

SINGAPORE

L.S. - Sunoco. Monday, Feb. 9, 1942.

British military circles in London appear to have but little hope for Singapore. The outcome of the entire war in the Far East may depend upon what happens in the next few days. The sad part of the situation is the crying lack of aircraft. If there were only twenty more squadrons of modern fighting planes, the entire picture in that part of the world would be changed.

The strategy of the Japanese became clear today. By seizing the island of Palau Ubin, they misled the British defense into expecting an attack in force on the northeastern part of Singapore Island. Actually, the seizure of that small island was only a feint. The next bit of enemy tactics was a devastating ~~artillery~~ artillery bombardment from the west. It was a barrage of such volume as to destroy everything. That prepared the way for the crossing of Johore Strait at the

~~northwest under cover of darkness.~~

British army headquarters use^s that time-honored military phrase, "the situation is in hand." ~~NEX~~

Nevertheless, it is admitted that at some points the Imperials have fallen back and are fighting a delaying

action. ~~However, it is announced that~~ ^{all} this is in

accordance with pre-arranged plans. At other points,

the defenders, ~~with their backs to the wall,~~ have

pushed the Japanese back. [#] The enemy scrambled ashore

near the mouth of the Krangj River, just west of the

causeway which the British have blown up. They used

small boats and sampans which they had been getting

ready all of last week. They landed in a region full

of mangrove swamps, tangled jungles and marshes.

A spokesman for the army at Singapore declared that

it was a terrain easy to defend with plenty of natural

cover. Two sizeable creeks converged near there to

form the mouth of the Kranji River.

Military experts in London believe that this landing is also more of a feint than anything else. The real attack, say the experts, will be delivered at a point on ~~the~~ ^{the} coast more favorable for a landing and for the movements of mobile troops units.

An American newspaperman rode to the headquarters of the Australian contingent with one of the troop convoys. All the highways were crowded with troop trucks going west and empty supply transports going in the opposite direction. The roar of the guns, he wired, was incessant.

The Japanese invaders have taken cover in the mangrove swamps.

Apparently Singapore will escape one siege danger, the shortage of water which led to the downfall of Hong Kong. During the present season, it rains about three hours regularly every day in that part of the world. Rains so violetnly that nine inches falls

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in that ~~thre~~ three hours eachday. And every house is equipped with facilities to catch the rainfall.

INDIES

In the battle for the East Indies, the Japanese today for the first time attacked Batavia, the Netherlands capital. They bombed two Dutch airdromes five miles outside Batavia. The Japanese also tried to attack Batavia's harbor, Tandjong Priok, but they were driven off by heavy anti-aircraft fire.

PHILIPPINES

Again no evening communique from our own War Department. So all we have is this morning's news, renewed attacks by the Japanese, repulsed by General MacArthur's little army. There was heavy fighting at several points along the Batan front.

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The Japanese have established hidden batteries from which they've been bombarding Corregidor as well as the small forts which are still flying the American flag. Some of these hidden batteries have been found by American gunners and several direct hits were observed. and some of the enemy batteries were silenced.

BATAN

An American reportedⁿ sends us an eye-witness
account of the battlefield on the northern Batan front
where a suicide squad of the Japanese were trapped.
He describes it as a gruesome sight with the bodies
of more than a hundred Japanese lying scattered about.
Huge trees were smashed down by artillery shells and
the foliage decayed and brown from powder blasts.
Our tanks^{which} were never made for warfare in the jungle,
~~but~~ nevertheless they were used to batter their ways
into the Japanese pocket. The Japanese had mostly
machineguns and at least one anti-tank gun. But the
scouts of General MacArthur pushed forward and overran
the enemy positions one by one. More than once, the
Japanese had been invited to surrender, but each time
they refused in perfectly good English.

A.V.G.

An official statement was made today conferring a pat on the back ^{to} ~~of~~ the American volunteer pilots who have been fighting the Japanese in Burma. And this tribute came from none other than the Royal Air Force. It declared that the United States flyers had borne the brunt of the air defense at Rangoon, and then went on to use these words:- "The high courage, skillful fighting and offensive spirit, marks the American volunteer ^{group} ~~force~~ as a first class fighting force." And it pronounced their equipment superior to the enemy's.

Another story from Rangoon tells us that the A.V.G., as they are called, have today bagged their hundred and first Japanese plane. The pilot who did it is a Colorado man named Buster Keeton, an ex-football star of Colorado College, a lad from the little burg of Manzanola.

ADD A.V.G.

A ~~later~~ dispatch from Rangoon reports that
The Flying Tigers have now shot down a hundred and
thirty-six Japanese planes. That includes the air
fighting over Rangoon and also for the protection of
the Burma Road. The Rangoon report adds that the
Chinese army has now taken over the defense of some
sections of the Burma front.

STANDLEY

For some time it has been rumored that our next Ambassador to the Soviet Union would be a military man. As a matter of fact he'll be a naval officer, Admiral William H. Standley, former chief of Naval Operations. President Roosevelt sent the nomination to the Senate today, and as diplomatic nominations are usually approved as a matter of course, we can take it for granted that it will go through.

Admiral Standley will be no newcomer to Moscow. He was a member of the Lend-Lease mission, headed by W. Averill Harriman, which went to the Moscovite capital last fall. Standley there got a lot of knowledge about Russian problems. He only recently returned from Pearl Harbor, where he was a member of the Roberts Commission which investigated the sad business of December Seventh.

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NAVY

The total sum now appropriated for war purposes in less than two years, has reached the figure of a hundred and sixteen billion dollars.

And now the White House let it be known that the President is asking Congress for still another whopping appropriation, twenty-six billion, seven hundred and forty million dollars for the Army and the Maritime Commission. This will bring the total up to a hundred and forty-two billions. Of that, the Army gets twenty-two billions, eight hundred and eighty-eight millions odd. To build more merchant ships, Mr. Roosevelt asks a mere trifle of three billions, eight hundred and fifty-two millions. The biggest single item to be allotted to the Army is thirteen billions, three hundred and fifty-two millions for ordnance, cannon to you.

And now apparently we'll need a few millions of that to rebuild the NORMANDIE right when she was about to go into service as a transport

NORMANDIE

Not long after lunch this afternoon the gongs in the fire houses on Manhattan Island tapped out ^{that} ~~the~~ ominous and much dreaded signal, ~~the~~ four alarms. The fire was on West Street, the water front, ^{right outside my Fox-Movietone office window!} and presently every bit of apparatus ~~on~~ the West Side ^{of Manhattan} ~~of the~~ Island was rolling to the Hudson River dock where workmen had been transforming the luxurious French liner NORMANDIE into ^{the U. S.} ~~United States~~ Transport LAFAYETTE. ^{TP And it turned out to be just about} ~~It was~~ the most dramatic blaze that New York had seen in an age. There ^{were} ~~was~~ something like two thousand five hundred workmen aboard that towering ^{at the time.} vessel. Some of them had to be saved by ladders that the firemen raised up to the bow of the ^{great liner,} ~~ship~~. Hundreds of them jumped to the dock or slid down ropes. Others lowered the lifeboats into the water and escaped that way. ^{TP} It is ~~even~~ feared ~~that~~ some of them may have drowned; ^{but} ~~as~~ that's mere speculation ^{since} ~~as~~ it has been impossible yet to make a check. ^{TP} Fire fighting apparatus lined the water front for blocks ^{below our Movietone windows} and on the ^{water} ~~water~~ side fire boats ~~were~~ pouring ^{ed} streams of water on the flames of

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the ~~largest~~ ^{huge} vessel. ~~but one in the world~~ ^{So big is she that} They could hardly reach her upper decks ^{with those columns of water.}

What about the ~~casualty~~? Naturally we immediately think of the word sabotage. But it's too early to say anything definite. A large quantity of bedding was taken aboard recently and it is believed the fire may have started in that. ^{††} Late this afternoon it was reported that at least twenty people had been injured. ^{††} Presently the monster liner listed over to port five degrees. It is believed now that she is resting on the bottom. The explanation is that the sea cocks of the great ship were opened to help extinguish the flames.

The belief that it was a case of sabotage is wide-spread.

The latest check on casualties in the NORMANDIE fire, shows none dead. Ninety-eight hospitalized, and a hundred and twenty treated at the scene.

ADD NORMANDIE

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Later this afternoon, Rear Admiral Andrews, Commandant of the Third Naval District, said there was no possibility of the fire's having been started by sabotage. The naval authorities ~~claim~~ this evening that the blaze was touched off by an acetylene torch, which was being used by one of the workmen. When the NORMANDIE was built, her owners boasted that she was as fireproof as it is possible to make any ship, with every known device to guard against such danger.

explain

INGALLS

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Appearing as defendant in a Washington law court, accused of being a petty Nazi agent, was a woman, Laura Ingalls, hitherto known as an isolationist and an aviatrix. The Department of Justice appointed a special assistant to prosecute her, and he told the jury that ^{Laura} ~~the~~ Ingalls woman had been in the employ of Hitler's Reich or his representatives from March First, Nineteen Forty-One to December Eighteenth, eleven days after the Pearl Harbor business, and even after Germany had declared war on the United States. Miss Ingalls, he ^{said} ~~declared~~, had worked under the direction of the Second Secretary of the German Embassy, Baron von Gienanth. From him she had received several sums of money. ^{He} He said further that she had spread Nazi propaganda from one end of this country to the other and had failed to register with the State Department as an agent drawing pay from Hitler's government.

Two women are on the jury ~~that is~~ trying

Laura Ingalls.

HOPKINS - TAFT

The Taft School has just announced an interesting long-range plan for training young Americans so they will be better able to shoulder the tremendous responsibilities that our young men are going to have to carry in the years to come. The program was launched by Doctor Ernest M. Hopkins, President of Dartmouth, ~~and~~ a former diplomat, who knows a great deal about the world and its peoples. ^R Paul Cruikshank, head of Taft, and his colleagues seem to realize how little we Americans know about the rest of the world, the leadership of ~~which~~ which our young men are going to have to assume, --- whether they are ready for it or not.

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In addition to telling the men of Taft that the world has changed more in your lifetime and mine than in the previous one thousand years, the President of Dartmouth said something which seems particularly appropriate this evening. It was this: "Every time that a people have become prosperous,

every time that material prosperity and economic plenty have become attributes of a people, and they would profit and carry civilization farther than ever before, they have gone soft, deteriorated, and just disintegrated." Then, added the Dartmouth President: "Outside of every Rome there is a Hun."

Judging from the news of sabotage and spies inside this Rome there is a Hun.

Have we gone soft, and are we about to disintegrate? Surely the time has come for us to prove ourselves -- show that we are not soft. And, we'd better hurry up about it.

PENSION

The storm of protest against pensions for Congressmen began to have effect today. One Senator who had voted for the bill admitted that it was a mistake. Senator Josh Lee of Oklahoma, said: "The law is all right, but it was not an appropriate time to pass it." Senator Lee was one of those who voted for the pension bill; but, he admitted, it had been "so misunderstood by the people throughout the country that it should be repealed immediately."

Congressman Curtis of Nebraska declared that the congressional pension act was put through the House in a most unparliamentary manner.

The hubbub about the glamor appointments in the Office of Civilian Defense came to a head today. For one thing, Senator Sheridan Downey of California sprang to the defense of Movie Actor Melvyn Douglas. He pointed out that Douglas was giving up a fabulous income to serve the government, since the movies pay Douglas many times the eight thousand a year that he would get from the O.C.D. Downey added that the Congressman who compared the salary of Douglas to that of General ^{Douglas} MacArthur rather rashly invited comparison between his own ten thousand a year and the eight thousand paid to the General.

Then again it comes to light that the appointment of Mayris Chaney, Mrs. Roosevelt's dancer protege, was disapproved by none other than Mrs. Roosevelt's titular boss, the head of civilian defense, Mayor LaGuardia. In ~~xxx~~ fact, Dancer Chaney would have

started work in New York City more than a month ago if LaGuardia hadn't blocked it.

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Mrs. Roosevelt took up the cudgels in behalf of her protege today. She told newspapermen that she had suggested the appointment because ^{Miss} ~~the~~ Chaney ~~woman~~ had presented a plan for developing children's fitness. Mrs. Roosevelt also declared that her ~~dancer~~ friend had wider contacts than any playground director or teacher who might be considered. Mrs. Roosevelt also suggested that Congressmen ^{should do} ~~xxx give~~ her the courtesy of letting her give them the facts. "They have their offices," she said, "and I have feet." So I am waiting to hear from them."

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As for Melvyn Douglas, she had nothing to do with his appointment.

Late this afternoon, the House gave in, ^{the} voted ~~g~~ hundred million dollar fund which had been

asked for civilian defense. The principal string tied to it is a clause forbidding the use of any of that money for fan dancing, theatricals or other forms of public entertainment, an obvious dig at Mrs. Roosevelt's friend, the dancer.

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And now Hugh.

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