What follows is a replay of the folio game *Kasserine: Baptism of Fire*. It’s late February 1943. The Axis are attacking the inexperienced US II Corps in Tunisia. The Axis player capture several key locations to obtain a victory. The first and most obvious one is the town of Sbeitla. That town is an important crossroads, but it can be outflanked to the south at Bir el Hafey. The next likely objective is the town of Thala, to the north. Thala and the western map-edge town of Tebessa contain the Allies’ Youks-les-Bains Airfield. Northwest of both Thala and Tebessa are LOC (Line Of Communication) hexes that also yield VP. The Axis player needs to capture at least three among all of those objectives to win, or take two for a draw.

The German forces will focus on Sbeitla first, and then throw a feint toward Tebessa in the hope of drawing off American forces, ultimately allowing for the capture of Thala and the LOC to its rear. We’ll see how that works out.

**Turn 1**

**Axis**

Axis forces enter through two areas in the opening phases. A battalion of American Shermans is blocking the main east-west road. A three-pronged attack is launched to open that road, led by the powerful 501 Panzer Company, which is supported by the 1/90 PF and the 2/69 PG Battalions. Both sides employ fire support, but the Germans have more. The combat results in an exchange. The US armor is depleted a step, and the 1/90th PF is reduced.

Farther south, German forces spearhead another advance into the American forward positions. The US 1/133 Battalion has decent defensive terrain near Dj. Garet Hadid. Both sides call for fire support. There’s no effect due to a rolled six.

The Axis player conducts mobile movement. In the north a panzer battalion and a mechanized battalion outflank the Americans at Dj. Lessonda. The forces in the south try to swing around the US right.

**US**

Several units are received as reinforcements. The 2/1 and 3/6 Battalions fall back across Wadi Hatab. The 3/1 Armored Battalion falls back into the grove behind Wadi Sbeitla. The 1/6 Mechanized Battalion moves to Dj. El Koumin. Several reinforcements are pushed through toward the key junction at Kasserine Pass.
German 33 Recon Battalion arrives from the southern map edge along the trail. That unit bolts toward Dj. Hamra, where it secures the junction among the trails. The German commander attempts three attacks into the American lead position.

The 1/133 Regiment is defending Dj. Garet. It has the advantage of rough terrain, but Axis forces have surrounded it. Both sides employ fire support. The American infantry regiment is outgunned, and is consequently destroyed.

Then the Axis commander focuses on the depleted Sherman battalion. The Shermans had withdrawn to benefit from Wadi el Fekkar, but Axis units have outflanked those American
tanks. The US commander calls for support from the available mortars, but it’s not enough to save the tanks.

The 3/26 Infantry is defending in mined boxes. That doubles the defense strength and halves the attacker’s fire support. The Americans are surrounded, but the CRT yields a NE result.

**US**

Several reinforcements are released, but they’re sprinkled across the map. The American commander sets up two armored battalions in the groves near Sbeitla. The 894 guards the bridge crossing Wadi Hatab. The 2/1 Armored Battalion occupies Sbeitla. A number of units pour into the Kasserine area in order to maintain control of that vital crossroad. The 2/6 Mechanized Battalion moves into An Bau Dries.

**Turn 3**

**Axis**

There are no reinforcements. The Americans have a bit more firepower now as their support increases. The 104 Regiment advances toward Sbeitla, but remains out of contact. Meanwhile, an Axis battalion leads an attack on the US 3/26 Regiment, which is holed up in a mined box.

That’s the only attack. Both sides employ available fire support. The US has +6, while the Axis is halved due to the mined box. The result is an exchange, and the 3/26 is eliminated. The Axis absorbs a step with one of the PJ battalions.

**US**

The American commander realizes he has no more reinforcements for a while. Attention is given to the defense of Sbeitla. The 3/6 Mechanized Battalion holds the north flank. The 2/1 Armored Battalion remains in Sbeitla, flanked to the south by the 3/13 Armored, and the flank is at Dj. El Koumin. The 1/6 Mechanized is deployed there in the rough terrain. There’s no counterattack by the Americans, who
are still reeling, and the Axis player has plenty of support fire available.

**Turn 4**

**Axis**

The Axis player obtains several reinforcements. Some of them arrive via Gafsa Road, which will put a division in the American position. The Axis commander continues to be aggressive on the attack. Combined arms tactics are his staple, with panzers and infantry supported by artillery.

There are several firefights erupting across the battlefield. Heavy fighting opens near Sbeitla. The 1/6 Mechanized Battalion has dug in at Dj. El Koumin. That's because the US 19 Engineer Regiment is in range. The result is an exchange, and the 2/69 PG Battalion is depleted along with the US 1/6 Mech. Both sides employed full fire support, but the Axis was halved due to the engineers.

Next, the US 3/1 Armored faces an attack. It's just out of range of the engineers; so it's not fortified. Defending in groves, it originally had the wadi for protection, but a German battalion managed to cross the wadi and flank the American tanks. Both sides use fire support, and the US troops are forced to retreat. The 3/1 also becomes depleted as it can't fulfill its retreat.

To the south the Axis commander launches an attack against the US troops on Gafsa Road. The 2/168 Regiment has been harassing the Axis supply lines. Now it's surrounded. Both sides use fire support. The 2/168 Infantry is eliminated with ease.

**US**

There are still no reinforcements. The units near Sbeitla redeploy for better defense. Meanwhile the 1/26 Infantry Regiment has manned the fortified boxes to the east. That's occupying the attention of four Axis units. A weak defense line is placed south of Bou Chebka. That will help stem the tide from that direction. Overall, the American commander isn't too happy.

**Turn 5**

**Axis**

Both sides now have 10 fire support markers. The Germans, however, have a powerful Stuka. The Axis forces from Gafsa advance through Feriana and Thelepte, heading for Kasserine Pass. Meanwhile, two areas are embroiled in combat.

First the German commander zeroes in on the American 1/26, which is deployed in fortified boxes to the east. That unit threatens the Axis supply line and is therefore commanding a lot of attention. Both sides use maximum fire support, but the US fortifications halve the Axis artillery. Things don't look great for the Axis here, but a lucky die roll of one destroys the 1/26. The valuable Stuka support has been expended, though.
The 1/13 Armored Battalion has deployed in the groves south of Sbeitla. Unfortunately for the Americans, that unit has been outflanked to the north, thereby negating the defensive value of the wadi. The 19 Engineer has managed to get a detachment forward to help to fortify the 1/13. That will reduce the effectiveness of the Axis support units. The American tanks are wiped out. A final attack is launched on the north flank of Sbeitla. The 10 Motorcycle attacks the 3/13 Armored Battalion, hoping the advantage in fire support will turn the tide. This attack is pushed because the US engineers are out of range. The CRT yields a No Effect result.

**US**

Still no reinforcements. The US commander contemplates bombardment, but he realizes the Axis counterbattery is too potent. A few units reposition to buttress the defense. There isn’t much action.

**Turn 6**

**Axis**

No reinforcements. An Axis force presses on Sbeitla. Another group heads for Kasserine from the south. Meanwhile the units to the east begin to head north to cover the German right. The first attack pits the Axis against the US 2/1 Armored in Sbeitla. The Axis player throws in heavy fire support. The result is an exchange. Both sides become depleted. The German 1/104 PG Battalion is reduced. Just to the south the US 3/1 is eliminated in an exchange. This time the German panzers take some losses too. Then the US 3/13 Armored inflicts another exchange on the German assault to the north of the position in Sbeitla.

German mechanized infantry and anti-tank weapons manage to force back the 3/39 Infantry near Kasserine. The advancing Axis columns capture Kasserine. The US 1 Ranger is nearby and fends off an attack by the German force west of Kasserine. Though fortified, the CRT yields an exchange. The rangers become depleted, but they take out some panzers as well.

**US**

A number of reinforcements are released now that the Germans have breached Kasserine. Those forces enter from both the north and east. The American commander orders most of his troops to fall back, but he continues to try to hold Sbeitla. The US
The German 1/8 Panzer Battalion is targeted near Kasserine. It’s subsequently destroyed by the American artillery. Unfortunately for the American player that tactic isn’t foolproof, as a battalion of his tanks are hit by friendly fire. The third barrage has no effect.

**Turn 7**

**Axis**

A number of reinforcements will arrive when the Germans finally take Sbeitla. This time the Axis commander decides to hold on to some fire support to use as counterbattery fire, in case the Americans decide to bombard again. Several attacks are carried out across the battlefield. The 2/5 Panzer Battalion and an anti-tank unit attack the Guinet Infantry Brigade on the east side of the area. That unit can threaten the supply lines as well as provide an expendable unit for bombardment. Both sides use two fire support chits, but the CRT yields a no effect result.

At Sbeitla the US 2/1 Armored Battalion faces a massive assault. The unit is surrounded, and now it’s also out of range of the 19 Engineer Regiment, which had been providing fortifications. The engineers had to fall back because they were threatened by a column of panzers driving through from Gafsa. Both commanders provide fire support. The Germans have Ju-87s, and the result is an exchange. The American tanks are eliminated, and Sbeitla falls to the panzers. Sbeitla is one of the VP locations the Axis player can obtain for victory. In the rough to the northeast of there the US 3/13 is also eliminated in an exchange. North of Kasserine the Americans hold the position with a recon battalion. The wadi provides some defensive benefit, but the Germans manage to get an anti-tank battalion across to negate that terrain. Both sides employ fire support, but the US 19 Engineer Regiment has fortified the recon unit. Nonetheless, an exchange results and both sides become depleted.

**US**

Due to the German successes at Sbeitla, the US receives more reinforcements. An infantry regiment and a battalion enter north of Tebessa. Then several mobile units arrive from the north.
Rather than counterattack, American troops maneuver to defend against the next wave of Axis attacks. That’s becoming more difficult for the Axis, as the terrain in the center of the map is difficult to traverse. Several areas are impassable. The US position is still porous though. No artillery bombardment fire is used this time.

**Turn 8**

**Axis**

With Sbeitla captured and the US falling back, the Axis commander looks to his next objectives: Thala and Kalla Djerda. Other objectives are Tebessa and the LOC to the west. The Axis player wants to threaten those to draw off some forces from Thala. Since Sbeitla has fallen, the Axis player also receives a few reinforcements along the road from Gafsa. On the eastern side of the battle the 10 MC Battalion
attacks a small brigade of French tanks. Both sides use artillery support, and the result is an exchange. The Allied tanks are eliminated, and the German battalion becomes depleted. Next the Germans focus on the 897 AG Battalion, which holds the road to Maktar. Both sides call for maximum fire support. The AG unit retreats through Sbilba to the northwest. The panzers capture Sbilba.

A French infantry unit is caught on the trail north of Kasserine. The German commander launches an attack, though the Allies are fortified and mined by the 19 Engineer Regiment. Both sides use fire support. The CRT result is no effect.

**US**

The US commander maneuvers his forces to cover the breakthrough at
Sbilba. Then more troops are added to the center between Dj. Sammana and Dj. Chambi. That’s the most likely avenue of Axis approach at this time. The American player contemplates using bombardment again, but the Axis still has plenty of counterbattery fire available; so that idea is shelved.

**Turn 9**

**Axis**

On the eastern side of the map the Germans attack a French infantry brigade. Both sides use mortars in support, but the result is no effect. The **US 18 Infantry Regiment** holds the trail west of Sbilba. The Germans concentrate in an effort to force a breakthrough. Both sides expend maximum fire support. The Stukas make an appearance, and the result is an exchange.

North of Kasserine the Germans attack an American AG battalion. Another fully supported fire fight ensues, resulting in an exchange. The US defenses are weakening, but the Axis player is feeling the effects of attrition. The German player makes an ill-advised attack against the **US 3/6 Mech**, which is holding broken terrain northwest of Sbeitla. That unit isn’t on a trail, and has managed to draw off several Axis units. The attack is repulsed, and the Axis troops fall back before incurring damage.

To the southwest the Germans and Italians join in an attack against the **US 601 AG Battalion**. That unit holds the trail south of Bou Chebka. Both sides employ full fire support, but the American unit is out of range of the **19 Engineer Regiment**; so it’s not fortified. The result is an exchange, and the American unit is destroyed.

**US**

The American player decides to leave the forces near Sbilba in place, as they’ve launched an effective delaying action. The forces in the center fall back to better defensive terrain. That allows the Axis units there a deeper penetration, but they will have to encounter the same enemy units farther west and in better terrain. Additionally, the **19 Engineer Regiment** falls back to where it can safely assist other units with their fortifications.

**Turn 10**

**Axis**

The German commander realizes time is running out. He continues to address the French infantry in the east near Dj. Aboid. That unit has done well at tying up Axis units by threatening the
Another attack on the trail near Sbilba leaves the German 501 Company depleted, but this time the US 18 Regiment is eliminated. Now the trail is open. The Axis had excellent fire support and Stukas in the fray.

**US**

The American commander continues to fall back on his line of communication. Time is running out for the Axis. The main roads leading to Tebessa from the south are defended by the 1/1 and 17/1 Armored Battalions. Though those units are weak on the defense, they’re in rough terrain. Another defensive position is set up at Dj. El Hamra. Two infantry battalions deploy on the trails due south of Thala. The French infantry and US assault guns manage to delay the Axis farther south of Thala. The American commander hopes that’s sufficient. Again there’s no bombardment.

**Turn 11**

**Axis**

The Axis player looks to force a breakthrough somewhere, or all’s lost. Several of the mobile units are marked for maneuver. On the trail between Sbilba and Thala a massive assault is launched to open the way for an advance. Both sides use maximum support. The Axis player rolls a one, and thus manages to force the US 3/6 Mech Battalion to retreat north. The panzers push through.

The Axis player refrains from further combat after an attack near Dj. Sammana fails to yield results. During mobile movement several Axis units pour through the breakthrough area, but they can’t push far enough to continue the attack.

**US**

The Allies maneuver their troops to protect valuable locations. Thala has a network of roadblocks now and is deemed sufficiently protected. The other area near Tebessa has only a weak Axis force in contact. That

LOC. Both sides apply +6 in support, but the Axis rolls a one, resulting in an exchange. The French unit is eliminated, and one of the German anti-tank battalions becomes depleted.

Next the Axis player launches a key attack against the French on the trail leading to Thala. Both sides use fire support. The French unit benefits from the 19 Engineer, which fortifies its position. The result is no effect. On the road to Tebessa the Germans mount an attack against a weak armored unit. That assault is also fully supported, but again the Allies are fortified. The assault is repulsed, and the German 1/47 becomes depleted.
AFTER ACTION REPORT

Effort was apparently a feint. The US player decides to sit tight.

**Turn 12**

**Axis**

This is the last turn. The Axis player makes several desperate attacks, but he can’t get through the next layer of the Allied defense. The American player doesn’t even need to take his last turn. The US wins the game, as the Axis only managed one objective: Sbeitla. It was certainly a baptism of fire for the Americans.