

GAME PROBLEM RESULT

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In this, the first puzzle presented in Phoenix, I wish both to give an answer to the puzzle set last issue and comment on some points of interest. Firstly, I emphasise that this is an answer (and a good one in my opinion!) since the flexibility inherent in our games allows a number of approaches to problems; the answer does not exist! With that proviso let us continue.

As suggested in the set-up, the Allies are NOT in a good position! With but 6 of 20 turns complete the Axis have advanced three-quarters of the way to Alamein and have taken Tobruk to boot, they now appear unbeatable ... or do they? It would appear there may be a weakness in their position associated with the few back-up units they have and the immovable Italian units west of Tobruk where they are grounded. The only free Axis units away from the front are those way back at home base and almost out of the reckoning. Based on the maxim that attack is the best form of defense it is possible to surround all the forward Axis units and Bardia - yes, THE LOT!! If this could be achieved then there could be a turn to sort out the strong Axis groups at the front which would be weakened from lack of supply before accepting a counter attack from the other advancing Axis units; this could turn the tide!

My answer demonstrates this possibility; namely, doing a Rommel and using the open desert flank to surround units and cut their supply lines. It is a gamers answer in many ways since it depends upon a careful examination of the rules and errata (I had to go to Moves, issue 14 for my errata), particularly the supply rules. From the rules it would appear that the Allies cannot go out of general supply at any time even though further moves may return units to supply by the end of the move. However nowhere does it stipulate that supply units cannot be moved in that game turn to supply general supply status; only attack and maximum attack supply need come from a static supply unit.

The move has two phases:

a) Turning the Flank (Figure 1)

- 1) Move up supply 4 to railroad, load truck and move to 1332. This is central to the situation since it allows Allied units to move round the flank yet keep in general supply.
- 2) Surround 7 Bers. and 27 Inf. by moving 4SA, 6SA etc in strict order 2 to 6 (Fig.1). This technique is useful in keeping the supply line to a minimum since the line may be traced through units in enemy zones of control but not empty enemy zones of control.
- 3) 26 Aus. moved up to surround all units south and east of Bardia - the shortened supply line is necessary for this move.

b) Advance towards Tobruk (Figure 2)

- 1) 1/8 is overrun (remembering that 1/8 is still in a supplied status), attack supply coming from supply 7 that is still a part of the Allied supply net. The strength of the Allied units means an automatic victory.
- 2) Without 1/8 present 5 Ind. can now be slipped into the 7 Bers. surround thus giving a shortened supply path to 26 Aus. and allowing:
- 3) 4 and 22 Armoured to sally forth and capture the Axis supply unit thus putting all Axis units east out of action. Voila!!

One may criticise this result by suggesting that in any face to face game there is not time (to be fair to one's opponent) to puzzle out all these complexities. Quite so, but there are those of us who both enjoy play by mail gaming, where one can spend a whole evening on one move, and solo play where such problems are the spice of life.

(Now Gentlemen, having led the way with a puzzle, let us be having some of your teasers. I would not expect them to be quite so convoluted but let us hope that they manage to stir a few neurones in working them out.)

FIGURE 1

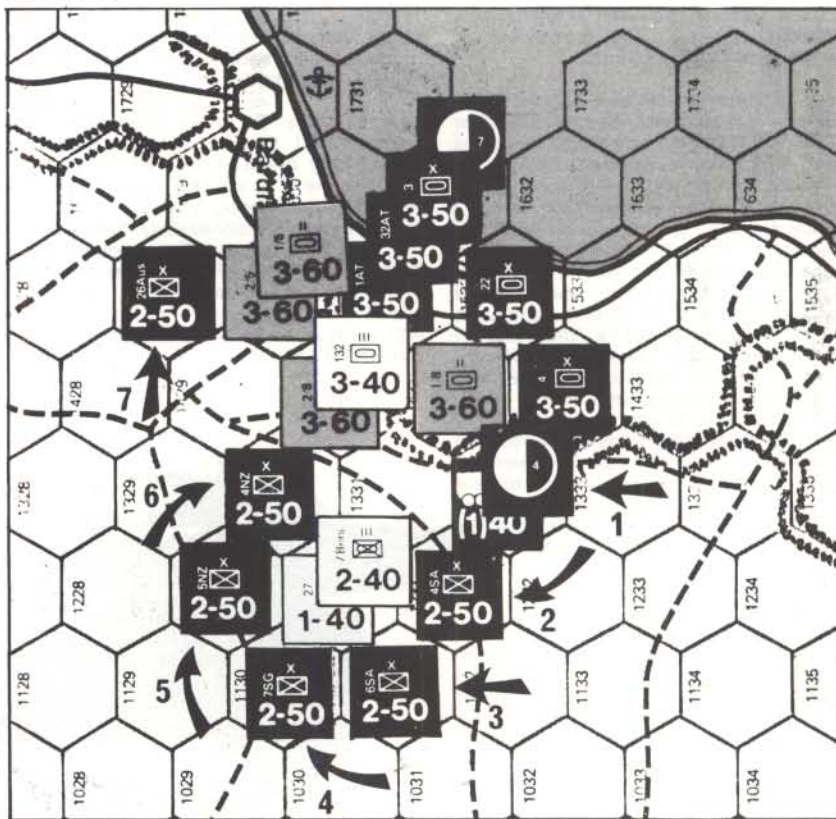


FIGURE 2

