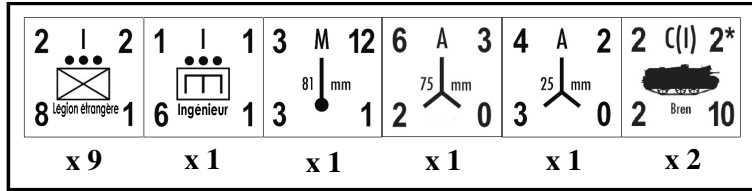


# 1st Free French Brigade

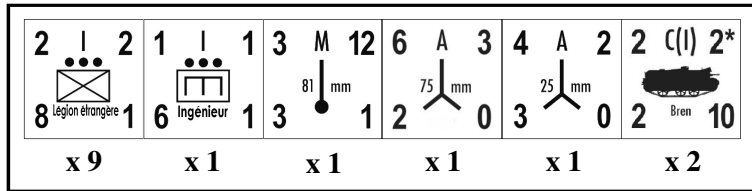
May 26, 1942

2nd  
Battalion  
Foreign  
Legion



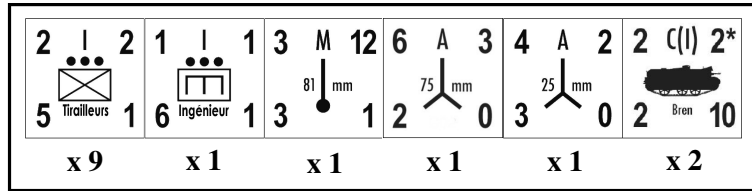
French Foreign Legionaries, some of them German and Italian but all loyal to France

3rd  
Battalion  
Foreign  
Legion



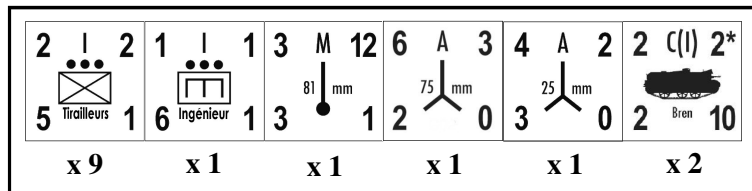
French Foreign Legionaries, some of them German and Italian but all loyal to France

Pacific  
Battalion



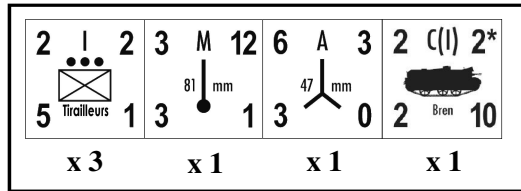
French colonists from the Pacific colonies, including Tahiti.

2nd  
Colonial  
Infantry  
Battalion



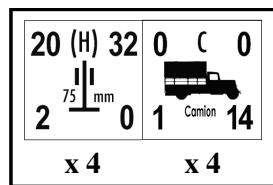
Colonial infantry with many native Africans.

1st  
Naval  
Infantry  
Battalion  
(-)

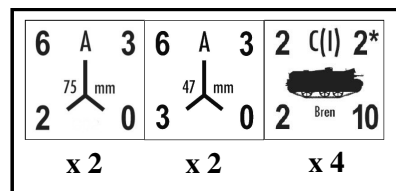


Naval Infantry battalion, usually tasked with guarding naval bases but sometimes used in the field.

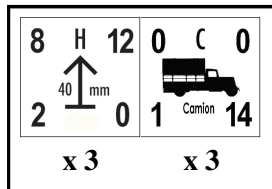
1st Free  
French  
Artillery  
Regiment



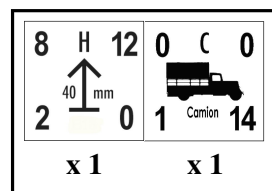
1st Free  
French  
Anti-Tank  
Company



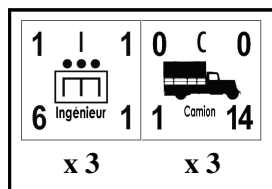
1st  
Naval  
Fusiliers  
Battalion



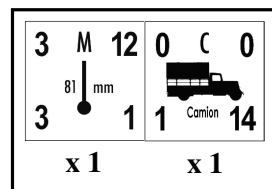
Troop,  
43rd Light  
Anti-Aircraft  
Battery



1st Free  
French  
Pioneer  
Company



22nd  
North  
Africa  
Company



By Greg Moore  
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May, 2010

The 1st Free French Brigade (reinforced with some elements from the 2nd Free French Brigade) was presented with the challenge of holding the southernmost fortified box, near an old Turkish fort at Bir Hacheim. The Axis battle plan put the French directly in the path of the assault. The Italian Ariete Armored Division was supposed to reduce the box in the early going but the first day attack was repulsed with the loss of 35 tanks. The tough French, anchored by two battalions of Legionaries, continued to take all that the Axis could throw at them, including air attack by Stukas and daily artillery bombardments. Ignoring German calls for surrender, they continued to be such a problem for Rommel's supply lines and schedule that the entire Axis offensive was almost defeated. With Rommel himself leading some of the assaults, the French refused to yield or crack. After 15 days, they were finally given permission to retreat as most of the 8th Army, that could, was on the road to El Alamein. The French finally escaped with about two thirds of their manpower, having caused the loss of 51 tanks and 3300 men to the Afrika Korps.