

SIDELIGHTS ON THE DESERT WAR

The age-old problem of supply and demand has had grim illustration in the western desert recently. Tanks were the commodity and once again the demand exceeded the supply. The desert battles had claimed an unusually heavy toll of armoured vehicles of all kinds. When the General Grant cruisers arrived, our men eagerly set about preparing the new tanks and went into battle with added determination. There was only one thing wrong, we didn't have enough of them to replace our losses.

In a series of screened snapshots we go with Pathe camera-man across the desert collecting evidence of the fighting which has gone before, and if you don't look out a bit of the stuff that is likely to come over when you least expect it. Fire reaches a disabled tank's ammunition, and up she goes. The aftermath of one desert engagement with long lines of Axis prisoners being brought back to the base in the midst of a dust storm and flinging themselves down in the waterholes to quench their thirst. Quite understandable, but extremely reckless. Our men escorting them drive them away. With a stomach full of that germ-laden water it's fatal. They've just got to hold on till fresh water is obtainable. That's the British way of treating prisoners.

Another silly sidelight in the Middle East brings us to a desert aerodrome to see the arrival of Red Air Force pilots on a goodwill visit to the Royal Air Force. Both R.A.F.'s are engaged on the same task so it's natural that they have much to discuss. There's nothing like a common purpose to cement friendship.