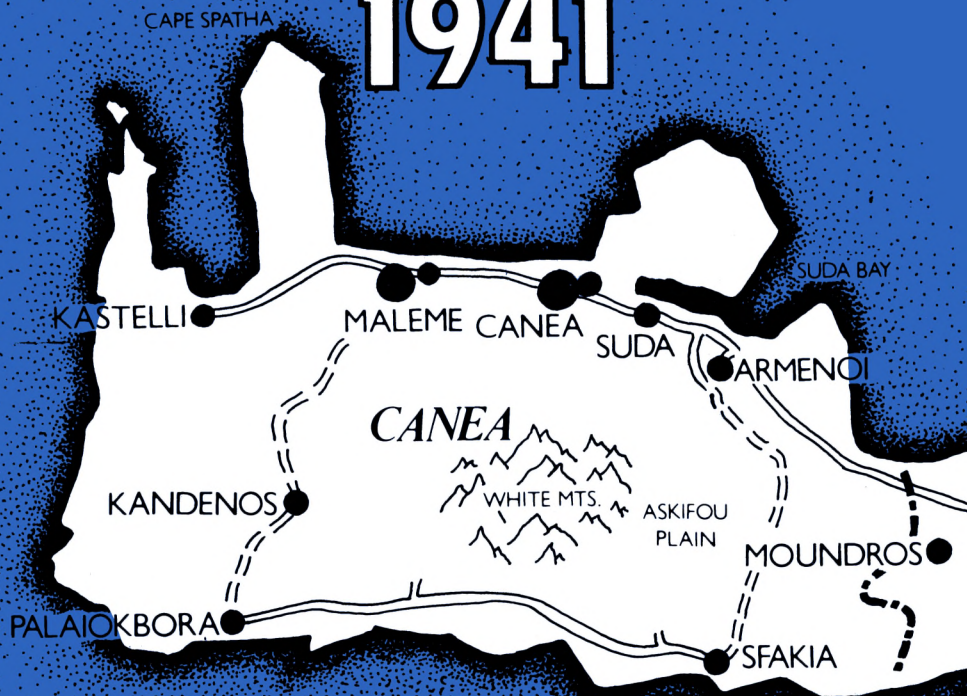


# CRETE

# 1941



# Fallschirmjäger



# CRETE 1941

## Fallschirmjager

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## 1. LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

**SPECTRUM:** Select 48K mode. Type LOAD ""

**AMSTRAD:** Type TAPE then RUN ""

**AMSTRAD DISC:** Type RUN "CRETE"

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

## 2. INTRODUCTION

**FALLSCHIRMJAGER** is a one or two player wargame reconstructing operation **MERKUR**, the German airborne invasion of Crete. This was the first and last major use of Hitler's elite paratroops in what was to become a very close run battle involving bitter hand to hand fighting.

The player may control either the German assault forces or Freyberg's beleaguered defence forces.

The game lasts from the morning of the 20th May 1941 to the night of the 27th May or until all enemy units have been eliminated. Various options are also available which can be used to modify the difficulty of the game.

## 3. GAME STRUCTURE

The game structure is:

- a) Set up options
- b) German convoy allocation
- c) Allied deployment
- d) German air phase
- e) German order phase
- f) Allied order phase
- g) Arrival phase and arrival combat
- h) Artillery phase
- i) Unit movement
- j) Combat phase
- k) Retreats
- l) Victory checks
- m) go to d

The game lasts 28 turns from the morning of 20th May to the night of 27th May. Each day consists of a morning, afternoon, evening and night.

## 4. INITIAL OPTIONS

- a) Load old game: Y loads a saved game.
- b) Computer Player: NONE selects a 2 player game.
- c) Convoys: A: Arrive: Convoys will not be intercepted  
D: Destroyed: Convoys will be sunk (historical)  
V: Variable: Convoys risk destruction. (50% chance of survival).
- d) Wind drift: Decides whether parachute landings will be accurate.
- e) Deployment: If free deployment is not selected then units must begin play within their allotted command sectors.

## 5. COMMANDS AND STACKING

To give a command, move the cursor using the cursor keys over the required unit. A list of options available will be displayed. Select the appropriate key. Some orders require a destination and the cursor should be moved to the required location and ENTER should be pressed.

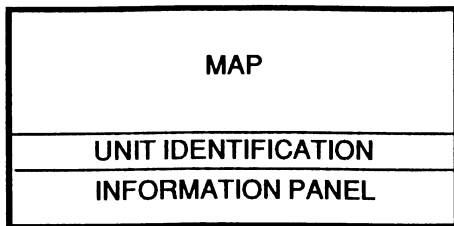
If a unit already has a MOVE, ROAD, BOMB or TRANSPORT order then its target destination is displayed by a cross if it is within the current screen boundaries.

To cancel an order you are currently issuing press the SPACE bar. Most orders may be changed during the player's order phase simply by issuing a new order. The exceptions are the DROP, LIFT and TRANS orders. Once these orders are issued the units are committed.

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 have not been given a command this turn (not shaded).

There is a stack limit of 1. ie only one unit is allowed at any map location.

## 6. SCREEN LAYOUT



## 7. GERMAN CONVOY ALLOCATION PHASE

The area in the sea surrounded by dotted white lines represents Greece. The airport symbols are airfields and the anchors are ports. To select units for convoy move them from an airfield to a port. To move a unit select it by moving the cursor over it and pressing ENTER. Move the cursor to its destination and press ENTER again. Press space to cancel this order.

German units can only be reallocated within the Greece sector. Note: The armoured unit can only be transported to Crete using convoy movement. It is also better to select air landing units for convoys since parachute troops will be able to land without an airport.

## 8. ALLIED DEPLOYMENT PHASE

Allied units may be redeployed within their own sectors. Moving units occurs in the same way as the German allocated phase. If free deployment is selected then units may be deployed anywhere. Careful choice of deployment will greatly affect the outcome of the battle. For historical deployment leave these units where they are.

## 9. VISIBILITY AND NIGHT

At the beginning of each player's phase the date is given and a summary of who commands each airfield.

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 while the opposition is giving their orders.

During night turns, only enemy units that are adjacent to friendly units will be visible and no air options will be available. This includes recces, air attacks and airborne troop movements.

## 10. GERMAN AIR PHASE

Only the Germans receive an air phase since there were no allied planes available to the defending forces. Air power may prove to be decisive. During night turns aircraft are grounded.

The player will receive a number of air points and may select between two actions which each cost one point. If an enemy FLAK unit is within range of the target then the air strike or recce may be driven off and only the firing FLAK unit will be displayed. 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: STRAFF

This orders your planes to attack a unit. Air attacks reduce enemy strength, morale, cohesion and movement. Suspected enemy targets may be attacked and do not need to be visible. Attacks on flak units will be unsuccessful.

### X: EXIT

Leaves the air phase and moves to the order phase.

## 11. ORDER PHASE

To give an order move the cursor over the required unit. The unit's name and possible orders are displayed. These are:

### H: HOLD

This tells a unit to stay where it is. A holding unit will receive less damage when attacked and its cohesion will improve as it has time to regroup. Morale may also improve if there are no enemy units adjacent to it.

### 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.

### R: ROAD

This order is the same as the MOVE order except that 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.

#### **B: BOMB**

Artillery and flak units may use indirect fire on enemy units. Their range is four and the target does not need to be visible. Enemy strength, morale, cohesion and movement will be reduced. If a unit's cohesion is too low then indirect fire will not be allowed.

#### **T: TRANSPORT**

German units may transport their convoy units from Greece to Crete. These units take between two to three days to travel commencing from the turn they are ordered to depart. Therefore, it is best for them to sail early in the game.

Convoys may be intercepted by Allied ships depending on the options set. If RANDOM convoy arrivals are selected then there is a 50% chance that they will be destroyed en route. Historically the convoys were destroyed or returned to base.

The Allied player may transport one unit from a port each turn with no danger to that unit.

Transportation destinations must be either a port or a beach. If a friendly unit occupies this location the convoy will wait off shore with a further possibility of destruction. If an enemy unit is encountered on the shore it will be attacked but the attacking unit will be at a severe disadvantage.

#### **E: EVAC**

Only Allied units may be evacuated from any port. They will not be returned to play but will affect the victory conditions.

#### **D: DROP**

This is the parachute/glider drop order. Only parachute units can drop (those with a V symbol). A number of air drop points are allocated. These may be used immediately or saved. Each point allows one unit to be dropped. Units may only be dropped in their allotted sectors. This order cannot be cancelled once issued.

Air drop points are accumulated on the morning and evening of the 20th and the afternoon and evening of the 21st.

If free deployment has not been selected then units may only be dropped within

their own allocated sector. (Some units have no sector allocated to them and may drop anywhere.)

**L: LIFT**

If an airfield has been captured then air lift points will be awarded. Air lifted units may only be landed at friendly airfields. Each airfield will accept one air lifted unit but must have no other unit on it.

**S: STATUS**

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

**N: NEXT**

Moves the cursor to the next unit which has not been issued an order this turn.

**P: PRINT MAP LOCATION**

Displays the terrain under a unit.

**SPACE BAR**

Cancels current order being issued.

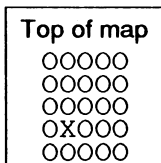
**X: Leave order phase.**

## **12. ARRIVAL PHASE**

After orders have been issued any unit arriving this turn is placed on the map. These include air landing, parachute, sea transported and two allied reinforcement units.

Air landing units will land at the selected airfield. If an Allied FLAK unit is within range of the airfield then it will fire at it causing some casualties. Once landed it will attempt to move off the airfield to allow room for the next unit to land on the next turn. If the airfield is not clear then the landing unit will return to Greece.

Parachute arrivals will also be dropped in this phase. If WIND DRIFT was selected then units may not land where they were ordered to. If their destination was X then units may land at any point O shown below:



This is because the prevailing wind blew North East. If a unit lands in the sea then it will be destroyed. If a unit lands within range of a FLAK unit it will be



fired at and take losses. If it lands on an Allied unit then combat will occur. The landing unit will only fight at 25% strength since German paratroopers dropped without their weapons and then had to collect them from containers once they had landed.

German sea transported units will arrive if they are not intercepted. Allied units may transport one unit each turn and this will always arrive. If their destination is occupied by an enemy unit then combat will occur with the landing unit heavily penalised.

### **13. ARTILLERY AND MOVEMENT PHASE**

Any flak, artillery or anti tank gun ordered to fire indirectly will now carry out their orders. Units that are hit will receive damage immediately.

All units will now move. Units move simultaneously and when their destination is reached they will hold.

Movement rates will depend on the movement points for the unit and the terrain crossed. Movement points will be reduced by artillery fire or aircraft bombardment. Units cannot cross sea locations.

Units will not pass through each other. Therefore you must be careful to avoid jams. Each unit has a zone of control. When an enemy unit moves into a zone of control then its movement will cease for this turn. The unit will also be displayed if it was not previously visible.

### **14. 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.

The outcome of the fight will depend on the strength, type, morale, tactical ability, cohesion and terrain of the engaged units as well as a little luck. Units with HOLD orders will also receive reduced damage since 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 will be made which is proportional 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 cohesion reduced by one step. If cohesion is too low then severe losses will be received. It is therefore wise to rest a unit by holding after several rounds of combat.

Although each side takes it in turn to fire, combat should be considered to take place simultaneously. Casualties are deducted at the end of the combat phase and therefore there is no advantage in firing first.

## **15. VICTORY CONDITIONS**

The game will finish when either all of one side's units have been destroyed or after the night of the 27th. Players may choose to extend the game after this period.

The winner will be declared according to the points he has won. Airfields are 20 points and evacuated units two points. The Germans are also awarded two points for each Allied unit eliminated and the Allied player three points for German units destroyed.

This is only a guide and the player should be able to judge for himself if the result is really a victory or not.

## **16. STATUS REPORTS**

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

<b>Name:</b>	Unit name.
<b>Order:</b>	Current order.
<b>Strength:</b>	Number of men (in 5's)/guns etc.
<b>Movement:</b>	Maximum number of movement points. Actual points may be modified by artillery fire etc.
<b>Cohesion:</b>	How well organised a unit is. All Allied units start the game fully organised. Any German air dropped unit will have its cohesion modified by the type of terrain it lands on. Flak fire will further reduce cohesion. Artillery units with low cohesion may not fire and the lower the cohesion rating the less effective the unit is in combat.

**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.

Cohesion, 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.

## 17. REINFORCEMENTS

The Allied player receives two reinforcement units during the game. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders on the night of the 22nd in the Heraklion sector and Lay Force on the evening of the 23rd near Spfakia.

## 18. UNITS



Headquarters



Parachute HQ



Infantry



Paratroops



Heavy weapons Coy



Parachute MG Coy



Engineers



Parachute Engineers



Anti-tank



Para Anti-tank



Artillery



Para Artillery

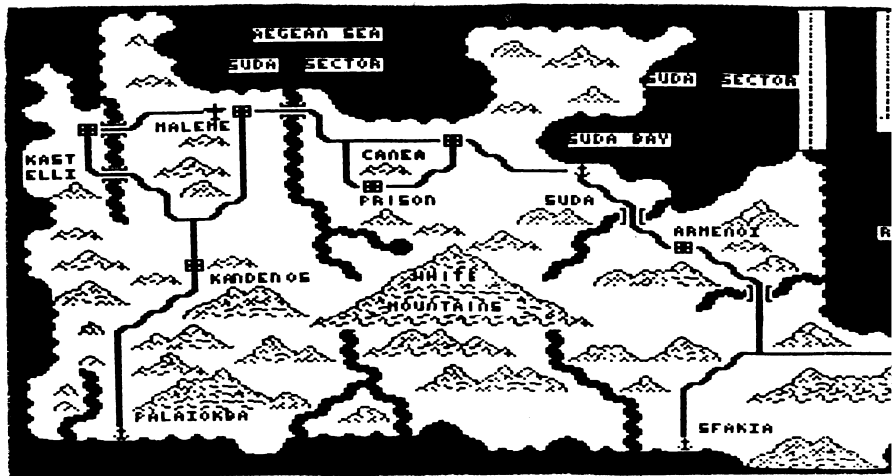


Flak Unit



Armoured Unit

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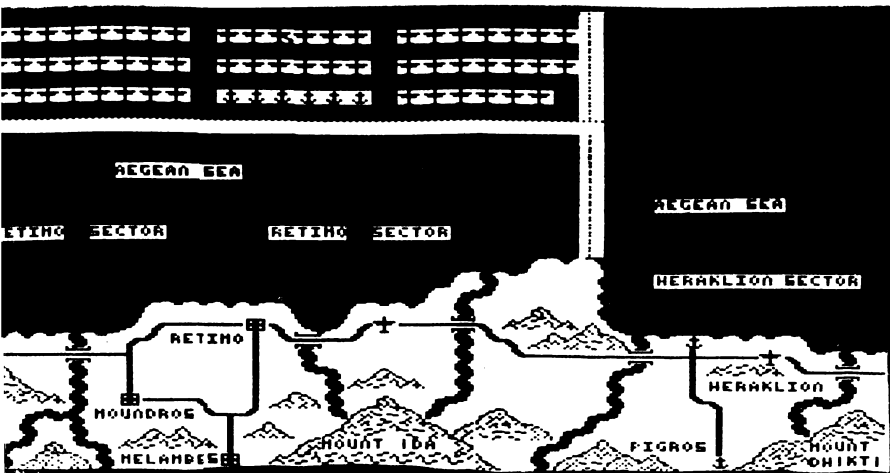


OPERATI

*See Page 9 for details of units*

# E 1941

## armjager












## ONS MAP

and Page 13 for terrain details.

German units are black, British units red, Australian and New Zealand units blue and Greek units green. Allied units face to the left, German units to the right.

Infantry:	General basic troops. Quality and strength varies considerably. German infantry can only reach Crete by sea or by being air lifted.
Heavy weapons:	Normally not as strong as infantry but get a 50% fire bonus due to better weapons.
Headquarters:	Same as infantry but less fire power (70% that of infantry).
Engineers:	Same as infantry except less fire power (80% that of infantry).
Artillery:	Weak in adjacent combat but may use indirect fire up to a range of four.
Anti-tank:	Again weak in adjacent combat but have indirect fire capability.
Flak Guns:	Weak units but have indirect fire capability. Also used for protection against air strikes and against air lifted and parachute dropped troops on arrival.
Armour:	Good attack strengths but generally weak in number. Allied tanks were relics from the desert campaign in Africa. German armour may only arrive by sea transport.
Paratroops:	These may consist of any of the above unit types except armour. They represent parachute and glider borne units and may be dropped on the island.

## 19. TERRAIN

Type	Symbol	Movement Cost	Cohesion Loss	Combat Losses	Colour
Road		1	3	+10%	Black
Bridge		1	3	+20%	Black
Town		1	5	-30%	Red
Port		1	5	-30%	Red
Airfield		1	2	-10%	Red
Clear		1	2	0%	Green
River		4	7	+50%	Blue
Low hills		3	5	-30%	Blue
High hills		4	6	-50%	White
Beach		4	2	+40%	Yellow

Parachute dropped units will lose cohesion points depending on the terrain they land on.

## 20. PLAYING HINTS

The German player has the initiative but it is essential that he captures an airfield quickly to bring in fresh troops. The choice of drop zones is critical. Beware of flak units and rough terrain since they will cripple your cohesion on landing. Make sure you recce potential drop zones and allow for wind drift.

Once enough forces have been landed move quickly to capture the other fields. It may be beneficial to drop some units to stop the Allies from evacuating from the Southern ports.

For the Allied player a good initial deployment is the best chance of success. The Germans are at their weakest just after landing and if a unit lands on one of yours there is a great chance of wiping it out for little cost. Once the enemy has landed there will be little time for adjusting your defenses since you will be under constant pressure.

Flak units are probably the most important units you have. Place them to disrupt enemy landings and also to protect your troops from the massed air power of the Luftwaffe. Make sure they are protected from ground attack since they are very weak in adjacent combat.

Many of your units are weak so do not squander them. Use the hold command to reduce casualties and form killer groups with your stronger units. Use artillery to maximum effect and attack any enemy artillery quickly before it reduces your status. Stop airfields from being captured and launch immediate counter attacks before reinforcements can be flown in.

Remember that each turn you can transport one unit by sea to reinforce another sector.

If a unit is weak it is better to evacuate it and gain three victory points, rather than allowing it to be destroyed by the Germans who then gain two points.

Both sides should protect their artillery since it is weak in adjacent combat. It is also better to attack with as many units as possible in order to keep casualties to a minimum. Keep an eye on the status of your units and use the hold command to increment morale and cohesion. Where possible, make use of terrain combat modifiers.

For a historical style game select convoys destroyed and wind drift on, and do not redeploy the Allied units. To make the game easier for the Germans, change these options.



## 21. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Crete has always had strategic significance in the Mediterranean especially since the advent of aircraft in warfare. In WWII both Allied and German Commands viewed the island as a potential bomber base. Allied aircraft could use the island to raid deep into the Balkans and Southern Europe (especially the Rumanian oilfields) whereas the Germans could attack Egypt, the Suez Canal and give support to their operations in North Africa.

Due to Greek neutrality Britain could not take advantage of Crete until Italy invaded Greece in October 1940. Plans were then put into operation to defend Crete for use as a naval refuelling base and Churchill believed Suda Bay could become the Scapa Flow of the Mediterranean. Work also began on five airstrips but construction was slow due to lack of manpower.

### The Defence

The failure of the Greek campaign resulted in 25,000 men of the 6th Australian and 2nd New Zealand Divisions being evacuated from Greece to Crete between the 25th and 29th April 1941. Most of these troops had lost all of their heavy equipment and supplies. An attack on Crete was expected but since there was insufficient transportation to evacuate them, it was decided that they should try to hold the island.

On 30th April Wavell appointed the New Zealander, General Freyberg, to take charge of the defence. Freyberg immediately set to work extracting whatever spare forces he could out of the Middle East command. Eventually he managed to equip all his infantry and even managed to acquire some tanks. The Germans continued to make it difficult to supply the island by making airstrikes on the convoys and docking facilities at Suda.

Freyberg ordered the 16 RAF fighters he had available to evacuate the island as he knew they would be insufficient in the event of an attack, and he would simply be risking their total destruction by keeping them there. He also asked for permission to destroy the airfields but the High Command would not allow this since they believed the island could be held.

The Allied plan was to divide into separate brigade groups and defend their own airfield and nearby beaches, with each brigade operating independently.

## **The German Plan**

The idea of an airborne invasion was encouraged by General Student, the German parachute forces commander. He wanted to prove the effectiveness of his force by siezing Crete quickly with an audacious plan called Operation Merkur. Hitler was impressed since it would enable his airforce to be available to support his Russian invasion with the minimum of delay.

Student originally intended to attack seven key targets but shortage of aircraft meant he had to reduce this to four – the three airfields and Suda. The paratroops would be dropped in two phases. The first at dawn on Maleme and Suda followed by the second wave attacking Heraklion and Retimo in the afternoon. Once an airfield was captured, units of the 5th Mountain Division would be flown in and a further force would be shipped to any suitable site on the island.

The Germans were also bringing some surprise weapons with them. The Light Gun 40 was a recoilless artillery piece which could be dropped in a glider or air lifted. It fired the same shell as the standard German Army 75mm gun to a range of 6800m compared to about 9500m for the standard gun.

To compliment the LG40 was the SdKfz 2 motorcycle tractor which could transport a gun with ammunition and crew at a speed of 65km/hr on a good surface.

## **The First Wave**

Early on the 20th May the first wave began its journey to Crete. Three glider detachments were to capture key bridges, AA guns and Hill 107 which commanded Maleme airfield. The rest of the troops were to drop further away, form up and then complete the capture of the airfield.

The airfield and AA gun landings went well but the bridge detail landed amongst Allied troops and suffered heavy losses before taking their objective.

The 3rd Battalion of the 3rd Regiment was scattered, with some men drowning in the sea but with most of them landing on Allied positions. At this time German troops were dropped armed only with a pistol and had to collect their weapons from containers. 400 out of the 600 strong force dropped were killed within the first 45 minutes of the fight as they searched for these containers.

The Germans found themselves in difficulties on all fronts. One company of the Sturm Regiment landed on the Akortiri Peninsula amongst the Northumberland Hussars and lost 108 men out of 136. Parachute Regiment 3 had a bad drop and landed amongst the 10th New Zealand Brigade and

three Greek Regiments, while others landed in the reservoir and were drowned.

## **The Second Wave**

The disaster that was happening on Crete was unknown to Student's Headquarters in Greece and the second wave prepared to depart. Due to refuelling problems and dust on the runway, the second wave was dispatched piecemeal. German planes also bombed prospective landing sites too early thus alerting the Allies as to where the drops were to be made.

Parachute Regiment 2 dropped near Retimo airfield but were scattered and pinned down. They had to be content with holding their ground and waiting for relief to come rather than seizing the airfield. Parachute Regiment 1 received a similar fate when it dropped on Heraklion. Both sides augmented their fire power by using captured equipment.

At the end of the first day's fighting the Germans were scattered and under extreme pressure and had suffered 1,800 casualties.

## **The Convoys**

Student was only now becoming aware of the situation in Crete. He thought that the best chance for success lay in the Maleme airfield so he diverted his first convoy towards the beaches near the airfield.

As they approached Maleme at 2300 hours on 20th May they were surprised by a Royal Naval cruiser squadron. The Germans were being transported in fishing vessels and were annihilated, despite a brave attempt by a lone Italian torpedo boat to cover them.

A second convoy was dispatched on the 22nd but it too met with another force of cruisers and withdrew to Greece under the protection of the Luftwaffe. This left the ground forces on Crete in the worst possible situation that paratroops can find themselves in; no relieving force with heavy weapons etc.

A major assault by the Luftwaffe on Royal Naval ships later resulted in the sinking of the cruisers Gloucester and Fiji, and two destroyers. In addition, the cruisers Naiad and Carlisle, and the battleships Warspite and Valiant were severely damaged.

## **The Tide Turns**

The night of 20th/21st of May was the critical point of the battle. Freyberg appeared to have over-estimated the condition of the German troops on the ground and did not press home attacks nor did he reinforce Maleme airfield.

Early the next morning disaster struck the Allies. The commander of the 22nd New Zealand Battalion gave the order to withdraw from Hill 107 thinking his forward units had been overrun. The Germans quickly took advantage and moved forward gaining control of the airfield.

In the early afternoon a Ju52 managed to land and drop off supplies. Soon after this German mountain troops were being ferried into the field and within a few hours the airfield was secured.

During the following night the last chance to save Crete was lost. The New Zealanders managed to assemble a force to counter attack and retrieve the airfield but their advance soon became bogged down by snipers from the remnants of the 3rd Parachute Battalion which had been destroyed on the first day.

On the 22nd the build up of fresh troops continued and on the 23rd the Germans began to advance. One group moved West to capture Kastelli and secured the airfield, another moved East along the coast, and a third cut across the mountains to outflank Allied positions.

The German advances were slowed down by the resistance of armed civilians who fought savagely and who mutilated any dead or wounded Germans in their path. Despite reprisals they continued to do this throughout the battle.

On the 24th the 100th Mountain Regiment supported by Stuka dive bombers broke through to paratroops who had been bottled up near Canea. On the 25th there was savage fighting around Galatas with ground being taken first by one side and then the other. The German strength and air power were too much however and on the 27th the decision was made to evacuate what troops they could.

## **The End**

The Australian and New Zealand troops made several savage counterattacks which fooled the Germans and allowed troops to start to move South to evacuation ports. The Germans were delayed by rearguard actions but they eventually reached their paratroops at Retimo and moved on to take Heraklion.

The Germans made the mistake of thinking that the Allies were retreating Eastwards, whereas they were actually moving South, particularly to the ports of Spakia, thus saving many Allied troops from death or capture.

## **Conclusions**

The last Allied troops on the island were surrendered on the 1st June. By this time 14,500 Allied troops had been evacuated. The Allies lost 1,742 killed, 1,737 wounded and 11,835 captured, along with an unknown number of Greek soldiers and civilians. Three cruisers and six destroyers were sunk and many naval units severely damaged.

The Germans lost about 6,000 men killed, with some units taking up to 70% casualties. Hitler was appalled by the losses to his paratroops and decreed that they should not be used again in a major airborne role. The elite paratroops spent the rest of the war fighting as light infantry, with the exception of a few small airborne operations.

It is easy to pass comment with hindsight, but Crete could have been held. The main problems were lack of communications and the unfamiliarity of the Allied commanders with paratroop techniques.

The Allied command overestimated the number of troops landed because they were widely dispersed. This should have given them the opportunity to wipe out the paratroops piecemeal. Instead they hesitated and let them reform and organise.

It seems the Allies did not appreciate that at this time the Germans had to have an airfield to resupply, since the ability to drop supplies to ground units had not yet been attempted. If Freyberg had gone ahead and blown the airfields then no German reinforcements could have arrived.

Three weeks after the island was taken, Hitler's invasion of Russia changed the war completely. He lost interest in North Africa and the Mediterranean and Crete became unimportant for the rest of the war.

## 22. NOTES

Crete is an interesting battle which could very easily have gone either way. Both sides made mistakes which cost many lives. The Germans were over confident and did not appreciate the Allied strength and resolve. The Allies did not blow the airfields and had to defend the beaches as well as the fields.

Both sides suffered from supply problems and made up for it by using captured supplies. Since both sides had the same problem, supply considerations have been ignored. The effects of armed civilians on German movement have also been neglected.

Operation Merkur was a dangerous and bold plan which only succeeded with luck and determination. Hopefully this game will recreate the pressures both sides were under during this battle.

Finally I would like to thank Dave Barlow and Chris Preece for assistance with historical research and play testing.

STEVE THOMAS

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War Maps:	Simon Goodenough

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Program designed and written by Steve Thomas

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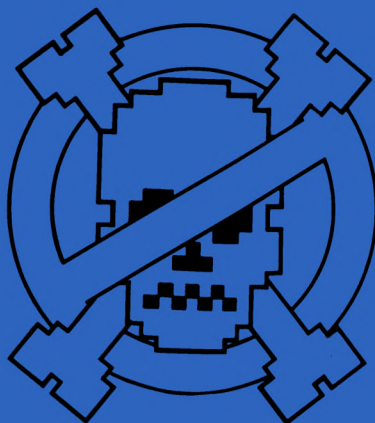
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