

# ITALIAN NAVAL SQUADRON SMASHED IN 20 MINUTES

By J. H. YINDRICH

United Press Staff Correspondent

IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, Dec. 13 (Delayed).—Four Allied destroyers, churning a foaming wake in a sea, steamed at more than 40 miles an hour into a dimly outlined battle fleet under a moonless blue black sky at 2:30 a. m. today.

Twenty minutes later, their speed unslackened, they steamed away, without a scratch, leaving one 5000-ton Italian cruiser blazing, another sinking, its back broken; a torpedo boat crippled and a motor torpedo boat blown to pieces.

Aboard this Netherlands destroyer of the Allied Mediterranean fleet, named for one of the Dutch Navy men who were the terror of the English fleet of King Charles II in the 17th century, I saw the fight, if fight it can be called, perhaps the swiftest, and the deadliest considering the elapsed time, of the naval phase of the war.

OUTNUMBERED, outraged, the British destroyers Legion, Maori and Sikh and this Netherlands destroyer Isaac Sweers spotted two cruisers of an Italian fleet steaming slowly toward the east in darkness.

The cruisers were protected by a formidable fleet of destroyers and motor torpedo boats.

The cruisers turned, and steamed slowly westward, not far from the Italian island of Pantelleria, off the Tunisia Coast, which was to have been a second Malta.

Quickly the Allied destroyers stepped up their speed. At well over 40 miles, they slipped between the cruisers and the shore. Apparently they were not seen at all until the Sikh loosed two torpedoes at the first cruiser and opened fire with its 4.7-inch guns.

It looked as the torpedoes hit the cruiser's fuel tanks or its magazine because it burst into flames amidships at once.

The Legion loosed two torpedoes and, like the Sikh, opened fire with its guns, at the second cruiser.

THE CRUISER, its back apparently broken, began to settle in the sea.

The Maori and the Isaac Sweers, following, opened their guns on the first cruiser.

As we raced along I saw a mass of flame shoot 200 feet up like a gigantic mushroom. A canopy of thick smoke, apparently from blazing oil, billowed above us.

Our rear gun barked, as I crouched behind a gun shield. Our ship lurched and swerved, still at more than 40 miles.

A dark shape loomed out of the blackness to port, 100 yards away, racing toward us.

"Italian destroyer!" yelled an officer.

I thought we were going to be rammed. But a terrific swerve, which nearly threw me into the sea, carried us clear. Not, however, before a dark-haired Dutchman, who looked like a film star, had fired a torpedo which missed the Italian destroyer by about five feet, and our guns had scored four hits on the Italian's bridge.

"WE HIT her four times all right, but I am not sure she's sunk,"

the gunnery officer commented.

The engagement was fought at about 2000 yards range, but the Legion went so close to one Italian motor torpedo boat that the Legion's crew, manning their pom-pom anti-aircraft machine guns, were unable to train them down on it until it got well past.

Then the guns blew the Italian boat out of the water. Crew and pieces of the boat went into the air as the boat disintegrated under concentrated fire from those four-barreled guns which are the dread of dive bombers.

A nearby torpedo boat was severely damaged by machine gun fire.

As the Isaac Sweers raced away, last in line of the four Allied ships, the first cruiser was still flaming fiercely. We could see it until we passed over the horizon.

The attack had ended and we were away before the Italian motor torpedo boats had had time to fire a torpedo.

## GERMAN FLIGHT JAMS HIGHWAYS

Tens of Thousands Facing Trap in 'Napoleon Sector' West of Moscow.

MOSCOW, Dec. 20 (U. P.).—The entire German Central Army is rolling back on the front west of Moscow, leaving picked sub-machine gunners to fight rear guard actions in a desperate attempt to impede the Russians who now threaten to trap tens of thousands with tank and cavalry flank attacks, dispatches said today.

Red Army men and transports are advancing through hundreds of liberated villages over the entire Moscow front and Russian reconnaissance planes report that highways and secondary roads in the Moshalsk sector, along Napoleon's tragic Warsaw road, are congested with fleeing German tanks, armored cars, trucks and infantry columns.

Russian armies on the northern and southern flanks had forced the Germans back until their entire center was in peril.

Ruza Stormed

It was evident, dispatches said, that as the northern German flank, retreating from Kalinin northwest of Moscow, had come into line with the Central Army in a general northwest-southeast direction, the German High Command had finally given the order for a general retreat.

Russian troops had stormed Ruza, 54 miles west of Moscow, and 14 miles from Moshalsk, and it was believed here that the thousands of Germans in the Ruza garrison had been trapped.

To the north, between Moshalsk and Volokolamsk, big Russian cavalry units had charged through the German lines and were reported turning a retreat into a rout.

Flee Into Woods

Remnants of the broken German 126th Infantry Division were reported to have fled into the woods in this sector, where those who lived to surrender would be the lucky ones.

To the north, toward Kalinin, one division of the German 29th Army Corps was reported fleeing in scattered knots.

The Soviet Information Bureau reported that remnants of the German Army in the Tula area, south of Moscow, were throwing in even their engineers, signalmen and motor repairmen in a vain attempt to stem the Russian advance.

A correspondent of Pravda said that many enemy officers and soldiers in this sector are "voluntarily" surrendering.

"An officer named Kikulaus lies deserted to the Russian lines near Dubina and said that the Germans had suffered a devastating blow on the Moscow front," Pravda reported.

Many Nazis Fear Defeat

"He said many officers and soldiers now believed that the war would end unfavorably for Germany."

A German radio broadcast, heard by National Broadcasting Co., said that the retirement "along the entire Eastern Front" is to establish efficient new battle lines. A Finnish communiqué said that the Russians were attacking in the north but had been "thrown back."

A Red communiqué said that in the one week up to Wednesday the Russians in their offensive had captured eight undamaged German planes, 319 tanks, 48 armored cars, 484 field guns, 231 mine throwers, 659 heavy machine guns, 1093 automatic rifles, 3729 trucks and 440 motorcycles.

CALL TOWNSENDITES TO AID IN DEFENSE

Indiana Townsend Club members will be registered next week, in the national effort, it was announced today by B. J. Brown, national representative here of the pension movement.

A 14-member committee, headed by Walter Bossert of Liberty, is working out the program which will make an estimated 150,000 members available for whatever work the Government desires.

"No person is too old to serve in some capacity," Mr. Bossert said. "We will register and classify all over 44 years of age. Should a shortage of farm labor, mechanics, nurses or any other service arise, we will be able to supply thousands who have retired but are anxious to do their part, releasing younger men for service."

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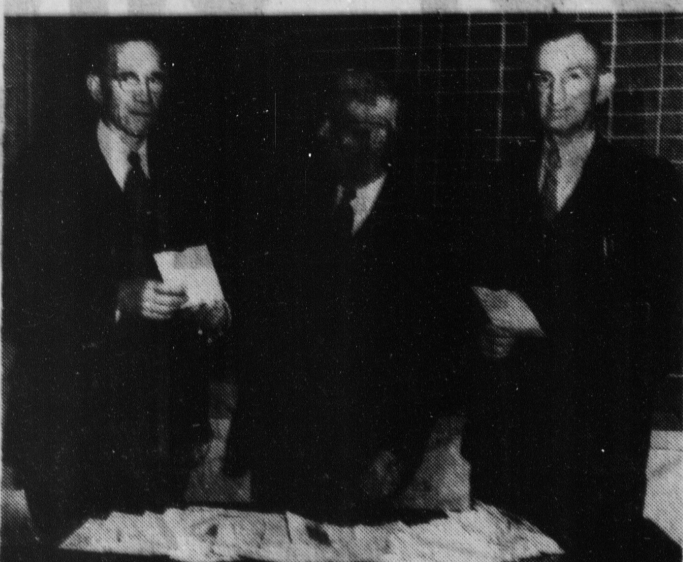
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## Bonds Given as Bonuses



C. H. Wallerich (center) presents a bonus to H. L. Ware (left) and G. C. Hamilton, the two oldest employees of the Wallerich Co.

Defense bonds were plentiful at a party last night at the C. H. Wallerich Co., 950 N. Meridian St., when the 81 employees shared \$14,000 worth of the bonds, given to them as a Christmas bonus.

C. H. Wallerich, president of the Chrysler and Plymouth distributing firm, made the presentation following a talk by Russell W. McDermott, chairman of the Indianapolis and Marion County defense bond committee. Present also was George A. Saks, publicity chairman for the committee.

Among those receiving bonuses were H. L. Ware, company secretary, who has served continuously since 1921, and G. C. Hamilton, who first worked for the firm in 1918.

What every thinking person in England wants to know today is why the British have not won so grievously wrong about Hongkong and whether it is just as wrong about other places of even greater strategic importance.

What I prove to be a very serious national inquiry into the Government's handling of the whole situation has already been started in a sober way by the London Times.

Wrong Impression Charged

Referring to Hongkong today, it admits that "its dangerous and exposed positions was well understood" but cites the damning fact that "recent reports, official, semi-official and non-official, emphasized the strength of the fortress and the thoroughness with which its defense had been prepared."

The impression was given, it continues, "that it was capable of holding out for months against any force which the Japanese could bring against it."

"The loss of the island after so brief, though gallant, a resistance" is bound to give fresh impetus to the well justified demand of the dominions to be given a more adequate share in determining policy and strategy.

MANUFACTURERS complain Army and Navy are slow pay; many have to come to Washington to collect. Services say manufacturers must do papers improperly. Both sides working on the problem.

ADD NIGHTMARES Add SMALL-BUSINESS nightmares: Fear of losing employees if temporary shutdowns result from material shortages or slow conversion. Big plants with U. S. orders are snapping up workers. Real pinch on little fellows due in 30 to 60 days.

GO SLOW ON back-yard vegetable gardens. Fertilizers and insecticides will be scarce. Secretary Wickard warns; supply must be used efficiently, on good soil only.

MOTOR CARRIERS want rate increases if railroads get a raise; their employees want a raise, too. Case involving workers' 11 Western states is before Mediation Board.

LOOKS AS IF Navy will get first call on electrical generating equipment for two years; Maritime Commission and industrial centers the rest. If power shortage develop civilians may have to turn out lights.

DO NOT EXPECT lower state taxes to offset rising Federal taxes. White House is encouraging states to retire debts or accumulate reserves to meet postwar problems.

SALES tax revenues (state and city) will dip as goods get hard to buy. Sales taxes may be broadened to make up for this.

NO SOFT-DRINK drought in sight. Manufacturers have put away 2-to-3-year supplies of sugar. (But look for seizure of these stocks if sugar gets really scarce.)

LOOK FOR sabotage attempts over holidays. Officials believe

BURIAL TODAY FOR MRS. DEEMA E. LEE

Deema E. Lee, wife of John W. Lee, 235 S. Sherman Drive, will be buried in Memorial Park today following services at 2:30 p. m. at the Moore and Kirk funeral home on E. Washington St.

Mrs. Lee, who died yesterday at the age of 56, is survived by her husband and two sisters, Mrs. Harry Perkins of Lorain, O., and Mrs. Minnie Mundora of Fostoria, O.

ROSEMARY LANE MAY WED NEW YORK, Dec. 20 (U. P.).—Hamilton (Bud) Westmore, Hollywood make-up man, said today that he will know "definitely Sunday or Monday" whether or not he will propose to Rosemary Lane, motion picture star.

And to the strains of gay accordion music they danced down the steps to the basement of one of the oldest department stores in the world—one which had been completely streamlined just for them—one arranged handle 125 little boys and 125 little girls in assembly line fashion.

First came the socks. And then the shoes—sturdy ones to cover feet practically on the ground. Then on to underwear, skirts and sweaters, shirts and pants, snowsuits and coats and mackinaws.

It wasn't one of those "standardized" affairs. This was a time when the underprivileged were privileged. They could have practically what they wanted.

"I'D LIKE A COAT the color of yours," said the 10-year-old, his hand clutching that of a struggling fellow. He got it. And

excited to say "Thank You" to their new found friends. But not the mothers and dads. "I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

"We won't forget this." "And a merry Christmas to you, sir, and a pause) God bless you!"

THIS WASN'T the first time, the Herff-Jones employees have made Christmas merry for many an Indianapolis family.

Six years ago they came to Herff-Jones and asked to be employed. The beaming faces of the children thrilled them so that the next year they asked for 100, the next 125; the next another 125, and last year 150. Now 250.

They like the feel of the Christmas spirit. Over at Ayres one could say everyone from the telephone operator to Harry Herff, the Herff-Jones.

Isn't this swell? The boss as he passed out handful after handful of chewing gum from his pockets to excited boys and girls.

THE HERFF-JONES clothing expedition brought the total children clothed to 1651. Wonderful, isn't it?

But there are still hundreds of needy children on the lists. You can help, too. The number is RILEY 5551.

## PERIL TO BASES SOBERS BRITISH

If Hongkong Is to Fall, What of Other Places, London Times Asks.

By WILLIAM H. STONEMAN Copyright, 1941, by The Indianapolis Times and The Chicago Daily News, Inc.

LONDON, Dec. 20.—Penang is gone. Hongkong, though fighting gamely against terrific odds, is likely to be taken by the Japanese at any hour.

Both of these bases were important in themselves but their loss is important for another reason; for generations every citizen of the British commonwealth of nations had been convinced that both were well nigh invulnerable.

The British Government has poured money into the defense of both places, and particularly into the defense of Hongkong. During the last four weeks the British Government has advertised its own conviction that Hongkong was defensible by reinforcing the place, with Canadians, among others.

What of Other Places? What every thinking person in England wants to know today is why the British have not won so grievously wrong about Hongkong and whether it is just as wrong about other places of even greater strategic importance.

What I prove to be a very serious national inquiry into the Government's handling of the whole situation has already been started in a sober way by the London Times.

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## Supreme Chief?

Gen. Douglas MacArthur

High Post Seen for MacArthur

Command of Allied Forces in Far East Believed Behind Promotion.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20 (U. P.).—The anti-Axis powers may be preparing a super-strategy plan that will place MacArthur's newest general—Douglas MacArthur—in supreme command of all Allied forces in the crucial Far Eastern struggle.

This possibility was viewed today as the real answer to President Roosevelt's action in promoting Gen. MacArthur, chief of the U. S. Army of the Philippines, to temporary rank as full general.

And it seemed to add up because: 1. Mr. Roosevelt announced the promotion even as he confirmed that plans for establishing an Inter-Allied command to mastermind operations on a world-wide front are being discussed here.

London Favors American 2. Swift Senate approval of the promotion came on the admitted basis that Gen. MacArthur probably would have to have the rank of full general to "deal on an equal basis" with military officials of America's allies.

3. London, which broke the first news of the contemplated Inter-Allied War Council, suggested earlier in the week that Gen. MacArthur would be the preferred choice to command the Allied armies of the Far East.

4. Gen. MacArthur has added tremendously to his prestige as a shrewd tactician with his brilliant direction of the Philippine defenses—the one bright spot in the Far Eastern picture.

On the basis of these developments, it was predicted that one of the first strategic strokes of the Supreme Allied War Council, once it is created, will be to give Gen. MacArthur full charge of the big show in the Far Eastern theater of conflict.

May Move to Singapore And it is no military secret that the center of this big show is Singapore.

The urgent task now confronting the Allies is the defense of Singapore, because the loss of that vital bastion may mean the difference between a long war and a comparatively short war. Competent observers believed the next 60 days would tell the story, and that some time within that period, Gen. MacArthur may move over from the Philippines to Singapore to direct the show from there.

It was believed that a British military leader may direct any action in the Near and Middle East, because of British experience in colonial warfare. Soviet Premier Josef Stalin probably will direct the Russian phase of operations, and Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek probably will play a specified role in his particular sector.

Other Citations Second Lieut. Randall Keator was credited with bringing down the first Japanese plane in a combat action near his field Dec. 10.

Capt. Jesus A. Villamor of the Philippine Army's Air Corps was decorated for "extraordinary heroism" on Dec. 10 and was awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster to be worn with the Distinguished Service Cross for another act of "extraordinary heroism" on Dec. 12.

Another Filipino hero decorated, Third Lieut. Joseph Gozar, tried to ram enemy planes after his guns had jammed.

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