

Roadblock at Brava

The Springboks race to Mogadishu

May, 1941

Situation

The rains in the Horn of Africa had come early in 1941 and it was unseasonably cold and wet. The 1st South African Division had finally broken out of the swamps and waterways of the lower Juba River. Its advance guard sat on the side of the road waiting for the weather to improve and the possibility of air reconnaissance and air attacks on the Italians blocking the way to Mogadishu. With the rain clearing and reinforcements arriving they mounted up and headed along the muddy road.

Colonel Bertoli of the 1st Italian Motorised Regiment was waiting on the coast road in the vicinity of the port of Brava. His Black Shirt engineers had finished a road block at the narrowest point between the salt marshes and the coastal dunes. If Mogadishu was to be defended it had to be here. Headquarters in Addis Abba had flown in elements of the Savoy Grenadiers; with their help he would at least have an even chance.

Scenario Notes

Benghazi Handicap's "Gaming the Desert War" is in force.

Duration of battle: 1030 to 1800 (15 Turns)

Number of players: 2 - 4

Weather: overcast, with light rain falling

Visibility: 30" (spotting ranges are halved)

At the end of each even numbered turn roll a D10. On a roll of 1-3 light rain turns to steady precipitation for the remainder of the game; visibility drops to 15" and spotting ranges are quartered. Flying operations are not possible during steady rain.

Battlefield

Anti-Tank Ditch: an anti-tank ditch stretches across the map between the sand dunes and salt marsh. Vehicles are prohibited from crossing the ditch. Personnel pay 1" to enter or exit the ditch.

Bridge: a weight class V bridge has been erected across the anti-tank ditch as shown on the map.

Road Block: a major road block has been erected blocking the northern exit from the bridge. It can be removed by an unpinned and unsuppressed engineer stand in 2 turns.

Salt Marsh: the area north west of the main road is covered with salt marsh. The entire area is impassable to vehicles and x2 movement for personnel.

Sand Dunes: sand dunes count as open blocking terrain and provide light (-1) cover. Personnel and tracked vehicles pay x2 movement, wheeled vehicles pay x4.

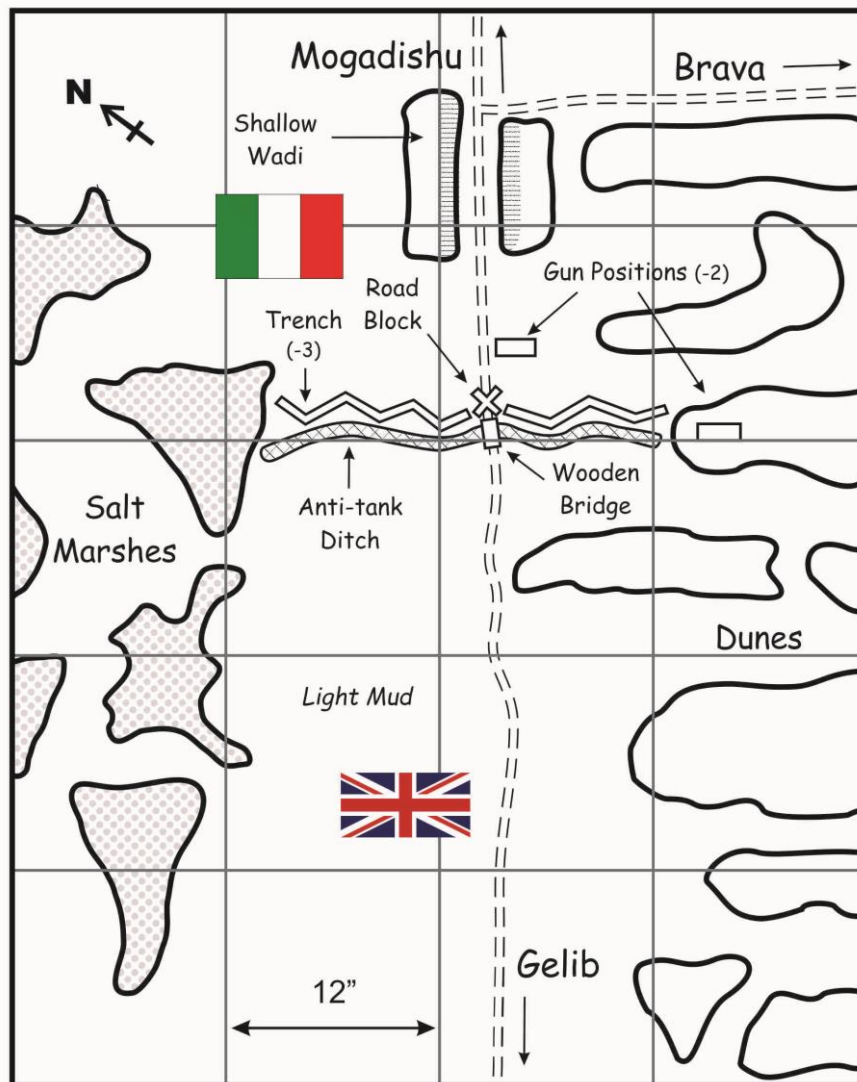
Roads: all roads are unsealed and in poor condition. They provide no benefit to movement and count as light mud (all stands pay x2 movement)

Muddy terrain: all clear terrain (i.e. areas not covered by dunes or salt marsh) count as light mud (all stands pay x2 movement).



Campaign

In our campaign it was not the Italian army that beat the South Africans but the weather. Taking too long to cross the lower Juba River meant that the rainy season was upon them, turning the unimproved roads of Italian Somaliland into rivers of mud. The Italian Commander used all means possible to get a few of his best troops in position to block the road to Mogadishu. This was enough to halt the South Africans and it would be late in 1941 before they could resume their attack towards Addis Abba.



	Condition
South African Victory	Exit at least 4 armoured vehicles or truck-borne infantry stands from the north east road exit by the end of the game.
Draw	If South Africans exit less than 4 stands from the north eastern road exit.
Italian Victory	Stop any enemy stands exiting the north east road exit by the end of the game.



British Army

Mission: Attack

Exit at least 4 stands from the north east road exit towards Mogadishu

1st South African Division

Troop Quality: Regular

Morale: 8

Enter via the road from Gelib (Turn 1)

South African Motorcycle Battalion	
Battalion HQ	1 command stand & car
	1 recon motorcycle stand 1 pioneer stand 1 light truck 1 support stand 2 medium supply trucks
A Company with:	1 command motorcycle stand 2 recon motorcycle stands
B Company with:	1 command motorcycle stand 2 recon motorcycle stands

1 st South African Armoured Car Company	
	1 cmd. Marmon Herrington A/C 1 Marmon Herrington A/C

Arriving on road from Gelib (Turn 3)

5 th South African Brigade Headquarters	
Headquarters	1 command stand & car 1 staff radio truck
Mountain Gun Battery	1 command infantry stand 1 3.7" mountain howitzer and crew 2 light trucks
Support Company	1 command infantry stand 1 MMG stand 1 3" mortar (Bn. Gun) 3 light trucks
Anti-Tank Battery	1 37mm Bofors A/T stand (Bn. gun) 1 light truck

5 th South African Brigade, 2 Battalions each with	
Battalion HQ	1 command stand & car
Support Company	1 recon motorcycle stand 1 pioneer stand 1 light truck 1 support stand 2 medium supply trucks
4 Infantry Companies, each	1 command infantry stand 1 light truck 2 infantry stands 1 medium truck

South African Tank Company	
	1 command Light Tank Mk. III 1 Light Tank Mk. III

5 th South African Pioneer Company	
	1 command engineer stand 2 engineer stands Two medium trucks



Arriving on road from Gelib (Turn 5)

2 nd South African Armoured Car Company	
	1 cmd. Marmon Herrington A/C 2 Marmon Herrington A/C

2 nd South African Brigade Headquarters	
Headquarters	1 command stand & car 1 staff radio truck
Mountain Gun Battery	1 command infantry stand 1 3.7" mountain howitzer and crew 2 light trucks
Support Company	1 command infantry stand 1 MMG stand 1 3" mortar (Bn. Gun) 3 light trucks
Anti-Tank Battery	1 37mm Bofors A/T (Bn. gun) 1 light truck

2 nd South African Brigade, 1 Battalion	
Battalion HQ	1 command stand & car
Support Company	1 recon motorcycle stand 1 pioneer stand 1 light truck 1 support stand 2 medium supply trucks
4 Infantry Companies, each	1 command infantry stand 1 light truck 2 infantry stands 1 medium truck

Off-board Artillery:

General Support from Turn 4

South African Artillery Brigade (*Regular, Morale 8*)

1st Battery: (2 x 18pdr.)

2nd Battery: (2 x 18pdr.)

2nd Battery: (1 x 60pdr. Mk.1)

Ammunition depletion: Red 1.

Air support: (*one mission only*)

1st SAAF Bomber Sqn. (2 Fairy Battle bombers)
Regular, Morale 8

Fairy Battle Attack 1937 - - 1(5)1" (2)

Notes:

1. Troops available on Turn 1 start within 6" of the road entry point along the south western table edge.
2. Reinforcing units arrive mounted in transport vehicles at the south western road entry point.
3. Note that the South African Light Tank Company and 1st Armoured Car Company have losses from previous battles.
4. The South African Light Tank Mk III is the precursor to the more famous Light Tank Mk VI. Very similar in many ways but only armed with a single turret mounted .5" HMG.
5. In the 1st South African Division all types of weapons were critically short as shipments from Britain were cancelled after Dunkirk. Hence fewer support weapons are provided in the OB.



Italian Army

Mission: Defend

Prevent the South Africans exiting 4 stands off the north east road to Mogadishu

Troop Quality: Trained

Morale: 7

Deployed in the entrenchments (-3)

1 st Motorised Cavalry Regiment	
Regiment HQ	1 command stand 1 MMG stand
3 squadrons, each	1 command infantry stand 2 infantry stands

CCNN Engineer Company	
	1 command engineer stand 2 engineer stands

Troop Quality: Regular

Morale: 8

Deployed in the gun emplacements (-2)

Savoy Grenadier Anti-Tank Company	
	1 command infantry stand 2 47mm A/T stands

Rest of the force must be deployed more than 12" north east of the road block and within 6" of the road

Troop Quality: Regular

Morale: 8

2 nd Battalion, 2 nd Savoy Grenadier Regiment	
Battalion HQ	1 command stand
Support Company	2 MMG stands 1 45mm Brixia mortar stand
3 Infantry Companies, each	1 command infantry stand (integral A/T rifle) 2 infantry stands

Troop Quality: Trained

Morale: 7

Elements of East Africa Tank Regiment	
	1 command stand & car 2 CV 33 tankettes 1 Lancia Armoured Car

101 st Mortar Company	
	1 command infantry stand 2 81mm mortar stands

Troop Quality: Green

Morale: 6

3 rd Harar Anti-Aircraft Company	
	1 command infantry stand 3 AAMMG stands

Off-board Artillery:

General Support (Trained, Morale 8)

3rd Bn. E.A. Artillery Regt. (2x105/28 mm guns)

Ammunition depletion: Red 1.

Air support: (from Turn 4)

Army Co-Op Sqn. (1xRo.37) (*Experienced, Morale 8*)

Ro.37 Attack 1934 - - 1(5)1" (2)

Notes

1. The 1st Motorised Regiment, CCNN Engineer Company and Savoy Grenadier AT Company are in defensive positions at the start of the game.
2. Italian units start the game hidden as they are out of visibility of South African troops.
3. Italian Off Table Artillery and the 101st Mortar Company suffer from *Poor Doctrine*.