Little Stalingrad
The Battle for Ortona, December 1943
A Battlefront Scenario written by Bill Slavin

"For some unknown reason, the Germans are staging a miniature Stalingrad in hapless Ortona."
-AP Press correspondent

"It is clear we do not want to defend Ortona decisively but the English have made it appear as important as Rome."
-Field Marshal Albert Kesselring

"You're just a bunch of goddamned armoured sissies."
-Major Jim Stone, to Three Rivers tank commander

Historical Overview

Ortona, December 21-27

For seven long days over Christmas, 1943, Canadians of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade battled house to house against the German 1st Parachute Division for control of the streets of Ortona. The town straddled a narrow plateau, which drops away dramatically both to the east and west, and blocked the only way forward for Highway 16 winding its way up the Italian Adriatic coast.

Using demolitions, booby-trapped houses and carefully engineered fields of fire, the German paratroops sought to funnel the Canadians through the center of the town and into a killing ground centered on the Piazza Municipali. At no time did many more than 100 Germans hold the line in Ortona, constantly rotated in and out of the line held against first one and eventually three battalions of Canadian infantry, all reduced in strength from the prolonged fighting south of Ortona.

With the loss of the town inevitable, on the night of December 27th the order came to withdraw, and the paratroopers silently abandoned their positions in the dead of night. In the morning, preparing to resume the offensive, the Canadians found the ruined town deserted of enemy and Ortona theirs.

Notes regarding this scenario

This scenario covers the fighting of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment on December 22 centered on the Corso Vittorio Emmanuele from Piazza Vittoria to the Piazza Municipali. The German defense was a staged withdrawal, and victory points in this scenario are given for inflicting superior casualties on the attackers, denying them as much headway as possible and keeping their own casualties light. Defenders are given rubble piles (both mined and not) and booby-trapped houses to slow down and hinder the Canadian advance.

The Canadians are charged with seizing the town from the defenders, VP's awarded for sectors taken and damage done to the enemy.

Due to the closeness of the fighting sides, only battalion level mortar support is permitted for both sides.

The playing area is 2' square (15mm).
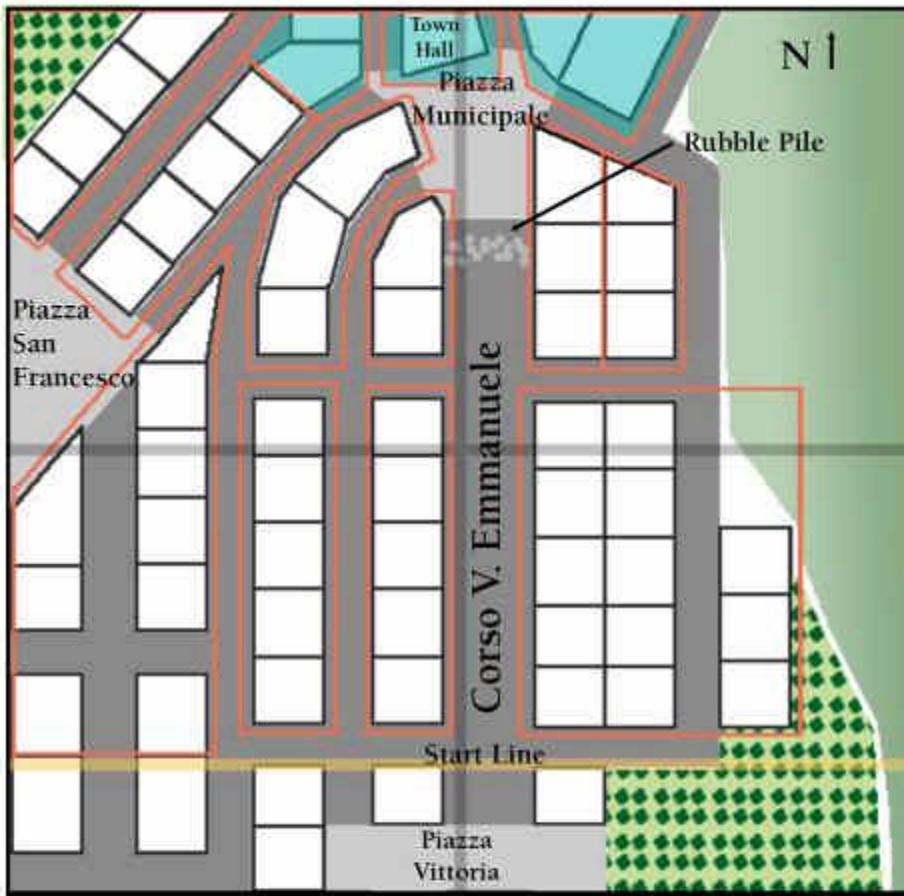
Terrain Chart

- ☐ BUS - Two levels, stone
- ⠿ Park - treat as "Orchard"
- ▨ Piazza - treat as "Open terrain"
- ▨ Sheer slope - impassable
- ☐ Blocks

Terrain Notes

All buildings are 2 level stone and brick structures. Troops may occupy either or both floors. See Paddy Green's BUS rules for multi-level combat:
http://www.fireandfury.com/extra/downloads/multilevelbus.pdf

Canadian Briefing

Major Jim Stone, D Co., Senior Commander present, Loyal Edmonton Regiment

Yesterday you fought your way into the southern outskirts of Ortona against light enemy opposition. The enemy clearly had no intention of denying you this toehold, and cautious reconnaissance up the Corso Vittorio Emmanuele the night before yielded no sign of the enemy. But you know this isn't the case and somewhere behind the shattered walls of Ortona he lies in wait.

Battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel Jim Jefferson, believing the Germans have no intention of holding Ortona, has chosen to make his headquarters far to the rear. So as senior company commander present the attack today falls on your shoulders to implement. You believe that the town isn't held in depth, and if you can breach his lines quickly with a decisive blow, then the battle for Ortona may be over quickly. If not, it will be a very long day.

German Briefing

Hauptmann Ferdinad Foltin, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Fallshirmjaeger Regiment

The Canadians have twice breached the German defensive lines, first at the Moro River and then at the gully south of the city. Now they stand at the gates of Ortona itself. The stalwart soldiers of the 1st Fallshirmjaeger Division have been given the task of defending Ortona for as long as possible. You have elected to only lightly defend the southern edge of the town, permitting the enemy to gain a foothold and planning your defensive blocking line away from the prying eyes of Tommie's artillery observers. Your engineers have been instructed to block the narrower side streets with demolitions in the hope of funneling the main attack up the Corso. Buildings have been booby-trapped, rubble piles mined and machine guns and AT guns placed to cover lines of advance.

Your orders are to delay the enemy as long as possible, and only to give ground when absolutely necessary. The town is not to be surrendered without a fight, and what a bloody fight it shall be!

Scenario Length

10 turns

Initial placement

Canadian units can occupy any space south of the Start Line. The Canadian player may also opt to leave units off able, bringing them on when desired.

Germans can occupy any of the rest of the board, and begin in *improved positions*. Guns can be placed in bottom floors of sectors. Other than the large rubble pile at the head of the Corso, rubble piles (mined or otherwise) and booby-trapped buildings can be placed as desired.

It is recommended for this scenario that hidden unit placement also apply to booby-trapped houses and rubble piles, which may be marked on a map until detected.

Scenario Specific Rules

Increased scale

To mimic the effect of the density of urban fighting, use 20mm scale and templates for 15mm figures. BUS areas should remain at original scale. (The simplest way to manage this is to create a ruler with Battlefront "inches" measured off at 1.5" .)

Players using 20mm should scale up accordingly.

Command Radius
Command radius is limited to streets and sectors adjacent to the command stand. German command posts established at the beginning of the game will have a 5 BF inch radius of effect.

Mined Rubble
The defending player may place twenty rubble piles on the board. Rubble piles are considered to cover the width of the street. They block LOS like a high hedge, but may be spotted over if the target or spotter are at a higher level. (Exception: see *Corso Rubble Pile* below.)
Mines may be placed in ten rubble piles. All rubble piles other than those placed in the Corso require a breach and bog down check for armour to cross (breach for troops). Treat rubble piles placed in Corso (other than large pile) as normal rubble.
Engineers may remove mines from rubble by moving *onto* the pile, expending one engineer action (only action allowed) to lay the charge and completing a successful demolition action on the following turn (1 in 10 fails). If engineer stand disordered, action fails. Action triggers opportunity fire. See Engineering Rules: http://www.fireandfury.com/extra/engineering.shtml
If there are no mines present, the first engineering action will determine this.
Note that subsequent passage through rubble still requires breach (and bog down check for armour).
Defenders cannot pass through their own mined rubble. For spotting purposes, rubble piles can be seen when within line of sight.

Corso Rubble Pile
The rubble pile at the top of the Corso (see map) was 25' tall, created by blowing the majority of the small church located at this point into the street. Treat it as a Level 1 obstacle for blocking line of sight with a –4 bog down check for vehicles. The defending player may opt to have this be one of his allotted mined rubble piles.

Booby-trapped sectors
10 sectors may also be booby-trapped. Treat these sectors as "minefield" with an additional +1 to traverse. If there is no game referee, the defending player should secretly roll when the attacking player traverses one of these buildings and inform the opposing player if there is a result so as not to disclose their location if the booby-trap is not activated.
Note: There is the possibility of the attacker traversing a booby-trapped sector and not being aware of it.

There is a 20% (1-2 on d10) chance of infantry spotting a booby-trapped sector immediately upon entering. Spotted booby traps are considered disengaged if the entering infantry expends one action in order to accomplish this, and is not disordered or knocked out. Otherwise the booby trap stays until discharged, after which the sector is considered disarmed.
Engineers can clear booby-trapped sectors. Booby-trapped sectors are simply nullified by an engineer stand moving into it (100% chance to spot) and staying there for one action. Defenders can occupy booby-trapped sectors safely.

Destroying BUS's
Destroying BUS rules are in effect. All buildings have 4 HP per level each. A clear line of sight needs to be drawn to the target. See: *Destroying BUS's for Dummie*s *Rules*, attached at end of scenario.

Spotting

All streets are considered 1" across for spotting purposes. Therefore, units can always spot into the building *directly* across the street from one another, even if the spotter is conformed to an inner side of the BUS.

The Piazza Municipale and Piazza San Francesco are considered open terrain, and the Corso sparse deep, with *no maximum spotting distance*. Sectors bordering these areas are dense edge. Line of sight is blocked to streets leading into and out of the squares and side streets off the Corso, as with normal BUA's, other than the entrance from the Corso to the Piazza Municipale. All other streets and BUS's are considered dense deep.

Fire Support

Because of the scale of this scenario, supporting mortars are considered off board (no discipline rating bonus).

Optional Rules in Effect

Destroying BUS's (see *Destroying BUS's for Dummies Rules*, attached at end of scenario.
MG Grazing Fire http://www.fireandfury.com/extra/mggrazing.shtml
Engineering Rules http://www.fireandfury.com/extra/engineering.shtml
Burning Vehicle Rules http://www.fireandfury.com/extra/burnveh.shtml
Multi-level Rules http://www.fireandfury.com/extra/downloads/multilevelbus.pdf

Victory Conditions

For the purpose of this scenario, the town has been divided into 12 blocks (see map).

Canadians
1 VP for every block cleared after the first six blocks. (A block is considered cleared if Canadians were the last unit occupying it and have confirmed by spotting that there are no enemy units present in that block.)
Germans
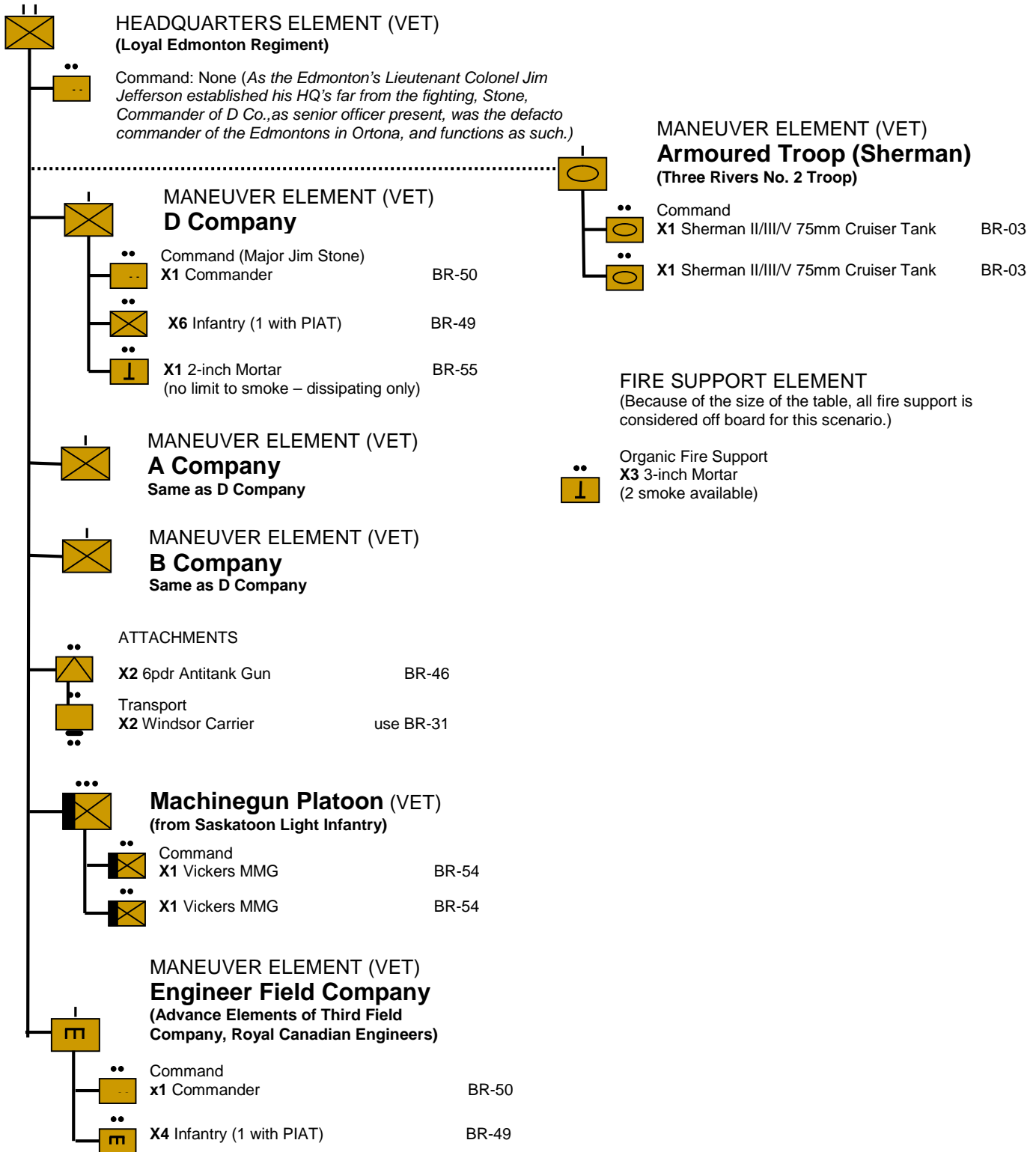1VP for each ME with less than 50% casualties.
3 VP's for holding the town hall and 2 adjacent blocks east and west of this sector.

Other VP's are calculated in the usual manner, with the Germans needing to accrue 2 to1.

Canadian Order of Battle

BATTLE GROUP

HEADQUARTERS ELEMENT (VET)
(Loyal Edmonton Regiment)

Command: None (*As the Edmonton's Lieutenant Colonel Jim Jefferson established his HQ's far from the fighting, Stone, Commander of D Co.,as senior officer present, was the defacto commander of the Edmontons in Ortona, and functions as such.*)

MANEUVER ELEMENT (VET)
D Company

Command (Major Jim Stone) **X1** Commander		BR-50
X6 Infantry (1 with PIAT)		BR-49
X1 2-inch Mortar (no limit to smoke – dissipating only)		BR-55

MANEUVER ELEMENT (VET)
A Company
Same as D Company

MANEUVER ELEMENT (VET)
B Company
Same as D Company

ATTACHMENTS

X2 6pdr Antitank Gun		BR-46
Transport **X2** Windsor Carrier		use BR-31

Machinegun Platoon (VET)
(from Saskatoon Light Infantry)

Command **X1** Vickers MMG		BR-54
X1 Vickers MMG		BR-54

MANEUVER ELEMENT (VET)
Engineer Field Company
(Advance Elements of Third Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers)

Command **x1** Commander		BR-50
X4 Infantry (1 with PIAT)		BR-49

MANEUVER ELEMENT (VET)
Armoured Troop (Sherman)
(Three Rivers No. 2 Troop)

Command **X1** Sherman II/III/V 75mm Cruiser Tank		BR-03
X1 Sherman II/III/V 75mm Cruiser Tank		BR-03

FIRE SUPPORT ELEMENT
(Because of the size of the table, all fire support is considered off board for this scenario.)

Organic Fire Support
X3 3-inch Mortar
(2 smoke available)

German Order of Battle

BATTLE GROUP

HEADQUARTERS ELEMENT (VET)
(2nd Battalion, 3rd Fallschirmjaeger Regiment)

Command (Hauptmann Ferdinad Foltin)
x1 Commander   GE-46

ATTACHMENTS
X3 Pioniere (1 w/Flamethrower)   GE-47

X1 50mm PaK38   GE-40

MANEUVER ELEMENT (VET)
1st Kompanie

Command
x1 Commander   GE-46

X9 Fallschirmjaeger   GE-100
(3 w/ Panzerfaust - May
replace up to 3 infantry
stands with LMg stand)

X2 Heavy Machine Gun   GE-50

FIRE SUPPORT ELEMENT
(Because of the size of the table, all fire support is
considered off board for this scenario.)

Organic Fire Support
X2 80mm Mortar (2 smoke missions)

Bibliography

Ortona: Canada's Epic World War II Battle, Mark Zuehlke
The Canadians in Italy, Lt.-Col. G. W. L. Nicholson
The War in Italy 1943-1945, Field Marshal Lord Carver
400 Yards – And into the "Courtyard of Hell", Graham Hart, "A" Squadron, Three Rivers
Regiment (first person account of the battle)

Destroying BUS and Rubble for Dummies (a revised version of that found on the Battlefront website)

Allocate hit points to each BUS, using the following guides:
Stone Structure 4 HP's
Wood Structure 2 HP's
Stone walls 1 HP
Towers are half value, and don't count as multi-level BUS's. (i.e. are considered a single level above ground level for HP purposes.)
Some stone structures (churches, warehouses, etc. may warrant higher HP values.)

IDF against BUS

Only IDF of 75 mm or greater may damage BUS's.

Use +/- IDF for TGsV (Ignore negative random shelling modifier for this roll.)

Roll separately for any BUS with at least one aiming point under the template. A KO result counts as a hit.

Note: Because of the common practice to suspect and target certain areas as likely observation points, church steeples, multi level BUS's, and areas of high ground (including BUS's on that spot) may be targeted as you would a spotted target. If an area of high ground or multi level BUS is being targeted, only one such area on the opposing player's side of the board may be so designated, and it needs to be a single area that clearly dominates the battleground more so than any other. All church steeples in the scenario are subject to b being designated as if spotted. This means a player is not limited to random shelling on these terrain features, may target with concentrations, and also may target the feature by IDF elements firing as single sections.

DF against BUS

Only DF of 75 mm or greater may damage BUS's, or heavy infantry anti tank weapons such as bazookas, panzerfausts and panzerschreks.

BUS's may be targeted for direct fire. If element within BUS is targeted, make second roll for damage to BUS, disregarding any modifiers directly related to the unit within (suspected target, improved positions, etc.) Attacks against BUS don't affect occupying units, unless sector is destroyed.

Use +/- DF for TGsV.

A KO result counts as a hit.

Multi-level BUS

Double the number of HP's. Upper levels destroyed first.

Destroying BUS

When a BUS's HP's are reduced to 0 (or a level destroyed in the case of multi-level BUS's) that level of the BUS is destroyed. ("Improving position" markers can be used to keep track of hits.) Any adjoining streets to BUS are filled with rubble, as is the BUS. Improved positions are lost, and troops must conduct a bail out, with following modifiers:
+1 if troops disordered
+2 if troops suppressed
+3 if troops in good order

Guns in destroyed BUS are also destroyed.