

No senior officer from Headquarters ever visited us or came round to inspect the defences. I should have thought that they would have come round and spoken to the men and told them exactly what the situation was and what was to be done. Not that our chaps, a very fine lot, needed bolstering up, they were all volunteers.

Klopper may have been too busy but take his G.I., Col Krieg, who had only arrived in Tobruk a few days earlier and knew nothing about the desert, conditions or active service. A great pity Grobler the G2 was not appointed G.I. for he had been with us all the time. I will mention Krieg again later, also Col Richards the C.R.A. responsible for the artillery.

Unfortunately, the Powers that be, knowing that Rommel had far more fire power than we, had allowed the weapon strength of the Tobruk Garrison to be reduced and made no effort to improve or supply the mines so badly needed and other weapons.

The Kaffrarian Rifles like other Units of the 2nd, Division replenished their fire power with German and Italian weapons many of which they were not au fait with. Lieut Jerome of our 'C' company reminded me the other day that when we were attacking Helfya the artillery officer noticed that they had an Italian 45 millimeter gun, asked them to fire a few shots into the enemy position, when they were sure they would reply and their Observation Post could spot the position of the enemy guns. This they did with great success. At Tobruk the same officer was asked by our Brigadier Hayton how many rifles his men had. His reply was 'None Sir'. "What!" said the Brigadier and then Jerome told him that every man had an enemy automatic weapon. Later, after the war when Jerome was in the transit camp at Brighton he says he felt a tap on his shoulder and it was Brig. Hayton who said 'How many rifles did you say your men had'. Let me get on with my story. I have been told that sometimes I talk too much instead of getting on with the writing.

Well it was surprising that more strength was not put into the Eastern perimeter. Rather have put a stronger unit in that area instead of the Maharats, who no doubt were at one time a very fine Regiment but they now had too many inexperienced recruits.

Our intelligence knew the day before the attack that the 90th Light German Division was opposite the Eastern Perimeter and that Unit was always Rommel's spearhead. Even at that late hour a transfer of Units could have been made. The fact that it was known the day before the attack that the spearhead was on the Eastern Perimeter is borne out by the Sit Trip (Message) despatched to me on that day but owing to the communications having been destroyed by aerial bombs I only received on the morning of the attack. We were dependant on land line lines for communications as at that time we were not provided with Walkie Talkie instruments. Today these instruments are carried by every traffic cop, Municipal vehicles. Doctors also carry small instruments in their pockets.

We were awakened on the morning of the 20th June by a terrific barrage and aerial attack. Not one of our aircraft did we see.

The enemy Stukas were using the aerodrome at El Adam a few miles away and so were able to drop their eggs and be back with a new load within half an hour. There seemed to be literally hundreds of them.

Their artillery carried on a heavy barrage and in no time there was clouds of dust and smoke.

The German engineers had no difficulty in clearing the few mines there might have been and were soon making the tank trap usable for their tanks. They entered the Maharates section who although they tried to counter attack were soon overcome. As I have mentioned these Italian dugouts were only useful as sleeping quarters and not suitable to fight from.