

RETURN TO GREECE

The liberation of Greece has begun - three and a half years after our evacuation in 1941, we are back again on Greek soil to turn the tables on the Nazis. Vessels drop anchor off the Island of Kythera - the first part of Greece to receive the forces of liberation.

The people of Greece who have suffered so greatly at the hands of the German invaders welcome us with joy and thankfulness - they have little else to offer - the Germans who withdrew but a few days before have seen to that. In the town, Elás partisan~~s~~ troops of the National Liberation Front march through the streets armed with German weapons. These men have done valuable work by speeding the evacuating Germans on their way.

Reminder of a time when Kythera was British territory, this British-built fort dominates the town. Ancient cannon, bearing the British coat-of-arms, are firmly embedded at its base. For the Germans, there is another kind of writing on the wall. Greek meets Ally ... "Together we will sweep the Nazi plunderers from the shores of Greece".

Next, in Poleponnesia, troops of Land Forces Adriatic, working in close co-operation with the R.A.F. Regiment, go in to take the important town of Patras and the nearby airfield at Araxos. Cameramen of the R.A.F. Film Unit were there to get these first pictures of the operation, which is of particular interest as it is so largely a Royal Air Force show. Again, we are given a warm reception as we go ashore.

Supplies of petrol, oil, rations, aircraft spares, Bailey-bridging equipment and airfield matting are unloaded. Huge dumps rapidly appear on the water side.

At the Airdrome where Airbourne troops have been landed high speed repairs are carried out. This airfield was actually started by the R.A.F., when they were operating here in 1940-41. When the Germans evacuated recently they dynamited the runway. But now, whole Greek families, including children - lend a hand; glad of the chance to help. Exactly six days after the commencement of repairs, the first aircraft touched down and the routine of the airfield gets underway.

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Patras is the third largest City in Greece. R.A.F. armoured cars passing through the main square find the going difficult while the crowd presses in on all sides .. but beneath all this outward happiness, lays the real tragedy of tortured Greece - a tragedy which has been fully exploited by the Germans - For the Greeks, though unanimously pro-British and anti-Nazi, are rent by bitter warfare between the opposing political factions. Their economy has collapsed. Disease and hunger stalk the land though these pictures convey nothing of this. Yet on this day of liberation their sorrows are forgotten. People flock in from the outlying villages to form themselves into one huge parade which went round the town singing, shouting and cheering.

Lots of nice things written on banners - just a lot of Greek to me.

The popular Mayor of Patras, rides through the surging throng on his horse, to be lifted from it and carried shoulder-high into the City Hall.

He hails this glorious day of Liberation from the balcony. This, for the Greeks, is the beginning of new hope - for the Germans (who have again left their withdrawal too late) - it is the beginning of their end in Greece.