

Commonwealth and Axis for Gazala, May 1942

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 Carrier, 8A-16 or
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

Anti-tank Gun Platoon with:-

x4 ATG 2pdr, 8A-33
carried into action as:-
x4 Portee 2 pdr, 8A-30

x4 Infantry Companies, each with:-

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

NOTE Only British battalions would have had an Anti-tank Gun Platoon; many that did were under strength. Commonwealth Battalions seem to have had none. Indian battalions would replace Carrier, 8A-16 with Wheeled Carrier, 8A-25.

XIII Corps' Infantry Tank Regiments were:-

Head Quarters Element for 44 & 4 RTR

x1 Valentine command tank 8A-09
x1 Valentine infantry tank 8A-09

Manoeuvre Elements 44 & 4 RTR

x3 Squadrons, each with:-

x1 Valentine command tank 8A-09
x1 Matilda Mk II CS tank 8A-08
x6 Valentine infantry tank 8A-09

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 Carrier, 8A-16

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 Some Motor Battalions were in the process of exchanging their 2pdr ATG for 6pdrs, these were very much in the minority and training on the new guns was not complete. Only 112 x 6pdrs were on strength by 26/05/42.

Head Quarters Element for 42 & 7 RTR

x1 Matilda Mk II command tank 8A-08
x1 Matilda Mk II infantry tank 8A-08

Manoeuvre Elements, 42 & 7 RTR

x3 Squadrons, each with:-

x1 Matilda Mk II command tank 8A-08
x1 Matilda Mk II CS tank 8A-08
x6 Matilda Mk II infantry tank 8A-08

Organisations for Gazala, May 1942 - continued

NOTE There were now armoured car recce squadrons in XIII Corps. All were South African with Mk II or Mk III Marmon-Herringtons

Manoeuvre Element

Recce Squadron with:-

x1 Mk II or Mk III MH command A/C (8A-20).
x6 Mk II or Mk III MH armoured car (8A-20).

XXX Corps contained 1st & 7th Armoured Divisions

1st Armoured Division Head Quarters

x1 Crusader Mk II command tank 8A-06
x3 Crusader Mk II tank 8A-06

2nd Armoured Brigade Head Quarters

x1 Crusader Mk II command tank 8A-06
x3 Crusader Mk II tank 8A-06

Head Quarters Element for each Regt:-

x1 Crusader Mk II command tank 8A-06
x1 Crusader Mk II tank 8A-06

Manoeuvre Elements for all three Regt

x2 Squadrons, each with:-

x1 Crusader Mk II command tank 8A-06
x9 Crusader Mk II tank 8A-06

x1 Squadron with:-

x1 Grant Mk I command tank 8A-12
x5 Grant Mk I tank 8A-12

7th Armoured Division Head Quarters

x1 Stuart command tank 8A-02
x3 Stuart Mk II tank 8A-02

4th Armoured Brigade Head Quarters

x1 Grant Mk I command tank 8A-12
x1 Grant Mk I tank 8A-12
x2 Stuart Mk II tank 8A-02

Head Quarters Element for each Regt:-

x1 Grant Mk I command tank 8A-12
x1 Grant Mk I tank 8A-12

Manoeuvre Elements for all three Regt

x2 Squadrons, each with:-

x1 Grant Mk I command tank 8A-12
x5 Grant Mk I tank 8A-12

x1 Squadron with:-

x1 Stuart command tank 8A-02
x9 Stuart Mk II tank 8A-02

22nd Armoured Brigade Head Quarters

x1 Crusader Mk II command tank 8A-06
x3 Crusader Mk II tank 8A-06

Head Quarters Element for each Regt:-

x1 Crusader Mk II command tank 8A-06
x1 Crusader Mk II tank 8A-06

Manoeuvre Elements for all three Regt

x2 Squadrons, each with:-

x1 Crusader Mk II command tank 8A-06
x9 Crusader Mk II tank 8A-06

x1 Squadron with:-

x1 Grant Mk I command tank 8A-12
x5 Grant Mk I tank 8A-12

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

Attachments Armoured car recce companies in XXX Corps were mainly equipped with Mk II or Mk III Marmon-Herringtons; there was just one squadron with Mk II Humbers.

Manoeuvre Element

Recce Squadron with:-

x1 M Mk II or Mk III MH command A/C (8A-20).
x6 Mk II or Mk III MH armoured car (8A-20).

or just the one Recce Squadron with:-

x1 Humber Mk II command A/C (8A-22).
x6 Humber Mk II armoured car (8A-22).

Organisations for Gazala, May 1942 - continued

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.	

x1 Anti-tank Gun battery attached with:-

x8 ATG 2pdr,	8A-33
carried into action as:-	
x8 Portee 2 pdr,	8A-30

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 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

Anti-tank Gun batteries within the Armoured Divisions were in the process of exchanging their 2pdr ATG for 6pdrs, but training on the new guns was not complete.

x1 Anti-tank Gun battery with:-

x8 ATG 6pdr,	8A-35
carried into action as:-	
x8 Portee 6 pdr,	8A-31

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

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

Attached:-

Anti-aircraft Battery (with Italian crews)

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

Organisations for Gazala, May 1942 - continued

Medium Armoured Battalion organisation:-

Head Quarters Element

x1 M14/41 Command, IT-05

Manoeuvre Elements

x3 Medium Tank Companies, each with:-

x1 M14/41 Command IT05

x7 M14/41 IT05

In January 1942, Ariete had 228 tanks in three battalions, nearly all M14/41, with a few M13/40 remaining. Littorio had 90 M14/41 in two battalions

Attached:-

Semovente Battery organisation:-

x1 M13/40 Command IT06

x4 Semovente 75/18 IT08

In January 1942, Ariete had just 24 Semovente on strength in three batteries.

Armoured Car Regiment organisation:-

Head Quarters Element

x1 L6 Command, IT-03

Manoeuvre Elements

x2 Light Tank Companies, each with:-

x1 L6 Command, IT-03

x7 L6 Tank, IT-03

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, 0TGsV Large Template

Organisations for Gazala, May 1942 - continued

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 5.0cm Pak 38 DAK-37
x1 Horsch 830B, DAK-32

about 25% were still only equipped with:-

x1 3.7cm Pak 36 Antitank Gun, DAK-36
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 Schutzen 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!

Some Panzer Grenadier Battalions dispensed with their Mortar Platoons and allocated the 8cm mortars (DAK-54) between the rifle companies.

Shortages also 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

Organisations for Gazala, May 1942 - continued

A 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 PzIIIH Command	DAK-04
x6 PzIIIH	DAK-04
x2 PzIIF	DAK-02

x1 Medium Panzer Company, with:-

x1 Pz IVE Command	DAK-08
x2 Pz IVE	DAK-08
x2 PzIIF	DAK-02

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

Panzer III Specials were even rarer, just 18 in total had been made available on 25 May 1942 DAK-05

On 25 May 1942, 5th Panzer had 29 PzII, 107 PzIII (plus 15 x PzIII specials with 5cm L60 guns) & 19 PzIV in two battalions

8th Panzer had 29 PzII, 131 PzIII (plus just 3 x PzIII specials with 5cm L60 guns) & 22 PzIV in two battalions on the same date

Attachments:-

Panzerjager Coy

x3 5.0cm Pak 38 Antitank Gun,	DAK-37
x3 SdKfz10 halftrack, vehicles.	DAK-32 as towing

plus/or (605th Battalion only)

x3 PzJag IB,	DAK-12
X1 Diana	DAK-16

Anti-aircraft battery

x2 8.8cm FlaK 36	DAK-44
x2 SdKfz7 halftrack, vehicle.	DAK-29 as towing