

Commonwealth and Axis for Operation Crusader, Nov 1941

Commonwealth Forces

Infantry Battalion organisation:-

Head Quarters Element

x1 Commander, 8A-40
x1 Carrier, 8A-16

Manoeuvre Elements

Mortar Platoon with:-

x3 Mortars 3", 8A-46
carried into action as:-
x3 Truck 15 cwt, 8A-27

Carrier Platoon with:-

x1 Commander, 8A-40
x1 Mortar 2", 8A-45
x1 Boys ATR, 8A-39
x3 Bren LMG, 8A-43
carried into action as:-
x6 Carrier, 8A-16

Pioneer Platoon with:-

x2 Assault Pioneer, 8A-41
carried into action as:-
x1 Lorry 3 ton 8A-28

x4 Infantry Companies, each with:-

x1 Commander, 8A-40
x1 Mortar 2", 8A-45
x3 Boys ATR, 8A-39
x6 Infantry, 8A-39

NOTE Indian battalions would replace Carrier, 8A-16 with Wheeled Carrier, 8A-25.

Attachment to British Infantry Battalions only:-

Anti-tank troop

x4 2 pdr anti-tank gun, 8A-33
carried into action as:-
x4 portee 8A-30

Attachment to Indian Infantry Battalions only:-

Anti-tank troop

x3 37mm anti-tank gun, 8A-34
carried into action as:-
x3 portee 8A-30

XIII Corps infantry was about 52% New Zealanders (experienced) with 32% Indian and 16% British (both trained).

Indian brigades had two Indian and one British battalion.

Motor Battalion organisation:-

Head Quarters Element

x1 Commander, 8A-40
x1 Carrier, 8A-16

Manoeuvre Elements

x4 Carrier Platoons each with:-

x1 Commander, 8A-40
x1 Boys ATR, 8A-39
x2 Bren LMG, 8A-43
carried into action as:-
x4 Carrier, 8A-16

x4 Machine Gun Platoons each with:-

x2 Vickers MMG 8A-44
carried into action as:-
x2 Truck 15 cwt, 8A-27

x4 Anti-tank Gun Platoons each with:-

x2 ATG 2pdr, 8A-33
carried into action as:-
x2 Portee 2 pdr, 8A-30

x4 Infantry Companies, each with:-

x1 Commander, 8A-40
x1 Mortar 3", 8A-46
x3 Boys ATR, 8A-39
x6 Infantry, 8A-39
carried into action as:-
x6 Truck 15 cwt, 8A-27

NOTE Only British Motor Battalions would have had an integral Anti-tank Gun Platoon; many that did were under strength. Commonwealth Battalions had none.

Attachment to South African & New Zealand Infantry Battalions only:-

Anti-tank troop

x3 2 pdr anti-tank gun, 8A-33
carried into action as:-
x3 portee 8A-30
x1 18 pdr gun (prototype card) BR-P27
x1 15 cwt tuck 8A-27

XIII Corps' Infantry Tank Regiments were:-

1st Army Tank Brigade Head Quarters

x1 A13 Cruiser command tank 8A-05

Head Quarters Element for 8 RTR:-

x1 Valentine command tank 8A-09

Manoeuvre Elements (3), 8 RTR

x3 Squadrons, each with:-

x1 Matilda Mk II CS command tank 8A-08
x5 Valentine infantry tank 8A-09

Head Quarters Element for 44 RTR:-

x1 Matilda Mk II command tank 8A-08

Manoeuvre Elements (1), 44 RTR

x2 Squadrons, each with:-

x1 Mk VIb command tank 8A-01
OR
x1 Mk VIc command tank 8A-01

x1 Matilda Mk II CS tank 8A-08
x4 Matilda Mk II infantry tank 8A-08

Head Quarters Element for 42 RTR:-

x1 Matilda Mk II command tank 8A-08

Manoeuvre Elements (2), 42 RTR

x3 Squadrons, each with:-

x1 Mk VIb command tank 8A-01
OR
x1 Mk VIc command tank 8A-01

x1 Matilda Mk II CS tank 8A-08
x4 Matilda Mk II infantry tank 8A-08

NOTE! there were NO armoured car recce squadrons in XIII Corps

XXX Corps contained 7th Armoured Division (trained):-

Divisional Head Quarters

x1 Crusader Mk I command tank 8A-06
x2 A9 Cruisers 8A-03

4 Armoured Brigade Head Quarters

x3 M3 Stuart command tank 8A-02

Head Quarters Element for each Regt:-

x1 M3 Stuart command tank 8A-02

**Manoeuvre Elements for all three Regt:-
8 Hussars, 3 RTR & 5 RTR**

x3 Squadrons, each with:-
x1 M3 Stuart command tank 8A-02
x6 M3 Stuart tank 8A-02

7 Armoured Brigade Head Quarters

x1 A9 CS command tank 8A-03
x2 A10 tanks 8A-04

Head Quarters Element for 7 Hussars:-

x1 A10 command tank 8A-04

Manoeuvre Elements for 7 Hussars:-

1st Squadron, with:-

x1 A10 command tank 8A-04
x5 A10 tank 8A-04

2nd Squadron, with:-

x1 A13 command tank 8A-05
x4 A13 tank 8A-05

3rd Squadron, with:-

x1 Crusader Mk I command tank 8A-06
x6 Crusader Mk I tank 8A-06

Head Quarters Element for 2 RTR:-

x1 A13 command tank 8A-05

Manoeuvre Elements for 2 RTR:-

x3 Squadrons, each with:-

x1 A13 CS command tank 8A-05
x6 A13 tank 8A-05

Head Quarters Element for 6 RTR:-

x1 Crusader Mk I command tank 8A-06

Manoeuvre Elements for 6 RTR:-

x3 Squadrons, each with:-

x1 Crusader CS command tank 8A-06
x6 Crusader Mk I tank 8A-06

22 Armoured Brigade Head Quarters

x3 Crusader Mk I command tank 8A-06

Head Quarters Element for each Regt:-

x1 Crusader Mk I command tank 8A-06

Manoeuvre Elements for all three Regt:-

3 County of London,

4 City of London,

2 Royal Gloucestershire Hussars

x3 Squadrons, each with:-

x1 Crusader CS command tank 8A-06

x6 Crusader Mk I tank 8A-06

NOTE The Crusaders were notorious for mechanical breakdowns and the early cruisers were worn out – this dramatically reduced the number of tanks available for combat each day, do not field them at establishment strengths!

XXX Corps infantry was mainly South African (trained – good troops, but led into their first combat very cautiously by their commanders) plus about half a dozen British Motor Battalions with the armour (trained).

Attachments

Armoured car recce companies in XXX Corps were 90% South African with Mk II Marmon-Herringtons (8A-20). There was just one British recce unit, the 11 Hussars with Humber Mk II (8A-22), as part of 22 Armoured Brigade.

Each **Manoeuvre Element** had a command armoured car plus x6 armoured cars

Artillery Attachments

25pdr RA Field Regiment with:-

x3 Field batteries each with:-

x1 Forward Observer, 8A-42
x1 Daimler Scout Car, 8A-17 as transport.
x4 25 pdr Gun, 8A-36
x4 Morris C8 Quad, 8A-29 as towing
vehicles.

4.5" RA Medium Regiment with:-

x2 Medium batteries each with:-

x1 Forward Observer, 8A-42
x1 Daimler Scout Car, 8A-17 as transport.
4 x 4.5" guns, using a large template @ 0/+1

Note Only available to organisations containing either South African or Indian infantry (not New Zealanders).

NOTE Field batteries can be on-table in an anti-tank role, but only if the off table indirect fire support role is sacrificed to allow it

Axis Forces

Italian Infantry Battalion organisation:-

Head Quarters Element

x1 Commander, IT-26
x1 Fiat 508, IT-16

Manoeuvre Elements

Mortar Platoon with:-

x3 Mortars 81mm, IT-33
carried into action as:-
x3 Truck Fiat AS 37, IT-17

Scout Platoon with:-

x1 Commander, IT-26
x1 Rifle Infantry, IT-24
x3 Breda LMG, IT-29

x2 Assault Companies, each with:-

x1 Commander, IT-26
x6 Rifle Infantry, IT-24
x3 Breda LMG, IT-29
x1 Breda MMG, IT-30
x1 65/17 Infantry gun IT-21
x1 Truck Fiat AS 37, IT-17

x1 Reserve Company, with:-

x1 Commander, IT-26
x6 Rifle Infantry, IT-24
x3 Breda LMG, IT-29
x1 Breda MMG, IT-30
x2 47/32 Anti-tank gun IT-21
x2 Truck Fiat AS 37, IT-17

Attached:-

Anti-aircraft Battery organisation:-

x2 90mm Autocannone IT-10

Artillery Attachments

75mm Light Battalion organisation:-

x3 Field batteries each with:-

x1 Forward Observer, IT-27
x1 Fiat 508, IT-16
x2 75/27 Gun, IT-20
x2 AS 37 truck IT-17 as towing
vehicles.

100 mm Howitzer Battalion organisation:-

x3 Field batteries each with:-

x1 Forward Observer, IT-27
x1 Fiat 508, IT-16
x2 100/17 Howitzer, -1V, OTGsV Large Template

Italian Bersaglieri Btn organisation:-

Head Quarters Element

x1 Commander, IT-26
x1 Fiat 508, IT-16

Manoeuvre Elements

Motorcycle Scout Platoon with:-

x1 Commander, IT-26
x3 Bersaglieri IT-25
x4 Motorcycle, IT-15

Anti-tank gun Platoon with:-

x4 47/32 Anti-tank gun IT-21
x4 Prime mover TL 37, IT-17

x2 Rifle Companies, each with:-

x1 Commander, IT-26
x1 Fiat 508, IT-16
x1 20mm A/T rifle IT-31
x1 Breda MMG, IT-30
x8 Bersaglieri IT-25
x5 Truck Fiat AS 37, IT-17

Medium Armoured Battalion organisation:-

Head Quarters Element

x1 M13/40 Command, IT-05

Manoeuvre Elements

x3 Medium Tank Companies, each with:-

x1 M13/40 Command IT05
x5 M13/40 IT05

In November 1941, Ariete had 146 tanks in three battalions, all M13/40, The L3/35 tankettes were history!

German Panzer Grenadier Battalion:-

Head Quarters Element

x1 Commander, DAK-47
x1 Horsch 830B, DAK-32

Manoeuvre Elements

Mortar Platoon with:-

x3 8cm Medium Mortars, DAK-54
x1 Opel Blitz Medium Truck, DAK-34

Gun Platoon with:-

x1 7.5cm IelG18 L/12 gun DAK-338
x1 Krupp Protze Light Truck, DAK-33

Anti-tank Platoon with:-

x1 3.7cm Pak 36 Antitank Gun, DAK-36
x1 Krupp Protze Light Truck, DAK-33
In process of being replaced by:-
x1 5.0cm Pak 38 DAK-37
x1 Horsch 830B, DAK-32

Pioneer Platoon with:-

x2 Pioniere DAK-48
x2 Krupp Protze Light Truck, DAK-33

x3 Motorized Companies, with:-

x1 Commander, DAK-47
x3 Light Machine Gun, DAK-51
x2 Heavy Machine Gun, DAK-52
x6 Infantry, DAK-46

x6 SdKfz 251/1 ,DAK-19
for first company only, then:-
x6 Krupp Protze Light Truck, DAK-33
or
x4 Opel Blitz Medium Truck, DAK-34
or
x6 British 15 cwt truck 8A-27

German Infantry Battalion:-

Head Quarters Element

x1 Commander, DAK-47
x1 Horsch 830B, DAK-32
x3 Infantry, DAK-30
[not for combat, these are x3 Motorcycle, for communication, so they can be ignored]

Manoeuvre Elements

Mortar Platoon with:-

x3 8cm Medium Mortars, DAK-54
x1 Opel Blitz Medium Truck, DAK-34

x 3 Machine Gun Platoons each with:-

x2 Heavy Machine Guns, DAK-52
x1 Krupp Protze Light Truck, DAK-33

x3 Motorized Companies, with:-

x1 Commander, DAK-47
x3 Light Machine Gun, DAK-51
x1 Heavy Machine Gun, DAK-52
x1 5cm Mortar, DAK-53
x6 Infantry, DAK-46

x6 Krupp Protze Light Truck, DAK-33
or
x4 Opel Blitz Medium Truck, DAK-34
or
x6 British 15 cwt truck 8A-27

Attached:-

Pioniere Company with:-

x1 Commander, DAK-47
x9 Pioniere DAK-48

Carried into action as:-

x1 SdKfz251 halftrack DAK-19
plus
x4 Krupp Protze Light Truck, DAK-33

Any combination of the above trucks may be used as DAK was always notoriously short of transport and used many captured vehicles. After Gazala probably over 50% was ex British!
Shortages meant that the Gun Platoons were not always present.

Artillery Attachments

Howitzer Battery organisation:-

x3 Field batteries each with:-

x1 Forward Observer, DAK-48
x1 Horsch 830B, DAK-32

X2 10.5 cm IefFH 18 DAK-45

Heavy Battery organisation:-

X2 Heavy batteries each with:-

x1 Forward Observer, DAK-48
x1 Horsch 830B, DAK-32

X2 15 cm sIG33 L/11 DAK-42

German Machine Gun Battalion:-

Head Quarters Element

x1 Commander,	DAK-47
x1 Horsch 830B,	DAK-32

Manoeuvre Elements

Mortar Platoon with:-

x3 8cm Medium Mortars,	DAK-54
x1 Opel Blitz Medium Truck,	DAK-34

Anti-tank Platoon with:-

x1 3.7cm Pak 36 Antitank Gun,	DAK-36
x1 Krupp Protze Light Truck,	DAK-33
In process of being replaced by:-	
x1 5.0cm Pak 38	DAK-37
x1 Horsch 830B,	DAK-32

x3 Machine Gun Companies, with:-

x1 Commander,	DAK-47
x1 Infantry with PzB 39,	DAK-46
x1 5cm Mortar,	DAK-53
x5 Heavy Machine Gun,	DAK-52

x7 Krupp Protze Light Truck,	DAK-33
or	
x4 Opel Blitz Medium Truck,	DAK-34
or	
x7 British 15 cwt truck	8A-27

The usual mixed combination of the above trucks may be used as DAK was always notoriously short of transport and used many captured vehicles.

Panzer Battalion organisation:-

Head Quarters Element

x1 PzBefWgIII command tank	DAK-18
x2 PzIIF	DAK-02

Manoeuvre Elements

x2 Light Panzer Companies, each with:-

x1 PzIIIG or IIIH Command	DAK-03 or DAK-04
x6 PzIIIG or PzIIIH mixed	DAK-03 or DAK-04
x2 PzIIF	DAK-02

x1 Medium Panzer Company, with:-

x1 PzIVD or IVE Command	DAK-07 or DAK-08
x2 PzIVD or IVE mixed	DAK-07 or DAK-08
x2 PzIIF	DAK-02

Panzer IV were scarce in the Desert and the quantity available rarely reached double figures in a battalion.

On 18 November 1941, 5th Panzer had 34 PzII, 58 PzIII & 17 PzIV in two battalions
8th Panzer had 38 PzII, 76 PzIII & 21 PzIV in two battalions on the same date.

Attachments:-

Panzerjager Coy

x3 3.7cm Pak 36 Antitank Gun,	DAK-36
x3 Krupp Protze Light Truck,	DAK-33

plus/or

x3 5.0cm Pak 38 Antitank Gun,	DAK-37
x3 SdKfz10 halftrack,	DAK-32

plus/or

x3 PzJag IB,	DAK-12
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plus

x2 8.8cm FlaK 36	DAK-44
x2 SdKfz7 halftrack,	DAK-29