

# Stern Fight Still Rages In Streets of Ortona

Algiers, Dec. 26 (AP). — While Canadian troops fought fiercely for the seventh day for the last remaining corner of the Port of Ortona, 8th Army troops captured the Town of Ariella, about three and a half miles northeast of Orsogna, and seized a ridge dominating the Village of Crecchio, about six miles southwest of Ortona.

Both Ariella and Crecchio are northwest of the lateral road joining Ortona and Orsogna.

Operations along the 8th Army front were hampered by rain and stormy weather.

The British contest for Ortona went on with Canadian 1st Division troops still striving to dislodge stubborn Nazi defenders from one corner of the town where the enemy tanks were embedded in ruins. The Germans have been ordered to hold on at all costs. Nazi troops were dying rather than retreating.

All sections of the landing installations at Ortona have been blown up in the course of the week-long battle.

(The Cairo radio said Saturday that Ortona, last important bastion protecting Pescara, Adriatic terminus of a lateral highway leading to Rome, is in Allied hands, but there was no confirmation of the report.)

## Tanks Become Forts.

The Canadian 1st Division troops used "Molotov cocktails"—bottles filled with gasoline and fuel oil with a lighted wick attached—grenades and every kind of weapon they could lay their hands on to blast the enemy out of basement strong points in the town.

The Germans sank the tanks in basements of houses as formidable strong points. An Allied military commentator said it was almost impossible to blast out such fortifications because they get stronger as more rubble falls on them.

The Nazis have reinforced the 1st Parachute Division with battalions from Rome and have sent in elements of the 26th Tank and the 90th Grenadier divisions to strengthen their resistance.

Heavy fighting was reported Saturday around Villa Grandi, three miles southwest of Ortona, and a little northwest of the Ortona-Orsogna Road. Troops in the central sector of the front consolidated gains made in the previous 24 hours.

Troops of the Allied 5th Army assaulted two Nazi hilltop strongholds on the fringes of the plain leading to Rome and captured Mount Samucro dominating the fortified Village of San Vittore, seven miles east and slightly south of Cassino. San Vittore has been heavily fortified by the Germans.

(Previous despatches from Allied Headquarters had reported the capture by the 5th Army of Mount Samucro. There was no immediate amplification of Sunday's report. It possibly meant that Mount Samucro had been retaken by the Germans in a counter-attack after the original seizure.)

Heavy bombers blasted the Bolzano rail yards in Northern Italy, 30 miles south of Brenner Pass, and

barracks and an airfield at Vicenza 40 miles west of Venice. Medium bombers struck at the main station at Pisa as well as rail targets at Porta Nuova, a suburb of Pisa.

The spurt in aerial activity came after heavy bombers of the 15th American Air Force had been grounded three days by bad weather. Carrying on their work of disrupting rail lines carrying supplies from Germany to the Italian front, the bombers left only the eastern coast line open after assaults on the central line at Bolzano and the west coast line at Pisa.

Light bombers operating ahead of the 5th Army front bombed a bridge at Pontecervo near Cassino, but other tactical flights in this section were washed out by bad weather.

Fighters strafed shipping off the Island of Korcula on the Yugoslav coast and destroyed two locomotives on the Italian east coast line.

American heavy bombers escorted by fighters which attacked barracks and an airfield at Vicenza, caused violent explosions in the target area. Approximately 40 enemy fighters rose to challenge the bombers and their escort and one of these planes was destroyed. Three Allied aircraft were missing from all the operations on Christmas Day.

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