

KASSERINE

STARTER SET

BATTLE OF KASSERINE PASS
SCENARIO



FLAMES OF WAR
THE WORLD WAR II MINIATURES GAME

THE BATTLE OF KASSERINE PASS – 19 FEB 1943

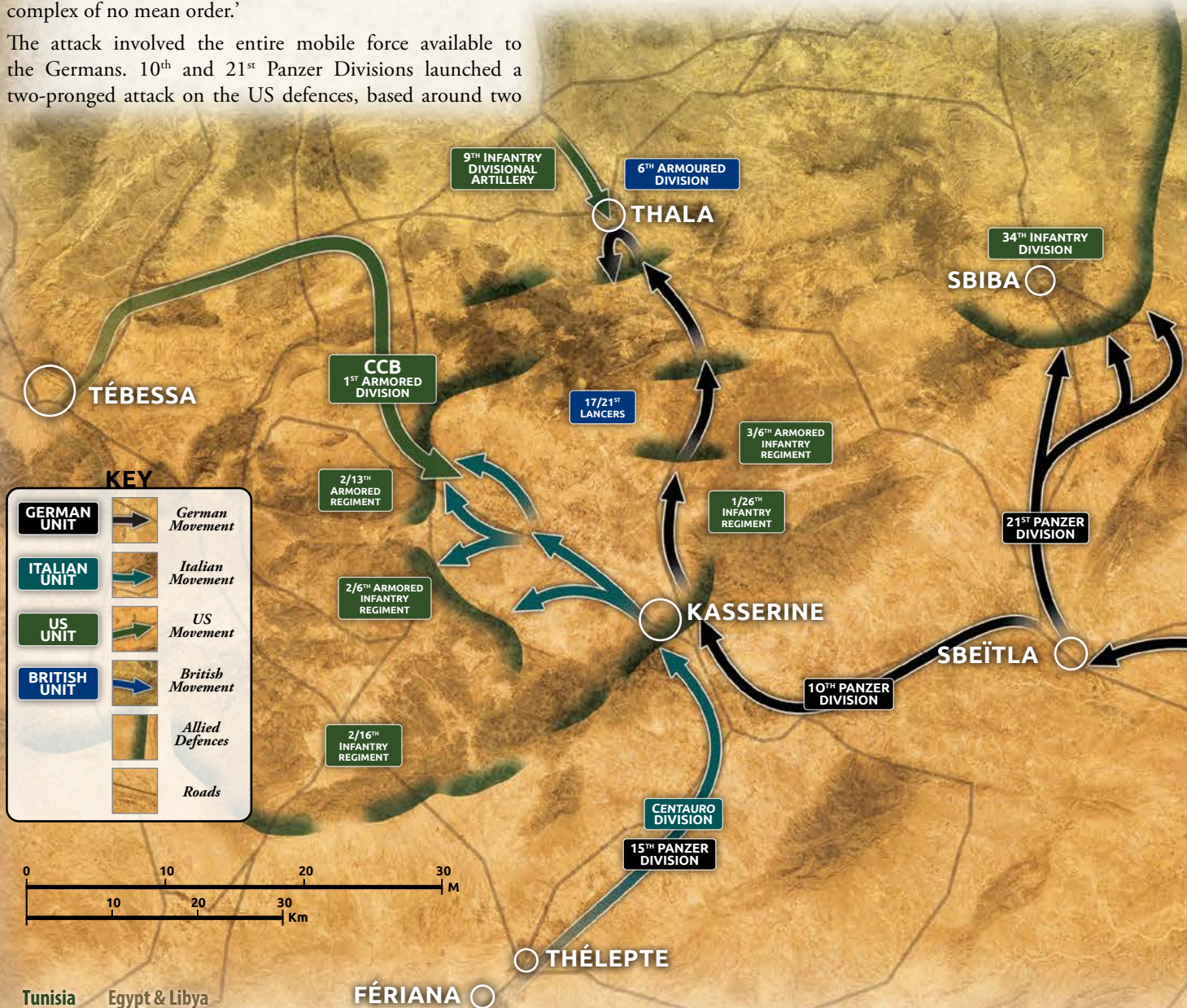
A mountainous area separates Tunisia's hot arid south from the fertile north. Two mountain chains, the Eastern and Western Dorsals, form an inverted V-shape, with high rocky plains in between. Passes through the Dorsals were strategically critical. One such pass, at Kasserine, would be the site of the Americans' first major battle.

Rommel was preparing to defend against the advancing Eighth Army at the Mareth Line in the south, which he knew would be harder with the Americans threatening his rear. He had a poor opinion of the leadership and morale of the inexperienced Americans, and hoped to inflict on them a swift and demoralising defeat, to 'instil in them an inferiority complex of no mean order.'

The attack involved the entire mobile force available to the Germans. 10th and 21st Panzer Divisions launched a two-pronged attack on the US defences, based around two

hills east of the town of Sidi Bou Zid, in the early hours of 14 February, under the cover of a heavy sandstorm.

Heavily outnumbered, tanks of 1st Armored Division's Combat Command A were overwhelmed by the massed attack. Severely mauled, but narrowly escaping complete destruction, the survivors retreated to Sbeitla to regroup. A combined-arms force comprising two battalions of the 168th Infantry Regiment and various supporting units were left encircled by the advancing enemy on the two hills east of the town. They were denied permission to withdraw, and instead ordered to wait for reinforcements. These would never arrive.



Tunisia Egypt & Libya

FÉRIANA

1943

14-24 January

Casablanca Conference: Roosevelt, Churchill and Free French leaders plan next phase of Allied strategy in Europe

23 January

British capture Tripoli

29 January

Axis forces recapture Benghazi

30 January

5th Panzer Army captures Faïd Pass, opening the way to western Tunisia

1 February

US attempt to recapture Faïd is repulsed

2 February

US reorganise for defence at Sidi Bou Zid

4 February

Eighth Army reaches Tunisian border

14 February

Operation Frühlingwind: armoured attack against CCA of 1st Armored Division at Sidi Bou Zid

15 February

Counterattack by 1st Armored Regiment is crushed and CCA withdraws to Sbeitla

16 February

Germans occupy Gafsa

17-18 February

Germans capture Fériana, Thélepte and Sbeitla. Americans withdraw to Sbibá and Kasserine

On 15 February Combat Command C counterattacked out of the town, led by M4 Shermans of 1st Armored Regiment, supported by tank destroyers of the 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion. However, the American commanders had still drastically underestimated the strength of the German force. The outnumbered Americans now had a first-hand lesson in the effective German tactic—by now very familiar to the British—of feigning retreat, thereby luring the pursuing enemy tanks into a deadly screen of waiting 8.8cm anti-tank guns. The German force also included several Tiger heavy tanks of the 501st Heavy Panzer Battalion, which were soon to earn a fearsome reputation with the Americans. The counterattack came nowhere close to reaching the trapped infantry battalions, who were now belatedly ordered to try to escape under cover of darkness. Some managed to do so, but most were captured.

By 17 February, the spearhead of the German advance, including around 80 Panzer IV and several Tiger tanks, were threatening the town of Sbeitla, and the Americans were forced to evacuate the town.

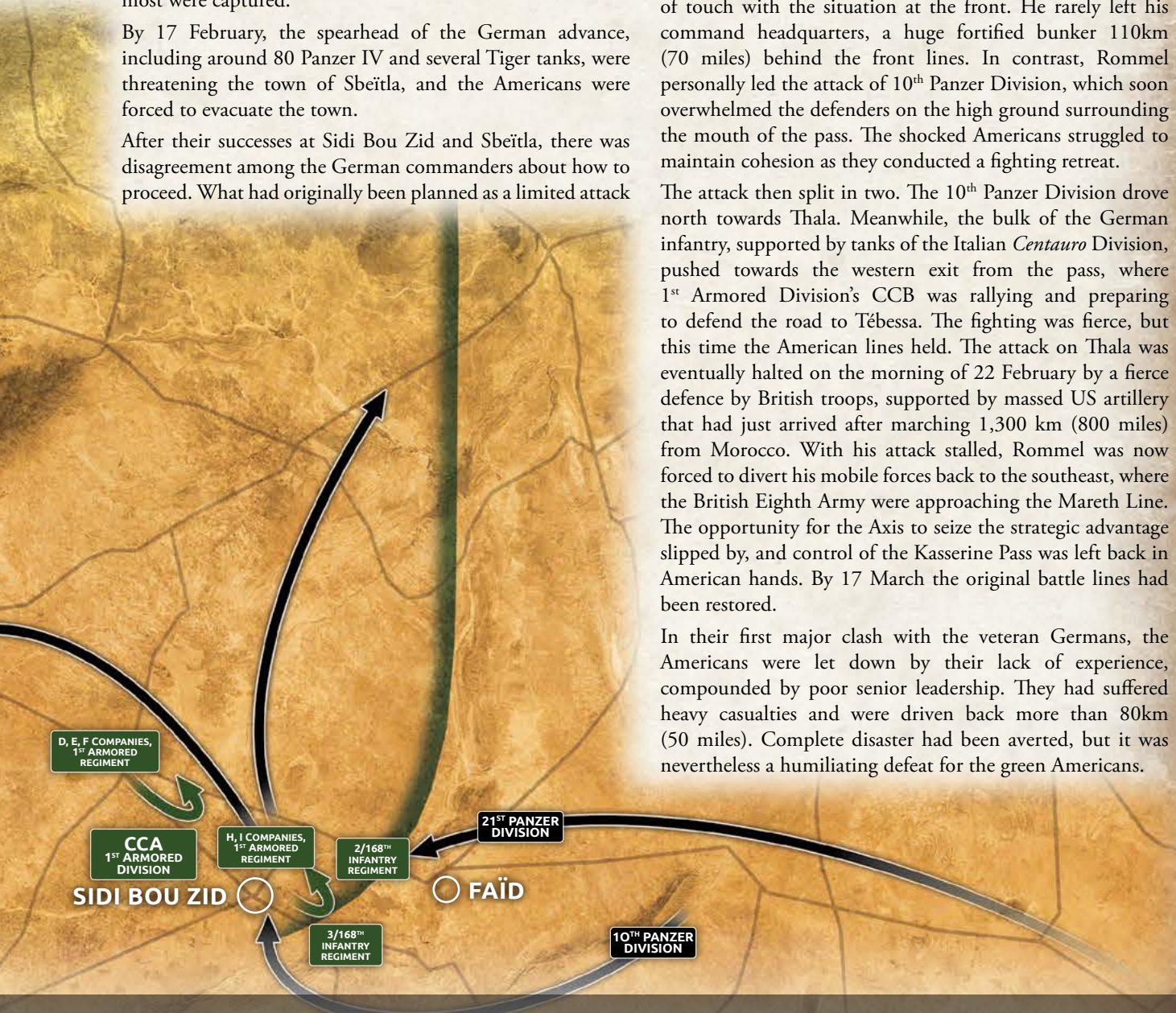
After their successes at Sidi Bou Zid and Sbeitla, there was disagreement among the German commanders about how to proceed. What had originally been planned as a limited attack

could potentially be turned into a full-scale breakthrough. Rommel wanted to capture Tébessa, the Allies' main supply base for southern Tunisia, and then press on toward the coast at Bône, splitting the First Army in half. He was instead ordered to attack further north towards Thala, a town crucial to the Allies' lines of communication. Rommel concluded that the weakest part of the Allied lines was the Kasserine Pass, an X-shaped gap in the Western Dorsal mountains a mile wide at its narrowest point. The initial infantry attacks, on the morning of 20 February, were successfully repulsed by the 26th Infantry Regiment, supported by tanks and tank destroyers. In the afternoon, 10th Panzer Division arrived to reinforce the attack.

The Allies' command and communications were chaotic. The II Corps commander, Lloyd Fredendall, was often out of touch with the situation at the front. He rarely left his command headquarters, a huge fortified bunker 110km (70 miles) behind the front lines. In contrast, Rommel personally led the attack of 10th Panzer Division, which soon overwhelmed the defenders on the high ground surrounding the mouth of the pass. The shocked Americans struggled to maintain cohesion as they conducted a fighting retreat.

The attack then split in two. The 10th Panzer Division drove north towards Thala. Meanwhile, the bulk of the German infantry, supported by tanks of the Italian *Centauro* Division, pushed towards the western exit from the pass, where 1st Armored Division's CCB was rallying and preparing to defend the road to Tébessa. The fighting was fierce, but this time the American lines held. The attack on Thala was eventually halted on the morning of 22 February by a fierce defence by British troops, supported by massed US artillery that had just arrived after marching 1,300 km (800 miles) from Morocco. With his attack stalled, Rommel was now forced to divert his mobile forces back to the southeast, where the British Eighth Army were approaching the Mareth Line. The opportunity for the Axis to seize the strategic advantage slipped by, and control of the Kasserine Pass was left back in American hands. By 17 March the original battle lines had been restored.

In their first major clash with the veteran Germans, the Americans were let down by their lack of experience, compounded by poor senior leadership. They had suffered heavy casualties and were driven back more than 80km (50 miles). Complete disaster had been averted, but it was nevertheless a humiliating defeat for the green Americans.



18 February
German reconnaissance arrives at Kasserine

19 February
21st Panzer Division unsuccessfully attacks Sbiba

19 February
German attack at Kasserine Pass begins

20 February
US retreat from Kasserine Pass

21 February
CCB of 1st Armored Division defends the road to Tébessa

21 February
10th Panzer Division attacks Thala

22 February
German attack at Thala is halted by heavy bombardment by 9th Infantry Division's artillery

22 February
General Ernest Harmon arrives to assume command of the defence

23 February
Lacking enough mobile forces to overwhelm the defence, Rommel calls off the attack; Axis forces retreat through Kasserine Pass

25 February
Allies reoccupy Kasserine Pass

KASSERINE PASS SCENARIO

AMERICAN ORDERS

You must hold a superior force of German tanks until more troops from your division can form a defesive positions to hold the pass.

GERMAN ORDERS

You orders are to breakthrough the American positions and push on to take the enemy's main supply base and inflict a morale sapping defeat on their inexperienced troops.

SPECIAL RULES

- Ambush (American)

SETTING UP

1. Lay out the terrain on a 6' x 4' (180cm x 120cm) table as shown on the map opposite. Place two Objectives on the spots marked **X**.

DEPLOYMENT

2. Starting with the American Player, the players place Ranged In markers for all of their deployed (including in Ambush) Artillery Units.
3. The American Player may hold one of their Units in Ambush.
4. The American Player then places all of their remaining Units in their table half.
5. The German Player places their Units in their table half at least 16"/40cm from the table centre line.
6. All Infantry and Gun Teams start the game in Foxholes.

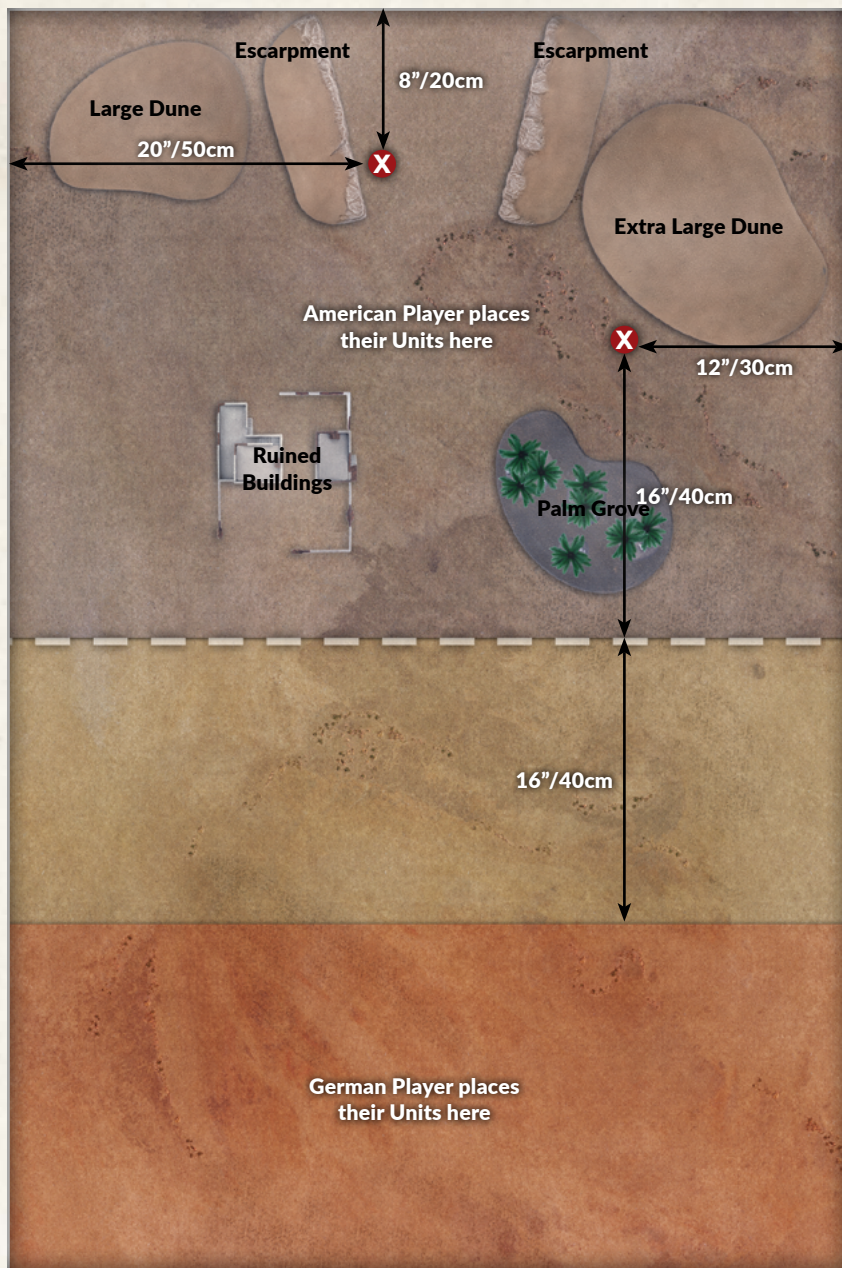
STARTING THE GAME

The German Player has the first turn.

WINNING THE GAME

- The German Player wins if they end their turn Holding an Objective.
- The American Player wins if they end a turn on or after the fourth turn with no Attacking Tank, Infantry, or Gun teams within 8"/20cm of the Objectives.

Forces are unbalanced, much as they were during the actual battles for Kasserine. The American player has less points worth of troops, but all they have to do is hang on until turn four and ensure the German Player has not taken the objective, and ideally, has not got any units within 8"/20cm of the Objectives. For the German the key it to take one of the Objectives as fast as possible and keep the offensive rolling.



TERRAIN

The terrain used in this Scenario can all be found in the new Desert Terrain bundles. For the above table we have used items from:

- BB951 Gaming Mat – Grassland/Desert
- FW256-BB05 Desert Features Bundle
- FW256-BB06 Desert Hills Bundle
- FW256-BB03 Desert Ruins Bundle

SCENARIO FORCES

Playing this Scenario using forces from *Kasserine: Complete World War II Starter Set*.



AMERICAN FORCE CCB, 1ST ARMORED DIVISION

- M3 LEE TANK COMPANY HQ (MU103)
- 1x M3 Lee (short 75mm) 5 points
- M3 LEE TANK PLATOON (MU104)
- 3x M3 Lee (short 75mm) 15 points
- M4 SHERMAN TANK PLATOON (MU106)
- 3x M4 Sherman (75mm) 24 points
- M3 STUART TANK PLATOON (MU102)
- 5x M3 Stuart (37mm) 10 points

TOTAL 54 POINTS



GERMAN FORCE 8. PANZERREGIMENT, 15. PANZERDIVISION

- PANZER III TANK COMPANY HQ (MG101)
- 1x Panzer III (short 5cm) 5 points
- PANZER III (MIXED) TANK PLATOON (MG106)
- 3x Panzer III (long 5cm)
- 2x Panzer III (short 7.5cm) 37 points
- PANZER IV TANK PLATOON (MG109)
- 3x Panzer IV (long 7.5cm) 30 points
- 5CM ANTI-TANK GUN PLATOON (MG114)
- 3x 5cm guns 12 points

TOTAL 84 POINTS

SCENARIO FORCES MORE OPTIONS

If you want to play a larger game you can also add to the *Kasserine: Complete World War II Starter Set* forces by adding these units from the *American M3 Lee Tank Company* (USAB12) and *German DAK Panzer Company* (GEAB22).



- add 2x M4 Sherman (75mm) to the above M4 Sherman Tank Platoon +16 points
- M3 LEE TANK PLATOON (MU104)
- 4x M3 Lee (short 75mm) 20 points
- M7 PRIEST
- ARMORED ARTILLERY BATTERY (MU123)
- 3x M7 Priest (105mm) 22 points
- M10 3-INCH TANK DESTROYER PLATOON (MU112)
- 4x M10 (3-inch) 32 points

TOTAL 144 POINTS

- PANZER III (UPARMOURED) TANK PLATOON (MG105)
- 4x Panzer III (Uparmoured) 32 points
- PANZER III (UPARMOURED) TANK PLATOON (MG105)
- 3x Panzer III (Uparmoured) 24 points
- 8.8CM HEAVY AA PLATOON (MG122)
- 2x 8.8cm guns 12 points
- 10.5CM ARTILLERY BATTERY (MG120)
- 4x 10.5cm howitzers 14 points
- PANZER IV TANK COMPANY HQ (MG108)
- 1x Panzer IV (long 7.5cm) 10 points
- PANZER IV TANK PLATOON (MG109)
- 3x Panzer IV (long 7.5cm) 30 points

TOTAL 206 POINTS