

TUNISIA

P.T. - Sunoco.

Friday, March 5, 1943

The latest battlefield in Tunisia is the kind of place to evoke the reminiscence of travelers who have wandered about in the lands of Islam. Sedjenane is an Arab village of mud huts, and a few more substantially constructed houses - a mere thirty-one dwellings, and two streets. But that Arab village has a railroad station - it is an important rail and highway junction.

At dawn today, a wild and spectacular conflict raged among the thirty-one houses and down the two streets. A force of Germans held the town - they having driven that far in the thrust launched against the British forces in northern Tunisia. The strategy of ~~xxxx~~ roads and railways made the Arab village a Number One prize of war, and the British struck back with a violent ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ fighting ~~xxxx~~ counter-attack - tanks thundering forward, infantry engaged in savage hand-to-hand fighting. I don't know how much was left

of the Arab mud houses, after the explosive blast of modern battle had raged ^{down} ~~in~~ the two streets - but nothing was left of the Nazi force. The British captured the key junction place, and thereby scored an important success against the German drive in northern Tunisia.

Southward, where the Americans are, the job today was mostly one of consolidating recent gains.

Our lines are now in front of Faid Pass, from which Rommel staged his previous advance - the advance that rolled ahead swiftly for a while, and then was hurled back.

AIR WAR

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The air war against the homeland of the Nazis continued last night, though the Allied air raids were not on the giant scale of previous nights. ~~Moreover,~~ ^{However,} they kept the round-the-clock bombing in progress - striking at Germany every night. R.A.F. planes delivered ^{ing} ~~ed~~ blows here and there - keeping the Nazis worried. ^{TP} ~~And~~ The British effort followed precision raids by American flyingfortresses ^{which} ~~They~~ hit at Rotterdam and also at a place called Hamm, ~~That's~~ one of the most important railroad junctions of western Germany; ~~and is~~ a bottleneck through which Nazi defense forces will have to ^{stream} ~~stop~~ in case of an Allied invasion of western Europe. The kind of railroad center it is can be perceived vividly in a statement by Lieutenant James R. Bullock of Greensboro, North Carolina.

"There were so many trains jamming the yards," said he, "that some of the boys reported seeing a

smokescreen - which was only the smoke from the engines."

Quite a target for the flying fortresses,[!] and on this they delivered some choice examples of what they call "pin point bombing." Pin point signifying minute accuracy of aim at a target far below.

London thinks that the Nazis, in retaliation for the round-the-clock air assaults, may resort to gas. The use of gas may perhaps be implied in the following boastful statement made by a Nazi spokesman:- "Next Spring, with new weapons," growled the Hitlerite, "Germany will give such an answer that Britain will beg mercy." ^{FF} London surmises that the new weapon may be gas. All along Allied military leaders have considered the possibility, ^{that} as things got worse for the Nazis, ~~that~~ their desperation would cause them to resort to chemical warfare.

(~~London notes that three and a half years of~~

war have now passed without any resort to poison gas,

although predictions have^d~~ve~~ been that the chemical

horror would be one of the first weapons ~~that~~^{the} Germany^s

would use. Why have they refrained? British military

men say that, in the first place, there is plenty of

doubt whether attack by poison vapors would be as

effective as a similar effort put into high explosive.

And, in the second place ^{However} the Nazis know that if they

start it, the retaliation would be swift and

overwhelming - the Allies prepared to give them double

and ^ptreple[^] doses of gas warfare.

RUSSIA

In the Soviet war news, night after night, we hear of towns and villages recaptured - and ^{the} ~~a~~ the number of these is frequently ^{the} ~~a~~ measure of the latest Red Army success. Tonight we have a large number - fifty-two, that many inhabited places retaken from the Nazis. The fiftytwo were seized in the Vyazma sector, an important fortified salient held by the Germans.

Soviet forces are threatening to outflank Bryansk, another Number One enemy base. And, more and more it appears that the Germans will soon have to evacuate Orel, that mighty bastion ^{west} ~~southeast~~ of Moscow.

These reports come from Moscow, ^{while} Berlin tells of heavy Soviet attacks in still another area - up to the north, toward Leningrad. A communique issued by the Nazi high command states that Marshal Timoshenko has started a ferocious attack at Starayarussa, an assault with massed tanks, infantry, artillery and air forces.

NEW GUINEA

Yesterday's news of the Battle of the Bismarck Sea is followed by word today that General MacArthur is moving to drive the Japs from their last bases on the northern coast of New Guinea - Lae and Salamaua. The purpose of the Jap convoy, which was wiped out one hundred per cent, was to reinforce the remaining new Guinea positions held by the enemy. They are virtually cut off from help, and the convoy may well have been their last hope - a vanished hope.

After-the-battle stories give us a picture of waters littered with the wreckage of ships - lifeboats and life rafts. Allied headquarters in New Guinea tell us that some of the Jap survivors of sunken troop transports may have drifted onto the New Guinea coast, but ~~they are~~ mighty few. Others ^{survivors} of the fifteen thousand Jap soldiers were reported to be clinging to rafts and wreckage on the shark infested

sea. Some Japs in lifeboats have been ~~xxxxxxxx~~ shooting American planes overhead. Mounting light machineguns, they blazed away at low flying aircraft engaged in the task of finishing off the remnants of the convoy.

More and more it becomes evident that the Japs ran into such complete disaster because the weather failed them. They were moving down toward New Guinea under cover of a storm, when suddenly the weather broke and clearing skies were left for the American air force to do its job. American officers explained today that the storm area did not extend as far south as the Japs expected - they miscalculated the weather just that much.

Among the reflections of the day after the big battle news, we may observe this moral:- Think of the ^{motor fuel} ~~gasoline~~ factor in the American victory - the

immense amounts of super motor fuel that our fleet of planes consumed in smashing the enemy. That represents

gas which we civilians have not been getting, ^{because} ~~And when~~

the tankers have been plying the Pacific,
a motorist is inclined to grouse about the restrictions,

on using his car - he'll do well to remember that the

gasoline he is not getting is helping our flying men

to get the Japs.

PRISONERS -

Here is word on the subject of American prisoners held by the Japs. Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles declared today that most of the American and British who were seized in the Shanghai area have been interned. He said he understood that a number of them are being kept in barracks formerly occupied by United States Marines -- the barracks of the Fourth Marine Regiment, which had been stationed at Shanghai.

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Sumner Welles figured that there are about fifteen hundred Americans, men, women and children at Shanghai -- and about four thousand British citizens. He added that some fifteen hundred ^{of our} ~~Americans~~ ^{countrymen} are held by the Japs in other parts of China and six thousand in the Philippines. Two or three hundred ~~are left~~ in Japan proper. ~~As for the Americans interned by the Japs, Sumner Welles stated that the United States Government has not yet made any representation about the way they are being treated.~~

ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT

Today in Congress a letter was read - a letter from Lieutenant Colonel Elliott Roosevelt, ^a~~the~~ son of the President. He wrote to Congressman Fritz Lanham, ~~xxx~~ of Texas, and his letter apparently has been delayed - because it was written shortly after the Casablanca conference, long weeks ago. ^{Elliott} ~~He~~ is in North Africa, from which war zone ^{mail} the service is none too regular.

The Lieutenant Colonel ~~Elliott Roosevelt~~ writes:-
"I have just had an opportunity of seeing my father over here and he gave me the first American newspapers I have ~~since~~ seen since I left the States last September. In the papers," Elliott Roosevelt goes on, "I read something which deeply disturbs me. A fellow Congressman of yours has undertaken to criticize some of my brothers and their war records by stating that two of them were pulled out of combat zones so that they would not be exposed to danger." ^{TF} Elliott Roosevelt goes on to

observe that of the four Roosevelt boys, he himself is in North Africa and Franklin is on a destroyer, so the criticism must refer to James and John - James having been at Guadalcanal *and then taken out.*

Elliott Roosevelt states: "I happen to know that James ~~ix~~ has insisted on carrying on, even though he is not physically up to the strain of combat. If he were anybody else's son he would be exempt from such duty. John, my youngest brother," says Elliott Roosevelt, "is in the Naval Supply Corps. He has been fighting to go on foreign service, and I know that my father or anybody else isn't going to stop him before this show is over."

Elliott Roosevelt himself has been decorated, and this has drawn some invidious remarks - to which I should like to add some things I heard in Washington recently. I was talking to an officer high in the

Ferry Command, an officer just returned from North Africa. He told me that Elliott deserved his decoration long before he received it. A group of his comrades got medals - but Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt was left out, ^{only} because he was the President's son, ^{hence} ~~and~~ it might have looked like favoritism. It was only later, considerably after the others had been decorated, ^{and} ~~that~~ after he had done some other hazardous [^] he was granted official recognition - for ~~the bravest~~ ~~kind of work, doing~~ aerial photography, ^{over} ~~of~~ the enemy lines, and across the Mediterranean [^] - over Italy.

FOURTH TERM

The question of a fourth term was opened bluntly in Congress today, with Senator Guffey of Pennsylvania coming forward with an outspoken demand for the reelection of President Roosevelt. "There is no American tradition," declared Senator Guffey, "which says ~~the~~ ^a good President cannot serve four terms in the White House." In a series of strong statements, he argued that the war situation makes a fourth term necessary - with the people demanding it. "Today, ten years after Roosevelt's first inaugural," cried the Senator, "there are countless Americans, rich and poor, of every race, creed and color, bankers included, who say, 'Thank God for Roosevelt.'" *So says Sen. Guffey.*

RED CROSS

The Red Cross announces that its first mercy ship will set sail for Europe next week - a ship loaded with gifts for American prisoners of war in Axis countries. The Red Cross will send a whole fleet of similar vessels crammed with mercy cargoes, packages for prisoners. The first ship will sail from Philadelphia.

The Red Cross gives out good news about its war fund drive, telling of a list of large contributors who have doubled the donations they made last year. I, myself, was agreeably reminded of the Red Cross drive this morning when I talked to one of my neighbors, Mrs. Hogate, wife of the Mayor of Scarsdale. She told me that in her town, they have already gone over the top, with all the citizens taking part, and with no gift larger than five hundred dollars. They simply got off to a flying start on Monday, and already, with the campaign period less than one-quarter over, Scarsdale

has exceeded its quota, thereby setting an excellent
example for the rest of the country.

FARM

The Senate Military Affairs Committee gave an opinion today on the ^{country's} prospective food supply. ~~in this country.~~ Is it likely that the food crops this year will be as large as last year? The committee replied in these words: "almost hopeless ^{of} realization." In other words the committee believes that the food production goal^s that have been set cannot possibly be met.

As for the reason -- that ^s is implied in the recommendation ^{which} ~~that~~ the Military Affairs Committee makes to Congress. It puts an okay on the Bankhead Bill, which proposes that farm workers shall be deferred from military service.

~~The committee points to the Tydings amendment to the Selective Service Act. This amendment provided that essential farm workers should be exempt from the draft -- but it did not work out that way, according to the committee. Speaking of the amendment, the committee states: "Draft boards throughout the country did not~~

GARDENS

In Washington they are thinking about granting special rations of gasoline to Victory Garden growers. That is - to people who live in towns and cultivate patches of vegetables in the suburbs. The extra gasoline ~~will~~ ^{would} enable them to travel back and forth between home and garden.

This plan originates in the Office of Price Administration, ^{but they} ~~where they think it would help in the drive to have people grow vegetables and relieve the food shortage. The Department of Agriculture, however,~~ expresses opposition, ~~opposition to the granting of extra gasoline to what an Agriculture spokesman called today - "weekend farmers." He said it would be a waste of gasoline - also of time and seed.~~

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A spokesman
~~He~~ said that city slickers have peculiar notions about farming. They have an idea, he explained, that they can just dig up a few rows of dirt, pour some seeds

into it, and cover up the earth. The only result they'll get out of that kind of agriculture is, as the Department spokesman says, "a lot of fresh air and a few blister^s."

Well, I wonder! I know quite a few weekend farmers - Harold Williams, Charley Murphy - lots of them - who can raise more than blisters!

PERFECT WIFE

Here's the story of a man who tried to create a perfect wife. The news comes, as you might expect, from a divorce court. The would be creator of the ideal mate is a psychologist and psychoanalyst. He is fifty-two, thirty years older than the wife whom he sought to endow with all ~~the~~ ^{for} ~~of~~ perfections of matrimony.

In a Los Angeles court today it was told how the psychologist, Doctor Negri, ~~began his psychoanalytical matrimonial task when the girl was fourteen -- she was a pupil of his. He~~ moulded her mind and guided her thoughts -- to make her the perfect wife. *Then he married her. And once* ~~When she was eighteen he married her -- and once~~ the wedding ring got on the finger the psychoanalysis did ⁿot seem to work so well. Today the scientific doctor stated that the perfect wife refused to wash the dishes. She would not sweep out the house, and often the doctor had to take care of the baby.

Wifie charges that the psychoanalyzing doctor was not so perfect as a husband. She says that,

although he made ten thousand, ~~a year~~, he gave her only twenty-five cents a day for spending money.

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Pyschoanalyzing
^ So that's what happened to the marriage of the psychologist and the perfect wife that he created.

Today the doctor explained that when he started out on the miracle he made just one mistake -- he forgot to psychoanalyze himself. I suppose he means that anybody who thinks he can create a perfect wife is just plain crazy. Or perhaps you have the perfect wife Hugh.

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