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THE LIBERATION OF ETHIOPIA
MARCH - MAY 1941

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Index.....	1
Bibliography	2
Introduction	3
Geographical Description	4
Preparation	5
The British Plan	6
The Advance from Kenya	8
The Occupation of Italian Somaliland	10
Advance into Ethiopia	11
The Attack on Keren	12
The Capture of Addis Ababa	14
Pursuit toward Amba Alagi	15
The Lake Campaign	16
Analysis and Criticism	17
Lessons	19
Map A - East Africa	
Map B - East Africa -- Geography	
Map C - Advance from Kenya	
Map D - Northern Advance	

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THE LIBERATION OF ETHIOPIA
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INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the liberation of Ethiopia from March to May, 1941.

For a better understanding of the different operations which took place during this period, it is necessary to discuss some incidents which ^{had} have a direct bearing and led to the liberation.

For the purpose of this monograph this country will be referred to as "Ethiopia" rather than "Abyssinia," which incidentally the natives dislike.

In 1935 the Italians with powerful, well-equipped forces succeeded in winning a quick victory in Ethiopia. Since July, 1940, a British military mission had been operating in the interior of the country. This mission was kept busy in arming and training the natives, as well as using every available means of propaganda. They spent much time in correcting the mistakes made by the Ethiopians during the Italian campaign in 1935. Part of the plan was to equip and train them in such a way that they could be on equal terms with the Italians. (1)

In July, 1940, the Italians in East Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland) struck outward, capturing the frontier cities of Kassala, Gallabat and Kurmuk in the northwestern part. Also, Moyale in northern Kenya was captured, and on 15 August British Somaliland had to be evacuated by the small defending force. The occupation of these areas gave the Italians a strategic position with relation to Kenya and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, from which they could strike at any one of these localities. The British forces were disposed around this Italian empire in such a manner that reinforcement with one another was difficult. (See Map B) (2)

(1) A-8, p. 118; (2) A-3, p. 9.

GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION

To have a clear view of the difficult terrain in which these series of operations took place, a geographical description of this vast area is necessary. Eritrea is so similar to Ethiopia, geographically, that it will be covered ^{on} this description of the Italian possessions. (3)

The central part of Ethiopia consists of a great irregular plateau, which is the main mass of Ethiopia. This plateau is deeply cut by rivers, which produce gorges through it, mostly on their way to the Nile River. The plateau is between 6000 to 8000 feet high, with ranges up to 14,000 feet. All these mountains and the many rifts formed by the rivers make very difficult obstacles for military operations. The eastern edge of the plateau drops abruptly to the plain, runs from the northern tip of Ethiopia, passes 30 miles west of Massawa, in the Red Sea, then south for about 400 miles to a point east of Addis Ababa. There is a great plain in between the Red Sea and the plateau, which is one of the hottest and most arid in the world. The eastern edge of the plateau passes Addis Ababa, and joins a range running southwest to a point near Lake Rudolf. On the far side of the Great Rift, there are other ranges which divide the northeastern plain from a larger plain in the south. In the west the plateau steps down to the Egyptian-Sudan in terraces. On the southeast the plateau slopes down to the coastal belt of Somaliland. (See Map B) (4)

The western part of Ethiopia is difficult ~~mountainous~~ country interrupted by the Blue Nile Valley on the northwest of Addis Ababa and by the Great Rift Valley with a chain of lakes in the south. (See Map B) (5)

The rains in the plateau are concentrated during the summer months, are very heavy and make traffic very difficult. This has a great influence on the operations to come. (6)

(3) A-8, p. 116; (4) A-8, p. 116-117 and A-10, p. 24; (5) A-2, p. 11; (6) A-1, p. 16.

The frontiers presented by Italian East Africa to the west were about 2500 miles long, and the sea frontiers were almost as long as those on land. The area comprising Italian East Africa is of an immense size, Ethiopia alone having an area of 350,000 square miles. Distances from the frontier to important objectives are very long ^{hence} as a result of which large numbers of troops are likely to be necessary for the protection of lines of communication. (7)

Ethiopia has a great diversity of climate due to its extent in latitude. ^{what?} The climate on both plains is hard on Europeans. The air is cool in the plateau. (8)

Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, is the largest city with a population of 150,000 Diredawa being next with 30,000 followed by Harar with 25,000. (9)

PREPARATION

A Fifth Column was organized very skilfully. Eleven trained messengers were sent across the borders into Ethiopia. These runners took instructions to eleven powerful chieftains ^{that the British were to} for delivery of money, arms, food and ammunition from the British at the Egyptian-Sudan. (10)

Mission number 101 was organized under the command of Colonel Sandford with four other men and two wireless sets. This mission penetrated deep into the interior to organize resistance among the natives. They organized mule trips to the Sudan for transporting arms and ammunition. Attacks on the Italian lines of communication were also organized. Patriotic messages and photos were disseminated among the natives. (11)

The work performed by the mission was very important for the liberation, due to the fact that Great Britain could not afford to use large forces in a secondary front. The natives were being used to restore their own empire. (12)

<sup>3- wireless
need protection</sup> While planning a resistance and a feeling of revolt was being organized in the interior of Ethiopia, the British were building up forces.

(7) A-8, p. 117-118; A-1, p. 16; (8) A-8, p. 117; (9) A-10, p. 41;
(10) A-7, p. 96; (11) A-7, p. 96; (12) A-8, p. 120.

To the troops in the Sudan, estimated at 7000, were added the Fourth and Fifth Indian Divisions. Also Free French and Belgian forces were added. (13)

Air strips were constructed and secrecy was maintained. Dumps of all kinds were accumulated, and troops arrived from the Gold Coast,* from Nigeria ** and from South Africa. Mechanized transport was prepared and large quantities of gasoline accumulated. (14)

The strength of the Italian forces in this whole area was estimated to be at least 250,000 men, well armed, with all types of modern weapons and well supplied. (15)

For several months after Italy entered into the war the British installations of the Egyptian-Sudan and Kenya were greatly numerically inferior to the forces they were opposing. As a result of this they were forced to evacuate some posts on and near the frontier. In Kenya where the Italian forces outnumbered the British more than in the Sudan, the defenders were protected by large distances of desert through where an attacker would have faced the great problem of securing water and supplies. (16)

During the next winter months preparations for the attack were accomplished and by the last part of January the preparations were completed. Preparations had been very thorough, taking into consideration the large movements that were to be accomplished in which supplies, especially water, played such an important part. (17)

THE BRITISH PLAN

The British plan was to reduce the Italian forces by means of several attacks from as many directions as possible. (18) The two main offensives were to take place about 1000 miles apart; in the north in the direction of Keren, and in the south from Kenya. (See Map B) (19)

(13) A-7, p. 96; (14) A-1, p. 19; (15) A-1, p. 16; (16) A-8, p. 121; (17) A-1, p. 19; (18) A-2, p. 11; (19) A-2, p. 11.

* Gold Coast - a British crown colony and protectorate in Guinea, in western Africa.

** Nigeria - a British territory in West Africa.

The plan was a complex one, involving use of forces in different points and in varied ^{types} (conditions) of terrain. Some areas were flat and desert-like, others contained steep ridges, tropical country, and scrub, making movement almost impossible. (20)

Distances were so large that the supply problem, especially water, was of the utmost importance. Gasoline was very limited in the areas occupied by the British, making operations more difficult. (21)

The British planned on using approximately five divisions against about twelve or thirteen. For the main attack in the direction of Ker-en in the north, they were to employ the Fifth Indian Division with a small Sudan Defense Force. These forces had been holding a broad front of about 500 miles of frontier. The Fifth Division was reinforced by the Fourth Indian Division, which was pulled out from the British forces attacking Sidi Barrani in Egypt, on the 10th of December, 1940, and sent to the Egyptian Sudan. (22)

General Sir Archibald Wavell, the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East and East Africa, detailed Major General Platt to command the forces in the northern sector; and on the south Major General Cunningham. On the south the British were to attack with three divisions; the First South African Division, the Eleventh and Twelfth African Divisions. For the southern operation there were no more than 20,000 infantrymen available. (23)

It is clearly noted that the British were to undertake the offensive with an overall strength estimated at about one-seventh of the Italian forces. (24)

The First South African Division moved north from Nairobi, in Kenya, and concentrated at Marsabit, about 120 miles southwest of Moyale, which was in Italian hands. (See Map B) (25)

(20) A-1, p. 16; (21) A-1, p. 16; (22) A-1, p. 18; (23) A-1, p. 18 and A-5, p. 102; (24) A-1, p. 18; (25) A-1, p. 19.

The Eleventh and the Twelfth African Divisions were concentrated near the Tana River, 75 miles west of the frontier of the Italian Somaliland. (26)

On the left the First South African Division was to cover some 400 miles with the mission of threatening from the south and to cover the left flank of the main advance from Italian Somaliland. (27)

In the north the British planned to attack in the direction of Keren, in Eritrea. (See Map B) This was done for three reasons. The first one was that Kassala, ~~being~~ located on the railway between Port Sudan and Sennar, and connected by a good road with Khartum, could be used as a supply base. Secondly, they could strike directly against important objectives like Asmara and Massawa. This would give the British a good supply port and they would not have to depend on a long difficult line of communication. Asmara, being well connected with the port of Massawa and to most roads in the south was a strategic place from which to dominate the country. The third reason for the choice of direction of attack was that, different to other objectives in Ethiopia which were very distant, Asmara was only 170 miles from Kassala. (28)

THE ADVANCE FROM KENYA

In January, the post of Buna in Kenya was abandoned by the Italians. An attack preceded by an aerial bombardment drove the Italians out of the fortified post of El Wak, across the border of Somaliland.

At the beginning of February some Ethiopian posts near Lake Rudolf (See Map B) had been captured and advance units penetrated about 40 miles into the eastern border. (29)

The First South African Division moved up to the northwest through Dukana and El Yibo. (See Map C) (30)

On the extreme left of the First South African Division, the East African Brigade (31), part of that division, moved up west of Lake

(26) A-1, p. 19; (27) A-1, p. 20; (28) A-8, p. 122; (29) A-4, p. 114; (30) A-1, p. 20; (31) Brigade - equivalent to a regiment in the US Army.

Rudolf. Meanwhile the rest of the division with some companies of Ethiopian irregulars crossed the frontier east of the Lake and entered the colony west and north of Moyale, having for their first objective Mega. (See Map C) (32)

At the beginning of February all British forces started moving simultaneously from every direction, keeping up with General Wavell's plan of striking the enemy from different directions. This plan was intended to avoid giving the enemy the opportunity to engage each column, piecemeal. The Italian commander, the Duke of Aosta, decided on putting all his effort on the defensive rather than taking the initiative to attack for which his troops were prepared in strength, weapons and training. (33)

The First South African Division encountered difficulties on its way to Mega, due to the heavy brush near El Yibo and had to cut a trail through, not having any roads available. This town was an important objective, being a center of lines of communication to Moyale, Yavello and Negelli. (See Map C) But Mega was situated on a plateau about 6000 feet high, surrounded by peaks that rise to 3000 feet. On the south the position had been well fortified. So great were the difficulties encountered when the troops advancing from the north came into heavy artillery fire, it is believed the casualties would have been heavier if they had advanced from the south. The town was captured on the 18th of February. (34)

With the capture of Mega the South Africans were in a position from where they could strike the Ethiopian Lake area to the north. (See Map C) Moyale also fell. Now the roads to Yavello and Negelli were open. (35)

On the west of Lake Rudolf the East African Brigade moved up toward Maji and were facing toward Jimma, which was to be a strong center of resistance. (36)

(32) A-1, p. 20; (33) A-1, p. 20-21; (34) A-1, p. 21-22; (35) A-1, p. 22; (36) A-1, p. 22.

THE OCCUPATION OF ITALIAN SOMALILAND

The Eleventh and Twelfth African Divisions, starting the main attack upon Addis Ababa, moved east across the frontier of Italian Somaliland, toward Afmadu. (See Map C) The movement was made in three different directions. Nigerian troops moved along the coast, in the center a column of troops from Kenya and the Gold Coast, and on the left a column of South Africans. Supported by the South African Air Force the Kenya column captured Afmadu. The South African and Gold Coast forces went through Afmadu on a forced march of 50 miles to the Juba River. (See Map C) The Nigerian column, moving along the coast, found that forces in Kismayu had retreated, apparently warned by the heavy naval bombardment. This was the first important objective of the southern advance into Ethiopia through Italian Somaliland, because of its natural harbor. (37)

The Juba River was reached, where a strong fortified river line was encountered. This river line offered a very strong resistance, due to the Italians outnumbering the British forces, and since the river was 200 yards wide and had wooded banks. (38)

General Cunningham found out that the Italians failed to keep a large mobile reserve well back to eject any counterattack. So he ordered the Kenya Brigade to envelop the position from the north. The Kenya Brigade, supported by a tank company and armored cars moving to the northwest, cut their way through scrub and crossed the river. Then they cut their way through five miles of forest. Using mobility and surprise, they attacked from the rear, making it possible for the main attacking force to cross the river and attack the town of Gelib. (39)

A column of Gold Coast troops turned northward, advanced upon Lugh Ferrandi, took Negelli and prepared themselves to take care of any threats from the Lake area, reinforcing the First South African Division at Maji and Mega. The left flank of the main advance to Harar was now well protected. (40)

(37) A-4, p. 114; A-1, p. 22-23; (38) A-1, p. 23; (39) A-7, p. 103; A-1, p. 23-24; (40) A-7, p. 103; A-1, p. 23-24.

On the 23d of February the column, moving along the coast, captured the port of Brava, ninety miles east of Gelib. They went through Merca, and on February 25th, Mogadishu, the capital of Italian Somaliland, was captured. (41)

ADVANCE INTO ETHIOPIA

The occupation of Italian Somaliland assured better and faster routes of supply from the port of Mombasa in Kenya instead of across difficult desert country. It also opened new good roads for the invasion of Ethiopia. This position offered two routes of approach toward the north; one, an excellent highway across the Juba Valley toward the capital, the other on the east up the Webbe Shebeli, across the Ogaden Desert in the direction of Harar. The Italians were not expecting great danger from these two directions; hence, they were not as well prepared as they were for other approaches. British forces moved along both routes. (42)

At the beginning of March the forces that captured Mogadishu moved up the Webbe Shebeli. On the 2d Villa Abruzzi was reached and on the 6th Ferfer was reached. Moving at the rate of fifty miles per day, they reached Dagabur on the 10th, and Jijiga on the 17th. (43)

Through air attacks on airports, keeping Italian planes from the air and also by naval bombardment, it was made possible for two separate columns coming by sea from Aden, Arabia, to retake Berbera, the capital of British Somaliland. (See Map C). Part of the force that captured Jijiga was sent to strike toward Hargeisa and to link up with the column moving southwest from Berbera. This was accomplished, clearing the flank of the main advance toward the capital. (44)

The ground from Jijiga to Harar and to Addis Ababa offered good defensive terrain, (whereby) the Italian engineers, being very skilful, made maximum use of it. The route to Harar was very well organized for the defense, and Parda Pass between Jijiga and Harar was captured

(41) A-1, p. 24; (42) A-4, p. 116; A-1, p. 25; (43) A-1, p. 24-25; (44) A-4, p. 116-117.

as a result of a frontal attack. Then the Italians started delaying the quick-advancing forces as much as they could by means of demolitions. General Rommel was getting ready to retake Cyrenaica, so British troops, being delayed, could not be employed in North Africa. (45)

While the forces at Harar were striking east at the railway between Jibuti and Addis Ababa, several columns were moving from the west and south. (See Map C) The Juba Valley permitted rapid advance northward to the Dolo area. Also Ethiopian forces engaged in Kenya's northern frontier, and who had recaptured Moyale, advanced to Mega and Javello. The resistance in the south was finally overcome when the forces advancing from the Dolo area joined the Ethiopian forces at Negelli, which was captured on March 22d. One of these minor columns was the (one) led by Emperor Haile Selassie, who started from the Sudan with two Ethiopian battalions and struck east from the province of Gojjam. (See Map C) In the west another column began advancing, and on the 27th a small force of Belgian and British troops entered Gambela, 160 miles west of Jimma. (See Map C) (46)

THE ATTACK ON KEREN

While General Cunningham's forces were advancing from the south on Addis Ababa, at the same time the main attack from Anglo-Egyptian Sudan was being launched in the northwest against the strong fortified city of Keren in Eritrea. (See Map D) Kassala, where the Italians tried their strongest attempt to invade the Sudan, was the center of operations for the northern attack. Here again the Italians took advantage of their engineering skill for the preparation of a defensive position. (47)

The Italians had occupied Kassala, Gallabat and Kurmuk. From these places and across the frontier they struck several blows, but (45) A-1, p. 28; A-7, p. 105; (46) A-4, p. 117; A-1, p. 28; A-7, p. 108; (47) A-1, p. 29.

the British temporarily held the defensive position while planning for the main offensive. Kassala was selected ^{as the} main point of the attack, for from here, roads spread across the frontier; one branch in the direction of Agordat and the other to Barentu and then to Agordat. The main column for this attack into Eritrea was to be made by the Fifth Indian Division, plus the small Sudan Defense Force. This same force would send columns from Gallabat and from Kurmuk. Kassala was captured on the 19th of January, and on the 26th the railhead of Biscia was captured, while the main column continued toward Agordat and another advanced toward Barentu. Agordat was captured quietly and with it many prisoners, guns and transportation. (48)

The Italians were chased all the way to Keren, taking about three weeks to reach it, due to the roads being thoroughly blocked and mined. (49)

In the meantime another column from Gallabat advanced, covering the flank of the attack on Kassala. Gallabat and Metemma had been facing each other for several months, but neither force made a move. Metemma was found to be evacuated, and the British started the pursuit along the road to Gondar. (See Map D) (50)

The force attacking Keren was having very tough resistance. At this time it is proper to describe the terrain at Keren to understand why the position was so strong. Keren is located on a gorge, surrounded by hills, some as high as 7000 feet and all of them very skilfully prepared for the defense. (51)

Initially it was planned to attack from two directions, but the road to Arezza was found blocked. A large number of Italian transports and equipment, left behind on their retreat, blocked this approach in such a way that the British had to change their initial plan. (52)

A column was sent on the other flank across the frontier at Karora, moving southward. Other forces were landed at Marsa Taklai, moving down

(48) A-1, p. 29-30; (49) A-1, p. 30; (50) A-1, p. 30; (51) A-1, p. 30; (52) A-1, p. 30.

along the coast. During this attack the Fourth Division reinforced the Fifth, but even with this the Italian forces had almost twice as many men. High steep peaks had to be climbed, and the heat was intense. During this operation the British Air Forces played an important role by bombarding continuously the position of Keren. The seige lasted six weeks. The Italians were determined to hold this position, but the British launched a 48-hour attack, capturing Keren on the 27th of March. (53)

The Italians retreated along the road to Asmara, being pursued by means of artillery fire and airplanes. Asmara also was very well prepared for the defense but fell four days after the capture of Keren. The speed of the advance had been maintained in such a way that the Italians were not given an opportunity to counterattack. The approach to Gondar was blocked in a way that it was impossible to make an immediate repair. The road to Dessie was still in good condition, and the pursuit continued. (See Map D) Another force advanced toward the port of Massawa, the principal Italian naval base in the Red Sea. (54)

On April 8th Massawa surrendered after the Italians sunk all ships. The only way out for the Italians now was the port of Assab, including an airstrip. (55)

A mechanized column passed through Adowa, and by the 15th of April, they had reached a gorge six miles north of Amba Alagi. This position was as well prepared as Keren, its peaks and ravines being used in the defensive preparations. (56)

THE CAPTURE OF ADDIS ABABA

Meanwhile, the attack from the south was advancing from Harar to the capital. The Nigerians, leading the advance, pushed through strong resistance, including heavy demolitions, and reached Diredawa. (See Map C) There is a railway and a good road between Jibuti in French Somaliland, and Addis Ababa running through Diredawa. (57)

(53) A-1, p. 30-31; A-2, p. 13; (54) A-1, p. 32-33; (55) A-1, p. 33; (56) A-1, p. 33; (57) A-1, p. 33.

Assisted by the South African Air Force, the South Africans passed through the Nigerians and continued their advance to the capital, reached Mieso and continued in the direction of the Awash River, which passes across the road and railway, running from the northeast to the southwest. At this point the road started mounting to the capital. The South Africans reached the Awash River on the 4th of April and crossed it even though the bridges had been demolished. Although this river offered good opportunities for the defense, the Italians continued their retreat. (58)

The advance elements of the British forces entered Addis Ababa on the 5th, and on the 6th the capital was occupied. The city was handed over to avoid bloodshed. The Duke of Aosta ordered his troops to continue the delay as long as possible, trying to retain as many British troops on that front so they could not be used in Lybia, where the Germans had retaken Benghazi and were approaching the Egyptian frontier. (59)

The Italians were succeeding in their mission of delaying the British. They marched their troops out of the capital, leaving the British with the responsibility of protecting the civilians left behind. A number of troops had to be left behind to garrison the place. Oil and food stores had to be guarded. (60)

After the capture of Addis Ababa, there were three main places of Italian resistance; one north of Lake Tana around Gondar, another in the Lakes area and the Jimma area, and a third along the main road between the capital and Asmara. (61)

PURSUIT TOWARD AMBA ALAGE

The Italians retreated toward Dessie, north of Addis Ababa. (See Map C) South African troops kept forcing them up, while the Indian Division pressed down from the north. On April 7th Debra Markos was (58) A-1, p. 35; (59) A-1, p. 35; (60) A-4, p. 176; A-7, p. 106-107; (61) A-4, p. 177.

captured. In the southwest the British troops pressed up through Yavelle and Negelli. At this time the success of the liberation was so clear that President Roosevelt declared the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden open to allied shipping. Supplies could now be sent to the Near East. (62)

On April 18th the South African forces made contact with the Italians about fourteen miles south of Dessie. This advance was delayed here, due to the road being damaged. For several days the resistance had been increasing, but the British forces kept pressing and on the 22d of April they forced the enemy out of positions on the road toward the entrance to the Kombalcha Pass. (See Map C) A few days later Kombalcha, located 10 miles east of Dessie, was captured. From here on the road to Dessie was a very twisting, mountainous road; however, the British entered the city on the 26th of April. (63)

On the 5th of May Emperor Haile Selassie entered Addis Ababa. On this same day in 1936 the Italians entered the capital. (64)

The British forces continued the pursuit, pressing from the north and south, closing on Amba Alagi. (See Map C) Waldia was captured, and two days later South Africans reached Quoram. The northern forces delivered their main attack from the west to distract the Italians, while the southern force moved up from the south. The fort of Amba Alagi was surrounded by May 14th, and on May 16th the Duke of Aosta surrendered. (65)

THE LAKE CAMPAIGN

The columns that advanced on the west and southwest pushed the enemy through to the Gondar area and to the Lake area southwest of the capital. (See Map C) (66)

(62) A-1, p. 36; A-4, p. 120; (63) A-1, p. 36-37; (64) A-1, p. 37; (65) A-1, p. 37-39; (66) A-1, p. 40.

When the South Africans passed through the Nigerians at Diredawa, the latter were sent to Addis Ababa, and ordered to the Lake area to the south. A column was sent west along the road to Lechemti and another down to Jimma, the center of resistance. The troops that crossed into Ethiopia from Kenya, west of Lake Rudolf, moved up through Maji. (See Map C) Another small force of patriot forces moved up in the loop of the Blue Nile toward Addis Ababa through Dangila to Debra Markos. The Italians offered a strong resistance at Wajjara, but the Gold Coast troops advanced from Negelli on May 6th and fought heavily for two days. Two columns converged between Lakes Shala and Abaya. (See Map D) The southern force advanced toward Dalle. Patriots took care of clearing forces east of the lakes and the British troops advanced toward Jimma. Jimma surrendered to patriots commanded by British officers. There were a number of Italians in the west, but the capture of Jimma ended the Lake campaign. (67)

The few scattered troops in the west were rounded up gradually, while the group at Gondar, a small group that could do no harm, was left to surrender. (68)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In analyzing this operation we must consider the strength of the Italians and their capabilities to strike at nearby British possessions. The Italians greatly outnumbered the British forces, but they never took advantage of this fact, satisfying themselves with defending what they already had captured. Although they were a strong force well situated, they lost the initiative (to attack), a factor which greatly influenced their defeat. Once they lost their initiative, they never regained it.

The British commanders displayed outstanding ability and leadership on the planning, preparation and conduct of this operation. The skilful organization of Fifth Column activities was an important step (67) A-1, p. 41-44; (68) A-1, p. 45.

in the preparation for their future advance. The simultaneous attacks from different directions were good use of tactics and kept the Italians engaged in more than one place.

The British supply system, although difficult at times, worked efficiently, mainly due to the fact that maximum use was made of available port facilities and water points along the lines of advance. This proved very effective considering the difficult varied conditions of terrain.

I should give credit to the British forces for being so aggressive and maintaining the initiative to attack at all times, although greatly numerically outnumbered. Their employment of forces to envelop strong fortified positions proved very effective and was the reason for their success in the most difficult situations.

The coordination of land, air and naval forces so essential in combat operations was very effective as proved by the results of the attacks on Kismayu, where the naval bombardment forced the Italians to withdraw.

The Italian forces did not organize in depth their defensive position at the Juba River. In this way they failed to apply this basic principle of defensive combat.

The attacking forces gained surprise through mobility and striking from directions other than the natural one. This was a very decisive factor in many of the different attacks on fortified positions.

The air superiority gained and maintained by the British forces was a great factor in the advances accomplished.

In detailing columns to advance along the flanks, the attacking forces were able to advance without major threat on their flanks.

The use of demolitions by the Italians was very effective in delaying the quick advancing forces and in holding British forces in East Africa so they could not be employed in North Africa.

Pursuing the Italians by means of artillery fire and airplanes was effectively accomplished by the British after the attack on Keren.

The defending forces made very skilful use of the available key terrain features, causing positions to be more difficult to capture.

The liberation of Ethiopia, although not decisive for any major campaign during World War II, was a forward step on the application of basic tactical principles and demonstrated the fatal results of failing to apply those principles. It also cleared the Red Sea for allied shipping of supplies to the Near East. As the Balkan campaign was at its peak, this was of great potential value. — *Why?*

LESSONS

The following lessons were learned from this operation:

1. The Fifth Column activities, when skilfully organized, are very effective. *No effect of 5th Column brought out.*
2. In desert operations where water is of vital importance, proper planning and maximum use of water points has a great influence on the final outcome of an operation.
3. Coordination of land, air and naval forces is essential in amphibious operations. *No amphibious ops brought out —*
4. A combination of surprise and mobility can shatter a good defense barrier.
5. A very aggressive force, although numerically inferior, can win success over a much larger force. *which is not aggressive.*
6. Attacks on fortified positions made from directions other than the *expected* natural one afford surprise and cause less casualties. *Remembering*
7. In the defense of a river line as well as in any other defensive situation, organization in depth is *(a very)* essential factor to a defending force.
8. The flanks of a main advance should be protected, to insure the safe, *and* uninterrupted advance *of* the main drive. *its*
9. A strong, numerically superior enemy can be defeated by means of simultaneous blows from several different directions.

10. ^{shd} Initiative should never be lost, ⁽ and should be kept whenever possible. ^{Double thought}

11. ^{??} Demolitions are very effective in delaying an aggressive force.

12. In the pursuit, artillery fires and aerial strafing are very effective. ^{Not clearly, complete etc.}

13. In fighting over terrain in which objectives are very distant and land communications difficult, the use of sea routes of supply speed up the flow of supplies. ^{plus but no simplification in this}

14. The possession of air superiority by an attacking force facilitates its advance. ✓

15. Organization of key terrain features by skilled engineer personnel makes a defensive position very difficult to penetrate.