

L.T. - SUNOCO. FRIDAY, NOV. 13, 1942

Cannon

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

The British Eighth Army has occupied Tobruk and is now chasing Rommel across Libya. The Imperials took the much captured and recaptured and rerecaptured Tobruk about half past nine this morning and continued their sweep west. Unofficial reports had Rommel already half way across Cyrenaica. The British now do not expect him to make any stand east of El Agheila, on the Gulf of Sirte, west of Bengazi.

The German radio admitted Rommel had evacuated Tobruk but said he had taken out all his equipment and supplies, with which he expects to make a stand in Lybia. Cairo says Rommel is in no shape to make a strong stand anywhere. Apparently he has only some twenty thousand soldiers left, a few tanks, and virtually no air force. Allied planes are

constantly bombarding all the Axis bases in Sicily, Sardinia and Crete, the bases that have been all along to reinforce Rommel. And British submarines have sunk so many Axis transports and supply ships that it is believed only a trickle can get through to Africa.

The capture of Tobruk was prefaced by a dramatic affair. At dawn, the eleventh of November, a dare-devil band of thirty New Zealanders, under cover of darkness, crept up a winding road to the top of Halfaya Pass, the Egyptian-Lybian Frontier pass which was guarding the road to Bardia, Tobruk and Bengazi.

The New Zealanders had only rifles and tommy guns. They found a force of several hundred Italians guarding the pass with twenty lorries, eight field pieces, several anti-tank guns, and numerous machine guns. The New Zealanders took the "eyeties" as they call them, with hardly a shot fired, losing only one man killed and two wounded. Then, said the New

Zealanders, the eyeties began waving white handkerchiefs. "It happened pretty fast," said one of the New Zealanders. He told an American reporter that the Italians came over with their hands up. They had been under the command of five German officers who had deserted them the night before.

As for the American-British advance in Algeria, the British First Army reached a place called Bone on the Mediterranean shore only fifty miles west of the Tunisian frontier. That we learned from an army communique at four ~~08~~ o'clock this afternoon. So by now the Allies may actually be in Tunisia.

British fighter planes, which preceded the army's advance, shot down half a dozen big Italian transports. The British pilots reported that the transports were removing German army personnel from Tunisia. If this is true Hitler has decided to evacuate Tunisia entirely instead of trying to occupy it and defend it with troops air-borne from Italy.

Meanwhile, all the airdromes in Tunisia were being continually and heavily bombarded by the American planes under Brigadier-General Jimmy Doolittle's command. Royal Air Force bombers from Malta were also raining bombs on them.

NOGUES

Admiral Jean Francois Darlan has gone over to the Allies, lock, stock and barrel. If he had not already burned ~~hi~~ behind him all the bridges between himself and the Axis, he certainly did it today when he issued a proclamation which was read over the air in which he used these words: "I am resuming responsibility for French interests in Africa." He added that he was doing this in full agreement with General Nogues, Governor-General of Morocco, and that he, Darlan, is in full possession of his liberty. Darlan was also joined by General Eve Chatel, French Governor-General of Algeria. Darlan added the following significant words: "I have the full approval of American authorities with whom I intend to guarantee the defense of North Africa."

And that most dramatic piece of news was heightened by a statement from General Nogues, who said that on November Tenth, he had been appointed by Marshal Petain to succeed Darlan as commander in

North Africa. This was prior to the invasion of the unoccupied zone of France by Hitler's troops. And Nogues explained that Petain had taken this action because he believed Darlan was no longer free. Nogues then said: "After my arrival in Algeria, I found the Admiral in full possession of his freedom. I also found that our views on the further conduct of affairs coincided fully." So, "In the name of the Marshal and in full agreement with him I therefore hand over my powers to Darlan and place myself under his orders."

Darlan's proclamation also instructed every governor or resident, meaning resident-administrator, that he must remain in his place and administer his territory according to the laws in force as in the past. Darlan concluded with the appeal: "Frenchmen and Moslems, I rely on your complete discipline, everyone to his post." And he finished with the words: "Long live the Marshal, long life France!"

ALGIERS

I am in Washington tonight, and at the White House we just learned that the President has extended lend-lease aid to the French in North Africa.

One of the amusing sidelights on the occupation of Algiers concerns the taking of an airfield thirty miles to the southwest of the city. The capture was undertaken by a British Lieutenant-Colonel commanding four American Rangers and Ned Russell of the United Press. A friendly French captain had warned them that the officers commanding the field were furious because an American plane had bombed it at dawn. However they drove along a road covered by French machine gun nests. On the way they met several high French officers. What happened then was not a battle, but an argument. "We talked like mad for three hours," reports Correspondent Russell. "Finally we convinced them that all we wanted was the field and not a fight." He continues: "Suddenly the Frenchmen smiled, shook hands, saluted smartly, and the airfield was ours."

Thereupon the French insisted that the Rangers must help the French soldiers to defend the field. The British colonel could not determine whom they were supposed to defend it against. The French insisted the Germans might try to land paratroops. Or else Vichy French soldiers might attack. So the French gave the Americans eight trucks to bring more Rangers to the field. When they got to the middle of the airdrome, itself, they found some very angry French officers. In the middle of the field a plane was burning furiously. It had been hit by an American bomb. The British and the Americans apologized profusely explaining it must have been a mistake, which it was. While they were still talking, American fighter planes roared overhead and were signalled to land.

SOLOMONS

There has been a heavy naval and air battle in the Solomons and two American ships have been damaged, Not seriously, but there was damage. At dawn yesterday United States naval forces began a heavy bombardment of the Japanese, west of our land positions on Guadalcanal. The Jap batteries were silenced by our naval guns which started large fires. Our guns also destroyed thirty large Jap landing boats and damaged several others.

In the middle of the afternoon the bombardment was interrupted by an attack from the air. Twenty-three Japanese torpedo bombers protected by eight zero fighters came at our surface ships. They were intercepted by twenty-eight navy wildcats which shot down sixteen Jap bombers and five Zéroes. The anti-aircraft from the ships also shot down ~~x~~ nine enemy planes. Thirty out of thirty-one Japs shot down.

One of our ships damaged was the U.S.S. SAN FRANCISCO, famous heavy cruiser. But the damage to it was accidental. The ship's anti-aircraft guns hit and set fire to a Japanese plane that fell onto the deck of the San Francisco, and exploded, killing thirty of her crew. About the same time a five inch shell from one of the Jap shore batteries damaged the U.S.S. destroyer BUCHANAN.

Here in Washington, one topic of conversation today was last night's radio broadcast by Congressman Maas of Minnesota, who says we are still losing the war with Japan. Maas has just returned from four months of active duty as a Colonel of Marines in the South Pacific. Among other things, he said: "There just is no unity of command in the Pacific." And he claimed that one naval battle which still is being hailed as an American victory was really a defeat in which "our losses were greater and far more serious than those of the Japs."

President Roosevelt when asked about the charges made by Maas, replied that he didn't know the Minnesota congressman had made a speech.

Senator Vandenberg of Michigan said he was perfectly amazed by what Maas had said. And he declared: "Colonel Maas cannot be dismissed as an armchair strategist." Vandenberg said further: "The charges are serious and there ought to be a conclusive

answer. They are a typical example of things that should be dealt with by a joint congressional committee on war cooperation."

RICKENBACKER

Eddie Rickenbacker may be alive. His pilot has been found. Today the War Department announced the rescue of Captain William T. Cherry, who was the pilot of the Rickenbacker plane when it vanished in the Pacific three weeks ago. He was discovered on a life raft, after drifting on the ocean ever since October Twenty-First. So, may it not be possible that Rickenbacker, too, may be alive and adrift?

Here is what the War Department announcement states:

"From such information as Captain Cherry was able to furnish, it is believed possible that other survivors may be on life rafts in the same general vicinity."

The Army and Navy never did give up hope for America's ace sky fighter in the previous World War and an important figure in this second one. Eddie Rickenbacker was on a military mission for Secretary of War Stimson, when he took off from Hawaii, and flew out into blankness and mystery. In the plane with him were seven others. Hope seemed slender

enough when, day after day, there was no sign of the missing plane. But there was a constant and insistent search -- with long range planes scouting the immense spaces of the Pacific. And now that patient search has been rewarded -- wht the finding of Eddie Rickenbacker's pflot adrift on a life raft. Captain Cherry, after his long ordeal, is said to be in good condition, though weak. He will soon recover.

The search that was rewarded is being redoubled in the hope of finding Eddie Rickenbacker and his other companions. Hope of finding another life raft -- and on it America's ace in the previous war.

FLIERS

This afternoon I went out to the Walter Reed Hospital to see three of the most interesting young fellows in this country today -- three airmen who were in the Doolittle bombing raid against Japan. They are, in fact, the only three members of that memorable bomb-Tokyo expedition who are in the United States right now. A number of the others are with General Doolittle in North Africa, finding new adventures in air battles against the Axis.

I had quite a talk with Captains Ted Lawson and Hal Watson, both pilots, and Navigator Lieutenant L. C. McClure, and they gave me some interesting angles of the Tokyo air raid. In fact Lieutenant McClure, who was navigator on the bomber piloted by Captain Lawson, told a Washington audience today how they sighted a Japanese aircraft carrier on the Tokyo raid. It was not more than two hundred yards from their low-flying plane. But they didn't try to bomb the carrier -- because they had been ordered to

strike only at the specific targets assigned to them. Each bomb aboard the Doolittle planes was destined for a definite place -- and no other. In the case of the plane aboard which McClure was the navigator, the target was a big munitions plant -- and that was what they blasted.

This bomber flew across the China Sea, and made a crash landing just off shore. The plane hit the water so hard that four men were hurled right through the plastic and glass nose of the bomber. Every man of the crew survived, though injured more or less. Their story is a typical example of the thrills and hazards of the Tokyo air raid.

BULLETIN

The President has just signed the bill
to lower the draft age to eighteen.

BYRNES

An announcement by James F. Byrnes, director of Economic Stabilization who has requested the War Production Board to insist upon a simplifying and standardizing of everything made for civilian consumption. To eliminate waste and combat rising costs.

RATIONING

Butter will be among the foods rationed all over the country, and that before long. Members of the Mercantile Exchange in Chicago predicts that not only butter but other dairy products will be on the list by January First, including rich cream, cheese and eggs.

ROOSEVELT

President Roosevelt had his usual Friday press conference today. He told the reporters he had no news. And that, he explained, was due to the fact, that he had a number of hens setting but they had not laid any eggs.

One correspondent remembered that Mr. Roosevelt sometimes describes himself as a farmer, So he asked: "Mr. President, when does a setting hen lay eggs?"

The story ends that Farmer Roosevelt shook his head with a wry grin.

COLLECTION

Speaking of the song that is sweeping the country, "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," a preacher in Massachusetts offers an amendment to that sentiment, which Chaplain Father McGuire says did not originate with him. At any rate The Reverend Archiver Strait of the College Avenue Methodist Church in Somerville, Massachusetts says he will preach next Sunday on the text: "Praise ~~ext~~ the Lord and pass the collection plate!"

Well, be that as it may, I hope you will all go to church on Sunday and Praise the Lord, and that you will remember the collection plant. And that includes pious church-goers like you, Hugh.