

HISTORY AS IT HAPPENS

Thursday, April 17

In the most smashing and intense raid of the war, the London area was pounded by German bombers for eight hours. Casualties were heavy and considerable damage was done. Dive-bombing was adopted by the raiders, numbering several hundred aeroplanes.

German armoured columns which crossed the Vistritsa River west of Mount Olympus, were battling against Greek and British forces. The enemy pressure on the Allied lines in Greece was increasing and heavy fighting was in progress.

British troops were in contact with the enemy along the whole of the front in Libya with the Tobruk situation unchanged.

British naval forces intercepted and annihilated between Sicily and Tripoli a southbound convoy consisting of five ships escorted by destroyers. All were sunk, with the loss to the British of the destroyer Mohawk.

Refugees arrived in Dublin from the air raid on Northern Ireland when 200 to 300 bombers destroyed hundreds of homes in Belfast and surrounding towns.

Friday, April 18

In spite of almost non-stop attacks on the heights of Mount Olympus by wave after wave of German infantry, the British line forming the right flank of the Allied armies defending Northern Greece held firm. Enormous casualties were inflicted on the German hordes which were flung into the fray regardless of cost. The famous Mount Olympus Pass itself was held by New Zealand troops.

It was revealed that the Germans had lost 64 machines in night raids over Britain so far in April.

Twelve thousand people were believed to have been killed in the German raid on Belgrade, which exceeded in savagery those on Warsaw and Rotterdam.

The United States Maritime Commission announced the acquisition of four American cargo ships for immediate transfer to Britain.

Saturday & Sunday, April 19 & 20

The Allied situation in Greece remained very serious. The Allies, notably the Anzacs, counter-attacked and again inflicted terrific casualties on the Germans. The latter threw in huge masses of men and material regardless of their losses, but although the British line had to be shortened it did not break.

In Libya British forces took the offensive in the Tobruk and Sollum areas. Hundreds of enemy vehicles were destroyed.

In Abyssinia our troops were in touch with the enemy 14 miles from Dessye, one of the remaining Italian strongholds.

Strong Imperial forces arrived at Basra to open up lines of communication across Irak and were welcomed by the new Iraqi Administration.

The Greek Prime Minister, M. Korizis, died suddenly.

An announcement from No. 10 Downing Street, stated that if the Germans bombed Athens and Cairo the British would bomb Rome, taking care not to bomb Vatican City.

The largest parade of armed forces, Home Guard and E.P.S., ever staged in New Zealand, was held in Wellington.

Monday, April 21

Although the Germans brought fresh troops into Northern Greece the Allied line remained unbroken. Mount Olympus, where New Zealand troops were operating, was evacuated by Imperial troops before the Germans took it. The Germans continued to suffer terrific casualties.

King George of the Hellenes took over the premiership of the new Greek Government.

Indian mechanised troops arrived at Tobruk and repulsed further costly German raids.

President Roosevelt and the Canadian Prime Minister in a joint statement announced that they had agreed to mobilise the North American defence production resources.

Tuesday, April 22

Allied and Greek forces in Macedonia and Albania completed their withdrawal to new positions, maintaining an unbroken line. British losses were only slight.

King Peter of Yugoslavia was reported to have arrived in Palestine.

It was learned that the late M. Korizis, former Prime Minister of Greece, had died by his own hand.

German forces were said to have occupied the Greek island of Samothrace and to have attacked Lemnos.

Wednesday, April 23

British naval forces, assisted by the R.A.F. and naval aircraft, were reported to have successfully bombarded Tripoli. Six enemy transports and one destroyer were damaged and the harbour installations heavily shelled.

The Germans claimed to have reached Volo and Lamia in Greece.

The Greek King and Government moved from Athens to Crete.

USE OF GLIDERS IN INVASION

EARLY in 1940, there were reports that the Germans were using gliders in France to transport small parties of men to attack isolated positions, and there have been other reports that large numbers of gliders had been taken to Norway by the Nazis, assembled and stored ready for use. Some of these machines, it has been stated, are covered with transparent fabric, so that at height they are practically invisible. These stories may contain some truth, says the Air Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*.

Towed gliders and "flying trains" have been experimented with in the United States, France, Russia and Germany, and there are no technical difficulties in constructing a glider which would carry 12 to 14 men. As a troop-carrier, such a machine would have some advantages over an aeroplane, the most obvious being that it would be absolutely silent in flight. And since it would have no engines and would carry no fuel, its low-wing loading would allow it to be landed easily in rough and undulating country.

It should be noted, too, that when an aeroplane is towing a glider, the former's speed is not greatly reduced, and it would therefore be feasible for one powered aircraft to tow several gliders at a fairly high speed. In experiments with towed gliders, it has been found that the towing cable has to be at least one hundred yards in length to ensure safety in flight, and therefore in making a take-off with a "flying train" an immense aerodrome would be required. In Russia, this has been overcome by fitting each glider with a drum, round which is wound the towing cable. Each cable is thus unwound as each glider in turn is drawn forward and made air-borne by the towing plane.

What chance of success would be open to the enemy in using the glider as a troop-carrier or for transporting supplies to an invading army is a matter for debate. The advantages of silent approach, ease of landing, and partial invisibility are counterbalanced by a lack of speed, limited manoeuvrability and armament, so that only by using these machines with the utmost stealth and when no opposition in the air could be given, does the glider attack appear likely to be effective.



THE new anti-gas helmet now being issued in Britain to persons unable to wear any ordinary type of gas mask

THE R.A.F.

IT is officially announced that the number of Australian Air Force squadrons in service overseas will be more than doubled in a few months. There would be a "doubling and redoubling" Mr. McEwen, the Commonwealth Air Minister, stated. "The project in which Australia, Canada, and New Zealand are co-operating will provide scores of squadrons and thousands of highly-skilled air crews and ground staffs within the period originally fixed, as the first phase of the Empire training scheme. The new squadrons will be distinctly Australian, but will include a small proportion of members of the R.A.F."

Red Hot News

SINCE Mussolini has proclaimed in public on so many occasions that Italian war news is the most reliable of the lot, it seems a pity to have to correct one of its latest achievements, says "Lucio" in the *Manchester Guardian*. But the Rome wireless was wrong in announcing last week that "the Queen Mother, Princess Elizabeth, and Princess Margaret Rose, accompanied by the Crown jewels," recently left for America on the same battleship as Lord and Lady Halifax. Actually it was Mr. Churchill who departed, disguised as all three of them and carrying the Crown jewels in a cigar-box. His place has since been supplied in public by a stuffed effigy, with Mr. Duff Cooper (who has lately made great progress with the ventriloquial art) supplying the voice.

Mr. Anthony Eden, by the way, is in a concentration camp. It is Mr. Vic Oliver who has gone to Ankara, where his make-up is said to have deceived even Sir John Dill.

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