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AIR HISTORICAL BRANCH

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TRANSLATION NO. VII/¹⁰¹~~400/2~~

WAR DIARY OF THE GERMAN AFRICA CORPS

3RD AUGUST - 22ND NOVEMBER 1942

TRANSLATED BY
AIR MINISTRY A.H.B.6
NOVEMBER, 1950

G.279002/DS/10/50/35.

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AUGUST 1942

3.8.1942

The NIGHT passed quietly and without incident.

- 09.15 order received from Army Headquarters that the country west of the Qattara track is to be cleared of enemy patrols and mines. Africa Corps allotted a definite strip.
- 0945 21st Panzer Division received ordersto carry out this clearing operation. The DAY passed without special incident, increased artillery activity on both sides in the morning hours. No change in enemy dispositions. 21st Panzer Division reported that it had carried out reconnaissance of the southern area ordered on 2 August. The results of this reconnaissance will be passed to Army Headquarters.

Patrols of 21st Panzer Division detailed for clearing the rear areas several times encountered patrols from other units, which could only with difficulty be identified as our own. Since clearing operations are to be continued for the next few days, at

- 20.30 90th Light Division and XX Corps were requested to give locations of their patrols.

Order about camouflage of tanks.

During the morning Major von Heuduck deputised for Lt.-Col. Frevert, who is sick. He was relieved in the afternoon by Major von Ziegler-Klipphausen, who has been seconded to Africa Corps for the duration of the illness of Ia (GSO 1 (Ops)).

Translator's Note:

The Qattara track, known to the Germans as the Steinpiste, was a poor road, metalled in parts and capable of taking wheeled traffic, running from west of El Alamein in a SSW direction to Naqb Abu Dweis, where it swung west along the northern side of the Qattara Depression.

The Rahman track, known to the Germans as the Rommelpiste, was laid - perhaps on an existing track - by Rommel along the line of the telegraph from Sidi Abd el Rahman first SSW then swinging SE towards Deir el Qattara. It had a firm, possibly metalled surface capable of taking wheeled traffic.

4.8.1942

After a quiet NIGHT slight artillery activity on both sides in the Corps sector. Two bombing raids each by 12 Boston bombers. Battle Group Mildebrath suffered casualties. Otherwise the DAY passed without special incident.

- 16.00 the Commander of the first paratroop battalion due to arrive, Major Kroh, reported at Corps Battle Headquarters. He reported that his battalion cannot be expected to arrive before 6 August. The Corps Commander (General Nehring) discussed with Major Kroh the plan to use the battalion in four strong points with some kept in reserve in the former sector of 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment.
- 16.45 the Q.M.G. reported to the Corps Commander that on the orders of Army Headquarters, military vehicles are to be used to accelerate accumulation of supply goods. Control and employment are to be in the hands of the Q.M.G.

No changes in enemy dispositions observed.

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- 22.30 21st Panzer Division received orders (through Ia (GSO 1 (Ops) to GSO 2 (Ops) of 21st Panzer Division) to look for a fresh billeting area.

Order about identification of patrols in rear areas.

5.8.1942

The NIGHT passed quietly without incident. In the early hours heavy enemy artillery shelled the boundary between 15th Panzer Division and the Ariete Division.

- 08.40 15th and 21st Panzer Divisions received orders (by telephone to 21st Panzer Division) to seek fresh billeting area.
- 11.35 Army Headquarters Ia discussed with our Ia the relief of infantry units of 15th Panzer Division by paratroops. The paratroops have been placed under command Africa Corps (15th Panzer Division) until the arrival of their own Brigade H.Q. The battalions of the Bologna Division in 15th Panzer Division's sector remain under X Corps. The responsibility of 15th Panzer Division for the sector remains unaltered.

Except for two bombing raids in the morning, the DAY passed without special incident. No change in enemy dispositions. The mopping-up patrols of 21st Panzer Division had felt their way through the rear areas to a depth of 75km without encountering the enemy.

- 23.15 order from Army Headquarters about increased alertness at night, which was immediately passed on to the divisions.

6.8.1942

NIGHT passed quietly except for an attempt by an enemy patrol to place demolition charges near the Lindemann Battle Group.

- 09.30 Ia (GSO 1 (Ops)) discussed with Ia, 21st Panzer Division the question of refitting.

Re vehicle position: at the moment 2 battalions of 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment are not motorised and, owing to the assignment of 13 cm medium field howitzers, there is a shortage of artillery ammunition carriers. Besides this, the vehicles of 200th Panzer Engineer Battalion are in a very bad state through continuous use. In this case, however, the division is arranging replacements.

Air raid precautions: the division suggests reinforcing the 2 cm anti-aircraft weapons.

Personnel: gunners for artillery and new tank crews urgently needed.

- 09.40 Ia discussed question of refitting with Ia, 15th Panzer Division.

Vehicle position: in this division one battalion of 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment is not motorised. There is also a shortage of artillery ammunition carriers (16 trucks are urgently required for this). 33rd Panzer Engineer Battalion is considerably below strength owing to continuous use of its vehicles.

- 10.00 the C-in-C arrived at Battle Headquarters for a conference with the Corps Commander (General Nehring).

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12.00 a conference with the Corps Commander took place.

Present: Corps Commander, Ia, Ia's of 15th and 21st Panzer Divisions.

Points discussed:

1. Mildenbrath Battle Group to be disbanded, units to return to their formations.
2. Directions according to the C-in-C's plans.

21st Panzer Division will be transferred to a new area north of that hitherto reconnoitred. There to rest, refit and remain in readiness for counter-offensive, artillery to be employed on barrage duties by arrangement with Artillery Commander, 104 Group.

15th Panzer Division will be relieved by the Paratroop Brigade and withdrawn from the front line.

After 20 August a renewed advance towards the east from the area north of El Taqa is to be expected. Assembly areas for both divisions and probable lines of advance will be announced. (Assembly area as laid down by Panzer Army Headquarters Operational Staff's No. 88/42 Top Secret of 22 August 1942. Lines of advance similar to those given there but somewhat broader).

Divisions are to proceed with the following at once:

- (a) Reconnaissance of the assembly area.
- (b) Commence to erect vehicle blast bays in the new refitting area and in assembly area, which will make it possible to move inconspicuously.
- (c) Speeding up of all necessary steps, especially laying in stocks of fuel oils and issuing ammunition.
- (d) Reconnaissance of the difficult country over which move is to be made to the assembly area.
- (e) The Corps Commander made a special point of the necessity for concealing all preparations and observing secrecy.

12.45 the Corps Commander discussed with the Ia, 15th Panzer Division its relief by Paratroops. Anti-tank and Sapper units are to remain for the time being in the sector even after 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment has been withdrawn.

Relief to start during the night 7/8 August.

15.50 Chief of Staff, Army Headquarters, pointed out once again to our Ia that the artillery of 21st Panzer Division is to take part in the barrage in the new billeting area. The divisions are to organise their defences in the new area in the form of strong points, but at the same assault troops are to be held in readiness for a counter-attack. They are to speed up the erection of tank blast bays in the new billeting area as well as in the southern assembly area.

17.00 order issued for 20th Panzer Engineer Battalion to return to 21st Panzer Division.

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- 17.50 Army Headquarters ordered (Chief of Staff to our Ia) that the removal of 21st Panzer Division is to be completed by the evening of 7 August. Movements may also be carried out during daylight.
- 18.45 Corps Commander ordered the Ia, 15th Panzer Division to push out a picket platoon at night to prevent the infiltration of enemy patrols north of the Lindemann Battle Group.
- 19.00 order from Corps to 21st Panzer Division (Ia to Ia 21st Panzer Division): The division will commence to move at 02.00 hours tonight into the new area in such a manner that the movement is completed by the evening of 7 August.

Otherwise the DAY passed without special incident. No change in enemy dispositions.

The number of tanks ready for action has increased to 171.

Order from Army Headquarters about reporting special occurrences.

7.8.1942

- 02.00 21st Panzer Division started moving into the area ordered. The NIGHT passed quietly.
- 09.15 on an instruction from Army Headquarters orders issued for clearing the planned dummy minefield west of Deir el Dhib.
- 10.45 order from Army Headquarters about combatting known enemy digging parties and mining operations.

On the basis of the conference of the previous day, Corps order issued to prepare for mobile defence.

The DAY passed without incident, artillery harassing fire on both sides.

During the evening two enemy fighters were shot down by ground defences.

No change in enemy dispositions.

Order from Army Headquarters concerning accuracy of reports.

8.8.1942

- 04.00 15th Panzer Division reported that in its divisional sector two companies of Kroh's Parachute Battalion have relieved II/104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment and II/115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment. Otherwise the NIGHT passed quietly.
- 09.00 the C-in-C arrived at 21st Panzer Division Headquarters and gave instructions for an alteration in its positions.

The Corps Commander discussed several times the deployment of the Paratroops with the Ia (GSO 1 (Ops)) and the Ia of 15th Panzer Division. The Corps Commander discussed over the telephone with the Commander 21st Panzer Division the incorporation of the 13 cm medium field howitzers (self-propelled) into the divisional artillery. When the necessary replacements have arrived, both divisions are to set up a tenth troop in the artillery regiment and equip it with 13 cm medium field howitzers.

The DAY passed without incident. Artillery harassing fire on both sides.

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Enemy dispositions unaltered.

Reports made about captured armoured vehicles and serviceable weapons above 4 cm calibre.

9.8.1942

04.00 15th Panzer Division reported that III/115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment also relieved during the night by Paratroops. There is now only one (Reserve) infantry company left in 15th Panzer Division's sector.

Kroh's Paratroop Battalion has taken over responsibility for 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment's sector. The Battalion has been placed under command 15th Panzer Division. Otherwise the NIGHT passed quietly.

09.30 C-in-C appeared at Corps Battle Headquarters for a talk with the Corps Commander (General Nehring). Points discussed:

1. Deployment of 15th Panzer Division towards the north as a flank protection in case of an attack from Alamein towards the south-west.
2. Manning of the Deir el Shein sector after 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment has been relieved by Paratroops and Italians.

13.00 order received from Army Headquarters about:

1. Re-organising the mobile formations of the Army as they are relieved, and
2. Removal of rear elements.

20.00 preliminary notification to the divisions about moving baggage and rear units.

During the DAY only weak artillery harassing fire on both sides in 15th Panzer Division's sector. Enemy dispositions unchanged.

Removal of identification marks prohibited.

Order about levelling abandoned positions.

Lt.-Col. Frevert returned from main dressing station and returned to duty as Chief of Staff, Africa Corps.

10.8.1942

The NIGHT passed without incident.

04.00 15th Panzer Division reported that the reserve company of 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment has been relieved by the last elements of the Paratroop Battalion.

07.00 15th Panzer Division reported that during the night an enemy patrol was repulsed by the Lindemann Battle Group. The enemy left two dead behind. Kroh's Paratroop Battalion captured a stray New Zealander who had belonged to the patrol.

07.30 the Corps Commander went to 21st Panzer Division.

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12.00 the Corps Commander returned to Battle Headquarters. He immediately discussed with the Ia (GSO 1 (Ops)) the deployment of 15th Panzer Division.

15.30 conference at Corps Commander's Headquarters about co-operation between German and Italian formations in the Deir el Shein - Box C sector.

Present: Corps Commander, Ia, Ia - Engineers, Commander 15th Panzer Division with his Ia, Commander of Bologna Division with his Ia and the German Liaison Officer, Ia of XXI (Italian) Corps with the German Liaison Officer, Commander of the second paratroop battalion to arrive, Major von der Heydte.

Points discussed:

Occupation of the positions Box C - Deir el Shein by the Bologna Division, parts of X (Italian) Corps, and two German Paratroop Battalions. Relief, deployment, extensions to the position, handing over of plans of the minefield, battle tactics, co-operation with German and Italian artillery. The Corps Commander's proposals were accepted by the Italian officers. The Bologna Division intends to lay an extra minefield in the Deir el Shein. Von der Heydte's Paratroop Battalion is to move into the Deir el Shein with the first units during the night 12/13 August.

17.15 Ia discusses over the telephone with the Ia 21st Panzer Division the deployment of II/104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment north of III/104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment near Trig Point 408 (48 ?).

The Divisional Commander of 21st Panzer Division considered the one company of the battalion provided at that point to be inadequate, and intended placing two companies there. One company of the battalion together with I/104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment are to be held in reserve.

17.30 our Ia (GSO 1 (Ops)) reported to Ia, Army Headquarters, the outcome of the conference at 15.30 hours and the dispositions decided on at this conference.

17.45 our Ia discussed with Ia, 15th Panzer Division, the deployment of 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment north of Deir el Abyad. The C-in-C has inspected the positions and is in complete agreement with the dispositions.

The DAY passed without special incident. No change in enemy dispositions.

Order from Army Headquarters about mining the Qattara Depression.

Appreciation of the campaign from May to July 1942.

Report on technical experiences and proposed alterations for the Mark IV tank with the 7.5 cm gun L/43 passed on to Army Headquarters. Tactical experiences with the same tank passed to the divisions.

Order for removal of rear line units to the area order by Army Headquarters.

11.8.1942

The NIGHT passed without incident.

07.00 the Corps Commander accompanied by Ia went out to reconnoitre the district north of the Qattara Depression. At the same time will inspect installations in the southern assembly area.

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- 13.00 the Corps Commander returned to Battle Headquarters.
- 13.30 Chief of Staff, Army Headquarters, instructed that the thirteenth (infantry gun) companies of the two Panzer Grenadier Regiments are to be exchanged for two infantry gun (self-propelled) companies of 90th Light Division. Comments of Africa Corps requested.
- 17.00 our Ia discussed with Ia 15th and Ia 21st Panzer Divisions the necessity for speeding up the construction of the boxes in the southern assembly area.

He went on to discuss the exchange of the infantry gun companies and the question of training at the present time.

- 21.00 15th Panzer Division received orders, in accordance with a Directive from Army Headquarters, to compare the operational effectiveness of the German 5 cm gun and the British 5.7 cm (6 pounder) anti-tank gun on 13 August. Time and place to be notified later.

During the DAY artillery harassing fire from both sides in 15th Panzer Division's sector. Enemy positions unchanged.

Order about care and maintenance of water pipe-lines.

Tank transporter return.

12.8.1942

The NIGHT passed without special incident.

- 08.00 the Corps Commander, accompanied by the Ic (GSO 1 (Int)), left for Army Headquarters for a conference with the C-in-C.
- 08.45 order sent to 21st Panzer Division to provide trucks for transporting 2nd Paratroop Battalion (v.d. Heydte) on 12 and 13 August.
- 09.00 Ia (GSO 1 (Ops)) reported to Army Headquarters that Africa Corps agreed to the exchange of the infantry gun companies.
- 10.30 order from Army Headquarters: vehicles for transport of v.d. Heydte's battalion to be provided by 15th Panzer Division, not 21st Panzer Division.
- 14.00 Major Willers (Quartermaster) advised the Ia about the Army's plan to hold one Reconnaissance unit, 90th Light Division (less tanks and one artillery battery) in readiness in case of a British landing in the rear.
- 15.30 Chief of Staff, Army Headquarters, gave information about the situation in the Mediterranean:

A very strong enemy convoy from Gibraltar is approaching the Sicilian Channel on an easterly course. An attempt to land in the rear of the Panzer Army is considered possible. The Luftwaffe is making a large-scale sortie against this convoy. Parts of the Panzer Army may be moved to the west. Africa Corps is to hold 21st Panzer Division (less tanks and one artillery battery) in readiness. It is to be calculated with which elements the division can go into action.

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- 16.00 after conferring with 21st Panzer Division, the Ia reported to the Ia at Army Headquarters that 21st Panzer Division can go into action with 1½ battalions, one light artillery battery, one heavy artillery battery, a battalion of sappers, an anti-tank battalion, a signals battalion, an anti-aircraft battalion (2 companies), and an anti-aircraft battery (one heavy, one light troop).
- 18.20 the Corps Commander returned from Army Headquarters. Ia informed him about the situation and the telephone call from Colonel Bayerlein.
- 19.00 the C-in-C visited Battle Headquarters, 21st Panzer Division, and informed the division about the situation in the Mediterranean and the possibility that the bulk of the division might be moved (see information under 15.30 hours).
- 19.20 v.d. Heydte's Paratroop Battalion reported that they cannot carry out the relief as planned since the vehicles for their transport have not yet arrived.
- 20.00 GSO 2 (Ops) will advise X Corps through the German Liaison Officer that the relief will be delayed.

The DAY passed quietly with weak artillery harassing fire from both sides and a little activity in the air. Enemy positions unchanged.

Order about restricting artillery operations and increasing those of the heavy infantry weapons.

13.8.1942

During the NIGHT at times lively enemy artillery and patrol activity.

- 04.00 15th Panzer Division reported that the artillery concentration during the night on Hill 63 had fallen north and south of it. Enemy patrols had been repulsed.
- 07.30 Colonel Bayerlein informed the Ia (GSO 1 (Ops)) about the situation in the Mediterranean:
- The Luftwaffe had had great success. No decision can be expected before 14.00 hours about 21st Panzer Division's action.
- 07.30 the Corps Commander left to inspect rear Battle Headquarters.
- 10.45 order from Army Headquarters (through Headquarters to Ia):
- Box B is to be enlarged as a dummy minefield. Africa Corps is to take over the western half.
- 12.00 the Corps Commander returned to Battle Headquarters.
- 14.55 the Corps Commander and Ia left to watch the comparative shoot between the German 5 cm Pak 38 (anti-tank gun) and the British 5.7 cm (6 pounder) anti-tank gun.
- 16.10 15th Panzer Division reported that two companies of v.d. Heydte's battalion and his battalion HQ are established in Deir el Shein.
- 17.10 order from Army Headquarters (Chief of Staff to O 5 (GSO 3 (Int)):
21st Panzer Division to stand down.

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17.15 above order passed to 21st Panzer Division.

19.15 the Corps Commander returned to Battle Headquarters.

Order from Army Headquarters about losses in prisoners, the use of binoculars for reconnaissance and the ban on reconnaissance in the Qattara Depression.

The NIGHT passed quietly.

11.30 at the request of Africa Corps, Army Headquarters issued orders that Ramcke's Brigade is to be directly under command Army when further elements arrive. Africa Corps is to co-operate closely with the Brigade and be responsible for the sector. (Ramcke's Brigade is the Headquarters Staff for Parachute units moved to Africa).

11.45 15th Panzer Division reported that two companies of v.d. Heydte's Paratroop Battalion have not yet taken up the positions ordered.

11.50 with reference to the above the Corps Commander ordered the Commander, 15th Panzer Division, to carry out the relief during the coming night. Double relief was expressly forbidden.

17.40 at the request of Africa Corps, Panzer Army Headquarters ordered that one battalion of the 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment could be withdrawn as soon as the Italians, who had been ordered by the C-in-C to move into that sector, arrived.

The DAY passed without incident. Enemy dispositions unchanged.

In the course of the day General Ramcke arrived with the first of his Staff and took over command of the active units of his Brigade for the time being under 15th Panzer Division.

Request from Army Headquarters and report about the 2 cm anti-aircraft gun.

15.8.1942

During the NIGHT there were two artillery concentrations. The remainder of v.d. Heydte's battalion arrived. An enemy patrol landed from a collapsible boat near Q-Detachment during the night and committed acts of sabotage. Little damage, one killed. A search will be made for the patrol since it is probably still on land.

18.15 orders from Army (Ia, Army Headquarters to Ia (GSO 1 (Ops)):

Ramcke Brigade is to be directly under command Africa Corps. Africa Corps will remain responsible for the sector.

19.45 preliminary order to the Ramcke Brigade and 15th Panzer Division:

On 16 August 1942 at 12.00 hours the Ramcke Brigade will take over 15th Panzer Division's sector. Artillery of 15th Panzer Division is instructed to co-operate. 15th Panzer Division will leave the Artillery Commander, Ic (GSO 1 (Int)) and one officer of the Signals Detachment at Ramcke Brigade Battle Headquarters, which will be at 15th Panzer Division's old Battle Headquarters. 15th Panzer Division may take their own Battle Headquarters further back.

The DAY passed quietly.

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The tank situation has improved further. The number of serviceable tanks exceeds 200 again for the first time since 26 May.

Order about vigilance and nuisance raids.

The Corps Commander is celebrating his 50th birthday. The day will be a holiday at Corps Headquarters. After reveille by the military band of 5th Panzer Regiment, General Nehring will receive the congratulations of the officers, NCOs and men. Forward Battle Headquarters has arranged this. The Deputy Chief of Staff, Lt/Colonel Frevert, will present the greetings. The Corps Commander will then hold an investiture.

- 11.00 the C-in-C visited Battle Headquarters to give his congratulations to General Nehring.
- 12.00 the unit commanders of Africa Corps assembled to offer their congratulations.

The day ended with a dinner for the officers on Headquarters Staff.

16.8.1942

The NIGHT passed without special incident. Occasional artillery harassing fire in the sector of the Ramcke Brigade.

- 09.00 order to the Ramcke Brigade about taking over 15th Panzer Division's sector.
- 12.40 orders from Army (Ia, Army Headquarters to Ia):

Commencing immediately, Special Unit 288 is to be relieved by the third Paratroop Battalion to arrive. For the time being 90th Light Division is to provide any heavy weapons which are lacking.

This order was passed on at once to the Ramcke Brigade and Special Unit 288.

- 16.20 15th Panzer Division reported completion of hand-over of their sector to the Ramcke Brigade.

Nothing of special importance occurred during the DAY. Artillery harassing fire of varying intensity in the Ramcke Brigade sector. Weak enemy air reconnaissance. Enemy dispositions unchanged.

Order about restricting M.T. traffic at night.

- 23.30 strong artillery bombardment of Kroh's Paratroop Battalion began, lasting half an hour.
- 23.50 15th Panzer Division reported a serious accident with mines. When unloading a truck of British mines the whole lot blew up. (7 killed, 12 wounded).

17.8.1942

- 05.45 the Ramcke Brigade reported they had beaten off an attack by a strong enemy patrol which was made against the north-eastern part of Box C following the midnight bombardment.
- 08.00 later reported that one soldier of Kroh's Battalion missing since the raid. During the remainder of the NIGHT artillery harassing fire on the Ramcke Brigade sector.

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- 08.45 order issued that the Africa Corps Combat Unit, which has been operating during recent weeks with 15th Panzer Division, is once more to come under direct command of the Corps.
- 10.00 a supplementary order issued to the Corps order preparing a mobile defence from 7th August. This contained further instructions for the planned offensive, especially for reconnoitring routes and terrain.

Owing to increased enemy patrol activity during the last few days, XX Corps (Italian) asked Army Headquarters for permission to move a battalion into the southern edge of Box C.

- 17.00 the C-in-C spoke over the telephone about this with the Corps Commander.
- The C-in-C supported XX Corps proposal and instructed General Nehring to pass on permission.
- 17.20 the Corps Commander passed the C-in-C's sanction to the German Liaison Officer at XX Corps.

The DAY passed quietly. No change in enemy positions. At dusk Huebner's Paratroop Battalion (the third to arrive) began to move into the Qattara positions.

Supplementary report from the Ramcke Brigade about taking over 15th Panzer Division's sector.

18.8.1942

The NIGHT passed quietly.

- 09.00 the Ramcke Brigade reported that during the night the enemy left one dead in front of the position occupied by Kroh's Battalion after a raid. It turned out later that it was a New Zealand C.S.M.
- 09.40 Special Unit 288 reported that their relief by Huebner's Battalion will be completed by 19 August.
- 12.00 Colonel Bayerlein, who has been deputising for the Chief of Staff at Panzer Army Headquarters for the last nine weeks, resumed his post as Chief of Staff, Africa Corps.
- 14.20 the Corps Commander discussed with General Ramcke the deviations in the deployment of his Brigade from those laid down in a sketch on 18 August. The Ramcke Brigade was instructed to change its position to conform with the sketch.

The DAY passed without special incident. Weak harassing fire by enemy artillery.

The number of serviceable tanks has again increased, thanks to repairs, receipt of spare parts and new deliveries. It now amounts to 211 tanks (15th Panzer Division 96; 21st Panzer Division 111; Africa Corps Combat Unit 4).

19.8.1942

During the NIGHT further artillery bombardment of the Ramcke Brigade's sector; an enemy patrol was repulsed.

- 16.15 Special Unit 288 reported that all sections had been withdrawn.

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09.30 the Ramcke Brigade reported that Special Unit 288's sector has been taken over by Heubner's Battalion. Two companies of the battalion have arrived in the Qattara position. It is still 180 men below full battle strength.

18.00 a conference with the C-in-C took place at Africa Corps Battle Headquarters.

Present: Corps Commander, Chief of Staff, Ia (GSO 1 (Ops)), General Ramcke.

Points discussed:

1. Preparations by Africa Corps for an offensive.
2. Attack expected to begin at end of August.
3. Owing to the nature of the terrain, the sector allocated for Africa Corps' advance must be altered slightly.
4. The supply position, which was becoming increasingly difficult, was discussed in full detail. Stocks of petrol are still too small. Altogether 10 V.S. was considered essential (1 V.S. = 100 km fuel), but 15th Panzer Division have only 0.9 - 1.0 V.S. available and 21st Panzer Division 2.3 - 2.5 V.S. There is also a shortage of some kinds of ammunition (for example 5 cm anti-tank gun ammunition).
5. The deployment of Ramcke's Brigade.
6. Preparatory reconnaissance of the attack sector by 3rd Reconnaissance Unit.

The Ramcke Brigade, which was brought to Africa by air, possesses practically no vehicles of its own. 135th Flak Regiment was detailed to use its vehicles to move up and supply the Brigade. They had not enough vehicles for the job. Africa Corps, therefore, must continually make vehicles available for moving up and supplying the Brigade.

15th Panzer Division proposed that they be allowed to move II/33rd Artillery Regiment - which had been ordered to co-operate with the Ramcke Brigade - back to positions from which they could carry out the tasks allotted to them, without being exposed to the enemy's very effective artillery fire. Permission was granted.

The Corps issued battle orders on the lines of yesterday's discussions with General Ramcke for conducting the infantry fighting of the German formations in and to the north of Box C.

No special incidents during the DAY.

20.8.1942

The NIGHT passed quietly.

One of our patrols reconnoitred the area north of Ruweisat as far as the Rahman track. Weak enemy patrol activity.

As a result of the conference with the C-in-C on the previous day, order issued to divisional commanders to hold a tactical exercise without troops, and an order about reconnaissance with 3rd Reconnaissance Unit of the sector for the attack.

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- 16.45 order from Army Headquarters that 612th Anti-Aircraft Battalion hitherto under command Africa Corps, is to be withdrawn during the night of 21/22 August and join 15th Rifle Brigade. The Ramcke Brigade received orders to take over their sector.

The DAY passed without special incident. No change in enemy dispositions.

- 19.00 the Ramcke Brigade submitted deployment sketch of Huebner's Combat Group. The Brigade requested transport to bring up the units of Huebner's Battalion, which were still missing. Order correspondingly issued to 15th Panzer Division.

List of appointments at Africa Corps Headquarters.

Order from Army Headquarters about firing on isolated vehicles.

21.8.1942

Between 00.01 hours and 04.15 hours three rather heavy artillery bombardments of the southern part of Deir el Shein.

The DAY passed without special incident.

The number of serviceable tanks in Africa Corps has increased to 220.

Battle orders issued to the Ramcke Brigade to complete those issued on the previous day.

Order from Army Headquarters about allocation and changes in infantry and regular anti-aircraft formations.

22.8.1942

With the waxing moon the NIGHT activity of the enemy became more lively. (Full moon 26 August). Heavy artillery fire on the Ramcke Brigade positions. Night bombing raids again for the first time this month. (100 bombs dropped on 15th Panzer Division and the Qattara positions).

- 08.00 at Corps Battle Headquarters the Commander of 3rd Reconnaissance Unit received, in accordance with the directive laid down in the conference on 19 August, orders to reconnoitre the district in front of the southern assembly area. Immediately afterwards the Corps Commander attended a practice shoot of 21st Panzer Division with the medium field howitzer 13 (self-propelled). The firing showed that this gun, now that sufficient numbers of them have been brought up, with a flexible command and fire control has become an effective offensive weapon for a Panzer division.

Chief of Staff, Africa Corps, was ordered during the morning to attend a conference at Army Headquarters. He returned to Battle Headquarters at 18.00 hours. He brought with him the operations order for the coming offensive.

- 20.00 In accordance with the operations order and the conference at Army Headquarters, an order was issued to divisional commanders about fresh instructions for entering the assembly area.

The DAY passed without special incident. No change in enemy dispositions.

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23.8.1942

During the NIGHT continuous bombing raids made from 22.00 to 01.00 hours on 15th Panzer Division's area, the Ramcke Brigade and Corps Battle Headquarters (about 450 bombs dropped). The enemy pushed out patrols on a broad front towards the Ramcke Brigade.

16.30 a conference took place at Corps Battle Headquarters.

Present: Corps Commander, Chief of Staff, Ia (GSO 1 (Ops)), Ia's 15th and 21st Panzer Divisions.

Points discussed:

1. Directions for the course of the planned attack.
2. Instructions for tactical exercises without troops to be held prior to the attack.
3. Supply questions.

The DAY passed without special incident except for a fighter-bomber raid in the early hours of the morning.

No change observed in enemy dispositions.

Deployment sketch of the XX (Italian) Corps from the Qattara positions to the left boundary of the Corps (sent at the request of Africa Corps).

Order about protecting the supply route by vehicles that have broken down.

24.8.1942

No special incident during the NIGHT except for a minor bombing raid.

07.40 the Corps Commander left for the tactical exercise at 15th Panzer Division's Headquarters.

08.25 order from Army Headquarters:

Advanced elements of tanks will move into the southern assembly area during the night of 24/25 August. The order to move will be sent through Chief of Staff. At the same time wireless silence will be strictly observed.

The DAY passed without incident.

19.05 Army Headquarters ordered that the tanks were to take four nights, not three, to move to the new assembly area. The Army ordered fresh efforts by troop supply columns to increase stocks of fuel and ammunition.

19.15 orders issued to 21st Panzer Division to move only two tank companies during the night 24/25 August.

Timetable of movements and planned commitment of forces.

Order sent to the divisions about the move and the timetable.

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Deployment sketch of Africa Corps before the start of the move into the southern assembly area.

Lt./Colonel Frevert resumes duties as Ia (GSO 1 (Ops)) as from today.

Major von Ziegler, who had been relieving him, is to return to Army Headquarters.

25.8.1942

During the NIGHT a stronger enemy patrol was repulsed in the centre of the Ramcke Brigade positions. A few bombs dropped and weak artillery fire. The first quarter of the tanks was moved into the southern assembly area according to plan.

06.50 the Corps Commander left for the tactical exercise at 21st Panzer Division's Headquarters.

The DAY passed quietly. Increased enemy armoured car activity in front of the Ramcke Brigade. In 15th Panzer Division's sector two British fighters were shot down.

Order received to move the tanks in four nights (confirming telephone report 24 August 19.05 hours).

135th Flak Regiment (Colonel Woltz) returns to Africa Corps as from today.

Order about rear echelons.

Order about engaging low-flying aircraft at night.

26.8.1942.

03.00 After a quiet NIGHT a heavy artillery bombardment began on the Deir el Shein sector and southwards as far as the northern edge of Box C. Most concentrated on Hill 63. A patrol feeling its way north of Box C under cover of artillery fire was repulsed by battle outposts. The second quarter of the tanks was moved into the southern assembly area during the night according to plan.

09.25 the Q.M.G. reported that during the night British destroyers had bombarded the supply troops of 15th Panzer Division. Little material damage.

12.30 the Corps Commander with his Chief of Staff left on a reconnaissance of the southern assembly area. There he met the Ia/Pi (GSO 1 (Ops/Engineers)) of Army Headquarters and the Ia's of the two divisions, and discussed with them preparations, the advance over the starting line, clearing gaps in the minefields and laying two supply tracks across the almost impassable slopes of the Gebel Kalakh. At Battle Headquarters of the Folgore Division German-Italian co-operation during the forming up and the advance was discussed.

14.30 order from Army Headquarters (Ia to Ia):

Moves planned for tonight will not take place. They will probably be continued 27 - 28 August. The Corps Commander and the divisions were immediately informed by wireless or telephone.

17.15 the Corps Commander and Chief of Staff returned to Battle Headquarters.

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The DAY passed without incident. The Ramcke Brigade has now been further reinforced by the arrival of the remainder of Huchner's Battalion.

Order to harass mining operations in the district 10 km east of Gebel Kalakh.

Order about notification of newly-reconnoitred enemy mincfields.

Order about digging in and dispersal of formations.

27.8.1942

The NIGHT passed without incident. Bombs were dropped in the Ramcke Brigade sector.

09.30 the Corps Commander and Chief of Staff left for a conference at X Corps.

Points discussed:

Co-operation with the Folgore Division, conduct of the campaign in the central sector of the front, relieving the artillery of 15th Panzer Division.

12.00 the Corps Commander returned to Battle Headquarters.

12.40 the liaison officer attached to the Bologna Division reported an enemy attack supported by tanks on III/39.

12.45 an enquiry at the Ramcke Brigade revealed that no attack had taken place on III/39. Traffic forward of the front line was somewhat heavier.

14.00 Corps order issued for the counter-attack on X - Day. For reasons of supply it is not possible to determine the actual day of the attack, since it is still uncertain when the petrol required for the operations will have arrived.

15.25 order from Army Headquarters:

The third quarter of tanks is to be moved into the new area tonight. This order was passed on at once to 15th and 21st Panzer Divisions.

In accordance with orders received from Army Headquarters, the anti-aircraft units allotted to Africa Corps were strengthened. Besides 612th Flak Battalion and the two fully established batteries, I/18th Flak Regiment and I/43rd Flak Regiment, I/6th Flak Regiment, with two troops of heavy anti-aircraft, will come under command Africa Corps.

19.30 135th Flak Regiment reported that all the anti-aircraft units concerned are being sent to Africa Corps.

During the DAY slight artillery harassing fire, armed air reconnaissance.

It appears that the enemy has been reinforced east and south-east of Deir el Shein. The arrival of the Ramcke Brigade, the relief of 15th Panzer Division and the bringing-up of fresh anti-aircraft units resulted in an increase in motor traffic on the central sector in the middle of August and this seems to have given the enemy the idea that the Germans intended to attack in the central sector. One is also lead to this conclusion by the heavy night bombing raids of 21 - 23 August and the lively patrol activity.

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Order from the Army about supplies for the Ramcke Brigade. The Brigade continues to be dependent on Africa Corps for supplies.

Order about the meaning of flare signals.

Order about dummy emplacements.

28.8.1942

During the NIGHT a few bombs dropped on the rear line units and on tanks of 21st Panzer Division on the move to the south.

- 06.30 Corps Commander left for a conference at Army Battle Headquarters about the coming action. The divisional commanders also took part in this conference.

Returned 13.30 hours.

- 10.45 Army Headquarters ordered that the moves were to continue as planned. Today the last quarter of the tanks, tomorrow the wheeled vehicles. The order was passed on at once to the divisions.

After the return of the Corps Commander to Corps Battle Headquarters, a new timetable for the continuation of the attack on X + 1 Day at 05.00 hours was sent to the divisions.

The DAY passed without incident. During the afternoon about 30 vehicles, mostly armoured, felt their way forward to within 2.5 km of the Qattara positions.

The number of serviceable tanks with Africa Corps has risen to 234.

- 20.35 In (GSO 1 (Ops)) at Army Headquarters discussed the following questions over the telephone with Ia, Africa Corps:

1. After Africa Corps has moved out of its present area, the Ramcke Brigade will come directly under command Army.
2. Africa Corps requested an alteration to the order about flare signals.

Reason; under the ordered regulations white Verey light flares could no longer be used to light targets and positions, since they would cause the barrage to start up.

3. Army artillery will not be brought up until later in the operations.

The evening reports show that stocks of petrol are still very low. Even the use of unit transport columns was unable to bring the stocks of petrol up to the required level. On the evening of 28 August the divisions had 2 - 2.5 V.S. available, while there are still 35 cbm of fuel in the Corps dump. Fuel used for the current daily supply run amounts to 40 cbm. As a result of a talk between Chief of Staff and Army Headquarters, Africa Corps made a report of its estimated requirements for the forthcoming operations.

- 22.10 order from Army Headquarters making alterations in flare signals.

29.8.1942

During the NIGHT the remaining armoured elements were moved according to plan. Enemy activity in the air during the night and in the early morning hours. Artillery harassing fire on the Ramcke Brigade.

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10.15 order from Army to detail a platoon of engineers to the Ramcke Brigade for the night 29/30 August.

16.00 the order about X-Day arrived by despatch rider. X-Day is the 30 August.

The order was passed on to divisions immediately.

16.10 order to the Ramcke Brigade: from 17.00 hours the brigade will be placed directly under command Army.

The DAY showed all signs of preparation and expectation of the offensive which begins tomorrow. At Corps Headquarters arrangements were made for moving Battle Headquarters, which started by Groups from 17.00 hours.

19.00 the Operations Staff took possession of their new Battle Headquarters 3.5 km west of Hill 208 at Gebel Sanhur.

There was no special incident during the day reported from the divisions.

A wireless intercept by Army Headquarters showed that the enemy has been observing the lively traffic during the afternoon on the Qattara track and the Rahman track south of the Qattara positions. The Army therefore ordered 3rd Reconnaissance Unit to block the overlooked positions immediately.

At dusk units of Africa Corps commenced moving their wheeled vehicles into the assembly area.

Order about changing the code-word for the Army Battle Headquarters as laid down in the Operations Order.

30.8.1942

During the NIGHT isolated bombing raids on units on the move. Both divisions carried out the move according to plan.

09.00 a conference took place at Corps Battle Headquarters.

Present: Corps Commander, Chief of Staff, Ia (GSO 1 (Ops)), the Divisional Commanders and the Ia's of the divisions. The Corps Commander discussed once again the planned moves etc., for the night of 30/31 August.

12.00 the C-in-C's Order of the Day sent to the divisions.

17.00 No. 3 Company of 200th Armoured Engineer Battalion which today arrived at Army Headquarters from Europe is to be placed directly under command of Army Headquarters. At the request of Africa Corps the company will, however, remain at the disposal of 21st Panzer Division, to which it will be attached today.

18.00 Forward Tactical Corps Headquarters moved its Battle Headquarters to Trig Point 540 south of Gebel Kalah.

A wireless message from Army Headquarters which arrived during the move informed us that there was an improvement in the petrol position.

22.00 after a rest period of about three weeks Africa Corps began to attack.

The fighting power of the Corps has considerably increased during this time. The morale of the troops is good and they are confident of victory. The tank regiments are going into action with a strength of 237 tanks. The rifle regiments which have sustained heavy losses have received only partial replacements. The artillery is

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going into action in full strength and with the addition of the recently arrived 13 cm medium field howitzers (self-propelled). On crossing the start line, transport jams occurred on the difficult eastern slopes of Gebel Kalakh, especially in the sector of 21st Panzer Division advancing on the left. Weak enemy outposts were quickly overrun by the division.

31.8.1942

Tactical Corps Headquarters is moving up with 21st Panzer Division Headquarters.

- 01.00 the advance was checked as both divisions came up against minefields defended by the enemy. The divisions immediately sent Panzer Grenadiers into action and detailed engineers to clear lanes through the minefields. This, however, is a long job since regular minefields and scattered mines have been encountered. In addition, clearing is being interrupted by mortar and machine-gun fire. The C-in-C inquired several times as to the position at the spearhead.
- 01.55 Africa Corps, breaking the hitherto observed wireless silence, reported:
Spearhead of 21st Panzer Division at the track leading northward from Qaret el Himeimat. Wireless communication with 15th Panzer Division is interrupted. The Army is urging that the advance be speeded up. (message did not arrive until 04.19 hours).

The advance of Africa Corps has been watched since 01.00 hours by enemy night reconnaissance aircraft. The last units of the divisions moving into the assembly area have already been attacked by a few night bombers which had apparently noticed the start of the offensive.
- 02.30 heavy air raids on Africa Corps commenced, directed mainly against 21st Panzer Division.
- 03.50 the Corps Commander and several officers were wounded by a serious direct hit on Corps Battle Headquarters. General Nehring, slightly wounded, has gone to the main dressing station. Lieutenant von Burgsdorff and Civilian Specialist Schmidt were seriously wounded and have since died. Until further notice, Chief of Staff, Colonel Bayerlein, will take over command of the Corps; General von Vaerst, Commander 15th Panzer Division, who may have to deputise for the Corps Commander, has been advised and requested to come to Corps Headquarters.
- 04.10 0 4 (GSO 3 (Int)) 21st Panzer Division reported that the Divisional Commander, Major General von Bismarck, advancing with the foremost battalion of the division, has been killed by mortar fire.

In the meantime the location of 15th Panzer Division has been reported by the liaison officer of the division. 15th Panzer Division is fighting its way through the minefield on the right, alongside 21st Panzer Division. This was confirmed at 05.35 hours by a wireless message heard also by 33rd Reconnaissance Unit.
- 05.25 Africa Corps reported that both divisions have formed a bridgehead over the minefield on both sides of Point 118 on the right.
- 05.35 a second minefield reported behind the first (verbally by an officer of 21st Panzer Division). Numerous scattered mines are delaying the advance.
- 08.00 the position has developed as follows:

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After forcing the lane through the minefields the divisions have sent the Panzer Regiments forward and have begun to continue the interrupted advance towards the east without encountering serious enemy resistance. On account of the air raids expected during the day-time, the advance is to be made in great depth. 21st Panzer Division has been ordered to make contact with XX (Italian) Corps.

08.05 the C-in-C arrived at Corps Battle Headquarters. The Chief of Staff gave him the following information of Africa Corps' situation:

1. Advance during the night made difficult by many mines both scattered and thickly sown in hitherto unknown minefields. Also by bombing raids and artillery fire.
2. The leading elements of the divisions have crossed the area 4 km east of the minefields (south-east of Point 114) and are at present advancing further towards the east. Up to now the enemy has offered only weak resistance. 15th Panzer Division has knocked out 6 tanks.

The situation is summed up as follows:

The minefields and enemy resistance have delayed the advance more than was expected. The planned surprise of penetrating by dawn the enemy's flank and rear, and then pushing northwards has not been achieved.

The following possibilities present themselves for the continuance of operations:

- (a) carrying on according to plan,
- (b) going over to the defence in the present positions, utilising the British minefields,
- (c) withdrawal to the start line,
- (d) continuing the attack, not as planned by an extensive advance towards the east, but by immediately swinging to the north-east.

The C-in-C, who had decided to go over to the defensive for the present, as was revealed by an order which arrived later, on the strength of this appreciation of the situation, gave orders to continue the attack in the changed direction. Africa Corps is to prepare for attack in the area north and north-east of Point 115 (north-east of Himeimat), and after this preparation to attack at 12.00 hours with 15th Panzer Division on the right and 21st Panzer Division on the left in the direction of Hill 132 (Alam el Halfa). The right flank to be protected by the Reconnaissance Group. XX (Italian) Corps will attack hinging on the left flank. Objective: Hill 132. During the advance of Africa Corps on Hill 132, enemy moves from the east and also from the north-west in the rear of Africa Corps must be expected. The utmost importance must therefore be attached to maintaining contact with neighbouring formations and on protecting the flanks.

08.30 the C-in-C left Battle Headquarters.

Orders in accordance with the new plans were passed on at once to the divisions through their Staff Officers, and at the same time the divisions were ordered by wireless to halt. The Divisional Commanders were ordered to come to Corps Battle Headquarters which since 04.30 has been located in the district west of the minefields.

09.10 the order reached the divisions verbally. They are at present engaging 50 enemy tanks in the district south-west of Deir el Ragil. The tanks, however, soon withdrew.

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- 10.00 the Commanders of 15th and 21st Panzer Divisions arrived at Corps Battle Headquarters. For the time being Major General von Vaerst will retain command of 15th Panzer Division, but will hand over at the first opportunity to Colonel Waltenberger and assume command of the Corps. The Chief of Staff gave both officers an appreciation of the situation as recorded above. The Corps order (given verbally) is as follows:

Africa Corps will attack along both sides of the central line, Points 115 to 132 (Alam el Halfa). The escarpment south-east and south-west of Point 67 may be by-passed on both sides; adherence to the central line is not absolutely necessary. In this connection 15th Panzer Division will prepare for attack on the right, and 21st Panzer Division on the left of the Central line in the area north of Point 115. The attack to commence at 13.00 hours. The Reconnaissance Unit is to cover the right flank. XX (Italian) Corps will attack hinging on the left in the same direction. Corps Forward Battle Headquarters with 21st Panzer Division.

- 10.50 Chief of Staff to Ia, Army Headquarters (by telephone): Start of attack delayed till 13.00 hours, as the divisions have advanced further towards the east than originally planned and re-forming will therefore take longer. Army in agreement. The Reconnaissance Unit will be placed under command Africa Corps.

- 11.10 Reconnaissance Unit received orders to cover the flanks by pushing further forward to the East. In the following period it reported that the enemy was frequently observed. However, this does not indicate that an enemy attack is to be expected from the east.

On the left flank, the Littorio Division was held up for a time but has now begun to catch up and since 10.10 hours has joined up with 21st Panzer Division. This will make it more difficult for 21st Panzer Division to move towards the north-west. For this reason the Division requested a further postponement of the start of the attack, but it was turned down owing to the time involved: everything depends on the objective being reached today.

During the morning Africa Corps was frequently attacked by formations of 12 - 18 aircraft. Results of our own fighter and anti-aircraft defences are not known.

- 12.00 Corps Battle Headquarters transferred to Point 114 north-east of Himeimat. Further current orders and directions of the carrying out of the attack were given by wireless. 15th Panzer Division went into action on time, 21st Panzer Division about an hour later.
- 13.45 the Littorio Division on our left flank has also gone into action.
- 14.10 the C-in-C arrived at Corps Battle Headquarters. Chief of Staff informed him of the situation.
- 14.40 on the basis of the directive from C-in-C, orders were issued to the Divisions that all spare sapper forces are to be employed in clearing lanes and marking routes through the minefields for the supply columns.
- 14.30 the Forward Battle Headquarters of Africa Corps set off and is following the attack with 21st Panzer Division.

The attack of Africa Corps is gaining ground. The enemy is weak and is withdrawing to the north-east and north. The foremost elements of the Divisions are maintaining contact with one another. The Reconnaissance Unit is following on the right flank, the Littorio Division on the left.

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- 15.09 the foremost elements have reached the first objectives set by Africa Corps (Deir Daayis and Deir el Tarfa). The Corps reported this to the C-in-C and then ordered the Divisions to continue the attack as far as Hill 132.
- 15.35 the C-in-C again came to Corps Battle Headquarters. XX Corps reports it cannot go into action as the lanes through the minefields are still occupied by Africa Corps. The Chief of Staff points out that this cannot apply to the Littorio Division because - as can clearly be seen from Corps Battle Headquarters - it is attacking on the left at the side of 21st Panzer Division.
- 15.50 Both Divisions ordered to push on eastwards to Manqir el Taiyara. This order conforms to Africa Corps' plan of keeping the Divisions together for the attack on Hill 132.

The situation on the right flank is giving no immediate cause for anxiety. Any enemy forces appearing there are being thrown back by the Reconnaissance Group.

- 16.40 the Reconnaissance Group again placed directly under command of Army with the task of concentrating in the area south-east of Deir el Ragil to cover the flank and rear.
- 16.45 Major General von Vaerst took over command of Africa Corps. At this time 15th Panzer Division had pushed past Manqir el Taiyara with its forward elements, while 21st Panzer Division was moving forward in the neighbourhood of Deir el Tarfa. Enemy resistance was increasing in front of both divisions.
- 17.05 both divisions received orders to continue the attack until 18.30 hours and then go over to the defensive.
- 15th Panzer Division is moving further towards Hill 132.
- 18.30 15th Panzer Division making a pincer attack from the east and south-east on the hill.
- 19.50 15th Panzer Division reported that it has reached the crest with its armoured elements and is forming its tanks in an all-round defensive position on the slopes.

The main body of 21st Panzer Division has not gone forward so quickly.

At dusk 5th Panzer Regiment on the left next to 8th Panzer Regiment was engaged in a fierce struggle with strong points on the ridge running towards the south-west from Alam Halfa. The division halted at about 18.30 hours and is forming an all-round defensive position in the area near and north of Deir el Tarfa, and is bringing the Panzer Regiment back into the divisional defence locality against the wishes of Corps Headquarters. There was considerable doubt at Corps as to the correctness of the location of 21st Panzer Division. However, these doubts proved to be unfounded on the following morning. In this connection there was also some uncertainty as to the exact position of Corps Battle Headquarters, but this was likewise clarified at dawn on 1 September.

After dusk contact was made with Advanced Army Battle Headquarters located near Corps Battle Headquarters.

On the evening of 31 August, the following appreciation was made of Africa Corps' situation:

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The attack during the afternoon had gone well, although owing to the ever increasing resistance it was not possible to capture Hill 132 completely. The delay in the advance of 21st Panzer Division and the voluntary withdrawal of 5th Panzer Regiment were making themselves felt.

Prisoners taken by 15th Panzer Division from enemy units retreating to the east and north-east belonged to 7th Armoured Division; those taken by 21st Panzer Division from the enemy forces retreating to the north and north-west belonged to 1st Armoured Division. From this it is deduced that 7th Armoured Division has withdrawn to the area east of 15th Panzer Division, while 1st Armoured Division remains to the north-west of Africa Corps. Both forces suffered only slight losses on 31 August. Africa Corps is therefore expecting heavy enemy counter-attacks on 1 September. It intends to take up defensive positions. The commanding Hill 132 is only to be taken if a favourable opportunity arises.

- 21.30 Major General von Vaerst presented himself at Army Advanced Battle Headquarters. Army's appreciation of the situation tallies with that of Africa Corps. Army Headquarters ordered Corps to go over to the defensive on 1 September.
- 22.00 On the return of the Acting Corps Commander orders were issued accordingly to the divisions.

Corps Battle Headquarters has been located since 22.00 hours 1 km north of Mirbat Aza (north of Deir el Ragil). Africa Corps Combat Unit has been transferred there.

During the late afternoon Colonel Lungerhausen took over command of 21st Panzer Division.

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