

MEDJEZ EL BAB

0430 HRS, 25 NOVEMBER 1942,
MEDJEZ, TUNISIA

Pressure was on the British General Anderson and 1st Army to begin the attack toward Tunis. He had three elements prepared to advance, 36th Brigade and 11th Brigade of the 78th Division and a composite US group named Blade Force.

Along the coast 11th Brigade of the 78th Division approached the Medjerda River, and the village of Medjez el Bab. The 11th Brigade plan of attack required one battalion to approach the town from each side of the river, while a third element came from the west to seize commanding ground. 2nd Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers, was the northern force, while 5th Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment attacked from the southwest to seize Djebel Bou Mous, later known as "Grenadier Hill".

2nd Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers, commanded by Lieutenant L. A. Manly, attacked the town of Medjez on or about 0430 hours in an effort to seize the town and the bridge across the river. The Lancashires were supported by the 175th Field Artillery Battalion, a US 105mm towed Battalion.

Several days earlier, Hauptmann Wilhelm Knoche commanding the 3rd Battalion, 5th Fallschirmjager Regiment, arrived to defend the town.

His Fallschirmjagers were reinforced by an Italian anti-tank Company, two dual purpose 88mm guns from the 10th Panzer Division and a Kampfgruppe from the 190th Panzer Battalion.

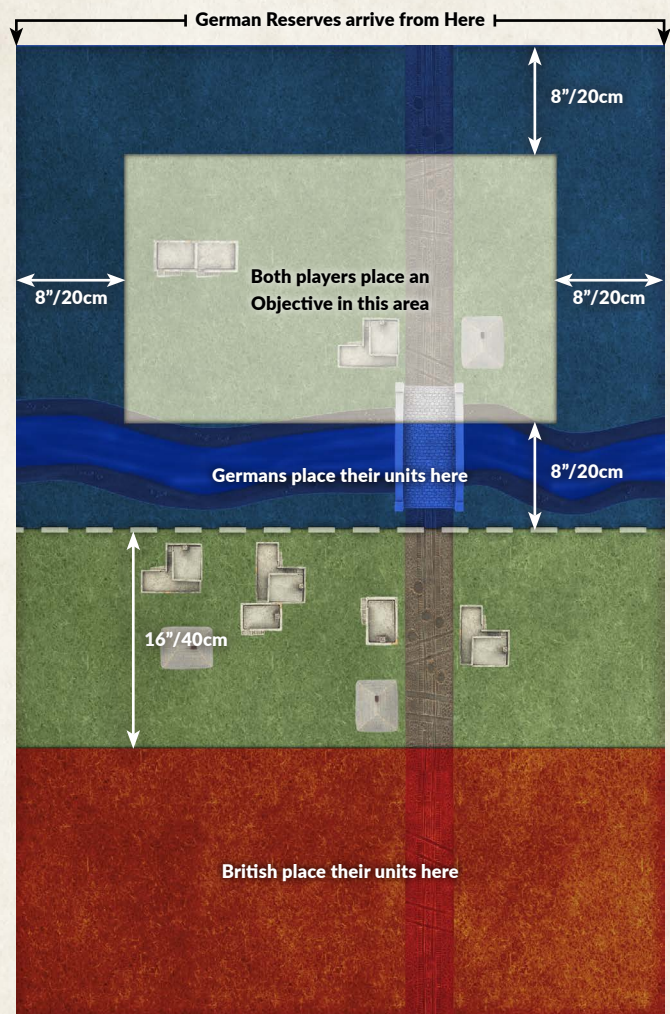
Unfortunately, the Allied attack was a disaster. The full moon did little to hide the approaching infantry from the veterans of Crete and the Low Countries, and long range machine-gun fire killed Lieutenant Manly soon after the start of the attack.

Two companies pressed on and valiantly fought their way across the river, seizing building on the far side. Soon after sunrise the Fallschirmjager mortars isolated the British Infantry and a combined Fallschirmjager and Panzer counterattack sent them back across the river, where the Fallschirmjager HMG's raked the companies.

SCENARIO

This is a **No Retreat** Mission. German forces are defending and British forces are attacking. The terrain was designed for a 6'x4' table, the objective area and middle of the table are marked in red.

- Two of the companies made it across the river and LTC Manly was killed in the first contact at the edge of the town.
- As the attack commenced at 0430 hrs the British can use the Night Attacks rule.
- American artillery coordination with the British was sketchy, only the American FO's can call for fire from the US Batteries, and the guns may not move forward of their start line.



- The river was chest high, so only Infantry Teams (but not Heavy Weapons) can fire while in the river and ROF is reduced to 1. Units in the water and at the river's edge, being engaged from the same side of the river count as concealed.
- CPT Knoche held the Panzers as a reserve, so the Panzer III Tank Platoon must be the last platoon to arrive as a reinforcement.
- I tried to include those forces that were mentioned as influencing the battle in the After Action Reports. The FJ's mortars and HMG were particularly noted as were the two 88mm's. The Italian anti-tank was present, but did not impact on the fight. The hedges interspersed along the river were also specifically noted by the British survivors.
- The American Artillery should be off board as per "Guns Across the Volga" (see Enemy at the Gates or Iron Cross street fighting rules). This prevents the 105's from being moved forward, or fired directly.
- Only Infantry Teams can cross the water and they treat the water as difficult terrain.