

THE BATTLES FOR CASSINO

Ultimately the battles for Cassino represented a hollow victory for the Allies. The tremendous casualties and slow, bitter fighting overwhelmed the strategic gains of the campaign. Cassino became the baseline for comparing all the future battles in Italy. Close hand-to-hand fighting in the northern Italian mountains and towns became known as 'little Cassinos' to those who fought there.

Cassino defined all the battles in the Italian Campaign for the next year. From Florence to Pisa, across the Apennine Mountains in the dead of winter, and finally through the Gothic Line and into the Po River valley, the final battles for Italy were all measured against what happened at Cassino. The heroic struggles of infantry on infantry in the almost unbearable conditions elevated the battles for Cassino, making them comparable with the other truly epic battles of World War II.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND

Cassino battles were fought across the mountains, valleys and in the town surrounding the famous monastery. Each battle was ultimately affected by the terrain, weather and the abilities and guts of the individual soldiers who fought them.

Boots on the Ground rules are optional modifications that give players specific flavour representing the battlefield conditions for that area.

MOUNTAIN ROUTE - BATTLE 1 - THE BARRACKS

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - THE BARRACKS (500 POINTS)

The Barracks was a key set of buildings blocking the road to the town of Cassino. Whoever holds the Barracks wins the battle.

Mission selection: (1-3) Fighting Withdrawal, or (4-6) No Retreat.

Mission Rules: Place an objective placed by the Defender in a building. The defender may exchange one HMG in their company for an HMG nest prior to beginning the battle. The mission uses the Night Fighting and Night Attacks rules, found in the *Flames Of War* rulebook, in addition to its normal special rules.

MOUNTAIN ROUTE - BATTLE 2 - SNAKESHEAD RIDGE

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - SNAKESHEAD RIDGE (700 POINTS)

Snakeshead Ridge is a rocky boomerang-shaped ridgeline strewn with boulders leading to Hill 593 and the Cassino Monastery. Its rocky ground makes it impossible to dig foxholes and gorse (thorny) thickets guard its ravines.

Mission selection: (1-3) Breakthrough, (4-6) No Retreat.

Mission Rules: Troops cannot dig Foxholes nor start the game in Prepared Positions. Whenever an Infantry or Man-packed gun team is Gone to Ground, it is considered to be in Bulletproof Cover.

MOUNTAIN ROUTE - BATTLE 3 - HILL 593

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - HILL 593 (900 POINTS)

Hill 593 was the highest point atop Snakeshead Ridge guarding the approaches to the Cassino Monastery.

Mission selection: (1-2) Encounter, (3-4) Hasty Assault, or (5-6) Fighting Withdrawal.

Mission Rules: Troops cannot dig Foxholes nor start the game in Prepared Positions. Whenever an Infantry or Man-packed Gun team is Gone to Ground, it is considered to be in Bulletproof Cover. The defender may exchange one HMG in their company for an HMG Nest prior to beginning the battle.

TOWN ROUTE - BATTLE 1 - CASTLE HILL

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - CASTLE HILL (500 POINTS)

The castle on the hill anchors the defence against any invader approaching Cassino from the north. Approach it with caution if you wish to capture the castle.

Mission selection: (1-3) No Retreat or (4-6) Cauldron.

Mission Rules: The attacker places a building on a hill in the defender's deployment area. Replace all of the mission objectives with a single objective placed in the centre of that building. All attacking platoons use the Cautious Movement rule found in the *Flames Of War* rulebook.



TOWN ROUTE - BATTLE 2 - CONTINENTAL HOTEL

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - CONTINENTAL HOTEL (700 POINTS)

The Continental Hotel commands Highway 6 as it enters Cassino from the north. Manned and fortified it is all but impregnable.

Mission selection: (1-2) No Retreat, (3-4) Cauldron, or (5-6) Fighting Withdrawal.

Mission Rules: Place a large building surrounded by town and rubble in defender's deployment area. All Concealing Terrain is Bulletproof Cover. The defender may deploy any of their HMG or anti-tank gun teams in the large building. Teams deployed this way become HMG or Anti-tank Pillboxes, armed with their original weapons. They are no longer count as a part of their original platoon and instead become bunkers.

TOWN ROUTE - BATTLE 3 - HANGMAN'S HILL

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - HANGMAN'S HILL (900 POINTS)

On a rise just below the monastery stands Hangman's Hill. Ominously it peers down upon the battlefields below.

Mission selection: (1-2) No Retreat, (3-4) Breakout, (5-6) Cauldron.

Mission Rules: The attacker places a hill in the defender's deployment area. Place all of the objectives that the attacker must capture on this hill. All attacking platoons may make a Reconnaissance Deployment (see the *Flames Of War* rulebook) after initial deployment.



LIRI VALLEY ROUTE - BATTLE 1 - THE RAPIDO

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - THE RAPIDO (500 POINTS)

Crossing the Rapido is the first step in attacking Cassino. Holding that bridgehead is the second.

Mission selection: (1-3) River Assault, (4-5) No Retreat, (6) Breakthrough.

Mission Rules: If you are playing a River Assault mission, ignore the Preliminary Bombardment and Limited Fortifications rules. Instead of using the mission's normal Ending the Battle and Deciding Who Won conditions, use the following:

The defender wins if there are no attacking teams on the defender's side of the river on or after the defender's turn six.

The attacker wins if they start any of their turns beginning on turn six with a combat platoon containing at least two teams and the platoon command team dug-in on the defenders side of the river with no defending teams within 4"/10cm.

If you are playing any other mission, play it as normal with no modifications.

LIRI VALLEY ROUTE - BATTLE 2 - GUSTAV LINE

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - THE GUSTAV LINE (700 POINTS)

The trenches, concrete casements, barbed wire, and minefields of the Gustav Line prevented the Allies from quickly securing the road to Rome.

Mission selection: (1-2) No Retreat, (3-4) Breakthrough, (5-6) Fighting Withdrawal.

Mission rules: The defender may place up to two of the following fortifications in their deployment area before placing any objectives: up to one minefield, up to two barbed-wire entanglements, up to one HMG nest.

The attacker may place one more objective in addition to their normal ones. Place this objective using the same instructions as the others. Once all platoons have been deployed but before the game begins, the attacker must remove one of the objectives they placed from the table.

All attacking platoons may make a Reconnaissance Deployment (see page 194 of the *Flames Of War* rulebook) after initial deployment.

LIRI VALLEY ROUTE - BATTLE 3 - HITLER LINE

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - THE HITLER LINE (900 POINTS)

An even more hardened defence awaited those who fought in the Liri Valley on their way to Rome.

Mission selection: (1-2) No Retreat, (3-4) Breakthrough, (5-6) Fighting Withdrawal.

Mission rules: The defender may place up to four of the following fortifications in their deployment area before placing any objectives: up to one minefield, up to four barbed-wire entanglements, up to two HMG nest.

The attacker may place one more objective in addition to their normal ones. Place this objective using the same instructions as the others. Once all platoons have been deployed but before the game begins, the attacker must remove one of the objectives they placed from the table.

All attacking platoons may make a Reconnaissance Deployment (see the *Flames Of War* rulebook) after initial deployment.