

# FIRE & MOVEMENT FOLIO GAME EXCLUSIVE RULES

## EL ALAMEIN: ALAM EL HALFA, SEPTEMBER 1942



### EXCLUSIVE RULES

#### 10.0 INTRODUCTION

10.1 First Player

#### 11.0 REINFORCEMENTS

11.1 Allied Replacements

11.2 German Replacements

#### 12.0 LINES OF COMMUNICATION

#### 13.0 THE START LINE

#### 14.0 MINEFIELDS

14.1 Friendly Minefields

14.2 Enemy Minefields

14.3 Variable Minefield Deployment

#### 15.0 OBJECTIVES

15.1 Stage #1 Marker Placement

15.2 Stage #2 Marker Placement

15.3 Capturing Objective Markers

#### 16.0 QATTARA HEXES

#### 17.0 DIVERSIONARY ATTACK

#### 18.0 SUPPORT FIRE

##### DIMINISHMENT

18.1 Support Fire Random Draw

18.2 Support Fire Coordination

#### 19.0 VICTORY CONDITIONS

19.1 Automatic German Victory

19.2 British Victory

#### 20.0 SCENARIOS

#### 21.0 GAME NOTES

#### 10.0 INTRODUCTION

*El Alamein: Rommel at Alam el Halfa* is a simulation of the battle in Egypt between forces of the British Commonwealth and those of Germany and Italy. The Germans, under the command of the resourceful Gen. Rommel, conducted a wide flanking maneuver south around the British defenses to strike towards the Allied rear areas east of El Alamein. British Gen. Montgomery had been forewarned of Rommel's plans by Ultra intelligence, and had set up a defense at Alam el Halfa to repel the German tanks.

##### 10.1 First Player

The German (Axis) player is the first player throughout the game (see 3.0).

#### 11.0 REINFORCEMENTS

Neither side receives any reinforcements during the game.

##### 11.1 Allied Replacements

During each of his own movement phases, the British player automatically receives one replacement, which may be used to bring any eliminated unit onto the map (as depleted), or rebuild any depleted unit already on the map (even if within an enemy ZOC). Replacements must be deployed immediately; they may not be accumulated for a later turn. If no counter is available for a replacement, the eligible replacement is lost. Each British replacement unit received must arrive on the British supply symbol hex on the northeastern map-edge (3306), but may only arrive if that hex is not presently occupied by any Axis unit or within any Axis unit's ZOC.

##### 11.2 Axis Replacements

Once per game, during his own movement phase, the Axis player automatically receives one replacement. It may be used to bring any eliminated unit onto the map (as depleted), or rebuild any depleted unit already on the map (even if within an enemy ZOC). The Axis player is not required to utilize his eligible replacement during any particular game turn, but once he does so, no further replacements are afforded to the Axis player throughout the remainder of the game. An arriving Axis replacement must arrive on the Axis supply symbol hex on the northwestern map-edge (0101) but may only arrive if that hex is not presently occupied by any Allied unit or within any Allied unit's ZOC.

#### 12.0 LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Each side has a supply symbol along the edge of the map, representing their lines of communication to rear areas off the map. There is one British supply symbol (hex 3306), and one Axis supply symbol (hex 0101). If any supply symbol hex is currently occupied by an enemy unit, the side that lost its supply symbol will lose half (rounded down) its support fire marker allotment out of each subsequent turn's allotment while that supply symbol hex is occupied by any enemy unit.

#### 13.0 THE START LINE

The orange hex line running north to south on the western side of the map represents the starting line that divided the Axis and Allied positions just prior to Rommel's offensive, and it serves as the set-up boundary for both sides. The start line also represents the area, roughly, that had been mined by the Germans, such that

each hex west of and adjacent to the “Start Line” is considered a German minefield hex, and is governed by the rules below (14.0).

#### 14.0 MINEFIELDS

Minefield hexes are represented on the map and are considered permanent terrain features that can neither be created nor destroyed during the course of the game. A minefield friendly to a player at the beginning of the game remains friendly throughout the game. Likewise, enemy minefields do not become friendly when captured; rather, their effects remain throughout the game.

**Exception:** Some Allied minefields exist as markers and are deployed on the map during the British set-up (see 14.3).

**NOTE:** Zones of Control extend into enemy minefield hexes normally. No unit (except commando units) may move from EZOC to EZOC in a minefield hex.

##### 14.1 Friendly Minefields

Friendly minefields have no combat effects on any friendly units, but friendly units must expend +2 movement points to enter a friendly minefield hex, even via a track, road, or railroad.

A unit may retreat or displace into or through a friendly minefield normally, with no effect to the retreating unit.

##### 14.2 Enemy Minefields

Enemy minefields, if within an enemy ZOC, require a unit to expend its entire movement to be entered. This means that a unit must begin its movement adjacent to an enemy minefield (if within enemy ZOC) to enter that minefield hex. If an enemy minefield hex is *not* within an enemy ZOC, a unit must expend +2 movement points to enter an enemy minefield hex.

A unit may retreat into or through an enemy minefield, but is depleted as a result (or eliminated if already depleted or a one-sided unit). No unit, however, may ever displace (see 7.7.2) into an enemy minefield.

Any attacks on an enemy unit in a minefield hex must be resolved using the “Mines” terrain type on the Combat Results Table (regardless of which direction the attack is from). Minefields in this game, being in-hex instead of hexside are not nullified by attacks from any other direction or multiple directions. Attacks on any enemy unit in a friendly minefield hex (friendly to the attacker) suffer no penalty.

**Note:** Minefield hexes are never destroyed, even after an attack or a bombardment into a minefield hex, nor even if occupied by any enemy unit.

##### 14.3 Variable Minefield Deployment

The British player is provided with four minefield markers which he may place anywhere on the map, east of the Start Line, except in any hex that is already printed with a minefield symbol, supply symbol hex, or Qattara Depression terrain.

The British player must place all of his minefield markers during the British set-up, and once placed, they may never move. Otherwise, the British minefield markers function as minefields per 14.0 in all respects.

**Designer’s Note:** This rule simulates the German underestimation of the extent and depth of the British minefields.

#### 15.0 OBJECTIVES

To represent the effect of Ultra Intelligence and the foreknowledge that Gen. Montgomery had about Rommel’s operational objectives, the Axis player is provided with two objective markers (Stage #1 and Stage #2) that the Axis player must place on the map, explained immediately below. These objective markers, once placed on the map, become mandatory objective hexes that the Axis side must capture during the game to achieve a victory. Failing to capture both of these objective markers results in an automatic defeat for the Axis player, although their capture does not achieve an automatic victory, but are merely requisites for victory (see 19.0).

##### 15.1 Stage #1 Marker Placement

When placing the two objective markers, the Axis player must place the “Stage #1” objective marker first. The Stage #1 objective marker must be placed east of El Alamein (1407), but *not* closer to any railroad hex than the Stage #2 marker when it is placed (see below). Once placed, the Stage #1 objective marker cannot be moved by either side.

##### 15.2 Stage #2 Marker Placement

Next, the Axis player must place the Stage #2 objective marker second. The Stage #2 objective marker must be placed east of El Alamein (1407), and *closer* to any railroad hex (east of El Alamein) than the Stage #1 objective marker, and it must also not be closer to the Stage #1 marker than to any railroad hex (in other words, it must be closer to a railroad hex than it is to the Stage #1 objective marker). Once placed, the Stage #2 objective marker cannot be moved by either side.

##### 15.3 Capturing Objective Markers

It is not actually required that the Axis side captures the Stage #1 objective marker before the Stage #2 objective marker, but both must be captured to qualify for victory per 19.0. An objective marker is considered captured by the Axis side as of the instant that any Axis unit enters the hex where it had been placed (even as the result of a retreat or displacement). Once an objective marker hex is occupied by any Axis unit, it is removed from the map and qualifies towards the achievement of a German victory (see 19.0).

Allied units have no effect upon objective marker hexes, regardless of when or how often entered by any Allied units, and objective markers have no effect upon movement, ZOC, or combat in any way.

#### 16.0 QATTARA HEXES

The Qattara hexes printed on the map represent the precipices and soft sand that is impassable to vehicles. As such, no unit (from either side) may ever move into any Qattara hex, except via a track.

#### 17.0 DIVERSIONARY ATTACK

Representing Rommel’s diversionary attack near the coast, the Axis player may, during the first two game turns *only*, declare the results of any land combat involving at least one Italian land unit to be a “dot” (no effect) result instead. As such, a no effect result thus applies to both the Axis and the Allied side equally in such a case.

This rule applies regardless of which side is conducting the attack (during the first two game turns only), although the Axis player may decide its implementation, or not, on a combat-by-combat basis. In other words, he may apply this rule to some combat results but not to others, or to all combat results, or none at all. However, this rule is never applicable after the first two game turns.

**Note:** Any support fire markers that had been applied (by either side) to a combat result are expended normally for that game turn, even if that combat result is declared to be a “no effect” result instead.

#### 18.0 SUPPORT FIRE DIMINISHMENT

The Allied player’s allotment of Support Fire chits is immediately reduced by one (-1) per each ridge hex of the Ruweisat Ridge and/or the Alam El Halfa Ridge that is occupied by any enemy unit.

##### 18.1 Support Fire Random Draw

Instead of the normal procedure of selecting Support Fire markers (per 8.1), each player must draw his eligible allotment of Support Fire markers *randomly* from his own Support Fire chit pool.

**Note:** *Insofar as support fire is drawn randomly, neither player is entitled to know what specific Support Fire markers remain in the Support Fire chit pool.*

This rule is, of course, not applicable when a player is allotted his entire pool of Support Fire markers.

### **18.2 Support Fire Coordination**

Both players may allocate Support Fire markers per 8.3 normally, regardless of the type of unit or nationality of friendly units involved in combat (whether attacking or defending).

### **18.3 Bombardment Range Limitations**

Because of the map scale *vis-à-vis* unit sizes, bombardment range in this game is not unlimited (contrary to standard rule 8.4). As such, both sides are limited to conducting each bombardment within a range of hexes equal to the bombarding Support Fire marker's support fire number, counted from the nearest friendly land unit (of any type or nationality).

**Example:** *The British player intends to conduct a bombardment with a "+2" Support Fire marker, and so he may only bombard an enemy unit that is within two hexes of any British land unit with that Support Fire marker.*

## **19.0 VICTORY CONDITIONS**

The Axis player wins the game if he can, at any time (even if only momentarily), demonstrate that any railroad hex east of El Alamein is within any Axis unit's ZOC, provided that no Allied unit occupies that same hex.

If the Axis player fails to achieve a victory before the end of that last game turn, the Axis side loses the game.

### **19.1 Automatic Axis Victory**

The Axis player can achieve an automatic victory if El Alamein (1407) is currently Axis-controlled as of the end of the last game turn, although both objective markers must be captured nonetheless (see 15.0).

### **19.2 British Victory**

The British player wins the game by preventing the Axis player from achieving his victory conditions as outlined above (19.0).

## **20.0 SCENARIOS**

*El Alamein* has one historic scenario of the German attempt to capture or cut off El Alamein.

### **Set-up (German)**

The Axis player sets up first, and he may set-up all of his units (including Italian) anywhere west of the orange "Start Line" printed on the map. However, the Axis player places his "Stage #1" and "Stage #2" markers per the stipulations of 15.1 and 15.2.

### **Set-up (British)**

The British player sets up second, and he may set-up all of his units (including Commonwealth) anywhere east of the orange "Start Line."

## **21.0 GAME NOTES**

When initially designing this game, I examined the 1973 SPI game *El Alamein*. Being a progenitor of the *Fire & Movement* folio system, it seemed like a good place to start. However, I came to realize it was a substandard simulation (although, as a game, it can be argued it's fun and conveys a feel for the battle). The SPI map was not quite right in terms of triangulating known locations, besides being quite plain and the order-of-battle was indiscernible. The units were not printed with any historical identification, although there was some resemblance to the historic order-of-battle. Without more specific information, I couldn't trust its accuracy, so I had to start from scratch. This involved extra time and effort to put together the design, but it gave me an opportunity to thoroughly research the order-of-battle and make sure it was accurate. OOB research is perhaps the most challenging component of wargame design, especially for obscure topics, but the final result is rewarding once it all comes together.

Beyond the OOB, the new map provided in this game is notable for its accurate terrain features derived from a US Army Corps of Engineering compilation of British war-time maps (circa 1941 and 1942). Every contour of every ridge or depression is a thoroughly precise tracing of the actual cartographic print, with some occasional nudging to conform to the hex grid. The map is almost precise enough it could be used for land navigation of the area (well, in 1942, anyway). I jest, of course, but the detail is indeed very high for the scale portrayed.

Incidentally, players may be interested to know that the various landmarks throughout the map are more about *verisimilitude* than functionality. The depressions, for instance, are representative of minor indentations in the desert if they dipped at least 50 feet—anything less was not portrayed. And, as such, their effect during play is mostly negligible. The ridges are no less accurate, although they are not necessarily proportionally equal in height. The "Al Taga" plateau is actually three times

higher in some places than the Ruweisat Ridge just south of El Alamein, and its gradual slopes are taller than the ridge for miles northward.

The map does not show this comparative relation simply because the featured ridges represent sudden rises from the desert that create a distinct obstacle to movement and line-of-sight (in relation to the surrounding terrain). This is portrayed for purposes of presenting defensible positions. As another example, though not portrayed on the map, the landscape just south of Ruweisat Ridge is actually higher in elevation than the ridge by about 10-20 feet, but its height is a gentle rise and not pronounced enough to be particularly defensible. In terms of its height above sea level, the Ruweisat Ridge is not significant, but its sudden protrusion from the desert floor is what the terrain feature represents.

As a simulation, the game is a challenge for the Axis player, as was the historic situation for Rommel. It may be true that Rommel had no real hope for success when considering the obstacles—figurative and literal—he was up against, but the Axis player's prospects are decidedly better, in any case. Had Rommel's tanks inflicted severe losses upon the British and broken through, the battle would not have necessarily been decided by that event alone—the Allied army had ample reserves, supplies, and depth to stabilize a burgeoning disaster, if it occurred. But, in game terms, it's enough to simply put the British player in that position, which is represented by the victory conditions merely requiring the Axis player to cut the rail line between El Alamein and the east map edge. This represents the severing of British supplies and reinforcements from Alexandria, which could have been enough to unravel British defenses or morale, and this premise is to be assumed if the Axis player can at least get that far.

However, in fairness, it's debatable whether the game's victory conditions are anything more than Rommel's best prospects, however unlikely. Nevertheless, the mercurial nature of war means the whole campaign could have potentially been upended by one such event, and this game assumes the worst case scenario for the Allies in North Africa, which is precisely what commanders endeavor to avoid, however remote the possibility. Besides, who can say what the resourceful Desert Fox may have been able to achieve had he gained the initiative? For the want of a nail... the kingdom was lost, as the saying goes.

—Eric Harvey

## INTEGRATED COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

<b>Terrain Type</b>	<b>Combat Differential (attacking strength minus defending strength)</b>												
<b>Mines (enemy)</b>	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10					
<b>Rough, Ridge</b>	-2	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10				
<b>Town, Marsh</b>	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10			
<b>Dunes, Stony</b>	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10		
<b>Desert, Depression</b>	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2, +3	+4, +5	+6, +7	+8, +9	+10	
<b>Die Roll</b>	<b>Result</b>												
1	(A)	A3	A2	•	Ex	Ex	D2	D2	D2	D3	De	De	
2	(A)	(A)	A3	A2	•	Ex	Ex	Ex	D2	D2	D3	De	
3	(A)	(A)	(A)	A3	A2	•	Ex	Ex	Ex	D2	D2	D3	
4	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	A3	A2	•	Ex	Ex	Ex	D2	D2	
5	Ae	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	A3	A2	•	Ex	Ex	Ex	D2	
6	Ae	Ae	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	(A)	A1	•	Ex	Ex	Ex	

**De** = The defending unit is eliminated.

**D3** = The defending unit must retreat three hexes (or deplete one unit of the defending player's choice, instead; see 7.8).

**D2** = The defending unit must retreat two hexes (or deplete one unit of the defending player's choice, instead; see 7.8).

**Ex** = One attacking unit and one defending unit must be flipped to their depleted side (or eliminated if already depleted).

**A1** = The attacking unit(s) must retreat one hex (or deplete one unit of the attacking player's choice, instead; see 7.8)

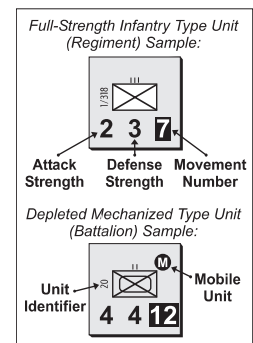
**A2** = The attacking unit(s) must retreat two hexes (or deplete one unit of the attacking player's choice, instead; see 7.8)

**A3** = The attacking unit(s) must retreat three hexes (or deplete one unit of the attacking player's choice, instead; see 7.8)

**(A)** = One attacking unit must be depleted (or eliminated if already depleted).

**Ae** = All attacking units are eliminated.

• = No effect.



## CREDITS

**Design & Development:** Eric R. Harvey

**Playtesters:** Eric R. Harvey, Joseph

Miranda, Gene Wytrykus

**Map Graphics:** Brandon

Pennington & Eric R. Harvey

**Counter Graphics:** Eric R. Harvey

**Rules Booklet:** Callie Cummins & Lisé Patterson

**Cover Design:** Lisé Patterson & Chris Dickson

© 2015 Decision Games, Bakersfield,

CA. Made & printed in the USA.

[EIAIamein\_Folio-v5F]