

P.I. - Standard. Tuesday, May 30, 1944

~~Tonight we have~~ News of the first tank battle of the war in the southwestern Pacific *has just come in.* Hitherto the clash of armour has been lacking in that conflict. However modern the weapons have been in other respects, the Japs have not brought forces ~~in~~ of tanks to oppose us.

Now, however, there has been a contest of armour - on Biak Island. American forces landed last Saturday on that bit of land off New Guinea, and heavy fighting has been going on for possession of the Mokmer Flying Field. The Japs had tanks to defend the air base, and these went into action against American tanks. The Japs lost eight -- in that first clash of tanks.

CHINA

Jap offensive movements in China assume a more formidable aspect, with a Chungking statement that one hundred and fifty thousand Japs have been moved from Manchuria, where they ~~are~~ were facing Soviet ~~armies~~ Siberia, and have been thrown into the enemy drive against the

Chinese rice bowl. Chungking states that it is the greatest assault that the Japs have launched during the seven years of the China war.

In the rice bowl campaign they ^{Japs} are on the ~~offensive~~ offensive along a hundred and forty-mile front, and are pushing in the direction of the key city of Ch^{ang}shah.

In the war ~~new~~ news from Burma, military moves are subordinate to the aspects of the weather - a nightmare of weather.

The Monsoon rains are now in full flood, and on the ^aArkan Front in Burma, for example, an average of two hundred inches of rain falls

during the five months of the Monsoon. So no wonder today's dispatch from Mountbatten's Headquarters dwells on the ~~horror~~ ^{problem of living, let alone fighting, in} the water-soaked jungle. ^{Monsoon time is also mosquito time. And there are}

~~The rains began early in May, and now it's a downpour every day. The sun breaks through the clouds for a brief time each morning or afternoon, but the spells of sunshine only make things worse. The heat, which goes to above a hundred degrees, ~~and~~ raises clouds of miasmal mist, a sodden fog as bad as the rain.~~

~~In this nightmare of jungle, ^{dank} ~~spider~~ moisture and suffocating heat, some Allied troops try to keep out of the rain by wearing slickers, but not many. It's like wearing clothes in a steam room -- the perspiration drenches them even more than the rain.~~

~~A bad dream of ~~is~~ the hot and the wet - but that's not all. Monsoon time is also mosquito time. ~~The jungle teems with the pestilent insect, especially the malarial mosquito. And there~~~~

are other parasites which bring other illnesses - dysentery and jungle fevers ^{some of} which the science of medicine has not yet identified for study.

And, moreover, there are ~~the~~ leeches, blood-sucking parasites that get under clothes and fasten themselves to the skin. The leeches fall from the trees in showers on living things that pass below - sucking blood and causing sores and ~~the~~ ulcers.

The mere telling of it is enough to give one the

shudders, and I am shivering with exceptional vigor - because I ^{have} ~~got~~ done considerable ~~some~~ travelling in the Burma jungle, ^{during the monsoon} and have a vivid memory of ~~the~~ its ^{dark, spooky,} ~~dark, dank,~~ slimy discomforts, the insect pests, ^{and, especially the}

leeches. They seem to hear man coming along way off, and they inch-their way, at a leeches gallop, across the leaves, to get at you. They even go through the eyelets of your boots. And then, when you find them attached to your skin later on they are much too big to go back thru the eyelets of your boots!

SUBSTITUTE FOR CONFERENCE

President Roosevelt stated this afternoon that the United States has drafted a plan for world organization after the war - a blueprint that has been placed before the governments of Great Britain Soviet Russia and China. There will be no formal conference, but an interchange of suggestions, ideas and planning between the four big powers.

The President made this statement in today's White House news conference, during the course of which he likewise gave comment on something he had said previously -- that he intended to confer with Prime Minister Winston Churchill either this summer, in the fall or late next spring. The mention of spring caused instant remark because if the President plans to see Churchill at that time it would mean that ~~he~~ he expects to be still in the White House -- a Fourth Term. This afternoon, however, he explained that it was all a slip of speech. He didn't mean to mention spring -- he intends to have a meeting with Churchill some time before his present term expires.

Today the First Lady of the Land gave some comment on Great Britain's first Gentleman of the Land -- Winston Churchill. She made a remark about Churchill's recent declaration in praise of the Franco government of Spain. It is recalled that Mrs. Roosevelt, at the time of the Spanish Civil War, supported movements in behalf of the Spanish Republicans who fought against Franco. So she was asked today about Churchill's pro-Franco statement.

To which she ~~responded~~ responded: "Mr. Churchill has thought a certain way for sixty years, and I don't think he wants to change."

Next she was asked about another thing that Churchill said - his theory that the post-war world should be controlled by a council of the big nations. That has been attacked by those who think the small nations should have their say. ~~As~~ As for the Churchill notion of great power domination, Mrs. Roosevelt said:- "It is very characteristic of Mr. Churchill -- I won't elucidate on that".

Then the First Lady went on to affirm ~~her~~ her belief in - ~~unconditional~~ unconditional surrender. She referred to the fact that some people think that the unconditional surrender theory is making

making the Germans fight harder. She said she thought that is what she called "sentimental nonsense".

"What makes them fight on to the bitter end", said ~~my~~ she, "is not our ~~own~~ terms, which they ~~know~~ know would mean decent treatment, but the knowledge that their own cruelty in occupied countries has aroused such bitterness that the Allied military authorities may not be able to keep the freed ~~my~~ populations in control".

Now Hugh, while we ponder over that will you tell us something about Stan. of Cal.?

[Handwritten scribbles and lines]

ITALY

Word from enemy sources seems to bear out what our Commander in Italy had to say today. General Mark Clark, in some Memorial Day remarks, told his troops that they would be in possession of Rome -- ^{"before} ~~before~~ many days have passed", said the General.

The word from the enemy side comes via Spain, and tells of a ~~ma~~ crazy state of traffic confusion in Rome -- this because of the endless columns of German military vehicles that are moving through the Eternal City, and pulling out northward. ~~Roman streets can be intricate and can provide some complicated snarls of traffic which the Germans apparently are finding out, as their motor transport retreats northward through the ancient city, This news via Spain indicates that it is a retreat. The~~ Germans deciding not to try to defend Rome.


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And from our own Battle front we have similar ~~xx~~ word - reports of columns of enemy troops moving away from the area of the fighting. Apparently the Germans to the South have stopped their attempts to get through via the big highway, the Via Casilina - which has been virtually cut off by nearby Allied artillery fire. The Nazi units are retouring through secondary ~~xxxx~~ roads, which lead to the East. ~~The belief is that the Germans will succeed in~~

getting out of what has been threatening to be a trap. That is - they can retire through the mountain roads and trails escaping eastward -- as the British Eighth Army pushes forward from the South.

If the signs of General withdrawal from Rome be correct, it would seem that their defense along the line just below the city is ⁱⁿ the nature of a delaying action. In any case, they are defending that line ~~as~~ stubbornly. They are holding ~~firmly~~ fiercely against the assaults of the Allied troops that have pushed forward from what recently was the beach head.

The latest tells of Allied progress in thrusts that aimed directly are ~~aimed~~ at Rome. American tanks have driven swiftly through the Alban Hills, punching wedges into the German defense line. And tonight they are only thirteen miles from Rome, which venerable city may indeed fall, as General Clark said today - "before many days have passed".

~~And here's the latest a declaration made by~~ the Berlin radio, ^{used} these words ^{today:-} "The battle has reached the gates of Rome".



ADD ITALY

And a still later German dispatch states that in front of Rome Allied forces are attacking with one thousand tanks.

The targets ranged from Austria, which the Italy-based planes hit, all the way to the invasion coast of France. Attention was concentrated on aircraft factories, airbases and rail yards, which were attacked in western Germany, Belgium and France.

Meanwhile we have a story that five American flyers had been lynched in Germany - some to death by sad infernal crowds. But this is being received with suspicion in London. The story of the atrocious crimes from enemy sources, and is combined with the general hysterical vein of Nazi propaganda against the Allies. The five American flyers are described as having been lynched in a way which the Nazi propaganda account describes as follows:

... before the police could intervene.

There was another huge one-two punch today -- struck from the north and from the south. Thirty-two hundred American bombers and fighters assailed the Nazis -- some of the squadrons flying from Britain, others from Italy. To these heavy weight American air fleets you can add swarms of the lighter planes, which bring the ~~total~~^{total} for ~~today~~ up to seven thousand;- that many planes smashing at the enemy today.

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Nazi plane losses ~~WERE~~ were heavy during the day; ^{Doolittle's} ~~our~~

Eighth Air Force battlers based on Britain shooting down sixty-six --
for their share of aerial victories. Our own losses were medium,
and among the planes that failed to return were eight big bombers
forced down in Sweden. The crew members were saved, though some
were injured.

Here's a story of ^{another} a Flying Fortress that staggered out of a big air battle considerably damaged. And, as it moved on into the safety zone, out of reach of enemy fighters, the ~~Waist~~^S Gunner spoke up and said: "Say Bud, look around for some of my toes, will you? They are bound to be in the plane somewhere".

The ~~Waist~~^S Gunner's right foot had been half shot away, but he had kept mum about it. The radio man, too, had been wounded, badly hit in the leg and he likewise had kept silent about his injury.

The story was told today at a bomber base in Britain, by Lieutenant Richard ~~W~~ Treleaven of Oak Park, Illinois. He said that near ^{their} target the Fortress was ganged by twenty German fighters, which hit the plane with cannon shells. These burst inside and wounded the waist gunner and the radioman. Neither one let on. The gunner kept on shooting, while the radioman continued his wireless reports to the pilot. The plane had to fight ~~in~~ its way back, and they didn't want to ^{distract} ~~attract~~ the attention of their comrades ~~in~~ from their tasks.

Then, when the Fortress had finally got into the clear, out of the battle area, they reported that they had been hit.

Technical Sergeant John Staiger of Philadelphia went back to investigate and found the radioman bleeding from leg wounds, while the Waist Gunner was sitting with ~~a sandwich in each hand - he'd dug up a bite to eat,~~ his right leg ~~was~~ stuck straight out in front, the fleece-lined boot half ripped away. It was then that he made his humorous crack, ~~about his toes.~~ "Say, Bud, look around for some of my toes, will you? They are bound to be in the plane somewhere".

POLES

At Buffalo a Congress of Polish Americans has been in session, and today they adopted a Constitution for the organization, which represents ~~an~~ Five Million Polish Americans. This Constitution demands what it calls - "Atlantic Charter treatment for Post-war Poland". In other words, Polish Americans ask that the country of their ancestors be given the good treatment provided for in the Atlantic Charter. They point out that Poland was the first nation to fight the Nazis, and they declare "the Poles have not broken faith with ~~the~~ the Allies."

Moreover, the Buffalo Congress adopted a memorial to President Roosevelt, urging him to reject any settlement at the expense of Poland.

~~All of this followed a stormy debate, with some of the delegates objecting to expressions of support of Poland against the stand ~~is~~ taken by the Soviets. One delegate tried to make a speech to that effect and was howled down under shouts of "Bolshevik". Later he stated that the anti-Soviet speeches in Buffalo represented what he called "an effort to split the unity of the American people and the ~~the~~ United Nations".~~

The majority, however, affirmed its support of Poland - and appealed to the President.

ECUADOR

We hear that American Lend-Lease tanks played the decisive part in the new ~~xxx~~ revolution in Ecuador. Revolting troops at the Port of Guayaquil, used the Lend-Lease tanks to assault the barracks ~~mix~~ of the police, which were captured after ten hours of fighting --, the police surrendering.

The trouble was caused by the fact that President Arroyo De Rio, who was a guest of President Roosevelt a year and a half ago, planned to turn over his job to the Vice President of the Senate, Doctor Allende, who is a friend of our own Vice President Wallace. An election was scheduled to be held in a few days. The revolutionaries supported former President Velasco Ybarra, who is in exile. It was believed he could never win - not against the official government candidates.

However
The rebels, thanks to those Lend-Lease tanks, overthrew the government, and are now bringing back Ybarra to become President.

LABOR

We have some figures tonight concerning strikes in defiance of the Smith-Connally anti-strike law. The Bureau of Labor statistics in Washington gives the information, which would seem to show that the anti-strike law has not been so effective.

~~The Smith-Connally Act was adopted last June. It provided a whole lot of things to check wartime strikes, one provision being - "a cooling off period". That is, any strike-call was to be delayed thirty days, during which time efforts for a settlement might be made - talk things over and cool off. In spite of that, during the six months from June to the end of Nineteen Forty-three, there were nineteen hundred and nineteen strikes. How many of these complied with the anti-strike law - and its cooling off period? Only thirty-four, less than two per cent.~~

All of which takes us to the ~~xxx~~ fact that right now strikes involving ~~xxx~~ sixty thousand workers are on. These include a wildcat walkout of thirty-five thousand lumber workers in the Pacific northwest - which has virtually paralyzed timber operations. In Detroit ~~xx~~ there is a bakery ~~xx~~ strike and a walkout of chemical workers.

PAINTER

Art is a deep subject, and it would be tough for somebody like me to have to decide on the merits of the artistic quarrel that broke out at Hollywood today. They are having an exhibition of paintings, ^{and} a roaring complaint is registered by one of the artists who entered a picture, because his masterpiece received only third honorable mention. The painting that took the first prize is entitled - ~~xxx~~ "road to war." And he says it looks like "a melted ice cream cone". ~~and~~ ^{he} growls; - "if that's war, I'll take vanilla".

Artist John Decker has made a reputation for painting film stars in the shape of world famous figures. For example, he once painted Comedian W. C. Fields, bulbous nose and all, as Queen Victoria. But he is outraged by the "road to war", which ^{he insists} looks like a melted ice cream cone.

And now here's Hugh James who looks neither like bulbous-nosed W.C. Fields nor a melted ice cream cone. Hugh looks fresh as a daisy.