

Strafexpedition After-Action-Report, Scenario: "Last Stand on Monte Novegno"

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Playing *Strafexpedition* for the first time (but after reading the appropriate sections in the Austrian post-war General Staff work), I start with the little introductory scenario "**Last Stand on Monte Novegno**" solitary.

The set-up hexs are pre-determined by the scenario instructions except for the artillery. I placed the heavy and field artillery of both sides along the trails because they couldn't otherwise change a terrain level (see pic; the trenches are replaced with a red marker below the units). So, let's go with a frenetic "*Vivat Kaiser Franz Joseph!*"

1. **Reinforcement Phase:** none

2. **Command Phase:**

- a) Italians deduct 3 LP (2 LP remaining) for activating Ancona and Cagliari brigades. The former gets a second LP for artillery support.
- b) AH deduct 4 LP (3 LP remaining) for activating 58 KJ and 180 KJ each with up to 5 artillery units. Both AH and the Ancona HQ are put on the appropriate Brigade Display Box.

3. **Initiative Phase:**

- a) Italians: dr 1 + 2 LPs = 3
- b) AH: dr 3 + 3 LPs = 6

AH is Initiative player.

(Both side must re-roll if a tie should result. This re-roll is also modified by the expended LPs)

4. **Weather-Phase:** Overcast according to the Game Turn Track.

Bombardment Factors are halved on firing on target on level 5 or higher, LOS range reduced.

5. **Supply Phase:** all units are in supply (KJ units at Priafora peak cross a Crags hexside as their first hexside).

6. **Artillery Phase:** all artillery are on "fire" side.

7. **Event Phase:** none

8. **Initiative Player Action Phase:**

AH player places 58 KJ brigade marker on hex 1733 (= in supply hex). Four artillery units are activated (1 Heavy and 3 mountains), too. All units of 58 KJ brigade and the activated artillery units are within the 6 hex command range of 58 KJ HQ. All EZOC hex are negated by friendly units.

(All activated independent units are marked with an ACT marker. Artillery units are marked with an ACT marker if bombarding offensively. Note that Artillery units must be marked with an ACT if activated, even if not bombarding.)

A. Tactical Movement and Assault Declaration:

- aa) I and II/1 KJ in 1534 assault Clapier Alpini in 1435 paying all their MPs.
- bb) III/3 KJ and I/4 KJ in 1635 assault I/69 in 1535 paying 1 MP for entering clear terrain and +1 MP for level change upside (from level 6 to 7).
- cc) II/4 KJ (only, III/4 KJ stays in place protecting supply/command path) in 1636 moves to 1536 for 1 MP (clear terrain), +1 existing EZOC (from I/69). Immediate Infiltration Fire with 1 MG factor (one column shift for Trench 1, one column shifts for being on higher ground): dr 3 on "4-5 column" = * = dr 2 = D1 on II/4KJ (which now projects ZOC into 1436 hoping for infiltration fire against retreating I/69).

B. Offensive Bombardment:

All artillery units are bombarding Clapier Alpini in 1435 (spotted from adjacent friendly occupied hex 1534 [so the LOS reduction of overcast weather is ignored] and within range of all artillery units).

Bombardment Factors: 10 (hvy) + 3x4 (mountain) = 22 halved for overcast = 11, one column shift for Trench 1. dr 1 on "6-8" column = 1D1 on Alpini Clapier (reduced and gets 1 DP)

C. Defensive Fire:

aa) I/69 against assaulting III/3 KJ and I/4 KJ. MG Factor 1 shifted by one column for Trench 1 and one column for being on higher terrain: dr 2 on "4-5" column for a D1 (both assaulting units get each 1 DP).

bb) Alpini Clapier plus Alpini Matajur (adjacent to assaulting units) against assaulting I, II/1 KJ. MG Factor 4 plus both Italian artillery units (which are 6 hexs away from the target hex) with 9 Bombardment Factors reduced by 1/8 (for overcast) to 1 for a

total of 5. One column shift for Trench 1. dr 3 on "6-8" column = D1 (assaulting units get each 1 DP), the Italian artillery units are marked "Def.Fire".

D. Assault Resolution:

aa) I and II/1 KJ vs. Clapier Alpini. AH units enter 1435. 8 AH Combat Factors vs. 2 Italian Combat Factors = 4:1. One Column shift for Trench 1, three shifts for crossing a Crags hexside, no net morale shifts (both sides are morale 4).

dr 6 on "2:1 column" for D1 for attackers (both AH units get their second DP), 1D2R (Alpini unit is eliminated, the other results are thus ignored). Trench 1 is eliminated.

bb) III/3 KJ and I/4 KJ vs. I/69. AH units enter 1535. 8 AH Combat Factors vs. 3 Italian Combat Factors = 2,5:1. One Column shift for Trench 1, one shift for one terrain level assaulting upward (level 6 to 7), no net morale shifts (both sides are morale 4). dr 5 on "1,5:1 column" for D1 for attackers (both AH units get their second DP), D1R (I/69 gets one DP and retreats by priority (13.4.5 B) to hex 1436. Trench 1 is eliminated.

Immediate Infiltration Fire by II/4KJ (only) in hex 1536 with MG Factor of 2 (no column shift): dr 4 on "2-3 column" = no effect.

E-G. Counter-Assault Declaration:

The Italian command wants to re-conquer the just lost hex 1435 but the Alpini reserve battalions are three hex away! The remaining II//70 battalion alone is too weak.

H. Activation Completed: 58 KJ HQ marker is flipped.

I. Opponent Reaction:

Cagliari HQ marker is placed on hex 1134; dr 6 > 2 (Initiative Value) so Cagliari Brigade is not activated (the plan was to shift the Alpini one hex nearer to possible break-through hexes so enabling them to counter-attack).



The Battlefield



Situation at start 12 June 1916



Activation of 58 KJ Brigade finished

AH command presses forward now with its second brigade.

8. Initiative Player Action Phase:

AH player places 180 KJ brigade marker on hex 1632 (= in supply hex). Five artillery units are activated (3 Field and 2 mountains), too. All units of 180 KJ brigade and the activated artillery units are within the 6 hexs command range of 180 KJ HQ. All EZOC hexs are negated by friendly units.

A. Tactical Movement and Assault Declaration:

- aa) III/2 KJ in 1634 moves forward one hex to 1534 for 1 MP (clear) and +1 (from level 4 to 5).
- bb) III, IV/1 KJ in 1433 assault Matajur Alpini in 1434 paying 2 MPs (hex 1433 has three levels – I assume the centre is level 5) joined by I, II/2 KJ in 1533 paying all MPs for crossing Craggs. “Assault” marker atop all units.
- cc) I, II/1 KJ in 1432 assault I/70 in 1331 paying 1 MP for entering clear terrain and +1 MP for level change upside (from level 5 to 6). Put “Assault” marker atop units.

B. Offensive Bombardment: All artillery units are bombarding Matajur Alpini in 1434 (spotted from adjacent friendly occupied hex 1433 and target hex is within range of all artillery units). *I rotate artillery units which fired offensively by 90° for convenience.*

Bombardment Factors: 3x5 (Field) + 2x4 (Mountain) = 23 halved for overcast = 11.5 rounded to 11; one column shift for Trench 1. dr 2 on “6-8” column = D2 on Matajur.

C. Defensive Fire: aa) I/70 against assaulting I, II/1 KJ. MG Factor 1 shifted by one column for Trench 1 and one column for being on higher terrain: dr 1 on “4-5” column for a D2 (assaulting units get each 2 DP).

bb) Alpini Matajur plus 63 Regiment (all three battalions adjacent 1433) against assaulting III, IV/1 KJ. MG Factor 5, each one column shift for Trench 1 and firer on higher level: dr 1 on “9-11” column = 1D1T. III/1 KJ loses a step, III and IV/1 KJ get each 1 DP. T result is ignored. *[Man, two ones in row! That will be a hard day for the Tyrolean Kaiserjägers.]*

D. Assault Resolution: aa) Now, regarding 13.1.4 and 13.4.1 first sentence, the brigade commander splits the assault: From 1433 only the IV/1 KJ enters 1434 together with II/2 KJ climbing the Craggs from 1533 against the Matajur Alpini. 8 AH Combat Factors vs. 4 Italian Combat Factors = 2:1. One Column shift for Trench 1, one shift for one level upward (level 5 to 6) but no shifts for crossing a Craggs since not EVERY assaulting unit crosses them. Then two net morale shifts to the RIGHT (Alpini have currently only morale 3, fresh II/2KJ morale 5).

dr 6 (!) on “2:1” column for D1 for attackers (IV/1 KJ gets second DP, II/2 KJ the first DP), 1D2R for defenders (Alpini unit is reduced and suffers third and fourth DP just one below surrendering, then retreats to Cima Alta in hex 1334 regarding retreats priority 13.4.5 b). Trench 1 is eliminated, the Torre di Vaccaresse is captured.

bb) I, II/1 KJ vs. I/70. AH units enter 1331. 8 AH Combat Factors vs. 3 Italian Combat Factors = 2,5:1. One Column shift for Trench 1, one shift for one terrain level assaulting upward (level 5 to 6), one net morale shifts (Italians have morale 4, the Kaiserjägers currently only 3 due to deadly defender’s machine gun fire).

dr 1 (!!!) on “1:1” column for D1 for I/70, 1D1R for attackers (I/1 KJ is reduced, both units get their third DP and retreat back to their starting hex 1433.) The assault is repulsed bloodily.

E-G. Counter-Assault Declaration:

Again, the Italian command ponders about re-conquering the just lost Torre di Vaccaresse but declines.. This time the Alpini reserve battalions are in range but the shattered Matajur battalion hampers the commitment of both reserve battalions (stacking limit is two and the just retreated Alpini may counter-attack but can’t withdraw).

H. Activation Completed: 180 KJ HQ marker is flipped.

I. Opponent Reaction: no need, it’s time for Italy anyhow.



Activation 180 KJ Brigade finished

Although Italian command could be pleased that the AH offensive didn't achieve a break-through the enemy control of either hex 1434 or 1435 is at least a partial success for AH command (read: a draw) . So these critical hexs have to be recaptured on 12 June, otherwise the foe will reinforce his position.

9. Non-Initiative Player Action Phase:

Italian player places Ancona brigade marker on hex 1035 (= in supply hex). Both artillery units are activated together with shattered Matajur and Natisone Alpini battalions. All units of Ancona brigade and the activated independent units are within the 6 hex command range of Ancona HQ. All EZOC hex are negated by friendly units.

A. Tactical Movement and Assault Declaration:

aa) Matajur Alpini in 1334 is withdraw from the frontline back to Monte Novegno (hex 1235) for 1 MP (clear) and +1 exiting EZOC. Place an "Act" marker atop.

bb) The Alpini are replaced on Cimi Alta by II/70 from hex 1234 (paying 1 MP clear, +1 MP change level from 6 to 7) and has

order to attack hex 1435. Place “Assault” marker atop for 1 MP (MP cost for entering 1435).
cc) Natisone Alpini from hex 1134 has to support the assault and rushed forward to 1334 (entering 1234 for 1 MP, 1334 for 2 MP). Put “Assault” marker atop (+1 MP).
dd) II/69 in hex 1335 assaults adjacent hex 1435; “Assault” marker atop.
ee) III/69 from hex 1236 moves forward to hex 1335 joins the assault (paying 2 MP in total).

B. Offensive Bombardment:

All artillery units are bombarding I,II/3 KJ battalions in 1435 (target hex is under observation [by an adjacent hex] and within range of all artillery units).
Bombardment Factors: 5 (Field) + 4 (Mountain) = 9 halved for overcast = 4.5, rounded to 4 (no shifts): dr 5 on “4-5” column = no effect. All artillery are now “Def.Fire & Act”

C. Defensive Fire:

The Kaiserjäger split their MG fire each orders artillery support.

aa) I/3 KJ (only) against assaulting Alpini and II/70. MG Factor 3 plus artillery (all within 6 hexes) for 3 additional BF (10 Heavy, 2x5 Field, 4 Mountain = 24:8 for overcast, all marked with “Def Fire”) : dr 5 on “6-8” column = * = 2 = D1 (assaulting units get each 1 DP).

bb) II/3 KJ against assaulting II, III/69. MG Factor 3 plus artillery (all within 6 hexes) for 1 additional BF (2x4 Mountain = 8:8 for overcast, all marked with “Def Fire”) : dr 2 on “4-5” column = D1 (assaulting units get each 1 DP).

D. Assault Resolution:

Ancona brigade commander orders a two-fold assault: from 1334 only the Alpini enters 1435, joined by III/69 from 1335 against the Kaiserjäger.

6 Italian Combat Factors vs. 8 AH Combat Factors = 1:1.75 and one net morale shifts to the RIGHT (Alpini have currently morale 4, Kaiserjäger morale 3).

dr 2 on “1-1.5” column for D1 for defenders (Kaiserjäger get third DP), D2R for attackers (assaulting units suffer second and third DP, then retreat back to their starting hexes). Natisone Alpini gets “Act” marker atop.

E-G. **Counter-Assault Declaration:** none

H. **Activation Completed:** Ancona HQ marker is flipped.

I. **Opponent Reaction:** none

Italian command hesitates to commit the Cagliari brigade (actual only a half-brigade) and probably to sacrifice it in front of the expected heavy machine gun fire. So Italian command leaves it untouched for the next day.

10. **Non Activated Unit Movement:** none

11. Replacement and Rally Phase:

A. Matajur Alpini (in 1235) has now only 3 DP since it is in supply and not in EZOC. All other units are in EZOC.

B. I/64 (in 1232) which started the scenario already reduced is now at full strength. It is in supply and not in EZOC. Matajur Alpini could not replenished since a DP was already removed.

12. Victory Condition Check Phase:

No sudden death condition fulfilled, advance Game Turn Marker to 13th June 1916.



Activation of Ancona Brigade



Italian counter-attack



Both sides were worn out



Situation dawn of 12 June

13 June 1916

1. **Reinforcement Phase:** none

2. **Command Phase:**

Both sides run out of ammunitions...

a) Italians deduct 2 LP for activating Cagliari brigades with artillery support as counter-attack force. So Ancona brigade has the mission to hold.

b) AH deduct 3 LP for activating 58 KJ and 180 KJ. 180 KJ gets also support by up to 5 artillery units. HQs are put on the appropriate Brigade Display Box.

3. **Initiative Phase:**

a) Italians: $dr\ 4 + 2\ LPs = 6$

b) AH: $dr\ 5 + 3\ LPs = 8$

AH is Initiative player.

(Should one side win the Initiative die roll it MUST activate a brigade at least a brigade before to "Pass")

4. **Weather-Phase:** Clear according to the Game Turn Track.

5. **Supply Phase:** all units are in supply (KJ units at 1434 and 1435 cross a Crag hexside as their first hexside).

6. **Artillery Phase:** all artillery are on "fire" side.

7. **Event Phase:** none

8. **Initiative Player Action Phase:**

AH command plans to occupy more victory hex, especially the Cima Alta in hex 1334 and the Chalet hex (1333). Despite the troops need some rest the armchair generals in Bozen decide to renew the attack.

AH player places 180 KJ brigade marker on hex 1633 (= in supply hex) and activates five artillery units (1 Heavy, 3 Field and 1 Mountain), too. All units of 180 KJ brigade and the activated artillery units are within the 6 hex command range of 180 KJ HQ. All EZOC hex are negated by friendly units.

A. Tactical Movement and Assault Declaration:

aa) Shattered III/1 KJ battalion in 1433 is exchanged by I/2 KJ in hex 1533 which prepares for an attack on the two Italian battalions of 63rd Regiment of Cagliari Brigade in the Chalet hex (paying 2 MP for 1433 and 2 MP for entering 1333). Place "Assault" marker atop.

bb) The attack is supported by III/2 KJ from battalion hex 1534 (paying 1 MP for 1533, 2 MP for 1433 and 2 MP for 1333). Place "Assault" marker atop.

cc) The two disrupted front-line Kaiserjäger battalions (II/2 KJ and IV/1 KJ in hex 1434) have to join attack and to distract the enemy fire. Place "Assault" marker atop.

B. Offensive Bombardment:

At dawn a massive annihilation fire from dozens of guns are roaring through the bright air. Target hex 1333 is under observation [by an adjacent hex] and within range of all artillery units.

Bombardment Factors: $10\ (Heavy) + 3 \times 5\ (Field) + 4\ (Mountain) = 29$, one column shift for Trench 1: $dr\ 2$ on "21-25" column = D3 on each II, III/63. Firing artillery are now "Act".

C. Defensive Fire:

aa) From the Monte Cogoio I/63 fires downhill with support fire of a Mountain Battery on I, III/1KJ. MG Factor 1 plus artillery (within 6 hexes) for 1 additional BF (4:4; arty is marked with "Def Fire"), two column shifts for Trench 1 and downhill fire: $dr\ 1$ on "6-8" column = 1D1 (assaulting units get each 1 DP, I/1 KJ is reduced). *Bravissimo!*

bb) II,III/63 against assaulting Kaiserjägers battalions in 1434. MG Factor 2 (no artillery support – it gives no better column here) with one column shift for Trench 1: $dr\ 3$ on "4-5" column = * = $dr\ 1 = D1$ (II/2 KJ gets its second DP, IV/1 KJ its third). As before the Italian MG gunners are excellent.

D. Assault Resolution:

The Kaiserjägers from 1433 attack uphill with III/2 KJ in first-line and supported by II/2 KJ battalion from 1434.

7 AH Combat Factors vs. 6 Italian Combat Factors = 1:1, one column for Trench 1, one column for attacking from level 5 to 6, three net morale shifts to the RIGHT (Italians have currently morale 1, III/2 KJ morale 4).
dr 6 *this time Lady Luck rolls for AH!!* on “1.5:1” column for D1 for attackers (III/2 KJ gets second DP, II/2 KJ the third), D2R for attackers (assaulting units fourth DP). Both Italian battalions were so much suppressed and confused by the preceding gunfire that they surrendered in the melee. The chalet is captured! Trench 1 removed.

E. Counter-Assault Declaration:

The Italian command orders Alpini battalion Cividale (in 1134 – 2 hex away from lost hex in 1334) and brigade reserve battalion I/64 (in 1232 – also within 2-hex-range) to an immediately counter-assault. The main advantage of a counter-assault is that the superior AH artillery could not support the defenders and – if the counter-assault retakes the hex – the trenches will be restored.

aa) Movement of Cividale bn: 1234 (1 MP) & entering 1334 for +1 MP (Assault marker atop).

bb) Movement of I/64 bn: 1235 (2 MP) & entering 1334 for +1 MP (Assault marker atop).

F. Counter-Assault Defensive Fire:

The leader of the AH assault group orders to concentrate the machine gun fire solely against the Alpini. MG Factor 4, no column shifts: dr 5 on “4-5” column = a miss - da...jams!

G. Counter-Assault Resolution:

7 Italian Combat Factors vs. 7 AH Combat Factors = 1:1, two net morale shifts to the RIGHT (Alpinis have morale 5, III/2 KJ have currently morale 3).

dr 5 on “2:1” column for D1 for both attacking battalions, D2R for defenders (III/2 KJ gets third and fourth DP, II/2 KJ the fourth and fifth). The counter-attack was too much for the PAUSENLOS fighting II/2 KJ: they surrendered to the Alpini while the 3rd Battalion was pushed back to hex 1434. The Chalet is in Italian hand again! Trench 1 restored, Cividale gets ACT marker.

H. Activation Completed: 180 KJ HQ marker is flipped.

I. Opponent Reaction: none

8. Initiative Player Action Phase:

AH player places 58 KJ brigade marker on hex 1634 (= in supply hex) All brigade units are within the 6 hex command range of 180 KJ HQ. All EZOC hex are negated by friendly units. There is no artillery support this time and reserve battalion IV/4 KJ in 1634 could not reach the assembly area against the Cima Alta in 1334. So brigade command goes for a better position for an upcoming offensive.

A. Tactical Movement and Assault Declaration:

aa) Shattered I, II/3 KJ in 1435 are withdrawn to hex 1534 (all MP across Crags).

bb) The front-line is now occupied by reserve battalion III/4 KJ in 1636 (enter 1535 for 2 MPs, enter 1435 (1 MP and +1 for exiting EZOC from I/69 in 1436).

Infiltration Fire with MG Factor 1: dr 5 on “1” column (no shift) = no effect.

cc) III/3 KJ is also withdrawn back from Monte Giove (1535) to hex 1635.

dd) Reserve battalion IV/4 KJ moves forward from hex 1634 to Monte Giove (paying 2 MP for 1534, 2 MP for 1535) and for 1 MP (for 1436) place an “Assault” marker atop.

ee) II/4 KJ entering 1436. Place an “Assault” marker atop.

B. Offensive Bombardment: none

C. Defensive Fire: I/69 fires with support fire of a Field Battery on IV/4 KJ (hex 1535). MG Factor 1 plus artillery (within 6 hexes) for 1 additional BF (5:4; arty is marked with “Def Fire”): dr 5 on “2-3” column = no effect. This time the famous Italian MG gunners fail.

D. Assault Resolution: 8 AH Combat Factors vs. 3 Italian Combat Factors = 2.5:1, two net morale shifts to the RIGHT (Italians have currently morale 3, IV/4 KJ morale 5).

dr 1 *arrgh* on “3.5:1” column for 1D1 for attackers (II/4 KJ gets second DP and is reduced, IV/4 KJ has now one DP), 1D1R for I/69 (second DP and reduced).

Although the Kaiserjäger suffered surprisingly heavy losses the brave Italians retreated to empty hex 1336.

H. **Activation Completed:** 58 KJ HQ marker is flipped.

I. **Opponent Reaction:** none

9. **Non-Initiative Player Action Phase:**

The Italian command has only the Cagliari brigade combat ready. Most of its battalions were gone, so not much is to do but both artillery batteries are activated.

A. **Tactical Movement and Assault Declaration:** none

B. **Offensive Bombardment:** The Italian artillery fire on the Torre di Vaccaresse (hex 1434) against worn out III/2 KJ and IV/1 KJ (both have 3 DP). Target hex is under observation [by an adjacent hex] and within range of all artillery units. Bombardment Factors: 5 (Field) + 4 (Mountain) = 9; dr 6 on “9-11” column = no effect, firing artillery are now “Act/Def.Fire”. The Italian gunners were obviously too exhausted.

10. **Non Activated Unit Movement Phase:**

A. Initiative Player: none

B. Non-Initiative Player: none

11. **Replacement and Rally Phase:**

Alpini Battalion Matajur now 2 DP, III/3 KJ and I/4 KJ now 1 DP, I and II/3 KJ now 2 DP.

III/1 KJ (180 KJ Bde.) now full-strength.

Remove Brigade HQ and markers.

12. **Victory Condition Check Phase:**

Italy controls Monte Novegno, AH controls 1434 and 1435. So the scenario ends in a draw.

Die Lage am 12. Juni 1916

1 : 200.000

0 1 2 3 4 5 10 15 km



Situation after devastating AH bombardment



The Chalet is under Austrian control!



End of Activation of 180 KJ Bde



Attack of 58 KJ Bde



End of Activation of 58 KJ Bde



Situation dawn 13 June



Historical Situation in front of AH 8th ID 12th June 1916