

L.T. - SUNOCO. FRI. JULY 17, 1942

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

The war news from Russia tells of Soviet success and failure. The success, however, occurs in the less vital area, the place that is not so important.

At Voronezh, Red Army units smashed the Nazis hard today. They crashed through at places, forcing the Germans on the defensive. The Russians have been holding the city of Voronezh with stern valor, making the most stubborn kind of fight. The Axis forces have expended great amounts of blood and explosive in trying to capture the place, but have not succeeded -- indeed, have been thrown back on the defensive there.

Moscow states that today the Germans continued their advance to the big bend of the Don. One arm of their ~~arm~~ forces is ripping down to the southeast, and was reported today to have reached the sector of the city of Kamensk, ~~that is~~ on the railroad to Stalingrad. ^{TR} Berlin reports the capture of Voroshilovgrad, an important industrial place. Other accounts would seem to indicate that the Nazis had by-passed Voroshilovgrad -- and were already considerably to the East of the city.

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Hitler pouring a million men and ~~arm~~ equivalent mechanized armament into the big bend of the Don. And it seems likely the Germans may occupy the whole area - with the Red Army making a decisive stand along the river. Word from Moscow would seem to hint increasingly that the Soviets will seek to use the Don as their defensive position for stopping the drive against Stalingrad and the Volga. ^{TR} The Germans ~~are~~ now are in territory that consists of the open Steppes, the great flat plain of Russia. Only a few minor streams to cross, ideal terrain for the maneuver of the Panzer divisions -- nothing much to stop them until they reach the ~~point~~ farthest of the bend of that broad slow river, the Don.

EGYPT

The tank battle in Egypt is still in the
indecisive stage -- with the British meeting Rommel
tank for tank, The German Field Marshal is said
to be developing ~~xx~~ his day and night attacks into
an all-out battle to smash the British line defending
Alexandria and the Delta of the Nile. Thus far, says
Cairo, no decision has been reached -- with the clash
continuing and growing more violent.

ALEUTIANS

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The Navy this afternoon gave out a comprehensive bulletin anent the Aleutian Islands -- those bits of rugged land of such strategic importance to the North American continent. What's been happening in the Aleutians? We know that the Japs grabbed several of the westernmost islands -- those reaching over toward the coast of Asia. The situation out there has been shrouded in doubt and fog, the fog causing some of the doubt -- the stormy cloudy weather of those northern parts impeding our observation of what the Japs are going.

The Navy relates the Aleutians to Midway, stating that the attack on the northern islands, ^{the Mid-Pacific isles, and} ~~are the islands and~~ the thrust in the Hawaiian area were part of one large enemy operation. At Midway the Japs were decisively hurled back -- with heavy losses. In the Aleutians ^{we are told, the} ~~the next~~ result was not so decisive.

* The Navy today reveals that there were two air assaults against Dutch Harbor, our principal base in the Aleutians.

The first Jap attack occurred ~~is~~ on June third. We heard about ^{that} ~~that~~ ^{one} ~~that~~ at the time. But, until now we were not told anything about the second bombing of Dutch Harbor, which occurred the next

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day, on June the fourth.

Enemy high explosives in that second raid killed forty-five persons and wounded forty-nine. The damage is stated by the Navy as follows: "A warehouse and fuel oil tanks were hit and set afire and one empty aircraft hanger was hit". Furthermore an old ship was blasted and destroyed by fire -- a forty-three year old passenger vessel that had been beached and was being used as barracks.

To offset the loss of life and damage ^{at} to Dutch Harbor, plenty of injury was done to the enemy. The Navy states that in the Aleutian operations three Jap destroyers and a transport have been sunk, Four cruisers, three destroyers, a gunboat, and a transport -- damaged.

About the islands the Japs have seized we not have formal word -- three of them. In their first attack they occupied ^{Attu} ~~Atu~~ and Kiska, and later Agattu. We have heard previously about the enemy occupation of this third island, ^W ~~no~~ is officially confirmed.

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SECOND FRONT

From London we hear that there's to be an Anglo-American conference on that topic which has become a leading question of these critical months --^a second front. Reliable sources in the British capital state that British and American military leaders are getting together to reexamine the whole possibility of an immediate invasion of Nazi Europe to relieve pressure on the Red Army.

FINUCANE

The story of the end of Paddy Finucane is vividly in keeping with the story of his life -- breathtaking drama.

He was the ace of the R.A.F. and he had a completely Irish name -- Brandan Finucane. They called him Paddy. He was a Dublin bookkeeper, and joined up. Later he became the youngest wing commander of the R.A.F. He was twenty-one. In the brief span of his life he crammed enough hair-raising adventure for the lives of a hundred. He shot down thirty-three enemy aircraft.

But fate at last caught up with Paddy Finucane, and a mocking fate it was. He was brought down by a bullet, not from a German ace among the clouds, but from a bullet from a signal long machine gunner, on the ground, a bullet that should never have found its mark. The London air ministry today describes it in these words -- "a million-to-one chance shot."

It happened on Wednesday, though the news

was released by London only this afternoon. The squadron that Paddy Finucane commanded flew across the channel to France -- taking part in a mass daylight raid against the Nazis along the coast. It was a low-flying raid, with the R.A.F. pilots skimming along close to the ground. This was much like the low-flying attack that General Jimmy Doolittle's war planes made in the bombing of Japan -- whizzing along so low and so fast that anti-aircraft guns couldn't aim at them. I've just been talking to General Doolittle, and he said, when a machine gunner on the ground takes a shot at you, well, you never can tell, the almost impossible may happen.

The ace of the R.A.F. flying a Spitfire, was speeding just above the trees, when the almost impossible thing happened. The London Air Ministry bulletin states a "German gunner got in a lucky shot which penetrated the Spitfires radiator."

Back in England the Commander of the station for the squadron was listening on the radio telephone,

and was tuned in on Finucane's radio. He heard Finucane say "This is it , chaps."

His plane was crippled and his parachute was of no use -- too low to bale out! The channel was nearby, and the pilot in the stricken plane turned that way for a landing in the sea -- a better chance to save himself.

His companions were near him -- other Spitfires of his squadron. They flew along with him -- saw him clearly. They saw him whip off his flying helmet, as the speeding plane plunged into the water. He hoped to get out, and he picked up. But no. The Air Ministry bulletin states: "The Spitfire stayed afloat for a few seconds and then sank like a stone, carrying Finucane with it."

His companions in the other Spitfires circled around the scene for a long time afterward, but there was no sign of Finucane -- only a widening streak of oil arising to the surface from the plane that had gone to the bottom, carrying with it the ~~xxx~~ ace of the R.A.F.. Paddy Finucane, now an Irish and a British immortal.

A congressional committee voted today to outlaw the payment of contingent ~~freexes~~ fee commissions on war contracts for the Navy. A contingent fee commission is a percentage of a contract paid to an agent, if he gets the contract for a client.

There have been a lot of complaint^s about these commissions, some of which have been shown to be mighty big. For example, an agent was indicted in Washington today. He is Alexander H. Stone, who testified before a congressional committee that he got Six Hundred Thousand Dollars in commissions on Navy contracts. He is indicted on the ground that he earned the money while in the employ of the Federal Government. It's against the law for government employees to collect commissions on government contracts.

Today's action was taken by the House Naval Affairs Committee, which voted to make contingent fee commissions a criminal offense -- both paying them and receiving them. The committee action applies only to commissions on Navy contracts, but committee chairman Congressman Vinson said there

will be further action to outlaw contingent fee commissions
on all war contracts.

INFLATION

President Roosevelt indicated today that he is considering something new and big in the campaign against inflation. He stated to a news conference that he may get together with Congress in trying to formulate a more effective program to hold down the cost of living.

The President was asked about yesterday's verdict by the labor board which granted an increase of forty-four cents a day for the workers in what is called -- "Little steel." He said he was making a study to decide whether the wage increase would boost the price of steel and thus increase war costs. The President pointed out that a raise in pay in an industry like steel would not force up the cost of living as much as would a similar boost for workers in food industries -- food canning factories, for example.

The labor board, in its decision regarding "Little steel" announced a general policy of giving employees fifteen percent more wages than they had on January first of last year -- nineteen forty-one. This, says the board, is in accord with a fifteen percent rise in the cost of living since that time.

PARACHUTE

Last night we had a parachutist up in the Adirondacks -- a mysterious sea plane and a chute floating to earth. Tonight we have sinister visitors supposed to be dropping from the sky in Dutchess County, in fact in the neighborhood of President Roosevelt's home -- which of course, adds greatly to the drama. Moreover, the rumor mentions "six or seven parachutists." U. S. planes have been flying ^{apparently} low, combing Dutchess County. One, zooming just over the home of Gubernatorial candidate Thomas E. Dewey. And right over the treetops of many other farms.

In both areas, which are a long distance away from each other, searching parties are scouring the wooded hills -- but thus far nothing has been discovered.

In the case of the parachutist of the Adirondacks, we are told that the original reports emanated from three ladies. They say they saw the chute coming down. As for the mysterious sea plane

observed so far inland among the mountains -- there is one story that it was identified today. It is described as a small commercial aircraft equipped for landing on the water. There are a lot of lakes up there in the Adirondacks, and these are sometimes used as landing places for planes.

Later news gives us a whole series of parachute stories -- from such places in New York State as Oneonta and Tenantville. One alarming rumor told of a parachute floating in the Croton Reservoir -- which is part of the water supply system of New York City. However, the superintendent of the State Police gives an explanation of that. He says that the parachute floating in the reservoir turned out to be a canvas cover blown by the wind from a haystack.

KNICKERBOCKER

The passing of Cholly Knickerbocker recalls a couple of anecdotes about that lofty journalistic authority on high society, the blue-bloods, the elite, the social register.

~~The~~^{He} started in, years ago, on the Philadelphia Times, and had to use a smart bit of trickery to get on the paper. He applied for a job as a social reporter, but was firmly turned down. Then, under another name he sent a series of items of society news to the paper. These he filled with mistakes. They were all balled up -- but the Philadelphia Times printed them.

Whereupon the ambitious job-hunter, using his right name, went to the editor and protested against the glaring inaccuracy of the society reporting -- was quite indignant about it. He pointed out all the mistakes -- which he himself had planted. And that display of aristocratic knowledge got him the job.

Another anecdote about Cholly Knickerbocker tells how he came to New York and went to work on that long defunct newspaper, ⁵⁸ The New York Press. Hired as a society expert, his first assignment was to cover the opening of the Metropolitan Opera -- that supreme

social event of old New York.

The trouble was that he didn't know ~~ax~~ any of the New York society leaders by sight. They were all strangers to him. He got around that by copying the names inscribed on the door plates of the doors of the diamond horseshoe boxes. And he blithely used these names in writing a hoity-toity story about the Metropolitan opening and the society leaders who attended.

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The next day publisher Frank Munsey called in his new society expert. "Mrs. ~~Six~~ Stuyvesant Fish," said Munsey, "Thinks you might be interested to know that you have succeeded in opening half the graves in Woodlawn Cemetery." The names on the boxes at the Metropolitan were those of original box holders of years gone by.

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And now a sober weekend thought from Hugh.