

P.T. - Sumoco. Tuesday, Feb. 16, 1943.

RUSSIA

The Soviets announce their ~~the~~ greatest victory of the present Red Army offensive in southern Russia. They ~~have~~ captured ^{of} Kharkov.

Stalingrad was a decisive success, but it was mostly defensive in character. Kharkov is a victory of attack, and the city was the most important German stronghold on the southern Russian Front. Its fall today ranks as the most spectacular event in the forward surge of the Soviet ~~forces~~.

The capture of the city was virtually forecast by German dispatches, earlier in the day, ~~and late yesterday.~~ Berlin announced that a Soviet thrust had cracked the Kharkov defense line, and that the fighting was going on in the outskirts of the city. ~~(The Nazis were evacuating all they could, and railroads were reported to be clogged with trains taking men and armament out of the Kharkov area while the taking out was good.)~~

Moscow tells of huge tank battles that preceded

the fall of the city, ~~and~~ ^{who were} The Germans defeated were Hitler's best -- elite Nazi divisions.

The Soviet capture of Kharkov, following that of Rostov emphasized the impression that the German command has decided on a retreat all along the line in southern Russia. Moscow accounts tell of the Nazi front collapsing at one place after another -- and the climax of collapse was ~~xxx~~ at Kharkov. This powerfully fortified area is what they call -- a bolt. That is a bolt anchoring the top of the southern front. The bolt has now been pulled out, and the whole front may be expected to recede ^a along way. How far? ~~xxxxxx~~ Suppositions are that the Germans, in the face of the shattering Soviet offensive, will have to pull as far back as the river Dneiper, a huge retreat.

AFRICA

Our forces in North Africa have launched a successful counter attack ^{which} ~~and it~~ compensates somewhat for the Nazi capture of Gafsa. That place is an important point on the American line in southern Tunisia, but a powerful German armored thrust made ^{it} ~~the place~~ ^{unteny} ~~unattainable~~. So our troops evacuated Gafsa. The location of the American counter attack that followed was near ^a ~~the~~ place called Faid. There the Germans had lunged forward, but later were hit so hard, that they were driven back for six miles.

The drives ^{into} ~~in~~ the American lines are being staged by Rommel's veterans ^{of} ~~the~~ North Afrika Korps, ^{the men who} ~~which~~ did so much desert fighting before ^{hurled} ~~it was driven~~ out of Egypt and all the way to Tunisia. ~~No one believes that Rommel is staging any kind of major offensive. The panzers of the North Afrika Korps are merely trying to improve their position by widening the corridor which they hold -- backed against the sea as they are.~~

Meanwhile the British Eighth Army, which drove

Rommel so far and fast, is lunging forward to join forces with the Americans. The British announce the capture of a place twenty miles inside ~~of~~ the Tunisian border and ^{are} ~~is~~ sweeping toward the Mareth line -- the fortified positions built by the French and now held by the North Afrika Korps.

SOLOMONS

The picture the Navy gives us ^{of} the last
big sea fight revolving around Guadalcanal, ^{discloses} ~~is in~~
a novel picture of naval action,
~~contrast to the other big battles that our fleet has~~
fought with the Far Eastern enemy. The first two
clashes between opposing naval squadrons were dominated
by aircraft carriers - with carrier based planes doing
nearly all of the assaulting. This was true of our
victories in the Coral Sea and at Midway - where fleets
lashed out against each other with their planes, the
warships being so far apart ^{even} that they never caught
sight of each other. Later, in probably half a dozen
engagements on the waters of the Solomons, the naval
guns of warships came into their own again - with
powerful escort vessels ^{slinging} it out at close range.
Some of these actions were accompanied by plenty of
air fighting - others none.

The last oceanic epic of Guadalcanal was

~~still another kind of affray.~~ The ships in it were nearly all of the light speedy sort - destroyers mostly. Today's Navy bulletin makes no mention of battleships on either side, and speaks of only one cruiser. The Navy states: "There were no actions between heavy forces."

Large air fleets were engaged, and the picture is one of small fast ships ranging over great spaces of ocean, with air squadrons striking through the sky. ^{And —} Nearly all of the ship losses were inflicted by air power. No warships fought gunnery duels with each other.

The battle was ^{waged} ~~fought~~ for a week - January Twenty-Ninth to February Fourth. The facts are revealed only now - three weeks after the beginning of the engagement. ^{latest} The historic episode of sea and air war was hidden by the closest military secrecy - until now.

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The Navy today tells us how, out there in the Solomons, American scout planes reported heavy concentrations of Jap ships and planes to the north.

Meaning

The enemy was up to something - but what? At first our naval commanders suspected Japan might be planning a supreme attempt to reinforce the Japs on Guadalcanal.

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Maybe the enemy intended to bring on a decisive clash between the full powers of the hostile fleets. ~~The~~

~~well~~

~~Japs did go into some vigorous action, but it soon~~

But

~~became apparent their purpose was a minor one~~ All

the naval sparring around was merely to cover the

evacuation of Japs from Guadalcanal } ~~what few~~

~~remaining troops the enemy could get out. They sent~~

~~great numbers of destroyers in concerted maneuvers~~

~~aimed at ^{the island} Guadalcanal and hurled flights of planes,~~

~~and did succeed in removing several thousand of their~~

men.

Today's Navy bulletin gives the lie to the fantastic claims the Japs made at the time of the battle - their stories of having sunk two American battleships and three cruisers. We lost one cruiser, the CHICAGO; ^{also} one destroyer, and three motor torpedo boats. The Japs lost two destroyers, and four other similar ships were probably sunk. Six of their destroyers were damaged, and so were a corvette and two cargo ships. Our air losses consisted of twenty-two planes. They lost more than sixty.

In the very first stage of the battle, the ^{U. S.} ~~United States~~ heavy cruiser, CHICAGO, was sunk. On the evening of the first day of the week-long engagement, the CHICAGO was attacked by Jap torpedo planes, hit, and severely damaged. The cruiser was taken in tow during the night. On the afternoon of the following day, while still being towed, the

CHICAGO was assailed by air torpedoes again. Thirteen Jap torpedo planes came winging to the assault. They were attacked by American fighters, ^{which} ~~we~~ shot down twelve of the thirteen - only one got away. But the fighter ^{inter} ~~re~~ception was too late to ^{ward} ~~ward~~ off the attack on the CHICAGO. Before those twelve ^{out} of thirteen Japs were shot down, they torpedoed the cruiser ~~xxx~~ with repeated hits - and the CHICAGO sank. The loss of life was little - most of the crew taken off.

^{Then the sinking} ~~The~~ loss of the American destroyer occurred on the fourth day of the battle. ^{the} ~~A~~ small warship was hit by dive bombers, not far from the coast of Guadalcanal.

The heavy loss of Jap destroyers was accompanied by a series of American air blows. ^{lished} ~~(On the~~ ~~third day of the engagement,~~ for example, our bombers attacked an enemy group consisting of a destroyer.

~~a corvette and a big cargo vessel. All three of these ships were left on fire and in a sinking condition apparently - though the Navy does not list them as sunk.~~

For example

~~The next day, American dive bombers and torpedo planes assailed a formation of four destroyers. Two are believed to have been sunk and a third was left on fire.~~

We are told how our planes made an attack on sixteen destroyers, and again on a force of twenty, which was followed by another assault against eighteen. This is an indication of the large destroyer forces the Japs were using in their moves to evacuate troops from Guadalcanal. *IP of the* ~~The~~ six that were sunk *for* sure, not counting other probable sinkings, one was sent to the bottle ~~by~~ *by* motor torpedo boats - two others probably sunk. Twenty destroyers made a dash for Guadalcanal. Our speedy motor P.T. boats went ~~out~~ after them, and

scored repeated hits. Three of our small speedy craft were lost.

As for clashes between the rival sky forces, clashes in which our planes inflicted such heavy losses, here's an example:— On the fifth day of the battle, a squadron of flying fortresses, escorted by fighters, blasted a cargo ship ^{and} - ^ twenty Zeros came speeding to the attack. Eight - possibly nine - were shot down. And, we did ^{at this time} not lose a plane. // On one day alone, twenty Japs were shot down over Guadalcanal.

Such is the official picture that we ~~fix~~ are finally given of the battle that was kept so secret - the ~~fx~~ vast destroyer and airplane conflict ranging over a hundred thousand square miles of ocean.

Here is a bulletin, issued by the Government of India on the subject of Gandhi's fast. That's how important they consider the Mahatma's refusal to eat anything.

The little brown Saint is now in the seventh day of his hunger strike - and this is considered the critical stage. He intends to fast for twenty-one days, and the question is - will he survive it?

Today, six doctors visited Gandhi in his prison - the prison being the fabulous ^{Paona} palace of the Aga Khan.

The six physicians conferred on the Mahatma's condition, and announced ^{that} the seventy-three year old mystic ^{and} ascetic was suffering from nausea and chills. These are normal effects after a week long fast.

The doctors say that, as the Gandhi hunger strike goes on toward the appointed twenty-one days, the Mahatma will become weaker and will be forced to lie perfectly quiet all the time - not even talking. He

will communicate with bystanders by writing notes until he is too weak to hold a pencil. Then he will be able to do no more than make signs.

But, apparently, signs will suffice. Today one physician stated: "People around Gandhi know what he wants even if he only moves a finger."

New demands are being made for the release of Gandhi, the latest being urged in the Indian Parliament. A British leader argued in opposition, and characterized the Mahatma's hunger strike in these words: "a pistol again is held at our forehead."

That figure of speech is an odd expression of political importance in Gandhi's fast - when one aged man's refusal to eat is called a pistol at the head of the magnificent British Raj in India.

LANDIS

A little more than five hours from this present moment, at midnight, an important wartime change will go into effect throughout a large area of this nation. This event will concern the safety of millions of people. Instead of my trying to tell you about it, suppose we go to headquarters - switch over to Washington and hear from James M. Landis, United States Director of Civilian Defense. Director Landis in Washington -- will you tell us about tonight's event?

MR. LANDIS: Thank you, Mr. Thomas. The event you have spoken of is indeed vital to every man, woman and child in the states along the Atlantic Coast and I am grateful for this opportunity to describe it to your vast radio audience. At midnight tonight the new air raid warning signals go into effect. These new regulations were promulgated by Lieutenant General Hugh A. Drum, Commanding the eastern defense

command and first army, for the eastern military area. These new signals are as follows -- when you hear a steady, even note of a siren, whistle or horn -- this is the blue warning. It no longer means all clear. It means now that enemy planes have been sighted and are headed in your direction. Black out your house lights. Keep your radio on to receive special messages. If you are driving, turn your headlights on low beam and drive carefully. When you hear short blasts of a whistle or horn, or rising and falling notes of a siren, that is the red signal, the same as the present air raid signal. It means that planes are practically overhead. You must ^{go} to shelter immediately. Motorists must turn out car lights before leaving. After every red signal, the long, steady note will always be sounded. This blue signal does not mean all clear. It means only that enemy raiders have passed but may return. Your home must stay blacked out. Traffic and pedestrians may

move again. This blue warning remains in force until the all clear is announced by telephone to the civilian defense corps, and by radio to the general public. If the all clear is to be given in any other way in your community, it will be announced by your local defense council. These new air raid warning signals go into effect tonight at midnight in the New England states and in New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida east of the Apalachicola River, and the District of Columbia. The Q.C.D. recommends that all states except those on the west coast adopt these new signals. But I urge every one of you listening in the Atlantic seaboard states to memorize these air raid warning signals. Remember -- the long, steady note -- the short blasts or wavering note -- the long steady note again -- all these are warnings on which your safety may depend. And now back to Lowell Thomas in New York.

PRODUCTION BOARD

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War Production Chief Donald Nelson today

demanded the resignation of Ferdinand E. Eberstadt -
a Vice-Chairman of the W.P.B.

And this climaxes a feud that has been going on
for months between Donald Nelson on the one side, and
the Army and Navy on the other. Eberstadt, before he
went to the W.P.B., was the head of the Army and Navy
Munitions Board, and ~~he~~ represented the viewpoint of
the armed services.

Two weeks ago, Donald Nelson deprived

Eberstadt of some of his powers, and transferred these
to another W.P.B. vice-chairman, Charles E. Wilson,
Former President of General Electric.
That brought the quarrel to the breaking point, and
something had to snap.

Today, the whole thing broke open with a loud
snap - Nelson ousting Eberstadt. The War Production
Chief acted on his own authority, and did not consult
President Roosevelt - so states a Production Board
spokesman.

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Today Secretary of Agriculture Wickard told ~~the~~ a Senate sub-committee that he is going to ask the Army to furlough troops to work on farms. This fits in with the demand of powerful Senate forces, ~~which have been demanding that prompt measures be taken to relieve the shortage of agricultural labor. They want the Army to grant leaves of absence to soldiers who are from the farms -- leaves of absence that will enable them to help in harvesting the crops these years.~~

Secretary Wickard stated that last year he asked the Army to furlough soldiers for farm work -- but the Army refused. Today he stated: "I am going to ask again this year, if it is necessary." ^{TP} And Secretary Wickard talked to the subcommittee about the black market in meat. He said the nation has a serious problem in black market operations -- particularly in connection with beef. ~~The~~ Racketeers are getting as high as one dollar and seventy-five cents a pound for beef in the black market in New York.

ROOSEVELT

President Roosevelt today talked about spend-
thrifts. He was referring to people who don't want
to spend money now for post war planning. Because they
don't want to spend money they are spendthrifts. The
President explained the paradox by saying that if we
invest now in post war planning we'll save several
billions of dollars and spare ourselves ^a huge lot of
~~un~~employment -- when peace time returns again.

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The President drew a thrifty picture of himself
as a great saver of money. -- Does that portrait surprise
you? The President admitted that few people ever saw
him in the frugal guise of a careful economizer.

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And now from F. D. R. the
frugal financial economizer
to Hugh James with his chaste
economy of words.