

L.T. SUNOCO - WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 1941

Good Evening, Everybody:-

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The story of Crete tonight sounds more and more like something invented by Jules Verne or H. G. Wells. Every hour it becomes more dramatic, more tense. According to some, it's just a side-show, a dress rehearsal. But there are the Nazis again tonight, dropping down from the sky, out there on the Island of Crete.

Today for the first time we have the German ~~VERSION~~ version of it. Yesterday Berlin had nothing to say, ~~WEEK~~ merely denied that the parachute troopers were clad in New Zealand uniforms. Tonight in Berlin military spokesmen were telling how wave upon wave of German soldiers have been dropping from parachutes and landing by air transport. Berlin claims they have been rapidly seizing key positions on Crete.

Aside from from claiming that the men dropping from the skies were consolidating themselves in strong positions, the Germans refused to discuss the maneuver.

The Rome radio declares that the Greek Government, which took refuge on the island, has left and gone to Cairo.

And, the German claims, for the most part, are corroborated by London. Prime Minister Churchill told the Commons today that three thousand parachutists reinforced the Germans on Crete last night

The tactics employed, to send wave after wave of dive bombers to clear the way for transport planes towing gliders and parachute troops. [However, said Churchill, ~~many of the aircraft crashed,~~ and he added that the situation is well in hand.

Churchill told Parliament that most of the three thousand parachutists that were landed for the attack on the airdrome at Suda Bay had been accounted for by half-past six yesterday. Meanwhile, however, other detachments came to earth near Canea, the capital of the island, and ^{Retimo.} ~~Retimo.~~ It is even believed that one or two troopships got past the cordon of British men o'war.

Another less ~~official~~ official story from London is that the Nazis now have a total of between eight-thousand-five-hundred and eleven-thousand-five-hundred men on Crete.

Berlin makes another claim: that a squadron of German
dive bombers attacked the British fleet in the Eastern
Mediterranean, damaging a battleship, five cruisers, and one
destroyer. Fires, the Nazis say, ^{broke out on} ~~destroyed~~ four of the cruisers,
and one of ~~these~~ them developed a heavy list. On this
the British have nothing to say.

Milkins.

May 21, 1941.

WILKINS

Now, for some first-hand information about that fabulous island. When we think of Sir Hubert Wilkins we think of the Polar Regions. But Sir Hubert also has some intimate, first-hand knowledge of Crete. Intimate indeed. For he crashed there in a plane some years ago.

You have good reason to remember Crete, Sir Hubert.

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WILKINS:- Indeed I have, Lowell -- ten thousand reasons, ten thousand good English pounds Sterling. That's what my experience with Crete cost me, though I can't exactly blame Crete for it.

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LT:- I remember. That was when you were taking part in the first airplane race from England to Australia, back in Nineteen Nineteen? Wx

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WILKINS:- Yes, we had got seventy miles beyond Crete when one of our two engines failed. With the remaining one we had only a range of thirty miles. We had to turn back, and the only way we could even get to Crete was by gliding in. (more)

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The mountains near Canea, the capital city, drop sheer into the sea. The winds are always tricky around Crete, making it a difficult job. We almost didn't make it, and when we got over the airdrome at Suda Bay, Crete, we went into a flat spin.

Down we came, missing a house-top by inches. Planes didn't have brakes in those days. Anyhow, we hit the field but overshot it, and ran into a two-foot ditch where our tires burst. Then we ran into another ditch and finished up just at the top of the bank with our tail in the air, right up against the wall of the harem of the home of a Turk.

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L.T.:- So you must have made the first glider landing on ^{Crete,} ~~Greece?~~

Sir Hubert?

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WILKINS:- Yes, I suppose so.

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L.T.:- How about the ten thousand pounds?

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WILKINS:- We found we could get hold of a couple of Rolls Royce

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motors to replace our two Eagle Eights. Each of those Rolls Royce engines had fifty more Horse Power than our Eagle Eights, and would give us a hundred Horse Power more. But the makers of the plane put their foot down, said the plane couldn't stand any greater Horse Power. It would shake it to pieces. How ridiculous ~~today~~ that sounds today when Horse Power in airplane motors runs up into the thousands rather than the hundreds. Well, while we were arguing about it, Ross Smith went ahead, got to Melbourne, won the race; and, won the ten thousand pounds. If the manufacturers hadn't been obstinate, I am sure we could have won.

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L.TL:* Now about Crete?

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WILKINS:- It's all mountains, Lowell. And they go up to eight and nine thousand feet. There are one or two flat spots, but none large enough to hold more than a thousand men at a time. The island is full of ravines and canyons where men could hide ~~in~~ indefinitely.

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L.T.:- This business of towing gliders by airplanes -- weren't we the first to try it?

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WILKINS:- Yes; back in Nineteen Thirty Frank Hawks crossed the continent, riding a glider behind a ^{plane with} ~~plane with~~ young Jim Jernigan at the controls. Nelson Rockefeller and I were at the field in New York when he landed.

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L.T.:- What was the idea?

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WILKINS:- First to demonstrate the military possibilities of towing men in gliders. But the U. S. Army wasn't interested. It took the Germans to finish the glider job started by Frank Hawks.

CASEY Follow Wilkins

Thank you Sir Hubert, and here's a bit of news from your own country that will interest you. Australia is pouring out in one year of this war as much money as she spent during the entire four and a half years of the last one. That much was told at a luncheon in New York by the Australian Cabinet Minister Richard G. Casey. The total cost of the war to the Commonwealth in Nineteen Forty-One will be about seven hundred million dollars.

FRANCE

Uncle Sam has received a cordial invitation from the Germans to move his embassy out of Paris. Not the building but the contents. This news was published by the State Department in Washington today. The Germans, furthermore, give our diplomats a deadline -- to June Tenth. Vichy reports that all other neutral government - we're still neutral - have been requested to remove their envoys from occupied countries. The explanation is that Paris is considered a zone of extended operations and that the request has been made for military reasons. A question was asked about this in Berlin, and the answer was that nothing is known.

There's news from Admiral Leahy in Vichy tonight. He has sent word to the State Department that the Nazis will let the American survivors of the ZAMZAM go home by way of Spain and Portugal.


IRAQ

From the fight in Iraq, nothing startling. But an interesting radio report from Brazzaville, on the west coast of Africa, was overheard in New York. The report was that Free French troops have entered Syria, to fight on the side of the British.

This Brazzaville broadcast was made by an independent French news agency which said that the regiment that has gone into action in Syria is commanded by a colonel who won much fame in Nineteen Seventeen. The report continues that the main body of the French forces ~~are~~ under the command of the French High Commissioner in Syria, have been instructed to withdraw towards Lebanon.

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LINEN TRADE PRESENTATION

The Linen Trade Association of New York City has presented a Spitfire to Britain. Wendell Wellkie has turned the check over to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, in Canada, a check for twenty thousand dollars. This is the first from a trade association in the U. S. A. The linen people over here have requested that this Spitfire be assigned to the air fleet of the North of Ireland, where so much linen comes from.

Robert MacBratney, Junior, representing the Linen Trade Association, dropped in at my studio this evening, and insists on putting a pin on my lapel.

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MR. MCB.:- That's right, Lowell. This pin, which I hereby present to you, is the first one designed to commemorate our gift of a Spitfire to Britain. We want you to have this because of the part you played in the whole matter. That Spitfire tells just how we feel about this fight for liberty and individual freedom.

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L.T.:- Thanks a million, Mr. MacBratney, to you and the
Linen Trade people. May you never run out of linen!

DROUGHT

Extra

The drought in the east gets worse and worse. Officials in Albany, New York, declare that it's beginning to offer a major threat. Of course they were speaking only for New York, but all the other states on the Atlantic Coast have been up against the same dangerous lack of rain, and on top of that there have been late frosts this month.

Up in Canada, troops were ordered out to help fight the forest fires in the Province of Quebec, the worse in twenty years. In one part of the Province three million feet of timber, two power dams, a sawmill and a lumber yard were destroyed by the flames. The forest rangers became utterly exhausted and had to be reenforced by soldiers. Elsewhere almost the entire half of one village has been wiped out.

Practically every community in the east is on its toes watching for the first sign of fire. But aside from that, the loss to the farmers is disastrous and threatens much worse for later in the year, such as the shortage of hay, and the shortage of milk.

KNOX

Back to the freedom of the seas, cries the Secretary of the Navy Frank K_nox. The Neutrality Act was a terrible blunder, he added, and the passing of the Neutrality Act was merely abdicating our birthright. He spoke, he said, not so much in his capacity as Secretary of the Navy but as a newspaperman. As a newspaperman, he declared, he always regarded that Neutrality Act as a terrible blunder, ^{TP} ~~quite in passing~~, Secretary Knox remarked that President Roosevelt ^{is} ~~too~~ ^{was} a firm believer in our traditional policy of freedom of the seas.

The reporters tried to get the Secretary to break down a little further and talk about convoys. But ^{all} ~~he refused to be~~ baited that far. ~~All~~ he was willing to say ~~on that subject~~ was that just because we worked out an effective convoy system for the last war, it was ^{plain} ~~just~~ silly to believe that ^W ~~it~~ could be a pattern for the changed conditions of today.

NAVY PLANES

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Uncle Sam's Navy now has three thousand, four hundred and seventy-six airplanes of all types. That's the latest report as of May First. On July First, ^{only} Nineteen Forty, the Navy had two thousand, one hundred and seventy-two. ~~However, that doesn't~~ ^{nor does this} mean so ^{little} ~~slow~~ progress as ^{you might think, For} ~~it sounds~~. The Navy and the Marine Corps together received nine hundred and ninety-six planes in the ^{And} first four months of this year. That's a big advance over last year. In the first four months of Nineteen Forty, only seventy-nine were delivered to the Navy and the Marine Corps.

Rear Admiral Towers, Chief of the Naval Bureau of Aeronautics, reports that one of the principal needs of the Navy Air Corps at present is for pilots. More of them are needed, many more. But the expanded training program of the Navy will take care of that by the end of the year. Five hundred students are being enrolled every month and in a couple of months there'll be eight hundred every month presenting themselves for training.

STRIKE

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Out in San Francisco, there was a peculiar spectacle today - Union men marching through picket lines! The metal workers went back to their jobs in two of the struck shipyards on the Pacific coast, and one thousand of them were led by the President of the Metal Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor. And an official of the Boilermakers Union of the A.F. of L. headed another group entering another shipyard. The men on the picket lines booed them but there was no rough stuff. *And the striking machinists are still out.*

PEACE

Every time there's a war there are rumors of peace, with or without foundation. The latest comes ~~from~~ from Washington and emanates from a couple of Senators. One of whom is not an isolationist. The other is. Neither is willing to have his name mentioned. Nevertheless, they cited a series of recent happenings which they construe to mean that the British are really seriously discussing terms with Hitler; though not in the open.

These two Senators point out first that Hitler has won in Europe, and can take the Mediterranean at both ends, whenever he gets ready. That the war, in short, has come to a stalemate except for the dramatic fighting in Crete. That's one point. Then there's that Hess episode. Number Two. They point out that last Wednesday President Roosevelt had planned to make an address to the Pan-American Union. He cancelled it at the last moment., just as the Hess exploit became known. Instead there will be a fireside chat next Tuesday.

Next, that speech of Cordell Hull's last Sunday. In it the Secretary of State laid down several principles, conditions on which this government would insist after the war. One, that raw

materials supplies must be available to all nations without discrimination. That, said one of the Senators, is one of the main points that Germany has been howling for all along.

One top of all this, the two Senators are pointing out that the recent bombings by German planes in England haven't been as hard as they were, nor the R.A.F. raids in Germany. Also, submarine sinkings have been much reduced.

For those five reasons the two Senators, the Roosevelt supporter and the isolationist, believe peace is in the air. At the same time, they admit, maybe these events are all unconnected. Maybe it's all some more wishful thinking. It makes you recall a popular distortion of an old proverb -- "Blessed is he who expecteth nothing, for he will probably get it."

And now, ~~next~~ let's see what we get from Hugh.