

Story not yet Told in Rome

Italian Debate's Result Likely Far-Reaching; Morale Is Low

By KIRK L. SIMPSON
Steel-shod jaws of a carefully prepared British trap have sprung shut to bite off the head of Italy's boasted army of attack in Egypt, and Rome is now awash with tidings of disaster.

A grim story of defeat, more crushing perhaps in its potential effect upon the course of the British-led war than the Greek rout of Italian invading hosts, awaits official telling in Italy. It will tell rigorously of the Italian's boast that his war bulletins to his people are "documentations of truth."

British estimates of the number of prisoners taken are soaring into tens of thousands figures. Each new Cairo bulletin steps up the aggregate. Prime Minister Churchill prepared parliament for announcement that three or more Italian divisions had been swiftly gobbled.

Fourth of Army Gone
That would mean substantially a sixth at least of Marshal Graziani's once powerful striking force. Add in probable Italian casualties and stragglers and a quarter or more of his entire army seems to have been put out of action in four days.

Authoritative figures on Graziani's full strength are lacking. It has been estimated at from 150,000 to 250,000 men all told. The cream of it unquestionably was posted at the now lost Sidi Barrani spearhead and has been destroyed.

Those divisions were the cutting edge of the Italian thrust at the Suez canal. They were shock troops, native and Italian. Their loss is irreparable because replacements cannot be sent from Italy to Africa through Britain's tightened Mediterranean blockade.

It looks hopeless
Prolonged lunge by the victory-flashed British and their "free French" allies seems impossible. The Italian retreat route probably is badly cluttered by wreckage of the shattered advance army and its supporting service. To bring up fresh shock divisions against that morale-breaking situation and under fire of British bombers and long range naval guns would be difficult, even if Graziani has such fighting units to call upon.

It is probable that the British could have brought an overwhelming superiority in numbers into action. What seems far more likely is that the Italian army in Egypt was touched with the same apathy that obviously marked the fascists in Albania.

As reflections of public war morale, the Italian disasters in Albania and Egypt could be of more importance than can be measured by military yardsticks. They could mean the beginning of the end for Mussolini, if not Hitler.

Portland Physician Is

Suicide; Father of 4

PORTLAND, Dec. 12—(P)—Dr. Edwin P. Fagan, 38, committed suicide in his home here today, Gideon Snook, deputy coroner, said.

The body was found with a rifle lying beside it. Dr. Fagan suffered a nervous breakdown recently. Four children survive.

Greek Version of War Movements



Athens reports that Italians are falling back for a possible new stand in heights around Chirmare (1), almost half way up the Albanian coast from Porto Edda to Valona. A Greek spokesman said Italians also were withdrawing north of Argirocastro and London reports said Greeks had taken Kodre (2). Shows hampered operations on the northern front (3). Greeks said their penetration (slant shading) of Albania now is almost twice as deep at both flanks as maximum Italian. Thrusts into Greece several weeks ago. Black areas indicate direction and location of the Italian thrusts, which never have been exactly defined.—AP Telemat.

Seattle Unions Reject Proposal

SEATTLE, Dec. 12—(P)—Rejection by Seattle local 1-19, international longshoremen's and warehousemen's union, of the proposed new west coast waterfront agreement negotiated by a committee headed by President Harry Bridges, was announced today by Elmer Johnson, local secretary.

He said it was rejected by 42 votes, 606 to 564. San Francisco and Portland locals previously approved the proposal, which is to be determined by a coastwide count.

The local also rejected by a 519-539 vote a proposal, approved by the last longshoremen's convention at North Bend, Ore., for arbitration of port grievances by districts instead of by ports.

West Importance To Defense Cited

WASHINGTON, Dec. 12—(P)—John C. Page, reclamation commissioner, said in his annual report to Secretary Ickes today that this country must depend on the western states for strategic minerals in event of a prolonged national emergency.

Electric power to produce these materials, he said, would be produced at Boulder, Grand Coulee and Shasta dams.

Page said that a new supply of irrigation water had been made available during the last year to more than 100,000 acres of western lands. Drought refugees and other farmers were offered homestead opportunities on 23,000 acres of farm land, he said.

He estimated that the reclamation program, when completed, would provide water for about 3,500,000 acres of land in established farming and industrial communities which he said were in dire need of additional water supply.

Woman Slays 3 Children, Fresno

Father out of Town as Mother Strangles 2 Girls, Boy

FRESNO, Calif., Dec. 12—(P)—A traveling salesman's wife killed her three children in their beds here sometime during last night but, the police report today added, she apparently acted in the torturing mental fog of a nervous breakdown.

The children—Veryl Ann Edwards, 9 years; Donald Ralston Edwards, 6 years; and Susan Edwards, 11 months—were found dead in the modest cottage across the street from State college by a woman who helped care for them.

Mrs. Lillian Edwards, about 35, the mother, who police said bore wounds which may have been inflicted in a suicide attempt, was placed under observation in the Fresno county hospital.

Coroner J. N. Lisle reported preliminary examinations indicated the children were strangled with bed sheets but that autopsies would be performed, probably tomorrow, to determine if they had been poisoned.

The father, Kenneth N. Edwards, traveling out of here for an electric supply corporation, was notified at Visalia and returned here but was too shocked to discuss the tragedy.

Notice of Christmas Leave Welcome To Salem Guardsmen, Camp Clatsop; Skeleton Crew to Remain for Duty

CAMP CLATSOP, Dec. 10.—Troops of this post recently received a welcome announcement from Col. Clifton M. Irwin, commanding the 249th CA, to the effect that the authorized leave period for the holiday vacation would be from noon, December 21, to reveille, 6:10 a. m., January 2.

The announcement came as a surprise to most of the sited in from other army posts. The leave period is the standard authorized for all posts of the fourth army, with the exception of national guard units which have been inducted since November 1. These units are held to a shorter period.

100 to Remain in Camp
Only enough men to maintain fatigue, guard and administration details will be required to remain in camp for the period. Many battery commanders have made arrangements for men to remain the first half of the period and others to remain the last half.

Approximately 100 men will remain in camp. In most cases volunteers and men guilty of slight misdemeanors have made up the quota, and the rest are stepping lightly so as to not lose their leave privileges.

Epidemic Is Down
The epidemic of minor influenza has subsided to the extent that the post is once more resuming its normal schedules. The majority of the patients are confined to their quarters where they are under the observation of the medical detachment.

Promotions Noted
Private First Class Robert E. Boatwright and Private Gordon

Control Restored, Liquor in Reserve

State May now Collect Tax at Ft. Stevens; License Revoked

PORTLAND, Dec. 12—(P)—Restoration by congress of the Oregon state liquor commission's control in military reservations after January 1 was announced today by Robert O. Boyd, commission attorney.

After this date the commission will be able to collect privilege taxes on beer and wine sold at Fort Stevens.

The commission, at its regular meeting, revoked the beer license of Mrs. Rose Birbaum, Hebo, because her tavern was "noisy and disorderly," the order said; and suspended the retail and package beer licenses of Loren L. McCallum, John Day, for selling beer to a minor.

PORTLAND, Dec. 12—(P)—The state liquor control commission refused today to modify a recent ruling which barred tassels, drinking glasses and other objects from wine bottles.

Lloyd Wentworth, chairman, said the regulation prevented price wars in which rebates in the form of ornaments, and drinking glasses would be offered.

James De Shazor, manager of a wine company, protested that the ruling harmed his business. He also attacked the tax structure on wines and a regulation limit-

ing alcoholic content to 14 per cent.



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