

WAR SETBACK SERIOUS

Nazi Counterblow Grows Steadily In Fierce Attack

News Blackout Lifted to Reveal 14-15 Enemy Divisions Swarming Through Breach in U. S. Lines

By NEDVILLE NORDNESS

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, Paris, Dec. 20—(AP)—The gigantic German counter-offensive is "the big thing" and is increasing steadily in fury, supreme headquarters said late tonight in lifting the blackout of news relating to the savage fighting on the US First army front.

Fourteen to 15 German divisions—of which five or six are panzer (armored) divisions—are swarming into the breach of the First army's lines in Belgium and Luxembourg, it was disclosed.

Today fresh infantry waves were fighting behind the armored units which first smashed through the American positions last Sunday and headquarters said the German advances had made considerable progress with more to be expected.

Allies Lay Plans Plans are being made to stem the onslaught, it was stated, but the feeling at this headquarters was that the situation would not be restored this week—or even next week.

Appalling bad weather today kept allied air forces on the ground, thus eliminating support which the American troops sorely needed. No heavy bombers could leave their British bases and not a single fighter-bomber got into the air during the day to help the hard-pressed doughboys.

Nazis Use Vets Some of the panzer units spearheading the German drive are first class fighters, veterans of units which faced the allies at Caen, it was disclosed. They have been reorganized and refitted for this great do-or-die German counter-offensive and now are fresh and physically fit.

The German infantry divisions are mostly made up of Volksgrenadiers, Hitler's home guard. (If at full strength, as seems likely for this carefully-prepared German thrust, armored divisions would number about 10,000 men each and infantry up to 15,000, making a total force of up to 200,000 men in the first assault. No dispatches disclosed the nature or extent of the second wave just put into action.)

Crack American troops appeared to be stemming the onslaught at one point, but elsewhere the Nazi power gathered steadily, and a late Associated Press dispatch from the front said the situation along the entire 60-mile-wide line was "both confused and serious."

Another late dispatch from the Stavelot sector some 20 miles inside Belgium said both the Americans and the Germans were paying great prices in lives and material.

Monschau, German town at the extreme northern end of the enemy's assault, was recaptured by counterattacking Yank troops, who surrounded and presumably seized Nazi forces who had fought into the town. Monschau, 16 miles southeast of Aachen, was the jump-off point for a short-lived American attack last week.

Congress May Probe Large Scale Pilfering in Europe

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20—(AP) Reports that thefts of gasoline and food from supply lines has been a serious problem for American armies in Europe brought talk today of a congressional investigation.

Both senate and house committees evinced interest in press dispatches saying that pilfering of supplies reached such proportions at one time as to menace military operations, but had since been curbed.

Chamber Head



Loyal Warner

Loyal Warner New Head of Salem C. of C.

Loyal Warner, vice-president of the Salem chamber of commerce and recently re-elected director, was chosen president of the group for 1945, at a meeting of the directors Wednesday noon. He succeeds Carl Hogg.

W. L. Phillips was elected first vice-president; Linn Smith, second vice-president; Lester Barr, secretary, and Guy Hickok, treasurer.

The board appointed Director Ralph Campbell to head a committee named to draft a resolution commending Hogg's three-year leadership during which chamber membership was trebled and new industries drawn to this area.

Hogg, who remains a director, was named chairman of a newly-created committee to act with the post-war planning commission. Other committee chairmen: Industrial, Robert Elstrom; agriculture, Frank Doerflinger; legislative, Ralph Campbell; social, Dorothea Steusloff; membership, Ralph Johnson; publicity, F. W. Shepard; administrative, Grover Hillman; civic, Leo Childs; director-at-large, Lowell Kern.

Italy Based Planes Busy

LONDON, Dec. 20—(AP)—Flying Fortress and Liberator bombers of the 15th air force, based in Italy, smashed at strategic targets in Czechoslovakia, Austria and Germany for the sixth straight day, but bad weather strangled the allied British-based fighters and bombers sorely needed to combat German armor in Belgium.

Thunderbolts of the 15th also strafed gun positions and rail lines in the Spezia-Genoa area, struck at the Padua-Mestre district in northern Italy and swung north to the Brenner pass to cut the railroad at four places south of Trento.

Tito's Forces Reported In German-Held Zagreb

LONDON, Dec. 20—(AP)—The Swiss radio reported tonight without confirmation that Marshal Tito's partisans had broken into Zagreb, main German-held center in Yugoslavia. Tito's communiqué said yesterday his forces were near Zagreb.

WASP Transport Pilots Mustered from Service

LONG BEACH, Calif., Dec. 20—(AP)—Twenty WASPs of the Sixth ferrying group, mustered out of the service today, appealed to President Roosevelt and war department leaders for any flying duty within the United States for \$1 a year, but were turned down.

Weather

Maximum temperature Wednesday 42 degrees, minimum 32 degrees, 41 inch rain, river 3 1/2 in. Mostly cloudy Thursday and Friday with few light showers and west of Cascades Thursday night and Friday. Few snow flurries eastern periphery Friday. Little temperature change.

Blackout Of News Protested

SHAEF Promises Bigger View of Battle Situation

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCES, Paris, Dec. 20—(AP)—As protests poured in from almost all the allied world over the suppression of news of German gains on the western front, supreme headquarters pulled the curtain aside partly and promised a bigger view of the situation tomorrow.

The positions of the German and allied armies will in the future be made public once daily, it was announced—after a sufficient time lag to make sure the enemy will reap no benefit from the information.

This time lag is expected to be between 24 and 48 hours. Tomorrow's promised disclosures, therefore, will be of positions as they stood yesterday or today.

The supreme headquarters answer to critics of the news blackout has been that it was imposed on the basis of opinions of generals directing the fight and that information of the whereabouts of German troops, even if it were days late, might help the enemy.

George H. Lyon, OWI representative at supreme headquarters said tonight that he had been trying for 48 hours to get the army to let the people know what was happening on the battlefields, but without much success.

"In my opinion, the army is making a bigger mistake than it did in the Patton case (the incident of Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's slapping a soldier in Sicily)," Lyon said.

Snell to Hear Request on Folkes' Case

A request that the death sentence which hangs over Robert E. Lee Folkes, negro, for the "lower 13" slaying of Martha Virginia James in January, 1943, be commuted to life imprisonment will be heard here Friday afternoon by Gov. Earl Snell.

A delegation of Oregon citizens, whose request for a hearing from the governor was received in a letter from Folkes' attorneys, is expected to base its plea for leniency largely upon the dissenting supreme court opinion of Justice George Rossman. The opinion holds that there were sufficient errors in the Linn county circuit court trial to warrant a rehearing.

Former Solon Dies at Home

CONCORD, N.H., Dec. 20—(AP) George Higgins, former US senator from New Hampshire and once described as "the most exciting man in American public life, died tonight at his home. He was 75.

The widely known republican leader, who served three times in the United States senate, lost his seat in the democratic landslide of 1942.

He had been ill in a Concord hospital for over a year and had just returned to his home for the Christmas holidays when death came of coronary thrombosis.

Bomb Crashed Into Queen's Apartment

LONDON, Thursday, Dec. 21—(AP)—A bomb crashed through the roof of Buckingham palace and through the apartment of the queen in the early days of the London blitz, but failed to explode, it was disclosed today.

Superforts Blast Mukden Targets With Great Force

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21—(AP) Superfortresses in substantial force today pummeled industrial targets in Mukden, Manchuria.

Up to 60 B-29's of Maj. Gen. Curtis E. LeMay's 20th bomber command participated in the daylight strike against the Japanese-dominated puppet state. The war department announcement said a communiqué will be issued on the mission when results of operational reports are received from the theatre.

Valley Project Holds Priority For Post-War

Ed Lage, Hood River, was elected president of the Oregon Reclamation congress at the closing session Wednesday afternoon. George Cochran of LaGrande was made vice president and Art King of Corvallis secretary.

Directors elected are: First district—W. L. Powers, Corvallis; Frank Doerflinger, Salem; Chester Cumming, Salem; Dean Walker, Independence; U. S. Alderman, Dayton.

Second district—John N. Mohr; Hood River; Howard W. Turner, Madras; Olaf Morgan, Redmond; Frank T. Anderson, Nyssa; F. A. Baker, Umatilla.

Third district—Kenneth Miller, Lewis A. McArthur, Marshall N. Dans, A. S. Scrimmeier, Arthur Farmer, all of Portland.

Fourth district—Victor Boehl, Grants Pass; Charles Edwards, Eugene; Niel Allen, Grants Pass; William Tugman, Eugene; Ried Carter, Grants Pass.

Congressman James W. Mott, surprise visitor at the congress, said that the Willamette valley control project held one of the highest priorities and will probably be completed shortly after the war is over.

Eating Houses Close Monday

To the stranger within its gates, Salem will offer no wide variety of Christmas dinners in restaurants next Monday, it became apparent Wednesday as major establishments announced plans to close their doors that day.

Salem Restaurant Operators' association, which includes the Blue Bird, Sps, Schneider's, Marion hotel, Cherrito Inn, the Golden Pheasant and Hull's, has voted to give employees the day at home. Cline's Food shop and the Bright Spot of the food and beverage dispensers' organization will be closed for the holiday week.

P. M. Robinson New C-C Secretary at Albany

ALBANY, Dec. 20—(AP)—P. M. Robinson, former Portland Chamber of Commerce employe, will fill the vacancy left when Carl Curlee resigned as secretary of the Albany chamber.

Curlee originated a plan to rename Berlin, Ore., Distomo, honoring a Greek town destroyed by the nazis.

Meeting Sought By Eden

Churchill Says 'Big Three' Still In Full Accord

LONDON, Dec. 20—(AP)—Assuring the house of commons that Britain's bayonets would not impose a king on the Greeks, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden tonight eased political controversy over Britain's armed intervention after reports of differences among the three big Allied powers had received partial confirmation from Prime Minister Churchill himself.

Eden, apparently giving up hope for an immediate meeting of the big three but bent on finding a method of eliminating future misunderstandings, pleaded for re-establishment of quarterly meetings "between the foreign secretaries of the great powers as we used to have to deal with some of these matters."

His plea was entered only a few hours after Churchill, in grim reference to "this dangerous and momentous phase of the war," maintained that Britain, Russian and the United States were in "entire agreement about the general aims which bind our alliance," but admitted that "whether there is complete agreement on every aspect of these matters is another question altogether."

Churchill quickly side-stepped argument over whether the accord among the Allies could be applied to "spheres of influence."

One member pointedly asked him whether "he did not agree that there is a danger in implementation of proposals of the Dumbarton Oaks conference if certain powers assign themselves spheres of influence and other powers are not brought into co-operation during the war."

"I think that is a topic that obviously I should not attempt to deal with now," replied Churchill.

FR Signs Bill For Road Aid

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20—(AP) President Roosevelt signed today a bill authorizing a \$1,673,250,000 federal contribution toward a \$3,173,250,000 three-year postwar highway program.

And, in an accompanying statement, he praised congress for having "made possible advance planning of needed facilities on a sound basis."

"Now it becomes a challenge to the states, counties and cities which must originate the specific projects and get the program ready for construction after the war ends."

A-13 Gas Coupons Will Expire Today

Friday will be an unlucky day for holders of gasoline coupon A-13. The coupon, good for four gallons of gasoline, expires today, the OPA warned Wednesday night.

U. S. Consumers Spend Record Smashing 97 Billion in '44

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20—(AP) American consumers are ringing up a new spending record this year.

The commerce department estimated today that 97 billion dollars will have been spent for goods and services in 1944. That's six per cent bigger than last year. It's more than half again as big as 1939 spending, which totalled \$61,700,000,000.

Campaign Drawing To End

Nips Lose Last Ground Supply Route on Isle

GENERAL MACARTHUR'S HEADQUARTERS, Philippines, Thursday, Dec. 21—(AP)—The battle of Leyte island is "rapidly drawing to an end," Gen. Douglas MacArthur said today, announcing the complete destruction of the once-powerful Japanese Yamashita line on the northwest shoulder of the island.

The scattered enemy defenders' last ground supply route was lost when Yanks surging north up the single corridor road from Ormoc overran Liboguan where a road forks off to the Nippon supply port of Palompon.

The enemy's "cohesion is now completely broken," the communiqué said, "and he is no longer capable of an integrated defense."

Small remnants of the Japanese forces have been broken into isolated groups and are able to resist only temporarily and at isolated points.

Scattered Japanese forces are fleeing toward Palompon on Leyte's northwest coast, the only port remaining in enemy hands.

Destruction of the Yamashita line in the Ormoc corridor was accomplished when the 77th division, New York's own, advanced four miles north from Valencia, Japanese headquarters whose seizure was announced Wednesday, and took a road junction at the same time the first cavalry division drove south from Loney.

The cavalry seized Kananga and approached to within a mile of the 77th, completing the deadly squeeze play on the Japanese.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur reported counting another 1541 Japanese dead Wednesday.

The enemy also has lost six months supplies to the onrushing doughboys, making his supply problem more crucial.

Reds Advance Up to 5 Miles In Slovak Push

LONDON, Thursday, Dec. 21—(AP)—The Red army in advances up to five miles in southern Czechoslovakia yesterday captured 13 towns and cracked and outflanked the Germans' strong Slana river line in a drive aimed toward the citadel of Losonc.

The Moscow communique last night and a supplemental elaboration this morning said nothing of the encircling thrust against Kassa, where latest unofficial reports from Moscow had Soviet forces preparing for a climatic attack on the Torsya (Tarca) river fortifications two miles outside that communications center.

Moscow announced, however, that about a battalion (500) Germans were killed in the day's fighting on the front 45 to 60 miles southwest of Kassa and that the Russians were closely threatening the railway junction town of Rimaszombat from the south and east.

Chief of the day's captures was the town of Tornaia, 13 miles east of Rimaszombat and a stronghold of enemy defenses on the east bank of the Slana river. While the Russians had not yet crossed the Slana, which flows from north to south, they outflanked it on the west by crossing the eastward-flowing Rimava river.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20—(AP)—Paul A. Porter will become a member of the federal communications commission tomorrow under a recess appointment, FCC officials said tonight.

They said the publicity director for the Democratic national committee in the fall political campaign will take the oath at 11 a. m. His name would be expected to go before the next congress, convening in January.

IT SEEMS TO ME

By Chester A. Sprague

I see where some of the Multnomah senators are threatening to question the right of Merle Chessman of Clatsop county and John Carson and Frederick Lampport of Marion county to hold seats in the coming legislative assembly.

It is true the last senate recognized these appointees as senators only until November, 1944, but they can present their old certificates which remain valid as far as the county court is concerned. If the senate should declare the seats vacant the formalities of making new appointments would be gone through with, so the only probable result would be delay.

In the case of Senator Chessman, the protest would be based on the claim that a man cannot hold two offices at the same time. Chessman is member of the state highway commission by appointment of the governor as well as state senator. Since the senate is judge of the qualifications of its own members it can act as it sees fit. But it may be set down here that the senate will not eject Chessman, for two reasons: first, because of his personal standing, and second, because it would have to apply the same rule to Senator Strayer of Baker county, who also is a member.

Scobie Issues Stern Warning ELAS Group

ATHENS, Dec. 20—(AP)—Lt. Gen. R. M. Scobie, British commander in Greece announced tonight that as of 9 a. m. tomorrow any ELAS battalions still firing in Athens and Piraeus will be attacked "with all the arms at my disposal," and warned civilians to put 500 yards between themselves and leftist gun positions.

Jean Rallis, the pro-Nazi former premier who escaped from the Averoff prison two days ago after ELAS guns pounded the building for 12 hours, was arrested tonight.

In leaflets captioned "urgent warning" and dropped from RAF planes, the British commander announced that he intends to use machine guns, rocket weapons, bombs, land artillery, mortars and naval bombardment on an all-out scale in an effort to silence insurgent guns which have been active for 10 days.

Earlier there had been signs of an impending political development when men using megaphones in some ELAS-held areas announced that regular leftist forces soon would withdraw from Athens and Attica and that only reserve troops would surrender their arms.

Snell May Say Something on Nisei Return

Following the receipt Wednesday of the official army order, Gov. Earl Snell indicated he might have something to say shortly in connection with the return of Japanese Americans to the Pacific coast.

The governor previously had conferred with Governors Arthur Langlie of Washington and Earl Warren of California in the hope that the three coast states might decide upon some uniform action.

Warren said the Japanese Americans were entitled to protection under the constitutional rights the same as other citizens while Langlie declared it would be a mistake to allow the Japanese to return to the Pacific coast at this time.

German Officers Riot, 13 Make Escape from British Prison Camp

LONDON, Dec. 20—(AP)—Hundreds of German officers rioted and 13 escaped Monday night from a prison camp near Penkridge, Staffordshire, it was disclosed tonight.

The prisoners were believed to have been inspired by news of the German counteroffensive. All but one of those who escaped had been recaptured, although two got as far as Liverpool and were about to board a ship leaving England.

SHOPPING DAYS LEFT CLOSE TO THE ZERO HOUR BUY CHRISTMAS GIFTS