

Subject: Punitive Expedition into the Ousseltia Valley

From: Officer Commanding, 2nd Bn. East Surrey Regt.

To: Major Sanders, Cmdg. A Company.

At first light tomorrow, you will take your Company (with supporting troops as listed below) into the Ousseltia Valley. On arrival, you will proceed into the valley, destroy the mud-fort of the Ouled Ghazi tribesmen and return to camp.

Own Troops: A coy. consisting of:

HQ Platoon (White)	Officer cmdg.	
	Lieut.	<u>4 Lorries</u>
	Sgt.	
	2 Light Machine teams	
	8 Riflemen	
Red Platoon)	Lieut.	
Blue Platoon) each	Sgt.	
Green Platoon)	12 Riflemen.	

Total: 5 Officers.

4 Sgts.

44 Riflemen

2 Light m/g teams (4 men)

2 Light tanks (2pdr guns) of 3rd Light Coy., R.T.R.

1 Armoured Car (heavy m/g) ditto.

Enemy Troops: Thought to be about 160 strong, of whom 50 are thought to be mounted on camels or horses.

The tribesmen are fierce, resolute fighters and know the mountains and the valley to the inch. They have no weapons heavier than a rifle but are deadly shots. It is possible that they may have laid some primitive home-made land mines to hinder vehicles but it is not thought that they have made more than 6 of them. They may also use petrol bombs to disable tanks.

Notes: It is essential that no wounded men are left behind to the mercies of the tribesmen. Therefore, each man who is wounded will be taken back to the First-Aid station or conducted back to safety by a comrade. An Aid station will be set up in a safe position immediately on arrival in the valley or else a truck will accompany the troops to pick up wounded.

Because of the nature of the terrain, it will be necessary for the tanks and the armoured car to move 'opened-up' with the commander's head out of the turret. This will make the vehicle more vulnerable (see rules).

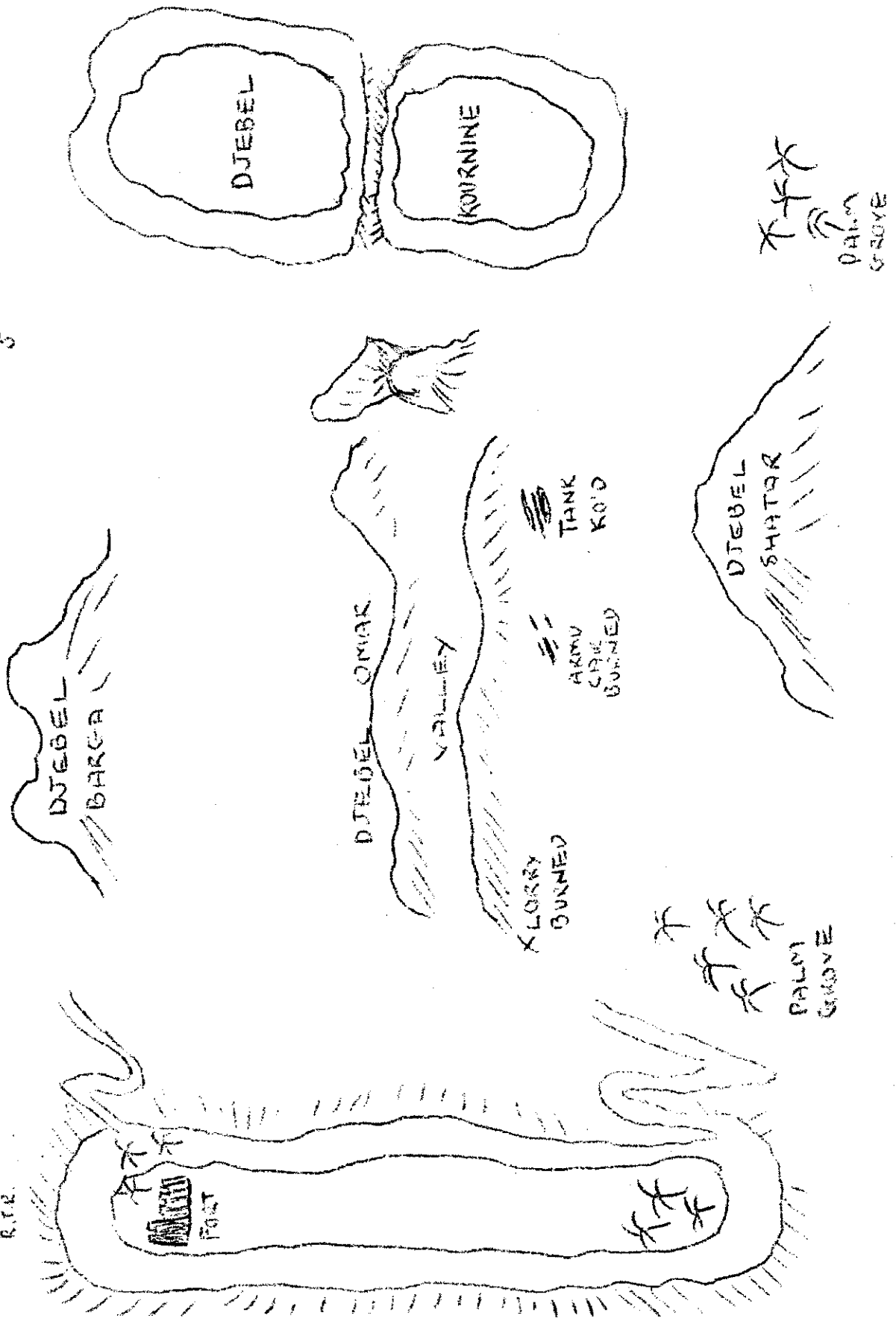
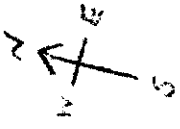
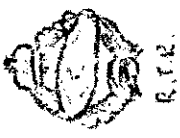
The mud-fort may be destroyed by shots from the tanks 2pdr guns (see rules) or it may be blown up by charges (see rules).

J. Blandon

4th Nov. 1936.

Lieut. Col. Cmdg. 2nd Bn. East Surrey.

THE OUSSELTIA VALLEY NOV. 1936



Rules for Ousseltia Valley Expedition.

Moving:

Infantry	12"	(6" when climbing)
Lt. Machine gun team	9"	(4½" when climbing)
Lorries	15"	
Armoured Car	18"	
Tanks	15"	
Tribesmen on foot	12"	at all times
" on horses	18"	
" on camels	18"	

Firing:

Infantry	24"
Lt. M/gun	24"
Eq. M/gun (armd car)	30"
2 pdr guns (tanks)	36"
Tribesmen	24"

Infantry take 4" of their move to fire - thus they may move 8" and fire once, 4" and fire twice or not move and fire three times.

The light machine guns ditto.

The heavy machine gun in the armoured car fires by throwing 6 dice per move - the dice may be thrown together for 'blanketing fire' or one after the other as the gun traverses along a position.

For effects of fire of all these weapons - see below.

Spdr gun can fire three rounds per move - see below for effects

Effects of Fire.

<u>Rifles (Both infantry and tribesmen)</u>		<u>Massed targets</u>	<u>Deployed</u>
<u>Light M/Guns</u>	24"	½ dice score.	½ score.
	15"	" "	"
	6"	Full score	"

Half score only when targets behind hard cover.

Heavy M/Gun

	<u>Car Moving</u>		<u>Car Stationary.</u>	
	<u>Massed target.</u>	<u>Deployed</u>	<u>Massed target.</u>	<u>Deployed</u>
30"	½ score	¼ score	¾ score	½ score
15"	½ score	½ score	Full score	½ score

Half scores only count when target behind hard cover.

2 pdr gun. Pick point of aim - throw dice.

	<u>Tank Moving</u>	<u>Tank Stationary</u>
36"	Hit scored by 3. 1 or 2 = 3" short 4 or 5 = 3" rt or lt. 6 = 3" over	Hit scored by 3 or 4. 2 and 5 is 3" rt or left. 1 is 3" short. 6 is 3" over.
18"	Hit scored by 3 or 4 2 & 5 = 3" rt or lt.	Hit scored by 2, 3, 4, 5. 1 = 3" short.

1 = 3" short
6 = 3" over.

6 = 3" over.

When hit is scored use burst-circle - all under it are killed without saving throws. If under cover, usual saving throws prevail.

Tribesmen: Throw individual dice.

	<u>Massed</u>	<u>Deployed</u>
24"	4, 5, 6	5, 6
12"	3, 4, 5, 6	4, 5, 6

Tribesmen's rifles cannot effect armoured car or tanks.

Mines: If any part of a vehicle touches a mine then a dice is thrown.

1 or 2 = Mine fails to explode.
3 or 4 = Vehicle disabled 1 move.
5 or 6 = Vehicle knocked out.

Petrol bombs. May be thrown from range of 6" or dropped on vehicles.

1 or 2 = missed or failed to ignite.
3 or 4 = fire extinguished in 1 move (no movement of veh)
5 or 6 = vehicle totally destroyed - throw for crew.

Tribesmen carrying petrol bombs will have small plasticine ball on rifle. If hit by rifle fire, they have no saving throw.

Saving Throws: Infantry - 1 or 2 = killed
3 = wounded and requires assistance.
4, 5, 6 = unhurt.
Tribesmen saved by 4, 5 or 6.

No extra saving throws for cover.

Morale: Infantry - need 4, 5 or 6 to carry on if both officer and sergeant killed.

Tribesmen - need 5 or 6 to stand when infantry get within 6" of them or vehicles within 12". If behind hard cover this does not apply.

Mounted troops or dismounted tribesmen will not press home an attack if they lose 1/3rd of their numbers approaching. Tribesmen wishing to throw petrol bomb needs 4, 5 or 6 to approach within 6" of vehicle.

Hand-to-hand fighting: Done on man-for-man basis, deciding by dice if a man is facing more than equal numbers. Dice v dice, then saving throw for loser. Mounted men add 1 to dice throw. Attackers add 1 to dice throw for impetus. Officers add 1 to dice throw as do chieftains.

Boulders may be rolled down recognised slopes at vehicles. They will be balls of plasticine and will actually be rolled down, being pushed by at least two men. If a vehicle is hit by a boulder it dices - and 1 or 2 means vehicle disabled 2 moves; 3 or 4 means 1 move and 5 or 6 means unhurt.

Tank Commanders: If killed, throw dice - 1 or 2 = tank or car withdraws from action; 3 or 4 delayed 1 move. To kill commander, tribesman needs throw as usual but deducts 1 from dice for small target.

A Company of the 2nd Bn. East Surrey Regiment arrived at the South Eastern corner of the valley at first light on the 5th of November, 1936. In the far distance, at the North-West corner of the valley could be seen the tower and walls of the mud fort they had come to destroy, rising above palm trees growing along the edge of the plateau upon which the fort was built. The valley itself was more a series of small valleys or defiles rather than one large valley between rising hills.

Immediately to their right front rose Djebel Kournine with two rocky peaks towering at either end and a sandy plateau halfway up the eminence entered on the East and West sides only by two narrow, steeply rising tracks. A thick belt of jungle and palm trees lay almost between the Kournine and a smaller, less prominent rocky eminence to the South, the Djebel Shatar. Between the Kournine and Shatar stretched a small narrow valley leading to yet another long and high rising rocky range stretching for about a third of the valley directly from East to West. This was the Djebel Omar, two almost unclimbable rocky ridges with a very narrow ravine stretching between them. Immediately North of Djebel Omar was a plateau surrounded on almost all four sides by unclimbable rock face, having only one small entrance on its West side - a steep track. This was Djebel Barga. The rear or Western end of the valley was completely closed by a rock face climbing high into the air to a large plateau which stretched far off out of sight. This plateau was only reached by two very narrow, winding, rocky paths one to the North and one to the South end of the rock face. At the very Northern end of the plateau, behind a thick grove of palm trees and jungle, lay the mud fort of the Ouled Ghazi tribe - the objective which A Company had been sent to destroy.

It was possible to see tribesmen lying in position on the majority of the climbable rocky eminences. They were behind stone sangers or breastworks, many of them high above the narrow tracks through which the party must pass. Many of these men were armed with petrol bombs which they were waiting to drop upon the vehicles as they laboriously moved beneath them.

Although not known at the time, the tribesmen in view were far from being the full strength of the Ouled Ghazi tribe. Behind Djebel Barga a large force of camel mounted tribesmen (30) lay hidden and at the Western end of Djebel Omar a force of 25 tribesmen mounted on Arab horses were waiting their opportunity to attack. Three large bands (each 25 tribesmen) were congregated behind rock faces on Djebel Shatar; in the valley between the ridges of Djebel Omar and in the jungle and palm to the south-west of Djebel Omar. (these men were not placed in position but represented by one man and counter marked with the complete number of the party he represented).

The floors of all the valleys were thickly covered with small stones and boulders (represented by tiny balls of plasticine). Among these stones, the tribesmen had cleverly concealed primitive

landmines, which would explode upon pressure of a vehicle. (These were represented by a small circle of white paper imbedded on the bottom of one of the balls of plasticine. As a vehicle proceeded over one of these "stones" they were turned up as touched and when a white paper dot was revealed, the vehicle knew that trouble lay ahead - (see rules.)

Major Sanders, Commanding A Company, began in a very cautious frame of mind, sending both tanks and the armoured car directly along the eastern border of the valley closely followed and shielding his force which were still in their four trucks. The force came under fire from half a dozen tribesmen securely tucked away behind stone breastworks on Djebel Kournine and Red Platoon were detailed to ascend the steep track and winkle the tribesmen out from the sandy plateau halfway up the rocky eminence. They were aided by a number of 2pdr. rounds from the tanks and by burst of machinegun fire from the armoured car. As the vehicles passed the bottom of the rocky track leading up to the Kournine on their way north-west, a large boulder (a ball of plasticine an inch in diameter) was sent rolling down the track at them narrowly missing the leading vehicle. The main party continued on round the northern end of the Djebel Kournine, still under fire from the small parties of tribesmen on the eminence whilst Red Platoon toiled upwards and, soon to be engaged in a sharp fire fight and then a hand-to-hand combat with the tribesmen, losing more than half their strength in settling the five natives.

The advance continued slowly and laboriously around the northern end of the Kournine, Major Sanders sending ahead infantrymen on foot to lift each suspected mine - in every case they turned out to be false alarms! (Up till now the British force had been manipulated by wargamer Nigel Mottram; at this stage wargamer Keith Wickham arrived and brought a much needed touch of audacity to the proceedings).

Once round to the west of Djebel Kournine, the British force surprisingly did not press west down the valley between Djebel Omar and Djebel Barga but moved immediately south to the small valley between Djebel Shatar and Djebel Omar. The force of tribesmen on Djebel Shatar had moved across and were climbing the winding track on the west side of Djebel Kournine, soon to become engaged with the remnants of Red Platoon. The riflemen of White Platoon had been left at the south-E. end of Djebel Kournine and were sheltering in the rocks in case a flank or rear attack by tribesmen. This expenditure of half of their manpower on a smaller number of tribesmen seemed to be rather wasteful.

Moving down the valley between Omar and Shatar, disaster struck. A tribesman cleverly hidden on a rock face managed to drop a petrol bomb onto the armoured car which immediately went up in flames. Immediately afterwards one of the light tanks following it struck a

mine and similarly brewed up. Risking mines, the other tank followed by the trucks pushed forward down the valley towards the patch of jungle south-west of Omar, being under fire from Shatar, Omar and from the jungle itself. Throughout the attack, the machine guns and heavier weapons of the vehicles had been taking constant toll of the tribesmen but their superior numbers enabled them to absorb these greater losses. At the western end of Djebel Omar another concealed tribesman managed to drop a petrol bomb into a truck containing Blue Platoon. The truck went up in flames and five men of the Platoon were killed. The remaining light tank lost its second commander at this stage which now left it with a one man crew. Thus it was able to move or to fire but not to do both at the same time. These vehicle commanders had been methodically sniped at throughout the operation and not one of the original commanders remained.

Things looked black for A company and it appeared that they would have to withdraw from the valley without achieving their objective but on being reinforced by two armoured cars of 3rd Light Coy of R.T.R., which came in at the north and southern ends of the eastern border of the valley, they decided to press forward. The car which came round the northern end of Kournine, following the route of the rest of the party brought with them the truck-borne remainders of Red and White platoons and this force was sufficiently threatening to prevent the tribesmen on Djebel Barga, or the camel reserves, from moving out of their position to aid their comrades at the southern side of the valley. The second armoured car skirted the jungle south of Djebel Kournine and came past the still burning vehicles in the valley between Shatar and Omar similarly preventing the tribesmen on Shatar from moving down to attack the small British force.

Led by the light tank, the force reached the foot of the winding track at the south-western corner of the valley and began to ascend. The tank led followed by three trucks bearing the remainder of the infantry whilst the two armoured cars remained at the foot of the track covering the party.

The Arabs had either uselessly expended all their petrol bombs or else the men bearing them had been killed and a known track had been found through the mines so that there was little to prevent the party from proceeding forward and destroying the Fort. There were no tribesmen on the top plateau, everyone having come down into the valley to defend their territory. Although the tribesmen still had a large force of camel and horse mounted men it was not considered that they would have logically attacked this mechanised force of lorry-borne infantry supported by two untouched armoured cars and a tank. For this reason it was decided that the British force would probably be able to make their way back out of the valley relatively unimpeded by what was left of the Ouled Ghazi tribe.

This small action involving under fifty Airfix 8th Army figures, with three Lesney Matchbox armoured cars suitably converted to pre-World War II vintage vehicles of the North West Frontier of India and supported by two similarly constructed light tanks of the period were opposed by the contents of about five or six boxes of Airfix Arabs. Each figure had a piece of lead the same size as its base glued underneath the base which made it possible for them to stand up on some pretty steep slopes. The whole action, even with these small numbers, lasted from 6.30 p.m. until 10.30 p.m. and both sides had about half their strength remaining at the conclusion of the battle. It was an interesting, easily assembled and unusual type of war game which was greatly enjoyed by the participants.

---ooOoo---

A.HANSFORD-WATERS ON THE 50% RULE

I was very interested indeed to read Mr.Grant's reasoned criticism and compliment him on an original idea - the 50% Rule. I do not, however, see where we disagree. Mr.Grant has pounced on the sentence that plenty of units down to 30% give a good account of themselves. The word plenty was, I admit, ill-chosen, but the sentence is supposed to show that a hard and fast 50% is incorrect; to give the same effect I could have written that plenty run with only a few casualties - they mean the same at opposite poles. Mr. Grant's rule allows for no extremes, and in some ways the point of the rule is lost because one's opponent and indeed oneself knows full well when a unit has had enough. It is simple matter to have a unit ready to plug or exploit a gap. The lack of battlefield "intuition" that lost so many opportunities like these in real life is not taken into account.

We certainly are in agreement over the further development of the rule, it IS too generous, two shaken units do not make one good one except in cases where the units have fused naturally on the field by reason that they have been sent on the same objectives, etc. The use of the 30% direction of argument was intended to be read to suggest that if 30% units cannot, EVER, stand in line, and 40% losses do not drive a unit back, it is a very odd rule, but this is not what I said, and I must concede that part of the argument to Mr.Grant.

Perhaps some other readers could give their views on the subject, as it is a subject that Mr.Grant has very capably proved can be discussed in an interesting manner?

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I am asked by Alan Hansford-Waters to point out that he no longer is an official of the Horse and Musket Society. This has now been taken over by Hamish Fraser of 27 Ramsgate Road, Margate, Kent, to whom all correspondence and enquiries should be addressed.