advances throughout the Mediterranean, North Africa's RAF contingents received only secondary support. Many older aircraft came from nearby British colonies while top-of-the-line planes went to more pressing theaters of war: homeland





defense, Greece, Crete, and Malta. As the war progressed and aircraft production increased, newer planes arrived in the skies above North Africa, playing a key role in wearing down the Luftwaffe and defeating Afrika Korps.

The RAF flew valuable interdiction sorties that slowed the arrival of the German's ever-dwindling trickle of fuel and supplies to the front. The desert pilots also provided Allied commanders with important information on the location and activities of German combat units.

Bristol Blenheim Mk IV

A mainstay of bomber squadrons throughout England's Middle Eastern colonial holdings, the Bristol Blenheim seemed adequate against the prewar fighter planes the RAF expected to confront. Although the Luftwaffe's much faster fighters flew circles around the Blenheims and found them easy targets, the RAF persevered and continued using the light bombers throughout the North African campaign.

Armor Class: 11 (-4 size, +5 speed), **Damage Points:** 150, **Size:** Gargantuan, **Maneuverability:** -2, **Engines:** 2, **Range:** 1,450 miles, **Weapons:** 1 x .303 cal MG (left wing, 25 bursts), 2 x .303 cal MG (dorsal turret, 25 bursts), 2 x .303 cal MG (rearward ventral blister, 25 bursts), **Bombs:** Up to 1,000 lbs., **Crew:** 5 (pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, 2 gunners), **Armor-Wing:** 4, **Fuselage:** 6, **Cockpit:** 8, **Engine:** 8

Bristol Bombay Mk I

Specifically designed for dual bomber/transport duties, the Bombay served a vital role hauling supplies and troops around North Africa. Although already technically obsolete when it entered service in 1939, the Bombay proved an effective transport craft since it could carry unusually large cargoes or up to 24 troops.

It saw extensive use by the RAF's 216 squadron, which supplied and supported early LRDG oasis operations.

Armor Class: 10 (-4 size, +4 speed), **Damage Points:** 125, **Size:** Gargantuan, **Maneuverability:** -2, **Engines:** 2, **Range:** 2,230 miles, **Weapons:** 1 x .303 cal MG (nose turret, 25 bursts), 1 x .303 cal MG (tail turret, 25 bursts); optional 2 x .303 cal MG (left and right beam, 25 bursts), **Bombs:** Up to 2,000 lbs., **Crew:** 4 (pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, gunner), 24 passengers, **Armor-Wing:** 4, **Fuselage:** 6, **Cockpit:** 8, **Engine:** 8

WACO

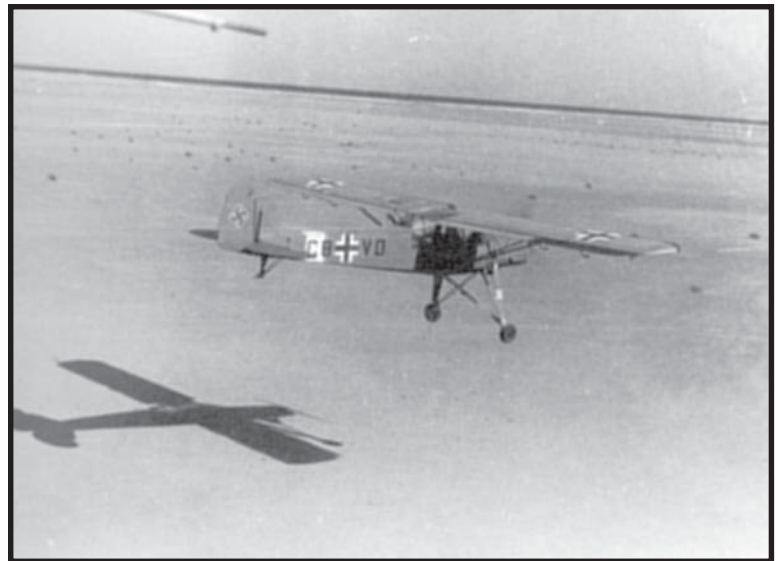
The LRDG employed two civilian American-built airplanes for transport, medical evacuation, and support operations. They plied routes between Cairo and the desert oases the LRDG used as bases for forays into Cyrenaica. The unarmed biplanes proved unsuitable against roaming enemy patrols, so LRDG personnel took great pains to limit their exposure to combat. For large shipments of supplies with armed transports the LRDG relied on Bristol Bombays from the RAF's 216 squadron.

Armor Class: 12 (-2 size, +4 speed), **Damage Points:** 50, **Size:** Huge, **Maneuverability:** +2, **Engines:** 1, **Range:** 600 miles, **Weapons:** None, **Bombs:** None, **Crew:** 1 (pilot), 2 passengers, **Armor-Wing:** 2, **Fuselage:** 4, **Cockpit:** 4, **Engine:** 6

Westland Lysander

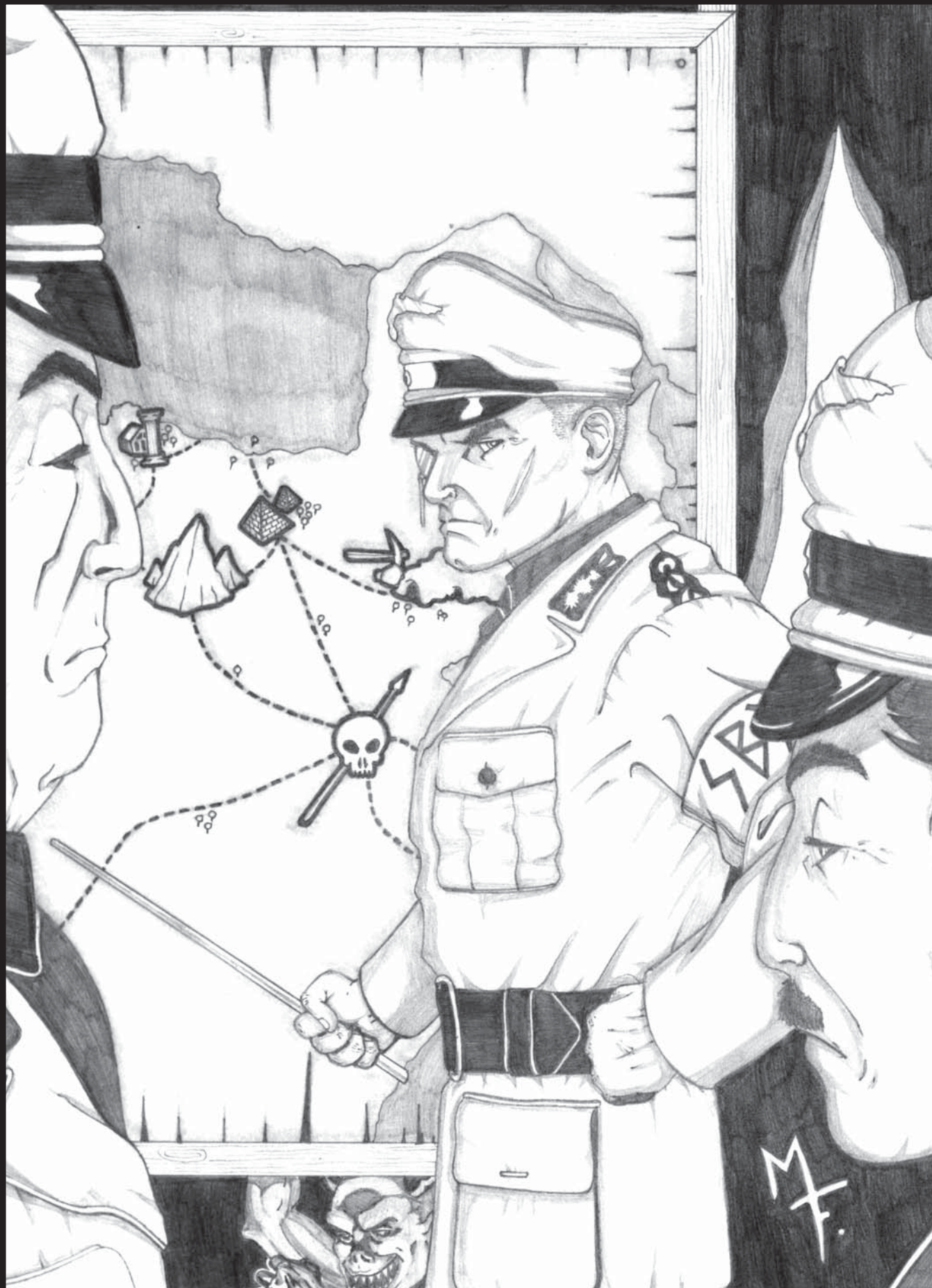
The Lysander fulfilled the same role as the German Storch and American Grasshopper: short takeoff and landing reconnaissance aircraft. Bulkier than its cousins, the Lysander sported large cockpit windows offering a clear field of vision for spotting ground forces. At times it also served to transport ranking officers.

Armor Class: 12 (-2 size, +4 speed), **Damage Points:** 50, **Size:** Huge, **Maneuverability:** +2, **Engines:** 1, **Range:** 600 miles, **Weapons:** 1 x .303 cal MG (rear, 25 bursts), 2 x .303 cal MG (forward wheel fairings, 25 bursts), **Bombs:** Up to 500 lbs., **Crew:** 1 (pilot), 1 passenger, **Armor-Wing:** 2, **Fuselage:** 4, **Cockpit:** 4, **Engine:** 6



A Fieseler Storch comes in for a landing.





Chapter Three:

Operational

Overview

"It is blood that moves the wheels of history."

—Benito Mussolini, 1919

If you're going to fight effectively against Jerry, you need a basic understanding of why you and your mates are here. You might be thousands of miles from the green hills of England or the wide open spaces of America, but by blasting the Germans from North Africa you're helping to defend your homeland. The desert might not seem like much to fight over, but winning the war here is the first step toward victory over the evil shadow threatening to consume the world.

The war in North Africa raged back and forth across the coastal areas and the deserts just beyond them. The German Afrika Korps sparred with the British Commonwealth Forces' Eighth Army, advancing toward Egypt, the vital Suez Canal, and the Middle East oilfields twice, then making a fighting retreat when support from Italy waned and supply lines stretched too far.

The British breakthrough and advance at El Alamein in November 1942 and the subsequent Allied invasion of Morocco and Algeria in Operation Torch ended

Rommel's free reign in Africa and forced him to retreat through Kasserine Pass to Tunis.

Significant actions took place in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and deeper within the Sahara desert (various raids, expeditions, and Long Range Desert Group activity). Much of the combat between the Afrika Korps and British Eighth Army sprawled back and forth over the region of Libya known as Cyrenaica. This area stretched from El Agheila in the west to the Egyptian border near Sollum and Halfaya Pass in the east.

Understanding the various elements of the North African campaign can provide depth and color to individuals waging the war against Rommel. Troops took pride in where they'd been, what actions they'd fought, and what German and Italian units they'd faced.

Knowledge of desert conditions and terrain can help soldiers survive, move quickly, and fight effectively. Familiarity with key locations puts the entire campaign—and individual operations—in a much more meaningful context, knowing that the action of every individual soldier works against the Nazis and their nefarious schemes for utter world domination.



Campaign Phases

"My fiancée would read that I had died a hero's death for the Fatherland. And what would that mean? That I was just a bloody mess in the sand at an unidentified spot near an unimportant point in the desert."

—Leutnant Heinz Werner Schmidt

Advances, retreats, and battles waged across North Africa over the course of three years, 1941-1943. British, German, and Italian forces suffered greatly from desert conditions and the savage warfare required to gain such inhospitable ground. For every advance, supply lines stretched too thin. For every battle, the winner salvaged valuable equipment from the field while the loser retreated to dig into defensive positions for the next confrontation.

War Masters can set their own North African campaigns during any of these phases. They represent general movements of one side or another across the desert, characterized by certain kinds of action: battles, advances and retreats, reconnaissance, and siege.

Prelude

On June 10, 1940, Italy joined the Third Reich in declaring war against Britain and on all nations in its commonwealth. Already Italy had revealed its ambitions and aggression in forcefully dominating

colonial holdings such as Ethiopia and Libya, countries in dangerous proximity to British protectorates in Egypt, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and Kenya.

On September 13, Italian forces raced over the Libyan border into British-controlled Egypt. They counted on the supposedly weakened spirit of their opponents, having faced defeats in France, on the beaches of Dunkirk, and in the skies over England. In this early phase in the war Britain stood alone against the Nazi menace, depending on aid from the neutral but sympathetic United States and their own English resolve.

That determination held firm, and British forces in Egypt repelled the Italian invaders and chased them back to Libya during Operation Compass. Plagued by obsolete equipment and ordnance, as well as overextended supply lines, the Italians continued their retreat. The British armies under General Sir Archibald Wavell seized the opportunity and pressed the chase, forcing the Italian army out of much of Cyrenaica and capturing men, ordnance, and provisions. After almost two months the Italian retreat reached El Agheila. With their own supply lines overextended, the British established a military administration to administer the newly captured territory, Cyrenaica Command (CYRCOM). Generals in England determined that the commander of British Troops Egypt (BTE), General Wavell, should hold this region with minimal troops as a secure flank. He received orders to commit





his forces in Egypt—now stationed behind this secure buffer zone—to other threatened locations in the Middle East, including besieged Greece and Crete. With the North African situation seemingly decided by Operation Compass, the British relaxed their presence in the region to divert their already thinly spread forces to other theaters.

Rommel Arrives

On February 6, 1941, Hitler appointed Rommel commander of Axis forces in Africa, charging him with leading the newly deployed German forces and existing Italian army against the British. Hitler saw this as appeasing his Italian allies and as a means to evicting the British from the Mediterranean Sea, where their forces harassed German naval operations. Ever the opportunist, Rommel eventually viewed it as an opportunity for a pincer move against the vital Middle East oil fields, with his armies in North Africa and those fighting in Russia driving toward the prize along two fronts.

Rommel arrived in Tripoli on February 12 and immediately formed the German Afrika Korps from the Wehrmacht units assembling there. Hitler transferred Fliegerkorps X from Norway to North Africa to harass British shipping in the Mediterranean, cut off overland and overseas supply lines to Cyrenaica, and support any actions Rommel planned. Shortly thereafter, two specialized units arrived from Germany to assist in campaigns against the British: the *Sonderbergungsgruppe* (SBG) and the *Fernmeldeaufklärung* Company. Many believed the *Sonderbergungsgruppe* ("special salvage unit") was the only sinister representation of the SS in this theater. It undertook support and supply missions veiled in secrecy and rumors of horrific experimentation of a supernatural nature. The *Fernmeldeaufklärung* Company (a radio signals unit) worked under Captain Seebohm to intercept, decipher, decode, and analyze enemy wireless transmissions. This intelligence went first to the SBG's commander, Colonel Morden, then to Rommel's headquarters. Both units played important roles in proving Rommel's reputation for outsmarting his opponents and exposing British weaknesses.

On March 24, reconnaissance units of Afrika Korps made the first move against the British, followed by strong thrusts by German and Italian units deep into the heart of poorly defended Cyrenaica. They

routed British forces, captured valuable supply dumps, and raced across the desert at seemingly lightning speed. By April 10, they had reached and besieged the key port of Tobruk. Rommel pressed the attack, finally forced to confront solid British defenses in the region of Sollum and Halfaya Pass.

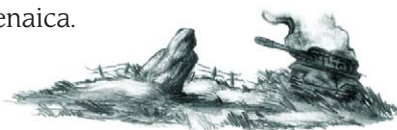
Tobruk Besieged

While Rommel concentrated his efforts at pushing the front past the British to the east, Axis forces besieged Tobruk. The plucky British and Aussies dug in, creating three nested defensive lines of tank traps, barbed wire, minefields, and fortified emplacements for machineguns and antitank guns. Night patrols and constant artillery bombardments tied up German units that could have been fighting on the main battle front. For eight months the garrison there withstood air attacks and several armored spearheads intent on weakening and breaching the defenses. The British mounted several offensives to break through German lines and relieve Tobruk. Few succeeded in doing little more than getting a few units through the defenses to bolster their troops under siege. Given his less-than-sterling performance against Rommel, General Wavell received orders from Prime Minister Churchill that General Sir Claude Auchinleck would replace him.

During this campaign the SBG deployed some of its experimental forces conjured from casualties from the siege and the front lines. Despite these attempts, they represented only a token fighting group, and in reality only freed an insignificant number of living units to press the attacks against British armies to the east.

Rommel Withdraws

On November 18, 1941, the British launched Operation Crusader, an offensive against Rommel's line—a force now weakened by a long siege at Tobruk, several failed attempts to break out to the east, overextended supply lines, and inadequate materiel from Germany and Italy. During a series of pitched battles Rommel displayed a severe lack of initiative, ingenuity, and intuition that had blessed his previous victories. German and Italian forces suffered great defeats. The Afrika Korps withdrew during a fighting retreat back across Cyrenaica, eventually settling on a defensive line near El Agheila under cover of sudden sandstorms. The British relieved Tobruk and began resupplying for the defense of Cyrenaica.





Rommel surveys the front lines in person with his aide Bayerlein.

The lack of Rommel's characteristic leadership in this period was blamed on various factors. The Desert Fox himself was worn thin by lack of sleep, a frustrating supply situation, frequent clashes with high command, and constant activity while commanding from the front lines. Knowledge of SBG activity among the ranks of Afrika Korps might have eroded morale, though many believe the SBG somehow drained living energy from their own troops to provide power for what might have been a failed attempt to use supernatural forces to break the British. An inexplicable interruption of radio intercepts from Seeborn's *Fernmeldeaufklärung* Company

contributed to Rommel's lack of adequate intelligence about enemy strength, disposition, and intentions just prior to Operation Crusader.

Raids, Recon, & Espionage

Throughout the North African campaign various groups worked behind enemy lines to weaken the Afrika Korps and uncover the Nazis' true intentions and methods. The Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) played an important intelligence roll, guiding commandos through the desert to German supply staging areas, conducting raids of their own, and maintaining a "road watch" on the Via Balbia, the principle coastal road along which supplies, troops, and ordnance passed. Bands of Allied commandos struck at targets from the Jebel Akhdar, the Cyrenaica mountains: the SAS hit airfields and supply dumps, while Colonel "Popski" Peniakoff (known as "Penman" among his peers) and his private army, the 1st Special Demolition Squadron, raided any viable targets they could find.

The Germans also waged their own intelligence war, secretly ferrying spies into Cairo and rear command posts, sending panzer reconnaissance units into the desert to track down and engage the LRDG, and supporting their own independent units, like *Sonderkommando Almasy*, led by the Hungarian desert explorer

Count Ladislaus Almasy. The SBG and Seeborn's *Fernmeldeaufklärung* Company also continued their activities to weaken the British by twisting and harnessing spiritual energy and intercepting wireless transmissions.

Rommel Strikes Back

The sudden retreat from Cyrenaica spurred outrage from Mussolini, who insisted the Germans help reconquer the Italian colony. Although Germany's armies fought desperate battles in Russia, Wehrmacht high command temporarily renewed its responsibility to supply Rommel with new troops, armor, ordnance, and supplies.





On January 21, 1942, the Afrika Korps once again advanced into Cyrenaica and began overrunning hastily formed British defenses and supply posts. Rommel soon ran up against a defensive line dug in at Gazala, 30 miles west of Tobruk, his supply lines already overextended and running low. The Afrika Korps outflanked Free French forces holding the line and raced out from the desert to engage the Eighth Army. In the fierce fighting in what later became known as the "Cauldron," Rommel's panzers almost exhausted all their petrol reserves—but at the last minute, Italian forces broke through the main line and resupplied him. This victory helped the Afrika Korps establish a strong point amidst the British line from which it sortied to threaten the Eighth Army's rear positions. The British retreated, leaving a token force at Tobruk to resist the Germans, who promptly captured the port.

Although the battle at Gazala was a victory for Rommel, he suffered several seemingly minor setbacks that would ultimately doom him. During the military buildup prior to the breakout, the SBG increased its presence and profile, frightening the British and inadvertently unnerving its own troops, particularly the Italians. Although the British eventually turned their fear to resolve at El Alamein, the blow to Italian morale would prove fatal.

During the fighting at Gazala, elements of the British Eighth Army surprised Seeborn's *Fernmeldeaufklärung* Company and inflicted heavy casualties. A loss of trained personnel, specialized equipment, and Captain Seeborn himself gutted the formerly efficient radio intercept company. This damage combined with the transfer of the American military attaché from Cairo (whose comprehensive reports home Seeborn had intercepted) proved the end of Rommel's intelligence edge and his seemingly supernatural ability to second-guess the British during the campaign in North Africa.

El Alamein

The Afrika Korps pursued the Eighth Army until it reached a line stretching from a series of ridges around El Alamein south to an impassable desert salt flat, the Qattara Depression. Here Rommel had no passable end of the line he could outflank. With supplies low and overextended, the Germans and British settled down into several months of entrenched action, probing each other's defenses for weaknesses, and making no

Blow-by-Blow

Looking for a blow-by-blow account of the battles and units involved in specific offensives during the North African campaign? Check out Ronald Lewin's *Rommel as Military Commander*. It provides an account of all Rommel's battles, from his role in the invasion of France to his supervision of defenses on the Atlantic wall before D-Day, with the bulk of the book covering his involvement in the North African theater.

headway. With his key intelligence-gathering organization gutted, Rommel had no idea from what quarter or how the British would attack. He interlaced his stronger German units with Italian ones along the front, keeping his panzers in close reserve behind the front lines to quickly respond to any fighting or breakout. The SBG bolstered minefield defenses with supernatural measures of its own.

Once again disappointed with a commander who allowed the Germans within striking distance of Cairo and the Suez Canal, Churchill relieved General Auchinleck and appointed Lieutenant General Bernard Montgomery as commander of British forces. After repelling several German attempts to break their lines, the reinforced British army launched an offensive on October 23.

Rommel was forced to redistribute his panzers, shore up gaps in the Italian units, and expend his supplies. Hitler ordered Rommel to hold fast, but his own forces weakened when British troops penetrated the line in Operation Supercharge. Rommel tried holding off this desperate attempt to break through his line. Severely weakened, with few supplies and a handful of panzers left, Rommel began his withdrawal.

"In the situation in which you find yourself there can be no other thought but to stand fast, yield not a yard of room and throw every gun and every man into the battle.... It would not be the first time in history that a strong will has triumphed over the bigger battalions. As to your troops, you can show them no other road than that to victory or death."

—Adolf Hitler to Field Marshal Rommel, November 3, 1942





Monty beside a Lend-Lease M3 Lee tank.

Operation Torch

Once again the Yanks arrived at the party late. On November 8, 1942, Allied forces invade the beaches of Morocco and Algeria in Operation Torch. They swiftly overcame token resistance by loyal Vichy French forces and local partisans, thanks to the efforts of resistance fighters and Bedouin tribes who provided advanced intelligence, supplies, and support to invading troops. Within a few days of his defeat at El Alamein, Rommel had to worry about a second North African front against the Americans. Allied forces tried rushing to engage Rommel from behind, but became bogged down in the face of bad weather and a tenacious and desperate enemy.

Retreat: Mareth & Kasserine

The Afrika Korps retreated across Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and into Tunisia, finally reassembling along a defensive line established near Mareth. British units harassed them along the entire line of withdrawal, finally settling in to stage forces against Rommel's

defensive positions in Tunisia. To slow American armies advancing from the west, the Desert Fox executed a daring panzer attack against the US 1st Armored Division in the region of Kasserine Pass. Although initially successful, it was hindered by dissention among his ranking officers, and particularly by General von Arnim, who failed to support the attack according to Rommel's plan. The German thrust into Kasserine failed, and the Afrika Korps withdrew to its defensive positions along the Mareth Line. Rommel returned to Germany on March 9, 1943, physically and emotionally weakened by months of desperate fighting, low supplies, and empty promises of support from his superiors.

The Axis forces did their best without promise of adequate supplies, reinforcements, or other official support until a combined Allied attack finally defeated them in June. Until finally evacuated on June 2, the SBG continued deploying supernaturally enhanced units in North Africa, a mere shadow of what was to come in the impending defense of the Fatherland.





Lay of the Land

"The outlines of Africa emerged before us: the narrow coastal strip cultivated by the Italians, with its date palms, olive groves, the whitewashed houses of the colonists, and the long, asphalt ribbon of the Via Balbia. Behind it shimmered the desert."

—Colonel Hans von Luck

Warfare in North Africa proved challenging for everyone. The Italians never grasped how to effectively control such expansive spaces and underestimated an opponent's capacity for crossing vast distances quickly. When the British

obstinately stuck by their inflexible organization and battlefield procedure, the desert became their adversary—when they broke the rules and operated seemingly lawless patrols like the LRDG, the desert served as a valuable ally. The Germans used the terrain to their best advantage in panzer warfare and defensive minefields, yet quickly realized that without secure ports near the front, land-based supply convoys took longer and were still exposed to enemy observation and attack.

Since North Africa serves as the backdrop for any campaign against the Afrika Korps, War Masters should familiarize themselves with its terrain features, natural challenges, military obstacles, and key locations for the armies facing off across the sands.

North Africa Campaign Timeline

1940

June 10: Italy Declares War on Britain and France.

September 13: Italian forces invade Egypt from Libya.

December 9: British commence counterattack to drive Italians out of Egypt and advance into Libya in Operation Compass straining already extended supply lines.

1941

February 6: Hitler appoints Rommel commander of Axis forces in Africa.

February 7: British deliver decisive defeat of Italians at Beda Fomm.

February 12: Rommel arrives in Tripoli and forms German Afrika Korps. Begins reorganizing and deploying units and planning offensive.

March 11: *Sonderbergungsgruppe* (SBG) arrives at Tripoli and begins covert recovery operations.

March 24: Rommel begins offensive to drive British from Libya, races across Cyrenaica.

April 10: Axis forces surround Tobruk, commence siege operations.

May 2: Germans hold Sollum-Halfaya Pass line; skirmishes with British forces.

June 15: British begin Operation Battleaxe, attempting to push back German lines and relieve Tobruk.

June 17: Operation Battleaxe fails.

November 18: British launch offensive against Rommel's line in Operation Crusader.

December 7: After several counterstrikes, and assurance that fuel and reinforcements could not arrive before January, Rommel begins retreat.

December 10: British forces relieve garrison at Tobruk.

December 28: Operation Crusader peters out after Rommel makes a fighting retreat to El Agheila and establishes defensive line.

1942

January 21: Afrika Korps begins counteroffensive across Cyrenaica.

May 27: Rommel begins flanking maneuver against British defenses at the Gazala Line.

June 13: Rommel defeats British forces near Gazala and forces their retreat.

June 21: Tobruk falls to Axis armies.

July 1: Rommel's advance reaches El Alamein; a failed action to push through British defensive positions exhausts his supplies and halts his advance.

August 13: General Montgomery takes command of British forces in Egypt.

October 23: British forces begin attack at El Alamein in Egypt.

November 4: British break through Axis defenses at El Alamein; Rommel begins withdrawal.

November 8: Allied forces invade Morocco and Algeria in Operation Torch.

November 13: British retake Tobruk.

1943

January 23: British forces occupy Tripoli.

February 22: Rommel strikes through the Kasserine Pass to slow the Allied advance into Tunisia.

March 9: Rommel leaves Tunisia and returns to Germany.





Desert Terrain

"These level plains, broken frequently by rocks and hills of gravel, have been the scene of the fighting for the past year or so."

—Luftwaffe Pilot Flying to Derna

The North African desert isn't simply sand, though the granules are everywhere and get into everything, from clothing and food to the more delicate workings of vehicles and weapons. Along the coast one finds rocky mountains, water-eroded wadis, a few areas of cultivation, and desert dotted in camel-thorn bushes. The region's only asphalt road, the Via Balbia, runs across the Italian colony of Libya from Tripoli to the Egyptian border. Deeper in the Sahara one encounters oases, desert tracks, and endless seas of sand dunes.

Commanders frequently compared action in North Africa to engagements on the ocean. The desert was a vast space a large force might cross swiftly, if not beset by sudden changes in the weather (torrential rainstorms and billowing dust clouds) or plagued by unseen terrain hazards.

People often lost their way without regular landmarks. Patrols operating in the Sahara like the LRDG relied on both magnetic and sun compasses to chart their course and determine their location

with some degree of accuracy. In daylight, units stood out among the featureless desert, particularly visible to aerial patrols. At night, vehicles using headlights were easily spotted—those traveling in darkness frequently became lost, wandering into enemy-held territory or having close calls with opposing forces. A British recon patrol might camp for the night on one side of a dune, with their German counterparts encamped on the other, and neither was the wiser until daybreak.

Dust covered everything, sometimes even obscuring unit markings on equipment and uniforms. Germans often painted additional swastikas on topside surfaces of vehicles, or stretched Nazi flags across hoods of trucks and cars. Lorries passing on the roads blinded each other with their headlights, making identification of oncoming traffic difficult until it was too late. Italian sentries were infamous for assuming all vehicles in rear areas belonged to the Axis—the LRDG and SAS took great advantage of this, driving their own vehicles through checkpoints and even chatting with Italian guards in broken German without raising suspicions.

War Masters familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of North African terrain can use it to enhance the action in their game. The desert was a place of extremes both in temperature and the ruggedness of its terrain; simple survival was a task unto itself.





Rocky Scrub

Much of the North African desert could be categorized as rocky scrub—flat, featureless sand plains with a good deal of gravel, rocks, and patches of scrawny grass and a few camel-thorn bushes. Although it provides little natural cover other than a few low ridges and dips, it is ideal for military defenses. Soldiers easily burrowed trenches and foxholes and reinforced them with rocks and gravel. Tanks found hull-down positions behind the occasional rise or low rocky shelf. Engineers planting mines concealed them beneath flat rocks, clumps of grass, or a simple layer of loose sand. LRDG road watch patrols set up behind camel-thorn bushes along supply roads where they could avoid detection until they returned to base camp.

Wadis

Over the centuries, sudden rainstorms have eroded channels through rock formations, creating valleys strewn with boulders, loose gravel, and sand. These ravines wind their way from higher ground toward the Mediterranean Sea. They prove formidable obstacles to cross, particularly for vehicle traffic. Much of the time these dry riverbeds contain no water, and are often flat and clear enough to serve as a twisting road (though getting down into them may pose a problem). Small units and individuals used them for sneaking up on enemy positions, concealing vehicles, or evading troops behind the lines. Shadows during all but midday offered cool shade and cover from even the most tenacious aerial patrol. During unpredictable rainstorms, however, these winding canyons suddenly turn into raging torrents that can sweep away a lorry and devastate an encampment.

Low Mountains

Ranges of low mountains parallel the coasts: the Jebel Akhdar in Cyrenaica, Atlas Mountains in Morocco, and Dorsal Mountains in Tunisia. These peaks only rise upwards of 2,000 feet, but they provide formidable obstacles for large fighting forces with tanks and motorized infantry. Small units—recon elements and native tribesmen—operated best in this environment, using the canyons, heights, and rough terrain to their advantage. The mountains offer many hiding places even though the terrain seriously impedes any rapid movement. The local inhabitants use the foothills for raising sheep and goats,

and hide encampments in canyons. Downed pilots or other desert raiders trapped behind enemy lines frequently found shelter here, living out of caves or traveling among networks of friendly Bedouin to reach British lines.

By the end of the North African campaign armies could no longer afford the luxury of avoiding this kind of difficult terrain. Rommel tried using the rugged topography of the Dorsal Mountains in Tunisia in a last-ditch effort to halt the Allied victories in North Africa during the savage battles around Kasserine Pass. Although it helped the Afrika Korps put up one last good fight, the determined Americans persevered and rose to the challenge of mountain warfare.

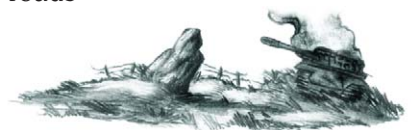
Coast Road

The Via Balbia is the only paved road running along the coast from Tripoli to the Egyptian Border. Beyond that, the Khedival Motor Road stretches eastward from Sollum to Alexandria and then south to Cairo. Both sides depended on these roads for transporting provisions, arms, reinforcements, and equipment to the front.

As the campaign marched on, Axis forces could not reliably transport light cargoes by aircraft due to the RAF's frequent dominance of the skies. With no ports in captured territory reliably secured from aircraft raids, the Afrika Korps landed most supplies in Tripoli and hauled them by truck convoy along the Via Balbia to the front. They erected road houses and temporary encampments at various intervals on the highway to offer rest areas for convoys and troops in transit. As a major coastal landmark, the Via Balbia stood out from the terrain. Convoys traversing it became highly visible targets for the RAF. Its proximity to the Jebel Akhdar also made it a prime objective for LRDG "road watch" and "beat up" missions.

Desert Tracks

Beyond the coastal regions one finds a network of tracks connecting locations deeper in the desert. These lead from major towns near the Mediterranean Sea to outposts beyond the mountains, in the Sahara, and at oases. Most have existed for centuries, traversed by camel caravan, merchants, raiders, and transient Bedouin. They're little more than worn paths through the sand, marked even further by vehicle traffic during the war. Those close to the coast served as secondary roads





German troops past the old colonial fort, Fort Mechili.

for military traffic. Tracks running deep into the Sahara only offered passage to small groups on specialized missions who were trained and well-equipped to face the risks of traveling into the desert. Since these routes stretched through rough, desolate terrain, they were more susceptible to raids by units like the

Desert Navigation

Maintaining one's course can become difficult in desert regions without predictable features, landmarks, or other geographical characteristics. Those traveling through sand seas and the more desolate rocky scrub of the deep Sahara depended on accurate navigation to reach their destination (or supply dumps) before their provisions ran out. The LRDG relied on regular magnetic compasses as well as sun compasses. The metal in vehicles frequently interfered with accurate readings from traditional magnetic compasses—navigators had to stop their vehicle and move a short distance away to take accurate readings, delaying their travel. Sun compasses mounted on jeep dashboards allowed navigators to use the sun (and sometimes the moon) to determine their bearing without stopping.

When attempting Navigation rolls in sand seas and featureless desert terrain, heroes suffer a -6 penalty unless they have a sun compass or stop to take a magnetic compass reading. One cannot use the sun compass without bright sunlight, or when the sun is near zenith and thus too vertical to cast an accurate shadow. In the desert, one inaccurate Navigation roll can mean the difference between reaching civilization and spending a very long time lost in the sand dunes.

LRDG who operated effectively behind enemy lines.

Sand Seas

Most people think of sand dunes when they think of typical desert terrain. The sand seas cover vast stretches of the Sahara, but pose the greatest hazard to travel. Vehicles easily become stuck in soft patches of sand. Unwary drivers mount the crest of dunes, only to tumble down the other side uncontrollably. Without navigation by magnetic and sun compasses, even the most experienced explorer could lose his way among the ever-rolling dunes.

Vehicles stick out in the featureless topography for aircraft patrols to spot, and tire tracks can remain for days. This terrain offers no place for habitation: no wells, no oases, no brush for firewood. Settlements abound along the edges, however, and provide reference points and havens for those crossing the sand seas. During the war, only the Long Range Desert Group and *Sonderkommando Almasy* had any reliable success crossing the sand seas—the dunes remained impassable to large military forces.

Oases

Desert settlements cluster around water sources. Most villages crowd around a brackish pool or a series of stagnant ponds. Others rely on a single well sunk into the rock that provides water year-round. Few embody the comforts one might associate with an oasis, as they are plagued by mosquitoes, stale water, and disease. The communities of Bedouin established in oases sustain themselves on minimal agriculture (usually date palms) and trade with other oases and the coast. Like most Bedouin throughout North Africa, they welcomed whoever happened to march into their settlement, preferring to avoid confrontation by siding with whoever occupied their village at any given moment.

In some cases oases hosted Italian garrisons, and in others they served as advanced headquarters for the LRDG.





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Visitors received the Bedouin's traditional hospitality, but also kept their distance, establishing themselves at the settlement's edge or camping just outside of town. Those within 200 miles of the Mediterranean coast often served recon units of both sides during the war.

Salt Marsh

The Qattara Depression is the region's largest salt marsh, an area below sea level where ground water leeches through the rock into a salty quagmire. Bounded on the north by a high escarpment, it served as the principle obstacle against which General Montgomery anchored his left flank during the engagements at El Alamein in 1942. Only certain routes through the depression remain passable during the dry season, and even then vehicles often broke through the delicate crust of sand into a few inches of muck. *Sonderkommando Almasy* and the LRDG were the only two groups who could traverse the Qattara Depression with any degree of success—they usually avoided it altogether unless no other expedient route to their objective existed. The region remained impassable to large fighting formations and was considered more hazardous than the sand seas.

Desert Weather

"The problem is to make yourself so much master over the appalling difficulties of Nature—heat, thirst, cold, rain, fatigue—that, overcoming these, you yet have physical energy and mental resilience to deal with the greater object, the winning of the war."

—Captain W. B. Kennedy Shaw, LRDG

Life in North Africa often depends on weather conditions and natural environmental hazards. The climate along the Mediterranean coast poses few challenges other than overcast skies and rainstorms during the winter months. Units operating in desert terrain must face climate extremes and often unpredictable weather events.

Heat

Perhaps the greatest danger the desert environment poses is heat. Temperatures in the desert average around 65° Fahrenheit in the winter, but can climb as high as 120° in summer months. The temperature begins rising around April and remains high until it starts dissipating in October.

For every hour a character spends active in very hot conditions above 90° he must make a DC 15 Fortitude save, with a +1 cumulative increase to the DC for each previous check. A hero who fails this check sustains 1d4 points of subdual damage. Once the heat has reduced a character to unconsciousness, he begins taking 1d4 points of normal damage every hour until relieved.

For every 10 minutes a character spends in extreme heat conditions above 110° he must make a DC 15 Fortitude save, with a +1 cumulative increase to the DC for each previous check. A hero who fails this check sustains 1d4 points of subdual damage. Once the heat has reduced a character to unconsciousness, he begins taking 1d4 points of normal damage every hour until relieved.

Consider anyone sustaining subdual damage from heat as suffering sunstroke. They become fatigued, suffer a -2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity, and are incapable of running or charging.

The character cannot recover subdual or normal damage from these conditions—or rest from his fatigued state—until he finds some way to mitigate the heat: finding shade, lasting until sundown, or wallowing in water. A full 8 hours' rest eliminates the effects of sunstroke-induced fatigue.

Fortitude saves against heat are subject to several modifiers. Characters in helmets suffer a -2 penalty to their save, while those in cloth hats with brims gain +2 on their rolls. Heroes with Wilderness Lore may add their skill bonus to the save roll, considering they know how to best find shelter from the heat in a given

Terrain Modifiers

Terrain	Driving	Attack	Move
Rocky Scrub	0	0	3/4
Wadi	-2	-4	3/4
Low Mountain	-4	-4	1/2
Coast Road	0	0	+50%
Desert Track	0	0	Full
Sand Sea*	-4	-4	1/2
Oasis	0	0	3/4
Salt Marsh*	-4	-4	1/2

*The vehicle may become bogged down.

The -4 modifier for operating in darkness applies to any vehicles driving or attacking without benefit of headlights, flares, or other light sources.





The dust raised by vehicular traffic required guides to keep vehicles on course.

environment. Heroes with the Arid Acclimatization feat ignore saves for very hot conditions, and treat extreme heat conditions as very hot.

Thirst

In most cases the heroes always have access to some water: their canteens, flimsies or jerry cans, or the unit's tanker truck. The threat of dire thirst can serve as a plot device to prod the characters to action or movement—it should never become a record-keeping chore that bogs down game play. Although the search for water might encourage the heroes to leave their secure position and wander off into dangerous or uncharted territory, War Masters should have an ulterior motive. Perhaps this hunt for water brings them to an encounter location, or they must confront some danger before reaching water.

A character can last without water 1 day plus a number of hours equal to his Constitution score. Beyond that he must make a Constitution check every hour at a DC of 10 (+1 for every previous check) or take 1d6 points of subdual damage. The character also becomes fatigued, incapable of running or charging and suffering a -2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity. These conditions remain until the hero finds adequate water.

Finding natural water sources in the desert requires intuition and experience. If a character knows where to look, he can find potable water in rocky scrub, wadis, low mountains, and oases. Finding water in these environments requires both a DC 15 Wilderness Lore and Intuit Direction roll. For every 2 points above the

Wilderness Lore DC a character rolls, he finds water enough for an additional person. Each person can only make these rolls once in a 24-hour period. Searching for water takes anywhere from 2 to 6 hours, depending on various environmental conditions and the War Master's overall plot plans.

Sandstorms

Sandstorms usually occur in March and April, including the legendary *khamsin*, a fierce, hot wind that blows sand up from the south. Winds propel grains of sand into the air, whipping them about in a

dense cloud of dust. Anyone in the open without goggles and a scarf has extreme difficulty seeing and breathing.

Even with proper protection, all Spot and Listen checks suffer a -4 penalty due to roaring winds and reduced visibility. Characters can still make ranged attacks, but with a -4 penalty; such storms do not adversely affect artillery barrages, though few gunnery crews want to work amidst the flying sands. Visibility penalties do apply to rolls made to call in artillery, however.

Pilots prefer to avoid such airborne obstacles, as sand chokes aircraft engine's carburetors and gums up other sensitive machinery. Those insane enough to fly through a sandstorm have a cumulative -2 penalty to all actions each round (representing continuous damage to the engine), and must make a DC 15 Piloting check every round just to retain control of the aircraft.

The storm extinguishes open flames, and has a 50% chance of putting out protected fires. Sandstorms frequently last 2d4 hours. When everything finally settles, the storm leaves behind 1d6 inches of sand on everything in its path. Sandstorms often brought action on the North African front to a halt, and in some cases even covered Afrika Korps retreats when Allied forces might have crushed the unit.

The *khamsin* proves a deadlier foe. These storms blow up from the south with an unusually hot wind and sand whipped from the tips of Saharan dunes. Successful Spot and Listen checks are all but impossible. Characters cannot even





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make ranged attacks, and artillery barrages suffer a -4 penalty. Seeing to call in accurate artillery fire is nearly impossible.

Anyone caught in the open without shelter suffers 1d3 points of subdual damage each round, and must make a DC 18 Fortitude save to keep from being knocked down by the *khamsin's* winds.

The airborne dust also presents a choking hazard—those venturing outside must hold their breath or filter it through a scarf or other cloth protecting their mouth and nose.

Unprotected characters can last a number of rounds equal to twice their Constitution score; those with scarves can last a number of rounds equal to 10 times their Constitution score. Heroes may extend this time by making a DC 10 Constitution check each round afterwards, with a +1 cumulative increase to the DC every round.

At the end of this time the character begins to choke, falling unconscious one round, asphyxiating the second round, and finally dying on the third round. The storm extinguishes open flames, and has a 75% chance of putting out protected fires. After blowing for 2d4 hours, the *khamsin* covers everything in its path with 2d3-1 feet of sand.

Piloting aircraft through a *khamsin* is impossible.

Cold

Although daytime temperatures are quite high even in winter (upwards of 65° Fahrenheit), they dip as low as 40° during winter nights. This proves more of a discomfort than any physical danger, especially since most units have fires, coats, blankets, and other means of warding off chills.

Characters in cold conditions without the proper means to keep warm have difficulty sleeping properly. For each night in such a climate without proper sleep, characters spend the next day fatigued (they are incapable of running or charging and suffer a -2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity).

Rainstorms

Foul weather occasionally clouds the Mediterranean coast in winter months, blowing rainstorms inland several miles. These tend to turn all desert tracks and other normally passable terrain into muddy quagmires, halving movement rates and imposing a -4 penalty to all Driving checks.

Airmen flying through such storms also receive a -4 penalty on all Piloting checks. All Spot and Listen checks suffer a -4 penalty from winds and reduced visibility. Characters can still make ranged attacks, but with a -4 penalty; rainstorms do not adversely affect artillery barrages, though few gunnery crews want to work in the cold, wet conditions. These sudden rainstorms extinguish open flames, and have a 50% chance of putting out protected fires.

Sudden rainstorms become deadly hazards for anyone traveling through or encamped in a wadi. Water erosion carved these features from the desert landscape—unfortunate characters caught in a canyon during a rainstorm witness this natural wonder firsthand.

In addition to the normal penalties associated with rainstorms, the characters must also face a flash flood racing down the wadi. Anyone caught in the flood must make a DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid becoming pummeled by waterborne debris and swept off down the ravine. Characters lost in the water sustain 1d6 points of subdual damage each round, or 1d3 points if they make a successful DC 20 Swim check. Waters rising high enough to entirely cover a vehicle eventually sends it tumbling downstream.

Summon *Khamsin*

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: Adt 5

Runes: Berkana, Hagalaz, Laguz

Casting Time: 30 minutes

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Effect: 1-mile-radius *khamsin*

Duration: 2d4 hours

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell allows an adept to summon a *khamsin* from any desert terrain within the spell's range. The wind whips the sand into a storm which the caster can then send in one general direction or cause to hover over an area no farther than the spell's range. (Use the storm's edge, not its center, when resolving any matters regarding the spell's range.) Once the storm begins its course, it continues in that general direction at a set rate chosen by the caster until the spell's duration ends or other environmental or magical factors redirect or dissipate it. Those caught in the storm's path treat it as a natural *khamsin* as described under Sandstorms in the Desert Weather section of this chapter.





German Panzer IIIs on the attack.

Superior defensive lines helped the British hold Tobruk for eight months despite a heavy German siege. They also plugged the Axis advance into Egypt twice, once at Sollum and again at El Alamein. Rommel used defensive lines to maintain his front while waiting for much-promised (and rarely delivered) supplies from Italy and Germany. Formations like the Mareth Line played key roles in his fighting retreats and in Afrika Korps' ability to hold out so long in Tunisia.

Wire

Both sides used barbed wire to deny enemy troops access to areas and delay their passage. Some formations (particularly along the frontier borders) consisted of fences, with wire strung at several points between tall posts. The easiest means of deploying barbed wire was in coils, often called "dannert" wire. Infantry patrols could easily unfurl these from the back of transports and secured them at intervals with waist-high poles driven into the ground. In some areas engineers erected double coils to thwart enemies. An entanglement formation ran wire from knee to waist level between a field of posts—careful soldiers could crawl through this, but swift passage remained impossible. The worst obstacles consisted of a "thicket" of barbed wire haphazardly strung around posts randomly hammered into the ground. Engineers cut loose ends to dangle and catch soldiers trying to penetrate the bramble.

Infantry did not easily breach barbed-wire defenses without a pair of wire-cutters or enough time and cover to weave their way through. Soldiers often attempted this at dusk or dawn, when enemy spotters had the least chance of noticing them. Night patrols and raiders knew the path through their own wire, or at least knew the best place to attempt passage. The brash Americans sometimes used Bangalore torpedoes to blast their way through such obstacles, regardless of whether or not they intended to conceal their attempt to pass through wire. Heavy tracked vehicles easily breached these

Battlefield Terrain

"It was a frightening and awesome spectacle—the dead and dying strewn over the battlefield, in trucks and Bren-carriers, in trenches and toppled over in death, others vocal with pain and stained by red gashes of flowing blood or the dark marks of old congealed wounds."

—Lieutenant Cyril Joly, British Tank Commander

Given the desert landscape, both sides easily adapted their terrain to their purposes. Although aggressors relied on open areas for rapid advance, defenders used the sandy soil and plentiful rocks to quickly create hazards to slow, immobilize, and wear away at enemy forces.

Desert defenses were quickly employed and just as easily abandoned, as dictated by the fluid nature of desert warfare. During periods of rapid advance, hastily erected defenses aided in maintaining a fighting retreat and in salvaging as many troops, supplies, and tanks as humanly possible.

When one side halted the advance because of overextended supply lines, Axis and Allied forces hunkered down behind defensive lines stretching across the entire front. Besides protecting against an unexpected enemy advance, this bought precious time to bring up fresh reinforcements and to prepare new strategies.





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defenses, though they still left a mess of flattened barbed wire in their wake to hinder infantry passage. The British designed specialized equipment for covering hazardous wire, including "carpet" devices mounted on tanks that unfurled heavy canvass over wire obstacles; these proved marginally effective.

Soldiers slipping through barbed wire defenses must make Reflex saves with a DC based on the way the wire was deployed (see sidebar chart). If the soldier fails the save, he becomes tangled in wire whose barbs snagged his flesh, gear, or clothing. Those caught in wire take 1d3 points of damage each round—if they do not make a DC 15 Will save to remain calm, they also add their Strength bonus to this damage. Once snared, they must make a DC 20 Reflex save to extricate themselves (or a DC 10 Reflex save if a companion helps them). If the initial save fails, they take damage a second round; the DC for each save also rises by +1 every round they remain stuck in the wire.

Minefields

Both sides used minefields to deny the adversary access to areas and to defend set positions. They slowed advances, forcing armies to attempt wide outflanking maneuvers far into the southern desert, or try daring mine-clearing operations to open paths through which motorized units could charge. Since mines relied on their concealed nature and density to thwart the enemy,

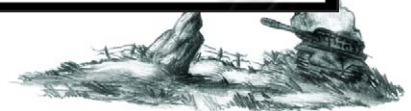
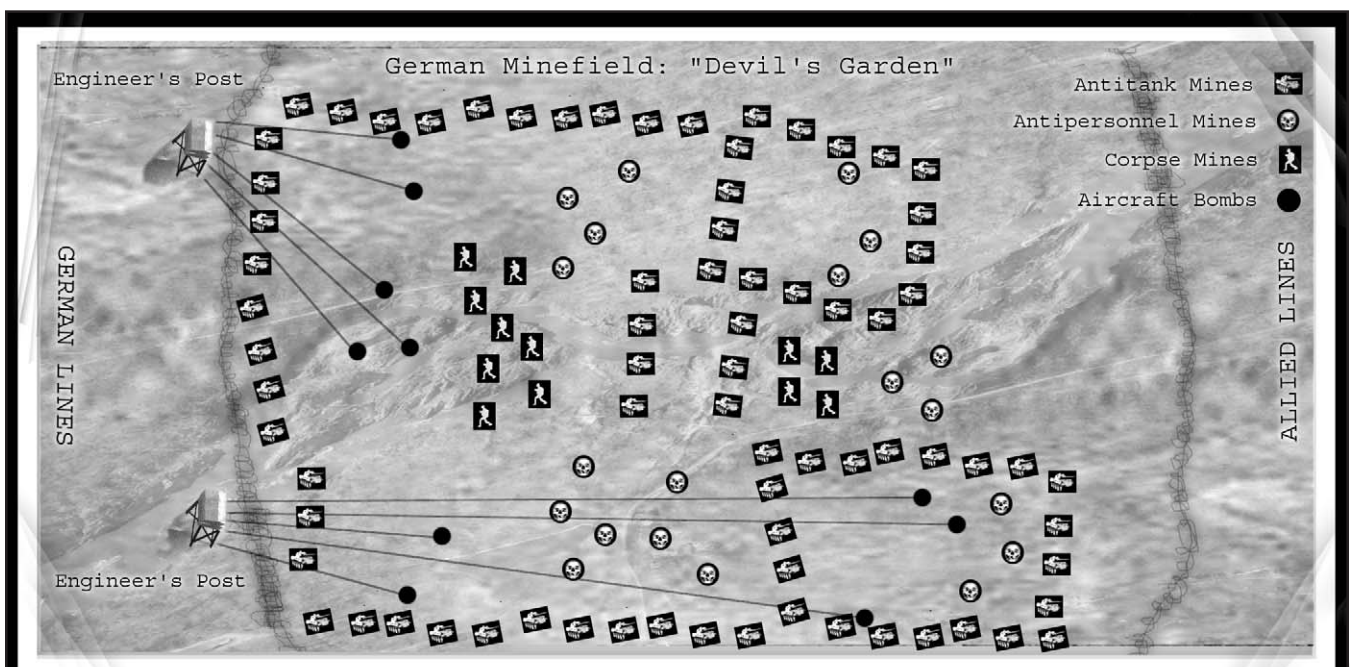
units frequently deployed them (and later cleared them) under cover of darkness. Members of the SAS and LRDG often planted vehicle mines on roads and desert tracks when leaving the site of a raid to hinder and eliminate any German forces in pursuit.

Both sides used their standard mine ordnance. Since desert warfare relied heavily on rapidly moving armor and motorized infantry, vehicle mines often covered vast open spaces. The German Tellermine 35 particularly plagued Allied engineers, as it contained a secondary detonator set to ignite if the mine was lifted from the ground.

With difficult and unreliable supply conditions in North Africa—both for the Germans and the valiant British garrison holding Tobruk—engineers often improvised. When the Afrika Korps ran short of regulation mine ordnance, it rigged up aircraft bombs and naval shells as mines, often detonated by wire rather than jury-rigging a more risky pressure-

Barbed Wire Reflex Saves

Wire Formation	Reflex Save DC
Fence	10
Dannert Coil	10
Double Coil	17
Entanglement	10
Thicket	25





A New Zealand machinegun crew makes the most of natural cover.

sensitive detonator. The SBG deployed its own mines scavenged from spare munitions and men salvaged from the hospitals: corpse mines buried just beneath the sand, trained to claw their way up and embrace enemy personnel before detonating the explosives strapped to their rotting bodies (see Chapter Four: Bestiary for more information).

The preponderance of minefields in North Africa, the ease with which engineers could deploy them in the sandy terrain, and the wide open stretches of desert landscape inspired the British to develop several means to clear them. Until October 1942, most infantry and engineering units employed the old tried and true but painfully slow method, investigating any recently disturbed sand and probing it with bayonets until they located, uncovered, and disarmed a mine. After the Axis and Allies settled down along the El Alamein line in the summer of 1942, the British commanders selected a core of engineers to create a better drill for clearing minefields. They began using metal detectors to locate mines more easily.

Tank regiments also fitted awkward contraptions to obsolete tanks (particularly the Matilda) intended to plow, thrash, and roll over mines, exploding them in the process while the crew remained shielded by the tank's armored hull. None of these methods proved totally effective. Despite concerted efforts, mine-clearance operations inevitably missed some mines that later plagued

units moving through the area and caused delays. Such endeavors only opened a narrow passage through minefields, causing rapidly advancing contingents to bottleneck.

Consult the Minefields section on pages 96-97 of *Blood on the Rhine* for more game rules on deploying, clearing, and disarming mines.

Tank Trenches

Both sides used tank traps to ensnare enemy tracked vehicles, though the British used them to greater effect in their defense of Tobruk. Engineers dug these trenches deep and steep enough that panzers tumbling into them could not extricate themselves. Although they usually sustained only minimal damage, they were in no position to participate in the action, and were left behind if an advance failed and the crew's forces retreated.

Unlike other defenses, trenches took more time and effort to dig deep enough to trap a tank, and often required additional materials or engineering to shore up so they wouldn't simply crumble into a shallow depression under a panzer's weight. They sprang up during prolonged sieges (like Tobruk) or standoffs (such as those at Sollum, El Alamein, and Mareth).

Without effective means to bridge them, they also became formidable obstacles to those who built them; they often protected positions or areas through which no vehicle traffic was expected to pass. In some cases British units equipped their tanks (particularly the outmoded Matildas) with implements they could deploy to cross these trenches, including ditch-crossing ramps and Inglis portable bridges.

Drivers must make a DC 20 Spot check to notice tank traps hidden amidst the desert landscape—if they're alerted that such defenses exist (either through map intelligence or orders from their commander) they only need to make a DC 10 Spot check (don't forget the vision modifiers if the tank is buttoned up). If they fail, they drive into the trench. Roll 1d6: on a 1 or 2, they plow into it head-on, on a 3-6 they drive in at an angle and tip over. The collision inflicts damage on the vehicle's forward or side armor as if in a T-bone crash with a Huge obstacle with armor of 10 (consult the Collision Damage and Collision Size Modifiers tables on page 104 of *Blood on the Rhine* for details).





German Minefield Ordnance

The Germans fortified their North African minefields with several new kinds of weapons, including the Tellermine 35 antitank mine, and jerrybuilt mines from aircraft bombs. See Chapter Four: Bestiary, for information about the SBG deploying "corpse mines."

Tellermine 35

The German Tellermine 35 was a particularly nasty piece of battlefield technology. The disc-shaped mine contained 12 pounds of TNT, with an armored pressure plate over its upper portions that both set off the charge and tore into deadly shrapnel in the explosion. It required at least 250 pounds of pressure to release the striker and spring into the detonator, so infantry easily passed over, leaving it to explode beneath heavier lorries or tanks.

The most insidious feature of the Tellermine 35 was the secondary fuse placed in the lower surface. If the mine were lifted from its position without proper caution (usually blocking the aperture through which a pressure trigger sensed the ground), it would detonate. Anyone trying to disarm a Tellermine 35 must make either a DC 20 Spot check to notice the secondary fuse, or a DC 15 Demolitions roll to correctly identify the mine by its appearance. If either roll fails, they can disarm the primary trigger, but fail to find the secondary fuse and detonate the charge. The engineer must make two DC 20 Demolitions checks, one to safely disarm each of the fuses.

Damage: 7d12, **Burst:** 4, **Notes:** 250 lbs. or more of pressure to detonate; secondary fuse requires a DC 20 Spot check or DC 15

Demolitions check to identify, plus an additional DC 20 Demolitions check to safely disarm.

Aircraft Bomb Mine

As the war in North Africa waged on and supplies of mines became scarce, German engineers began employing unexploded aircraft ordnance to supplement explosives in minefields. They used using stockpiled aerial bombs (useless without aviation petrol to fly the Luftwaffe planes) or salvaged duds with faulty detonators but perfectly good shells and powder charges.

Engineers buried these shells in minefields with the detonator assemblies facing up. They jury rigged detonation wire to the charges, then ran the wire back to observation posts at the minefield's edge (requiring a DC 25 Demolitions check). From here, pioneers on guard could hook up the wire to electrical detonators, blowing the charges manually when sentries spotted enemy troops moving near the bomb. Although small piles of stones or a characteristic piece of debris marked the bomb's location, the blast proved powerful enough to damage anyone venturing too close. Wires from several charges could run to one engineer's post, from which the pioneer could detonate them in a sequence to best waylay enemy soldiers and vehicles attempting to pass through the minefield.

Damage: 12d12, **Burst:** 8, **Notes:** Detonated by electric detonator and a wire running from the pioneer to the bomb.

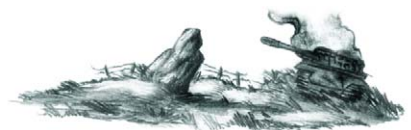
Unlike obstacles tanks and other tracked vehicles might somehow drive up and over, these traps immobilize a vehicle—it cannot return to operational status until extricated from the trench by some kind of tow.

Perimeter Posts

When both armies faced off across the desert, they created perimeter posts to protect areas through which the enemy might try advancing. Often situated between and behind mine fields, they employed an array of the battlefield features discussed above. A series of barbed-wire formations covered the post's forward area, behind which mines and booby traps deterred infantrymen. Defenders used tank traps only during prolonged sieges when they could devote

time to digging and reinforcing them. These formations created a semicircle around the forward area of the perimeter post.

Behind these forward defenses, trenches linked areas of cover for different armaments: light and heavy machineguns and anti-tank guns. Sometimes tanks found hull-down positions here to provide heavy fire support and move quickly to respond to enemy advances. Booby-traps, sandbagged buttresses, and sentries guarded the outermost entrances to this warren of trenches. More barbed wire and anti-tank mines protected the rear of the position, but with clear paths through which the defenders could retreat if overrun by the enemy. A post such as this is a formidable obstacle for any group of heroes attempting to penetrate the enemy lines.





Bases of Operation

"Here, in Cairo, was the supreme oasis of peace and plenty, where one stayed for a while between the long spells in the west with its dust and rock and camel-thorn, its battles of advance and battles of retreat."

—Captain Alastair Timpson, LRDG

Although soldiers spent most of their time at the front fighting in the desert, Allied forces relied on several bases of operation to keep their troops provisioned, serve as headquarters, and coordinate the campaign to defeat the Axis in North Africa. Each of the locations below served the Allies in a different capacity and played an important role in the struggle against the Afrika Korps.

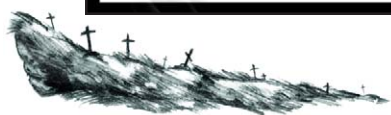
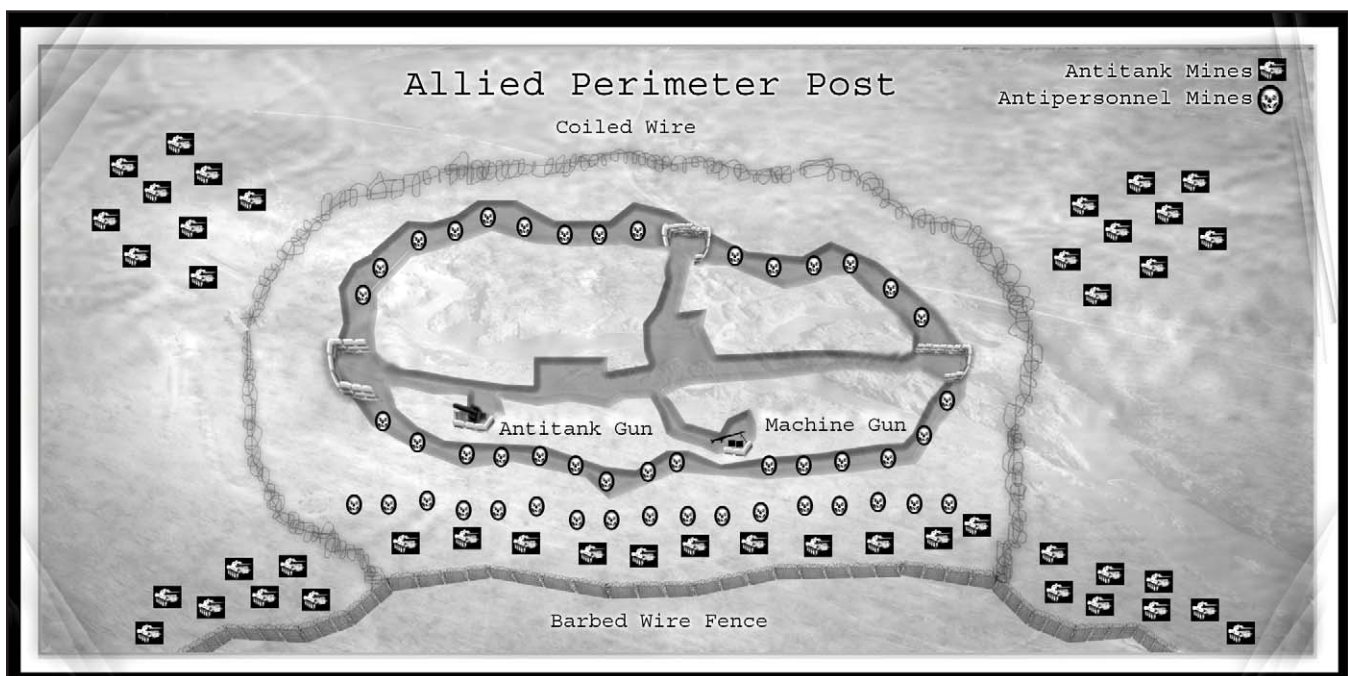
Cairo

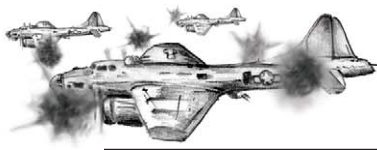
The capital of Egypt served as a base of British operations after they stepped in to protect the vital Suez Canal during the economic and social turmoil of the late 1800s. During World War II it was the center for all Allied operations in North Africa until the Battle of El Alamein and Operation Torch pushed the front too far west for the city to function as an effective headquarters.

The bustling city merged British culture with the native Islamic society in what has long been an exotic and alluring mix for Europeans. Cars raced down the streets past turbaned merchants and horse-drawn carts. The ancient pyramids looked down on domed mosques, blocky mud-brick buildings, fancy hotels, and elite clubs. Merchants hawked ornate, hand-crafted Arabic goods and fake antiquities, while muezzin called the faithful to prayer from tall minarets.

With the onset of war, the suburbs grew with facilities to prosecute the campaign against the Afrika Korps. Cairo hosted the headquarters of British Troops Egypt, as well as numerous administrative offices, particularly those for intelligence and logistics. Hospitals cared for the flow of wounded coming in from the front lines, while sprawling supply depots sprang up in the northwest suburbs from which provisions were dispatched to units throughout North Africa.

Cairo served as the prime destination of personnel on rest and recovery leave (although Alexandria served in this capacity to a lesser degree). Here members of various units took their leave, recovered from wounds, or waited for transfers or transportation to new assignments. Officers played cards, smoked cigars, and nursed drinks at the upscale Turf Club while enlisted men on leave slumped around the dingy bars in the European Quarter and near their barracks on the city's edge.





Cairo offers many adventure possibilities for those who ordinarily don't serve on the front. Operatives with the OSI frequently wandered the corridors of headquarters, gathering intelligence, tracking down rumors, and trying to get a jump on any insidious Nazi plots that might weaken British forces. LRDG and SAS personnel used Cairo to refit their patrols and prepare for major operations. The seriously injured passed through the hospitals here, possibly brushing up against those who'd gone insane from exposure to weird events in the desert fighting. Of course, anyone passing through Cairo on leave can become embroiled in the intrigue and mystery haunting the shadowy streets and seeking to infiltrate the British presence in Egypt.

Tobruk

As the German advance rolled unopposed across Cyrenaica in the spring of 1941, the British decided to hold Tobruk—a vital supply port—at all costs. While this proved a thorn in Rommel's side for the duration of his activity that year, it turned the former Italian settlement into an armed camp resisting constant German siege. Garrisoned by plucky Australians and led by Major General Leslie Morshead (nicknamed “Ming the Merciless” for his grim determination), the city surrounded itself with extensive defensive works, set up antiaircraft batteries everywhere, and salvaged every bit of material in daring strategies to fight off Afrika Korps.

At this early stage of the war, the RAF had not yet attained dominance in the skies, so the Luftwaffe pounded the port city and attacked ships bringing supplies and reinforcements. Rommel surrounded Tobruk with equally impressive siege formations, pounded the defenses with artillery, and even attempted a few panzer breakthroughs...all to no avail. The spirited Diggers made do with what provisions they had, improvised defenses, and even sortied small night patrols to ambush the Germans in the darkness.

Tobruk can serve as an ideal background for an infantry campaign fighting from set defensive positions against an overwhelming force. The heroes must endure constant attack despite shortages of supplies and arms. As the siege drew on, the SBG arrived on the scene and tested some of their earlier breakthroughs in unnatural magic, including the use of brutes and reanimants to overwhelm defenses with

Adventure Seed: Through Enemy Lines

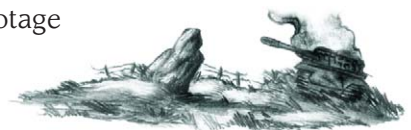
With the Luftwaffe sinking many supply ships, Tobruk desperately needs medical provisions. The characters receive orders for a daring night raid against the Afrika Korps units besieging their sector of the perimeter. They must penetrate enemy lines, locate a field hospital, and liberate a generous portion of medical supplies to transport back within the city's defenses. Besides facing the usual array of minefields, barbed wire, and enemy soldiers, they run into an SBG contingent using remains from the field hospital for gruesome experiments.

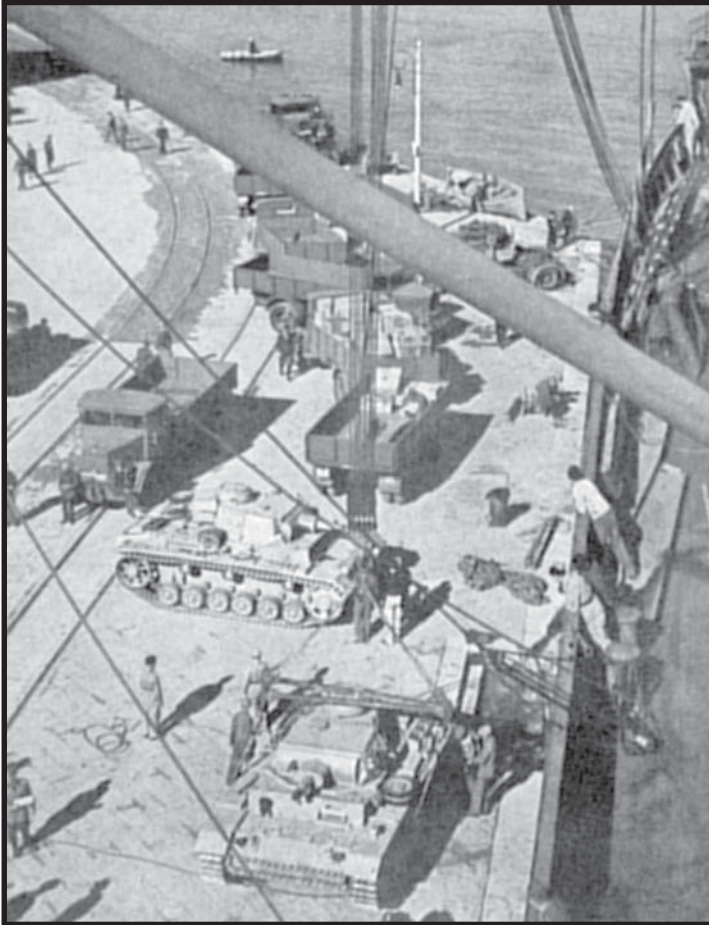
superior numbers. Characters must hold out against these horrors until the action elsewhere on the North African front forces the Germans to retreat back across Cyrenaica and abandon their siege of the battered port.

Casablanca

When the French surrendered to the Nazis in May 1940, administration of most French colonies reverted to the German-allied Vichy government. Like occupied and Vichy France, the Moroccan city of Casablanca quickly became a covert hotbed of dissident and espionage activity. Like Cairo, it merged aspects of European and Muslim society in an exotic setting, complete with international expatriates, smugglers, and corrupt officials—all dominated by the overhanging shadow of Nazi authority. Agents established resistance groups among the French living there to observe and report enemy activity in western Africa, forge alliances with influential desert sheiks and native Bedouin, and ultimately thwart Vichy counterattacks to any attempted Allied beachhead. It only served as a purely military base of operations for a short time during Operation Torch, as the American and British forces moved swiftly eastward to engage Rommel's unprotected rear in Tunisia.

Casablanca is no place for overt action until the onset of Operation Torch (in which case the allure of the setting disappears against the backdrop of massive military operation). Until November 1942, heroes working in Casablanca must do so covertly. Resistance fighters and OSI operatives find this a rich setting for their missions to undermine Nazi authority, sabotage





Panzer IIIs are unloaded in Tripoli.

loyal Vichy defenses, and uncover secret, magical plots that might thwart the Allied landings in Operation Torch. Casablanca serves as the opposite of Cairo: an exotic locale in which the characters must survive discreetly deep within enemy territory.

Adventure Seed: The Papyrus

While visiting or working in Cairo the heroes purchase a papyrus scroll from a shady street vendor. An hour later, they hear the merchant was brutally murdered and his stash of papyrus ransacked. The characters feel they're being followed, and an uneasy anxiety about the scroll descends on them. They seek an authority on ancient Egypt to help them read the papyrus—a priestly instruction manual for summoning the oracle at the Temple of Ammon in Siwa Oasis. When the other interested party ambushes the heroes and steals the scroll, they must uncover their sinister adversaries' true nature and travel to Siwa Oasis to stop them from consulting the oracle for advice on defeating the British in Egypt.

Kufra, Siwa, Jalo

For such desert raiders as the LRDG and SAS, these three oases served as field headquarters for "road watch," "taxi service," and "beat up" operations deep behind enemy lines. The oases consisted of small settlements and groves of date palms clustered around sprawling lakes of brackish water. Since these pools bred malaria-carrying mosquitoes, British forces stationed here made their headquarters on the oasis edge.

They mingled with the local Bedouin, often hiring them for help loading trucks but keeping relations businesslike. Officers frequently took lodgings in whatever mud-brick structures stood at the edge of town, with other buildings used for necessary supplies and signals work. Other personnel stayed in any remaining buildings or in tents or temporary structures pitched nearby. Since Middle East Command deemed LRDG work vital to supporting operations at the front, oasis bases were kept well-stocked, both to supply the raiders and to provide items used to barter with the Bedouin.

Kufra was close enough to the Nile to remain in British hands for the war's duration, although members of *Sonderkommando Almasy* sometimes breezed through on their way in or out of Egypt. As the farthest oasis from Cairo and the most convenient one for supporting operations in Cyrenaica, Jalo faced the greatest threat from enemy forces—the LRDG only operated there when Allied advances along the coast kept the Afrika Korps at bay. Siwa sat halfway between Jalo and the Nile, and thus proved the best forward headquarters for desert raider operations with the least threat from enemy units. Still, a German reconnaissance battalion advanced into Siwa during the standoff at El Alamein in 1942, but retreated after the onset of Operation Torch.

Although Kufra hosted ancient Egyptian ruins (a well-preserved temple to Ammon), Siwa held the more famous ones, particularly the remains of Cleopatra's palace, a temple to Ammon, and the 30-foot circular well fed by underground springs known as Cleopatra's Pool. According to the ancient Greek scholar Herodotus, the temple at Siwa was home to a great oracle of Ammon, one who foretold the destruction of an attacking Persian army in the Sixth Century BC.



Allied Forces

"The British are receiving large quantities of war materiel, which is being landed at Suez and then brought up to the front at once."

—General Georg Stumme

Much of the Allied fighting force in North Africa belonged to the British Commonwealth, with participants from England, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and even India. Others joined them, including expatriate Polish soldiers and determined Free French units who made their way through the Sahara and Middle East from colonies formerly held by France. They formed a multi-purposed fighting force that included a traditional army, the Royal Air Force, desert raiding groups, subversive resistance cells in enemy territory, and intelligence organizations that coordinated efforts to destroy the Nazis in North Africa.

Although it does not offer a comprehensive listing of corps, regiments, and battalions, the overview below can provide players and War Masters some background on the kinds of people and units involved in fighting the German Afrika Korps.

Commanders

"The commander must decide how he will fight the battle *before it begins*. He must then use the military effort at his disposal to force the battle to swing the way he wishes it to go; he must make the enemy dance to his own tune from the beginning and never *vice versa*."

—Lieutenant General Bernard Montgomery

The British Eighth Army went through several commanders before settling on Montgomery. Each fell victim to the peculiar circumstances of desert warfare and supply, the situation left by their predecessor, and constant exhortations from Churchill to engage the enemy. Only Montgomery lasted—and forged his reputation—in the North African campaign thanks to a decisive victory at El Alamein and the Allied invasion in western Africa in Operation Torch.

The Allied commanders affected overall strategy on the front and made major decisions on the actions of entire armies. Their influence on smaller units came in

the form of inspiration, often through near legendary stories about their personalities and habits. While the average infantryman probably never met "Monty," they knew he was so unshakable that he never addressed the day's business—even emergencies—without first finishing his leisurely breakfast.

The Americans did not face the constant turnover of commanders in North Africa. As leader of the newly arrived American forces, General George S. Patton pursued German forces with dogged determination. The late American entry into the campaign against the Afrika Korps gave him a short time to prove himself before moving on to other theaters of war.

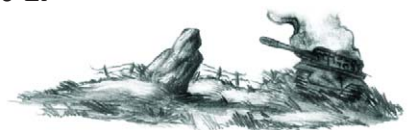
General Sir Archibald Wavell

The British began the North African campaign with Wavell in command. In mid-1940 he repulsed the Italian invasion of Egypt and pursued retreating enemy forces across much of Cyrenaica. He put faith in his subordinate commanders while juggling demands to siphon off units to help defend Greece, Crete, and the Middle East. His peers described him as "cool and imperturbable when things went wrong," and he held his composure when facing Afrika Korps' rapid advance in early 1941 amidst constant pressures from his superiors to fight back with the depleted forces at his disposal. With Tobruk under siege and British forces failing in attempts to relieve the city, Auchinleck stepped in to replace Wavell.

General Sir Claude Auchinleck

The "Auk," as he was known among the Tommies, admired his predecessor and faced the same difficulties: shortages of adequate armor and supply, depleted forces, a superior foe, and high turnover in subordinate officers. A competent commander, he fared slightly better than Wavell. During his command Eighth Army pushed the Afrika Korps back across Cyrenaica and relieved Tobruk, only to have the enemy rebound all the way to El Alamein in 1942.

During this time he laid the groundwork for what would eventually aid General Montgomery's successes. Lend-lease materials filtered into the units, particularly the American-made Sherman tanks that were far superior to some of the obsolete armor the British fielded. Although he put up a valiant fight at Gazala, Auchinleck was relieved when the fighting ground to a halt along the El





General Auchinleck stops to talk with an Indian machinegunner.

Alamein line, inside British-controlled Egypt, with German troops within striking distance of Cairo and the vital Suez Canal.

Major General Leslie Morshead

The commander of the Ninth Australian Division held Tobruk during Rommel's initial thrust across Cyrenaica in 1941. Known as "Ming the Merciless" for his

schoolmaster discipline and resolute will to resist the Nazi assault, Morshead soon won the affection of his Aussie Diggers and inspired them to hold out against the Germans and even strike back at them from time to time (they eventually shortened his nickname to "Ming"). A patient and determined man, he survived with what few supplies made it past Luftwaffe raids into Tobruk harbor, encouraged his men to conserve what materials they could scavenge, and he made sure that the two most vital resources for his troops made it through on convoys: cigarettes and the mail.

Lieutenant General Bernard Montgomery

Like Morshead, "Monty" captured the affection of his troops and fired their spirits. He arrived on the North African front at a critical time when he could capitalize on past experiences and gains to build his reputation among his troops and his superiors.

With both armies dug in along the El Alamein line, he had time to survey the situation, reorganize the Eighth Army, and prepare his plans to break through enemy lines. He had many advantages that resulted from 18 months of hard desert fighting. The LRDG harassed the German rearward areas, the RAF finally dominated the skies, and new lend-lease Sherman tanks began pouring into the armored divisions, all while the Afrika Korps sat at the end of an overextended supply line with little support from OKW (Army High Command) in Germany.

Although previous commanders had moderate successes holding Tobruk or driving Rommel from Cyrenaica in late 1941, Montgomery brought the Allies their first definitive and permanent success of the entire war: smashing through German lines in fierce fighting at El Alamein and slowly chasing Rommel all the way back to Tunisia. His indomitable spirit, frequent visits to the front, and unshakable demeanor sustained him through smaller setbacks and inspired his men. The ego created from his success in North Africa led him to dominate further military operations until the war's end (and caused not an inconsiderable amount of friction between him and his American allies).

Adventure Seed: 'The Dead Monty'

The heroes come upon clues that sinister elements of Afrika Korps (the SBG) are planning an assassination attempt on General Montgomery. They stumble upon one part of a greater plan: cryptic messages on a fallen messenger, a scuffle with a German agent in Cairo, or the discovery of a small but significant cursed item near Middle East headquarters. The characters must uncover the significance of this clue, track down enemy operatives working in British-held territory, and stop a covert SBG plot to murder Monty or replace him with some form of doppelganger to hinder Allied war efforts. They must overcome a secret network of German agents, ambushes, diversionary and protective magic, and an all-seeing mole within British command who stops at nothing to eliminate them.





General George S. Patton

The typical American cowboy in a soldier's uniform, Patton commanded with an aggressive style. His boastful, loudmouthed personality fit well with his determination to prove American soldiers could hold their own in their first action on the road to freeing Europe from Nazi tyranny.

He led the Western Task Force that landed in Morocco in Operation Torch, successfully crushing Vichy French resistance to Allied beachheads. He drove his men across Algeria and into Tunisia's mountains. While Montgomery slowed against the German Mareth Line in the east, Patton clashed with the Afrika Korps around Kasserine Pass. Patton blamed American losses there on lack of British support, primarily due to Montgomery's stubborn, plodding adherence to proper planning (and a good dose of ego to boot). Although he eventually helped oust the Germans from Africa, Patton and Montgomery's personalities continued to grate on each other. They fostered a sometimes detrimental rivalry throughout subsequent operations in Italy, France, and Germany.

Eighth Army

"We know from our sources that Churchill was in Cairo at the beginning of August and that on the twelfth, Montgomery took over command of Eighth Army. A new wind seems to be blowing among our opponents."

—Generalmajor Alfred Gause, Rommel's Chief of Staff

Like many units of varying backgrounds joined to create the German Afrika Korps, so did many units from the British Commonwealth assemble to form the Eighth Army. It grew from forces already in Africa as part of British Troops Egypt which repulsed the Italian invasion and took advantage of their rapid retreat.

Before Rommel arrived, Churchill ordered British commanders to siphon off various bits of this force for duty in Greece, Crete, and the Middle East since North Africa seemed relatively calm at the time. With the formation of Afrika Korps and the German prosecution of an aggressive campaign in Cyrenaica, the Eighth Army was formed from these motley elements and reinforcements from around the Middle East and the Commonwealth.

Main Eighth Army Units at El Alamein

10 Corps

1st Armored Division
7th Armored Division

13 Corps

50th Infantry Division
44th Infantry Division
7th Armored Division

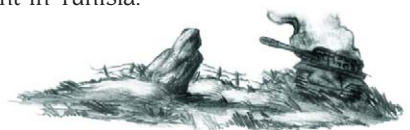
30 Corps

9th Australian Division
51st Highlander Division
2nd New Zealander Division
1st South African Division
4th Indian Division

Generals Wavell and Auchinleck continued the campaign against Rommel with Eighth Army much as it had been. When General Montgomery took over in mid-1942, he took the time afforded by a prolonged stalemate along the El Alamein line to reinforce Eighth Army with the new American Sherman tanks and completely reorganize it into a more effective fighting force. The resulting group proved better suited for massive attacks to break through enemy lines than pursuit, as proved during Rommel's fighting retreat westward across North Africa to the Mareth Line.



Patton surveys the front in Tunisia.



Chapter Three



An RAF bomber pounds a German supply convoy.

Eighth Army's composite nature brought many elements from across the British Commonwealth together. Units of legendary reputation like the Black Watch, Coldstream Guards, Royal Scots Greys, and Scots Guards served beside divisions from Australia, India, New Zealand, and South Africa. Foreigners from occupied territories—the Free French and Polish Brigade—also pitched in to fight the Afrika Korps. This diversity in the Allies fostered a friendly competition among units and brought a variety of fighting styles into the fray.

Adventure Seed: Frontline Catacombs

While holding a defensive line against the advancing Afrika Korps near Mersa Matruh (100 miles west of El Alamein), a near-miss artillery blast weakens the rock and sends the heroes tumbling into a deep pit beneath the sand. When they gather their wits, they find themselves deep within ancient catacombs from the Roman settlement of Paraetonium. Shifting rock and sand block their return to the surface, so they must explore the labyrinth to find an escape before the Germans overrun the defensive positions above. During their wanderings they may stumble upon Roman artifacts or magical treasures. Unfortunately the catacombs also host such dangers as scorpions and snakes, unstable stone ceilings, pockets of flammable gas, sand traps, and a few angry Romans whose remains take personal offense at the presence of the living.

Eighth Army bore the brunt of the fighting in North Africa until the arrival of the Americans in November, 1942. Its units pursued Rommel back and forth along the coastal deserts, advancing and retreating along the Via Balbia, holding out at Tobruk, and digging in along defensive lines at Sollum, Gazala, and El Alamein.

Royal Air Force

"I wondered idly what he was like, this man I would kill. Was he young, was he fat, would he die with the Führer's name on his lips, or would he die alone...I would never know."

—Richard Hilary, RAF Pilot

Eighth Army couldn't have persisted against the Germans without strong air support, and the RAF obliged by throwing in whatever it could afford. With its ranks depleted during the desperate Battle of Britain in the summer of 1940, it struggled to engage the Luftwaffe and Regia Aeronautica in the skies above several fronts. The first months in North Africa saw a battle for supremacy of the skies. Fortunately Germany couldn't maintain a successful fight against the RAF without sufficient supplies of spare parts, aircraft petrol, and replacement planes. The Luftwaffe—which so relentlessly pounded Tobruk's defenses and supply ships during the siege—became a casualty of German High Command's thinking that the North African campaign was secondary to defeating the Soviets on the Russian front.

The RAF assumed many mission profiles against Luftwaffe and Afrika Korps targets. Most assaults focused on Rommel's beleaguered and overextended supply lines. The Axis landed provisions in ports like Tripoli, well out of the range of RAF bombers, and then transported them by truck along the Via Balbia to the front lines. Ports in Cyrenaica like Benghazi—well within range of RAF aircraft—proved convenient targets and thus could not serve as reliable harbors for unloading supplies. Aircraft raids on ocean-going convoys, vital port facilities, supply columns on the coastal road, and provisions depots made sure the Afrika Korps was always short of essential materials.

The RAF also provide traditional air support, transport, reconnaissance, and patrol duties. British pilots flew from bases around Cairo and Alexandria as well as temporary desert airfields closer to the action. They struck at German ground



defenses, stray transport and reconnaissance aircraft, and desert ground patrols. Toward the campaign's end the Luftwaffe began flying low just to avoid detection and interception by higher altitude RAF patrols. Stuka flights began transporting officers around the front in their gunner's seat because the smaller, lighter armed Fieseler Storchs commonly used for flying personnel proved no match for RAF warplanes. By the time Operation Torch landed Americans in North Africa, the RAF dominated the skies.

Although British commanders didn't consider North Africa a secondary front, they still juggled resources. The RAF flew a variety of aircraft of different mission configurations, but often settled for older or outdated planes like the Bombays—the heroic Spitfire was still reserved for home defense until assembly plants could produce enough for other fronts.

RAF pilots embodied the same spirit of grim determination that helped them endure the Battle of Britain and England's previous defeats in the war. Although they weren't as cocky as their American counterparts, they still displayed a sense of pride in their aerial expertise and their integral role fighting the Germans. They fostered the same camaraderie that infused Eighth Army with its competitive attitude. One LRDG officer recalled a wager that a team of SAS commandos could slip into an RAF base outside Cairo on a given night and write their names on the pilots' planes. The SAS won the bet, but the RAF airmen put up a good showing, spotting the commandos only on their way out.

Long Range Desert Group

"Flash from Tripoli road watch. Eastbound March 18. Tanks 6 Mark 3 and 1 Mark 4. Armored cars German 4-wheeled 7."

—LRDG report radioed to Middle East HQ

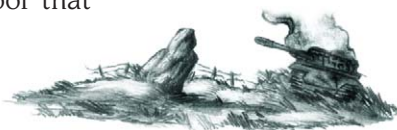
British explorers had roamed the Sahara for years before the war. Some sought ancient artifacts, others geographical information and maps; all wanted a bit of adventure. These men learned the hard way how to survive in desert conditions, cross the vast sand seas, and mingle with various tribes of Bedouin. Their experience proved invaluable to winning the war in North Africa.

Adventure Seed: The Shimmering City

While flying patrol over the Sahara, the heroes notice wind blowing sand from previously unrecorded ruins. If they don't land and explore it on their own, they receive orders to do so from their base, prompted by a mysterious intelligence officer who frequently visits. After landing on some flat ground and hiking to the site, the pilots discover that the sands sheltered what appears as a living oasis city straight out of ancient Egypt. The inhabitants welcome the characters, but warn them they've arrived during a turbulent power struggle between the ruling governor and the high priestess of Sekhmet, the lioness-headed war goddess. The governor wishes to rule in peace, while the priestess wants to venture out into the world to affect the great war beyond their oasis. The heroes must help resolve the conflict—avoiding an assassin's ambush, protecting the governor (or priestess) from angry mobs, and fighting off the opposition's bodyguards—all before the sands return to cover the city 24 hours later.

Middle East command formed the Long Range Desert Group at the outbreak of hostilities in North Africa to harass Italian outposts in the Sahara and help bring Free French support in from French Equatorial Africa (also known as Chad). With Rommel's arrival and Afrika Korps' initial thrust across Cyrenaica, the LRDG soon burgeoned into a force of officially sponsored desert renegades charged with three primary duties deep behind enemy lines: "road watch," "taxi service," and "beat ups."

The LRDG's greatest contribution to winning the North African campaign was intelligence gathered on "road watch." Patrols rounded the enemy flank deep in the Sahara and crept up to positions overlooking desert tracks and the Via Balbia itself to monitor Axis traffic. With the Germans landing supplies and reinforcements in ports far from the range of RAF aircraft, truck convoys transported these goods to the front by road. Hiding behind camel-thorn bushes and shallow ditches, LRDG patrols diligently recorded every passing vehicle, reporting their numbers and types back to headquarters on the wireless. Patrols might be out for several weeks before relieved by their fellows. The information proved valuable in assessing troop buildups at the front and anticipating major enemy actions. It gave Middle East Headquarters proof that





Members of the LRDG, aka "Desert Rats," mounted up before a mission.

RAF raids on Axis shipping in the Mediterranean was effective in hindering German progress in eastward across North Africa.

Given the LRDG's experience crossing the vast expanses of the Sahara, it naturally assumed duties transporting goods and personnel through the desert and inserting them behind enemy lines. Dubbed "taxi service," it supplied partisans working among the Senussi Bedouin in Cyrenaica, scouted new routes for the LRDG and recon elements of Eighth Army, helped SAS and OSI personnel penetrate German rear areas for sabotage, raids, and intelligence work, and set up hidden depots where lost, harassed, or returning patrols might find

additional provisions of much-needed food, water, and petrol.

Occasionally LRDG personnel participated in more daring action against Afrika Korps in raids called "beat ups." This often consisted of ambushing small convoys, secretly planting bombs in trucks as they rumbled past, or setting explosives at airfields and supply depots. Occasionally the LRDG joined SAS personnel in more daring "beat ups." LRDG raiders had to exercise caution—frequent raids at one location might endanger ambushes down the road, and alert the Luftwaffe and Regia Aeronautica patrols that British personnel were operating in the area. "Beat ups"

endangered "road watch" missions, and thus became rare given the greater effectiveness of accurate intelligence over rear-area raids.

The initial LRDG patrols consisted of several groups of New Zealanders, but soon other patrols joined the unit, including officers and other ranks drawn from Rhodesian units, the Coldstream and Scots Guards, and the Yeomanry. A lieutenant or captain led each patrol, consisting of about 18 other ranks and several specialists: an experienced signaller, fitter, and medic. For transportation they used several light trucks (not the heavy three-ton lorries typically used for transport duties) that could haul the most provisions without easily sinking into the sand. Officers often rode in a jeep, though a second jeep might accompany the patrol for additional reconnaissance capacity. The LRDG fitted all their vehicles with extra gear and modifications: machine guns, spare jerry cans for water and fuel, sand mats and ramps to "unstick" vehicles from dunes, and a wireless set built into one of the trucks.

The LRDG worked from the oases in the western desert, primarily Kufra, but also Siwa and Jalo, when they weren't occupied by enemy forces. Caravans of lorries, two WACO aircraft, and patrols arriving from leave in Cairo brought

LRDG Patrols

Unit	Composition
T1	New Zealanders
T2	New Zealanders
R1	New Zealanders
R2	New Zealanders
S1	Rhodesians
S2	Rhodesians
G1	Coldstream Guardsmen
G2	Scots Guardsmen
Y1	Wiltshire Yeomanry and other Units
Y2	Wiltshire Yeomanry and other Units





provisions and reinforcements. Since it operated so far from regular supply lines, the LRDG received preferential treatment regarding choice personnel, a specially designed regimen of foodstuffs, and even captured jerry cans (which were far superior to the British "flimsies" for containing liquids).

Since it was founded on an elite group of desert explorers, the LRDG included several notable individuals. Major Guy Prendergast, the LRDG's commanding officer, made arrangements for the patrols in Cairo, ensuring a steady flow of supplies, RAF support, refitted vehicles, and smooth integration in overall operations in North Africa. He also owned and piloted one of the group's WACO aircraft. The patrols revered him as a brilliant explorer and able officer who trusted his men in the field. Captain John "Jake" Easonsmith served as Prendergast's second-in-command and the chief officer supervising operations in the field. Although he organized the LRDG's oasis bases, he also took part in action behind enemy lines, commanding the R1 New Zealand patrol in the war's early years. Since the LRDG's mission profile closely paralleled that of the SAS and resistance fighters, it sometimes worked with Lieutenant Colonel David Stirling, Captain John Haselden, and Colonel Penman.

Special Air Service

"The boy Stirling is mad."

—Lieutenant General Bernard Montgomery

Like the LRDG, the Special Air Service (SAS) operated behind enemy lines, but in a less frequent and more daring capacity. Created from commandos and crack troops under the command of Colonel David Stirling, the SAS in North Africa specialized in infiltration, sabotage, and general mischief at vital targets behind enemy lines: supply depots, Luftwaffe airfields, and harbor facilities. If it could be blown up, the SAS destroyed it. Unlike the more mundane LRDG, the SAS employed top-line combat gear, including explosives with complex detonators, folding boats, and limpet mines.

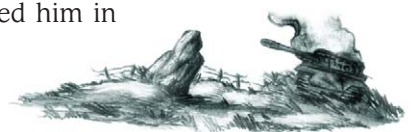
Middle East Headquarters frequently timed SAS operations to coincide with other military action at the front, sending the commandos in to destroy aircraft or supplies on the eve of major Allied offensives. Although the RAF sometimes conducted nighttime bombing raids to

LRDG Exploits

The adventures of the LRDG and the many individuals associated with it produced several accounts of its operations. The most renown telling came from Captain W. B. Kennedy Shaw, the unit's intelligence officer, who wrote a comprehensive history of the LRDG in *Long Range Desert Group*. The commanding officer of the G2 Guards patrol, Captain Alastair Timpson, also recorded his personal experiences with LRDG in his book *In Rommel's Backyard: A Memoir of the Long Range Desert Group*. Both provide first-hand accounts of the organization, operations, and rigors of serving with the LRDG at the height of the North African campaign.

provide distractions or supplement SAS efforts, these operations more often than not forced premature execution of commando plans or, in rare cases, hindered them altogether. Sometimes they parachuted near their destination (earning them the nickname of "parashots"), but they used the LRDG's "taxi service" more frequently to navigate across the desert wasteland to their targets. LRDG sometimes participated in SAS raids, using their heavily armed jeeps to smash through enemy checkpoints, set commandos loose in an area, and drive around wreaking havoc and shooting at anything in sight. Eventually the SAS requisitioned their own force of modified vehicles, though they still used the LRDG as escorts and guides to reach their targets across the desert.

The SAS attracted even more flamboyant personalities than the LRDG. Chief among these was its fearless commander, Colonel David Stirling. A trained commando, he organized and personally led SAS operations in North Africa, including a daring raid on port facilities in Benghazi and several strikes against Luftwaffe airfields with the LRDG. During the course of the campaign his unit destroyed upwards of 85 enemy airplanes—a tremendous loss for the already hard-pressed Luftwaffe, but a marginal victory as far as the ambitious Stirling was concerned. He spent his time planning the next operation, refusing to take "no" as an answer from anyone who might support him. Stirling had an uncanny run of luck, surviving several vehicle accidents, evading enemy forces, and rendezvousing with extraction units. When the Germans finally captured him in





A Tommy gives some captured Germans the "V." Different from Churchill's "V for Victory," this particularly British insult dates back to the Battle of Agincourt.

January, 1943, he reportedly greeted them by saying, "Nice to meet you. I shall be glad to spend a few days with you and perhaps meet your famous Marshal Rommel." Despite heavy guard, he promptly escaped, but the Germans apprehended him a short time later.

Behind enemy lines people like Stirling relied on undercover operatives like Captain John Haselden. Since the Axis forces didn't hold the ubiquitous Senussi tribesmen in high esteem (the Italian colonial government relentlessly persecuted them in the years before the war), they often passed unnoticed near sensitive targets. Haselden took advantage of this, his appearance as a typical

Bedouin giving him great mobility, a strong support network, and an amazing ability to creep up on German installations. A friend to the local Senussi tribes—and an expert at passing for a Bedouin in appearance, language, and behavior—Haselden roamed Cyrenaica, gathering intelligence for the Allies, guiding SAS and LRDG personnel, aiding downed airmen, and sometimes even participating in daring operations against German targets. He was killed during a disastrous raid on Axis-held Tobruk in late 1942.

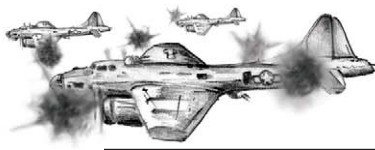
Haselden wasn't the only renegade wandering through Cyrenaica causing trouble for the Afrika Korps. Colonel Penman, nicknamed Popski, roamed the region with his 1st Special Demolition Squadron ("Popski's Private Army"), ambushing convoys, blowing up grounded aircraft, and setting supply dumps afire. Between raids they hid in the hills of the Jebel Akhdar, biding their time, gathering intelligence on future targets, and planning their attacks. The LRDG sometimes transported provisions and munitions for him, though he primarily lived off what he "liberated" from the Axis. His force of renegades sometimes worked with the SAS on more daring missions. Penman was only a code-name to protect his identity. In truth he was a British national named Peniakoff, who had worked in Egypt's sugar industry in the 1930s. Like the LRDG founders, Almasi, and others, he succumbed to the lure of the desert, spending his free time exploring the Sahara west of the Nile before the war.

The OSI in North Africa

"Africa is an ancient land filled with great potential for the deployment of supernatural energy. The OSI must harness those powers and keep them from the Nazis at all costs."

—Brigadier General Harry Oliver

Like the LRDG and SAS, the core members of the Office of Supernatural Investigations in North Africa spent the pre-war years probing the continent's mysteries. Some worked at archaeological excavations in the Nile valley or deep in the Sahara, while others explored African mountains and jungles. Many gained insight into the cultural superstitions of African cultures and legends of primordial



evils. These individuals maintained a loose, close-lipped association. Those with firsthand knowledge of supernatural occurrences in Africa kept it to themselves, lest the mundane public deem them insane.

When war broke out and violence and injustice wreaked disaster on the free world, these men were among the first to realize the correlation between massive death and release of great spiritual energy. When General George C. Marshall established the OSI in 1940, these men formed the core of OSI operations in North Africa. Working from offices in Cairo, they gathered intelligence about supernatural activity throughout the region, attempted to understand and harness it, and fought to deny the enemy this awesome power. They also recruited new members, investigating their exposure to spiritual phenomena and indoctrinating them in the OSI. Those who resisted posed a security threat, and were discreetly packed off to a maximum security mental health institution for at least the war's duration, sometimes longer. Despite the freedoms espoused by the Allied governments, the OSI couldn't have people casually chatting about strange phenomena and Nazi blood magic with the general public...ever.

Brigadier General Harry Oliver commanded OSI operations in the North African theater. Working closely with his American counterparts in other regions of the world, he planned overall strategy for investigating, researching, understanding, and harnessing supernatural energy released in the desert campaign. Oliver was quite familiar with the Middle East, having dabbled as a desert explorer, archaeologist, aircraft pilot, and a student of Arab culture. His travels exposed him to ancient myths, lost civilizations, and supernatural occurrences. Oliver put full stock in the tales and rituals he learned, and began researching how to put them into practice when the war broke out. Oliver merged his personal knowledge with that of the OSI and put it to practical use against the Germans in North Africa.

While General Oliver supervised overall OSI efforts from Cairo, a core of dedicated agents helped him maintain an overall sense of activity on the front, recruited new members, and confronted Nazi blood mages operating in the Sahara. Chief among these was Captain Stewart Latham, who investigated supernatural phenomena among Allied personnel. The gaunt officer

Adventure Seed: Benghazi Cages

The heroes join an SAS raid on Benghazi to cause havoc within the Axis-occupied port and free captives from the POW prison there, particularly a friend, fellow operative, or important officer named McAllister. After bluffing their way past enemy checkpoints and avoiding patrols in the city, they assault the prison and nearby Afrika Korps barracks. Once they free McAllister, they become separated from their unit and their means of transportation back to their base. The characters—with McAllister—must make their way past the city's defenses and into the desert on foot, or along the coast to find allies and transport there...all while angry German forces pour out of Benghazi to hunt them down. McAllister might help them, or the SBG might have used magical means to turn him, making him an immediate threat to the heroes' escape, or a danger later when he can infiltrate British command units.

haunted Cairo's hospitals, lurked among troops at the front, and even mysteriously appeared several times at LRDG oasis bases. He posed as an "inspector" from headquarters looking into various events, oddities, and supposedly violated regulations. The average soldier who spoke with him often disappeared suddenly, whisked away as part of some "immediate transfer to headquarters." By 1942 most men learned to keep their mouths shut about any strange happenings they encountered on the front lest Captain Latham show up to interrogate them.

A few American OSI officers worked in North Africa before 1942—most arrived posing as "military attachés" sent to observe and report on the effect lend-lease materials had on the war. Since they had free reign to wander both Cairo and the front lines, they occupied a prime position to spot supernatural activity and overhear reports of weird encounters among the men.

In addition to investigating weird phenomena at the front and recruiting new personnel, the OSI participated in several major operations during the North African campaign. After a few scouting missions with the LRDG, a full OSI expedition traveled to the Tibesti mountains to explore ruins some speculated were remains of ancient colonies of Atlantis. OSI operatives confronted elements of *Sonderkommando*





German prisoners being escorted to the rear to be debriefed by OSI personnel.

Almasy bent on raising a lost Persian army from the sands of Egypt's western desert. In preparation for Operation Torch, OSI personnel infiltrated Morocco and dealt with supernatural threats that might oppose the Allied beachhead. Operatives also followed British and American armies chasing Axis forces to Tunisia, examining abandoned or destroyed SBG facilities and investigating sites of spiritual phenomena

Adventure Seed: Lost Library

The heroes acquire a mysterious Greek papyrus from a shady antiquities dealer, anonymous source, archaeological dig, or a contact murdered on their doorstep. Casual perusal and some informed inquiries with the university, scholars, and explorers reveals it as part of a lost book of Herodotus's *Histories*—one that details unholy magical practices of the ancient Egyptians, Persians, and Greeks. Unfortunately the papyrus roll is incomplete. As part of the OSI or under the direction of a mysterious “liaison” with Middle East Headquarters, the characters track down the scroll's true source, the legendary lost library of Alexandria. They must explore the Alexandria catacombs, progressing from Roman and Greek areas to deeper Egyptian levels. After braving rock slab deadfalls, underwater caverns, ancient puzzle curses, and animated stone guardians (see the colossus in Chapter Four: Bestiary), they reach the deep basement chambers where volumes from the burning library were stored before that structure completely collapsed. As they search the dusty bins and alcove shelves for the rest of the lost scroll, their competitors ambush them—a team of SBG agents bent on recovering the full papyrus and using its magic against the Allies.

previously inaccessible behind enemy lines. By the time the Afrika Korps surrendered in June 1943, the OSI had collected and analyzed a wealth of information that later proved useful during Allied campaigns in other theaters.

Free French and Partisans

“I frequently took over command of the assault forces myself, and seldom in Africa was I given such a hard-fought struggle.”

—Field Marshal Erwin Rommel on the Free French at Gazala

Free French forces and partisans among the Vichy colonial holdings bolstered the ranks of Eighth Army and aided Allied landings during the American Operation Torch.

When the Vichy government formed after France's surrender to Germany in 1940, her colonies came under control of the new authority. Many military units in Morocco, Algeria, and French West Africa remained loyal to the new government rather than revolt against the Nazis and bring retribution upon their countrymen in occupied France. Some, however, fled Vichy colonies to join independent Free French units gathering in French Equatorial Africa.

These men—nominally under the control of General Charles de Gaulle—harassed Italian garrisons in the southern Sahara near the Tibesti Mountains, and later sent contingents into Egypt to support the Eighth Army. The Free French fought valiantly at Gazala, holding the British extreme left flank at Bir Hacheim during the intense action afterward known as the “Cauldron.” Although German advances eventually forced them to retreat, the Free French put in a good showing and won the respect of their fellow Allies.

Some French in pacified Vichy colonies refused to submit to alliance with Nazi Germany. Like the secret resistance cells operating in occupied France, these brave men and women covertly conspired against the Germans and their own Vichy government. They aided Allied intelligence



and OSI operatives working to forge alliances with desert sheiks, local tribesmen, and factions within occupied Africa. Cells provided information on enemy troop activity, coastal defenses, and espionage activity via wireless reports.

On the eve of Operation Torch they sabotaged defensive installations, staged diversionary attacks, and harassed troops remaining loyal to Vichy France and Nazi Germany. Afterwards they provided aid to the Allied soldiers and helped identify and round up enemy operatives still at large.

All Free French forces fought with a charged spirit borne from their homeland's occupation. This élan fueled their daring and determination to defeat the Nazi menace throughout all French holdings in Africa.

Bedouin

"We always know where you are and move away whenever things get dangerous.... One day, you will all have disappeared again and the desert will belong to us again. Allah be with you."

—Bedouin Sheik

Most of the Bedouin living in North Africa quietly helped Allied forces throughout the desert campaign. The Senussi in Libya proved particularly loyal friends, since the Italians who colonized that region had brutally suppressed their people in the past. They aided downed airmen and guided them through the Sahara and into the hands of the LRDG. Roving Bedouin families took in soldiers lost behind enemy lines, sheltering them from German troops and offering directions and provisions for reaching their units.

Those in the Jebel Akhdar worked closely with independent British commando units like the LRDG, SAS, and Penman's 1st Special Demolitions Squadron. Some even formed deep friendships with those foreigners willing to immerse themselves in Senussi culture and traditions, including Captain John Haselden, who operated frequently throughout the region disguised as one of the native Bedouin.

The Majabra tribe also served Allied interests as merchants. Unlike their nomadic Bedouin counterparts in the Sahara, the members of this clan maintained a presence in most major settlements, from Cairo, Alexandria, and

Adventure Seed: Aladdin's Cave

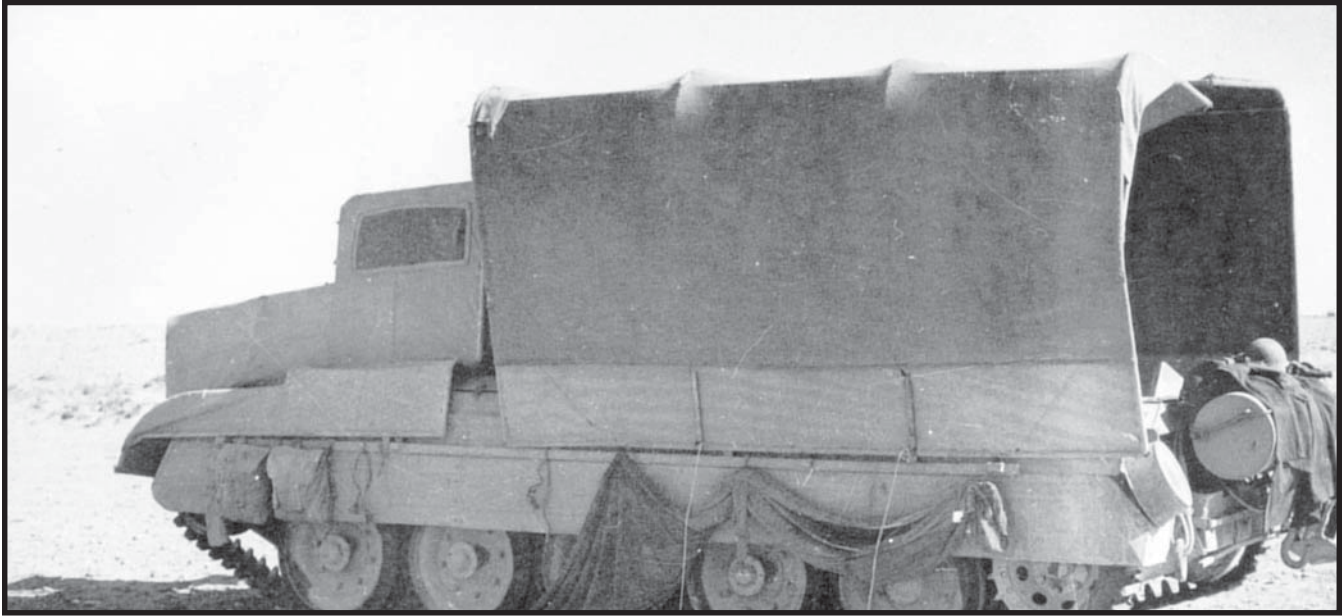
While interacting with Bedouin during operations behind enemy lines (LRDG patrols, escape and evasion, raids, or espionage work) the heroes hear tales of a magnificent cave filled with wild riches and powerful artifacts hidden in ancient times by Islamic sultans. To find it, they must research these legends among the Bedouin, seeking information from a crazed hermit and a rich oasis sheik. Once they collect clues leading to the cave, the characters evade Axis patrols to reach the cave entrance hidden deep within the Jebel Akhdar. Although they gain access to the treasure-filled caverns, they must defend their new-found wealth from a squad of SBG troopers led by a blood mage who was tailing the heroes.

Benghazi to the oases at Kufra and Jalo. Masters of desert travel and intertribal commerce, they maintained a trade network of inconspicuous camel caravans linking other tribal enclaves across the Sahara and supplying much-needed provisions to the isolated oases. This tight network provided smuggled materials for units operating behind enemy lines and reported intelligence gathered from observing German troops and listening to gossip among other Bedouin.

Not all tribesmen held unquestionable allegiance to Allied personnel. The Fezzan tribes living in southwestern Libya naturally befriended the more easygoing Italian troops manning remote garrisons. The Bedouin living in Tripolitania—having suffered less at the hands of oppressive Italian colonial regimes—fostered a weak loyalty to the Axis. Some actively aided the Germans, ratting out Allied spies, road watch patrols, and soldiers hiding among the natives. Most either gave both sides minimal aid as the situation allowed, or viewed the entire war with calculated disinterest.

The Bedouin based their hospitality on their culture's emphasis on protecting guests, a practice nurtured by Islam and the need to survive in harsh desert conditions. Still, some influential Arabs covertly assisted the Allies in the hopes of independence from colonial powers after the war—a hope that was not to be fulfilled until well after the war had ended and the British and French empires crumbled during the new Cold War with Russia.





Both sides went to great lengths to conceal their troop movements from each other.

Axis Forces

"They lacked the power of individual thought and action. They had been trained as a team, for years the best fighting team in the world.... They liked to do things *en masse*."

—Alan Moorehead

Although the British had repulsed the Italian invasion of Egypt and forced Mussolini's army back across Cyrenaica, they were to meet a formidable foe in the Afrika Korps. *Il Duce's* outrage at the British victory over his African colony splattered onto Hitler. The Führer felt pressured to aid his fellow Fascist ally—and take advantage of an opportunity to oust the British from the Mediterranean—and sent General Erwin Rommel to command German army elements assembling in Tripoli.

Through sheer force of personality and willpower against pompous Italian commanders, Rommel integrated the sometimes disparate pieces of the Italian army with his newly formed Afrika Korps and supported it with the Luftwaffe's Fliegerkorps X to create a relatively cohesive military force. He had a knack for assessing a unit's strengths and using those to his best advantage on the battlefield. While Italian infantry was infamously undisciplined, the armored units fought with professionalism and valor. Rommel's alternating Italian

divisions with stronger German units along the El Alamein front demonstrated this principle at the most dire point in the Axis campaign.

Rommel maintained a delicate balancing act on many fronts to ensure Afrika Korps's survival. He constantly clashed with Wehrmacht High Command over additional troops, armor, munitions, and above all, supplies—petrol, food, ammunition—that were vital to fighting in the harsh North African climate. Unfortunately his superiors had little faith Rommel's campaign would have any effect on the overall war, focusing their efforts in defeating Bolshevism on the Russian front. Rommel continued to mediate disputes between his own officers and the Italians, who felt they should supervise the campaign to evict the British from their African colony. As the campaign dragged on and Afrika Korps was finally pushed toward Tunisia, Rommel faced dissent in his own commanders, each of whom had their own plan (often inspired by sycophants in Hitler's entourage) for a final victory over Allied forces.

Through all these trials the men of Afrika Korps carried out their duties faithfully. They put their trust in the superior quality of their panzers and fought with typical Teutonic determination.

These soldiers found inspiration not in love for the Fatherland or loyalty to Hitler, but in the dedication of their own leader, the Desert Fox. He gave them a vision of





victory—of Afrika Korps marching through Cairo, across the Suez Canal, and into the rich Middle Eastern oilfields that could supply their countrymen, friends, and brothers fighting the Soviets and the Communist scourge.

Rommel

“We have a very daring and skillful opponent against us, and, may I say across the havoc of war, a great general.”

—Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister

The Afrika Korps gained its chief momentum and strategic brilliance from General Erwin Rommel during the entire desert campaign. Without his leadership the German and Italian armies would never have operated efficiently together, nor would Axis forces have surprised and overwhelmed the British enough to make North Africa the principle campaign in the war's early stages. Through sheer personal energy and force of will Rommel coordinated the many often conflicting elements of desert warfare against a harsh environment and a stalwart opponent.

Rommel's military career set him apart from more traditional German officers. Even while serving in the Great War he distinguished himself by leading a daring outflanking maneuver against Italian units. As war in North Africa proved, successful maneuvers to round the enemy's flank were vital in obtaining victory.

When Germany unleashed the Blitzkrieg on France, Rommel commanded the Seventh Armored Division, the “Ghost Division,” personally leading it through a daring river crossing against heated opposition and in fierce fighting against an allied counterattack around Arras. He used various elements of his forces to the best of their ability, often adapting them in unorthodox but effective means—such as using the dreaded 88mm Flak 36 as artillery against ground targets. Little did Hitler realize he was sending a first-rate strategist and inspired leader to what Wehrmacht High command considered a secondary front.

In Africa, Rommel drew on his past successes, both in integrating and deploying his forces and in relying on his strength of character to face every conflict. His daring strategies focused fast-moving panzer units in daring outflanking maneuvers against entrenched

enemy positions. Like an experience admiral at the head of a destroyer squadron, he ranged with his panzers and motorized infantry across the open desert, racing across Cyrenaica to isolate and surround elements of the British army.

Rommel commanded from the front. He raced between units in his kubelwagen. Rommel frequently took to the skies in a Fieseler Storch to observe his own and enemy positions from the air and gain a better overall picture of defenses, terrain, and other conditions facing Afrika Korps. His headquarters constantly moved, both to keep up with the fluid front and to better accommodate his frantic travel between forward units and rearward support elements. His presence among the average fighting soldier helped bolster morale in the ranks and elevate him as an honored hero and noble commander. It also gave his headquarters staff headaches as they tried to keep track of their frenetic commander's location at the front.

Amidst the numerous tensions throughout the North African campaign, Rommel's furious and personal command style created additional conflicts and wore him down physically and emotionally. He clashed with Wehrmacht High Command when begging for badly needed provisions. He went through a succession of commanders and staff, few of whom were reliable and could weather Rommel's constant frontline activity, intemperate moods, and tactical brainstorming.

His strategies relied on his sole authority on the North African front, a policy that inevitably created enemies within his own ranks. He constantly sparred with Italian commanders who felt they knew how to better prosecute the war against the British. Rommel maintained an uneasy alliance with the SBG, finding their unnatural methods disgusting, but realizing they might prove necessary to winning the desert war. He personally bolstered his troops' failing morale at the most desperate times, at great personal cost to himself and his energy level.

Eventually his furious activity at the front cost Rommel. During his victories he soared to new heights of leadership and strategy; but with defeat came overwhelming disappointment that brought him low with sickness and frustration. He made several trips back to Germany to recuperate from illness,





Rommel outlines his plan of attack.

during which he also met with Wehrmacht High Command and the Führer about developments in the campaign. Rommel wasn't even in Africa when the British launched their breakout offensive at El Alamein. When he returned, he could

only supervise a fighting retreat to Tunisia, with little support from his superiors and plenty of bickering among his commanders and recriminations from the Italian generals.

Rommel later returned to Germany and supervised Axis defenses along the Atlantic Wall. He was wounded shortly after D-Day. After being incriminated in the July, 1944, assassination attempt on Hitler, he was given the choice of suicide by poison or arrest and the persecution of his family. Rommel chose suicide and was buried with

full military honors befitting a hero of Germany.

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel: CR 17;

Medium-size Human; Class: Ofc 17; hp 94; Init +0; Spd 10 yds; AC 10 (+0 Dex); Atk Luger +17/+12/+7/+2; AL LN; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +14; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Artillery +9, Climb +4, Concentration +11, Demolitions +6, Diplomacy +13, Driving +10, Heal +8, Hide +6, Intimidate +13, Jump +2, Knowledge (strategy) +14, Leadership +22, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Observation and Assessment +23, Search +11, Sense Motive +17, Spot +12, Swim +2, Wireless Telegraphy +18; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Command, Command Voice, Desert Defenses, Desert Fox, Eagle Eyed, Eye for Terrain, Firearms Proficiency, Lay of the Land (desert), Natural Born Leader, Point Blank Shot, Rank: General Feldmarshal, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Tactician, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Pistolet 08 Luger, 2 spare magazines, 30 rounds of 9mm ammunition, binoculars, goggles, uniform, maps, map case, overcoat, scarf.

Adventure Seed: Rommel Is Missing

Allied intelligence catches wind that Afrika Korps can't find Rommel. As usual he was out racing between locations at the front when something happened to his Fieseler Storch reconnaissance aircraft. The RAF reports no activity in that sector and no patrols encountered any such aircraft. Headquarters assigns the heroes to track down Rommel, uncover the reason for his disappearance, and capture him alive.

Rommel isn't really missing—the SBG spread reports of his disappearance to provoke an Allied response and capture the unsuspecting team sent to capture the general. As they travel behind enemy lines and begin searching the desert, the characters slowly realize they're walking into a trap; they find conflicting clues, signs drawing them into increasingly hostile territory, and little concrete evidence Rommel was ever lost. They must evade German ground and aerial patrols looking for them, and escape a climactic SBG ambush using undead elements and the blood mage in charge of the operation.





Afrika Korps

"You know, we Germans couldn't do this sort of thing—out five hundred miles from our base for days or weeks on end. We like to go about in a crowd."

—German Officer Captured by LRDG

The German Afrika Korps included a wide range of units to support the primary panzer forces: artillery, pioneers, reconnaissance, and mechanized infantry. Many gained experience in previous campaigns in Poland and France. They found the vast, featureless terrain of North Africa well-suited to armored operations, and quickly adapted to the unique tactical challenges the terrain offered.

The Germans worked best in large, highly integrated groups. Recon units scouted ahead, panzers followed in a quick strike, and mechanized infantry moved in to secure areas where artillery could provide additional support. Supply battalions transported provisions and arms from ports far from the front, and anti-aircraft units protected vital targets from constant RAF raids. Afrika Korps was one massive, well-oiled machine operating efficiently to roll across the North African desert.

Unfortunately, intricate machines require lots of maintenance in the harsh desert environment. Afrika Korps fell victim to beleaguered and overextended supply lines, lack of proper reinforcements, and poor support from commanders in Germany who felt North Africa was inconsequential when compared with the Russian front.

The practical German soldiers made do with what they had because it was their duty. Their tenacity and courage brought them many unexpected advances and sudden victories, but made defeat taste all the more bitter. When it first landed in North Africa, the Afrika Korps represented the most technologically advanced, successful army in the world. Two years later it cowered on the shores of Tunisia, hoping that Wehrmacht High Command would evacuate those who'd survived the brutal punishment of the war in the desert.

Afrika Korps Soldier

The typical Afrika Korps soldier was a dutiful German proud to fight the British in North Africa. Although he held Rommel in highest esteem and fought hard for the

Fatherland, he respected the Tommies and Diggers waiting for him across the open desert. The commanders might bicker about plans and force advances across dangerous ground, but they were all fellow soldiers. German soldiers knew their duty and quickly learned how to operate effectively in the harsh, sun-baked desert terrain.

Afrika Korps Soldier: CR 1; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 1; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk Kar 98k +3; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Driving +2, Entrench +2, Heal +2, Hide +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +5; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Rank: Grenadier, Simple Weapons Proficiency; Weapon Focus: Kar 98k, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Kar 98k, 40 rounds of 7.92mm ammunition, helmet, uniform, 2 stiehlhandgrenate 24

Afrika Korps Soldier, Veteran

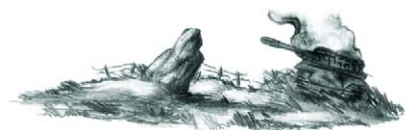
The veterans who first arrived in Tripoli to form the Afrika Korps had seen action during the blitzkrieg across Poland and France. Already exposed to the rigors of combat, they could focus on acclimating themselves to new conditions in the desert. Eventually others rose to fill the ranks of veterans, having gained experience fighting with sand in their clothes and the sun beating on their backs. The British taught them respect, while their superiors sitting cozily in Berlin demonstrated how secondary their campaign was by diverting much-needed provisions to the harsh Russian front.

Veteran Afrika Korps Soldier: CR 4; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 4; hp 27; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk Kar 98k +6; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Driving +2, Entrench +4, Heal +2, Hide +7, Move Silently +6, Search +3, Spot +7; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot; Rank: Grenadier, Rapid Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Toughness, Weapon Focus: Kar 98k, Weapon Specialization Kar 98k, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency.

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Kar 98k, 40 rounds of 7.92mm ammunition, helmet, uniform, 2 stiehlhandgrenate 24





German scouts speed across the desert.

Afrika Korps Officer

Those leading Afrika Korps men still believed in the honorable nobility of officers. Fueled by the Wehrmacht's successes in Europe, they looked forward to similar triumphs over the British in North Africa. They made sure those under their command remained organized and efficient at all times so they could quickly react to changing battlefield conditions.

Afrika Korps Officer: CR 1; Medium-size Human; Class: Ofc 1; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk Luger +2; AL LN; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Heal +3, Leadership +5, Move Silently +3, Intimidate +4, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +2; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Command Voice, Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Rank: Leutnant, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Pistole 08 Luger, 2 spare magazines, 30 rounds of 9mm ammunition, binoculars, map case, helmet, uniform

Afrika Korps Officer, Veteran

Officers with more experience in North Africa managed to hold their units together despite scarce supplies, overwhelming odds, harsh conditions, and occasional defeats. Although dismayed by Wehrmacht High Command's lack of

attention to their plight, these men swallowed their bitterness lest their own soldiers become disillusioned with the war. Veteran officers were skilled at both military tactics and the survival in the harsh desert.

Veteran Afrika Korps Officer: CR 4;

Medium-size Human; Class: Ofc 4; hp 20; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk Luger +5; AL LN; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Heal +3, Leadership +8, Move Silently +3, Intimidate +7, Search +4, Spot +8, Wilderness Lore +2; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Command, Command Voice, Desert Defenses, Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Rank: Leutnant, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Pistole 08 Luger, 2 spare magazines, 30 rounds of 9mm ammunition, binoculars, map case, helmet, uniform

Panzer Crewman

The Afrika Korps panzer crewman quickly adapted to the fluid nature of desert warfare. They drew on their unit's professionalism, their technically superior tanks, and Rommel's indomitable spirit to drive them forward against the dogged British resistance.

Panzer Crewman: CR 1; Medium-size

Human; Class: Grt 1; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk Main gun +2 or MG34 +2; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Driving +5, Heal +2, Hide +2, Mechanic +4, Spot +5; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Firearms Proficiency, Gunnery, Rank: Kanonier, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Walter P38, 2 full magazines of 9mm ammunition, uniform

Panzer Crewman, Veteran

Veteran panzer crewmen serving in Afrika Korps either fought with Rommel during the blitzkrieg into France in 1940, or gained experience in the North African deserts. Early German victories against the British in Cyrenaica seasoned them with experience and fueled their enthusiasm. Those who survived the entire campaign knew both the elation of victory and the bitter taste of a hard-fought defeat.





Operational Briefing

Veteran Panzer Crewman: CR 4; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 4; hp 24; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk Main gun +5 or MG34 +5; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Driving +8, Heal +4, Hide +3, Mechanic +8, Spot +8; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Eye for Terrain, Firearms Proficiency, Gunnery, Lay of the Land (desert), Rank: Kanonier, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Tactics, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Walter P38, 2 full magazines of 9mm ammunition, uniform

Pioneer

Wehrmacht pioneers in the Afrika Korps were assault engineers who sabotaged, attacked, and breached enemy defenses. They planted and cleared minefields, surreptitiously cut openings in barbed-wire lines, and blew passable openings through tank traps. These siege commandos operated in small units to reconnoiter and penetrate British lines and open a path through which German panzers could break.

Pioneer: CR 1; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 1; hp 8; Init +2; Spd 10 yds; AC 13 (+2 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk MP40 +3 or combat knife +1; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Concentration +3, Demolitions +5, Heal +3, Hide +4, Jump +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Search +3, Spot +3; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Desert Fox, Firearms Proficiency, Light Armor Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Rank: Grenadier, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: MP40, 4 full magazines of 9mm ammunition, combat knife, entrenching tool, wire cutters, helmet, uniform, 2 stiehlhandgranate 24

Pioneer, Veteran

Veteran pioneers learned much from the protracted sieges during the North African campaign. From Tobruk and Sollum to Gazala and El Alamein, they fought desperately against Allied defenses when both armies ground to a halt and pounded away at each other for months over a no-man's-land of burned-out tanks and cratered desert. Those who survived, were among some of the most battle-tested men in the German wehrmacht.

The Honorable Soldier

"If the struggle were not so brutal, so entirely without rules, one would be inclined to think of the romantic idea of a knight's tourney."

—Leutnant Schorm, Afrika Korps

Contrary to popular belief, not all Germans were barbaric SS fiends with no sense of respect or humanity. Despite the brutal fighting along the front lines throughout North Africa, both sides acted honorably according to the rules of war. The Germans viewed the British as fellow men and admirable adversaries worthy of common respect. Captives on both sides received adequate treatment. Apprehended officers frequently met with their enemy counterparts to exchanges friendly conversation over rations and a cup of tea. In the more remote areas, desert recon units observed pleasantries such as cease-fire during tea time, an exchange of news about missing or captured patrols, and trade of vital prisoners (officers and doctors) in return for much-needed goods (cigarettes and medicine).

Both sides acted as if the struggle in North Africa were some medieval joust between two noble knights of Europe. Such idealistic notions were quickly dispelled in other fronts. "Subhuman" Russian prisoners suffered unspeakable atrocities during the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. Nazis subjected POWs to brutality in the desperate campaign to liberate Europe in the Reich's final year. As the war dragged on, German desperation quickly stripped humanity and decency from the common soldier and officer alike.

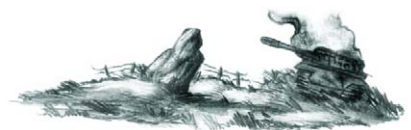
Only the SBG abused captives in North Africa, occasionally transferring a few POWs from prisons to their "research" facilities for gruesome experimentation.

Veteran Pioneer: CR 4; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 4; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 10 yds; AC 13 (+2 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk MP40 +6 or combat knife +4; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Concentration +3, Demolitions +7, Heal +3, Hide +6, Jump +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Search +6, Spot +6; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Desert Fox, Firearms Proficiency, Light Armor Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Rank: Grenadier, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: MP40, 4 full magazines of 9mm ammunition, combat knife, entrenching tool, wire cutters, helmet, uniform, 2 stiehlhandgranate 24





One of the dreaded German 88s in action.

Fliegerkorps X

"My Luftwaffe is invincible. Just look at its achievements in Poland and in France—can one conceive of a war machine in history which has contributed so much towards such total victories as these?"

—Reichsmarshal Hermann Göring

The Luftwaffe unit that covered North Africa and the Mediterranean had previously served with distinction in the invasion and subjugation of Norway. Unfortunately, Fliegerkorps X's next mission was split between providing air support for operations in North Africa, hunting and sinking Allied supply convoys in the Mediterranean, and tangling with the RAF based out of the island of Malta, a constant thorn in the side of the Axis.

Fliegerkorps X pilots flew a variety of aircraft on various missions. Messerschmitt Bf109s tangled with the RAF over North Africa and the Mediterranean. Bf110s and Ju-87 Stukas cruised the desert, hunting British reconnaissance patrols or retreating commandos, and lending sporadic air support to German ground actions with their cousin, the Ju-88. Heinkel IIIIs bombed British supply columns and frontline defenses. Ju-52s frequently ferried supplies from rear area ports like Tunis, Tripoli, and Benghazi to forward areas or oases posts. These transports and Fieseler Storchs also flew Afrika Korps personnel across the wide-ranging North African theater to visit various units.

The Luftwaffe never really gained much air superiority against the RAF in the desert. Fliegerkorps X sustained heavy losses against the RAF's tenacious fighters. The anti-aircraft installations guarding Tobruk inflicted heavy casualties on German bombers supporting Rommel's siege.

The SAS and LRDG attempted several raids on Axis airfields far from the front, damaging valuable aircraft and proving that no rear area was truly safe. Petrol, replacement parts, and new pilots were constantly in short supply—if they weren't being diverted to the more important Eastern Front or for convoy hunts in the Mediterranean. By the time the Americans showed up in Operation Torch, the Luftwaffe in North Africa was all but finished.

Fliegerkorps X Pilot

New pilots assigned to North Africa quickly adapted to the desert conditions—learning to read the terrain, enduring the new weather patterns, and spotting targets through mirages and heat distortion. They were eager to engage British forces, particularly the RAF, to prove the Luftwaffe's strength in the light of its recent defeat in the Battle of Britain.

Fliegerkorps X Pilot: CR 1; Medium-size Human; Class: Plt 1; hp 6; Init +3; Spd 10 yds; AC 13 (+3 Dex); Atk Walther PPK +3; AL LN; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bombardier +4, Bluff +3, Driving +4, Heal +3, Intimidate +3, Navigation +4, Piloting +7, Search +4, Spot +5, Swim +2; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Firearms Proficiency, Gunnery, Rank: Lieutenant, Simple





Weapons Proficiency, Single-Engine Aircraft Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Walther PPK, 20 rounds of 9mm ammunition, flight suit, warm boots, bomber jacket, spare uniform

Fliegerkorps X Pilot, Veteran

Veteran pilots in Fliegerkorps X were used to the desert extremes. Harsh weather in Norway gave them cautious experience at dealing with the Sahara's sometimes unpredictable rain and dust storms. They took more care when engaging the RAF, especially when spare parts, extra petrol, and replacement planes weren't as plentiful as their previous billet. Machines required constant upkeep to maintain optimum performance against the enemy. The seasoned Fliegerkorps X pilots resented the Reich's support of the Russian Front to the detriment of German forces in Africa.

Veteran Fliegerkorps X Pilot: CR 4; Medium-size Human; Class: Plt 4; hp 26; Init +3; Spd 10 yds; AC 13 (+3 Dex); Atk Walther PPK +6; AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bombardier +6, Bluff +5, Driving +4, Heal +5, Intimidate +5, Navigation +7, Piloting +10, Search +6, Spot +6, Swim +3; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Eagle Eyed, Firearms Proficiency, Gunnery, Multi-Engine Aircraft Proficiency, Rank: Leutnant, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Single-Engine Aircraft Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Walther PPK, 20 rounds of 9mm ammunition, flight suit, warm boots, bomber jacket, spare uniform

Fliegerkorps X Mechanic

The ground crews who kept Luftwaffe aircraft flying over North Africa never had easy lives. They lived in harsh conditions, made do with few supplies, satisfied the demands of harried pilots, and moved hastily when enemy advances threatened their airfields.

It was bad enough that airplanes were damaged in combat, but constant exposure to desert wind, heat, and sand also took their toll on the delicate machinery. They were expected to work technical miracles on a variety of complicated aircraft systems with minimal replacement parts, basic tools, and time. Despite the obstacles facing them, they often did just that, just like their ingenious brethren toiling for the enemy.

Axis Airfields

Given the fluid nature of war across the North African deserts, neither side could establish permanent airfields within easy flying distance of the front. Forts at desert oases often had an unprotected field with outbuildings and a few hangars. Ports and cities maintained airports, but these were captured and lost as the result of larger battles, often suffering damage from the retreating forces who wished to deny the opponent easy air operations from the facility. The majority of flight facilities were hastily constructed, with a minimal investment of time and materials lest they fall into enemy hands during a sudden advance.

Most airfields consisted of flat scrubland, with landing areas cleared of obstacles and marked with small stone cairns along their perimeter. Aircraft were parked in the open at one end of the crude runway. Several structures—often existing native dwellings or hastily constructed buildings—housed barracks for the pilots, mechanics, and sentries, mess, and workshop. Stockpiles of supplies in the open or under shelter were often protected by fencing or wire.

The entire airfield area was often too large to encircle with a proper fence, though barbed wire was strung along the perimeter when time and materials allowed. Patrols often neglected their duties, especially so far from the fighting. The SAS and LRDG had little trouble penetrating Axis airfields and sabotaging enemy aircraft.

Fliegerkorps X Mechanic: CR 3; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 3; hp 20; Init +0; Spd 10 yds; AC 10 (+0 Dex); Atk wrench +3; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 9.

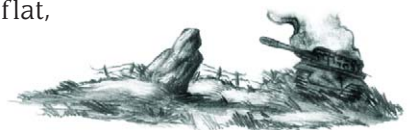
Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Concentration +5, Demolitions +6, Driving +6, Heal +4, Hide +4, Jump +6, Listen +5, Mechanic +11, Search +9, Spot +7; Firearms Proficiency, Scavenge, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Technically Adept, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

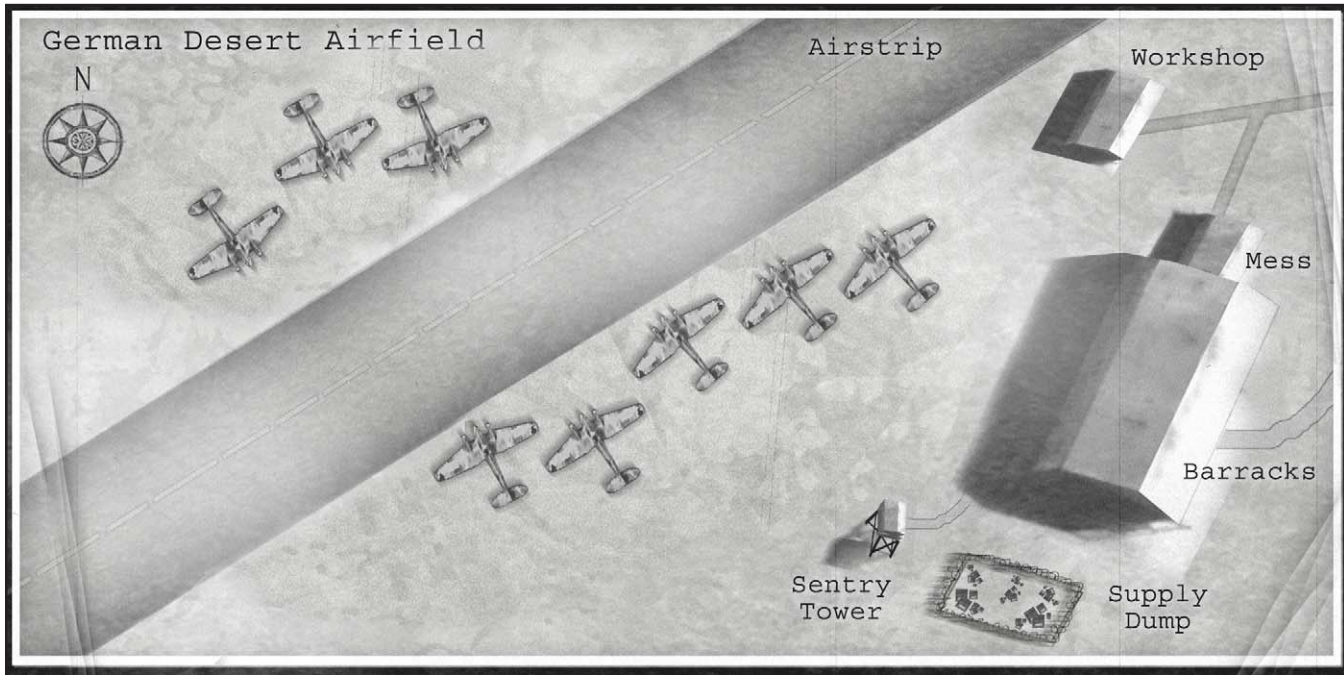
Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Coveralls, cloth cap, greasy rag, oil can, toolkit

Italian Airfield Sentry

While seasoned Italian units went to the front to support Afrika Korps operations, those soldiers with less experience and untested mettle were assigned duties as rear-area sentries, protecting airfields, supply dumps, and motor convoys. Already bored with foreign wars in Africa, these sentries quickly succumbed to the tedium of desert life—limited contact with other units, flat,





featureless landscape, and little variation in duties. They also chafed against the German pilots, mechanics, and officers who frequently belittled the Italians and trivialized their role in the North African campaign.

Italian Airfield Sentry: CR 2; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 2; hp 11; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk Carcano Model 91/24 +3; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Driving +4, Heal +1, Hide +4, Jump +2, Listen +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Firearms Proficiency, Incoming!, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicles Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Carcano Model 91/24, 40 rounds of 6.5mm ammunition, desert uniform, mess kit, canteen, entrenching tool, spare uniform, overcoat

Italian Forces

"But the Italian divisions give us a lot of worry. There are shocking signs of disintegration and German troops are being forced to the rescue everywhere...."

—Field Marshal Erwin Rommel

The Italians earned a bad reputation in North Africa. Although their country pioneered the basic concepts of the militant Fascist state, some argued its

cultural attitudes prevented its people from rising to greatness. Before action heated up in North Africa, the Italian military had already suffered several embarrassing setbacks. While German armies tore through northern France during the blitzkrieg, Italian armies failed to break through French defenses in the south. After a successful thrust into Egypt, Italy's North African forces beat a hasty retreat across Cyrenaica in the face of spirited British troops. Puny British aircraft dealt a crippling blow to the Italian fleet in Taranto harbor. German forces had to aid Italian units trying to force the British out of Greece.

These failures wore away at the Italian appetite for war and gave them a poor reputation for laziness, disorganization, and low morale. The constantly fluid North African front didn't help: one month the Italians might advance on the British, the next they were making a fighting retreat back toward Tripoli. Germans derided them as "spaghetti eaters" who drove around in "sardine tin" tanks. The Italians frequently balked at the strict German military discipline, and looked with fear when evidence of the SBG's horrific presence surfaced. North Africa bred in the Italians a simmering distrust of Nazi doctrine, blood magic, and their ever-growing use of atrocities to win the war.

The more efficient Germans had little choice but to rely on the Italians in fighting the hard-pressed and inadequately supported North African front. Rommel





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used many Italian infantry units to garrison captured port cities, while others drove and guarded truck convoys bringing up provisions along the Via Balbia. Italian sentries guarded Luftwaffe airfields and supply dumps in rearward areas. Those who garrisoned remote desert outposts wavered in their loyalty given the lack of support or supply these isolated oasis forts received from *Commando Supremo*. Some even exhibited honorable behavior about remaining prisoner when abandoned by enthusiastic LRDG men charging ahead to assault outposts with their fellows, and in some cases even helped negotiate the surrender of garrisoned troops.

A few frontline units proved their tenacity and fighting spirit in several battles. At Gazala, the Ariete armored division broke through British defenses to supply Rommel's flanking panzers before they ran out of petrol. Trieste motorized and Littorio armored divisions frequently came to the aid of Afrika Korps or held their line during the most heated fights. Rommel interspersed Italian units between German elements along the El Alamein line, but the British exploited this by constantly attacking and weakening the Italians, forcing the Germans to spread their lines thinner and keep several armored divisions in reserve to plug gaps in the line.

Italian Soldier

Most soldiers came from Italy to Africa to do their duty for *il Duce* and their country. They weren't fighting to protect their homeland, despite the presence of Italian colonies in North Africa. This was all about the Germans, as Rommel proved when he arrived and promptly took command over the Italian generals. The average Italian infantryman takes it all with a smile and a good dose of his easy-going nature. If they survive an RAF strafing run, then they laugh and give thanks that they made it through alive. If an

unidentified party passes through their checkpoint, then...whatever. The Germans would sort it out if it's some LRDG patrol out to cause trouble.

Italian Soldier: CR 1; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 1; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk Carcano +3; AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Driving +2, Entrench +2, Heal +1, Hide +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Rank: Private, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus: Carcano

Special Qualities: None

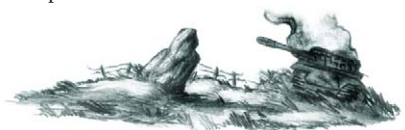
Possessions: Carcano Model 91/24, 40 rounds of 6.5mm ammunition, helmet, uniform

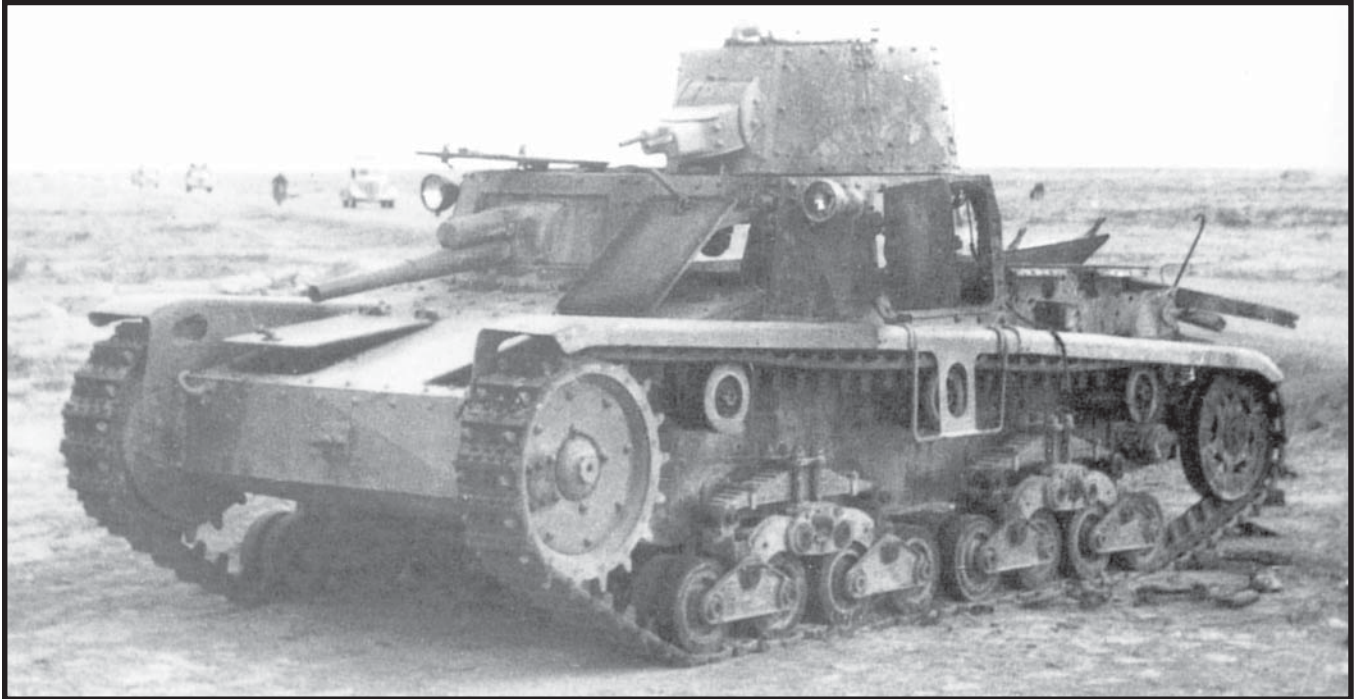
Italian Soldier, Veteran

Those who'd fought in Italy's colonial campaigns had a fighting spirit forged in tiring, bloody conflict. They'd negotiated the difficult African terrain and suffered through countless battles—even before the Germans came to their aid. Only their relaxed outlook could abate the weariness of warfare that plagued them. The average Italian veteran didn't approach the war with the Germans' stern, fatal attitude; he put up a good fight, but gave up when the fight became hopeless.



Desert-camouflaged stukas of Fliegerkorps X.





A disabled Italian M11/39 tank.

Veteran Italian Soldier: CR 4 Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 4; hp 22; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk Carcano +6; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Driving +5, Entrench +6, Heal +5, Hide +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +7; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Firearms Proficiency, Incoming!, Mechanized Infantry, Point Blank Shot, Rank: Private, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus: Carcano, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Carcano Model 91/24, 40 rounds of 6.5mm ammunition, helmet, uniform

Italian Officer

Those leading Italian troops into battle use every means to boost morale and keep flagging spirits high. Many Italian officers cling to a patriotism to inspire their men, while others rely on good-natured enthusiasm to balance their soldiers' morale against the grim realities of war.

Unlike their German counterparts, Italian officers sometimes mingle with those under their command and foster a friendly camaraderie.

Italian Officer: CR 1; Medium-size Human; Class: Ofc 1; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk Carcano +2; AL

LN; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Driving +3, Heal +3, Leadership +5, Move Silently +4, Intimidate +5, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +1; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Command Voice, Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Rank: Lieutenant, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Carcano Model 91/24, 40 rounds of 6.5mm ammunition, binoculars, map case, helmet, uniform

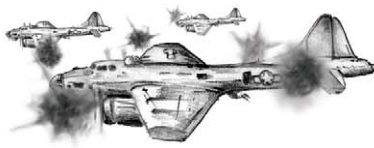
Italian Officer, Veteran

Veteran Italian officers became used to inspiring their men to overcome the various difficulties of warfare in North Africa: heat and sand, boring rear-area duty, long standoffs, ambushed convoys, and jibes from their uptight German allies.

Although they were as impatient for victory as il Duce, they realized that surviving the war was more important than dying in some miserable desert minefield. Using a combination of national and cultural pride, they led their men through numerous perils and kept their spirits higher than those of the grim Germans.

Italian Officer: CR 4; Medium-size Human; Class: Ofc 4; hp 20; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk Carcano +5; AL LN; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.





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Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +4, Driving +4, Heal +5, Leadership +7, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Intimidate +4, Spot +6, Wilderness Lore +4; Arid Acclimatization, Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Command Voice, Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Rank: Lieutenant, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Carcano Model 91/24, 40 rounds of 6.5mm ammunition, binoculars, map case, helmet, uniform

Italian Tanker

If the Germans admired anyone among the Italian forces, they held the tanker crews in the highest esteem. They rambled across North Africa in outdated tanks known as “sardine tins” for their bolted armor, cramped spaces, and unimposing appearance.

The Italians didn’t let that stop them—their tank divisions rebounded from numerous defeats with gallant enthusiasm.

Italian Tank Crewman: CR 1; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 1; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk Main gun +2; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Driving +5, Heal +2, Hide +2, Listen +3, Mechanic +3, Spot +5; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Firearms Proficiency, Gunnery, Rank: Private, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Modello 89B Pistol, 20 rounds of 10.35mm ammunition, uniform

Italian Tanker, Veteran

Italy’s tank veterans continued a strong tradition forged on the bloody North African front. Determined to break German stereotypes of lazy, unreliable Italians, they accepted their combat missions with good-hearted resolve, carried out their duties with courage, and persevered through some of the war’s fiercest fighting.

The Ariete division’s thrust through the minefields at Gazala proved their worth, saving Rommel and relieving Afrika Korps in one of the riskiest maneuvers of the campaign.

Italian Tank Crewman: CR 4; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 4; hp 20; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk Main gun +5; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Driving +7, Heal +4, Hide +5, Listen +6, Mechanic +7, Spot +8; Arid Acclimatization, Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Firearms Proficiency, Gunnery, Rank: Private, Incoming!, Lay of the Land (desert), Simple Weapons Proficiency, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Modello 89B Pistol, 20 rounds of 10.35mm ammunition, uniform

Italian Pilot

The pilots of the Italian Regia Aeronautica possessed the same sense of cocky flamboyance as flyers in the other air services. Having dominated the skies over Ethiopia, they flew over North Africa with impunity—at least until the RAF started shooting them down and the Luftwaffe relegated them to secondary duties.

They still enjoy a reputation for style and flair, even if only among their own troops and the girls back home.

Regia Aeronautica Pilot: CR 1; Medium-size Human; Class: Plt 1; hp 6; Init +3; Spd 10 yds; AC 13 (+3 Dex); Atk Beretta +3; AL LN; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bombardier +3, Bluff +4, Driving +4, Heal +3, Intimidate +4, Navigation +3, Piloting +7, Search +3, Spot +5, Swim +1; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Eagle Eyed, Firearms Proficiency, Gunnery, Rank: Lieutenant, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Single-Engine Aircraft Proficiency

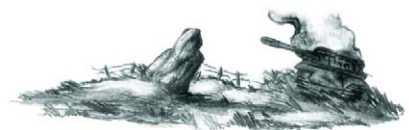
Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Beretta M1934 Pistol, 20 rounds of .380 caliber ammunition, flight suit, warm boots, bomber jacket, silk scarf, spare uniform

Italian Pilot, Veteran

Italy’s air force veterans used their talents where they had the most effect: defending rear areas and patrolling the deep Sahara for renegades like the SAS and LRDG. Flying unopposed by the RAF squadrons that supported military action along the coast, they preyed on lone units, lost reconnaissance aircraft, retiring raiding parties, and stragglers left behind during fighting retreats.

Veteran Regia Aeronautica Pilot: CR 4; Medium-size Human; Class: Plt 4; hp 24; Init +3; Spd 10 yds; AC 13 (+3 Dex); Atk Beretta +6; AL LN; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 14.





Skills and Feats: Bombardier +6, Bluff +6, Driving +4, Heal +4, Intimidate +6, Navigation +5, Piloting +9, Search +5, Spot +6, Swim +1; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Eagle Eyed, Firearms Proficiency, Gunnery, Rank: Lieutenant, Seat of the Pants, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Single-Engine Aircraft Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Beretta M1934 Pistol, 20 rounds of .380 caliber ammunition, flight suit, warm boots, bomber jacket, silk scarf, spare uniform

Sonderbergungsgruppe

"They might not wear SS uniforms, but the SBG men are just as ruthless, diabolical, and devious in their efforts to use whatever means necessary to defeat the forces of freedom in North Africa."

—Brigadier General Harry Oliver, OSI

The Special Salvage Unit (SBG) represented the SS in North Africa. At Rommel's request, the battalion concealed its true nature behind standard Wehrmacht infantry uniforms, identified only through the unit shoulder flashes and SBG armbands emblazoned with the runes Sowilo, Berkana, and Gebo. Vehicles displayed the SBG unit marking, a triangle with bands of the German national colors black, white, and red descending from the point.

Given its mission profiles in North Africa, the SBG maintained transport vehicles but fielded few panzers and artillery. The battalion possessed enough

trucks and tankers to move all its personnel and supplies. One motorized platoon employed SdKfz 251 halftracks for special assignments or convoy escort duty along the Via Balbia or desert tracks. Three Fieseler Storchs provided aerial reconnaissance and transportation for command personnel. On occasion the SBG requisitioned panzers, additional halftracks, and armored recon vehicles for specific operations—Rommel provided these reluctantly, since the loss undermined his already weakened forces at the front line.

Colonel Gunther Morden commanded the SBG battalion. Officially he held the SS rank of Sturmbannführer, but he and his men eschewed their SS designations to masquerade their presence in North Africa. SBG personnel maintained their distance from the rest of Afrika Korps and the two Italian corps under Rommel's command.

The average soldier might have easily become upset with the SBG's sometimes unnerving methods. The SBG conducted more mundane activities near other troops, but relegated its more sinister operations to desert wastelands, unpopulated regions in the Jebel Akhdar, isolated oases, and well-guarded coastal facilities. SBG platoons intermingled with Afrika Korps units only when imperative to their mission.

The SBG engaged in many different operations, but most concerned recovery efforts and strategic support; rare missions focused on archaeological expeditions.

Recovery efforts consisted of gathering suitable materials from hospitals, battlefields, and graveyards and transporting them back to SBG camps for processing. Here blood mages transformed the collected bodies into reanimants, corpse mines, and other undead monstrosities using alchemy and harmonic magic. Assembled into loose units under command of an SBG officer, these forces were deployed for action at the front, in isolated desert regions, and near key SBG installations.

Recovery assignments also included investigating any paranormal occurrence in German-occupied territory—haunted vehicles, unnerving personal traits (weird feats), and other supernatural forces summoned by the rampant spiritual energy released in combat—specifically with an eye to harnessing its power and deploying it against the enemy. When the SBG learned of such occurrences in Allied

Adventure Seed: The Phantom Fighter

The heroes capture and question a downed Italian pilot who claims the Luftwaffe is preparing to deploy a deadly new aircraft against the RAF in North Africa. They claim the Germans have imbued it with "mirage magic" to make it fade in and out of the desert heat. Hearing these reports, an officer from headquarters in Cairo sends the characters out into the desert to penetrate German lines, reconnoiter enemy airfields, locate one of these phantom fighters, steal one, and destroy the others. Besides the usual perils of Luftwaffe patrols, Italian airfield sentries, and minefields, the heroes must overcome the elite guards and SBG personnel surrounding the facility where pilots and their blood mage gunners train on the new fighter.





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territory, it sometimes sent an expedition to penetrate the Allied rear areas and covertly investigate.

At times Rommel consulted with the SBG to provide strategic support during military operations. Such actions most often consisted of deploying reanimants against the enemy, or planting corpse mines for defense. At least one SBG expedition tried to gain control over a flight of flaming flugzeuggeists, though these abominations proved only marginally effective against the RAF. Rumors claim the SBG also summoned the fierce sandstorm that covered the final stages of Rommel's first retreat back to El Agheila in late 1941.

The SBG also supervised archaeological expeditions into the desert and behind enemy lines to recover ancient or magical artifacts of great significance. At least one platoon reached the Tibesti Mountains far south of the front (in French Equatoria, or Chad), though it never returned from its attempt to find and explore ancient Atlantean ruins. An SBG team worked with *Sonderkommando Almasy* (see below) to acquire an Egyptian papyrus, use it to contact the oracle of Ammon at Siwa Oasis, and seek the location of a Persian army lost in the desert thousands of years ago.

The true extent of SBG activities in North Africa may never be fully known. Some of its activities were never reported. Those records of their missions and supernatural experiments that were not sent back to Germany were burned in Tunis before the remains of the battalion were evacuated in early 1943.

SBG Trooper

The rank and file soldiers serving in the SBG are all members of the Waffen SS transferred to service in North Africa. Although they didn't wear the SS uniforms and insignia, they displayed the same fanatical loyalty and devotion to the Nazi cause. They performed their duties with grim efficiency, never questioning their superiors or flinching at their sometimes distasteful tasks.

SBG Trooper: CR 1; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 1; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk MP40 +2; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Driving +3, Heal +3, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +6, Search +2, Spot +4; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Firearms Proficiency, Furtive, Point Blank Shot, Rank: SS-Grenadier, Simple Weapons, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities:

Devotion: The devotion of SS members to the Nazi Party gives them a +2 morale bonus to Will saves.

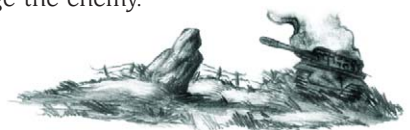
Possessions: MP40, 4 full magazines of 9mm ammunition, helmet, uniform, 2 stiehlhandgranate 24, bedroll, canteen, entrenching tool

SBG Trooper, Veteran

Veteran SBG soldiers spent enough time in North Africa to become more familiar with desert warfare and their operations parameters here. They acquired a tougher stomach for savage fighting and the SBG's more grisly practices. They quickly learned not to become too curious about the activities in which they engaged; those who failed this lesson often disappeared.



Italian "sardine tins" valiantly charge the enemy.





Adventure Seed: Oasis of Doctor Anderung

The Allies hear disturbing reports of an SBG facility conducting gruesome experiments on live British soldiers. The heroes must brave the dangers of penetrating enemy lines and navigating the desert to find the oasis from which a mysterious Doctor Anderung works. They follow a prisoner convoy to the facility, reconnoiter the German defenses and buildings, and uncover evidence of horrid experiments to twist human flesh into different, stronger forms suitable for warfare. A force of SBG troopers, corpse mines, reanimants, and mutated monsters guard several mud-brick buildings housing the barracks, chemical supply dump, laboratory, prisoner cages, and pits for the beastly results of the experimentation. The characters must plan an assault on the base to free the prisoners, rescue or dispatch those warped by Anderung's magic, assassinate the doctor, and destroy evidence of his unnatural activities.

Veteran SBG Trooper: CR 4; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 4; hp 26; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk MP40 +6; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Driving +5, Heal +3, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +9, Search +6, Spot +7; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Rank: SS-Rottenführer, Rapid Shot, Simple Weapons, Weapon Focus: MP40, Weapon Specialization: MP40, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities:

Devotion: The devotion of SS members to the Nazi Party gives them a +2 morale bonus to Will saves.

Possessions: MP40, 4 full magazines of 9mm ammunition, helmet, uniform, 2 stiehlhandgranate 24, bedroll, canteen, entrenching tool

SBG Officer

Many low-level SBG officers supervised routine operations, though they possessed full knowledge of their superiors' activities dabbling with the supernatural. They had the potential to become initiated in the arcane arts as a reward for faithful service, exemplary performance, and effective leadership.

Many kowtowed incessantly to their superiors, obeying every order unquestioningly—those who failed to act this way usually didn't last long with the SBG.

SBG Officer: CR 1; Medium-size Human; Class: Ofc 1; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk PPK +2; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Heal +3, Leadership +5, Move Silently +4, Intimidate +4, Observation and Assessment +3, Spot +4, Wireless Telegraphy +3; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Command, Command Voice, Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Rank: SS-Untersturmführer, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Special Qualities:

Devotion: The devotion of SS members to the Nazi Party gives them a +2 morale bonus to Will saves.

Possessions: Walther PPK, 2 spare magazines, 30 rounds of 9mm ammunition, helmet, uniform

SBG Officer, Veteran

Veteran SBG officers were entrusted with higher-profile operations that required a greater degree of judgment, discretion, and leadership. As a reward for their faithful service and to assist their duties, they received cursory training in the use of blood magic. Those who employed these powers effectively and with prudence eventually received training and promotion as full-fledged blood mages.

Veteran SBG Officer: CR 4; Medium-size Human; Class: Ofc 3/Adt 1; hp 21; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk PPK +4; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Heal +3, Leadership +6, Move Silently +4, Intimidate +5, Observation and Assessment +5, Search +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +6, Wireless Telegraphy +5; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Command Voice, Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Rank: SS-Hauptsturmführer, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Tactics

Special Qualities:

Devotion: The devotion of SS members to the Nazi Party gives them a +2 morale bonus to Will saves.

Blood Magic: The veteran SBG officer suffers no fatigue costs from casting spells.

Runes: The veteran SBG officer knows 2 runes: Algiz, Kenaz

Possessions: Walther PPK, 2 spare magazines, 30 rounds of 9mm ammunition, helmet, uniform, runestones





SBG Blood Mage

Blood mages serving in the SBG maintained a low profile. Like their SS counterparts, they appeared in the guise of intelligence officers or others of high status.

They masked their true intentions, methods, and goals, particularly guarding their knowledge of magic and the supernatural. Colonel Morder put several in charge of SBG companies, though a few worked as independent operatives throughout North Africa or handled one of Morder's "special projects," such as the expedition to explore the rumored Atlantean ruins in North Africa. Some blood mages may still be operating in the area clandestinely.

SBG Blood Mage: CR 12; Medium-size Human; Class: Ofc 6/Adt 6; hp 60; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk PPK +10/+5; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +13; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Concentration +10, Decipher Script +11, Diplomacy +10, Heal +9, Leadership +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcane) +10, Move Silently +10, Observation and Assessment +9, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +12, Spot +10, Use Magic Device +10, Wireless Telegraphy +8; Command, Command Voice, Extend Spell, Firearms Proficiency, Quicken Spell, Rank: SS-Obersturmbannführer, Silent Spell, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus: PPK, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities:

Devotion: The devotion of SS members to the Nazi Party gives them a +2 morale bonus to Will saves.

Blood Magic: The SBG blood mage suffers no fatigue costs from casting spells.

Runes: The blood mage knows 9 runes: Ansuz, Ehwaz, Eihwaz, Kenaz, Laguz, Mannaz, Sowilo, Tiwaz, Wunjo

Possessions: Walther PPK, 2 spare magazines, 30 rounds of 9mm ammunition, helmet, uniform, runestones

Oberst Gunther Morder

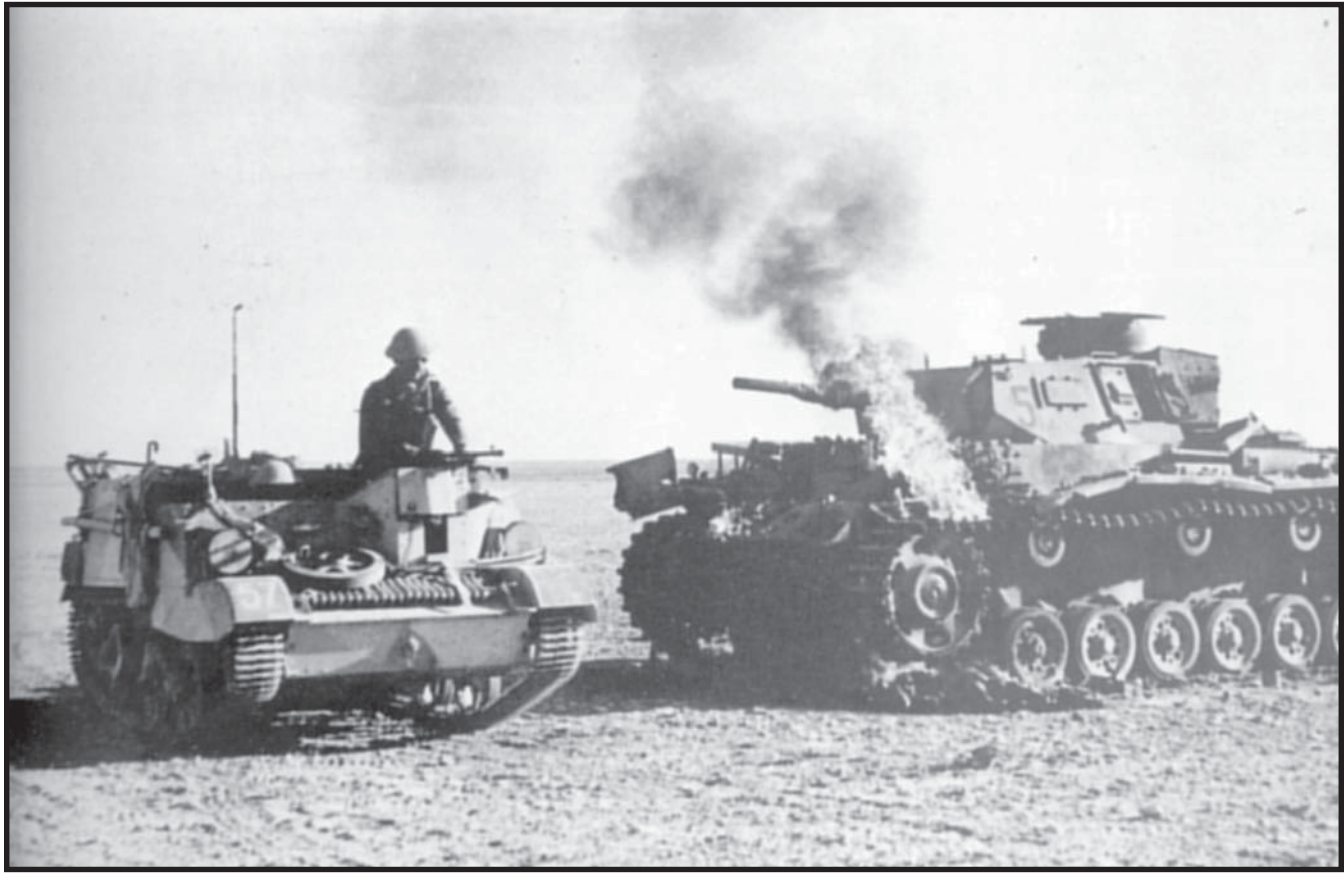
Gunther Morder was a loyal Nazi party member and professor of archaeology at the University of Heidelberg. An early advisor to Hitler on matters of ancient civilizations and the occult, he soon found himself participating in various expeditions around the world to track down legendary sites and arcane treasures for the Reich. He joined the party that discovered the Thule ruins in northern Finland in 1936 and conducted research on *The Import of the Elder Futhark*. Morder led other expeditions throughout Africa and the Middle East in the years leading up to the war, seeking ancient relics that might tap into the supernatural power described in the Thule manuscript. During this time, as an SS officer, he also conducted small-scale espionage operations to gather intelligence should Germany go to war in the region.

At the outbreak of war Morder was recalled to Berlin, but had to escape from British-controlled Egypt, where he was conducting a dig amidst ancient ruins. He joined the blood magic training program in Radom, Poland, and continued to supervise trainees and experiment on his own after graduating. In early 1941, Hitler himself appointed Morder chief of the SBG, a shadow SS unit charged with overseeing supernatural activities in North Africa.



British tankers scramble to their tank to repel an attack by SBG reanimants.





A British soldier in a Bren carrier passes a smoking Panzer III.

Although nominally reporting to Rommel, Morder maintained contact with his SS superiors in Berlin, occasionally sending important dispatches directly to Himmler and sometimes the Führer himself. He supervised SBG activities, including the acquisition and deployment of undead troops, signals interception and decryption efforts, and examination of spiritual phenomena and ancient artifacts in the African theater of operation.

He pioneered efforts to find and harness such supernatural creatures as the wireless hounds and flugzeuggeists, organized expeditions to the Tibesti mountains, Nile ruins, and lost oases seeking magical treasures and arcane wisdom, and sent agents behind British lines to investigate and capture ordinary soldiers somehow imbued with extraordinary abilities. At times he commandeered various Afrika Korps units for particular missions, reviewed radio intercepts from Captain Seeborn's *Fernmeldeaufklärung* company, and used *Sonderkommando Almasy* to insert agents behind British lines (see below for information on these two important groups).

Various Allied reports claim he was shot down in transit over the Mediterranean, killed in a rockslide while exploring the ruins of an Atlantean city in the Tibesti Mountains, tortured to death in Berlin for failing in North Africa, and captured by OSI operatives for interrogation.

OSI maintains he had no association with the SS after the defeat of Afrika Korps in 1943 and was not involved in subsequent operations against Allied forces during the invasions of Italy and the Continent.

Oberst Gunther Morder: CR 15; Medium-size Human; Class: Ofc 6/Adt 9; hp 63; Init +6; Spd 10 yds; AC 13 (+2 Dex, +1 Armor); Atk PPK +13/+4; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +16; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +9, Concentration +11, Decipher Script +12, Diplomacy +12, Driving +9, Heal +8, Hide +9, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Leadership +11, Move Silently +9, Observation and Assessment +9, Profession (archaeologist) +14, Search +13, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +22, Spot +12, Use Magical Item +11, Wireless





Operational Briefing

Telegraphy +10; Command, Command Voice, Firearms Proficiency, Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Rank: SS-Standartenführer, Sahara Lore, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus: PPK, Weapon Specialization: PPK, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities:

Devotion: The devotion of SS members to the Nazi Party gives them a +2 morale bonus to Will saves.

Blood Magic: The Colonel suffers no fatigue costs from casting spells.

Runes: Colonel Morder knows 13 runes: Algiz, Ansuz, Dagaz, Ehwaz, Eihwaz, Gebo, Kenaz, Laguz, Mannaz, Raidho, Sowilo, Teiwaz, Wunjo

Possessions: Walther PPK, 2 spare magazines, 30 rounds of 9mm ammunition, helmet, uniform, runestones

Fernmeldeaufklärung Company

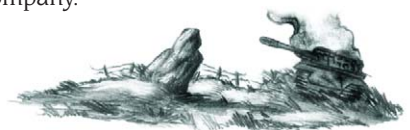
"The destruction of Seebohm's radio intercept group at Gazala was the beginning of the end for Rommel."

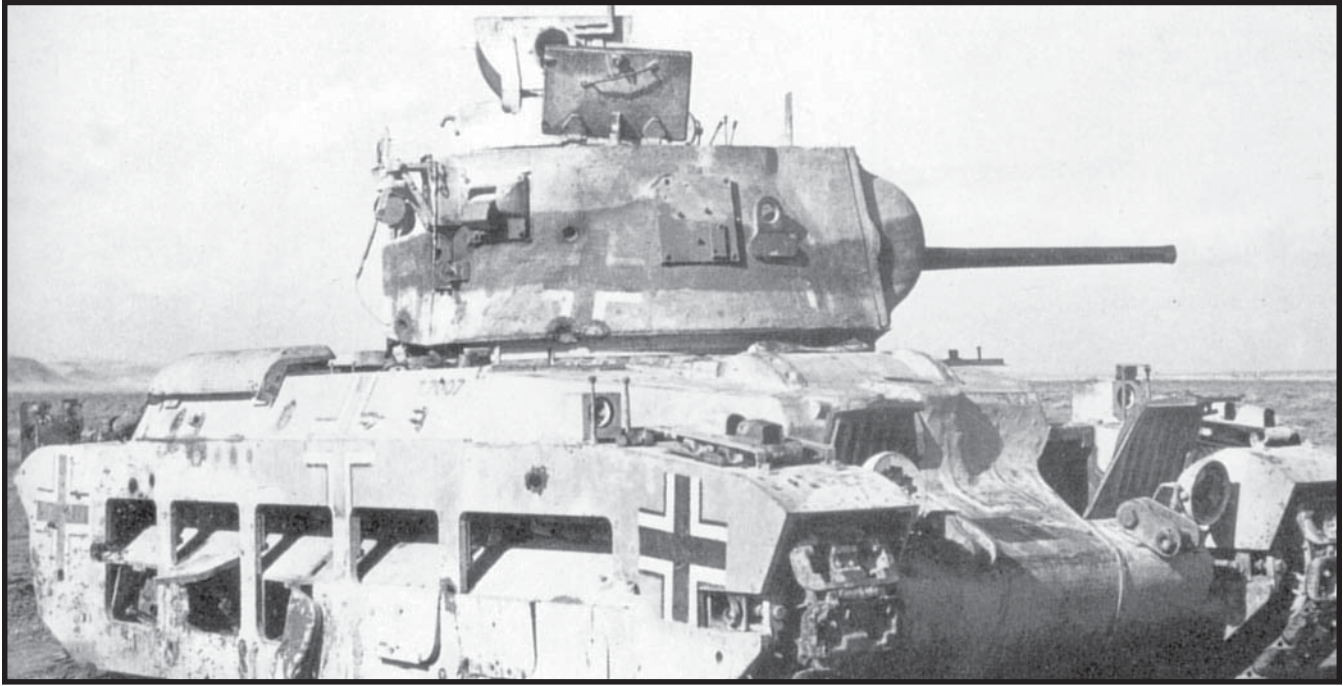
— General Sir Claude Auchinleck,
Commander in Chief, Middle East

Also called the *Horchkompanie* ("listening" company), the 3rd Company 56th Signals Battalion monitored most Allied wireless transmissions on the North African front. It intercepted, recorded, and analyzed voice messages sent "in the clear" (uncoded and unencrypted) by inexperienced British radio operators along the front, passing intelligence along to Rommel's staff that helped the Desert Fox earn his reputation



Rommel stops to have some tea with members of Seebohm's company.





A captured Matilda pressed into German service.

for outguessing and outmaneuvering his opponents. Under the command of Wehrmacht Captain Alfred Seebohm, a master code breaker and cryptographer, this mobile unit also received, decoded and deciphered messages sent in Morse Code between frontline units, desert commandos, and the headquarters of British Troops Egypt. Thanks to a compromised American code and a thorough American military attaché in Cairo, Seebohm even intercepted detailed reports of British unit dispositions and operational plans (see the Compromised Intelligence sidebar).

The *Fernmeldeaufklärung* company operated along the front lines and in rearward command areas. For mobile operations, the unit used several wireless trucks (similar to the British signals vans described in Chapter Two: Ordnance and Equipment), as well as an escort of reconnaissance and transport vehicles, including SdKfz 234/2 Pumas, SdKfz 231/1s, SdKfz 251 halftracks for support troops, and enough trucks to transport the company's remaining personnel.

Normally intercepted signals intelligence passed to Rommel's staff intelligence officer, Major Friedrich Wilhelm von Mellenthin. Messages sent "in the clear" were translated, analyzed, and summarized for von Mellenthin within a few hours. Encoded and enciphered wireless transmissions took a bit more work to process, often taking up to 24

hours, even when aided by experienced signals officers, captured codes, cipher machines, and cipher imps.

Although the signals company operated officially as a unit of the Wehrmacht, the SBG infiltrated and controlled it, screening all intelligence gathered before authorizing any of it to pass to Rommel. Most strategic information passed through unhindered, but the SBG often withheld intelligence regarding OSI operations and supernatural phenomena amidst the Allied forces. It used this information in acting against British attempts to harness spiritual energy to aid their war effort (see *Weird Feats* in Chapter One: Desert Training for information on the SBG, SS, and Nazi doctors interested in capturing and experimenting on Allied soldiers exposed to supernatural phenomena).

The SBG secretly recruited Captain Seebohm and several other key members of the *Horchkompanie* to enforce their control over intercepted intelligence. The organization also aided interception efforts, primarily by providing through the SS captured code books and cipher machines. The SBG also summoned cipher imps to more rapidly decipher messages—the diminutive creatures lurked in several German signals vans, listening and reading intercepts and babbling possible solutions until something made sense to the handler. Seebohm kept the existence of these creatures secret lest his true association with the SBG become too widely known.





Compromised Intelligence

"The military intelligence service has come into the possession of the American secret code."

—Galeazza Ciano, Italian Foreign Minister

A compromised American diplomatic code allowed Rommel to intercept a detailed account of British operations in North Africa from January 1942 until the intelligence leak was discovered six months later.

The American military attaché in Cairo, Colonel Bonner F. Fellers, worked closely with Commonwealth forces to evaluate British operations, morale, supplies, and, most importantly, the effects of American lend-lease aid on the battlefield. To prepare his reports with firsthand knowledge, Colonel Fellers extensively toured the North African front. He encrypted his evaluations with the American Black Code and sent them via wireless back to American military intelligence in Washington, DC.

Little did he or the Allies realize that German signals intelligence could read and react to every report sent to America in the Black Code. Italian spies stole the code book from the American military attaché in Rome (America and Italy were not at war in August 1941). German cryptologists attached to the Afrika Korps in the *Fernmeldeaufklärung* Company also broke the cipher used to encrypt the messages. After Colonel Fellers sent his comprehensive report to Washington, German signals officers intercepted,

decrypted, decoded, and translated them. In the morning they presented them as a detailed appraisal of British troop strength and location, morale, and operational objectives to Rommel and SS officers covertly working as the SBG. The Germans used this intelligence to great advantage during the first half of 1942, as Rommel rebounded from his earlier retreat and marched from El Agheila to El Alamein.

The British suspected this leak after several operations failed due to obviously compromised intelligence. Captured German troops later confirmed that their *Horchkompanie* signalers were regularly reading intercepts from a source in Cairo. The British quickly tracked the leak to Colonel Fellers's office and arranged for his quiet transfer to Washington. The new U.S. military attaché scrapped the compromised Black Code and began using a new encryption technique.

This proved a double setback for Rommel. His source of accurate and comprehensive information on British operations immediately dried up. But the Desert Fox couldn't anticipate that Churchill would use this compromised American intelligence source as a bargaining chip to pressure President Roosevelt to increase lend-lease support and seriously commit to a joint British-American invasion of North Africa: Operation Torch.

Colonel Fellers later received the Distinguished Service Medal for his work in North Africa, the citation noting that "his reports to the War Department were models of clarity and accuracy."

The SBG also controlled Seeböhm's platoon of Huff-Duff operators. Working from Puma scout cars and employing high-frequency direction-finding equipment, this unit ranged through the desert independently and with recon and SBG groups to track down enemy transmitters in the Saharan wastelands. Their principle targets were the LRDG, SAS, and other commandos operating behind German lines to disrupt supply, command, and support facilities. The *Fernmeldeaufklärung* company lost one of these squads in early 1942 when it unsuccessfully tried to hunt down and harness several wireless hounds in the desert south of El Agheila.

Rommel's superior intelligence sources dried up in June 1942 at the Battle of Gazala. Operating on the ever-fluid front line, a majority of the *Horchkompanie* fell victim to an unexpected British thrust.

Seeböhm died, and the rest of the well-trained, experienced signals intercept officers were killed or captured. Rommel and the SBG tried unsuccessfully to form a new company to replace the one lost at Gazala, but it never recovered the former unit's deft ability to efficiently read British communications. Lack of accurate intelligence played a detrimental role in Rommel's impending halt and defeat at El Alamein, and his fighting retreat for the duration of the North African campaign.

Funktechniker

The typical Afrika Korps wireless operator (*funktechniker*, "radio technician," in German) was a rank-and-file soldier promoted within his original unit and trained in radio operations and protocol. He spent his shifts cramped in the radio van or hunched next to a unit in a transport truck, headphones cramping his hot ears, scribbling dots and dashes





German troops survey a disabled tank looking for salvageable equipment.

into his notebook. He was essential in maintaining communication between frontline combat units, desert reconnaissance forces, and headquarters.

Funktechniker: CR 5; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 4/Sig 1; hp 27; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk Luger +5; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Driving +6, Gather Information +4, Hide +5, Listen +8, Mechanic +7, Move Silently +5, Observation and Assessment +5, Search +7, Spot +7, Wireless Telegraphy +8; Arid Acclimatization, Firearms Proficiency, Lay of the Land, Lightning Reflexes, Rank: Obergefreiter, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Technically Adept, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Headphones, wireless set, pad and pencil, Pistole 08 Luger, 2 spare magazines, 30 rounds of 9mm ammunition, uniform

Funktechniker, Veteran

After enough time wireless operators gained more knowledge of radio protocol and a better idea of the overall importance of signals intelligence in the greater scheme of frontline actions. The most talented of these received transfers from their original units to the *Fernmeldeaufklärung* company, where they specialized in tuning into and intercepting enemy transmissions. This was considered a prime billet because it was away from the fighting and near a headquarters—usually with better food.

Veteran Funktechniker: CR 7; Medium-size Human; Class: Grt 4/Sig 3; hp 36; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk Luger +5; AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Driving +7, Gather Information +5, Hide +5, Listen +8, Mechanic +8, Move Silently +5, Observation and Assessment +8, Search +7, Speak Language (English) +5, Spot +7, Wireless Telegraphy +11; Arid Acclimatization, Firearms Proficiency, Lay of the Land, Lightning Reflexes, Rank: Feldwebel, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Technically Adept, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities:

Lay of the Land Bonus: The veteran funktechniker gains a +2 bonus to Wireless Telegraphy when carefully sighting his aerial.

Fist Recognition: Can identify the Morse Code sending style of various radio operators (see signaler prestige class description in Chapter One: Desert Training).

Possessions: Headphones, wireless set, pad and pencil, Pistole 08 Luger, 2 spare magazines, 30 rounds of 9mm ammunition, uniform

Horchkompanie Officer

Officers in the *Fernmeldeaufklärung* company managed the numerous radio operators under their command, supervising efforts to intercept, decode, decipher, and translate British wireless messages. They also helped their superiors analyze the content and importance of intercepted communiqués, and operated Huff-Duff equipment to locate enemy transmitters.

Horchkompanie Officer: CR 5; Medium-size Human; Class: Ofc 4/Sig 1; hp 23; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk Luger +5; AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Decipher Script +6, Diplomacy +4, Driving +5, Leadership +6, Observation and Assessment +8, Search +7, Speak Language (English) +8, Spot +6, Wireless Telegraphy +10; Lay of the Land, Rank: Leutnant, Technically Adept, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency





Operational Briefing

Special Qualities: None

Possessions: Headphones, wireless set, pad and pencil, Pistole 08 Luger, 2 spare magazines, 30 rounds of 9mm ammunition, uniform

Horchkompanie Officer, Veteran

Veteran wireless officers cracked enemy codes and ciphers, analyzed the overall import of intercepted transmissions, summarized and prioritized information slated for headquarters, and were essential to providing Rommel the edge he so desperately needed on the battlefield. The SBG recruited, blackmailed, or otherwise pressured many officers at this level to filter all intelligence through that organization and tip them off regarding intelligence of particularly sensitive nature.

Veteran Horchkompanie Officer: CR 7; Medium-size Human; Class: Ofc 4/Sig 3; hp 28; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk Luger +5; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +5, Decipher Script +10, Diplomacy +6, Driving +6, Leadership +8, Observation and Assessment +12, Search +7, Speak Language (English) +8, Spot +7, Wireless Telegraphy +12; Desert Fox, Firearms Proficiency, Lay of the Land, Light Armor Proficiency, Rank: Leutnant, Technically Adept, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities:

Lay of the Land Bonus: The veteran Horchkompanie officer gains a +2 bonus to Wireless Telegraphy when carefully sighting his aerial.

Fist Recognition: Can identify the Morse Code sending style of various radio operators (see signaler prestige class description in Chapter One: Desert Training).

Possessions: Headphones, wireless set, pad and pencil, Pistole 08 Luger, 2 spare magazines, 30 rounds of 9mm ammunition, uniform

Hauptman Alfred Seebom

Captain Alfred Seebom commanded Rommel's Horchkompanie, intercepting and analyzing enemy wireless transmissions. Although a ranking officer overseeing radio intercept operations, Seebom was a practical, hands-on fellow who engaged in much of the work

himself. He took a quiet pride in his job, which helped masked his anxiety in attending two masters. Seebom walked a fine line between admiring and serving Rommel and placating the SBG's demands that all intelligence pass through that organization first. Both played on his sense of pride to urge him to more comprehensively monitor and interpret British wireless traffic. The SBG also pressured him with the usual SS tactics—cooperate and your family back home would not fall under suspicion of treasonous activities.

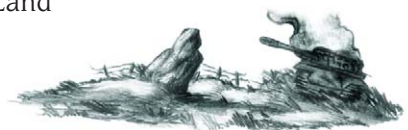
Seebom's unit, and the captain himself, often accompanied Rommel's headquarters, camping nearby. The Desert Fox frequently commanded from the front, traveling by car or reconnaissance plane from headquarters to the front, rearward supply areas, and the siege at Tobruk. Seebom's *Fernmeldeaufklärung* personnel more often than not interacted with Rommel's command staff. The captain's practical nature and easy manner with others ensured an efficient and amiable working relationship with staff officers. Seebom maintained a strained relationship with his SBG masters, trying to work with them with the utmost discretion, but also chafing at their increasingly intrusive demands.

Seebom was killed during a sudden British offensive at the Battle of Gazala, when the Horchkompanie encampment was shelled and then overrun by infantry. Allied personnel believe Seebom and most of his highly trained, experienced personnel were killed; a few who were captured revealed the true extent of German intelligence intercept activity and the degree to which it influenced Rommel's seemingly supernatural ability to second-guess and surprise the British.

Hauptman Alfred Seebom: CR 12;

Medium-size Human; Class: Ofc 6/Sig 6; hp 78; Init +2; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk Luger +10/+5; AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Decipher Script +19, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +11, Driving +9, Gather Information +10, Hide +9, Intuit Direction +10, Leadership +9, Listen +10, Move Silently +6, Navigation +6, Observation and Assessment +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +10, Speak Language (English) +9, Spot +8, Wireless Telegraphy +19; Arid Acclimatization, Desert Defenses, Desert Fox, Firearms Proficiency, Furtive, Incoming!, Lay of the Land





A German supply convoy follows a rugged desert track.

(desert), Rank: Hauptman, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Technically Adept, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities:

Lay of the Land Bonus: Seebohm gains a +2 bonus to Wireless Telegraphy when carefully sighting his aerial.

Fist Recognition: Can identify the Morse Code sending style of various radio operators (see signaler prestige class description in Chapter One: Desert Training).

Huff Duff Intuition: Using his wireless set, Seebohm can track and estimate the location of a transmitter on a particular frequency after monitoring it for 24-48 hours.

Possessions: Headphones, wireless set, pad and pencil, Pistole 08 Luger, 2 spare magazines, 30 rounds of 9mm ammunition, uniform

Adventure Seed: Downed Codebreakers

The RAF shoots down a Ju-52 reportedly carrying a team of *Horchkompanie* code experts on their way to a German-occupied oasis—the characters receive orders to find the downed plane, capture its passengers, and acquire enemy code books, cipher devices, and possibly a cipher imp without the Germans knowing the British have obtained them. The survivors have dug in, however, improvising defenses (both mundane and magical) until reinforcements arrive to rescue them: a panzer reconnaissance company with an SBG detail under orders to retrieve the signals crew...or kill them if they fall into Allied hands.

Sonderkommando Almasy

“Almasy was often traveling in Libya, usually at someone else's expense. He had a real passion for the desert and much of it he knew extremely well.”

—Captain W. B. Kennedy Shaw, LRDG

The LRDG wasn't the only group operating in the desert behind enemy lines. The Germans had their own special commando group, *Sonderkommando Almasy*, that was smaller than the LRDG but

mirrored many of its functions. Employing intimate knowledge of the desert terrain throughout Libya and Egypt, the unit operated six squads, each with a few cars fitted for desert travel. Its leader—a Hungarian count famed for his desert exploration before the war—used his navigational expertise to guide the unit through the desert on various covert missions.

Sonderkommando Almasy was not as heavily equipped and supported as its British counterpart, so it consigned itself to “taxi service” and “road watch” duties and avoided confrontations, planned “beat ups,” and raids. The cars cruised across the desert to insert spies and informants into key locations in British controlled Egypt, including Cairo. Some journeys simply probed British defenses and the vigilance of the LRDG. Other trips mapped out routes for future travels, or reconnoitered the terrain for potential outflanking maneuvers the Afrika Korps might make south of any British defensive line. At times *Sonderkommando Almasy* teams gathered intelligence like the LRDG's “road watch,” monitoring desert oases for activity, discovering and appropriating supply dumps, and collecting information about enemy strength and disposition.

Although the commandos themselves were well-trained, they stood little chance in a scrap with better armed and equipped troops—even the LRDG. They avoided armed confrontation. Using unmarked kubelwagens or civilian cars, the *Sonderkommando Almasy* relied more on bluffing and speeding their way past confused Arab sentries and bewildered British privates on guard duty. To pass as





civilians, they did not mount heavy machineguns on their vehicles, though they heaped supplies, jerry cans, and gear onto the cars as if they were peacetime desert explorers. The LRDG detected signs of activity from *Sonderkommando Almasy*: phantom tire tracks in the sands, discarded equipment, and stories from startled sentries who innocently let them pass.

Sonderkommando Almasy worked primarily out of the Jalo oasis in the spring of 1942, during Rommel's second advance across Cyrenaica. Many surmise that the unit was active in the region before then, though no proof of this exists. Almasy, the group's leader, no doubt made several desert expeditions to insert German spies into Egypt during the early stages of the North African campaign.

Sonderkommando

Those serving with *Sonderkommando Almasy* were hardy types conditioned to desert survival, operating behind enemy lines, and responding to a variety of situations.

A combination of soldier-spy, they employed equipment scavenged from questionable sources, drove vehicles appropriated from British civilians, German command units, and Italian settlers, and wore uniforms of a British cut or clothing suitable for European desert explorers.

Many relied on subtlety, guile, and trickery rather than outright force to achieve their mission objectives—though combat had its place when the circumstances became desperate. They knew they could depend on little support from the formal units of the Afrika Korps and only minimal assistance from German intelligence operatives already working in Egypt. They had to arrange for their own supplies, weapons, and gear, or acquire them on their own. Each commando functioned equally well as an individual or with a unit.

Sonderkommando: CR 8; Medium-size Human; Class: Sct 5/Com 3; hp 57; Init +6; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk Enfield No.2 +10 or knife +9; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +5, Disable Device +4, Demolitions +4, Driving +5, Heal +3, Hide +10, Intuit Direction +4, Listen +3, Mechanic +2, Move Silently +10, Navigation +4, Observation and Assessment +4, Open Lock +5, Search

Bluffing the Guard

One might ask how *Sonderkommando Almasy* personnel found it so easy to bluff their way past guards posted in major desert towns and oases. The roads through such places were often monitored by local militia reporting to the town officials, or members of the native Sudanese Defense Force. Even for British troops in these regions, the war, and thus enemy personnel, was a long way off to the north. Timing the encounter for early morning or evening might catch sentries off guard. With unmarked cars, dusty uniforms, and someone who spoke fluent Arabic or English, passing through wasn't much of a problem.

The LRDG's intelligence officer, Captain W.B. Kennedy Shaw, relates one such incident with members of *Sonderkommando Almasy* in *Long Range Desert Group*, his account of LRDG activities during the war:

"Then early one morning in June the Arab watchman on the landing ground at Kharga [an oasis only 100 miles west of the Nile] saw a car approaching as he stirred himself from sleep. The car stopped and an officer leaned out, speaking to him in Arabic: he wanted to know just where the road to Asyut [a port on the Nile] left the oasis. The Arab showed him and the car drove off. It was a British type of car and no doubt, thought the watchman, the officer was British. These mad foreigners were always roaming about the desert and a few of them spoke Arabic. He turned his thoughts to breakfast.

"The next morning at about the same time the same car passed him returning from Asyut and drove off westwards into the desert. 'Well,' thought the watchman, 'that's a bit odd. I may as well tell the Mudir.' So he told the Mudir [a local official] who forwarded a report through the 'usual channels' which finally reached someone in Cairo who wondered if there really *had* been a British car in Kharga at that time on that day and took the trouble to find out.

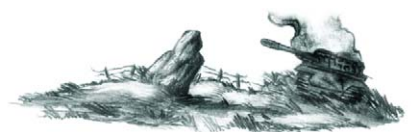
+4, Speak Arabic +3, Speak English +6, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +4, Wireless Telegraphy +3; Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Desert Fox, Endurance, Expertise, Firearms Proficiency, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Lay of the Land (desert), Simple Weapons Proficiency, Track, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities:

Pathfinder: See Scout description in *Blood on the Rhine*, pages 32-33.

Sneak Attack +2d6: See the *Player's Handbook* page 47.

Uncanny Dodge: See the *Player's Handbook* page 48.





German soldiers travel in a kubelwagen. Notice the jerrycan on the rear fender.

Possessions: Enfield No.2 Mk1*, 20 rounds of .38 caliber ammunition, knife, canteen, desert clothing, scarf, goggles, survival kit.

German Intelligence Operative

*Sonderkommando Almas*y occasionally transported German spies across the desert, around British patrols, and into the inhabited regions of Egypt. These

operatives mingled with the European population in such urban areas as Cairo and Alexandria, gathering intelligence on enemy strength and disposition, subverting others to the Nazi cause, and sometimes even engaging in outright sabotage.

Once he settled himself into life among the British, an operative used a variety of methods to glean useful information for his superiors back at German headquarters—the more effective techniques were often those that entailed greater risk of exposure and capture. He gathered intelligence by eavesdropping, mingling with military personnel,

observing installations, watching the roads heading toward the front, and by befriending or blackmailing those who could acquire information for him. His superiors sometimes ordered him to engage in more dangerous activities: breaking into offices of high-ranking personnel, assassinating key officers, infiltrating secure military installations, and sabotaging aircraft.

The members of *Sonderkommando Almas*y were an operative's only lifeline in or out of hostile territory. They delivered communiqués and retrieved intelligence reports lest the operative give away his position by using a wireless set. Teams transported essential equipment across the desert to resupply operatives. In dire circumstances they extracted operatives whose cover had become compromised and were forced to flee with vital information.

German Intelligence Operative: CR 8;

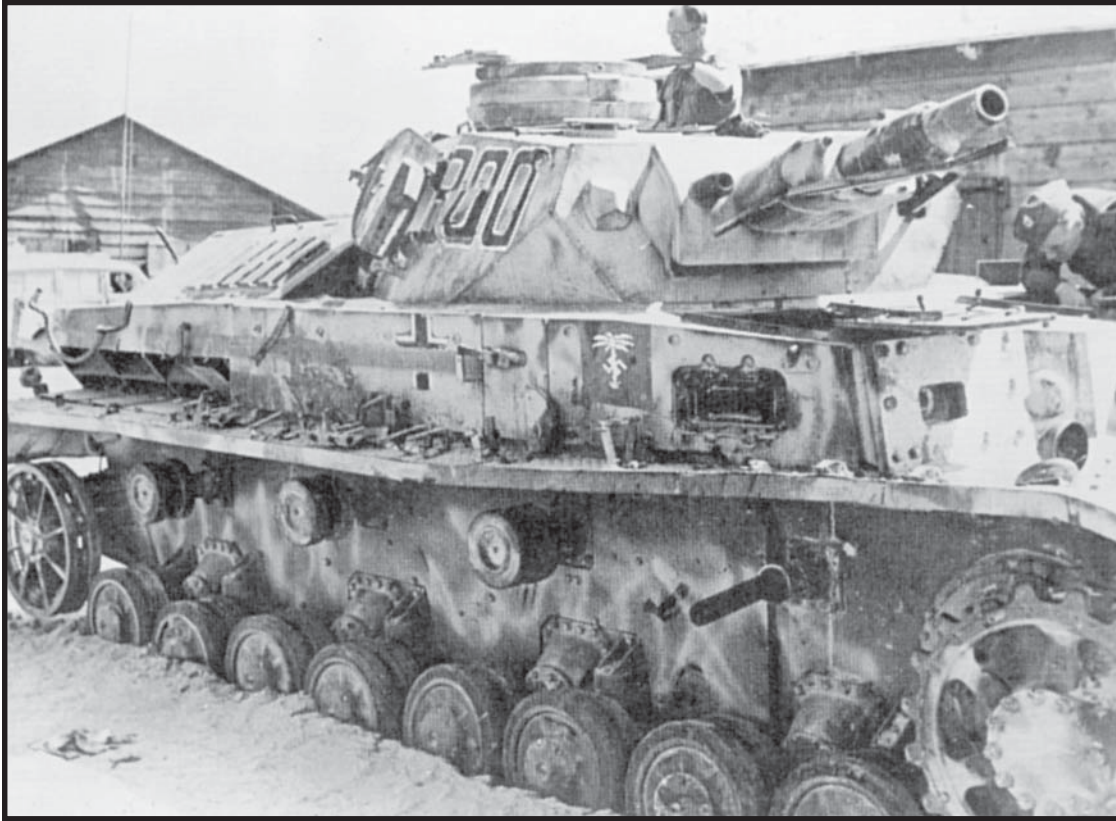
Medium-size Human; Class: Sct 5/Opt 3; hp 37; Init +6; Spd 10 yds; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk Enfield No.2 +9 or knife +8; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Climb +4, Disable Device +8, Demolitions +7, Disguise +6, Driving +7, Heal +5, Hide +8, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +6, Intuit Direction +5, Jump +3, Listen +9, Move Silently +8, Observation and Assessment +11, Open Lock +7, Search +8, Sense Motive +8, Speak Arabic +7, Speak English +8, Spot +10, Wireless

Adventure Seed: Time Commandos

The characters stumble onto an antiquities theft and become embroiled in the ensuing investigation. The stolen papyrus scroll purportedly contained magical spells from the time of Ramses the Great. Soon the heroes find evidence that a group of German agents operating with support from *Sonderkommando Almas*y are working to translate the hieroglyphics and organize an expedition to the temple of Abu Simbel in southern Egypt. The characters must wend their way through shady contacts, traitorous antiquities merchants, and mysterious scholars to gather clues about the operatives' mission and follow their path to the temple. The spies have plenty of help from undercover German partisans and the desert raiders from the *Sonderkommando Almas*y. If the characters don't stop the agents, the Germans might use the spells on the scroll to open a magical portal in the temple, one that leads back to a key point in time where they can alter the course of history in favor of Nazi victory in North Africa.





A Panzer III is repaired in the field.

Telegraphy +6; Alertness, Automatic Weapons Proficiency, Expertise, Firearms Proficiency, Improved Initiative, Furtive, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Technically Adept, Track

Special Qualities:

Pathfinder: See Scout description in *Blood on the Rhine*, page 33.

Sneak Attack +3d6: See the *Player's Handbook* page 47.

Uncanny Dodge: See the *Player's Handbook* page 48.

Possessions: Enfield No.2 Mk1*, 20 rounds of .38 caliber ammunition, knife, pad and pencil, ordinary clothes, suitcase.

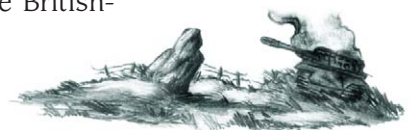
Count Ladislaus Edouard de Almasy

The leader of *Sonderkommando Almasy* was a renowned desert explorer in the years before the war. The Hungarian count maintained the status of a Renaissance man of the Sahara, a seasoned traveler, English-educated linguist, experienced driver and pilot, and author of several essays about his desert journeys. Between 1929 and the outbreak of war Almasy made several expeditions by automobile, including a trek from East Africa to Egypt and various visits to the oases and Arab settlements from the Nile

to the Sudan and out into the Libyan Desert. Along the way he pursued an interest in history, seeking evidence of ancient habitation—prehistoric rock paintings, lost Persian armies, and stockpiles of pottery that once held precious supplies of water for Roman explorers.

Almasy frequently worked with German or Italian adventurers and archaeologists. Given his prior associations and his tendency to advocate totalitarian governments, it was no surprise when the LRDG learned he was working with the Afrika Korps leading a special commando unit in the desert.

As leader of *Sonderkommando Almasy* the count put his desert experience to work for the Germans. Operating from Jalo oasis and other Saharan posts, he organized a group of commandos and led them behind enemy lines to cause mischief. The true extent and effectiveness of these measures was never known, though some might attribute various inexplicable events to Almasy's meddling. Before the war he spent quite a bit of time in Cairo, using it as a base from which to plan his expeditions. With his fluent English and Arabic, and his ability to infiltrate British-





US Shermans load up before moving out.

controlled Egypt via the desert, Almasi might have even worked as a spy in Cairo during the war.

The mystery surrounding Almasi's activities was due in part to his ability to traverse the desert undetected, using knowledge of the terrain gained in his past expeditions. He had detailed maps of the entire region, and updated them during every mission. In addition to planning and participating in *sonderkommando* operations, Almasi also served as the unit's chief navigator and desert expert, training others in the unit so they could operate more independently.

Only a handful of British military personnel recall meeting Almasi before the war. Those who did remembered him as an aloof foreigner who at times could easily slip into British and Arabic society. Although proud of his accomplishments as a desert explorer, Almasi guarded the

knowledge he gained, sharing it with others only when it might provide him with advantage or profit. A practical fellow, he seemed most at ease in his beloved desert.

Count Almasi: CR 12; Medium-size Human; Class: Sct 12; hp 66; Init +1; Spd 10 yds; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk Webley Mk4 +13/+8/+3; AL LN; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +7, Climb +2, Disable Device +5, Demolitions +4, Driving +10, Gather Information +4, Heal +5, Hide +4, Intuit Direction +9, Jump +1, Listen +10, Move Silently +5, Navigation +12, Observation and Assessment +10, Open Lock +3, Piloting +5, Search +7, Speak Arabic +9, Speak English +8, Spot +10, Wilderness Lore +12, Wireless Telegraphy +5; Arid Acclimatization, Desert Fox, Find Water, Firearms Proficiency, Lay of the Land (desert), Point Blank Shot, Sahara Lore, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Single-Engine Aircraft Proficiency, Track, Tracked Vehicle Proficiency, Wheeled Vehicle Proficiency

Special Qualities:

One with Nature: See the Scout description in *Blood on the Rhine*, page 33.

Pathfinder: See Scout description in *Blood on the Rhine*, page 33.

Sneak Attack +3d6: See the *Player's Handbook* page 47.

Uncanny Dodge: See the *Player's Handbook* page 48.

Possessions: Webley Mk4, 20 rounds of .38 caliber ammunition, canteen, desert clothing, survival kit.

The English Patient

Almasi and his role as a spy during World War II received popularity in an Oscar-winning 1997 film. *The English Patient* was loosely based on Almasi's background as a desert explorer, but fictionalized events and did not accurately reflect the true nature or effectiveness of *Sonderkommando Almasi* in the desert war.

The film provides impressions of prewar Cairo, the capture of Tobruk, and some cinematically impressive scenes of the vast Saharan terrain. It also illustrates some of the methods, hazards, and experiences in crossing the desert by automobile and airplane.





Campaign Themes

The North African theater offers a variety of campaign styles with varying degrees of weirdness. War Masters can stick with one theme, exhaust the adventure potential of one and move on to another as the characters advance, or find excuses for the same heroes to touch on choice elements of each campaign. Each has potential for weird elements to creep up on characters or drop in on them full force, depending on the War Master's style and the effect he intends for the game.

Each theme description below provides notes on ideal character classes for the campaign, ideas on exposing heroes to weirdness, and a sample campaign overview with a few brief adventure seeds. War Masters can translate adventure ideas from one campaign style into another, mixing and matching mission profiles to best suit their gaming style and their players' appetites for different experiences.

Frontline Action

"With the wantonness of a boy destroying some harmless bird for 'sport,' I contributed my share towards the never-ending story of man's inhumanity to man."

—John Verney, British Infantryman

War at the front lines was Hell—give the heroes a taste of this in a campaign focusing on battlefield operations. Let them hold the line at Sollum or El Alamein, drive tanks against the panzers in the "Cauldron," protect Tobruk against siege, charge up the beaches in Operation Torch, or fight through the savage terrain of Kasserine Pass. Such a combat campaign serves to give low-level characters basic experience fighting the Axis—and introduces essential rules concepts to new players—with perhaps only a hint of the sinister weirdness lurking behind the Nazi facade.

The frontline campaign encompasses the most common battlefield elements: patrols, minefields, advances, the confusion of battle, displacement, and recovery. The heroes don't have to worry about the overall action, just their particular piece of it. For instance,

characters taking part in the Battle of El Alamein might brave enemy fire to clear a safe passage through the minefields, take part in the armored breakout and assault through the Axis lines, or hold the extreme left of the Allied line against Italian infantry divisions trying to outflank the British.

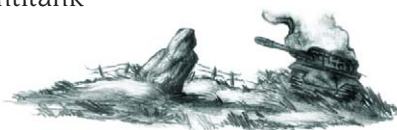
Given the fluid nature of battle, characters of any fighting unit might find themselves involved in the action. Non-motorized infantry wouldn't normally participate in a speedy armored advance, but might offer support clearing mines, follow to help reinforce battlefield gains, or defend a position where tanks are holed up. Tankers might mingle with infantry in defensive actions along the lines established near Sollum in 1941 or El Alamein in 1942, but they might also attempt daring outflanking maneuvers in the deserts to the south, or try smashing through tough enemy defenses across the battlefield. Recon units would probe the Sahara, sparring with highly mobile German forces and seeking a means of outflanking the enemy without endangering precious resources in minefields and impassable terrain.

For some ideas for the kinds of actions involved in various operations, consult the Campaign Phases section at the beginning of this chapter. It provides a basic overview of how the tide turned across the North African deserts, including major battles and other actions at various locations.

During a traditional frontline campaign, the characters might only encounter the faintest evidence of the supernatural, something they uncover as a growing menace to confront in the campaign climax. War Masters can use a few battlefield missions to introduce players to the basic game and universe concepts of World War II adventuring, then promote their characters to an arena where they have more exposure to weird elements (like the Desert Raiders or OSI campaigns). If they have any extreme degree of involvement with the supernatural, they would naturally find themselves involuntarily transferred to an OSI campaign.

Character Classes

Most of the basic character classes found in *Weird War II: Blood on the Rhine* fit into a frontline campaign. Officers, medics, and scouts all serve an essential purpose on the battlefield. Grunts form the backbone of fighting units. Antitank



Chapter Three



teams, combat engineers, infantrymen, machinegunners, mortar crewmen, and tankers play essential roles at the front. Although a few units might have snipers and minefield engineers, few other prestige classes (and no overt OSI prestige classes) operate on the battlefield.

Weird Exposure

The frontline campaign focuses on the rigors of combat and battlefield confusion. These elements offer distractions that divert the heroes' attention from odd occurrences, allowing War Masters to subtly insert hints of weirdness. Were those Germans really zombies, or did they just look that way because the Allies have vilified them so much? Funny how that sandstorm blew in just in time to cover the Axis retreat and foil the British advance.

Although the characters' exposure to supernatural elements might be kept to a minimum as they acclimate themselves to an intense combat environment, War Masters can escalate the weirdness, drawing the campaign in a different direction. Perhaps one character somehow acquires a "weird feat" and must figure out what's happening to him and how to control it (see the Weird Feats section in Chapter One: Desert Training).

Should the heroes stumble onto something really big, the OSI steps in, "transfers" them back to a secure location in Cairo, initiates them into their elite organization, and sends them off to

uncover and battle even more insidious paranormal forces in the Nazis' control. A frontline campaign gives them enough experience to advance to an OSI prestige class to fight the supernatural powers opposing the Allies.

Sample Campaign Overview

War Masters can flesh out these brief outlines to form a short frontline campaign. Although they refer to action just prior to and during the Battle of El Alamein, they could conceivably lead up to any major battle during the North African campaign. These seeds work best for infantry units, though War Masters can change certain circumstances to better suit the needs of tanker characters. At first they might seem ordinary, but a campaign of this nature focuses on introducing heroes to the rigors of combat (giving players a taste of the game) with occasional and vague weirdness stirring up the pot.

Perimeter Guard: The characters have been moved to the front to shore up gaps in the line. They must establish and protect a defensive formation under occasional enemy artillery fire. They fortify a foxhole for their machinegunner, mortar crewman, or antitank team, string barbed wire and plant mines, dig trenches to connect other defensive positions, and survey enemy activity across the flat desert.

When their commanding officer goes down under a sudden artillery barrage, they must scurry to a nearby unit under heavy enemy fire to retrieve additional medical supplies to stabilize the officer before he can be evacuated. While maintaining watch after sundown, they discover a sneak German attack that probes their position's defenses and threatens to weaken the overall battle line.

Sortie: Desperate for some indication of enemy strength and defenses, command orders the characters' unit to undertake a nighttime sortie to probe the German perimeter. Skirting a minefield and scrambling around in the dark, they eventually reach a network of barbed wire and booby



A British Sherman advances near the Mareth Line in Tunisia.





A German 88 rigged for towing behind an Sdkfz 9.

trapped trenches filled with dead Germans. Obviously, the enemy has retreated to a point beyond these defenses.

As the characters probe deeper into the abandoned position, the seemingly dead Nazis soon rise and ambush them—are these just soldiers who look more injured than they let on, or are they something more sinister and incomprehensible? Additional attacks from troops farther back pit the characters in a deadly crossfire. The characters must fight their way out of the trenches and back across a minefield under enemy fire and reanimant attack.

Panzer Attack: The strain of prolonged combat increases when a sudden sandstorm descends on the battlefield. The characters wait out the storm in what shelter they can find, peering through the dust and listening for any sounds of enemy activity.

When the sky clears, they face a phalanx of panzers charging their position! After a desperate struggle to hold off the tank attack, the characters must repel an advance by brutish German troopers who seem to hold up extremely well under fire (misshapen brutes from *Blood on the Rhine*, page 164).

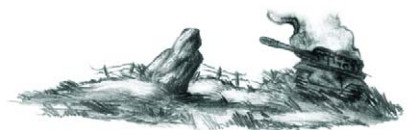
Minefield Clearance: Headquarters is preparing for an upcoming offensive. The characters are assigned to a nighttime mine-clearing detail sweeping a corridor

over which tanks and motorized infantry will pass during the advance. If the characters aren't combat or minefield engineers, they provide armed guard for the mine removal team.

After dispatching an enemy patrol, the group uncovers and disarms several antitank mines. Suddenly, German soldiers buried beneath the sand rise up and attack the characters, some even exploding (these are corpse mines from Chapter Four: Bestiary). The characters must extricate themselves from the ambush and retreat back to their defensive line under occasional enemy fire. Their retreat may be complicated by the need to transport NPCs wounded in the fighting.

On the Move: The characters take part in a mechanized infantry advance against the Germans. Following a tank thrust through enemy lines, the characters follow to provide support and mop up Nazi infantry resistance. As they advance after the retreating enemy, the characters encounter a burned-out panzer whose dead inhabitants are not quite ready to leave the land of the living.

Eventually the heroes catch up with their tanks, now halted against reinforced enemy lines with more British troops piling up behind them, making retreat difficult. Alternately, this operation could come as part of a fighting retreat in the face of a renewed Axis offensive.





British Matildas attacking during Operation Battleaxe.

RAF

"Two-Sixteen Squadron remained masters of the desert sky, taking Stirling and his parashots to Jalo, ferrying supplies for the French when they attacked Kufra, evacuating our wounded, bringing us stores to Siwa and all this but a fraction of their everyday work for Middle East."

—Captain W. B. Kennedy Shaw, LRDG

Although the RAF played a supporting role in North Africa, its operations proved essential to wearing down Axis forces and ultimately winning the campaign. As heroes of the RAF, the characters fly sorties to ensure victory for the Allies, striking enemy targets across North Africa and tangling with the Luftwaffe and Regia Aeronautica.

An RAF campaign packs plenty of flight time. Typical missions include flying over front lines, avoiding enemy patrols, dodging antiaircraft fire, attacking the target, and heading home. Objectives primarily consist of the beleaguered and overextended Axis supply infrastructure: shipping in the Mediterranean, truck convoys along the Via Balbia, supply dumps in both rear areas and the front lines, and low flying transport aircraft. RAF heroes might also hit battlefield

targets to weaken enemy capabilities in preparation for an Allied ground offensive or to cover a fighting retreat. RAF patrols can intercept Axis bomber formations, reconnaissance and transport craft, and fighter sorties.

Some squadrons might fly support for desert units like the LRDG and SAS, ferrying supplies, transporting the wounded, flying diversionary attacks, and searching for members lost in the vast desert wasteland. Their primary challenges include sudden rain and sand storms, antiaircraft fire, and the determined pilots of the Luftwaffe and Regia Aeronautica.

War Masters can establish the heroes' squadron at a fixed, rear-area airfield facility near Cairo or Alexandria, or allow them to operate from temporary airstrips cleared and leveled from the sand. These offer faster access to the front, but also prove vulnerable to the fluid nature of desert warfare. Rear area fields allow the heroes access to the cities of Cairo and Alexandria. This makes possible all sorts of non-aerial adventures, including a number of the adventure seeds that have been proposed so far.

Success or failure directly affects the action at the front, and thus the pilots' home base. If they don't sink those petrol tankers crossing the Mediterranean, or blast the supply column heading eastward along the coastal road, Axis forces could





Operational Briefing

have enough fuel, munitions, and provisions to push the British line back and overrun the heroes' airfield—time to relocate in a hurry.

Just because the heroes are pilots doesn't mean they must spend every adventure in the air. They might help oversee security at their airfield, watching out for locals who might report to German intelligence officers, or infiltration by agents inserted by *Sonderkommando Almasy*. They might become embroiled in espionage intrigues or more mundane confrontations while on leave in Cairo. Any flyer who goes down over the desert might suddenly find himself in a survival situation where he must evade enemy units hunting him and somehow find food, water, and shelter to stay alive in the arid wastelands. He might even come upon an LRDG patrol and share their escapades on his way back to civilization.

An RAF campaign can easily transform along other lines. Those supporting the LRDG or SAS might find themselves drawn into adventures based on the Desert Raiders campaign below. Anyone gaining too much exposure to—and asking too many questions about—phenomenon encountered in the skies might find themselves in an aerial OSI campaign. War Masters can even tailor adventure seeds from the Frontline Action and OSI campaigns to include RAF personnel.

Character Classes

Pilot characters work best for RAF campaigns, though ground crews and troops supporting an airfield might participate in certain adventures with action on the ground. The *Weird War II* supplement *Dead from Above* is essential for running pilot heroes and creating scenarios best suited to their specific role in the North African campaign.

Weird Exposure

Pilots usually confront mundane challenges in the war above North Africa, but an RAF campaign offers a few opportunities for infusing adventures with the supernatural. Much seems inexplicable, or at best an odd

coincidence. Perhaps their commanding officer—acting on cryptic intelligence from headquarters—asks them to bomb a target seemingly void of military significance yet secretly essential to German SBG operations on the front. Is the sandstorm or heat haze obscuring the target natural or some intentional effect summoned by unknown forces? Maybe they must fight off a wing of fiery flugzeuggeists that ambushes their patrol, or help their ground crews eradicate a horde of gremlins infesting their airfield.

Sample Campaign Overview

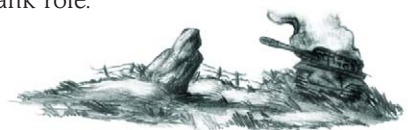
The adventure seeds below can form the basis of a short RAF campaign. Adjust the aircraft for the mission and the heroes' capabilities. For instance, a fighter squadron might fly a bombing run using bombs mounted beneath their wings. Bomber crews might find themselves inadvertently involved in missions for fighter craft by sheer chance or tactical circumstance. Heroes can undertake varied operations using multi-role aircraft like the De Havilland Mosquito.

The outline also assumes a gradual infiltration of weirdness as the campaign intensifies—the more the time characters spend flying above North Africa, the more likely they encounter the supernatural.

Bombing Benghazi: The Germans have captured the port of Benghazi in western Cyrenaica and plan to use it as a forward supply depot for their rapidly advancing armies. The heroes must bomb the port facilities and prove to the Wehrmacht



A Flak 36 in action in the antitank role.





British M3 Lee tanks move to the attack near El Alamein.

High Command that Benghazi is too close to the front to safely off-load provisions. Sending the squadron on a “typical” bombing run offers a chance for players to learn rules about aircraft engagements and test their heroes’ mettle against enemy defenses, including anti-aircraft batteries and Axis fighter pilots. Any weirdness in this mission should seem like an odd coincidence—for instance, they might run into a building, ship, or anti-aircraft emplacement that simply refuses to die.

Down in the Desert: While working as a flight crew aboard a transport or bomber, the characters suddenly encounter several mysterious, fiery creatures that tear into their aircraft (see Chapter Four: Bestiary for details on the *flugzeuggeist*). The heroes crash land in the midst of a vast sand sea. They must somehow march eastward and reach the British lines, surviving on salvaged rations, avoiding desert hazards (both natural and supernatural), and evading German recon units hunting them. If they show proper respect and gratitude, they could find aid from local Bedouin. If they’re just plain lucky, they might run into an LRDG patrol that could help them reach civilization...as soon as these desert raiders complete their current mission.

Attack on the Via Balbia: The squadron receives orders to find a particular convoy traveling eastward along the coastal road and destroy it. After a brief flight and only a little flak from the German frontline anti-aircraft batteries, they find the small convoy of supply trucks with strange “SBG” markings. As they prepare

for their strafing run, the heroes notice a small group of infantry hiding along the Via Balbia—members of an LRDG patrol waiting to ambush the convoy. Does the squadron carry out its assault on the column of lorries, possibly interfering with the LRDG plans and perhaps even inflicting casualties on them, or do they make a pass and wait to see what happens? If they don’t attack right off, the SBG blood mages traveling with the convoy spot the squadron and cast a variety of spells to threaten both the LRDG personnel and the heroes.

Base Mischief: While returning from a patrol, the heroes notice a German truck abandoned in the desert several miles from their base. Grabbing their airfield’s supply lorry, they retrieve the damaged enemy vehicle and find its payload filled with cigarettes, schnapps, and other goodies! Unfortunately the truck’s inner workings host a horde of pesky gremlins—a German recon unit towed it near the British airfield as a Trojan horse that might disable flight operations while the Afrika Korps undertakes a flanking maneuver. While the characters enjoy their spoils, the gremlins begin infesting their aircraft. The heroes soon discover these mischievous sprites and try eradicating them...at least until headquarters radios in with orders to scramble and intercept a rapidly advancing recon element of Afrika Korps.

Assault on Rommel: Headquarters received specific intelligence pinpointing Rommel’s frontline headquarters! Since the Desert Fox frequently moves between the front and rear areas to personally supervise combat operations, the heroes must quickly scramble to catch him at his forward headquarters. They race to the location, dodge anti-aircraft fire, and blast away at the small compound of tents, signals vans, and recon vehicles clustered around a bleak mud-brick house serving as temporary headquarters. As they’re pulling away from one of their strafing runs, they notice a small German recon plane—a Fieseler Storch—flying away from the site and directly for a squadron of Luftwaffe fighters sent to eliminate the characters! Can they shoot down the Storch in time? Is Rommel really in the plane, or is it some powerful SBG blood mage who summons supernatural assistance?





Desert Raiders

"It was quickly established that a force not comprising armor, artillery, effective antitank weapons and air support or, at least, good AA defense, must play a hit-and-run game and avoid prolonged engagements."

—Captain Alastair Timpson, LRDG

A desert raiders campaign offers more freedom than those based in more conventional military units. Not only can characters come from a variety of backgrounds, but their adventures can encompass a large range of operations: reconnaissance, commando raids, desert exploration, survival, even bits of espionage.

They work in loose bands consisting of a few trucks and jeeps with additional armament and supplies, crossing vast expanses of wasteland to hit objectives far behind enemy lines. In one mission the heroes might plan an ambush on a German airfield, in another they could help track down a lost archaeological site of significance to some unnamed "people" at Middle East Headquarters. Characters might even work among the native Bedouin disguised as locals, helping them maintain reconnaissance on enemy units, sabotage German supply lines, and support British operations in rearward areas.

War Masters running a desert raiders campaign should familiarize themselves with SAS and LRDG operations as detailed in the Allied Forces sections above. Simple missions might include any of the LRDG's three primary objectives. To effectively reconnoiter enemy transport during "road watch" heroes must sneak up close to the Via Balbia or other tracks crossing the desert, avoiding detection, and in some cases beating a fighting retreat if discovered. For "taxi service" jobs they must transport various groups across the treacherous desert, possibly joining the SAS or other commandos in daring, high-risk raids on German installations. Heroes can also plan their own, low-key "beat ups," ambushes on transport convoys, road houses, and supply depots.

Because such desert raiders operate as extremely independent units, they can also undertake special missions that wouldn't involve regular troops. Perhaps they must seek out a new desert route for an outflanking maneuver involving tanks,

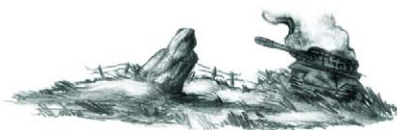
or chart a course to French Equatorial Africa to allow Free French forces to join the British Eighth Army. Cryptic directives from Middle East Command might send them to the Tibesti Mountains seeking evidence of an ancient and powerful civilization, or to Egyptian oases searching for lost artifacts of arcane power.

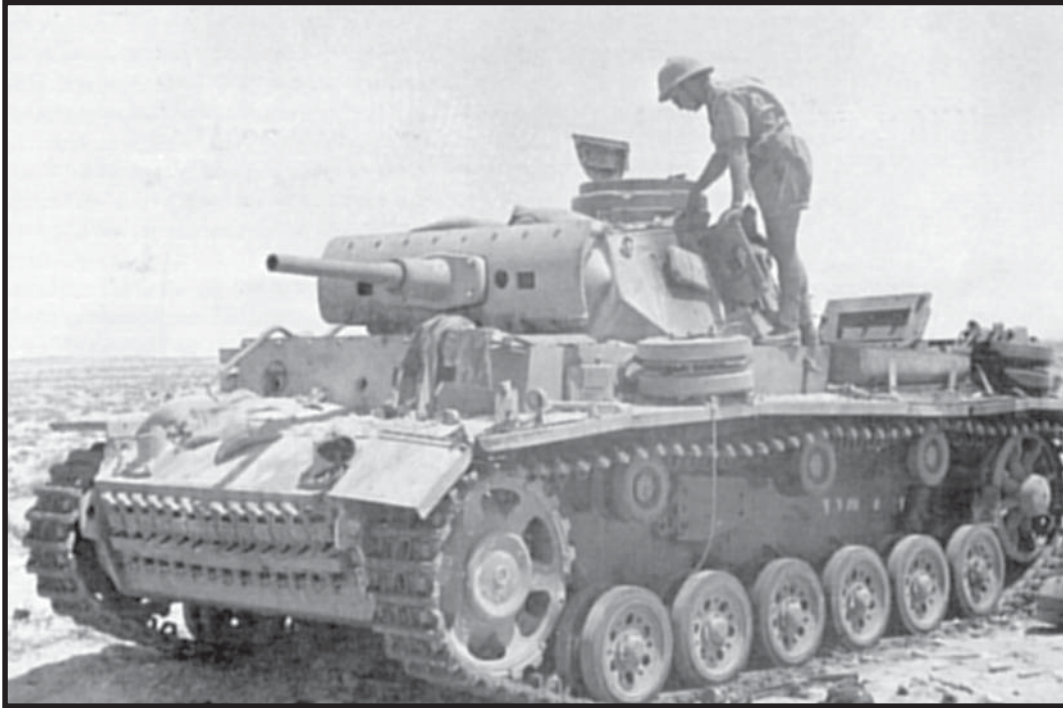
Every mission—either mundane or extraordinary—the characters must deal with hardships of desert travel: lost supplies, lack of cover, decoding wireless transmissions from headquarters, mechanical breakdowns, and the unforgiving terrain of sand seas, rocky wadis, and scorching desert. If they're not careful, they may fall prey to enemy aircraft patrols, the treacherous *Sonderkommando Almasy*, roaming German recon forces, traitorous Bedouin, Nazi radio direction-finding units, SBG blood mages, or the unnatural horrors living in the wastelands or commanded by the Nazis.

Like pilot characters in RAF campaigns, desert raiders operate from temporary bases in the Saharan oases. The security of these encampments depends on the ever-shifting front line. When the British advance, so do the desert bases, cutting travel time to objectives, but lengthening supply lines back to Cairo. When the Germans advance, support from Egypt comes easily, but the heroes must travel farther, and often through difficult terrain, to avoid Axis forces and reach their objectives behind enemy lines. How well they accomplish their missions against German supply lines and military posts directly affects the success or failure of enemy actions at the front.

Character Classes

Both the SAS and LRDG recruited personnel from a variety of units already serving in North Africa. Almost any character class can operate in a desert raiders campaign: grunts, officers, medics, scouts, and even resistance fighters (most often Senussi Bedouin or Majabra tribesmen, but also Free French settlers from France's African colonies). Prestige classes best suited for serving with the LRDG and SAS include the commando, sniper, fitter, LRDG officer, native guide, and signaler. OSI personnel might covertly operate with desert units, working to attain their own objectives against German supernatural forces, and keeping their true affiliation secret from their fellows.





A British tankster examines a Panzer III that made a solitary attack on his position. Strangely, no crew was seen bailing out of the tank when it was hit.

Characters can “transfer” into a desert raiders game after running through a frontline action campaign. Heroes serving in an OSI campaign could serve on a temporary basis with the SAS or LRDG, secretly working to achieve their own gains while fighting with desert forces. Personnel can always transfer back to their regular units, or advance into an entirely different campaign. Anyone gaining too much exposure to the supernatural would be seconded to the OSI, either through a permanent transfer or as an agent operating with desert forces.

Weird Exposure

Desert raiders have a high potential for exposure to the supernatural. As members of an irregular unit, they have greater freedom of movement and action, but also greater opportunity to encounter weird phenomenon, arcane relics, and magical powers beyond description. The desert is a primordial wasteland filled with untapped energy, ancient curses, and exiled souls. A campaign can draw on the typical fare of desert adventures: ruined cities, mysterious maps, buried treasure troves, mythical oases, lost civilizations, banished magical entities. In frontline combat, spiritual energy abounds but phenomena cannot easily be explained. Blood mages use their powers sparingly or

covertly, lest others learn of the greater evil behind their authority. In the Sahara they wield their energies freely, with few around to witness their atrocities. Besides, few people would believe fantastic accounts of the supernatural from a handful of survivors whose brains baked for months beneath the unforgiving desert sun.

Sample Campaign Overview

The desert raiders campaign outlined below offers a mix of

traditional patrols with interesting twists and a few exceptional missions. It assumes the heroes are attached to the LRDG or SAS and have free reign to roam the Sahara and harass the German rear areas.

War Masters can also mix and match ideas from other story lines, particularly those in the Frontline Action and OSI campaigns. Characters could execute a commando raid much like any skirmish at the front, or might transport OSI operatives across the desert as part of their “taxi service” duties.

Road Watch: The heroes set out on a typical road watch—sneak up behind enemy lines, avoid enemy patrols (recon and aerial), set up observation positions overlooking a well-traveled track, and record German supply traffic. After overcoming various obstacles and settling into a rather tedious guard, the characters notice several lorries with strange “SBG” markings. Perhaps they even notice weird activity surrounding these transports: shambling soldiers who stumble out the back and collapse in the road, boxes with arcane markings, or a detail that digs up roadside graves, loads the corpses, and then heads toward the front. As the heroes prepare to leave their post and report their findings, a German troop convoy halts near their position and





Operational Briefing

begins setting up camp around them! The characters must sneak and bluff their way out of the encampment and back to their own patrol rendezvous to report the SBG's strange activities.

Tibesti Taxi Service: A strange officer shows up at the character's oasis base with orders that they must transport him across 500 miles of rocky wasteland and sand seas to the Tibesti mountains in the south-central Sahara. Along the way they must dodge enemy aircraft patrols and a team of particularly tenacious German desert explorers bent on tracking them down (possibly *Sonderkommando Almasy*).

Once they reach the mountains, the heroes must help the officer explore vast ruins (populated by various forms of undead and unfriendly "guardians") to find a particular room with a strange glowing doorway. After the officer bids them farewell, he walks through the portal and then the doorway disappears! The characters must find their own way out of the ruins...right into the clutches of the ruthless German explorers.

Convoy Beat Up: The Germans are thrashing British forces at the front—the heroes must go behind the lines and stop reinforcements from reaching the forward battlefields before the Allied lines collapse. They sneak up to the via Balbia at night, find some way to slow or distract approaching trucks ("damaged" decoy vehicle, construction blockage, "injured" infantry patrol), and lob packs of timed explosives into the back so they explode down the road.

However, nothing goes according to plan. Convoys fail to slow down or actively try to run over or through the obstacles, troops lob the explosive packs back at the characters, faulty fuses detonate a charge in one of the heroes' vehicles, or an entire convoy might see through their ruse and deploy along the road to hunt them down.

Cave of Wonders: While traveling back from road watch duty, the heroes must find cover from an enemy aircraft patrol. When they hide their vehicles in a deep-cut wadi, they discover a cave filled with marvelous, primitive paintings and runes. These depict the usual scenes of village life and hunts, but also show men with strange hats falling from the sun, legendary or unknown animals, and fantastic floating cities.

While they try to decipher the markings and record the paintings, they must fend off enemy forces:

Sonderkommando Almasy seeking the cave's location, recon units hunting down their patrol, or a blood mage hoping to unleash the hidden powers of these alien runes.

Benghazi Raid: Headquarters plans a massive counteroffensive, and needs the heroes to cause maximum trouble behind enemy lines. They order them to hit the harbor, supply dumps, barracks, and airfield at Benghazi. Loaded with maximum firepower and explosives, the characters must bluff or sneak their way into the city—past enemy infantry and armor patrols—then plan their strategies to take out the various targets. Security in the town seems lax, so they have free reign until someone messes up or the explosives start detonating. While troops pour out of barracks and patrols seal off roads out of town, the heroes must escape into the desert. They have a long journey back to their oasis base, especially with enemy aircraft and recon patrols in pursuit, hoping to exact revenge for the raid.

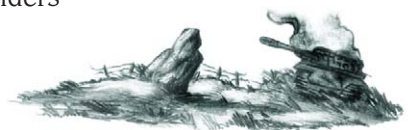
OSI

"The rank-and-file joke when I talk about the Nazis being monsters and all. They can't face the brutal truth—those beastly Nazis have summoned the forces of darkness to their aid, and we must stop them no matter the cost."

—Captain Stewart Latham, OSI

Once the characters have tasted a bit of the weirdness haunting North Africa—or if the players want to dive into the thick of things with advanced characters—the OSI "recruits" them through coercion or a cryptic transfer. Perhaps they stumble on a Nazi plot, ancient treasure, or supernatural occurrence, and, by sheer coincidence of their involvement, are assigned, embroiled, or otherwise dragged into it—and eventual membership in the OSI.

Their missions have the greatest degree of variety, from frontline action against the SBG and commando raids on strategic targets to desert sorties to investigate strange ruins and espionage operations to ferret out spies in Middle East headquarters. Given the fantastic elements inhabiting the desert wastes and the supernatural forces at the Nazis' command, OSI personnel often find themselves in pulp-style adventures where anything goes. An OSI storyline can include elements of the desert raiders





AN Sdkfz 232 on long-range patrol.

campaign, allowing characters broad freedom of operation and movement around the North African theater to head off and eliminate incipient paranormal threats.

SBG forces serve as the principle adversaries in an OSI campaign. At first glance an operation might only seem to involve regular German units, desert commandos, or special signals groups, but something sinister always lurks beneath the surface. Like the OSI, the SBG lurks in the background of the battles in North Africa, maneuvering unholy forces into position, planning schemes to unearth unholy artifacts, manipulating German and British personnel through blackmail and magical means, and trying to harness, control, and unleash supernatural entities in a desperate struggle to crush the Allies and drive them from Africa.

If the SBG isn't behind mysterious happenings in the desert, some uncontrolled spiritual power is. The Sahara desert is an ancient place filled with the magic of lost people, the power of legendary places, and the savagery of mystical beasts summoned by curses, blood, hunger, and roaming spiritual energy.

Not only must OSI characters deal with paranormal threats, but they must also keep them under wraps. How does one

explain to the general public what happened when that blood mage spontaneously burst into flame in that Cairo bazaar? How do OSI agents explain the madness of a man in hospital who can intercept and decode wireless transmissions in his head? How do they conceal a legendary Egyptian temple rising from the sands and pouring forth mummified warriors?

OSI characters might work from a variety of bases. Middle East headquarters in Cairo provides ready access to military administration, civilization, and the front lines. Forward bases with battlefield command offer direct access to the fighting and prime intelligence filtered through headquarters units. Attaching themselves to an LRDG oasis camp offers protection and transport through desert

regions, and closer proximity to the mysterious locations deep within the Sahara.

Character Classes

Since only OSI personnel have clearance to deal with extreme supernatural situations, only OSI prestige classes should participate in an OSI campaign. Their past experience in other classes should prepare them for most challenges they'll face in the field.

Members of the other character classes who wish to join the campaign should take on an OSI prestige class. In some cases, members of OSI might masquerade as ordinary military personnel, allowing them to covertly manipulate characters of other classes with necessary expertise in achieving their objectives—and thus allowing OSI and mundane classes to operate together.

Weird Exposure

By its very nature, an OSI campaign has the maximum exposure to weirdness. If the characters aren't investigating occurrences that might have supernatural origins, they're busy directly combating spiritual monstrosities at the SBG's command. Every desert ruin has an ancient curse, each artifact possesses astounding powers, and every adversary is twisted with unholy energy.





Sample Campaign Overview

Unlike other campaigns, the action over the course of several OSI adventures cannot escalate simply through an increasing amount of weirdness—challenges must increase, and the overall stakes for Allied victory—in North Africa and elsewhere—must rise. The adventure seeds below offer just a small sample of the potential missions for OSI characters and an outline for heightening the action during the course of the North African campaign.

Archaeological Mischief: The heroes must track down a German archaeologist who evaded the roundup of foreigners when the war started. He's known as an expert on ancient Egyptian language and hieroglyphics, and frequently studied papyrus scrolls from the period of Ramses the Great.

The characters follow various clues from the Egyptian museum and various ancient ruins along the Nile to the temple of Abu Simbel, near Egypt's border with the Sudan. Here the archaeologist meets up with several mysterious desert explorers. These members of *Sonderkommando Almasy* intend to aid him in a crazed scheme to use magical energies, an ancient scroll, and the morning sunlight shining into the temple to cast a powerful spell—perhaps one that alters the past, weakens British forces fighting at the front, or calls down some natural disaster on Allied armies elsewhere. Obviously the heroes must stop them.

Assassinate Rommel: In November 1941 the heroes receive intelligence from Captain John Haselden working undercover as a Senussi native in Cyrenaica. General Rommel has his personal quarters in a lightly guarded house in a small settlement in Beda Littoria, only a few miles from the coast. With the British Eighth Army about to launch a major offensive, the characters must penetrate German lines, sneak up to the villa under cover of darkness, and assassinate Rommel.

Unfortunately Haselden's intelligence was either incorrect or dated. The heroes stumble into the personal quarters of a high-ranking SBG officer charged with overseeing the nearby farmhouses where blood mages transform German fatalities into reanimants and other undead horrors! The characters must inflict maximum damage—perhaps even destroying the entire operation—then escape with their lives.

Destroy Seeborn: Middle East Command cannot afford for the Germans to decipher and decode any more of its valuable intelligence transmitted by wireless.

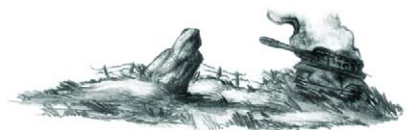
In early June 1942, during a British thrust to dislodge Axis forces from advances made around Gazala, the heroes must pose as an infantry unit, penetrate enemy lines, locate the headquarters of the German radio intercept group run by Hauptman Seeborn, and destroy it. Besides dodging various battlefield threats, they must fight their way past supernatural horrors conjured to guard the radio intercept group and deal with a blood mage attached to the unit to aggressively protect it. They must also accomplish all this while the British Eighth Army beats a fighting retreat from the battlefield at Gazala after a disastrous counterattack.

Torch Parley: The heroes travel to the Moroccan desert to parley with a prince with great influence over the local population and secret resources that could support Allied beach landings during the upcoming Operation Torch. Before he commits his allegiance to the Allies, the prince requires the characters to demonstrate their authority and power by vanquishing an old foe living in the Atlas Mountains: an ancient sorcerer who summons demons to protect his impregnable fortress.

The heroes must find and penetrate the stronghold, defeating undead guardians and traps. When they finally confront the sorcerer, they find him entertaining a Nazi blood mage and his entourage who hope to negotiate an unholy alliance and change the course of the war.

Power of Ancient Atlantis: With German forces desperately engaging British and American units in the region of Kasserine Pass, the SBG makes one final bid for Axis victory in the North African campaign. Oberst Morder himself leads the remnants of his unit to break out through Allied lines in the south and head across the Sahara for the Tibesti Mountains.

Here he hopes to find some ancient artifact among the treacherous ruins of an Atlantean city, a relic so powerful that it might vanquish the Allied armies and help lead the Reich to a final victory. The heroes must track him down, discover his destination, and finally eliminate him, avoiding undead, mysterious guardians, and a dormant, primordial evil nesting among the Atlantean ruins.





Chapter Four:

Bestiary

Fantastic creatures haunt the North African deserts and mountains. Some emerged as war-warped entities bred from intense heat, sand, blood, pain, and lost souls of the battlefields. Other beasts appear from the perverted activities of a handful of blood mages operating as a "Special Recovery Team" (*Sonderbergungsgruppe*).

Since the *Waffen SS* doesn't have such an overt presence in North Africa, and since portions of the campaign come at a relatively early time in the war, most Allied troops aren't likely to come into a lot of contact with Hitler's twisted minions. As the war progresses—and as Rommel becomes more desperate—such abominations as reanimants, brutes, and fext, play a greater part in the outcome of battles. Given the heavy dependence on tanks, motorized infantry, air power, and transports, gremlins abound in a playland of mechanized destruction. Some units have encountered slugh along the coastal regions and mountains, but deeper within the desert regions packs of ienpu have taken their niche in the war-warped wastelands.

Desert beasts from the *Monster Manual* that might appear in more fantastic North African campaigns include genie, gorgons, griffons, harpies, lammasu, manticores,

medusas, mummies, rocs, sphinx, and wraiths. Troops could also encounter more traditional desert creatures, including baboons, camels, eagles, hawks, rats, vipers, and a variety of monstrous vermin mutated by the supernatural energy released by warfare.

The number and type of critters your heroes run into depends on how fantastic a campaign you want to run. Just remember, though, that if you are shooting for a creepy horror campaign a little goes a long way. If every encounter the players have is with some sort of supernatural beastie, the horror wears off pretty quickly. Like a good horror movie, you should hint at something sinister and allow the players quick glimpses of evil rather than bashing them over the head with it at every turn.

A war setting also has its own intrinsic horror aspects. Although the war in North Africa was fairly "civil," there were isolated incidents of brutality and unhumanity. The desert also offers opportunities for horror. Picture a desert patrol, low on water, that arrives at an oasis to find the waters filled with bloated corpses and running red with blood. Or a besieged garrison that is forced to find an alternate source of liquid refreshment...



Aajej

Huge Elemental

Hit Dice: 8d8+56 (92 hit points)

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 50 ft.

AC: 11 (-1 Dex, +4 natural, -2 size)

Attacks: +9 melee

Damage: Whirlwind 2d6+7

Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 5 ft./15 ft.

Special Attacks: Whirlwind

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 15/+1

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +1, Will +2

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 9, Con 20, Int 5, Wis 4, Cha 2

Skills: Intimidate +3, Spot +3

Feats: —

Climate/Terrain: Desert

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral evil

Advancement: None

Rising from patches of dry, bloodied sand, the aajej attack as raging dust devils, whipping loose debris and sand at those caught in their fierce winds.

For centuries the Bedouin of southern Morocco have encountered aajej, fierce sandstorms they fight with knives. With North Africa engulfed in battle, the aajej raise themselves throughout the Sahara at points where the fighting becomes most savage.

Blood shed in the desert seeps into the sand, staining it with liquid and with the magical essence of the dying creature. When infused with the hot desert wind, these restless spirits become the small and harmless dust devils one sees meandering across the wastelands. But when the wind rouses the sands where many died, it raises the dread aajej, a towering sandstorm funnel empowered with the supernatural and malignant energy of those destroyed in battle. These tormented souls combine their energy to become one monstrosity that wreaks havoc on the living.

In its dormant state, the aajej appears as a vast reddish patch of sand. Those who traverse it rarely realize the horror upon which they tread, for the aajej remains quiet until awakened by storms both meteorological and emotional. Wind and anger whip it into a fury that only dissipates once the stormy conditions disappear or it slakes its considerable thirst for conflict. Some aajej whirl through the desert wastelands, seeking anyone upon whom they can vent their violent temper. Others rise suddenly from

battlefields, awakened by wind and the sheer volume of death present. Although they present a formidable foe, their rage slowly dwindles as the fires of combat fade and dissipate.

Combat

An aajej attempts to envelop its enemies, lashing out with sandy gusts that contain airborne debris. The vast sandstorm rumbles past those who seek shelter and hope to wait it out, but it vigorously assails anyone caught in its path who actively opposes it.

Damage Reduction (Su): Due to its composite physique, an aajej has damage reduction of 15/+1.

Elemental: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits.

Whirlwind (Su): The aajej primarily attacks as a whirlwind, enveloping foes, pummeling them with stones and small items made airborne in its fierce currents, and even lifting and tossing enemies through the air. On a normal attack roll, an aajej can strike multiple opponents with airborne debris for 2d6+3 damage.

Medium-size or smaller creatures must also make a Reflex save (DC 15) to keep from being blown off their feet, propelled though the air, and cast back against the ground from a great height. Thrown victims sustain 4d6 damage. Those with solid shelter (hut, tank, cave) gain immunity from these attacks. An aajej tears apart and uproots such light shelters as tents.

The sand and debris picked up in the whirlwind obscures all vision, limiting it to 5 feet. Anyone within 5 feet has one-half concealment, while anyone farther than that gains total concealment. The whirlwind of an average aajej is 30' in diameter.

Adventure Seeds

As a hidden foe that rises when least expected, an aajej can suddenly fly up in the midst of a heated battle to add an extra complication to the fray. The aajej also plague those crossing vast expanses of desert, particularly those near sites of bloody conflict in the recent or ancient past.

They might also serve as guardians of ruins haunted by the memory of many deaths. Heroes working for the OSI might seek some way to control the aajej and employ it in the war effort, possibly searching for clues, legends, and lost spells in remote desert locations of long-forgotten civilizations.





Cipher Imp

Small Outsider

Hit Dice: 1d8 (5 hit points)

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 20 ft.; fly 50 ft. (perfect)

AC: 12 (+1 Dex, +1 size)

Attacks: Claws +3 melee

Damage: Claw 1d3 and poison

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Poison

Special Qualities: Fire and poison immunity, know languages, see in darkness

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +3

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 5

Skills: Decipher Script +15*, Hide +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +2

Feats: Weapon Finesse (claws)

Climate/Terrain: Temperate

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Lawful evil

Advancement: None

Nazi blood mages summon imps from another plane of existence—

possibly even the depths of Hell itself—to aid cryptographers in decoding and deciphering vital Allied radio transmissions to gather intelligence on upcoming operations and British military strength.

Cipher imps are two-foot-high creatures with a devilish look about them: gangly limbs, red-scaled skin, barbed tail, bat wings, and a leering face topped by two horns. They chatter incessantly in a variety of languages (sometimes mixing several at once), stopping only to stuff their toothy maws with treats from their handlers.

Elite German signals units like Alfred Seeborn's *Horchkompanie* employ these imps as translators and cipher clerks. The beasts hop around the office listening to intercepted Allied transmissions and babbling possible solutions until the signalers hear something

that makes sense. They enjoy puzzling over Morse Code messages, running through possible encryption solutions aloud, and triumphantly screeching the decoded information to their handler. In exchange for their services, the imps feast on frequent rewards of sausage, captured tinned beef, and scraps from the officers' mess.

When they're not put to work reading Allied signals traffic, the imps wander around the office, napping in cozy corners, rifling through piles of old dispatches, and generally getting underfoot. They don't like being bored, and sometimes wander off to cause mischief or find an intriguing conundrum to solve. The imps aren't very hardy creatures, so they don't survive sudden artillery barrages or enemy raids very well. As long as the

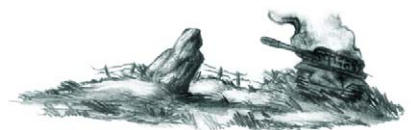
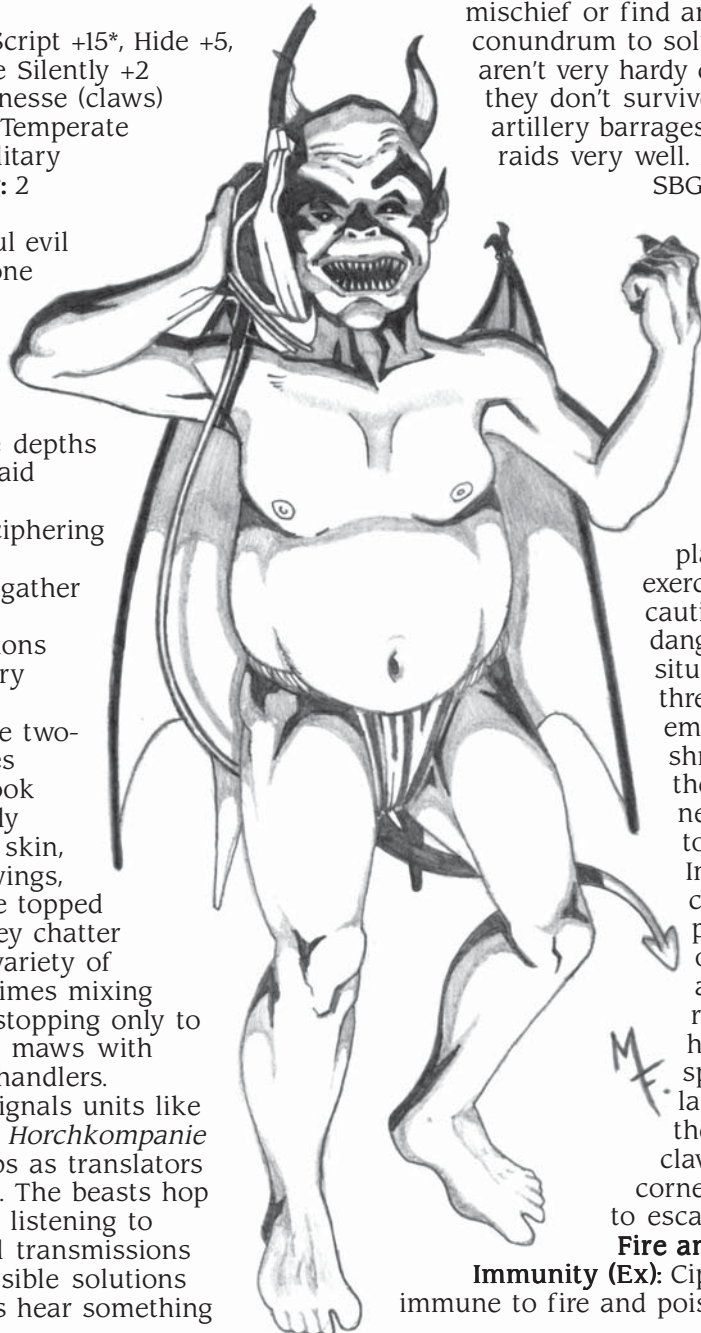
SBG operates in North Africa, however, they can always summon a few more.

Combat

Cipher imps are quite aware of their mortality on the earthly plane, and exercise extreme caution in dangerous situations. When threatened they emit piercing shrieks to alert their handlers or nearby sentries to their plight. Imps avoid combat when possible, flying or scurrying away and retreating to hard-to-reach spaces. They lash out with their poisoned claws only when cornered or trying to escape.

Fire and Poison

Immunity (Ex): Cipher imps are immune to fire and poison.





Know Languages (Su): Cipher imps have a fluency in all languages, including contemporary ones and ancient tongues lost ages ago.

Poison (Ex): A cipher imp's claws contain a poison that addles the minds of those it strikes. Anyone taking damage from the claws must make a DC 10 Fortitude save or suffer a temporary loss of 1d6 Wisdom; secondary damage includes a temporary loss of 1d6 Dexterity and a temporary loss of an additional 1d4 Wisdom.

See in Darkness (Su): As devilish creatures, cipher imps can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, including that created by spells.

Skills: *Cipher imps receive a +10 racial bonus to Decipher Script checks, even when breaking codes and ciphers without proper equipment and encoding information.

Adventure Seeds

The heroes might first encounter cipher imps when they raid or overrun an Afrika Korps signals post. If they don't encounter them firsthand, they might find evidence that they exist: cupboards made to comfortably shelter the small creatures, claw marks on tabletops, or shed red scales. Once the OSI learns that the Germans employ cipher imps to decrypt and decode British transmissions, it assigns the characters to somehow capture, tame, and turn an imp to aid

Allied signals interception and decoding efforts. Since the Germans, and SBG especially, jealously guard the secrets surrounding their decoding efforts, the heroes must overcome numerous challenges to reach their goals: minefields, protective spells, and an SBG bodyguard unit.

Another mission might center around discovering the spell by which Nazi blood mages summon the cipher imps, stealing it for use by Allied adepts. The characters must retrieve and destroy all known copies in German hands, and eliminate all those who know the spell or handle the cipher imps.

Colossus

Large Construct

Hit Dice: 6d10 (33 hit points)

Initiative: +3 (-1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 20 ft.

AC: 16 (+0 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size)

Attacks: +8 melee

Damage: Large spear 2d6+5, large falchion 2d6+5, or fists 1d8+5

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Frightful presence

Special Qualities: Freeze, stoneskin

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +8

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 16, Cha 9

Skills: Hide +8*

Feats: —

Climate/Terrain: Desert, ruins, underground

Organization: Solitary, pair, or court (4-8)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: None

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Advancement: None

Colossi protect ruins, underground chambers, and remote desert sites. At first colossi seem like massive stone statues decorating ancient architecture. They stand between columns, in decorated niches, or flanking entrances to temple gateways and inner sanctums. Arcane magic, curses, or the power of primeval gods animate them as guardians of the precincts they inhabit. When trespassers enter they come to life, preventing further passage and attacking intruders. Some stand watch alone, while those guarding portals appear in pairs. Temple colonnades or underground vaults often have a colossus in each space between the columns.

These towering statues depict ancient gods, statesmen, and warriors. Ancient Egyptian colossi inhabit the desert and

Summon Cipher Imp

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: Adt 3

Runes: Dagaz, Ansuz, Laguz

Casting Time: 15 minutes

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: One summoned cipher imp

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell allows an adept to summon one cipher imp into his presence. The imp owes basic allegiance to the adept or anyone he designates as the imp's handler. The creature serves the handler as long as it's fed and kept busy solving deciphering and decoding puzzles—otherwise it wanders off on its own to find food and diversion. Most handlers furnish small, locked cupboards where the imps can rest when their services are not required.

The imp remains in the handler's service until killed or vanquished by a dispel magic spell.





Bestiary

oases. They often possess characteristics of the god to whom the area was dedicated. Recumbent lions might guard a shrine to Sekhmet, lioness-headed goddess of warfare. Looming statues of Set, god of chaos and destruction, could protect the gateway to one of his hidden, underground sanctuaries. Colossi along the coast have Roman or Greek origins—they frequently depict elder statesmen or bold warriors in a larger-than-life scale. Few colossi remain in the more populated Moslem regions. Islam's strict prohibition against graven images in or near holy sites long ago prompted the destruction of many colossi in heavily populated regions. Those remaining now stand in shunned, cursed, or remote areas where few dare to travel.

Combat

Animated colossi act according to prescribed directives: some deny entry to a sacred area, others simply eliminate all opponents. They strike with powerful blows using their rocky fists or weapons that are part of their sculpture.

Construct:

Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Freeze (Ex): Colossi blend into their surroundings as decorative statues. Until a colossus animates itself, observers must make a DC 20 Spot check to notice anything out of the ordinary.

Frightful Presence (Ex): When a colossus comes to life, it may initially frighten others with its unnerving presence. Those of 5th level and lower must make a DC 13 Will save or flee as best they can, suffering a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage, and saving throws. Those who make the Will save become immune to the colossus' frightful presence for one entire day.

Skills: *Colossi gain a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks when concealed as statuary in an appropriate architectural setting (ruins, temples, decorated underground chambers).

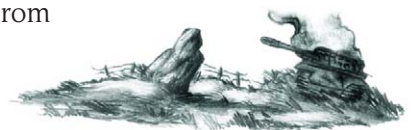
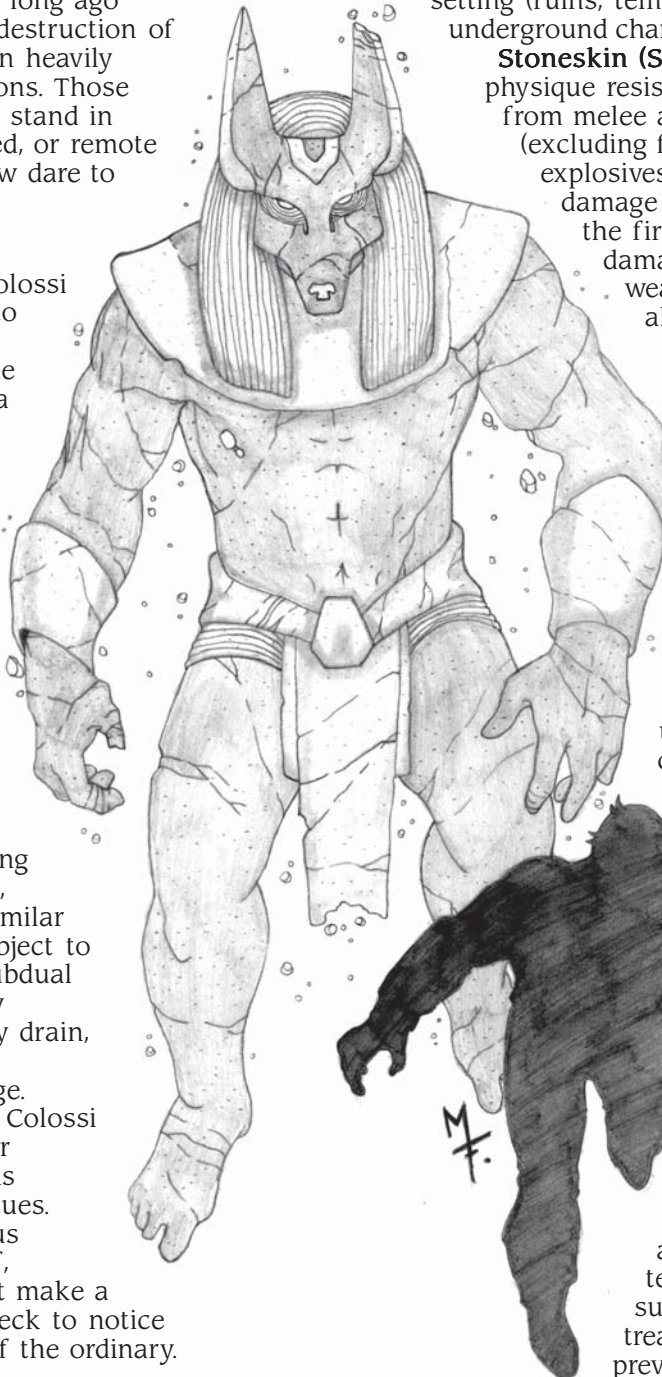
Stoneskin (Sp): A colossus' stone physique resists many attacks from melee and ranged weapons (excluding firearms and explosives), giving it 10/+5 damage reduction. It ignores the first 10 points of damage each time such a weapon hits it, although a weapon with a +5 enhancement bonus or any magical attack ignores this reduction.

Adventure Seeds

Colossi are best suited for encounters in ruins, ancient temples, and underground chambers. Since their stoneskin ability still leaves them vulnerable to contemporary firearms, they rely on their ability to fade into architectural elements and

surprise opponents to gain the upper hand.

Colossi serve best as guardians for temple sanctuaries or subterranean treasuries. They fight to prevent heroes from





Colossus Inscriptions

Colossi often have inscriptions on their bodies, bases, or nearby architectural elements warning intruders or proclaiming their purposes. Those of ancient Egyptian provenance have the most colorful warnings:

"Hail colossus; if it be decreed to do labors in the Red or Black land, to smite those who trespass on sacred ground, or to carry sand from East to the West, you shall say, 'I will work, verily I am here when thou callest.'"

"As for any people who would enter this place unclean and do something evil to it, there will be judgment against them by the great god!"

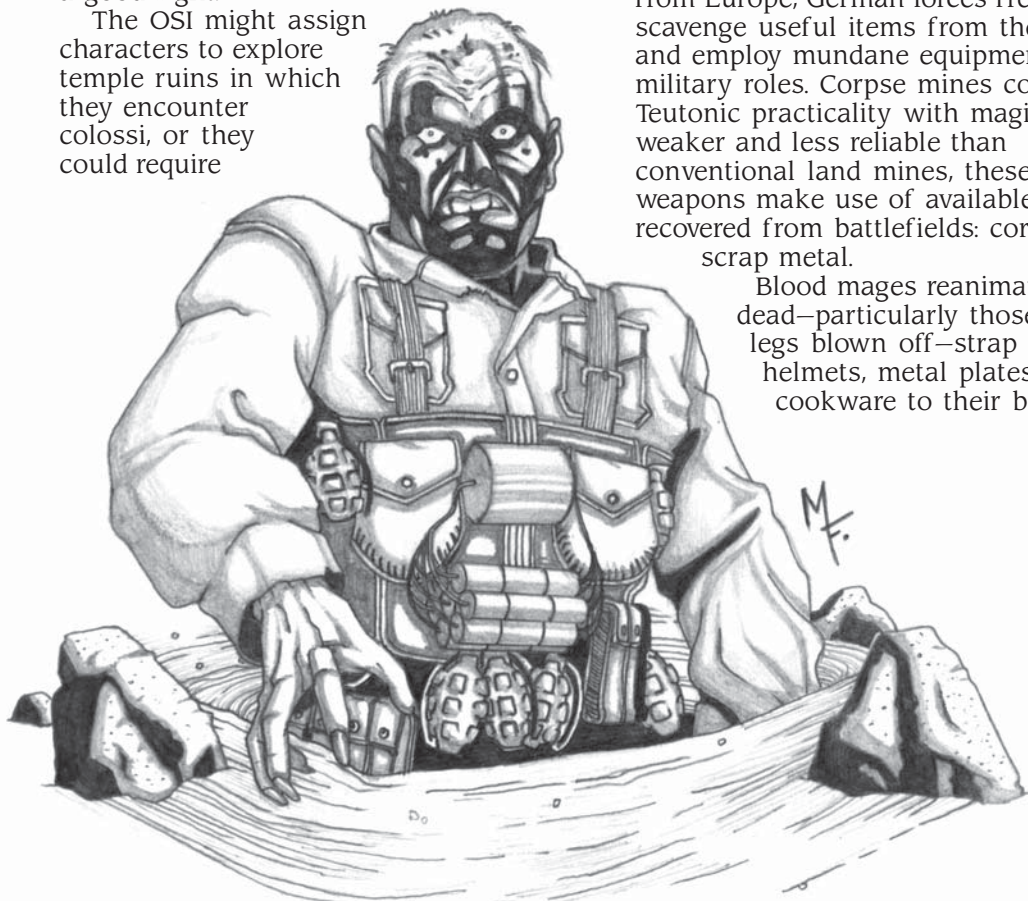
"I stand that I may protect thee, smiting down for thee thine enemies, taking vengeance upon the doer of evil."

"As for anyone who enters this place unclean, I shall seize him by the neck like a bird, he will be judged for it by the great god!"

"The harpoon is deep in Apophis, the Evil, he falls by the sword; and those who chose war are huddled for slaughter."

entering a particularly vital area, so the characters do not reach their goal without a good fight.

The OSI might assign characters to explore temple ruins in which they encounter colossi, or they could require



heroes to find some means of controlling and neutralizing such constructs. The characters might stumble onto an SBG plot to recover and command an army of colossi on the battlefield—a scheme the heroes must stop at all costs.

Corpse Mine

Medium-size Undead

Hit Dice: 2d12+3 (16 hit points)

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 5 ft.

AC: 15 (+5 natural)

Attacks: Claws +2 melee

Damage: Claws 1d4+1

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Self-Explosion

Special Qualities: Undead

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 10, Con —, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 1

Skills: Hide +10*, Search +2, Spot +5

Feats: Toughness

Climate/Terrain: Any land

Organization: Deployed in fields of 2-20

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Lawful evil

Advancement: None

Given the lack of reliable supply lines from Europe, German forces frequently scavenge useful items from the battlefield and employ mundane equipment in military roles. Corpse mines combine this Teutonic practicality with magic. Although weaker and less reliable than conventional land mines, these makeshift weapons make use of available materials recovered from battlefields: corpses and scrap metal.

Blood mages reanimate the dead—particularly those with their legs blown off—strap salvaged helmets, metal plates, even cookware to their bodies, and





bury them just beneath the desert floor. The corpses become aware when they sense a life-force nearby, burrow up through the sand, and attack.

These corpses prove most effective as antipersonnel mines—they are too weak to seriously damage vehicles. Since corpse mines use scrap metal to create shrapnel when they explode, those searching for mines with metal detectors have the same chance to find these corpses.

Combat

Corpse mines primarily claw at their victims, attempting to gain a firm grasp. Once they attach themselves to their prey, corpse mines focus raging spiritual energy in their bodies and explode.

Self-Explosion (Su): Corpse mines can concentrate malevolent spiritual energy within their remains and explode. Normally this only inflicts damage on anyone in their grasp: 3d6 plus any remaining hit points the corpse may still have.

The blood mages who resurrect corpses as mines first strap to their bodies salvaged metal plates, helmets, and other scrap metal to serve as shrapnel. When the modified corpse mine explodes, hot, metallic shards rend the air—those in their grasp sustain damage equal to 6d6 plus any of the corpse's remaining hit points. A DC 20 Reflex save allows the victim to wrestle free and sustain half damage. Others within the corpse's blast radius of 15 feet only take 3d6 damage (halved on a successful DC 15 Reflex save). Avoiding the blast of one corpse mine may very well put one within reach of another corpse waiting just beneath the sandy surface. Using this power destroys the corpse mine.

Skills: *Corpse mines gain a +5 racial bonus to Hide checks when concealed just beneath the ground.

Undead: As undead creatures, corpse mines have immunity against mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. They ignore critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, and energy drain.

Adventure Seeds

Heroes may encounter corpse mines during the course of any mission where they must navigate a minefield. The SBG particularly uses these abominations to guard the perimeters of their field headquarters or facilities where they employ blood magic far from the sight of mundane Afrika Korps troops. Particularly ambitious characters—once they realize

the threat corpse mines pose to the physical well-being, sanity, and morale of Allied soldiers—might seek some magical means to detect and defuse these beasts, eventually tracking down and destroying the SBG encampment where blood mages create them.

Flugzeuggeist

Large Aberration

Hit Dice: 4d8+12 (30 hit points)

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 10 ft., fly 90 ft.

AC: 16 (+1 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

Attacks: Shrapnel +4 ranged, talons +7 melee

Damage: Spitting shrapnel 3d8, talons 1d6+4 and 1d6 fire

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: —

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, Evasion, Fire Subtype

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +5

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 6

Skills: Intimidate +2, Intuit Direction +5, Spot +7

Feats: Flyby Attack

Climate/Terrain: Mountains, desert

Organization: Elements (2) or flights (4)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: None

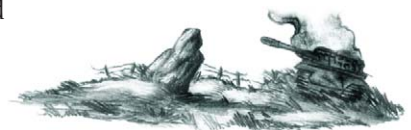
Alignment: Neutral evil

Advancement: None

Flugzeuggeists—German for “airplane ghost”—rise from the charred wreckage of aircraft. They appear as fiery, winged demons streaking through the sky, spitting molten shrapnel at targets in the air and on the ground.

When nobody retrieves and buries the bodies of downed pilots, their restless spirits haunt the wreckage. In some cases, their tormented emotions fuse with fire from the crash and parts of the damaged plane. The result appears like a flaming demon, flapping shredded wings, twisting its dragon-like fuselage, clawing at opponents with talons of crushed landing gear, and spitting molten shrapnel from its snout.

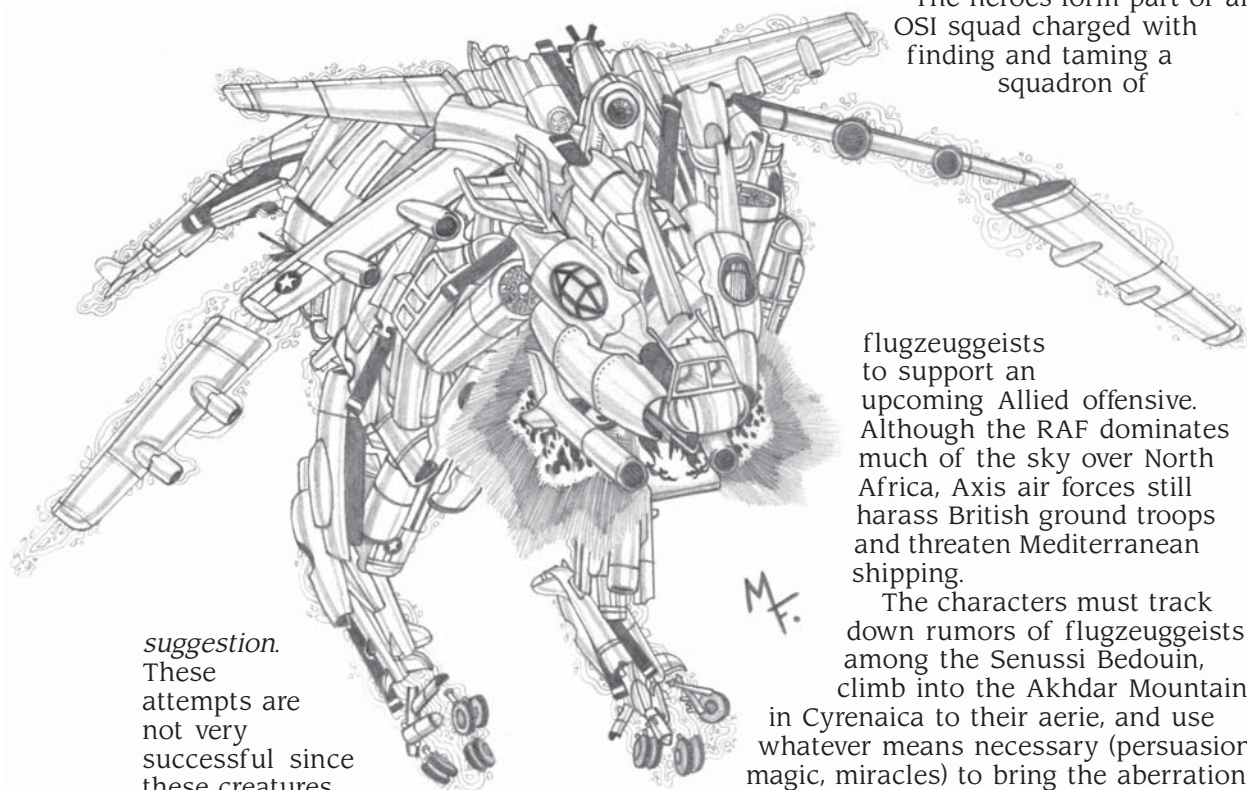
These fiends fly from aeries in the mountains, seeking living enemies on whom to wreak their vengeance. They somehow still retain a surreal need for the camaraderie of other fellow airmen, and the discipline required for aerial combat. They soar in formation and coordinate actions as if they were a living fighter squadron. German blood mages try controlling small groups of flugzeuggeists using spells such as *emotion* and





Adventure Seeds

The heroes form part of an OSI squad charged with finding and taming a squadron of



suggestion.

These attempts are not very successful since these creatures were not created from blood magic like reanimants. In a few cases, the flugzeuggeists have turned on the blood mages in fury.

Combat

Flugzeuggeists prefer to engage enemies from the air, frequently employing their flyby attacks. They spit molten shrapnel at opponents (with a range increment of 200 feet), though they sometimes rake ground targets with their twisted landing-gear talons. They rarely engage in melee combat, especially when it's more advantageous for them to fly away from dangerous foes.

Burn (Ex): Anyone hit by a flugzeuggeist's melee attack must make a DC 17 Reflex save or catch fire, taking 1d6 damage immediately and for 1d4 turns thereafter, or until they put out the flames. Those making melee attacks against this creature also catch fire if they do not make the Reflex save. A person on fire can make a move-equivalent action to extinguish the flame by rolling on the ground or jumping in water.

Darkvision 60 feet

Fire Subtype (Ex): Its fiery nature gives the flugzeuggeist fire immunity, but it takes double damage from cold attacks unless it makes a successful save.

flugzeuggeists to support an upcoming Allied offensive. Although the RAF dominates much of the sky over North Africa, Axis air forces still harass British ground troops and threaten Mediterranean shipping.

The characters must track down rumors of flugzeuggeists among the Senussi Bedouin, climb into the Akhdar Mountains in Cyrenaica to their aerie, and use whatever means necessary (persuasion, magic, miracles) to bring the aberrations to the Allies' aid in time for the offensive. A rival team of Nazi blood mages also seeks to enslave these creatures—if the heroes don't reach the aerie in time, they might walk right into a fiery trap.

Ghul

Medium-size Undead

Hit Dice: 3d12 (19 hit points)

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 13 (+3 natural)

Attacks: Bite +2 melee; 2 claws +0 melee

Damage: Bite 1d6+1, claw 1d4+1

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Fear Aura

Special Qualities: Undead

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 10, Con —, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 12

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +4*, Intuit Direction +3, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +6

Feats: —

Climate/Terrain: Warm mountains, desert

Organization: Solitary, gang (2-4) or pack (7-12)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Advancement: None





Bestiary

Ghûl is the Arabic term for evil spirits that haunt the night, abducting and eating babies, consuming flesh, and striking terror in peaceful souls. Various legends claim they rise from the unburied bodies of murderers, torturers, and the perpetrators of unspeakable crimes.

These corpse eaters pick over battlefields, burrow through hastily dug graveyards, and prey on those foolish enough to venture into the night when the smell of burned flesh and spilt blood wafts thick through the air. In their cowardly demeanor as nighttime scavengers, they subsist on the dead flesh that abounds from the combat in North Africa. If pressed, however, they gladly prey on the living, often the weak, witless, dying, or helpless.

These hairless, gangly creatures know no masters. Some live like solitary hermits among caves and sewers, venturing out at night to terrorize anyone within their hunting range. Others form packs that create impenetrable warrens, infest ruins, swarm through abandoned trenches, or camp amidst battlefield wreckage. Attempts to capture and tame them for use as unconventional soldiers inevitably fail given the beasts' savage nature, barbaric existence, and chaotic origins.

Combat

Solitary ghûls prefer ambushing their prey from carefully chosen hiding places. Ghûl packs overwhelm victims by their numbers, using the terrain to their advantage in swiftly attacking and withdrawing to regroup. Few would attack a healthy, armed soldier without some sort of overwhelming tactical advantage or a pressing need for food.

Fear Aura (Su): Ghûls continuously exude an aura of fear fueled by their evil reputation among the various peoples of North Africa. Upon first seeing a ghûl, the viewer must make a DC 15 Will save or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. This ability can only affect a viewer once per day, even after a failed Will save. Those who make the save are immune to the fear effect for 24 hours.

Skills: * Ghûls' sandy coloration and skin texture gives them a +4 racial bonus to Hide checks when concealed in desert or mountainous terrain.

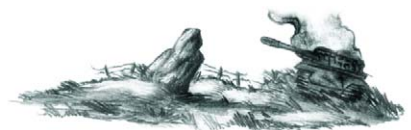
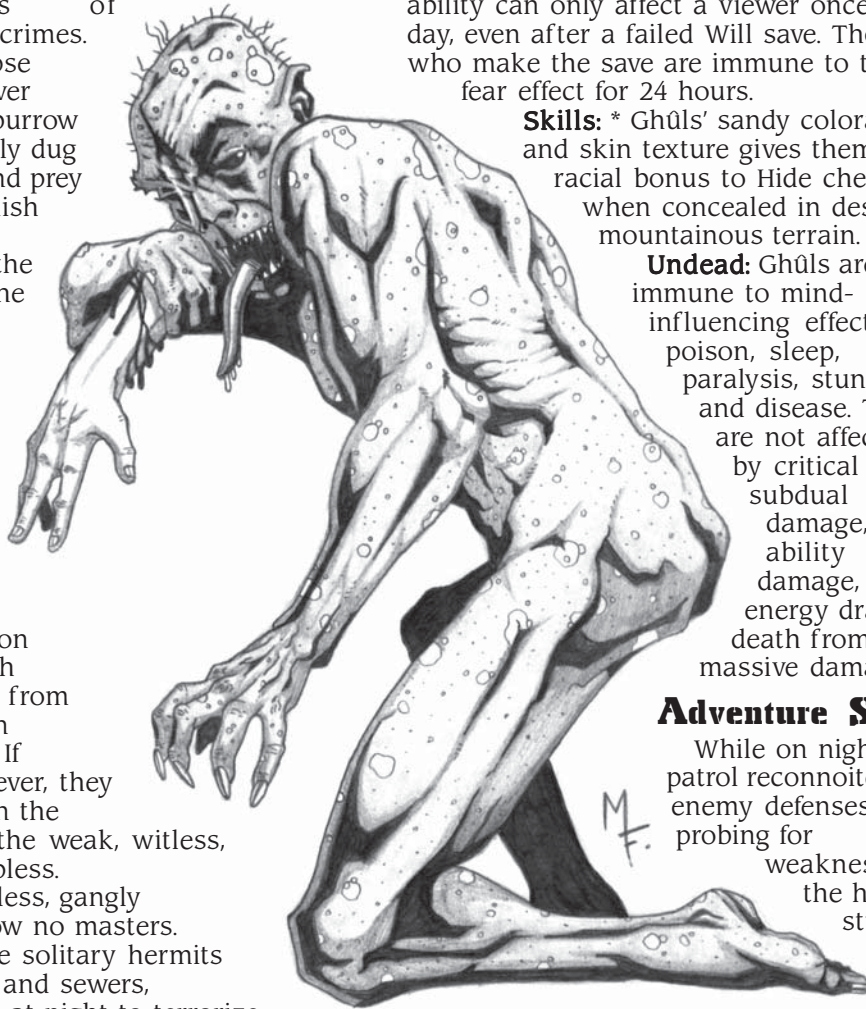
Undead: Ghûls are immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. They are not affected by critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Adventure Seeds

While on nighttime patrol reconnoitering enemy defenses and probing for weaknesses, the heroes stumble

into an abandoned German trench. Bodies litter the ditches and craters, presumably left here after an intense bombardment. After picking their way through booby-traps, wrecked supply huts, and partially destroyed bunkers, they discover the remains of a field headquarters. But as they rummage through the debris searching for intelligence, they discover the true nature of the trench's final demise. A large pack of ghûls encamped in underground bunkers emerges seeking nourishment—from the characters' still-living bodies!

The surrounded heroes must find a way to escape. If they are successful, the next question is, do they report this to headquarters? The scuttlebutt around camp says that people reporting strange occurrences tend to vanish.





Ienpu

Medium-size Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 1d10+1 (7 hit points)

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 40 ft.

AC: 12 (+2 Dex)

Attacks: Bite +1 melee, or claw -3 melee

Damage: Bite 1d6; claw 1d4

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./ 5ft.

Special Attacks: Confusion

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Skills: Listen +3, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +5*

Feats: Dodge

Climate/Terrain: Warm mountains, desert

Organization: Pack (5-20)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Advancement: None

Although they resemble the jackals that roam the desert wastelands feeding off carrion, ienpu are supernatural messengers of the ancient god Anubis sent to aid souls on their way to the underworld.

Ienpu appear in packs anywhere they smell a distressed or dying soul. Some say they materialize as the sun descends into the western horizon, while others believe they emerge from hidden caves that serve as portals to the underworld. They prefer to attack when the odds are in their favor. Ienpu roam the remote regions of the Sahara, but also use their

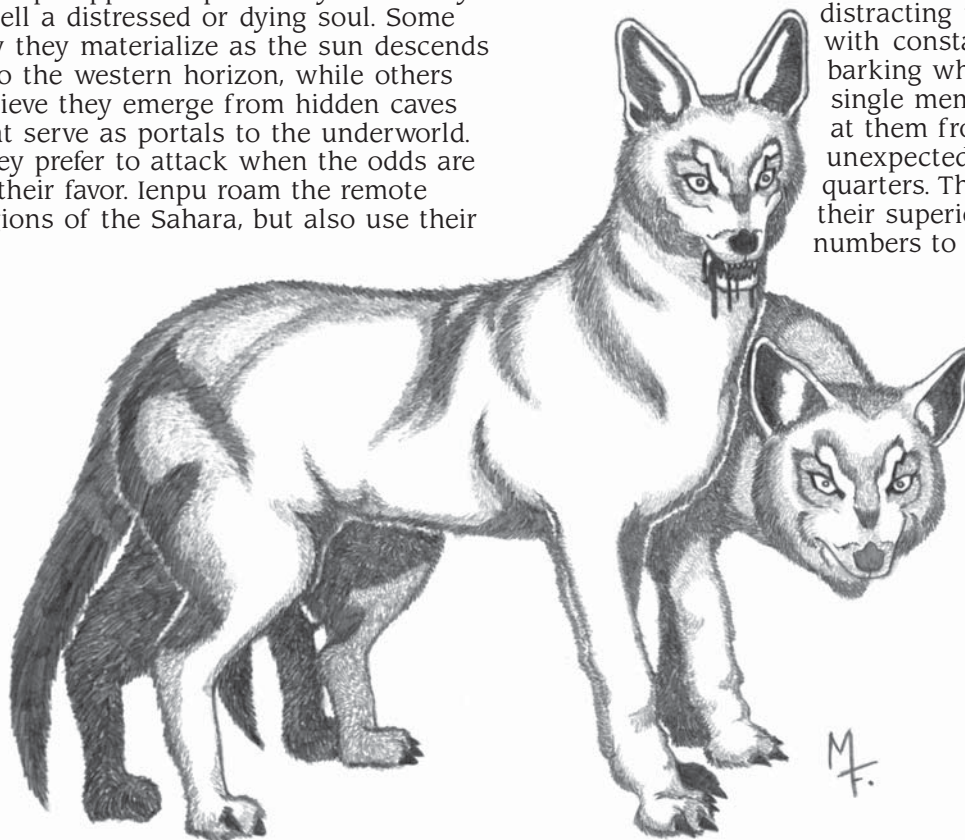
numbers and agile speed to penetrate more populated areas, dodging more able-bodied souls to reach those who need a little nudge toward death. They even lurk near field hospitals, waiting until the dead of night before making off with the more hopeless cases. These otherworldly dogs prey on the mortally wounded, weak, thirsty, feverish, and those unfortunate enough to travel alone through the harsh desert. When fighting doesn't produce accessible victims, packs of ienpu dig up the numerous graveyards scattered across the North African front, seeking souls still trapped in corpses.

Ienpu frequently appear in packs of 5 to 20 dogs. When killed, the spirit of Anubis flees from their bodies, but the other ienpu inevitably drag the body off to consume it in their lair.

As emissaries from the underworld, ienpu always approach from the west. They cannot enter doorways or portals facing north, east, or south, thus offering potential victims a chance to find shelter inside a building, vehicle, or other structure with all western entries blocked or guarded.

Combat

Ienpu packs overwhelm their opponents, distracting them with constant barking while single members nip at them from unexpected quarters. They use their superior numbers to maintain





enough attacks to wear down their prey. Ienpu disperse if their pack loses more than half its members.

Darkvision 60 ft.

Distraction (Su): As long as at least five ienpu remain in a pack, their constant yapping and maneuvering creates an aura of distraction that may panic their prey. Those failing a DC 10 Will save become panicked—they suffer from a -2 morale penalty on saving throws, have a 50% chance to drop anything in their grasp, and they flee the pack in a randomly determined direction (one that seems perfectly logical to the panicked character at the time). If cornered, the panicked target cowers; he loses his Dexterity bonus to AC, may take no actions, and becomes a stationary target that attackers can hit with a +2 bonus.

Low-light vision

Skills: *Ienpu receive a +5 racial bonus to Wilderness Lore checks when tracking by scent.

Adventure Seeds

Their ability to sniff out bodies with remnants of the soul still inside makes the ienpu useful supernatural hounds. The OSI might assign characters the task of somehow capturing and training a team of ienpu to uncover lurking corpse mines, whose remaining spiritual energy powers their explosive capabilities but gives them away to creatures seeking souls. The heroes could also uncover an SBG plot to harness the ienpu's abilities as otherworldly war dogs, overwhelming field hospitals to cause confusion behind the lines before an imminent Afrika Korps attack. The SBG might try using the dogs as guard beasts for their camps, where the creatures would wear down the courage of those trying to penetrate such sensitive facilities.

If the ienpu become a frequent threat in their campaign (or a tactical weapon in the hands of the SBG), the characters could seek some protective measures against the dogs' ability to panic their prey. Perhaps they research ancient spells among the papyrus scrolls at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, search for evidence from the fabled library of Alexandria, explore temple or tomb ruins for clues, or somehow contact Anubis himself or his earthly avatars. Knowing the morale-weakening value of ienpu, whether or not under their control, the SBG does everything in its power to stop the heroes on their quest to protect against the ienpu.

Judgment Beast**Huge Outsider**

Hit Dice: 12d8+60 (114 hit points)

Initiative: +3 (-1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 40 ft.

AC: 13 (-1 Dex, -2 size, +6 natural)

Attacks: Bite +21 melee, claws +16 melee

Damage: Bite 2d6+9, claw 2d4+9

Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Frightful presence, improved grab, trample

Special Qualities: Fire and poison immunity, invisible in sunlight, see in darkness

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +7, Will +8

Abilities: Str 28, Dex 9, Con 20, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 3

Skills: Hide +5, Intuit Direction +12, Hide +11, Intimidate +4, Listen +16, Move Silently +9, Search +10, Spot +16, Wilderness Lore +12

Feats: Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Track

Climate/Terrain: Warm mountains, desert

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 12

Treasure: None

Alignment: Lawful evil

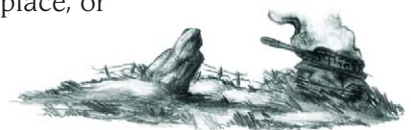
Advancement: None

Judgment beasts are manifestations of the ancient Egyptian goddess Ammut, eater of the souls of those whose hearts are judged impure and unfit to enter the afterlife. The fantastic creatures mirror the goddess's appearance, with the head of a crocodile, mane and foreparts of a lion, and hindquarters of a hippopotamus.

Judgment beasts rarely appear in the earthly realm, and even then only in lands formerly conquered by the ancient Egyptians. They pass from another plane of existence to hunt down and consume those with impure hearts who have somehow cheated death in an unnatural or magical way.

Those evildoers who deserved to die and found some infernal means of raising their earthly remains might meet a judgment beast in the dark cold of night when they least expect it. Nobody quite knows how the creatures enter the earthly plane, though once discovered, they can only leave it through their own destruction.

Sometimes the beasts emerge just when their prey is surmounting overwhelming odds, when he would unjustly escape with his life once again to continue his villainous ways. Other times the creature appear at the wrong place, or





Summon Judgment Beast

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: Adt 9

Components: Authentic ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, Chapter 125

Runes: Thurisaz, Tiewaz, Laguz

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: One summoned judgment beast

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell allows an adept to summon one judgment beast into his presence. Casting the spell requires the three runes as well as an authentic papyrus scroll inscribed with Chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead, in which the deceased's heart is weighed on the scales and tossed to the beast if it is judged impure. The scroll spontaneously burns during the course of casting this spell and becomes a useless heap of ashes afterwards.

Upon summoning the judgment beast, the spellcaster must specify the name of a particular individual (the prey) and make a convincing argument that the victim has an impure heart and has somehow cheated his rightful death. To do this, the caster must make a DC 20 Bluff or Diplomacy check (the War Master may factor in a bonus based on convincing roleplaying of this accusation)—if he fails, the beast immediately attacks the caster.

The judgment beast can only be summoned in regions formerly conquered by the ancient Nile civilization: Egypt, northern Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Palestine, and Syria. The creature can only hunt and attack victims who are physically in these areas.

a location its victim recently abandoned, and it must hunt down the cursed person at night. In these cases, it inevitably runs into unwitting opposition from those terrorized by its composite body and fierce demeanor. It continues its hunt until someone slays it in combat or its victim dies.

Only the most powerful blood mages know how to summon the judgment beast for their own foul purposes, though this knowledge came at great cost of research, espionage, and sacrifice.

Combat

A judgment beast becomes a formidable foe in combat. It first snaps at its prey with its immense crocodile jaws, attempting to get a grip and use its Improved Grab ability to inflict damage on the victim each round. The beast constantly maneuvers its body, shielding its head from attacks and trampling anyone unfortunate enough to fall under the powerful hippopotamus legs at its hindquarter. It continues fighting until nobody remains to oppose it, or it has consumed the impure heart it was sent to destroy.

Fire and Poison Immunity (Ex): A judgment beast has immunity from fire and poison.

Frightful Presence (Ex): When a judgment beast first appears, it may initially frighten others with its unnerving presence. Those of 12th level and lower must make a DC 12 Will save or flee as best they can, suffering a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon





damage, and saving throws. Those who make the Will save become immune to the beast's frightful presence for one whole day.

Improved Grab (Ex): If the judgment beast hits a Large or smaller-sized target with its bite attack, it maintains its grip and deals bite damage each round until the prey is either dead or somehow freed from its grasp.

Invisible in Sunlight (Ex): A judgment beast is invisible in direct sunlight, though others can see it in shadow or artificial light (both firelight of candles and torches, plus that of headlights and spotlights).

See in Darkness (Su): As a devilish manifestation, a judgment beast can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, including that created by spells.

Trample (Ex): An enraged judgment beast can trample nearby Huge or smaller opponents for 2d6+9 points of damage. Those who choose not to make attacks of opportunity against the creature can attempt a DC 24 Reflex save to halve the damage.

Adventure Seeds

A judgment beast should appear only rarely during the North African campaign, possibly as the climax of a story arc. Although the OSI might know the creatures exist—and even have the knowledge to summon one—they might avoid dabbling in that kind of magic given the beast's limited range and its potential to go out of control during the summoning.

The SBG, however, has no qualms about researching the spell, collecting a copy of the ancient Book of the Dead, and summoning a judgment beast for their own purposes. Perhaps the heroes first learn of this scheme when thieves steal a papyrus from the Cairo Museum containing the judgment chapter from the Book of the Dead. Strange happenings at archaeological sites in Egypt might also give away the SBG's plans.

The characters might investigate a brutal slaying in Cairo or in an Allied rear area, discovering clues that could only prove that a judgment beast slaughtered the victim. They could run across other murders or attacks—supposedly by

a lion or crocodile—as a beast travels through more populated areas on its way toward its intended prey. What begins as a simple investigation soon leads the heroes into a confrontation with the judgment beast that is none too pleased to encounter them.

Sand-Rot Mummy

Medium-size Undead

Hit Dice: 2d12+3 (16 hit points)

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 12 (+0 Dex, +2 natural)

Attacks: Slam +2 melee

Damage: By weapon or slam 1d6+1

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: Damage reduction, undead, partial actions only

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 10, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1

Skills: –

Feats: Toughness

Climate/Terrain:

Warm mountains, desert

Organization:

Gang (2-5), squad (6-10), or mob (11-20)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment:

Neutral

Advancement:

None

Sand-rot

mummies rise from dunes where the blood of the slain and the hot desert transform corpses into shambling bodies filled with rage against the living.

For centuries the cultures inhabiting the arid desert preserved their dead by removing the moisture and decomposing elements of the body.

The Saharan sands

naturally desiccate

anything containing

moisture left buried

there for any length

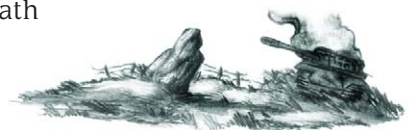
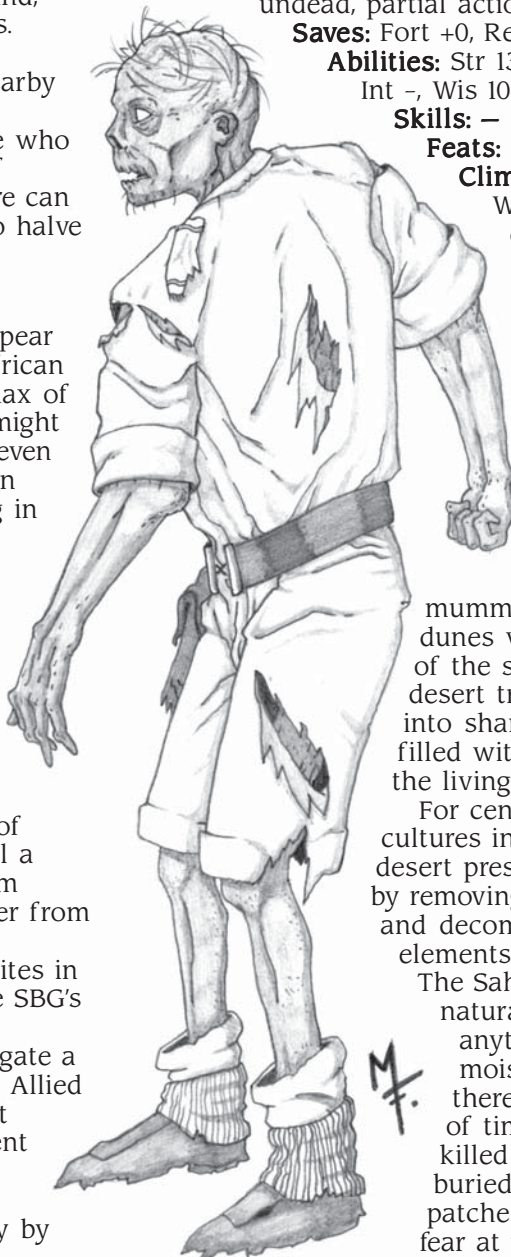
of time. For those

killed in the dunes or

buried in great sandy

patches their anger and

fear at their death



imbues their blood with energy that transforms the sand and later empowers their broken bodies.

The sand absorbs the blood, bodily fluids, and spiritual energy, desiccating the body and mutating it into a ghastly shadow of the human it used to be. The sand not only dries out the corpse but crystallizes parts of their bodies into a hardy, leathery substance, making them more resistant to damage from all types of weapons. Their hardened skins tend to slow them down, however.

Although they aren't wrapped in the linen gauze one associates with traditional ancient Egyptian mummies, sand-rot mummies still present a frightening sight. They emerge from the sand and shamle about, moaning, howling, and venting their rage against those more fortunate to remain alive, Nazis and Allies alike. Their dried flesh still retains signs of the injuries that killed them, and tattered uniforms and gear hang on their frames like useless garbage.

Sand-rot mummies instinctively seek out others of their kind, feeding off their collective anger and inflicting their vengeance on any living souls they encounter.

Combat

Sand-rot mummies wander about the desert, seeking living creatures upon which to vent their wrath. Their rage and the torment of death erased much of their common sense and basic instinct for self-preservation and tactics, so they simply try to overwhelm opponents with their sheer numbers. They employ any club-like weapons available (rifles, boards, pipes) or assault the living with their toughened fists.

Damage Reduction 7/- (Su): Sand-rot mummies' crystalline-flesh composition makes them particularly resistant to damage of all types. They ignore the first seven points of damage dealt to them from each attack, no matter what kind of weapon is used against them.

Partial Actions Only (Ex): With their poor reflexes, sand-rot mummies can perform only partial actions—they can move or attack, but not both unless they make a partial charge.

Undead: As undead creatures, sand-rot mummies have immunity against mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. They ignore critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, and energy drain.

Adventure Seeds

Nobody's quite sure exactly how sand-rot mummies come into existence, so finding a way to create and control them—or prevent their formation—could become the focus of the heroes' mission. The characters could guard an Allied laboratory experimenting with various chemicals to weaken or dissolve the mummies' flesh—meaning they need a fresh supply of captured mummies the heroes must acquire. German agents might try infiltrating this facility to sabotage operations or steal the chemical formula for their own use.

Perhaps the OSI obtains reports of a secret SBG camp deep behind enemy lines where blood mages experiment on creating sand-rot mummies of their own. Unfortunately this research requires killing Allied prisoners and treating their corpses in a variety of ways to obtain the desired effects. The characters must locate the facility, penetrate its defenses, free the Allied prisoners, and confront the Nazi blood mage.

Supply Rat

Small Animal

Hit Dice: 1d8 (5 hit points)

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dex)

Speed: 40 ft.; climb 20 ft.

AC: 15 (+3 Dex, +1 size, +1 natural)

Attacks: Bite +4 melee

Damage: Bite 1d4 and disease

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Disease

Special Qualities: Low-light vision 60 ft., scent

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +8, Move Silently +8

Feats: Weapon finesse (bite)

Climate/Terrain: Warm mountains, desert, battlefield

Organization: Pack (11-20)

Challenge Rating: 1/3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral

Advancement: None

Supply rats have grown fat on pilfered provisions and gone savage from eating the flesh of the dead. The oversized vermin can reach up to three feet in length, yet still retain their instincts for finding tasty morsels and scratching their way to them.

The feral creatures lurk wherever food is plentiful: supply dumps, battlefield trenches, kitchens, and field hospitals.



They munch on dry goods and dying soldiers with equal gusto, snapping at each other for the choicest scraps. Their unsavory diets breed disease in their mouths, which they inadvertently pass along to anyone they bite. Nothing seems to keep them away—they gnaw through fences and tent canvas, and wriggle their bloated bodies through the smallest spaces to reach food. Large dogs seem effective at tracking and killing them, though they shy from larger rat packs. Only when supply rats become severe problems in camp does command assign soldiers to guard provisions or actively hunt down and destroy rat nests.

Combat

When confronted by a foe (or attacking a weakened creature) supply rats use their superior numbers to try overwhelming their prey. They fight to protect their food supply, but often flee in the face of intense opposition.

Low-light Vision 60 ft.

Disease (Ex): Anyone bitten by a supply rat must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or come down with a debilitating fever in 1d3 days. The illness gives them a temporary loss of 1d3 points of Dexterity and 1d3 points of Constitution.

Scent (Ex): Supply rats rely on their keen sense of smell to alert them to approaching foes, seek out tasty morsels, and track down dying creatures.

Adventure Seeds

Supply rats pose hazards in both rear areas and front lines. The characters could receive orders to guard a supply dump and either catch or ferret out the thief who's been stealing provisions. After following suspicious sounds and trails of crumbs, they eventually discover a nest of supply rats amidst the depot. If they escape the rats the first time, they must reorganize and reequip themselves to eradicate the beasts from the supply dump before they consume or spoil all the provisions destined for the front.

The heroes might also find rats as battlefield obstacles. Supply rats might infest a defensive trench the characters need for cover, or plague a field hospital where

their comrades, commanding officer, or secret contact is recuperating. Perhaps they head out on a nighttime patrol to search for another recon unit that disappeared. They find supply rats gnawing on the survivors and must fight them off to retrieve vital intelligence from the recon unit.

'Twisted Hulk

Huge Construct

Hit Dice: 10d10 (55 hit points)

Initiative: -1 (-1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft. (can't run)

AC: 27 (-1 Dex, -2 size, +20 natural)

Attacks: Slam +16/+11 melee

Damage: Slam 2d6+9 melee

Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 5 ft./15 ft.

Special Attacks: Frightful presence, trample

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 50/water, water vulnerability

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3

Abilities: Str 28, Dex 9, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1

Skills: —

Feats: —

Climate/Terrain: Battlefield

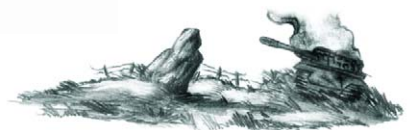
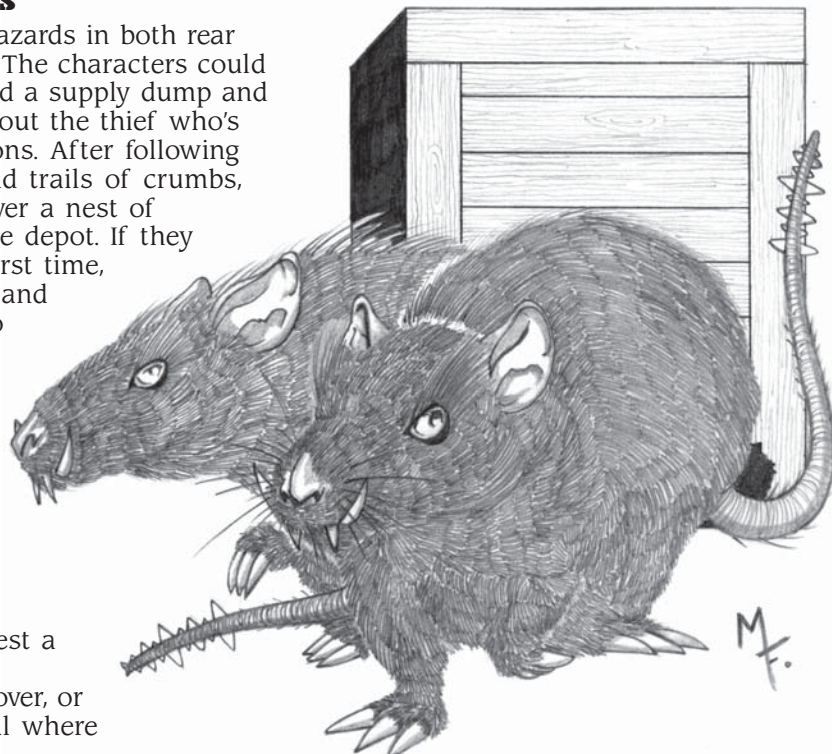
Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: None

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Advancement: None



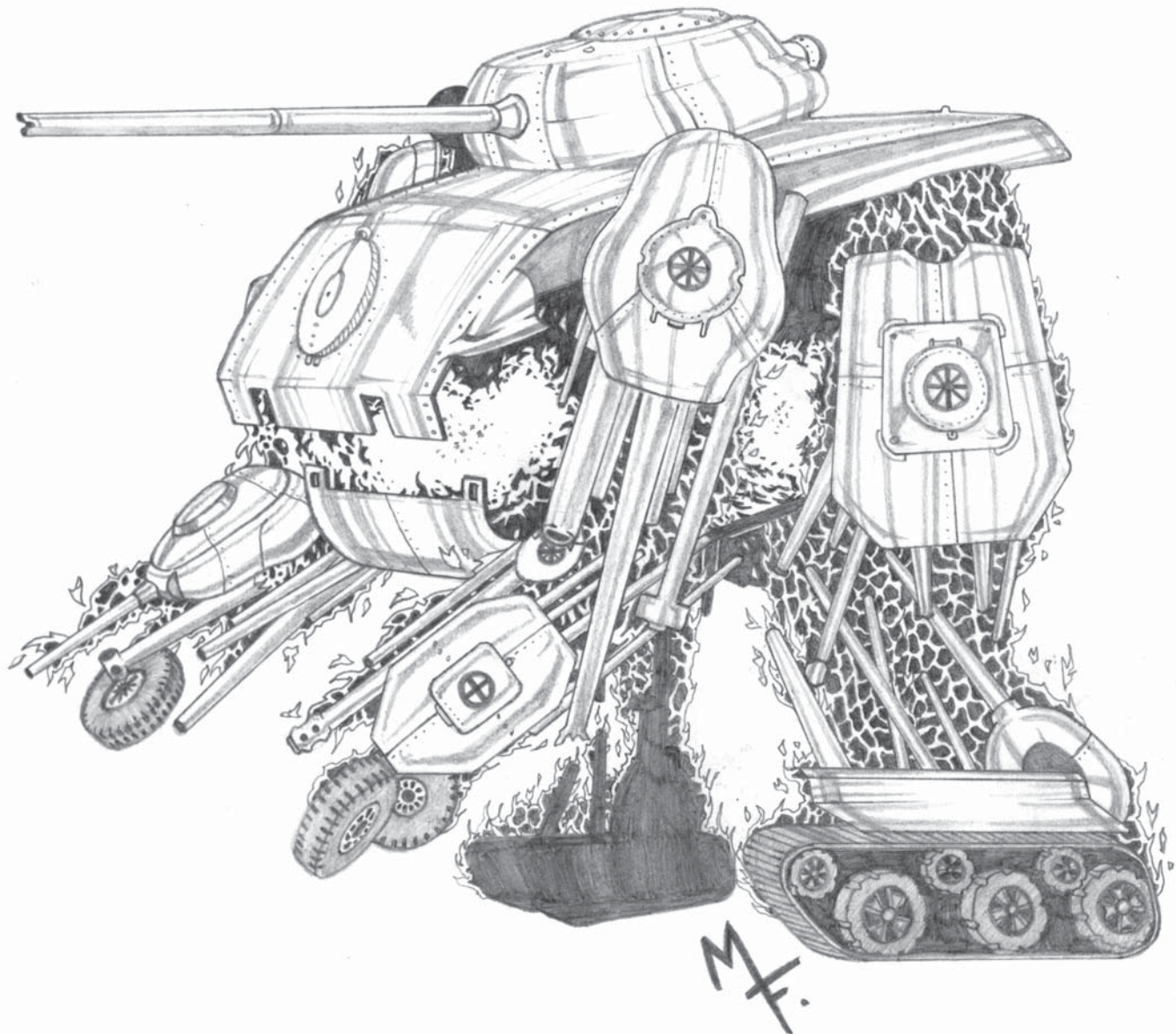
Chapter Four

The burning remains of tanks, fueled by the bodies of their crews, sometimes rise in anguish as twisted hulks, raging beasts of metal intent on expending their spiritual energy on one last frenzy before they burn out.

Nobody really knows why or how these monstrosities form. Tank battles inevitably produce horrid results for panzer crews: armor penetrated by shells, shrapnel tearing through the crew compartment, ammunition exploding, engines catching fire. The twisted hulk is born from the frantic emotions of the crew members as they try hauling their shrapnel-torn bodies from the burning tank. These intense feelings, raging fires, and desperate spiritual energy fuse the tankers' flesh, blood, and souls with that of their vehicle.

All their hatred and fear twists the remains of their tank—and others sharing the same fate nearby—into an animated hulk filled with vengeance for those still alive. Their raging life forces assert themselves by binding parts of their destroyed tanks together in an anthropomorphic form. Twisted hulks use tank chassis for torsos, turrets for shoulders and hips, and gun barrels, fenders, axles, and other bits for arms and legs, all bound together by tank-tread sinews and suspension spring ligaments. They bash at foes with driver wheels, radiators, armored hatches, and bogie wheels bound by sheer will into metal fists.

Twisted hulks fight like berserkers—in their fiery pain, the souls trapped within lash out at anything nearby, and anyone





attacking them. This fighting panic only add more confusion to the battlefield, as units of opposing sides become common enemies to the hulk, regardless of its crew's nationality. Most soldiers naturally flee such an unearthly construct, then attack it from a distance. Few realize the hulk simply wants someone to put it out of its misery with a good dousing with water—a precious and often rare resource in the desert.

If they aren't destroyed immediately, twisted hulks eventually beat off all attackers and stomp their way north, into the Mediterranean Sea, which finally quenches the hot metal fires burning the souls within.

Combat

A berserk twisted hulk on the battlefield creates an immediate danger for any units nearby. The raging monster wildly attacks the nearest threats first, whether they're armor or infantry. Any reinforcements immediately become targets for the hulk's flailing metal arms and lashing whips of tank tread. Once it encounters no further resistance in the immediate area, the hulk moves on to the next threat—often a unit some distance away firing on it from a defensive position. The twisted hulk attacks that force and any others that stand in the way of its march to the sea.

Once it encounters no further resistance, it stomps off north toward the Mediterranean Sea, destroying anything in its path, until it wades into the water and quenches the agonizing fire within its armored body.

Construct: Twisted hulks have immunity against mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. They are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Damage Reduction 50/water (Ex): The armored exterior of twisted hulks makes them particularly resistant to damage. (Note: War Masters may wish to vary the exact amount of damage resistance based on the type of armored vehicle fused into the twisted hulk.)

Frightful Presence (Ex): When a twisted hulk appears on the battlefield, it may initially frighten others with its unnerving presence. Those of 9th level and lower must make a DC 15 Will save or flee as best they can, suffering a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage, and saving throws. Those who

make the Will save become immune to the twisted hulk's frightful presence for one day.

Trample (Ex): Twisted hulks raging on the battlefield can trample nearby Medium-size or smaller opponents for 2d6+9 points of damage. Those who choose not to make attacks of opportunity against the hulk as it moves can attempt a DC 24 Reflex save to halve the damage.

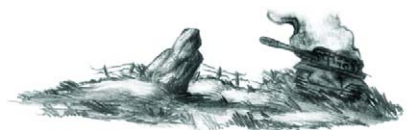
Water Vulnerability (Ex): Twisted hulks ultimately seek to end their painful, tormented existence by quenching the fires burning within their bodies in water. For every gallon of water thrown on a twisted hulk, it immediately sustains 1d6 points of damage.

Adventure Seeds

Twisted hulks appear on only the most intense battlefields, but once they do, the OSI sends the characters to the scene to investigate the wreckage or track down a fleeing hulk. Reaching a hulk's dead remains might not prove easy, especially if the beast fell in enemy controlled territory. They must determine what conditions create the hulk—does it depend on how or where the tank was made, the religious or superstitious beliefs of its crew, or some mysterious power inherent to the location where it rose?

The unnatural merging of humans and machines through supernatural energy could spark an entire field of research for the SBG. Such a facility experimenting with this phenomenon would have ready access to useless panzers (perhaps near a rear-area tank repair camp) and unwilling, easily terrorized souls (Allied prisoners of war). The heroes must uncover, investigate, and ultimately sabotage such inhuman experiments to free Allied soldiers and make sure the Nazis can't summon and control the twisted hulks on the battlefield.

Or perhaps the heroes are sent to investigate an even stranger anomaly. All OSI records show that twisted hulks head north to the sea, but now spotting reports have come in of a hulk heading *south*, deeper into the desert. The characters are dispatched to discover why this construct is behaving in a different manner from the others. Does the creature have some sort of goal? Is it driven by a need for revenge, or perhaps a sense of duty? Either way it's not willing to stop and discuss its motivations with the heroes—they'll have to find out the hard way.





Wireless Hound

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 4d10+12 (34 hit points)

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 18 (+1 Dex, +7 natural)

Attacks: Tail gore +7 melee

Damage: Tail gore 1d8+4

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Radio quills, Rage

Special Qualities: Wireless sensitivity

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +5 Will +2

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 5

Skills: Listen +4, Move Silently +3, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +9*

Feats: Track

Climate/Terrain: Warm mountains, desert

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral

Advancement: None

A massive increase in radio waves tearing through the ether mutated the North African porcupines living in the hills into fierce beasts able to track and destroy the source of their torment.

The wireless hound's long spines vibrate in the presence of radio waves, irritating the beasts and sending them into a fury the closer they get to a transmitter. Given the huge influx of wireless use throughout the North African front and the Sahara desert, radio waves constantly plague the hounds. Instead of fleeing their territory, they seek to destroy the source of their torment.

The previously timid creatures shy away from large military units and armored combat, but commonly hunt down solitary transmitters in easily accessible areas: rear-area headquarters signals vans, hidden radios supporting resistance fighters, and the mobile wireless sets desert raiders like the LRDG use during their forays across the Sahara. The beasts manage to control their irritation enough to sneak up on the radio, but fly into an wild frenzy when they come within 75 feet of an active transmitter. They focus their attack on any parts associated with the wireless set, including its power source, aerial, and the unit itself. Anyone in its way who tries preventing it from destroying the source of its torment also becomes a target.





Once it demolishes the wireless set (or someone has the sense to turn it off), the hound eases out of its rage and lumbers off to forage for food and water, return to its nest, or to seek another radio signal for destruction.

Combat

Characters frequently encounter wireless hounds near actively transmitting radio sets. Enraged by the intensity of radio waves disturbing the ether, the hounds fly into a frenzy, attacking the transmitter, aerial, power source, and anyone standing in their way. They typically leap toward a target, then spin their bodies and gore their foes with their long, spiny tail. Once they destroy the wireless set, the hounds lumber off into the desert to seek another annoying transmitter, and flees any subsequent attacks.

Rage (Ex): When within 75 feet of an active wireless set, hounds immediately fly into uncontrollable, violent rages focused on the radio transmitter and anyone in the vicinity. They temporarily gain bonuses of +4 Strength, +4 Constitution, and +2 morale on Will saves; however, they suffer a -2 penalty to AC, and cannot use their skills effectively. This rage lasts until they destroy the wireless set (or someone turns it off), after which the hounds become fatigued (-2 to Strength and Dexterity, and they cannot charge or run).

Radio Quills: Anyone struck by a wireless hound's tail gore is also jabbed with 1d4 of the creature's long, barbed quills. These easily rip through clothing into flesh but are blocked by any sort of armor.

The quills are sensitive to radio waves and channel the energy of any transmitting radios within 75 ft. into the victim. This causes intense pain at the quill's location. For each quill a victim has embedded in his flesh, he receives a -1 cumulative penalty to all actions when in the presence of a transmitting radio.

Removing a quill can be done as a standard action in combat, but yanking it out in this way causes the victim 1 point of damage. Outside of combat, quills can be removed with a Heal or Combat Medicine check with a DC of 10. This causes no damage to the victim and requires approximately 1 minute per quill.

Skills: *Wireless hounds receive a +5 racial bonus to Wilderness Lore checks when tracking radio signals received on their spines.

Wireless Sensitivity (Ex): Radio waves vibrate the hounds' spines, giving them the ability to sense the direction and distance to wireless transmitters and trace them using the Track feat and Wilderness Lore skill.

Adventure Seeds

The wireless hounds' ability to sense and track radio transmissions makes them an aggressively accurate alternative to the time-consuming, sometimes inaccurate high-frequency direction-finding equipment (Huff-Duff) used to locate enemy radios. Axis or Allied efforts to harness and control this power could form the focus of an adventure.

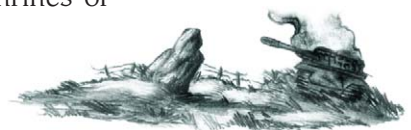
After the heroes survive and report a run-in with a wireless hound, their OSI superiors assign them the task of luring a hound into a trap using their radio set, capturing the beast, studying its behavior, and somehow training it as a friendly tracking hound.

Their test comes when they must seek out an enemy patrol transmitting sensitive information from a location deep within the Sahara Desert. But when they find this German patrol, they discover that it, too, has trained a pack of wireless hounds to track down Allied radio transmissions—and savagely attack Allied soldiers on command.

Heroes in an RAF campaign might be assigned a different task. They are given a top secret mission and a number of heavy wooden crates are loaded onto their aircraft. The heroes aren't told what's in them and the crates' solid construction prevents them from seeing inside. They can hear faint noises coming from within the crates, though. Each crate is equipped with a parachute.

The heroes are tasked with dropping these crates behind enemy lines at the suspected positions of German radio transmitters. They are warned that they must maintain complete radio silence during the mission for their own safety.

Once underway, curious heroes might peek into the crates to get a glimpse of their mysterious cargo, only to find some cute, if slightly over-sized, porcupines. They might also hear agitated noises coming from the crates whenever they receive a message on their aircraft's radio. If the characters violate the order on maintaining radio silence or if they fly directly over a transmitting radio, the wireless hounds may fly into a rage and break out of their crates—causing a confused melee in within the confines of the aircraft.



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