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978-0-521-19270-5 - Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to El Alamein

Jonathan Fennell

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## Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign

Military professionals and theorists have long understood the relevance of morale in war. Montgomery, the victor at El Alamein, said, following the battle, that ‘the more fighting I see, the more I am convinced that the big thing in war is morale’. Jonathan Fennell, in examining the North African campaign through the lens of morale, challenges conventional explanations for Allied success in one of the most important and controversial campaigns in British and Commonwealth history. He introduces new sources, notably censorship summaries of soldiers’ mail, and an innovative methodology that assesses troop morale not only on the evidence of personal observations and official reports but also on contemporaneously recorded rates of psychological breakdown, sickness, desertion and surrender. He shows for the first time that a major morale crisis and stunning recovery decisively affected Eighth Army’s performance during the critical battles on the Gazala and El Alamein lines in 1942.

JONATHAN FENNELL is Lecturer in Defence Studies with King’s College London, at the Airmen’s Command Squadron, Royal Air Force, Halton.

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## Acknowledgements

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I was sitting at a desk in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra when I was handed the first file of a series of documents that in many ways forms the spine of the research on which this book is based. I had the official censorship summaries of the soldiers' mail for Middle East Command in my hands. Because there are no copies of these files in UK archives, as far as I know I was the first historian tracing the morale of British soldiers in the desert to have the opportunity to study them.

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Abbreviations

AA	Anti-aircraft
AAMC	Australian Army Medical Corps
ABCA	Army Bureau of Current Affairs
ACS	Army Council Secretariat
ADH	Assistant Director of Hygiene
ADMS	Assistant Director of Medical Services
AEC	Army Education Corps
AES	Army Education Scheme
AFV	Armoured fighting vehicle
AG	Adjutant-General
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
AIR	Records of the Air Ministry
ANZ	Archives New Zealand
ATk.	Anti-tank
AWM	Australian War Memorial
AWOL	Absent without leave
BAR	Browning automatic rifle
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
BLM	Bernard Law Montgomery
Bn	Battalion
CAB	Records of the Cabinet Office
CCS	Casualty Clearing Station
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CO	Commanding Officer
Col.	Colonel
Coys.	Companies
DAG	Deputy Adjutant-General
DCIGS	Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff

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DCS	Deputy Chief of Staff
DDMS	Deputy Director Medical Services
DGAMS	Director-General of the Army Medical Service
DGAW&E	Director-General of Army Welfare and Education
Div Docs	Divisional Documents
DMI	Directorate of Military Intelligence
DMO	Directorate of Military Organisation
DMT	Director of Military Training
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
DSP	Directorate of Selection of Personnel
ECAC	Executive Committee of the Army Council
ENSA	Entertainments National Service Association
FO	Records of the Foreign Office
FSR	Field Service Regulations
FSS	Field Security Section
Gds.	Guards
Gdsm.	Guardsmen
GHQ	General Headquarters
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GOC-in-C	General Officer Commanding-in-Chief
GSO	General Staff Officer
HO	Records of the Home Office
HW	Records of Government Communications Headquarters
INF	Records of the Central Office of Information
IO	Information Officer
IWM	Imperial War Museum
LAWO	Local Army Welfare Officer
LHCMA	Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives
Lieut.	Lieutenant
ME	Middle East
MEF	Middle Eastern Forces
MEFCWS	Middle East Field Censorship Weekly Summary
MEMCFS	Middle East Military Censorship Fortnightly Summary
MEMCWS	Middle East Military Censorship Weekly Summary
METM	Middle East Training Memorandum
MG	Machine gun

List of abbreviations

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MO	Medical Officer
NA	National Archives
n/a	Not available
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NAAFI	Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
n.d.	Not dated
NOSU	New Officer Selection Unit
NYD(N)	Not yet diagnosed (nervous)
NZ	New Zealand
NZEF	New Zealand Expeditionary Force
OCTUs	Officer Corps Training Units
OR	Other rank
PIN	Records of the Ministry of Pensions
POW	Prisoner(s) of war
PREM	Records of the Prime Minister's Office
QMG	Quartermaster-General
RA	Royal Artillery
RAA	Royal Australian Artillery
RAC	Royal Armoured Corps
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAMC	Royal Army Medical Corps
RE	Royal Engineers
RMO	Regimental Medical Officer
RN	Royal Navy
RO	Routine order
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major
RTR	Royal Tank Regiment
S-of-S	Secretary of State
SAMAD	South African Military Archives Depot
SAMC	South African Medical Corps
SSAFA	Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association
UDF	Union Defence Force
UWH	Union War Histories
VCIGS	Vice Chief of the Imperial General Staff
WDF	Western Desert Force
WO	Records of the War Office
WOSBs	War Office Selection Boards
WR	War Records

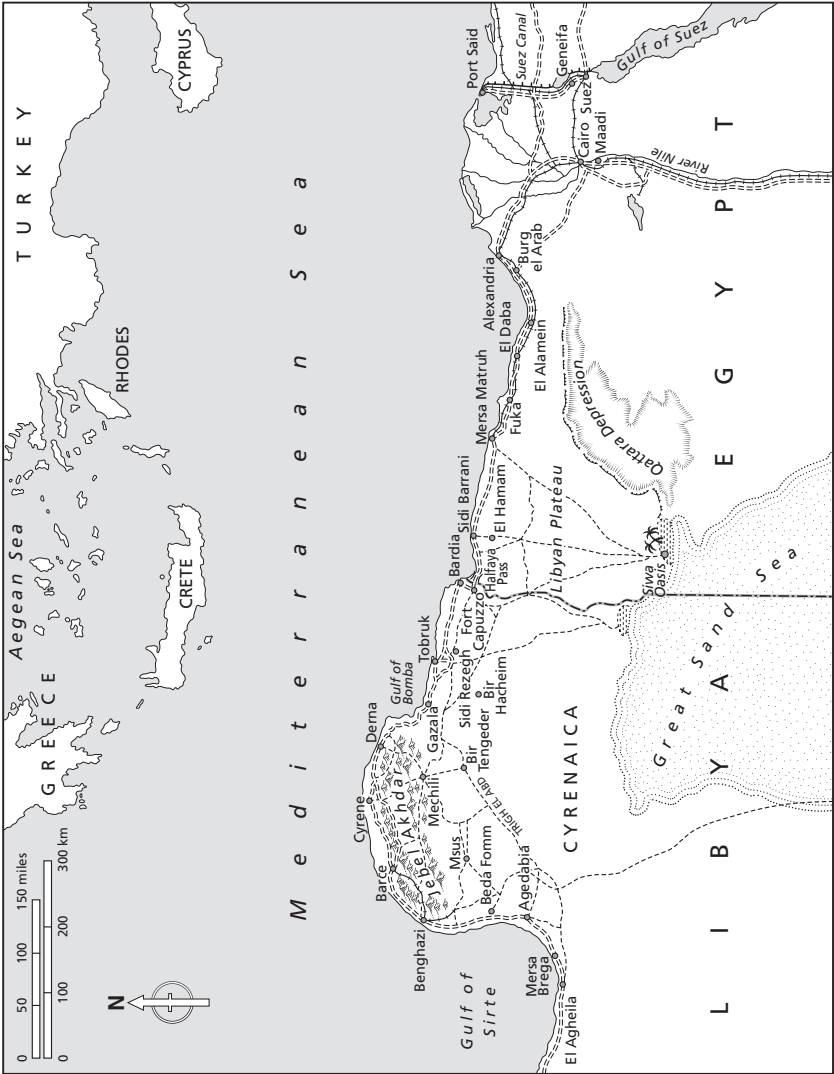
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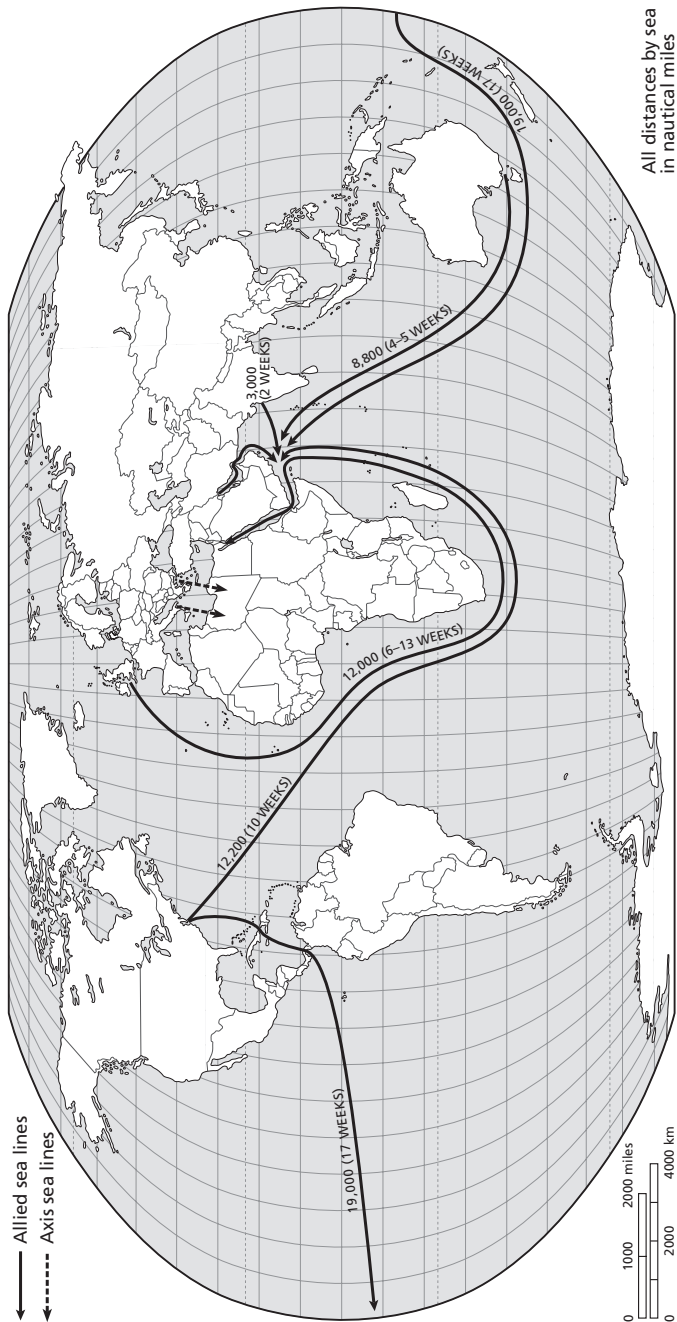
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