

L.T.-SUNOCO. THURSDAY, MAY 21, 1942

(Navy "E" Banquet of Wheeler
Shipyard, Brooklyn)

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

The latest news about the battle of Kharkov states the following - Soviet artillery is now shelling the outskirts of that city. Which would mean brilliant progress for the Red Army in the Kharkov battle. The origin of the news is interesting:- Berlin. Stated by the German radio in a Russian language broadcast. London, naturally, regards this as rather peculiar.

The Nazis do give broadcasts in Russian, but they mightily seldom publicize Red Army victories. And today's radio statement is all the more surprising because the Berlin broadcast in Russian definitely contradicts official statements made by the German High Command today. This official Berlin bulletin declares that heavy Russian tanks had been repelled

and adds that Soviet Marshal Timoshenko had been compelled -- "to reduce his goal," as the Berlin bulletin phrases it. That is, he was now trying for local successes, rather than a conquest of Kharkov. Which certainly does not jibe with the Berlin broadcast in Russian -- that the Soviets are near enough to Kharkov to have the outskirts of the city under shell fire.

A late bulletin from Vichy tells us that the Red Army has hurled new armored forces in the battle -- including seventy ton tanks. Vichy states that this is the first time the Nazis have been assailed by such huge monsters -- seventy tonners.

OPTIMISM

A sober note of warning comes from Washington tonight -- a warning against over-optimism. A high official of the Government states the probability that this will be a long war. He concedes the possibility that Japan and Germany may be defeated sooner than we expect. But he adds -- "The chances are strong that it will be a long struggle." He said we must not be downcast by further reverses. "Inevitable disappointments are ahead," he declared.

This high official of the Government observed that there is a wave of optimism in this country right now, and this opinion is reflected in other official quarters. They are worried about the optimistic tendencies. The high official who spoke today declared that he thought the excess of hopefulness to be so serious as to require a warning, to the American people.

"We are on the upswing," said he, "but I don't want it artificially boosted." He argued that

the tendency is to play up minor skirmishes as decisive battles. "What's coming ahead this year will be interesting enough," he declared. "But I don't want it developed in such a way as to mislead people."

In other words, we are jubilant about good news, but it is bad to overdo it. "It is very dangerous to play this up artificially," said the high official today. "And I get the impression that this is being done. I don't want our people to get the idea it's all over," he added.

The summary is -- that our Government is counting on a long war and is preparing for one.

NORMANDIE

The Senate today postponed the confirmation of four naval promotions, and the reason was -- the Normandie. The names of four high naval officers are before the Senate for elevation in rank, and one of these is Admiral Adolphus Andrews -- who was in command of the New York naval district when the Normandie burned and capsized. He is now a Rear Admiral, and is scheduled for promotion to Vice-Admiral.

The Senators today decided to hold up the list of promotions until they can examine a report prepared by the Naval Affairs Committee on the burning of the Normandie. Senator Brewster of Maine, a member of the Committee, stated that the report on the Normandie shows, in his estimation, that Admiral Andrews was cleared of any responsibility for the fire. He pointed out that while the Normandie was burning, the Admiral could not prevent the New York firemen from flooding the ship with water -- which caused it to capsize. He had to get hold of Mayor

LaGuardia, before the pouring in of water was stopped.

At the same time, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox reported to President Roosevelt that the former French luxury liner will be salvaged. This was followed by an announcement from the Navy which stated that the Normandie will be raised, repaired and put back into commission. That will cost several million dollars. And how long will it take? "More than a year," says the Navy. The biggest job of salvaging on record.

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ADMIRAL WAESCHE

The top ranking officer present at this Navy E Banquet where I am at this moment, is Vice Admiral Russell R. Waesche. Although all Admirals are a part of Uncle Sam's Navy, Vice-Admiral Waesche is something special. He is in Command of the United States Coast Guard, the First Commandant of the Coast Guard ever to hold such high rank. Nor is he a graduate of Annapolis. Instead, he is a product of the Coast Guard Academy.

In his thirty-eight years with the Coast Guard Admiral Waesche has done some interesting things. For instance, he originated the Coast Guard Institute and Correspondence School for Warrant Officers and Enlisted Men. Admiral is that a good idea for a land-lubber, to take a correspondence course in how to be a sea dog? Does it work?

ADMIRAL W:- (Extemporaneous)

L.T.: This afternoon I went out to Coney Island Creek. No not to Coney Island to ride on the Steeple Chase, or float down with one of those parachutes from the top of that tower that used to be at the World's Fair. I was at Coney Island Creek at the Wheeler Shipyard, where they are turning out speedy anti-submarine patrol vessels for the Coast Guard, actually turning them out on a sort of an assembly line -- study^r wooden ships, each eighty-three feet long. Admiral Waesche where do those fast cutters go when they are launched? When they leave Coney Island Creek?

ADMIRAL WAESCHE:- Well, Mr. Thomas, some of our coast Guard Cutters are on combat duty with the Navy. As you know we are now part of the Navy. Our largest cutters are on the high seas, doing convoy duty. Others are way up north on the Greenland patrol. And, quite a few of them are roaming up and down the coast, on the lookout for U-boats. And a number of our smallest

vessels are on what we call the Inshore Patrol. Tonight we are celebrating the award of the Navy E to the Wheeler Shipyard for the great work they have done in turning out these speedy cutters. Congratulations, gentlemen! You deserve the Navy E, for you have done a great job!

(APPLAUSE)

L.T.: As I stood with seventy-three year old ^{here} Mr. Wheeler today, out at the shipyard, I didn't know which to admire most, Mr. Wheeler's wonderful side whiskers, or the speed with which these men are turning out your coast guard cutters. But, as I watched the vessels being built what I wondered was, how you could get enough men to man them, men as good as the ships. Where do you turn out the crews?

ADMIRAL WAESCHE: Some of them from the U.S.

Merchant Marine Academy at Great Neck, Long Island, and from four state maritime academies. Then for men

who have had at least fourteen months at sea, we have our training station at New London, Connecticut, and another at Alameda, California. Also, we have special opportunities for college graduates. And soon we will be turning out over sixty thousand men a year, at our training stations -- one in California, one in Florida and two here in New York. Training, equipment and salaries all provided by Uncle Sam, while instruction is going on. In this way, we are building up a large and well-manned merchant marine in addition to our regular Coast Guard Service. And nothing is more essential to victory than our new merchant marine.

L.T.: Many thanks, Admiral for giving us a glimpse of what is going on in your branch of the Navy. And along with you I too would like to congratulate these hundreds of husky men who are sitting around us, these men of the Wheeler Shipyard in Coney Island Creek, who have been breaking a few records at their job of turning out Coast Guard Cutters whose job it is to chase Hitler and his submarines from our shores.

SUBMARINES

Those are encouraging things you told us, Admiral Waesche, and they are urgently needed -- especially all that equipment to fight the submarine menace. For example, here is news about a ship sunk in the Caribbean. It was attacked by a pack of Nazi U-boats -- at least three. The vessel torpedoed three times, and the crew did not abandon ship until eight hours after the first explosive missile hit. Even after being torpedoed, they battled against the U-boats with gunfire, and drove them off into the darkness.

Another submarine story tells of nineteen sailors in a lifeboat for eleven days -- after their ship was sunk. They traveled for more than six hundred miles to get to Dutch Guiana. They were mighty hungry when they landed on that tropical shore, but there they had a feast. They killed a two hundred and fifty pound turtle, which they cooked into a dish for a king. One of the sailors today called it -- "wonder soup."

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Any epicure will agree with that seafaring man about the excellence of turtle soup, only it costs so much in a New York restaurant.

AIRPLANES

Here is a vision of post-war aviation -- fleets of freight carrying transport planes superseding railroads and cargo ships. That is the picture painted by Grover Cleveland Loening, airplane designer and veteran in the art of flying. He points out that after the war we will have a stupendous number of planes on hand -- such as tens of thousands of giant bombers capable of carrying heavy loads. There is, for example, the new B-19 army bomber, Loening said that forty thousand sky monsters of this type could carry the same amount of freight as is now transported by forty million tons of shipping -- the total tonnage possessed by all of the combined United Nations right now. And another forty-five thousand aircraft of the B-19 type could handle the freight now carried by the one million nine hundred thousand freight cars used on our railroads. In other words -- ninety thousand of these planes, he says, could do what both our maritime shipping and railroad freight service are

doing now.

We will end this war not only with huge fleets of planes but also with some three thousand pilots and several million aviation mechanics. What to do with all this immense sky organization when the conflict terminates? It will be ready and available for peace time work and Grover Loening reasons as follows: "It is clear," says he, "that the air will have to invade the heavy freight field of the railroads and the heavy cargo field of maritime shipping. And he thinks that this will start before the war is over.

TAXES

The Treasury Department today recommended a ten per cent wage deduction in part payment of income tax. The idea would be for employers to take ten per cent out of the wages of their employees each week, and pay this to the government. The sum deducted ~~for~~ from each employee would be placed to his or her credit for the payment of income tax. Taxes above the amount thus deducted would be paid in the regular way.

However, the ten percent deduction would not apply to one's entire salary. In the case of an unmarried man, the percentage would be calculated on his earning above eleven dollars a week. A married man without children would have his pay over twenty-six dollars a week subject to the ten percent deduction. An additional exemption of eight dollars and fifty cents a week would be granted for each child or other dependent.

The treasury points out that employers right now are responsible for collecting payments for Social Security. The ten percent for income tax would work in the same way. The idea behind it all is for the employee to pay his taxes ~~and~~ as he earns the money, before he spends it.

Treasury Expert Randolph Paul stated the following to the House Ways & Means Committee:

"While no method of paying taxes can make them painless," said he, "Collection at source is the most nearly painless of any method because the tax is paid in small amounts before the taxpayer receives his income and spends it."

LA GUARDIA

A lively battle is on between Mayor LaGuardia of New York and Civilian Defense Director Landis. They are both vigorous warriors with words. LaGuardia is noted for a gift of flaming expression, and Landis can sock hard with sharp-edged phraseology. La Guardia used to be the big boss of Civilian Defense, and Landis took his place -- which gives an added zest to the grammatical hostilities.

LaGuardia charged with loud emphasis that New York City has failed to get anti-air raid equipment. The big town was promised a lot, but nothing was ~~for~~ forthcoming -- especially in the matter of twenty-two thousand helmets for air-raid wardens. Landis responded today with remarks about irresponsible utterances in wartime. This, said he, is second only to giving information to the enemy. And he accused the Mayor of "carping criticism."

LaGuardia promptly retorted: "Less chatter, more supplies," he barked, and added: "Making ~~mix~~

misstatements and calling names is not going to help in our war effort."

Well, they are both sturdy battlers -- with the dictionary for a weapon. I don't know where the blame lies -- and wouldn't dream of guessing.