

The Washington MERRY-GO-ROUND

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Washington, D. C.

MEDITERRANEAN MIX-UP

Inside story on General Wavell's transfer to India, as told in diplomatic dispatches, is that Wavell had been quarreling with Churchill and had opposed political-military moves such as the campaign in Greece and Crete and the expedition to Solum. More important from the American point of view, Wavell had favored the evacuation of all British forces from the entire Mediterranean area. And U. S. military experts agreed with him—in fact, urged it.

So although in a sense General Wavell is being demoted, yet in other respects he will be in a position to command British forces from an area to which he had urged that British forces retreat.

For some time General Wavell had contended that Britain's position in the Mediterranean was indefensible. The British force of only 400,000 men in the Near East faced a combined Axis total twice as strong—400,000 Germans and Italians in Libya, plus 600,000 Nazis in Greece, Bulgaria and Rumania.

The latter figure has been partially diminished by transfers to Russia; but Wavell argued that the Nazi-Fascist armies could concentrate attack in one place while British troops had to spread out over a far-flung line from Libya to Syria and Iraq. Therefore he disagreed with Churchill on all military moves which had a political motive.

U. S. Worried Over Atlantic.

U. S. military and naval strategists sided with Wavell, were strong for the idea of a complete British withdrawal from the Mediterranean. The strategy behind this was twofold:

1. The British have lost 40 per cent of their original Mediterranean fleet. The losses at Crete were much worse than officially admitted, and even in the Syrian campaign naval losses were considerable. Therefore, American naval men, facing the probability of having to help the British fleet in the Atlantic, did not want the fleet further weakened.

2. The United States is more interested in what happens on the bulge of Africa around Dakar (opposite Brazil) than it is in the Mediterranean.

To this end, both General Wavell and U. S. strategists favored the idea of withdrawing British forces from the Mediterranean entirely and establishing a new line of defense across the very center of Africa—from Port Sudan on the Red sea to Freetown on the Atlantic ocean.

This line of defense meant that about 1,500 miles of the hottest desert in the world would be between the Nazis and the British lines. Over such a desert it is difficult for tanks to operate without heating up; also it is difficult for the average bomber to carry a load over such distances. So it was expected that the Nazis would exhaust themselves in the deep, hot deserts of Africa.

Part of the plan contemplated a highway straight across equatorial Africa from Freetown and later from Dakar to Port Sudan.

Churchill Says No.

However, Churchill was flatly opposed. So were many other British leaders. They felt that the shock of withdrawal from the Mediterranean, traditional sphere of British influence, and from Suez which had been identified with the British empire for years, would be too much for the British public.

This debate occurred before the Nazi attack on Russia and before the British march into Syria. But after the slowness of Wavell's success in Syria, all these factors culminated in his transfer to India.

There Wavell can concentrate on defense of the most important part of the empire—if the Nazis creep up on the Indian border in South Russia. Also, he will not be in the Mediterranean, for the defense of which he had no great enthusiasm.

MERRY-GO-ROUND

It was a breathless day in Washington. The only breeze was kicked up by the little subway car running between the senate office building and the Capitol. Passenger Hatie Caraway, senator from Arkansas, clutched at her flying strands of hair.

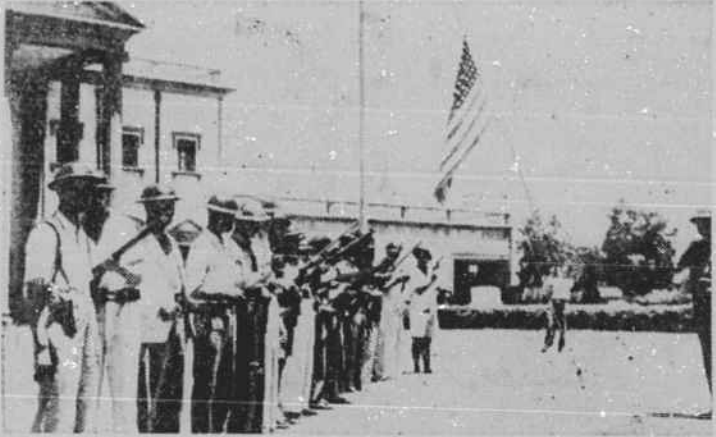
Curly-haired Sen. Berkeley Bunker of Nevada, who succeeded to the seat of the late Key Pittman, never misses a senate session and is assiduously studying parliamentary procedure. Vice President Wallace has called him to preside during his absence more than any other senator.

WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS

By Edward C. Wayne

Landing of U. S. Forces in Iceland Is New Move in Hemisphere Defense; Germany's Campaign Against Russia Gives British Chance for Air Attacks

(EDITOR'S NOTE—When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of the news analyst and not necessarily of this newspaper.)
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During the Iraq rebellion and war, Americans stationed at the Iraq capital city of Baghdad prepared to defend themselves. As Old Glory is raised in the background men of the American legation staff start training drill with weapons furnished by British military mission commander. But the British won this war before the Americans were called upon to defend themselves.

ICELAND:

Occupied by U. S.

American naval forces have occupied Iceland to supplement and eventually to replace British forces there. This information was given congress by President Roosevelt, who explained that the move was taken "to forestall any pincers movement undertaken by Germany against the Western hemisphere."

The occupation was accomplished with the full permission of the new Iceland republic which had declared its independence from Denmark in May.

ON RUN:

Or Defending?

Crucial questions of the Russo-German war were these:

Did the Nazis actually have the Russians in a wild-disorganized retreat?

Were the Russians, instead, falling back to the Stalin line in good order considering the magnitude of their army?

Was the finish to be another defeat for the defenders as soon as the large cities were taken, as had happened in Norway, Belgium, Holland, France?

Or were the Russians willing, like the Chinese, to move back across vast territory and let space and winter hardships swallow up the Nazi effort?

None of these questions could be answered accurately through the muddle of rival claims, yet there were hints here and there that tended to show trends in attack and defense that might furnish a partial answer.

The onslaught was terrific and news pictures released by the Germans showed the advance across battlefields filled with backgrounds of smoke, flame and destruction. The speed could be counted at about 350 miles in two weeks—the very distance not only pointing to the terrific power of the attack, but also to the difficulty of maintaining a service of supply and "mopping up" over so many thousands of square miles.

So much tended to show the Nazis swift and easy victors. Yet there were other indications, entirely aside from the official and biased communiques which bore on the eventual result and the theory of the Red defense.

There were reports from Nazi-friendly Vichy and Rome. The former reported half the troops of occupation withdrawn to the eastern front; the latter warned against expecting a swift and easy victory.

The reports from Scandinavian sources of the evacuation of civilians from Leningrad and Moscow and Kiev; the speech of Stalin in which he urged the "scorched earth" defense; the plans of Hitler to put Louis Ferdinand on the Russian throne—all indicated that there might be a chance that the Russians were willing to drop back as slowly as might be, cede what cities and territory must be given up, and let the Russian wastes and the impending Russian fall and winter eat up the strength of the attacker.

Few believed that the "Stalin line" would be anything but a stormy way-station for the German advance. But many believed that the "Chinese plan" would not only stem the Hitlerian attack—but eventually defeat it.

BRITAIN:

Her Chance

The British were apparently keenly aware that the preoccupation of the Nazis with the Reds on the East furnished them with their great chance of the war.

Hardly had the attack against Russia been on for a week than the R.A.F. leaders announced mastery of the daytime air over the occupied regions and western Germany.

Hardly did a day pass without large-scale daytime bombing raids, and the British plane losses did not appear great if, as the claim was made, they were using several squadrons of upward of 100 bombers each every day.

There was a silence from German sources about the accomplishments of the raids, but the British, judging from their own losses from German air attacks, figured that their chosen objectives must soon be reduced to hopeless ruins.

They felt that the Coventries on Europe's soil must be numerous. Heavy night attacks followed those by day, with only occasional and very light German reprisals—and all of these under cover of darkness.

On the sea, also, the British seemed to be making some headway against the U-boat menace, and the probability was felt that many submarines must have been diverted to the Baltic, to serve against Russian vessels.

MARSHALL:

And Draftees

Two vital questions on the home front were brought to the fore by General Marshall, chief of staff of the U. S. army:

The keeping of selective service men past their 12-month training period.

The question of sending them beyond the United States and her possessions as "task troops."

The chief of staff made his case plain. The army, he said, was composed of three elements—regulars, national guardsmen, and draftees. These, instead of having been kept separate, were all melted into one military whole, and to remove a part of these, the draftees, at the end of 12 months, would be to create utter confusion in the whole organization, he said.

He asked that the part of the selective service law which limited the time and place of the soldier's service be taken away.

Otherwise, he pointed out, the power of the commander-in-chief would become a meaningless thing and detachments needed at certain points would be forced to lose their manpower.

But the chief of staffs request couched in such a way that it seemed an official request of congress by the war department, found considerable opposition, Senator McNary of Oregon, Republican leader, stating that he was not only in opposition to the removal of the geographical restrictions in the draft act, but also was against the removal of the 12-month restriction as well.

It was evident that Marshall's hope for an army of 2,500,000 trained men, able to move wherever the congress and the commander-in-chief deemed expedient, was not going to be won without overcoming serious opposition.



THE old-timer likes to think the old days and the old ways were the best. As the years slip by he lets his imagination build up the stronger spots and lop off the weaker turns his ancient idols carried into action.

Certainly baseball's two most famous stars for 30 years—from 1905 to 1935—were Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth.

Cobb's big league career opened in 1905, Babe's in 1914. For more than 10 years their careers overlapped.

Their counterparts in 1941 are Bob Feller and Joe DiMaggio. Bob Feller is, or should be, one of the all-time pitching greats. The same rating applies to Joe DiMaggio as a hitter and outfielder.

Without attempting to rate the value of Ty and Babe against Bob and Joe, there is one department at least where the old-timer can expand his chest and prove his point. This is the matter of color.

Cobb and Ruth packed an enlarged amount of personality in their playing systems. They had flame, flare, dash. They caught and held the fancy of the crowd.

Feller and DiMaggio are both on the quiet, unobtrusive side who like life better away from the mob. Both are friendly, serious young men who make their entire contribution as a star pitcher and a star outfielder. They make no claim or pretensions to any form of so-called "color."

Cobb and Ruth have always been exactly the opposite. They were actors as well as ball players. Both were on the exciting side. And a big part of their crowd appeal had no particular connection with mechanical skill. They had plenty of that.

Disagreeing With Ty

It pains us to disagree with such an old pal as Tyrus Raymond Cobb.

I was in Atlanta when Ty was in Augusta around 1904 or 1905 and we headed north from the red clay hills at about the same date.

Ty naturally likes the "one run at a time" game best. He likes the less lively ball. He has something on his side of the argument with respect to this.

But the modern game is more dramatic. In the old days a three or four-run lead was usually decisive. Today it may mean little, and the crowd knows it. Both infielders and outfielders, especially infielders, have to work at a far faster clip to handle whistling drives that come their way. The home run is still the main crowd thrill.

I must disagree with Ty on another point. On his all-time all-star team the pitchers he names are Walsh, Alexander, Mathewson, Johnson, Plank and Feller.

What about a pretty fair pitcher by the name of Deaton Tecumseh (Cy) Young, the Paoli Phenom?

All Cy did was to win 512 ball games in two major leagues. This winning count totals more games than the great majority of pitchers ever pitch. They talk about pitchers who can win 20 ball games a season—Cy Young averaged better than 20 games a year for more than 20 years.

About Cy Young

Young did his pitching for Cleveland, St. Louis and Boston, working in both leagues. He came up from Paoli, Ohio, in 1890 with hay in his hair.

Cy, a huge hulk of a fellow, had speed, control, a fine head and a stout heart. And you can emphasize control and smartness. Cy worked from 1890 through 1911 and when he had finished he had passed by something like 100 winning games of Walter Johnson's mark in second place.

Cobb picks Ed Walsh and Eddie Plank, both fine pitchers, but old Cy won more games than both together.

I ran across Cy a short while back. He gave me then one of the secrets of his success.

"How did I ever win 512 games?" he said. "Here's one reason. I had four different pitching motions that I made look alike. Also, I think that I was the first pitcher to cover up the pitching motion completely. I'd practically turn my back to the batter and the ball would be on him before he was set," he explained.



Grantland Rice

Our Wasted Hours

Statisticians have been at their favorite game again, and now they have calculated the time we spend doing useless things. We are told that the average man loses three days a year holding a buzzing receiver waiting for someone to speak to him. They say that most people repeat themselves at least three times a day, which amounts to about 20 hours a year.

One of the greatest thieves of time is indecision, and many people spend 15 minutes daily making up their minds. In the average lifetime this cuts off a chunk equal to 1 1/4 years. This is how other time is wasted: Waiting for meals, 2 1/2 years, answering the door one year, traveling to work 1 1/2 years.



Failing Community

A churchless community, a community where men have abandoned and scoffed at or ignored their religious needs, is a community on rapid down grade.—Theodore Roosevelt.



Deadly Tongue

The second most deadly instrument of destruction is the dynamite gun—the first is the human tongue.—W. G. Jordan.



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