

Desert Pass – Blitzkrieg Commander battle report

26th November 2007: Nik & Dean, Taunton, Somerset

Desert Pass: Tunisia, January 1943 Afrika Korps v British & American allies DAK 1500 points v Allies 3000 points

Scenario: Early in 1943 and dug-in Afrika Korps, heavily outnumbered, wait for an overwhelming Allied force to try to force their way through a critical pass...

Aerial reconnaissance from the Allies shows the terrain, but doesn't reveal the well-established, dug-in and camouflaged Germans:



Deployment & Forces:

Afrika Korps = 1500 points:

CO, 2 x HQ, FAO, FAC

12 x Infantry

2 x Support MG

2 x Support Mortars

5 x Transport (half tracks / trucks)

2 x PzIV long

1 x Marder

1 x 75/76mm ATg; 1 x 88mm ATG

1 x Nebelwerfer; 1 x 105mm artillery

1 x Me109; 1 x Stuka



German baseline



German line - view from the German left flank



From the DAK lines towards the pass...

Commonwealth & US = 3000 points:

Commonwealth:

- CO, HQ, FAO, FAC
- 1 x Recce Marmon
- 6 x Infantry
- 3 x Support MG
- 1 x Support Mortar
- 2 x Combat Engineers
- 1 x Bofors AA
- 3 x Sherman
- 3 x Valentine 6pdr
- 3 x Churchill 6pdr
- 1 x Bishop; 1 x Priest
- 1 x Hurricane
- 2 x Carriers

US:

- CO, 2 x HQ, FAO
- 1 x Recce White Scout Car
- 8 x Infantry
- 2 x Support MG
- 1 x Support Mortar
- 2 x Combat Engineers
- 3 x Stuarts
- 3 x Lees
- 1 x M16
- 3 x M3 half-tracks
- 2 x 57mm ATG
- 3 x 105mm howitzers artillery
- 2 x Trucks



Allied baseline

Allied game-plan was simple - as Dean tells it: "US foot-slogging infantry to yomp up & seize the hill in front of them. Mechanised infantry was to support the armour in their advance as they rushed the pass, fully expecting to take fire in doing so. The British armour would then move through whatever was left of the US armour, with the infantry tanks engaging and destroying the Afrika Korps as they encountered them. The British Cruisers were tasked with taking out the DAK anti-tank capability as soon as they could. Commonwealth infantry would seize the second objective, moving as quickly as possible through the

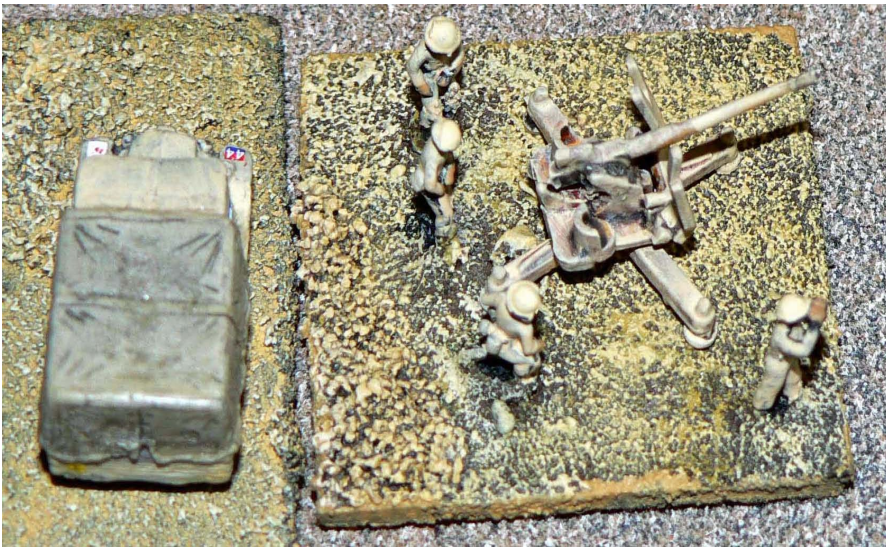
rough ground in front of it".

Early Game:

The Afrika Korps was more than content to sit in their dug-in positions and wait for the Allied forces to advance-to-contact. Their deployment was suited to the terrain and allowed for tactical flexibility with an acknowledgement that the Allied armour would attempt a force through the central pass...With all forces dug-in the DAK resisted the temptation to open up on the massed Commonwealth forces...

Early moves saw the Commonwealth allies advance cautiously - the US foot-slogging infantry really didn't want to get going [in fact, they only moved a total of 50cm forward in the whole game!]

The DAK used its artillery and air support to good [if not decisive] effect - one of the key points of the game came in the first air attack by the DAK against the advancing Commonwealth: despite an abundance of AA fire from the Bofors & Command stands in proximity, the crazed Luftwaffe Glory Boy decided to attempt a strafing in his Me109 - and was promptly shot to ribbons...much rejoicing from the Allied commander!



Bofors firing at the Me109 on approach...



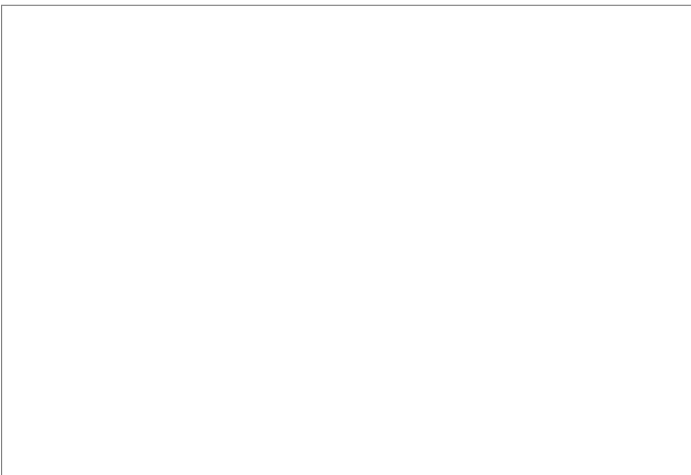
Resulting in this...Luftwaffe pilot heading back to his own lines, tail between his legs!!!

Mid-game:

The mid-game saw the Commonwealth forces advance steadily (if somewhat unpredictably!) towards the pass - the US footsloggers really didn't want to know...and varyingly accurate artillery & air attack on both sides saw some damage inflicted, but nothing decisive...British armour started to gain a foothold as the US drew fire moving into the pass...

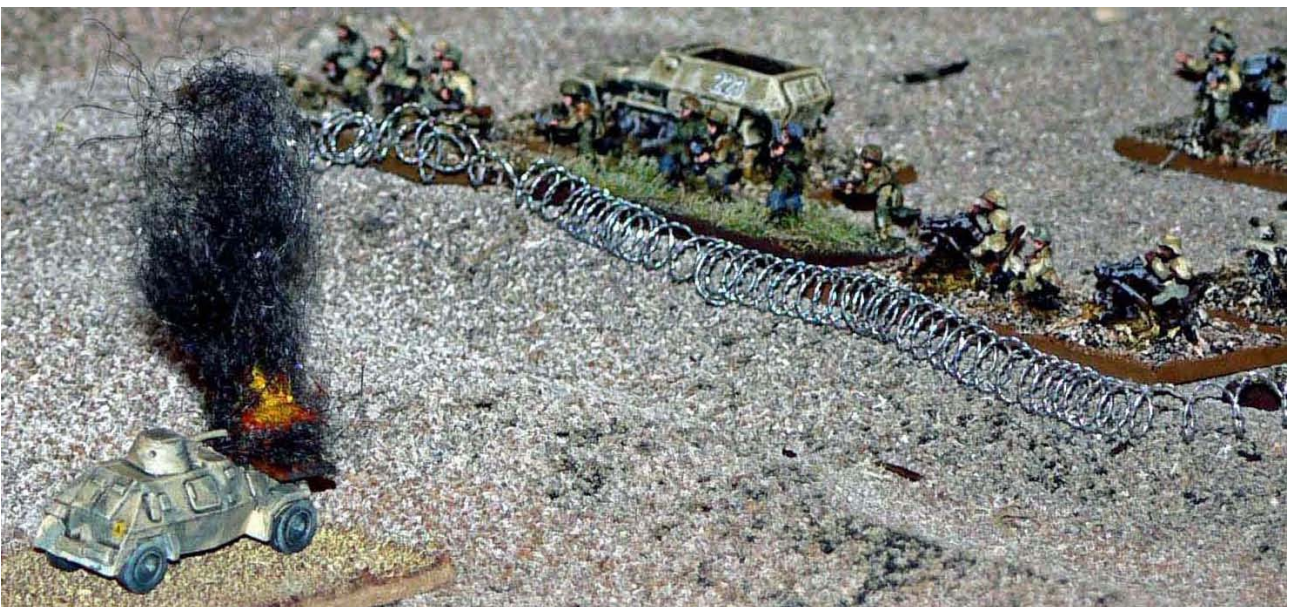


The Allied advance



The Allies press on towards the pass

At which point the Commonwealth Recce unit gets a bit **too** adventurous:

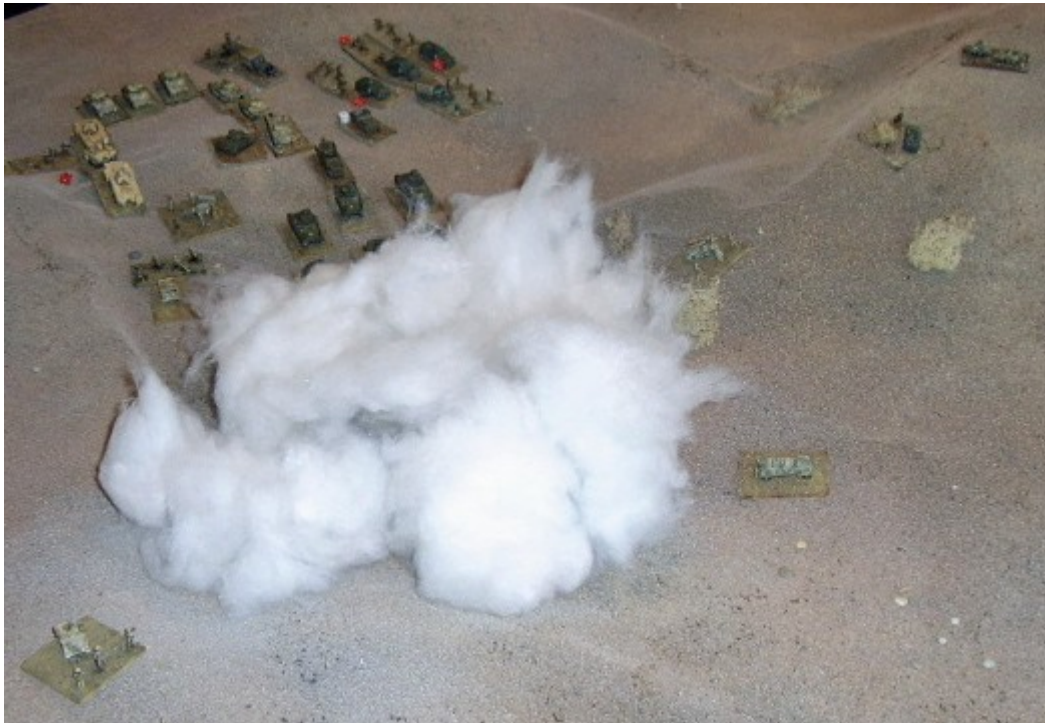


...and gets wasted by dug-in troops...



Mid-game - and things start to heat-up as exchanges of fire increase...

At this point, with the Allies pressing for an advantage in the pass, the Allied commander calls down this lot [on his own forces!]:

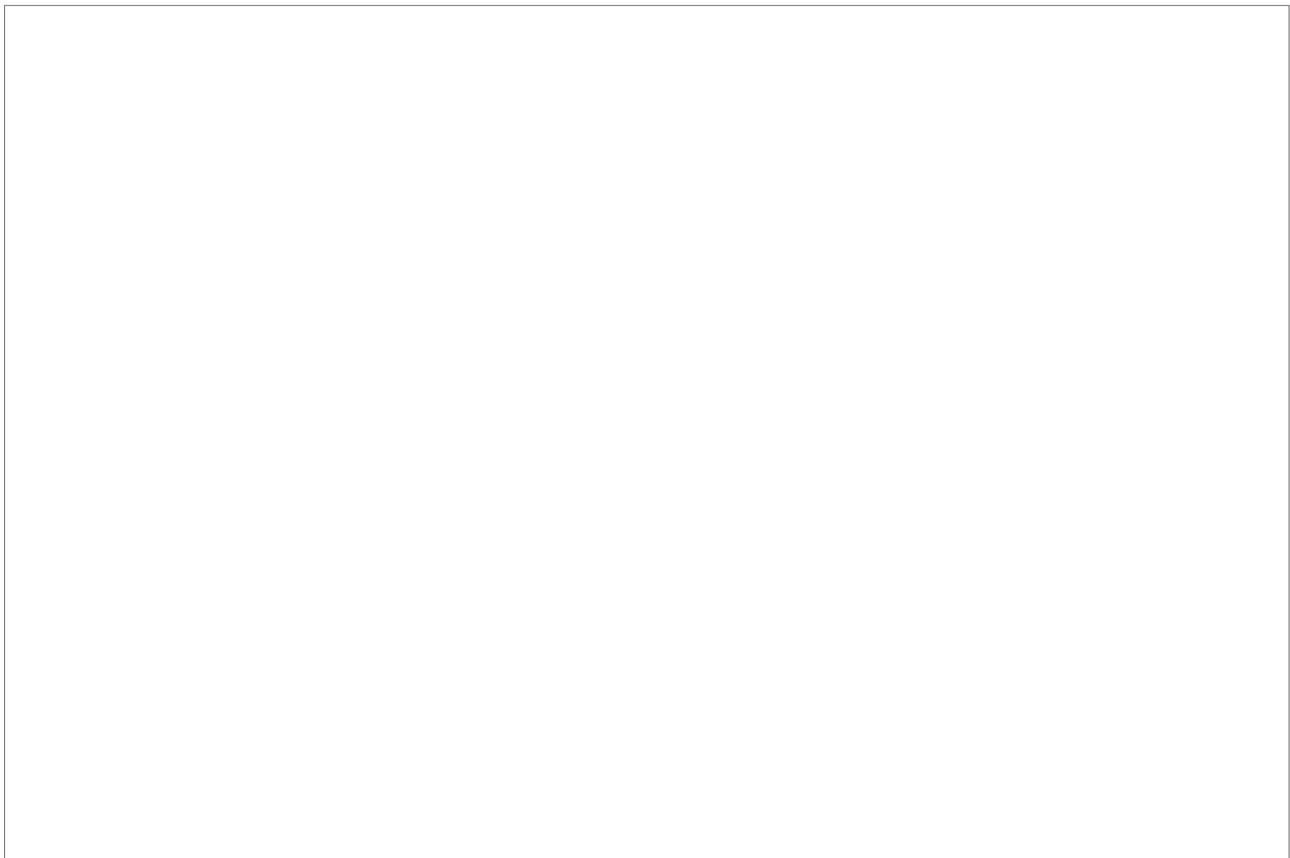


Little realising that the DAK observers have moved to a high point of view on the top of the hill & can still call in fire, seeing this:



It's all a bit easy calling in fire from here...!

Still, the Commonwealth allies continue to press on into the pass where things start to get jammed & congested...the British armour decides to move on through the carnage and succeeds in taking out the DAK armour & AT capability. At this point the dug-in infantry on the DAK right flank decides to take the fight to the enemy, leaves its dug-in positions and advances up the hill to try to engage any available enemy forces...



The remaining US armour starts to inflict casualties on the DAK infantry but comes under accurate return fire...



View from the DAK lines...

These fellas are truly scary too - surprisingly hard!



During the mid-game the DAK Stuka accomplished its flight missions and managed to inflict some damage & disruption on the Commonwealth forces - looked a bit like this:



End-game:

By the time we approached the end-game (turns 7-8) it was clear that the Commonwealth advance was struggling. What was left of the US armour started to take on the German infantry to good effect and the British armour took out the remaining German armour and anti-tank capability...by the end of the game, the DAK were on break-tests at -2 which they passed...thereby securing the first win for Nik against Dean (yippee!) The objectives were secured...



And this fella, known as the Desert Fox, was really happy:



Afternote:

I need to mention here that once we'd done the hand-shaking & after-game brief post-mortem I then realised that I had in fact scheduled artillery fire against both of the objectives in turn 8: in effect this is likely to have obliterated my remaining DAK forces, thereby giving the Commonwealth forces the victory...

Dean in his good grace *still* awards me the victory - on the basis that I had in fact stopped his forces dead in the pass.