

LIBERATION OF ITALY

FORCES ON THE SOUTHERN FRONT, 1944-45

INFANTRY ACES

BOOTS ON THE GROUND



THE BATTLES FOR CASSINO

Ultimately the battles for Cassino represented a hollow victory for the Allies. The tremendous casualties and slow, bitter fighting overwhelmed the strategic gains of the campaign. Cassino became the baseline for comparing all the future battles in Italy. Close hand-to-hand fighting in the northern Italian mountains and towns became known as 'little Cassinos' to those who fought there.

Cassino defined all the battles in the Italian Campaign for the next year. From Florence to Pisa, across the Apennine Mountains in the dead of winter, and finally through the Gothic Line and into the Po River valley, the final battles for Italy were all measured against what happened at Cassino. The heroic struggles of infantry on infantry in the almost unbearable conditions elevated the battles for Cassino, making them comparable with the other truly epic battles of World War II.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND

Cassino battles were fought across the mountains, valleys and in the town surrounding the famous monastery. Each battle was ultimately affected by the terrain, weather and the abilities and guts of the individual soldiers who fought them.

Boots on the Ground rules are optional modifications that give players specific flavour representing the battlefield conditions for that area.

MOUNTAIN ROUTE - BATTLE 1 - THE BARRACKS

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - THE BARRACKS (35 POINTS)

The Barracks was a key set of buildings blocking the road to the town of Cassino. Whoever holds the Barracks wins the battle.

Mission selection: (1-3) Rearguard, or (4-6) No Retreat.

Mission Rules: In No Retreat, place an Objective placed by the Defender in a building. In Rearguard, one Objective placed by the Attacker must be placed in a building. The defender may exchange one HMG team in their Force for an HMG Nest (see Nest rules on page 241 of *Liberation of Italy*) prior to beginning the battle. The mission uses the Night Fighting and Dawn rules, found on page 113 of the *Flames Of War* rulebook, in addition to its normal Mission special rules.

MOUNTAIN ROUTE - BATTLE 2 - SNAKESHEAD RIDGE

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - SNAKESHEAD RIDGE (50 POINTS)

Snakeshead Ridge is a rocky boomerang-shaped ridgeline strewn with boulders leading to Hill 593 and the Cassino Monastery. Its rocky ground makes it impossible to dig foxholes and gorse (thorny) thickets guard its ravines.

Mission selection: (1-3) Breakthrough, (4-6) No Retreat.

Mission Rules: Troops cannot Dig-in during the game nor start the game in Foxholes. Whenever an Infantry team is Gone to Ground, it is considered to be in Bulletproof Cover.

MOUNTAIN ROUTE - BATTLE 3 - HILL 593

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - HILL 593 (70 POINTS)

Hill 593 was the highest point atop Snakeshead Ridge guarding the approaches to the Cassino Monastery.

Mission selection: (1-2) Encounter, (3-4) Contact, or (5-6) Rearguard.

Mission Rules: Troops cannot Dig-in nor start the game in Foxholes. Whenever an Infantry team is Gone to Ground, it is considered to be in Bulletproof Cover. The defender may exchange one HMG team in their Force for an HMG Nest (see Nest rules on page 241 of *Liberation of Italy*) prior to beginning the battle.

TOWN ROUTE - BATTLE 1 - CASTLE HILL

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - CASTLE HILL (35 POINTS)

The castle on the hill anchors the defence against any invader approaching Cassino from the north. Approach it with caution if you wish to capture the castle.

Mission selection: (1-3) No Retreat or (4-6) Bridgehead.

Mission Rules: The Attacker places a building on a hill in the Defender's deployment area. Replace all of the mission objectives with a single objective placed in the centre of that building. All attacking Units use the Scout rule found on page 93 of the *Flames Of War* rulebook.

TOWN ROUTE - BATTLE 2 - CONTINENTAL HOTEL

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - CONTINENTAL HOTEL (50 POINTS)

The Continental Hotel commands Highway 6 as it enters Cassino from the north. Manned and fortified it is all but impregnable.

Mission selection: (1-2) No Retreat, (3-4) Bridgehead, or (5-6) Rearguard.

Mission Rules: Place a large building surrounded by town and rubble in Defender's deployment area. All Concealing Terrain is Bulletproof Cover. The defender may deploy any of their HMG or anti-tank gun teams in the large building. Teams deployed this way become HMG or Anti-tank Pillboxes, armed with their original weapons. They are no longer-count as a part of their original Unit and instead become Bunkers (see page 241 of *Liberation of Italy*).

TOWN ROUTE - BATTLE 3 - HANGMAN'S HILL

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - HANGMAN'S HILL (70 POINTS)

On a rise just below the monastery stands Hangman's Hill. Ominously it peers down upon the battlefields below.

Mission selection: (1-2) No Retreat, (3-4) Breakout, (5-6) Cauldron.

Mission Rules: The Attacker places a hill in the Defender's deployment area. Place all of the Objectives that the Attacker must capture on this hill. All attacking Units may make a Spearhead move (see page 93 of the *Flames Of War* rulebook) after initial Deployment before the game begins.



LIRI VALLEY ROUTE - BATTLE 1 - THE RAPIDO

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - THE RAPIDO (35 POINTS)

Crossing the Rapido is the first step in attacking Cassino. Holding that bridgehead is the second.

Mission selection: (1-3) Bridgehead, (4-5) No Retreat, (6) Breakthrough.

Mission Rules: If you are playing a Bridgehead mission, play it with a river and at least two crossing points (bridges or fords) placed along the table's long centre line. Instead of using the Mission's Winning the Game conditions, use the following:

The Defender wins if there are no attacking teams on the defender's side of the river on or after the Defender's turn six.

The Attacker wins if they start any of their turns beginning on Turn Six with a Formation Unit containing at least three Infantry teams Dug-in on the Defenders side of the river with no defending teams within 4"/10cm of them.

If you are playing any other Mission, play it as normal with no modifications.

LIRI VALLEY ROUTE - BATTLE 2 - GUSTAV LINE

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - THE GUSTAV LINE (50 POINTS)

The trenches, concrete casements, barbed wire, and minefields of the Gustav Line prevented the Allies from quickly securing the road to Rome.

Mission selection: (1-2) Defensive Line, (3-4) Breakthrough, (5-6) Rearguard.

Mission rules: If playing Breakthrough or Rearguard, the Defender may place up to two of the following fortifications in their deployment area before placing any Objectives: up to one Minefield, up to two barbed-wire entanglements, up to one HMG Nest. If playing Defensive Line from Liberation of Italy, play the mission as is (for a 70 point game they get 22 Fortification Points).

If playing Breakthrough or Rearguard, the Attacker may place one more Objective in addition to their normal ones. Place this Objective using the same mission instructions as the others. Once all Units have been deployed, but before the game begins, the Attacker must remove one of the Objectives they placed from the table.

All Attacking Units may make a Spearhead move (see page 93 of the *Flames Of War* rulebook) after initial deployment.

LIRI VALLEY ROUTE - BATTLE 3 - HITLER LINE

BOOTS ON THE GROUND - THE HITLER LINE (70 POINTS)

An even more hardened defence awaited those who fought in the Liri Valley on their way to Rome.

Mission selection: (1-2) Defensive Line, (3-4) Breakthrough, (5-6) Rearguard.

Mission rules: If playing Breakthrough or Rearguard, the Defender may place up to four of the following fortifications in their deployment area before placing any Objectives: up to one minefield, up to four barbed-wire entanglements, up to two HMG nests. If playing Defensive Line from Liberation of Italy, play the mission with and additional 5 points of Fortifications for the Defender (for a 70 point game they get 27 points of Fortification Points, instead of 22).

If playing Breakthrough or Rearguard, the Attacker may place one more Objective in addition to their normal ones. Place this Objective using the same mission instructions as the others. Once all Units have been deployed, but before the game begins, the Attacker must remove one of the Objectives they placed from the table.

All Attacking Units may make a Spearhead move (see page 93 of the *Flames Of War* rulebook) after initial deployment.