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Gen. Van Fleet Talks To Greek Soldiers Like Football Coach

Top U. S. Military Man in Greece Hits Salonika To Look Over 'Slow Motion' Civil War

By FRED SPARKS—Times Foreign Correspondent
SALONIKA, Greece, Apr. 13—Gen. James Van Fleet, chief of the American military mission in Greece, came up here to look over this slow motion civil war.

Gen. Van Fleet with the shoulders of a halfback and the profile of a Warner Brothers juvenile, is pretty much the top military man in Greece these days. For the U. S. is picking up the Greek army's dinner check.

We left Athens aboard an American C-47 transport plane. We were accompanied by Gen. Yantzi, Greek chief of staff, various aides and interpreters.

At Salonika, we were loaded into a small convoy of trucks. A tank and a mine sweeper pushed a head and a few truckloads of shabby soldiers brought up the rear.

We bumped over pitted roads for hours, passing signal towers built by Alexander the Great when he sat firmly on this part of the world.

Soon we neared the Kroussa Range, where a confusing battle—sparked by Gen. Van Fleet's planning board—had been going on for a week.

On top of a hill the local Greek combat commander had pitched his headquarters tents. Troops had scraped themselves some protective mud and peered down behind Bren and Sten guns.

The outpost was circled with barbed wire. Scores of empty cans were strung to the wire. Anybody—even a cat—rubbing the wire at night would rattle a can and promptly die.

On Highest Ridge, escorted by Gen. Yantzi and local brass, Gen. Van Fleet mounted the highest ridge and, as Greeks waved maps, shouted and pointed, looked over the countryside.

"Last night," said the commanding officer, "they escaped through that pass. We are now in pursuit. We hope to drive them into the sea."

"How can I get up to the front line?" asked Gen. Van Fleet.

"Oh, my," said a Greek officer, "it would take many hours on a mule."

Gen. Van Fleet couldn't spare the time. And he was disappointed. He is no flabby rear-chelon. Washington-kissing general. On the beachheads of Europe he was a mere chicken colonel—and he walked across the bloody sands with his lowest GI.

"Be sure to plug this pass," said Gen. Van Fleet, studying the map. "We don't want any more escape routes open."

Like Football Coach
This is the gist of all Gen. Van Fleet's conversation with the Greeks.

He talks like a football coach between halves: "Surround them. Capture or kill them. Now is the time to make the extra effort. We must stamp out the bandits this summer."

All the Greeks nodded their heads in agreement.

Just then up puffed Lt. Col. Silas Ben Dishman, of Williams-



Mr. Sparks

burg, Ky. Ben is the American officer attached to this particular combat unit.

"Are they really slugging, Colonel?" asked the general.

"They moved at night," said Col. Dishman.

This made Gen. Van Fleet happy. It's just what he's been trying to get the Greeks to do. Moving them at night is quite an accomplishment. They have no great desire to poke around mountain crags after dark. If a man slips behind a strong, mountainous mountaineer might light on his back and finger his throat with a knife.

Greek GI Is OK

Then the general climbed back into his jeep and we returned to Salonika. There he went over the entire area situation with Gen. Yantzi—of whom he thinks highly—and the commanding officers.

Until the early hours he was subjected to rounds of toasts and speeches and Greek dishes swimming in oil.

Gen. Van Fleet bravely (and diplomatically) ate everything set before him and responded to all toasts with this statement:

"Your Greek GI is a good boy. Keep him moving. Let us get this civil war over with."

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Plan Chili Supper

Wayne Township Fire Department No. 9 women's auxiliary will hold a chili supper from 5:30 to 8 p. m. Saturday at 6333 Rockville Rd. Dancing will follow.

State OK's New Roadside Parks

The state highway department today announced approval of plans for two new roadside parks and four road junction landscaping projects.

The roadside parks will be located five miles east of Kokomo on Ind. 35 and on Ind. 37 in Marshall County.

Junctions to be landscaped are U. S. 36 and Ind. 67 northeast of Indianapolis; U. S. 52 and Ind. 3 at Rushville; U. S. 31 and Ind. 431 south of Indianapolis, and Ind. 37 and Ind. 28 east of Elwood.

GOP Club Sets Meeting

Warren Township Republican Club will meet at 8 p. m. tomorrow in the home of Mr. and Mrs. B. L. Curry, 6797 E. 10th St.

14 KARAT GOLD BRIDE AND GROOM WEDDING RINGS

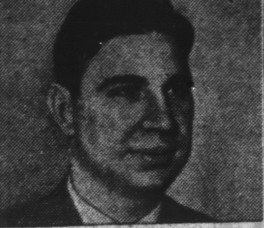


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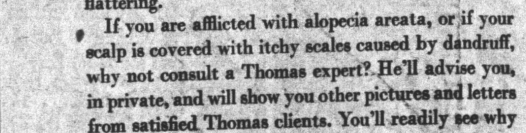
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