

This sincere wish for you, Reader, goes out today from the hearts of those who produce your daily Oregon Statesman—the editors, business staff, reporters, printers and pressmen, and the carrier boys who deliver your favorite paper on your doorstep or to the postoffice for forwarding by mail.

Admiral Darlan Assassinated

Reds Drive in Caucasus; Killer Captured, Unidentified; Death May Solve Diplomacy

Airmen Sink 3 Jap Ships Off Guinea

ALLIES PENETRATE TO LAST JAP DEFENSE LINE, BUINA AREA. By C. YATES McDANIEL. ALLIED HEADQUARTERS IN AUSTRALIA, Friday, Dec. 25.—(AP)—Allied airmen have sunk a Japanese destroyer, a transport and a cargo ship to the north of New Guinea in the most widespread air sweeps in the southwest Pacific in many weeks, while American and Australian ground forces have penetrated to what an official communique Friday described as "the last line" of Japanese defenses in the Buna area.

Ranging over the waters to the northwest and north of Australia, Gen. Douglas MacArthur's airmen shot down six Japanese planes and damaged five others in nine separate sorties. These attacks carried the allied planes over the principal enemy operational bases in the islands from Timor to New Ireland.

Attacking from both flanks, Australian and American infantry, backed by tanks, artillery and mortars, Friday smashed through the enemy's outer defenses around the Buna government station. At nightfall the allies controlled practically all of the main airfield at Buna and had the Japanese pinned down to a coastal strip about a mile long and between 500 and 600 yards deep.

The communique warned, however, that this confined space was "a prepared and fortified citadel of resistance."

In a series of hard-hitting attacks at Japanese shipping north (Turn to Page 2-B)

Workers' Bus Skids, Kills Two in East

BALTIMORE, Dec. 24.—(AP)—A bus carrying graveyard shift workers to Martin aircraft three hours early so they might be home again in time to greet the Christmas dawn careened into an icy ravine Tuesday night bringing death to two and injury to 30.

Dead are Thelma Fish, 45-year-old mother, and Irwin R. Shanefelter, 44, the bus driver. Those injured in the wreck were rushed to Union Memorial hospital and placed in an emergency receiving hall set up in the auditorium of the nurses' home.

Doctors said shortly before midnight three were in critical condition; six others seriously injured and "under very close observation." Five were released after treatment.

Wesley Dood, one of the least injured, declared "It felt as though we had gone into a hole in the road." Witnesses at the scene said it was a "miracle" a live wire exposed when the skidding bus hit a power pole did not set fire to gasoline spilled on Herring Run creek at the bottom of the 20-foot ravine.

No Santa Claus? Read This Ere You Decide

KLAMATH FALLS, Dec. 24 (AP)—If there isn't a Santa Claus, how do you explain this one? A mother of three children Wednesday debated whether to spend her last \$20 on the past due rent or on Christmas presents for her children. The latter urge won.

This morning there was a knock on the door. She opened it and a man handed her an envelope. In it was a \$20 bill. The woman said she did not know the identity of her benefactor or what prompted him to give her the money.

French Coming From South

ALLIES THROW ENEMY OFF HILL; ROMMEL FLIGHT UNBROKEN

LONDON, Friday, Dec. 25.—(AP)—Fighting French communique broadcast early Friday by the Brazzaville radio said French forces coming up from the Lake Chad region had routed an axis motorized detachment in the region of Fezzan.

This was the third report of an encounter in the Fezzan territory, which is formed by several oases in the middle of the north-central African desert, generally in the vicinity of the corner of Libya, Algeria and French West Africa.

The latest apparently authentic report was of a skirmish at Djanet almost precisely in the three-country corner.

By The Associated Press. LONDON, Dec. 24.—(AP)—Allied soldiers fighting in the rain and mud of central Tunisia have thrown the enemy out of a height dominating the important junction point of Medjez-El-Bab, 35 miles southwest of Tunis, allied headquarters reported from north Africa Thursday night as the British Eighth army doggedly pursued Field Marshal Rommel westward across Libya.

An allied command communique announced the capture of the heights and added that allied troops held it against counterattacks by the enemy.

Dispatches from allied headquarters in north Africa pointed out that this was the first significant offensive action reported on the central Tunisian battlefield in two weeks.

The allied command also said there was patrol activity on the northern sector of the Tunisian front while on the southern sector (Turn to Page 2-E)

No Suspension Of Gasoline Sale Planned

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.—(AP)—The office of price administration and the petroleum administration for war issued a joint statement Thursday urging the public, in its own interest, not to start runs on gasoline filling stations. The statement follows:

"There have been in circulation rumors to the effect that the office of price administration is about to issue another order suspending sale of gasoline to the public.

Fourth Push Gains; Don Area Clears

By HENRY C. CASSIDY. MOSCOW, Friday, Dec. 25 (AP)—The fourth major soviet winter offensive, in the critical Nalchik area of the Caucasus, was announced early Friday by the Russians and the total enemy killed and captured in the continuing advance in the middle Don area of the third offensive mounted to 92,999 nazis and satellites.

A special communique of the soviet bureau of information said the new Caucasus offensive already had regained 12 to 14 miles in that sector, where the Germans had attempted to break through the mountains to the oil riches beyond.

The new action in the deep Caucasus was the first important battle since the Russians stopped a German attempt to push to the vital Georgian military highway through some of the world's tallest mountains.

"Recently our troops in the area southeast of Nalchik went over to the offensive and advanced 18 to 20 kilometers (12 to 14 miles)," the special announcement said.

It announced the recapture of Alagir, 40 miles southeast of Nalchik, Ardou, 25 miles northwest of Ordzhonikidze, and three other large populated places.

In the Don, the communique indicated, the Russians are driving out the Germans faster than they came in.

The red army Thursday gained from 13 to 16 miles, the communique said, for a total eight-day advance of from 85 to 120 miles in the middle Don.

The Russians announced the capture Thursday of 5600 men, bringing the Don offensive total to 42,200 and said that on Wednesday the enemy left more than 6000 dead on the battlefield, raising to 50,000 the enemy dead so far announced for that sector.

In the Don area, the Russians further said they had occupied "several dozen populated places" and two large railway stations.

Again, in the regular midnight communique the soviet command described its troops as "pursuing the retreating enemy, and inflicting heavy losses upon him.

"In several sectors," it was added, "the enemy attempted to stem the advance of our troops and carried out several counterattacks. All enemy counterattacks were repelled."

In the battle for a single town—Volovoloshina—which was wrested from the invader on Wednesday, Friday's Russian communique reported that 3000 nazis were killed.

Giraud Seen Most Likely As Successor

Fighting French Hold Enmity; Allies Seek Unity for French. By ROBERT E. BUNNELLE. LONDON, Friday, Dec. 25 (AP)—The assassination of Admiral Darlan may have settled in one stroke the most difficult diplomatic problem which has confronted the allies since the beginning of the war.

The death of the former collaboratorist wrote a bloody new chapter in unfortunate France's participation in the present war, which has reached one sensational climax after another.

Elimination of Darlan from the North African political scene came at a moment when allied leaders in London and Algiers were reliably reported exerting all efforts to obtain unity of all French forces in opposition to the axis.

It was reported only Thursday that the Fighting French, who had bitterly opposed Darlan, were sending a commission to North Africa to investigate the situation with a view of uniting with other French patriots, though preferably not under the leadership of Darlan.

Presumably with the death of Darlan the British, American and Fighting French leaders all would attempt to find a man upon whom every faction of Free France could agree.

It was considered possible in London that Gen. Henri Honore Giraud, who has been serving as (Turn to Page 2-D)

Governmental Pay Increase Bill Signed

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.—(AP)—President Roosevelt Thursday signed the bill providing pay increases for most governmental employees and simultaneously ordered a six-day, 48-hour week for them.

This represented a four-hour increase in the working week of most agencies and the president ordered a corresponding reduction in personnel. The bill removed "the peacetime luxury of the Saturday half holiday," in Mr. Roosevelt's words, by eliminating a provision that compensatory time off must be given for hours beyond four worked on Saturday.

In directing department heads to institute a general six-day 48-hour week, Mr. Roosevelt wrote in a memorandum:

"Obviously this will permit reductions of personnel in some agencies and eliminate the necessity for filling vacant positions in others. I am expecting you to take immediate steps to bring about a reduction in your personnel staffs."

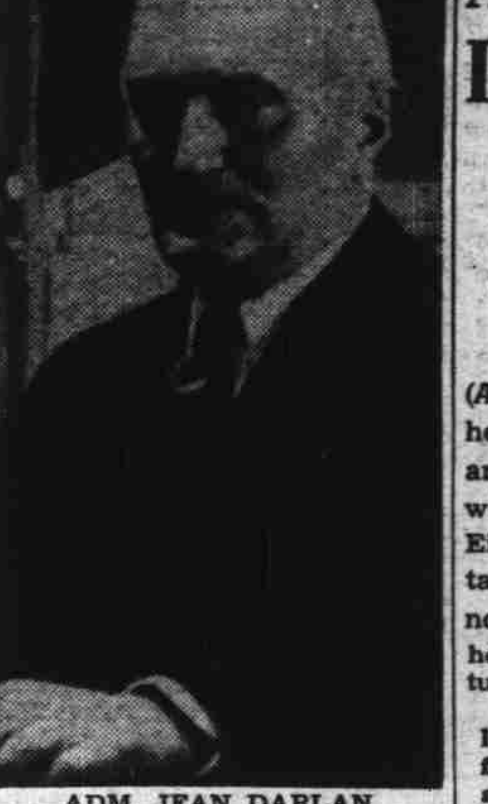
The president further directed that "red tape" be cut and that government activities be "stripped of every non-essential."

The bill provides overtime pay for hours beyond 40 a week at the rate of time and a half on the basis of the first \$2900 of annual salary. In lieu of overtime, a 10 per cent raise is granted in pay up to \$2900 for legislative and judicial employees and workers paid on mileage, postal receipts, fees or other than a time basis. About 1,500,000 employees are affected.

The new pay basis is retroactive to December 1 and will continue until April 30. By that time congress is expected to pass more comprehensive legislation.

Trees Glance off South Santiam Bus. ALBANY, Dec. 24.—(AP)—Enoch Cunningham, Halsey, driver of an Albany-Bend bus, saved himself and eight passengers from injury Thursday by reversing his machine when he saw two large trees falling across the South Santiam highway east of Soter. He backed 20 feet and the bus was hit only a glancing blow by one of the trees.

Murdered



ADM. JEAN DARLAN

FR Denounces Darlan Murder

WASHINGTON SHOCKED; AXIS PROPAGANDA CHANCES SEEN. WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.—(AP)—President Roosevelt Thursday night denounced the assassination of Adm. Jean Darlan as "murder in the first degree."

"The cowardly assassination of Admiral Darlan is murder in the first degree. All leaders of all the United Nations will agree with that statement."

"Nazism and fascism and military despotism hold otherwise. I hope that speedy justice will overtake the murderer or murderers of Admiral Darlan."

The news of the slaying of the former Vichy leader who became a co-worker of the American forces in north Africa was relayed to Mr. Roosevelt while he was in the midst of Christmas eve observance at the White House.

The president immediately put all other considerations aside to compose his statement and hand it to Stephen Early, presidential secretary, for distribution to the press.

The assassination came as a shock to the whole capital, even to those who questioned the wisdom of American dealings with Darlan. Fighting French officials here were among those who expressed a sense of shock. Pending receipt of further details, however, they (Turn to Page 2-C)

French Send Supply Aide

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.—(AP)—Gen. Emile Bethouart, French hero of two wars, arrived here Thursday as head of a military supply mission for the French forces in north Africa.

His primary function, it was understood, will be to advise war department officials on the needs of the French African troops fighting with the allies and the types of equipment they have been trained to use.

Official announcements did not specify the exact status of the mission or the machinery by which its supplies would be furnished. Since the mission came here under the auspices of the war department, however, it was believed that its supplies would be allocated by the assignment to the French forces of army-owned equipment, rather than through lend-lease. Thus the reception of the mission apparently involved no political recognition of its principals, and no announcement was made by the state department.

Auto Takes Dive. When Howard Sherman, of the 1900 block, North Capitol street, missed the turn at 14th and Mission streets late Thursday afternoon, his car went into Shelton ditch. Although the first aid car was summoned, there was no injury to Sherman, who was alone at the time. His automobile was severely damaged.

Algiers Quiet After Civilian Leader Dies

Ex-Collaborationist Hit by Two Bullets In Africa Palace. By NOLAN NORGAARD. ALGIERS, Friday, Dec. 25 (AP)—Adm. Jean Darlan, civil head of French Africa under an arrangement of cooperation with US Lt. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, was shot and mortally wounded Thursday afternoon in the government palace here by an assassin who was captured immediately.

Five shots rang out as Darlan was about to enter his office. Two bullets hit the former arch-collaborationist and he died within a few minutes while enroute to a hospital.

The killer's identity had not been learned by early Friday morning. He was questioned during the night.

The assassin, who was said to be about 22 years old, also wounded Darlan's aide, Commandant Hourcade, when the latter tried to capture him.

Credit for the actual capture was given to Darlan's chauffeur, Adj. Andre Vulchard, who seized the assassin.

LONDON, Dec. 25.—(AP)—The Algiers radio announced Friday that "maintenance of order" in French north Africa had been "taken over" by Gen. Henri Honoré Giraud following the assassination of Adm. Jean Darlan.

Giraud has been acting as commander of the French armed forces in north Africa since the allies arrived there and has been fighting side by side with them against the Germans. He made a spectacular escape from occupied France in a British submarine just before the allies entered north Africa, and immediately on his arrival in north Africa issued an appeal to all French nationals to rally to the allied cause.

The killer as he leaped over the admiral's body and attempted to escape.

The first of the two shots which struck Darlan wounded him in the mouth and the second penetrated a lung. It was this shot which proved fatal.

A communique issued by French authorities here said it was not known whether the assassination was "of German or Italian origin."

The communique said the nationality of the man who killed the former commander of all Vichy forces was not known.

(Reuters reported that a broadcast from Algiers identified the assassin as a 20-year-old Frenchman.)

Despite the shock of the high commissioner's death, and the manner in which he died the city of Algiers maintained complete order. The French communique mentioned, however, "the indignation of the population."

Gen. Jean Marie Bergeret, former secretary of aviation and now member of the imperial council which is governing north Africa, announced that Darlan's death "demands that we unite all French forces for the only fight that counts today, the liberation of France. All attempts at dividing the population will be crushed."

The text of the communique issued by the French authorities follows: "Admiral Darlan, high commissioner for French Africa, was assassinated this (Thursday) afternoon soon after 3 o'clock at the offices of the high commissariat. "He died on the way to the hospital. "The assassin was arrested on the spot. "Complete order reigns in Algiers notwithstanding the general indignation of the population. "The assassin was immediately interrogated but his name is as yet unknown. It is not known whether the assassination was of German or Italian origin. The nationality of the assassin is unknown. "At the same time the allied forces headquarters issued the following communique: "Admiral Darlan, high commissioner (Turn to Page 2-A)

Salem to Entertain Men Of Service at Yuletide

Christmas thoughts extend to far parts of the world from Salem today as the capital's citizens worship the Prince of Peace in their churches and demonstrate His spirit of good will to guests—many of them in uniform—in their homes.

It's a Christmas different from that dark and tense day a year ago, when fewer of the community's men had gone away into the nation's service, but the hope for victory was darker and the uncertainty of civilians accentuated by the newness of this new kind of global war.

The unprecedented bustle of activity that has prevailed in stores and shops and malling places in recent weeks has not been able to overshadow the needs of lonely service men and of hungry families.

Hundreds of soldiers from Camp Adair will enjoy Christmas dinners in Salem homes, through the cooperation of the USO. The service agency's office Thursday had definitely filled more than 300 such invitations. And service men who wander into the USO today will find a register in which to enter their names if they wish such an invitation and to which residents of the city may go if they have vacant chairs which they desire to fill at Yuletide tables.

Some apprehension was being felt, however, lest visiting soldiers who have no invitations to homes might find it difficult to obtain meals at downtown eating places, many of which were planning to close for the day to give a needed holiday to rush-weary employees. Only three major downtown restaurants were reported as planning to serve meals today.

More than 50 needy families were supplied Thursday by the Salvation Army with shopping bags filled with provisions for a full dinner, Adj. E. T. Hill reported. Their menus as a result will include generous helpings of meat, potatoes, vegetables, fruits and nuts. A number of individuals and clubs filled similar orders after obtaining the names of families from the "Army."

Deserving cases of need are still to be found despite the general money prosperity of the times, Adj. Hill declared. They exist among elderly people, families in which there has been protracted illness and service men's families whose dependency benefits have not yet begun to come through.

This is to be a real day of rest for the city's hurried postal crews, Postmaster H. R. Crawford said Thursday. No deliveries will be made other than of special delivery parcels and perishable goods.

All Christmas packages on hand at the postoffice up to Thursday night had been delivered, with the exception of those that were improperly addressed.

This season's Christmas mail volume was estimated by the postmaster at nearly 25 per cent above that of last year, which was a record year. In terms of postal receipts, \$45,985.86 was received by the postoffice during the first 23 days of this month in contrast with \$383,094.77 for the same period a year ago.

War World Notes Christmas; Pope, Roosevelt Give Talks

By The Associated Press. A world at war today celebrates the birthday of the Prince of Peace.

While spiritual, civil and military leaders on Thursday voiced messages of hope and blessing, United Nations fighting men carried the observance of Christ's birthday to strange far lands, or celebrated where it was an age-old story.

It was a heartening holiday for the United Nations generally, contrasting with the horror and heartache and darkening future of Hitler-enslaved Europe which Nazi propaganda broadcasts failed to mask.

with less confidence in the success of their evil ways." The president told the nation's armed forces that "You are in the thoughts of your families and friends at home, and that Christmas prayers follow you wherever you may be."

He greeted the armed forces and merchant sailors of the United Nations and told those at remote islands and bases that they were "essential to the ultimate victory—and that we have not forgotten them."

"To all Americans," he said, "I say that loving our neighbors as we love ourselves is not enough—that we as a nation and as individuals will please God best by showing regard for the laws of God. There is no better way of fostering good-will toward men than by first fostering good-will toward God. If we love Him we will keep His commandments. (Turn to Page 2-A)