

SALERNO

L.T. Sunoco - Sept. 15, 1943 Wed.

The state of affairs in the Battle of Salerno is clearer tonight. We have a fairly precise picture of the American Fifth Army holding firm on the beaches - against one German assault after another, an interminable series of Panzer drives launched from the advantage of higher ground. The assailants are supported by the fire of batteries, cannon and mortars, stationed on the summits of the hills - again the advantage of that higher ground.

But the ~~xxxx~~ stubbornly ^{defending} ~~defending~~ Americans on the beaches also ~~xxx~~ have their own support - thundering naval guns of warships which hurl salvo upon salvo against the shore positions of the enemy. And a superb mass of air power - planes of every category, from wasp-like fighters to monster Fortresses.

These bomb the assaulting enemy, raking them with tons of high explosive. They fly low, skimming just above our own troops, and hurl their bombs at the Nazis just beyond. We are told that even the Flying Fortresses are roaring close to the ground in low level bombing. Altogether, two thousand sorties, two thousand individual battle flights, were made during the day, - for the greatest air support that ground troops have ever had.

From this it may be surmised that allied short range

fighter planes now have the advantage of airfields seized by the British, in their swift advance from the south. The British on both the East and West coast of Italy are moving swiftly, and on the west side General Montgomery's Eighth Army promises to approach the Salerno battle area ~~within~~ within a couple of days. The air fields they are taking are much ~~more~~ nearer to Salerno than those in Sicily, and flying bases for our fighters will come closer and closer as the British push on.

The Nazis have reduced their extravagant claims of yesterday, their ~~boasts~~ boasts that Americans and British at Salerno were in retreat to their ships - evacuating - another Dunkirk. Today Berlin admitted that the allied resistance had stiffened; - "surprisingly", Says Berlin. The Germans claim to have encircled a couple of units, but have abruptly stopped their talk about another Dunkirk. They admit that our forces are ~~still~~ standing firm, and seem to give a hint that their own heavy drive has just about spent its strength.

The enemy radio stresses the arrival of reinforcements, and emphasizes the ~~bravado~~ broadsides hurled by the guns of allied

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warships. In fact, the German version coincides generally with our own, picturing successful ~~xxxx~~ resistance on the beaches with the support of a naval bombardment and a swarm of hard-hitting planes.

The set-back we had ~~ix~~ is classified by an American military communique which states that we have evacuated a couple of villages. These, when looked up on the map, are seen to be ten miles inland from the Salerno beachhead. So it is clear that in the first rush of the landing, the allied troops made an advance of ten miles. Their most advanced points were those two villages, and there they were in a position that could not be held - not against the flanking fire of German guns on the hills and the assaults of the ~~xxxxxxx~~ Panzers. So there was retirement.

Last night we lost a little more ground, with the Nazis putting everything they had into a battle in the darkness. They prefer night fighting, because the darkness shields them from the planes - the battering from the air. Which is endless in the daylight. There is a weird melee of night fighting, under clear Italian skies. Save at one or two unimportant places,

the enemy was held back. Today found the allied position ~~more~~ appreciably better, but we are warned that it is still serious. During the day we recaptured some ground, and there is every expectation that the tide is about to turn.

~~It is being noted far and wide that the Salerno battle reminds one of Tunisia - the time when American forces ~~in~~ suffered a serious reverse at Kasserine Pass, only to retrieve the situation and turn the whole thing into an overwhelming victory. Then the turn of the tide was accomplished by air power - and the promise is that it will be the same thing all over again for Salerno.~~

The Allies have captured Capri - that isle sacred to tourists. Capri, just outside the Bay of Naples, has been a famed beauty spot for ~~centuries~~ centuries, and is a strategic point dominating the Bay of Naples. Allied forces took over without any trouble. Capri was garrisoned by Italians, and these now have been entrusted ^{with} ~~to~~ its defense - under allied command.

MUSSOLINI

Today the bedeviled Italian people heard something with a familiar sound - a proclamation by Mussolini. It was read over the radio - though not by the ex-Duce himself. There was no sound of that voice which the Italians know so well, and which now they remember with disgust and disillusion. Why wasn't the Mussolini message spoken by Mussolini himself? We don't know. The radio rendition of the Duce proclamation, without the Duce, leaves us with still no positive certainty that he was rescued by the Germans - alive.

Today's pronunciamento asserts the reestablishment of the Fascist state - though with a difference. This time it's called - A Fascist Republic. Meaning - the end of the monarchy, no more King, by implication, the king is dethroned.

The proclamation calls for the removal of all officials appointed by the Badoglio government - and the reinstatement of all ~~the~~ former Fascist functionaries. In other words, the ousted Fascist party, backed by German military power, is to take over the administration.

And the proclamation, purportedly signed by Mussolini,

calls also for the punishment ~~of~~ of what it calls - traitors. That is, those who played a part in kicking out the Fascist regime. Maybe it also means those who welcomed and cheered the fall of Mussolini. And that would include the majority of the Italian people ~~except~~ apparently.

The talk about punishing the traitors suggests that the black shirt stooges of the ~~Nazis~~ Nazis are bent on a course of vengeance - and vendetta is an ominous word in Italian history, in any case, a virtual state of civil war ^{is} is declared - civil war between German-backed Fascists and the government of King Victor Emanuel ^{and} Badoglio. And this might turn into civil strife of the bitterest kind - if the Fascist puppets really assert themselves and try to seize their former dominance in the Italian communities now under the German heel.

~~An apt comment on all of this was made by some Italian prisoners who arrived in North Africa today. "The prisoners", states the United Press dispatch, "say they hope Mussolini's future collaboration with the Germans will end with the Duce bringing the same end to Germany which he has brought to the Italian nation".~~

NEWSPAPERMAN

Here's a headline ^{about a} war-exploit performed, not by a soldier but by a newspaperman - a reporter out to get a story.

He is Aldo Forte, a United Press foreign correspondent stationed

in Switzerland. ^{U. P. Reporter Forte} wanted to find out at first hand how the

Italians feel toward the Allies and the Germans - so he made a trip down into Italy, risking the chance of being captured by the Germans, as they seized control. This, I believe, is the first instance of an American newspaperman getting into Italy since America got into the war.

Aldo Forte tells how he made up as a mountain climber, and had a guide conduct him across the Italian border at a remote place. Thereupon he and the guide started on an extensive tour of the Italian province of Lombardy, making their way to the town of Como - on that famous scenic lake. He talked to people far and wide, and everywhere found a burning hatred for the Germans. They told him that the German patrols are rounding up men between eighteen and fifty and shipping them away in sealed cars to unknown destinations. "Como", writes the newspaperman, "was flaming with the war spirit. I saw women and children helping their menfolk dig

trenches in various sections of the city".

Typical was the attitude of a couple of men to whom he talked. "They asked me when the allies were coming", he writes, "and said that the Italians were eager to fight the Germans".

The outstanding success announced by the Russians today is the capture of a ~~xxx~~ railroad center called Mezhin. That place is only ~~in~~ seventy-two miles northeast of Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine and the number one Soviet objective on the southern front. ~~With~~ With the seizure of Mezhin, the Red Army gains control of the last north and south railroad line east of the Dnieper River. Moscow says that there is little doubt that the Soviet forces will be hammering at the gates of Kiev before the autumn rains begin and turn the Ukrainian steppes into mud.

All along the southern and central line the Russians are pushing forward as the Germans continue a general withdrawal and London wonders whether they will stop to hold ^{a line along} ~~at least~~ the Dnieper. This is believed generally to be their plan, but some British observers think the Nazis may retire as far as the border of Poland.

FATHERS

The Army comes out flatly against the idea of keeping pre-Pearl Harbor fathers out of the draft. Today General McNarney, Army Deputy Chief of Staff, and Under Secretary of War Robert Patterson, stated that the pre-war fathers must be inducted into the Army if the military plans of the Allies are to be carried out. These call for an American Army of seven million, seven hundred thousand men this year.

SOLDIER WORKERS

In Washington today, inquiry was made concerning a charge that soldiers who volunteered for work in New Jersey canneries had union dues deducted from their pay. This is alleged by President Herbert Voorhees of the New Jersey Farm Bureau.

He refers back to a labor shortage that threatened to spoil a huge quantity of New Jersey fruit and vegetables, which was scheduled to be canned. There were not enough workers for the canning job, and an appeal was made to the Army. Soldiers volunteered for the job, and did emergency work in saving the crop and getting it into cans. For this they were paid regular wages, and now the story is that regular union dues were deducted from their pay. That is - the ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ check-off, according to which an employer deducts a certain percentage of wages for dues and turns it over to the union.

~~Today officials of the War Man Power Commission stated that they had no information about this. They explained that arrangements for sending the soldiers to the New Jersey canneries had been handled locally through the camp commanders.~~

~~One W.M.C. official declared: "If the complaint is true, it will have a very damaging effect on any move to obtain volunteers from among the soldiers in the future."~~

ADD SOLDIER WORKERS

Here is the latest -- union officials admit that union dues were taken out of the soldier's pay in the canneries. Twenty-five cents a week was deducted. A union official explains that the soldier workers were subject to the conditions and contracts that existed at the plants. They came under the heading of seasonal workers. He adds that the soldiers were consulted before they started work and agreed to have their regular dues taken out of their ~~ne~~ pay.

BASEBALL

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Today the War Department issued an announcement, not about war, but about Baseball. Two all-star teams are going to visit the troops in the Pacific theatre of war, and play a series of games.

The idea was suggested to the Army by Baseball Commissioner Landis, and the War Department said okay. Each major league, National and American, will pick a team of its best players, and these will tour the Army centers in the Pacific and play a series of inter-league games. So the boys are going to see a lot of hits and runs, not counting the errors.

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~~And now a hit from you
Hughes, ^{and} then we'll both run.~~

BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Three years ago today, there was a scene of tense drama at headquarters of the Air Ministry in London. A group of men stood staring at a huge map, a detailed study of London and southern England. On the ^{map}~~map~~ was shown the progress of a giant air battle - the movements of the planes, the combats, the planes shot down. Predominant among the men who watched was that familiar burly figure, whose face looks like a cartoon of the traditional John Bull -- Winston Churchill. He was so absorbed that he forgot to light that unfailing cigar. And no wonder - for the air battle shown on the map was deciding the fall or survival of Britain.

It was the climax of the German blitz - the series of daylight sky assaults with which the Nazis planned to ~~XXXX~~ knock out British air power and gain control of the sky. It was perfectly understood at the time that if the Germans won supremacy of the air, they would invade England, and probably successfully - it was so soon after Dunkirk.

The Prime Minister, with his dead unlighted cigar, scanned the moves on the ^{map}~~map~~ for a long time, and his face

brightened at what he saw. Because on that day of the climax, the Nazis lost a hundred and eighty-five planes. They had been losing a lot of planes, day after day, and this was the peak. It was also the clincher - convincing the Germans that they could not go on taking losses like that in their effort to knock out British Air power. And so ~~xx~~ Britain was saved.

^{then}
The Germans turned to night bombing, which was fearfully destructive - but ~~xxx~~ could not be decisive for an invasion on the embattled island.

Today Britain commemorated, and so did the other allied nations, that day of crisis three years ago - as one of the decisive turning points of the war.

The victorious commander of the air Battle of Britain was Air Chief Marshal Lord Hugh Dowding, chief of the British Fighter Squadrons. Where is he today? The answer is curious. Lord Dowding is no longer in the British Air Service. He has retired and devoted himself to spiritualism - saying that he is in occult ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ communication with British flying men who lost their lives in the air battle of Britain. He keeps in

touch, he claims with the boys who gave their lives, boys he once commanded.

He writes and lectures on spiritualism, and goes from one spiritualist meeting to another - where he recites the messages that he has received from the flying heroes now in the beyond. Here is one of the most extraordinary of these. Dowding tells how the spirit of a pilot killed in air battle communicated to him the following, the pilot's experience when he was killed: "I saw another figure hunched over the controls", the psychic message states. "I pushed up to free him and found to my ~~hmm~~ horror that it was myself. I had come apart from my ~~hax~~ body - that is what had happened".

Such is the spirit message which the Air Chief Marshal of the Battle of Britain says he has received from a pilot who was killed.