

Camp News

As this is not an official publication of Army Headquarters of the New Zealand Military Forces, all matters intended for publication should be addressed to The Editor and reach this office not later than 2 p.m. Mondays. Correspondence is invited on topical items of interest. Only business communications should be addressed to the Manager. Extra copies of "Camp News" may be obtained on application to the Manager, "Camp News," 3rd Floor, Whitaker's Buildings, 11 Manners Street, Wellington.

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Wellington, Friday, October 30, 1942

**This is Interesting!**  
**WHAT WAS SAID EARLY IN 1941**

Hitler really means business in Egypt . . . but he's got to supply his tanks, and we've got a Navy, says Tom Winttingham in the "Daily Mirror."

The Nazi drive through Libya is clearly at the moment the key move of the war. If American estimates are correct, three German armoured divisions have reached the Egyptian border, after moving nearly 400 miles through the desert in twelve days.

This force, under General Rommel, started moving from the point on the Bay of Sirte, El Brega, where our outposts stood just over a fortnight ago. It did not then swing north-eastwards towards the coast. It kept to the desert.

Another German force with few tanks and a considerable number of infantry carried in lorries, took the north-easterly route, missed the British troops withdrawing from Benghazi and Derna, but caught up with these troops at Tobruk.

While this second German force was keeping the British troops busy near Tobruk, the first German force passed almost without hindrance many miles south along the dry, hot tracks, to Bardia.

The normal German armoured division includes about 450 tanks. Allowing a 20 per cent. wastage for breakdowns on this long and hard trip, almost twice as long as any previous German tank drive, we may estimate that three armoured divisions will have 1,000 tanks fit for action for their next drive.

According to Zurich reports, Germans in Berlin are boasting that these tanks will go straight on to Port Said on the Suez Canal.

The position is menacing, but the job will not be as easy as that. General Wavell's forces will try to hold Mersa Matruh, the railhead from which they went forward to defeat the Italians.

Behind Mersa Matruh and south of it into the desert there are defences.

Unfortunately, these defences have to end somewhere to the south. There is therefore a desert flank always open.

It cannot be held by any "defence in depth," as the coastal strip behind Mersa Matruh can.

During our drive against the Italians we could always swing a "left fist" through the desert round behind their forces near the coast. Similarly, during their drive through Libya the Germans have swung their "right fist" through the desert to Bardia and Solulim.

But at some point a pause in the German advance is inevitable. Armoured divisions need supplies. These supplies must come along the 750 miles of road behind them, from Tripoli.

The German right fist is free to swing through the desert towards Egypt; our own right fist is free, because of our sea power, to hit at the German supply line.

The Germans may need to pause for as long as three weeks, or for a shorter time, to get forward their fuel, food and other supplies.

If we can use sea power to cut their supply route, they may have to go back.

While the brief and feverish pause occurs in this desert fighting, a similar pause, probably of shorter duration, can be expected in the Balkans.

There the most dangerous German thrust came, as I predicted recently westward from Bulgaria to cut the Yugoslavs off from the Greeks.

It is the same manoeuvre as a year ago, when British, Belgian and some French forces were cut off from the main Allied army.

Here also the advanced German units need supplies. And they need a new supply route, the direct railway from Belgrade to Salonika.

When that line is cleared and the supplies get down it, the German armoured divisions are likely to move from Monastir southwards.

The danger here is that Greek troops in Albania may be cut off; because of this we may expect the Greeks to withdraw the right of their line in Albania.

At the same time they may try to attack the Italian along the sea coast, in the hope that they can join up with the Yugoslav army through Albania.



MALTA—A 3-in. Mortar crew laying a smoke screen during an Army tactical demonstration which took place despite air raids over the island.



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"Daily Mirror"