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running tanks over his potatoes ... knocking down his peas ... shooting his dog..."

"Hey, hey, wait a minute, old chap," remonstrates an officer. "What's the trouble?"

"What's the trouble!" The civilian roars and rants. "Japs screaming and shouting all over a man's farm. Why don't you get out and fight them instead of sitting here? What's the matter? Are you yellow?" He looks round belligerently.

"Well, where is your farm?" asks an officer. "Here, show us on the map."

With a swing of his hand, the visitor sends the map flying. "That's all you can think about. Bits of paper. Get out and fight like men instead of sitting here doing nothing." He aims a kick at the sergeant and tips over the table with the typewriter and papers. With a quick spin he sends the officer flying over the overturned table and then, shouting and screaming, grabs one of the students acting as a clerk. At this moment, a despatch rider, covered with dust, comes into the room holding out an urgent cipher message. The 'phone starts to ring incessantly. With one accord, the Headquarters staff pick up the civilian and heave him through the door. Divisional headquarters ring asking for corroborative evidence to identify enemy armoured vehicles or tanks.

"Yes," says the instructor, enjoying it, "you just threw that corroborative evidence through the door."

Enemy Falls Back

More information is pouring over the 'phone, and on all fronts patrols report the enemy falling back.

The cipher message asks for a return of all office furniture held on charge as at the first of the month.

A report that the left company of the left forward battalion has captured three enemy believed to belong to the Second Japanese Marines arrives by liaison officer, and on all fronts the enemy continues to fall back.

Aerial reconnaissance states that two transports were bombed off the coast about three miles from — Beach. They were accompanied by a destroyer, which shot down two of our 'planes. One of the transports was sunk.

Our armoured fighting vehicle regiment of the right flank is advancing rapidly against almost negligible opposition, and although the left flank is giving some trouble, the rest of the brigade is driving the enemy back towards — with apparent ease.

There is an air of victory in the headquarters, and the staff, between messages and 'phone rings, are congratulating themselves on the fairly easy advance the brigade is making.

Lessons Learned

The instructor, however, is not pleased.

"Here are the Japs doing something they've never been known to do before and you have so far attached no significance to it," he says. "Why should they suddenly start to withdraw right along the line? And you need only look at your own map to see that's what has been going on for about two and a-half hours."

"Well I'll be——"

"And here," the instructor points out, "At 10.35 two enemy soldiers identified as belonging to the Second Japanese

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, FEBRUARY 26

From The Desert To Dad, Aged 100



"JAN" ROMANS
An unusual centenarian

TO be able to hear a greeting from his son on the battlefield was an experience that enlivened the 100th birthday of George Henry ("Jan") Romans, of Arrowtown, the other day, and it was an experience that he must share with very few, if any, other centenarians.

The father of 11 children, Mr. Romans was born in Tasmania on February 9, 1843. Two years ago, according to a friend of the family who lives in Wellington, he was playing bridge until 1 o'clock in the morning as quite the ordinary thing, and on one occasion

Marines were captured by the right forward battalion over here. Then again, at 12.14 three soldiers identified as belonging to the same unit were captured here by the left forward battalion. Have a look at the map. Get your dividers and work out how far apart these two points are."

The sergeant works it out.

"It's roughly 6,500 yards."

"Yes, 6,500 yards. Nearly four miles. Now, what is the usual frontage for a battalion?"

"Round about 1,000 to 1,500 yards, sir," says the sergeant.

"Well, here again we have something that should make us ask what is going on. What do you think about that?"

"Well, sir, I -er-er."

"Here we have men captured from the same unit at the extreme ends of our front. We have the enemy creating a most conspicuous precedent by withdrawing at the slightest pressure. In addition, we have the rather strange phenomenon of two transports endeavouring to reach——. Now, surely that must mean something?"

"I've got it, I think."

"Yes, what do you think?"

"The enemy has only a small force on land. Division told us he had at least 20 transports in this area last night. Do you think he could have brought them all here to fool us? Only unloading one and keeping the brigade guessing all day and being held up by only one battalion."

"But surely it's obvious," the instructor prompts. "He makes a landing with a few troops here, giving it a semblance

our informant saw him get up at 6 a.m. to go out and scythe a paddock.

"He reads without glasses, plays a great game of bridge, keeps a big garden all by himself in wonderful order, and he's generally alert and active."

Mr Romans is known throughout the district as the Grand Old Man of Otago, and has been in Arrowtown itself for 70 years, since the days when it was known as "Fox's"—a busy cosmopolitan mining centre. For a while he was a contractor, and then had a butchery and store business. He raced his own horses, and is well known on every track in Central Otago.

There are three sons overseas (one a prisoner of war), and it was Reg., who left here a captain and is now lieutenant-colonel, whose greeting was heard over the air at the time of his father's birthday. Here is part of his message:

"Hullo Arrowtown, this is Reg. Dad, I hope you are sitting by the radio smoking your pipe, feeling in good fettle, and listening to me. I am still battling strongly, and feel 100 per cent. . . Dad, we shall be drinking your health at your 100th birthday. Keep it up, sir, we are proud of you. To all Lake Country friends my very best wishes and good fortune. The Arrowtown, Queens-town boys with me are all well and doing grand work. So we say cheerio, lots of love to you all, and keep smiling."

of a full-scale landing, to get our forces to rush to this area, so he could make an uninterrupted landing further north."

Now it is all clear, and they wonder why they did not see the significance of these reports on captured enemy.

Theory and Practice

This is their first practical exercise. After weeks of theory and discussion, they learn their first real lesson; that it is not enough to have much knowledge unless they can apply it intelligently; that theory is insufficient without hard practice.

The next day they are at it again. And the day after. They learn that the nerve centre of a fighting force controls just about the most complicated mechanism ever devised. They are served by radio, by runner, by field telephone. Around them pivot the movements of infantry, artillery, engineers, supply companies, huge transport services. They must understand the air and the sea, and they should know the geography, the meteorology, even the geology of the land. They need to be psychologists, understanding something of the way of living of the enemy, as well as his methods of fighting. They must soak in as much knowledge as they can hold and compare it with information pouring in at them from all their own multifarious units, from civilians, from airmen, from seamen. And what they learn they must be able to apply instantly. If the mechanism breaks down under them they know that repairs cannot be made at any factory. The broken cogs will be men, and the cost may be their own country.