

RUSSIA

L.J. - Sunoco. Tuesday, Dec. 22, 1942. *Q*

In Russia, the Soviet offensive in the ^{big bend} ~~area~~ of the Don continues. That is where Red Army forces smashed deep behind the Nazi divisions before Stalingrad, and drove all the way to the City of Millerovo.

Today's Moscow communique states that Soviet troops have captured several dozen more towns, eight of them large places. ~~And this would indicate that the Russians are recapturing a lot of territory from the Nazis - which territory is so situated as to count most. Every mile of advance increases the peril of the huge Nazi forces before Stalingrad - peril of complete encirclement.~~

The Red Army is aiming at Rostov on an arm of the Black Sea, and if they should draw a line north and south all the way to that port, one million Germans in the Stalingrad area and in the Caucasus would be caught in the biggest military trap in history.

AFRICA

Here's the latest! - A Moscow bulletin announcing the capture of Kamensk, which puts the Red Army 85 miles from Rostov.

Reports from enemy sources indicate that the tempo of ground fighting is increasing in North Africa. The Axis radio tells of new Allied attacks in Tunisia. Rome calls the fighting there - "somewhat more intense". Berlin says the signs indicate that there will soon be Allied action on a major scale, a big time American and British push.

~~From London we have an account of how the Allied forces in Tunisia are disposed. The Americans hold the center of the line, the British are on the left, the French on the right.~~

7 { London indicates that our air forces are rapidly gaining equality with the Axis - and maybe superiority. We are told that American warplanes ~~thus~~ ~~far~~ have ~~xxxxx~~ dropped a million pounds of bombs on enemy targets during the past seven days, while British Beauford fighters have almost driven Axis night fighters from the skies.

Cairo tells of plans for a combined operation ~~by~~ the two Allied armies in North Africa - our forces in Tunisia and the British Eighth Army based on Egypt. The program for unified action has been worked out by General Eisenhower, and there are unconfirmed rumors that Eisenhower has met with the British Eighth Army Commander, General Montgomery - ~~the two working out arrangements for a coordinated operation.~~ The plan, they say, is for the Eighth Army to keep on driving Rommel's Africa Corps on into Tunis^{ia}, and then Eisenhower's and Montgomery's armored battalions will join forces for an all-out offensive against the enemy pocketed ^{there.} ~~in Tunisia.~~

The Eighth Army continues to chase Rommel, and has evidence that the Nazi rear guard has fortified positions at Zem Zem. Zem Zem is ninety miles west of Sirte, which place the British have already reached.

18

Zem Zem is a strong natural position, rugged country, with rocky strongholds. So it looks as if the Nazis would fight a delaying action at Zem Zem - in addition to which they are preparing some more fortifications still further to the west.

Cairo now indicates that the Axis rear guard, which was reported to have been trapped last week, succeeded in getting away. The trap was not completely and firmly closed. So now this same rear guard is ~~diggin~~ digging in at Zem Zem.

As a sidelight - how about the story that General Eisenhower was for a time Commander of Gibraltar? This has been reported, and would have been quite an innovation. The fortress of Gibraltar has not been commanded by anyone but a Britisher during the past two hundred and thirty-eight years. Today we are told that this long tradition was not broken. General

Eisenhower was not Commander of Gibraltar. He was there during the preparations for the African offensive, and as an American Lieutenant-General he out-ranked the British commander - a Major-General.

So he was technically the British Commander's superior officer, but Eisenhower did not take ^{over the} command. ~~It~~ was the boss by virtue of rank, but not Commander of the Rocks.

AFRICAN COMMANDO

The news from North Africa tells of the most successful commando raid of the war. A party of British and Americans struck deep into the Axis home grounds, and seized temporary control of a hundred and twenty-five square miles in the neighborhood of Bizerte. That big French naval base is, of course, ^{the} Number One Axis stronghold in Tunisia. It's the key point that they are fighting to hold - and the commandos penetrated to within four miles of Bizerte. ^{Once there} they held on for three days, before they made a typical commando getaway.

~~They made~~ ^a surprise landing by sea, and they fought their way for a swift dash inland. They attacked centers of Axis communications, and inflicted heavy damage on road convoys and airfields. They seized two important road junctions, and tied the enemy transport system into knots. Three days of this was a stinging blow where it hurt the most, and the

Axis had to bring up heavy forces - before the Commandos made their getaway.

London tells of still another type of novel warfare that our side is employing in Tunisia - ~~Robin Hood tactics, they are called. The name of England's legendary forest here is employed to symbolize~~ ^{at} ~~the peculiar and daring type of guerrilla~~ _λ operation. Bicycle troops do the trick, riding swiftly ^{they} ~~and~~ ^{secretly} ~~filtering~~ _λ through the enemy lines. They go into hiding, and at the right moment get busy with their principal weapon - land mines. They take with them quantities of these explosive charges, and wait for Nazi tanks to move forward along the roads. Then they lay the land mines behind the tanks - on the road ^{by} ~~which~~ the moving forts will return to their base. The tanks don't expect any such trouble on their way back, and are blown up.

CHINA

From embattled China come two grim stories:- one is an illustration of the resentment that is growing ~~even~~ among those Chinese who have consented to cooperate with the Japanese. A dispatch from Nationalist China reveals the tragedy of the Puppet Premier of Manchukuo General Chang Ching-Hui. ~~He~~ Brooded^{ing} over his submission to the enemies of his country, "He was" as the dispatch says, "unable to stand Japanese oppression". So the Premier of Manchukuo took desperate action. First he poisoned his family, then he hastened to his office and shot the Japanese advisor and five high Japanese officials, and, killed himself.

And Nationalist Chungking gives us some figures which show the spirit among the Puppet Chinese. Since Nineteen Thirty-Seven two hundred thousand Chinese troops have been armed and trained by the Japanese.

Of ^{which} ~~these~~ over one hundred and eighty-one thousand
have deserted and joined the Nationalist Chinese
armies.

The second grim story from China tells
of the execution of a high nationalist official.
He was ~~xxx~~ head of the transportation department
of Chiang Kai Shek's Ministry of Finance. This
~~high ranking~~ official was found guilty of steeling
funds. He was in charge of Chinese property in
Burma early this year and is said to have embezzled
thirty million yuan -- worth more than a million
and a half dollars. His execution was ordered
personally by Chiang Kai Shek, who has launched
a campaign to crush official corruption in
nationalist China.

AIR ACTION

Today's Navy communique tells of three strong American air raids. One - in the Aleutians. United States bombers, escorted by fighters, made a heavy coordinated attack on the Japs at Kiska. Hits were scored and heavy explosions were noted in the vicinity of the enemy submarine base there.

The other two raids were in the South Pacific, the Solomon Islands - both striking at the much bombed Japanese air base at Munda. Flying fortresses hit two successive smashes against that important new flying field which the Japs have been trying to put into operation.

PRISONERS

A horror story of the torpedoing of a prison ship comes from China today. A Jap merchant vessel was sunk by a submarine, and aboard it were some one thousand British and Canadian soldiers. They had been captured at Hong Kong, where they had been kept for nine months in prison camps of appalling hardship.

3
H Finally, in September, they were loaded aboard ships, to be taken away. ^{They} were packed in the hold. On the second day the vessel was torpedoed, ~~xxx~~ one survivor telling of it in these words:- ^H "The ship shuddered under a huge explosion, and began to list in a few seconds. We could hear firing above, apparently at the ~~xxxxxx~~ torpedoing submarine. The ship settled but continued to move. Then," the survivor goes on, "the nightmare began. The Japanese closed all hatch covers. There were no air inlets and hour by hour the hold became more unbearable."

We are told that the night was like the Black Hole of Calcutta. "Next morning," relates the survivor, "there was no sound on deck. The stronger men decided to escape. They forced through a hatch to the deck and saw the ship was being towed. There were no Japanese left aboard. ~~We could see the~~ *says he,* ~~Japanese beginning to cast off the tow,~~ *"*Our ship lurched and began to go down by the stern."*"*

the British and Canadians
He tells how hundreds of ~~men~~ *men* jumped overboard although they had no life belts. *And* The Japanese machine-gunned them, *and* they swam. Some survivors were picked up by Japanese ships, but no rescue lifeboats were lowered. "Probably," says the survivor, "not over a few hundred were saved."

Some were able to swim to shore, reaching the China coast. Thereafter, after long journeying, they made their way to Nationalist China - and now their story comes to light.

RICKENBACKER

There's a project to name a street or a plaza in New York after Eddie Rickenbacker. Of course few New York streets or plazas are without adequate names, but there are some. For example, there's the plaza at Fifty-Ninth Street and Fifth Avenue. Why not call that Rickenbacker Square? ^{TP} This proposal is made by the demon aviation enthusiast, F. Darius Benham. And Freddy is pushing it with his customary ^{delirious and} ~~and~~ demoniac energy. He ~~thinks that we can have a sort of aviation shrine at a street or plaza named after America's ace in the First World War, who has recently come back from the edge of the Beyond survived so extraordinary an adventure and ordeal in~~ ^{TP} ~~the Pacific.~~ Freddy thinks that on Rickenbacker Square there should be a monument inscribed with the names not only of Rick, himself, but also those of some of the fliers who fought with him ~~xxx~~ in the previous war and some of the great trans-Atlantic fliers of a few years ago. *And I second the motion.*

BAPTISTS

Today a protest was made against one provision of the new Victory Tax. It was a church protest - lodged by the Baptists of Kentucky. Their complaint concerns the clause that requires a five per cent tax to be ~~collected~~ ^{deducted} at the source - employers to ~~collect~~ ^{deduct} the five per cent from the wages of employes and pay it to the government. The religious angle ~~sets forth~~ ^{concerns} the fact that churches are required to take the five per cent out of the salaries of their ministers. A church is considered to be an employer, and its minister an employee. To this the Baptists object.

They make the further point that the Victory Tax clause in question violates the traditional Baptist belief in the separation of church and state. The church, in collecting the tax from its ministers and paying this to the government, becomes an agent of the government.

The ministers do not object to paying the five per cent, but they want to pay it themselves - as individuals. ~~Their objection is against the church having to do it as a corporation acting for the government in making deductions from an employee's pay.~~

The Baptists seem to be dead in earnest about this. The Kentucky protest represents twenty-one hundred churches and four hundred and ten thousand

people. (And today John D. Freeman, Editor of the official ~~xxxx~~ Kentucky Baptist publications, stated: "The Victory Tax must be altered, or else we face almost certainly the spectacle of Baptists going to jail in America for their religious beliefs.")

FUGITIVE

Today a happy ending came to the latest story of an escaped prisoner who for years has lived an honest life. The Governor of Arkansas has pardoned James Owens who escaped from an Arkansas prison twenty years ago, and who has been living in New York under the name of Philip Sullivan - married, a hard working machinist. "He has suffered more from his crime," says the Governor, "than if he had remained in the penitentiary." ~~And this is an apt comment on the ordeal through which the one-time fugitive has gone.~~

James Owens always claimed he was innocent of the crime of which he was convicted. Traveling through a Texas oilfield he happened to get in the company of two strange youths, and was arrested along with them - when the police grabbed ^{them} ~~him~~ for a robbery. They swore that Owens had committed the crime. He served a year in prison, and then escaped.

After twenty years Nemesis came upon him - all because he liked to go fishing. He applied for a fishing permit to angle in restricted waters, and that called for finger printing. He was not worried particularly when they took his prints. That sort of thing had happened twice before - once when he got into a fight with another fellow in a saloon, and again when he got a job as a building superintendent. Both times he was finger printed, and nothing happened. It was different, though, when he decided to go fishing, and applied for ^{the} permit. His finger prints went ~~through~~ through the usual routine, and this time they were recognized. So the fugitive was arrested for extradition to ^{Arkansas,} ~~Oklahoma~~. He and his wife had an ordeal of suspense until today - when the pardon came.

ACCIDENT

8

From Montreal comes a story of an astonishing way to save a life. A Canadian military plane was flying at four thousand feet, and in it were an R.A.F. civilian employee named Harry Griffiths. Somehow or other, Griffiths fell through the escape hatch of the plane. He toppled out, but contrived to catch hold of the bottom edge of the door: ~~There he~~ And there he hung with his hands, his body dangling below the plane. His yells attracted the attention of the pilot, Sidney Gerow, a former crack commercial flyer. There wasn't any way to get him up. So the pilot let him down. That was the extraordinary part of it.

8 1/2

Nearby was a lake, thoroughly frozen, a sheet of ice. The pilot brought the plane down from four thousand feet, and skimmed the glassy surface. A few feet above the lake Griffiths, as he hung suspended, let go and went sliding along the slippery surface.

Considering the speed of the plane, it was one of the longest slides on record. When he came to a stop, he got up and walked across the ice to a nearby farmhouse.

Slide Griffith slide, and
catapulted from a plane he slid,
~~sure did.~~