

AFRICA

L.I. - Sunco. Friday, Feb. 19, 1943.

The latest from Tunisia tells of a surprise attack by Allied troops. French and British forces hit the enemy north of the American sector, and smashed through. They slashed deeply into the Axis lines.

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~~In North Africa, the German offensive against the American lines has died down, and little more than air fighting is reported today.~~ The Germans claim to have gained some more ground and declare that they now control the railway running from ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Gafsa to Sousse, an important link of communications.

~~From the Allied side~~ ^{Hdqts} we hear that ^{both} ~~ground fighting was at a standstill all day long, with both sides consolidating their position.~~ ^{s.} American troops are digging in to form a strong position in the hills westward of the line they previously occupied. Rommel's Afrika Korps is consolidating gains it succeeded in making, with Desert Fox Rommel keeping a wary eye on the British to the south. ^{TP} Montgomery's Eighth Army is still moving up toward the Mareth Line - either to storm the fortifications by frontal assault or to try to flank the line by driving around it on the

north along the coast. Or - by swinging south of it
across the desert. *From the Axis side*
~~London cautions us not to expect,~~
we hear that the British have
~~any all-out drive against the Mareth Line immediately.~~
launched a heavy attack,
~~Time and preparations are needed before General~~
~~Montgomery can attack in full force.~~

Today, in a discussion of the American set-back,
advices from North Africa say it was a case of trying
to hold too much of a front with not enough men -
too long and too thin. Nevertheless, the Americans
fought splendidly, knocked out twenty Nazi tanks
on the first day of the battle. They repelled Rommel's
panzers at *the* a place called Sbeitla. *Hurled* ~~They still held~~ the
Germans out of the town, and only withdrew when they
were threatened with encirclement - an orderly
withdrawal.

RUSSIA

In Russia - Soviet forces report their principal successes today as occurring west of Kharkov. They're pushing on from that captured industrial center on a forty-five mile front, and are threatening the key German bases of Poltava and Krasnodgrad.

Moscow reports bitter resistance in this area by Nazi units. In two towns, the capture of which was announced today, the Germans fought desperately and defended all modern buildings - forcing the Russians to capture the towns in house-to-house ^{battling} ~~fighting~~ with tommy guns, hand grenades and bayonets.

Another critical area for the Nazis is the Donets basin, where ^{Red} army forces are striking to the south toward the port of Tagnorog on the Sea of Azov. This threatens to trap great Nazi forces in the Donets basin.

BOMBING SUBMARINE BASES

At an Army-Navy E presentation to the Ciba pharmaceutical company in Summit, New Jersey, today, I met a distinguished Canadian Flying Officer who has just returned from sixty bombing raids, over ~~XXXXXX~~ enemy territory. R.A.F. Wing Commander Timmerman of Kingston, Ontario. Incidentally, he was the first Canadian member of the R.A.F. to be decorated in this war, and ~~he~~ has both the D.S. O. and D.F.C. ^{TP} Wing Commander Timmerman told me something interesting about the bombing of German submarine bases, places on the French coast like Lorient, and St. Nazaire. He said, what we have heard, that the submarines go into shelters that are covered over by a prodigious thickness of concrete. Concrete so heavy that all ordinary bombs just bounce right off. But, he stated that the usefulness of some of these submarine bases has been almost completely

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neutralized by the R.A.F., by the flattening of the
cities
~~situation~~ themselves, driving out all the workers.

He expressed great regret that it was necessary
to bomb French cities and that his many loads of
bombs hadn't all been dumped on Germany itself.

VATICAN

has just been made
The statement ~~was made today~~ that the visit of Archbishop ~~NY~~ Spellman of New York to the Vatican is in connection with proposals for the Pope to leave Rome and cross the Atlantic. This was printed today in the Brooklyn EAGLE -- in an article written by Michael Williams, a Catholic writer on the subject of religion. ^H He tells us that certain governments, which he does ^{not} name, want the Pontiff and the Govern^{ment} of the Vatican, to go to Latin America for the duration of the war. ^H The plan, as outlined by Michael Williams, would be for Pope Pius to fly from Rome to Lisbon and then to proceed either by plane or by submarine across the southern Atlantic. His probable destination -- Brazil. ^H The writer states that the New York Archbishop is going to Rome to discuss the plan. "It would be," says Michael Williams, "a wholly psychological blow of gigantic force struck at the world prestige of the Axis."

This afternoon inquiries were promptly made

and informed Catholic sources in Washington stated that they had in their words: "never heard of such a purpose."

Meanwhile, Archbishop Spellman, on his way to Rome is in Barcelona. The plane on which he is to travel to the eternal city is grounded by bad weather.

GANDHI

Today at ^{Poona}~~Puna~~ in India an Indian Nationalist leader had a conference with President ~~ixi~~ Roosevelt's special envoy -- a conference on the subject of the fast of Gandhi. The presidential envoy is William Philipps. The Indian Nationalist leader is Chakra-varthi Ra-ja-go-pala-cha-ri. One immediate surmise would be that Chakra-varthi Raja-go-pala-cha-ri, in calling on William Phillips, was trying to get the United States to intervene in behalf of Gandhi and try to do something to get him released. ^{TP} After the conference Chakra-varthi Raja-go-pala-cha-ri stated that if Gandhi should die as a result of his hunger strike there would be an explosion of violence in India. On the other hand, said Chakra-varthi Raja-go-pala-cha-ri if the British Indian government would release Gandhi the Mahatma could immediately put an end to every sign of disorder in India.

^{And} There were some more disorders today -- one when twelve members of the Nationalist Party staged a

demonstration in ^{be}half of imprisoned and fasting ^{saint in the loin cloth,}
~~Gandhi.~~ The twelve were arrested.

Six doctors saw the Mahatma today, and report that he is ~~a little~~ weak ^{er and} ~~and that he~~ can't sleep -- on this the tenth day of his fast. ~~On~~ The seventy-three year old mystic and nationalist is under the constant care of his wife -- Kasturbai and an Indian woman poet -- Sairo-jini Naidu. The room of his hunger strike is a scene of Hindu ~~religious~~ devotions, and religious melodies are played for him on a ~~radio~~ ^{kind of} musical instrument with seven strings -- that seven stringed ^{kind of} mandolin with its delicate tinkling sounds so typical of India.

MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK

There were smiles today, combined with pathos and emotion, in what Madame Chiang Kai-shek had to say.

She was interviewed at a White House news conference -

and joined the President
~~took the President's customary place,~~ in talking to the

Washington correspondents. ^{TP} The First Lady of China

displayed all that winning charm with which she captivated

Congress yesterday - or perhaps more so *today - the*

circumstances being less formal. ~~Between~~ Placed between

the President and Mrs. Roosevelt, she wore a Chinese

dress of oriental flowered pattern - and her feet dangled

inches above the floor, as she sat in the President's

big chair. Mr. Roosevelt is a tall man, with an ample

length of limbs. Madame Chiang Kai-shek is the petite

Chinese type - and, sitting in the large presidential

chair, she could kick her feet like a small girl.

Not that she did swing them back and forth - the occasion

was too important for that. ^{TP} She says that she is in the

United States on a visit entirely personal, ^{but} at the news conference today President Roosevelt characterized Madame Chiang Kai-shek as a special envoy, giving her diplomatic status.

The smiling part of the interview - a large laugh in fact - came in the course of the discussion of aid to China - which was a dominant note throughout the proceedings. President Roosevelt stated that increasing help will go to the Chinese. He pledged that we will send military materials more and more - as fast as the Lord will let us.

To that Madame Chiang Kai-shek responded with comment most American. She was educated in this country, and talks our language. ^{So} She reverted to the good old homespun proverb - that the Lord helps those who help themselves. That got a roar of laughter from the crowd of newspaper people, with President and Mrs. Roosevelt

joining in the hilarity.

The pathos and emotion came in further talk about that same topic - war aid to China. One newspaper reporter asked Madame Chiang ~~Kai-shek~~ about reports that Chinese manpower was not being fully utilized - that there were plenty of men in the Far Eastern land who were not in the battle. To this the First Lady of China responded in a voice of deep feeling. She said the Chinese could not fight with their bare hands. Yes, China has abundant manpower, but China also lacks the weapons, the guns, ammunitions and warplanes.

They are fighting with bare hands. Her voice

most looked on the scene. While the lady from China was making her appeal, action was being taken to increase aid ~~to China~~. Today

4 Lend-Lease Administrator Stettinius created a new division of the Lend-Lease Administration - a China Division. Until now, there have been separate Lend-Lease sections for ~~sending lend-lease materials to~~

Great Britain and ~~to~~ Soviet Russia, while help for China was handled from merely a branch of the Stettinius office. Now, however, a Chinese Division is set up, and that is a move to put the Far Eastern land on an equal footing with Britain and the Soviets.

○

President Roosevelt outlined to the new conference some points of American Far Eastern strategy. He said that our military command intends to strike at Japan's long supply line at the top. That is - at the upper Japanese end of the supply line, Japan itself. ~~It is well recognized that a great weakness of the Far Eastern enemy lies in the immense extent of the sprawling island empire that he has seized. The lines of communication along which the Japs must transport materials from the conquered lands is long drawn out - and is vulnerable. Strike it near the top, at the Japan end - that is the idea the President expressed. Strike it by bombing, and~~

China will be a major base for the launching of the air assault, *said the President.*

In outlining this strategy, ^{he} ~~the President~~ disclaimed the notion of island hopping. He said that if we launch an offensive that would take one Pacific island after another, it would take a mighty long time to reach Japan. If we conquered an island per month, it would take fifty years to get to Tokyo.

~~The President made the point sharply, in fact, the point was not obtunded one bit - and the use of that word takes us to the picture of a number of Congressmen thumbing pages of dictionaries. Yesterday, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, with her flawless English, baffled a good many of the lawmakers by using the word - obtunded, which is quite an unusual term.~~

~~"We shall," said she, "have faith that, at the writing of peace, America and our other gallant allies,~~

MAN POWER

President Roosevelt stated today that ~~the~~ Nineteen Forty-Three figures for the size of the armed forces will stick -- seven and a half million men for the Army alone and a total of more than eleven million for the Army, Navy and Marine Corps ~~is~~ together. He ~~refer~~ revealed that ^{this} figure had been decided upon last August and that he himself ~~had~~ made the decision -- as Commander-in-Chief. ^R The President added that some military officials thought the figure for the army should be still larger. Some suggested ten million or twelve million or thirteen million. — *Just for the Army.* If that latter figure had been adopted ~~for the Army,~~ with two and a half million men in the Navy and Marine Corps, the grand total for the armed services would have been fifteen and a half million.

~~The president was asked whether he was concerned over congressional opposition to so big an army.. The Farm Bloc ~~is~~ protesting more bitterly than ever about the drafting of labor away from the farms.~~

~~Legislation to stop the drafting of farmers is gaining~~
~~favorable ^{attention} ~~tension~~ in Congress.~~

The president ~~replied that he was concerned~~
~~about the congressional opposition, ~~xx~~ but indicated~~
~~that there would be no change in plans for the size~~
~~of the Army.~~

also He told a story of how the Russians at Moscow
put three hundred thousand children to work to produce
food and cut wood for fuel. He said he thought that
in this country the young folks in the small towns
could help the farmers with their crops. For example,
54 ~~if the~~ ^a whole town ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ California turned out ~~for~~ and
helped to gather the fruit from the orchards.

~~After making these statements the President~~
~~conferred with Senator Bankhead of Alabama, a number~~
~~one leader of the Farm Bloc opposition. The ~~discussion~~~~
~~discussion accomplished nothing, with Senator Bankhead~~
~~saying afterward: "We didn't agree on anything -- we~~
~~didn't try to agree on anything."~~

The latest is a statement that the President has tacidly endorsed the idea of letting soldiers help the farmer ^s ~~to~~ harvest the crops. This was stated by Chairman Fulmer of the House Agricultural Committee ^{who} ~~He~~ had a conference at the White House today and said the President by implication gave his endorsement to the bill that would allow farm soldiers to do farm work.

PIPELINE

Today work was completed on one of the greatest of engineering jobs - that famous pipeline from Longview, Texas, north for five hundred and thirty-one miles. ~~It is~~ The greatest crude oil pipeline ever constructed, ~~and~~ It was completed and put into operation today.

This new line extends to Norris City, Illinois, and is to be further extended to New York and ~~Rhixxx~~ Philadelphia - which will just about double its length.

57 { The whole thing will cost ninety-five million dollars when completed and will carry three hundred thousand barrels of oil a day to the Atlantic seaboard area. The final extention will be completed around June First.

Meanwhile, the first section went into operation today - oil flowing through five hundred and thirty-one miles of pipe to the Illinois terminus.

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From that point petroleum is coming to the refineries
of the east in tank cars.

FORD

A Congressional okay was given today to Henry Ford's huge bomber plant at Willow Run.

The Truman Committee had previously charged that Ford bomber production was disappointing. That led to an investigation - with the Committee members going out to Detroit to look for themselves. Late this afternoon, having had a large look, they say they were impressed with what they saw. "Most of us feel that

this mass production plan will work out," said Senator Walgren of Washington. The Committee characterizes the operation of the Willow Run plant in these words:

"It ~~xxxxxxx~~ compares very favorably with any other airplane factory in the country as far as actual production work is concerned."

The Committee adds that the Ford management has been handicapped by constant changes of design, and by transportation, ^{and} housing problems. Moreover, there is

a question of labor shortage, with Edsel Ford today
appealing to the Committee to ask ^{the} Manpower Commission
to do something about it, help the Willow Run plant
~~to~~ get more workers.

TAXES

58 1/2 The ~~House~~ Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives has rejected all the pay-as-you-go tax plans. This action was taken late this afternoon, and the rejected plans include the Rum1 skip-^a~~the~~-year idea^{of} pay-as-you-go. The Committee. which couldn't come to any agreement at all, referred the whole thing to a five-man sub-committee which is instructed to draft a tax program - do something, get it on paper. ^{And -} The sub-committee is ^{told to} ~~instructed to~~ include pay-as-you-go in the proposed bill it turns out.

59 And now Hugh James.