

Chain of Command

CHAIN OF COMMAND WESTERN DESERT, 1941

DUEL IN THE DESERT THE VILLAGE AT ELPH ARRT



WEHRMACHTBERICHT, REICHSMINISTERIUM
FÜR VOLKSAUFKLÄRUNG UND PROPAGANDA, (RMVP)

ARMED FORCES REPORT VOLUME 3.
VICTORY AT THE VILLAGE OF ELPH ARRT.

THE ALLIES

1ST PLATOON, 3RD BATTALION THE NORTH ESSEX REGIMENT

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

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

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

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

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



1ST PLATOON, A COMPANY, 22ND NEW
ZEALAND BATTALION, ALSO KNOWN AS THE
"WELLINGTON BATTALION".

2ND LIEUTENANT BARNEY PYTHON
AGED 26 FROM WELLINGTON. COMES FROM A
WELL KNOWN AND PROMINENT RESPECTED
FAMILY. HIS FATHER IS A FORMER MAYOR OF
WELLINGTON WHO SERVED IN WW1 AT
GALLIPOLI WHERE HE WON A MILITARY CROSS.
LT PYTHON IS A NATURAL LEADER BUT ALSO
RELIES HEAVILY ON HIS SGT'S EXPERIENCE AND
COUNSEL.

SERGEANT FULTON MCKAY
AGED 37 ORIGINALLY FROM GLASGOW, WAS
FORMERLY A SERGEANT IN THE SCOTS GUARDS
WITH 15 YEARS HARD SERVICE IN IRELAND,
PALESTINE AND INDIA BEFORE BUYING HIMSELF
OUT OF HIS ARMY CONTRACT TO EMIGRATE AND
JOIN THE NZ PRISON SERVICE.

CORPORAL COLIN MEADE
AGED 28 FROM LEVIN OUTSIDE WELLINGTON,
WAS FORMERLY AN ALL BLACK INTERNATIONAL
RUGBY PLAYER AND A SHEEP FARMER. WELL
OVER 6 FOOT 5 INCHES AND WEIGHING IN AT
220 POUNDS WITH A HARDY HEWN PHYSIQUE, HE
HAS THE STRENGTH TO CARRY A SHEEP UNDER
EACH ARM AND RUN FOR MILES WITHOUT
STOPPING. BEING HALF MAORI, HE HAS AN
INTENSE DISLIKE OF RACISTS.

LANCE CORPORAL ALFRED 'MOBY' DICKIE
AGED 23 FROM KAPITI ISLAND OFF
WELLINGTON'S COAST, TACITURN, BUT ALSO
ABLE TO INSPIRE THE MEN IN HIS SECTION WITH
HIS COURAGE.

CORPORAL TIMOTHY 'HIC' FARTHING
26 FROM WELLINGTON, SON OF A CARPENTER.
CPL FARTHING WAS FORMERLY A VICAR WHO
PRIOR TO THE WARS OUTBREAK LED A
SOMEWHAT HERMIT LIKE LIFESTYLE,
TRAVELLING ACROSS NEW ZEALAND PREACHING
THE VIRTUES OF SOCIALISM, GODLINESS AND
THE DANGERS OF DRINK.



THE AXIS

AFRICA KORPS 5TH LEICHTE DIVISION - RESERVE PLATOON

OBERLEUTNANT OTTO VON GENSCHLAND

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

1ST SQUAD - OBERGEFREITER JOHANN SCHMIDT

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

2ND SQUAD - OBERGEFREITER KARL HAGEN

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

3RD SQUAD - OBERGEFREITER STEFAN WASSERLECHNER

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

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

COMMANDED BY TENENTE STEFANO VILLARI

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

1ST SQUAD

SERGEANTE LUIGI GRIFFO

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

CAPORALE POMPEO STROMBOLI

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

2ND SQUAD

SERGEANTE FRANCESCO BERNOULLI

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

CAPORALE VINCENZO SANTORINI

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



THE VILLAGE AT ELPH ARRT

THE PATROL PHASE UNDERWAY, THE INEXPERIENCED BRITISH PLATOON WERE IMMEDIATELY DRAWN TO THE APPARENT SAFETY OF THE VILLAGE, IT ACTUALLY TURNED INTO A DEATH TRAP TO THE MEN FROM NORTH ESSEX.

THE NEW ZEALAND PLATOON ENDED UP DEPLOYING ON THE BRITISH LEFT FLANK AND HAD A LONG WAY TO GO OVER OPEN GROUND TO GET INVOLVED IN THE BATTLE.

THE MORE EXPERIENCED GERMANS AND ITALIANS MANAGED TO WORK THEIR WAY AROUND THE BRITISH RIGHT FLANK UNDER THE CAREFUL TUTELAGE OF THE COMPLETELY UNBIASED UMPIRES, AND DEPLOY AMONGST THE ROCKS AND BROKEN GROUND WHICH GAVE THEM GOOD COVER TO POUR FIRE INTO THE HAPLESS BRITISH.



THE VILLAGE AT EL PHARRT



THE ALLIES DEPLOY

THE BRITISH DEPLOYED INTO THE VILLAGE THEN REALISED WITH VERY FEW DOORS AND WINDOWS THAT THE HOUSES WERE VERY LIMITING. THE ROOFS ONLY ALLOWED A VERY NARROW FRONTAGE AND ONLY A FEW OF THE BRITISH COULD FIRE.

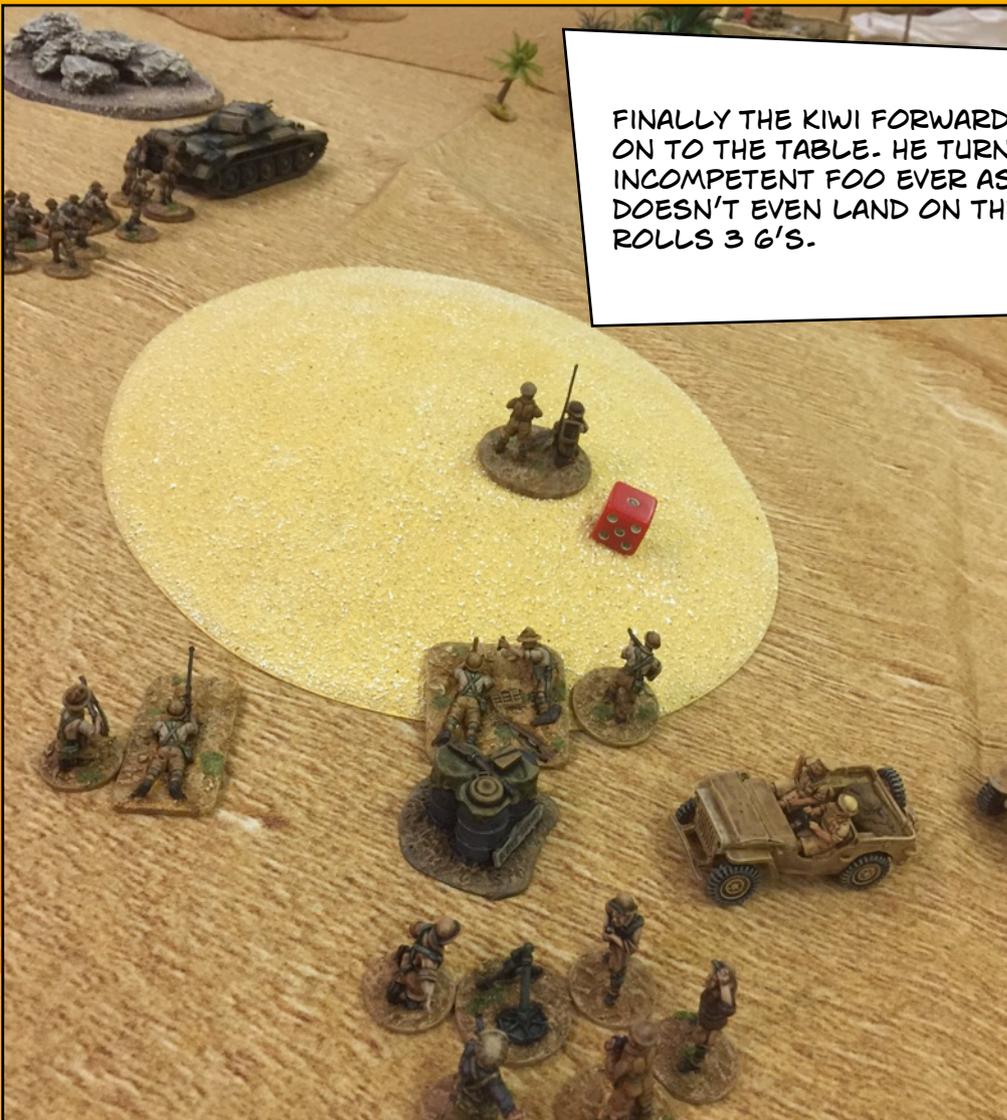
THE NEW ZEALANDERS DEPLOYED BEHIND THE HILL AND HAD TO RISK SOME VERY ACCURATE GERMAN FIRE BEFORE THEY COULD REACH THE RELATIVE SAFETY OF THE OASIS. BY THE TIME THEY HAD GOT THERE 3 OF THE RIFLEMEN WERE DEAD AND CORPORAL COLIN MEADE WAS WOUNDED.

THE NEW ZEALANDERS CALLED ON THEIR SUPPORTS, AN A15 MK.1 CRUSADER AND A 3" MORTAR BATTERY. COMMUNICATIONS IN THE DESERT PROVED DIFFICULT AND THE ORDERS TO THE BATTERY KEPT GOING ASTRAY.





THE BRITISH DEPLOYMENT PROVES DIFFICULT AS THEY SHELTER FROM THE HEAVY FIRE FROM THE GERMAN AND ITALIAN MACHINE GUNS.



FINALLY THE KIWI FORWARD OBSERVER FINDS HIS WAY ON TO THE TABLE. HE TURNS OUT TO BE THE MOST INCOMPETENT FOO EVER AS HIS FIRST RANGING SHOT DOESN'T EVEN LAND ON THE TABLE - DEVIATES 3DG AND ROLLS 3 6'S.





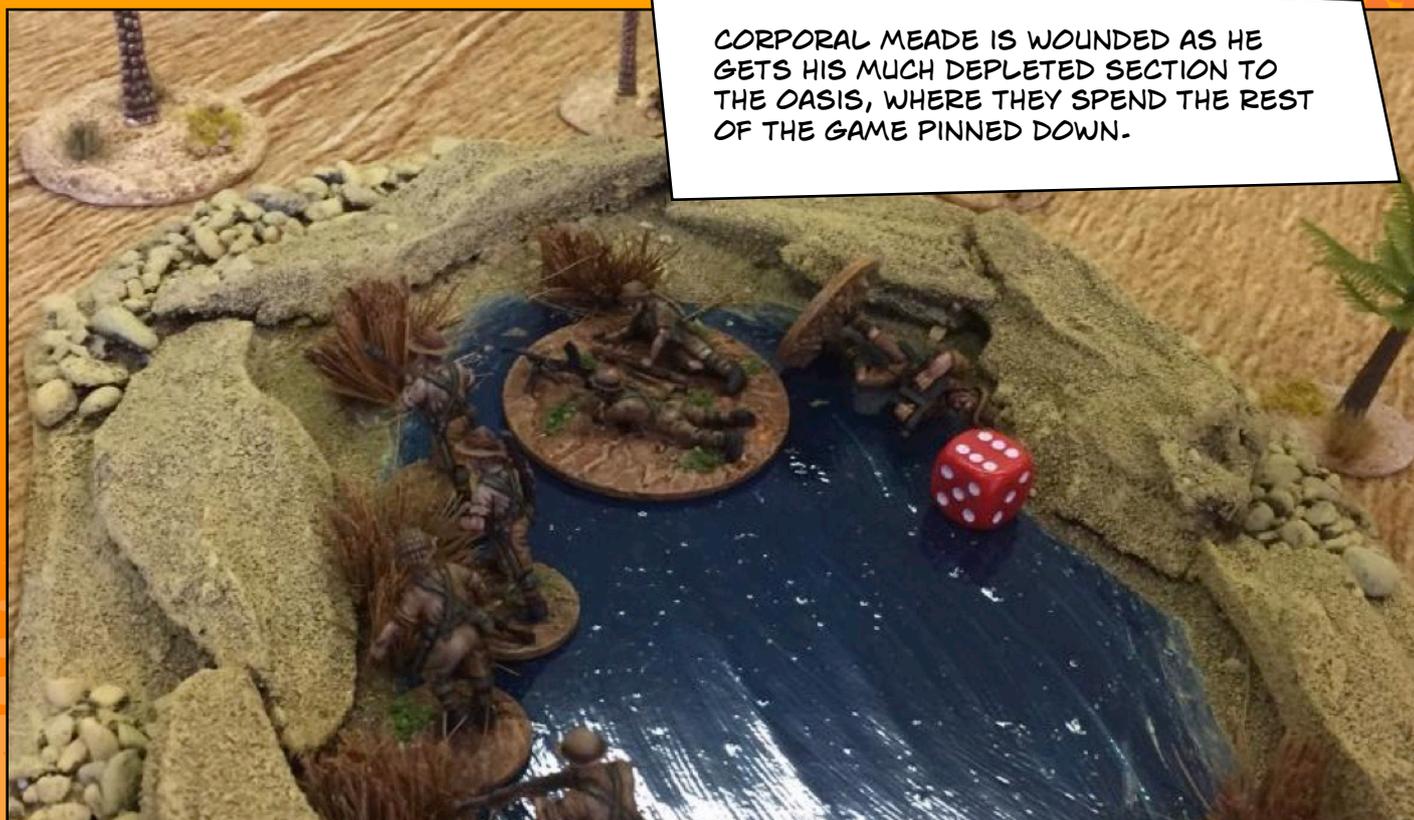
STROMBOLI
ASSEMBLES
HIS MEN.

CAPORALE STROMBOLI ON HIS
ILL-FATED MISSION.





THE BRITISH AND NEW ZEALANDERS TRIED TO ADVANCE AGAINST THE COMBINED ITALIAN AND GERMAN MACHINE GUNS BUT WERE DRIVEN BACK. THE BRITISH IN THE VILLAGE WERE EVENTUALLY BROKEN AND THE KIWI'S STRUGGLED TO OVERCOME MULTIPLE PINS AND SHOCK.



CORPORAL MEADE IS WOUNDED AS HE GETS HIS MUCH DEPLETED SECTION TO THE OASIS, WHERE THEY SPEND THE REST OF THE GAME PINNED DOWN.

CASUALTIES

VON GENSCHLANK'S' GERMANS SUFFERED ONLY MINOR CASUALTIES - 2 DEAD.

CAPORALE STROMBOLI AND HIS ENTIRE PLATOON OF 10 RIFLEMEN WERE SENT OUT TO ASSAULT THE VILLAGE AND WERE NEVER SEEN AGAIN. THEY WERE EITHER CAPTURED OR KILLED.

CORPORAL MEADE AND 3 OTHER KIWIS WERE KILLED OR WOUNDED.

THE LOSSES AMONGST THE BRITISH WERE CATASTROPHIC, CORPORALS LE MANOR AND JENKINS WERE BOTH KILLED ALONG WITH 15 OTHERS.

LIEUTENANT BRIAN SURBITION MAY BE RELIEVED OF HIS COMMAND.

THE GERMAN AND ITALIAN COMMANDERS RECEIVE THEIR BRIEFING FROM THE UMPIRES.

