



CURTAIN—Spectacular capture of Cap Bon Peninsula by British troops marked the end of Axis rule in Africa. Only one sizeable pocket of Italian troops in Ben Fichta region continued to resist.

—Associated Press Wirephoto Map.

forces and the British Eighth Army and continued a hopeless struggle in the mountains southwest of the base of the Cap Bon Peninsula.

Since any soldier worth his salt would rather whip a tough foe than win an easy victory over an enemy who won't stop running long enough to shoot back, the Italian stand in Tunisia found military men here evincing a kind of paradoxical pleasure that the only real snag struck by the Allies in the Tunisian mopup should be the defiant First Italian Army.

And since the Germans as well as the Allies have poked fun at the Italian soldiery for its lack of stomach for a fight, Rome probably found considerable solace in the announcement today that General Messe had "spurned" an Allied demand that he surrender.

FACES DEFEAT.

Whether he was still holding out tonight was not known here, but it was certain that he would soon be overwhelmed. Some German forces shared his fight for awhile.

General Messe is a 59 year old infantry expert, generally regarded as one of Italy's ablest commanders. In August, 1941, he was given command of the Italian Expeditionary Force to Russia, remaining on that front in command of an Italian Army Corps until last December. He was promoted to full general in October, 1942, and early this year was transferred to North Africa.

Following almost on the rear bumpers of the armored cars in the dash up the cape's western coast, I am unable to report what is happening on the eastern shoreline, around Kelibia where heavier British forces have been engaged. But I have personally viewed about 30,000 prisoners of whom only 3,000 or so were Italians.

The German crackup along the main west road has been so suddenly complete that the greatest hazard I have encountered was from an Allied fighter bomber raid at 2:30 p. m. which set the hilly brush afire a half mile from where I was hastily lunching on sauerkraut and brown bread.

FLUSHED PRISONERS.

Bombs and machine gun bullets flushed a few hundred tardy prisoners from the hills, but they were not enjoyed by the British motorized infantry and myself.

When the front is advancing at a rate of five miles per hour it is risky for distant army liaison officers to fix the bombline for the air force.

(Dispatches from Allied headquarters today said bombing operations against the peninsula have been halted.)

"There is no trace of an evacuation; I have been down to the sea on both sides of the cape and all I saw was one rowboat—full of natives," an armored car commander declared. "Hitler must have wiped out this business as a complete loss."

Standing at the crossroads with Tommies gleefully loaded down with enemy pistols, binoculars and other expensive military gear, you meet, face to face, the big parade of defeat.

All of the enemy cars converging here fly the white flag, and troops aboard hold out white handkerchiefs and undershirts to make sure the handful of British recognize their intentions.

German colonels drive up in their own "volkswagens" or long ago captured American jeeps. They turn in their Luger automatics to a squat, grinning British private, who waves them on along the dusty route to Tunis with his bayoneted rifle.

NO GUARDS IN SIGHT.

German half-tracks and trucks are crammed with junior officers and men. There is not a single escorting guard in sight.

These German troops going towards military prisons have almost a skylark attitude. Many men with many war decorations are among them. The Iron Cross for Russian front service and the Pour le Merite are the easiest to spot because they are so common.

They carry pet dogs and accordions and have pockets bulging with cigars, cigarettes, biscuits and candy.

Hitler fed them well, dressed them well and inspired them with what they thought almost a holy mission. But they did not fight today. They quit.

Admiral Monroe Confers

MEXICO CITY, May 12.—(AP)—United States Rear Adm. William Monroe, commander of the Gulf of Mexico sea frontier, arrived in Mexico City yesterday and conferred with Defense Minister Lazaro Cardenas and Navy Minister Heriberto Jara.

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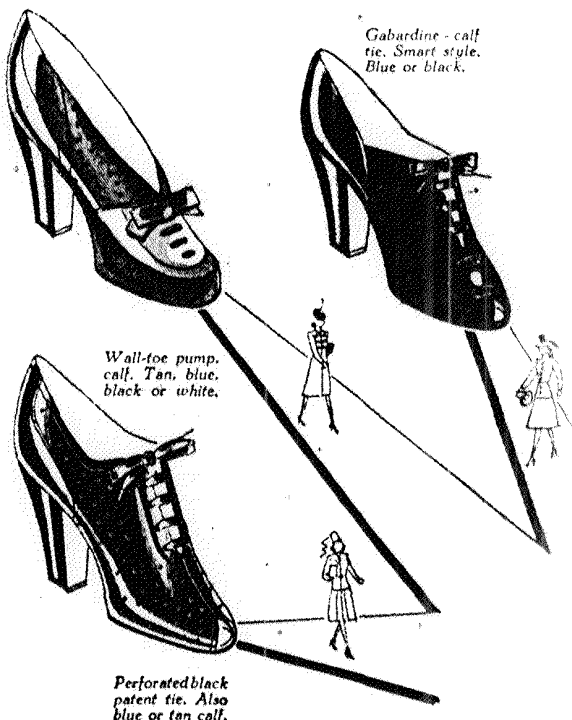


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