

P.T. - Sunoco. Tuesday, August 12, 1944.

German offensive number three was in full blast today. This is stated in a Moscow dispatch, which describes the present flare of battle as the third full force blitzkrieg attack.

The first was when the Panzer Divisions sliced through the Red Army in Poland, and drove past Minsk to the Berezina River. That break-through compelled the retirement of the whole Red Army to the Stalin Line; (or so it was called, although Moscow now denies that there ever was any Stalin Line.)

The second German offensive came when the Panzers cut through the middle of the front, all the way to Smolensk, on the road to Moscow. And at the same time German forces pushed in the direction of Leningrad.

Now the Red Army is fighting what Moscow calls the third offensive - the one in which the German High Command switched to the South and drove into the Ukraine.

Moscow describes it ~~xx~~ as a two punch affair - a smash in the North as well as in the South. The Soviet Communique admits that the blitzkrieg has made advances in both areas, but claims that Red forces have driven the Nazis back in the central ^{around} sector ~~of the~~ Smolensk.

Berlin pictures the battle ~~in~~ in the Ukraine as an overwhelming military triumph. Says the blitzkrieg forces have driven to the Black Sea. Meaning - that after thrusting east into the Ukraine, they cut ~~down~~ South. Berlin claims ^{the} advance to the Black Sea ~~and had~~ ^{has} been made in several places - both to the West and East of Odessa. Consequently - that great Soviet harbor is isolated. Berlin describes the advance in the southern part of the Ukraine with a big word - "gigantic".

In the West, the R.A.F. today conducted what is described as its greatest daylight raid, with American built flying fortresses ~~were~~ in the vanguard. London states that in the huge series of ^{to} bombings twenty British planes were lost. Berlin claims that the R.A.F. lost forty-one planes today.

The air activity in the West is intense - with British and Soviet collaboration in the bombing of Germany.

FRANCE

There's headline importance in a political event that occurred in France today. (Admiral Darlan, vice-premier in the government of Marshal Petain, was given complete command of all ~~the~~ French Military forces ^{today} - both in France and in the French Colonies. The comment from Vichy is - that Darlan is now invested with a greater authority than any figure in French History since Napoleon. This, in itself, is a striking fact, and it's all the more significant because of Admiral Darlan's attitude toward the war. He is said to be ^{bitterly} Anti-British and an advocate of full collaboration with Nazi Germany.

Late today, Marshall Petain, head of the Vichy Government, made a radio broadcast in which he announced the elevation of Darlan to full military power. The aged Marshal spoke of confusion and questioning in France. He blamed the uncertainty and division on propaganda made by the British and by the Free French forces of De Gaulle. The Petain radio address gave a measure of confirmation ~~on~~ to reports of increasing discontent among the French people - discontent against the policy of collaboration with Nazi Germany.

There are still other stories of division, and these focus on

Weygnad - the French pro-Consul in North Africa. They say that Weygnad ~~xxxxxx~~ is strongly opposed to Darlan's policy of lining France up with Nazi Germany. He advocates the least possible collaboration, as against Darlan's demand for full collaboration. So, how will Weygnad take today's event which puts him and his North African Army under the command of Darlan? In that question may lie a lot of history about to be made.

All of which casts an interesting light on Weygnad's recent movements - enigmatic movements. He flew from North Africa to Vichy, and was there while the decision was made to give the power to Darlan. He flew back to North Africa today - without attending the government council that announced the Darlan decision.

Marshal Petain, in his radio address today, made an appeal to the United States. He asked for American sympathy in these words:- "America has no reason to fear a decline of the French ideal." And he added, "The instinct for liberty still burns strong within us." Nothing very definite about that, but it's obviously some sort of assurance to Washington on the subject of Darlan's elevation to full military ~~xxxxxx~~ power.- assurance that France will not bow completely to the Nazis.

Today in Washington, Secretary of State Cordell Hull said he is watching the change in the Vichy Government with much interest, but he added that it was too early to express an opinion about it.

JAPAN

The tension in the Far East continues to increase. Events *are indeed* ~~are~~ moving according to a pattern that might well end in war, *in which* Today's developments are several.

First - in Tokyo a ~~Japanese~~ Japanese spokesman spoke in rather ominous fashion about American supplies to Soviet Russia. He said Japan is concerned about American war equipment being sent to Vladivostok that Soviet port so near to Japan. He made the comment that Japan couldn't be sure where that material for battle might end - whether it would ever get to the fighting front against the Nazi's in Western Russia, or ~~that~~ whether it would be retained by Red Army forces in the Far East, or whether it would wind up in the hands of the Chinese fighting Japan.

He conveyed the impression that the armament sent by America to the Soviets might be used eventually, not against Hitler, but against the Mikado's Empire. He expressed the opinion that a war between Japan and the Red Army seemed impossible, but added that you never could tell. All in all, today's Tokyo disquisition about American aid to the Soviets gives a good deal of support to the surmise - that Japan might undertake to stop American shipments going to Vladivostok.

Great Britain is taking a firm stand toward Japan's maneuvers in the direction of Siam. London says that the question of war or peace is up to Tokyo, and we hear today that the Mikado's government has received some strong representations from both Great Britain and the United States. In Washington, the opinion is expressed that there may be a complete break of commercial relations between the United States and Japan.

With Siam as an acute question, ^{here is important} ~~let's observe one bit~~
of military news from Southeastern ~~xxx~~ Asia. The Japanese army plans to send a hundred and eighty thousand men to that French colony which Japan has ^{recently} taken over. That mass of troops ^{to} ~~will~~ be concentrated in West Cambodia, ^{right} ~~which is~~ next door to Thailand - Siam.

CRASH

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A major air disaster in England was announced today. It was no affair of war, no misfortune in air battle - but an accident, a crash. A communique issued by the air ministry in London reads as follows :- "Sunday last a transoceanic aircraft flew into a hillside shortly after taking off. Twenty-two passengers and crew lost their lives," it adds, "of the twenty-two - seven were Americans."

No further details are given - neither the type of the plane that crashed, nor the kind of trans-oceanic flying in which it was engaged. However, some inferences are to be drawn.

The announcement from London was preceded by one in Montreal - made by the Royal Air Force ferrying command. That's the organization which directs the task of flying American and Canadian-built bombers across the Atlantic. The ferry crews take the bombers over, and then are flown back as passengers in big planes. So it's to be assumed that the twenty-two killed in the crash were air men engaged in the ferry service, and that they were starting on a return flight across the ocean -- when their plane flew into a hillside.

PEACE RUMORS

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London flatly denies a story told and repeated by United States Congressmen in Washington. The story alleges that the British have informed Washington that unless the United States gets into the war right away, Great Britain will make peace with Hitler. This warning, we are told, came directly from Lord Beverbrook - the British press lord who is chief of war-time production in the London government. He's reckoned as second in importance only to Churchill.

Today in Washington, Congressman Paul Shafer, a Missouri Republican, made the following statement:- "Beverbrook has given notice to responsible authorities in the United States that unless we come into the war within thirty days, Great Britain will negotiate for peace with the Nazis." The congressman says he has the information from what he calls - "An absolute reliable source." From a source high in government circles, said he.

His declaration was corroborated by Representative Dewey Short, also a Missouri Republican. He added that the Beverbrook notice to the United States had been received within the last three or four days. And the Congressman made a demand:- "I call upon

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those in authority in the administration to deny this statement if it is not true - or to be honest and frank in informing the American people if it is."

A denial was promptly forthcoming from the State Department, which stated the report was not true. Then came a statement from London. It was made formally by the minister of information. He said he had been authorized by Lord Beaverbrook to deny unequivocally the story circulating in Congressional circles in Washington. Other British quarters chimed in with the reminder - that Britain has repeatedly declared that there will be no negotiations with Hitler.

SERVICE

It looks as if the service extension bill would pass tonight. The latest is that the House of Representatives adopted the amendment to keep the men in the Army for eighteen ~~months~~ months. So that's the form of the bill - what they'll vote on, accepting or rejecting.

Today the House went about the business with vigor and promptitude. The Congressmen ~~assembled two hours earlier than usual for the consideration of the service bill.~~ They started in at ten o'clock this morning, instead of the customary opening at noon. The speeches and the debate went off quickly, with one thing to be noted - the development of Republican support for ~~xxx~~ the measure to let the Army hold the men.

Congressman Andrews of New York, the ranking Republican member of the military affairs committee, said the extension was necessary in view of the critical international situation. Throughout the debate there was emphasis on the new recent turns of world peril - successes of the Nazi Blitzkrieg in Russia and the increasing danger in the Far East. These new developments they say, have exercised a strong influence among the congressmen. The administration leaders ~~were~~ were confident - though a few days ago they were worried, ~~afraid~~ afraid that the bill might be beaten.

When the voting began, interest was concentrated on an amendment proposed by the opposition - to release the Selective Service man. That, of course, was the direct opposite of what the administration and the Army wanted. So, the vote on the amendment was in every respect a test vote. It was rejected. The administration won by a vote of a hundred and eighty-five to a hundred and forty-six not too large a majority.

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However, that vote seemed to indicate that the administration was in control. Various other opposition proposals were turned down, and then came the second important amendment - the one sponsored by the administration. This one - to keep the men for ~~wit~~hteen months more, the same proposal that the Senate voted. It was adopted - by a voice vote, with merely the calling out of aye and nay. The voice vote adoption was significant. Meaning - the opposition did not demand that the vote be counted. They didn't think it was worth the trouble.

Hence the belief, the service extension of ~~ei~~ghteen months more is sure to pass tonight.

CORRECTION

I had a telegram today from John Green, President of the Shipbuilders Union. He asks me to correct the statement that striking shipworkers at Camden had returned to work. He tells me that there was no strike. That an agreement was signed yesterday - without any walkout having occurred.

SOLDIER

From Fort Slocum New York, we have an army bulletin expressed in the language of baseball. It concerns Private Robert Bomar of Brooklyn, who grew homesick for his native borough - the home of the Dodgers. He yearned to see Flatbush and Bay Ridge again, and had a hankering to see the Dodgers play in their strenuous battle for the pennant.

From Fort Slocum, looking across the sound, you can see Long Island - the general area of Brooklyn. And Private Bomar gazed frequently at the shore a mile and a half away. He longed for Brooklyn and the Dodgers so much, that he decided that the mile and a half of water would not detain him. He picked up an old wooden door, and of this he made a raft. He transformed an old lard can into a watertight container for his clothes. Then, lying on the raft, and paddling with his hands and feet, he navigated across the sound to Long Island, soon after he was in Brooklyn. You ^{just} can picture him at Ebbets Field, rooting for the Dodgers.

^{passed before}
~~After~~ Some days, Private Bomar remembered Fort Slocum and the outfit in which he was a soldier. So back he went, after having been

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A.W.O.L. in that fashion. How much time in the guard house?

That's expressed with baseball terminology in today's bulletin from the Fort - reading as follows: "It will probably be world

Series time for the Dodgers when Private Bomar reaches Brooklyn again."

MAGAZINE

Some people have a lot of luck in this world -- take the case of a New York magazine. If there's anything an editor loves, it's to get letters of praise from readers - the more enthusiastic the better. That widely read magazine, The READERS DIGEST, has launched a South American edition, which has become a huge success. All South America seems to be reading it. Letters are pouring in from their Latin-American readers -- and you know how enthusiastic a Latin can be. Also how flowery the Spanish language can be. Here's one example - from a student in Peru.

"Your magazine," says the letter to the editor, "resembles one of those exquisite liqueurs that are sipped drop by drop, the better to be savored. I prefer to read it alone in my room. Then, when I close the pages and turn out the light, my thought springs from one to another of the truths that have been unveiled to me, and finds rest in the tranquil region of understanding."

Some letter that! And it is equalled only by an effusion from Panama. "Such a magazine," writes the Panamanian pen, "brings the world to our firesides. It is like a seashell, which retains the echo of every human activity in the stormy ocean of life."

Maybe those are the sort of things which Latin lovers tell the girls. I wonder? Hugh, would you know?