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CASSANDRA'S CURSE (ABRIDGED)



OLD HEADQUARTERS PRESS

How to Read this Book

The purpose of this book is to give you the background you need to work through a decision-forcing case. In particular, this book gives you the information that you will need to play the role of Ludwig Crüwell, the commanding general of the German Africa Corps.

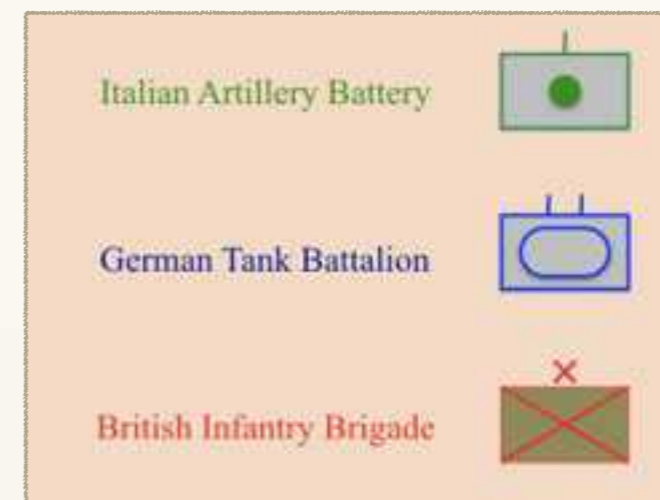
As with other sorts of case materials, this book is designed to be read ‘in character’. Thus, as you read the book, try to imagine that the year is 1941, that you are Lieutenant General Crüwell, and the situation being described is the reality that you must deal with. (To help you do this, the text has been written in the present tense.)

The book is laid out so that you can read it in a conventional fashion, starting at the beginning and ending at the end. Nonetheless, you should not read the book as if it were a novel or a short story. Rather, as you read through the text, you should frequently ask yourself how the facts you have just encountered will affect the decisions you make at the helm of the Africa Corps.

The text of this book is full of items that may be new to you. As you encounter these, ask yourself about their relevance to

your plan. If you feel that you need more information about a particular word or picture, feel free to click on it. In most cases, you will find that it is linked to either an explanatory article or, in a few cases, a film clip. (This feature will only work if your reading device is connected to the internet.)

The organizational diagrams in this book use standard NATO symbols. Symbols depicting British Empire forces have brown backgrounds and red outlines. Those representing Axis units and formations have gray backgrounds. (Symbols with blue outlines indicate German organizations, while those with green outlines designate Italian outfits.)





THE PROTAGONIST

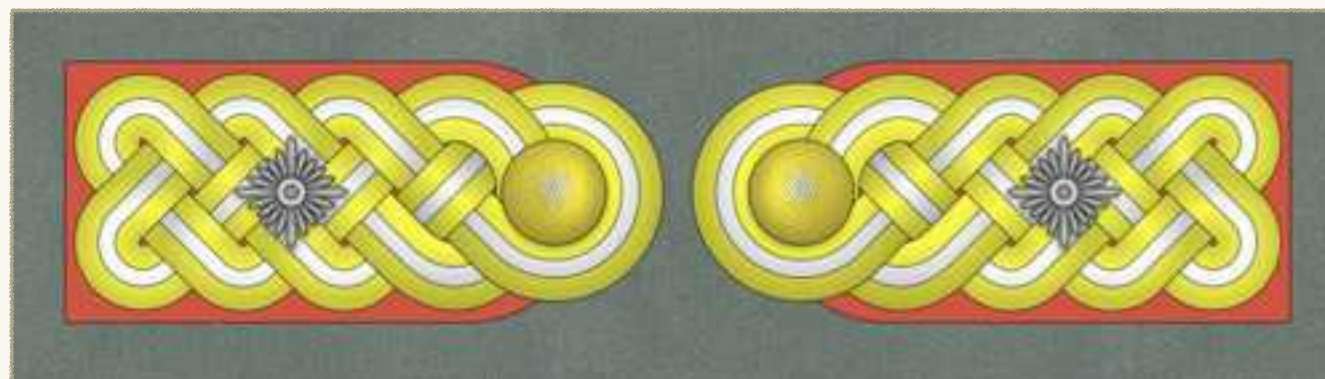
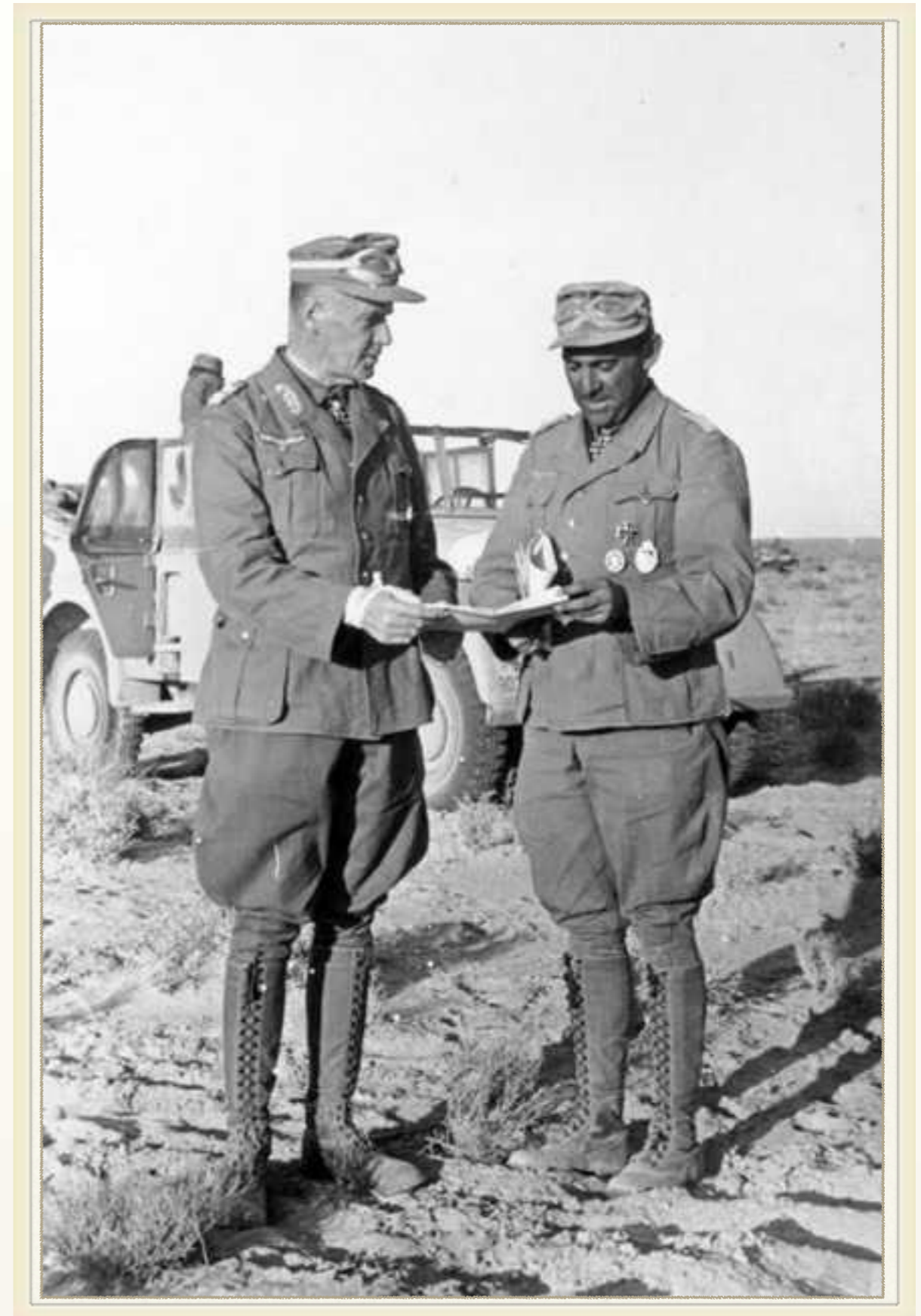
Your name is Ludwig Crüwell. You were born, on 20 March 1892, in Dortmund, in the Rhine Province of the Kingdom of Prussia, where your father owned a company that published textbooks and hymnals. After earning your baccalaureate (*Abitur*) from a classical secondary school (*Gymnasium*), you briefly studied law and economics, in Munich (Bavaria) and Grenoble (France). On 6 March 1911, you reported for duty, as an officer candidate, to the 1st Hanoverian Dragoon Regiment, then located in the fortress city of Metz.

Between 1 October 1911 and 30 June 1912, you attended the War School (*Kriegsschule*) at Bad Hersfeld (in the Electoral Principality of Hesse.) After graduation from the course for prospective junior officers, you returned to your regiment, where, on 18 August 1912, you were commissioned as a second lieutenant.

During the First World War, you served as a patrol leader (August 1914 through September 1916), senior staff officer (*Adjutant*) for your regiment (September 1916 through May 1917), junior staff officer (*Ordnanzoffizier*) for the 233rd Infantry Division (May 1917 through October 1917), company commander in the 450th Infantry Regiment (November 1917 through January 1918), senior staff officer of the 233rd Artillery Command (January 1918 through March 1918), and senior staff officer of the 19th National Guard (*Landwehr*) Infantry Brigade (March 1918 through November 1918.)

After the First World War, you were one of the relatively small number of officers who were retained by the army of the German Republic. Between 1919 and 1934, you served in the main office of the Ministry of Defense, on the staff of the 2nd Cavalry Division, and as a squadron commander in the 12th Cavalry Regiment. In 1934, you transferred to the Motorized Combat Troops (*Kraftfahrkampftruppen*), the branch that would eventually become the Armored Troops (*Panzertruppen*.) Between 1934 and 1939, you commanded an anti-tank battalion and, after your promotion to colonel, the 6th Tank Regiment.

The outbreak of the Second World War found you in charge of a department of the Army General Staff. During the battle for France of May and June 1940, you served as chief-of-staff of the 16th Army. Soon thereafter, you took command of the 11th Armored Division, which you led in both the Balkan campaign of the spring of 1941 and the invasion of the Soviet Union of the summer of that year. On 1 September 1941 you were promoted to the rank of lieutenant general and appointed to the command of the Africa Corps.



Chapter 1

NOVEMBER 1941

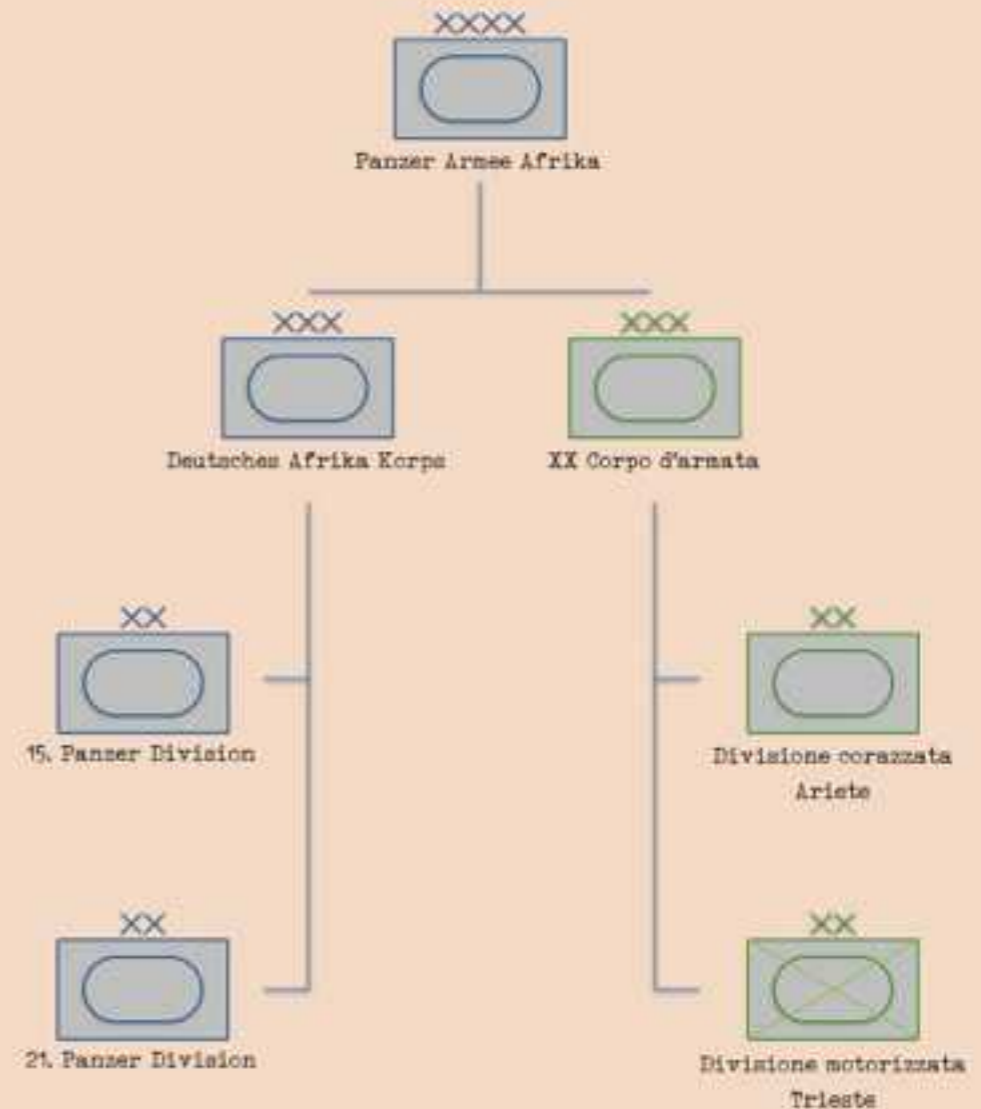
The Second World War is in its twenty-sixth month. In the first year of the conflict, Germany inflicted catastrophic defeats on two of its three most powerful enemies (Poland and France) and drove the forces of the third (the British Empire) off of the continent of Europe. In the summer of the second year of the war, Germany acquired two new enemies, the Soviet Union and the United States, each with a potential war-making capacity far greater than that of the British Empire. Thus, while the German armed forces continue to achieve considerable success on many fronts, the days of easy victories are over.



Chapter 2

THE AFRICA CORPS

The German Africa Corps (*Deutsches Afrika Korps*) is one of the two component armored corps of Armored Army Africa (*Panzer Armee Afrika*). The other is XX. Corps (*XXCorpo d'armata*) of the Italian Army. Each of these armored corps is a binary formation, with two component armored divisions. In the case of the Africa Corps, these are the 15th and 21st Armored Divisions. In the case of XX. Corps, these are the *Ariete* armored division and the *Trieste* motorized infantry division. In addition to its two armored corps, the German Africa Corps often exercises operational control over a number of additional units and formations of the German and Italian armies in North Africa.



**Mechanized Formations of
Armored Army Africa
Fall 1941**

Chapter 3

THE FRONT

The war in North Africa has been a see-saw affair, a contest in which an advance of several hundred miles might be followed by a retreat of similar length. It began in earnest on 9 September 1940, when an Italian field army based in Libya invaded Egypt. On 9 December 1940, the British Empire forces in Egypt counterattacked, capturing all that had been lost in the past three months, as well as a significant portion of the long Libyan coastline.

In February of 1941, Germany came to the aid of its ally, sending a small expeditionary force to Libya. After fulfilling its original mission of stopping the British advance into Italian territory, this formation went on the offensive. By 15 April 1941, the German and Italian forces in North Africa had retaken most of the territory that had been lost to British Empire forces just a few months before. In May and June of 1941, they successfully defended this ground against two British offensives. Since then, the front line in North Africa, which runs, more or less, along the border between Libya and Egypt, has been both stable and, notwithstanding raids and reconnaissance patrols, remarkably quiet.



The North African Theater of Operations 1941-1942

