

The big Soviet offensive in Poland grows bigger
Tonight Marshal Stalin announces a new massive drive
south of Warsaw - and aimed straight at Berlin, says the
bulletin from Moscow. This offensive today made large
and immediate progress - a Red army advance of ~~thirtyxxxx~~
thirty-seven miles on a seventy-five mile front.

Thirteen hundred Polish towns and villages have been
captured, so says Stalin - who announces the seizure
of the fortress of Rádom. This is a key point south of
Warsaw, and a bastion of the Nazi defense of the Polish
capital. And today Rádom fell to the Russians.

Berlin gives its own picture of the Soviet drive -
and it's a gloomy one for the Nazis. Berlin says that
in the new drive south of Warsaw, six hundred thousand
Russian soldiers are on the march - and the Germans
estimate that all along the vast eastern front, two
million Soviet troops are in a stupendous drive. Berlin
says the Soviet winter offensive is intended - to end
the war.

WESTERN FRONT

Today some soldiers of the American First Army met some G.I.'s of the Third Army - and they were mighty happy about it. The First Army all along has been driving into the northern side of the salient that the big German offensive thrust into Belgium, while the Third Army was battering at the southern side of the bulge. The meeting of the soldiers of the two outfits today signalized the success of slicing right through the salient - with the junction of the American First and Third Armies.

This was accomplished at the town of Houffalize, a key point - which is only ten or fifteen miles from the line where Nazi Field Marshal von Rundstedt started his offensive and break-through. ~~Von Rundstedt drove a~~ salient of more than fifty miles, and the way that salient has been eliminated was illustrated graphically today by the meeting of First and Third Army soldiers at

Houffalize. ~~#~~ Their junction closed a trap ~~on~~ sizeable German forces to the west. Von Rundstedt succeeded in withdrawing most of his infantry and armor out of the salient, as this was being crushed. ~~But~~ a considerable number of Germans were left in what remained of the bulge - when the meeting at Houffalize cut them off.

~~These trapped Germans apparently were abandoned - to become prisoners, for the key town was taken without a fight. The Germans, after a bitter defense for days, evacuated - von Rundstedt pulling his main forces still farther back out of the salient, which now had ~~shrunk~~ to the depth of a mere few miles.~~

To the south, in Alsace, the enemy today launched a big assault against American Seventh Army troops at the edge of the Hagenau Forest, and drove our soldiers out of most of the town of Hagenau. But, on the other hand, units of the Seventh Army wiped out a

German bridgehead across the Rhine north of Stasbourg.

They drove for almost two miles in a few hours and stormed the bridgehead.

And at the extreme north of the line,

Montgomery's British troops started an offensive today - attacking along the border of Holland and Germany. The Holland front, which has been quiet for a long time, now flares into action.

MALMEDY

Today we have a disclosure of another of those mistakes of war - errors being inevitable in the turmoil of battle. The news had previously told how a city in Allied hands had been bombed by American air forces - Malmedy, ~~the key point~~ a key point in Belgium. ~~That place was bombed twice, in fact although there were no Germans in the town. On the contrary,~~ Americans were in Malmedy, First Army soldiers billeted in the local houses. So the people were astounded when they saw American planes - and these dropped high explosives on the city.

Today's news gives the final irony - which completed the grim comedy of errors. American planes, after having bombed the city twice in twenty-four hours, continued by dropping propaganda leaflets. The people of Malmedy were showered with pamphlets, calling upon the city to surrender. That completed the panic, and there

was danger of a wild stampede of the population along the roads - a stampede that would have clogged the highways and handicapped American military transport at a critical hour in the battle of the break-through.

The situation was saved by some American civil ~~middle aged civilians~~ affairs officials - ~~who took over in Malmedy~~ and reassured the people, ~~getting them into~~ under control and calming the panic.

Hugh, I have some good news from the Pacific - and more news from here at home - but first let's hear from you.

CHURCHILL

One of the much debated questions of the hour was brought forward sharply in the London House of Commons today - and just as sharply answered ^{The question} of whether the unconditional surrender theory is not prolonging the European war. It has been charged repeatedly that the Roosevelt-Churchill theory of unconditional surrender is ~~being used by Nazi propaganda to strengthen German morale, making the Germans fight harder, making the war longer, and costing thousands of lives.~~

In Parliament today, Prime Minister Churchill was asked - "Do you not appreciate that the slogan - 'unconditional surrender' - is of great political value for Hitler and his gang?"

"I do not think so," Churchill responded.

He was asked further - whether the unconditional surrender policy might be reconsidered?

He replied: "No Sir."

And then Churchill rephrased his contention in the following words - which had a curious twist of logic: "I am not of the opinion," said he, "that the demand for unconditional surrender is prolonging the war. At any rate," he added, "the war will be prolonged until unconditional surrender has been obtained."

~~In other words - it seems to be~~ a curious turn of phrase, "not prolonging the war" but "the war will be prolonged."

The Churchill implication would seem to be that - even if unconditional surrender does prolong the war, ~~the~~ policy ~~that~~ will be pursued.

~~And~~ The parliamentary proceedings today went on to another question of much debate, the Atlantic Charter - President Roosevelt's revelation that the Charter, as a document, does not exist. Did this cast any doubt on the genuinness of the Charter? Churchill said - No. And he pointed to the subsequent presidential statement

SUBSTITUTE PHILIPPINES

In the Philippines, the heaviest fighting in the invasion of Luzon thus far has broken out on the eastern flank of the MacArthur drive. The Japs ~~in that~~ ~~so~~ made their first real show of resistance today charging forward with counter-attacks to cut into the flank of the American advance. ~~And the enemy had after,~~ ~~tonight's late dispatch telling of the destruction of~~ ~~three Japanese tanks.~~

The attack was beaten off by American troops and it is noteworthy chiefly because it represents the first vigorous battle of that Luzon invasion, which has been so strangely unresisted by the Japs. Even so, the Jap attack against the eastern flank of the MacArthur drive is nothing like the bitter and violent enemy resistance on Leyte, for example.

In the center, where the push moves on toward Manila, it's the old story - next to no resistance.

MacArthur today reported a new four mile advance by the main American force, which has taken them thirty-two miles inland from the invasion beaches. American advance patrols, however, are much farther on the road to Manila - stabbing way ahead. The main ^{push}~~advance~~ is comparatively slow, not because of enemy ~~xxxx~~ opposition, but because of supply difficulties.

BOTTCHER FOLLOW PHILIPPINES

The news from the Philippines is rehearsing stories about Captain Herman Bottcher, the German born American fighter whose death in action is reported today. He was killed in the final battle on Leyte Island.

Herman Bottcher was an anti-Hitler German, who fought on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War - after which he came to the United States and enlisted as a private in the Army. This was a month after Pearl Harbor. He was sent out to the southwestern Pacific, to New Guinea, and presently became known as - "the one man army of Buna." A sergeant, he led an outfit that split the Japanese line near Buna village.

For that ~~exploit~~ exploit he was decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross and commissioned an officer. A German alien, it was necessary for Congress to make him an American citizen before he could attain officer's rank.

On Leyte he and his outfit were famous for spending more time behind the Japanese battlefront than behind their own lines. ^{They} ~~he~~ specialized in crippling the Japs by destroying bridges. Sometimes they would remove a bridge piece by piece and hide it in the jungle, so it could be set up for future use by the Americans. And Bottcher himself personally captured a Japanese captain - the highest ranking Japanese prisoner taken on Leyte.

In the last big battle on Leyte, Captain Bottcher was, as usual, behind the enemy lines. They were fighting off three hundred Japs, when a burst of mortar fire mortally wounded the German born soldier who had been ^{"the} ~~A~~ one-man army of Buna" and afterward a hero on Leyte.

PACIFIC

We marveled the other evening when we heard that American sea and air power had struck all the way to the coast of ^{Asia -} ~~China~~ - planes from American carriers raking the Japs along ~~the coast of~~ the mainland, ~~of Asia~~. Tonight we can marvel still more - at the news of planes from our carriers sweeping inland for as much as ninety miles. That naval air force penetration of the Asiatic continent was accomplished in the latest blow hurled by Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet. ¹ For three days, Halsey's planes have been smashing at the Japs, along three hundred and fifty miles of the China coast. Tonight we hear of the third successive blow, with American planes bombing the great cities of Hong Kong and Canton. Canton ^{of course} is a harbor up a river, and the planes had to fly ninety miles inland to assail the Japs in the metropolis of South China.

In the sweep^s of the planes reported today, nine Japanese vessels were sunk and twenty-one damaged, and eighty-seven enemy planes were destroyed.

OIL follow PACIFIC

Here is a headline for those American air forces which are hitting so hard in the Pacific - a new great source of high octane gas for them was opened today.

At Richmond, California, operations began in one of the largest producers of hundred octane gas in this country - a twenty million dollar refinery of ~~the~~ Standard ~~Oil~~ ~~Company~~ of California. The new plant has, not only a huge capacity, but also a strategic situation - being in a position to load oil directly into tankers.

Today's opening of the new Standard of California refinery represents a triumph of **f**ast construction. They started building the new plant only several months ago, and it was rushed to completion ahead of time - so as to meet the needs of the mighty American air forces that are in such an upsurge of action over across the Pacific.

WRECK

We have tonight an explanation of the disastrous train wreck in Utah, the day before New Year's - in which fifty persons were killed and eighty others injured. And the explanation is the most fantastic of all that had been suggested. A fast passenger train ran through a whole long line of warning signals - because a dead man was at the throttle. The engineer had died of a heart attack just before the crash.

Such was the evidence given to a coroner's jury today. The fireman, who survived the wreck, testified that he ~~had~~ called the engineer's attention to the first signals ahead, and the engineer replied: "I got 'em." ~~After that, he made no move or sign.~~ The fireman shouted warnings of more signals, but the engineer gave no sign, ^{make no} ~~or~~ move - and the train did not slow down. Finally, the fireman saw the other passenger train ahead, and shouted frantically to the engineer. "There still was no

response, nor any attempt to apply the air brake," said the fireman today.

Still more decisive testimony was given by the pathologist who performed an autopsy on the engineer's body. He stated definitely that the engineer had died of a heart attack just before the crash - apparently just after the fireman first called his attention to the warning signals.

MURDER

Today in one of London's most famous courts, Old Bailey, an American paratrooper went on trial for his life. And with him - a British girl, an eighteen year old blonde, a strip tease dancer. They ~~are~~ are accused of - a thrill murder. The charge is that the American paratrooper shot and killed a London cab driver - to provide a thrill for the strip tease *blonde.*

In court today, a confession allegedly made by the American paratrooper, was read - one of the strangest stories that Old Bailey has heard in its long history of London crime. According to the statement, the American paratrooper was out with the strip tease dancer, who told him that she had always wanted to do something thrilling. She is quoted as saying - "do something dangerous - like flying a bomber over Germany." Quite a patriotic idea - the blonde's desire to emulate the heroes of the bombing of the Nazis. The best substitute

that she could think of, apparently, was - murder. And the charge in court today was that she egged the American paratrooper along to a ^{cold} ~~very~~ blooded crime.

They picked up a cab, a cab operated by a London character who had a peculiarity of face that earned for him a strange nickname. He was called - "the man with the cleft chin." They hired this cab ^{by} ~~driver~~ - and forced him to proceed to a deserted ⁺ place. There, the American paratrooper shot ~~the man with the cleft chin.~~

~~Today in court the following statement, attributed to the strip tease dancer, was read: "I was in the car when he was shot, but I didn't do it. The purported confession of the American paratrooper says: "If ^{it} ~~he~~ hadn't been for her, I wouldn't have shot him."~~

They rifled the pockets of the body, ~~of the man with the cleft chin, and~~ took a wallet, a watch and some other belongings. ~~Then they went to a pub, and examined~~

~~the loot while they had some drinks.~~

Such was the story related in historic Old Bailey today - the story of a murder committed because a strip tease blonde yearned for a thrill - like flying a bomber over Germany.

INHERITANCE

There are many stories about Americans of Italian ancestry who, serving in the invasion of Italy, found relatives over there - and here is the classic.

(Fay-reen-yo)

It leaves Coast Guardsman Matthew Ferrigno the owner of five houses ^{other property,} and a sailboat in a village near the romantic old town of Amalfi.

(Fay-reen-yo)

Coast Guardsman Ferrigno is a radar operator aboard a troop transport. Recently his ship put into harbor at Naples, he had some time off, and went looking for relatives of his father. He found them not far away in the village near Amalfi - a whole raft of relatives. He found fifteen uncles and aunts, twenty-five cousins, and his grandmother. She has a lot of grandchildren ^{in the U.S.A.,} - thirteen American grandsons alone. The Coast Guardsman discovered, moreover, that grandma owned most of the village - most of the houses, most of the land, fields, vineyards, olive groves.

He got a great welcome. A family reunion was held, with a feast of spaghetti and red wine. For a climax, the Italian grandmother informed the American Coast Guardsman that she was bestowing upon him, then and there, his share of the inheritance. She presented him with documents making him the owner of five houses in the village, some vinyards and olive trees - and an ^{85 foot} sailboat. The sailboat - because he was a sailor, I suppose.

Today, Coast Guardsman Ferrigno, upon arriving back in the United States, was asked - what was he going to do about his unexpected inheritance? To which he replied: "I am waiting to see what things ~~in~~ are like in Brooklyn when the war is over."

If things for an ex-Coast Guardsman after the war don't look so good in Brooklyn - he might go over to those five houses, vinyards, olive trees, and the sailboat *near romantic Amalfi.*

FREAK

Last night in Pittsburgh, a young man was found dead in a motion picture theatre. An autopsy today discloses that he had only one lung, and only one kidney - and his heart was on the right side. That is, not the left side, the wrong side.

ARGUMENT

An argument is on between a city and a magazine. The city - Boston. The magazine - Life. The trouble started when Life published an article pertaining to Boston, and mentioned what it called - "lace curtain Irish." That ^{to}'s the sort of thing ~~that would~~ bring down a storm of brickbats - and Life magazine got one brickbat square on the coco today.

The offending article specified by naming one particular block in Boston as being inhabited by - lace curtain Irish. And today State Representative Patrick J. McDonough disclosed that in the block so described - there are no Irish at all. Nobody of Irish descent lives there.

On the other hand, one of the editors of Life itself used to live in the block. Representative McDonough points out triumphantly that Associate Editor George H. Frazier once had his home in the block

to which his own magazine now applies the term --
"lace curtain Irish." Well, the Fraziers don't
sound Irish, and maybe they didn't have any lace
curtains -- in which case Life Magazine would seem to
be all wrong.

And now, Hugh again -- Hugh who is all right.