

Field Commander: Rommel
North Africa
By Bob Leonhard

March, 1941

15th and 21st Panzer, along with four Italian infantry divisions, attack the British 2nd Armour Division at El Agheila. The British defense is dug-in, with an armored reserve prepared to overrun. The enemy also has good intelligence. I decide to focus on destroying/capturing enemy supplies, and I bring AT guns and tactics to the fight. Finally, I plan on exploiting. The enemy foils my plan to capture supplies, but I do destroy one depot and crush the 2nd Armour without casualties on my side. The 21st Panzer is now a veteran force.

After the battle, I can either move into Tengeder to avoid further fighting, or move north to Benghazi to take on the Guards Division, or move east to El Adem against the 3rd Indian Division. Alternately I could split the 15th and 21st Panzer Divisions and attack both places, but it seems unlikely that I would destroy either if I did that. I decide to hit Benghazi, because if I went instead to El Adem, I could get counterattacked from two directions.

The enemy again has good intelligence and has planned a massive air strike against the attackers. This could be very dangerous. I decide to focus my intelligence operations on disrupting his air attack. Meanwhile, I will rely on tactics and pressing the fight to destroy the Guards. I manage to nullify half of his air and then annihilate the Guards, but the 15th Panzer takes a hit. The 21st Panzer are now elite.

Ariete Division advances to Tengeder, while the rest of the Italian forces lag behind in Libya. Bologna takes a hit from lack of supplies in El Agheila. All in all, not a bad beginning. I bring Deutches Afrika Korps (DAK) into Tripoli and accumulate much-needed supplies.

British forces in the Tobruk region hold in place. The 7th Australian Division advances from Mersa Matruh to Halfaya. British reinforce Alexandria and Cairo but fail to reinforce Tobruk. This will be my big chance to grab the key port.

April-May, 1941

I refit 15th Panzer. I surge my Panzer Divisions, Ariete, and three Italian infantry divisions against Tobruk, where the 9th Australian and Coastal Infantry defend behind fortifications. I also send the depleted Bologna against the 3rd Indian at El Adem to divert British supplies there.

Bologna is destroyed, but they did their job. Allied supplies are dwindling, which will impair their main defense at Tobruk. Since the enemy intends to press the fight, I focus on preparing an armored assault, salvaging supplies, and exploiting after the battle. I annihilate the defenders and capture the port, while losing Brescia Division. Ariete and 15th Panzer become veterans.

Leaving Ariete and an infantry division in Tobruk, I order the Panzers and Pavia Division to attack the 22nd Division at Bardia. We overrun the enemy easily, capturing more supplies, and we then push on to El Adem.

We wipe out 3rd Indian Division, and Pavia is now a veteran. But the Italians are worn out, so the Panzers will have to move on alone to finish up the job at Halfaya. When I destroy the last British there, I will have cleared the Tobruk area of enemy, thus easing my supply situation.

I'm a little more careful this time. I conduct intelligence operations to locate and destroy the enemy's artillery. Then, I swing my Panzers behind the enemy and dig-in athwart his supply lines, forcing him to attack me. I destroy him easily with no casualties. Ha! I get 13 supply points! DAK moves to El Agheila, and the rest of the Italian forces close into the Tobruk area. I bring 90th Light Division, Trieste, and Bersaglieri into Tobruk and spend the rest on supplies. I'm in great shape.

The enemy tries an amphibious assault against Tobruk. Not smart. They manage to damage two infantry divisions before dying. British reinforcements and supplies surge into Egypt, and units advance piecemeal toward the frontier.

June-Sept., 1941

I now have to contemplate the conquest of Egypt. I flirt with the idea of blitzing all the way to Cairo, which I technically could do with my two premier Panzer Divisions if they could successfully fight through three divisions before getting there! They would then face three more fortified, well-supplied divisions. I'm going to give it a go!

I have accumulated 16 supplies, and I have the option of refitting Trieste and Savona in Tobruk, at a cost of 4. This would leave me 12 supplies to conduct the campaign. Assuming that I do not use any supplies to enhance my battle plans, reserving all fuel to support my exploitation, I will need 19 supplies to advance the whole force to El Alamein and Cairo. I could possibly acquire an additional 6 supplies along the way, which still leaves me short. I elect not to refit my infantry divisions and instead reserve all supplies for the campaign.

I cross the frontier into Egypt and prepare to assault the enemy's front line at Sofafi, defended by the refitted Guards Division. My force is huge: 15th and 21st Panzers (both elite), 90th Light Division, DAK, Ariete (veteran), Pavia (veteran), Trento, and Bersaglieri. Interestingly, the enemy has elected to focus on supply. He intends to interdict my supplies and try to capture some of my fuel.

My intelligence operations thwart his attempt to disrupt my supply lines. I destroy the Guards easily and capture 2 supplies, destroying one of his. He's down to 12 supplies. He tries to capture mine but fails, and my force survives unscathed so far. Ariete is now elite. I spend 8 supplies (10 left) and move the entire force to Bir El Kenaysis. The 1st South African Division defends there. Once again, he focuses on diminishing my supplies and capturing my fuel! Pretty savvy opponent. In a replay of the last fight, my intel advantage keeps him from messing with my supply lines. I overrun him without casualties, capturing 2 more supplies. I

now have 12, and I destroy another of his, so he's down to 9. Time to move on. 90th Light is now veteran.

I expend 8 more supplies (4 left) and advance the entire force to El Alamein. The 4th Indian Division is fortified there, and there are reinforcements en route. The enemy has set ambushes in front of the main line of resistance. My intelligence pinpoints his reinforcements, and I'm able to stop them before they reach the fight. The enemy uses his ambushes and an overrun to draw first blood from my force, damaging Trento. I overrun him, capturing 2 supplies (total: 6). The 90th Light is now elite.

I spend 5 supplies (1 left) and reach Cairo with 15th and 21s Panzers, Ariete, 90th Light, and the DAK. The city is fortified and defended by 41st, 2nd New Zealand, and Coastal Divisions. They are well supplied, and this should be one hell of a fight.

The enemy is very confident. He has plans to press the fight and exploit! He has a good tactical plan, including a massive overrun. I decide to maximize my destructive potential, because I will have exactly 2 battle rounds (thanks to my Limey friends) to finish off these guys. I'm using air, artillery, and an armored assault.

It's a difficult fight. I lose DAK, and 90th Light is damaged, but I take the city and win the game. Woot!