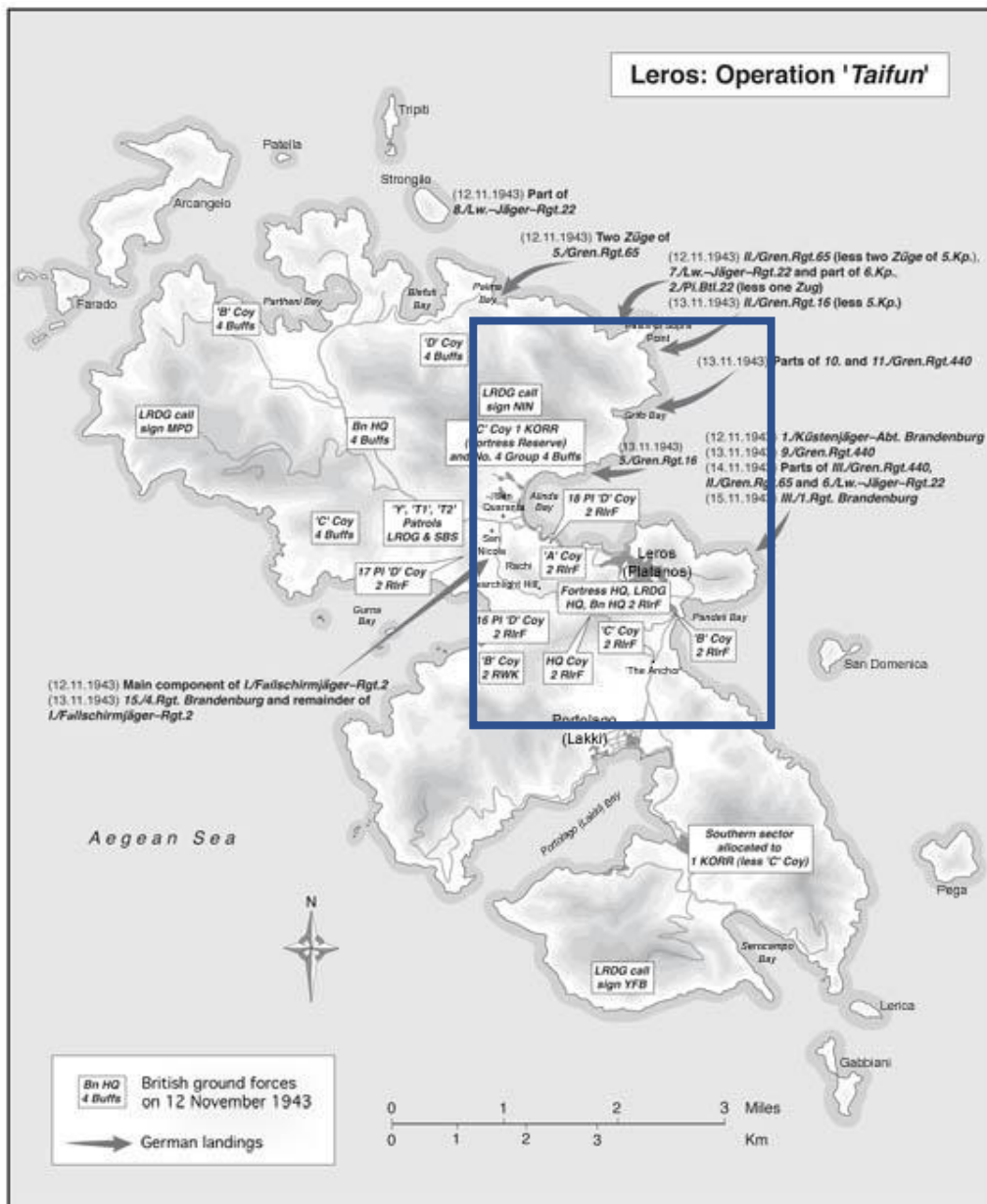


Leros: Operation 'Taifun'

British 234th Infantry Brigade vs German 22nd Air Landed Division
Leros, Greece - 12th-13th November, 1943



The Battle

The island of Leros is part of the Dodecanese island group in the Aegean Sea and was originally a deep-water port under Italian rule. After the fall of Greece in April 1941 and the subsequent loss of the island of Crete, in May 1941, the majority of the Greek islands were occupied by German and Italian forces.

On the 8th September, 1943 Italian forces surrendered to the Allies and it was possible for the first time to attempt operations in the Aegean. This was a mostly British operation with minimal support from the Americans.

Most Italian garrison forces were keen to fight alongside the Allies but unfortunately German forces were rushed to the area securing the key island of Rhodes and denying its airfields to the Allies.

By early November there were still over 7,000 Italians and more than 3,000 men of the 234th Infantry Brigade on Leros with the best Italian troops manning a range of coastal batteries armed with a variety of guns from 76mm to 102mm. Leros and these guns are generally accepted as the inspiration for the novel "The Guns of Navarone" by Alistair Maclean.

German forces for Operation "Taifun" were placed under the command of Lieutenant General Muller and consisted of II/ 440th Regiment, I / 16th Infantry Regiment and II / 65th Infantry Regiment from the 22nd Air Landed Division. Further support was provided by an amphibious commando company (Kustenjäger) and an airborne battalion (Fallschirmjäger) based in Athens. Unlike the British defenders, German forces were amply supported by fighters and bombers in the days leading up to the German landing with two groups of JU-87 "Stukas" available for close air support.

On the 12th November 1943, a German invasion force landed, against little effective resistance, at Palma and Grifo Bays on the east coast of Leros. A smaller force landed at Pandeli Bay with a direct assault up the steep slopes of Mt Appetici by the Kustenjäger in an attempt to capture the Italian guns in the 'Lago' battery. Another German flotilla was forced to abandon a landing on the west coast at Gurna Bay.

Despite initial counter-attacks by the British defenders by late morning German forces had captured the Italian "Ciano" battery and were moving west towards the centre of the island. German fighters and bombers cleared the area between Gurna and Alinda Bays in preparation for the airborne assault, which arrived early in the afternoon, effectively dividing the island in two.

In subsequent days, German reinforcements steadily forced back the British defenders and by the 16th November British forces had surrendered to the Germans.

Leros: Operation 'Taifun' - The Game

Operation 'Taifun' is based on the German landing at Leros with events of the first two days of the invasion compressed for the purpose of the scenario. It is a medium sized game played on a 10' x 6' table over 12 moves. Due to the desperate nature of the fighting on Leros neither side counts as "isolated" for unit morale tests.

Objective (both sides)

To win: control two out of the three Italian coastal batteries ("Ciano", "Lago" and "PL 211") at the end of 9 turns. A battery is considered controlled if only one side has troops deployed on the position (with no enemy troops within 6").

To draw: more than one Italian coastal battery is contested or unoccupied.

Sources

"Operation Nostalgia" Part I & II - Richard Marsh

Wargames Illustrated #74 (November 1993) & #75 (December 1993)

"Churchill's Folly" (2017 edition) - Anthony Rogers

"Swastika over the Aegean" - Anthony Rogers

"The Battle for Leros" - Peter Schenk After the Battle # 90

"Leros - The Island Prize" (Tactical Combat Series board game)

"War in the Aegean" - Peter Smith & Edwin Walker

"Storming Eagles" - James Lucas

"Captain Corelli's Mandolin" - Universal Studios - not Leros but atmospheric German Landing

"Guns of Navarone" - Alistair Maclean (Novel & Movie)

British Special Rules (move first)

British forces start the game as indicated in the order of battle. Infantry and guns start in prepared defensive positions (but not on reserved fire). Bofors guns may engage ground targets. British reinforcements arrive on turn 9 anywhere along line X-Y.

Italian Coastal Batteries - are open emplacements and provide hard cover to small arms & deduct 2 from the D6 throw for HE effect rather than the usual deduct 1 (p107).

Damaged Motor Launch - may not move, provides hard cover for the crew and can engage vessels, aircraft or ground targets.

LRDG / SBS - are treated as SMG groups i.e. + 1 to short range value and no long-range fire (p88).

German Special Rules (move second)

All German forces start afloat or off-board. There is no preliminary naval bombardment.

Landing Craft - first wave starts one move out from their respective "beaches". As each wave carries out a "scramble landing" (directly onto the rocky shore) landing craft are replaced by the next wave (pp104-105). "Beaches" are not mined and other "on the beach" rules do not apply (p106).

- Pioneersturmbote (PSB) - treat as per LCA (small)
- Pioneerlandungsboote (PLB) - treat as per LCM (small)
- Schnellboote Escort - Torpedo Boat
- Marinefahprahm (MFP) - treat as per LCT (large)

Landing craft and Schnelleboote can be targeted (p107) by Italian coastal guns (no connection test) or the 25pdr (connection test) using IDF. Roll a D6 and check effects set out in (table 28 p111).

1940s Era Buildings (2014)
*Taken walking back from
Commonwealth Cemetery at
Alinda Bay with Leros Castle
just visible top right through gap*



Air Drop - on German turn 7 all Fallschirmjäger elements arrive on one of three drop zones, chosen by the German player before the game starts, no closer than 6" to British positions or buildings AND no further than 6" from another Fallschirmjäger element. All elements may move, but can only fire small arms at short range or use grenades (may not go on reserved fire) on turn 7. From turn 8 fire as normal.

Aircraft & Artillery "Friendly Fire" - if the target of a German aircraft is within 12" of a German element, roll for "friendly fire". On a 5 or 6 the target switches to the nearest German element instead. The same rule applies for IDF artillery fire, from either side, if the target element is within 6" of a friendly element.

Kustenjäger - are treated as a SMG group i.e. + 1 to short range value and no long-range fire.

Air Support - The Arado seaplane OR an OP team attached to either Battlegroup HQ may be used as an air link OP to call in an air attack (table 20 p98).

Movement and Cover

Roads provide a benefit to troops and vehicles moving along them. Vehicles moving off road roll as for a continuous obstacle. *Clidi Ridge, Rachi Ridge* and *Mt Appetici* are very steep terrain (p114) for troops (max 4" move) and troops are treated as if in soft cover when targeted by small arms.

Buildings start intact (*Leros Castle* is treated as a two buildings). *Olive Groves* provide soft cover but do not restrict visibility or movement. For the purpose of compulsory withdrawal British units move to the west and German units move towards their respective "beach" landing zone or air drop zone. "Beaches" are not mined.

Tactical Tips

British - You cannot prevent a landing of German troops but instead must hold the Italian artillery positions on the high ground overlooking Leros harbour. Revealing your position too early will only draw German naval fire or air attack. Look for opportunities to counter-attack. Prepare a force to hit the Germans once they have landed and before they consolidate their position.



Alinda Bay (2014)
*Looking north across
to Clidi Ridge*

German - Your force is spread along the east coast of Leros. Try to capture the high ground around Leros Castle and Clidi Ridge as soon as possible and push on towards Leros Town and Quaranta to link up with the planned Fallschirmjäger drop. Once ashore prepare for the inevitable counter-attack. Be bold and aggressive in your actions.

British Briefing

Order of Battle - elements of 234th British Infantry Brigade
all regular except Italians (poor) and LRDG / SBS (elite)

Brigade HQ* Brigadier Tilney [Mt Meraviglia]

CO + 5 figures

* Higher order HQ for all British forces (p78)

4th Royal East Kent (Bufs) [Mt Meraviglia, Leros & south of Quaranta]

Lt Col Iggulden - 46 figures - test @ 20 casualties

BHQ CO + 4 figures, 2" mortar

A Company 8 figures, 2 x jeeps

B Company 8 figures

C Company 8 figures

D Company 8 figures

Support Company 3 figures, 3" mortar

Platoon, MG Battalion 6 figures, 2 x Vickers MMG

Troop, 9th Artillery Regiment, Royal Artillery [Mt Meraviglia]

4 figures, 1 x 25pdr (no towing vehicle)

OP team # 1 [Clidi Ridge], OP team # 2 [Leros Castle]

1st Platoon, 1st AT Battalion, Royal Artillery [Mt Meraviglia & south of Quaranta]

4 figures, 2 pdr ATG (no towing vehicle)

3rd Battery (-), 1st Light AA Regiment, Royal Artillery [Mt Meraviglia]

8 figures, 2 x 40mm Bofors (no towing vehicles)

2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers (Irish) [Clidi Ridge & north of Quaranta]

Lt Col French - as per 4th Royal East Kents

2nd Platoon, 1st AT Battalion, Royal Artillery [Clidi Ridge OR north of Quaranta] - no test

4 figures, 2 pdr ATG (no towing vehicle)

LRDG / SBS [Clidi Ridge OR north of Quaranta] - no test

2 x patrols each 4 figures (elite for small arms firing and close assault only)

Damaged Motor Launch (ML 358) - [Alinda Bay]

5 figures, 2pdr (40mm) "pom pom" gun, 20mm (Oerlikon) autocannon - min crew of 1 per gun (p110)

2nd Queen's Own Royal West Kents (Kents) - Lt Col Lancaster - 29 figures test @ 15 casualties

[From west anywhere along line X-Y] as per 4th Royal East Kents (HQ + 4 companies) - turn 9

Italian Coastal Batteries ** (poor for small arms firing & close assault)

("Ciano")** 1 x 152mm L/40 - 10 figures [Clidi Ridge]

("Lago")** 1 x 120mm L/45 - 10 figures [Mt Appetici]

("PL 211")** 1 x 102mm L/35 - 10 figures [Rachi Ridge]

** direct fire only vs ground targets OR IDF only vs landing craft - no connection test required



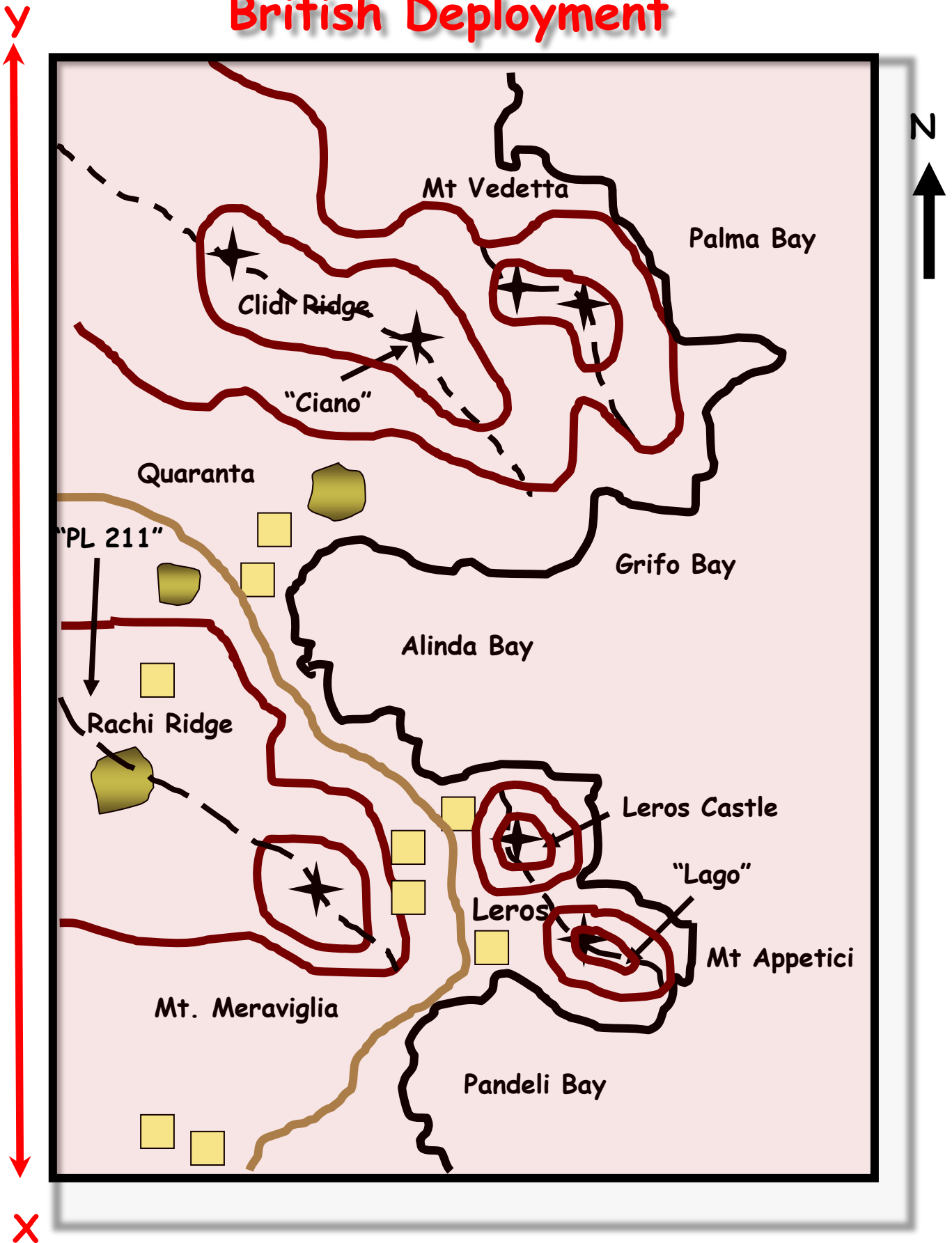
Leros Castle (2014)
Looking south from
Leros town

**Italian "Ciano"
Coastal Battery**

*Modified Airfix
Gun Emplacement with
Britannia Italians and
LRDG figures*



British Deployment



German Briefing

German Landing Force - elements of 22nd Air Landed Division
all regular except Fallschirmjäger & Küstenjäger (both elite)

Kampfgruppe 'Von Saldern'

II Battalion, 65th Grenadier Regiment [Grifo Bay]

Major Von Saldern* - 40 figures - test @ 20 casualties

BHQ CO + 4 figures, 50mm mortar + Naval Gunfire OP team # 1** (PLB - turn 1)

* higher order HQ for all German Forces (p78)

** OP team observes for off-board naval gun fire

5th Company 8 figures (PLB # 1 - turn 1)

6th Company 8 figures (PLB # 1 - turn 1)

7th Company 8 figures (PLB # 1 - turn 2)

8th Company 11 figures, 2 x MMG, 80mm mortar (PLB # 1 - turn 2)

2nd Company, 22nd Pioneer Battalion 8 figures, F/thrower [Grifo Bay] (MFP # 1 - turn 6) - no test

13th Company 3 figures, 1 x 75mm IG, Sdkfz 10 [Grifo Bay] (MFP # 1 - turn 6) - no test

14th Company 3 figures 1 x 50mm Pak 38, Sdkfz 10 [Grifo Bay] (MFP # 1 - turn 6) - no test

3rd & 4th Batteries, 22nd Artillery Battalion *** [Palma Bay]

12 figures, 2 x 105mm howitzer, 2 x medium trucks (MFP # 2 - turn 6)

***Can be observed for by any figure from BHQ, II/65th Regiment or Naval Gunfire OP teams

II Battalion, 22nd Luftwaffe Jäger Regiment [Palma Bay]

Captain Meincraft - 38 figures - test @ 19 casualties

BHQ CO + 4 figures + Naval Gunfire OP team # 2** (PLB - turn 1)

** OP team observes for off-board naval gun fire

9th Company 8 figures (PLB # 2 - turn 1)

10th Company 8 figures (PLB # 2 - turn 1)

11th Company 8 figures (PLB # 2 - turn 2)

12th Company 9 figures, MMG, 80mm mortar, 120mm mortar (PLB # 2- turn 2)

Kampfgruppe 'Doerr'

Captain Doerr - 29 figures - test @ 15 casualties

BHQ CO + 2 figures (PLB # 1 - turn 4)

1st Küstenjäger Detachment (elite for firing only & close assault only)

10 figures [Mt Appetici] (PSB - turn 1)

9th & 10th Companies III Battalion, 440th Grenadier Regiment

each 8 figures [Mt Appetici or Pandeli Bay] (PLB # 1 - turn 4)

Kampfgruppe 'Kuhne'

I Battalion, 2nd Fallschirmjäger Regiment

Captain Kuhne - 43 figures - test @ 20 casualties (turn 5)**

BHQ CO + 4 figures, 50mm mortar
1st Company 8 figures
2nd Company 8 figures
3rd Company 8 figures
15th Brandenburg Parachute Company 8 figures
4th Company (HW) 6 figures, MMG, 80mm mortar

** Drop Zone "A" (North of Clidi Ridge), "B" (West of Quaranta) or "C" (South of Mt Meraviglia)
Chosen before game. **Historical** = Drop Zone B

Air Support

Stuka Dive bomber (cannot be shot down- p99) - low altitude (automatically arrives each turn)
Arado Seaplane "Air Link" OP (p107) - medium altitude (p98)

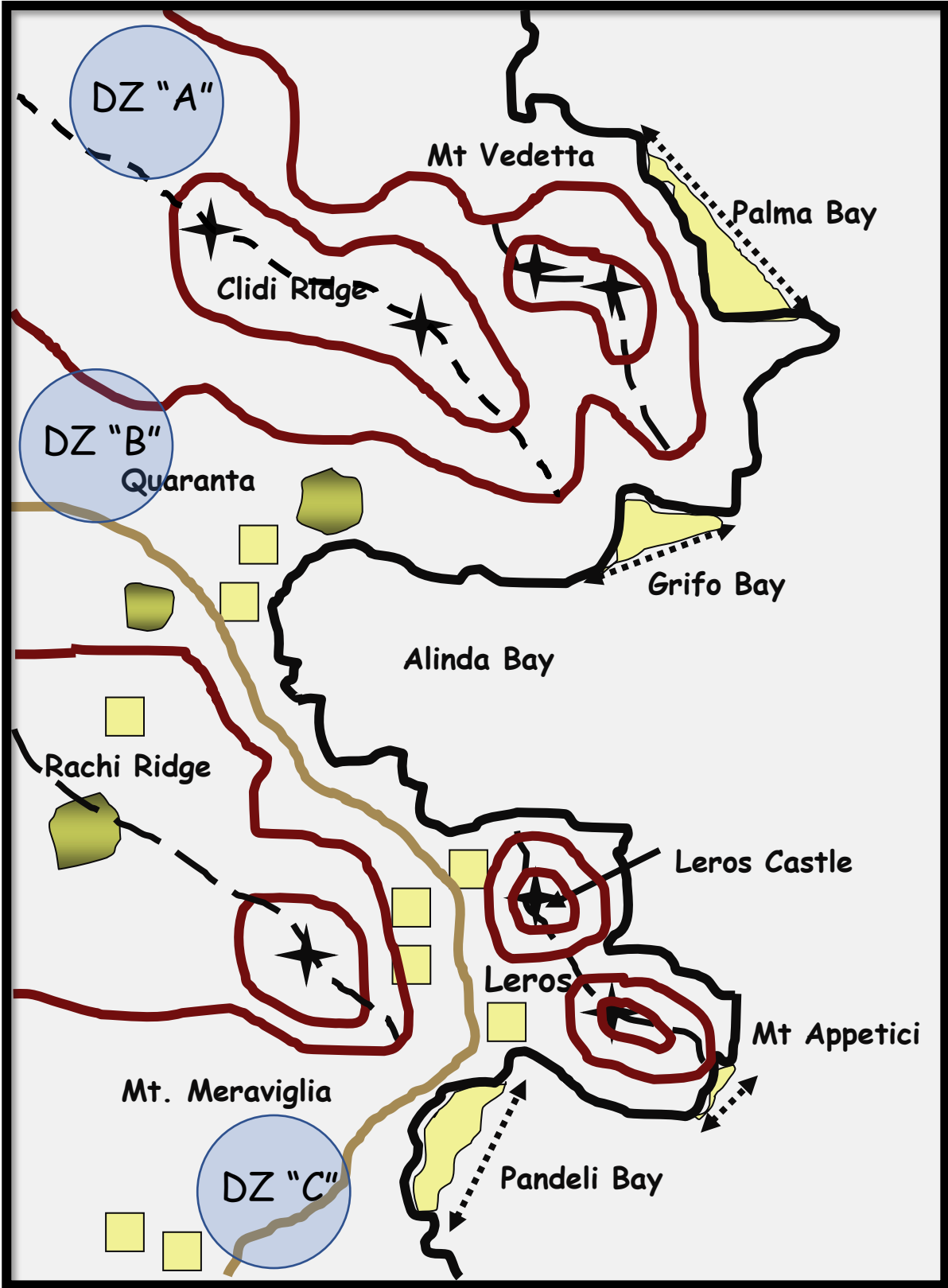
Naval support

Schnelleboote Escort (p111) - on board - 5 figures, 2 x 20mm autocannon
Max move per turn 3 x own length - minimum distance from coast 6"
May engage British MTB & other land targets with direct fire, min crew of 1 per gun (p110)
Once down to 1 figures must withdraw.
Destroyer - off board
2 x 102mm gun
2 x Naval Gunfire OP teams [one with each HQ II/65th & II/22nd Battalions] - (p107)



Grifo Bay (2014)
*Looking back
towards Mt Appetici
with Leros Castle at
top right*

German Landings





10' x 6' board

Key locations (both sides) as per the British & German briefings

British & Italian Vehicle and Gun Chart

GUNS		
Description	AT / HE Value	Notes
2" mortar	HE 6 pts table 4	Minimum range 3", maximum range 18"
3" mortar	HE 8 pts table 4	Minimum range 6", maximum range 48"
2pdr AT gun	AT 4 / NO HE	
2pdr "Pom Pom" gun	Autocannon	6"/16"/30" direct - 8 pts
20mm (Oerlikon) Gun	Autocannon	6"/16"/30" direct - 8 pts
40mm Bofors AA	Autocannon	6"/16"/30" direct - 8 pts
25pdr field	AT 3 / HE 12 pts table 4	
Italian 102mm L/35	AT 3 / HE 12 pts table 4	
Italian 120mm L/45	AT 4 / HE 12 pts table 4	
Italian 152mm L/40	NO AT, HE 12pts table 5	

VEHICLES			
Vehicle (Main Weapon)	Speed	Armour	Hull Weapons / Turret Weapons
Jeep	24/12	F	None

German Vehicle and Gun Chart

GUNS		
Description	AT / HE Value	Notes
50mm mortar	HE 6 pts table 4	Minimum range 3", maximum range 18"
80mm mortar	HE 8 pts table 4	Minimum range 6", maximum range 48"
120mm mortar	HE 12 pts table 4	Minimum range 6", maximum range 60"
Flamethrower (p67)	15 pts on casualty chart	Maximum range 6"
20mm Flak 36 AA	Autocannon	6"/16"/30" direct - 8 pts
50mm Pak 38	AT 3 / HE 6pts table 4	
75mm infantry	AT 5 / HE 10 pts table 4	48" direct / 72" IDF
105mm howitzer	AT 3 / HE 12 pts table 4	48" direct / 72" IDF
Italian 102mm	12 pts table 4	Off board artillery (always in range)

VEHICLES			
Vehicle (Main Weapon)	Speed	Armour	Hull Weapons / Turret Weapons
Truck	24/12	F	None
Sdkfz 10	30/15	F	None

AIRCRAFT		
Description	Type	Ground Attack Armament (p95)
JU 87 Stuka	Dive Bomber (light bomber)	2 x MMG (8 pts) OR 1 x heavy bomb (15 pts table 5)