

L.T. - SUNOCO. FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 1942.
(Barre, Vermont)

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

I am away up in Vermont tonight, not so far from Canada and the longest unguarded border in the World. I am in the city of Barre, the world's granite capital. That music you heard when Hugh James introduced me, came from the Spaulding High School Band of Barre. Forty-five young musicians are sitting around me on the stage of the Barre Auditorium. Before me sit a ~~thruugh~~ thousand or more Vermonters. And beside me sits the Governor of Vermont.

I wish I had good news for these Vermonters, and you who are listening. But so far in this War we haven't had much good news. Take this first item for example:

RUSSIA

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Today's latest account from Moscow says the Germans are counter-attacking. They're staging local offenses. The Capture of prisoners indicates that Blitzkrieg units are being rushed from West to East some transferred from France to Russia. They are attacking to recapture important places seized by the Soviets during the winter war.

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Moscow tells that trapped German forces at Staraya Russia are in a bad way, and gives a grim detail saying that the German command at Staraya Russia has ordered that military funerals be denied to men who commit suicide.

R.A.F.

There was brisk air fighting over northern France today -- reminding us of months past, when great battles were the rule. In the skies near the English Channels, British air squadrons were out in force, all over northern France. They shot down eight Nazi planes in a series of air fights and lost five of their own.

Paris had an air raid scare today. The Paris radio went off the air suddenly. Usually the sign of raid. However, no bombs dropped at or near the French capital. One explanation is that German planes of a new design were flying, and were not recognized, and were thought to be British.

Paris is nervous, after the havoc when R.A.F. planes bombed factories making war material for the Germans. And apparently there is going to be more of that same thing, because tonight a British spokesman broadcast the following to Western Europe; "the R.A.F. again in a short while," said he, "Is going to bomb factories which are giving valuable aid to Nazi Germany.

The warning," he added, "is for you to get away from these factories."

SEA WAR

The Japs are now thrusting down through the Solomon Islands and that might seem to mean further advance against the Australian life line. Enemy naval units are being hit by Australian and American bombers, but appear to be continuing on their way. The Solomons lie northeast of Australia, and are part of an island chain that stretches to the south, flanking the East Australian coast. The islands therefore, reach down toward the sea route from the United States to Australia. They flank the oceanic highway that American war supplies must take to reinforce Australia -- an all important life line.

Weeks ago the Jap enemy struck at the Solomon Islands, and now they seem to be trying a push down the island line, which includes the Solomons, the New Hedrides and New Caledonia, -- for an island advance toward the American-Australian supply route. Islands of rather villainous history -- inhabited by fuzzy-headed cannibals with those pieces of bones through their noses.

Today big American bomber struck at
the New Guinea air bases the Japs have just established
And our flying fortresses destroyed a couple of
enemy air dromes.

AUSTRALIA

Australia announces the loss of a cruiser and a sailing ship. Both left Java before the fall of the island, and have vanished. Eight hundred and thirty-three persons are missing -- the crews of the ships and people they were taking away. It is hoped that some at least have been saved, because of the narrow waters out there -- with island shores not too far away.

The cruiser lost was the PERTH , a warship that went through fierce fighting in the battle of the Sea of Java. The PERTH survived heavy engagements with the Jap invasion fleet -- only to come to grief on leaving the doomed island. The route of escape was through waters dominated by enemy aircraft and war vessels, and that no doubt accounts for the loss of the PERTH - though just what happened to the cruiser is not known.

The PERTH WAS a seven thousand ton vessel sister ship of that other Australian cruiser, the

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SYDNEY -- which also disappeared under circumstances of mystery. The SYDNEY fought with and sank a heavily armed German merchantship raider -- and then vanished. Australia had six cruisers when the war began -- two lost, four left.

BURMA

There's little news from Burma, ^{where} the campaign is in a lull. The British Imperials now hold a line east to west, some seventy miles above Rangoon. The Japs are in contact with the defenders, but there's little more than patrol activity. Apparently they are bringing up their forces to continue the drive.

China reports an increasing Chinese reinforcement of the British-Burmese armies -- masses of Chiang-Kai Shek's veterans arriving to bolster the defense.

AMERICANS

Americans in the armies of our Allies are to be transferred to our own American forces. In Washington today the War Department announced that negotiations were being conducted whereby Americans under other flags will be taken into service under their own flag. And, at the same time, Allied Nations will be permitted to transfer to their own armies such of their citizens as are now serving in our forces.

IRELAND

Today brings the most positive kind of denial of stories that there has been trouble between American and British troops in North Ireland, Ulster. Nothing to it, says Lieutenant Commander H. E. Franklin, British Commander in North Ireland.

He refers to tales that are being circulated in his area -- stories that American and British Soldiers have been getting into barroom brawls and even gun battles in public houses. Also -- there there have been difficulties between the Americans and the Civilian population of Ulster. Fifth column propaganda, says the British Commander! And he adds, "rumors have become so persistent that an official denial is necessary."

So he issued a statement as follows: "Do not believe stories obviously inspired by Fifth Column agents, to the effect that there is friction between American and British troops in Northern Ireland and between Americans and Civilian population. Nobody,

the British Commander goes on, "has been able to track down the authority for these stories. And not a single authentic case has been recorded of rows between the soldiers of the two countries."

This denial is seconded by the United Press correspondne t attached to the new A.E.F. He says he has seen what he calls -- "Only the best spirit of good feeling and comradship exhibited by the Doughboys and Tommies." And he adds that they have been seen mixing affably in all public houses and dance halls.

BRAZIL

There were more anti-Axis demonstrations in Brazil today -- popular anger because of the Nazi torpedoing of Brazilian ships. Disorder occurred at various places throughout the republic of the Amazon -- with crowds attacking Axis-owned business establishments.

The principal rumpus was again at Rio -- where a riot broke out in front of a German-owned drug store in the heart of the business district. The police were on the lookout -- posted at strategic corners of streets. So, when the drug store attack began, they came charging. The crowd was stubborn and shooting began, a crash of gunfire. However, it wasn't as deadly as it sounds. The police did the firing, and nobody was hurt -- the Brazilian cops using blanks. And the noisy shooting was enough to discourage the multitude.

There were further demonstrations in front of German and Japanese firms. The Rio dispatch says the indignant people pay little attention to Italian business houses. The Brazilians have never

taken the Italian part in the war very seriously.

One picturesque feature is that tonight the city of Rio has a gala appearance -- as if it were some spectacular festival. Because stores everywhere have hung out flags. Allied places are flying American and British flags. Brazilian firms are decorated with the Brazilian colors -- and so are stores of Axis ownership.

EQUITABLE BUILDING

New York had a lively war scare today.

In the Wall Street financial district the Equitable Building was shelled. Explosive missiles hit the skyscraper and knocked masonry flying from the cornices of the thirtieth and thirty-first floors.

Nobody was hurt by the falling stone. But the artillery bombardment was enough to cause all sorts of excitement.

The shelling of the Equitable Building caused thousands to gather near the tall building. There were wild rumors. Could it be that some Nazi U-boat out to sea had a gun with a long enough range to fire shells into the heart ~~of~~ of Manhattan. No, it was not that. After much confusion and puzzlement, here's the answer -- a late dispatch just in. The shells were fired accidentally from an anti-aircraft battery in Manhattan. Because of some mishap, there was gunfire to the extent of eight shells and these anti-aircraft missiles ^{hit} the skyscraper, giving ~~a~~ Wall Street a war scare.

SINKING

At New York, survivors of a sunken ship told a dramatic story today. A Norwegian freighter, sunk six hundred miles off Bermuda, put up the bravest kind of battle -- with one gun against U-boats. The German submarines appeared on both sides of the ship, about two miles away. The Norwegians, with their single gun, could fire at only one. This they did until Nazi shells, coming from both sides, set the ship ~~afire~~ afire and sank her.

SCRAP METAL

The government today took its first action in the requisitioning of war material. A United States marshal seized two hundred thousand pounds of scrap metal from a junk yard at Valparaiso, the city known mainly as the home of Valparaiso University -- the poor man's Harvard. The owner had persistently refused to sell at the price fixed by the government. He demanded more money.

Frank Shumak runs an antique gun shop at Valparaiso -- also a junk yard. He accumulated two hundred thousand pounds of scrap, and was openly and defiantly holding it for speculation.

There's a war shortage of scrap, and for the lack of it steel mills in many areas are running at less than capacity -- some are even closing down. The War Production Board is determined to acquire every bit of scrap metal that it can. And there was the antique and junk seller, Shumak, with enough junk metal to produce four medium tanks when mixed with an

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equal amount of pig iron. The authorities tried to buy it, at the regulated price of eighteen dollars and seventy-five cents a ton. But Shumak demanded three dollars a ton more than that. The result was that the Federal Marshal today seized the scrap metal -- the government's first requisitioning of war material under the authority of the law.

ROOSEVELT

President Roosevelt says he is studying proposals to control wages and profits. He told his press conference today that several plans are being considered -- plans to limit the war time wages of labor and of profits of business. The President said this, as Congress began an inquiry into the charges that high wages, the forty-hour x week and strikes are impeding armament production.

SPIES

And George Sylvester Viereck was sentenced today -- the man who was a propagandist for the Kaiser in the previous war, who has been a journalist and writer since then, and who was accused of concealing some of his Hitler propaganda activities during the time leading up to our entrance into the present war. Today the judge gave him the maximum penalty -- a prison sentence of from two to six years, for George Sylvester Viereck.

DESERTERS

Whenever and wherever there is an army, there is always the problem of deserters; and today we have a melodramatic gun shooting story.

At Fort Ogelthorpe in Georgia, two soldiers of the third cavalry, went on a desperade rampage. Privates Testerman and Lovett waylaid a sentry, beat him savagly, and made off with four automatic pistols and a hundred rounds of ammunition. They kidnapped a taxi driver, and forced him to speed them over into Tennessee. Then they tossed the taxi driver out of the cab, and kept going.

They drove into nearby Virginia, but the F.B.I. was on their trail and two of J. Edgar Hoover's agents found them in a tavern at the town of Abingdon. There was a thundering bedlam of pistol fire. Agent Tracey fell mortally wounded. His partner, F.B.I. man Tignor, was hit, but he blazed away with his pistol. The deserters dashed out of the tavern. Tignor followed them, still shooting -- until he collapsed. He is seriously injured.

With this, a huge manhunt was on. It didn't last long, however. This afternoon a posse, combing the town found the deserters in the basement of a negro home. "Why don't you coppers come in and get us?" yelled the desperadoes, and opened fire.

The posse reponded with tear gas and in a minute the two deserter outlaws emerged weeping. Charges against them - desertion, and murder. And in any Army that means death.

DOGS

I won't try to explain this next bit of news, I'll just read the United Press dispatch as it came across the wire. "Sikeston, Missouri, March the Thirteenth. When Mrs. Nathan Simms patted her now Boston bull dog on the back, it coughed up ten dimes and a nickel."

How come? I'll be doggoned if I know.

X S L U Monday.