

OUR DESERT PATROLS MAKE BIG CLEAN-UP

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Title: Hidden Gold.
Track: What Goes On There In My Heart.

Lines: Stagg.
Voice: Do.

Mechanised war calls for workshops, and as the Western Desert isn't provided with that sort of thing, mobile repair centres are kept on the fringe of battle operations, to put broken down lorries, guns or tanks back into service. A few versatile handy men make the best of such equipment as can be carried about, and do minor miracles in the way of repairs.

Any lorry whose engine wants an overhaul, any guns that's got something wrong with it, comes to the workshop and is soon fixed up.

This tank had trouble with its feet, a common complaint in the desert, so they soon had its boots off.

Repaired and on test ! Look out, Musso.

Desert life is made a burden by flies - big brutes that give you no peace, awake or asleep.

War on this pest was organised by an Australian officer, partly for better comfort and partly because the flies spread disease. Men of the Fly Squad bait wire-mesh traps with meat and bones, and in a short time the sun makes it so high that every fly for miles round comes to claim its share. The traps are left for four days. In the first month the squad killed a million flies - though they don't say who counted them. Anyway the troops captured even more flies than Italian prisoners, so one way and another the desert's getting quite a nice place ... Coming back on the fourth day the men kill the flies with a chemical spray.... Next time you're offered a currant-bun look at it very closely.

The end of a million ! But you should have seen the one that got away.

If the sand's hard on tanks what must it be like for your poor old feet. To keep pace with corns and blisters there's a daily foot inspection. It almost looks as if the men were taking the desert away with them. The Medical Officer makes a careful examination, and effects minor repairs on the spot, and he doesn't even wear a gas-mask. After that there's a stampede for the bathroom.

Another sidelight on cleanliness - the desert washing-day. Indian troops make excellent launderers.

(IRONING) The worst of washing for the army, one lot's no sooner out of the way than another drops in.

It doesn't take long to dry in the sun - just long enough for the boys to have a swim. Glad to see their faces haven't got sun-burnt.
