

164. LEICHTE AFRIKA-DIVISION - UNIT HISTORY

DATE	LOCATION	ACTIVITY	CHAIN OF COMMAND
1939/11/27	Dresden, Wehrkreis IV	Activation as the 164.ID	C.O.: Gen.Maj. Konrad Haase, 1939/12/01-1940/01/10 Subordinate to: Stellv.Gen.Kdo. IV, 1939/11/27-1940/06/05
1939/12/01	Truppenuebungsplatz Koenigsbrueck	Formation, billeting, equipping, training, also designated Lehrdivision, 1940/01/16	C.O.: Gen.Lt. Josef Folttmann, 1940/01/10-1942/08/10
1940/06/06	Vianden, Ettelbruck, Luxembourg	Transfer	Subordinate to: OKH, 1940/06/06-1940/06/08
1940/06/11	Charleville, Sedan, Rethel, Rheims, France	Movement as a reserve unit	AK 29, 1940/06/09-1940/06/21
1940/06/25	Rethel, Sedan, Vouziers	Movement, occupation and security duty	AK 1 zhV (Mil.Bfh.Frankreich), 1940/06/22-1940/07/04 AK 23, 1940/07/05-1940/07/27 AK 42, 1940/07/28-1940/10/17
1940/10/27	Ostend, Bruges, Belgium	Movement, coastal defense	
1940/11/29	St.Die, Rambervillers, France	Movement, occupation duty	
1940/12/20	Giurgiu, Rumania	Transfer (source: situation maps of Lage West and Suedost)	
1941/02/27	Giurgiu, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, Greek border	Movement, preparations for the invasion of Greece	AK 30, 1941/02/27-1941/05/17
1941/04/06	Drama, Xanthe, Salonika, Aegean Islands	Advance, offensive engagements, coastal defense, occupation	AK 18, 1941/05/17-1941/05/31
1941/08/01	Salonika, Aegean Islands	Defense, security	AK 18, 1941/08/01-1941/09/20 Bfh. Saloniki-Aegaeis, 1941/09/21-1941/12/31
1941/12/18	Crete	Transfer, reorganization as Festungsdivision Kreta	
1942/01/08	Crete	Command, defense, security, training	
1942/07/21	Tobruk, Libya, El Alamein, Egypt	Transfer, redesignation as 164.le.AfrD, movement, offensive operations	Deutsches Afrikakorps, 1942/07/21-1942/11/08 C.O.: Gen.Maj. Karl-Hans Lungershausen, 1942/08/10-1943/01/15

DATE	LOCATION	ACTIVITY	CHAIN OF COMMAND
1942/10/23	El Alamein	British counteroffensive, German defeat and withdrawal	
1942/11/05	Matruh, Sidi Barrani, Egypt, Marsa Lucch, Bardia, Tobruk, Benghazi, Libya	Disengagement movements	Subordinate to: Obkdo.d.dtsch.-ital. PzAOK Afrika, 1942/11/09-1942/12/19
1942/11/13	Marsa el Brega, El Agheila, Sirte, Homs, Tripoli	Withdrawal, defensive engagements	
1942/12/08	Buerat el Hsun, Uadi Zemzem Beni Ulid, Tarhuna	Construction and defense of positions	AK 20 ital., 1942/12/20-1943/01/13 Deutsches Afrikakorps, 1943/01/13-1943/02/10 C.O.: Gen.Maj. Kurt von Liebenstein, 1943/01/03-1943/02/17, 1943/03/13-1943/05/12
1943/02/01	Zuara, Libya, Fom Tatahouine, Ben Gardane, Medenine, Mareth, Matmata Range, Tunisia	Defensive engagements, withdrawal, construction and defense of positions	Subordinate to: AK 21 ital., 1943/02/10-1943/03/22 C.O.: Gen.Maj. Fritz Krause, 1943/02/15-1943/03/13
1943/03/21	El Hamma, Gabes, Tunisia	Withdrawal, defensive engagements	Subordinate to: Dtsch.Chef d.GenSt.b.it.AOK 1, 1943/03/22-1943/03/31

Records of the 164. leichte Afrika-Division are reproduced on rolls 1473-1474 of Microfilm Publication T315 and are described following the unit history.

Although no records of this division dated later than 1943/03/31 were available in the National Archives, situation maps of Lage Nordafrika show:

1943/04/01	Chott el Fedjedj	Position defense
1943/04/29	Enfidaville, Pont-du-Fahs	Defensive operations
1943/05/12	Pont-du-Fahs	Capitulation

Manuscripts in the Foreign Military Studies series, prepared by former German officers for the Historical Division, Headquarters U.S. Army, Europe, between 1945 and 1959, contain references to the 164.le.Afrika-Division as follows:

Mareth Line, Feb-Mar 1943: MS D-122 (Beitraege ueber die Mareth-Stellung, III. Teil, Einsatz als stellvertretender Fuehrer d. 164.D.) by Gen.Maj. Fritz Krause

MS D-306 (Die Kaempfe der 164. leichten Afrika-Division in der Mareth-Stellung vom 13.3.-28.3.43) by Gen.Maj. Kurt Freiherr von Liebenstein
Transfer to Crete, Jan-Jul 1942: MS D-305 (I. Die 164.Inf.Div. auf Kreta als Flankendeckung fuer Rommels Angriff auf Aegypten, Juni 1942;
II. Der improvisierte Transport der 164.Inf.Div. von Kreta nach Aegypten ab 7.7.42) by Gen.Lt. Josef Folttmann

Tunisia: MS D-315 (The operations of the 164th light Africa-Division from the Schott position to the surrender of Tunisia, 29 Mar-13 May 1943),
by Gen.Maj. Kurt Freiherr von Liebenstein.

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CONTENTS	DATES	ITEM NO.	ROLL	1ST FRAME
Ia, KTB 1 mit Anlagen und Ic, TB. War journal with orders, directives, notes, and surveys pertaining to the activation of the 164.ID in Dresden on 27 Nov 1939; its formation, billeting, equipping, and training in the Truppenuebungsplatz Koenigsbrueck; its additional designation as Lehrdivision beginning 16 Jan 1940; and the planned transfer to France on 6 Jun. Order-of-battle charts; special supply directives; an afteraction critique relating to the Polish campaign; an activity report of the intelligence branch, 1 May-5 Jun 1940, concerning troop indoctrination and entertainment; strength reports; a register of officers; lists of officers duty assignments.	1939/11/27-1940/06/05	164.le.AfrD W540	1473	1
Ia, KTB 2 mit Anlagen und Ic, TB. Transfer from Dresden to Vianden and Ettelbruck in Luxembourg, 6-10 Jun; movement to Rheims, France, via Sedan, Charleville, and Rehel as a reserve unit, 11-22 Jun; return to Rehel, Vouziers, and Sedan for occupation duty, security, harvesting, and training, 25 Jun-17 Oct; and planned transfer to northern Belgium for coastal defense. An order-of-battle chart; a register of officers; casualty and strength reports. (There is no indication that KTB 3 and Ic TB for the period 18 Oct 1940-26 Feb 1941, record item W6895 as listed in the Potsdam catalog, was ever in National Archives custody.)	1940/06/06-1940/10/17	164.le.AfrD W2691	1473	453
Ib, KTB 1. Transfer of the division from Crete to Tobruk, 21 Jul 1942, to strengthen PzAOK Afrika; supply activities in the El Daba, Matruh, and Sidi Barrani areas, 24 Jul-22 Oct; British counteroffensive at El Alamein, 23 Oct-3 Nov; movement of the supply headquarters to Tobruk, 5 Nov, and to Tripoli, 28 Nov; Allied landings in North Africa, 7-8 Nov; evacuation of	1942/07/18-1942/12/31	164.le.AfrD 29099/1	1473	764

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Benghazi, 12 Nov, and withdrawal to Marsa el Brega, El Agheila, and Tripoli, 13-30 Nov; the establishing and defense of the Buerat positions east of Tripoli in December; the planned withdrawal of PzAOK Afrika to Tunisia. (This record item, filmed originally without frame numbers on MR 1783, has been assigned a simulated initial frame number.)				
Ia, KTB 4 mit Anlagen und Ic, IIa/b, TB. Movement to Plovdiv, Bulgaria, via Giurgiu, Rumania, and to the Greek border, 2-24 Mar; preparations for the invasion of Greece, 25 Mar-5 Apr; offensive engagements, coastal defense, and advance to Salonika via Xanthe, Drama, and Alexandroupolis, 6-12 Apr; occupation of the Aegean Islands, 14 Apr-10 May. Photographs of Greek fortifications; afteraction reports and critiques on the occupation of the Aegean Islands of Thasos, Samothrace, Lemnos, Lesbos, Chios, and Icaria; activity reports of the intelligence and personnel branches. (There is no indication that KTB 5 (Griechenland) mit Anlagen for the period 1 Jun-31 Jul 1941, record items 13096/1-2 as listed in the Potsdam catalog, were ever in National Archives custody.)	1941/02/27-1941/05/31	164.le.AfrD 10287	1474	1
Ia, Ic, IIa/b, TB. Activity report and orders pertaining to regrouping of components of the division and defense and security of the Salonika area and the Aegean Islands; sea transportation; training; troop inspection; internal political situation; planned reorganization of the 164.ID as Festungsdivision Kreta in Jan 1942; transfer to Crete, 18-30 Dec; and the planned takeover of the command of Crete on 8 Jan. Order-of-battle charts; combat and ration strength reports. Activity reports of the intelligence and personnel branches concerning counterintelligence activity, military security, acts of sabotage,	1941/08/01-1941/12/31	164.le.AfrD 15947/1	1474	415

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intelligence training, enemy propaganda, and treatment of prisoners of war.				
Ia, Ic, IIa/b, Feldgend., Ia/Mess., TB mit Anlagen. Activity report with orders and directives pertaining to the reorganization of the 164.ID as FestD Kreta, its organizational breakdown, and takeover of command of Crete, 8 Jan; security, training, transportation situation, and the establishing and defense of strong points on Crete; status and strength reports. Activity reports of the intelligence and personnel branches, Military Police Co. 220, 1 Feb-31 Mar, and the map and survey officer, 1-31 May. (There is no indication that the TB for the period 1 Apr-15 Jul 1942, record item 21320/1 as listed in the Potsdam catalog, was ever in National Archives custody.)	1942/01/01-1942/03/31	164.le.AfrD 17509/1	1474	656
Ia, KTB 1 mit Anlagen. War journal and orders pertaining to the British counteroffensive at El Alamein, resulting in a German defeat, 23 Oct-3 Nov; withdrawal and defensive operations to Matruh and Sidi Barrani, Egypt, and Marsa Lucch, Bardia, Tobruk, Benghazi, Marsa el Brega, El Agheila, Sirte, Homs, and Tripoli, Libya, 5 Nov-8 Dec; and the construction and defense of the Buerat positions in the Buerat el Hsun and Uadi Zemzem areas, 8-31 Dec. Casualty and strength reports; an afteraction report for the period 23 Oct-20 Nov 1942, covering operations of the 164.le.AfrD (redesignated 21 Jul 1942).	1942/11/01-1942/12/31	164.le.AfrD 29098	1474	868
Ib, Anlagen zum KTB 1. Orders, messages, and tables pertaining to supply activities, problems, organizational changes, and statistics during the withdrawal from Egypt to Tripoli; special directives concerning supply for FestD Kreta during its transport to North Africa, 18-21 Nov, and the 164.le.AfrD in Egypt, 24 Jul-22 Oct, and in the Tripoli and Buerat el	1942/07/18-1942/12/31	164.le.AfrD 29099/2	1474	1011

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Hsun areas, 29 Nov-20 Dec; directives for construction of the Buerat positions; a map showing the location of the division from 21 Jul to 31 Dec 1942.				
Ib, IVb, V, IVd, TB. Supply activities and problems in Egypt and Libya. Activity reports of the medical and motor transport officers, 21 Jul-31 Dec 1942, and of the Catholic chaplain, 1-31 Dec; a casualty report; a list of medical officers duty assignments.	1942/07/18-1942/12/31	164.le.AfrD 29099/3	1474	1289
Ia, KTB 2. Position defense in the Buerat el Hsun, Beni Ulid, and Tarhuna areas in January; defense of Zuara, withdrawal to Tunisia, defensive engagements in the Ben Gardane, Foum Tatahouine, and Medenine areas, and the establishing of the Mareth positions in the Matmata Range in February; defense of the Medenine and Mareth positions and withdrawal to and defense of the Schottstellungen north of El Hamma and Gabes in Mar 1943.	1943/01/01-1943/03/31	164.le.AfrD 30271/1	1474	1349
Ia, Anlagen zum KTB 2 und Ic, IIa/b, IVd, TB. Orders and messages concerning operations in Libya and Tunisia; tables and charts showing organizational breakdown and order of battle of the 164.le.AfrD; afteraction reports relating to operations of division units in the El Hamma area, 21-28 Mar 1943; a proclamation by General Montgomery in response to an appraisal of the military situation in North Africa by Gen.Feldm. Rommel. An activity report of the intelligence branch covering the enemy tactical situation, unit identification, losses, and propaganda; control of the civilian population; and troop entertainment. Activity reports of the personnel branch, 1 Feb-31 Mar, and the chaplain, 1 Feb-15 Mar; strength and casualty reports.	1943/01/01-1943/03/31	164.le.AfrD 30271/2	1474	1522