

# Desert Fox Playthrough

*By James Halstead*

## Mechanics:

As this is my first playthrough I'm going to give a general idea of how I perceive the mechanics and hopefully give an impression of what's going on in the playthrough itself. I've split these down into several areas that I think are the most important elements.

All throughout my initial survey of the rules I can see so many dilemmas that will present themselves in this game.

## Supply:

Supply is absolutely crucial in the North Africa campaign and Desert Fox is no exception. In Desert Fox you use two types of supply units – MSUs (Motorised Supply Units?) and Dumps. MSUs simulate trucks and can move (unlike dumps) but cannot provide supply as far as dumps. They are somewhat interchangeable and MSUs 'flip' to become dumps – this simulates the stretching supply lines as one side advances and quite literally simulate vulnerable supply lines.

Importantly supply radius is measured in motorised movement points – which means that placing your dumps on important crossroads and at least rough trails becomes even more important. From studying the map this means that the Dump supply radius of 12 hexes rapidly gets bumped down to only 6 hexes worth when moving over even clear terrain.

Supply also gets spent by certain actions – for example providing above a certain amount of attack supply to motorised units or refitting depleted units.

## Turn order and initiative:

This is not a standard IGO-UGO system. Instead turns are organised into:

Normal Movement

Enemy reaction

Normal Combat

Motorised Movement

Motorised Reaction

Motorised Combat

Furthermore the player that goes first changes each turn depending on an initiative dice roll that determines whether the Germans may take initiative. Taking the initiative means they can choose to go first or second – a big advantage. This means that they will often have the liberty of deciding whether they will ACT or REACT. IF they win initiative do they wait for the Commonwealth offensive before going for a (potential) double turn counterattack or do they act now and take the first turn to strike first but with the certainty that there will be a whole Commonwealth turn before they can act again.

Beyond this the turn order rather encourages the importance of armour to the fighting in the desert with the armour given lots of scope to make big outflanking runs – although remembering they will have to take, and expend supply with them if they intend to do any serious fighting.

## **Turns 1-2**

Rommel strikes from El Agheira and turns the Commonwealth flank. After brushing aside the 2nd Armoured Division units German armoured forces make a strike across the Desert for Tobruk. The German plan is to make a rush on Tobruk and hopefully cut off the Australians and remnants of 2nd Armoured. Unfortunately this is overly optimistic as Axis forces seem to have an inability to capture Commonwealth supplies so by the end of turn 2 it is only the Italian units rushing around the tip of the Cyrenaica bulge that are at the gates of Tobruk. Coupled with a particularly poor turn 2 for supply convoys there were simply not the available supplies to sustain a more determined German drive.

Sadly for the Germans they were not able to move quick enough to maximise on the pressure and its going to be a case of building up strength

Meanwhile the Commonwealth are building up their forces around Tobruk ready to face down the renewed Axis offensive. They block the coastal road with a 1-strength fort which they are slowly building up troops in while also building up forces on the Escarpment around Sidi Rezegh south of Tobruk.

**Player Note:** 6/2 NZ are listed as turning up on turn 2 on their counter – but on turn 3 on the reinforcement tracker. In lieu of an answer in the errata I could find I just assumed they would enter play on Turn 3 as the weight of judgements seem to lean towards the Printed Reinforcement Tracker

*My plan as the Axis was to try and drive in early and take Tobruk – unfortunately like Rommel so often did I failed to account for supplies and wasn't able to capture enough on the way with the German troops seemingly being trigger happy. The Commonwealth are happy to react for now and prepare to defend Tobruk.*

*Rules wise there was only one combat – at the very beginning and the Commonwealth retreated so fast the Axis supplies couldn't keep up. I feel this may be a combination of poor Axis luck and my inexperienced play in handling the supplies. I'm beginning to understand the importance of 'leap frogging' supplies in offensives – and making sure to stretch the dumps as much as possible away from supply sources.*



*End of first German Movement Phase*



### SUMMARY OF SUPPLY SOURCES AND CAPACITIES

Source	ALLIED	NE	EX	U	L	E	U	L	E	U	L	E	U	L	E
General Supply															
Non-MotORIZED (NE/EX)	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U
MotORIZED (NE/EX)	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U
Combat Supply															
Attack (NE/EX)	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U
Defense (NE/EX)	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U
Reinforce Disruption (NE/EX)	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U

NE: Supply sent not expended; EX: Supply sent expended; U: Unlimited; L: Not applicable; \* See 3.16

### [6.37] RAID ON MALTA TABLE

RAID	1	2	3
1	1-0	1-0	0-0
2	0-0	0-0	1-1
3	0-0	1-1	0-1
4	0-0	0-1	0-1
5	1-1	0-1	1-2
6	0-1	0-1	0-2

Axis Supply Expended: 0 1 2

1-1: Axis Commonwealth Air Points abandoned; See 3.11

### [7.17] AXIS CONVOY ARRIVAL TABLE

Axis	MSUs Available
1-3	4
4-5	3
6-7	2
8-10	1
11+	0

Add the number of CW Air Points at Malta to the roll of 2 dice. Game-Turn 1-9, subtract 1 from the above roll. Game-Turn 10-22, add 1. See 3.15

### [5.18] AXIS REINFORCEMENTS

ITALIAN	TURK	GERMAN
17 Pan: 23 Btl; 23 Sq; 76-100 Mech; 41-2 Div; 62-70; 102; 7th; 2 Axis	2	33 Recon; 104 Mech
	3	115 Mech; 8 Armd; 155 Mixed
	4	25 Par Arty
	5	361 Arty
	6	180 Recon
	7	
	8	1-18 Flak
	10	11-23 Flak; 368 Flak
	11	
	12	114 Flak; 1-6 Flak
	14	3-152 288 Hvy Wpn
	15	1 Arty
	16	180 Arty
	18	Rancke Hwy; Airbce Inf
	19	125 Mixed; 164 Recon; 11-15 Flak; 142 Mixed; 413 Mixed; 220 Axis
	20	

Recon Armd Car: 800-70; 45-101 Mixed; 66-101 Mech; 40-70; 114 Wpn

100-101 Armd; 120-12; 100-101 Mech; 100-101 Mech

100-101 Recon; 100-101 Armd Arty; 100-101 Poly Glb Inf

DESTROYED TS

End of first German Turn



End of the Axis Turn 2 Normal Movement Phase

counterface of the scheduled withdrawal is present. If there is such a space, the scheduled unit is placed on it. This procedure is used to keep track of scheduled units when a scheduled withdrawal is due to expire later in the game at an intermission (7.25).

(7.25) If a scheduled unit is made for a withdrawal, the scheduled unit is returned to play when the original unit is due to return. A unit withdrawn in Deported status returns in Deported status, although any Deported units are removed. If the unit is withdrawn as a substitute for a scheduled withdrawal, no unit returns if the scheduled unit withdraws later due to return to play.

(7.26) Incoming reinforcements may be used as substitutes for a scheduled withdrawal on the Phase of their arrival.

(7.27) The Commonwealth player may voluntarily withdraw a unit before its withdrawal is required by its schedule.

(7.28) A withdrawal error unit that later returns to the map, returns with the Army Rating at which it was withdrawn.

**[6.0] Air Support**  
**GENERAL RULE**  
 Players control Air Points as indicated on the Turn Record Table. Air Points may be used to support attacks and defenses. The Commonwealth player may place Air Points in Malta to reduce the number of Mobile Supply Units (MSUs) the Axis player receives each turn, and the Axis player may use his Air Points to raid Malta.

**CASES**  
**[6.1] AIR POINTS**  
 Each Reinforcement Phase, the Player whose turn it is to move the number of Air Points indicated on the Turn Record Table. These Points may be used in all the moving Player's turns until they are eliminated. Players should keep track of available Air Points on the Ref/Air Point Track.

**[6.2] USES OF AIR POINTS**  
**[6.21] Air Points may be used once each Player-Turn until they are eliminated (6.23 and 6.7).**  
**[6.22] Immediately before the die is rolled for any combat, the players may decide how many Air Points (if any) they wish to use in the combat. The attacking player must announce whether he is allocating any Air**

**TEMPORARILY WITHDRAWN UNITS**  
 Units that are temporarily withdrawn are placed in a separate area of the map. They are not subject to the rules of the game until they are returned to play.

**PERMANENTLY WITHDRAWN UNITS**  
 Units that are permanently withdrawn are placed in a separate area of the map. They are not subject to the rules of the game until they are returned to play.

**[6.3] MALTA**  
 The Commonwealth uses the strategic island of Malta as an air base from which to harass Axis convoys. Several times during the North Africa Campaign, the Axis attempted to destroy Malta and its air base. They never completely succeeded, although they did wreak considerable damage.

(6.31) The Commonwealth player may control one or two Air Points in Malta in any Commonwealth Air Allocation Phase by removing the points from the Ref/Air Point Track, adjusting the Commonwealth Air Point Track. A maximum of two Air Points may be in Malta at one time.

(6.32) The Axis player must add the number of Air Points in Malta to his rolls on the Axis Convoy Arrival Table (7.37).

(6.33) The Axis player may attempt to reduce the number of Air Points in Malta by launching a bombing raid on Malta. An Axis friendly Air Allocation Phase the Axis player may announce a raid, stating how many Air Points are participating, up to a maximum of three. For every Air Point over one allocated to a raid, one Axis dump within three hexes of LITKO, TOROK, or BENGHAZI (1,200) must be expended (removed from the map). A dump may not be used if it is within five hexes of an enemy (enemy unit, however). A raid may not be announced unless the appropriate number of dumps are eligible for expenditure.

(6.34) Once the appropriate number of dumps for a raid have been expended, the Axis player rolls a die and consults the Roll on Malta Table (6.7). The result on the table will be given in terms of Axis and Commonwealth Air Points that are lost. Commonwealth Air Points must be removed from the Ref/Air Point Track. If the Roll on Malta Table indicates that more Air Points are lost than are present at Malta, the excess loss is ignored. Commonwealth Air Points which are not at Malta are never affected by a raid.

(6.35) Only one raid on Malta may be conducted each turn.

(6.36) Commonwealth Air Points allocated to Malta may not be reassigned to the Ref/Air Point Track.

(6.37) **Raid on Malta Table**  
 See charts and tables.

Supply units can be captured or destroyed, a summary of supply sources and capacities is provided in this section and what you need to know about the supply situation in this section. The player should refer to this summary when reading this section.

**PROCEDURE**  
 At the beginning of each friendly Movement Phase, the Player whose turn it is to move should trace a supply line to each friendly unit on the map. A supply line is a chain of hexes, starting from a friendly supply source or unit. A unit is considered to be supplied if it is connected to a friendly supply source or unit. A unit is considered to be unsupplied if it is not connected to a friendly supply source or unit. A unit is considered to be unsupplied if it is not connected to a friendly supply source or unit. A unit is considered to be unsupplied if it is not connected to a friendly supply source or unit.

**CASES**  
**[7.1] TRACING SUPPLY LINES**  
 To trace a supply line to a unit, the player should start at a friendly supply source or unit and trace a chain of hexes to the unit. The chain of hexes should not pass through any enemy units or through any hexes that are occupied by the unit whose supply line is being traced. The chain of hexes should not pass through any hexes that are occupied by the unit whose supply line is being traced. The chain of hexes should not pass through any hexes that are occupied by the unit whose supply line is being traced.

**[7.11] Dumps and other friendly units**  
 A unit is considered to be supplied if it is connected to a friendly supply source or unit. A unit is considered to be unsupplied if it is not connected to a friendly supply source or unit. A unit is considered to be unsupplied if it is not connected to a friendly supply source or unit.

**[7.12] Movement Phase**  
 At the beginning of each friendly Movement Phase, the Player whose turn it is to move should trace a supply line to each friendly unit on the map. A supply line is a chain of hexes, starting from a friendly supply source or unit. A unit is considered to be supplied if it is connected to a friendly supply source or unit. A unit is considered to be unsupplied if it is not connected to a friendly supply source or unit.



*End of Commonwealth Turn 2*