

The Loyals Last Line

ANZIO - Operation 'Fisch Fang' - Campo di Carne

18 February 1944

Scenario written by Paddy Green and Richard de Ferrars

British Player Briefing

Situation

Lt-Col E Fulbrook DSO, Oi/c 1st Bn The Loyals, 1st Div, 2nd Bde, 05:00 Feb 18th 1944, Campo di Carne

On 10 February your Battalion moved up to their current positions east of the Flyover along the Lateral Road, promptly christened Wigan Street. The Loyals have been in continuous action since arriving at Anzio but have yet to be bloodied by a major attack. So far they have suffered only 137 casualties and these losses were made good by reinforcements 3 days ago. Your original team of officers and NCOs remains intact making the 1st Loyals are a hardened, experienced and self-confident battalion. Although tired like everyone else in the beachhead, they are the freshest battalion in 1st Div.

The area along Wigan Street is completely treeless; there is no cover anywhere. To the north the fields slope gently downwards, with a slight dip about 300 yds north of your forward positions where there is some dead ground. Beyond this the fields slope up to the Dead End Road some 1,100 yds north of Wigan Street. Further away, beyond the battle scarred fields, where until recently the front line had been drawn, is the conspicuous bulk of the Factory with its menacing chimney. From there the Germans can see your every movement and direct their artillery; you feel like you are under constant observation. Along Wigan Street are a number of houses: Carne Farm lies midway between the flyover and the scruffy, half-destroyed remnants of "Stonk Wood;" Todhunter Lodge, is a large, solid building south of the road and further to the east a wind-pump sticks out like a gaunt skeleton. A gully crosses the front 300 yds behind this and here you have established your HQ.

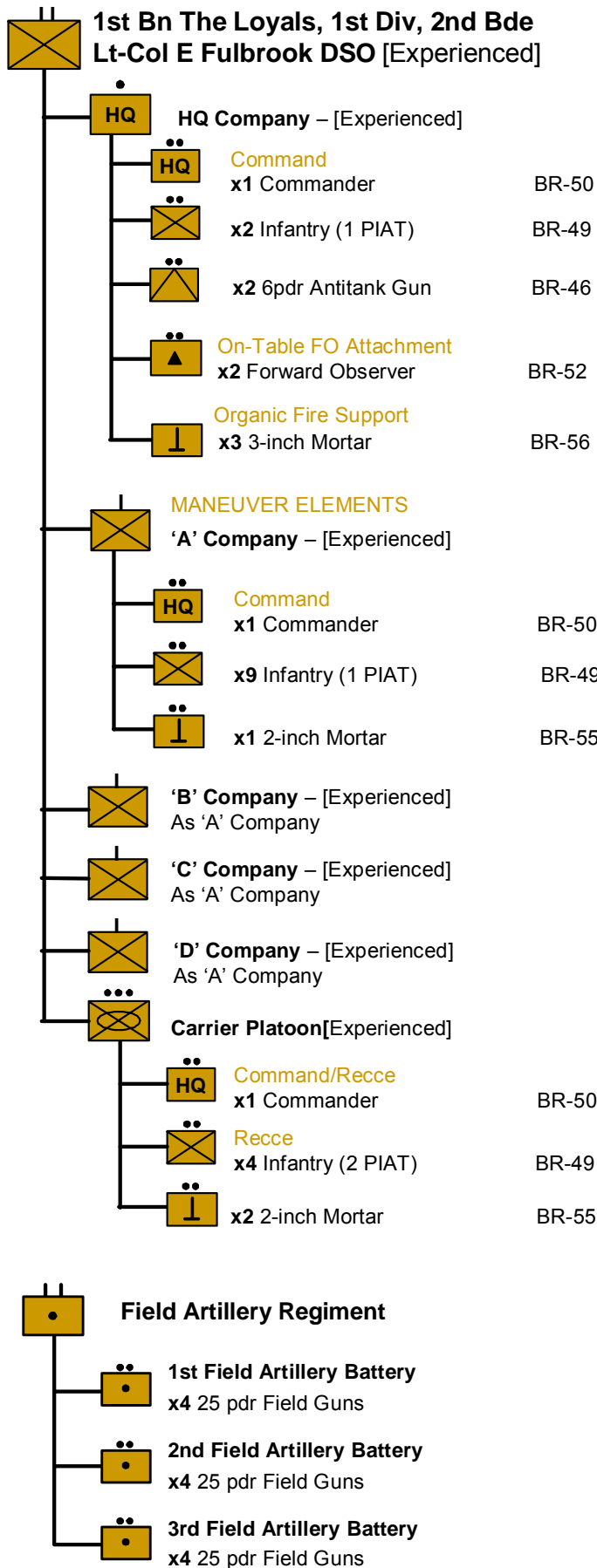
Your front is 2,000 yds long and with such a distance to cover you have found it necessary to have 3 companies forward along the line of Wigan Street. 'A' Coy is in the immediate area of the Flyover, 'B' Coy is in residence around Carne Farm, while 'C' Coy have established themselves around the houses short of Stonk Wood. To provide depth to this perilously shallow position, 'D' Coy and the Carrier Platoon are in the area between the wind-pump and Todhunter Lodge. Over the last week, your Battalion has been improving its unpleasant position. No work is possible by day, but as night falls, your men concentrate on building up their wire, laying mines, reinforcing their slit-trenches and generally making their positions as defensible as possible. There has been little rest for anyone. Your troops are dug-in but the ground is soft, reclaimed marshland, unsuitable for tanks, and two feet below the surface lies freezing standing water.

Over the last few days the battle has drawn closer and you have begun to realise that your Battalion may well have to use the positions that they had been developing sooner rather than later. On 16th Feb you watched the American infantry regiments to your front resist mounting German pressure. By dawn on 17th the American resistance was beginning to crack. At about 0930 hrs the wounded began to pass through 'A' Company positions near the Flyover. By mid-day you could see enemy armour moving around the Dead End Road and sporadic shell fire was directed at your positions. Around 1600 some American tanks joined a noisy battle some few hundred yards up the Via Anziate before scaring the horizon with thick plumes of black smoke. It has become painfully obvious that what had started as a second line of defence will soon be well and truly in the forefront of affairs. The battle to save the beachhead is about to be joined.

Mission

Hold your current lines to prevent the Germans breaking through to threaten the landing beaches.

The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment



British Deployment, Notes & Special Rules

• Deployment and Reinforcement

Turn 1 Start of scenario which will last for 12 turns..
All forces are deployed behind the British initial deployment line.
All British forces may initially deploy dug into Soft or open ground or in IP if in a BUA.
Up to 12 bases of mines may be deployed behind the British initial deployment line.
Up to 12 bases of barbed wire may be deployed behind the British initial deployment line.
German player moves first. The German player has an option for starting the scenario “early”
And hence the game may start before turn 1 if German player opens fire or is spotted and uses Defensive fire prior to turn 1

• Discipline Rating

- All MEs are Experienced.

• Hidden Unit Status

- All British troops start the game as hidden. However, all their positions are suspected and targeted by Artillery FOOs situated in the Factory.

• Off board Artillery

- British General Fire Support originates from the south edge of the table.
- This is General Fire Support and can only be called by FOOs. They do this at a -1 penalty (i.e. requiring 6 or more to be successful. This represents the severe pressure on resources over the last few days and the shortage of ammunition at the beachhead.
- The replacement of British FOOs optional rule is not in force as they can't easily get forward.

• Transport

- The soft ground is unsuitable for vehicles. All company transport (including carriers) is held to the rear in reserve and may not be deployed on the table.

• Mortars and 6pdrs

- Battalion Mortars are deployed and may provide on-board direct fire support to Infantry Companies, Carrier Platoon or HQ Companies.
- Some of your 6 Pdr ATGs have been deployed off-table defending ground that is more easily traversed by tanks. They are not available to you.
- No Brigade or Divisional assets (such as 4.2” Mortars) are available.

• Fox-Holes and Slit Trenches

- The low lying wet ground is unsuitable for the construction of anything more than fox-holes or slit trenches.
- Troops may start in basic IP/ enhanced IP in BUS but nothing else.
- With virtually no cover and poor ground conditions any troops rolling to construct IP do so with a -1 penalty.

• Minefields and Wire

- Before the game starts the British player may deploy 12 Minefields medium density anti-personal minefields anywhere within their initial deployment zone.
- Before the game starts the British player may deploy 12 sections of barbed wire anywhere within their initial deployment zone.

• Spotting

- The dead ground & gully are not true level -1 terrain. Therefore troops may not claim “higher elevation” modifier when spotting into the gully & dead ground unless they are on genuine higher ground (off-board FOO or flyover ramp). However, troops in the gully and dead ground are harder to spot and enjoy a DOWN 1 spotting modifier.
- Weather and Darkness Spotting Modifiers
 - Before Turn 1 Night Rules - Poor Visibility were in force.
 - Turns 1-3 Dawn / Dusk Rules apply.
 - Turns 1-5 Additional DOWN 1 modifier due to early morning mist

German Player Briefing

Situation

General der Panzertruppen Gräser, CO 3. Pz-Gren Div, 05:00 February 18th 1944, Carroceto

Operation Fischfang (Fish Trap), the major German offensive to destroy the Allied invasion landing at Anzio, started 2 days ago on February 16th, 1944. This is the most destructive and determined operation German forces have yet launched. It will smash the Allies and drive them back into the sea nearly 10 miles away where they will be destroyed piecemeal. So far the attack has gone slowly. Rain has caused havoc with plans to bring armour into the fray. However, on the first day the Carroceto factory was seized and its tall chimney now presents the perfect vantage point from which your Artillery spotters can see every Allied movement of the enemy. Since then Fischfang has deteriorated into a slugfest with massive losses on both sides. After two horrendous days, your forces have reached the Flyover, several miles from where they started. You have broken the main Allied defensive lines and with one last push you will be able to smash their last defensive line. Once you have broken through this the Allies will only have only weak stop lines comprised of second echelon troops and artillery between you and the sea. You must breakthrough!

The area in front of you is almost totally flat and completely treeless; there is practically no cover at all. The ground slopes gently downwards, to a depression some 300 yds in front of the British positions. This offers some dead ground where the British cannot see your troops forming up. Better still the pronounced gullies that cross the area provide an avenue to infiltrate into the heart of the Allied positions. Two Roads cross your front: the closest is an incomplete farm track that leads nowhere; 1,100 yds south of that is the lateral road to Campomorto. Via Anziate and the railway run southward and form the western edge of your Divisional boundary. The ground beyond that around Pantoni is dominated by the tributaries of the River Moletta. The ground there is terrible, and pitted with many small drainage ditches and caves. The battle scarred fields to your front is soft, reclaimed marshland, unsuitable for tanks, and two feet below the surface lies freezing standing water which quickly fills any shell hole or slit trench. Your job is to break the Allies Defensive line running along the Lateral Road, christened Wigan Street by the Tommies. Along this line lie a number of houses. Carne Farm lies midway between the flyover and the scruffy, half-destroyed remnants of a wood. Todhunter Lodge, is a large, solid building south of the road and further to the east a wind-pump sticks out like a gaunt skeleton.

Your front is 2,000 yds long and thinly defended by a single battalion of British. You plan to attack with 2 Battalions of Panzer Grenadiers supported by a Battalion of Artillery. Earlier casualties have been made good by reinforcing the ranks with support troops. The heavy weapons company have been stripped of the equipment that would only bog down in the muddy terrain. Their crews and any admin, transport and support troops that can be spared have joined the front line rifle companies. You expect the front to be littered by mines and barbed wire and so your Pioneers have been attached to the lead Battalion to ensure that they are not delayed. The scheduled time for the attack to begin is 0500 but one Kompanie began infiltrating the Allied positions earlier last night. They have crept down a gully that leads to the heart of the British position. You have no indication of whether they have been successful or not but the dark night and early morning mist means that they have had every chance to infiltrate deep into the British position. Finally you are still desperately trying to bring up some armour to support your attack.

Mission

Break the British line and exit at least one kompanie off the southern table edge.

Deployment & Reinforcements

- Turn -6** Infiltration of British Positions may begin with one Kompanie (5/II/29).
Turn 1 Start of scenario.
All selected forces (except armour) are deployed behind the German initial deployment line.
All units in dead ground are hidden at the start of the game.
Turn 5 If selected start rolling for arrival of German Armour.

• **Discipline Rating**

- All MEs are Veteran.

• **Infiltration of British Positions**

- One German ME (5 Kompanie II/29) may elect infiltrate the British positions.
- This ME may start moving with 6 unchallenged turns before the game starts in an attempt to infiltrate the British positions. This may be done with knowledge of the suspected British positions.
- The infiltrating company may only manoeuvre (but this may include engineering actions). If spotted and fired at by the British it will cause the early start of the scenario.
- The infiltrating company must roll manoeuvre rolls.

• **Hidden Unit Status**

- All German troops start the game hidden if deployed in Dead Ground (including the gully).

• **Arrival of German Armour**

- At the start of the game the German player may select either 11 Kompanie III/29 or a Platoon of Stug IIIs, not both!
- If 11 Kompanie III/29 is selected it is deployed on table at the start of the game and may move from turn 1.
- If the Platoon of Stugs is selected then the German player must roll for its arrival from Turn 5. To do this the German player must roll one die at the start of his turn. If the number rolled is less than the current game turn then the Stugs may arrive at the northern end of Via Anziate that turn.

• **Off board Artillery**

- German Direct Fire Support originates from the north edge of the table.
- German MEs have no attached FOOs. All spotting is conducted by FOOs located in the chimney of the Factory at Carroceto. German Commanders are in Radio communications with these supporting FOOs and so the fire can be directed where tactically needed.
- For game purposes these FOOs are assumed to be 36" north of the northern table edge and counts as being level 4 higher ground. All Allied IP positions are suspected at the start of the game (i.e. on the 5th turn the player needs to roll 4 or less.)

• **Transport**

- The soft ground is unsuitable for vehicles. All company transport is held to the rear in reserve.
- Tracked vehicles will move at half speed and conduct bog down checks if moved off road.

• **Mortars and 6pdrs**

- Battalion Heavy Mortars and Light Infantry Guns are deployed off table and may provide direct fire support to companies in their Battalion. These cannot be called by units from the other Battalion.
- Other HW crews have strengthened the Rifle companies and are not available to you.

• **Fox-Holes and Slit Trenches**

- The low lying wet ground is unsuitable for the construction of anything more than fox-holes or slit trenches.
- With virtually no cover and poor ground conditions any troops rolling to construct IP do so with a -1 penalty.

• **Minefields and Wire**

- Before the game starts the British player may deploy 12 Minefields medium density anti-personal minefields anywhere within their initial deployment zone.
- Before the game starts the British player may deploy 12 sections of barbed wire anywhere within their initial deployment zone.

- These may be defused or cut by Pioneers employing Engineering actions.

- **Spotting**

- The dead ground & gully are not true level -1 terrain. Therefore troops may not claim “higher elevation” modifier when spotting into the gully & dead ground unless they are on genuine higher ground (off-board FOO or flyover ramp). However, troops in the gully and dead ground are harder to spot and enjoy a DOWN 1 spotting modifier.
- Weather and Darkness Spotting Modifiers
 - o Before Turn 1 Night Rules - Poor Visibility were in force.
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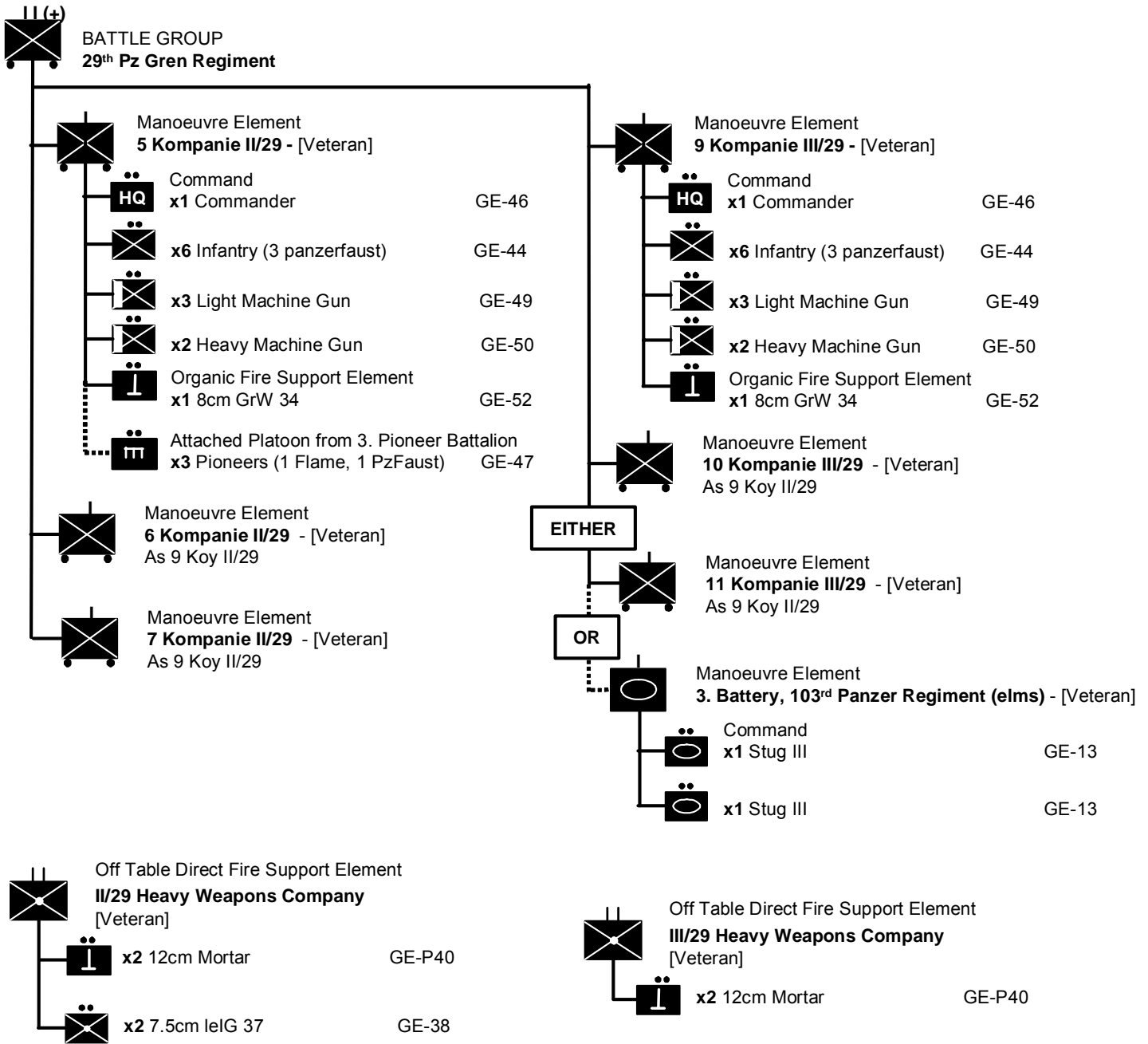


The Flyover (First Overpass)



A view over Carrocetto and the Factory (the chimney was destroyed by the time of this photo) over. This Battle takes place to the left of the First Overpass on this photo.

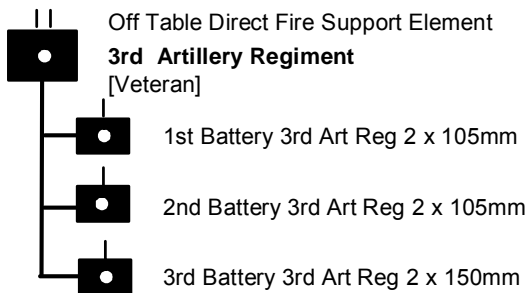
3rd Panzer Grenadier Division



These Fire Support Elements may only be called by Kompanie Commanders from II/29 as Direct Fire Support. Their fire may not be combined.

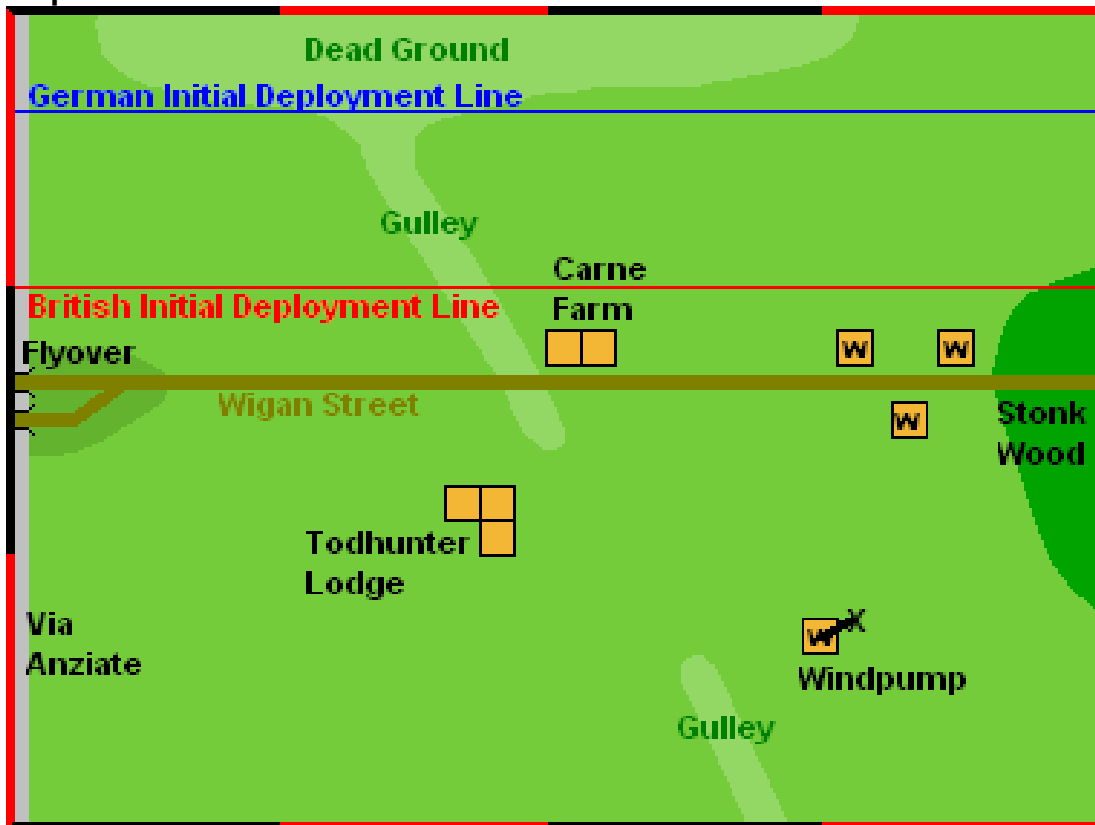
This Fire Support Element may only be called by Kompanie Commanders from III/29 as Direct Fire Support. Their fire may not be combined.

Off-board Direct Fire Support



These Fire Support Elements are called by up to 3 FOOs located at the Aprilla (The Factory). This is situated 36 inches north of the centre of the north table edge and is a Level 4 structure. Their Fire may be combined into Regimental fire or split into Battery fire as required. If split into Battery fire it may only recombine

Map & Terrain



Terrain Notes and Special Rules

- The playing area is 4' x 3' and north is at the top of the map.
- The ground scale is 1" = 40yds
- The battle area is flat open reclaimed marshland -
 - All terrain is soft ground except the raised area around the Flyover and Stonk wood.
- Carne Farm and Todhunter Lodge are Stone Buildings, all others are wooden.
- Via Anziate is a paved road and Wigan Street is an unpaved road
- The raised area around the Flyover is level 1 terrain.
- The light green terrain is the dead ground or the gulley and troops deployed here enjoy a DOWN 1 spotting bonus.

Game Notes

The game starts with the German player employing an Accelerated Advance to contact rule.

The play starts at 0500 and lasts 12 turns.

During Turns 1-3 the Dawn / Dusk Rules apply.

During Turns 1-5 the table is covered in an early morning mist which reduces spotting DOWN 1.

For spotting purposes, before Turn 1 Night Rules - Poor Visibility were in force.

The following optional rules are in force throughout:

1. Base Sizes and Figure Scale
2. Grazing Fire
3. Sneak Manoeuvre Action
5. Improved Position Clarifications
13. Destroying BUS and Rubble
15. Engineering Manoeuvre Actions
16. Minefield Rules
17. Laying Mines
18. Clearing Mines
19. Barbed Wire
27. Miscellaneous Additional Rules and Restrictions

Victory Conditions

Victory is determined by the accumulation of Victory Points (see page 12).

Additional Victory Points are earned for each ME the German player exits off the south Table edge:

- 1 VP for a ME with more than 75% casualties.
- 2 VP for an ME with between 50% and 75% casualties.
- 3 VP for an ME with between 25% and 50% casualties.
- 4 VP for a “fresh” ME with less than 25% casualties.

The following Table is then consulted:

| | British Player | German Player |
|----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Total Victory | 5VP or more than the Germans | 5VP or more than the British |
| Major Victory | 3VP more than the Germans | 3VP more than the British |
| Minor Victory | 1VP more than the Germans | 1VP more than the British |
| Draw | All other Results | |

Historical Outcome

At 5 o'clock in the morning the Loyals 'B' Company were suddenly assaulted and engaged in a savage battle. Their forward platoon had 'vanished' overnight, their kit was left in their slit trenches but the men were either dead or missing. Soon Todhunter Lodge had fallen to the enemy infiltration and 'A' Company on the left became heavily engaged. 'C' Company restored the position with a spirited attack, before themselves facing a terrible onslaught. However, through the Loyals courage and incredible fortitude all these attacks were beaten back. At 1130 the German Artillery slackened off and the Loyals tried to retake the lost half of 'B' Company positions. 'D' Company and the Carrier Platoon swept forward, preceded by a 5 minute bombardment. They routed a platoon of Germans who were holed up unpleasantly near Battalion HQ and rescued their prisoners, including 'B' Company CO. They drove the Germans back into the dead ground at the point of the bayonet. 'D' Company then plugged the unpleasantly large gap in the perilously thin line running along Wigan Street. By now most companies were now below 100 men; 'C' Company could only muster 60 and was reinforced by the battalion's cooks, drivers and QM staff - things looked desperate.

At 5 o'clock in the afternoon another thunderous barrage opened up and yet another battalion of Germans was thrown at 'A' Company, which hung on grimly fighting a desperate hand-to-hand battle with grenades, supported by a handful of tanks and a Company of Gordon Highlanders from the other side of the Via Anziate. Finally, as dusk fell the Loyals were joined by a full company of machine guns from the Middlesex Regiment who used the flat ground to create fields of interlocking fire across the Loyals' front. Throughout the evening the German attacks still came in thick and fast, only to be deluged with a staggering weight of fire and beaten back with crippling casualties. Eventually Operation 'Fisch Fang' petered out amid the mud and blood of Campo di Carne, scenes reminiscent of the Somme.