

# GELA 10 July 1943

## The counterattack of the Mobile Group "E"

A Rapid Fire 2 scenario (V 2.0 – 16.12.2008)

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American Ranger near a destroyed R-35 Italian tank.



Gen. Patton congratulate with Col. Darby after the battle of Gela.

## Background

This scenario represent the first counterattack, carried out in the first hours of the same day of the disembarkation in Sicily, from the Axis troops against the American forces disembarked on the beaches of the city of Gela. The attack, carried from the Italian Mobile Group "E" coming from Niscemi, was carried out without coordination with the units of the German division "Herman Goering" that also had received order to attack the beaches of disembarkation.

The action however was lead with energy and courage, in spite of the losses endured in phase of approach to the city for the fire of cruiser USS BOISE, in fact the Italians tanks succeeded to penetrate in the first roads of the city. The Americans defenders, pertaining to 1<sup>st</sup> Rangers Battalion (Darby's Rangers), found in difficulty for the lack of anti-tank weapons, besides the bazooka of normal equipment, therefore they were forced to engage a fight road for road with the Italians tanks (Renault R35 ex French, booty of war), attacking them with grenades and in a case, also with explosive charges, launch from the balconies and the roofs of the houses. The situation was resolved to advantage of the Americans when the Col. Darby taken, with to an other official, a jeep and succeeded to find on the disembarkation beaches a 37 mm. antitank gun. It quickly carried on the place of the combat and thanks to the fire of the gun (Col. Darby personally destroyed an Italian tank) the Americans rejected the adversaries. The Mobile Group "E" was forced therefore to withdraw itself, but it would have renewed own attack, without greater fortune, the morning of the successive day with units of the Infantry Division "Livorno".

## **Italian Order of Battle (test @19 casualties)**

### **GRUPPO MOBILE "E"**

HQ: CO (Ten. Col. Conti) + 3 Figs. + Lancia Aprilia staff car.

1<sup>st</sup> Co. CI Battaglione Carri R-35: 3 x Renault R-35.

2<sup>nd</sup> Co. CII Battaglione C.C. 47/32: 6 Figs. + 2 x 47/32 A.T. guns + 2 x trucks.

4<sup>th</sup> Co. 501<sup>th</sup> Battaglione Costiero: 10 Figs. + truck.

155<sup>th</sup> Co. Motorcyclists: 10 Figs. + 6 motorcycles.

9<sup>th</sup> Batteria 75/18 III Gp. 54<sup>th</sup> Art. "Napoli": 4 figs. + 75/18 gun + truck + 2 Figs.

OP. + Fiat 508 car.

1<sup>st</sup> Section 326<sup>th</sup> Batteria 20mm "Assietta": 3 figs. + 20 mm. A.A. Breda machine gun + truck.

1 civil sharpshooter.

## **American Order of Battle (test @17 casualties)**

### **1<sup>st</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup> RANGERS BATTALION (DARBY'S RANGERS)**

HQ: CO (Col. William O. Darby) + 4 Figs. + 60 mm. mortar.

Ranger Co. "A": 5 Figs. + Bazooka.

Ranger Co. "B": 5 Figs. + Bazooka.

Ranger Co. "C": 5 Figs. + Demo Charge.

Ranger Co. "D": 5 Figs. + 30 cal MMG.

Ranger Co. "E": 5 Figs. + 30 cal MMG.

Ranger Co. "F": 5 Figs. + 30 cal MMG.

### **Reinforcements:**

1 jeep + 37 mm. A.T. gun.

### **Naval Forces**

USS BOISE (CL 47): 2 x 6" (152mm) shot for turn (15 points Table 5).

AOP USS BOISE: Vought OS2U "Kingfisher" (Lt. C.G. Lewis).



## SCENARIO RULES

- The dimensions of the table are 200x120 cm., the game have a duration of 15 turns, the Italian player move for first.
- All the Italians troops are "Regular". All the Americans troops are "Elite".
- The Italians forces enter to the first turn from SS 117 bis (side north of the table); to chosen of the Italian player, some units they can postpone their entrance to turn 2.
- The Americans forces deploy wherever to south of the railway line.
- The bunkers of the traffic control post of Gela are disarmed, can be occupied and to offer shelter, like the small house of the passage to level, only to the OP Team.
- The railway's bank supplies "hard cover" (not against IDF) to the infantry, A.T. guns and AA machine-gun. It constitutes linear obstacle for the vehicles with the exception of the feature in correspondence of the passage to level.
- SS 115, SS 117 bis and inside of the city, the way General A. Cascino and the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, are wide and allow the passage of two placed side by side vehicles. All the other roads, also inside of the city, are tightened and allow the passage of a single vehicle. Vehicles destroyed in tightened roads, until are not removed, block the passage to the other vehicles.
- The Italians tanks R-35, in order to simulate the impetuosity and the courage demonstrated during the battle, can approached the enemy infantry without restrictions and they do not have to carry out no test of moral.
- Military and civil sharpshooters operated in city till the night of day 10 July 1943. The Italian player has a civil sharpshooter (considered "poor" for hand to hand combat) he is deploy at the start of game, after the deploy of American player, inside of any houses situated on the hill of Gela. In the event that he comes deploy in a house occupied from Americans troops, at the moment of the activation (of the sharpshooter or of the Americans troops) will be fought a hand to hand combat.
- The Rangers can attack the Italians tanks using the demolition charge. It has a range of 2" and if the attack is carried from the inside of a house, it does not demand a heroic

action. Apply the following procedure: to pull a D6 (with 3-4-5-6 the charge is launch to useful capacity); to pull a D6 in order to verify if it explodes (with a 1-2, the charge does not explode); to pull a 6D in order to verify the damages (1= light damage, 2-3= heavy damage, 4-5= destroyed; 6= no effect).

- The AOP of USS BOISE remains on the battlefield in order to direct the shooting of the guns of the cruiser for the first 5 turns. At the beginning of the sixth turn to pull a D6, the result indicates for how many turns still will be available the AOP before return on board of USS BOISE. Once that the AOP has return on board, it will not be more possible to use the naval fire.
- The naval fire cannot hit targets situated to south of the road near the escarpment of the hill of Gela.
- At the end of the fourth turn, the Col. Darby and an other figure of group HQ, is removed from the table (must to go to the beach in order to try A.T. gun); launch a D6, the result indicates after how many turns the Col. Darby re-enters from any point of the south border of table with the jeep and the antitank gun (this shooting would have to be carried out from an arbiter). A.T. gun cannot be to deploy less than 10" from any enemy unit. If the Col. Darby remains killed before the term of the fourth turn, the aforesaid action cannot have place. During its absence, in case of moral test, to apply the modifier of - 1.
- The Italian player wins if he succeeds to occupy 6 houses at least of the city of Gela (consider only the houses situated on the hill). From 1 to 3 houses occupied is a American victory, from 4 to 5 is a balancing.
- The Italians test the moral after 19 casualties enclosed the guns crews and the OP. The civil sharpshooter not count to the aims of the moral.
- The Americans test the moral after 17 casualties.

Italian victory is very hard. The Italian player must coordinate the action of infantry, tanks and artillery very well, trying to avoid losses to own infantry before that it catches up the hill of the city of Gela. Once in city to use the tanks in order to discover the American positions, the artillery in order to inflict losses and only successively the infantry in order to occupy the positions.





You can see more scenario photos on: <http://picasaweb.google.it/roberto058>

## ***Sources:***

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