

BURMA

L.J. - Sunoco. Thursday, April 30, 1942.

In Burma, the capture of Lashio brings to a supreme climax the peril of the main Chinese and British forces in the sector of Mandalay. The Japs have cut around to their rear, and they are threatened with complete encirclement.

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This afternoon's British dispatch states that there is only minor fighting on the front in western Burma, south of Mandalay, the area of the Irrawaddy and Sittang rivers. Apparently the Japs are not trying to push the defenders back in those parts. Presumably, they have thrown everything into the sweep that crashed through to the east and ^{has taken} ~~is taking~~ ^{captured} them to Lashio, the Burma Road.

London military opinion ^{attributes} ~~contributes~~ the ^{debacle} ~~battle~~ in Burma to clever enemy strategy. They explain that the Jap attacks in western Burma, south of Mandalay, a week or so ago, were merely a feinting operation -

not the real thing. By threatening the British along the Irrawaddy, they drew the Chinese over from Eastern Burma to rescue the British. And the Chinese did -- with a headline victory. But that was all part of the Jap strategy, say British military experts. When the Chinese sent their forces to western Burma, they weakened the eastern end of the defending line -- and there the Japs crashed through.

GENERAL

Today an Army citation with terse brevity extolled the achievement of Brigadier-General Harold H. George. He was killed in an air crash in Australia along with Melville Jacoby, correspondent for TIME and LIFE magazines. General George is awarded the Distinguished Service Medal -- posthumously. The citation accompanying the decoration tells how he commanded the American Air Force in the Philippines during the heroic days of Batan.

The terse Army citation is expanded by a dispatch from United Press Correspondent Frank Hewlett in Australia. He speaks of -- "The Bamboo Fleet". In Batan General George commanded worn out and tattered planes -- patched up with bamboo. His air force never exceeded eleven airplanes, and was reduced to five battered crates. Yet it bombed the Jap invasion convoys -- and sank ships. The Japs constantly reported the Bamboo Fleet as a formidable sky armada.

General George said he hoped to meet his end in battle with Jap zero fighters, and it came in an air crash.

FLIERS

In travel stories there is a commonplace phrase - "the green hell of the tropics." Out in Australia, there are nine American air men who are employing that rather trite expression and saying - it is only too true. They are the crew of an American bomber that raided the Japs in New Guinea, and were forced down deep in the wilderness of the black island - green hell, according to them.

Today, the navigator, Lieutenant George Monroe of Kirkwood, Missouri, told the story as follows:- "We ran out of gas somewhere over southern New Guinea, and picked out a place to land. From the air," he relates, "it looked like a grassy field, - but it turned out to be a swamp covered by three or four feet of water and thick marsh grass so high I couldn't touch the top of it."

When the nine men of the crew stepped off the wings of their bomber, the water was up to their chest. "We couldn't see anything but the green stalks of ^{wild cane} ~~green~~ and sago," Lieutenant Monroe goes on. "It was like a wall around us. Every step we took we had to bend the stalks aside or hack through them with long jungle knives. At dusk," he continues, "we tried to arrange beds. We gathered cane into great piles, but our weight soon packed it down until we were lying in water."

Thus they battled their way through the green hell for three days and four nights. "General exhaustion made us all a little crazy," Lieutenant Monroe relates. "One man leaned against the green wall of cane thinking he was leaning against the side of a plane. He toppled into the water full

length. Another became convinced the mess hall was just across the road."

On the fourth day, the nine men came out of the cane brake swamp, just five miles from where they had started. They found a ^{Papuan} village, and then they had to go forty miles through the wilderness to ~~find~~ a British station, and from there ~~trudged~~ on to the coast - to Port Moresby.

~~That was a couple of weeks ago.~~ Now they are back with their squadrons in Australia, and today's news is that the crew of nine took off on another bombing raid against the Japs.

RAIDS

There was a big air battle over the English Channel today - a daylight sweep of R.A.F. bombers and fighters.

They smashed ^{again} at Nazi controlled points on the continent, and attacked ^{a German} ~~a Nazi~~ convoy off the coast of Brittany.

They bombed three enemy destroyers escorting merchant vessels, and badly damaged one of the destroyers.

This follows the big British air raids of last night, in which bombers flew over France and raised havoc with the great motor plant outside of Paris - the Gnome-Rhone factory. There was loss of civilian life in the suburb of Paris, and heavy damage.

This was the eighth day of the all-out R.A.F. air assaults - in which four thousand British planes have taken part. In the eight-day period, the R.A.F. has lost one hundred planes - a low cost, says London.

The Nazis continue to strike back in what are

~~Baedecker~~
called ~~Bettiger~~ raids, referring to that famous
~~Baedecker~~
~~Bettiger~~ guide ~~to~~ historic places in Europe. The
Nazi air corps is hitting at old and venerated cities
in England - as a sort of spite-revenge for those
round-the-clock bombings of the R.A.F. Last night
Norwich, haven of ancient tradition, was blasted.

In the House of Commons today, an M.P. asked
whether the British Government would attempt to get a
tacit agreement with Germany to refrain from bombing
historic monuments. He suggested that some such
implicit arrangement might be made through the Red Cross.

"No sir!" responded Deputy Prime Minister Atlee.

"Experience has shown the worthlessness of any agreement
entered into with Hitler."

In the Mediterranean sector, a British dispatch
states that a hundred and two persons were killed by a

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German air raid on Alexandria, the night before last -
Nazi planes striking at Britain's Number One base in
the eastern Mediterranean.

ENGLAND

Two election defeats for the Churchill Government are today's political sensation in Britain. Two Labor candidates defeated two Conservatives in districts where the Churchill party won the last time, ^{and Churchill himself campaigned} To make the event more significant, the two Laborites are not really members of the Labor Party. They are extremists of the Left who were expelled from the Party on the charge that their activities were injuring the collaboration of Labor with the Conservatives in the Churchill Government.

Two out of the three defeated candidates are the Laborites.

Both candidates ran on a program of - second front. They called for an invasion of the Nazi-controlled continent to help Soviet Russia. One today interpreted his successful election in these words:- "A command for the opening of a second front and victory this year."

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^{In direct}
~~Quite in~~ contrast to this, Lord Beaverbrook

was denounced in Parliament today because of his demand

for a second front. A Conservative M.P. denounced Beaverbrook's declaration over here in America, his appeal for an invasion to help the Soviets. The M.P. called this propaganda and an attempt to force the hand of the British government. He asked whether Beaverbrook, who is on an economic mission to the United States, had any right to make any declaration. Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee responded that Lord Beaverbrook was, as he said, "free to express his own opinion."

SOVIETS

Tomorrow will be a novel day in Soviet Russia -- May Day without a celebration. Ever since the Soviet Revolution, May Day has been the big occasion of the year all over Russia -- with great Red Army parades. Tomorrow, however, they will celebrate by working as usual -- in the face of the threatening Nazi offensive.

Some Soviet figures are released anent the German seige of Sevastopol. That siege began six months ago today, and the Red Army announces the German losses have been forty-five thousand killed -- before the defenses of Sevastopol.

MEETING

There are rumors of another one of those Hitler-Mussolini meetings - the kind that have been staged with a blaring of Nazi-Fascist trumpets. The last one, as I recall, occurred at the time when the Nazi blitzkrieg was launched on Soviet Russia. Since then, things have changed quite a bit for the Axis boys, and ^{HITLER} Adolf and ^{MUSSOLINI} Benito are not likely to meet in such triumphal style - especially since the Fascist Duce is said to be in a shaky situation in Italy.

Berlin quotes Rome today in denying the stories that Mussolini might be removed from power by King Victor Emanuel. The Axis ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ contention is that these reports are some kind of British-American propaganda. On the other hand, we in this country are warned that ^{the Mussolini stories} ~~there~~ may be some

kind of Axis propaganda - all of which leaves us in a state of confusion.

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Another bit of propaganda confusion comes today from the Office of Facts and Figures in Washington, which states that the military leaders in Germany are apparently cooperating in an effort to inform the German people that it was Hitler, and Hitler alone, who was responsible for the terrible Nazi winter campaign in Russia - with all its loss and suffering to the Germany Army. High Nazi generals and Nazi Number Two man Goering are said to be trying to convey this idea to the German people - putting the blame for Russia on Hitler. At the same time, similar propaganda is being shot into Germany by anti-Nazi broadcasts - blaming Hitler for the winter war.

RUBBER

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Today in Washington before an Agriculture Sub-Committee of the Senate, an international mystery thriller was related. The Sub-Committee is considering that Number One problem of war time -- synthetic rubber. They were told about a Polish inventor with a secret synthetic rubber formula so important that Senator Gillette stated: "It may completely solve our rubber situation." And he added the words, "Invaluable to us in defeating the Axis."

William S. C. Lacy, Chief of the Information Unit of the Office of Price Administration told a story that went back to the early Spring of Nineteen Forty, when the European War was new -- some six months after the first Nazi blitz campaign had crushed Poland. At that time Lacy was approached by a Polish refugee who asked, "Would your country be interested in a synthetic rubber formula?"

Lacy said, "Yes," and was told that he could get the formula if he would go to New York and contact

another refugee -- a Polish count. This he did, and got the formula.

Its importance was recognized at once -- an improved method of manufacturing synthetic rubber with alcohol as the basic substance -- instead of petroleum. The only trouble was, the formula was entirely useless, could not be worked. Because it was incomplete. Vital points of information were missing -- key facts about catalysts, those strange chemical agents.

Lacy was informed that the missing links could be supplied only by the inventor, named Shukevich. But where was the inventor? Lacy found out that he was in Italy. What was he doing there? That question evoked a dramatic bit of high international politics.

In the early Spring of Nineteen Forty, Fascist Italy was not yet in the war, and the general Allied policy was one of appeasement, -- trying to appease Mussolini to keep him from joining Hitler. The exiled Polish Government, the refugee regime in London, followed that policy. They were trying to offer

Mussolini inducements, and to this end Inventor Shukevich was in Rome with his secret rubber formula. Fascist Italy was about to get it -- as appeasement.

This was the information that Lacy procured about the Polish inventor. "Naturally I was excited," he told the Senate Committee today, "and felt that something must be done to get him out of the clutches of the Italians without delay."

He informed the Polish exile group in America that the United States was interested in the formula, and they replied -- if that was the case, they would try to get Shukevich out of Italy. This led to some international under-cover work, and after a while Lacy learned that the Poles had succeeded in getting the inventor to Brazil. There he was surrounded by international intrigue. Lacy stepped in, and managed to bring him to the United States.

~~In this country, the Polish inventor disclosed the full secret of the formula for synthetic rubber.~~

Now the formula is ready to go into action,
and the whole story is made public -- was told to
a Senate Sub-committee today.

DIM-OUT

The Army today took over the dim-out along the Atlantic coast - declaring that the voluntary control of lighting has failed. This was announced by Secretary of War Stimson today. He said that the voluntary dim-outs have not been successful - they have not dimmed the illumination along the Atlantic ~~seaboards~~ ^{TP} sufficiently. "It is imperative," said the Secretary ^{of War,} "to control lighting on the seacoast to prevent the silhouetting of ships, leading to their destruction." And he cited a case in which witnesses stated that the glare of lights on the Florida coast had definitely enabled a Nazi submarine to spot and sink a ship.

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So now the Army is taking control, ^{and} will enforce the regulations for the dim-out.

~~In New York, the bright lights of Broadway~~

Broadway looked strange without the giant animated signs, what they call -- spectaculars. Today Douglas Leigh, the Number One operator of animated and illuminated signs, suggested that some arrangement might be worked out, with the approval of the military authorities -- some way whereby the monster flicker boards might gleam on Broadway without shining up into the sky to help enemy submarines.

BONDS

In the War Bond campaign, the Treasury Department is now giving each state a quota -- each state to raise a certain amount each month. This begins on May First, and from that point it is almost compulsory for every wage earner to chip in with ten percent of his salary -- that is, the Government request is so urgent that it is virtually compulsory.

LABOR

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The Labor Bill in the House of Representatives was virtually killed by the House Naval Affairs Committee - the Smith-Vinson Bill to control profits and suspend the forty-hour week for the duration of the war. The Committee voted thirteen to twelve to put the bill on the shelf. This follows suggestions by the President that labor legislation be put aside for the time being; the lower House saying - okay. The Senate, too, has called off moves for labor regulation.

TAXES

Here's a late report from Washington. It states that all corporation excess profits may be taxed at the flat rate of ninety per cent. It is said that experts of the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives agreed on that idea today - the Government to take ninety per cent of excess profits.

PUZZLE

In New York, Jacob Ottner, seventy-nine years old, is a professional puzzle solver, and today he proved that he can also pick up the clew of a detective mystery. Who stole the corned beef and cabbage?

Puzzle Solver Ottner lives in a lodging house, does some cooking in his room, and keeps the foodstuffs in an icebox. All was okay, until recently - when the groceries began to disappear from the icebox. Somebody was stealing them - but who could it be?

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Puzzle Solver Ottner laid a trap. In his icebox he placed a piece of corned beef and a head of cabbage. And today, sure enough, this disappeared. Whereupon *the* Puzzle Solver ~~Ottner~~ sniffed the atmosphere *and* smelled that unmistakable fragrance! You know the rich scent of corned beef and cabbage, how it drifts through the corridors, and perfumes the whole house. Puzzle Solver Ottner had only to follow his nose, which led him down

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the hall to the room of another inhabitant of the
lodging house - an Irishman, trapped by the lure of corned
beef and cabbage.

The culprit turned out to be a friendly soul.
When the puzzle solver appeared at his door, he said:-
"Come in - and have a bit of corned beef and cabbage."

On a table Puzzle Solver Ottner saw his
corned beef cooked just right, the cabbage not too soggy.

So he sat down and had a square meal, eating most of his

^{own}
corned beef and cabbage. ^{And then} ~~before~~ he called ~~in~~ the cops.

Which certainly was solving a puzzle with ^{ghoulish} ~~complete~~

satisfaction.

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And now Hugh.