

RUSSIA

P.G. - Sunoco. Monday, Dec. 21, 1942.

The extent of the sweeping Soviet advance in southern Russia is indicated by the fact that the Red Army is threatening the City of Millerovo. This place is two hundred miles southwest of Stalingrad, far in the rear of the Nazi forces between the Volga and the Don. The swift advance of the Soviets over the weekend has reached the outskirts of Millerovo, and the Red Army even had hopes of presenting that key <sup>railroad</sup> city to Stalin as a birthday present. The Soviet war leader was sixty-three years old today. <sup>But</sup> It does not appear that Millerovo was captured ~~today~~ for a birthday present. <sup>However</sup> ~~but~~ the fact that the Red Army has got that far is immensely significant.

Berlin admits the break-through. Today the German high command stated that the Russians, after an attack by strong tank formations for several days, succeeded in breaking through the German lines on the

Don River front.

The Germans are counterattacking in desperate attempts to stop the Soviet push - the Russian rush, you might call it, <sup>which now</sup> ~~For this~~ has encircled twenty-two German divisions in the area before Stalingrad.

<sup>A close-up</sup>  
~~An intimate~~ story of the great Soviet <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ published today, an account written by United Press Staff Correspondent Henry Shapiro.

7  
He was permitted to make a tour of the Stalingrad front, and he gives the following reason for its great success:

"The blow took the enemy completely by surprise," <sup>the U.P. man. And he</sup> writes ~~Shapiro, and he~~ adds: "That was admitted to me by a captured Rumanian General, with whom I talked."

<sup>He</sup> ~~Then the U.S. correspondent~~ quotes the Rumanian General as follows: "The Russian offensive was so unexpected and so crushing, ~~he explained,~~ <sup>that</sup> it shattered all the plans of the German-Rumanian high command," <sup>said the General,</sup>

## SERBIA

The Germans are said to be threatening to use poison gas in Serbia. This information comes from the Yugoslav Government in exile in London, which has word that the Nazis have started a new campaign of terror in their attempt to suppress the guerrilla resistance led by General Mikhailōvitch. They are burning villages, making mass arrests and shooting people for helping the guerrilla bands. And they have threatened to employ poison gas against the Serbian population, unless the forces of Mikhailōvitch stop fighting.

## AMERICAN BOMBERS

London tells us of a big air victory scored by American bombers over France. Flying fortresses and Liberators hit a German center seventy miles east of Paris, and got <sup>mixed up in</sup> ~~into~~ a huge <sup>in the sky,</sup> ~~air~~ battle. In this, they are said to have shot down at least forty-six German fighters and damaged thirty more. The figures are not official, but they are considered substantially correct. Six of the <sup>American</sup> bombers were lost.

Today's bulletin states: "Some of the bitterest aerial fighting of the war over Nazi-occupied country, occurred Sunday, when American bombers fought their way deep into France." <sup>We are told how this American armada</sup> ~~The American warplanes swung~~

<sup>swung</sup> within sight of Paris, where most of the airmen saw the Eifel Tower for the first time. Crack German squadrons of Focke-Wulf Hundred and Nineties swarmed to attack them, and the battle was on. <sup>H</sup> "Holding tight to their formations," says London, "the bombers laid

down a murderous fire." And that incessant blaze of

*gunnery*

~~fire~~ from the bomber formations, accounted for the

*It then - and during the battle*  
big bag of Nazi planes. The flying fortresses and

Liberators hit their target hard - an important

German military airdrome.

## FRENCH WARSHIPS

9  
We have some more word about the French fleet at Toulon, information bearing on the question - How thoroughly was it wrecked by its crews? Madrid has what it calls "reliable reports from France", and these <sup>tell us</sup> ~~declare~~ that a commission of experts was assigned by the Germans to investigate the French ships.

These experts have done their job, and find that most of the warships by-far, are beyond any possible use. A few might be salvaged, but even these will take a year of intensive work.

The experts are said to have reported that a majority of the ships sunk by their crews can be raised to the surface within six months, but they all have been damaged inside, damaged so heavily as to be worthless. Several smaller ships, light destroyers, might be raised and made seaworthy. But the experts agreed that it was hardly worthwhile to attempt any salvage

of the heavy and medium ships.

Some of the craft were not sunk, and these included three destroyers and two cruisers. The explanation is that the vessels were not scuttled because they had been dismantled, and the French naval command considered them worthless.

Such is the story that Madrid gives us of the complete <sup>ruin</sup>~~ruin~~ of the French fleet.  
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SPAIN-PORTUGAL

Spain and Portugal have joined forces to maintain their neutrality. This we hear from Lisbon, where the Spanish Foreign Minister is conferring with the Portuguese government. The two nations, that occupy the ancient peninsula of Iberia, have formed what they call an Iberian bloc." ~~The purpose of this is to unite Spain and Portugal in a policy of neutrality.~~

Lisbon tells us that at a banquet given by the Portuguese Foreign Minister to the Spanish Foreign Minister, the former declared: "Our two nations are determined to remain aloof from the conflict. We have created an Iberian bloc." <sup>TK</sup> In addition to the policy of neutrality, Spain and Portugal are joining forces to exert a larger influence on international politics - and to help in the cause of eventual peace.

<sup>TK</sup> The Spanish Foreign Minister states: "Our hopes today are to pacify hates, attenuate enmity and calm passions."

We hope," he adds, "that the Iberian bloc can accomplish its aim of maintaining our peace - and of bringing peace to the world."

## AFRICA

Today we are given a figure for the speed that Rommel's North Afrika Korps is making <sup>— in reverse,</sup> London states that the defeated outfit is averaging fifteen miles a day; which is rapid retreating. Rommel has now reached the vicinity of Sirte, ~~which is~~ a hundred and seventy-five miles <sup>t</sup> passed El Agheila - the place where <sup>he</sup> ~~they~~ tried <sup>his</sup> ~~their~~ last temporary stand. The British are completely convinced now that Rommel won't stop until he gets to Tunisia. His plan is to abandon Libya and join forces with the Nazi-Tunisian army, which is resisting the Americans and British.

London tells us that Rommel has made an urgent appeal to Hitler for reinforcements, and so has Colonel-General Nehring, the Axis Commander in Tunisia. They demand new contingents of men and machines to be sent across to maintain a last Nazi toehold on the continent of Afrika - the tip of Tunisia. <sup>IP</sup> And it seems

as if a major attempt might be made to get reinforcements across ~~the~~ Mediterranean waters - this according to reports from Madrid. We hear that an Axis convoy of a hundred and fifty ships is massed and ready for an attempt to make the run to Tunisia. The convoy is likely to get a hot reception from Allied ships and planes.

In Tunisia ~~it~~ itself, not much activity is reported. Today's Army bulletin tells merely of one enemy <sup>ground</sup> raid. An Axis detachment made a local attack, which was repelled. (It is assumed that bad weather is hampering military <sup>ground</sup> operations - perhaps air operations also. Today's Army bulletin has only this bit of sky fighting to report: "In the course of routine patrols over Tunisia yesterday," it says, "our fighters destroyed one enemy bomber and one enemy fighter, without loss.")

BURMA

In Burma, British General Wavell continues his advance into the ~~Japanese-occupied province~~ <sup>country</sup>. The British, pushing down <sup>along</sup> the Bay of Bengal, are now within sixty miles of the important port of Akyab. The Japs are offering no resistance apparently. Why not? We don't know. Neither do we know whether Wavell's thrust is merely a local operation or the beginning of a major attempt to recapture Burma.

3  
The British are being supported by American air forces based on China, General Claire Chenault's big bombers struck heavily at the ace Jap air base at Lashio, <sup>put it</sup> and ~~they put the airdrome~~ out of commission. The ~~amount of damage done is related~~ ~~vividly~~ vividly by Captain John Ruse of LaGrange, Illinois. He led a bomber formation that attacked the ~~warehouse area~~ <sup>Lashio</sup> of the air base. "We could see two big fires," says he, "and the remainder of that area of the city was

## RICKENBACKER

Today one of Eddie Rickenbacker's companions in that adventure and ordeal on the Pacific, told about the attitude of the others toward Rick. Lieutenant James G. Whitaker says: "When we started out, we thought he was just another man who had influence enough to get a ride."

When the plane was forced down at sea, <sup>and</sup> they went drifting for three weeks in a boat, ~~and~~ their attitude changed. "Captain Rickenbacker took the leadership and pull <sup>ed</sup> us through," says Lieutenant Whitaker.

Not only did America's ace in the First World War display the moral qualities that made him a leader, but he also showed the greatest amount of physical stamina. Lieutenant Whitaker says that when they were finally picked up, none of the others could have lasted more than forty-eight hours - while Rickenbacker

could have <sup>stuck it</sup> ~~stayed~~ out for another week.

Today people were talking about the extraordinary story that Rick told on Saturday at a War Department press conference and <sup>yesterday in part</sup> ~~later~~ on the radio.

One ~~xxxxxx~~ particular thing ~~that he told~~ is provoking a lot of discussion; how the castaways prayed for food, <sup>And how Rick</sup> held a prayer meeting. ~~Rick now~~ goes on to tell:

"Within an hour after the prayer meeting," says he,

"A seagull came in and landed on my head, and you can imagine my nervousness in trying to turn around and get him, which I did."

So they had seagull to eat, <sup>and for bait to catch fish</sup> ~~and the episode~~

<sup>Another episode</sup> ~~is one~~ to add to the anthology of stories <sup>of</sup> ~~is~~ response

to prayer.

for food.

## FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS

Probably the largest number of American war correspondents ever to be together at one time will foregather Wednesday evening of this week. They are going to see the American premiere of a motion picture called "In Which We Serve." ~~Although~~ Some of the correspondents, Quentin Reynolds and others, have already <sup>seen</sup> ~~had~~ a preview ~~of this film~~ which tells the life story of a destroyer in this war. -- ~~The~~ picture was conceived, the story written and produced, by one man. And, he plays the leading role. His name is Noel Coward. And the role he plays is supposed to be taken directly from the life of young Lord Louis Mountbatten.

At any rate, at the American premiere this Wednesday night at the Capitol Theatre in New York, the entire proceeds will go to a fund for American war correspondents. In proportion to their number, more war correspondents have been killed in this global war than men in any other line of activity. There are no exact figures on this. But ten American correspondents

have been killed since Nineteen thirty-nine; twenty-one wounded; two are missing and unaccounted for; and fifteen have been captured, not including the large number who were taken prisoner and put in internment camps and prisons in Germany, Italy and Japan until they were exchanged and sent home.

OIL

The oil rationing is going to stay ~~pretty much~~ as it is. - ~~no relaxation.~~ This was stated today by Economics Stabilization Director Byrnes. "There is no hope for any lessening of the restrictions upon the use of gasoline and fuel oil," said he. He added that any change would consist of an improvement of rationing methods.

This statement ~~by Stabilization Director Byrnes~~ followed the lifting of the ban on sales of gasoline to private automobile drivers in seventeen eastern states and the District of Columbia. You get <sup>now</sup> gas on <sup>your</sup> A, B and C coupons, ~~again,~~ but not as much as before on <sup>the</sup> B and Cs. The value of these ~~coupons~~ is reduced from four to three gallons. A coupons stay at three gallons. And T coupons, used only by commercial vehicles, retain their former value of five gallons.

~~Oil Coordinator Ickes today issued an order~~

## DIVORCE

The Supreme Court today upheld the legality of Reno divorces. This came about in a decision handed down by the high Justices in a North Carolina case.

~~A North Carolina~~<sup>g</sup> man and woman went out to the metropolis ~~of divorce,~~<sup>Each</sup> ~~and each~~<sup>of whom</sup> had a spouse back in North Carolina. They got Reno divorces, and proceeded to marry each other in Nevada. Then they went back to North Carolina, where they were presently charged with bigamy, tried, and convicted.

They appealed to the state Supreme Court, which upheld the conviction. They carried the case on up to the Supreme Court of the United States, and today the highest tribunal gave its verdict. The conviction is set aside, the Justices voting six to two to reverse the conviction for bigamy. <sup>And</sup> this amounts to a Supreme Court verdict upholding Reno divorces.

Legal opinion around Washington is that today's

decision is of far reaching importance, and that the courts of any state, no matter what the divorce laws of that state may be, hereafter will have to uphold the validity of divorces granted in Nevada or in any other state.

## HOLLYWOOD

Hollywood stars are temperamental, as we all know. But you'd think that even screen celebrities would be a little more consistent than is revealed today.

Each year the members of the Hollywood Women's Press Club take a vote to pick the most cooperative actor and actress of the year -- the most popular. Their vote, as announced today, picks Rosalind Russell as the most cooperative actress.

Nothing so surprising about that, but a paradox is discovered when we learn what actress was voted to be the most non-cooperative. The prize for unpopularity goes to Ginger Rogers. Why is that astonishing? Because last year it was the other way around. Ginger was then voted to be the most cooperative, the most popular.

A similar upside down reversal of things is to be discovered in the vote for the most cooperative actor. Cary Grant is named. He is acclaimed as the

5/2  
most popular this year. He has changed a lot since last. Because a year ago Cary Grant was at the foot of the class, was handed the boobey prize for non-cooperative unpopularity.

So apparently the stars change a lot in Hollywood. One year <sup>they</sup> a scowl and growl, <sup>and</sup> the next year they are all smiles and gentle friendliness. Which now calls, not for scowls and ~~no~~ growls, but for smiles and gentle friendliness, from Hugh James.

9