

ALLIES ADVANCE ON ALL TUNISIAN FRONTS

TANKS CONVERGING ON KAIROUAN

INTENSIFIED AIR OFFENSIVE

61 AXIS TRANSPORTS SHOT DOWN

Keeping up its relentless pursuit of the Axis forces in Tunisia, the Eighth Army, which occupied Sfax on Saturday, was reported last night to be beyond La Hencha, a road junction 50 miles south of the port of Sousse.

Progress has been made on every front in Tunisia, and in the central sector allied forces are converging on Kairouan, their tanks being now within a few miles of the city.

The air offensive is playing an ever greater part in the allied offensive. Yesterday 21 more enemy air transports were destroyed, making the total for the week-end 61. Last night it was also announced that the 10,000-ton Italian cruiser Trieste, which was bombed in La Maddalena harbour, Sardinia, on Saturday, had sunk.

OCCUPATION OF Sfax

PRESSING ON TO THE NORTH

The following announcement was made by Allied Force Headquarters, North Africa, yesterday:—

SUNDAY

The Eighth Army continued to advance northwards through Tunisia. Sfax was occupied in the early morning, and by Saturday night our forward patrols had made considerable progress to the north.

In the Fondouk area our armoured forces continued to advance towards Kairouan, encountering stiff opposition by enemy armour.

French troops continued their successful operations in clearing the eastern dorsal.

In the north in the Mejez el Bab-Munchar area our troops made further progress and more prisoners have been taken.

Extensive air operations were carried out yesterday by North-West African forces. Strong formations of Flying Fortresses of the Strategic Air Force attacked two Italian heavy cruisers at La Maddalena, on the north coast of Sardinia. Both cruisers received direct hits from heavy bombs and were severely damaged, an explosion being seen in one of them.

SUBMARINE BASE

At the same time Fortresses attacked the submarine base and harbour installations at La Maddalena. Hits were observed on the munition depôt, and fires were left burning in the target area and among shipping in the harbour. These attacks were carried out without the loss of any allied aircraft.

During the course of two sweeps in the Sicilian straits P38 Lightnings encountered large formations of Ju52 transport aircraft with strong fighter escort. In the ensuing combats the P38s shot down 30 of the Ju52s and 11 other enemy aircraft. B25 Mitchell medium bombers, on a sea sweep, also encountered large formations of Ju52s and other aircraft. The bombers attacked the enemy aircraft and destroyed 10 Ju52s and two Ju88s.

On Friday night Wellington bombers attacked enemy troops and transport concentrations in the Enfidaville area. Attacks on these targets continued throughout Saturday by medium bombers of the Strategic Air Force and by lighter-bombers and fighters of the Tactical Air Force. A supply dump was hit, many vehicles were destroyed and others left in flames.

Other operations over the battle area continued.

On the north sector of the front fighters in the course of offensive sweeps destroyed five enemy aircraft.

From all these operations three of our aircraft are missing.