

# TEL EL EISA

## 10<sup>TH</sup> / 11<sup>TH</sup> JULY 1942

### What Really Happened

Striking from the Alamein 'box' in the early hours of the 10th July, the Australian 9th Division's assault battalions quickly ousted the newly arrived Italian defenders from the eastern end of the coastal ridge that provided the Axis with excellent observation of 8th Army's positions. Colonel Hammer's 2/48th then drove on, supported by heavy artillery support, to capture point 33 at the western end of the ridge, despite its attached Valentine tanks bogging down in salt marsh. The 2/24th swung left to reach the railway line, clearing Italian guns and digging in as best it could before dawn. A bonus for the Australians was the unexpected capture of a German signals company that turned out to be Nachrichten Fern Aufklärung Kompanie 621 (NFAK 621), Rommel's key intelligence gathering unit.

### Axis Reaction

Von Mellenthin, Rommel's Chief of Staff, quickly mustered staff from the Panzer Army's imperilled HQ and newly arrived troops from 164th Light Africa Division to block the Australian's route up the coastal road, whilst XXI Corp's General Navarini sent 7th Bersaglieri (some of whom were already dug-in on Tel el Eisa) and an artillery battalion on the same mission. They were followed by elements of the Trieste Division. In the late morning the Australian's divisional cavalry tried to push its Crusaders up the road, but they were soon driven back. Then followed a series of counter-attacks, spearheaded by Kampfgruppe Kirsten that Rommel had personally detached from 15th Panzer Division to the south and reinforced with elements of his own kampfstaffel, including the M3 Stuarts of the Kiehl Group.

### Assault on Tel-el-Eisa

Their hands full just beating off Axis attacks on the 10th, it wasn't until the morning of the 11th that the Australians were able to launch their attack on the high ground of Tel el Eisa. Supported by 44th RTR's Valentines, they first captured the northern part of the feature and then, at midday, the rest. What followed was a relentless bombardment from Axis artillery, including 149mm pieces attached to the Sabratha Division and German 210mm howitzers. More counter-attacks tried but failed to shift the Australians, including a 5.00pm tank attack by the Trieste's 11th Battalion.

### The Outcome

With all plans shelved for exploiting their success deeper into Axis lines the Australians engaged in a long see-saw battle for the dusty mounds of Tel el Eisa, only temporarily alleviated by Operations Bacon and Splendour to the south. Driven off the high ground completely at one point, by the end of First Alamein they still grimly clung on to a portion of its shell-pocked ground.

Front cover: The inexperienced crews of 23rd Armoured Brigade carry out their Balaclava-like charge during Operation Splendour. Despite the fact that he had merely been obeying his flawed orders their CO was sacked after this debacle.

Below: A captured M3 Stuart from the Kiehl Group is supported by a captured 2pdr portee. At this stage of the desert war the Axis relied heavily on captured transport and equipment. At one point the Kiehl Group was operating 12 Stuarts.



## THE GAME

Tel el Eisa represents the aftermath of the assault by Australian 9th Division's 26th Brigade (XXX Corps) against the positions of the Italian Sabratha Division, both on and near the Tel el Eisa mounds, and the subsequent counter-attacks by elements of Panzer Army Afrika. It compresses the actions of the 10th and 11th July 1942 into one day. The game should take no longer than 15 moves.

## TABLE SIZE

The game can be played on a 6' x 5' or 6' x 4' table

## THE FORCES

8th Army	400 point Australian 9th Division/26th Brigade
Axis	400 point Panzer Army Africa/XXI Corps

## SCALING

This scenario uses the normal Rapid Fire scaling of 1:15 for figures and 1:5 for vehicles and guns.

## VICTORY CONDITIONS

### Commonwealth

To win:

At the end of the game there are no active enemy units behind the Australian deployment line and you \*hold Tel el Eisa with at least 8 figures.

To draw:

Capture NFAK 621's truck and achieve one of the objectives above.

### Axis

To win:

At the end of the game have a minimum of 1 active tank or 6 figures behind the Australian deployment line and you \*hold Tel el Eisa with at least 8 figures.

To draw:

Achieve one of the objectives above.

(\*Hold means there must be no active enemy units on the Tel el Eisa high ground.)

## AXIS DEPLOYMENT

The 1/7th Bersaglieri Regiment begins the game within the Bersaglieri deployment area marked on the battle map either dug-in or mobile, but up to one company and one AT gun may begin the game dug-in on the main Tel el Eisa feature, but at least 6" from the railway line.

192nd Heavy Artillery Battery begins the game dug-in within the Axis artillery zone (off-table if playing on a 6' x 4' table).

NFAK 621 begins the game at point N. It takes two full moves to pack up and move its truck. It may attempt to defend itself.

## Reinforcements

Moves (use move numbers in brackets if playing on a 6' x 4' table)

- 1 Panzer Army HQ, 2nd Bn/382nd Regiment (German) and 45th Artillery Regiment enter between Ax1-Ax1.
- 2 The German Corps Artillery Battalion OP may enter within the Axis artillery zone. The 210mm howitzer is off-table.
- 3 (4) \* The Trieste infantry battalion may enter at any point on the western or southern edges of the table.
- 4 (5) \*Kampfgruppe Kirsten may enter between Ax2 - Ax2.
- 5 \*The Trieste's 11th Tank Battalion may enter between Ax1 - Ax1.

\*Roll a D6 on the move before entry. 1, 2 - no delay, 3, 4 - 1 move delay, 5, 6 - 2 move delay

## COMMONWEALTH DEPLOYMENT

Australian 26th Brigade and support begins the game behind the Australian limit of deployment line.

## Reinforcements

Moves

- 1 A Squadron 44th RTR enters between Aus 1 - Aus 1.
- 4 \*Australian Divisional Cavalry enters on the road at point Aus 2.

\*Roll a D6 on the move before entry. 1, 2 - no delay, 3, 4 - 1 move delay, 5, 6 - 2 move delay

## TEL EL EISA SPECIAL RULES

### Morale

The Australian infantry battalions and Kampfgruppe Kirsten are classed as elite. All other forces are classed as regular.

### Observation

From move 4 to move 12 inclusive, maximum observation distances are restricted by the desert heat haze. Heat haze maximum observation range is 24". Normal restrictions on observation under 24" still apply. All higher ground blocks observation.

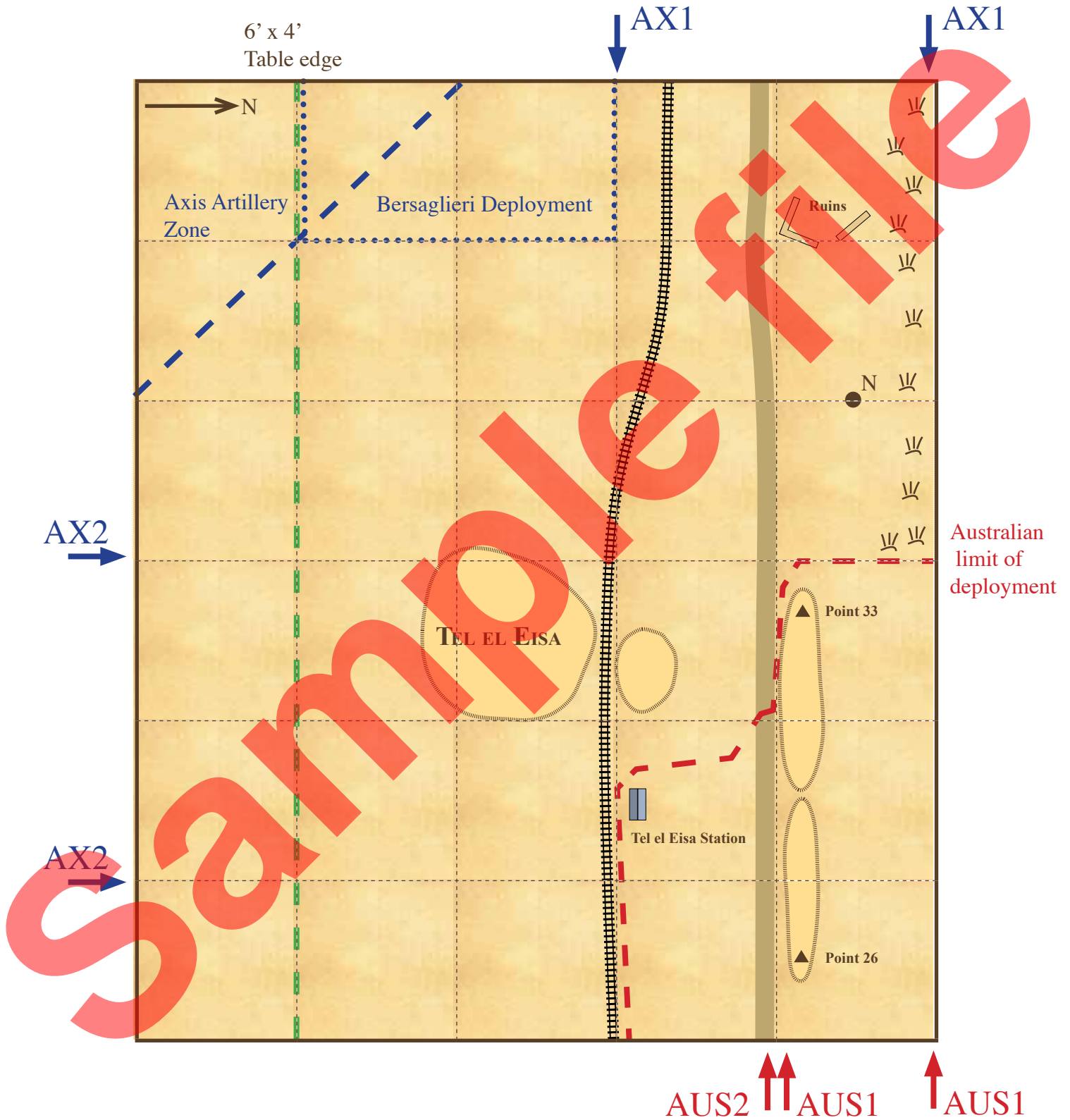
### Movement

Vehicles in the salt marsh areas marked on the battle map throw a D6 for each move in which they attempt to move. A 6 and they are bogged down and cannot move (for that move only). The railway line and any high ground does not restrict movement. Vehicles entering the table move a maximum of 12".

### Firing

Artillery that loses its OP may only fire direct or use predicted fire (with average intelligence).

# TEL EL EISA BATTLE MAP (6' x 5' or 6' x 4')





# XXI CORPS/ PANZER ARMY AFRIKA

- 400 POINTS -

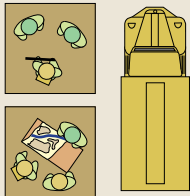


## Panzer Army Africa HQ

Lieutenant-Colonel Mellenthin

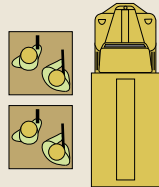
### HQ

CO + 5 figures, radio truck



### NFAK 621

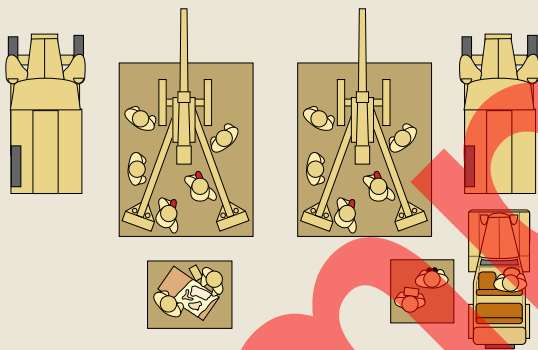
4 figures, radio truck



Morale: HQ: Higher level CO  
NFAK 621: N/A

## 192nd Heavy Artillery Regiment

12 figures, 2 x 149mm gun, 2 x heavy prime mover, 2 x figure OP team, car

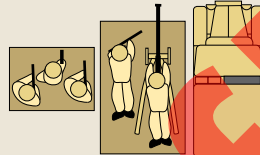


Morale: Artillery unit

## 1st Battalion / 7th Bersaglieri Regiment

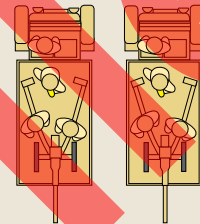
### HQ

CO + 4 figures, 20mm ATR, light truck



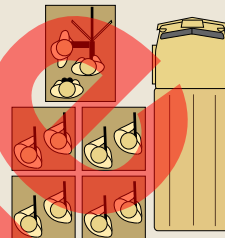
### AT Company

6 figures, 2 x 47mm AT, 2 x portee trucks



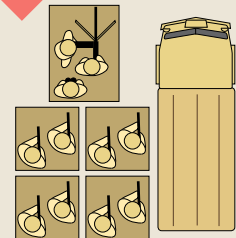
### Company

11 figures, MMG, truck



### Company

11 figures, MMG, truck



Morale: CO + 32 figures (Regular)

Below: These 149mm guns of the 192nd Heavy Artillery Regiment are obviously feeling confident as they've opted not to dig in. When the Australians tried to move beyond Tel el Eisa it is reported that the artillerymen of this unit lowered their gun barrels and used direct fire against the advancing infantry. This is permissible within the rules, but not as anti-tank fire.

