

Tactical Combat Series:

Hunters from the Sky

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Tactical Combat Series Game Number 6

The Battle for Maleme, 20-23 May, 1941.
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Introduction

The German attack on Crete was the first large-scale use of airborne forces in history. This was also the first capture of an isolated island without complete command of the seas. **Hunters from the Sky** covers the assault of the Luftlande-Sturm-Regiment on the New Zealand 5th Brigade to seize the Maleme Airfield.

1.0 General Special Rules

1.1 Digging In

Only those Commonwealth units which begin play on the map and which have never moved are considered to be Dug In. No other unit ever is considered as such. **PLAY TIP:** Show Commonwealth release and Dug In status with standardized orientations.



1.2 Command and Control

The TCS Command rules are not used in this game. All Axis units on the map and all **released** Commonwealth units can be used in any way the player sees fit.

1.3 Set Up & Map Notes

1.3a Order of Set Up. The German player always sets up first—including all his Air Transport planning. **Before play begins**, the German player **must** select the Direction of Drift. Place the Direction of Drift Marker on the Scatter Diagram in any desired facing. The Direction of Drift cannot be changed after play begins.



1.3b Battalion Morale. All Battalion Morales start each scenario at zero. The Scratch-27 NZ units are considered part of the “Misc” Battalion.

1.3c Minefields. Neither side can deploy minefields.

1.3d Tavronitis River Bed. The Tavronitis River is dry. Because of this, it can be moved through normally. Units in the River Bed (as determined by the hex’s center dot) are on Billiard Table Terrain.

1.3e Tavronitis River Bridge. Units on the bridge use Primary Road terrain for movement and Billiard Table terrain. The bridge does not block LOS and units in bridge hexes have an elevation of 10 meters.

1.3f Tavronitis River Island. The Island in the middle of the Tavronitis (connecting the two Tavronitis Bridges) is Open terrain and is 5 meters above the riverbed. It can act as an LOS blockage.

1.3g Gullies. Units located in a gully can only be observed from and can only conduct direct fire against adjacent hexsides. Overwatch triggers which occur when a unit moves into a gully can be seen and fired upon (use the Gully hex’s Terrain

Type). Indirect fire can only be directed into a gully if there is a spotter in an adjacent hex. Mortars can fire out of a gully with no problems. Artillery can be targeted adjacent to a gully hex without further restrictions—Zone hexes inside the gully attack normally. Air sorties can be directed at gully hexes.

1.3h Vineyards. Vineyard hexes are partly protective cover and have a height addition of 5 meters for LOS purposes.

1.3i Bofors Pits. Any unit inside a Bofors Pit hex get the Bofors Pit terrain effects (even if currently assaulting the hex to capture it). Bofors Pits do not affect LOS. Units in Bofors Pits cannot also be Dug In.

1.3j Maleme Airfield. Only hexes which have their hex dot within the perimeter of the printed airfield are considered to be hexes of the Maleme Airfield itself. Any hex considered to be part of the airfield is subject to the Billiard Terrain type—even if there is some Open terrain in the same hex, an exception to Series rule 9.3a.

1.4 Sequence of Play

In any scenario beginning at 0700, 20 May, there is no Commonwealth Action Phase until 0720. On any turn in which there are Glider or Parachute Assault landings, the German Action Phase is first.

1.5 Zero Movement Allowance Units

Some units have a movement allowance of zero. They cannot move under their own power, nor can they be towed. They are fixed in place. If forced to retreat they are destroyed.

1.6 AT Rolls

No AT Roll attacks are allowed in this game because of the complete lack of personal anti-tank weapons available.

2.0 German Special Rules

2.1 Air Transportation

All German units (except the Motor Sailing Flotilla, see 2.9) arrive by Air Transportation in one of three modes: Glider Assault, Parachute Assault, and Air Landing. The type of landing any German unit must perform is listed on the German Reinforcement Chart. Regardless of type, air transportation must be planned in advance and the landings occur in the German Action Phase of the planned turn. In any turn where the German player has Glider or Parachute landings scheduled, his Action Phase must be played first. Regardless of method, landing from the air is not an Overwatch Trigger.

2.1a Air Transportation Planning. All morning of 20 May Glider and Parachute Assault Landings must be planned before the Commonwealth player sets up. These are plotted using the provided German Landing Plan. For each Drop Zone (company or battalion as indicated on the Landing Plan) or Glider Landing hex, record the hex you desire (if different than the Historical hexes). These drops occur on the turns given on the German Landing Plan.



Parachute units becoming available on or after 1500 20 May are plotted as in the above on the turn they become available for arrival on their scheduled turns on May 21st.

Air Landing units becoming available at 1500 20 May can be scheduled to arrive on any turn beginning 1500 21 May or later, provided the scheduling is done no less than 24 hours in advance. Air Landings can only be scheduled for one Flight per turn and only on those turns giving an Air Landing Box for the correct date.

2.1b Flights. All Air Transportation uses the division of units into Flights. For Glider Assaults, each Flight can consist of only one unit. In Parachute Assaults, a Flight must be two units (unless after all two-unit Flights have been assigned and a lone unit remains to be assigned a Flight of its own). In Air Landings, each Flight must contain 3 units (with a “remainder” Flight as in Parachute Assaults). Each unit, when counting units for a Flight, is a single counter, regardless of step size or type.

2.1c Glider Assault. Record the target hex for each Flight of Glider Assault units—one unit per Flight—according to the times and units listed on the German Landing Plan. These landings occur as the first event in the German Action Phase. Simply place the Flight into the plotted target hex.

Units landing by Glider can be placed in Move Mode or Fire Mode (German Player’s choice at the instant of landing) and function normally with full movement and fire abilities in that turn—to include the ability to fire SFAs. There are no losses inflicted on units landing by Glider, unless they happen to land on top of a Commonwealth unit—in which case the Glider Flight is destroyed.

2.1d Parachute Assault. Parachute Assaults must be assigned according to the German Landing Plan. Units are assigned either Company or Battalion Drop Zones and the player **cannot** change the times, or type of drops the units will make—but, he **can** assign Drop Zone Hexes which might be different from the historical ones. Make any Parachute Assault Landings as the very last action in the German Action Phase. Units making a Parachute Assault landing must be placed into Move Mode and cannot move, fire, or change Mode in the phase in which they land—they can only conduct involuntary SYRs. Generally, units landing in Parachute Assault cannot fire on the turn they land. If these units are defender’s in Assault Combat, infantry can fire with a strength of 1; all other unit types are automatically eliminated. The turn after such units land, they function normally.

For each Drop Zone (Company or Battalion) follow the routine below.

- 1) Place the Drop Zone Marker in the plotted Target (or Drop Zone) Hex.
- 2) Scatter the Drop Zone Marker by rolling one die for direction (according to the Scatter Diagram) and another for distance. If the Drop Zone Marker shifts out to sea, place it in the last land hex available along the direction of scatter. If it exits the map area, see 2.1e.
- 3) Place the Drop Zone Marker in the resultant hex.

Then, for each Flight assigned to this Drop Zone, do the following:

A) Roll two dice and subtract 5. Displace the Flight along the Direction of Drift that number of hexes (a negative number would displace directly opposite the Direction of Drift.

B) From that Drift Hex, roll one die. Place the Flight in the hex adjacent to the Drift Hex determined in A in the direction of this roll using the directions from the Scatter Diagram. Each Flight must land as a stack.

C) Apply any automatic losses inflicted by the Parachute Loss Table, based on the range from each flight to the nearest Commonwealth unit (of any type).

Commonwealth units further than three hexes away do not matter. LOS, etc. does not matter. These losses are inflicted on each unit of each Flight separately and these losses do not require Morale Checks or additions to Battalion Morale.

D) Repeat A), B), and C) for all Flights using this Drop Zone. See 2.1e for any units which scatter off the map’s edges.

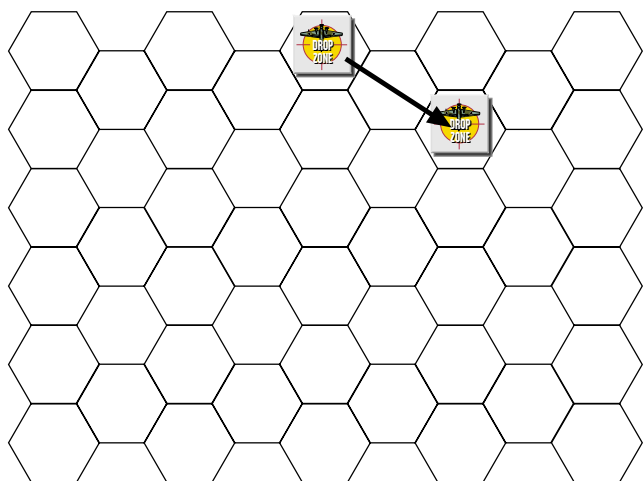
2.1e Drifting Off the Map. Units which drift off the South or East Map edges are automatically destroyed. For any Flight which drifts off the West edge of Map A, roll one die. Place the Flight that number of turns in the future on the Turn Record Track. The units enter hex A11.32 as reinforcements on that turn. If a Drop Zone Marker scatters off the map edge, follow the above separately for each Flight.

2.1f Air Landing. ONE Flight of three units can be planned for each turn for Air Landing. Place these Flights into the boxes provided with the Turn Record Track for the planned turns. On that turn, the Flight must either land at Maleme **OR** enter the Landing Pattern Box. Flights starting a turn in the Landing Pattern Box **must** land **that turn** either at Maleme, **OR** crash land on any beach hex within 3 hexes of the Maleme airfield. Newly arriving Flights cannot crash land on the beach—they must enter the Landing Pattern Box first. Place the landing Flight in either any hex of the Maleme Airfield or any beach hex at or within 3 hexes of the airfield and make the roll for the Flight on the Air Landings Loss Table. Conduct Air Landings as the first thing in the German Action Phase. Units landing by Air Landing can be placed in Move Mode or Fire Mode (German Player’s choice at the instant of landing) and function normally with full movement and fire abilities in that turn.

2.1g Landing Atop the Enemy. Any German unit which lands on top of a Commonwealth unit (of any type) using Glider, Parachute or Air Landings is automatically destroyed.

2.1h Overstacking on Landing. German units which end up overstacked because of the landing rules can remain overstacked without penalty until the end of the first German Action Phase in which those units can move out from the hex. If they are still overstacked at that point, kill off the excess.

2.1i Landing in the Ocean. German units which drift out into all-sea hexes while executing their Parachute Drop scatter are destroyed. Their fate **does not** generate additions to Battalion Morale.



First, the Drop Zone Marker for this DZ is scattered as shown from the plotted drop zone hex. The German player rolled a 3 for direction and a 2 for distance—this scattered the DZ Marker as shown here.

Next, the troops assigned to this DZ are divided into the two unit flights shown below with one remainder flight of one unit.

The German player then places out the flights one at a time with the die rolls shown.

The diagram at the bottom is the end positions of all the flights landing in this group. After taking any landing losses, the player is ready to move to other drop groups or to the end of his phase.

	Distance Roll	Scatter Roll
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- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F

8

3

9

4

6

1

4

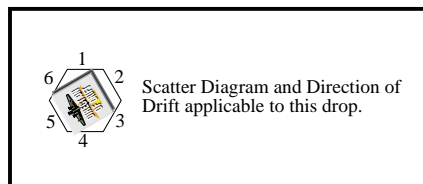
4

4

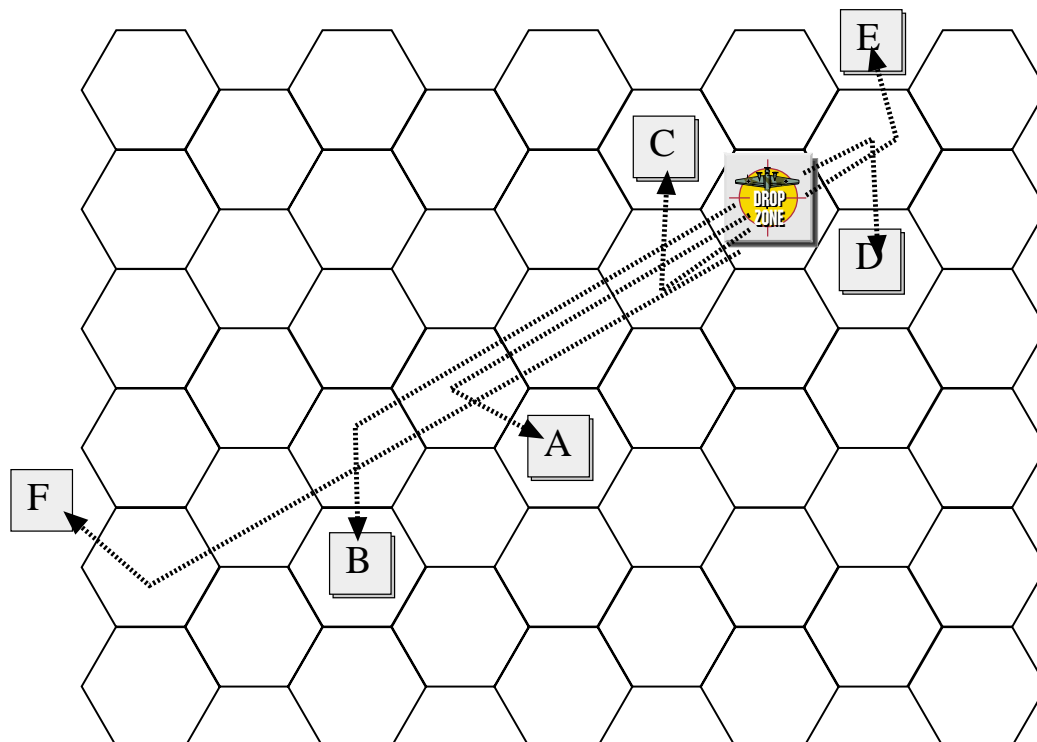
1

11

6



This is the remainder flight for this drop.



Example: Parachute Assault Scatter Sequence

2.2 Bicycle/Motorcycle Infantry Units

All infantry and MG units from the 55 Krad and 95 Aufk Battalions are Bicycle/Motorcycle equipped. These units pay reduced movement costs for Primary or Secondary roads when at least six hexes from any enemy unit.

2.3 German Artillery

The following batteries are available to the German player:

Battery	Guns
1-I-95	4x 75mm
2-I-95	4x 75mm
4-II-95	4x 75mm
5-II-95	4x 75mm

The German player cannot shoot Battalion Artillery Missions.

The guns of one battery become available after the German player devotes a block of 3 turns worth of Air Landings to bring them in. Only one battery can arrive per block of 3 turns allocated, although the player could devote several three-turn blocks sequentially to bring the batteries in one after another.

2.4 Artillery Ammunition

As each Artillery battery becomes available, 25 HE, 4 Smoke and 1 Illium Battery Fires also becomes available.

2.5 German Air Power

Each daylight turn, the German Player will be provided with air support. Roll two dice and consult the German Air Power Table.

A Ju 87b attacks with an area fire value of 19, or can attempt to destroy point targets on a two dice roll of 8+. An Me 109e attacks with an area firepower value of 13, but has no Point Attack effect.



2.5a Initial German Air Bombardment.

On the 0700 and 0720 Turns of May 20, roll twice on the German Air Power Table and execute all the air sorties it gives the German Player. (Execute one roll's batch of sorties, then roll again and execute the next batch.) The two rolls are in addition to the die roll modifier for that morning.

2.6 The Motor Sailing Flotillas (Optional)

These units (listed on the German Reinforcement Chart) can land any time after 2400, 21 May. Place them in any coastal hex west of the Tavronitis River that is at least 20 hexes from the nearest Commonwealth unit.

2.9 Captured Equipment

Each time the German player captures a Bofors Pit hex (only when the Pit is **first** captured by German troops, after resolving any Overwatch fires), roll one die. On a roll of 5 or more, place a captured Bofors Gun unit in that hex. The captured gun is fully operational at the moment of capture—it is in Fire Mode and is capable of SFAs immediately. There are only four Captured Bofors Guns available to the German player, do not roll for more Bofors Guns after the fourth enters play. If some captured guns remain after all the Pits have been rolled for, they never enter play.

The German player also captures trucks. The instant the Maleme Airfield terminal (A39.27, marked with the two trucks on the map) is occupied by German units, place the two Captured truck units in that hex.

2.10 Regimental Weapons

The IV-Sturm is the regimental weapons battalion for the Sturm regiment. The 13 Company (105mm mortars) may be called for fire by any unit of the Sturm regiment.

3.0 Commonwealth Special Rules

3.1 Commonwealth Release

The historically rigid release (3.1c below) is very restrictive and does not make for a very good game. Generally players will enjoy the game better with the normal 3.1b Looser Release system. The choice is yours. Regardless of the system in use, NO CW unit can EVER set up WEST of the Tavronitis River (even when 3.10 is in play).

3.1a Battalion Defense Zones. Until they are Released, Commonwealth units must remain within their Battalion Defense Zone. All Battalion Defense Zones consist of the Battalion Zone Marker's hex and all hexes at or within 10 hexes of that hex.

Units can move and fire freely provided they remain within their Battalion Zone. Once Released, units can move and fight anywhere on the map. Mark the Battalion Defense Zone of each unreleased Battalion with that Battalion's Marker. Remove the Battalion Zone Marker from the map to designate that a Battalion has been released.

3.1a Looser Release. Each turn during his Action Phase (starting with the first turn), the Commonwealth player rolls two dice. If the roll is 11 or greater, he can



release one of his battalions (his choice). Any units still not released at 2400 21 May, are released at that time. Reinforcements are always released when they arrive.

3.1c Historically Rigid Release. (Optional) Until 2400 on 21 May, each Battalion, including the Engineering Detachment, must maintain all of its unreleased troops within the Battalion Defense Zone, as defined in the initial set up.

3.2 "Infantry Guns"

"Z" Battery, Coastal Defense, Royal Marines, was located in a concrete bunker on the North side of Pt.107. These guns can fire inland, but only as direct fire Infantry Guns.



C Battery, 27th NZ Artillery is without sights. Because of this, they can only be used as direct fire infantry guns.

3.3 The "I" Tanks

The Commonwealth Player is blessed (if that is the correct term) with two Matilda tanks. Make a "Breakdown Check" each turn when these tanks move one or more hexes. Roll one die for each tank. On a roll of one, remove it. Otherwise there is no effect. This rule has no effect on the Mk III tanks, only the Matildas.



3.4 Cretan Militia and the Maori

The Commonwealth player has four Cretan Militia units. Place these (two at Pirgos, one at Modhion, and one at Platanias) at 0700, 21 May. They cannot be placed into a hex which contains a German unit. They cannot leave their village and destroy them if forced to do so.

The Maori (the 28th NZ Bn) were fierce fighters in close combat and wielded their knives with great effect. To show this, any unit of the 28th NZ Bn which is engaged in any type of Assault Combat (attacker or defender) has its **firepower strength x3** (in addition to range shifts). Furthermore, in any such Assault-style attack or defense, these units receive an additional -3 modifier for the Morale Table.

3.5 Anti-Aircraft Gun Defense

The Commonwealth has several 3 inch and Bofors Anti-Aircraft guns. Units marked "AA" instead of a firepower value are incapable of firing at ground targets, even when being overrun by assault



combats. AA guns can spot for artillery fires. Except when using the Air Landings Loss Table, these weapons behave as if they were unarmed. They have an assumed Morale of 3. These units automatically surrender when a German unit enters their hex.

3.6 Commonwealth Artillery

The following batteries are available to the Commonwealth Player:

Troop	Guns
A, 27th NZ	2x 94mm (available at start)
B, 27th NZ	3x 75mm (available at start)
C, 2-3 Aus	4x 75mm (available according to 3.8 OR 1200, 23 May otherwise.)

The Commonwealth player can never shoot Battalion Artillery Missions.

3.7 Artillery Ammunition

The Commonwealth Player begins the game with 50 HE, 6 Smoke, and 5 Illum Battery Fires. At 2400, 21 May, add 100 HE, 15 Smoke, and 10 Illum Battery Fires. Commonwealth Battery Fires can be used with either of the available gun types.

3.8 Reinforcements for the 5th Brigade (optional)

During the night of 21-22 May, the last Commonwealth counterattack was ordered in the Maleme area. The attack forces consisted of the 20th and 28th NZ Battalions and they actually succeeded in regaining the east edge of the Airfield. In this variant, roll one die at 2400, 21 May and compare to the following chart:

Roll	Reinforcements
1	No Change
2	20th NZ Bn
3	C, 2-3 Aus Artillery and 2-1 Aus MG Company
4	2nd Bn, 7 Aus Rgt
5	18th NZ Bn
6	1 Welch Bn

Receive all the reinforcements with rolls less than or equal to the number rolled. Consult the Reinforcement Schedule for their new arrival times.

3.9 The 1st Greek Regiment (optional)

Add the 1st Greek to initial Commonwealth forces. Their battalion area is anywhere within 8 hexes of A20.23 and they can set up anywhere in this area.

3.10 Free Deployment (optional)

Allow the Commonwealth player to readjust his Battalion Defense Zone Markers up to 20 hexes from the set up's printed location and set up accordingly.

4.0 Scenarios

4.1 The Initial Assault and Response: 0700-2400, 20 May

First Turn: 0700, 20 May

Last Turn: 2400, 20 May

Map Area: All

Number of Turns: 44

Set Up:

German:

None

Commonwealth:

7 Aus and 156 LAA Anti-Aircraft Detachments: 1x AA Gun in each Bofors Pit

“Z” CD: 2x 4 in Guns at A38.21

“C” RM: 2x HAA Guns at A39.18

Royal Air Force Det: 33 Sqd at A36.21, 30 Sqd at A43.15, 1x RAF MG each at A38.27, A39.27, and A36.21.

C, 27th NZ: w/i 2 B13.13

FPC (Field Punishment Center) Platoon: B12.10

Band Platoon: B46.10

5th Bde Bren Carriers (3x Bren): B51.13

B, 7 RTR (2x Matilda): A42.21

Scratch, 27th NZ MG: 1x MG at A47.24 and A44.18, 2x MG with any 22 NZ unit, 2x MG with any 23 NZ unit.

Note: All of the units above are Released.

21st NZ:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: A52.04
All units, less one Infantry Platoon from D Company, within the Battalion Defense Zone.

One Infantry Platoon from D Company at A31.16

D Company is Released.

22nd NZ:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: Anywhere on Map A east of the Tavronitis River.
All units within Battalion Defense Zone.
A Company is Released.

23rd NZ:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: A58.12
All units within Battalion Defense Zone.
C Company is Released.

28th NZ:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: B38.10
All units within Battalion Defense Zone.
No units are Released.

NZ Eng Det:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: B19.16
All units within Battalion Defense Zone.
No units are Released

Victory Conditions:

A player possessing both Maleme Airfield (all hexes) and Pt. 107's hex wins; any other result is a draw

4.2 Maleme is Secured: 1400-2400, 21 May

First Turn: 1400, 21 May

Last Turn: 2400, 21 May

Number of Turns: 23

Map Area: All

Set Up:

German:

Sturm: 3 Co (-2 platoons),

4 Co (-3 platoons), 5 Co (-1 platoon),

7 Co (-1 platoon), 8 Co (-2 platoons),

9 Co (-2 platoons), 13 Co (no losses),

14 Co (-9 guns), 15 Co (-1 section)

The Following Sturm Companies have been destroyed: HQ-I, 6, 10, 11, 12, 16,

Other: 3-7 Flk (-2 sections), 1-7 Art (-2 guns), 2x Captrd Bofors, 2x Captrd Trucks (all Bofors Pits have been rolled for.)

Set up west of the following line (inclusive): From the south map edge along the A28.xx hexrow to A28.08, then from A28.08 to A38.13. From A38.13 follow the road to A46.21, then follow the A46.xx hexrow to the ocean. Captrd Bofors must each be in its own Bofors Pit. The Captured Trucks can set up anywhere in the zone.

Commonwealth:

Dead Units:

All Bofors AA, RAF, Matilda, “Z” CD units. 4x Scratch, 27 NZ MG sections.

Set Up:

C, 27th NZ: w/i 2 B13.13

FPC Platoon: B12.10

Band Platoon: B46.10

5th Bde Bren Carriers (3x Bren): B51.13

Scratch, 27th NZ MG: 2x MG with any 23 NZ unit.

Note: All of the above units have been released.

21st NZ:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: A52.04

German Landing Plan

Use the Historical Drop Zones or designate your own. Note that even if you designate your own Drop Zones, companies listed below must drop as companies and battalions as battalions.

This must be filled out (except for the 21 May drops) before play begins in any scenario beginning 0700 20 May.

Time	Units	Drop Type	Historical Drop Hex(es)	Player Chosen Drop Hex(es)
20 May				
0720	HQ-I-Sturm	Glider	A30.25, A32.25	_____
	3-I-Sturm	Glider	A35.28, A33.25, A34.26, A36.29	_____
	4-I-Sturm	Glider	A34.10, A36.10, A42.13, A44.13	_____
0740	9-III-Sturm	Parachute	Company Drop Zone at A47.21	_____
	10-III-Sturm	Parachute	Company Drop Zone at B17.18	_____
	11-III-Sturm	Parachute	Company Drop Zone at A55.10	_____
	12-III-Sturm	Parachute	Company Drop Zone at A58.18	_____
	IV-Sturm	Parachute	Battalion Drop Zone at A17.27	_____
	3-7 Flak	Parachute	Company Drop Zone at A22.20	_____
0800	II-Sturm	Parachute	Battalion Drop Zone at A17.27	_____
0900	1-7 Arty	Parachute	Company Drop Zone at A22.20	_____
For the following, select the Drop Zone Hexes in the 1500 turn of 20 May.				
21 May				
1500	II-2 FJ	Parachute	Battalion Drop Zone at B18.16	_____
1600	7 PJ	Parachute	Battalion Drop Zone at A19.29	_____

The DZs for this turn cannot be plotted closer than TEN Hexes from any another DZ.

All units, less one Infantry Platoon from D Company, within the Battalion Defense Zone.

One Infantry Platoon from D Company has been destroyed.

D Company is Released.

22nd NZ:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: Anywhere on Map A east of the German Set Up Line. Losses: -1 platoon each from A Co., B Co., and HQ Co. All other units within Battalion Defense Zone.

A Company is Released.

23rd NZ:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: A58.12 All units within Battalion Defense Zone. C Company is Released.

28th NZ:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: B38.10 All units within Battalion Defense Zone. No units are Released.

NZ Eng Det:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: B19.16 All units within Battalion Defense Zone. No units are Released

Cretan Militia: All, deployed in their respective cities.

Artillery Ammo: 30 HE, 2 Smoke, 2 Illum

Victory Conditions:

The player possessing both Maleme Airfield and Pt. 107 wins; any other result is a draw.

4.3 The NZ Counterattack: 2400, 21 May – 1800, 22 May

First Turn: 2400, 21 May

Last Turn: 1800, 22 May

Map Area: All

Number of Turns: 45

Set Up:

German:

Sturm: 3 Co (-3 platoons), 4 Co (-3 platoons), 5 Co (-2 platoons), 7 Co (-1 platoon), 8 Co (-2 platoons), 9 Co (-2 platoons), 13 Co (-1 platoon), 14 Co (-9 guns), 15 Co (-1 section)
The Following Sturm Companies have been destroyed: HQ-I, 6, 10, 11, 12, 16,
2 FJ Rgt: HQ Co, 5 Co (-2 platoons), 6 Co (-1 platoon)

100 Mountain Rgt: 6 Co (-1 platoon), 7 Co (-1 platoon), 8 Co (-1 platoon), 9 Co (no losses), 10 Co (no losses)

Other: 3-7 Flk (-2 sections),

1-7 Art (-2 guns), 7 PJ (-6 guns), 2x Captrd Bofors, 2x Captrd Trucks (all Bofors Pits have been rolled for.)

Set up west of the following line (inclusive): From A43.01 along the road to A49.10. Then follow the Axx.10 hexrow to A54.10. From A54.10 to A54.15, then to A46.19 and along the A49.xx hexrow to the sea.. 5-II-2 FJ Rgt and 6-II-2 FJ Rgt must set up in any hex of Pirgos.

There is no German artillery available as yet. Plot all remaining air landings before play begins.

Commonwealth:

Dead Units:

All Bofors AA, RAF, Matilda, "Z" CD units. 4x Scratch, 27 NZ MG sections. 2x Pirgos Militia MG units.

Set Up: (all units are released)

C, 27th NZ: w/i 2 B13.13

FPC Platoon: B12.10

Band Platoon: B46.10

5th Bde Bren Carriers (3x Bren): B51.13

Scratch, 27th NZ MG: 2x MG with any 23 NZ unit.

21st NZ:

A, B, C, and D Co (-1 platoon) w/i 3 A52.04 HQ Co w/i 2 A60.03

22nd NZ:

A Co (-1 platoon) w/i 2 A52.09

B Co (-1 platoon) w/i 2 A55.13

C Co w/i 2 A55.08

D Co w/i 2 A46.02

HQ Co (-1 platoon) w/i 2 A56.10

3x Bren, Bn Mortar Platoon w/i 2 A57.05

23rd NZ:

A Co w/i 1 A62.13

C Co w/i 4 A62.10

D Co w/i 1 A59.14

HQ1 Co w/i 2 A56.14

HQ2 Co w/i 2 B4.14

1x Bren, Bn Mortar Platoon w/i 2 B6.10

28th NZ: All w/i 5 of B38.14

Eng Det: All w/i 10 of B19.16

Cretan Militia: All except Pirgos, each in their own cities.

Artillery Ammo: 100 HE, 15 Smoke, 10 Illum

Victory Conditions:

A player possessing both Maleme Airfield and Pt. 107 wins; any other result is a draw.

4.4 The Battle for Maleme: 0700, 20 May – 2200, 23 May

First Turn: 0700, 20 May

Last Turn: 2200, 23 May

Map Area: All

Game Length: 204

Set Up:

German:

None

Commonwealth:

7 Aus and 156 LAA Anti-Aircraft Detachments: 1x AA Gun in each Bofors Pit

"Z" CD: 2x 4 in Guns at A38.21

"C" RM: 2x HAA Guns at A39.18

Royal Air Force Det: 33 Sqd at A36.21, 30 Sqd at A43.15, 1x RAF MG each at A38.27, A39.27, and A36.21.

C, 27th NZ: w/i 2 B13.13

FPC Platoon: B12.10

Band Platoon: B46.10

5th Bde Bren Carriers (3x Bren): B51.13

B, 7 RTR (2x Matilda): A42.21

Scratch, 27th NZ MG: 1x MG at A47.24 and A44.18, 2x MG with any 22 NZ unit, 2x MG with any 23 NZ unit.

Note: All of the units above are Released.

21st NZ:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: A52.04 All units, less one Infantry Platoon from D Company, within the Battalion Defense Zone.

One Infantry Platoon from D Company at A31.16

D Company is Released.

22nd NZ:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: Anywhere on Map A east of the Tavronitis River. All units within Battalion Defense Zone. A Company is Released.

23rd NZ:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: A58.12 All units within Battalion Defense Zone. C Company is Released.

28th NZ:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: B38.10 All units within Battalion Defense Zone. No units are Released.

NZ Eng Det:

Battalion Defense Zone Marker: B19.16 All units within Battalion Defense Zone. No units are Released

Victory Conditions

German: The German player must hold all of Maleme Airfield and Pt. 107 by 0800 21 May AND have cleared all the map area west of B21.xx of ALL Commonwealth units by the end of the game.

Commonwealth: Avoid the German conditions.

Allied Order of Battle

Creforce

5th New Zealand Brigade

- 21st NZ Bn
(10x Inf, 1x 3in Mortar)
- 22nd NZ Bn
(15x Inf, 1x 3in Mortar, 3x Bren)
- 23rd NZ Bn
(13x Inf, 1x 3in Mortar, 1x Bren)
- 28th NZ Bn
(15x Inf, 1x 3in Mortar)
- 5 Bde Transport Sec
(3x Bren)
- 5 Bde Band
(1x Inf)
- 5 Bde Field Punishment Center (FPC)
(1x Inf)
- Scratch 27th NZ MG Bn
(6x MG)
- C, 27th NZ Art Bn
(4x 75mm IG, 2x Truck)
- NZ Engineering Detachment (NZ

Eng)

- 7th Field Co (7 Fld)
(4x Inf)
- 19th Army Troops (19 A)
(6x Inf)
- B, 7th Royal Tank Rgt (B, 7 RTR)
(2x Matilda)
- 1st Greek Regiment
- A Bn
(10x Inf)
- B Bn
(10x Inf)
- Anti-Aircraft Detachment
- 7th Aus
(4x Bofors)
- 156th LAA
(6x Bofors)
- Royal Air Force Detachment (RAF)
(2x Inf, 3x MG)
- Royal Marine Detachment
- Z, CD
(2x 4in Inf Gun)
- C, RM
(2x 3in AA Gun)

Creforce Reserves

- 20th NZ Bn
(15x Inf, 1x 3in Mortar, 1x Bren)
- C, 3rd Hussars (C, 3 Hus)
(3x Mark III Light Tanks)
- Creforce Transport Co
(16x Trucks)
- Det 2-1 Aus MG Bn
(2x MG, 1x Bren)
- 2-7 Aus Bn
(15x Inf, 1x 3in Mortar)
- 1st Welch Bn
(15x Inf, 1x 3in Mortar, 4x Bren)
- 18th NZ Bn
(15x Inf, 1x 3in Mortar, 1x Bren)

Cretan Militia (Militia)

- (4x MG)

German Order of Battle

XI Fliegerkorps

Airlanding-Sturm Regiment

- I-Sturm Bn
(10x Inf)
- II-Sturm Bn
(12x Inf, 4x 81mm Mortar)
- III-Sturm Bn
(12x Inf, 4x 81mm Mortar)
- IV-Sturm Bn (Regimental Troops)
(3x Inf, 6x MG, 3x 105mm Mortar, 12x 37mm AT Gun)

7th Air Division

- II-2 FJ Bn
(9x Inf)
- Divisional Troops
- 3 Co., 7 Pio Bn (partial)
(3x Inf)
- 7 Artillery Bn
- 1-7 Arty
(4x 75mm Inf Gun)
- 3-7 Arty
(2x 75mm Inf Gun)
- 7 PJ Bn
(18x 37mm AT Gun)
- 7 Flak Bn
(12x 20mm AA Gun)

5th Mountain Division

85th Mountain Rgt

- I-85 Mtn Bn
(9x Inf, 6x MG, 3x 81mm Mortar, 2x 75mm Inf Gun)
- III-85 Mtn Bn
(9x Inf, 6x MG, 3x 81mm Mortar, 2x 75mm Inf Gun)
- 16 Co., 85 Mtn Rgt Troops
(8x 37mm AT Gun)

100th Mountain Rgt

- I-100 Mtn Bn
(9x Inf, 6x MG, 3x 81mm Mortar, 2x 75mm Inf Gun)
- II-100 Mtn Bn
(9x Inf, 6x MG, 3x 81mm Mortar, 2x 75mm Inf Gun)
- III-100 Mtn Bn
(9x Inf, 6x MG, 3x 81mm Mortar, 2x 75mm Inf Gun)
- 16 Co., 100 Mtn Rgt Troops
(12x 37mm AT Gun)
- sIG Co., 100 Mtn Rgt Troops
(2x 150mm Inf Gun)

Divisional Troops

- 95th Aufk Bn
(6x Inf, 2x MG, 3x 81mm Mortar, 3x 37mm AT Gun)
- 95th Pio Bn
(9x Inf)
- 95th PJ Bn
(24x 37mm AT Gun, 3x 50mm AT Gun)

Attached Troops

- 55th Krad Bn** (from the 5.Pz Div)
(9x Inf, 6x MG, 3x 81mm Mortar)
- 84th Flak Bn** (from 12.Army)
(9x 20mm AA Gun)
- Other**
(Captrd Bofors (4x Bofors Gun), Captrd Trucks (2x Truck))

Time

All times utilized are per the German system [this is one hour behind Cairo (used by the defenders) and one hour ahead of London].

Designer's Notes

Invasion games have always been a favorite of mine and there is nothing more interesting to me than an airborne assault. Although the attack on Crete has been a popular design topic, most of the previous efforts look at the battle from an operational level and do not provide the type of tactical detail available in the TCS.

The Battle for the Maleme Area is extremely well suited to the TCS system. Both sides are slightly larger than a regiment in strength and the battle area fits nicely on two maps. The battle might seem long by TCS standards, but the low unit density and lack of tanks will make turns fly by more quickly than usual.

Research started with a collection of every piece of reference material available on the subject (being my first real research project there were a number of lessons to be learned regarding the cost and speed of acquiring materials). Most sources concentrated on the Allied side and the New Zealand Official History was very useful in providing a good overall picture of the battle down to the company level. But, the heart of the TCS is the platoon and I was stuck without detailed data for quite some time. Eventually, the New Zealand Battalion Histories for each unit were located and these gave me the weapons counts and starting locations that were needed (including the facts that various platoons were missing and that the HQs were acting as weak infantry).

On the German side, the Order of Battle for the Wehrmacht units was easily obtained from the captured records of the 12th Army. The problem was I could not find any Luftwaffe Records. This was very frustrating since several sources referenced two wartime reports (one written by the IX Air Corps and the other by the 4th Air Fleet). These were eventually located and provided the needed data for paratrooper ratings and air transport schedules.

Before leaving the subject of research, I would like to thank Vance von Borries for his valued assistance. We were able to share research about half-way through our respective projects and had several discussions on various subjects. Though we never did agree on the exact number of gliders employed, I believe our exchanges materially affected both efforts.

Historical Notes

Campaign Background

The island of Crete is located halfway between Greece and the north coast of Africa. From here the Allies could threaten the Rumanian oil fields and the Axis could contest the British presence in the Mediterranean. Thus, for both sides the island took on a strategic importance in the early months of 1941.

The British prepared a defensive plan for the island, but never allocated the resources needed to carry it out. Garrison units were in place as early as December 1940 and efforts were made to expand the port facilities. However, it wasn't until the evacuation of Greece that the defense of Crete was taken seriously.

As the British were leaving Greece, troops were dropped off in Crete to shorten the evacuation route for the Royal Navy. Many of these did not believe they would remain on the island for any length of time and several formations (including the New Zealand 6th Brigade) did move on to Egypt. As most of these units landed, their heavy weapons and equipment were deposited into warehouses at Suda Bay. After several days, the weapons were evenly divided and redistributed to the various defensive positions around the island. Defenses were improvised as the men realized their stay would not be as short as expected.

The German preparations for the invasion were about as hurried as those of the British defense. General Student was asked to begin planning for the operation on 21 April. Student favored a single, concentrated operation against one airfield, while Göring favored simultaneous drops at multiple locations. The availability of transports finally forced a compromise where morning drops would be made in the Maleme and Canea areas and would be followed in the afternoon with landings in the Retimo and Heraklion sectors.

The Forces

The Maleme sector was assigned to the 5th NZ Brigade of four battalions (21st, 22nd, 23rd, and 28th). The 28th Battalion was made up exclusively of Maori tribesmen. Also assigned to the brigade was a battalion strength engineer detachment, several platoons of a MG Battalion, artillery, and two Matilda tanks. In the area, but not directly under the brigade's command were two batteries of AA guns and several RAF and RM detachments.

For the assault, the Germans had the Sturm Regiment and the 7th Flieger

Division. In the final plan, each of the four regiments would be given a different objective and split between the morning and afternoon drops. The Sturm Regiment was assigned Maleme. For follow-up, the 5th Mountain and elements of the 6th Mountain and 5th Panzer Divisions were available. The Mountain troops proved very well suited to the role they were to play given their light equipment and their training for rough terrain. Many of these soldiers, however, had never flown in aircraft before.

Defense at Maleme

The New Zealand defense at Maleme (and all of Crete for matter) was rooted in the preconceived idea that although the threat of airborne attack was real, the most significant danger would come from the sea. Thus, the 5th Brigade was not only assigned the task of defending the Maleme airfield, but of also covering the coast all the way to Platanias.

The airfield and the overlooking height of Pt. 107 was assigned to the 22nd Bn. This unit was the strongest in the brigade and was also heavily reinforced. The 23rd Bn was reduced in strength by the loss of its B Company, so they were posted just east of the airfield in order to support the 22nd if needed. The 21st Bn (the weakest in the brigade) was positioned inland from the coast in order to support both the 23rd and 22nd Bns. The Engineers were construction troops who were converted into infantry and given a length of coast to defend. Finally, the 28th Bn was to defend Platanias and form the brigade reserve.

Two colorful units were also in the 5th Brigade area. The first was the brigade band which shows the lengths to which the defenders were forced to go to defend their sector with infantry. The second was the Field Punishment Center (FPC), a collection of the brigade's discipline cases. These were not hardened criminals or mutineers, but were instead slackers and those caught stealing oranges from the locals. They performed very well once the Germans arrived.

The German Attack Plan

The German plan of attack at Maleme was based on the belief that the airfield was the prize the NZ troops would be defending. They expected that the areas to the east and west of the field to be free of defending units. This proved to be true in the west, but was not in the east. A fact that gave disastrous results.

The initial assault wave consisted of four Glider Detachments. Det. Braun would

land near and capture the Tavornitis River Bridge. Det. v.Plessen would land on the west edge of the airfield and would be responsible for silencing the AA guns posted there. Det. Koch would land on either side of Pt. 107 and would clear the hill.

The main body of the regiment would arrive by parachute after the glider landings. First would come the III Bn which would land to the east of the airfield. Next would be the IV Bn landing to the east. Its job would be to support the hard-pressed glider troops. Finally, the II Bn would land in the west to form the regimental reserve.

The Battle

As the morning of 20 May 1941 dawned, the German bombers made their normal run over the island. After they passed, the troops started their daily routine with lining up for chow. The morning quiet was broken by a new German attack with Stukas and fighters screaming in low over the countryside. The time was 0700 and, unknown to the troops on the ground, the sky was thick with transports bringing in the much expected invasion.

The gliders arrived on schedule amid the dust and confusion of the air attack. Losses to AA fire was minimal, but several gliders crashed upon landing. Det. Braun was able to secure the bridge and began pushing a wedge into the NZ positions along the main road. Det. v.Plessen was able to silence the AA guns, but was stopped short of the edge of the airfield. Det. Koch suffered the most from fire and found themselves disorganized and engaged with many more defenders than expected.

9th Company landed in good order and made significant progress. They were able to clear Pirkos and apply pressure to the airfield. The landings of II and IV Bns went according to plan and by noon, 8th and 15th Companies were attacking Pt. 107 from the southwest. But, where was the rest of III Bn?

III Bn suffered badly from two poor decisions. First, the company commanders feared they might be landed in the sea, so they instructed the transport pilots to drop them a "little" further inland. This resulted in a great deal more scatter than should have occurred. The second bad decision was related to the selection of the drop zones and the location of the defenders. In covering the coast, instead of concentrating in the defense of the airfield, the mass of the 5th Brigade occupied III Bn's drop zones. The slaughter of isolated groups of paratroopers was almost complete. For example, a list of 126 names was found on

a fallen German officer (the list of his company's initial drop). By 1000, the New Zealanders had accounted for every name on the list. Those who survived the massacre could do little more than to find a place to hold up and provided nothing more than a nuisance value for the remainder of the battle.

Back at Maleme, the 22nd NZ was fighting well. Though the troops on the west edge of the airfield had been destroyed, no real German gains were allowed at either the airfield or Pt. 107.

A counterattack by the two Matilda tanks was ordered in the early afternoon. The attack started around 1615 hours supported by 20 survivors of C company and the RAF Detachment. The panic on the German side was total as they had no weapons that could knock out these monsters. As fate would have it, mechanical problems would take care of the situation. The first tank fell out when it was discovered that the ammunition for the 2 lbr gun would not fit in the breach block and the turret wouldn't traverse. The second tank continued and reached the riverbed, drove under the bridge, and (after its turret jammed) drove up and down the riverbed machine-gunning Germans until its engine gave out. Then it was abandoned.

As stated, 22nd Bn was holding well, but Colonel Andrew did not know what was happening. Contact had been lost with the HQ Company (it was destroyed at Pirkos) and runners could not get through to C and D Companies. Communications with Brigade were sporadic and since parachutes were also seen to the east it could only be assumed that the other battalions were as hard pressed as the 22nd. The tank attack, Col Andrew's last trump card, had failed and requests for reinforcements had gone unanswered.

Based on the above, the decision which may have cost the Allies the battle of Crete was made—Point 107 would be abandoned. The 22nd NZ became filing off the hill. On the way down, Andrews stumbled into the promised reinforcements (a company each from the 23rd and 28th Bns). These companies had not started their move until dark (for fear of air attack) and had lost their way. By this time, dawn was breaking and it was too late to return to the hill.

May 21st was a day for the Germans to consolidate and begin their reinforcement program. As dawn came, they could not believe their good fortune to find Pt. 107 vacant and through the morning they moved to occupy it and the village of Pirkos. The paradrops conducted in the early afternoon of the 21st were, like those of the 20th, of

mixed success. The anti-tank guns dropped west of the river (in direct response to the Matilda attack of the previous day) were conducted in good order. The drops east of Pirkos, however, were the result of the same bad judgment that had destroyed the III Bn. The Germans believed they were facing the entire 5th Bde and that the enemy rear would be devoid of troop concentrations. The plan was to drop the two companies behind the enemy lines. In reality, these units suffered as badly as those dropped in the same area the day before.

As mid afternoon approached, transports began arriving at the airfield carrying the first mountain troops. Most were able to land in good order, but a few were forced to crash land on the beach.

During the late afternoon, the New Zealanders realized the implications of the continuous air traffic at Maleme and began planning a counterattack. This was to begin at dusk from positions near Platanias and would be conducted as follows:

- Three newly arrived Light Tanks would attack down the road.
- The 28th NZ Bn would attack between the road and the foothills.
- The 20th NZ Bn would attack between the road and the coast.

The arrival of the 20th NZ Bn was significantly delayed, however, by Creforce command because they would not be released until their coastal duty was fully taken over by the 2/7 Australian Bn. This again shows the paranoia associated with the threat of a seaborne attack and is doubly ironic in that at the time that the 20th Bn was waiting to be relieved, naval gunfire flashes were spotted to the north as the Royal Navy dispersed the German Flotilla.

The late arrival of the 20th Bn resulted in a delayed start of the counterattack. Good progress was made, but the attack was slowed by the remnants of III-Sturm and II-2 FJ who had converted many buildings into 2-4 man strongpoints. As the attack reached Pirkos, dawn began to break and the attacking force was subject to the full weight of the Luftwaffe. The attack reached the east edge of the airfield before being forced to fall back to their starting positions in a much reduced force.

From here the battle was one of constant pressure along the road and flanking marches by the Mountain troops. Fear that the Maleme Germans would link up with the 3rd FJ Regiment to the southeast and cut off the retreat route finally forced the 5th Bde to fall back behind Ay Marina. The fight for the Maleme airfield had ended and the fate of Crete was sealed.

German Reinforcement Chart

<u>Time Available</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Units</u>
All availabilities are 20 May		
0720	Glider Assault	I-Strum Bn
0740	Parachute Assault	III-Strum Bn, IV-Strum Bn, 3-7 Flak Bn
0800	Parachute Assault	II-Strum Bn
0900	Parachute Assault	1-7 Arty Battery

The following are released at the times below, schedule them to arrive at least 24 hours **after** their release.

See the German Landing Plan for Parachute Assault units. Place Air Landing units (divided into 3 units flights) onto the spaces provided on the Turn Record Track.

1500	Parachute Assault	2 FJ Rgt
	Air Landing	3-7 Arty Battery, 5-7 Flak Bn, 100 Mtn Rgt (less III-100 and 4x AT Guns of 16 Co)
	Air Landing	85 Mtn Rgt, 95 Pio Bn, 95 Aufk Bn, 95 PJ Bn, 55 Krad Bn
	Air Landing	All Four Batteries of the 95 Artillery (No counters exist for these guns, see rule 2.3)
1600	Parachute Assault	7 PJ Bn
Optional	Flotilla	3-7 Pio Bn, 2-84 Flak Bn, III-100 Mtn Rgt (plus 4x AT Guns of 16 Co)

Commonwealth Reinforcement Chart

All units enter anywhere along the East edge of Map B.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Units</u>
0700, 21 May	Cretan Militia
0240, 22 May	C & D Co., 20th NZ Bn, Creforce (6 Trucks), C Co., 3rd Hus (3x MKIII Tanks)
0440, 22 May	20th NZ Bn (Remainder), Creforce (10 Trucks)
1800, 22 May	Det 2-1 Aus MG
1200, 23 May	C, 2-3 Aus Artillery Battery becomes available

Optional (see 3.8):

0100, 22 May	20th NZ Bn
0200, 22 May	2-7 Aus Bn, Det 2-1 Aus MG Co
0400, 22 May	1st Welch Bn, C, 2-3 Aus Artillery Battery becomes available
0600, 22 May	18th NZ Bn