

## 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division <sup>(1)</sup>

Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division

4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade <sup>(2)</sup>

Headquarters, 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade & Signal Section

4<sup>th</sup> Royal Tank Regiment <sup>(3)</sup>

5<sup>th</sup> Royal Tank Regiment <sup>(3)</sup>

7<sup>th</sup> Royal Tank Regiment <sup>(4)</sup>

7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade <sup>(5)</sup>

Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade & Signal Section

2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Tank Regiment

7<sup>th</sup> Support Group <sup>(6)</sup>

Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Support Group & Signal Section

1<sup>st</sup> Bn. The King's Royal Rifle Corps

2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. The Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own)

3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery

4<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery

1<sup>st</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery

Divisional Troops

11<sup>th</sup> Hussars (Prince Albert's Own) <sup>(7)</sup>

4<sup>th</sup> Field Squadron, Royal Engineers <sup>(8)</sup>

143<sup>rd</sup> Field Park Squadron, Royal Engineers <sup>(8)</sup>

7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Divisional Signals, Royal Corps of Signals

## NOTES:

1. This was a regular army division stationed in Egypt. It had been formed as the Mobile Division in September 1938, as a result of the raised tension caused by the Munich Crisis. Initially called the 'Matruh Mobile Force', it was founded by Major General P. C. S. HOBART. This is the Order of Battle for the division on 15 May 1941. This was the date of the start of Operation Brevity, the operation to reach Tobruk. The division was under command of Headquarters, British Troops in Egypt until 16 May 1941. On that date, it came under command of Headquarters, Western Desert Force (W.D.F.). It remained under command of W.D.F. until the formation of XIII Corps on 27 September 1941. During this period, the division was commanded by Major General Michael O'Moore CREAGH, who was in command from 4 December 1939 until 2 September 1941.
2. This brigade was the original, pre-war Heavy Armoured Brigade (Egypt). It was redesignated as the 4<sup>th</sup> Heavy Armoured Brigade on 16 February 1940, and as the 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade on 14 April 1940. The brigade commander during this period was Brigadier A. H. GATEHOUSE, who had assumed command of this formation on 8 May 1941.
3. These units joined this brigade on 4 May 1941, and both left this brigade after the conclusion of Operation Battleaxe on 27 July 1941.
4. This unit also joined this brigade on 4 May 1941, but left on 11 July 1941 due to heavy losses sustained during Operation Brevity and Battleaxe.
5. The 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade was the successor to the pre-war Light Armoured Brigade (Egypt). It was redesignated as the 7<sup>th</sup> Light Armoured Brigade on 16 February 1940, and then simply as the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade with effect from 14 April 1940. The brigade had participated in the capture of Sidi Barrani in December 1940. It left the division on 18 May 1940 to come under command of Headquarters, British Troops in Egypt. After refitting, it rejoined this division on 2 July 1940 and remained with this division until effectively wiped out during the battle at Sidi Rezegh in November 1941. There was a period between 1 May and 20 May 1941, when this brigade was detached from the division to come under the direct command of Headquarters Western Desert Force, which covers 15 May when Operation Brevity actually commenced. During this period, the brigade was commanded by Brigadier H. F. RUSSELL.
6. The original establishment for British armoured divisions from 1940 until 1942 allowed for a Support Group. The intention was the Support Group to contain the infantry and artillery support for the armoured brigades. This support group was formed on 22 January 1940 in Egypt for the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division. The first commander was Brigadier W. H. E. GOTT. Originally, only one field battery and one anti-tank battery were allocated, but the full regiments came under command on 1 March 1941 and 6 April 1941 respectively. The 1<sup>st</sup> L.A.A. Regiment joined on 13 May 1941. As there was a Commander 7<sup>th</sup> Support Group, there was no Commander Royal Artillery in the division and divisional troops were limited.
7. This was the divisional reconnaissance unit equipped with armoured cars.
8. These two Royal Engineer squadrons came under command of this division on 17 May 1941, just as the division went into action in Operation Brevity.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division <sup>(1)</sup>

Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division

4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade <sup>(2)</sup>

Headquarters, 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade & Signal Section

8<sup>th</sup> King's Royal Irish Hussars <sup>(3)</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup> Royal Tank Regiment <sup>(4)</sup>

5<sup>th</sup> Royal Tank Regiment <sup>(5)</sup>

7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade <sup>(6)</sup>

Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade & Signal Section

7<sup>th</sup> Queen's Own Hussars

2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Tank Regiment

6<sup>th</sup> Royal Tank Regiment <sup>(7)</sup>

22<sup>nd</sup> Armoured Brigade <sup>(8)</sup>

Headquarters, 22<sup>nd</sup> Armoured Brigade & Signal Section

2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Gloucestershire Hussars

3<sup>rd</sup> County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters)

4<sup>th</sup> County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters)

7<sup>th</sup> Support Group

1<sup>st</sup> Bn. The King's Royal Rifle Corps

2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. The Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own)

3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery

4<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery

60<sup>th</sup> (North Midland) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery

Divisional Troops

11<sup>th</sup> Hussars (Prince Albert's Own)

1<sup>st</sup> King's Dragoon Guards

4<sup>th</sup> South African Armoured Car Regiment

102<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery

1<sup>st</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery

4<sup>th</sup> Field Squadron, Royal Engineers (6)

143<sup>rd</sup> Field Park Squadron, Royal Engineers (6)

7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Divisional Signals, Royal Corps of Signals

5<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

30<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

58<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

65<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

67<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

550<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

2<sup>nd</sup> Light Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps

13<sup>th</sup> Light Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps

15<sup>th</sup> Light Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps

7<sup>th</sup> Light Field Hygiene Section, Royal Army Medical Corps

7<sup>th</sup> Divisional Workshops, Royal Army Ordnance Corps

7<sup>th</sup> Divisional Ordnance Field Park, Royal Army Ordnance Corps

## NOTES:

1. After the failure of both Operation Brevity and Operation Battleaxe, the division remained under the command of XIII Corps. It re-equipped pending the next major operation, which was titled Operation Crusader. In preparation for this offensive, the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division transferred to the command of XXX Corps on 15 November 1941. It fought with this corps throughout the battle, until it was withdrawn to rest and refit in Egypt on 1 January 1942 under British Troops Egypt. This is the Order of Battle for the division on the 18 November 1941, the date that Operation Crusader commenced. During this period, the division was commanded by Major General W. H. E. GOTT, known as 'Strafer' GOTT. He was in command from 3 September 1941 until 6 February 1942.
2. This brigade was the original, pre-war Heavy Armoured Brigade (Egypt). It was redesignated as the 4<sup>th</sup> Heavy Armoured Brigade on 16 February 1940, and as the 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade on 14 April 1940. The brigade commander during this period was Brigadier A. H. GATEHOUSE, who had assumed command of this formation on 8 May 1941. He remained in command until 26 June 1942.
3. This regiment joined this brigade on 31 July 1941. It remained with this brigade (apart from five days in February 1942) until 2 June 1942 during the retreat from the Gazala line.
4. Although this regiment had left the brigade on 27 July 1941 (see above), it returned to the command of this brigade on 31 July 1941. It then remained with this brigade until 7 June 1942.
5. This regiment joined this brigade on 31 July 1941, and it remained until 7 June 1942.
6. The 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade was the successor to the pre-war Light Armoured Brigade (Egypt). It was redesignated as the 7<sup>th</sup> Light Armoured Brigade on 16 February 1940, and then simply as the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade with effect from 14 April 1940. The brigade had participated in the capture of Sidi Barrani in December 1940. It left the division on 18 May 1940 to come under command of Headquarters, British Troops in Egypt. After refitting, it rejoined this division on 2 July 1940 and remained with this division until effectively wiped out during the battle at Sidi Rezegh in November 1941. Brigadier H. F. RUSSELL had been replaced as commanding officer on 26 July 1941 by Brigadier G. M. O. DAVY. On 27 November 1941, the surviving details of the brigade came under command of G.H.Q. Middle East Forces. It was re-equipped with American Stuart tanks, and was sent to the Far East. It sailed from Egypt on 1 February 1942 bound for Singapore, however, the British forces on Singapore surrendered on the 15 February so the brigade diverted to Burma, landing at Rangoon on 21 February 1942. Brigadier J. H. ANSTICE had replaced Brigadier DAVY on 9 December 1941, so he led the brigade during the Burma campaign.
7. This regiment had served with the 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade until 19 January 1941. It spent a period in Egypt, and then joined this brigade on 8 June 1941. It remained with this brigade until 24 January 1942, so did not travel with this brigade to Burma in February 1942.

8. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Armoured Brigade was a Territorial Army formation which was raised on 3 September 1939 on the declaration of war. It comprised the two regiments from London, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Gloucestershire Hussars being based in Bristol. The commanding officer on the brigade's formation was Brigadier J. SCOTT-COCKBURN. The brigade left the United Kingdom on 15 August 1941 to sail for the Middle East. It arrived in Egypt on 2 October 1941 and had little time for preparation as it moved up to Libya to come under command of the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division on 8 November 1941. The brigade fought under the command of this division during Operation Battleaxe until 23 November 1941, when it came under the direct command of XIII Corps.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division <sup>(1)</sup>

Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division

4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade <sup>(2)</sup>

Headquarters, 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade & Signal Section

8<sup>th</sup> King's Royal Irish Hussars <sup>(3)</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup> Royal Tank Regiment <sup>(4)</sup>

5<sup>th</sup> Royal Tank Regiment <sup>(5)</sup>

7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade <sup>(6)</sup>

Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade & Signal Section

7<sup>th</sup> Queen's Own Hussars

2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Tank Regiment

6<sup>th</sup> Royal Tank Regiment

22<sup>nd</sup> Armoured Brigade <sup>(7)</sup>

Headquarters, 22<sup>nd</sup> Armoured Brigade & Signal Section

*2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Gloucestershire Hussars*

*3<sup>rd</sup> County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters)*

*4<sup>th</sup> County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters)*

7<sup>th</sup> Motor Brigade Group <sup>(8)</sup>

Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Motor Brigade & Signal Section

1<sup>st</sup> Bn. The King's Royal Rifle Corps

9<sup>th</sup> Bn. The King's Royal Rifle Corps (The Rangers)

2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. The Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own)

4<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery

4<sup>th</sup> Field Squadron, Royal Engineers

550<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

15<sup>th</sup> Light Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps

7<sup>th</sup> Motor Brigade Group Ordnance Company, Royal Army Ordnance Corps

Divisional Troops

11<sup>th</sup> Hussars (Prince Albert's Own)

*4<sup>th</sup> Field Squadron, Royal Engineers (9)*

143<sup>rd</sup> Field Park Squadron, Royal Engineers

7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Divisional Signals, Royal Corps of Signals

5<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

30<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

58<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

65<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

67<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

2<sup>nd</sup> Light Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps

*13<sup>th</sup> Light Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps*

7<sup>th</sup> Light Field Hygiene Section, Royal Army Medical Corps

7<sup>th</sup> Divisional Workshops, Royal Army Ordnance Corps

7<sup>th</sup> Divisional Ordnance Field Park, Royal Army Ordnance Corps



## NOTES:

1. Operation Crusader eventually forced the German and Italian forces in Libya to retreat from Cyrenaica to behind a defensive line at El Agheila. This is where the British advance had stopped in early 1941, and from where the German Africa Corps had launched their first offensive almost nine months previously. The German and Italian forces did not take long to regroup, with a counter offensive being launched on 21 January 1942. The Axis forces reached the Gazala line before they halted. A hiatus existed for a few months along the Gazala line, before the German and Italian forces struck again on 26 May 1942. The German Africa Corps made a wide sweep around the main British positions through lightly held sectors around Bir Hacheim. On 30 May, the Africa Corps began to consolidate their position within an area that came to be known as the Cauldron. During the first part of this battle, the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division was under the command of XXX Corps, and it was instrumental in halting the Axis advance. On 11 June, the Axis forces broke out of the Cauldron, and the British and Allied forces were soon forced to retreat. On 20 June, this division passed to the command of XIII Corps to assist in the defence of Mersa Matruh, but this was soon overrun. The division retreated back to the El Alamein line, still under command of XIII Corps. It fought with this corps in the First Battle of El Alamein between 1 and 27 July 1942, and the Battle of Alam Halfa between 30 August and 7 September 1942. This last battle was decisive, as the Axis forces failed to break through Allied lines, and moved into defensive positions. This is the Order of Battle for the division from 26 May until 7 September 1942, after which it refitted for the Second Battle of El Alamein. On 6 February 1942, Major General J. C. CAMPBELL (known as 'Jock' CAMPBELL) was promoted from command of the 7<sup>th</sup> Support Group to become the divisional commander. He was killed on 23 February 1942. With his death, Brigadier GATEHOUSE officiated as divisional commander until the appointment of Major General F. W. MESSERVY on 9 March 1942. He was in command during this period, until relieved of his command on 19 June 1942 by the corps commander and replaced by Major General J. W. M. RENTON.
2. This brigade was the original, pre-war Heavy Armoured Brigade (Egypt). It was redesignated as the 4<sup>th</sup> Heavy Armoured Brigade on 16 February 1940, and as the 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade on 4 April 1940. The brigade commander during this period was Brigadier A. H. GATEHOUSE, who had assumed command of this formation on 8 May 1941. He remained in command until 26 June 1942, when Brigadier A. F. FISHER assumed command. This brigade left this division on 25 June 1942.
3. This regiment joined this brigade on 31 July 1941. It remained with this brigade (apart from five days in February 1942) until 2 June 1942 during the retreat from the Gazala line. It suffered heavy losses, and was withdrawn from action during the retreat. The surviving details merged with those from the 4<sup>th</sup> Hussars, and the combined regiment came back under command of this brigade on 14 July 1942.
4. Although this regiment had left the brigade on 27 July 1941 (see above), it returned to the command of this brigade on 31 July 1941. It then remained with this brigade until 7 June 1942.
5. This regiment joined on 31 July 1941 and remained with this brigade until 7 June 1942.
6. This brigade was under command of this division from 20 May 1941 until 27 November 1941.
7. This brigade left the command of this division on 8 February 1942 and did not return until 26 July 1942.

8. On 9 February 1942, the 7<sup>th</sup> Support Group was retitled as the 7<sup>th</sup> Motor Brigade Group. It was under command of Brigadier J. M. L. RENTON. It operated as a brigade group until 24 August 1942, when it reverted to a standard establishment.
9. These unit of the Royal Engineers were not under command of the division between 14 March and 24 August 1942.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division <sup>(1)</sup>

Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division

4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade <sup>(2)</sup>

Headquarters, 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade & Signal Section

4<sup>th</sup> Queen's Own Hussars

8<sup>th</sup> King's Royal Irish Hussars

The Royal Scots Greys (2<sup>nd</sup> Dragoons)

1<sup>st</sup> Bn. The King's Royal Rifle Corps

3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery

22<sup>nd</sup> Armoured Brigade <sup>(3)</sup>

Headquarters, 22<sup>nd</sup> Armoured Brigade & Signal Section

1<sup>st</sup> Royal Tank Regiment

5<sup>th</sup> Royal Tank Regiment

4<sup>th</sup> County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters)

1<sup>st</sup> Bn. The Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own)

4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, Royal Artillery

### Divisional Troops

The Household Cavalry Regiment <sup>(4)</sup>

11<sup>th</sup> Hussars (Prince Albert's Own) <sup>(5)</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup> Derbyshire Yeomanry <sup>(6)</sup>

44<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps <sup>(7)</sup>

Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Divisional Royal Artillery <sup>(8)</sup>

97<sup>th</sup> (Kent Yeomanry) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery

65<sup>th</sup> Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery

15<sup>th</sup> (Isle of Man) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery

Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Divisional Royal Engineers

4<sup>th</sup> Field Squadron, Royal Engineers

21<sup>st</sup> Field Squadron, Royal Engineers

143<sup>rd</sup> Field Park Squadron, Royal Engineers

7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Divisional Signals, Royal Corps of Signals

No. 5 Company, Royal Army Service Corps

No. 10 Company, Royal Army Service Corps

No. 58 Company, Royal Army Service Corps

No. 67 Company, Royal Army Service Corps

No. 287 Company, Royal Army Service Corps

No. 432 Company, Royal Army Service Corps

No. 507 Company, Royal Army Service Corps

2<sup>nd</sup> Light Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps

7<sup>th</sup> Light Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps

14<sup>th</sup> Light Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps

15<sup>th</sup> Light Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps

7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Divisional Ordnance Field Park, Royal Army Ordnance Corps

4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade Workshop, Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers

22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade Workshop, Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers

7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Divisional Postal Unit, Royal Engineers

7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Divisional Provost Company, Corps of Military Police

## NOTES:

1. This is the order of battle for the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division during the Battle of El Alamein, which opened on 23 October 1942. Major General (Acting) James Malcolm Leslie RENTON, D.S.O., O.B.E., commanded the division from 17 June 1942 having been promoted from command of the 7<sup>th</sup> Motor Brigade. He was replaced by Major General (Acting) A. F. HARDING with effect from 14 September 1942. HARDING remained in command throughout the battles of the Defence of El Alamein from 1 to 27 July 1942, the Battle of Alam Halfa from 30 August until 7 September, and the Battle of El Alamein from 23 October until 4 November 1942. During the whole of this period, the division was under the command of XIII Corps, transferring to XXX Corps on 26 November 1942. The Headquarters 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division was equipped with seven Crusader tanks and five armoured cars.
2. The brigade suffered heavy casualties during the Battle of Alam Halfa, so the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Hussars merged to form a composite regiment for the Battle of El Alamein. This composite regiment was equipped with forty-eight Stuart light tanks. The Royal Scots Greys had fourteen Grant medium tanks and nineteen Stuarts. The brigade headquarters had nine armoured cars for its use. The brigade had a series of commanders during this period, with Brigadier A. F. FISHER in command from 26 June until 7 July 1942. Brigadier W. G. CARR replaced FISHER until 3 October, when Brigadier M. G. RODDICK assumed command. He lasted only until 18 November 1942 when he was wounded severely as a result of his vehicle driving over a mine.
3. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Armoured Brigade had four Crusaders allocated to its headquarters. The 1<sup>st</sup> R.T.R. had twenty-four Grants and nineteen Stuarts on 23 October, with the 5<sup>th</sup> R.T.R. having the same number of Grants but eighteen Crusaders in place of the Stuarts. The 4<sup>th</sup> C.L.Y. had just nine Grants but twenty-eight Crusaders.
4. This regiment was attached to the division during this period, being equipped with fifty-three armoured cars.
5. The 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars were the divisional reconnaissance regiment, but for the Battle of El Alamein, they were placed in reserve. The regiment had sixty-one armoured cars on its establishment at the beginning of the Battle of El Alamein.
6. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Derbyshire Yeomanry was another reconnaissance regiment, equipped with fifty armoured cars. It was attached to this division during this period and came under command of the 4<sup>th</sup> Light Armoured Brigade to make the third armoured regiment as the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Hussars had been merged temporarily.
7. The 44<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Regiment was attached from the 44<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division specifically for this operation. It was equipped with Universal carriers and two troops of 'Scorpions'. Its men had been trained to create safe corridors through minefields. After the battle, it left the command of this division.
8. Brigadier R. MEWS was the Commander Royal Artillery of this division during the Battle of El Alamein, until he was injured on 24 October 1942 when his jeep drove over a mine, killing his A.D.C.. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal Horse Artillery had twenty-four 25 pounder field guns and was attached to the 4<sup>th</sup> Light Armoured Brigade. The 4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment had sixteen 25 pounder field guns and was attached to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Armoured Brigade.

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