

L.T. - SUNOCO. WEDNESDAY, DEC. 31, 1941
(Lake Placid)

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

Tonight when we say "Happy New Year," that familiar salutation will be more complex than in former years. In the back of our minds we'll be expanding the cheery call to imply something like this:- "May the New Year continue and end more happily than it begins." For it may be that Manila soon will fall to the Jap invader.

To somebody in some other country this might seem to be merely an incident of war -- and not a decisive incident at all. But Manila has a closer meaning to us Americans -- the Philippine Islands have been associated with us so intimately, and we feel such a historic responsibility toward them. And then we think of our own soldiers and their Filipino allies battling in desperate isolation, cut off from help, and surrounded by overwhelming numbers of enemies

The fall of Manila, if it should happen, would come closer to the American heart than any other incident of the Asiatic war -- emotionally a sombre thing for us.

Throughout the day the most ominous thing was the silence. All day long the only thing we had to go by was an official dispatch issued early this morning. And this painted a dark picture of overpowering attacks by enemy mechanized forces, Japanese dive bombers in command of the roads, the hard pressed American and Philippine defenders reforming their lines, falling back under terrific assaults both to the north and the south of Manila.

After that foreboding bulletin, nothing more was heard through the day. The news agencies had no word from Manila, no communication - silence ~~xx~~ on the other end. And there was no information from the War Department in Washington. That ominous hush was the State of Affairs until a moment ago.

Now here is the news:- an official bulletin. General Douglas MacArthur, commander of the United States far eastern forces, reports to Washington that American and Filipino wounded have been evacuated from Manila. They've been put aboard the steamer McTan which has been converted into a hospital ship. S. S. MCTAN has been marked in accordance with international law -- plainly marked as a hospital ship. As such it has the right of way to sail from Manila -- immune from attack -- if the Japanese respect international law in this particular. Destination - Australia. The hospital ship McTan is steering for the British southern commonwealth to discharge its cargo of wounded there.

So states General MacArthur's communique. But what about the fighting? What about the Japanese drives against Manila?

The communique is terse and reticent - doesn't say much. It merely reads: "American and Philippine troops are continuing their stubborn resistance in accordance with prearranged defense plans".

That is all we hear of the military situation -- all that the late bulletin gives us, after the silence throughout the day.

MALAYA

There's not much news from Malaya, where the British tell of taking the counter offensive with patrol attacks against the Japanese invader. However, the fighting is going on south of the tin capitol - the city of Ipoh - and that means that the Japs have pushed into some of the most important economic areas of Malaya, country rich in rubber, tin and coal. In these parts they are less than three hundred miles from Singapore.

One item of Malayan news comes from Canada, where at Ottawa today Prime Minister Winston Churchill expressed his thorough confidence that the Japs will never be able to capture Singapore.

RUSSIA

In Russia - the Red Army in a late bulletin announces the retaking of Kaluga. This is an important railroad junction southwest of Moscow, and its capture by the Nazis months ago was an important item of news. The Soviets declare that in driving on Kaluga they inflicted a heavy defeat on German forces, and paint a picture of disaster for Hitler's armies all along the line in the bitter cold of the Russian winter.

In the Crimea, the Red forces are all cheered up today over the capture of the important town of Kerch and are trying to drive across the peninsula to relieve the siege of the great naval base of Sevastopol.

Hitler has ordered the capture of Sevastopol, and the Soviets tell us that Stalin is master-minding the Red Army drive to relieve that famous fortress.

In Berlin today Hitler repeated his yearly promise of full success during the coming twelve months. Last year he was a lot more confident in

his victory prognostication for Nineteen Forty.

His prophecy for Nineteen Forty-One is toned down

a good deal. (Today ~~he~~ told his soldiers there

would be an offensive in the spring, and then they'll

wipe out the Red Army. That's the promise he made

today.

COMMAND

One of the most important angles of the negotiations among the allied powers concerns the question of a unified high command.

And London today tells us that a great deal of progress has been made in the matter of appointing supreme commanders for the war in the Pacific. Who will they be? Who may we expect to be named to assume the supreme direction of the British, American and Dutch forces in the vast theatre of the oceanic war? London says -- an American admiral and a British general.

The American Admiral would have charge of sea operations, all movements of the Allied Fleets. He'd have his headquarters at Pearl Harbor, and from that point give orders to the ships of the United States, of Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands Indies.

The British General, we are told, would have under his jurisdiction the land and air forces of Singapore, Burma, the Philippines, the Dutch East

Indies, and all the Allied islands in those parts. Where would his headquarters be? Singapore, you'd think. But today's London dispatch mentions the Dutch East Indies as the seat of the supreme commander on land.

The British General most prominently mentioned is Sir Archibald Wavell, now commander-in-chief in India. He was the first British General to make a reputation in this war -- in the overwhelming defeat of the Italians in Libya. When the war in the Mediterranean area took a turn against the British, he was sent to India. And now General Sir Archibald Wavell is mentioned as the probable supreme land commander who would cooperate with an American Admiral in charge of the naval aspect of the war in the Pacific.

The extent to which plans have been drawn up for a unified effort by the allied nations is indicated in a dispatch from Australia. This tells us that today the Australian government put its

OKAY on a new war program for the Pacific area. Meaning - that American, British and Netherlands military authorities have prepared their scheme of concerted action, submitted it to Australia, and have procured a favorable response.

The Great British commonwealth of the southern hemisphere is of Number One importance in the matter, because of Australian protests during the past couple of weeks. The people and their government down there complained against theories that the important theatre of war was in Europe - with the Pacific conflict in second place. They have replied with the contention that the Pacific is of premier importance, and that the defense of the Dutch East Indies should come first. All of which is quite understandable on the part of the Australians - since a bad turn of the war in the Pacific might bring the Jap invaders onto their shores. Today's dispatch from Melbourne states that the new war plan for the Pacific upholds their view -

the defense of Australia regarded as essential.

We are told, moreover, that we'll soon have a full statement of the decisions reached in Washington - the results of the British-American conversations that began with the arrival of Prime Minister Churchill. The information will be released simultaneously in Washington, London and Australia - within the next forty-eight hours, so says the dispatch from the southern hemisphere.

FREE FRENCH

We have some subtle explanation to elucidate a delicate topic -- the Free French seizure of St. Pierre and Miquelon, taking these islands off Newfoundland from the Vichy government. That has been a befuddled affair all along -- the Free French being ~~xxxx~~ supremely anti-Hitler and Secretary of State Cordell Hull giving them a dressing down for their action. All of this happened while Prime Minister Churchill was at Washington, deep in conferences with President Roosevelt.

Then yesterday at Ottawa, Churchill proceeded to administer a scorching to the Vichy government of Marshal Petain, and, at the same time, he praised the Free French. So what? A paradox? It seemed to be one of those double action, inside-out contradictions to the American viewpoint? The answer was -- No. Because the United States really is on most friendly terms with the Free French -- nothing but cordiality! Washington in fact is on good terms with both French factions -- friendly

with Vichy too.

As for the seizure of St. Pierre and Miquelon - that is something else again. It simply concerns the often expressed American opposition to the use of force in acquiring territory in this hemisphere. That's why we objected to the Free French seizure - on general principles. It has nothing to do with our amiable feelings toward the Free French and our approval of the kind words that Prime Minister Churchill said about them yesterday.

Such is the explanation given by State Department sources -- and it ~~xxxxx~~ is a thing of subtle nuance and inflection.

NORMANDIE

Here's a late bulletin. The Navy announces that the former French super-liner NORMANDIE is being converted into a naval auxiliary. The NORMANDIE was taken over some time ago, and it was surmised that the huge boat might be turned into an aircraft carrier or possibly a troop transport. Now we hear -- naval auxiliary, though exactly what kind we're not informed. The NORMANDIE IS changing its name. She becomes U.S.S. LAFAYETTE, in honor of the great Frenchman who was America's friend in the Revolutionary War.

ALIENS

California continues to take measures of precaution affecting enemy aliens -- Japanese, Germans, Italians and so on. Today all liquor licenses held by Japanese aliens were revoked -- this being done under an interpretation of the "trading with the enemy act." It isn't clear just how liquor licenses might affect fifth column activity or espionage, but the Californians are considering all sorts of possibilities.

Enemy aliens are crowding into police stations to hand over short wave radios and cameras -- equipment that might be useful for espionage. They are also turning in weapons -- which the state laws have forbidden to aliens all along. The sheriff of Alameda county says that two hundred and seventeen shotguns, rifles and pistols have been surrendered in his area alone.

In San Francisco, however, one Japanese was told to keep the deadly weapon that he came in to surrender. An aged Oriental marched into the Berkeley police station with a huge rifle and bayonet. It was

of the vintage of Eigtheen Sixty-three -- Civil War armament. The ancient Jap told the police he had had the rifle and bayonet hanging on a wall in his house as an ornament for many years. The cops took one look at the Civil War relic, and said "Keep it."

RUBBER

Today in Washington, the first set of regulations was issued to the boards that will regulate the rationing of rubber.

There are some fifty thousand of these state and local boards. The regulations passed out today stress the point that the extent of the hardships that we may have to endure because of the rubber shortage will be governed largely by the way the rubber rationing boards operate, wisely or unwisely

The document called "Tire Rationing Regulation" includes a note of promise. It states that if the rubber situation should become better, there'll be quick changes to ease the stringent rules governing the distribution of automobile tires.

If more rubber should become available in one way or another, larger quotas will be granted, and more tires will be released to motorists. Officials tell us that if there should be any such readjustment, owners of taxicabs, delivery trucks, and people who have to drive to work may be put in the

the category of those who are permitted to buy new tires. And the regulation goes on to tell us the meaning of the term "new tires". The key figure is one thousand miles. Any tire that has been used less than a thousand miles is to be considered new.

PATRIOTISM

This trip to the northland -- the Canadian Border, and snowly Lake Placid -- I find to be a heartening thing -- in these war-time days. Heartening to be among the local people here, the mountaineers, the farmers, the woodsmen, the trappers, the forest guides, the bob sled racers, the ski jumpers and so on. You can't help but note the attitude they have toward the rugged country in which they live, the love they have for the wintry landscape -- and it certainly is wintry and snowy up here with snow falling just outside the window.

They don't say much, these hardy people of the Adirondacks, but you can see their eye linger with friendly familiarity on the white expanse of snow, the white austere mountains and the unending slopes that glisten with the purest white. It's their country and these people up here love it.

I think ~~at~~ the beginning of patriotism is the fondness we have for the familiar scenes ~~xxxx~~ that we know so well, the scenes in which we live and the

scenes of our youth. The exaltation of soul called patriotism is founded richly in that simple elemental thing -- the love we have for our own locality, the life and the countryside in which we live or were reared.

These are reflections suggested to me today as I stood near the summit of the highest peak in this region -- Mount Marcy.

At the Lake Placid Club, just a moment ago, I chatted with a fellow from Mississippi -- where it almost never snows. He's been away from the South for quite a while, and he was telling me of his most vivid memory -- memory of his boyhood. Add the words he featured were -- cotton and snow.

"Did you ever," he asked, "see cotton fields in the moonlight -- when the bolls have burst, the fibre is out, and the cotton has not yet been picked? To think of it makes a fellow homesick."

To which one may add that when your own locality makes you homesick to be away from it, you

are blessed with the richest, element of the priceless thing that we call patriotism.

And now Happy New Year to all, and that includes you in New York, Hugh.