

WAVELL

P.T. - Sunoco. Thursday, Feb. 26, 1942.

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The story of an escape from Singapore, a history-making thrill, was told today by Secretary of War Stimson. Who was the adventurer that made a last minute getaway under a blaze of enemy fire? It was General Sir Archibald Wavell, supreme commander of the United Nations in the Far East. And Secretary Stimson reveals that General Wavell, as a result of his breath-taking thriller, has been nursing a broken rib.

The Secretary today spoke the following:- "The Commander of the United forces," said he, "has ~~been~~ shown himself worthy of the character of the men he commands. He has visited all fronts, even at great personal risks." ^R Yes, Sir Archibald Wavell visited that desperate front, Singapore - at the greatest personal risk. He landed at the doomed naval base during its last thirty-six hours of resistance. The Japs were rushing upon Singapore, bombing it to bits -

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when the Commander of the forces of the United Nations landed at the city airport. He wanted to see if it were not possible to retrieve the hopeless affair at the last moment, Or, ~~at~~ least, he wanted to share personally the danger of Singapore. Merely to go flying into those skies was a rash venture - the way the enemy had the utter supremacy of the air. The airport was under enemy fire, ~~and the city was a place of all the disaster of war.~~

Wavell saw that nothing could be done, and had his share of the danger - more than his share. ~~If the airfield was under shellfire when he landed, it was still more so when~~ He left ~ just before the city fell. And he didn't get away unscathed - neither himself nor the plane that he took. Secretary Stimson said today that mishap befell the United Nations Commander as his
The plane hit
plane was taking off. ~~It~~ by a shell, and damaged,

apparently. And in the ensuing ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ shake-up, General Wavell sustained a broken rib. It isn't clear whether he finally took to the sky in the same plane ~~that had been damaged~~ or another one. But in any case, he went winging to Java.

Our Secretary of War likewise revealed that Wavell wanted to go to join General MacArthur in the Bataan peninsula. When that campaign began, he sent a personal message to MacArthur, offering to come in person. MacArthur rejected the idea, not wanting to submit the Commander to so desperate a risk. He reckoned that Wavell's life was what Stimson today called - "too precious to jeopardize."

PHILIPPINES

The strange lull on the Batan Peninsula has come to an end -- but not because of any violent enemy assault. It's the other way around. Our men have done the assaulting. After the Japs had kept quiet for several days, General MacArthur ordered an offensive. No all out overwhelming drive, but a series of local attacks. These were decidedly successful -- especially at the right wing of the American-Filipino line. There the Japs were pushed back by local thrusts. Or, as MacArthur reports it in military terminology: "Forward elements of the Japanese troops were faced to withdraw several kilometers."

HEROES

In Java today they decorated Colonel Eugene Eubank. He arrived to take command of the American air forces in the Dutch East Indies and found a hero's medal waiting for him - because of gallantry displayed in the early days of the war in the Philippines. The medal in question is identified as - "the Silver Star and Purple Heart." I suppose that's a Dutch East Indies ^{an} [^] or Philippine decoration, and it certainly does sound romantic. What heroism wouldn't one perform to attain the Order of the Silver Star and Purple Heart!

And Java gives **us** what is obviously the makings of a nerve-tingling adventure tale. Two American flyers ~~were~~ shot down far out in the southwest Pacific - a long way from no ^{where.} ~~place.~~ They had a rubber boat and in this they drifted for five days. Their only food was sea gulls, which they shot down with weapons intended for enemy planes and air battle. Eating raw

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sea gulls they eventually reached an island.

BURMA

Things appear to be quieter in Burma today, and with this news come indications that the British Empire forces are swinging their line around for the defense of Mandalay. Hitherto they ^{have} ~~have~~ been ^{holding} ~~defending~~ river lines extending north to south. Mandalay toward the north, Rangoon at the south. The line would now appear to be swinging east to west, across middle Burma. This would mean that southern Burma will be abandoned to the Japanese enemy - Rangoon included. Such a maneuver would account for the news yesterday of the devastation of Rangoon by fire and explosion - the British scorching the earth to keep the Japs from getting supplies left behind.

China reports that the Japs have massed large forces in the northwestern part of Siam, ^{facing} ~~which faces~~ northern Burma. These, say the Chinese, are intended for a drive through northern Burma against Mandalay.

51 { Such an attack ^{might} ~~would~~ threaten to flank the new
east-to-west line which the Empire troops are said
to be taking to defend Mandalay.

Meanwhile, the devastating work of the American volunteer flyers continues. A dispatch from Chungking states that they shot down thirty-four enemy planes in air battle over Thailand yesterday and today. The Americans were outnumbered, but all returned safely - after having shot down thirty-four. Such is the Chinese report.

ENEMY CLAIMS

Here are some enemy claims for us to size up and appraise. The Japs have sunk a United States aircraft carrier - this is reported by Berlin, quoting Tokyo. The enemy gives the opinion that the carrier was the YORKTOWN, one of our biggest and best. There's nothing to confirm this - so we can just keep it in mind and pass on to the next one.

Tokyo claims that a Japanese air raid on a flying field in Java destroyed sixty-eight planes of the United Nations. The Dutch authorities call this fantastic, and a newspaper reporter who visited the airport to inspect the damage reports the following:-

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he says that one bomber was destroyed - because it had motor trouble and could not get into the air when the Japs came over. Otherwise, the Jap damage was slight. So we can dismiss that one, and go on to the next - which is indeed stupendous.

It's a Tokyo ^{radio} ~~said~~ description of ~~that~~
bombardment ^{by} ~~that~~ a Jap submarine ~~fired~~ on the oil
fields near Santa Barbara, California. The Tokyo
radio dispatch reads as follows:- "The United States
War Department on Wednesday officially announced that
Santa Barbara was devastated - admitting that a
submarine appeared suddenly and bombarded military
establishments." ^{That's news.} Devastation of the City of
Santa Barbara! - ~~so~~ That's the Japanese version of the
lobbing of twenty-five shells, which caused ^{about \$500} ~~twenty-five~~
dollars' worth of damage ^{to an oil derrick.}

This is a prime example of the way Japanese
propaganda is working. The belligerent nations have
followed varied standards of veracity, different degrees
of truthfulness in issuing war news. We have been able
to size them up for correctness and falsehood as time

has gone on, and by now we've been able to get a pretty good line on the Japanese war claims. They've been distinguished by a good deal of exaggeration in general, with flights into the realms of fantastic lying - weird whoppers, obviously for propaganda purposes in the Orient.

SHIP

It was revealed today that the United States Coast Guard Cutter HAMILTON was torpedoed just as it was about to enter port. The sinking of the ship in Iceland waters occurred several days ago, and now the stories, told by the survivors, are at hand. The torpedo explosion was startlingly unexpected - although for days the men of the HAMILTON had expected a U-boat attack at ~~almost~~ any moment. They were navigating in dangerous waters, but now they were about to enter the harbor of Reykjavik - and it seemed as if their perils were over. For the time being - at any rate.

The element of the unexpected is illustrated graphically by the case of Lieutenant Allen Smith of New Smyrna Beach, Florida. He hadn't had his clothes off for days, incessantly on duty - that's how much on the alert they were. But now, about to enter port,

he was taking off his clothes for a nap. That was when the torpedo hit and ripped the Cutter open as a can-opener does a can. "I hobbled to the deck in my pajamas," Lieutenant Smith related today. "I still had one shoe on."

Hobbled because

In that stunning surprise, how did the crew of the HAMILTON behave? "We had a lot of untried men aboard," relates *Lieut.* Chick Welsh of 'Mt. Kisco', New York, "But they were superb."

The story is told of how one man was temporarily blinded by live steam. That was the most terrifying thing of all - the scalding steam from the boilers. And this blinded man had his hands burned raw. But he wrenched open ~~the~~ ^a companionway and freed four of his buddies, who were trapped in the boiling steam. Tales of heroism, and eighty men were saved!

BRITISH ADMIRALTY

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London states that a British submarine has torpedoed a big German cruiser of the PRINZ EUGEN class - probably the PRINZ EUGEN itself. Also, a submarine escorting the cruiser was probably hit. This happened off the coast of Norway, and when last seen the Nazi cruiser, heavily damaged, was being towed to a Norwegian port.

The ~~xxxx~~ name of the German warship, PRINZ EUGEN, recalls that sensational sweep of Nazi warships through the English Channel a couple of weeks ago. *And*
Other news from London had ^s_^ something to tell us about that affair. A spokesman for the British Admiralty states it is now definitely determined that the Nazi battleships SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU, were severely damaged by British air and sea attacks as they drove through the rain and mist of the Channel. Air photographs made by reconnaissance planes now show that

one of the two Nazi battleships is in a drydock at Kiel for repairs, the other in a drydock at Wilhelmshaven.

The Admiralty spokesman, in a resumé' of the war at sea, recounted ^S heavy losses sustained by the enemy, ^{and} ~~and it~~ ^{he} listed a series of big British ships that had been damaged - giant battleships like the MALAYA and the NELSON. In spite of losses, however, he said that the British Navy now is three or four times as strong as it was back in the normal times of peace - though it is still spread pretty thinly for warfare in the seven seas. And he warned of a perilous Axis campaign against Allied shipping during the coming Spring.

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AIR RAID

The great California air raid becomes more and more of a puzzle. Yesterday Secretary of the Navy Knox had his say about the blazing of anti-aircraft guns in the Los Angeles area, a tremendous lot of shooting at something mysterious in the sky. Secretary Knox said it was - a false alarm. ^R Today, however, ~~XX~~ another Secretary speaks up - Stimson of the War Department. He says that aircraft did fly over Los Angeles, as many as fifteen. He thinks they were probably enemy planes, ^{but} ~~not~~ not warplanes - they were commercial aircraft. The Secretary of War embodies this seemingly paradoxical idea in the following puzzling words:- "probably commercial planes operated by enemy agents."

Secretary Stimson stated that the fifteen planes flew at a height of from nine thousand to

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eighteen thousand feet. Their speed varied^d - up to two hundred miles an hour. Anti-aircraft shells were fired at them to the amount of fourteen hundred and thirty rounds. None were shot down, and no bombs were dropped. Also - no American fighter planes went into action to intercept the peculiar air raiders. The Secretary was asked today - Why not? Why didn't any of our planes go after the mysterious air fleet? He

refrained from answering that ~~xxxxxxx~~ one. *The report is that there was too much anti-aircraft fire.* Furthermore^{TP} - Why would enemy agents make a

flight over Los Angeles in fifteen commercial planes?

The Secretary said the purpose was probably to discover the location of anti-aircraft batteries - that and the demoralization of the civilian population, creating a panic.

Where did the enemy agents in commercial planes come from? The secretary refused to hazard a guess on

that point.

In California, however, they ~~are~~ ^{are} rather more forward ^{in their} ~~about~~ guessing. ~~There's~~ ^{they are uttering} a demand that the Army, the Navy and other defense agencies make a search over large spaces of the far west - conduct a hunt for hidden enemy air bases. The Sheriff at Los Angeles said he did not believe there was any point in the nearby region from which enemy agents could have flown, but ^{that} there are other sections where a search ought to be made. "In San Bernadino and Mōnō Counties in California, in Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico," he said, "there are vast uninhabited regions where camouflaged bases may be located."

There is some California suspicion that the enemy-operated commercial planes might ^{have} come from secret land bases in Mexico. It is pointed out that

the Mexican Government would cooperate in seeking

anything like that. Only recently, an inspection was made by the Governor of Lower California - General Cardenas, former President of Mexico, ^{who} ~~he~~ reported ^{that} there were no enemy air bases in his district.

In Congress, Representative Leland of California today demanded a thorough investigation of the mystery planes. He wants to know whether it was a practice raid, a political raid, or what kind. The mention of politics was explained by the Congressman. He spoke of the possibility of what he called: - ~~XXXX~~ "a raid to lay a political foundation to take away from southern California its industries."

It's difficult to figure ^{just} what it's all about, but of course it might have been some twisty scheme of the enemy for making obfuscating mischief.

And now Hugh, let's hear ~~In Virginia they had an air raid alarm, but~~

59 1/2 You clear up something obfuscating