

GIRAUD

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The selection of General Henri Giraud as high commissioner of French Africa was received today as good news all around.

There is no doubt, ^{but} that it ^{pleases} suits Washington. Two hours after his regular ^{news} ~~press~~ conference Secretary of State Hull issued a special statement about it. I am quoting this in full.

It reads;- "the selection of General Giraud to his new post is a most fortunate choice and one that will, I am sure, receive the enthusiastic commendation of all." ^{"T"} General Giraud is one of the great military commanders of the world today" added the Secretary of State, "and his recent selection will result in greater unification of all groups and elements behind his military leadership."

"It will go far," ^{see.} said ^A Hull, "to assure the common victory with the restoration of french liberty everywhere."

^{The American} ~~our~~ ^A commander-in-chief in Africa also had something to say about it. Lieutenant General Eisenhower announced that we are equipping and arming General Giraud's army

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with the utmost speed possible. Planes have already been delivered to General Giraud's airforce; Tanks are on the way; also more planes. This news was released after a conference between General Giraud and General Eisenhower. Later on Giraud conferred with members of the French Imperial Council.

The word from allied headquarters in North Africa is that ^{Gen.} Giraud will appoint a deputy to conduct civilian affairs. That deputy will cooperate with Robert Murphy of the ^{U.S.} State Department, our diplomatic agent on the spot, in the job of supplying food and clothing to the civilian population of North Africa. A British broadcast reported that ^{Gen.} Giraud's deputy would be General Nogues, the French Resident General in Morrocco.

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Although Giraud accepted the position of high commissioner, he considers himself primarily and

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essentially a soldier and is, therefore, anxious to delegate as many civilian functions as possible. In answer to all political questions Giraud replied, I am a soldier." He has informed the United Press that he can provide a French army of no fewer than three hundred thousand men. He will also add to the allied forces a fleet composed of the squadron which has hitherto been interned off Alexandria and all other French men-of-war in French Africa^v ports.

RETAKE

Add Giraud.

And, General ~~Charles~~ ^{has} DeGaulle added his word of praise for the selection of General Giraud as High Commissioner. ^{Gen.} Giraud, said DeGaulle, is an outstanding military leader. At the worst moments of the battle of France, added De Gaulle, it was a great regret to the french republic that Giraud could not be appointed Generalissimo because he had been taken prisoner by the enemy.

DeGaulle said further that french troops already have attained great success which are sure to increase. Then he used these words; " In North Africa the purest patriotic spirit is regaining its rights as elsewhere. France" He added, "has never been out of the war either in fact or in spirit."

Only one sour note was heard in the chorus about Giraud today. that came from radio vichy. It purported to be a broadcast by Marshall Petain. The old marshall denounced ^{ing} all the french leaders who have been collaborating with the allies. "They pretend," he said, "that they act in full agreement with me." and to that Petain added: "I formally give them the lie. They have betrayed their oath, they have betrayed French Africa to the British and Americans. I ~~gave~~ gave them an order," said Petain, to resist aggression. They did not fight. They were false to their honor and sacrificed the interests of France."

Africa.

Tonight's news from Africa is good from our point of view but not spectacular. Allied headquarters reported that a heavy force of flying fortresses had attacked the port of sousse in northern Tunisia. sousse at present is held by the axis, but not, we hope, for long. The attack on that port was part of a sustained offensive by United States planes against the shipping and supply lines of the enemy. It resulted in one ship being blown to bits, while docks and warehouses were damaged by big bombers, ^{which} ~~they~~ were escorted by thirty-eight lockheed lightnings.

And, the army announced that not only all the fortresses but all the pursuit planes returned safely. Furthermore, one fortress ~~which was~~ reported to have been lost over Bizerte on Saturday, turned up safely today. She landed in friendly territory after shooting down a german focke-wulf and damaging two others.

There is no dramatic story of success on land from North Africa, because both armies are thick in mud. ~~the~~ result is that nothing but patrol operations are going on. However, official french bulletins ^{says} ~~reported~~ that french forces had driven ahead in southern Tunisia and improved their positions

thirty five miles inland from Sousse. The chief attention of the United States bomber command has been concentrated on the east coast of Tunisia, Sousse, Sfax and Gabes. It is through these ports that the axis has received considerable volume of their supplies. When the first american bombers raided Sfax a few weeks ago, there was almost no shipping there. Today, heavy cargoes are being brought in. It is believed that this is because our planes have done so much damage to Tunis and Bizerte, that they are almost unusable.

The War department communique issued in Washington

shortly after noon today reported that flying fortresses with fighter escorts had ~~almost~~ bombed the harbor at Bizerte. They started fires at Bizerte among the shipping docks and shot down two enemy fighters. ^{also} fighter planes have been sweeping over Tunis, attacking a number of targets. ~~The war department corroborated the announcement of General Eisenhower that french forces are being reinforced and reequipped by the United States. The war department communique says; "These troops have displayed high fighting quality despite their initial weakness in modern equipment, especially artillery and tanks, they have successfully repulsed every axis~~

Christmas.

Christmas eve on the Tunisian front. ^{That's a headline} ~~That is an interesting~~

^{Just in today from} ~~bit in any man's language.~~ It was filed by Ned Russell of the United

^{He filed the story} Press, on December twenty fourth, from somewhere near Medjez-eld-bab, in Tunisia.

"Here I am," he wired, "standing ankle deep in mud and rain, sending Christmas cards." ^{and} he continues; "The only christmas party we are going to have is a slashing attack on a strategic hill northeast of Medjez-eld-bab. Our barrage lasted for twenty-four minutes and then the German artillery opened up in reply. Shells began bursting a hundred yards from our position while we watched allied infantry leap to the attack through the swiftly falling darkness."

^{TP} ~~then he says further;~~ ^{he goes on} "Through the darkness ^I can see red tracer bullets streaking across the battle field. The line of fire moves steadily up the hill. then we see the signal of victory; a white, 'very' light streaking across the sky. Our troops have won the hill. "

^{TP} Ned Russell adds that the barrage which allied troops threw down was probably the heaviest ^{so far in this} ~~fired in the~~ campaign. ^{in North Africa.} The American position was

in a valley filled with brown ^gblue-like mud. With the white farm houses that are scattered through the valley, everything looks ^{ed} peaceful until

Christmas

sheet #2

the artillery opened up. ^{With} guns flashed ^{ing} in every direction, the
hill almost disappeared from sight in the smoke, of battle; with U.S.
infantry rushed ^{ing} the German positions."

^{TP} Q and that was how some of our fighters passed ^{lads who are now}
in this war overseas, passed
Christmas Eve! .

RUSSIA:

It looks as though our biggest news during these final days of the year is going to come from Russia.

According to the latest from that front the Red Army has twenty-two Nazi divisions in a trap between the Volga and the Don. The word from Moscow is that the Soviets have a double ring around

those twenty-two divisions. And the word today

is that the Russians have recaptured two more

strategic towns -- ^{one} Solonetsky, seventy-five miles west of Stalingrad, and ^{the other} ~~Birukov~~, eighteen

miles to the south. Russian experts claim this has

strengthened and tightened the ring inside which

those three hundred thousand Axis troops are

trapped.

The fighting there is in deep snow and with the thermometer below zero.

However, we should remember that last winter the Russians had German divisions completely surrounded, but, the Nazis, managed to hold out

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until Spring, when they were relieved.

Nevertheless the news from Russia tonight is more encouraging than it has been for a year. With the Red Armies now only eighty miles from Rostov, and have regained command of the air at Stalingrad, and with Moscow saying the Russian Armies are advancing on all five sectors of that immensely long front, it looks good.

Here is the latest from Moscow just in. The Red Army advancing South has by-passed the city of Kotelnikovski, ninety miles to the Southwest of Stalingrad. The Soviet forces on that sector advanced twelve to fifteen miles yesterday.

Kotelnikovski is the key railroad center in those parts and by surrounding it the Russians have effectually cut the communication line of the Germans, Stalingrad.

RUSSIA

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SOLOMONS (Cont'd)

TP ^{in the Solomons,}
On Guadalcanal ~~itself,~~ ^{now} the Japs are trying to reinforce
their troops by parachute. But ~~they are not getting very~~
~~far with it.~~ On December 27, ^{U.S.} ~~our~~ Army planes ^{sighted} ~~espied~~ some
thirty cargo laden parachutes on the beach ten miles west
of Henderson airfield. ^{Army} ~~our~~ Airacobras went after them
and bombed them. ^{TP} This is the first attempt by the Japs
to reinforce their men on Guadalcanal by air.

TP On the same day, December 27, Airacobras and dive bombers
attacked ^{to small camp} a Japanese ~~base~~ ^{base} some eight miles west of
Henderson field. On the day previous~~ly,~~ December 26, our
dive bombers attacked and sank another ship, in addition
to the 5,000 tonner already mentioned. That brings the
number of Japanese ships definitely destroyed in the
Solomons to 55. Six others are listed as having probably
been sunk.

LIGHTNINGS

The planes known as "lightnings" are mentioned in dispatches from two different parts of the world today. They ^{are} reported as having escorted flying fortresses on their raids in Tunis. And, from New Guinea comes word that the Lightnings have just done their bit of one of the fiercest air battles of the campaign in those parts. Up to now they have been used principally for patrols and reconnaissance. Finally, they responded to an air alarm in one short air fight. Twelve Lightnings shot down fifteen Jap Zeros and dive bombers out of a formation of forty-two. This battle was fought at altitudes varying from eighteen thousand to five thousand feet.

The remainder of the Japanese lit out for home.

TRAIN WRECK

We ~~do not often~~ ^{seldom} hear of serious train wrecks in Canada.

So the disaster at Almonte station in Ontario ~~last night~~ comes

~~with an added~~ ^{as a} shock. The news today is that at least, thirty-^{five} ~~five, (35)~~ people were killed, possibly more. ^{And, some} ~~furthermore,~~

one hundred and fifty passengers were injured. ^{TP} The story from

Almonte ^{tells us of} ~~is described as~~ one of the worst railroad accidents

in the entire history of Canada. The principal cause of it

was icy rails; but, it was also due in part to war conditions.

A train carrying troops from a military camp crashed into the

rear of a local crowded with commuters. The local was ~~not~~

~~moving at the time but~~ standing in the station ^{at the time} —

^{not moving.}

PRODUCTION

The production of arms in this country took a big jump in November. Such is the report of Production Chief Donald Nelson. During that month United States factories turned out four and one third times more war material than in November, Nineteen Forty-One.

And then Donald Nelson added that in Nineteen Forty-Three, he expects the country to produce almost twice as much as during this past year of 1942.

As for the recent November record which he spoke about today, our factories produced twelve per cent more planes, tanks, guns, ammunition, ships and other fighting materials in November than in the previous month. And he added the reassuring news that included in all the equipment rolling off our assembly lines are certain war machines most needed in the type of warfare now being waged in North Africa.

Paul Garrett, Vice-President of General Motors is sitting beside me tonight and he has just told me that his firm with its one hundred and four plants -- all devoted to war work now -- but you tell us, Mr. Garrett.

Mr. Garrett:- One hundred and four plants is right, Mr. Thomas. And some three hundred and twenty-seven thousand employees. We are making nine million dollars' worth of munitions a day in General Motors plants alone. And our people are working with great enthusiasm; partly because they know the things they make are going to their sons and brothers and fathers who are doing the fighting abroad.

Morgenthau.

Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau had a favorable report to make today. He said the December drive for victory funds had resulted in what he called, "the unbelievable total of eleven billion nine hundred and forty six million dollars." **By** Thursday, the end of the month and the year, *he said,* the total will surely be well over twelve billions.

The Secretary of the Treasury also reported that of the money borrowed by the Treasury in December, sixty percent came from sources outside the banks.

The banks contributed only forty percent . and that, he considered, a most favorable position.

Lasker.

here is news for people interested in advertising.

The firm of Lord and Thomas, for a long while one of the celebrated names in that domain, will shortly be no more. It was announced today that the firm is going out of business.

Albert D Lasker, the head of Lord and Thomas, also former head of the ^{U.S.} shipping boards is retiring entirely from the advertising field. He is credited with having placed more than one billion dollars worth of advertising. Lasker in future will give most of his time to ^{a hobby} ~~avocation~~ in which he has been keenly interested.

And now I'm retiring - in favor of Hugh James after saying so long until tomorrow.