



NATO TANK?

A Centurion on the Hohne ranges shows how, when in difficulties, it can surround itself with a smoke screen. Smoke bombs from the ejectors visible on right of turret are seen exploding.

THESE striking photographs of Centurions of 11th Armoured Division were taken on the Hohne ranges in Germany.

A plan is reported to be under consideration to make the Centurion the No. 1 tank for European armies, under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

Battle-tested in Korea, Arctic-tested in Canada, desert-tested in Egypt, the Centurion is now being tropic-tested in a Pacific isle.

The optical equipment of the gun is so good that "you do not just see the target, you see the enemy scratching his ear" — to quote an officer of the 8th Hussars. The 20-pounder gun keeps itself aimed steadily at the target even when the tank is in motion. Thanks to its stabiliser (the existence of which was long kept secret), a Centurion in motion can confidently lob shells over the heads of forward Infantry — a risky feat when attempted by moving tanks during the late war. The gun control equipment costs £1600, and the actual gadget that works the stabiliser only £100. Two initial snags of the Centurion — limited mileage and lack of a Besa gun on the turret — have now been overcome. An auxiliary fuel tank is seen on the tank illustrated at the top of this page. Centurions are built in Leeds. They cost the taxpayer £38,000 each.

Two-dimensional war: an Auster "poses" over a row of tanks poised on a ridge during exercises.



PAGE 12



Above: Here you can count some of the 56 Infantrymen a Centurion can carry on its back — and there's still room for one or two more. Below: A tastefully camouflaged Centurion tops a ridge. Right: Troopers of 5th Royal Tank Regiment load 20-pounder rounds into their tank. The gun is a weapon of uncanny precision.

