

Monte Cassino, 1944

A Flames of War Mega-Game Scenario

After their initially successful seizure of Naples the Allied advance in Italy slowly degenerated into a slugfest, as the Germans built successive strong lines blocking access up the peninsula toward the objective of Rome. The strongest of these lines, was centered on the hills above the town of Cassino, and blocked access up the Liri valley to the outskirts of Rome itself. Unable to bypass the German positions here, the Allies were forced into assault after assault in an attempt to clear the heavily fortified position.

This scenario uses a large tabletop to show a scaled down version of the area around the historic Monte Cassino position, as the Allies try to seize the commanding ground and open the road to Rome. This area saw some of the most intense infantry fighting of the entire Italian campaign, and provides an opportunity to field a wide variety of interesting and unique Late War units. The scenario is based on what the Allies referred to as the first and second battles for Cassino, the strong initial push to overcome the position.

Special Terrain rules:

- Cassino Town – by this point in the battle, the town had been reduced to rubble, providing excellent defensive cover. Any stand touching a building should be treated as in concealing terrain and bulletproof cover.
- The Hotel – a particularly substantial building, it made a natural fortress and was a focal point for much fighting. In addition to the normal town rules, the defender in this area may swap any of his HMG teams that deploys within the hotel for an HMG nest.
- Heights – the whole battlefield was commanded by the heights and the Abbey. Any unit on the heights can see over lower level forest or buildings. The entire heights are impassable to vehicles, except along paths (which are treated as very difficult going). The entire heights provide concealment to any team on them, and no team may see or be seen through more than 8" of heights. The ground was very rocky, so proper digging in was not possible without explosives. German teams on any part of the heights may begin the game dug in, but no teams may dig in on the heights during the game.
- Craters – the entire area had been heavily shelled by both sides, and large areas of craters created from the shelling. Craters are difficult to traverse and provide cover in the otherwise flat open landscape. Treat craters as very difficult going, and any team even partially in a crater counts as concealed.

Deployment:

As the game starts the Allies are prepared for their assault to crack the vaulted Gustav Line at Cassino. While the German forces are attempting to cling to their strong defenses, the Allies need to advance quickly to link up with the Anzio beachhead and capture Rome.

The German forces are deployed on table first, as noted in each force's deployment. Each German player may elect to hold a single platoon off table in reserve. If they do, reserves are rolled for normally commencing on turn 2, and they may enter anywhere in their force's deployment area that is more than 12" from any enemy stand.

Once the German forces are deployed, the Allied players deploy their forces. Allied forces may be deployed within their deployment area and no further than 6" from the table edge, or they may move onto the table on the first Allied turn. Allied players may elect to hold any or all of their platoons off table to avoid congestion, any platoons held off table may enter from their force's deployment area at the start of any Allied turn.

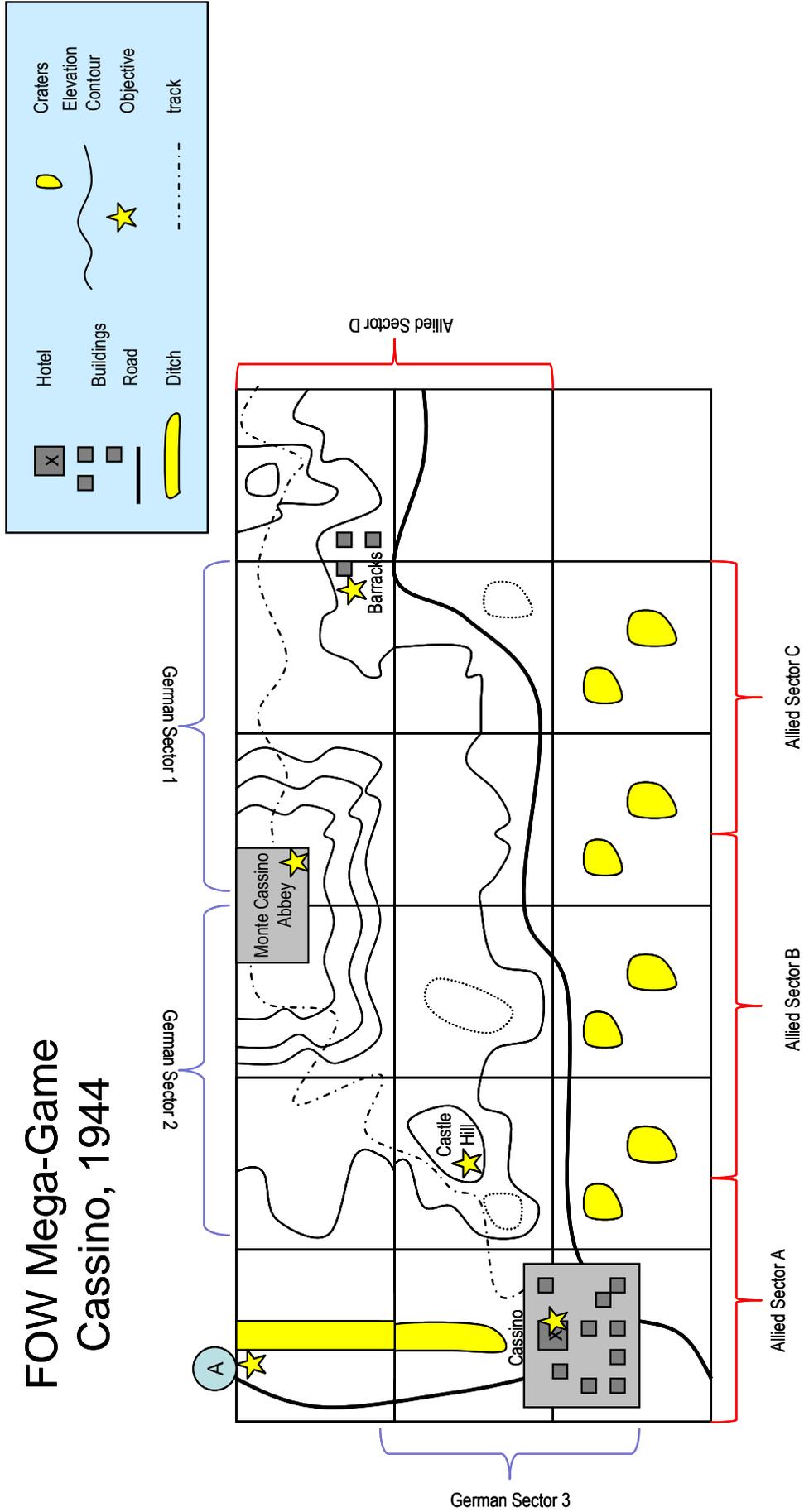
After all forces are deployed, the Allied players then take the first turn.

Infantry Aces:

The Cassino battles were very much an infantryman's action. Each player may make their company commander an infantry ace, and select any two turn 1 abilities from pages 128-129 of the Cassino book for their ace.

Map:

FOW Mega-Game Cassino, 1944



Axis Forces:

1st Regiment / 1st Fallschirmjager Division –

Rating: units are rated as Fearless Veteran except as specified in the list
Core List: Fallschirmjager Kompanie list from Cassino
Points: 1200
Added units: none
Prohibited units: no vehicles
Deployment: deployed at start anywhere within German sector 2, within 12" of the board edge OR within 6" of Castle Hill or the Abbey.

[1st Fallschirmjager Regt] _____

2nd Regiment / 1st Fallschirmjager Division –

Rating: units are rated as Fearless Veteran except as specified in the list
Core List: Fallschirmjager Kompanie list from Cassino
Points: 1200
Added units: none
Prohibited units: no vehicles
Deployment: deployed at start anywhere within German sector 3, within 12" of the board edge OR within 6" of the Continental Hotel.

[2nd Fallschirmjager Regt] _____

44th Reichgrenadier Division –

Rating: units are rated as Confident Trained except as specified in the list
Core List: Reichgrenadier Kompanie list from Cassino
Points: 1200
Added units: none
Prohibited units: no vehicles
Deployment: deployed at start anywhere within German sector 1, within 12" of the board edge.

[44th Reichsgrenadier] _____

90th Panzergrenadier Division –

Rating: units are rated as Confident Veteran except as specified in the list
Core List: 90th Panzergrenadier Kompanie list from Cassino
Points: 1200
Added units: none
Prohibited units: maximum of 2 platoons of vehicles
Deployment: enters on turn 3 from the German Road edge in the Liri Valley (entry point A)

[90th Panzergrenadier] _____

Allied Forces:

French 2nd Moroccan Division –

Rating: Moroccan Division units are rated as Fearless Trained except as specified in the list
Core List: Goum Rifle Company list from Cassino
Points: 1500
Added units: none
Prohibited units: maximum one platoon of vehicles
Deployment: enter the table on turn one from Allied Sector D

[Goums] _____

American 34th Infantry Division –

Rating: units are rated as Confident Veteran except as specified in the list
Core List: US Rifle Company list from Fortress Europe, Italy Veterans
Points: 1500
Added units: none
Prohibited units: maximum one platoon of vehicles
Deployment: enter the table on turn one from Allied Sector C

[34th US Infantry Division] _____

4th Indian Division –

Rating: Indian Division units are rated as Fearless Veteran except as specified in the list
Core List: Indian Rifle Company list from Cassino
Points: 1500
Added units: none
Prohibited units: maximum one platoon of vehicles
Deployment: enter the table on turn one from Allied Sector B

[4th Indian Division] _____

2nd New Zealand Division –

Rating: New Zealand Division units are rated as Confident Veteran except as specified in the list
Core List: New Zealand Rifle Company list from Cassino
Points: 1500
Added units: none
Prohibited units: maximum one platoon of vehicles
Deployment: enter the table on turn one from Allied Sector A

[2nd New Zealand Division] _____

Gustav Line:

The Cassino position was part of the extensive fortifications of the Gustav Line. Where the German forces are deployed on table, each German commander may place 1x MG bunker and 2x barbed wire entanglements within their deployment area.

German artillery positions in the Gustav Line were dug into mountain faces and well camouflaged. German commanders may elect to deploy up to one artillery unit off table using the Across the Volga rule.

Massive Assault:

The Allies employed masses of firepower, from mortars and guns to medium and heavy bombers, to soften up the German positions prior to assault. Prior to the start of the game, the Allied Commander receives a Preliminary Bombardment.

The Allies knew that they would take massive infantry casualties to clear the Cassino position. To reflect this, the first two combat platoons lost by each Allied force do not count for the purpose of company morale. In addition, the first combat platoon lost in action is automatically replaced; it enters at the beginning of the player's next turn from the edge of their deployment area.

Airpower:

By this stage of the war, the Allies enjoyed an increasing air superiority level, and they used it extensively when the weather cooperated.

- Each clear weather turn the Allied CiC receives 2 airstrikes. He may allocate them to any player as he sees fit.
- Each clear weather turn the Axis CiC receives 1 fighter mission. After enemy airstrikes are placed, it may try to intercept and chase off the attacking aircraft, succeeding on a d6 roll of 5+.

Weather:

The weather was a significant factor in the Italian campaign, but the Allies timed the start of their assault to coincide with good weather. The weather for the first two game turns is automatically clear. From turn three onwards, the Allied player rolls 1d6 for weather at the start of each turn. If the roll is 4+ the weather is clear, if it is not the weather is bad and no air support is available to either side that turn.

Winning the Game:

Much blood has already been spilled over control of the crucial Cassino position. The Allies were desperate to capture the area, and the German forces equally determined to prevent its capture. To reflect this, there are 5 objectives on the tabletop:

- The Allied side will win a strategic victory as soon as they hold any 3 objectives at the start of their turn.
- If the Allies do not win a strategic victory, the game will end after 10 turns. If at that point the Allies hold any 2 objectives they win a tactical victory. If they hold any 1 objective then the result is a draw.
- Any other result is a German tactical victory.