

TODAY and TOMORROW

BY WALTER LIPPMANN

The Quality Of The Command

The reverse in Libya is a grim reminder that battles are not decided merely by the quantity of material and the courage of troops. There is also the quality of the command. It is the most critical of all the factors in war. Yet in nations which do not fight until they are attacked, in nations which do not take seriously the business of war until they are actually at war, the selection of commanders who know how to win battles is rarely achieved except by the costly method of trial and error. The records which men make in the long years of a defensive peace to not, as so many British and American wars have shown, give a clear indication of how they will meet the test of battle.

Indeed, the primary advantage of nations like Germany and Japan, which have a warrior caste, is that their commanders understand the war they are going to wage before they begin to fight it. It is this understanding of the kind of war they mean to fight which enables them to use an inferior quantity of resources to mobilize a superior quality of striking power at the point which they have selected. We, on the other hand, bound down by the rule that we must strike nowhere but must defend everywhere, must plan to aim at sheer quantity of material and men rather than at quality specifically prepared for a specific purpose. The commanders in the field and at home are men who prepare for preparedness in general, rather than men like Rommel who prepare for the precise tactical situation in the place where they mean to fight.

This qualitative unpreparedness is almost certainly the result of the fact that at the outset of a war of this kind the aggressor has a small compact territory to defend (which no one is prepared to attack, anyway), while his opponents have vast scattered territories which are military liabilities in that they have to be defended and yet furnish no force of their own.

In this global war, for example Russia is great man power and an arsenal, though not a self-sufficient arsenal. China is man power but not an arsenal. Britain is small man power and a very considerable arsenal. The United States is man power and an arsenal. But, except on the Russian front, the campaigns of the United Nations have had to be for the defense of regions like the south Pacific, Burma and the Middle East, which are military liabilities, originating almost no military power of their own, dependent upon power produced elsewhere and laboriously moved to the theater of war.

This situation has confronted the governments, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt with a series of dilemmas as to which front to reinforce. The front they did not reinforce was the one most likely to be attacked: the front they did reinforce was likely to become a place where precious military forces were locked up and left in cold storage. Political considerations of a most compelling kind—from Australia, the Netherlands Indies, Malaya, India—have prevented them from taking the purely military decision to concentrate all the available forces somewhere for the counter offensive.

Thus none of the fronts has been held with decisive strength, and Hong Kong, Singapore, Java, Manila, Burma and Libya have fallen one after the other. Our enemies have had no such dilemma. They could pick the battlefield, ignoring all others, because they were operating in our territory and not in their own.

But while this explains a great deal, including our qualitative unpreparedness for the kind of warfare we have had actually to conduct, the explanation does not justify us in taking an indulgent and resigned attitude. The United States, leaving Britain's failings to the British, was qualitatively unprepared at Pearl Harbor: with war imminent the commanders were not alert to the kind of attack which our own war games had demonstrated was feasible and therefore possible. The United States was qualitatively unprepared in the Philippines or, hours after war had begun, the lesson of Poland would not have been ignored and the air force would not have been lined up on the ground where it could be destroyed.

The United States was qualitatively unprepared for the submarine war in the Atlantic, or the Navy Department, which had plenty of money, would have realized two years ago the need for the quick production of a large number of escort vessels. The United States is qualitatively unprepared for the Aleutian campaign, or the Navy Department would not countenance the complacent explanation that the Japanese are there to save face after their defeat at Midway. For while the occupation of the islands may not be a matter of the first importance, the inspired comment is positively alarming in its frivolity.

The defeats we have been suffering are not wholly attributable to insufficient equipment, and we shall deceive ourselves dangerously if we hug the delusion that they

can be retrieved by the sheer quantity of material we can produce. Our defeats are attributable in part to the fact that at the highest level of the United Nations command the political leaders have had to compromise their strategic decisions: they had not prepared the people to understand that to become strong somewhere it is necessary to make political sacrifices elsewhere.

Our defeats are attributable, then, to an excessive desire not to hurt the feelings of likable men and to a club spirit which protects and even promotes men who have failed and are clearly inadequate. In war the lives of men and the fate of nations depend upon competence, and it is impossible in a war of this kind to hurt the enemy mortally if we are too amiable to hurt the feelings of men who ought to be weeded out.

Bethel Methodist Minister Is Conference Lay Leader

NEW BERN, June 24. — After serving for some time as associate lay leader of the North Carolina Methodist Conference, W. J. Smith of Bethel is now the conference lay leader, succeeding Dr. W. K. Greene, of Duke University, who resigned the post in accepting the presidency of Wofford College in South Carolina.

Mr. Smith's election took place

Fala Sacrifices For Rubber Drive



Fala, President Roosevelt's Scottie, gathered up all his rubber toys at the White House and sat by wistfully as they were put aside for the executive mansion's contribution to the nation's campaign to collect scrap rubber.

Monday at a meeting of the conference committee of lay activities held at Goldsboro. His successor as associate conference lay leader will be named at the annual conference next November.

RED CROSS DELAYS ANNUAL ROLL CALL

Will Combine November Campaign With War Fund Drive In '43

WASHINGTON, June 24. — The Red Cross has postponed its usual November roll call and has combined it with a war fund drive to be conducted in March, 1943, Chairman Norman H. Davis announced today.

The action had the full approval of President Roosevelt, who wrote Davis that "The nation can look forward to the month of March 1943 as Red Cross month."

Davis said the decision to make a combined drive followed requests that the Red Cross reconsider its policy of not participating in combined campaigns. He emphasized that the Red Cross would not change this policy but, in view of the need to conserve manpower and effort, had decided to combine the two drives next March.

"With the pressure of maritime work I feel the Red Cross has made a wise decision to combine the November roll call with its

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next war fund campaign in March, 1943," the President said. "This will not only be a distinct saving in effort and manpower but will make possible a proper spacing of the other major appeals."

Lewis Coleman Training For Lieutenant's Bars

MAXWELL FIELD, Ala., June 22.—Taking the initial step toward winning his wings as a pilot and a second lieutenant's commission,

Lewis William Coleman of 2021 Creasy Avenue, Wilmington, North Carolina, is now enrolled as an aviation cadet in the huge Army Air Forces Pre-Flight School (pilot) at Maxwell Field, Alabama, where he will undergo expert military, physical and academic training calculated to fit him for the job of learning to fly our fighter planes.

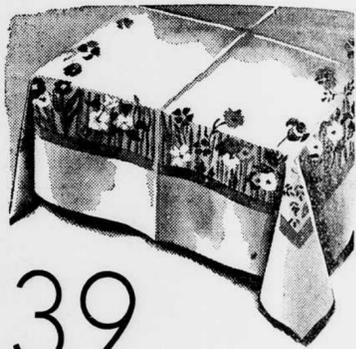
Cadet Coleman was attending Wake Forest College when accepted by the Aviation Cadet Examining Board as a cadet in the U. S. Army Air Forces May 12, 1942, at

Fort Bragg, North Carolina. After completing his course at Maxwell Field this cadet will be sent to one of the many primary flying schools located in the Southeast for the first phase of his pilot training.

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