

# Operational Combat Series:

## *Reluctant Enemies*

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### Operation Exporter:

*The Commonwealth Invasion of Lebanon & Syria, June-July, 1941*

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Special Assistance: The *Mastelleone's Italian Cold Cut Submarine* (with everything). In keeping with *OCS* tradition, we must recognize the very important role played by "the greatest Italian cold cut sub in the universe", without which this little *OCS* game would not have been possible.

### Introduction

*Reluctant Enemies* ("RE") is a small game meant to serve as an accessible introduction to the *Operational Combat Series* ("OCS"). It is one map, with 60 or so combat units (both players) in action at any given time. This allows for a pace of play not possible with previously published OCS monster games. Regardless of the reduction in scale it remains an *OCS* game with all features relevant to the system. In this game there can be wide open, swirling, DAK-like battles in the desert with some limited armor forces, river lines to break, and very rough mountainous terrain to contend with. The British have an amphibious invasion, naval shore bombardments by both sides can be important in this campaign and there is a small but significant air campaign. As always in the *OCS*, supply constraints make *each* player feel that he may be on the edge of disaster.

Unfortunately, *Operation Exporter* remains a footnote in WWII history even among many knowledgeable enthusiasts. However, given the nature of events in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations during the first half of 1941, this campaign was arguably the hot spot in the world at that moment in time.

General Wavell, senior military commander for the Commonwealth (here including Free French forces), certainly had his hands full after the entry of Rommel in Libya, the German invasions of Greece and Yugoslavia, and the fall of Crete at the hands of the Fallschirmjagers. His troubles were further compounded by the German support of an anti-British coup in Iraq. This German support was aided and abetted by General Dentz, the Commander-in-Chief of the "Army of the Levant" and High Commissioner of the Levant in charge of the defense of the Vichy protectorate

comprised of the French Mandate of Lebanon and Syria. The Vichy, ostensibly Britain's ally just a year earlier, saw fit to allow German air forces to transit through Rayak airfield in Lebanon on their way to Iraq. In addition, the Vichy sent hundreds of tons of armaments, munitions and other supplies to Iraq in support of the coup. All this was happening while Rommel was pressing against Wavell's now depleted forces in the Western desert.

Nevertheless, Churchill demanded action. Wavell was compelled to find some available forces to deal with the threat to his rear and *Operation Exporter* was the result. Two brigades of Australian troops (21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>), the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade, and two brigades of Free French (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigades of the 1<sup>st</sup> Free French Division), along with some supporting troops, but very little armor or air support, were tasked with taking military control of all of Lebanon and Syria. De Gaulle contended that because of the involvement of his Free French, the Vichy French forces would not fight their "brothers in arms" and the operation would be a simple "walk over". He was wrong.

The Vichy were well equipped and organized. They put up stiff opposition, and counterattacked with great effect. The Commonwealth and Free French forces, at first, were stopped cold. Ironically, it was the failure of *Operation Battleaxe* (June 15) in the Western desert that allowed reinforcements for this campaign and a resumption of the Commonwealth offensive. First Damascus fell, then Beirut was seriously threatened. Indian 10<sup>th</sup> division troops with Habforce moving on Aleppo and Homs to the North, the Vichy proposed an armistice to end the fighting.

The armistice was signed on July 14. However, this result was far from certain. Here you can examine why.

## 1.0 General Special Rules

### 1.1 Scale Issues

**A. Half Scale.** *RE* uses the *OCS Sicily* “Half Scale”. Hexes are 2.5 miles across as opposed to the 5 mile *OCS* standard and there are 4 turns per week, rather than 2 turns at the standard *OCS* scale. Ground movement factors follow the regular *OCS* convention.

The representation of the combat units takes into account the change in scale as well as the practical need to have in play enough combat units to allow a realistic portrayal of the events of the campaign.

The great majority of combat units are battalions. All battalion designated units are ½ regimental equivalent for *OCS* size purposes. All company designated units are ¼ regimental equivalent for *OCS* size purposes. For the purpose of Recovery from “Low” or “Exhausted” status for internal stocks of combat supply (*OCS* rule 12.10) each combat unit, regardless of size, costs 2T per level for recovery.

The combat system remains the same, although the *OCS* Combat Results Table (CRT) is a bit bloody for this scale and sparse number of combat units. To compensate, the Combat Unit Recovery system (see section 1.11) has been provided to represent a greater “staying power” that the combat units exhibited. This was preferable to step loss markers. Each combat unit in *RE* is one step for purposes of losses and Combat Unit Recovery. (Non-rebuildable Combat Units and Air Units are an exception.)

**B. Construction.** Because of the shorter time period covered in a turn (1/4 week rather than 1/2), construction activities can only occur in turns represented on the turn record track with a construction symbol (see pick & shovel icon). Note, this means that every other game turn construction activities are allowed for each player.

**C. Air Units.** Due to the small geographic scale of the game, all aircraft have range to reach any hex on the map, effectively making aircraft ranges unlimited. This also applies to Commonwealth aircraft flying from the Off Map Holding Box. Therefore the air unit counters have no range factors.

**D. Headquarters.** Due to the scale of the game and the particular command structures for each player there are some non-standard rules regarding

headquarters. For Commonwealth player see section 2.3 (also, optional rule 4.1) and for the Vichy player see section 3.2.

**E. No Other Adjustments for Scale.** Unless otherwise noted, all consumption rates, draw ranges, HQ throw ranges, displacement distances, air unit interception and patrol ranges, charts, tables and modifiers remain *OCS* standard.

### 1.2 Weather

The weather in Lebanon and Syria at this time of year did not appreciably affect combat operations (tell that to the poor troops suffering in the desert summer heat.) As such there is no weather table and no weather phase. Flight is always allowed.

### 1.3 Counter Color Definitions and Ownership

The counters representing the various contingents of troops portrayed in *RE* have been rendered with particular color combinations as described below. Each combat unit has its respective unit designation(s) to the side of the Unit Type Box. To the Right side is the higher echelon formation (here usually a regiment or brigade designation), and to the left is the lower echelon formation (here most often a battalion designation).

#### A. Vichy French.

All darker “Vichy Blue” units are Vichy French forces.

Vichy air units are also the darker Vichy Blue color but with the radial gradient background pattern and air frame silhouettes on the counters.

Local Vichy forces are two toned, Vichy Blue below and gray on top. These local forces are further designated as either local Syrian forces –Levant or local Lebanon forces –Liban.

#### B. Commonwealth.

**Australian**—Lighter Tan

**British**—Darker Tan (British Tan)

**Indian**—Dark Brown

**Free French**—Light Blue, with French Cross of Lorraine flag

**British (and Australian) Air**—British Tan with a radial gradient and air frame silhouette.

**Trans Jordan Frontier Force**—Two toned: British Tan below, Lighter Tan above

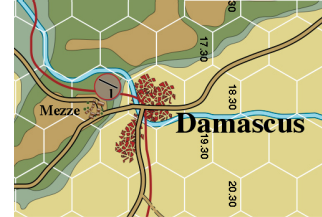
**Czech**—“Czech” Green

**Jewish Palmach**—Two toned: Sky Blue over British Tan

## Reluctant Enemies, OCS #13

Please note, for simplicity, all the above forces are referred to as Commonwealth units.

### 1.4 Damascus—The Open City



The Vichy commander did not see the purpose of defending Damascus since such defense would reduce the city to ruin, and so Damascus was declared an open city. Any Vichy units defending in either hex of Damascus have their defense strengths halved and get no defensive benefit from the major city terrain (Terrain is considered Open). Vichy units may benefit from the Barada River terrain as appropriate. These restrictions never apply to Commonwealth units.

### 1.5 Fuel Costs



The *OCS* Rule 12.5c Part B, “pay 1SP for the HQ and all independents are fueled” does not apply in this game.

All units of any multi-unit brigade or regiment must each pay fuel costs each time those units move. However, see optional rule 4.2.

### 1.6 Mile Markers



To facilitate the movement of the game pieces, in particular the movement of supply, “mile markers” have been printed on the map at intervals *from* Haifa, Beirut and Damascus (south hex). These mile markers indicate the least number of truck movement points from the particular city indicated.

### 1.7 Railroads, Roads and Supply

**A. Railroads.** Each player has a Rail Cap as indicated in the scenario rules. Each Point of Interest in this game functions as a “detrainable hex” in *OCS* terms. Examples of detrainable hexes are Sanamein, Deir Ali, Kiswe, and Damascus. All *OCS* Rules pertaining to railroads and rail movement apply.

**B. Roads and Trace Supply.** In this game, roads (not tracks) can be used for trace supply back to a Supply Source exactly like railroads in the *OCS Series Rules*. Each road hex functions as a “detrainable hex” for trace supply purposes. Rail Cap cannot be used on roads.

**C. Trucks and Wagons.** These transportation units can freely break down into 1 token sized units at any time. The counter mix is not a limit.

## 1.8 Engineering Capabilities and Limitations



All HQs, engineers and pioneers have engineer capabilities per the *OCS Rule* 13.8.

No hedgehogs may be built, by either player (however, see Optional rule 4.3).

## 1.9 Hip Shoots

No Hip shoots are allowed for either player.

## 1.10 Naval Barrage



**A. Naval Barrage Units.** The Commonwealth player has two Naval Barrage Units, a “Cruisers” unit (barrage 9, range 4) and a “Destroyers” unit (barrage 6, range 3). The Vichy player has one Naval Barrage Unit, a “Destroyers” unit (Barrage 6, range 3). These units are placed in the “Naval Barrage Box” “Fired” side up. These units may become eligible for naval barrage during the naval barrage segment of their respective Movement Phases (See the Naval Barrage Box for Barrage Eligibility Dates).

**B. Procedure.** During the reinforcement phase each player determines availability for each Naval Barrage Unit eligible for that turn. Roll one die. On a 3-6 the Naval Barrage Unit is available for a barrage mission. Turn the unit from the “Fired” side to the “Barrage” side.

At any time during the movement phase, prior to resolution of naval barrage, a player may place available Naval Barrage Units in a sea hex (all sea, no coast). Commonwealth Naval Barrage Units must be placed south of the “Commonwealth Naval Barrage Limit” line. The Vichy Naval

Barrage Unit may be placed anywhere north of hex row 33.XX. During the naval barrage segment of the respective player’s movement phase, the player can then fire a naval barrage at any target within range. All Naval Barrages in *RE* are spotted. The British Destroyers and Cruisers may combine their barrage strengths to fire on a single target. At the end of the movement phase, return all Naval Barrage Units, “Fired” side up, to the Naval Barrage Box.

## 1.11 Combat Unit Recovery

*As noted in Section 1.1a, losses generated by the OCS CRT are a little high for purposes of RE, and so to compensate each player can recover some losses to represent the greater “staying power” that the combat units exhibited.*

Units recover in the Reinforcement Phase each turn prior to rebuilds. Track the number of step losses that have occurred in the game. Each group of three step losses allows one unit to return to play—once they do so, those step losses are “used” and no longer count for recovery. Available groups of three step losses must be used on the turn in which they are available.

For each group of three step losses, draw one random unit from the Dead Pile. Recover that unit in the current turn. Recover as many units as you have groups of three step losses. Place recovered units on or with 2 hexes of any appropriate HQ. Unit rebuilds occur normally following recovery.

Recover from the complete Dead Pile from the beginning of the game, not just the previous turn’s losses.

If you have a remainder of one or two step losses after recovery, retain that value for use in the next turn.

Non rebuildable units and Air Units cannot be recovered and their step losses do not count for recovery.

## 2.0 Commonwealth Special Rules

### 2.1 Reinforcements, Supply and Replacements

#### A. Reinforcements and Supply.

Commonwealth reinforcements appear in accordance with the scenario specifications and are received during the reinforcement phase. Supply is received during the reinforcement phase in accordance with a roll of two dice on the Commonwealth Supply Table. Commonwealth reinforcements and supply arrive at any Commonwealth Entry hex (marked as A, B or C). Each of these Entry hexes is a Supply Source. Reinforcements arrive fueled, as appropriate.

#### B. Commonwealth Replacements.

Commonwealth replacements are received during each reinforcement phase (starting Turn 1) in accordance with the Commonwealth Replacement Table, as determined by the roll of two dice (2D6). Replacements are in addition to Combat Unit Recovery (Section 1.11 above). Combat Unit Recovery occurs prior to unit rebuild.

### 2.2 Commonwealth Commandos



The Commonwealth has available the 11<sup>th</sup> Commando battalion designated as “Layforce”. This battalion is represented by its component companies, each named after the company commander. These companies start the game available for an amphibious landing attempt on turn one.

**A. Amphibious Landing Procedure** Prior to the Vichy set up the Allied player will plan the landing attempt in writing, by designating a **single** coastal hex as the “Landing Hex”. The Landing hex may be any coastal hex from 10.10 through 23.06 inclusive (the “Commando Landing Limit” area). On Turn 1 the Commonwealth player will attempt to land all the Commando companies in the Landing Hex at the end of the Movement phase after resolution of any naval and air barrages. Roll one die (1D6). On a roll of 1-3, all Commando landing attempts will then be performed immediately in the Movement Phase. On a roll of 4-6 all landing attempts will be delayed until the last action of the Movement Segment of the Exploitation Phase of Turn 1.





Prior to the landing attempts the Commonwealth player rolls for each Commando for possible “drift”. Roll one die (1D6). On a 1 or 2 the landing attempt drifts one hex north of the Landing Hex, on a 3 or 4 the landing is attempted in the Landing Hex, and on a 5 or 6 the landing attempt drifts one hex south of the Landing Hex. Note that a Commando landing attempt can drift outside the Commando Landing Limit area.

If there is no enemy combat unit in the hex of the landing attempt (after check for drift), then the landing attempt success or failure for each hex containing a Commando is determined by rolling two dice (2D6) and referencing the result to the Amphibious Landing Table (ALT) (apply modifications found on the ALT to the die roll). If successful, place the Commando in the landing hex. If unsuccessful the Commando is eliminated.

If the hex of the landing attempt (after check for drift) is occupied by an enemy combat unit then resolve each such landing attempt as a beach assault in the following combat phase. Note that the Commando(s) attempting to land by beach assault are still offshore at the end of their movement phase waiting for their beach assault resolution during their combat phase.

**B. Landing Turn Supply.** On Turn 1 (including the Vichy player turn) each Commando unit has combat supply. Commandos do not have to check for trace supply during the Supply Phase of Turn 1.

**C. Royal Naval Supply.** Each Commonwealth movement phase (including Turn 1 after the commando landing attempts, and including the Commonwealth Exploit Phase, if applicable) where any Commando unit is in a coast hex and out of trace supply, the Royal Navy can attempt to land 2T of supply in one hex containing any such Commando(s). Roll one die. On 3-6, 2T of supply has landed with the Commando(s). On a 1 or 2 the supply fails to land. When a Commando unit comes within trace supply it is no longer eligible for Royal Naval Supply.

**D. Commandos in Combat.** If a Commando is stacked with or attacks with a non-Commando unit then the action rating of the Commando is not used in the combat.

**E. Commando Withdrawal.** If during the supply phase of any Allied player turn a Commando unit is found to be in trace supply, it will be withdrawn and removed from play during the following Allied reinforcement phase.

**F. OCS Series Rule 18.5 – Amphibious Landings.** Unless changed by these game specific rules, the OCS Rule 18.5–“Amphibious Landings” will be in effect.

## 2.3 Commonwealth Headquarters (HQs)



**A. Corps HQs.** The Lavarack and Wilson Corps headquarters each have a parenthesized (defensive only) strength of 5 when deployed on the “combat” side of the counter and a parenthesized (defensive only) strength of 1 when deployed on the movement side of the counter. These strengths are intrinsic and do not appear on the counter. They are each 1 RE in size. These HQs may supply any Commonwealth units within their respective ranges; they have full engineering capabilities, and may coordinate unit rebuilds and unit recoveries of any Commonwealth units within two hexes of their location.

**B. Division/Brigade HQs.** The Australian 7<sup>th</sup> Division HQ, British 6<sup>th</sup> Division HQ, the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade HQ, and the Free French Division HQ each have a parenthesized (defensive only) strength of 2 when deployed on the “combat” side of the counter and a parenthesized (defensive only) strength of 1 when deployed on the movement side of the counter. These strengths are intrinsic and do not appear on the counter. They are each ½ RE in size. These HQs may supply any Commonwealth units within their respective ranges; they have full engineering capabilities, and may coordinate unit rebuilds and unit recoveries of any Commonwealth units within two hexes of their location.

**C. Haifa Nominal HQ.** Haifa acts as a nominal HQ (without a counter) for the purpose of unit rebuilds only (not Combat Unit Recovery). Units can be rebuilt within two hexes. The Haifa Nominal HQ has no range or combat strength, and has no function or purpose other than rebuilding units.

## 2.4 Commonwealth Brigades

Most Commonwealth infantry battalions are organized by brigades. Each such battalion assigned to a certain brigade will be identified with a particular color stripe across the center of its counter. These brigades are considered “multi-unit formations” and the component units of each such must all draw trace supply from the same source or else be subject to the procedure of OCS Rule 12.6.f.

## 2.5 Commonwealth Green Units



The Australian 21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Brigades are not yet acclimated to the desert conditions to which they had been deployed in April, 1941. To account for their less than fully effective performance during this period of acclimation each infantry battalion of each of these brigades, prior to the July 1 game turn, has an action rating of 3, not the 4 action rating printed on the counter. Each such battalion has a green circle around the action rating as an indicator of this provisional “green” status. On July 1 and thereafter, the action rating of each of these units is 4.

## 2.6 Commonwealth Off Map Holding Box

The Commonwealth Off Map Holding Box is a representation of the airbases within range of the battle ground but not actually present on the map. Each air unit flying a mission from the box has sufficient range to reach any hex on the map. Fighters do not project a patrol zone from this box. Vichy French units, including Vichy air units cannot enter the box. Air unit refits for the airbase in this box do not cost supply, the air units refit for “free”.

## 3.0 Vichy French Special Rules

### 3.1 Vichy Units—Limitation of Use



**A. Restricted Units.** The following Vichy French forces are Restricted Units (Place a red “Restriction” marker on these units):

**5.10 (Beirut):** II/6 Lgn Mot. Inf. Bn.

**6.18 (Zahle):** I and III—6 Lgn Mot. Inf. Bn.'s, Marion/6 Chas Armored Car Bn., V/1 Met Artillery Bn.

**18.28 (Mezze):** Gandy/7 Chas Armor Bn. and the Roulin/7 Chas Armored Car Bn.

Restricted Units may not move, and Restricted artillery may not barrage until released during the reinforcement phase or reaction phase of a particular game turn as provided below. Vichy Restricted Units can be in reserve, including at start.

On game turn one, 1 of the Restricted Units may be released (one of the total, not one per hex). On game turn two, 2 more of the Restricted Units may be released (3 total for Turns 1 and 2). At the beginning of game turn 3 all remaining Restricted Units are now released.

#### B. Trans-Jordan Movement Limitation.

No Vichy units are allowed to move into Trans-Jordan prior to Turn 3 (June 12).

### 3.2 Vichy Headquarters (HQs)



**A. Corps HQ.** The Verdilhac Corps headquarters has a parenthesized (defensive only) strength of 5 when deployed on the “combat” side of the counter and a parenthesized (defensive only) strength of 1 when deployed on the movement side of the counter. These strengths are intrinsic and do not appear on the counter. It is 1 RE in size. This HQ may supply any Vichy French units within range; it has full engineering capabilities, and may coordinate unit recoveries or rebuilds of any Vichy units within two hexes of its location.



**B. Arlabosse and Delhomme Division HQ's.** Each of these HQs have a parenthesized (defensive only) strength of 2 when deployed on the “combat” side of the counter and a parenthesized (defensive only) strength 1 when deployed on the movement side of the counter. These strengths are intrinsic and do not appear on the counter. They are each ½ RE in size.

These HQs may supply any Vichy French units within range; they have full engineering capabilities, and each may coordinate unit recoveries or rebuilds of any Vichy units within two hexes of their location.

**C. Beirut and Damascus Nominal HQs.** Beirut and Damascus each acts as a nominal

HQ (without a counter) for the purpose of unit rebuilds only (not unit recovery). A unit can be rebuilt within two hexes. The Beirut and Damascus Nominal HQs have no range or combat strength, and have no function or purpose other than rebuilding a unit.

### 3.3 Reinforcements, Supply, and Replacements

**A. Reinforcements and Supply.** Vichy reinforcements appear in accordance with the scenario specifications and are received during the reinforcement phase. Supply is received during the reinforcement phase in accordance with a roll of two dice. Find the supply received for that turn on the Vichy Supply Table. Reinforcements arrive fueled, as applicable.

Vichy supply arrives at any Vichy Entry hex (marked as 1, 2 or 3). Each of these Entry hexes is a Supply Source.

**B. Vichy Replacements.** The Vichy French receive replacements in accordance with the scenario specifications and the Reinforcement schedule, rather than rolling on a table as ordinarily seen in *OCS* games. Replacements may enter at either Vichy Entry hex 1 or 2. Replacements are in addition to Combat Unit Recovery (Section 1.11 above), which occurs prior to unit rebuild.

### 3.4 Vichy On Map Holding Box: Rayak Airbase

The On Map Holding Box is a play aid to help better organize the Vichy air forces ordinarily employed at the Rayak Airbase (Hex 6.21). In every regard the units in this box are actually on the map at the Rayak Airbase. Air unit refit at the Rayak Airbase does not cost supply; the air units refit for “free”.

## 4.0 Optional Rules

### 4.1 Commonwealth HQs

To reflect the actual capabilities and unique aspects of the Commonwealth command structure, Commonwealth Special Rule 2.3 case B. is replaced with the following:

**2.3 case B. Australian 7<sup>th</sup> Division HQ, British 6<sup>th</sup> Division HQ, the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade HQ, and the Free**

**French HQ.** Each of these HQs has a parenthesized (defensive only) strength of 2 when deployed on the “combat” side of the counter and a parenthesized (defensive only) strength of 1 when deployed on the movement side of the counter. These strengths are intrinsic and do not appear on the counter. They are each ½ RE in size.



The Allen Australian 7<sup>th</sup> Division HQ may supply any Commonwealth units (**except Free French units**) within its range; it has full engineering capabilities, and may coordinate unit rebuilds and unit recoveries of any Commonwealth units (**except Free French units**) within two hexes of its location.



The Evetts British 6<sup>th</sup> Division HQ may supply any Commonwealth units within its range; it has full engineering capabilities, and may coordinate unit rebuilds and unit recoveries of any Commonwealth units (**including Free French units**) within two hexes of its location.



The Lloyd 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade HQ may supply any Commonwealth units within its range; it has full engineering capabilities, **except for bridging**, and may coordinate unit rebuilds and unit recoveries of any Commonwealth units (**including Free French units**) within two hexes of its location.



The Legentilhomme Free French Division HQ may supply **only Free French units** within its range; it has full engineering capabilities, **except for bridging**, and may coordinate unit rebuilds and unit recoveries of **only Free French units**, within two hexes of its location.

## 4.2 Alternative Brigade and Regiment Fueling

Game specific rule 1.5 applies to independent units requiring fuel. Fueling of multi-unit brigades under this optional rule is handled as follows:

**A. Commonwealth.** All units of Commonwealth Brigades can be fueled at the cost of one supply point per Brigade, and will remain fueled until their next Clean Up phase. Note that fueling is done on a per brigade basis. The respective Brigades of the Australian 7<sup>th</sup> division and the British 6<sup>th</sup> division can be fueled at a cost of 1SP per Brigade.

For Commonwealth Brigades that do not have an HQ marker, place fuel markers on any or all of the component battalions as necessary to indicate a particular Brigade's fueled status. One Australian artillery unit can be fueled along with each Australian Brigade for no additional cost.

**EXCEPTION, All units** of the Free French Division can be fueled at the cost of one supply point, and will remain fueled until their next Clean Up phase.

**B. Vichy.** In the same manner as a Commonwealth brigade (see above) certain Vichy regiments can be fueled for the cost of one supply point, and will remain fueled until their next Clean Up phase. In addition, a Vichy regiment may fuel one Vichy artillery unit and the Levant independent light armor battalion. Place fuel markers on any or all of the component battalions as necessary to indicate a particular regiment's fueled status. Note that fueling is done on a per regiment basis and each eligible regiment can be fueled at a cost of 1SP per regiment.

The following units can be fueled as a part of the respective regiment for one supply point:

6<sup>th</sup> Lgn (I, II, III, IV Bns.) (plus one artillery Bn. and the Levant light armor Bn.)

24<sup>th</sup> Mxd (I, II, III Bns.) (plus one artillery Bn. and the Levant light armor Bn.)

6<sup>th</sup> Chas (Gandy & Roulin Bns.) (plus one artillery Bn. and the Levant light armor Bn.)

7<sup>th</sup> Chas (Lehr & Marion Bns.) (plus one artillery Bn. and the Levant light armor Bn.)

## 4.3 Vichy Hedgehog

The Vichy historically prepared some defenses at Damour which may possibly be considered enough to warrant an *OCS* hedgehog.

The Vichy player may build one hedgehog (anywhere) during the course of the *Campaign Game* (Scenario 5.1). The cost is two supply points. Apply all ordinary *OCS* rules regarding this construction and use of this hedgehog.

## 5.0 Scenarios

### 5.1 The Campaign—Operation Exporter, June 8, 1941 – July 12, 1941

**Setup Order:** Commonwealth Commando Landing Plan (2.2), Vichy setup card, Commonwealth setup card.

**First player:** Commonwealth

**First Turn:** June 8

**Last Turn:** July 12

**Game Length:** 21 Turns

**Reinforcements:** Use Reinforcement Cards

#### Scenario 5.1 Victory Conditions:

**Introduction.** Victory is determined by each player's control of designated geographic objectives. The purpose of these victory conditions is to evaluate the relative effectiveness of the players against their historical counterparts, Wavell for the Commonwealth and Verdilhac for the Vichy French. A player will win by scoring a Sudden Death Victory at the end of any player turn or by a determination of Victory Points (VPs) scored at the end of the last turn of the scenario.

**Sudden Death Victory.** Either player can score a Sudden Death Victory by controlling a respective Sudden Death Victory Hex at the end of any player turn. The game is then over with that player scoring a Crushing Victory.

**Vichy Player Sudden Death Victory Hexes** are the Commonwealth entry hexes/supply sources, A (Haifa, 37.01), B (63.13) or C (Amman, 63.20).

**Commonwealth Player Sudden Death Victory Hexes** are Beirut, (5.10) or Rayak airbase, (6.21).

## Reluctant Enemies, OCS #13

**Victory by VP Determination.** If there is not a Sudden Death Victory then victory will be determined by the number of VPs scored by the Commonwealth Player. The Commonwealth player (only) scores VPs for control of Geographic Objectives at the end of the last turn of the scenario:

**Damour (13.09) – 2VP**

**Ain Trez (13.12) – 1VP**

**Sidon (18.07) – 1VP**

**Merdjayoun (22.12) – 1VP**

**Hasbaya (21.15) – 1VP**

**Rachaiye (18.18) – 1VP**

**El Masna (12.20) – 2VP**

**Yahfouf (6.24) – 1VP**

**Dimas (15.24) – 1VP**

**Damascus (North – 18.29) – 2VP**

**Damascus (South – 19.29) – 2VP**

Consult the **Victory by VPs Determination Table** to ascertain the winner (see the Campaign, 5.1 Scenario column).

**Control.** A player controls a particular Sudden Death Victory Hex or Geographic Objective if, 1.) that player has an attack capable combat unit In Trace Supply occupying such hex, or 2.) was the last player to have an attack capable combat unit move through such hex, "In Trace Supply". In addition, if, at the end of a player turn, a Sudden Death Victory Hex is not In Trace Supply, then that player is considered to control the Sudden Death Victory Hex, scoring a Sudden Death Victory. Further, if, at the end of a scenario, a Geographic Objective is not In Trace Supply to a Vichy supply source, then the Commonwealth player controls the Geographic Objective.

**In Trace Supply.** For purposes of control under these Victory Conditions, *In Trace Supply* means that if it were the player's supply phase, such combat unit or hex (as though such hex were a combat unit) would be found to be in trace supply in accordance with *OCS* Rules section 12.6, and not supplied by "eating off the map". Note that Commandos do not have to check for trace supply the turn of their landing, however, this is not In Trace Supply for purposes of control under this rule. Note further, that an In Trace Supply determination for purposes of this section occurs at the end of a player turn, or as applicable, the end of the scenario, not during such player's supply phase.



## 5.2 Secure the Levant

**Setup Order:** Commonwealth Commando Landing Plan (2.2), Vichy setup card, Commonwealth setup card.

**First player:** Commonwealth

**First Turn:** June 8

**Last Turn:** June 22

**Game Length:** 9 Turns

**Reinforcements:** Use Reinforcement Cards

Commonwealth and Vichy setup information is the same as Scenario 5.1 – *The Campaign – Operation Exporter*.

Reinforcements are the same as scenario 5.1, although only through June 22 (game turn 9).

### Scenario 5.2 Victory Conditions

The victory conditions for this short scenario are the same as the Campaign Scenario, 5.1 (including Sudden Death Victory), **except** Victory by VPs Determination is evaluated using the Secure the Levant, 5.2 column on the **Victory by VPs Determination Table** (see back cover).

## Historical Commentary

By Curtis H. Baer

Grey Side Bars by David Hughes

*“Our view is that if the Germans can pick up Syria and Iraq with petty air forces, tourists and local revolts then we must not shrink from running equal small-scale military risks and facing the possible aggravation of political dangers from failure. For this decision we of course take full responsibility, and should you find yourself unwilling to give effect to it arrangements will be made to any wish you may express to be relieved of your command.”*

From a cable by Prime Minister Winston Churchill to General Sir Archibald Percival Wavell, May 21, 1941.

*Reluctant Enemies* is a simulation of the campaign by Commonwealth forces to take military control of the Vichy French Levant, Lebanon and Syria, during June and July of 1941. This was an obscure but militarily significant operation at the time. The first half of 1941 was a dramatic moment during World War II, certainly in

the Mediterranean Theater of Operations. Following the success of O'Connor and Wavell's campaign to push the Italians out of Egypt and Cyrenaica (*Operation Compass*); the German high command responded. Enter Rommel, the legendary “Desert Fox”. The aggressive German general pressed the thin and overextended Commonwealth forces and sent them reeling back to the Egyptian border, except for a small garrison lodged at Tobruk. Then a series of events further compounded Wavell's troubles. The Germans, in support of their Italian allies invaded Yugoslavia and Greece. Churchill required that the Greeks be supported and Wavell complied, sending aid from the scant forces available to him. In Iraq, Rashid Ali Galani and his quartet of army Colonels, “The Golden Square”, staged a coup aiming to rid themselves the British troops occupying their country. After the fall of Crete the Germans were in a position to support this anti-British coup in Iraq. They sent air units to Baghdad. However, these air forces basing out of Crete and Rhodes could not fly to Baghdad without first landing for relief somewhere in between. That somewhere, primarily, became Rayak airfield in Lebanon. All of this threatened the strategic oil reserves in both Iraq and southern Iran. Churchill was adamant that the Vichy French could not be permitted to aid the Germans, but General Wavell was circumspect; he could not see any military means available to effectively act against the Vichy French. He felt he was simply spread too thin, and by any objective measure he was.

Wavell conveyed these concerns to the war cabinet in London but was rebuffed and told that the strategic circumstances dictated British military action to deny the Germans the use of Lebanon and Syria and certainly to deny the Germans and their Iraqi surrogates the ability to interdict the flow of oil. In fact his objections had sealed his fate and his time as Commander of Commonwealth forces in the North Africa and the Middle East was now limited, Churchill had made the decision to replace him with Auchinleck.

He was now resigned to follow his orders to the best of his ability with the limited forces available. The troops he could commit to the task were: two brigades of the Australian 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (the 21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>—the 18<sup>th</sup>, part of the Tobruk garrison was unavailable), the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade of the 4<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Division, veterans of the fighting in the desert and East Africa, two Free French brigades newly

arrived in Palestine, and some independent battalions. In addition there was a battalion of special forces commandos which would make an amphibious landing to help cross the Litani River on the coast in southern Lebanon. To make matters worse there were only a few light tanks and limited air support available at the start of this operation. However, the Royal Navy was committed to provide shore bombardment support along the Lebanon coast.

*The Australians were members of the Second Australian Imperial Force, all volunteers in the model of the much praised men who had fought at Gallipoli and France in the Great War as part of the First Australian Imperial Force. So revered was the memory of their service and sacrifice that it became a political necessity to tie the First and Second together. This was done in several ways – the most public being to insert a ‘2nd’ in front of the battalion formation numbers. This honored the record of the matching Great War battalion, such as the 2/16th Battalion. There were also other, less obvious links. Five infantry divisions had been formed in 1914-1918 so the first new division, was numbered the 6th.*

The Vichy French were under military command of General Joseph-Antoine de Verdilhac. At his disposal were about twenty battalions of French colonial infantry, including a regiment of the famous Foreign Legion and eight battalions of local Lebanese and Syrian militia. This infantry was supported by three battalions of colonial horsed cavalry, four battalions of local militia cavalry, and several battalions of artillery. Above all the French possessed a relatively formidable armored force comprised of two battalions of R35 medium tanks, two battalions of armored cars, and a small training battalion of WWI F17 infantry tanks. The Vichy had expected Commonwealth intervention and deployed these forces forward to meet the threat. There were few air forces available at the start of the campaign. The French navy consisted of a few destroyers and two submarines.

Wavell appointed General Maitland “Jumbo” Wilson as commander in charge of this *Operation Exporter* which was to use three simultaneous avenues of advance: along the coast to Beirut, between the mountain ranges to Rayak airbase in the Bekaa valley, and through the desert to Damascus.

## On to Beirut

The geography along the coast of Lebanon is conducive to defense. The foothills of the Lebanon mountain range fall to the sea from east to west in a series of steep ridges and deep ravines making inland, off road, north-south movement of military forces nearly impossible and at best very difficult. Therefore the primary operation for the drive on Beirut was effectively confined to the road running north along the narrow coastal plain. Three rivers run from east to west from the mountains across the coastal plain to the sea. From south to north these rivers are, the Litani, 20 miles north of the border, the Aouale, 15 miles further north and, the Damour, which enters the sea about 20 miles south of Beirut.

On June 8<sup>th</sup> at 2 a.m., the 21<sup>st</sup> Australian Infantry Brigade, along with supporting troops, under command of Brigadier Stevens was assigned to drive up the coast road to seize Beirut. This drive initially saw great progress against light resistance from Vichy Tunisian cavalry stationed at Iskandaroun north of the border. The Australians were aided by local Palestine Jewish militia forces organized as the Palmach ("Strike Force"). One Jewish guide at the fore front of the advance took a wound to the eye from the shrapnel of Vichy sniper fire. He was Moshe Dayan who became the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army in 1953.

This thrust up the coast was supported by a flanking move along a track through the inland hills by Colonel MacDonald's 2/16<sup>th</sup> battalion of the 21<sup>st</sup> Australian Brigade plus supporting troops. These two groups met on the coast at Tyre and then proceeded north to the Litani River.

Lt. Colonel R. N. R. Pedder, commanding "C" battalion commandos which were part of a formation known as Layforce was assigned to make a pre-dawn amphibious landing, above the Litani River to establish a bridgehead. This landing was planned to facilitate the passage of Brigadier Stevens' force over the Litani in its drive up the coast. High seas forced a postponement at the direction of the Royal Navy commander. The commando battalion returned early the next day, just as the 21<sup>st</sup> brigade was approaching the Litani. C Battalion displayed great courage and resolve in their beach assault, drove inland and had some initial success. However, Vichy French forewarned by the approach of the 21<sup>st</sup> brigade were by this time holding the nearby river line in force. The commandos were

eliminated as an effective fighting force, with many killed, including Pedder and most of the rest taken prisoner. However, their effort was not in vain. The commandos sufficiently disrupted the Vichy defenses to allow the Australian infantry under Stevens to cross the Litani in force on June 9<sup>th</sup>. A major barrier on the road to Beirut had been breached.

*C Battalion was known as the 'Scottish Commando', as many of its men had volunteered from Scottish regiments, such as the Highland Light Infantry and the Cameron Highlanders. But being a Commando in the Middle East was a risky business. C Battalion had been part of a four battalion commando group known as 'Layforce'. Both A and B Battalions had been wrecked fighting on Crete against German paratroopers and C itself would be disbanded due to the losses incurred in Syria.*

Further progress was slowed as the Vichy committed the tanks and armored cars of the 6<sup>th</sup> RCA. In addition, the Vichy had air superiority. The Commonwealth did not have an effective answer. This allowed the French to conduct a skillful delaying action on the coast above the Litani for the next week.

## The Mountain Valley

The 25<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Brigade commanded by Brigadier A. R. Baxter-Cox along with supporting troops was ordered to make a thrust north between the Lebanon mountain range and the Anti-Lebanon range further inland. The objective was Rayak airbase located in the Bekaa Valley about fifty miles north of the Palestine border. Progress was initially good, with the important mountain town of Merdjayoun taken on June 12 against light resistance. However, this offensive was then stopped cold about eight miles northeast of this town in very rugged terrain near Hasbaya by determined Vichy resistance employing effective artillery fire and air bombardment.

Baxter-Cox then received orders from General Lavarack of the Australian 7<sup>th</sup> infantry division to "...transfer the bulk of the 25<sup>th</sup> brigade to assist the 21<sup>st</sup> brigade in its progress along the coast." Merdjayoun would now be defended by the 2/33<sup>rd</sup> and the newly arrived 2/5<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion and by the weak Scots Greys, a newly constituted "lorried" British infantry battalion. The Scots Greys had a long and distinguished record as horsed cavalry,

## Reluctant Enemies, OCS #13

but they reluctantly lost their mounts just prior to the campaign and had received no effective training in motorized infantry doctrine. Morale was not high for the Scots Greys as a result. The other two battalions of the 25<sup>th</sup> brigade (2/25<sup>th</sup> and 2/31<sup>st</sup>), along with supporting artillery and a few light tanks crossed the Litani on a track to the west of Merdjayoun and then moved north along very poor trails towards the mountain town of Jezzine. This town was significant due to the presence of several tracks, one of which led west to the coast at Sidon, just south of the Aouale river. Another track led north to the little village of Beit ed Dine, located at the junction of other important tracks through awful terrain. The capture of Jezzine would threaten the flank of the Vichy defense on the coast.

*The British garrison of Palestine had included the 1st Cavalry Division, made up of regular and territorial (in American terms national guard) regiments. All were being 'de-horsed', an action especially offensive to the Royal Scots Dragoons – universally known as 'the Greys' after the color of their horses. There is an unconfirmed, but plausible, story that they would only agree if they were allowed to paint all of their vehicles and tanks grey!*

After a further tortuous journey through incredibly rough terrain the Australians finally met Vichy resistance about five miles south of Jezzine on the morning of June 14<sup>th</sup>. The Vichy defense included interlocking machine guns and pre-sited artillery fire. Commonwealth artillery was required to dampen this defense allowing the tanks and Bren carriers to make some headway, forcing the Vichy to pull back along a portion of their line. Further enemy resistance was encountered at the hills covering the road entering Jezzine from the south. Again the artillery provided effective support. This time the infantry routed the Vichy in close fighting with rifle fire and the use of bayonets. The French had fought hard and inflicted significant casualties on the Australians but, by sundown on the 14<sup>th</sup> the Commonwealth held Jezzine, the surrounding heights, and the tracks leading west to Sidon and north to Beit et Dine.

## The Drive on Damascus

To the east in the desert plains of northern Trans-Jordan, Brigadier W. L. Lloyd commanded the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 4<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Division, recently arriving from their successful campaign in east Africa. They were tasked with clearing Vichy



resistance in southwestern Syria. The plan was to then allow two Free French brigades under command of General Paul Legentilhomme to pass through and press the attack North, with Damascus as the objective. Prior to the campaign General Charles de Gaulle had promised Churchill that once the Vichy saw that their French brothers in arms were involved in this operation, that Frenchmen would not fight Frenchmen, and this campaign would be “a walk to Damascus”. De Gaulle was wrong in this notion. Instead the Vichy considered de Gaulle’s men traitors and fought with determination to defend their territory.

*The 5th Indian Brigade was a regular formation composed as usual of one British and two Indian battalions. These were highly experienced soldiers, many of whom had seen action on the North-West Frontier of India before fighting the Italians in Egypt and Ethiopia. However it was not intact. In its previous battles it would have enjoyed the support of a full complement of 2pdr or 37mm anti-tank guns and 25pdr field guns, all capable of defeating most tanks of the period. The decision to leave many of these behind would prove very costly.*

The Punjab and Rajputana infantry battalions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade made short work of the light resistance encountered at Deraa just north of the border on the Hejaz railway. They advanced north to Sheikh Meskine where they rendezvoused with the cavalry and light tanks of Groupement Collet which had crossed the border at Fiq to the west. Colonel Collet had defected from the Vichy on May 21<sup>st</sup> with several squadrons of well-trained cavalry under his command. This defection was probably the event that most influenced de Gaulle, creating a mindset that the Vichy forces would not fight, but rather “crack like an eggshell.”

The third battalion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade, London’s Royal Fusiliers (Lt. Colonel A. D. G. Orr, commanding), were stationed at Tell Or, on the southern point of Lake Tiberias. They were ordered to take Kuneitra on the Golan Heights east of the Jordan River. This task had been accomplished by the end of the second day, supported by a detachment of Australian field artillery. The defending Senegalese battalion was forced to withdraw 15 miles northeast to the town of Sassaa. In fact, General Delhomme, commanding the Vichy forces in southern Syria, had ordered a general withdrawal of his forces north to the el Awaj River line just south of Kiswe. He felt the open desert plains could not be adequately defended.

Legentilhomme’s Free French moved north in high spirits, reportedly singing “La Marseillaise”. They did not, at first, encounter any substantial opposition, only bombing runs by the Vichy air force. The Free French concentrated at Sanamein, about 20 miles south of Kiswe on June 10<sup>th</sup>, where a plan to take that town was developed. At this time, General Legentilhomme sustained an injury to his arm as the result of Vichy air bombardment and was evacuated to a hospital in Deraa. There were reports that this injury had affected him greatly, to the point where he had reportedly “...gone off the top of his head entirely.” As a result, Wilson now named Brigadier Lloyd as C. O. of operations in Syria with Colonel Jones of the Rajputana Rifles replacing him in command of the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade. Lloyd then ordered up the Rajputana and Punjabi battalions to support the attack across the el Awaj River at Kiswe, while Colonel Collet, now with a few available light tanks and by some accounts a detachment of armored cars from the British Royals battalion, led his cavalry force east to flank the Kiswe position.

## The First Week of Operations

Commonwealth progress, after initial success, was stalled, contrary to expectations. The thought that the Vichy would welcome the invaders with open arms by simply presenting Free French liaison officers under a white flag of truce to explain their righteous position swiftly disappeared. In like regard the order to Australian forces to display their peaceful intent by wearing their distinctive head gear, the Slouch Hat, rather than their steel helmets certainly did not achieve the desired result, instead serving only to greatly irritate the troops. There were no mass Vichy desertions as expected by some in high office. It was now abundantly clear the paucity of forces employed by the invaders was inadequate for the task. In this, General Wavell’s reservations about the operation were vindicated. In addition, the Vichy air force was reinforced allowing it to achieve air superiority. Further, the RAF had its hands full against the Luftwaffe bombing the Royal Navy. This deployment of German air forces hampered British naval efforts to provide supporting barrages. Vichy destroyers were still periodically bombarding the Australians on the coast. So, the Commonwealth was stopped at Sidon, Merdjayoun, Jezzine and the el Awaj River south of Kiswe. Reinforcements were required, but Wilson did not know where they would come from. The main focus of

the Mideast command was still the western desert of Egypt where an offensive was planned to commence June 15<sup>th</sup> against Rommel, *Operation Battleaxe*.

## Verdilhac’s Counterattack

General Verdilhac had busied himself that first week preparing for an effective response to the invasion. His counterattack plan provided simultaneous offensive operations against Jezzine and Merdjayoun, Kuneitra, and the Commonwealth line of communications in the desert at Ezraa and Sheikh Meskine. These counterattacks were overall, quite successful, inflicting heavy casualties and for a period of time stopped the Commonwealth cold, causing an immense shock to the Commonwealth command. In fact if the attacks at Merdjayoun and Kuneitra had been exploited more aggressively the Vichy could have severely interrupted the Commonwealth LOC from Palestine, and quite possibly reached the important supply hub at Haifa on the Mediterranean coast.

## Merdjayoun and Jezzine

A task force under command of Colonel Albord led by a well-trained and disciplined battalion of the Vichy French Foreign Legion (III/6<sup>th</sup> REI), supported by tanks of the 6<sup>th</sup> RCA, Algerian colonial infantry battalions, and some cavalry squadrons took Merdjayoun and fort Khiam, just south, by storm on June 15<sup>th</sup>. The Australian 2/33<sup>rd</sup> battalion had been off in the foothills of Mt. Hermon trying to flank the Vichy position blocking the valley at Hasbaya. The defending Scots Greys were badly mauled, causing, by some Australian accounts, a complete and desperate rout. The road to the Jordan River valley of Palestine was open and the Commonwealth communications threatened. Albord, however, not fully understanding the extent of the enemy’s panic, did not pursue this opportunity. This allowed much needed reaction time for General Lavarack (still commanding the Australian 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, but soon to be promoted to commander of the Australian I Corps and overall commander of *Operation Exporter*.) Lavarack recalled the Australian 2/25<sup>th</sup> battalion from Jezzine to move on Merdjayoun from the northwest. In addition, he called up from Palestine what few reserves he had in the form of companies from the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Machinegun Battalion and 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Pioneer Battalion. In addition, the newly arrived light tanks of the 9<sup>th</sup> Australian

Division Cavalry were put into action. There ensued a bitter battle for the town over the course of the next five to six days.

*The two opposing Foreign Legion forces in Syria were very different. The Vichy 6e Régiment Étrangère d'Infanterie (REI) had been created the previous year, using men from the older regiments in Algeria. They were classic legionaries – tough, experienced and from a multitude of nations. The Free French unit was very different. It was the remnant of a two-battalion 'demi-brigade', also formed in 1940 but to fight the Germans in Norway. When France surrendered only one of these battalions agreed to serve with De Gaulle – one that contained Spanish Republican soldiers forced to leave when Franco won in Spain. From the point of view of the 6th Regiment they may not have been considered legionaries – certainly they were not French!*

*The key to the success of the Vichy offensive lay in the 90 tanks and supporting armored cars of its two cavalry regiments. These belonged to the Army of North Africa, a totally separate force with its own command and structure (just as the US Marines are separate from the US Army). It contained what were known as both 'white' and 'native' regiments of cavalry and infantry. The native cavalry regiments were called 'Spahi', the white known as 'Régiment Chasseurs d'Afrique' (RCA) although the 6th and 7th RCA serving in Syria contained both European and North African soldiers.*

## Kuneitra

Verdilhac's primary counterattack was aimed at Kuneitra on the Golan Heights. A task force consisting of R35 tanks and armored cars of the 7th RCA, supported by Senegalese colonial infantry and Circassian cavalry squadrons had been assembled at Sassaa about 15 miles northeast. He assigned command of this force to Colonel le Couteulx. There were a number valuable opportunities available to Verdilhac after capturing Kuneitra. Colonel Couteulx could then move northwest in support of the attack on Merdjayoun, turn southeast in support of the operations against Ezraa and Sheikh Meskine, or exploit across the Jordan river into Palestine threatening the Commonwealth communications for their coastal and valley operations. The Vichy attack on Kuneitra was delayed by Lloyd's assault on Kiswe and the surrounding heights. Verdilhac diverted about half of the 7th RCA's tanks to Kiswe in response to the

success the 5th Indian Brigade experienced early on June 15th. With this reaction the position north of Kiswe was stabilized and Verdhilhac considered Damascus safe. The attack on Kuneitra then went in the following morning, June 16th. Le Couteulx completely cut off Orr's Royal Fusiliers and tested their morale by pounding their positions with point blank gun fire from his tanks. This tactic proved successful. Colonel Orr had no remedy to the casualties his men were taking from the Vichy tankers. By nightfall, short of ammunition, and with no hope of reinforcement, Orr conceded to the inevitable and surrendered his command. This was the first surrender of the Royal Fusiliers in their long, proud history. It was especially painful to give up to the French against whom the Fusiliers had fought so many times.

*The Royal Fusiliers (a 'fusil' was an early flintlock musket assigned to elite troops used to guard artillery trains where the usual burning matchlock musket was liable to cause an explosion) were also known as the City of London Regiment. Serving the capital they were able to raise more battalions than any other regiment, a total of fourteen in World War Two. But this paled in comparison to the Great War in which no fewer than thirty-three battalions bore the regiment's name. Of course it was the fact that it was the 1st Battalion, a unit raised in 1685 that surrendered that was especially offensive to the British.*

## Ezraa and Sheikh Meskine

Commandant Simon (Chief-of-Staff to Colonel Kieme, commanding the Levant cavalry) was assigned the task of moving on Deraa and Sheikh Meskine to sit astride the lines of communication of the Commonwealth forces pressing on Damascus. He had at his disposal a squadron of armored cars, and a detachment of Moroccan spahis, plus some support from the Souedia watch force in the form of a battalion of Tunisian colonial infantry and several squadrons of Druze cavalry. Simon made great headway on June 15th, easily capturing Ezraa against scant opposition from the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force troops stationed there in defense. The French plan was then to continue on to Sheikh Meskine which would interdict the Commonwealth supply lines. With Ezraa and Sheikh Meskine secured Simon could then move in support of operations at Kuneitra or push south to secure the border town of Deraa. However, Simon faltered by sitting in Ezraa contemplating his options rather than

## Reluctant Enemies, OCS #13

pressing his advantage. This allowed time for reaction by Brigadier Lloyd who had not panicked but stayed cool under the pressure of reports of the Vichy counterattacks. Lloyd deployed a Free French colonial infantry battalion supported by a battery of artillery for the relief of Sheikh Meskine and Ezraa. It was all he had to spare. For the morning of June 16th Simon planned a simple frontal assault on Sheikh Meskine from the east with his armored cars in the lead. This effort was stopped by the fire from the artillery battery received as reinforcement the previous evening. This action ended the Vichy attempt to seize this important objective. Simon retired back to Ezraa. A timely reinforcement, the Queen's Own battalion of the British 6th Infantry Division arrived the night of June 16th from Palestine. The British organized a counterattack on the Vichy force at Ezraa. The Queen's Own infantry, again with the support of the artillery battery pounded Simon's troops. The Vichy did not have enough to hold the town. They further retired to the safety of the rough country of the Jebel Druze. Simon had lost an opportunity. If he had exhibited sufficient initiative and resolve on the 15th he could have driven the disorganized Jordanian defenders into the desert thereby disrupting Lloyd's line of communications with known consequences.

Verdilhac was pleased with the disruption his counterattacks had caused the enemy, but in fact he had expected even better results.

The Vichy counterattacks accelerated a planned reorganization of Commonwealth forces on June 17th-18th. General Lavarack, commanding the Australian 7th Infantry Division was appointed to command of the newly formed First Australian Corps. His command now included all forces for the entire campaign from the Mediterranean Sea to Damascus. General Allen took control of the Australian 7th Infantry from Lavarack. General "Mad Jack" Evetts, commanding the British 6th Infantry Division arrived June 19th with orders to take control of Commonwealth forces in Syria

*The 6th Infantry Division has some claim to be the most active British infantry formation of the war. It was formed in 1939 from the regular battalions in garrison in northern Egypt and along the Suez Canal and assisted in the defeat of the Italians in December 1940. After serving in Greece, Crete and Syria it formed the garrison of Tobruk during Operation Crusader, the expensive defeat of*

*Rommel's Afrika Corps in December 1941. When India was at risk from the Japanese it was rushed there and two years later was converted into the famous Chindits. As the war ended its battalions were training as glider infantry.*

## The Battles at Kiswe and Mezze, and the Fall of Damascus

### Kiswe

The town of Kiswe is about 12 miles due south of Damascus, lying astride the road from Amman. It is situated just north of the river el Awaj which runs from west to east. There are a series of prominent hills just northwest and northeast of the town. The Vichy had surrounded Kiswe with an antitank ditch reported to be 13 feet wide and 13 feet deep. Verdilhac had 4 battalions of colonial African troops to fill the front line, (I/17<sup>th</sup> and III/17<sup>th</sup> Senegalese, and I/29<sup>th</sup> and III/29<sup>th</sup> Algerians.) In addition, he had a section of tanks and a section of armored cars from the 7<sup>th</sup> RCA and the III/24<sup>th</sup> RMIC battalion at his disposal as a reserve. This position was prepared to support a formidable defense against an attack from the south.

*One of the three armies of Vichy France was 'La Coloniale' charged with the protection of all French colonies outside North Africa, which included Indo-China, the Pacific islands, Madagascar and French West Africa. 'Sénégalais' was the name given to the native troops raised in colonies such as Dahomey, Niger, the Ivory Coast and Senegal itself. In 1939 there were no fewer than 22 three-battalion regiments of Sénégalaise and Vichy retained most of them after the Armistice. And the majority of the Free French troops were also Senegalese, who (just like the Legion) fought bitterly against their brothers in the Vichy Army. As it turned out most of the relatively few Vichy soldiers who agreed to join the Free French came from the 17e Regiment de Tirailleurs Sénégalais.*

Brigadier Lloyd, still commanding the invasion forces in Syria, planned to seize Kiswe on Sunday morning, June 15<sup>th</sup>, one week after the start of *Operation Exporter*. This was a very busy moment in the campaign, as Verdilhac chose this time to also counterattack at Merdjayoun, Kuneitra and Ezraa/Sheikh Mesquine, as described above. Lloyd sent his battalion of Punjabi infantry forward under cover of darkness with a hope of surprising the defenders. As

fate would have it one battalion of Algerians was in the process of relieving another at the moment of the Punjabi attack, and the disorganized defenders were indeed surprised. The Indians, carrying 30 foot ladders to bridge the anti-tank ditches rapidly moved forward into the positions of their confused opponents. The attackers cleared the town in short order and Kiswe was taken. The defenders fell back to the heights above the town, desperately trying to reorganize.

In action to the east Colonel Collet was attempting to cross the el Awaj River and flank Kiswe with a force of Circassian cavalry and 12 light tanks. He met a determined defense supported by artillery. This artillery was put to good use and the Vichy barrages inflicted heavy losses upon Collet's command with, "ten of the twelve tanks ...put out of action", and "most of the Circassians' horses lamed on the ground". This stopped the flanking action on Kiswe at that time.

Despite receiving dispatches reporting counterattacks at Kuneitra and Ezraa, Lloyd maintained his resolve to press the attack. He issued orders to clear the hills surrounding Kiswe to consolidate his position. Follow on attacks by the Rajputana Rifles, supported by Free French Senegalese troops were enough to force the disorganized Vichy defenders off the heights. The Commonwealth troops then withstood a counterattack by a force Vichy tanks and armored cars. By the evening of Monday June 16<sup>th</sup>, Lloyd was planning his advance on Damascus.

### Mezze

Brigadier Lloyd was once again in command of the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade after the return to duty of General Legentilhomme. With Collet's failure east of Kiswe, his plan for taking Damascus centered on the capture of Mezze, a town just west and sitting on the connections between Damascus and Beirut. The road and railroad to Beirut pass just north of Mezze through the Barada river gorge. There are 7 old stone forts on the hills overlooking Mezze from the west. It was expected that this important location would be well defended.

Lloyd decided to lead the attack with the Rajputana Rifles, under the command of Colonel Jonah Jones. Lloyd, looking again to surprise the enemy, took a calculated risk sending his forces in at night over unfamiliar terrain. In support of this action, two companies of Free French marines led

by Commander Chevigne were ordered to Artouz securing the road from Damascus to Kuneitra and the remaining Free French forces were to move from the heights north of Kiswe to invest the southern suburbs of Damascus, once Mezze was secured.

*The Free French 'Fusiliers Marines' were in fact sailors equipped for landing parties, not soldiers comparable to the American or British marine corps. The two companies that fought in Syria came from those sailors in French warships immobile in Britain who had decided to join the Free French. They had an interesting war, soon being converted into a light anti-aircraft battalion (presumably because many of the men had been gunners), while in 1943 some left to join the French commando that landed in Normandy.*

On the evening of June 18<sup>th</sup> the Rajputana Rifles attacked. Their supporting Punjabi battalion commanded by Colonel Greatwood was checked by Vichy machine gun fire, but Jones and his men pushed on. The next day the Punjabis broke through to a hill overlooking Mezze and detached a company to support Jones. With this assistance his men, although under considerable fire from the Vichy defenders, stormed into the center of town. After an hour of fighting, they overwhelmed their opposition and captured the town. Disorganized and demoralized the Vichy troops withdrew.

General Verdilhac had replaced the ineffective Delhomme with Colonel Kieme, previously commander of cavalry in the Levant. Upon hearing of the loss of Mezze, Kieme organized a counter attack. First, he reinforced the defenses of Damascus by sending in a fresh reserve battalion of metropolitan troops, the III/24<sup>th</sup> RMIC. Then, on June 19<sup>th</sup>, following the pattern of success at Kuneitra three days earlier, he sent all the available tanks and armored cars of Lecoulteux's 7<sup>th</sup> RCA battalion out of Qatana through Artouz (overrunning the surprised Free French colonial troops defending it), then up the road northeast to liberate Mezze. Faced with this armored attack and without support of anti-tank or field artillery Jones and Greatwood ordered their troops to fortify their positions as best they could. This effort, just as at Kuneitra, proved to be of no avail. The Vichy tanks delivered a fierce pounding to the Rajputs and D Company of the Punjabis, inflicting horrendous casualties. The remaining Indian defenders concentrated back at the brigade headquarters, a walled stone house compound in the center of the town





protected by ravines on three sides. To make matters worse, to the south of Damascus the Free French had been stopped by the III/24<sup>th</sup> RMIC. It appeared the will of the Free French colonial troops to fight effectively was quickly waning. On the morning of June 20, messengers delivered word to Lloyd that a disaster was looming at Mezze.

*The Vichy Colonial Army just like its Army of North Africa contained white and native regiments. The elite white regiments were considered to be a risk by the Germans and ordered almost all disbanded when France surrendered. But the 24<sup>th</sup> was allowed to remain in Syria, the departure of its Breton I Battalion to the Free French proving that German suspicions were right. To bring the regiment back up to three battalion strength native troops were added – creating a ‘mixed’ unit, hence its French title of Régiment mixte d’infanterie coloniale (RMIC).*

Lloyd dispatched a reserve company of the Punjabis supported by a battery of artillery to relieve the troops at Mezze. Gathering up surviving Free French colonials and other Punjabi riflemen along the way, they moved north. The defenders in the center of Mezze could hear the guns firing in the distance and hoped that relief was on the way. Jones, seeking time, sent out a delegation under a flag of truce to request a ceasefire to bury the dead. The Vichy, thinking the Rajputs had surrendered, stormed the stronghold, and in a confusing melee captured the remaining defenders. With this action, on June 20, the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian infantry brigade had been eliminated as an effective fighting force.

However, their losses were not in vain. Without even waiting to see if his counter-attack had succeeded Kieme, apparently losing his nerve, sent a dispatch to Verdilhac stating that Damascus was in jeopardy of being cut off and that he would order the withdrawal of all Vichy forces west. His plan was to defend the Anti-Lebanon mountain range passes. This would allow reinforcements to move further west to bolster the defenses of Merdjayoun-Hasbaya and on the coast road leading to Beirut.

Meanwhile, Brigadier Lloyd had received much needed reinforcements, the Australian 2/3<sup>rd</sup> infantry battalion and 2/3<sup>rd</sup> machine gun battalion. He ordered these troops to occupy the heights west of Mezze and to block the Damascus-Beirut road in the Barada river gorge. A sharp Vichy counterattack led by the III/24<sup>th</sup> RMIC

battalion resulted in a seesaw battle for the forts on the heights on the night of June 20<sup>th</sup>. Despite these efforts, the road remained closed, so Kieme evacuated much of his remaining force (about 6 battalions) through tracks in the mountainous terrain north and west of Damascus. By dawn on June 21<sup>st</sup>, unknown to Lloyd at the time, Damascus was an open city.

### Damascus

“Ancient and venerated”, Damascus is “traditionally” thought to be “the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world.” General Wilson was initially reluctant to take Damascus by storm. He sent a radio message to General Dentz, the political governor of the Vichy Levant on June 18<sup>th</sup> requesting that Damascus be spared destruction and declared an open city. General Dentz delayed his response but, eventually refused the request. Despite this blustering it appears that he was nevertheless himself predisposed to leave Damascus. His notes of June 20<sup>th</sup> on the military situation in the Levant include this passage, “I must extricate from the Damascus area as much as possible of the force operating there. Every man and all possible equipment will be needed if I am to continue operations elsewhere...” Dentz accepted Kieme’s decision to abandon the city on the morning of June 21<sup>st</sup>.

The Commonwealth entered Damascus on Saturday, June 21, 1941. The plan was to have Legentilhomme lead the Free French as the first to take the city. Instead the Australians of the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> machine gun battalion and 2/3<sup>rd</sup> infantry battalion roared into Damascus passing the assembling Free French, covering them in a cloud of dust, and denying them the honor of being first. The Australians apparently thought the honor was theirs for their role in the fighting the night before.

### The Battle for Sidon

Due to a lack of sufficient force, the loss of the commandos, effective Vichy counterattacks on the coast, at Merdjayoun and Jezzine, the drive to Beirut had diminished. Regardless, General Arlabosse, in command of the Vichy defense of Lebanon, was pessimistic, believing that the British naval bombardment of his forces on the coast might prove decisive. His fear was that the failure to hold the Litani river line could very well repeat itself all the way up the coastal road to Beirut. The defenders fell back in some confusion to Sidon after a renewed attack on June 12<sup>th</sup> by the Australian 21<sup>st</sup> infantry brigade

beside the ancient Phoenician caves south of Sidon. Arlabosse being uncertain about his defense of Sidon and the Aouale river line just to the north welcomed the arrival of Colonel Amanrich’s 6<sup>th</sup> RCA tanks and armored cars as reinforcements to his infantry battalions. Colonel Lehr was in command of the tank battalion of the 6<sup>th</sup> RCA. On June 13<sup>th</sup> he skillfully deployed his tanks in repeated counterattacks against the Australian advances. The Australians did not have anti-tank guns and fearing for the safety of their artillery, they positioned it too far to the rear to be an effective counter measure. In addition the Vichy air force made periodic bombing and strafing runs to further hamper the Australian efforts. However, one counterattack by Lehr’s tanks when in pursuit of Bren carriers went too far and the Australian artillery lying in wait opened fire inflicting significant losses. Although these attacks had apparently stopped the Australians, the loss of irreplaceable tanks, and a threat of attack from Jezzine from the east again drained Arlabosse’s confidence. He ordered a general withdrawal to Damour. By June 15<sup>th</sup> the advancing elements of the Australian infantry found Sidon abandoned.

General Wilson cautiously did not pursue the Vichy to Damour still fearing counter attacks from the hills to the east due to the enemy activity at Jezzine, and Beit-de-Dine. In addition, the Vichy counterattack at Merdjayoun had stopped the drive by the Australian 25<sup>th</sup> infantry brigade. He therefore called a halt to the offensive to consolidate his supply and rest his forces.

### Stalemate in the Mountain Valley

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of June Verdilhac had ordered a counterattack on Merdjayoun which successfully caught the defenders by surprise. The Australian 2/33<sup>rd</sup> infantry and the British Scots Greys infantry battalions were driven from the town south to Mettula just north of their invasion starting point on the Palestinian border. The Commonwealth was taken by surprise and routed, especially the Scots Greys, who by some Australian reports became demoralized to the point of ineffectiveness. As described above the Scots Greys had recently lost their mounts and were issued trucks as lorried infantry. They had no training in motorized infantry doctrine, so morale was bad before the rout. Because of the rout they were deemed undependable and ordered to garrison duty at Deraa in Syria. This was unfortunate for the reputation of the British forces because the other British cavalry units engaged, the



Cheshire Yeomanry and the Staffordshire Yeomanry, performed very well and their services were much sought after by both brigadiers Baxter-Cox and Stevens in their respective sectors due to the nature of the rough terrain.

Lavarack and Baxter-Cox reacted quickly to this threat to the northern Jordan River valley. The Australian 2/25<sup>th</sup> infantry battalion was recalled from Jezzine. In addition some troops of the Australian 2/5<sup>th</sup> infantry battalion, plus the Australian 2/2<sup>nd</sup> pioneer battalion were moved north from reserve north of the Sea of Galilee. The deployment of these troops apparently stabilized the situation and no further attacks from the Vichy were forthcoming. These troops were supported by artillery batteries of the Australian 5<sup>th</sup> field regiment. Commonwealth attacks were made on June 17<sup>th</sup> and again on June 19<sup>th</sup> with the purpose of retaking Merdjayoun and continuing the offensive. Each failed due to stubborn resistance of the Vichy, in particular the tenacity of a Foreign Legion infantry battalion, support by tanks and Vichy artillery batteries.

However another attempt to recapture Merdjayoun was organized by the artillery commander of the British 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Brigadier Berryman. On June 23, he ordered the 2/33<sup>rd</sup> and the newly arrived, British 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion of the Kings Own Regiment to attack Fort Khiam, south of Merdjayoun and then north to the important road junction of Merdjayoun itself. The 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Pioneers were assigned to support the assault. Also in support of the right flank was a small force of cavalry troopers formed in the rough terrain from the remnants of a Scots Greys platoon. They were mounted on horses earlier captured from Vichy colonial spahis. These men, known as "Kelly's Gang", were very happy to be on horseback again and became an effective if small fighting force.

During the day long battle there was much hand to hand fighting, with bayonets and grenades, in both Khiam and Merdjayoun. The Vichy resistance was again stiff but the concerted effort of Berryman's troops, now supported by effective artillery fire, was enough to cause the harried Vichy to retire in the early morning of June 24<sup>th</sup>. After a difficult struggle Merdjayoun was back in Commonwealth hands.

After the capture of Merdjayoun, Berryman's force was relieved by the British 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade, Brigadier Galloway commanding. Commonwealth forces pressed northeast

up the valley road to Hasbaya. This town was strongly defended by Vichy Foreign Legion, Algerian and Tunisian colonial troops supported by local militia and several batteries of artillery. This was enough to deter the Commonwealth from any plans to continue north to Rayak through the Bekaa valley. The Commonwealth's focus shifted to the coast road north of Sidon with the capture of Beirut as the immediate objective.

### Jebel Mazur

The British 16<sup>th</sup> infantry brigade (less one battalion at Merdjayoun) arrived after the fall of Damascus. The second battalions of the Leicestershire and Queen's Regiments reinforced the Australian 2/3<sup>rd</sup> and 2/5<sup>th</sup> infantry battalions, all now under command of British General "Mad Jack" Evetts. New to his command, Evetts was not eager for offensive action but instead took three days to understand the condition and morale of the troops, supply lines, and communications. Brigadier Lloyd objected, wanting to immediately press on through the Barada gorge and mountain passes northwest of Damascus to the Bekaa valley and then to capture Rayak airbase, a major objective of this campaign. Lloyd believed the Commonwealth now had the advantage over the worn Vichy troops, especially with the arrival of the two fresh British battalions.

This lull allowed the Vichy troops a much needed rest after withdrawing about 18 miles northwest of Damascus to the heights of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains at Jebel Mazur. On these very steep slopes they deployed several artillery battalions with a fantastic field of fire on the plains below, supported by colonial infantry.

The initial attempts to take Jebel Mazur were ineffective with the Vichy artillery stopping any progress. Then Evetts ordered the Australians to climb the heights during the night of June 26<sup>th</sup>. The Australians, opposed by only light forces on the summit at that time were successful and in the morning found themselves in command of the heights with a good view of the valley below. However, as they failed to bring along radios and spotting officers, they missed an opportunity to direct counter battery fire on the Vichy artillery whose positions were now in full view of Australian observers. The Vichy organized an effective counterattack by Senegalese and Moroccan troops, well supported by the still untouched artillery, forcing the Australians to retreat.

Clearly Lloyd was right to have recommended a continued attack on the Vichy immediately after the fall of Damascus. It appears an opportunity was lost.

Evetts was now reinforced by the third unit of the 16<sup>th</sup> infantry brigade (2<sup>nd</sup> battalion Kings Own Regiment) and a battalion of the Free French Marine Infantry. He ordered a final attempt to take Jebel Mazur by storm on July 10/11. This led to intense close combat with Vichy artillery and mortar fire again inflicting significant casualties. However by now the RAF was spotting the enemy gun positions and the British counter battery fire proved very effective. For instance it was reported that "four of the Vichy 'seventy fives' had been blown clean out of their gun pits". The battle became a draw with both sides retreating, the Vichy forces moving back to another formidable mountain pass. Evetts knew this would be another bloody and difficult objective. He was thankful that discussions leading to an armistice had begun.

### Damour—Gateway to Beirut

Damour is a town on the coastal plain about 15 miles south of Beirut, just inland from the Mediterranean Sea surrounded by large plantations of palm and banana trees. It lies about three miles north of the Damour River. The Damour is not as wide or deep as the Litani to the south but still presents a formidable obstacle in defense of this position. East of the plains the river runs through very steep ravines. In addition, east of the coastal plain north of the river there are rugged hills allowing for effective defense. It was this position where Dentz ordered Verdilhac to prepare to contain the Commonwealth's renewed drive to Beirut.

Meanwhile, in the Syrian desert to the north and east, two brigades of the 10<sup>th</sup> Indian division (20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>) led by General William Joseph Slim out of Mosul and the British 4<sup>th</sup> cavalry brigade from Habbaniya were advancing west from Iraq toward the Vichy cities of Aleppo and Homs north of Damascus and Beirut. It was at Palmyra that the Vichy defenders expected to stop this invasion from the east. Palmyra is a beautiful desert oasis, on the Tripoli oil pipeline midway between the Syrian-Iraqi border and Homs and was once the capital of Queen Zenobia, a fervent enemy of the Roman Empire. Within the beautiful ancient Roman ruins, the Vichy deployed two companies of well trained and disciplined



foreign legion troops (from the IV/ 6<sup>th</sup> REI), along with local Syrian units. But they lacked both artillery and air support and were forced to surrender after a battle costly to both sides. Without sufficient troops left to defend the eastern Syrian desert Dentz was now desperate to stop the Commonwealth forces at Damour.

Verdilhac, his local commander, had at his disposal two experienced battalions of the 6<sup>th</sup> Foreign Legion (the fresh II and weakened I) as the backbone of this defense. They were supported by all available Vichy troops consisting mostly of survivors of earlier battles, including the II/17<sup>th</sup> Senegalese, the II and the III/24<sup>th</sup> RMIC, plus some untested Algerian and unreliable Lebanese battalions. Squadrons of Tunisian and Moroccan cavalry were deployed in the mountain tracks to the east. The Vichy still had considerable artillery, well placed, primarily in the hills above Damour.

Major General Allen was finally able to concentrate the whole of the 7th Australian Infantry Division and use it against Damour. The 21<sup>st</sup> brigade deployed the 2/14<sup>th</sup> along the coastal plain south of the Damour River. The 2/27<sup>th</sup> and 2/16<sup>th</sup>, deployed further inland, were given the difficult assignment of crossing the Damour River ravine and then moving up through mountainous tracks to attempt a flanking attack on the Damour defenders in the hills above the town. The 25<sup>th</sup> brigade, now commanded by Brigadier Plant moved inland, capturing Jezzine on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June and then moved north towards the next crossroads at Beit ed Dine in a further effort to flank the Vichy forces at Damour. The third brigade, now designated the 17<sup>th</sup>, was formed by Brigadier Savage. It was comprised of the depleted Austrian 2/3<sup>rd</sup>, and 2/5<sup>th</sup> Infantry battalions, and 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Pioneer battalion. They were deployed in reserve as an “exploiting brigade”. Nearly all of the Australian artillery batteries had been gathered for the attack, some sixty two guns of various calibers. In addition the Royal Navy and RAF, both now essentially unopposed, were prepared to support the operation. The Commonwealth commanders previously pursuing conflicting and scattered objectives were now focused on the most important objective of all at this point in the operation, the capture of Beirut.

July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1941 on the Lebanese coast at Damour, was a clear, hot day; the sea was azure blue; towering white clouds floated above. It was a beautiful scene for the major battle of the campaign. The Australian 2/27<sup>th</sup>

and 2/14<sup>th</sup> just south of El Boum (about three miles inland) moved out in the darkness of the early morning. They moved unopposed down the steep ravine and crossed the Damour River, no deeper than three feet at that point. Then they proceeded back up the hills north of the river looking to overrun the Vichy positions. Alerted by sentry dogs the Vichy opened fire with pre-registered machine guns and artillery. The northern slope of the ravine erupted into “a sheet of flame” inflicting serious casualties on the Australians. However, according to an eye witness report of one correspondent, the Australian infantrymen “...like their fathers on the death-strewn escarpments of Gallipoli never faltered.” The 2/27<sup>th</sup> with great effort climbed into the Vichy positions above, then “...swept the French off the crest with bayonet, and pushing forward without giving them time to reorganize, cleared the heights beyond.” A much needed bridgehead across the Damour had been established.

On July 7<sup>th</sup>, the 2/16<sup>th</sup> and two companies of the 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Pioneers, supported by field artillery, and naval and air bombardment assaulted Vichy positions in the banana plantations along the coast. This assault was challenged by Vichy artillery and machine gun fire and briefly checked. The Vichy also counterattacked in the hills to the east halting the Australian advance there. The Australians were not able to make a “real crack in the defense”. In an effort to truly break the Vichy defense a bombardment by massed field artillery was arranged for July 8<sup>th</sup>. Australian artillery spotters had targeted Vichy positions in the plantations and assumed gun positions to the north. However, this bombardment, while truly spectacular, was not effective. This was due primarily to a Vichy tactic of moving their positions forward to avoid the worst of the barrage. However, the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> and 2/5<sup>th</sup> infantry infiltrated through the mountain tracks east of Damour and by midnight had cut the road to Beirut about two miles north of the town, the 2/16<sup>th</sup> advanced along the coast, entering Damour just after dawn on July 9<sup>th</sup>. The Vichy defenders, exhausted, and apparently low on ammunition and other supplies had already retired toward Beirut and by July 10<sup>th</sup> the entire 7<sup>th</sup> Australian force was advancing.

### Conclusion

When the enemy breakthrough on the road above Damour was reported, General Dentz knew “the end had come”. Ten days earlier he had refused a request to open negotiations with the American Consul

in Beirut, but he was now, on July 10<sup>th</sup> persuaded to make a formal request for a “cessation of hostilities”. He acted with Petain’s approval. Much had changed in those ten days. The 10<sup>th</sup> Indian infantry was sweeping in from the eastern desert toward Aleppo nearly unopposed. The British 4<sup>th</sup> cavalry, after taking the scenic oasis of Palmyra had joined with some elements of the Free French forces moving along an established supply route from Damascus. These forces planned to move on Homs. The RAF had nearly free rein over the skies of the Levant. Fuel and ammunition for the Vichy were running low. The defenses of Damour had been breached. Perhaps most importantly, the promised reinforcements from France and North Africa had failed to appear, which had an adverse effect on the morale of the troops.

Churchill announced in the House of Commons that “formal application had been made for a discussion of terms leading to an armistice”. Hostilities were scheduled to end at midnight on July 11. An armistice was signed at Acre on July 14<sup>th</sup>. The primary purpose of *Operation Exporter*, to protect the Commonwealth’s greatest source of oil, had been accomplished, but at a much greater price than expected. The Vichy, contrary to the claims of De Gaulle, had fought hard to defend their military honor. They initially stopped the invasion cold with well planned and executed counter attacks. The Commonwealth reported some 4700 casualties and the Vichy about 6250. These figures were significant given the relatively small forces engaged by both sides. Ironically, the Germans, whose presence was the cause of this conflict had, unknown to the War Cabinet in London, completely vacated Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon just prior to the invasion. After action interrogations of Vichy prisoners consistently revealed that the Vichy soldiers were disinclined to fight if Germans were still operating in the Levant. Under those circumstances the Commonwealth might have been able to enter the Levant unopposed.

While this operation was arguably the hot spot in world at the time it commenced, June 8, 1941, it was greatly overshadowed by the German invasion of the Soviet Union, just two weeks later. Still, the importance to Britain of securing the oil of Iraq and Iran cannot be overemphasized. General Wavell, who was forced to switch commands with General Auchinleck during this campaign (on July 5, 1941), was proved correct in his view that the Vichy would fight and that the initial forces available for invasion were







inadequate. As often proved to be the case Churchill's tendency to demand 'immediate action at all costs' and to ignore military advice proved very costly. But in the end his demands were met and the Levant removed from Axis influence. Perhaps the greatest loser was De Gaulle. Not only was he proven wrong about the reaction of his fellow French, but they even ignored him when the battle was over. Very few Vichy troops agreed to join the Free French, and the Vichy would remain an effective minor force until the Allies landed in North Africa.

## ORDER OF BATTLE

### Commonwealth

Prime Minister Churchill ordered Sir Archibald Percival Wavell, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Middle East Command, to undertake a campaign to invade and control the Vichy French Levant. Wavell appointed General Henry Maitland "Jumbo" Wilson as the commanding officer of this invasion, code named *Operation Exporter*.

Theater Command: Wilson Headquarters, Nazareth, Palestine, after June 17<sup>th</sup>, I Australian Corps Headquarters

I Australian Corps—Lt. General John Lavarack  
Scots/Greys Infantry Battalion (lorried) (British) (Sc Gry)  
Cheshire Yeomanry (horsed cavalry) (British) (Ches Y)  
Staffordshire Yeomanry (horsed cavalry) (British) (Staff Y)  
Royal Dragoons (armored cars) (British) (Royals)  
6<sup>th</sup> Australian Divisional Cavalry (Cav/6 Div)  
9<sup>th</sup> Australian Divisional Cavalry (Cav/9 Div)  
Palmach Infantry Battalion (Local Jewish Palestine "strike force") (Sadeh/  
Palmach)  
170 Light Anti-aircraft Battery (British) (battery of the 57<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-aircraft  
Regiment)  
  
7<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Division Maj. General John Lavarack, after June 18  
Maj. General A. S. Allen  
2/3 Australian Infantry Battalion  
2/5 Australian Infantry Battalion  
2/2 Australian Pioneer Battalion  
2/3 Australian Machine Gun Battalion  
2/4 Australian Field Artillery Regiment (24x25pdrs)  
2/5 Australian Field Artillery Regiment (16x25pdrs)  
2/6 Australian Field Artillery Regiment (24x25pdrs)  
212<sup>th</sup> Battery, 64<sup>th</sup> Medium Royal Artillery Regiment (British)  
5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Companies (Engineers)  
2/2 Australian Anti-tank Battalion (Composite including light Anti-aircraft  
batteries)

Australian 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade (lorried, but depleted transport) Brigadier J.E.S. Stevens

2/14 Infantry Battalion	Lt. Col W.G. Cannon
2/16 Infantry Battalion	Col. A. B. Mac Donald
2/27 Infantry Battalion	Lt. Col. M. J. Moten

Australian 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade (lorried, but depleted transport) Brigadier A.R. Baxter-Cox

2/25 Infantry Battalion	Lt. Col N. Marshall
2/31 Infantry Battalion	Lt. Col Porter
2/33 Infantry Battalion	Lt. Col R.F. Monaghan

Indian 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade (lorried) Brigadier W.L. Lloyd  
Royal Fusiliers Regiment (1<sup>st</sup> Battalion) (British) (Roy Fus) Col. Orr  
4/6<sup>th</sup> Rajputana Rifles Battalion (Indian) (Rajput) Col. L.B. Jones  
3/1<sup>st</sup> Punjabi Rifles Battalion (Indian) (Punjab) Lt. Col. Greatwood  
1 Royal Artillery Regiment (British) (1 Roy) (16x 25pdrs)  
171 Anti-Aircraft Battery (British) (includes an anti-tank company)  
18 Royal Bombay Sappers & Miners Company (Indian) (18 RB)

Free French Infantry "Division" Maj. General Paul Legentilhomme

1er Brigade D'Orient  
Foreign Legion (Lgn) Cazaud  
1 Battalion d'Infanterie de Marine (1 Mar) Chevigne  
2 Battalion d'Infanterie de Marine (2Mar) Detroyat

2e Brigade D'Orient Genin  
1 Battalion March (Senegalese) (1 Seng) Delange  
2 Battalion March (Senegalese) (2 Seng) Roux  
3 Battalion March (Senegalese) (3 Seng) Garbay

1er FF Artillery Battalion 4x75mm, 4x65mm (Italian mountain howitzers)

Groupment Collet  
Light Armor Battalion (Collet/Circ)  
Circassian Cavalry Battalion (Collet/Circ)

Transjordan Frontier Force (TJFF)  
Mechanized Battalion (Armored cars) Kilkelly  
Cavalry Battalion (composite)

No. 11 Special Service Battalion, "C" Battalion - Layforce  
Scottish Commandos (Cyprus and Alexandria, deployed for amphibious assault)  
I Company Col. R.R.N. Pedder  
II Company Cap. G.R.M. More  
III Company Maj. G.C.T. Keyes

#### Reinforcements:

June 17-18:  
6<sup>th</sup> Division Headquarters Maj. General J.F. Evetts  
16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade (lorried) (British) Brigadier C.E.N. Lomax  
King's Own Royal Regiment (2<sup>nd</sup> battalion) (Kings)  
Queens Regiment (2<sup>nd</sup> battalion) (Queens)  
Leicester Regiment (2<sup>nd</sup> battalion) (Leicest)  
4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment Royal Artillery (4 Fld) (16x25pdrs)  
211<sup>th</sup> Battery, 64<sup>th</sup> Medium Royal Artillery Regiment (British)  
2/9 Australian Field Artillery Regiment

June 23-24:  
23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade (lorried) (British) Brigadier Alexander Galloway  
Border Regiment (4<sup>th</sup> battalion) (Bdr)  
Durham regiment (1<sup>st</sup> battalion) (Durham)  
Czechoslovak Battalion (Czech)  
60<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment Royal Artillery (60 Fld) (24x25pdrs)

June 28:  
Australian 17 Infantry Brigade Brigadier Savage  
(Comprised of Australian 2/3 and 2/5 Infantry Battalions and 2/2 Pioneer Battalion,  
formerly operating independently under 7<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Division, all  
understrength)

July 8:  
14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade (lorried) (British) Brigadier B.H. Chappel  
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment (1<sup>st</sup> battalion) (BdHf)  
York and Lancaster Regiment (2<sup>nd</sup> battalion) (York)  
Black Watch Regiment (2<sup>nd</sup> battalion) (BW)  
North Somerset Yeomanry (lorried) (NS Yeo)

### Vichy French

The Vichy Levant (Syria and Lebanon) was under command of High Commissioner General Henri Dentz. Military defense of the Levant was under overall command of General Joseph Verdilhac; the defense of Lebanon command, Brigadier Paul Arlabosse; defense of southern Syria command, Brigadier Etienne Delhomme (after June 19, Colonel Keime replaces Delhomme).

6e Régiment Etranger d'Infanterie (Foreign Legion) (Lgn) Barre  
I Battalion Jouve  
II Battalion Brisset  
III Battalion Robotaille  
IV Battalion Hourtane

24e Régiment Mixte d'Infanterie Coloniale (Mixed Metropolitan & Colonial Inf) Georges-Picot  
(Mxd)  
I Battalion Gauthier  
II Battalion Olive  
III Battalion Plantard

17e Régiment de Tirailleurs Sénégalais (Senegalese Rifle Infantry) Hoareau  
(Seng)  
I Battalion Rollet  
II Battalion Boyer  
III Battalion Mercuit

16e Régiment de Tirailleurs Tunisiens (Tunisian Rifle Infantry) (Tun) Rauscher  
I Battalion  
II Battalion  
III Battalion

22e Régiment de Tirailleurs Algeriens (Algerian Rifle Infantry) (Alg) Aubry  
I Battalion Sirot  
II Battalion Rousselot  
III Battalion Lecorne



29e Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens	Albord
I Bataillon	Blanc
II Bataillon	Dillemann
III Bataillon	Massone
1er Régiment de Tirailleurs Marocains (Moroccan Rifle Inf) (Mor)	
V Bataillon	Pinoteau
6e Régiment Chasseurs d'Afrique (mécanisé) (Chas)	Amanrich
Group I (R35 tanks) (Lehr)	Lehr
Group II (armored cars) (Marion)	Marion
7e Régiment Chasseurs d'Afrique (mécanisé) (Chas)	Caumont
Group I (R35 tanks) (Gandy)	Gandy
Group II (armored cars) (Roulin)	Roulin
Compagnie Autonome de Chars du Levant (Tank Training Company) (Levant)	
4e Régiment de Spahis Tunisiens (Tunisian cavalry) (4 Tun)	
8e Régiment de Spahis Algériens (Algerian cavalry) (8 Alg)	
I Company, Goumiers (Goums)	Carmejane
II Company	Bodman
1er Régiment de Spahis (Moroccan cavalry) (1 Mor)	Martin
1er Régiment d'Artillerie Coloniale du Levant (colonial artillery) (1Col)	
Group I and Group II	
Group V	
1er Régiment d'Artillerie (metropolitan artillery) (1 Met)	
Group I and Group II	
Group V	
2e Régiment d'Artillerie (2 Met)	
Group I	
Group II	
Troupes Specials (local Lebanese, Liban and Syrian, Levant troops)	
1er Bataillon du Levant	
3e Bataillon du Levant	
4e Bataillon du Levant	
7e Bataillon du Levant	
1er Bataillon de Chasseurs du Liban	
2e Bataillon de Chasseurs du Liban (2 Beirut)	
3e Bataillon de Chasseurs du Liban	
Groupment d'Escadrons Tcherkesses Cavalry	
(local Syrian horsed cavalry) (Tcherk)	Gueriviere
Groupment de Cavalerie de Ligne	
(local Lebanese horsed cavalry) (Liban)	Bruniere
Groupment d'Escadrons Druzes	
(Druze cavalry) (Druze)	Mollat
41e and 42e Groupment d'Escadrons Motories du Levant (Circ)	
(truck mounted Circassian cavalry squadrons)	
13e, 14e and 36e Groupment d'Escadrons Legers (Circ)	
(horsed Circassian cavalry squadrons)	

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## Player Notes

By Alan Murphy

### Commonwealth Player Notes

Do not get the impression that you can launch some kind of O'Connor-like offensive here. If you haven't already picked up on this, just take a look at your forces. Everything you have here is borrowed from other active theatres. Upon initial reflection, one cannot help but feel some level of empathy for Wavell. Here he was certainly pressed to produce unreasonable miracles for his boss, Winston Churchill. Whatever Rommel's distractions were from Rome and Berlin, at least he could concentrate his military skills on one front; Wavell had to conduct two separate and distinct campaigns, for the revolt in Iraq had exacerbated the dangerous political situation in Syria, and directed Churchill's attention towards an area where he believed his old love affair with France could be satisfactorily pursued. With scarce military assets stretched so thin, it should hardly come as any surprise that for Operation Exporter the Commonwealth ("CW") has such a small, fragile ground force; accompanied by a tiny air force. Add to this meager transportation resources and seemingly, never enough supply: Welcome to the Levant! Chin up. After several turns, things will get better as your reinforcements trickle in.

The Commonwealth army in *Reluctant Enemies* is truly a coalition of forces. Here you have an eclectic collection of Australian, British, Indian, Rajputana, Punjabi, Free French, Tunisian, Algerian, Goumiers, Moroccan, Senegalese, Jewish-Palestinian and Trans-Jordanian troops; even a battalion of the Special Service Brigade, No. 11 Commando, coming in over the rough waters from Alexandria. Tactically, the Commonwealth Army has a number of very good units, and far more of them. Overall, the CW forces have a 2.5 advantage in units bearing a 4 action rating. Use these units to stiffen attacks, as they have good strength and good action ratings. Further, the majority of these are motorized. Like your mobile artillery, your truck-borne infantry will play a large part in this battle.

The early game is usually very fluid and mobile. Still, care must be taken setting up for the offensive. While a series of small actions may be a set back to the Vichy player, a crushing attack will be harder for him to react to. One of the most difficult and frustrating problems you will experience

is logistics; trying to move gas and bullets forward where they are needed. Here, you have only 1SP worth of trucks, with no leg transport units available (unlike your Vichy opposition). Care should therefore be taken to ensure that the axis of your offensives is where you want, because moving supply forward is difficult due to the serious shortage of transportation. You must simultaneously protect your precious pool of trucks while maximizing their use to the utmost. Break them down into 1T truck points and find a comfortable means of shuttling supply where needed, utilizing their full movement. Another useful transportation asset is your IRE rail capacity. Once the Haifa-Deraa rail line has been cleared, you can begin railing up to 1SP as your campaign progresses. Establishing an efficient and effective transportation network should play an important role in your overall strategy.

Your Special Service commando companies may seem very cool, however don't anticipate them sticking around very long. You could easily lose a company (or more) just trying to land them. This is a shame, as they are some of your best units. However, remember their mission here is to aid the anticipated "zip drive" up the coast. As a plus, the commandos land in trace and with combat supply during their first turn. Should they survive the first couple turns, they can be a serious impediment to the precarious Vichy supply line along the coast.

The naval units are a bit abstract here as compared to other OCS titles. Here, the Royal Navy consists of barrage strengths from a destroyer squadron and a heavy cruiser squadron. Initially, these two units should support the commando landings as much as possible. While unpredictable, the RN units have considerably more mettle than that of the Vichy's; they also appear far more consistently. The RN cruiser unit is your most powerful artillery asset in the game, featuring the best overall strength and range. Best of all, it requires no supply. Used properly, the RN will be a definite asset during the advance up the Mediterranean coast line.

During mid-game, the game progresses into siege-like warfare in difficult terrain. You may suddenly see what appears to be a fortunate opportunity and decide to make a grab at either Rayak Airfield or Beirut for "Sudden Death" Victory. Be careful of this, for these forays usually will result in failure. Remember, you will need to maintain a supply trace through mostly awful terrain to

these locations in order to obtain a "Sudden Death" victory. What usually happens is the Vichy reserves will readily mop up your invaders instead. Therefore, you should seek smaller solutions for a chance at victory in increments. In RE, time will prove to be to your benefit. On the defense, depth is the key. Don't allow enemy cavalry or truck-borne raiders to get behind your lines. If allowed to infiltrate, the Vichy has the resources to drive deep into your unprotected rear areas and seriously disrupt your operations or, worse yet, wreak total disaster. Boneheaded things like leaving Haifa ungarrisoned is a prime example.

Your variable replacement capability is of considerable advantage over the Vichy, who only receive 1 Pax from the reinforcement arrival schedule. You have, roughly, a 40% supply advantage, which is good, because you will need every token of it. To add to this, your primary airfield is situated in an Off-Map Holding Box (representing the various airfields just to the south of the map). As a Level 3 airbase, it can accommodate the majority of the RAF as well as provide a safe haven from enemy facility air raids. Your planes can refuel here at no cost. You also possess a 2:1 advantage in headquarter units, as well as several engineer units. These are particularly useful units to have when it comes to bridging the map's numerous river barriers.

Your artillery components are surprisingly versatile. They can be handily broken down or built up to adequately accommodate the Barrage Table variations. Furthermore, when fueled, they can be quickly transported from one sector of the front to another; usually in the course of a single turn. Use this agility to your advantage, as it may throw the Vichy player off balance. If you make a feint in one sector, you can quickly divert your artillery to another attack. The same applies to your AT guns (which the Vichy lack) which will be useful in defense against marauding enemy armor units as you advance through the open desert.

When not in direct use (which will be most of the time), be sure to protect your vulnerable artillery units with attack-capable units. When it's time for the big guns, be frugal and select your targets carefully. It will take several turns to accumulate the supply necessary to fire off the salvos needed to help blow a hole in the enemy lines; particularly as you advance north and have to pound your way through a lot of very close terrain. The RAF can assist in this matter. Your air strikes will





## Reluctant Enemies, OCS #13

serve as an important offensive weapon. While starting off small, the RAF will grow as the campaign progresses. If you wage a vigilant and successful air campaign, you will gradually wear down the Vichy air forces to gain air superiority.

The wild card in Commonwealth planning is the Indian 5th Brigade of the 4th Indian Division. Veterans of Keren, these units are among your best. With proper planning, these battalions can be used to support any of the three CW axis of advance to great effect. The first option would be to reinforce the drive north, along the Hejaz Railway, to be joined by the oncoming Free French Division (which enters the map fueled on GT2). Second, the brigade can be used to reinforce the Aussie 25th Brigade and other independent units that start near the Hasbani River, supporting their drive up the Litani River Valley. Finally, the brigade could quickly Strat Move to the west coast and support the Aussie and SSB operations in their advance up the coastline.

As the campaign draws to a close, you will find that you have exhausted the majority of your units, along with almost all of your air support. However, if you have coordinated things as planned, time will have proved to be on your side. The key here is to have the Vichy player run out of the above three before you do.

### Vichy-French Player Notes

At first glance, the Vichy army is seemingly big and powerful. The French here have the considerable advantages of good troops, interior lines, adequate supply resources and ample transportation assets compared to their CW opposition. The majority of your army already starts on the map and, for a short while, your losses seem to recoup rather quickly after being lost in combat. Despite this initial perception, be wary of unnecessary losses, for you can ill afford to lose units. Several Vichy groups cannot react during the first turn or two, representing the Vichy's cautious response to the Commonwealth's invasion. Despite this, the Vichy side has the initiative in the early game and should make full use of it while he can.

Similar to their Commonwealth counterparts, the Vichy Army is comprised of a coalition of French, German (within the Foreign Legion), Algerian, Tunisian, Moroccan, Goumiers, Senegalese and Druze troops; along with a smattering of conscripted Lebanese and Syrian forces. By early 1941, the Army of the Levant had

been reduced to 35,000 troops. However, these were, by and large, mostly well trained and well led professional soldiers, equipped with a considerable proportion of war supplies. Your OOB includes a regiment of very tough Legion étrangère, Foreign Legionnaires, all bearing 4 action ratings. Overall, your forces at hand are very good and surprisingly quite resilient.

The real power of the Vichy army will be its ability to react quickly. While their armored assets may seem small in number, if deployed together as a distinctive group, the Vichy armored battalions are the best units in the game. As such, they can cause the CW forces some real damage. Further, your artillery components, while not as numerous as the CW artillery network, are more powerful; few units possess greater range. However, as with the CW, supply is tight. You must therefore judge wisely when to spend precious supply points for artillery ammunition. Your single naval unit can barrage for free. When available, it may be of use along the coast. Keep an ever-protective eye on your artillery assets, for they can do wonders in shutting down a looming CW offensive, or significantly increase your odds in an attack. If you decide to incorporate *RE* optional rule 4.2, you can fuel certain Vichy regiments at the cost of one supply point, in accordance with OCS series rules 12.5, part B. This option would allow the fueled regiment to be accompanied by one additional artillery unit, along with the CACL independent light armored battalion. Consider the effect of this - if the timing is right, you may be able to run a fueled regiment all the way from Damascus to Amman or Haifa. A possibility exists to be in trace supply at the end of your turn, as these locations are in relatively open terrain. On the tail end of a game turn, such an event could prove to be a disaster for the CW.

The Vichy transportation network, while small, is on par with your CW counterpart. Yet augmenting your meager 1RE of truck transport is another 1RE of wagons, which move via Leg movement. While slower than your Renault trucks, the wagons, with their leg movement capacities, will prove to be quite useful in forwarding precious supply through the rough and mountainous areas - where the majority of your battles will be fought. Like your trucks, your wagons can be broken down into 4T tokens. Further augmenting your transport logistics is your 1.5 RE rail capacity. As with the CW notes above, you must find an effective use of all your transportation assets and get your supplies and reinforcements where they need to be.

Your air force is highly effective and one of best assets in your arsenal. Your bomber force is more numerous and more powerful than the RAF's. Your fighter force, while a bit smaller, will dominate the early game, especially after the third turn reinforcements arrive. That Dewoitine 520 fighter unit, rated at '4', is the best fighter unit on the map. It will be a constant threat to enemy air operations. Until it is reduced or eliminated, the CW is going to have major anxieties given its presence. A further feather in your cap here is your airfields. They are where they need to be. As such, they will prove to be a tremendous asset during the mid-game. Rayak Airfield, a Level 3 base, will provide very tough flak defenses. Posting a HQ unit here will further augment the base's flak defense by +1. Similar to the CW's Off-map Box, all planes based at Rayak can refit for free. Since this base is actually on the map, CW units entering into the clear terrain within Litani Valley do so under the shadow of Rayak's air umbrella. They can be subject to a +1 barrage column shift by Vichy air once in range. Consider building a forward airbase early on, to deploy fighter patrol zones. Such a fighter umbrella would provide useful air protection along the coast, south of Damour, in the mountain valley and in proximity to Merdjayoun and north thereof.

The basic challenge for the Vichy player will be conducting a mobile defense. Here, you have three distinct sectors to defend; the coastline, the valley between the mountain ranges, and the Syrian Desert. If you try to defend all three fronts simultaneously, it is highly likely that an aggressive Commonwealth army will reap havoc on your army. Here, consider an axiom of mobile defense; holding the shoulders of the any CW breakthroughs and constraining their advance to a narrow breakthrough. Delay any deep penetrations by enemy reserves with minimal forces (the Syrian and Lebanese battalions are ideal for this and they make great spotters for barrage); then counterattack with vigor into the flank of the breakthrough. Your counter-attacks should be led by your superior armored units, supported by good rated infantry. This is the true essence of the OCS. With skill, it can be applied here to great effect. A careful analysis of the map should be in order each turn. Find those locations where the enemy is having difficulty holding or defending and move forces there; just enough to possibly distract the CW player. Your cavalry battalions are ideal in this role, as they move swiftly and require no fuel. Ideal locations for raids could be the Kunietra area (using the Lava Fields near Sassaa as a launching base); the no-man's



land situated between Sheikh Meskine and Sanamein (again, using the rough terrain just south of Kiswe as a launching base). Opportunity exists if you can manage to hold Merdjayoun early on in the campaign, as this can be an incredibly tough nut for the CW to crack. On this same note, establishing an effective roadblock (hex 23.11) may not only prevent CW flanking moves west of Merdjayoun but possibly trap enemy forces situated there.

A dilemma you will need to consider is when to withdraw. As your forces pull back, they fall back towards their supply network and into more defensible terrain. There are several good defensive river lines to consider - the el Awaj (15 miles south of Damascus), and the Litani, the Aouale and the Damour. The latter three are situated along the coastline, from south to north. These coastal river lines are studded with escarpment hex sides, prohibiting movement and channelizing all movement to the east or west. Situated behind these effective defensive river lines, you can make the CW forces pay for every inch of ground. That Level 1 airfield in Mezze, just outside of Damascus, is worth fighting for. Here the road net here diverts to the northwest, towards the famous Maysalun Pass (through the Jabel Mazur, near hex 15.24, Dimas) and into the Litani Valley. This passage is vital to defend. To keep the CW player out of the Latani River Valley, it behooves you to staunchly defend Mezze and its Level 1 airbase as stubbornly as possible. Deny the CW opportunity to advance his supply network westward towards the mountains. If successful, it will leave the roads to Rayak (6.21) and possibly Beirut (5.10) wide open. In the campaign game, Damascus, the "Open City", is another interesting dilemma. Neither side can afford the forces necessary to create or defend a siege situation - this is no Stalingrad! Successful defense of Damascus yields at least a Marginal Win for the Vichy, which the CW cannot ignore. As long as trace supply can be maintained, it is worth holding for as long as possible. You'll have to know when it is time to withdraw into the mountains.

One final consideration for the Vichy player here is the deep battle. Certainly more opportunities exist than for his CW opponent. If the CW player has not left ample reserves to counter a major attack, the Vichy forces have the necessary resources to make that one bold drive, deep into the enemy's rear. If opportunity presents itself, here you have the tools to do it. There is little

more embarrassing to the Commonwealth player than having the Legion etrangere running rampant in either Amman and/or Haifa. Salaam alikum, viva la France!

## Player Notes

by "Game Fun Assurance Committee Chairman" Daniel Broh-Kahn

So you've set up Operation Exporter... Now what? Well, before you jump into the sunny Mediterranean with both feet, why not take a few minutes to read the experiences of one of the playtesters, for not too long ago, I was in your shoes too! I will not go into the details about the Operational Combat System, although that has some merit. The core rulebook for the game has some outstanding advice regarding the system, and you should read it! In addition Mr. Jansen's quick start summary of the OCS rules included here with *Reluctant Enemies* can be very helpful to newbies. As a former newbie myself, I was struck by the organizational and supply rules, as well as the combat results table (Surprise!) and the awesome importance of unit effectiveness ratings. If you don't learn those, then anything I tell you will be less than useless!

OK, so now you think you understand the OCS. Let's look at an overview of Operation Exporter first, and then we'll get into some strategies and tactics. These notes apply to the campaign game. The first thing to note is the scale, which is 4 turns per week. This is not the standard 2 turns per week OCS scale, but given the unit densities, entirely appropriate for the campaign. For both sides, be cognizant of how long the game is. In essence, the burden of attack in on the Commonwealth and they have to accomplish certain objectives within a certain timeframe. For the Vichy French, their job is simply a matter of surviving and holding on to real estate, two often competing goals.

TACTICAL NOTES: First let's look at the units from both sides of the coin. I'd say from the French side first, but I cannot, because there are French units on both sides! On average, the Commonwealth units are slightly better than the Vichy French in terms of action ratings. But this is terribly misleading, because an action rating differential of +1 is huge! This means that in any combat, the Allies can lead their worse units with a better one almost every time, so for those MUST WIN attacks, the Allies can risk their best units and already have a leg up. The Vichy are less capable of this, so just knowing that fact will help you.

MOBILITY: In any OCS game, mobility can be a key element of gameplay, and in this game, it is no different. Actually, here, the effects of mobility may be even more pronounced! Why? While there is plenty of restrictive terrain on the map, a motorized unit in movement mode using roads unimpeded can move clear across the map. In other OCS games, there may be enough units to garrison key crossroads, but in this game, there never seems to be enough units to do that, for either side. So, you've been warned. Given the paucity of replacements, this adage becomes even truer as the game goes on! Although there are a few early reinforcements and periodic unit recoveries, a smart Vichy player will learn that the units he starts with are basically all he is going to have to work with the entire game. So husband your resources carefully, especially air and armor assets. The same is true, to a lesser degree, for the Commonwealth but your bigger issue for this player will be keeping the pressure on.

SUPPLY: In the many games I play tested, I never ran out of supply, for either side, but I often noticed that the supply was not where it was needed! So keep that in mind. Plan ahead when using supply, and always strive to get the most efficient bang for your buck using the available supply tokens. Use your few trucks and wagons to move the supplies where they are needed, and be sure to protect your dumps. Did I mention that you never have enough units?

ARMOR, INFANTRY and ARTILLERY: There is the possibility for extensive notes on each of these topics. However, for a novice player of the OCS, it is imperative that you understand the importance of reserve and exploitation movement, as well as understanding movement modes. Take your average tank or armored car unit and flip it over; notice how much faster it moves in Movement mode. Use that knowledge to your advantage, and ensure that your units are in the proper mode at all times! Don't forget that Armor and Mech combat values are doubled when attacking in Open (and for armor in Low Hills). However, these units combat values are generally halved almost everywhere else!

AIRPLANES: Because there are so few, for both sides, they must be used carefully. Losing even a single fighter step can lead to a slippery slope of disaster, as your opponent will continue to beat up on your ever-weakening air force. Reread the OCS rules about patrol zones, because not understanding them will cause you to put



## Reluctant Enemies, OCS #13

your planes where they are not needed, and you never have enough to do that. Understand the air umbrellas of patrol zones and use them to protect your ground pounders. Your bombers may give you that missing DG you need! The Vichy should not underrate the effects of interdicting (Train Busting) the Hejaz railway.

COMMANDOS: Vichy Beware! I could write a treatise on this one particular topic, because our playtester group certainly spent a lot of time discussing it. Let's just say this: Read and reread the commando rules carefully, and understand exactly what the implications are of a successful (or an unsuccessful) landing. As both the Commonwealth and Vichy player, you should prepare for the worst, hope for the best, but expect the average. In other words, as a Vichy player, the worst result would be a very successful landing, supported by Royal Navy supply and cutting the coast road, putting all your southern Lebanon forces out of trace supply. That is a disaster for you, so prepare for it, because it could happen! Commonwealth, with a sensible Vichy setup, your Royal Marines will be wiped out to a man, but you can at least make it interesting for your opponent.

STRATEGIES: As you read this, lay the map out in front of you. The features that concern you the most are the road and rail networks. Terrain is important too, as are the cities and towns, but you have to utilize the transportation network through the terrain to get to the cities and towns. The mountains and escarpments present some very restrictive and movement channeling terrain. This is primarily a challenge for the Commonwealth player. There are three primary axes of advance through Lebanon and Syria (Vichy player, note these as well!)

THE LEFT (Commonwealth viewpoint sitting at the south end of the map): The first and probably most obvious one is the coast road, from Haifa to Beirut. Look carefully at the choke points, as these will determine your strategy and direction. The escarpments will channel your attacks right along the coast, and, in addition, there are three river lines that will halve your combat factors for any units attacking across. Be prepared to be frustrated as you try to crack these river defenses, but crack them you must, and, eventually, you will. (Vichy player, fight for these tooth and nail.) For both sides the coast road offers quick resupply and reinforcement possibilities, as available from Beirut or Haifa. This coastal

area is contained by the impenetrable barrier of the Anti-Lebanon mountain range, just 6 hexes to the east of the coast. This battle front is very much a north-south affair with limited (but important) availability for flanking the coastal positions.

THE RIGHT: There are two typical routes from Deraa to Damascus. The good thing for the Commonwealth player is that the terrain in this sector is mostly Open. The bad thing is that as soon as you get close to your objective, Damascus, the terrain closes up at Kiswe, with the added benefit of a river line and lava terrain. A smart Vichy player will try delaying tactics up the road, while building up a credible defense along the river line. It will never be perfect, but a competent Vichy player will know when to "Cut and Run" from the river. Hopefully, it will be later in the game. The Commonwealth can (and must) assign resources to ultimately break the river line and follow up into Damascus, but the Vichy player must make him pay, in Mr. Churchill's words, in "Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat." Lots of tears! This is ordinarily a very important early battle for both players.

THE MIDDLE: So what's left is the rough terrain of the valley between the mountain ranges – The Middle. It offers many possibilities for both sides. For the Vichy player, beware of first turn overruns and exploitations which could leave the Commonwealth player in the vicinity of Hasbaya on the first turn! The rewards for an aggressive assault on Merdjayoun are few, unless you managed to shred the Vichy army while taking it. If not, expect a long slug up the road to El Masna and beyond, if you ever manage to get that far. If a competent Vichy player can manage to allocate a few choice units and supply them along this road, he can create a painful bottleneck and really drive the Commonwealth player nuts! This is a difficult front for the Commonwealth player. However, the Vichy player should beware of treating this too lightly. Rayak airbase at the top of the valley is a sudden death victory objective. Play testing has shown that it can be taken.

COMMONWEALTH: So which strategy should you take, Mr. Commonwealth? The three routes all have advantages and disadvantages. The Commonwealth player must apply credible pressure on all three routes, simply to force the Vichy player to stretch his resources as much as possible. Capitalize on your strengths, which include the strategic initiative, better

units, formation mobility, and the eventual depletion of Vichy forces. On the other hand, remember the onus of attack is on you. Do not get frustrated when you discover how long it takes to crack a river line in close terrain. Your task may seem endless. Remember, you will eventually crack them, hopefully in enough time to take your objectives.

VICHY: Mr. Vichy, do not get discouraged when you get pushed back, welcome that result as the historical reality. As the Vichy player, you must defend all three avenues of approach, and there is not a lot of lateral movement to allow cross support. (You do have three reserve markers, which are ideally suited to plug gaps; make the best use of them. They may be your most important "units") If you overcommit on one approach vector, you will find that the Commonwealth mobility will allow him to quickly adjust to the new possibilities offered by another avenue, and you will not be able to respond as quickly. Your job is to slow down your opponent as much as possible, and trade space for time. His infantry are better, his artillery becomes more numerous, his air force will be reinforced, and he even has Frenchmen, by God! (Although Gaullists) You will lose most combats. You do have the best armored force in the game. Find the best way to use it most effectively. In addition you will have air superiority early on. Find a good place for a forward airbase and try to maintain a patrol zone. A nasty well placed surprise counterattack can derail Commonwealth operational plans, and may even cost him the game! The Vichy have sudden death victory objectives also. Good luck, and don't give up when things look bad. They might be worse for your opponent!

## Design and Development Notes

First off, I haven't "designed" anything. The credit for design here rightly belongs to Dean Essig. He has created the *Operational Combat Series* ("OCS") which is the underlying system of game play employed for *Reluctant Enemies* ("RE"). It might be better said that I have adapted the military and political circumstances of *Operation Exporter* to conform to the OCS and thereby allowing an examination of *Operation Exporter* in this format.

[DE: Curtis, you are being too hard on yourself here. You designed this game, as much as anyone else who designed a game in one of my series... they (and you) fully earned the title 'game designer'.]





I'm grateful to have this opportunity to present this game as my understanding of these events and to provide a small and manageable game for a learning experience of the *OCS*.

## Learning the OCS

I have enjoyed my amateur study of World War II since I was in junior high school. That's been over forty years ago now. It's been a great pastime, and I've read many books and magazine articles on the subject along the way. I have also played many WWII wargames. Studying a WWII battle, campaign, theater of the war or the entire war itself by playing a wargame can be rewarding and enlightening. Books can have limitations that a wargame can alleviate. This aspect, of feeling involved with the history, is just a different experience than simply reading words on a page, often dully presented. Of course a wargame naturally allows some competitive aspect to come into play, so there is another dimension involved. However, for me, a wargame is just a different vehicle to understand the subject matter. I do enjoy competitively playing of a good wargame, especially in the company of likeminded friends, but primarily it is an adjunct to learning the history being portrayed.

About five years ago there was a great discussion on *Consimworld* about the need for a small *OCS* game to make the system more accessible to new players. Previous *OCS* games have been monsters in scope and production with often many maps to portray the geography, possibly hundreds of game turns and thousands of counters to represent the forces involved in a particular campaign. The *OCS* is an involved system which can be a challenge to learn, and especially to learn on your own with just the rulebook. I know how hard this can be; it's how I did it.

I had three false starts trying to teach myself the *OCS*. The first time was in 1992 when the first *OCS* game was released, the original *Guderian's Blitzkrieg*. Wow, what a game. It had a combination of game play that made it unique and a fresh viewpoint on WWII military operations. There was movement, overrun, barrage, combat and then do it again with the reserves in exploitation. The combat units had their historical designations. Dean provided plenty of scenarios. The system included combat unit modes, artillery barrage, enemy reaction, operational airpower, and of course command and logistics. I punched out the counters for a short scenario and went to work to learn the system. However, I struggled on my own to understand how it worked as a whole.

Eventually, I moved on to something else. Sound familiar? I broke out the old *GB* again in the mid-nineties when my copy of *DAK* arrived, and again at the turn of the century when I received *Burma* (my personal favorite). However, my efforts to learn the system were not successful regardless of the time spent trying. Oh well, had to move on, again.

When I got my copy of *Guderian's Blitzkrieg II* in 2002, I committed to Really Learn the System. I played the three turn *GBII* scenario, *Drive On Bryansk*, over, and over, and over, and read the rules, again, and again, and again. I counted twenty-five times on my chalk board in my war room. The feeling of "What do I do now?" dissipated and I finally understood the subtleties of the phasing of the various segments of play. I was always a determined but slow learner, and I didn't get everything. What, there's such a thing as a fighter sweep? This wasn't specifically spelled out in the rules then, although it was not prohibited. Can you imagine trying to play the air war in *OCS* without fighter sweeps? No wonder I couldn't fully appreciate the facility barrage table. At least I was over the hump and understood the basics of the game. I was fortunate to have met Steve Jansen at WBC in 2003. An experienced *OCS* player; he patiently provided me with my advanced *OCS* training. He's a great teacher and I'm thankful for his time and effort in showing me the whole system.

This was not the best path for learning the *OCS*, and hopefully no one will have to walk this path again.

*Reluctant Enemies* is a small game which can serve as an introduction to the *OCS*. It is Twenty-One turns long, for the campaign game, a blink of an eye by *OCS* standards. There is one smaller nine turn starting scenario. So, yes, it's small *OCS* game that is a manageable gaming experience which is conducive to learning the system.

In addition, Steve Jansen has prepared a summary explanation of the important aspects of the *OCS* system to facilitate the learning process for new players. This summary is included here with *RE*.

Finally, all beginners should appreciate Chip Saltsman's illustrated play examples in the "OCS Starter Guide." This guide is meant to aid the newbie in learning *OCS*. It is included with *RE* for that purpose.

I hope you enjoy the game.

## Development Issues and Notes

**Game Scale - Combat Unit Strengths and Recovery.** The most significant "design" issues I have addressed for *RE* are related to the scale of the game particularly regarding (1) the strengths of the combat units and (2) the Combat Unit Recovery system. Most of the maneuver units in this game are battalion sized. At "regular" *OCS* scale, as in *DAK (II)* for instance, the combat strength of most Commonwealth infantry brigades and German infantry regiments (that are assumed to be comprised of three battalions) is 6. Therefore, by interpolation I assumed each battalion's strength at regular *OCS* scale is 2. This presented a problem because I needed a greater range to effectively depict the relative strengths of the various battalions of *RE*. So, as a base I simply tripled the strength of the "standard" battalion from 2 to 6. This then allowed the granularity that was required but with a significant deviation from the *OCS* norm. For instance I could now aptly show a "standard" Australian infantry battalion at a strength of 6 as compared to the lesser manpower of, say, the Australian 2/2 pioneers as a strength of 4. Problem solved for *RE*, but as a consequence, these combat units will not port to *DAK (II)* or any other *OCS* game.

The *OCS* combat results table (CRT) was designed by Dean Essig for the original *Guderian's Blitzkrieg* in 1992. It has not significantly changed. For those who do not know, *Guderian's Blitzkrieg* (and its successor *Guderian's Blitzkrieg II*) is a monster game depicting the German drive for Moscow in the fall of 1941 (*Operation Typhoon*). It has multiple map sheets to portray the ground from Star'aya Russa to Yaroslavl in the north and Konotop to Vorenezh in the south. The forces engaged in this massive campaign are necessarily depicted by 2800 counters comprising thousands of steps of strength. It's a big, big game. By comparison *RE* is miniscule. *RE* will have about 60 to 70 combat units, total for both sides, in play at any one time in the game. It became clear to me after early play testing that the *OCS* CRT, designed for such a large campaign, where a single step of combat strength is essentially meaningless, was way too bloody for this small conflict. The forces engaged in *RE*, both the Vichy and Commonwealth, simply had a greater staying power after losses. In addition, in *RE*, each combat unit and the loss thereof can be significant. Something had to be done to best portray the losses suffered and



the recovery of combat units in this smaller campaign. I felt the choice I had to make was showing each, or most battalions as 2 step strength units or the Combat Unit Recovery system which I have included here in *RE*. In *OCS Burma* the Japanese have a similar, non-standard, unit recovery system which influenced the development of the *RE* Combat Unit Recovery system. I can also admit to being influenced by the recovery system used in GMT Games', *The Battle for Normandy*. The *RE* Combat Unit Recovery system is simple and easy to use; recover one combat unit for every three losses. Most importantly, I feel it realistically portrays what actually happened; combat formations recovering their ability to function as a fighting force and reconstituting back to a headquarters. This play tested very well.

Regardless of these deviations from the norm, *RE* is in every way an *OCS* experience.

I understand that these two design choices may be *OCS* heresy of the first order in some quarters, and I actually agonized over the decision to include them as game specific rules. After explaining my dilemmas to Dean, he finally said in effect, don't worry, it's no big deal. Thank you Dean, that's exactly how I felt about it. In fact I believe the many particular game specific rules found in each *OCS* game to be a unique aspect of the *OCS*. So, if I'm to be burned at the stake for this, I feel it's fair that I burn only in effigy.

**Naval Actions.** During this campaign there were small but numerous naval engagements off the coast of Lebanon. The German air force was very active out of bases on Crete and Rhodes, sending missions against the Royal Navy on a nearly daily basis. Most of the RAF that was available for this campaign was engaged against this German threat to the RN, especially early on. I made a decision, upon good advice, to abstract all this naval activity. So the naval barrage eligibility table represents my view of the possibilities for naval barrage support for the ground forces engaged on the coast.

**Regiment vs. Battalion Designations.** For ease of play and simplicity some combats units which were historically designated as regiments are here designated as battalions due to the actual smaller size of the force. This simplification affects primarily the Australian artillery, British Artillery and British cavalry regiments.

**Road Trace System.** The rail network in Lebanon and Syria in 1941 was rudimentary. It consisted primarily of the Hejaz Railway, which went north from Amman to Damascus. From Damascus the railroad then went west, over the mountains to Beirut on the coast and north to Baalbek, then off the *RE* map further north to Homs and Aleppo. There was a railway that also ran from Haifa on the coast east through Irbid to link at Deraa in southern Syria with the Hajaz Railway. Most importantly for *RE*, in 1941, there was no railway on the coast from Haifa north to Beirut or from Haifa north through the mountain ranges into the Bekaa valley and then on to Rayak.

Therefore, I made the decision early on to allow trace supply along roads (not tracks). This play tested very well. Consistent with other games in the series portraying 'difficult theaters', such as *DAK*, *Sicily*, and *Case Blue* (south of the Don River) it is a workable solution to an otherwise difficult game design problem.

### Order of Battle Notes

**Australian 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade.** The sources were conflicting on the deployment of this under strength and under equipped brigade. Some sources listed the component battalions of the 17<sup>th</sup>, the 2/2<sup>nd</sup> and 2/3<sup>rd</sup> infantry and the 2/2<sup>nd</sup> pioneers as arriving after the start of the campaign as reinforcements. This is incorrect. There are many credible accounts of these units being in the fight from the start as independent forces under the Australian 7<sup>th</sup> infantry division. The confusion was due to the late appointment and arrival of the brigade commander, Brigadier Savage and his staff. These independent battalions were assigned to the 17<sup>th</sup> brigade under the command of Savage to fill out the 7<sup>th</sup> division prior to the start of the battle for Damour. For simplicity I have left each of these units as independents here in *RE*.

**Australian I Corps Headquarters.** General Wavell assigned General Maitland "Jumbo" Wilson as the commander of forces for *Operation Exporter*. Wavell's forward headquarters was at Nazareth. The 7<sup>th</sup> Australian infantry division, under the command of General Lavarack was a component of Wilson's at start forces. On the morning of June 18<sup>th</sup> Lavarack was promoted to command the Australian I corps, and that corps was given command of all forces in Lebanon and southern Syria. This command change is portrayed in *RE* by a switch of headquarters units from Wilson to Lavarack. This is purely for historical

recognition of these events and there is no effect on game play.

**Lloyd - 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade Headquarters.** Brigadier W.L. Lloyd proved himself to be an extraordinarily capable, resilient and resourceful commander during the course of this campaign. He was a leader of men. Time and again he drew out the most from his troops. He rallied exhausted soldiers and remade them into effective fighting forces. His role in this regard cannot be underestimated. When Legentilhomme's arm was injured and he had to relinquish command, Lloyd stepped into this assignment without hesitation, and assumed command of all forces fighting in Syria with impressive results. Under his direction he pressed the Commonwealth forces in his command to aggressively, seize opportunities before they were lost, and greatly affected the campaign in its drive to capture Damascus. I know it is unusual to have a brigade headquarters in an *OCS* game. But given the scale as I've explained above and the remarkable record of Lloyd I feel that a HQ counter is warranted here.

**The Vichy Regiments Chasseurs d'Afrique. (Designated as 6Chas & 7Chas on the counters in RE).** These units are the arguably the most formidable units in *RE*. Each regiment was organized as two battalion sized "groupments" each comprised of a mix of about 45 or 50 R35, two man tanks plus about 75 armored cars, primarily Panhard and White-Lafflys. These tanks and armored cars were actually deployed most often in particular task forces for small operations as required, but most of these actions are below the scale of *RE*. They were however; used in concentrated formations for the important and effective Vichy counterattacks. Therefore, I decided to portray the regiments as two battalions, one of tanks and another of armored cars. I believe this tested really well, allowing the Vichy player to realistically, sharply and sometimes decisively counterattack the Commonwealth player.

### Place Names

I encountered a dizzying variety of English names for nearly every place depicted on the map. Arabic to English appears as difficult as or possibly more difficult than even Chinese to English. For instance, I found the following spellings for Kuneitra (Hex 30.18): Quneitra, Qouneitra, Qunaitira, Qunaytrah, and El Qunaytirah. So instead of making myself crazy trying to be a linguist I have simply used the spellings found

in my first source; Gavin Long's official Australian history of the campaign, *Greece, Crete and Syria*. I hope this explanation will prevent any debate that may erupt about the "correct" spelling of these place names. Such a debate (other than by actual linguists) is non-substantive, so I suggest we just use my place names, move on and enjoy the game. Thanks.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to recognize Daniel Broh-Kahn for his patient guidance in helping me learn some necessary skills with Adobe Illustrator so that I could finally produce the map and counters for play testing. My thanks to Hans Kishel for sharing his counter and map artwork which he developed for his *OCS* game *The Blitzkrieg Legend*. In addition, thank you very much Hans for creating a *Vassal* module for *RE*. Jim Daniels, thank you for revising the *Vassal* module. Urs Widmer, thank you for also revising the *Vassal* module. Urs, thank you for further revising the *VASSAL* module with the final game components. Myk Deans, thanks for the one page charts summary.

David Hughes was a great help to me in preparing the order of battle. He is very knowledgeable about the combatants, particularly the Commonwealth forces. He was very patient with each of my requests for information; providing clear answers when he had them and helpful advice when a matter about a particular combat formation required judgment. I was able to make practical use of his counsel, and the welcomed result is the *RE* counter sheet depicting the actual forces engaged in this campaign. In addition he did a thorough job editing my historical notes, and he wrote the sidebars included there. David, I'm very grateful for all your help, thank you.

Chip Saltsman has provided the *OCS Starter Guide* included with the game. He has done a great job and I feel his illustrated examples and explanations will go a long way to help newbies learn the *OCS*. Thank you for all your hard work Chip.

Steven Jansen has written the *OCS Rules Summary and Beginner Explanation* that is also included with *RE*. Steve is an experienced *OCS* player as well as a great teacher of the system. I trust this supplement will be well received by newbies. Thanks Steve for this contribution to *RE*.

Rupert Cullum did a professional job proofing and editing the game specific rules. He presented his findings in a very, detailed, but organized, easy to understand

and use format which was a tremendous help to me. In fact his edit comments are longer than the rules themselves. Thanks for all your help Rupert.

John McDougall was a proofing machine. He proofed the map, counters, rules, charts and setups. Of course there be will be errata, but certainly less due to John's efforts. Thanks John, you did a great job.

Thank you Dan Broh-Khahn and Al Murphy for your player's notes. I encourage all new *OCS* players to read those and heed their advice and guidance.

I need to recognize the outstanding efforts of the following playtesters: Christian Widmer, Urs Widmer, Urs Kasermann, Myk Deans, Eric Landes, Pere Cerdan and his group in Barcelona, Spain, Martin Stauton, Stephane Acquaviva, Alan Murphy and Alden Greene. These guys responded to my call for help by providing useful written reports, packed with data and often illustrated with pictures of game play. I read and used every one of these reports which were instrumental to the development of *RE*.

I was blessed with many other volunteers, from around the world, who play tested and proofed *RE* with critical eyes. Thank you gentlemen, one and all.

Finally, and most importantly, this little game would not have been produced without the faithful, dedicated and invaluable playtesting, proofing, consultation and just plain general assistance from the members of my local gaming club, the Baltimore NEBO Grogards. I owe a great debt of gratitude in particular to Steve Jansen, Dan Cochrane, Francis Czawlytko, Ben Mangus, Joe Woolshleger, and again, Dan Broh-Kahn. They did a lot of hard work which allowed *RE* to become more than some vague idea in my mind. Thanks guys.

## Abbreviations

Alg	Algerian
BdHf	Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire
BW	Black Watch
Blenh	Blenheim
Bdr	Border
Cav	Cavalry
Chas	Chasseurs (tanks)
Ches Y	Cheshire Yeomanry
Circ	Circassian
Col	Colonial
Czech	Czechoslovak
D	Dewoitine
Div	Division
Durham	Durham Light
FF	Free French
Fld	Field
Goums	Goumiers
Jisr Bennt Jacob	Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob
Kings	Kings Own
Legntil	Legentilhomme
Leicest	Leicester
LeO	Liore et Oliver
Levant	Syrian locals
Lgn	Foreign Legion
Liban	Lebanese locals
LT	Light
Mar	Marines
Med	Medium
Met	Metropolitan
MG	Machine Gun
Mor	Moroccan
MS	Moraine-Saulnier
Mxd	Mixed
NSYeo	North Somerset Yeomanry
Pio	Pioneers
Punjab	Punjabi
Queens	Queen's Royal
Rajput	Rajputana
RB	Royal Bombay Miners and Sappers
Roy	Royal
Roy Fus	Royal Fusiliers
Royals	Royal Dragoons
Sc Gry	Scots Greys
Seng	Senegalese
Staff Y	Staffordshire Yeomanry
Tcherk	Tcherkesses
TJFF	Trans Jordan Frontier Force
Tun	Tunisian
York	York & Lancaster
Y, Yeo	Yeomanry

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AMPHIBIOUS LANDING TABLE (ALT)		
Modified Roll – 2D6		
Terrain	Failure	Success
Open/Village	2 or Less	3+
Other Than Open/Village	3 or Less	4+
Success – Commando may land in coastal hex. Failure – Commando eliminated		
Die roll modifiers (cumulative): Landing hex adjacent to Non –DG attack capable enemy combat unit: -2. Landing hex is adjacent to DG attack capable enemy combat units: -1. Landing attempt in 1941: -2.		

Commonwealth Supply (2D6)	
2-5	1.5
6-8	2.5
9-12	3.5

Commando Drift Table		
Roll 1D6		
1-2	3-4	5-6
1 Hex North	None	1 Hex South

NAVAL BARRAGE UNIT ELIGIBILITY TABLE		
TURN	COMMONWEALTH	VICHY
JUNE 8	YES	YES
JUNE 10	YES	NO
JUNE 12	YES	YES
JUNE 14	YES	NO
JUNE 15	YES	YES
JUNE 17	YES	NO
JUNE 19	NO	YES
JUNE 21	YES	NO
JUNE 22	NO	YES
AFTER JUNE 22	EVERY OTHER TURN - Start June 24	NO

Commonwealth Replacement Table		
(2D6)	PAX	EQ
2-8	x	x
9-10	1	x
11-12	1	1

Vichy Supply (2D6)	
2-4	1.0
5-9	1.5
10-12	2.0

Common Rebuild Table	
Inf, MG, Mar, Cav	1PAX
Arm, Arm. Car, AA, Art.	1EQ
HQ	1PAX, 1EQ
2x Air Unit Steps	1EQ
2T Trucks (Rebuild trucks losses only)	1EQ

Victory by VPs Determination Table			
Victory Points Campaign (5.1)	Victory Points Secure the Levant (5.2)	Level of Victory	
5 or Less	2 or Less	Crushing	Vichy Victory
6	3	Overwhelming	
7	4	Impressive	
8	5	Marginal	
9	6	Draw	
10-11	7-8	Marginal	Commonwealth Victory
12	9	Impressive	
13	10	Overwhelming	
14 or More	11 or More	Crushing	
Level of Victory		Victory Effects	
Marginal		The loser must offer the winner a firm handshake and sincere congratulations on winning a close game.	
Impressive		The loser must offer the winner a firm handshake and sincere congratulations on winning the game. The loser must also buy the winner an adult beverage of the winner's choice.	
Overwhelming		The winner obtains Massive Bragging Rights. The loser must offer the winner a firm handshake and sincere congratulations on winning an Overwhelming victory. The loser must also buy the winner an adult beverage of the winner's choice.	
Crushing		The winner obtains Massive Bragging Rights, and the designation Glorious Victor. The loser must offer the winner a firm handshake and sincere congratulations on winning a Crushing victory. The loser must also buy the winner an adult beverage of the winner's choice. The winner may humbly post on the OCS forum of Consim World a notice of this victory. The loser may consider another hobby.	
Draw		Sit back down and play again.	