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December 16, 1943.

Now for some of the bad news of
~~the day~~. just revealed today.

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

The enemy certainly caught us off base
on December second,
in the Mediterranean ~~today~~. That Nazi raid on Bari was
a complete success, from their point of view, and there
is no denying the fact that it was a real disaster to us.
In fact, it was the worst blow to the Allies since Pearl
Harbor. The destruction tonight stands at seventeen
Allied ships with one thousand casualties. The ships,
however, were mostly merchantmen. The huns claim to
have inflicted heavy damage on a medium sized warship.
But there is no confirmation of that from our side.

The most serious part of the disaster,
of course, was that one thousand casualty list. Among
the killed or injured were thirty-seven ^{men} of Uncle Sam's
Navy.

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The loss would have been worse yet if those ships had not been already unloaded. As it was, the raid had the effect of cutting Montgomery's army down on supplies for several days.

There is a report that the Germans used radio guide rockets or glider bombs. That was offered as an explanation for the failure of Allied flak to do any damage to the raiders. It is a fact that the Germans have been using those rockets and glider bombs. I saw one of them hit our cruiser "Savannah" in Salerno, in September. The best haul they got was when they hit a couple of ammunition ships. Naturally these blew up with a huge commotion, spreading fire and destruction all over the harbor.

Obviously, the disaster did not permanently weaken the zest or hamper the attacking power of the

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British ^{Eighth}~~Eighth~~ Army. For in the last twenty-four hours they have been going ahead again. They've cut an important road in three places; the road that feeds the German armies on the Adriatic front. The soldiers from Canada, India and New Zealand ~~XXXX~~ pushed across the road from Ortona to Orsona. And that is the German lifeline on that front. This forced the boche to retire ten miles northwest to new positions along the Pescara River.

General Clark's Fifth Army has ^{had} somewhat better weather for its fighting, but did not go far. They fought several ~~xxx~~ sharp battles with the Nazis near the west coast and they captured one of the key peaks of the ~~xxx~~ Apennines in central Italy.

One U.P. report has the Americans using tanks in that mountain fighting.

AERIAL FOLLOW LEAD

Further north our fliers have sewn up the Brenner Pass again. It was a sortie of heavy bombers, Flying Fortresses and Liberators. The big forts flew over the Alps for the first time, and blasted the northern terminal of the Pass the railroad yards at Innsbruck in Austria. That seals the Pass up at both ends, but only for the time being, of course. One division of the sortie took the railroad yards at Balzano in Italy for their share of the sport. They turned those yards into ~~an~~ a pile of burning wreckage. Meanwhile, a number of Liberators visited the great bridge across the Avisio River, thirty miles south of Bolzano. It was a bridge of thirty-six spans, and after the Liberators had finished, it had seriously lost its usefulness as a bridge. The net result of these operations is that the Germans will be without their principal direct line of communication into Italy for quite a while.

RAID - FOLLOW AERIAL

This afternoon we were told that the United States Eighth Air Force had taken another crack at northwestern Germany. Eighth Air Force headquarters did not at first tell us the name of the town that was bombed, only that the raiding unit was a heavy force of flying forts and Liberators. Tonight it appears ~~that it~~ ^{there} was another attack on Berlin. A devastating attack apparently. People watching on the East coast of England reported they saw a huge force of planes flying over the North Sea for almost an hour. That means a Big League affair.

The big bombers were escorted all the way there and back by P-47 Thunderbolts and P-~~4~~³8 Lightning fighters. The Luftwaffe sent up some ~~fix~~ fifty Nazi Interceptor planes, but ~~the~~ our Thunderbolts and Lightnings soon put them to flight.

The flying forts and big Liberators flew

flew over Berlin for a whole hour, dropping their big blockbuster bombs in wave after wave.

The American sortie had hardly returned when the Royal Air Force took up the job again, their first raid in two weeks. They devastated Hitler's capital ~~xxx~~ so badly that even the Nazi news agency admitted that it was another attack of considerable dimensions.

CHURCHILL

In the British Isles and throughout the British Empire the topic that interested everybody was not the disaster at Bari, nor the raid on Berlin, nor even the invasion of New Britain. What every Briton wants to know tonight is -- "How is Winnie?" Yes, the British all over the world are huddling around their radios and forming lines on the streets around newsstands, waiting for the latest bulletin about the health of the great War Prime Minister.

The news might be worse, but it is not too cheery. Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee told the House of Commons that Churchill's condition is as satisfactory as can be expected. Vague, but not too good.

We have to remember that the Prime Minister suffered an attack of pneumonia last winter, and this second one comes pretty close on top of it. But those

of us who know the British Prime Minister know
what a fighter he is and we have every confidence
that he will win out.

ROOSEVELT

President Roosevelt today is back, safe and sound, somewhere in the United States. His historic journey into the heart of Asia kept him away longer than on any previous trip. He was gone five weeks altogether. Secretary Steve Early released the news after the Germans had broadcast a report that the plane carrying Mr. Roosevelt had made a forced landing in the Azores on its way to the Middle East. So naturally, the correspondents asked Steve was it so. Early replied that he knew nothing about that, but he added: "I am happy to ~~ix~~ say that the Chief is back in the United States." He did not know how soon he would return to the White House. The President comes home to tackle a hefty lot of mobs on the home front. But hefty jobs have never feazed him yet.

TRAIN WRECK

As though the news from Abroad was not bad enough tonight we have more complete details of the ~~most~~ worst disaster of the year on the home front. The number of people killed in that train wreck near ~~the~~ Rennert, North Carolina, is now estimated as no fewer than ~~seventy~~^{sixty} five. And besides that ~~nearly~~^{more than} one hundred ~~and fifty~~ are injured. To make it worse, the accident happened in freezing weather.

What happened was that the crack Atlantic Coastline train, the West Coast Champion, southbound, was derailed on the way to St. Petersburg and Tampa. Almost immediately up came the northbound Champion and smashed into three of the derailed coaches of the other train. It all happened ~~with such suddenness~~^{so with such} ~~and speed~~^{lightning speed} that it ~~had been~~^{was} impossible for the trainmen to ~~signal~~^{flag} the onrushing northbound express/in time.

The wreckage was terrific. The locomotive and eight of the sixteen cars of the northbound train were derailed and fragments were strewn around for yards.

Every succeeding bulletin has raised the number of dead. By noon the Red Cross workers and other helpers had removed more than fifty bodies from the wreckage. That was eleven hours after the wreck occurred. But, as we have heard, they were not all. Some passengers were pinned in the wreckage alive.

The rescue crews operated under the greatest difficulties. Not only was it almost zero weather, but there were four inches of snow on the ground. The ambulances taking the injured to the hospital had to drive over roads coated with ice. Hundreds of people are stranded in towns nearby because the roads are so icy that few buses are able to run.

A physician who helped to treat the injured said the ~~xx~~ wreck was the worst thing he had ever seen. People were mangled and crushed, he said, ~~and~~ their bodies broken and slashed in the wreckage. He added he was sure some of them died of cold and ~~expise~~
~~xxxxpizntexheferex~~

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exposure before medical help could reach them.

NEW BRITAIN

(Following through out 1) Sun Oil Co. Dec. 18/43)

In The Southwestern Pacific the Allied Air Force has struck the greatest air blow at the Japs that they have endured in that sector. The record previously was held by the American squadrons that hit the great base at Rabaul. That was in October, ^{When} ~~and~~ three hundred and fifty tons of Bombs were dropped. The new record, announced today, was made with three hundred and fifty-six tons of bombs--which ^{hit} ~~is~~ the Japs in the Arawe ^{area} ~~area of New Britain Island~~ ^{of} New Britain Island.

That Number One base, Rabaul, is the the northern tip of the island, and today's biggest raid was one of the series working up from the southern part of New Britain.

These have ~~been~~ blasted the Japs progressively northward and are undoubtedly designed to soften up the New Britain Defenses in preparation for a drive to capture Rabaul.

MARSHALLS

And the Japs here hit in Mid-Pacific again--
the Marshall Islands. The latest tonight is a
bulletin that heavy army bombers smashed the Jap
airdrome in the Marshalls. The bombers were attacked
by enemy fighters and shot down or damaged from
ten to fifteen of these.