

TUNISIA

L. J. - Sunoco. Friday, April 2, 1943 4/2 *London*

Let's take the Tunisian battle line from north to south, and see what is happening in the respective sectors. ^{In} the north, ^{at} the tip of Tunisia, is the British First Army. The word there is -- a new advance. (The British having captured Sedjenane are pushing on and have reached a point only thirty miles from the great naval base at Bizerte. Little opposition is being encountered -- with Nazi General Von Arnim pulling his troops back to positions in the hills. The advance British forces are ^{about} four miles from the Nazi high-ground-battle-front.

A little to the south of the British First Army are forces of General Giraud's French troops. They, too, are moving ahead, and they likewise are not encountering much opposition.

Somewhat further to the south, however, the story is very different -- plenty of opposition. That's where the Americans are. They were assailed today by Rommel's panzers in a fierce assault, -- the

~~North Afrika Korps lashing out with an armored assault.~~

Once again emphasis is placed on the threatening position the Americans occupy -- a flanking position from which they might lunge forward and close the trap that has been menacing Rommel all along. The Nazi Afrika Korps is retreating north to join with Von Arnim's Germans in the Bizerte area. This is stated officially by Berlin today -- a German dispatch *declaring* ~~stating~~ that Rommel and Von Arnim have now joined forces

It was to cover this movement that the Afrika Korps launched its drive against the Americans -- thrusting to keep the corridor open for their retreat. They struck with fierce power in the El Guettar area, but the panzers were beaten back. American artillery smashed ^{them} ~~the~~ them to a standstill. ~~the~~ ^{and} United States Infantry surged forward ^{and} recaptured a hill position which the Germans had seized in a previous attack. ^{TP} At last reports the battle was still raging -- the delaying action against the American^s to which Rommel has resorted

in covering his withdrawal northward.

At The southern end of the line, ~~for~~ where the British Eighth Army has been pushing after the Afrika Korps, the progress of General Montgomery's forces was slowed down today, as heavy rear guard resistance was encountered -- Rommel leaving strong rear guard parties to fight it out as long as they could. There, too, ^{it} ~~there~~ was a delaying action to cover the ~~xx~~ retreat. We hear, moreover, that the British Eighth Army has slackened its pace, because of the necessity of reorganizing. After the drive ~~is~~ so swift and fierce, that captured the fortifications of the Mareth Line, the Eighth Army needs a breathing spell to bring up supplies and get set for another smash.

Altogether the Tunisian picture, from north to south, gives much the same impression as on previous days -- the impression of the Nazi forces pulling into the defensive areas of Northern Tunisia for a final stand. *R* Allied North African Headquarters say there is

no confirmation of the report that the Nazis have been flying troops to their last foothold on the African shore. ^{But} they do continue to send supplies and munitions - in spite of severe losses that our planes and submarines inflict on their ships *and cargo planes.*

One splash of color comes in today's North African news, together with that peculiar word -- "Goum." Serving with the French forces ~~the~~ ⁱⁿ Northern Tunisia, the Goums are a hardy and ferocious lot -- native colonial ~~xxxx~~ troops trained by the French, stalwart Berbers of the desert. They wear turbans and baggy wide trousers and have long beards. They ^{are} devout Mohammedans, and never touch liquor, but smoke cigarettes all day. Among them are Frenchmen, who try to look like their Moslem ~~comrades~~ ^{comrades} of ^{the} Sahara. The Frenchmen grow beards and some ~~have~~ ~~the~~ cut and scarred their faces to make them look more like the Goums, who boast of the marks of the wounds of battle.

The Goums ~~xx~~ can run and climb all day and

then fight most of the night, says today's dispatch from North Africa. Their tactics are like magic.--

The color of their clothing, ~~it~~ blends with the Tunisian landscape -- brown and tan. ~~It is~~

Camouflage, and they seem to wear a cloak of invisibility.

TP The story tells us how recently a party of British officers visited the Goums and asked them to put on a ~~an~~ disappearing act. Whereupon the Goums with full equipment marched to a mountain side and in brief minutes appeared to vanish without a trace -- like the presto change^a of ~~the~~ magician.
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RUSSIA

Soviet ~~Russia~~ reports ^{are} that the Germans are piling immense reserves into the war zones of southern Russia. Moscow states that the networks of railroads and highways in the Ukraine are jammed with Nazi forces that are pouring toward the fighting line along the Donets River. The assumption is that Hitler's High Command is getting set for another huge summer offensive in southern Russia.

Meanwhile the Red Army reports advances in the Caucasus, while on the critical Smolensk front things are at a standstill -- partly because of the heavy thaw and spring floods.

PACIFIC

Action has flared anew in the Solomon Islands -- air action. For the first time in weeks powerful squadrons of the sky have appeared in the vicinity of Guadalcanal. The enemy formation consisted of some thirty or forty Zeros and these were promptly ~~promptly~~ encountered by American fighter planes, which shot down sixteen. We lost six.

The big sky battle followed American air attack on a squadron of five Jap destroyers and cargo ships. One surmise is that the purpose of the Zeros was to defend the convoy, and the new flare of activity is taken as another indications of a massing of enemy forces in the islands north-east of Australia. This increase has been noted and reported by the American Command.

UNITED NATIONS

We have a denial today that there is any plan to keep newspapermen from covering the forthcoming United Nations conference on food. President Roosevelt had stated previously that the international parley would be held in an isolated city where the delegates could work unhampered by a host of reporters. He argued that people, engaged in a conference, work together better in a quiet place rather than in a big town, and pointed to his own secret ^{meetings} ~~conferences~~ with Prime Minister ~~Winston~~ Churchill. The North ~~African~~ Atlantic and ~~the~~ Casablanca ^{affairs} ~~conferences~~ were held in seclusion, and the President cited them as examples of the right way to do things.

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Today Reporters took the question to the White House, and asked the following ~~question~~ of Presidential Secretary Steve Early: "Is it the plan," they inquired, "to bar newspapermen from the premises

in which the conference will be held?"

"I know of no such plan," replied ~~Steve~~ Early.

"There certainly will be reporters on the premises."

~~There have been suppositions that the President~~
~~hoped that the newspapermen working for the Office of~~
~~War Information would cover the conference so thoroughly~~
~~that other reporters would refrain from trying to get~~
~~stories from the delegates. Steve Early~~ ^{He} was asked

whether editors had been requested not to send

correspondents to the conference? The Presidential

Secretary replied - No, he knew of no such request.

The same denial was made by Elmer Davis of
the O.W.I., who declared that reporters would cover
the United Nations meeting the same as they would
any other major story. ~~He pointed out that the news~~
~~men could do a lot of damage by injudicially arousing~~
~~antagonisms between countries represented at the~~

meeting.

He was asked if the American news fraternity had not already demonstrated its patriotism to such an extent that it could be trusted not to provoke dissention deliberately.

To which Elmer Davis added, "An overwhelming majority of the press has displayed convincing proof of its patriotism."

So apparently there is nothing to the apprehension that the gatherers of news will be barred and not permitted to get stories about the United Nations conference.

The countries of the United Nations are jumping to accept invitations to the international pow wow. A number have sent in their replies, and among these are Great Britain, Soviet Russia and China. This was stated today by Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who

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added that he was gratified by the prompt Soviet acceptance. Great Britain, Russia and China! - Add the United States, and you have the four major powers

of the United Nations. The Big Four! As the United Nations, talking about food, make the first move toward international organization.

VETO

President Roosevelt today did the expected, when he vetoed the Bankhead Bill. This bill, which had^S₁ to do with complicated problems of farm subsidies and the calculation of farm prices, would raise the cost of food to the public. And the President vetoed it on that score. He said it was inflationary.

The veto message to Congress is a long one, and goes into a lot of things. For example, it ~~in~~ ~~argues the question of whether or not the President had~~ ~~the legal right to order that benefits paid to farmers~~ ~~should be reckoned with in calculating farm prices.~~ The proponents of the Bankhead Bill contended that Congress had given ~~the~~ President no such authority - when it passed the law for stabilizing prices. The veto message today points out that in enacting the stabilizing law, Congress rejected an amendment that would have excluded farm benefits from parity.

calculation. Thus, when the President ordered that the farm benefits should not be excluded, he was following the intent that Congress expressed - when it rejected the amendment. "It cannot therefore be fairly said," the President declared today, "that I ignored either the law or the legislative intent of the Congress."

The scope of today's veto message was such ~~that it~~ included ^S John L. Lewis and his demands - included ^S them by inference. The President, in condemning the farm price thing as an aid to inflation, ~~included~~ ^{puts} in the same category the kind of wage increases that Lewis is demanding. He indicated ^S that he will stand by what is called "the Little Steel formula" for a ceiling on wages, just as firmly ~~h~~ as he is maintaining the existing standards of farm prices.

Now what is to follow the veto? Will Congress

override the President? ~~Will the national legislature
muster majorities of two thirds to pass the Bankhead
Bill over the veto?~~

The Senate passed the bill by an enormous majority of seventy-nine to thirty-two. The lower House likewise gave ^{it} ~~the bill~~ a huge okay. This afternoon administration leader Senator Barkley stated that the Senate would probably override the veto, but he did ^{not} think that the necessary two-thirds majority could be obtained in the lower House.

RACKET

Every so often for years we've had a story about some rogue or other who could be classified as the meanest man - the lowest crook. It takes wartime, however, to give us the most abysmal rascal of all - with the basest of rackets.

Military authorities at New York issued a warning today against a new kind of skin game, which victimizes families of soldiers - mothers, wives and sisters. The racket works this way:- ^{a fellow} ~~some~~ in uniform calls at ^a ~~the~~ service man's home, and usually the chisler wears the ~~xxxxx~~ chevrons of a sergeant.

The old Sarg! -- That always carries authority. Most often he says his name is "Gallagher", and that has a good hard boiled army ring - Sergeant Gallagher.

He tells the mother, wife or sister that Joe or Jim or Bill asked him to drop by to pick up a few dollars so that Joe or Jim or Bill can get home on a furlough

during the coming week. He had^S been ordered overseas
and will have one more chance to get back and see the
folks. The sum he needs for transportation runs from
ten to twenty-five dollars - whatever the swindler
thinks he can get. And he usually gets it. To stop
his racket, the Army warns: ~~be on the~~ lookout for the
phoney sergeant. — the most abysmal
rascal of all.

SINKING

You often hear how people have lost pounds of weight in a short time - ⁱⁿ a strenuous ~~time~~ ordeal and exertion. Today we have an account of ten pounds lost in one hour - and it's a story of desperate melodrama at sea.

Out in the Atlantic, a cargo steamer, the CITY OF FLINT, was sunk by a Nazi U-boat, and aboard the vessel was Lieutenant Henry Benton of Monson, Massachusetts. When the torpedo hit, Lieutenant Benton started toward the stern of the vessel, and took a jump to ^a ~~the~~ lower deck. His foot caught in an obstruction, and was jammed. He struggled with all his strength, but couldn't get it loose - and the ship was sinking rapidly. It looked as if he, with his foot caught, would be taken down with the foundering boat.

Three sailors dashed by, making their escape. One saw the Lieutenant's predicament and gave him a

Violent
~~with~~ pull - a successful pull, dragging his foot loose.

Whereupon the Lieutenant ran to the stern to jump.

He saw the water ablaze below, oil from the ship ~~was~~ burning on the sea on all sides. ~~and it looked like the doom of jumping into a blazing inferno~~

However, the Lieutenant noted that in between the ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ expanses of glaring flame, were some spaces and lanes of black; - narrow stretches of water over which the burning oil hadn't yet spread. ~~There were streaks of black here and there, and he thought that, swimming, he could make his way through it, follow paths of water without fire, and get clear beyond the flames.~~ So he dived in, and swam through lanes between the blaze. At times, the fiery spaces seemed as if they would close in on him, and more than once the flames came so near that he had to push them away - beating the water with his hands to send the burning

oil drifting ~~away~~ ^{off}

Thus he succeeded in getting through black paths between the glare of fire on the sea, ~~and swam~~ out into open water, ^{he swam, where} ~~there~~ a lifeboat picked him up.

Just then, however, the ship began to explode, its cargo of ammunition blowing up. ~~A million~~ ^{Myriads} ~~a~~ projectiles were hurled, and in the lifeboat they had to dodge, as if from a barrage of enemy fire.

They got away from that, and were quickly taken aboard another ship. Lieutenant Benton's ordeal had lasted for just an hour, and he found he had lost ten pounds of weight.

SCIENCE

Tonight we should summon ^{the} a ghost of the Ancient Mariner, ~~a spook of that legendary sea goer,~~ ^{and} ~~and~~ hear him mutter:- "Water, water everywhere, and never a drop to drink!" With that cadence of words did the Poet Coleridge evoke one of the oldest and most frightful of human tragedies - the fate of castaways who perish of thirst on the sea. ^{Today,} ~~The irony~~

~~of it has always mocked men who navigate on the ocean.~~

~~"Water, Water everywhere, but never a drop to drink."~~

~~That, however, will not be the case in the future judging from a report today that tells of some chemical research that has just been completed.~~

Dr. Alex Goetz of the California Institute of Technology, states ^d that he has ^s developed a chemical formula for purifying sea water. You just add some medicine to the salty brine of the deep and - presto, chango, it's fit to drink!

~~Dr. Goetz stated today that the new chemical process is a military secret, but told enough to indicate that his way to turn sea water into drinking water is exceedingly simple.~~ Only two containers are necessary - like a couple of buckets. You get ⁹~~the~~ bucket full out of the ocean and add some chemical. This precipitates the poisonous material. Then you pour the water into the other bucket and add some other chemical, - and ~~you can~~ go ahead and drink, ~~as much as you like.~~ ~~"It's as simple as pouring water from one sea boat to another," says the Doctor.~~

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The process takes about two hours, and a container ~~xxxx~~ of the chemicals about the size of a pack of cigarettes is enough to purify ~~about~~ two quarts. So I hope that tonight the shade of the Ancient Mariner is hovering somewhere near, ~~xxx~~ ^Hearing about the new way to sweeten the salty ~~of the~~ brine of the

sea, ~~and~~ he'll stop growling in his beard, "Water,
Water everywhere and never a drop to drink."