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British RN and RAF Units Destroy Italian Forces in Tripoli!

Special war report correspondent Richard
Richardson - London

Rumors concerning an attack by Royal Navy units against the Italian north African port of Tripoli have been confirmed by a report released by the Admiralty today. Units of the Mediterranean Fleet operating from Alexandria and well as Malta have attacked Italian forces in and around the port of Tripoli. In conjunction with the RN, Royal Air Force bombers coordinated an air attack on enemy air and port facilities.

RAF bomber units opened the engagement during the early morning hours of Monday and reported the enemy had been taken by complete surprise. Meeting only inconsistent and inaccurate anti-aircraft fire and encountering no fighters, the bombers ruled the sky during their sustain mission over the enemy city. Desert Bomber Command would not comment on the number of aircraft involved but stated that all units returned to their bases safely. No numbers of Italian losses were given but hints were made that the damage and destruction was substantial.

Shortly after the last bombing unit had withdrawn, the second part of this coordinated effort appeared just off the African coast in the form of main battle units of the RN and their escorts. All units cruised within sight of the port and bombarded the port facilities and what appeared to be a recently arrived Italian supply convoy. It is reported that coastal defense batteries attempted to engage the fleet

but their rounds fell harmlessly in the sea as the fleet operated just outside of the coastal guns range, but well within that available to the ships themselves.

Naval officials stated that the damage inflicted on the port facilities was substantial and should cripple future use for some time to come. All vessels within the port were hard hit as a direct result of the aerial or naval bombardment. As such, the same officials stated "It is considered that most vessels in the port were sunk outright or rendered inoperable by direct result of naval gun fire." No comment was made concerning the numbers or types of vessels, either military or civilian that were involved. The outcome of this operation was stated as being "...a success with far reaching result."

No major loss was reported for RN units conducting this attack although two spotting aircraft were acknowledged as have been lost due to anti-aircraft fire.

Luftwaffe Chief visits Channel Coast

Special war correspondent John Johnson - Paris

In an exclusive interview with this reporter, chief of the German Luftwaffe, Herman Göring stated that his air forces would soon complete the total isolation of the British Isles.

Entertaining several foreign correspondents present at a dinner held at the Hôtel du Monde Vieux the Field Marshall, resplendent in powder blue uniform and bedecked in his numerous medals, spoke of the gallant effort being made by the German air forces in their ongoing battle to subdue the British air forces in the skies over the channel and the isl-

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HINTS OF BATTLE

*Malta Times Correspondent
Reginald Bothswick, Malta*

Units of the Royal Navy have begun arriving late this evening in Malta's Grand Harbor showing damage in various degrees from light to very heavy. Official comments from the Admiralty have not been forthcoming at this time, other than to the effect that comments will be made later. It is evident, however, that some major action has transpired between British and Italian forces somewhere near this beleaguered island.

Strong Italian air forces have continued the aerial siege of Malta proper and the facilities supporting the British war effort. A late afternoon attack inflicted light casualties to Royal Air Force units and no damage was reported by Malta Naval Command. It can be assured that the connection between the air raids of today and the appearance of damaged naval units late in the evening will prove to be related.



MAJOR CLASH IN MID-MED

*Associated Pressmen Correspondent
J.R.A. McKlinen, Cairo*

Malta Naval Command has announced that a major battle has taken place between Britain's Mediterranean Fleet and a large portion of the Royal Italian Navy. Complete details have not been presented and those stated in the official communique provide only the barest outline. This communique says in part:

"Major units of the British Mediterranean Fleet, including Forces A and B which had been mentioned in dispatches prior, have concluded what must be considered the largest surface action of the war in the Mediterranean Sea to date. While a complete damage assessment is being conducted, losses to British units are considered light although at least two cruisers and an equal number of destroyers were sunk in action. Names and specific casualties will not be

released at this time.

"Admiral Sir Second N in the Med, commanding the fleet units reports that a large portion of the Royal Italian Navy was engaged by British forces. Although seriously outnumbered by Italian forces who initially pressed a determined attack, British forces withstood these pressures and inflicted substantial losses to the Italians.

"Initial estimates indicate that at least four Italian cruisers along with six to eight destroyers were sunk during the battle which lasted for over two and a half hours. A matching number of cruisers and destroyers were also damaged, several having left the scene of the engagement prior to its outright conclusion. A large number of the Italian Navy's battle-ships were present and both engaged and were engaged in various degrees. While none were sunk outright, it is believed that serious and extensive damage was inflicted on at least three of these units."

From other sources it has been learned that small battle units of the Royal Navy have remained on station to perform life saving missions, collecting various groups of survivors from units lost during this engagement. While exact numbers of sailors rescued have not been given, mention was made that numbers of Italian personnel had been recovered from the sea in the battle area as well.



VICHY GOVERNMENT COMPLAINS OF INTERFERENCE

*Special Correspondent K.G.O. Ipshing-Trun
London*

A formal letter of complaint has been received by His Majesty's Government from Vichi French leaders in North Africa. The letter asserts that units of the Royal Air Force as well as Royal Navy flying units have repeatedly interfered with French air transport lines between the French colonies in North Africa and the French homeland. Warning that such incidents could (cont. on page 21)