

Tactical Combat Series:

Ariete: The Battle of Bir el Gubi

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Introduction

Morning of 19 November 1941: General Balotta, commander of 132nd Armored Division Ariete, the only Italian armored division in North Africa, is completing his defensive dispositions to cover the southern approaches to Tobruk. He orders his division's motorized infantry regiment, the crack 8th *Bersaglieri*, to occupy three battalion strongpoints around a key crossroads near the well (bir) of Gubi. The 8th *Bersaglieri*, supported by the reinforced divisional artillery, begins moving into position around Bir el Gubi and digging in. Most of the M13/40 tanks of Ariete's understrength 132nd Tank Regiment are kept to the rear.

At the same time, General Gott, commander of the British 7th Armoured Division, orders the 22nd Armoured Brigade to attack the Ariete at Bir el Gubi, a complete change from his original orders for the brigade to secure Sidi Rezegh, 25 miles to the north. The reason for the change is still not clear: perhaps Gott hopes to give this well-equipped but inexperienced brigade an opportunity to season itself against an

Italian formation that he assumes will be a weak opponent; possibly he just wants to clear his division's left flank before advancing. Whatever the reason, the full-strength brigade, equipped with 162 brand new Crusader tanks, is eager to emulate the Commonwealth's easy victories against the Italian Tenth Army the previous winter.

The stage is set for a desert battle between evenly matched opponents.

Game Scale

The Ariete game map uses a scale of 150 meters per hex. To maintain standard TCS movement rates, the game uses a time scale of 30 minutes per turn. The Prep Ratings for both sides have been modified to account for this change in turn length.

1.0 General Special Rules

1.1 Terrain, LOS and Visibility

1.1a Desert. Desert hexes are Open Terrain for all purposes.

Design note: The terrain includes numerous rocky outcroppings and small depressions that are too small to be represented on a TCS scale map. This is not Billiard Table terrain.

1.1b Spotting. LOS is limited to a maximum of 10 hexes, subject to Visibility (see 1.1e).

Design note: The pervasive effects of swirling dust, heat haze, and "sub-hex" terrain features on the battlefield limits LOS significantly in a desert environment.

1.1c Contours. The Ariete battlefield is relatively flat, with each contour line representing 5m rather than the usual 20m. No extra movement points are paid to cross any contour line in Ariete. A contour line only blocks LOS [TCS 8.1a] between two hexes if both hexes are at the same elevation, on the lower elevation side of that contour line. Due to the long, gradual slope of the battlefield, a contour line never blocks LOS between two hexes at different elevations.

1.1d Dust clouds. Any hex containing a Vehicle unit in either Mode, or a unit with Integrated Carriers in Move Mode that was last declared as using Vehicle movement points [TCS 24.2c], blocks LOS through the hex or along any of its hexsides. LOS may be traced into and out of such hexes normally.

Design note: Tanks and moving vehicles raised a significant quantity of sand and dust, rendering it difficult to see beyond the first line of moving units.

1.1e Visibility. At the end of the Command Phase of each turn (i.e., NOT just every hour), roll two dice and consult the Visibility Table (on game map) to determine the maximum Visibility for that game turn.

Design note: Visibility in the desert could be quite uncertain, with fluctuations in dust and heat haze being prime variables.

1.1f Exiting the map. When authorized by scenario special rules, scenario victory conditions, or if a map edge is designated as a Rally Point (see 1.7g), units may exit the map area in play at a cost of 1 MP from any hex along the designated map edge.

1.2 Lack of Radios

Because of a general lack of voice communication equipment on both sides, coordination between and within formations was difficult.

1.2a Combining fires. Units in different hexes may not combine to fire PFAs. Units that are not on the same Op Sheet (even if stacked together) and units that belong to different Vehicle formations [1.7f] (even if stacked together and on the same Op Sheet) may not combine to fire SFAs, PFAs, or in response to an Overwatch Trigger in either Action Phase.

Design note: Due to this restriction the Cross Fire Modifier [TCS 11.4] cannot be used for P-Fires.

1.2b Tank Element Grouping. During his Action Phase the phasing player must complete all Vehicle Impulses [TCS 20.2] or SFAs for all units of a friendly tank “element”, i.e., an Italian tank company or British armoured (NOT armoured car) squadron (see 1.7f), as a group before performing a Vehicle Impulse or SFA with a unit of any other element or formation. Before he performs a Vehicle Impulse, SFA, or response to an Overwatch Trigger with a unit from a tank element, the phasing player must first designate any one unit of that element as its “command tank” for the current Action Phase, then must immediately determine whether the other units of that element are “in command”: all units that are within 2 hexes of their “command tank” at that moment are deemed to be “in command”, as are any units that are adjacent to a unit that is “in command” (which could create a chain of adjacent “in command” units, only one of which must be within 2 hexes of its “command tank”).

All units deemed to be “in command” will remain “in command” for the remainder of the friendly Action Phase, regardless of any later movement or change of location relative to their “command tank”. Any unit not “in command” is deemed to be “out of command” for the remainder of the Action Phase. Only a unit that is “in command” may perform a Vehicle Impulse fire (PFA, CS Smoke [3.2a], Assault, Overrun), SFA, or response to an Overwatch Trigger during the friendly Action Phase; any unit that is “out of command” may only move and/or change Mode during the friendly Action Phase.

“Out of command” restrictions do not apply during an enemy Action Phase, allowing an otherwise eligible tank unit to respond to an Overwatch Trigger regardless of its

proximity to the rest of its element. British regimental HQ tank units, although part of their formation, are not an “element”; they may freely move and fire, individually or as part of a stack, at any time during the British Action Phase.

Design note: Tank formations must stay grouped for effective command and control.

1.2c Restrictions on Artillery Missions. In order to fire an Artillery Mission, an artillery battery or battalion must be on an implemented Op Sheet. Only a unit on the same Op Sheet as the firing artillery unit may observe for its Artillery Mission. An artillery battery (or all batteries of an artillery battalion), whether on-map or off-map, counts as a single element for Op Sheet size but does not qualify for the Staff Modifier. All on-map batteries of a battalion must be within one hex of a single common hex to fire a Battalion Mission.

1.3 Limited AT weapons

Due to the general ineffectiveness of AT weapons in use in 1941, all AT Rolls receive an additional -2 modifier, cumulative with any other AT Roll modifiers.

1.4 Minefields

Neither side may deploy minefields in this game.

1.5 Vehicles

1.5a Vehicles as Carriers. Vehicles may not act as Carriers.

1.5b Vehicle morale. The Vehicle Morale rules [TCS 17.8] are NOT used in Ariete.

1.5c Vehicle SYR. Any stack of Vehicles that suffers 2 or more step losses from an attack (a single P-Fire, A-Fire or a set of simultaneous die rolls on the Artillery Point Fire Table or AT Roll Table), must conduct an Obligatory SYR [TCS 17.4].

1.6. Off-Map Artillery

Artillery units designated in a scenario may fire from off-map.

1.7 Command and Control

1.7a Italian Command Prep Rating. The 8th Bersaglieri Regiment has a Command Prep Rating of 3. The 132nd Tank Regiment has a Command Prep Rating of 2.

1.7b British Command Prep Rating. The British Command Prep Rating is 2 for all formations

1.7c Italian Commander's Intent. The Italians must defend Bir el Gubi and defeat the British armor.

1.7d British Commander's Intent. The British must defeat the Italian armor.

1.7e Initial Op Sheets. If not otherwise indicated in the scenario, players may draw up Op Sheets of any type before the beginning of the game.

1.7f Vehicle Op Sheets. In the desert war the role of armored formations was to maneuver against enemy formations; the taking and holding of geographic objectives was secondary to finding the enemy and engaging him in battle.

A Vehicle Attack Op Sheet may list one or more enemy formations, even if not currently on the map, as its “target” rather than designating a geographical objective. Units on an implemented Vehicle Attack Op Sheet which lists an enemy formation as its target may freely maneuver against it in order to destroy units of that formation. Any (or all) of the battalions of the 132nd Tank Regiment, as well as any (or all) of the regiments of the 22nd Armoured Brigade, may be listed as the target of a Vehicle Attack Op Sheet. Incidental targets in close proximity to a target formation may also be engaged, but the focus of the Vehicle Attack Op Sheet should be the destruction of the target formation, not clearing other units from a geographical area 'en route'.

When calculating Op Sheet size [TCS 6.9b], each Italian tank battalion and British armoured regiment is a Vehicle formation and each Italian tank company and British armoured squadron is an element of its parent formation.

1.7g Off-map Rally Points. Both players may designate a friendly map edge as the Rally Point for Op Sheet failure: for the Italian player, the friendly map edge is the northwest edge (hexes 1.27-1.53); for the British player, the friendly map edge is the south edge (hexes 1.00-40.00) [Exception: If playing the Optional Tank Reinforcements variant (see 4.0a), the friendly map edge for 3CLY (only) is the northeast edge (hexes 40.27-40.43)]. Units executing Failure Instructions may exit the map through the designated map edge at a cost of 1 MP. Any unit re-entering the map on a new implemented Op Sheet after exiting must do so through their designated friendly map edge.

Design note: Both players can use off-map Rally Points to regroup out of contact and strike from their friendly map edge with a new attack.

1.8 Set Up Notes

1.8a Order of Set Up. Both players draw up all Op Sheets BEFORE set up. After initial Op Sheets are completed, the Italian player sets up first.

1.8b Set Up Codes. "Formation/Element (-#)" used in scenario 4.4 only means that the formation/element sets up with # less steps of type indicated. Step losses at set-up may be distributed among the units in the formation/element as desired.

1.8c Battalion Morale. Unless specified with a "BM=#" code (used in scenario 4.4 only), Battalion Morale for all units always starts at zero.

1.8d Artillery Ammunition. Each scenario lists artillery ammunition available at start. Track ammo separately by formation as given in the scenario set-up.

2.0 Italian Special Rules

Some of the Italian special rules are optional (and are so indicated); these may be used to explore "what-ifs" or to balance the game for players of different abilities.

2.1 EP Rounds

Italian 75mm On-Map Artillery Batteries may roll once per gun on the Artillery Point Fire Table [TCS 18.9b] when using direct fire (SFAs, Overwatch, or in Assault or Overrun Combat) as IGs [TCS 24.5b], with a maximum range of 8 hexes. This is an exception to the requirement under TCS 24.5b that the IG be at least 100mm. For each On-Map Artillery Battery using direct fire in this fashion, expend one Battery Fire of ammunition [TCS 24.6c].

Design note: Effetto Pronto (EP) were HEAT rounds. A few hundred of them were distributed to Ariete's 75mm artillery groups (battalions) just before the battle. They were a new type of round for the 75mm, developed to make it a stop gap AT gun. Ariete was the first unit to receive them and the only one to receive them during Operation Crusader.

2.2 Weapons Units

2.2a 102mm AT Gun. The Italian 102mm AT Gun depicted in Ariete is a naval gun permanently mounted (i.e., not just transported) on a heavy truck chassis; for Spotting purposes, therefore, it is treated as a vehicle target both in Fire Mode and Move Mode, but in all other regards it is a Weapons unit [TCS 3.1b] with an Integrated Carrier [TCS 24.2], not a Vehicle.

2.2b 47mm AT Gun. Italian 47mm AT gun units have 2 steps each; when firing, both steps must fire at the same target [TCS 9.1g].

2.2c MG and Mortar Units. The Weapons units of III-8th Bersaglieri deployed in an infantry role at Bir el Gubi. Treat the MG and 81mm Mortar units as Infantry units for the purpose of making AT Rolls [TCS 16.1a], including during Assault and Overrun combat.

2.3 Op Sheets

Units from the three battalions (III, V, XII) of the 8th Bersaglieri Regiment (and all artillery and AT units that enter or set up with them), may never be on the same Op Sheet, nor may the Op Sheets containing different battalions of the 8th Bersaglieri Regiment overlap with their graphic in any way. Other Italian units, including the Motorcycle Company, the three tank battalions (and their component companies), the I-Milmart Artillery Group, and the I-24 Artillery Group, may be assigned to any Op Sheet(s).

2.4 Battalion Morale

Unlike weapons battalions in other TCS games, III Heavy Weapons Battalion, 8th Bersaglieri Regiment, is subject to Battalion Morale rules [TCS 17.1] and has its own Battalion Morale Box.

2.5 Tank Breakdown

OPTIONAL When used in any scenario, the Italian player rolls a die for each tank company just before it sets up or enters the map. Halve the result, rounding fractions down, and remove that many steps (minimum 0, maximum 3) from the company to represent breakdown en route to the battlefield. Step losses due to breakdown may be distributed among the units within the company as desired. Step losses due to breakdown do NOT count for Victory Points [4.0c].

Design note: The M13/40 tank was underpowered and had reliability issues.

2.6 Supply Problems

OPTIONAL. Reduce Italian artillery ammunition to one-half the designated amount, rounded down.

3.0 British Special Rules

Some of the British special rules are optional (and are so indicated); these may

be used to explore "what-ifs" or to balance the game for players of different abilities.

3.1 2pdr Tank Gun

Because the British 2pdr guns lacked HE rounds, halve the Fire Strength of any British P-Firer Vehicles (all were armed with 2pdr guns) when making Area Fires.

3.2 CS Tanks

British Cruiser tanks in 1941 were armed with the 2pdr gun with no Smoke or HE capability; thus a section of two Close Support (CS) tanks, armed with 76mm howitzers able to fire Smoke (with a very limited HE load), was part of each armoured squadron's headquarters troop establishment.

3.2a Smoke. A CS tank unit may fire Smoke in lieu of any one Vehicle Impulse during its Action Phase. To fire Smoke a CS tank unit must be in Fire Mode. When firing Smoke, a CS tank unit (whether composed of 1 step or 2 steps) fires at a single hex, rolling once on the Mortar and Infantry Gun Smoke Table. Although it is not marked with a Fired marker, a CS tank which has fired Smoke may not fire again in that phase. A CS tank unit may not fire Smoke in response to an Overwatch Trigger.

3.2b A-Fires. CS tank units are High Trajectory A-firers, but a CS tank unit may only use A-fire twice per game, each roll on the Fire Table, including in Assault combat or Overrun, counting as the use of one A-fire. Use the game markers to indicate whether a unit has fired once or twice.

3.3 2pdr Portee AT guns

At the start of the British Action Phase, 2pdr AT gun units can be declared to be either mounted ("en portee") on their trucks, in which case they are B-1 Vehicle targets, whether in Fire Mode or Move Mode, or dismounted as standard AT guns [TCS 24.4] with Integrated Carriers [TCS 24.2], in which case they are B-0 targets in Fire Mode or when using Foot MA in Move Mode, or B-1 targets when using Vehicle MA in Move Mode. For each 2pdr unit the declaration remains in effect until changed in a future British Action Phase.

Design note: The British Army, having found that towing the 2pdr AT gun cross-country in the desert caused significant damage to the gun, transported it on the back of a truck ("en portee"), as illustrated in the counter art. While it could be fired from the truck, standard practice was to unload the gun and fire it from the ground. The Italian Army used the same approach with their 47mm AT guns and 75mm artillery.

3.4 Op Sheets

Units from different British armoured regiments (2RGH, 3CLY, 4CLY) may not be on the same Op Sheet, nor may the Op Sheets containing different armoured regiments overlap with their graphic in any way. Other British units, including B Sqn, 11 Hussars; AT Trp, 102 Anti-Tank Regt RHA; C Bty, 4 Field Regt RHA; and A Coy, 1KRRC, may be assigned to any Op Sheet(s).

British armoured regiments are treated as battalions for the Op Sheet Staff Modifier [TCS 6.9c].

3.5 Tank Breakdown

OPTIONAL. When used in any scenario, the British player rolls a die for each armoured squadron just before it sets up or enters the map. Halve the result, rounding fractions down, and remove that many steps (minimum 0, maximum 3) from the squadron to represent breakdowns en route to the battlefield. Step losses due to breakdown may be distributed among the units within the squadron as desired (Mk VI Cruiser or Mk VI CS steps at the player's option). Step losses due to breakdown do NOT count for Victory Points [4.0c].

Design note: The British Mk VI Cruiser and CS tanks, new to the desert environment, were very prone to mechanical breakdown.

3.6 Maintenance

OPTIONAL. Assume the British did a better job with maintenance and repair of the new Mk VI Cruiser and Mk VI CS tanks before the battle. When rolling the die for variable tank breakdown as per 3.5 above, subtract 1 from the die roll before halving.

3.7 1st Bn KRRC

OPTIONAL. The British player may add one motor infantry company (A Coy-1KRRC) to represent the possible use of 1st Battalion, Kings Royal Rifle Corps in this battle. It sets up or enters the map with AT Trp-102 Anti-Tank Regt RHA. Note that the three infantry section units of its Scout Platoon have 2 steps each.

4.0 Scenarios

The scenarios for Ariete divide the battle geographically into east and west sections (4.1 and 4.2, respectively), as well as temporally into the initial attack phase (4.1a, 4.2a, 4.3a) and the Italian counterattack (4.4). There is a scenario for the entire battle (4.3), as well as an open deployment

scenario (4.5) to explore establishing different operational objectives before the battle.

4.0a Variants. Most scenarios allow a number of variants. These variants are *listed in italics*. They are optional and allow players to explore some significant "what-ifs".

Better-Prepared Italian Defense: The entire 8th Bersaglieri begins already deployed and Dug In. Historically the units arrived piecemeal and III-8th Bersaglieri was caught in transit by 2RGH and scattered. For play balance the use of Italian optional rule 2.5 Tank Breakdown is highly recommended. May be used with 4.1-4.3 (including their short versions, 4.1a, 4.2a, and 4.3a).

British Arrive Early: The British get off to a better start and the first turn is 1100 rather than 1130. This affects reinforcements and catches the Italians less prepared. May be used only with 4.1-4.3, and 4.2a (not recommended for 4.1a or 4.3a as it would produce a complete "no contest" on the east flank). Do not use in combination with the *Better Prepared Italian Defense* variant.

Optional Tank Reinforcements: This variant assumes that Italian 2 Co VII-132nd Tk Bn, which in the historical battle moved further to the east and was destroyed by A and C Squadrons, 3CLY, remained with IX-132nd Tk Bn, and that 3CLY came up on the right flank of 2RGH, as was the original intent. For play balance the use of British optional rule 3.5 Tank Breakdown is highly recommended. May be used only with 4.1, 4.3, and 4.4.

4.0b Automatic Victory. Most scenarios use the Automatic Victory conditions below.

British Automatic Victory: If, at any point during the game, the Italian player has declared Mission Failure for *all* tank formations/elements on implemented Op Sheets, the game ends immediately and the British player automatically wins a Major Victory.

Italian Automatic Victory: If, at any point during the game, the British player has declared Mission Failure for *all* tank formations/elements on implemented Op Sheets, the game ends immediately and the Italian player automatically wins a Major Victory.

4.0c Victory Points. If no Automatic Victory has occurred by the end of the last turn, or if the scenario does not use the Automatic Victory conditions, victory is instead determined by Victory Points (VPs). The players accrue VPs according to the rates below. Scenarios may also award additional VPs as indicated.

- 2 VPs each Italian tank *step* eliminated (British player)
- 1 VP each British tank or armoured car *step* eliminated (Italian player)
- 2 VPs each enemy Inf platoon or arty unit eliminated (both players)
- 1 VP each enemy AT gun *step* eliminated (both players)
- 1 VP each enemy Inf section, MG, or Mtr unit eliminated (both players)

To determine victory, total British VPs and subtract Italian VPs, then modify by any VPs for the use of variants. Compare the net result against the Victory Determination for each scenario.

4.1 Attack of the 2nd Royal Gloucestershire Hussars

This scenario depicts the day's action on the east flank of the British attack, from the scattering of III-8 Bersaglieri through the tank battles north of Bir el Gubi.

- First Turn:** 1130
- Brits early* 1100
- Last Turn:** 1630 (11/12 turns)
- Map Area:** East of the boundary defined by hexes 1.40 – 28.26 – 28.00 (inclusive)
- Initiative:** British player has Initiative for first 2 turns.

Note: Any variants can be used with this version of the scenario.

Italian Information:

- Set-up:**
w/i 1 of 35.21 (all units in Move Mode, Vehicle movement last declared [TCS 24.2c]):
- III-8 Bers. (3 x 81mm Mtr, 6 x MG)
 - 1 Co II-8 Bers. (4 x 47mm AT)
 - I-3 Celere Art Grp (3 x 75mm Art)

Better-Prepared Italian Defense Variant:
w/i 4 of 35.21 (all units in Fire Mode)

British Arrive Early Variant: on Track hexes w/i 2 of 29.18 (all units in Move Mode, Vehicle movement last declared [TCS 24.2c])

Reinforcements:

- Enter 1200 through hex 1.47 (Trigh el Abd):
- One platoon, 1 Co IX-132 Tk Bn (1 x M13/40 [5 steps]); this platoon is exempt from 1.2b until it begins an Italian Action Phase within 2 hexes of another platoon of 1 Co IX-132 Tk Bn)

Enter 1330 through hex 1.47 (Trigh el Abd):

- Two platoons, 1 Co IX-132 Tk Bn (2 x M13/40 [4 steps])
- 2 Co IX-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)
- 3 Co IX-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)

Optional Tank Reinforcements Variant: Add to 1330 reinforcements:

- 2 Co VII-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)

Artillery:

- I-3 Celere Art Grp

Ammunition:

- I-3 Celere Art Grp (75mm): 25 HE

Orders:

• III-8 Bersaglieri (plus 1 Co II-8 Bersaglieri and I-3 Celere Art Grp) begin the scenario Unassigned, with 10 weighted turns accrued toward implementation of a Hasty Defense Op Sheet (to defend w/i 4 of 35.21), having just completed Preliminary Instructions (Move Op Sheet, to move to w/i 1 of 35.21). The Italian player may designate exiting the west edge of the map area (hexes 28.16-28.26) as the “Rally Point” for Op Sheet Failure. The Italian player may declare Mission Failure for the Hasty Defense Op Sheet in any Action Phase after a British tank unit has been Spotted by a unit assigned to the Op Sheet.

- IX-132 Tk Bn: Attack (any British tank formation).

Better-Prepared Italian Defense Variant: III-8 Bersaglieri (plus 1 Co II-8 Bersaglieri and I-3 Celere Art Grp): Prepared Defense

British Arrive Early Variant: III-8 Bersaglieri (plus 1 Co II-8 Bersaglieri and I-3 Celere Art Grp): Unassigned, 8 weighted turns accrued toward implementation of a Hasty Defense Op Sheet (to defend w/i 4 of 35.21), currently executing Preliminary Instructions (Move Op Sheet, moving to w/i 1 of 35.21). The Italian player may declare Mission Failure for the Move Op Sheet and/or Hasty Defense Op Sheet in any Action Phase after a British tank unit has been Spotted by a unit assigned to the Op Sheet.

Optional Tank Reinforcements Variant:

- 2 Co VII-132 Tk Bn: Attack (any British tank formation).

British Information:

Set-up:

w/i 5 of 40.00:

- Two troops B Sqn 11th Hussars (2 x Humber AC)

Enter at start through south edge of map area (hexes 28.00-40.00):

- Regt HQ 2RGH (2 x Mk VI)
- H Sqn 2RGH (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)

Reinforcements:

Enter 1200 (*British Arrive Early Variant: 1130*) through south edge of map area (hexes 28.00-40.00):

- F Sqn 2RGH (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)

Enter 1230 (*British Arrive Early Variant: 1200*) through south edge of map area (hexes 28.00-40.00):

- G Sqn 2RGH (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)

Optional Tank Reinforcements Variant:

Enter 1500 w/i 2 of hex 40.36 (Trigh el Abd):

- 3CLY (2 x Mk VI HQ, 12 x Mk VI, 3 x Mk VI CS)

Artillery:

- I-C Bty 4th Field Regt RHA (off-map)

Ammunition:

- 25pdr: 15 HE

Orders:

- Attack the 132nd Tank Regiment.

Victory Determination:

British and Italian Automatic Victory conditions [4.0b] are used in this scenario. If no Automatic Victory has occurred by the end of the 1630 turn, determine victory by Victory Points [4.0c]:

30 or more	British Major Victory
25 to 29	British Minor Victory
20 to 24	Draw
15 to 19	Italian Minor Victory
14 or less	Italian Major Victory

Better-Prepared Italian Defense Variant: 5 VPs for British

Optional Tank Reinforcements Variant: 10 VPs for Italians

British Arrive Early Variant: 5 VPs for Italians

4.1a Short Version: A Chance Encounter

This version depicts III-8 Bersaglieri being overrun by 2nd Royal Gloucestershire Hussars. Historically, this occurred just as the Italian units began detrucking in their new defensive positions east of Bir el Gubi, but the British tanks had business with the 132nd Tank Regiment further north and moved on, leaving III-8 Bersaglieri to reorganize and be in position to inflict additional losses on 2RGH when the British withdrew through the area later in the day.

First Turn: 1130

Last Turn: 1330 (5 turns)

Map Area: East of hex column 28.xx (inclusive), south of hex row xx.26 (inclusive)

Initiative: British player has Initiative for first 2 turns.

Note: Only the Better-Prepared Italian Defense Variant is recommended with this version.

Italian and British information: per Scenario 4.1, including *Better-Prepared Italian Defense Variant*.

Exceptions:

No Italian Reinforcements enter play. British Orders: Exit north edge of map area (to find and attack the 132nd Tank Regiment).

Victory Determination:

The Automatic Victory conditions are not used in this version of the scenario. Determine victory by Victory Points instead:

55 or more	British Major victory
50 to 54	British Minor victory
45 to 49	Draw
40 to 44	Italian Minor victory
39 or less	Italian Major victory

Additional VPs:

1 British VP for each tank step exited via the northern edge of the map area (hex row xx.26)

Better-Prepared Italian Defense Variant: 5 VPs for British

4.2 Attack of the 4th County of London Yeomanry

This scenario depicts the day’s action on the west flank of the British attack, from the initial attacks of the 4th County of London Yeomanry through the counterattack of the VIII-132nd Tank Battalion.

First Turn: 1130

Brits Early 1100

Last Turn: 1630 (11/12 turns)

Map Area: West of hex column 25.xx (inclusive)

Initiative: British player has Initiative for first 2 turns.

Note: The Optional Tank Reinforcements Variant is not used with this scenario.

Italian Information:

Set-up:

w/i 4 of 9.15: (*British Arrive Early Variant: all units in Move Mode, Vehicle movement last declared [TCS 24.2c]*)

- XII-8 Bers. (6 x Inf, 4 x 47mm AT)
- I-132 Art Grp (3 x 75mm Art)

w/i 4 of 20.13:

- V-8 Bers.(3 x Inf, 4 x 47mm AT)
- II-132 Art Grp (3 x 75mm Art)

w/i 2 of 17.19 (Bir el Gubi):

- 2 Co II-8 Bers. (4 x 47mm AT)
- MC Co 8 Bers. (3 x Inf)

w/i 1 of 11.22:

- 1 Bty I-Milmart (3 x 102mm AT)

w/i 1 of 5.22:

- 3 Co VII-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)

Reinforcements:

Enter 1400 through hexes 1.27-1.39

- 1 Co VII-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)
- VIII-132-Tk Bn (9 x M13/40)
- 6 Bty I-Milmart (2 x 102mm AT)
- I-24 Art Grp (105mm Art, off-map)

Artillery:

- I-132 Art Grp
- II-132 Art Grp
- I-24 Art Grp (off-map)

Ammunition:

- I-132 Art Grp (75mm): 25 HE
- II-132 Art Grp (75mm): 20 HE
- 105mm: 25 HE, 10 Smoke

Orders:

• V-8 Bers. and II-132 Art Grp: Prepared Defense.

• I-24 Art Grp begins the scenario Unassigned and can accrue weighted turns beginning 1130 for the purpose of being added to any implemented Op Sheet [TCS 6.13c], I-24 Art Grp may not begin rolling to be added to an implemented Op Sheet until 1400.

• All other units: Hasty Defense; 3 Co VII-132 Tank in Reserve.

Better-Prepared Italian Defense Variant:

• V-8 Bers. (*plus II-132 Art Grp*): *Prepared Defense.*

• XII-8 Bers. (*plus I-132 Art Grp*): *Prepared Defense.*

• I-24 Art Grp: *Unassigned, can accrue weighted turns beginning 1130 for the purpose of being added to any implemented Op Sheet [TCS 6.13c], I-24 Art Grp may not begin rolling to be added to an implemented Op Sheet until 1400.*

• *All other units: Hasty Defense; 3 Co VII-132 Tk Bn in Reserve.*

British Arrive Early Variant:

• V-8 Bers. (*plus II-132 Art Grp*): *Prepared Defense.*

• XII-8 Bers. (*plus I-132 Art Grp*): *Unassigned. 14 weighted turns accrued toward implementation of Hasty Defense Op Sheet (to defend the area w/i 4 of 9.15). The Italian player may declare Mission Failure for the Hasty Defense Op Sheet in any Action Phase after a British tank unit has been Spotted by a unit assigned to the Op Sheet.*

• I-24 Art Grp: *Unassigned, can accrue weighted turns beginning 1130 for the purpose of being added to any implemented Op Sheet [TCS 6.13c], I-24 Art Grp may not begin rolling to be added to an implemented Op Sheet until 1400.*

• *All other units: Hasty Defense; 3 Co VII-132 Tk Bn in Reserve.*

British Information:

Set-up:

w/i 3 of 2.00 and/or 14.00:

- Four troops, B Sqn 11th Hussars (4 x Humber AC)
- AT Trp-102nd Anti-Tank Regiment RHA (4 x 2pdr AT)
- 2-C Bty 4th Field Regiment RHA (1 x 25pdr)

Enter at start through south edge of map area (hexes 1.00-20.00):

- Regt HQ 4CLY (2 x Mk VI)
- A Sqn 4CLY (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)

Reinforcements:

Enter 1200 (*British Arrive Early Variant: 1130*) through south edge of map area (hexes 1.00-20.00):

- B Sqn 4CLY (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)

Enter 1230 (*British Arrive Early Variant: 1200*) through south edge of map area (hexes 1.00-20.00):

- C Sqn 4CLY (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)

Artillery:

- 2-C Bty 4th Field Regt RHA

Ammunition:

- 25pdr: 15 HE

Orders:

- Attack the 132nd Tank Regiment.

Victory Determination:

British and Italian Automatic Victory conditions [4.0b] are used in this scenario. If no Automatic Victory has occurred by the end of the 1630 turn, determine victory by Victory Points [4.0c]:

20 or more	British Major Victory
15 to 19	British Minor Victory
10 to 14	Draw
5 to 9	Italian Minor Victory
4 or less	Italian Major Victory

Better-Prepared Italian Defense Variant

5 VPs for British

British Arrive Early Variant

5 VPs for Italians

4.2a Short Version: “The Nearest Thing to a Cavalry Charge”

This scenario covers only the initial attack of the 4th County of London Yeomanry on XII-8th Bersaglieri, which was deployed (but not yet dug-in) west of Bir el Gubi. Observers described it as “the nearest thing to a cavalry charge” that they had seen in the war.

First Turn:	1130
<i>Brits early</i>	1100
Last Turn:	1330 (5/6 turns)
Map Area:	West of hex column 25.xx (inclusive), south of hex row xx.26 (inclusive)
Initiative:	British player has Initiative for first 2 turns

Note: The Optional Tank Reinforcements Variant is not used with this scenario.

Italian and British information:

Per Scenario 4.2, *including variants.*

Exceptions:

No Italian Reinforcements enter play.

British Orders: Exit north edge of map area (to find and attack the 132nd Tank Regiment).

Victory Determination:

The Automatic Victory conditions are not used in this version of the scenario. Determine victory by Victory Points instead:

10 or more	British Major Victory
5 to 9	British Minor Victory
0 to 4	Draw
-1 to -5	Italian Minor Victory
-6 or less	Italian Major Victory

Additional VPs:

1 British VP for each tank step exited via the northern edge of the map area (hex row xx.26)

Better-Prepared Italian Defense Variant

5 VPs for British

British Arrive Early Variant

5 VPs for Italians

4.3 The Battle of Bir el Gubi

This scenario covers the full attack of the 4th County of London Yeomanry and the 2nd Royal Gloucestershire Hussars on the 132nd Armored Division *Ariete* around Bir el Gubi. It's the big one!

First Turn: 1130
Brits early 1100
Last Turn: 1630 (11/12 turns)
Map Area: All
Initiative: British player has Initiative for the first 2 turns.

Note: Any variants may be used.

Italian and British Information: per Scenarios 4.1 and 4.2, *including variants*.

Exceptions:

Add to British Scenario 4.2 Set-up, w/i 3 of 2.00 and/or 14.00:

- 1-C Bty 4th Field Regiment RHA (1 x 25pdr)

Combine British Ammunition allotments for Scenarios 4.1 and 4.2:

- 25pdr: 30 HE

British Special Movement restrictions:

4CLY must remain west of column 20.xx (inclusive) until they move north of hex row xx.26.

2RGH must remain east of column 21.xx (inclusive) until they move north of hex row xx.26.

When the British player draws up his Op Sheets he may freely set the boundary between his armoured regiments for the map area north from hex row xx.27 (inclusive).

Victory Determination:

British and Italian Automatic Victory conditions [4.0b] are used in this scenario. If no Automatic Victory has occurred by the end of the 1630 turn, determine victory by Victory Points [4.0c]:

50 or more	British Major victory
40 to 49	British Minor victory
30 to 39	Draw
20 to 29	Italian Minor victory
19 or less	Italian Major victory

Better-Prepared Italian Defense Variant:

10 VPs for British

Optional Tank Reinforcements Variant:

10 VPs for Italians

British Arrive Early Variant

10 VPs for Italians

4.3a Short Version: The Attack on the 8 Bersaglieri

This version covers the initial stage of the battle as two regiments of the British 22nd Armoured Brigade, the 4th County of London Yeomanry and the 2nd Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, attack the 8 Bersaglieri (plus attached units) around Bir el Gubi.

First Turn: 1130
Last Turn: 1330 (5 turns)
Map Area: South of hex row xx.26 (inclusive)
Initiative: British player has Initiative for the first 2 turns

Note: Only the Better-Prepared Italian Defense Variant is recommended with this version.

Italian and British information:

Per Scenarios 4.1 and 4.2, *including Better-Prepared Italian Defense Variant*.

Exceptions:

No Italian Reinforcements enter play.

Add to British Scenario 4.2 Set-up, w/i 3 of 2.00 and/or 14.00:

- 1-C Bty 4th Field Regiment RHA (1 x 25pdr)

Combine British Ammunition allotments for Scenarios 4.1 and 4.2:

- 25pdr: 30 HE

British Orders: Exit north edge of map area (to find and attack the 132nd Tank Regiment).

British Special Movement restrictions:

4CLY must remain west of column 20.xx (inclusive).

2RGH must remain east of column 21.xx (inclusive).

Victory Determination:

The Automatic Victory conditions are not used in this version of the scenario. Determine victory by Victory Points instead:

65 or more	British Major victory
55 to 64	British Minor victory
45 to 54	Draw
35 to 44	Italian Minor victory
34 or less	Italian Major victory

Additional VPs:

1 British VP for each tank step exited via the northern edge of the map area (hex row xx.26).

Better-Prepared Italian Defense Variant:

10 VPs for British

4.4 The “Ram” Strikes – Counterattack of the 132nd Tank Regiment

This scenario examines the second phase of the battle, as the 132nd Tank Regiment arrives in force to deal with the British armoured regiments.

First Turn: 1400
Last Turn: 1630 (6 turns)
Map Area: All
Initiative: British player has Initiative for the first turn.

Note: Only the Optional Tank Reinforcements Variant may be used with this scenario.

Italian Information:

Set-up:

w/i 4 of 9.15:

- XII-8 Bers. (6 x Inf [-6 steps], 4 x 47mm AT [-2 steps])
- I-132 Art Grp (3 x 75mm Art)

w/i 4 of 20.13:

- V-8 Bers. 6 x Inf, 4 x 47mm AT)
- II-132 Art Grp (3 x 75mm Art)

w/i 4 of 35.21:

- III-8 Bers. (1 x 81mm Mtr, 2 x MG; BM=3, place the eliminated 81mm Mtr (x2), MG (x4), 47mm AT (x2) and 75mm Art battery (x1) on the III-8 Bersaglieri Battalion Morale Display)

- 1 Co II-8 Bers. 2 x 47mm AT [-2 steps])
- I-3 Celere Art Grp (2 x 75mm Art)

w/i 2 of 17.19 (Bir el Gubi):

- 2 Co II-8 Bers. (4 x 47mm AT)
- MC Co 8 Bers. (3 x Inf)

w/i 4 of 5.22:

- 3 Co VII-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40 [-5 steps])

w/i 1 of 11.22:

- 1 Bty I-Milmart (3 x 102mm AT)

w/i 1 of 8.48:

- 3 Co IX-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40, must set up in Move Mode).

w/i 1 of 8.45:

- 2 Co IX-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40, must set up in Move Mode).

w/i 1 of 8.42:

- Two 4-step platoons, 1 Co IX-132 Tk Bn (2 x M13/40, must set up in Move Mode).

- One 5-step platoon, 1 Co IX-132 Tk Bn (1 x M13/40, may set up in either Mode).

*Optional Tank Reinforcements variant:
w/i 8 of 1.47: 2 Co VII-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40, must set up in Move Mode).*

Enter at start through hexes 1.27-1.39:

- 1 Co VII-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)
- VIII-132 Tk Bn (9 x M13/40)
- 6 Bty I-Milmart (2 x 102mm AT)
- I-24 Art Grp (105mm Art, off-map)

Artillery:

- I-132 Art Grp
- II-132 Art Grp
- I-3 Celere Art Grp
- I-24 Art Grp (off-map)

Ammunition:

- I-132 Art Grp (75mm): 10 HE
- II-132 Art Grp (75mm): 10 HE
- I-3 Celere Art Grp (75mm): 10 HE
- 105mm: 25 HE, 10 Smoke

Orders:

- V-8 Bersaglieri (plus II-132 Art Grp): Prepared Defense
 - IX-132 Tk Bn: Attack (any British tank formation)
 - 1 Co VII-132 Tk Bn, VIII-132 Tk Bn, 6 Bty I-Milmart: Attack (any British tank formation)
 - I-24 Art Grp begins the scenario Unassigned and has accrued 15 weighted turns for the purpose of being added to any implemented Op Sheet [TCS 6.13c].
 - All other units: Hasty Defense

*Optional Tank Reinforcements variant:
• 2 Co VII-132 Tk Bn: Attack (any British tank formation).*

British Information:

Set-up:

w/i 12 of 2.00 and/or 14.00:

- B Sqn 11th Hus (4 x Humber AC)
- AT Trp 102 AT Regt RHA (4 x 2pdr AT)
- C Bty 4th Field Regt RHA (2 x 25pdr)

w/i 4 of 1.17:

- 4th County of London Yeomanry (2 x Mk VI HQ, 12 x Mk VI, 3 x Mk VI CS) [-6 steps]

w/i 4 of 18.44:

- 2nd Royal Gloucestershire Hussars (2 x Mk VI HQ, 12 x Mk VI, 3 x Mk VI CS) [-3 steps]
- Two troops, B Sqn 11th Hussars (2 x Humber AC)

Reinforcements:

*Optional Tank Reinforcements variant:
Enter 1500 w/i 2 of hex 40.36 (Trigh el Abd):
• 3rd County of London Yeomanry (2 x Mk VI HQ, 12 x Mk VI, 3 x Mk VI CS)*

Artillery:

- C-Bty 4th Field Regt RHA

Ammunition:

- 25pdr: 10 HE

Orders:

• Attack. British tank formations must choose an Italian tank formation as the target of their Attack Op Sheet.

Victory Determination:

British and Italian Automatic Victory conditions [4.0b] are used in this scenario. If no Automatic Victory has occurred by the end of the 1630 turn, determine victory by Victory Points [4.0c]:

40 or more	British Major victory
30 to 39	British Minor victory
20 to 29	Draw
10 to 19	Italian Minor victory
9 or less	Italian Major victory

Losses already inflicted at the start of this scenario to not count for VPs.

*Optional Tank Reinforcements Variant:
10 VPs for Italians*

4.5 The Battle of Bir el Gubi (Open Deployment)

This scenario covers the attack of the 22nd Armoured Brigade on the 132nd Armored Division *Ariete* around Bir el Gubi, with an early start to allow the players more freedom to develop their plans and set-ups.

First Turn:	0800
Last Turn:	1630 (18 turns)
Map Area:	All
Initiative:	British

Note: Do not use any variants with this scenario.

Italian Information:

Set-up:

w/i 4 of 20.13:

- V-8 Bers. (6 x Inf, 4 x 47mm AT)
- II-132 Art Grp (3 x 75mm Art)

w/i 1 of 15.22:

- 3 Co VII-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)

Reinforcements:

Enter 0830 through hex 1.32:

- 2 Co II-8 Bers. (4 x 47mm AT)
- MC Co-8 Bersaglieri (3 x Inf)
- 1 Bty I-Milmart (3 x 102mm AT)

Enter 0930 through hex 1.32:

- XII-8 Bers. (6 x Inf, 4 x 47mm AT)
- I-132 Art Grp (3 x 75mm Art)

Enter 1030 through hex 1.32:

- III-8 Bers. (3 x 81mm Mtr, 6 x MG)
- 1 Co II-8 Bers (4 x 47mm AT)
- I-3 Celere Art Grp (3 x 75mm Art)

132 Tank Regiment (less 3 Co VII-132 Tk Bn), 6 Bty I-Milmart, and I-24 Art Grp begin the scenario off-map with no prepared Op Sheets; the Italian player may create Attack Op Sheets for these units or assign them to existing Op Sheets [TCS 6.13c, 6.13d] (use of Preliminary Instructions is NOT permitted) in any Command Phase after a British tank unit (NOT an armoured car, AT gun, or On-map Artillery unit) has been Spotted. A unit may enter play through hexes 1.27-1.53 on the turn its Op Sheet is implemented.

- 1 Co VII-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)
- 2 Co VII-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)

- 1 Co VIII-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)
- 2 Co VIII-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)
- 3 Co VIII-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)

- 1 Co IX-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)
- 2 Co IX-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)
- 3 Co IX-132 Tk Bn (3 x M13/40)

- 6 Bty I-Milmart (2 x 102mm AT)
- I-24 Art Grp (105mm Art, off-map)

Artillery:

- I-132 Art Grp
- II-132 Art Grp
- I-3 Celere Art Grp
- I-24 Art Grp (off-map)

Ammunition:

- I-132 Art Grp (75mm): 25 HE
- II-132 Art Grp (75mm): 25 HE
- I-3 Celere Art Grp (75mm): 25 HE
- 105mm: 25 HE, 10 Smoke

Orders:

- V-8 Bersaglieri (plus II-132 Art Grp): Prepared Defense
- 3 Co VII-132 Tk Bn: Hasty Defense, in Reserve

British Information:**Set-up:**

Enter at start through south edge of map area (hex row xx.00):

- B Sqn 11th Hussars (6 x Humber AC)
- AT Troop 102nd Anti-Tank Regiment RHA (4 x 2pdr AT)
- C Battery 4th Field Regiment RHA (2 x 25pdr)

Reinforcements:

The 2nd Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, 3rd County of London Yeomanry, and 4th County of London Yeomanry begin the scenario off-map with no prepared Op Sheets; the British player may create Attack Op Sheets for these units (use of Preliminary Instructions is NOT permitted) in any Command Phase after an Italian unit has been Spotted. A unit may enter play through the south edge of map area (hex row xx.00) on the second turn after its Op Sheet is implemented:

- Regt HQ 2nd Royal Gloucestershire Hussars (2 x Mk VI HQ)
- F Sqn 2RGH (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)
- G Sqn 2RGH (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)
- H Sqn 2RGH (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)
- Regt HQ 3rd County of London Yeomanry (2 x Mk VI HQ)
- A Sqn 3CLY (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)
- B Sqn 3CLY (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)
- C Sqn 3CLY (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)
- Regt HQ 4th County of London Yeomanry (2 x Mk VI HQ)
- A Sqn 4CLY (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)
- B Sqn 4CLY (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)
- C Sqn 4CLY (4 x Mk VI, 1 x Mk VICS)

Artillery:

- C Bty 4th Field Regt RHA

Ammunition:

- 25pdr 30 HE

Orders:

- Attack

Victory Determination:

British and Italian Automatic Victory conditions [4.0b] are used in this scenario. If no Automatic Victory has occurred by the end of the 1630 turn, determine victory by Victory Points [4.0c]:

50 or more	British Major victory
40 to 49	British Minor victory
30 to 39	Draw
20 to 29	Italian Minor victory
19 or less	Italian Major victory

Ariete Order of Battle and Counter Manifest**132nd Armored Division Ariete**

8th Bersaglieri Regiment
Motorcycle Company 3 x Inf (MC) (4-4-2 AA6(24))

II-8 Bers. (Anti-Tank Battalion)

- 1 Co 4 x 47mm AT (2-4-0 PB3(12)) [2]
- 2 Co 4 x 47mm AT (2-4-0 PB3(12)) [2]

III-8 Bers. (Heavy Weapons Battalion)

- 1 Co 3 x 81mm Mtr (6-24-4 AA4(12))
- 2 Co 6 x MG (2-8-4 AA5(12))

V-8 Bers.

- 1 Co 3 x Inf (4-6-3 AA6(12))
- 2 Co 3 x Inf (4-6-3 AA6(12))
- 3 Co 4 x 47mm AT (2-4-0 PB3(12)) [2]

XII-8 Bers.

- 1 Co 3 x Inf (4-6-3 AA6(12))
- 2 Co 3 x Inf (4-6-3 AA6(12))
- 3 Co 4 x 47mm AT (2-4-0 PB3(12)) [2]

132nd Tank Regiment**VII-132 Tank Battalion**

- 1 Co 3 x M13/40 (2-4-2 PP9) [4,4,3]
- 2 Co 3 x M13/40 (2-4-2 PP9) [4,4,3]
- 3 Co 3 x M13/40 (2-4-2 PP9) [4]

VIII-132 Tank Battalion

- 1 Co 3 x M13/40 (2-4-2 PP9) [4,4,3]
- 2 Co 3 x M13/40 (2-4-2 PP9) [4,4,3]
- 3 Co 3 x M13/40 (2-4-2 PP9) [4]

IX-132 Tank Battalion

- 1 Co 3 x M13/40 (2-4-2 PP9) [5,4,4]
- 2 Co 3 x M13/40 (2-4-2 PP9) [5]
- 3 Co 3 x M13/40 (2-4-2 PP9) [4]

132nd Divisional Artillery

I-132 Artillery Group 3 x 75mm (4-14-0 AB(12)) [4] (Bn 11/5, 3 x Bty 8/4)

II-132 Artillery Group 3 x 75mm (4-14-0 AB(12)) [4] (Bn 11/5, 3 x Bty 8/4)

I-3 Celere Artillery Group 3 x 75mm (4-14-0 AB(12)) [4] (Bn 11/5, 3 x Bty 8/4)

I-24 Artillery Group (off-map 105mm Bn 16/7, 3 x Bty 12/5)

1 Bty, I-Milmart Artillery Group 3 x 102mm AT (6-7-0 PB(18))

6 Bty I-Milmart Artillery Group 2 x 102mm AT (6-7-0 PB(18))

22nd Armoured Brigade

AT Troop 102nd Anti-Tank Regiment RHA 4 x 2pdr AT (2-4-1 PB3(18))

C Battery 4th Field Regiment RHA 2 x 25pdr (4-14-0 AB(18)) [4] (2 x Bty 8/4)

11th Hussars (Prince Albert's Own) (11H)
B Squadron 6 x Humber Armoured Car (1-6-1 AB(30)) [3]

2nd Regiment, Royal Gloucestershire Hussars (2RGH)

Regt HQ 2 x Mk VI (2-4-2 PP18) [2]

F Squadron 4 x Mk VI (2-4-2 PP18) [3],

1 x Mk VI CS (4-14-2 AP18) [2]

G Squadron 4 x Mk VI (2-4-2 PP18) [3],

1 x Mk VI CS (4-14-2 AP18) [2]

H Squadron 4 x Mk VI (2-4-2 PP18) [3],

1 x Mk VI CS (4-14-2 AP18) [2]

3rd Regiment, County of London Yeomanry (3CLY)

Regt HQ 2 x Mk VI (2-4-2 PP18) [2]

A Squadron 4 x Mk VI (2-4-2 PP18) [3],

1 x Mk VI CS (4-14-2 AP18) [2]

B Squadron 4 x Mk VI (2-4-2 PP18)

[3,3,2,2], 1 x Mk VI CS (4-14-2 AP18) [1]

C Squadron 4 x Mk VI (2-4-2 PP18) [3],

1 x Mk VI CS (4-14-2 AP18) [2]

4th Regt, County of London Yeomanry (4CLY)

Regt HQ 2 x Mk VI (2-4-2 PP18) [2]

A Squadron 4 x Mk VI (2-4-2 PP18) [3],

1 x Mk VI CS (4-14-2 AP18) [2]

B Squadron 4 x Mk VI (2-4-2 PP18) [3],

1 x Mk VI CS (4-14-2 AP18) [2]

C Squadron 4 x Mk VI (2-4-2 PP18) [3],

1 x Mk VI CS (4-14-2 AP18) [1]

1st Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps (1KRRC)

A Company 3 x Inf (4-6-2 AA6(18)), Scout Platoon 3 x Inf Sec (3-6-2 AA6[12])

Note #1: Unit steps are given in [brackets] at the end of each element's line entry (Exceptions: Infantry platoons and sections, Weapons sections).

Note #2: A and B Target Type units with Movement Allowances in Square Brackets [...] indicate Tracked movement and Movement Allowances in parentheses (...) indicate Wheeled movement.

The Battle for Bir el Gubi (Mauro de Vita & Rick McKown)

On 19 November 1941, during Operation Crusader, a battle was fought in the Libyan desert around the crossroads at Bir el Gubi (spelled "Bir el Gobi" in Italian sources) between the Italian 132nd Armoured Division Ariete, the best (and best known) Italian armored division of WWII, and the British 22nd Armoured Brigade. What follows is a description of the main combat units on each side and the battle they fought near Bir el Gubi.

The Italians

In the early '30s, when most armies in the world were still far from the concept, Italy had begun to develop a doctrine of motorized warfare (*Guerra di Rapido Corso*). Although the country lacked the means to properly sustain this innovative doctrine, it began to create the organizations needed to implement it, and the nucleus of *Centotrentaduesima Divisione Corazzata "Ariete"*, the 132nd Armoured Division Ariete, was established in January 1937, when the Italian army formed two armored brigades, Ariete (Ram) and Centauro (Centaur). Ariete was enlarged to division size in February 1939 and included the 32nd Tank Regiment, with four tank battalions (for a total, on

paper, of 156 tanks); the 8th Bersaglieri (light infantry) Regiment, with three motorized infantry battalions; the 132nd Artillery Regiment, with two battalion-sized artillery "groups"; two light anti-aircraft batteries; and an engineer company.

After the destruction of the Italian Tenth Army in December 1940, Ariete was sent to North Africa, the lead elements arriving in Tripoli on 24 January 1941. By 7 February the bulk of the division had arrived, 6000 men strong, with 40 M13/40 medium tanks, 117 L3/35 light tanks (including 24 flame-throwing tanks), 24 75mm field guns, 36 47mm anti-tank guns, 760 trucks and cars, and 703 motorcycles. For the March-April 1941 German-Italian counter-offensive, the new Axis field commander, Lt.-General Erwin Rommel, paired Ariete with the German 5th Light Division. After its involvement in the fighting for El Agheila and Mersa Brega (24 March-2 April), Ariete was subdivided into several columns for the advance on Derna. On 7-8 April, the 8th Bersaglieri Regiment, after a long march, seized El Mechili, capturing over 2000 prisoners from the 3rd Indian Motorised Brigade and the HQ of the British 2nd Armoured Division. Through 14 April Ariete continued to fight at Derna, Tobruk, Bardia, and Sollum, then, at the end of April, was withdrawn from the front line and designated as mobile reserve. Part of the division was involved in bitter fighting near Sollum in the middle of May

and again during Operation Battleaxe in the middle of June, after which the division retired to Berta, where it spent the summer of 1941 resting, training, and rebuilding its strength. On 15 June the 132nd Tank Regiment (which was to become known as the best Italian armored regiment of the war), consisting of three tank battalions (VII, VIII and IX) equipped with M13/40 medium tanks, was formed and incorporated into Ariete. The tank component of the division was now centered around the M13/40, which, although not a stellar machine, was a "real" tank compared to the L3/35, a vehicle more in the class of the British Universal Carrier.

At the beginning of November Ariete, now reinforced by additional artillery, was deployed around Bir el Gubi, about 60 km south of Tobruk, facing east. On 18 November, as Operation Crusader commenced, Rommel ordered Ariete to redeploy facing south, which was to cause some problems for the 8th Bersaglieri Regiment, which was only partially redeployed when the Crusaders of the British 22nd Armoured Brigade attacked.

The British

The 22nd Armoured Brigade, activated on 3 September 1939 under Brigadier J. Scott-Cockburn, was composed of three Territorial Army (Reserve) mechanised cavalry (armoured) regiments: the 3rd and



4th Regiments of the County of London Yeomanry ("The Sharpshooters") and the 2nd Regiment of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars. On 31 July 1941 the brigade was mobilized for overseas service and on 1 August it was inspected by the King and Queen at Warminster. The 22nd Brigade was re-equipped with Mk. VI Cruiser (Crusader) tanks, the first armoured brigade to be fully equipped with this new tank, and, in mid-August, embarked at the Clyde, Avonmouth and Liverpool, starting the trip to the Middle East. The Mediterranean route being closed by the Italian navy, the ships had to take the long route, around Africa, through the Indian Ocean, to Port Said on the Red Sea; the last lap was by train to El Amirya, near Alexandria.

After five more weeks of training, the great news was received: the 22nd Armoured Brigade was to go into action as part of the 7th Armoured Division, the famous "Desert Rats", commanded by Major-General Gott. The 7th Armoured Division was part of Lt.-General Norrie's XXX Corps, under the newly named Eighth Army of Lt.-General Sir Alan Cunningham. Operation Crusader was starting.

The Battle

Operation Crusader was intended to destroy the German and Italian armored formations and recapture Cyrenaica. The relief of Tobruk would follow. The armored elements of the British XXX Corps were to move round the south flank and either destroy the enemy armor or prevent it from interfering with the British XIII Corps operating to the north. Within this plan, the task of the 7th Armoured Division was to advance to the airfields at El Adem and Sidi Rezegh. The 22nd Armoured Brigade was on the division's left (southern) flank.

Greene & Massignani, in *Rommel's North African Campaign*, wrote: "Rommel was ignoring the growing body of intelligence that suggested a British counterattack, and was determined to finish off Tobruk - it had become an obsession." In fact, Italian intelligence was aware of an imminent attack toward Tobruk and tried to warn the Germans, but with little success. In the first days of November, Ariete moved to Bir el Gubi; it was part of General Gambarà's *RECAM* Corps, along with the Motorised Division *Trieste* and the *Recam* Group.

At dawn on 18 November 1941, the 22nd Armoured Brigade advanced with the 4th County of London Yeomanry (4CLY) on the left, the 3rd County of London Yeomanry

(3CLY) on the right, and the 2nd Royal Gloucestershire Hussars (2RGH) in the center. Humber armored cars of the 11th Hussars were patrolling up to 20 miles in front of the brigade, which began crossing the Libyan border at 0900 hrs and by the end of the day had reached an area 20 miles southeast of Bir el Gubi. During the 80-mile march there were many breakdowns of Crusader tanks due to mechanical failures.

On the evening of 18 November, men from the 132nd Tank Regiment saw dozens of enemy fighters and bombers flying overhead. The following morning the news arrived that an enemy attack was to be expected shortly.

On the morning of 19 November the 22nd Armoured Brigade resumed its advance, although 4CLY was short of fuel. First contact with elements of Ariete was made around noon by 2RGH.

The Italian official history, *Le Operazioni in Africa Settentrionale* - Vol. II, written by General Mario Montanari, reports:

At Bir el Gubi the Ariete was busy redeploying. It had to establish a defensive line about 10 kilometers south of Bir el Gubi, formed by a semicircle of strongpoints, held by the Bersaglieri and reinforced by 47/32 AT, 20mm pieces and 75/27 guns. On 19 November the fieldworks were still incomplete when at 7.30 AM General Mannerini, deputy commander of the *RECAM* Corps, arrived at the Ariete HQ to attend a meeting with General Balotta. Considering that the British were already very near, it was decided to contract the defensive line. This way V-8th Bersaglieri Battalion and II-132nd 75/27 Artillery Group remained where they were, on the trail to el-Cuasc; III-8th Bersaglieri Battalion and the 3rd Celere's 75/27 Artillery Group were sent east of Bir el Gubi; XII-8th Bersaglieri Battalion and I-132nd 75/27 Artillery Group were sent west of Bir el Gubi. North of the Bersaglieri positions were the Milmart and the 105/28 Artillery Battalion from the 24th Artillery Regiment, and further north was waiting the slightly understrength 132nd Tank Regiment, with its 100 M13/40s . . .

Around 11.00 AM there was the first clash with 22nd Armoured Brigade, advancing screened by 11th Hussars Regiment: one M13 company and one 75/27 section had a brief fight at Bir el Dleua a few kilometres southwest of Bir el Gubi. After sustaining some losses, the Italian unit retired on Bir el Gubi.

After a short time the 22nd Armoured arrived before Bir el Gubi. General Scott-Cockburn deployed his eight 25pdr and ordered the attack. The 2nd RGH on the right charged the V-8th Bersaglieri Battalion position; 4th CLY on the left attacked the XII-8th Bersaglieri Battalion. V Bersaglieri had been in place for a few days and was well entrenched, while XII Bersaglieri had not had time to prepare its new position and was virtually in the open. III Bersaglieri was literally arriving on the field of battle with its trucks . . .

All the 47/32s and 75/27s started to fire against the three charging British regiments. In a few minutes everything was submerged in a dense dust cloud. The artillery fire was deadly and accurate and soon 3rd and 4th CLY changed course and tried to attack the Bersaglieri positions from the flanks. XII Bersaglieri succeeded in repulsing the attack of 4th CLY, but III Bersaglieri, attacked by 3rd CLY and 2nd RGH started to crack. 3rd CLY was able to penetrate III Bersaglieri positions. 8th Bersaglieri HQ, now isolated, had to fight to reach XII Bersaglieri positions . . .

At this moment, 3.00 PM, Scott-Cockburn still had good hopes of winning the battle, but, suddenly, the Ariete counter-attacked. Two kilometres north of Bir el Gubi the 132nd Tank Regiment launched its 100 M13/40s toward 2nd RGH. In the meantime Milmart's seven 102/35s started firing their devastating anti-ship rounds. VII and VIII Tank Battalions clashed with 3rd CLY and 2nd RGH and after one hour of fighting Ariete's last reserve, IX Tank Battalion, was launched against the flank and rear of the tired British. That was a little bit too much. 22nd Armoured's remaining Crusaders used their advantage in speed over the M13s to retire in disorder . . .

Ariete's losses were 12 officers and 193 men in dead, wounded and missing, 49 tanks (15 of them were later recovered), 4 75/27 guns and 8 47/32 guns . . . 22nd Armoured Brigade lost 57 tanks.

The surviving War Diaries of 3CLY and 2RGH do not fully support some of the details in the official Italian account. The 3CLY War Diary reports that "A" and "C" Squadrons of that regiment, assigned to cover the right flank of 2RGH, saw brief action against a single Italian tank company (2 Company VII-132nd, with about 11 tanks) some distance to the east of Bir el Gubi, outside the Ariete map area; late in the afternoon seven tanks from "B" Squadron,

3CLY, on the regiment's left, approached Bir el Gubi in search of 2RGH, with whom they were not in communication - all seven tanks were promptly destroyed by Italian anti-tank guns, apparently the sum of 3CLY's losses that day. The 2RGH War Diary reports that "F" and "H" Squadrons of that regiment overran an Italian unit still mounted in their trucks east of Bir el Gubi (as reported in the Italian official history, that unit would be the III-8th Bersaglieri), then proceeded about three miles north of Bir el Gubi, where they encountered a large number of Italian tanks (i.e., the counterattack by the 132nd Tank Regiment), engaged in a three-hour battle with them, and retreated through the Bersaglieri position, where they received fire from Italian anti-tank guns; 2RGH reported that they began the day with 46 tanks and had lost 30 by the end. Losses for 4CLY, who were very heavily engaged with the XII-8th Bersaglieri, would account for the remaining 20 British tank losses (of 57) reported in the Italian official history (the 4CLY War Diary did not survive), remembering that Ariete held the field at the end of the day and could count the wrecks. The game covers the fighting that resulted in the 50 tanks lost by 2RGH and 4CLY and about 38 of the reported 49 Italian tank losses (excluding 2 Company VII-132nd).

The Sharpshooters' regimental history concludes the chapter on this battle saying:

"... the wisdom of putting in this attack on a heavily fortified position with dug-in gun emplacements and anti-tank artillery may be doubted in retrospect... It would be possible, but pointless at this distance of time, to examine mistakes made and lessons learned. Fruitless also to try to apportion responsibility for losses suffered. Sooner or later all fighting regiments must be blooded and the process is never painless." General Norrie, XXX Corps commander, wrote about the battle: "... it had been an encounter battle... carried out too enthusiastically against prepared positions... not seen or recognized until after the attack had been launched..."

In any event, the 22nd Armoured Brigade was repulsed, suffering substantial losses, and left Ariete in possession of the field. The Italians felt that their improved combat performance was due to elite units being sent to Africa, the lessons of 1940 having been learned, and the impact of the Germans in the theater. The weapons were generally the same but they were better used and some effort had been made to improve leadership.

Designer's Notes (Mauro de Vita)

The first version of Ariete is dated 1994 and originated during research work done for Tunisia, DAK, Crusader, and Gazala. Ideally, Ariete is a zoomed-in view of the

battles in the Bir el Gubi area during Operation Crusader, from OCS DAK through SCS Crusader. It was my wish to show that, after the disaster of the Italian 10th Army during Wavell's offensive (late 1940-early 1941), the Italian forces in North Africa were able to face British and CW forces, stand their ground, and win.

The choice of Ariete division, the oldest armored unit in the *Regio Esercito*, still alive today as the only armored brigade in the modern Italian Army (equipped with latest generation Ariete MBT), was natural, considering it fought well during all the North African campaigns, from early 1941 to 3rd Alamein.

The battle of Bir el Gubi was chosen because it introduces into the TCS series a number of never-seen-before situations: it was a desert battle; it was between Italian and British forces (i.e. no Germans); it was between tank-heavy forces.

The British/CW OOB are the results of Steve Rothwell's researches, while the Italian OOB was researched by myself, in this recreating the 'usual suspects' team which researched the OOBs of several OCS and SCS games (DAK, Sicily, Tunisia II, Crusader, Gazala).

I hope you will enjoy this game!



ARIETE OP SHEET



Time:
Type:
Size:

Task Organization:

Failure Instructions:

Written Notes:

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Terrain Effects Chart

	Terrain Type			
	Desert	Track	Contour	Building
Combat	Open	<i>ot</i>	<i>ot</i>	Partly Protective
Foot	1	1	<i>ot</i>	1
Tracked	1	1	<i>ot</i>	1
Wheeled	2	1	<i>ot</i>	2

ot = Other Terrain

Visibility Table

Dice Roll	Time			
	0800 - 1030	1100 - 1300	1330 - 1500	1530 - 1630
2	4	3	2	1*
3	6	4	3	2
4	8	6	4	3
5	10	8	6	4
6-8	10	10	8	6
9	10	10	10	8
10-12	10	10	10	10

* = Visibility 1: Movement Point entry cost of each hex is doubled (x2).

Roll for Visibility at the **end** of the Command Phase each turn [1.1e].

