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OPERATIONS IN NORTH WEST AFRICA FROM 8th NOVEMBER 1942 TO 13th MAY 1943.

PREFACE BY THE WAR OFFICE.

The Anglo-American expedition to French North Africa, discussed from the time of the United States entry into the war and finally approved in July, 1942, had as its main objects the securing of French Morocco and Algeria with a view to the earliest possible occupation of Tunisia. It was also hoped to secure communications through the Mediterranean. For its success it depended partly on surprise and partly upon the degree of opposition or assistance which might be offered by the French forces in North Africa.

The forces available for this operation were partly British and it was advisable that these, with their more recent operational experience, should play a leading part in the early stages of the campaign. On the other hand, the United States had maintained relations with the Vichy Government, whereas the British Government had recognised the movement headed by General De Gaulle. It was thought that, for this and other reasons, a United States expedition would find more local support in North Africa than an expedition in which British troops were foremost. Accordingly, an American officer, Lieutenant-General Eisenhower, was appointed Commander-in-Chief, with a British officer, Lieutenant-General Anderson, as Commander of the Eastern Task Force on which the burden of the initial fighting was likely to fall. It was planned, furthermore, that American troops should participate largely in the assault phase including the eastern landing, and that Lieutenant-General Anderson should not assume command until after that phase should be ended. His despatch commences, therefore, some two days after the operation began.

The landings in North Africa extended over a wide front from Casablanca to Algiers. The Western and Central Task Forces met little sustained opposition, but the move of the

Eastern Task Force into Tunisia was countered by the simultaneous, and practically unopposed, arrival of German troops, many of whom came by air. General Anderson's force, after initial failure to reach Tunis and Bizerta, was then reinforced, partly by sea and partly by troops moving overland from Casablanca and Oran. By this process First British Army was formed together with 2 U.S. Corps.

Eighth Army, meanwhile, was making progress in Tripolitania, and it was decided, at a Conference held in Casablanca in January, 1943, that this Army would come under General Eisenhower's command when it crossed the border into Tunisia. This actually occurred in February, the forces then uniting to form 18 Army Group, immediately under the control of General Alexander as Deputy Commander-in-Chief.

This despatch covers, therefore, the operations of First Army up to the conclusion of the campaign. It also covers the operations of 2 U.S. Corps and 19 French Corps during a period (ending 18th February, 1943), in which they were co-ordinated, and finally commanded, by General Anderson.

The following despatch was submitted to the Secretary of State for War on 7th June, 1943, by **LIEUTENANT GENERAL K. A. N. ANDERSON, C.B., M.C., GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING-IN-CHIEF, FIRST ARMY.**

8th November, 1942-13th May, 1943.

INTRODUCTION.

The initial assault landings in North Africa on night 7th/8th November, 1942, were undertaken entirely by United States troops, except at Algiers. There, the British 11 Infantry Brigade Group and two Commandos (all on assault scale) landed simultaneously with the troops of United States 34 Infantry Division, while a