

L.I. - Standard. Thursday, Nov. 25, 1943.

Fellow Bougainville

Good Eve. Everybody :-

The latest from Allied headquarters in the Southwest Pacific tells of savage land fighting on Bougainville. It began when the Marines and Army troops seized a position in No Man's Land - - near Empress Augusta Bay.

The Japs promptly hit back, beginning with an air assault - - ~~but the bombing was ineffective,~~ ^{that} didn't do much damage. Then the enemy opened up with artillery, ~~hammering at the Americans in their no-man-position.~~ BUT Our side replied with heavier guns and the word ^{is that the} Japs didn't do so well in the artillery duel.

Whereupon, this afternoon, they launched an infantry charge - - ~~the enemy surging forward with automatic weapons, trying to overwhelm the Americans.~~ But the Marines and soldiers met the attack with devastating fire, repelled it, and pushed their own positions forward.

Today Allied bombers were chasing two Jap destroyers ^{that} which escaped from the enemy defeat north of Bougainville. The bombers were sent out to finish off a destroyer that had been smashed up in the fight, and was still above water, a derelict, and we hear that the war planes then went after the two remaining warships, ^{that} which were in full flight.

The American victory in the clash of light sea forces was pictured today as an affair of especial brilliance. The American squadron was led by Captain Arleigh Burke, of Washington, DC. His force was numerically inferior, but he went after the Japs as if he were backed by the whole American Fleet. ^R Six enemy destroyers were nosing around west of Bougainville, possibly trying to evacuate the personnel from that island, or may be trying to land supplies ^{for} to the Japanese garrison. Captain Burke led his ships charging against the Japs, and there was a running fight. Running is right, ^{for} - - it was a long chase. The small American force went right up into the waters off Rabaul, which is supposed to be Japanese controlled one hundred percent. And in that kind of thrilling adventurous action they sank four of the six Japanese destroyers.

Flier

The news today tells of the valor of a flying man who risked everything, rather than disorganize a vital air war maneuver. Major General Ralph Cheli, of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, who is listed as - - "missing in action." Today in Washington, the announcement was made that Major Cheli has been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest decoration that this nation can grant. How well the medal was deserved is indicated eloquently by the story.

It happened in the southwest pacific, the New Guinea Theatre of War. Major Cheli was on his fortieth combat mission. Thirty nine times previously he had sallied forth against the Japs, and had been decorated twice - - a veteran who knew what it was all about. The Major was leading a formation of army bombers, and the target was a Japanese base near Wewak, in New Guinea. The planes, upon reaching the objective, went into a dive - - still maintaining their formation, tight and disciplined, for the attack. Twenty five or thirty Jap Zeros assailed the diving planes, and they concentrated their fire on Major Cheli. His plane burst into flames, and was doomed. In the steep formation dive, it was like a rocket trailing

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fire and smoke. What did the Major do. His citation for the Congressional Medal of Honor tells the tale:

"His speed," says the citation, "would have enabled him to gain necessary altitude to parachute to safety, but this action would have resulted in his formation becoming disorganized and exposed to the enemy." *The citation says: -* (Although a crash was inevitable, ~~the citation goes on to say~~ he courageously elected to continue leading the attack in his blazing plane. From a minimum altitude the squadron made a devastating bombing attack on the target."

So rather than disorganize his formation by pulling up and bailing out, he chose to lead it in a successful attack. *Then* he crashed into the sea, and today is listed as missing.

Gilberts

A vivid flash of action out there in the Gilberts was revealed today - - this in a terse bulletin from Admiral Nimitz. The admiral states that one United States carrier alone shot down thirty-four Japanese fighter planes, nine bombers, and three huge patrol seaplanes. The American carrier, itself, lost only three fighters and one torpedo bomber.

Behind these bald figures you can vision a tremendously dramatic scene. The carrier - - one of the warships that launched the invasion and conquest of islands in the Gilberts, and obviously the mark for a massive Japanese air attack. It's an axiom of the war out there - - go after the carriers. So the Japs came swarming to get that flattop, which sent its own planes to meet the attack. You can imagine the swirl of dogfights in the sky, with the carrier's anti-aircraft fire blazing away at the Japs that managed to get near. And Jap planes were shot down all over the place.

~~The announcement of the most prominent American casualty in the invasion of the Gilberts points to an old bit of American military tradition. In the landing, Colonel James Gardner Conroy was killed, while leading his regiment. And that regiment was New York's famous old Sixty-Ninth - - Irish.~~

Russia

A new Soviet offensive has been launched, this one in

White Russia, seventy miles north of Gmel. And impressive progress has been made judging from Russian figures - - which tell of an advance of from eleven to twenty-seven miles on a thirty-seven mile front, with the capture of a hundred and eighty towns and villages.

Further south, the Germans are still pressing their menacing counter-attack in the direction of Kiev, but Moscow tells us that the Nazi thrust has been checked. The Hitler generals continue to pour tanks and troops into the salient, but the Russian version is that Soviet artillery has taken command of the battlefield. Field guns, heavy mortars and anti-air craft rifles are smashing up the German tanks in such fashion that the counter-offensive has bogged down.

The Nazis have been hammering for eleven days, and today for the first time the Moscow communique tells of a forward move by the Russians in the sector before Kiev. At a critical point, the Red Army has, in the words of Moscow, "improved its position."

The German command sent in more than a hundred tanks and four regiments, twelve thousand men, thrusting with this heavy force in a narrow sector. But they ran into Soviet guns of every sort, posted

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in depth and along the flanks. These opened a tremendous barrage,
smashing the leading tanks, whereupon the ~~attacking force was~~ *Germanes were* stopped,
and pushed back, ~~the Russians "improving their positions."~~

Air War

Today the American Air force, based on England, made its first use of fighter planes carrying bombs. These tactics have been employed elsewhere - - utilizing the nimble speed of the fighters for planting bombs at vital points. Today ~~with~~ ^{they} ~~hundreds of~~ the sky went winging across the Channel, each carrying a bomb ~~high explosive~~ ^{to be dropped} ~~which was hurled~~ on Nazi targets in Northern France.

This daylight operation followed last night's raid on Berlin - - the ~~smashed~~ ^{up} Nazi capital taking still another bombing attack, the third in three nights. The two previous ones were giant affairs launched by fleets of high flying heavy bombers. Last night the mosquitoes were at it, ~~low-flying medium bombers~~. They skinned ^{ing} over still burning and smoking Berlin and ~~added some~~ ^{ing} more devastation to the already terrifying picture of havoc. ~~Only one mosquito was lost.~~

Nazi commentators, reacting to the blasting of Berlin, are ~~again~~ talking about ^{that} a new secret weapon. There is no phrase a nazi likes better than that mysterious expression - - "secret weapon." However, none has been in evidence as yet, although there is a cryptic bit of news from London. The British capital had an ~~air~~ raid alarm last night,

though no hostile planes showed up and no anti-aircraft fire was heard. However, ~~something peculiar was witnessed, with today's London dispatch stating,~~ A vivid flash of flames was seen in the sky."

~~What that was we don't know, but~~ ^{And} Londoners today ^{were} recalled ^{ing} rumors that the Germans on the Channel coast have been setting up ~~big rocket guns,~~ batteries from which rocket projectiles can be launched and sent whizzing for long distances. ~~The vision suggested~~ ~~is one of rocket barrages streaming through the air and hitting~~ ~~deep in England.~~ All of which leads to some vague surmise that last night's flash in the London sky may have been ~~a rocket from the~~ ^{a long range} ^{from a rocket} ~~gun~~ ^{gun.} ~~across the Channel.~~

On the other side of Europe, the southern side, American flying fortresses hit Toulon, the great french naval base where the french fleet was scuttled to keep it from falling into the hands of the Nazis. Toulon is now an important U-boat base, from which undersea prowlers threaten allied shipping in the Mediterranean. The fortresses turned Toulon into a massive billowing of black smoke, and reconnaissance photographs taken shortly afterward show that three SM ~~ex~~ submarines were hit squarely, also a cargo vessel in a drydock.

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And the U-boat pens were blasted. Most of the smoke that billowed over Toulon was from burning stores of oil.

~~Another air blow launched in the Mediterranean area was eastward, all the way to Bulgaria -- where the capital city of Sofia was raided by Liberator bombers. A rain of ^{bombs} devastated military targets in the metropolis of the satellite country, and today the puppet Bulgarian government wailed in loud complaint.~~

The Liberators were escorted by long distance fighters and sharp air battles developed - - with four enemy planes shot down. In all the Mediterranean air activity about which we hear today, only three of our heavy bombers are missing, and in the case of one - - all hands aboard came safely to earth; The big bomber was badly hit, and was on its way to destruction - - when ten parachutes were seen to billow open below the crippled plane. The number of the crew was ten, all bailing out safely.

Italy

~~There was~~ Action in Italy once again today - - after days of uneventful stagnation. ~~It happened~~ On the eastern side, the Adriatic side, ~~the Eighth Army side.~~ General Montgomery's troops smashed their way across the Sangro River and established a wide bridgehead on the opposite bank of that stream. ~~(The British crossed the Sangro on a five mile front and the latest word pictures them as having pushed forward for a mile and a half beyond the stream.)~~

The Sangro is the last water barrier to be faced until the harbor of Pescara is reached, ~~(accent on the first syllable). That city is the next goal for the Eighth Army - - and an important goal, Pescara is an exceedingly useful port, and moreover it is a terminus, of a Number One Cross-Peninsula Highway, - - a lateral road leading to~~

^{TR} If the British progress today is decisive locally, the next thing we may expect to hear is ^A a fighting march toward that harbor, ~~of Pescara,~~ which would roll up the whole german Winter Line, and put Allied troops on that lateral road to Rome.

~~However, the weather still continues bad in Italy, with heavy rainfall to impede the operation of the tactical air force - - that branch of air power which cooperates with the ground troops.~~

Follow Italy

On one sector along the front, American soldiers appeared on a river bank, and hurled large objects across the stream. And that was a matter ~~not~~ ^{TP} of war, but of Thanksgiving. Because of the rains that have bedeviled the campaign for weeks, the river was a surging flood, and had washed out its bridges. And Thanksgiving Day detachments were unable to get across to deliver the feast day turkey to patrols far forward. They had to toss the turkeys across the stream, with the soldiers on the other side doing some expert catching.

At other points, Thanksgiving Day deliveries were made by night patrols, which had to steal warily through the perils of No Man's Land to forward posts in close proximity to the enemy.

~~For the most part, however, the ceremonies of the day were not so adventurous -- just a military version of the turkey dinner traditional of the feast of gratitude. General Mark Clark, himself, supervised the arrangements whereby every american soldier in Italy was guaranteed turkey for Thanksgiving.~~

Post war

The cost of waging the war would seem to be quite enough by way of expense, but we also have - the cost of stopping the war. In other words, the expense of stopping the expense.

In Washington they're trying to figure that ^{one} out, while various measures are being considered for avoiding an economic crash when the enormous production of armament is stopped suddenly. Most of these measures will cost money - - and lots of it. The ideas range from the provision of loans to plants and factories, all the way to the donation of a jeep to every soldier. *Every soldier - and civilian - wants a jeep.*

~~One point of difficulty lies in the wording of the contracts for war production - - the documents. Senator Murray of Montana declares that many of these contracts are what he calls "masterpieces of confusion." And he adds that the documents are often full of "unreadable fine print" and "unintelligible verbosity." Well, there might be something good in that after all - - if they'd publish the unintelligible verbosity in unreadable fine print.~~

Armistice

Cleveland was a bit ahead of time today, quite a bit. Some people ^{there} ~~out there~~ were all set to celebrate the armistice - - the next one. On a railroad line in the city something went wrong with a locomotive whistle. It started to blow and the trainmen couldn't make it stop. Far and wide echoed the loud whistle, minute after minute, and thousands of people jumped to a wrong conclusion. Newspapers, radio stations and the police were swamped with eager inquiries: "Is the war over?".

SECRET

In the war of the air, ^{as we know,} the flying men have to contend with the Gremlins. In the amphibious operations along the northern coast of New Guinea the men of the boats are plagued by -- ^{Equatorial} the Gnomes. That's what the Australians call the pestilent creatures which flit about making trouble for the mosquito fleet operating against the Japs. In fact, the ^(of Pacific) Gnomes are ^{actually the nautical cousins} ~~nothing more than a naval counterpart~~ of the aerial Gremlins.

In appearance they are as peculiar as the Gremlins. A Gnome is described as being a few inches tall, with what the news dispatch calls, "a horse-shaped head which is always cocked to one side." A Gnome has only one eye, but can see well enough to make a lot of mischief.

One favorite trick of the Gnomes is to raise the lids of cans of food and let the cockroaches in. The Gnomes and the cockroaches, in fact, seem to be natural allies. The Gnomes like to stir up sediment in the fuel tanks ^{too,} and thereby handicap the motors. And one of their favorite pranks is to extinguish the compass lights to make steering harder -- especially when there are Japs around.

The Australian boatmen, however, are a hopeful outfit, and each boat crew has a great ambition. The idea is to catch a Gnome,

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and train him - - make him a useful member of the crew. And aboard some boats they claim to have done this; ^{they} claim to have a good Gnome for a pet. However, there is a catch to that, because a Gnome, no matter how well tamed, is likely to go native and relapse into his evil ways. And the most disconcerting thing of all is when your pet Gnome goes wrong and let's the cockroaches into the food.

Well I hope none of you were troubled either by gremlins or gnomes on this Thanksgiving Day.
And now ~~George~~ who ~~is usual~~ will "talk turkey" to you. And by the way Geo. will say s-l-u-t-for me.