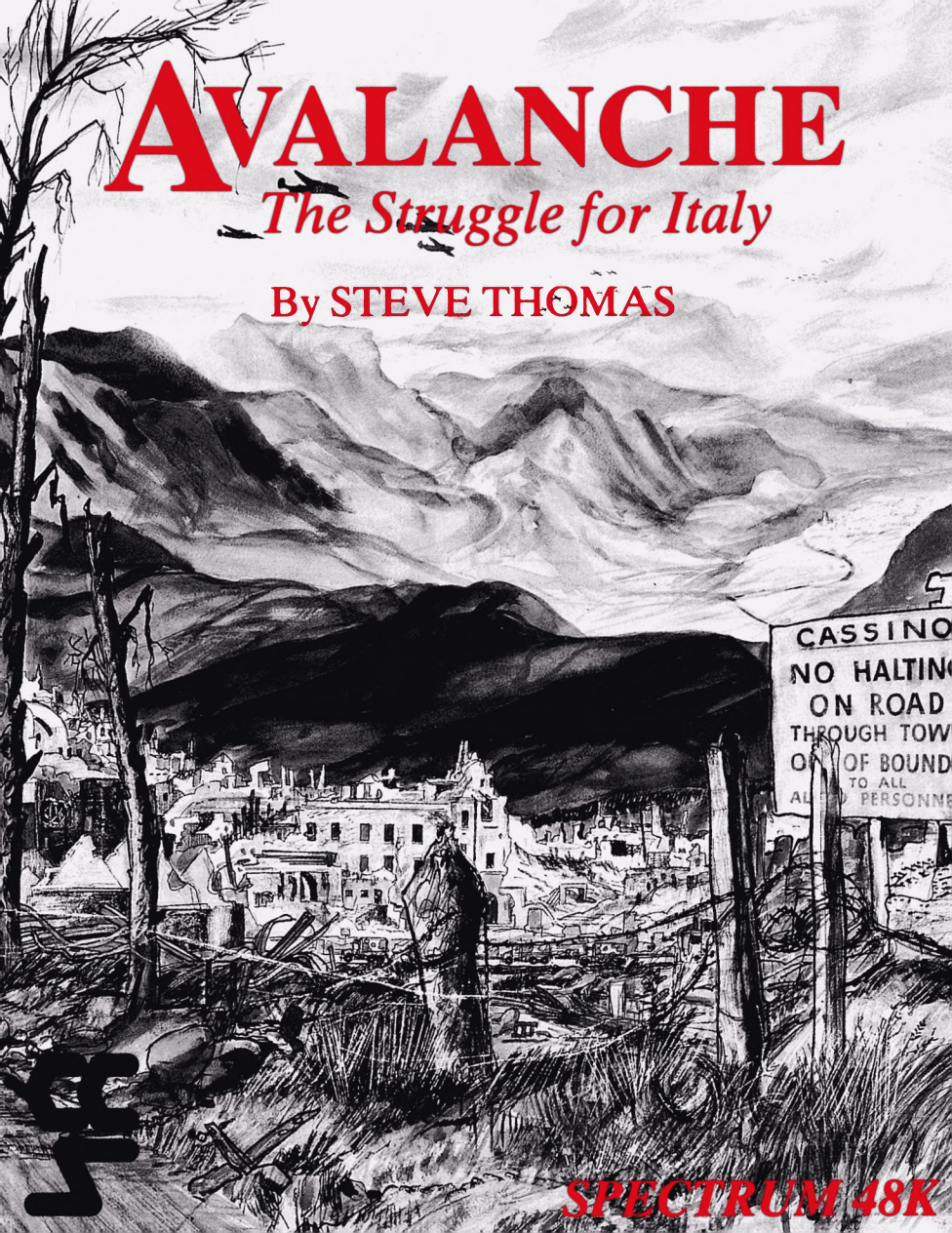


AVALANCHE

The Struggle for Italy

By STEVE THOMAS



SPECTRUM 48K

AVALANCHE

The Struggle for Italy

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1. LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

SPECTRUM: Select 48K mode. Type LOAD ""
AMSTRAD: Type TAPE then RUN ""
AMSTRAD DISC: Type RUN "disc"

Should you experience any trouble in loading, remove all peripherals and try again.

2. INTRODUCTION

AVALANCHE is a one or two player wargame depicting the campaign in Italy during WWII. The player may choose to play either the Axis forces of C-in-C South, Field Marshal Kesselring, or the multinational forces of the 15th Army Group under General Alexander.

The game starts with the Salerno landings on the 9th September 1943 and ends with either the capture of Rome on the 5th June 1944, or the end of the war in May 1945. Each game turn represents one week in real time.

A number of historical variations have been included which allow the player to explore what may have happened if High Command had given this theatre of operations a higher priority. The variations can also be used to modify the difficulty of the game.

3. GAME STRUCTURE

The game structure is:

- a) Set up options
- b) German air phase
- c) German order phase
- d) Allied air phase
- e) Allied order phase
- f) Artillery phase
- g) Transport phase
- h) Unit movement
- i) Combat phase
- j) Retreats
- k) Victory checks
- l) go to b

4. INITIAL OPTIONS

a) Load old game:

Y: Loads a saved game.

N: Sets up a new game.

b) Computer Player:

G: Computer plays Germans.

A: Computer plays Allies.

N: Selects two player game.

c) German Garrisons:

H: Selects historical conditions

German forces in Italy in September 1943 consisted of von Vistinghoff's 10th Army in the south and Army Group B, commanded by Rommel, in the north. Hitler, believing it impossible to hold the Allies in the south, refused to commit Army Group B en masse fearing an Allied seaborne invasion in the north cutting off his southern forces. As the fighting progressed and the Allies became bogged down, elements of Army Group B were released piecemeal to shore up the German defence lines.

R: Release Garrisons

This releases Army Group B en masse and puts the Allies under a great deal of pressure.

d) Panzer Withdrawals:

H: Historical

At the beginning of the campaign the Germans had a large number of panzer and panzergrenadier units in Italy. As the campaign developed, the Germans found that only a few tanks were required to deal with the short-lived spells of high mobility that occurred. Consequently these units were gradually transferred to other theatres of operations that were under greater pressure, chiefly Russia, where their mobility and offensive capacity were used to greater effect.

C: Cancelled

This option assumes that the Panzer units were not required elsewhere and that they remained in Italy.

e) Anvil Landings:

H: Selects Historical Conditions

After the Normandy landings the Americans insisted on launching an attack on Southern France to support their troops in the north. The only way this could be done was to transfer troops from Italy.

C: Anvil landings cancelled

This reflects the British opinion that the Italian theatre had a vast untapped potential for thrusting into Austria from the south. If this option is selected, units of the US VI Corps and French troops will not be withdrawn for use in France.

f) Shingle Landing:

H: Historical

If this option is selected the Anzio landings will occur on 22nd January 1944.

P: Player selected

If this option is selected, the player can decide when he wishes to launch a landing at Anzio.

g) Italian Loyalty:

H: Historical

After the overthrow of Mussolini on the 24th July 1943, Badoglio began secret negotiations for an armistice with the Allies. On the 8th September Eisenhower broadcast the Italian surrender on radio from Algiers with the result that the Germans immediately disarmed the Italian forces. Only a few divisions, including the Ariete Division garrisoning Rome resisted, but they were quickly eliminated.

A: All support Allies

This option assumes that all Italian units joined the Allied cause and resisted the Germans. This would have delayed German reinforcements.

B: Some support Allies

This option randomly selects Italian forces to support the Allies. All other Italian units are disbanded.

C: All support Axis

This option assumes that the Italians did not sign an armistice with the Allies and all Italian units remained on the German side.

D: Some support Axis

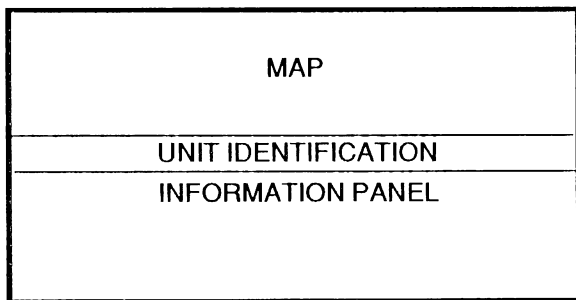
This randomly selects which Italian units remain loyal to the Axis. All other Italian units disband.

h) Game Level:**H: Hard**

This is the standard game.

B: Beginner

The beginner's game relaxes the supply rules. In the hard game a unit may only receive supply and replacements when using the HOLD command. In the beginner's game any unit that can trace a line of supply will receive replacements and supply regardless of the order given. This enables the player to be much more mobile than the hard game where every action must be weighed carefully against the amount of supply remaining.

5. SCREEN LAYOUT

6. VISIBILITY, WEATHER AND STACKING

At the beginning of each player's phase the date and current weather conditions are given. Ground conditions may be firm or mud and are selected at random but with a weighting according to the time of year: e.g. it is more likely to be muddy in winter.

Weather conditions affect movement and combat. Combat is less effective in poor weather for both the attacker and the defender but the attacker is likely to receive more casualties than the defender.

Movement is hidden but any enemy unit within four map locations of a friendly unit will be displayed. If there are two players, then the screen should not be viewed when the other player is giving his orders.

There is a stack limit of one. Only one unit is allowed at any one map location.

7. AIR PHASE

The player will receive a number of air points and can choose one of two actions, each costing one point. These points must be used immediately and cannot be saved for future turns. Possible air commands are:

R: RECCE

This orders your planes to search for enemy units. It is always successful and any enemy unit within four map locations range will be displayed.

S: STRAFFE

This orders your planes to attack a unit. Air attacks reduce enemy strength, morale, supply and movement. Suspected enemy targets may be attacked and do not need to be visible. If an enemy airfield is within five map locations of the target then the air strike may be driven off by local fighter cover.

X: EXIT

Leaves the air phase and moves to the order phase.

8. REINFORCEMENTS, WITHDRAWALS AND GARRISONS

Many units took part in the Italian campaign but few fought for the entire duration. Throughout the game both sides will receive reinforcements and will have units transferred to other theatres of operation. These transfers take place at the beginning of the Order Phase.

Allied reinforcements arrive at the ports of Salerno, Taranto and Bari, or on the road at the bottom left hand edge of the map which leads to the Strait of Messina. These units will only have a **MEDIUM** level of supply when they arrive. This represents the disruption caused by shipping troops.

The Germans receive two sources of reinforcements. They may either be sent to Italy or they may be released from Army Group B, which is on garrison duty in the north. External reinforcements arrive on the roads at the top edge of the map. Garrisons will gradually be released either on a historical basis, or if an enemy unit comes within five map units of it.

Note: For a reinforcement to arrive successfully its port/road arrival point must be free of any other units.

Notice of a unit's withdrawal will be given on its information panel one week prior to its withdrawal.

If operation **SHINGLE** has been selected for user scheduling, then after all withdrawals and reinforcements have taken place, the Allied player will be asked if he wishes to initiate the Anzio landings. If selected the landings will take place during the next turn.

9. ORDER PHASE

To give a command move the cursor, using the cursor keys, over the required unit. The unit's name and possible orders are displayed and the current order highlighted in red. Select the appropriate key. Some orders require a destination. Move the cursor to the required location and press **ENTER**.

If a unit already has a **MOVE**, **ROAD**, **BOMB**, **TRANSPORT** or **LIFT** order, then its target destination is displayed by a cross if the destination is within the current screen boundaries.

To cancel an order you are currently issuing press the **SPACE** bar.

When a unit has been given an order its background colour will be shaded. The **N** command (next unit) will cycle through those units which are not garrison units and have not been given a command this turn (not shaded).

Possible orders are:

H: HOLD

This tells a unit to stay where it is. A holding unit will receive much less damage when attacked and its supply level will increase by two points. Morale may also improve if there are no enemy units adjacent to it and will also be able to receive replacements.

M: MOVE

When this command is selected the user must specify a destination by moving the cursor to a new location and pressing the **ENTER** key. During the Movement Phase the unit will attempt to move directly across country and will continue during subsequent turns until its destination is reached. Any enemy units encountered will be engaged.

Terrain will affect the amount of movement allowed and units cannot move over sea. If a unit moves over an airfield or a port then that location will become a friendly airfield or port.

R: ROAD

This order is the same as the **MOVE** order except the unit will follow the road to the required destination. Both start and final locations must be on a road type location. Road movement is normally quicker and there is no combat penalty involved. If a specific route is required, it is best to issue a series of short moves. Beware of traffic jams.

B: BOMB

Corps artillery units may use indirect fire on enemy units. Their range is four and the target does not need to be visible. Enemy strength, morale, supply and movement will be reduced. If a unit has no supply then indirect fire will not be allowed.

T: TRANSPORT

This order is only available to the Allies who had command of the sea. A unit may transport from one friendly port to another. See Section 13 for 'friendly port' definition.

If the destination port is occupied then the move will be postponed until the port is free. When the convoy arrives the unit will have a reduced supply level to

compensate for the organisational problems of transporting troops. The arrival of the Convoy will be announced to both sides.

L: LIFT

This order only applies to Allied paratroops that are located on a friendly airfield. (By this time the Germans did not have the resources for a large scale operation.) Paratroops may be lifted to any clear or road map location that has no other units on it. If other troops are at the destination location, then the order will be postponed. If the landing is successful then the unit will have much reduced supply, once again representing the disorganisation caused by such an operation.

S: STATUS

Displays the unit status. Press space bar to return to orders.

N: NEXT

Moves the cursor to the next unit which is not a garrison unit and has not been issued an order during the current turn.

P: PRINT MAP LOCATION

Displays the terrain under a unit.

O: SOUND ON/OFF

This toggles the combat sounds on and off. If sound is off then the combat phase will proceed a little quicker but the player will not be able to gauge enemy strength by their return fire.

SPACE BAR

Cancels current order being issued.

X: Leave order phase.

10. ARTILLERY AND MOVEMENT PHASE

Any artillery units ordered to fire indirectly will now carry out their orders. Units that are hit will receive damage immediately.

Units that have **TRANSPORT** or **LIFT** orders move next, followed by normal ground movement. Units move simultaneously and when their destination is reached they will hold.

Movement rates will depend on the movement points for the unit, the terrain and the weather. Movement points will be reduced by artillery fire or aircraft bombardment. Units with no supply will move at half speed. Units cannot cross sea locations.

Units cannot pass through each other — so be very careful to avoid traffic jams. Each unit has a zone of control. A zone of control consists of the eight map locations around the unit. When an enemy unit moves into a zone of control then its movement will cease for that turn. The unit will also be displayed if it was not previously visible.

11. COMBAT PHASE

Any unit moving into an enemy zone of control will be engaged. Enemy units that are adjacent to each other but are both holding will not fight. A unit with a MOVE or ROAD order will be considered to be attacking, whereas a HOLDING unit is the defender.

The outcome of the fight will depend on the strength, type, morale, tactical ability, supply, weather and terrain of the engaged units, as well as a little luck! Units with HOLD orders will also receive reduced damage as they are defending.

The fire power of a unit is calculated and divided equally amongst all engaged units. Therefore, it is better to attack with as many units as possible so as to minimise damage received.

After the Movement Phase each firing unit is displayed shaded and each attacked unit flashes. A firing sound is made in proportion to the fire power of the attacking unit.

If a unit suffers heavy damage then morale may be reduced. If more damage is inflicted than received, morale may increase. After combat units may retreat. Any unit that has been destroyed is removed from the map.

Each unit that participates in combat will have its supply reduced by one step. If a unit has no supply then it will only attack with 60% efficiency and will receive 50% more casualties. It is wise to rest a unit by HOLDing after several rounds of combat.

Attacking in muddy conditions will cause 20% additional casualties to the attacker.

Combat should be considered to take place simultaneously, regardless of which side fires first. Casualties are deducted at the end of the combat phase and therefore there is no advantage in firing first.

12. VICTORY CONDITIONS

The game is divided into two sections and a result is given at the end of each section.

Section 1

Requires the Allies to secure Rome and is suitable for a player who wishes to play a shorter game or can be used as part of the 'full game' victory conditions. For the Allies to win they must capture Rome before the end of the first week of June 1944. Also there must be no German units south of Rome that can trace a line of supply to the north. If the Allies do not achieve their victory conditions then the Germans win.

Section 2

Continues after the race for Rome and requires the Allies to move five units, all of which must be able to trace a supply line, into the region marked on the map, before the end of the war. This represents a breakthrough into Southern Austria. Again the Germans win if they stop the Allies from achieving their goal.

Each objective is considered to be either a minor or major victory depending on the relative number of units either destroyed or badly damaged. The player must balance the objective being secured with the casualties taken.

When playing the full game the Allied player should only consider that he has won a complete victory if he achieves both sets of objectives. The same applies to the Germans and if each side wins a section of the game, then it should be considered a draw. Securing Rome is mainly a political and propaganda goal but these factors are very often considered to be more important than pure military considerations.

The above are only guidelines as the player should be able to judge the outcome for himself.

13. AIRFIELDS, PORTS AND ROME

These two types of terrain, and the Rome map location, are important and may be considered to be either friendly or enemy. At the beginning of the game Rome and all the airfields are considered to be under German control. The ports of Salerno, Taranto and Bari are considered to be under Allied control and all other ports under German control.

To make any of these locations friendly you must pass a unit through them using the MOVE or ROAD order. They will then remain friendly unless an enemy unit recaptures them.

Airfields give fighter cover, are an Allied supply point, and allow Allied paratroops to take off. Ports give the Allies a quick transport facility and a supply point. Rome gives both sides a supply point and is important for victory conditions.

14. STATUS REPORTS

When status reports are selected the unit's attributes are displayed:

Name:	Unit name.
Strength:	Strength of the unit.
Movement:	Maximum number of movement points. Actual points may be modified by artillery fire, supply etc.
ISP:	In supply. Indicates whether the unit can trace a line of supply to a supply source or whether it is next to a supply point. If it cannot, then morale will be reduced by one point.
Morale:	The spirit of the troops. May be changed by success/failure in combat, bombardments or air attacks. May increase if Holding with no enemy unit adjacent to it. Affects combat ability and the probability of a unit retreating.
Tactics:	This is the training/experience of the troops. This affects combat but remains constant for the unit throughout the game.
Supply:	This is the level of essential items such as food, ammunition and fuel required for fighting.

Supply, morale and tactical ability are displayed as EXCELLENT, V.GOOD, GOOD, Q.GOOD, MEDIUM, Q.POOR, POOR, V.POOR, ABYSMAL, NONE. To leave the status display press the SPACE bar.

15. SUPPLY AND REPLACEMENTS

Supply is very important since it represents the food, ammunition and fuel etc of a unit. Supply levels vary from none to excellent. Any order, except HOLD, given to a unit will reduce the supply level. Artillery fire, air attacks and combat will also reduce supply.

If a unit runs out of supply then the movement rate for that unit will be halved, the firepower will be reduced to 60% of maximum and the unit will take considerably higher casualties in combat. Therefore it is wise to maintain a good supply level.

For a unit to replenish supply it must be able to trace a line of supply to a supply source or it must be on, or next to, a friendly supply point. If either of these conditions are true, then the unit is considered to be in supply (ISP) and the ISP flag on the status report will be set.

Supply Lines

Lines of supply may take any route, however devious, from a supply source along either road or fortification locations. The supply line may not pass through, or be adjacent to, an enemy unit. A unit must be on, or adjacent to, a supply line to be in supply (ISP).

Supply Points

To be in supply from a supply point, a unit must be on or adjacent to the supply point. Supply points are not supply sources and only supply the eight map locations surrounding the supply point. You may not trace a line of supply from these locations but lines of supply may pass through them.

The Allied supply source is the road entry point at the bottom left hand side of the map leading to the Strait of Messina. Allied supply points are FRIENDLY ports, airfields and Rome (if captured).

German supply sources are the four entry points on the top edge of the map. German supply points only consist of a friendly ROME. Airfields and ports do not count as supply points since the Allies had complete control of the seas and the Germans did not have the air resources to supply an air bridgehead after their disastrous losses at Stalingrad.

If a unit is in supply (ISP) and is HOLDing then it will receive two supply points. If it is not at maximum strength then it will also receive replacements. During the

game the number of replacements for each side varies, but generally the German manpower levels are less than the Allies, especially as the game progresses.

If the **BEGINNERS** game level option is selected then to receive supply and replacements, a unit does not need to be **HOLDing**. This allows for a more mobile game to be played.

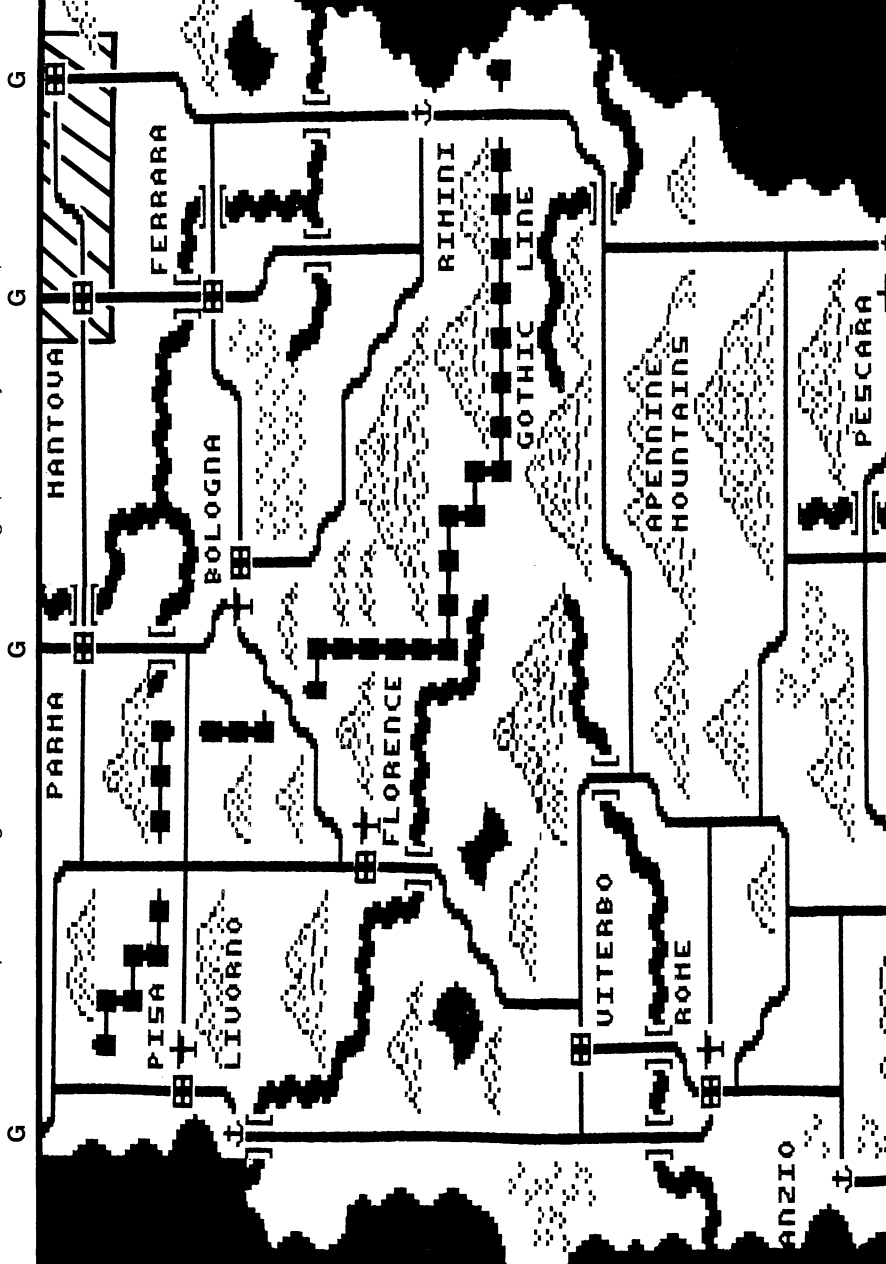
If a unit cannot trace a line of supply or is not next to a supply source, then it will have its morale level reduced for each turn that it is not **ISP**.

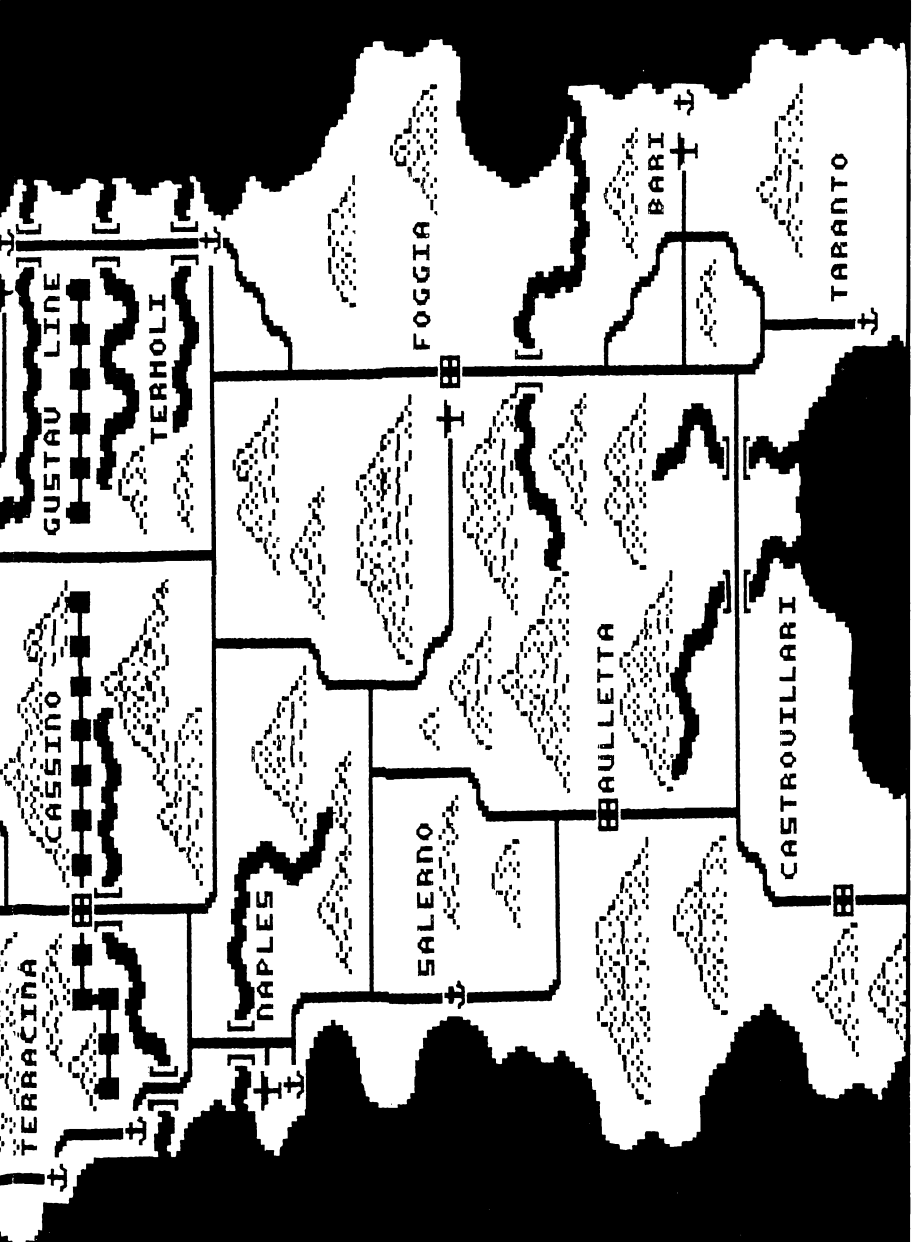
THE MAP

G: Represents German supply sources and reinforcement entry locations.

A: Represents Allied supply source.

Shaded area: Represents target area for Allied breakthrough (see victory conditions).





16. UNITS

SPECTRUM

AMSTRAD

German Garrison



SS Panzer Division



SS Panzer Grenadiers



German Armour



Panzer Grenadier



Axis Infantry



Mountain Infantry



German Paratroops



German Artillery



TERRAIN SYMBOLS

— Road



Marsh

— Bridge



Sea

田 Town



Fortifications

⚓ Port















Hills

✈ Airfield



Mountains

~ River

	SPECTRUM	AMSTRAD
Allied Armour		
US & GB Infantry		
Allied Paratroops		
Italian Armour		
Italian, French and Polish Infantry		
Allied Artillery		

German units face to the left, the Allies to the right. If Italian units are selected to remain with the Axis then their colours and symbols will be the same as normal German forces.

National colours are:

	SPECTRUM	AMSTRAD
SS Units	Black	Black
German	Black	Grey
British	Red	Red
American	Blue	Blue
Commonwealth	Magenta	Brown
French	Blue	Sky Blue
Polish	Red	Orange
Italian	Magenta	Green

1st SS Panzer

Although the 1st, 2nd and 3rd SS Panzer Divisions were scheduled for Italy, only the 1st SS Panzer and the 1st and 2nd SS Panzer Corps HQ troops actually arrived, due to a renewed Soviet attack in the east. This unit is very powerful but historically only saw action against local partisans and therefore does not enter the game until the Garrison Release option is chosen.

SS Panzer Grenadier

This is the 16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division 'Reichsfuhrer-SS'. Although not one of the premier SS Divisions, it fought very well throughout the Italian campaign.

Armour

Armoured units are fast and powerful. They are not, however, suitable for fighting in mountainous regions and because of this a unit in hill or mountain terrain will have a 25% reduction in fighting capacity.

Infantry

Allied units normally have better movement rates than those of the Germans because most of the Allied units were motorized.

Paratroops

Allied paratroops have the option of being air dropped from any friendly airfield to any clear, empty map location and can therefore be used to cut off enemy forces or capture ports etc, although historically, paratroops were hardly used.

By this time German paratroops were mainly restricted to ground operations. This was due to a combination of a lack of aircraft and training and the policies of High Command. For this reason the Germans cannot use the LIFT order and paratroops should be considered as elite light infantry.

Mountain Units

These units were well trained in mountain warfare and generally were recruited from people living in mountainous areas. To reflect their skills, these units will receive a 25% bonus to their combat factors when fighting in hills or mountains.

Artillery

These units represent the Corps artillery and may use indirect fire up to a range of four map locations. If these units have no supply then indirect fire is not allowed. The effect of bombardments will vary according to the terrain of the defending unit.

17. TERRAIN

TYPE	SYMBOL	MOVEMENT COST		COMBAT MODIFIER	COLOUR	
		<i>Firm</i>	<i>Mud</i>		<i>Spectrum</i>	<i>Amstrad</i>
Road		1	1	+10%	Black	Black
Bridge		1	1	+30%	Black	Black
Town		1	1	-20%	Red	Red
Port		1	1	-20%	Red	Red
Airfield		1	1	0%	Red	Red
Clear		1	3	0%	Green	Green
River		5	8	+50%	Blue	Blue
Hills		4	6	-20%	Red	Grey
Mountains		6	8	-30%	White	Red
Marsh		3	5	+30%	Blue	Blue
Sea		—	—	—	Blue	Blue
Fortifications		1	2	-50%	Black	Black

Note: Units in fortification locations will not have their morale reduced by artillery fire.

18. PLAYING HINTS

The style of play for each side requires totally opposing tactics as the Allied player is very much on the offensive and the German player very much on the defensive, with the option of small local counter-attacks.

The Allied player has a vast amount of strength available but will find it difficult to deploy, since the supply rules require the player to stay near the roads and advances are frequently halted to allow supply to increase. Always try to attack in strength with units that have good supply and preferably when the ground is firm. If a unit's strength or supply becomes low, then move it off the road and allow these attributes to increase. Remember if a unit is badly damaged it will count towards the final victory conditions.

The best method of removing a well dug-in enemy unit is to cut off its supply line. Use concentrated artillery and air strikes on it and then attack in force with strong units that have good supply. Probe the enemy line to look for weak spots. You may wish to send units across country to cut off the enemy, but be careful that they do not get stuck if the ground becomes muddy, or that they are not counter-attacked. Although an outflanking manoeuvre is preferable, there will be many occasions when costly, head-on assaults, will be your only choice.

Allied reinforcements enter the game with a supply level set at medium. Therefore, it may be wise to move them off their entry point and allow their supply to build up before advancing. You must balance the advantage of waiting against the build-up of the enemy line. A rush north, with a poorly supplied unit, may prevent the Germans from consolidating their line. Remember that using the **TRANSPORT** command is quicker than moving a unit north using the **ROAD** command.

The German player must conserve his forces. He has a good chance of complying with the Rome intermediate victory conditions but must guard against losing too much strength while achieving this, as that would allow the Allies a rapid advance after the capture of Rome, with little to stand in their way.

The German player must use terrain to his advantage. Use fortification, hill and mountain locations where possible. Using the **HOLD** command will reduce casualties. It is also advisable to pray for mud as this will slow down the enemy assaults!

I would advise the German player not to rush back to the Gustav or Gothic lines as the Allies may overwhelm these defence lines before they can be consolidated. Therefore, it is better to use some units in a rearguard action to delay the enemy

advance. If a unit is badly damaged, then move it to the north and allow it to absorb replacements.

It is usually advisable only to counter-attack weak units or units with no supply. If possible keep a reserve force behind your strongpoints to wipe out any Allied unit which is cutting off the supply to your frontline.

Unless the Release Garrison option is selected it is probably wise to attempt to drive the Allies back into the sea at the start of the game. It is a good idea, however, to mount a small spoiling attack on the Salerno beachhead as this will slow down the Allies' preparations to advance.

Playing the Allied side will suit those players who like to follow a methodical campaign. The German player, however, needs to be resourceful and capable of dealing with the unexpected.

19. HISTORICAL NOTES

Sicily

As the North Africa campaign drew to its close, the Allied leaders met at Casablanca to discuss the next campaign against the Axis forces. The Allies had the choice of either suspending any further activities in the Mediterranean, in preparation for a cross Channel attack, or pursuing the retreating enemy into Sicily and on into mainland Europe.

The decision was subsequently taken to attack Sicily and then Italy on the assumption that if pressure was taken off the Axis forces in the south, then they might reorganise and possibly reinforce the garrisons in France, thus making the Channel assault more difficult. For a small investment in manpower the Allies believed that they could tie down, or trap, large numbers of enemy forces and perhaps even knock Italy out of the war. Italian air bases would also be useful for bombing locations deep within enemy territory, especially the Ploesti oilfields. The offensive would also appease the Soviet demand for a second front which would ease their problems in the east. For these reasons the Allies treated the campaign as a diversion for the Allied build up for the invasion of France. They did not realise that a long and brutal campaign would ensue and which would, at times, resemble the battlefields of WWI.

The massive invasion of Sicily (operation Husky) on the 10th July 1943 went according to plan. The Allies managed to convince the Axis that their main attack would take place in Sardinia, with Sicily being a diversion. This they did by allowing

the body of a dead British officer carrying Sardinian invasion plans, to be washed ashore in Spain. The landing of Patton's US 7th and Montgomery's 8th Armies took the defenders in Sicily by surprise and little resistance was offered. Patton raced up the west and central parts of the island whilst Montgomery moved up the east coast to cut off any German retreat across the Strait of Messina into Italy. Montgomery was the first to meet with heavy resistance when he was halted at Catania by the German 1st Parachute Division. This delay meant that Patton was the first to reach Messina on the 17th August by moving along the north coast. By this time the vast bulk of the Axis forces had managed to escape to mainland Italy.

Italian Loyalty

On the 25th July, King Victor Emmanuel was restored to power, Parliament was reconvened, and Mussolini was forced to resign. These dramatic events were due to the loss of the Italian North African Empire and the impending loss of Sicily. Marshal Pietro Badoglio became head of the government and immediately began secret negotiations with the Allies to arrange a surrender on favourable terms. He even offered to join the Allied cause if this would improve Italy's status at the end of the war.

Hitler was extremely worried by the events taking place in Italy and despite reassurances from Badoglio, he continued to believe that Italy was on the verge of changing sides. This would have had a disastrous effect on Germany's other Allies and he therefore ordered Rommel to move Army Group B into Northern Italy to secure its industrial regions. Mussolini was rescued by German paratroops and made head of a rival Italian government, loyal to the Axis, in the north. When the invasion eventually took place the Germans were ready. A premature broadcast of the Italian surrender by Eisenhower on the 8th September allowed the Germans to disarm the Italians. They then seized Rome and moved south to counter the Allies. Only the Rome garrison put up a fight but this resistance was quickly crushed. This premature broadcast and a reluctance by Badoglio to take effective measures (he refused an offer to drop the US 82nd Airborne Division on Rome to encourage a revolt), resulted in the Allies paying heavily for Italy.

Invasion

The invasion of Italy was beset by a number of problems. A shortage of landing craft and the range of fighter cover from Sicily contributed to the decision of where to land. Churchill called for a landing close to Rome, to trap German forces in the south and to encourage an Italian revolt. A lack of naval resources and the advice by air commanders that the Gulf of Salerno was the furthest point north that air cover could be guaranteed, meant that the quiet backwater of Salerno became the landing beaches for Clark's US 5th Army. This was to become known as operation 'Avalanche'. Montgomery proposed that a landing across the Strait of Messina, the shortest sea route, carried little risk. Montgomery's 8th Army mounted this operation known as 'Baytown'. A further landing, operation 'Slapstick', was made by the British 1st Airborne Division at the open port of Taranto.

On the 3rd September 'Baytown' proceeded. It was hoped that 'Baytown' would draw German forces south, allowing the unopposed landings at Salerno to cut them off. Montgomery met with little resistance, as most of the German forces had evacuated the Italian 'toe' two days previously. The German forces, however, left a large number of obstacles behind them which greatly reduced the speed of Montgomery's advance.

On the 9th September operation 'Avalanche' took place. The Allied troops had expected an easy landing but Kesselring had guessed that the main Allied landings would take place at Salerno. The Allied troops were met by fire from the 16th Panzer Division and heavy Luftwaffe attacks. A beachhead was nevertheless established. On the same day 'Slapstick' took place at Taranto. The landing went unopposed and the Italian fleet was seized.

On the 10th of September the Germans crushed the Italian revolt in Rome and Von Vistinghoff began to assemble his 10th Army for a counter-attack at Salerno. This took place on the 14th and consisted of the 14th and 76th Panzer Corps. For five days the 5th Army was in serious trouble and was nearly driven back into the sea. Reinforcements were pushed into the beachhead and eventually the approaching British 8th Army and the weight of the Allied strength, naval gunfire and airpower all contributed to saving the day. On the 16th the US 5th and British 8th Armies finally linked up and the Germans began to slowly withdraw northwards.

The Race for Rome?

By the end of September the Allies and the Germans both changed their strategies. Rommel initially convinced Hitler that it was impossible to hold the Allies south of the Gothic line but Kesselring was disproving this. Rommel argued that the nature of the terrain favoured a slow, fighting, withdrawal north. Hitler gradually came to the conclusion that Kesselring's strategy was correct and Rommel was transferred to France in late November.

The Allies changed their strategy after their landings were secured. Instead of merely tying down enemy troops, they saw the possibility of driving quickly north and threatening Germany from the south, but this would require keeping troops and other resources back that had been earmarked for the Channel assault.

As the Germans fell back from Salerno the Allies began their pursuit. Initially the Allies thought that they could take Rome by the end of the year but as the Allies moved north the terrain became more hostile and the fine weather began to break. In addition, Kesselring's brilliantly flexible tactics reduced the Allied advance in the west to a miserable crawl. Each of the many rivers blocking the Allied advance were staunchly defended. While the Allies were struggling forwards, the Germans were preparing the massive Gustav line which in places, was 10 miles thick. This line ran behind the Garigliano and Rapido rivers in the west and the Sangro in the east.

In the east Montgomery made good progress and forced a crossing of the Sangro, breaking through the Gustav line with the Canadian 1st Infantry Division taking Ortano on the 27th December. Increased enemy resistance, a deterioration in the weather and sheer exhaustion, brought this offensive to a halt. Montgomery was then moved to the west to help in the preparations for 'Overlord', and was replaced by Leese.

The quickest route to Rome, however, lay in the west along Route 6. It was Clark's 5th Army whose job it was to move up this route into Rome. By the end of December, after heavy fighting, they found themselves facing a part of the Gustav line which was to become legend — Cassino.

Cassino

Four major battles were fought before Cassino was captured and Route 6 re-opened. The key to the defence was Monastery Hill (435m high) with the famous Benedictine monastery on the top, overlooking the town of Cassino and dominating the Rapido and Liri valleys. This was the toughest part of the line and defended by the veterans of the 1st Parachute Division. The Allies were to assault it head on.

The first battle was preceded by a 3,000 bomber raid on German communication lines. Then on the 17th January 1944, French troops attacked to the east of Cassino, the British 10th Corps to the west and the US 2nd Corps the town itself. This assault was to act as a prelude to operation 'Shingle', the landings at Anzio, which took place on the 22nd January.

The British Corps made some headway at first but after 11 days were beaten back by savage German counter-attacks. The US attack came very close to taking both the town and the monastery, but was forced back after suffering horrendous casualties. The French on the right were much more successful, but after the failure in the centre, could do little and had to give ground.

Meanwhile the US 6th Corps, under Lucas, landed at Anzio on the 22nd January. The British 1st and US 3rd Infantry Divisions stormed ashore to find their landing unopposed. Instead of bolding striking out of his bridgehead, capturing Rome, and cutting the supply lines to the Gustav line, Lucas built up a defensive perimeter around his beachhead, fearing a similar counter-attack by the Germans as had happened at Salerno. The Germans had no forces in the area to counter Lucas, but the Allied hesitation gave Kesselring time to remedy this. By the time Lucas attempted a breakout, Von Mackensen's 14th Army was ready to contain the attack and then gradually destroyed the Allied forces in the beachhead. A grim struggle continued for four months resulting in 40,000 Allied casualties against 35,000 German. Winston Churchill said, 'We had intended to fling ashore a screaming wild-cat; instead we found ourselves with a stranded whale'.

While the battles around Anzio were raging, the Allies began their second attempt at capturing Cassino. This attack began with the controversial destruction of the monastery itself by a massive airstrike. The Allies believed it was being used as an artillery observation post. On the 16th of February, the 2nd New Zealand and 4th Indian Divisions began their assault. These attacks were again driven off even after the British 78th Division joined the New Zealanders. The attack was finally called off after the Indian troops were accidentally bombed by Allied aircraft.

The third battle lasted from the 14th to the 22nd of March, and was fought by the New Zealanders. Again they were driven back by the German Paras and had to be taken out of the line as their losses were so great.

The fourth and final battle was better planned and took place on the 11th May. The Polish Corps attacked Cassino and the British 13th Corps attacked to their left, swinging round behind Cassino and cutting off Route 6. The French and US 2nd Corps attacked to the west and drew off enemy reinforcements with a breakout from the Anzio beachhead, joining up with their troops to the south. All these assaults were preceded by a massive artillery bombardment. With such overwhelming forces the Allied assault could not have failed. As the Allies made progress Kesselring realised his position was hopeless and began his withdrawal north. On the 18th May Cassino fell to the Poles. The casualties for the four Cassino battles were 115,000 for the Allies and 60,000 for the Germans.

Rome

If the US 6th Corps had driven east out of the Anzio beachhead then the German 10th Army would have been trapped and may have been destroyed. Instead it appears that Clark was tempted to drive straight for Rome. Unfortunately he was stopped by the German Caesar line and this enabled the 10th Army to escape. On the 2nd June Hitler gave permission for Kesselring to abandon Rome and the first Allied troops arrived in Rome on the 4th June. On the 6th June 'Overlord' began in Normandy. This was to have a significant effect on the fighting in Italy. Although the capture of Rome was achieved at a very high cost, it did succeed in tying down a large number of experienced German troops and the capture of a former Axis capital also gave the Allies' morale a boost.

The Gothic Line

After the fall of Rome Kesselring fell back on the Gothic line, using the Dora and Arno lines to slow down the Allied pursuit. He need not have worried, however, as the Allies needed time to reorganise because the French Expeditionary Corps and some other units were required for the Anvil landings in the south of France.

Leese suggested that the British 8th Army should be moved back to the eastern side of the country to drive towards Rimini, while the US 5th Army continued the pursuit of the German 14th Army in the west and then to swing east towards Bologna. The Albert and Arno lines were subsequently broken with Pisa being taken on the 23rd July. The US 5th Army began assaulting the Gothic line on the 25th August while in the east the 8th Army reached the line on the 30th August.

The Gothic line proved to be less formidable than previously thought to be and was breached by the 5th Army during the first three weeks of October and by the 8th Army on the 14th September.

Although the Gothic line was broken, the Germans behind the line fought fiercely. A steady increase in the number of casualties caused the US 5th Army to cease offensive operations on the 27th October. The 8th Army continued its offensive until the 29th December when bad weather made further headway difficult. Although Bologna was not taken, the Allies felt that victory was within their grasp.

The End

1945 began quietly in Northern Italy with both sides suffering from bad weather and exhaustion. Alexander decided to continue his offensive as soon as the Spring weather made it practical. This would stop them from withdrawing to the Alps where it would be extremely difficult to dislodge them, especially since the Canadian Corps was ordered to North West Europe.

Kesselring wanted to withdraw to the Alps but Hitler did not agree and appointed Kesselring C-in-C West and replaced him with Von Vistinghoff. Kesselring took four divisions with him and so further weakened the German position. Alexander's assault began on the 9th April 1945 with a powerful double blow by both the 5th and 8th Armies. For a time the Germans held the offensive but in the end weight of numbers and overwhelming air support carried the day. After several counter-attacks by the Germans, the Allies smashed their way north towards Austria and France with the remaining German forces in rout. Mussolini was captured by partisans while fleeing to Germany and was killed on the 28th April. On the 29th Von Vistinghoff agreed to the unconditional surrender of all German forces in Italy which came into force on 2nd May. On 6th May the 5th Army advanced through the Brenner Pass into Austria and met the 7th Army. On the 4th May Montgomery accepted Germany's unconditional surrender and three days later the war in Europe was formally at an end.

20. DESIGNER'S NOTES

Although the names of Cassino, Anzio and Salerno are well known, I believe that the Italian theatre has received much less attention than the more spectacular mobile battles in North Africa and the operations in Northern Europe after the Normandy invasion. It should be remembered that many men gained valuable battle and amphibious landing experience in this campaign and it was the Western Allies first campaign on mainland Europe since Dunkirk.

The campaign was given low priority by both the Germans and the Allies but the historical options will enable the player to vary the manpower available to either side, which could have resulted in a decisive outcome. This can also be used to vary the difficulty level of the game.

Ideally I would have liked to include the invasion of Sicily in the game but unfortunately memory restrictions have prevented this. Memory restrictions have also meant that the map of Italy has had to be viewed vertically so as not to waste memory on sea locations and only the areas of Italy where the major fighting took place have been included.

Finally I would like to thank Dave Barlow and Chris Preece for their help with the historical research and play testing of the game.

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