

BRITISH SINK 5 TO 8 ITALIAN WARSHIPS

Hint Fascists Fired on Own
Vessels; 3000 Dead;
British Unhurt.

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taken completely by surprise in the almost Stygian darkness of a moonless night.

Reconnaissance planes had sighted the elusive Italian cruisers off the southeast coast of Sicily at the entrance to the Ionian, where Greek and Roman galleys used to fight, last Thursday morning.

Friday morning destroyers sighted the battleship southwest of Crete, to the east. Reconnaissance planes flashed word that two battleships, cruisers and destroyers had been sighted farther north, going east.

Grecks Race to Help

The Italians turned and fled westward.

The British fleet raced in pursuit and ships of the little Greek Navy, advised of the prospect of a fight, at once proceeded at full steam to battle positions.

Throughout the day, British torpedo planes from the new aircraft carrier Formidable attacked the battleship as it fled, hitting it at least three times, and lowering its speed from 30 knots to 15. R. A. F. bombing planes arrived and joined in a general attack on Italian cruisers and destroyers.

The loss of speed to the Italian ships was such that shortly after 9 p.m. the heavy British fleet units arrived within range.

One Broadside Is Enough

Three Italian cruisers appeared off the British fleet's starboard bow.

The flagship, the great 30,000-ton Warspite with eight 15-inch guns, opened fire with a complete broadside.

It reduced the crack 10,000-ton Italian cruiser Fiume to a floating hell with this first salvo.

Two other Italian cruisers, the Pola and the Zara, appeared at the same time.

Warspite, its sister ship Valiant, and the 31,000-ton battleship Barham opened their full gunpower against them. They met the fate of the Fiume.

Battleship Is Damaged

British destroyers, racing in to finish the job, sank two Italian destroyers, the Vincenzo Gioberti and the Maestrale.

The captain of the destroyer Havo, which went in to finish off the Italian cruisers set afire by the 15-inch gun broadsides, radioed Admiral Cunningham, the commander-in-chief:

"I am hanging on to the stern of the Pola. Shall I board her or blow her stern off with depth charges?"

Sir Andrew's reply was not disclosed—but the Pola was sunk.



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Mystery Grows



Lockwood McCoy

Lee Roy McDonald

HANGING, FIRE STILL UNSOLVED

Words of Delirious Man
Recorded; Dead Man's Kin
Scarf at Suicide.

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Donald, who has not regained consciousness. They asked St. Vincent's Hospital nurses attending him to record every word muttered during his delirium.

Besides the unblemished personal records of the two men, two other factors shroud the case with mystery. One is that detectives have been unable to match the "ld" which apparently was used to strike McDonald with any apparatus in the Polk plant. Another is the fact that McCoy was found hanging from a nail that was only five feet eight inches off the floor, while the dead man was nearly six feet tall and weighed 195 pounds.

The tragedy was discovered shortly after 10 p.m. yesterday when officers called to the second floor of the company's garage at 1100 E. 15th St. While they were fighting the blaze, one of the firemen went to the second floor paint shop to open windows. He found McDonald, who was in charge of the paint department, on the floor by his desk with some canvas folded under his head.

Meanwhile, Norman Marsh, 27, of 1640 N. Somerset Ave., returned to the Prolac department from lunch and saw McCoy's arm protruding from a little-used closet. He cut McCoy down, but McCoy was dead when police arrived.

Reports from British airmen indicated that the Vittorio may have sunk before reaching port. It was last seen badly down at the stern. Air reconnaissance Saturday of the area in which the Vittorio was last seen showed several hundred men clinging to life rafts or floating on life belts.

26 Ships in Fleet

There were at least three Italian battleships, nine cruisers and 14 destroyers in the entire fleet.

It was believed that the three cruisers known to have been sunk did not see the British fleet until the 15-inch shells struck them. They fired but a few shots which seemed to be fired at random and had no effect whatsoever.

The chief gunnery officer of the Warspite said, however, that the Italian destroyers had fired torpedoes at his ship but had missed.

There was no doubt that the ships claimed by Britain were really sunk. Survivors have been picked up from all of them.

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That would be a dangerous proceeding in waters so close to Greece where it should have been assumed British ships would be in force, as long as troops and supplies are moving into Greek ports. Nevertheless, it is difficult to find any other reason for the strange division of the Italian Fleet.

The consequence of the British victory has been to cripple the Italian Navy so severely that the British can either lessen their Mediterranean naval strength or else divide it more effectively. They can detach some ships for Atlantic convoy service or they can increase their watchfulness between Italy and Tripoli against the transport of German troops and supplies.

The effect of the battle on Jugo-Serb opinion may well be considerably at this time when the Serbs are trying to persuade the Croats to accept a unified policy. Admiral Darlan cannot fail to be impressed by the display of British Mediterranean power in considering Anglo-French naval relations.

At the same time, Yosuke Matsukawa, Japanese Foreign Minister, will have much to think about when he reaches Rome tonight and receives the news of British naval efficiency. His meeting with Mussolini can scarcely take place under circumstances less likely to impress the shrewd Japanese statesman with much remaining Axis strength in the Mediterranean.

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JUGOSLAVS ASK NO-WAR TREATY

Eden Arrives at Athens as
Balkan Showdown Nears;
Dire Dawe Taken.

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Jugoslav coup d'état and the British naval victory was increasing.

There was no attempt in Berlin to conceal the rapid deterioration of relations between Germany and Yugoslavia and all German citizens — between 16,000 and 20,000 — had been ordered to leave Yugoslavia immediately.

All schools in Yugoslavia were ordered closed.

In Africa a British column was pounding along the railroad toward Addis Ababa, capital of Ethiopia, after the Italians abandoned Dire Dawe without a fight. Another column was pressing toward Asmara, capital of Eritrea and chances seemed good that all Mussolini's East African empire would be in British hands before the heavy spring rains start.

Rome, however, said that there was an "epic battle" under way in Eritrea and that both sides had already suffered heavy losses.

Full scope of the British naval success against Italy became apparent only today when fuller accounts were given by the Admiralty and the Italian high command confirmed a major portion of the losses claimed by London.

Rome Admits Losses

British sources gave this recapitulation of Italy's sea losses:

Three 10,000-ton eight-inch gun cruisers, the Flume, Pola and Zara sunk; two destroyers, the 1729-ton Vincenzo Gioberti and the 1449-ton Maestrale sunk; a 35,000-ton Littorio class battleship seriously damaged by torpedoes; the 5069-ton six-inch gun cruiser, Giovanni Delle Bande Nere possibly sunk; another destroyer, possibly the Vittorio Alfieri, a sister ship of the Gioberti, probably sunk.

The British said they suffered not a scratch to their ships or men except for probable loss of two air-planes.

The Rome communiqué admitted loss of three cruisers and two destroyers and said it was believed that a heavy British cruiser was sunk and possibly two other cruisers damaged.

The Royal Air Force pounded hard at the French invasion coast during the night, centering attack upon Brest, where it was said in London the 26,000-ton German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau now are harbored. The British did not claim hits on the two powerful Nazi sea raiders but said that bombs exploded around them. At Le Havre five hits were claimed on two German tankers, which were said to be afire and sinking.

French, British Clash

In a second Mediterranean action the British and French had a brush over a French convoy which a light British naval force tried to intercept between Nermours and Oran on the Algerian Coast. The British warships drew off when French shore batteries fired on them and the *West Goliath* today discharged a sharp protest to London.

The British charged that one of the French ships had a cargo of rubber which it was feared was destined for Germany.

The Franco-British brush was not in itself important but in the light of the shattering blow to the Italian fleet it was assumed that German pressure to obtain the use of France's fleet to restore the balance of sea power in the Mediterranean was likely to be increased sharply.

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