

BARDIA BATTLE IS CHRISTMAS EVE ARTILLERY DUEL

Purvis Issues Call For More Weapons Quickly

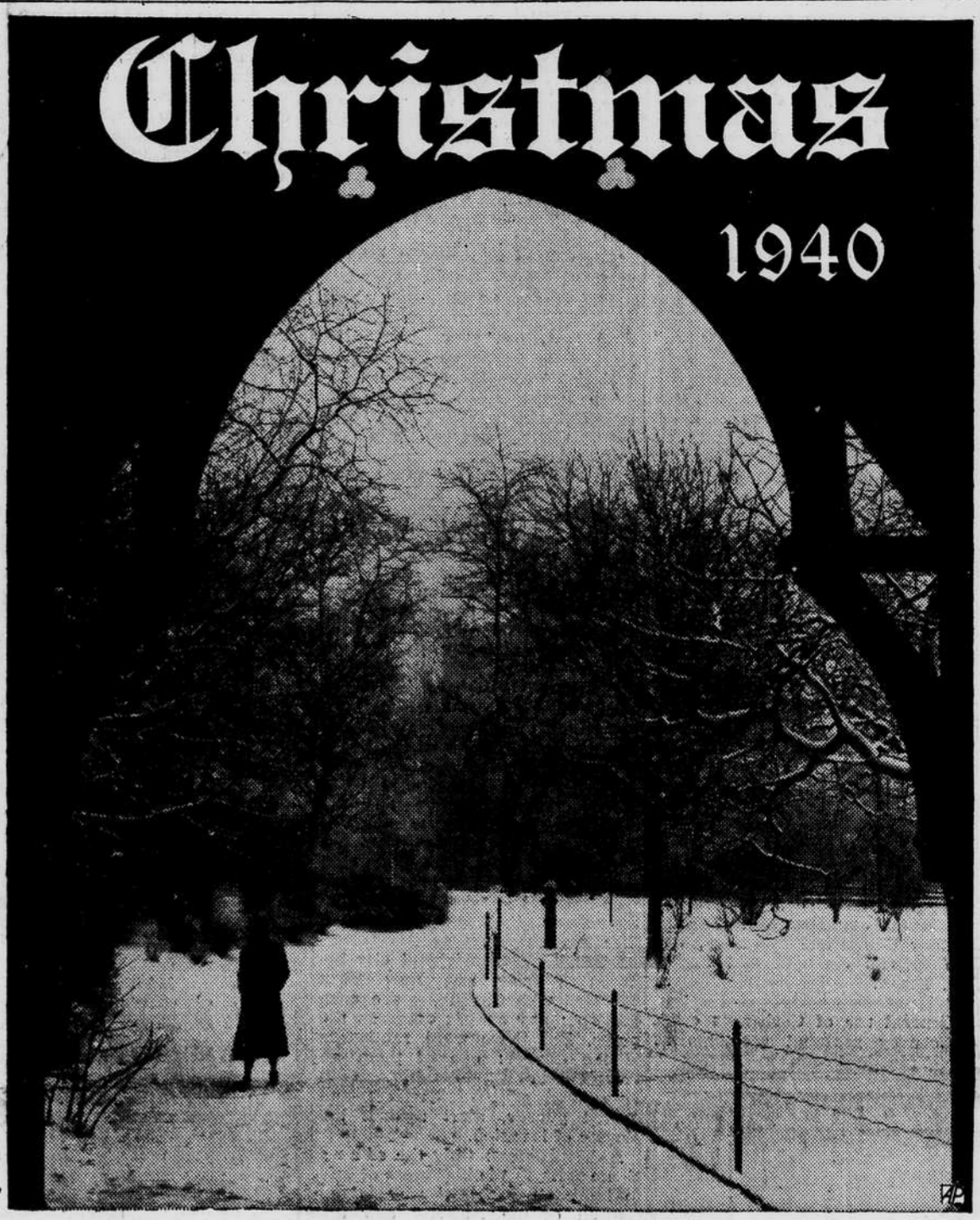
Ships And War Materials Are Big Problem Says Production Of Arms 'Is Keynote To Stopping War'



Leahy Starts Trip To France With Grandson

All Is Quiet In England At Christmas No Sounds Of Warfare Disturb London As Day Arrives

MAY BE TRUCE But Quietude May Be Due To Bad Flying Weather Over Channel



Big Guns Boom On Both Sides Near Fortress

British Units Draw Steadily Nearer Their Objective BRITISH DETERMINED Main Body Of Italians Is Entrenched In Dug-outs, Ditches

BY EDWARD KENNEDY WITH BRITISH FORCES OUTSIDE BARDIA, Libya, Dec. 24.—(AP)—The battle for Bardia warmed into a great artillery duel this Christmas eve with guns booming on both sides and the British units drawing slowly nearer the ring of fortresses encircling the town.

"We could go in and take Bardia," the Australian captain in command of one unit told me on the battlefield. "But it would probably cost a good many lives, so it's better to keep hammering at them. Then when we get more tanks and artillery we will get them out of their holes without much trouble."

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.—(AP)—Calling for more weapons quickly as "the keynote to stopping the war," Britain's chief buyer, Arthur B. Purvis, brought a fresh report on British war needs from his country to Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau today.

Ships, he said, "and maintaining the British merchant fleet so that supplies can be brought from America to Great Britain" constituted the most urgent immediate problem.

Linked with that, he declared on his return to the capital from England, was the need for greatly accelerated production of war material in the coming 60 or 70 days.

"The production of weapons," he said, "both in the United Kingdom and North America—by which I mean both the United States and Canada—is the keynote to stopping the war."

"The more we produce in the next few weeks, the greater will be the production six months from now."

Purvis, director-general of the British purchasing commission, spent an hour describing to Morgenthau the conditions he found in England and its present requirements.

3,000 Children Aided By Empty Stocking Fund

PACKAGES DISTRIBUTE Contributions To Make Unfortunates Happy Mount To \$1482 Total

More than 3,000 children in Wilmington and vicinity will have their hearts gladdened this morning when they awaken to find their stockings filled with toys, candy, and fruits—furnished through the Star-News Empty Stocking Fund.

The fund this year, through the generosity of the public, was able to take care of these unfortunate children who otherwise would not have had a visit from Santa Claus.

Without the aid of this fund, which yesterday climbed to \$1,482.10, these children would have known none of the joys and happiness of Christmas.

All day yesterday the Cape Fear Artillery armory at 814 Market street was a scene of activity as the needy residents of the city and territory poured in for their baskets and boxes of Christmas candies and toys.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.—(AP)—Authoritative German sources here reported tonight that the Luftwaffe proposed to refrain from bombing England from tonight until Dec. 27 as a sort of Christmas truce provided the royal air force carried out no attack upon Germany or German-held territory.

Whether it was an unofficial Christmas truce was not known early today.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill weeks ago rejected flatly the idea of a Christmas truce but informed sources talked of a report that Adolf Hitler had told a newspaper correspondent that "we do not fly at Christmas if the British do not fly."

There naturally was no indication as to whether the Royal Air Force too had remained on the ground for Christmas but there seemed to be a tacit feeling in informed circles that Berlin and other RAF objectives were having the peaceful beginning of Christmas.

Too, there was a possibility that the weather might have caused the death of aerial activity.

A low ceiling of dense clouds hung over Dover Strait—raiders' pathway (Continued on Page Twelve, Col. 4)

HILTON YULE TREE PROGRAM OPENED Large Crowd Attends As Santa Promises Gifts For Children

Programs at the Community Christmas tree at Hilton Park began last night with the flashing on of the lights, a prayer service, Santa Claus in attendance, and the first of a series of concerts.

ITALIANS BLAST CHURCHILL TALK

Royal Family Makes Show Of Loyalty To Fascist Regime In War

By The Associated Press ROME, Dec. 24.—Winston Churchill's appeal to the Italian people over Premier Mussolini's head was met with blasts of defiance and denunciation by fascist spokesmen today, the royal family itself made a show of loyalty to the fascist regime and its course in the war.

Dr. Giovanni Ansaldo, editor of the Leghorn Telegrafo, went on the air with a violent retort to Churchill. Earlier, the government itself had answered that "the war will continue on all fronts until victory" and King Vittorio Emanuele had declared in a Christmas message to the nation's armed forces that "no obstacle and no difficulty may halt the glorious rise of Italy."

Anne Lindbergh Asks Food To Aid Europe

NEW YORK, Dec. 24.—(AP)—Anne Morrow Lindbergh said tonight in a Christmas eve broadcast to the nation that "it is to our practical advantage to support those organizations seeking a way to distribute more food to starving Europe."

Bethlehem Blackout

BETHLEHEM, Palestine, Dec. 25.—(Wednesday)—(AP)—This little Judean city was shrouded in its first blackout in history while the ageless drama of Christ's birth was re-enacted early today at the Church of the Nativity in bomb-proofed gloom instead of the traditional blaze of Christmas light.

Even the bonfires in shepherds' fields about the city were put out early—lest they guide Italian air raiders to the little city.

And thus the line of pilgrims moved slowly and carefully into the town by starlight—for the observance just as the three wisemen came centuries ago by light of the star of Bethlehem to worship the Christ child.

All other holy places in this shrine of Christendom were blacked out too and filled with the gloom of wartime.

War Interpretive

BY KIRKE L. SIMPSON Nazi moves to heighten the Christmas invasion scare in England must remain subject to skepticism until the moment that Hitler actually launches an attack across the channel.

ROOSEVELT WARNS ON 'DEFEATISM'

Prays For 'Peaceful Chance' For Humanity To Strive For Better World

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.—(AP)—President Roosevelt sent forth a "Happy Christmas" greeting to the nation tonight in an address warning against cynicism and defeatism and praying for a "peaceful chance" for humanity to strive for world betterment.

Lighting a 30-foot cedar Christmas tree at dusk near the White House, he observed sadly that except for little children, Christmas, 1940, could not be "merry."

Greeks Hail Capture Of Chimara As Big Victory

BY DANIEL DE LUCE SOMEWHERE ON THE SOUTH-ERN ALBANIAN FRONT, Dec. 24.—(AP)—The capture of Chimara, a drab little Albanian coastal settlement of 1,500 souls, was hailed today as a major victory by the Greek forces engaged in the drive against the Italians in southern Albania.

NAZI MARSHALL HINTS INVASION

Says 'Ocean Can Protect England Only As Long As It Suits Us'

BERLIN, Dec. 24.—Amid the big guns which point at England from the German-occupied French coast, Field Marshal General Walther von Brauchitsch, commander-in-chief of Adolf Hitler's army, declared today: "The ocean can protect England only so long as it suits us."

The commander-in-chief made what German sources said was a surprise visit to a long-range battery on the channel coast (one is situated at (Continued on Page Three, Col. 7)

Christmas Sees Strange Pattern In Other Nations

By The Associated Press This is the second Christmas of war for the millions in Europe. It makes a strange pattern, and not a cheerful one. But still it is Christmas, and today it is in the hearts of everyone.

WEATHER

Table with columns: Station, High, Low, Prec. Includes cities like Asheville, Atlanta, Birmingham, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Fort Worth, Galveston, Jacksonville, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Louisville, Memphis, Miami, Mobile, New York, Norfolk, Pittsburgh, Richmond, St. Louis, St. Paul, San Francisco, Savannah, Tampa, Washington, and Wilmington.

FORECAST

North Carolina: Mostly cloudy with showers Wednesday and probably Thursday morning, slowly rising temperature.

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