

# RUSSIANS DEAL SLEDGE HAMMER BLOWS TO BREAK BACKBONE OF ENEMY'S CAMPAIGN IN THE BALKANS

## ALLIED LAND AND SEA FORCES BOMBARD TURKS AT DARDANELLES

### Constantinople Reports Fierce Attacks by Anglo-French Troops — Berlin Paper Says Order Given to Launch Austro-German Attack on Allied Armies in Greece.

Constantinople, Jan. 7, via Amsterdam and London, Jan. 2.—Heavy fighting continues along the Dardanelles front still held by the Allies. An engagement in which the land and sea forces of the invaders took part is reported by the war office in the following statement:

"On the afternoon of December 31 we exploded two mines on our right wing. The enemy's artillery, assisted by two cruisers, bombarded our trenches in the centre of our front. We replied effectively.

"Our batteries at the Narrows bombarded the landing place at Seddul Bahr and the neighboring camps. The French battleship Suffren assisted by five torpedo boats, replied unsuccessfully.

"Our airplanes attacked and repelled a hostile aeroplane which was making a reconnaissance."

### Attack on Saloniki to Begin

Berlin, Jan. 2, via London.—The Morgenpost today publishes a report that orders have been given to the German and Austrian troops in Serbia to advance into Greece and attack the French and British. A Bucharest despatch to the Morgenpost credits this statement to the Outrout of Sofia. It is said Germany has communicated to Greece her desire to clear Greecean territory of the Allied forces. The German minister at Athens, the despatch says, told Premier Skoufoudis the best interest of Greece demanded the removal of the French and British, inasmuch as in the existing circumstances Greece would be exposed to danger from the troops of the Central Powers, which have been ordered to pursue the Allies on Greek territory.

### Nancy Bombarded, Two Inhabitants Killed

Paris, Jan. 2.—The following report was given out by the war office today:

"Between the Aye and the Oise, our heavy artillery silenced the enemy batteries in the region of Amy, to the south of Roze.

"Between Soissons and Rheims there was fighting with mines. We exploded successfully two small mines in the region of Troyon, and a third near Pompele, southeast of Rheims."

### Reunion in Trenches on Christmas Day

"The King" and "Canada" Drunk in Good English Beer Imported for the Occasion.

London, Jan. 2, (Montreal Gazette cable).—Describing Christmas Day at the front, a trooper of the Canadian Western Cavalry of the Second Division says:

"We had a very decent day under the circumstances. There was a regular reunion of our troops at squadron headquarters, many not having met since coming to France. Dinner consisted of soup, roast pork, vegetables and plum pudding, and the toasts—'The King' and 'Canada'—were drunk in good English beer imported for the occasion. This was followed by a concert. On the whole, the day, though not so bright as if we were at home, was much brighter than we had anticipated."

### COL. J. L. BIGGAR DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTS

Has Done Excellent Work Since Outbreak of the War and Appointment is Well-merited Promotion.

Special to The Standard.  
Ottawa, Jan. 2.—Col. J. Lyons Biggar has been appointed director general of transports and supply. This is a promotion. Since the outbreak of the war he has looked after the arrangements for transport and transport supplies for the Canadian forces. Under the management of Col. Biggar over 200,000 troops have been moved by rail, while 125,000 troops have been moved across the Atlantic and to Bermuda. Only one life has been lost and this was the case of a soldier who fell off a train on the way to Valcartier. Col. Biggar is a brother of W. H. Biggar, vice-president of the G.T.R.

### RUSSIANS DRIVEN BACK

London, Jan. 2, 1.25 a. m.—A Bagdad despatch received by Reuters Telegram Company by way of Amsterdam says that a Turkish division, advancing in the region of Sul Balak, south of Lake Urmiah, drove the Russians from the town, inflicting important losses. The Russians, the despatch adds, are being pursued.

Paris, Jan. 2 (3.35 p. m.)—A delayed Montenegro official statement says:

"Artillery actions and infantry engagements occurred on all the fronts on December 31. The Austrians made particularly violent attacks near Molkovatz, and Bogioevitch, but were repulsed."

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## CZAR'S ARMIES ATTACKING SUCCESSFULLY ON FRONT OF OVER THREE HUNDRED MILES

### Most Ambitious Strategic Attempt Since War Began and Aims at Crippling Germanic Armies on Whole Line Across the Balkans—Success Will Menace Vitals of Austria-Hungary and Subdue Turkey—Victorious on Heights Near Czernowitz.

London, Jan. 2.—The Russians have captured heights northeast of Czernowitz, Bukovina, according to a despatch to Reuters Telegram Company from Petrograd. Eight hundred and seventy prisoners fell into the hands of the Russians.

London, Jan. 2.—Russia's campaign in Bessarabia continues to be the most important viable war activity. From the Pripet to the Rumanian frontier, over a front of at least three hundred miles, a huge Russian force with a great appearance of confidence is hurling sledge-hammer blows at the opposing forces, which, according to all accounts, totals at least a million and a half men.

Petrograd still claims considerable success in the early stages of the campaign, and despatches emphasize the excellent equipment, supplies and munitions which Russia laid up for this purpose during a period of comparative passivity.

Some London observers, speculating on the meaning of the Bessarabia move, call it as one of the most ambitious strategic plans since the beginning of hostilities, and predict that it will prove a colossal attempt to break the backbone of the Germanic allies, the whole line across the Balkans. Thus one critic says:

"The plan is that Russia and the other Allies, moving from different sides, shall meet in the Balkans and gain complete mastery of that peninsula. If they succeed, Turkey will be subdued and the vitals of Austria-Hungary menaced."

### Nothing Official From Roumania

So long as Russia keeps up her present activity just north of the Rumanian border, the attitude of Roumania will continue to grow in importance. There have been many assertions in the Entente capitals that Roumania was about to enter the war on the side of the Allies, but nothing to support this has yet been heard from credible Roumanian sources, meanwhile in the south of the Balkan peninsula, the Allies continue their expectant attitude toward a threatened attack, although Greece seems mainly occupied in making various diplomatic protests, having followed up a protest to the Entente Powers against the arrest of the consuls by an equally strong protest to the Central Powers against their airplanes flying across Greek territory in a raid which killed a Greek shepherd and a few sheep.

### A Joint Protest

Paris, Jan. 1, (3.50 p. m.)—The representatives of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria, have made collective representations to the Greek government relative to the arrest of their consuls at Saloniki by the Allies, according to a Havas despatch from Athens. They were informed by Premier Skoufoudis that he already had protested to the British and French governments.

### On Italian Front

Rome, Jan. 2, 1.15 a. m.—The Italian war office has issued the following official communication:

"Last night small enemy attacks were easily repulsed near Mori Val Lagarina, and on the Col Di Lana, and on the slopes of the Rambon in the Pleszo Plateau region.

"In the Carso zone, our detachments took prisoners and munitions. Hostile aeroplanes yesterday dropped bombs on Marco al Lagarina, on the Strigano and Borgo Val Susana, but without damage."

### REUNION IN TRENCHES ON CHRISTMAS DAY

"The King" and "Canada" Drunk in Good English Beer Imported for the Occasion.

### HON. JOHN HARRIS DIES AT ST. JOHN'S, N.F.D.

President of Legislative Council—Str Coban Floated and Towed to St. John's for Repairs.

St. John's, Nfld., Jan. 2.—Hon. John Harris, president of the legislative council, died yesterday, aged fifty-seven years. He was a partner in the mercantile firm of Hearn & Company, and his fellow partner, John Henderson, died on Christmas Day.

The Black Diamond liner Coban, ashore at Placentia last week, and repaired, was towed here today for repairs.

### MUST SERVE TIME AS RECRUITS BEFORE CAN SECURE COMMISSION

London, Jan. 2, 7.51 a. m.—The War Office announces that heretofore commissions as officers will be granted only to men who have completed their course as recruits, and that preference will be given to men who have served with the expeditionary force.

This order, which presumably will apply to all units organized under the compulsory system, is expected to make possible more rapid training of troops, as well as to insure a satisfactory standard of qualification for officers.

### KING GEORGE HOTEL AT SYDNEY IS BURNED

Blaze Broke Out Midnight Saturday and Guests Had Narrow Escape — Loss About \$50,000.

Sydney, Jan. 2.—Fire which totally destroyed the King George Hotel, broke out shortly after twelve o'clock Saturday night. Persons passing by the building about five minutes before the alarm sounded saw no signs of fire then visible.

The night porter J. W. Johnson, and the hotel clerks among the guests and a hurried scramble for clothing soon ensued; trunks were hurriedly packed but most of these had to be abandoned later, as the fire gained headway rapidly and many of the guests considered themselves lucky to escape with their lives.

It was soon seen that the building was doomed, inside of half an hour the whole building was a huge mass of flames.

The firemen worked steadily and it is due to their splendid efforts that the damage was confined to the hotel alone. The heat was intense and soon the adjoining buildings were seen to be in danger. The store of A. J. Beaton and Sons, undertakers, caught about two o'clock but prompt action on the part of the firemen soon prevented the flames getting a grip. At 3 o'clock sharp the southern end of the building collapsed part of it falling outward across the street and the other part falling on the residence of Dr. E. M. McDonald.

At this juncture the fire laddies pulled off a most spectacular stunt arranging a hoose one of them cleverly lassoed the peak of the burning wall which was resting on Dr. McDonald's residence and with the aid of some others he pulled it to the ground. The firemen worked all through the night and at about eight o'clock this morning it was considered safe to allow the fire to burn itself out.

At 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon it was still smoldering. The value of the building is estimated at \$70,000. The loss is partly covered by about \$50,000 insurance, \$40,000 being the insurance on the building and \$10,000 on the stock.

The hotel was formerly conducted by Mr. Alfonso Vassallo, under the name of Alfonso Hotel. It was remodelled in 1910 for Messrs. Mombourquette and McNab.

## BRITISH STEAMER TORPEDOED; AMERICAN CONSUL AMONG LOST

### Sinking of Stmr. Persia in the Mediterranean One of Most Cold-Blooded Crimes in Records of Hun Submarine Warfare—No Warning Given and Vessel Sank in Few Minutes—Two Boatloads of People Drawn Down by Suction of Sinking Steamer.

Bulletin—London, Jan. 2.—Reuters correspondent at Cairo, Egypt, telegraphs that the British steamer Persia was torpedoed Thursday in the Mediterranean without warning and sank within a few minutes.

AMERICAN CONSUL AMONG VICTIMS.

Bulletin—Washington, Jan. 2.—Advice to the State Department today from American Consul Garrela at Alexandria, Egypt, indicate that Robert N. G. McNeely, consul at Aden, Arabia, who was on the steamer Persia when she was sunk in the Mediterranean, was lost. He was last seen in the water after the vessel sank. Consul Garrela reports that Charles H. Grant, of Boston, another American aboard the Persia was saved. No submarine was seen by survivors, according to Garrela's report but an officer of the Persia saw the wake of the torpedo which struck his ship. She sank in five minutes.

London, Jan. 2.—Unofficial despatches from Cairo state that the Persia was torpedoed without warning and sank in five minutes. Between 150 and 160 survivors have been landed at Alexandria, Egypt. Robert N. McNeely, American consul at Aden, Arabia, is believed to have been drowned.

Reuters Cairo correspondent makes the unreserved statement that Mr. McNeely lost his life. Charles H. Grant, of Boston, was saved.

### Struck in Vital Spot

Details of the sinking of the Persia came in slowly today but such information as was received made it appear that the number of persons who escaped in the four boats which were put off was larger than was feared when the first news was received yesterday. The Peninsular & Oriental Company, which owned the Persia, announced this morning that 153 survivors had arrived at Alexandria.

The survivors comprise the chief officer, second officer, seven engineers, twenty-seven seamen, sixty-three lascars, and fifty-nine passengers.

A Lloyd's despatch gives the number as 153, made up of 59 passengers of whom seventeen are women, and ninety-four members of the crew, including fifty-nine lascars. The survivors include ten military officers and eight persons who are not British subjects.

"The ship was struck amidships on the port side at 1.10 p. m.," says Reuters correspondent at Cairo. "She had disappeared completely by 1.15."

Survivors say it was little short of a miracle that any one was saved. There was no panic. Four boats were launched, with the utmost promptitude.

"The captain was drowned. When last seen, he was swimming, after the liner had plunged beneath the surface."

Both the Peninsular and Oriental Company and Reuters Cairo correspondent say that Mr. Grant has been landed at Alexandria. The steamship company this afternoon had received no news of Mr. McNeely's fate. Edward Rose, of Denver, left the Persia at Gibraltar, as was reported yesterday.

A Survivors Account.

London, Jan. 2 (11.40 p. m.)—The Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company tonight received the following telegram from C. C. Bingham, who was among the survivors of the Persia disaster:

"A torpedo struck the ship on the port bow at 1.05 o'clock in the afternoon when about forty miles south of the east end of the island of Crete. No warning was given, nor any attempt made to assist. Within five minutes the ship had sunk. It was impossible to lower the starboard boats, owing to the heavy list. Five or six boats were lowered on the port side. I did not see this myself, as I was washed overboard when the boat capsized.

"The conduct of the passengers and crew was splendid. There was no struggling and no panic. Four boats, after thirty hours at sea, were picked up by a warship."

### Two Boatloads Drawn Down By Suction

London, Jan. 2.—A despatch to the Times from Cairo says that two boatloads of people were drawn down with the steamer Persia, when she sank as there was no time to cut the ropes. Four boats got away, but it was thirty hours before a trawler picked them up. Several ships passed by without assisting the refugees, being afraid presumably of decoys. Many passengers were thrown into the water when the vessel heeled over.

### Will Be Disavowed if Proved Austrian Submarine Did It

Washington, Jan. 2.—Anxiety over the news of the sinking of the British steamship Persia increased in official circles here today when a consular despatch brought the information that the ship had been torpedoed without warning and that at least one American citizen, Robert N. McNeely, now consul at Aden, Arabia, was missing. At the same time officials were gratified at the indication, emanating from Baron Epeck Zweidinek, charge of the Austro-Hungarian embassy here, that the Vienna government would be quick to "satisfactorily adjust" the matter should it develop that an Austrian submarine commander had disobeyed instructions in regard to the torpedoing of passenger-carrying ships without warning.

"Judgment should be withheld pending the receipt of the real facts surrounding the sinking of the steamship Persia," said Baron Zweidinek. "It may have happened in many ways. In the first place, it is not yet proved that a submarine sank the Persia. If it was an Austrian submarine, it must be determined whether the circumstances were such as to warrant the action taken."

"I am confident, at least I hope, that the final explanation will be satisfactory. If the commander of the submarine disobeyed his instructions I feel sure my government will not hesitate to satisfactorily adjust the matter."

"From the answer made to the last note on the Ancona alone, it is quite evident that the Austro-Hungarian government will not countenance any act which is wrong."

Complete confidence prevails in the Austro-Hungarian government that if an Austrian submarine sank the Persia without warning the act would be disavowed promptly, and that the Austro-Hungarian government would be quick to make amends.

Only one despatch concerning the sinking of the Persia was received today by the State Department. It came from Consul General Garrela, at Alexandria, Egypt, and in it indicated that Consul McNeely, on his way to his post, had been lost. He was last seen in the water before the steamship went down. Consul Garrela reported also that Charles H. Grant of Boston, another American who was aboard the Persia, was among the survivors. No submarine was seen by the survivors, according to the consul's report, but an officer on the ship said he saw the wake of a torpedo. The Persia went down in five minutes. This despatch was immediately forwarded to President Wilson at Hot Springs.

While Secretary of State Lansing tonight declined to comment on the situation confronting the United States, it became known that he and other administration officials were awaiting full confirmation before forming an opinion and determining upon any action.

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