

CYPRUS FIRE.

A new terror is added to the ordeal of British troops in Cyprus, as a big forest fire sweeps hundreds of acres of the south-western mountains. Units combing the area for EOKA terrorists find themselves suddenly fighting a blaze which races through the tinder-dry pinewoods. Civilians help battle with the flames, but the wind changes, and before long the inferno is raging worse than ever.

Twenty servicemen die and 18 are badly injured - some of them by exploding petrol, when vehicles were trapped in narrow forest tracks; by the advancing fire.

In spite of the fire, the work of rounding up terrorists goes on; some captured EOKA men reveal the secrets of their hideouts, and lead British patrols to the spot. To guard against reprisals, the informers wear hoods over their faces. One by one, the camouflaged positions and arms-dumps are located, and thoroughly searched for any clues which may lead to the capture of more of the terrorist leaders.

No one knows yet how the fire began - but the Army suspects EOKA bands may have started it to cover their escape. If so, the Army declares, they have only postponed their capture - for the net is tightening.