

made their way to Gavdopula Island that had harboured the crew of the M.L. 1030. Here they secured a cave.

An armed party was landed and returned with the report that they were the only inhabitants of the island. A well was found and all containers filled. The engine-room staff, consisting of four Australian corporals and a Commando sergeant, refitted the engine. The troops were "exercised in seamanship." The phrase is taken from Major Garrett's report. What these exercises comprised is not known, but the sentence has a brave ring.

A complete muster was made of all their resources. Then came a good dinner, the first proper meal for three days, followed by a substantial supper, a last drink at the well, and a "top-up" of every water container. At 9.30 p.m. on June 1 off they went.

BEFORE leaving Sfakia Major Garrett had somehow contrived to find a map of the Eastern Mediterranean in the village. Lieutenant R. R. Macartney, of the 3rd Field Regiment, A.I.F., had a map of North Africa. With these two aids to navigation they set a course for Tobruk, 180 miles distant, which they knew to be in our hands. They had, of course, no sextant, no knowledge of the compass deviation, no log or chronometer or means of calculating the set of currents. They estimated they had petrol for 140 miles.

They lost two hours during the night of June 1 repairing the steering gear, which broke down. An experiment with diesel fuel in one engine, in an attempt to save petrol, merely resulted in the engine pecking up. The other broke down in sympathy shortly afterwards.

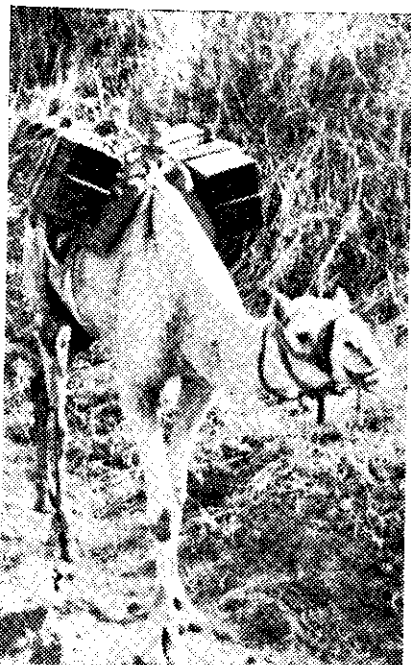
Undaunted by the contrariness of the machine, Major Garrett made plain sail, the canvas being furnished somewhat inadequately by the winch cover. This just enabled them to keep the lighter on her course.

The sea rose and seasickness overwhelmed them. The devoted engine-room staff continued, however, to strip down the engine and clear it of dieselite, which enabled them to get under way again until 6 p.m. on June 2 when their petrol was exhausted.

All night they wallowed in a heavy sea under their rag of a sail. On June 3 they were rationed to a sixth of a pint of water, an inch and a-half cube of bully-beef and half a ship's biscuit. They burned flares at night, using the diesel oil. Two young marines, A. Harding and A. R. Booth, were inspired to improvise a distilling plant from petrol tins, using the diesel oil as fuel. In two days they produced 4½ gallons of drinking water. Rummaging among the stores Major Garrett found a tin of petrol which he hoarded for emergencies.

AT 7.45 on the morning of June 4, a Blenheim aircraft sighted them and circled them twice. This heartened everybody; they were getting very weak. The engineers busied themselves in changing the port clutch and gearbox with the starboard, which was slipping, and they ran the engine for half an hour in the evening to keep their spirits up.

Next day, unable to sight land, they used up the rest of the petrol hoping to lift the African coast; but when the engine petered out it was still the same



★ Dour but dependable: A camel with a load of ammunition in North Africa

horizon of waves heaving against the lonely sky to the south of them. Marine Harding built a raft of diesel oil drums, with floor boards as paddles; a raft party volunteered to go and look for Africa and fetch help, but their craft was too unstable and the project had to be abandoned. Next day they rigged a canoe, but it would take only one man and they were too weak for a single-handed task. That too was given up.

They then devoted all their energies to sailing the lighter. They contrived to make four blankets into a jib and six into a mainsail. A marine named Yeo distinguished himself as a sail-maker. The lighter refused to answer her helm and yawed despairingly. To wear ship it was necessary for these exhausted men to plunge overboard in small parties and by swimming with all the energy left in them push the bows round on to the proper course again.

THEY had two colour-sergeants and one sergeant of the Royal Marines on board. The former were "old timers," the latter "Hostilities only." Between them they heartened and sustained that clamjamfrey of armed scarecrows, bearded and gaunt and hollow-eyed, crowded together on the sun-grilled plates of a landing craft. The senior, Colour-Sergeant C. A. Dean, was the lighter's sergeant-major, a combination of master-at-arms and purser, issuing the meagre ration of water with stern impartiality.

His fellow, Colour-Sergeant H. C. Colwill, organised the watches on board and constituted himself a sort of sailing master, which involved leading the swimming party into the water every time it was necessary to steady the ship on her course. Sergeant Bowden helped his seniors in these various activities. As a "Hostilities Only" he was probably not expected to be familiar with the routine of sailing the high seas in a square-nosed lighter that refused to answer her

rudder and was propelled by blankets and kept on her course by swimmers towards a coast they might never reach in time. It must be supposed that he just picked it up as he went along.

On June 8 Private H. J. Wysocky and Driver K. Watson, 155 Battery, 52nd Light A.A. Brigade, died from exposure and exhaustion, and were buried. At 5.45 p.m. land was sighted.

AT 1.30 a.m. on the 9th, they ran on to a sandy beach and lowered the brow. A patrol, under Lieutenant Macartney and Sergeant Bowden, was landed with orders to move south in the hope of striking the Sollum road. Two Maori soldiers, Private Thompson and Gunner Peters, volunteered to land and find water. They found a well a quarter of mile away within 45 minutes.

Sergeant Bowden reappeared after some hours. He announced that they were beached seventeen miles west of Sidi Barrani, 100 miles to the eastward of Tobruk. They had made good 230 miles, but must have travelled nearer 250. Sidi Barrani was the headquarters of the 1st A.A. Regiment, and motor transport had been arranged for the following morning. Sergeant Bowden had found his way back across five miles of desert in the dark without a compass. The colour-sergeants must have agreed that one way and another Sergeant Bowden showed promise.

THE following morning, June 10, Major Garrett marched his force across the desert to where the lorries awaited them. It is appropriate that the story should end here—with the little band of the unbeaten trudging across the sand, their shadows shortening as the sun rose higher; they were still led by the man who had taught them that life and defeat cannot be co-existent, a man whose Corps motto was *Per Mare Per Terram*.



★ War Dog 471/322 (Rob), who made more than twenty parachute descents over enemy-occupied territory, receiving the V.C. for animals, the Dickin Medal and Riband, from Major Philip Sidney, V.C.

Casualties

IN the House of Commons on April 10, Mr. Churchill reported that casualties to all ranks of the British Commonwealth and Empire forces from September 3, 1939, to February 28, 1945, excluding deaths from natural causes, totalled 1,126,802.

The killed numbered 306,984, the missing 70,872, the wounded 422,476, the prisoners of war, including servicemen and internees, 326,470.

The casualties to merchant seamen as a result of enemy action for the same dates were: Deaths (including deaths presumed in missing ships), 30,179; internees 3,982, making a total of 34,161.

Civilian casualties through enemy action in the United Kingdom are: Killed (including missing, believed killed), 59,793. Injured dealt with in hospital, 84,794.

The figures of prisoners of war include those who have been repatriated or have escaped. If only those who are still reported prisoners of war are included in the figure, the over-all total is 1,099,179.

The separate totals of casualties are: United Kingdom, 685,638; Canada, 89,220; Australia, 87,256; New Zealand, 36,747; South Africa, 33,803; India, 163,486; colonies, 30,652.

Mr. Churchill revealed that New Zealand's casualties were:

Killed	9,334
Missing	934
Wounded	17,987
Prisoners of war	8,501

Other British Commonwealth casualties in the same period were:

Australia: Killed 19,430, missing 6,955, wounded 35,595, prisoners of war 25,276.

United Kingdom: Killed 216,287, missing 30,907, wounded 255,142, prisoners of war 183,242.

South Africa: Killed 6,030, missing 512, wounded 12,632, prisoners of war 14,429.

Canada: Killed 31,439, missing 4,163, wounded 45,251, prisoners of war 8,367.