



Australian-manned "General Stuart" tanks bust Japanese pill-boxes in the final assault on Buna. Infantry commander warns tank crew of another Japanese pill-box at right as the tank blasts away at a pill-box ahead.



months. The men were taught to snap to it on the parade ground and on exercises, to know their weapons until they could handle them blindfolded, to move so fast and far across the dust and stones of the desert that they cursed their commanders for "forgetting they were not still in the bloody cavalry."

At Tobruk, just a year after the arrival in Egypt, an Australian brigade trained in this way made a fighting march of twenty miles in one day and fought and won, at the end of it, a tough fight against superior forces which were backed by tanks.

"First Libya" proved to every Australian that training paid. The man who could move fast, though carrying a load of gear that would worry a mule, who could get his weapons into action in split seconds, was less likely to get killed. The battalion and the company that were with a leader who did not lose his way and did not lose control in broken, featureless country, and kept close up behind the barrage, came through with few casualties and many prisoners.

It was not the demoniac courage of natural-born fighting men that took the powerful fortifications of Bardia and

Tobruk—though it took plenty of courage to keep on and not go to ground while the machine-gun bullets whipped past knee-high and the shells raised sudden tree-high clouds of dust and whistling steel—it was a sudden, accurate artillery barrage pounding down on the Italian line, groups of infantrymen who were so close behind it that they were in the Italian posts before the garrisons had recovered their wits. Tanks and infantry were behind the Italian line and among their guns before the Italians knew what was happening.

There were plenty of reinforcements in those days—raw recruits keen to conform with *Yank's* idea—but the fighting units that had been through it did not like them that way. Back to the training camps in Palestine the blooded battalions sent their best officers and sergeants to knock the new arrivals from Australia into shape. Each battalion, for example, had to staff a training company back in Palestine from which it would draw its reinforcements. If it did not send back first-class officers and