

ITALY

L.I. - Sunoco. Wednesday, Aug. 4, 1943.

The Allied assault on Sicily is now a full scale three-way affair -- by land, air and sea. British and American warships are taking a major part in the all-out drive to wipe out the remaining Axis forces at the tip of Eastern Sicily. Everywhere along the coast there, naval guns are hurling shells against the lines of transport -- this in a mountain country where most of the roads run along the shore of the sea.

On land, Americans, British and Canadians are smashing forward against the fiercest kind of enemy resistance. The Germans are counter-attacking, and for the first time since the early days of the invasion, they are launching counter-thrusts with tanks. But the Allies are repelling the Panzers, and the Americans today captured a town called Caronia, which is four miles beyond San Stefano, the last important place they seized in that sector. Along the north coast, they made a fighting advance of six miles.

And tonight finds the Americans within fifty-five miles of Messina, the key city at the ultimate angle of the tip of Sicily. At the same time, the British and Canadians are forcing their way into the enemy defense lines in front of Catania.

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On the obscure political side, where the Badoglio Government faces the relentless question of surrender, we have a whole series of reports. One deals with the Vatican, where an important conference is being held tonight -- so we are told. The word comes from the official Nazi news agency, which states that the Cardinals resident in Rome had been called to meet with Pope Pius. This sort of gathering usually deals with questions concerning the Vatican and foreign governments, and London believes that the meeting of the Cardinals may be for the purpose of approaching the new Italian Government on the subject of peace. London notes that the Vatican might logically do this on the ground that conditions in Italy are growing worse, with growing disorders.

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We hear that the anti-war movement continues to increase, especially in the industrial city of Milan. There thousands of workers are on strike -- protesting because the Badoglio government has not made peace. And now we hear that a workers' committee has issued a declaration that the strike movement will become one hundred per cent, all the workers going on a general strike, if the war is not ended.

The Badoglio government is trying to hold down the anti-war disorders with various measures. For example, forbidding ^{people} ~~any~~ to listen to allied radio broadcasts.

On the other hand, we hear of Badoglio moves that look more like a break with Germany.

Switzerland reports shipments of food from Germany to Italy have been stopped -- the consignments of rice and vegetables that Italy had been sending to Germany via Switzerland. And we hear of special trains filled with Italian workers whom the Fascist Government sent to work in Germany. They are moving back to Italy -- trainloads of workers. And, at the same time, the British radio tells of German civilians returning from Italy to Germany. It states that the first trainload of these has left.

In London today, foreign Secretary Anthony Eden was questioned ^{on that} ~~on the matter~~ matter of -- unconditional surrender, ~~in an M.P. referred to the fact that General Eisenhower assured the Italians that they could surrender under that Eisenhower called "honorable conditions" How can surrender be unconditional, if honorable conditions are granted, or any other kinds of condition? To that line of reasoning, Eden replied tartly: "I~~

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~~do not want to argue this matter now. Our position is unconditional
surrender. I can understand circumstances under which unconditional
surrender might not be dishonorable to those who made it.~~

~~After which the foreign secretary gave the formal~~
statement^d that no peace terms had been ~~offer~~ offered to the
^
new Italian Government.

ROME BOMBING

Tonight we have specific facts about the magnitude of the bombing of Rome. The war Department discloses that the raid was made by five hundred and twenty-one planes. Of these, two hundred and seventy-two were heavy bombers, and two hundred and forty-nine were medium bombers. This great air force dropped one thousand and ^{one} hundred and one tons of bombs.

On the basis of these figures, the bombing of Rome rates as the heaviest daylight air raid of the war. There have been heavier bombings at night, but there was never anything as ^{big} in the light of day. The War Department confirms the magnitude of the damage, which crippled the two great railroad yards on which the assault was concentrated.

The story released today tells how bombs were preceded by leaflets. On the night before the bombing of Rome, eighteen British warplanes flew ^over the city of Tiber and dropped eight hundred and sixty-four thousand pamphlets -- giving warning that high explosive was to follow. And the next morning, at thirteen minutes past eleven, the first wave of flying fortresses appeared over Rome and released their bombs.

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Today's account from the War Department dwells upon the feebleness of the defense. The anti-aircraft fire was neither intense nor was it accurate. Only twenty~~or~~ thirty Axis fighter planes were encountered, and they showed little inclination for battle -- fighters that didn't fight. Four were shot down. And of the five hundred and twenty-one bombers that assailed Rome, only three were lost.

EISENHOWER

Today we are given the dramatic picture that attended the beginning of the Allied offensive against Sicily. Directing the opening of the assault, the American and British commanders had their headquarters at Malta -- that much bombed island. And there, on the historic night of July ninth, they were an anxious group of generals. General Eisenhower in particular -- because he was the top commander, and things looked bad. It was a matter of weather, those all important meteorological conditions which count so much during an amphibious operation. A high wind was blowing, most unfavorable for both the landing parties and the airborne troops.

Anxious General Eisenhower check^{ed} the wind, time and again, and finally broke into a smile -- the wind was declining as the night wore on, the night of the invasion. At one time he stood in ~~a~~ ^{a path} of the moonlight, and overhead there was a great roar, as squadrons of planes flew by -- the airborne troops. General Eisenhower saluted them, gave a military greeting to his men who were thundering through the sky for the invasion.

The stately picture is followed by an anti-climax when we learn that General Eisenhower and all the high officers of his staff got sand-fly fever. Malta is infested with those pestilential

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vermin -- sand flies. They bite you on all occasions, and their sting is capable of producing a high fever. So while General

Eisenhower was saluting his ^{attacking} airborne troops, the sand flies were

^{attacking} ~~saluting~~ General Eisenhower.
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RUMANIAN OILFIELDS

A delayed dispatch from Turkey states that eight of the American bombers that blasted the Nazi-controlled Rumanian oil fields were forced down in Turkey. At the time of the raid, the number of planes that we lost was given, and it was added that some others had failed to return. These might be the planes which, as we now hear, landed in Turkey.

From the United States Air Force we have vivid stories told by flyers who bombed the oil fields. Sergeant Harry Riekin of the Bronx, New York, says: "Before our plane reached the target, we saw high flames from the oil wells." And ^{into} ~~with~~ the flames they flew and bombed. "We flew so low and the flames were so high" says he, "that they licked at us from all sides. It got awfully hot. ^{And he adds:-} "We kept flying fifty feet off the ground for a hundred miles to prevent enemy planes from diving at us."

So there we have a graphic picture of low level assault, ground skimming tactics employed in the bombing of the blazing oilfields -- the same kind of low level bombing that the Doolittle flyers used in the raid on Tokyo.

RUSSIA

In Russia the Germans are evacuating the Orel salient.

This is the latest from Moscow. The Russians tell how Nazi rear guards are putting up a desperate fight to cover the withdrawal of a quarter of a million ~~km~~ German troops who are threatened with a second Stalingrad. They are retreating as fast as they can along narrow bad roads to escape the ~~xxx~~ trap the Red Army is closing. Moscow says the escape corridor for the ^{huge} ~~huge~~ Nazi host is now only twelve or thirteen miles wide. From the German side we have virtual admissions of a retreat -- admissions that try to minimize the importance of the defeat.

ADD RUSSIA

Here's the latest - a Moscow dispatch stating that Red Army troops have broken into Orel. They smashed their way into the city and fighting is now going on in the streets.

STATE DEPARTMENT

Secretary Hull spoke up today in defense of the State Department. ~~This was~~ ^{an} response to criticisms made in an article published by the New York Times this morning.

The Times charged that the department which handles our foreign affairs was in a state of confusion and internecine conflict -- cross purposes. The story in the Times stated: "Diplomats of other governments are reported puzzled over the cross purposes ^{at} ~~in~~ which the state department seems to operate."

According to the Times, one official will have one policy, while another official will advocate a contrary policy.

The New York newspaper went on to say that behind this conflict of policies there is a conflict of personalities in the State Department -- our diplomatic officials at odds with each other. The rivalries are away up at the top, declared the Times, and put the charge in these specific words: "Rivalry between Secretary Hull and under-secretary Sumner Welles is common knowledge in Washington."

Asked today about the story of State Department inefficiency, Secretary Hull gave an emphatic ~~n~~ denial, and permitted himself to be quoted directly. "Having been in the department for some ten

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years, and more, and ~~were~~ charged with all responsibilities of administration," said he, "I think I know what is going on in the department. It functions efficiently," he added, "And I am prepared at any time to give the fullest accounting to any person or agency."

BOVINGTON

Today the office of Economic Warfare ousted the economic analyst, John Bovington. This expert, who was once an instructor in a Japanese University, was under fire on charges that he had been a ballet master and also that he had Communist leanings. I suppose that one can dance the twinkle-toe in the ballet and still be a most profound economist. But, anyway, Bovington denied that he had been a ballet dancer though he did admit that he had once been a protagonist of rhythmic dancing for health -- and the newspapers proceeded to publish a picture showing him in what looked like an ecstasy of dancing and rhythm.

Congressman Dies of the Dies Committee demanded that Bovington be ousted, and threatened to take the matter to Congress. Whereupon the O.E.W. asked Bovington to resign, to which he replied that he was the victim of what he called "an anti-new deal offensive to undermine the entire war effort." And so he refused to get out of his fifty-six hundred dollars a year job.

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SWINDLER

Today the F.B.I. announced the arrest of one of the most talented ¹ swindlers -- a gifted gyp artist whose career of flamboyant crookery goes back to the previous World War. In that conflict he passed himself off as a naval officer, for which he was arrested several times, and then in Nineteen Twenty-One he achieved a masterpiece.

In that year the United States entertained a royal visitor, Princess Fatima, Sultana of Kabul, a member of the ruling family of Afghanistan. The princess arrived in New York, and who should appear to greet her but the phoney naval officer. He posed as a representative of the state department sent to greet Princess Fatima, Sultana of Kabul, and conducted her to Washington. There, he took her to the White House and presented her to President Harding. The President realized ^{the} the importance of Afghanistan in Central Asiatic politics, gave a cordial reception to Princess Fatima and her state department escort, and posed with them for a photograph on the White House lawn.

After the visit to the White House, the imposter took the Sultana of Kabul to the state department -- of which he was pretending to be a representative. There, he presented the royal visitor to the Secretary of State, the majestic Charles Evans Hughes.

All of which as going too far. The authorities got wise and the next thing you know the cheeky charlatan was given two years in the Federal penitentiary.

So what has this genius of rogues been up to now? He has been operating as a professor ~~fox~~ of draft dodging, conducting classes on how to keep out of the army. He had a suite of offices in a fashionable New York Hotel, and there he taught his clients how to evade military service. He gave them lessons in pretending how to be deaf. He prescribed for them various drugs that would produce symptoms of heart disease. And he showed them how to play crazy -- ^{to himself} ~~be~~ being crazy as a fox.

Today J. Edgar Hoover, head of the F.B.I., stated: "In several instances he so thoroughly schooled draft dodgers in the mannerisms and reactions of mentally incompetent persons, that they were rejected as being unfit."

The professor of draft dodging charged juicy fat fees. From some of his army evading pupils he got a few hundred dollars. From others as much as two thousand. And in some cases his clients in order to pay the professor's fee, had to cash in their war bonds. So he was working, not only against the draft, but also against ~~the~~ Government War Finance.

KIDNAPPING

In Albany, Oregon, an effecting plea was made today,
a plea to the kidnapper of a ^{— stolen} baby from a hospital yesterday.

The mother, Mrs. B. W. Gurney, is in a critical condition tonight.

^{Because of}
~~she is distracted by~~ the kidnapping. She is a partial cripple
from childhood paralysis, and risked her life to have the child,

and tonight the family issued this appeal^l: "We are making the
plea to ~~us~~ those who did the kidnapping to return the Gurney
baby. We have no malice toward the kidnappers", the statement
goes on "and only ask that they get in touch with us so we can
have the baby back. I am sure, the family adds, "that no woman
would want to cause another woman the agony that Mrs. Gurney
is ~~am~~ suffering now".

Hugh, how about a final
word from you?