KASSERINE PASS
BATTLES

Readings
Volume I, Part 2

U.S. ARMY
CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY
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1st Armored Division, Report of Operations,
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1943
1. a. Enemy is concentrated in strength in the vicinity of Faidham and Thrace with that estimated to be not less than one armored division, (the 21st) understrength in tons, (about 75 estimated). Strong patrol activity was reported during the night of 18-19 February at 5-6462, 3-6450, 8-7500 and 5-7832. One battalion of tanks was reported at S-7628 and another battalion (10th Panzer Division) was reported between KASSIANE and S-9573. Heavy two-way traffic on the UN/FAHNA Road.

b. Our troops are holding the passes as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lt. Col. Bowen, Commanding</th>
<th>Col. Walvert, Commanding</th>
<th>Col. Stark, Commanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C T, 3d BN (2d 81)</td>
<td>1st BN, 106 Inf</td>
<td>1st BN, 26 Inf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det 443 CA</td>
<td>1 Ranger BN</td>
<td>1st BN, 26 Inf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Co, 13 3d</td>
<td>125 Fa BN</td>
<td>33 Fa BN (-1 Stry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Co, 106 CA</td>
<td>8 Co, 702 CA</td>
<td>1 Co, 105 CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Co, 213 CA</td>
<td>Det 443 CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36 Fa BN (-Det)</td>
<td>D Co, 105 CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Inf, French Inf</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. The 1st Arm Div will act defensively to protect the town of FASASKA and supply installations there agreed attack from the south and southwest, being prepared meanwhile to counterattack to the southeast to restore the BEHA position in the event that position is penetrated by hostile attack.

**MAPS**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIV RESERVE</th>
<th>CC B (REINERT)</th>
<th>DIV RESERVE</th>
<th>CC A (HALLETT)</th>
<th>CC A (HALLETT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GS, GC, 1 Co, 443 CA</td>
<td>Co, GC, CC, GS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 Inf (-2d &amp; 3d BN)</td>
<td>6 Inf (-2d &amp; 3d BN)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1st BN, 13 3d (-1 Co)</td>
<td>1st BN, 13 3d (-1 Co)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>91 Fa BN (-30 Co)</td>
<td>2d BN, 6 Inf</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68 Fa BN (-30 Co)</td>
<td>27 Fa BN</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>701 TD (-1 Co)</td>
<td>601 TD (-1 Co)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Co, 105 3d Gr</td>
<td>7 Co, 16 3d Gr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16 Guns, 443 Ca</td>
<td>16 Guns, 443 Ca</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Inclosure A1
b. CC "A" will meet and repel any enemy attack from the west through the valley between Hill 4944 and Hill 5151. The enemy forces will be first engaged and defeated or delayed in the vicinity of the eastern exits of the valley. Infantry defensive positions will be reconstituted but not occupied; a proportion of anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns will be located, dug in and concealed to effect surprise flank and rear fire on an attacking hostile force. It is contemplated that if CC "A" is forced back by overwhelming enemy strength, it will be ordered to retire while executing a temporary delay, to the vicinity of Hill 1724 (S-356). Here it will begin enemy resistance and prepare to execute a pincer counterattack, in conjunction with CC "B", upon an enemy penetration north of Hill 1724.

CC "A" will also be prepared to participate with other elements of the division in repelling an enemy attack in sectors other than its own. CC "A" will occupy artillery to place fire in front of the minefields being laid at (or near) S-106 and S-356 and at S-235.

CC "A" will establish guards on the minefields at S-106 and at S-235.

g. CC "B" from the general vicinity of its present position will be prepared to execute on Division order the following alternate missions:

1. Counterattack, or reinforcement of the Hill 4944 Hill 5151 position in case of threatened enemy penetration.

2. Movement to position covered from ground observation in vicinity of Point S-4072 as Division reserve in case of enemy attack from the west. From that position CC "B" will be prepared to execute a pincer counterattack (in conjunction with CC "A") against an enemy penetration from the west through the valley, meanwhile placing a force (to include Tank Destroyer guns) to block enemy passage north through the pass at S-3075.

3. Counterattack to restore the Hill 4944 Hill 5151 position in the case of an enemy penetration.

CC "B" will in the meanwhile place an appropriate number of tanks to support the position of the 3d Inf in the passes south of Hill 4944 Hill 5151.

x. (1) Arab traffic into our lines (except through minefields) will be permitted. Arab traffic toward the enemy will not be permitted.

(2) Any passes (in addition to those at which minefields are now being emplaced) through the mountains which form our defensive line, will be mined and covered by artillery fire. Reconnaissance to locate such passes will be effected by combat commando as follows:

- CC "A" West of the Tabaqah - CC "B" 2070 Road.
- CC "B" East of the Tabaqah - CC "A" 2070 Road and West of the Tabaqah - 200 Cemeteries Road.
4. See Administrative Order Number 5.

5. 

a. 

\[ M \text{ in:} \quad \text{m-4474,} \]
\[ F \text{ in:} \quad \text{m-4663,} \]
\[ C \text{ in:} \quad \text{To be reported.} \]
\[ C \text{ in:} \quad \text{m-4665,} \]

b. Instructions regarding use of the thrust line and a new set of reference points will be issued separately.

Commanding

A TRUE COPY:

[Signature]

[Name]

[Title]

[Location]
OPERATIONAL INSTRUCTION

NUMBER . . . . . . . 6

1. CC "A" will be prepared to carry out the Division mission in the valley between DJ BOU DJELLAL and BABET EL SID - DJ ANOUAL, that is, to act defensively to protect the town of TEBESSA and supply installations thereat against attack from the South and Southwest, being prepared meanwhile to counter-attack to the Southeast to restore the DERNAIA position in the event that position is penetrated by hostile attack. If suddenly attacked or if communications fail, appropriate action will be taken at once.

2. The execution of the above mission requires the following.

a. Minefields in the mountain passes to be guarded and backed up by artillery fire.

b. Disposition for the counter-attack, or reinforcement of the EL MA EL ABIOB position in case of threatened enemy penetration.

c. Close liaison with the troops holding the DERNAIA position to determine the routes of approach and most profitable direction of counter-attack.

d. The preparation of plans for the attack on any enemy forces for entrance into the valley by the Eastern exits.

e. Prepare plans for blocking the passes through the mountain range, just South of TEBESSA, by the use of mines and defensive action.

NOTE: Cross fire from tanks hidden in Arab homes, hay stacks, etc. or under other cover and the clever use of supporting fires, mine fields, and hidden anti-tank guns will be used to trap at a disadvantage any enemy tanks entering the valley.

ORLANDO WARD
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding.
FIELD ORDER

NO. . . 7

MAPS: GS,GS 4180 - Sheets 18,28,39 - Scale: 1/200,000.
GS,GS 4227 - Sheets 10,11,13,14 - Scale: 1/200,000.

1. a. See Intelligence Summary.

b. (1) Forces of the British 6th Armd Div and the 34th Inf Div held a position at SBIBA, and the passes at 0-1905 and at T-1590; the pass Northwest of KASSERINE is the only one available to the enemy.

(2) Forces of the Ist Inf Div and French troops under General Welwart hold the DERMA position and the pass South of EL MA EL ABIOD; part of the Ist Inf Div made a successful attack East from a point near S-7574 in the afternoon of February 22.

2. The 1st Armd Div (less detachments) with attached troops will hold the enemy South of the general line DJ HAINRA - THALA, covering the left flank of the II Corps and preventing a German move to the West.

TROOPS

DIV RCN

CO, 81 Rcn, Comd

81 Rcn Bn (-A Co)

CC A (DIV RES) (McQUILLIN)

5 Inf (-2 & 3 Bns)
1 Bn, 13 AR
3d Bn, 16th AR
91 FA (-B Btry)
A Co, 16th Engr
701 TD
16 Guns, 443 AA

26TH ARMD BRIG, (REINF)

(NICHOLSON)

26th Armored Brigade (Brig)
1 Co, 66th Cav
1 Co, 86th Chemical Mtn
B & D Cos, 105th AA
34th FA Bn
60th FA Bn
84th FA Bn

DIV RES

26 Inf (-2d & 3d Bns)
3d Bn, 6th Inf
16th Engr (-A, C, & D Cos)
Prov. En, 1 AR

CC B (ROBINETT)

13 AR (-1st Bn & HQ & I Co, 3d Bn)
2d Bn, 6 Inf
27 FA Bn
68 FA Bn
694 TD
601 TD (-C Co)
D Co, 16 Engr
2d Bn, 16 Inf
3d Bn, 39 Inf
16 Guns, 443 AA

NOTE: The dispositions indicated above will be checked for accuracy, and report of error made to Division Headquarters.

3. a. The 81 Rcn Bn will operate initially in the gap between DJ BOU EL HANEEHE and DJ EL ATROUS to cover the left flank of the Division, and will reconnoiter through the pass East of DJ EL ATROUS to establish contact with the enemy.
81 Rcn Bn will shift its main forces into the latter pass, on Division order, if that pass is reported clear.

b. CC B will execute the Division mission within the zone:
   West Boundary: REKKARIA (incl) - ridge top of DJ ES SIF to point 1116 road-trail junction at S-8379 (incl)
   East Boundary: DJ EZ ZABA (N-9914) - DJ DOULES (T-0556).

c. The 26th Arm Brig (rein) will execute the Division mission within the zone:
   West Boundary: Railroad line (actual) RAIDRA - KASSERINE (incl)
   East Boundary: DJ EZ ZABA (N-9914) - DJ DOULES (T-0509).

d. CC A will remain in Division Reserve in general area East of HAIDRA. It will institute route reconnaissance to enable it to reinforce the positions either of CC B or the 26th Arm Brigade, if that action be ordered. It will maintain all elements of the command in positions permitting them to be moved East or West. It will anticipate and formulate plans for a counterattack through the THALA or DJ HAINRA position.

e. The 16th Engr Bn (-det) will continue necessary maintenance on the Road HAIDRA - DJ HAINRA, and will conduct route reconnaissance within the zone: DJ HAINRA - THALA - TADJEROUINE - KALAAT ES SENAH - EL MERIDJ - MORROTT - TEBESSA.

f. Other elements of the Division Reserve will remain in present areas East of HAIDRA, reorganizing and awaiting orders.

X. (1) All elements of the Division will fully inform personnel of the existing situation, to permit intelligent action by all ranks. Action will be tenacious, and harassing. Through aggressive action, night and day, the enemy armor and personnel will be waylaid, or approached by stealth, and destroyed. Great emphasis will be placed on the use of sticky bombs and "Molotov Cocktails" to inflict the maximum losses upon the enemy. Our armor must be so utilized as to inflict damaging losses yet maintain itself at effective fighting strength. It must be given adequate artillery support.

X. (2) A strong counter offensive (on Division order) to destroy the enemy North of the bottleneck of the KASSERINE pass must be kept in mind.

4. See Administrative Order Number 5.

5. Command Post:
   T ARMY DIV: N-6109
   CC A: to be reported
   CC B: S-6864
   26 Arm Brigade: THALA
   81 Rcn Bn: to be reported

ORLANDO WARD
Commanding.
HEADQUARTERS 1ST ARMORED DIVISION
A.P.O. 251 c/o Postmaster
New York City, N.Y.

23 February 1943.

OPERATIONAL INSTRUCTION

NUMBER . . . . . . . . 6 )

1. CC "A" will be prepared to execute with a striking force, consisting of purely combat elements of Hq CC "A", 3d Bn, 13 AR (-2 Cos), 1st Bn, 13 AR, 701 TD Bn, 1st Bn, 6 Inf and 91 FA Bn, each of the following missions upon receipt of the message "Execute Plan A" or "Execute Plan B".

2. PLAN "A":

A counterattack by CC "A" to supplement the efforts of the 26th Armored Brig at THALA. Approach should be made rapidly via the quickest route, and (according to a hasty reconnaissance) must bottleneck through THALA. Further reconnaissance and liaison with the 26 Armored Brig will be made to determine best route and direction. Brig Nicholson will take over command of both forces in the event of such commitment of CC "A".

3. PLAN "B":

A counterattack by CC "A" to supplement the efforts of CC "B" in the vicinity of DJ HAINBA. The approach should be made rapidly via the quickest route. Reconnaissance and liaison with CC, CC "B" will be made to determine best route and direction of attack. This action, if ordered, will be coordinated by CC, 1 AD.

4. The enemy situation may require that a reinforcement of a defensive line (placing tanks in hull down firing positions) be effected, rather than a counterattack. Such action will be additionally contemplated by commanders concerned.

ORLANDO WARD
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding.
Field Order: Dictated by General Harmon, 1640 hrs., February 24, 1943.

Howze Plan will be executed 0630 hrs., tomorrow, 25 February, 1943. The limit of artillery fire to the left for the 1st Armored Division and to the right for the 6th Armored Division will be the wadi that goes through Kasserine Pass. Artillery fire to the left of the wadi only on call from the 6th Armored Division. The 1st Armored Division will send an artillery liaison officer with radio to THALA AT once to report to the Commanding General, 6th Armored Division.

Attack must be made on time. High ground overlooking the Pass will be the objective of both divisions. Corps artillery will furnish supporting fires to be coordinated by Force Commander and artillery officer, II Corps. Air support will be furnished by Corps. When position is captured the high ground overlooking the Pass will be organized for defense by the combat team from the 1st Infantry Division making the attack. The attack will be made primarily by infantry and supporting artillery. The artillery of the 9th Division under Gen. Irwin is attached to the 6th Armored Division for the attack. These battalions will be in the British sector under their control but supporting fire for the American force may be called for through the artillery liaison officer with the 6th Armored Division. Reconnaissance after the Pass is captured and the mines cleared will be pushed by the 1st Armored Division to Kasserine then south to Feriana. Reconnaissance from 6th Armored Division will be pushed through Kasserine north to Solba.

E. H. Harmon
Maj. Gen., U.S.A.
25 February 1943.

A. 5th Division

1. See G-2 estimate.
2. See boundary.
3. See overlay.
4. 9th Div.

(a) Assemble 150 within 2,500 yards of El. on El. 250 - 310 (both inclusive).

(b) See boundary.

(c) See overlay.

1st Ranger Div.

1. When 555th F.P.S. is captured and secured, assemble north of El. on El. 250 - 310 in Corps Reserve.

2. Maintain contact with Yeomanry and 9th Div.

3. Release elements of 39th Inf. to 9th Div. in 250 Corridor area.

2nd Division

1. Maintain contact with 167th CT.

2. Maintain contact with 168th CT upon arrival.

3. Release elements of 30th Inf. to 9th Div. in 250 Corridor area.

34th Division

1. Maintain contact with 168th CT.

2. Release 3rd Inf. upon arrival.

3. Maintain contact with Yeomanry.

16th RCT

Assemble and reorganize vicinity of 16th RCT as relieved.

1st Derby Yeomanry

1. 1st Derby Yeomanry. See overlay.

2. 1st TB Group. Disperse units as follows:

39th TB BN - back up established base.

60th TB BN - await deployment for reorganization.

61st TB BN - in reserve.

701st TB BN - remain attached 1st and 2nd Divs.

5th Division

1. 751st TB BN - upon arrival, 751st TB BN to be attached 30th Div.
UNCLASSIFIED

20 February 1943 to 25 February 1943

1. 20 February 1943. At about 1030 hrs the Commanding General received from the 1st Armored Division orders that he was to move his command without delay to THALA by way of TEBESSA - HAIDRA, where he would assume command of all troops defending the KASSERINE Pass. At this time many officers of all units and of the C/C "B" staff were reconnoitering terrain to be traversed in case the command were to act in accordance with plans issued by the CG, 1st A.D. The command moved at 1300, preceded by the CG party.

At about 1600 hrs the CG met Gen Fredendall about 4 miles south of THALA on the THALA - KASSERINE road. He was there informed that the enemy had broken through the KASSERINE Pass and was pushing to the north on THALA, west toward TEBESSA. Our forces were in retreat up both avenues. C/C B was ordered to move southeast from HAIDRA, secure the passes of DJ al HAIDRA, assume command of all U.S. troops southwest of OUBD EL FATAH in the FOUSSANA Valley, stop advance of the enemy into that sector, drive him out of the valley and restore our position in the KASSERINE pass.

That part of the command which had passed HAIDRA counter-marched and went into assembly areas about 1 mile southeast of HAIDRA. Unit C.O.'s were called to the CP which had been established at 1725 hrs just south of HAIDRA, advised of the new situation and ordered into assembly positions shown on overlay B. Units closed in these areas by 2400 hrs. 1 heavy section of the 601st TD Bn was attached to the 27th FA Bn. The Reconnaissance Co, and the remaining heavy guns of the 601st TD Bn were attached to the 2nd Bn, 13th AR.

The C.O., 601st TD Bn, was charged with establishing a straggler line along the north - south road just east of DJ al HAIDRA and all available staff officers of the command were ordered out to contact, assemble and help reorganize units retreating from the KASSERINE Pass.

At 2300 hrs, CG and S-3 left the CP to meet Brig Nicholson, British 6th Arm Div, under whose command CIC B was to operate.

2. 21 February 1943. The CG and the S-3 met Brig McNabb, the BGS of 1st Army, and the CG, 26th Arm Div, in the THALA Post Office at 0200 hrs. In the absence of the commander, Brig Nicholson, it was agreed by all parties at the conference that 26th Arm Div, moving south from THALA and C/C B, moving southeast from vicinity DJ al HAIDRA, would advance toward the KASSERINE Pass if possible with infantry elements, but would not commit the armor in either sector. Brig McNabb stated that II Corps would be informed that it must coordinate the action. The conference was concluded and the CG departed for the CP just south of HAIDRA.

By 0600 hrs, the 601st TD Bn, less detachments, had commenced feeding regrouped stragglers just west of the Pass at S-7088. Units which were being reassembled at this time included the 3rd Bn, 59thInf, the 1st Bn, 26 CT, the 894th TD Bn (almost entirely intact), very small groups of the 19th Engrs' Bn, and the 33rd FA Bn. Personnel of the 805th TD Bn, supposedly in the area, were never contacted.

At 1500 hrs, the C.O., 601st TD Bn, with the 3rd Bn, 59thInf, Co D, 16th Engrs attached, was near the west sides of the passes at S-6784.
S-7088 and S-7384. These passes were completely organized for defense by 2400 hrs, except that the northern-most pass had not been mined due to a shortage of mines and wire, then on order.

At 1530, the 2nd Bn, 13th AR (plus detachments) which had then picked up the remainder of "I" Company, 13th AR, was attacked by approximately 20 enemy tanks. The attack was repulsed with the loss to the enemy of 10 tanks and 10 other vehicles and an unknown number of infantry. We had no losses. The 27th FA Bn, which was supporting the tank battalion, was dive-bombed at 1630 hrs by 10 Stukas and suffered 9 casualties; 1 H/T destroyed. The enemy retired at about 1800 hrs.

At about 1600 hrs 68th Arm'd FA arrived in the area just west of the pass at S-7088 to operate under this command.

3. 22 February 1943. 2nd Bn 13th AR reported enemy burning vehicles and apparently planning to withdraw 0050 hrs. The 2nd Bn, 6th Inf and 2nd Bn, 16th Inf were ordered to patrol actively to their front. No contact was gained with the enemy. At 0845 hrs the 2nd Bn 6th Inf and the 2nd Bn, 16th Inf were relieved by the 33rd FA Bn in front of it were attacked by an estimated force of 1 Bn of tanks and 1 Regt ofInf supported by arty up to 155mm sn. Enemy tanks did not close, but attacked by fire only. 1 Btry of the 33rd FA Bn was captured, penetration was made between the 2 Inf Bns and the left of the 2nd Bn, 6th Inf was threatened when the CG sent Co "G", 13th AR, to support the latter Bn. The 2nd Bn of the 13th AR was not employed since it was facing a tank force approximately equal to it in size. By 1200 hrs the enemy attack seemed to have slowed down considerably and by 1400 hrs it had been so stopped that the 2nd Bn, 6th Inf, was able to counterattack, restore its position and recapture the equipment of Btry C of the 33rd FA Bn.

Commencing at 0700 hrs the 2nd Bn, 13th AR, was taken under fire by a continuous but ineffective enemy artillery. During the counterattack of the 2nd Bn, 6th Inf., the 2nd Bn, 13th AR was able to disorganize and capture enemy infantry which were driven toward its position. Over 200 prisoners were taken. Throughout the day, the 27th FA, although not in direct support of the 2nd Bn, 6th Inf, fired over 2000 rounds on targets of opportunity which present themselves in front of the Inf Bn. The repulse of the enemy was in great part due to the accuracy and quantity of fire delivered by the 27th FA.

At about 0930 hrs mess orders was received from the 1st AD stating that that unit was taking charge of operations in the TRAIJA - TASSERINE - RAIDRA area and that its CP was moving to the area as soon as possible. Its right boundary was
governed as an East—West line through DJ EL SIP to cross-roads at S-6379. That
mid-afternoon, the 1st Bn., of the 16th CT without our knowledge moved into passes
at S-6378 and S-7098 with orders from CG, 1st Inf. Div. to defend them. Accordingly
3rd Bn., 35th Inf., was ordered to move to defend the passes at S-7393 and S-7695.
Occupation of the passes was completed by both Bns by 2400 hrs. Co "P" 16th Engs,
completed mining of pass at S-7393 at 1800 hrs. Dispositions of troops are as
shown on overlay #3.

4. 22 February 1943. 2nd Bn., 13th AR moved at daybreak to occupy positions
in wadi at S-7586, at 0900 hrs one Co of tanks made a reconnaissance in force
to the vicinity of S-7890. No enemy encountered. At 1700 hrs the Bn completed
an ordered move to a position in the vicinity of S-6378. The 27th and 68th Arm.
FA Bns moved up behind it. No enemy yet encountered. Bn Co reconnoitered as
far east as vertical 85 - no enemy contact.

At 0935 the 2nd Bn., 6th Inf., assembled in the vicinity of S-7180. The 16th
CT was advised to fill the gap thus created on its front. At this point no sa-

tisfactory communication had as yet been established with the 2nd Bn., 16th CT, which
was under our command in the sector of the 1st Inf. Div. Just after dark, the 2nd
Bn. of the 13th AR dropped back about one mile to bivouac for the night.

During this night the RAF bombed KASSERINE intermittently.

The 16th CT came under our command at 2200 hrs.

At about 1100 the 894th TD Bn was ordered to assemble in rear of the pass
at S-7098 and to send light patrols to the north to the area south and west
of THALI. The balance of the Bn when assembled was to move to the right flank
of the 2nd Bn., 13th AR and push run toward the KASSERINE Pass along the northern
slope of DJ CAFBAL.

Reports had been received starting before dawn that the enemy occupied
THALI or that the 6 A.D. was defending along a northeast—southwest line
about four miles south of THALI, thereby encountering our left flank.

For dispositions of the command as of 2400 hrs, see overlay #4.

The results of our operations this date: None.

5. At about 0300 hrs, CG, 1st AD, arrived at our CP and informed the CG
that the command had the mission of driving the enemy from the valley, destroy-
ing as much of him as possible and re-capturing the KASSERINE Pass. The attack
was to be coordinated with the 26th Arm. Div. moving south from THALI by Maj.
Gen. Harmon, Deputy Commander of the II Corps. The enemy had apparently with-
drawn from before THALI, and our left seemed secure.

The CG, C/C B, submitted a plan for the capture of the Pass which was later
adopted by the Deputy Commander. The plan provided for infantry to work onto both
shoulders of the Pass from the north and west, the infantry to be closely fol-

owed by a tank—artillery team — C/C B moving from the west, 6 AD from the north.

The 2nd Bn., 13th AR, with One Company of Infantry attached, closely supported
by the 27th and 68th FA Bns moved forward towards the KASSERINE Pass at daylight.
The 601st TD Bn (less Co "C") with Co "O" of the 13th AR attached, moved to the
north side of OUED EL FATAIJ just prior to daylight and from the vicinity of S-
8078 moved forward down, protecting the left flank of the 2nd Bn., 13th AR
and sending reconnaissance troops to the THALI Pass. The 894th TD Bn was on the
right flank of the 2nd Bn., 13th AR. At 1000 hrs, the Bn Co of
the 601st TD Bn and of the 13th AR was at contact at a point one
mile west of the KASSERINE Pass. At 1400 hrs 2nd bn, 13th AR, received artillery fire in the vicinity of S-8776. At that time, orders were issued for units to advance to positions as shown on overlay #5. The 2nd bn, 6th Arm Inf was to secure a line of departure for the 16th CT as shown on that overlay. Concerning at dark, the 16th CT be an movement to position as shown on that overlay, and by 2400 hrs, all troops were in position as shown on overlay #5.

During the late afternoon, Provisional Inf, detachments organized from the 894th TD by its C.O., had worked its way SW of Dj El Amna towards Dj Chaoual, where it came under mortar and machine gun fire. It is believed that the fire this detachment returned had driven the rear elements of the enemy off the SW shoulder of the KASSERINE Pass, by 2000 hrs. This was not known until the following day, because of lack of communication with that detachment.

6. 25 February 1943. Following a 30 - minutes artillery preparation, the 16th CT attacked at 0630 to seize and secure the SW shoulder of the KASSERINE Pass. No enemy was contacted. By 1030 hrs the 2nd bn, 13th AR, reached NY south of the Pass and Co "D", 16th Engrs, moved forward to begin removing mines at that time. Lines in the pass were removed by 1400 and the road cleared to KASSERINE by 1800. Rem Co, 17th AR, reached KASSERINE at 1800. The 894th TD bn, with the 2nd bn, 6th Inf attached, outposted the 16th CT with small elements of each arm in the vicinity of KASSERINE. The 16th CT continued Rem of the NE shoulder of the pass at about 1700 hrs in order to begin relieving the Guards' Brigade, from their positions at daylight of the 26th February.

7. In conclusion, it is felt that the attack (which was eventually launched in the air) could have met the enemy successfully had more infantry been assigned to C/Co 3 sooner and had its left flank been cured by more vigorous action by the 6 AD south of TELA. Tanks and artillery with little infantry cannot maintain contact in close terrain, especially at night.

P. L. ROSEBETT, 
brig Gen, Cbst Co. & "D". 
Commanding.

F. H. RUSSELL, 
Lt. Col., Cav., 
S-3.
OVERLAY #3

Disposition of Troops c/c "B"
As of 2400 hrs., 22 Feb 43
Map - TUNISIA - 1/50,000
Sheets 75 + 83

Ruscel
S-3

Robinett
Comdg
OVERLAY #4

Disposition of troops c/"B"
As of 2400 hrs, 23 Feb 43
Map - Tunisia - 1/200,000
Sheets 10 + 13

Russell
S-3

Robinett
comdy
A Factual Summary of the Combat Operations of the 1st Infantry Division in North Africa and Sicily During World War II (Extract)
6. Lessons learned from the ORAN Operation

Immediately following the French surrender at ORAN, intensive efforts were made, by the Division, to correct the deficiencies noted in that operation.

The use of night maneuver and night combat. A severe setback had been suffered by the 18th Infantry Regiment, during its initial attack against ST. CLOUD, on 8-9 Nov. Their initial attacks had bogged down, and considerable casualties had been incurred. This impasse was due to a lack of accurate preliminary reconnaissance and a lack of maneuverability by the assault battalions. However, this grave deficiency was corrected by the 18th Infantry Regiment, on the battle-field, on the night of 9-10 Nov., '42, by the following measures:

The 1st Battalion was held to contain the enemy forces at ST. CLOUD.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions were withdrawn to bypass ST. CLOUD under cover of darkness; and by night maneuver were directed on to their assigned locations, for the assault on ORAN, early on 10 November.

After seeing the results of this particular night maneuver, the 1st Infantry Division had become completely sold on the results that might be attained, by the skillful use of night maneuver and night attacks.

This night maneuver at ORAN was the fore-runner of many boldly executed night attacks, launched later, during the hard fought campaigns against the Germans in TUNISIA and later in SICILY. The German Panzer Divisions learned to fear the dreaded night attacks of the 1st Infantry Division, which invariably resulted in maximum damage to the enemy, and quick tactical success for the 1st Division.

II. THE INITIAL COMBAT OPERATIONS IN TUNISIA

1. Detachment of 1st Division Units to TUNISIA.

Hardly had the 1st Division regrouped and reorganized, after the surrender of the French forces at ORAN, on 10 Nov., '42, when valorous units of the Division were hastily detached into TUNISIA. This was done, as an emergency measure, on orders of the Allied High Command, to bolster the Allied defenses against the rapid German build-up on the Eastern front. These early troop movements were as follows:

The 3rd Battalion, 26th Infantry, Lt. Col. John W. Bowen, Comdg., left by transport planes and gliders, on 15 Nov., '42, to outpost the southern approaches to the ATLAS Mountains, in the GAFSA area in Southern TUNISIA.

The 18th Infantry Regiment, Col. Frank Greet, Comdg., the 32nd Field Artillery Battalion, and the 5th Field Artillery Battalion left later in November '42, to reinforce the British V Corps, then fighting against heavy odds in Northern TUNISIA.

The 26th Infantry Regiment, Col. Alec. Stark, Comdg., (less the 3rd Battalion - already detached) together with the 33rd Field Artillery Battalion, left early in Jan. '43, to join the American II Corps, in Southern TUNISIA.

The detachment of these 1st Division Units, to various Allied Task Forces, then operating under American, British and French command, in Eastern TUNISIA, was a matter of grave concern to 1st Division
Headquarters, still located back in ORAN. It was reported that the Division Commander of the 1st Infantry Division had inquired at the Allied Force General Headquarters, at ALGIERS, as to "Whether or not this was a private War? Or, could any Son-of-a-gun get into it?"

Finally on 18 Jan., '43, the remainder of the 1st Infantry Division, together with Division Headquarters, was ordered into general reserve in Central TUNISIA. Later on 27 Jan., '43, the 1st Infantry Division (less its detached elements) took over a combined American-French Sector, in the OUSELTIA VALLEY, in Central TUNISIA.

III. THE ROLE OF THE 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION IN THE DEFENSE AGAINST THE GERMAN BREAK-THROUGH AT THE KASERINE PASS (See Battle Map #2)

To visualize the role of the 1st Infantry Division, in its operations against the German break-through, at the KASERINE PASS, will require a brief explanation of these items, in connection therewith:

The distribution of Allied Forces in Eastern TUNISIA.
The location of units of the 1st Infantry Division (on all fronts).
The defensive set-up of the American II Corps, in Southern TUNISIA.
The German recapture of the FAID PASS, early in Feb., '43.
The German break-through at FAID PASS, 14 Feb., '43.
The German break-through at the KASERINE PASS, 21 Feb., '43.
The later Allied counter-attack.

1. The Distribution of Allied Troops in Eastern TUNISIA, as of 1 Feb., '43.

The Northern Tunisian Sector was basically a British Sector, under the British V Corps (Gen. Allfrey, Comdg.). It had been reinforced, in Nov. and Dec. of '42, by detached units from the American 1st Infantry Division and the American 1st Armored Division.

The Central Tunisian Sector was basically a French Sector, under the French XIX Corps (Gen. Koeltz, Comdg.). This Sector had been reinforced from time to time, by American Units from the 1st Infantry Division, the 1st Armored Division and from the 34th Infantry Division.

On 27 Jan., '43, elements of the 1st Infantry Division (under 1st Division command) took over the critical OUSELTIA VALLEY Sector, under the French XIX Corps, in Central TUNISIA. The 1st Infantry Division was then temporarily reinforced by a French Groupment (including 6 French Infantry battalions).

The Southern Tunisian Sector was basically an American Sector, under the American II Corps (Gen. Fredendall, Comdg.). The troops, in this sector, had been gradually built up into a heterogeneous group of Special Task Forces, as listed below:

**American Units**

- 26th Infantry Regiment (less the 2nd Battalion), of the 1st Infantry Division.
- 33rd Field Artillery Battalion, of the 1st Infantry Division.
- 168th Infantry Regiment, of the 34th Infantry Division.

9
The 1st Ranger Battalion (a specially trained unit of high combat value).

Combat Commands "A" and "C", of the 1st Armored Division.

The 19th Combat Engineer Battalion (a newly organised engineer unit).

Various Corps Artillery units.

French Units

The French Constantine Division (Gen. Welvert, Comdg.) Made up of brave, willing soldiers, but under strength and ill equipped.

British Units

The Derbyshire Yeomanry Reconnaissance Squadron (a well trained reconnaissance squadron - Detached from the British 6th Armored Division).

NOTE: Other American and British Units attached later.

2. The Location of all Units of the 1st Infantry Division.

Although the units of the 1st Infantry Division were deployed on a wide front (under British, French and American command - in Northern, Central and Southern TUNISIA) at the time of the German break-through, at FAID PASS, it will be noted that eventually all units of the 1st Infantry Division were later committed in Southern TUNISIA, against the German break-through forces. The actual location of these 1st Division units, at the time of the German break-through, at FAID, on 14 Feb., '43, was as follows:

1st Infantry Division Units in Northern TUNISIA. (then attached to the British V Corps)

18th Infantry Regiment

32nd Field Artillery Battalion

1st Infantry Division Units in Central TUNISIA. (then attached to the French XIX Corps)

1st Infantry Division Headquarters

1st Infantry Division Special Troops

19th Infantry Regiment

2nd Battalion only (of 26th Infantry Regiment)

32nd Field Artillery Battalion

5th Field Artillery Battalion (released from British V Corps - 7 Feb., '43.

1st Combat Engineer Battalion

1st Infantry Division Units in Southern TUNISIA (then attached to the American II Corps)
26th Infantry Regiment (less the 2nd Battalion)

33rd Field Artillery Battalion

3. Defensive Set-up of the American II Corps, in Southern TUNISIA.

Importance of the FAID PASS

The Southern Tunisian Sector, assigned to the American II Corps, included a stretch of wild desert country, covering a frontage of 200 miles. It was interspersed with a series of precipitous mountain ridges, extending from Northeast to Southwest. The FAID PASS (located in the north central portion of Southern TUNISIA) provided the most practicable route of approach, through the south end of the GRAND DORSAL Mountain Range. Control of this Pass was vitally important.

For the Allies, their control of the Pass would deny the movement of German mechanized forces into the western areas, of Southern TUNISIA.

For the Germans, their control of the Pass would provide the most feasible, direct route of approach for their mechanized forces, in their future plans for offensive action, which were based on securing more maneuver space to the west. Additional maneuver space would be needed later by the German Africa Corps, then withdrawing in the East, towards TUNISIA, before the advancing British 8th Army.

Early Operations in the FAID PASS

The tactical importance of the FAID PASS had been apparent, since Dec., '42, to the commanders of the Allied Task Forces, who first operated in Southern TUNISIA. These early Task Force units included:

The 3rd Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, of the 1st Infantry Division, (Lt. Col. John Bowen, Comdg.). This battalion was then based on GAFSA, with instructions to outpost the GAFSA-SENI D area, and to reconnoiter east and northeast thereof.

Elements of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment (Lt. Col. Edson D. Raff, Comdg.).

One Company of Tank Destroyer (commanded by Capt. Gilbert Ellman).

Detached Infantry - Artillery elements from the French Constantine Division, (Gen. Welvert, Comdg.).

The strategic value of the FAID PASS seemed obvious to Raff and Bowen. So, while acting on their own initiative in that area, they decided to take the place, for self-protection. With a makeshift Task Force, made up from these units noted above, they took the Pass in a surprise night attack, early in Dec., '42.

Lt. Col. Raff then arranged with Gen. Welvert to garrison the Pass with elements of the French Constantine Division, as it was necessary for Lt. Col. Bowen to return with his Battalion to the GAFSA-FERIANA area.

Had the Allied High Command seen fit, at that time, to organize a strong defending force for the for the FAID PASS, with adequate artillery and anti-tank support, a great deal of their later difficulties,
at the time of the German break-through, might have been avoided.


Commencing in Jan. ’43, the American units were gradually reinforced in Southern TUNISIA.

The remainder of the 26th Infantry Regimental Combat Team (less the 2nd Battalion, then in Central TUNISIA), and with the 33rd Field Artillery Battalion attached, arrived in that area late in Jan. ’43. It was placed initially in a reserve position near SBEITLA (about 32 miles west of FAID PASS). At this time, the 3rd Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, was still in GAFSA.

Combat Command “A”, of the 1st Armored Division, came into the area and occupied a position in the SIDI BOU ZID area, west of the FAID PASS, in Jan. ’43.

During this period, the 168th Infantry Regiment, of the 34th Infantry Division, was in position on the high ground, northwest of the FAID PASS.

5. Corps Status of the Southern Tunisian Sector.

Major General Fredennall arrived about 10 Jan., ’43, established the American II Corps CP at TEBESSA, and assumed command of the II Corps Sector, in Southern TUNISIA.

During this interval, the G-2, of the American II Corps, predicted an all-out German attack against the FAID PASS. And, Gen. Fredennall requested reinforcements and an opportunity to regroup the American forces, in this sector, under better cohesion and control.

But the British 1st Army Headquarters (under which the American II Corps operated) insisted that the expected German main attack would be launched farther north, in the PICHON area, where it had come before. Meanwhile, the actual garrison, of the FAID PASS, still consisted only of the same elements of the French Constantine Division, which had taken over the defense of the Pass, early in December, ’42, after the Pass had first been captured by the American Task Force. These French Troops were ill-equipped to stop a determined German mechanized attack.

6. Recapture of the FAID PASS, by the Germans, early in Feb., ’43.

Following their recent feints further North, the German Panzers took a sharp crack at the Allied south flank, in an all-out attack against the FAID PASS, early in Feb. ’43. This was in exact accordance with the G-2 Intelligence Estimate, previously submitted by the G-2, of the American II Corps.

Smashing into the Pass with infantry, artillery and tanks, and a few 88’s, the Germans were finally able to snatch the Pass from the French garrison (elements of the French Constantine Division). But this was not accomplished until at least half of the gallant but ill-equipped French troops were either killed or wounded.

An American counter-attack was launched early the next morning, following the German capture of the Pass, by the 26th Infantry Regimental Combat Team (less two battalions) and Combat Command “A”, of the 1st Armored Division. But the counter-attack was not successful. The Germans, having been reinforced, were able to hold on, and retained complete control of the FAID PASS.

The Initial German Attack

The German break-through forces had apparently been strongly reinforced, following their capture of the FAID PASS, early in Feb. '43. And, on 14 Feb., the German Panzers came boiling out of the west end of the Pass, with a whip lash of tanks, guns and men, that set the American forces reeling back behind the mountain passes at SBEITLA and KASSERINE (40 miles west of the FAID PASS).

Combat Command “A” and Combat Command “C” (of the American 1st Armored Division), then located in the SIDI BOU ZID area (10 miles west of the FAID PASS), caught the brunt of the German break-through attack. Out-maneuvered, out-numbered and out-gunned, by the German Panzer Divisions, they were badly mauled, and lost 54 tanks in this engagement. A side swipe, by these on-rushing German Panzers, also over-ran the 168th Infantry Regiment, of the American 34th Infantry Division, then located north of SIDI BOU ZID.

Following their quick success at SIDI BOU ZID, the German Panzers were then well on their way to SBEITLA and KASSERINE, just 30 miles further to the west. It then became necessary for the American II Corps to take immediate steps to protect the mountain passes, through SBEITLA and KASSERINE, and the passes west thereof, leading north to TEBESSA.

8. American Reinforcements from the North

When it was finally realized that the tremendous American supply base at TEBESSA was in grave danger of being captured; and that the Germans very possibly could smash north through THALA, clear to LE KEF, and thus threaten the right rear flank of the entire British 1st Army; then, finally, the Headquarters of the British 1st Army saw fit to release additional reinforcements from the north, to assist the hard pressed American II Corps. These initial reinforcements included Combat Command “B” (of the American 1st Armored Division), and the 18th Infantry Regimental Combat Team (of the 1st Infantry Division).

Combat Command “B” (of the 1st Armored Division) (Col. Robinette, Comdg.) - on release from the British V Corps, boiled down south, and by 16-17 Feb. was in position, north of SBEITLA, to cover the American withdrawal therefrom. It was later ordered further northwest, to help protect the THALA area and the passes leading into TEBESSA, from the east.

The 18th Infantry Regimental Combat Team (of the 1st Infantry Division - with the 33rd Field Artillery Battalion attached), Col. Greer, Comdg., on release from the British V Corps, came down from the north, on 17 Feb., to occupy a defensive position, just southwest of SBEITLA (24 miles, north of SBEITLA). On 19 Feb. ‘43, it repulsed several enemy armored-infantry attacks, in this area, after inflicting heavy losses on the enemy; and thus secured the left flank of the hard pressed American II Corps.


The KASSERINE PASS provided the most favorable corridor of approach for the German Panzer Units, in their advance north towards the critical area near THALA (at the head of the KASSERINE VALLEY). The KASSERINE PASS had been occupied initially by the 19th Combat Engineer Regiment (a regiment of Corps troops, which was new to combat). These defending troops were reinforced, and the Pass was hastily organized for defense on 19 Feb., under command of the Headquarters, of the 26th Infantry Regimental Combat Team (Col. Alec Stark, Comdg.). In this hasty defensive organization, the 19th Engineer Regiment occupied the west side of the Pass; and the 26th Infantry Regiment (less the 2nd and 3rd Battalions) occupied the east side of the Pass. The 33rd Field Artillery Battalion (Lt Col. Verdi Barnes, Comdg.) was in general support.

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The organization of this defensive position has hardly been started, on 19 Feb., '43, when the Germans launched a probing attack. They later launched their main attack, against the Pass, early on 20 Feb., and gained possession of the dominating heights on the west flank. After bringing up their 88mm guns and mortars, the Germans then placed the right flank of the west sector (held by the 19th Engineer Regiment), and drove on through the last flank of the Pass.

During the night of 20-21 Feb., the Germans over-ran both positions, cleared the mine fields, and their tanks then started rolling up the KASSERINE VALLEY, early on 21 Feb. In the meantime, after having incurred heavy losses, the surviving American defenders had been forced to withdraw to the north, under strong enemy pressure.

10. Additional Allied Reinforcements (British)

Two additional tank regiments, of a British Armored Brigade, had been rushed down from the north, on 19-20 Feb., to reinforce Combat Command B (of the 1st Armored Division), in the area near THALA. This combined British-American Task Force was later driven back further north, behind THALA (the northern exit of the KASSERINE VALLEY), by the heavier German tanks, and were being hard pressed. However, at that time, the Division Artillery, of the American 9th Infantry Division, had just arrived after a forced march of 750 miles, from SPANISH-MOROCCO. Their added artillery support saved the day for these Allied units, then holding the critical northern exit of the KASSERINE VALLEY (south of THALA).

11. Movement to Southern TUNISIA, by remainder of the 1st Infantry Division.

When the German offensive in Southern TUNISIA first started, the 1st Infantry Division (less units detached elsewhere) had been holding a sector in the OUSSELTIA VALLEY, in Central TUNISIA, under the French XIX Corps. The units, under 1st Division command, in this sector, then included the following:

1st Infantry Division Units

1st Infantry Division Headquarters
Division Special Troops
16th Infantry Regiment (Col. Fechet, Comdg.)
2nd Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment (Lt Col. Beck, Comdg.)
1st Engineer Battalion (Lt Col. H. C. Rowland, Comdg.)
1st Division Artillery, to include
5th Field Artillery Battalion (Lt Col. Tyson, Comdg.)
7th Field Artillery Battalion (Lt Col. Geo. Gibb, Comdg.)

French Units temporarily attached to 1st Infantry Div.

French Groupment, to include:
6 Infantry Battalions
1 Field Artillery Battalion
Signal Company

At this time, the 1st Infantry Division Headquarters had close working relations with Gen. Koeltz, the Commanding General, of the French III Corps. On 18 Feb., '43, the following radio telegraph message was received, by the Comdg. General of the 1st Infantry Division, at his OUSSELTIA VALLEY CP—Quote:
Feb. 18, '43. Koeltz to Allen: "This is a warning, General Anderson has just issued a directive to Colonel Fechet's Regiment (the 16th Infantry Regiment) to go to Fredenall as soon as possible." (Referring to Gen. Fredenall, C.O. of American II Corps).

It was then urgently requested by Gen. Allen that this reinforcement to the II Corps, be provided on a divisional basis, instead of sending the 16th Infantry Regiment down (merely as another Task Force component).

Gen. Koeltz was requested by Gen. Allen to arrange for the movement of all available combat elements, of the 1st Infantry Division, to go as a unit, under 1st Division Command, to support the American II Corps, in Southern TUNISIA. Shortly thereafter, it happened that all available combat units of the 1st Infantry Division were ordered to move without delay, (under 1st Division control), to support the American II Corps. The 2nd Battalion of the 26th Infantry Regiment and the 5th Field Artillery Battalion were left behind as a nucleus for the incoming French units, detailed to take over the OUSSELTIA VALLEY Sector, which was to be vacated by the 1st Infantry Division. The OUSSELTIA VALLEY sector was 80 miles NW of THALA.

An advance detail from the 1st Infantry Division, to include the Division Commander, the Division G-2 (Lt. Col. R. W. Porter), the Assistant Division G-4 (Major Donald Curbs), and Assistant Division G-3, and several liaison officers, left the OUSSELTIA VALLEY at dusk, on 18 Feb., to contact the Headquarters of the II Corps, in the HAIDRA-TEBESSA area, in Southern TUNISIA.

While enroute by motor to TEBESSA, early on 19 Feb., '43, the Advance Command Group, of the 1st Division, met Gen. Fredenall (C.G. of the American II Corps) with his aides, on the road in motor, near HAIDRA (24 miles northeast of TEBESSA). Gen. Fredenall was cheerful and optimistic. He outlined the latest developments at the KASSERINE PASS; and stated that the 1st Division must be prepared to counter-attack where needed. He directed that the 1st Division make early contacts with Gen. Welvert (C.G. of the French Constantine Division, then located south of TEBESSA), and have him coordinate his efforts with the 1st Division.

The 1st Division Artillery Commander, Gen. Clift Andrus, completed the turn-over of the 1st Division Sector, in the OUSSELTIA VALLEY, to the incoming French units, on 19 Feb.; and then followed immediately thereafter with the designated combat units of the Division, to an assembly area, southeast of TEBESSA, in Southern TUNISIA.

12. Combat preparations initiated by the 1st Infantry Division.

Assembly areas were indicated for the incoming 1st Division Units, near BOU CHEBKA, west of the KASSERINE PASS VALLEY.

That evening, on 19 Feb., the C.G. of the 1st Infantry Division contacted the rear CP of the 33rd Field Artillery Battalion, then in direct support of the American units, defending the KASSERINE PASS. This CP was operated by Capt. Theodore Crocker, S-3 of the 33rd Field Artillery Battalion. Crocker was not particularly worried, now that the remaining 1st Division units were on the way. He was a unique type of combat soldier, and quite a "rustler". He even produced Gen. Welvert (C.G. of the French Constantine Division), at 2:00 AM, on the morning of 20 Feb.

Gen. Welvert was a gallant old soldier. But, having had 10-15 years service, as a Major General, in the French Army, he was very jealous of his prerogatives. He was not too sure but that he might be "Having his leg pulled". But he finally offered to have the French Constantine Division cooperate "full out", with the 1st Division.
During the night of 19-20 Feb., the remaining elements of the 1st Infantry Division (including the Division Special Troops, the 16th Infantry Regiment, the 7th Field Artillery Battalion, and the 1st Engineer Battalion) rolled into their assembly areas near BOU CHEBKA, west of the KASSERINE PASS VALLEY.

13. Counter-Attack Orders, issued by the 1st Infantry Division.

Late on 20 Feb., warning orders were received, by the 1st Division, from the II Corps, to be prepared, at daylight, on 21 Feb., to block the north exit of the KASSERINE PASS VALLEY, and to counter-attack, from positions west of the KASSERINE PASS VALLEY, against any German forces advancing north up the Valley. Orders were then issued by the 1st Division, as follows:

To have the 16th Infantry Regiment (Col. Fechet, Comdg.) place one battalion, with anti-tank weapons attached, in position on the DJEBEL HAMRA (north of BOU CHEBKA), prepared to block any continued German armored advance, up the KASSERINE VALLEY to the northwest, towards HAIDRA, or through the Pass, in that area, leading directly west into TEBESSA.

To have the 16th Infantry Regiment counter-attack with its two remaining battalions, from the west, against the left (west) flank of any German infantry forces, that may advance up the KASSERINE VALLEY, to the north.

To have the 7th Field Artillery Battalion operate in general support.

To have the 1st Engineer Battalion alerted in Division reserve.

14. Limit of the German break-through up the KASSERINE VALLEY.

After the Germans had finally overrun both flanks of the KASSERINE PASS defensive position (on the night of 20-21 Feb.), the German heavy tanks then started rolling north, up the KASSERINE VALLEY, early on 21 Feb., followed by the German infantry units. In the meantime, the surviving American defenders had withdrawn to the north, towards THALA, under heavy enemy pressure.

The British had rushed in their lighter tanks (from the THALA area) very early on 21 Feb., to support the hard pressed American units, in the Pass. But these British tanks were little match for the heavier German "Tiger" Tanks. Driven back close to THALA, (near the northern exit of the KASSERINE VALLEY), the British tanks were finally able to hold in that area, under the close support of the newly arrived American artillery units, and Combat Command "B" of the US 1st Armored Division.

At this time, early on 21 Feb., '43, the German Panzers had reached the furthest northern limits, of their hard fought drive from the south. After their initial success at FAID, SIDI BOU ZID, and SBEITLA, and finally in their break-through at the KASSERINE PASS, the Germans were now over-extended, and were "Riding for a fall." The Allied final line of defense, protecting the northern exits of the KASSERINE VALLEY, had to be held, at all cost.

Both sides were "wobbly and punch drunk." But, the Allies still had one "Ace left in the hole." The last remaining elements of the 1st Infantry Division, had come down from the north, under Division control, and were all set to counter-attack.

15. Launching of the 1st Division Counter-Attack.

This was the picture, when the newly arrived 1st Division units came in at daylight, 21 Feb., to counter-attack.
The 3rd Battalion, of the 16th Infantry Regiment, Lt. Col. Mathews, Comdg., with special anti-tank weapons attached, was located on the DJEBEL HAMRA (10 miles south of HAISSA), prepared to block the northwest exit of the KASSERINE VALLEY, and to protect the mountain pass, leading west to TEBBAS.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions (Lt. Col. Cunningham and Lt. Col. Crawford, Comdg.), of the 16th Infantry Regiment, from positions west of the KASSERINE VALLEY, had gained early contact with the German follow-up infantry units, and attacked aggressively, at daylight, on 21 Feb. After considerable close-in hard fighting, the German infantry units attempted to withdraw to the north, under close pressure from the west, by the 16th Infantry assault battalions. But these German units incurred heavy casualties when they found escape in that direction cut-off by the British and American tanks (with close-in artillery support - located south of THALA).

The 7th Field Artillery, Lt. Col. George Gibb, Comdg., of the 1st Division Artillery, was in close support of the 16th Infantry units, during this operation.

Allied Air Support was tremendously helpful at this time. American and British bombers joined in a series of highly effective sorties, on the afternoon of 21 Feb., against the German tanks and guns, which were then jammed-up "bumber to bumber", in their hurry to escape being bottled up in the KASSERINE VALLEY.

16. The German Withdrawal.

Once the German withdrawal to the south had started, their evacuation of the KASSERINE VALLEY was conducted with remarkable celerity. The lack of any pre-planning for an organized direct pursuit, had delayed the regrouping of any mobile II Corps troops, for a quick, direct pursuit.

Thus, contact with the retreating German forces was lost, and their withdrawal to the south was effected without serious hindrance. A few days later, close contact was regained with the German units, further south, at the same old stands, at GAFSA, MARKASSY, FAID and PICHON.

The German High Command had "Shot the Works", in an all-out effort to seize the Initiative. But, from that time on, the end in TUNISIA, was inevitable; although the fighting became even more severe, before the Allies had won the final victory in TUNISIA, on 13 May, 1943.

17. Summation of the Combat Operations (Leading up to and following the KASSERINE PASS Break-through)

To present a clear picture of the entire KASSERINE PASS Operation, there is included herein a terrain analysis of that general area, and a chronological listing of the combat operations connected therewith.

Terrain Analysis (See Battle Map #2)

The Southern Tunisian Sector included a wild desert area, covering a frontage of 200 miles, interspersed with a series of precipitous mountain ridges. The FAID PASS (located in the north central part of that area) provided the only feasible route, through the south end of the GRAND DOUBAL Mountain Range. Control of this Pass was vitally important, both to the Germans and to the Allies.

From FAID (near the west exit of the Pass), it was 10 miles due west, to SIDI BOU ZID, and thence 32 miles northwest, to SBEITLA. From SBEITLA it was 28 miles north (through the SBEITLA PASS) to SHABA.
TUNISIA

ARTILLERYMAN, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

This map is a pocket guide which will orient you in your travels and experiences in the battle zone.

Keep yourself constantly oriented and connect your experiences with places.

One inch on this map is 32 miles on the ground. Do not mark this map! It is not intended to help the Hun.

Keep this map on you at all times. Know where you have been, where you are, and where you are going. Become a G.I. With this aid, you can be the best informed soldier in this fight. Report to an officer what you see.
The road junction at SBIBA controlled the main eastern highway leading 44 miles further north to LE KEF; it also controlled the road leading 20 miles west to THALA.

The cross-road center, at THALA, controlled the western highway, leading 46 miles north to LE KEF, and a road leading 32 miles west (through HAIDRA) to TERESSA (the location of the huge American supply dumps).

The pass at KASSERINE (16 miles west of SBEITLA) provided direct access, up the KASSERINE Valley, to THALA (30 miles north of the KASSERINE PASS). A continued break-through, by the Germans, to the north, through THALA, would seriously endanger LE KEF (46 miles further north). The German seizure of the road center at LE KEF, would disrupt the main Allied supply route, and would endanger the right rear flank of the entire 1st British Army, in Eastern TUNISIA.

Chronological list of the Combat Operations in Southern TUNISIA (previously explained):

Capture of FAID PASS, by American Tank Forces in Southern TUNISIA, about 4 Dec., '42.

Establishment of the American II Corps, in Southern TUNISIA (Gen. Fredendall, Comdg.), about 10 Jan. '43.

Recapture of FAID PASS by the Germans, about 3 Feb. '43 - followed by American attempt to again recapture the Pass.

German break-through, at FAID PASS, 14 Feb. '43.

German defeat of Combat Command "A" and Combat Command "C" (of the American 1st Armored Division) and of the 168th Infantry Regiment (of the American 34th Infantry Division), near SIDI BOU ZED, 15 Feb. '43.

Allied Reinforcements sent down from the North:

Combat Command "B" (of the American 1st Armored Division) to the SBIBA-THALA area, 16 Feb. '43.

18th Infantry Regimental Combat Team, with the 32nd Field Artillery Battalion (of the American 1st Infantry Division) to the SBIBA area, for a critical defensive role, 17 Feb. '43.

Remainder of the American 1st Infantry Division (to include the 16th Infantry Regiment, the 7th Field Artillery Battalion, the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, and the Division Special Troops) came south, from the OUSSELITEA Valley, to counter-attack, from the area west of KASSERINE Valley, on 18-20 Feb., '43.

Two British tank regiments came down to reinforce Combat Command "B", of the American 1st Armored Division, at THALA, 19 Feb., '43.

The Division Artillery, of the American 9th Infantry Division, arrived from Spanish MOROCCO, 19 Feb., '43, to reinforce the Allied units in the THALA area.

The German attack and break-through at the KASSERINE Pass, 19-21 Feb., '43. The American defending force, then holding the KASSERINE PASS, included only the 26th Infantry
Regimental Combat Team (of the 1st Infantry Division), less two battalions; and with the 19th Engineer Regiment attached to the 26th Infantry Regiment.

Counter-attack by elements of the American 1st Infantry Division, from the area west of Kasserine Valley, 21 Feb., '43.

Counter-attack by Combat Command B (of the American 1st Armored Division) and by British tank regiments, in the Thala area, 21 Feb., '43.

Allied Air Support, in the Kasserine Valley, 21 Feb., '43.

The German Withdrawal, to the south, 21-23 Feb., '43.

18. Conclusions to be drawn from the Kasserine Pass operation.

When Gen. Fredendall took command of the Allied Forces in Southern Tunisia (under the American II Corps), about 10 Jan., '43, he found that sector sparsely occupied by a heterogeneous group of Allied Tank Forces. It was reported that Gen. Fredendall had endeavored to bring these scattered units, under cohesion and control; that he had asked to bring the American 1st Infantry Division under unified division control, in one section of the line; and, that he had tried to bring the widely separated components of the American 1st Armored Division together, in a central location, under proper division control. But, he was not able to attain these objectives, for the unification of his command.

The G-2, of the American II Corps, had predicted that the Germans would break through in force, at Fair Pass; and Gen. Fredendall had repeatedly requested reinforcements for that critical area. But, the British 1st Army Headquarters (in overall field command) was far more worried about a German break-through, further north, at Pichon, in Central Tunisia; and made their plans accordingly.

After the German break-through at Fair (as predicted by the American II Corps), followed by their victory at Sidi Bou Zid, reinforcements were then finally rushed down, from the north, to assist the hard-pressed American II Corps. Only a few Allied units (moved barely in time to "plug" the critical holes) had finally succeeded in preventing an all-out German victory.

There was never any indication of panic at the Command Post of the American II Corps, in spite of the difficulties incurred, at that time. There seemed to be a feeling of certainty, that eventually the tide would turn in their favor.

The Advance Command Group (of the First Infantry Division), while enroute from the Oussellia Valley to Tebessa, happened to meet Gen. Fredendall, on the road, by motor, at about daylight, on 19 Feb., '43, near Kalatt Jbera, northeast of Tebessa. The verbal instructions, then received by the Division Commander, from Gen. Fredendall, (as to the immediate mission of the incoming 1st Infantry Division units) were positive and clear cut. Detailed instructions (regarding the counter-attacking mission, for the 1st Division) were received shortly thereafter.

A final analysis of the results attained, in the German break-through drive in Southern Tunisia, would indicate that the entire operation finally terminated in a stale-mate, with heavy losses in personnel and equipment, both to the Germans and to the Allies. Actually, the German had failed in their primary objective for this offensive - to gain more maneuver space to the west, for their German Afrika Corps, then withdrawing from the east, before the advancing British 8th Army.
For the American forces, the Kasserine Pass Operation had resulted in a bitter lesson, stressing the need for cohesion and control, in the battle leadership of the major American combat units. It had not been possible for Gen. Fredendall to exercise the proper cohesion and control of his major units, because of the conditions involved in Southern Tunisia, during his period of command of the American II Corps. He was greatly handicapped, in this respect.

However, it happened that, early in March, '43, the American II Corps was then designated as a separate autonomous command, responsible thereafter only to the new field commander, General Sir Harold Alexander, of the British Army, who had been designated as field commander of the entire Allied Forces in Tunisia. This assurance of control of his major units, in the II Corps, had never been available to Gen. Fredendall, as it was later for his successors (Gen. Patton and Gen. Bradley).

IV. REASSEMBLY OF THE 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION.

Rest Period at Morsott

Following the German retreat from the Kasserine Pass area, on 21-23 Feb., '43, the new German defensive line was later re-established along the general line (Gafsa-Senid-Markassy-Faid-Pichon).

After the German withdrawal to the south, the 1st Division was pulled back and regrouped, on 1 Mar., '43, near MORSOTT, northwest of Tebessa. Here all units of the Division were reassembled, rested and filled with replacements, preparatory to further combat operations. A quick reorganization was needed, as there had been considerable battle casualties, particularly in the Infantry units, some of which had been almost continually in combat, since the landing at Oran, on 8 Nov., '42. But, with the 1st Division again reunited, there was a general feeling, throughout the Division, of renewed confidence and combat esprit.

The 1st Division Battle School for Replacements

A Battle School, for incoming replacements, assigned to the 1st Infantry Division, was established at this time near MORSOTT; and it continued in effect during the remainder of the campaign in North Africa. This brief special course of instruction, for replacements, was conducted by a small selected group of battle wise officers and NCO's, operating on a rotating basis, from the front line units. The instruction included an orientation on the background and traditions of the 1st Division - a program of intensive physical conditioning - special instruction in infantry weapons - scouting and patrolling - night combat - and platoon combat exercises.

As a result of this procedure in special replacement training, the number of battle casualties was greatly reduced, and the combat efficiency of all units was maintained at a higher level.

V. THE RECAPTURE OF GAFSA (16-17 Mar., 1943)

Strategic Value of Gafsa

Gafsa, a former French garrison town, was located on the edge of the desert, 60 miles south of Kasserine. It was then occupied by a garrison of German-Italian troops, having been evacuated by the American II Corps, when the Germans broke through at Faid, on 14 February, 1943. Gafsa had strategic assets, as a road center and a railroad junction. Its re-capture was needed in order to provide a railroad supply point for the British Eighth Army, then advancing from the south, through the coastal area to the East.
1st Infantry Division, Summary of Activities, January-March 1943, and Division Commander's Notes
SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES OF 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION

After the initial successful landing operations at ORAN, the Division underwent intensive training in a large area south of ORAN. Emphasis was placed on rapidity of maneuver and quick use of supporting fires. It was also necessary to guard ZAPARAOUI and LA SENA airfields, and air field at NOUVION, and to furnish a battalion to maintain order in ORAN.

On November 20, the 5th FA Battalion started east from ORAN to join the British 5th Corps. By November 25, they were in action SW of TUNIS. They have operated continuously on the Tunisian front since then and have been at BEJA, TABOURDA, MEDJEZ EL BAB, GAFSA, SBEITLA, OUSSERIA, and KESSERA. They rejoined the Division on March 4th.

On November 20, the third battalion, 26th Infantry, was flown by air transport from ORAN to YOUNG-LES-BAINS airport and attached to the remaining elements of Col. Raff's parachute battalion. They took part in the initial action at FAID and then operated from FERIANA-GAFSA as part of the RAFF FORCE. They conducted numerous raids on SNEAED and MACKOASY and together with the Rangers, covered the withdrawal of 11 Corps elements from GAFSA and FERIANA. The battalion came back under Division control on February 21.

On November 19, Btry "C", 33rd FA Battalion and the Anti-tank Company, 26th Infantry, were ordered to MARTINPREY DU KISS from ORAN to reinforce the French units of the TLEMCEN sub-division. They were returned to the Regiment on December 27.

Combat Team 18 was ordered east on December 8, and attached to British 5th Corps. They went into the lines at MEDJEZ EL BAB on December 23. The first battalion was given the mission of relieving the Coldstream Guards, after the Guards had taken LONGSTOP BILL which is northeast of MEDJEZ EL BAB. In a two-day action, the first battalion suffered casualties of 24 officers and men. Drafts were taken from the other battalions of the Regiment to re-man this battalion.

The 18th CT operated in the MEDJEZ area until February 15, when they were relieved and sent south to the XIX French Corps. While in the MEDJEZ area the 18th Combat Team took part in many raids and were very active in their patrolling. They were well spoken of by all elements of the 5th Corps, and our 32nd Field Artillery battalion was taken as a model for artillery of this British Corps.

Upon passing to the command of the XIX French Corps, the 18th Combat Team was placed in the line at SHIRA between the British Guards Brigade and the American 34th Division. In this sector on February 19-20 the 18th Infantry distinguished itself by completely stopping every German tank and infantry attack. They are expected to rejoin the Division within the next few days.
On January 10, CT 26, less third battalion, with the 1st Reconnaissance Troop attached, was ordered east and attached to II Corps for operation in Southern TUNISIA. They were split up into Task Forces by II Corps and operated with armored elements in the GAFSA-SEBEITLA-FAIR area until the German breakthrough southwest of PONT DU FAIS. They were then ordered into the OUSSELTIA VALLEY with Combat Command "B", 1st Armored Division, and assisted in restoring the situation in that area.

Combat Team 26, less the second and third battalions and the 1st Reconnaissance Troop, was then ordered to SEBEITLA, and took part in operations around FAIR with Combat Command "A", 1st Armored Division.

They were then withdrawn to the KASSERINE PASS where they took part in the heavy fighting which proceeded and followed the German breakthrough in that area. They came back under Division control February 26th.

By January 20, the Division, less 26th and 18th Combat Teams, and certain divisional units, were at GUELMA which is 75 miles east of CONSTANTINE.

On January 18, the Division, less detachments, was ordered to join the French XIX Corps. A sector was assigned the Division in the OUSSELTIA VALLEY extending from PICHON N about thirty miles. Six French infantry battalions and two Tabors (Moroccan Irregulars) together with British, French, and American artillery and tank units, were attached to the Division for the defense of this sector. The thirty-mile sector was organized for a vigorous defense. It was sub-divided into two sub-sectors with the various French Moroccan and British units in the PICHON (right sector) with General Roosevelt in command. The left sub-sector was composed of First Division units under Colonel Pechet who commands CT 16. The work of General Roosevelt in organizing his conglomerate units was outstanding.

Activity in this sector was largely restricted to continual active patrolling and to artillery fire. Minor enemy attacks were quickly broken down. Enemy air was very active. The OUSSELTIA VALLEY is very flat and open. Daylight movement of combat vehicles in the VALLEY brought almost immediate strafing. Two German planes, particularly, nick-named "Ike and Mike" by the soldiers were very annoying in their strafing and diving tactics. Even a lone jeep was a fair target for "Ike and Mike".

The French High Command discussed the advisability of the Division capturing DJEBEL BOU DABOSS which was a commanding hill mass north of the HALFA PASS. It dominated our left sub-sector. With the continued reverses in southern TUNISIA, an early withdrawal from positions east of the OUSSELTIA VALLEY seemed inevitable. Consequently, it seemed futile to waste lives and material in capturing this position. In football parlance taking this hill mass would have been "battering our brains out to gain a yard and a half in the middle of the field". Accordingly, plans to capture this hill was abandoned. This turned out to be a wise decision, since the High Command later ordered us to withdraw west across the OUSSELTIA VALLEY.
The withdrawal order was issued on February 15th. The Division was ordered to occupy and defend the mountain range along the west side of the OSSELTIA VALLEY. Ammunition and heavy supplies were moved across the Valley the night prior to the withdrawal of infantry and artillery elements. All units were withdrawn the night of February 17-18 without casualties, confusion, or the loss of matériel. The new position was occupied and organized by February 19th.

On February 19, the Division, less detachments (CT 18, CT 26, and 5th FA Bn) was ordered to move with all possible speed to vicinity of BOU CHEBKA, northwest of KASSERINE to reinforce that sector. The Germans, attacking in force, had taken the KASSERINE PASS. This gave them a close approach to our supply base, TEBESSA. Further advances by the Germans would cut Allied communications, threaten CONSTANTINE, and might necessitate a general withdrawal of Allied forces in TUNISIA.

On arriving at higher headquarters en route, I was informed of the dangerous German break-through in the KASSERINE PASS, that our units were withdrawing toward THALA and that the situation was critical. I was directed to assume command of the KASSERINE sector, including the French Constantine Division and various separate American units. At that time, the German continued advance up the KASSERINE VALLEY seemed inevitable.

A division command post was set up at 1100 P.M., February 20, near BOU CHEBKA, where contact was hastily established with the French Constantine Division, attached American units, and elements of the First Division. The situation at this time was precarious. The second battalion, 16th Infantry, was attached to Combat Command "B" at daylight, February 21, and remained in position on the high ground south of DJ HAMRA during the day. At midnight on the night of February 21-22, it was decided to block the HAMRA PASSES at the head of the KASSERINE VALLEY with one battalion of the 16th Infantry, heavily reinforced with artillery and accompanying weapons, and to be prepared to counter-attack from the commanding ground south of HAMRA position, held by our 16th Infantry and two French Senegalese Battalions.

The German attack was resumed on the night of February 21-22. There was considerable confusion, since the leading elements of the German Infantry attacked in American and French uniforms. They overran and captured one battery of the 33rd Field Artillery, then supporting Combat Command "B", 1st Armored Division. It was "touch and go" for a short time. In fact, warning orders had already been issued by higher headquarters to prepare for a general withdrawal.

The German Infantry was followed by German tanks. Local counter-attacks were directed for all available infantry units with the close assistance of the artillery. The 33rd Field Artillery Battalion, now under Divisional control, and the 7th Field Artillery Battalion participated in the counter-attack, firing at close ranges at German Infantry and Tanks. General Andrus (Divisional Artillery Commander) was very active in directing these counter-attacks. A coordinated counter-attack was launched by the 16th Infantry at 3:30 P.M., February 22nd. As the lines of our infantry reached their positions, the Germans broke and ran. Some 400 surrendered to a group of 13th Armored Regiment tanks on reaching the valley. Our attack was followed by a counter-attack by Combat Command "B" of the 1st Armored Division from the northeast side of the valley.
These counter-attacks apparently caused a complete German withdrawal from the KASSERINE VALLEY. They were made on the flank of the thrust toward THALA and threatened to cut off elements engaged there. I have been told that this incident seemed to be a turning point and that a general withdrawal was then started of all the German forces in contact with the Allied Forces.

On February 27, the Division was withdrawn to a rest area for re-supply and re-equipment.

All combat operations of the Division in TUNISIA, including the minor operations of separated battalions were as successful as might have been expected, considering the handicaps and difficulties of control. Marked success attended the efforts of the Division when it was possible to operate under Divisional control and take advantage of the teamwork and morale so thoroughly instilled during training periods. Losses have been suffered, which are part of the cost of belonging to the "Fighting First", but in no case was there any disorganization, and the Boche was made to pay in kind. Casualties in the officer personnel have been particularly heavy and indicated the active leadership of the junior officers.

One incident occurred in the OUSSELTIA VALLEY about the 31st of January, which seemed typical of this spirit. Lt. Colonel Davis, 7th Field Artillery Battalion, and his S-3, Major Levin, were killed while reconnoitering for a new forward position. Both were buried in rear of their artillery positions. When their bodies were lowered into their graves, the entire 7th Field Artillery Battalion fired three concerted salvos at located enemy targets. This incident indicated the spirit in which the Division is making the Germans pay for the losses received.

/s/ TERRY ALLEN

TERRY ALLEN,
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.
General George C. Marshall,
War Department,
Washington, D. C.

Dear General Marshall:

Knowing your interest in the First Division, which we appreciate very greatly, I am sending you a brief summary of the operations of units of the Division on the Eastern Front.

Higher tactical considerations have necessitated the dispersion of many elements of the Division during a great part of this period. Considering the difficulties of control and leadership that were thus involved, all units did exceptionally well in some cases, and very well in others.

Elements of the Division did particularly well when half the Division was assembled on February 21 and 22 at the time of the German breakthrough in the Kasserine Valley. At that time, the French Constantine Division and various separate units were attached to the First Division for the final defense in this sector and the following counter-attack. If I may say so, the counter-attack launched by the First Division was most successful and I have been told that it was responsible for the initiation of the general German withdrawal.

I am happy to say that the Division is now being reassembled for use as a complete unit in a very important impending operation. Many of the units have been separated for some time, but their morale and esprit is still excellent and I am sure they will give a good account of themselves.

I have enclosed a citation given the Division by General Koeltz, commanding the French 19th Corps, under whom we temporarily served, and by General Eisenhower, following the counter-attack on February 22. I have also enclosed two memorandums recently issued the Division.

Assuring you of our serious intentions of living up to the confidence that has been reposed in the Division, I am

Very sincerely,

/s/ Terry Allen
TERRY ALLEN
MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Message of Commendation.

TO: Unit Commanders, 1st Infantry Division.

The following message of commendation from the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Force, is published for the information of all personnel of this command:

"As an American, I am proud of the way in which American Troops, in the recent battling, recovered from initial shocks and speedily demonstrated a readiness to slug it out with the enemy. Our troops are rapidly becoming battlewise and their future operations are certain to bring discouragement to the ranks of our enemies. Front line units now have the urgent task of replacement, rehabilitation and training, and I assure you that I am straining every nerve to bring your magnificent organization up to strength as quickly as it is humanly possible.

"Let us make sure that the new men coming up quickly absorb the lessons that the front line units have learned, so that every pound of ammunition and equipment that is brought to you, may be most effectively employed in the destruction of the forces opposing us.

"I hope that every man in your command realizes that I have complete confidence in his readiness and ability to do his full part alongside our gallant allies in driving our enemies out of Africa. Please accept my personal thanks and congratulations on your fine record of leadership.

/s/ EISENHOWER"

By command of Major General ALLEN:

/s/ LEONIDAS GAVALAS
Lt. Col., A.G.D.
Adjutant General

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At the moment when the 1st American Division is leaving the sector of the C.A.F., General Koeltz, commanding the 19th Army Corps, is particularly happy to express to its commander, General Allen, as well as to his assistants, General Roosevelt and General Andrus, all the satisfaction that he felt in having under his orders such valorous troops.

Arriving in the Ousseltia Valley at the moment when a powerful German attack had just been launched on the flank of the 19th Army Corps, they came at once with resolution to the aid of their French comrades and threw back the enemy into the mountains.

Animated by the finest military spirit, they thus showed the highest battle comradeship.

Side by side with the battalions of the Division of Algiers, they then fought to hold the reconquered heights in Ejebels Rihana and Lehrich and the Byzantine Ruins.

General Koeltz asks General Allen to be so kind as to transmit his sincere thanks and his very best wishes to the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the 1st Infantry Division.

Headquarters, 21 February 1943
Lt. General Koeltz,
Commanding 19th Army Corps

Directed to General Allen

True Copy
/s/ Terry Allen
Maj. Gen.
MEMORANDUM

TO: All units in the lst Infantry Division.

My sincere thanks to all units for your efficient execution of missions assigned you during recent operations. Your cheerful execution of difficult missions has been favorably commented upon. Preparation for our coming tasks will require the most intensive efforts. The following items are of utmost importance:

Discipline
Physical toughness
Combat efficiency
Intensive belief in your units.

Discipline means thorough teamwork and cooperation and the prompt, cheerful execution of orders and instructions. Your discipline must be exemplified by the prompt execution of orders, by military bearing and the proper wearing of the uniform, by careful attention to saluting discipline and by the general demeanor of all individuals.

Physical toughness is a vital requisite to success in combat. It must be attained by intensive physical conditioning. All of us must be mentally, morally, and physically tough and well able to "Take it and dish it out."

Combat training must be stressed to acquire the battle wisdom necessary to inflict the maximum losses upon the enemy, with the minimum losses to ourselves. Maximum proficiency must be attained in the use of all weapons, in mine laying, mine detection and the detection and removal of booby traps, in all types of night operations, and particularly in the skillful use of FIRE and MANEUVER. Reconnaissance, security, patrolling, the use of cover and the lessons learned in recent combat operations must all be stressed.

An abiding belief in your units is a pre-requisite to success in combat. All individuals must be actuated by the need for maintaining the traditions of our Division. "Nothing in hell must delay or stop the FIRST DIVISION."

/S/ TERRY ALLEN,

TERRY ALLEN
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding

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"A" and "C"
MEMORANDUM

TO All Units, 1st Infantry Division.

Recently, the units of the Division, of necessity, have been widely separated on detached combat missions, involving great difficulties of leadership and control. We have not been able heretofore to fight as a complete division. The First Division is now reassembling.

We do not know what our next mission may be or how soon it must be executed, but in any case, "WE WILL FIGHT AS A UNIT."

Every individual must be prepared to give everything he has got for the honor of our Division. Every objective must be taken per schedule with the maximum damage to the enemy. Every objective seized must be held.

"Nothing in hell must delay or stop the First Division."

/s/ TERRY ALLEN,

TERRY ALLEN,
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

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"A" & "C"

March 9, 1943.
16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, Operations Report, 19-26 February 1943
KASSERINE CAMPAIGN

FEBRUARY 19, 1943: CT moves from Ousseltia Valley, having turned sector over to French forces for defense. CT moved to new location at 5253, Sheet 13, to open Kasserine phase, beginning movement at 1550 hours, 19 February 1943 and arriving in bivouac area at 0530 hours 20 February 1943.

FEBRUARY 20, 1943: CT in bivouac in Kasserine sector. Preparation made and orders issued for movement into lines.

FEBRUARY 21, 1943: 1st Platoon Company A, 1st Engineers Battalion relieved from attached to CT 16 and reverted to control of Commanding General, lst U. S. Infantry Division. The 2nd Battalion is moved forward into the lines and the remainder of the CT is alerted for movement. However, no movement is made. At 2200 hours lst and 3rd Battalion with attachments from Special Units are moved forward but are not committed.

FEBRUARY 22, 1943: Regimental CP moved forward to 6967, Sheet 13. Orders received from Commanding General, Combat Command B that CT 16 will have mission of protecting 7th and 33rd Field Artillery Battalions. At 1045 hours K and M Companies 16th Infantry come in contact with enemy. 1st Battalion is sent on mission to protect flanks. Commanding Officer issues plan to make local attacks in coordination with Combat Command B. At 1445 orders issued for 2nd and 3rd Battalions to make their local attacks as planned at 1500 hours, preceded by small artillery barrage. Battalions jump off on time. Company C, 1st Ranger Battalion attached to CT at 1518 hours. Local attacks made by battalions were successful in that dominating ground was taken and some field artillery guns captured by enemy were retaken. The Commanding General, II Corps and the Commanding General, lst U. S. Infantry Division, each sent the following message to the Commanding Officer CT 16: "Many thanks for the splendid work of your CT today."

FEBRUARY 23, 1943: Orders received from Commanding General, lst U. S. Infantry Division that very active patrolling must keep up as it is believed that enemy is making a general withdrawal. Orders passed to Battalions which are out of contact following attacks of yesterday. 39th Infantry takes over sector occupied by 3rd Battalion, 16th Infantry. 3rd Battalion moves to new defensive position.

FEBRUARY 24, 1943: Extensive plans made to move forward thru pass. Plans made in detail and although no resistance is expected, every detail is planned to take care of it. CP moved to 8477 after meeting of all unit commanders.

FEBRUARY 25, 1943: At 0700 all battalions move forward as planned. At 0820 hours the 1st Battalion had reached the base of the hill which is its first objective without resistance. At 1000 hours the lst Battalion had passed its first objective and reached its 2nd one. The 3rd Battalion moved forward without resistance and took objective on schedule. Kasserine Pass was cleared of enemy, but found to be mined and booby trapped extremely. All units moved forward without resistance to Theilepte and Feriana. There, lines were stopped, and defensive positions organized.

FEBRUARY 26, 1943: Defensive positions organized and a period of reorganization. Not in contact with enemy. At 1155 hours new CP opened at 390742, 1/50,000. lst Reconnaissance Troops attached to CT to reinforce motorized reconnaissance for a short period.
23

10th Panzer Division, War Diary (Extract), 14-22 February 1943
Intelligence Report of Activities
9 February 1943
Transfer of Div. Hqs. to Bou Thadi (south of Kairouan).
13 February 1943
Transfer of Div. C.P. to the region east of Faid.
14 February 1943
Attack of the division on Sidi bou Zid.

At 0600 hr the advanced elements of the 86th Pz.Gren. reach the area 8 km west of the Faid pass without coming in contact with the enemy. 

Faid

After clearing the mines at the pass our tanks, sweeping a round to the right past the north edge of Dj. Lesouda, advance on the road to Sbeitla.

At 0615 hr our tanks are engaged with enemy tanks just southeast of Dj. Lesouda. The mountain itself is occupied by enemy infantry. At 0700 hr the right flank of the 86th Pz.Gren.Rgt.

enemy tanks attack east of Dj. Lesouda (north of the road to Sbeitla). The attack is repulsed. At 0730 hr the enemy artillery was still firing on the defile just west of Faid. At 0735 hr the enemy resistance on the road to Sbeitla (about 8 km northeast of Sidi bou Zid) was broken. At 0830 hr after our tanks had reached the road fork about 11 km west-northwest of the northwest Faid, the enemy withdraw while at the same time he attacked with tanks from Sidi bou Zid, on the road to the northeast.

At 0900 hr enemy low level attack on the 7th Pz.Rgt. At 0930 our tanks advanced southward on Sidi bou Zid. At 0900 hr some enemy tanks withdrew from the road coming down from Sidi bou Zid and moved toward the west. The fate of the enemy tanks was successfully attacked by dive bombers north of Sidi bou Zid between 1015 and 1055 hrs. At 1100 hr our air and ground reconnaissances ascertained that the enemy was withdrawing east of Sidi bou.
Zid was retreating through Sidi bou Zid to the west and the northwest, and that there was heavy tank and artillery traffic. At the same time, 25 enemy tanks were observed driving from Sidi bou Zid to the west. Behind the lines, vehicles movements also from Sidi bou Zid to the southwest. At 1123 hr the 7th Pz.Rgt. reported a new enemy tank attack of 10-15 tanks from the West on Sidi bou Zid; it was repulsed. During the engagements the 86th Pz.Gren. the 7th Pz.Rgt took 71 prisoners including 6 officers.

In addition the following material was captured or destroyed:

- 40 tanks
- 7 armored personnel carriers
- 15 gun motor carriages
- 1 anti-tank gun
- 14 prime mover truck
- 4 trucks
- 8 passenger cars
- 9 machine guns

In addition, 10 vehicles, some of them armored were captured or destroyed, one enemy plane was shot down and an enemy reconnaissance plane shattered on the ground. Several ammunition dumps were set on fire.

Enemy tanks were mostly of the Sherman type.

15 February 1943

The night passed without special occurrence. At 1140 hr the reconnaissance detachment of the 86th Pz.Gren. reported heavy enemy movements from the north on the Haifa-Sbeitla road, 15 km west of Dj. Lascoua. At 1150 hr 86th Pz.Gren. reported enemy motorized column with tanks advancing on the Sbeitla road. Then strong enemy concentrations were observed in the area west of Sadaguia. At 1525 hr the enemy attacked with 10 tanks (Shermans) from the area of Sadaguia on Sidi bou Zid and the road 6 km
southwest thereof; the attack was executed with artillery support. An immediate counterattack with tanks brought the enemy attack to a standstill. About 30 enemy tanks were shot down by our tanks during the repulse of the enemy tank attack from the area 10 km north-west of Sidi bou Zid to the east and southeast. Three additional enemy tanks which had broken through in the area 6 km southeast of Sidi bou Zid were shot down. A total of 81 prisoners have been brought in.

Prisoners statements disclosed the following units in line: 31 Bn., 1st Armored Rgt., 91st Field Arty Rgt. (10.5 cm guns on gun carriages); 17th Field Arty Rgt. (15.5 cm guns); 163rd Inf., 701st Antitank Bn. (7.5 cm on gun carriages).

Captured papers disclosed that these units and the elements they have in line here belong to Combat Commando A, and that this is the latter had its HQs and main in Sidi bou Zid until a few days ago.

Combat Commando C was committed north thereof according to captured papers.


In the course of the tank fight on the afternoon of 15 Feb. there arose the impression that the enemy had intended to put into line the hostile elements located on Djebel Garot Hadid and east thereof. In the evening of 15 Feb. enemy elements were still holding out on the heights of Dj. Lassouda.

On that day we inflicted considerable losses on the enemy. On 15 Feb. the following matériel was captured or destroyed:

- 39 tanks
- 17 armored personnel carriers
- 4 antitank guns
- 3 gun motor carriages
- 5 machine guns
- 1 10.5 cm mountain howitzer
- 1 15 cm gun
- 100 vehicles (approximately)

During the 2 days of fighting the total of matériel captured or
destroyed follows: 79 tanks, 30 armored personnel carriers, 18 gun motor carriages, 5 antitank guns, 2 arty guns, 17 machine guns, about 100 vehicles, 2 planes; 125 prisoners were taken.

16 February 1943

During the night the enemy attempted to get away from Dj. Lessouda.

Three officers and 53 men were taken prisoners. Remaining enemy elements are presumably still on Dj. Lessouda.

The encircled enemy on Dj. Garot Hadid was reconnoitered and attacked. Cross

In the forenoon enemy tanks advanced north of the road (17 km northwest of Sidi bou Zid) toward the east. The enemy was also reported as advancing with tanks over this intersection on both sides of the road to the east and southeast as far as the area 4 km west of Sadaguia. It is supposed that this movement was for the purpose of covering the enemy withdrawal to the west in the direction of Sbeitla. Toward 17 hr enemy tanks retreated to the north and west from our tank thrusts. In the afternoon the road to Sbeitla east of the intersection 17 km northwest of Sidi bou Zid lay under enemy artillery fire. Enemy batteries on gun carriages were ascertained northwest of the intersection.

On the evening of 16 Feb. the enemy held out on Hill 500 of Dj. Ksaïra with at least 1 company in well improved positions with antitank guns against our attack from the northwest, and on the northeast spur of Dj. Garot Hadid against our attack from the southeast. There too it was assumed that the enemy strength was approximately 1 company.

The enemy encircled on Dj. Lessouda was still holding out.

Captured papers disclose enemy minefields on roads between Dj. Ksaïra and Dj. Rechatch, and on road 2 km east of Hill 561. The 69th Ps. Gren. Rgt. was warned of the fact by radio.

An estimate of the enemy situation as depicted by the division
to Gen. Ziegler (the enemy is covering with tanks the withdrawal on the east roads in the direction of Sbeitla) leads to the decision for attack and for the destruction of enemy tanks assumed to be there.

17 February 1943

At 0935 our troops reach Hadjeb el Aloum without contact with the enemy. Our reconnaissance in the area 12 km north-northwest of Hadjeb el Aloum observed at 1235 hr motorized enemy forces withdrawing to the northwest. The enemy had mined and blasted the mountain pass at Kaig el Almar.

At 15 hr our spearhead established liaison with our troops at Fondouk. Native statements disclosed that the enemy as having fallen back to the west during the night.

Hostile forces in still unknown strength on Dj.Lessouda. Tank spearhead was held up by enemy mine obstacles in the area 6 km northeast of Hadjeb el Aloum and 10 km south-southwest of Fondouk. The approach road to Fondouk lay under enemy artillery fire from a northern direction. Through for additional information on the enemy by prisoners statements see Portfolio Prisoners statements.

13 February 1943

Quiet night. A few more prisoners were brought in; they belonged surrounded to the remaining enemy forces (166th American Inf. Rgt) on Dj.Lessouda. In the early morning our troops occupied Dj.Lessouda and the last remnants of the enemy were captured. Only weak enemy forces were still occupying Pishon in the forenoon. As our troops approached the enemy withdrew to the west so that the town was taken without fighting. Arab statements disclose that the enemy has withdrawn the bulk of its forces about 30 km.

The divisional C.P. is shifted to El Alem, north of Kairouan.

19 February 1943

The intelligence officer sets out for the advanced C.P. of
Pz.A.O.K.Africa, under whose control the division has been placed on 19 February 1943, to get oriented on the enemy situation.

At Shiba the 21st Pz.Div. has come upon British troops. The intelligence officer of Pz.A.O.K. suspects that they belong to the British 6th Pz.Div. It is assumed that this division has been put in line for the support of the right French flank which, after the fighting for Sidi Bou Zid and the subsequent withdrawal of the Americans, was also falling back. Besides these Britishers only French are to be expected at Shiba. However it is not altogether impossible that elements of an American combat commando make an appearance there. In other respects the Americans have gone back to Tebessa with Combat Commando C which had had few casualties and with the remnants of Combat Commandos A and C.

American prisoners were taken in Faniara; they belonged to the infantry. According to statements of prisoners the unit was identified as the 3rd American Inf.Div. The British in line at Shiba immediately mined and wired their position and offered stubborn resistance. For this reason the German attack was not continued on the evening of 19 Feb. and was to be resumed in the morning of 20 February.

At Tebessa also the enemy has mined and wired his positions, according to reports on hand at Pz.A.O.K. In the evening of 19 February there is still no report on the Kampfgruppe of Pz.A.O.K. Africa which has been committed from Kasserine to the northwest in the direction of Mala; therefore Pz.A.O.K. is unable to give out a detailed estimate of the enemy situation. However new enemy forces are not expected in this sector. It is true that the Americans have still about 3 divisions in Africa (the 21st Pz.Div., 31st and 9th Inf.Divs.) but they are said to be in Morocco at this time and perhaps held in readiness there for special employment.
22 February 1943

As soon as the defile behind Kasserine has been fought free of the enemy the division has the mission to pursue him immediately through that defile in a northern direction. The Kampfgruppe of Pz.A.A.Africa, committed from Kasserine on the defile has only weak infantry elements but is very strong in artillery (9 batteries and projectors). According to prisoners' statements the defile is defended by elements of the First American Armored Division. Enemy strength is estimated at about 1500 men; a few concrete pill boxes have been identified. According to information received the enemy has evacuated all the airfields, including Tebessa.

Div. G.F. Kasserine railroad station.

Weather: dull, foggy, rain at night.

Detachment [7] 10 which at first had been committed at the defile north of Kasserine had taken Hill 974 at 1411 hr and was attacking on Hill 1191, with enemy forces between the two points. At 1430 a report is received from Det.10 that the enemy is still northeast of Hill 1191. It is also reported that the enemy is bringing forward reinforcements in the north including tanks and artillery on gun carriages.

A prisoner was brought in, a straggler who had become separated from his unit days before (168th Inf.).

21 February 1943

At 0109 hr, 2 km south of Hill 846 (road to Thala) enemy infantry men and vehicles, 66th Pz.Gren. attacking to the north. At 0113 report received that the enemy is withdrawing northward. At 0230 hr the defile at 016 is taken; the enemy has retreated; only scattered enemy machine gun fire (2 cm). At 0730 hr the 66th Pz.Gren. reports that 24 km south of Thala armored cars and 2 km west of the road 15 enemy tanks are feeling forward. At 0815 hr 20 armored cars are observed approaching covered by the early morning fog.
At 0832 hr the enemy is attacking from the north with tanks, and artillery fire from 2 batteries. Kampfgruppe 36 entrenched. At 0935 the enemy stops his attack. Kampfgruppe lies under artillery fire. 8th advance at first was delayed by strong mine obstacles. At 1230 hr Kampfgruppe reports that strong enemy infantry forces have not been observed heretofore. At 1235 hr Kampfgruppe air reconnaissance North of Hill 992 7 enemy tanks and 20 motor vehicles; light motor vehicles traffic on the road north thereof in a northern direction. In the meantime our tanks have passed through the Kampfgruppe and are attacking/right of the road in the direction of Thala. The road of advance especially in the area by Hill 992 lies under enemy artillery fire; we are assuming that there are 2 enemy batteries there.

At 1710 hr the 7th Pz.Rgt. reports that the enemy is withdrawing under cover of the haze. While pursuing the enemy 15 enemy tanks destroyed and as the advance continued additional tanks were knocked out. At 1930 hr our tanks and advanced elements have reached the area 2 km south of Thala. Rather strong enemy forces on both sides of the road of advance; our armored infantry had to fight enemy still being them out of their foxholes. At 2035 hr on both sides of the road south of Thala, tanks, infantry and antitank guns. In the course of the fighting to south of Thala 185 prisoners, including 11 officers, were taken up to 21 Feb 1943. Prisoners' statements disclosed the following:

1. British elements:

- 17-21 Lancs (6th Armd Div.)
- 20th Leicesters (46th Inf Div.)
- 80th Chemical Warfare Co., Royal Engineers, independent company

Enemy composition according to captured papers

- 11th Inf. Brigade
- 21 Bn., Light Fusiliers
- 1st Bn., East Surrey
21 Bn., Hampshire (light Gard brigade)
2d Bn., Parachute M
6th Commando
21st Leicesters (15th Inf.Div.)
66th Chemical Warfare Independent Co.

2. American elements:
16th Co., Engineer Bn. (1st Armored Div.)
168th Inf.Rgt. (24th Inf.Div.)
26th Inf.Rgt. (1st Inf.Div.)
39th Inf.Rgt. (9th Inf.Div.)
19th Engineer Rgt.

Captured or destroyed:
- 32 tanks
- 12 antitank guns
- 1 Flak
- 15 heavy mortars
- 6 motor vehicles
- 3 gun carriages
- 2 motor cycles.

22 February 1943

At 0515 a reconnaissance disclosed that the area on both sides of the road at Thala and south thereof was strongly occupied by the enemy. The enemy attacked out of Thala with several tanks and a few of them broke through our security line. After 5 of his tanks had been destroyed the enemy withdrew northward. A new reconnaissance at 0555 hr disclosed that the hills about 1.5 km south of Thala were strongly occupied by the enemy, also with antitank guns and tanks. During the day the enemy has remained rather quiet. According to Arab statements it was assumed that the enemy had brought reinforcements from an eastern direction.

Late in the afternoon the enemy attacked with 7 tanks west of the road on the left flank of our security line; later he withdrew.

In front of Gruppe Rommel the enemy was getting reinforcements. For enemy cipher see division order of 22 February.

By tearing up the enemy front and destroying strong enemy elements in the deep enemy flank the division has carried out its mission to its
Full extent. During the night of 22/23 February it disengages itself from the enemy and reaches the pass position 15 km northwest of 7716 to defend the latter with the D.A.K. For particulars concerning the enemy see the prisoners' statements file.
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21st Panzer Division, War Diary (Extract), 14-23 February 1943
The night passed quietly.

Until break of day combat groups pushed forward to the trail 7226-7224. At 0535 hours Kampfgruppe Schütte reports the crossing of the swamp area. At 0610 hours the advanced elements of the March group have crossed the minefield. At 0615 hours and 0630 the Rec.Bn.580 and the Pz.Rgt. respectively have crossed with all their elements the mine belt. The sandy areas of the trails mentioned present a considerable obstacle, progress being hindered by the frequent sinking of vehicles. Labor detachments of the 220th armored Eng. are employed so that the vehicles are made mobile as soon as possible.

At 0630 Kampfgruppe Schütte has occupied the prescribed position at 7223 and reconnoiters to the north.

The enemy, intercepting some of our radio messages, knows of our advance, but remains quiet.

The 609 Flak Bn. receives the order to occupy positions on both sides of the road south of the mine belt and to remain in contact with the enemy.

At 0755 a report could be made to 5th Panzer A.O.K. that the movements had been carried out systematically, but up to now no reports of contact with the enemy are at hand.

The divisional C.P. was located on the south slope of Djobel Zebbak at 7229 and had a good view into the terrain of the advance. At 0730 hours Reconnaissance Bn.580 crossed point 7231 and in addition covered the right flank at 7223 without coming in contact with the enemy.

At 0820 hours Armored Bn. Rohr is pulled out of area 7223 and brought to the 5th Panzer Rgt. At 0840 the 220th Armored Eng.Bn. report that the column is rolling since 0800 hours. The slowing up and temporary stoppage of the
speedway were caused by 2 tanks which had chain trouble. At 0900 hours the division commander decided to go forward to the advanced tank elements as the Kampfgruppe had apparently halted. A radio message received by an armored regiment was ambiguous and armored regiment was standing still on purpose. The division commander took stock of the situation and ordered the march to be resumed.

At 0920 hours the 104th Armored Grenadier Rgt. was marching through the mine belt and passed through without enemy interference. Low flying enemy planes attacked the march groups several times without success. At 1000 hours the 220th Armored Eng. Bn. reported that the 104th Armored Gren. Rgt. had concluded its march through the mine belt. The 2d Bn., 104th Rgt. reported at 1010 h. that enemy artillery was moving from 7210 in the direction of Sidi bou Zid. At 1015 hours the reconnaissance bn. had reached the prescribed area at 7257 and gone into position. The last vehicle of Kampfgruppe Pfeiffer passed the mine belt at 1020 h.

In the south sector the forenoon was quiet. At 1030 h. the command echelon of the division starts marching through the mine belt to reach the north slope of the Djebel Zebbak.

A few enemy armored scout cars were engaged by Rec.Bn. 580th north of the Djebel Querga and forced to retreat leaving 1 scout car behind.

At 1055 h. the 5th Armored Rgt. had reached the area 3 km south of 519. The 2d Bn. reports vehicle traffic on the road to Bir ol Hafey. The head of the column continues its march in the direction of the road Sidi bou Zid-Gafsa. The terrain is not heavily mined but the mud swamps make the going difficult. The reconnaissance of the 580th Rec. Bn. discloses only few enemy vehicles in the region southeast of Bir ol Hafey. The enemy is falling back with his Kampfgruppen to the southwest. Toward 1220 h. Kampfgruppe reaches the road Sidi bou Zid - Gafsa at Point 518. The 1st Bn., 104th B retains contact with
At 1316 h. the 609th Flak Bn. passes through the mine belt and advances in the direction of 563 to 537. In the area of 518 the 5th Panzer Rgt. has assembled and at 1345 h. advances again on Sidi bou Zid. The 2d Bn. already destroyed 6 enemy tanks northeast of 510. At 1405 h. a report is received that elements of the 10th.Pz.Div. have captured Sidi bou Zid. Pursuit to the southwest is initiated. Grenadier Bn. Major Künsel carries out a thrust against the enemy at Djebel Ksaira. It has the mission to surround it from the north in a southeastern direction and take it.

The advance of the 5th Pz.Rgt. is going smoothly forward and at 1445 h. the area 2 km east of 386 is reached. Our artillery fire is increased on the Fekka slopes. At 1450 h. a change of C.P. for div. Hqs. takes place in the area 3 km southeast of 534; the final divisional C.P. is reached at 1540 h. 3 km northwest of Nasseur.

Kampfgruppe Stenkhoff continues to drive in the direction of Sidi bou Zid in constant contact with the enemy. At 1705 h. west of Sidi bou Zid contact is established with the 10th.Pz.Div. The enemy continues to show intentions to fall back to the south along Hill 7209, and at 1800 h. the 5th Pz. A.O.K. orders pursuit. The 10th.Pz.Div. presses from the north on 7209. The 10th 2 Pz.Gren.Rgt. receives the mission to push forward against 7209 until it comes in contact with the enemy.

For the 15th of Feb. 7210-7220 is ordered as objective to force a junction with Battalion Künsel. The Kampfgruppen receive the order to get into position for all-around defense in the areas they have reached, refuel, reammunition and organize so as to march on Gafsa as soon as possible.

Flak Bn. 609 is committed in the area of 7256 with the mission to cover to the northeast against the encircled enemy.

Sidi bou Zid is securely in our hands. The enemy has withdrawn in the direction of Sbeitla.

It is reported to At 2015 h. 5th Panz. A.O.K. that the divisions expects to be in a position to march on Gafsa at 1200 h. 15 Feb. Gren Rgt. 10th 9 has been ordered...
to block the terrain at 512 in a northeastern direction and to tie down the enemy at 357. At dawn 1 battalion will be launched to destroy the enemy in a coup de main.

Gruppe Söd had the mission to continue on 15 Feb. on the defensive and to carry out offensive reconnaissance against 9015.

In areas 356, 357, 358 a reconnaissance discloses enemy forces with many motor vehicles. Thereupon 5th Pz.Rgt. receives at 2100 h. the order to reconnoiter immediately in these areas with instructions to the Gren.Rgt.104 B to advance on the enemy groups from the south and southeast on the morning of 15 Feb.

In all Kampfgruppen the night passed quietly.

The 5th Pz.Rgt. received the mission to reconnoiter from 7237 to the southeast as far as the area 7222 and 7223 to establish contact with the Gren.Rgt.104 B. The 4th Bn., 104th Rgt. is engaged with the enemy since 0730 h.; the enemy is still occupying the hills at 7221. The C.P. of Gren.Rgt. 104 B is in Sidi bou Zid; that of the 5th Pz.Rgt. is 5 km southwest of Sidi bou Zid, south of the road to Gafsa.

The general impression is that except for the small enemy group enround southeast of Sidi bou Zid, the fighting is concluded.

The Rec. Bn. 580 receives the order to keep open the defile 8 km south of 7288 to facilitate the planned operation on Gafsa.

5th Pz.Rgt. receives the basic order to hold the positions reached until the enemy blockaded southeast of Sidi bou Zid is exterminated. In addition it will prepare the march to the south. All supplies will be adjusted to the undertaking.

Toward 0930 h. the division commander with Lt.Col.Stenkhost and Capt.Voss discuss the operation Gafsa at point 7260 from where they have a view into the terrain. For the conference ordered by 5th Pz. A.O.K. the operation
accompanied by the go to the advanced C.P. of 5th Pz. A.O.K. at
at 0700 h. The Gafsa operation were discussed thoroughly and planned.

Toward 1030 a report is received here from the 10.Pz.Div. that enemy columns
with tanks and infantry have been identified in the region of 250. Their
direction indicates that Sidi bou Zid is their objective.

At 1300 h. the leaves the C.P. of the advanced Pz.A.O.K. and at 1500
at 10th Pz.A.O.K.

thereafter an observer reports that the enemy already identified is now be-

Col. Gerhard (7th Pz.Rgt.) and Major Pfeiffer the following elements are put
in line for the destruction of the enemy:

3 companies of the 5th Pz.Rgt. attack the enemy in the flank in a
south-north direction.

1/3 company of the 10th Pz.Gren.Rgt. follows the tanks. A company
of the 7th Pz.Rgt. is put in line northwest of Sidi bou Zid enveloping toward
the west. The committed artillery (3 heavy and 2 light guns) is effectively
engaging the enemy brisk rate. The counterattack of our Panzers gains
ground. The enemy fails to reach his objective, Sidi bou Zid, and he cannot reach the group which is surrounded. At 1630 h. a Stuka attack
takes place on enemy tanks. During the entire engagement the enemy artillery
tries to find the range on our batteries, but without success. The tank action,
so successful for us, continues until nightfall. At 1630 h. the
observer arrives at the divisional C.P. and reports to the division commander.

14 enemy tanks were shot down; we did not lose any. The loss of time caused
by this engagement necessitated a 24 hours delay in the Gafsa operation.

At 1730 h. the Reconn.Bn. 580 reported Gafsa free of enemy; thereby
the entire operation falls through. As it is provided for that the D.A.K. is

to occupy Gafsa coming from the south, the division commander decides to send
the following telephone message to D.A.K.:

"Request elements of the Africa Corps to Gafsa; need Recon.Bn.580 for other purposes."

The undertaking of Pz. Gren.Rgt.104 B against the enemy group in area 7222 was not successful, as the enemy, in the strength of a battalion, had well established himself in improved positions difficult to recognize. At 1920 h the Recon.Bn.580 is given the mission to occupy Gafsa and to reconnoiter in the areas 9020, 25 and 9043.

Elements which participated in the tank engagement returned to their rest areas in the evening.

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16 February 1943
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The night passed without special occurrence.

At 0215 h. a radio message was received from the advanced 5th Pz.A.O.K. giving the 10.Pz.Div. the mission to move very early on Sbeitla with a strong reconnaissance force to pursue the evading enemy at Sidi bou Zid. For that purpose the 21.Pz.Div. will hold an armored battalion in readiness.

At 0610 h. the D.A.K. reports the occupation of Gafsa and the retention of Recon.Bn.580 is now unnecessary. At 0630 h. BnPlessing engaged anew the enemy positions at 7221. The O.B. orders a conference at 1200 h. at 722 7212.

In compliance with an order of 5th Pz. A.O.K. the Recon.Bn.580 is brought forward to 7288. At 1100 h. Rgt. 104 B reports that the attack against 7221 advances only slowly. The enemy is falling back step by step toward the northwest.

Pz. Gren.Rgt. 104 A receives the order to initiate immediately a reconnaissance out of Sidi bou Zid. At 1435 h. Recon.Bn.580 is ordered to reach area 7263. The reconnaissance launched toward the northwest is to stop; a reconnaissance patrol will remain in the defile 8 km southwest of 7288.
the conference at 7212 Gen. Ziegler gives the division commander and the commander of the 10. Pz. Div. instructions for the attack on Sbeitla. Kampfgruppe Pfeiffer comes under the control of the 10. Pz. Div. effective at once and receives the mission to march in the direction of Sbeitla toward 1700 h. with a grenadier battalion, an armored battalion and 2 light batteries. The mass of the 21. Pz. Div. will follow as soon as possible. Toward 1600 h. the divisional C.P. is transferred to 7253.

In the south the enemy apparently holds with comparatively weak reconnaissance forces the line 9222, 93, 94 as rearguard. Faced by rather strong reconnaissance forces he withdraws at 0924 toward the northwest almost without fighting.

At 2145 h. Kampfgruppe Pfeiffer reports that at 2130 h. enemy infantry with antitank guns is covering 5 km east of 7275. The Kampfgruppe is attacking. At 2216 h. 4 enemy tanks are reported; 1 antitank gun is destroyed. The attack is gaining further ground.

On 16 Feb. Rgt. 104 B continues his attack on 7221 and Djebel Ksaíra. At 2315 h. Flak Bn. 609 receives the following mission: it will cover the advance of the division with the combat detachments under its control at 7210 - 7219 and on the road 7219 - 7210 by occupying a position in the valleys between 7272 and 7270. At the same time the battalion will assume air protection for that area. When this task is accomplished the division will recall the battalion. At 2315 h. the operations officer supplements the order issued, and goes over it once more. The battalion will fall in at 0100 h. and between 0400 and 0500 will reach the area between 7272 and 7271 with front toward the northwest, west and north.

The 2d Bn., 25th Flak will take the protection of the cross roads at 7219 with 1 light and 1 heavy battery. They will be ready to fire at 0400 h.

At 0045 h. the 1st Bn., 104th Rgt. receives the order to move in such
a'way that its advanced elements will stand at 7219 on 17 Feb. at 0900 h. It
will leave the present area at 0500 h. The left flank will be covered from
the region 7272 -7271 by Flak Bn.609. The march route will lead through 7268, by
am to 7210. The 1st Co., 220th Eng. is ordered to the Sbeitla area early on
X 18 Feb. and there will be at the disposal of the division. A labor detachment
will occupy Wadi Meheri until 104 B has passed through and will then complete
the mine belt.

At 0110 h. the 2d Bn., Flak 25 receives the mission to set to march
a flak combat detachment to the 1st Bn., 104th at 7232.

During the night Kampfgruppe Pfeiffer meets strong enemy resistance
at 7275, and upon order/the division commander remains stationary until dawn.

17 February 1943

During the night and morning the movements of the division are taking
place as planned. At 0530 the division commander with the assistant in go
to the C.P. in area 7274. In the morning hours the elements which had remained
in the former divisional resting area identify enemy forces south of the road
Sidi bou Zid - Bir el Hafey. In a vigorous action about 800 prisoners were
brought in. They belonged to that enemy unit which had occupied a position in
7221 and was now attempting to fight its way through to the north west. On its
march from 7235 to 7268 the 1st Bn., 104th also came upon the enemy falling
back to the northwest; he was well camouflaged in cactus fields. After a
short exchange of fire about 600 prisoners were taken, including Col. D'Auro,
commander of the position in area 7221.

The enemy has organized for defense in the favorable terrain around
Sbeitla and the attack is set for 1200 h. Reconnaissance discloses that he is
with... withdrawing his train elements to the northwest in the direction of Sbiba.

The Recon. Bn. 580 has the mission to reconnoiter and screen the line 7232 and 7291.

Kampfgruppe Stankloff attacks, south of Sbeitla, the enemy tanks which, well camouflaged in the olive groves, accept the fight. Armored forces are also in the spurs of the Djebels el Haraadok. The tanks were partly buried and interspersed with antitank guns. Enemy artillery had a good range on our attacking tanks; observation for the artillery was conducted by single-engine fighter planes. The Panzer Regiment had to advance through the difficult terrain on a width of 10 km. A violent tank fight developed and one could see that it was a case of a systematic prepared defense with the objective of getting out of Sbeitla everything possible. The enemy’s expenditure was smoke shells.

During the attack our Luftwaffe was very active and attacked the enemy positions and columns with bombs and in low flying raids.

The 3d Bn., 104th attacked Sbeitla frontally and made good progress along the Wadi southeast of Sbeitla. Toward 1700 h. it reached Sbeitla and the same evening pushed a company to the northwest through the locality and there moved into defensive positions. The tank engagement taking place south of Sbeitla was very stubborn and last until 1830h. Despite everything on this day 27 tanks were put out of commission without a complete loss.

During the evening the 5th Pz. Rgt. assembles in the area 2 km east of Sbeitla. The Grenadiers have the mission to defend Sbeitla. The artillery supports the Grenadiers and is ready to beat down any eventual enemy attack. The division intends to undertake in the morning of 18 Feb. a vigorous reconnaissance to Kasserine. The mission of Col. Lang, the defense of the high ridge (Djebel Lessouda) with reconnaissance up to the line 7217 - 7218 - 7220 remains in force as there might still be some remaining enemy forces to reckon with.
At 0715 h. Major Pfeiffer reports to the division commander: "Advance elements are still holding firm in front of a superior enemy."

The division commander decides to put off the attack until 1200 h. At 0915 h. the attack is discussed with the commanders. After a short, vigorous artillery preparation the tanks advance on Sbeitla in an enveloping movement to the right, while the infantry carry out a frontal attack. At 0800 h. 2 light enemy batteries find their range and at the same time the first enemy low-flying raids take place. A reconnaissance discloses that on the right attack flank there exists a tank obstacle and on the slope behind it about 15 enemy tanks have concentrated. Thereupon at 1015 h. in the presence of the commanders the division commander decides to launch the panzer attack enveloping on the left. Flak combat detachments assume the protection of the right flank. An antiaircraft battery 8,8 moves forward in the area 7274 and takes over air raid defense and at the same time ground commitment.

At 2140 h. Kampfgruppe Kuhn receives the order to return to Rgt. 104. A. Report at 0515 18 Feb. by Major Pfeiffer.

Recapitulation

The enemy resistance at Sbeitla proved considerably stronger than expected. An organized, tactically well planned defensive position in which a strong, mobile armor belt took a hand (about 50 enemy tanks) The 7 hours very tank fight was hard. Sbeitla is firmly in our hand.

Main body of tanks east of 7279; 5 batteries northeast of 7279; 7280. K 104th A Sbeitla. Flak 609, 7280.

The reinforced 1st Bn., 104th moving to assembly position in the area north of 7269 destroyed the remnants of the 168th in hard close combat. Plans for 18 Feb.: Defense of Sbeitla, cleaning up of the region Sbeitla [Kasserine village] 7237 - 7263. Reconnaissance with point of main effort 5312 and 7716.
The night passed quietly.

The divisional C.P. is located 6 km west-northwest of 7236. The Pz. Gren.Rgt. 104 B is again placed under the control of the division with its 2 battalions and attached elements and has the mission to cover with Bn. Knösel area 7230 and with Bn. Plessing and a light battery. [Dr. Howe: the same words are crossed out in the text]

The intermediate terrain retains some enemy remnants which must be cleaned up. For the missions of the various units for 18 Feb. see division order no. 4 in the annex.

At 1300 h. Gren.Rgt. 104 A launches a reconnaissance platoon in the direction of Kasserine and twice encounters an armored enemy reconnaissance which, after a short exchange of fire, withdraws to the north.

In the course of the afternoon this reconnaissance platoon made contact with the DAK in Kasserine.

The division receives the order to push immediately a fresh security detachment to Kasserine, as this is not possible the division requests DAK the permission to keep the detachment until 1000 h. 19 Feb. It is provided that a Kampfgruppe under the command of Capt. Kuhn the duty at 1000h. 19 Feb.

The closing report of the day to the 5th Pz. AOK is as follows: The enemy retains weak reconnaissance forces in the area 5378 and on the road 7216. Occupation of 5347 is established. No enemy air activity. Our reconnaissance forces in 7716; contact made with elements of DAK. Combing through the area 7202 - 63 - 79 results in taking 2 officers and 150 men prisoners. 2 tanks, 4 personnel transportation wagons destroyed. Numerous motor vehicles captured, mostly disabled. From 14 Feb. - 17 Feb. the 5th Pz.Rgt. has destroyed 103 tanks without completely losing one.

Tank situation: 95/III, 114/IV.

Plans for tomorrow: Kampfgruppe to 7216.
19 February 1943

The night passed quietly in the Sbeitla sector. At 0445 h. the following radio message was sent from the advanced 5th Pz. AOK: "Get ready to march immediately. Probable time of departure 0800 h. under Rommel in direction of 5372. Order for starting follows". At 0634 h. the division received the following order: "The 21st Pz. Div. comes under the orders of Rommel effective at once. The division will leave area 7279 at 0800 h. 19 Feb. along the main road leading to the north and will reach the road junction 4567." For division starting order see annex. At 0615 h. units were acquainted separately with the new order by telephone or radio. The battery with Gren.Rgt. 101 B and with Kampfgruppe Düver also follows to the Sbeitla area.

The Reconn.Bn. 580 will join the line of march in the first possible gap that occurs, if possible between Panzer Gren. and artillery. A move forward is intended later. Capt. / Immediately in front to the division commander who drives xxxxx behind the armored spearhead.

Howard 1100 h. the armored spearhead encountered a minefield 1 km south of 5374; it was cleaned up without incident and crossed. A few enemy scout cars withdrew to the north. After beyond this rather ineffective minefield there was a second, much better constructed. Behind it about 20 tanks, 2 batteries and well placed infantry are ascertained. The division commander decided to attack after moving into position. The road as well as the area are obviously under artillery observation fire. While the engineers are occupied cleaning up the second minefield an armored battalion, encircling about 7 km from the east is committed. A light field Haubitze battery is ready to fire 30 minutes after the tanks came upon the minefield; 4 additional batteries are put in line during the afternoon to fight the enemy batteries which are giving our tanks plenty to do. At 1500 h. Major Pfeiffer receives from the division commander the order to bring forward the 101 A Hpt. and place it for the time being behind the nearest rearward hill. It is intended that the
even today perhaps

A regiment be committed to the attack/on the infantry positions along
the hills. For the present a reconnaissance is to be carried out in both
flanks. At 1620 h. the FM arrives at the C.P. to get oriented on the course
of the operations. The FM advocates the view that every means must be employed
to throw the enemy. At 1710 h. Lt.Col. Stenkhoff reports the following to the
division commander at the divisional C.P.: "Our tank attack is at a stand still
as a result of barbed wire obstacles, mines and antitank guns, and also because
of enemy artillery; ten breakdowns up to now". The division commander decides
to call off the attack and orders to take back the tanks at dusk, to assemble, and
refuel/re-ammunition.

A battalion of A Rgt. is committed for the defense of the
ridge east of the road. The second battalion moves to the hollow as reserve.

Reconn.Bn.580 assume the protection of the right flank and reconnoiters
toward the east. Flak Bn.609 covers the left flank and occupies a position to
on the ridge with connection the road. Reconnaissance as far as the enemy
will begin immediately when the moon shines.

The division commander takes the following decision: with the first
rays of light on 20 Feb. the attack will be launched anew. The entire infantry
and the 5th Pz.Rgt. will carry the attack forward under good artillery support.
Bn.Kursel, widely pulled apart, will attack frontally by bounds. The main
concentrated
will be on the right flank. An engineer platoon and 2 flak combat detach-
ments, Bn.Kuhn and the 5th Pz.Rgt. will be on the right flank. The attack of
the right flank will be carried forward in such a way that from point 5394
either point 5371 will be reached and thereby Draa bou Rouinos, skirting Shiba,
or that the attack from 5352 advance to the north so as to swing west on
Shiba at the proper moment.

To Flak Bn.609 devolves the mission to tie down the enemy and especially
to simulate an attack on the left flank.
Attack will begin at 0630 h.

At 2200 h. a conference took place among the commanders concerning the Sibia undertaking. Since Bn. Kuhn was a little late in reaching his assembly area the attack was ordered for 0630 h.

The artillery will be committed as follows:

3 light field howitzer batteries will occupy positions on the right flank
3 heavy field howitzer and 1 gun battery have gone into position in the hollow in front of the mine field.

Two flak combat detachments have been attached to Gren. Bn. Kurzei.

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The night passed quietly. Heavy ground fog cut off the view in the morning hours. Enemy at 0827 Stukas are requested from Pz. A01 Africa to fight/artillery positions at 5372. At 0830 h. the attack progresses as planned. the Recon. Bn. covers the right flank and reports that the area at 5354 is free of enemy.

The enemy, with considerable artillery, begins adjustment fire on the advance march movements of the division.

At 1130 h. Kampfgruppe Stenkhoff reports that the advance 4 km southeast of 5571 makes only slow progress as the terrain is cut through by deep Wadis. Until now the march was accomplished without resistance. The 3d Bn., 104th Rgt. advances only slowly in heavy artillery and mortar fire. The 1st Bn., 104th Rgt. which fell into line at 0940 h. 2 km southeast of 5554 reached the hills of 620 toward 1140 h.

The Panzer Rgt. reports that the terrain between 5371 and Hill 620 is impassable; a scout patrol sent ahead in advance became bogged. Toward 1200 h. the 3d Bn., 104 reached Hill 643 with its right flank. On the basis of the report of 5th Pz. Rgt. the division commander at 1230 h. decides as follows: the thrust of the Pz. Rgt. with 1 battery will take place over 5371 - 60 - 66.
to Sbiba from the northwest. The 1st Bn., 104th will continue to attack along the wadi in a western direction. The 3rd Bn., 104th closes to the right and follows. Flak Bn., 609 extends its position a few 100 meters to the east. The artillery increases its observation of the area west of the road.

At 1400 h., a liaison officer arrives from 3rd Bn., 104th and reports that the attack is at a standstill as a result of the strongest enemy artillery and mortar fire. Up to now, 3 men killed and 10 wounded. The enemy artillery fires more and more accurately on our batteries and especially on the divisional C.P. There is strong evidence that enemy observers are located on the hills west of the road and that our entire installations are exposed to their view.

At 1415 h., there is a call from Pz. AOK Afrika with the report that FM Kesselring has promised the strongest air commitment for the attack on Sbiba. The weather becoming worse and worse, the project is not carried out.

At 1700 h., the division commander decides to stop the attack and orders the various Kampfgruppen to disengage from the enemy at nightfall.

At 2200 h., a commanders' conference takes place. Its basis is the division order for the defense of the terrain south of Sbiba. For the order see the annex. In the course of the day, the Reconnaissance Bn. was given the mission to reconnoiter over 5352, 47, 65, 55, 58. Result: no enemy observation. The battalion receives the order to block the defile at 5347 toward the north with its main body. The reconnaissance will be carried out as far as 5345, 55, 56, 70 and 67. Upon order of Pz. AOK Afrika, Recon. Bn., 530 comes under the control of Pz. AOK Afrika, effective at once.

The march takes place over 5353 to 7716.
21 February 1943

The weather became worse during the night; the rain softened roads and terrain. Enemy harassing fire lay on the division positions during the night.

At 0310 AOK issues the following order:

"Pass position south of Sbiba resting on the enemy mine field to be defended. Recon Bn. 530 to march immediately by the shortest road as army reserve to the area around Kasserine".

Toward 0500 strong artillery fire begins again. Probably the enemy expects us to be moving into position of readiness. During the night we succeeded in disengaging from the enemy and to organize the defense.

During the night a nuisance force under the command of Lt. Col. von Katzler was ordered to block with mines the road net 5 km east of 5616. The force is equipped with radio and has the mission to reconnoiter to the west. According to Arabs' statements from 40 to 50 enemy tanks are moving there.

At 1200 h. enemy artillery fire lays on the divisional C.P. and the division commander decides for an immediate transfer of the C.P. 1 km south of 5376.

At 1430 h. it was possible to report to Pz. AOK that the division after regrouping on the line 5341, 5353, 5373, had passed to active defense. Toward 1600 h. Capt. Missmann reports that about 500 men coming from the north are moving in the mountain in front of the position of Flak Bn. 609, and that according to a reconnaissance already about 300 men are there. Thereupon an armored company is set to march and occupy the position behind Flak Bn. 609.

Toward 1610 h. it looks as if the enemy, 400-500 men strong, has the intention of attacking the position of the battalion. At 1630 h. an order goes to Major Pfeiffer: "The enemy will be observed and kept off by a reconnaissance".
Toward 1730 h., heavy artillery fire of heavy caliber with smoke laid upon the 3d Bn., 104th Rgt. The enemy attack which is shaping up is at once taken under effective fire by the 2d and 3d Bn., 155th Arty. Rgt. At 1745 h., enemy tanks attack frontally. Violent smoke-shell firing lies on Flak Bn. 609 which moreover is reached by enemy infantry fire. At 1745 the Pz. Rgt. was alerted; on order of the division commander one battalion cleans up the penetration while the other remains in readiness. A tank broke through in the 3d Bn., 105th and 3 others in Flak Bn. 609. All weapons turn at once to active defense and 5 tanks are disabled; not one of ours is a total loss. An inquiry of Ia to Flak Bn. 609 as to whether the infantry is following the tanks is answered in the negative by Capt. Hissmann.

22 February 1943

With the approval of 5th AOK the 104th Rgt. is brought forward to SEbiba. The order follows at 0325 by radio. At 0130 the following telephone call was made to AOK:

"7 batteries in the area around Sbiba including 1-2 heavy ones; 20 tanks ascertained east of Sbiba. Infantry elements in position north of SEbiba on both sides of the road. No retrograde movement. At 616 an enemy group in company strength with antitank guns and personnel transportation wagons; east thereof for the protection of our flank 1 lieutenant and 10 men with 1 battery. Withdrawal of the enemy improbable."

The security detachment ordered to Pass 534 establishes that apparently there exists a former American path of retreat as many vehicles hors de combat are lying along the trail. The committed reconnaissance patrols returned in toto without coming in contact with the enemy. The reconnaissance patrols in line in the pass position at 5616 also spent a quiet night. The
laying of mines in the position before Sibia makes good progress. At 1000h.
the enemy fires well placed harassing fire on our advanced positions, espe-
cially on the 3d Bn., 105th Rgt. Our observation is very much hindered
by the weather. At 1100h. the reconnaissance detachment at 5616 reports
that contrary to map findings there is a good pass entrance at Mashei and
Abdullah. 5616 is occupied by an enemy reconnaissance company. Toward 1300h. again
violent smoke firing on the left flank of Flak Bn. 609. It can be assumed
that the enemy is undertaking an attack to get relief from pressure. At 1330h.
20 tanks, 1 battery and a few motor vehicles are observed 4 km. east of Sibia.
As visibility has become extremely good it is assumed that these motor vehicles
are nothing new but simply were there in the previous days and could not be identified because of the weather.

Toward 1500h. enemy artillery fire lies on a line with the flak
switch line. Westward toward 643 an enemy battery is identified. Our artillery
fires on identified objectives. The numerous scouting operations launched
by the division during the day disclose that the forward terrain is mostly
free of enemy. Toward evening the enemy's artillery fire slackens notice-
able and was altogether quiet after 1630h. At 1730h. for the first time
12 enemy fighter planes flew over the divisional area. A "Lightning" was
brought down.

The following commanders were ordered to appear at the division:

commander: Col. Bruer
Lt. Col. Stenkhoff
" " Werdelmann
" " Pfeiffer
Captain Hissmann
" " Richter
" " Streitz

At 1830h. the 3d Bn., 105th Rgt. observed vehicles before the front.
They were probably employed to lay mines. Our artillery engages them at once.
At 1850h. Col. Bayerlein informs Ia: "10.Pz.Div. DAK regrouped and reached
the pass positions at 7760, -7745. The 21. Pz. Div. remains before Shiba for the defense. Again several artillery fire concentrations on the sector of the 3d Bn, 105th Rgt since 1915 h. At 20 h. a radio from X O.S. reaches the division. Contents: [Figures illegible] defense of the present position. 10. Pz. Div. and DAK will withdraw to the pass position 7776, 5655 which will be held. Prepare the mining of the road to Sbeitla."

The enemy behaved as on the previous day, but did not attack. Artillery activity is somewhat less. 5616 is occupied by an enemy company. Our 6 km east of 5616. XXX flank protection by artillery is weak. First enemy air reconnaissance over the positions of the division. One "Lighting" shot down. Plans for 23 February: Defense; reconnaissance.

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23 February 1943

The night passed without special occurrence. The reconnaissance confirmed Arabs statements that the enemy has evacuated the positions south of Shiba and the locality itself. Enemy artillery fires on Shiba and north of Shiba throughout the day.

At 1220 h. FM Rommel issued the order to continue the occupation of the position.

Bn. Major Knötsel with the addition of a company from Major Plessing occupies the position just northwest of Sbeitla. Flak Bn. 609 furnishes a reinforced platoon and starts it to march to 5 km east of 5616 for security purposes and to relieve Lt. Col. von Katzler. The platoon is placed under the control of Capt. Römer, commander of the position. The entire position is under the direct control of the division. Toward 1550 h. an armored enemy column coming from the north approaches Shiba and in front of the northern
exit turns again to the north. At 1630 h. an enemy infantry company is advancing from the north on Sbiba on both sides of the road. Committed fresh reconnaissance patrols reconnoiter south of Sbiba and at 1640 h. report the area south of Sbiba free of enemy. At the southern exit the patrol was fired upon by tanks from the northern direction. Two tanks and 1-12 motor vehicles were ascertained without a doubt. At 1720 h. our artillery observers ascertain that the enemy is moving into area south of Sbiba free of enemy. At the southern exit the patrol 10 was fired upon by tanks from the northern direction. Two tanks and 1-12 motor vehicles were ascertained without a doubt. At 1720 h. our artillery observers ascertain that the enemy is moving into area south of Sbiba free of enemy. At the southern exit the patrol was fired upon by tanks from the northern direction. Two tanks and 1-12 motor vehicles were ascertained without a doubt. At 1720 h. our artillery observers ascertain that the enemy is moving into area south of Sbiba free of enemy. At the southern exit the patrol was fired upon by tanks from the northern direction. Two tanks and 1-12 motor vehicles were ascertained without a doubt. At 1720 h. our artillery observers ascertain that the enemy is moving into area south of Sbiba free of enemy. At the southern exit the patrol was fired upon by tanks from the northern direction. Two tanks and 1-12 motor vehicles were ascertained without a doubt. At 1720 h. our artillery observers ascertain that the enemy is moving into area south of Sbiba free of enemy. At the southern exit the patrol was fired upon by tanks from the northern direction. Two tanks and 1-12 motor vehicles were ascertained without a doubt. At 1720 h. our artillery observers ascertain that the enemy is moving into area south of Sbiba free of enemy. At the southern exit the patrol was fired upon by tanks from the northern direction. Two tanks and 1-12 motor vehicles were ascertained without a doubt. At 1720 h. our artillery observers ascertain that the enemy is moving into area south of Sbiba free of enemy. At the southern exit the patrol was fired upon by tanks from the northern direction. Two tanks and 1-12 motor vehicles were ascertained without a doubt. At 1720 h. our artillery observes...
Fifth Panzer Army, War Diary (Extract), 18-23
February 1943
the entire north and center front of the 5.Pz.Armee.

On the basis of these considerations the army has decided to withdraw to the area north of Gabès, the Lw.Jg.Brig.1 as well as elements of the heavy army artillery and flank artillery as army reserve for possible employment at the Mareth front. These elements were held as reserve at noon already by D.A.K. upon orders of the army. The transfer will begin in the evening. In addition the Div. Centauro is ordered to commit its forces reinforced by the 7.Bers.Rgt. in the Gafsa area for defense with front to the north and the west, and to leave the im-mobile elements of the division as support in the former positions east and southeast of el Guettar. (Annex 1027)

The combat group of the D.A.K. receives the order to hold on 18 Feb. with the remaining forces (Pz.Gren.Rgt.Afr., 1 artillery battalion, A.A.33, 1 Eg armored battalion, 1 engineer company, 1 antitank company, 1 Italian armored battalion, 1 Italian artillery battalion) the bridgehead positions gained just north of Thelepte and to launch strong reconnaissances against Kasserine and in the direction of Tebessa. Withdrawal in the direction of Gafsa will be effected only in case of strong, superior enemy attack. (Attack 1029)


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10 February 1943

Sequence of events.

Southeast front:

The enemy continues vigorous reconnaissance activities in front of the reconnaissance group and of the 15.Pz.Div., but without advancing with stronger forces. All assaults of enemy armored scout cars are repulsed by our artillery fire. No large scale operation is carried out with in the Foum Tatahouine area or against the rearguard position west of Kedenine. (Annex 1100)
control

The Lw.Jg.Brig.1 -under the immediate control of the army since 18 Feb.- reaches at dawn the assembly area Metouia (north-northwest of Gabès) and remains alerted there at the disposal of the army for eventual commitment at the Mareth front. (Annex 1101)

b. West front:

Our reconnaissance forces throw enemy rearguards north of Thelepte and at the Tunisian-Algerian border near Oum Ali back to the mountain passes leading to Tebessa, where the enemy occupies defensive positions reinforced by artillery. Kasserine is captured and a platoon of 60 Goulists arriving from the east is taken prisoner. (Annex 1102)

The weak security detachments of the D.A.K. committed in the Metlaoui - Tozeur line reconnoiter over Moulares in the direction of Tammerza on the Tunisian-Algerian border. A quantity of valuable railroad and mining material is secured. Reconnaissance in the direction of the border cannot be continued because of a violent sandstorm. According to Arab statements Tammerza is still occupied by the enemy. (Annex 1103)

Reconnaissance forces of the 21.Pz.Div. establish contact at Kasserine with the D.A.K. and clean up and secure the area gained. (Annex 1104)

(Situation map and reports see Annex 1105)

Air situation:

Limited commitment on both sides on account of unfavorable weather.

Southeast

Air reconnaissance discloses no important change in the enemy picture before the southeast front. One must suppose that the enemy will attack the rearguard positions at present just west of Medenine only after a concentration and readiness of comparatively strong forces. At the same time we must expect a continued strong pressure of enemy reconnaissance forces against the south flank.

There is no change in the plans of the army on the southfront.
b. West front:

The air reconnaissance disclosed in the forenoon movements to the rear from the area northwest of Kasserine and from the area around Bou Chebka; this and the general impression gained from the enemy picture gave the army ground to the interpretation that the enemy is falling back with its main body to Tebessa leaving strong rear guards at the mountain exits southeast and east of Tebessa. On the basis of this enemy situation the O.S. is of the opinion that through an immediate thrust of comparatively strong forces from the southwest on Tebessa and the area north a unique opportunity is offered to change the situation decisively in Tunisia. This thrust, which would be carried out by the 3 Panzer divisions, would penetrate in the deep flank and rear of the British forces facing the north Tunisian front and would likely cause the entire enemy north front to collapse. A prerequisite for the execution of this operation is the assurance of plentiful supply through drawing on the reserves of the 5.Pz.Armee.

Inquiries are made to the 5 Pz.A.O.K.5 as to plans for the continuation of operations. The answer is that the intention is to fall back to the positions of departure -some of which are far forward-. The 21.Pz.Div. will at first cover the occupation of the new positions from the Sbeitla area and then withdraw from enemy pressure behind the main line of resistance. The withdrawal of the mobile units of both armies from the Sbeitla-Thelepte-Feriana area will be carried out by mutual agreement. (Annex 1106)

The 5.Pz.Armee is therefore of an opposite opinion concerning the further conduct of operations. Nevertheless, at 1420 hours the O.B. \text{transmits} by radio [his suggestion to Comando Supremo for an immediate enveloping thrust from the southwest on Tebessa and north thereof, provided supplies are assured, and requests for that purpose that the 10. and 21.Pz.Divs. be put under his control and be moved as soon as possible to the Thelepto-Feriana area. (Annex 1107)
In a telephone conversation of the O.B. with Gen. von Armin the latter expresses his concern with regard to the plans of the O.B. The 5. Pz. Arme intended in the next few days an attack operation in the area west of Tunis and would need a panzer division for that purpose. The army therefore had already withdrawn the 10. Pz. Div. out of the present operations and transferred it to Kairouan.

Nevertheless the O.B. upholds his intention as he sees in it the only possibility to bring quick relief to the entire Tunisian front and free strong forces to resist the British Eighth Army or to attack the enemy advance before the Mareth position, and thereby change the entire complexion of the North African theater of war.

Toward evening F.M. Kesselring agrees with the O.B.'s point of view and announces that he will that same evening have a talk with Comando Supremo and the Duce. (Annex 1108)

When at midnight there was still no answer from Comando Supremo a radio message was sent pointing to the fact that the proposed operation had a chance for success only if the attack were launched without delay. (Annex 1109)

2. Morning and noon report to O.K.H. (Annex 1110)

Attack Operations in Central Tunisia
from 19 Feb. - 23 Feb. 1943

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19 February 1943

1. Sequence of events.

a. Southeast front: The enemy continues his reconnoitering with tanks and armored scout cars from the east and southeast against our rearguard positions just west of Medenine. All his assaults are repulsed by our artillery fire.
The enemy does not succeed in feeling forward beyond Medenine to the west. The town itself is still free of the enemy in the evening. It is occupied by our weak security detachments. (Annex 1111)

The pressure of superior enemy forces continues in the south flank against the reconnaissance group. Faced by an enemy infantry attack with artillery support it has to withdraw its right flank from Kasr Mguebla to about 12 km to the northwest on Kasr et Turki to avoid being cut off from some of its elements. (Annex 1142)

b. Front of the attack group north:

The approval of Comando Supremo for the operation suggestion is received at 0130 hours.

Comando Supremo orders that a thrust be carried out against the deep flank and rear of the enemy forces opposite the north Tunisian front, making full use of our previous success, cut them off if possible, but at least force the enemy to a withdrawal.

F.M. Rommel will execute this drive with all available troops of the D.I. Pz.Armee and those of the newly subordinated 10. and 21. Pz.Divs. with under close concentration of forces and strong screening of the west flank on the general line Sbeitla - Thelepte - Maktar - Tadjerouine. Moreover the 5. Pz. Armee will hold itself in readiness to fall in to an attack upon special orders between the coast and Pont du Fahs on a broad front. The enemy facing it will be kept tied down and on the alert by frequent assaults. (Annex 1113)

Deviating from the suggestion of O.B. Comando Supremo has ordered the thrust made on Le Kef. The O.B. had proposed Tebessa as this is farther west of the northern Tunisian front and therefore would not lead so easily to the enemy reserves in readiness there.

The army issues immediately the following order to the subordinate
units (extracts given out *xx*ially by *te*lephone)

aa. The combat group of D.A.K. (less Bers.Bn. and artillery bn. of the Div. Centauro which will remain at first in the Feriana area to protect and reconnoiter to the north and northwest), starting at once, will reach Kasserine, and there will get ready to attack shortly and will then gain immediately first the mountain pass northwest of Kasserine. Further action from there will be by special order of the army according to the development of the situation.

The following units will be immediately brought forward for the reinforcement of the D.A.K.:

1 mortar battery, 1 smoke battery and 1 Eng. battery.

The Bers.Bn. and the Italian artillery bn. again will be brought forward to the combat group as soon as the newly subordinated 7.Bers.Rgt. and the reinforced co., Lw.Jg.Brig.1 have arrived in the Feriana and have been committed to the north and the northwest for the defense of the left flank of the Rommel attack group.


bb. The 21.Pz.Div. will start from the Sbeitla area at 0800 hours 19 Feb. (the order will be transmitted by A.O.K.5) along the high road leading north and will gain the road junction about 75 km north-northwest of Sbeitla (Ksour)

cc. The 10.Pz.Div. will leave the present area around Pichon immediately Sbeitla and reach by the shortest road at the disposal of the Rommel attack group. It will hold itself in readiness there, and according to the situation will, on special order, be committed either behind the 21.Pz.Div. in the direction of Le Kef or over Kasserine in a general northwesterly direction.

without delay
dd. Div. Centauro will bring forward to the Gafsa area all the xxix elements
heretofore committed southeast or south of Gafsa and will put them in line for defense there. The 7.Bers.Rgt. will be detached immediately from the positions in front of Gafsa and will march to Feriana. There the regiment will be placed under the control of D.A.K.

The Lw.Jg.Brig.1 will set to march as soon as possible 1 co., reinforced by a platoon of light flak and a platoon of heavy flak, to Feriana at the disposal of D.A.K. (Annex 1114)

The O.B. decides to start at dawn to the D.A.K. Hqs. with an operations staff and the necessary communication equipment and, according to where the main effort of the attack unfolds, conduct the operations directly with the following advanced C.P. behind the D.A.K. or the 21.Pz.Div. The main body of the Pz. under A.O.K. will remain under the command of the lst officer of the General Staff at the Mareth front.

The order of Comando Supremo provides for F.M.Rommel's retention of the responsibility for the Mareth position. Nevertheless, the army requests Gen.Messe to take over the high command over the Mareth front as a representative during the absence of the O.B. from the southeast front. Gen.Messe declines. Thereupon the O.B. informs Comando Supremo that it is not possible for him to command at the Mareth front and lead the western operations at the same time, as means of communication are lacking for the exercise of direct command. The O.B. therefore requests that Gen.Messe take over the command of the Mareth front as his representative. (Annex 1115)

While in the morning hours D.A.K. is getting into a position of readiness in the Kasserine area for attack, the A.A.33 is thrown forward to open the pass northwest of the locality in a coup de main. This is foiled however by the stubborn resistance of the enemy in line on the heights on both sides of the pass. At 1100 hours the Pz.Gren.Rgt.Afrika moves to the attack. It succeeds at 1315 hours to capture "Hill 914 with the right flank, while in the left
the attack comes to a standstill. The tank attack launched in the afternoon
strong
is stopped by the mine blast at the pass. However at 1600 hours Flail
712 is taken and in the evening hours stubborn fighting forces the violently
resisting enemy to fall back to the north, though it is not possible to break
through the well fortified defensive positions. (Annex 1116)

The 7. Bers. Rgt. coming from the Gafsa area arrives toward noon in
Feriana, and with the reinforced company of the Lw.Jg. Brig.1 which has also
arrived there, will be committed for the defense of the left flank west and
northwest of Thelepte on the road leading in the direction of Tabessa. There-
by the Bers.Bn and the artillery battalion of the Div. Centauro are freed
to be committed by D.A.K. In compliance with orders they arrive in the after-
noon in the Kasserine area. The army Eng.Bn.Afrika and 1 mortar battery and
1 smoke battery also arrive there for the reinforcement of the combat group
of the D.A.K. and are placed under the control of the combat group. (Annex 1117)

At 0830 hours the 21.Pz.Div. starts from Sbeitla to the north. Weak
enemy forces -probably combat outposts- in the region 8 km south of Sbiba
are pushed back at 1100 hours. At 1230 hours, 4 km south of Sbiba the division
runs against/comparatively strong enemy in improved positions with several
mine fields extending in front of them. After moving into position of readiness
and clearing paths free of mines the Pz.Rgt resumes the attack at 1600 hours.
Because of stronger resistance, new mine lines and rain making the terrain
almost impassable it is impossible to break through the enemy lines. The
attack comes to a stand still. The division passes to the defensive for re-
grouping. (Annex 1118)

The 10.Pz.Div. coming from the Kairouan - Pichon area reaches Sbeitla
with his advanced elements only toward the afternoon because of road diffi-
culties. The division which has only half of its combat strength because a
considerable part of its elements are committed and immobilized on the north
front of the 5.Pz.Arme, will have reached with the mass of its units the the assembly area of Sbeitla by dawn of next day. (Annex 1117)

There is no contact with the enemy in the Gafsa - Metlaoui - Tozeur area and west thereof.

The immobile forces of the Div.Centauro which had remained in the former positions at el Guettar are brought forward and put in line at the north front of Gafsa.

Situation map and reports see Annex 1119)

Air situation:

Sand storms and strong fog formations in the mountains make the use of the air force almost impossible on both sides.

Estimate of the situation and intentions:

a. Southeast front:

Because of the weather situation air reconnaissance discloses only an incomplete picture before the front.

The army intends to hold the rearguard positions just west of Medenine on 20 Feb. also.

b. Front of the attack group north:

On the north front the enemy opposed stubborn resistance to our attack. The attack came to a standstill in the two attack groups (21.Pz. Div. and combat group D.A.K.) because of strong enemy resistance in well improved positions/reinforced by numerous mine blocks. The enemy has apparently brought reserves forward. British troops were identified opposite the 21.Pz.Div. It is to be assumed that the enemy has brought forward the 6th British Panzer Division located heretofore behind the north sector as reserve and has thrown it into the fight. A combat value considerably higher than that of the American troops can be attributed to these British troops. Therefore the army expects a further stiffening of the resistance on 20 Feb. (Annex 1120)
The army intends to continue the attack on 20 Feb. with the main effort in the D.A.K.

The following orders are issued in that intention (in the evening orally, the O.B. instructs the individual division commanders verbally)

aa. The combat group of the D.A.K. will gain a coup de main during the night if possible the pass positions still held by the enemy, and at dawn will debouch from the pass in the direction of el Hamra and of the pass 5 km to the southwest, open the passes and will pass to the defensive with its front to the west. In connection with this operation a combat group will be employed (to open the Dernaia pass) from a northern direction (to connect with Div. Centauro's attack from the direction of Thelepte).

bb. Until dawn the 10.Pz.Div. will bring its units forward to the Kasserine area and west thereof and will attack, following behind the D.A.K., in the direction of Kalaat Djerda, and at the same time will protect the right flank of the D.A.K. from a possibly enemy drive from the Thala direction.

c. The 21.Pz.Div. will continue the attack through Sbiba on Ksour.

d. Div. Centauro, while retaining its former mission -reconnoitering and in the afternoon covering in a western and northern direction - will open the Dernaia pass (northwest - northwest of Thelepte) with a combat group. (Annex 1121)


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20 February 1943

1. Sequence of events

The order of Comando Supremo for Gen. Mussu to take over the command (First Ital.Arm) to take over the command at the Kareth front is received during the night. The First Ital.Arm and the attack group north will
join the Rommel group and placed under the joint command of F. M. Rommel who, at the same time, will retain the direct command of attack group north. (Annex 1123)

a. First Italian Army:

At 0600 Gen. Messe has taken over the high command of the Mareth front. All the German and Italian troops heretofore under the high command of the D.I. Panzerarmee will at that time come under the direct high command of the First Italian Army inasmuch as they are in line at the Mareth front. Gen. Messe will be given a German liaison staff for the command of the German units. (Annex 1124)

To watch over German interests F. M. Rommel orders that Gen. Ziegler be entrusted with the command of D. A. K. until the arrival of the commanding general. All the German troops employed at the Mareth front are placed under the control of D. A. K. Only the 90.le. Afr. Div. will receive operational orders from the XX. A. K. (Annex 1125)

Under the cover of strong dust clouds loosened in the forenoon by a sand storm, strong enemy armored units have advanced with their point of main effort north of the left flank of the rearguard position of the 15. Pz. Div. and in the early forenoon stand in the deep northern flank of the division. The division had to fight stubbornly and call out all its forces to resist the crushing superiority of the enemy panzeres, and despite the enemy attempt to encircle the southern flank also, it kept open the withdrawal road Medenine - Toujane. The one armored battalion at the disposal of the division (with about 20 tanks) repeatedly brings to a standstill through counterattacks an enemy almost five times as strong. Severe fighting continues until dusk.

The division has mastered the situation so far that it can disengage itself from the enemy systematically and withdraw along the Medenine - Toujane road behind the advanced position. (Annex 1126)

Herewith the last German units have been withdrawn behind the advanced
position and the defense of the Mareth position is beginning. The First Ital. Army has already ordered readiness for defense of all the positions in the morning. (Annex 1127)

The enemy continues vigorous reconnaissance activities on the south flank of the position in the area about 25 km northwest of Foum Tatahouine. (Annex 1127)

b. Front of the attack group north: during the night

After regrouping had been carried out, the 21.Pz.Div. attacks again at dawn and strikes at a reinforced enemy in improved, heavily mined positions and with numerous artillery pieces (9 batteries ascertained), tanks and antitank guns. Our attack makes only slow progress because of extremely violent resistance and at noon is brought to a standstill. After further regrouping a renewed attack equally falls in ground. The division stops the attack and at the edge of the enemy mine field. (Annex 1128)

The combat group of D.A.K. does not succeed in taking the rest of the enemy positions at Kasserine Pass. The enemy, who has brought reinforcements forward, even launches counterattacks which it is possible, however, to repulse entirely.

At dawn the combat group of D.A.K. renews his attack after strong artillery preparation. The attack comes to a stand still in the violent defensive fire of the enemy stubbornly fighting in overhanging mountain positions. Thereupon the advanced elements of the 10.Pz.Div. which have arrived in the area northwest of Kasserine are put in line on the right of the combat group of D.A.K. After hard and fluctuating fighting lasting until late afternoon the enemy is thrown out of his mountain positions. Enemy reinforcements launching an enveloping movement over the mountain are caught by a counterattack, surrounded and for the most part destroyed. The panzer battalion of D.A.K. which supported the attack and forced the breakthrough on the pass road, shot down 10 enemy tanks and captured
about 30 American armored personnel carriers mounted with 7.5 cm guns.

(Annex 1129)

After a breakthrough the pass position had been forced elements of the D.A.K. and of the 10.Pz.Div. were immediately put in line in the direction of Djebel el Hamra or Thala for pursuit.

For the first time on the African theatre of war rocket launchers were used in the fighting for the Kasserine pass position. One of the batteries at the disposal of the D.I.Panzerarmee supports effectively the attack of our infantry. The O.B. requests therefore the immediate bringing forward of additional rocket projector equipment and submits this request also to F.M.Kesselring at his C.P. in the afternoon. (Annex 1130)

The Div.Centauro holds its positions at Feriana. An attack executed with only weak available forces against the pass north of Thala effects no penetration because of strong artillery resistance. (Annex 1131)

There is no contact with the enemy before the west front in the Gafsa - Metlaoui - Tozeur area.

in the afternoon

Upon order of Comando Supremo the 5 Pz.Div.with Kampfgruppe Buhse (reinforced Gren.Regts.47) fell in to the attack from the area north of Kairouan to the west in the direction of Maktar. The Kampfgruppe by evening reaches the region 6 km south of Ousseltia without meeting strong enemy resistance.

Continuing the advance its foremost elements come upon strong enemy forces which had taken a foothold in favorable positions at the passes west of Ousseltia.

(Annex 1132)

O.B.Sd F.M.Kesselring arrives toward noon at the C.P. of Gruppe Rommel northwest of Kasserine and the O.B. orients him concerning the situation.

Situation map and reports see Annex 1133

Air situation:
Strong dust clouds and sand storms continue to limit the air activity on both sides. (Annex 1124)

Estimate of the situation and intentions

a. First Ital. Army:

It is supposed that today's attack of strong enemy armored forces against the 15.Pz.Div. was carried out to relieve the American units engaged in heavy fighting. It is apparently the enemy's intention to induce our command to pull out forces from the attack group and transfer to the Mareth front. Therefore, additional strong enemy attacks must be expected on 21 Feb. also. An air reconnaissance confirms this assumption, as the enemy group between Medenine and Ben Gardane has been reinforced by 2,500 motor vehicles. (Annex 1127) (the troops fully alerted?)

The First Italian Army has ordered full defense readiness at the Mareth front.

b. Attack group north:

Using all his available forces the enemy attempted to hold his new switch position on the ridge northwest of Sbeitla - Kasserine - Thelepte. He continued to send reinforcements for this purpose to Sbiba, northwest of Kasserine, as well as north of Thelepte. According to today's impression made by the enemy, the army must expect enemy counterattacks on all of the three sectors, as the enemy will be anxious to restore the line that was partly lost.

On the basis of this situation the army decides to remain on the defensive on 21 Feb. at Sbiba and Feriana, to prepare for defense at Kasserine pass with comparatively weak forces and to be ready with a strong assault group to fall in, according to the development of the situation, either to an assault or to a counterattack to the north or to the west.

In this connection the following is ordered:

aa. The 21.Pz.Div. will defend its positions south of Sbiba to the edge of
of the enemy mine field. The A.A.530, placed under the control of the division, will be set to march immediately to Kasserine as army reserve.

bb. The D.A.K. will defend the pass positions west of the Kasserine - Thala road and will send a kampfgruppe to reconnoiter in the direction of Djebel el Hamra. The relief of the 10.Pz.Div. east of the road will be prepared.

c. The 10.Pz.Div. will defend the pass positions east of the Kasserine - Thala road and will move with a kampfgruppe (without tanks) in the direction of Thala. Tanks and the mass of the division will be held in readiness for a thrust to the north or possibly a counterattack to the west.

dd. The Div. Bentauro will defend the Feriana - Thelepte area and brings forward for that purpose additional artillery from the Gafsa area. (Annex 1135)

2. Morning and noon report to O.K.H. (Annex 1136)

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21 February 1943

Sequence of events

a. First Ital. Armee

During the 15.Pz.Div. occupied systematically the ordered area in the sector of the Div. Spezia. Though the division has been engaged the whole of yesterday in hard defensive fighting against enemy forces many times superior losses and breakdowns remained comparatively small. (Annex 1137)

Today the enemy did not continue his attack but limited himself to vigorous reconnaissance against the advanced positions of the Mareth line. (Annex 1138)

In the Rhoumerassen area (northwest of Foum Tatahchene) the pressure of strong enemy reconnaissance forces continues against our reconnaissance group in line on the south flank of the position. (Annex 1138)

b. Front of the attack group north:

While the 10.Pz.Div. and combat group of D.A.K. are preparing for
defense in the conquered pass positions, advanced pursuit elements drive
during the night farther west and north.

The reinforced A.A.35 (combat group D.A.K.) strikes against a
strong enemy fighting delaying action along the road in the direction of
Hamra pass. It throws/to the northwest an enemy
armored attack at 0615 hours and follows/up by xxxxxx reaches the area
about 12 km east-southeast of el Hamra pass. (Annex 1132)

The combat group of the 10.Pz.Div. throws the enemy rear guards
back to the area 20 km south of Thala during the night. A counterattack by
enemy tanks is successfully repulsed and several tanks are shot down. Other
elements of the 10.Pz.Div. clean up the high ground north of the Kasserine
pass the rest of enemy forces still established there. (Annex 1114)

The 21.Pz.Div. has organized for defense in the area it reached
yesterday afternoon.

The night passes quietly in Div. Centauro. Since it is feared that
the enemy will attack on the south flank with strong forces to drive into
the left flank of the attack group, the A.A.350 -army reserve since midnight-
receives the order to move immediately to the Feriana area. (Annex 1114)

At dawn Gruppe Buhse of the 5.Pz.Armeekommando resumes its thrust in the
direction of Maktar. In compliance with an order of Comando Supremo received
during the night Gruppe Rommel will take over the command, effective at once,
are incorporated into the attack movement or will be incorporated. (Annex 1114)

On the basis of the impression created by the enemy this
forenoon (his heavy losses during the fighting yesterday and early today,
the withdrawal during the night, no counterattack to regain the lost pass
positions, his passive attitude also in the Feriana area) the army comes to
the realization that the enemy had been beaten so hard that for the present
he did not have the strength to recapture in a counterattack the pass positions at Kasserine that are so important for him. Therefore the O.B. decides at 1200 hours to exploit the situation and continue the attack with the 10.Pz. Div. and the combat group of the D.A.K. and drive immediately on Kalaa Djerda or in the direction of Dj. el Hamra.

In this connection orders are issued as follows: (verbally by the O.B. to the commander of the 10.Pz.Div., the commander of combat group D.A.K. and the commander of 4x A.A.580)


bb. The 10.Pz.Div. (less motor cycle Bn.10, which will at first occupy and hold the Kasserine pass) will drive through Thala on Kalaa Djerda.

c. Combat group D.A.K. will fall in immediately and open at first the pass at Slougi and then at Zitoun. An additional thrust in the direction of Haidra is planned.

d. A.A.580 will not reach Feriana but will move to Kasserine by the shortest road and will open the pass north of Thelepte from the north by driving westward through the Kasserine pass.

e. Div. Centauro will hold the former positions at Feriana and Thelepte.

(Annex 1114) To prevent the enemy from drawing additional reserves from the north Tunisian front the 5.Pz.Armee is instructed to carry out limited offensive action in front of its western front to harass the enemy and keep him as busy as possible. (Annex 1114)

At 1400 hours the 10.Pz.Div. and combat group D.A.K. launch an attack to the north and northwest.

The 10.Pz.Div. in a bold advance drives enemy security detachments back and about 15 km south Thala comes upon a comparatively strong enemy in a well developed hill position. In an energetic stroke the division succeeds
in throwing the enemy back and in inflicting heavy losses to the British armored unit which had come forward to support the Americans in a counterattack. In a rapid follow-up thrust Panzer and Panzergrenadiers drive into Thala toward 1900 hours, roll up a battalion and capture it (About 700 men). However the enemy holds the heights on both sides of the town with strong forces, so that the division has to withdraw a few kilometers to the south at dusk because of a threat to its flanks and rear. About 5 km south of Thala the division passes to the defensive. (Annex 11/5)

The combat group of D.A.K., after good initial progress in the attack can only make slow headway in the afternoon on account of extremely strong partly flanking defensive fire. The attack comes finally to a standstill on the plain opposite the enemy occupying overhanging mountain positions. At dusk the combat group has its advanced elements 8 km east of Djel Hamra and has organized for defense there. Its losses are considerable. (Annex 11/6)

Opposite the 21.Pz.Div. the enemy during the day gets reinforcements especially of artillery (a total of 11 enemy batteries are now ascertained). At 1700 hours the enemy supported by numerous tanks launches a counterattack which can be brought to a standstill after 6 enemy tanks are shot down. (Annex 11/7)

A renewed attempt of Div. Centauro to open the Dernaia pass north of Thelepte fails because of extremely violent and well placed enemy artillery defensive fire. (Annex 11/8)

Gruppe Buhse has been unable to throw the enemy out of his hill positions west of Ousseltia and therefore attempts to continue the thrust on Maktar driving from the north and the south.

(Situation map and reports see Annex 11/9)

Air situation:

Limited air activity on both sides on account of bad weather.
Estimate of the situation and intentions:

a. First Italian Army:

Today's air reconnaissance discloses that enemy forces in the area between Medenine and Ben Gardane are not as strong as was to be assumed on the basis of yesterday's air reconnaissance. Today there were only 1200 motor vehicles ascertained in that area.

As a result of his ground reconnaissance of today the enemy must have observed that he has come against a well developed position. It must then be assumed that enemy, according to his former custom, will make thorough and lengthy preparations for attack. The army therefore does not expect that he will advance on the Mareth position in the next few days.

The plans of the First Italian Army are unchanged.

b. Front of the attack group north:

After the loss of the dominating pass position northwest of Kasserine the enemy attempted today to hold the ridge line el Hamat (11 km southeast of Thala) - Dj. el Hamra. For the purpose he brought forward additional American forces out of the area around and southeast of Tebessa and also additional elements of the 6. British Pz.Div. The army expects that on 22 Feb. the enemy in a counterattack will attempt to regain the line of resistance he has lost in parts and that he will oppose stubborn resistance to a continuation of our attacks. (Annex 115)

The army intends therefore to continue the attack for a limited objective with D.A.K. and 10.Pz.Div. and to hold the former positions with the 21.Pz.Div. and Div. Centauro.

To that effect the following orders are issued:

aa. The 21.Pz.Div. will assume the defensive in the former main line of resistance. If the enemy withdraws through Sbiba, the division will follow up with some elements, the main body being held in readiness for a new
assignment. The O.B. combat echelon will drive from Thala on RoAia in the rear of the enemy from Sbiba.

bb. The 10.Pz.Div. will reach the Thala - Kalaa Djord area and pass to of its defensive with its main body. The division will push some/elements on Fadjerouine and Le Kef.

c. Combat group D.A.K. continues the attack for the capture of the el Hamra passes. The passes will be encircled far to the south during the night of 21/22 Feb.

d. A.A.580 will open the passes north of Thelepte by a thrust from the north and will hold them.

e. Div. Centauro will withdraw from action south of the passes, will reach during the night the old area around Feriana - Thelepte and will pass to the defensive there. The division will hold reserves in readiness for mobile employment. (Annex 1151)

Results of today's air reconnaissance, incomplete because of the adverse weather, but supplemented by ground reconnaissance and listening posts establish that the enemy continues to draw strong reserves from the northern Tunisian front and brings them forward to the Le Kef area. The 5.Pz.Arme is therefore requested again to harass the enemy through local thrusts on the entire front and tie him down. (Annex 1152)

22 February 1943

Events of the day:

a. First Italian Army

The enemy continues his reconnaissance activities in advance of the Mareth position and also on the south flank in the region of Rhumarassen. The day passed without any action on any considerable scale. (Annex 1154)

b. Front of attack group north

The attack of the 10.Pz.Div. planned for 1300 hours against the enemy is not carried out as ground reconnaissance in the forenoon disclosed that the enemy has brought up strong reinforcements from the direction of Kalaa Djerda, receive and is apparently preparing to counterattack. The division plans to meet the enemy attack in its present favorable positions in order to take Thala in a thrust to be delivered immediately following the enemy's move. However, the anticipated strong counterattack of the enemy was not made. Only minor hostilities probings to the front are made by him and are beaten off with losses to him. As the enemy continues to move up reinforcements, the army, taking into account the poor state of the terrain as a result of the rain, orders the division not to execute the attack that had been prepared but to pass to the defensive. (Annex 1155)

The attempt made during the night by Kampgruppe D.A.K. to seize the pass by a swift stroke fails. The Kampgruppe reorganizes and at dawn advances again to the attack. As a consequence of the enemy's powerful artillery action and because of flanking fire on three sides coming from dominating positions in the hills, the attack meets with no success. The Kampgruppe is forced to pass to the defensive toward noon and to meet several violent counterattacks executed by the enemy, some of them with tanks, until evening. In the course of this action our left flank is pressed back eastward. The fighting lasts until nightfall. In this counterattacks the enemy has the advantage of possessing
on the surrounding heights excellent observation posts commanding the entire battlefield. (Annex 1156)

The attack of the A.A.580 to open the passes north of Thelepte from the north is also unable to push through to its objective because of strong hostile interference and the swampy condition of the roads. Consequently the attack is broken off toward noon on orders of the army. (Annex 1157)

Hostile artillery activity is stepped up on the front of the 21.Pz.Div. and Div. Centauro. However the enemy does not advance to the attack.

The advance made by Buhse Group is scarcely able to move forward over the difficult terrain which has become almost impassable from the rain. The enemy defiles continue as before to hold the defiles west of Ousseltée in heavy forces.

Further reconnaissance conducted on our part along the north Tunisian front establishes the fact that there has been no weakening of the advanced enemy forces occupying the positions opposite the northern half of the Af 5.Pz. Army's sector. Moreover local reserves still seem to be there (Annex 1158)

(Situation map and reports see Annex 1159)

Air situation:

Our Luftwaffe is giving effective support to our fighting despite very difficult weather conditions.

Throughout the day enemy Jabo and attack planes were attacking in the region of Dj.el Hems and south of Thala. In this fighting 5 enemy planes were shot down by ground fire.

Estimate of the situation and plans:

a. First Italian Army:

Because of poor weather conditions, air reconnaissance is able to disclose only an incomplete picture of the enemy dispositions on the front. The impression gained of the enemy today confirms the viewpoint of the army, that the enemy will not move to the attack against the advanced forth position until he has brought up stronger forces and has completed his preparations.
The plan of the First Italian Army is unchanged.

b. Front of attack group north:

Air reconnaissance during the day disclosed new enemy forces moving toward the front along the line road Le Kef - Kalaa Djerda to Thala, and also east-northeast from Tebessa. Furthermore, according to reliable sources, orders have been issued all organizations forbidding any withdrawal from the positions now occupied or, to leave his without express order. The enemy in any case will defend the present line: Sbiba - Thala - Dj. el Hamra, and will probably start his counterattack from this line too, to recapture the important Kasserine Pass in particular. The enemy counterattacks made this afternoon on the front of the 10.Pz.Div. and Kampfgruppe D.A.K. support this interpretation. (Annex 1160)

The O.B. orients F.M.Kesselring, who arrives at the C.P.northwest of Kasserine in the afternoon, on the situation and concludes that it appears futile to continue the attack, in view of the constant reinforcing of the hostile forces, the unfavorable weather which renders the terrain impassable off the hard roads, and because of the increasing problems caused by the mountain terrain which is so unsuited to the employment of armored units, all this added to the low strength of our organizations. The O.B. therefore recommends stopping the attack and withdrawing the attack group once heavy losses have been inflicted on the enemy and his development in the Gafsa - Sbeitla area has been cut up. In favor of this decision is the further fact that the situation on the Mareth front necessitates a speedy shift of the mobile troops of both armies there, in order to strike a sudden blow at the enemy while he is regrouping and before he is ready to attack.

By this means it would be possible to gain a delay in his attack.

F.M.Kesselring, who approves of the idea of O.B., is requested to advise Comando Supremo of the situation in the attack group in this sense.

In agreement with O.B.SBD the O.B. plans to effect an initial with-
drawal to the position in the pass north of Kasserine in the night 22/23 Feb. by the 10. Pz. Div. and the D.A.K., mining the roads and trails. This is to be followed by later bounds by all elements, including the 21. Pz. Div. and Div. Centauro, back to the original departure positions of the operation. Considering the weakness of our forces and the necessity of concentrating all mobile units for an operation from the Mareth position, the aforementioned position is viewed as the most favorable.

Detailed orders were issued as follows:

aa. 21. Pz. Div. will defend on 23 February the present position and will prepare to mine the Sbiba – Sbeitla road.


cc. A.A.580 at dusk will withdraw to the region north of Kasserine and will remain there for the time being in army reserve.

dd. Div. Centauro will hold its present positions on 23 Feb. (Annex 1161) by F.M. Kesselring

On the basis of the estimate of the situation, at 2310 hours Comando Supremo issues the order for breaking off the attack in Central Tunisia and for falling back with the mobile troops to the positions of departure (Annex 1162).


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23 February 1943

1. Sequence of events:

a. On the front of the First Italian Army the day passed without fighting of any consequence other than reconnaissance by both sides. (Annex 1164)

In the regrouping of the left flank, the reconnaissance group (A.A.3 and A.A. Nizza) is moved to the Bir Sultane area. The mission of the group is to secure the deep south flank of the Mareth front by extended reconnaissance.
south and southeast. A rather small detachment of A.A.3 remains initially in the region north of Rhoumerassen. (Annex 1164)

After Gen. Masse had stated that he could not agree to the order directing that all German Units in his army be placed under a German commander, the commanding general of the D.A.K., O.B.Stid, by direction of Comando Supremo, orders Gen. Ziegler as deputy commander of the D.A.K. to look after the interests of the German troops in the First Italian Army, until the arrival of the "German commander at headquarters of the First Italian Army". (Annex 1165)

5. Front of the attack group north:

The withdrawal of the 10.Pz.Div. and Kampfgruppe D.A.K. in the night of 22/23 Feb. took place free from enemy pressure of any consequence and, despite considerable difficulty on account of the roads, it went off according to plan. In the late forenoon the last units are taken back behind the pass position, all roads and trails being heavily mined. The 10.Pz.Div. and the Kampfgruppe D.A.K. stand in the positions ordered, ready for action (Annex 1166)

The night passed quietly in the 21xPz.Div. and Div. Centauro. (Annex 1167)

Toward noon the army orders Kampfgruppe D.A.K. relieved by elements of the 10.Pz.Div. and to reach the region Feriana - Thelepte by evening, where it would take over positions held there by the Div. Centauro. (Given orally by O.B. to the commander of Kampfgruppe D.A.K.)

Apparently held up seriously by the mines, the enemy follows hesitantly only. He limits his activity to reconnaissance and artillery action. The day passes without fighting of any consequence.

Toward evening the situation is as follows:

21.Pz.Div. is defending its former positions just south of Sibha,
10.Pz.Div. is holding the Kasserine pass positions.

Most of the organizations of Kampfgruppe D.A.K. have arrived in the Feriana - Thelepte region and have begun the relief of Div. Centauro.
Air situation:

Since early afternoon the enemy has kept up a constant attack with bombers and pursuit aviation against the region/round Kasserine and Feriana in a force heretofore unparalleled. (In a quarter of an hour 104 planes are counted over the Kasserine area).

Our Luftwaffe carries out successful attacks in the region around Thala and el Hamra.

Estimate of the situation and plans:

a. First Italian Army:

Situation and plan on the Mareth front unchanged.

b. Front of the attack group north:

In compliance with orders from Comando Supremo to move the attack units back by echelon in delaying action, it is ordered for the 24 Feb. that:


bb. The 10.Pz.Div. will defend Kasserine Pass. In case of strong enemy pressure it will be taken back to the region west of Sbeitla, to cover the withdrawal of the 21.Pz.Div.

c. Kampfruppe D.A.K. will defend the Feriana region and will fall back under heavy enemy pressure only after mining the roads and destroying the railway line running to Gafsa. Elements of Div. Centauro attached to the Kampfruppe will be released to the division.

d. Div. Centauro with mobile elements, including attached German Lw.Co. will occupy the north and northwest front of Gafsa following its relief by the D.A.K. There the im-mobile troops will be relieved and put in line in the former positions east of Guettar and south of Dj.Bu Jerra.

Elements previously attached to Kampfruppe D.A.K. will accompany it.

e. A.A.580 will secure the right flank of the 21.Pz.Div. in the region north-
east of Sbeitla. (Annex 1168)

At 1730 hours the order is received from Comando Supremo covering the formation of the Army Group Africa under the command of F.M. Rommel. To the Army Group Africa are attached the 5.Pz.Army and the First Italian Army, and the are placed under its direct control as a mobile Kampfgruppe. 10.Pz.Div., 21.Pz.Div. and the Kampfgruppe D.A.K./(Annex 1169)

F.M.Rommel reports to Comando Supremo and O.K.W/W.F.st., that he has taken command of Army Group Africa at 1800 hours. (Annex 1170)

On the basis of the new organization of the command it is directed that:

aa. The 5.Pz.Army will occupy the former main battle position, its right on the coast, its left at Sened and will organize it immediately for defense. The work of mining the front is to be carried out quickly.

bb. The First Italian Army takes command of the entire front of the former D.I. Pz.Army including the Gafsa area. For this purpose Div. Centauro is attached to it. (Annex 1171)

Toward 2100 hours a second order arrives from Comando Supremo containing instructions for subsequent action of the Army Group. It prescriptions the operation on the Marsh front proposed by F.M.Rommel. It directs that:

"The Army Group will move the mobile organizations by echelon in delaying action in rear of the former main battle position, so that they will complete their reorganization and rest, and be completely ready to reenter the line at the beginning of March. The following will be assembled as indicated, at the disposal of the Army Group: 10.Pz.Div. in the region of Sfax, the bulk of the other motorized organizations in the area of Gafsa.

The new mission of the Army Group is to destroy the advanced combat elements of the British Eighth Army. The objectives of this operation will be announced as soon as possible". (Annex 1172)

On the basis of this order Gen.Messe is requested to submit to the O.B. not later than 26 Feb.:
aa. Recommendations for an attack of mobile forces in the strength of 2–3 Pz.Divs. to destroy the hostile forces standing on the Mareth front.

bb. Recommendations for an attack by 2–3 Pz.Divs. against hostile forces operating against the southern front of the Mareth position, with the object of destroying them. (Annex 1173)

**Deutsches Afrika Korps**, War Diary (Extract), 19-24 February 1943
19 February 1943

Quiet night. Combat echelon O.B. emk blows up the railroad tunnel northeast of Moulare (A 1 = 1, B 1).

0355 hr Army order (talk telephoned) through Op. Section O.O.K. via Personal Adjutant to O.B. (Gafsa) to F.O.O. Operation Section. Kampfgruppe B.A.K. will attack on 19 Feb. over the Thelepte road, the Masserine Pass northwest of Masserine and take it (text: Army Order A 5) All troops will be ready to march immediately. Commanders at Corps O.P. The intention of the Corps is to take the pass northwest of Masserine in a surprise raid by the 33d Reconnaissance Bn. making use of the first moon light. In case the battalion meets strong resistance the F.O.Gran.Rgt.Africa will attack later after moving into position and after the advance of the artillery.

Armored Div. Stetten will move forward at first only as far as the area west of the road fork north of Thelepte so as to be available for employment in the direction of the pass and also to the west. The 5th Bersaglieri Bn. will cover the sector heretofore defended by B.A.K. until the arrival of the reinforced 7th Bersaglieri Rgt. from Gafsa. The Armored Bn. of the Div. Catura will be placed under the control of the battalion to repulse a possible enemy attack from the direction of the Tebessa road. Pertinent orders will orally be issued immediately by telephone and later verbally.

0500 hr the 33d Recon. Bn. is advancing in the direction of Masserine.

0720 hr the remaining elements of the Kampfgruppe fall in. With poor visibility the 33d Recon. Bn. approaches the pass and is met by the fire of anti-tank guns and of a light battery. (Annex 2-3) The enemy is defending the pass with the point of main effort to the west. It is not possible to take the pass with the forces of the battalion. Therefore the battalion
from the entrance of the pass to the southwest. (An. 9)  

In the meantime the Pz. Gren. Bt. Africa has reached the assembly area north of the pass. Behind the regiment the artillery and the flak btry.

are going rapidly into position.

0920 hr the regiment starts in the direction of the pass entrance (Chambi).

The Corps C.P. has already been moved to the region 1 km northwest of the road fork west of Kasserine (B 2). With the support of the artillery the regimental attack makes good progress at first; there is a slight fog.

The 2d Bn. attacking on the right throws enemy security detachments back into the pass road and, toward noon, takes Hill 974 east of the pass. (3 3)

Then flanking fire from the vicinity of Hill 712 and from the north stops the attack. The 1st Bn. (left), which had started shortly after the 2d Bn.,

attacks over Wadi Zobboua in the direction of Hill 712. The battalion sustains strong fire from antitank guns, mm machine guns and artillery which cannot be eliminated by our artillery because of poor visibility. The enemy seems to be strongly entrenched in the left sector. At some places 7.5 cm motor gun carriages are identified. As the region possesses the only crossing to Hill 712 except for Wadi Zobboua, and has no terrain obstacles, the commanding general decides to commit the armored battalion for the support of the im battalion employed on the left and engaged in hard fighting, and for the relieving the pressure on the right battalion. The armored battalion moves out of

at 1215 hr the area west of the road fork west of Kasserine.

1500 hr O.S. at the C.P. He is oriented by the commanding general on the development of the situation. The Corps intends to capture today the stubbornly defended pass. The O.S. give information concerning the intention to carry out a main thrust with the 10th and 21st Pz. Divs. over Sbeitla, Sbiba to the north. After the Kasserine pass is opened an advance toward the west against Tebesa is intended to deceive the enemy. After the pass is taken the Corps will take measures for leaving security detachments at the
pass and for moving with the bulk of its troops over Sbeitla, Saiba 225 to act as covering force. Later, The O.D. gives further information on the fi-
tuation in the 21st Pz.Div., advancing over Sbeitla, has come to about
12 km of Saiba, has been stopped there by a double mine belt and strongly
occupied mountain positions, and is getting ready to renew its attack.

1500 hr the Kampfgruppe resumes the attack on the left flank. The armored
battalion attacks over Wadi Zebibous on Hill 712. About 30 enemy heavy armored
to the northwest
squat cars, some of them equipped with 7.5cm guns, withdraw from the attack.
The 1st Bn., Pz.Gren.Rgt. Africa follows the attack of the Armored Battalion.
As far as visibility permits the attack is supported by the concentrated fire
of the artillery and heavy flak. The enemy offers stubborn resistance. The
area between Hills 712 and 812, from which he conducts his defense, turns out
to be rugged hill country with many ravines. At Hill 712 the attack of the
armored battalion is stopped by a mine field (An.10, B h, 8x5). The 1st Bn.,
moves Pz.Gren.Rgt.Africa up to the line of tanks, and at nightfall moves
beyond then in the direction of Hill 812. Several times the enemy is observed
moving back to the northwest. Engineers are employed to clear the mines in
front of the armored battalion. However, the approaching darkness makes a
further assault of the tanks impossible.

A company of the Pz.Gren.Rgt.Africa (mountain infantry) had been committed
in the direction of Hill 812 encircling from the south. No message is received
from the company. The sound of fighting is heard from a direction south of
Hill 812. According to prisoners' statements the company is surrounded.

In the 2d Bn., Pz.Gren.Rgt.Africa committed on the right the attack did
not go beyond Hill 974 because of strong flankng fire from a westerly direction.
From the road leading from the north to the pass and from the mountainous
terrain north of Hill 974, the enemy launches several attacks against the
battalion; they are all repulsed.
For the night it is ordered that the Pz.Gren.Rgt.Africa will pass to the defense in the line it has reached and will keep close contact with the enemy through combat reconnaissance. If a withdrawal of the enemy is observed, pursuit will be launched immediately. The armored battalion moves back to the area southwest of Chambi. The 5th Bersaglieri Bn. relieved during the day by the 7th Bersaglieri Rgt. in the Thelepte sector and the Armored Battalion of Div. Centauro move during the night to the area northwest of the Kasserine road fork. Rca.Bn. 33 receives the order to move to the area 3 km east of Chambi and to act as a covering force jointly with the 2d Bn., Pz.Gren.Rgt. Africa. Because the terrain is impassable the mission cannot be carried out. The battalion therefore remains in the area southwest of Chambi.

2000 hr The Corps 4, Pz. is transferred to the east exit of Kasserine (B 6)

Evening report A 11 - 18, B 7, B 8

In the area of Hill 712 over 100 prisoners were taken. Pz.Gren.Rgt. Africa reports that according to prisoners' statements the pass is defended by 1500 Americans. (A 19)

Supplies, D.A.K., begins during the day to move the supply depot forward to the area Periana, Thelepte B 9).

After nightfall the 2d Bn., Pz.Gren.Rgt. Africa succeeds in taking the dominant height 1191 west of the pass and in advancing along the road to the north as far as the region of point 700. The enemy attacking during the night the two battalions of Pz.Gren.Rgt. Africa is generally repulsed. He succeeds however in recapturing point 700 in a counterthrust. Contrary to late the impression existing during the afternoon that the enemy is retreating to the northwest, the Corps gain the impression that the enemy intends to continue holding the western and northern exits of the pass on 20 February.

2300 hr the Army order for 20 February is received. On 20 February the Corps
will open Kasserine Pass and advance to the northwest in the direction of Djebel Hammam, open the passes there and pass to the defense with front to the west (A 20). Drifting from the intention announced this morning by the Gen. the Army intends, after the pass has been opened, to draw the 10th Pz.Div. through it in the direction of Thala, Kalaa Bjorda.

Thereupon the Corps orders for 20 February: Pz.Gren.Rgt.Africa xxxix, with the support of the entire artillery and heavy flak to which a howitzer battery and a rocket projector battery arrived during 19 Feb. have been attached, will continue the attack and take Kasserine pass. Attack will be launched at 0700 hr. After opening the pass road immediate commitment of the reconnaissance battalion and the two armored battalions to the northwest is intended. These two units will be ready to march at 0800 hr. (pertinent orders issued 20 February 0105 hr and 0110 hr, B 10, 11).

On 20 February 2 light flak battery of the 135th Flak Rgt. will be brought up to Pz.Gren.Rgt.Africa as reserve for ground operation. (B 12)

20 February 1943

During the night the enemy attempted at various places to throw the attacking advanced elements of the Pz.Gren.Rgt.Africa back by a counterthrust. The attacks were repulsed (A 1.)

In the morning hours the leading elements of the 10th Pz.Div. arrive in the Kasserine area. To avoid a concentration of forces the division is requested to remain east of Kasserine (p.2)

The attack which had been decided for 0700 hr is postponed 1 hour and minutes fire 30 because of poor visibility and the unreadiness of the entire artillery.

At 0330 hr the attack interrupted the previous day is resumed. In the deep west of point 712 the 1st Bn., Pz.Gren.Rgt.Africa makes only slow and
painful advance. The 2d Pz.Gren.Rgt.Africa cannot fall in to the attack
attack as the enemy is advancing against Hill 1191 in battalion strength, 1
through the security detachments placed there and attacks the 2d Bn.
from the north.

0900 hr O.B. at Corps C.P. at Kasserine. He discusses the situation with
the commanding general. As a result an order is issued to the 29th Bersaglieri
Bn. to attack into the gap between the 1st and 2d Bns., Pz.Gren.Rgt.Africa over
point 712 in the direction of Ogrino. The O.B. moves to the advanced Corps
C.P. and issues the order for the immediate commitment of the Grenadier C.O.
of the O.B. combat colonel and of the Grenadier Co. of the 33d Recon.Bn.
on the left flank of the 1st Bn., Pz.Gren.Rgt.Africa. From the advanced Corps
C.P. the O.B. goes with the commanding general to the C.P. of the 1st Bn.
Pz.Gren.Rgt.Africa in the area west of point 712. The regiment commander
reports on the progress of the attack. The 1st Bn. is advancing slowly and with
great pains in the difficult mountainous terrain by Hill 912 where the enemy
in well consolidated positions and dominant mountain positions is resisting
stubbornly. The possibilities of artillery support are limited by the
terrain difficulties and especially by the fog. The enemy seems to be offering
strongest resistance in the line Ogrino-point 812. For the reinforcement of
the attack the O.B. orders the commitment of a battalion of the 10th Pz.Div.
which had advanced out of the Sbeitla during the night. Later the order is
supplemented to the extent that at 1630 hr the 10th Pz.Div. and Kampfgruppe
X, D.A.K. together (the 10th Pz.Div. with all elements arrived now)
will attack the pass positions (B 3,4). The 10th Pz.Div. will attack with 2
battalions over Hill 974 to the north and later turn westward in the direction
of Ogrino. The 2d Bn., Pz.Gren.Rgt.Africa and Bn.5 Bersaglieri
will attack. The 6th Bn. Bersaglieri is advancing since 1025 hr from Hill
712 to the northwest (A.2, 3).
In the noon hours the 5th Bn. Bersaglieri and the 1st Bn., Fz. Gren. Rgt. 5th Bn. which has arrived via Africa are advancing slowly in the direction Ghirra - 812. The artillery is active on both sides.

Armored Inf. 1

At 1215 hr elements of the 10th Pz. Div. (2 Battalions, 2 Artillery Bns) and Kampfgruppe D.A.K. again launch the attack on the entire front. They gain ground rapidly thanks to well placed fire of artillery and mortars. In the left sector the 1st Bn., Fz. Gren. Rgt., effectively supported on its right flank by the 5th Bersaglieri Bn., drives the enemy out of the pass to the northwest. The enemy is still holding out at the north exit of the pass with strong forces and also tanks. The commanding general therefore decides to launch the Armored Bn., Stotton against this enemy. In strenuous fighting the battalion succeeds in annihilating 12 enemy tanks and 51 armored personnel carriers. The attack is effectively supported by elements of the 10th Pz. Div., advancing over point 974.

At 1315 hr the enemy is driven north of point 700 (An.1). The battalion continues its pressure and reaches the north exit of the pass 7 km north of Ghambi (An.5). Even before this enemy movements to the rear had been observed and engaged by our artillery fire. Div. Centauro's armored battalion, in readiness for pursuit, received the order to fall in before darkness to the northwest and reach Mir Brika (9 km northwest of Ghambi). The battalion advances to Mir Brika and pushes 3 km beyond without coming in contact with the enemy.

In compliance with the O.B.'s instructions the orders for the night and for 21 Feb. are issued after nightfall. The 10th Pz. Div. will take over the defense of the eastern part of the pass (east of Wadi Hatob) and some of its elements will attack during the night beyond this point to the north. The sector south of Wadi Hatob is protected by Kampfgruppe D.A.K. For that purpose the reinforced 5th Bersaglieri Bn. and the reinforced 1st Bn., Fz. Gren. Rgt. Africa will be put in the advanced line. For the defense the 5th Bersaglieri...
was killed at
was killed at

Armored Bn. Stottam will withdraw to the area south of Chambi for avail-
ability, while the 33d Recon. Bn. reinforced by an Army Eng. Bn., 1 light field
howitzer battery and armored elements of Div. Centauro receives the order to
start to march at midnight along the road to the northwest and advance as far
as the passes at Dj. el Hamra and take possession of the main pass by surprise
if possible. (p.6-11)

Evening reports An.6 - 12 p.12
Progress report p.13

Weak air activity on both sides because of poor visibility. Out of 4
attacking enemy planes 3 were shot down.

Army order for the new set up of the chain of command. Accordingly the
First Italian Panzerarmy has taken over the command in the south sector. All
the elements of the First Italian Army and of the Fifth German Army which
are at present engaged in the attacks in central Tunisia will be placed under
the control of F. W. Rommel as Group Rommel; until further orders the First
Italian Army is also under his orders (An.13, 14)

21 February 1943

Because of obstruction of the pass road the reinforced 33d Recon. Bn. was
unable to launch its counterthrust at 0000 hr; it did so at 0200 hr (An.1).

Sixteen kilometers north of the pass the battalion came upon an enemy group
of 20 vehicles which, upon attack of the battalion, withdrew to the northwest.
An.2,3). The battalion continues to advance, destroys 1 armored reconnaissance
ear and 1 antitank gun and attempts to encircle enemy rearguard (an.4). At
the battalion
first the enemy withdraws, but at 0500 hr attacks with 30 vehicles including
tanks (An.5) and at 0600 hr withdraws again to the northwest. (An.6).
In the pass position the night passed quietly. An order from A.O.K. (Komm. Group Roman) is received for 21 February. It concerns with the instructions issued orally and by telephone: to hold the pass position, and send strong reconnaissances in the direction of Dj. el zam. The 10th Pz.Div. will attack with a combat group in the direction of Thala. The relief of the motor cycle battalion of the 10th Pz.Div. in the east part of the pass by Kampfgruppe D.A.K. will be prepared. The road Kasserine - Thala will be the boundary between the 10th Pz.Div. and Kampfgruppe D.A.K. However after a talk with the 10th Pz.Div. the old boundary Wadi Hatab is maintained retained.

a report being sent to A.O.K. (An.7, An.3). At daybreak the bulk of the Kampfgruppe begins to prepare for defense in the left sector of the pass.

The Corps C.P. is transferred to point 735 just east of the Shambli road fork.

The commanding general sets out for the positions to talk over with the commanders the positions the commitment of the units and cooperation with the artillery.

In front of the 331 Recon.Bn. the enemy who at first had fallen back, advances again at 0730 against the battalion, but at 0930 comes to a standstill (An.9 -12, p.1).

At 1125 hrs a report from 331 Recon.Bn. announces that the enemy has withdrawn the bulk of his forces behind the passess (An.13) but still has 100 vehicles in front of the north pass and 50 vehicles in front of the south pass. The report is forwarded to the Army immediately. Thereupon the O. B. orders at 1145 hr an immediate thrust of the entire Kampfgruppe D.A.K. on the 2 passes at Dj. el Hazra. Missions open the fl main pass (Kraquuat or Sloughi) with artillery protection against a possible threat from the south pass (Kraquuat or Zitoun). The necessary orders are issued immediately.

The 331 Recon. Bn. receives the order to advance against the north pass and take in a surprise raid; if the attempt fails the battalion will remain
there until the arrival of Kampfgruppe D.A.E., which will come forward out of the pass at 1400 hr. The 10th Pz.Div. will move at the same time on Thala (p.2-8). The raid of the 33d Rec.Bn. failed; the battalion went into position north of the trail leading to the main pass at point 732 at Wadi Hatob (An.14).

At 1400 hr the bulk of the Kampfgruppe moves in in the order named: 1 battalion of Pz.Gr. Rgt. Africa, artillery, 1 battalion Pz.Gr. Egt. Africa, tanks, 1st Bn. Bersaglieri. The foremost battalion joins the left flank of the 33d Rec.Bn. at 1530 hr and prepares on both sides of the passes for an attack to the northwest.

At 1630 hr the battalion reinforced by tanks of the Div. Centauro (An.15) south of p.732 strong launches the attack (p.9) which is checked by increasingly/arty fire (p.10,11). Our artillery, ready to fire in a very short time can only engage enemy vehicles and advanced enemy positions. The positions of the enemy artillery (4 brutios) have not been spotted.

Estimate of the situation at nightfall:

The mission assigned at noon for the opening of one of the two passes to Tebessa could not be executed, as the forces brought forward until the afternoon were too strongly hindered by the effect of enemy artillery fire.

The attitude of the enemy leads to the conclusion that he no longer intends to hold bridgeheads west of the passes. It can be assumed, however, that he will defend the passes proper on 22 Feb. also.

The terrain between the positions we have reached and the north pass (Kranguet or Sloughi) is very level, offers hardly any cover and can be viewed exceptionally well from the dominant mountain positions on both sides of the pass. The strength of our Kampfgruppe, especially of our infantry, indicates that a frontal attack, as well as one from the northeast would be hopeless.

An attack from the south along the east ridge of Dj. Herra is rejected because
of constant flanking threat. For a night attack surprise raid against the north pass the enemy forces seem too strong compared to the ones we can commit and the varied conformations of the terrain in the north pass too difficult.

A systematically planned attack against the south pass is also very difficult considering the comparatively weak combat strength of the Kampfgruppe, since strong flanking security detachments must be detached. However the terrain conditions there are more favorable, as Djj. el Adira stretching southeast of the south pass facilitates an approach and offers possibilities for observation positions. The protection of the south flank still remains a problem since no forces will be available to make it secure, after the Pz.Gren.Rgt. Africa has been committed to the attack against the pass, the 53rd Reo.Bn. and 5th Bersaglieri Bn. are covering the north flank and the tanks are in position of readiness for an attack on both flanks. From a telephoned instruction of A.O.X. that the 530th Reo.Bn. which is in line in the south flank of the corps, will attack via Wadi Chorchara on Ain bou Dries (9 km northeast of Bou Chebka) tonight or early in the morning (22 Feb.) it is assumed that insufficient for a systematic attack by day.

The commanding general therefore decides to have the Kampfgruppe ready during the night of 22 Feb. for an attack against the south pass (Kranquet es Ztoun) with protection on the north flank, while it is still dark to take possession of the south pass in a surprise raid. Suitable orders will be issued for the attack (p.12#-15) (Excerpts for the units will be extracted from the order).

Evening reports An.16 - An.19 p.16
Army order 57 for 22 Feb. (An.20).
During the night and also by day several down pours. The 5th Bersaglieri Bn. (reinforced by 2 Italian batteries 6.5cm and a German heavy antitank company) occupies positions in the prescribed area. Against the order of the Corps the motor vehicles are taken into the positions and left there. The Pz.Gren.Rgt. Africa and the artillery of the KompGruppe are regrouping. Because of terrain difficulties the march of the Pz.Gren.Rgt. Africa is delayed. The regiment happens upon the enemy by surprise (p.1) and takes 8 guns and about 30 motor vehicles, but during the day it loses them again. At day break it is found that during the night the regiment has gone out of its way and is now at Hill 612, 9 km. south-southeast of the ordered objective. The regiment is opposed by the enemy at about the strength of a regiment preventing defending the pass road leading from the north on Almo bou Gireu. The 1st Bn., Pz.Gren.Rgt. Africa succeeds in capturing Hill 612 occupied by the enemy, but the regiment, supported by part of our artillery only and facing in an open terrain a superior enemy, remains in a dangerous situation, as the left flank in which the 580th Rec. Bn. was to be, is unprotected. In such a situation it is not possible to carry out the mission.

At the right flank the situation develops as follows during the morning: The enemy disengaged himself. He seems to have some security detachments opposite the 5th Bersaglieri Bn. In addition, before the front of the battalion several enemy tanks and self propelled mounts are holding the positions under concentration fire (An.5). The defensive force of the battalion is poor. Moreover, considering the Italian mentality, it is doubtful whether the battalion is equal to further heavy duties. Accordingly the armored group (Pz.Stottn, Armored Bn. and assault guns of Div.Contauro)
receive the order that the enemy in front of the 5th Bn. Borsaglieri is to be thrown back to the pass entrance.

At 0930 the 33rd Reg. Bn. reports 25 enemy tanks coming from the west, advancing 4 km north of our position (point 732 (Am.6)). On the basis of this report on the new enemy group Pz. Gren. Bgt. Africa receives the order to withdraw 1 battalion and put it in line north of the trail on a line with the Corps C.P. Mission: protection of the deep north flank (p.2).

The regiment reports by telephone that it is under very strong artillery fire, that to detach one battalion is possible only at the risk of heavy losses, and that the line reached cannot be defended held with one battalion only. Thereupon the order is repealed. The artillery regroups according to the changed situation.

In the meantime pressure at the front of the 5th Bn. Borsaglieri has been eased by a tank attack of our own (Am.7, 8). Armored Bn. Stotten reports that 2 km E. front enemy tanks and infantry are in position. The battalion is under strong artillery fire; it is impossible to advance farther (Am.9, 10). Therefore at 1245 hr it receives the order to withdraw to the position of the 5th Bn. Borsaglieri (p.3) and to remain in position there as reserve of the battalion.

At 1200 the 33rd Reg. Bn. reports that the enemy group north of point 732 rapidly reinforced in 100 motor vehicles, including 40 tanks (Am.11; Am.12, p.4). However the enemy group does not advance against the D.A.K. in the afternoon (Am.13-15). Vehicles drive from Bou Rahan to the northeast in the direction of the advance route of the 10th Pz. Div.; the division is informed of the fact (A.G.K. also) p.5, p.6.

During the noon hours the Pz. Gren. Bgt. Africa is again under heavy
artillery fire. The mortar batteries in position with the regiment loses 1/4 of its guns. Enemy counterattacks are repulsed.

At 1145 hr, on the basis of the development of the situation the commanding general decided to order a withdrawal on Kasserine pass for tonight. A.O.K. is instructed (p.7, p.8).

The G.S. officer in charge of Supplies and Administration, present at the C.P., is commissioned to report orally at A.O.K. on the development of the situation. Army approves of the Corps' intention and orders the occupation of the old pass position after the withdrawal. (An.16, 17).

1505 hr. The orders for the withdrawal are issued (p.9 - 13).

1600 hr. The Corps shifts its C.P. The commanding general remains until dark at the old C.P.

During the forenoon there was only weak air activity, but in the afternoon the/attacked several times with bombers and fighters in low-level flying. 4 machines were shot down.

At 1720 hr the Fz.Gren.Rgt.Africa reports an attack on the advanced (1st) battalion from the southwest (An.18), and later: critical situation there (An.19).

Fak Rgt. 135 and the artillery commander are instructed to relieve the pressure on the regiment by concentrated fire.Shortly before dark enemy tanks penetrate into the positions of the battalion. The bulk of the battalion withdraws in disorder at first, but rally later. The 5th Bn.Bergglieri is also attacked just before dark by some isolated tanks and abandon its positions leaving many motor vehicles and all heavy weapons behind.

At 1900 hr new Corps C.P. at Hill 735 west of Chambi.

The withdrawal is made difficult by the muddy condition of the trails. At some places only cross-country motor vehicles can manage the quagmire without help. As Fz.Gren.Rgt.Africa is unable to cover outgoing position...
at Mr. Quleh Dif in time, the Corps orders the 33d Rec. Bn. and Armored Bn. Stotten to cover the withdrawal. Col. Wolz, commander of the 135th Flak Rgt. has the mission to regulate the withdrawal march on the main withdrawal trail, and the commander of the Pz. Corps Signal Bn. is entrusted with the traffic regulations at the narrow pass road of Kasserine pass (p. 11-19). At the bad places on the road to the rear towing parties will keep the traffic going. For the protection of the west entrance of the pass until the arrival of Pz. Gren. Rgt. Africa the commanding general is putting the 31 Co. (10 Pz. Div.) and D.A.K. artillery training staff in line. The 10th Pz. Div. will be instructed.

At 2130 the 33d Rec. Bn. and Armored Bn. Stotten report that the 5th Bn. Bersaglieri is scattered. The battalions are the last elements to break contact with the enemy (An. 20, 21). At 2300 hr a report is received from Pz. Gren. Rgt. Africa according to which the regiment after the withdrawal of rear guards has broken off contact with the enemy. (An. 22).

At 2330 hr the 33d Rec. Bn. which is marching acting as rear guard in the Mr. Quleh Dif region reports that at no point is the enemy following (An. 23).

Evening reports An. 21-26, p.20

The attempts of Kampfgruppe D.A.K. to open the passes east of Tebessa are carried as a result of the superiority of the enemy who had brought forward new forces. The conduct of operations was made more difficult through the accidental splitting of forces which occurred on 22 February. The 21st Pz. Div. (Sidba) and the 10th Pz. Div. (south of Thala) were fighting hard defensive action on 22 February against newly brought up (British) forces. In the evening the 10th Pz. Div. is also beginning to withdraw on Kasserine pass. On 23 February the Corps expects that the enemy will attempt to recapture Kasserine pass. The defensive power
of D.A.E. is deemed adequate if all elements are in position on time. Therefore measures will be taken to assure the withdrawal of the entire Kampfgruppe during the night.

The new Chief of Staff, Lt-Col. Molte, O.S., arrives at the C.P. in the evening of 22 February.

23 February 1943

During the day weather clear and cloudy by turns; no fog. The Kampfgruppe withdraw to Kasserine pass during the night. After the initial jam went the movement on evenly though slowly. Almost all the guns and vehicles which had stuck in the mud could be salvaged. The 33d Rec. Bn. which has reported several times that the enemy is not in pursuit, leaves at 0300 hr the area Mr. Ouled Sif, the last unit to withdraw (en.1-3).

At dawn the last elements are moving into the pass position (An.1-3).

At 0745 the commanding general arrives at the advanced C.P. There he receives the orders for the intended movements:

1. The attack in Central Tunisia is finally broken off. Gruppe Rommel will withdraw. The elements will start to march to the Mareth position as rapidly as possible.

2. After being relieved in the pass position by the 10th Pz.Div. D.A.E. will withdraw to the area Thelepte, Feriana. Mission to relieve Div.Centauro which will move to the Gafsa area, and to cover the Thelepte area until completion of the demolitions of road and stations Thelepte and Gafsa.

3. Today the following troops will be in the Mareth position:


   of Div. Centauro
of the 1st Bty., 190th Arty will be released.

4. Further withdrawal from Tholepte on Gasa only upon order.

5. Demolitions and mine laying will be carried out on railroad, roads and airfields all along the way to the rear.

While the commanding general is still at the advanced Army C.P. the Chief of Staff regulates the arrangement of the Kampfgruppe in the pass position.

After the commanding general and the chief of staff returned to the Corps C.P., the orders for the march were issued. Kampfgruppe will depart at 1300 hr in small groups at long intervals. The relief of the reinforced Pz.Gren.Rgt. Africa by the 1st Bn., 10th Pz.Div. will be arranged with the 10th Pz.Div. (p.2-9).

1300 hr. to the Commanding General (tel), Div.Centauro is being attacked by the enemy and is under strong enemy fire. Transfer to Thalepte to be accelerated, elements to be sent there immediately.

The 33d Rec.Bn. and the 1st Bn., 8th Armored Rgt. receive the order to move immediately on Thalepte (8 10-12, An.10).

In the forenoon the enemy felt forward with tanks and scout cars against the positions. From 1100 hr the harassing fire of heavy, long-distance artillery lies on the Chambi region. Enemy units of combat planes, twin engines planes and fighter bombers attack the march movements several times in the afternoon.

1345 hr. The Commanding General leaves for Tholepte.

1500 hr. The Commanding General arrives in Tholepte. There the situation is altogether calm (p.13)


1. Situation before the front: calm; scattered artillery harassing fire
2. Relief: In Tholepte and in Goubeul pass the elements of the division
in position there may depart 27th Pz. Gren. Rgt. Africa or 33d Reo. Bn. are
ready for defense (presumably at 2100 hr). Elements which have pushed
to Ogloet Bou Haya can depart at 2200 hr (completion of the movements
on the Kasserine-Tholepte road).

3. After arrival in the Tholepte area the lst Bn., 8th Pz. Rgt. will remain
at first at the northeast edge of Tholepte.

1535 hr The Commanding General to O.B. by telephone: the Commanding General
the reports on the situation and the progress of relief.

At 1715 hr reports of Italian units are received through various channels;
ey mention 25 vehicles, tanks among them, which are approaching the posi-
tions at Ogloet Bou Haya. (An. 11, 12, p.14) A reconnaissacne by the 1st Bn.
8th Pz. Rgt. discloses that they are our own troops, driven away by the fire
of Italian artillery.

The march of the Corps is disrupted several times by bombing attacks.

At 1915 hr the 27th Pz. Gren. Rgt. Africa has moved in the new positions north of

The relief of Div. Centauro goes on systematically.

Evening reports An. 26-21, p.15

At 2200 hr the Army Eng. Bn. begins mining the Kasserine-Tholepte (An. 22,
23, p.16, 17).

21 February 1943

During the night enemy guns which have been brought forward lay harassing
by fire on the Feriana-Tholepte road. Two attempts of enemy reconnaissance
patrols to penetrate in the Goubeul pass were repulsed. The mining of the
Kasserine-Tholepte road is continued (An. 1, 2, p.1, 2).
Gruppe Rommel announces that F.ILRommel has taken the high command of "Heeresgruppe Afrika". D.A.K. is placed under the direct control of the Heeresgruppe (An.2). In modification of the instructions issued on the previous day the Army Group gives the order for the defense of the Führer area and for withdrawal on Gafsa only if hard pressed by the enemy (An.ii). On the basis of this order the Commanding General requests the retention of the 1st Bn., 8th Pz.Rgt and 1st Bn., 190th Arty in the Führer area (p.3). The request is denied (A.5). The 1st Bn., 8th Pz.Rgt. and 1st Bn., 190th Arty. (less 1 battery) receive the order to withdraw via Gafsa into the Kebbit area (p.4, 5). D.A.K. reports the defense cannot be carried out with the forces available (p.6).
II Corps, Report of Operations, 1 January-15 March 1943
TO: The Adjutant General, U. S. Army, Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT: Report of Operation SATIN

SECTION I - THE SATIN TASK FORCE
SECTION II - OUSSELTIA VALLEY - SEDED DIVERSION
SECTION III - SIDI BOU ZID - GAFSA
SECTION IV - KASSERINE VALLEY THUIST
SECTION V - ADMINISTRATIVE

Report of Operations II Corps from 1 January 1943 to 15 March 1943 is hereby submitted in compliance with paragraph 10, AR 345-105.

SECTION I - THE SATIN TASK FORCE

1. The II Corps, under verbal authority AFHQ, was selected to plan and execute operation SATIN. The initial studies for operation SATIN prior to 1 January 1943 were prepared by Fifth Army under the direction of AFHQ.

2. The II Corps staff assembled for the planning of Operation SATIN at 2400 hours, 31 December 1942, at the Alexander Hotel, City of Algiers. Upon its arrival at Algiers, the staff was given the mission of preparing three plans: "A", "B", and "C". Final choice as to which of the three plans: "A", "B", or "C", to be put into effect was to be made by the C-in-C, AFHQ. Plans "A", "B", and "C" all required an initial concentration of the SATIN TASK FORCE in the TEBESSA - KASSERINE area. In Plan "A", the SATIN TASK FORCE was to seize and hold the Port of SFAX, prepared to operate northwest in the direction of SOUSSE. In Plan "B", the SATIN TASK FORCE was to seize and hold SFAX, prepared to operate north toward SFAX. In Plan "C" the SATIN TASK FORCE was to advance on and capture KAIROUAN. After securing KAIROUAN, the force was to advance on and capture SOUSSE, being prepared to destroy the port, bridges, utilities, etc., if forced to withdraw.

3. The SATIN TASK FORCE was directly under the command of AFHQ as of 1 January 1943. For this operation, the force consisted of the following major units:

- Headquarters II Corps
- 1st Armored Division plus 701st TD Bn.
- 3rd CA Bn. (-1 Plat. Dtry A) and 2nd Bn., 16th Med. Regt. attached.
- 26th RCT plus 5th F.A. Bn. and 501st TD Bn. attached
- XII Air Support Command

Supporting troops consisted of the French Constantine Division.

1. D-Day for the execution of the SATIN OPERATION was tentatively set for 22 January 1943. Prior to D-Day, the enemy rushed reinforcements and U.S.
On 5 January 1943, the SATIN Staff moved from ALGIERS to CONSTANTIN and continued plans of the SATIN Operation. While the plans were being drawn from 1 January to 17 January, troops under the SATIN TASK FORCE were moved to initial concentration areas behind the British First Army. These areas were as follows: 1st Armored Division in the areas TEBESSA and ORAN SEGUIN; 2nd Armored Division in the areas OUSA and AIW MILIA; and service troops in the areas CONSTANTINE and TEBESSA. These concentrations were preparatory to concentration in the TEBESSA - KASSERINE area. A secondary mission of guarding the lines of communications for the British First Army was assigned to the SATIN TASK FORCE troops in these areas. A small infantry and paratroop force under Col. Raff was at this time operating in the GAFSA - EL GOLT area.

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6. While the above concentrations were going on, a reserve of 10 days' supplies of all classes was built up in the TEBESSA - KASSERINE area prior to D-Day. Supplies were drawn from the British First Army and from the ORAN and ALGIERS areas. The SATIN TASK FORCE assumed the responsibility for administration east of the line TEBESSA - ICHEROTT.

7. An engineer depot was established in the vicinity of TEBESSA prior to D-Day. Water supply was the responsibility of commanders concerned, with information as to available water supply points being furnished by the Engineer Officer. Water distributing points were established after D-Day by the Water Supply Company.

8. Initially, an evacuation hospital and medical supply depot were established in the vicinity of CONSTANTIN. One medical battalion was established under Corps control in the vicinity of TEBESSA and a second medical battalion was attached to the 1st Armored Division.

9. The SATIN TASK FORCE ammunition supply point was established at TEBESSA and maintained a stock of four units of fire. Forward ammunition supply points were established close behind combat troops throughout operations and a one-unit-of-fire level maintained. The Provisional Ordnance Group provided balanced ordnance maintenance service to all units. Ten days' Class I and Class III supplies were assembled in TEBESSA and a signal depot established prior to D-Day.
Report of Operations, II Corps, 2 May 1913 (Continued).

10. Effective dark, 17 January, SATIN FORGE troops began movement from CONSTANTINE - GUELIA area to TERESSA - Kasserine - Sbeitla area. 3rd Bn., 26th Inf., reinforced, was in GAFSA area and 2nd Bn., 26th Inf. at Kasserine.

11. Enemy ground forces during 17 January to 21 January in the sector of the line FOUCHOUK to GABES (inclusive) were estimated to be equivalent to one strong division composed of Italian Infantry and armored elements reinforced by minor elements of German infantry and armored forces. The scale of enemy reinforcements remained constant at about 500 per day. Armored strength in this area was about 100 to 115 light and medium tanks exclusive of the tank strength of the 10th Panzer Division which was north of KAIROUAN. On 21 January, incidentally, one day prior to SATIN D-Day, the enemy successfully disrupted the French front, secured PONT DU FAHES and penetrated down the PONT DU FAHES - ROBAIA VALLEY. AFHQ immediately ordered a postponement of the execution of SATIN Operation. Due to the above, General Ward, commanding the 1st Armored Division, initiated a reconnaissance by direction of General Prendergast and recommended that the SATIN Plan be carried out as of the 22 January as planned with minor alterations to meet the changed situation.

SECTION II - OSSSERTIA VALLEY - SBEITLA DIVISION

1. A directive issued 1200 hours, 21 January, by AFHQ, signed by General Truscott was received. A summary of this directive was as follows:

   Following measures will be implemented immediately to check German offensive. Elements First Army under British command will operate southeast and south in direction ROBA and CHAD EL KEBIR northeast of ROBA to cut off and block enemy advance. General Robinett's Force (CCBM, 1st Arm. Div.) is placed under command General Juin for operations east or west of GRANDE BORDELE as situation requires. This force will be employed as complete unit under General Robinett and not split into detachments. General Juin will notify all concerned as early as possible of mission assigned to this force. General Prendergast will reconstitute reserve including armored units and artillery in area SBEITLA to be employed under his command in support of French sectors FOUCHOUK and PIGION. Operations are being coordinated with General Juin.

2. To meet this threat from the north, CCBM was dispatched to the OSSSERTIA VALLEY. 2nd Bn., 26th Infantry (plus 3rd FA Bn.) marched to MANTAR night 21-22 January. General Ward reconstituted a force from the 1st Armored Division at SBEITLA similar to CCBM, night 21-22 January, prepared to attack FOUCHOUK 23 January and observing FOUCHOUK, TAKASSIY and approaches to GAFSA from GABES. With the dissolution of the SATIN FORCES, the junction of the AFRICA CORPS and the enemy forces in Tunisia became inevitable.

3. Colonel Fechet, commanding infantry troops in OSSSERTIA VALLEY area, assembled his force in the vicinity of MANTAR. The 2nd Bn., 26th Infantry and 33rd FA Bn. reached MANTAR by daylight, 22 January. The 1st Bn., 16th Inf., marched from GUELIA to MANTAR night 22-23 January. Combat Command "W" had assembled in the vicinity of SBEITLA by daylight, 22 January.
In compliance with letter AFRQ Advanced Command Post, dated 24 January 1943, the II Corps (CATH FORCE) was attached to the British First Army and the Commanding General, British First Army, General Anderson, was responsible for the employment of American troops in accordance with general policies made known by the C-in-C. In accordance with 1st Army Instruction No. 11, Commanding General, II Corps, assumed command of ground troops of all three nationalities operating south of the general line all exclusive METZ - THIL - SIDI all inclusive DJ TROZZI - FENOUN - SIDI AMER EL KENAITI thence exclusive of COSSU and north of the general line exclusive of the line of the CHOTTES to GHOSS. The mission of II Corps as defined by AFRQ was the protection of the right flanks of the Allied Forces in Tunisia.

In addition to the American Infantry and Armored Forces in the OSSELTIA VALLEY, there were approximately two Bns. of French Infantry in position on DJEBEL BORGHI. These troops were also placed under the command of Colonel Fechet. General Robinett was in command of the armored units.

On 26 January, the 26th CT attacked KAIROUL PASS in the OSSELTIA VALLEY and took 400 Italian Prisoners. 16th RCT less 1st and 2nd Bns. and 7th FA Bn. bivouaced east of KENTAR. COMB was in contact with the enemy and holding along the KAIROUL-OSSELTIA road. Patrols to KHUSOLLIE and KARAGZUN contacted the British at KUSOLLIE.

During these operations in the OSSELTIA VALLEY, the enemy clearly controlled the skies. He usually made raids over our positions at 0800 hrs., 1200 hrs., and 1500 hrs. In one raid alone, six of our trucks were lost.

On the 26th of January, 26th CT vicinity of OSSELTIA engaged enemy forces east of the pass through the EASTERN DORSILE and took 70 Italian prisoners.

On 30 January by 1000 hours, the OSSELTIA VALLEY had been cleared of enemy troops to the OSSELTIA - KAIROUL road and the eastern slope of DJEBEL TOUILL. Enemy positions were reported on the north slope of DJEBEL TOUILL. The enemy left many scattered and unmarked mine fields behind indicating that he had no intention of resuming his push through the POINT-DU-FAYS, ROBIN and OSSELTIA VALLEY. The enemy, fearing an allied counterthrust up the OSSELTIA VALLEY dug defensive positions covering the northern exit from the valley.

While the forces under Colonel Fechet and General Robinett were assembling in the ROBIN - OSSELTIA area, patrols from the Italian garrison at KHUSULLY became active in the SEDD STATION area.

On 11 January, the 1st Armored Division less detachments made a reconnaissance in force from OULA toward KHUSULLY. This force advanced halfway between SELLID and KUKMES, made contact with the enemy and captured three trucks, 20 German Sp's and 130 Italian PVs. The 1st Armored Division lost two medium tanks, two were killed and three wounded. By the 28th of January, there was increased enemy activity in the EL GUELLI area. The French outpost there had been attacked by a small German motorcycle patrol.

As the OSSELTIA VALLEY had been cleared of the enemy, COMB was withdrawn and moved to ROB CHER during the night 23-29 January and the Stock
13. On the 30th of January, the Germans initiated an attack against the French positions at FAID. CC"A" under General McQuillan, and the 26th RCT (-2 Bns.) marched from SHELTA to reinforce the hard-pressed French garrison at FAID. The XII ASC bombed and strafed enemy columns attacking FAID continuously. As of 1700 hrs., 30 January, the small French force garrisoned at FAID were reported to be still holding FAID, but the enemy had infiltrated units to the south and rear of the French positions. By daylight, 31 January, CC"A" reached its forward assembly area west of FAID and launched an attack against the enemy positions at FAID. At last light on the 31st, the north prong of CC"A"s attack had reached the enemy positions which were dug in the foothills north of FAID. The south prong of CC"A"s attack had advanced north from SHELTA along the east side of DJEBEL BOU ZID and had reached the village of FAID. Throughout the 1st and 2nd of February, CC"A" and the 26th RCT attacked to restore the FAID positions. Little progress was made. The enemy remained in possession of the high ground Commanding FAID PASS. CC"A" had some forces to the south of this pass while the French also still retained a few positions south of the pass. On the 3rd there was a lull in the fighting in the vicinity of FAID and General McQuillan regrouped his troops for another assault on FAID. This assault failed to restore the FAID positions. Active contact with the enemy was maintained. The 26th RCT (-2 Bns.) was withdrawn from this position on 9 February and on the 10th the responsibility for the defense of the FAID approach was assigned to General Ward, commanding the 1st Armored Division.

14. The defense of the FAID approach by General Ward will be treated separately under Section III of this report. In the meantime, as this battle of FAID was in progress, the forces stationed at GAFSA began an attack against TUNISSY.

15. Due to the increased activity in the vicinity of EL GUETTAR on the 28th of January, CC"A" under Colonel Stack moved from BOU CHEIKKA to GAFSA. Then CC"A" marched on the 30th of January, to relieve the hard-pressed French at FAID, CC"A" also marched toward FAID from GAFSA to reinforce the French garrison. As CC"A" was marching, however, orders were received from 1st Army to attack and seize TUNISSY. CC"A", therefore, was turned south at SIDI BOU ZID along the road to TUNISSY and the 1st Armored Division less CC"A", CC"B", and the Stack Force but reinforced by the 1st Bn., 168th Infantry, moved from BOU CHEIKKA to GAFSA, closing there at daylight 31 January. From GAFSA CC"D", commanded by Colonel Sisal, and consisting of a battalion of medium tanks, a battalion of the 168th Infantry, and a battalion of armored 1st Armored artillery, advanced on TUNISSY. Reconnaissance elements of this force passed STATION BURNOUGH at 0715 hours, 31 January without contacting the enemy. As of 1700 hours, CC"D" was attacking enemy positions at SIREED. This position had been reinforced by 18 truckloads of enemy infantry during the afternoon. By dark, reconnaissance elements had reached within 8 miles of TUNISSY. The XII ASC, meanwhile, bombed enemy concentrations at BOU TAUDE and at TUNISSY, reporting many enemy vehicles destroyed. During the night 31-1 February, the 2nd Bn., 168th Infantry and the 175th F. Bn. reinforced CC"D" for a coordinated attack on SIREED at daylight. By 0916 hours, CC"D" had arrived at the DJ TUNISSY PASS and was breaking south to join CC"D". CC"D" attacked STATION SIREED at 1100 hours and had captured STATION SIREED by 1105 hours. Patrols from CC"A" and
CCPBW sat in the DJ-MELT, 6.3 as of 1140 hours. By dark, CCPBW had captured SEDLD and the 168th CT had organized the high ground two miles east of SEDLD for defense. Over 100 FMs were taken in the vicinity of SEDLD. Throughout the day, enemy dive-bombers repeatedly attacked our troops between GFS and SEDLD.

16. Although the enemy had definitely given up any idea of attempting to come through the SEDLD, VALLEY again after his latest disasters defeat by CCPBW, air reconnaissance reported enemy concentrations east of the MADDOX - SEDLD pass and inexperience troops who were evidently alarmed by their proximity to the enemy greatly exaggerated reports of enemy ground air activity. Based on these reports, therefore, a message from 1st British Army received at 1140 hours, 1 February, directed that engagements at SEDLD and MADDOX areas be discontinued as soon as possible, that an effort be made to clear up enemy positions in the MAD area, and that the maximum possible force be concentrated in a mobile reserve position in the area of MADDOX. In compliance with this order, CCPBW moved from BOU CHEIK to MADDOX, immediately, and later from MADDOX to GFS. During the night 2-3 February. (2nd Armored Division less CCPBW), CCPBW, and CCPBW moved to SEDLD night 2-3 February.) During the night 3-4 February, all forces except a reinforced infantry battalion (3rd BN, 26th) were withdrawn from the GFS area.

17. The frequent redisposition of forces and the long marches caused thereby had a great influence on the outcome of the operations described in Section III of this report. CCPBW and the 1st Armored Division shifted to the north. During the night 3-4 February, the 168th CT gave up its hard-won positions at SEDLD and moved to SEDLD. CCPBW withdraw from the MAD area and moved to BOU CHEIK... By the 4th of February all the remaining elements at SEDLD had withdrawn to GFS. The 1st BN, 17th F, moved during the night 3-4 February to BOU CHEIK and 1st BN, 168th Infantry moved from GFS to GFS. The following moves were made during the night 4-5 February: 168th Infantry (one battalion) from GFS to FERMIL, 1st BN, 17th F, from BOU CHEIK to FERMIL, 1st BN, 168th Infantry, from BOU CHEIK to SEDLD, 1st BN, 17th F, from BOU CHEIK to SEDLD, 1st BN, 168th Infantry, from BOU CHEIK to SEDLD, and 1st BN, 17th F, from BOU CHEIK to SEDLD. During the night 4-5 February, the following moves were made: 1st BN, 168th Infantry, moved from SEDLD to FERMIL, 168th Infantry (less 1st and 2nd Bns.) and 2nd BN, 17th F, moved from SEDLD to SEDLD, and the 2nd Derbyshire Yeomanry moved from SEDLD to MADDOX. During the night 8-9 February, the 26th CT (less 2 Bns.) moved from SEDLD to MADDOX and the 1st Ranger Battalion arrived in the TEGES area. During the night 9-10 February the 1st Ranger Battalion, 3rd BN, 213th CA, and Co. B, 805th TD BN, moved to GFS. During the night 10-11 February the 805th TD BN, moved from BOU CHEIK to FERMIL.

SECTION III - SIDI BOU ZID - GFS

1. With the Afrika Corps rapidly falling back from TRIPOLI to join Von Armin's forces in TUNISI, and the Allied lines over-stretched in its attempt to prevent the junction of these two forces, it became apparent that the enemy was going to make a final thrust to disrupt the Allied timetable. On the 5th of February, a large number of enemy vehicles were reported 15 miles east of GFS: on the GFS - GDES Road. On the 9th, seven or eight enemy tanks from GFS...

the direction of HAMASSY approached to within four or five miles of GAFSA and heavy motor movements were observed on the GUN TREE ROAD. Four or five Italian armored cars and one motorcycle approached HDILLA and drove the French back slightly to the north.

2. To investigate the enemy's intentions in the vicinity of GAFSA and FAID, active reconnaissance was initiated by our forces. A light mobile force supported by air was dispatched from GAFSA to investigate the strength of the enemy in the vicinity of ZAMISOU. This force moved as far east as STATION STERN without contact with the enemy. A small mobile force sent from GAFSA easily restored the situation at HDILLA. The enemy met our patrols in the vicinity of FAID with a withering fire. Elements of the Afrika Corps were identified in this area.

3. As stated in Section II of this report, on 11 February the responsibility for the defense of the FAID position was assigned to General Ward, Commanding the 1st Armored Division. The scheme of defense was to hold the two key terrain features, DJ. KSAIML on the south and DJ. LESSOUD on the north by organizing infantry islands of resistance on these two positions. These positions were not mutually supporting for antitank and small arms fires. A mobile reserve was held in a position of readiness in the vicinity of SIDI BOU ZID. During the night 11-12 February, the 701st TD Bn. (A and B Cos.) arrived at SUSTITA and came under the command of the 1st Armored Division for the defense of the FAID positions. During the afternoon of 13 February the C-in-C visited the FAID positions and had a conference with General Anderson, British First Army Commander.

4. At daylight on the 14th of February, the enemy attacked our positions in front of FAID. The positions on DJ. LESSOUD were attacked by artillery fire, infantry, and approximately thirty enemy tanks. The FONDOUK and GAFSA areas were quiet. As of 0930 hrs. the 3rd Battalion, 1st Armored Regiment with two batteries, 91st F. Bn., launched a counterattack and became heavily engaged with enemy tanks between SIDI BOU ZID and DJ. LESSOUD. By 1300 hours, the 3rd Battalion, 1st Armored Regiment, had suffered 50% tank casualties. By 1700 hours enemy tanks had overrun "B" Battery, 91st FA Bn., northwest of the DJ. LESSOUD position. Enemy infantry moved from FAID to SIDI BOU ZID in trucks and the position on DJ. LESSOUD was completely surrounded by the enemy. The 3rd Battalion, 1st Armored Regiment was pushed back southwest of SIDI BOU ZID with both flanks threatened from the north and the south. The XII Air Support Command successfully attacked enemy tank and truck columns throughout the day. As a result of these operations, and after repeated requests, the Army Commander ordered the 2nd Battalion, 1st Armored Regiment from CO"B" at KILBR to the 1st Armored Division at FAID.

5. Due to the critical situation at FAID, the force of American and French troops at GAFSA was withdrawn to positions in the vicinity of FERLILA during the night of 14-15 February. At daylight on the 15th, the 1st Armored Division launched a counterattack between DJEBEL KARIA and DJEBEL LESSOU. The 168th Infantry still held the heights of DJEBEL LESSOUD and DJEBEL KARIA. The MajGen, 1st Armored Division, was directed to effect the withdrawal of these troops to positions defending the KASSRINE PASS. By 1535 hrs., the 2nd Battalion, 1st Armored Regiment, had reached the outskirts of SIDI BOU ZID attempting to take the town and effect the relief of the 168th Infantry.
150 men from the 2nd Battalion, 168th Infantry, on DJIRELL KHIR, managed to withdraw to DJIRELL KHIR. The 3rd Battalion, 168th Infantry, still held DJIRELL KHIR. Contact was lost with both the 168th Infantry and the 2nd Bn., 1st Armored Regiment, which was near SIDI BOU ZID. Patrols were unable to get through from these forces to them. The enemy organized a strong defensive position north and south through SIDI BOU ZID. Enemy tanks west of SIDI BOU ZID withdrew towards SIDI BOU ZID. As of 1200 hours on the 16th, about 50 enemy tanks attacked in the vicinity of DJIRELL KHIR. Our armored forces lost approximately 86 medium tanks in their attempt to relieve the infantry holding DJIRELL KHIR, and DJIRELL KHIR.

6. A directive from the Commanding General, 1st British Army, dated 15 February 1943, directed that forces holding the high ground west of FAID be withdrawn and the pass at KASSERINE organized for defense. A force consisting of the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, and the 19th Combat Engineer Regiment organized a new defensive position four miles east of KASSERINE. After repeated requests, 16th Armored Brigade was released by 1st British Army to II Corps as of 1500 hours, 15 February, with permission to move 16th Armored Brigade from Kasserine to SEBITTA.

7. From the 17th to the 19th of February, II Corps completed its withdrawal to the general line DJ BOU DJERIDI - DJ BOU CLIP - DJ BOU KERT - DJ BOU SIDI - DJ BOU SIDI. The XII Air Support Command evacuated both airfields in the vicinity of TELLETTA. The 1st Armored Division withdrew from SEBITTA to an area southeast of TELLETTA. The 89th Td Bn. arrived and went into bivouac in the vicinity of BENELLA. The 89th Armored Brigade (less 1 Regt. Group) (British) came under control of II Corps in the vicinity of TELLETTA as of 0900 hours, 19 February, with the proviso that they were not to be committed to action without the authority of the Commanding General, First British Army. Other new arrivals in the II Corps were the 58th Co. (British), 39th Infantry, and the 56th Sqn (British), all of which were immediately dispatched to reinforce the troops holding the KASSERINE PASS positions.

SECTION IV - KASSERINE VALLEY THRUST

1. The WESTERN DORS.LE, a range of mountains 20 miles west and parallel to the DORS.LE, formed a cross compartment through which the enemy would have to pass in an operation against the Allied right flank. KASSERINE PASS, SIDI MEIM PASS, and the DERD PASS above TELLETTA, consisting of three approaches across DJ. DERD, and the EL ASIOD PASS were the four main approaches across the WESTERN DORS.LE in the II Corps zone of action. In a clockwise direction from KASSERINE PASS, DJ CLIP, south of the pass, DJ NOUGUI and BOU DRIES south and west of the pass, DJ KERT, about 20 miles west of the pass, DJ EL ASIOD and DJ BIRI, north and west of the pass, and DJ SIDI MEIM form the sides of a bowl around the corridor cut by the OUED ILTE. Two main roads, separated by the OUED ILTE, cut through this bowl and meet in the pass. One road leads northeast to TELLETTA, and the other approximately west to TELLETTA. Since there had been several days' rain prior to the 20th of February, the OUED ILTE was unfordable and communication between the TELLETTA road and the TELLETTA road was impracticable at any point other than at the fork of these two roads within the pass. Since the rain had filled the KASSERINE bowl with mud, only full-tracked vehicles were able to operate across country.
During the night 19–20 February, enemy infantry infiltrated to positions on the high ground north and south of Kasserine Pass. From these positions, which overlooked the defensive positions in the pass, the enemy brought small arms and mortar fire directly on our defensive positions. At daylight on the 20th, enemy infantry supported by artillery attacked the defensive positions across Kasserine Pass.

1. The 6th Armored Infantry, was ordered from THALI to reinforce the troops in Kasserine Pass. The 6th Armored Division (Brigade) moved to a position along the Thali–Kasserine road preparatory to supporting forces holding Kasserine Pass.

2. Due to small arms and mortar fire from the high ground overlooking the 26th Infantry positions, the 26th Infantry withdrew to the road towards THALI. This withdrawal exposed the north flank of the 19th Engineer Regiment, which was disposed astride the road leading to Kasserine Pass.

3. The first armor division from the 3rd Armored Division (Brigade) (British) with the 18th Infantry attached, organized positions to defend the SEBLI approach.

4. The enemy appeared to be directing his main effort up the THALI Road. On the TERESS Road he appeared to be making a secondary effort using Italian Battalions behind them.

5. The 16th Infantry held positions on BOLT DRIES. Due to the outstanding leadership of General Robinett, who assumed command of all troops along the TERESS Road, he had the situation well under control by daylight of the 22nd.

6. While General Robinett was engaged south of the OUED EL TED, Brigadier Dumphie met the main German attack with his 26th Armored Brigade (British) north of the OUED LITIM. The 26th Armored Brigade (1st armored regimental group) as stated above, arrived at THALI during the night 18–19 February. Brigadier Dumphie reported to Hq IT Corps at 0100 hours on the 19th. After learning the situation, he visited Colonel Stark who was in command of all the forces in the pass. He arrived at Colonel Stark's CP at 1630 hours and learned that the battle had been in progress since daylight. Although Colonel Stark's CP was under direct small arms fire at this time, Colonel Stark claimed that the situation was well in hand and that all of his troops were in position.
9. Brigadier Dumphio immediately returned to TILLI where he reported to British First Army that the situation was very poor at the pass and requested permission to employ his force to restore the situation. Ist Army granted him permission to employ not more than one motorized company, 1 armored squadron, one troop of AT guns, and one troop of artillery. This force moved to a position astride the TILLI road along a ridge about two miles northwest of the pass during the night 19-20 February. This force was further reinforced in this position by the 3rd Bn., 6th Armored Infantry. After the 26th Infantry left their positions in the pass, this composite American and British force held this covering position along the ridge astride the TILLI Road until dark, 20 February. The armored squadron lost all of its tanks. The 3rd Bn., 6th Armored, suffered very heavy casualties. During the afternoon of the 20th, the remainder of the 26th Armored Brigade moved up to a covering position about 10 miles south west of TILLI. General Frendudall paid a personal visit to this position at this time and placed Brigadier Dumphio in command of all troops British and American in this area. During the night 20-21, Brigadier Nicholson arrived to coordinate the action of CCF 6th and the 26th Armored Brigade. A meeting of General Robinett, Brigadier Dumphio, and Brigadier Nicholson at TILLI was arranged. In order to get back to his troops prior to daylight, General Robinett had to leave before Brigadier Nicholson arrived. Brigadier Dumphio and General Robinett, however, had agreed to a plan of action before General Robinett left TILLI. Brigadier Nicholson arrived in TILLI at 0245 hours and approved the plan already made by Brigadier Dumphio and General Robinett. According to this plan, General Robinett was to restore the situation south of the OUED EL-TEH while the 2nd Bn., of the 5th Loicesters, who had arrived early that night, prepared defensive positions astride the road three miles southwest of TILLI. The 26th Armored Brigade was to delay the enemy and prevent him from reaching the Loicesters position before 1800 hours, 21st of February. Colonel Stark was to form a straggler point at TILLI for all American troops and send them up from this point to reinforce the Loicesters' position.

10. About 0730 hours on the 21st of February, a German force of all arms could be seen from the 26th Brigade's positions forming astride the TILLI Road prepared to attack north. The approximate strength of this enemy force was as follows: 30 tanks, about 20 SP guns, 35 half-track infantry vehicles, and 2 companies of infantry in trucks who discounted and advanced by foot. This enemy concentration was shelled by the artillery of the 26th Armored Brigade. The enemy SP guns engaged the forward tanks of the Brigade and knocked out four. At 1500 hours, the enemy attacked straight up the road. The tanks of the 26th Armored Brigade fought a delaying action back to TILLI and lost 20 tanks knocking out only a small number of German tanks. The 26th Armored Brigade, however, managed to maintain the required delay. The last tank passed through the Loicesters' position at 1930 hours. Five TD guns of the 805th TD Bn. under Lt. Col. Forconan were the only American troops who fought in this delaying action and in the defense of the Loicesters' positions. Although most of the 805th TD Bn. had been lost in previous fighting, Colonel Forconan by his superior leadership, managed to keep these remaining guns together and they gave an excellent account of themselves throughout the remainder of the battle. The 26th Armored Brigade rallied behind the Loicesters' position. By 1945 hours, machine gun fire inside the Loicesters' positions...
Report of Operations, by II Corps, 2 May 1943 (Continued)

indicated that the enemy had broken through these positions. The artillery of 9th Division, however, by marching continuously for four days and nights in the last stages of their march from CASABLANCA, arrived in the THALA area and had gone into supporting positions of the 26th Armored Brigade by daylight. Orders from Brigadier Nicholson were received to hold the positions of the 26th Armored Brigade at all costs.

11. To relieve the situation confronting CC"B" and the 26th Armored Brigade, the 16th Infantry launched a counterattack in the vicinity of BOU DRIES and cleared BOU DRIES of the enemy. This counterattack and the sudden increase in artillery fire caused by the arrival of the 9th Division Artillery, caused the enemy to pull back before his line of retreat through the pass was cut behind him. At 0215 hours on the 22nd, the enemy began a general withdrawal towards the pass. Artillery concentrations harassed his movement through the pass by interdiction fire throughout the night.

12. CC"B" moved from BOU CHEBKA to HAIDER during the night 22-23. From the 23rd of February to the 25th of February, the enemy continued his withdrawal from the KASSERINE bowl, leaving many mines and booby traps. Patrols were pushed out to maintain contact. By daylight on the 21st however, CC"B" had lost contact with the enemy. Fires were observed in KASSERINE and FERLITI during the night 21-22 February. By the 25th, CC"B" and the 26th Armored Brigade had regained control of the high ground north and south of the pass and by 1155 hours the Reconnaissance Company of the 13th Armored Regiment entered the pass. The advance of the forward elements was greatly hampered by mines.

13. During the period 26 February to 16 March in compliance with First Army Operations Instruction Number 19, dated 24 February 1943, II Corps reorganized and consolidated its positions along the MISTERU DORSALL with the 34th Infantry Division on the north, the 9th Infantry Division on the south, and the 1st Armored Division in a position of readiness on the south flank. The 1st Infantry Division began its concentration in the BOU CHEBKA area.

SECTION V - ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Status of strength - Appendix "A".
2. Casualties and prisoners - Appendix "B"
3. Replacements - Appendix "C"
4. Evacuation - Appendix "D"

For the Commanding General:

Lt. Col. J. G. D.,
Adjutant General.
APPENDIX "A" TO REPORT ON OPERATIONS, HEADQUARTERS II CORPS, 2 MAY 1943.

Status of Strength of Command by Division and Separate Units on 1 January or on date they came under II Corps control.

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### APPENDIX B

#### Report on Operations, HQ II Corps, 2 May 1943 (Continued)

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## Appendix "A" to Report on Operations, Hq. II Corps, 2 May 1943 (Continued)

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**UNCLASSIFIED**
Appendix "A" to Report on Operations, Hq. II Corps, 2 May 1943 (Continued).

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15 March, Corps Total: 11410 228 157 83192 88287
APPENDIX "B" TO REPORT ON OPERATIONS, HEADQUARTERS II CORPS, 2 MAY 1943.

1. Prisoners captured by II Corps units during period 1 January to 17 March, 1943:

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2. Casualties of II Corps during period 1 January to 17 March, 1943:

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APPENDIX "C" TO REPORT ON OPERATIONS, HEADQUARTERS II CORPS, 2 MAY 1943.

Replacements by branch received by II Corps units during the period 1 January - 15 March, 1943:

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Medical Activities During Period 1 January to 17 March, Inclusive.

1. During the period 1 January to 21 January, corps medical units were concentrated in the Constantine area. These units were the 9th Evacuation Hospital, 77th Evacuation Hospital, 118th Surgical Hospital, 51st Medical Battalion, 2nd Battalion, 16th Medical Regiment, and the 1st Advance Section, 2nd Medical Supply Depot. During this period, only British hospital facilities were available and all hospitalization was in British hospitals.

2. Upon arrival in the Tebessa area, the 9th Evacuation Hospital was established 12 miles south of Tebessa. The 118th Surgical Hospital established one hospitalization section at Foriana, the other section moving to vicinity of Thala. The 77th Evacuation Hospital was held in reserve until 11 February, when it established lightly 12 miles south of Tebessa. The 1st Advance Section, 2nd Medical Supply Depot, was established 10 miles south of Tebessa.

3. During the period 16 February to 20 February, all medical installations were withdrawn to vicinity of Ain Baida. During this withdrawal it was necessary to move approximately 700 patients with the hospitals because of lack of evacuation facilities to the rear.

4. Supply. The initial medical supplies were adequate and there was no difficulty in maintaining an adequate supply of class one supplies, that is, those supplies contained in medical maintenance units. It became necessary early in the operation to alter the maintenance unit in order that a more nearly balanced stock would be available in the depot. The greatest difficulty in supply was encountered in replacing items of organizational equipment for hospitals and field units. It was necessary to augment the T/3A equipment of hospitals materially, in order that they might function efficiently at near full capacity.

5. Hospitalization. The two 750-bed evacuation hospitals and the 100-bed surgical hospital were adequate for the troops initially involved. The two 750-bed evacuation hospitals were placed on a 15-day policy in order that as many patients as possible might be returned to duty in the forward area. This policy was abandoned towards the end of the period when troops in the area were increased. The 118th Surgical Hospital received the majority of casualties and rendered the initial operating treatment. This unit was on no fixed policy. Clearing platoons of Corps Medical Battalions were utilized extensively in the forward areas with surgical teams attached. These units performed excellently and filled the gap between division units and the more fixed hospitals in the rear.

6. Evacuation. Evacuation from forward units was accomplished by the 51st Medical Battalion and the 2nd Battalion, 16th Medical Regiment. This latter unit was placed entirely in support of the 1st U.S. Armored Division, while the 51st Medical Battalion covered evacuation from clearing platoons to hospitals. Evacuation to the Communication Zone was entirely by air until 16 February, when air evacuation completely failed due to unfavorable flying conditions. The British First Army then furnished a section of the 6th Mater Ambulance Corps for evacuation by road to the 61st Station Hospital at El Guerrouch. This unit remained with the Corps during the remainder of this period, and covered all forward evacuation by road.
Panzer Armee Afrika (Rommel), War Diary (Extracts), 17-22 February 1943
The fight for Sbeitla is harder than expected. Defense well organized; about 50 enemy tanks. Seven-hour tank fight. Sbeitla firmly in our hand. Bulk of tanks now at 7279 (Sbeitla). Result: number of prisoners increased to 51 officers, 1,660 men; 12 tanks, several self-propelled mounts, 6 personnel transportation wagons, 2 guns destroyed. Intention: defense of Sbeitla, moving up in 7237/263 (road 81 km to 30 km southwest). Point of main effort of reconnaissance 5872 (Sblea, 35 km north of Sbeitla) and 7716 (Maserine). Tank situation: 65 ready for action.

Sources:

Anlagenband 9 zum Schlachtbericht der Pz. Arme Afrika Nr. 12.2.43 - 23.2.43
3. 375/11
To Comando Supremo

to Pz.A.O.K.5 for information

On the basis of the enemy situation as of today, and presupposing that the supply situation of the Fifth Pz.Army is adequate, I suggest an immediate enveloping thrust of strong forces from the southwest on Tessa and the area north of it. I also recommend, if necessary for the purpose, the attachment and rapid move forward of the 10th and 21st Pz.Divs. to the Thelepte-Feriana area.

Rommel

Source:
"Analagenband9 zum Schlachtbericht der Pz. Armee Afrika 1a 12.2.43 - 23.2.43 22 375/II"
CONFERENCE on 19 February 1943 - at 0915 hrs.

Field Marshal Kesselring
General v. Arnim
Major General Ziegler
Brigadier General Gause
Lt. General Gandin
Colonel v. Quast
Aide O.B.S.

The general describes briefly the tactical and supply situation and states his view on the order from Commando Supremo concerning the Gruppe Rommel attack. The commander-in-chief emphasizes that the main objective must be Bone. To this end, the first attack objective is Le Kef (see written plan). If the attack ordered is to succeed it should be executed promptly; as a matter of fact, it should have been launched 2 days ago already. The objective ordered by Commando Supremo - the penetration between Le Kef and Tebessa - promises little success; the attack will also get farther away from the supply base. The attack, accompanied by a covering action, should move with all force toward the north, a direction not expected by the enemy, and in a manner that would steadily shorten the routes of supply. Hence, commitment of the 21st Pz. Div. from Sbeitla toward Le Kef, of the 10th Pz. Div. from Pichen toward Le Kef. The main effort should not be laid on Tebessa, not even in the direction of Tebessa.

Although Field Marshal Kesselring does not side in with the plans proposed with all peremptoriness, he concedes that this operation has very many advantages and a prospect of success.

The question of adjustment in the chain of command, the frontier, or the boundary between Gruppe Rommel and 5th Pz. Armee is not clearly solved
by Field Marshal Kesselring. The project of Field Marshal Kesselring got the that Regt. Buhse should be commanded by Rommel did not consent from the other officers.

The amount of supply and motor vehicles, considered absolutely necessary if the operation is to be executed at all and requested by the commander-in-chief, appear high to the Field Marshal; however, an increase in the bringing up of supply and motor vehicles is promised.

Source: KRIEGSTAGEBUCH IV
Pz. A.O.K. 5, Ia
from 1,2 - 28, 2, 43
29 777/7
Telephone Message to
A.O.K.J. Advanced C.P.
Lt.Col. Puntow

Order for Operation "Sturmflut"

1. The forces under the command of Field Marshal Rommel or, newly placed under his orders (10th Pz.Div., 21st Pz.Div., Kampfgruppe D.A.K.), exploiting their former success, will immediately push forward over the general line 7279 - 5127 northward in the deep flank and rear of the British forces standing in front of the north Tunisian front.

2. To that effect the following is ordered:
   a. The 21st Pz.Div. will leave the area of 7279 at 000 h. 19 Feb. proceed along the high road leading northward and will reach the road junction about 75 km north-northwest of 7279.
   b. The 10th Pz.Div., after receiving pertinent orders, will immediately leave the Fliohen area and reach by the shortest route the Schetla area at the disposal of Field Marshal Rommel. It will remain there in readiness and upon order of Field Marshal Rommel and according to the development of the situation will be committed either behind the 21st Pz.Div. in the direction of La Kaf or over Fensoline in a general northwesterly direction.

3. Field Marshal Rommel's C.P. will be transferred at noon 19 Feb. to Furiana south. Radio communication with the 10th Pz.Div. will be assured.

Source:
Anlagenband 9 zum Schlachtbericht der Pz.Armee Afri. Lt
12.2.43 - 23.2.43
21 5/5/43
Operations Section

German Italian Panzer Army C.P.
19 February 43 0405 h.

to
Div. Dentauro

New situation. The 7th Bers. Rgt. will start to march to Ferrara immediately. Upon arrival there, will pass under the control of D.A.K. The regimental commander will proceed in advance to the C.P. of the D.A.K. at Ferrara south. There he will receive further orders.

Source:
Anlagenband 9 zum Schlachtbericht der Pz. Armee Afr. In
12.2.43 - 23.2.43
375/11
Order for German African Corps (by telephone to Lt.Col. Stolbeck)

1. **New situation.** The forces under Rommel's command or those who will be shortly under Rommel's command (10th Pz.Div., 21st Pz.Div., Kampfgruppe D.A.K.), exploiting the advantage gained up to now, will attack as rapidly as possible flank over the general line 7279 - 5127 northward in the deep center and rear of the British forces standing opposite the northern Russian front.

2. To that effect the same following is ordered:
   a. At 0800 h. 19 Feb. the 21st Pz.Div. will move out of the area 7279, follow the high road to the north and gain the junction about 75 km north-northeast of 7279.
   b. The 10th Pz.Div. starting immediately from the Ploken area, at first at the disposal of Rommel, will reach area 7279. Further commitment from there is reserved.
   c. Kampfgruppe D.A.K. (less the Bersaglieri Bn and the artillery battalion of the Div. Centauro) will start immediately and reach area 7716, will move into position of readiness shortly and will then gain without delay the mountain pass northwest of 7716. Further commitment from there, according to the development of the situation by special order of the Army.

3. The Bersaglieri battalion and the Artillery Bn. of Div. Centauro will at first remain in the area 7741 for security and reconnaissance to the north and the northwest. Relief during 19 Feb. through the 7th Bers.Rgt. arriving from Cairo as provided for. Upon arrival in'Feriana south the 7th Bers.Rgt. will be placed under the control of D.A.K. After relief through the 7th Bers. D.A.K. will issue the necessary orders for the movement of Bns. of the Bers.Bn. and Arty.Bn of Div. Centauro.

   After removing the former point of main effort of reconnaissance the Recon.Bn. 33 is placed completely at the disposal of D.A.K. for the new mission.
4. Howitzer Btry, 2d Bn., A.A.E 1 and 1st Co., Rocket projector Hgt. 71 will move during 19 Feb. to D.A.E. at 7741 south and will be placed under its orders at arrival.

Kasta A.O.E. will be detached immediately from D.A.E. and is again placed directly under the control of the Army.

5. S.O.S. at 19 Feb. noon, Rommel's C.P. at 7741 south.

Sommel

Sources:

Ablagenband 9 zum Schlachtbericht der Fz. Arme Afri.La
12.2.43 - 23.2.43
24 375/11
Radio Message to
G.R.H. Army G.S., Section Frente Noro West III

Intelligence to G.S., Section Fremde Heere West

Intelligence Evening Report

North Front:

The enemy opposed violent resistance to our attacks at Shiba and at the pass northwest Kasserine.

At Shiba, the enemy who received constant reinforcements especially in artillery, was able to put a stop to the attack of the 21st Pz.Div. from his improved, dominant positions; the division had gained little ground and was forced to pass to the defensive.

Opposite Kampfgruppe D.A.G. the enemy succeeded at first, with the support of new forces brought from the north, in holding his very advantageous pass positions northwest of Kasserine. But after the commitment of elements of the 10th Pz.Div. he was thrown back in heavy fighting and had to give up the pass. He lost several hundred prisoners, many weapons and materiel.

Northwest of Thalpte the enemy was able to repulse with strong artillery an attack launched by weak forces of the Div. Centauro.

Very weak air activity because of poor visibility. Out of 4 enemy planes attacking from the northwest of Kasserine 3 were shot down.

2. Impression made by the enemy:

Committing all his available forces /the enemy is endeavoring to hold his new switch position in the hills

northwest of Sbeitla---Kasserine---Thalpte. He keeps on bringing reinforcements at Shiba and northwest of Kasserine. Enemy counterattacks are expected on 21 Feb. at Shiba, northwest of Kasserine and northwest of Thalpte.

Branch of the Intelligence Service dealing with Western Allies.
3. According to statements of the British Intelligence Service, elements of the 1st British Garde-Brigade may be assumed to be at Shibia. Since British tanks Mark VI were also ascertained there the commitment of elements of the British 6th Panzer Div. in this area can be reckoned with. 

Prisoners of the 9th Inf., 9th American Inf.Div. were brought Northwest of Kasserine.

According to reliable information the rest of the Combat Commando of the 1st American Panzer Div. has been ascertained anew in the area southeast of Tebessa.

Source:
Anlagenband 9 zum Schlachtbericht der Pz.Armee Afr. In 12.2.43 - 25.2.43
34 375/11
Operations Section

21st Pz.Div.

Defense in the present main line of resistance.

In case the enemy withdraws over Shibla, pursue with elements; bulk/for now assignment.

Kasta 0.3. will attack from Thala on Rhodes in the rear of the enemy at Shibla.

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To the 10th Pz.Div.

Defense in the area Thala-Kala Djorda. Local assault on Jadjerouine around Le Esf.

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To D.A.K.

Continued thrust to capture Pass el Hamra. Wide south envelopment during the night of 21/22 if necessary.

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To 530th Arty.Bn.

Attack over 7730 on 7732 and 7762. Hold the passes.

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To Div. Centauro

Withdraw from section south of the passes. During the night the old area around Feriana-Tolepte will be gained and defended, road fork Oglet bu Hayn will be mined. Reserve will be held in readiness for mobile commitment.

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To Commanding General, Air Force Corps Tunis

Today's reconnaissance results received after 1600 h. only. Continued reconnaissance in the entire Tunisian area and timely reports are of decisive importance for further decisions.

Normal.
Radio Message from
Intelligence Section

O.K.H. Army Gen.Staff, Front of Hoera West III
German General in Rome
O.B.S.Sd

Evening Report, Intelligence

1. North Front:

At Shiba the enemy continued to get reinforcements. A total of 11 batteries was identified. A tank thrust from the west in the afternoon was repulsed and 6 enemy tanks were destroyed.

In the forenoon northwest of Kasserine pass an attack of enemy armored forces was repulsed in the area of 5666. The enemy opposed violent resistance to our noon attack in a northern and northwestern direction. He brought forward the 26th Pz.Brigade of the British 6th Pz.Div. against our 10th Pz.Div. in line toward the north. In hard fighting this brigade was thrown back in the direction of Thala and lost almost 40 tanks. The enemy was successful in bringing to a stop the attack of Kampfgruppe D.A.K. against the pass 31 east of Tebessa; he was in strong positions on the surrounding hills and his artillery fire checked the attack 8 km east of El Hamra. He contested his positions successfully against an assault of weak forces of Div. Centauro on heights 20 km northwest of Thala.

2. Enemy Intentions:

After losing the citadel pass position 13 in northwest of Kasserine, the enemy attempted today to hold the line of heights 31 east of Tebessa (14 km southeast of Thala)—Dj.13 Hamra (32 km west of Tebessa)—Dj. Nogueria (7739). For this purpose he brought forward additional American forces from the area of Tebessa and southeast thereof and also the 26 British Pz.Brigade.

3. According to reliable information Combat Command B of the 1st American
Pz.Div. was transferred from the area southeast of Tobessa to the region of Halâra (34 km northeast of Tobessa).

Captured papers indicated that enemy forces at Kasserine pass are as follows:

1 bn. of the 26th Inf. (1st Amer.Inf.Div.)
1 bn. of the 169th Inf. (34th)
1 bn. of the Rangers
1 French bn. of the Div. Constantine
2 cos., 13th Pz.Rgt. (1st Amer.Pz.Div.)
1st Co., Derbyshire Yeomanry (6th British Pz.Div.)
33d Arty.Bn. (1st Amer.Inf.Div.)
175th Arty.Bn.
1 bn. 228th Royal Engineers
1 co. 19th Amer.Eng.Rgt.
1 co. 805th Antitank Bn.
6 Flak batteries

Sources:

Anlagenband 9 zum Schlachtbericht der Panzer Armee AfR. In 12.2.43 - 23.2.43
34 575/11
Operations Section

German Italian Panzer Army C.P.
22 February '43 0030 h.

Day report 22 February '43

I. General

A continuation of the attack appears to be pointless on account of the continuous reinforcements of enemy forces during 22 Feb., the adverse weather which renders the terrain impassable outside of the hard surface roads, and the increasing difficulties of committing mobile troops in the unfavorable mountain region; also because of the poor combat value of the troops.

Therefore the Army, after causing the enemy heavy losses and breaking up his concentration, in agreement with O.S.S.Fd ordered in the afternoon a cessation of the attack and a withdrawal of the attacking troops.

Additional ground for the decision was the fact that the situation at the front makes a rapid shift of the mobile troops of both armies necessary to give the enemy, who is not yet ready for the attack, a swift blow in his assembled forces and thereby force him to delay it. During the night of 22/23 Feb. the Army will advance the 10th Pz.Div. and Kampfgruppe D.A.K., clearing the roads and the trails, first to the pass position north of Kasserine, and then in additional bounds will have all units including the 21st Pz.Div. and Div. Centauro reach the point of departure of the operation.

In view of the weak forces and the necessity of concentrating all mobile elements for an operation out of the Kasserine position, this position is held to be the most favorable.

II. Particulars

The 21st Pz.Div. held its position south of Sibica. Enemy apparently further reinforced; however no enemy attack.
10th Pz.Div.

The armored battalion, which in the evening hours of 21 Feb. had broken through at Thala, was caught in the back by strong enemy forces and was forced to evacuate the village. Strong enemy forces (elements of the 6th British Pz.Div. and of the 46th British Inf.Div.) were occupying the dominant ridges on both sides of Thala. The prepared attack on the Thala hills was not carried out on account of the continuous reinforcements in enemy infantry and artillery from a western and northern direction. Several enemy attempts at attacks were repulsed with losses for him. At night fall the division disengaged itself from the enemy and reached Kasserine Pass after mining the road.

Kampfgruppe D.A.K., in the morning hours had launched an attack on the pass position of Dj. el Hamra. As a result of strong artillery effect of the enemy and the flanking on 3 sides from dominant mountain positions the attack did not succeed. The Kampfgruppe had to pass to the defensive and repulsed several violent enemy counterattacks which were still in progress at night fall. The withdrawal and reaching the positions in the Kasserine Pass were carried out during the night.

The attack of the Artillery Br. 550 to open the passes north of Thalepte launched from a northern direction could not go forward on account of strong enemy action and marshy roads, and had to be broken off.

Div. Centauro without important engagement in defensive positions in the Thalepte-Portiana area.

Air situation During the entire day constant Jabo and low-level attacks in the area Dj. el Hamra and south of Thala. Five enemy planes were downed by antiaircraft fire. Despite adverse weather conditions our Luftwaffe supported the operations effectively.

Results of 19-22 Feb. engagements according to reports as yet incomplete.
845 prisoners (mostly British)
66 tanks
74 motor gun carriages and scout cars
18 antitank guns
10 guns

numerous motor trucks, heavy and light infantry weapons captured or destroyed.

8 planes downed by anti aircraft fire.

Source:
Anlagenband 9 zum Schlachtbericht der Panzer Armee Afr. Ia
12.2.43 - 23.2.43
Bl. 575/11
Radio Message from Intelligence Section

German-Italian Panzer Army C.P.
22 February 1943

to Q.E.H. Army G.S., Section Foreign West III
German General in Rome
Q.B.354

Evening Report, Intelligence Service

1. North Front

There is no change in the picture presented by the enemy at Sbiba.

Toward noon strong enemy forces with tanks were assembled in readiness for a counterattack on our positions 5 km southeast of Thala, but the attack was not launched.

The enemy initiated several strong thrusts with tank support against our Kampfgruppe southeast of Dj. el Hamra but was repulsed for the most part. He really succeeded only pushing back the left flank of this Kampfgruppe toward the east. The enemy attacks in this area were supported by strong artillery which had at its disposal outstanding observation positions on the surrounding hills.

- No important action northwest of Thalepte.

Our air reconnaissance, spotty because of bad weather, disclosed that new enemy forces were brought forward on the Le Kef—Bales Djerda road to Thala, and from Tebesaa to the east-northeast.

2. Picture presented by the enemy:

The enemy continued to bring forward reinforcements to stop our advance over the Kasserine pass to the north and northwest or to launch a counterattack to recapture Kasserine pass.

Reliable information, prisoners statements, captured papers and ground reconnaissance disclose the following picture of the enemy distribution of forces in front of our attack front at the present time:

a. At Sbiba elements of the 1st British Guard Brigade, and elements of
the 6th British Pz.Div., at least 1 battalion strong, 1 armored battalion and 11 batteries.


Djebel


d. In the area southeast of Tobessa Combat Commando A of the 1st Amer. Armored Div.

According to reliable information on 21 Feb. all units of the First British Army were given the order that there will be no falling back out of the present position and that no man may leave his post without an express order.

3. During the fighting of 19/22 Feb. on the north front of the Coro.-Ital. Pz.Army, reports as yet incomplete announced the following success:

Prisoners: 815

Captured or destroyed: 66 tanks
74 gun motor carriages and armored personnel carriers
43 antitank guns
10 guns

and numerous motor trucks, heavy and light infantry weapons. In addition 8 planes were shot down.

Source: Anlagenband 9 zum Schlachtbericht der Panzer Armee Afrika, 12.2.43 - 23.2.43
34375/11