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AMERICANS ANXIOUSLY AWAIT NEWS

Tunisian Losses Considerable

— 25.2.43 —

NEW YORK, Thursday, AAP

Operations in central Tunisia are being anxiously watched in USA, for all reports from the battle area indicate substantial US losses in men and tanks.

"Even if Rommel is stopped now, he has pretty well spoiled any chance we might have had of cutting through to the sea," says CBS's Algiers correspondent. "It also means that he has weakened us a great deal in southern Tunisia, for the indications are that our losses are considerable."

This correspondent adds that we have lost some useful positions and, what is much more painful, men and tanks, but it does not mean that the campaign is seriously endangered. Rommel's ultimate chances are no better.

"My impression of the reactions of the people here is that they are taking a realistic view of the fighting in Tunisia," says Michael Barclay, BBC correspondent. "Any tendency to imagine that US troops would sail into immediate victory has been checked. Reporters have done a good job in reminding the people that the US troops are still green. No one doubts that in 6 months' time, with some battle experience, the Americans will turn out as tough as any other troops. At present they are looking to the veterans of the Eighth Army."

It is reported that Gen Eisenhower, C-in-C Allied Forces, was making a quick tour of the Tunisian battle area when the Germans first launched their attacks. He passed through Sidi Bou Zid only 90 minutes before German panzers took the town.

German Radio claims that the Axis has driven the Americans deep into the Atlas Mountains, finally removing the threat to the Axis in South Tunisia. In these operations they took 800 prisoners, captured 97 tanks, 23 guns, 33 armoured vehicles, and inflicted heavy casualties.