

PLANNING.

The early notification of the Army Plan enabled preparations to proceed in good time.

PREPARATIONS.

Accumulation of stores
Routes
Blooding of 51 HD
Trg for the battle
Preparation of dug in comms and HQ

SECURITY.

Controlled release of the plan to subordinate comds.
Method of gaining confidence of the Army

DECEPTION.

Constant veh densities from 1 Oct
Construction of routes
Dummy pipe line
Veh concentration in south
W/T dummy traffic
RAF - attacks in moonlight periods of Sep and Oct

CONCENTRATION

&

DEPLOYMENT.

Arty by D minus 1 by night
Fwd inf by D day " "
Remainder after 1900 hrs D day

EIGHTH ARMY PLAN.

Simultaneous attacks in north and south to destroy Axis forces in present areas

- (a) North - To make a gap for the armour to pass through
- (b) South - Similar purpose in order to contain 21 Pz Div with the object of destroying the Axis forces in their present posns.

PLAN NORTH.

Capture bridgehead to pass 10 Corps through before 1st light D plus 1.

9 Aust Div deception plan and its reaction.

PLAN SOUTH.

Capture smaller bridgehead to pass 7 Armd Div through to contain 21 Pz Div.

7 Armd Div to remain in being to retain BALANCE in EIGHTH ARMY

PHASES.

BREAK IN
DOG FIGHT
PURSUIT

SOUTH.

44 Div gapped first minefield by first light and second minefield following night 24/25 Oct.

7 Armd Div attempted to move through but took casualties from A Tk guns to the flank and was withdrawn.

1 F F F attacked HIMEIMAT but did not secure it.
Success with Tk Busters against KIEL GP.

RESULT.

Enemy deceived as to point of main attack.
18 tks and 21 Pz Div contained

NORTH.

Each of 9 Aust, 5 NZ Highland, 2 NZ and 1 SA Divs secured portion of their final objective.

10 Corps moved up - failed to debouch and resulting congestion drew fire.

ARMY PLAN.

30 Corps to gain a bridgehead through the enemy gun area - few if any, guns captured.

10 Corps fighting east of the final objective.

24/25 OCT.

9 Aust Div completed capture of objective - remaining divs improve their posns.

2 NZ Div Cav passed through and gain first objective.

9 Armd Bde lose 40 tks in attempting to move out across MITEIRIYA RIDGE.

Minefields proved far more extensive than we knew.

24 Armd Bde fought its way out and forced back after losing 60 tks - nothing achieved.

RESULTS.

PW statements - Germans expected attack in the south and were completely confident of defeating any attack.

Attack in south failed, that in the north succeeded rather belatedly and 10 Corps could not get through.

Surprise had been gained, but the big advantage from surprise had been lost and the attempt to pinch out the Italians in the centre had been abandoned.

The need of more inf in the north became apparent.
13 Corps ordered on to defensive and to release armour and inf for the north.

Eventually reduced to 6 inf bdes on 38 mile front.

7 Armd Div and remaining inf bdes moved north.

25/26 OCT.

'Eating the Guts' to be continued by 30 Corps (9 Aust Div) by attacking northwards to cut off the enemy in the north.

26 Aust Inf Bde to capture DEFILADE RIDGE and Pt 29.

2 NZ Div and 1 SA Div complete capture of MITEIRIYA RIDGE.

1 SA Div and 51 Highland Div take over more front to release 2 NZ Div and 9 Aust Div for further ops.

26/27 OCT.

153 Highland Bde take over to northing grid 300.

20 Aust Inf Bde relieves 26 Aust Inf Bde.

27/28 OCT.

Enemy counter-attacks increase in number and size.

100 tks reported in area - RAF bomb concentrations and attack does not develop.

28/29 OCT.

20 Aust Inf Bde - Secure flanks of 26 Aust Inf Bde attack.

26 Aust Inf Bde - 2/25 Aust Inf Bn with 46 RTR meet unknown and unexpected opposition - posn captured, but re-organisation necessary before attack can proceed.

New plan for 43 hrs later.

29 OCT.

4 R Sussex on Trig 23 - heavily counter-attacked and overrun after am had run out.

29 & 30 OCT.

Breast of enemy counter-attacks taken by 9 Aust Div.

30/31 OCT.

2/32 Bn to complete task allotted 2/23 Bn. B 11 area.

2/48 Bn and 2/24 Bn to attack along MAIN RD eastwards.

2/3 Aust Pnr Bn to attack northwards to the sea.

2/32 Bn attack succeeded.

2/48 and 2/24 Bns lost the barrage, attacked without it, lost heavily and came back to 2/32 Bn area.

2/3 Aust Pnr Bn finished up in the same area.

Unexpected rebound of DECEPTION PLAN 9 Aust Div.

31 OCT.

Enemy's violent counter-attacks. 18 Mk IIIs threaten right flank.

31 OCT/1 NOV.

GOC's decision to relieve 26 Bde, now very much depleted, by 24 Bde saved the right flank and probably the battle.

Capture of areas WOODCOCK and SNIPE.

RESUME OF PHASES.

- (a) 'Break In' had finally succeeded in north.
- (b) 'Dog Fight' being pursued successfully in the north and west.
- (c) 'Break through' had not been effected.

Building up of reserves by Army Comd to enable him to retain the initiative.

All German divs employed -

9 Aust Div had fought portions of all four 164, 90 Lt, 15 and 21 Pz.

Decision - while continuing northern threat along MAIN RD to which the enemy was most sensitive, to attack with 151 Bde and 152 Highland Bde westwards towards TELL EL AQQAQIR.

Attack was under comd 2 NZ Div and no doubt Army Comd made his purpose clear to all comds in view of the growing need for a Break Through.

1/2 NOV.

Inf attack succeeded.

SUPERCHARGE.

9 Armd Div went through and lost 80 out of 120 Shermans fighting against the German A Tk screen.

No definite gap available.

2 NOV.

Two sqns ROYALS and later 4 SA Armd Cs get out to the SW and and take toll of Axis thin-skinned vehs.

50 RTR and 2 Seaforths capture ring contour 863295 under hy arty barrage with very slight losses.

Pressure on 9 Aust Div weakening.

2/3 NOV.

7 Mot Bde capture TELL EL AQQAQIR.

3 NOV.

8 RTR and 5/7 Gordons take extremely hy casualties in attack SW on RAHMAN track owing to HE barrage being altered to SMOKE at the last moment.

3/4 NOV.

5 Ind Inf Bde with 50 PTR capture area Pt 45 859290.

This attack finally forced a considerable gap.

Armour of 10 Corps passed through in pursuit.

1 Armd Div directed on DABA

10 Armd Div directed on GAZAL and COASTAL RD

7 " " " " MERSA MATRUH and later CAPUZZO

NZ Div " " FUKA

9 Aust Div Cav and RAE dets clear rds to FDLs in Coastal area and test enemy line without getting through.

4/5 NOV.

24 Bde established a line to the coast.

20 Bde discover withdrawal and follow up with inf patrols, carrier patrols and a mob coy; the latter capturing the last German coy at SIDI ABD EL RAHMAN.

9 Aust Div Cav and RAE clear rds and aerodromes to DABA

6 NOV.

48 hrs delay caused to pursuit by rain.

RESULT.

Army Comd's object achieved to a large extent. PW over 33,000 incl 28000 Germans.

Estimated escaped. - 11,000 Germans, 14,000 Italians, 20 tks.

POINTS FROM THE BATTLE.

1. Vital necessity for presenting tps to the battle.
2. Value of being able to train for particular ops.
3. Confirmed that moonlight confers greater advantages on the attacker than on the defender.
4. Depth in defence of necessity demands depth in the penetration required for success.
5. Limited operational value of tks in mined areas or against an A Tk gun screen; the latter will become an inf task. For ops with inf at night in minefield areas tks should wait and come/just before first light to posns from which to sp inf against counter-attack.
6. Inf after a temporary eclipse is restored to its posn as Queen of the Battlefield.
7. Concentrated arty fire is an effective deterrent in inf and armd counter-attack.
8. Arty control should be vested in the hands of the highest comd who can effectively control at any stage of the battle (this is entirely in accordance with previous teaching.)
9. Security is still obtainable in big ops.
10. With careful organisation and staff work, large forces can be assembled for battle in comparatively small areas.
11. Surprise can be obtained despite aerial observation and in spite of apparently obvious preparations such as the 10 Corps routes, sup dumps and tp concentrations.

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