

L.T. - SUNOCO. THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 1943.

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

The battle of the Mareth Line <sup>seems to have</sup> ~~has~~ reached its climax. Near the northern end of that line there <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ a gap now, a gap made ~~is a hole, a hole~~ punched by the British Eighth Army.

Yesterday we heard that Rommel's ~~Afrika Korps~~ had counter-attacked. Tonight we learn that he has

definitely won back his main positions on that Mareth

Line. General Montgomery has lost the bridgehead he had

established across <sup>the</sup> Wadi <sup>Zigau</sup> ~~Zigau~~ near the Tunisian ~~coast~~.

<sup>And that's</sup> ~~coast~~ That is the key to the whole Nazi system of ~~That wadi~~ is a great ~~gully~~ which no tank can cross, defense. British engineers were trying to strengthen

the span they had thrown <sup>over it,</sup> ~~across the Wadi~~ but Rommel

let <sup>go</sup> ~~loose~~ a fierce barrage of shellfire ~~that~~ prevented

the light British spearhead <sup>which had gotten over</sup> ~~that had got across the~~

*from holding*  
~~Wadi from keeping~~

back the Nazi counter-attack.

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However, the Eighth Army still is holding ~~on to~~ some of the gains it made on the approaches to the Wadi.

In other words, there still is a breach in the Mareth Line.

Meanwhile, the British flanking force that Montgomery sent through the desert, is believed to be in the throes of a heavy fight with strong German forces twenty-five miles to the south of Gabes. ~~The fiercest fighting of the whole war is going on in that hole in the line.~~

A strict military censorship had been slapped down on the reporting of details of ~~the~~<sup>e</sup> battle. Correspondents were expressly ordered to write nothing about the British Eighth Army except the facts given them in the communique. Newspapermen were also instructed not to speculate, not to draw their own

conclusions, nor <sup>even</sup> ~~to~~ guess at what the enemy might be attempting. This official secrecy will be kept up

until the battle has gone <sup>clearly</sup> ~~definitely~~ one way or another.

<sup>TF</sup> But, the military authorities <sup>have</sup> ~~did~~ <sup>ed</sup> allow correspondents to report <sup>to us that it is</sup> ~~that it was~~ violent and ~~bloody~~ <sup>costly battle</sup>.

The British are trying to break through at another point further north near the extreme end of the line. <sup>and</sup> The Germans are fighting back desperately. <sup>TF</sup> The most hopeful part of the news from Tunisia is that Rommel has been obliged to split the Nazi armored forces into four units. <sup>And</sup> In spite of his ~~temporary~~ come-back yesterday, the Allied columns are slowly forcing him into the sea.

The news of the American army's operations is curt and laconic. Allied headquarters merely announce<sup>s</sup> that they are still fighting in the area around Maknassy, and adds that our troops have made

local gains. In the Gafsa sector, ~~the doings are~~ <sup>our men are</sup> engaged in described as principally patrol operations, which were extensive and successful.

~~A still~~ later dispatch ~~now~~ brings word that the Americans have rolled ahead ten miles from Maknassy, and are now fighting their way up the last mountain pass that separates them from the Mediterranean. ~~Sea.~~ In

<sup>tonight</sup> fact, they are ~~now~~ in command of the pass and are <sup>within</sup> ~~virtually in view of the sea,~~ <sup>sight of the coast.</sup> Below them is a narrow

strip of land, Rommel's only line of communication to the north. <sup>(which)</sup> ~~That~~ would indicate that the Allies between them are ~~right~~ on the verge of having the Afrika Korps

~~hemmed in,~~ encircled. <sup>except for the sea.</sup> ~~From~~ northern Tunisia, <sup>no news. Except</sup> ~~says the communique,~~ that the weather is unfavorable. ~~there is nothing to report, wet grounds,~~

~~Back~~ <sup>today</sup> In Washington, Secretary of War Stimson told the country, that there is no doubt the Allies

will eventually win in Tunisia. But, he warned us,

*men will be lost.*  
"many of our ~~boys must pay the supreme sacrifice to~~  
~~maintain our way of life~~ " It must always be

remembered," he ~~continued~~ *said,* "that the grim conclusive  
battles must be fought on the ground. In this respect,"

*See,*  
said Stimson, "the Allied forces in North Africa have  
more than justified themselves against the veteran  
German troops."

The Secretary also had an encouraging report  
about air power. The war above ground in North Africa,  
*he tells us,*  
~~he said,~~ is now heavily in our favor. We are shooting  
down three or four Axis planes for everyone we lose.  
Then he pointed out that the air raids over Nazi-occupied  
Europe have a distinct and deliberate relation to the  
air fighting in Africa. The ~~heavy~~ day and night attacks  
made by British and American planes on Nazi war plants  
keep Nazi fighting planes at home, *planes that* ~~which~~ would  
otherwise be used against us in North Africa.

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RAIDS FOLLOW LEAD

Secretary Stimson also ~~gave a most satisfactory~~ <sup>gives us a further</sup> account of the ~~monster~~ <sup>great</sup> raid our flyers made the other day on the Nazi submarine base at Vegesack, near Bremen. The target, said Stimson, was completely demolished and the area enveloped in flames. <sup>R</sup> But, it appears that the best effort of Uncle Sam's airmen was accomplished in France, March Eighth. ~~It was~~ an attack by flying fortresses on ~~Rennes, a huge~~ <sup>a big</sup> railway junction, ~~most~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~important to the Nazis.~~ It is today reported as "probably the most devastating raid of this kind conducted in the whole war." ~~It was so reported by~~ <sup>So it was so we hear</sup>

<sup>from</sup> Brigadier <sup>Gen.</sup> Newton Longfellow, Chief of the Eighth Air Force Bomber Command.

Longfellow went on to say that the results of ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> raid probably would ~~endure for many~~ <sup>be felt for</sup> months. He also announced that the raid on Vegesack was enough to cripple the Nazi submarine shipyards there for a

considerable length of time. <sup>H</sup> In less than five months,  
~~our~~ Flying Fortresses and Liberators have dropped more  
than four thousand tons of bombs and accounted for  
seventeen hundred and sixty-two German planes destroyed

or damaged, or probably destroyed, <sup>said Gen.</sup> Longfellow, ~~said~~

<sup>adding</sup> ~~further~~ that he is hoping soon to be able to make

daylight raids on the same scale as the <sup>immense</sup> ~~British Royal~~

<sup>R. A. F.</sup> ~~Air Force's devastating~~ night raids.

SUBMARINE

From <sup>all</sup> ~~several~~ accounts, the most important battle now going on is the campaign against U-boats in the Atlantic. Both the President and Prime Minister ~~Winston~~ Churchill have let it be known that this at present is the first consideration in Allied strategy. Churchill told the House of Commons today that the United Nations ~~have~~ now have substantially larger fleets afloat than they had at the worst moment in the U-boat war, and this improvement is continuing.

At the same time, the Nazi high command claims to have developed new improvements in submarine chasers. <sup>The Nazis</sup> ~~Berlin~~ claims <sup>to</sup> ~~that they~~ have sunk five British undersea boats in the Mediterranean in the course of ~~just~~ a few days.

A member of the House of Commons asked Churchill <sup>what</sup> about a recent Nazi claim that they had sunk more than thirty ships out of one convoy in the North Atlantic.



Churchill replied, "All sorts of claims are made by the German radio, and the Nazis would very much like to know how far adrift they are from the truth. But," he added, "nothing would induce me while I am responsible, to qualify enemy knowledge on this matter."

Raymond Clapper, in his column today, says we are breaking every shipbuilding record. He described a visit he paid the other day to the Sun Shipbuilding Yards at Chester, Pennsylvania. He saw a tanker launched, "the first he had ever seen launched", and he adds, "when you see a ship slide down the skids into the water, you get a deep thrill out of it." Raymond Clapper adds:

"Joseph N. Pew, Chairman of the Sun Shipbuilding Company, said he had seen hundreds of ships launched, but after all these years he still gets a thrill out of it."

RUSSIA

The Germans have <sup>not</sup> much to say about the fighting on the Russian front today except that the Red Army <sup>has suffered</sup> ~~had~~ serious losses and that its attacks have weakened.

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The Soviets, ~~on the other hand,~~ report that they have the Nazi <sup>s</sup> ~~Army~~ stopped along the upper Donets. Red Army positions are holding firm everywhere on a broad arc east of Kharkov. The German attack in the upper Donets has been going on for a week now. The RED STAR, the official organ of the Army, says it has brought the Nazis no results except piles of corpses littering the right bank of the river. Soviet defenses, it claims, have not been broken at a single <sup>point,</sup> ~~front.~~

Front line dispatches to Moscow claim that ~~the~~ German losses have been enormous and that their strength is failing, <sup>and that</sup> the latest Nazi attacks on the Donets have been feeble. <sup>And that</sup> they are at a standstill

all the way from Belgorod to the region above and below

Kharkov. ~~At the same time,~~ <sup>Although</sup> they are still bringing up

strong reinforcements of further armored forces <sup>with</sup>

~~They are still determined to crash that Donets line.~~ <sup>which to try and smash the Donets</sup>

~~Russian line.~~ <sup>Russian line.</sup>

Further north, the Russian story is more

sanguine. The Red army is now <sup>practically</sup> ~~literally~~ at the gates

of Smolensk. ~~Huge~~ <sup>Masses</sup> of Russian tanks have forced

their way through the outer defense area of the Nazi

fortification system around the historic city. ~~The Red~~

~~column that has been advancing along the main railroad~~

~~from Moscow to Warsaw, has fought its way to the~~

~~suburbs of Derogobuzh. That is an important railway~~

~~point.~~ A column driving down from the north is only

seventeen ~~and a half~~ miles from Yartsevo, ~~That is the~~

<sup>main</sup> ~~greatest~~ defense bastion in the Nazi line, ~~there.~~ It

~~is only~~ thirty miles northeast of Smolensk. ~~itself.~~

The scene of the fighting there is one of the ~~greatest~~

With fortifications many  
fortified areas of the world. ~~It is dozens of~~ miles  
<sup>also</sup>  
deep; ~~full of difficult country,~~ forests, lakes, rivers,  
swamps.

The Russians ~~also~~ claim to be ~~getting along well~~  
~~in the Caucasus.~~ They are advancing north of the Kuban  
<sup>in the Caucasus, and to</sup>  
River, ~~and~~ have taken one place forty miles north of  
the Nazi naval base at Novorossisk and another place  
nineteen miles northeast of Novorossisk. The Germans  
<sup>there</sup>  
are being pushed into a pocket between the Sea of Azov  
and the Black Sea, a pocket that is growing smaller &  
<sup>smaller.</sup>  
~~all the time.~~ So say the Russians.

## NAVAL BATTLE

In the waters around the Solomons Islands, there was a naval battle earlier this month, and tonight we have some of the details. An American task force was on its way, stealing through the island, to shoot up the Jap bases at Munda and Vila. The Japs had set a trap for them. A couple of Nipponese warships lay in ambush for the American task force. However, they were spotted by Lieutenant Broyles, a Navy flyer, <sup>and they by</sup> ~~he~~ had a grandstand seat for that show, sitting <sup>up there</sup> in a spotter plane. ~~upstairs.~~ <sup>The naval flyer</sup> He saw them in Kula Gulf, all ready for action, ready to surprise our ships. Said Broyles: "I flashed word to our task force and then the surprise was on the other foot." He not only flashed word but gave accurate range. Our guns went into action at long distance. <sup>And</sup> In twenty minutes ~~these~~ <sup>the</sup> two enemy ships <sup>went down,</sup> ~~were in Davey Jones's Locker.~~ Before they sank in flames, they were only able to let loose one or two

shots, which went wild.

Thereupon, the <sup>U.S.</sup> task force went on to bombard

Munda and Vila. The Japs had coastal batteries, ~~but~~  
*which were* ~~they were soon~~ blasted and silenced. *Guy,* ~~Our task force~~

~~then went on to shoot the daylights out of Jap gun~~

~~emplacements, tents, barracks, planes on the ground,~~

*all were blasted.*

~~They started four separate blazes, which finally joined~~

~~up and became one big fire.~~

CHENAULT

President Roosevelt made a lot of new generals today. He nominated seventy-three colonels to be brigadiers. He also nominated twenty-three brigadiers for promotion to major general; ~~And it is good to learn that among them is Brigadier Claire A. Chenault, Commander of the Fourteenth Army Air Force in China. Also Brigadier General Clayton L. Bissell, Commander of the Tenth Air Force in India and Burma.~~ Chenault, you will recall, is the colorful, hard-bitten, ~~up from~~ *Louisianan* ~~the ranks fellow~~ who made such a name for himself as leader of the famous Flying Tigers. ~~All the flyers I have known and all the aviation engineers, just swear by Claire Chenault. He is a flyer from way back, what the British would call a "stout fellow."~~

FOOD

The chief news from Washington today is that we have a new federal agency. Its function will be to tackle and conquer our food problem. It is called the "Administration of Food & Production and Distribution." The head of it is Chester C. Davis of St. Louis, now President of the Federal Reserve Bank there. At one time he was head of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

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Some parts of the set-up are not altogether clear. The Administration of Food Production and Distribution will be a part of the Department of Agriculture. Claude Wickard, who has been Food Administrator, will continue to be Secretary of Agriculture. But it does <sup>just</sup> not appear <sub>^</sub> what will be his relations to Chester Davis or Chester Davis's relations to the Secretary of Agriculture.

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The White House release uses these words:



"The Administrator will have charge of what may be called the food production and distribution of the department." That will include the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. It will also include the food distribution <sup>functions</sup> ~~activities~~ that were transferred to the Department of Agriculture by the War Production Board last December. Also the recruitment of farm labor recently transferred to the Department by the War Manpower Commission.

Wickard, said the White House, will continue to be a member of the War Production Board, also the Economic Stabilization Board, the Combined Food Board, and other committees which now consume a large portion of his time and prevent his giving to the administration <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~ operational activities the time he would like to devote to such administration. The White House also said that President Roosevelt had drafted Chester Davis

for his new job.

It is believed that Davis will have control over all farm machinery or at least procure from the War Production Board the release of enough steel to make more farm machinery. He will have price control over all food products from the farm to the distributor. But the O.P.A. will still hang onto its power over rationing. The theory of government circles is that this new agency will put an end to divided control over food and farm products.

Governor Vivian of Colorado today took action in opposition to the state draft officials. They claimed recently that they had drafted no essential draft workers in Colorado since December. Governor Vivian said he found that out of fifty-nine men drafted recently in one county, twentytwo were farmers, all essential.

So he has ordered the head of the Colorado  
Selective Service not to draft any more farm workers.  
Federal regulations, he said, give him authority to do  
that.

The Office of Price Administration has prosecuted many people. Today in Los Angeles the regional O.P.A. office was in court on the other end of the plank. A metals company asked the court for an injunction to stop the agency from "destroying its business and good will." This is being done, says the Company, by conflicting orders and red tape. In its petition the Company said its officers were utterly bewildered. O.P.A. officials recently warned them to comply more closely with O.P.A. regulations. The Company's counsel retorted: "We could not figure out what they were," and he added: "We could not stay in business unless we violated one ruling or another."

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The attorney said further: <sup>There are</sup> ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

thousands of tons of scrap gathered in recent school drives which are still lying around because everyone is afraid to buy or handle it. The O.P.A. has ruled

that in Arizona the scrap must be moved by rail,  
not by truck. But most of the scrap is far far away  
from any rails. So there it sits.

And here sits Hugh,  
ready to go.