

989

12.15 PM M. Berthold.
25/6/43

THE ALLIED ATTACK FROM NORTH AFRICA --- AIR OFFENSIVE AGAINST ITALY.

Pantelleria --- the first island in history to be conquered
+ naval bombardment.
by air ~~assault~~.

After days and nights of incessant pounding until all resistance had ceased, this vital stepping-stone to Sicily lay staggered and silent beneath the shadow of doom. This was Pantelleria --- ~~Reconnaissance aircraft sweep overhead to gain some idea of the terrible wounds inexorably inflicted on this small bastion of the Axis in the Mediterranean.~~

~~The air attack began during the closing days of May and on June 10th~~ A greater load of bombs was dropped on ~~Pantelleria's~~ 30 square miles than on any other target of similar size. It was more than was delivered through the whole of April on all targets in Tunisia, Sicily, Sardinia and Italy.

~~The total number ran into millions of pounds. So great was the air traffic that several times during the day scores of aircraft were kept circling over other formations waiting to drop their bombs.~~

And over Lampedusa, that small island lying about 100 miles to the south of Pantelleria --- ^{it was} the same story of ~~Axis~~ desolation and ruin. --- ~~But~~ it was absolutely necessary ~~for the United Nations~~ to lay this target flat, as the harbour was a base for E-boats, and the island possessed quite a useful airfield --- one third of the town and harbour area was flattened out and the strong garrison, estimated at 3,000 men --- was completely helpless under the shattering hammer blows from the air.

THE ALLIED ATTACK FROM NORTH AFRICA ---- (2)

Hapless islands of the sunny Mediterranean --- whose inhabitants had been forced to live under ^{the} ~~this~~ dark regime of a Megalomania^{ac} --- now just an endless panorama of destruction and defeat --- further victims indeed of the insatiable maw of a fast-festering jackal - *Mussolini*

And continuing the pounding of vital centres of Italy --- heavy Liberator bombers of the U.S.A.A.F. prepare to carry out a big raid on the airfield at Taranto.

~~On the ground, the crews are busy working on the engines and checking equipment.~~

Bombs are packed up on the trailers and pulled out to the planes. ~~Then the final loading into the racks.~~

The plane you see here has 45 raids to her credit, one bomb painted on the side for each mission.

(*Quoted case*) Zero hour --- and the formations cross the North African coast --- heading northwards for Italy.

For below is Taranto.

Now they're over the Italian coast, ~~and the Italians set off~~

~~as smoke flares on sighting the approaching bombers.~~ From the ^{you will see in a moment} substratosphere, the ^{so} sturdy Liberators let ~~got~~ stick after stick of ^{Strike as Italians set up a frantic smoke screen too late} bombs bombs --- ~~Down they streak~~ --- hundreds of them --- they're ~~reeling under the strain, far below in Taranto.~~ Suddenly --- ~~Now~~ through a break in the clouds --- they can be seen landing squarely ^{amid the scene of destruction} ~~on the airfield~~ --- ~~A fuel dump is hit and blows up~~ --- ~~and another~~ successful raid ^{is over -} ~~A~~ the prelude, perhaps, to Rome --- ~~and the bombers head homewards and in the official words of the Communique --- "all our aircraft returned safely."~~