

# Science of War Rewritten by Italy

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forms what may be called the shock troops. This force is the first to clash with the enemy, and, if possible, defeats and disperses him without the aid of the other two forces. Each shock trooper is as lightly equipped as possible. He carries nothing with him but his arm, whatever that may be, and enough food, water and ammunition to last him two days. This is a distinct innovation, for in the American and other armies during the World War the individual soldier carried only sufficient materials for one day's fighting.

Should the shock troops successfully engage the enemy and rout him, so much the better; but that is a result which must not be depended upon. That is where the second of the three groups enters. Under ordinary circumstances it will have to be thrown into the battle, but it is not thrown forward as reinforcements for the shock troops; it is swung in an arc to left or right, as the terrain requires, in an encircling flank attack against the enemy, while the first force is either holding him or gradually pressing him back.

During this time the third of the groups stays back. It is the good, old-fashioned reserve, which no modernization in principle can do without, and it plays the part that reserves have always played—to strengthen a crumbling line, to fill in gaps, to turn the tide of battle when victory hangs in the balance, or to cover a retreat. Neither the second nor third groups, it is important to note, are to be used unless absolutely necessary—the second only when its use will almost certainly bring victory, the third only when defeat is threatened.

So much for a typical attack. What of a defensive action? Suppose you go out to meet an enemy attack (as the Italians did in the Tembien at the end of January when the forces of Ras Kassa and Ras Seyoum launched a drive against their communications), or suppose the enemy effects a surprise attack (as the Negus's army did north of Lake Ashanghi on March 31). Your troops are still, and always, in their tripartite formation. The first group absorbs the shock of the attack. If it can hold and then throw back the enemy, that is the end of the action until your forces are ready to launch a counter-attack in the usual formation. Should the first group be unequal to the task, the second force is thrown into action—but there again, not to join the first force, in a passive defense, but to attack the enemy on his flank in an encircling movement.

In extreme cases, where the terrain or the desperate character of the battle demands, the second group may have to join the first, but if so, only long enough to stop the enemy in his tracks. It then takes the initiative, although not by frontal attack, for there again would be the danger of a deadlock should the enemy succeed in making a firm stand. The counter-attack must be made at a tangent, forcing the enemy out of position and giving the battle the necessary character of mobility to permit a definite decision.

It needs no military expert to realize that a highly trained and highly specialized soldier is needed for this type of warfare. Gone are the days when a clerk or a farmer could be enrolled one month and thrown into the front lines next. Gone, even, are the days when compulsory military service of a year or eighteen months could prepare a nation for an eventual war. In order to carry out the "guerra manovrata" a militarized nation, whose youth has been brought up to war, is necessary.

In Marshal Badoglio, Italy has a great exponent of the "guerra manovrata." His brilliant campaign here is a tribute to its efficacy, and it is hardly open to doubt that military students the world over will be studying this campaign for many years to come.

The battle which was fought just north of Lake Ashanghi, beginning on March 31, was a brilliant example of the new tactics. It was initiated by the Emperor's forces which made a surprise attack at dawn against the First Army Corps positions at Mai Ceu on the northern slope of the Valley of the Mecan.

The first of the traditional three groups was able to hold its own without assistance from the second group or the reserves. Marshal Ba-

doglio sought nothing more that day than a repulse of the enemy, reserving the greater part of his strength for a future counter-attack. He was not ready for his major attack, in the first place, and the Negus had thrown only 20,000 of his 50,000-odd soldiers into the battle. The Italian commander was angling for bigger fish; his turn came two days later.

On that day the Emperor's Guard had entrenched itself on a hill called Chessad Ezba, and his reserve was four miles back on an eminence named Addi Assel Gherti, which dominated the Pass of Agumberta, leading to Lake Ashanghi and the town of Quoram. As always, the Italian objectives were far more complicated than a simple frontal attack to dislodge the Ethiopians. The idea was to manoeuvre in such a way as to make their positions untenable, forcing a retreat which could be turned into a rout and a slaughter.

There were the usual three groups—the first being divided this time into two parts, one of the Alpini Division and the other of the Sabauda. The second group was an Eritrean Division which made the encircling movement, and there was the customary reserve.

The attack was launched at day-break on April 2. It was the job of the Alpini to make a frontal attack, inflicting the utmost possible damage, and, of course, if possible, dislodging the Imperial Guard. Meanwhile, the Sabauda Division, in true "manoeuvring" style, struck to the side of the Ethiopian force and then turned on it in a flank attack, which quickly forced a withdrawal. The Italians pursued, and under their pressure, and the desperate menace of being outflanked by the rapidly approaching Eritrean Corps, the enemy broke and fled.

The part airplanes have played in this campaign is truly overwhelming. Not only have they performed the "natural" functions of bombing and strafing with machine guns, but they have played a remarkable rôle in the pursuit of the defeated enemy, in reconnoitring, in conveying information of enemy movements before and during battles, and in dropping food and water to stranded troops. Aviation, in a sense, has taken the place of cavalry in the old-fashioned warfare which, incidentally, was also a "war of manoeuvre."

Then there has been the adaptation of motorized warfare—an application not as great as might have been expected, because of the difficult terrain of Ethiopia, and the lack of roads, except where the Ita-

lians have built them. However, trucks have been used enormously for supplies and artillery, and in one case, at least—that of the occupation of Gondar—the operation was effected by a great motorized column.

A whole chapter could be written about the enormous effectiveness of artillery in all the battles. Another interesting chapter could be devoted

to the military mapping done by the Italians—a truly amazing performance, far beyond anything previously accomplished. And then there is the "logistical" end of the campaign—the work that has been done, and extremely well done, by the services which correspond, in the American Army, to the Quartermaster and Ordnance Corps. In another field there are the hospital ships—the last word in their department of war. But there will be books written about the African campaign, and the public will, in time, learn all there is to learn about it.



IMPERATORE

## TORTURE AND DECAPITATION of Airman Minniti

Statement by Three Members of the Egyptian Medical Mission.

### AFFIDAVIT.

On February 15th, 1936—Year XIV of the Fascist Epoch—Abdel Mohsein El Wishy, an Egyptian citizen living in Cairo, formerly attached to the Egyptian Medical Mission in Abyssinia as assistant dispenser, came of his own accord to the editorial offices of the 'Giornale d'Oriente' and made the following statements to me, Dr. Filippo Zamboni, son of Albino, deceased, in the presence of four witnesses, Cav. Ing. Latino Tozzi, Prof. Arduino Albanese, Prof. Pier Luigi Malesci, and Subhi Wehedah, those statements being confirmed categorically by the other members of the Mission, MM. Kamel Ahmed and Labib Salamah,

who have heard corroboratory statements from reliable persons in Ethiopia.

Abdel Mohsein Wishy made the following declaration on oath:

"On December 24th, at about 4 p. m., coming out of the Egyptian ambulance tent at Bolali, I saw a group of Abyssinian levies going by under the command of Sergeant Manghestu, dragging along a man in aviator's uniform, the man's hand being tied behind his back. As I had to go to fetch water in the neighbourhood, at Bir, I set out following the same road as the Abyssinians. A little further on they stopped and, after taking off the airman's overalls, placed shackles on his legs as well and bound him to a tree.

"Having been called up by Sergeant Manghestu, who asked me for a cigarette, I approached, and, out of curiosity, stopped to look on, though I certainly did not foresee the horror of the spectacle I was to witness.

"While the sergeant sat on the ground smoking the cigarette I had given him, the soldiers unbound the prisoner's hand and, holding him fast, cut off his fingers. Manghestu, having finished his cigarette, approached the unfortunate prisoner, who was shrieking with pain, replaced the iron shackles on his bloody wrists, took off his coat and shirt, and spat in his face. One of the soldiers cut off a tuft of hair from the back of his head, as the Abyssinians do to malefactors, and handed it to Manghestu. Thereupon the airman's feet were unshackled and his trousers were taken off. Being narrow at the bottom, they were slit with a knife. He was thus left completely naked. A soldier replaced the irons on the man's feet, and, kneeling, pressing his head against the wretch's belly to hold him fast, cut off his genital organs.

"The airman gave a heartrending shriek, while the blood gushed out from the horrible wound.

"At this point I, who had been glued to the spot by horror, began to run towards the ambulance tent. There I met the dresser Mohammed Hassan, to whom, as soon as I was fit to do so, I described, my voice hoarse with emotion, the appalling spectacle I had witnessed. We both returned to the spot to fetch the leather bottle which I had left behind me in my flight.

"But a still more horrible scene awaited us. The poor wretch, now a corpse, had been unbound and set on the ground, where he lay bathed in a pool of blood, while the sergeant was busy flaying the skin off the victim's chest. Aghast, but overcoming the fear which the Ethiopian levies

STAR, Mar. 22, 1935. Van Paassen.

The heat in the desert of Basa is so terrific that no white man can stand it for any length of time. Through that blistering inferno, in which there isn't a single oasis, not the smallest waterholes, not an inch of shade and nothing resembling a human habitation, the Italian expeditionary force will have to advance if it is to invade Abyssinia. After that awesome wilderness comes a range of savage mountains, another stretch of godforsaken desert-land, ghoulis in its nakedness and aridity, and then comes the Abyssinian army.

The Italian army will shrivel up like dry leaves.

MAIL, June 28, '35. Editorial.

Before Italy can be trusted with a "civilizing" mission in Abyssinia, she ought to be required to undergo a test to determine whether her own civilization is sufficient for the task.

GLOBE, July 24, '35. Editorial.

With eighty thousand tons of British fighting ships on their way to Malta, it may not yet be too late for the nations that want peace to make it plain to Signor Mussolini that they are prepared to make it extremely unpleasant for the man who brings war upon them.

STAR, July 27 '35. R. Halliburton.

Italy must wage war 2,500 miles from home. She must send out by ship, via the Suez canal, all the provisions, arms, motors, timber, cement, necessary for her campaign.

## VENOM (AMENITIES OF THE

STAR, Mar. 22, 1935. Van Paassen. Her seaport at Massawa in Eritrea is so ill-favored that it takes a week to get a ship unloaded. And then the cargo piles up on shore for more weeks before it can be removed to the interior.

The nature of the country, then, is Abyssinia's best ally.

But she has another enormous advantage, too—the morale of her soldiers compared to the morale of the Italians.

STAR, July 31, '35. Van Paassen.

37,000 Italian soldiers have so far been shipped back from Africa suffering from enteric fever, malaria, scurvy, scrofula and other tropical diseases. This figure represents fully 13% of the total strength of the Italian armed forces in East Africa, estimated at 280,000 men.

Fresh information reaching League of Nations authorities to-day is that dysentery is playing havoc with the Italian troops massed in East Africa. The number of cases to date is said to total 15,000.

STAR, Aug. 1, '35. Pierre J. Huss.

"Tanks are useless in the mountains and only pack animals can get over the passes. Water, as in Ogada, is scarce and the Italians must lug it along for man and animal. There is a blazing heat in valley and plain, and the desert stretch facing the southern part of Eritrea is a furnace.

STAR, Aug. 15, '35. Rev. Dr. Lambie

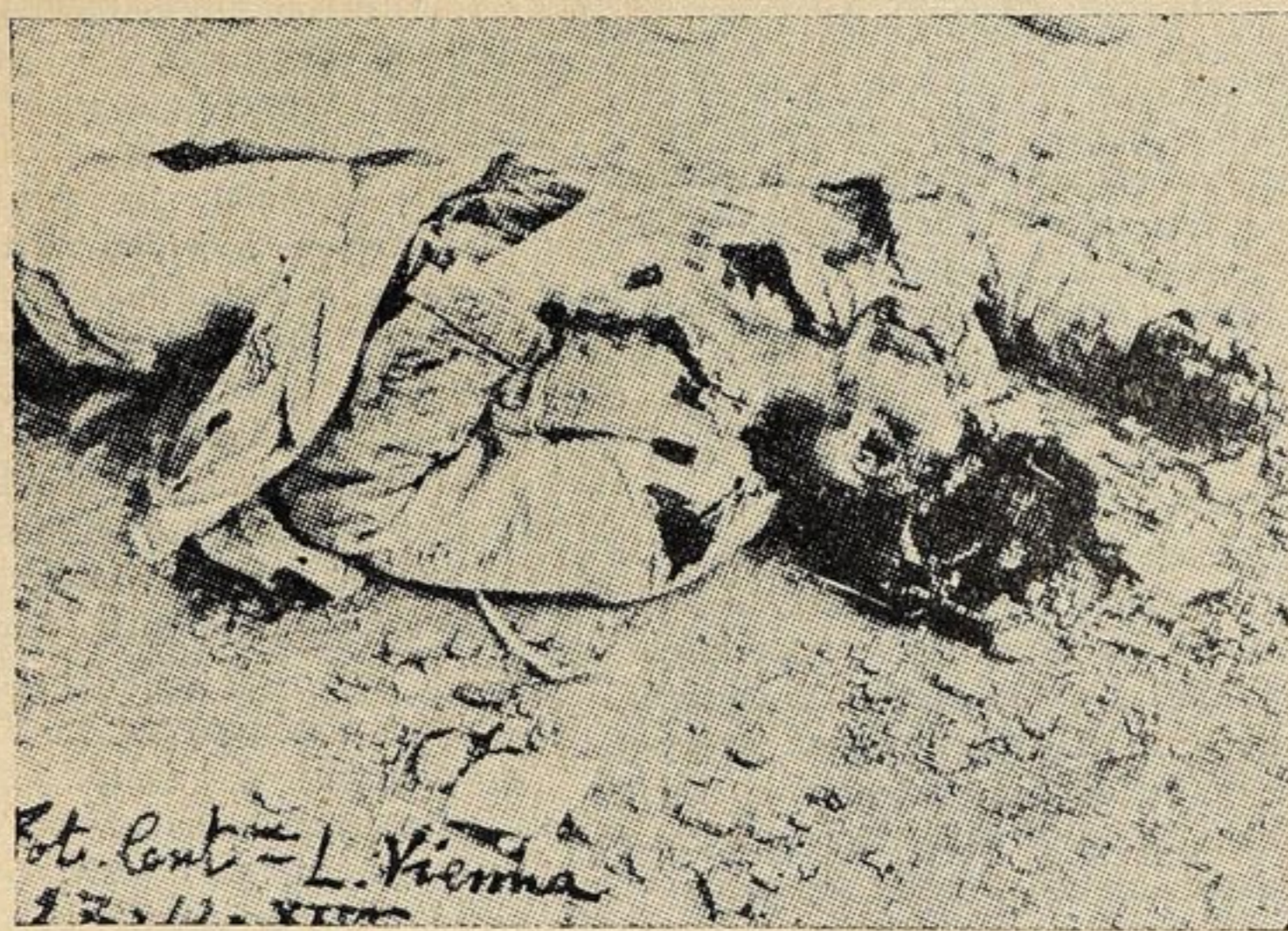
"Mussolini," Dr. Lambie told The Star, "will never conquer Ethiopia."

Leaflets signed by General Graziani which were worded roughly as follows: 'You have murdered an Italian airman, violating the principles of humanity according to which prisoners are sacred. You shall be punished.'

"I then learnt that the airman's name was Minniti.

"Shortly afterwards the Italian aeroplanes did, in fact, bomb the region. The ambulance, however, did not suffer any damage. The nearest bomb fell at a distance of 3 km. from our tent.

"A few days later, at the request of Dr. Sakkawi—as the zone was dangerous, owing to the proximity of Abyssinian levies, who were the object of the Italian air attacks—the ambulance left Bolali for Jijiga and



Private Ciro Parise, son of Pietro Parise, born at Resina, district of Nola, class 1911 — Tansoca' (Tembien) — December 27th, 1935. Top of skull blown off by a dum-dum bullet discharged at point-blank range.

## The Uncivilized Abyssinians

H. E. Fulvio Suvich, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, telegraphed the Secretary General of the League of Nations as follows:

By right of retrospective information to state members of the League of Nations, I beg to inform your lordship that the Belgian lieutenant, Armand Frère, passing through Gibuti, on April 22 last, left with three Italian journalists the following declaration, written and signed by his hand:

I make the following declaration on my honour as an officer: In the month of January, during the Italian offensive at Kolmaye, on the Somali front, as military advisor to Ras Desta, I was present at a feast of Abyssinian soldiers in honour of Ras Desta, of three decapitated heads of Italian soldiers who were also emasculated.

To stimulate this disgusting feast they pretended to break the corpse and eat the flesh; knives and swords cutting the cold and stiff corpses.

Twelve Eritrean soldiers captured by Ras Desta's soldiers were decapitated and emasculated before my impotent presence.

I can assure you that Ras Desta gave the order not to take any prisoners and a gift of 10 thallars awaited the arrival of each proof of emasculation.

By order of this strenuous war, daily I saw his soldiers occupied in transforming their bullets into dum-dum missiles.

As regards the munitions found at Wadare in the Swiss Red Cross trucks, Ras Desta alone gave the order to load these munitions in the above mentioned trucks.



Head chopped to bits

two others the feet from which the shoes had been filched, another the clothes, and Manghestu finally the genital organs, got into a lorry that was leaving for Daggah Bur, Jijiga and Harrar.

"On the following day, when I took the medical reports to Wehib Pasha, I recounted the horrible scene I had witnessed. He, it must be admitted, showed great annoyance, but advised me to hold my tongue.

"My companion Mohammed Hassan also told the story to Dr. Mahmud Izzet, who ordered him in future to keep within hospital bounds.

"Three days later, Manghestu returned to Bolali. He said that he had had most wonderful receptions at Diredawa and Harrar when he had arrived with the Italian airman's head and genitals. He added that at Harrar a great procession had been formed and had proceeded to the palace of the Provincial Governor to show him the ghastly trophies.

"It was on the fourth day, if I am not mistaken, that Italian aeroplanes made an incursion and dropped

Harrar. In the latter town we met Dr. Abdel Hamid Said, the representative of the Egyptian Committee for the Defence of Abyssinia."

(Signed) Abdel Mohsein El Wishy

We, the undersigned, Kamel Ahmed and Labib Salamah, members of the Egyptian Mission, fully confirm on oath the statements made by Abdel Mohsein Wishy. Concerning the facts of which he was an eye-witness, we have collected corroboratory evidence from trustworthy persons in Ethiopia.

(Signed) Kamel Ahmed Labib Salamah.

We, the undersigned, Cav. Ing. Ing. Latino Tozzi Condivi, Prof. Arduino Albanese, Prof. Pier Luigi Malesci, Subhi Wehedah, state that we have heard the evidence of Abdel Mohsein Wishy given in our presence.

(Signed) Latino Tozzi Condivi Arduino Albanese. Pier Luigi Malesci. Subhi Wehedah. (Signed) Filippo Zamboni.