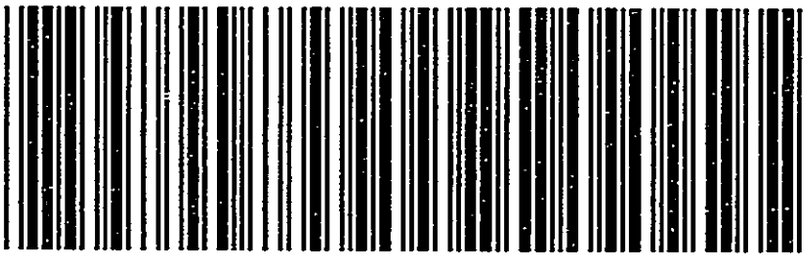
AWM52
Australian Military Forces, Army headquarters, formation and unit diaries, 1939-1945

1/5/12
DIVISIONS

6 Australian Division General Staff Branch (6 Aust Div GS Branch)

1941, Intelligence summaries



1/5/12-0220

6 DIV INT SUMMARIES - GENERAL

BATTLE OF BARDIA

EQUIPMENT "B" - BARDIA

BOOBY TRAPS AND INCENDIARY BOMBS	Details and drawings in appendices "A" & "B" of 7 Armd Div Int Summary No 1 of 1 Jan 41	
AIR BOMB	Description and diagram of enemy air bomb found at GAMBUT aerodrome, probably carried by Caproni Bergamaschi shot down on 23 Dec. Appx A - 7 Armd Div Int Summary No 95 of 28 Dec 40.	6 DIV INT SUMS - GENERAL.
TANK SIGNS	Described and drawn, Appx "B" of above.	BATTLE OF BARDIA

WORKS - BARDIA

ANTI-TANK AND WIRE DEFENCES	Diagrams, appendices "A" & "B" of 7 Armd Div Int Summary No 93 of 24 Dec 40.	6 DIV INT SUMS - GENERAL BATTLE OF BARDIA

TOPOGRAPHY - BARDIA

DESCRIPTION	of chief centres in the area, water supply defences etc. (Summary of information re BARDIA, 27 Dec 40).	6 DIV INT SUMS - GENERAL BATTLE OF BARDIA

OPERATIONS - BARDIA

6 DIV INT SUMMARIES - GENERAL

BRITISH SOLDIERS CAPTURED BEFORE BATTLE.	Report on interrogation of 9 OR's of 2 Queens Regt captured by Italians and rescued from the schooner ZINGARELLA by the Royal Navy on the night of 28/29 Dec 40.
BEGINNING OF CAMPAIGN ON 9 DEC 40.	Adv HQ BTE Int Summaries, dealing with action of British Forces against SIDI BARRANI, 9 Dec 40, and subsequent advance to EGYPTIAN-LIBYAN Frontier.

SECRET

NOT TO BE TAKEN IN FRONT OF BN HQ

6 AUST DIV INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY No. 3 Copy No: 37

BASED ON INFORMATION RECEIVED UP TO 0600 HRS 6 JAN 41.

OPERATIONS

1. The attack commenced on 5 Jan was continued on 4 Jan and our patrols entered BARDIA in the late afternoon. The remaining resistance in the NORTH Sector capitulated and by 1800 hrs only portion of the SOUTH Sector was holding out. Attack by inf, tanks, arty and air on morning 5 Jan subdued all resisting elements in BARDIA defences by 1430 hrs.

AIR ACTIVITY

2. During 4 and 5 Jan a force of bombers escorted by fighters bombed our posns, causing damage and casualties.

PRISONERS

3. 16 Inf Bde have taken over collection of P/Ws, which are estimated to be in the vicinity of 30,000. Several instances occurred of enemy showing white flag and tps moving fwd to disarm them being wounded by enemy probably in adjacent posts.

Gen TRACCHIAI, Comd 62 Div, and Gen DE GUIDIA, Comd 63 Div, and fourteen other Corps and Div Staff Offrs have been captured.

ENEMY EQUIPMENT - TANKS

4. M 13 tanks examined had front armour 30mm, side 25mm, top 15mm. No W/T; signalling by flag.

A CV 3 tank was found fitted with SELOCHINE A Tk gun and NO MG; also CV 3 tank with trailer type flamethrower.

BARDIA DEFENCES

5. Strong posts on perimeter were found to be a wired area protected by A Tk ditch and in some cases A Tk mines. Inside the wire a gp of sangars was connected by strongly concreted passages to dugouts. In the Southern Sectors some of these dugouts were connected by underground passages to adjacent strong pts. Armament - 2 Breda light automatics, 2 A Tk rifles and 2 0mm MMGs, though this scale may NOT be general.

TOBRUK DEFENCES

6. Estimates are as follows:-

(a) Garrison - 20,000 all ranks.

61 Div	8500
One Bn 64 Div	1000
XXXI GAF	3000
XXXII GAF	3000

60 Div may have got fwd to TOBRUK, but thought unlikely.

It is thought that Divs come under comd of Corps as they move into areas, and that HQ XXII Corps is at TOBRUK, and therefore in comd of all units in that area. This system of changing comds as divs move is said to be having an unsettling effect on tps.

(b) Tanks - 95 light, 30 med.

21 Lt Tank Bn
Two Coys 60 Lt Tank Bn
One Coy M 11
One Coy M 13

(c) Arty - 64 guns.

Nine Btys 77/28
Four Btys 120/25
Two Btys 149/35
Three AA Btys 77/27 CK

(d) Perimeter Defences

It is reported that these are NOT as thorough as those at BARDIA, nor are they as complete. Documents captured in BARDIA show the scheme as outlined in 1938, and plan of defence in Aug, 40. These will be used to interpret air photos and the result issued as an overprinted map.

7. CONCLUSION

Information on what units are in TOBRUK is dependent, to a great extent, on what units and formations have been defeated at BARDIA. More details will be available when these are ascertained.

Time of Signature: 1110 hrs.

Method of Issue: LOs and Sigs.

R. Kinnig Maj
for Colonel
GS, 6 Aust Div.

Distribution

As Int Summary
No. 5 (Down to
Formations.)

RRV/MF.

Ref GI's question on Adv HQ BTE Int Summary No. 8.

"GIII(I).....did you or IO supply any information on which para 6 is based?"

Answer: NO.

Information given:

"I/W state main food depot hit just after retreat from BARRANI." (6 Aust Div Int Summary No. 5.)

Other reports given indicated food scarce.

Distribution of Adv BTE Int Summaries:-

General Headquarters, Middle East	1
HQ, BTE	2-3
Adv HQ WDF	4-13
HQ, WDF	14-20
HQ, Northern Delta L of C District	21-24
HQ, Cairo Base Sub-Area	25
HQ, Canal Base & L of C Area	26-28
C-in-C, Med	29
GOC-in-C	30
AQMG	31
G(Ops)	32
G(I)	33
NLO	34
War Diary	35-36

6 Aust Div Int Summaries 5 and 6, War Diary copies, are attached.

Capt
for G III(I)'s and I.O.

9 JAN 41

BTE I Summary No 8. Goc. spoke to Goc in C & GSO II (I) on Subject & decided then to take no further action

10 Jan

DA

URGENT

G3(I)

No copies of this Summary are to be issued.
Did you ... to supply any information on which parallel is based.

(15A5)

SECRET.

Copy No 9

8 Jan.

ADV H.Q., B.T.E. INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO.8.

(Based on information received at Adv. H.Q., 13 Corps up till 0900 hrs 6 Jan 41.)

1. OPERATIONS.

By daybreak resistance at BARDIA continued only in the South, and all parts of BARDIA village were in our possession.

19 Australian Brigade with a detachment 7 R.T.R. attacked and cleaned up enemy guns in turn. All resistance ended by 1330 hrs.

2. ENEMY STRENGTHS.

Captured generals and others state that the strength of the garrison of BARDIA was about 35,000. Of these there should be some 30,000 prisoners.

3. ENEMY TPT.

A brief survey indicates between 1,000 and 2,000 vehicles of which a very high proportion seem unserviceable.

4. ENEMY A.F.Vs.

(a) A/Tk armament. Abandoned A.F.Vs type CV.33 were in some cases found in pairs, one armed with twin M.Gs as normal and one with a Solunthurn A/Tk rifle instead.

(b) Flame Throwers. One CV.33 was found abandoned with a trailer and equipment exactly as described in 'Notes on the Italian Army'. One more was nearby but without its trailer. That examined was three quarters full of dark oily liquid. Only one of the twin M.Gs is removed to provide the flame throwing projector.

(c) M.13. Three M.13 were found at the Italian workshops: one had a 2 pdr hole through the front just below the drivers visor opening. This tank was as previously reported in B.T.E. Weekly Summaries, but contained no W/T.

5. ENEMY DEFENCES.

(a) Although some of these contained much concrete, none of it was above ground. The concrete was all for lining underground accommodation; the actual defences being largely trenches with sangars and sandbags.

(b) In places the A/Tk obstacle was primitive. During the opening bombardment large numbers of enemy took shelter in it. The Australian Engineers then made them fill it in for our tanks to cross.

NOT to go out

/2.....

6. RESOURCES IN BARDIA.

Preliminary reports indicate that :-

(a) There is an appreciable quantity of food. P.W. statements of one months rations for a garrison of 35,000 may be correct, but probably does not allow for recent destruction by R.A.F.

(b) Water from the Wadi RATEB supply, North of BARDIA, is a little salty to taste, though probably quite drinkable.
All water supplies are intact also water points which are numerous.

7. ITALIAN AIR ACTION.

So far as the attack on BARDIA was concerned this so far has consisted of :-

Night 3/4 Jan. Thermos Bombs in area CAPUZZO and between there and the sea.

4 Jan. One raid by 15 bombers flying high over wadi GERFAN.

5 Jan. One raid by a number of high bombers somewhere NE of CAPUZZO.

In both these raids there was fighter escort. In each case at least one S.79 was brought down by our own fighters.

Night 5/6 Jan. Enemy aircraft were over SALUM area.

8. ITALIAN COMMANDERS.

General de GUIDI and PRACCHIA commanding the Cirene and Marmarica Divisions are prisoners. The commanders of the two Blackshirt Divisions and Gen.BERGAMZOLI, commanding 23 Corps are not accounted for. It is believed that they have fled, but by what means is not known.

9. TOBRUK DEFENCES.

Air photos show mines and some 12 battery positions, all to the East.
Captured documents,dated 21 May, show that the G.A.F. artillery then consisted of 25 btys, plus ofcourse the btys of any divisions holding the area in excess of G.A.F. units.
It is possible, however, that some of the artillery then allocated to TOBRUK may subsequently have been sent forward and may already be captured.

C.H.F.Fuller, Capt
Major,
General Staff.

In the Field.
6 Jan 41.

DISTRIBUTION as for Intelligence Summary No.6.

SECRET.

Copy No. 2

3 Jan 41.

17 Aust. Inf. Bde. Intelligence Summary No. 7.

based on information at this H.Q. up to 2000 hrs. 2 Jan. 41.

General.

Operations today were divided into two phases. In the first when 2/5 Bn. was pinned down by strong enemy resistance from M.G. posts and artillery fire when enemy resistance broke in this sector at least two thousand prisoners were taken.

2/6 Bn. was pinned down for the whole of the day in the [illegible] by accurate artillery and M.G. fire, B Coy. being caught [illegible] and suffering heavily. 2/7 Bn. moved down on wire and now [illegible] wire 51613908 51663906, 51675900, H.Q. being located at 51613914.

Any 2/5 Bn. occupies p on. log of road at 5178 906.

Composite coys of 2/5 Bn. occupy areas pt 163, 5159 915 and about [illegible] and pt 153 to 152, 51729918 - 51773915.

Consolidation is proceeding along these lines.

Enemy artillery in the area approx 519,99, 520,99, 520,00 were very active and caused considerable trouble to 2/5 and 2/6 Bns.

M.G. posts are also active in this area and 5162 907.

The tank ditch across in M.M.-S.[illegible] direction has held tanks up [illegible] make the task of neutralizing enemy batteries much harder.

Enemy O.P. Stations.

Enemy resistance was strong in all areas, but completely ceased at 1427 hrs. after which thousands of prisoners were taken. [illegible] hereby an and a battalion at least is known to be holding at approx 5172 [illegible].

Artillery was particularly accurate and caused great [illegible]

Forces.

Order of Battle.

It is possible that larger forces than were previously [illegible] occupied the [illegible] defences.

Enemy Morale. With regard to artillery personnel the morale seems to be high, the ordinary infantry of the line have not much stomach for a fight at close quarters preferring to surrender than fight on. M.G. personnel are also fighting well.

Tanks have a demoralizing effect according to reports by P.W.

In the southern sector tanks did not reach [illegible] and enemy continued to resist strongly.

Enemy Supplies.

Water has not been plentiful to troops in the outer defences and consequently the P.W. are continually crying for water. Food is particularly short also.

Enemy Air Activity.

Was minimised and we can only deduce that they were taken by surprise. However we can expect heavy attacks within the next 24 hours.

Hostile Shelling

was particularly accurate and was directed on all units. [illegible] of the medium type, hitherto unsuspected, was in active operation today.

Conclusion. The enemy have now been confined to a smaller area in the southern sector and in view of today's events can be expected to fight strongly. In view of the prisoners taken, it would be impossible for the enemy to [illegible] offensive, consequently it would seem to be only a matter of time before they are reduced to impotence.

The main features of the next attack will be to silence the enemy batteries and so leave the way open for the infantry.

There is a possibility of the enemy withdrawing to the [illegible] circle and thus making the defence denser again.

Signed at 2345 hrs.

Distribution :

As for I. Summary No. 6.

D.I.O. 17 Aust Inf Bde.

Recd 1820 [illegible]
5/1/[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY [illegible]

Based on information received from period [illegible]

[illegible]

Reference BARDIA 1/50,000, [illegible]

1. [illegible]

Following intensive RAF and [illegible] action [illegible] the [illegible] assisted by I Tanks attacked [illegible] on [illegible] Jan. The defences were successfully [illegible] at several places and by the evening the greater part of the [illegible] sector [illegible] about 10,000 prisoners taken.

There was no enemy air activity over BARDIA throughout the day.

2. [illegible] BARDIA.

At 0530 hrs Inf of 16 [illegible] formed a bridgehead [illegible] post 45 and immediately after [illegible] filled [illegible] the tank [illegible] to enable the I Tanks to enter the perimeter. By 0705 hrs the tanks were successfully over the ditch.

Arty concentrations were put down on posts [illegible] 45, [illegible] moving South as far as post 54 from 0530 hrs, for two hrs. Arty later fired by observation.

The general direction of the attack after the [illegible] break through was [illegible] and by 0245 hrs the line of the road [illegible] BARDIA had been secured as far as the [illegible] junction.

Enemy fwd btys had been either captured or [illegible] by [illegible] hrs.

In addition to the main attack at the northern extremity of the [illegible] sector, Inf demonstrations supported by concentrations were made from 0530 hrs onwards at the [illegible] of the perimeter.

The second phase of the attack commenced at approx [illegible] hrs. It included a thrust in the southern portion of the perimeter by 17 [illegible] and also after 1600 hrs infiltration by the French motor [illegible] in the area of the [illegible] road.

This operation met with stiffer resistance, Italian Arty firing effectively up the wadis and holding up the advance. By nightfall the situation was approx as follows:

16 [illegible] holding [illegible] line from post [illegible] the escarpment to road junction [illegible]

17 [illegible] occupying [illegible] mentioned road junction to the edge of [illegible] sector.

The enemy therefore still occupied the wadis in [illegible] sector, BARDIA Village and the ground [illegible] the area north of [illegible] road.

Throughout the day and [illegible] across the [illegible] road prepared both to [illegible] from [illegible] and to capture any enemy [illegible] BARDIA.

Back Areas.

[illegible] which was carried out continually [illegible] day both over BARDIA itself to report the situation [illegible] attacking [illegible] as far as [illegible] either [illegible] 100 [illegible]

Strat/R during the morning as far as DERNA reported [illegible] between DERNA and GAZALA. There were approx 190 [illegible] at [illegible] a camp on the coast WEST of TOBRUK and 4 small ships at [illegible].

3. RN OPERATIONS.

On night of 31 Dec two more schooners were intercepted by a destroyer outside BARDIA. Both were bound for TOBRUK having brought supplies to the beleaguered garrison of BARDIA.

During 1 and 2 Jan units of the RN bombarded BARDIA [illegible] and the area NORTH of the TOBRUK road encountering no opposi[illegible]. On 3 Dec this attack was considerably intensified up to 1600 [illegible] the target again being the Northern sector of the perimeter.

4. ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE.

Identifications from BARDIA have so far contained no surprises. Confirmation was quickly obtained of [illegible] presence there in strength of 1 CC.NN. Div. This Div [illegible] occupying the Western perimeter near where the main attack [illegible] launched. Identifications from 1 CC.NN. include so far 13[illegible] of 233 Legion and 219 Legion.

Both 62 and 63 Divs seem to have been [illegible] in the area SOUTH of the TOBRUK road. In 62 Div identificat[illegible] have been obtained of 3 Bn 115 Inf (860 prisoners), 116 Inf ([illegible] prisoners so evidently the whole Regt is captured), 44 Arty ([illegible] prisoners) and 62 [illegible] Bn (500 prisoners). 1500 prisoners fro[illegible] 63 Div have been identified including one Bn plus one Coy and HQ of 157 Inf, 15[illegible] Inf (70 prisoners), 4[illegible] Arty and [illegible] Bn.

HQ XXI Corps is stated by PWs to be still in BARDIA and located in [illegible] HELGH [illegible] 2,500 yards S of the harbour. Confirmation required.

XXI Corps Arty appears to have suffered heavy casualties both in guns and personnel. 620 prisoners from 1, 2 and 3 [illegible] have already been taken.

HQ XXIII Corps is identified, the head of the Intelli[illegible] Branch being captured.

The remainder of 2 CC.NN. Div appears to have been in reserve in a posn N of the TOBRUK road.

XXX Sector G.A.F. is stated by PWs to total [illegible] of [illegible] approx 2,000 have been captured. 6 G.A.F. Arty Group is identified, formerly 2 Group, 12 Div Arty, 25 Div.

Tank Identifications.

62 Lt Tank Bn.	Prisoner stated other Lt [illegible] BARDIA included 61 and [illegible]. All normal strength 45 [illegible] now u/s or abandoned.
60 Lt Tank Bn.	One Coy attached 2 CC.NN. [illegible]
One Coy [illegible] 13s.	Corps Tps. (Cap. Coc.)

Comment.

Now that it is established that 62, 63, 1 CC.NN. 2 CC.NN. Divs were definitely in BARDIA, it [illegible] that only [illegible] Div, Corps and Army Tps and the G.A.F. remain at [illegible].

5. AIR ACTIVITY.

(a) Enemy.

Has been conspicuous by his absence during the last [illegible] days with the exception of one low flying attack on our fwd [illegible] 15 enemy fighters, an abortive attack on [illegible] and on the 3rd an attack on some of [illegible] In the latter attack very slight casualties [illegible] damage to the ships.

5. (b) [illegible] ... [illegible] ... [illegible] ...

Pencilled alterations & additions from personnel file of Major E N Berryman with key Ltr. fr. J Bampard

SECRET

3 Jan 42.

BATTLE DIARY.

0730 Hrs:	Report from Armd OP PEGAK followed by BOWSAG and BOWSAK. G I reported this to G I MEGU, stating 2/1 Bn had gone in through wire, followed by 7 R Tanks and that 7 R Tanks were attacking SE.
0710 Hrs:	AMAPAG followed by AMAPAK, reported to MEGU, stating that 2/2 Bn had crossed ditch and was following tanks in SEly direction.
0723 Hrs:	Above information reported to Comd 17 Aust Inf Bde.
0725 Hrs:	EIDAK crossings through ditch, wire and stone wall completed by 2/1 Fd Coy.
	Tac R reports MES X rds 159972 - 166950.
0730 Hrs:	PEGAM 1 Bn on the 1st road. (See list of code words for reports from Armd OP.)
0747 Hrs:	Arty OP reports tanks seen at Pt 181 on 2nd road in 51383943.
0800 Hrs:	From 17 Aust Inf Bde, timed 0737 hrs reporting 2/5 Bn at assembly area on time. OP reports some shells landing short. Enemy AA very poor. MMG IA from post GG smoke vicinity post.
	From Armd OP "A" Sqn 6 Aust Cav crossed ditch.
	Tac R report no movement EAST or NE of our tps. Heavy AA fire.
0808 Hrs:	From TETO. Enemy aircraft dropped THERMOS bombs from CEFU 516372 2100 hrs 2 Jan. Bombs discovered 0615 hrs today one vehicle damaged. Bombs being disposed of.
	Armd OP reports 2/5 Bn have crossed ditch. (Message repeated MEGU).
0815 Hrs:	SEAK reports Post 11 taken. (this was incorrect but 17 Bde did NOT advise HQ of correct pos'n)
0820 Hrs:	Tanks reported square 514392.
0900 Hrs:	From Major Campbell:- by telephone to G I "Fwd right flank 2/2 Bn nearly on CAPUZZO rd. No AA fire from there now at 0850 hrs. 2/3 Bn has a lot of prisoners; must be close to its objective. 2/1 Bn has all of its objectives. Air reports no sign enemy Counter Attack and 1000 MT in Wadi near BARDIA. Prisoners estimated 8000 (?). Lot of shelling outside of perimeter, coming from northern sector. Prisoners going out to 2/3 sector. Very few casualties so far. Capt. Stewart killed. Two tanks disabled through wire. Did not get through gap. ~~MEGAS did only one gap, (?)~~. No air action against PIPO. AA fire against our Tac R planes ceased. Find out number of tank crossings built (question from Col. BERRYMAN). A Tk guns of NF with MGs got over crossings.
0950 Hrs:	Report from RAA that tanks had been down to Post 19, but are now returning.
1030 Hrs:	BM 16 Aust Inf Bde rang at 1020 hrs stated:-

1630 hrs: Telephone message from BM 17 Aust Inf Bde. BM left fwd area about 1605 hrs. Situation then was:

On the left -

2/5 Bn between rd BARDIA - CAPUZZO and Pt 156 (51693921). One coy 2/5 Bn between Pts 153 - 152 in sq 517391. One Coy 2/7 Bn in triangle of roads in sq 518390. One Coy 2/5 Bn was directed along the switch line at 1400 hrs. Remaining Coy of 2/5 Bn was directed to Post 16 in sq 518389.

Maj SELL, comd 2/5 Bn, has HQ about 51603915.

Lt-Col WALKER, comd 2/7 Bn, has est HQ near the rd BARDIA - CAPUZZO at Post 27.

2/7 Bn less two Coys was directed to move along the perimeter from Post 27 to secure the line of Posts incl Nos. 17 and 16.

Maj BROCE also reported that a large number of prisoners, estimated by him at from 2000 to 3000, had come out of WADI SCEMMAS and streamed through the perimeter.

Following the above conversation, Brig SAVIGE asked for CB fire on the enemy guns along the coastal stretch to the NORTH of WADI EL KUATTRED. He intended to send out patrols tonight NORTH of WADI EL KUATTRED and requested that no arty fire take place WEST of a line running from 52183872 - 52183878 - Pt 119 in sq 521388. He further asked that aeroplane recce before dark be obtained in order to ascertain posn of our tps in 17 Aust Inf Bde Sector. (Request for Tac R sortie was made to 13 Corps who, however, stated that no further Tac R would be possible today owing to the lateness of the hour.)

1030 Hrs: "HQ at post No. 40. All objectives appear captured, but not sure about 6 Aust Cav or 2/3 Bn, but large numbers of prisoners have come back from their objectives. Some tanks have already refuelled and eight (8) tanks are refuelling now in vicinity of post 45. No arty fire about our HQ and no firing at present from Northern Sector. 2/1 Bn at Post 46, 2/2 on rd at the "E" in WADI SCEMASE, map ref 51503917. HQ 2/3 Bn not known at present. Tanks went considerably further than anticipated; beyond the BARDIA Rd.

1042 Hrs: Location "G" Tp 51215958 (message from "F" Bty 4 RHA).

1044 Hrs: From 2/2 Bn. Right fwd objective reached. Tanks reported left fwd coy also on road CAPUZZO - BARDIA. Amb consolidating Bn HQ 51463912. Right fwd posn being heavily shelled from guns in southern sector.

1350 Hrs: Message from PIPO. 2/3 Bn attacked by six M.11 tanks. Knocked out all six, lost one gun. 2/3 Bn lost three offrs. Cav operating on RIGHT 2/3 Bn cleared out snipers which were holding them up. Have lost three carriers; one direct hit. Arty fire has now slackened. ABBOTT's Coy 2/3 Bn moving down SPUR on to ROAD. Two "I" tanks cruising round RIGHT REAR 2/3 Bn to meet any enemy tanks. Posn obscure between LEFT of 2/2 Bn and RIGHT of 2/3 Bn. Portion A Sqn in observation only. Instructed PIPO to consider ordering 2/2 Bn to put their res coy in on the LEFT to link up with 2/3 Bn.

From HILO to PIPO: "RAMP has got on to the enemy guns in area 512400. We now have the place under observation and will open up when they appear again".

2/1 Bn are staging a local attack with own resources to take enemy Post EAST of Post No. 55.

1630 Hrs: (See sheet attached).

1703 Hrs. Telephone message received from G II HQ 13 Corps (WDF).
"Intercepted message sent at 1515 hrs from HQ BARDIA as follows:-
'HQ BARDIA reports to TOBRUK, situation at BARDIA very grave. Extreme pressure in centre from British. Consider necessary destroy ciphers. Request intervention from TOBRUK'.
G II further reports that no movement of Tps from TOBRUK had been seen.
(Det 7 Armd Div - Coy Free French)

2010 Hrs: IMBE/approached northern sector 1530 hrs and came under heavy shell fire. (Signed at 1615 Hrs).

Movement across front. Heavy arty fire from med and fd guns from west end of wadi RAHIB. (Signed 1615 Hrs - TOO 1730 hrs).

Two btys enemy guns - 6 guns each - 51224012 and 51194005 - firing north west and west - 1717 hrs.

Intercepted message from BERGONZOLI to TENTH ARMY, saying:- "Tonight I will try and close in around BARDIA and continue to resist. If you can, send aircraft from dawn onwards".

SECRET

0300 Comd 16 Aust Inf Bde rang & asked that GI get in touch with him in the morning. GI rang & fixed details for attack with I tks at 1000 hrs

BATTLE DIARY

4 Jan, 41.

0630 hrs: G I and Comd 16 Aust Inf Bde. discussed 6 Aust Div message O 213 instructing PIPO to close in on BARDIA. Comd stated it would take some time to arrange arty support FREW Gp. He would push in with what tanks were available to get astride the Main Rd BARDIA - TOBRUK and then exploit into BARDIA. He stated that there was a small fort where five roads met in 51743945 and that he would need to clean this up before he could bring the left of the 2/2 Bn onto the Wadi head about 51743953.

He asked if 17 Aust Inf Bde could co-operate and G I replied that they had been instructed to do what they could, but NOT to rely on them

0845 hrs: Comd 19 Aust Inf Bde reported as requested by G I. G I explained situation and put fwd following plan as a proposal. This plan was then discussed by GOC, Comd 19 Aust Inf Bde, CRA, and G I, and adopted.

466 403

Plan: To have a co-ordinated plan ready to clear the enemy and enemy btys out of the Southern Sector by attacking at first light 5 Jan if BARDIA does NOT fall or situation is NOT cleared up before then.

19 Aust Inf Bde to attack with SL along main BARDIA rd. Right about rd junc at 51583925. Attack on a front of one bn in a Southeasterly direction.

Under comd 19 Aust Inf Bde:-

J Bty less a Tp
One Tp P Bty
1 RNF less two Coys
A Sqn 6 Aust Cav
I Tanks that may be available.

Attack to be supported by all available arty.

Comd 19 Aust Inf Bde decided to attack with 2/11 Bn.

First Objective: Wadi head 51743928 - rd corner 51693921.

2nd Objective: Wadi head 51893924 - rd junc 51793911.

3rd Objective: Wadi head at Pt 142 51973910 - rd junc 51803904.

2/4 Bn to exploit behind 3rd objective and to bound in rear of 2/11 Bn one objective in rear.

Arty: A thin rolling barrage in f ront of attacking inf and all med arty on CB tasks.

A Sqn 6 Aust Cav to watch LEFT flank of attack.

2/5 Bn to come under comd 19 Aust Inf Bde and, as attack passes, 2/5 Bn to be brought into res.

Inter bde boundary incl 19 Aust Inf Bde - road from 52033890 - rd corner 51693921.

0930 hrs: Corps Comd and his G I called. Corps Comd agreed to plan but did NOT accede to request to provide a sqn of cruiser tanks as they were required for further ops. He decided to leave a Cav Regt behind our left flank for use only in case of emergency and that 16 British Bde should take over duties of escorts P/Ws and water pts from 19 Aust Inf Bde.

1030 hrs: Comd 16 British Bde calledand was given order about taking over duties from 19 Aust Inf Bde, which he proceeded to do forthwith.

1035 hrs: G I spoke to Comd 16 Aust Inf Bde, who explained that his movement to close in BARDIA was in progress and that he had seven I Tanks operating. G I asked him to report this evening the number of I Tanks that would be available to assist 19 Aust Inf Bde, and also to inform 19 Aust Inf Bde and Div of posn of his FDLs along the BARDIA rd and EAST thereof.

1100 hrs: G I instructed LO I to visit 7 Armd Div and find out all he could about the rd BARDIA - TOBRUK and the plans of 7 Armd Div. LO I was instructed to draft orders for movement of Adv Gd of 6 Aust Div on TOBRUK, these to be put into operation if situation BARDIA cleared up.

1130 hrs: G I instructed CRE that one Sec Fd Coy were to be placed under comd 16 Aust Inf Bde and remain available to proceed BARDIA to protect installations when ordered by Comd 16 Aust Inf Bde. One Sec Fd Coy under comd 17 Aust Inf Bde to be in support 17 Aust Inf Bde, as CRE reported that Sec Fd Engrs previously under comd had been used as inf, attacking Posts down the perimeter.

1210 hrs: LO II instructed by G I in role of 17 Aust Inf Bde and it was specially emphasised that 17 Aust Inf Bde were NOT to have patrols out in the area that was to be attacked next morning by 19 Aust Inf Bde.

Ref Map BARDIA NF35 1/50,000

1420 hrs: Telephone conversation with Comd 16 Aust Inf Bde, who reported 1500-2000 prisoners in WADI South of rd junc. (515397) Patrol went to rd junc across to HEBS EL HARRAM. Sent Cav patrol after them with a view to persuading them to surrender, and apparently 2000 more are surrendering and now coming in. Cav patrol unconfirmed moving towards BARDIA. 16 Aust Inf Bde can hold HEBS EL HARRAM line through to the X-rds North and South. HEBS EL HARRAM dominates BARDIA from that direction and if present posn can be held, 16 Bde could get a front facing North across to EATHER (3/8). NO fire coming from the North and Comd 16 Bde would like Support Gp to enter North to test it. Have whole of the North-South end 95 in two rds. Coy there to CHILTON's (3rd Bn) near five black circles in the Wadi. (5170 sheet) Hope to capture bty and occupy that area. One Coy at (Pt) 104. (518305) Tanks turned them out and they had a bty on the left. 16 Bde would occupy it on the 100 contour. Have captured AA bty with ring round it on map. (517393) Bringing 2/8 Bn in to fill gap from that Coy with the bty to 17 Aust Inf Bde South. Another bty near E in (Green) IPONTICELLI near where CHILTON has HQ. (5112)

G I said that the more 16 Aust Inf Bde could get CHILTON out to SE the nearer we should get to btys. Comd ~~17~~ 19 Aust Inf Bde had no objection. to use of 2/8 Bn 16 Aust Inf Bde already had 1st objective planned for tomorrow and if 2/8 Bn could go through fighting by patrols they might get 2nd objective as well. Most important that we should have at least three crawlers left to crawl up the big pipes.

(Note crawlers — I tanks)
Big pipes — [illegible] Arty & Bardia Bill)

1440 Hrs: Message telephoned to MEGU.

"The operation that was taking place when the Corps Comd was at ENID this morning, has brought about this result:

"Patrol has established a post on road junc 51593973. South of that road we have pick up 1500 prisoners in the wadis north of that point at HEBS EL HARRAM. A Carrier Patrol is pursuing 2000 ITALIANS, and it is expected that they will be captured. We have a carrier patrol backed by some "I" Tanks at that road junc ready to proceed into BARDIA. South of BARDIA at Pt 104, 51863952, we have a company. 800 yds south of Pt 104 there has been a bty knocked out, and we hope to establish a Coy locality. At 51823943 we have established a Coy Locality, running north and south, and straddling the wadi. An AA Bty (Square 51773934) has been captured and a locality established. It is not known yet whether it is a Pl or Coy Locality. Immediately south of that bty we have a Coy locality. We have another Coy locality at 51683956 (south of Wadi).

All this work was done by the 2/2 and 2/3 Bns, six "I" Tanks, and "A" Sqn 6 Aust Cav.

The operations is continuing. The 2/8 Bn is being ordered to push through in a south-easterly direction, for the head of WADI EL MEDEIGER, with a view to assisting the proposed attack of 19 Aust Inf Bde tomorrow morning.

There has been no fire or activity observed by our northern Bn in the northern sector, and we would like the Support Gp to test the perimeter north of the BARDIA - TOBRUK road, to find out if there is anything there.

From Comd 16 Aust Bde to GI

1620 hrs: 2/2 Bn will be SOUTH of the WADI HELGH EL ANZ on Trig 147. 2/8 Bn coming down with LEFT flank on the sea through big 520. There is a bty of guns behind L in HELGH EL ANZ. Have taken four btys. One tp of crawlers. 2/8 Bn were moving in two hrs ago and got on RIGHT flank of 2/2 Bn between Pt 145 - 130. NOT much opposition there. (G I directed they should stop this side of WADI EL MKREIGHA in order that we should know where to start the arty.) Standing patrol and crawlers in BARDIA. Satisfied BARDIA is captured.

About HEBS EL HARRAH Northern line to be along rd incl Post 65 running down rd above Pt 152 to HEBS EL HARRAH (incl rd to ENGLAND. NORTH will be fixed if that line held.

GI directed particular care in dispersion of vehicles tomorrow as JUMBO had informed them to expect maximum air attacks. G I said that Comd 19 Aust Inf Bde had Post 34. 19 Aust Inf Bde attack would go in SE on RIGHT of 2/2 Bn or 2/8 Bn if the latter got out to 2nd Wadi, and go in Southeasterly direction to btys situated near BARDIA BILL. SEAR had NOT made much headway; had made most progress SOUTH of where 16 Bde had first tank battle this morning.

2/1 Bn knocked out one enemy tank, making 8 in all yesterday and four this morning found deserted. Enemy only had 18 if all were available. 6 crawlers were operating.

1635 hrs G I said that Comd 19 Aust Inf Bde could postpone zero hour until between 0800-0900 hrs tomorrow but he needed some crawlers to attack the btys. We are sending up three more carriers to replace those knocked out, but they were without A Tk rifles. "Stan" had got R 9. 2/5 Bn along rd downwards and would remain in battle posns until taken over. No other change. "Stan" reports a lot of btys still in action in SE corner. To "Horace": Use your judgment when zero is to be. About 0800 - 0900 hrs would help gunners tremendously.

NOTES BY BRIG SAVIGE ON MAP BROUGHT BY LO (CAPT GRIEVE) AT 1500 HRS, 4 JAN, 41

Posn as shown on Map:

2/5 Bn have three coys and one comp coy; two coys relatively fresh. 2/7 Bn average of 35 men per coy (Col WALKER). With arty by day and 2/7 Bn -- if arty NOT available -- reverting to observation.

Saw Col BARKER 1250 hrs and was NOT satisfied that he could carry out his task by day. Left conference 1200.hrs. WALKER stated his strength and condition of tps (exhausted.)

Decision: Night op use two coys 2/5 Bn which had been rested last night.

NOTE BY G I: ENID O 225 TOR 1530 hrs, placed CRA under comd NORA forthwith.

2245 hrs: G I MEGU rang and asked 6 Aust Div to form a tank unit from captured enemy tanks in BARDIA with a view to their use in the next op against TOBRUK. Referred to Div Comd who instructed G I 6 Aust Div to take immediate steps to form a tank unit.

2155 hrs Comd to 7 Armd Div
Enemy Comd Northern Sector came in tonight & surrendered. Enemy tps to stay in posn tonight & Free Fr[illegible] NOT to attack them tomorrow morning. Informed G I 13 Corps & 16 Aust Inf Bde

FHB

Recd [illegible] 12/1/41 [illegible]

1715

SECRET.

9.

ADV H.Q., B.T.S. INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. [illegible].

(Based on information received at Adv. H.Q., 13 Corps up till 0900 hrs 5 Jan 41)

1. OPERATIONS.

(a) At daybreak on 5 Jan an artillery duel developed across WADI MAATERED and during the morning 17 Australian Brigade advanced 1,000 yards Northwards.

Further North the same Brigade also encountered more resistance, but reached area Pt. 145, [illegible] (just North of head of WADI HERIGA) with their right working South, clearing up defended posts. By noon they reached post 17 on the perimeter [illegible] and their left was about rd junc 51[illegible]. Later the left made progress of over 1,000 yards North Eastwards overlooking BARDIA village from the South. [illegible]

16 Aus/Brigade were by noon from [illegible] to 1,000 yards South of the TOBRUK road on the line of WADI [illegible], the right probably on the road about 51[illegible] and the left on the wadi near the perimeter. In the middle of the day elements reached road junc 51[illegible] and well North of it. [illegible] more prisoners were taken and an attack was developed Eastwards. This, with a detachment of 7 [illegible], reached BARDIA village by the afternoon.

[illegible] dark the General Commanding the divisional [illegible] [illegible] surrendered with 7,000 men, but the Brigadier said at the time (or is alleged to have said) "It is too late to do anything [illegible] it [illegible] - you had better come back tomorrow".

[illegible] FRENCH operated in the extreme North and captured some prisoners.

(b) The effect of these operations has been to split the garrison into a number of isolated areas.

It is unlikely that the situation will be cleared up before 5 Jan. From the various wadis which we holdered from these wadis of which we hold the heads, [illegible] continue to come. [illegible] the [illegible] the enemy artillery seem to be more determined from the rest. The Corps Commander is also there.

2. ENEMY STRENGTHS.

A P.W. connected with supply services states that the ration strength of BARDIA was 40,000. This seems excessive. Details were produced to support the high figure, but possibly units over indent especially as rations have been halved.

3. ENEMY FOOD.

Though P.W.'s state food stocks are abundant, rations were said recently to have been halved. It is not clear whether the cause for this is the destruction of the main food depot by the R.A.F. in mid December, the need to conserve food, or mal-administration and bad distribution.

/s.....

4. ENEMY TPT.

Abundant confirmation is received of difficulties over tpt. In the Italian army control is centralized and tpt allotted as required. With tpt short and being used much across country many difficulties have arisen. Tpt is overloaded and overworked and the system is generally complained of by all P.W's.

5. ENEMY HEALTH.

No cases of under nourishment have been noticed amongst P.W. from BARDIA or BARRANI, but an appreciable number - perhaps 2% are believed to suffer from dysentery, a fact which the Italians are anxious to conceal as medical records captured show no dysentery but a lot of enteric.

6. WATER IN BARDIA.

It is now thought more probable that the CAPUZZO water had been deliberately salted rather than that the wadi GERFAN supply is saline.

7. GIARABUB.

Recently Australian tps have carried out reconnaissance and offensive patrols in this area. The posts at MSUFA and AIN GETBAIA were attacked but their garrisons escaped. Tps operated to within 1500 yards of the landing ground which is vital to the Italians as only by air can the garrison be supplied.

This is believed to number from approx.2,000 partly Libyans, partly Italians, as it includes detachments withdrawn from the frontier posts to the North. It includes arty kept concealed in the aeroplane hangars there.

8. ENEMY FORMATIONS IN CYRENAICA.

(a) P.W. are in general not well informed about their own forces, but the majority seem to believe that there is little behind BARDIA. This agrees with previous information.

(b) 61 SIRTE Div, 140 Bn 2 (35 October) Blackshirt Div, and G.A.F. are the only tps known to be in TOBRUK. Although both 31 and 32 Sectors, G.A.F. are thought to be weaker than 30 Sector at BARDIA, which is reported to be unexpectedly large, they may number together as many as 6,000 men.

9. ENEMY A.F.V.

P.W. states that 20, 61 and 62 Light Tank Bns are in BARDIA. He states that of 62 Bn 9 are under repair in TOBRUK and 30 unserviceable and 18 abandoned in BARDIA. The other two bns are said to be in similar poor circumstances. Each bn is reported to have about 45 light tanks. Can doc shows one Coy, 60 Light Tank Bn, of 12 tanks only, in BARDIA. One Coy of M.T's are also thought to be there but can doc shows that 5 were knocked out and P.W. declares that these were the only ones there.

C H F. Fuller Capt
Major,
General Staff.

In the Field.
6 Jan 40.

DISTRIBUTION as for Intelligence Summary No.6.

SECRET.

Copy No. 9

ADV. H.Q., B.E.F. INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO.6.

(Based on information received at Advance, H.Q., XIII Corps up till 0900 hrs., 4th January, 1941.

1. OPERATIONS.

(a) Preparations,

(i) R.N. carried out bombardment on the NE area of the perimeter, where was the largest concentration of vehicles and a strong force.

(ii) R.A.F. On 31 Dec. and 1 Jan. BARDIA was bombed. 2nd Gen. enemy aerodromes in CYRENAICA and TRIPOLI were heavily bombed. At BARDIA the area selected was mainly that into which the attack was to go, though by night modification was necessary so as not to interfere with night patrolling.

(iii) Military. Whilst 7Armd Div were patrolling westwards to EL ADEM and nearly to TOBRUK, 6 Australian Div patrolled vigorously against the southern SW, and to a lesser extent against the western defences of BARDIA, patrols penetrating deeply by night.

(iv) Surprise. Thus it was honed that even though expecting an attack, and expecting it as soon as the intensity of naval and air bombardment increased, the enemy might be in ignorance as to the sector chosen.

Actually first P.W's state that they thought that we would try to starve out the garrison without attacking and this is confirmed by the admission of the Commander of 116 Inf Regiment captured early the first day together with Chief of the Intelligence of XXIII Corps.

(b) First Phase. At 0530 hrs on 3 Jan. 16 Aus Bde attacked supported by 7 R.T.R. after a bombardment by the div arty reinforced with a medium regiment. The area selected for attack was some 1,000 yds South of the main road BARDIA - TOBRUK and the general direction was South Eastwards. By 0845 hrs the line of the road BARDIA - CAPUZZO had been secured from about 3,500 yards North of the perimeter to the perimeter itself.

Meanwhile from dawn till 1600 hrs R.N. and R.A.F. were bombarding the area North of the road BARDIA - TOBRUK, across which our own tps were not allowed till that hour.

During this phase prisoners were captured totalling possibly 10,000. Being, however, far more numerous than their captors accurate assessment was impossible and many could not at first be rounded up.

(c) Second Phase. Was to include a thrust further South and after 1600 hrs the FRENCH could participate North of the TOBRUK road. To the South stronger Italian resistance was met: the Italian arty, as previously, proving themselves more stalwart than the infantry.

(d) Meanwhile feint attacks had been made at numerous points on the South and SW and 17 Australian Brigade secured the line of WADI MAATRED.

/2.....

2. ORDER OF BATTLE.

(a) Identifications. Contained no surprises, but confirmation was quickly obtained that the whole of 1 CC.NN. (23 March) Div was in BARDIA.

The identifications on the first day included:-

H.Q. 23 Corps.
115 Inf Regt)
116 Inf Regt) 62 "Marmarica" Div.
62 M.G. Bn)
157 Inf Regt 63"Cirene" Div.

21 Corps Arty Regt.
133 Bn, 233 Legion)
219 Legion) 1 CC.NN. (23 March) Div.

(b) The following tps may be in TOBRUK.
61 SIRTE Div.
One Bn 2 CC.NN. (28 October) Div.
Stragglers from early operations: say 3,000.
G.A.F. Total approx. 12,500 men.

(c) 60 SABRATA Div is known to have moved from TRIPOLITANIA and may now be in area DERNA with H.Q., 20 Corps. 17 PAVIA Div is thought to be following but is unlikely to have reached DERNA yet. Gen BABINI is at MEKILI with H.Q., Special Armoured Brigade.

Apart from these tps in or moving to CIRENAICA there remain only 25 BOLOGNA, 27 BRESCIA and 55 SAVONA Divs in TRIPOLITANIA.

3. ENEMY STRENGTHS - BARDIA.

First reports of P.W. suggest that the strength of the garrison is 35,000: this is probably an exaggeration, though the figure is NOT too unreasonable if all formations are at strength as follows :-

62 Div	-	7,500
63 Div	-	7,000
1 CC.NN.Div		7,000
2 CC.NN.Div		4,700
Corps Tps,23 Corps		3,500
Part of Corps Tps 21 and 22 Corps.		1,500
G.A.F.		3,300
		35,000

(All figures approximate.)

4. ENEMY DEFENCES.

Those seen in the SIDI BARRANI area and on the escarpment in the SALUM area seem primative low stone sangars in vast quantities covering a wide area, but with little digging even in those places where it is easy. Nowhere would A.F.Vs be stopped.

As a contrast the Italians have spent much time in building stone shelters which are well sited in the sides of wadis so as to be inconspicuous from the air.

/3.....

5. ENEMY AIR ACTIVITY.

Apart from three attacks on one of H.M. Ships this was negligible, a tribute, perhaps, to the effect of the R.A.F. bombing the previous day.

6. WATER.

When captured, CAPUZZO was found to have reservoirs with a capacity of 4,000 tons (more than was expected) and equipped with water points capable of dealing with 20 lorries simultaneously. The water was brackish though not undrinkable. It is possible that the water from the WADI GERFAN at BARDIA, one out of the two main supplies, may also prove salty.

7. ENEMY RESOURCES.

Cap docs show that the enemy were suffering in the Autumn from a lack of Diesel Oil and were then feeling this more than shortage of petrol.

8. ENEMY TRANSPORT.

(a) Cap docs reveal that this is suffering from frequent overloading.

(b) On one move from TRIPOLITANIA a unit is alleged to have driven for 20 hrs out of 24 for three days on end. (P.W.) Even if an exaggeration it is small wonder that at least two lorries overturned injuring 50 men.

9. CONCLUSIONS.

(a) BARDIA. Half the perimeter of the defences are in our hands and our troops have secured a large portion of the defended area. The enemy have their backs to the sea in the centre and the Northern and Southern areas are virtually cut off from one another by the big WADI EL GERFAN. Coordination of effort should prove difficult. There are however still a large number of troops in these areas and further resistance may be expected.

(b) General. The presence in BARDIA of so large a portion of the remnants of 10 Army and the lack of reports of reinforcements to TOBRUK make it questionable whether on the fall of BARDIA any serious resistance will be afforded there. Another seige would eventually mean the loss not only of the harbour but also the garrison. The defences are not strong and TOBRUK is dependent for water on outside supply. It is more likely that 61 SIRTE Div and the rest of the Garrison will be withdrawn possibly to form a line of resistance DERNA - MEKILI.

C H F Fuller Capt
for Major,
General Staff.

In the Field.
4 Jan 41.

DISTRIBUTION :-

G.H.Q.,M.E.	1- 4	202 Gp,R.A.F.	24-25
H.Q.,R.A.F.,M.E.	5- 6	R.A.(L).	26
H.Q.,13 Corps.Adv.	7- 9	R.A. I, B.S.	27
C.-in-C. Med.	10	Adv H.Q.,B.T.E.	28-31
H.Q.,No.1 L.of C.Area.	11-13	Rear H.Q.,B.T.E.	32-33
HQ Canal Base & LofC Area.	14-16	Rear H.Q.,13 Corps.	34-35
H.Q.,Cairo Sub-Area.	17-18	Major Purdon, S.C."I",Alex.	36
2 Armd Div	19-22	War Diary	37-38
18 Aust Bde.	23	File.	39.

NOT TO BE TAKEN IN FRONT OF BN HQ

6 AUST DIV INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY No. 5 Copy No: 36

BASED ON INFORMATION RECEIVED UP TO
2400 HRS, 3 JAN, 41.

Ref Maps: BARDIA NORTH & SOUTH 1/50,000 dated 26 Dec, 40.

1. GENERAL

On morning of 3 Jan our land forces supported by Navy and Air Force launched an extensive attack against the BARDIA defences. The perimeter was pierced just NORTH of Post 45 and 16 Aust Inf Bde, supported by 7 RTR, secured their objectives and now hold an approx line from Post 51, along top of escarpment to rd junc BARDIA - CAPUZZO, to [illegible]. At the same time, a demonstration against the SW corner was staged by 2/6 In who held [illegible]. Upon completion of Phase I, 17 Aust Inf Bde attacked SW sector from rd BARDIA - CAPUZZO and at nightfall were occupying approx line 51503920 - 51703920 - 51703911 - 51703907 - 51873900.

2. ENEMY ACTIVITY

Enemy Inf appear to have offered little resistance in the Central Sector, whilst the Arty are holding out strongly in the Southern Sector. There was a complete absence of aerial activity by e.a.

3. PRISONERS

Estimate of P/W is 10,000, although it is thought that there are still many prisoners in fwd areas.

Information obtained from P/Ws appears in Appx "A".

4. CONCLUSION

Action will be continued on 4 Jan.

Time of Signature: [illegible] hrs.

Method of Issue: 10s and Sigs.

[signature] for Colonel, GS, 6 Aust Div.

Distribution	Copy No.
16 Aust Inf Bde	1-3
17 Aust Inf Bde	6-9
19 Aust Inf Bde	10-13
RAA 6 Aust Div	14-19
RAE 6 Aust Div	20
Sigs 6 Aust Div	21
Comd	22
G	23-24
AQ	25-26
AIDO	27
AASC 6 Aust Div	28
ADMS	29
1 Aust Corps	[illegible]
Adv Hq WDF	[illegible]
7 Armd Div	[illegible]
7 RTR	33
War Diary	34-35
File	36-37

RRW/MF

S E C R E T

APPENDIX "A" to 5 Recce Div
Int Summary No. 5

INFORMATION FROM P/W

Tps

Bread supplied on following ration strength:-

3 Div COMM)	
4 Div COMM)	7000
64 Div)	
1 COMM	10,000
62 Div	12,000
63 Div	2000 all ord.
GAF	5000
	40,000

HQ X Army - HLT 5143[illegible] (Comment:- relieved at TOBRUK HLT.)
HQ XXI Corps - WADI HALFA
HQ XXIII Corps

Identification

2 Btys of 1 Gruppo 21 Regt Arty
14, 18, 27 Btys 8 Gruppo Arty Bn
(previously with 12 Regt Arty and only recently etc)
2 Bty 33 Gruppo 10 Regt Arty - att 1 Gp 1 Div
233 Legion 1 COMM Div (P/W states will div [illegible])
17 Bty 30 Sitzes 21 Corps GAF 8 Gruppo
(Previously allotted to 8 Gruppo but changed after fall of SIDI BARRANI)
8 Coy 2 Bn 157 Regt 63 Div - (P/W states all div Arty GAF in [illegible])
116 Regt 62 Div
157 Regt 63 Div
219 Legion 1 COMM Div (Staff Offrs only)

XXX GAF Includes part 140 regt.

FOOD

Main food depot hit just after retreat from [illegible] ration of bread is 350 grams per man per day for last 20 days - Daily - one day in four. No food in area between the two dumps.

WATER

Plentiful. Main supply from three cisterns along rd [illegible] - CAPUZZO, located on right of road at grids 81868.84, 81868012, and one between. Each has three pumps.

ANTI TANKS

Our arty banged on main dump - built into [illegible] hills on small wadi about 81723887. Moved to SOUTH bank of WADI [illegible] 350-300 metres from area and appros 821888827. Have plenty of ammn.

ARTY

Line of 70mm, then two lines 105mm parallel to WADI [illegible] - Grid 391. Ranged COMM perimeter area
Bty of 4 guns of 140mm approx Pt 101 82883800. Were 6 guns but 2 lost with [illegible]. Cond - 15-cwt HOWITZER of 1 Regt Arty was in [illegible] force behind defence; was withdrawn from SIDI [illegible] to organise [illegible] defence.

BARDIA GUN is 140mm gun using bricks charge, hence long pause between shots.

TOBRUK reported to be very lightly defended. Work on defences just [illegible] in earnest.

Wireless: Main sig at HQ X Army.

AIRFORCE

NOT seen for 7 days. Believe Sqn coming from GERMANY.

MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

Only Post Office.

CHEMICAL WAR

One CW Coy but NOT prepared for attack or defence. Most tps have lost or thrown away respirators.

TANKS

Seen 6 only type M 11 13-15 CV33; may be few more but NOT many. Are 1 or 2 M 13.

MORALE

Tps are NOT anxious to fight. Mussolini asked could BARDIA hold out. BASTICO replied; "BARDIA is impregnable", which annoyed tps who feel will stay there dead. We constantly urged on with reports of a GERMAN Armd Div which is coming to assistance.

Recd 4/1/40 1137 hrs

Officers	Initial	Date
Comd.		
G.S.O.1	[illegible]	[illegible]
G.S.O.2	[illegible]	5 J
G.S.O.3	[illegible]	5 Jan
G.S.O.3		
G.S.O.3(ev)	[illegible]	[illegible]
L.O.1		

L.O.1
L.O.2
L.O.3
I.O.

SECRET.

COPY NO. 16

V ARMD DIV INT SUMMARY NO. 2.

(based on information recd up to 2000 hrs 3 Jan 41)

1. GENERAL.

The attack by the 6 Australian Division supported by tanks and artillery began at dawn today and progressed successfully during the day. Full details are awaited.

There was little enemy activity on this Division's front apart from shelling from the NW sector of BARDIA defences. Enemy air activity was almost negligable.

A movement of vehicles approximating a weak Brigade from TOBRUK to EL ADEM was reported by Tac/R.

2. ENEMY GROUND ACTIVITY. 7 Armd Div Fronts.

There has been little enemy ground activity on our front today.

A movement of MET Southwards from NW portion of BARDIA defences was put a stop to by our guns at 0225 hrs.

At 1000 hrs MENASTIR aerodrome was being shelled and desultory shelling from the NW of BARDIA was reported at 1350 hrs. This was silenced by our guns.

More shelling broke out across MENASTIR aerodrome from medium and field guns at NW end of WADI RAHEB at 1[illegible] hrs, and two Btys each of 6 guns were in action firing [illegible] at 1717 hrs.

A Tac/R at 1600 hrs reported 100 vehicles moving from [illegible] to EL ADEM.

3. OWN TROOPS.

Our troops carried out their roles during the day of demonstrating against the North-West defences of BARDIA and watching for any enemy activity from the direction of TOBRUK.

4. AIR ACTIVITY.

(a) Enemy.

Was conspicuous by its absence except for a low flying attack on our forward troops by 15 enemy fighters which met with a hot reception and caused no damage. HMS "Terror" was bombed by 8 bombers but sustained no damage.

(b) Own.

Fighter patrols, Tac/Rs and Strat/Rs were maintained all day and in addition the NW defences of BARDIA were bombed as was TOBRUK.

...../2.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

It will be noted that the figures given are approximate and only to give a rough general idea; fronts, depths and distances will be fixed according to each situation, and in relation to the existing situation and ground.

(ii) Column of platoons in diamond formation (front 120 yards, depth 800 yards).

The first formation is more suitable for break-through tactics and for penetration in following success (I.U.C. 68 and 69), since it develops the company's full strength; the second is more suitable for manoeuvring and for attacks in rear (I.U.C., because it allows greater freedom of action and greater use of cover offered by the country; on the other hand it does not permit so much fofce being developed.

The battalion may adopt two formations (normally) :-

(i) Column of companies in line of platoons in diamond formation (front of 600 yards depth 1100 yards - 1500 yards.)

(ii) Line of companies in column of platoons in diamond formation (front 600 yards - depth 600 yards).

Both develop equal initial power (on a 600 yards front); in the first instance we get three successive waves of companies in the second, three distinct points. The first formation is more suitable for action involving a break-through and for penetration to complete a success achieved; the second for actions where manoeuvrability is of paramount importance and for attack in rear in order to complete a success.

The distance between two successive waves (see also I.U.C. 90) is intended to avoid tanks bunching too much and preventing the defence's weapons taking on two waves at one and the same time; the length of 600 yards is given as the maximum to be employed over open terrain (with good visibility favouring the picking of targets by the defence, though also helping visual communication between tanks).

For a break-through action the battalion may adopt two other formations :-

(iii) Occasionally: 2 companies forward and one in support (front 1,200 yards, depth 600 yards - 700 yards).

(iv) Very rarely: 3 companies in line (front 1800 - 2000 yards), depth 120 yards) ; this is a formation having very little penetrative power; in our country ground suitable for such a formation will rarely be found.

...../4.

8. THE ATTACK ON BAROLA.

Up to the time of writing no full report is available of the operations carried out today by the Australian Division against BAROLA. It is, however, known that the attack has been most successful and has proceeded according to plan.

The chief incidents as reported are as follows : -

0630 hrs. The Bombardment began and at first the enemy only replied by small arms and LMG fire. The Australians were soon through the wire and our Tanks were across the anti-tank ditch by 0705 hrs.

0725 hrs. Our troops were inside the perimeter and proceeding SE according to plan.

0930 hrs. The first stage of the attack had reached its objective and our troops were in position.
From now onwards ground reports and reports from the air indicated that the attack was going as per plan and it was learnt that approximately 8,000 prisoners had been captured and that our casualties were slight. The enemy forward batteries had been either captured or silenced by 0930 hrs and their batteries in the rear had not yet got their range.
Phase one had been successfully completed by 0850 hrs and our leading troops were on a general line 51253916, 51395964, 51343949, to road junction 51563916. Many prisoners and some MT was reported captured.
Tac/R reports indicated that there was no sign of a counter attack developing and phase two of the attack began and was continuing favourably when last reported.
During the action one troop of our 80th A/Tk guns under command of the Australians knocked out 6 enemy medium tanks for the loss of one man killed and one gun destroyed.

...../5.

9. ENEMY TANK FORCES.

It is reported that a further M.11 Bn landed in BENGHASI from Italy a short time ago (5 Bn) It is thought that the total strength available for the enemy, discounting those in BARDIA is as follows:-

5 Bn.-M 11, two coys 3 Bn 4 Regt (M13), 60, 61 XX and XXI. Light tank Bns (CV3)

Until further details regarding a reputed Mobile Force at DERNA are received, no accurate estimate can be formed as to the dispositions of these tanks. It seems likely that two coys M 13 and three light Bns have been retained in TOBRUK.

for Colonel,
General Staff.

Method of Issue.. [illegible].....

Time of Signature 2305 hrs..

Distribution as for Summary No. 94.

Officer	Initials	Date	Time
Comd.			
G.S.O.	[illegible]	2000	7 Jan
G.S.O.2	[illegible]	2 Jan	2035
G.S.O.3	[illegible]	2 Jan	2300
G.S.O.			
G.S.O.	[illegible]	4 Jan	1045
L.O.1			
L.O.2			

L.O.m
I.O.

[1141]

SECRET

COPY No. 16...

T ARMD DIV INT SUMMARY No. 1

(based on inf recd up to 2000 hrs 1 Jan 41.)

1. GENERAL.

The situation around BARDIA remains the same. A certain amount of defensive activity has been observed inside the defences.

2. GROUND ACTIVITY.

(a) ENEMY.

Scarcely any enemy activity has been reported on our fronts during the last two days. About 100 men were observed digging in the area of the BARDIA - TOBRUK rd near the defences on 1 Jan.

Three vehicles and 3 M/Cs were observed on the main rd at 440420. They withdrew NW.

The enemy shelled the area of the tr junc 502401 at 1480 hrs. The nature of the fire was apparently harassing.

(b) OWN.

Close observation on the enemy has been maintained and recce patrols have been carried out.

Our AA has shot down a twin-engined bomber on 31 Dec. There were 4 survivors all wounded.

Enemy targets and batterys have been registered within the BARDIA defences and a 4-gun bty replied from 51154023 to our harassing fire.

3. AIR ACTIVITY.

(a) ENEMY.

31 Dec. Three enemy bombers and 3 fighters attacked our fwd tps with incendiary bombs and lost one of their number in the process to our AA gunners. The circus consisting of 5 bombers and 16 fighters flew NW over Sp Gp at 8,000 ft at 1635 hrs. A low-winged civilian aeroplane landed at BARDIA at 1720 hrs.

1 Jan. Two fighters machine-gunned fwd tps at 0920 hrs. Two dive-bombers and 3 fighters bombed the area 440418; all machines were seen to take off and land at 433419.

(b) OWN.

The RAF made 37 sorties against the enemy aerodromes of [illegible] and [illegible] between 16 and 22 Dec. During the same period they shot down 19 EA with a further 11 unconfirmed.

4. ENEMY BACK AREAS.

31 Dec. Tac/R reported NES in the areas around TOBRUK.

1 Jan. Tac/R as above. One large ship was observed in the Southern part of BARDIA harbour and 3 destroyers and 1 gunboat at TOBRUK.

5. ENEMY LOSSES.

A rough count on 19 Dec showed that the following enemy material was captured or destroyed during the operations from 9 Dec to 15 Dec:-

900 lorries and tractors
28 Med Tks and 45 Lt Tks
195 guns, 5 hy and 50 lt AA guns
60 A/tk guns and 800 MGs and LMGs

6. STATEMENT BY LIBYAN REFUGEE.

He left TOBRUK on 26 Dec and was found at GAMBUT on 31 Dec. He was a labourer in Government employ and stated that there were fewer tps than formerly in TOBRUK, and that ships had been used for evacuation. He had not seen any tks but had observed bomber aircraft on TOBRUK WEST aerodrome.

7. ENEMY EQUIPMENT.

(a) A booby trap was found in HALFAYA CAMP, particulars and full-size drawings of which are in Appx 'A'.

(b) An elementary incendiary bomb was also found in the same place, confirming the Italian intention of constructing such weapons in accordance with documents captured earlier on. Out of 7 bombs thrown only 4 exploded and the effect was limited to a radius of 5' from the explosion: see Appx 'B'.

Time of Signature..2040 LT...

Method of Issue....[illegible].....

[signature]
Colonel,
General Staff.

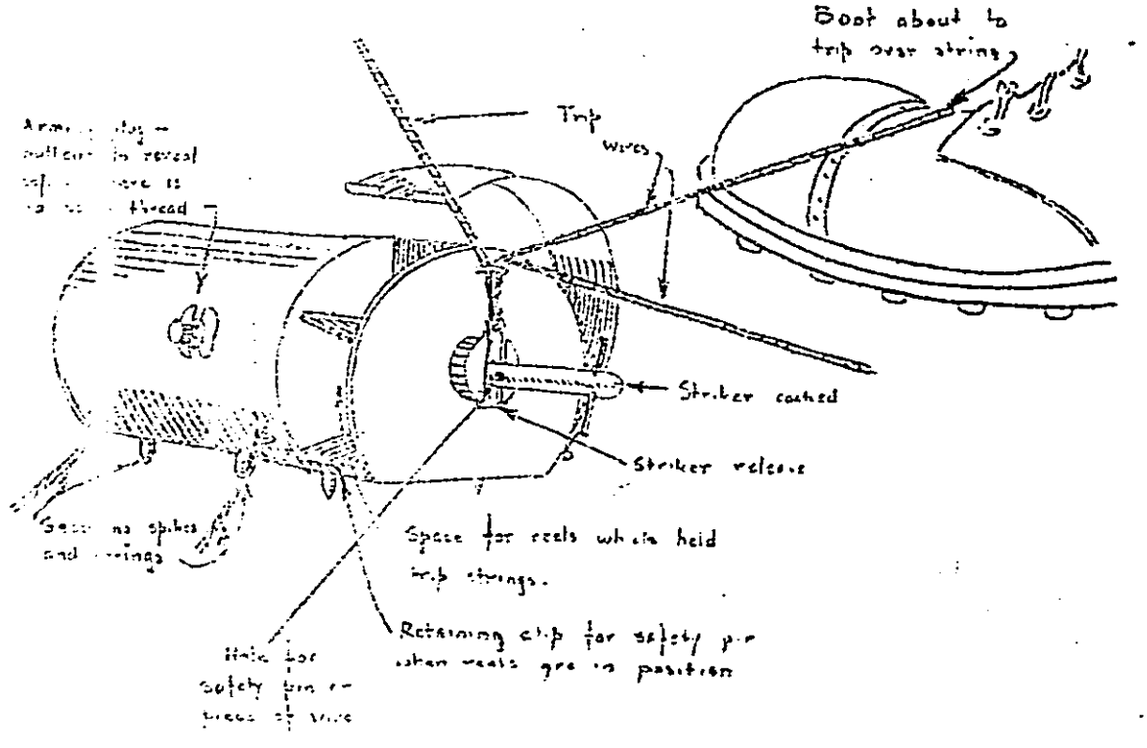
Distribution as for Int Summary No. 94.

APPENDIX 'A'

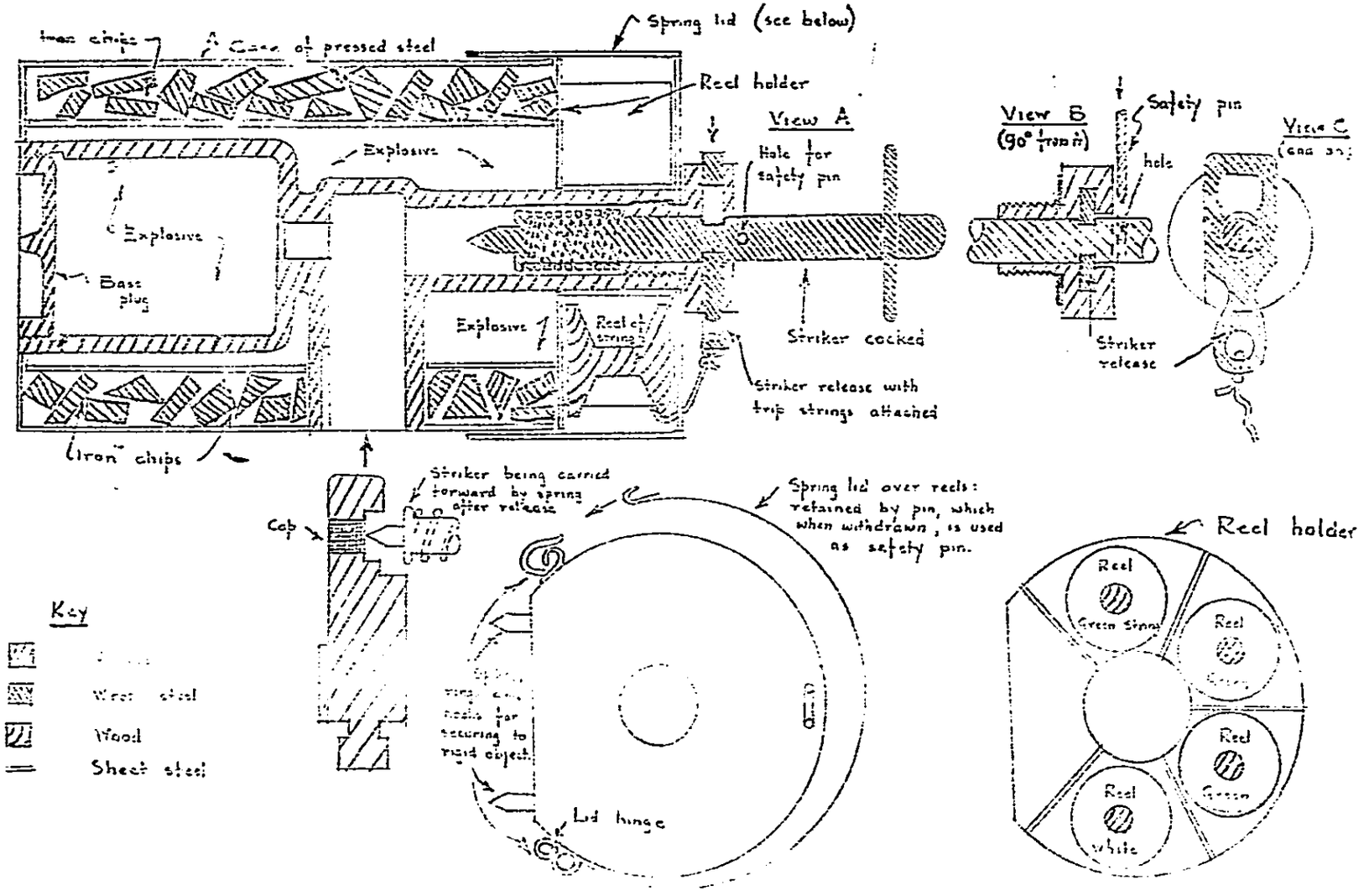
ACTION IN LAYING. Pin booby trap to rigid object in desired position. Undo arming lid and remove spring reels. Lay green string as trip-wires (20' on each reel). Cock action by withdrawing striker and sliding striker release into position. Place spring lid retaining pin through hole in striker as safety pin. Withdraw arming plug and insert cap. Replace plug. Walk quickly away with dignity, unreeling white string attached to safety pin and withdraw this pin at the full extent of the string. The infernal machine is then highly dangerous.

ACTION IN REMOVING. This will not be necessary if green strings have been tripped over. If they have not however, place the original safety pin in the striker, or if not available, some other piece of wire. Withdraw the arming plug and remove the cap. Replace the plug, reel in the strings and stuff them up. Fire the action by withdrawing safety pin and pulling striker release, shut the lid, remove the booby trap from the rigid object and hurl it into the nearest deep water.

DANGER AREA. Presumably up to the end of the green string, i.e. 20' radius but may be more.

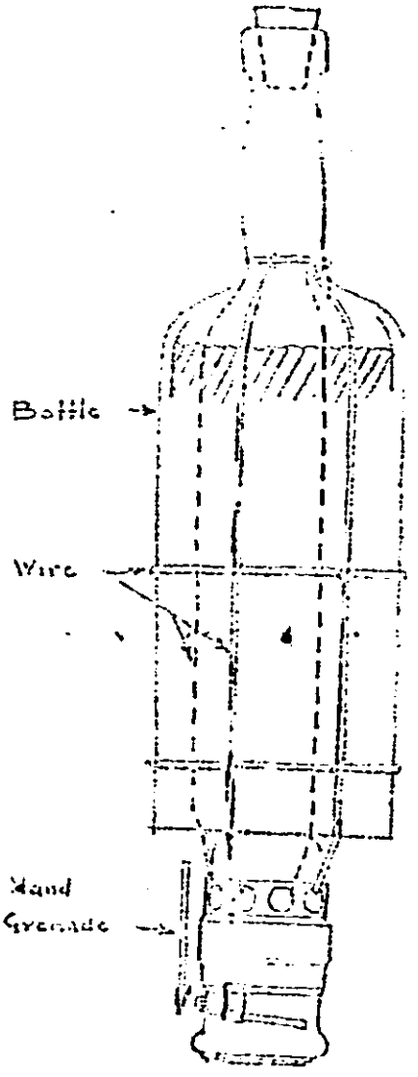


See next page for F.S. drawings.


Spring lid (see below)
Iron chips
Case of pressed steel
Reel holder
View A
Explosive
Hole for safety pin
Explosive
Base plug
Explosive
Striker cocked
Striker release with trip strings attached
Iron chips
View B (90° from A)
Safety pin
hole
View C (end on)
Striker release
Striker being carried forward by spring after release
Cap
Spring lid over reels: retained by pin, which when withdrawn, is used as safety pin.
Reel holder
Reel
Green string
Reel
Green
Reel
Green
Reel
White
Key
Wood
Sheet steel
Lid hinge

Appendix A-2

APPENDIX B



ENEMY INCENDIARY BOMB

Materials: —

Empty beer wine or spirits bottle.

Petrol.

Hand grenade.

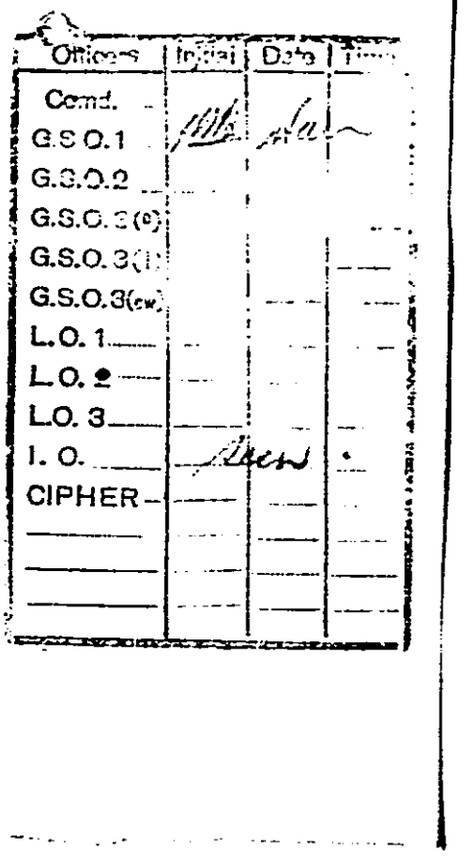
Wire.

Manufacture: —

Wire grenade to bottle, fill bottle with petrol and cork.

Method of use: —

Withdraw safety pin and hurl bomb in desired direction.



Officers	Initial	Date	Time
Comd.			
G.S.O.1			
G.S.O.2			
G.S.O.3(e)			
G.S.O.3(i)			
G.S.O.3(ew)			
L.O. 1			
L.O. 2			
L.O. 3			
I. O.			
CIPHER			

E/40/1/GSI.

SECRET.

COPY NO. 7

ADVANCED WESTERN DESERT FORCE INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 8.

Based on information received from 2000 hrs 28 Dec 40 to 2000 hrs 1 Jan 41

1. GENERAL.

The general situation has remained unchanged.

Since 28 Dec the enemy has twice ventured out from the NW area of the BARDIA defences, the furthest point reached being 7 miles from the outer perimeter.

Active patrolling as far as the defences of TOBRUK continues.

On night 28/29 Dec the RN intercepted two schooners outside BARDIA harbour, sinking one and capturing the other.

2. ENEMY GROUND ACTIVITY.

On 29 Dec a force of 13 tanks, mostly mediums, accompanied by 30 m/cs, a Staff Car and 3 lorries emerged from the [illegible] defences near the TOBRUK road and appeared to make a reconnaissance in force as far as the 506 grid. The entire force had withdrawn within the defences by 1630 hrs with the exception of 7 Light Tanks which remained on the main road till dark.

Early the next day a Staff Car, 3 other vehicles and 8 m/cs were seen on the main road at the 504 grid. They remained only an hour, however, and had returned to BARDIA by 1030 hrs. Later the same day movement of [illegible] was observed within the perimeter N of the TOBRUK road.

There is no other activity to report from the BARDIA area with the exception of the normal shelling of TOBRUK which continues intermittently.

There are no further indications as to the enemy's intentions with regard to EL ADEM. The place was reported empty by Tac/R on 28 Dec.

Tac/R which has covered the area BARDIA - TOBRUK [illegible], reports no enemy movement between these two places. TOBRUK appears normal.

3. OWN GROUND ACTIVITY.

Has been confined to active patrolling on all fronts and effective harassing shoots on targets within the BARDIA defences.

A fwd A/C patrol was attacked from the air and lost a vehicle. The crew after being surrounded in a blockhouse by m/cs armed with LMGs succeeded in fighting their way out and escaped into broken country.

On 31 Dec AA gunners attached to fwd Bns shot down an enemy twin-engined bomber.

4. RN OPERATIONS.

On night 28/29 Dec a destroyer intercepted two Italian schooners just N of BARDIA attempting to reach TOBRUK under cover of darkness. One was sunk and the other captured. The latter contained approx 80 Italians, the majority being Naval personnel being sent to TOBRUK to rejoin their units who, it appears, had panicked and fled from BARDIA in the initial stages of our advance. There were also on board 9 British prisoners captured during a recent patrol.

BARDIA was bombarded on the morning of 28 Dec.

6. AIR ACTIVITY.

(a) Enemy.

Has again been slight during the period under review, probably due to the recent effective bombing of rearward aerodromes by the RAF and also an evident scarcity of fual.

Fwd patrols were attacked both on 30 and 31 Dec no casualties resulting.

At 1835 hrs on 31 Dec an air circus consisting of 5 bombers and 16 fighters flew NW over our fwd tps at 8,000 ft. The same day at 1730 hrs a low winged civilian aeroplane is reported to have landed within the BARDIA perimeter.

On 1 Jan 2 dive bombers and 3 fighters bombed an area 22 kilos WEST of GAMBUT; all machines were seen to take off and land at 433419.

Taking advantage of the new moon, enemy bombers attacked SALUM at 1930 hrs on 1 Jan dropping 14 bombs but causing no damage.

(b) Own.

Fighter patrols have been maintained over the area BARDIA - SALUM.

No engagements have taken place.

Army/R shoots have taken place daily with growing success.

Bombing.

Raids on landing grounds at TMIMI, GAZALA and DERNA have been carried out. No details are available.

Strat/R

Strat/R on 29 Dec reported 20 EA at DERNA, 50 at GAZALA and 20 at TMIMI.

On 31 Dec two EA, one of them a CAPRONI 310, were shot down by our AA gunners.

5. SHIPPING - TOBRUK.

Tac/R on 30 Dec reported 4 small and 1 large ship in TOBRUK. At 0845 hrs on 1 Jan 3 destroyers were seen steaming into the harbour. In addition there was one gunboat lying alongside the sunken cruiser "SAN GIORGIO".

7. BARDIA GARRISON.

Information just obtained from PWs and cap. docs indicates that 1 CC.NN. Div (less at least one Bn) is in BARDIA and not TOBRUK. This is in addition to the remainder of 62, 63 and 2 CC.NN. Divs as reported in Int Sum No. 7. If this information is correct it must necessarily raise the estimated Garrison to the neighbourhood of 25,000 unless Divs are considerably more under strength than previously supposed.

It is also reported that 62, 63 and 2 CC.NN. Divs retired in some confusion on BARDIA about 12 Dec many men having abandoned their rifles en route. Moreoverit was not possible to re-equip them in BARDIA. (Confirmation required).

8. BARDIA DEFENCES. Ref Map 1/50,000 BARDIA, with green overprint.

Photos on 30 Dec show that a single row of mines has been laid along the Western face of the defences between Posts 37 and 53. In front of the posts themselves there is a double row of mines in the form of a V pointing outwards.

Four Btys have been moved from the PONTICELLI to the GERFAN Sector all being now positioned SOUTH of the escarpment. Three Bty posns previously empty just EAST of the CAPUZZO road are now occupied.

In addition various defensive posns on the lines of the SOFAFI and HALFAYA Camps have been constructed 1,000 - 2,000 yds inside the perimeter on the NORTH and WEST. They form a lightly defended third line of defence.

The Heavy AA Bty as marked on the map in square 513401 is confirmed by Tac/R.

9. TRANSPORT.

An undated cap. doc. gives the following numbers for MT required for XXI Corps:

62 Div.	249 Heavy,	435 Med lorries	6[illegible]	
63 Div.	" "	" " "	[illegible]	
Corps Tps.	442 "	101 " "	8[illegible]	
			1811 MT	excluding m/cs.

Comment.

These are presumably total numbers required to fit [illegible] Corps. Recent information indicates that all Divs are far [illegible] being fully motorised.

10. ATTITUDE OF LOCAL POPULATION OF EASTERN CYRENAICA

Arabs living in the coastal area Northwards of BARDIA are very friendly towards us and appear to be looking forward eagerly to their early release from Italian rule. There can be little doubt that the Italian Govt in CYRENAICA is far from popular.

11. ORGANISATION.

G.A.F.

There are frequent references in cap. docs to Arty and A.Tk guns being withdrawn from the G.A.F. at TOBRUK and BARDIA after the Italian advance in Sep in order to bring Divs fwd to strength. It seems that the defences of TOBRUK in particular have been depleted in this way particularly as regards Fd Arty.

12. SUPPLIES.

Prisoners confirm that supply dumps [illegible] very effectively bombed by the RAF in particular on night 1st Dec when five dumps were hit.

13. EXTRACTS FROM ITALIAN BROADCASTS.

The following extracts are published without comment:

"ITALY is holding fast against the mass of some 450,000 Britishers in N AFRICA..."

"Foreign newspapers are full of praise for the heroism shown by Italian troops and for the [illegible] with which they are contending every foot of the ground to the en[illegible]

In the Field,
2 Jan 41.

[illegible] Colonel,
[illegible] Corps.

SECRET.

Copy No.....4

1 Jan. 41.

17 Aust. Inf. Bde. Intelligence Summary No. 3.

Based on information at this H.Q. up to 2000 hrs. 1 Jan. 41.

Ref. Maps B.I.O. H. A. S. 1 : 50,000 green overprint.

General. Increased activity on both sides has been apparent today.

Enemy Order of Battle. Reports indicate that Italians, probably 157-350 Regts. of 55 Div. are manning the Southern defences, not Libyans.

Captured Bedouin indicate -

2/3 Legion of 1st. CCBT Div.

201 Regt. Div. t.

were probed here from 31 is now relieved now be in the WIA.

Observations. Pt. 170, ref. 5193564?, which has been used by the enemy as an M.G. Observation Post, is now evacuated by enemy. 1/6 R.N. also found telephone wires and evidence of effective arty fire, which may have caused enemy to abandon post. Post 11 continues to bring down M.G. fire to bear on Pt. 171 when movement observed.

Enemy Activity. Increased activity on enemy front was observed by 2/6 and 2/7 Bns.

Digging parties of 30 men observed area 515790, also much M.T. movement same area.

The enemy were observed during shells in Wadi 520770 and small bodies enemy type 300 - 400 yds to west.

Air Activity. Our aircraft have been very active over BARDIA. During night 31 Dec/1 Jan bombers attacked objectives in enemy area continuously.

Enemy activity - one bomber flying west direction ~~across~~ dropped bombs area ~~5555??~~ 5?5?7?

Hostile Shelling. As per traces attached.

Recce. Reports.

Report on recce of area 52105360, 52103750, 52103540.

Ground from 52103640 to 5227?736 is convex and so there is no inter-visibility and movement is across the skyline.

Wadi BARDIA, from 52275?36 to 5220?252 has very steep sides, is impassable to any type of M.T. and difficult on foot.

At 52255858 (Post 10) on the side of a steep cliff we observed a sentry. Wadi BARDIA between 5220?252 and 52193649, the wadi 52245944 to 52193649 and small wadis running into this from the Southern sides are passable for M.T. There is cover from shelling on Northern side. Ample dispersion is possible. However, at a bearing of 326 deg fro. 52245644 about 1500 yds away, an enemy pole sitter had full view of all movements in this wadi.

Near the pole sitter is a small stone building around which was constant enemy movement. From all other directions movement in the wadi is hidden by the banks.

From 52103640 to 52153647 a slight rise affords a little cover from view.

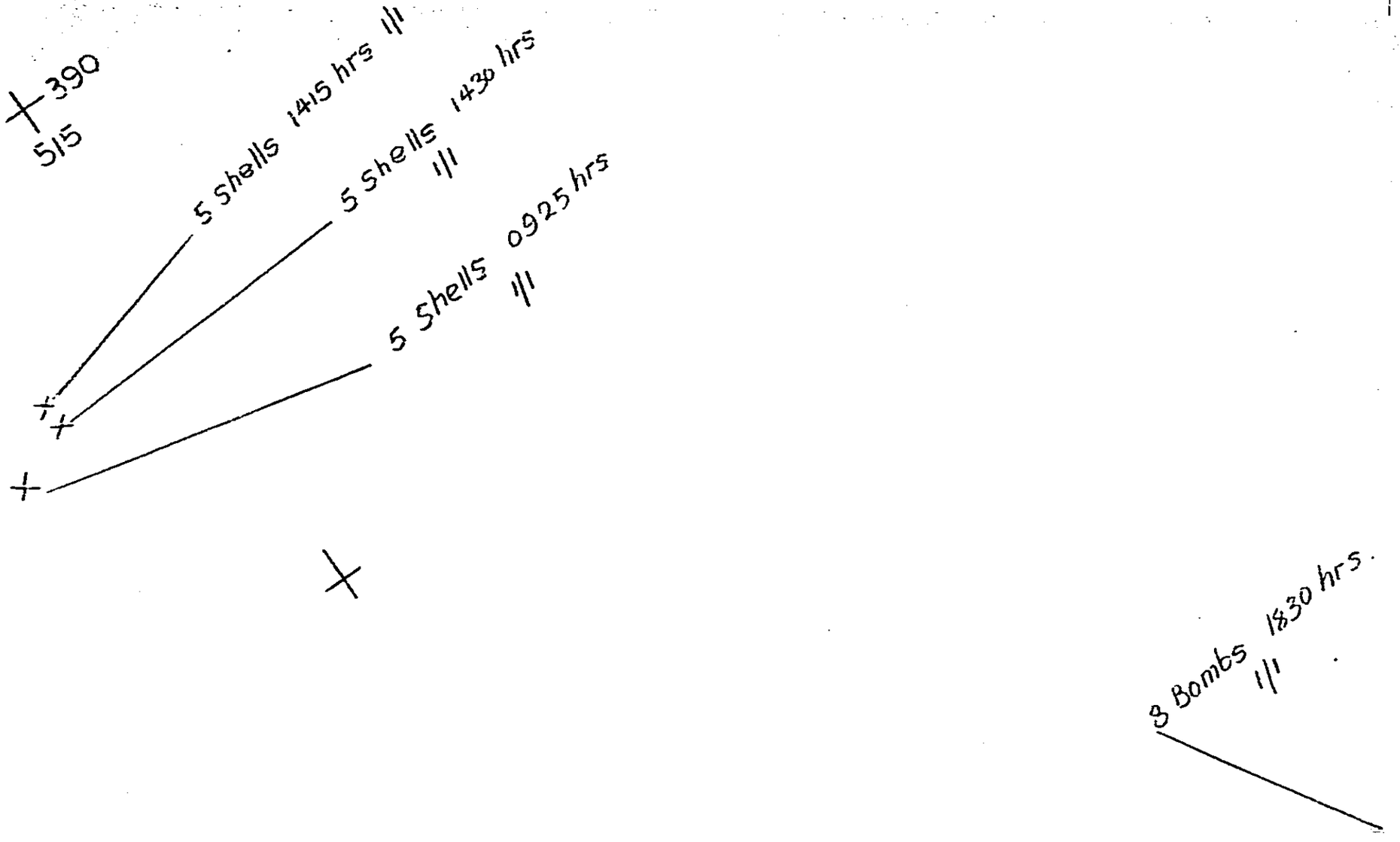
Over the remainder of the area, except in wadis, the pole sitter can observe all movements.

Conclusion. It would appear that the enemy is making preparations for an attack which they anticipate will come from the South in direction of WADI EL BUAT WD.

Signed at 2250 hrs.

Lieut.,
B.I.O. 17 Aust. Inf. Bde.

Distribution :
As for No. 4.


390
515
5 shells 1415 hrs 1/1
5 shells 1430 hrs 1/1
5 shells 0925 hrs 1/1
3 Bombs 1830 hrs 1/1

SECRET.

Copy No. 4

31 Dec. 40

17 Aust. Inf. Bde. Intelligence Summary No. 4.

Based on information at this H.Q. up to 2000 hrs. 31 Dec. 40.

General. 2/7 Bn. moved fwd. to new localities held previously by 6 Div. in each locality.

Enemy were not apparently observed by the enemy.

3 Coy. 2/5 Bn. pushed fwd. further during night and is consolidating. 5235 3559

Enemy Operations. As a result of enemy fighting patrol attack on B Coy 2/3 Bn. one Coy of P.W. were taken this morning - "Orie. for money". Interrogation further yesterday captured.

Order of Battle. P.W. identified -

3 Coy 11 Bn 157 Regt 52 (LOWLAND) Div.
First Aid Personnel 157 Regt. 52 (LOWLAND) Div.

Enemy Morale. Information from P.W. indicates it to be very low, due chiefly to lack of food, the non-appearance of the promised large reinforcements and lack of desire to fight. The willingness with which information, if known, was given, indicated either complete lack of spirit, or fear of harsh treatment by us. This point was at first shown by P.W. in letter that the enemy impressed on them that there will be killed or tortured if taken prisoner by us.

Enemy Supplies. P.W. confirm reports of acute shortage of food supplies, water & petrol is at present.

Enemy Air Activity. Right fwd. 2/7 Bn. report that, at 1700 hrs., planes, followed by whistling and bombs, were heard and may possibly be SAFI 'OS bombs.

Enemy Shelling. As shown on Shelling trace attached.

Extracts from Patrol Reports.

PATROL No. 1. :- Summary of report by Lieut. Sherlock, B Coy., after patrol 29/30 Dec. :- Ref. Map EGYPT 50 NW 1:50,000.

Frontier Post 8 is on bank of WADI South of FORT RIDDI. Leaving F.P. 8 with very steep to WEST for 100ˣ then turning NORTH for 500ˣ to F.P. 9 which is with the start of WADI RIDDI. I travelled 600 yds. WEST along bank where the WADI runs S.W. into the sea. The wadi affords excellent concealment for troops 50 deg. North there are wire entanglements which run WEST from the sea.

While patrol was moving along wire they heard enemy giving fire orders to Arty which had apparently been moved fwd to vicinity of Frontier wire between Posts 16 and 17. Returned to CARRIER WADI night of 29/30 Dec.

PATROL No. 2. :- 2/7 Bn. Patrol No. 2 reports that the road from their area to EL DUDA difference is passable with clearance on either side from shell holes and abandoned vehicles. A stone wall ten to fifteen yards long and three feet wide has been erected across the road in line with angle of tank trap. This trap runs east - west - turns north at this point and is approx 14-15 feet wide and 7-8 feet deep. Several vehicles and what appeared to be a plane were standing in the area formed by stone wall and North-south line of trap. Personnel working almost daily about it to cross by means of a bridge. No firing took place and patrol remained in the area from 0145-0215 hrs and patrol returned at 0330 hrs.

PATROL No. 3. :- Patrol reached point 5202[illegible]1 - a junction of two wadis, the main one appeared to run active along direct front. At point 520[illegible] it appeared that enemy were constructing sangars 70 yds to the front. Area to the left. Moved off on a bearing of 255 degrees and stopped at a distance of 700 yds. Area covered with sangars and wadi shallower. At approx 5200[illegible] there appeared to be an enemy strongpost. At point 51995860 many more sangars.

Remarks. Pt. 162 is a fairly high feature but it is unknown whether it dominates the enemy. The wadi could be crossed easily by inf and carriers 200 yds. from wadi junction 52045862.

Conclusions.

It is apparent that the action last night that the enemy are becoming suspicious of our increased activity and movement and may be anticipating an attack from the south east. However there are no indications of preparations for any major offensive by the enemy.

Time of Signature 2250 hrs.

[illegible]
3.I.O. 17 Aust. Inf. Bde.

DISTRIBUTION :

Copy No. 1	2/5 Bn.
2	2/6 Bn.
3	2/7 Bn.
4	6 Aust. Div.
5	16 Aust. Inf. Bde.
6	File.
7 - 8	War Diary.
9	4th Bty.
10	2/2 Fd. Regt.
11	Brigadier.

5. (b) A.D.S. at 51903792 will move under orders 17 Aust Inf Bde.

SECRET.

6 AUST DIV.

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION NO. 52.

BATTLE OF BARDIA.

1. SUPPLIES.

(a) A.A.S.C. will deliver to "B" Ech tpt of 16 and 17 Aust Inf Bdes who will provide guides at the S.P. at 1000 hrs daily. Other units will send unit tpt to the S.P.

(b) All Inf personnel and certain Arty personnel will carry on the man one tin preserved meat and 8 Oz biscuits as an iron ration.

(c) An issue of rum to units will be made on 2 Jan. The time of issue to individuals is left to discretion of Bde Comds.

2. PETROL.

Petrol point will be established at 51733734 at 1400 hrs daily.

3. AMMUNITION.

Amn Pts will be established at order by Z X 120 on D 1 day :-

50483873
51403800

4. WATER.

(a) To avoid congestion, units will continue to draw at the point already allotted irrespective of any change in unit location. Checking of demands and recording of issues will NOT be done on D 1. Offrs in charge water points will concentrate on dispersion of waiting vehicles, security from air attack, and speed in filling.

(b) Water in enemy territory will NOT be used until passed by a Medical Officer.

5. MEDICAL.

(a) M.D.S. 51603747
A.D.S's to be established by 0400 hrs D 1 day

50453900 - 2/1 Fd Amb.
50253830 - 2/1 Fd Amb.
51903792 - 2/2 Fd Amb.

(b) [illegible] to Aust Inf [illegible] 51903792.

(c) A.D.S. at 50453900 will move under orders 16 Aust Inf Bde.

(d) C.A.A.S.C. will detail 6 30 Cwt Lorries to report to M.D.S. at 1700 hrs D 1 day. These will be available to A.D.M.S. for carrying walking wounded [illegible] D 1 day. They will be returned to C.A.A.S.C. by 2000 hrs D 1 day. They will carry red cross flags supplied by A.D.M.S.

(e) Walking wounded in 16 Aust Inf Bde Sector will be directed back to KING street where they will be picked up by the transport shown in sub-para (d) above.

(f) The position of wounded left lying on the ground will be marked by a rifle or other article stuck in the ground and to which a bandage or similar article is attached.

6. PROVOST.

(a) D.A.P.M. will detail 1 Offr (or Sgt) and one Sec Pro Coy to report H.Q. 16 Aust Inf Bde afternoon D 2 day for traffic control duties in 16 Aust Inf Bde area. These revert to control D.A.P.M. at Zero plus 60.

G III(1)
G III(1)
I.O.

(b) Secs Pro Coy will be detailed as in 6 Aust Div Adm Instn No.91 dated 1 Jan.
(c) On D 1 day Pro personnel on duty at water points will be reduced to two at each point.

7. CLEARING THE BATTLE FIELD.

(a) Bdes are responsible for clearing the battle field in their own areas. The order of priority will be :-

(i) Collection of wounded
(ii) Burial of dead
(iii) Salving of Br war material

The collection of captured material will not be undertaken until further instructions are issued.
(b) Enemy wounded and dead are to be dealt with in the same manner as our own. Personal effects of enemy dead will be collected in unit dumps.
(c) As far as possible burials should be concentrated in unit, if not bde areas. The exact site of all burials must be recorded. It is suggested that portions of the anti tank ditch be used as cemetries.
(d) Br war material will be collected in unit dumps the location of which will be notified to Div H.Q. for subsequent collection by Div Salvage Unit. Units will ensure that any deficiencies of equipment are replaced from salvaged material.

8. CAPTURED WAR MATERIAL.

(a) Captured war material is of great value to the Empire and its allies. Consequently care must be exercised that valuable equipment is not needlessly damaged or essential parts of large equipments removed. Examples of this are sights of guns, wireless equipments and all technical equipment. These must not be interfered with; but left for subsequent collection by qualified personnel.
(b) Care must be exercised in the handling of captured weapons and explosives. Under no circumstances except for personal protection, are these to be fired.
(c) Reps of C.R.E., C.A.A.S.C. & D.M.S. and D.A.D.O.S. will be sent forward to recce the captured area and report what stores and material relating to their respective services are in the area. Any large dump captured will be reported by units to Div H.Q. through Bde H.Q.
(d) Captured enemy vehicles will not be taken into use by units.

9. WAR TROPHIES.

War trophies which may be captured by units will be collected under unit control & subsequent orders, for disposal will be issued. Items which, at the time, can not be collected will be marked with the unit vehicle number NOT the unit title.

10. STRAGGLERS.

A stragglers post manned by an N.C.O. and 3 O.R., 6 Aust Div Pro Coy will be established at 507 [illegible] by Z X 60 D 1 day. Stragglers will be returned to their unit.

[signature] COL.
A.A. & Q.M.G. 6 AUST. DIV.

1 Jan 41.

Distribution as in Adm. Instn No.91.
Plus : 7 R.T.R.

SECRET.

Copy-No.... ...

A AUST DIV.

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION No.91.

PRISONERS OF WAR.

During the operations on the day it is likely that a large number of P.O.W. may be captured, and the following suggestions and instructions are promulgated for the guidance of all concerned :-

1. GENERAL

The principle to be observed is to get prisoners outside perimeter as soon as possible.

(a) Prisoners will, as far as possible be made to wear complete uniform greatcoats and head dress, and to carry blankets, [illegible] water bottles, [illegible] and/or water containers. All will be searched for concealed weapons, and will be disarmed immediately on capture. Papers and maps will be collected and taken back and handed over at each collecting centre in turn. It is important that none be convenired since they may contain valuable information.

(b) Prisoners will be collected in reserve coy areas and despatched to Bde collecting centres in batches of about 100 with an escort of not more than one N.C.O. and 7 men. This move will need careful coordination by Bn H.Q. to ensure that a minimum number of personnel is used on escort duties at the one time. On handing over prisoners to Bde collecting centre escort will return to their unit.

(c) Officer prisoners will be kept separate from O.R.s, and will NOT be permitted to converse together or with O.R.s

(d) Men of the escort will march on the flank and rear of the coin at sufficient distance to prevent being surprised. Men should carry grenades as well as rifles, and if possible a bren gun.

2. UNIT RESPONSIBILITY.

(a) Units will be responsible for the conducting of prisoners from the time of capture until arrival at Bde collecting centres. These will be established as follows :-

16 Aust Inf Bde - on road 5[illegible]250 moving to 5[illegible] at Z X 120
17 Aust Inf Bde - [illegible].

(b) Coy collecting centres should be established in each forward coy area, and prisoners sent to the rear in a similar manner to that suggested in para 1 (b) above.

3. BDE COLLECTING CENTRES.

(a) One sec of the Div Pro Coy will be allotted to 17 Aust Inf Bde centre, and one sec to 16 Aust Inf Bde centre, to receive prisoners and conduct them to the Div Collecting Centre. These Secs will [illegible] at the respective centres by Zero plus 60.

(b) Prisoners will be held at Bde Collecting Centres until their numbers are approximately 1000, and will then be despatched to the Div Collecting Centre under escort of Pro Coy personnel.

(c) 19 Aust Inf Bde will provide a guard of one pl at each of these collecting centres from Zero plus 60.

4. DIV COLLECTING CENTRE.

(a) The Div Collecting Centre has been established at 51703770 where prisoners will be handed over to a guard of one pl 19 Aust Inf Bde.

(b) Instructions for the clearing of the Div Collecting Centre will be issued at the time.

(c) Prisoners will NOT be fed with Br army rations; but from captured rations under arrangements to be made by C.A.A.S.C.

COL.
A.A. & Q.M.G. 6 AUST. DIV.

1 Jan 41.

DISTRIBUTION.

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NOT TO BE TAKEN FORWARD OF Bn HQ

SECRET

Copy No: 10

6 AUST DIV INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY No. 4.

Based on information received between 1500 hrs 29 Dec and 1500 hrs 31 Dec 40.

Ref Maps: BARDIA North) 1/50,000 dated 26 Dec 40.
BARDIA South)

1. ENEMY ACTIVITY.

At 1630 hrs 30 Dec an enemy patrol of approx 100 approached outposts of our right bn in Southern sector from vicinity of pt 170 (51953849). Fire was opened on them and patrol immediately retired leaving a number of dead, and one wounded man, who was captured.

Arty OP and patrols on our left front report considerable MT activity during night in areas near the perimeter, between the main CAPUZZO Rd and the southern corner of the perimeter.

It is apparent that the enemy is unaware of the position of our fwd posts, and parties of them may be intercepted at any part of our front.

2. OUR OPERATIONS.

At dusk 29 Dec, a Naval patrol captured a schooner, which was leaving BARDIA for TOBRUCH. They took 100 prisoners of a Pioneer Bn, who had been working in BARDIA, and released British prisoners recently captured in this area.

These report that the Fortress HQ BARDIA seems to be in the area SE of the loop in the CAPUZZO Rd (sq 516394) in a deep wadi. Italians on board report:-

(i) On 17 Dec a schooner brought 500 land mines into BARDIA.
(ii) The strong points in the defences are mainly open sangars.
(iii) 6 tanks, type M 13, were seen and there are about 35 of this type, and approx 70 It Tanks in the area.
Comment: These figures seem high.
(iv) Gun which fires at SALUM is 149 mm.

A patrol of right Bn investigated WADI MUATERED on night 30/31 Dec, about 52013861 and found a large party of enemy building sangars on the north bank.

3. IDENTIFICATIONS.

In addition to the wounded prisoner, a Red Cross Corporal was captured whilst searching for the wounded man.
Both belonged to 157 Regt of 63 DIV.
It is possible that 63 and 64 DIVs have taken up the positions they held in BARDIA in August last with 63 DIV on South and 64 DIV on North.

4. ENEMY MORALE.

Both PW captured confirm statements made by British prisoners that food rations in BARDIA Garrison are extremely short and morale of men is poor.
PW also state that our arty fire has caused a number of casualties.

TIME OF SIGNATURE: 1500 hrs 31 Dec 40.

METHOD OF ISSUE: DRLS & L-O's

Colonel,
GS 6 Aust Div.

Distribution -

16 Aust Inf Bde	1 - 5
17 Aust Inf Bde	6 - 9
19 Aust Inf Bde	10 - 13
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6 Aus Div

SECRET. Copy No. 16

7 ARMD DIV INT SUMMARY NO. 96.

(based on information recd up to 2000 hrs 30 Dec)

1. GENERAL.

The general situation remains unchanged. The enemy has twice ventured out from the N.W. area of BARDIA in the last two days. Once with a force of Medium tanks and the second time with a staff car, 3 lorries and a few motor cyclists. On neither occasion did they venture far or stay long.

Royal Air Force reconnaissances have noted a decrease in shipping in TOBRUK and also a slight decrease in enemy aircraft on aerodromes in the back areas.

Our gunners continue their harassing fire on the BARDIA defences and the intermittent and ineffectual shelling of TOBRUK continues.

The Royal Navy captured one and destroyed another Italian schooner outside BARDIA.

2. ENEMY GROUND ACTIVITY.

No further indications of the enemy's intentions with regard to EL ADEM have been forthcoming. Rec/R reported EL ADEM empty on 28 Dec.

29 Dec between 1330 and 1530 hrs a force of 18 tanks mostly medium came out from the BARDIA defences in the area of the main BARDIA-TOBRUK Rd 50c4.00 accompanied by 30 M/Cyc + staff car and 5 lorries. This sortie appeared to be in the nature of a reconnaissance in force and by 1650 hrs all the enemy had returned inside the defences with the exception of 4 tanks on the main road at the 507 grid line.

30 Dec at 0945 hrs 1 staff car, 3 vehicles and 2 M/Cs were observed in the area 50c4.01. They remained a short time and had returned to BARDIA by 1030 hrs. There was [illegible] of vehicles in the area 512599 at 1250 hrs and at 1440 hrs two men were observed walking from Pt 155 512599 to the [illegible].

3. OWN MOVES.

The enemy has been kept under observation by our patrols [illegible]. A troop of RHA put down harassing fire on the North West area of the BARDIA defences early on the morning 30 Dec.

It is now thought that one patrol armoured cars must be [illegible]. No news has been heard of it since it was due to observe in the EL ADEM area. A further patrol was sent out to look for it. This patrol however was attacked from the air, one car being burnt out, and the other rendered unserviceable. Of the crews three are missing and the remainder safe after being surrounded on foot in a bivouac by Motor Cyclists with LMGs and being forced to march [illegible] into broken country. Casualties were caused

[illegible]

.....2.

4. AIR ACTIVITY.

(a) Enemy.

Has been less during the past two days. One of our forward patrols suffered 2 dive bombing attacks between 1150 and 1350 hrs 30 Dec. The first attack was by one enemy aircraft which used some incendiary bombs, and the second also by one machine which bombed and machine-gunned the patrol and was escorted by another plane which took no part in the "straffing". No casualties or damage resulted from either of these attacks.

Strat/R on 29 Dec reported 20 enemy aircraft at DERNA, 50 at GAZALA and 20 at TMIMI.

(b) Own.

The remains of a burnt out British twin engined bomber L 8436 were found at 497418. No bodies were found and the wreck appears to have been there for a long time.

Strat/Rs of the enemy back areas have been carried out and confirm the MT concentration in the NW area of the BARDIA defences.

5. ENEMY BACK AREAS.

A Tac/R on 29 Dec reported no work in progress on the TOBRUK defences 12 small and 3 large ships in the harbour with lighters alongside 2 of them.

NMS on the roads round TOBRUK and no enemy shipping between TOBRUK and BARDIA.

Later a Strat/R reported that there was no troop movement between DERNA and TOBRUK.

A Tac/R on 30 Dec at 1115 hrs reported 5 vehicles, possibly AFVs, moving South at 439418. There were 4 small ships and one large in TOBRUK harbour. There was no movement in the TOBRUK-EL ADEM-BIR GUBI areas.

6. ROYAL NAVY.

On the night of 28/29 Dec our destroyers intercepted 2 Italian schooners outside BARDIA. One schooner was sunk and the other which had British prisoners of war on board, was captured. The prisoners consisted of a Sergeant, a Corporal and seven other ranks of 2 Queens Regt.

7. PRISONERS OF WAR.

Nine Italians were picked up 30 Dec in the BARRANI area. They had been at liberty since the BUQ BUQ battle.

Appendices "A" and "B" dealing with Italian Transport are attached.

Time of Signature.....2000 hr.....

Method of Issue.....Lig.....

[signature]
Colonel,
General Staff.

Distribution as for Int Summary 94.

APPENDIX "A" TO

7 ARMD DIV INT SUMMARY NO.96

Summary of Italian Transport

1. Tank Regts - A captured, undated document gives the following transport as being in possession of an unknown Tank Regt (probably 4 Regt):-

(a) Kit lorries - LANCIA RO

R.H.Q.	5	
1 coy	1)	
2 coy	1)	1 & 2 Bns
Reserve coy	7)	
Total - 23		

(b) Mobile offices - LANCIA RO

1 per B.H.Q. - Total 2

(c) Heavy recovery - PAVESI tractors

1 per B.H.Q. - Total 2

(d) P.O.L. - DOVUNQUE FIAT

R.H.Q.	1	
1 coy	2)	
2 coy	2)	1 & 2 Bns
Reserve coy	1)	
Total - 11		

(e) FIAT 626

1 per B.H.Q. and 1 for R.H.Q.
Total - 3

(f) Omnibus - FIAT 634

1 for R.H.Q. - Total - 1

(g) Staff cars - BIANCHI S 6
FIAT 1100 & 508

R.H.Q.	3	
1 coy	1)	
2 coy	1)	1 & 2 Bns
Reserve coy	1)	
Total - 9		

(h) Workshops lorries

1 per B.H.Q. - Total 2

(i) L.A.D. Vehicles

R.H.Q.	5	
B.H.Qs - each -	1	
1 coy	1)	
2 coy	1)	1 & 2 Bns
Reserve coy	7)	
Total - 25		

(j) Motor-cycles - GILERA & GUZZI 500's

R.H.Q.	14	
1 coy	2)	
2 coy	2)	1 & 2 Bns
Reserve coy	4)	
Total - 30		

(k) Motor-tricycles - BENELLI

(as opposed to m/c and sidecar)

R.H.Q. 7 - Total - 7

Totals:-

LANCIA RO	48
FIAT DOVUNQUE	11
FIAT 618	3
FIAT 634	1
PAVESI tractors	2
BIANCHI S.6 / FIAT 1100 / FIAT 508 / LNSC	9
	4
M.T. -	78

GILERA 500 / GUZZI 500	30
BENELLI	7
M/Cs -	37

NOTE:

Tank Regt consisting of two Bns each of two coys and reserve coy. Totals are for Regt

Summary of Italian Transport - (continued)

2. Corps Transport

A [illegible] captured document probably dated about Sep or Oct 40, gives the following numbers for transport required for XX1 Corps:-

[illegible] Div	- [illegible] heavy 435 medium lorries	-	684
[illegible] Div	- " " "	-	684
Corps tps	- [illegible] heavy 101 medium lorries	-	543
			1911 MT (excl m/cs)

APPENDIX "B" TO

7 ARMD DIV INT SUMMARY NO.95

Motorized Columns

From a captured document dated 10 Aug 40, the following organization has been obtained:-

(a) Organization

		Total
Squadron	- 6 [illegible], commanded by NCO below rank of Sgt	6
Half Auto-section	- 2 sqns commanded by Sgt	12
Auto Section	- 2 half auto sections, commanded by subalterns	24
Autoreparto	- 4 or more auto sections, commanded by a capt	96
Autogruppe	- [illegible] or more auto repartos, commanded by a major	288
Autoraggruppamento	- 2 or more autogroups, commanded by a colonel	576

The speed of such motorized columns is based on 9 - 12 mph for heavy vehicles and 12 - 18 mph for medium vehicles.

(b) Control is exercised by D.R. and by semaphore signals.

(c) Refuelling is carried out with the aid of petrol and oil pumps from barrels.

(d) Recognition signs

(i) ground

Day - Flags or discs on the left of the vehicles: 3' above top of vehicle:-

1 black } XX11 Corps
1 blue }

1 black } 1 CCNN Div
1 white }

etc, etc.

Night - Coloured discs in nearside headlamp:-
blue with black strips XX11 Corps
white with black stripe 1 CCNN Div, etc, etc.
Offside headlamps blacked out with exception of 3" slit and screen to project light on to ground.

(ii) Air

Column at [illegible] - [illegible] - L 111 - XX111 Corps
L 11 - 4 CCNN Div
L 1 - 1 CCNN Div, etc, etc.

SECRET
Copy No. 4

17 Aust. Inf. Bde. Intelligence Summary,
No. 3.

(Based on Information received up to 2200 hrs 30 Dec.)

Map. Refs: BARDIA NORTH. } 1/50,000 Green Overprint.
BARDIA SOUTH. }

GENERAL: 2/5 Bn. relieved 2nd Liecesters. Relief completed 1310 hrs.

OPERATIONS: Our Patrols were again active during night 29/30, infor[illegible] [illegible] obstacles and strong posts.

51943850

Preliminary report Enemy attack on 'B' Coy, 2/6 Bn. :

At 1648 hrs a party of enemy came out from area of point 176 and moved into [illegible]. Shortly after an enemy pl. came out of the [illegible] and attacked the right pl. of 'B' Coy, supported by another pl. on their left flank. Our pl. sent [illegible] to their right to try and cut off this pl., but a considerable volume of fire forced our pl. to defend. The enemy continued to fire until dusk [illegible]. [illegible] had some difficulty with our L.M.G's although they had been tested [illegible]. The whole Coy. was engaged, also a pl. of M.M.G's supporting them. Our [illegible] one hand wound, one shell shock. Estimated enemy casualties 17. [illegible] area, quarry - point 176 is strongly held as it was from there [illegible] fired on and also from there that [illegible] attack on artillery [illegible] launched which was repelled by counter-attack from a pl. of 2/6 Bn.

[illegible]: A. Tk. obstacles ~~[illegible]~~ 51913263 12' to 15' deep - perpendicular sides is very definite obstacle, almost man-obstacle. It was examined for [illegible] direction and found not to vary, Although it appeared that a mine field [illegible] in front of this no mines could be found. A report from a patrol indicates [illegible] the enemy have now drawn field guns close to the wire.

[illegible]: No hostile aircraft reported over this area today.

[illegible]: 2/7 Bn report two shells fell 51493349. Heavy shelling [illegible] left flank 2/6 Bn following our own artillery fire. [illegible] - detailed reports not yet to hand.

[illegible]: After enemy artillery had covered the front an attack [illegible] on 'B' Coy 2/6 Bn.

CONCLUSION: It appears that the enemy attack last night may have been designed to [illegible] section of our artillery or alternatively to investigate the reason for our patrols which had been particularly active in the area in which the [illegible].

[signature]
B.I.O. 17 Aust. Inf. Bde.

Time of Signature. 2230 hrs.

Copy No. 1 2/5 Bn.
2. 2/6 Bn.
3. 2/7 Bn.
4. 6 Aust. Div.
5. 16 Aust Inf Bde.
7,8 War Diary.
9 File.
10. 'J' Bty.
11. 2/2 Fd Regt.
12. Brigadier.

1135
300
Dile

309

SECRET.

Copy No.....

29 Dec. 40.

17 AUST. INF. DIV. INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY No. 2.

(Based on information received up to 2000 hrs. 29 Dec.

- -

Map : BARDIA NORTH |
BARDIA SOUTH | 1 : 50,000
Green Overprint.

Operations:

Patrols from our fwd. Bn. were very active during night 28/29 Dec., all patrols reaching [illegible] and only opposition encountered [illegible] by [illegible] patrol, who engaged enemy approx. strength 70 in quarry [illegible], who had probably been forced from wadi by arty fire.

2/7 Bn. relieved 2/2 Bn. during night 28/29 Dec., relief [illegible] 2220 hrs.

Air activity.

No hostile aircraft were observed in this area. Own [illegible] active.

Captured Documents.

Indicate that 131 Bn. 201 Legion of 2 [illegible] Div. [illegible] driven back to BARDIA, also 201 Reggimento Artig.

Hostile Shelling.

Increased activity on 2/6 Bn. front probably due to very [illegible] patrols and patrols being observed moving back.

The shelling of 2/7 Bn. H.Q. seems to indicate that this area is one chosen for periodical shelling, this area having been shelled earlier this week.

Reports from Units.

C Coy 2/6 Bn. 52033316.

Time	Area	No. of Rds.	Type	Direction	Tired	Damage	Type of gun.
0670 0770 1030 1100 1200 1325	Between F.P. 23 & along wire.	50 1 60	HE	From 45°	No	Nil	Not known.

D Coy. 2/6 Bn. 51083354

1220	At 194° & 600x from Coy area.	1	HE	22°	Yes	—	18-pdr.

H.Q. 2/7 Bn. 51473836

1420	200x fwd of 2/7 HQ	5	HE		—	—	Now.

The guns shelling C Coy 2/6 Bn. may be those shown on BARDIA Map Green Overprint at 52223874; those shelling 2/7 Bn. H.Q. 51483929.

Enemy Operations.

Enemy surrounded arty. O.P. at 51953049, but showed no [illegible] to fight when attacked by one pl. D Coy 2/6 and rapidly withdrew under [illegible] heavy arty and mortar fire. Pl. reached wadi 51953852.

P.T.O.

Conclusions.

Patrol reports indicate that though [illegible] is not strongly held, the enemy is on the alert and when movement is observed [illegible] fire is quickly brought to bear on the area.

The enemy appears to be waiting for us to show initiative.

Time of Signature 2050 hrs.

[illegible]
S.I.O. 17 Aust. Inf. Bde.

Copy No. 1 2/5 Bn.
2 2/6 Bn.
3 2/7 Bn.
4 6 Aust. Div.
5 16 Aust. Inf. Bde.
6 H.Q.
7-8 War Diary
9 File.

S E C R E T

6 AUST DIV INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY No. 3. Copy No: 34.

Based on information received between 2000 hrs 25 Dec and 1500 hrs 29 Dec 40

Ref Maps: BARDIA NORTH - 1/50,000 dated 26 Dec 40.
BARDIA SOUTH - 1/50,000

1. ENEMY GROUND ACTIVITY.

In the NW sector of the defences considerable digging has been reported for several days, both inside and outside the perimeter

2. ENEMY AIR ACTIVITY.

Of 10 S which attacked SALUM on 27 Dec, 3 were shot down and it is thought that at least one of these was being used for photographic purposes.

It is reported that delay action bombs are being used. These burst when the Enemy Aircraft are well clear.

3. WATER SUPPLY BARDIA & TOBRUCH.

PW report distilling plants at both BARDIA and TOBRUCH. The former is sited on the inner part of the bay below the rd leading to CAPUZZO 1½ kilos from BARDIA.

4. ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE.

Adv WDF advises that elements of 1 CCNN Div are in BARDIA in addition to unit shown in our Int Summary No. 2 Appendix. Total remains unchanged at between 20/25,000.

5. CAPTURED DOCUMENTS.

Valuable information is being obtained from captured documents, which have included Air Force Signalling Code, Army Code List dated Nov, List of Recommendations for Awards in 3 CCNN (Showing movements of units, and unit comds), and various technical textbooks.

6. OMI PATROLS

A brief summary of the information of the BARDIA Perimeter defences obtained by our patrols and OPs to 27 Dec is given on the attached trace. Following are extracts from subsequent reports:-

(a) 7 Armd Div - 25 Dec and 26 Dec.

From the ridge running approx N and S through Pt 206 (507391) Pt 211 (507395) Pt 212 (508396) a fairly good view can be obtained of the western edge only of the BARDIA defences. This ridge has previously been registered and any movement on it is [illegible]. A reconnaissance up to about 511394 drew [illegible] and probably A Tk rifle fire from the direction of [illegible] WADI AR (511393).

From Pt 206 (507391) to Pt 211 (507395) the ridge is [illegible] defined and there should be no difficulty in getting [illegible] behind it (i.e. to the 506 Grid Line). No movement [illegible] apparently be seen from the observation ladders, of [illegible] are 4.1. Further north, the ridge becomes flatter, bu[illegible] movement along it is subject to accurate shelling agai[illegible], movement [illegible] it is not apparently seen.

[illegible] north of [illegible] Grid Line (397) is very rough and [illegible] obstacle [illegible] or AFV movement. Many signs of ene[illegible], i.e., in [illegible] and wadis about 507397 and 508397,

but these have not been occupied recently. A telephone wire was found, cut and 100 yds of cable removed.

There is no obstacle to MT or AFV movement from the W up to 507 Grid Line. There are a lot of hummocks which restrict the speed of movement. The ridge previously mentioned is negotiable at all points. The going is similar up to the 511 Grid Line and from what can be seen, continues up to the BARDIA wire. In the whole of the area there is much scrub and less dust than usually is raised by movement.

It appears certain that there is no obstacle to AFV movement from the West from incl Grid Line 391 to incl Grid Line 397.

With regards to infantry movement East of Grid Line 507 it is strongly emphasised that the ground is very open and affords no cover. There is a certain amount of ground from about Grid Line 510 that is defiladed from the front but an AFV that was taken in there was heavily fired at from the direction of BIR ADET UUAR (513393). It appears that most of the ground in front of Grid Line 507 is under observation from the East and a little South of East. However, the thick scrub which runs right up to the wire would help to hide infantry movement in a poor light.

From the permanent dust cloud that appears to overhang the BARDIA defences it seems that there is much loose sand and any movement there raises a great amount of dust. It seems probable that shelling would restrict the view of the defenders.

There are several artificial mounds apparently for registration purposes and of recent construction about Grid Line 510 and 511. On 22/12 artillery fire was laid down on a line running N and S through BIR BELCHENFUS (505395). There were no troops within 1 mile at the time, nor at any time during the day.

(b) 2/6 Bn Patrol Reports.

(i) Advanced to Wadi 51863845 on bearingnof 34 deg. Investigated Sangers at entrance and found them unoccupied. Continued advance up Wadi, inspecting numerous sangers on the way. Proceeded about 2600 yds, passing dugouts in the bed of the Wadi - all appeared deserted. Struck road, in bed of Wadi, running up to enemy position. At point where first struck, branched over side of Wadi to East. Advanced along rd for 150 yds and heard engine running and also what I took to be a human voice in the distance. At Trig 176 (51943850) found a very prominent sanger on eastern side of Wadi. Crawled up to same and found it deserted. We heard no enemy during the patrol and saw no movement.

(ii) At 0230 hrs, 1 offr 1 Sgt & 6 ORs went on recce patrol on rd Argub about 400 yds then Pl Comdr examined dogleg and found digging going on corner 52043861. Run into enemy outpost at 52013851, tried to collect a prisoner and were not fired on till reached about 100 yds of post. Were outnumbered, and Bren out of action. Number encountered, about 70. Were fired on from flanks by a type of Mortar.

(iii) Met main WADI RAMLA. Travelled NORTH and followed approx 500 yds. Then WEST approx 500 yds wadi very deep to this point and practically impassable. At this point a very deep hole and caves - WADI there gets shallower. On NORTH bank wadi immediately above our posn and 50 yds from edge is frontier wire running on bearing 247 deg. Also stone building in heavily wired enclosure. Wire continues EAST to limit of vision. Frontier wire appears to run considerably further towards coast than shown on map.

(c) 15 Aust Inf Bde report 27/28 Dec.

(i) At 51233950 ditch 15ft wide, 4ft 5 ft vertical bank, with loose stones and rubble, 3ft wall on outside. Holes to take mines on either side of track crossing tank ditch, but no mines.

(ii) 2/3 Bn Fighting Patrol.-

Left at 2000 hrs and proceeded to pt 50973904, and crossed a track leading off on a bearing of 35 deg.; this track did not appear to have much traffic recently. When the patrol reached 51143911 enemy arty opened fire from a bearing of 35 deg, the interval between flash and report of detonation being 17 secs. This occured at 2130 hrs. The patrol then crossed a well-made gravel road, 12' wide at 51233913. At 51343918 an A Tk trench was reached at 2230 hrs, the A T trench at this pt was approx 6 ft deep and 8 yds wide, banks being vertical. 20 yds to the left the trench ran in a semi-circle and immediately on the opposite bank a defence post was located wired in with double apron barb wire. At 51213928 patrol contacted a Tank trench 7 ft deep by 10 yds. wide with vertical banks. There was no wire or work of any description in the WADI. The patrol reports that to contact the defensive post at 51223930 it would be necessary to cross the A Tk trench and to proceed in Wadi. The patrol reports that it is likely that the post ~~xk~~ has fixed lines on both of these approaches.

Time of signature:- 1400 hrs 29 Dec 40.

Method of Issue: DRLS, & LO's.

Capt
for Colonel,
GS 6 Aust Div

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DESCRIPTION OF DEFENCES BY PATROLS & OPs TO 27 DEC 40.

MAIN WIRE DEFENCES.

Single apron fence of barbed wire 3 in between barbs, then 7 ft of taut and loose wire and another single apron fence. Wire old but good. Safe to cut. Takes approx 20 min to cut right through wire belt. Mainly wooden posts. Trip wire 8 in from ground in front of trench.

STRONG POST.

No description yet obtained.

A Tracks along defences used considerably.

B Breastworks 2 to 3 ft high 30 yds from wire.
Ditch has 45 degrees slope on outside [illegible] ft wide at bottom, inside bank vertical, 2½ ft earth [illegible] ft stones. Deepest part 10 ft.

C As "B" but 7 ft deep

D 10ft deep, 60 degrees slope outside, inside in 3 vertical steps 3ft, 4ft and 3ft.

E 2 ft deep plus 1 ft spoil, [illegible] wide 45 degrees slope outside vertical inside. Earth in wadi [illegible] up. Mines suspected.

F 3 ft deep. Number of crossings in wire.

G Row of unoccupied gunpits 1 ft deep.

H Searchlight with 360 degrees [illegible]

J Stacks of roots 10 ft square [illegible] ft high

K 10 ft wide 5 ft deep sheer sides. Some of mines removed from minefield.

L Row of 3 pits = 4ft x 5ft x 1½ ft.

M Piles of broken stones 2 ft high 30 yds behind wire. Ditch 4'6" to 6ft, deep 9ft wide at bottom, 20ft at top, sloping outside vertical inside.

N 5ft 6 ins to 6 ft deep 15ft wide.

O 15ft wide, both sides vertical [illegible] deep [illegible] spoil, rocky bottom. Wire double apron and second row of pickets wired with [illegible] strands only. Between wire & ditch 2 ft squares of [illegible]

P 3 to 4 ft deep, [illegible] ft wide.

Q 20ft deep 10ft wide at [illegible] apron [illegible] concerting wire behind

R No A [illegible]

S 2 [illegible]

T Rows of pickets [illegible]

APPENDIX 'A' SECRET

28 DEC 40

To be superimposed over
NTH & STH 'BARDIA' Sht
Dated 28 Dec 40
SCALE 1:50,000

515
400

30' O.P. TOWER.

520
395

A
B
C
D
E

REENTRANT
HEAVILY WIRED

9'-10' DEEP, 15' WIDE

F
G
H
K
J

510
390

REENTRANT
HEAVILY WIRED

10' DEEP

M
N
L

20
390

Q
P

G
R
S
T

001865K

[redacted]

Officers	Initial	Date	Time
Comd.	[illegible]	2 Dec	12m
G.S.O.1	[illegible]	2 Dec	
G.S.O.2	[illegible]	31 D	1500
G.S.O.3	[illegible]	31 D	1600
G.S.O.3	[illegible]	31 D	1200
G.S.O.3	[illegible]	31 D	1700
L.O. 1	[illegible]	3 Dec	1950
L.O. 2	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
L.O. 3			
I. O.	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
CIPHER			
A Sqn 6 Aust Cav	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Distn:-

Circulating as above & return to "I" (C.O. 7 RTR to see)	1 copy
R.A.A. then 19 Aust. Inf. Bde	1 "
16 Aust. Inf. Bde. then 17 Aust. Inf. Bde	1 "
A.A.E	1 "

SUBJECT : Summary on BARDIA.

6 Aus Div
7 R T R

Herewith 4 copies of a Summary on BARDIA based on information received up to 27 Dec 40. The document should be studied in conjunction with the BARDIA 1 : 50,000 map with green over print.

Any comments you have based on recent patrolling will be welcomed.

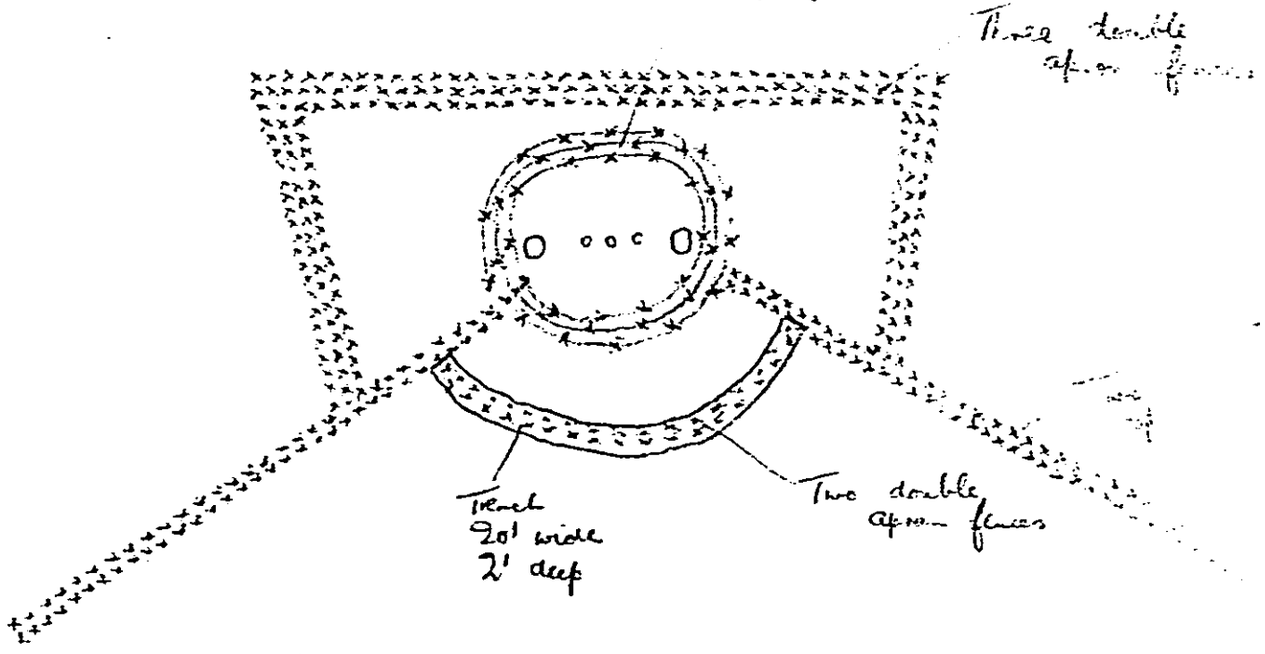
[signature] Capt
for Colonel,
General Staff, Western Desert Force.

In the Field.
28 Dec 40.

G3(I) RHE should have a copy before anyone else w.r.t. roads, minefds, defences & water supply installations
[initials] 30 Dec

Distr altered accordingly
[initials] 31/Dec

TYPICAL MAIN STRONG POINT



* These fences are not confirmed by air photos, but it is not possible to determine from photos the composition of thin wing; probably old wire

Scale – 1500 feet

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION RE BARDIA.

27 Dec 40.

Reference maps BARDIA NORTH and SOUTH 1/50,000 with green overprint. Numbers in brackets, e.g. No. 6 refer to intelligence detail.

1. Description of Chief Centres in the Area.

BARDIA.

The village is divided into two parts known as Upper and Lower BARDIA.

(i) UPPER BARDIA.

Is the main village from which the harbour takes its name. It is situated 350 ft above sea level and consists of low mud or stone houses similar to the native houses at MATRUH, mostly one-storied. Houses are situated on each side of the single main street. Buildings include civilian houses, cafes, a church, municipal offices, a lighthouse, wireless station, military Headquarters and barracks, and a marine observation station.

(ii) LOWER BARDIA.

Is situated near the harbour beach at the bottom of the WADI GERFAN about 1 mile SW of BARDIA village, to which it is connected by a steep tarmac road up the cliffs. It contains a native troops camp, storehouses, a war material dump, and the wells and pumping plant which supply water to BARDIA and the BARDIA - AUSEAT pipeline.

The harbour in Lower BARDIA has a small mole against which only small coastal vessels can tie up. Accommodation is limited, but ships up to 4,000 tons can anchor in the bay and discharge by lighter in fair weather. Dis-embarkation by lighter is almost impossible in N or NE winds.

2. General Description of Terrain.

(a) Coastline and Landing Places.

SOUTHWARDS from MARSA EL MREISA (11 miles NNW of BARDIA) the coast rises rapidly and consists of a line of cliffs rising sheer from the sea to about 300 ft in height with deep indentations where steep-sided wadis meet the sea. These cliffs continue to MARSA ER RALA whence they become less steep to SALUM.

Apart from the small harbour at BARDIA landing on this stretch of the coast is very difficult under good conditions and almost impossible in NORTH or NE winds.

The only two possible landing beaches appear to be MARSA MREGA (3½ miles SOUTH of BARDIA) and MARSA RAHEB (3½ miles NORTH of BARDIA). Both these bays are covered by the BARDIA defence system; they are open to NORTH and EAST winds, and precipitous cliffs surrounding them would make access inland difficult.

(b) Types of "Going" for M.T.

(i) Coastal Area.

The coast line for a distance of 8 miles NORTH and SOUTH of BARDIA is broken by a large number of steep sided wadis which extend inland in a general WESTWARD direction, becoming shallower and gradually dying away at distances varying from 3 to 6 miles from the coast. These wadis are impassable for M.T. throughout most of their length.

Between the wadis the ground is level and stony with sparse srub similar to the "going" WEST of SALUM.

"Going" WEST of the wadis as far as the 510 Grid is good for wheels and tracks, though slightly camel humped.

"Going" in the area EAST of the 500 Grid and NORTH of the TOBRUK rd is middling to bad. Recent rain (27 Dec 40) has made the ground very soft and boggy. The track running NORTH and SOUTH from ~~50 2541~~ 503401 to 503416 is much used and as a result of recent rain is very boggy and deeply rutted.

(ii) Inland Area.

In the area SIDI AZEIZ - BIR RAMLA - AMSEAT the ground is stony and flat, rising very slightly towards the WEST. NORTH of this and WEST of the coastal area (described above) "going" is similar and consists of a level plain ending in the escarpment which extends EAST and WEST about 1½ miles SOUTH of the main road BARDIA - TOBRUK. There are no obstacles to A.F.Vs as far NORTH as the 397 Grid, "going" being good right up to the WESTERN edge of the BARDIA defences. The ground slopes slightly down EAST of the 507 Grid and it is possible to obtain a fairly good view of the WESTERN edge only of the BARDIA defences from the ridge running NORTH and SOUTH along approx the 507 Grid.

The escarpment, which is similar in appearance to that SW of MATRUH, begins immediately WEST of the loop in the main rd two miles SW of BARDIA village and gradually becomes higher to the WEST. It overlooks the rd BARDIA - TOBRUK at an average height of 150 ft for a distance of 20 miles WEST of BARDIA after which the road bears away NW. The escarpment is serrated by many small Wadis running Northwards and is believed to be only passable by MT at a few places. It is possible for an AFV to descend the escarpment in the area NEZUA BU RIM on the 510 Grid.

NORTH of the escarpment the neighbourhood of the main rd is flat reddish earth with small hummocks similar to the going in parts between CHARING X and SIDI BARRANI.

(c) Roads.

The main asphalt rd has 16 ft width of asphalt with 3 ft earth border each side. It is in first class condition and leads from the frontier wire, via AMSEAT, Northwards where it passes WEST of BARDIA and meets the main rd BARDIA - TOBRUK at BARDIA BIVIO (Fork) about 2¼ miles WEST of BARDIA.

From BARDIA to TOBRUK the rd is similar and fit for all types of MT two way traffic.

At a point 1¾ miles SW of BARDIA village there is

a loop in the main rd from which the old rd leads NE into BARDIA. This rd is metalled but rough and is passable to all types of MT. It descends steeply with one hair-pin bend, down the escarpment into the Wadi GERFAN (SOUTH of the village) and then runs parallel with the harbour beach (~~and not as shown on the 1/100,000 map~~) where it joins an asphalt rd rising steeply with one hair-pin bend into the village.

(d) Tracks.

The area BARDIA - AMSEAT contains a network of tracks of which only three are of real importance i.e. (i) SIDI AZEIZ to a point immediately SOUTH of where the Wadi SCEGGAS crosses the main road AMSEAT - BARDIA. (ii) SIDI AZEIZ to a point on the main road AMSEAT - BARDIA 1¾ miles NORTH of AMSEAT.

The above two tracks connect at SIDI AZEIZ with a good metalled road (the Trigh CAPUZZO) running to EL ADEM which provides an alternative route to TOBRUK.

(iii) The track leading SOUTH from AMSEAT to the frontier wire and thence via SIDI OMAR to SCEGGA and GIARABUB.

All the above tracks are unmetalled but are kept in good repair. They are liable to cut up under heavy MT traffic.

3. WATER RESOURCES.

(a) General.

The water supply from local sources at BARDIA is estimated at at least 200 tons a day. These sources used to supply drinking water to CAPUZZO, SIDI AZEIZ, MADDALENA and GIARABUB in addition to the garrison of BARDIA itself.

The quality of the water at BARDIA is slightly saline, and it may be presumed that owing to abnormal demands in recent months the salinity has increased. The water is however quite fit for white tps to drink.

(b) Pipelines.

(i)

A pipeline from BARDIA used to supply CAPUZZO. It starts from wells in the Wadi GERFAN (No.15), approx 1½ miles from BARDIA Village, and runs beside the main CAPUZZO road.

(ii)

A second pipeline runs from near the mouth of the Wadi SCEGGAS and joins the main pipeline 2 miles SW of BARDIA (at the prominent loop).

(iii)

A third pipeline comes from the Wadi RAHEB (No.16) 4 miles NORTH of BARDIA and running round the inside of the defences joins the main BARDIA - CAPUZZO pipeline at PONTICELLI (515392) where the Wadi crosses the main road. There are two branches from this pipe. At the point where it crosses the main TOBRUK road, a branch line runs Westward alongside and SOUTH of the rd for 15 Kms where

it fills a cistern. (This line probably supplied tps located in the Wadi CHARRUBA area). The second branch runs from Pt 145 (513399) SOUTH to the cantoniere house on the main road.

(c) Wells.

(i)

In the Wadi GERFAN water is obtained from an underground grotto, artificially constructed, which can produce up to 200 tons a day. The grotto is located inside the Southern face of the Wadi opposite the point where wells are shown on the 1/50,000 map. Water is slightly brackish and becomes more so if excessive pumping is carried out. It is this source which supplies BARDIA Village and (previously) CAPUZZO.

There are four 60 HP Diesel engines installed in a chamber above the grotto to pump out the water.

(ii) Wadi RAHEB.

NB. Information from PW thought to be reasonably accurate.

There is a deep well here about 80 metres below ground level and about 500 yards inland from the Wadi beach. The quality of the water obtained here is stated to be good and better than that obtained in the Wadi GERFAN. Pumping machinery similar to that in the Wadi GERFAN has been recently installed.

Output of this well not known.

(iii) Wadi SCEMMAS.

Work on a cistern or gallery similar to that in Wadi GERFAN was started in June 1940. Pumping machinery was also to be installed. It is not known whether the work has yet been completed. Air photos show a pipeline running from the top of Wadi SCEMMAS escarpment to the GERFAN pipeline about 300 yards SOUTH of the prominent road loop.

(d) Condensing Plant.

There are reported to be two distilling plants situated on the sea shore in the inner part of the bay below the road leading up the hill to CAPUZZO, at a spot 1½ kilos from BARDIA.

(e) Cisterns.

Three cisterns are visible on air photos at PONTICELLI WEST of the main rd. A PW has stated the total capacity there is 1000 tons.

Groups of cisterns have been reported in the past SOUTH of the TOBRUK rd and about 4 miles WEST of BARDIA (fed from the RAHEB pipeline) and also at BIR SLEMAN (514388). The existence of these is not confirmed by air photos.

Each of the main Strong Points round BARDIA is reported to have a tank containing a ton of water. To these must be added previously existing Roman cisterns scattered within the defended area round BARDIA, and the cisterns at the end of the branch pipeline 15 Kms up the TOBRUK rd. The total amount of stored water is estimated at about 8 - 9,000 tons.

(f) Boosting Stns.

None on the BARDIA pipeline system, sufficient pressure being maintained at the main pumps to ensure delivery. (No.14) in the green overprint is incorrect and is probably a hut connected with the PONTICELLI cisterns.

5. GARRISON.

The present garrison of BARDIA is estimated at approx 20,000 - 23,000 Italian troops consisting of portions of the following Divs :

62 & 63 Metro Divs.
1 & 2 CC.NN. Divs.

In addition there is XXX Sector G.A.F. consisting of about 4,000 troops divided into eighteen coys, six to each of the three sub sectors of the defences (GERFAN, PONTICELLI and MERSEIGA).

A portion of 10 "VITTORIO EMANUELE" Cav Regt, dismounted and equipped with Hy M.Gs, is reported at BARDIA and it is also possible that a small part of 64 Div escaped following its defeat at BUQBUQ on 11 Dec.

Arty is estimated at 60 Fd, 24 Med and 16 Hy AA guns.

The whole garrison is grouped under command of XXIII Corps (Comd Gen. BERGONZOLI).

6. DEFENCES.

(i) Layout of Perimeter Defences.

A chain of wired strong points placed at intervals of 500-800 yds runs in a rough semi-circle from the WEST end of the Wadi MAATRED to a point on the coast 7,000 yds NORTH of BARDIA. The semi-circle is completed to the coast by a line of secondary unwired posts along the NORTH side of the Wadi MAATRED.

There is a switch of strong points which runs due EAST to the sea from a point on the main chain 4000 yds NW from the head of the Wadi MAATRED.

At an average distance of 400 yds inside the main chain including the Wadi MAATRED defences is a line of secondary posts most of which are wired.

Over and above these defensive lines various minor defence works have recently been made well inside the perimeter. They may possibly form a third line about halfway between the outer defences and BARDIA. These defences consist only of low walls.

4,000 yds of coast NORTH of the 'Frontier Wire' is defended by M.G. posts dug into the side of the cliff. Similar defence posts extend over 2,000 yds of coast in the area of Wadi RAHAB.

(ii) Defence Sectors.

The BARDIA defences are divided into three sub sectors (see map) which are in turn sub-divided into fourteen smaller defence sectors. M.Gs of these sub-sectors are shown on the map.

(iii) Description of Strong Points. (see attached sketch)

The main defence posts consist of three or more sangars in a straight line, those at each end being the largest; the distance between the end sangars is about 40 yds. There is reported to be underground accommodation for the garrison and each post is self contained in ammunition and water supplies.

Round these sangars there are reported to be three concentric single fences of barbed wire. This is not definitely confirmed by air photos. The diameter of this ring is 80-90 yds and the fences are about one yd apart.

40 yds in front of the post and concentric with the wire fences ~~one yard apart round the back of~~ is a semi-circular /two trench 20 ft broad and 2 ft deep. In this trench are/double apron fences one yard apart round the back of the post on the ~~et~~ other three sides are three double apron fences one yard apart.

Posts are also formed by two double apron fences one yard apart. This fence runs in shallow 'V's between posts.

In a few isolated cases there are odd stretches of wire seemingly without pickets in front of this latter fence.

The secondary posts on the WESTERN face and SOUTH of the TOBRUK road are wired and consist of strong points equipped with M.Gs with a semi-circular double wire fence in front which also surrounds the post on the other three sides.

Unwired secondary posts are simple strong points equipped with M.Gs. Some are built up but the majority are dug down.

(iv) Armament Garrison of Strong Points.

The main posts are believed to contain a platoon with three M.Gs and an A/Tk gun while the secondary posts vary from a similar armament to single M.Gs.

Forty two main strong points and sixty three subsidiary posts have been accurately located.

(v) A/T Obstacles.

Road Blocks.

Exist on both the TOBRUK AND CAPUZZO roads. On the CAPUZZO road the block consists of three iron girders supported by brick pillars.

/.....7

An A.Tk trench runs in shallow Vs from the head of Wadi MAATRED right round the perimeter as far as the TOBRUK road. Dimensions average 10' - 12' broad and 6'- 8' deep, sloping on our side and vertical on the enemy side. NORTH of the TOBRUK rd the trench appears very shallow and not so wide but work is undoubtedly still in progress.

Northwards from Wadi MAATRED for 10,000 yards (as far as ~~88~~ SP 37) the spoil of the trench is thrown on the inside only. Beyond this pt it is thrown on both sides except for a 1,000 yards immediately SOUTH of the TOBRUK rd where the trench is only 6' wide and the spoil thrown on the inside - for 400 yards SOUTH of this stretch there is at present a gap.

Five A.Tk minefields exist, according to captured maps dated Aug 40, varying in size between 300 yds and 1,000 yds long in front of the A.Tk trench in the PONTICELLI Sub-Sector on either side of the CAPUZZO road.

In addition twenty-two of the strong points have a small A.Tk minefield of their own. Patrols report that the minefield actually astride the CAPUZZO road has been taken up (probably owing to casualties to Italian personnel).

Natural Obstacles. Wadi MAATRED and other Wadis extending inland to an approximate line halfway between the coast and the road BARDIA - CAPUZZO. In addition the escarpment SOUTH of the TOBRUK rd except in certain isolated places (See para 2(b) above).

(vi) Wire.

The general system of wire defences has already been described in sub para (i) above. Patrols reported having encountered both single and double apron wire after crossing the A.Tk trench. On one occasion they were able to roll underneath it. Concertina wire has been reported on several occasions - this may be Dannaert. The wire is supported by wooden and not iron posts. There is a possibility that portions can be electrified though this requires confirmation. Disconnected stretches of wire between the trench and the main wire may be Dannaert.

(vii) Field and Med Arty.

There are twenty-six btys of which six are medium and some may be fixed defence guns. They are concentrated almost entirely in the Southern portion of the defences, there being only three btys visible in the NORTH. Positions of bty s from air photos are shown on the map.

(viii) Coast Defence and AA Arty.

Coast Defence guns (possibly up to 4) are believed to be situated on the cliffs immediately NORTH of Wadi RAHEB.

A bty of 4 CD guns is situated on the promontory on the SE side of the harbour entrance. Calibre not known.

4 to 6 CD guns, calibre reported 75 mm (3 inch) are in position on the cliffs between 1000 and 2000 yds SOUTH of Wadi HREGA.

Four heavy AA Bty positions each of four guns have been located within the perimeter evenly spaced from NORTH to SOUTH.

(ix) Searchlights.

A captured map unfortunately undated shows that there are 12 searchlights within the defences of which 10 are included in strong points. Four of them are 120 cm diameter and the remaining eight 90, 75 or 50 cm in diameter.

It is not certain whether all these lights are fixed. Mobile searchlights have been reported on more than one occasion.

G.S."I".
Adv H.Q.,
Western Desert Force.

23 Dec 40.

1120 Idan

Report on Interrogation of the following British O.Rs, belonging to 2 Queens Regt, rescued from on board the Schooner "ZINGARELLA" by the Royal Navy on night 28/29 December 1940.

LIST 'A'.

Sgt WATSON.
Cpl STEWING.
Pte ELEINGTON.
Pte GENTLE.
Pte HUGGINS.
Pte MUSCAT.

List 'B'.

Pte SMITH.
Pte LOVELOCK.
Pte HARPER.

Those mentioned in List 'A' belong to a patrol under Command of Sgt WATSON which went out at dawn on Christmas Day to reconnoitre the enemy positions in the Wadi MAATRED. The patrol appears to have lost its way, and having remained in observation on the SOUTHERN slopes of the wadi, were surrounded and obliged to surrender to a superior enemy force at about

Those in List 'B' belonged to a patrol under the Command of Captain LLOYD OWEN, who were despatched on the evening of 24 Dec to reconnoitre the area Wadi MAATRED, and if possible obtain a prisoner. The patrol were fired on and found it impossible to achieve their object. The three men captured appeared to have got separated from the rest of their patrol, and at dawn on 25 Dec found themselves completely surrounded by the enemy.

Orinions differed considerably as to the enemy positions in the Wadi MAATRED. It appears that there is wire running up and down the bottom, and that the enemy frequently patrol the SOUTHERN slope. Having been captured all the prisoners were taken to a Headquarters post which from air photographs appears to be located at 5207/3868 Here they were subjected to a preliminary interrogation at which only questions such as name, rank, number, and circumstances of capture were asked. From here those mentioned in List 'B' were marched about 2 miles, and then put into one of our 15 cwt trucks and driven to what appears to have been Fortress Headquarters, BARDIA. Those mentioned in List 'A' were taken by lorry the whole way to the same place. List 'A' did not actually meet List 'B' until they were all put into the same tent at Fortress Headquarters.

The men were able to give very little information regarding either the route followed or particulars regarding defences on the way from the point where they were first interrogated to Fortress Headquarters. The following points however emerged:

(a) All agreed that there were a considerable number of troops dispersed the whole way along the route. Most of them were engaged in digging or carrying stones about. All were Italian troops and one man at least thought there were some blackshirts too.
(b) They were taken through wire at frequent intervals some of which appeared to have been a type of dannaert. At one point a "knife rest" was raised to let the party through.
(c) NO strong points and NO A/Tk trench was met at any point (this is to be expected as the men must have been taken well inside the outer perimeter).
(d) There were a large number of vehicles of all types and motor bicycles dispersed the whole way along the route, but at NO point were either tanks or guns seen. So far as can be gathered the road taken was NORTHWARDS about 2 miles from the sea as lorries were continually going down into wadis and out again. In each of these wadis there were large numbers of troops dug into the sides of the wadi.

(e) One man stated that they got on to a Tarmac road for a short way before turning off again for the Headquarters, but this was not confirmed by the others.

Air photographs were shown to all the men, and so far as can be ascertained the Headquarters to which they were taken is located in the wadi SE of the prominent road loop map reference 517994. It would seem to be near the suspected ammunition dump in that area, which has been successfully bombed on more than one occasion.

The Headquarters itself was located in a deep wadi into each side of which offices and sleeping quarters were dug. There are apparently a number of natural caves, and these have been cemented to make comfortable offices. All the men agreed there were large numbers of troops dispersed throughout the length of this wadi, also a number of vehicles especially motor bicycles which were heaped together in sangars. Across the top of the wadi there is a wireless aerial supported by two masts on each side. The prisoners were placed in a small tent about 5 minutes walk from the offices at which they were all in turn interrogated. During the period of their stay (25-28 Dec inc.) each man was subjected to at least two or three interrogations; the men were told to reply in the negative if they did not know the answer to a question and were not pressed in any way with the exception of Pte BURGAT (Maltese) who they subjected to several more interrogations than the others, and on refusing to reply to his interrogator, was put into chains, and in general maltreated. He even stated the Italians threatened to shoot him.

The following is a list of the main questions asked to prisoners:

(i) Particulars of the 2" Mortar.
(ii) What are "Creepers" and "Crawlers"?
(iii) Which Unit does the Code Name BEAM belong to (the men were asked the Units of several Code Names, but they were not able to remember any except BEAM).
(iv) Details regarding Pl., Coy, Bn, Bde and Divisional organisation.
(v) The location of the AUSTRALIANS especially their Arty, and also where the INDIANS had got to. The location of the Leicesters, A & SH and Rifle Bde was also asked.
(vi) The use made by us of captured material, especially their Diesel lorries.
(vii) Whether we were getting many supplies through SALUM by sea.
(viii) The armament of the Bren Carrier.
(ix) Whether we were using the Boyes A/Tk Rifle.
(x) Quality of food and clothing issued to troops.
(xi) When were we going to attack BARDIA?
(xii) The location of ammunition and petrol dumps.
(xiii) What damage did their own Arty and bombing do?
(xiv) Was Arty attached to each In?

As far as can be ascertained no information of importance was given away by the prisoners.

On the afternoon of 28 Dec the men were taken in a closed lorry to BARDIA Harbour for embarkment. All agreed that they reached the Tarmac road about 10 minutes after leaving the Headquarters, and they all remember crossing two road bridges and flanking to the right where the CAPUZZO road joins the TOBRUK Road. They did not naturally go into BARDIA village itself but turned right handed down the hill into the Harbour. Before getting on board the Schooner they saw three officers, whom they were told were Generals and a fourth General who appeared considerably senior to all others present, who they described as stoutish with a small beard. This may have been BERGONZOLI.

After being at sea for two or three hours the men were roused by hearing a shot fired across the bows of the Schooner, and immediately after the Maltese, Pte MUSCAT was summoned by the Captain and told that a British Destroyer had ordered them to stop. After the Destroyer had been informed that there were British prisoners on board the Schooner, the prisoners themselves took charge and the Schooner followed the Destroyer back to SALUM. In the afternoon of the 29 Dec the British prisoners were transfered to H.M.S. "[illegible]", where they spent the night, and were landed at SALUM at midday on the 30 Dec.

R Prior

Major,
G.S."I"., Adv. Western Desert Force.

In the Field.
31 Dec 40.

Received 1300 hrs 2 Jan 40 1134

[illegible]

[illegible]

COPY NO. [illegible]

ADVANCED WESTERN DESERT FORCE INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 7.

Based on information received from 2000 hrs 25 Dec to 2000 hrs 28 Dec 40.

1. GENERAL.

The situation at the front remains unchanged. Active patrolling continues round the BARDIA defences and by our armoured forces as far as EL ADEM.

Enemy bombers attacking SALUM have been successfully engaged both by heavy AA and fighters.

The RAF continue to bomb enemy rearward [illegible] with marked success.

2. ENEMY GROUND ACTIVITY.

Work continues on the BARDIA defences particularly in the area NORTH of the TOBRUK road which is revealed by air photos to be considerably weaker than on the Western and Southern sides of the perimeter. In addition the enemy has moved the majority of his MT and probably a large proportion of supplies and ammo to this Northern area probably to get them as far from the range of our guns as possible. On the morning of 26 Dec a continuous stream of heavily loaded lorries were observed moving in a North-Westerly direction - numbers were estimated at [illegible] in the hour.

A dawn recce on 26 Dec by a carrier towards the [illegible] sector got within 100 yards of the wire and engaged enemy patrols; this carrier was attacked by an enemy med tank which emerged from the defences at BIR ALLET UBAR and fired unsuccessfully at the carrier before withdrawing again.

Patrols confirm that enemy sentries around the BARDIA defences are now more alert than at first and it is difficult to reconnoitre strong points at night without drawing [illegible] fire.

There are about 45 derelict vehicles in the [illegible] CHARRUBA.

Enemy med Arty continues to shell SALUM intermittently without causing any serious damage.

Early on 27 Dec patrols reported [illegible] Med Tanks and 50 MT just outside the TOBRUK defences SOUTH of the BARDIA road.

Tac/R has reported no movement except our own between TOBRUK and BARDIA with the exception of a coln of heavy lorries with trailers which was seen approaching EL ADEM from TOBRUK early on 28 Dec. A later air report stated there was no movement on the GOBI track and no movement at EL ADEM from which it may be deduced that the coln visited EL ADEM to evacuate stores and then returned to TOBRUK or else the enemy intends to reoccupy EL ADEM.

Our patrols have found several unoccupied defended posns just SOUTH of the Trigh CAPUZZO and EAST of EL ADEM.

3. OWN GROUND ACTIVITY.

Constant patrolling of the BARDIA defences continues. Further information obtained is printed in para [illegible] below.

In addition patrols have watched the entire coastline as far as the TOBRUK defences. Slight [illegible] have been suffered as a result of air straffing.

Effective harassing shoots have been carried out on enemy heavy gun posns within the BARDIA defences.

On 26 Dec the enemy post at HALFA (on the frontier EAST of GIARABUB) was captured and burnt.

4. AIR ACTIVITY.

(a) Enemy.

The enemy's air effort has been restricted to the bombing of SALUM and the machine-gunning of our adv patrols.

SALUM raids.

At 1545 hrs on 26 Dec 10 bombers escorted by 40 fighters attacked the pier. All bombs dropped wide of the target area and caused no damage or casualties. Two CR 42s were shot down and two more probably. In addition one S 79 was seen by our adv tps to be belching smoke and losing height rapidly and may be presumed to have forcedlanded.

At 1615 hrs on 27 Dec 8 bombers escorted by only 7 fighters were employed in the attack. 3 bombers were shot down and possibly 1 fighter.

On 28 Dec no bombing was reported.

(b) Own.

Fighter Patrols.

These have been maintained over the area SALUM - BARDIA and without loss to themselves have shot down three bombers and two, possibly five, fighters.

Arty/R Shoots.

These have been taking place daily on the BARDIA defences.

Bombing.

Enemy rearward aerodromes have been successfully bombed every night; no details are available.

Information just received states that during the attack on BENINA aerodrome on night 17/18 Dec, 12 SM were set on fire and 6 more either destroyed or very seriously damaged. It is estimated that approx 40 SM were rendered u/s - much damage was also caused to the whole hangar area.

On the night 20/21 Dec our aircraft destroyed 20 SM on the ground at CASTEL BENITO (near TRIPOLI) and probably damaged many others. Five hangers and administrative buildings were hit and an ammn dump believed to have been blown up. The bomb dump was also set on fire.

5. BARDIA DEFENCES. Ref Map BARDIA NORTH & SOUTH 1/50,000, with Green overprint.

(a) Area PONTICELLI Sub-Sector as far SOUTH as the CAPUZZO road.

At strong point No. 49 the A.T. trench is 10 ft deep. Further SOUTH the depth decreases when crossing the Wadi SCHEIAS, as previously reported. Immediately WEST of the CAPUZZO road however it is again 10 ft deep. The average width in this area seems to be 12 ft.

Single apron wire has been encountered 150 - 200 yards beyond the ditch. 30 - 40 yards beyond this again breastwork 2 - 3 ft high have been met.

Men have frequently been seen working on the wire fence in this sector following our Arty shoots.

(b) Area CAPUZZO road to Wadi BATTICO.

No. 1 strong point has a scaffolding OP. The post itself does not appear to be strongly wired. The enemy in this sector are not reported to keep a particularly alert watch.

Immediately EAST of the CAPUZZO road the trench is 10 ft deep and approx 12 ft wide. In the area Strong Points Nos. 13 to 15 the trench is 20 ft wide and 3 to 4 ft deep with straight sides.

Area NORTH of TOBRUK Road.

Energetic digging in progress.

6. BARDIA GARRISON

Strength is estimated at approx 20,000 Italian Tps consisting of portions of the following Divs:

62 and 63 Metro and 2 CC.NN. Divs.

Of the above it seems that 62 and 63 Divs are slightly depleted and that 2 CC NN. is less at least one Legion.

To the above must be added XXX Sector G.A.F. consisting of about 4,000 Italian Tps divided into eighteen Coys, six to each Sub-Sector of the defences (GERFAN, PONTICELLI and MEREIGA). It also appears possible that a small portion of 64 Div escaped from [illegible] (or were not fwd with their Div) and that this small portion is in the process of being evacuated to TOBRUK by coastal steamer.

Arty is estimated at 70 Field, 24 Med and 16 AA Guns.

Tanks are estimated at portions of two Lt Tk Bns (62 and portion of 63) and either a Coy or a Bn of Med (possibly M 13).

All the above are grouped together under XXIII Corps (Comd Gen. BERGONZOLI). Gen. AMICO commands BARDIA Address.

7. TOBRUK DEFENCES

Tac/R reports that there is a trench running NORTH and SOUTH West of the rd TOBRUK - EL ADEM outside the perimeter. It was estimated that the trench connecting the strong points on the perimeter has been fairly recently dug.

Early on 26 Dec there were approx 100 MT dispersed in the SE portion of the defences.

Air photos show three Btys of Arty and some huts at the heads of the Wadis 7 - 10,000 yards SE of TOBRUK. Exact locations are as follows:

One in the easternmost tributary of the Wadi BIAD
Two in the fork at the head of the Wadi DALIA.

8. ENEMY ACTIVITY BY SEA

At 1710 hrs on 27 Dec an enemy destroyer with letters PR marked on her bows, appeared off MERSA LUCCH and started to shell that area. It was successfully engaged by our Arty and on being hit retired Westwards under cover of a smokescreen.

9. TOTALS OF PRISONERS AND WAR MATERIAL CAPTURED.

Prisoners evacuated from the main SIDI BARRANI battle area totalled 35,949 on 23 Dec 40. There were still several thousands more in the fwd areas. The total of war material captured is still unknown but an early rough count shows that the Italians have lost at least 900 lorries and tractors; 23 Med Tks; 45 Lt Tks; 196 Guns; 12 Heavy and 50 LT AA Guns; 60 A.Tk guns and over 900 Machine and Automatic Guns.

10. ARMY ORGANISATION.

(a) Tanks.

A cap. doc. dated 31 Aug 40 shows that the Tank Group [illegible] was formed on 29 Aug under direct cond of Marshal GRAZIANI and not under cond of Gen. BABINI. The Group contained all/Tanks in LIBYA, both Lt and Med. /the
Organisation was as follows:

Two Tank Raggruppamenti
One Mixed Bn (with [illegible] Raggr)
One Lt Tank Bn (allotted to XXI Corps)

The 1 Raggr. contained 1 M.11 Bn, XX Lt Tk Bn and 62 & 63 Lt Tk Bns. 2 Raggr. contained one Coy of Med Tks (from 9 Bn, the remainder being with [illegible]), XX Lt Tk Bn [illegible] and 61 Tk Bns. Note. 9 Bn must have been re-formed since July 40; PW states that 60 Tk Bn was also with 2 Raggr. but this is unconfirmed.

The 1 Raggr. was ordered to come under cond of [illegible] Corps and 2 Raggr. to come under cond Group of Lib Divs.

Comment. It seems that both Tank Raggruppamenti were [illegible] at the time of the Italian advance in Sep. With ref to para 9 above, though exact figures for the number of tanks captured are not yet available it seems almost certain that the greater part of the Med Tanks (M.11s) in the two Raggruppamenti have been accounted for and that the equivalent of at least one Lt Tk Bn (portions of 9 and 63 Bns) has also been captured. The following Lt Tk Bns therefore remain:

XX, XXI, 60, 61, 62 and possibly a Coy of 63.

Regarding Med Tks, there are no identifications for additional M.11 Bns but this Type of Tank has been identified recently at TOBRUK and also probably at BARDIA. In neither case did the number seen exceed a Coy. Prisoners have stated there are some M.13 Tanks in BARDIA (numbers not known) and a cap. doc. identified the 3 Bn of M.13s at TOBRUK.

(b) Arty.

A cap. doc. indicates that Corps Arty Regts [illegible] have two 105/28 Gps and two mechanised 75/27 Gps or one [illegible] Gp and one 149/13 Gp.

The establishment of Army Arty Regts in [illegible] appears to be four 149/35 Gps.

Note. "BARDIA BILL" is believed to be a Bty of 149/35 [illegible] belonging to Army Arty (max range 17,560 metres).

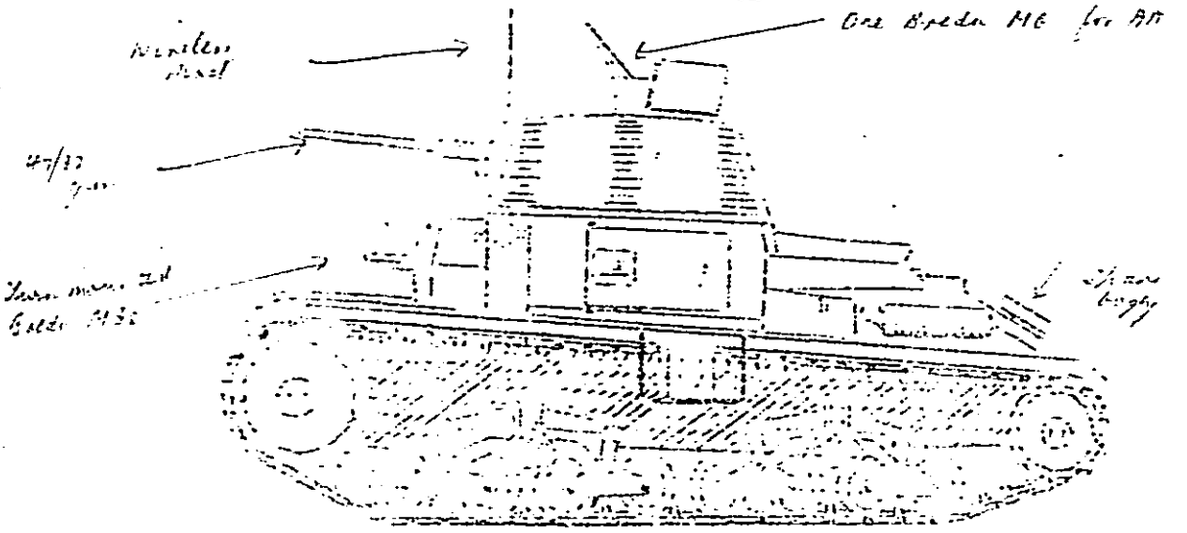
In the Field,
31 Dec 40.

[illegible] Colonel
General Staff, Adv Western Desert Force

SUPPLEMENT NO. 1.

(attached to Adv. Western Desert Force Intelligence Summary No. 7)

ITALIAN M. 13 MEDIUM TANK.



PARTICULARS.

Length.	16' 0"
Breadth	7' 6"
Ground clearance	1' 2"
Maximum gradient	45 degrees
Vertical obstacle	2' 11"
Trench crossing	6' 7"
Maximum fording depth	3' 3"
Transverse stability in motion	40 degrees
Transverse stability stationary	45 "
Maximum speed on roads	19 m.p.h.
Maximum speed across country	8 m.p.h.
Armament	One - 47/32 cannon in revolving turret.
	One - 8 mm. Breda MG in revolving turret, twin mounted with cannon.
	Two - 8 mm. Breda MGs, twin mounted in casemate.
	One - 8 mm. Breda MG in reserve, and for AA fire.
Turret	Power traverse 360 degrees.
	Contains one periscope on each side.
Crew	Four (Commander, 1 driver, 2 Gunners of whom one is wireless operator).
Engine	Identical to that of M.11/39 i.e. 8 cylinder 105 h.p. water cooled.
Radio	Receiver and Transmitter.

In the Field,
31 Dec 40.

954

SECRET.

Copy No 16.

WARNO DIV INT SUMMARY No 95.

(based on information received up to 2000 hrs 28 Dec).

1. GENERAL.

The general situation remains unchanged. The enemy appear to be strengthening the defences of BARDIA, particularly on the NW into which area they have also moved most of their MT. They visited EL ADEM for a short time on 28 Dec with a coln of vehicles protected by AFV's but appear to have retired back to TOBRUK. Our forward patrols have suffered slight casualties as the result of air 'strafing'.

Our gunners successfully engaged an enemy warship and shot down two bombers.

2. ENEMY GROUND ACTIVITY.

This has been confined chiefly to within the BARDIA defences where the enemy appears to be engaged in strengthening his defences and in shelling in reply to our harassing fire. His Outposts are well on the alert and any of our patrols that are suspected or discovered are fired upon. The chief theatre of activity inside the defences is in the North West corner and probably indicates that the enemy is strengthening the comparatively neglected defences in this area and is moving his MT as far from the range of our guns as possible.

Tac/R at 0805 hrs 28 Dec reported a coln of 30 lorries flanked by AFV's approaching EL ADEM from the direction of TOBRUK.

Later at 1255 hrs a Tac/R reported [illegible] rds BARDIA - EL ADEM - TOBRUK - EL ADEM and BIR GOBI - SIDI OMAR from which it would seem that the coln above may have visited EL ADEM possibly to evacuate stores and then have returned to TOBRUK or else an impending occupation of EL ADEM.

With GAMBUT and EL ADEM evacuated it would seem that enemy positions East of TOBRUK are confined to the defended positions of TOBRUK and BARDIA and the garrison at [illegible].

3. OWN TROOPS.

Patrols are being maintained in the area GAMBUT - EL ADEM where enemy fighter opposition has been encountered.

[illegible] Sty RHA shot down two S 79's on 27 Dec.

See para 6 for details of 1 RHA's engagement with an enemy warship.

4. ENEMY AIR ACTIVITY.

Has been mainly concentrated over the SALUM area but has caused no damage since the raid on Dec 24.

5. OWN AIR ACTIVITY.

Our bombers again visited the aerodromes of DERNA, BARCA and TOBRUK on the night 23/24 Dec. Fighters shot down two with a possible two more CR 42s on Dec 26.

A plane described as a SAVOIA type either 81 or 79 was found 28 Dec at 491414. It was burnt out and over a week old. 6 bodies were found inside.

6. ENEMY ACTIVITY BY SEA.

At 1710 hrs 27 Dec an enemy destroyer with letters PR marked on her bows, appeared off MERSA LUCCA and started to shell that area. It was successfully engaged by a troop of 1 RHA and on being hit retired Westwards under cover of a smoke screen at 1720 hrs having caused no damage or casualties.

7. WATER SUPPLY AT TOBRUK AND BARDIA.

Prisoners statements indicate that there are sea water distilling plants at both BARDIA and TOBRUK. Two distilleries are reported at BARDIA on the sea shore 1½ kms from BARDIA. It is thought that there are 4 distilleries at TOBRUK, two being near the Naval base and two on the beach. These are said to have been badly damaged and other reports say that salty water from a short pipeline 3 kms from VAHO, was distributed by cart from house to house.

8. BARDIA DEFENCES.

In the area immediately East of the main BARDIA-CAPUZZO road an A/Tk minefield probably originally laid on each side of the road was examined and found to have been removed. This confirms previous reports that mines had been removed in the area due to casualties to Italian personnel. The A/tk ditch 1,000 yds East of the rd is 12-14 ft broad and 9-10 ft deep, with a sloping face on our side and a vertical face on the enemy side.

There is a tank trap and wire was encountered at 51493907 and where first touched was 10 ft wide and 5 ft deep with sheer sides.

A patrol whose role was to investigate the enemy defences between 51853881 to 51763893 found an A/Tk ditch at 51843870 which was 3 to 4 ft deep including the soil which was thrown up on either side and some 20 ft across. The bottom of the ditch appeared to be flat and both sides straight.

...../3.

In the area 51843877 an A/tk obstacle was discovered running due North and South. It consisted of a ditch about 15 ft across, both the near and far sides being straight and the depth of the obstacle, including spoil, which was thrown up on both sides, varied from 4 ft to 6 ft.

The overall width of the A/tk obstacle appears to be 10 ft at the top and 6 ft at the bottom sloping on our side and perpendicular on the enemy side.

No minefields have yet been encountered though they almost certainly exist. The pressure required to set off an Italian Tank mine is believed to be 300 lbs.

From captured documents it is known that the Italians in July were aiming at dumping one months supplies for 15,000 men at BARDIA. Be this so, the present garrison of 20,000 should have enough for 3 weeks full rations. Some of this dump may have been moved to the forward areas, but it can be assumed that there are fairly adequate food supplies in BARDIA.

9. ENEMY ARTILLERY.

Captured documents reveal that : -

(a) 46 Group and possibly 42 Group of XXII Arty Bagg were attached to 1 LIB DIV. Both groups were equipped with 105/28 guns though only six guns of the calibre had been located on the battlefield by salvage parties up to 27 Dec.

(b) It is almost certain that the whole of the 202 Arty Bgt has been eliminated.

(c) 61 Div received the following Arty reinforcements : -

1 Group of 12 Div Arty Regt			(100/17)	Remainder of Regt in CYRENAICA.
1 " " XXI	"	"	(105/28)	
3 " " "	"	"	(75/27)	
69 & 70 close support Btys			(65/17)	
202 A/tk Coy (47 mm).				

NOTE: It seems as though the majority of the artillery at SOFAFI successfully evacuated to BARDIA.

(d) 4 Group of XXI Arty Regt (75/27) is with 62 Div.

(e) 43 Arty Regt of 61 Div is probably now with the rest of its Div in TOBRUK area.

(f) Arty captured at SIDI OMAR on 19 Dec belonged to 42 Arty Regt of 60 Div which div is believed to be on its way to, or now at, TOBRUK.

(g) Of the old XXI Corps Arty Regt, three Groups are accounted for in above paras (a) and (d). The remaining second Group may also be with 62 Div.

The XXI Arty Bagg (four groups of 149/13 Howe) is probably split up between the defended positions of BARDIA AND TOBRUK.

...../4.

10. GROUPING OF DIVISIONS INTO ARMY CORPS.

The latest distribution list of the XXIII Corps available (dated 11 Nov) shows it to be composed of 62, 63 and 2 CCNN Divs, portions of all of which are now in BARDIA under the command of Genl. BERGONSOLI.

As regards the XXI Corps, it may consist of 60 and 61 Divs, the latter in TOBRUK and the former also there or in process of moving up from TRIPOLITANIA.

11. COMPOSITION OF 61 "SIRTE" DIV.

G.O.C. Div Genl DELLA MURA.

x69 Inf Regt ANCONA
70 " "
43 Arty " (1st Gp 100/17, 2nd & 3rd 75/27)
%61 AA/A/Tk Bty
261 " "
61 A/Tk Coy (47 mm)
61 MG Bn.
61 Mixed Eng Bn.
61 M/C Coy.
61 Complement Bn.

x The close support Btys of 69th & 70th Inf Regts were attached to the CIRENE Div some time ago. Their place being taken by the close Support Btys of 66 Inf Regt (60 Div) & 39 Inf Regt (25 Div).

% The 61st AA/A.Tk Bty was allotted to 1 LIB DIV. Its place has been taken by that of the 17th PAVIA DIV.

12. ENEMY EQUIPMENT.

A bomb described in Appx "A" has been found at GAMBUT aerodrome. It is painted bright blue with a scarlet nose. It is probable that this type of bomb was carried in the CAPRONI "BERGAMASCHI" shot down on 23 Dec, but it is not known whether it is HE or incendiary.

13. ENEMY TANKS.

Captured documents indicate that a recognition sign consisting of a white disc 70 cm in diameter is now painted on the roof of the turret of M 11, M 13 and M 6 tanks and on the engine hatch of the CV 3.

(See Appx "B" for unit signs).

Time of Signature.....2140 hr.....

Method of Issue.....Life.....

Colonel,
General Staff.

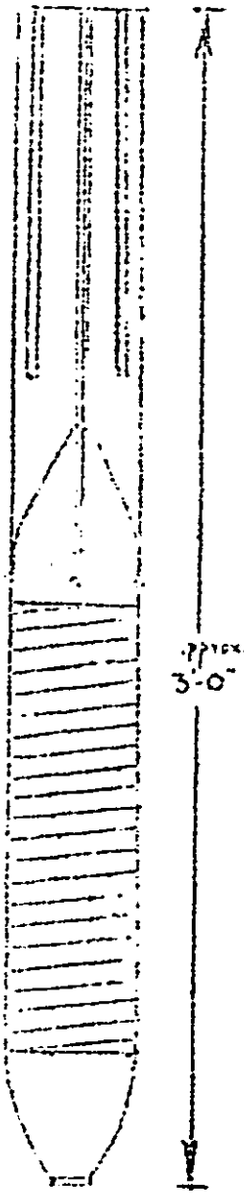
Distribution as for Int Summary 94.

APPENDIX A

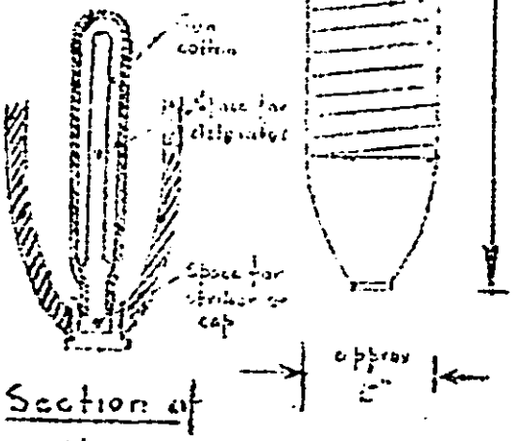
Plan of Fins.



Elevation



Section of Nose



Weight — approx. 50 lb.

Fins — Pressed steel

Body — Heavy coil spring with inner lining: no details are available now

Colour — Fins, Body } Blue

Nose - Red

APPENDIX "B".

Distinctive signs for tanks and armoured cars (from a captured document - Italian War Ministry, 8 Sep 40)

1. COMPANY COLOURS.

1 Coy	RED
2 Coy	BLUE
3 Coy	YELLOW
4 Coy	GREEN
Bn HQ	BLACK
Regt HQ	WHITE WITH BLACK SQUARE.

2. BN. CHIEF TANK.

A rectangle bearing all this company colours, excluding those of the company commanders, surmounted by the Bn number in Roman numerals in WHITE.

3. PLATOON NUMBERS.

These are signified by numbers or vertical WHITE bars on the company colour corresponding to the number of the platoon. The bars are BLACK for HQ Coy.

4. TANK NUMBERS.

(a) Vehicle number is on the "number-plate" at the back. "R. Eto" stands for REGIO ESERCITO or Royal Army - thus

R^{O} Eto
2669

(b) Tank numbers inside the platoon are shown by an arabic figure in the company colour surmounting the company rectangle.

5. GENERAL.

All tanks shall carry at the back on right and left respectively the Roman numeral of the Bn. and the arabic number of Regt painted in WHITE.

6. RESERVE TANKS.

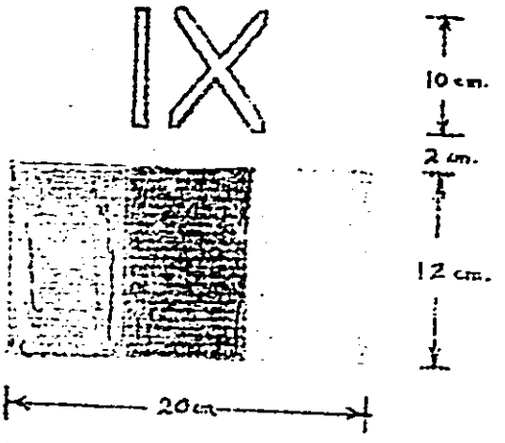
(a) Bn. Reserve - the Bn. and the Regt number is carried.

(b) Regt Reserve - only the Regt number.

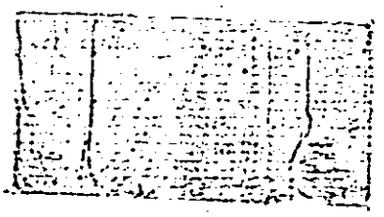
P.T.O.

APPENDIX 'B'-2

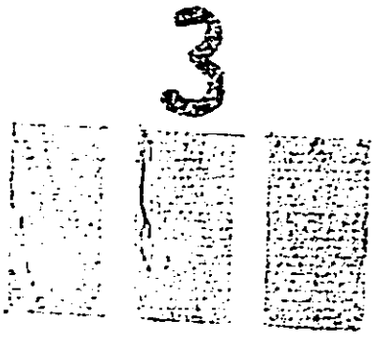
DISTINCTIVE SIGNS



Bn. Comd's Tank
No's 1, 2 & 4 Coys. in Bn.



No. 1 Coy. Comd's Tank



3rd Tank of 2nd Pln. of 1st Coy.

Recd 1520 hrs 27/12

S E C R E T. Copy No. 16

7 ARMD DIV INT SUMMARY NO.94.

(based on information recd up to 2000 hrs 26 Dec)

1. GENERAL.

There has been no change in the situation during the last two days. The enemy artillery has been partially more active from BARDIA and the activities of the air "Circus" continue. Our own troops appear to have made the very best of a bad job over Christmas.

2. ENEMY GROUND ACTIVITY.

24 Dec It was reliably reported that there is a daily motor ceiling boat service with two vessels between BARDIA and TOBRUK and it is suspected that the GOC XXI Corps with some civilians and women have left BARDIA by this means.

A Tac/R reported scattered and minor digging [illegible] in the whole area inside the BARDIA defences.

Scout/R 14/1500 hrs reported HMS DERNA, seaplane [illegible] to BORIA, 20 EA [illegible], 50 EA GAZALA.

25 Dec At 0550 hrs a patrol reported a column of 20 tanks and 60 vehicles at 4250-4255 well dispersed. A road block and some block-houses were also seen in this area and appeared to constitute an outpost rather than a camp. Little activity was seen.

A Tac/R at 0740 hrs reported HMS roads BARDIA, TOBRUK area and A/tk trenches being dug on the [illegible] side of the TOBRUK defences.

The enemy heavily shelled own troops to the South of BARDIA at first light, but caused no damage or casualties.

Our artillery successfully engaged enemy batteries within the BARDIA defences.

26 Dec During the morning the enemy shelled one of our patrols from a position at 511401 where digging activity had been observed on 25 Dec.

Patrols report 17 abandoned vehicles at 408380 and 25 abandoned vehicles at 406399, all are more viceable.

3. OWN TROOPS.

25 Dec EL ADEM was found to be unoccupied. (See para 6).

...../2.

4. TOPOGRAPHICAL.

One Petty Officer and nine marines were captured in the Signal Station at 438416 (24 Dec). Their role was to report on aircraft and road movement and although on the telephone to TOBRUK were quite out of touch with current affairs. They stated MMS road BARDIA - TOBRUK since CVSs passed going WEST on 14 Dec.

5. WATER SUPPLY.

It is reported from an Arab source that there is a good water supply in the Wadi SAHAL 487413 from which a pipe line leads to GAMBUT.

6. ENEMY AIR ACTIVITY.

A white plane with a red cross on its side has been observed flying up and down the seaboard morning and evening. Its course enables it to get a very good view of our positions in this area.

At 1210 hrs 24 Dec 2 CR42s straffed GAMBUT aerodrome causing a fire. The attack was repeated at 1700 hrs.

During the morning of 24 Dec three planes were seen to be using MENASTIR Aerodrome.

At 1130 hrs 25 Dec two CR 42s again straffed a party on GAMBUT aerodrome, wounding one OR.

SALUM was bombed twice during the afternoon at 1500 hrs and at 1800 hrs but no damage was done.

A reconnaissance of enemy aerodromes on 19 Dec indicated that there was an increase of enemy aircraft in Eastern LIBYA. Two JU 87s (German dive-bombers) were seen on TOBRUK WEST aerodrome.

6

Fighter patrols have been maintained over the forward areas.

On the night 17/18 Dec extensive bombing operations were carried out. BENINA was attacked with good results despite bad weather and rain. BARDIA was heavily bombed on this and subsequent nights.

7. R.A.F. OPERATIONS.

On the night 18/19 Dec the Northern portion of the defended area of BARDIA defences was bombarded.

...../3.

8. ENEMY BACK AREAS.

A reconnaissance of DERNA was carried out on 18 Dec and little enemy activity was reported.

EL ADEM

A patrol reports that the first enemy defences were encountered along the Trigh CAPUZZO in the area Pt 175 438404.

The second defences, a very small perimeter camp at 429406.

The third, another small perimeter camp across the road at 417407 and another one astride the road at 413408.

Many sangers were observed on the escarpment South of EL ADEM.

All these defences were unoccupied. A line of telegraph poles runs South alongside the track from the road junction at 439418 to an unoccupied white house in the camp at Pt 175.

The aerodrome at EL ADEM is situated at 404410. It is a very good one and shows no signs of bomb craters.

There are many well built buildings of which three houses, the wireless hut and one hangar has been destroyed by fire. The wireless hut appears to have been deliberately burnt by the Italians. The Water Tower is intact and in good condition, but it is not yet known whether it contains water. Eight stone houses and one hangar are complete and one store-house is burnt out. There are seven burnt out aircraft on the ground and two reconnaissance planes which appear to be in good condition. The aerodrome appears to have been evacuated in a hurry.

At 429406 there is a good OP of the perimeter camps in the area, but not of the aerodrome.

The Trigh CAPUZZO is metalled as far as EL ADEM aerodrome, but WEST thereafter becomes track. The road EL ADEM - TOBRUK in the EL ADEM area is metalled but not tarmacked.

9. [illegible].

BARDIA

A captured document, probably dated August or early September, shows that the HQ 62 Div was at approx Pt 181 50993982 and the HQ 63 Div was at Pt 173 51513941.

It is noticeable that these Divisions were dispersed around the perimeter defences, due probably to the [illegible] and air bombardments of BARDIA. It is reasonable to suppose that these dispositions have been maintained.

1 CCNN was situated immediately to the [illegible] of 63 Div with its HQ at KARMUS EL MENASTIR 5[illegible]1.

...../4.

10. ENEMY ORGANISATION.

DIVISIONAL ARTY REGTS.

45th Arty Regt.

HQ Col SOLIANI
Two Groups each of three Btys, each equipped with 4 75/27 guns.
One Group of three Btys each equipped with 4 100/17 Hows.
The 65 20 mm Bty and the 263 20 mm Bty (complement Bty) each 8 guns.

Fire Power

Rifles 1512
Pistols 191
18 Light Automatics
[illegible] 18 MGs.
24 75/27 guns.
12 100/17 Hows.
10 20 mm BREDA AA guns.

Ammunition

For the 20 mm BREDA : - 26,000 rds AA & 17,000 rds AP.
For the 75/27 guns : - 6,300 rds HE & 4300 Shrapnel.
For the 100/17 Hows : - 2,200 rds HE & 520 rds Shrapnel.

11. ENEMY FORMATIONS.

I [illegible] ARMY CORPS.

G.O.C. .....

G.O.C. Div/Gen LERICI. G.O.C. Div/Gen GRENASCOLI.
G.O.C. Div/Gen MAGGIANI.

25 "[illegible]" DIV	27 "BRESCIA" DIV. (1)	55 "SAVONA" DIV.
39 Inf Regt (1)	19 Inf Regt	15 Inf Regt.
40 Inf Regt	20 Inf Regt	16 Inf Regt.
10 Arty Regt (2)	68 M.G. Bn.	55 M.G. Bn. (1)
25 Mixed Eng Bn.	55 Arty Regt. (Mot)	12 Arty Regt.
	27 AA/A Tk Bty.	55 Mixed Eng Bn.
	27 Eng Bn.	

(1) Close Support Bty with 61 Div.

(2) One Gp already reported in CYRENAICA

(1) May be under 10 army and possibly therefore in CYRENAICA.

(1) Part at least already reported in CYRENAICA.

(2) Part at least already identified in CYRENAICA.

...../5.

XX MOTO ARMY CORPS (1)

G.O.C. A.C.Gen GOZA.

60 "SABRATA" DIV.

G.O.C. Gen. ORLIA ZONI.

85 Inf Regt.
87 Inf Regt. (2)
60 M.G. Bn.
42 Arty Regt. (three groups).
60 AA/A.Tk Coy (20 mm)
230 AA/A. Tk Bty (20 mm)?
60 A/Tk. Coy (47 mm) ?
60 Eng Bn.
60 Complement Bn.
60 Lt Tank Bn (3)
Services.

17 "PAVIA" DIV (4)

G.O.C. Gen ZAGLIO.

27 Inf Regt.
28 Inf Regt
69 MG Bn.
28 Arty Regt (three groups).
17 AA/A.Tk Bty (20 mm) (5)
17 A/Tk Coy (47mm) ?
17 Mixed Eng Bn.
Services.

COMMENTS.

(1) 61 Div formerly belonged to this Corps. A document dated Nov 4 shows that this Div together with 2 "28 Oct" CCNN Div not forms a reconstituted 21 Corps whose normal stati station is ASSABAH.
(2) The Close Support Bty (65/17 guns) of 86 Arty Regt was attached to 61 Div.
(3) The 60 Lt Tank Bn is reported to form part of 2 Tank Regt and to be located in area BARDIA.
(4) Information re 17 "Div" incomplete.
(5) 17 AA/A.Tk Bty (20 mm) was attached to 61 Div.

12. CONCLUSIONS.

The character of the enemy's shelling from BARDIA defences give indications of nervousness on his part.

The hurried evacuation of EL ADEM also gives an indication of the state of the enemy's nerves, and it may also override a flattering estimation of our mobility.

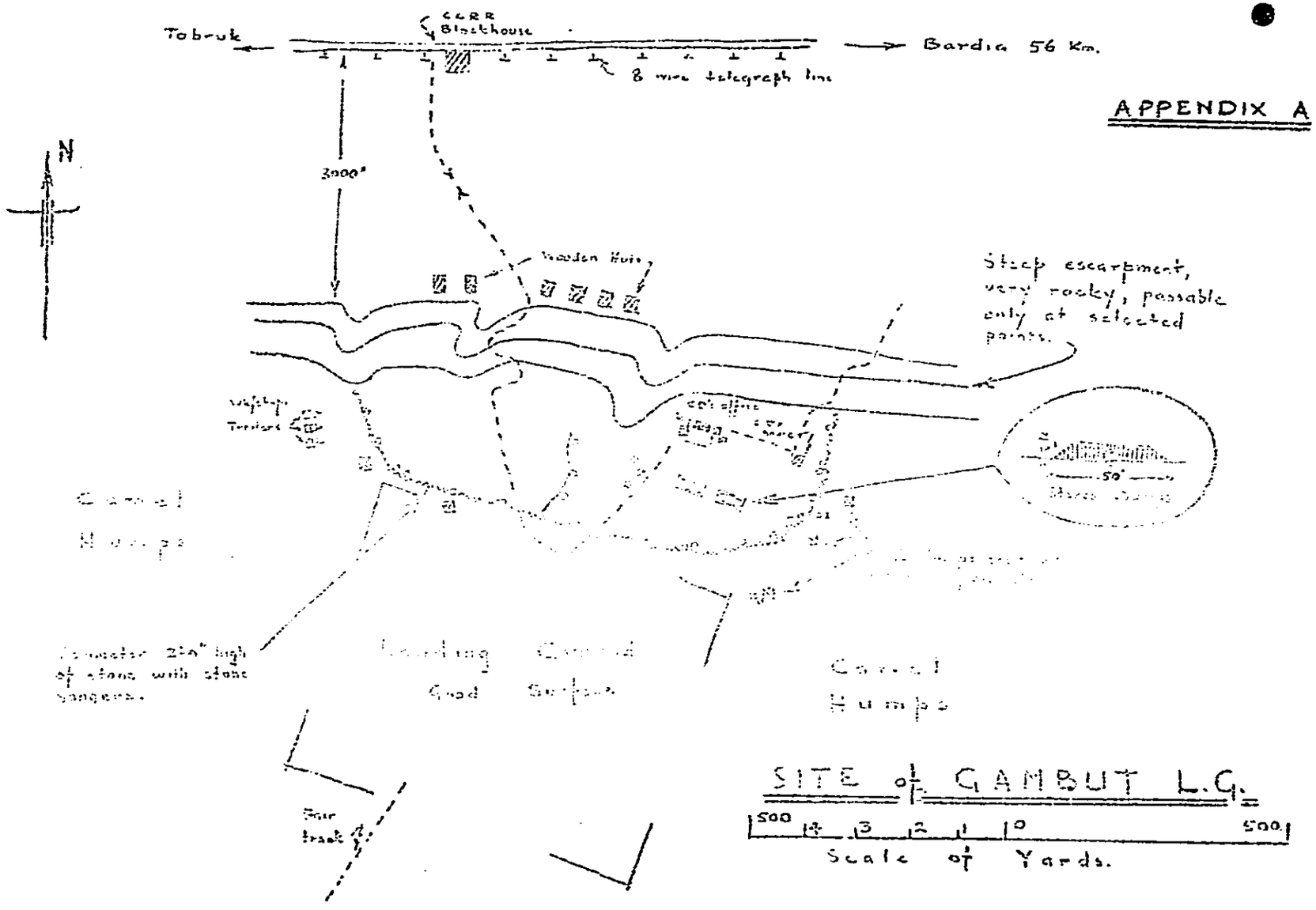
Time of Despatch: 2100/7
Method of Issue: Mail

[signature]
Colonel,
General Staff.

DISTRIBUTION.

	Copy No.
4 Aust Bde	1
7 Aust Bde	2
Sp Gp	3
CRA	4
CRE	5 - 6
Adv Div HQ	7
Rear Div HQ	8
11 Hussars	9
CRASC	10
Div HQ Sqn	11
[illegible]	12 - 15
HQ 4 IND Div	16
HQ 6 Aus Div	17
Det 208 Sqn RAF	18
Cond	19
"G"	20
"A/Q"	21
"AMD"	22
"ORD"	23
FILE	24 - 25
War Diary	

APPENDIX A



SITE of GAMBUT L.G.

500 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 500

Scale of Yards.

1.

2.

3

4.

5.

6.

APPENDIX A

PRESUMED ORDER OF BATTLE ITALIAN FORCES IN BARDIA

25th December 1940.

J.C.C. : Army Corps General [illegible]

Headquarters 62 "MARMARICA" Div
[illegible] Div Gen [illegible]
115 Inf Regt
116 Inf Regt
44 Arty Regt
Three [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible]
62 Machine Gun Bn
62 AA A/Tk Bty (90 mm dual [illegible]) Less approx 30%
[illegible]
(262 AA A/Tk Bty
62 A/Tk Coy 47 mm
62 Mixed Engineer Bn
62 MC Coy
Complement Bn
62 Light Tank Bn
Services.

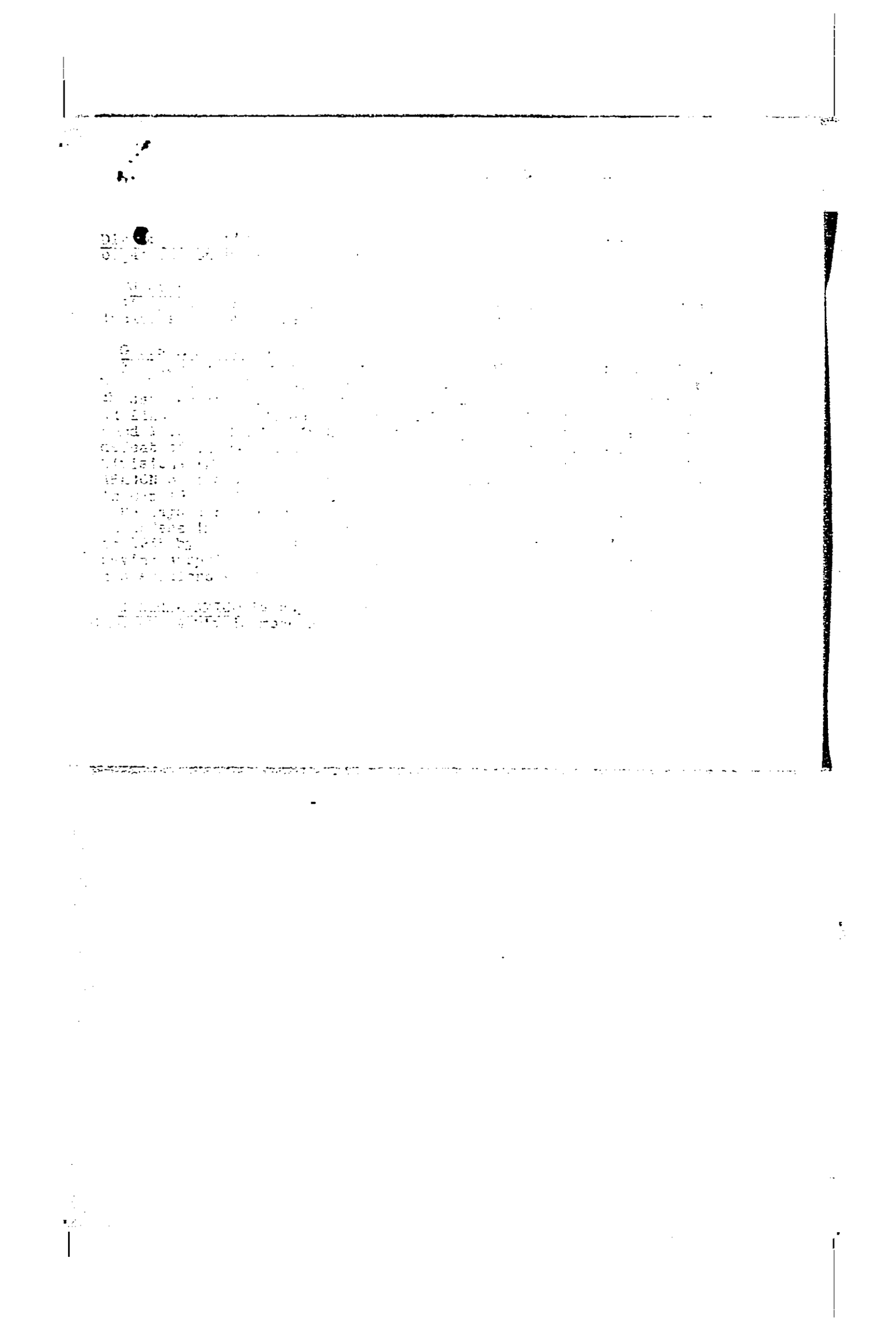
Headquarters 64 "[illegible]" Div
[illegible]

[illegible] Inf Regt
[illegible] Inf Regt
45 Arty Regt
[illegible]
(257 AA A/Tk Bty [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] Mixed Engineer Bn
[illegible] MC Coy
[illegible] Complement Bn
65 Light Tank Bn
[illegible]
[illegible] Coy
Services.

Attached:
69 [illegible] Bty
[illegible]
[illegible] Bty
207 A/Tk Coy (47 mm)

Headquarters 64 "[illegible]" Div
[illegible] Div Gen [illegible]

[illegible] Inf Regt
[illegible] Inf Regt
201 Arty Regt
two AA A/Tk Btys (Nos. 24 and [illegible]) Less approx 80%
203 Machine Gun Bn (80 mm)
203 Mixed Engineer Bn
203 A/Tk Coy ([illegible] mm)
One [illegible] MC Coy
64 Complement Bn
Services.



Recd 27/12/40
1520 hrs

E/40/1/GS"I".

S E C R [illegible]

[illegible]

ADVANCED WESTERN DESERT FORCE INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. [illegible]

Based on information received from [illegible]

1. GENERAL.

The situation at BARDIA remains unchanged; our [illegible] the place tightens, and there is no comm with the [illegible] except by occasional small sailing boats [illegible] evacuated GALBUT and [illegible], and [illegible] the TOBRUK defences.

Enemy rearward [illegible] has been [illegible] by the R.A.F. and the [illegible] fighter [illegible]

Enemy air activity has been [illegible] and has been directed [illegible] against [illegible] at SALUM.

Valuable information about the [illegible] from patrols, air photos and captured [illegible]

2. [illegible] ACTIVITY.

Movement can be [illegible] the BARDIA defences; the enemy [illegible] strength [illegible]

Long range [illegible] to shell [illegible] extremity of the BARDIA defences [illegible] either [illegible] reported.

With GALBUT and [illegible] evacuated, [illegible] TOBRUK seem to be confined to the [illegible] and BARDIA, and the garrison [illegible]

At GALBUT a large quantity of [illegible] stores, tents and some large [illegible] L.C. was [illegible]

On [illegible] Dec [illegible] were captured by a patrol operating not far outside the [illegible] perimeter.

In the [illegible] area, in addition to the [illegible] 20 Dec [illegible] Italians [illegible] Libyans [illegible] empty camps were found. The [illegible] by Libyan [illegible] spent some time in this area.

Back Areas. Nothing to report

3. OWN PATROLLING ACTIVITY.

Patrols have been active every [illegible] obtaining valuable information about the [illegible] see para 1 below.

In addition patrols around GALBUT [illegible]

4. [illegible]

Information [illegible] distinct [illegible] at BARDIA [illegible]

One [illegible] who has worked at both places [illegible]

"distillatori" at BARDIA, situated on the [illegible] inner part of the bay below the [illegible] leading up the [illegible] BARDIA to [illegible], at a spot [illegible] kilometers [illegible] further stated that he had heard that there were [illegible] at TOBRUK, two being near the [illegible] base, and two on the [illegible] (spiaggia). Of these he could not give further [illegible] except that he had heard that they had been [illegible] other P.Ws who [illegible] at TOBRUK [illegible] round the houses [illegible] short pipeline [illegible] from [illegible]

5. BARDIA [illegible]

(a) Area [illegible]

[illegible] at the [illegible] Wire [illegible] running [illegible] 20' deep and [illegible] found 25 yds [illegible] wire [illegible] and our [illegible]

EAST of the [illegible] point [illegible] apart located halfway up the slope of the [illegible] in 5 [illegible]

(b) [illegible]

[illegible] main [illegible] Confirms previous report that mines have [illegible] area due to [illegible] personnel.

[illegible] 9-10 [illegible] face [illegible]

[illegible] of [illegible] taut [illegible] beyond [illegible] This [illegible]

[illegible] 500 yds wide [illegible] timber [illegible] dumps of [illegible]

(c) Area [illegible]

At the point [illegible] A/Tk trench is [illegible] formidable obstacle, [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] appears [illegible]

(d) [illegible]

Special [illegible] 1500 [illegible] movements [illegible] (BARDIA).

[illegible] the [illegible] EAST [illegible] area [illegible]

(e) Area [illegible]

There are five lines of digging running parallel to the coast 1,500 yds apart from the point where the [illegible] rd enters the perimeter [illegible] to [illegible]. On 24 Dec there were large quantities of [illegible] in this area and men digging. [illegible] appeared to be occupied on 24 Dec. There were three aircraft on the L.G.

The following general points may be noted:

(i) No enemy patrols have been seen.
(ii) Stand to appears to be at 0345 hrs.
/the (iii) The overall width of A/Tk obstacle [illegible] the top and 6' at the bottom sloping on [illegible] perpendicular on the enemy side.
(iv) No minefields have yet been encountered [illegible] certainly exist. NOTE. The pressure [illegible] an Italian A/Tk mine is believed to be [illegible]
(v) A patrol on one occasion [illegible] underneath [illegible]

6. [illegible]

(a) [illegible]

The area [illegible] several [illegible] [illegible] during [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] on 25 Dec. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] has been very [illegible]

[illegible] delay [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

The following enemy losses are confirmed:

[illegible] Dec. [illegible] bombers.
[illegible] Dec. [illegible] bomber. [illegible]
25 Dec. [illegible] fighter [illegible]

(b) [illegible]

On night [illegible] Dec aerodrome [illegible] successfully attacked, [illegible] night [illegible] targets [illegible] successfully attacked.

[illegible] tps.

[illegible] on 22 Dec [illegible] GUBBI. [illegible] 40 aircraft [illegible] [illegible] reported [illegible] GAZALA. [illegible] at AIN

7. [illegible]

The [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

(a) [illegible] and possibly [illegible] [illegible] attached [illegible] Both [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to 5 Dec.
/cal [illegible]
(b) [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible]

(c) 65 Div received the following Arty reinforcements:

1 Group of 12 Div Arty Regt. (100/17) Remainder of Regt [illegible]
1 Group of [illegible] Arty Regt (105/28). [illegible]
5 Group of " " " (75/27).
80 and 70 Close Support Btys (65/17).
302 A/Tk Coy (47 mm).

COMMENT: It will be recalled that air photos of [illegible] showed sufficient gun positions for at least two Arty Regts. The identifications given above more than account [illegible] arty; it seems unlikely however that all [illegible] strength. It seems that the majority of the [illegible] successfully evacuated by the Italians and is [illegible].

(d) 4 Group of [illegible] Arty Regt ([illegible]) is [illegible]

(e) [illegible] Arty Regt of 61 Div was just [illegible] It is probably now with the rest of its [illegible].

(f) Arty captured [illegible] of [illegible] Div. The remainder of [illegible] the [illegible] from [illegible]. The [illegible] on [illegible] Sep [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] supposed.

/be (g) Of the [illegible] Arty Regt, [illegible] above, [illegible] with 65 Div. [illegible] the [illegible] Arty Regt [illegible] now split up between the defended positions of [illegible].

6. [illegible]

Cap [illegible] show that the following [illegible] place in recent months:

(i) [illegible] of [illegible] Corps [illegible] under Command of [illegible] Corps [illegible] Div.
(ii) [illegible] Div passed under [illegible]
(iii) [illegible] of this date shows that [illegible] left [illegible] Corps and became part of [illegible] Corps along with 61 Div.
(iv) [illegible] returned [illegible]
(v) [illegible] under Command [illegible]
(vi) [illegible] under Command of [illegible] Corps.
[illegible] Corps.
(vii) [illegible] continued [illegible]

[illegible]

SECRET

In the field,
26 March [illegible] General Staff, Adv. Northern Group Forces.

1/2 - Recd 1300 hrs 25/12 [illegible]

6 Am Div

SECRET.

Copy No....25

7 ARMD DIV INT SUMMARY NO. 93.

(based on information recd up to 2000 hrs 24 Dec)

1. GENERAL.

There has been no change in the general situation. Our hold upon BARDIA continues to tighten and the enemy have shown no signs of either trying to evacuate this area or of reinforcing it. The air report that EL ADEM is unoccupied requires further confirmation, and if proved correct would imply/with the evacuation of GAMBUT and EL GOBI a purely defensive attitude by the Italians.

2. GROUND ACTIVITY - ENEMY.

24 Dec. 50 men were seen in GIARABUB.
At 1430 hrs 19 vehicles were reported facing North at 50$_{94}$01 and a column of 10 vehicles were seen moving North along the track at 51^{0}40$_{3}$.
An occupied enemy camp with watch-tower and sangers was observed at 511397 and 19 vehicles were stationary 400 yds West of the watch-tower.
In the camp at 51154015 there was movement of lorries, explosions and AA fire. An abandoned light-house was found at 460422 with a harbour and houses to the North of it.
There are 3 lines of digging running parallel to the coast 1500 yds apart from approx 50$_{84}$05 to 511399 and large quantities of MT and men digging. There is also a line of OPs running from 512598 to 515394. 3 Aircraft were observed on the LG at MENASTIR which appeared occupied. There is one very active gun at 512398 which keeps our patrols at a distance.

23 Dec. Tac/R states that the EL ADEM camps are definitely not occupied.

3. GROUND ACTIVITY - OWN.

Our troops continue to patrol and watch enemy's movements.

24 Dec. At 1145 hrs an enemy signal station and 8 prisoners were captured at 438426.

...../2.

(a) Near the coast Wadis running East and West make going impossible for wheels and tracks.
(b) A thick wire fence runs up the Wadi MARTARAD.
(c) The going round BIR NAHLA 520327. Pt 177 504320 track running NW - 513690 - 511597 and West of the WADIS to the 510 Gridline is good for wheels and tracks.

The road previously reported non-existent running from 5028[illegible] to [illegible] has now been found.

7. BANDIA DEFENCES.

Reports from the Australian Division's patrols give the following information : -

(a) Area BIR EL SLEMAN. Appears to be well honeycombed with clusters of weapon pits 2 ft deep and stone parapets.
There is a tank obstacle 3000 ft North of BIR EL SLEMAN, a ditch 12 ft wide at the top and 6 ft wide at the bottom. On the further side 5 ft high and perpendicular. Nearside sloping with rubble thrown back to a distance of 30 ft behind the obstacle. Two rows of ordinary straight fence 10 ft high and 6 ft apart filled with 5 ft of loose wire. Behind the wire a stone rampart 2 ft high.
Mine field. Small holes 10 ins by 8 ins and 8 ft apart seen. No mines seen.
(b) The area 600 yds East of Main Tarmac Rd.
Where the 5183 grid cuts the enemy defences.
The tank ditch in this area has a sloping nearside and a vertical far or enemy side. It is 9 ft wide at the bottom and 20 ft at the top. The depth of the vertical was 5 to 6 ft. Piles of broken stones approx 2 ft high stretched 30 yds beyond this ditch.

(c) Area - WADI BIR AILET UUAN 51163929.
The tank ditch for a distance 200 yds South of the WADI and 400 yds North of the WADI was 2 ft deep with an extra foot of soil on the far side making a total of 2 ft there. North of a point approx 400 yds North of the Wadi the tank ditch was very formidable, being 10 ft deep, four feet wide at the bottom, 60 ins slope on our side and the enemy's face stepped up 3 ft, 4 ft and then 3 ft.

A reconnaissance by Engineers on the night 25/[illegible] has given the following information : -

(a) The A/tk obstacle in the vicinity 51173928 is formidable [illegible] "A."
(b) At the North and South sides of the Wadi the A/tk obstacle is so shallow that it presents no obstacle. However, the ground appears to be made up and mines are suspected.
(c) The A/tk and wire defences were reconcitred from Pt [illegible] for about 900 yds West [illegible].

./.

(d) Part of the A/tk minefield in the vicinity 515380 was examined and it was found that the mines had been removed.

Further information of this nature will be forthcoming.

8. TOBRUK DEFENCES.

A tac/R on the 21 Dec sent out with the object of discovering whether any delaying defensive positions were being prepared outside the BARDIA-TOBRUK road reported the following :-

(a) Some circular defences facing EAST astride the 440 grid just South of the main TOBRUK Rd.

(b) Similar defences facing EAST just North of TRIGH CAPUZZO between the 456 and 457 Grids (approx Pt 151)

(c) Similar defences just SOUTH of the TRIGH CAPUZZO astride the 450 Grid (East of the track branching off to the SOUTH).

(d) Four fairly large perimeter camps within a radius of 2 miles to the EAST and SOUTH of EL ADEM.

All the above defensive positions appeared unoccupied.

9. ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE.

A captured document indicates the following:-

45 Arty Regt of 61 Div
1 Gp 100/17 Hows
2 and 3 Gps 75/27 guns
31 20 mm Bty attached to 1 Lib Div and therefore accounted for.
261 20 mm Bty (complement)
20 mm Bty belonging 17 Pavia Div.

10. IDENTIFICATIONS.

With reference to the abandoned lorries at [illegible] and further captured documents at 479409 it is apparent that this latter area was the Camp of the 4 Tank Regt in Nov. The Regt appears to consist of 3 Bns. Nos 1 and 2, M 11s. No 3. M 13s. 1 Bn was captured at MINTINA. It is thought that 2 Bn is in BARDIA and 3 Bn in TOBRUK.

NOTE: 4 Tank Regt was reorganised from 32 Tank Regt before leaving for LIBYA in August. The M 13 Bn was in MENGHASI at the end of Sept.

...../5.

11. ORGANISATION.

XXI ARTY RAGGRUPAMENTO.

A captured Document shows that the RAGG. is not the Arty Ragt originally with the XXI Corps. It is new, consisting of four Groups numbered 105, 150, 143, 130 each consisting of twelve 149/13 Hows. Personnel are almost entirely recalled men over 24 years old and are short of training.

Guns captured at BARRANI and SALUM and dumps of 149 mm shells at BARRANI indicate that possibly one or two Btys have been accounted for. The remainder are probably incorporated in the defences of BARDIA and TOBRUK. The heavy AA Group of the RAGG. may be the 18 Sp of 88/56 guns (not previously heard of) which according to a captured document was at BENGHASI in late October 40.

12. TRANSPORT.

Captured documents dealing with the move of the 63 Div from EL ADEM to BARDIA on July 8.9.10 show :-

Transport available
LANCIA. RO. 121. SPA 118. L 39s. 61
Transport required to lift the Div was :-
LANCIA RO. 175. SPS 220. L 39s. 12.

This shortage of Transport was further shown in that according to the captured document, each Inf Reft required an additional 100 SPA lorries, only 1 and 2 Arty Gps had their full MT allotment. The 202 A/tk Coy had no transport of its own, the ENG Bn had no transport of its own, and the [illegible] Bn. needed an additional 30 SPA.

NOTE: This shortage of transport is known to be in no way peculiar to the 63 Div. A shuttle service to move a Div has been resorted to on more than one occasion.

13. ENEMY EQUIPMENT.

Arty Fuzes.

A captured document dated 1 Oct 40 reveals that a large amount of Arty ammunition was fitted with old fuzes and on 9 Nov 40 XXI Arty Ragg. had 9,000 rds with 1939/40 fuzes and 21,000 unfit for use as they were filled with old fuzes.

In area 470400 there are 7 six wheel trailers which have carried M 11 tanks.

...../8.

14. ARTY SIGNALS.

A captured document dated 27 June states that signals with rockets were as follows :-

Two red .. .. we are attacked.

Two green .. .. Reinforcements urgently needed.

15. ENEMY MINEFIELDS.

The minefields at SIDI AZEIZ are reported clear but areas 100 yds in radius round all sangers within 3 miles of SIDI AZEIZ are not cleared.

A Prisoner of war states that the road EL ATCH - SIR GOFI is mined on both sides of the road at a distance of 5 Miles South of EL ATCH.

16. TUERNOS BOMBS.

Are reported in the area 525376 - 522376.

17. CONCLUSION.

It is reported from a reliable source that Christmas comes but once a year from which it is deduced that the Seasons Greetings are seasonable.

[signature] 4/6/41

Colonel,
General Staff.

Time of Signature ..[illegible].....

Method of Issue. ..[illegible].....

Distribution as for Summary No.91.

4. [illegible]

(a) [illegible]

Dec 23. At 0846 hrs two CR 42s machine-gunned the Southern edge of 7 Armd Div HQ leaguer.
The Circus was active in this area about 0945 hrs and was "seen off" by our fighters.
1 S79 and 2 CR 42s landed at GIARABUB.
Dec 24 SALUM was bombed at 1400 hrs causing some casualties.

(b) [illegible] Dec 22

Dec 22 The RAF successfully bombed BENINA and [illegible] aerodromes and TOBRUK foreshore, and shot down two S 79s.
Dec 23 It is believed that 4 enemy planes were accounted for by the RAF.
0915 hrs. A Reconnaissance Aircraft was shot down about 5½ miles North of this HQ by a Hurricane. The crew of 4 were made prisoner by Major-General Creagh and his party.

5. ENEMY AIRCRAFT.

The reconnaissance aircraft referred to above was a Caproni 310 twin-engined low winged monoplane. Markings Fasces above and below wing Red St. Andrews cross on lower surface of wing and White cross on rudder. Camouflage mottled brown and green. Armament two 7.7 mm wing guns. One 7.7 mm turret gun. The aircraft carried a crew of 4 and had racks for what appeared to be flares. It belonged to 33 Sqn 67 Gp. stationed at TOBRUK.

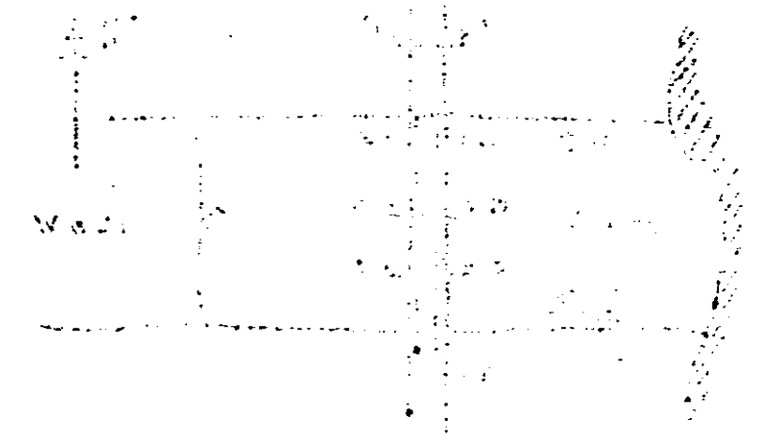
6. GOING REPORTS.

A road has been built up the escarpment by the Italians at 492404. The Wadi running from the cross roads at 494403 to 495411 can be regarded as an anti-tank obstacle. Further anti-tank obstacles as follows : - The Wadi EL AIN running from 488415 to 490422 and the Wadi EL TIMFAUI from 478416 to [illegible].

The track running North and South between the Main Rd. [illegible] and 503409 is much used and very boggy owing to rain (21.12.40), there are deep ruts. The WADI [illegible] SORFOHI (1500 yds west of track) is passable in most places. The surrounding country is flat with no cover and the going in the surrounding area is middling to bad. Camel humps with occasional patches of cultivation but all very soft and wet after recent rain.

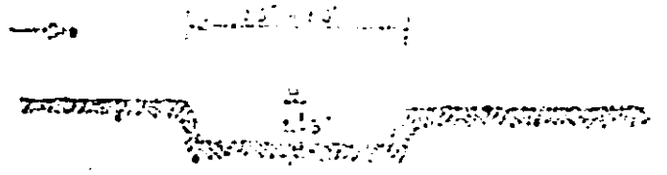
The escarpment in the area 415 to 505 grid lines is impassable to MT.

A report on the going 5000 yds out from [illegible] between the coast and the 510 North and South grid states : -



Sections

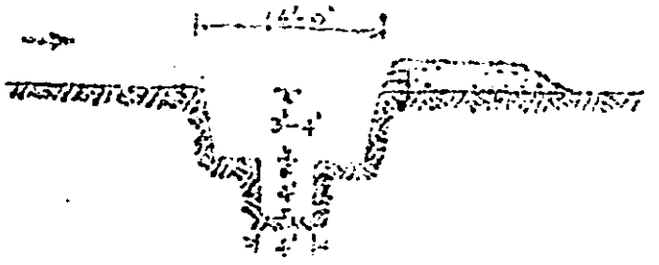
A - A



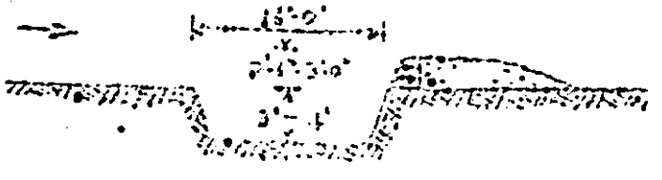
B - B



C - C



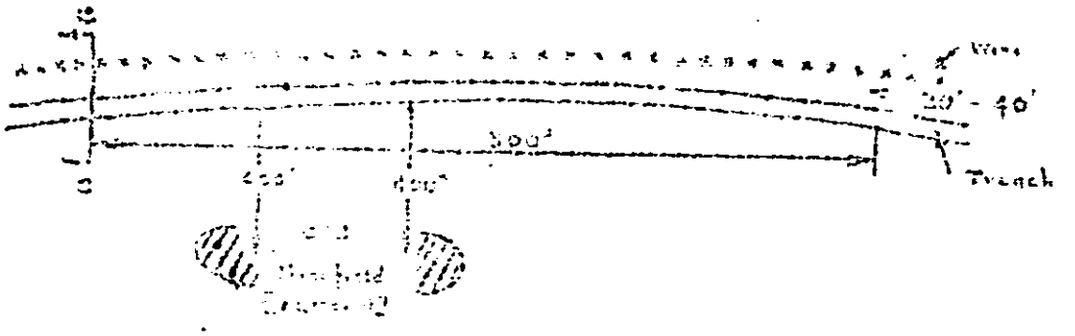
D - D

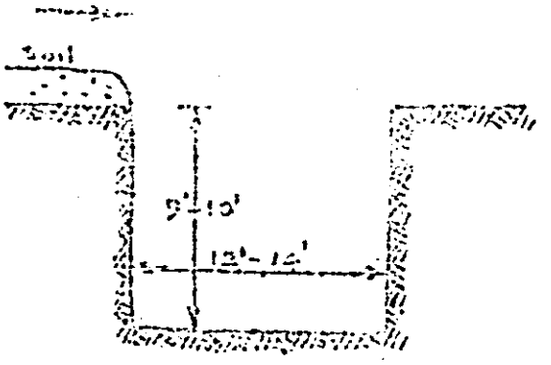


Soil :- Mixed red loam & boulders

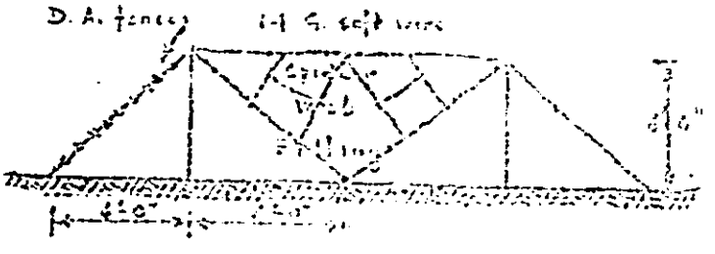
A/Tk OBSTACLE AT 5117328

APPENDIX 'B'





TRENCH AT C-C.



WIRE FENCE AT C-C

A/Tk & WIRE DEFENCES.

5164 3896 to 5165 3896

SECRET

COPY No: 25

6 AUST DIV INT SUMMARY No. 1

BASED ON INFORMATION RECEIVED UP TO 2000 HRS 23 DEC 40

1. GENERAL

Comd 6 Aust Div assumed comd in SALUM - CAPUZZO area at 1200 hrs 21 Dec. The following units came under comd 6 Aust Div:

16 Inf Bde, 51 and 104 Fd Regts, 7 Med Regt, 13 Lt AA Regt.

2. OPERATIONS

Our Patrols have been active each night. The following general points are noted:-

(i) No enemy patrolling has been seen.
(ii) Stand to appears to be 0345 hrs.
(iii) Average width of obstacle at top 15', bottom 6'. Sloping on our side, perpendicular on enemy side.
(iv) No minefield seen; in one area small holes 10" x 8" - 8' apart seen.

Reports of patrols are att at Appx "A".

No other operations have taken place.

3. AIR ACTIVITY.

On 22 Dec heavy bombing took place at 1115, 1615 and 1815 hrs. Areas bombed: line SSE from BARDIA: few casualties, slight damage.

On 23 Dec from 0455 to 0615 hrs bombs were dropped on line North of CAPUZZO rd and approx 6 miles East of ENID. At 1000 hrs 10 bombers escorted by 8 fighters dropped a series of 9 bombs 6 Kilos SW of CAPUZZO

4. ENEMY DISPOSITIONS

(a) A cap doc, unfortunately undated, but probably Aug or early Sep, shows dispositions as follows:-

BARDIA.- 62 Div occupied the Northern half of the perimeter and continued Westwards SOUTH of the TOBRUK rd as far as the 508 grid. Hq 62 Div was at approx Pt 154, map reference 50993982.

63 Div occupied the Southern portion of the defences but including a small bulge immediately to the West of BARDIA village. Hq 63 Div was at Pt 173, map reference 51513941.

It is noticeable that the area around Upper and Lower BARDIA is excluded from either of the above Divl areas and indicates that probably ever since bombing and bombardment of BARDIA commenced the garrison has remained dispersed around the perimeter defences.

1 CCHN was situated immediately to the West of the 62 Div with one Legion (219th) back at X-tracks in Square 481411. Hq 1 CCHN was at CARMUS EL MENASTIR, map reference 536401.

(b) Gun posns located: 51283942 bty 12 guns
51373927 Bty
51543920 A Tk
52303867 20 Fd guns
52163878 Big Benito

5. SHELLING

At 0600 hrs each day and at intervals throughout the day, the area about SOLUM is shelled. No damage or casualties have been reported.

6. SPECIAL RECCE

At 1500 hrs 23 Dec, BM 16 Aust Inf Bde proceeded on special recce:

(a) "Proceeded on Western side of 200 contour to Pt 204 50733978. Found that movement on Western side of 200 contour was quite safe but on Eastern side was fired at by arty who have the area ranged.

(b) From Pt 204 observed approx one bn digging hard in area 51424005 to 51204005.

(c) OP tower 30' high with crows nest observed at Pt 190 51283967.

(d) Considerable enemy movement observed on ridge from 51453952 to 51283978 unaffected by arty fire on area Pt 128 51523960 - Pt 133 51463965.

7. BOOBY TRAPS

Hand grenades with pins withdraw in crevices of rocks in CAPUZZO area: when picked up, grenades explode.

8. CONCLUSION

There have been no signs of any attempt to evacuate BARDIA or to enforce the garrison there, and it would appear that the enemy intention is to hold BARDIA.

A. Goldham Capt for Colonel,
GS, 6 Aust Div.

Time of Signature: 1030 hrs

Method of Issue: DRLS + orderly.

DISTRIBUTION	Copy No.
16 Inf Bde	1-4
16 Aust Inf Bde	5-9
17 Aust Inf Bde	10-13
RAA 6 Aust Div	14-19
RAE 6 Aust Div	20-21
Sigs 6 Aust Div	22
Comd	23
G	24-25
Aq	26
AASC 6 Aust Div	27-28
ADMS	29-31
1 Aust Corps	32
Adv Hq WDF	33
7 Armd Div	34
War Diary	35-36
File	37-38

SECRET

Appx "A" issued in conjunction with

6 Aust Div Int Summary No.1.

PATROL BY "A" COY SIMO NIGHT 22/23 DEC 1940.

Strength 1 and 5. Out 0015 hrs. Returned 0430 hrs.

Route:- Through Frontier Wire between Pt 21 and 22 to well defined track at 51923860.

Patrol then struck wire by mistake in the darkness, in front of strong pt at 51953863. Alarm was immediately set up, post [illegible] very alert, and MG fire was opened on the patrol, one or two grenades were also thrown at them.

Patrol withdrew and felt forward again to the EAST [illegible] later to the WEST of the strong pt. Owing to the moonlight [illegible] alarm having been sprung it was impossible to get through the wire to investigate whether there was a ditch the far side of the wire. Wire was of box variety and easily cut about 10ft broad, though some 20 mins is required to cut right through.

Patrol then returned owing to the lack of further time.

Patrol went to frontier wire in MT. Thence on foot. No difficulty nor opposition nor any sign of the enemy was encountered on the way to the strong point.

It is recommended that a much smaller patrol be sent next time. As once the alarm has been sprung it is not practicable to move a large body any further, and valuable time is wasted picking up those left behind afterwards.

(Sgd) J.H.MARRIOTT
Capt & Adjt,
SIMO.

23.12.40.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

TETO
23 Dec 40.

To: ENID.

RECCE OF ENEMY A Tk AND WIRE OBSTACLES

on 16 AUST INF BDE FRONT ON NIGHT 22/23 DEC.

An Eng recce of the enemy's defences was carried out during night 22/23 Dec to personnel of 2/1 Fd Coy (att 16 Aust Inf Bde).

OBJECT OF RECCE - to obtain information about the enemy A Tk obstacles and wire defences

INFORMATION OBTAINED

1. The A Tk obstacle in vicinity 51173928 is quite formidable - sections through the obstacle at this point are shown in Appx 1.

2. At the North and South sides of the Wadi the A Tk obstacle is so shallow that it would be easily passable. However, ground appears to be made up and so mines are suspected.

3. The A Tk and wire defences on 2/2 Bn front were reconnoitred from pt 51653896 to about 800 yds West. Details are shown in Appx 2.

4. Part of the A Tk minefield in vicinity [illegible] was examined and it was found that the mines had been removed.

5. Enemy fire prevented further information from being gained but the recce will be continued night 23/24 Dec.

(Sgd) E.M.BECKINGSALE, Lieut.
for Lt-Col.

23.12.40

2/2 Bn.

Patrol went out at 2300 hrs and contacted enemy defences near the Right of 2/2 Bn front at approx pt where the 5166 Grid cuts the enemy's main defence lines. T c patrol was observed and withdrew without obtaining any information about the Tank ditch and the wire. It moved to the left and tried to approach the enemy posn 300-400 yds to the East of the main tarmac road. As the enemy had observed it, it withdrew before it reached the tank ditch and moved further to the left of the 2/2 Bn front where it was more successful and was NOT discovered by the enemy. The Tank Ditch in this area had a sloping entrance our side, with a vertical side on the enemy side. It was 9' wide at the bottom and 20' at the top. Depth of vertical 5-6'. For 30 yds beyond the ditch were piles of broken stone approx 2' high with foottracks between them. Forty yards beyond these stone heaps was a wire obstacle which consisted of two single apron fences with a gap of 7' between fences, filled with taut wire. Approx 30 yds beyond the wire was a line of breastworks 3' high. The wire was light and soft. Enemy were in occupation of the posn also. Three hundred yds on our side of the enemy's line at this part is a 500 yds wide area full of 10' square stacks of timber 5' high. The timber consists of tangled roots. The length of this belt is unknown.

2/1 Bn.

Patrol arrived at the WADI BIR RILET UADR 51163929 at 0220 hrs. They could NOT find the pipe line shown on the 1/50,000 map. They discovered that the tank ditch for a distance of 200 yds South of the Wadi and 390 paces North of the Wadi was 2' deep with an extra foot of spoil on the far side, making a total of 3' there. North of 390 paces from the Wadi the Tank Ditch was very formidable, being 10' deep, 4' wide at the bottom, 60° slope our side and the enemy's face stepped up 3', 4' and then 3'. The shallow trench mentioned above had a rock bottom. Behind the ditch was a similar belt of wire to that mentioned by the ldr of the 2/2 Bn patrol. It was noted that the wire pickets were wooden. Thirty paces beyond the wire was a breastwork similar to that facing the 2/2 Bn. It appeared to have a fire bay every 200 yds (paces.

2/3 Bn (Centre Bn)

Their patrol which contacted the enemy about 700 yds from their left boundry, which is the Wadi, where 2/1 Bn patrol ldr mentioned were discovered and heavily engaged by the enemy. Before withdrawing, however, they discovered that the Tank Ditch was 10' deep.

GENERAL - No enemy patrols were contacted by the above-mentioned patrols during the night.

Summary of 16 Aust Inf Bde Patrols on night 22/23 Dec, 40.

(Sgd) I.R.CAMPBELL, Major
BM, 16 Aust Inf Bde

Verbal report by LC 15 Inf Bde (English)
Patrol reports night 22/23 Dec.

No tps in WADDY from 52133870 to 51953862 Patrol moved along WADDY to OP 51953862 touched wire in front of OP and brought down SAA fire on fixed lines on bearing of Approx 40° & 150°

PATROL REPORT "C" COY 2/3 Bn NIGHT 21/22 Dec.

TIME: Left 2000 hrs. Returned 0615 hrs.
DIRECTION: 24° from Coy location.
OBSTACLE: 15' W - 2' to 3' deep with 2' parapet. Wire placed to form blind pockets which are covered by fire. Patrol penetrated to almost 200 yds inside main wire and was pinned to ground by fire. Withdrew without casualties.
NATURE OF WIRE: Double apron type, wooden picket with wire att resembling a maypole, NO concertina wire seen.
PASSAGE OF WIRE: Patrol negotiated wire by rolling underneath.
ARTY: Enemy arty Bty situated left and approx 2000 yds in front of BARDIA.
TRAFFIC: Roads showed signs of carrying heavy traffic.

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REPORT BY "C" Coy 2/2 Bn NIGHT 21/22 Dec.

STRENGTH: 5 NCOs - 18 Men
TIME: Left 2400 hrs. Returned 0535 hrs.
AREA: BIR - EL - STEWAN
REPORT:-

GENERAL

Appears to be well honeycombed with clusters of weapon pits, 2' deep - parapets stone - NO gun emplacements or tracks mark of AFVs

TANK OBSTACLE Posn 30008 due north of BIR EL STEWAN Top 12' W Bottom 6'. Further side 5' H and perpendicular. Near side sloping with stony spoil thrown back in a batten - 30' behind obstacle. Two rows of ordinary straight fence 10' H 6' apart - space filled with 3' of loose wire. Behind rear wire - stone rampart 2' H. Stand to appears to be at 0345 hrs.

MINE FIELD Small holes 10" x 8" - 8' apart - NO mines seen.

FORWARD POSTS NO enemy movement in front of obstacle - posts, recently dug, may be occupied by day.

TIMBER large stacks of timber dumps 6' H 100' deep.

ARTY From pt north of BIR EL STEWAN on bearing of 357° at least 8 guns fired salvos.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

6 Aus Div

SECRET. Copy No 25

7 ARMD DIV INT SUMMARY NO. 92.

(based on information recd up to 2000 hrs 22 Dec)

1. GENERAL

There has been little activity in the forward areas during the period under review, and the situation remains unchanged. Air reports indicate no movement in the enemy back areas. There have been rain storms in the coastal area, and the northernmost route from TOBRUK to BARDIA has been impassable. In addition, it is reported that landing grounds in the DERNA area are unusable.

A large number of ships is reported in TOBRUK.

2. GROUND ACTIVITY.

(a) Enemy.

This has been confined almost entirely to the BARDIA area, and has taken the form of artillery shooting.

On the 21 Dec, Tac/R reported many MT inside the NW defences of BARDIA, presumably to get out of range of our own artillery. MENASTIR camp was found to be unoccupied.

At 1120 hrs on 22 Dec a battery position was located at 515390 with infantry about 1,000x NW. Two hours later 12 guns were in action at 515395. Several MT were seen moving North and South at 512397, and may have been shifting stores or making a minefield. At 1630 hrs, 50 to 60 MT were observed stationary East of the landing ground at 510400.

(b) Own.

On 20 Dec our patrols captured three Italians, and two Libyans together with mules and horses, and a car containing W/T equipment, in the area MESA LUCCH. No further activity has taken place up to the time of signature, and patrolling continues.

An abandoned light tank and four empty camps were found at 4900422y. There was a further empty camp at 4886236.

3. ENEMY REAR AREAS.

Tac/R on 22 Dec reported digging at GAMBUT, and five large marquees. Ground reports GAMBUT unoccupied. Further West, there is a deep trench round TOBRUK, but the defences are not in depth. There were 15 ships in the harbour. This may indicate reinforcements in men and material in view of the great losses sustained by the Italians. The question of MT shortage has probably been solved by the use of ships, thus avoiding long marches towards the front over great distances and keeping troops fresh.

Unoccupied positions are reported at 440417, 457307 and 430306.

...../2.

4. ENEMY FORWARD AREAS.

Unoccupied GAMBUT contains an immense supply of aircraft bombs of all calibres, new wooden huts and tents and a quantity of aircraft stores still in grease; a patrol tank lorry and a 10-ton Diesel full of bombs were found. The landing ground is good and not mined.

The most northerly route along the coast between [illegible] and TOBRUK was found to be impassable owing to rain on 21 Dec.

5. ENEMY LANDING GROUNDS.

On 22 Dec, an enemy landing ground was reported at 462412, where there was considerable aircraft activity on the ground.

The same patrol reported a further landing ground at 460390 with several runways 1000x long. There are several mudhuts in the area.

Tac/R at 1720 hrs reported 40 enemy aircraft at DERNA, 30 at TMIMI and 70 at GAZALA. It is not known how many are unserviceable.

6. IDENTIFICATIONS.

The prisoners captured near MERSA LUCCH belonged to the REGIA MARINA or Royal Marines. Further prisoners captured bore the legend 137 RT on their caps, and in conjunction with the R/T material captured, presumably belong to a wireless unit, although nothing is known of it. Documents found in an abandoned lorry in area 480415 indicate 4 and 32 lorry-borne infantry regts. These units are at present unknown, but the MT may have been attached elsewhere from them.

7. SEA ACTIVITY.

On 21 Dec, an unidentified warship (presumably British) hit three houses at MERSA LUCCH with gunfire. MERSA LUCCH is a naval signalling station, and is unoccupied. It was thought to be also a training centre for elements of 1 Lib Div who were out of the line when the attack went in on BARRANI.

8. AIR ACTIVITY.

(a) Enemy.

A "circus" of an average of 10 bombers and 8 fighters slightly above and behind the bombers, has operated over the forward areas at more or less regular hours during the last three days. The times have been between 1430 hrs and 1600 hrs and on 22 Dec at 1115 hrs as well.

...../3.

(b) Recn.

Two/ and Strat/R have been carried out. On 22 Dec, one HURRICANE attacked an enemy formation of 15 bombers and five fighters. Two S 79's were shot down and the HURRICANE escaped pursued by C 42s.

On 21 Dec, enemy air losses were 2 C 42s, 1 S79, and 1 possible 3 more aircraft without loss to ourselves.

9. ENEMY TACTICS.

It is thought that in the bombing raid on the morning of 22 Dec, the enemy bombers flew very low so that there would be no room for our diving fighters to pull out, at the same time dropping appreciably delayed-action bombs in order to avoid damage to the aircraft. Confirmation is awaited.

10. CONCLUSIONS.

There is no change in the general situation, and no enemy movement has been observed indicating counter-attacks or a relief of BARDIA. There is no indication of any move towards evacuating BARDIA. The presence of such a large number of ships in TOBRUK strengthens the view that the Italians intend to hold this position, and probably EL ADEM as well. It may also mean that fresh units have been brought direct from TRIPOLI, by passing BENGHASI in order to avoid a long march on foot from there to TOBRUK. A remark was made by Colonel OLLIA commanding 119 Bn 219 Legion at SIDI OMAR to the effect that he hoped the fact that he had put up resistance at his outpost would be mentioned to our Higher Command and recorded for posterity. This appears to lend strength to the theory that BARDIA is only waiting for a sufficient show of strength to allow the garrison to surrender with a clear conscience.

Time of Signature.....

Method of Issue.....

Colonel,
General Staff.

Distribution as for Summary H. 91.

Memo for 9
Mark relevant extracts

109

E/40/1/GSI.

S[illegible]

COPY NO. 7

ADV WESTERN DESERT FORCE INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 5.

Based on information received between 2000 hrs 19 Dec and 2000 hrs 21 Dec.

1. GENERAL.

The situation at BARDIA remains unchanged. Our patrols have now cut off all communications with TOBRUK.

Extensive night bombing operations have been carried out by the RAF in addition to daily offensive fighter patrols over the area SALUM - BARDIA.

2. OPERATIONS 20 - 21 Dec.

20 Dec.

Early morning Tac/R on 20 Dec reported no change within BARDIA perimeter, the main MT concentrations still being on the Western and North Western sides of the defended area. There was no enemy movement along either the TOBRUK rd or the TRIGH [illegible].

Our adv patrols operating near the coast at [illegible] LUUCH captured some prisoners and [illegible]/T set. They reported that [illegible] LUUCH appeared to be a Naval Signalling Station. A schooner was observed two miles off the coast proceeding towards BARDIA.

At 1600 hrs on 20 Dec patrols reported GAMBUT and the [illegible] to the SOUTH unoccupied, but both appeared to have been recently used.

Tac/R to GIARABUB during the morning reported [illegible] in a wired perimeter SW of the village. Otherwise no movement. There was no movement on either the MADDALENA or the GOBI tracks. Only [illegible] MT were seen at MADDALENA and the place looked completely deserted.

21 Dec.

There was heavy rain in the area WEST of BARDIA on the morning of 21 Dec. Early Tac/R reported no movement on the rds leading Westwards from BARDIA, and no change within the defended area.

At 1455 hrs our patrols reported considerable movement in [illegible]ASTIR Camp, MT being seen to enter and leave the area. At 2100 hrs however, it was reported that [illegible]ASTIR appeared unoccupied, there being a considerable amount of transport apparently [illegible] also drums probably containing petrol or oil in the CHARRUBA [illegible].

Tac/R at midday which was despatched with the object of discovering whether any delaying positions were being prepared astride the BARDIA - TOBRUK rd reported the following:

(a) Semi-circular defences facing EAST astride the 44[illegible] Grid just SOUTH of the main TOBRUK rd.

(b) Similar defences facing EAST just NORTH of TRIGH [illegible] between the 436 and 437 Grids (approx Pt 151).

(c) Similar defences just SOUTH of the TRIGH [illegible] astride the 4[illegible] Grid (EAST of the track branching off to the [illegible]).

(d) Four fairly large perimeter camps within [illegible] radius of two miles to the EAST and SOUTH of [illegible].

All the above defended positions appeared unoccupied.

3. AIR ACTIVITY.

(a) Enemy.

Air activity has been slight and no engagements are reported with the exception of one S.79 carrying out Arty spotting over SALUM which was successfully shot down on 21 Dec.

(b) Own.

Offensive Fighter Patrols.

These have been maintained continually over the area SALUM - BARDIA - GAMBUT.

Bombing.

On night 18/19 Dec ten tons of bombs were dropped on DERNA Bay, the majority being believed to fall in the target area. The NORTHERN half of the BARDIA defences were also continuously bombed for 5½ hours.

On night 19/20 Dec BENGASI and BENINA aerodromes were attacked, approx eight tons of bombs being dropped at BENGASI and three tons at BENINA. Accurate results are believed to have been obtained. AIR GAZZALA L/G was also successfully attacked.

On night 20/21 Dec BENGASI was again attacked causing fires and explosions.

Recce.

Recce of enemy aerodromes on 19 Dec indicated there was an increase of AA in Eastern LIBYA. Two JU 87s (German dive bomber) were seen on TOBRUK WEST aerodrome. No enemy ground force movements were seen.

4. ORGANISATION.

Re-grouping of Divisions.

A cap. doc dated 5 Nov 40 indicated that XXI Corps had been re-organised and was composed of the following:

2 CC.NN.
61 Div.
XXI Arty Regt.
Blackshirt Volunteer Bn.

G.O.C.
Gen. SPATOCCO.

It seems probable that XXIII Corps (Gen. BERGONZOLI) includes 65 Div and 1 CC.NN. Div, and possibly 62 Div. There are indications that XXII Corps has been disbanded but this still lacks confirmation. If it exists it might consist of 62 Div and 64 Div (the majority of which are believed to have been captured.) 4 CC.NN. was known to be under command of Group of Lib Divs at the time of our advance and 3 CC.NN. has almost certainly been disbanded.

XXI Arty Regt.

Cap. docs dated Nov 40 show that the XXI Arty Regt is not the Arty Regt originally with XXI Corps. It is a new regt of four Groups numbered 105, 130, 143 and 130 each consisting of twelve 149/13 guns. The Regt has been only recently formed as in mid Nov one Group was still awaiting the unloading of material at BENGASI. Personnel are almost entirely recalled men over 34 years of age and are short of training, at least two Groups having only had one or two practice shoots since formation.

Dumps of 149 mm shells are known to have been in course of constitution at BARRANI early in Dec; in addition guns of approx 6-inch calibre have been captured at both BARRANI and SALUM. These probably belonged to XXI Arty Ragg. but it seems doubtful whether more than one or two Btys are thus accounted for. The remainder are now probably incorporated in the defences of BARDIA and TOBRUK.

The Heavy AA Group of XXI Arty Ragg. may be the 1? Group of 33/56 AA Guns (a new calibre not previously heard of) which was according to a cap. doc. at BENGASI on 23 Oct 40.

5. ORDER OF BATTLE.

43 Arty Regt of 61 Div.

A cap. doc dated 21 Sep 40 indicates this was as follows.

1 Group 100/17 Mows.
2 and 3 Groups 75/27 Guns.
61 90mm Bty attached to 1 Lib Div and therefore probably accounted for.
361 90mm Bty (Complement).
90mm Bty belonging 17 PAVIA Div (presumably to replace the 1 Lt AA Bty

6. TRANSPORT.

A cap. doc dated 3 July 40 deals with the move of 63 Div in three nights from EL ADEM to BARDIA.
Transport available was as follows:-
Lancia MO 121, 112 SPA and 61 L39.

Transport required to lift the Div was as follows:-
176 Lancia MO, 490 SPA and 12 L.39.

The Div was therefore short of 55 Lancias [illegible] SPAs.

A study of the cap. doc. shows that each Inf Regt required an additional /100 SPA lorries, only 1 and 2 Arty Groups had their full [illegible] allotment 3 Group being obliged to use that of the other two [illegible] 202 A-Tk Coy had no [illegible] of its own, the [illegible] Bn needed an additional [illegible] SPA and the Eng Bn had no transport of its own.

Comment. Information from other sources shows that this shortage of transport is by no means peculiar to 63 Div. The need for a shuttle service in order to move a Div has been in evidence on more than one occasion.

7. ENEMY EQUIPMENT.

Arty Fuzes.
A cap. doc. dated 1 Oct 40 reveals that a large amount of Arty ammunition was fitted with old fuzes, e.g. on 9 Nov [illegible] XXI Arty Ragg. had available for immediate use 9,000 rds with 1050/[illegible] fuzes and 21,000 rds unfit for use as they were fitted with old fuzes.

8. ARTY SIGNALS.

A cap. doc. dated 27 June 40 states that the signalling code with rockets was as follows:
Two red,..... we are attacked
two green.. , reinforcements urgently needed

In the Field,
[illegible]

General Staff, [illegible] Desert

S/40/1/GS"I".

S.E.C.R.E.T.

COPY NO. 7

ADVANCED WESTERN DESERT FORCE INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 4.

Based on information received from 2000 hrs 17 Dec to 2000 hrs 19 Dec.

1. GENERAL.

The last two days have been comparatively quiet with the enemy remaining secure behind the BARDIA defences and our adv tps covering all possible exits.

The R.A.F. have maintained continual fighter patrols over the SALUM area in addition to effective bombing of BARDIA and rearward aerodromes.

2. OPERATIONS 18-19 Dec.

Our patrols remained in observation of BARDIA.

Air reports indicate that the main MT concentrations are in the NORTHERN and NORTH WESTERN portions of the defended area; this is confirmed by ground observation. On the morning of the 18th, patrols met with shell fire along the whole SOUTHERN perimeter from the coast to BIR AILET UUAR (512393). In the evening the enemy strength in the Wadi HAATRED area was estimated at 400 Inf, 4 Fd guns, 8 M.Gs, and 15 lorries.

In the evening the enemy commenced long range shelling of SALUM, using probably 149mm guns, firing from the SOUTHERN extremity of the defences. This was a favorite habit of his prior to the Sep advance, and used to prove singularly ineffective.

On the morning of the 19th patrols were able to estimate the enemy strength in the fwd defence sector astride the BARDIA - TOBRUK rd as follows:-

Two Bns, 20 Fd guns, with one Coy and an O.P. one mile WEST of boundary point 19. A number of MT within the defences were considered derelict.

Ground observation throughout the day reported that the defences were fairly fully held, and that there was nothing in the enemy's movements to indicate a general withdrawal from BARDIA being contemplated.

Tac/R over BARDIA, which has been maintained at least twice a day, reports a [illegible] of at least 500 MT within the defended area, and a concentration of approx 70 MT still in the wadi CHARRUBA area SOUTH of the TOBRUK road.

On 18 Dec GARN UL GREIN was evacuated. Air recce over GIARABUB on 18 Dec reported 26 MT between GIARABUB and [illegible]. Otherwise no movement.

Back Areas. Recce of DERNA was carried out on 18 Dec and little enemy activity was reported.

3. R.N. OPERATIONS.

On night 18/19 Dec the NORTHERN portion of the defended area of the BARDIA defences was bombarded.

4. ORDER OF BATTLE - 63 DIV.

A cap doc dated 7 Dec 40 indicates this was as follows :-

157 Inf Regt
158 " "
45 Arty Regt
63 MG Bn

ORDER OF BATTLE - 6[illegible] DIV. (Contd)

6[illegible] Lt Tk Bn.
6[illegible] Eng Bn.
6[illegible] A/Tk Coy.
202 A/Tk Coy.

Comment. It was previously thought that 6[illegible] Lt Tk Bn was with 1 Tank Regg. It would appear that this formation was broken up prior to our adv on 9 Dec, or else this Lt Tk Bn, though seconded, was still on the addressee list of H.Q. 6[illegible] Div.

A prisoner was captured as long ago as July 14 belonging to 202 A/Tk Coy. He stated at the time that his Coy was with 6[illegible] Div.

The whole of 6[illegible] Div appears from cap. docs to have been in the SOFAFI area. It is estimated that at least three quarters escaped and are now in BARDIA.

AIR ACTIVITY.

(a) Enemy.

Has been comparatively ineffective during the last two days, though on one occasion a HQ was bombed while on the move.

Own.

Fighter patrols have been maintained over the fwd area and two, possibly five, FA have been shot down.

On night 17/18 Dec extensive bombing operations were carried out. BENINA was attacked with good results despite bad weather and rain over LIBYA. Water was reported seen on the aerodrome.

BARDIA was heavily bombed both on this and the subsequent nights.

X. ENEMY DISPOSITIONS.

(a) A cap. doc, unfortunately undated, but probably August or early September, shows dispositions as follows:-

BARDIA.

6[illegible] Div occupied the Northern half of the perimeter and continued westwards SOUTH of the TOBRUK road as far as the 50[illegible] Grid. H.Q. 62 Div was at approx Pt 154, map reference 50[illegible].

6[illegible] Div occupied the Southern portion of the defences, but including a small bulge immediately to the WEST of BARDIA village. H.Q. 6[illegible] Div was at Pt 17[illegible], map reference 51517941.

It is noticeable that the area around Upper and Lower BARDIA is excluded from either of the above Divisional areas and indicates that probably ever since bombing and bombardment of BARDIA commenced, the garrison has remained dispersed around the perimeter defences.

1 CC.NN. was situated immediately to the WEST of the 62 Div with one Legion (219th) back at cross tracks in Square 481411. H.Q. 1 CC.NN. was at CARMUS EL MENASTIR, map reference 50640[illegible].

/SIDI AZLIZ....

SIDI AZEIZ.

1 Bn belonging to the 115 Inf Regt, 62 Div with close support and A/Tk units attached.

GABR SALEH.

2 Lib Div.

BIR SOBI.

1 Lib Div.

In the area astride the BARDIA road approx 14 miles EAST of the EL ADEM track junction, the 64 "CATANZARO" Div less two Bns, captured

A second undated/map, probably marked about MAY or JUNE 40, shows dispositions in the TOBRUK area as follows :

4 Div (CCNN occupying an area on top of the escarpment SOUTH of EL ADEM.

63 Div occupying an area outside the TOBRUK perimeter at the SW corner.

The map does not cover TOBRUK itself.

7 ENEMY ORGANISATION - DIVISIONAL ARTY REGTS.

A cap doc dated 9 Dec 40 states that the organisation of 45 Arty Regt was as follows :-

Headquarters : CO Col SOZZANI.

Two Groups each of three Btys each equipped with 4 75/27 guns.

One Group of three Btys each equipped with 4 100/17 Howrs

The 63 20 mm Bty and the 263 20 mm Bty (complement Bty) (each 8 guns)

Fire Power of the Regt was as follows :

Rifles : 1312
Pistols : 191
18 Light Automatics and 18 Machine Guns
24 75/27 Guns
12 100/17 Howrs
16 20 mm Breda AA Guns

Ammunition :

For the 20 mm Breda : 36,000 rds AA and 17,000 armour piercing
For the 75/27 : 6,300 rds AP and 2,700 Shrapnel
For the 100/17 Howrs : 3,300 rds AP and 500 Shrapnel

Strength :

No information is given, but judging by fire power is estimated at approx 1,500.

8. ENEMY INTELLIGENCE.

(a) (i) According to an Italian Int Sum amongst other important documents found after our withdrawal in Sep were a complete Code Book with several Code Tables.
(ii) The nominal roll of the 6 Tank Bn giving its composition.
(iii) W/T Code "X".
(iv) A pass belonging to a man of 'C' Coy, 1 Tank Bn.
(v) An Arty Manual showing the composition of a British Bty
(vi) A semaphore code.

(b) Hundreds of documents prove that the Italians daily intercepted a large number of our R/T conversations and wireless messages.
As an example : "The following is for Lieut ISHAM of ABBA ; you have been chosen to undergo a Course of.....with the 7th Regt;(Sic) report to Kasr-el-Nil." In this case the interpreter fortunately identified Kasr-el-Nil as a Cinema in CAIRO, but a study of these lists shows that many items of more or less valuable information have been obtained by interception.

(c) Reports on the interrogation of our own prisoners have been found. In every case the man has given the designation of his unit, but in few cases has information of value been given away.
It is stressed that anyone taken prisoner is only bound to give his name and number and in NO circumstances should he give his unit number or other information.
One case has, however, been found of a man describing the movements and methods of his patrol, the name of his C.O. and locations of adjacent HQ. The accuracy of his statements (which may have been made purposely to mislead) are being checked.
It is not believed that compulsion is used to make our prisoners speak, but the German method may be employed. This consists of telling his prisoner that unless he gives the name of his unit and certain other details his capture will not be notified and his relatives will remain ignorant of his fate.

(d) TANK ORGANISATION.

A PW states that the 2 Raggruppamento consisted of [illegible] Corps Tank Bn, 60 and 61 Divisional Tank Bns, all three of which were equipped with Light Tanks. They all left [illegible] in JULY, and the [illegible] and 60 Bns were in the fwd area prior to our advance. The 61 was thought to be back in the [illegible] area.

Bns were stated to be organised into three Coys each of about 13 tanks, there being, including [illegible], approx 4[illegible] Lt Tks to a Bn.

No information was obtained [illegible] or 6[illegible] Bns.

In addition prisoner stat[illegible] back towards [illegible] about a mont[illegible]

Comment. Exact figures ar[illegible] number of enemy tanks account[illegible] is now established that the en[illegible] at SOFAFI; despite this however [illegible] part of the 1 and 2 [illegible] Bns [illegible] The enemy still has available [illegible] and possibly half an M.11 Bn [illegible] area requ[illegible] there are some in [illegible]

10. ENEMY USE OF CAPTURED MATERIAL.

A captured document dated 21 July 40 is of interest; translated it reads as follows:-

"His Excellency the Marshal Commanding in Chief (i.e. GRAZIANI) fully approves the proposal under reference, and directs that all the armoured cars captured from the English, provided it is possible to make them serviceable, shall be allotted to the 4 Tank Regt, complete with their accessories, armament, equipment and wireless sets. In the use of the latter, rigorous measures will be taken to prevent interception."

A copy of this order was forwarded for information by H.Q. XXII Corps CC.NN. to H.Q. 4 CC.NN. Div on 5 Aug 40.

11. CONCLUSIONS.

It is now obvious that the enemy intention is to hold BARDIA. He has had a breathing space in which to organise the defences, and although the allotment of Divs to sectors with the BARDIA perimeter is not yet known it is reasonable to suppose that 62 and 63 Divs have once more been allotted their previous areas as shown in para 6 above (i.e. 62 Div in the NORTH and 63 Div in the SOUTH) with the remnants of 2 CC.NN. Div possibly in the [illegible] area.

Since the withdrawal behind BARDIA defences the enemy has been continually bombed and shelled by ground tps, Navy and Air, and he must be suffering from jagged nerves and loss of sleep.

GAMBUT is now reported as unoccupied, but it is thought possible that a rearguard position has at least been reced in this area to cover a withdrawal if BARDIA falls. Air confirmation is being sought, and recces are searching for any other projected enemy delaying positions between BARDIA and TOBRUK.

It is thought likely that any such positions would be manned by tps sent fwd from TOBRUK.

Reinforcements in the form of possibly one Division, weak in Arty, are reported to be on their way from TRIPOLITANIA, but it is unlikely that they can have yet reached as far as DERNA. They are more probably between DERNA and BENGASI.

There are no indications at present that the enemy is preparing a force to march to the relief of BARDIA.

The GIARABUB garrison remains in place. It is likely that the Libyan Garrison MG Coys formerly at the frontier posts up to and including SIFFERZEN have been withdrawn to GIARABUB, making a total of five Coys (about 800 men). The Blackshirt support Btys and AA/A.Tk Btys at these posts are believed to have been withdrawn to join the 1 CC.NN. Div at TOBRUK.

In the Field.
21 Dec 40.

[illegible] Colonel,
General Staff, Advanced Western Desert Force.

Date	Time	Copies
17	1410	1
G ASST. CP.		/

MOST SECRET.

Copy No. 30

ADV. HQ., B.T.E. INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 5.

(based on information received up to 2000 hrs 14 Dec 40)

No Summary was issued on 13 Dec 40.

1. OPERATIONS.

During the past two days information of operations has been scarce, but it is known that elements of 7 Armd Div have penetrated into LIBYA. Elsewhere the battlefield is being cleared up and the problem of evacuating prisoners is being successfully tackled.

The weather is good.

2. OPERATIONS BY WESTERN DESERT FORCE.

The enemy are still holding out in the HALFAYA area, though as yet they have not been seriously attacked. The Armd Div reformed and a large portion of it is now in LIBYA with elements astride the TOBRUK- BARDIA road, where the telephone line has been cut and communication interrupted.

Throughout the remainder of the front the battelfield is being cleared up and the thousands of prisoners evacuated.

3. ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE.

(a) There is now reason to believe that XXII Corps still exists, and it seems likely that the Corps was mixed, containing both Metropolitan and Blackshirt Divs. From various sources it now appears that the enemy's Order of Battle is:-

HQ X Army	-	TOBRUK
Adv HQ (report centre)	-	BARDIA
HQ XXI Corps	-	Formerly BUQ BUQ, now BARDIA area.
62 Div		BARDIA
remnants of 63 Div	-	HALFAYA - SALUM
HQ XXII Corps	-	MARTUBA
61 Div	-	EL ADEM
1 CCNN Div	-	TOBRUK
HQ XXIII Corps	-	SALUM
remnants of 2 CCNN Div	-	CAPUZZO - HALFAYA

C.O.C. Fwd areas is Gen. BERGONZOLI.

There are indications that 60 "SABRATHA" Div is being moved across to CIRENAICA.

2/....

(b) Identifications.

There is evidence that the "Catanzaro" Div included:-

141 Inf Regt
142 Ind Regt
203 Div Arty Regt

The following identifications have also come from P.W. and captured documents:-

131 Bn, 2Sl Legion, 2 CCNN Div
36 Inf Regt
12 Div Arty Regt
202 Div Arty Regt
18 Garrison MG Coy

Comment.

36 Inf Regt is believed to have been formerly part of 16 "Pistoia" Div, Italy. 18 Garrison MG Coy is at GARN UL GREIN.

4. ENEMY AIR ACTIVITY.

Enemy aircraft have been employed in attacking our fwd tps. Many heavy attacks have been carried out, and although no details are yet available, it is believed negligible damage has been done. Approximately 85 aircraft (largely S.79s) have been shot down in the last two days.

5. OWN AIR ACTIVITY.

The maximum effort that the R.A.F. put forward at the opening of the offensive has been steadily maintained, and has had the result of keeping most of the Italian Air Force on the ground. A very large number of aircraft were made unserviceable at CAST EL BRITTO, and BENINA aerodrome was also made unserviceable as a result of raids.

The R.A.F. have lost approximately 6 aircraft in the last two days.

6. ENEMY TACTICS.

A captured officer stated that in the course of several discussions with GALLINA and PESCATORI he had strongly advocated the use of heavy tanks as the only way of winning the war in AFRICA. GALLINA and PESCATORI however were firm believers in infantry. The officer said that had we attacked with 250,000 infantry they would have been wiped out, but that the Italians had never expected to cope with heavy tanks with the equipment they possessed.

7. PIPE-LINE.

Captured civilians, formerly employed on the pipe-line, stated that on 4 Dec water arrived at SIDI BARRANI and that by 8 Dec the water was clear enough to drink. On 11 Dec, however, when they came to turn on the cocks no water came through.

The pipe-line consisted of tar-coated steel pipes of varying diameter i.e. 14-20 cms, and that they were put in as they came up. The pipes were placed about 50 cms in the ground.

8. WATER SUPPLY.

P.Ws report that there are plants for distilling sea water at BARDIA and TOBRUK which are capable of supplying several thousands. On the other hand P.Ws also stated that water for TOBRUK was brought from DERNA or BARDIA, so it would seem that the existence of a distilling plant here requires confirmation.

9. ITALIAN FIGHTING QUALITIES.

As already stated, Italian gunners at BARRANI put up a fine show. It is also reported that Blackshirts fought well at TUMMAR WEST, and that at BARRANI the Libyans went for the tanks with bombs, though they broke before infantry.

10. CHEMICAL WARFARE.

All prisoners have ridiculed the idea of gas being used. According to available reports none have seen anti-gas equipment, and all stated they had either been ordered to discard their respirators before going into action, or had thrown them away.

11. CONCLUSIONS.

It is still not known what line the Italians propose to adopt, though the fact that they are holding out on the escarpment indicates that they wish to cover BARDIA. There has been little movement on roads running West during the past two days, and the indications at the moment point to BARDIA being defended.

Ady HQ PTE.,
15 Dec 40.

[signature]
Brigadier,
General Staff.

DISTRIBUTION:

As for INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO.4.

MOST SECRET.

Copy No. 30

ADV. H.Q., B.T.E. INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO.4

(based on information up to 2000 hrs 12 Dec 40)

1. OPERATIONS

The remnants of the Italian force in EGYPT are being engaged in the neighbourhood of 517366 where there is a strong fortified camp with Medium arty.

The battlefield is being cleared up.

The weather remains bad.

2. OPERATIONS BY WESTERN DESERT FORCE.

It is now known that Pt 90 surrendered at 1425 under a white flag. HALFWAY HOUSE was abandoned by the enemy, but HALFAYA remains occupied, together with a fortified camp containing medium guns/is still holding out at 517366.
which

At BUQ BUQ 14,000 prisoners were captured, which accounted for the whole of 64 "Catanzaro" Div and a legion of the 2 CCNN Div. 25 Medium tanks were abandoned by the enemy at MABIA.

It is believed the total number of prisoners taken is 30,000, and may be more. It was estimated before the offensive began that the Italians had 40,000 troops forward of SALUM. It is very doubtful whether the Italians succeeded in evacuating any equipment or war material except possibly that of 63 Div which may have been in the HALFAYA area. It is estimated that the complete equipment of the Group of Libyan Divisions, 4 CCNN Div, 65 and 64 Divs, and a considerable part of the 2 CCNN Div has been captured. In addition to this, all the equipment transferred from other units in TRIPOLITANIA and CIRENAICA to the fwd areas and arty (including medium guns) sent up from BARDIA, has been captured.

3. ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE.

(a) The enemy Order of Battle in CIRENAICA is now thought to be:-

G.H.Q. Libya	-	CIRENE.
HQ X Army	-	BARDIA
61 Div	-	EL ADEM - BIR GOBI
HQ XXI Corps	-	BARDIA
62 Div	-	BARDIA
remnants of 63 Div	-	HALFAYA - SALUM
HQ XXIII Corps	-	CAPUZZO area
1 CCNN Div	-	TOBRUK
remainder of 2 CCNN Div	-	CAPUZZO area

(b) Identification:

Prisoners captured in the BARRANI area included some from:-

15 Motor Bn, X Army
219 Mortar Coy.

2/...

Prisoners from a detached Coy of 62 Mixed Eng Bn were captured at BUQ BUQ.

There have also been the following identifications:-

27 Labour Bn
203 Arty Regt
14 Inf Regt.

Comment. 14 Inf Regt was last identified as part of 24 "Pinerolo" Div. CHIETI, IX Corps, S. Army Gp. This requires confirmation.

(c) Personalities.

The following Generals have also been captured:-

General CHARIO	-	G.O.C. 1 Lib Div
Cons/Gen MAZETTI	-	C of S, 4 CCNN Div

4. ENEMY AIR ACTIVITY.

Enemy air activity has been confined to low-flying attacks on our most advanced troops, but have done practically no damage. Their casualties during the day were:-

Three CR 42s	shot down.
Three CR 42s	destroyed on the ground
One S.79	shot down.

5. OWN AIR ACTIVITY.

The R.A.F. have given invaluable assistance by harassing the retreating enemy almost to TOBRUK. They continue to carry out heavy and effective raids throughout Eastern CIRENAICA.

Two of our planes were lost today.

6. ITALIAN WAR COMMUNIQUE.

The following communique has been broadcast on 12 Dec:

"Severe fighting continues and is taking place on the West of BARRANI towards BUQ BUQ. Enemy losses were heavy, ours considerable. The day before yesterday we stated the enemy lost 4 planes. It is now known that this should read 15. They were seen to crash and their loss is certain. 7 of our planes did not return.

The British think they have won a large victory because our scattered fwd troops had retired a short distance towards the LIBYAN frontier; let them beware their cheap success and wait till they meet our main body. They will then, of course, do one of their famous strategical retreats."

7. CONCLUSIONS.

It was at first thought that the Italians would make a stand on a line CAPUZZO - SALUM or CAPUZZO - BARDIA. A rear-guard action is being fought in the neighbourhood of HALFAYA - SALUM, but CAPUZZO appears to have been evacuated, and there has been continual movement West out of BARDIA towards TOBRUK. At the moment there are no indications of the Italians attempting to stabilize the position on any particular line.

Ady HQ BTE
13 Dec 40.

D.H. Salmon Capt
for Brigadier,
General Staff.

DISTRIBUTION:- As for SUMMARY NO.2.

Date	Time	Copies
12	1330	1
G MUST. DIV.		/

MOST SECRET.

Copy No. 30...

ADV. HQ., B.T.E. INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 5.

(based on information up to 2000 hrs 11 Dec 40)

1. OPERATIONS.

The advance continues with equal success. The only Italians remaining in Egypt are a vast number of prisoners and remnants of 65 Div fleeing from SOFAFI and other formations.

The weather has improved slightly but there is still a high wind blowing.

2. OPERATIONS BY WESTERN DESERT FORCE.

The main resistance at SIDI BARRANI was overcome on the afternoon of 10 Dec, and it fell completely on 11 Dec.

Pt 90 Camp held out until the afternoon of 11 Dec when it surrendered. MATRUH Force captured two Bns from the troops who had withdrawn from BARTILA towards BARRANI.

During the morning reports from air showed that the garrison of SOFAFI and RABIA was retreating towards HALFWAY HOUSE. These camps were occupied by our troops, some prisoners and much material being captured.

At the same time, 4 Armd Bde was directed along the escarpment to harass the retreating troops. On the coast the other Armd Bde with 11 H. was directed on BUQ BUQ and to exploit Westward.

Enemy made a stand between Eastings 55% and 55%. They were attacked by the 7 Armd Bde who captured 2000 prisoners and guns.

3. ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE.

(a) Considerable information has been received of enemy's Order of Battle.

XXI Corps - 62 Div
63 Div
64 'Catanzaso' Div
Maletti Gp.

Comment.

64 'Catanzaso' was partly formed from old 3 CCNN Div which was disbanded. Other formations went to 4 CCNN Div and some returned to Italy.

G.O.C. XXI Corps is Gen SPATOCCO (formerly G.O.C. 65 Div). G.O.C. 64 Div is Gen AMICO (formerly Chief of Staff, 1st Corps, Turin).

XXIII Corps - 1 CCNN Div
2 CCNN Div
4 CCNN Div

2/....

Comment.

4 CCNN Div received part of 3 CCNN Div and relieved 1 CCNN Div in the BUQ BUQ - BARRANI area about 5 Dec.

G.O.C. XXIII Corps - Gen BERGONZOLI.

(b) Dispositions.

It is thought that the enemy's dispositions are as follows:-

Adv HQ X Army	-	BARDIA.
HQ XXI Corps	-	BARDIA.
62 Div) 64 Div)	-	BARDIA area
63 Div	-	Remnants retiring on CAPUZZO - SALUM.
HQ XXIII Corps	-	CAPUZZO area
1 CCNN Div	-	TOBRUK
2 CCNN Div	-	CAPUZZO - AZEIZ

(c) Tank Gp.

According to P.W. the Tank Gp is commanded by Gen BABINI and is composed of 200 tanks of which 50 are light tanks and the remainder medium (majority M.11, but some M.13).

This Tank Gp is reported not to be organised into permanent groups, but tanks are allotted as required.

(d) Identifications.

A very large number of minor identifications have been received, but so far there is nothing new to report. Fresh identifications of 157 Inf Regt and 45 Div Arty Regt confirmed the presence of 63 Div in the SOFAFI area. The XXI Corps Arty Regt was also identified.

(e) Personalities.

The following officers have been captured.

Gen GALLINA.	G.O.C. GP of Lib. Divs and 4 CCNN Div.
Gen MERZARI	G.O.C. 4 CONN Div
Gen PISCATORI	G.O.C. 2 Lib Div
Col RAO TORRES	C of S. to GALLINA
Col GIUSFREDA	C of S to MALETTI.

S/....

4. ENEMY AIR ACTIVITY.

Enemy air activity was practically negligible. Five bombing attacks were carried out on Armd cars and on tps in TUMMAR with no success. No other bombing raids were carried out. Six enemy machines were shot down yesterday - 3 CR 42s, two S.79s and Recce machine.

5. OWN AIR ACTIVITY.

Our bombers continually attacked enemy bases, aerodromes and concentrations. A particularly successful attack was carried out on HALFWAY HOUSE where was gathered a tremendous collection of vehicles and men. All our bombers dropped all their bombs in the target area.

Our fighters, too, ground-strafed every target that presented itself doing great damage, while at the same time bringing back valuable and full information.

This aerial offensive undoubtedly had a very great effect on the enemy.

6. SUCCESS OF OUR "I" TANKS.

Our "I" tanks have been a deciding factor in the offensive. The Italians had nothing that could stop them, and it was largely through them that NIBEIWA and TUMMAR were captured with so much ease.

7. ITALIAN ARTY.

(a) Types.

The following types of arty have been captured or identified:-

75/27 CK AA
75/27 Field
105/28 Medium
65/17 Inf Gun
* 65/16 AA
47 mm A/Tk

* This is a new type of gun mounted on a lorry, and equivalent to our 3-in AA gun.

(b) Handling.

Italian gunners fought extremely well at BARRANI, manning their guns till the last moment or the last round. Libyan gunners however were poor.

8. ITALIAN A/TK WEAPONS.

(a) Concealment.

At NIBEIWA enemy A/Tk guns were found concealed in tombs.

(b) Rifles.

German A/Tk 'Solothurn' rifles were captured at NIBEIWA.

4/....

9. SURPRISE.

The Italians were completely taken by surprise at NIBEIWA - many officers being in their beds when the attack came in.

10. MORALE.

The morale of the prisoners is extremely low and more than one officer has asserted that "this is the end of the Italian offensive".

11. ITALIAN WAR COMMUNIQUE.

The following communique is interesting as it shows how the truth is withheld from the Italians.

"At dawn on Dec 9th the British attacked S.E. of SIDI BARRANI. Our troops valiantly resisted but eventually had to fall back on SIDI BARRANI. Heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy. On the 9/10 heavy fighting continued. General MALETTI was killed leading his Libyan troops. The 4 C'BN Division and Libyan troops particularly distinguished themselves. Our planes bombed and machine-gunned enemy tanks".

This was again repeated with the following added:-

"The Italian Air Force dominated the sky for the last few days. Britain has claimed to have had big victories in LIBIA. The reference to yesterday's communique proved that the fighting was negligible. Britains had better wait until they had really done something to talk about. The B.B.C. claimed that 80 Italian planes were brought down. Nonsense! We dominated the air that day - so we cannot have lost many planes".

12. CONCLUSIONS.

Every indication points to the thorough demoralisation of the Italian forces. The Italian temperament does not lend itself easily to withdrawal, and morale falls to pieces in a rout. It is most unlikely that the Italians will ever recover from this blow, and unless German assistance is forthcoming - and there is no evidence of it yet - there is no doubt that the Italian Army in LIBIA as an effective force is finished.

In the Field.
12 Dec 40.

[illegible] Capt
for Brigadier,
General Staff.

DISTRIBUTION:

General Headquarters, M.E.	1
H.Q., R.A.F.	2 - 3
Adv HQ Western Desert Force	4 - 14
HQ. Western Desert Force	15 - [illegible]
HQ. Northern Delta L of C District	30 - 35
HQ. Suez Base Sub-Area	[illegible]
HQ. Canal Base & L of C Area	2? - [illegible]
HQ. 8 Aust Div	[illegible]
C-in-C, Med.	[illegible]
C.G.S.-in-C.	[illegible]
G (Ops.)	[illegible]
G (I)	[illegible]
M.L.O.	[illegible]
War Diary	[illegible]

MOST SECRET.

Copy No. 24

ADV. HQ., B.T.E. INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO.2.
(based on information up to 2000 hrs 10 Dec 40)

1. OPERATIONS.

The advance continues. MAKTILA has been abandoned by the enemy and there is confused fighting round SIDI BARRANI.

The weather has deteriorated, a strong wind blowing from the West with considerable sand blowing about. Visibility has been also affected.

2. CONTINUATION OF THE OFFENSIVE.

Information is still meagre as to the exact situation. TUMMAR WEST and TUMMAR EAST have definitely fallen, but there is no news of Pt 90, which is in any case isolated. MAKTILA has also been abandoned by the enemy, the garrison withdrawing to the BARRANI area where they are digging in.

The advance to SIDI BARRANI from the TUMMAR area was continued by 16 Inf Bde supported by 11 Ind Inf Bde. Strong opposition was encountered and the A. & S.H. in particular suffered casualties. 16 Inf Bde was reinforced by 11 Ind Inf Bde and 4 Armd Bde. Of the latter, 7 R.T.R. went in and came out with 750 prisoners and a number of MT. Fighting still continues in the area, butthe situation is obscure.

MAKTILA was abandoned by the enemy and it is believed a considerable quantity of MT and stores were captured by the MATRUH Force. It is thought that we have reached the Easting 603.

West of BARRANI the 11 Hussars have reconnoitred 15 miles West of BUQ BUQ. It is reported there are many dumps in the BUQ BUQ area. There is a strongly fortified camp at ALAM EL RIMTH (577565).

To the South, the Support Gp and 7 Armd Bde continue to watch the SOFAFI area, and the 8 H have been sent to watch the Western end .

6,000 prisoners are known to have been captured and a considerable quantity of MT and other war material.

3. ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE.

It is thought that our attack was launched at a time when the Italians were conducting reliefs of their forward Blackshirt and Metropolitan tps. This would account for the conflicting identifications in the BARRANI area. It is thought that 4 CCNN Div was in process of relieving 1 CCNN Div, while 3 CCNN Div was relieving 63 Div at SOFAFI. This has not yet been confirmed. No fresh identifications are yet available.

2/.. ENEMY AIR ACTIVITY.

4. ENEMY AIR ACTIVITY.

Enemy fighter patrols were active during the day over the frontier and a dive-bombing attack was carried out on our troops at TUMAR. This attack was intercepted by our fighters and one aircraft was shot down, with a further two unconfirmed. The total enemy aircraft casualties during the day were 4 shot down confirmed, 3 unconfirmed.

5. OUR AIR ACTIVITY.

The R.A.F. have continued to attack enemy aerodromes and fleeting targets on the ground, though of the latter there were very few. Many trucks, however, packed with tps, were completely destroyed.

6. AIR RECONNAISSANCE.

Strat/R.

1005 hrs. MADDALENA - BARDIA - CAPUZZO.

MADDALENA	-	20 MT
MADDALENA - BARDIA	-	NMS
CAPUZZO - BARDIA	-	20 lorries moving.
MENASTIR	-	Aircraft
TOBRUK - BARDIA	-	NMS
Escarpment	-	NMS
Coastal road	-	NMS

Tac/R.

(a) 0920 hrs. BARDIA - CAPUZZO - SALUM.

BARDIA - CAPUZZO	-	NMS
BARDIA - SALUM	-	NMS
CAPUZZO	-	20 aircraft on landing ground.

(b) 1450 hrs. SOFAFI - BARRANI - BUQ BUQ.

SOFAFI Area	-	AA Fire. Shelling Eastwards from BABIA.
SOFAFI - BUQ BUQ	-	NMS
BUQ BUQ	-	AA Fire and 100 men who took cover. Many dumps.
BUQ BUQ - BARRANI	-	NMS

Note:

Visibility was bad during the day owing to low cloud and sandstorms.

7. ENEMY EQUIPMENT.

It is reported that captured Italian war material is largely of poor quality.

8. SURPRISE.

Complete surprise was obtained at NIBEIWA. Maletti's Chief of Staff stated that the first that was known of the attack was the noise of our tanks working round to the West one hour before the attack was launched.

9. MORALE.

No details of the enemy's morale is yet available, though it is evident that the Italians are fighting stubbornly at SIDI BARRANI. It is reported that Italians still believe Italy is winning the war.

10. CONCLUSIONS.

It is now apparent that our offensive took the Italians completely by surprise and there is no evidence that they contemplate making a stand forward of the frontier.

In the Field
9 Dec 40.

Brigadier,
General Staff.

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MOST SECRET.

ADV. HQ. W.D.E. INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 1 Copy No. 111

(based on information received up to 2000 hrs 9 Dec 40).

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1. OPERATIONS.

A large-scale attack commenced at dawn 9 Dec 40. The action, which has been highly successful, continues.

The weather in the WESTERN DESERT has been good.

2. OPERATIONS BY WESTERN DESERT FORCE.

Details are not yet available.

(a) On night 8/9 Dec tps concentrated as follows:-

7 Armd Div in area BIR EL SHALLUDI 593345 - ALAM EL ILLIQIYA 597344 - GHOT SHAGARIT EL RIH 598335 - GHOT EL MAGAL 587340.

4 Ind Div in area ALAM EL HAMMAM 590350 - SIDI ABBAS 600345 - ALAM EL ILLIQIYA 597344.

(b) First objective.

At 0600 hrs 5 Ind Inf Bde and 7 RTR attacked NIBIEWA Camp. The operation was highly successful and objective was captured by 0745 hrs. Prisoners reported to be 50 officers and 450 ORs. The Comdr. - Gen MALETTI - was killed.

(c) 2nd objective.

11 Ind Inf Bde with 7 RTR advanced to attack TUMMAR Camps at approx. 1230 hrs. Objective was captured by 1600 hrs.

Details not yet available.

(d) 4 Armd Bde moved North behind NIBIEWA and TUMMAR Camps and reached track at 585374 in early afternoon. The Bde is now in area Pt 69 583375 - SANYET EL TIFL 584374 - 588367 - Pt 74 582368.

(e) Force of two Bns and attached tps from MATRUH were in position to the East of MAKTILA by 0600 hrs 9 Dec with a screen from 62873705 to Pt 54 623366 to Pt 70 62173645. Remainder of force behind screen in readiness. Guns registered MAKTILA at dawn.

In late afternoon Pt 55 619368 was occupied.

(f) 7 Armd Div and Sp Gp had the role of watching the RABIA - SOFAFI group of Camps.

2/... ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE.

3. ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE.

(a) From information received from Prisoners of War and most secret sources, it is thought that the enemy's Order of Battle is as follows:-

HQ XXII Corps	HALFAYA (?)
3 CCNN Div	Area SOFAFI - RABIA.
4 CCNN Div	Area BARRANI with elements East of BUQ BUQ.
HQ XXIII Corps.	BARDIA (?)
1 CCNN Div	BARDIA
2 CCNN Div	BARDIA
HQ XXI Corps	BARDIA
62 Div	Area BARDIA
63 Div	Area CAPUZZO - SALUM - HALFAYA
HQ Gp of Libyan Divs	Area BARRANI
1 Lab Div	MAKTILA
2 Lib Div	Destroyed at TUMMAR.
MALETTI Gp	Destroyed at NIBEIWA.

The above Order of Battle is based on limited information, and must be treated with reserve.

(b) IDENTIFICATIONS.

i. 32 Arty Ragguepamento (Metropolitan)

It is learnt from P.W. that this Ragguepamento was formed from 24 Div Arty Regt (formerly part of 29 'Piemonte' Div, MESSINA).

ii. 4 Gp. 32 Arty Ragguepamento (77/28). (238,240,241 Btys).

This Gp is at ALAM EL SHAMIKH (608371).

iii. 11 Lib Bn ALAM EL SHAMIKH

4. ENEMY AIR ACTIVITY.

As a result of heavy and successful bombing attacks on aerodromes in E. Cirenaica, and strong fighter patrols in the fwd areas carried out by the R.A.F., enemy air activity has been negligible. Enemy fighters have been seen over the fwd areas and an occasional recce plane reported. The enemy has attempted no counter-measures either in the fwd areas or on the L of C.

5. OWN AIR ACTIVITY.

(a) Bombers.

BENINA aerodrome was heavily attacked on night 8/9 Dec. Great damage was done to hangars, buildings and E.A. which were in large numbers on the ground. BARDIA, SALUM and BARRANI were also bombed.

(b) Fighters.

Our fighters have been active throughout the day and have carried out many successful 'beat-ups' on enemy MT

and infantry. They have also accounted for 2 enemy bombers and 8 (possible 10) enemy fighters.

6. AIR RECONNAISSANCE.

(a) Strat/R.

The following Strat/Rs were carried out during the day:-

i. Early morning.

GAMBUT - BARDIA - CAPUZZO - SALUM.
No information was received from this Strat/R as the aircraft did not return.

ii. Afternoon.

GAMBUT - MENSTIR - BARDIA - MADDALENA - CAPUZZO.
The following information was obtained:-

SIDI OMAR to MADDALENA	-	NMS
SIDI OMAR to BARDIA	-	NMS
MENASTIR to BARDIA	-	40 MT moving into BARDIA.
BARDIA to CAPUZZO	-	20 MT moving South. 30 MT stationary on Southern edge of BARDIA.
CAPUZZO	-	3 camps. (centre one fairly full of stores & MT).
SALUM	-	30 MT moving towards SALUM.
HALFAYA to SOFAFI	-	NMS

(b) Tac/R.

0750. SOFAFI - TUMMAR - AZZAZIYA.

60 MT outside Northern edge of SOFAFI NW Camp, otherwise no change in SOFAFI area. Indication of pending move from TUMMAR.

0850. BUQ BUQ - NIBEIWA- SALUM.

28 large MT facing South TUMMAR - NIBEIWA track.
27 large MT facing South just North of TUMMAR.
No MT moving West along coastal track to BUQ BUQ.
15 MT moving East between SALUM and BUQ BUQ.
25 MT moving NW South of the last.

1440 - 1530. NIBEIWA - BARRANI - BUQ BUQ.

Situation at TUMMAR and NIBEIWA obscured by black smoke, battle raging at TUMMAR WEST.
NMS 570560, South from BARRANI and BARRANI - MAKTILA.
28 MT facing East just below M of ALAM EL BARRANI.

7. ENEMY ARTY.

P.W. stated that the range of 77/88 gun was about 8000 yds, but that there was a shortage of ammunition.

8. CONCLUSIONS.

It is evident that the attack took the enemy by complete surprise, and this is borne out by the normal MT movement that continued in the rear areas during the early part of the morning. There are no [illegible] of the enemy [illegible] the [illegible], though it is likely that he will [illegible] a re-organisation of his front by night.

[illegible]
[illegible]
General Staff.

In the Field
[illegible]

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