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The Christmas bombing truce is still on - with one small exception. For the first time since the unofficial armistice began on Christmas Eve, a Nazi bomber appeared over Britain, and high explosive crashed. The German war plane struck at the island of Sheppey, at the mouth of the Thames. A few bombs were dropped. They caused no casualties and did little damage. The incident seems a little puzzling. Why should the Nazis violate the air truce in such a minor way?

The time of that ~~Christmas~~ ^{unofficial} bombing armistice has about expired ^{--if} it's a forty-eight hour affair beginning ~~at~~ on the night of Christmas Eve. There's some talk though that it might extend through the holiday season - until after ^{the} New Year.

Although a ~~During the~~ time of quiet, Britain was doubly vigilant today - on guard against a possible invasion attempt. ^{For} It was ideal invasion weather - the Channel shrouded in mist, the water calm. These conditions are regarded as the best for a sudden attempt to get across the quiet ^{— though so seldom quiet} water and be unobserved in the mist. 'Moreover, Berlin rather ostentatiously reports Hitler to be on, what the German's are calling - the western front. We thought

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that had vanished when France collapsed, but the Germans apply the term to the line along the English Channel - a possible ^{front.} ~~invasion point.~~ British precautions today took the form of vigilant air scouting and the massing of defense patrols along the Channel coast. Detachments searched coves and inlets, and kept a watch over the beaches.

Nazi plans are shrouded in mystery, but there are large indications that something important may be afoot. Take those heavy German troop movements into Rumania - three hundred thousand soldiers with artillery, they say. Accounts tell of an endless string of troop trains streaming southward into the Balkans. Some surmise that this may be directed against Soviet Russia - although a Hitler-Stalin break seems most unlikely. ^{Some} ~~It is~~ assumed that ~~perhaps~~ the Nazis are confronting the Soviets on the Rumanian front with a powerful army ^{--- just} as a measure of policy. There's increasingly bad feeling between the Rumanians and the Soviets, and behind Rumania stands Nazi Germany. ^R There are other suggestions that the mustering of Hitler war power in the Balkans may be a move toward Greece - to aid Italy in Albania. Or maybe

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the long talked-of thrust toward the Dardanelles, possibly into Turkey - aiming in the direction of the Suez Canal. A threat down that way would be calculated to relieve the British pressure on the Italians in North Africa.

Here's the latest. A report from Yugoslavia that three German divisions today entered Italy, moved by train through ~~the~~ *Alpine* ~~Brenner~~ *Pass* ^{as}. This sort of Hitler aid for Mussolini has been rumored before - and always denied.

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From the Libyan front, we hear a story of Long Lizzie and Bardia Bill. Long Lizzie is a big Italian cannon, apparently an eleven inch naval gun. It has been shelling at long range, hitting at the road that British units must traverse on the way to help in the siege of the Italian stronghold. Bardia Bill is the British reply to Long Lizzie - a big gun that they've brought up for an exchange of shells with the Italian naval cannon. So today there was a duel between Long Lizzie and Bardia Bill.

Libyan

The Italian ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ^{*Libyan*} seaboard base is described as being ringed with British cannon, as the siege of Bardia grows

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more intense. The Fascist forces in their strong positions are resisting grimly, but the British believe that Bardia soon must fall.

The Italians claim to have torpedoed a British light cruiser.

The London Admiralty refers to the sinking of a British ship.

BRITISH RATIONS

The segrity of the Nazi campaign to destroy British ships is indicated anew today by news from London concerning -- food rations. They're to be reduced. The word is that Lord Woolton, the Food Minister, will soon issue an announcement that the meat ration is to be cut drastically. Right now each person is allowed to buy one shilling and ten pence worth of meat each week -- that's about thirty-five cents' worth. The reduced ration will permit each person to buy one shilling and six pence worth of meat per week -- about twenty-eight cents' worth.

There'll ^{be} still another important change. At present in Britain the men of the army, navy and air crops are allowed a much larger meat ration than the civilian population. But their food allowances too are to be curtailed. This -- at their own suggestion. Taking note of the constant destruction of ships by Nazi-U-boat and bombing attack, the soldiers, sailors and air men of Britain have volunteered to eat less. It's hard to think of a more genuine exhibition of public spirit and patriotism. You're more likely to find men willing to fight and die for their country than to say - let's have less at mealtime.

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ROOSEVELT

President Roosevelt is busy - writing. He has called off all appointments save such as may be absolutely necessary - so that he'll have time to work on his radio talk to the nation, which will be given Sunday night. Likewise - the President is preparing his message to the new Congress, the traditional presidential report on the state of the nation. On the radio Sunday we'll get a White House report on the defense program and proposals for aid to Britain. The President won't go into much detail about armament production - won't divulge any vital facts. Presidential Secretary Steve Early put it this way: "I wouldn't look for any information that any other government would like to have."

The White House today received an aid-to-Britain proclamation, a telegram signed jointly by a hundred and fifty prominent Americans - people of high position. The round-robin telegram ~~XXXX~~ urges the President in these words:- "We ask you," it says, "to make it the settled policy of this country to do everything that may be necessary to insure the defeat of the Axis powers - and thus to encourage here and everywhere resistance to ~~the forceful~~ *the plausible* but fatal arguments of appeasement."

From Congress we have ~~an argument~~ ^{statements} of a somewhat different tone. Congressman Woodruff of Michigan today denounced the proposal to seize German and Italian steamships in American ports and hand them over to the British. The suggestion that this be done, emanates from London. Representative Woodruff said today that it would be - "an act of war." Speaking in the lower House of Congress, he ~~said~~ ^{stated:} "There's no question among the authorities on international law, but that such an act would be an act of war. It would be almost impossible," he added, "for Germany and Italy to refrain from recognizing it as such and acting accordingly. That would involve Japan, of course," he argued. And," he contended, "the United States would be in the war with all our men as well as all our money."

The Congressman summarized in these words concerning the idea of giving the German and Italian ships to the British, "to call such an act as this a measure short of war," he declared, "is merely to insult public intelligence."

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At Washington today the story was told how a man went to an important plant doing national defense work - a factory that occupied a key position in the production of armament. ~~The man~~ ^{He} walked to the gate, and strolled in. Nobody challenged him although he wore no badge, had no identification - in fact had no apparent business in the plant. He crossed an outer yard and came to a second gate. And again nobody paid any attention to him. Similarly, he went through a third entrance, ^{and then he} ~~and~~ was inside ^{that} ~~of the~~ all-important plant. ^{In fact he} ~~He~~ walked around among the workers, rubbing shoulders with officials and technicians. He poked his nose in the secret production activities, where confidential work was going on for the armed forces of the United States. He asked questions about the meanings of this and that, and got good-natured answers - informative answers.

Now the good thing about this story is that the man was not a spy. Quite to the contrary - he was in fact, an agent of the F.B.I. ~~He was~~ ^{One} of the G-men assigned to the task of protecting national defense against foreign secret agents - a counter-espionage service. He was just out to see how far a

possible spy might be able to go - either in acquiring defense secrets or in doing sabotage. He found that Mr. spy could go a ^{long} ~~longer~~ way - just about as far as he liked. We are told today that, as a result of this experiment, J. Edgar Hoover's F.B.I. proceeded to devise a series of precautions for armament plants - a check-up system to guard against the danger of stealthy intruders who might mingle in among the workers.

Canada had a raging, roaring fire at a naval camp today, and the check-up shows that at least one life was lost.

54 Surprising that the casualties were not numbered in scores - it was that bad a fire.

The place is designated as an "east coast Canadian port" - wartime secrecy hiding the name. There were three huge barracks, housing nine hundred men. The barracks were crowded when the fire broke out. It spread with what the dispatch calls "incredible rapidity." The barracks were on the shore, and a stiff gale was blowing from the Atlantic. The high wind swept the flames with racing speed. In brief moments, the two-story wooden building ~~xx~~ that caught fire was a mass of flames. Men simply poured out from doors and windows. The burning building disgorged a human torrent. The blaze swiftly engulfed the two other barracks, and the whole naval camp was reduced to ashes.

At last reports the cause of the fire had not been determined.

KIDNAPPER

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Today at San Quentin Penitentiary in California, the Convict Muhlenbroick, went to work as usual in the prison jute mill. Muhlenbroick is the German alien who kidnapped the three-year old son of Count and Countess Marc deTristan of Los Angeles. The child was recovered unharmed, and Muhlenbroick was given a life sentence. ~~There was nothing~~

There was nothing unusual in the way he reported for work today in the jute mill. He went ^{about} to his task, picking the fibre for rope, along with the other convicts. Then suddenly Muhlenbroick keeled over, collapsed, fainted. When they picked him up, and started to revive him - they found that beneath his sleeves his wrists were cut, slashed. Then when the kidnapper regained consciousness, he told them - he had tried to commit suicide in his cell. He had slashed his wrists with a safety razor blade. Blood spurted, and presently he fainted - lying on his prison cot. Then after a while he revived, came to - and realized he had not died. He felt all right, in fact, and when ~~he~~ the call came to go to work in the jute mill, he obeyed the summons - concealing the cuts on his wrists, keeping his sleeves down. Then he fainted again - and the truth was disclosed.

A United States destroyer has joined a Coast Guard search off the coast of California - a search for eleven Coast Guardsmen who have been missing for more than twenty-four hours. Yesterday they set out on a mission of rescue, hazarding their lives - as the Coast Guard so often do. A lumber schooner ~~was~~ in distress, out at sea - beaten by a terrific storm. *That ship we heard about last night.* The surf along the shore was tremendous, yet the eleven Coast Guardsmen put out in two boats - a motor lifeboat and a motor surf boat.

Today, a cutter reached the disabled lumber schooner, the crew of which said they had seen nothing of the Coast Guardsmen in their lifeboat and surfboat. The rescue party had failed to reach its goal. So it's feared that the eleven Coast Guardsmen have been lost in the raging tempest. ~~But~~ There's still hope, however, that they may be somewhere out at sea, unable to get to shore because of the breakers. So a search is on - Coast Guard boats and scouting ~~air~~planes. And the latest is that a United States destroyer has joined the hunt for the men who went to the rescue - out into the teeth of desperate peril.

In the grim literature of stories of hunted men, there's one kind of terror perhaps the most blood-curdling of all - tracked by bloodhounds. The trembling fugitive, the deep baying of the dogs, the relentless scenting of the hound pack, their noses to the ground - these are the materials of breath-taking suspense!

Tonight we have a story of this kind - from Tennessee.

It tells of a five-day manhunt; (the search for a convict who escaped from prison in Missouri, where he was serving a life term.

He made his way to Georgia, and there killed a policeman. The

officers
~~police~~ next got on his trail in Tennessee - and the manhunt was on,

a posse scouring the woodlands; - and bloodhounds! The baying pack

was put on the scent of the fugitive. They picked up the trail,

and it seemed certain that they must find the outlaw. Yet the

bloodhounds failed - they never did catch him. He was arrested

today, near Decatur, Tennessee - but without the aid of the

hounds. A posse got him.

The outlaw was all in, half starved. He had nearly

frozen during his five-day flight and he had a shotgun wound in

his leg. They asked him the one question that was bothering the police. ~~asked him~~ ^{How} about the bloodhounds. How had he been able to elude the pursuit of the pack of dogs that were scenting his trail?

The prisoner's reply pictured a ~~blood-curdling~~ ^{nerve-shattering} moment. "Sunday night," he related, "I was lying on a hillside - and a dog passed so close he breathed in my face." The bloodhound pack was that

near to him, as he lay hidden - one dog breathing in his face!

That must have been an experience to ~~shatter~~ ^{snap} the strongest nerves!

The outlaw, however, seems not to have been particularly disturbed -

he appears to know a trick or two, because here's what he told the

officers:- "It ain't no trick to fool a dog - he ain't no smarter

than you or me." He refused to elucidate - wouldn't tell the

trick of fooling the bloodhounds. A trick that more than one law breaker would like to have had as a Xmas present from Santa.

Now Hugh, ~~how~~ how about presents somewhat more innocent.

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