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### AIR OPERATIONS IN THE WESTERN DESERT

All day until dusk on September 2 our fighters and light bombers were incessantly active over the Western Desert battle area.

Two Me.109s were early victims but the main feature in the air during the morning was the bombing by both sides. By midday six heavily escorted raids by our bombers had been carried out against the enemy's armoured forces.

Despite the difficulty of immediate assessment of the results of these raids excellent photographs show scores of accurate bomb bursts in the middle of large enemy concentrations.

Our bombing attacks met with considerable opposition throughout the day from heavy and concentrated anti-aircraft fire and from enemy fighters.

Despite this opposition our aircraft created new records for the Western Desert by flying over twenty per cent more bombing sorties than have ever been flown in a single day in the desert.

In one attack bombs fell among enemy troops who were already being shelled by our land forces.

In one afternoon engagement between our fighters and Me.109s, two of the latter were shot down. Later one of our fighter formations encountered about fifteen Ju.87s escorted by Messerschmitts when six of the Stukas were destroyed.

The total score at the end of the day was eight Me.109s, one Macchi 202 and six Ju.87s definitely destroyed.

It is now known that one other enemy bomber and an additional fighter were destroyed on September 1.

Our losses on September 2 were ten aircraft but five of the pilots are already known to be safe. During the night of 2nd/3rd September medium bombers of the R.A.F. carried out concentrated attacks in the battle area. Heavy bombs fell among tanks and motor transport. The Daba area was subjected to a particularly heavy attack.