

8th (King's Royal Irish) Hussars

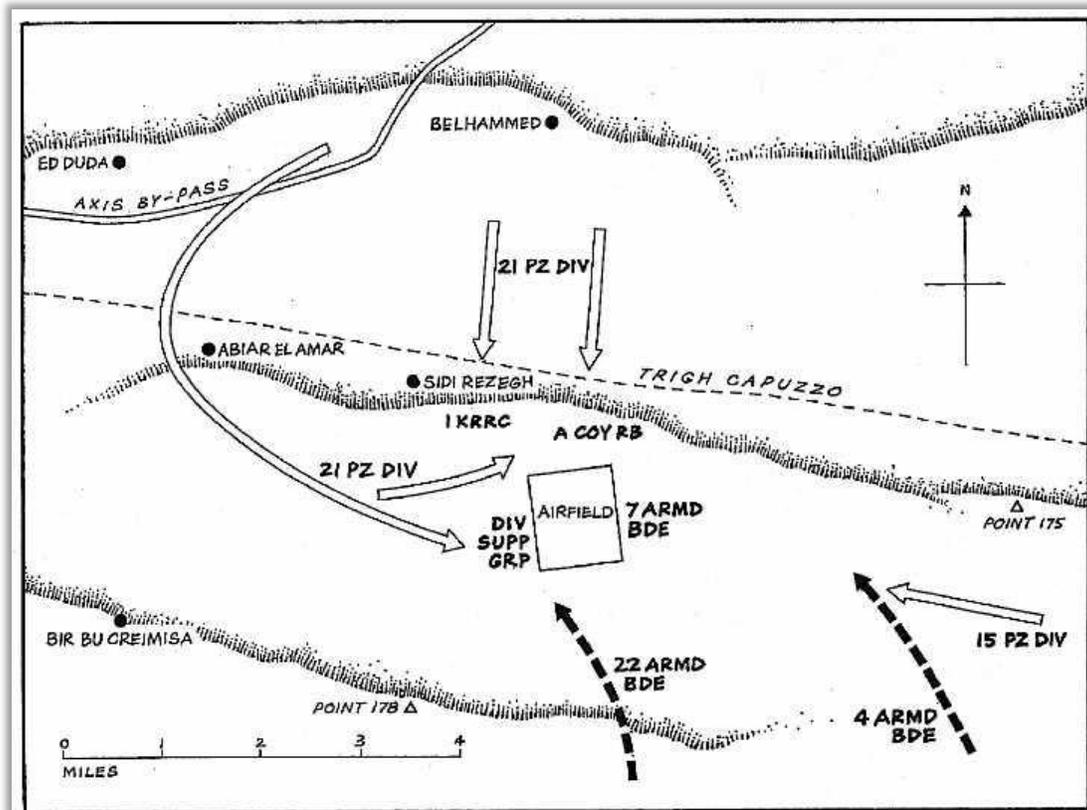
Regimental History



The 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars was a cavalry regiment in the British Army, first raised in 1693. It saw service for three centuries, before being amalgamated into The Queen's Royal Irish Hussars in 1958. The regiment was first raised in Ireland as Henry Conyngham's Regiment of Dragoons in Derry in 1693, and ranked as the 8th Dragoons. It was briefly disbanded from 1714 to 1715, and 1716 to 1719, reforming each time without any loss of precedence. In 1751, it was formally titled as the 8th Regiment of Dragoons, and designated light dragoons in 1775 as the 8th Regiment of Light Dragoons. The regiment was renamed in 1777 for George III as the 8th (The King's Royal Irish) Regiment of (Light) Dragoons, and became hussars in 1822, as the 8th (The King's Royal Irish) Regiment of (Light) Dragoons (Hussars). The title was simplified in 1861 to the 8th (The King's Royal Irish) Hussars. After service in the First World War, the regiment retitled as the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars in 1921, and was transferred to the Royal Armoured Corps in 1939. The Regiment fought with distinction in North Africa, Greece, France & Germany during World War II.

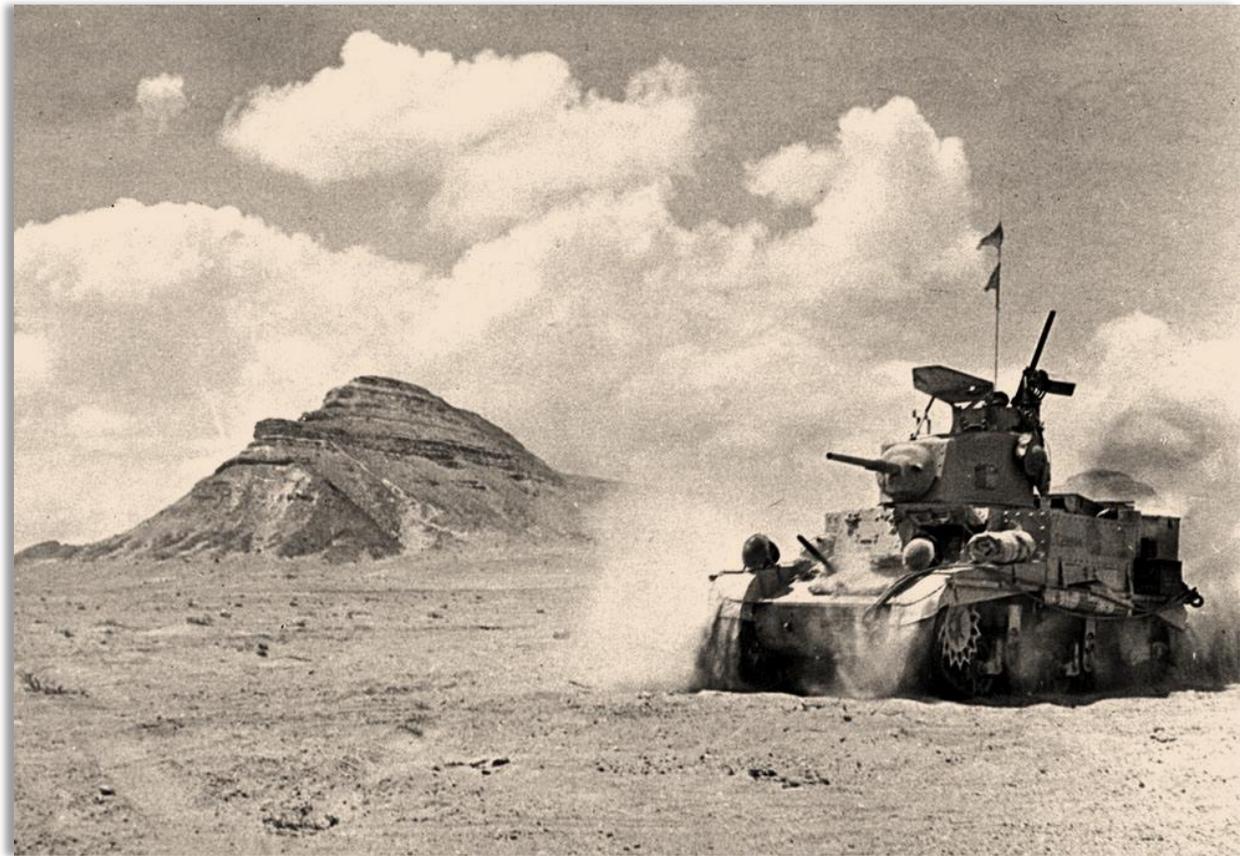


Operation Crusader and the Battle of Sidi Rezegh Airfield (November 1941)



July 1941 found the 8th Hussars, in Stuart tanks, back as part of the 4th Armoured Brigade for Operation Crusader. On the 19th November, at the start of the three day Battle of Sidi Rezegh Airfield, the 4th Armoured Brigade, with their 164 Stuarts, met up with 15th Panzer Division at Gabr Taieb el Essem, north-west of Scheferzen. The 3rd RTR had moved north in the afternoon of the 19th in pursuit of a German Reconnaissance unit and were on the Trigh Capuzzo, when 8th Hussars were attacked by a German Panzer Battle Group (Kampfgruppe Stephan) with over 100 tanks and infantry. This force was part of 21st Panzer Division and consisted of eighty-five MK III and MK IV tanks, plus thirty-five MK II tanks with a strong artillery group of 105mm howitzers and 88mm anti-tank guns. It had been sent at 1145 hrs on the 19th to destroy the British forces north-east of Gabr Saleh. Five hours later they encountered the Fifty Stuarts of 8th Hussars who were deploying to meet engage them. Having been lucky enough to find a gap in the armoured car screen, the German attack was preceded by dive-bombing and machine gun attacks, mainly on 8th Hussars RHQ. The German tanks opened fire at 1,500 yards, at which range they were immune to the guns of the British tanks. Later 5th RTR came to the aid of 8th Hussars and the battle continued until it was broken off at nightfall. By the end of the day the 8th Hussars had lost 20 tanks. This was the first 'large' tank versus tank battle in the desert, with the Germans having firepower and numbers on their side, while the British had the speed

and maneuverability of their Honey. The Brigade did its best to overcome the disadvantages of armour and armament, but suffered heavily as a result, with both 3rd and 5th RTR were chased back 25 miles to the Trigh el Abd and 8th Hussars at Gabr Saleh. When the fighting resumed early on the 20th with the same Panzer Battle Group, it was more of a running fight across the Brigades front and resulted in the Germans moving away northwards and 4th Armoured Brigade being able to take up their position near Gabr Saleh again. By the end of the battle on 22 November the engagement with the Germans had left the Irish Hussars with just eight Honey Stuart Tanks fit for battle; the rest of the Regiment had been captured or destroyed.



References

<http://www.desertrats.org.btinternet.co.uk/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/8th_King's_Royal_Irish_Hussars

<http://www.btinternet.com/~ian.a.paterson/battles1941.htm>

