

L.J. - Sunoco. Friday, Nov. 15, 1940.

BOMBING

Tonight the air defenses of Britain ^{is} ~~are~~ on the alert more than any other night. The British think the Nazi air fleet may try to repeat the attack on Coventry, repeat it against another British

industrial center. In Berlin the statement was made that the raid on Coventry was in revenge for the British bombing attack on Munich - a few days ago, when Hitler and the Nazis were having an anniversary celebration in the Nazi beer cellar shrine. But the British surmise that last night's frightful destruction of the city in the Midlands may be the beginning of a systematic German attempt to wipe out British industrial centers, one by one.

London aviation circles point out that the Royal Air Force makes no claim to be able to stop the night bombing of squadrons that come through the darkness. They say that British air defense has made considerable progress in defending against night bombing -

but there is no complete defense. So as evening came on today

Britain wondered, in apprehension. ^{over there it's} ~~It's a bright moonlit night~~

~~over there~~, full moon, the most dangerous time for air raids in the

darkness - just as it was last night when Coventry was destroyed, ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ bright moonlight.

That city in the industrial area of the Midlands, was

something like a British equivalent of our own Flint, Michigan - ;
only,
~~but~~ airplanes at Coventry instead of automobiles. It was an old
town, with a venerable ^{and glorious} medieval Cathedral. A city of legends -
Lady Godiva, for example. It was at Coventry, so old stories tell,
that Lady Godiva made her renowned ride clad only in her copious
tresses of golden hair. But Coventry in modern times had become
exceedingly modern - an important center for the British aircraft
industry, turning out bombers and fighters for the battle in the sky.

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Last evening at this hour, I gave a London report that
one of the greatest of German air fleets was winging from the east
to the British Midlands. Some huge blow by sky, obviously - but
where it would hit we didn't know. We didn't know that at that very
hour, this time last night - Coventry was being bombed. ^{Today the} ~~The~~ Germans
described the air raid as - "the greatest attack in the history of
aerial warfare." ^{and} The British say the city of a hundred and sixty-seven
thousand people was wiped out -- as if by an earthquake. They are
calling it - the earthquake type of bombing. London states that
more than a hundred German planes were in the raid. Berlin says
the number was five hundred. The German report indicates that they

attacked with the largest of bombs. Five hundred planes dropped 450
twenty-two hundred pound ~~bombs~~ ^{air missiles.} A million pounds of high explosive!

That in addition to incendiary bombs!

The air raiders came over in waves, all night long -
for ten and a half hours. Here is an eye-witness account. "There was
a constant flash and crash mingled with the whistle of falling bombs
and then their explosives^{one.}" So says an observer who went through the
attack, and he continues:- "A pall of smoke rose over the town, and
was turned red by the glare thrown up against the sky. The glare was
brighter than the full moon. Stabbing through the smoke," he
continues, "searchlights tried to catch the raiders in their beams.
As the raid continued, the air seemed to be filled with the noise of
planes diving repeatedly and releasing more high explosives and
incendiaries." So says the eye-witness account.

Today Coventry was a scene of such devastation that the
descriptions appeared fantastic. The tower of the medieval Cathedral
still stands, but the rest of the building is a pile of ~~xxx~~ mortar,
glass and timber. The United Press dispatch contains these words of
description:- "In some places," it states, "the bombs had fallen

RETAKE

so thickly that it was almost impossible to tell where the streets once had been and where the rows of houses had stood." The loss of life was frightful, more than a thousand people killed. The British account makes no mention of the damage to the airplane factories, the war aircraft industry in which most of the people were employed. The Berlin bulletin claims that all the airplane factories at Coventry were - "virtually wiped out."

Today buses streamed from the ruined city, buses overflowing with people, and hundreds walked their way along the road - an exodus from the scene of the latest ~~frightfulness~~

*the latest tonight? clouds
frightfulness from the air. have blown over England,
diminishing the danger of moonlight bombing.*

Last night was a climax of the war in the air, not only in the case of British Coventry - but also at Berlin. Today the British Air Ministry gave out the report that Berlin had sustained the most devastating air raid of the war. There, as at Coventry, a full moon was shining - ideal for the air raiders. The R.A.F. could pick its targets, and these were chiefly the Berlin railway stations. Virtually every station in the German capital was blasted. ~~The one that had been bombed at the time of the Molotov conference with Hitler~~

~~was bombed again.~~ Great fires were started, fires visible for

thirty miles. ^{In one} ~~whole areas were reported to be aflame.~~ In the

section alone, between the Potsdamer and Anhalter Railroad Stations,

twelve fires were spotted. And the R.A.F. struck at the great

Templehof Airdrome, where burning buildings flamed high. ^R In addition

to that, the R.A.F. ranged all night over other Nazi centers in

Germany and the occupied country, bombing incessantly - in that

climax of the war in the air.

VICTORIA CROSS

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In this war one thing is to be noted - the scarcity ~~of~~ in the news of stories of individual heroism. In my book, PAGEANT OF ADVENTURE, which was recently published, I pointed out that the war news from Europe is so burdened with heavy events and world important developments, that there is little space for ~~small~~ tales of thrill and bravery. ~~--for there must be so many of~~ ~~them~~ Well, tonight we have one - a flashing bit of heroism fit for ~~any~~ any pageant of adventure.

It was announced in London today that the Victoria Cross has been awarded to Lieutenant James Nicholson. And the citation tells the following:- Pilot Nicholson was in an air battle over Southampton. A German fighter swooped down on him with a blaze of machine gun fire. Nicholson was hit and gravely wounded, and an incendiary bullet set fire to his plane. The cockpit was ablaze. He was about to bail out, take to his parachute to avoid the flames - when he saw a German plane within attacking distance. So he stuck to his seat, though a hot seat it was. He flew straight at the enemy sky craft, engaged it in battle - though the fire in the cockpit was badly burning his face and neck.

He shot down the Nazi sky craft; and then once again was about to bail out from his burning plane - but this time he saw ^{another} German fighter straight ahead. "Right in his gunsight," says the London story. So once again he stayed in the fiery cockpit, and blasted away with his machine gun. The button for firing the gun was so hot that his right thumb was blistered as he pressed it, and his left hand was ^{scared} ~~scared~~ with flame as he held the throttle open.

He shot down the second German plane, and then at last bailed out.

He was a badly injured pilot, shot and burned, as he fluttered ^{to the} ~~down~~ ground.

~~and~~ They sent him to a hospital, and today the news - the Victoria

Cross for James Nicholson!

PERTINAX

For years in European journalism we have noticed an odd name -- Pertinax, name of a Roman Emperor. This classic pseudonym concealed the identity of one of the sage and authoritative commentators of our time. Pertinax, writing in Paris, was watched the world over -- for inside understanding of the trend of international affairs. He's in the United States now, so I looked him up - rather expecting to find more of a legend than a real person. But a very real person he turns out to be. His real name is Andre Geraud. He's over on this side of the ocean writing his familiar highly informed articles. Pertinax has been telling me something about the state of opinion in France. He has it from a friend who has been traveling around in France - talking to the prefects here and there. The French prefects are officials famous for having a comprehensive knowledge of what is going on in their communities. They will know how the French people feel right now. But Pertinax is here with me at the microphone, so let's have him tell us.

PERTINAX: I can tell you this. That the German propaganda in France has not changed the beliefs of the people. There is of course a deluge of propaganda, trying to make the French masses hate

Great Britain. It is enough to glance at the newspapers published in unoccupied France to realize its brazenness. Those newspapers ought to be closely read in the United States. They have a tale to tell: the power of the fifth column. The newspaper GRINOIRE continues, of course, that methodical slandering of Great Britain which in its columns was already in full swing as early as October, Nineteen Thirty-Five when Henri Beraud wrote the unforgettable article: "Must we reduce England to serfdom?" But that slandering has become more unbridled and it can be found now even in remote provincial papers. No wonder. The head of the press department is a Germanophile of old standing, who was received by Hitler on the second of February Nineteen Thirty-Six and told him that the Reichswehr would not be resisted if it reentered the Rhineland! Notwithstanding that despicable press, the word I get is that the ~~pe~~ people are not persuaded. The people of France favor the British and hope they will win, ninety per cent of them said a high official some while ago; ninety-five per cent, corrected another.

L.T.: What is your opinion of the war?

PERTINAX: I can only repeat that the only salvation of France is through British victory. I believe that the British will win and that France will be saved. Meanwhile, the hearts of most Frenchmen beat for Winston Churchill.

L.T.: About Winston Churchill, Pertinax has been tell me that he had known the London Prime Minister for years. And here is an anecdote to illustrate that famous Churchill gift of biting expression. In the years past, Churchill had a great scorn for Prime Minister Baldwin. At an aristocratic country house, one weekend, Churchill stood watching a chess game. Lord Oxford and Asquith, the former Prime Minister were playing chess. Pertinax was there too, so let him tell what happened.

PERTINAX: It caused quite a laugh. Mr.Churchill was studying Lord Oxford's position on the chess board and suddenly, in his grumbling manner, "Wake up," he said, "move those pawns, marshall those Baldwins!"

L.T.: "Move those pawns, marshall those Baldwins!" Decidedly a sharp expression of Winston Churchill's political opinions at the time.

The British Admiralty repeats its contention that three Italian battleships were crippled in the famous raid on Taranto - half of the capital ships of the Fascist fleet. This, says London, has been reconfirmed, by aerial reconnaissance. British scout flyers report that two vessels of the Cavour class were aground, and that the Italians are working to salvage a big ship of the Littorio class. "Auxiliary and salvage vessels," says the London Admiralty account, "were lying at both sides of a battleship of the Littorio class. Pumping was in progress. The bows of the ship," concludes the British statement, "have now been raised and she has a list to port."

Simultaneously, the British Admiralty denies the Italian statement that a Fascist submarine torpedoed a big British battleship in the Mediterranean.

Rome announces a meeting between the Italian Chief of Staff, Marshal Badoglio, and the German Commander of similar rank - Marshal Keitel; at Innsbruck near the Brenner Pass. Rome states that the two generals are discussing new plans for joint German and Italian military operations. This may have to do with the

Italian war in Greece, where things have gone badly for the Fascist forces. Concerning that war, there's nothing particularly new tonight. Earlier in the day, the Greeks claimed new successes, but the latest dispatches this evening tell mostly of aviation action - both sides bombing each other. Here's something late:-

The Greeks have just announced that they have completely surrounded the Italian stronghold of Karitza in the Albanian mountains.

President Roosevelt today proclaimed American neutrality in the Italian-Greek conflict - extending the provisions of the United States Neutrality Law to cover it.

STRIKE

Every effort is being made to settle the aircraft strike in California. The Vultee plant has ^{large} defense contracts with the United States Government and war contracts with Great Britain. The workers are demanding an increase in pay and union leaders say that three thousand of thirty-seven hundred ~~workers~~ have joined the strike. The walkout began today and defense officials in Washington immediately expressed concern. This is the first case of a strike in a factory making armament.

MILLIS

The National Labor Relations Board has a new Chairman -- he was appointed today. Dr. Harry A. Millis, an economist of the University of Chicago; a labor expert of long experience.

The appointment is regarded as a move in an attempt to settle the long standing war between the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O.

The rival factions in the world of unions are gathering for their respective conventions -- the A. F. of L. at New Orleans and the C.I.O. at Atlantic City. And today A. F. of L. President Green announced that in his keynote speech opening the convention he will discuss relations with the C.I.O. - the possibility of peace. He made this comment:- "I assume that the President will ask us to start negotiations with the C.I.O., just as he has done in the past."

At Atlantic City, a peace proposal was launched by a powerful group in the C.I.O. - the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. The C.I.O. is called upon to take action. The resolution used these words:- "They should devote their best and most sincere efforts to unite the two organizations on a basis which will not sacrifice any of the great gains made by the C.I.O."

From all appearances, John L. Lewis will fulfill the promise he made when he came out in support of Willkie during the campaign. He then announced that if President Roosevelt were reelected, he, Lewis, would step out as head of the C.I.O.

EARLY

The famous kick that figured so much in election publicity is the subject of some authoritative comment today. A general appraisal of the affair is printed in that eminent journal of the newspaper trade -- "THE EDITOR AND PUBLISHER". Stories are related by the newspaper men who were there:- when Steve Early tried to get a party of Washington correspondents to the President's train at Pennsylvania station, New York. Perhaps the clearest account is given by John C. Henry of the WASHINGTON STAR. He states that the negro policeman and a white police sergeant pushed the presidential secretary backward. And he continues :- "One of the newspaper men directly behind Steve braced him, probably saving him from being knocked down. As he went backward," the newspaper man goes on, "Steve raised his hand and a knee. The colored officer immediately backed away, and complained that he had been hit in the stomach."

Based on the various stories, the EDITOR AND PUBLISHER draws the conclusion that Presidential Secretary Steve Early was not the aggressor, but the victim in the affair. Or do you remember the incident? Eh, Hugh?