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S A L E R N O

By Frank Gillard, representing the Combined British Press

With U.S. Fifth Army,  
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Things are still quiet here at the northern end of the front. The enemy is making many fewer sallies against our positions, but at the same time he is holding firm himself.

There are four different valleys running northward into enemy territory from this end of the front and the Germans are holding each of these with infantry and tanks. These forces are mobile and any thrust by us at the present moment on this front would be severely resisted. This confirms the general impression that the Germans are using the Salerno area as a pivot. While standing fast for the present in this area they are probably swinging up their main forces away from the south, bringing them northwards away from the Eighth Army while a way of escape is still open.

Naturally during carrying out such a movement they would be bound to hold our left flank in place pretty firmly to prevent us from breaking through and cutting off the withdrawing divisions.

It is impossible at present to gauge the rate at which the enemy is carrying out these movements if indeed this is his plan. Certainly there is no sign that he is in great haste and the situation may remain much the same for some days, depending on the amount of pressure the Allied forces are able to bring to bear on the retreating columns.

The Gulf of Salerno is separated from the Gulf of Naples by the narrow Campanella Peninsula of which the southern coast bordering Salerno Gulf is in our hands. There are several luxury seaside towns along this coast, places which have been practically untouched by war and where wealthy Italians are still living in great style.

A British officer was at one town recently interrogating Italian civilians when he was told that two of the leading inhabitants were loading up a high-powered car with petrol and documents and were about to set off for Rome. The officer considered the story rather improbable but decided to check up on it immediately.

He went direct to the house of one of the men named and there sure enough was a big car loaded with cans of petrol and packets of papers. Inside the house he found two Italians getting ready to depart.

"And where are you off?" asked the officer.

"Oh, we are going to Rome," was the calm reply. "We have just heard on the radio that Mussolini has formed another government and has called all leading Fascists to Rome, so we are off there now."

"That's just where you are entirely mistaken," the British officer replied. "You are not off to Rome at all, you are off to the nearest gaol." And he put them under arrest.

There are few such Fascists left but those who have not escaped are rapidly being rounded up.

There are a few English people living in villas along this southern coast of Campanella Peninsula. One acts as lady bountiful and universal provider for the Italian people of her village. Recently when they ran out of grain she took a sailing boat and went across the gulf by sea to Salerno. There she calmly helped herself to supplies of grain in the granary, loading up the small boat and returning to the village with her booty.

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