

# ADDIS DIGEST

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## SPECIAL ADWA VICTORY CENTENARY (1896 - 1996)

### «For the Motherland, the Emperor and the Faith»

«The Italians left their fortified positions at 9:00 p.m. and marched through the moonlit night hoping to obtain the advantage of surprise over a «greatly decimated army». Their objective was to occupy the hills around Adwa and position their superior artillery before the Ethiopians discovered what was going on.

Menilek and Taitu were at religious services with Ras Michael, Makonnen and Wole when they received the news of the Italian advance at 4:00 a.m. on Sunday. Menilek had become so accustomed to similar alerts over the previous month that upon receiving the news, he smiled, shrugged and continued to worship. But shortly after the first messengers had come, news of an enemy engagement of the Tigrean troops on duty that night under Ras Mengasha Yohannes, left no room for doubt.



Emperor Menelik II

The moving scene that followed was described by the French magazine «*Revue française de l'Etranger*» (August 1896) some months after the battle of Adwa:

«Special trumpeters were ordered to sound the call to arms, but the incredulous trumpeters remained silent. Fortunately, Ras Mekonnen appeared. The assembly was sounded and, carried out in an instant... Priests passed among the assembled troops, hearing confession, giving Holy Communion, and blessing the soldiers. After Menilek, Taitu and the Ras had received the bread and wine, the green, orange and red flag was inclined towards the crucifix. The masses of humble Abyssinians beseeched the God of combat: «For the motherland! For the Emperor! For the faith!» Confidently, the troops rallied around the Emperor and the flag. The rising dawn lit this moving, grandiose scene of religious and military fervor. It was 5:30. The army got underway with the usual clamor.»



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**RAGPEHA**