

IRON CROSS

Iron Cross writers Darryl Morton and Stuart McCorquodale meet in the desert for a rare small battle involving about a company of infantry and a couple or three tanks on each side. We take a look at events from the point of view of the DAK, commanded by Hauptmann McCorquodale.

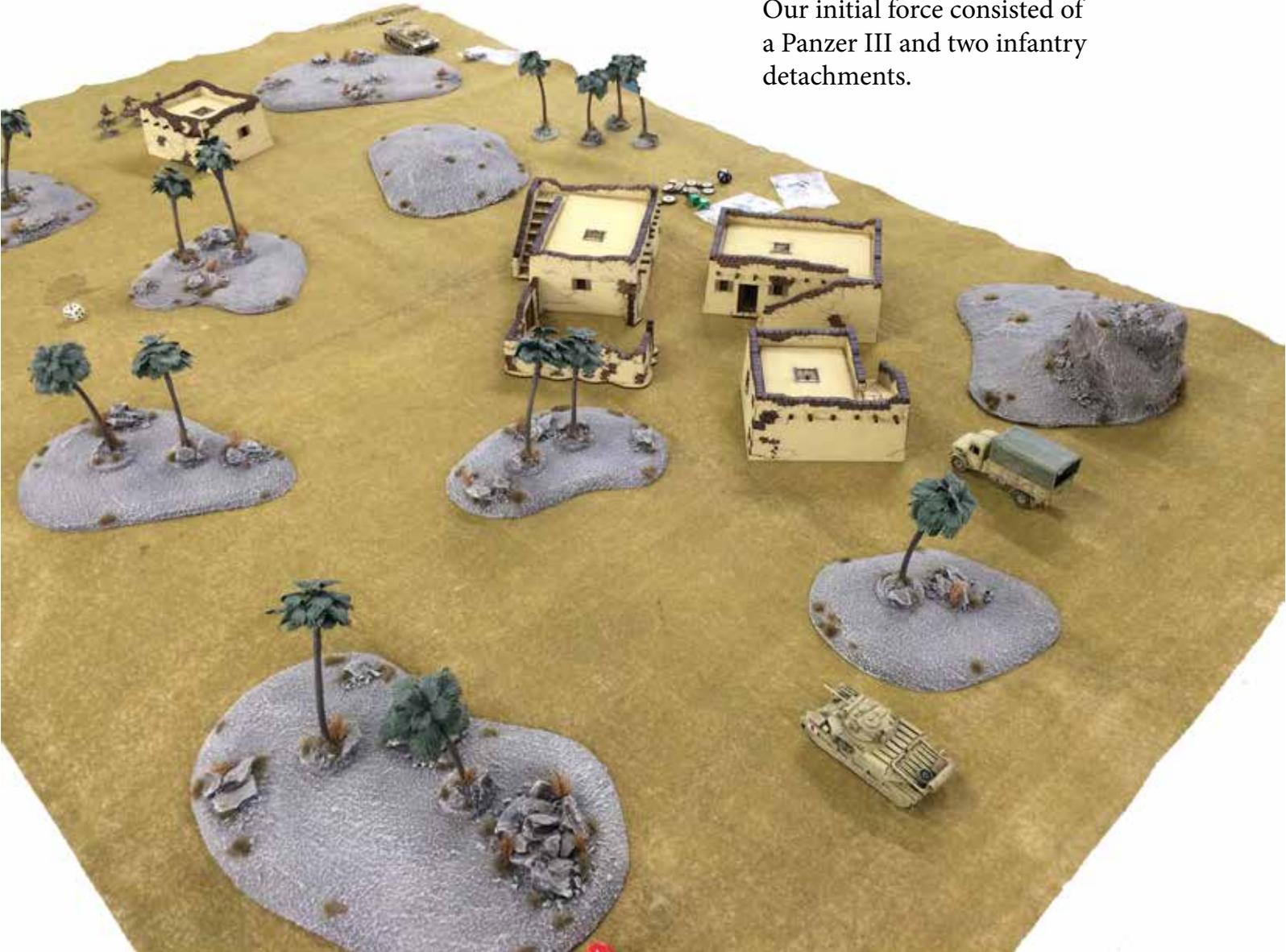


An Escalating Engagement scenario, in which forward elements of a larger force skirmish as greater numbers are drawn into the fight. I identified that the Matilda would be the greatest obstacle for me, but potentially a great hinderance for the British/Indian force itself.

The plan was to isolate any heavy tanks and launch an assault on the left to seize the village compound. If we could contain any enemy attempt to garrison that area, I felt we could use it to suck in the British and Indian troops and exploit our greater armoured mobility.

The enemy consisted of a truck laden with infantry and a Matilda, against which we had nothing to cause Darryl any great worries, as long as he used them wisely and nullified the greater mobility of our Panzer III's. In Iron Cross, units may activate multiple times in a turn. Heavy vehicles, such as the Matilda, find this more difficult than other units.

Our initial force consisted of a Panzer III and two infantry detachments.



It appeared as though the enemy was already on his way to fortifying the village compound and that he would anchor it on his left with the Matilda.

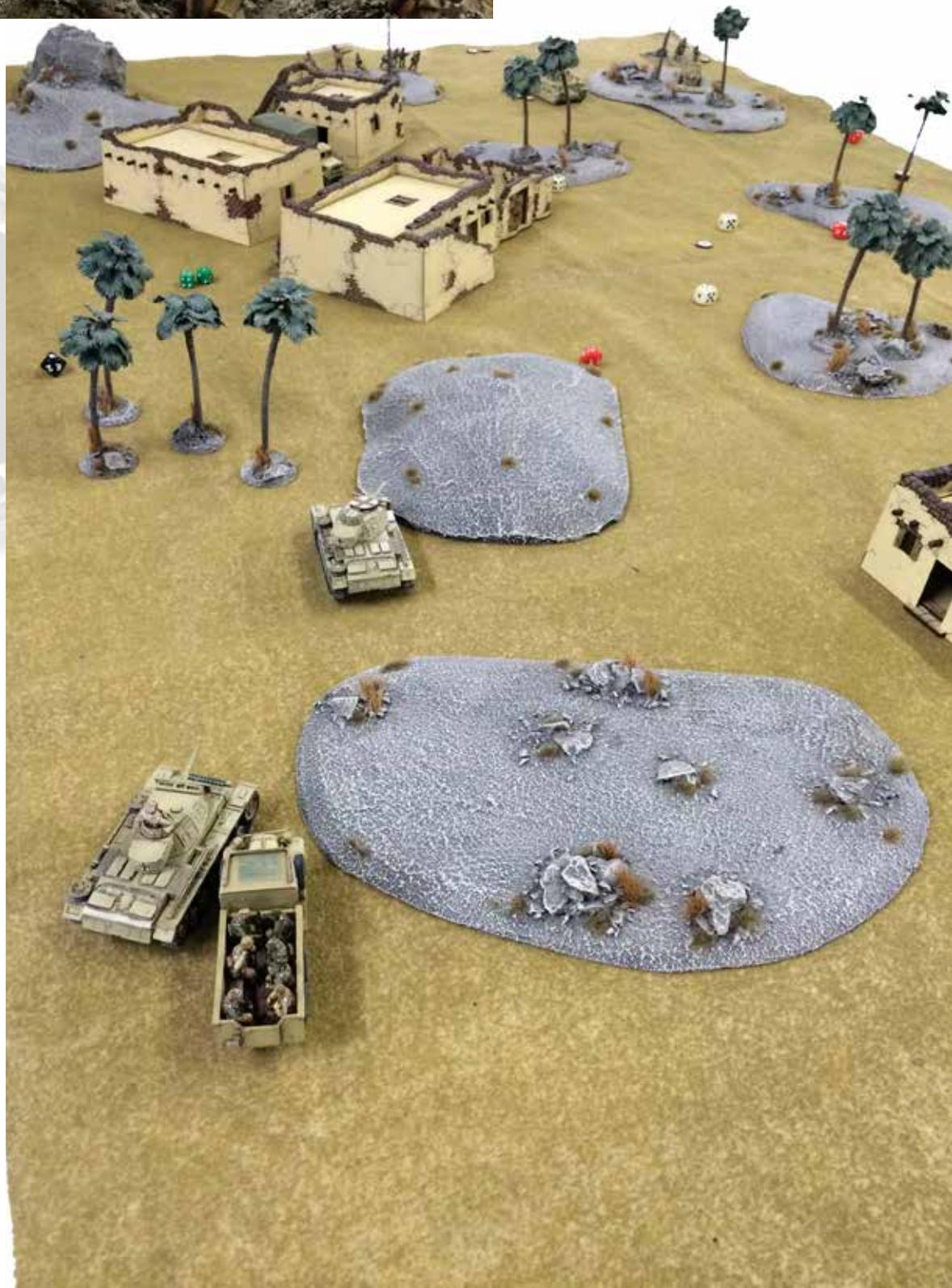
The game started with the enemy taking the initiative and manoeuvring infantry and machine guns into the village as expected.

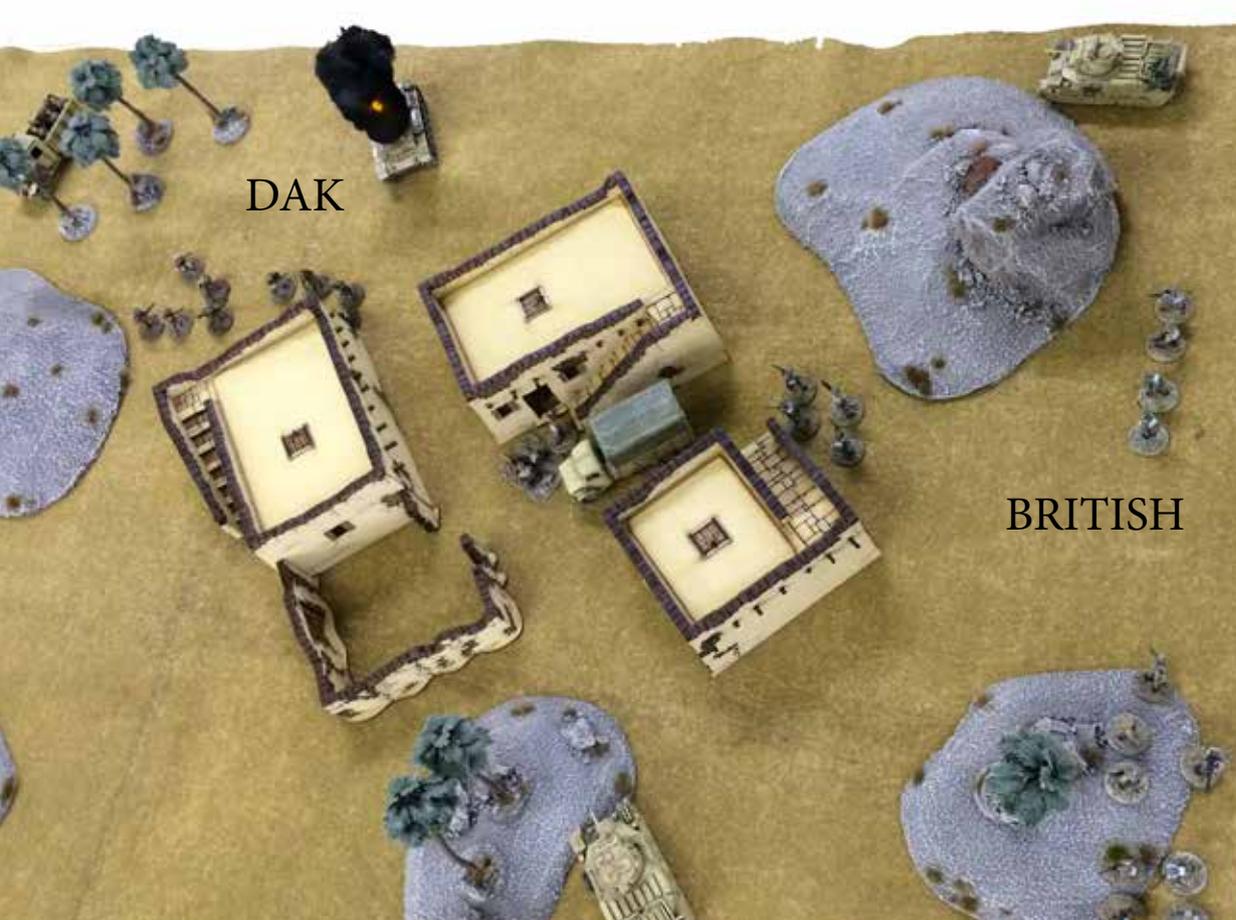


These German troops were detailed to monitor the village and be ready as a reserve to reinforce the planned assault on the compound.

The planned German assault in its early stages on the left. The British commander seems to be unaware as he has not taken steps to fortify the village. After a brief exchange of fire with the Matilda, the Panzer III's redeploy for the main attack.

With multiple activations allowable for units in Iron Cross, I felt that we were just about in position to launch a decisive attack.





Our attack on the compound causes heavy losses upon the enemy, but the second Matilda makes my gamble look shaky as it knocks out one of the trio of Panzer III's.

Time for a brief moment to get into some juicy rule mechanics as we look forward to the inevitable enemy counterattack!

In Iron Cross, units are activated by the use of command tokens; you get a number of these according to the size of your force and, in some cases, depending on the scenario. A turn lasts until both sides have used all of their command tokens.

Command tokens may be used to activate a unit or to take a company morale test. Units may activate multiple times, but dice rolls for activations are required beyond a unit's first. In the example of the DAK attacking the compound, I activated both infantry units three times in the turn! The first was "free", the second and third required dice rolls to succeed (the command token is spent whether this rolls passes or fails).

Iron Cross has no fixed turn sequence. At the start of a turn, one player holds the initiative. That player spends command tokens to activate units as he or she wishes, but the opposing player may interrupt at any point and react. Reactions can be to take a company morale test or to activate a unit. In the attack above, my Panzer III was attempting to activate again when Darryl decided to react with his Matilda. Reactions always require a dice roll to succeed. He made the roll and killed the tank.

As reactions may be made to any enemy action, there is always a lot of decision making and lots of tense, to-and-fro activity. In addition, if a player scores a 6 to react, he or she "seizes the initiative" and the opposing player is now in a position of having to react to the action. The key is to know when to react and when not to react. Failed reactions exhaust command tokens!



The British and Indian troops counter attack at the village and force the Germans back, but sustained fire from an anti-tank gun and a lucky hit from a Panzer III takes care of a Matilda.



With the other Matilda isolated to the enemy left, the Panzers are free to support another infantry assault on the compound. With a decisive use of initiative, the German commander lead from the front and the enemy lost an infantry unit and his machine guns.

A display of stubbornness from the Indians saw them take out another Panzer III, but the ferocity of the German infantry assaults on the village, plus the isolation of the British armoured support, saw the Germans win this battle pretty decisively.

Iron Cross is released
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