

# **XIII Corps**

## **Operation CRUSADER**

### **18 November 1941**

*XIII Corps was an infantry formation. For CRUSADER, it was tasked with clearing the Italian frontier defenses between SIDI OMAR and BARDIA.*

*The following OpOrder is not original, but was re-created for PME. The weaknesses and inconsistencies of the original plan have been retained for discussion purposes.*



**XIII Corps**  
**FORT MADDALENA**  
**18 NOV 1941**

### **Operation Order** for Operation CRUSADER

Task Organization: ANNEX A

#### 1. SITUATION

- a. General. Omitted.
- b. Enemy. See ANNEX B. The Italian 55th Infantry Division defends the SIDI OMAR to SOLLUM (HALFAYA PASS) frontier, occupying a series of battalion-sized outposts. A single German battalion holds HALFAYA PASS. BARDIA is held by a German-Italian force believed to be no more than two infantry battalions and three battalions of artillery.
- c. Friendly. See 8th Army CRUSADER OpOrder. 8th Army attacks and destroys Axis armoured forces in North Africa IOT to defend Egypt and secure the North African coast for an eventual invasion of Europe. XXX Corps is ME.

XXX Corps find, attacks and destroys the armoured units of the Afrika Corps IOT eliminate the enemy's offensive capability.

2. MISSION. At H-Hour, XIII attacks Italian frontier defenses in the SIDI OMAR to SOLLUM area IOT fix Italian units and clear a coastal route to TOBRUK.

#### 3. EXECUTION

- a. Concept of Operations. See APPENDIX 10: Operations Overlay to Annex C: Operations.

As XXX Corps attacks through GABR SALEH to SIDI REZEGH, XIII Corps attacks the Italian frontier defenses at SIDI OMAR in two division-sized envelopments. 2nd NZ Division outflanks SIDI OMAR and attacks (N) to seize FORT CAPUZZO. 4th Indian Division envelops and seizes SIDI OMAR and HALFAYA PASS. On consolidation near

FORT CAPUZZO, XIII Corps seizes SOLLUM and BARDIA. XIII Corps will then advance (W), clearing coastal positions between BARDIA and TOBRUK.

b. Tasks

- (1) 2nd NZ Division. ME. Attack (N), seize FORT CAPUZZO and cut the TRIGH CAPUZZO and VIA BALBIA IOT isolate and fix Axis forces in the SIDI OMAR to SOLLUM area.
- (2) 4th Indian Division. Attack and destroy Italian frontier defenses from SIDI OMAR (NE) to HALFAYA IOT clear a coastal route to support follow-on operations.
- (3) 1st Army Tank Brigade. RES. Screen the gap between 2nd NZ and 4th Indian Divisions IOT prevent an envelopment of 2nd NZ Division from the (W).

c. Coordinating Instructions

- (1) D-Day: 18 Nov 1941
- (2) H-Hour: 0400

4. ADMIN and LOGISTICS. Omitted.

5. COMMAND and SIGNAL. Omitted.

A. R. GODWIN-AUSTEN  
LtGen  
Commanding



*25-pounder in action in the Libyan desert during Operation CRUSADER.*

*The 25-pounder was the standard artillery piece for British field artillery regiments in World War II. It was considered by many to be the best artillery piece of the war.*

*The maximum range of the 25-pounder was over 12,000 meters.*

# XIII Corps

## Operation CRUSADER

### 18 November 1941



**XIII Corps**  
**FORT MADDDALENA**  
 18 Nov 1941

#### ANNEX A: Task Organization to Operation CRUSADER

#### XIII Corps

LtGen A. R. GODWIN-AUSTEN

#### 2nd New Zealand Division

MajGen Bernard C. FREYBERG

#### 4th Indian Division

MajGen Sir Frank W. MESSERVY

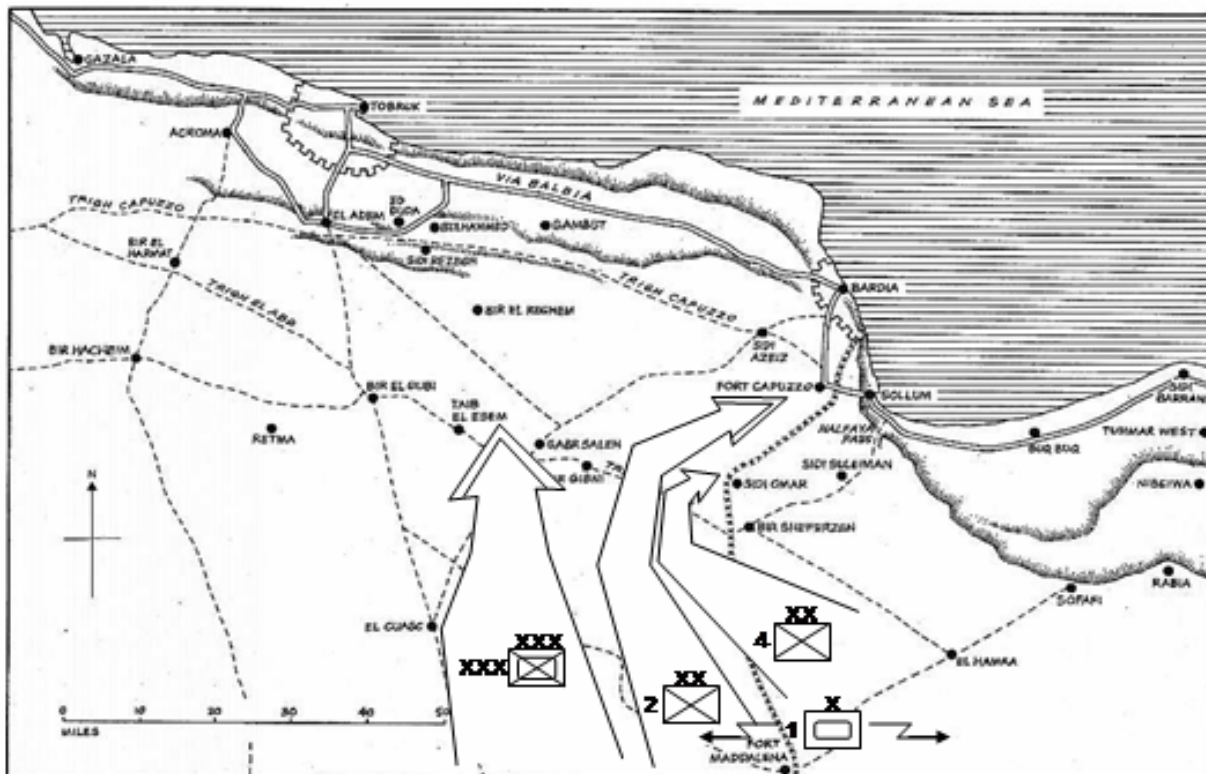
#### 1st Army Tank Brigade

Brig H. R. B. WATKINS

#### Corps Artillery

- 7th Medium Regiment, RA
- 8th Medium Regiment, RA
- 64th Medium Regiment, RA
- 86th Medium Regiment, RA
- 65th Norfolk Yeomanry (AT) Regiment, RA
- 73rd AT Regiment, RA

#### APPENDIX 10: Operations Overlay to Annex C: Operations



**2nd New Zealand Division  
Operation CRUSADER  
18 November 1941**



**2nd New Zealand Division  
FORT MADDALENA  
18 November 1941**

ANNEX A: Task Organization to Operation CRUSADER

**2nd New Zealand Division**

MajGen Bernard C. FREYBERG

**4th New Zealand Brigade**

18th NZ (Auckland) Bn  
19th NZ (Wellington) Bn  
20th NZ (South Island) Bn

Brig Lindsay M. INGLIS

LtCol S. F. HARTNELL

**5th New Zealand Brigade**

21st NZ (Auckland) Bn  
22nd NZ (Wellington) Bn  
23rd NZ (South Island / Canterbury-Otago) Bn  
28th NZ (Maori) Bn

Brig James HARGEST

**6th New Zealand Brigade**

24th NZ (Auckland) Bn  
25th NZ (Wellington) Bn  
26th NZ (South Island) Bn

Brig H. E. BARROWCLOUGH

**Division Artillery**

4th Field Regiment (24 25-pounders)  
5th Field Regiment (24 25-pounders)  
6th Field Regiment (24 25-pounders)

7th AT Regiment

+ 14th LAA Regiment, 8th Army

**Engineers**

5th Field Company  
6th Field Company  
7th Field Company  
8th Field Company

**2nd New Zealand Cavalry Regiment**

**27th New Zealand MG Battalion**

Division HQ

**4th Indian Division  
Operation CRUSADER  
18 November 1941**



**4th Indian Division**  
FORT MADDALENA  
18 Nov 1941

ANNEX A: Task Organization to Operation CRUSADER

**4th Indian Division (REIN)**

MajGen Sir Frank W. MESSERVY

**5th (Jhansi) Indian Infantry Brigade**

1st Bn, The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment)  
3rd Bn, 1st Punjab Regiment  
4th Bn (Outram's), 6th Rajputana Rifles

Brig Dudley RUSSELL  
LtCol J.E. KING  
Maj A.V. McDONALD  
LtCol LAWRENSON

18th Field Coy, Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners RIE  
5th Indian Infantry Brigade Transport Company RIASC, 14th Indian Field Ambulance  
117th Indian Mobile Workshop Company IEME, Light Aid Detachment and Workshop IEME

Maj STUART

**7th Indian Infantry Brigade**

1st Bn, The Royal Sussex Regiment  
4th Bn, 11th Sikh Regiment  
4th Bn, 16th Punjab Regiment

Brig Harold Rawdan BRIGGS  
LtCol G.C. EVANS  
LtCol J.J. PURVES  
LtCol S.S. LAVENDER

12th Field Coy, Q.V.O. Madras Sappers and Miners RIE  
7th Indian Infantry Brigade Transport Company RIASC, 17th Indian Field Ambulance  
118th Indian Mobile Workshop Company IEME, Light Aid Detachment and Workshop IEME

**11th Indian Infantry Brigade**

2nd Bn, The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders  
2nd Bn, 5th Mahratta Light Infantry  
1st Bn (Wellesley's), 6th Rajputana Rifles

Brig Andrew ANDERSON  
Maj SAUNDERS  
Maj LANCASTER  
LtCol BUTLER (KIA)

4th Field Coy, K.G.O. Bengal Sappers and Miners RIE  
11th Indian Infantry Brigade Transport Company RIASC, 19th Indian Field Ambulance  
119th Indian Mobile Workshop Company IEME, Light Aid Detachment and Workshop IEME

**Royal Artillery**

1st Field Regiment R.A. (16 25-pounders)  
25th Field Regiment R.A. (16 25-pounders)  
31st Field Regiment R.A. (16 25-pounders)

CRA Brig W.H.B. MIRRLEES  
LtCol Calvert JONES  
LtCol EASTMAN  
LtCol Claude GOULDER

65th Anti-Tank Regiment R.A.  
57th LAA Regiment R.A. (36 40mm)  
+ 16th LAA Regiment R.A., 8th Army

Maj SYKES

## **Royal Indian Engineers**

21st Field Coy, Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners RIE

11th Field Park Coy, Q.V.O. Madras Sappers and Miners RIE, 5th Bridging Platoon RIE

CRIE LtCol R.V. CUTLER

## **Central Indian Horse (CIH)**

LtCol GEORGE

## **4th Indian Division Headquarters**

4th Indian Division Signals

4th Indian Division Provost Coy, 4th Indian Division Postal Unit

RIASC: 4th Indian Divisional Troops Transport Coy, 220th Indian DID RIASC, 18th M.A. Section

IEME: 4th Indian Divisional Recovery Company IEME, Light Aid Detachment and Workshop IEME

IAOC: 4th Indian Division Ordnance Field Park IAOC

Medical: 15th Indian Field Hygiene Section

LtCol Peter GRAY

# **1st Army Tank Brigade Operation CRUSADER 18 November 1941**



## **1st Army Tank Brigade**

FORT MADDDALENA

18 Nov 1941

## **ANNEX A: Task Organization to Operation CRUSADER**

### **1st Army Tank Brigade**

Brig H. R. B. WATKINS

#### **8th Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment (RTR)**

#### **42nd Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment (RTR)**

LtCol MARTIN

#### **44th Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment (RTR)**

LtCol H. C. J. YEO



*British Tank Brigades were designed and equipped to support infantry formations.*

*For CRUSADER, the battalions of the 1st Army Tank Brigade were equipped with **Valentine tanks.***