

R.A.F.

*L.I. Standard. - Thursday, Dec. 23, 1943.
Sun.*

A dispatch from London discloses that for the past ninety six hours the British R.A.F. has been delivering a concentrated bombing attack on targets across the English Channel. There is no mention of what exactly the British war planes are striking at. And that provokes the phrase -- mystery targets. These are in the vicinity of Calais. ^{TP} That section back during the days of the Nazi blitz against Britain was called the "Invasion Coast" -- the shore from which a German invasion of England was expected hourly. And, we may find that term invasion coast used once again -- but in a reverse sense -- pertaining to the expected British-American invasion of Nazi controlled France. ^{For} The launching of the second front is expected to be across the English Channel.

Today, ~~however,~~ we find that stretch of

shore near Calais given ~~was~~ another name -- "the rocket coast." In telling of the prolonged R.A.F. bombing, London newspapers today printed big headlines reading: "A blitz on the Rocket Coast".

It all goes back to the much talked of secret weapon of the Nazis, which concealed menace is being more and more clearly defined as a giant rocket shell, a monster projectile with which the Nazis intend to bomb Britain from the shore of

France. ^{TP} One account from Switzerland tells us that the Rocket Shell is believed to ~~might~~ weigh fifty tons -- all of fifty tons -- yet it is said to carry only ten tons of explosive, ~~as~~ the other forty tons being required for the glider-like construction of the missile and for the rocket mechanism propelling it. ^{TP} Still another report is even more formidable, describing the rocket glider as a monster of seventy-

five tons and this version says it holds sixty-five tons of explosive. ^{TP} All of which raises a fantastic menace for London -- ~~if~~^{if} the Nazis are able to project the glider monsters from the French Coast to the heart of the British capital.

^{TP} Reports are insistent that the Germans of late have been busy in the Calais area, setting up guns for the discharge of ^{these huge} ~~the~~ rockets.

The British response is to bomb the rocket guns, as they are being installed -- to knock them out before they can be put into operation. This is the picture summoned by today's ^{London} ~~s~~ headlines -- "A blitz on the Rocket Coast."

LEAD RETALIATION

An ugly message was broadcast by the Nazi controlled Oslo radio today -- a statement that captured British and American military aviators in German hands are to be tried as war criminals.

^{JP} This is an increasingly definite threat, following yesterday's story of how the Nazis were making menacing statements about retaliating on British and Americans for the execution of Nazi war criminals in Russia. ^{JP} ~~From London we hear that~~

~~representations will be made to the German government on this score -- representations~~ →

The Nazi attitude is that the hangings in Russia were carried out on the theory that the individual soldier is responsible for his actions -- though he may be merely carrying out orders. To which the Nazis add "We shall apply to ~~Britains~~ British and American pilots in our hands the method of holding the individual soldier responsible". And the London Daily Mail quotes the Nazi controlled Paris radio as stating that the first British and American prisoners to be tried will be flyers who took part in the bombing of Nuremberg -- the great industrial center and railroad junction.

From London we hear that representations are to be made to the German government on this score, representations

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~~We hear that representations are to be made to Nazi Germany on the score of German threats to retaliate against American and British fliers for the execution of Nazi war criminals, in Russia. They say the representations to Berlin will be made jointly by the United States, Great Britain and Soviet Russia. The Swiss Republic ^{to} ~~will~~ be the go-between. ~~This account comes from London, where official circles are much concerned over the Nazi reprisal threat.~~ ^P If the Nazis were to execute British and American flyers as an answer to the Soviet hanging of three German war criminals at Kharkov it might set going a hideous series of retaliations. In this connection London notes that Germany has some two hundred thousand allied prisoners of war, while the number of German prisoners of war in allied hands is above that figure.~~

FOLLOW RETALIATION

In Washington official circles express tonight the fear that the Nazi threats of reprisals for the execution of ~~German~~ Germans in Russia may lead to the break down of the Geneva covenant, that international pact regulating the treatment of prisoners of war. The Japs executed some of the Doolittle flyers, but the United States made no move of reprisal. If now, however, there should be a series of retaliations, in the European theater -- all the rules of war ^{for} ~~of~~ the treatment of prisoners might go into the discard.

RUSSIA

Soviet war news tonight again features the strong point of Vitebsk on the ~~xxx~~ northern front. That's where the latest of the Soviet drives has thrust forward ^{for} ~~xxx~~ large strategic gains.

Moscow states that Soviet troops are closing in on the great bastion of Vitebsk and that many thousands of Nazis have been driven into the frozen marshlands, desolate winter wilderness. These trapped Germans are now being wiped out in what the Moscow dispatch calls - fierce battles of annihilation.

~~On the southern front, for five hundred miles, the Germans are hurling powerful counter attacks of massed armored infantry. ~~that~~ Powerful ~~kind of~~ forces are being employed in the Nazi counter drives; but, these are being stopped all along the line, says ~~xxxxxxxx~~ Moscow.~~

the time when the Nazis grabbed unoccupied France -- in Nineteen Forty-two. DeTassigny tried to resist the onrushing German hordes, and attempted to make a stand with what is called -- "two non-coms and one gun". Needless to say, he did not succeed -- with two non-coms and one gun against the German Army. For this defiance to the Nazis the Vichy government sentenced him to ten years in prison, but last ~~month~~ ^{September} he made an escape -- which is described as remarkably similar to Giraud's own escape from prison in Germany.

ITALY

The news from Italy today features the Canadians. Shock troops from the Dominion are foremost in the fighting in the ruined town of Ortono. And that fighting is of the fiercest kind, with desperate street battles from house to house. The Canadians, aided by tanks, have captured most of ruined Ortono, and the full occupation of the one-time quiet Italian town is expected hourly.

The desperation of the Germans on the Adriatic front is indicated by the fact that into the battle against General Montgomery's Eighth Army they are throwing paratroops but not from the sky. They are using those specialized experts, the paratroops, as ordinary infantry.

On the Fifth Army side, General Clark's troops have captured two more mountain summits, which overlook the town of Cassino -- which is still the Fifth Army goal in the present stubborn battle.

OBSERVATION

I've had occasion at a previous time to remark that, among the air heroes of the war, too little glory was heaped on the airmen of the photographic and observation planes. This I said in telling of decorations bestowed on Colonel Elliott Roosevelt, son of the President. He and his companions of the photographic and observation flying service here distinguished themselves on one thrilling flight after another; flying against the enemy, armed with only cameras.

Today's news brings several examples of the gallant exploit by American flying men. One tells of yesterday's death of Lieutenant Colonel Dyes, a hero air fighter of Bataan who crashed in a plane last night near Burbank, California. He could have survived and made a safe landing on a street -- but he saw an automobile into which he might have crashed and he pulled his disabled plane

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~~up only to hit a church steeple and plunge for a fatal accident.~~

~~Another account tells of more exploits in the Mediterranean sector by Lieutenant Walter Schroll, former Cornell all-America half-back.~~

~~But, I prefer to concentrate on still another story, which has to do with the photographic and observation service in the war.~~

At the headquarters of the Fifth Army in Italy today General Eisenhower made one of his rare public appearances on the Italian front. He did so to confer a decoration on a California flyer who had been recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross by Colonel ^{Elliott} ~~Smith~~ Roosevelt, and also by Lieutenant General Mark Clark, the Fifth Army Commander.

The airman in question is Lieutenant Colonel

Carl Polifika of Watsonville, California.

~~Carl is~~
~~He is~~
^

~~attached to the aerial photography squadron commanded
by the President's son, and during some of the
bitterest fighting in the Italian campaign he did
a bit of observation work that was of decisive
importance for the fighting on the ground.~~ ^{TP} An

^{TP} An American advance was held up ^{for 3 weeks by} ~~by some cleverly hidden~~
^{some cleverly hidden} German artillery positions, so shrewdly camouflaged

that they could not be spotted in any regular way.

~~In fact, today's news story from Fifth Army Headquarters~~

~~quarters tells us that these disguised German~~

~~batteries held up the Fifth Army advance in that~~

~~point for three weeks. That's how important they~~

were. ^{TP} ~~The turn of the offensive came when~~ Lieutenant

Colonel Polifika spotted the hidden guns. How?

That is stated with military brevity by the citation
which General Eisenhower read at the ceremony today.

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It states: -
~~It reads,~~

"Carefully camouflaged positions were located by the actual muzzle blast of the guns firing at him as he flew over four times during the day at heights ranging from one hundred ~~xx~~ to nine hundred feet".

So there you have the picture of the kind of deed of valor that is performed by ^{*our Army Air Force.*} ~~the~~ photography and observation service -- the Lieutenant Colonel from California flying at low level over the hidden batteries, making himself ^{*a*} target, ~~then~~ drawing their fire and risking the continuous blast so that he could spot the spurts of fire ^{*right close up to*} ~~from~~ the muzzles of the guns.

FRENCH

At Algiers they were saying today that General Giraud may step out as the commander of the French Army fighting the Nazis. The explanation is that Giraud is embarrassed because of the treason trials of ~~some~~ former prominent adherents of Vichy. The embarrassment is understandable, because Giraud invited several of the accused Vichites to come to North Africa, and gave them prominent posts.

And there is speculation about a possible ~~is~~ Giraud successor, Who? Rumor names General De Tassigny, who is described as a Five Star General. Four stars are all a general can have over here, but the French rank goes up to five stars.

General De Tassigny has distinguished himself ~~for~~ for his work with the French underground, and is famous for an exploit during ~~the fall of France. Not such a successful exploit~~.

COMMANDER

Word from Washington is that the Second Front Commander is to be General Eisenhower, ^{and} not Chief of Staff General Marshall -- as has been rumored so much. The United Press hears in Washington that President Roosevelt has decided to keep his military staffs in ~~in~~ tact, keep them just as they are; and this is in line with the contention, expressed emphatically, that General Marshall has been doing such a great job as Chief of Staff, that he should be retained in that post. That argument prevailing, General Eisenhower will become the Second Front Commander -- so we are told.

PACIFIC

The Japanese reinforcement fleet has been sighted in the Marshall Islands. Admiral Nimitz announces that twenty enemy vessels have been spotted in one of the lagoons. And this is taken to indicate that the Japs are hurrying new forces into the Marshalls, -- in the belief that an American invasion blow will soon be launched. This

~~is coupled by news of another successful American bomber raid against hostile Japs in the Marshalls.~~

TP
~~In New Guinea Australian troops continue their belisome progress on the Huon Peninsula, while air action takes the form of new raids by Billy Mitchell Bombers against Weewak. Two transports and a freighter were damaged.~~

And China is in the news with word of a great Allied victory in the sky -- ~~sixty~~ ^{when} China-based American fighter pilots shot down or damaged

forty-five Jap planes, ^{*This occurred*} ~~and~~ when an enemy air formation tried in vain to bomb the main base of the United States Fourteenth Air Force.

RAILROADS

Tonight President Roosevelt took measures to seize the railroads. He directed the Attorney General to prepare the necessary formalities for the government to take over the rail ~~line~~ lines of the nation. This ~~is~~ in case the present negotiations to avert a strike collapse and break down for good.

⁷⁷ ~~The~~ late news does not mean that the President is taking over the railroads right now but merely that he is getting set to do so -- if his mediation efforts meet with complete failure.

Today, he called upon the railroad companies and the unions to let him arbitrate, and asked them to agree to accept any decision that he may make concerning the ~~railroad~~ wage dispute. And the President gave warning in these words: "The war cannot wait and I cannot wait." Whereupon the railroad companies said "okay" and so did two of the biggest

of the five operating unions. The other three held back, and later the President of the Brotherhood of Firemen and Engineers stated that his union and the two remaining brotherhoods had decided to reject the President's offer of arbitration.

Whereupon the White House issued the order that preparations be made to seize the railroads -- if necessary.

NEW DEAL

It is time to abolish the term - New Deal.

Who says so? Why, *Franklin D.*
~~and this belief is attributed to~~ President Roosevelt

himself. ^{TP} Of late there have been reports that F.D.R. believes that the name attached to his administration ever since he entered the White House in Nineteen Thirty-three is now obsolete, out-moded. And today Presidential Secretary Steve Early was asked about this to which he replied:- ^R The phrase New Deal was born back in the days of the Nineteen Thirty two emergency, and it was the slogan ■■ through the campaign. This he added, is now Nineteen Forty-three. What term does the President prefer in place of New Deal. His suggestion is:- Win the war.

^{TP} Which already, of course, is the slogan of all parties in all countries involved in the war,

HUSBAND

In Los Angeles Mrs. Beverly Fournier whose husband is a sailor somewhere in the Pacific war area is not supposed to be/lonesome on Christmas. So she's looking for a sailor with black wavy hair and Irish blue eyes -- just the same as her husband, who will be standing watch on a warship far-away. In other words, Beverly plans to have a stand-in for her husband on Christmas Day -- a substitute husband, though not altogether, but with distinct qualifications.

The sailor's wife has ~~not~~ received a letter from her sea-going hubby, in which he told her that ~~he~~ ^{just} doesn't want her to be lonesome on Christmas.

Thereupon he suggested the idea of a stand-in to take his place; ~~so far as~~ ^{that is, to} ~~helping~~ ^{to} decorate the Christmas tree, presiding ^{ing} over the distribution of the presents, and sitting ~~ing~~ at the head of the table for

Christmas dinner. That much, and no more -- and sailor Fournier distinctly specifies that the stand-in husband shall not kiss the make-believe wife.

Uh uh, None of those conjugal ways of saying -- Merry Christmas!

Wifey, upon receiving the letter, thought it was a good idea. And, as an added sentimental touch, she decided she'd have a stand-in husband who looks as much as possible like her jack-tar ^{out there in} ~~the far~~ Pacific. That is -- a sailor with wavy

black hair and Irish blue eyes. Also -- a Mariner whose idea of happiness is to help decorate the Christmas tree, preside over the distribution of the presents and sit at the head of ^{the Christmas dinner} ~~the~~ table.

~~And now Ben what would~~
~~A wisdom have you to add to that?~~
And now for a vital message, a Christmas message for every American.

ITALY

While General Eisenhower's appointment as Commander-in-chief of the second front was being announced, the General was on the Italian front. Even if it had been possible for him to listen into the President's broadcast, the appointment probably was no news to him. One of the last conferences the President had on his way home a couple of weeks ago, was with Eisenhower on the site of ancient Carthage. They were together for some time, and we may reasonably assume that the President then told the General of the great honor and added responsibility in store for him.

Word came from Allied headquarters in Algiers today that Eisenhower is spending Christmas with Lieutenant General Mark Clark. By the way, in the list of appointments made public today, no mention has been made of Clark, or whether he also is to have a new assignment. But it is generally believed that he will stick to the difficult job he now has.

And the latest from that Italian front is another advance by the Canadian and Indian ~~and~~ soldiers of the British Eighth Army. They have driven a new wedge into the Germans' winter line. ~~Correspondents~~ describe that Winter Line as actually in a crumbling condition. The latest progress of the British Eighth Army has had the effect of neutralizing the Nazi position

at Ortona which was their anchor on the Adriatic Coast. Their positions, twelve miles inland, are now precarious.

This became obvious when Montgomery's men captured Vezzani, only three miles to the southwest of Ortona. They are now even further ahead on the road to Pescara. A fierce battle is now raging against German paratroops landed at Ortona.

On the west front of that Italian line, General Clark's men have again been held up, not only by German counterattacks, but by their old enemy, rain and flooded streams. Nevertheless, they slugged through three miles of slush and captured a height dominating the German lines. The worst part about the rain is that it prevents the Allies from using tanks for some time to come.

General Eisenhower held a press conference and told the correspondents that the campaign in Italy had been a disappointment to him in one respect. He had hoped to reach Rome much sooner than now appears to be possible. Nevertheless, the Allied campaign in the peninsula has forced the Germans to use at least twenty-seven divisions and has contributed a great deal to the Allied war effort.

PACIFIC

And now across the world to the Pacific. General Douglas MacArthur celebrated Christmas today with interesting information. Since the first of the month his heavy planes have dropped almost three thousand tons of bombs on one ~~point~~ point alone, Cape Gloucester. Our heavy medium bombers have been blasting at that Japanese base in wave after wave. They have started many fires, destroyed Japanese vessels, and broken up enemy communication lines. At Arawe the troops of the Sixth American Army have achieved control of the entire peninsula, on the southwestern coast of the island.

Our high command is speeding up its general offensive against the Japanese in the mid-Pacific and in the south Pacific, as well as in the southwest Pacific.

Admiral Halsey radioed the season's greetings to the men under his command. He saluted them as his sea-sweeping, sky-blazing, jungle-smashing crew." "You may take pride," the Admiral said, "in the knowledge that your magnificent performance is bringing on brighter days for us all."

And on the home front:- Tonight there is a faint ray of hope in the matter of that railroad strike, but it is only faint. Two important unions have agreed to call off the strike and then would accept the

President as arbitrator, which means they would accept his decision. The two veteran brotherhoods are the locomotive engineers and the railroad trainment. That sounds good, but there are three other operating brotherhoods and five non-operating unions. A leader of one of these said that the acquiescence of the trainmen and the engineers does not necessarily affect the situation at all.

The heads of those two brotherhoods announced that they were calling off their strike as a Christmas present to the nation. But unless all the other organizations of railway employees fall in line, it will mean nothing. Attorney General Biddle today was conferring with Secretary of War Stimson, and preparing the necessary papers for the President to sign, in case he is forced to seize the roads for the government.

The Eighth Air Force of the United States Army today celebrated Christmas Eve, by delivering a record-making attack on the French invasion coast. In the early hours of the morning, the British Royal Air Force went over to Berlin, and dropped a thousand tons. Our own command followed it up, by sending out the greatest concentration of American battle planes ever assembled in one sortie. Evidently, there were more than eight hundred Flying Fortresses and Liberators, because we are told that there were more than thirteen hundred altogether, and of these more than five hundred were fighting planes, including thunderbolts, lightnings and Spitfires.

The fighters went first, and swept the sky clear of enemy interceptor planes. Then the giant bombers came thundering over the Straits of Dover, and dropped their tonnage of destruction on the area around Calais.

That is the area from which the Germans were preparing to bombard London with rocket guns, or so they had boasted. It ~~was~~ also the possible area for the second front attack on the Fortress of Europe. But that is only speculation.

The bombers went in low and what they did was devastating. The crews as they returned were jubilant. First reports indicated that our losses were spectacularly small.

The R.A.F. raid on Berlin left behind fires which are still burning, fires that are visible a hundred and twenty miles away.

RUSSIA

On the Eastern front, the Red Army has begun a fresh attack in the lower part of White Russia. Several divisions are engaged. And in the Kiev salient that Nazi counter-attack, the biggest of the year, is tonight established as a complete failure. The Soviet forces have the initiative there again.

The Nazis tonight admitted for the first time the heavy Russian onslaught along the upper reaches of the Knieper. As usual, the Germans claim to have driven the Russians back, but they admit that heavy fighting is going on.

W.P.B.

The War Production Board has acted to relieve the serious civilian shortage of infant's and children's clothing. Manufacturér's have been authorized by the W.P.B. to produce more than twenty-four million garments for babies and children in the first three months of 1944. Large quantities of cotton textiles and woolen and worsted yarns have been released for the purpose.

POPE

Pope Pius the Twelfth today gave voice to a prayer, which will be echoed by everybody regardless of creed or denomination. It was a prayer that this might be the last Christmas of war.

The Pontiff delivered this Christmas message from ~~xxVatixxxx~~ the Vatican, ~~xxxx~~ completely isolated from no fewer than three hundred million of his communicants. Since he last addressed the Roman Catholic world, the Nazis have occupied Rome. He spoke by radio in Italian, hemmed in by a ring of Nazi bayonets and machineguns. Most of his message was devoted to expressing his horror of the war. He described it as a form of war that proceeds, without intermission, and piles up slaughter of such a kind that the most bloodstained pages of past history pale in comparison.

Pope Pius expressed the hope that the peace, when it is concluded, will not be a peace imposed at the point of the sword. At the same time he said: "This does not mean that measures should not be taken to prevent any strong force from committing aggression upon humanity again."