

OKINAWA

P.T. - Sunoco. Friday, May 25, 1945.

(Dr. R. C. Andrews gave to. - P.T. in Pacific area.)

On Okinawa, the smashing of the powerful Japanese defense line seems to have been accomplished at last. Word is that the American drive at the eastern end of the enemy fortifications is proving to be a decisive blow.

Today's ~~news~~<sup>story</sup> tells of a two mile advance south from the captured town of Yonabaru, - an advance scored against disorganized opposition. And American troops are now only seven miles from the southern tip of Okinawa.

The Japs everywhere appear to be falling back, giving up their string of fortresses across narrow Okinawa. They are still holding the key points of Shuri and Naha but the defenders there are considered to be rear guards, putting up a delaying action to cover a general evacuation.

In other words, the Japs are pulling back to a new line. Or rather, they are withdrawing for a final death stand at the tip of Okinawa - according to their practice in battles on previous islands.

Tokyo reports the landing of suicide, airborne troops behind the American lines. These, claim the Japs, did a sabotage job - attacking depots of munitions and installations at airfields. There is no American confirmation of this airborne blow - presumably by parachute. In previous battles, the Japs have resorted to sabotage parachute landings, which were promptly wiped out.

Tokyo indicates that another American invasion is imminent - an amphibious blow at the island of Amami. That bit of land is in the northern Ryukyus, ~~Yukuy~~ about a hundred and twenty-five miles northeast of Okinawa and a hundred and eighty-five miles from the southern coast of Japan.

Tokyo has been hit again. Today another deluge of fire bombs poured down on the Japanese capital. And new fires were started in the city that has already been largely burned out. It is estimated that nearly thirty-six square miles of Tokyo have been swept by flame - more than one-sixth of the enemy capital.

The Twentieth Air Force discloses that in the last previous bombing of Tokyo, (the one of the day before yesterday) twelve B-29s were lost. The Superfortresses were brought down by anti-aircraft fire. ~~Some~~ Jap fighter opposition was not so severe, but the ack-ack-was intense.

## LAFFEY

One of the weirdest features of the war has been Jap suicide planes. We have had only a vague idea of ~~the situation~~ what happens when ~~suicides~~ <sup>these fanatics</sup> come diving into ships. Today we know more - after the disclosure of the story of the Destroyer Laffey. That little craft, staunch beyond description, arrived at Seattle today under its own power - after having been hit by six suicide planes. Six supposed to be death blows, not counting sundry bombs.

It happened off Okinawa, during the third mass-suicide attack against American warships near that island. Twenty Jap planes concentrated on a single destroyer - regular bombers, and then the fanatics.

One bomber missed with its bombs, and got away. Four more came in, and everyone was shot down. A suicide plane ~~was~~ <sup>dove</sup> ~~crashing~~, but was knocked out by gunfire before it could reach its target. Another Jap plane was hit. ~~It~~ <sup>it</sup> crashed into the water so close to the Laffey that the explosion ~~killed~~ killed an American sailor.

~~It~~ <sup>just</sup> ~~the~~ bomb hit the rudder, and for the remainder of the battle the destroyer couldn't steer - ~~it~~ went round and round in a dizzy circle.

Then the first suicide plane hit, ~~it~~ <sup>ed</sup> demolish a gun mount - and fires broke out in three compartments. In quick succession two more suicide planes crashed ~~in~~ onto the deck with violent explosions. The guns of the Laffey were blazing away, and American carrier planes were diving at the Japs. Nevertheless, three more suicide Japs got through and hit the destroyer -- ~~it~~ <sup>Then</sup> a bomb exploded in the wardroom.

The ~~ship~~ <sup>ship</sup> seemed utterly a goner, but her skipper, commander William D. Eberhardt, ~~he~~ said: "I will never abandon ship as long as a gun ~~can~~ <sup>can</sup> fire."

At one point a sailor knocked the skipper down - to save him as a Jap suicide plane crashed onto the deck.

(shown up) The Laffey was a mass of flames when the engagement ended. Her ~~story~~ <sup>experience</sup> equals the epic of the

aircraft carrier Franklin - the heroism of which was the story of the hour last weekend. The fires aboard the Laffey were eventually put out, and today the destroyer steamed into Seattle - on her own.

The Navy has just announced the loss of a destroyer in the Jap air attacks off Okinawa - the U.S.S. Little. The destroyer was sunk with casualties that are described as - moderate.

## TRIESTE

Word from London is that the situation at the Adriatic port of Trieste is not as optimistic as has been represented. We've been hearing that the dispute between the western Allies and Marshall Tito will soon be settled. But this is characterized in London as "rather more hopeful than the facts seem to warrant."

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From Trieste itself we hear of exciting events last night. The Jugoslavs occupying part of the city did some wild shooting, fireworks all over the ~~place~~. New Zealand troops holding a section of the harbor, dug into positions ready for a fight - not knowing what was going on <sup>and</sup> thinking that the Jugoslavs might be attacking. It was explained later that the gunfire was in celebration of the Birthday of Marshal Tito.

## U-BOATS

A strange story about U-boats comes through today - a report that the German submarines are still operating in the Baltic - pirate U-boats. This emanates from the island of Bornholm, which the Russians have taken over - and states that the Red Air Force is hunting down the pirate submarines.



## HIMMLER

The end of the Gestapo Chief Himmler, about which we heard in the news yesterday, is followed today by a vivid eyewitness account of what occurred. This is related by British Sergeant-Major Edward Austin, ~~who~~ was one of the guards in the room at the Lüneburg Prison Camp into which Himmler was taken - after being recognized as the notorious chief of the Nazi Gestapo.

"He came into the room dressed in an Army shirt and with a blanket wrapped around him. I immediately recognized him as Himmler. Speaking to him in German, I pointed to an empty couch and said, "that's your bed, get onto it!"

"He looked at me and then at an interpreter and said. 'He doesn't know who I am'!"

"I said, yes, I do, you're Himmler.

"He started to go to bed. Then a doctor and a Colonel came into the room. They began a routine inspection - looking for poison, which we suspected that Himmler had on him. We searched his clothes, all over his body, under his arms, in his ears, and in his hair.

At last Himmler was told to open his mouth".

This was followed by quick action. "The doctor" put two fingers in his mouth. Himmler clamped down his jaws on the doctor's fingers - and crushed a phial which he had held in his mouth for hours". Thus spoke the British soldier.

It was, as the news told yesterday, a phial of potassium cyanide - that most deadly of all poisons. And I've been wondering! - Suppose that, in shutting his teeth on the British doctor's fingers, Himmler had cut the flesh and cyanide had got into the wound. Might he not have taken the life of the surgeon while killing himself?

But no such thing happened. The doctor, realizing the situation, threw Himmler onto a sofa. With the aid of the Colonel, he tried to make him spit out the poison. But the Nazi, long known as "Hitler's hangman" died-as they held him.

SPY

*1 min*

A sensational spy case broke in New York today when the F B I arrested a former officer of the French air force as a secret agent, who had worked for Nazi Germany. He is Paul Jean Marie Cavaille<sup>*z*</sup>.

The charge is that Cavaille<sup>*z*</sup>, after the fall of France, entered the employ of the Nazis, and was sent to the United States. He operated in New York and Washington, and with a powerful radio set <sup>*8*</sup> tried to send messages to Germany.

He was caught through the aid of still another French aviator -- the famous ocean flyer, Costas. Costas himself posed as a Nazi agent. In France he teamed up with German espionage, then went to Spain where he told his story to American authorities, who thereupon employed him for counter-espionage. The Germans, thinking that Costas was their spy, ordered him to go to the United States. They informed him that Caville<sup>*z*</sup> would follow him - the two to work together. Costas reported the whole thing to the F B I, and Caville<sup>*z*</sup> was under surveillance all the time as he tried to carry out his mission ~~in~~ of espionage.

## BARI

Here's a story that Lowell Thomas would like to tell - a tale of heroism that comes close to home, close to this program. It has to do with one of the ~~carefully~~ guarded secrets of the European war - the catastrophe at the Italian port of Bari. There have been various accounts, but I don't think the story has ever been told fully - of how Nazi planes made a surprise attack, and blew up ammunition ships, turning the harbor into an inferno of explosions.

The cataclysm began when a German bomb blew up an ammunition ship which erupted and hurled a volcanic mass of flame, exploding ammunition, chunks of steel, and debris. Three other ships were set on fire, and on the docks heaps of bombs and gasoline tanks flamed with new explosions.

At one of the docks was a Sun Oil tanker loaded with one hundred thousand barrels of hundred octane aviation gasoline. The ship lurched as a huge tidal wave, caused by the explosions, swept the harbor. Steel and fire were raining down, and on the nearby pier

barrels of gasoline burst into a tempest of flame.

The Captain of the tanker tried to get his ship away, but it was moored to the blazing dock, and there was nobody at the other end to release the cables. So there was the tanker caught in the midst of fire and explosions - with one hundred thousand barrels of high octane gasoline ready to blow up.

The ship was saved by a sailor, Seaman Val Stanley Zdun of Chester, Pennsylvania. Without orders from anyone, he dived into the water, swam to the burning dock, and cast off the heavy lines of Manila hemp. Jumping back into the water, he hung onto one of the lines, hoping to be hauled aboard with it. But the line sank.

The sailor swam back to the dock and found a rowboat. In this he rowed to the ship, which now was getting under way - the first vessel to escape from the erupting harbor of Bari. The tanker had to navigate through dangerous channels, blocked by the hulls of twenty exploded ships.

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Today at Philadelphia, the Sun Oil Company paid formal honor to its bravest employee - Sailor Val Stanley Zdun. Company President J. Howard Pew presented him with a medal and with other gifts to commemorate his hardihood and bravery in saving the ship and his comrades.

## CHURCHILL

In London, Prime Minister Winston Churchill named his new cabinet today - the "caretaker cabinet." It is straight out Conservative, ~~with~~<sup>with</sup> the retiring Labor ministers replaced by members of Churchill's own party. With this new group Churchill will administer Great Britain "taking care of things" - until the election of a new Parliament in July.

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The hot political campaign will be opened by the Prime Minister tomorrow - in his own constituency, Woodford. That's a suburban section of greater London, and Churchill will make eight street corner appearances in five hours - what we Americans would call, "taking the stump".

## MEDICAL DRAFT

In Washington today, legislation was proposed for the drafting of doctors and nurses - to take care of wounded veterans. A ~~measure~~<sup>bill</sup> to that effect was introduced by Congressman Rankin of Mississippi, Chairman of the House Veterans Committee. The idea is to draft medical help, to be sure that injured veterans get the best of attention. Doctors and nurses would be ~~be~~ conscripted to serve under the veterans Administration, this agency <sup>would</sup> acquire a medical staff along the lines of the Army and the Navy.

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Congressman Rankin introduced his bill after a visit to the White House, where he discussed it with President Truman and Veterans' Administrator General Hines. He says the President agrees with the medical draft bill in principle.

And now Goodnight -