

**Introduction**

Welcome to the extended version of the *OCS Starter Guide* that was included with *Reluctant Enemies*. This article continues the campaign from the start of Turn 2. Turn 1 was published as an insert included with the game. The action continues with slightly less detail, except when we encounter activities not previously described.

**Where do I find an example of...?**

When assembling this *Starter Guide*, we tried to include an example of many situations encountered in a typical *OCS* game:

Air Base Capture with Displacement	CW Turn 6
Air Base Construction	Vichy Turn 3, CW Turn 5
Air Campaign Overview	CW Turn 10
Air Mission with Interception	CW Turn 1
Attrition Table Rolls	Vichy Turn 12 & 13
Barrage of an Air Base	Vichy Turn 2, CW Turn 4, Vichy Turn 11
Barrage resulting in Step Loss (an "Air Kill")	Vichy Turn 7
Big Picture Analysis	CW Turn 6
Breakout	Vichy Turn 4, Vichy Turn 10, Vichy Turn 12
Capture Table	CW Turn 4
Combat against Reserve Units	CW Turn 11, CW Turn 15
Defender Surprise	Vichy Turn 6, CW Turn 11, CW Turn 12
Defensive Barrage Use	CW Turn 6, CW Turn 11
Double Turn	Vichy Turn 2/3, CW Turns 11/12 & 14/15
Eating off the Map	Vichy Turn 2
Exploit Mode Attacks	CW Turn 4, CW Turn 11
Fighter Sweep	Vichy Turn 2
Fighter Sweep versus Bombers only	CW Turn 5
Flak with Mission Loss Table	CW Turn 7
Internal Stocks for Combat Supply	CW Turn 8, CW Turn 11
Multiple Overrun	CW Turn 15
Naval Barrage	CW Turn 1
Naval/Air Barrage [1/2] result treated as DG	CW Turn 10
Negating Enemy Zone of Control	CW Turn 8
Overrun	CW Turn 1, CW Turn 7, Vichy Turn 11
Rail Move of Units	CW Turn 2
Recovery from Low or Exhausted Supply Status	CW Turn 12
Refusing Combat Supply	Vichy Turn 12
Replacement Units (Pax and Eq) Units	CW Turn 2
Reserve Units defending against Ground Attack	CW Turn 15
Retreating a Zero MA Unit	CW Turn 15
Retreat after Combat Decisions	CW Turn 4, CW Turn 7
Retreat DGs Stack that is in Enemy ZOC	CW Turn 15
Returns, Rebuilds & Reinforcement Placement	Vichy Turn 12
Set-Piece Attack	CW Turn 10
Strat Mode	CW Turn 13, CW Turn 15
Supply Nets & Garrisons Overview	Between Turns 7 & 8
Trace Supply Checking	Vichy Turn 2
Trace Supply for spread-out Multi-Unit Formation	CW Turn 12
Trainbusting Missions	Vichy Turn 12, Vichy Turn 13
Trainbusting Effects	CW Turn 13
Truck Capture	CW Turn 11
Unit Definitions	Prior to Turn 2
Using Internals	CW Turn 11
Voluntary Abort from Air Combat	CW Turn 5, CW Turn 10

**Errors** - Well, I hope there aren't any. This Extended Starter Guide had a thoroughgoing proofread. If you find something, please let me know and give me a break—I'm a "newbie" to the system after all!

**Photos**

Operation Exporter is one of those "forgotten" campaigns of World War II. The game-specific rules contain a comprehensive bibliography of books published on the conflict. Photographs from Syria-Lebanon in the summer of 1941 are difficult to find. The best photo set is located at the excellent Australian War Memorial site ([www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)) which has approximately 2500 photos viewable online (do a search for "Syria" and "World War II"). Several of Australia's premier photographers, including Frank Hurley and George Silk, were journalists during the campaign. Other information and photos can be found by web browser searches for specific units or equipment. We located very few photos of Vichy units or activities despite extensive searching.



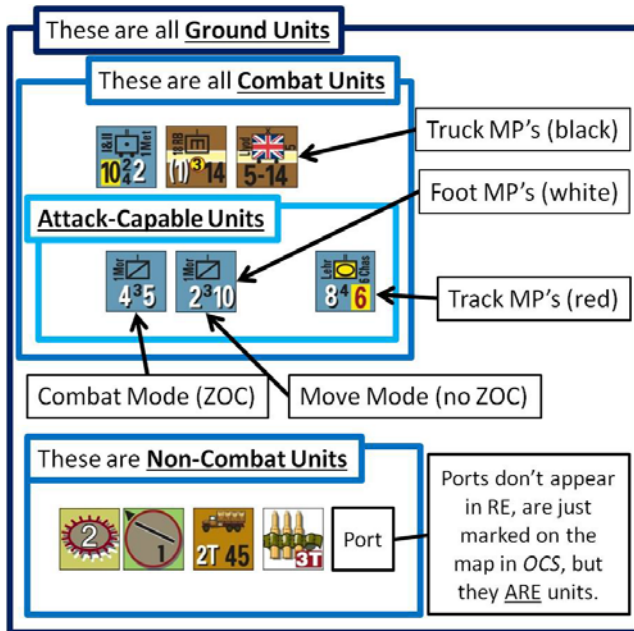
June, 1941, 6<sup>th</sup> Division Cavalry, AIF. "A strange new monster encroaches on the peaceful olive groves—war machines seem strangely out of place in this sylvan setting near Er Rama" (approximately hex 36.08). (Photo: Frank Hurley)



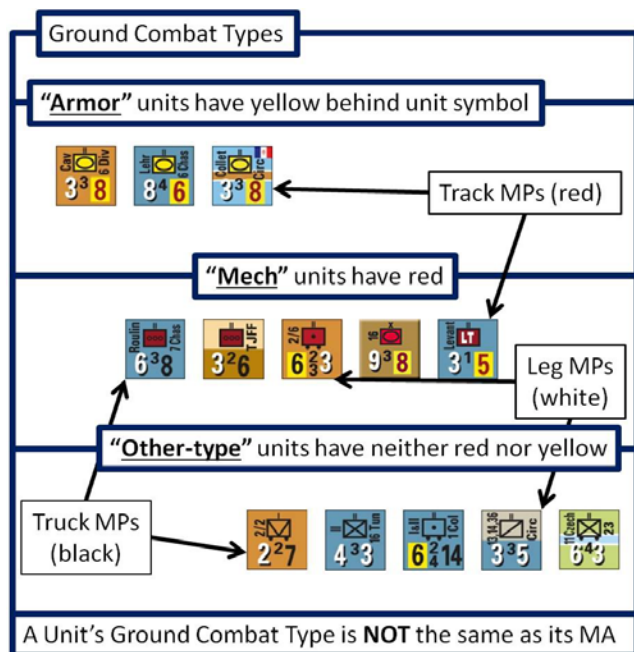
June, 1941. The beginning of an attack made by the 2/27<sup>th</sup> battalion from the plains below El Ardun. This attack led to much bitter fighting which culminated in the capture of the heights and town of Saiada (photo by Frank Hurley).

## Unit Definitions

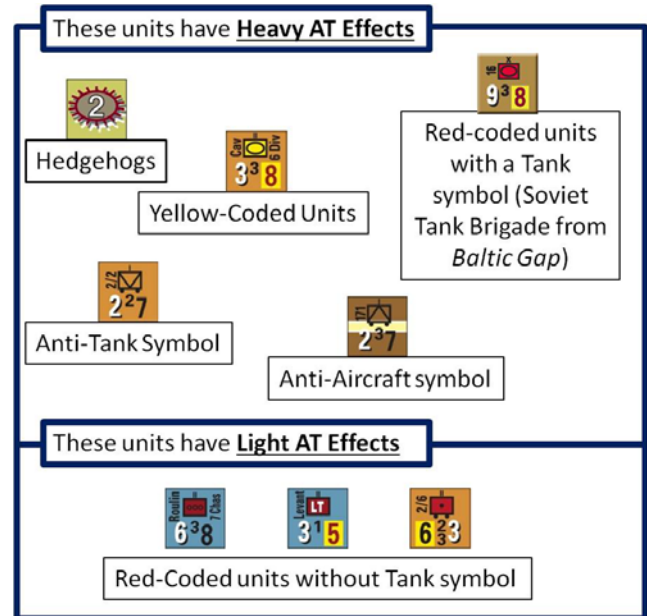
The OCS uses a consistent and carefully crafted set of definitions. Units can fall into several different categories that are confusing for first-time players, particularly when the categories are referenced later in the rules. This first diagram shows which units are Ground Units, Combat Units, Attack-Capable Ground Units and Non-Combat Units (OCS Rules 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3).



Ground Combat Types (Armor, Mech and Other-type, defined in OCS Rule 3.2a) are important to know because of the ways in which Terrain affects unit strength (OCS Rule 9.4). Each game has a terrain chart which lists the terrain cost by movement type (Track, Truck and Leg) and which also lists the combat effect on each of the Ground Combat Types. **Note that a unit's Ground Combat Type is NOT the same as its movement type.**



Another factor that can modify a unit's combat strength are Anti-Tank (AT) Effects (OCS Rule 9.4e). Specific combinations of attacking and defending units might reduce attacking Armor or Mech units from a x2 (the normal attacking multiplier for clear terrain and some other terrain types) to x1.5. When the defender's hex has the **same or a higher** level of AT Effects, then the attacker's multiple is reduced.



Fort Khiam, Syria (hex 23.13), June 9, 1941. Australian troops of 7th Division 2nd AIF moving across the courtyard of Fort Khiam during its capture from the Vichy French, ready to mop up enemy troops remaining in shelters. The soldiers in the foreground are from the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion, the soldier with the Bren gun is identified as Private Donald Herbert Dickson later taken Prisoner of War (POW) and worked on the Burma/Thailand Railway, the soldier in the centre is Private (Pte) Garry Hooper and on the right is Pte Whittaker.

The unit in this illustration is the 2/2 Pioneer Battalion. It has Foot MP's on both its Combat Mode and Move Mode side. It is an "Other-type" unit for Ground Combat terrain modifiers and possesses no Anti-Tank Effects. However, this unit DOES have engineering capabilities, per RE Rule 1.8.

## Turn 2, June 10, 1941

**June 10 – CW First Player – Turn 2** - I win the First Player Determination die rolls with an 8 to John's 4. I elect to go first so I can close up to the Litani River line and attack Merdjayoun. I refit my fighter in 37.02, paying 1T with Direct Draw from the dump in Haifa (37.01). My bomber unit in the off-map holding box can refit for no SP cost (RE Rule 2.6). Next I roll for supply and replacements. My supply roll of 2 dice is a 6, yielding 2.5 SP's (RE Rule 2.1A and on-map chart), and I place 2 SPs in Haifa and 2T in Amman. I do Combat Unit Recovery before my Replacement roll (per RE Rule 2.1B). I lost 4 units (not counting the Commandos) so can pick one at random out of the dead pile (the process is described in RE Rule 1.11). It turns out to be the weakest unit available, the 2/2 AT Company, and I place it in Iskandaroun (29.04), which is 2 hexes from the 7<sup>th</sup> Australian HQ. My Replacement die roll is a 9, giving me 1 Pax Replacement unit (Repls), which I place in Haifa (RE Rules 2.1A and 3.3A specify where Reinforcements appear).

Replacements in OCS are represented by Pax (Personnel) or Eq (Equipment) Repls counters, obtained by rolling on the Replacement Roll table or received as Reinforcements. These are placed in the same way as normal Reinforcements and must make their way across the map like any other unit. Yes, Eq units must be fueled to move. They may be used to rebuild units from the dead pile (or add a step to a multi-step unit in other OCS games) during the Reinforcement Phase if they are within 2 hexes of a Combat Mode HQ and not in an enemy ZOC (OCS Rule 13.5). Haifa is also a nominal HQ for the purposes of rebuilding units within 2 hexes of the city if I wish (RE Rule 2.3C). Beirut and Damascus function in this way for the Vichy forces, per RE Rule 3.2C)

Next, I place the Commonwealth reinforcements—12 steps and an air unit. In most OCS games, Truck and Track mobile Reinforcements do not arrive “gassed up” when placed on the map—they need to be fueled to move (OCS Rule 12.5f), however this is not the case in RE—the units arrive fueled (RE Rule 2.1A and 3.3A). My Cruiser unit is available for Naval Barrage but the Destroyer misses its roll.

My objectives for this turn are:

- Coast: Get my units up to the Litani River and position them to assault this line (and tie down some of the Vichy units in the process).
- Center: Attack Merdjayoun (22.12) and get my cavalry units back in trace supply.
- East: Advance towards Damascus (19.29) while also dealing with his forces near Souedia (43.32).
- Mass several batteries into a big stack of artillery I can more reliably use to obtain DG results.

Along the coast, I pile two units into 24.06 to provide a strong force at the river—this should forestall any enemy advance, and will eventually be my attack group. I form a stack in 27.05 that can become an exploit force next turn when I can put a Reserve Marker on those units, when I will take another try at crossing the river.

**Newbie Note:** I intend the units in hex 27.05 as an exploitation column that will be in Reserve next turn. I plan to move these units in the Exploitation Phase if I can clear or DG his units across the Litani. They do not have to be released and move in a body—some could move and conduct an Overrun before I release others. The artillery can both move and barrage before the Combat Segment in exploitation.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade swarms around Merdjayoun (22.12) and readies itself for an attack on the town. By occupying hex 22.13 with a combat unit, I negate the enemy ZOC, which allows the Wilson Corps HQ to provide trace supply as far as Hasbaya (21.15). I pull the cavalry units back so they will just be in trace supply and spread them out so his cavalry can't easily get around them. I bring up artillery units and form a big stack in 25.12.



South of Damascus, I puzzle over how to deal with his forces near Souedia (43.32) while also pushing north, even reinforced with the excellent Free French units which arrived this turn. If I cut his units off by taking Ezraa (39.28) or Sanamein (32.28), he has the supply dump at Souedia to draw from. What if I can take that supply dump out? Souedia is hard to get at, since it is protected by lava terrain. Then I realize that if I can get units into either 43.31 or 44.31, I can attack Souedia directly. Lava terrain can only be entered by leg mobile units that expend all their MP's, so I decide to position units adjacent to these hexes but make them appear to be doing something else entirely—attacking his units at 42.30. They may be able to move and attack Souedia in the following turn. I decide to focus most of the Free French units here and position the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade units so they surround his units blocking the road/rail in 36.26 and 37.28. This may draw his mobile units out of Damascus for a counterattack, but I figure they are easier to deal with in the open desert away from his non-motorized supporting infantry.

**Newbie Note:** John's decision about whether to leave a force at Souedia, and my decision about whether to starve them out or fight are bigger than they seem. They shape the battle for the road to Damascus.

Some comments as I advance my units:

- The Pax unit moves up to Iskandaroun (29.04), positioned to rebuild a unit from the dead pile next turn.
- I used my Railcap to send the TJFF Armored Car battalion from Amman (63.20) straight to Ezraa (39.28). Transporting units by rail is covered by OCS Rule 13.3c—the unit must be in Move Mode, can move up to half their MA beforehand but none after moving by rail, must travel by rail in the Movement Phase and must finish in a Detrainable hex like Ezraa. The unit was fueled when it arrived as a reinforcement, but could not have traveled this far using regular movement. The Transportation Equivalent of this battalion is ½ RE, so it uses ½ SP of my RailCap

(OCS Rule 4.7a. Note that a unit's transportation equivalent is halved if its Move Mode MA is between 1 and 6 Leg MP, per OCS Rule 4.7b).

- The Free French units which conducted the overrun at Fiq last turn swing over to this part of the map. They are part of the Free French division multi-unit formation per RE Rule 2.4 and must draw supply from the same source or face the penalty outlined in OCS Rule 12.6f: Units of the multi-unit formation that cannot draw trace supply from the same source (HQ or Direct Draw Source) must eat off the map—in other words, keep your multi-unit formations together!
- My trucks shuttle 2T up to 39.28 from Mafra (52.27), returning, picking up the remaining 2T and moving to 50.26, where they halt with the 2T still loaded.
- I am one unit short to surround his infantry at 36.26.

**Newbie Note:** Surrounding a unit by occupying all six hexes around it forces that unit to roll on the Attrition Table during its next player turn or attack via Overrun to try and escape, and it is a supply-efficient move. I notice this tactic is often used by experienced OCS players. Unfortunately, I can only manage 5 of the 6 hexes, and the unit can still slip away.



All this moving used up a lot of fuel, 3.75 SP's in total. I think I am doing the right thing by repositioning my units the way I have, and several have walked instead of flipping to Truck MA Move mode. I keep my Gladiator fighter unit active in 51.27. It could conduct a fighter sweep against his reduced fighter unit in Mezze (18.28), but I decide I like having a patrol zone over my units better (and I realize that I may quickly advance out of range).

The last segment during movement is Air/Naval Barrage. The Cruiser unit is a use-or-lose, so I Barrage the Lehr armor unit in 22.06. It has a 9-strength Barrage, with one shift left for Density to the 5-7 column and I roll a 10 (2d6) for a DG. My bomber flies up from the off-map box to 42.30, there is no patrol zone, so no interception, rolls a 9 (2d6) for flak (no effect) and then a 9 (2d6) to DG the stack (6 point Barrage, spotted, with 1 shift left for Density to the 3-4 column). The Vichy cavalry unit which had been in Reserve Mode in the hex loses its Reserve status and is placed into DG Mode—I wouldn't necessarily have known it was in Reserve because of Fog of War.

My Supply Phase is straightforward, with all units in Trace Supply. The advanced cavalry units at 20.15 and 20.14 are "adjacent is good enough" from the throw range of the Wilson Corps HQ in 25.12. The Collet/Circ armor unit and cavalry unit are each adjacent to a hex their HQ can throw to with its 8 MP Throw Range.

John has few options in his Reserve Phase. He has only has one Reserve Mode group left, the two cavalry units in 15.09. They come out of reserve and move down to 20.07, where his I&II/1 Col Artillery unit is sitting by itself. The Vichy bomber unit is inactive, so he cannot conduct an Air Barrage.

Back to me for the Combat Phase. I use two of my artillery units in 25.12 (2/5 and 2/6) to generate an 8-point Barrage against Merdjayoun (22.12). This costs me 2T, and I roll a 6 (2d6) for no effect (8-11 column, with 1 shift left for Density and 1 shift left for Very Close terrain to the 3-4 column). Now for the assault on Merdjayoun: I have four units attacking, and designate the 2/5/17 Infantry to provide its '3' Action Rating (including this unit in the attack does not actually shift the odds, but I anticipate I will need to take an option in order to force him to retreat and I would rather lose this unit than one of the battalions from the 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade). Our AR's are the same and John designates the Rough Terrain for the Very Close row on the Combat Table. And then I roll a 6, 6, 6 for surprise! We go from the 4:1 column to the 21:1 column. The Combat Roll is a 9 (2d6) for an Ae3/DL2o2DG. The defending I/22 Alg unit is vaporized, but when I try to capture the dump my capture roll is a '1' and the entire dump is removed. Further, because I was attacking from 3 different hexes my units are not eligible for the exploit result. I advance all the units except the 2/25 Infantry into the hex.

**Newbie Note:** That was a dramatic surprise roll, but had I NOT won surprise and rolled a '9' on the 4:1 column, the result would have been AoI/DoI. I would have killed the 2/5/17 Infantry to force him to take his option. This would likely have been a retreat to 21.12, since 22.11 is in my ZOC and would have caused his retreating unit to enter DG mode. I would still have taken the town, but this result puts pressure on his units all along the Litani river.

My other attack is against 42.30 with the three adjacent Free French units. The terrain is all clear, so we have a 3:1 with a +2 AR differential. The surprise roll this time is a 3, 3, 1 modified to 8 for no surprise. The Combat Roll is a 5 (2d6), modified up to 7 with a result of AoI/DoI. I take the options as retreats, moving two units to 44.30

and one to 42.28, and now the Vichy unit may ignore its option (by the way, it doesn't have to—John can still take the option if he wishes).

During my Exploitation Phase, I leave the 27.05 Reserve stack in place, as I want to be able to follow up on what I hope will be a retreat from the Litani River. I don't make any Barrages or Attacks. There is nothing to do in my Clean Up Phase.



**Newbie Note:** Supply and fuel costs must be paid the instant they are used, **BEFORE** you move the units or conduct the combat (OCS Rules 9.5b, 10.1b and 12.5a). Make this a habit each and every time. Otherwise, you will lose track and confuse yourself!

**June 10 – Vichy Second Player – Turn 2** – The challenges John faces are different:

- Now that Merdjayoun (22.12) has fallen, should he pull back to the Sidon/Aouale River line (17.08 to 15.12) or try to hold me where I am at the Litani?
- Only 2 of his Restricted Units are released this turn (RE Rule 3.1). Should he counterattack with the tank/armored car units south of Damascus or bring down units to help defend in the west?
- How does he block me north of Merdjayoun?
- How can he prepare for next turn's substantial Vichy air reinforcements?

John refits both his aircraft at Rayak free of charge. During the Reinforcement Phase he gets no Recovered Units (he must lose two more units before becoming eligible), and he does not roll for Naval Barrage this turn. He does receive three steps of units as reinforcements. His supply roll of 10 (2d6) nets him 2 SP's, and he places 2T in 01.14 and 1.5 SP's in Baalbek (01.28).



Royals Armored Car Battalion

Again, John plays an “open” game without the Fog of War restrictions for purposes of illustration. He decides to defend forward near Merdjayoun (22.12). His cavalry units enable him to defend the river line from 23.11 to 21.12, though 23.11 is out of Trace Supply. His units spread out across the valley to the north of Merdjayoun. John rails the SP's in Baalbek (01.28) to Beirut (05.10), and his truck shuttles 2T down from Beirut to 21.11 to build up the dump, returning to Beirut. He puts the V/1 Col artillery unit in 21.11 in Reserve Mode on its Combat Mode side. His second Reserve Marker goes on the II/6 Lgn, which is released from being Restricted and moves 3.5 MP's from Beirut to 12.09.

**Newbie Note:** The 2T John transported by truck from Beirut to 21.11 could not be the same SP's that were railed in from Baalbek (01.28). That is called “Leapfrogging”, prohibited by OCS Rule 12.2a—No SP can be moved by more than one type of transport (shipping, rail, Transport Point, etc.) in a single phase, nor can an SP be loaded if it was unloaded previously in the same phase.

His units near Souedia (43.32) pull back into a defensive position, occupying the lava terrain so I can't get at the town directly. His surrounded units at 36.26 and 37.28 can move a little, but not enough to block the road to Damascus. His Restricted units in 18.28 flip to Move Mode and go into Reserve (one can still be released if needed). John is also organizing his defense in the Kiswe (23.28) area, including a major artillery stack. He pulls back his I/17 Seng infantry from Kuneitra (30.18) to the lava hex in 26.21.

John declares a Fighter Sweep against my Air Base in 37.02 using his Mixed Fighter unit out of Rayak. Fighter Sweeps take place in a Movement Segment (*OCS* Rule 14.2e and they are not subject to Flak per *OCS* Rule 14.4a). I have only my 1-step Mixed Fighter at the Air Base, but it is active and cannot evade the combat (per *OCS* Rule 14.3d (A), I can abort all but one aircraft to avoid the combat if I wish, by making them go inactive in the hex). His Air Combat Rating is a 3 and mine is a 2, which will modify the die roll. John rolls a 4, 6, 4. Adding 3 and subtracting 2 from the 4, 6 yields an 11 result, aborting my fighter, but the third die (4) means without loss. Our planes go inactive at our respective Air Bases, but my Patrol Zone is now gone.

His final move is to relocate two of his headquarters. The Verdilhac HQ flips to Move Mode and goes to Damour (13.09) while the Arlabosse HQ moves to 15.19. John explains that he needs the greater throw range at the coast, and he also wanted an HQ positioned at 15.19 to construct an Air Base next turn. (Construction is only allowed in turns with a “pick and shovel” on the turn record track per *RE* Rule 1.1B).



*Inspecting a Vichy R-35 tank captured in Syria*

Following the Movement Segment is the Air/Naval Barrage Segment. Three of my stacks seem like appealing targets: 24.06, 27.05, and 22.12. None would have Density shifts, but 22.12 is Rough Terrain (1 column shift) and 27.05 would be unobserved (3 column shifts). John considers saving his bomber for a Reaction Barrage, but instead declares an Air Barrage against my Air Base in 37.02. I can't intercept with my inactive fighter, and my flak roll misses with a 5 (2d6) +1 for the Air Base level. This kind of Barrage uses the Barrage vs. Facilities Table (*OCS* Rule 14.7 covers Air Barrage missions in general and *OCS* Rule 10.0c covers Barrage vs. Facilities specifically). His Barrage Strength is 6, so he rolls on the 5-10 column with one die and there are no modifiers used. He rolls a 5 for a 1\*(5) result. This reduces the Air Base (which can't go below 1, so no effect). The “\*” result would indicate success if this were a TrainBusting mission, and the (5) means he rolls an additional die and I lose an air unit step if he rolls a 5 or higher. He rolls a 3 for a miss. His bomber returns to Rayak and goes inactive.

The Supply Phase requires John to ensure each unit can make their trace. Let's look at some of his units (refer to the maps on the next page):

- 36.28 & 34.25 – can make their trace 2 Truck MP's to 34.27, since each road hex is a Detrainable hex in *RE* (*RE* Rule 1.7B). The CW Punjab, Raiput and RoyFus battalions are all in Move Mode so they do not have ZOC's. Had they been in Combat Mode, the Vichy 41&42 battalion would not be able to make its trace.

- The four units near Souedia (43.32) are unable to make their trace. They “Eat off the Map,” expending 1T from the dump in Souedia, which they can all reach via Direct Draw. (1T can provide trace for up to 2 RE's of units, per *OCS* Rule 12.6c)
- 21.11 – This unit can make its trace 5 MP's along the track to 20.07.
- 23.11, 22.11 & 21.12 – None of these units can make their trace. Counting from the units along the track to 20.07, none can make it even adjacent in 5 Truck MP's. Nor can the Verdilhac HQ throw to a hex adjacent to them with its current throw range. John must have these units “Eat off the Map” from the dump in 21.11, which they can reach via Direct Draw, expending 1T for the 1.5 RE of units involved. Once the Verdilhac HQ flips over next turn, these units will be in Trace Supply.

In my Reaction Phase, I figure two can play at this Fighter Sweep game. A player's Active aircraft can perform missions in friendly Movement, Exploitation, and Reaction Phases (*OCS* Rule 14.0). I use my Gladiator out of 51.27 and declare a Fighter Sweep of the Air Base at 18.28. His reduced Potez 63 Air Combat Rating is 1 and my Gladiator is 2. The roll is 5, 6, 5, with a +2 and -1 means his unit aborts with losses. Since it already is reduced, the Vichy Potez 63 unit is eliminated and my fighter returns to its base and goes inactive.



*Merdjayoun, 1941, painting by Harold Herbert (hex 22.12)*

On the ground, I do nothing at all. I only have two units in Reserve at 27.05, and I don't see that they can accomplish anything worth the fuel.

John has one Barrage during the Barrage Segment of his Combat Phase, firing the I&II/1 Col artillery in 20.07 at my stack in 24.06. This costs him 3T, but his roll of 7 (2d6) on the 12-16 table with no shifts DG's the stack. He makes no attacks during his Combat Segment.

There are no moves during Exploit, as John keeps his Reserve units ready to counter my moves. During the Clean Up Phase, the units in 22.06, 42.31 and 43.31 all recover from DG Mode.



### Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 2

Starting supply: 9.75

Arrives via Reinforcement: 2.50

Refit: 0.25

Eat off the Map: 0

Fuel: 3.75

Barrage: 0.50

Combat: 1.75

Remaining: 6.00

### Vichy Supply Summary Turn 2

Starting supply: 12.00

Arrives via Reinforcement: 2.00

Refit: 0.00

Fuel: 0.75

Eat off the Map: 0.50

Barrage: 0.75

Defensive Combat (CW turn): 0.50

Lost by capture/elimination (CW turn): 1.50

Remaining: 10.00



June, 1941. The crew of a tank of the 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Divisional Cavalry Regiment spotting an enemy aircraft during the Allied advance into Syria.

### Turn 3, June 12, 1941

**June 12 - Vichy First Player – Turn 3** – During Turn 3, all Vichy Restricted units are released and his units are allowed to enter Trans-Jordan. It is also a turn when construction is allowed, designated by the pick-and-shovel on the Turn Record Track.

I roll a 7 for Initiative and John an 11. This time he elects to go first, as he wants to get his Turn 3 reinforcements on the board and pull back his units on the road to Damascus.

**Newbie Note:** During the last two turns, the side winning the initiative roll has chosen to go first. It is counterintuitive, but moving second is the real power position. See the discussion on Initiative at the end of this Guide.

John readies his aircraft at Rayak (no supply cost) and then brings on his reinforcements. He still gets no Recovered Units (he must lose two more units before becoming eligible), but his roll of 4 means his Naval Barrage is available this turn and he flips his Destroyer unit to its ready side. He receives the three battalions of the 24<sup>th</sup> Mixed infantry regiment as reinforcements and decides to place them in Baalbek (01.28). In addition, he receives a Tcherkesses cavalry battalion at 15.35—these are his last reinforcements in the game other than 1 replacement step on the June 24 turn. His supply roll of 6 (2d6) gives him 1.5 SP's, and he places them in Baalbek. John also gets considerable air reinforcements, and he places them in Rayak, except for the MS.406 fighter which goes to Mezze (18.28).

In the Damascus Road area, his units continue to backtrack, occupying blocking positions near Sanamein (32.28). John has given up a lot of ground, but he has made my supply problem much more difficult in the process! He also builds up quite a reserve stack in 21.29 (this is a good example of hiding a big stack under an innocent-looking cavalry unit—with Fog of War I would not know exactly what is hiding in there).

**Newbie Note:** John's 41&42/Circ unit started in 36.28, a Lava terrain hex, and moved to 32.28. Because it started in a hex prohibited to Truck and Track MA units, it could not flip to its Move Mode Truck MA side. It had to stay on its Combat Mode Foot MA side. The rule that applies here is OCS Rule 6.1d: "A unit can move from hex A to hex B only if it could also move from hex B to hex A." Don't ask how they hauled the trucks through the Lava terrain . . .

The Arlabosse Division HQ in 15.19 flips to its Combat Mode side. It utilizes its Engineering capability to build an Air Base in 15.17. (OCS Rule 13.8d covers construction – within 2 hexes of the unit with Engineering capabilities, construction happens immediately and OCS Rule 15.3 gives the cost as 1 SP). He can begin using the Air Base immediately, and his D-520 fighter flies down (and remains active). He could have built the Air Base near the HQ in Damour (13.09) but this location will provide a Patrol Zone over the Sidon/Aouale defense line, the Merdjayoun area and Damour.

The Lehr/6 Chas armor unit in 22.06 goes into Reserve without moving, and the I&II/1 Col artillery moves to join it (it moved more than ¼ of its MA, so it cannot also go into Reserve mode this turn). He also flips the III/22 Alg unit in 23.07 to its Combat Mode side (ensuring your units flip to the most advantageous Mode can be easy to forget this as John apparently did last turn). John has all his units,

his air force has been reinforced, he has his Restricted units released, he is mostly in position—this is as formidable as he is likely to get.

John made several strategic positioning decisions in the course of things—he has gathered most of his armor in the Damascus area, he moved the 24<sup>th</sup> Mixed Brigade's three units to 7.12 to form a strategic reserve, and he is defending well forward on the West side of the Litani river in the area near Merdjayoun (22.12).

His Air/Naval Barrage Segment features two Barrages. His destroyer trains its guns on my stack at 27.05. This is a 6 Barrage Strength unit, clear terrain, and no Density shifts (2.5 RE's). The roll is 8 (2d6), just enough to DG the stack. Next he moves his force of LeO 451 bombers (1 full-strength and 1 half-strength unit) to bomb my units in Merdjayoun (22.12). I have no active Air Units with a Patrol Zone over this hex so there is no interception. John knows this, and does not provide an escort. The flak roll misses with a 5 (2d6). The bombers have a Barrage Strength of 12. There is 1 left shift for Very Close Terrain, and none for Density (1.5 RE's). The roll is 6 (2d6) which just misses DG'ing the units. The bombers return to Rayak (6.21) and go inactive.

In his Supply Phase, John's HQ moves have put all his units back into Trace supply except the units near Souedia (43.32). John expends 1T for these two RE's of units to Eat off the Map.

I have nothing I can do in my Reaction Phase. My last Reserve Mode units have been DG'ed, and I have no active Air Units.

John makes no attacks, nor does he release any Reserves. He is awaiting my next move, having DG'ed my units near the coast, blocked me at Merdjayoun, and assembled his forces in front of Damascus.





**June 12 – CW Second Player – Turn 3** – I refit my aircraft (2T total, 1T per on-map Air Base). My Supply roll of 7 (2d6) nets me 2.5 SP's and my Replacement Roll of 4 (2d6) nets me nothing. I put all the supply in Haifa. I use the Pax in Iskandaroun to rebuild the 2/3 MG battalion. The Common Rebuild Table, printed on the map, specifies the number and type of Repls required for various units to be rebuilt and the other two units in the dead pile require Eq (Equipment) Repls in order to be rebuilt. My rolls for Naval Barrage are successful and both the Destroyer and Cruiser units become available. I look over the map to plan my move:

- At the coast, I need to recover from DG and tie down his units.
- Near Merdjayoun, I need to force the river line so I can unhinge his defensive position.
- Is there some way to mask or neutralize his units near Souedia?
- How can I maintain my advance on Damascus, getting sufficient supply forward?

- How can I build up supply?

At the coast, I move the newly-rebuilt 2/3 MG battalion up to 24.06 and make sure all units in this hex are in Combat Mode. My 2T of trucks in Haifa (37.01) make nearly two full round trips to ferry 1 SP to Safad (36.11), reaching 36.08 on their return trip.

In the Merdjayoun (22.12) area, I move the 2/3/17 Battalion up to Kuneitra (30.18) to block the road, slide the 2/2/17 Pioneer Battalion to Merdjayoun in Move Mode, and place all the artillery in 25.12 in Reserve on their Combat Mode side.

Much more activity takes place to the east. The 2T truck unit shuttles 1 SP from 50.26 up to Ezraa (39.28). These SP transit runs will get more and more crucial for me. I move up a second SP to Ezraa with my Railcap. I close up my units to his near Souedia, preparatory to an attack I plan on his most dangerous unit, the Druze Cavalry battalion in 42.31. Finally, I mass my advanced units in Combat Mode near hex 35.27. I accomplish all this with only 1T of fuel (to move the Free French HQ).

Regarding Air Barrages I may plan, I look carefully at his Patrol Zones. My fighters are at a disadvantage compared to his reinforcements, so I avoided any Fighter Sweeps during movement. Instead I send my bombers to 42.31. The flak roll is 8 (2d6) for a miss, and my Barrage roll misses the unit with a 7 (2d6, a 6 point Barrage with one left shift for density). I use both Naval Barrage units against 22.06, which combine for a 15 point barrage with 1 shift left to the 8-11 column and DG the stack with a 7 (2d6).



*Captured MS.406 fighters, Syria July 1941*

I have no units out of Trace Supply during my Supply Phase. The Free French units are spread out, but they can all have Trace thrown to them from the Legentil HQ in 50.26, which acts as the common source.

John wastes no time in employing his upgraded air force to attack mine during the Movement Segment of his Reaction Phase. He launches fighter sweeps against both my Air Bases, counting on his Air to Air Rating advantage. Attacking fighters will win a Fighter Sweep 58% of the time with a +1 advantage and 72% of the time with a +2. His first Sweep pits his D-520 unit against my reduced Mixed fighter unit in 37.02. The roll is 3, 6, 1, which he wins handily, and my unit is rendered inactive. The second Sweep is his MS.406 from Mezze (18.28) against my Gladiator in 51.27. This roll is 4, 2, 3, which aborts both our units without loss (the Air to Air Rating difference means the roll is modified to a total of 7).

The Barrage Segment of his Reaction Phase brings a visit from the V/1 Col artillery in 21.11. It comes out of Reserve and fires on Merdjayoun (22.12). This uses up 2T of supply from the dump in his hex, but with a roll of 10 (2d6, 8-strength barrage, with 1 shift left for Very Close terrain) my units are DG'ed. Then his last active LeO 451 bomber unit flies against 42.30. The flak roll is 6 (2d6) for a miss and his Barrage roll is 11 (2d6), resolved on the 5-7 column (8-strength, 1 shift left for Density) for a 1/2 result. This means I must roll one die and lose a step with a 4-6 result otherwise suffer a DG. The roll is a 2, so my units are DG'ed without a step loss.

Well, all the units I moved forward as attack stacks have been DG'ed. My Reserve stacks consist of the artillery group in 25.12 and the Cavalry unit in 37.24. All my air units are inactive. I make no Barrages or Attacks in the Combat Phase and skip my Exploitation Phase entirely. In the Clean-Up Phase, I remove all the DG markers from 13 steps (!) of my units.

Three turns in, and I have taken 2 Victory Point locations: Merdjayoun (22.12) and Hasbaya (21.15). I am stuck at the Litani, my air force is getting pummeled and John has been able to prepare his defenses. On the other hand, I have accumulated some supplies, massed my artillery, and am making progress towards Damascus. Let's see what the next turn brings.

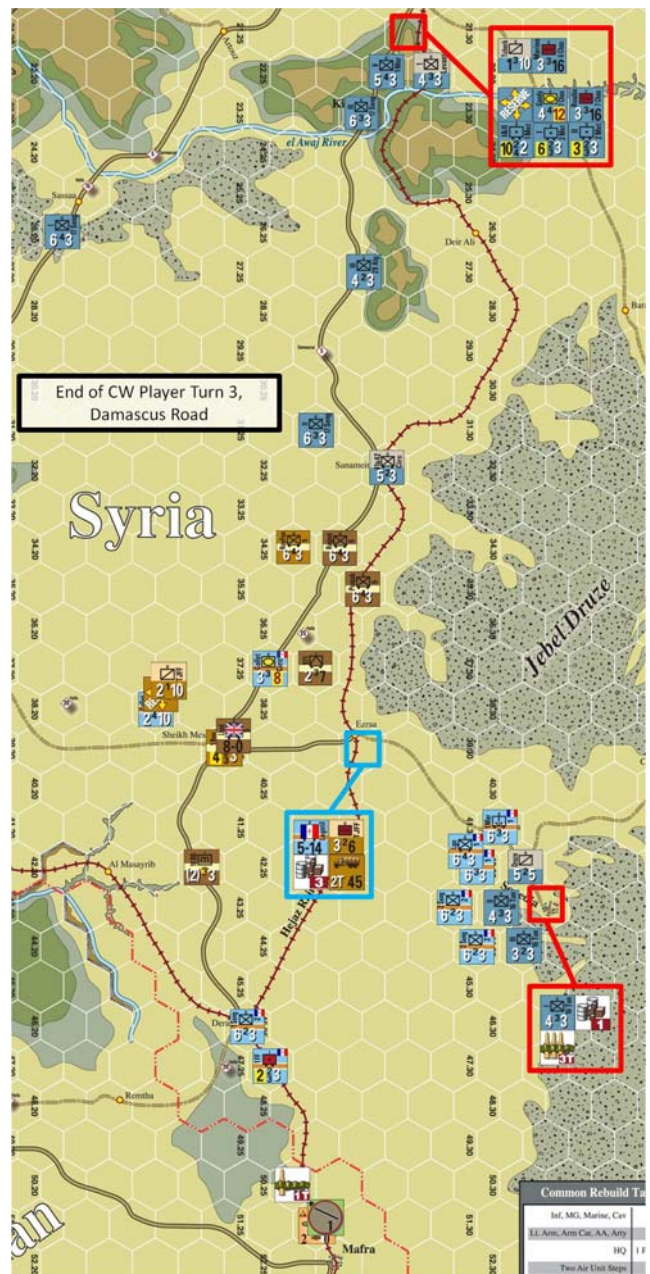


### Vichy Supply Summary Turn 3

Starting supply: 10.00  
Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.50  
 Refit: 0.00  
 Fuel: 1.25  
 Construction: 1.00  
 Eat off the Map: 0.25  
 Reaction Phase Barrage: 0.50  
 Remaining: 8.50

### Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 3

Starting supply: 6.00  
Arrives via Reinforcement: 2.50  
 Refit: 0.50  
 Fuel: 0.25  
 Overruns: 0.00  
 Barrage: 0.00  
 Combat: 0.00  
Reserve Movement: 0.00  
 Remaining: 7.75



#### Turn 4, June 14, 1941

The initiative rolls are CW 8, Vichy 3. Double turn option for the CW! His air force is inactive, and he has only one Reserve stack remaining. I decide to play first.

**June 14 – CW First Player – Turn 4** – I refit all my aircraft. The supply and replacement rolls results provides 3.5 SP's (1.5 placed in Amman and 2 in Haifa), but no replacements. I am not eligible for any recovered units. I successfully roll for my Cruiser unit which becomes available for Naval Barrage.

My supply situation is now in somewhat better shape (10.75 SP's on the board after Aircraft Refit). The sequence of play defines much of my flexibility, and I have only two Reserve markers. I believe I can:

- Mount an attack at 23.06, with a big Reserve stack ready to exploit. A successful Barrage would really help.
- Mount an attack at 22.11, with a Reserve unit available. Again, a successful Barrage would be very nice.
- Attack 42.31 to pen in the units near Souedia.
- All the bomber units at Rayak are inactive. I may be able to catch them on the ground (though the flak at a Level 3 Air Base is fierce).
- Maintain my position near 35.27.

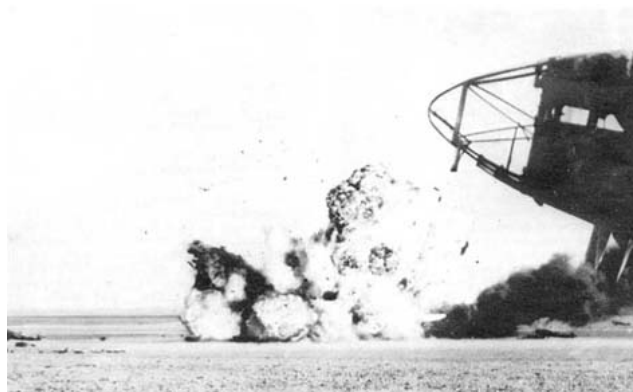
Let's go to work. First I sent the Gladiators to conduct a Fighter Sweep at Rayak. Up comes his Mixed fighter unit. We both have Air to Air ratings of 2. The die roll is 4, 3, 5, which means both units must abort with losses. His unit is eliminated, mine is reduced and returns to 51.27 and goes inactive. Most of my ground units are already in position, but I move some north along the Damascus road and I have the Engineer units join the stacks at 24.06 and 22.12. I move 1.5 SP's by Rail and truck from Amman up to Ezraa (39.28). I place my Reserve markers on the units in 27.05 and 22.13. The Patrol Zone for my fighter in 37.02 is no longer covering many of my units, and it is attracting Fighter Sweeps, so I Base Transfer the unit to my Off Map Holding Box.

One thing my big stacks could do is overrun. Overrun costs 3 MP's, and my Leg MA units in Combat Mode with their Movement Allowance of 3 can therefore overrun an enemy unit they begin adjacent to (as long as the cost to enter the hex is 3 or less per OCS Rule 8.1b. Units using OCS Rule 6.1c to move one hex even if they do not have sufficient MA cannot use this to Overrun.) Overrun might help me win the hex combined with an attack in the Combat Phase. However, I won't have an opportunity to DG the defenders by Barrage prior to an Overrun. I opt to Barrage first this time.

**Newbie Note: I moved Engineering/Pioneer units into 22.12 and 24.06. These units (as well as HQ units) can perform engineering functions such as bridging, construction and Detrainable hex creation when in Combat Mode. My 2/2/17 Pioneer unit has Engineer capabilities per RE Rule 1.8. Bridging is covered in OCS Rule 13.8b—it downgrades adjacent minor river terrain effects to “no effect.” This is very helpful for movement and supply, but does not affect Overrun or Combat other than making a hex accessible. There are no major rivers in RE, but in other OCS games Bridging reduces their effects to that of a minor river, which can be very important.**

So, on to my Air/Naval Barrage Segment. My Cruisers Barrage 23.06 (9-strength, 1 left shift for Density) and roll a 5 (2d6) for a miss.

I decide that his inactive bombers at Rayak (6.21) are just too tempting. My bomber flies up from its holding box. The flak modifier is +1 per level of the Air Base (OCS Rule 14.4f, and the modifiers are listed on the CRT Charts). Instead of a flak hit with an 11, Rayak will hit with an 8. Fortunately John's flak roll is 4 (2d6) for a miss. Bombing an airbase uses the Barrage vs. Facility Table, and is covered in OCS Rule 10.0c, A. My Barrage Strength is 6 and I roll a 6 (only 1d6 is used on this table), for a result of 1\*(4). The 1 means that Rayak Air Base is reduced one level to a Level 2 Air Base. The “\*” applies only to Trainbusting Barrages. The (4) means I roll 1 die for EACH unit at the Air Base, active or inactive, and a roll equal or higher than the parenthesized value means a step loss. There are three LeO 451 bomber units, and my rolls of 1, 6, and 5 miss one, reduce one and eliminate the one that was already at reduced strength. My bomber returns to the Off Max Holding Box and goes inactive. All my units are in supply, so it is over to John for his Reaction Phase.



*June, 1941 – Rayak Air Base under attack by Commonwealth Tomahawks. The nose of a LeO 451 is in the foreground.*

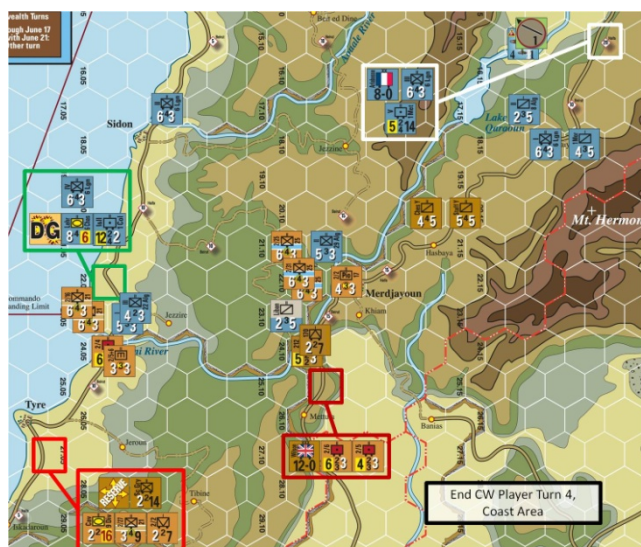
John's entire Air Force is inactive. He has one Reserve Stack, but the motorized units can only just reach my units near 35.27 (Units released from Reserve during Reaction have 50% of their MA, and there is no Combat Phase). So he sits tight.

During the Barrage Segment of my Combat Phase, the 2/4 artillery which I moved up to 24.06 fires on 23.06. Although only one Barrage per target hex is allowed per Phase (OCS Rule 10.0e, A), I can shoot at 23.06 again because the Naval Units conducted their Barrage in the Movement Phase and we are now in the Combat Phase. This is a 6-point barrage, with 1 left shift for Density and I roll a 2 (2d6) so the stubborn IV/6 Lgn comes through a second Barrage unscathed. Near Merjayoun I fire all three artillery units in range at 22.11 (15-point barrage, 2 left shifts for both Density and Close Terrain) and with a roll of 8 (2d6) the Vichy 4 Tun Cavalry unit is DG'ed. (Note that OCS Rule 10.1b specifies that supply for a multi-unit barrage must come via the same HQ or Direct Draw source).

I mount three ground attacks:

- My units at 24.06 could attack the IV/6 Lgn unit in 23.06 or the pair of units in 23.07. 23.07 would open an exploitation path, but two steps of units are much harder to dislodge than one. Or should I attack at all, since I wasn't able to DG the defenders? I go for it, attacking the IV/6 Lgn. Clear terrain, but across a river, which halves my attackers. I designate the 2/3 MG unit as my lead. The odds are 2:1 with a -1 DRM (my four units have a 19 Combat strength, halved to 9.5, just enough to generate 2:1). The Surprise roll is 2, 5, 6 for no surprise. The Combat roll is 7 (2d6) minus 1 and the adjusted 6 is an AL1/Do1. My MG unit dies and he takes his option as a retreat to 22.06. I advance the two Infantry battalions.

- Attacking the Vichy 4<sup>th</sup> Tun Cavalry in hex 22.11, I use the stack in 22.12 except for the Pioneer unit. John designates the minor river as the terrain for my attacking stack and his Close terrain for the defender, so we are on the 4:1 column on the CRT in the Close Terrain row. I use the 2/5 Infantry battalion for its AR rating of 3, and his is reduced by being in DG Mode to 2 for a net DRM of +1. I gain surprise with 3, 6, 1, upping the column to 6:1. My combat roll is 7 (2d6) +1 to 8 for Ao1/DL1o1. His unit dies. I take my option as a step loss, killing the MG battalion, and advance the two remaining Infantry battalions.
- The attack on the Vichy Druze cavalry unit in 42.31 is in clear terrain using my three adjacent units, and with my '4' AR unit against his '2' for a +2 DRM. The surprise roll is 5, 5, 4, which bumps from 4:1 to the 11:1 column. The combat roll is 7 (2d6), bumped to 9 for an Ae3/DL2o2DG. His unit dies, mine all gain Exploit markers, and I advance the 1 Mar/1 and Lgn/1 into 42.31.



Now to the Exploitation Phase. For movement, I release the 2/25/25 Infantry in 22.13 and move it to 22.10 (the presence of the Pioneer unit cancels the minor river hexside, and will enable me to get supply to this unit). I think very hard about releasing my Reserve stack at 27.05, but decide against it. They cannot get past the Vichy units at 23.06 and 24.06, and attacking either would probably be a 1:1 proposition. I don't move the units that won exploit near Souedia (43.32)—they are where I want them (they could not Overrun as their Exploit Mode only gives them ½ MA and also because Souedia is a Lava terrain. Overruns are prohibited into terrain which has a movement cost of "all" per OCS Rule 8.1b). I don't have any units released that can conduct a Barrage, so I skip that Segment. There are two Exploit Combat Segment attacks:

- 21.11 – This is the CW 2/25/25 Infantry attacking the Vichy V/I Col artillery. The terrain is Rough (Very Close) and initial odds 6:1, with a +1 DRM. The surprise roll is a 5, 4, 6 yielding surprise, and bumping the odds up to 24:1. The combat roll is 9 (2d6) plus 1 up to 10 for an Ae2/DL2o3DG. The Vichy artillery is destroyed and I move the attacking unit into the hex (My Exploit results are ignored in Exploitation Phase combat per OCS 9.13b)
- Souedia (49.32) contains the Vichy III/16 Tun unit and is attacked by my two units in 42.31. This is Lava terrain (Very Close) and initial odds of 4:1 with a +2 DRM. The surprise roll is a 2, 2, 1, narrowly misses defender surprise. The combat roll is 7 (2d6) plus 2 to a 9, which is Ao1/Do1.

I kill the unit which provided the '4' AR (the Lgn/1) unit to force him to take his option. He can eliminate a step or retreat. Note the retreat parameters in OCS Rule 9.12. He can't bring the Supply Dump with him (OCS Rule 9.12d), he does not want to retreat into the hexes with his other units—they are in my ZOC and the stack would become DG (OCS Rule 9.12e), and he can't retreat into my units (OCS Rule 9.12f). He can choose which direction to go (OCS Rule 9.12c). He retreats into 43.33, and I advance into the hex. My roll on the capture table is a 3, and I get 25% of the 1.25 SP's remaining in the hex, or 1T.



I remove the Exploit markers from my units near Souedia (49.32) and there are no DG markers to remove. The situation has changed dramatically from the last turn, and play passes to the Vichy player.

**June 14 – Vichy Second Player – Turn 4** – John has his work cut out for him. He must stabilize the situation at the coast, decide what to do

with his units near Souedia (43.32) and see if he can trip me up in the process.

First he refits his aircraft. His supply roll is a 3 (2d6), obtaining 1 SP of which he places 2T in Baalbek (1.28) and 2T in Hex 1 (1.14). He lost three ground units last turn, making him eligible for a recovered unit (and two more losses will give him his next). He draws the 13, 14, 36/Circ Cavalry unit and places it in 14.10, two hexes from the Verdilhac HQ. His Naval Barrage unit is not available this turn.

The first segment in a Movement Phase is usually skipped over, but not this time. The Breakout Segment takes place before movement, and is when he needs to decide what to do with his three units near Souedia (43.32). His options are:

- **Do nothing** – If still unable to make their trace in the Supply Phase, each stack rolls on the Attrition Table, with its dire results. Even if he stacks his two ‘3’ AR units, they would have a 28% chance of no loss, 17% chance of 1 step lost, and 55% chance of both evaporating.
- **Air Drop supply** – Not an option in *RE*, because neither side’s aircraft have a transport capacity. In many other *OCS* games, supplies can be dropped to surrounded units.
- **Transport SP via truck** – His truck in Damascus could pick up supply (5 MP’s) and drive to 41.33 (23.5 MP’s), drop it off (5 MP’s) and make it back to 31.35. His II/16 Tun Infantry unit can move to that hex, and must be present for the truck to unload (or the trucks could stay in 41.33 and any units that could trace to them could draw directly off the truck. (*OCS* Rule 13.2f, B)). This would allow him to maintain some units that could threaten my supplies, though without the Cavalry the effect is limited.
- **Overrun** – If they are going to die, they might as well try and take someone with them. Since Movement is before the Supply Phase, they could attempt to Overrun my units. The I/16 Tun and II/16 Tun could Overrun any adjacent unit not in the Lava terrain (since its movement cost is “All”), using internal stocks for Combat Supply. Because I am a nerd I did the math—a 1:1 Overrun with +1 DRM has a 36% chance of causing a DL result, 50% of an AL result, and 14% chance of just options. If it survived, the unit would still be OoS and need to roll on the Attrition table.
- **Breakout** – This is covered in *OCS* Rule 12.8e, and allows units out of Trace Supply to roll for Breakout, with a chance they will return some turns in the future. The odds are best the first turn units are cut off: 50% on average will survive, but only 33% in subsequent turns. John would lose the threat to my supply lines, but the survivors would be available later for defense. Unfortunately, these units “ate off the map” in prior turns, so they will only be successful on a roll of 5 or 6 (*OCS* Rule 12.8e, paragraph C).

After weighing all this, John decides to try Breakout for all three units. The Breakout rolls are 3, 5, and 5, so his II/16 Tun unit dies, but the other two are successful. He then rolls a 2 for each unit, so they are both placed on the Turn Record Track two turns ahead (Turn 6, the June 17 turn) when they will come back as reinforcements.



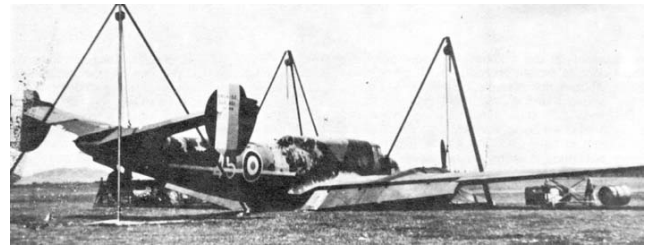
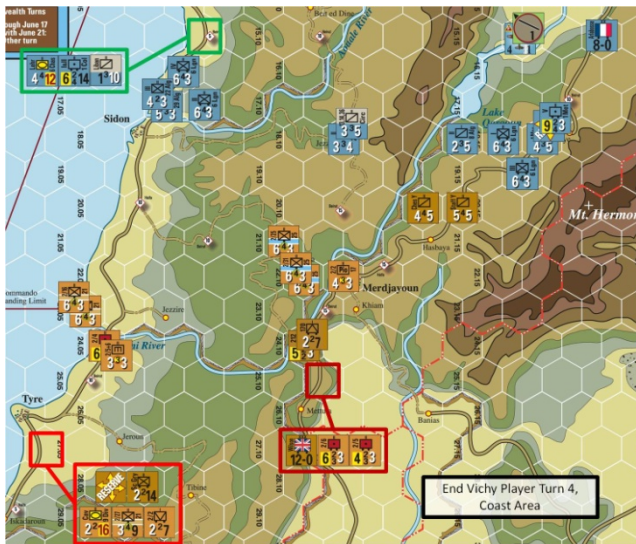
*Souedia in 1938 (hex 43.32)*

The 2T of supply in 1.14 is moved by truck to Damour (13.09) and the 2T in Baalbek (1.28) is railed to Zahle (6.18). John’s units pull back behind the Aouale River at the coast, and he sets up a blocking position at Jezzine (18.12). He also adjusts his units around Rachaiye (18.18).

In the Damascus area, he mounts a spoiling attack. His Armor and Mech units come out of 21.19, zip down the road in Move Mode, and declare an Overrun against my Raiput/5 Infantry, with supply thrown by the Delhomme HQ in Damascus. His units are doubled attacking in Clear terrain, so he has odds of 20:6 or 3:1. The AR’s are equal, so no DRM. He rolls a 6, 3, 1 to gain surprise and up the odds to 4:1. His Combat roll of 10 (2d6) is a result of Ao1e4/DL1o2. My unit dies, and he retreats his units back a hex to fulfill his option, and then supports this position with other units so I can’t easily surround them. He does nothing in his Air/Naval Barrage Segment.

*Newbie Note: John could have gone a different direction with this attack. If he had attacked my 2/3/17 Infantry unit at Kuneitra (30.18) from 29.21 with the same units and the same rolls, it would have been 10:4 or 3:1 in Close Terrain would have resulted in an Ao1/DL1o1. 29.21 is the very limit of the supply throw from his Delhomme HQ in Damascus. But from there with a double turn, he could get as far as an attack on Haifa (37.01), capturing my supply dump at Safad (36.11), attacking my HQ in 25.12 or cutting much of my supply net. Haifa is tough terrain for Armor or Mech units, but capturing it and being in Trace Supply would result in a Sudden Death Victory for the Vichy Player (RE Rule 5.1). Of course, he would need to win the initiative roll and plan ahead . . .*

His nimble retreat behind the Aouale left no units exposed or openings for my Reserve stack in 27.05, so I decide not to use it. John also declines to do anything in his Exploitation Phase and his turn concludes with the Clean Up Phase, where he removes the DG from his units in 15.09.



Vichy LeO 451 under repair at a Syrian airfield

### Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 4

Starting supply: 7.75

Arrives via Reinforcement: 3.50

Refit: 0.50

Fuel: 0.25

Overruns: 0.00

Barrage: 1.25

Combat: 2.50

Reserve Movement: 0.00

Exploitation Combat: 0.75

Gained by Capture: 0.25

Defensive Combat Supply (during Vichy turn): 0.25

Remaining: 6.00



Near Kham, Syria, June 10, 1941. The Command Post of "D" Troop of the 12th battery of the 2/6th Field Regiment during action against the French in the Merdjayoun Sector. Note the plotting board in use, the megaphone giving orders to the guns and the radio and field phones for receiving fire directions (hex 23.13).

### Vichy Supply Summary Turn 4

Starting supply: 8.50

Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.00

Refit: 0.50

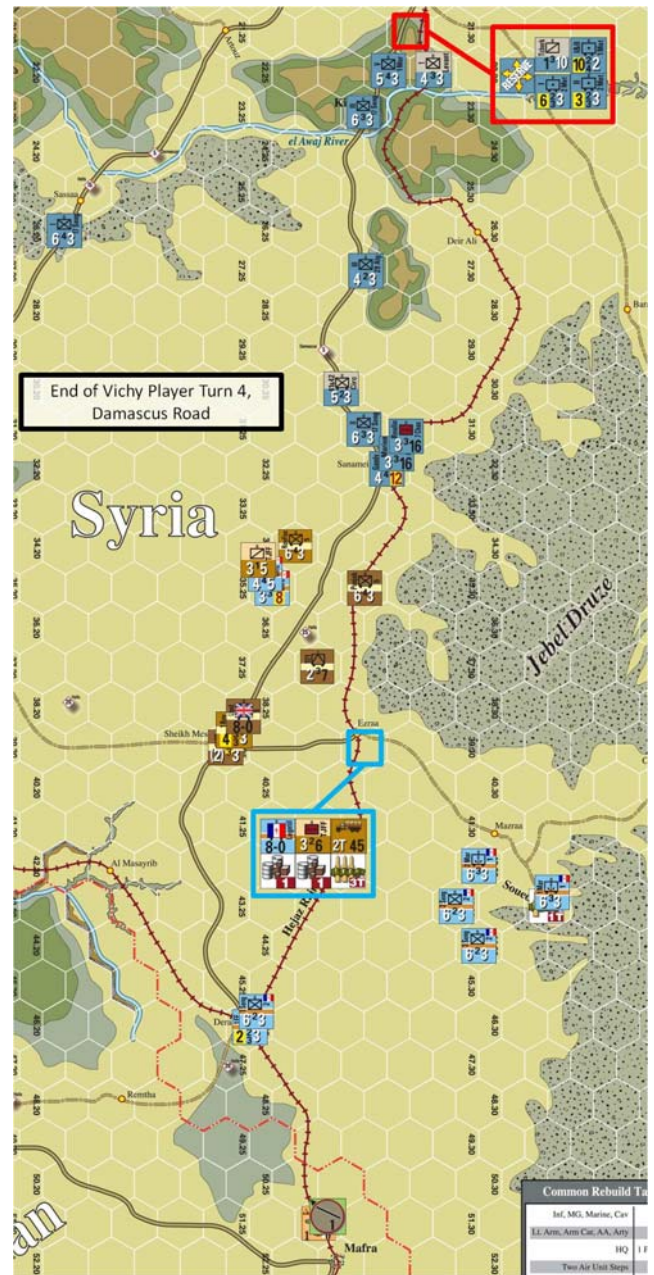
Fuel: 1.25

Combat: 0.75

Defensive Combat Supply (during CW turn): 1.25

Lost to capture: 1.25

Remaining: 4.50



## Turn 5, June 15, 1941

I roll a 6 for Initiative to John's 5 and elect to go . . . second.

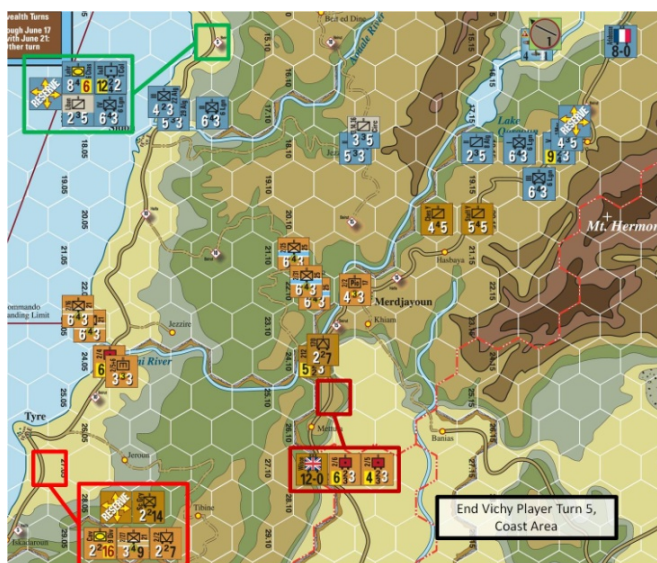
**June 15 – Vichy First Player – Turn 5** – John's Naval Barrage roll of 2 means he does not get his destroyer this turn. His supply roll of 8 (2d6) provides 1.5 SP's, which he places in Baalbek (1.28). He will be eligible for a Recovered unit after he loses one more.

What am I, nuts? The reason I forced John to go first is because supply is his basic challenge this turn. His aggressive spoiling attack cost him 1.5 SP's. He has 6 SP's total after his Supply Table roll. Just moving his Armor/Mech stack costs 3T, plus another 3T if they make any attack. It is a powerful stack—40 Combat Strength when in Combat Mode (attacking units without AT effects). That would be a 7:1 against one of my Infantry battalions. He could Overrun one and attack the other in the Combat Phase. That would use up 2.25 SP's, plus another 3T to get the units back near Damascus later on—half his remaining supply. And it would leave his Armor/Mech units exposed and open to being surrounded by my remaining units.

**Newbie Note:** *Exactly how aggressive you want to be is up to you. Also note that I made this call with knowledge of John's supply situation I would not normally have when playing an OCS game!*

John decides on discretion and focuses this turn is on preparing to meet my next advance. Along the coast, near Rachaiye (18.18) and along the Damascus Road he gets his units in Combat Mode and prepares Reserve stacks. His Armor/Mech stack withdraws to 27.28 and goes into Reserve, ready to emerge again if I am not careful in my advance. He eyes hex 21.07 for a Trainbusting attack, but decides to leave his bombers active because they can provide a no-cost defensive barrage.

I don't do anything in the Reaction Phase, nor does John in his Exploit Phase, and there isn't anything to do in the Clean Up Phase. Play passes to me.



**June 15 – CW Second Player – Turn 5** – I ready my Gladiator in 51.27 (1T cost, thrown by the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade HQ in 39.25). My supply roll of 9 (2d6) gives me 3.5 SP, which I split with 1.5 in Amman and 2 in Haifa. My replacement roll of 6 (2d6) and my Naval rolls of 2 and 2 yield nothing. I get one Recovered unit, draw the Lgn/1 Battalion, and place it in 37.26 (Recovered units may be placed within 2 hexes of any HQ, regardless of organization, per RE Rule 1.11).

My objective for the turn is to close with his units. Some considerations come to mind:

- I will receive substantial reinforcements next turn in the form of the 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade plus five air units. Even more importantly, I receive a third Reserve marker.
- John posted units at Jezzine (18.12) to threaten mischief. The area around Jezzine is rugged. My Wilson Corps HQ can just throw supply to units attacking Jezzine with the Pioneer unit in Merdjayoun (22.12). I need to keep something here to provide a credible threat.

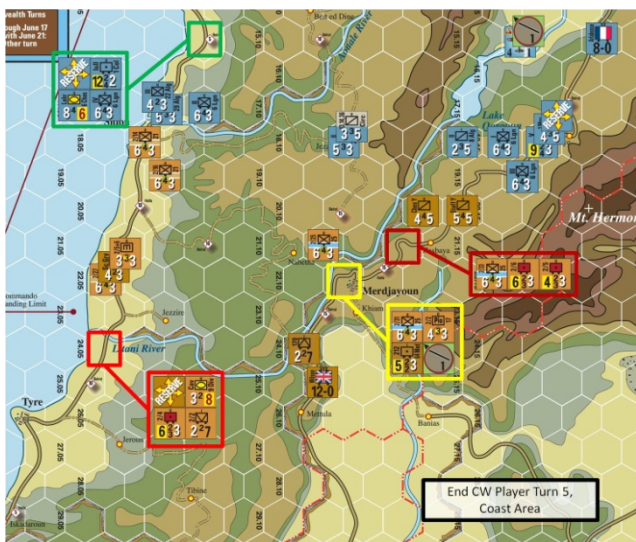
- I have outrun my Patrol Zone range from the existing Air Bases and need to prepare for my reinforcements.
- The Vichy spoiling attack was a stinger and I need to organize my forces near Damascus so they are less vulnerable.

I realize that by providing Patrol Zones with his aircraft based in 15.17 and 18.28, he no longer has a fighter unit stationed at Rayak (06.21). I declare a Fighter Sweep on Rayak using my Mixed fighter unit from my Off-Map box. Fighter Sweeps are not subject to Flak (OCS Rule 14.4a), which is important because it ALSO means they cannot be intercepted (per OCS 14.5 only missions subject to Flak and in a Patrol Zone can be intercepted). What a Fighter Sweep does is force the active aircraft at a given Air Base into combat. John doesn't want his remaining LeO 451 bombers to have to fight, but the only way he can do that is by OCS Rule 14.3d, A, which allows you to avoid air combat by Voluntary Aborting all but one of the aircraft in a hex. He voluntarily aborts his reduced-strength bomber and faces me with his full-strength bomber, because it has an Air-to-Air rating of '1'. My reduced-strength fighter has a rating of '2'. But the roll goes against me with a 2, 2, 3, and my unit is aborted without losses back to my Off-Map box. His full-strength bomber remains active, but at least I forced him to voluntarily abort the other one.

That was fun, so I do it again. My Gladiator will be Fighter Sweep toast if it stays at its Air Base, so I conduct a second Fighter Sweep against Rayak with it (any number of Fighter Sweeps against a given hex are allowed, per OCS Rule 14.6, as long as there are active air units at the target Air Base). Again, he can't avoid the combat. This time we both have Air-to-Air ratings of 1, but the roll goes my way with a 3, 5, 3—John's bomber aborts without losses. Win or lose, the unit conducting the Fighter Sweep must go inactive, but can return to any Air Base within range. I return it to the Off-Map box.

I move my ground units forward, using only the fuel I believe I really need. Several comments:

- I build Air Base in Merdjayoun (22.12) in anticipation of next turn's reinforcements (June 15 is a construction turn).
- I put units with AT Effects in reserve behind each force facing his Armor/Mech teams (hexes 24.06 and 35.26). In addition, each stack with my forward units south of Damascus also contains units with AT Effects.
- To some degree, I am marking time until my slower infantry can link up with the advanced units near Damascus and until my reinforcements arrive next turn.

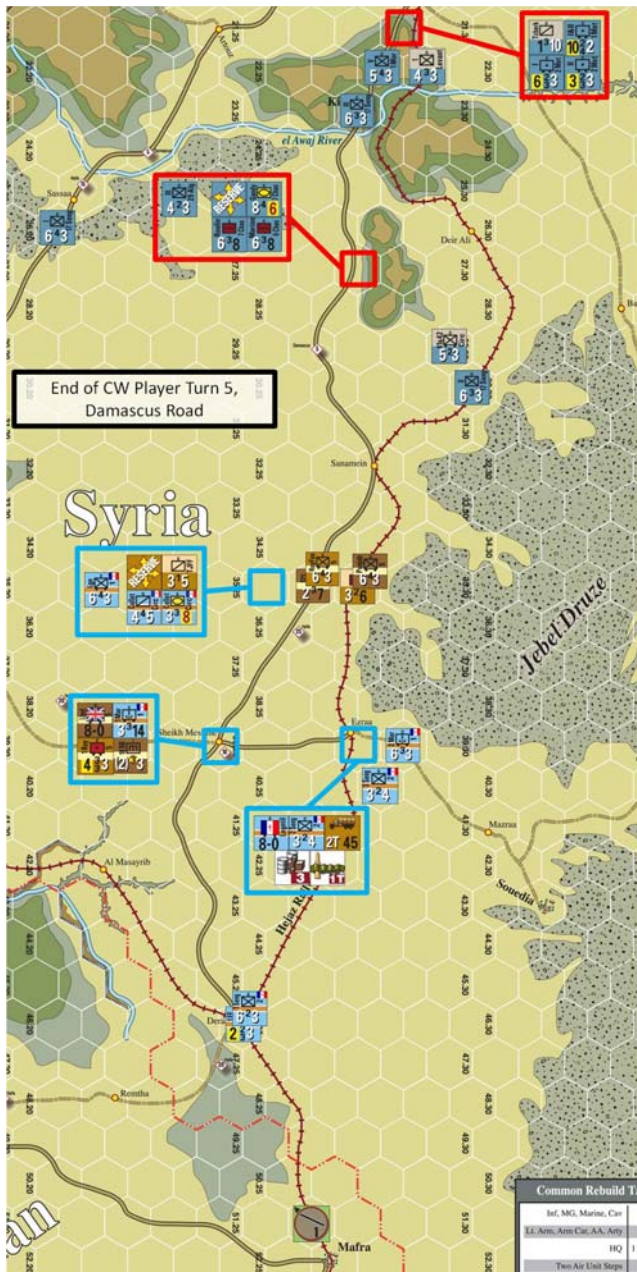


Australian troops in the Crusader castle near Sidon (18.07), Lebanon, June 1941

John's makes two moves in his Reaction Phase—he releases the Liban Cavalry unit in 15.09 and moves it to 10.10. I scratch my head over why he did it, but OK. He Base Transfers his MS.406 fighter from Mezze (18.28) up to Rayak.

**Newbie Note:** The Air Base in 22.12 was built by the 2/2/17 Pioneer battalion. An HQ or engineer unit is not considered Engineering-Capable unless it is on its Combat Mode side, but it can be DG'ed and still perform engineering functions (OCS Rule 13.8a). It cannot perform movement, but the construction of an airbase or hedgehog is immediate. The Pioneer unit can attack normally in the Combat Phase if desired. Air Bases cost 1 SP per Level; hedgehogs cost 2 SP per level.

**Newbie Note:** Hedgehogs or "Hogs" provide defensive benefits but cost SPs to construct. A hedgehog can be built by an Engineering-Capable unit within its 2-hex construction radius OR one can be built by a Combat Unit on its Combat side in its same hex. Their combat effect is to provide a DRM equal to their level (so a Level 2 Hog gives a -2 DRM) and they provide a -1 DRM to surprise rolls regardless of their level (OCS Rule 16.0d). They provide Heavy AT Effects (OCS Rule 16.0e). One other thing to note is that a unit in Reserve Mode cannot be in a Hedgehog at the end of any Movement Segment (OCS Rule 5.7g).



Reserve Movement: 0.00  
Defensive Combat Supply (during Vichy turn): 0.0  
 Remaining: 6.75



Near Khiam (approx. hex 24.13), June 13, 1941. Donkey team setting out from advanced battalion HQ on the road to Khiam, with rations and ammunition for B Company who have been isolated in the mountains for three days. Owing to the nature of the country it is not possible to maintain a transport service with the scattered units as the only lines of communication are steep and narrow mountain tracks (Photo: D. Parer).



June, 1941. View of the Litani River, approximately at hex 24.06. (photo by Frank Hurley)

I don't take any moves in my Exploitation Phase, have nothing for my Clean Up Phase, and the turn ends.

#### Vichy Supply Summary Turn 5

Starting supply: 4.50  
Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.50  
 Refit: 0.00  
 Fuel: 0.75  
 Combat: 0.00  
 Reserve Movement: 0.00  
Defensive Combat Supply (during CW turn): 0.00  
 Remaining: 5.25

#### Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 5

Starting supply: 6.00  
Arrives via Reinforcement: 3.50  
 Refit: 0.25  
 Fuel: 1.50  
 Construction: 1.00  
 Combat: 0.00

### Turn 6, June 17, 1941

My Initiative roll of 6 loses out to John's 9 and he decides to go second (other than his bombers, he is feels ready for my next turn).

**June 17 – CW First Player – Turn 6** – I ready my aircraft in the Off Map Holding Box. My replacement roll of 10 (2d6) gives me 1 Pax and my Naval rolls of 1 and 6 yield my cruiser unit. My supply roll of 8 (2d6) gives me 2.5 SP, and I place 1.5 in Amman and 1 in Haifa. I do not get any Recovered units. I pile my reinforcements (Pax included) into the Haifa holding box, replace the Wilson Corps HQ with Lavarack, put all my new air units in the Off Map holding box, remove the Mixed bomber unit and get another Reserve Marker. I use the nominal HQ in Haifa to rebuild the Raiput/5 battalion using the Pax Repl. Reinforcements are fun! (Note that the Raiput/5 unit will need to get over to the other side of the map before the Supply Phase so it could obtain Trace Supply from the same source as the rest of the Brigade or it will need to Eat off the Map.)



Sir John Lavarack

But what to do with my new guys? Let's have a look at the three channels of advance:

- **Coast** – One river line crossed, two to go at Sidon (18.07) and Damour (13.09). I have the 21<sup>st</sup> Brigade here plus some mobile troops and artillery. In its current position the Allen HQ can throw supply just past the river line at Sidon, but not far enough to attack the Damour line. John has five ground units and an artillery battalion defending this area. I am only 13 hexes from Beirut and have the potential for Naval Barrages, but there is very defensible terrain in the way. The escarpment terrain makes John's job easy along the coast since there are only 1-2 hexes I can attack at each choke point.
- **Merdjayoun** – The Lavarack HQ can throw supply as far as Rayak Air Base along the road. I face rough terrain here at the moment, but the Bekaa valley widens out just north of his defensive position and the terrain becomes much easier going, with no river obstacles between me and the Sudden Death victory location. This is where the 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade is advancing after capturing Merdjayoun, and I have two cavalry units and much of my artillery here. John has four ground units and an artillery battalion. There may be some weak points here—one of the hexes in his front line is held

by a 2 Combat Strength Cavalry Troop. Not far behind his lines is the un-garrisoned Arlabosse HQ. This seems to have much better potential than the Coast area.

- **Damascus Road** – The open terrain south of Kiswe (23.28) changes to more defensible areas as you approach Damascus. The road network gives you no options to bypass Damascus, and once past the city, you must cross over the Jebel Mazur to reach the Bekaa Valley. To obtain Victory based on points, I have to capture both hexes of Damascus. Fifteen of John's current ground units are here including 3 of his 4 Armor/Mech units, plus three artillery battalions. So is much of my combat power—the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade and the Free French "Division." I have a rail line to bring up supply but will need to reposition HQ's a few times as I proceed. I must keep this advance going, but have become wary of the backhand blow power of his counterattacks.
- **Strategic** – He has a strategic reserve of three strong motorized battalions (the 24<sup>th</sup> Mixed Brigade, currently sitting in 7.12) and a few local Vichy units (the "two tone" units) that he has been using to garrison Damascus, Beirut and Rayak.
- **Other** – I have captured only 3 VP locations (Merdjayoun, Hasbaya and Sidon) thus far, enough to give the Vichy player an "Overwhelming" victory even if we were playing the 9-turn "Secure the Levant" scenario. I need to press on hard!

*Newbie Note: Step back every so often and look at the evolving "big picture." Where is your opponent overextended? What are weak points that emerged as play moved along? How does your supply net need to adjust?*

My plan: Hit the Bekaa Valley area hard, push near Damascus to tie down as many of the Vichy units there as possible. Look like I am about to attack along the coast road.

*Newbie Note: Experienced OCS players warned me to "garrison EVERYTHING". Translating such advice into what I actually need to do is more difficult. I find it most helpful to play "the worst he can do if he had a double turn" what-if's on the map and forestall those.*

So, what is "worst he can do?" Looking at the map:

- If he were able to move an Armored Car unit and some supply to 41.24, with a double turn it could get to Amman, one of the Sudden Death hexes. It would also have to be in Trace Supply to "control" the hex (RE Rule 5.1). I have plenty of units sitting on the road/rail lines, except the one passing through Kuneitra (30.18), with only the 2/3/17 Infantry in the way. If he could take that unit out, then the road is clear to Amman or Entry Hex B (63.13).
- If he were to get a ZOC on or occupy the road between 36.12 and 26.11 it would put my units near Merdjayoun out of Trace Supply.
- I have not garrisoned the Supply Dump at Safad (36.11), and he could capture it. He could move an Armored Car unit to 26.21 and it could drive to 36.11 the next turn.
- I have un-garrisoned HQ units at 25.12 and 30.02. Starting from 26.21, he could get an Armored Car to Mettula (26.11) and attack the Lavarack HQ. Starting from 34.20, his Armored Car could get to 31.02 and attack the Allen HQ, passing through the Safad Supply dump enroute.

These would be one-way trips for John's units without a way to get Trace Supply or Eat off the Map. But any of my "worst" scenarios are somewhere between "Very Bad" and "Game-Over Awful". (My second game of *Reluctant Enemies* ended with Vichy armored cars in Haifa for a Sudden Death victory. Unfortunately, I was playing the Commonwealth side again!) I decide I need to get some blocker units into my backfield. From the just-arrived reinforcements, I send the 211/64 Med artillery unit to garrison my supply dump at Safad (36.11) and the 2/9 artillery and 6 Division HQ to 25.12. While I can't manage it this turn, I plan to establish some Supply Dumps near the front so that the units could Eat off the Map for a turn if needed. I was eyeing the 1 FF artillery unit for a garrison unit, but I don't want to send any units from multi-unit formations—they would get too far from the common trace supply source these units must use.

Speaking of keeping my multi-unit formations together, I flip the Raiput/5 battalion into Move Mode, enter Strat Mode, fuel from the dump in Haifa, and move it clear to 35.28, where it hides under the other units in the hex (a journey of 23 Truck MP's). Hiding them is a good idea, as Strat Mode units make a hex very vulnerable to barrage.

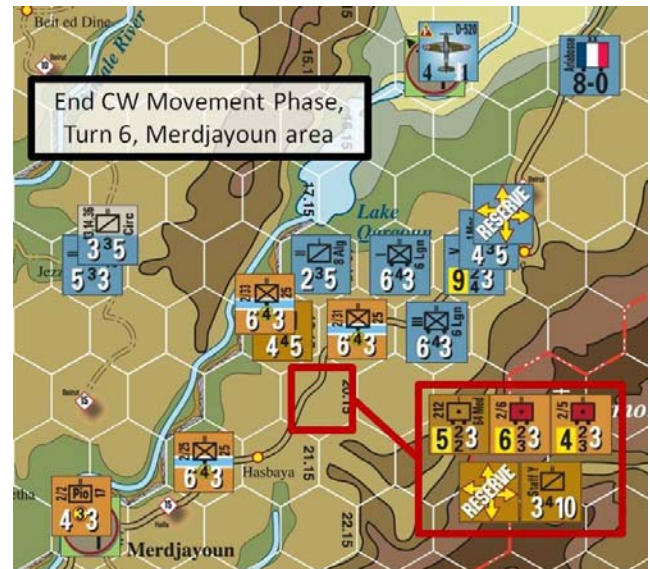
The rest of the newly-arrived units all zoom up to 24.11 and hide under the 170 AT Company. John can see them, since we are not using Fog of War for illustrative purposes, but I am very ostentatious in counting out the movement points up to Jezzine and Sidon to keep him guessing. Along the Damascus road I continue to mass my forces and stage the Free French HQ up to 35.27. I send my 2T of trucks that have been in the Damascus area over to Haifa to help move supply on that front.

I fire up one of my newly-arrived Hurricanes and declare a Fighter Sweep against the Vichy D-520 fighter unit in 15.17. I am fighting at a disadvantage, but I want to abort/reduce it so I can bring in an Air Barrage on 18.15, my intended breakthrough hex. His Air-to-Air Rating is 4 and mine is 3. The roll is 1, 5, 1 and my unit aborts without losses. I try it again with my second Hurricane and roll a 5, 2, 2 for the same result. His D-520 remains Active (*OCS Rule 14.1a* essentially says your Air Units stay Active until they become Inactive by flying a mission or because you Voluntary Abort them. Fighters stay active after a successful Intercept and after making a Base Transfer at normal Range, per *OCS Rule 14.1c*).



French Vichy Air Force's Dewoitine D 520s fighter aircraft, likely of the GC III/6, parked on Eleusis Airport, Athens, May 1941. Eleusis was a stopover during the long ferry flight from the France to Syria, via Italy or Germany, of the Vichy's fighter units committed for defense of French Middle East against the threat of the British Forces. After Eleusis, recently occupied by the Axis forces, the last stopover, before the arrival at Rayak, Lebanon, was at Rhodes, at this time in Italian hands.

I use my Naval Barrage against 15.09. This is a 9-point Barrage with no shifts and I DG the stack with a 7 (2d6). All my units are in Trace Supply during the Supply Phase.



John can see my attack brewing north of Merdjayoun, but there is only so much he can do about it. His bombers are all Inactive, one of his Reserve stacks was DG'ed, and the one in 27.28 is too far away to affect the fight. He does have his two units in Reserve at 18.17. The 1 Mor Cavalry unit has only ½ it's MA, or 2.5 Leg MPs. 2.5 Leg MPs is not enough to get to either 18.15 or 17.16, the hexes he would really like to reach. He can also see my Reserve Mode cavalry ready to follow up any success. He decides to bring the 1 Mor Cavalry back to stack with his HQ in 15.19 (foiling my plan).

**Newbie Note:** *OCS has a very strict order of stacking, outlined in OCS Rule 4.8b. If a Combat Mode, Attack-Capable unit is in the hex, it must be on the top of the stack (to make the ZOC obvious). My Cavalry unit is in Reserve Mode, so it is hiding beneath the Artillery units (Combat Units, but not Attack Capable), and would not ordinarily be visible to my opponent.*

The other thing he can do in his subsequent Barrage Phase is try to DG my attackers in 19.15. He fires the V/1 Met artillery (9-point Barrage, 1 shift left for density and 1 shift left for Very Close terrain) and DG's it with a roll of 9 (2d6).

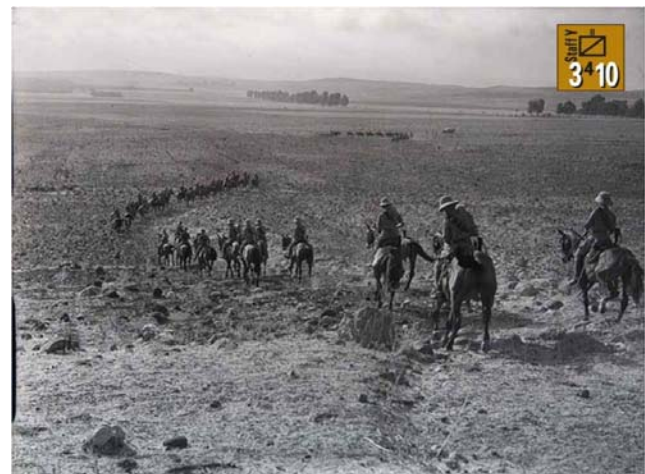
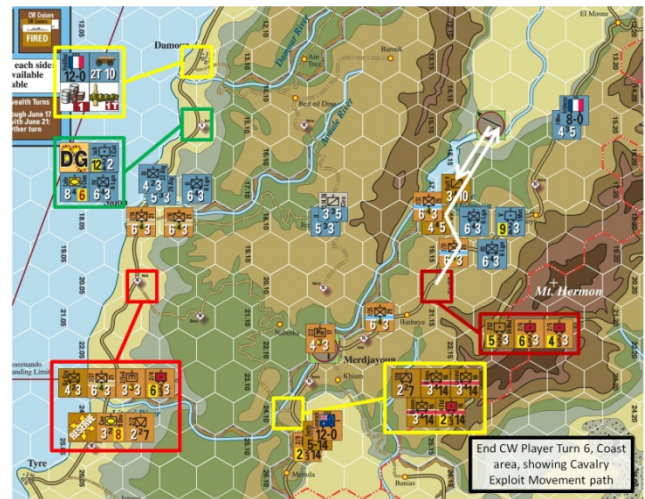
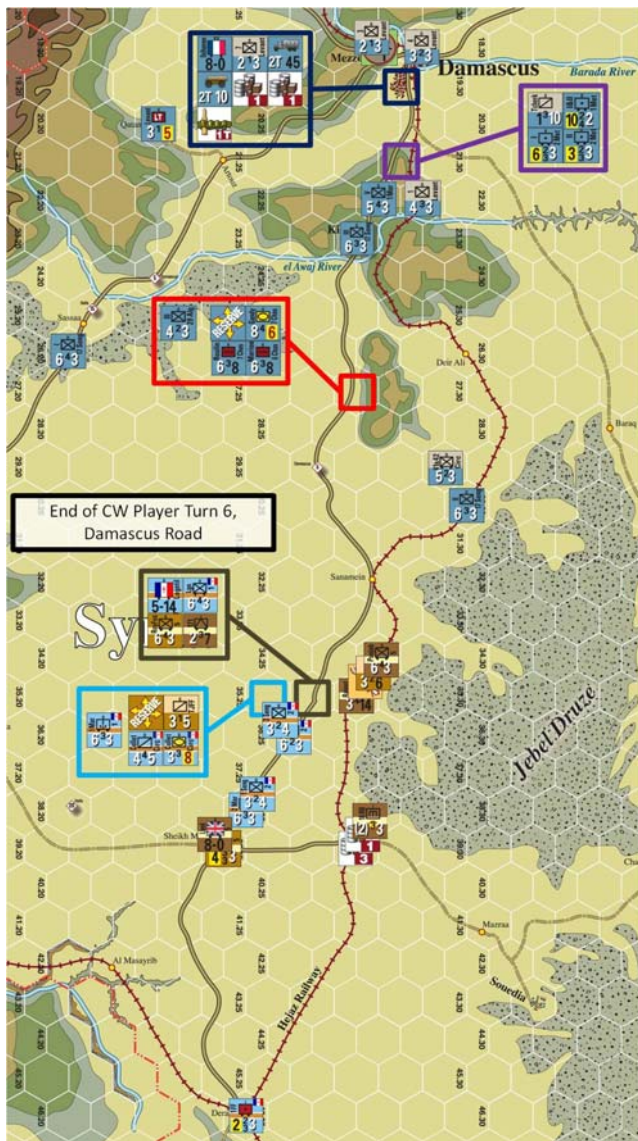
Back to me for my Combat Phase. I had just the one attack planned, but now two of the attackers are disrupted—including the one I planned to use for its AR. Should I still proceed? I decide to press ahead. First, I Barrage 18.15, using the three artillery units I moved into range. This is a 12-point Barrage, with one shift left for density and 1 shift left for Very Close terrain. I roll a 7 (2d6) and just miss.

**Newbie Note:** *I think a 17-24 point Barrage is your best return for the supply expenditure. It can DG the defender on a roll of 5 or better with no shifts and costs 3T. I am planning to mass enough artillery for this purpose. John has already done so with his stack at 21.29*

DG'ed units can still attack, but are half Combat Strength, half MA, -1 AR and cannot Overrun or earn Exploitation Mode (*OCS Rule 5.10b*). This means I have 11 Combat Strength to the defender's 2, and I use my Ches Y Cavalry's reduced AR of 3. 11:2 is 6:1 using the

Rounding Rule. My Surprise roll is 5, 6, 2 achieving surprise with a 2 column shift to 12:1 on the Very Close terrain column. I roll a 12 (2d6) for an Ae3/DL2o2DG. The defending II/8 Alg Cavalry unit is eliminated and I advance my two DG'ed units into its hex. My 2/31/25 Infantry in 19.16 is placed in Exploit Mode.

During my Exploitation Mode, I don't do anything with the 2/31/25 Infantry, because I want him sitting tight on the road. I release the Staff Y Cavalry from Reserve, and think about my options. I had planned to attack the HQ unit in 15.19, but he garrisoned that hex with his Cavalry. I could occupy inconvenient hexes like Rachaiye (18.18) or 13.20, but these don't actually put his units out of Trace Supply (my unit is in Move Mode and does not exert ZOC's, so he could still Make his Trace—although occupying 13.20 would prevent him from drawing supply from the dump in Zahle (06.18)). I could swing around and attack or overrun his artillery unit at 18.17. I decide to capture the Air Base in 15.17. I move to 15.17, and roll a 7 (2d6) on the Air Base Capture Table, and his D.520 Fighter unit displaces without loss to Rayak and goes inactive (Air Base Capture is covered in OCS Rule 9.14f). I have just enough MA to return to 17.16. The Air Base is now a CW Non-Combat unit and he will need to recapture it in order to use it again. I leave my other Reserves in place and remove the DG and Exploit markers in my Clean Up Phase.



*British Cavalry unit advancing in Syria*

**June 17 – Vichy Second Player – Turn 6** – John refits his aircraft at Rayak then rolls on the Supply Table. With a 9 (2d6) he gets 1.5 SP's and puts it in Baalbek (1.28). He is eligible for a Recovered unit and draws the I/22 Alg. In addition, he receives his two units that successfully made their Breakout rolls back on Turn 4. John places the III/16 Tun in Damour (13.09) with the Verdilhac HQ, the I/16 Tun in 14.17 and the I/22 Alg in 17.18.

**Newbie Note:** *Oops—we found a mistake here during our final proofing and don't have time to correct all the images/text. The two units that returned through Breakout arrive as Reinforcements (at one of the three entry hexes), NOT within two hexes of an HQ as just described. Sorry about that!*

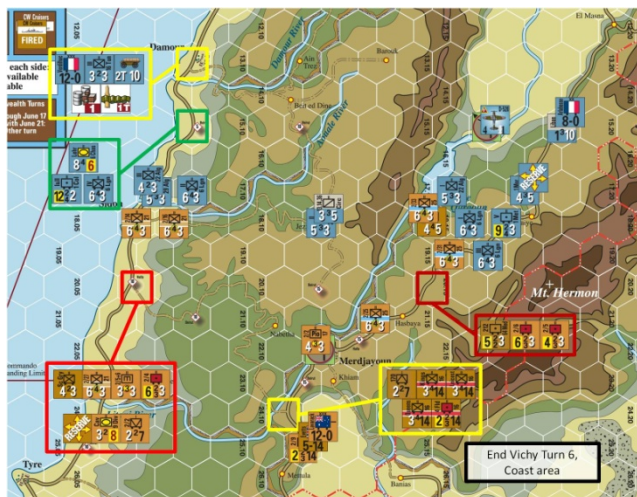
During his Movement Phase, John closes in on my advanced cavalry unit. He uses the I/16 Tun to recapture the Air Base as it moves to 16.16 (converting the Air Base from a CW Non-Combat Unit back into a Vichy one). The Liban Cavalry unit which came out of Reserve last turn flips to Move Mode and travels all the way to 15.19, where it garrisons the Arlabosse HQ. Near Damascus, he pulls back his Armor/Mech units, maintaining a screen in front of his positions around Kiswe (23.28). He flies in his D.520 unit to reoccupy the newly recaptured Air Base at 15.17, re-establishing a Patrol Zone over the area.

John assigns his bomber force of LeO 451 units to hit 17.16 with a Barrage. The flak roll misses with 5 (2d6) and his bombers miss with a 5 (on a 2d6, 12-point Barrage, 1 shift left for density and 1 shift left for Close Terrain).



I make no moves during my Reaction Phase. John doesn't perform any Barrages, but goes straight to his attack on 17.16. His three units total 15 Combat Strength versus my 3. John elects to use the AR from the I/16 Tun unit, even though it is a '3', because he does not want to risk his higher AR unit in 18.16. My unit's AR is 3 as well. We have a 5:1 attack in Hill terrain (Close) with 0 DRM (starts on the 4:1 column). John's surprise roll is a 1, 4, 1 which gives Defender Surprise with a 1-column left shift to the 3:1 column. His combat roll is a 4, 6 for an AoI/DL1o1. My unit is destroyed. He eliminates the I/16 Tun in order to fulfill his option and advances after combat with the I/22 Alg Infantry.

Pleased to have restored his line, John leaves all his Reserve mode units in place. He removes the DG in hex 15.09 during his Clean Up Phase and the turn concludes.



## Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 6

Starting supply: 6.75

Arrives via Reinforcement: 2.50

Refit: 0.00

Fuel: 1.00

Barrage: 0.75

Combat: 0.75

Reserve Movement: 0.00

Defensive Combat Supply (during Vichy turn): 0.25

Remaining: 6.50

## Vichy Supply Summary Turn 6

Starting supply: 5.25

Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.50

Refit: 0.00

Fuel: 1.00

Combat: 0.75

Reserve Movement: 0.00

Defensive Barrage (during CW Turn): 0.50

Defensive Combat Supply (during CW turn): 0.25

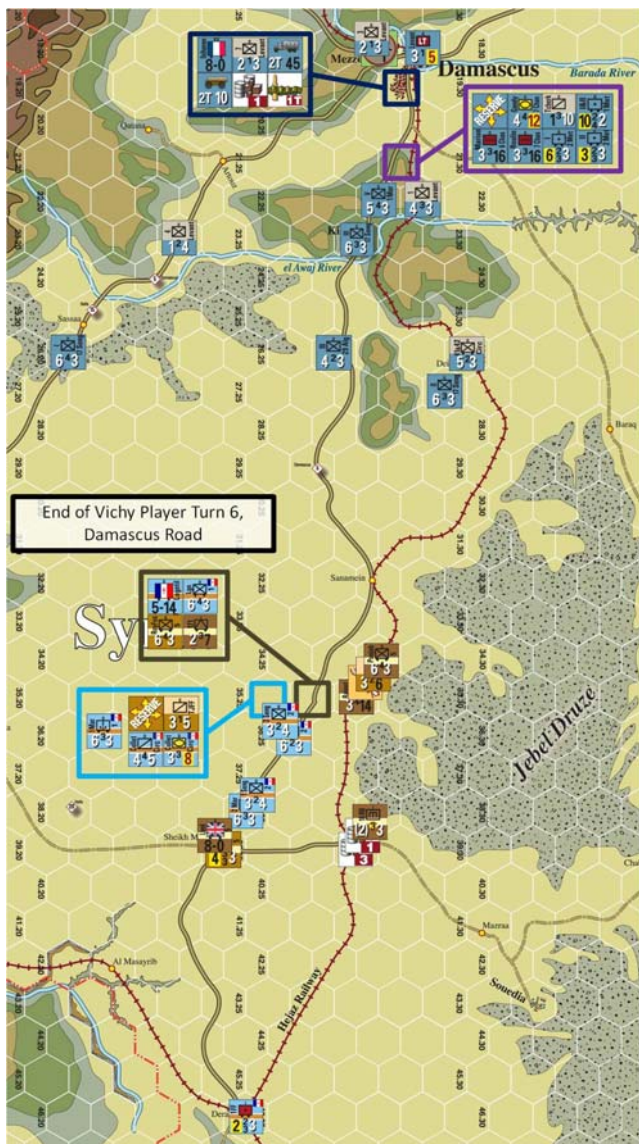
Remaining: 4.25



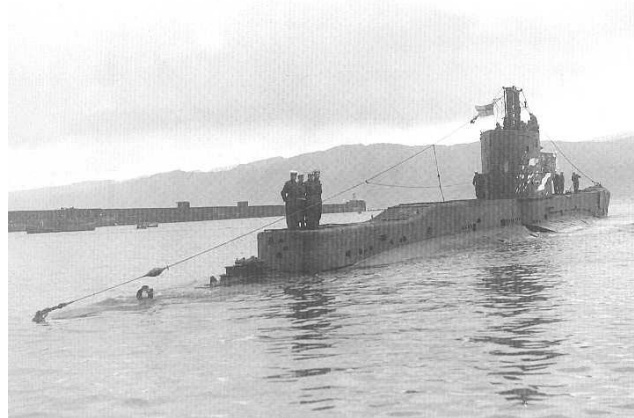
June, 1941. Troops of the Cheshire Yeomanry regiment, who were attached to the Australian forces during the Syrian campaign, watering their horses at an old Roman well. (Photo by Frank Hurley).



The Cruiser HMAS Perth during the Syrian campaign. The ship has been camouflaged in a "dazzle pattern" with two shades of gray. Her catapault has been removed and light anti-aircraft guns fitted to the turntable.



Vichy French Submarine *Souffleur* in the crosshairs of the British submarine *Parthian*, June 25, 1941. The submarine rests in water near the coast and is easily accessible by scuba divers.



*HMS Parthian* (later sunk in 1943, probably by a mine off Brindisi)



*HMS Kimberley*, DD. Main armament: 6 4.7-inch guns. *Kimberley* took part in the Second battle of Narvik, and many actions in the Mediterranean including engaging with the Vichy destroyers *Guepard* and *Valmy*. She survived being torpedoed by the U-77 off Tobruk and was only one of two K-class destroyers afloat at the end of the war.



Eastern Mediterranean, June 1941. *HMS Leander* fires a salvo in an attack on Vichy positions on the Syrian coast.

Turn 7, June 19, 1941

My Initiative roll of 6 beats out John's 5 and I choose to go first.

**June 19 – CW First Player – Turn 7** – I ready my aircraft in the Off Map Holding Box. My supply roll of 7 (2d6) gives me 2.5 SP, of which I place 1 in Amman and 1.5 in Haifa. My replacement roll of 7 (2d6) gives me nothing, I don't have enough eliminated units to trigger Recovery and I am not eligible for Naval Barrage Support this turn.

Time to ratchet up the pressure. I have accumulated 5 SPs in the Damascus road area, and I am ready to jump forward, while keeping the pressure up in the Bekaa Valley corridor. I hadn't really considered the "run him out of supply" strategy as a strategy, but I know he is getting very low. It really limits his ability to fire defensive Barrages or use his mobile units. This turn I plan to:

- Continue the attack in the Bekka Valley.
- Advance on Damascus, targeting his units south of Kiswe (23.28).
- Hold at the coast.

First I conduct Fighter Sweeps using the Hurricane units from my Off Map Box. The first is against his D-520 fighter at 15.17. I roll 5, 4, 2 which aborts his fighter without losses (his '4' Air-to-Air rating against my '3'). The second is against his M.S. 406 in Rayak, even ratings, and a roll of 3, 4, 4, aborts both units without losses. Hopefully I will cause some casualties soon, but I like the 1T he will need to pay to refit even more.

At the coast, I put all units in 20.07 into Reserve.



In the Bekaa Valley, the three Infantry battalions of the 16<sup>th</sup> Brigade flip into Combat Mode, enter Reserve, and slide forward one hex (they can move ¼ of their MA of 3 or .75, per *OCS* Rule 5.7a. The ‘Play Note’ just after this rule reminds you that they “can always move one hex” per *OCS* Rule 6.1c. What they can’t do is move two hexes along

the road, as that would be 1 MP total and per *OCS* Rule 4.2 you never round Movement Allowances.) This sets me up for the attack I am planning on 18.16, selected because his Reserve Cavalry unit can't reach it, but I only plan to attack if I can DG it first. The 4 Fld/16 Artillery battalion moves forward to join my "grand battery" in 20.15.

Last turn south of Kiswe, John moved his III/29 Alg Infantry unit from 27.28 to 26.27 in order to block the road. But it also put his unit in Clear Terrain and I think that makes it an appealing Overrun target.

Overrunning units must begin the turn stacked together (*OCS* Rule 8.1), so I put my stack in 35.26 in move mode, fuel the two units that require it, move them to 27.28 and declare an Overrun against the III/29 Alg. My Armor is doubled in the Clear terrain so the initial odds are 11:4 or 3:1. I use the '4' AR from my Collet/Circ Cavalry and the defender AR is 2 for a +2 differential. A 9 or better gains surprise in Overrun and my roll is 2, 5, 4, (+2) is successful, bumping the odds up 4 columns to the 9:1 column. My Combat roll is 6 (2d6) plus 2 is an 8 for an Ae4/DL1o2. This destroys his unit and puts me in the hex having expended 8 MP's. Overruns ignore Exploit Mode results, but can keep moving. The stack continues its move, proceeding to 24.27, a hex in the ZOC of the Vichy II/17 Seng in 23.28. I leave the two Cavalry units in 24.27 and my 1 Mar/1 and Collet/Circ Armor move one more hex to 24.28. The 1 Mar/1 unit has now expended 14 Truck MP's, its entire Movement Allowance. It stays in place and the Collet/Circ cavalry continues to 25.29. The units that drop off as the stack continues its movement are not able to move further if they have MA remaining—once a unit stops its movement is done for the turn (*OCS* Rule 6.1f).

***Newbie Note: Foot-Mobile and Track-Mobile units are unaffected by enemy ZOC's. But the Truck Mobile 1 Mar/1 must stop when it enters an enemy ZOC unless that ZOC is "negated". This happens if the hex being entered has a friendly unit at that moment and that friendly unit will end the current phase in the hex, per OCS 4.5b. The OCS v4.1 rulebook has an example on page 11 of using negation to "lay a carpet" through several hexes in enemy ZOC's.***



My Free French foot infantry hustles up the road. I put the truck-borne infantry into blocking positions so that the Vichy units in 26.30 and 27.30 are cut off. The TJFF armored car unit moves to 25.30 since neither of the HQ's could provide Trace supply to that particular hex which I needed to block the escape route of the Vichy units. I keep one unit at 35.27 in Reserve on its Move Mode side to react if needed.



*Colonel Collet (white kepi) with his Circassian Cavalry*

My supply transport repeats what it has been doing the last several turns: use my Railcap to move supply as far forward as possible in the Damascus area and use my trucks to shuttle SP's from Haifa (37.01) to Safad (36.11).

Because I aborted his fighter in 15.17 John no longer has a Patrol Zone over the Bekaa Valley. This gives me an opportunity in the Air & Naval Barrage Segment to fly all my bombers against 18.16. There are two Wellingtons and one Blenheim IV totaling 19-points of Barrage strength. The Flak roll of 10 (2d6 +1 modifier for three or more units in the mission) scores a hit. When multi-plane missions that take a hit from flak, consult the Mission Loss Table to determine which unit must lose a step (OCS Rule 14.4f). I roll a 5 (1d6) and that will reduce the Blenheim IV one step. The Barrage is resolved using the 5-7 column. Starting at the 12-16 column, I have 1 shift left for terrain and 1 shift left for density. My roll is 8 (2d6), just enough to DG the hex.

I check my Trace Supply in the ensuing Supply Phase. The Raiput/5 unit in 23.32 can just have Trace Supply thrown to it by the Lloyd HQ in 29.31 (which is why I moved it there), which in turn can draw from either the Detrainable hex at Sanamein (32.28) or one of the road hexes. Even though it occupies a Rail hex, 29.31 will not be considered a Detrainable hex until the HQ flips to its Combat Mode side and regains its Engineer-Capable status (OCS Rule 13.8c). However, the unit I can't provide Trace to is the Engineer unit guarding the Supply Dump at 39.28—all the other units of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade are tracing to the HQ. The Engineer unit must Eat off the map, per OCS 12.6f.

**Newbie Note:** OCS Rule 12.6f says that if not all units of a multi-unit formation can “make their trace” to the same HQ or the same direct-draw source, then you must select which part of the unit Makes its Trace and which must Eat off the Map or go OoS. If not an HQ, this “same direct-draw source” needs to be ONE specific hex such as a Detrainable hex, Extender or map-edge supply source. The units can't trace back to different hexes even if those hexes are on the same rail line or go off the same map-edge but at different hexes.

John's Reaction Phase options are limited. He holds off on moving his Mech units and instead just makes two moves. The Tcherk Cavalry in 21.29 goes to 22.31 to block the road. He also slides his 1 Mor Cavalry from 17.18 up to cover the V/1 Met Artillery in 18.17 as he is concerned about a breakthrough.

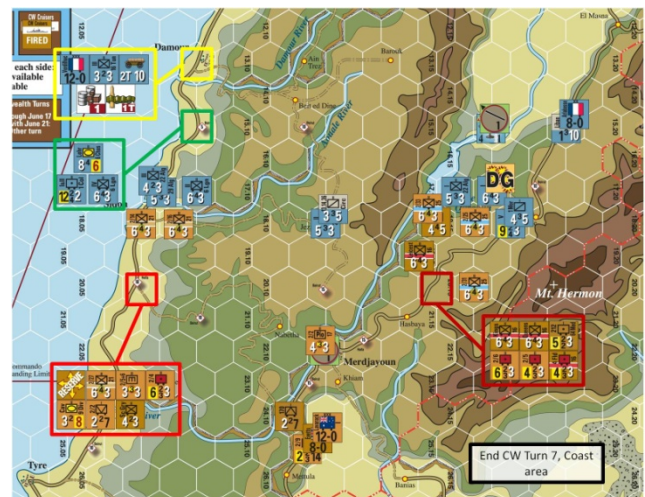
Back to me for the Combat Phase. I have finally been able to assemble enough artillery to create a 19-point Barrage, which I fire at the unit 19.17 (1 shift for terrain and 1 shift for density) and DG it with a roll of 8 (2d6).

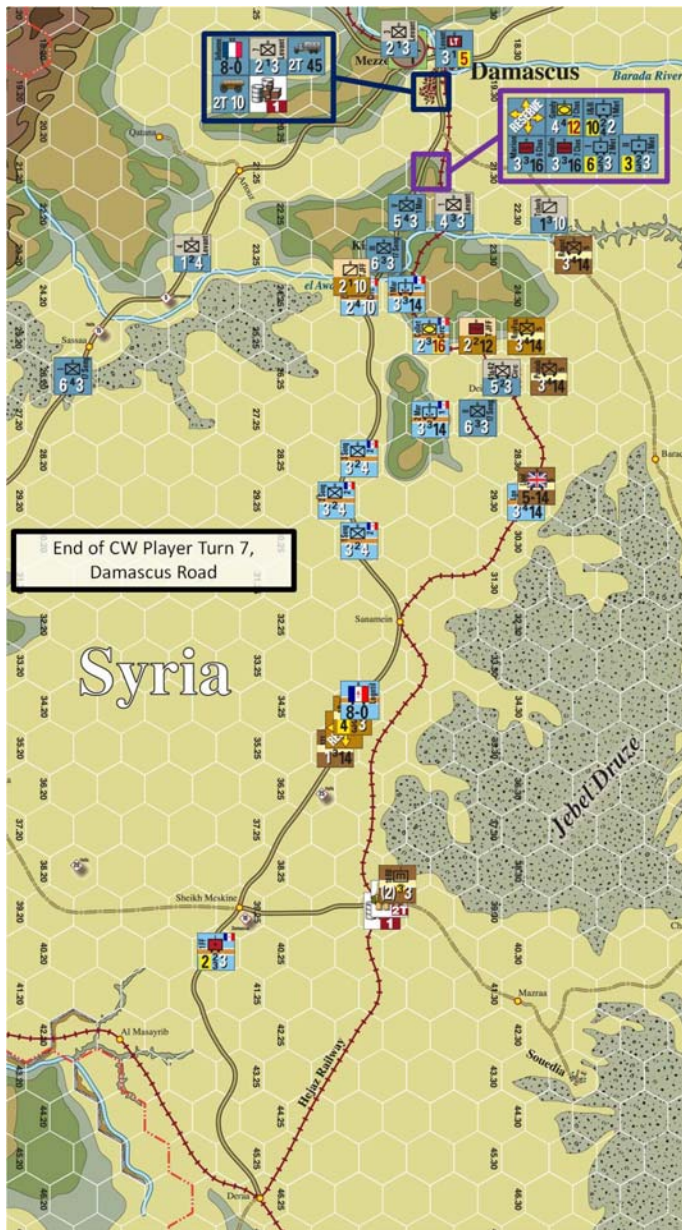
My attack goes in against his I/6 Lgn unit at 18.16. I am attacking with my units in 18.15 and 19.16, yielding 16-3 odds of 5:1 in Very Close terrain (goes to the 4:1 column). I use the '4' AR rated Cavalry unit against is '3' (reduced 1 for the DG). The surprise roll is 5, 1, 4, meaning no surprise. The attack roll is 7 (2d6) with a +1 DRM to 8 for a result of Ao1/Do1. I kill my Ches Y Cavalry unit to force him to take an option, which he does by retreating to 17.17. I advance my 2/25/25 Infantry into his hex.

In my Exploitation Phase I release the three Infantry Battalions of 16<sup>th</sup> Brigade and move them up to 19.16. In the combat phase I attack the III/6 Lgn in 19.17 (18:3 or 6:1 in Very Close terrain, with a +1 DRM). My surprise roll 4, 1, 3 narrowly avoids Defender Surprise. The combat roll of 9 (2d6) +1 results in an Ao1/DL1o1. This eliminates the defending unit. I take my option as a retreat with two battalions moving into 20.15 and the Leicest/16 into 19.15. (A retreat into a hex containing friendly units does no harm unless that hex is in an enemy ZOC, which would cause the whole hex to become DG per OCS Rule 9.12e).

That turn used up 2.25 SP's in fuel and 3.25 in Barrage/Combat, but I am pressing him hard. Let's see how John reacts. I have no actions to perform in the Clean Up Phase, and play passes to the Vichy player.

**Newbie Note:** OCS Rule 9.12 governs retreats. Basically, each option not taken as a loss equals one hex of retreat. The retreating units do not have to stay together. They enter DG Mode if called for by the Combat Results, upon entering the second hex of a Retreat, or upon entering an Enemy ZOC (including any Friendly units already in this hex). If already in DG Mode when entering the Enemy ZOC, the units that are retreating must lose a step as well. There are a few more “fine print” rules worth noting, so have a look at the entire rule.





**June 19 – Vichy Second Player – Turn 7** – John spends the 1T to ready his fighter unit at 15.17, and his air units at Rayak refit for free. His supply roll of 8 (2d6) gets him 1.5 SP's (bringing him to a total of 5 SP's on the map). He is eligible for a recovered unit and draws the 1 Liban Infantry and places it in 20.30. He is also eligible for a Naval Barrage, but his roll of 2 means it is not available.

John decides his priorities for the turn are to put a stopper on my attack in the Bekaa Valley and to get ready for the impending attack around Kiswe. And he needs to accumulate supply!

In the Bekaa valley, none of units on the front line can enter Reserve as they are all in Commonwealth ZOC's. John brings down the three units of the 24 Med Brigade (his strategic reserve which had been stationed near Beirut) and uses two to hold the road hex (18.18) with a '4' AR unit. The other battalion moved to support the Arlabosse HQ in 15.19. After rearranging himself, the only unit he is able to put into Reserve as a reaction force is the Liban Cavalry. He also tries a sneaky trick by advancing his 13, 14, 15/Circ Cavalry to 20.13 in order to put a ZOC on my supply road at 21.14.

Near Damascus John readjusts his units to create as much of a river defense as possible. But his cleverest move is to advance the newly-recovered 1/Liban unit to 22.32. He then uses his truck to transport 1T to the hex, unload it, and return to Damascus (there must be a friendly Combat Unit, Air Base, Port or existing unloaded Supply Dump in a hex for the Trucks to unload per *OCS* Rule 13.2f, which is why the 1/Liban moved there). The units I thought I had cut off march out to 26.32 and 25.33, where they will be able to Eat off the Map from the supply he moved in. (The 41 & 42/Circ unit has Truck MA on its Move Mode side, but cannot draw SP for fuel, so it stays on its Combat Mode side. No driving to a fuel point—you must be able to fuel the unit at the beginning of its move per *OCS* 12.5a).

For his Air/Naval Barrage, he flies the Vichy bomber force against my 2/25/25 Infantry in 18.16. The Flak roll misses with a 5 (2d6) and his 12-point Barrage (with 1 left shift for density and 1 for Very Close terrain) hits with a roll of 11 (2d6). It doesn't just hit, an 11 on the 5-7 column is a 1/2 result, meaning we roll another die and the stack loses a step on a result of 4-6 in addition to being DG'ed. John rolls a 6 and my unit goes to the dead pile (*OCS*'ers call this an "Air Kill"). He had intended to attack the hex had the unit been DG'ed, but the rules do not allow you to "advance after combat" into a hex that was cleared by Barrage.

During John's Supply Phase, his two wandering Infantry units Eat off the Map by tracing from each unit to hex 23.33, which is adjacent to the 1T in 23.32. Hex 23.33 is also adjacent to my Raiput/5 battalion, but because that unit is in Move Mode it does not have a ZOC. The Vichy 13, 14, 36/Circ Cavalry can have Trace thrown to it from the HQ in Damour (13.09)

Both of us now really wish we had more units in Reserve in the Bekaa Valley area! None of mine can reach the area so I don't do anything in my Reaction Phase.

John's only Exploit move is to release the Liban Cavalry and move it into 18.16, the hex that was cleared by his air attack. He removes his DG marker from 17.17 during the Clean Up Phase.

#### Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 7

Starting supply: 6.50

Arrives via Reinforcement: 2.50

Refit: 0.00

Fuel: 2.25

Overrun Combat: 1.00

Eat off the Map: 0.25

Barrage: 0.75

Combat: 0.75

Exploitation Combat: 0.75

Defensive Combat Supply (during Vichy turn): 0.00

Remaining: 3.25

#### Vichy Supply Summary Turn 7

Starting supply: 4.25

Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.50

Refit: 0.25

Fuel: 0.75

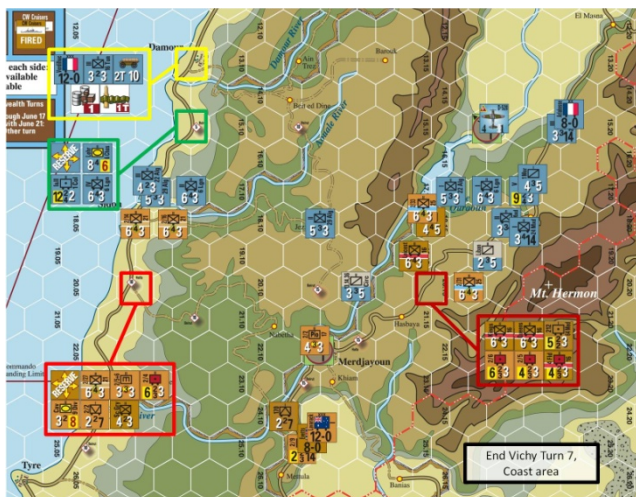
Combat: 0.00

Supply Phase (Eat off the Map): 0.25

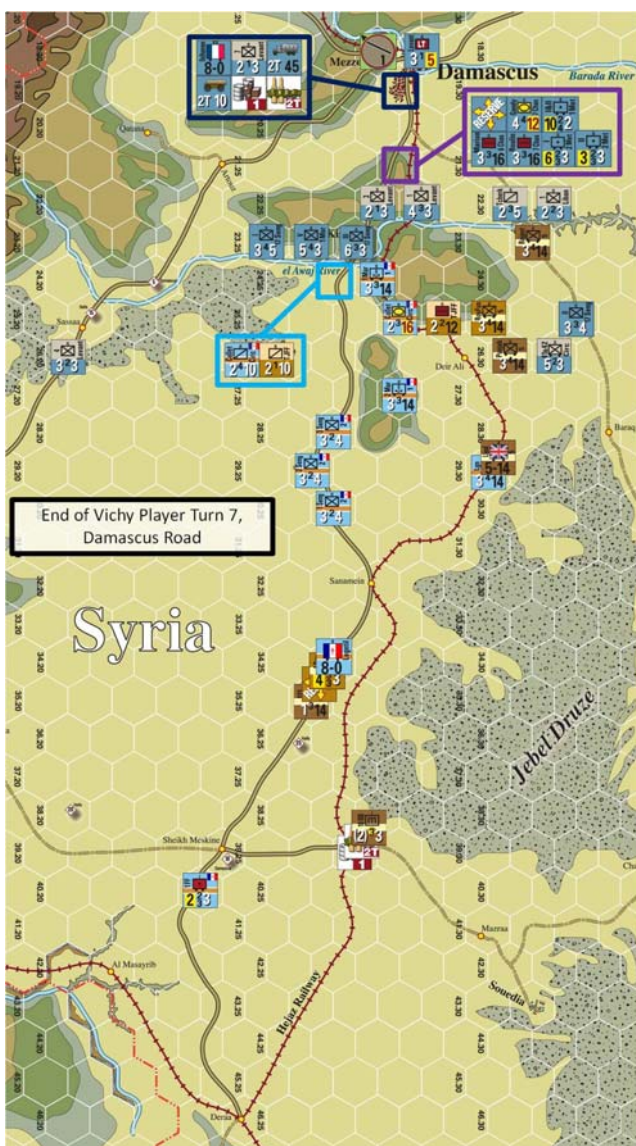
Reserve Movement: 0.00

Defensive Combat Supply (during CW turn): 0.75

Remaining: 3.75



Men of the 7th Division Recovery Section, 2/3 Army Field Workshops, at work on a captured French Renault R-35 light tank near Tyre (hex 26.04), 13 June 1941. Private M Coleman, Corporal T R J Schofield and centre Staff Sergeant G A Briggs.



France's Lioré et Olivier LeO 451 bomber

**Newbie Note:** Here are a few more phrases I hear experienced players use:

- The “Brain” – a high-AR unit placed in a stack of low-AR unit..
- To have “The Hammer” – to possess the initiative and choose to go second in a turn, with the potential for a double turn.
- “Steps” – Experienced players tend to think in terms of the number of “steps” in a hex and not number of units. RE features only 1-step units, so this comes into play in other games. Taking a hex held by several steps, such as a river crossing, requires much more planning than a hex containing just a single step.
- Conduct “an op” – I notice OCS veterans plan out bursts of activity carefully, which they call an operation or “op”. During the turns they seem to just be accumulating supply they are actually carefully mapping out and positioning the forces and SPs for their next actions.



*An advance infantry patrol of the 2/27th Battalion moves stealthily along an exposed scarp prior to launching an attack on an enemy position on the heights overlooking El Ardun, June 1941.*



*June, 1941. A tank crew of the 6th Australian Division Cavalry Regiment resting during a halt in their advance into Syria.*



*June 1941. 2/4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment in action against Vichy forces in Syria (photo by Frank Hurley).*



*June 9, 1941, Fort Khiam, Syria. Men of "A" Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Platoon, 2/33 Battalion with a machine gun left by the French. They are (left to right) Corporal R. C. Campbell, Sergeant A. M. Sweetapple, Lieutenant G. B. Connor and Private J. J. Wayte.*



*A group of Vichy French pilots at Rayak after the Allied occupation. The Armistice in Syria freed all Vichy French military who agreed to transfer to the Free French - these men probably came under those arrangements. (Photo from L/Cpl. Paul Purtell, VX38118)*

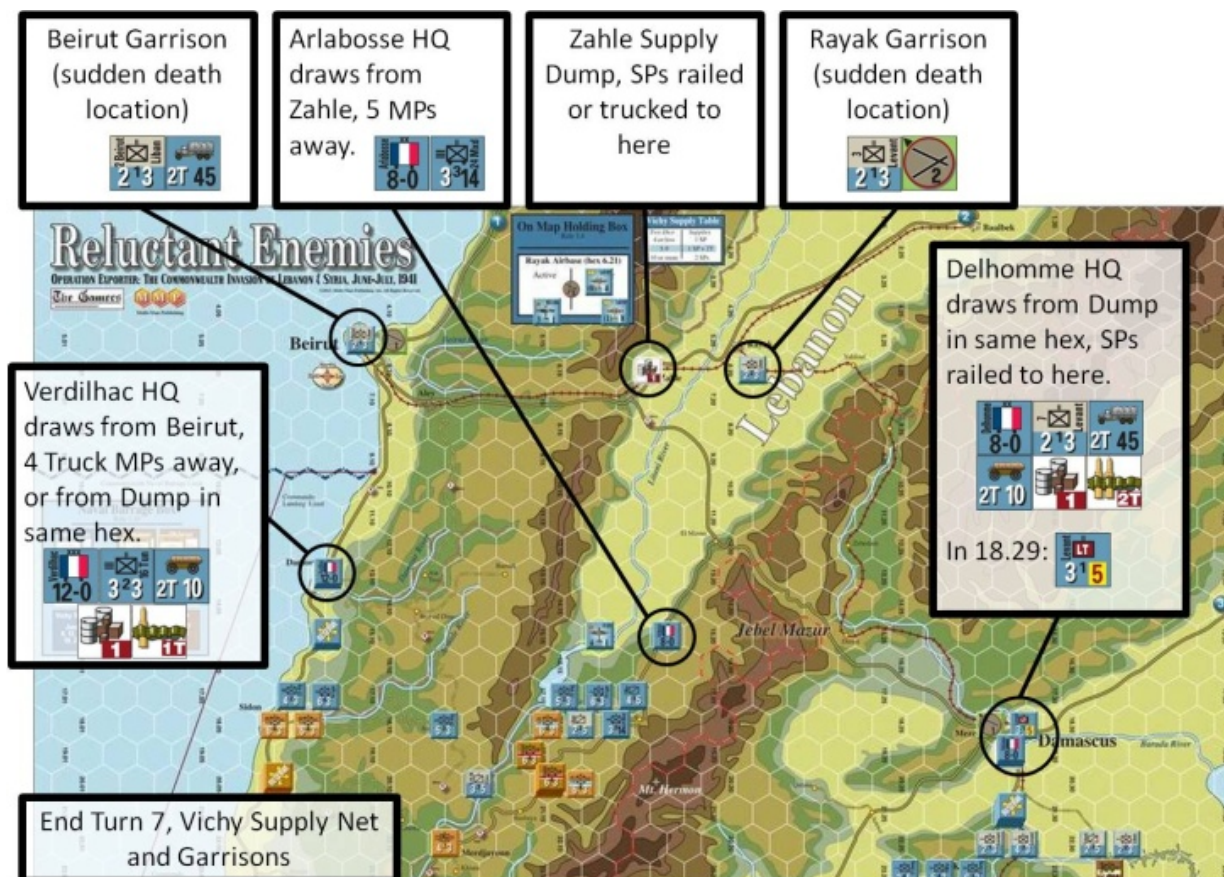


*Vichy Potez 63 Aircraft*

## Garrisons & Supply Nets

Let's pause for a moment and look at the evolving supply net and garrisons for each player. Managing your "rear area security" and logistics is just as important as the front line.

### Vichy Situation:



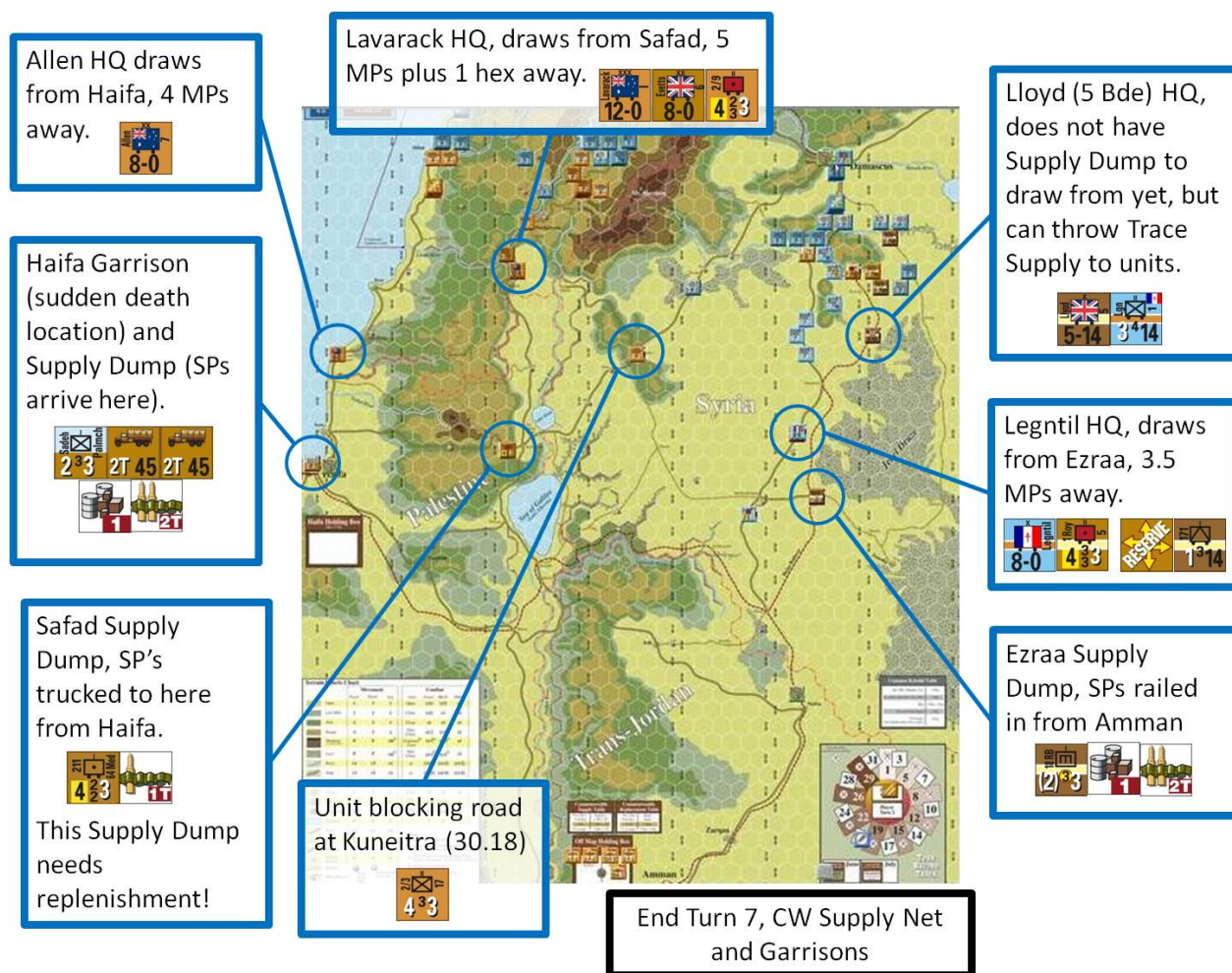
The Vichy player is often falling back along his supply path, so is less concerned with moving supply than preventing breakthroughs.

- Each of these three HQ's has a unit with it as a garrison (he learned his lesson from my marauding cavalry during Turn 6).
- There is a garrison in each of the two "Sudden Death" locations, plus both hexes of Damascus.
- The HQ's have ready access to Supply Dumps, and he has not had problems moving SP's around the board.
- John is running low on Combat Units (10 in the dead pile currently)—note that he doesn't have any to provide garrisons for the Supply Dump at Zahle (6.18) or his Air Bases at 15.17 or Mezze (18.28).
- His HQ's and their garrisons provide roadblocks behind his front lines for the three roads I will need to advance along.
- He parked his 24<sup>th</sup> Mixed Brigade around 7.15 as a strategic reserve, but has now been forced to use it to hold the line in the Bekaa Valley area.
- John's most pressing supply problem is that he doesn't have enough of it. He is down to 3.75 SP's at the end of Turn 7, precious little to fuel his Armor/Mech units or Barrage.



*Syria, June 1941. French shells falling during the Syrian Campaign close to an Australian battery, 2/6<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, during the attack on Merdjayoun, near Fort Khiam. No hits were registered on the Australian battery.*

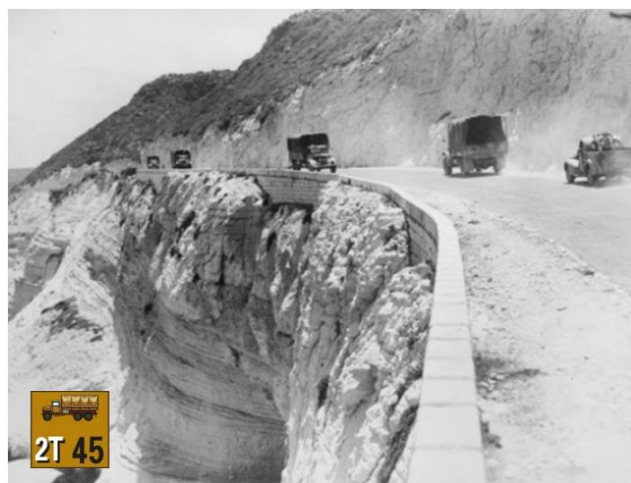
## Commonwealth Situation:



Advancing puts a bigger strain on the supply net. The CW player has 1 RE of Railcap and 1 RE of Trucks to move supply around.

- I made most of the adjustments to garrison my rear area I mentioned a few turns ago. Three of my four HQ's have garrisons as well as all my Supply Dumps.
- In addition, I have a roadblock unit at Kuneitra (30.18). 36.12 would be nice, too. I believe this will give me security from a sudden dash by his Armor/Mech units, either by slowing them down or preventing them from getting the Trace Supply they would need for a Sudden Death victory.
- I am not as short of units as the Vichy player (7 in the dead pile at the moment), and I can look forward to more Reinforcements/Replacements.
- I can't keep the pace of my last turn (I went through 5.5 SP's), and need to accumulate/move supplies. I actually have 2T less on the board than my opponent!
- Along the coast road, I am still able to draw from Haifa until I get past the next river line.
- In the Bekaa Valley my Lavarack HQ with its throw range of 12 is sufficient for the moment, but I still need to shuttle supply to the dump in Safad. At the moment, I have positioned all my trucks for the Haifa-Safad run, which slows down what I can do near Damascus. This is where my big artillery stack is positioned, and they need 3T per Barrage.
- Right now my only means of getting SP's to the front in the Damascus area is my 1 SP Railcap.

- I have no strategic reserve (another brigade will arrive on Turn 10 and a final one Turn 19), but I hope to receive a few units from Replacement rolls.



*Australian Transport Trucks in Syria, 1941*

### Turn 8, June 21, 1941

Our first Initiative roll is a tie, so we re-roll (OCS Rule 2.3). I win the next roll, and elect to go first.

**June 21 – CW First Player – Turn 8** – I do the usual turn start activities, starting with the Aircraft Refit Phase where I ready my aircraft in the Off Map Holding Box. Next comes the Reinforcement Phase:

- My supply roll of 4 (2d6) gives me the minimum of 1.5 SP's of which I place 1 in Amman and 0.5 in Haifa.
- My replacement roll of 4 (2d6) gives me nothing,
- I am eligible for a recovered unit, pull the Staff Y Cavalry and place it in 23.12
- Naval Barrage Support rolls of 1 and 2 give me neither unit (I am eligible every other turn beginning this turn).

My objectives for this turn are to consolidate my position south of Damascus, make only limited attacks, and continue my air campaign against his fighter cover. I see only two attacks I want to make.

I begin with my Fighter Sweep campaign against his air unit in 15.17 with a Hurricane from the Off Map Box. The first result is 5, 4, 6—aborting his D-520 with a step loss. I then send a second Hurricane on a Fighter Sweep against Rayak, but this time come up short with a 1, 1, 4, aborting my fighter unit without loss.

I don't change a thing along the coast road. Near Merdjayoun, I move 2/9 Artillery up to 21.14 to negate the ZOC he put on the road. The newly recovered Cavalry unit enters Reserve and moves to 20.15. I also use my trucks to transport 1 SP to 20.15 (they can just make the round trip – 16.5 Truck MPs each way, 5 to load and 5 to unload is a total of 43 MP's). The infantry units of the 16<sup>th</sup> Brigade move into 19.16 and the 2/31/25 advances to 19.17. I Base Transfer my 1-step Mixed Fighter up to the Air Base at Merdjayoun.

Near Damascus I flip most units to Combat Mode and organize myself south of Kiswe (23.28). I am able to get some units into a Reserve stack at 25.29 and move others into the hex that will be an exploit stack in future turns. I send four units to take one more crack at his fleeing unit in 26.32. I also notice that hex 27.21 is a Lava hex with a road in it, and advance my 2/3/17 infantry to it, where it plugs any movement around my flank. The 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade HQ (Lloyd) in 29.31 flips to its Combat Mode side, creating a Detrainable hex, and the 1 SP I placed in Amman rails in and is unloaded, creating a new Supply Dump.

In my Air/Naval Barrage, I fly my bomber force up to 18.17, which is no longer in the Patrol Zone of the now-inactive D-520 in 15.17. The flak roll is 12 (+1 due to 3 units in the mission) for a hit, and my roll of 5 kills the second step of my Blenheim IV unit per the Mission Loss Table. The Barrage is 16-points (spotted, 1 shift for density and 1 for Very Close terrain) shifted to the 5-7 column and I miss with a 6 (2d6).

My units are all in Trace Supply during my Supply Phase. My artillery unit in 21.14 negated the ZOC of John's sneaky Cavalry ploy and the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade (Lloyd) can throw Trace to the furthest unit, the Raiput battalion in 24.32, since the units along the way negate the Vichy ZOC's from his unit in 26.32 (and the II/17 Seng in 25.33 is in Move Mode so does not have ZOC's). Note that negating an enemy ZOC requires a Combat Unit which will end the current phase in the hex (OCS Rule 4.5b)

John can see the 16<sup>th</sup> Brigade presumably deploying to attack his Liban Cavalry unit in 18.16, but can't do anything about it—this was

the Reserve unit he had in the area (which moved in the Exploit Phase of his last turn), and his bomber force is inactive. He does nothing in his Reaction Segment.

I launch the two attacks I planned. The first comprises three adjacent units attacking the 41&42/Circ in 26.32. The odds are 18-5 or 4:1 with a +2 DRM in clear terrain. His unit is unable to have supply thrown to it, so must use internal supply and has a "Low" marker placed under the unit. I roll 1, 4, 4 for surprise, avoiding Defender Surprise via the DRM. The combat roll is 11 (2d6), +2 to 13 for an Ae3/DL2o2DG. The defender is destroyed, I advance the Punjab battalion, but my units are not eligible for the exploit since they attacked from three hexes (OCS Rule 9.13b).

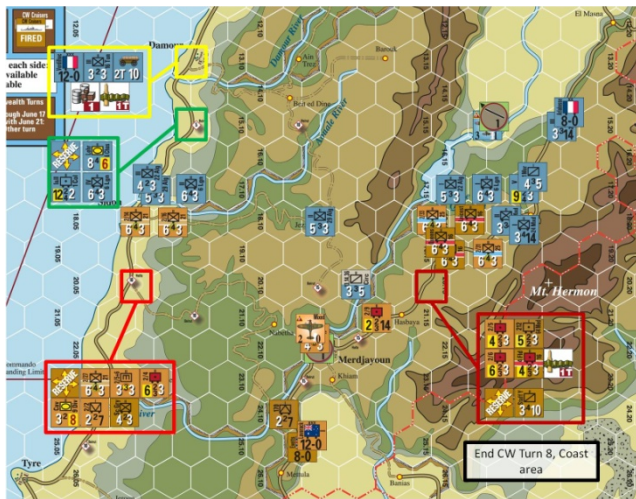
**Newbie Note:** *Internal Stocks are a mechanism for a unit to provide itself Combat Supply for the immediate combat situation, but cannot be used for Trace or Fuel Supply. Being marked as "Out of Supply" refers to Trace Supply and has penalties described in OCS Rule 12.8d. "Using Internals" generates Combat Supply for a unit, regardless of its Trace Supply Status. It can use internals only if it can't draw or be thrown Combat Supply (OCS Rule 12.10a), and can do this twice (being first marked "Low" and then "Exhausted"). Once Exhausted, the unit is not able to provide Combat Supply to itself—it can't attack and must defend at half strength. Being Out of Supply has no effect on Internal Stocks and vice versa (OCS Rule 12.10f), but the penalties are cumulative, so a unit's defensive combat strength can be quartered if it is both marked Out of Supply AND does not have Combat Supply (OCS Rule 9.5a). Recovering from Low or Exhausted is mandatory if the unit has access to on-map Supply Points and is expensive (see OCS Rule 12.10e).*

My second attack is against the Liban Cavalry in 18.16. I am attacking with the three units of the 16<sup>th</sup> Brigade, even though more units are adjacent to the defender. The odds are 18:2 or 9:1 with a +1 DRM in Very Close terrain. My surprise roll is 5, 5, 2 for Attacker Surprise giving me 2 shifts to the 15:1 column under Very Close terrain. I roll a 10 (2d6) bumped up to 11 for an Ae3/DL2o2DG. His unit is destroyed, and I advance just one of the battalions (I want the others to stay behind so they are out of his ZOC and can enter Reserve next turn). All my attacking units earn Exploit Mode.

Which brings me to my Exploit Phase. I don't use any of my units at this point and the turn concludes with my Clean Up Phase, were I remove the exploit markers.

**Newbie Note:** *If I advance all three units I would have a powerful stack adjacent to his units. It could not enter Reserve during my next turn, but it could Overrun adjacent Vichy units with its 3 Foot MP's. It's your call on how you want to manage this conundrum. Just like with Supply, there is more you want to do than your resources allow!*

I like the results of my attacks, but I haven't gained any ground with my supply situation!



- His supply roll of 8 (2d6) gives him 1.5 SP's, placed in Baalbek (1.28).
- He needs one more unit lost to be eligible for Recovery.
- No roll for Naval Barrage this turn.

John's moves are all focused on reorganizing his forces in the Bekaa Valley and in front of Damascus. His II/17 Seng unit escapes to 22.32, having walked all the way from its initial starting position at 39.25. He works to build up strong reserve stacks and supply, and ends his move with 4.75 SP, Much more than I have on the board! He glares at the air unit I placed in Merjdayoun, but decides not to Fighter Sweep it, because he wants his own Patrol Zone over the area and he wants an active fighter guarding Rayak.

I make no moves during Reaction and John makes none during Exploit, so the turn ends quickly.

### Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 8

Starting supply: 3.25

Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.50

Refit: 0.00

Fuel: 0.25

Barrage: 0.00

Combat: 1.50

Exploitation Combat: 0.00

Defensive Combat Supply (during Vichy turn): 0.00

Remaining: 3.00

### Vichy Supply Summary Turn 8

Starting supply: 3.75

Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.50

Refit: 0.25

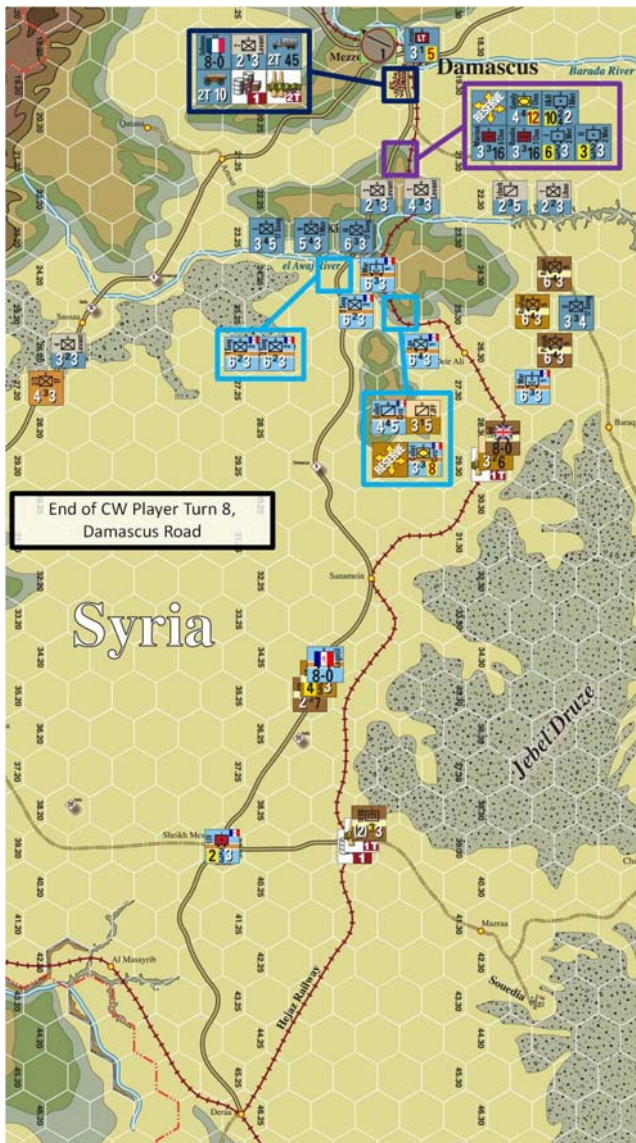
Fuel: 0.00

Combat: 0.00

Reserve Movement: 0.00

Defensive Combat Supply (during CW turn): 0.25 (the unit that used internals and was destroyed did not consume on-map Supply Points)

Remaining: 4.75



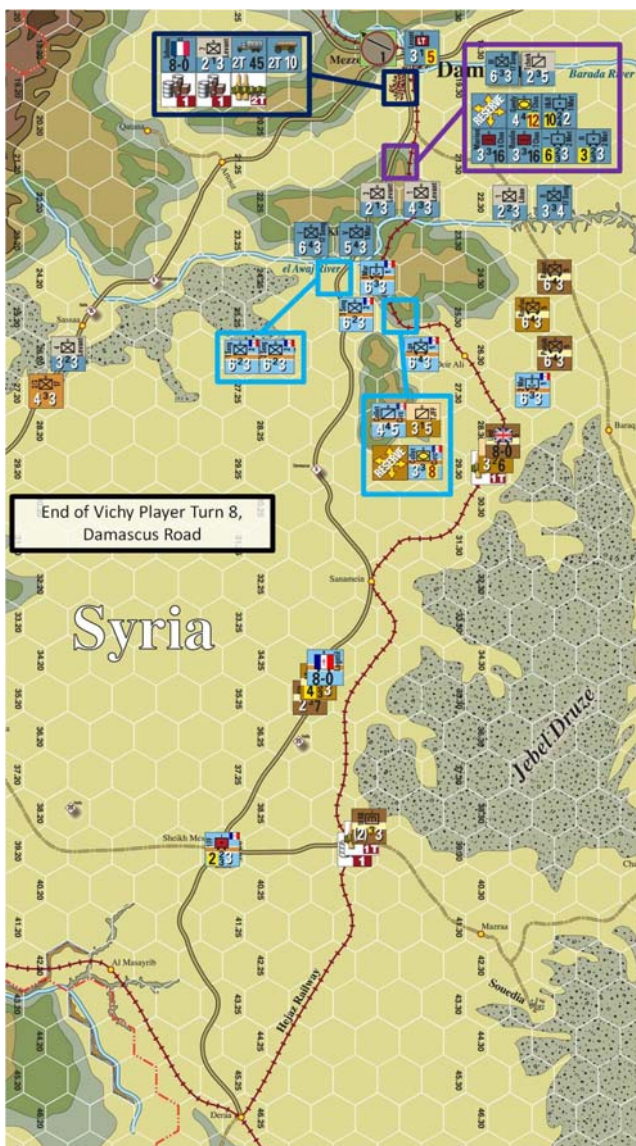
*General Dentz (on left), commander of Vichy forces in the Levant, with his staff. Dentz was charged with conspiring with the enemy after the war and sentenced to death. Charles de Gaulle pardoned him, but he died in prison December 1945.*

**June 21 – Vichy Second Player – Turn 8** – John also performs his turn start activities:

- He readies his aircraft in Rayak and the D-520 step in 15.17, grumbling at the 1T it costs.



The "Mechanical Regiment" of the Trans Jordan Frontier Force moving at speed along the desert tracks during one of their patrols of the Syrian border.



Senegalese of the Colonial Army



Tomahawks of the RAAF fly in formation over Syria

### Turn 9, June 22, 1941

John wins the Initiative roll and decides for me to go first, wary of giving me a double turn.

June 22 – CW First Player – Turn 9 – I do the usual turn start activities:

- I ready my aircraft in the Off Map Holding Box.
- My supply roll of 6 (2d6) gives me 2.5 SP's of which I place 1 in Amman and 1.5 in Haifa.
- My replacement roll of 10 (2d6) gives me 1 Pax replacement, which I place in Haifa. I immediately use the Repl to rebuild the Ches Y Cavalry.
- Not eligible for Naval Barrage or Recovered units this turn.

My turn is spent organizing and moving supply. My only offensive moves are the Fighter Sweep campaign against 15.17. The Air-to-Air ratings are now equal between my two Hurricanes and his reduced D-520. My first Sweep rolls a 3, 2, 4, aborting my unit. The second rolls a 6, 5, 6, destroying his fighter (my unit returns to base inactive).

The Ches Y Cavalry enters Strat Mode and travels up to 20.15. This move requires 19.5 Leg MP's because it must detour through 22.14 (Strat Move units cannot enter a hex with an Enemy ZOC such as 21.14, and this cannot be negated per OCS Rule 4.5a. They must end their move in a hex that is in Trace Supply per OCS Rule 5.8b).

John takes no action in his Reaction Phase and I take no action in my Exploitation Phase, completing the turn.

June 22 – Vichy Second Player – Turn 9 – John is also building his reserve stacks and Supply Dumps. During his turn start:

- His air units are already active in Rayak.
- His supply roll of 4 (2d6) gives him 1 SP, placed in Baalbek (1.28).
- He needs one more unit lost to be eligible for Recovery.
- This is the last turn he is eligible for Naval Barrage, and it is not available on a roll of 1.

John's turn is similar to mine—distributing supply, reshuffling units, and building groups of units in Reserve. Neither of us takes any offensive action.

Had we been playing Scenario 5.2, Secure the Levant, the game only lasts until Turn 9. You have to capture Damascus to win that scenario, and I have only 3 Victory Points (Merdjayoun, Sidon and Hasbaya). As of now, the game would end in a Vichy Overwhelming Victory requiring me to buy John an adult beverage of his choice. (Seriously! Check the Victory Conditions.) I need to get a move on.



French Guépard-class destroyer, of which the *Valmy* and *Guépard* were with Vichy forces in Lebanon. Main weapons are five 5.4-inch guns.

### **Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 9**

Starting supply: 3.00

Arrives via Reinforcement: 2.50

Fuel: 0.25

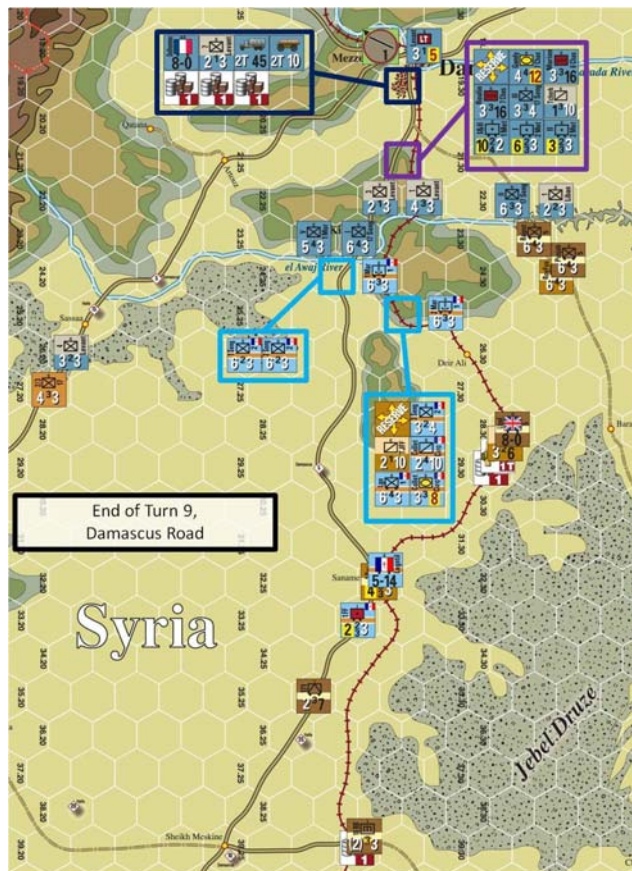
Remaining: 5.25

### **Vichy Supply Summary Turn 9**

Starting supply: 4.75

Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.00

Remaining: 5.75



**Newbie Note:** Other than the Fighter Sweeps, this kind of turn is called a “Simulcast” Turn, when neither side is taking any offensive action (OCS Rule 2.4), which can speed up play.

### Turn 10, June 24, 1941

John wins the Initiative roll again and announces that I shall go first, still wary of giving me a double turn.

#### June 24 – CW First Player – Turn 10 – Turn start activities:

- I ready my aircraft in the Off Map Holding Box.
- My supply roll of 7 (2d6) gives me 2.5 SP's of which I place 1 in Amman and 1.5 in Haifa.
- My replacement roll of 6 (2d6) yields nothing.
- My Naval Barrage rolls are 6, 4 and both units become available.
- Replacements for Turn 10 include an additional 2.5 SP's in Haifa. I receive two air steps that I must use immediately. I increase my Mixed fighter unit in 22.12 back to two steps and bring back the Blenheim IV (reduced to its 1-step side) in the Off-Map Holding Box.
- Replacements also include the 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade containing three AR 4 battalions and an artillery unit, all placed in Haifa and they arrive fueled for the initial Movement Phase per RE Rule 2.1A.



HMAS Perth off Lebanon supports AIF at battle of Damour, July 5-9, 1941 - Photo George Silk

With the supply that arrived this turn I am back up to 10.50 SP's, plus a fresh brigade of '4' rated infantry, so I have the resources to press my offensive. But where to commit them? John brought me to a halt in the Bekaa Valley area north of Merdjayoun by bringing in the 24<sup>th</sup> Mixed Brigade. However I have only 1.5 SP's of supply available for use in that area, compared with 3.25 SP's in the Damascus road side of the board and 6 on the coast. If I am to move now, the coast looks like the place. The challenge is John's defense arrangement—he has units in Close Terrain behind a river backed up by a Reserve stack. There are some units lurking around Jezzine that might harass me on my flank. I have Naval Barrages to employ, and no Vichy Patrol Zones to hamper my Air Barrage.

Looking more closely at his arrangements, I think I see how to come at this. He has a tough '4' AR II/6 Lgn unit in 17.09 and two lower AR units in 17.08, which is where the road crosses the river. I can't overrun across the river with units using Truck or Track MP's (OCS Rule 8.1c prohibits Overruns into terrain that would cost more than the 3MP's for an Overrun, and crossing a river into 17.08 (Low Hills) is 7 Truck MP's or 4 Track MP's. I could do it using Foot MP's, but I didn't position a stack last turn that could do this—my intentions

would be pretty obvious if I bulked up a big stack adjacent to his units!

**Newbie Note:** Once again, *Fog of War* would limit what I could actually see. John might have slipped a big unit into 17.08 and I wouldn't know until I attacked.

What I need are some DGs, and then several attacks in succession which might be able to dislodge him.

Other objectives for the turn are to 1) position units for action south of Damascus—it looks like I would need to either go through his units near Kiswe (23.28) or around them, and I think I like going around and, 2) I need to keep pounding his air units.

First up are the fighter sweeps. John's remaining air force consists of two bomber units and a fighter at Rayak (6.21). I send in one of my Hurricanes from the off-map box and right away John is in a quandary. Does he Voluntarily Abort his bombers or not (OCS Rule 14.3d)? If he doesn't, then they would be in real difficulty should my fighter unit win the initial combat against his MS.406. If he does, he loses their ability to Barrage. He keeps them active.

And regrets that decision at once. My Hurricanes are at parity with his MS.406, so there is no adjustment to the die roll. It is a 4, 4, 4, which aborts his fighter without losses. But now the fight continues until one side runs out of active aircraft—once the Air Combat procedure in 14.3e starts, there is no way out. John puts forward his full strength bomber, since its Air-to-Air rating of (1) gives it better odds. I rub the dice with glee . . . and roll a 2, 1, 2. Our Air-to-Air ratings give me a +2 advantage, but it isn't enough and my fighter is aborted.

I send in my second Hurricane. He still has two active aircraft at Rayak, and one must remain to fight (OCS Rule 14.3d). John Voluntarily aborts his two-step unit and faces me with a reduced bomber, with its Air-to-Air Rating of '0'. This time the roll is 5, 1, 5, and his air unit is destroyed. My fighter returns to the Off Map box and goes inactive. I have more fighters that are active, but Fighter Sweeps can only be flown against Air Bases with active enemy aircraft (OCS Rule 14.6). His air force is now neutralized.

I rail the newly-arrived SP from Amman to 29.31. I flip the Legntil Free French Division HQ to Combat Mode and garrison the hex with two small artillery units (the HQ is positioned here to simultaneously block the road/rail line and to be able to draw down the Supply Dump at Ezraa (39.28)). I slide the Punjab Battalion forward a hex, and I shift around some units to get my units that are Truck Mobile on their Move Mode sides ready to go into Reserve next turn.

In the Bekaa Valley, I get all the Attack-Capable Combat Units on their Move Mode side, and create a Reserve Stack in 20.15.

**Set Piece Assault, Part 1** – Now for the offensive stuff. I move the 2/2/17 Pioneer unit in Merdjayoun forward a hex to 21.12. Yes, I know I left Merdjayoun unguarded, hold on a minute. The 2/14 Infantry battalion shifts over from 18.07 to 18.08. My newly arrived 23<sup>rd</sup> Brigade comes racing up the coast road, drops off the 60 Field/23 Artillery in 20.07, and moves into assault position in 18.07. My 2/4 Artillery in 20.07 does NOT enter Reserve this turn.

**Game Note:** The RE rules state that “Reinforcement units arrive fueled, as appropriate.” This applies for the very next Moment Phase only—they must be fueled from on-map Supply Points to move in any later Phase. This is not explicitly stated in the Game-Specific Rules. Think of it as “these units just spent SPs to fuel themselves the instant before they appeared.” “As appropriate” means “only if they need to be fueled to move.”

I use both my Naval units to Barrage his reserve stack at 15.09. It is a 15-point Barrage with no shifts (he has 1.5 RE's in the hex so no density shift, the hex is Clear and the Barrage is automatically Spotted). My roll of 9 (2d6) is a [1/2] result—this means the stack is DG'ed and would normally roll for a 50% chance of killing a step. But the explanatory notes to the right of the Barrage table indicate that the brackets around the results mean that for Air Barrages, Naval Barrages, unspotted Barrages or defending units in a Level 3 or 4 Hedgehog, the result is just a DG. I am perfectly content with this since it removes his Reserve marker.

I bring all my bombers to perform an Air Barrage at 17.08. There are three units, so a +1 to the Flak roll, which I pass with a roll of 4 (2d6). It is an 18-point Barrage (1 shift left for density and 1 shift left for terrain) and I my roll of 3 (2d6) misses the target. (By the way, there is a limit of four aircraft in a single Barrage mission, per OCS Rule 14.2a). A quick check of Supply shows all my units can Make their Trace during the Supply Phase.

John's has limited options in his Reaction Phase. I have taken his Air Units and nearby Reserve stack out of the picture for the moment. None of his other Reserve units can get close to the battle, so he makes no Barrages or moves (remember that units released from Reserve in the Reaction Phase of your opponents turn only have 50% of their MA available, per OCS Rule 5.7b).

I have one more chance to DG the defenders in my intended river-crossing hex, so I use the two artillery units in 20.07 to Barrage the hex. This is why I didn't put the 2/4 Artillery in Reserve this turn, since once in Reserve a unit can't be Released until either my Exploitation Phase or Reaction Phase during the Vichy Player Turn (OCS Rule 5.7b). You can only perform one Barrage per Phase per target hex except for Hip Shoots (OCS Rule 10.0e), but my Air Barrage took place in my Movement Phase and this is now the Combat Phase. It is an 8-point Barrage with two left shifts (1 for density, 1 for terrain, spotted) and I miss with a roll of 6 (2d6).

**Game Note:** Defensive Supply costs 2T per combat unless the defending units have 1 RE or less, in which case the cost is 1T (OCS Rule 12.4). Most defensive combats in RE require only 1T. Don't forget when you play other OCS games!

**Game Note:** Just as you never use the “Rounding Rule” (OCS Rule 4.1) to round Movement Allowances (OCS Rule 4.2), you also never round Regimental Equivalents (REs)—not for calculating defensive combat supply, not for transport costs, not for barrage density. So, 1.25 RE's would require 2T defensive combat supply, 2T of transport and not round down to “1 RE or less” for a -1 Density shift when the target of a barrage. This is not explicitly stated in the OCS Rules. I learned it in conversation with John Kisner, OCS System Coordinator, while reviewing this article.



I hope a third try will be the charm. I announce the attack against 17.08 with my five adjacent units, leading with the Bdr battalion to use its '4' AR. John selects the river hexside as the terrain for my attacking stacks and the hex terrain (Low Hills, or Close Terrain) for the defender. His I/29 Alg unit is the unit supplying its '3' AR, so the DRM is +1. I have 21 Combat Strength halved to 10.5 versus the Vichy 9 for the 1:1 column on the Close Row of the CRT. The Surprise roll goes against me with a 3, 1, 2, giving Defender Surprise even with the +1 DRM (adjusted roll of 5 or less) with two column shifts to the 1:3 column. The Combat roll is 7 (2d6) +1 for an 8, which is an AL101/DoI result. My lead unit is eliminated. I also eliminate the 2/14/21 Infantry for my option because I need to force him to take his option. This puts John in a quandary—retreat from the river line or lose a step? He decides to take the option as a loss and eliminates his I/29 Alg battalion.

**Set Piece Assault, Part 2** – Next comes my Exploitation Phase. In the Merdjayoun area, two of the units in Reserve in 20.15 are Cavalry units in Move Mode. I move them around to encircle his 13, 14, 36/Circ Cavalry unit at 20.13. This will place him out of Trace, and to escape he would need to go through the Mountains or attack my Cavalry. I had moved my Pioneers before in order to help block the Vichy units escape routes.



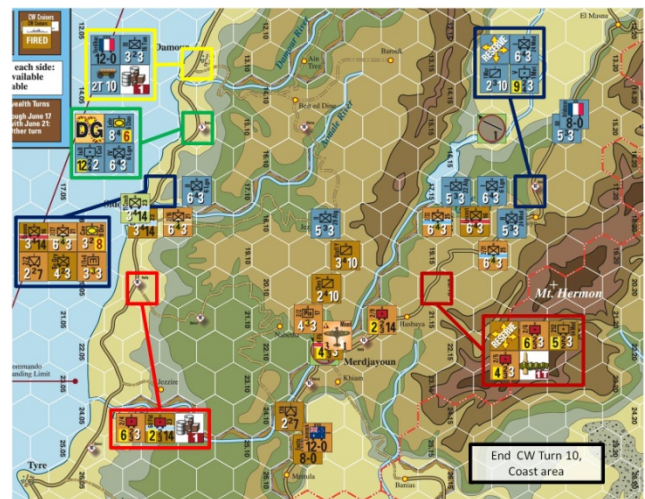
I release the Kings/16 and Queens/16 battalions from 20.15, fuel them, and drive them all the way to 18.08 (down to 24.11, across the windy road through Nabetha to 20.07 and then up to 18.07 and east to 18.08 is 13 Truck MP's). I release the rest of the Reserves in 20.07 and bring them to 18.07.

Moving to the combat phase, all the units that were released from Reserve and moved in Exploit are designated as the attack force. Once again the attacking terrain is the river and the defending hex is the Low Hills terrain. My attack totals 24 Combat Strength, halved to 12, and I use the Kings/16 battalion's AR of 4. The Vichy III/22 Alg infantry has 4 Combat Strength on defense with an AR of 2, giving me a +2 DRM. The initial odds are 3:1, and my Surprise roll of 2, 2, 3 escapes Defender Surprise with the DRM. My Combat roll of 8 (2d6) +2 up to 10 is enough for an AoI/DL1o1. This kills his unit and I take my option as a loss (eliminating the Kings/16 battalion) in order to advance the other units into the hard-won hex. I am across!

I don't take any other actions with Reserve units and have no markers to remove in my Clean Up Phase.

#### Newbie Note:

- *Breaking the river line cost me 3 strong units and 4.5 SP's. The "option" mechanic enables you to pound your way through if you can absorb the casualties and the supply burn.*
- *The "factor counters" among you will have noticed I could have left a unit out of each attack and still gotten the same odds. With Fog of War you will not have such perfect intel. The variability in the combat system and limited visibility into opponent's stacks ensures that you get a big range of outcomes, just like real life. You can't really "game" it effectively, so no need to scrounge extra factors (and they cost supply to include in an attack!)*
- *I have better mobility than the Vichy units, so I was able to "switch fields" for this attack.*
- *The river line limited my ability to Overrun the hex in addition to my regular attacks.*
- *My cavalry surrounding his unit at 20.13 may kill that unit for zero supply cost.*



**June 24 – Vichy Second Player – Turn 10** – John has counterattack options to mull over. During his turn start:

- His air units are readied and made active in Rayak.
- His supply roll of 9 (2d6) gives him 1.5 SP, placed in Baalbek (1.28).
- He is eligible for unit Recovery, draws the I/16 Tun from the cup, and places it in 14.10.

The Breakout Phase is first and he attempts to Breakout the 13, 14, 36/Circ Cavalry. He rolls a 5 (successful Breakout) and then a 2, so he places the unit two turns from now on the Turn Record Track.

John knows from my attack that I currently have 21 Combat Strength in 17.08, with a '4' AR unit. If he attacked with everything he had in the area, he could just manage a 1:1 with a DRM of '0'. Even if he could DG me, dislodging me is nearly impossible. He could put two units in each of 16.08 and 17.09, but would have very little to position as a Reserve. He decides that this isn't the place to fight it out and withdraws to the Damour River line. He is careful to set up a unit in Reserve in 12.09 by backing the III/16 Tun up a hex.

John eyes an attack on 18.16 as a way to force me to pay attention to the Bekaa Valley area. He could attack with a 4:1 and 0 DRM if he used one of his units in Reserve. In Rough Terrain it is about a 50/50

for him to kill my unit—but it could easily cost him a unit as well. After long consideration, he makes no changes. Nor does he make any moves in the Damascus area.

Where John would love to hurt me is my big stack in 17.08. His air units are reduced to the point where he can't go head-to-head and must choose his attack points. 17.13 is within the Patrol Zone of my Mixed Fighter in 22.12, which John would prefer to clear out before he can Air Barrage my big stack. Down flies his MS.406 for an even-odds Fighter Sweep, and back they go, inactive, with a roll of 1, 4, 1.

He isn't interested in being intercepted, so John brings his bombers instead to 23.32. This is an 8-point barrage, clear terrain, spotted and 1-left shift for density. His roll of 7 (2d6) narrowly misses DG'ing my units.

**Newbie Note:** Air campaigns are an interesting game-within-a-game in the OCS. Consider all of the tactics available to you:

- *Aggressive Fighter Sweeps to clear away opposing fighters and make your opponent's air units inactive. Then, Barrage attacks against airfields to reduce them and kill air steps. An air superiority campaign requires relentless use—every opportunity to hit them activity.*
- *Build air bases to provide Patrol Zones over your units. In larger games, its best for air bases to be 10 hexes or less apart, so the PZs are interlocking.*
- *On defense, conserve fighter power in off-map boxes (if available) that can Sweep and create local superiority for your bombers. Spread out your air force to many Air Bases instead of stacking high on a few (so it takes more effort to hurt your air force, but this also requires more SPs to ready the aircraft).*
- *DG'ing enemy Reserve stacks or attacking units from the air is sometimes worth advancing a sacrificial unit as a spotter for a spoiling attack.*
- *Air transport/drop of Supply Points or even units to sustain your advance (however, none of the air units in RE have a transport capacity).*
- *Trainbusting to gum up opponent's mobility.*
- *Hip Shoots, if available to your forces, which can be done "on call" and multiple times against the same hex during your Movement Phase (including Reaction and Exploit Movement Phases).*
- *Strategic air campaigns to reduce Port capacity.*

I take no action in my Reaction Phase, and John takes none in his Exploit Phase. He removes the DG from his Lehr/6 Chas unit and we conclude the turn.

#### Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 10

Starting supply: 5.25

Arrives via Reinforcement: 5.00

Refit: 0.00

Fuel: 0.25

Barrage: 0.50

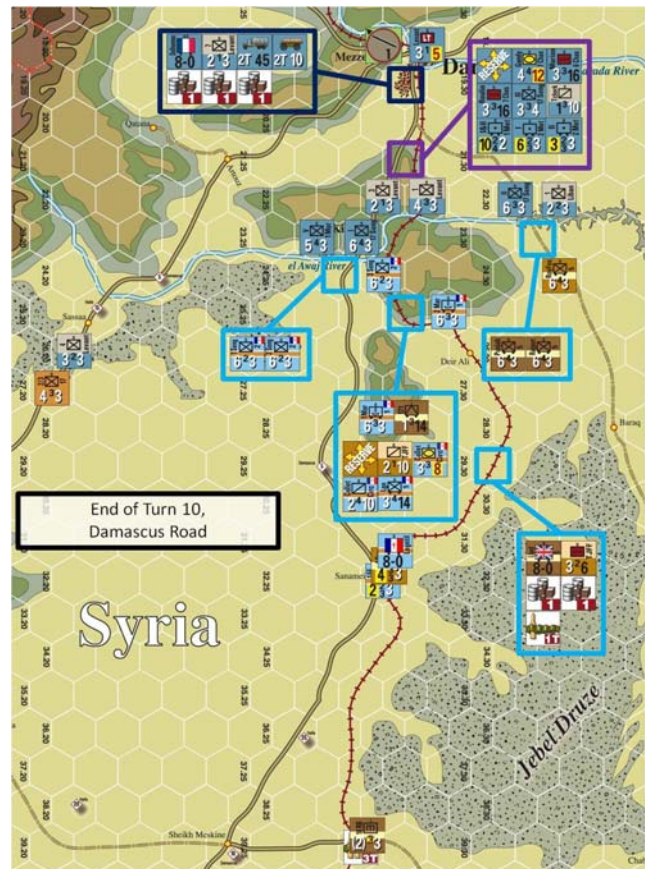
Combat: 1.25

Exploitation Fuel: 1.00

Exploitation Combat: 1.75

Defensive Combat Supply (during Vichy turn): 0.00

Remaining: 5.50



#### Vichy Supply Summary Turn 10

Starting supply: 5.75

Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.50

Refit: 0.00

Fuel: 0.50

Combat: 0.00

Reserve Movement: 0.00

Defensive Combat Supply (during CW turn): 0.50 (1T during CW Combat Phase and 1T during CW Exploitation Phase)

Remaining: 6.25

### Turn 11, June 26, 1941

I win the Initiative roll this time. I have been planning to begin my assault south of Damascus this turn, but let's take the time to look at the whole picture:

- **Damascus area** – The forces arrayed against each other are roughly even (18 Vichy Combat Units to 18 CW). What seems promising to me is a “right hook” along the road in 22.31. If I can get up near Damascus I can cut off supply to his units. Damascus is not defensible, since it is an “open city” (Vichy units defending in the Damascus hexes are halved and treated as if they were in open terrain, per *RE* Rule 1.4).
- **Bekaa Valley** – What seemed such a promising area a few turns ago is now tamped tight. There are 8 Vichy Combat units to my 10, though I also have the CW Cavalry units near Jezzine (18.12) that could swing back into the Valley or head to the Shore area.
- **Coast area** – The Damour River line is more difficult than others, since 13.10 is Rough terrain. I anticipate I must spend a few turns accumulating supply before I can mount my next assault. But there are only 6 Vichy Combat units in the area, compared to 14 Commonwealth. This is also the shortest path to a Sudden Death Victory hex. And have a look at 13.10. There is one unit there, the ‘3’ AR I/16 Tun, since John hasn't had a chance to rearrange his units. This might be a great opportunity for a fast follow-up.
- **Strategic** – John committed his 24 Mixed Brigade to the fighting in the Bekaa Valley and no longer has a group of mobile/high AR units which can respond to emergencies. If I can create a crisis he may have no choice but to strip the Reserve units from other fronts.

So I hand the dice to John and tell him he must go first.

*Newbie Note: Why am I giving him the initiative and letting him prepare for my next move? There was a weak unit at 13.10 begging to be attacked! It's because the Double Turn threat is a huge advantage—my gaming group calls it having “The Hammer.” Very few tactical situations are worth giving up Double Turn potential.*

June 26 – Vichy First Player – Turn 11 – John quickly moves through his turn start:

- His air units are readied and made active in Rayak.
- His supply roll of 6 (2d6) gives him 1.5 SP, placed in Baalbek (1.28).
- He is not eligible for Recovery.
- John gets one last Reinforcement, a “Pax” Repl step. He places it on Entry Hex 1 (1.14).

John rearranges his units at Damour, making sure he has two units in each front line hex and a reserve stack. He distributes the supply he received. His Pax Repl moves to 7.11, near an HQ to rebuild in the next Reinforcement Phase.

During his Air Barrage Segment, John tries again to DG my units in 23.32. Same as last turn: an 8-point barrage, clear terrain, spotted and 1-left shift for density. His roll of 4 (2d6) isn't even close, and the bombers return to Rayak inactive.

I know my air units will refit at the start of my turn, so in my Reaction Phase I Fighter Sweep his active Fighter in Rayak with my Hurricane from the Off-Map Box. I roll a 2, 3, 4 and my unit is turned away. I try again with the Hurricane from 22.12 and with a 4, 3, 2 we both go inactive.

This clears the way for a raid on Rayak Air Base. I bring my two Wellington bomber units with their ‘8’ Barrage strength to try and kill his air units on the ground. I roll a 7 (2d6) for flak, which misses even with the +2 modifier from the Air Base level. My roll on Barrage vs. Facility table is a 6 for a 1\*(4). Rayak becomes a Level 1 Air Base, and my subsequent rolls of 5 and 3 reduce his fighter by a step and misses his bomber.



Wellington bombers

John has no attacks or Exploit Movement.



June 26 – CW Second Player – Turn 11 – Turn start activities:

- I ready my aircraft in the Off Map Holding Box.
- My supply roll of 9 (2d6), gives me 3.5 SP's of which I place 1 in Amman and 2.5 in Haifa.
- My replacement roll of 9 (2d6) gives me 1 Pax replacement, which I place it in Haifa and then use to rebuild the Bdr/23 battalion.

- I do have a unit Recovery, and pull the Cav/6 Div out of the cup at random and also put it in 29.04.
- There are no Naval Barrage eligibility rolls this turn.

John's air units are now inactive, so no Fighter Sweeps are possible.

I start by announcing an overrun against his 1/Liban unit in 22.32 with my two Infantry units in 23.32. This has initial odds of 3:1 in Clear terrain, because my units are halved crossing the wadi. The DRM is +2. With a 5, 3, 2 I gain surprise, so we go up to a 5:1. The combat roll is a 6 (2d6) +2 to 8, which is an Ao1/DL1o1. This kills the defender and puts me into the hex after losing my lead Punjab infantry unit (by the way, the result would have been exactly the same if I hadn't gotten surprise). I move in more units (in particular, the 171/5 AT unit, anticipating a counterattack) and prepare an exploitation column in 25.29.

The Lavarack Corps HQ flips to move mode side, gasses up, and drives over to 28.04. The Allen 7<sup>th</sup> Division HQ is positioned so that it can throw supply to units as far up the road as 15.09, but that isn't far enough to get Combat Supply to units when they attack the next river line at Damour (13.09). The Corps HQ's greater Throw range and positioning in 28.04 will allow it to still draw from Haifa and throw all the way to Beirut along the road (when I flip it to Combat Mode next turn). Now that I have an "extra" HQ I can pre-position them ahead of time. The Evetts 6<sup>th</sup> Division HQ remains in 25.12 and is sufficient to support the Bekaa Valley front for the time being.

I shuttle 1 SP of supply from Haifa up to my Dump in 20.15 (my trucks can load, drive up, unload, and return to Haifa for 43 MP's). The Queens/16 battalion returns to 20.15, as it would no longer be able to receive Trace Supply from the Lavarack Corps HQ (where the other units of the 16<sup>th</sup> Brigade can be thrown Trace) and would have to Eat off the Map per OCS Rule 12.6f. I close up to his new river defense line at Damour, careful to create a Reserve stack at 17.08. One of my cavalry units advances to 18.18 (the limit of supply throw from the not-yet-Combat Mode Lavarack HQ in 28.04). I move the Staff Y Cavalry unit all the way to 19.17, planning to try and edge around his line and threaten the VP hex at Rachaiye (18.18), currently ungarrisoned—or at least force him to extend his line.



June, 1941. Australian stretcher bearers in action during the Syrian campaign (photo by Frank Hurley)

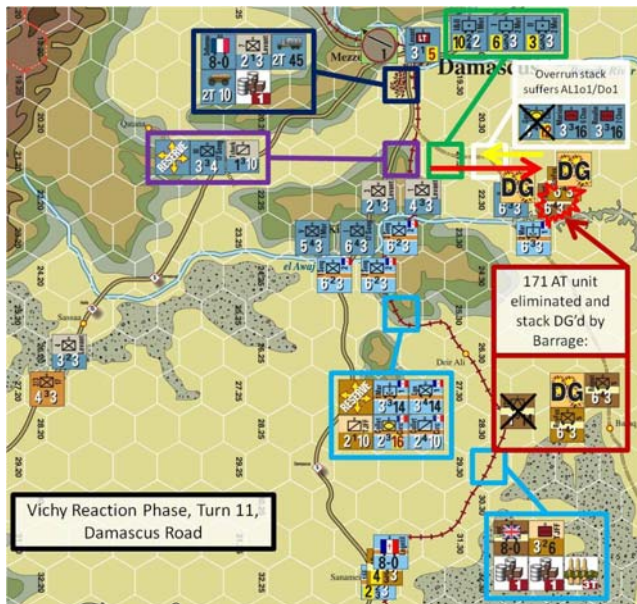
In my Air/Naval Barrage Segment I fly my bomber group to 22.31. His flak roll misses with an 8 (2d6 and +1 due to three air units). I

have an 18-point Barrage, spotted, with one shift left for Density. My roll of 9 (2d6) is a [1/2], which converts to a DG for air barrage attacks. In my Supply Phase we determine all my units can Make their Trace.



John doesn't do any reacting at the coast or Bekaa Valley. But he can see trouble brewing near Damascus and decides it is time to stiff-arm my units that have crossed over the wadi. He releases the armor/mech units from 21.29, fuels them from the dump in Damascus, moves to 21.32 and declares an Overrun against 22.32. This is all clear terrain, but I brought in my AT unit last turn, so his units are only x1.5 instead of doubled. This makes the attack 15:13 or 1:1 with a 0 DRM (he uses his Gandy/7 Chas '4' AR and my RoyFus/5 also has a '4'). The 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade HQ in 29.31 can throw Combat Supply to 23.32, sufficient to be "adjacent is good enough," but my 1.25 RE's don't round to 1, so I require 2T for defense Combat Supply). John's surprise roll is a disaster, a 3, 3, 3, giving Defender Surprise and shifting the column over to the 1:4 column for Clear terrain. His combat roll of 8 (2d6) is an AL1o1/Do1. He eliminates his tank unit and retreats the two armored car battalions to 21.31, which means I can ignore my defender option.

John still has some options to hold me up and it is still his Movement Segment. He releases his three artillery units from 21.29 and moves them 1 hex to 21.30. He then proceeds to the Barrage Segment where he fires a 19-point Barrage against 22.32. There is 1-shift left for Density, and the Barrage is spotted by his unit in 22.31 (neither the "Effects of DG Mode" in OCS Rule 5.10b nor the "Spotter Restrictions" in OCS Rule 10.0b prohibit use of DG Mode units as spotters). His rolls are much better: an 11 (2d6) for a 1/2 result, followed by a 6 which kills one step. I destroy my AT unit and DG the two units remaining in the stack (per OCS Rule 9.6, the owning player can choose which units are lost to a barrage or retreat, unlike Combat where the first loss must be the unit which supplied its AR).



**Newbie Note:** It took me a while to adjust to the ability of artillery to both move and then Barrage immediately afterward!

Back to me for my Combat Phase. I don't have the artillery near Damascus for a return Barrage, so I proceed to my Combat Segment. I attack his DG'd II/17 Seng unit in 22.31 with my three adjacent units. The initial odds are 9:3 or 3:1 with a +1 DRM (the Vichy unit is halved and -1 AR for the DG, and my units are all halved by the DG or wadi, and I use the 2 Mar/1 for its AR). My Surprise roll of 5, 3, 5 narrowly misses surprise. The combat roll of 10 (2d6) is +1 to 11 for an Ao1/DL1o1. This kills his unit, and I retreat each of mine to the southeast a hex.

Jeez, what a turn! But we aren't done. In my Exploitation Phase, I first release the two cavalry units in 25.29, which move to 22.31 to secure the bridge. The other three units from 25.29 fuel up and proceed over the bridge, around the Vichy armored cars (which are in Move Mode without a ZOC) and declare an Overrun against Damascus (hex 19.29). Damascus has some special combat effects: because it was considered an "open city", Vichy units are halved and defend as if it were Open terrain (*RE* Rule 1.4). I am going to interpret this Damascus being considered Open terrain on the Combat Table, but my armor unit would have to use the x1/3 multiplier for Major City terrain. In many *OCS* games Major City hexes may not be Overrun, but the TEC in *RE* prohibits it only for Mountain and Lava hexes. Entering a Major City is less than 3 MP's, so I should be able to conduct the Overrun.

The Delhomme HQ is 1/2 RE in size and 2 Combat Strength on its Combat Mode side (*RE* Rule 3.2B), so John has 4 Combat Strength in this hex, halved to 2. Since my armor unit won't make a difference, it drops off from the stack at this point and I continue with just the infantry (two 3-strength units) for initial odds of 3:1. My units are beyond the throw range of the HQ in 29.31, so they use Internal Stocks and are marked with a 'Low' marker. I have a '4' AR unit and the Vichy infantry defender is a '1' so the DRM is +3. The surprise roll is a 4, 2, 4 so I gain surprise and 4 shifts up to the 9:1 column. The combat roll is a 9 (2d6) +3 for a result of Ae3/DL2o2DG. Both Vichy units are destroyed and I move into the hex. I roll '3' and get 25% of the supply from the dump (only 2T remains, so I capture 1T), '4' for the trucks (capture 1T of trucks) and '1' for 0% of the wagons (note that you roll for each category on the Capture Table separately –

check *OCS* Rule 9.14). My units are not eligible for Exploit Mode because this is the Exploitation Phase.

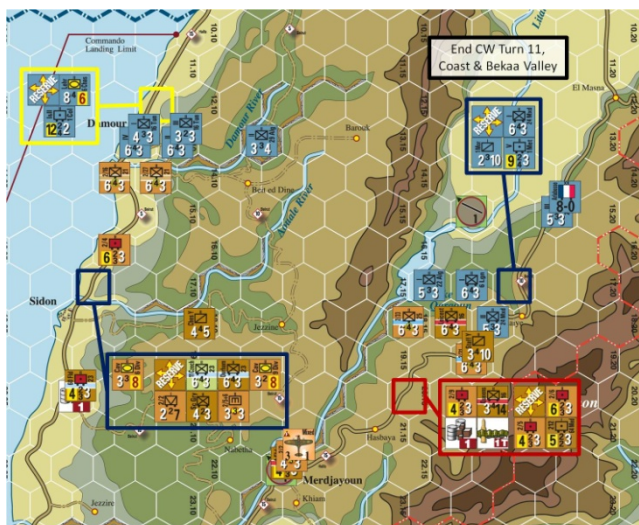


I don't do a Barrage or Combat Segment, so my turn ends with the Clean Up Phase, where I remove the DG marker from my units in 23.33.



*Gen Catroux and Gentilhomme with an escort of Circassian Cavalry enter Damascus, 1941*

Damascus—at least part of it—is mine, and I have caused severe problems for the Vichy player. But my units are past the end of a very long supply tether! The next turn will be crucial.



### Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 11

Starting supply: 5.50

Arrives via Reinforcement: 3.50

Refit: 0.00

Fuel: 1.00

Combat Supply for Overrun: 0.50

Combat Supply (during Vichy Reaction): 0.50

Barrage: 0.00

Combat: 0.75

Exploitation Fuel: 0.75

Exploitation Overrun Combat: (used Internals)

Gained by capture: 0.25

Remaining: 5.75



June, 1941. A Bren Gun carrier of the 6th Australian Division Cavalry Regiment passing through a wood during the advance into Syria.



Syria, 1941. Father and son; Private N. Nelson (left) and his father Private J. E. Nelson of the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Machine-gun battalion. Nelson senior was in Gallipoli in World War I and served in Syria until the Armistice with the Vichy French in July 1941.

### Vichy Supply Summary Turn 11

Starting supply: 6.25

Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.50

Defensive Supply for Overrun (during CW turn): 0.25

Reserve Movement Fuel during Reaction: 0.75

Overrun Combat Supply during Reaction: 0.75

Barrage during Reaction: 0.75

Lost to Capture: 0.50

Defensive Combat Supply (during CW turn): 0.50 (1T during CW Combat Phase and 1T during CW Exploitation Phase)

Remaining: 4.25

### Turn 12, June 28, 1941

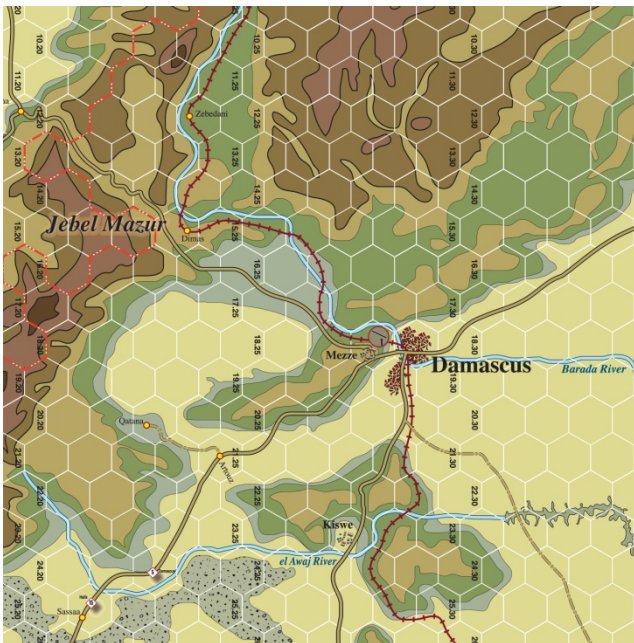
This is a particularly important initiative roll, which I win. Double turn! John groans and looks stricken. Let's see what I can do to capitalize on the situation.

#### June 28 – CW First Player – Turn 12 – Turn start activities:

- I ready my aircraft in the Off Map Holding Box.
- My supply roll of 9 (2d6), gives me 3.5 SP's of which I place 1 in Amman and 2.5 in Haifa.
- My replacement roll of 9 (2d6) gives me 1 Pax Repl unit. I place it in Haifa and immediately rebuild the Punjab/5 Infantry.
- I am not yet eligible for unit Recovery.
- My Naval Barrage rolls are 4, 6 and both units become available.

Look at the terrain near Damascus for a moment. I hold the south hex of Damascus (19.29). There is a road to the northeast to Entry Hex 3 (hex 14.35), which is a Vichy Supply Source (*RE* Rule 3.3A). The only other Vichy supply lines into the area are along the road from El Masna (12.20) and from the Detrainable hexes along the railroad: Zebedani (12.24), Dimas (15.24), Mezze (18.28) and the northeastern hex of Damascus (18.29)—I do not yet have a ZOC that blocks the rail line into Damascus. There are no Vichy SPs on this portion of the map at present, so he cannot move his units that require fuel. Notice how the road and rail go into Damascus from hex 18.28. My units in 19.29 are in Move Mode, so I don't block this road. Therefore, all the Vichy units would be able to Make their Trace if this were their Supply Phase (either tracing to/through the road running from Mezze southwest to Sassaa). I need to put this whole group OoS this turn if possible.

**Newbie Note:** *Having one big mound of SPs to cover a large area is efficient, but it is wise to disperse little bits of supply closer to your front. Strongpoints or areas that might be cut off can really use some SPs that have been squirreled away for an emergency like the Vichy player is facing! Our gaming group calls creating these small dumps "pollinating."*



I also need to think about the next phase of the campaign. Once I secure the Damascus area, I face a slog through the Mountain terrain of the Jebel Mazur along the road to El Masra (12.20) or along the rail line to Yahfouf (6.24). The path is unguarded at the moment, but won't be for long! Any ground I gain doesn't have to be fought for later, and it puts his units farther from their supply sources. I don't yet have possession of the road/rail lines past Kiswe (23.28), so I need to bring SPs around to Eat off the Map. Yet the first 1 SP I bring will be vacuumed up by my two units marked "Low" to Recover their Internal Stocks (*OCS* Rule 12.10e, and note that this happens BEFORE the SP can be used to provide Trace Supply). Bypassing the northern hex of Damascus isn't easy--there is NOT a road going from 19.29 to 18.29, meaning it costs 2 Leg MPs or 5 Truck MPs to move that one hex.

John is sure to rush reinforcements to the area. Any pressure I can put on him at the coast or Bekaa Valley might force him to leave more units in those areas.

Let's get the supply net organized first. I rail my 1 SP from Amman up to 29.31. My trucks in Haifa bring another 1 SP over, with 1T going to 24.27, and 3T to 29.31, and the trucks returning towards the coast (they can only make it back to 35.13). Then I flip the Legentil Free French HQ to Move mode and bring it up to 23.32. From there it can draw from 29.31 and throw all the way up to Damascus.

I flip the Collet/Circ cavalry to its Combat Mode side and bring it up to the 19.29 hex of Damascus to occupy the city in anticipation of my next move.

The Vichy light armor battalion in the north hex of Damascus is an AR '1' unit, which means it unlikely to survive an attrition roll. I don't really want to spend the SP to take it out, but I have to remove its ZOC and clear the road. I plan to use the Lgn/1 and 1 Mar/1 battalions currently in 19.29, and realizing there is a minor river hexside in the way, initially thought to fuel them, drive around to 18.30, and attack from there. But, duh, I could also Overrun from where I am in Combat Mode—it doubles their strength which would then be halved by the minor river hexside, and saves me the fuel. I flip the two battalions to Combat Mode and declare an Overrun against 18.29. The terrain is treated as clear, the defender is halved for Damascus being an open city and my attackers are halved for the river. I have a '4' AR unit and the defender's AR is '1'. My units have combat supply thrown to them by the Legentil HQ, so they do not need to use their Internals, but the Vichy defender does use Internals for combat supply. Initial odds are 4:1. My surprise roll is a 2, 5, 3 gives me surprise with a three-column shift up to the 9:1 line. I roll a 4 (2d6) for the combat, bumped up to 7 for an Ao1e4/DL1o2. The defending unit is destroyed. I take my option as a retreat and move the units into 20.28. (*OCS* Rule 9.12c governs retreat direction, which must be "generally away from enemy units involved in the combat" but you can bend the definition of what "locally to the rear" is to avoid losses. In this case, 20.28 is adjacent to enemy units which do not have ZOCs, and the hex is just within the Throw Range of the Free French HQ.)

**The "Low" markers had no bearing on the combat. They simply designate that my units had drawn on Internals once to provide Combat Supply and had not yet Recovered from this. Using Internals is like borrowing supply from a loan shark—they have a very high interest rate, and they WILL be repaid!**



Now I start to push units far up the road. The TJFF Cavalry battalion flips to combat Mode and can just make it to the Damascus 18.29 hex (passing through 20.29 to get on the road). The Raiput battalion motors to 12.24 and the RoyFus battalion drives clear out to 12.21. Finally, my newly captured 1T Truck unit transports the 1T of supply that was in Damascus up to 12.21, unloads, drives all the way down to 29.31, picks up 1T of supply, and brings it back as far as 23.32. I place the 2 Mar/1 battalion in Reserve in 23.32 to cover the HQ. Sure, these units are way out on a limb, but they strand all his units south of Damascus, will force him to block me along both the rail and road corridors and hopefully will avoid the necessity to fight my way through the Jebel Mazur. Finally, I shift the Collet/Circ armor battalion over to 18.31 in Combat Mode—this will prevent Vichy units from tracing supply to the road hexes leading to Vichy Entry Hex 3.

In the Bekaa Valley, I flip the Staff Y cavalry to Combat Mode and shift a hex east to 19.18 to threaten Rachaiye as planned. The Lavarack Corps HQ in 28.04 flips to its Combat Mode side. This enables the Ches Y cavalry battalion to move up to 17.13, at the very end of the Lavarack Throw range. I have seven units that enter Reserve, forming a massive stack in 17.08. The Queens/16 battalion goes into Reserve in 20.15, but I keep the big stack of artillery in the same hex in Combat Mode.

The Bdr/23 battalion moved on its Combat Mode side last turn after being rebuilt, getting to 32.01. I realize it will take two more turns of Leg movement to get past Sidon, so I flip the unit to Move Mode, fuel it (from the dump in Haifa) and bring it up to 17.08. The Punjab/5 just rebuilt in Haifa flips to Move Mode, fuels from the dump in Haifa, enters Strat Mode and drives 28 Truck MP's over to 23.32.

The Air & Naval Barrage phase gives me the opportunity to use both my Naval units against 12.09. A 15-point barrage, spotted, 1-shift left for terrain and none for density and my roll of 6 (2d6) just misses a DG. The three-aircraft bomber force can't Barrage 12.09 again (it is the same Segment), but it can hit Damour (13.09). The flak roll is an 11 (2d6) which requires a step loss from my barraging air units. I roll a 3 on the Mission Loss Table which determines that the second plane in my mission is hit, which is one of my Wellingtons. The barrage is now 14 points (1 shift left for Density) and I roll a 9 (2d6) for a [1/2] result, which for Air Barrages is only a DG result (no check for possible loss required).

It is now my Supply Phase. Before anything else happens, the two 'Low' units Recover at a cost of 1 SP thrown by the Legentil Free French HQ. This same HQ can draw from the Detrainable hex at 26.30 and throw Trace supply to the advanced units as far as the two Damascus hexes. What the Legentil HQ can't do is also function as

the Trace Supply source for the four Free French units south of Kiswe (23.28) that are part of the multi-unit formation. It will be able to reach them once it flips to Combat Mode next turn, but this turn they must Eat off the Map using the 1T I dropped off in 24.27 (OCS Rule 12.6f). The two advanced units in 12.21 and 12.24 must also Eat off the Map, expending the 1T I moved up to 12.21. Eating off the Map requires 1T is per 2 RE of units or fraction thereof, per OCS Rule 12.6c.

John looks at his options for Reaction Movement. I am doing my best to threaten several points—it isn't lost on him that all the artillery in 20.15 is no longer in Reserve and can Barrage him in my Combat Phase, for example. I could be planning an attack against his newly DGd units in 13.09. I want him guessing.

John assesses things this way: He has to forestall me along the coast road, so he releases his armor unit, the Lehr/6 Chas unit and moves it into Damour (13.09). In the valley, he has to prevent me slipping around his unit at 18.17, so he releases his I/24 Mixed battalion from 17.18 and moves it into Rachaiye (18.18). On the Damascus front, he needs to get a unit as far down the rail line from Rayak to Dimas as he can, and that means he needs Cavalry. The 1 Mor cavalry troop comes out of reserve from 17.18 and can get all the way to 08.20. The Tcherk cavalry battalion in 21.29 and marches off to 17.26—it blocks my supply line for the moment, but that cavalry is trying to escape! What John does not have available are any of his more powerful units in Move Mode that can contest my advance—that will come during his own player turn. John declares a 9-point artillery barrage against my Leichest/16 unit in 18.16 with his V/1 Met artillery battalion in 17.18. There are two shifts (terrain and density) and his roll of 6 (2d6) misses my unit. (My RoyFus/5 unit in 12.21 does not block his supply draw for the barrage, since it does not have a ZOC.)

Back to me for my Combat Phase. I use my artillery stack in 20.15 to conduct a 19-point Barrage against 18.17, where his II/24 Mxd infantry battalion sits (the 212/64 Med artillery only has a range of 2, so cannot range the target hex). The barrage is spotted, 1 shift for Density and 1 shift for terrain and my roll of 7 (2d6) is just enough to DG the hex. (Note that OCS Rule 10.1b, note A, requires that all supply to conduct a multi unit barrage must come from either the same HQ or the same Direct Draw point. If an HQ is throwing supply to the barraging units, it can draw the supply from more than one Supply Dump.)

I have one attack, against the newly DG'ed unit in 18.17 with my three adjacent units. I choose the Staff Y cavalry to provide its '4' AR and have 17 Combat Strength attacking his 2.5 Combat Strength, '2' AR unit (reduced because of the DG). This starts on the 6:1 column for Very Close terrain. The surprise roll is a 3, 3, 6, so no surprise either way. The combat roll is a 7 (2d6), +2 to a 9 for an Ao1/DL1o1. The Vichy unit is destroyed and I eliminate my cavalry unit to secure the advance. We are reaching the point where every unit is critical to him. Each one I can kill—even losing one of my own in trade—limits his options. He needs a four-unit front line in the Bekaa Valley front now to hold me back, and it's looking like an excellent place to keep up the pressure.

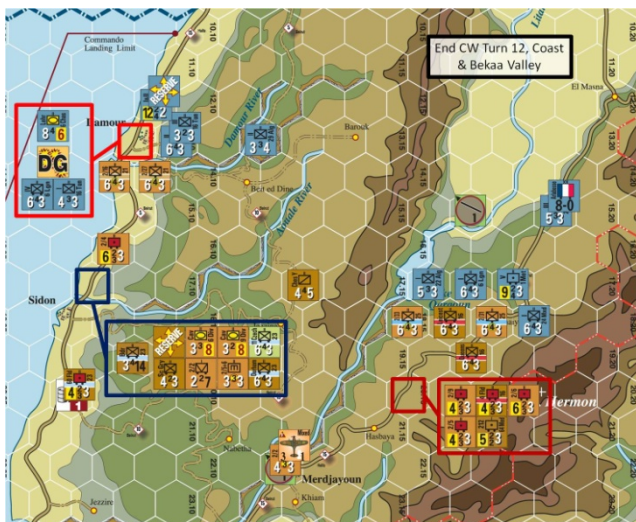
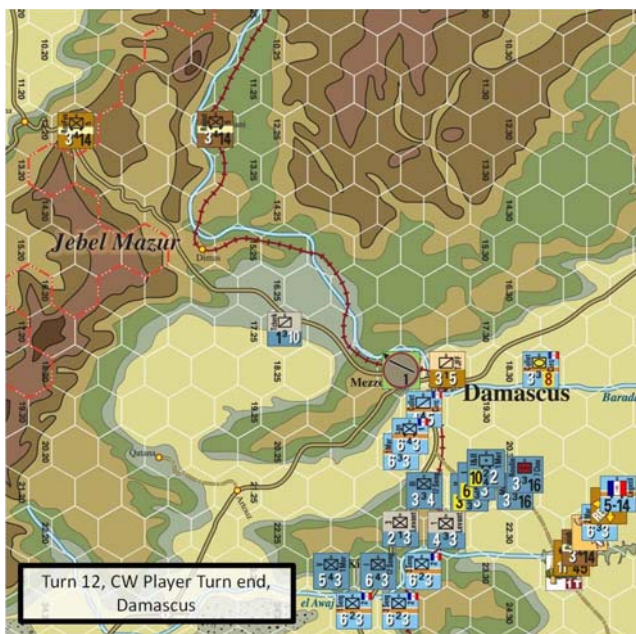
I don't attack at Damour—it would have been tempting if the hex hadn't been reinforced. As it is, I have tied down more of his units.

I have three Reserve stacks—a unit at 23.32, one at 20.15 and the huge stack at 17.08. The 17.08 stack, by the way, is 3.75 RE's in size, but doesn't even come close to the stacking limit, which is 10 REs (OCS Rule 4.8). I ostentatiously count out 1.5 MPs from this stack to 14.08 and rub my hands together and cackle like I can't wait to jump him

during the Reaction Phase in his player turn. Maybe that will make him think twice about stripping the Damour area. I leave the unit in place at 23.32 to garrison the HQ in the same hex.

The lone Vichy artillery unit in 17.18 looks like an opportunity, though. I release the Queens/16 battalion from 20.15 and move it up to 18.17. During my Combat Segment I declare an attack. I have just the one unit attacking against his artillery unit. The DRM is +2 and initial odds are 6:1 in Rough terrain, so we are on the Very Close line. My surprise roll is an abysmal 1, 2, 2 giving defender surprise and a 2 column shift to the left, ending at the 3:1 column. The combat roll is an 8 (2d6), +2 to 10 for an AoI/DoI. I don't see the point in losing my unit so take my option as a retreat. This means John can ignore his option, and anyway he is too busy handing out medals to the gunners in the V/1 Met battalion for their heroic defensive stand.

Well, I am as stretched as I can imagine. I am down to 4 SPs on the entire map, and only 2T remains on the Damascus side of the board. I have no supply available to my Bekka Valley units. But I have put his Damascus-area units in desperate straits and John has a first class emergency on his hands. I have no activity for my Clean Up Phase and play passes to the Vichy side.



**June 28 – Vichy Second Player – Turn 12** – This is a good time for a refresh about the rules pertaining to returning units:

- **Recovered units** must be placed within 2 hexes of an HQ, but NOT the nominal HQ's of Haifa, Beirut or Damascus (RE Rules 2.3C and 3.2C). This happens prior to any Rebuilds (RE Rule 1.11)
- **Rebuilds** The Pax and Eq received as Reinforcements or from the Replacement Table must be placed within 2 hexes of an HQ, including the nominal HQ's in Haifa for the CW player or Beirut or Damascus for the Vichy player (RE Rules 2.3C and 3.2C). This is true even if the Vichy player holds only one of the hexes of Damascus. Rebuilds cannot be placed within an enemy ZOC (OCS Rule 4.5a).
- **Reinforcements** are placed per instructions in the Set Up Cards (for RE) or Order of Arrival chart (most OCS games provide this in the game-specific rule booklet).
- Units that successfully **Breakout** are placed the same as reinforcements (OCS Rule 12.8e), but exactly where isn't covered in the game specific rules. I checked with the game designer on this one, and was told they can appear at any of the three Vichy entry hexes (or any of the three CW entry hexes if they are CW units).

John moves through his turn start:

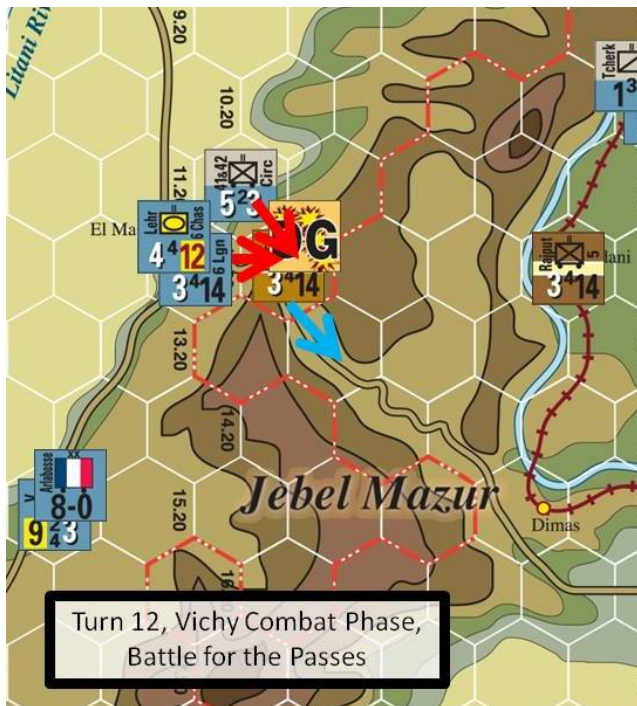
- His air units are readied and made active in Rayak.
- His supply roll of 6 (2d6) gives him 1.5 SP, placed in Baalbek (1.28).
- He is eligible to Recover two units (and one more step lost will get him another). He reaches into the cup and pulls out the 41&42/Circ Infantry and then the Delhomme HQ unit (HQs require two replacement steps to rebuild, an Eq and a Pax per the Common Rebuild Table on the map, but he would really have preferred a combat unit just now!) He puts the infantry unit in 13.20 and the HQ in 7.11.
- The Pax Repl he moved to 7.11 last turn rebuilds the III/6 Lgn battalion.
- John has no more Reinforcements, but the 13, 14, 36/Circ cavalry that made a successful breakout arrives this turn, and is placed in Baalbek (1.28).

His first Segment in the Mode Determination and Movement Phase is Breakout. This presents a real conundrum: All the units cut off near Damascus are out of Trace Supply and could only regain it if they can get close enough to the road coming onto the board from Entry Hex 3. If they try to Breakout during the first turn they are cut off from Trace Supply, they have a 50% chance of success, but only reappear randomly over the next six turns. If they stay on the board, some might survive the Attrition Table and complicate the CW supply situation—but then their reappearance is very unlikely (they would count towards Recovery). The Attrition table roll is done hex by hex, keying off the highest AR unit (OCS Rule 12.8b). John considers piling some units into just one hex like 21.29 where both the road and rail line pass through. He decides to do this with three units, attempting Breakout with eight others, with the following results:

Unit	Breakout Success?	Delay
4/Levant	4 - Yes	4 turns
V/1 Mor	2 - No	n/a
1/Levant	4 - Yes	5 turns
3/Levant	5 - Yes	6 turns
III/17 Seng	5 - Yes	2 turns
I&II/1 Met	3 - No	n/a
Marion/6 Chas	5 - Yes	4 turns
Roulin/7 Chas	4 - Yes	1 turn

The I/17 Seng unit and two remaining artillery units south of Damascus all move into 21.19 (a rough terrain hex that blocks both the road and rail lines) and prepare an all-around defense—they have no on-map supply, so their fate is up to the Attrition table. John moves his 1 Mor cavalry unit along the rail line to 10.25, and backs it up with the newly returned 13, 14, 36/Circ cavalry unit. The Tchek cavalry unit slips by the Raiput/5 battalion and joins the 1 Mor. He can get three units in position to attack my advance unit at 12.21 (the Lehr/6 Chas armor, the newly rebuilt III/6 Lgn, and the 41&42/Circ cavalry). He uses his truck to shuttle 2T from Baalbek to 15.19. The Delhomme HQ repositions itself to Rayak (6.21). He rearranges his units in near 17.18 to get four units into the line. He is running low on units that can be put in reserve, I notice.

In his Air & Naval Barrage Segment, John flies his bomber unit on a Trainbusting mission to 18.28. Trainbusting uses the Barrage vs. Facility Table and is always subject to Flak. The Flak roll is 7 (2d6), not enough for a hit, even with the +1 adjustment for the Air Base in the hex and the +1 adjustment for a Trainbusting mission. The roll is a 4 on the 5-10 line for a (6)\* result, and the \* places a Trainbusting marker in the hex. This lasts until the next CW Clean Up Phase and adds a +1 movement cost to the hex and surrounding hexes (see OCS Rule 14.8).



To the Supply Phase. Except for the 3-unit stack in 21.29, all Vichy units are in Trace supply. Hex 17.16 can just make it, as the

Arlabosse HQ can throw as far as the adjacent 17.17, and the HQ can draw Trace supply from the road at 11.20. The cavalry units in 10.25 can Make their Trace to the Detrainable hex at Sirghaya (8.25). The units in 21.29 have to be marked OoS and roll for Attrition. His Attrition roll is a 6 (2d6) meaning no loss on the 4 AR column. Units that are marked OoS have no ZOC and attack/defend at half strength if Combat Supply is available, or quarter strength if Combat Supply is not available (OCS Rule 12.8d). I realize those units could be there for a while!

The only units I have in Reserve are in 17.08. Despite my earlier posturing, they can't attack in my Exploit Phase since it doesn't contain a Combat Segment. I decide not to move them. But I can do a Fighter Sweep against his active fighter at Rayak. I use one of my Hurricane fighters from the Off Map box, with its 3 Air-to-Air rating against his 2. The roll is a 3, 1, 4 which aborts my unit. I try again with the second Hurricane. This roll is a 5, 1, 2 which aborts both our units. I Base Transfer my Gladiator unit (all of one step with a 1 Air-to-Air rating) up to Mezze to put a Patrol Zone over the area. The Trainbusting marker has no effect on air units.

Next is the Vichy Combat Phase. First, John conducts a Barrage against 12.21 with his V/1 Met artillery in 15.10. This is a 9-strength Barrage using the 2T just transported into the same hex as supply. There are 2 shifts left for terrain (Mountain terrain is Extremely Close) and 1 shift for Density but his roll is a 10 (2d6), enough for a DG.

John declares an attack against 12.21, using the three units he has moved adjacent to it. His units can all Direct Draw from Zahle. I am in a quandary—I could use internals (internals can be used ONLY if the unit cannot access on map SPs, per OCS Rule 12.10a). Alternatively, I can forego Combat Supply, since the defender always has the option to forego it and defend at half strength (OCS Rule 12.4). I don't want to have a Low marker that gobbles up any supply I bring to the Damascus area, so I decline Combat Supply. This means my unit is quartered (halved for no Combat Supply and halved again for the DG) and has a Combat Strength of 0.75. I am in a Mountain hex, which according to the TEC is Extremely Close, unless any of the units are attacking along a road, in which case it is Very Close. The Vichy Armor unit can only attack along a road into Mountain terrain and is 1/3 strength. The "Other" units are normal strength, so the odds are 9 1/3 to 0.75 or 12:1, on the Very Close terrain row. This isn't as awful as it seems, only 2 columns from where we would have been if I used internals to provide Combat Supply. The surprise roll is 4, 1, 5, and we add in the DRM of +1 (his III/6 Lgn's AR of 4 against mine reduced to a 3). This just misses Defender surprise. His Combat Roll is a 4 (2d6) +1 for the DRM resulting in an Ao1/Do1. He kills his AR unit as his option and I take my option as a retreat back to 13.22. The surviving units advance—he really had to take the hex if he is to have a hope of plugging me into the pass, but it costs him a strong 4 AR unit.

John declines to do anything with his one remaining Reserve unit, the artillery in 12.09, in his Exploitation Phase. He removes the DG from 13.09 in his Clean Up Phase.



### Vichy Supply Summary Turn 12

Starting supply: 4.25

Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.50

Reserve Movement Fuel during Reaction: 0.25

Defensive Combat Supply: 0.25

Defensive Combat Supply during CW Exploitation: 0.25

Fuel: 0.75

Barrage: 0.50

Combat: 0.75

Remaining: 2.50



*Commonwealth Anti-Tank gun in position*



### Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 12

Starting supply: 5.75

Arrives via Reinforcement: 3.50

Refit: 0.00

Fuel: 1.50

Combat Supply for Overrun: 0.50

Eat off the Map & Recovery: 1.50

Combat Supply (during Vichy Reaction): 0.25

Barrage: 0.75

Combat: 0.75

Exploitation Combat Supply: 0.25

Remaining: 4.00



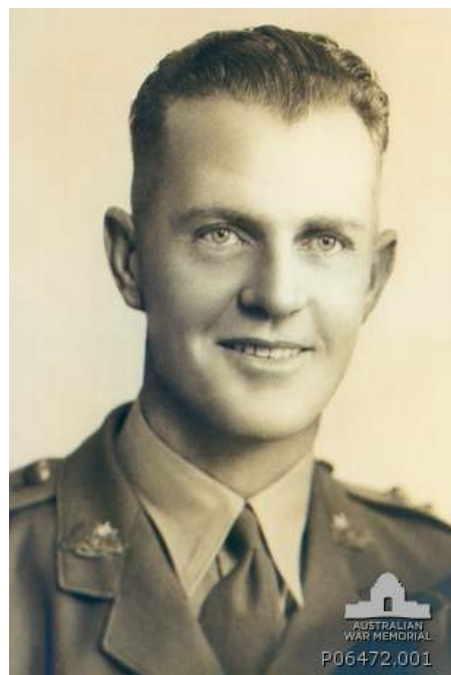
*June, 1941. A.I.F. troops move stealthily along an exposed scarp before attacking an enemy position.*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

008579/17

*Syria, July 1941. A view taken from a British bomber during a raid on the headquarters of General Henri Dentz, Commander of the Vichy Forces, shows bombs falling towards the target from a Blenheim.*



*Studio portrait of WX1592 Captain (Capt) Ivan Johnson, 2/16 Battalion, of Carnamah, WA. Capt Johnson enlisted in Perth, WA on 1 May 1940. He was killed in action in Syria on 9 June 1941.*



*"Remember in one letter I wrote to you telling you about going out to the graves of our mates. Here is the snap taken after we had done the graves up in some sort of civilized manner".*



*Destroyed bridge at Damour (hex 13.09)*

### Turn 13, June 29, 1941

We roll for Initiative and I win the choice. I like the idea of fixing up my precarious situation, but I like the idea of a potential double turn even more. Plus I would like to see him do another Attrition roll. I hand the dice to John and declare that the Vichy plays first this turn.

June 29 – Vichy First Player – Turn 13 – John takes care of his turn start activities:

- His air units are readied and made active in Rayak.
- His supply roll of 7 (2d6) gives him 1.5 SP, placed in Baalbek (1.28).
- He is eligible for one Recovered unit, pulls the III/22 Alg Infantry battalion out of the cup, and places it in 15.19.
- John gets one of his units that broke out, the Roulin/7 Chas armored car battalion. He places it in Baalbek (1.28).

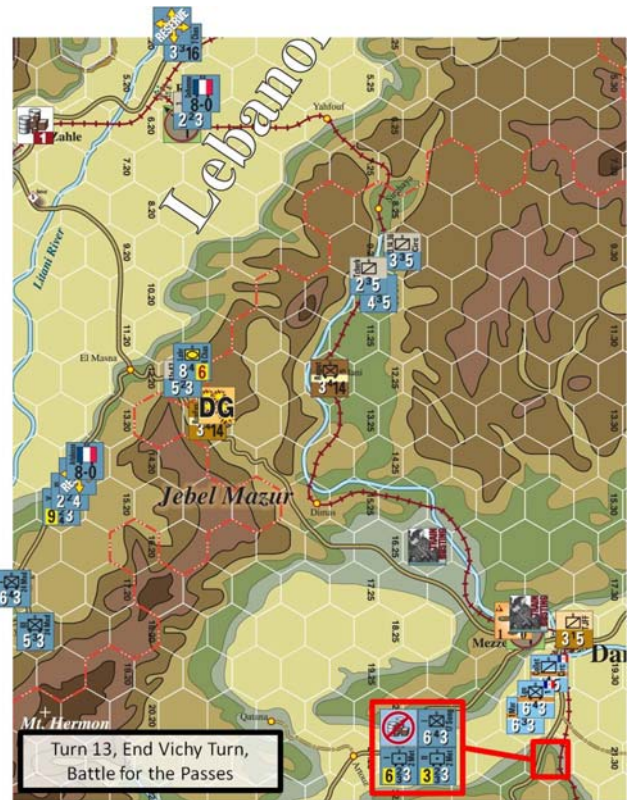
This is an organizing turn for John. He flips over many of his units into Combat Mode and establishes reserves at 4.21 (the Roulin/7 Chas armored car) and 15.19. His armor unit in 12.21 is 1/3 in Mountain terrain even on defense, but John keeps it there for the AR rating.

John announces another Trainbusting Barrage, this time against 16.26. My flak roll of 5 (2d6) does nothing, and his roll on the Barrage vs. Facility table with an 8-point Barrage with a '5' results in a 1\*(5). This adds a second Trainbusting marker along my path of advance.

We come to the Supply Phase and John's Attrition roll for his stack at 21.29. One again a roll of 7 (2d6) means he loses no units from 21.29. Sheesh! That '4' AR unit is really holding it together.

My only action during the Reaction Phase is a Fighter Sweep with my fighter unit from 22.12 against Rayak Air Base (6.21). I roll a 4, 4, 4, aborting his fighter, still without losses. Mine returns and goes inactive.

John takes no action in his Exploitation Phase.



June 29 – CW Second Player – Turn 13 – Turn start activities:

- I ready my aircraft in the Off Map Holding Box, but I don't do so in 22.12, saving 1T in supply.
- My supply roll of 8 (2d6), gives me 2.5 SP's of which I place 1 in Amman and 1.5 in Haifa.
- My replacement roll of 4 (2d6) yields no Replacements.
- I am eligible for unit Recovery. I draw the Kings/16 battalion from the cup and place it in 23.12.
- My Naval Barrages are not available this turn.

OK, so what is Trainbusting all about? The marker defines a Trainbusting Zone ("TZ") for that hex and the six adjacent hexes. Units pay +1 MP for each hex in a TZ, and if I try to rail cargo through a TZ it doubles the Railcap cost (OCS Rule 14.8c). The TZ goes away in the Clean Up Phase of the next enemy turn (meaning these will disappear at the end of my Player Turn). One important piece of "fine print" is that the TZ only affects Leg MA movement in the hex with the marker (OCS Rule 14.8b). A TZ does not affect supply draw or throw or impede retreats in any way—it basically represent sustained air harassment over a wide area. What all this means is a Track and Truck MA unit will require 11.5 MPs instead of the normal 4.5 MPs to make the drive from hex 20.29 to 15.24.

I map out my plan for this turn. Currently I hold 8 VPs worth of geographic objectives, which is a marginal Vichy victory. I am close to locations worth another 5 VPs. I need to consolidate my advance positions and open up the supply road into the Damascus area. With another turn or two of supply deliveries, I will be able to take up the offense again.

The 2/3/17 Infantry flips to its Move Mode side and enters Strat Move Mode (OCS Rule 5.8). It can move up to 23.13.

The Punjab/5 battalion in 23.32 remains in Move Mode but does not enter Stat Mode this turn. Once gassed (from the dump at 29.31) it has just enough MP's to move to 17.26 (7 Truck MPs normally, but it must pass through 6 TZ hexes).

Truck moves—2T of trucks can depart 35.13, move to Haifa, pick up 2T, and move to 20.15 and get back down to Safad (36.11, 44 MPs for the entire move). I move 2T of trucks to 26.30 where it meets the 1 SP railed in from Amman (I cannot load or move any portion of the 1 SP onto my trucks as that would constitute Leapfrogging, illegal per OCS Rule 12.2a). My 1T of captured trucks in 23.32 have enough MPs to shuttle their 1T supply up to 17.26 and return to Damascus, even through the TZ markers. Those markers don't impede the Collet/Circ cavalry unit's Foot MP move up to 13.22 (except in 18.28, where the TZ marker is actually on the road hex).

I conduct an Air Barrage against the OoS stack in 21.29, using my two Wellington bombers. John drills one of the units with a flak roll of 11 (2d6) and my roll on the Mission Loss Table reduces the full-strength unit. I now have an 8-point Barrage. It is spotted, the 1.5 REs in the target hex means no Density shifts, but there is a shift left for terrain. The Barrage roll of 11 (2d6) means a 1/2 result, but my subsequent roll of 3 means the stack is only DG and does not lose a step.

I send the Blen 4 and a Hurricane up to Rayak to attack the field. The flak roll of 9 (2d6) just misses killing a step (there is a +1 for the Air Base). I have 3 Barrage strength in total, but my roll of 2 on the Barrage vs. Facility table means I obtain no potential hits.

During my Supply Phase I note that the Vichy mass Breakout opened up the road from Kuneitra (30.18) to Damascus and beyond. This provides a path for Trace Supply to get to all the CW units, even the ones up at 12.21 and 11.25. However I still must have my most extended units at 13.22 and 11.25 Eat off the Map from the 1T in 17.26, because they cannot draw from the same hex as the rest of their Multi-unit Formation units to the south. The now-Combat Mode Legentil Free French HQ in 23.32 can throw Trace to all the Free French units except the cavalry in 13.22. I still need to get on-map SPs to the area in order to put my offensive back in gear, and must move up the rest of the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade.

John does nothing during his Reaction Phase.



My target for Combat is the OoS stack. It is halved for being OoS, and halved again for the DG. John uses Internals to provide the units combat supply, giving the stack a Combat Strength of 2. I have 12 Combat Strength attacking, using just two units, but John elects to use one of the artillery units for its AR (a 1 since it is DG), so this gives a +3 DRM with a 6:1 in Very Close Terrain. A 6, 3, 3 surprise roll brings me up to the 15:1 column, and a combat roll of 4 (2d6, +3 to a 7) is an Ao1/DL1o1 result. His lead unit dies and I retreat my units.

Very clever—he lost only an artillery unit instead of his '4' AR "brain" unit.

I don't take any action during my Exploitation Phase. During my Clean Up Phase, we remove both Trainbusting markers as well as the DG on my unit in 12.21.



### Vichy Supply Summary Turn 13

Starting supply: 2.50

Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.50

Fuel: 0.25

Barrage: 0.00

Combat: 0.00 (the OoS units used Internals for Combat Supply)

Remaining: 3.75

### Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 13

Starting supply: 4.00

Arrives via Reinforcement: 2.50

Refit: 0.00

Eat off the Map: 0.25

Barrage: 0.00

Combat: 0.50

Exploitation Fuel: 0.00

Remaining: 5.50



July, 1941. Crew members of a Blenheim aircraft getting ready to climb into the cockpit, before a raid on the headquarters General Henri Dentz, Commander of the Vichy forces.



Jezzine, July, 1941. The road is called the "Mad Mile." All supplies were taken along this road which was under continuous observation and shellfire (photo by G. Silk).



June, 1941. 2/4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment in action against Vichy forces in Syria (photo by Frank Hurley).



Ras Naqoura, Palestine. June 8, 1941. A light tank of A Squadron, 6th Australian Divisional Cavalry, awaiting an order to advance into Syria at the start of the invasion.

### Turn 14, June 30, 1941

We roll for Initiative, once again I win the choice, and once again I want the Vichy player to go first.

#### June 30 – Vichy First Player – Turn 14 – Turn start activities:

- His air units are readied and made active in Rayak.
- His supply roll of 6 (2d6) gives him 1.5 SP, placed in Baalbek (1.28).
- The Vichy Player is eligible for one Recovered unit, pulls the Liban cavalry battalion out of the cup, and places it in 8.20.
- John gets one of his units that broke out, the III/17 Seng Infantry battalion. He places it in Baalbek (1.28).

John's continuing concern is how he plugs four approaches into the areas containing Sudden Death victory objectives. He is sitting on geographic barrier locations at present, but once breached the CW forces will break out into the open where are much harder to contain.

- **Damour (13.09)** – Five Vichy infantry steps and an artillery unit defend this strong river line two hexes wide, facing 10 Attack-Capable CW units.
- **South Bekaa Valley (17.18)** – Five Vichy infantry steps and an artillery unit defend a 4-hex front against 9 Attack-Capable CW units and a hefty artillery grand battery.
- **El Masna pass (east of 12.20)** – Two Vichy units square off against two CW battalions at the moment, but more are headed this way.
- **Yahfouf Rail Line (6.24)** – This looks the least troublesome, with three Vichy cavalry units blocking a rail line with four Mountain terrain hexes behind them, and faced by just one CW unit.

It appears to John that he should be most concerned about the Bekaa Valley and El Masna areas. They have open terrain behind them and little natural defensive points on the way to the Sudden Death location at Rayak Air Base.

There isn't a lot he can do. The newly-Recovered Liban cavalry moves to 12.21. III/17 Seng enters Strat Mode and moves close to the action in 9.20. He doesn't see where else he can pull units at this point, concerned that each would be a case of "robbing Peter to pay Paul."

Perhaps he can push back in the Bekaa Valley. His air force strikes at 18.17. The flak roll is a 9 (2d6) for no effect, and his 8-point barrage from the LeO 451 is shifted left twice (Density and Terrain). The Barrage roll is a 4 (2d6) for a miss.

The Supply Phase requires another Attrition roll for his stack at 21.29. For the third time running, he rolls a 7 (2d6) and suffers no losses. I am glad the stack is DG'ed, since OoS units move normally (OCS Rule 12.8d) and John would very much like to jump them up to 18.28, where he can block the road/rail line. These units have become a real bone in my throat!

In my Reaction Phase, I conduct a Fighter Sweep against Rayak with my one active Hurricane in the off-map box. The roll is a 1, 4, 2 which aborts the Hurricane without loss. The Vichy fighter stays active. I make no moves with my ground units.

John's Combat Phase starts with an artillery barrage against 18.17. He has a 9-point unit in 15.21, shifted left twice (Density and Terrain). This time the roll is a 10 for a DG.

In his Combat Phase, John attacks 18.17 with the three adjacent units. He has 17 Combat Strength against my 3 (6:1, Very Close terrain) with a +2 DRM from his I/24 Mxd infantry. The Surprise roll is a 6, 2, 5, giving him Surprise and a shift up to the 21:1 Column. This is followed by a Combat Roll of 10 (2d6), shifted up to 12 for an Ae2/DL2o3DG. My defending unit, overwhelmed by this surprise Vichy attack out of the blue, is obliterated. John advances the I/24 Mxd unit. His units do not earn Exploit Mode because they attacked from three different hexes.

***Newbie Note:** Advance after combat is limited to occupying the defending hex if the defenders are destroyed or forced to retreat (OCS Rule 9.12g). In some games, an overwhelming victory such as this would result in a bigger advance. The OCS requires an exploit force (Reserve or units that earn Exploit Mode) to capitalize on success. John instead plans to use this as a local victory, reducing the front by a hex and freeing up a unit he can put into Reserve.*

John indeed makes no moves during Exploit. In his Clean Up Phase, the DG comes off his stack at 21.29.



June, 1941. Two Mark VI tanks manned by members of the 6th Australian Division Cavalry Regiment advancing into Syria.



#### June 30 – CW Second Player – Turn 14 – Turn start activities:

- I ready my aircraft in the Off Map Holding Box, but I still don't do so in 22.12, saving 1T in supply at the cost of not having a PZ over my units.
- My supply roll of 4 (2d6) gives me 1.5 SP's of which I place 1 in Amman and 2T in Haifa.
- My replacement roll of 10 (2d6) yields 1 Pax Repl. I place the Pax in Haifa and immediately rebuild the Staff Y cavalry.
- I am not eligible for unit Recovery.
- My Naval Barrages are eligible this turn and rolls of 3 and 4 make them both available

This turn is for building up supply, opening up the rail line, and pushing back against his units in the Bekaa Valley. Perhaps I can DG units along the coast and create some opportunities.

First, we go after his air units at Rayak using my Hurricanes from the Off Map Box. My first Fighter Sweep rolls a 3, 2, 2 (again, I have an Air-to-air Rating of 3 versus his of 2) and my unit is rendered inactive. I send in the second Hurricane who rolls a 5, 3, 1 and his unit is rendered inactive. Both my fighters are now inactive in the Off Map box.

The 2T of trucks that start in 26.30 shuttle the 2T up to Dimas (15.24), drop it off, and then have enough MP to return to Haifa. My Railcap moves the 1 SP from Amman to 29.31. The 2T trucks in Safad (36.11) shuttle 1 SP from Haifa to Safad in two trips, though they do not have enough MPs to unload the second 2T.

I position the three Infantry battalions of the 16<sup>th</sup> Brigade to confront the Vichy I/24 Mxd unit at 18.17. I move Free French units in to battle his OoS stack at 21.29 yet again. I make sure all units in 17.08 are in Reserve. The Staff Y cavalry moves up to 20.07 in Move Mode.

I have two Barrages in the Air and Naval Barrage Segment. My reduced air force flies up to 18.17. The flak roll misses with a roll of 5 (2d6 +1 for the third air unit) and then the Barrage roll of 8 (2d6) misses (10 point barrage with 2 shifts for density and terrain). The Naval units do better, with a 15-point barrage on 13.09 (1 shift for density), which rolls an 8 (2d6) and DGs the Vichy units.

The only units that have problems with Trace Supply are (again) the ones in the passes northwest of Damascus. As soon as I have enough supply I will move up the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade HQ and its other units, but for now these must Eat off the Map again, consuming 1T from Dimas.

John makes no moves in his Reaction Phase. He is waiting to see where my heavy blow is headed.

It is now my Combat Phase. I study the situation in the Bekaa Valley. Without a DG on his unit at 18.17 I hesitate to attack. There is only 5T available to units in this area, not enough to unleash a big barrage followed by an attack. Right now the attack would be a 3:1 in Very Close terrain. A Combat Roll of 7 (2d6) on this column is an AL1o1/Do1. I am a lot more interested in being three columns to the right, where a 7 results in an Ao1/DL1o1. I decide not to take action here.

I have surrounded the Vichy OoS stack at 21.29, and decide to attack with only four of the battalions. This will be an attack into Very Close terrain with a 0 DRM. The odds are 24:3.5 or 7:1 (his units are halved by the OoS). My Combat Supply comes from the 1 SP I railed up to 29.31, and the defenders use Internals again. The Vichy units are now 'Exhausted' and will be unable to give themselves Combat Supply until they have Recovered, which means their future Combat Strength will be halved (in addition to the OoS effects). John uses his trick of providing the AR from his artillery again, hoping his infantry unit will survive the combat. This time the surprise roll is a 5, 3, 4 and with the +2 AR I gain surprise, and the odds move up to 18:1 column. Then I roll an 8 (2d6) +2 to a 10 which is an Ae3/DL2o2DG. Both defending units are killed (but I do not gain Exploit because I attacked from four hexes). Had he used the 4 AR unit, the result would have been an 8 on the 6:1 column for an Ao1/DL1o1, killing his Infantry unit but his artillery could have survived, likely to be overrun or perish by Attrition. Finally the rail line is open!

I decide to see what I can do with the DG units in Damour (13.09). In Exploit, I bring up my three infantry battalions of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Brigade out of Reserve and up to 14.08. I don't Barrage, but in the Combat Phase they attack. My units are halved by the river, but his are halved by the DG. The odds are 9:5 or 2:1 on the clear terrain line, with a +1 DRM. I roll a surprise roll of 5, 3, 6 (no surprise) and then a 7 (2d6) moved up to 8 for an Ao1/Do1. I kill my AR unit (Bdr/23) to force him to take his option.

John now has a major quandary. Does he eliminate his 4 AR infantry unit and hold the river line? Or does he back up a hex, saving his unit but letting me across the river? He has to take an option, neither of which are good:

- **Hold the line** – This would leave a DG'ed unit behind the river line, which he could reinforce if he wins the Initiative roll. But it costs a Combat unit (and he only has about 20 remaining), and risks a big breakthrough if I am the one who wins initiative.
- **Save the unit** – He would back up a hex to join the Reserve artillery unit at 12.09. I would be over the river, difficult to dislodge, and likely to pile in with everything I have in the area during my next player turn.

Recalling a sentence from the historical commentary included with the game, “When the enemy breakthrough on the road above Damour was reported, General Dentz knew ‘the end had come’”. He decides to hold the line and eliminates the IV/6 Lgn infantry. I have no actions during my Clean Up Phase.



#### Vichy Supply Summary Turn 14

Starting supply: 3.75

Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.50

Fuel: 0.00

Barrage: 0.50

Combat: 0.75

Defensive Combat Supply (during CW Exploit): 0.25

Remaining: 3.75

#### Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 14

Starting supply: 5.50

Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.50

Defensive Combat Supply: 0.25

Refit: 0.00

Eat off the Map: 0.25

Barrage: 0.00

Combat: 1.00

Exploitation Combat: 0.75

Remaining: 4.75



*Damour area, Syria, July 1941 (hex 13.10). Tracks and crossings in exceedingly difficult country over the Damour river created by Engineers of 2/6 Field Company for use by Australian troops prior to the attack on Damour.*



*Vichy 75mm model 1897 artillery in action at Damour*

*Newbie Note: My “grand battery” in 19.16 is probably TOO big. If I combined the three 4-strength artillery units with the one 5-strength one, then I would have a stack generating 17 Barrage Strength, which is a cut point on the Barrage Table. I could move the 6-strength unit over to the coast road, combine it with the other 6 and the 4, then I would have a 16-strength stack. Yes, that is a little gamey, but we are playing a game! I need to pay more attention to optimizing my forces.*

### Turn 15, July 1, 1941

There is a lot riding on this particular Initiative roll! The dice fly, we count the pips, and I win the choice. Double turn! Hoo-boy, this is going to be fun!

#### July 1 – CW First Player – Turn 15 – Turn start activities:

- I ready my aircraft in the Off Map Holding Box, but I still don't do so in 22.12, saving 1T in supply at the cost of not having a PZ over my units.
- My supply roll of 4 (2d6), gives me only 1.5 SP's, of which I place 1 SP in Amman and 2T in Haifa.
- My replacement roll of 12 (2d6) yields 1 Pax and 1 Eq (Equipment) Replacements. I look at the Common Rebuild Table (printed on the map) and the units in my dead pile. The ones that require Eq replacements are an armored car unit an Anti-Aircraft battery. I decide instead to bring my bomber force up to strength and use the Eq to flip both Wellington units to their full-strength sides. I place the Pax in Haifa and immediately rebuild the Bdr/23. I have had more than my fair share of luck with Replacements!
- I am not eligible for unit Recovery.
- I am not eligible for Naval Barrages this turn.
- This is the July 1 Turn, and my Australian units marked with a green circle have acclimatized to the desert conditions and now function with their full 4 AR (*RE* Rule 2.4).

I have what looks like a golden opportunity for a breakthrough at Damour (13.09) if I play this right. The option John had to take last turn leaves a weakened unit behind the river, an artillery unit in Reserve behind it, and then open road all the way to Beirut. A few points to note:

- Beirut is Minor City terrain, Very Close, and both Armor and Mech units are halved attacking into it. It has a 1 AR Combat unit and a Corps HQ (5 Combat Strength with an AR of 0 on its Combat Side, per *RE* Rule 3.2A, which is the 'default' for HQ units in *OCS*, Rule 13.1c).
- Units attacked while in Reserve Mode defend at half their Combat Strength (*OCS* Rule 5.7), so the artillery unit in 12.09 will be very vulnerable.
- Beirut is also a sudden death victory location. If I can get an attack-capable combat unit in the hex (or was the last to have a combat unit pass through the hex) in Trace Supply at the end of any player turn, then I win a "Crushing Victory" (*RE* Rule 5.1). If I can eliminate the two units at 12.09 and 13.09, neutralize the ZOC of the units at 13.10 and occupy Beirut this turn, that would do it.

The Vichy aircraft are still inactive at Rayak. I Base Transfer one of my Hurricanes to the Air Base at 22.12 to re-establish the PZ over my units. In the Damascus area, I move the Free French units up towards the front. The ones that do not use Truck movement on their Move Mode side do this in Strat Mode. The Truck movement units must stay in Combat Mode., since Strat Mode requires units to be oriented on their Move Mode side (*OCS* Rule 5.8), which means they need to be fueled to move and I don't have the supply. I reposition both the Free French and 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade HQ's in Dimas (15.24) and spend the supply to move up units of the multi-unit formations that would otherwise have to Eat off the Map. We should be able to start exerting pressure here in a turn or two.

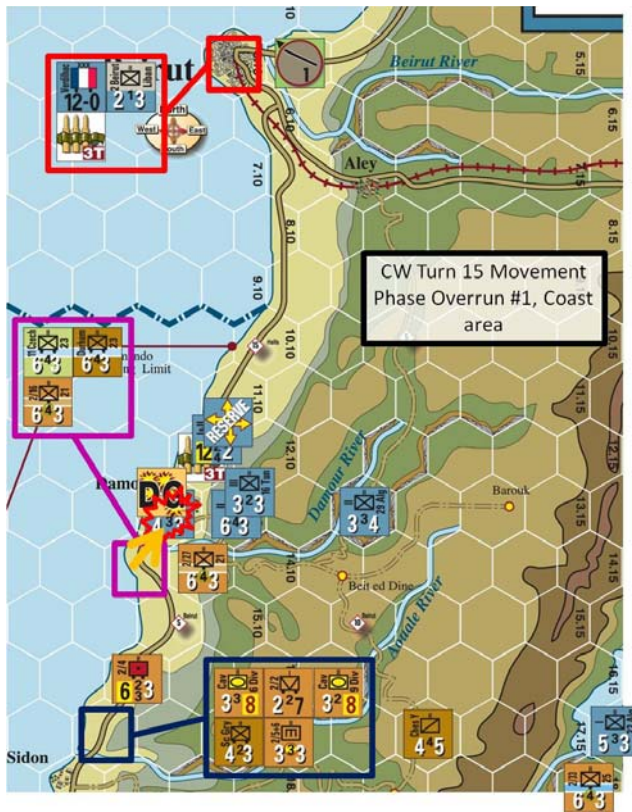
**Newbie Note:** *Strat Mode is handy for moving units around quickly, but is the equivalent of an administrative move with soldiers not prepared for combat. Units in Strat Mode are extremely vulnerable, with their Combat Strength and AR reduced to zero (OCS Rule 5.8). Attacks against units with a zero combat strength begin on the rightmost column on the Combat Table (OCS Rule 9.14a). In addition, if a hex contains any units in Strat Mode, the hex receives a 3 column shift to the RIGHT on the Barrage Table.*

In the Bekaa Valley area, I place the 2/3/17 infantry in Reserve and move it one hex up the road. I slide the Queens/16 battalion into the mountain hex to threaten Rachaiye (18.18) and force him to keep an extra unit in the hex to block me.

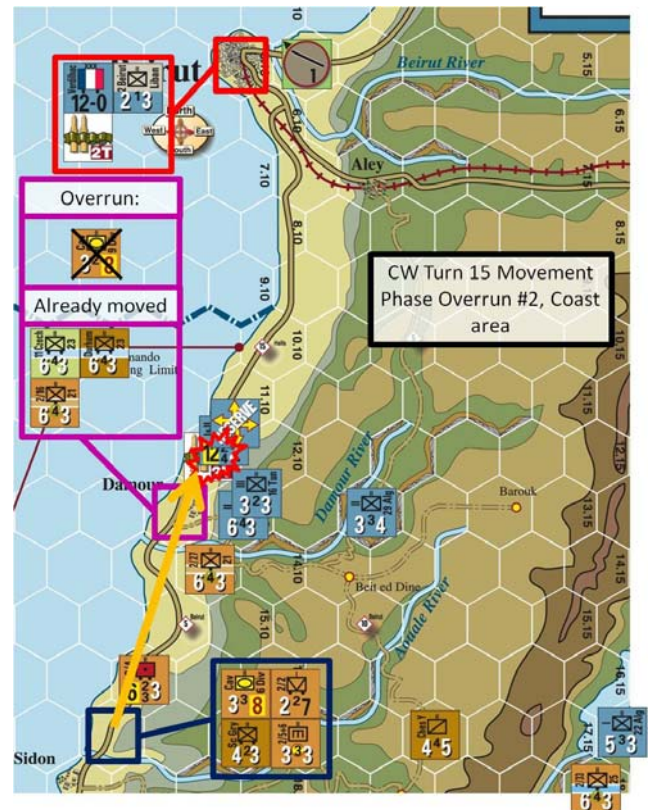


*Damour, Syria, July, 1941. Signaler George Arthur White, K Section, 6th Division Signals, leading a mule along a track above the sea carrying a No.11 wireless transmitter/receiver and Lucas light signaling equipment from Damour to what became the armistice line. Smoke from a shell blast rises nearby but White shows no concern.*

Time to get down to business at Damour. I declare an Overrun against 13.09 with the three battalions in 14.08. I have 18 Combat strength halved to 9, he has 4 Combat strength halved to 2, giving us initial odds of 5:1 on the clear terrain line. The DRM is +2. My surprise roll is 6, 3, 6 giving me surprise and moving the odds column all the way to the right. I then roll a 7 (2d6) plus 2 for a 9 or Ae3/DL2o2DG. His unit is destroyed and I move into the hex (Overrun attacks do not earn Exploit results). My attacking units have used their entire MA for this attack—I could have done this in Move Mode, but that would cost fuel and reduced the odds to 2:1. Taking this hex is key to what follows.



Next, I need to kill the Vichy I&II/1 Col artillery unit at 12.09. I move up the Cav/9 Div armor battalion. The defending unit is sitting on a 3T supply dump and Direct Draws defensive supply from it. The terrain is Low Hills, which is Close terrain but my armor unit is still doubled on the attack. The artillery unit is halved for being in Reserve Mode. The odds are 12:1 on the Close terrain line and the DRM is 0. My surprise roll of 1, 2, 4 is defender surprise and brings me down to the 4:1 column. The combat roll is a 5 (2d6) is an AL1/Do1. This kills my attacking unit and forces the defender to take an option. He takes it as a retreat into 11.10. The 2T Vichy Supply Dump remains in the hex as a Vichy Non-Combat Unit. The Vichy artillery unit is no longer in Reserve (units come out of Reserve if they receive any defender result from overrun or combat—even an ignored Do1—per *OCS* Rule 5.7d).



Let's try that again. I bring up my Cav/6 Div armor unit to overrun the stubborn artillery unit. When I enter 12.09, I roll on the capture table and get a 6, obtaining the 2T for me. This time the defender is in a Clear terrain hex and not halved for being in Reserve. The initial odds are 6:1 and my attacker has a 3 AR, so the DRM is +1. My surprise roll of 6, 4, 2 gets me attacker surprise and moves the combat resolution to the 9:1 column. I roll a 6 (2d6) +1, so make it a 7 for an Ao1e4/DL1o1. The defending artillery unit is eliminated and I must take an option. I don't want to lose the unit, but if I retreat it into 13.09, then all the units in that hex become DG'ed (because 13.09 is in an enemy ZOC, the retreating unit and any units in the hex become DG, per *OCS* Rule 9.12e). I don't really have a choice and accept the retreat and DG the stack.



*June, 1941. British entry into Syria. Australian tanks on reconnaissance during the advance.*



*A belly-landing in Syria. This Tomahawk, serial AK436, had shot down two Vichy French bombers during the course of the Syrian campaign. On the 11th of July 1941 it was damaged by anti-aircraft fire while strafing French motor transport and gun positions. The pilot, Flying Officer Knowles, regained the Allied lines and force-landed on a stony plain 10 miles NNW of Damascus (approximately hex 16.26).*

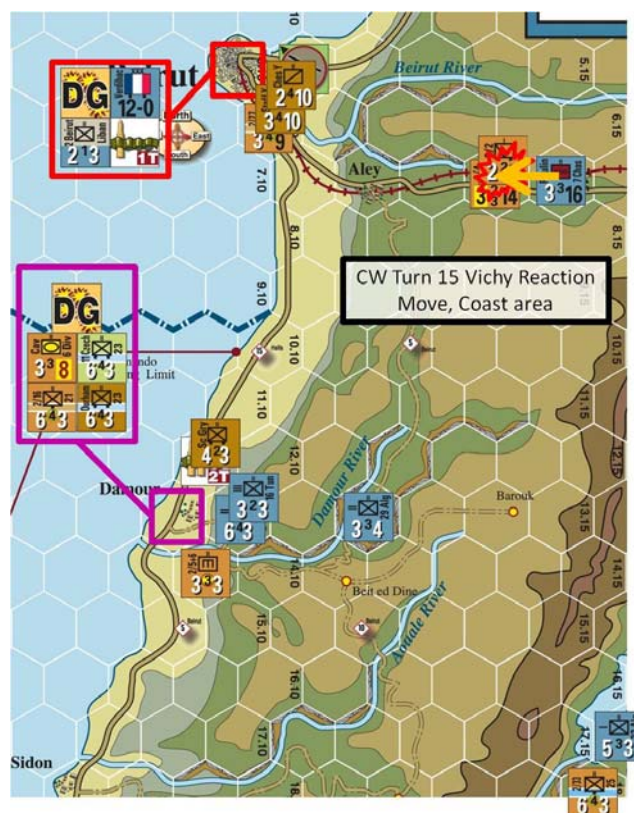


Clearing the Vichy artillery was tough, but now the road to Beirut is clear except for a ZOC in 12.09. (The 2T Supply Dump that I captured is now a CW non-combat unit, however negating a ZOC requires a combat unit that will end the current phase in the same hex, per *OCS* Rule 4.5b. A unit that starts a phase by itself in an enemy ZOC does not require negation to leave the hex). Let's get some supporting units in place:

- The 2/5+6 Engineers moves up to 14.09 (I plan to move the Australian infantry in a moment).
- The Sc Gry infantry battalion moves up to 12.09.
- The 2/2 AT company fuels and moves up to 7.14. This is to block the road against Vichy Reaction forces and is the limit to which the Lavarack HQ can throw combat supply.
- The 2/4 Artillery battalion fuels and joins the AT unit in 7.14, thus adding a step to the blocking force.
- The Ches Y cavalry squadron flips to Move Mode and can just make it to 6.10 from 17.13 by going through Biet ed Dine (14.11)
- The 2/27/21 infantry battalion flips to Move Mode, fuels, and joins the Ches Y cavalry in 6.10.
- The Staff Y cavalry flips to Move Mode and gallops up to 6.10.
- The truck unit in Sassaa 25.22 turns around and brings its 2T cargo back to Haifa, as I believe I need every ounce of supply I can lay my hands on at the coast.
- The Bdr/23 infantry battalion flips to Move Mode, enters Reserve, fuels and moves up to 31.02 to provide me with some options.

For my Air/Naval Barrage I fly my newly rebuilt air force to Beirut (both Wellington units and the Blen IV). The flak roll DRM is +2 (+1 for 3 aircraft in the mission and +1 for the HQ), but John rolls a 3 (2d6) modified to 5 for a miss. My Barrage is 18 points (1 shift for terrain) and the Barrage roll of 8 (2d6) means a DG.

**Vichy Reaction Phase:** John has only two units in Reserve. The III/22 Alg battalion comes out of 15.19 and moves up to 8.18. His Roulin/7 Chas armored car battalion in 4.21 is the only unit that can affect the battle for Beirut. He fuels it, motors to 7.13 and declares an Overrun against my blocking units. His unit is Mech and halved in the Rough terrain. My AT unit has Heavy AT effects, but that only makes a difference when the attackers are doubled because of terrain. The initial odds are 1.5:3 or 1:2 with a +1 DRM (I will use the Artillery unit to supply the AR). John then rolls a 6, 2, 3 and gains surprise, upping the odds to 3:1. His combat roll is an 11 (2d6) +1 to 12 for an Ao1/DL1o1. My artillery unit dies, but he decides to retreat a hex instead of kill his armored car unit. (Even had he cleared the hex, his unit only had enough MPs to reach 7.13. Really, he is banking on me not capturing Beirut so he can bring in more forces.)



There is only one battle in my Combat Phase, the assault on Beirut. I have 8 Combat strength attacking, with its Combat Supply thrown from the 1 SP Dump in 20.07. John has 6 Combat Strength halved because of the DG and he uses the last 1T in Beirut to provide defensive combat supply. Because 1.5 RE's are defending (the Verdilhac HQ is 1 RE in size and the 2 Beirut/Liban unit is 0.5 RE's), the defense requires 2T to be fully supplied. John uses internals for the 2 Beirut/Liban and marks it with a "Low" marker. 8:3 becomes a 3:1 (Very Close row) with a +4 DRM (AR supplied by my Ches Y cavalry unit). My surprise roll is a 3, 3, 4, but that is enough to gain surprise with the +4 DRM and move the odds column to the 12:1 column. My 5 (2d6) combat roll is bumped up to a 9 for an Ao1e4/DL1o2. His defending infantry unit is eliminated. I kill the Ches Y cavalry to fulfill my option. His HQ must take two options and either die or retreat two hexes (units with a zero MA change into Move Mode before retreating, per *OCS* Rule 9.12b). Units that retreat two hexes must enter DG mode the moment they enter the second hex (*OCS* Rule 9.12a), but there is no effect if they are already DG unless they enter an enemy ZOC while retreating. He retreats to 5.12 (he would love to curl around and occupy the road, but he must end his retreat two hexes from where he started. I mark my remaining units

with an Exploit marker (they are both AR 4) and advance them into Beirut.

I skip the Exploit turn, remove my Exploit and DG markers and since I possess Beirut with units in Trace Supply the game is over with a "Crushing Victory" for the Commonwealth player!



### Commonwealth Supply Summary Turn 15

Starting supply: 4.75

Arrives via Reinforcement: 1.50

Refit: 0.00

Fuel: 2.25

Overrun Combat Supply: 1.25

Gained by Capture: 0.50

Defensive Combat Supply during Vichy Reaction Phase: 0.25

Combat: 0.75

Remaining: 2.25

### Vichy Supply Summary Turn 15

Starting supply: 3.75

Defensive Combat Supply vs. Overrun: 0.75

Fuel during Reaction Move: 0.25

Overrun Combat Supply: 0.25

Defensive Combat Supply: 0.25

Lost to Capture: 0.50

Remaining: 1.75



June, 1941. A view of the main coastal road along which the advance of the British forces was made in the push to Beirut (photo by Frank Hurley).



Lebanon, 1941. Australian troops moving forward under heavy fire after leaving Damour on their way to Beirut. The dark shapes visible just short of the shell bursts are Bren gun carriers.

### *Some last observations:*

OCS seems to give you more challenges than your opponent has—no matter which side you play! The *Reluctant Enemies* challenge of smashing your way through good units in difficult terrain as the CW player balances against the Vichy dilemma of defending on a shoestring.

### Commonwealth:

I had some very fortunate breaks during this game—double turns when most helpful and better-than-average replacement rolls (about 3 steps more than probable). Even so, CW progress wasn't enough for a victory until nearly the end. The balance can shift rapidly in OCS.

I realized early on that a 1:1 exchange rate of losses would eventually run the Vichy Player out of units. He was eventually stretched too thin to cover all my approaches. But I didn't appreciate until well into the game that you can run your opponent out of supply as well. I was able to pull off some dramatic breakthroughs when capturing Damascus and Beirut, but those were enabled by applying pressure all across the map.

With my mobility advantage, I could also "switch fields" by moving a brigade from one area to another and concentrate for an attack. Just be sure to bring all the units of each multi-unit formation so you don't run into Trace Supply issues by splitting them up!

### Vichy:

It's obvious, but maximize your defensive terrain benefits. The open spaces are only the friend of your powerful armor/mech units. So use the Rough terrain/river lines as your cloak and the mobile forces as your sword. The clear terrain along the approach to Damascus and some of the relatively open terrain in parts of the coast are the best places. I think the Vichy player missed a big opportunity during his counterattack in the desert around Turns 4-5, when he might have been able to kill several more infantry battalions. Those battalions are the main CW combat power and were vulnerable.

Playing offense is challenging, but conducting an effective "active defense" is really difficult. You need to select the moments carefully and then hit very hard. Simply forming a line is not sufficient. Defend in depth, pollinate nuggets of supply to your key stacks, and force your opponent to expose his units in Move Mode where they can be hurt.

I didn't understand this until well into the game, but the Vichy mobile reaction force also requires a LOT of gas (I will play with the RE optional rule 4.2 about alternative fueling next time, I think). Wherever you employ this group, plan on it needing to move 3-4 times, hence 3-4 SP. It might be better to combine the Foreign Legion with the armor to give you some options that don't necessarily require fuel. One of the reasons John didn't press the counterattack during Turns 4-5 was his concern over fuel stocks.

### Overall:

*Reluctant Enemies* is a fun, balanced game, and this campaign was closer than it appeared at the end.

It's easy to get distracted by tactical situations, particularly when new to the OCS. There are just so many things you can do! Set your strategic priorities and stick to them. If you say, "I will take down his Air Bases and grind away his air force" then stay on it every single Movement Phase. Play with your eye on the BIG prize and how you will get there. Don't get caught up in picking off isolated units or dispersing your combat power for things that don't advance your strategic objectives.

Many newcomers to the system underestimate the importance of having "The Hammer." Most of the time, the side that wins the initiative roll should choose to go second. In a recent Consimworld post, Tony Zbaraschuk put it this way: *"Don't go first unless you (a) win the game by doing so, (b) avoid losing the game only by doing so, or (c) take a giant step in either of those directions. Option (c) requires some experience to evaluate properly."*

Another Consimworld post (from Chris Dodd) spelled out some of the more subtle implications: *"It may seem like initiative is completely random -- you roll every turn and neither side has any way to influence the roll. That is true, but misses the point. Over the course of a campaign, both side will get the SAME NUMBER of double turn opportunities -- each time one side takes (or gets) a double turn, the other side will then have the next opportunity for a double turn. So "controlling" the initiative means maximizing the benefit from your double turns while minimizing the pain from enemy double turns, whenever they may occur. You can't control precisely when the double turns will occur, so you need to control what happens from them."*

*There are a number of simple 'tactical play rules' that follow from the above.*

- *When you win the initiative, choose to go second unless a major coup or disaster is in the making. If you can force your opponent to take a double turn now when he can't make major gains from it, that's a tactical victory right now. If you can't make a major gain from a double turn, you want to defer it, setting up a possible double turn next turn that will be better. If you moved first last turn and feel you need to move first again to "keep up the pressure", don't -- you put on a lot more pressure by moving second and threatening a double move.*
- *When you are moving first, play defensively. Your opponent may get a double turn at any time, so make sure you have reserves available to counter anything he might do with it.*
- *When you are moving second, play aggressively. You have the next double turn, so you should be trying to set up a big gain from it.*
- *When you are building up for an offensive, wait until you are moving second to launch it. Delaying an extra turn or two will rarely cost you much, and the benefit of a double turn (or just the threat of one) is worth a lot more."*

OCS is about Supply, yes. But it is also about Maneuver. Supply AND Maneuver. They are your left hand and your right hand, and both together can deliver a powerful blow, or leave you open if they aren't functioning in a coordinated way.

**Editors Note:** *The reason I considered designing RE was to provide a small game which would be conducive to learning an involved game system. Operation Exporter was a good choice in this respect. It was small compared to the OCS games that have preceded it. However, playtesting revealed on many occasions that this was not just a small game, but a real and interesting challenge for both players. I was really pleased with this. When Dan Cochrane and Ben Mangus came*

to my house February 5, 2011 for the first playtest I didn't know what to expect. I was very anxious to see whether this campaign would make a good OCS game. –Curtis H. Baer

We hope this *Extended OCS Starter Guide* helps you learn and enjoy the system!



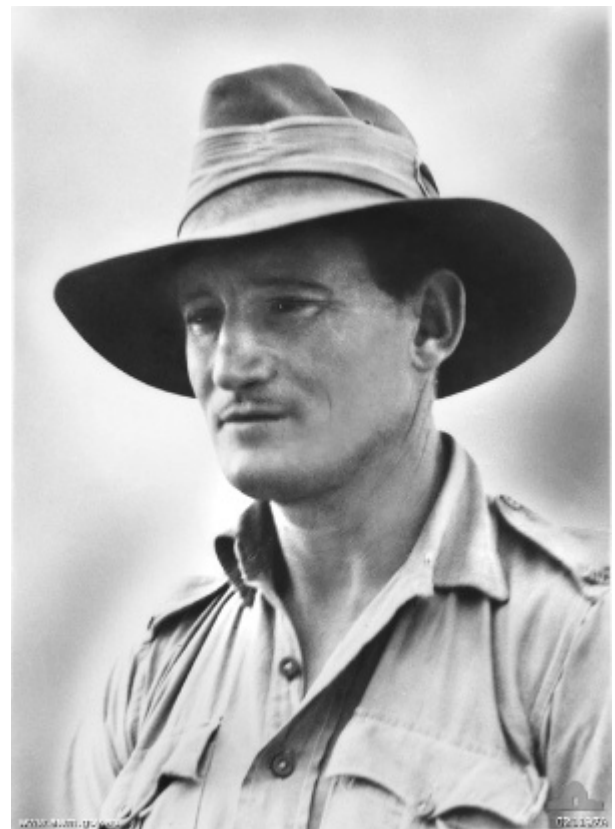
The original graves of members of the 2/27 Battalion, all of whom were killed or mortally wounded whilst advancing on Vichy French positions near Damour, Syria, in June 1941. The identified graves are, from left to right: unidentified; Lance Sergeant Harry Wayne of Glossop, SA, died of wounds 13 July 1941, aged 32 years; Captain John Howell McLean Price of Renmark, SA, killed in action (KIA) 13 June 1941, aged 40 years; Private Francis Joseph Gallway of Dunleath, SA, KIA 14 June 1941, aged 28 years; and Temporary Warrant Officer Class 2 James Pringle Williams, 2/3 Machine Gun Battalion, of Maryborough, Vic, KIA 16 June 1941, aged 40 years.



Lebanon, July, 1941, during the final big attack on the outskirts of Beirut. In the foreground is a net camouflaging a 2-pound Anti-Tank gun. This is probably the most forward gun on the road. Shells can be seen bursting about 100 yards away. The black object on the left corner is a tank waiting for the word to go into action. (Photo: George Silk).



British twenty-five pounder field gun in action during the advance into Syria, June 1941



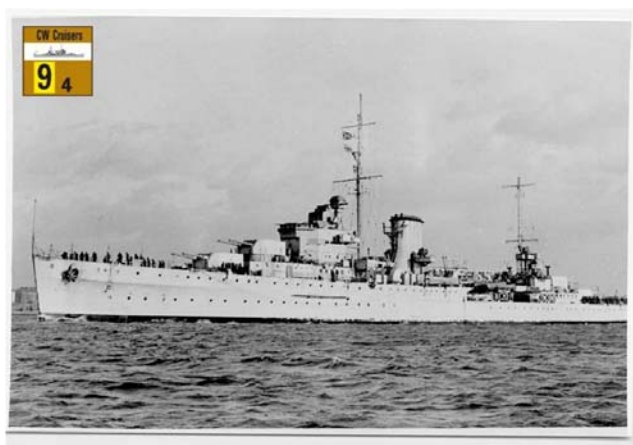
Australian James Gordon won the Victoria Cross for an attack on a French machine gun post, July 10, 1941



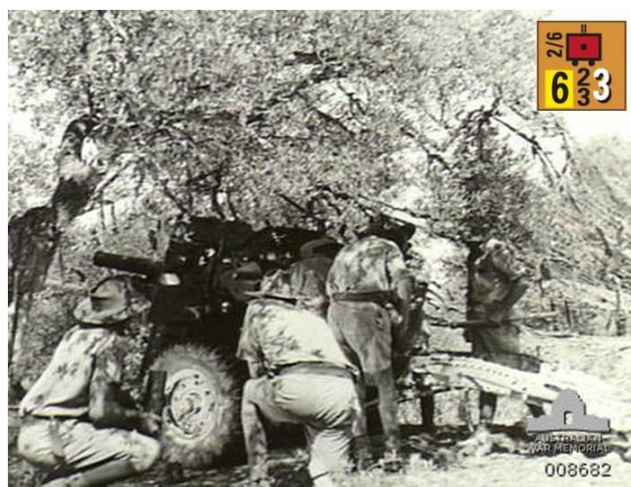
*Vichy sailors man coastal defense artillery in Lebanon 1941 (these guns are why the CW Naval Bombardment line does not extend up to Beirut)*



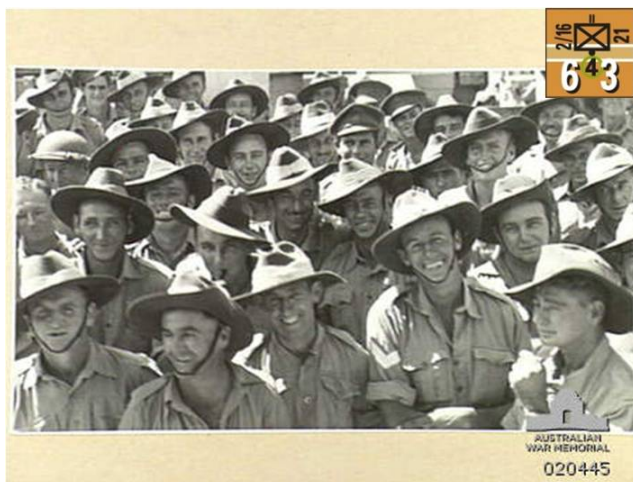
*Beirut, July 15, 1941. Mechanized Australian cavalry on the coast road between Beirut and Tripoli.*



*HMS Ajax (CL), Cruiser support during Exporter. Eight 6-inch guns are her main armament.*



*Syria, June 1941. Gunners of the 2/6<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, 12<sup>th</sup> Field Battery operate a 25-pounder gun from a camouflaged position.*



*Members of the 2/16<sup>th</sup> Infantry battalion, Hammana, Syria, September 12, 1941. The unit fought on the Kokoda Track in New Guinea during 1942, where they suffered very heavy casualties.*



*Jezzine (hex 18.12), and what Rough Terrain looks like.*



*General Allen, commander 7<sup>th</sup> Division with Lieutenant Colonel M. Moten, commander of the 2/27<sup>th</sup> Battalion (photo: Frank Hurley)*



*Near Khalde, Lebanon (hex 7.11), July 11, 1941. Men of the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry battalion advancing from a sheltered position along the road to Beirut.*



*Beirut, Lebanon, September 1941. General De Verdilhac, former Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Vichy French forces in Syria, left with the last shipload of Vichy troops. General De Verdilhac is inspecting a guard of honor mounted by troops of the 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Division, flanked by Major General Chrystall.*



*Near Khalde, Lebanon (hex 7.11), July 11, 1941. Shellfire covering the advance of Australian troops towards the wireless mast at Khalde (Photo: George Silk).*



*June, 1941. A Company, 2/16<sup>th</sup> battalion march along the road (photo by D. Parer).*



*Near Khalde, Lebanon (hex 7.11), July 11, 1941. The attack on the wireless mast at Khalde. Two Bren carriers can be seen between the shell bursts and the road (Photo: George Silk).*



*Lava terrain – this photo is near Chabah, hex 39.35*