

WAR IN ALBANIA : FIRST PICTURES.

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Up in the storm-swept passes of the Albanian mountains the valiant Greeks struck a death-blow at the war aspirations of Italy. BRITISH PARAMOUNT NEWS achieved something like a miracle of wartime transport in getting the film to England in so short a time. By horse and motor transport the Greeks pursued the foe, once they had the Italians on the run. They are far more at home in the bleak hills than the soldiers of sunny Italy. For the steep roads, winding 5000 feet above sea-level, they had good lorries. Where no lorries could go they had pack-mules.

Streams impeding them in the valleys were bridged by any method available. Planks and improvised pile-drivers made up for lack of pontoons.

Quite early in the advance the Greeks were counting their prisoners in hundreds.

Range-finders surveyed the Morova heights overlooking Koritza, as commanders of spearhead battalions estimated the Italian defences. Enemy strong-points noted, the officers ordered the artillery into action. The offensive spirit permeated the whole Greek army. Out-numbered though they were they knew that wars are not decided by figures.

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The far-off approaches to Koritza were now dominated by Greek fire. Greek infantry were firmly established on the surrounding heights. Their generals had no time for a cautious policy. They decided to attack....From the first their tactics had been to storm the hill-tops and make the valleys untenable. Down the steep slopes the best mountain-fighting troops in Europe pushed forward to repeat their successes. They were now well into Albania, pursuing the army that had fondly hoped to invade them.

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More than their own valour was in favour of the Greeks. It was winter, General Winter as a Russian once called it, with its intense cold and mud to dispirit all but the soldiers whom that severe climate has made hard as iron. Refugees passed them, Albanians turned out of their homes by the Italians, who then set the houses on fire to deprive the Greeks of shelter as they advanced. But the advance went on. They were in sight of Koritza and the enemy had fled.

Koritza was theirs.

When the campaign began this Albanian town eight miles from the Greek frontier was the headquarters from which Italy planned the hoped-for capture of Salonika. On all sides the Greeks had evidence of Italian development since Albania

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Continuation :

Albania/

was occupied nearly two years ago.

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(LV Troops) Four roads from Albanian ports converge on Koritza. When the Greeks captured the place they split up the enemy forces and compelled further retreat. Mussolini's hopes, like his newspaper, have no more place here. Greek monuments bear witness to the fact that Greeks are 75 per cent of Koritza's population, one more reason for the soldiers to rejoice over their success.

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Petrol was included in the booty taken from the Italians. The Greeks made good use of it.

(Four Out...GV Greek Column) There was no resting on Laurels in Koritza. The Greeks had the utmost contempt for self-styled military experts who told them it would be fatal to advance further. They pushed on and soon had the enemy routed.

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The litter of abandoned gun positions told of the Italians' pell-mell retreat. They had a long start but the relentless Greeks pursued them, trudging on through the mire, nearer every hour.

Four hundred boxes of ammunition were found abandoned by the enemy not far from Koritza. Still the spearhead of the attack pushed on. Through grim country, in the growingly severe winter, Elbasan, Pogradets, Argyrocastro, and Santi Quaranta were soon to fall into Greek hands - an object lesson to other countries that fortune still favours the brave. Bombs were now left behind by the enemy, for by this time the R.A.F. had won mastery of the air. The Italians abandoned their tanks whenever they got ditched.

Nobody could have foreseen, when Italy came into the war, that the first to puncture Mussolini's inflated reputation would be the Greeks. As British Paramount News' exclusive despatch left the front, the Greeks were still going forward, valiantly striking a blow from which Axis prestige will not recover.

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