

RAJPUT KILLS 25 GERMANS

INDIAN ARMY IN ACTION IN EGYPT

A V.C.O. (Viceroy's Commissioned Officer) of a Rajput Regiment killed twenty-five Germans in an Egyptian battle, and afterwards attacked others with the bayonet. He is one of a battalion of Rajputs who helped to break Rommel's heart in North Africa. How they did so was told in a letter from one of the officers of the unit, who described the action as the most bloody and desperate battle fought in the Western Desert.

"Most Indians are going into action for the first time," he writes. "I suppose the actions on the El Alamein line must have just about broken the enemy's heart; anyway, they are stopped and pushed back, and in this our battalion played its part. They, with another unit put in a dusk attack on a very strong enemy position, the other unit attacking the objective on their left. It was terrific.

"They went for the Hun absolutely bald-headed with the bayonet over about 1,000 yards of open ground, supported by every automatic they had. They crashed their carriers through minefields and got into the 'Boche' - sepoys shouting their war cries, and meting out terrific punishment to the Hun.

"Everyone up there who saw it says it was terrific, and they had not believed that the Units could go 'Ghazi' like that and get away with it.

"The other battalion did not get its objective, and although our chaps hung on all night and beat off a half-hearted attack, they were so reduced in number by enemy artillery and mortar fire, that they were pulled back before dawn. The battalion's remnants were re-formed and put into another attack, which they pressed home with the utmost determination.

"They captured their objective, but were pinned down by a most appalling concentration of artillery and mortar fire. Subsequently, they were withdrawn from this position for a rest. Yet a third time they were put into the attack along Ruweisat Ridge, and although they still went hard at it they could not get on top of the feature, and after staying there some hours were relieved by another battalion.

"The name of the Rajput Regiment is 'Number One' up here among all troops. They say the way the carriers tried to crash their way through minefields was terrific to watch. One of our Subalterns received an immediate award of the D.S.O., and was promoted to the rank of Major. He thoroughly deserved it. He is the only officer who went through the battle and came out, though wounded twice.

"A Colonel disappeared armed with a Bren gun, and is a prisoner of war. The Adjutant was killed outright when dashing around in a jeep, which stopped a direct hit. Our present C.O. was wounded after being in action for a few hours. One V.C.O. went 'berserk' and killed about twenty-five Huns with a tommy-gun, and afterwards used a bayonet.

"The Battalion altogether received one D.S.O., one I.O.M., and five I.D.S.M's, all immediate awards."

INDIA OFFICE