

The Tokyo radio continues to broadcast reports of an American convoy approaching the island of Luzon from the south. With each succeeding broadcast, the convoy grows larger. And it has already become gigantic, according to the Japs.

The Nipponese high command is evidently convinced that it is up against the ^{final} ~~knockout~~ battle for the Philippines. It insists that the objective of the convoy is an invasion of Luzon. But the enemy commanders are in exquisite doubt about the exact place where MacArthur intends to strike. Of course, we do not know of any such intention, since neither MacArthur at Leyte nor Admiral ~~Chester~~ Nimitz at Pearl Harbor says a word about any invasion plan, and nobody would expect them to announce it. All they do say is that planes from carriers and from land bases have been delivering heavy and continued attacks on Luzon.

One Tokyo broadcast reported four hundred and fifty American vessels bound for, as the Japs put it, "some not too clearly defineable point on or near Luzon." Another broadcast talked of four hundred and fifty to four hundred and sixty transports on their way to the island. Still a third report from Tokyo mentioned another convoy of a hundred and fifty ships which were steaming northward around ^{Mindoro,} ~~Mandaya,~~ All in all, the Japs reported no fewer than three separate and distinct American naval forces approaching Luzon. But they are completely confused as to which is the main attacking force. (They lean to the opinion that MacArthur will hit them somewhere on the coast of the Linguayen coast, which has huge expanses of sandy beach, ~~They are~~ admirable for the landing of an invading army; and of course the Japanese are particularly prepared in that gulf.

Japs

They are evidently ready for a fight, and boasting about it. Baron Homma, the general who captured Bataan and Corregidor, declared that the Japanese on that great battlefield would deal us blows that would be literally annihilating.

The only news from General MacArthur tonight is a report that his planes for the tenth day in succession attacked Japanese airdromes on Luzon. On this tenth day ~~that~~ they caught twenty-six enemy planes on the ground and destroyed them, plus two shot down in the air, twenty-eight in all. That makes a total of three hundred and eighty-five Jap aircraft destroyed or damaged this month.

A bit of news which came in late this afternoon may have some connection with that story. During the last week in December, just about two weeks ago, Admiral ~~Chester~~ Nimitz flew to ^{MacArthur's} ~~the~~ headquarters ~~of General MacArthur~~ at Leyte and they had a conference. Nimitz took with him his deputy chief of staff, who is also head of the war plans division, ~~and his aide~~. Naturally, they revealed nothing about their discussions. But we may make our own inference and, since the censor passed the story we may infer that it helps to make the Japanese all the more anxious.

According to one reporter on the Western Front, ~~Nazi Marshal~~ von Rundstedt's counterattack has back-fired on him. In Belgium, his divisions gave way and began to withdraw on a front thirty miles wide

in the Ardennes. General Hodges's First Army advanced two more miles to the southward, making an even deeper dent into the bulge, ~~They~~ captured ^{ing} nine Belgian towns.

Simultaneously, General Patton's Third Army

drove ~~XXXXX~~ ^{on} northward ^{into} ~~through~~ that neck of the bulge, ~~to~~

~~that~~ now the First and Third ~~army~~ Armies are only six

miles apart, [^] meaning ~~that~~ the Nazis in the bulge have only a six mile corridor through which they can escape back to their main line.

Things are going better for ^{our people} ~~us~~ in the south too.

The doughfoots of the Seventh Army have stopped the threatening advance of the Nazi columns along the upper

Rhine, ~~and~~ have cut off the northern end of the

bridgehead the Germans had established above ^{the big Alsatian city} Strasbourg.

And they have cleared the vital road toward the Saar

Valley. They stopped the attack on Strasbourg from the

direction of Kolmar, stopped it short when it was ^{within} ~~less~~

~~has~~ fifteen miles ^{of} ~~away from~~ Strasbourg.

It seems that, as Field Marshal Montgomery

has ~~written~~ put it, the western third of von Rundstedt's

bulge has been "written off." There are still

strongholds to mop up, but the fourth Nazi counterattack

has been definitely hurled back. And, along the Rhine,

the Seventh Army of General Patch has recaptured towns

northeast of Strasbourg. So altogether, ^{we can} ~~it is possible~~

^{Feel more} ~~for us to feel~~ reassured about the Western Front ^{tonight.} ~~see~~

~~the time being.~~

ADD WESTERN FRONT

The Washington experts tonight are exceedingly hopeful. They believe ^{von} Rundstedt would like to withdraw his divisions from the Ardennes, at once. But, they point out he can't ~~not~~ do it conveniently because the fighting is so close that the enemy cannot retire without heavy losses.

All of which is long distance though expert conjecture.

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And now a Stan. A. Cal. message that is not conjecture — and then I'll be with you again in a moment.

The armies of the Soviet Union are now less than ninety miles ~~away~~ from Vienna. Over the weekend, they advanced ^{to eight} four/miles along the northern bank of the Danube. This onward march of the Red forces becomes of increasing moment, since the capture of Vienna is more important from the strategic point of view than the capture of Berlin.

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There is a peculiar situation in Hungary today, a situation which a German commentator describes as rare in military history. For one Russian army is advancing in one direction along the north bank of the Danube, while another is going in an opposite direction on the south bank. This latter force is trying to head off German divisions that are driving toward Budapest in a desperate attempt to relieve what is left of the Nazi garrison ^{in the battered} ~~at the~~ Hungarian capital.

The German resistance has made the Battle of

Budapest one of the greatest of the whole war. Their efforts to crack the Russian ring around Budapest

have been unceasing and ferocious. Moscow admitted

yesterday that *German* they had gained twenty-two miles in

one direction. But the Soviet lines around the big city

are unbroken and they took a hundred and thirty more

~~street~~ blocks in house-to-house fighting.

ITALY

Not much excitement in the war news from Italy.

On the Fifth Army front, the ground is covered with snow.

Allied soldiers ^{doing} ~~did~~ their patrolling on snowshoes or skis, dressed in white winter uniforms.

The Eighth Army has had blizzard weather to fight also. In spite of that, the Canadians and British advanced two miles, and in the last four days have cleared an area of some fifty square miles between Ravenna and Comacchio.

A rumor has been floating around that Ex-King Victor Emanuel was dead. ~~It is not true~~ A spokesman at the Quirinal Palace, the official residence of the House of Savoy, said that, on the contrary, the King was in excellent health, and at that particular moment *he was* walking in the garden of his villa near Salerno.

President Roosevelt's proposal to draft nurses appears to meet with approval in both Houses of Congress. They evidently are deaf to the criticisms raised by some people that it is unfair to pick on trained nurses and not other women.

But the lawmakers are extremely shy of a general draft of all labor. There are bills pending that can compel 4-F's to do war work and to apply a work-or-fight rule to men who quit their jobs in war industries. The Military Affairs Committee of the House will begin hearing witnesses on Wednesday.

A southern Representative has offered a bill to establish a new branch of the service, to be called a Supply Force. *This to* ~~it would~~ consist of 4-F's, strikers and absentee workers, that is, willful absentees. ~~REPRER~~ Representative Colmer of Mississippi suggests that the President should be authorized to use this force at

his behalf either for emergency jobs in war plants
or other necessary work. Such men would be in uniform
and receive army pay, but no other benefits. Mrs.
Roosevelt today repeated what she has said before,
that a national service act should include women as
well as men, and on the same basis.

RENT

The O.P.A. took steps today to stop a device which some landlords are reported to have used to get excessive rents from their tenants. In some places, people who wanted apartments, rooms or houses, have been obliged to buy furniture from the landlord or his associate in order to obtain a lease. According to the story from Washington, the practice has become widespread as a means of getting around the ceilings on rentals. In some cases tenants have paid from six hundred and fifty to two thousand five hundred dollars for furniture worth less than half ^{that} ~~as much~~.

HIGHWAYS

The federal government has begun apportioning the ~~one~~ billion and a half dollars that Congress has authorized for highways after the war. The job is in the hands of Major General Fleming, Administrator of Federal Works, *who* disclosed today that his office will spend no less than one hundred millions of that money on surveys, plans, and, buying rights of way. ~~and~~ The work will begin the ~~moment~~ Congress appropriates the money.

GAS

There is a chance that civilian car drivers will have to get along on even less gasoline than they had last year. The Deputy Petroleum Administrator announced today that all refineries are now operating at capacity or pretty close to it. Under present conditions, the oil companies have been able to fill all military orders in full in addition to meeting all coupons in the hands of civilians. But, if our armies, ^{and the} navy and air force need much more, civilians will ~~have~~ have to cut down.

For quite a few days there has been a rumor that all A and B coupons would have to be cancelled for a while. But this is not yet the fact.

STRIKE

In the Holy City of Jerusalem, a strike is going on, a strike with pickets, placards and everything. And the target of the strike is the famous American Colony, known to all who have visited the Holy City.

We thought we had seen in the last few years some complicated strike situations here at home. But the most tangled jurisdictional dispute in America is child's play compared to this one in Jerusalem.

It was called a month ago by a Jewish union, to obtain shorter hours, more pay, one day off a week, and a vacation with pay every year for the workers at the American Hostel and other units of the American Colony. The complications are these: That Jewish union has Arab members. The out-and-out Arab unions in the Holy Land are direct political enemies of the Jewish unions. But in this dispute, the Arab unions are providing strike-breakers to break the strike of fellow Arabs.

There are thirty-three Arab strikers, and twelve of them are women. The Arabs are doing their share of the picketing. The picket line is outside the walls of Jerusalem proper, not far from Gordon's Golgatha, and northwest of the Damascus Gate. The strikers also chalked up slogans on the walls around the American hostel. And for their slogans, those Arabs have gone, not to their own Koran, but to our Bible for quotations. One of those ~~xxx~~ placards, an excerpt from Deuteronomy, includes the words: "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee."

The unkind cut about this is that the American Colony is operated by American Protestants, most hospitable people, too. They took me in and fed me during World War I, when I was with Allenby. Maybe they'll retaliate with quotations from the ~~KixKixx~~ Koran, quotations about the duties that employees owe to their employers, of which the Koran undoubtedly has plenty.

BOMBS

(~~Kill the early story and substitute the following~~)

The folks on the eastern coast are on the qui vive tonight ^{because of} ~~through~~ an announcement by Admiral Ingram, Commander in Chief of the Atlantic Fleet. He warned them that they might consider death and destruction by Nazi ~~pure~~ ^{robot} bombs as not only possible but ~~also~~ also probable. ~~By~~ ^{By} that he meant the robot rockets like those that caused so much distruction and loss of live in England.

But this evening it becomes evident that there is a ~~sharp~~ difference of opinion in high ~~military~~ ^{military} circles. The warning from Admiral Ingram was released with the complete approval of the censorship. But two hours later, the Department ~~of~~ of the Navy issued an official statement that, I ~~quote~~ ^g quote: "there is no more reason now to believe that Germany will attack us with robot bombs than there was on December Seventh, Nineteen Forty Four," ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~quote~~ quote.

~~Adm.~~ ^{Adm.} Ingram believes the Nazis will release ~~robot~~ ^{robot} bombs on New York and Washington and maybe other

Atlantic Coast cities, from surface vessels that have sneaked through, or submarines, or long range planes. He went on to say that he had been charged with the responsibility of taking defensive measures and that his precautions would be completed by Wednesday. But after he had ~~been~~ given out that warning, the Departments of both the War and the Navy announced that they considered 'such attacks entirely possible but doubtful. Officialdom in Washington emphasized the statement by ^{Adm.} Ingram, that the principal danger from the ^{robot} ~~new~~ bombs would be panic. *And the* worst actual damage, ^{they} ~~it~~ might inflict would be fire.

At any rate the East Coast is on the alert. And now here is Hugh James again, on the alert, with a message for us.

BOMBS

Along comes another warning today that we here on the Atlantic Coast may expect Nazi robot bombs to disturb us almost any time now. We have heard these warnings ~~been~~ before, in fact the Army command told the Governors of certain eastern states to keep intact their organizations for civilian protection.

But, this latest announcement is far more specific and ominous. It comes from none other than Admiral Ingram, Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic fleet. And the Admiral mentions ~~ex~~ specifically New York City and Washington as the most likely targets. In fact, he says it is not only possible that these cities will be hit within the next ~~sixty~~ ~~dx~~ days, but also probable.

Admiral Ingram announces that he himself will take charge of the coastal defenses of New York and Washington. He adds that he has assembled plenty of forces for such defense.

The bombs, he tells us, will be launched either from surface ships, submarines, or long-range planes, and will probably be smaller than the V-One or V-Two

which the Nazis used against the people of England. Consequently, he doesn't expect they can inflict any ~~much~~ serious damage on large buildings -- but that the danger will come mainly from fires.

In the same breath, Admiral Ingram warns the public against panic. And he adds that the next alert will be the real McCoy!

The Germans, we hear have at least three hundred submarines loose in the Atlantic. It will take at least six or eight of them in one group to carry out any bombing operations on New York, and the Navy is prepared to stop them before they fire many of their bombs.

Admiral Ingram explains that it's difficult to stop a robot bombing attack except by catching them at the source.

A reporter asked the Admiral whether there was any chance that the Nazis might launch the ~~many~~ robot bombs from Europe. To which he replied: "I will catch everything that comes here, from Europe,

with a glove."

By Wednesday, he added, all the defense measures he has taken will be in complete shape to meet any situation. So we may take it that, although we must be prepared for bombardment, we should be on the alert.

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And now H — are you on the alert.