

L.T. SILVIA, ILLINOIS, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1943

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

I am within a few miles of the Mississippi River tonight, and I came here by rocket. That is part way in the cab of a diesel engine of a streamline rocket train, on the Rock Island. And then 60 miles in an auto on rails ~~on~~ a Rock Island General Superintendent. I did this after broadcasting to the East from Chicago; and in a few minutes The Golden State will pull in here and I'll board that.

And now, let's look at the world from this room high up in a yardmaster's office at Silvia, Ill. near the Mississippi.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

President Roosevelt today held the first White House press conference ~~xx~~ since his return *— at Cairo and Teheran —* from the great conferences -- and the President lived up to his reputation as a press conference expert. The newsmen are ~~xx~~ always looking for a headline and they got one -- a Presidential statement that ~~the~~ at Teheran there was a German plot against the lives of the big three -- Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt. He didn't go into the ~~xx~~ exact nature of the conspiracy, but stated that ~~the~~ it had been uncovered by the Russians and that, in consequence, he had moved from the American Embassy to the Russian Embassy. *Many had wondered why he was there*

The President related that on the very night of his arrival at the American legation at Teheran he got personal word from Stalin -- that the Russians had picked up word of the Nazi plot. At first F.D.R. wasn't inclined to put much stock in the story but

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Stalin made a plea -- asking him to come to the Russian Embassy and stay there. There was particular reason for this:- As the American Legation is some distance from the Russian Embassy and this entailed considerable travel through the streets of Teheran, if the conferees were to pass back and forth from the American to the Russian headquarters. Teheran, like most eastern cities, abounds in spies, and it certainly <sup>have been</sup> would ~~be~~ a great Nazi coup to wipe out the Big Three or any of them.

The President's residence at the Soviet Embassy made travel through the streets un-necessary, because the British Embassy is just next door. That afforded no travel and made the whole thing safe.

This ~~disclosure~~ disclosure of a plot was given in connection with the immense amount of secrecy that surrounded the conference -- President Roosevelt

having been asked about all that secrecy by the newsmen at the White House news gathering today.

*Then he* further went on to explain the accomplishments of the conferences and stated his belief that these will result in the prevention of another war in this generation. And the ~~the~~ President emphasized that this was not only <sup>his</sup> ~~his~~ belief but ~~was~~ also that of Marshall Stalin.

ITALY

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The news from Italy tells of slow going on the ground and fast going in the air. Both General Clark's Fifth Army and General Montgomery's Eighth Army hammered their way ahead on either side of the Peninsula -- virtually foot by foot across the rugged country. The fast going was on the wings of aviation -- <sup>a</sup>/~~a~~ powerful force of heavy bombers hitting hard at the Brenner Pass area, the slender valley line between Naziland to the north and Italy to the South. Flying Fortresses slashed <sup>ing</sup> at ~~the~~ railroad communications.

NEW BRITAIN

On the island of New Britain the Americans are mopping up - ~~they~~ are clearing out the Japs on the Arawe Peninsula, the neck of land invaded by the Americans in the great blow ~~xxxxxx~~ announced yesterday. The fact that General MacArthur's headquarters lay stress on the mopping up would indicate that our troops are experiencing little ~~xxi~~ resistance right now on the Arawe Peninsula. That is, resistance on the ground. The Japs have been trying to strike through the air, but their assaults have been beaten off.

In fact, after that first commando type of preliminary landing had been roughly handled by ~~the~~ ~~enemy~~ the Americans encountered no great amount of difficulty. The main invasion forces in their landing barges established their footing ashore with rapid precision -- and tonight the first initial

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phase of the New Britain invasion is an accomplished success.

Of course, an immense amount of fighting remains to be done -- as the island is a long drawn out affair of tropical jungle, mountains and morasse. And ~~Rabaul~~ Rabaul, the number one objective at the other end ~~is~~ is a most powerfully defended naval base -- with a natural protection of mountains, <sup>a</sup> ring of craggy summits.

MARSHALLS

The Marshall Islands were battered again, as was announced today. Long range Army bombers hit the Japs at the airdrome of Wotje. It is well to remark over and over again that these repeated bombings such as the Marshalls have been taking <sup>are</sup> ~~from~~ a most likely prelude to an invasion attack -- the bombings being the softening up.



## SILVIS

To return to Silvia for a moment: I am in the center of one of the great railroad yards of America. All 'round me sit the men who control the shunting of endless trains of this 8000-mile Rock Island system, in the heart of America--and that means in the heart of America's war effort on the Home Front.

Scores of steam and diesel locomotives are moving up and down outside my window. Handling more than 5000 cars a day. A few block buster bombs would play plenty of havoc here, but no one fears that. For the Allies are on the march now, and the blockbusters are all falling in Europe, Asia and the Pacific.

Seventy-five per cent of the people in this town of 3500 work here in these great Rock Island yards. And to see the way they do it is one of the sights of the land. Even the mayor works in these yards; and most of the aldermen. Around me are the countless flickering lights of this, one of the great centers of the American railroad world.

SILVIS

And railroading is one of the fields in which we lead the world. And one of the reasons why we are going to win this global war in which the movement of materials plays such an overwhelming part.

Captain J. B. Silvis of the Army, a member of the Army and Navy War College in Washington visited today that there was not, in his words, "any excuse for not anyone being involved." He charged the trainees with what he called "a complete lack of horse sense".

The story told by the Navy Captain concerned the astonishing fact that the long period of forty minutes elapsed between the time when the south bound train ran off the track and lay across the rails and the terrible moment when the north bound train came charging and crashing into the wreck. The reason why the north bound train on the collision

WRECK

Today brought the death list in yesterday's  
*southern*  
frightful train wreck to the tragic figure of eighty.

And with this come ~~charges~~ charges that the loss of  
life was caused by ~~the~~ negligence on the part of the  
trainmen. Captain J. L. Allen of the Navy, ~~i~~ a member  
of the Army and Navy War College in Washington stated  
today that there was not, in his words -- "any excuse  
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Coast Line was derailed seems to be officially established -- a break in the steel -- what is called a fissure in the rails. In itself this mishap in North Carolina would have amounted to no great disaster, if the other train had been halted before it got to the cars lying across the track.

Captain Allen of the Navy states that in the forty minutes between accidents he and another passenger took measures to stop other trains from crashing into the wreck. They went along the track and lit fires between the rails to stop southbound trains. And one was stopped safely -- ~~but~~<sup>by</sup> the blaze on the track.

Then they went in the other direction to do the same thing and stop north bound trains, but they weren't in time. Along came a crack passenger express, a Tamiami Champion, at high speed. ~~xx~~

"Another passenger and I" relates Captain Allen lighted a newspaper with a match and waved it. It seemed that the Engineer applied his brakes but he didn't have time to slow up very much." And thus it was that the Tamiami Champion ran headlong into the cars lying across the track -- in one of the most serious railroad world's ~~most serious~~ disasters.

In Congress today the demand was made that yesterday's disastrous train wreck be investigated. A resolution was introduced ~~xxxxxx~~ calling for an inquiry. And Congressmen will ~~recall~~ recall that earlier this week the Truman Committee of the Senate ~~predicted~~ predicted that the whole railway system of the country was in danger of a breakdown -- unless the railroads were able to replace worn out equipment and procure materials needed for repairs.

FARRINGTON - ROCK ISLAND

Before we start criticizing the railroads there are a number of things we should remember.

Our American railroads have been bearing the brunt of the war time job here on the home front.

Coordinator of Railroads Joe Eastman was here in Chicago today, discussing matters with the heads of the lines that radiate out from this, the greatest railroad center on earth. The top official of the great Rock Island System, J. D. Farrington told me that his line, for example, is now carrying six hundred percent more passenger traffic than in Nineteen thirty-nine which was the last year when they were able to get any new passenger equipment!

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He said that for some reason hard to explain the railroads have been treated as the stepchild of the war effort. And he added that the railroads are seriously handicapped in two ways in particular:-

rail and man power.

But, we have been making our railroads carry all the war supplies; making them carry the materials for the building up of our vast new war industries; making them carry six hundred percent more passengers as in the case of the Rock Island, and they have not been allowed to expand as other ~~xxxx~~ war industries have been permitted to do.

And now to get aboard  
1/2 the ~~Rock Island~~ Rocket again  
and head in West - or  
rather to get aboard the  
Rock Island Golden State this  
time. And, 2-1-4-Monday.



## CHURCHILL

What are the facts: Well, <sup>F</sup>from London comes word that Mrs, Winston Churchill ~~xxxx~~ is now at the bedside of her husband, at an undisclosed place in the Middle East, where the Prime Minister is stricken with Pneumonia--his second attack of that malady in ten months, and the latest is Churchill is better.

The medical bulletin just in speaks of marked improvement in the case which is diagnosed in the following words, "a patch of pneumonia on the left lung."

The bulletins from the Churchill bedside were scanned anxiously in Britain today. One eminent physician put it as follows:

"We cannot expect to be told that the pneumonia is diminishing, for three or four days yet.

~~But~~ <sup>TP</sup> But the bulletin makes it clear that there are no complications thus far." And he added " the strength of the heart ~~ix~~ which is the most important thing at present, is holding up" This medical authority summarized Churchill's case by saying:- "So far the illness appears to be taking a normal satisfactory course". <sup>P</sup> Britain's concern about ~~Winston~~ Churchill <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ *natural enough; the* ~~need not be expatiated upon.~~ Bull Dog of a statesman <sup>^</sup> having written only too ~~great~~ clearly in the pages of contemporary history the position that he holds in the minds and imagination of his country. <sup>TP</sup> Perhaps the most pointed instance of Churchill's position in the affairs of the world and war is to be seen in speculation concerning ~~ix~~ his successor -- if the worst should come. London takes it for granted that the statesman groomed for the Prime Ministerial successor is Anthony Eden, Foreign Minister. In this

they see the explanation of the fact that Eden has been taken so much to the great conferences in which <sup>the</sup> Prime Minister and President Roosevelt have played star parts. Britain regards Eden as the successor-- if need be; but not as another Churchill. The present Foreign Secretary has all the confidence in the world -- but not that peculiar Churchill genius.

## WRIGHT BROTHERS

Forty years ago today the weather along the coast of the Carolinas was much better than it was today -- and that was lucky. Because, if it had been as bad as it was today, one of the greatest events in history would not have taken place -- man's first flight.

This is the fortieth anniversary of that exploit of the Wright Brothers, who on the sand dunes at Kitty Hawk took off in the first heavier than air flying machine. There was an anniversary ~~xi~~ celebration ~~ix~~ down there near the sea, but the ceremonies were badly handicapped by the wintery *the worst Carolina weather in many years.* blustery antics of Old Man Winter, ~~Anyone on the scene~~ ~~there might have chivered with the thought of what~~ ~~would have happened if that original ~~ix~~ Wright Brothers~~ box-kite ~~ix~~ had tried to fly on a day like this.