

## THE MARCH TO DOMINO

Degezmatch Abraha, son of the deceased Ras Hagos Mirach Woldekidan marched from Degua Tembien (ደጉዓ ተምቤን) in Tigray and reached the border checkpoint of the newly established Colonia Italiana Di Eritrea and requested an political asylum from the Italian authorities.

The young Dejezmatch, in his early 20s played a smart card at border checkpoint of Colonia Italiana Di Eritrea to gain access to the domino. He explained to the Italian authorities, "My father's fateful role sealed the fate of Ras Alula, which is the number one enemy of your country, now I'm seeking political asylum from you."

Trio special events unfolded separately at different locations, which assisted Abraha Koblaly to gain the golden key to the domino from the Italian authorities:

1. Battle of Dogali, Mereb Melash, 26 January 1887.
2. Battle of Adi Chumai near Shire, Tigray, 19 January 1897.
3. Death of Ras Alula Uqbin, 15 February 1897.

## 1. BATTLE OF DOGALI (ወግእ ደጎሊ)

27 January 1887

The Battle of Dogali was fought on 26 January 1887 in Dogali, Mereb Melash, which is located 18 KM west of Massawa. The fight was between Italian colonial expeditionary force and native army of Ras Alula Uqbin (ራእሲ ኣሉላ ወቅቢን)

or Alula Aba Nega (አሌላ አባ ነጋ). Ras Alula was a loyal general as well related in blood with Aste Yohannes IV, Emperor of Ethiopia.

In the Battle of Dogali, Ras Alula Aba Nega's army achieved a stunning victory. They slaughtered 450 Italian soldiers and killed the highly decorated commander Tenente Collonello Tomaso De Cristoforis of the Italian colonial expeditionary force.

News of the Battle of Dogali, in which the Government of Italy was utterly defeated by inferiorly armed native African warriors, circulated around the globe like a raging wild bush fire. The Government of Italy felt unbearable humiliation by the daring action of Ras Alula Aba Nega.

The triumphant Ras Alula Aba Nega was heralded as the brilliant war strategist of Africa and some European journalists glorified him as "the modern day Hannibal", citing the 247–183/182 BC Carthaginian general who bravely fought the Roman Republic.

Immediately the Government of Italy declared national vendetta of high priority to kill Ras Alula Aba Nega to score for the devastation and humiliation Italy suffered in Dogali, at the hands of Ras Alula Aba Nega.



### **TRIUMPHANT RAS ALULA UQBIN (ራእሲ አሉላ ዑቅቢን)**

Ras Alula killed the highly decorated Italian commander Tenente Collonello Tomaso De Cristoforis in the Battle of Dogali in 1887. He also killed the powerful Ras Hagos Mirach Woldekidan of Tembien in the Battle Of Adi Chumai (ዓ.ዲ ጩማይ) near Shire in Tigray in 1897. Ras Hagos is the grand-grandfather of Isayas Afewerki. The Government of Italy put on Alula's head, a national vendetta of high priority to kill Ras Alula in order to score for Dogali.



[Image #5](#)

[TENENTE COLONNELLO TOMMASO DE CRISTOFORIS](#), commander of the Italian colonial troupe was killed in the Battle of Dogali by Ras Alula Aba Nega's army. The Government of Italy put national vendetta of high priority to kill Alula to avenge for the death of 449 Italian soldiers and De Cristoforis.



**BATTLE OF DOGALI, JANUARY 26, 1887:** In this old Italian military media, rendered by an Italian artist, commander of the Italian troupe Tenente Colonnello Tommaso De Cristoforis (Red Arrow) is seen throwing futile charge against Ras Alula Aba Nega's raiding army who flooded down into the enemy along the narrow gorges of the escarpments in Dogali.

## **2. BATTLE OF ADI CHUMAI (ወግእ ዓዲ ጩማይ)**

**January 19, 1897**

**Abraha Koblaly's father, Ras Hagos Mirach Woldekidan of Tembien fought a fateful battle against the mightiest Tigrayan war hero and strategist Ras Alula Uqbin (Aba Nega)**

in Adi Chumai, in the vicinity of Shire in Tigray. The fateful Battle of Adi Chumai was fought on 19 January 1897 between the armies of two Tigrayan giants.

The critical battle of Adi Chumai was won by Ras Alula Aba Nega. Aba Negas' soldiers captured the defeated Ras Hagos Mirach Woldekidan of Tembien. Ras Hagos was wounded in the battlefield at the same time captured by his foe.

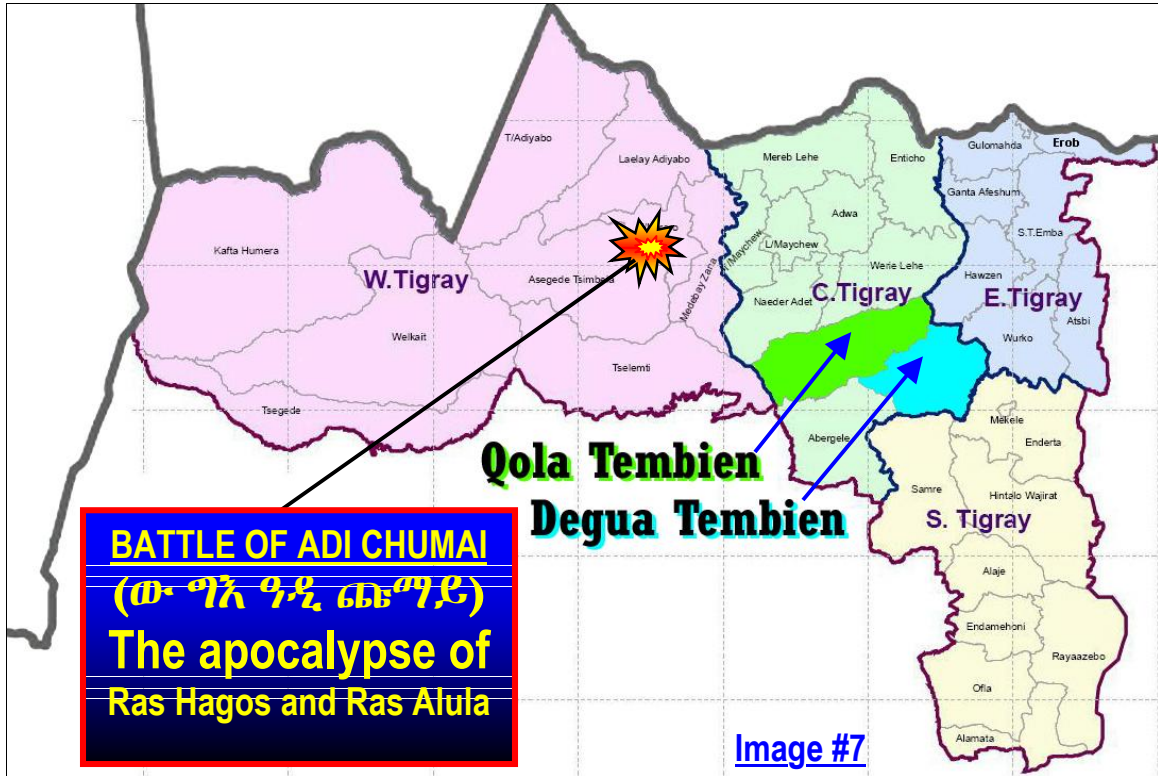
The victorious Ras Alula Aba Nega was also wounded to his leg in the battlefield but victory was on his side. Ras Alula Aba Nega ordered Ras Hagos to be hanged. The wounded and captured Ras Hagos was executed by hanging at the scene of the battlefield in Adi Chumai, near Shire.

### **3. DEATH OF RAS ALULA UQBIN**

February 15, 1897

The great war hero, the strategist and the pride of Africa Ras Alula Uqbin, Aba Nega died on 15 February 1897 just 27 days after the death of Ras Hagos Mirach Woldekidan of Tembien in the Battle of Adi Chumai. Aba Nega died as consequences from the gunshot wound he received to his leg in the Battle of Adi Chumai.

Adi Chumai (ዓዲ ጩማይ), which saw two Herculean Rases die on the heels of each other, became the fateful battle that ended the lives of two influential Tigrayn Rases. It ended all Tigrayan fighting potentials of the era. It also became the end of the mightiest House of Mirach Woldekidan in the annals of Degua Tembien.



**FATEFUL BATTLE OF ADI CHUMAI**  
**(ጽሕፍቶታት ውግእ ዓዲ ጨማይ)**  
19 January 1897

Ras Alula Aba Nega defeated Ras Hagos Mirach Woldekidan of Degua Tembien (ደጉዓ ተምቤን) in the fateful Battle of Adi Chumai, vicinity of Shire. The defeated Ras Hagos was wounded and captured in the battle. He was hanged to death at the scene by the orders of Ras Alula Aba Nega, who was also wounded but victorious in the battle. The fallen Ras Hagos is the grand-grandfather of Isayas Afewerki.

Ras Alula died 27 days after the death of Ras Hagos in Adi Chumai, due to the consequences of the gunshot wound he received in the Battle of Adi Chumai.

**Degua Tembien:**  
**A Natural Fortress**  
**(ደጉዓ ተምቤን: ናይ ተፈጥሮ ፎርቶ)**

**Qola Tembien (ቆላ ተምቤን)** is the district with predominantly lowland plain areas.

**Degua Tembien (ደጉዓ ተምቤን)** is the district with rugged features, plateaus, ridges, cliffs, hilltops and mountain ranges that makes it an ideal natural fortress.

Degua was the turf of the House of Mirach Woldekidan of Degua Tembien (እንዳ ምራጭ ወልደ-ኪዳን ናይ ደጉዓ ተምቤን).

## RAS ALULA DEAD.

**An Abyssinian General of Great Ability—The Son of Peasants.**

ROME, Feb. 26.—Reports received here announce the death of the great Abyssinian chief, Ras Alula.

Ras Alula was fifty-five years old. His parents were peasants in the village of Punake, near Mekale. He served for several years as groom to the uncle of the Negus, Ras Area. He entered the service of Ras Area, whose daughter he married, and later he became Master of the Wardrobe at Court. After the death of his father-in-law, he was promoted to the rank of Chamberlain, and then he was made Governor of Tigre, with the title of Ras.

Ras Alula developed great military skill, and for many years was regarded as one of the greatest of Abyssinian Generals.

**The New York Times**

Published: February 27, 1897

Image #8

## RAS ALULA UQBIN (ራእሲ አሉላ ዑቅቤን) HONOUR AT DEATH OF GENERALISSIMO

Wartime celebrity of Ras Alula Uqbin, Aba Nega in New York Times, after he passed away on 15 February 1897. The news report was dispatched from Rome on February 26 and published in New York Times the next day. Italian and American reporters paid great homage to the Late Ras Alula Uqbin, Aba Nega.



## Express Biography

**Ras Alula Uqbin (ራእሲ አሉላ ዑቅቤን), Aba Nega (አባ ነጋ)  
or Wedi Uqbin (ወዲ ዑቅቤን)**

Born in Menawee, Tembien (መናዊ፡ ተምቤን) in 1840s; Married to ordinary Tigrayan W/ro Betweta, they had 3 children; Ras Alula divorced W/ro Betweta and married W/ro Amlesu Araya Dimstu, daughter of Enderta aristocrat Ras Araya Dimstu Debeb; On the other hand Ras Araya Dimstu Debeb's sister, W/ro Ameteselass Dimtsu Debed was the mother of Negus Yohannes IV of Ethiopia; In these affairs of blood, Ras Araya Dimstu Debeb's daughter W/ro Amlesu was the wife of Ras Alula while Ras Araya Dimstu Debeb's sister, W/ro Ameteselass was the wife of Dejezmatch Mirach Woldekidan of Tembien, father of Negus.

Ras Alula Aba Nega had these battles under his belt: Battle of Gundet (1975) . . . Battle of Gurae (1976) . . . Battle of the Kufit (1985) . . . Battle of Dogali (1987) . . . Battle of Metema (1989) . . . Adwa (1896). Except Metema, all battles are won by the Generalissimo.

Alula was a loyal generalissimo and a war hero under Negus; Died on 15th February 1987 as a consequences to a gunshot wound he received in the Battle of Aid Chula, which was fought 27 days earlier, between him and Ras Hagos March Woldekidan of Tembien, the brother of Negus.

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Inputs, comments, questions, corrections, opposition are kindly welcome.  
Please submit them to us. Thank you.

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Shall continue on Part Three