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The News Is Good, Too Good

News of Allied successes in Europe and of American victories in the Pacific these past few days have been good, too good in fact to react advantageously to the future prosecution of the war which depends in a large measure upon the sustained efforts of those of us here at home. In the face of reports of crumbling German defenses on the western front, of routed Nazi troops retreating in disorder, of wholesale destruction of the enemy's mobile equipment and of the capture of tens of thousands of prisoners, it is hard to convince ourselves that the war in that part of the world is not nearly over.

Yet President Roosevelt in addressing the nation last night said that he was not one of those who predicts an early end to hostilities in Europe. And Prime Minister Churchill in his latest ventured opinion foresees that fighting may go into the summer or early fall.

The news that carrier planes of Vice Adm. Mitscher's new famous task force 58 has located long sought Jap fleet in the inland sea and has attacked and damaged it seriously, even when coupled with the highly successful B-29 raids on Tokyo and other war production centers on the home islands, the recapture of the Philippines and the conquest of Iwo Jima, fails to bring the end of the conflict in the Pacific into guessing range. There is no indication that even a successful invasion of the home islands would bring Japan to her knees, but might only transfer the bitter struggle to the mainland of Asia.

What expenditure of men, money and material still lies ahead no one knows. What grief and hardship and sacrifice may yet be demanded of us none can estimate. This is a time for prayer and work, not for rejoicing over victories that are but incidental to the whole task and which are being bought dearly in blood and lives.

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Combat Engineers

The life of a combat engineer may be neither a long nor a merry one, lacks the glamour of many other branches of the armed services and most of the attending publicity. Engineering is the oldest branch of the military service and West Point was founded for instruction along this line before becoming a training college for officers. Top graduates are still assigned to various branches of engineering.

The combat engineer is in the vanguard of every advance of troops and provides rearward protection and demolition in event of a withdrawal. Diversity of activities is matched only by ingenuity and over any given span of time is not monotonous.

Combat engineers were on the job when the Remagen bridge collapsed and it will be combat engineers who restore it for use. It is combat engineers who clear the pathway of assaults, throw up temporary bridges and man pontoon boats to carry the storming troops across a waterway, be it canal, stream or river.

"Our troops advanced . . . after paths had been opened through mine fields by combat engineers," reads a line or two in a press dispatch. Because of specialized training, reports indicate that comparatively few of this branch are fatalities and casualties light. Searching for and destroying land mines is just another job for the men of this versatile service.

While not trained to the point of perfection acquired by his brother in arms in the infantry, he is familiar with many small weapons, particularly rifle and sidearm, and in many instances is called upon to fill in gaps left by infantry casualties. Hence his title of combat engineer.

The combat engineer wears red and white piping on his cap and a castle is his insignia.

The Fight on Williams

A strong fight in the United States senate is being made against the confirmation of Aubrey Williams as rural electrification administrator. Mr. Williams is a professional social uplifter; entered government service with the New Deal in 1933 with the Federal Emergency Relief Administration as assistant administrator and promoted the leaf raking projects of the depression era. In 1935 he was appointed assistant WPA administrator and also director of the National Youth Administration until that costly bureau was abolished by congress in 1943, and has been liquidating its affairs since.

Mr. Williams has had no business experience, never met a payroll, and knows nothing about electricity. Senator Willis (R., Ind.), who is leading the opposition to Williams' confirmation, said in the senate debate that Williams' only qualification for the job is his "ability to speak beautiful words," and that his business experience was as "a clerk in a man's furnishing store" but he had proven "a profligate spender, with a careless disregard for the sacredness of public funds" and "a shedder of crocodile tears for the underprivileged." Most of the objections voiced by others were to his "communist tendencies."

In the eyes of the New Dealers, especially to such supporters of Williams as the CIO-PAC these are supreme qualifications, especially as he has been "cleared with Sidney." He has proven his ability to waste public funds on a grand scale. Besides, what difference does it make? If Williams is not confirmed, another one of the same stripe will be named—preferably some lame duck that knows his way about congress if he doesn't know anything about electricity. "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

Cooperation the Key

Cooperation in the enforcement of price controls is the key to success of America's home front battle to prevent disastrous inflation; cooperation by everyone concerned, the consuming public, the merchants, local price panels which apply the regulations and by the higher-ups in the rationing machine who perform the basic function of establishing price ceilings. But upon those who fix the prices and those who pay them lies the greatest responsibility.

Ceilings that are too low to permit of fair profits only invite attempts at circumvention by merchants whose costs are steadily mounting, and unprotected payment of over-ceiling prices serves to encourage such violations.

The lot of the merchant, plagued as he is with seemingly senseless regulations and red tape, is an unhappy one and the more so if he be conscientious in seeking to comply with them. But no less vexing and difficult in the set-up is the role of the local price panels. Upon them falls the unpleasant duty of adjusting and applying to varying community conditions the edicts promulgated by a bureau 3000 miles away. They must sit in judgment upon their friends and neighbors.

It is a job that must be done, however, lest runaway prices upset the economic balance of the country and defeat an important phase of the war effort. It can best be done by cooperation and by a determination on the part of every citizen to charge or pay no more than ceiling prices, and to report all overcharges to his local rationing board.

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Sips for Supper

By Don Upjohn

The controversy over the start of spring became a national issue today, apparently. Miss Nean West called us up on the phone and advised that Ted Collins and Kate Smith on their radio hour had a special celebration this a. m. to herald this as the first day of spring and that the New York Breakfast club did the same thing. Last night we happened to hear the incomparable Hildegarde announce on her program that "tomorrow is the first day of spring." This sounds like pretty incontrovertible evidence when stacked up against the advice of one slender little girl in the front office of our favorite paper who continued to stand like a pint-sized Rock of Gibraltar for her contention that spring started yesterday and not today. And behind the pint-sized Rock of Gibraltar, was that good old full-sized Rock of Gibraltar, The World Almanac, which advises in cold black type: "The seasons in 1945 (Eastern Standard Time) begin as follows: Vernal Equinox (Spring), March 20, 6:38 p. m." There you have it, Ted Collins, Kate Smith, Hildegarde, Sips and the others to the contrary notwithstanding. We guess we'll have to string along with the little girl in the front office and the World Almanac, let the Kate Smiths, Ted

Collins and Hildegarde fall where they way. Anyway, we thank Nean West for calling to back us up in our earlier prognostications which fixed today as the glad and gleeful time.

Our little pint-sized expert on spring explained it this way: Due to the fact that last year was Leap Year with an extra day in it, spring comes a day earlier than usual this year. Next year it will be vernal equinox at the same old date, she says. Doggone, we don't know how one mite of femininity can be smarter than all the big shots.

A lot of towns in Germany seem to have the word "Bad" as a prefix. It could be made general.

Experience Indicates
(Art Perry in Medford Mail-Tribune)

The public has started to wonder how long the current ration points for food system, will last after Germany has surrendered. A conservative guess holds it will prevail, until about 60 days before the congressional elections next fall.

Happened across Andy Hansen, the planing mill magnate, on State street. Andy had a saw and was sawing a piece of aluminum window molding. He looked at us kinda disgusted like as we stood there and looked at him, and then he remarked, "How come, here I have to work like a dog all my life and all you do is just walk around and watch people work? It ain't fair." Aha, Andy, but just think. You have a planing mill and all we have is a 1912 typewriter and two top notch sets of varicose veins. Maybe that evens the situation up.

Novelties In the News

(By the Associated Press)

Just Kids

Salt Lake City—Maj. Homer J. Colman, an ex-jap prisoner, says that the Nip is a "tough fighting man," but he's tickled pink if he obtains a Yo-Yo.

The major asserted that Yo-Yos to the Japs were "the most precious of all," and they would "strut around" playing with the toys.

Hungry Goat

Kansas City—In the Kansas City police station, a room is set aside for bicycles that have been picked up on the street.

A sergeant says the job is to get the bicycles back into the hands of the rightful owners, adding it's "a difficult job at best."

Today, a wayward goat, corralled temporarily with the bikes, chewed the identification tags off the recovered vehicles.

"Now we don't even know where we found the bicycles," moaned the officer.

Ach Tung

Cheyenne, Wyo.—The Wyoming department of agriculture doesn't know who won the argument but it does know that Adolf Hitler never did, doesn't now and never will own a ranch in Wyoming.

It so advised Lorene Harris, Folsom, Calif., who asked the department to settle a "hot argument" on the subject.

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REPAIRS — NEW ROOFING

The War Today

By DeWitt Mackenzie

An interpretative analysis of war developments by a famous Associated Press war correspondent.

So let's talk about war's end in Europe and peace and all that sort of thing—this being the beginning of spring, which not only is the season peculiar to hope but is the inspiration of great deeds.

Of course we aren't supposed to discuss peace—not right out in the open—because that might stimulate over-optimism. I'm well-aware that I shall receive letters, written both in sorrow and in anger, accusing me of coddling complacency. However, this isn't a bad time to give peace the "once over" and not wait for the war to blow up in our faces without warning.

Surely we don't need a sooth-sayer to tell us we are near the end of the European war. Indeed we are so close to it that the nazis might quit at any time!

Having said this we must—if we are to justify discussion of early peace—at once recognize that the fighting might continue for a considerable time if Himmler and Goebbels cling to their mad scheme of battling to a finish. Even so, it will be surprising if it goes further (than late spring or early summer).

No Delusions for Nazis

The nazi leaders have no delusions about their defeat. Despite their typically Prussian effort to bully the allies into a compromise, the Hitlerites have been fishing for peace—and that is official.

When the armistice comes, it may arrive out of the blue without warning as the result of sub-rosa discussions of a "semi-official" character.

Hitlerdom is cracking up fast, both militarily and politically. Always have thought—and have so indicated in this column—that the collapse of Germany would be premised on one of two things: (1) The loss of Hitler's personal leadership—since he has been nazism's very mainspring, without which the regime must perish, and (2) deterioration of the German military machine to the point where the allies would be able to crash through the last great barrier of Hitler's inner fortress—the Siegfried line and the Rhine in the west, and the powerful Oder defenses in the east.

Tearing Them to Shreds

We are on the verge of fulfilling the military requirement. The vastly superior allied armies are tearing the "invulnerable" defenses to shreds. We have breached them on both sides and are about to pour great armies through them into the open plains of central Germany. We've done more than that, for the allied air navies have so blasted the resources

of the reich that the Hitlerites are living off their own fat. Once the Russians and the western allies are sweeping across Germany, organized resistance will collapse quickly—if it lasts that long.

The other requirement—loss of Hitler's leadership—already has been fulfilled. He is reported to be a broken shell of a man for whom Himmler the hangman and propaganda minister Goebbels are ghosting in an effort to keep the facts from the German public. But truth will out, and the people will quit, despite Himmler's rule of death when finally they realize Hitler is finished.

Pay Increases to Portland Teachers

Portland, Ore., March 21 (UP)—Pay increases totaling \$2,800,000 over a nine-year period were voted for Portland teachers last night by the school board.

Reversing a stand taken a week previously, the board by a four-to-three vote approved a schedule submitted by the superintendent's office, which was a combination of recommendations by teachers' committees, the administrative staff and the plan submitted by Dr. John Almack, school finance expert at Stanford university.

The immediate effect will be to increase salaries for starting teachers, while under the long-range plan the chief beneficiaries among the city's 1600 teachers will be the veterans.

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