

The Player's Guide to **ENDGAME**

The Megagame of the Tunisian Campaign 1943

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Jim Wallman 2013

*Megagame
Makers*

ENDGAME



The Final Campaign in North Africa 1943

1. Introduction

Welcome to the ENDGAME Megagame.

This is new theatre of war for the megagame treatment and it has been an interesting exercise to design a game that gives a flavour of the chaotic and changeable conditions in the Tunisian campaign.

As the first proper United Nations campaign with French and US involvement it has a political as well as military problems of alliance warfare. And whilst we see, with the benefit of hindsight, an inevitable military victory for the Allies as the end point for this campaign, this was not how it was seen at the time – the outcome seemed a lot less certain.



Monty's victory at El Alamein in November certainly gave some confidence, but then the British had been thrown back before – could anyone be sure the tide had turned?

And, Tunisia was being reinforced by fresh forces.

For the Axis forces, directed by Hitler to hold North Africa, the judgements necessary to achieve that are subtle and decision making is further complicated by strains on relations within the Axis command structure.

In the end, like most megagames, events will unfold to tell a story different to the historical prototype. Just how different will be up to you, the players.

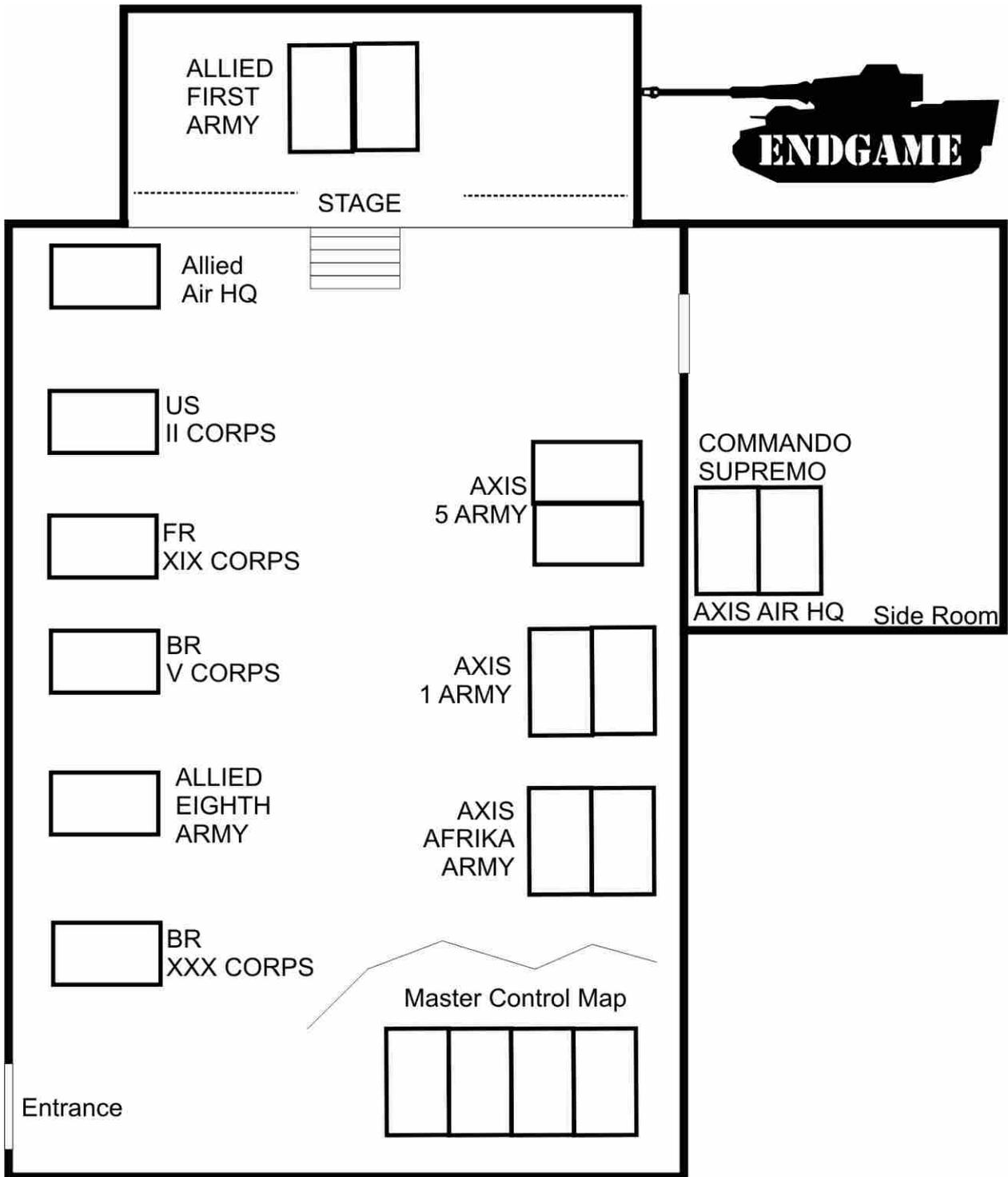
To fit with the scale of the campaign we are also taking a different approach to the operational game here. Many of us will be familiar with the heroic, or not-so-heroic actions of battalions and companies and with previous megagames dealing with operations of a few divisions.

But this game is set at a higher level, and at this level there is less familiarity for gamers. My advice is to remember the level you are at and think operationally and note that the time distance and unit scales may be unfamiliar.

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2. Layout for the Day



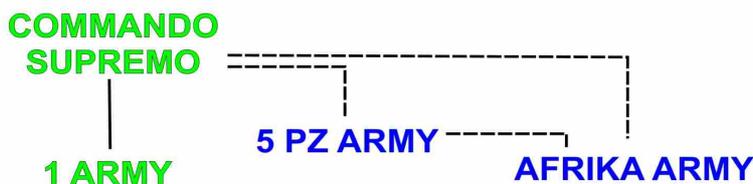
3. TEAM STRUCTURE

At the start of the day, the teams will be organised as illustrated in the diagram below. This might not remain the same throughout the day.

ALLIED TEAM STRUCTURE



AXIS TEAM STRUCTURE



4. Timetable for the Day

0930 – 1000	Arrival and booking in.
1000 – 1030	Plenary briefing.
1030 – 1100	Turn 1 : February 1943 Week 2
1100 – 1130	Turn 2 : February 1943 Week 3
1130 – 1200	Turn 3 : February 1943 Week 4
1200 – 1230	Turn 4 : March 1943 Week 1
1230 – 1300	Turn 5 : March 1943 Week 2
1300 – 1330	Turn 6 : March 1943 Week 3
1330 – 1400	Turn 7 : March 1943 Week 4
1400 – 1430	Turn 8 : April 1943 Week 1
1430 – 1500	Turn 9 : April 1943 Week 2
1500 – 1530	Turn 10 : April 1943 Week 3
1530 – 1600	Turn 11 : April 1943 Week 4
1600 – 1630	Turn 12 : May 1943 Week 1
1630 – 1700	Plenary Debriefing. Clear up phase.

5. What is an Operational Megagame?

This is an operational megagame. It is different from most conventional wargames or board games in a number of important respects.

- **Teams** - Players are organised into teams, who need to work in much the same way as a real-life operational headquarters
- **Command Hierarchy** - Teams are organised in a hierarchy of teams that mirrors a real-life military hierarchy
- **No Rules** - Players do not operate a rule-system – all adjudication is done independently by an impartial umpire team known as 'Control'.

Teams

You will find yourself part of a team of players. It is very important to your experience of the day that you get to know your other team members (you may already know them, especially if you have booked to come as a team).

Player teams represent Army Group HQs, Army HQs, Corps HQs and Air HQs.

Within the team you will have to sort out specific roles and jobs. You will find that if the team works like a discussion group, with everyone discussing and agreeing each action, events will happen much too fast for you to keep up.

Within your team, your headquarters if you like, there are three key activities that have to be done if your unit is to operate fight properly:

- Command
- Intelligence
- Operations

Command – the Commander player has the final responsibility for the operational decisions for the formation. This responsibility extends to reporting *up* the chain of command to senior level players. It also means that they have to follow orders (a difficult task for many gamers).

The game simulates a real military hierarchy – and it will allow for realistic consequences for failure or disobedience. If you like being the commander, the best way to hang on to that role is to do a good job.

The Commander listens to his operations and intelligence staff before deciding what he wants the formation to do – he can then leave it to his operations player to write the orders.



Intelligence – this is understanding what the enemy is doing. An Intelligence player will listen carefully to what Game Control or subordinate teams report and build up a picture of what is facing the formation. This can be a complex and difficult task at times, but if neglected can lead the team into some costly mistakes. Intelligence players will also probe Team Control for information and liaise with neighbouring formations. In a higher headquarters, the intelligence player will be asking for information from subordinate player teams as well as asking for information from other sources such as spies, resistance networks or air recce.

Operations – this is understanding what your own troops are doing. An Operations player will listen carefully to what Game Control reports about the status and capabilities of their own units. Operations will manage the movement of units and prepare order sheets. Operations will keep the unit commander informed of the capabilities and options available to the formation. This may include tasking units – such as armoured car units, recce aircraft - to gather intelligence information for the Intelligence player.

Communication - The game moves at a fixed rate without pause.

Each half hour represents **one week** of operations.

Within that time, players will have to do all the things described above AND communicate effectively.

This game is as much about effective communication as it is about manoeuvring combat units.

In the game, players will normally be allowed to move to the tables / HQs of friendly forces to communicate.

However, don't forget that the game goes on – if you spend too long chatting, you may not have time to write your orders properly. Players might choose to send written reports or messages to other teams - this can sometimes be quicker.

In some special cases, Game Control might place a team out of communication. If this happens they obviously may not move about and talk until communication has been re-established.

Command Hierarchy

You are playing a game where you are part of a military hierarchy and we aim that in this game, that hierarchy is observed (so far as it is possible with non-military players). You can disagree with superior commanders, but you may **not** disobey them. This applies to command teams at the higher levels as well, because they will have been given orders from even higher (not played) headquarters, which they must try to follow.



This means also that, as in real life, no commander has a completely free hand to do what they like.

Higher commanders (including non-player high command represented by Game Control) have the power to replace formation commanders.

This might be done by moving a new player into the role from another team, or by rearranging the team and swapping another member of the team into the command slot.

Generally, sacking like this isn't done for being unlucky or losing a battle.

It is done when there is obvious disobedience or incompetence – so be warned.

No Rules

Ok, there are rules *really*.

It's just that the players, as a whole, will not be shown all of them. The reason for this is that we want players to react and think like real-life military commanders (who don't have 'the rules' either) rather than chess-players with a full knowledge of the consequences of every action. The 'no rules' principle is particularly important in a game about Tunisia because many of the formations involved were fighting their first battles of the war and had yet to learn some hard lessons about what worked.

So you **won't** be able to say to yourself "...if I swing that battalion into hex 2345 I will gain a +1 on the CRT and block his zone of control.." or similar.

You might instead be saying "If we use the 3rd Regiment to swing round the right flank we might dislodge the German kampfguppe in that pass".

Much better, isn't it?

There are a number of player guidelines in this handbook.

These set out key assumptions that you share about the relative capabilities of units in certain circumstances, how far you can expect units to move, and how much supply they might consume.

The Game Control team will also do their best to report back to you in realistic terms.

You should **never** hear

"..your battlegroup launched a +23 attack on a status 17 German unit and got a total success result and took one status loss".

You **will** hear something more like

"Combat Command A pressed forwards against German infantry and anti-tank positions in the pass and pushed them out taking several hundred prisoners and driving them back towards the town of Al-Igorickal. Our tank losses are low and they will be ready for further offensive operations by next week."

6. Hints on Play

Command Style - The time pressure of operations means that a formation commander has to rely on his team to carry out his directions. This is because he will be spending time talking to the higher command. Higher command will be taking time to talk to all the subordinate commanders.

It also means that the armies cannot function on a turn-by-turn decision making basis. The game will work much better if higher commands are thinking several turns ahead, and low level commands at least a turn ahead.

Higher commanders should not, and in fact cannot, effectively micro-manage the lower team's battle for them.

Level of detail – As a general rule of thumb, players should concern themselves with the situation two levels down – e.g. Corps-level players should be aware of the situation at Brigade level (a corps will be controlling maybe 6-10 brigade-sized units), Army-level players with the situation at Divisional level (an Army might have a total of 2-3 divisions under it commanded by its subordinate corps).

Players should bear this in mind when reporting up the chain in order not to swamp higher headquarters with unnecessary detail, and when sending orders down the chain in order not to micro-manage the battle.

Try to Keep Up – the game moves inexorably onwards. Teams that fail to get their orders written in time will lose the opportunity to issue those orders at all – the game will not wait for them.



So the player teams are advised to do as much as possible to make sure they are ready to issue orders by the deadline.

For example, the operations player might start writing parts of the orders for the next turn before all the feedback from the previous turn has been received.

If they are thinking ahead the team will have some idea what they plan to do next. The ops player can then make minor corrections once the full results have been received from the previous turn.

Don't dither or waste time in arguing and discussion - remember the old military adage –

“... an adequate decision made immediately is better than the right decision made too late”.

That said, the formation commander should listen to what he is being told by his team – but the ultimate responsibility is his to make the final decision.

Establish a routine – teams will find it easier to operate efficiently if there is a definite structure to each turn.

This will help to ensure that teams keep up to time.

For example, communication between higher and lower formation teams should take place at roughly the same stage in each turn, so that players know when orders and reports need to be ready.

7. Scales, Level and Resolution

The smallest represented unit is the Brigade/Regiment (or equivalent). This means that some important elements have been factored into the combat capabilities of the brigade. Players represent the staff at Corps level or higher.

Each game turn is One Week.

The main map scale is one grid square = 20 km.

Note that the grid squares are for map reading and reporting, **they are not 'game board' squares** and you will find yourself in difficulty if you treat them as such.



8. Sequence of Action

Each game turn will take 30 minutes to complete.

Teams will need to structure their use of time carefully to ensure that they carry out all their tasks within each turn.

This table illustrates the sort of routine players in a Divisional team might adopt.

It is important to:

(a) organise your time around certain fixed points – most importantly, the need for written orders to be ready at the start of each turn, but also the times at which you should be communicating with higher/lower formations; and

(b) be ready to react flexibly and quickly if the routine starts to break down.

Time in turn	Commander	Ops	Int
Start	Thinking ahead to turn after next	Gives Control written orders for turn.	Ensure Control understands intelligence requirements – i.e. where recce has been ordered.
Minutes 1-3			
Control takes orders to Control map			
Minutes 3-10	Communicates with Army HQ	Prepares as much of next orders as possible	Communicates with neighbouring Corps HQ
Control reports back			
Minutes 10-15	Listens to Control briefing on outcome of combat	Listens to Control briefing on outcome of combat and status of own units	Listens to Control briefing for information on enemy units
Minutes 15-25	Considers whether changes in orders are required	Updates own units on team map	Updates enemy units on team map – this may take a while
	Gives orders for next turn to Ops	Assesses own units capability and briefs Commander	Assesses enemy strength/intentions and briefs Commander
Minutes 25-30	Spend time thinking	Receives orders from Commander	Receives intelligence requests from commander
		Completes written orders for next turn	Helping Ops with orders, checking.
Control returns for next turn's orders			

9. Orders

Each turn players will issue orders for units or groups of units with the same task (i.e. battlegroups, regiments, or brigades).

FORMATIONS

In ENDGAME the front line player teams will be given a number of 'FORMATION CARDS'.

The number of cards you have is significant, in that this is the number of sub-units you can create and control.

Each Formation can be allocated brigades or regiments from your order of battle (ORBAT).

In general, these Formations will be built around existing Divisional

Headquarters. You have a good deal of freedom to allocate and re-allocate units as desired, including cross-attaching brigades between divisions.

However, formations are always kept together and should be thought of as a single unit.



An example of a Formation Card is at the end of this handbook

MISSIONS

Orders are expressed in terms of a MISSION for that formation. You do not need to go into detail about what the individual units are doing, this can be left to the formation's commander, who will adopt the best tactics he knows.

A mission will indicate the following things:

a. Objective: Where you want the formation to end up. And the route. This might be just to attack and wear down the unit in front.

b. Cooperation : Whether the formation is to cooperate with another formation in some way

c. Tactics: Suggested Tactical Options (though these might be over-ridden if it turns out that they are not appropriate). Not all formations have tactical options – details of your options are in the Team Briefing. As the campaign progresses, some units will gain experience, and with it additional tactical options. You will be informed by Control when this happens.

d. Commitment : how determined they should be to carry out the mission.. This is on a scale of 1 to 4:

COMMITMENT	IN ATTACK	IN DEFENCE
1	Stop on contact and only fight if the enemy are obviously weaker than you. Use the minimum LSP possible (See 'Logistics' below).	Pull back without a fight if obviously over-matched. Use the minimum LSP possible.
2	Attack enemy but keep own casualties low	Hold but pull back if it looks like the enemy are more committed than you.
3	Attack enemy and be prepared to take heavy casualties.	Hold until forced out of position
4	Attack fanatically regardless of losses.	Hold to the last man.

e. Air missions: The number of units allocated to support missions and escort.

f. Logistics: The total number of LSP allocated to the mission.

10. Movement

Terrain

The terrain over which this campaign is fought is difficult, being very mountainous for much of it. As a result the key to all movement (and operations) in Tunisia is the roads. All movement is road-bound in the highlands, and very limited in the clear areas.

It is theoretically possible to fight off a road for a short distance, but for all practical purposes it is the roads that count.

Tracks (the dotted line roads) have reduced capacity and can only sustain a force of no more than brigade size.

Salt marsh is impassable.



Movement

In the space of a week (one turn), a motorised formation moving on a road can, potentially, cross the entire map, if unopposed.

Troops on foot might move up to 100 km on a road.

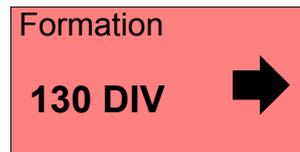
Formation movement is always based on the slowest element in the formation.

The railways are in operation, but only to the west of the map, and are fully occupied on logistics tasks.

11. Combat

Example Player Map Counter

You will be given a set of counters to mark the locations of your Formations.



Remember that the counter is simply a marker to indicate on your map the general area of operation of that Formation. Avoid thinking of it as a board game counter. It isn't the unit.

Formations can be deployed over areas larger than the counter (or smaller). Make sure your Team Control understands the operational area you intend each unit to cover. You may find it useful to mark this on your map using **soluble** pens or chinagraph.

Combat Assumptions

- Combat is extremely wearing on all troops. Even if they win a battle, the winner's attacking units will take many casualties, often more than the defenders. It is important for commanders to ensure that they do not exhaust their entire force by continually fighting. The rhythm of combat needs to include resting periods. It is unlikely that any unit in a formation can withstand more than 2 or 3 weeks of constant active combat operations.
- Air power in the support role can be decisive.
- Artillery is essential to both attack and defence. Attacking without artillery support is a definite disadvantage.
- Logistics are vital (see logistics below). Without supplies attacks will fail and defence is very unlikely to hold.
- Tank units are very potent in battle, but are brittle. Conserve your tanks for key battles.
- Resting is important as it is the time to rebuild damaged formations (see Logistics below).

- Stationary units are assumed to dig in, deploy mines and arrange their defence as a matter of course.

Supporting Artillery

Artillery must be attached to a Formation to be used by that Formation in a battle. Artillery ranges are short on the map, usually firing at ranges of around 10-12 km (less than one grid square).

12. Logistics

In a campaign on this scale, logistics are absolutely vital. To prevent the logistics aspect of the game from becoming too much like hard work, we have abstracted the process.

Logistics / Supply Points (LSP)

All supplies and reinforcements are represented by a Logistics / Supply Points (LSP). LSP are allocated to Formations and recorded on their Formation Card. They are a consumable resource.

The number of LSP you have, and rate of arrival of new LSP is shown in your national briefing.

LSP In Action

The more LSP a formation has, the more powerful it is in combat.

In order for a Formation containing motorised or mechanised units to move at the motorised rate, it must have at least 1 LSP for every 4 units in the Formation.

In a combat, we will only count the tanks, mechanised infantry and artillery units in a Formation if they have at least one LSP **each**.

In order for supporting air forces to be used by the formation at **least 1 LSP** must be consumed also.

Every extra LSP above that minimum gives a big bonus in combat.

Of course, it follows that if both sides are committing lots of LSP then the combat will be particularly bloody.

LSP and Rebuilding

LSP also represent replacements and reinforcements.

One LSP can be used to return one RESTING unit to its full strength, regardless of its state. Control will advise on which of your units are badly damaged.

Allocation and Movement

Higher commands (18 Army Group, First Army, Eighth Army, Commando Supremo) receive LSP from outside the theatre.

At the start of each turn, after orders have been submitted, they must allocate them to one of the following to options:

- a. An Army Supply Dump. This is a named location on the map (see Team briefing for more detail)

b. A subordinate unit. Once in the operational area of that subordinate unit the LSP pass to the control of that player team.

Make sure this happens early in the turn so that your subordinate teams know how many LSP they have for operations.

LSP already in theatre can be moved during this time, up to 100km along any unblocked road route.

LSP allocated to played front line units are located at their unit Supply Dump.

Formations under the control of that unit can draw freely from the unit Supply Dump so long as they can trace an unblocked road route to it.



13. Air Operations

Each week (game turn), the Air HQs will allocate air resources to a range of AIR MISSIONS. Your team Air Briefing contains more on how this works for your side.

Air Support

Air support of a ground battle can be quite important.

To be most effective, 'attach' the air units to a Formation.

Escort:

Close air cover to protect bombers or transport aircraft. It can also be attached to a Formation to provide cover to Air Support missions.

Air Superiority:

Combat air patrols to take control of the air in the areas outside the immediate combat zone of Formations in battle.

Bombing.

This is bombing separate from a ground operation.

There are 4 types of targets for bombing

- a. **Ports** – reduces supplies brought in by sea, both in the port and at sea
- b. **Airfields** – reduces enemy's air capability and destroys aircraft. Airfields are generally protected by AA defences.
- c. **Supply lines** – reduces enemy's ability to move supplies and might also destroy some supplies (see 'Logistics' above).
- d. **Front Lines** – bombing enemy entrenched positions. This is unlikely to be more than a harassment to dug in troops.

Recce: Reconnaissance of the map. One recce unit can conduct recce over 9 selected contiguous map squares.

14. Formation Types, Sizes and Abbreviations

Formation	Number of subunits	Approx numbers of troops	Normal Abbreviation
Army group	2+ Armies	20000-Loads	AG
Army	2-4 Corps	8000-250000	Army
Corps	2-4 Divisions	4000-60000	Corp
Division	2-4 Brigades	2000-12000	Div
Brigade	2-4 battalions	500-3000	Bde
Regiment	1-3 battalions	200-2000	Regt
Battalion	2-4 companies	200-800	Bn
Company	2-4 platoons	100-200	Coy
Platoon	2-4 Squads...	20-40	Pltn
Group/ Squad/ Section		8-12	Gp / Sqd / Secn

Comparative Staff Officer Ranks Table

British Army	US Army	Wehrmacht	Waffen SS
Field Marshall	General	GeneralFeldMarschall	OberstGuppenfuhrer
General	General	GeneralOberst	Oberfuhrer
Lieutenant General	Lieutenant General	GeneralLeutnant	Obergruppenfuhrer
Major General	Major General	GeneralMajor	Gruppenfuhrer
Brigadier	Brigadier-General	-	-
Colonel	Colonel	Oberst	Standartenfuhrer
Lieutenant Colonel (pronounced "LEF-TENANT")	Lieutenant Colonel (pronounced "LOO-TENANT")	Oberstleutnant	Obersturnbannfuhrer
Major	Major	Major	Sturmbanfuhrer
Captain	Captain	Hauptmann	Hauptsturmfuhrer



EXAMPLE FORMATION CARD BRITISH VI CORPS

FORMATION'S HEADQUARTERS 130th Division

UNITS ATTACHED TO FORCE

77th Brigade *78th Brigade*
177th Tank Brigade
130 Divisional Artillery
14th AGRA

MISSION

Objective

Engage enemy armour defending Wadi Ulukinat with the aim of breaking through to the east towards the sea.

Route

Move through town of Al-Igorikal

Cooperation

Guards Armoured division will be moving on our right flank.

Tactics

Attack

LSP
ALLOCATED

4

Commitment (circle one) : 1 2 **3** 4

AIR COMPONENT

Support = *2 Bomber Sqns*

Escort = *2 Fighter Sqns*