

L.T. - SUNOOC. WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 1942

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

The British are making ready to blow up the Suez Canal -- if necessary. That's not official; but, the report comes from London, and it's passed by the censor. So there seems no doubt about the high command in Egypt preparing for the worst.

And, they are all set to dismantle the great naval base at Alexandria, make it useless -- at least for the time being. If Rommel captures it.

Radio Berlin today sent out the claim that the British fleet has just steamed through the Suez Canal into the Red Sea. There is no comment from Cairo or London about that. The British are also prepared to remove or destroy the six French warships that are still in the harbor at Alexandria -- one, a large battleship --- the LORRAINE.

An officer of the British general staff today

declared that on Tuesday, the Eighth Imperial Army had been successful in the fighting in the Egyptian desert. The situation still is very grave, as he put it; but that British defense positions were intact at the time he spoke. A later dispatch from Cairo indicates that what he said was over-optimistic. In spite of some successful counter-blows by the British, the enemy has advanced. Five miles, ten miles, twenty miles, thirty-five miles, General Rommel's columns pushed on in one night. A dispatch that came in early this afternoon reported them thirty miles east of El Daba. There they made contact with the Eighth Army in the El Alamein sector, where the battle is raging there at this moment --perhaps the crucial action in the battle for Egypt.

Command-er-in-chief Sir Claude Auchinleck today did a thing that had not been done by a British General in some time. He issued an appeal to his troops.

"Stick it out", he implored them. "The situation now

LEAD- 3

CALLS for a supreme effort on the part of all of us."

And he added, "I know you will stick it until the enemy can no longer stand it, until he cracks. The battle is far from over, and will not be over until we have defeated the enemy, and defeat him we will." So spoke General Auchinleck. And he reminded his men it must not be forgotten that the enemy too had serious losses. Their units are much more reduced in strength and they are a long way from bases of supply.

When Rommel was thirty miles past El Daba, he has two hundred miles inside the Egyptian frontier and only sixty miles from Alexandria. What makes the British position all the more serious is that another strong enemy column is reported advancing eastward along the desert trail that skirts the northern end of the Qattara Depression, either heading straight for Cairo or attempting to encircle Auchinleck's position east of El Daba.

An American warship has made a spectacular contribution to the drama in that theatre of war. The Navy communique revealed the news today that the U.S.S. Wasp, one of our newest and fastest aircraft carriers, had accomplished a bold series of strokes in the relief of Malta. The defenders of that strategic British island were sorely put to it for planes that have been destroyed in fight after fight with the Axis air arm. The U.S.S. WASP ran the blockade with airplane reinforcements, not once but several times.

This created one particularly dramatic episode. The WASP was approaching Malta on one of its trips, and ~~xx~~ a group of R.A.F. pilots had taken off in fighter planes. Just at that moment, a swarm of enemy aircraft attacked the island. The last minute addition to the British fighter planes took the enemy attackers completely by surprise. They engaged the Germans and Italians over the island and

Beat them back with heavy losses -- all within thirty minutes after the reinforcements had arrived on the WASP. Incidentally, the WASP made all her trips without damage either to herself or to the warship which escorted her.

A late message from the Mediterranean, brings word that the Axis has begun its attack on the Holy Land. Airplanes appeared at Haifa, the Palestinian sea port seventy-five miles northwest of Jerusalem. They were driven off and no damage was done.

CHURCHILL

Harsh and bitter things were said today in the British House of Commons about the Prime Minister. *Indeed*

50
No Prime Minister ever heard anything more severe than one accusation that was made. A Conservative member, making a motion of no confidence, declared that Churchill as Defense Minister had made statements to the House which were untrue and inaccurate. He ^{referred to} ~~picked on~~ the Prime Minister's claims that the British were on equal terms with the enemy in Libya. Churchill's critic made the further charge that British tanks in the desert were out of date and inferior. ^{He} ~~and~~ asked what excuse there was for sending men into battle with the scales continually against them.

~~Prime Minister~~ Churchill stood up and spoke for himself and did not give an inch. One of his defenders had urged that the debate on the vote of no confidence should be postponed. Churchill stopped that. He told

the House ~~if~~ he was quite sure that if he joined the appeal, the House would acquiesce in delaying the ^{question of} debate. But, he said, the [^]vote of censure has been ~~on the paper for some time, has been~~ flashed all over the world. Therefore, he considers that it would be more injurious to delay a decision than to go forward. In other words, he challenged his critics and insisted ~~on~~ on taking the debate to a finish.

51
The principal advocate for the defense today was Captain Oliver Lyttleton, Production Minister. He spoke particularly about one criticism that there was a lack of dive bombers on the British side of the Libyan battle. It has been widely bruited that in spite of the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ lessons of the war, several British generals have ~~xxxxfxxx~~ pooh-poohed dive bombers. Curiously enough, Lyttleton, in his defense, admitted that. Commanders in the field, he said, are of the opinion

that dive bombers are largely ineffective in the desert.

53

The general tone of Lyttleton's defense of the government was that all things considered, ~~everything~~ the British had done ~~was~~ the best they could. He defended General Ritchie, the discharged Commander of the Eighth Army. Lyttleton said there is no evidence that Ritchie ran his armored division into an ambush on June Thirteenth. ^R The main point of his defense was that the British had inferior equipment. Rommel had the better tanks, and, more important, the better anti-tank cannon. Better cannon are now being made at the rate of several hundred a month, but there ~~was~~ were only a few in Libya when the battle began. Lyttleton inferred that the General Grant tanks made in the United States had been particularly useful.

52

As for dive bombers, they also now have been turned out in large quantities and will be on the way

soon, even though commanding officers of the field said they weren't of much use in the desert. In the House of Lords, Lord Beaverbrook, the former Production Minister, also talked about dive bombers. There has been some disappointment, he admitted, in delivery of these planes. There were no ~~five bombers in India~~ *such aircraft in Egypt* because the Government had none to send. When the Churchill Government came into office, no provision whatsoever had been made for dive bombers.

Viscount Cranborne, Colonial Secretary, took the floor of the House of Lords to deny the report that the Government had ordered Tobruk to be yielded to the enemy. There was no last minute order, said Lord Craneborne, the fall was quite unexpected by the Commander-in-Chief and by the Government.

One ~~disputed~~ Conservative member of the Commons declared that if what Captain Lyttleton said

was true, if British armament was as unsatisfactory as it showed up in the desert. the opening of a second front in Europe would lead to the greatest British military disaster in history.

Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Roger Keyes, former Commander-in-Chief of the Commandos, declared that he seconded the motion of "no confidence." But he added it would be a disaster if Churchill himself were turned out. Keyes explained that he would like to see the Prime Minister at the head of ~~the~~ a real national government, not a compromise affair like the present one.

It has been widely muttered in Britain that, although Chamberlain has gone, there are still too many ~~Chamberlains~~ ^{Chamberlainites} in key positions, too many "Munich men," as they are called, ~~in Britain~~.

RUSSIA

54

Bad news ~~also~~ from the Russian front, Sevastopol has fallen. This comes from Berlin. ^{So} ~~and~~ we may indulge in the feint hope that it is not quite true. But, it sounds all too ~~possible and~~ probable. Adolf Hitler's headquarters made the announcement with the usual fanfare of trumpets. ^{That} The Swastika and the Rumanian flags are flying over the Black Sea fortress tonight, after twenty-five days of the fiercest siege in history, *not the longest; but, the bloodiest.*

The defenders gave way only inch by inch, and it is believed confidently that the Nazis and Rumanians have lost more than sixty thousand killed and many more wounded. TH Hitler announced that he had conferred the rank of Field Marshal on Colonel-General Fritz von Manstein, the Commander-in-Chief of that assault. There is an echo of the last war in the news that the air corps was commanded by Colonel-General Baron von Richthofen.

The Russians did not surrender, did not capitulate. Some of them are still fighting. The Nazis report they retreated to the Chersonese Peninsula west of Sevastopol, where they are crowded together in a narrow space, and where, according to the Germans, are facing annihilation.

This gives the Nazis the last stronghold on the Crimean peninsula, the last strong naval base on the Black Sea.

The news followed on the claim that the Nazis had taken the historic Crimean town and harbor of Balaklava, famous in British literature, as the scene of the Charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War; the charge that Tennyson immortalized. Balaklava is almost due south of that great Crimean fortress, and is not such an important position.

Around Kursk, the battle rages back and forth. The Nazis made headway, but the Soviets declare that a strong counter attack by the Red Army forced them back. Russian correspondents report that Red Army resistance is growing stronger every day, every hour.

The Nazis have delivered a heavy attack at another point, a place called Gzhatsk. ^{only a} ~~that is~~ hundred and twelve miles west of Moscow, and ~~only~~ forty-five miles from the highway between Smolensk and Mozhaisk.

56 ~~that~~ The air today has been full of reports that the Soviets will be facing a fourth front at any moment. The Japanese have been moving both infantry and airplanes north in the direction of the border between Manchukuo and Siberia. [#] We have been hearing ^{this} ~~these~~ warnings from the Chinese, for several weeks, and there is no reason to ^{question} ~~believe~~ them. A military commentator in London observed ^S ~~that~~ that there seems no doubt, Japan is making every military preparation to attack Russia at her own chosen moment.

In Washington, both military and naval experts have been struck by the lack of any Japanese

RUSSIA - ~~5~~ 4

activity except in China. Their attack on the Aleutians came to a stop suddenly after they occupied Attu and ~~X~~iska. ^{Obviously} ~~Evidently~~ that was done to protect the Japanese flank from attacks by our forces.

Japan has the cream of all her armies in ~~the~~ Manchukuo, thirty-two to thirty-five well equipped divisions. That means around seven hundred thousand men. ^{There} They have their own munitions factories and arsenals. In other words, they are self-sustaining.

On the other hand, we hear one consoling report which indicates that the Russians will not be taken by surprise. They have been moving reinforcements into Siberia, a severe strain on them with most of their resources engaged against the Germans. ^{TP} There seems little doubt that Hitler and the Japanese are planning a pincers movement to cut off the British in the Middle East and ^{seize} ~~to grab~~ the oilfields there.

Tokyo propaganda put out the claim today that the Japanese forces in central China now have complete control of the railway between Nanchang and Hangchow. They have been moving steadily down the railway from both east and west, thus closing the pincers on the Chinese. Meaning that they are nearing one important objective, fast rail transportation all the way from Shanghai to HongKong, and perhaps even as far as Indo-China.

Tokyo also announced the occupation of the Nicobar group of islands in the Bay of Bengal, south of the Andamans.

SHIPPING

58

In spite of the submarine sinkings, the American Merchant Marine today is larger than it was before Pearl Harbor. That announcement was made today by Howard L. Vickery, Vice-Chairman of the Maritime Commission. Nevertheless, Vickery declares that the United Nations are not yet building ships as fast as the Axis raiders are sinking them.

The United States in June set a spectacular building record. Mr. Mosher of the Maritime Commission telephones me that in that month we actually put into service no fewer than sixty-six new cargo ships and tankers. Of those, the Sun Shipbuilding and Drydock Company ~~xxxxj~~ at Chester, Pennsylvania, the largest builder of tank^Aers in the world, turned out four tankers and one cargo ship in a month. You can get an idea of what that means when you recall that the Hog Island Shipyard in the first World War, in its best month,

5812

turned out only eight ships, and that was ten months after the Armistice.

So our own Sun Company is breaking records in this all out drive to win the war.

And now for the Sunny voice of Hugh.