

13 Corps: 1 New Zealand Division, 7 Armoured Division.

(b) Reserve—

5 Indian Division (4 Indian Division eventually): 1 Armoured Division.

(c) *General line of F.D.Ls.*—El Alamein defences—Pt. 63 (eastern) on Ruweisat Ridge—vicinity of Alam Nayal. South of Alam Nayal the flank will be covered by 7 Armoured Division.

(d) *General line of reserve positions.*—For forward bodies, the most western line of the new rearward position.

Should it be desired to avoid the full effect of an enemy attack in great strength the above F.D.Ls. can become the outpost line and the main front can be withdrawn accordingly.

(e) *Matruh.*—Should be blocked by the Navy without delay.

#### *Tactical Technique and Future Organisation.*

18. In the light of the course recommended it will be necessary to adjust our tactical technique. This should be based on three facts:—

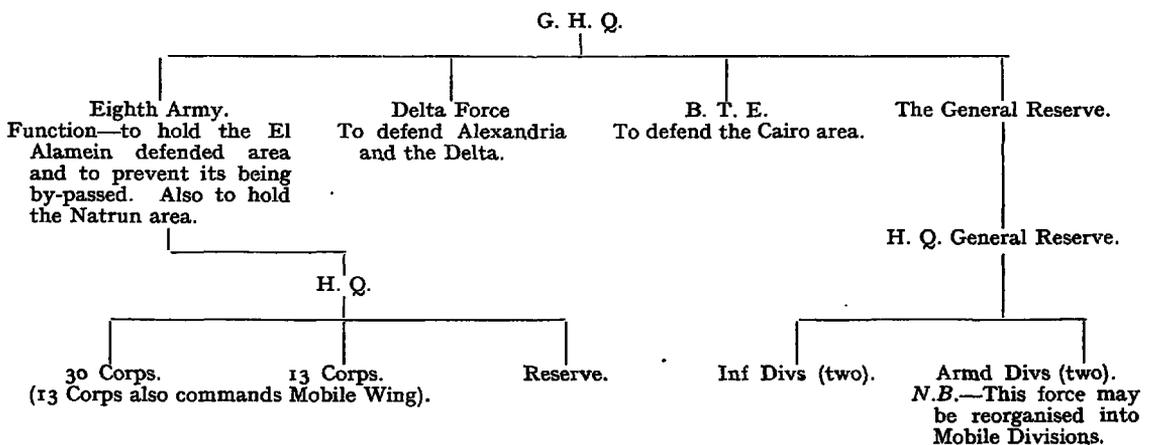
A.—We have to be prepared to fight a modern defensive battle in the area El

Alamein—Hammam. The troops detailed for this must be trained and exercised so as to get the maximum value from the ground and the prepared positions.

B.—Eighth Army may have to meet an enemy's sortie developing into manoeuvre by the southern flank from his firm front on the general line Bab el Qattara—Taqa Plateau. We must therefore organise and train a strong mobile wing, based on 7th Armoured Division, comprising a divisional artillery, 7th Motor Brigade, 4th Light Armoured Brigade, and possibly extra Crusader units. This mobile wing must be well trained in harassing defensive technique.

C.—Eventually we will have to renew the offensive and this will probably mean a break-through the enemy positions about El Alamein. The newly-arrived infantry divisions and the armoured divisions must be trained for this and for pursuit.

19. From the point of view of G.H.Q., the organisation of our available forces in August and September might take the following form:—



This goes further than the present appreciation, but can hardly be separated from it because, should this idea be adopted, it means that the formations now in Eighth Army will not be relieved and the new formations will be built up and reorganised irrespective of the immediate needs of Eighth Army.

20. *Summary.*—The enemy now holds in sufficient strength for his purpose a front from which he cannot be dislodged by manoeuvre or any attack Eighth Army can at present deliver. We are strongly posted for a defensive battle. The enemy is attempting to build up his strength and renew his attack on Egypt. Eighth Army requires re-equipment and training before it will be fit for offensive operations. During August it is unlikely that either ourselves or the enemy will be strongly reinforced on land; a successful offensive by either side is therefore unlikely. Provided the land and air situation does not change, Eighth Army can be reinforced about mid-September by two armoured divisions and two infantry divisions. This may give us a superiority sufficient to justify a direct attack on what may be by then a strongly organised front. Alternatively, we may develop a threat to the enemy's rear *via* Siwa. The immediate need is to reorganise present forces with Eighth Army and to rearrange the front so as to provide an army reserve. The longer term policy is to

train the newly-arrived divisions for the counter-offensive which it is hoped might begin in the latter part of September.

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*Letter to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.*

14th August, 1942.

1. I wish to place before you my views on the proposal to separate Iraq and Persia from the present Middle East Command and to constitute them as an independent command under a Commander-in-Chief directly responsible to the Chiefs of Staff.

I am aware that I have not been asked for my opinion, but I consider that in view of my experience as Commander-in-Chief both in India and the Middle East, and because I have made an exhaustive study of the problem of the defence of the area in question, it is my duty to place my views on record. I do this solely in the hope that they may be of some service to the nation, and not because I wish to attempt in any way to contest the decision to divide up my present command.

2. You are aware, I believe, that I have recently approved a reorganisation of the system of command in Iraq and Persia.

The object of this reorganisation is to free Commander Tenth Army and his staff to direct