

# **RAPID FIRE!**

## **OPERATION 'LUSTRE'**

by Mark Piper



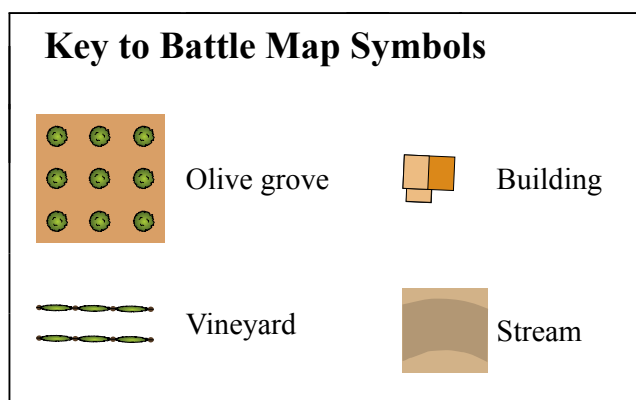
## **AIRBORNE ASSAULT ON THE RETREAT** **GREECE 1941**

FOR USE WITH RAPID FIRE! FAST PLAY WWII WARGAMING RULES

# CONTENTS

## *AIRBORNE ASSAULT ON THE RETREAT 26TH APRIL 1941*

Operation 'Lustre' - Greece April 1941 .....	3
Scenario - Operation 'Hannibal' - Corinth Canal (26th April 1941) .....	4



**Acknowledgements:** Many thanks to Colin Rumford, Richard Marsh, Alan McCoubrey, Scott Robertson and the members of the online Rapid Fire community for their input to this 'passion' project that started with the inspiration of Corinth Canal in the first edition of Rapid Fire. Original graphics provided by Colin Rumford (modified and formatted by Mark Piper), cover photo from the collection of Scott Robertson and all other photos from the collections of Scott Robertson, Mark Piper and Colin Rumford as indicated.

# OPERATION 'LUSTRE' - GREECE APRIL 1941

Operation 'Lustre' was a short campaign, that involved the movement of British and other Allied troops (Australian, New Zealand and Polish) from Egypt to Greece in March and April 1941, in response to the failed Italian invasion and the looming threat of German intervention in the Balkans.

The Allies initially planned to deploy about 58,000 personnel and their equipment to Greece by 2nd April 1941, including the 1st (UK) Armoured Brigade, the 6th (Australian) and 2nd (New Zealand) Infantry Divisions. While it was intended that these units would be followed by the 7th (Australian) Infantry Division, it was not deployed before the defeat of the Allies on the Greek mainland.

Available Allied forces were set up along the 'Aliákmon Line' (south-west of Salonica), before the Axis (German, Italian and Bulgarian) invasion (Operation 'Marita'), on the 6th April 1941.

The Greek Army did not retire to the 'Aliákmon Line' as expected, for fear of being overrun by more mobile German troops. Overall Allied forces had little effect on the German invasion and they were evacuated on and after the 24th April 1941.

This PDF contains one scenario from Operation 'Lustre'.

## *Airborne Assault on the Retreat*

The scenario is from the final days of the campaign and covers the only German airborne operation aimed at cutting off the retreating Allied forces, at the Corinth Canal.

Rapid Fire Reloaded Extra rules are used as indicated (or RF2) but where not covered additional rules are provided for destroyed bridges, cratered roads and improvised river crossings, as well as Vehicle and Gun charts for the opposing sides.

While this PDF has been designed to be compatible with other Rapid Fire publications I have at times made some minor changes to vehicle and gun charts, (see 'Greece 1941 - Campaign Rules' PDF), that reflect my own interpretation of the relative capabilities of the weapons and equipment, used by both sides, during this short but intriguing campaign. Feel free to ignore if you want !

The scenario has been expanded and designed to play on a larger table but this can be easily adjusted to fit the available space for your game.

*"Particularly it may be noted the the English soldier is a good fighter, and the Australian and New Zealand soldiers fought an outstanding defensive battle in the craggy wooded country in which they had to fight. Their choice of ground, use of ground, adaptation of the ground and construction of positions were good and made things very hard for the attackers. The siting and use of the British artillery was also very skillful. The shellfire was heavy and accurate. The British made great use of anti-tank weapons, which were always sited in good, well-camouflaged positions. Anti-tank rifles were used a great deal. The English made a lot of use of mines, choosing his minefields and blocks well. He had large stocks of mines and explosives. His road and bridge demolitions hindered our advance greatly. The British sensitivity to his flanks was again confirmed. The British soldier cannot stand up to determined tank attacks supported by accurate fire from our artillery and other weapons"*

German Army Documents on the Campaign in Greece (Notes on English Methods of Fighting).

**Front cover :** German Panzer II and III tanks from Panzer Regiment 33 (Scott Robertson)

# OPERATION 'HANNIBAL' CORINTH

## CANAL - 26TH APRIL 1941

### WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

As British, Greek and Commonwealth forces retreated from Greece they were funneled into a single crossing point over the Corinth Canal. The Germans considered that if the bridge could be captured and held Allied evacuation plans would be greatly frustrated.

A simple plan was devised. German Fallschirmjäger Assault Engineers would seize both ends of the bridge in a surprise glider assault. Both battalions, of the reinforced Fallschirmjäger Regiment 2, were then to parachute to the East and West of the bridge. All attempts to dislodge them would be resisted until relieved by ground forces.

The dawn attack was a success with complete surprise achieved. Demolition charges were located and disconnected (but left in the centre of the bridge), just prior to the airborne assault. Allied forces in the area reacted quickly and counter attacked but were unable to repel the attackers.

Both Fallschirmjäger battlegroups landed either side of the canal and set up a defensive perimeter. West of the bridge some Fallschirmjäger elements moved on Corinth and after a brief skirmish were able to negotiate the surrender of all Greek forces there.

The scattered elements of the Allied 'Lee' and 'Isthmus' forces counter attacked where they could but were finally broken up and dispersed.

A relief force based around two companies of the 26th (New Zealand) Infantry Battalion was released to move to the the area of the canal but was also forced to fall back.

The German forces successfully cut off the only retreat path for Allied forces from the Greek mainland to the Peloponnese. In the next few hours over 12,000 Allied prisoners were taken. Unfortunately the operation was not a complete success for the Germans as the bridge mysteriously disappeared in a big explosion.

### THE GAME

This represents the attempt by Fallschirmjäger Regiment 2 to capture the Corinth Canal Bridge. The game is played on an approximately 8' x 6' table. We suggest a maximum of 12 moves.

### GERMAN ARRIVALS

- Gliders land within 6" **East** and **West** of the Corinth Canal bridge.
- I Bataillon and Regt. Stabs. drop on **DZ A (East)**, at least 12" from the the bridge.
- II Bataillon drops on **DZ B (West)**, at least 12" from the bridge.
- Air support is available from move 1.

### GERMAN REINFORCEMENTS

Artillery glider lands at **LZ C (East)** on move 6.

### ALLIED DEPLOYMENT

- Both Bofors guns within 6" of the bridge.
- New Zealand Field Company at least 12" from the eastern end of the bridge.
- 'Lee Force' and 'Isthmus Force' deploy **East** and **West** of the canal, at least 18" from the bridge except where indicated.
- C Squadron / 4th Hussars C Squadron / New Zealand Divisional Cavalry **West** of the canal, at least 24" from the bridge.
- Greek Battalion in **Corinth**.
- Allied troops start the game in buildings or dug-in (hard cover).

### ALLIED REINFORCEMENTS

26th (Australian) Infantry Battalion enters at **A1** or **A2** on move 5. Reinforcements may not move more than 12" on the move they arrive.

### GERMAN VICTORY CONDITIONS TO WIN

**Capture** and **Hold** both ends of the bridge  
**OR** eliminate all Allied forces.

### ALLIED VICTORY CONDITIONS TO WIN

**Prevent** German forces from achieving their objective.

## German Air Support (Air OP available)

At the start of a German player turn, throw a D6 for air support:

- 1-3 (no air support available this turn)
- 4 (a Stuka)
- 5 (a Bf 109) or
- 6 (a Bf 110)



**Above:** British Bofors deployed near bridge at the Corinth Canal (Colin Rumford)



**Right:** British armour moves to counter-attack the Germans (Colin Rumford - photo from 1st Edition Rapid Fire Corinth Canal scenario)

### Rifle Grenade Launchers

Support weapon with crew of one. Minimum range = 3" and maximum range = 12". Throw a D6. 6 to hit a moving target; 5 or 6 to hit a stationary target. Use table 8 Grenades for effect.

### THE Bridge

To simulate the possibility of the bridge being destroyed throw a D6 at the end of each Allied move.

On a 5 or 6 followed by a second D6 throw of a 4, 5 or 6 the bridge is destroyed.

Any forces on the bridge at the time of the explosion are lost and removed from play.

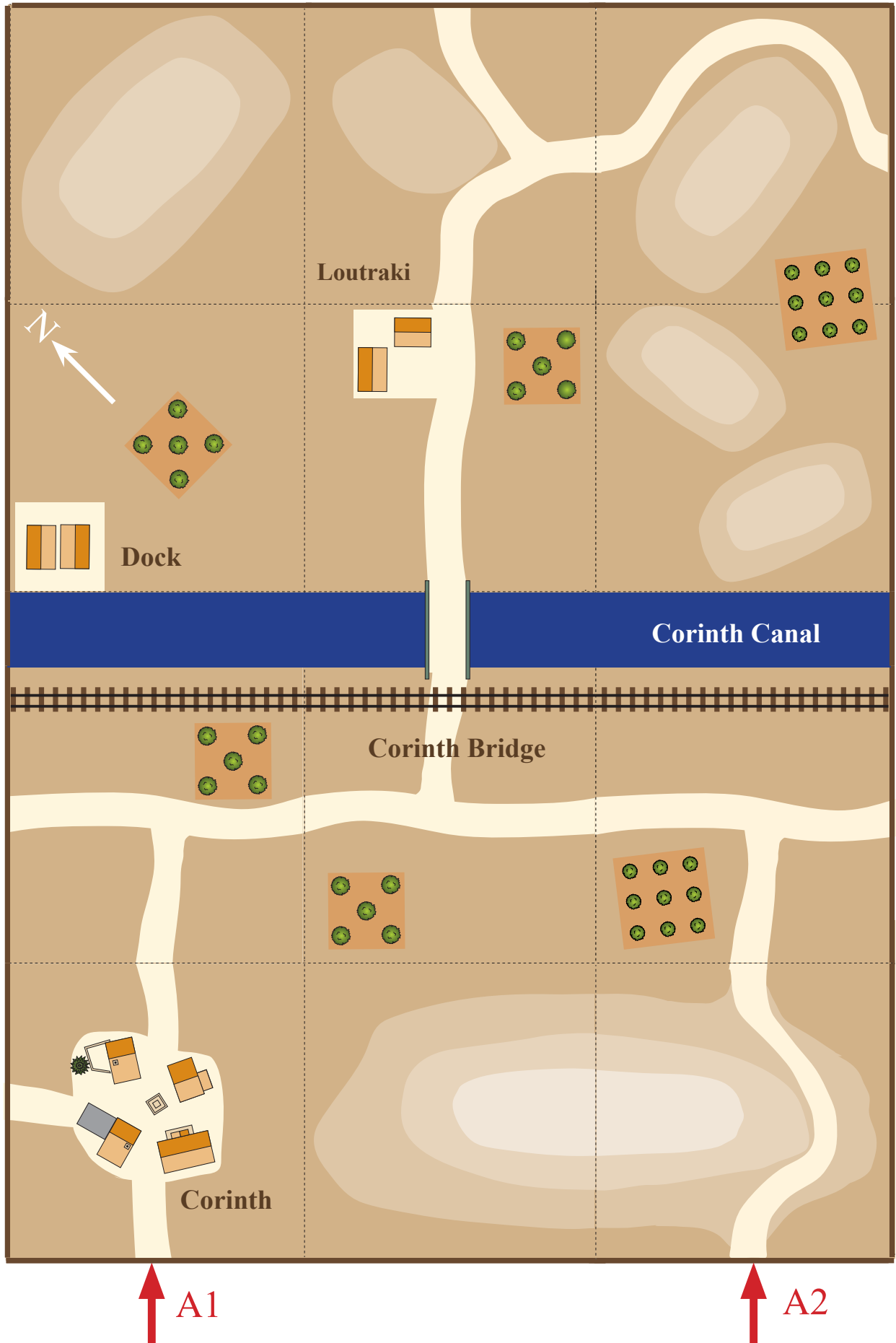
### TERRAIN

- **High ground** is a continuous obstacle for troops & vehicles trying to cross (no penalty for moving along) and provides soft cover.
- The **Corinth Canal** (6" wide) can only be crossed at the bridge.
- **Buildings** start the game intact.
- **Olive Groves** provide soft cover, are a continuous obstacle for movement and block LOS.
- **Walls** (36" to 48") provide hard cover to elements behind (up to 48").
- The **Railway** does not affect the game.

**Below:** German glider and parachute troops land near the Corinth Canal (Mark Piper)



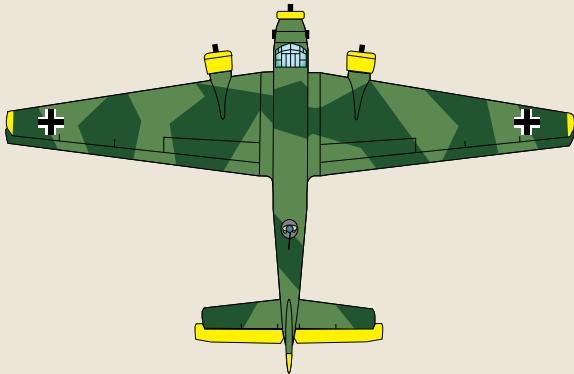
# CORINTH CANAL BATTLE MAP





## German Forces at Corinth Canal

The game begins after the bridge has been seized by glider troops. Place gliders within 6" of both ends of the bridge. The German player decides the drop zones for both battalions (one either side of the canal at least 12" from the bridge), prior to the start of the game, and marks these on a map.

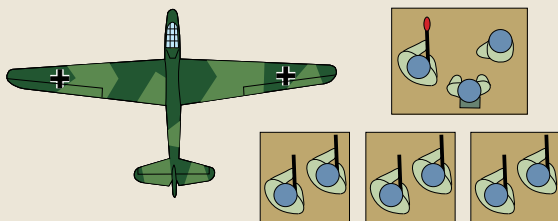


I Bataillon Fallschirmjäger Regiment 2  
(lands by parachute)

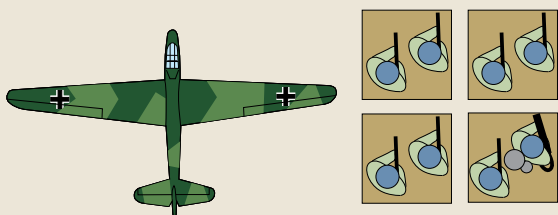
### MOVE 1 - within 6" of Bridge

#### Glider Assault Force Leutnant Häffner

Elements Fallschirmjäger Pionier Bataillon 7  
CO + 7 figures, rifle grenade launcher, glider



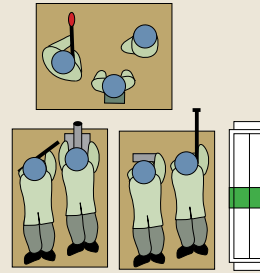
Elements Fallschirmjäger Pionier Bataillon  
7 8 figures, flamethrower, glider



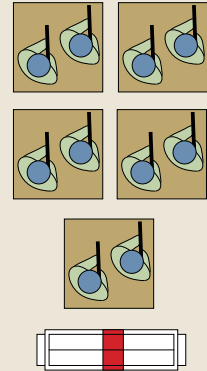
### MOVE 1 - Drop Zone A (East)

#### I Bataillon / Fallschirmjäger Regiment 2 Hauptmann Hans Kroh

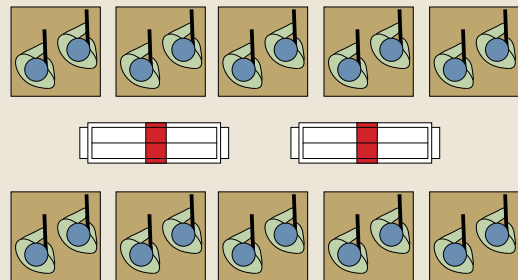
**Stabs Kompanie**  
CO + 5 figures, AT rifle, 50mm mortar, rifle grenade launcher, weapons container



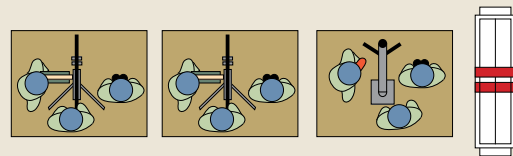
**1. Kompanie**  
10 figures, weapons container



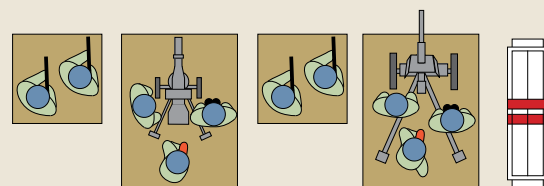
**2. and 3. Kompanien**  
20 figures, 2 x weapons containers



**4. Kompanie**  
9 figures, 2 x MMGs, 81mm mortar, weapons container



**Elements of 13. and 14. Kompanien** 10 figures, 75mm recoilless gun, 37mm anti-tank gun, 2 x weapons containers

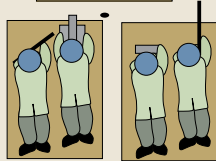
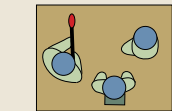


## MOVE 1 - Drop Zone B (West)

### II Bataillon / Fallschirmjäger Regiment 2 Hauptmann Erich Pietzonka

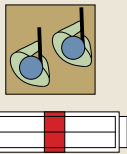
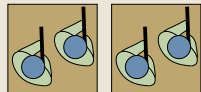
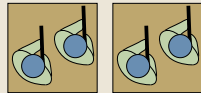
#### Stabs Kompanie

CO + 5 figures, AT rifle, 50mm mortar, rifle grenade launcher, weapons container



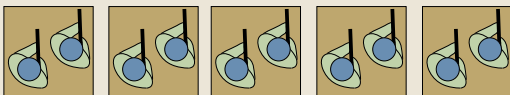
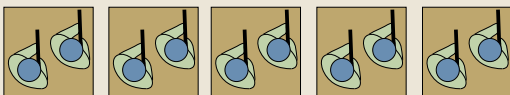
#### 5. Kompanie

10 figures, weapons container



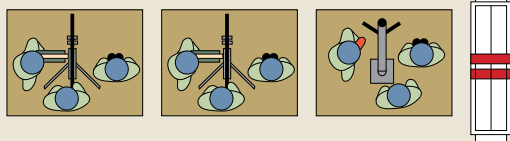
#### 6. and 7. Kompanien

20 figures, 2 x weapons containers



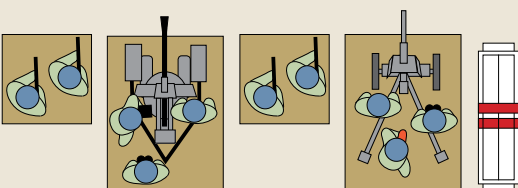
#### 8. Kompanie

9 figures, 2 x MMGs, 81mm mortar, weapons container



#### Elements of 3. Kompanie / Fallschirmjäger AA MG Battalion 7 and 14. Kompanie

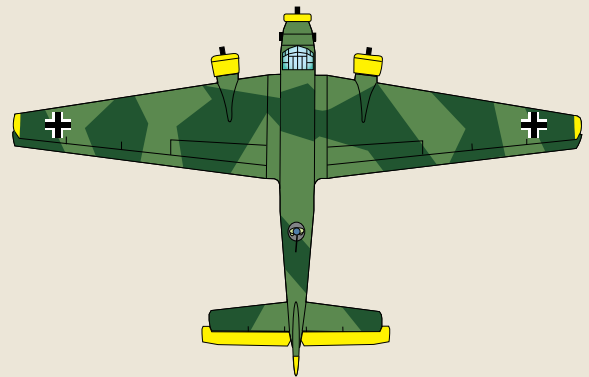
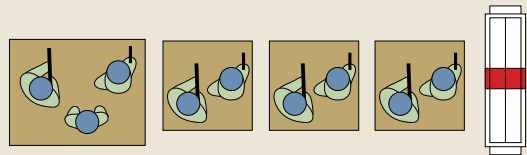
10 figures, 20mm AA gun, 37mm AT gun,  
2 x weapons containers



## MOVE 1 - Drop Zone B (West)

### Fallschirmjäger Regiment 2 Stabs Kompanie Oberst Alfred Sturm

Higher order CO + 8 figures, weapons container

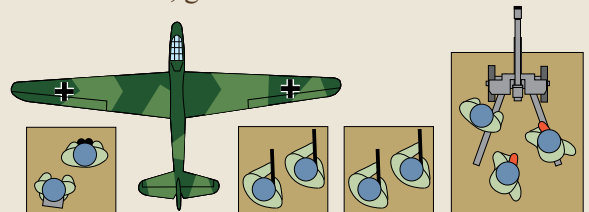


II Bataillon and HQ / Fallschirmjäger Regiment 2  
(lands by parachute)

## MOVE 6 - Landing Zone C (East)

### 3. Kompanie / Fallschirmjäger Artillery Abteilung 7

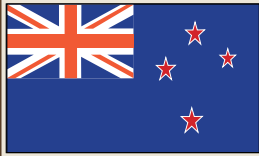
9 figures, 75mm mountain gun,  
observer team, glider



**Below:** German Fallschirmjäger assault engineers  
prepare to meet a counter-attack (Colin Rumford -  
1st Edition Rapid Fire scenario)







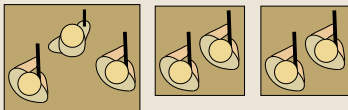
## Allied Forces at Corinth Canal

### Deployed **West** of Canal

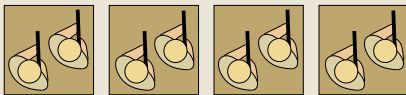


'Lee' Force HQ  
Lt Colonel Edward Lilington (4th Hussars)

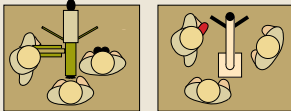
HQ  
CO + 6 figures, light truck



A Company  
2/6th (Australian) Infantry Battalion  
8 figures

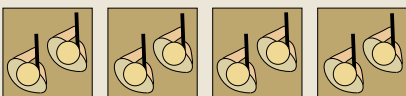


Headquarter Company  
2/6th (Australian) Infantry Battalion  
6 figures, MMG, 3" mortar



### Deployed **West** of Canal

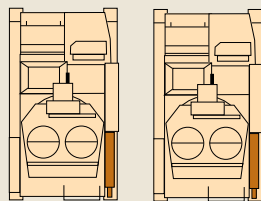
B Company  
2/6th (Australian) Infantry Battalion  
8 figures



### Deployed **West** of Canal



C Squadron  
/ 4th Hussars  
2 x Vickers Mk VIB  
(HMG/VMG)

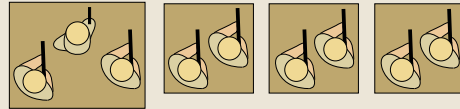


Morale: CO + 34 figures (Regular)  
including 2 AFVs

### Deployed **East** of Canal

'Isthmus' Force HQ  
Major Roland Gordon (19th NZ Inf Bn)

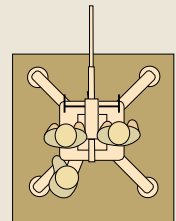
B Company /  
19th (New Zealand) Infantry Battalion  
CO + 8 figures



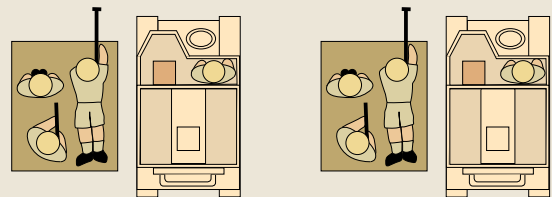
6th (New Zealand)  
Field Company  
8 figures



122nd (NZ)  
Light AA Battery  
3 figures, Bofors AA gun

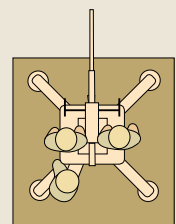


Combined Carrier Platoons  
22nd (New Zealand) and  
28th (Maori) Infantry Battalions  
6 figures, 2 x carrier \*

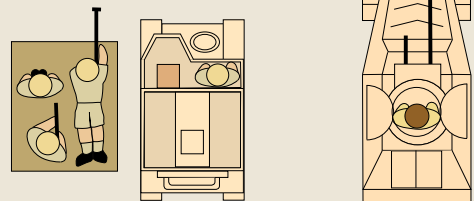


### Deployed **West** of Canal

122nd (NZ)  
Light AA Battery  
3 figures, Bofors  
AA gun



C Squadron /  
New Zealand Divisional Cavalry  
3 figures, AT rifle, carrier \*,  
Marmon-Herrington Mk II (ATR/MG)



\* If carrying passengers can use a VMG

Morale: CO + 34 figures (Regular)  
including an AFV

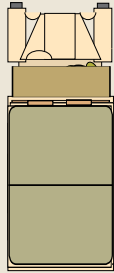
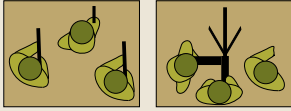
## Deployed at Corinth



**Greek Motorised Infantry Battalion**  
Colonel "Andrea Stavros" #

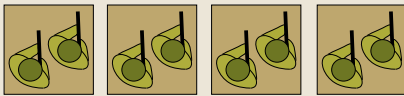
### HQ and MG Company

CO + 5 figures, MMG, lorry



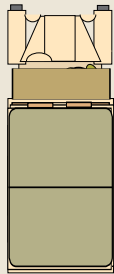
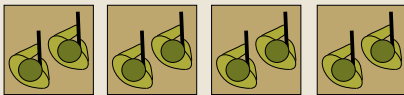
### 1st Company

8 figures



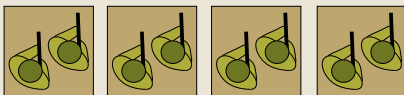
### 2nd Company

8 figures, lorry



### 3rd Company

8 figures



# Fictional character from the novel 'Guns of Navarone' by Alastair McLean ("A Colonel of Greek motorised infantry in Greece")

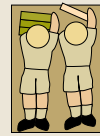
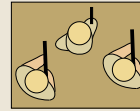
Morale: CO + 29 figures (Poor)

## Move 5 - Enter at A1

**26th (New Zealand) Infantry Battalion**  
Lt Colonel James Page

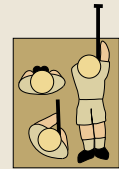
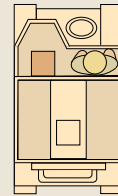
### HQ

CO + 4 figures,  
light truck



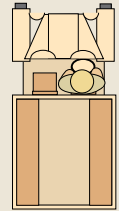
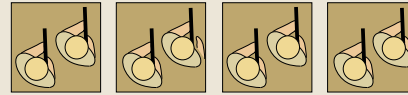
### Carrier Platoon

3 figures, AT rifle,  
carrier \*



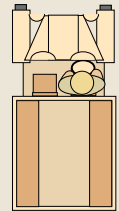
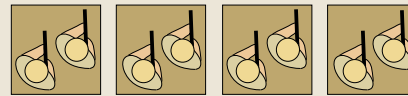
### B Company

8 figures



### D Company

8 figures, light truck



\* If carrying passengers can use a VMG

Morale: CO + 23 figures (Regular)

Allied forces had fought a series of rearguard actions since the Germans crossed the border from Yugoslavia into Greece on the 6th of April 1941. Remnants of the Allied contingent in Greece found themselves holding the vital bridge across the Corinth Canal on the morning of the 26th April.

Unfortunately the issue of command was confusing with two officers, Lt Colonel Edward Lillingston (4th Hussars) and Major Roland Gordon (19th New Zealand Infantry Battalion), believing they had sole command of the forces around the bridge. Therefore the battle was fought, from the Allied point of view, without an overall commander to coordinate their response.

**Below:** German paratroops assault New Zealand AA Bofors position (Colin Rumford - 1st Edition Rapid Fire Corinth Canal scenario)

