DESERT RATS

Sand & Steel in the Western Desert 1941/42

Introduction

These rules are intended to provide a framework for tank battle games set in the Deserts of north Africa in World War 2. The basic groups of forces are tanks and similar mechanised forces, and the intention is that they be used in a 'back-to-back' style of game on two maps or terrain models, using 1/300 scale models.
Each model represents on tank or an infantry section.
The ground scale is 1mm = 1 metre (1:10,000).

Command & Control

Each player controls a platoon of tanks or infantry. They are represented by a *Command Tank* (if tanks) or *Command Group* (if infantry), which indicates their physical presence on the battlefield.

Only enemy forces in view to them directly are placed on their battle model. If elements of their unit spot targets, the umpire will report their approximate position.

In each turn, a player can take one of the following *Command Actions*:

Command	Effect
PLATOON ADVANCE	All the elements move forward in the current formation
PLATOON RETREAT	All the elements move backward in the current formation
PLATOON MOVE TO...	All the elements move to a stated location in the current formation.
PLATOON FORMATE	Platoon halts and the player can select the current formation, usually, diamond, box, line, column, one-up etc.
PLATOON OPEN FIRE	Elements will all open fire on their nearest target in sight, the only player choice is where the Command element fires.
PLATOON CEASE FIRE	Roll 1d6 per element, score 3 or more for them to cease fire.
COMMAND MOVE	Player moves their command tank/group where they want it.
OWN ELEMENT FIRE	Player chooses the target and rolls dice for their personal command tank/group's fire.
OWN ELEMENT CEASE FIRE	No die roll, the element ceases fire automatically.

REACTIONS

All platoons suffer unpredictable reactions when under fire. To test this, roll 1d6 at the end of every turn the platoon has

- been under effective fire
- taken a loss
- retreated as a reaction last turn

Score	Result
7+	Platoon is overconfident, -2 from any cease fire order die roll.
3-6	Platoon is OK, continue as ordered.
0-2	Platoon disorganised, may not move nearer the enemy. Infantry go to ground, tanks circle in confusion.
-4 to -1	Platoon panics, and moves away from the enemy as fast as possible.
Under -5	Platoon demoralised, must move out of range of all enemy fire.

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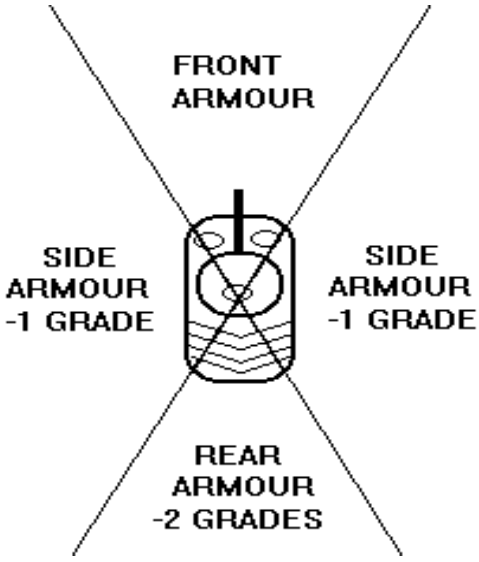
FACTORS:

-1 Each element lost from platoon this turn.
-1 Each element lost from platoon in battle.
-1 Under fire from enemy within 100 m
-1 Each friendly unit panicked or demoralised last turn.
+1 Infantry supported by tanks.

SHOOTING AT VEHICLES



The die rolls are the score needed to hit a target element and destroy it and take into account the type of target.

There are six armour classes, A to F (A is the thickest armour) and U for Unarmoured (lorries and the like).

In addition there are Infantry-type targets, such as anti-tank guns and infantry sections.

In the case of shooting at armour targets, the firing weapon must have an attack letter equal or better to be able to KO the target, otherwise the shots just bounce off.

When firing at the side of an armoured target, reduce its armour grade by one.

When firing at the rear of an armoured target, reduce its armour grade by two.

Roll 1d6. FACTORS
+1 Target Stationary
-2 Target Hull Down
+1 Each subsequent A/tk shot at same target from the same place.
-1 Target in cover

TANKS MAY NOT MOVE & FIRE

Desert Rats - Firing Table

Range:		100 metres		500 metres		1000 metres		1500 metres		2000 metres	
Target:		Infantry	Armour	Infantry	Armour	Infantry	Armour	Infantry	Armour	Infantry	Armour
	Arm.										
AXIS TYPES											
Panzer 2	E	5	3 (E)	6	6 (F)	7	8 (F)	n.e.	10 (U)	n.e.	n.e.
Panzer 3 Long 50	E	5	3 (B)	6	5 (C)	7	8 (D)	n.e.	9 (E)	n.e.	9 (E)
Panzer 4 Short 75	D	5	3 (A)	5	6 (B)	6	8 (C)	7	9 (D)	n.e.	10 (E)
Panzer 4 Long 75	C	4	3 (A)	4	5 (A)	5	7 (B)	6	8 (C)	7	8 (D)
Armoured Cars	F	5	4 (D)	6	6 (D)	7	9 (E)	n.e.	10 (E)	n.e.	10 (F)
Anti-Tank Gun	Inf	n.e.	2 (D)	n.e.	5 (D)	n.e.	8 (E)	n.e.	9 (E)	n.e.	10 (F)
88mm Flak 36	Inf	6	2 (A)	6	4 (A)	7	6 (A)	n.e.	7 (A)	n.e.	7 (B)
Infantry Section	Inf	3	4 (F)	5	6 (U)	7	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.
M13/40 Tank	D	5	3 (B)	6	6 (C)	7	7 (D)	n.e.	8 (E)	n.e.	9 (F)
M18/75 Semovente	E	5	4 (A)	6	5 (B)	7	7 (D)	n.e.	8 (D)	n.e.	9 (E)
BRITISH TYPES											
Crusader Tank	C	4	3 (B)	6	5 (C)	7	8 (D)	n.e.	9 (E)	n.e.	9 (E)
Matilda Tank	A	4	3 (C)	6	4 (E)	7	7 (F)	n.e.	10 (U)	n.e.	n.e.
Valentine Tank	B	4	3 (C)	6	4 (E)	7	7 (F)	n.e.	10 (U)	n.e.	n.e.
Armoured Cars	E	5	3 (C)	7	4 (E)	n.e.	7 (F)	n.e.	10 (U)	n.e.	n.e.
Infantry Section	Inf	3	n.e.	5	n.e.	7	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.
6pdr A/Tk gun	Inf	n.e.	3 (B)	n.e.	5 (C)	n.e.	8 (D)	n.e.	9 (E)	n.e.	9 (E)

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SHOOTING AT INFANTRY

Infantry are harder to spot than tanks.
Stationery infantry that are not firing cannot be spotted beyond 200m.
Anti-tank guns that are not firing cannot be spotted beyond 400m.
Of course, once they open fire their position is revealed.

Each infantry element needs 4 hits to 'kill'.

Factors:
Infantry moving in the open +2
Infantry stationery in the open –1
Infantry in trenches -3

MOVEMENT

	Good Going	Soft Sand*	Road
Medium Tanks	175m	50m	200m
Infantry Tanks (Matilda/Valentine)	125m	75m	150m
Armoured Cars	250m	50m	300m
Lorries	200m	n.a.	250m
Infantry on Foot	75m	50m	75m

* Roll 1d6 for each vehicle each move moving through soft sand, score 1 to become stuck. Roll 6 to become unstuck.

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