

# BREAKING THE HITLER LINE

## 2581 - OPERATION DIADEM

MAY 23 1944



Setup order		
1		x2
2		x2
3		x7
4		x10
5		x3
6		x3
7		x2
8		x4
9		x5
10		x6

### Historical Background

After the breach of the Gustav line the German forces fell back to their next position the allies called the Hitler Line. It was hoped by allied command that the Germans wouldn't make a resistant stand here. With the French forces already outflanking the right and the Polish after taking Cassino and threatening the North of the line it was decided that the Canadians would make a full on frontal assault and crash headlong into the line.

Not a lot was known about the Hitler line but the Candian infantry and British tanks who were about to engage it were in for a surprise. Not only was this line fortified with Tobruk pits but the presence of something new in Italy as well, the Panzerturm. A Panzerturm was a turret from an PzKw III or PzKw IV tank mounted on a base of bricks and reinforced concrete and protected on it's flanks by a brace of self-propelled guns. They remained concealed until the Candians attacked; their low profile made them very hard to hit.

On May 23rd the attack was launched. Allied artillery support was immense, more than twice the guns than were available for the famous barage at El Alamein. However even with massed artillery support, frontal attacks on a defended position is costly and the Hitler Line was no exception. 2 Brigade, the victors at Ortona ran into difficulties on the allied right. No opportunity was afforded for a proper recce and the diversion attack by the British on their right never took place. They soon found themselves pinned down and out of radio contact. On their left, 3rd brigade was making fairly good progress and eventually broke the line.

At the end of the day 1st and 3rd brigades succeeded in breaking the Hitler line but the cost was indeed high. 2nd brigade suffered 543 casualties, well over half of the division's 879 losses, in it's hardest day of fighting in the Italian campaign. The Germans suffered here too. The number of prisoners alone almost matched the Canadian casualties while the German dead numbered "several hundred". Almost every unit holding the Hitler Line was afterwards written off by the enemy high command.

### Briefing

Axis - 4 cards  
 Allies - 5 cards  
 Allies move first

### Conditions of Victory

6 Medals

### Special Rules

**Panzerturm** - The German tanks in the bunkers consists of 2 tank figures that represent the tank turret emplacements used to defend the Hitler Line. The unit is ordered and battles like a tank but cannot move (nor overrun). This unit gets the defensive benefit of being in a bunker. When a Panzerturm

unit is destroyed, remove the field bunker leaving the hex open.

**Exit** - Exiting an Allied unit off of the board at any of the Exit marked hexes or hexes between the two counts as a medal for the Allies. When the unit exits the board, place him on the Allied VP track.

**Bunkers** - The Axis player is in control of the Bunkers and may claim them as a defensive position. For Panzerturms just use the ordinary bunkers in combination with the 2 field bunkers.

**Air Rules are Optional** - Give the Allied player an Air Sortie card, shuffle the other into the deck.