OPERATIONAL COMBAT SERIES

The OCS Starter Guide

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An Eager Newbie takes on *Reluctant Enemies*

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I have gamed for years, and I am enthusiastic about the *Operational Combat Series* ("*OCS"*). Having been humbled by my attempts at *DAK2*, *Tunisia* and *Sicily*, I am now determined to learn the *OCS* well. The system has many subtle aspects, and I will flag particular rules and system concepts as I proceed through my first *Reluctant Enemies* ("*RE"*) game. This article is meant to help people new to the system to get their bearings in walk-through style. We are playing with *OCS* v4.1 rules set and the *RE* game-specific rules, but none of the optional rules. Set up the game and follow along!

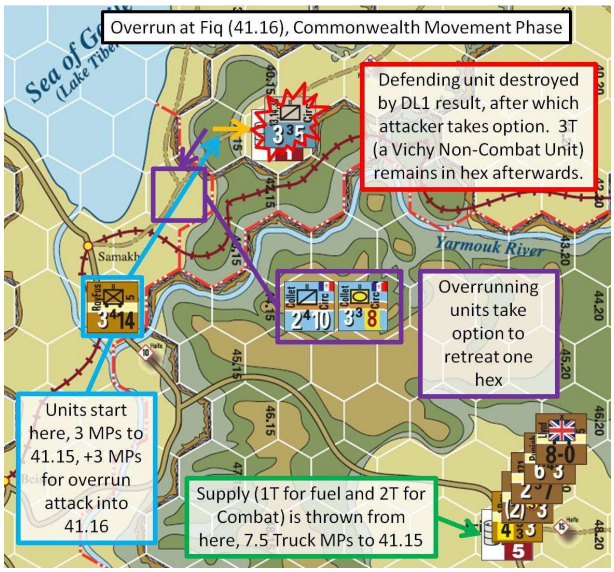
I am the Commonwealth ("CW") Player and my friend John has the Vichy forces. I note a landing hex for my commando units (*RE* Rule 2.2A), John sets up, and then I position my units (see Initial Unit Placement image on the last page). The Weather Phase does not pertain to *RE* per *RE* Rule 1.2 (the weather is always clear in this game, so flight will always be allowed). The Refit Phase is unnecessary this turn because each of my aircraft is active. I move on to the Reinforcement Phase. My roll of 10 (2d6) for supply gets me 3.5 Supply Points (SPs) per the Commonwealth Supply Table on the map. I place 1 SP in Amman (63.20) and 2.5 SPs in Haifa (37.01). I then roll for replacements. Consulting the Commonwealth Replacement Table indicates my roll (a 4 on 2d6) was short of a result, so no replacements this turn. My Naval Barrage Rolls (a 1 for DDs and a 6 for CLs, see the Naval Barrage Box) are successful only for the Cruisers unit, so I flip that unit to its available side (*RE* Rule 1.10B). Next in the sequence of play is the Mode Determination and Movement Phase.

Overrun at Fiq

My first move is to overrun the Vichy Circ cavalry unit at Fiq (41.16). This is an advanced Vichy unit, which could be a real thorn in my side if not dealt with. I will use the two Free French units that start in Tell Or (44.13). The Collet/Circ cavalry flips to its Move Mode side. This means its movement is doubled and combat strength halved compared to the Combat Mode side. This particular unit uses Leg Movement Points ("MPs"), indicated by the white-colored 10 MPs. I keep the Collet/Circ armor unit on its combat side. Only the armor unit requires fuel (its Movement Allowance ("MA") is red, indicating tracked movement) and the required 1Token, or ¼ of an SP, ("1T") comes from the Supply Dump in Irib, 48.19. The 5th Indian Brigade HQ, also in that hex, can throw supply 8 Truck MPs, which is plenty of range to make it to the armor unit. To conduct an Overrun, units must start the phase stacked together (*OCS* Rule 8.1). My units proceed to 41.15, (3 MPs total if they cut cross-country from 44.13 to 43.14 along the way), where they declare an Overrun for a cost of 3MPs (*OCS* Rules 8.1a and 8.1b, a total of 6 MPs so far).

At this point, we will follow the combat sequence in *OCS* Rule 9.2, so let's play it out in detail. My attacking hex is 41.15 and his defending hex is 41.16. I must spend 2T for Combat Supply (1T for each attacking step per *OCS* Rule 12.4), which can be thrown to the attacking units in 41.15 from the 5th Indian Brigade HQ. The defender is sitting on a Supply Dump and so takes its 1T from there. Combat Supply for a defender costs a standard 2T, but only 1T if the defending units are 1 RE or less, per *OCS* Rule 12.4.

I select my Cavalry unit to supply its Action Rating ("AR") of 4 for the combat. He has only the one unit, which has an AR of 3. John determines the terrain choice (not much to choose from, since hex and hexside are considered clear terrain). My armor unit is 2x when attacking in open terrain (see the Terrain Effects Chart "TEC" in the lower left corner of the *RE* map), so I have 8 Combat Strength and he has 3, yielding odds of 3:1 using the *OCS* "rounding rule" (*OCS* Rule 4.1). We determine the Die Roll Modifier ("DRM") to be +1 (attacker lead unit AR of 4 less defender AR of 3), and then I roll dice for surprise. Per the "Play Hint" in *OCS* Rule 9.8, we normally roll three dice at once, with one die a unique color to designate the possible column shift (third die). I roll a 4, 4, 2. The first two dice (4+4) are 8, modified by the DRM (+1) to a 9—and I barely get surprise per the Surprise Table, with a two column right shift (third die=2) on the Combat Table ("CRT"). Clear Terrain is considered "Open" on the TEC, meaning we find the odds column by looking on the Open row of the CRT. Two shifts moves the nominal 3:1 odds to the 5:1 column. I roll two dice for the attack and get 6, modified to 7. The result is an Ao1/DL1o1 (Combat results are covered in *OCS* Rule 9.10). John doesn't have a choice—the capital DL1 means that first the defender must lose a step, which eliminates the lone defending unit. Next the option results are considered, always starting with the attacker. I have one "option" (Ao1)—I can either lose a step from my lead unit (which would eliminate it) or I can retreat all my attacking units a hex and end their movement. The attacker takes options before the defender—even though the defender has been eliminated, I still must take the option. I elect to retreat a hex to 42.14 (remember that I have not yet moved into the hex being overrun). The defender option (Do1) happens after the attacker, but is ignored here because the defender has no remaining units. Had the Combat result been Ao1/Do1 he could have ignored his option had I retreated, but if I had taken that option as a loss, then he would have been forced to take his option and either lose a step or retreat. As it is, I have cleared away the unit but have not captured the hex, so the 3T of supply sitting in the empty hex is still Vichy (in fact, it is considered a Vichy non-combat unit, per *OCS* Rule 3.3).



Planning Goes a Long Way in OCS

"In preparing for battle, I have found that planning is essential, but plans are useless." --Dwight D. Eisenhower

> ***Newbie Note: Jumping into an Overrun was excellent fun, but "winging it" in an* OCS *campaign is a fast-pass to fiasco.* Reluctant Enemies *features a single map, evenly-matched forces and low counter density which make it a good learning game for the system. Some* OCS *things you won't see in this game: hip shoots, air transport, naval transport (other than the Commando landings), multi-step units or supply extension capability. But that doesn't change the imperative to plan carefully.***

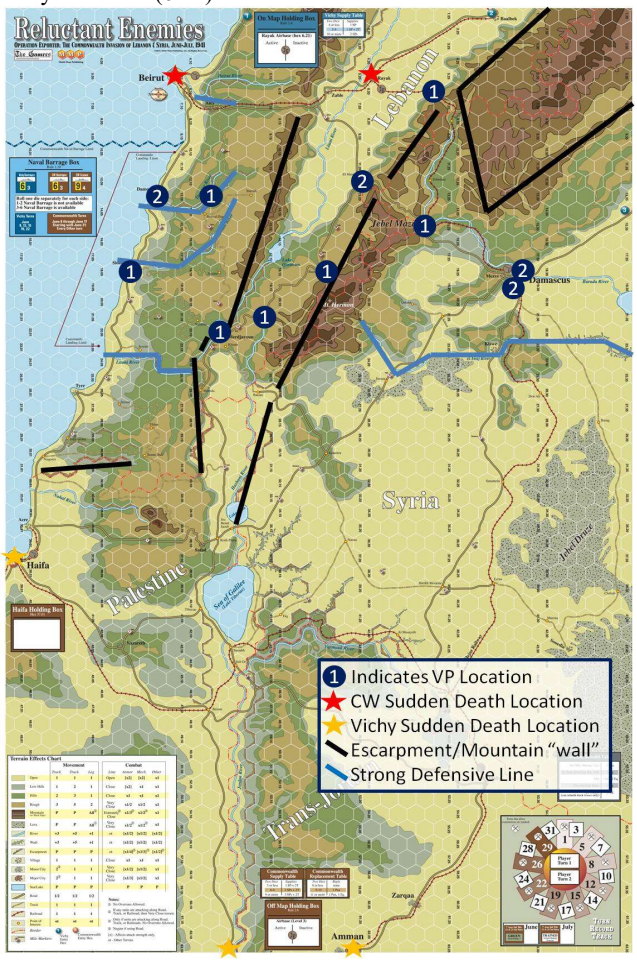
Let's have a look at the map. Locate hex 31.11. See the white gray and brown layered-looking hexside terrain feature on the eastern three sides of the hex? That is Escarpment, and it is completely impassible to military units. It forms a wall that extends from 31.11 to 15.16 when you include Lake Qaraoun (17.16). The mountain terrain extends to the north except for one pass near the town of Zahle (6.18). There are two breaks in the escarpment wall, at 24.11 where a trail winds to the northwest and at Merdjayoun (22.12) where there is a river and some hilly terrain. There is a second wall to the east, extending from Lake Hula (34.13) north to where the road crosses it at 26.15, and then the mountain terrain of Mt. Hermon to the north comes into play. Mountain terrain and Lava (gravel-like stuff such as hex 25.20) block Track and Truck movement, except at roads, and cost a Leg unit all its MPs. The "walls" in this game are indicated with black lines on the nearby illustration, and they channel military movement along three axes of advance as described in the Player Notes in the *RE* Rulebook.

The Commonwealth Player can win by a "sudden death" victory through capture of either Beirut (5.10) or Rayak Airbase (6.21). These are at the north end of the board. Failing that, the game hinges on the capture of victory point hexes. It takes 10 points to secure a marginal win for the Commonwealth in the Campaign Game (*RE* Rule 5.1 and see the Victory by VPs Determination Table), forcing him to make substantial progress into very difficult terrain. The Vichy Player can win by holding on to terrain, or by capturing "sudden death" objectives of his own: Haifa (37.01), Amman (63.20) or the entry hex B at 63.13. Those locations seem safely behind Commonwealth lines, but a Vichy armored car unit can zoom from near Beirut all the way to Haifa in one turn, and reach the south edge in a double turn if it gets an open road.

The forces seem evenly matched. The Vichy player has 43 steps of Combat Units on the board to begin with, and seven more arrive as reinforcements plus a sole Pax Replacement. Nine of the Vichy steps are '4' AR units, including two armor battalions that each have a Combat Mode strength of 8. Those two armor units are the biggest brutes on the board! Twelve of the Vichy steps are AR '1' and '2' (not counting artillery, which are all AR '2'). The Commonwealth Player begins the campaign with 36 steps of Combat Units, reinforced by 19 steps by turn 6 and four more each on turns 10 and 19. These last two sets of reinforcements include six AR '4' units. There are 8 AR '4' units to start with, and one of the commando units is a '5'. Six battalions of Australian troops are rated '4' but are considered green (-1 to their AR for the month of June, until Turn 14). A total of 10 non-artillery units are AR '1' or '2'. The CW player will ultimately have 5 HQ units to the Vichy's three.

The Commonwealth player has two big advantages to compensate for the burden of attack. His units are nearly all truck-mobile versus just a few of the Vichy forces, giving a distinct mobility edge (at a cost in supply!). He can rapidly "shift fields" or concentrate his artillery. Also, the CW player rolls for replacements, and can count on an average of 6-7 replacement steps during a campaign game. This means that he will have approximately 70 total steps to the Vichy 51 and can afford a 1-1 loss ratio.

Well, I need a plan. The historical article included with *Reluctant Enemies* is very well researched and gives a detailed overview. I sketch out something similar to the original CW campaign. In Lebanon, I want to get a bridgehead across the Litani River (near 24.06) on Turn 1, and then capture Merdjayoun (22.12). After that I expect to pound my way up the coast, but still be able to threaten a sudden push up the Bekaa valley to Rayak airbase (6.21).



In Syria my initial objectives are to clear out his forward forces from Kuneitra (30.18) to Sheikh Meskine (39.25) and Ezraa (39.28). This will cut off supply to the considerable Vichy force at Souedia (43.32) and Chabah (39.35). Then I plan to advance to the Kiswe (23.28) area where I expect John to have a sturdy defense ready. I have played John a few times—he is very organized and likes to unveil unexpected and unpleasant counterattacks using units lurking beneath innocent-looking stacks.

Look at the map one more time to understand the supply net—stick with me here, because this drives the campaign. CW Supply Sources are the hexes marked A, B, and C (*RE* Rule 2.1A). Note how hexes A (Haifa) and C (Amman) are also rail hexes. Vichy Supply Sources are the hexes marked 1, 2, and 3 (*RE* Rule 3.3A). Hex 2 (Baalbek) is the only one with a rail connection. The rail net is the critical supply backbone in most *OCS* games, but in *Reluctant Enemies* you can also use Roads for Trace Supply (*RE* Rule 1.7B). The mechanics of supply are explained later in this article.

Here are some examples of thinking through your supply situation. The Vichy HQ's start the game positioned in Beirut and Damascus. The Verdilhac Corps HQ has a Throw Range of 12 Truck MPs when in Combat Mode. From Beirut (5.10) to hex 28.04 is exactly 12 Truck MPs, and the Goums Troop of the 8th Algerian is one hex farther on. Fortunately, adjacent is good enough for supply (*OCS* Rule 12.3c), even across impassible terrain like escarpment. The Goums could "make their Trace Supply" either by being within the throw range of this

HQ, or by being within 5 Truck MP's of the road. They could even make it by "eating off the map" (*OCS* Rule 12.6c) from the Supply Dump in hex 26.04. Being in supply is important in the *OCS*. Supply status is checked each Player Turn during the Supply Phase. Combat units found out of supply ("OoS") are marked as such and remain OoS until their next Supply Phase when the supply status is checked again. OoS Units are ½ combat strength and have no ZOC, but can move normally (*OCS* Rule 12.8d). In addition, and most importantly, OoS Units must check for attrition by rolling on the Attrition Table. The Goums have a 3 AR, and would be eliminated if they roll more than a 5 with two dice, a 72% likelihood. Combat Supply or Fuel Supply must either be thrown from an HQ or come by "Direct Draw" from a Supply Dump (5 Truck MP's from the unit to the Dump or to a hex adjacent to the Dump. Remember, "adjacent is good enough" for supply in the OCS. Again, the Goums are fine (within Throw Range of the HQ, sitting on trace supply by being on the road and Direct Draw range of the Supply Dump)—fine, that is, until the Commonwealth Player does something about it.

Newbie Note: Notice I have been emphasizing <u>TRUCK MPs</u> when talking supply! Just as Truck MP units must stop upon entering an Enemy ZOC that isn't negated, Supply Trace and Throw are blocked as well. There are HQs in other* OCS *games which have Throw Range printed in Leg MPs, and their Trace and Throw are not blocked by Enemy ZOC's. All the HQs in* Reluctant Enemies *use Truck MPs.

The Verdilhac HQ can throw from Beirut (5.10) as far as hex 19.16 along the road to Merdjayoun. The Vichy units positioned in Merdjayoun are fine for Trace Supply because of the road and they have a 3 SP Dump to meet their Combat Supply needs (only the Artillery unit needs fuel and only if it travels in Move Mode). If cut off, however, they will need to eat off the map. HQ's can move, of course, but usually will not do so until there is a specific need to reposition the supply net or provide an Engineering function at a specific location (bridging a river or building an Air Base, for example).

None of the units in southern Syria are within throw range of an HQ. The 13, 14, 36 Circassian Cavalry that I overran at 41.16 had been sitting adjacent to the rail line, but it could not have drawn Trace Supply from it, because the nearest "Detrainable Hex" is at Al Massayrib (42.22; and *OCS* Rule 13.3c defines Detrainable Hexes). It had that 1 SP Dump from which to eat off the map. The stack of units at Souedia (43.32) is just within Trace Supply because 5 Truck MPs reach a hex adjacent to the Detrainable Hex at Ezraa (39.28), but the units over at Chabah (39.35) can only eat off the map from the Supply Dump at Souedia. If the Commonwealth Player takes Ezraa, all the Souedia and Chabah units must eat off the map or be marked OoS and roll for attrition. Eating off the map allows you to feed 2 RE's of units for 1T of supply per turn (*OCS* Rule 12.6c), so if cut off the six units at Souedia and Chabah, each of whom is 1/2 RE in size, would consume the 3.5 SPs in the Dump in 7 turns. The Vichy player will need to decide if they remain in place to threaten the Commonwealth advance to Damascus or if they withdraw to assist in the city's defense (and since most are Leg movement units, they will take a few turns to get there).

The Commonwealth Player isn't so stretched out, at least at the start. His Corps HQ in Nazareth (43.07) can throw as far as adjacent to the Litani River. The 7th Australian HQ in Safad (36.11) can throw past Merdjayoun—but only as far as adjacent to Tibine (28.08) in the Lebanese hills. The 5th Indian Brigade HQ in Irib (48.19) can barely throw past Deraa. As he advances, the CW Player will need to extend his network. The Corps HQ could move to 36.09, for example, draw supply from Haifa (37.01) and throw it as far as 18.17. Positioned in 28.04, it could draw from Haifa and can throw all the way to Beirut—along the road, anyway. The advance on Damascus must be supplied up the road/railroad from Amman or up the road from Safad. And moving the SPs to Supply Dumps where they can be drawn from is also part of the challenge! While HQs can throw supply for immediate consumption (for fuel and combat), physically transporting Supply Points around the map requires Transport. The CW player has a Rail Cap of 1 (meaning he can move 1 SP along the rail line) and enough trucks to haul 1 SP, so planning how the supply network moves with the offensive is crucial. Vichy Forces have more Lift Capacity (1 SP worth of trucks, another 1 SP of wagons, and a Rail Cap of 1.5), plus they are defending.

Newbie Note: Whew! Got all that? This game system gives real insight into why they say, "Amateurs study tactics; professionals study logistics." Learn to build your supply network, manage its mechanics, and then how to move it forward as you advance—while disrupting your opponent's network at the same time. The time spent planning will really pay off. I will need to reposition HQs and move up supply dumps I can use in the turns ahead.

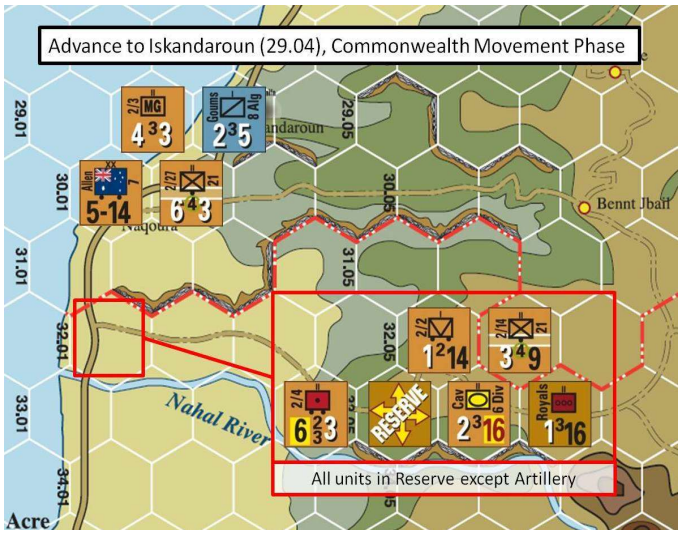
Australian soldiers at the "Mad Mile" section of road near Jezzine (hex 18.12). The road was accurately ranged by Vichy French artillery and mortars. William Dargie's painting gives an idea of the rugged nature of the terrain in this campaign (©Australian War Memorial).

Newbie Note: Motorized units burn a lot of gas! In many* OCS *games, HQs can fuel groups of units until your next Clean-Up Phase for 1 SP. With* RE *Rule 1.5, you must pay 1T per Track/Truck unit to expend Movement Points <u>in each movement segment</u> (movement, reaction or exploit phases). Units don't need fuel supply to attack, defend, barrage, advance after combat or retreat—those activities happen in non-movement segments.* RE *Optional Rule 4.2 covers how HQs can fuel specific brigades more efficiently if you wish to use it.

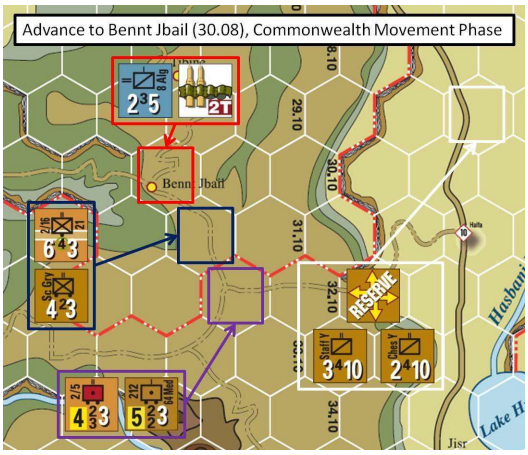
<u>Movement to Contact, on the Coast and to the Mountain Valley</u>

<u>Iskandaroun</u> - I have a tall stack that starts in 32.02. They need to clear the Vichy unit at Iskandaroun (29.04), advance to and cross the bridge at the Litani River (23.07), and prevent any Vichy units from slipping through to gain a sudden death victory by taking Haifa. I think my options are: A) Overrun 29.04 right off the bat or, B) attack it during the Combat Phase, keeping a Reserve stack to move and fight in the Exploitation Phase.

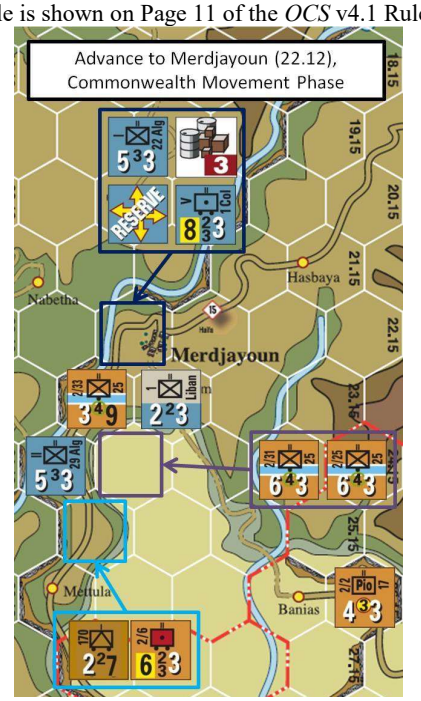
The Overrun seems risky to me, so I go for option B. I send the Sadeh unit to garrison Haifa. The 2/27 Infantry moves to 30.03 and the 2/3 MG to 29.03, both in Combat Mode, ready to attack John's cavalry at 29.04. The 2/2 AT, 2/14 Infantry, Royals Armored Car and Cav Armor all flip to their Move side and enter Reserve Mode in the starting hex, 32.02 by placing one of my two Reserve Markers. (If they expend MPs they must pay fuel costs, per *OCS* Rule 12.5a, which I don't want to do). The 2/4 Artillery also stays put in 32.02.



Bennt Jbail – Six units start within 2 hexes of 32.09. I want to clear the Vichy Cavalry unit out of Bennt Jbail (30.08) and position my cavalry as an exploit stack. The two artillery units sit tight in 32.09. The 2/16 and Scots Greys (Sc Gry) Infantry battalions both start in 32.09, remain in Combat Mode, and move to 31.09 to attack Bennt Jbail (30.08). My two Cavalry units (Staff Y and Ches Y) start in hex 32.11. I place them on their Move Mode sides, put them in Reserve with my other marker, and move them 2.5 of their 10 MPs up to 29.13. (Units entering Reserve can move ¼ of their MA during this Segment, per *OCS* Rule 5.7a.)



Merdjayoun – Now have a look at the area around Merdjayoun (22.12). Initially, I focused on the Vichy II/29Alg Infantry Battalion in 24.11. It is the furthest advanced, but it has a 5 Combat Strength, a 3 AR, and is in Rough Terrain (Very Close line on the Combat Table). The Vichy trace supply road into Merdjayoun is behind a much weaker unit, the 1/Liban Infantry battalion in Khiam (23.13). If I can maneuver in that direction I might be able to put him out of trace supply. First I must secure the east flank. I move the 2/3 Infantry Battalion from Safad (36.11) in Combat Mode to Jisr Bennt Jacub (35.13). This blocks the highway coming down from Damascus, what my Army instructors used to call a "high speed avenue of approach." The 2/5 Infantry Battalion that also starts in Safad enters Move Mode and advances as far as it can up the road to 29.13. Then I deploy the units that start within two hexes of 27.13 (inside Palestine). First, I move the 2/2 Pioneer Battalion, which starts in 27.14 across the river to (26.15). This is to block the road from Kuneitra (30.18) in the Golan Heights. I start the other units for this area in 27.12. The 170 AA Company stays in Combat Mode, fuels for 1T thrown to it by the 7th Division HQ in Safad and moves up to 25.12. It is joined by the 2/6 Artillery Battalion, which stays on its leg move side (no fuel necessary). The 2/31and 2/25 Infantry stay in Combat Mode and advance to 24.12. The 2/33 Infantry flips to Move Mode, fuels for 1T thrown from the 7th Division HQ, and advances to 23.12 passing through the now-negated EZOC at 24.12 (a technique called "Laying a Carpet" – another example is shown on Page 11 of the *OCS* v4.1 Rules).



Newbie Note: Learn to get creative with Reserve Markers. Reserves are "future activity options" and you can use them in several ways:

<u>"Defensive" Reserves</u> – Have a high AR unit in reserve to move in the Reaction Phase into an important hex where the enemy has disorganized ("DGd") your defenders. This adds combat strength and, most importantly, the fresh AR. They are often placed in reserve with artillery, who can both move AND barrage when released (it took me a long time to get used to that). You can also overrun enemy units.

<u>"Offensive" Reserves</u> – Plan ahead to have available in your Exploitation Phase a second, follow-on strike force for important operations after the combat phase. The Exploitation Phase allows for movement, barrage, and combat with reserves. This takes planning and supply accumulation.

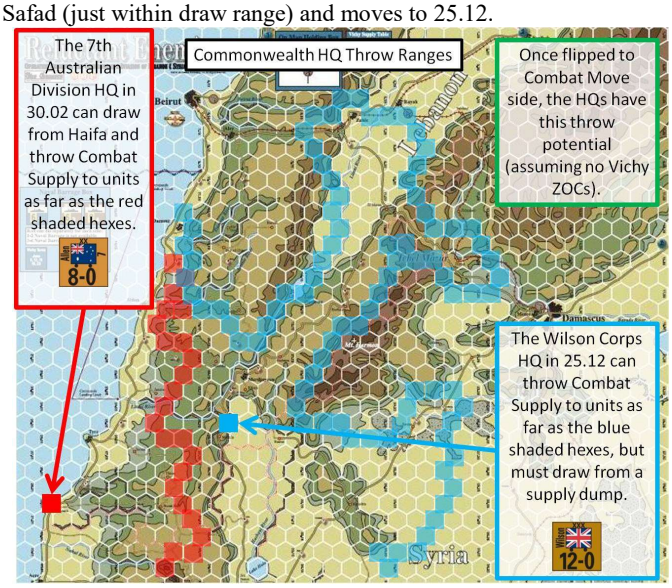
<u>"Movement" Reserves</u> – Allows you to get the most movement for the supply cost when necessary. Use the ¼ movement allowed in the movement phase, OCS Rule 5.7a, and then you still get full movement allowed during exploit, which means you get 1.25 times their movement allowance without using Strategic Movement.
Think ahead! You have a limited number of Reserve markers, and Reserve units must be in the same hex. Plan how to have them end the previous Player-Turn already stacked to avoid any fueling costs to assemble them and so they are eligible to conduct overrun.

<u>Fiq Again</u> – Now that Fiq (41.16) is clear, I want to capture the Supply Dump. I flip the Roy Fus Battalion in 44.13 to its Move Mode side, gas it up from the 5th Indian Brigade HQ (which throws from the dump in its hex) and motor up to 41.16. The 3T of supply sitting in 41.16 is a Vichy Non-Combat Unit, and I must use an Attack-Capable Unit to enter the hex (*OCS* Rule 4.4c). Upon entering I roll on the Capture Table (*OCS*

Rule 9.14b). I roll a 5, giving me 50% of the 3T, or a total of 2T (50% means I capture 1.5T, and round it up per *OCS* Rule 4.2 –the remaining 1T is destroyed). That will come in handy when I wish to move the Free French again. My Roy Fus Battalion expended 4 MPs to get to Fiq and now it doubles back, having enough MPs to reach 48.20. Had it continued to the east, the unit would not be able to make its Trace during the Supply Phase to the same supply source as all the other units of the 5th Brigade multi-unit formation (*OCS* Rule 12.6f).

Supply – I have 4T of trucks. I start 2T in Irib (48.19) loaded with supply (SPs that set up in the same hex as Transport Points may begin a game loaded or unloaded, per OCS Set Up Note C, rulebook page 3). They drive to the dump at 50.26 (7 MPs), unload the 2T (10% of their MA or 5 MP per *OCS* Rule 13.2f, and note in the same rule that Transport Points may only unload in certain hexes), then drive back to Irib (6 MPs back) and load 2T more (5 MPs to load). They repeat this process and end their move in Irib, having shuttled 1 SP over to 50.26. The other 2T of trucks starts in Haifa (37.01). 1T of trucks drives to Fiq, 41.16 (13 MPs), picks up 1T of supply (5 MPs), drives to Safad 36.11, (8.5 MPs), unloads (5 MPs), and returns to Haifa (7 MPs). I could move another 1T, but don't want to draw down my supply dump in Haifa. There is 1T of supply remaining in 41.16 to fuel the Circ tank unit next turn. The last 1T truck unit shuttles 1T over to Safad. I use my 1 RE Railcap to ship the 1 SP that I brought on the map at Amman up to Mafra (52.27), which is the nearest Detrainable Hex to Deraa. I could get some additional mileage out of my Transport Points, but it's unwise to leave them alone in a hex.

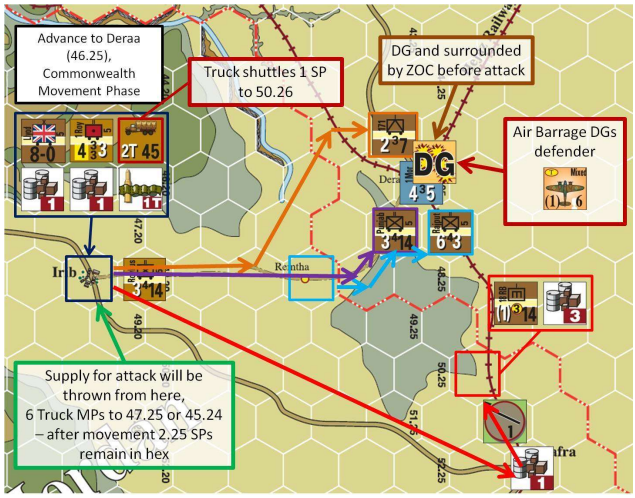
I don't want to move HQ units more than necessary, but still need to advance them. The Allen 7th Division HQ in Safad (36.11) flips to Move Mode, fuels from the dump in the same hex and moves to 30.02. (Hex 28.04 would be better—as far forward as it could be and still draw from Haifa but, there is that Vichy unit in the way!) The Wilson Corps HQ in Nazareth (43.07) also flips to Move Mode, fuels from Safad (just within draw range) and moves to 25.12.



Newbie Note: The CW Player's challenge is to get supply where it can be can used, which will only get harder as I advance north. I didn't want to stack the 7th Division HQ with an attacking unit in case there is a retreat and the HQ is left alone. Once I flip them to Combat Mode side, the HQ Throw Range is shown in the nearby diagram.

Air – I base transfer my fighter unit up to 37.02, where it stays active (*OCS* Rule 14.11). I considered the benefit of projecting a Patrol Zone ("PZ") over my units near the coast against the cost in on-map Supply Points to keep the fighter active and opt for a PZ.

Deraa – The 1 Mor Cavalry at Deraa is my next target. The Rajput Battalion of the 5 Indian Brigade in Remtha (48.23) stays in Combat Mode and moves up the trail to 47.25 and then east to 47.26 (total 3 Leg MPs). Leg and Track movement units do not have to halt upon entering an enemy ZOC (*OCS* Rule 4.5a). Had my unit been on its Move Mode side and using Truck movement, it would have had to halt at 47.25 unless the ZOC was negated by a friendly unit already in that hex.



The 171 AA Company stays on its Combat Mode side, fuels up (1T from the Dump in the same hex), moves east along the track to 48.22, then cross country up to 45.24 and finally east to 45.25. The Punjab Battalion flips to Move Mode, fuels (1T from the Dump in the same hex), and moves along the track to 47.25 where it must halt (Truck movement units stop upon entering an un-negated Enemy Zone of Control). Now I have Deraa surrounded with ZOC and 11 Combat Strength. I considered putting the Punjab Battalion in Reserve Mode on its Move side as it would be able to reach Ezraa if I eliminate the Vichy unit. But, I only have two Reserve markers and need them elsewhere. I leave the 5th Indian Brigade HQ and the artillery unit in their starting hexes—I will need to reposition these, but decide to wait until Deraa is clear. I flip the 18 RB Engineer Company to Move Mode, gas it up (1T) and motor over to 50.26 where a 3 SP dump sits alone in the hex.

Newbie Note: Ignoring rear area security in* OCS *encourages your opponent to cause havoc and unpleasantness. I moved the Engineers to garrison the supply dump, but later realized that the Vichy player is prohibited from entering Trans-Jordan during the first two turns per* RE *Rule 3.1B.

Air/Naval Barrage – This is the last Segment in the Commonwealth Movement Phase. In most *OCS* games aircraft range is a factor, but in *RE* each aircraft can reach every part of the board. I just pick up my Mixed bomber unit, bring it up to Deraa, and attack. There are no Vichy fighters projecting a PZ over the target (PZ's extend 10 hexes from an Air Base with an active fighter per *OCS* Rule 14.4c) so there is no interception to contend with (*OCS* Rule 14.5). I do have to roll for Flak (2D6), and my 9 roll means no effect. (A hit, with a roll of 11-12, would have killed one step of my bomber unit. Air Units have two steps represented by a full-strength and reduced-strength side.) An Air Barrage is treated the same way as artillery except that it doesn't use any supply. This unit has a Barrage Strength of 6, so the barrage will start on the 5-7 column on the Barrage Table. The target hex has 1 RE or less (1 battalion = 1/2 RE), so I have 1 left shift for Density. The hex is in clear terrain (no shift) and is spotted (no shift--the unspotted penalty is a 3 column left shift, which is best to avoid!) I slide down to the 3-4 Barrage Strength column and drill it with a 9 roll (2d6) for a DG result! This DGs

the 1 Mor Cavalry troop, causing it to enter an "involuntary" mode called "DG" or Disorganized Mode (*OCS* Rule 5.10). The counter is still oriented on its "Combat" side, but its **actual Mode is now DG**. DG Mode effects provide that Combat, Movement and Barrage values are halved, and AR is reduced by one (*OCS* Rule 5.10b).

> ***Newbie Note: DG'ing the defender is the preferred preparation for an attack. Had I rolled a 12, I would have gotten a '1/2' result with potential to kill the defending unit, but the main objective of Barrage is to obtain the DG. Results that actually eliminate steps are great, but regard them as a rare bonus.***

Naval Barrage – The *OCS* has a fairly involved Naval subsystem (*OCS* Rule 18.0), which has been abstracted in *RE* to the Commando Landings rule (*RE* rule 2.2) and the Naval Barrage rule (*RE* rule 1.10). My active ships can bombard in this Segment any hex within range of an all-sea hex. Naval Barrage in *RE* is exempt from the adverse 3 column left shift for no spotter (*RE* Rule 1.10B). If you have ships available, just plop them down and open fire. I place my Cruiser unit in 23.05 and train the guns on the II/22 Alg Infantry Battalion in 23.07, which is defending the important Litani River line. The Cruiser's 9 Barrage Strength starts on the 8-11 column, but is moved one to the left for low density (1 RE or less, where 1 battalion = ½ RE), resolving on the 5-7 column. I have some hot dice this game, rolling a 10 (2d6) for a DG. I return the Cruiser unit to the Naval Barrage Box with its 'Fired' side facing up.

My last activity in the Mode Determination and Movement Phase is the Commando Landings (*RE* Rule 2.2A). I roll one die and get a 6, which means my Commandos don't land until the end of the Movement Segment of the Exploitation Phase.

Supply Phase – I verify that each of my units is in Trace Supply.

Vichy Reaction Phase Now we go to my opponent for the Reaction Phase (*OCS* Rule 7.0). This consists of a Movement Segment in which his released reserves can move with 50% of their MA (*OCS* Rule 5.7b), followed by a Barrage Segment. There is NOT a Combat Segment in Reaction; the only ground combat comes from Overruns. John's hands are tied in *RE*—some Vichy units are restricted the first two turns (*RE* Rule 3.1A) or are unable to set up in Reserve Mode (as per the Vichy Set Up Card).

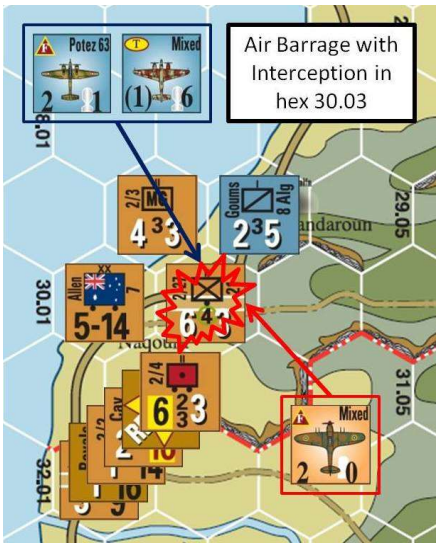
Reaction Movement – One reserve stack contains the two units in Merdjayoun (22.12). The I/22 Alg Infantry Battalion is on its Combat Mode Side, and with its MA halved to 1.5 it doesn't have enough to overrun my unit in 23.12. (*OCS* Rule 8.1a says you need 3 MPs to Overrun and he has 1.5. Even though his unit starts adjacent to mine, *OCS* Rule 6.1c says that the "you can always move 1 hex" doesn't apply to Overruns). The I/22 Alg unit just comes out of Reserve Mode and sits tight. If it remains in Reserve Mode its Combat Strength would be halved should I attack it (*OCS* Rule 5.7)

Next, two cavalry units on their Move Mode sides emerge from Beirut (5.10). They move south along the coast road, the Liban Cav dropping off in Damour (13.09) (where it joins the I&II/ 1 Col Artillery unit) and the 4 Tun going to 15.09. Finally, the I/6 Lgn infantry fuels with 1T from Beiruit, leaves Zahle (6.18) and moves towards Merdjayoun, halting in 18.17. John is allowed to move only one of his Restricted units this turn—the I/6 Lgn infantry is evidently the one.

Fighter Sweep – His final move is a Fighter Sweep (*OCS* Rule 14.6) against 37.02 with his Fighter based in Rayak. His fighter has a 3 Air Combat rating to my 2, giving him a +1 die roll modifier. Air Combat is covered in *OCS* Rule 14.3. The roll is a 2, 2, 2, which aborts his fighter with no loss—it moves back to Rayak and becomes inactive, being placed under the airbase counter. My fighter stays active. Fighter Sweeps can take place in any Movement Phase (*OCS* Rule 14.1g) including the Movement Segment of a Reaction or Exploitation Phase.

Barrage Segment – John now lets loose his Barrages. The Artillery unit in Merdjayoun comes out of Reserve and conducts a Barrage against 24.12. He has an 8 strength barrage, which is shifted down to the 5-7 column—it is spotted, but has 1 shift left (for Density as there is 1RE or less in the target hex, 2 battalions x ½ RE = 1RE). It costs 2T for the Barrage, which is paid out of the Dump in Merdjayoun. John rolls 6 for a miss (2d6).

Air Barrage with Interception – Next is an Air Barrage mission against the 2/27 infantry battalion in 30.03 with his bomber unit from Rayak escorted by his fighter unit from Mezze. The target hex is within the Patrol Range of my fighter in 37.02 and I decide to intercept. As the Interceptor, I am the Attacker. I select my only unit and John selects his fighter. Both units have an air combat rating of 2 so there is no die roll modifier. I roll a 5, 5, 6. The Vichy fighter must abort and because the loss die roll was a 6 it must also take a step loss. It flips over, returns to Mezze, and goes inactive beneath the Air Strip marker. Now I move on to intercept the bomber, whose Air Combat Rating is (1) so I have a +1 on the roll. This time the roll is 3, 2, 3. The modified roll is 6 (3+2=5 +1 for the air ratings modifier). Because the result is less than 7 my fighter must abort but does not lose a step as the loss roll was not a 5 or 6. Per *OCS* Rule 14.5 it must return inactive to the same airfield it came from, so I place it "under" the Air Base marker in 37.02.



Air Barrage missions are always subject to Flak, so I roll flak against the bomber (*OCS* Rule 14.4). A modified 11 or higher would cause a step loss (but the reduced bomber unit could still complete the Barrage). Note the modifiers: flying unescorted bombers into a Patrol Zone carries a +2 penalty! In this case the Patrol Zone no longer exists because my intercepting fighter was aborted back to its Air Base and rendered inactive, so there is no DRM. John rolls a 7 (2d6) and the flak is ineffective. The bomber's Barrage Strength is 6 so we start on the 5-7 column. There is 1 shift left for low density and 1 shift left for Close terrain so we end up on the 2 column. The roll is 6 (2d6), and the Barrage misses. The bomber returns to Rayak and goes inactive.

> ***Newbie Note: Neither Air nor Naval Barrages require Supply. Another target for his Air Barrage would have been my Reserve stack in 30.02 (but this barrage would have had a -3 column left shift for not being spotted). DG'ing my Reserve stack would remove the Reserve Marker and replace it with a DG marker, which is a particularly nasty trick. Naval Barrages in* RE *don't have the -3 unspotted shift, so Reserve stacks are a prime target!***

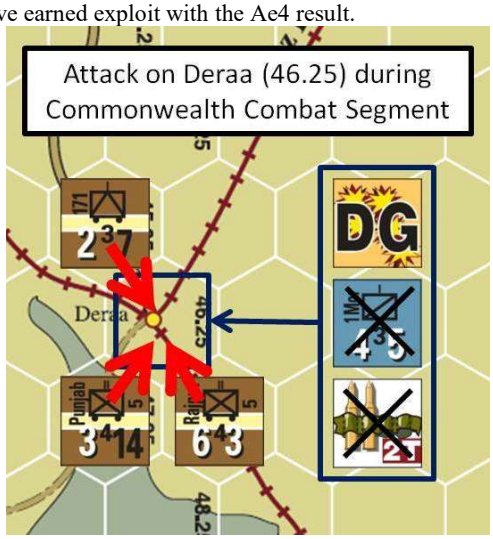
Combat Phase

"Artillery" Barrage Segment

John hands the dice back to me for my Combat Phase, the first Segment of which is Artillery Barrage (not Air or Naval Barrages, which take place at the end of the Movement Phase). I consider two possible 6 strength barrages, one on the Vichy Goums Cavalry at Iskandaroun (29.04) and the other against the 1/Liban Infantry at Khiam (23.13). However, each barrage would have two left column shifts (one for low density, the other for terrain). I would need a 10 or better on 2 dice, a 17% likelihood, so I don't conduct either barrage and save the supply. I decide that a barrage on the II/8Alg Cavalry at Bennt Jbail (30.08) is slightly better, as I have 9 Barrage Strength available in 32.09, which would need a die roll of 9 or better (28% likelihood). I go for it. A 9 Strength barrage costs 2T, which I can direct draw from Safad (36.11). It's spotted but again there are 2 left shifts, one for density and one for terrain, so I resolve on the 3-4 column. My roll of 9 (2d6) is just enough for a DG. I move on to the Combat Segment.

Combat Segment

Deraa (46.25): I have three units in three hexes attacking Deraa. This requires 3T in Combat Supply, thrown to them by the 5th Indian HQ from the Dump in 48.19. John uses 1T from the dump in the same hex as the defender for his combat supply. I lead with the Punjab battalion to use its '4' AR. The Vichy unit has an AR of 3, which is reduced to a 2 because of the DG, so the DRM is a +2. Initial odds are 11-2 or 6:1 (his Combat Strength is halved by the DG), which means we start on the 5:1 column for clear terrain (there is no 6:1 column for clear). I roll abominably for Surprise with a 2, 1, and 1. This is Defender surprise (3+2=5), fortunately with only 1 shift left, bringing the odds from 5:1 to 4:1. My combat roll of 9 roll modifies to 11, which resolves to an Ae4/DL1o2. The defender dies with the DL1 result and my '4' AR units could have earned exploit with the Ae4 result.

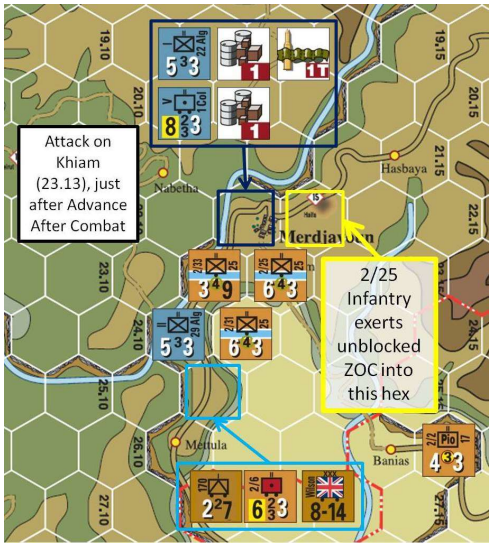


The Exploit 4 result can't happen in this case because A) there were three attacking hexes and B) two non-adjacent attacking hexes (*OCS* Rule 9.13b, either situation prohibits an Exploit result). But hey, the hex was taken without loss. I move my infantry units into Deraa with advance after combat. I try to capture the enemy supply, but roll a '1' on the Capture Table meaning the 1T remaining in his Dump is lost. I don't advance the AA unit—why move south when I don't have to?

Newbie Note: I can now use the entire rail line from Deraa (46.25) over to 43.14, even though I haven't "moved units through" the rail hexes, per* OCS *Rule 13.3h.

Khiam (23.13): I have 3 units in two hexes with a total strength of 15 attacking Khiam (23.13). My combat supply (3T) is provided via the Wilson Corps HQ at 25.12, which draws supply from Safad (36.11) and can throw forward to all attacking units. John's defending unit can use Direct Draw from Merdjayoun. His unit has an AR of 2 and I choose the 2/25 in 24.12 with an AR of 3 (these are some of the Australian troops considered "green" and therefore have -1 to their AR during June, per *RE* Rule 2.5). John chooses the rough terrain which is Very Close for the combat. We calculate the initial odds as 15:2 or 8:1, but the Very Close Terrain line only lets me get to the 6:1 column. The DRM is +1. My surprise roll is 6, 5, 4! With a 4 column attacker right shift we slide up to the 18:1 column. I roll an 8, modified to a 9, yielding an Ae4/DL1o2. John removes his defender on the DL1 result and I advance the 2/25 Infantry to take Khiam. I don't get any exploit as my units are all AR 3.

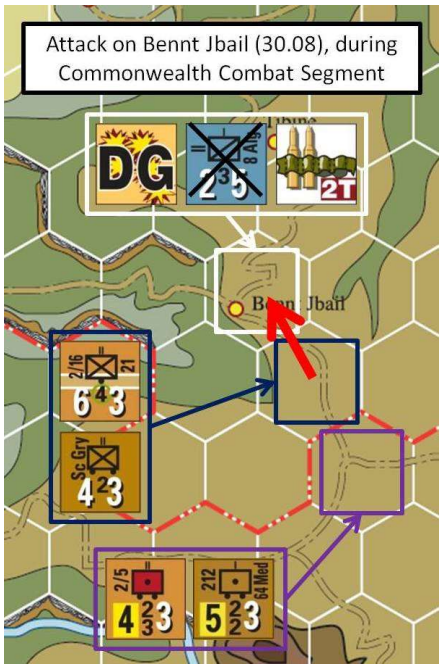
The next illustration shows the situation at Merdjayoun after the attack. Notice how I have a ZOC into 22.13 from my unit in 23.13, which puts all his units in the area out of Trace Supply at the moment (he could still "Eat off the Map" if necessary from the Dump in Merdjayoun during his Supply Phase). Most likely he will need to move a unit to 22.13 during his turn to negate my ZOC (*OCS* Rule 4.5b). His II/29 Alg is also out of trace supply and will have to move back into or through 23.11 unless he pins its hopes on a counterattack against the Australian 2/33 Infantry.



Newbie Note: You don't necessarily need to make high-odds attacks for operational success. In fact, you may not be able to, and they cost a lot of supply. Hitting weak spots and putting the enemy out of supply is much more supply-efficient. All operations should be aimed to cut the enemy out of supply, or threaten to do so. OoS is brutal in* OCS*. Eating off the map is terribly expensive and the attrition table should be avoided at all costs.

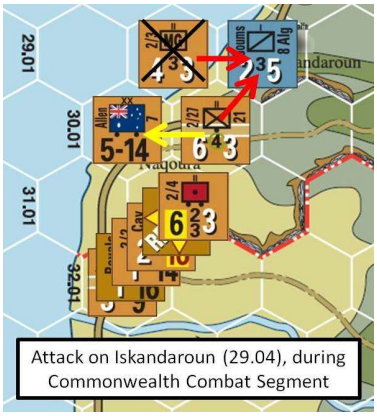
Troopers of the Cheshire Yeomanry in Syria during Operation Exporter. They appear to be entering Move Mode.

Bennt Jbail (30.08): My two attacking units at 31.09 can Direct Draw back down the trail 5 Truck MPs to hex 35.11 for their 2T of combat supply from Safad (36.11)—adjacent is good enough (*OCS* Rule 12.3c). John uses 1T from the dump in the defending hex.



I select the 2/16 Infantry to provide its 3 AR (another "green" unit). His 3 AR is reduced to a 2 because of the DG, so the DRM is +1. The initial odds are 10:1 (his combat strength is halved to 1 because of DG), which means we start on the 9:1 column of the Very Close terrain line as the rough terrain in this hex is what John chooses for this combat. My surprise roll is 3, 5, 4, which just misses getting surprise. The combat roll is 11, adjusted to 12 for an Ae4/DL1o2. His unit is eliminated on the DL1, and I advance into the hex, rolling a 6 on the Capture Table, capturing the 1T remaining in the hex. My units are both 3 AR so they do not qualify for the Exploit Mode result.

Iskandaroun (29.04): I am attacking with two units; 2/3 MG in 29.03 and 2/27 Infantry in 30.03. My 2T of combat supply is thrown to me by the 7th Division HQ in 30.02 which draws it from the Dump in Haifa (37.01) (the combat units could also have used Direct Draw back to Haifa). The Vichy unit uses Direct Draw from the Dump in Tyre (26.04). I use the 3 AR from the MG unit, same value as the Vichy unit. John uses the Hills Terrain (Close) for the combat table line, so we have initial odds of 10:2 (5:1), and start on the 4:1 column for Close Terrain. The DRM is 0. My surprise roll of 2, 5, 3 means no surprise. Combat roll of a 4 (2d6) is an AL1o1/Do1. I lose the MG unit from the AL1, and also have the option I must take. Even if I kill my Australian infantry unit John's Cavalry will just retreat a hex on his Do1 option and still block the road. So I retreat my surviving unit to Naqoura (30.02) and pin my hopes on an Exploitation overrun attack. John can now ignore his Do1 result (*OCS* Rule 9.10a).



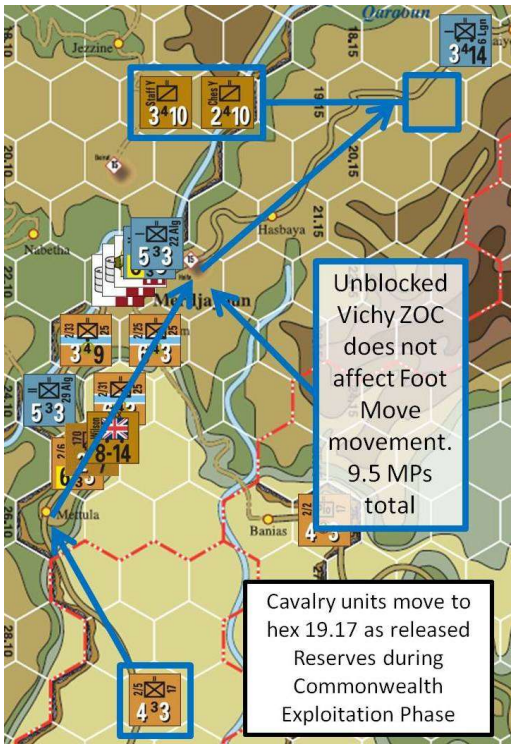
Newbie Note: You may get clobbered in a particular action. It's OK. You can probably recover. If you totally blow it, write down your lessons, reset and try again! Banish any Igo-Yugo mindset in* OCS. *The sequence of play is interactive, and sometimes serves up big "surprise" effects or a Double Turn. Therefore, planning a layered, sequenced move is your best approach. There are a lot of options for how to hit a given enemy unit, which can be done multiple times in a turn:

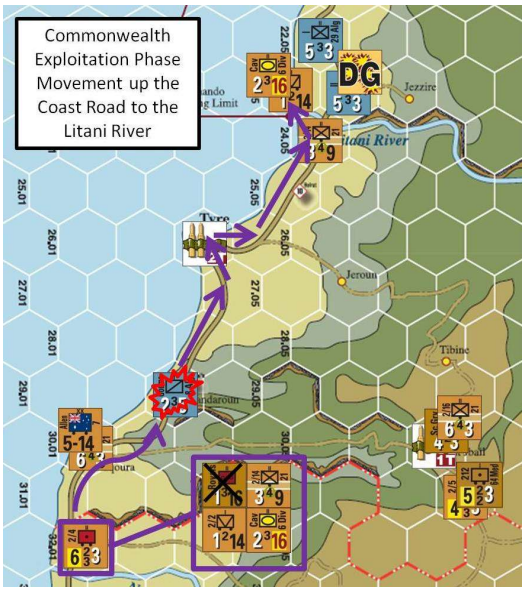
- ***Movement Phase Hip Shoot (depending on the proficiency of your armed forces and game-specific rules—not an option in* RE*)***
- ***Overrun during Movement***
- ***Possibly Overrun the hex again***
- ***Air & Ship Barrage***
- ***Artillery Barrage***
- ***Combat***
- ***Exploitation Hip Shoot (if available)***
- ***Exploitation Overrun***
- ***Exploitation Barrage***
- ***Exploitation Combat***

Also, notice how the turn sequence does NOT have a Reaction Phase for your opponent after your Exploitation Movement! You can put a large attacking force in Reserve and do your big attack during Exploitation when he can't React—and you might even get a Double Turn for a very powerful one-two punch.

Exploitation Phase

Merdjayoun Exploitation Movement – I have two Reserve stacks, and some choices to make. I must use one to continue my attack up the coast road. My other stack is comprised of two cavalry units in 29.13. Should I maintain a reserve or press the attack? It looks like I can really gain some ground, so I release them and move them up to 19.17. They can pass right through the Vichy ZOC in 22.13 as that only halts units using Truck MPs. However, that EZOC will stop my Trace Supply and I will need to deal with that problem before my Supply Phase next turn. I really debated how far to push with this move. I could have stopped in either 22.13 to seal off Merdjayoun, or 21.15 where the mountain terrain covers my flank. I decided to move to 19.17 to meet the Vichy forces as far north as possible. The risk is getting overextended, but I think I am OK. Certainly it creates a real problem for the Vichy supply situation in Merdjayoun.





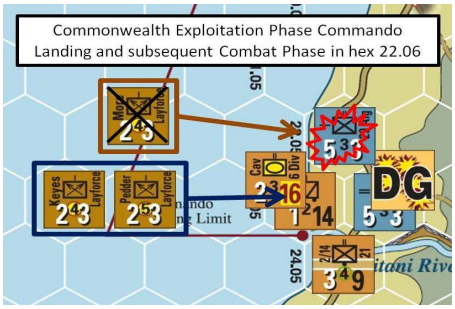
Newbie Note: The Mode concept and the associated precise definitions took me multiple tries to understand. The key: a unit is in <u>one and only one mode at a time</u>, designated by being on its Combat Mode or Move Mode side, unless overridden by a marker that changes its mode into Strat Move, DG, Exploit or Reserve.

<u>Coast Road Exploitation Movement</u> - Next, I release the entire 32.02 stack from Reserve, fuel it with Direct Draw from Haifa (4 units, so 1 SP), move to 30.03 and declare an Overrun attack against the stubborn cavalry troop still in Iskandaroun (29.04). I am attacking from the one hex. My combat supply (4T) is thrown to me by the 7th Division HQ from the Dump in Haifa (the attackers could also Direct Draw). The Vichy unit again uses Direct Draw from the Dump in Tyre (26.04). I use my Royals Armored Car Battalion 3 AR and his AR is still 3. I have Armor (yellow background within the unit symbol), Mech (red background) and "Other-type" units (no special color) in the stack (see *OCS* Rule 3.2a), but all have x1 values on the TEC for Hills Terrain so there are no terrain effects on the unit strength.

We have initial odds of 7:2 or 4:1 in close terrain. I roll a 5, 2, 5 surprise roll with a 0 DRM. No surprise. My combat roll is a 12(!) on 2d6 for an Ao1e4/DL1o2. The stubborn Vichy defender dies from the DL1. I need to keep moving so I must eliminate the Royals Armored Car as my option (or I could retreat all units a hex and halt, which is why it's called an option). The Exploitation result is ignored during Overrun (*OCS* Rule 8.1e). The Overrun cost me 3 MPs and its success puts me in Iskandaroun (29.04) having expended 4.5 MPs so far. The three surviving units proceed up the road through Tyre to capture what supply they can. I roll a 6, capturing 75% of 2T still there, rounded up to 2T, then continue on to the Litani River at 24.06. The 2/14 Infantry has expended 7.5 MP's at this point and drops off here. The Cav/6 Div and 2/2 AT have enough MP remaining to cross the river into 23.06. Note that the Vichy unit in 23.07 no longer has a ZOC because it is DG (*OCS* Rule 4.4b specifies that only Combat Mode Attack-Capable units that don't have an out-of-supply marker have a ZOC, but DG units are in **<u>DG mode</u>**, even when they are oriented on their Combat Mode side of the counter).

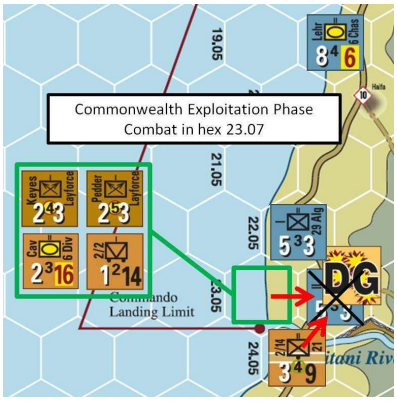
<u>Commando Landing</u> – The Commandos attempt their landing at their pre-game designated hex of 23.06 as the last action of the Exploitation movement phase. First each unit must roll for Drift (*RE* Rule 2.2A). The first two (Pedder and Keyes) will attempt to land as planned in 23.06 with rolls of 3 and 4. The third (More) drifts a hex to the north, 22.06, with a roll of 1; unfortunately this is where the Vichy I/29 Alg Infantry is deployed. After Drift, Pedder and Keyes must roll on the Amphibious Landing Table (ALT, located on the back of the game-specific rules) to see if a landing at 23.06 is successful. The ALT provides that a 2D6 roll of 3 or better is required for success here (clear terrain landing hex, but I must add -2 to the roll for it being 1941 and another -2 for being adjacent to the non-DG enemy unit in 22.06, so I need a 7 or higher). Fortunately I roll an 8 for a successful landing. The More unit that drifted north must wait to perform a Beach Assault since its landing hex is occupied by an enemy unit (*RE* Rule 2.2A), which happens during the Combat Phase.

<u>Exploitation Combat Beach Assault</u> - I have no Barrages, so we skip the Barrage Segment and proceed to the Combat Segment. Let's do the forlorn hope Beach Assault first. My Commandos are in Combat supply (*RE* Rule 2.2B. Some other *OCS* games have Landing Craft units but this is abstracted in *RE*). The More Commando is in a tight spot: Beach Assaults have a hexside terrain effect penalty of x1/2, all options must be taken as step losses and they are eliminated if they don't clear the enemy hex (*OCS* Rule 18.6a). I declare the attack against hex 22.06 from 22.05. The defense costs 1T in supply (1T), which is thrown to him by the Verdilhac HQ in Beirut. My units already have Combat supply (*RE* Rule 2.2B.). I have a 4 AR unit and he has a 3 AR, so the DRM is +1. My unit's Combat Strength is x1/2 so the initial odds are 1:5 on the clear terrain line. The Surprise roll is 6, 1, 2, so no surprise shifts. I roll a 6, modified to a 7 for an AL1o1. My unit is dead and the small yellow circle behind its AR rating flags it as a unit that is non-rebuildable (*OCS* Rule 13.5c and cannot be Recovered, *RE* Rule 1.11).



Exploitation Attack at 23.07 – I am attacking from 23.06 and 24.06. The Vichy unit gets its 1T of combat supply which is thrown to him by the Verdilhac HQ in Beirut. Supply to my units (3T—the Commandos are already in Combat Supply) is thrown from the 7th Division HQ, who draws it from Haifa. Much as I would really like to use the Commando unit's AR of 5, I am not allowed (*RE* Rule 2.2D) and so I identify the 2/14 Infantry to provide its '3' AR. John designates the river hexside for the unit in 24.06 and clear terrain for the units in 23.06. My Armor unit is doubled and the units attacking across the river are halved for a total of 10.5 to 2.5, making the initial odds 4:1 on the Clear terrain line. The DRM is +1. My surprise roll is 6, 4, 4, giving surprise and upping the odds column to 11:1. I roll a 5, which is modified to a 6 for an Ae4/DL1o2. This kills the defending unit, and I advance the non-commando units into 23.07 (*OCS* Rule 9.12g governs Advance after Combat—some or all of the units in regular Combat may advance if you wish, but successful Overrunning units must advance). Exploitation results are ignored during the Exploitation Phase Combat (*OCS* Rule 9.13b).

Newbie Note: Another option was to attack with just the Commandos, and use the 5 AR to generate a +3 DRM and hopefully get surprise. The same die rolls with just the Commandos would have been a 2:1 bumped up to a 7:1 and the 5 would become an 8 for Ao1e4/DL1o2. The defender would have died and I would have an option to retreat or lose the lead Commando (who must withdraw in a turn or so). Had the Commandos attacked the I/29 Alg in 22.06 with the same dice rolls the result would have been Ao1/DL1o1, killing that defender. Then I could have attacked the DG'd unit in 23.06 at 3:1. Just some of the calls you get to make in* OCS*, and there isn't a correct "school solution" answer.



The final part of each player-turn is the Clean-Up Phase. I don't have any DG or fuel markers to remove, so play passes to the Vichy side.

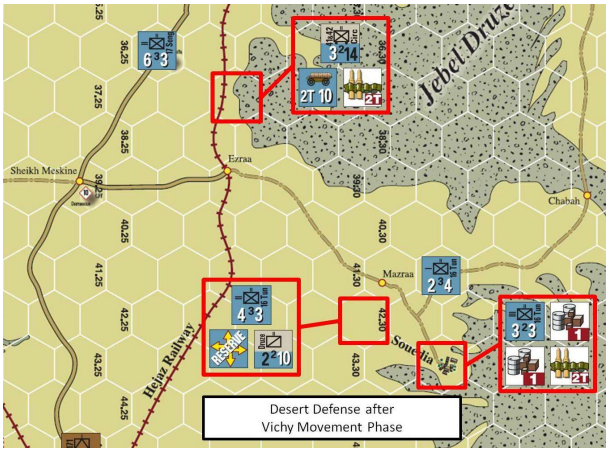
That was my Player-Turn. It's easy to second-guess myself. Should I have landed the Commandos much further north to cut off supply? Should I have managed the Litani River assault differently? Should I have started the coast attack with an overrun at 29.04 during my Movement Phase? Did I push my cavalry too far up the valley? I destroyed six Vichy units at a cost of three of my own. Even though I have cut off Merdjayoun and crossed the Litani, there are tough units and formidable terrain ahead of me. My Player Turn represents just the opening skirmish of a 21-turn campaign. Do I mass my units to push hard in one area while holding in others? Or apply steady pressure everywhere? It's all part of the decision-making fun!

Vichy Player-Turn

Newbie Note: For purposes of this Starter Guide, John will show all his units and moves. Normally, the Fog of War rule (*OCS *Rule 4.9) prevents you from seeing anything but the top Combat Mode Attack-Capable Unit, top Active Air Unit and any hedgehog in a hex. Use the rule to be as sneaky as you like.

Aircraft Refit and Reinforcement Phases – It is now the Vichy Player Turn. During Aircraft Refit John refits his fighter in Mezze (1T cost from the Dump in Damascus) and the aircraft at Rayak airbase (6.21) for no supply cost (*RE* Rule 3.4). The Reinforcement Phase follows. Three things happen: John makes his Supply roll (4 with 2d6) and adds 1 SP in Baalbek (1.28). His supply can be placed in any of three Vichy entry hexes (*RE* Rule 3.3A). His Naval Barrage roll is 1, which means the Vichy destroyers are not available this turn, and he leaves the counter on its "Fired" side (*RE* Rule 1.10B). The Vichy forces have lost six units. Per *RE* Rule 1.11, he gets to recover two of them selected at random from eligible units in the dead pile. He pulls the II/8 Alg Cavalry and 1 Mor Cavalry. He decides to place them both in 18.27, which is within 2 hexes of the Delhomme HQ at hex 19.29. (Again, I wouldn't necessarily SEE all this because of the Fog of War rule!)

John has some decisions: How will he contest my advance on Damascus from Deraa (he knows that the Free French "Division" arrives at the border just south of Deraa next turn)? Does he stand or bug out of Merdjayoun? Should he counterattack now or wait until his Restricted units are completely released (Turn 3)?



Desert Defense – First, John gets to work on the Damascus front. The II/2 Met artillery that started in Souedia (43.32) flips to Move Mode, fuels for 1T, then enters Strat Move Mode (giving it 2x MA per *OCS* Rule 5.8) and zooms off to 21.29. Next, the 41&42/Circ unit in Chabah (39.25) enters Move Mode (fueled by direct draw from the Souedia dump) and drives over to 37.28—a lava terrain hex with good defensive properties. His 2T Wagon unit drives up to 37.28 and stops there to unload some supply for this hex (10% of MA to load or unload

Transport Points, which for a Wagon is 1 MP, per *OCS* Rule 13.2f). The Druze Cavalry unit flips to Move Mode, enters Reserve, and moves forward to 42.30, joined by a Combat Mode II/16 Tun on top to hide it. The I/16 Tun flips to Move Mode and takes up residence in 41.32 and the III/16 Tun remains in Souedia with 2.5 SPs. The II/17 Seng pulls back to 36.26 where it blocks the road and is just in the Throw Range of the Delhomme HQ up in Damascus. He has them all in Trace supply, and has a force I can't ignore ready to annoy the flank of my advance on Damascus. Since 4 battalion sized units can "Eat off the Map" for 1T per turn, they can lurk for quite awhile! His Druze Cavalry Battalion in Reserve, is poised to dash at targets of opportunity, and with its 10 MPs can reach Mafra (52.27) from here.

John does a little rearranging to prepare his defensive lines. He fuels up the Verdilhac HQ and repositions it in hex 8.19. The Arlabosse HQ fuels and moves to Damour (13.09). He's repositioned his supply network. Notice how the two HQ's are still able to Direct Draw from Beirut. The I/6 Lgn in 18.17 flips to Combat Mode and stays put adjacent to my cavalry. The two recovered units in 18.27 flip to Move side, enter Reserve Mode and move 2.5 MPs to Dimas (15.24). The II/29 Alg stays in Combat Mode and slides back one hex to 23.11 where it will be behind a river AND be able to project its ZOC onto the road. The V/1 Col Artillery in Merdjayoun flips to Move Mode, fuels and repositions to Nabetha (21.11). The I/22 Alg stays in Merdjayoun, so it looks like he will make me fight him for it.

Coastal Area Movement – At the coast John prepares a major counterattack. The I/29 Alg moves east to 22.07. The IV/6 Lgn stays in Combat Mode and comes down to 22.06. His Lehr/6 Chas Armor fuels and moves to 22.07. Why no overrun? Overrunning units need to start the phase stacked together, per *OCS* Rule 8.1, and John says he doesn't want to risk his Armor unit without another unit that can provide the AR and take a possible AL1 result. The 4 Tun Cav in 15.09 enters Reserve and is joined by III/22 Alg and the Liban Cavalry Battalion from Damour (13.09), all three units entering Move Mode to do so. The I&II/1 Col Arty enters Move Mode, fuels and moves to 20.07. The 2T wagon in Damour (13.09) starts loaded with supply, moves to Nabetha (21.11) and unloads, as the V/I Col Artillery can't barrage without it (the wagon can unload in a hex with a friendly Combat Unit, per *OCS* Rule 13.2f, so it had to wait until the unit was present). Finally, the 1 SP he received moves to Damascus by rail.

Vichy Air Barrage - John sends his bomber to conduct an Air Barrage the Commandos in 23.06. I have no patrol zone and the flak roll is a 9 (2d6) for no effect, so his 6-strength Barrage goes in with 1 left shift for density, rolls a 9 (2d6), and DGs the stack. The bomber goes inactive in Rayak.

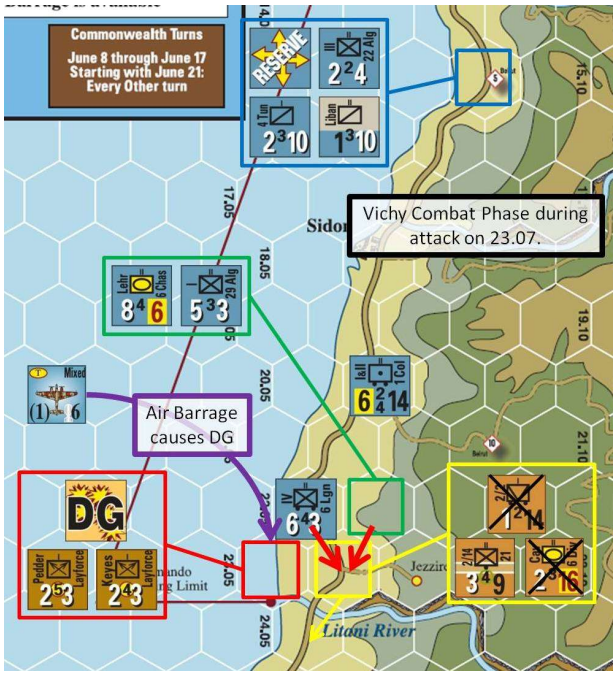
Vichy Supply Phase – The two infantry units near Merdjayoun are out of Trace Supply and eat off the map for 1T from the dump in 22.12. All the units in the Souedia area can just make their Trace to the detrainable hex in Ezraa (39.28), and his other units are easily in Trace Supply by detrainable hexes on rail lines or by roads that lead back to a Vichy supply source.

Commonwealth Reaction Phase - I have no units in Reserve and no active air units, so no reaction during my Commonwealth Reaction Phase.

Vichy Combat Phase

Vichy Artillery Barrage Segment – John starts his Combat Phase with a 6-point Artillery Barrage on 23.07 from 20.07. Clear terrain, 1 left shift for Density, spotted, and he rolls a 6 (2d6) for a miss.

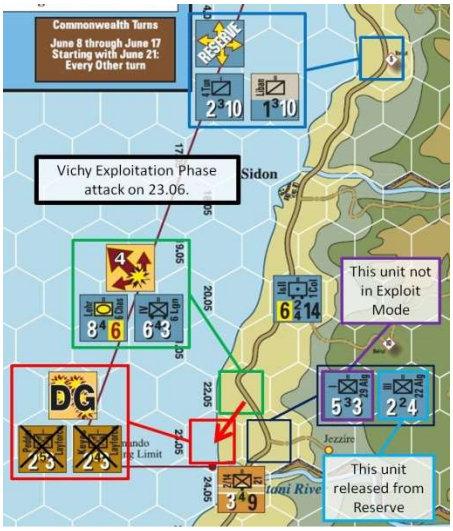
Vichy Combat Segment – He has a total of three units in two hexes attacking 23.07. John uses 3T thrown from the Arlabosse HQ which draws supply from Beirut and I use 2T from Haifa via the 7th Division HQ in 30.02 (I have 1.25 REs, but you don't round stacking size for defensive combat supply, which is 2T unless the defending units are 1 RE or less, per *OCS* Rule 12.4). He selects the 4 AR IV/6Lgn Infantry and I use my 3 AR Armor, so the DRM is +1. Initial odds are 23-6 or 4:1 in clear terrain (his armor is normally 2x attacking in clear but I have two units with heavy AT Effects so the armor's combat strength is only 1.5x per *OCS* Rule 9.4e). His Surprise roll is (gulp) 6, 4, 4, bumping the odds up to the 11:1 line, and his combat roll is a 7 modified to an 8 for an Ae4/DL1o2. My armor unit dies and I kill my AT unit to satisfy one option and retreat behind the river for the second. Had I taken both options as a retreat, I would have saved the AT unit but be DG'ed and sitting in 25.06, easy meat for an Exploitation (units that retreat 2 or more hexes enter DG mode, per *OCS* Rule 9.12a). I need to block the road at the river to prevent him from zooming south. John advances the two units from 22.07 but not the IV/6 Lgn. The Ae4 exploit applies to his two attacking units with the '4' AR rating, not to the one with the '3', and they do not have to advance after combat to earn it (*OCS* Rule 9.13). They enter Exploit Mode and can move and fight in the coming Exploitation Phase. Uh-oh.



Vichy Exploitation Phase

Exploitation Movement Segment – The Exploitation Phase consists of Movement, Barrage and Combat Segments and it is where you can really see an "expanding torrent" of activity. It only involves units that are released from Reserve Status or are in Exploit Mode. John first releases his Reserve Stack in 15.24. These are the two recovered Cavalry units in Move Mode and they move to 18.16, adjacent to my cavalry units. They could not have reached this hex in the Movement Phase (it is 10.5 Leg MPs from where the units started). By placing them in Reserve after moving 25% of their MA in the Movement Phase, John has maximized their movement potential to reach the front.

At the coast John is in a bit of a quandary. Exploit Mode units have full Combat and Barrage Ratings, but only ½ their MA (*OCS* Rule 5.9, but note that **Reserves** released in Exploit have full MA, OCS Rule 5.7b). Only his armor unit has enough MPs to Overrun, and he could hit my Commandos at 8:1 odds, since his Combat Strength is doubled attacking in Clear terrain. The risk is a negative result that could kill his powerful tank unit. He could pull in more units and attack during the Combat Phase, targeting the Commandos or my 2/14 Infantry (at lower odds since it would be across a river). He decides to restore the river line and eliminate my bridgehead. John moves his armor unit to 22.06 (it must fuel again, per *RE* Rule 1.5). The III/22 Alg pops out of the Reserve stack in 15.09 with just enough MA to reach 23.07. The two Cavalry units remain in Reserve in 15.09 for future use. It's always good to have reserves, I note, having not kept any at the end of my turn!



Exploitation Combat Phase – In the Combat Phase John declares an attack with the two units in 22.06 against the Commandos in 23.06. He could have included the III/22 Alg had he wished, but instead he saved the supply. He expends his 2T of supply thrown to him by the Arlabosse HQ which draws from Beirut. The Commandos are in Combat Supply during Turn 1 (*RE* Rule 2.2B) but they are in desperate straits. Had they not been in Combat Supply, I would have declined to expend 1T and let them defend at half strength (*OCS* Rules 9.2 and 12.4) since the odds are very high anyway. His AR is 4 and mine is 4 (Pedder's AR is 5 reduced by 1 for being DG). The terrain is clear. His armor unit is 2x attacking in clear, so he has 22 Combat Strength. My units are halved for the DG so their Combat Strength is 2. Initial odds are 11:1 and the DRM is 0. John then proceeds to roll 2, 1, 4, giving Defender Surprise with 4 left column shifts, over to the 4:1 column. The combat roll is 11 for a result of Ae4/DL1o2. My lead unit dies. The remaining unit (Keyes) must take two options. If it attempts to retreat its only available path is through 24.06, which is occupied by a CW unit but is also in an enemy ZOC. *OCS* Rule 9.12e covers this situation—my 2/14 Infantry would become DG and I would lose a step from the retreating stack as it moves into an EZOC (only if it is already DG'ed before it entered the EZOC). Keyes is doomed anyway, so I take the option as a loss which clears the hex. John advances only the IV/6 Lgn infantry, keeping the armor in 22.06.

Newbie Note: He could also have piled units into 23.07 and attacked the 2/14 Infantry in 24.06 across the river at 8:3 or 3:1 with a +1 DRM. With the same set of die rolls the initial odds would have been shifted 4 columns to 1:3, with the Combat Roll giving a result of Ao1/Do1. He would have either retreated or killed his IV/6 Lgn to force me to take an option. On the other hand he has now created a solid river defense and has disengaged his armor to either back up the line, go into Reserve, or combine with his other mobile units in future turns. But had he gotten across the river the situation would have been far worse—and he can still win Initiative for Turn 2.

John ends his turn and in his Clean Up Phase removes his Exploit markers (all his units marked DG were eliminated). We move the Turn Marker to the June 10 turn. I had been worried about how to cross the river, but now I am holding on for dear life behind it!

End of Turn

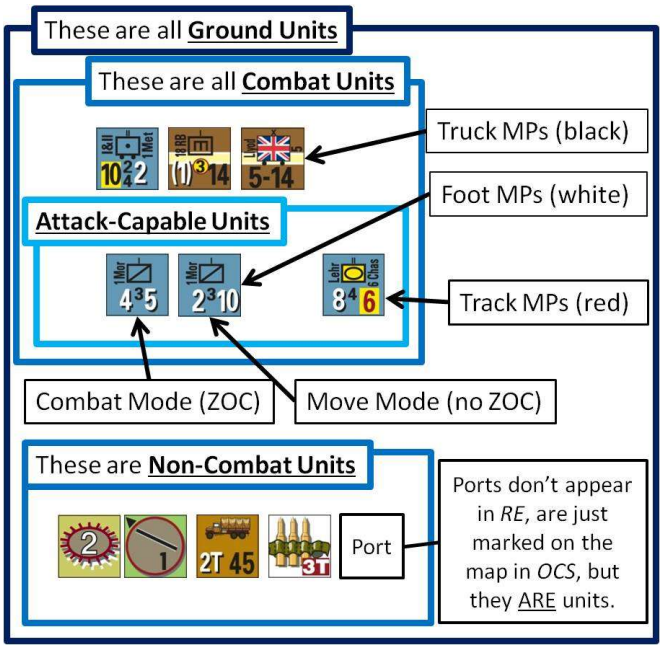
Well. I banged my head against a brick wall at the Litani River. I am pressing the Vichy hard near Merdjayoun and I have a good start on the Damascus front. After the Vichy unit Recovery we both have four units in the dead pile (not counting the Commandos). A 1:1 loss ratio will eventually run the Vichy player out of units. The start of the June 10 turn will be a First Player Determination Segment—one of us will get to select who goes first. We both grab our dice - *well that will be a later story.*

What the Newbie Learned – Summarizing key game concepts

Newbie Note:* OCS *is now on version 4.1 of its Rules set, included here with* Reluctant Enemies. *The first published* OCS *game was the original* Guderian's Blitzkrieg *in 1992. The rules have become very refined with precisely worded definitions, and in most cases key points are only stated once. As a newbie I found the implications were subtle and what was obvious to experienced players was not to me. The system isn't complicated, but it is complex! Here are notes about concepts and rules that confounded me in my early going.

Sequence of Play (*OCS* Rule 2.0) – You must follow this in exact order, and its flow has some nuances. For example the Supply Phase comes after movement—you can suddenly find that you've advanced beyond Trace Supply range. Air/Naval and Artillery both make "Barrage" attacks, but do so in different Segments. Your mantra: **Read the Sequence of Play, Learn the Sequence of Play, Know the Sequence of Play.**

Definitions – Read the sections on **Units and Markers** (*OCS* Rule 3.0), **General Concepts** (*OCS* Rule 4.0), and **Modes** (*OCS* Rule 5.0) carefully. ***These are the fundamental definitions behind all the other rules.***



Ground Units (*OCS* Rules 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3) – These comprise Combat Units and Non-Combat Units:

- **Combat Units** – Ground Units with a combat strength, including HQ's and artillery. Combat units with **printed** combat strengths are **Attack-Capable unless** the strength is parenthesized or the unit is in Strat Mode or Reserve Mode. A printed combat strength of zero still makes a unit Attack Capable (*OCS* Rule 9.14a). For an artillery unit the number on the lower left of the counter in the yellow box is a **Barrage Strength**, **not** Combat Strength. An artillery unit has a nominal (1) defensive-only combat strength (*OCS* Rule 13.4b), so it is not an-Attack Capable unit. The lower left number on an HQ counter is its **Throw Range**, **not** Combat Strength. HQ's have an AR of '0' and a nominal defensive-only Combat Strength (not printed on the counter) per *OCS* Rule13.1c (and some HQ strengths in *RE* differ per *RE* Rules 2.3 and 3.2).

- **Non-Combat units** - Non-combat units are considered Ground Units and they come in five types: Ports, Air Bases, Hedgehogs, Transport Points, and Supply Points. They are ground units but not combat units. Ground movement into a hex with one of these enemy non-combat units **requires an Attack-Capable unit** (*OCS* Rule 4.4c)**.** You can't run around capturing Supply Dumps or Air Bases with an artillery unit or HQ! Ports do not appear in *RE*. (In *OCS* games that have them, Ports don't have actual counters, but I find it helps to imagine they do.)

Supply 101 – Here are some pointers about **Supply**:

- On map supply is required for on map aircraft refit, "eating off the map" where Trace Supply is not available, fuel supply, combat supply, artillery barrage, and construction (i.e. building an Air Base). (There is an exception for refit at Rayak Air Base per *RE* Rule 3.4).
- On map SPs and Trace Supply are drawn or thrown for immediate use by units and HQs. On map Supply Points can only be moved around the map via rail, transport units, and in some games by naval shipping or air transport. Getting SPs up to the front becomes increasingly difficult for the Commonwealth player in *RE*.
- Units can access supply via Direct Draw (*OCS* Rule 12.3a). **Count "Direct Draw" *from the unit***, up to 5 Truck MPs back to a supply source or to a hex adjacent to a supply source whether for Trace Supply or On-Map Supply.
- Units can access supply (on map SPs or Trace Supply) by having it "thrown" to them by a HQ unit. This HQ unit must be able to first Direct Draw back to the supply (like any other unit), but can then "Throw" it forward to other units. **Count "Throw" *from the HQ*** to the unit or to a hex adjacent to the unit, using that HQ's Throw Range (ordinarily Truck MPs). An un-negated Enemy ZOC blocks HQ throw from HQs that use Truck MPs (*OCS* Rule 12.3d). Most, but not all, HQs use Truck MPs to draw and throw supply in *OCS*, but watch for HQs that use Leg MPs!
- Note the helpful "adjacent is good enough" provision (*OCS* Rule 12.3c)

Trace Supply (*OCS* Rule 12.6) represents basic subsistence for units. During the Supply Phase of your Player turn you must check that each of your units can "make their trace supply" or be marked Out of Supply (OoS) and roll for attrition—with possible dire consequences. Trace Supply is available from:

- Direct Draw from Detrainable hexes along your rail supply net. This rail net must go back, free of enemy units and un-negated enemy ZOC's to a friendly supply source. A "Detrainable Hex" is defined in *OCS* Rule 13.3c as a Rail hex with a village, minor city, major city, port or Engineer-capable HQ connected to the rail net (all the HQ units in this game are Engineer-capable, *RE* Rule 1.8). In addition, the *RE* rules add that a Rail hex with a Point of Interest (such as Al Masayrib at 42.22) is also a Detrainable Hex (*RE* Rule 1.7A). In *RE* and some other *OCS* games set in difficult terrain, Road hexes are also part of the trace supply net (*RE* Rule 1.7B). In this regard each road hex in *RE* connected to a supply source can provide Trace Supply.
- HQ Throw as described above.
- Extenders (*OCS* Rule 12.7), which are not applicable to *RE*.
- "Eating off the Map" – should a unit not be able to make its Trace Supply, it has the option consume on-map SPs to avoid being marked OoS. 1T will provide trace supply to 2 REs of units—this is an emergency situation and should be avoided. Units of a multi-unit formation that cannot "make their trace" to a common Trace Supply source must also Eat off the Map (*OCS* Rule 12.6f), so keep them together. These are the situations where on map SPs are used for Trace Supply, otherwise Trace Supply and on map supply are independent of each other.

On Map Supply Points are primarily used for providing a) Combat Supply (*OCS* Rules 9.5 and 12.4) and Barrage Supply (*OCS* Rule 10.1b) in the combat phases, and b) Fuel Supply for motorized and tracked units in the movement phases (*OCS* Rule 12.5). On-map Supply Points are also used to refit aircraft, build hedgehogs and airbases, repair port

facilities and allow units to "eat off the map" for Trace Supply (as described above). Draw and throw mechanics are applied for the expenditure of these On Map Supply Points.

Internal Stocks – Combat Supply (NOT Barrage Supply) for attack and/or defense can be obtained by using a unit's Internal Stocks (*OCS* Rule 12.10). This represents a combat unit's intrinsic ammunition stockpiles which are consumed in combat when on map supply is unavailable or the player voluntarily chooses not use on map supply. These internal stocks can only be used twice, and then need replenishment. Upon the first use of Internal Stocks a unit is marked Low Supply (no combat value effects), then the second time marked Exhausted (after which its Combat Strength is halved). Recovery from Low or Exhausted is very expensive. At **the start** of the Supply Phase, recovery from use of internals costs 2T for each level for each unit or regimental equivalent, whichever is greater (*OCS* Rule 12.10e). In *RE* **each unit** will require 2T to recover each level of internals used (*RE* Rule 1.1A.) Therefore, it costs an entire SP to replenish an Exhausted combat unit in *RE*. By the way, you can ATTACK using Internal Stocks (*OCS* Rule 12.10)! Even surrounded enemy units can still bite.

> ***Newbie Note: Concerning Supply. You never have enough—but your opponent feels the same way! A brigade-sized attack in* RE *will burn several SPs if barrage and fuel are involved. You may need to pause a turn or two to build up your stocks. And with each move ask yourself; do I have to put these units in Move Mode and burn the gas? Is this Barrage worth the Supply? How can I best use the "free" units (off-map Air and Naval Barrage)? There is always much more you would like to do than you have resources for—plan wisely!* OCS *rewards "strategic pauses" while you build up supply for the next push.* OCS *sometimes rewards aggressive play on the edge of supply disaster. Yes, that is a contradiction—both statements are true! I was also surprised how Trace Supply and Combat Supply are not directly related—you can be in one and not in the other.***

***RE* Supply Situation** – The CW player starts the game with 14 SPs on the board. I received 3.5 more during Reinforcement and captured 5T for a total of 18.75 SP. I used 8.5 SP's during just my own Player Turn (3.25 for fuel, 2T for overrun combat, 2T for Barrage, 2.5 SP for Combat, 1 SP for the Exploitation overrun and 3T for the Exploitation combat). Given the average of 2.5 SP's per turn and a one-time 2.5 SP reinforcement, I can reasonably expect only 65-70 SP's during the entire campaign game. The Vichy forces start with 18.5 SP on the board and then average 1.5 per turn, for a reasonable expectation of 50 SP's for the game. That's all you have to work with, folks.

Barrages – One thing that really threw me at first was understanding that there are TWO types of Barrage: regular Barrage (an attack against enemy ground units that uses the Barrage Table) and a Barrage using the Barrage vs. Facility Table (an attack against enemy air bases, ports or Trainbusting). All this is covered in *OCS* Rule 10.0 and the most important "fine print" is that Barrages against Facilities are NOT penalized by the 3 column left shift for no spotter. One of the game-within-a-game aspects of the *OCS* is the air war. Your aircraft can be used to kill aircraft on the ground, slow opponent's movement, screw up his supply network, etc.

Action Rating – This may be a small number on the counter, but it has a big effect on play. In an overrun situation, a +2 DRM differential means that 58% of the time the attacker gains surprise, 17% defender surprise, and 25% neither side does. Regular combat with a +2 has 42% attacker surprise, 8% defender and 50% no surprise. Also, several low-AR units stacked with one high-AR unit makes for a very potent stack. If your ARs are generally higher than your opponent, then the AR mechanism favors Overruns:

Overrun Attacks			
DRM	Defender Surprise	Attacker Surprise	No Surprise
-4	92%	0	8%
-3	83%	3%	14%
-2	72%	8%	20%
-1	58%	17%	25%
0	42%	28%	30%
+1	28%	42%	30%
+2	17%	58%	25%
+3	8%	72%	20%
+4	3%	83%	14%

If you have generally lower ARs, like playing the Russians against the Wehrmacht, then Regular Combat may be better because you can pile up the odds to offset the AR disadvantage:

Regular Combat			
DRM	Defender Surprise	Attacker Surprise	No Surprise
-4	83%	0	17%
-3	72%	0	28%
-2	58%	3%	39%
-1	42%	8%	50%
0	28%	17%	55%
+1	17%	28%	55%
+2	8%	42%	50%
+3	3%	58%	39%
+4	0	72%	28%

Zone of Control (*OCS* Rule 4.5) – Only **Attack-Capable units** have a Zone of Control (ZOC) and only if they are in **Combat Mode** and are not under an Out of Supply marker. Units in any mode other than Combat Mode (and this includes Reserve or DG Mode) **do not** have a ZOC (however, Exploitation marked units can have a ZOC, *OCS* Rule 4.4b). *OCS* Rule 4.5a has a list of ZOC effects, and they are NOT what you are used to in other games. For example, units cannot enter Reserve Mode when in an enemy ZOC, but can move into an enemy ZOC once they are in Reserve Mode.

Rear-Area Security – The fluid nature of ZOCs and potential double turns mean that if you leave key hexes un-garrisoned, they can be captured. This is Very Bad. "Key hexes" include HQ units, which have an inherent Action Rating of zero, Strat Mode units, whose Combat Strength and Action Rating are reduced to zero, Air Bases, and of course, supply dumps. You only need to experience an Armored Car unit rampaging around your rear once, as it is a painful lesson. Important

objectives such as the Sudden Death Objectives in *RE* are prime candidates for garrisons.

Mode – Once you select a mode for your units whether oriented with their Combat or Move side up, you are stuck with it until your next Player Turn, which might be after your opponent goes **twice** if he wins a double turn with the initiative rolls. Combat Mode units are slower but more powerful, while Move Mode units are faster, but more vulnerable.

Defense – The porous ZOCs in *OCS* means that a "solid line" defense is hard to construct and probably won't work. Think "Active Defense", which means depth, reserves, spoiling attacks and counter-attacks. Artillery kept in Reserve can DG attacking units. Barrage your opponent's Reserve stacks so he can't exploit. When he looks ready to advance, send out a unit that occupies his approach path (or that can be a spotter for a spoiling Barrage). Conduct "Trainbusting" Barrages that slow down his units. Build airfields to provide Patrol Zones over your front lines. Build hedgehogs at choke points. The defender gets to choose the terrain that affects each individual attacking stack—and can choose different terrain for each stack—but you do NOT add up all the terrain modifiers like in some other games (*OCS* Rule 9.4b).

Leg, Truck & Track MPs – Pay close attention to how these mesh together. Know the MP costs per the Terrain Effects Chart. Movement rates can differ by mode. Some units are Leg MPs on one side and Truck MPs on the other, such as artillery, which can move (slowly) without using supply in Combat Mode. Remember, Truck movement is affected by EZOCs, but Leg and Track movement is not.

Probability Theory – Over time, dice will deliver an "average" result. This game has a lot of decisions to make about whether to attack or not, burn supply, etc. Combat has two rolls—surprise and then the actual combat roll. It helps to play out the situations in your mind with all 2d6 rolls resulting in a 7 so you can better estimate the most likely outcomes. Every so often you will ALSO get unlikely rolls, both good and bad. Just like real life.

Fort Merdjayoun in 1941 (hex 22.12)

Fuel – I took a long time to get the hang of fuel. The key concept is: **Truck and Track movement units must pay fuel costs to expend Movement Points in a Movement Segment** (*OCS* Rule 12.5a). There are three Movement Segments (during the Movement Phase, Exploitation Phase and Reaction Phase as the Non-Phasing Player). You must be fueled to expend Movement Points in any of them. "Expending Movement Points" means moving on the map—even 1 hex—or conducting an Overrun. It doesn't matter if the overrunning stack begins movement adjacent to the defender, you are still expending 3 Movement Points for the overrun (*OCS* Rule 8.1a).

Units do NOT require fueling in order to:

- Attack, Defend, Barrage, Advance after Combat, or Retreat, even if they use Track or Truck movement. None of these actions occur during a Movement Segment (*OCS* Rule 12.5b)
- Move using Leg MPs. Leg movement does not require fuel. Many infantry and artillery units have Leg MPs on their Combat Mode side.
- Transport Points never require fuel (*OCS* Rule 13.2b). Supply draw/throw mechanics do not require fuel (*OCS* Rule 12.5a). Using Railcap does not require fuel.
- Units being placed on the map as reinforcements do NOT require fuel to appear, but moving them once they have been placed does require fuel (*OCS* Rule 12.5f). *RE* has a note on the Set-Up Cards that reinforcements enter fueled, which is an exception and applies for their first Movement Segment only.
- Air and Naval units do not require fuel to move (*OCS* Rule 12.5a).

Hammana, Lebanon (hex 7.15). September 2, 1941. Major General A. S. "Tubby" Allen (centre), commander of the Australian 7th Division, with Lt Colonel Murray Moten (center right), commander of the 2/27th Infantry Battalion and his men. (Photographer: Frank Hurley)

Fuel costs must be paid the instant they are incurred, and fuel is distributed using the normal Supply draw/throw mechanics (*OCS* Rule 12.3). There are three ways the fuel costs necessary to expend movement points can be paid:

1. **Formation Fueling**. *OCS* Rule 12.5c (A) Pay **1 SP to fuel an entire multi-unit formation**. **This payment lasts until the next Friendly Clean Up Phase.** Mark this by flipping the Formation marker to its Fueled side. (*RE* provides for this in *RE* Optional Rule 4.2, but the game does not have Formation markers.) This is an efficient way to provide supply to a large set of units. Because the fuel payment lasts until the next Friendly Clean Up Phase, the formation could be fueled when released from reserve in the Enemy Player Turn and move in three Movement Segments for that 1 SP. Note that the formation must fuel from the same dump or HQ, or the 1T-per-phase cost (below) will apply to units which can't. Obviously, if your multi-

unit formation has been reduced to less than 4 units, it may be cheaper to pay one at a time.

2. **Fueling Independents**. In most *OCS* games a player can pay **1 SP for a HQ** to fuel itself and all independent units within its throw range (see *OCS* Rule 12.5e). (However, this is not allowed in *RE* by *RE* Rule 1.5). **This payment lasts until the next Friendly Clean Up Phase.** Mark this with a Fuel marker on top of the HQ. Having paid its SP for fuel, the HQ can throw fuel to independent units "for free", thus avoiding the 1T per unit per phase cost—count the throw range when the unit begins to move in a given Movement Phase. This is another efficient fuel mechanic, and the wise *OCS* player will position HQs with large throw ranges to throw fuel to as many units as possible. Note that OTHER HQs are also independent units that can be fueled, but any HQs receiving fuel in this way only enables them to move, not to throw fuel themselves in a daisy-chain fashion.

3. **Per Phase**. *OCS* Rule 12.5c-C) Pay **1T per unit** that has **Tracked** or **Truck MPs**, regardless of the combat unit's organizational size. This lasts for the **current** phase only. Do not mark this fuel in any way. This is usually the least efficient way to fuel units, but sometimes it can't be avoided, and is the primary fueling mechanism in *Reluctant Enemies*. This is PER PHASE, folks, so you might wind up paying for units to expend MPs in the Movement Phase, Exploitation Phase, and Reaction Phase.

There are a few more bits of fuel "fine print" to cover:

- An HQ can throw fuel to independent units from ONE location per phase. (*OCS* Rule 12.5e). This affects a moving HQ, which must choose whether to throw fuel from its starting hex or its ending hex. Since it must itself normally be fueled in order to move, the HQ of a multi-unit formation may need to pay 1T to fuel itself as an independent unit and then 1SP to fuel its formation after the HQ conducts its move.
- There is some fine print hiding in *OCS* Rule 13.1d, which states that while an HQ can fuel independent units without regard to historical chain-of-command, Divisional HQs can provide supply only to their **own** division's units or to independent units (defined in *OCS* Rule 3.2e) of the same nationality. If a Division does both, it must pay 1 SP to fuel its divisional units and a second SP to fuel independent units in its throw range, which must be of the same nationality.
- Can you use Internal Stocks to fuel units? **NO**. Sorry, Internals only provide Combat Supply and can't be used to pay fuel costs (*OCS* Rules 12.5g and 12.10).
- The one exception to the "must have fuel to move" is the free move units are granted in *OCS* Rule 18.5h, whereby units that have made an Amphibious Landing and made an ALT roll can move half their MA and are considered fueled until the next Friendly Clean Up Phase.

Independent Units – Exactly what is an "independent unit?" Treat as "independent" any unit that is not a division-sized unit or that is not part of a multi-unit formation (*OCS* Rule 3.2f). **Division-sized units** are distinguished in other *OCS* games by having a Regimental Equivalent number printed on them and contain several steps. **Multi-Unit Formations** are those formations containing one or more ground units with the same higher designation *(e.g.,* "1st Division" or "6th Tank Corps"). Colored stripes mark multi-unit formations in most *OCS* games (*OCS* Rule 3.1c). The ground units in *RE* are all one-step and are either marked with a stripe (meaning they are part of a Multi-Unit Formation) or not (meaning they are independent units). There aren't any *RE* Combat Units that are division-sized or have multiple steps.

A few last ***Newbie Notes:***

- ***Experienced players often leave an empty hex between their front lines and the enemy forces. This is because if you are adjacent to the enemy, you are spotted for Barrages and can be DG'ed more easily. Also, units can't enter Reserve when in an enemy ZOC.***
- ***The experienced players told me multiple times, "you have to garrison everything". They aren't kidding. You can play a "deep battle" game, but so will your opponent.***
- ***Playing a turn takes a long time until you get the hang of it. I also learned that the time you need to play the first 90% of your turn is the same amount as you need for the last 10%. Just do the first 90% and don't sweat the fiddly bits.***
- ***OCS isn't just about moving your units, it is also about messing with your opponent's intentions/capabilities. Always look for ways to confound your adversary!***

Other Introductory Scenarios – Most *OCS* games are very large, but these seem to be good one-map options:

- Chir River Battles scenario from *Case Blue* (this is a special scenario posted on the Gamers Archive, not in the game box).
- North Mini-Campaign scenario from *The Blitzkrieg Legend*.
- Drive on Bryansk scenario from *Guderian's Blitzkrieg II.*
- Kharkov scenario from *Case Blue*
- Battle for the Primasole Bridge or Drive on Palermo scenarios from *Sicily* (an out of print and hard-to-find game).
- Race for Tunis scenario from *Tunisia*

Resources – I hope you enjoy *Reluctant Enemies*. I trust this *OCS Starter Guide* helps in your understanding of how to play the *Operational Combat Series*. There are other excellent resources available to you at the following locations:

- **Gamers Archive** – For an extended version of this article, and other very useful support materials such as current errata, game information and additional scenarios, go to http://www.gamersarchive.net/theGamers/archive/ocs.htm.
- **Consimworld** – www.consimworld.com has an OCS discussion form, and someone will usually answer questions quickly. I think of them as the "Greek Chorus" and receive answers to questions that I post within minutes or hours (sometimes accompanied by strong opinions!) The forum is located at http://talk.consimworld.com/WebX/.ee6b471.
- **Board Game Geek** – www.boardgamegeek.com has a page for each *OCS* game.
- **Grognard** – www.grognard.com is an excellent general wargame resource.
- **Vassal** – www.vassalengine.org is a PC game engine for building and playing online adaptations of board games and card games. There are Vassal modules for all *OCS* titles. Extremely useful for playing even large games without actually laying out the board.

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Starting Positions – This image shows the starting locations for this particular game, showing all the units that have some flexibility in their initial positioning. Note that the Vichy Wagon starts "loaded" with supply, which it is allowed to do per Set Up Note C on page 3 of the *OCS Rules*, if it starts in the same hex with SPs. Per Set Up Note J, all units begin a game "un-fueled."

Token-Sized Trucks and Wagons – Because of the limited numbers of trucks and wagons available in this campaign, the counter mix includes 1T and 2T Truck/Wagon Points in addition to the normal variety that carry 1 SP or 2 SP. Within the counter mix limit, the various truck (and wagon) points combine and divide much like supply points and tokens. Other than the small sizes, these transport points are handled normally.