

DAILY EXPRESS

Black-out 9.16 p.m. to 6.46 a.m.

SATURDAY APRIL 10 1943

Moon rises 10.43 a.m. sets 2.46 a.m.

Germans admit gap in the north, claim their front is restored

ANDERSON BREAKS THROUGH: ALLIES CAPTURE PICHON

**DOOMED U-BOAT
HEELS OVER**

3th Army chase Rommel from town 20 miles outside Sfax

NEW from Tunisia this morning is of a break-through by General Anderson's First Army in the north, Axis evacuation of Pichon in the centre, and a report that the Eighth Army in the south is now only 20 miles from Sfax.

Berlin radio admitted that General Anderson's troops had broken through Axis positions in the north, but claimed the gap was later closed "with the loss of 33 Allied tanks and heavy Allied infantry losses."

Algiers radio said the Axis positions had been "pierced in great depth" at Matour, 20 miles south of Bizerta.

The German version was that the breakthrough was much further south—in the hilly ground north of the road from Ouel Zarga to Medjez el Bab.

Front-line despatches say that the First Army is still advancing, and that the vital Beja-Medjez el Bab road is now under British control. Prisoners taken include the commander of a German battalion who

had ordered his headquarters staff into the fighting line to strengthen resistance.

The German News Agency admitted that Axis forces had evacuated PICHON, in Central Tunisia, against which the American and French forces have been pressing.

Fall of Pichon aids the Americans in their race to Kairouan and Sousse to cut off Rommel as he continues his retreat.

Algiers radio announced that the Eighth Army has reached a point near MAHARES, coastal town about 20 miles south of Sfax. It reported: "The Afrika Korps is in full flight."

Cairo despatches say that the Axis forces are abandoning Mahares and the railway town of Mezzouna, 40 miles west of Mahares. Rommel had one of his principal airfields at Mezzouna.

Rommel's retreat towards Sfax has been so slowed up by the hail of Allied bombs that his columns had to break up into small and widely dispersed groups.

MAY 1 Can we do it?

By MORLEY RICHARDS

MAY 1 was the date that many military experts hoped would see the final expulsion of the Axis from Tunisia. Use last night's news as the index, and assess the chances now.

In man power, by the time General Montgomery passes Sfax, Rommel will have lost some 40,000 men. That is half his army.

A second junction of British and American troops at Mezzouna, imminent if it has not already taken place, indicates that Rommel has got clear of another potential cutting-off operation from the westward.

There remains the attack on Kairouan, which by last night was being powerfully pressed—but perhaps not powerfully enough.

It is now a matter of a day or two at the most before decision is reached whether or not a large part of the Afrika Korps is to reach the mountains behind Sousse.

PITCHED BATTLE

On balance, it seems that the chances slightly favour Rommel.

How will that affect our date May 1? Von Arnim has 130,000 men, the majority German. Rommel may bring him from 30,000 to 50,000—allowing for troops he picks up on the way back—again nearly all German.

The scene will then be set for pitched battle on a front rather less than 100 miles long.

The Allies will have superiority in everything, but the difficulty is bringing that superiority to bear against the enemy. Because of terrain difficulties, General Alexander may not be able to mount overwhelming superiority in the field. If he cannot, the Axis might be able to delay us several weeks well beyond May 1.

That in turn would affect our summer European invasion plans.

It seems inevitable that, after clearing up Tunisia, there must be a pause of several weeks while the armies are rested and reorganised.

An invasion which did not begin until July or August would lose much of its value in the broader Allied strategy.

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