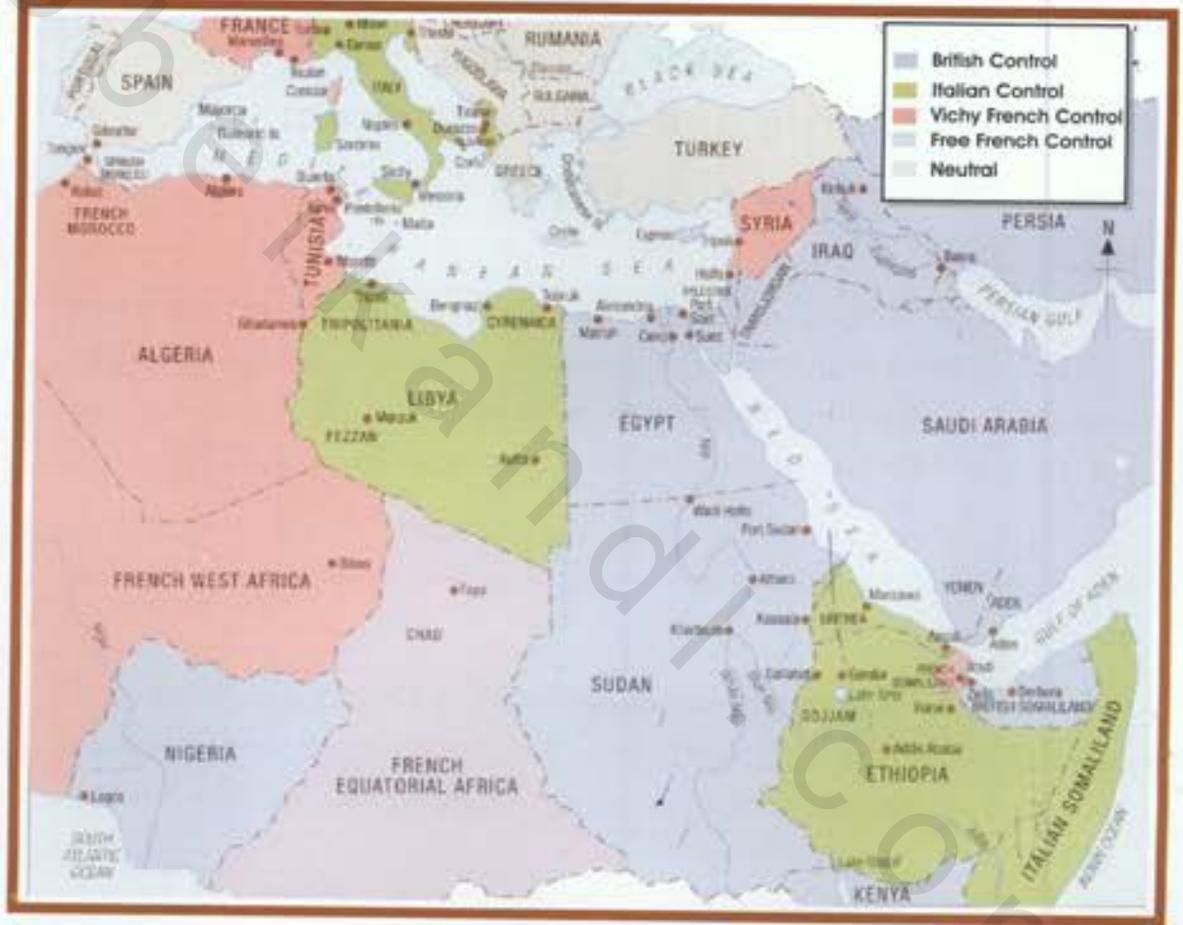


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**Tobruq and Memories  
from World War II in Libya**

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## **Tobruq and Memories from World War II in Libya**

### **Foreword :**

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, of which Libya was a part, This part of North Africa was included in the schemes of the big powers to colonize it . According to the division of the territories which had once been a property of " the sick man of Europe, Libya was left to the Italians .

The Italian forces appeared all of a sudden in ( 1911 ) on the Libyan coasts, declaring war against this peaceful land with its meager military and material assets .

Thus started a bitter struggle which had lasted two decades and consumed thousands of souls in dozens of battles . But they made the invaders learn a lesson that has become a model for all the people striving for their freedom

The Italian colonisation was of a settlement nature; and was determined to make Libya the fourth Italian shore .

The Italian colonization had become a theatre for the battles of another war, World War II . Dozens of British air-raids against the minor and main towns, thousands of the Libyan got enlisted while they were still minors, hundreds of mines were set up killing thousands of the inhabitants of the Libyan Desert, and twenty-seven battles took place on the Libyan territories between the Germans and Allies .



History never forgets and in that struggle there were many events which should be recorded to remain reminders to the world of the importance of international peace and to put an end to all kinds of struggle between the Big Powers .

Hence, Dar Alanees for Pubshion and Distribution has decided that it would be best to unravel the events that had taken place on the Libyan territories . Battles whose theater was eastern Libya, especially, the region of Tobruq .

In the second edition, Dar Alanees had added some Memories which concern the European reader and are closely related to the events of World War II in Eastern Libya to :



1- Concerning these Memories with the region of Tobruq and the Libyan- Egyptian borders .

One has to use some of Arabic Material about World War II , chief among these is the book of " The Events and Battles of World War II on the Libyan Territories " by the Libyan diplomat, Dr Qadri Miftah Alatresh, and the book of " The Desert War " by General Suleiman Mahmoud Suleiman, published by Aldar Aljamahiria for publications .



First German Forces arrived to Tripoli in Febraury 1941 .

General Romel The Second on the right side With ,Garibaldy the Italean qoverrler

## World War II

The struggle which had taken place during World War II between the Allies and the Axis ( Germany and Italy )was concentrated at six fronts, four of which were in western and Eastern Europe, the fifth in the pacific Ocean between the Japanese forces and Americans, who had joined the war on the side of the Allies, while the sixth was the North African front, where the struggle was between the Allies and Germany and Italy.

From a review of the battles in these fronts, we realize the importance of the North African front; and the importance of the Libyan field, where battles that had changed the events of the war, took place .

The High Military command in Tripoli provided the High command in Berlin and Rome of the movements of troops on the Libyan front, and all the details of the engagements and battles with the forces of the Allies .

The High command would convey the information to special maps and then issue commands and direction to the forces in the field of battle .

The writer is a reputed military officer . There is also the book of " With Rommel in the Sahara " translated by General Sulciman Mahmoud and Yunis Aziz .

To all of these, our thanks and gratitude . We have taken material from their books and used it to acquaint the reader with that devastating war of which Libya was an unconcerned victim .





According to the announcements made by the military leaderships, mass media had been making reports about major battles such as (Alburdy, Sidi Rizq, Kamboot, Tobruq, Ain Alghazala, Beer Hakeem, Almikhaily, Ijdabia, Marsi Matrouh, Alaqila ... (etc) ).

The aftermaths of World War II on the international situation have been going on ever since then .

From instant retaliation and balance between the two superpowers to the cold War, then came military alliances and the regional economic groups, the attempt to divide the Middle East after the discovery of petrol while the question of Palestine is still dragging on to the present day

The presidents of the western countries met in 1995 in each of Washington, London, Paris, Bon and Moscow to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the victory of the Allies in World War II, without the slightest



reference to the harm the war has inflicted on the Third World countries, while the danger posed by the mines fields in Libya and Egypt which still kill the innocent should have had a priority in their celebrations .

War II ended on 10th August, 1945 with the unconditioned surrender of Italy, Germany and Japan after it killed more than fifty million people and twice as much of the deformed, the wounded and the homeless .

All these victims and the devastation are a disgrace in the history of modern man . A look at this war tells us that it had four causes :

- 1** - The conflict between the economic interests of the European powers which have adopted the policies of armament and the ideological struggle .
- 2** - The giant force prepared by Hitler for the resumption of the German nation ( The Third Reich ) and to avenge Germany on those who had defeated it in World War I .

- 3- Hitler's insistence to widen the atmosphere which suited the place of the German people . This prompted him to invade Sudeit, Bohimia, and Poland .
- 4- The economic weakness of the European countries which had failed to contain the aftermaths of the Great Depression of ( 1929 - 1932 ) and the social changes created by the crisis .



## A Summary of the Events

### 1-Events of ( 1939 )

After Germany had taken each of Austria and Chicoslovakia, the German forces took over ( Dantrig ) and occupied West Poland in September . Britain and France declared war on Germany .

Russia occupied east Poland and invaded Estonia, Litwainia and Finland completing its control of the northern Baltic . The British and French forces were concentrated on the Maginot Line, opposite Sigfrid awaiting the German attack which came from the north .

### 2-Events of ( 1940 )

The invasion of the Germans to Denmark in May, Norway in April and France on 10th May through Holland, Luxumbourg and Belgium .

The English army made use of the Belgian resistance of the German forces and withdrew from the battle of Dankerk .

The French army failed to face the German army alone, so France surrendered and general Petain announced truce with Germany on 25th April, 1940, and formed a rightist government which made its capital in Vichy .

The northern part of France remained under German control . But General De Gaul did not recognize the government of Vichy and started to assemble the French forces for the resistance of the German occupation.



The German air force made intensive air-raids against the British Isles and battles between the German planes and the Royal Air Force of Britain over the sea of the Manche, which stopped the German plans for invasion of the British Isles .

### **3-Events of ( 1941 )**

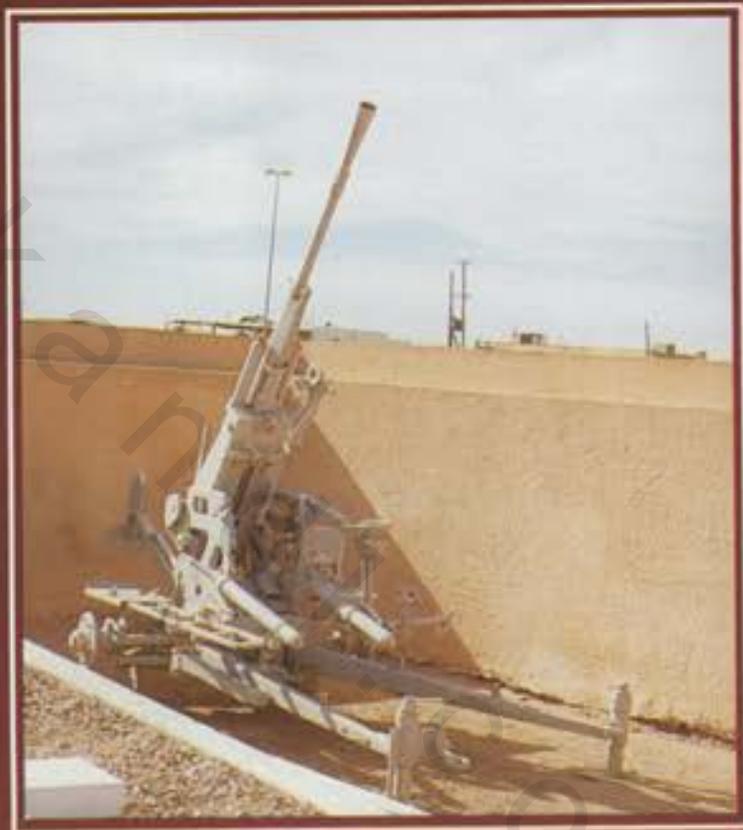
Italy tried to invade Albania after its invasion of Greece and the Balkan states but the failure of the Italian forces in Libya and Yugoslavia required the intervention of the German forces to save faces .

On April 22, Hitler decided to attack Russia before they could mobilize their armies .

The German forces were on the outskirts of Moscow and Stalingrad in December but the hard winter halted the movement of the German war machines and reinforcements were cut off in spite of all the attempts they had made .

The Japanese air-  
force attacked the  
American fleet at the  
port of Pearl Harbor  
and took over  
Singapore .

The United States of  
America entered the  
war on the side of  
the Allies and took  
part in the counter-  
attack during the  
engagement of the  
German forces in the  
Eastern against  
Russia .



#### **4-Events of 1942**

The USA joined the war on the side of the Allies to check the German victories in Europe and North Africa and to take control of the Mediterranean .

#### **5-Events of 1943**

The surrender of the sixth German Army after the Battle of Stalingrad in February because of Hitler's orders of non - withdrawal .

The arrival of the American and English troops in Morocco and Algeria to attack the German and Italian forces in Tunisia . After strenuous battles the forces of the Axis surrendered in March .

The forces of the Allies landing on Sicily and the defeat of the Italian forces that led to the fall of (Mussolini) and the submission of Italy in September .

The forces of the Allies led by General (Izenhower) made intensive air-raids against all German cities with the aim of stopping all economic activities and military movements to prepare for the airdrop carried out by the Allies in northern France (Normandy), and then the march towards the German borders .



## **6-Events of 1944**

The withdrawal of the German armies from all fronts as a result of the extensive war front and the Russian army advanced towards the eastern borders of Germany .

The forces of the Allies march towards the western borders of Germany with the success of the airdrop at (Normandy) in June . The expulsion of the German forces from France in July . In December the forces of the Allies and Russia closed up on Germany from the East and West .

## **7-Events of 1945**

The Allied Forces crossed the Rhine and entered into Germany from the western borders and the Russian forces from the east, had entered the capital, Berlin . Hitler committed suicide and Germany surrendered without conditions on 8th May, 1945 .

The American forces dropped atomic bombs on Heroshima and Najazaky, forcing Japan to surrender on 10th August, 1945 . Thus World War II ended formally on 8th May, 1945 .

## Resultes of World War II

World War II ended without peace agreements . Contrary to World War I, the Allies were content with the unconditioned surrender of the Axis (Italy, Germany and Japan) , The leaders of the Allies held meetings, one of which was at Yalta in February, 1945 to discuss the international situation in the post-war period and to divide the booty of the defeated .

**The most important results of those settlements were the following results .**

- 1-**The establishment of a new international organization to replace The League of Nations, that could be capable of maintaining international peace and security .

Agreement was reached on signing the charter of the organization of the United Nation in the Congress of San Francisco in 1945 . It was the charter whose items were unjust to the Third World countries .



The permanent member states of the Security Council have the say in all the UN resolutions .

This is the fault that these countries, one of which is Libya, are trying to correct .

- 2-**The situation of the Italian colonies, one of which was Libya, had an active role on the side of the Allies and weakened the Italian colonizers, but did not carry out their promises and had divided Libya among themselves in the (Bevan - Sphorza Agreement) .

The National Resistance Movement forced them to change their mind on the division . In 1951 the UN declared the independence of Libya as a federal country which composed of Tripoli, Bergha and Fizzan . Afterwards it was developed into a unified system in 1963 .

Finally, with the efforts of the Revolution of Alfateh in 1969 it was turned into a Jamahiri system and the People's Authority which depends on People's congresses and People's committees .



These are pieces of information which could help the reader to know the causes of World War II from which the Libyans have suffered greatly.

This will lead us to some memories about that war . Most of them during the period of 1940 - 1943 .



## The Tragedy of Mines

The war ended in North Africa leaving (250,000) deaths and thousands of prisoners of war from both sides, as well as, vast areas crowded with military equipment .

Military history was content with the records of the crucial battles in Tobruq, Alalamain, Bear Hakeem and Aqila . Three battles were as important as Dankirk .

But these records mentioned nothing about the thousands of civilians in Libya who were victimized by that war . They didn't pinpoint the locations where they had buried those mines which have been killing our people since them .

General, (Suleiman Mahmoud Suleiman) says in the introduction to his book (Rommel and the African Legion) :

“ I still remember two unforgettable scenes I have once witnessed, they were the remains of some Libyans, most of whom were my cousins.

They were scattered by mines buried by the warring parties in the depths of our beloved land " .

To have a complete picture of the causes which had created the tragedy of the mines we have to observe the following :

- 1- The reason behind the intensity and varieties of the millions of mines buried in our soil was the military tide among the warring troops, which advanced and retreated intermittently .
- 2- The geographical locations on the coastal strip where military operations took place didn't have natural barrier that could provide protection for the troops .

They made up for this deficiency by burying mines on the southern coast of the Mediterranean to safeguard their units from envelopment when withdrawing .



**3-** The countries of the Axis buried a mine field in the region of (Albweirat) which extended for 45 kilometres and at a great depth in a triangle connecting (Albuweirat, Abu Njeim and Ijdabia) . All kinds of mines were used there, anti-tanker mines, and individuals mines to protect the withdrawal of defeated troops from both parties .





#### 4- These mines include

- (A) Anti-tanks Italian mines, type V3 and other mines against individuals .
- (B) Anti-tanks German mines, M35 .
- (C) French mines, model 36 .
- (D) English mines, type Mk4

5- At the end of the war, the number of the mines buried in Libya was more than 150,000 mines and a similar number was found in the store ready for use .





6- The fact that these mines are still effective is due to the soil and the prevailing climatic conditions, which do not help in the analysis of explosive substances despite the long time (50 years) they have remained there .

So the perils of these mines will continue for several years unless the warring countries present maps of their locations and help in looking for them .







According to the figures included in the book of doctor Alatresh we can observe :

- 1- The period between (1939 to 1975), with the exception of 1969 and 1970 had seen victims of buried mines in the desert and some towns .
- 2- The period from 1939 to 1953 had seen the highest numbers of mines victim, and so had all the years that followed World War II . The record varied between 150 - 40 cases every year . The year with the lowest number of victims was 1950 (40 victims) .
- 3- People who were left with permanent deformities were even more in the period from 1939 to 1970 .

The subject of reparations for the victims or their families is subject to the response of the concerned nations and with the requirements of justice and the regard of the culprits to their international commitments .

As well as an international effort for the prohibition of mines in other people's territories .

Perhaps the most profound international detestation of mines was the demonstration which was organized by a humanitarian French society where large numbers of people collected pairs of shoes and made a pyramid out of them on one of the public squares in Paris .

It was a symbolic solidarity with the people in the third World countries, especially in Africa and Asia, who have lost their limbs in the mines .

In spite of the indefatigable efforts made in Libya to explode those mines and the efforts made by European countries to undo their effects, the number of the people who have been victimized by these mines will remain a painful reminder for the majority of the Libyan people .

The Centre for the Libyan Jihad has issued a valuable study on the mines of World War II buried in Libya and their economic and human effects by Mr(Ahmed Mohamed Bushara) . It's a documentary in which the writer has included all the documents he was able to collect.

He also referred to previous writings on the subject, including the book of the Italian military historian (Lushair Shira) titled " Mines and minefields in

the African Campaign, (1940 - 1943 ) and a study by a French thinker (The Technological Aspects connected with the War leftovers in the fields of battles) He also relied on the Geneva symposium of 1981, which was specialized on the study of the leftovers of war .

The question of the mines in Libya is a passive addition, which signifies that Libya is one of the victims of mines and it does not mean that it has a part in its creation . So, there are studies which have emphasized the legal, diplomatic, technical and economic aspects, such as the study made by Doctor (Ali Dawi) on the responsibility of the international community for the harm resulting from the leftovers of World War II in Libya .

The comment included in the speech made by the leader of Revolution on 2nd March 2009, at the signing of the agreement of an Italian apology to the Libyans was vital . He stressed the commitment of the countries that took part in the battles fought on the Libyan territories to solve the problem .

This is an indication that the question of the mines has taken the proper route .

## **Prominent Battles Between the Axis and Allies**

The forces of the Allies took over Benghazi on 12-1-1941 and pursued the forces of the Axis, who had been in control of the city to the region of Aligaila near Ijdabia .

The defeats suffered by the Italians jeopardized the situation of the German Army fighting in the Balkan Region. They could now be enveloped from the south-eastern coasts of the Mediterranean . In addition to this, Germany had been planning to establish bases for their air-force in Sicily and Libya to threaten the Allies' forces on the Swiss Canal, Malta and the island of Crete

Hitter was obliged to help his ally, Mussolini, keep his colonies in Libya, Somalia and Ethiopia and, at the same time, save his forces which were entangled in the Balkans . He had to stop the Italian defeats . Thus, they agreed to establish a force to expel the Allies from the territories they had taken .

General Rommel was appointed leader of this force, which was called (The African German Legion); thus this leader became destined to be part of the history of World War II in North Africa .

On the morning of 12th February, 1941 Rommel arrived at the airport of Benitto Castle, now Tripoli International Airport . Thus, started the story of the " Desert Fox " as leader of the German battalion in Africa and was





promoted to the title of major general (general banzer) and then leader of the Banzer's Army . He was later promoted to the title of field marshal . In Tunisia, he became general of the whole African Army .

The Italian leader (Garibaldi) was responsible before the Italian government and Mussolini, through the High Military Command in Rome. The military equipment of the German troops (the Banzers) arrived in Tripoli on 3-10-1941 .



They included 120 tanks, complete with modern equipments . Rommel ordered these forces to proceed to (Alaqila) . He also ordered his assistant, Streikh, to go to Marada and bury mines in the southern area for a length of 30 kilometres .

On 31st March, 1941 the forces of Rommel took over the harbor of Breiqa and intersected the troops withdrawing to Ijdabia; and destroyed large numbers of the Allies tanks . On 3rd April, 1941 the German forces took over Ijdebita .

Rommel directed his troops to the region of (Almikheli) in an attempt to get to Tobruq . At the same time the Allies forces retreated to Derna .

On 4th November, 1941 the German forces, led by General Futtints besieged Tobruq . Rommel ordered his troops to continue the besiege and had some troop proceed to the area of Salloom, Kamboot and Alburdy . Strenuous battles took place and the Germans suffered heavy losses . Thus they changed their mind about the attack against Tobruq .



Britain risked sending six ships carrying 307 tanks guarded by destroyers. Five of the ships arrived at Alexandria on 11th May . The sixth ship sank with 57 tanks .

Rommel received orders from the High command to withdraw his forces to the defense line at Aqila . The retreat took place at intervals and no more losses were suffered .

This was in January, 1942 . At this stage the German and Italian troops were estimated to be about 40 thousand .

When we talk about World War II and its painful memoires, we must mention two battles which took place in the eastern region .

They were the battle of Beer Hakeem and the battle of Tobruq . We shall also talk briefly about the battle of Alalamain, which took place in Egypt . The two sides made ready for these battles and their capabilities were as follows :

(A) **The Axis Forces** : 50 squadrons of infantrymen, 525 tanks, 700 planes

(B) **The Allies** : 55 squadrons of infantrymen, 300 tanks, 100 planes .



## **1-The Battle of Beer Hakeem**

Rommel started his full attack against the Allies troops on 26-5-1942 . The Italian troops were instructed to proceed to Beer Hakeem but they faced the problem of the mines . Fighting continued for three days and Rommel was able to defeat the English troops and took their anti-tank weapons . Then he proceeded towards Beer Hakeem and defeated the English and Indian divisions on 11-6-1942 .

## **2-The Great Battle of Tobruq**

The English leader ordered his defeated troops to proceed eastwards because they were incapable of putting up a resistance but orders came to him from London to collect all his forces and continue to defend Tobruq to the end . He was provided with a new New Zealand division coming from Syria .

Rommel ordered his troops to proceed to the east amid the mines. They moved along three axes (Ikruma, The Abi Well, Sidi Murzuq) to cut off the lines for any troops or provisions for the besieged forces of the Allies .

On 17-6-1942, Rommel was able to take these locations, as well as Aselloom and Alburdy . He destroyed the airports and defeated the English and Indian forces .







Then he proceeded in his full forces towards Tobruq .

The German attack against the air-force were used . At the end of the day the Germans took over the port of Tobruq and part of the town .

The English, The Indian and South African troops in the town tried to withdraw in the darkness but they failed .

Thus ended the battle of Tobruq with a landslide victory of Rommel, who took 30,000 troops from the Allies as prisoners, six of them were generals .

This battle had a great effect in changing the events of World War II .

It was considered among the great battles, such as the Battle of Stalingrad and Berlin . Hitler promoted Rommel to the rank of field marshall, which was a high honorny title .



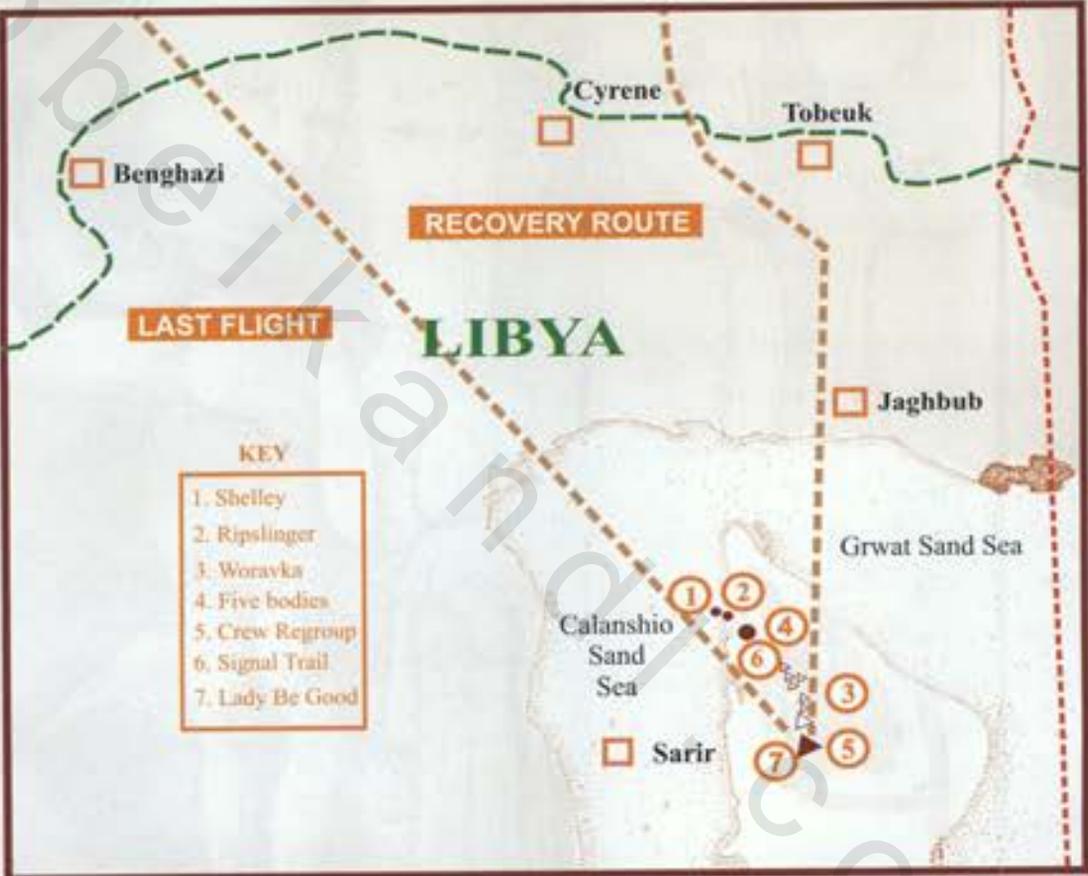


## **The American Aeroplane Lady B Good Trip No. 109**

The American fighter plane B 24 which was dubbed (Lady B Good) belonged to the American squadron 514 of the Desert Division No. 9; and specifically to the bomber fighters 376 centered at the Airport of Siloq south of Benghazi .

IT has left its base on 5th April, 1943 to bomb the town of Napole in Italy in an air-raid . There was a crew of nine navigators on board the plane . The plane took off with a squadron of twenty-five planes but a strong storm hit its engine and obliged the crew to discontinue the mission, thirty minutes away from Napole after one of its engines stopped functioning .

The plane emptied its load of bombs in the Mediterranean sea and started the return trip to Libya . The rest of the planes landed on the airport of Malta after they carried out their mission.



The plane faced bad weather conditions and winds whose speed was 80 knots . Its radio did not get across to Banina Airport despite the repented attempts .

Banina Airport received the last message from the plane at twelve o'clock of the 5th April, 1942, when the plane was coming nearer to Benghazi and then contacts were cut off . When the plane was over the Libyan Desert, the pilot emptied it of its fuel and instructed his crew to leave it on their parachutes .



The crew landed at a spot seven hundred and eight kilometers away from Benghazi, south of the great Sea of Sand and the plane was left to crash ten kilometres away, and was split into three parts .



One of the crew, lieutenant Werkfa, fell dead north of the wreckage of the plane .

The other eight landed safely and continued to walk northwards in a desperate struggle with death as two of them, Robert Tooter and Warbelsinger wrote in their diary which was found beside their skeletons .

They also said that they continued the journey with their colleagues with little food and water, using their parachutes to protect them against the sand and a cover at night .





The burning rays of the sun, the clear sky and empty desert was a vast graveyard for the seekers of salvage .

The eight continued their march until the 9th . April 1943, walking a distance of sixty-five miles in the northern direction . Five of them could not carry on .



They were the pilot, William Haton, crewman Haize, co-pilot Tooter, corporal Adams and radio technician, Lamooty . They sat at one place awaiting death without provisions or cover .

Tooter wrote in his memoirs for Monday, 12-4-1943 " There is absolutely no hope and the night is too cold " .

Rebslinger continued walking with another colleague for 20 miles . He made his last entry in his notebook on 11-4-1943 . But Shelly continued walking for seven more miles .

The location where the plane had fallen was pinpointed by a British team of geologists on 9-11-1958 . The first persons to get to the plane were Dr Sheridan and Martin who were geologists . In 1959 a division from the American air force looked for the wreckage of the plain to no avail . " Times" Company succeeded in getting to the location on 15-2-1960 .

In August 1960 they found the corpse of Lieutenant Woorka near the plane where he landed in his parachute .



The body of the ninth person Fernoon Moore has never been found . The bodies of the other eight were taken by the American Air-force from the Air Base of Wailis in Tripoli .

This plane had been lying in the Libyan Desert for fifty-one years as a remarkable sign in the Sea of Sand . Migrating birds used it as a stop-over station during their annual trips from north to south . I saw it best to look for the location of the plane and keep it somewhere safely .

**The reasons for my proposition were :**

- 1- Some hawk hunters took to getting to the plane in the nineties . They used to meddle with the wreckage and write their names on it .
- 2- Large numbers of foreign tourist got to the location and wrote their names on the wreckage and cut out parts of the plane using knives, and took them home .
- 3- Antiquity thieves got to it, too and stole some parts of it . Some even tried to smuggle the whole wreckage out of the country .

For all the above, I proposed to the Department of Antiquities to transfer the plane to Tobruq's Military Museum which represents the pivot of World War II .

It was here that more than sixty thousand troops from various nationalities, were killed .

Inside the Museum we found an operation room used during the war

At Imreira we had dug out a giant gun used in the war and weighed more than forty tons . It was used during the war for the protection of the coast of Tobruq between (Algaara) and (Ain Alghazala) .



The return trip from the southern Sea of Sand to Tobruq took ten days and a distance of seven hundred kilometres.

The American plane is now safely kept inside the premises of the headquarter of World War II in Tobruq . It was unearthed by a full team from the Department of Antiquities in 1993 .

It was on underground building with three wings and a meeting hall . " The search for the location of the plane and its return to Tobruq was carried out by a team headed by Dr Fadul Ali Mohamed, the secretary of Tobruq Office of Antiquities and a team for the Gulf Company for Petroleum .

The Austrian Mission helped us with a plan for a wall enclosure round the room .

The Secretariat of Tourism built a headquarter for it at the entrance of the Headquarters and we transported the plane to its new location, together with the giant gun which was made in 1917 .

We also found the car which carried Alhabeeb Borgeiba secretly to Egypt in 1946 when he was wanted by the French .





## **The Raid on Rommel's at Albaidha**

The British intelligence officer, Major Haseldon, who was fluent in Arabic and took his residence in Egypt, planned to kill Rommel behind the lines of fighting .

He selected for the task a long range desert group of guerillas of Scottish origin and had been trained in Italy before they were carried in two submarines, one of which was a Tordey and the other Telesman, to the beach of Al.Hamama north-west of Shahat . At the head of the group was Major Leekuk, the son of Admiral Jeffery Keez and Ieutenant major Kambel who was fluent in Arabic and German .

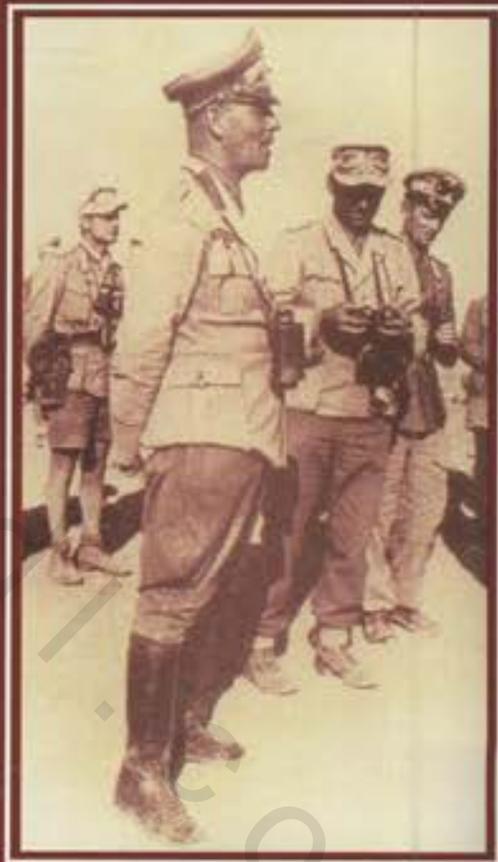
As the weather was very bad, only 29 people arrived . They were divided into several groups to cut off communication with the Italian Leadership in Susse and storm the house of Rommel in the town of Albaidha .

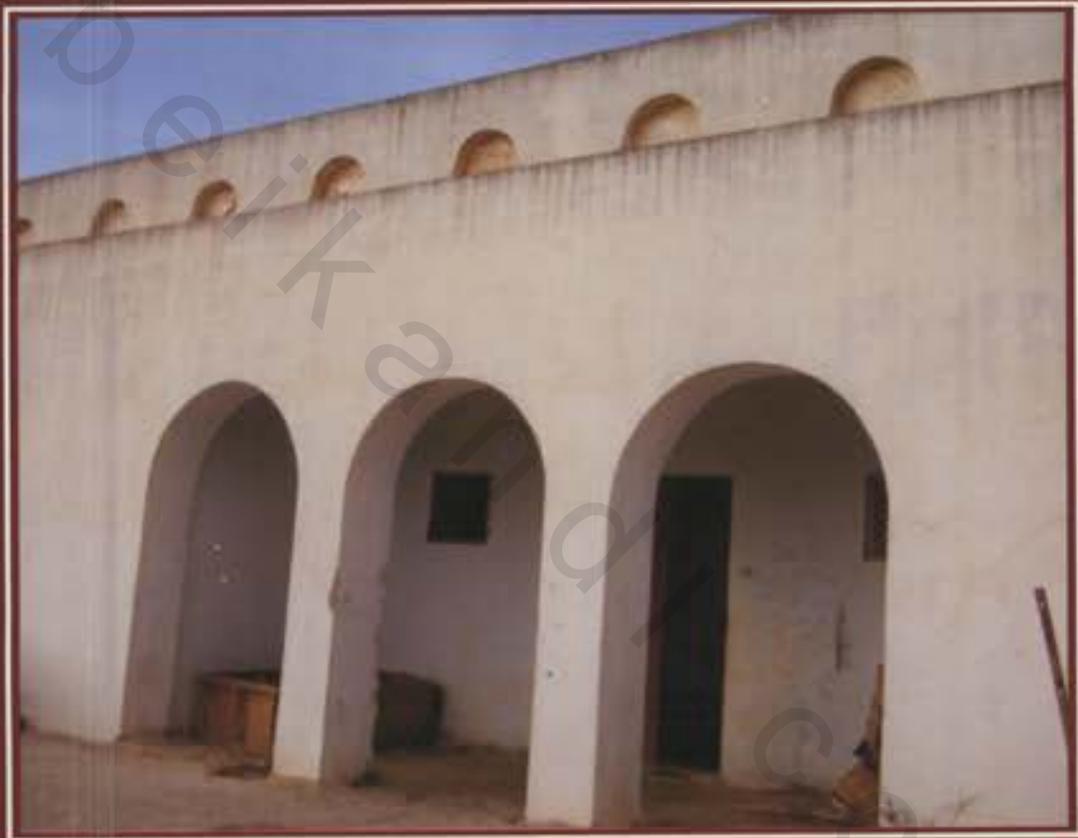
On the night of 18-11-1941, Kizo Kambel, and corporal Terry with six soldiers, covered by three others from behind, dropped a bomb inside the house but the night guards shot him dead .

His assistant Cambel was wounded while corporal Terry with others fled to Egypt across the desert . The rest were arrested and Hitler considered them spies and had to be tortured; but Rommel treated them as prisoners of war .

Keyes was buried in Baidha then his body was transported during the fifties to Benghazi .

On his grave is written : " Lieutenant colonel Keyes, 24, killed in the attack against the house of Rommel in Baidha near the Tomb of Sidirafie . The raid failed because Rommel wasn't in the house at the time of the attack





Some say that he had left the house a few days before the attack and that he was at his cave in the region of Ghreiga or he was in Athens . Others say he was in Rome to celebrate his birthday, but the building that had been stormed was in fact a headquarter for Administrative Affairs and a guesthouse for important persons

Charles Dickens commented on the attack, " To have Keyes alive was for better for me than the assassination of Rommel himself " .



Kez was awarded the Golden Decoration of Bravery (V.C), while lieutenant major Haseldon, the man who had planned the raids was killed south of Tobruq in September, 1942 .

The grave of Keyes is now in the graveyard of Alfiweihat on the fifth row, the fifth grave . His sister transferred his body from the Graveyard of Sidi Rafie in Baidha to Fweihat in the early fifties .







## **The Paintings of the British soldier John Brill**

Alburdy (Pitra Mighas), the big rock, which was formerly known as Minlous, is 125 klm east of Tobruq, on a rock protrusion between two deep bays .



It has got some historical buildings, castles and an old water tank . At the time of the Turks, it was called (The Burdy of Solomon) .

Like other places, it suffered from the destruction of World War II . The Italians had built battalions on it, which were shelled by the Allies during the battle over the port . Most of the buildings were destroyed and the remains of the War camp at the entrance of the port were removed .



John Brill



Drawn at 1942

## **The Room of the British Soldier Brill :**

It was a small room built on a cliff at Alburdy port . The British soldier, (John Frederick Brill) painted a picture on the events of the war on the southern wall .

The young soldier belonged to battalion (R.A.S.C) and was inspired by the war to make paintings .



In the painting, there is a table under which there are books by Charles Dickens, including *A Tale of Two Cities*, *David Copperfield*, and others . On the table there's a meal of human skulls .

To the side of it is a fiddler who is extremely excited . Near the group of young pertly dancers and on the top and bottom of the painting, there are black hands symbolizing war and white hands symbolizing peace . On the eastern edge, near the door there are Egyptian bank notes and coins bearing a map



of the Egyptian kingdom while someone, who could be the painter himself, is looking at the painting through the window .

He wrote in the middle of the painting, his name J.Brill, his battalion (Yorkshire) and the date of the painting (21-4-1942) . Sadly, the young soldier made the painting and was killed, two months later (on 1-7-1942) at Salloum, when he was only 22 years old . He was buried in the graveyard of Alalamain, square number 12 with his military number (4617871) . It seems from the painting of the young soldier that he was





influenced by the reputed artist of that time (Gogan) who had lived in East Asia . The room of John Brill is now visited by large numbers of tourists .

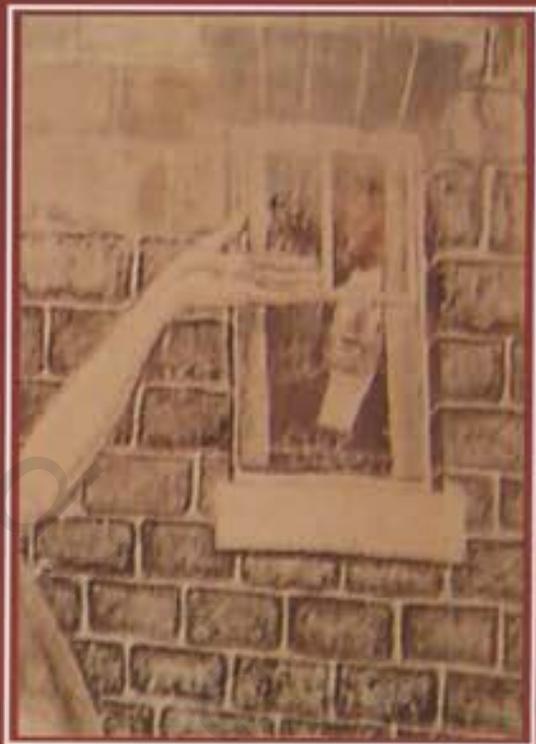
John Brill was born in Essex . His father, Frederick Brill was a cashier with a company called Silvertown . He had drawn several paintings in the Burdy region of which only this painting has remained .

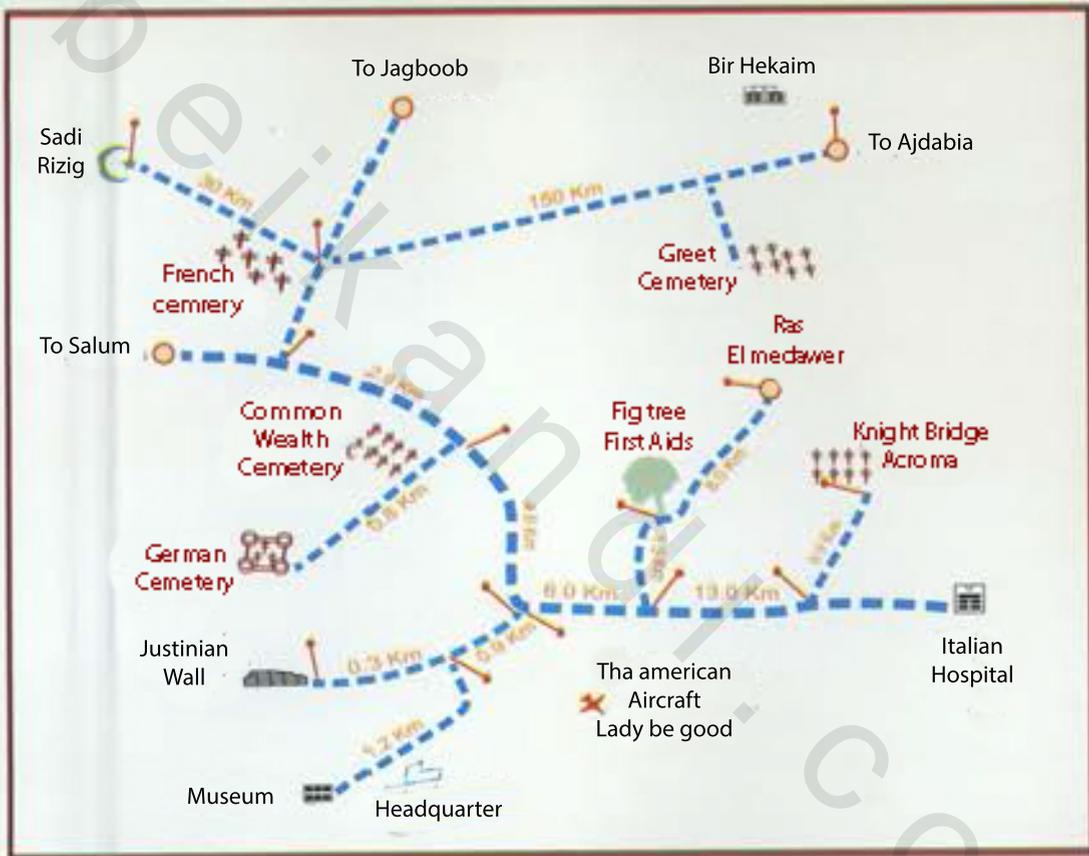
He drew other paintings on the walls of an Italian church which was destroyed during World War II . Only three of these paintings have remained.



**They are :**

- 1- A man wearing a hat and drinking wine from an overflowing cup .
- 2- Another man standing on the side of a big barrel of wine . He is drunk and staggering, with a small cup in his hand .
- 3- The third painting consists of a group of buildings surrounded on all sides by large numbers of soldiers and people . John Brill's mother said in an interview with a friend that her son had drawn lots of paintings in the region of Alburdi .





## World War II Cemeteries



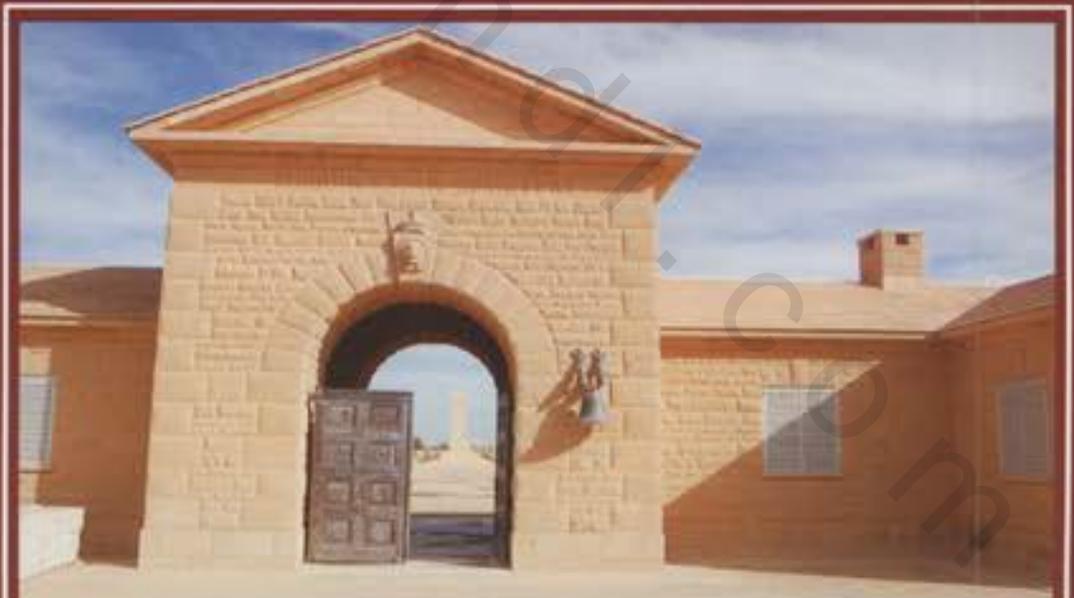
More than 17 million soldiers and 18 million civilians died in World War II . It also caused the devastation of villages, cities, towns, farms and hospitals all over the world, which had witnessed the woes of that war . In Libya, more than one and a half million soldiers of all nationalities took part in the war . More than 27 battles were fought on the Libyan soil



## Important War Cemeteries

### 1- The Cemeteries of Benghazi British Commonwealth

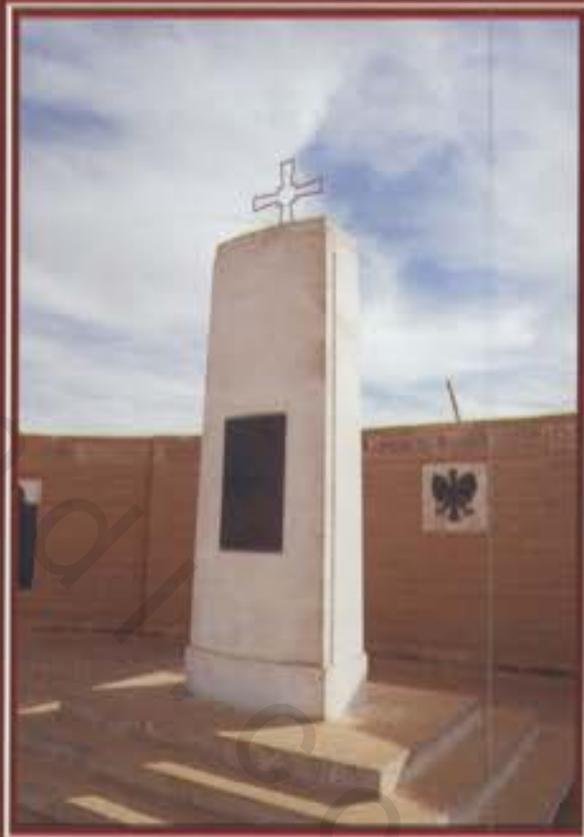
It's located in the area of Fiwaihat, in front of the Children's Hospital and is divided into two groups, one of which is military while the other is civilian . It includes the bodies of 1700 people collected from the battles fought in North Africa . It includes the grave of Captain Keyes who was killed in a suicide attack against Rommel at his house in Baidha on 17-11-1941 .





## 2- Acroma Knights Bridge

The Cemetery of Acroma or The Knights Bridge, 25 is kilometres west of Tobruq . It's one of the largest cemeteries and comprises the graves of 3649 persons belonging to 12 nationalities; but most of them are British . It has one lady nurse and more than a person with the decoration of bravery (V.C) .





### **3-The Cemetery of Tobruq**

It's 7 kilometres south of Tobruq; and has got the bodies of 2479 people of whom 750 are Australians, in addition to Poles, Newzelanders and other nationalities .





#### **4- The German Cemetery**

It's south of Topruq and looks like a two-storey fortified castle. It contains the bodies of seven thousand Germans whose names are written with mosaic letters on the inside walls.

There is a copper pot with four women in the form of angels and soldiers with no hats on their heads. The bodies of the Germans were collected from the battles on the line extending from Tripoli to Salloom under the castle.





## 5-The French Cemetery

It's located on the general road south of Tobruq, ten kilometres south of Gaghaboob . It's got the bodies of two hundred French with some Algerians and Moroccans . Most of them had been killed in the battle of Beer Hakeem on 6-6-1942 with the tenth German battalion of tanks and the battle of Sidi Rizq, south of Tobruq .





TRINIDAD MUSEUM MUSEUM  
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## 6-The Greek Cemetery

This cemetery is located off Tobruq-Ijdabia road, in the region of Muthaylam south-west of Tamemy .

These soldiers had been killed by a German plane, and they were 36 people . There are also graves of other Greeks .



## The Headquarter Room of World War II

This is an underground room north of Hureeya Quarter in Tobruq . It had been one of some old hiding places built by the Italians in World War I , This room was surrounded by four round watch towers .

Both the Axes and Allies had used it as main headquarters for the administration of war . It's not far from the Officers' Club overlooking the part where Rommel had used room 19 as residence sometimes .



The building is now called The Hotel of Jebel Akhader .

We made some excavations with the Antiquity Department in 1993 . After removing the debris of the destroyed buildings we found the following :

- 1- Three wings .
- 2- Four rooms on the upper part .
- 3- Four rooms on the eastern side .
- 4- A big hall for the leaders' meetings on the northern side .

There are ruins of panels fixed on the walls for the display of maps and other equipment to show the progress of battles and movements of troops . The place had been used as headquarters by both the Axis and Allies .



## First Aid Hospital

This famous hospital of the Australian troops is located in the area of Krome Alkhayl 20 kilometre away from Tobruq . It's in the form of a cave covered by a large fig tree . The wounded used to be evacuated to it at night so that they could be taken away from the area of battles .

Eye witnesses told us some Australian troops and officers took a branch from the fig tree and planted it in Australia where the old warriors assemble at a certain time to celebrate the day of the Australian fighter of Tobruq and pick its fruit .







Map of australia was Drawn From Stores in 1942



## Ras Almedour

It's a very high location in Tobruq . It was in fact a Roman fort . It was used by the Axis and the Allies for the control of Tobtuq . It's surrounded by barbed wire and had seen fierce engagements between the German and Australian forces .





## Barbed Wire

The barbed wires extend from the Majury Castle, south of Jaghaboob in the great Sea of Sand to the Mediterranean coast, a distance of 300 kilometres, divided into distances guarded by vehicles, troops and electric current to separate Libya from the neighboring countries .





It was one of the hateful techniques used by (Gritsiany) to stop the inflow of supplies to the Libyan Mujahedeen . It was also used to check the movements of troops in World War II . The bared wires are still intact and have become one of the landmarks of World War II in Libya .









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