

SEA BATTLE

L.Y. - ~~Senoco~~ Thursday, Dec. 31, 1942. 9

Somewhere in northern European waters, ^{this New Year's eve,} a sea battle is going on. ~~tonight. This was~~ ^{The tidings were} disclosed by a British Admiralty bulletin this afternoon. The Admiralty is brief in what it says. An enemy cruiser has been damaged and a destroyer hit so severely, it was sinking when last seen. We are not told just where the oceanic conflict is raging. ^{Just} In "northern waters", says the Admiralty - and no more.

46

Unofficial advices from London tell us that the battle probably centers around a convoy - a German convoy. Hitherto, most of the northern sea fights were incurred while Allied convoys were on their way with supplies for Soviet Russia. But London tonight speaks of a German convoy en route to a port in northern Norway. One guess was that Nazi battleships were in it - like the giant TIRPITZ. But these ~~se~~ later ^{information} ~~advices~~ suggest^s that the engagement ^{is} ~~was~~ probably one

of light forces on both sides. The Germans are not believed to have anything larger than a cruiser in the engagement - which, as the Admiralty says, is still going on.

RUSSIA

The Germans are making desperate attempts to stop the Russian drives in the big bend of the Don. Moscow states that the Nazis are resisting ferociously in that area where the Soviet offensive threatens to trap all the Germans on ^a ~~the~~ line east of Rostov. ^H Moscow reveals a detail or two about the method of German defense. ^{which centers} ~~This is centered~~ around railroad stations, ^{that} ~~which~~ the Nazis have fortified. At these railroad station strong points, they use stone houses for forts and have built elaborate systems of pill boxes and dugouts. And the Germans are counter-attacking. Moscow tells of dozens of counter-attacks a day, which are being repelled.

In the Caucasus, advancing Red Army forces seem to be on the point of capturing Elista, the capital of the Kalmyck Republic. Elista was one of the far points of Nazi advance in the region of the Caucasus.

Tonight's bulletin from Moscow gives figures for Nazi losses around Stalingrad. Ninety-five thousand killed and seventy-two thousand made prisoners - this as a result of the Soviet Stalingrad offensive which has surrounded seventeen German divisions and one Rumanian division. So says Moscow, with further statistics concerning German losses since the start of the Soviet winter offensive. A hundred and seventy-five thousand killed and more than a hundred and thirty-seven thousand made prisoner. During that period, thirty-six Axis divisions, including six tank divisions, have been shattered, routed, driven into disorderly flight.

48

The accounts of Soviet success pile up every day, and leave us to wonder ^{just} how near the Nazi war machine may ^{actually} be to a great disaster on the southern Russian front.

HITLER

New Year in Nazi Germany echoes a note that has become rather familiar of late: - not so much boastful confidence. Nothing like the vainglorious victory talk that was so loud early in the war. Hitler today addressed a New Year proclamation to the German Army, and this pronunciamento by Der Fuehrer featured the word - "difficult." "The year Nineteen Forty-Three perhaps will be a difficult one," says Hitler, "but certainly no more difficult than the past one." Which hardly has the ring of triumph - promising that the year to come won't be any tougher than the year gone by.

And there is some more rather lugubrious verbiage: "The struggle may be hard," Hitler tells the German Army, "and the scales of success often may seem to be on the side of our enemies." After which he promises victory - "as the final conclusion."

As a commentary on that, let's look at an

49

official New Year's statement made in London today.

The British Air Ministry states that Nazi air strength decreased during Nineteen Forty-Two, while British power in the sky was on the upgrade. As a result, the R.A.F. climbed from a position of inferiority to the Axis, ~~was~~ caught up and went ahead. The Air Ministry states that right now the British Air Force is one-third greater than that of the German and Italian air forces combined.

NORTH AFRICA

A sort of Lost Battalion of this war has been found, an Allied force that has been missing in the Sahara Desert for weeks. Missing, that is, so far as any public notice has been concerned.

When the big British smash started rolling Rommel out of Egypt and when the great American-British offensive was launched in ^{West} ~~XXXXX~~ Africa -- we were told of still another allied force that was moving against the Axis. This one was coming up from the south and threatening the ^{enemy} ~~Axis forces~~ from that direction.

TP Free French battallions in the vicinity of Lake Chad were pushing up across the Sahara Desert. After that we heard nothing about this trans Sahara Expedition -- not until today. Now the long missing desert force flashes the news that it has reached the southern part of Libya, and is operating at a point about four hundred and fifty miles south of Tripoli, the big Axis base. So this is another threat aimed at Rommel's North Africa Corps -- a menace that was announced weeks ago and now is materializing. TP The British Eighth

Army, meanwhile, has driven to within a hundred and seventy-five miles of Tripoli -- that Eighth Army which has been chasing Rommel all along.

In Tunisia we hear of an American motorized column within forty miles of the Port ^{of Gabes} Gabes. That place is in southern Tunisia, and if we drove ~~xx~~ ^{all} the way to it there would be no further communication between Axis Tunisia and Axis Tripoli. In other words Rommel's escape into Tunisia would be blocked -- the assumption still being that he intends to retire into that area. However, it is not certain whether the American motorized force ^{represents} a major drive or just a scouting expedition, some daring patrol work.

51

A dispatch today from American advance fighters in Tunisia tells us that the patrol activity in the hills over there is far different from what it was in France in the previous war. In the battle of the trenches patrols in No-Man's Land seldom got far from their own lines -- distances to be measured in yards.

In Tunisia patrols can travel without resistance for fifty miles ⁱⁿ on one night, and maybe ^{only} five miles on the next night.

The patrols however, are frequently detected -- by dogs. Every Arab hut has a dog, which ~~starts to~~ ^{soldiers} bark when ~~a patrol~~ ^{soldiers} comes within a mile. These dogs ~~sure can bark, and ~~xxx~~ our troops over there have found no way to quiet them. It wouldn't do to shoot an Arab's dog. ~~He~~ ^{You} might also have to shoot the Arab.~~

NORTH AFRICA POLITICAL

52

A statement was issued today by General Giraud, the new French High Commissioner in North Africa. He gave warning that attempts to cause division among the French people in North Africa will not be tolerated. Giraud stated that the Allied occupation had ^{SN} been ~~expected~~ ^{greeted} joyfully for the most part, but added that a small element has been trying to cause unrest.

This follows earlier news today which told of the arrest of twelve prominent Frenchmen as a preventative measure - Giraud explaining that he believed there might be attempts to assassinate him and also the American diplomatic envoy, Robert Murphy. Some among the twelve arrested are ~~said to have been~~ pro-Ally Frenchmen ~~who had ~~aided~~~~ aided the American and British occupation. Others are believed to be pro-Axis. *It's all my stuffying.*

~~{ As a sidelight - we have a story from a~~

United Press correspondent in North Africa who tells how Axis agents have been roaming around even after our forces have taken control. "The Allies," he cables, "could not tell pro-Allies from pro-Axis French and had to keep on their toes."

In London, a spokesman for General DeGaulle's Fighting French stated today that he believed that the twelve Frenchmen arrested by General Giraud at Algiers probably included some former supporters of Vichy who joined others in coming over to the cause of the United Nations, and ^{then} felt that they had not been sufficiently rewarded for changing sides. "They ^{se} might have decided to wipe out Giraud and the American envoy," said the DeGaulle spokesman.

In Washington, Secretary of War Stimson stated today that he was greatly distressed by the report of the plot to assassinate Giraud and Envoy Murphy.

53

This, of course, followed the killing of Giraud's predecessor, Admiral Darlan. And Secretary Stimson told several things about that assassination in which *still* remains cloaked in mystery. To this day there has been no official revelation of who the killer was - and why he committed the crime. Today Secretary Stimson described him in these words:- "An obscure youth who told conflicting stories concerning his identity and antecedents." What was the reason for the ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ assassination? That still remains a puzzle. "This youth," said the American Secretary of War, "told the French authorities that he had shot Admiral Darlan because he hated him - and not because of any connection with the Axis."

~~The killer was executed by a firing squad,~~
~~but apparently the case has not been closed.~~ "So far
~~as I have been informed,"~~ said Secretary Stimson,

"the French authorities have not completed their investigation of the assassination of Darlan. When the investigation is complete," he added, "I hope the French authorities will make the full story public."

54

The Secretary went on to tell about recent reports that had been received concerning Admiral Darlan, reports that have arrived since the assassination. These dwell upon the things that the Admiral had been doing, the policies he was pursuing. What impression did the reports give? Secretary Stimson used these words - "wisdom and loyalty." ~~Darlan's actions after he came over to the side of the United Nations were characterized by - "wisdom and loyalty."~~ "I have no reason to doubt," said Secretary Stimson, "That the only concern of Admiral Darlan was the defeat of the Axis and the liberation of France."

ARGENTINE

The British Government today made a formal statement decrying the neutrality in this war of the South American Republic of Argentina. The London Foreign Office uses these words:- "His Majesty's Government deplores the policy of Argentina in remaining in diplomatic relations with the enemies of humanity."

What has called forth this declaration from London? The British Foreign Office explains that it is all because of the way certain British newspaper articles have been misrepresented in Argentina. ~~These articles have been interpreted as suggesting that the London Government approves of the Argentine policy of neutrality.~~ One piece from a London newspaper was summarized by the Information Bulletin of the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs, summarized in such a fashion as to give the impression that London puts it okay on Argentine neutrality.

55
This is what the British Foreign Office today seeks to correct - with the official statement that "His Majesty's Government deplores." ^{TP} ~~This~~^e declaration brought a prompt response from Washington, where the State Department expressed its complete agreement with the British view. We too deplore Argentina's policy of neutrality. ^{TP} The reaction in Buenos Aires was equally prompt, with the Argentine Foreign Minister hurrying to a conference with President Castillo. ~~And one official source stated that the official bulletin to which London refers is not authoritative - "can in no way be considered the official mouthpiece of the Foreign Ministry."~~ ⁵⁰ ~~says~~ the Argentine ^{ian} ~~spokesman~~ [^] ~~today.~~

CHINESE MISSION

President Roosevelt ^{has} ~~today~~ said good-bye to the Chinese mission which has been in this country to negotiate the provision of war supplies for China. The ~~mission~~ mission is leaving and going back home, -- "in disappointment", it is said. We are told that Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist government does not feel that it has been getting sufficient aid from us in its long fight against the Japs. ^R The Chinese understand that it is the policy of the United Nations to knock out Hitler first. They think that ^{is} ~~is~~ a good idea, but, they are afraid that if we let the Japs alone long enough they will consolidate themselves with the immense resources of the regions that they have captured -- making it a much harder job to dislodge them ^{later on,} ~~after,~~

56

SEA PLANE TENDER

One of the ringing slogans of American history is re-echoing tonight. The slogan -- "Don't give up the ship." This is found in the story of the American warship that put into Pearl Harbor with the whole rear part of the vessel shot away -- and ^a ~~the~~ makeshift stern and rudder built in place. The craft is the U.S.S. McFARLAND, a World War destroyer converted into a sea plane tender. And the boys certainly did say -- don't give up the McFARLAND.

On October Fourteenth the sea plane tender ~~commanded by~~ ^{under} Lieutenant-Commander John Clement Alderman ^{er} ~~man~~ of Portland, Oregon, took aboard a big and explosive cargo at an American base. She was crammed with aviation gas and carried a deck load of bombs, aerial torpedoes and other ammunition, -- Explosive is the word. This cargo was bound for Guadalcanal, ^{and} the McFARLAND set out to make the voyage to that embattled island -- unescorted. She went all alone.

{ ~~Not far from Guadalcanal an order came --~~

turn back. Heavy Japanese air forces had been observed, and the naval command considered it too dangerous for the McFARLAND to proceed.

"We were right next door to our destination," said Lieutenant Commander Aldre^{er}man today. "So we sent a message requesting permission to go in and unload."

57
The permission was given and) The McFARLAND went on to Guadalcanal -- where she started unloading off shore, transferring the explosive cargo to lighters. The supply of gasoline was being transferred when the Jap air attack came. Nine enemy dive bombers ~~came~~ plunging down at the sea-plane-tender with ^{its} lighters alongside.

"Each plane," relates Lieutenant Commander Aldre^{er}man, "dropped two medium bombs. The last bomb hit directly on the stern, in the depth-charge rack -- setting off the depth charges. ^{and} That caused terrific concussion," he continues, "and blew the entire stern and rudder off. One of the barges took fire and a

blast of flame shot two hundred feet in the air."

Through all of this havoc the McFARLAND replied with its own guns, and shot down four of the nine Jap planes.

With the stern and rudder blown off, the ship could only steer with its engines -- and the bombing had put one of the engines out of commission. *But* They fixed it. Water was pouring in through gaping holes, but they checked that with the pumps. With the after part shot away, the ship was down at the stern with a heavy list. Every man possible was sent forward -- to establish some kind of balance. Then a fire started, and it was near the magazines -- but they managed to handle that too.

The McFARLAND was able to creep to nearby Tulagi, that other American controlled island of the Solomons. And at that point of safety the slogan was sounded -- don't give up the ship. The sea plane tender looked like nothing more than a wreck. *and* The

58
official suggestion was made to abandon the craft --
leave it as a mere hulk. But Lieutenant Commander
Aldre^{er}man refused. They were not going to give up
that ship. They took the battered hulk into a creek,
and camouflaged it with leaves of branches, concealment
against enemy bombers. There the crew did a repair
job -- with repair facilities at an absolute minimum.
Nevertheless they contrived to build a makeshift stern
and rudder, a good enough substitute to enable the
McFARLAND to put to sea again, and proceed to the port
from which she had started. There further repairs
58 1/2 were made, and the sea plane tender was good enough for
a voyage across the ^{vast} ~~great~~ Pacific spaces to Pearl
Harbor. So now she will get still more repairs, and
presently will go into battle again. ^{And this New Year's} ~~So tonight~~

^{eve}
there's a triumphant ring in that historic cry --

"Don't give up the ship!"

59
And what's your historic
cry this new year's eve, Hugh?