

Issue No. 1045..5..3..1941.

Title: Ambush.

Tracks: Last Outpost.. Fight...Way Of All Flesh.

Lines: Stagg.

Voice: Do.

It adds insult to Italian injury that Eritrea, oldest colony of the modern Roman Empire, should be over-run by the British army, concurrently with General Wavell's conquest of Lybia. Rapidly thrusting 150 miles into the country, General Platt, G.O.C. in this theatre swooped east and south from the Sudan, with speed surprising even by latest standards of mechanised attack.

Over terrain that would have severely tested field-guns a few years ago, 6-inch howitzers were rushed up to the Agordat-Barentu sector. Drivers forced their vehicles along roads barely suitable for mules. Speed was vital, to cut off the enemy behind Agordat and so compel his surrender of that important town.

(GV & SV) Indian regiments had a place of honour at the spearhead of the forward drive. Swift advance was understandable in Lybia, where most of the coast-road was flat and well-surfaced. That it was possible in Eritrea speaks much for masterly use our forces made of their mechanical equipment.

General Wavell, now awarded the G.C.B., himself found time to supervise the initial attack. The hero of our African victories is no armchair general. Under his eye ammunition was rushed to the guns. He is the one British commander who has so far had the chance to prove himself in attack, and brilliantly has he seized the opportunity.

(GETTING UP) On the heels of the barrage Indian troops encircled Barentu, while regiments further east closed in on Agordat. Enemy land mines in the path of the advance were spotted by Indian sappers. It wants cool nerve to take out the detonator and make the mine harmless. Two shells, end-to-end, with a fuse between, was the usual type encountered.

The path of the British drive was strewn with Italian vehicles of all kinds. Menaced at several points near Barentu the enemy had only one ambition - to escape capture. Many could only do so at the cost of their lives. This war is waged at Hitler's bidding, and every man in the Fascist ranks now knows it full well. Prisoners and the wounded know also that in Britain they meet a chivalrous foe.....

In Eritrea the toll of prisoners does not rival the captive host taken in Lybia, but 15-hundred surrendered at the fall of Barentu, and altogether some thousands were taken in the first weeks of the campaign. Intelligence officers found them ready to give all the information they could. Thus the strength and

The War In Eritrea Continued.

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composition of the enemy were soon known. Local boys made good by giving their version of the facts - a useful check-up.

Fortunately Eritrea is not a waterless country. Wells store the down-pour of the monsoon. Some of the regiments here had fought at Sidi Barani, and no one appreciates a good water-supply more than men who've campaigned in a desert.

(SIGN) Up with the first infantry to enter Agordat the Paramount cameraman looked in vain for signs of the enemy. When this town and Barentu had both fallen, the Italians retreated to Keren, which they still hold as these pictures reach us.

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The late headquarters of the enemy showed signs of being hastily abandoned. Eritrea has been Italian for half a century, but it was never more than a profitless outpost of a make-believe Empire. Between Tommy and Hitler, Musso'll soon be used to being walked over. On the scene of a vain attempt to build an empire, the sons of the greatest family of free nations in history today stand guard.

Eleven uninjured tanks fell into our hands at Agordat. A mobile radio station was put out of action and its sign appropriated by a British wireless unit.

On without pausing - the hallmark of Wavell strategy - that was the order in Eritrea. On to surround Keren, the Free French were attacking from the Red Sea. Keren dominates a plateau at a height of 7,000 feet. It is strongly held; the enemy knows that if it falls, Eritrea falls too. Holding a field-glass to his one eye - for like Nelson he lost one in his country's service - General Wavell saw promise of the victory that bids fair to drive the Italians from the country.

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