

Rommel and eisenhower

Government, Army



Complexity Within Simplicity The battle itself took the duration of a few days but was one of the most intense and fearsome battles in all of WWII. It took place in North Africa between the Allies (British + Americans) and the Axis (German+ Italian) powers. The battle was called the Battle of El Alamein and it held a high significance since it took place in Alam el Halfa, which is next to the Suez Canal that was the Allies' main means of transporting and receiving food.

This was essentially a last stand for the allies as the German-Italian forces kept advancing and conquering and showed no signs of stopping until all of Africa was under their control. However, they were stopped by the by two major generals- Eisenhower and Montgomery who led the allies to victory in North Africa. Though the battle itself was fierce, it was the military tactics and mentalities of Erwin Rommel, Dwight Eisenhower, and Bernard Montgomery that made it so interesting and complex. Bernard Montgomery was put in charge of the Eighth Army, while the main general in command for the Allies was Dwight Eisenhower.

Winston Churchill assigned them both their positions. On the 30 of August 1942, Erwin Rommel (the German Commander) attacked the Eighth Army at Alam el Halfa (" The Battle of El Alamein"). The battle consisted of mostly soldiers from Germans and Italians versus the British and the Americans. It was crucial for the Allies to hold their position at Alam el Halfa because that was where the Suez Canal was located. (The Suez Canal was the supply route for the Allies so if they lost their foothold over it, they would have lost their supplies and the last firm grasp that they had in the continent of North Africa.

Also, it would become extremely tough for them to regain after losing it and still be able to push back the Germans, "The Battle of El Alamein"). The Allies likewise followed the same strategy-to cut off the German supply route ("The Battle of El Alamein"). The Allies withstood the attack and fortified their defenses. They increased their army size and weaponry (tanks) and soon the German men were outnumbered 110,000 to 200,000 and their tanks outnumbered 500 to 1,000 ("The Battle of El Alamein"). Despite the outnumbered battalions, Rommel stood and fought.

Being a high-prestige, high ranked Field Marshall, Rommel understood how battles worked. After all, the road to his rank of Field Marshall was not easy. Rommel first took part in battle during WWI against the Italians. One of his most famous achievements was on Lucia Savogna road, in Italy. It was indeed a remarkable feat. Rommel and his men had been marching and quickly conquering their way into parts of Italy and destroying any resistance that came with it. After cutting deep into Italy, and stopping at a village named Luico, his army decided to rest briefly and let the rest of the army units and reinforcements catch up.

Then, one of the men spotted something in the distance moving towards them. Rommel told one of his men to check out the surrounding sight. After checking, he told Rommel that several resistance forces of the Italian military were on their way towards them. Rommel quickly spread this information with all of his soldiers and told them to prepare for battle. Though Rommel's men only numbered to about 150, Rommel knew he had to stand. It was a huge gamble at the time because had they lost the battle,

Rommel's campaign would've ended and the remaining reinforcements that were on their way, also would've been destroyed.

However, Rommel took the gamble, and positioned machine guns around the site of the battle, and ordered his men to shoot on his cue. After the Italian army (numbering to about 2,000 men) arrived. A messenger was sent to Rommel to reconsider his decision and stand down. However, Rommel refused to do such a thing. Soon after, Rommel blew his whistle and opened fire. Within minutes, the Italian resistance had been disintegrated and crushed. Rommel's enemy had lost their entire army to an army less than one-tenth of their size (SHOWALTER, DENNIS. "What Made Rommel ROMMEL").

Rommel's decision had been a huge gamble but being the intelligent leader that he was, he understood the importance of winning and how he needed to win the battle at any cost. During the battle of El Alamein, Rommel's army had pushed the allies to near defeat: conquering most of North Africa, then proceeding to expel the allies from Africa by cutting off their supply line from the Suez Canal, near El Alamein. Rommel's favorite attack strategy for most battles was a sort of entrapment. He would create a hollow circle with his battalions and leave the center of the circle open.

In this manner, he would fool his enemies into landing into the center, and fighting outwards. Most of Rommel's enemies figured that Rommel wouldn't suspect such an attack, but in reality, this would be Rommel's plan all along (Paris, Michael. "El Alamein, The People's Battle). After landing in the center of the circle, Rommel would encircle his enemy with his forces and crush them. Rommel had planned to use this method of entrapment against the

allies at the battle of El Alamein. However, General Montgomery and Eisenhower, the two main generals in charge of the battle of El Alamein during WWII were well aware of Rommel's strategy.

When Rommel had formed his circle to bait the allies into landing in the center, Montgomery and Eisenhower planned to put fake tanks in the center to counter-bait Rommel and fool him into thinking that there is a legitimate army force located in the center. Ike and Monty (Eisenhower and Montgomery's nicknames, Heydt, Bruce. "The General And The Field Marshal") planned on attacking the north end of the circle after Rommel command a large number of his forces to attack the fake tanks located in the center (Paris, Michael. El Alamein, The People's Battle") Sure enough, the plan had worked. After several days of fighting, Rommel's Afrika Korps were annihilated and Rommel had fled Africa, leaving his position as Field Marshall of the German Army and suddenly going on a sick leave right before the end of his campaign. (Temple, Truman "Erwin Rommel's Last Offensive In North Africa Ended With A Whimper At Medenine"). Though Eisenhower and Montgomery developed the attack plan, they greatly disliked each other.

Montgomery claimed to a reporter before a battle: "I liked Eisenhower, but I could not stand him about the place for long; his high-pitched accent, and loud talking, would drive me mad. I should say he was good probably on the political line; but he obviously knows nothing whatever about fighting" (Heydt, Bruce. "The General And The Field Marshal") He showed his disrespect throughout the war towards Eisenhower who also disliked him. On one event, Montgomery told an American reporter: "I'm sorry for coming late, but I really shouldn't have come at all. Eisenhower was infuriated by his

remark. Eisenhower remarked, "Montgomery is a skilled and successive general, but very conceited" (Heydt, Bruce. "The General And The Field Marshal") Even after the battle of El Alamein, the two refused to get along, but cooperated during the war solely for the good of their own countries. The battle of El Alamein was a huge turning point in WWII. It was the first major victory claimed by the allies who had been being continuously pushed back by the Axis during the previous battles ("The Battle of El Alamein").

Rommel, the "Desert Fox" (because of his sneaky and surprising strategies that often shocked his opponents, "The Battle of El Alamein") had proved to be a worthy opponent during the war, due to his high-caliber strategies and his intimidating, risk-taking nature. And the battle itself was consisted of major generals who could not get along but managed to pull together for the sake of the allies. El Alamein was truly a great battle, it was not simply just about which side had the greater number of arms and men, but more about matching and complying with the strategy and mentality of the opponent.