

In the second half of December, 1942, the German 334 Infantry Division began to make its appearance. This was a newly created formation of rather low quality. The division remained in northern Tunisia, and was completed by the arrival of its artillery in the second week in January.

On the 1st January, 1943, the estimated total of Axis troops in Tunisia, excluding air crews and ground staffs, was 55,900. The enemy tank strength was about 160 German tanks with in addition some Italian Medium and Light tanks, and by mid-January there were 14 12-gun batteries of artillery.

Enemy losses at sea in transports and cargo ships were very heavy, and it is reported that Hitler himself gave orders that personnel should travel only by destroyer or by air. The daily intake of reinforcements varied greatly, as the regular service of transport aeroplanes carried supplies as well as troops; at this period the daily average was between 700 and 1,000 men, some of whom were destined for Rommel's army.

In the last week of January, the Hermann Goering Flak Regiment—the original Hermann Goering unit—sent two of its batteries, the third remaining in Germany in its usual role as bodyguard to the Reichsmarschall. This proved to be the forerunner of the Hermann Goering Armoured Division which was built up in Tunisia on a most lavish establishment, though it was never completed to strength. It absorbed Parachute Regiment Koch which became Jaeger Regiment Hermann Goering and two Grenadier Regiments were formed in Germany and commenced to make their appearance in Tunisia in February.

Elements only of the Tank Reconnaissance, Artillery and Engineer units reached Tunisia by the end of the campaign, and a battalion of 2 Hermann Goering Grenadier Regiment arrived as late as the 24th April: but the Division was never completed.

On the 1st February the estimated total of troops had risen to 84,000, of whom 55,000 were Germans and 29,000 Italians. The tank state was about 380—280 German and 100 Italian, 21 Armoured Division having moved west into Tunisia with approximately 80 tanks; and there were 26 to 28 12-gun batteries.

During February Rommel's army had withdrawn to the Mareth area and became a potential—and later an actual—opponent of First Army. The German troops consisted of 15 Armoured Division, 90 and 164 Light Divisions, Panzer Grenadier Regiment Afrika, and the remnants of the Ramcke Brigade, with four reconnaissance units, six mobile batteries

of 88-mm. guns, and many supply and L. of C. troops.

The Italians were composed of Spezia, Pistoia and the Young Fascists Divisions, part of Centauro Division, and the remnants of Italian divisions from El Alamein grouped under Trieste Division, together with a considerable amount of corps and garrison artillery, and a large and miscellaneous collection of Carabinieri, Frontier Guards and L. of C. troops. The figure for the estimated total of enemy strength in Tunisia on the 1st March therefore includes this large addition from Tripolitania and is increased to 190,500, including 116,500 Germans and 74,000 Italians.

Only one more formation was sent to Africa. This was 999 Division, which began to arrive at the end of March. It consisted only of 961 and 962 Infantry Regiments each of two battalions with artillery support. Its morale was low, the rank and file being partly drawn from personnel serving sentences for political or military offences.

The flow of Marsch Battalions continued, the highest known number being 57, though some of the intervening numbers were never identified; but these battalions and all other reinforcements were absorbed into units already in the country. After reaching Mareth the original German Libyan Army began at last to receive its share, and it was a large one. After the New Year the intake of men apart from those belonging to the Hermann Goering and 999 Divisions, was in fact, mainly devoted to the replacement of battle casualties and the building up of the depleted formations from Libya.

The estimated enemy strength on the 1st April was 196,700—124,300 Germans and 72,400 Italians.

During the later stages of the campaign, efforts were made to raise volunteer battalions locally. Their fighting value was low, as the volunteer element was noticeably lacking, and many men with Allied sympathies only joined because of the opportunity thus offered of crossing to our lines. One such native Algerian unit was formed, and two Tunisian Italian Battalions, as well as the Phalange Française, a French unit into which only 150 men could be attracted.

Enemy reinforcements continued to arrive until the last week in April. The final estimate on the 1st May, 1943, showed 48,700 Axis infantry, 120 infantry guns, 402 field guns, 180 88 mm. guns and 443 anti-tank guns, with about 100 tank runners. The total strength, excluding the air component, was approximately 220,000.

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