

NAZI 7-DAY RATION MEN BEAT BRITISH

New Type of Picked Soldiers—Told to Stay at Post Until Dead or Victorious—Wins Battle of Hell Fire Pass—But Most Die in Fight.

By RICHARD D. McMillan
United Press Staff Correspondent

WITH THE BRITISH IMPERIAL ARMY IN THE LIBYAN DESERT, June 19: 5 p. m. (Delayed: via Cairo and London).—Germans have held the Hell Fire Pass on the Egyptian-Libyan frontier in a four-day battle against a British steam-roller offensive.

It was a battle in which both sides had for enemies, aside from each other, roasting heat and searing sand; a desert wind which cuts like a whip-lash and leaves raw sores; the blinding, interminable glare of the desert; flies, thirst, the stench of rotten, molten earth under trudging feet.

The Germans have held the pass with a new type of soldier, whom the Imperial troops call a seven-day-ration man—a man who is put at a fixed post by himself, with rations for one week, and told to stay there until his side has won or he is dead.

These men are a new German contribution to military science. They are recruited as picked men in the same way parachute troops and Stuka dive bomber "suicide" pilots are picked. They are crack machine-gunners who are placed in nests at vital spots in the desert on a seven-day trick.

I watched them all during the raging battle of Hell Fire Pass, using all types of machine guns and the cold-fire one-pounder guns of the navy pom-pom type.

Their guns roared in the moonlit desert night like the pulsing of a great African native war drum.

Almost Broke Through

I watched British Tommies and troops from the hill country of India advance on these men with the bayonet, under an intense barrage by British artillery batteries; climbing the dusty crevices into the pass under a pall of snuff-colored desert dust mixed with the grayish-black smoke of bursting shells. It looked at times as if the whole front of the steep escarpment was a wall of twisting, spouting fire.

The Indians, seasoned in fighting on the Northwest frontier, were especially adept in hopping and scambling from boulder to boulder.

They and the British made two big attacks with the bayonet. They killed many Germans who were holding the machine gun nests, and they almost forced through. But there were too many of the "seven-day" men. The Germans had manned every inaccessible cleft in the rocks, it appeared. Their losses were frightful, but they held the pass.

There was a magnificent spectacle at night when the Germans signaled their rear lines. They are equipped with signal rockets. Each day, as the molten sun sank and the stars came out, the sky was ablaze with vari-colored lights as the "seven-day" men began their signaling.

It was evident that, like the parachute troops, they had signals to say that all was well or that help was urgently needed at a given point.

It was evident also that the signals were answered. After the first big attack, the Germans started sending up reinforcements as soon as dark permitted, and when the Britons and the Indians made the second attack, they found a new, strong force against them.

Ft. Capuzzo in Ruins

During the second attack nearly every one of the "seven-day" men was wiped out. The Empire bayonet troops went up the escarpment and through the new German blockhouses strung in a snake-like line along the front. But that night, again, the Nazis replaced their dead with new "seven-day" men of the Afrika Korps.

This battle showed that the Germans had landed strong mechanized units in Italian Africa.

The "seven-day" men fought and died and were replaced in countless positions between the gleaming white mass of rubble that had been Italy's Ft. Capuzzo, an artillerist's plain below. Every time the Imperial forces mopped them up, they found more of them the next morning established in new posts in ravines, among rocks, and behind piles of rubble in the desert.

Thermometer at 120

It is difficult to make it plain just what the Imperial—and German—troops went through in this battle. Even the desert snakes and lizards seemed torpid because of the heat, but the soldiers sweated under their thin hats and carried all on.

Heat? You pick up a rifle and the barrel burns like a poker fresh from the fire. Thirst? You try to



To West Point

INVOCATE CENSORSHIP AT ATLANTIC BASES

WASHINGTON, June 20 (U. P.)—The Army and Navy, for the first time in the present emergency, have invoked compulsory censorship. At present it affects only mails passing to and from the eight Atlantic bases leased from Great Britain.

The War Department said no censorship will be ordered within the continental limits of the United States and explained that the present move was an alternative to censorship of mail by the British at the bases.

Army officers will censor both incoming and outgoing mail and Naval officers will perform the same function at Naval bases.

STRAUSS
SAYS:

Today's War Moves

By United Press War Experts
Despite the suspicion in London that the much-advertised tension between Germany and Russia is a smoke screen designed to conceal some German move elsewhere, the possibility of a conflict between the Reich and the Soviet Union cannot be overlooked.

The two countries are natural enemies. The mere signing of a pact of friendship for the sake of Hitler's inherent not have erased Hitler's inherent enemy to Bolshevism so clearly set forth in "Mein Kampf."

Stalin knows this. Hitler may be pulling a gigantic bluff to extort concessions from Russia in the way of raw materials, but if he asks too much, there can be little doubt that Russia would resist any attempt at armed force. While the British while he concentrates his resources on an invasion of vast Russia.

less realizes that Hitler cannot pull his air forces out of Western Europe and abandon the field to the British while he concentrates his resources on an invasion of vast Russia.

An announcement in the Soviet

Red Army, large as it is, is scarcely a match for Hitler's efficient mechanized forces. Stalin doubt-

organized for special service and undergoing exercises to get in fighting trim.

The Red Star said further that large bodies of troops are doing forced marches across swamp land. The latter reference suggests the key to Russian defense plans.

Marsches and lake country constitute a considerable part of Russia's long European frontier.

The territorial acquisitions which Russia has made since the start of the war would seem less designed for material benefits, than to establish outposts into Europe for defense of Russia proper.

The Russians learned a costly lesson in 1914 when they invaded East Prussia. They found out how defensible lake country is. Their legions were trapped and slaughtered by Hindenburg in the Tann-

nenberg region in four terrible days from Aug. 26 to Aug. 30. Two Russian corps were annihilated and three others cut in half.

Russia had another valuable lesson in the invasion of Finland. The Russians probably went into Finland to safeguard that possible German gateway to Leningrad. They took under their wing Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as a barrier along the Baltic coast and East Prussia.

They took the profitless slice of Eastern Poland not for material gain but because it consists mostly of the vast Pines Marshes, extending into Russia and presenting a formidable barrier to an invader.

Thus it can be seen that Russia has set up a continuous outer defense area from the Gulf of Finland to the Black Sea. Invasion would be possible but difficult.

STORE HOURS SATURDAY 9 A. M. TILL 6 P. M.

VICHY BATTLES FOR DAMASCUS

Allies Enter Suburbs, Try To Capture 'Street Called Straight.'

LONDON, June 20 (U. P.)—Vichy troops are resisting fiercely Allied forces which have penetrated the garden suburbs of ancient Damascus and are trying to fight their way through to the famous "Street Called Straight" which bisects the town, dispatches said today.

Indian troops had forced their way into the Mezze Airport section west and southwest of Damascus. A Free French force on the south, which had advanced up the railroad, was believed to be taking the brunt of Vichy resistance. A third force was approaching the city from the east.

The Vichy commanders were reported to have thrown a heavy force of tanks and armored cars against the Free French, including Circassians who had escaped Syria to Palestine, and seemed determined that if anybody took Damascus it would not be the Free French forces.

Confidence was increasing here that the fall of Damascus was near at last, and that the capture of Beirut and the collapse of Vichy resistance was in sight.

Beirut News Inadequate

Capture of Damascus would put the Allies in command of the central railroad junction and of most arterial roads.

News from the Beirut area on the coast was scant. Some reports said that Australian patrols were still about 12 miles south of the city; orders that Allied artillery was within shelling distance.

A column which had advanced between Beirut and Damascus was believed to be making progress and was expected to swing westward in an attempt to trap the defenders of Beirut.

Not Too Hot for Tea

That was true. At least one Tommy in every company takes advantage of a lull in the fighting to light a fire, boil some brackish, tar-tainted water and brew some "char" black, scalding tea.

Another strange sight was the Germans trudging back as prisoners, emerging suddenly from the smoke in No Man's Land while the planes roared in the dazzling sky.

All the fighting troops captured were Germans. But some of the Imperials got back to the second line, where they took some Italian prisoners.

It appeared that the entire area of Solum, Hell Fire Pass and Ft. Capuzzo is held by Germans. They

were mostly clerks, shop assistants, bus drivers, insurance agents and so forth, a year ago. They live and march under terrible conditions for months on end without complaint, and even with a laugh.

A fellow correspondent said to me:

"A strange thing about the British in even a desert and in the middle of a battle they still manage to make their cup of afternoon tea."

OFFICIAL WEATHER

U. S. Weather Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS' FORECAST—Fair and continued warm through tomorrow and Sunday; temperature this afternoon about 90°.

Sunrise 4:16 | Sunset 7:17

TEMPERATURE
—June 20, 1940—

6 a. m. 60 1 p. m. 71

BAROMETER
6:30 a. m. 30.20

Precipitation 24 hrs. ending 6 a. m. 00

Total precipitation since Jan. 1 13.16

Deficiency since Jan. 1 5.47

MIDWEST WEATHER

Indiana—Fair and continued warm this afternoon and through tomorrow and Sunday.

Illinois—Fair and continued warm this afternoon and through tomorrow and Sunday.

Ohio—Fair and slightly warmer tonight; tomorrow increasing cloudiness followed by scattered showers in west portion at night.

WEATHER IN OTHER CITIES, 6:30 A. M.

St. Louis 60 80 | Weather 65

Amarillo, Tex. Clear 20.88 65

Bismarck, N. D. Clear 26.91 60

Boise, Idaho Clear 30.97 70

Chicago Clear 30.18 70

Cincinnati Fog 30.24 64

Colorado Springs Fog 30.24 67

Denver Clear 29.80 57

Odessa, Tex. Clear 29.84 68

Omaha, Neb. Clear 29.84 67

Portland, Ore. Clear 30.11 72

Los Angeles Cloudy 29.94 62

Montgomery, Ala. Clear 29.92 68

Mobile, Ala. Clear 30.15 74

New Orleans Fog 30.15 72

New York Clear 30.17 77

Okla. City, Okla. Fog 30.00 71

Pittsburgh Fog 30.26 68

San Antonio, Tex. Cloudy 29.99 74

Seattle Fog 30.12 65

St. Louis Clear 30.13 70

Tampa, Fla. Fog 30.11 75

Washington, D. C. Fog 30.23

Wichita, Kan. Fog 30.23

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MEETINGS TODAY

Indian Motor Club, 10:30 a. m. and 2 p. m.

Indiana Stamp Club, Hotel Anders, 8 p. m.

United Service Organizations Committee, noon, Claypool Hotel.

Indiana Builders Association, 8 p. m., Indianapolis Athletic Club.

National Office Management Association, 8 p. m., Hotel Indiana.

Indiana Optical Co., 8 p. m., Hotel Sevier.

MEETINGS TOMORROW

St. John's Class of 1915, 2 p. m. and 6 p. m.

Lint-O-Scribe meeting, 8 a. m., Hotel Sevier.

Employment Services, 8 a. m., Hotel Sevier.