

The Oregon Statesman

"No Favor Sways Us; No Fear Shall Awe"
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Surprise on Western Front

We know so little of the facts about the German counter-offensive in the Belgium-Luxembourg sector that it is impossible for home front commentators to speak or write with any degree of authority. There has been almost a complete news blackout since the German blow struck. Insofar as this news-suppression may be needed to conceal information from the enemy, we are ready to acquiesce in the censorship. But if it is merely to save the people at home from bad news and let it seep out gradually, or if it is to cover up bad performance on the part of American officers or units, then we do not like it. The fact that the OWI representative has been working to get release of fuller information indicates that the censorship is not due strictly to desire for security.

What has been conceded is that the Germans have launched and carried forward a massive counter-attack, supporting it with sufficient strength to carry it for 35 miles, through a breach in our lines of some 60 or 70 miles. That is a mighty blow. The preparation of it must have taken weeks. The real mystery is over the surprise which evidently was inflicted on the first army.

To learn what the enemy is doing or is planning is the job of army intelligence. If this section gives accurate information the commanders can dispose their forces to meet the anticipated thrust. Intelligence depends on reports of various kinds, and now uses aerial reconnaissance extensively. Just how Germany could pile up such strength of eight or nine infantry divisions and five or six armored divisions without detection is what we do not understand. It is true that fog has kept our planes grounded much of the time, but it would seem that observation planes could have done patrol work enough to spot troop movements on such a scale and concentrations of armor. We will be getting fuller reports from correspondents soon, we hope, and then may get the full story of the surprise. It may not be a pretty one.

Americans are warned that this thrust is a "big thing." While it will not do for us to get panicky, the situation is serious because of its losses and because it may prolong the war for many months. But we must brace ourselves both for the reverses and for the casualties. We can hope, too, that this German expenditure will exhaust their strength so much that the war's end may be hastened in consequence.

No Mass Return of Japs

There will not be mass migration of Japanese back to the west coast. Thousands of former residents who were moved from the coast back in 1942 have established themselves in other parts of the country. They will not want to return. A very considerable number now reside in Chicago, running small hotels and rooming houses and engaging in the occupations as they did on the west coast.

Returning Japanese would find it hard to obtain housing here, unless they owned houses or had leases on them, which was not permitted to alien Japanese. Moreover, they do not want to come back if they are in physical danger or if the community is set against them.

Those who own property here, and many do, will want to come back to recover their property. This will be true of Japanese farmers; and if they return their rights must be respected.

Undoubtedly a question will arise over the damages done to Japanese-Americans by the evacuation order. One estimate is that claims up to \$400,000,000 will be filed against the government. Those who were citizens with no record of disloyalty can claim damages for loss of property or business or earnings of same because they were removed as a war necessity. Aliens probably have no right of recovery.

No recognition of such claims has been given, but without doubt pressure will come for such recognition. In the end congress may appoint some agency to examine such claims for damage, and provide funds to pay the approved claims.

Editorial Comment

TIME TO SPEAK UP

If the Army and Navy Journal purports to speak authoritatively though not officially from the viewpoint of the armed forces, and it does, it has certainly performed a most egregious disservice both for itself and for the Army and the Navy whose interests it presumably has at heart. The allegation, published recently, that the Allies have failed to break through on the Western front largely because of British and Russian preoccupation with political considerations in the Mediterranean and the Balkans, respectively, would have been in rather poor taste and inexpedient, to put it mildly, if uttered by a strictly civilian commentator. Coming from a source which implies some reflection of Army or Navy views, it is inexcusable.

Such a statement could put the American armed forces under the suspicion of disclaiming responsibility for their own difficulties and hastening to lay the blame on other shoulders. That is not in accord with the Army and Navy tradition of sportsmanship; it is like blaming a team-mate for delaying a touchdown. The American public understands the difficulties which the Allied armies have faced on the Western Front and there has been very little disposition to criticize the military leadership. Even if there were, we believe the overwhelming majority of Army and Navy men would wish to accept their fair share of the blame and defend themselves directly against any excess.

But the statement has been made and stands, unfortunately, in black and white. It seems up to the Army and Navy now to officially repudiate the Journal's viewpoint and thus free themselves, as well as the country, from its somewhat shoddy implications.—Christian Science Monitor.

"Down to Dover"

Our "staff correspondent" in London writes about a trip to Dover, the much-bombed and shelled city on the English channel. From his letter we quote:

"Yesterday, more or less in a mood to get out of town at any cost, I took a train for Dover in pouring rain, which continued until I got there—or, rather, went through there. The ticket said there were two stations, 'Priory' and 'Marine.' I decided I'd like to get off at Marine, but found myself five miles out of town on the way to Deal before I realized we weren't going to 'Marine.' I inquired about buses at a nearby pub, then legged a mile or so along a wet asphalt road through fields to the nearest village of St. Margarets, which lies in a swale about a mile back from the lip of the chalk cliffs. There, in an inconspicuously musty old hotel, I had a not-too-bad lunch with, by chance, a British chaplain of captain's rank who happened to come in. He remarked about having some ribs broken in an auto accident in Belgium in September. I asked about life in the army, and we had a pleasant chat. . . .

"Anyway, from St. Margarets I went by bus to Dover, where on general principles and to see the town best from the height, I first visited the castle. It's a military establishment, of course, as all castles are in this country, but the sergeant-major sentry or officer of the guard took a fairly good view of my navy card and an Admiralty pass I had along, and let me in. Once in, I could beat around as I wanted to; and in fact found the castle deserted completely. I wound up in a medieval stone stairway in one of the towers, and finally came out on the roof, quite the finest sightseer's perch in the neighborhood.

"You could look down on the town and see the sad sight induced by four years' off-and-on shelling from the French side, which, by the way, is invisible. Later, after looking about the castle a bit more, and at the still standing Roman lighthouse at the edge of the bluff, I came down into the town and saw the rows of musty, caved-in houses, chipped and torn-away walls, and littered piles of mouldering plaster and pulverized brick which the Germans had left there, without ever themselves having seen the place except from the air—and that at their imminent peril.

"The town is knocked about, and more than one street had hardly an inhabited building, but instead the sort of decaying remains of once reasonably stout business- and shop-structures. There was even a smell, as of disintegration, still lingering in the damp, mildewed interiors. "Like all British towns, the place didn't have, so far as I could find, and I tramped about for three hours, a single hotel open for tea on Sunday, and nothing else, either, except a cinema after five o'clock. I did finally find a bakery shop that was serving food of a sort, and had a meal before getting on a train back, where I chewed the rag with a couple of British officers on the subject of small arms."

To holders of 'A' gasoline cards, today is Christmas, because the No. 14 coupons become valid.

Interpreting The War News

KIRKE L. SIMPSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS WAR ANALYST

Official Allied disclosure that the Nazi counter-attack in Belgium had stabbed to within 18 miles of the vital Liege communications hub has an ominous sound unless it is recalled that the news was two days old.

What happened in the subsequent 48 hours is what really mattered. Military security still cloaked the details except for piecemeal and more nearly up to date bits of front line information from correspondents drifting back from the American First army command centers.

Checking those advances on the maps, there is nothing to indicate that the 35-mile deep puncture in American lines there is wide enough to be menacing. Key towns along its whole northern flank have been held or retaken, by American troops.

That First army "counter measures" reported in process relate particularly to that front, covering the southern perimeter of the Aachen bulge and the Liege and Maasticht crossings of the Meuse goes without saying. That stretch of the counter-attack front—from Monschau east of the reich frontier to the point 35 miles to the west where a Nazi armored spearhead has cut the Liege-Bastogne-Arion highway in Belgium to the come closest to Liege—probably holds the key to the ultimate result of the bold and risky German venture.

Along that front American forces currently are reported holding all important towns and villages including Monschau, Butgenbach, Malmédy and Stavelot. The line appears to conform generally to the route of an eastern feeder of the Liege-Luxembourg railway most if not all of which is in American hands to provide quick lateral communications at the front.

The second day Nazi penetration southwest of Stavelot, disclosed by a further limited lifting of the Allied news blockade, was westward, not to the north. It is to the north that the danger to Allied communications with the Aachen bulge lies and it is there also, within the bulge, that the whole American Ninth army and the left wing of the American First army are concentrated.

Due south of Malmédy American troops also held St. Vith at last reports. If so the base of the German salient driven across the Liege-Bastogne highway is less than 5 miles in width at that point. It is dangerously narrow for its depth, obviously inviting cutting off attacks from the northern flank. Loss of the use of the Liege-Bastogne highway along the northern section of the front is the most serious result of the new two-day-old German penetration. It was a very useful link connecting the two wings of the First army; but not an indispensable one. The Liege-Bastogne railway and a western loop of the Liege-Bastogne highway running by way of Marche still closely join the north and south elements of the First army, well behind the active front.

Press reports from Allied main headquarters appear to reflect Allied staff acceptance of the view of most military writers that the German counter-attack is being contained but still has not been definitely checked.

There is little doubt remaining, however, that the foe has accomplished his chief indicated purpose and brought the great Allied winter offensive drive at least to a temporary halt. General Eisenhower's plans will have to be recast even if the Nazi drive in Belgium and Luxembourg is finally sealed off.



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A Tip From Uncle Sam

The Literary Guidepost

By John Selby

"SITUATION NORMAL," by Arthur Miller (Reynal & Hitchcock: \$7).

Quite a while back a certain movie producer sent Arthur Miller out into the world of the military camps with an idea. The idea was that it would be nice to produce a movie that really did express the soldier—the kind of movie that could be shown in Army camps without rousing horselaughs all over the place. Mr. Miller was a good choice for that sort of assignment. He's not very old, he had some experience knocking about the world, and he has a certain amount of what the universities still call education. There were two more qualifications, too. One was that he has a ready sympathy which he is not ashamed to show, and the other is that he can write. Really write. This does not mean that Mr. Miller is one to whip adjectives all over the corral. It means that when he starts out to describe a man or a situation or an emotion, the thing stays described.

He was interested in the enlisted men, but writes well about their officers. He finds a great number of little things that never seem to get into print—the resentment between paratrooper and ordinary air-borne man, for one small illustration. The former gets twice the pay of the latter. Miller can go out on night maneuvers, and draw from them a set of wonderful pictures, such as the bored men sitting around in the blackout, smoking with their heads drawn down into their overcoats; such as a clever colonel handling his erring lieutenants so expertly that not one man even flushed when corrected.

Boys being outfitted, mumbling about camp in the vague state between civilian and soldier, boys watching expert actors show them how to do things and how not to do them, lonely boys, young racketeers, praying boys and cussing boys—all of them are drawn in all kindness. Mr. Miller does not do much conclusion findings, but when he does, they are good conclusions. He thinks, for example, that our men should know better what the war's about.

Oregon Ship to Launch Victory Ship West Linn

PORTLAND, Dec. 20. — (AP) — Oregon Shipbuilding corporation today launched the West Linn, first of two victory ships to be named for Oregon towns. Launching of the La Grande is planned for January.

"THE YOUNG IDEA" By Mossler



"Learning this stuff's silly, mom, what with the coming of the postwar kitchen!"

The News Behind the News

By PAUL MALLON

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 21.—Mr. Churchill's cold cutting of the Curzon line through Poland came as a shock to the public, but not to the diplomats.

A year or more ago even the newspaper men in London knew Britain had an understanding with Russia for this very Stalin acquisition of pre-war Polish territory. They were not permitted to write it publicly, but they discussed it freely among themselves.

The deal was reached long back before the recent Churchill and Eden visits to Moscow, perhaps as far back as the Tehran conference, as now reported. The European diplomatic game for practically the past two years has been directed on this phase, toward working the exiled Polish government in London around to acceptance of the Curzon cutting.

There was not much deception in Churchill's position. Last January and February he publicly implored the London Poles to accept the western Curzon slice.

The sensational way he presented it to parliament as a cold cut finally acceptable to him may have been inspired by a different motive. To shove it forward on the table now showed up the opposition which was pressing him on the Greek affair.

His own liberals, laborites and trade unionists (and our new dealers) had been reprimanding him for opposing the left wing and communists elements in Greece so he presented them with the Polish case in which he had sold out to those elements. Such adroit politics rather nullified their campaign against him on the Greek matter.

Here no one knows what to say (see state department announcement of Monday). Or rather they know what they are eager to say, but doubt if it would do any good.

Republican Senator Vandenberg walked around all last week with a speech obviously sticking out on his chest. He could barely restrain himself day by day, saying he was delaying presentation of his views because he did not know whether it would help or hurt the situation to offer them—and he delivered only half yesterday.

The disillusioning fact of the matter was that Britain went to war to save Poland. That is how this war started. While the British and French were in Moscow trying to make a deal with Stalin, Hitler announced a non-aggression pact with him (August 21, 1939) to run for ten years whereby neither would oppose the other. This no doubt called for division of Poland because Russia moved in and took her half less than a month later.

Meantime Hitler invaded his half of Poland (Sept. 1) and Britain declared war two days later when Hitler did not answer Chamberlain's ultimatum to withdraw Nazi troops from Polish soil (Britain had a treaty with the Poles undertaking to protect them.)

But the British do not now feel or act disillusioned. History may measure Churchill's conciliation against the British war cause, but the people everywhere since 1939 have been impressed with Russia's subsequent success in resisting Nazi invasion of her own soil and have come to accept the theory that she deserves anything reasonable on her western frontier, although the concession violates every American position on the war from the Atlantic charter to the Stettinius announcement a few weeks back urging free determination of their governments by European peoples without outside influence.

The Stettinius statement was issued in respect to Italy and Greece, where the British were interfering, but no exception was mentioned of Poland which the Russians are taking.

Now "freedom of peoples" is a policy which the United States can permanently defend. It has solid moral background. But Churchill and Stalin are working toward something contrary—division of spheres of major-nation influence over people. That is a course of expediency, justifiable by present day facts, but without any moral ground whatsoever.

For example, it is quite true a fully free Poland will remain an illusion as long as Russia, with its overpowering army, exists alongside her. Thus it is physically impossible to have what we want—at this time.

It also may be physically impossible to have freedom of people in Greece, Italy and elsewhere because leftism is a world movement, non-democratic Russian and dictatorial in nature—but because this is so, temporarily, should we abandon what we know is right, what is our own heritage, our own concept of the war? In short, should we abandon the American game of freedom of peoples to condone or accept the European game of spheres of influence?

That is the case—and the issue.

137,732 Apply For Stickers

A total of 137,732 applications for 1945 motor vehicle registration stickers had been received at the state department here up to Wednesday night, Secretary of State Robert S. Farrell, jr., announced Thursday.

Farrell said more than 100,000 stickers have been mailed to applicants or issued over the counters in the Salem and Portland offices. He estimated 440,000 motor vehicle registrations for 1945 as against approximately 425,000 this year.

The 1942 license plates will be retained.

Salem Man Elected

PORTLAND, Dec. 21.—(AP)—Lloyd Rich, Salem, has been named first vice-president of Columbia Empire Industries. The new president will be Thomas C. Young, Portland.

Kenneth L. Dixon
AT THE FRONT
Yank Sarge Trades Bus Driving Job For Soup Making

By Ruth Cowan
(Substituting for Kenneth L. Dixon)
NAPLES, Dec. 12.—(Delayed)—(AP)—Sgt. Frank Kauffman hears a woman is driving the bus he used to drive back in Newport, Ky., but that's okay with him, for he feels he has invaded the feminine field and has done quite well—thank you.

Since July, Kauffman has supervised the Kenneth L. Dixon making of 2,986,400 quarts of soup.

The sergeant has charge of a kitchen that feeds 16,000 to 21,000 persons daily. Most are Italian civilians employed at a port operated by the US Eighth army port of embarkation.

The members of the house military affairs committee were taken, during their visit here, on a tour of this port commanded by Col. John Hines, of Wilmington, NC.

Since the army took over in

November, 1943, the port has handled nearly 8,000,000 tons of shipping.

LA. Col. Paul Oizeaux, of Towson, Md., port labor control officer, said that one month the port surpassed the tonnage handled in the port of New York. The harbor facilities have handled up to 14,000 tons daily.

Much of the supplies destined for the Italian front comes through this, the second largest port in the Mediterranean in peace-time. Supplies also are (Continued on page 14)

The Safety Valve

LETTERS FROM STATESMAN READERS

To the Editor:

There have been a blast and a counter-blast in the local press regarding the recent serious fire at the Capital City Transfer company building. The most important item of news was entirely left out of the criticism, namely, that the fire was put out; and secondly, that the fire was confined to the original building. For your own information, attend the next good-sized fire and watch the chief for, say, thirty minutes, get up close.

The writer also makes no claim to being a fire expert; however, it is high time that the following facts be considered by Salem residents as to our fire department:

The Salem fire department has almost a dozen of its younger men in the armed forces at the present time.

By all standards, the four local fire houses are very much undermanned.

Much equipment is worn out or obsolete.

The Salem fire department is an excellent one from a personnel standpoint. Composed mainly of responsible, intelligent and courageous citizens, with long experience, and training with what equipment we have. Their business is to fight fires.

Chief Buck Hutton is neither a diplomat nor a politician thank God.

His job is fighting fires and commanding his department, and brother, he does both. He knows every building, hydrant, vehicle and bit of equipment, power line, and person or thing related to fighting Salem fires.

He will go quickly to the most dangerous and vital point at a fire, and his men naturally follow such leadership. He has always been on the job, attends all fires, is honest, and courageous to a fault.

He will say yes or no loud enough to hear, on any subject you wish, walks on both sides of all streets, and will tell any or all to go to hell, and more, at the slightest provocation, if any. Folks, we've got a good fire chief and fire department. Amen.

Paul Herdinks

Stevens
Diamonds - Watches - Jewelry
Make this a Diamond Christmas
Only 2 Shopping Days!
We have an exceptional collection of loose diamonds. Make your selection and we'll place it in a mounting of your choice right here in our store!
There is still time to have your gifts purchased here, engraved by Christmas.
Credit If Desired
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