

forward outposts and confirmed this plan from inspection of the ground.

The plan for the battle was given the code-name LIGHTFOOT. The attack was to be made by 30 Corps using, from north to south, 9 Australian, 51 Highland, 2 New Zealand and 1 South African Divisions. The first two were to drive due west on a line roughly parallel to and below the Tell el Eisa ridge to form the northern corridor and the latter two were to attack south-westerly to secure the Miteiriya ridge and to establish the southern corridor through the defences. 4 Indian Division, which was also under command, was to carry out a diversionary raid along Ruweisat ridge. When 30 Corps had formed these two corridors through the full depth of the enemy defences 10 Corps, with, from north to south, 1 and 10 Armoured Divisions, was to pass through and position itself on ground of its own choosing at the far end of the corridors. It was likely enough that the enemy would counter-attack immediately with his armour in order to close the breach. Whether he did or not the infantry of 30 Corps would proceed at once with the methodical destruction of the enemy infantry first between the two corridors and then on either of its flanks, working northwards from Tell el Eisa and southwards from Miteiriya ridge. 10 Corps would prevent the enemy armour from interfering with these operations. This stage of the battle would be quite certain to provoke a strong reaction from the enemy armour which could hardly sit and watch its infantry being destroyed piecemeal. This would be to our advantage, for we would be forcing the enemy to attack us on ground which we had chosen.

Simultaneously with the main attack 13 Corps, with under command 7 Armoured, 44 and 50 Divisions, was to attack in the southern sector. Two thrusts were to be made, one round the southern flank by 1 Fighting French Brigade, directed against Qaret el Himeimat, and the other north of Himeimat by 44 Division supported by 7 Armoured Division. The intention was, if possible, to make a breach in the enemy positions there as well, through which we might be able to exploit; if the Himeimat operation went well, 4 Light Armoured Brigade would be passed round the southern flank and launched in a raid on El Daba, to destroy the supply installations there and seize the landing grounds. But the main value which I expected from the 13 Corps operation was to distract the enemy attention from the vital thrust in the north and, in particular, to contain opposite it the two armoured divisions already on that flank. In order to ensure that the process of containment and attrition worked in our favour rather than the enemy's it was firmly laid down that 7 Armoured Division must be kept in being and should not incur such casualties as would make it ineffective. 4 Light Armoured Brigade was not to be launched on Daba without specific orders.

I attached very great importance to the deceptive measures to be taken to conceal our intentions from the enemy. It was obviously impossible to conceal from him the fact that we intended to attack; the most we could hope for was to deceive him as to the exact date and place of our attack. We could do this by showing him concentrations of troops and

administrative preparations in the southern sector which should be large enough to suggest a full-scale attack there but incomplete, so as to suggest a later date than the actual. Above all it was important to conceal the preparations being made in the north. I decided that we must go to all lengths to make this deception plan a success and no effort was spared to that end which ingenuity could suggest. We were fortunate in that our plans had been decided on over a month in advance of the operation; consequently we could ensure that the appropriate deception measures were taken from the start. The main problems which faced us were to conceal the concentration in 13 Corps' forward area of two extra divisions, two hundred and forty additional guns and a hundred and fifty additional tanks, and in the rear areas of seven thousand five hundred tons of petrol, stores and ammunition, and the construction of six additional tracks leading from assembly areas twenty-five miles in rear up to the actual sector on which the break in was to be made. In 13 Corps we had to conceal the forward movement of artillery to cover the points selected for attack. Most important of all was to conceal the move forward of 10 Corps from their training areas to their assembly areas in the northern sector.

To conceal the reinforcement of 30 Corps careful calculations were made to determine what the area would look like from the air immediately before the battle; the same picture was then reproduced by 1st October by disposing transport in the areas which would be occupied on 23rd October. Dummy lorries were erected in the areas which would be occupied by the artillery regiments so that the guns and limbers could be moved in by night and concealed under the dummies. The additional dumps were elaborately camouflaged, for which purpose the hummocky area near El Imayid station was well adapted. The new tracks could not be concealed, and they were the most revealing indications of our purpose. The only solution which offered itself was to delay until the last the completion of those parts of them which would be most significant to the enemy. In the 13 Corps sector the intended concentrations of artillery were first represented by dummy guns which were later replaced by real guns. Most elaborate measures were taken to conceal the movement of 10 Corps. The two assembly areas were filled by about 6th October with approximately two thousand vehicles in each with over seven hundred dummy vehicles to be placed over the tanks of the three armoured brigades. The Corps moved from its training area to two staging areas on 19th October; these moves were carried out openly as training moves. From the staging areas to the assembly areas the moves were made largely by night and all tanks and guns moved entirely by night. As units moved out of the staging areas they were replaced by dummy tanks, some mobile and some static, dummy guns and transport and by over two thousand real motor vehicles.

Besides these negative measures of concealment positive measures of deception were taken. A dummy pipeline was built stretching from the real pipeline down towards 13 Corps' sector. This was a most realistic production made of old petrol tins, with dummy pumping stations and reservoirs; it was started