

THE KLAMATH NEWS

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Comment in Brief

THE red hot eastern Mediterranean situation grew hotter Thursday, with reports of the heaviest bombing of Alexandria since the war began.

Alexandria is the key point in the Middle East for the British. It is a great British naval base, and it must be held and used by the British if they are to defend the Suez successfully.

It is now within 500 miles of German bombing bases on Crete, so recently wrested from the British and Greeks. It seems logical to expect that Alexandria from now on is going to take terrific punishment, unless RAF fighter planes can maintain air superiority and drive off the German assaults.

The 100 killed in Alexandria in today's assaults may be the beginning of continuous and heavy casualties.

With Alexandria and Syria the focal points of action, the war seems a long way from England. But in reality, the Battle of Britain is being fought right now in the eastern Mediterranean. If Hitler can cut the British life-line there, it will be a terrific blow at the tight little island that is still fending off attack upon itself.

It is plain that if anything happens of that nature in the Middle East, the Battle of the Atlantic will become more vital than ever. The Atlantic will then be the main remaining lane of supply for the hard-pressed British. Such developments obviously will draw the United States closer to the struggle, and with the Germans concentrating their effort against Atlantic shipping, anything can happen.

Although time works for the British in their island fortress, and it seems that Hitler cannot wait too long for an all-out attack on the island itself, there is reason to believe the German plan right now is to cut the lifelines first.

If a successful blockade can be established, the resultant stress and demoralization inside Britain itself will be an ideal prelude to a gigantic direct assault. Put a man in a room, shut off all food and water for a few days, and you can then go in and bat him around without meeting much resistance.

We all know the United States, under its pronounced policy, cannot permit the British to be blockaded. The British first, but with our increasing aid, are going to go to every extreme to keep the Atlantic sea lanes open.

So watch the battle of the eastern Mediterranean. Every unfavorable development for the British there makes the battle of the Atlantic, which is rapidly becoming our battle, more vital.

And as it becomes more vital, every incident that occurs will add to the danger of American involvement in outright hostilities.

With this the war season, no real lulls can be expected. The Germans can be expected to push to an early conclusion as possible of the issues in the Middle East—and the Germans have brought issues to conclusion in remarkably short periods.

Hence, no time must be lost in this country in preparation for any eventuality. The pressure must be turned on full blast for production and training. Every minute that is wasted, in inefficiency, in argument, in indecision, is dangerous.

We cannot afford the luxuries of inefficiency, argument and indecision.—M. E.

Klamath Gets \$2000 Quota in USO Fund

A meeting of a representative group of Klamath Falls citizens has been called for Friday morning to decide on the city's part in joining a United Service organization drive for the benefit of U. S. soldiers, Mayor John H. Houston announced Thursday.

Klamath Falls' quota in the nationwide campaign to raise funds for soldiers' recreational activity has been set at \$2000, Houston said.

NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS

By PAUL MALLON

WASHINGTON, June 5—Some people have been putting 2 and 2 together and getting peace rumors. Their arithmetic is denied and denounced by every official authority. What the rumor circulators are putting together are: the arrival of Herr Hess in England, the quietness of the British about it of late, the subsequent Hitler meetings with Darlan, then with Mussolini, and now the flight home of our ambassador to London, Mr. Winant.

One minor government man who knows nothing about it has stimulated speculation here by wanting to bet there would be peace within 30 days. But the only bet that can be safely made is that peace now would mean a German victory. The British military situation, to all outward appearances at least, is nowhere near that surrender point.

Vague informal peace negotiations are nearly always being carried on indirectly in all wars. They rarely reach fruition until one side has clearly established a victory.

A negotiated peace now could not conceivably clarify our defense problem, but would only intensify it. For these several reasons official interest in the subject is not yet evident here.

ALL-POWER BILL

The all-power bill (giving the president the right, theoretically at least, to take the shirt from your back or the gold from your teeth) was written in the war department last March. There, they say, they have nothing specific in mind for which the bill is designed. . . . it was merely written with advice from the White House bundling up the wartime powers given Woodrow Wilson in 14 or 15 different bills. . . . FDR sent it to congress now to implement further his defense action speech. . . . it takes a long time to get such things through congress and the war department lawyers, as well as the White House, wanted to be prepared for any future requirements. . . .

This is a good story, and no doubt true except that it will be a long, long time before congress will pass that particular bill. Restrictions are expected. One, fixing a time limit on the powers, will be accepted by the war department, but congress will adopt other restrictions which may not be acceptable.

What the framers of the legislation have in mind, they say, are primarily patents and cross-license cases. The necessity of taking control of communications, railroads and possibly utilities in the future is likewise foreseen. The bill has nothing whatever to do with acquiring land. Some difficulties were encountered with land acquisition in Caroline county, Virginia and Camp Stewart, Georgia, but all these have been adjusted.

NO DOPE

Individual British troops who escaped from Crete had reported the Germans were doped to a fighting fury for the attacks, but you are not likely to see that suggestion offered officially. What the nazis had eaten that made them mad was nothing more dopey than Hitler propaganda.

Being the aggressor, Hitler can concentrate his few most enthusiastic troops at the point of attack. The defenders can not. Stimulants are frowned upon by all military strategists, presumably including the nazis. Stimulation lasts only a few hours, and the hangover reaction would make troops far less efficient for a considerable period afterward.

CRITICISM

A few readers have written expressing amazement at the recent disclosures in this column

concerning army deficiencies and inefficiencies. They contend that the informing of the people on the deplorable state of their defense lends comfort to Hitler.

Their letters came simultaneously with news that the British air chief in the eastern Mediterranean had been kicked out and up to home defenses after the fall of Crete. If he had been subjected to enough criticism to have built some underground airports, Crete would be in British hands today.

This column is working on the conviction that the disclosure of defects will cause their correction. Any American who today says all is well with our defenses is not fooling Hitler, but paying the way for him. Any reporter who conceals defects and thereby lets them continue, is serving the cause of this nation's enemies more effectively than a paid saboteur.

Today's criticism: all three of the tank factories now producing this most vital defense implement are unprotected, except by wire fencing, although dozens of private airfields from which planes can be rented are within a few miles.

Courthouse Records

THURSDAY

Marriage Applications
 TOTTEN - ROHR, John David Totton, 31, Klamath Falls, stock clerk, native of Oregon. Joan Rohr, 25, Klamath Falls, stenographer, native of Oregon.
 MARTIN-FORD, Francis Gordon Martin, 39, Klamath Falls, insurance adjuster, native of Washington. Ethel Leona Ford, 30, Klamath Falls, laundry operator, native of Nebraska.

Complaints Filed

Pauline Johnson versus Ray Johnson. Suit for divorce. Couple married at Montgomery Creek, Calif., October 4, 1938. Plaintiff charges defendant with cruel and inhuman treatment. F. H. Mills, attorney for plaintiff.

Justice Court

Augustine Robert Smith, drunk on a public highway. Fined \$10.
 Robert Charles Burrell, operating car with void Washington license. Fined \$5.50.
 John Malatch, operating auto with improper lights. Fined \$5.50.
 Irwin Lee O'Neil, Indian, unlawful possession of liquor. Fined \$25.
 H. L. Taylor, permitting spread of fire. Fined \$50, given six months probation.
 Fenford Crain, Indian, unlawful possession of liquor. Fined \$25.

An all-time American record was set in 1940 when private pilots of 16,500 planes flew 220,000,000 miles.

SHERIFF WORRIED BY DATE CONFLICT

Sheriff Low is worried. He has been notified he is to appear in federal court in Portland June 12 as a witness in the murder trial of Wilbur Hixon, Klamath Indian.

June 13 is the day the sheriff is slated to appear with his posse in the rose festival parade in Portland. If the trial testimony isn't out of the way in time, the sheriff may find himself involved in conflicting dates with the witness stand and his spotted parade horse.

One thing seems to be certain in the situation. Sheriff Low is going to be in Portland June 12 and 13.

OBITUARY

BENJAMIN F. CLIFTON

Benjamin F. Clifton, a resident of Klamath Falls, Ore., for the past three years, passed away at the family residence on Winters lane, this city, on Tuesday, June 3, at 7:30 p. m. The deceased was a native of Camden, Ind., and was aged 53 years 9 months and 27 days when called. He is survived by his wife, Clara, a this city, and one niece, Mrs. James Sink of Camden, Ind. The remains rest in Ward's Klamath funeral home, 925 High street, where friends may call after 2 p. m. Thursday.

Amendment May Limit Draft to Ages 21 to 27

WASHINGTON, June 5 (AP)—Brig. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey was quoted by senators today as saying that men inducted for military training would be limited to those 21 to 27 years old if congress approved requested amendments to the selective service act.

The director of selective service, they said, testified this was

the intent of proposals to grant the president power to defer induction of men by age groups.

Chairman Reynolds (D-N.C.) of the senate military committee before which General Hershey appeared in close session, said the group probably would act on the requested amendments tomorrow.

Senator Lodge (R-Mass.) said General Hershey suggested the 27 year age limit for trainees when he was asked what would be done under the proposed amendments. Lodge then sug-

gested that this be written into the draft law.

The general was said to have suggested that the deferment would apply to all men who were 27 or over on October 19, 1940.

The sparrow is the costliest alien that North America ever admitted.

The lowest level in the United States is in Death Valley, Calif., 276 feet below sea level.

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Prison Serenade

with Beala BORDI
 Edgar BUCHANAN

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