

TAC NEWS

GHQ, 28100 Woodside Road, Shorewood, MN 55331 USA • (612) 374-2693 • www.ghqmodels.com

November - December 2011

Modeling Excellence Since 1967

21ST PANZER DIVISION IN NORTH AFRICA

The 21st Panzer Division symbolizes the Deutsches Afrikakorps (DAK). Elements of the division, originally known as the 5th Light Division, were among the first German units to arrive in North Africa early in 1941. They fought against the British 8th Army throughout the year before being reorganized as the 21st Panzer Division in time for the Crusader battles in November and December 1941.

The division was unable to prevent the relief of Tobruk during these battles but did manage to help cover the DAK's withdrawal to El Agheila. The division was refitted in early 1942, including receiving a number of long-barreled PzIIIJ tanks. A year of desert fighting had reinforced the need for all-around anti-tank capability, so the division reorganized its

infantry so that every Schutzen company had a detachment of heavy weapons (80mm mortars and MG42s) and anti-tank guns (towed 50mm Pak38s).

Three years of combat had allowed the German Panzer Division to develop into a capable all-arms fighting force, with regiments of panzers, motorized infantry and artillery along with engineer, reconnaissance, anti-aircraft, and support elements.

The 21st Panzer Division entered 1942 at the height of its effectiveness, organized as shown in the table in this article. The division had more than 100 tanks in the 5th Panzer Regiment at the beginning of the Gazala battles. Along with the rest of the DAK, 21st Panzer forced 8th Army back, recaptured Tobruk and drove to the Egyptian border. By the time the division got to El Alamein, it was down to less than 25 tanks.

21st Panzer fought on through Tunisia, receiving additional replacement vehicles, including more long-barreled Pz IIIs as well as PzIV F2s. Their last notable action in the desert was at Kasserine Pass against the Americans.



The division surrendered to the allies in May 1943. It never again regained the strength it had at Gazala.

In July 1943, the division was re-formed in France, again under the command of Erwin Rommel, but with a completely different organization.

During the Gazala battles, the division was engaged against a variety of units from 8th Army. In the opening hours of Rommel's offensive, 5th Panzer Regiment led that advance against armored brigades from British 1st Armoured Division that were equipped with a mixture of Crusaders and Grants, supported by 2 and 6-pound AT portees and 25-pound artillery. 21st Panzer was also heavily engaged in the "Cauldron" against the British 150th Infantry Brigade supported by Matilda and

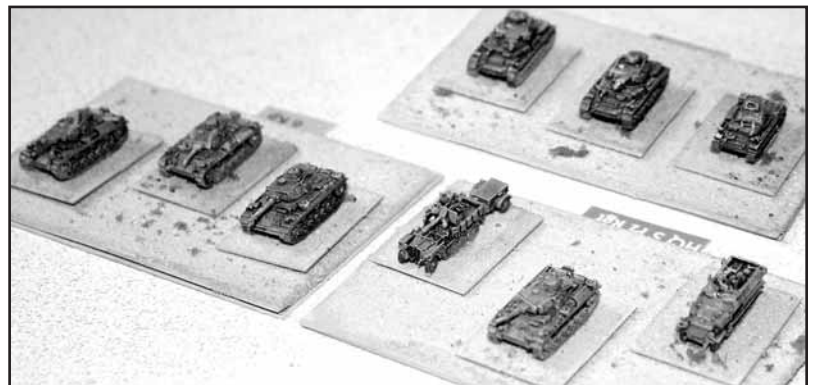
Valentine infantry tanks. Finally, the division took part in the pursuit to El Alamein, harrying the remaining 8th Army armour all the way to the Egyptian border.



Article and miniatures by John Drye

**21. Panzer Division Organization:
May 1942 Western Desert**

Panzer regiment HQ plus two tank companies including PzIIs, PzIIIs, and PzIVs protected by self-propelled 20mm from the AA battalion.



Division Headquarters

- HQ Squadron: 1 x HQ Staff Car, 1 x Radio Truck
- Recon Platoon: 1 x Recon Pz II

5. Panzer Regiment

- Regimental HQ: 1 x HQ Pz III, 1 x Radio Sdkfz 251/3
- Recon Platoon: 1 x Recon Pz II
- Maintenance Company: 1 x Sdkfz 9/1 ARV

I Panzer Abteilung

- Headquarters: 1 x HQ Pz III H, 1 x Recon Pz II
- Light Company: 2 x Pz IIIH, 1 x Pz IIIJ J (I)
- Light Company: 2 x Pz IIIH, 1 x Pz IIIJ J (I)
- Light Company: 3 x Pz IIIH
- Medium Company: 2 x Pz IV F1, 1 x Pz II



The recon battalion includes a variety of 4-wheeled and 8-wheeled armored cars.

II Panzer Abteilung

Headquarters: 1 x HQ Pz III H, 1 x Recon Pz II
Light Company: 2 x Pz IIIH, 1 x Pz IIIJ (I)
Light Company: 3 x Pz IIIH
Light Company: 3 x Pz IIIH
Medium Company: 2 x Pz IV F1, 1 x Pz II

104. Schützen Regiment (mot.)

Regimental HQ: 1 x HQ Staff Car, 1 x Radio Truck
Infantry Gun Battery: 1 x sIG 33 Infantry Gun / Tractor

I Schützen Abteilung

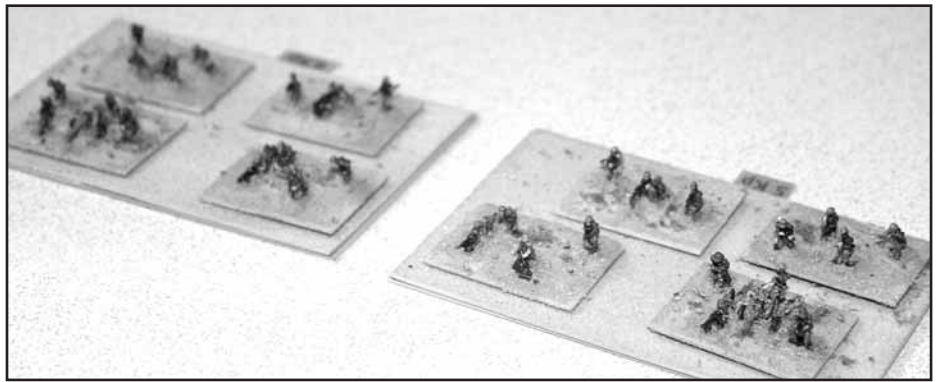
Headquarters: 1 x Infantry HQ / Kubelwagen
4 Company (each): 2 x Infantry / Truck, 1 x Infantry Support / Truck, 1 x Pak 38 / Truck

II Schützen Abteilung

(same as I Abteilung)

III Schützen Abteilung

(same as I Abteilung)



39. Panzerjäger Abteilung (mot.)

Headquarters: 1 x Infantry HQ / Kubelwagen
3 Battery (each): 1 x Pak 38 / Tractor

Two companies of the Schützen Regiment, each including rifles, MMGs, and 50mm AT guns make for a powerful all-around force.

3. Panzeraufklarungs Abteilung

Headquarters: 1 x Infantry HQ / Kubelwagen, 1 x 233 Armored Car
Motorcycle Company: 2 x Infantry / Motorcycle, 1 x Infantry Support / Motorcycle
Armored Car Company: 1 x Sdkfz 223, 2 x Sdkfz 222, 1 x Sdkfz 231
Heavy Company: 1 x Engineer / 251, 1 x 75 IG / Truck, 1 x Pak 38 / Tractor

200. Pionier Bataillon (mot.):

HQ: 1 x Infantry HQ / Kubelwagen
3 x Company (ea): 3 x Engineer / Truck

155. Artillerie Regiment (mot.):

Regimental HQ: 1 x HQ Staff Car

I. Leichte Abteilung

3 x Battery (ea): 1 x 105mm FH18 Howitzer / 1 Tractor

II. Leichte Abteilung

(same as I Abteilung)

III. Schwere Abteilung:

1 x Battery: 1 x 105 105mm FK18 Gun / Tractor
2 x Battery (each): 1 x 50mm sFH18 Howitzer / Tractor

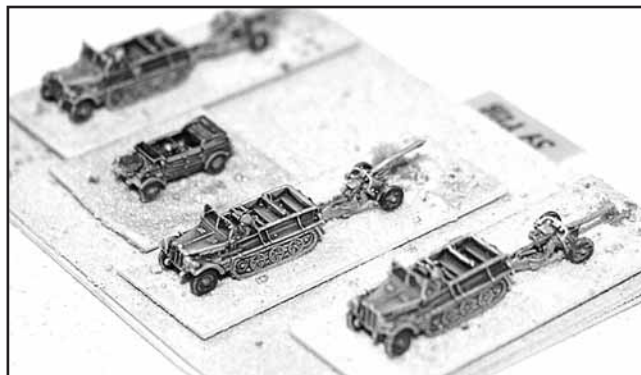
I. /18. Luftwaffe Flak Regiment (mot.) (attached):

3 x Battery (each): 1 x 88mm Flak / Tractor, 2 x 20mm Flak / Truck

617. Heer Fla Abteilung (attached):

1 x Heavy Battery: 1 x Sdkfz 7/1
2 x Light Battery (each): 2 x Sdkfz 10/4

The division's anti-tank battalion provides a powerful backstop to counter 8th Army armor.



NOW AVAILABLE



LCT-5 - 1/285th scale polyresin hull with cast metal details.

US155 \$39.95
(2 per pack)

OCTOBER 2011 RELEASES

GWF3	DD <i>BOUCLIER</i> -Class namesake. Twelve in class. 3/pk	\$8.75
GWB29	ACR <i>DUKE OF EDINBURGH</i> -Class namesake. 1/pk	\$9.95
G562	MOBELWAGEN -PzIV chassis, mounted 3.7cm Flak 43 L/89. 3/pk	\$9.95
G563	JAGDPANZER E-75 -Wehrmacht '47 heavy tank hunter, 128mm gun. 5/pk	\$9.95
UK98	UNIVERSAL CARRIER -1000s made, used by Commonwealth. 5/pk	\$9.95
AC83	F4F-4 WILDCAT -Main USN fighter to 1943. 2/pk	\$9.95
N544	VBCI -Current IFV, 8-wheeled replacement for AMX 10P. 5/pk	\$9.95
N545	FERRET Mk II -Widely used UK AC, mounts Saracen turret. 5/pk	\$9.95

CHECK OUT WWW.GHQMODELS.COM FOR WEB SPECIALS AVAILABLE ONLY WHEN YOU PLACE YOUR ORDER THROUGH OUR SECURE WEBSITE!