Main 2 NZ Div G 4/2

25 Sep 43

# 2 NZ DIV EXERCISE - "TECHNIQUE II" 2 NZ DIV INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 1.

Based on information received up to 1800 hrs 27 Sep 43.

Ref Map : 1:250,000 EGYPT and CYRENAICA Sheets 14 and 15.

All copies of this Intelligence Summary will be destroyed within twenty-four hours of receipt.

1. ENEMY SITUATION

After the fall of BRINDISI (ALEXANDRIA) on 20 Sep the enemy formations under Panzer Armee ITALIEN fell back in fairly good order covering their withdrawal with mobile columns of infantry and 8.8 cm guns. By evening on 22 Sep they were established in their present line: ABYAR EL SHAMMAMA (4390) - KHASHM EL EISH (4489) - ALAM EL KHADIM (4488) - TALLET EL NISURA (4587) - ALAM EL SHIRIF (4987) - MUNQAR ABD EL MAGID (5087), thence East to the road CAIRO-ALEXANDRIA.

The length of the line and the comparative weakness of the available forces have made it impossible for General von SCHEISS to construct a continuous line of defences. This however matters less in view of the difficulty of the going off the roads. His greatest strength is on his left, where 197 Div and 25 Mot Div cover the road and rail to VENICE (MATRUM) and the tracks parallel to them further South. The stretch of country between TALLET EL NISURA and the road CAIRO-ALEXANDRIA is defended by two divisions sited to cover the principal North-South roads, but separated from each other by wide gaps where the bad going and absence of tracks make attack loss likely. The infantry of 28 Lt Div holds the line from about 476877 to 494875; 333 Div extends from about 510870 to the main road. 25 Recce Unit patrols the area between 25 Mot Div and 28 Lt Div, and 28 Recce Unit that to the right of 28 Lt Div.

In the fighting for BRINDISI (ALEXANDRIA) the enemy's casualties did not exceed 5,000, and it may be assumed that his ' formations are now fairly well up to strength. He evacuated almost all his heavy equipment apart from the CD guns at BRINDISI (ALEXANDRIA) itself. Although 20 tanks were claimed knocked out, only 6 have been count d on the ground; three MkIII Best, two MkIV Long and one MkV1 Tigur. All the tanks identified belonged to 20 Pz Div, which is believed to have been withdrawn to the ROSETTA area. The only formation now on TWELFTH ARMY front which may be expected to possess armour is 25 Mot Div, which was recently promised a battelion of tanks. It is not known whether these tanks have yet reached the Division. During the BRINDISI (ALEXANDRIA) fighting reports were received of a type of tank hitherto not encountered by us, and the descriptions given make it seem likely that the tank concerned is the Mk V Panther, an account of which is included in para 4, below.

In addition to his normal divisional armament the enemy is strong in 8.8 cm and heavy artillary. He also has no lack of mines; minefields up to 300 yds in depth cover most of the infantry positions, and the gaps between formations are protected by mine marshes for the most part unmarked.

Attached at Appx "A" is a sketch map to show enemy dispositions as known at 1200 hrs 27 Sep 43.

## 2. ENHMY ORDER OF BATTLE ON TWELFTH ARMY FRONT

Strengths where given are strengths by establishments, NOT actual strengths.

# (a) 25 Mot Div

25 MC Bn
35 PGR (three bns)
119 PGR (three bns)
25 Arty Regt (two fd btys, one med bty)
25 Sigs Bn
25 Engr Bn
25 A tk Bn (18 x 5cm, 12 x 7.5 cm A tk guns)
Services (serial number 25)

As far as is known, this Div has NOT received the tk bn allotted to PGR Divs, but the point is not established for certain.

## (b) 28 Lt Div

28 MC Bn
7 PGR (two bns)
49 PGR (two bns)
83 PGR (two bns)
28 Arty Regt (two fd btys, one med bty)
28 Sigs Bn
28 Engr Bn
28 A tk Bn (18 x 5cm, 12 x 7.5 cm A tk guns)
1 Bn 46 PGR (under comd 49 Gren Regt)
Services (serial number 28)

#### (c) 197 Div.

229 Recce Unit
321 Gren Regt (three bns)
332 Gren Regt (three bns)
437 Gren Regt (three bns)
229 Arty Regt (three fd btys, one med bty)
229 Sigs Bn
229 Engr Bn
229 A tk Bn (18 x 5cm, 12 x 7.5cm A tk guns)
Services (serial number 800).

# (d) 333 Div.

333 Recce Unit
679 Gren Regt (three bns)
680 Gren Regt (three bns)
681 Gren Regt (three bns)
333 Arty Regt (three fd, one med bty)
333 Sigs Bn
333 Engr Bn
333 A tk Bn (18 x 5cm, 12 x 7.5cm A tk guns)
Services (serial number 333).

# (e) 21 AA Div.

Believed to have some twelve tps of 8.8 cm DP guns apart from the 8.8cm guns reserved for AA defence of rear areas.

- 1. ITALIEN Arty Rogt (one bty of 15 cm guns, one bty of 17 cm guns, one buy of 21 cm hows).
- ITALIEN Arty Reg: (as 1 Regt) 3. ITALIEN Arty Regt (as 1 Regt).

### STRENGTH ON TWELFTH ARMY FRONT - 26 Sep 43. (Fighting tos)

Formation	Men	dutk guns		Med & Hy Guns		Tks	Armd
25 Mot Div 28 Lt Div 197 Div 333 Div 21 AA Div Army Arty	11000 11000 14000 12000 4000	50 45 50 50	35 35 55	10 10 10 70	35	?	20
	60000	205	165	112	85	?	40

Length overall Width overall Height overall Armour

22' 72" 9165"

Front nose plate 75mm at 53° Drivor's front plate 85mm at 57° Front durred unickest 100 mm vertical Hull sides Supersture sides 45mm at 42° Turret sides Roof FLOOP

45mm vortical 45mm et 25° 1.7mm 1.7mm

Armament

One 7.5 cm high velocity super-longbarrolled gun unlike any previously known 7.5cm equipment.

all angles are quoted to vertical.

One co-axial MG

Suspension

Interluaved suspension of a type developed from that of the Tiger.

Speed

Maximum speed at least 30 mph.

Weight

43-45 tons.

The design of the Panther is based on the Russian T34, particularly in the matter of streamlining, although the turret of the Panther represents no advance in design over the MkIII and the MkIV. Nevertheless the arrangement of the armour of the Panther is a considerable improvement on that of all previous German tank designs. The performance of the gun purely in terms of penetration may be an improvement upon that of the 8.8cm KwK 36 although the effectiveness of the lighter projectile will be less. (abridged from M.H. Rechnical I.S. 198).

5. ENEMY MORALE

The morale of the prisoners taken on TWELFTH ARMY front has varied considerably as between the different formations. During the battle at BRINDISI (ILE MORIA) prisoners were taken from 20 Pz Div, 28 Lt Div and 333 Div. Of these far the poorest specimens were the lact. 333 Div. which has been on garrison

duty since the beginning of the war, appears to have been a collecting centre for men unable to stand the rigours of operations in RUSSIA or LIBYA. Many of the prisoners from it were physically C3; overage and undersize men made up fifty percent of the 3000 PW from this Division, and many of them frankly expressed satisfaction at the prospect of a quiet life on British rations. Nevertheless, these men put up a stubborn opposition to us so long as their line was unbroken, and it would be dangerous to assume that even a third class German formation will crack except under a resolute attack.

Only 50 PW were taken from 20 Pz Div and 34 from 28 Lt Div. They may be grouped together for consideration of morale. Only one of these prisoners (an officer) could be described as a fanatical Nazi. The rest, apart from three or four who had only been waiting for a chance to surrender, struck the interrogating officer as good soldiers who were genuinely sorry to be captured. They accept the Nazi story that the "Anglo-Americans" and the Bolstevists had been planning the destruction of GERMANY ever since 1933 and they believe that GERMANY has no choice but to fight on to save herself from annihilation. Some of them admitted that they could not see how GERMANY could win the war now; such defeatist views do not seem greatly to affect their efficiency as soldiers.

Golonel Staff

2 New Zealand Division.

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