

L.I. - Simoco. Friday, May 7, 1943

)(Lead)

Tonight we have two huge headlines of victory, either one ^{of which} would have provided a banner of triumph big enough for any day of news.

Tunis has fallen, and Bizerte has fallen. On the same day the Americans and British have captured the two predominant positions of the axis in ~~North~~ Tunisia. The fact that both were taken almost simultaneously indicates how swift was the enemy collapse, a sudden and irretrievable break-up-- resistance shattered to bits by the unceasing hammer blows.

With the fall of Tunis and Bizerte, it's all over for the axis now in north africa. They may still hang on in some rugged places, and put up some remnant of a bitter-end fight. But that's unimportant. The allies can now have scarcely more to do than mop-up.

^{TP} Tunis fell to the British; ~~Bizerte~~ Bizerte to the Americans. The armies of the two allied nations hit the enemy with magnificent coordination, with tremendous blows that were synchronized like the moving parts of a single machine. ^{TP} Earlier in the day, we heard that the British were in the outskirts of Tunis, the Americans in the outskirts of Bizerte. Late this afternoon, the word came as by inexorable logic-- the announcement of the fall of both places.

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~~(lead to come)~~

^{TR} Once the british first army broke through the final ring of hills they smashed with irresistible force across the flat plain in front of Tunis. The germans put up a ferocious brand of resistance, but were overpowered by the weight of metal on the ground, and, the power in the air. British and American aviation was simply overwhelming. With complete command of the sky, ^{hundreds} ~~sede~~ of planes shattered and pulverized the enemy on the ground.

Today's dispatch from north African headquarters tells us that during this one day, a total of one million, two hundred and fifty thousand pounds of bombs were dropped-- an all-time record for Africa. ^{TR} The axis forces ^{simply} could not stand against the tremendous assault. The British slashed through their lines, cut the enemy army up in pockets, and these were speedily mopped up. ^R And so the mighty offensive rolled on to Tunis. ^{TR} British tanks captured a place called LEBARDO, which was the official residence of the mohammedan ruler, the boy of tunis. Lebarde is less than two miles from the heart of the city, and british armor thundered on into Tunis.

The British at Tunis have reached the sea and this cuts

the Axis armies in two; the southern group now separated from the northern.

The southern group is in imminent danger of annihilation with the British and Americans driving heavily against the key point - Tebourba. The only hope of the enemy forces in that sector is to retire to the Cape Bon Peninsula, which reaches out into the Mediterranean south of Tunis. The peninsula is eight hundred miles of rugged country, and some Nazi forces might draw back and ~~might~~ elect to fight it out to the end, all the way to the tip of Cape Bon. But that's mere conjecture. They may try to evacuate; but, a second Dunkirk would seem to be well nigh impossible for the Nazis. Or, the remaining Axis forces may surrender. Hosts of prisoners have already been taken.

The American capture of Bizerte was accomplished by a drive from the south. The great naval base was under attack from two directions, assaulted by one

column moving along the northern shore of Lake Achkel, and the other skirting the lake around the south. The southern column scored the decisive victory when it captured the key point of Ferryville. After that, the drive rolled on into the naval base.

This was a mighty stronghold and was expected to put up a most formidable resistance, but Bizerte fell under that same kind of storm that conquered Tunis - overpowering forces on the ground and a devastating weight of high explosive from above.

Tomorrow it will be just six months since the great North African offensive was launched, and our forces and the British will celebrate the occasion in Tunis and Bizerte.

Its official now that Joseph E Davies is going to Moscow, our former Ambassador to the Soviets will make the trip shortly, and will take a special message from President Roosevelt to

Russian Premier Stalin. This was stated today by the President himself. *TCW* What will be in this special message from Roosevelt to Stalin?

The President was completely silent about that-- and these Roosevelt silences can be as eloquent as the words of a fireside chat.

To emphasize the silence, the President said today that not even Davies himself will know the contents of the message that he will take to Stalin. He will learn about it from Stalin, when the message is delivered-- and then will discuss the matter with the Soviet Premier.

The word, of course, is that Davies is going to Moscow to convey an invitation for a Roosevelt-Stalin meeting. However President Roosevelt today warned the news men about guessing, and with a genial smile he told them that in the past their guesses have been nearly always wrong.

SUBMARINE

Governor Sparks, here is a story that will make you and every Alabaman feel mighty proud. But first I'd better explain that I am in the capital of Alabama tonight, and the Governor is with me. Here is the story:-

Today in the news three words ring out, words that should have their place in the history of heroism; three commonplace words. Those words are:- "Take her down." And they were spoken by an American submarine commander. They were his command -- ordering the sub to dive immediately, dive while the Commander was lying wounded on the deck.

Today's Navy bulletin tells how the submarine was on a raid against enemy shipping in the Pacific, and then came a moment of hair raising action. The boat was on the surface when a speedy Japanese patrol craft came charging -- to ram it. The American skipper was Commander Howard W. Gilmore of Selma, Alabama, who already had won two

decorations. One -- for stealing into a Jap harbor and torpedoing three Jap destroyers, sinking two.

The other -- a medal for sinking twenty-six thousand tons of enemy ships. Now he was about to win the Congressional Medal of Honor -- posthumously.

As the patrol boat charged to ram he swerved his sub, dodging, and evaded the rush. And then he swung his own boat around and charged the Jap. Running on the surface at seventeen knots, the submarine rammmed the patrol boat, and smashed a gapping hole in its hull.

The Japanese vessel began to sink, but its gunners opened fire on the submarine. It was close range shooting, point blank and the sub was in immediate danger of being sunk. On its deck were crew members including the skipper. In the hail of fire, Commander Gilmore was hit and mortally wounded. His men tried to carry him below; but that meant delay, and it was a matter of seconds if the boat was to evade the storm of enemy projectiles. Commander Gilmore, as he lay wounded, ordered all hands below. They were loath to

leave him, but he compelled them. And he gave the command, -- "Take her down."

The mortally wounded officer remained lying there, as the deck sank below him; the water closing over him, as the boat obeyed his command:--
"Take her down."

GOV. SPARKS:

L.T.: Governor Sparks, what has this Second World War done to Alabama? That is aside from populating it with young aviators?

GOV. S: Mr. Thomas, before I answer that I want to comment on that submarine story you gave us a moment ago. Alabama will ring with the praises of Commander Harry Gilmore of Selma, who performed those feats you told us about, and who died so gallantly. I like to think that all our Alabama boys have that kind of stuff in them.

L.T.: Governor, you have a lot of northern boys down here with you in the deep South.

GOV. S: Yes sir, this is the place for all you Yankees to come, to the great State of Alabama! As for what the war has done to us. It has brought us many new enterprises, of course -- including munitions plants, aluminum mills, chemical works; and hundreds of thousands of young men who are being trained down

here, trained to win this war. Much depends on the daring and dispatch with which that job of winning it is done. But I guess I don't need to say much about that, because it looks as though our lads over in North Africa are doing a whirlwind job. It looks as though they've just about cleaned the Nazis and Italians out of Tunis; and now the rest of it may go faster and faster -- the rest of the job of winning the war.

Mr. Thomas, we in Alabama are also thinking about the period after the war, just as the folks are in other states. We want to see to it that events do not take any unbridled course. For if the war should end that way, victory might be accompanied by human misery and want worse than any military defeat. Here in Alabama we are already tackling the problem of after the war. To do less to win the peace than we are now doing to win the war would be to invite disaster.

L.T.: I was much interested to hear you say a moment ago, Gov. Sparks, that Alabama stands among the first two or three states ~~ix~~ in men enlisted in the armed forces. So I guess you Alabamans are doing your part.

*-HESS-

London is agitated once again by the singular case of rudolf

Hess. Word has been going around that the wife of the one

time nazi number-two-man has joined him in his captivity

in England. ~~A formal question on this point has been asked,~~

~~as mentioned last night,~~
~~in parliament, but, it has not yet been given an official reply.~~

But The word tonight is that there is nothing to the story--

That Hess's wife is not in England.

However, the mere existence of the rumor has directed new

attention to the strange prisoner, who landed by parachute so

surprisingly in scotland a couple of years ago. And today's news

from London indicates that hitler's one time chief lieutenant ^{is} ~~is~~

behaving in a peculiar way, going daffy in fact.

He had been kept as a prisoner of war in an internment camp, ^{where}

^{he} ~~and~~ seems to be suffering from a persecution mania. He shouts

at his guards, yelling, " You are plotting against me." ^t

-Hess †

But, the main theme of his persecution mania is Soviet Russia.

We have heard previously that Hess made his weird airplane flight to Britain with some kind of wild notion that he might persuade the British to join H. Hitler against the Soviets. ^{and} that hallucination [^] ~~is~~ still haunts him.

One British informant is quoted as saying "His principal fixed idea is the same one with which he arrived in England-- that Russia was menacing the whole world, and that England, the United States and all the rest of the world must join with Germany in defeating the Soviets. He started talking about that as soon as he landed, and he has never stopped." ^{so} says the British informant.

We are told that Hess talks incessantly when he can get anybody to listen to him. He pesters his guards with the interminable chatter concerning his fixed idea. ^{And} today's news story states: "It is becoming increasingly difficult to make any sense out of what he is talking about."

We are told that the erstwhile Nazi number-two man has never given the British any military information, and has been of little or no use.

HESS

The British informant puts it in these wry words " Before he landed,
SA, we thought it worthwhile to do almost anything in order to get
so important a nazi in our hands. once we got him, we found out
differently. He has been a complete loss." ^{So today's} says the word from
London.

ALEUTIANS-

The navy announces the occupation of another island in the Aleutians, amchitka. This happened last January, and was unopposed. ^{no} Japs on the island. ^{the} point of the matter is, amchitka is only sixty-three miles from the enemy base of Kiska, and this nearness helps to explain the great number of air raids that our war pilots have launched against the ^{Jap} number-one base in the ^{Alutians} Aleutians. With a distance of only sixty-three miles to go, even the ferocious weather of the Aleutians has not prevented them from striking scores of times at Kiska.

Moreover, amchitka is within the theoretical bombing range of Tokyo, seventeen hundred miles away. Theoretical range however, is not effective range-- thirty four hundred miles for the round trip being a long distance for bombing.

* COAL-

In the coal mine truce, time is passing- so what are the chances of a renewal of the strike: The Government does not expect another walk-out- so stated President Roosevelt today, and he added that the Government would not tolerate any new



-C Cal*

- COAL-

stoppage of work in the mines. He explained that the coal miners are now to be regarded as working for the Government, and added that he could not recall a case of federal employees going on strike.

The President was asked about a report of the fact that the war labor board wants to get rid of the little steel formula ~~the~~ for stabilizing wages- that formula, for a wage ceiling which figured so largely in the coal mine dispute. People have been saying that the war labor board, speaking through the medium of economic director Byrnes has informed the president that it would like to get away from the little steel formula. Today the President advised the news^{men} to discount these rumors; pay little attention to them.

The ruml ^{tax} plan won a victory in the senate today, when the senate finance committee put its okay on the general principles of the ruml version of the skip-a-year and pay-as-you-go. The vote was thirteen to six.

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PRICES -

Today the government took action to reduce the cost of living.

Price administrator Prentiss Brown announced late this afternoon that there will be a ten percent reduction of the retail prices of coffee, butter and five kinds of meat-- beef, pork, veal, lamb and mutton. These price cuts are effective on June first. The administration promised to roll back the cost of living, and this action today is a beginning. *And S-L-K-Monday.*

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