

INVASION

L.I. Sunoco. Friday, Sept. 3, 1943.

For ten days there was a hurly-burly of busy activity at the eastern tip of Sicily. Hour after hour, all day and all night long, masses of men and motorized equipment jammed the roads, pushing forward in an unending stream. At a casual glance you might have thought the scene to be one of crowded confusion. Crowded it was - but without confusion.

Everywhere along the Sicilian roads, there were signs thoroughly unfamiliar to the native of those parts - road signs, not in their own native language, but in English. These directed the streaming swarms of men and vehicles, always to the same focus - the tip of Sicily, the Straits of Messina, the narrow Channel of water between the island and the mainland of Italy.

At the same time, along those shores, the most explosive events were occurring. Day and night the mightiest thunderbolts of war were hurled from Sicily to the coast across the way - land batteries throwing an unending stream of shells. Warships blazing away with their naval guns, and bombers in a shuttle service - dropping tons upon tons of high explosives.

The enormous bombardment was for the purpose of clearing the opposite shore for navy and military forces. Enemy gun emplacements were blasted, and troop concentrations were shattered. All the technical resources of modern war were brought to bear on that one objective - the destruction of enemy defense works on the Italian side of the Strait.

Looking across, there was no sign of life - just empty beaches and hills that seemed deserted. But everybody knew that among the cliffs and crags were hidden enemy guns, artillery and nests of machine guns.

Then -
The hour before dawn today witnessed a climax of the bombardment, a supreme attempt to blow out as much opposition as possible. *At* ~~At~~ *today* dawn boats put out from the Sicilian shore, myriads of landing boats - dashing across the Strait. The weather was perfect, and the sea was calm, - and the hundreds of boats went at top speed, leaving streamers of white behind them. In a brief time they were across, and now it was a scene of landing boats running aground on the beach - with soldiers leaping out and tanks and armored cars rolling off.

Previously - paratroop planes had flown over, airborne ~~xxx~~ troops had been dropped at strategic points in the darkness. They floated down to seize important points, and establish ~~themselves~~ themselves for cooperation with the landing force. Thus Italy was invaded, the ~~xxx~~ mainland, the first point on the European continent.

It is not clear how much opposition was encountered, but

We are informed officially that the landings were made with speed and skill, and a bridgehead promptly established. The troops pushed inward, and there was violent fighting - against the remnants of opposition left after the prolonged bombardment.

It doesn't take much opposition to make trouble, there at the toe of Italy. The country, the province of Calabria, is wildly mountainous. At the point where the landings were made, the beaches are flat for a short ~~sixthousand~~ distance, and then the country rises steeply to high rugged hills - and mountains up to six thousand feet high. The nature of the terrain is such as to provide the Germans with every opportunity for their favorite tactics of demolition and delay - destroying roads and blowing up bridges.

It is much the same as the opposite tip of Sicily, which caused the allies such hard, slow going at the end of the Sicilian campaign. The invading troops are ~~now~~ now fighting along the same sort of mountain roads that wind around cliffs, with bridges everywhere - roads for the enemy to destroy and bridges for him to blow up. So the going may be laborious and slow - and the hardest ^{of} fighting is expected.

The landings are ~~now~~ reported to have been made on both ~~sides~~ *Red-is dee Kah lah' tree-ah* sides of the town of Reggio di Calabria, the principal city on the Italian side of the Strait. We are told that the two groups immediately began a converging advance inland - to join forces, thereby capturing the town. One report states that they are driving toward an important road junction.

How strong is the invasion force? We have an ~~no~~ answer ~~far~~ from the enemy side - one division, say the Germans. And it is entirely British and Canadian - belonging to General Montgomery's Eighth Army. No Americans were involved in the landing made this morning. ~~That would leave plenty of force to spare, like~~
Hence
~~the whole American Eighth Army~~ ~~and~~ one supposition is that today's

invasion of the toe of Italy may not be the real thing at all, that it may be just a diversion to prepare for other and bigger blows elsewhere. This surmise was made today by Nazi Germany's Number One Military Commentator, who ~~EXPER~~ expressed a worried wonder about what action may be planned for the ^{remaining} great mass of allied forces, ^{including the Americans on Sicily,} ~~the American Eighth Army~~ Landings further up the Italian coast might seem to be an excellent guess, not to mention assaults against the Balkans, or perhaps the south coast of France.

A report from Zwitserland states that the ~~Naz~~ Nazis are ~~be~~ abandoning the toe of Italy. We are told that the Germans are pulling out as fast as they can in all available trucks, tanks and armored cars. And this in such a methodical manner that it would seem that the runaway had been planned beforehand. They say that the Nazis are deserting their Italian allies, the same as they did in Africa and Sicily.

It would seem as if these Italian allies in general, did not mind being deserted. There were curious incidents to ~~be~~ indicate that the Italian people are waiting for the British and

Americans as deliverers.

One of these concerns the Commando raid against the toe of Italy early in the week. At that time ~~was~~^{we} had the story from Berlin, which claimed that the British raiding party had been wiped out. Now we are given the official allied version, which paints another sort of picture. Here's the story:

The Commandos landed at night, without opposition, and went wandering around the country. They came to a road and captured an Italian who was walking along, and then went on to a town which was deserted. They shouted and fired their guns, trying to stir up a fight, but still - no opposition. Whereupon the Commandos returned to their own boats, taking with them their ~~one~~^{long} prisoner ~~who~~^{who} was decidedly cheerful about it - in the usual Italian fashion. When they got him back to Sicily, he told the British: "They are all waiting for you over there on the mainland. They are expecting you every day".

Another revealing detail comes from war correspondent Alan Moorhead. Writing from Sicily, he relates:- "I've talked in the past few days to a number of people from the Italian mainland. They were emphatic", he goes on, "that the allied soldiers

would get a good reception from the Italian villagers. They kept saying, 'why don't you hurry!?' Kicking because the allies didn't ~~not~~ arrive fast enough.

From Madrid ~~we~~ we have news of peace demonstrations in all the big Italian cities, especially the great industrial centers of Milan and Turin. As Italy is invaded crowds gather in the street and raise Cain - protesting against the war.

Madrid gives us a rumor that Dino Grandi, the one-time big shot of the Fascist movement, may join the allies. They say that the allies may have a place prepared for Mussolini's one-time colleague. You might think that the place might be a nice cell in a jail, but the Madrid version is that Grandi might become administrator for the liberated areas of Italy, administrator under allied military government. ~~That certainly~~ Sounds cockeyed, but, the Spaniards pass it along, that in addition to a report that the Number One Italian General captured in Tunisia may command an Italian force in the service of the allies. *But then the same thing has happened in other wars.*

AIR WAR

The invasion, ^{by the way, was} ~~was preceded~~ preceded by an air blow against

the opposite end of Italy - away up in the Alps, just below that famous mountain gateway, ^{the} Brenner Pass. ^{The Brenner} ~~Pass~~ is the historic gateway between Italy and the Germanic lands to the North, and it's the number one line of communication between the two ends of the axis. In fact, in a physical and literal sense, Brenner Pass is the Axis.

It was hit by Flying Fortresses, which sped all the way from North Africa - the longest raid ~~Fortresses~~ ever made from the African bases. They ~~blasted~~ blasted the railroad that leads through Brenner Pass, hitting specially at the Alpine ~~xxxx~~ railroad center, Bolzano. Thus, while Italy was ~~xx~~ being ~~xxxxx~~ invaded at the extreme south, allied air power was smashing to cut the German route at the extreme north.

And in France, the Nazi was hit from the air. Allied warplanes of all types spread out and bombed military targets over wide areas. The feature of the day was the bombing of Paris - by American Flying Fortresses. These ~~xx~~ smashed airplane factories ^{that are} turning out equipment for the Germans. They ^{flew right over Paris} ~~blasted~~

and so high that one pilot said that the Eifel Tower "looked like a
~~1944~~^{toy} oil derrick". As they left the City-on-the-Seine, another
kind of tower rose into the sky, a five thousand foot tower of smoke
from ~~the~~ burning aircraft factories.

RUSSIA

In Russia the Soviet forces are advancing all along the line ^{on a} ~~seven~~ seven hundred mile front. This extends from Smolensk, west of Moscow, to the Black Sea, and everywhere the Germans are on the retreat. Moscow reports the capture of more than four hundred towns along those seven hundred embattled miles, and gives special mention to the Red Army drive in ~~the~~ the northern Ukraine. There they took one place only twenty-three miles from ~~the~~ key industrial center, ~~called~~ Stalino, and they seized another town which Moscow states to be a hundred and thirty-five miles from Kiev.

This is the first mention of Kiev I have seen in the war news in a long time; - that metropolis of the ~~the~~ Ukraine having been captured by the Germans in their first great surge two years ago. They stormed on beyond Kiev, at a tremendous rate, and eventually got almost to the Caspian Sea - only to be hurled back, hurled back so far that the mention of Kiev occurs once more in the war news. *And that surely is a good omen.*

ROOSEVELT-CHURCHILL FOLLOW INVASION

In Washington, there are two gentlemen who are watching the beginning of the new Italian campaign with the closest attention. President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. I wish I could tell you all that they know about it, and I also wish I could tell you whether they consider it a second front.

It's understood that the present meeting of the war leaders of the United States and Great Britain is largely for the purpose of discussing our relations with Soviet Russia and the possibility of establishing closer contact with Moscow-- by means of an American-British-Russian conference. Of course, one main point in the whole thing is the Soviet demand for a second front- to take some of the burden off the Russian Army, which is battling against the bulk of Nazi strength. But what do the Russians mean by a second front? We hear that they want something that will force the Germans to withdraw a lot of divisions from the Eastern front for the defense of Western Europe. Moscow mentions a major allied landing in northern France, a drive across the British Channel, as just about the right thing. And no one as Mr. Churchill

ROOSEVELT-CHURCHILL FOLLOW INVASION

said, can blame Moscow for doing the wanting. So what about the invasion of Italy? How far will that go towards satisfying the Soviets-if at all? What sort of second front will they consider it?

At the Russian embassy in Washington, there was no comment today. Presumably the Soviet reaction to the invasion of Italy will come from Moscow.

LONDON

~~To go back to Italy for a moment?~~

I don't know whether any turn of dramatics entered the timing of today's invasion of the Italian peninsula. But it does coincide with the fourth anniversary of Great Britain's ~~strike~~ declaration of war against Nazi Germany - Hitler having assailed Poland on the first, and Britain having responded with a declaration of war on the third. So there is plenty of dramatic fitness in the fact that today's mighty blow was struck today - on the anniversary. Probably it was all a coincidence - with the invasion launched at the moment when the allied forces were ready - military timing and not dramatic timing.

In any case, the island of Britain was doubly thrilled.

The anniversary had been named by King George as a national day of prayer, ~~strike~~ with special services in the churches, and a nationwide broadcast at ~~strike~~ eleven A.M., the hour when war was declared.

Britain was prepared for its day of prayer, when this morning

the news of the invasion broke. Everywhere from the tip of

- from Land's End to John o' Groats
Scotland to the English Channel, people thrilled with excitement.

They joined in the anniversary observance - and what did they talk about? One subject, the invasion of Italy.

In London ^{many} ~~two~~ thousand ~~human beings~~ gathered in

Trafalgar Square, listened to the nationwide broadcast, and joined in a great chorus of singing. And this was all the more electrified by the word from the Mediterranean - Italy invaded.

PACIFIC

Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox stated today that since Pearl ^{Harbor,} ~~Harbor,~~ in twenty-one months of war, Japan has lost three million, ~~and~~ three hundred thousand tons of shipping.

And that ~~is~~ means more than one third of the tonnage that the Japs had at the beginning of the war plus what they picked up later by way of capture.

Much of the enemy loss goes to the credit of American submarines, which ha^x sunk two-hundred-and-seventeen ^{vay} ~~vay~~ vessels of all types.

The matter of ~~increasing~~ decreasing shipping is a serious one for our Far Eastern enemy, who has to maintain ^{those} ~~the~~ long lines of Asiatic communication. ~~The~~ And Secretary Knox stated ~~in~~ today:

"This is bound to impair the use they can make of their loot.

~~The~~ The striking loss of cargo ships, ^{said he,} ~~must~~ be embarrassing to their vital activities.

— 0 —
And now what Labor Day weekend message from you Hugh?