

CYRENAICA ALL OURS

Never did mechanisation and thorough training bear more abundant fruit than in the brilliant campaign of Cyrenaica. In that half of Libya there is now no Italian soldier who is not a prisoner of war. Often in blinding sandstorms General Wavell's troops paused in their victorious advance to fight the enemy rear-guard. Under well-nigh impossible conditions artillery-men made gun-emplacements, and gave the enemy no rest.

Captured outposts yielded welcome food. Italians can't have their cake and run away from it.

(AFTER CAKE) Swift as the army advanced it was no walk-over. Medium artillery pounded the defences of Tobruk.

Caught between two fires Italians ran to surrender and the attack was pressed home.

(GV TROOPS) The whole of Cyrenaica is now in British hands, and this is the action that sealed its fate. Though few people realised it at the time the enemy were now demoralised. They had fought hard and many had given their lives to sustain Mussolini's tottering authority; the survivors now had little heart to fight longer. Pell-mell retreat or surrender was the best they could expect. Transport was recklessly abandoned. Sights like this told General Wavell that the main resistance was overcome.

Nearly a hundred enemy planes, fighters and Caproni bombers, were found destroyed on the ground at an aerodrome that fell into our hands. Inside the workshops too there was evidence of RAF attack. Roof and windows had been bullet-riddled by our Air Force gunners. By pinning the Italian planes to the ground the RAF earned a large share of the credit for the victory.

The funeral pyres of Mussolini's empire sent their smoke pillars into the darkened sky. Petrol stores had been set ablaze by the Italians, and one of their cruisers was on fire in the harbour.

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THE FALL OF TOBRUK....continued.

(PAN DOWN) At a regimental headquarters in Tobruk an Australian brigadier was host to some captured officers. They included a Rear-Admiral.

Several women settlers remained in the town. Only a few years ago Mussolini induced them to come to Libya.

The troops were in high spirits. Who wouldn't be when the enemy had left behind his best cigars and a lot of fancy dress.

It has been evident all through the advance that the prisoners are not a bit sorry they are captured. The modern Italian is not a warlike man. He was flattered when Mussolini dressed him in uniform while keeping the country at peace; but when it came to war for Hitler's sake the rank and file thought it was carrying things too far.

(AFTER MOTOR-BIKE) Leaving a small garrison behind to guard the prisoners General Wavell's army swept on to Benghazi and nearly 200 miles beyond. The more the Italians thought it over the better they were pleased by their own fate. Safe and sound for the rest of the war they were almost as glad to be beaten as the Dinkum Digger was to win.

The miracle of the campaign is the astounding number of prisoners, taken at so slight cost. It's some time since they were estimated at one hundred and twenty thousand. Then the adding machine broke.....It would be unbelievable if the evidence were not before our eyes. In eight short weeks General Wavell has seemed to wave a magic wand and turn a hostile army into a captive host.
