

THE ALAMANCA GLEANER

Vol. LXVIII

GRAHAM, N. C., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1942

NO. 45

WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS

Soviet Pushes Offensive Against Nazis As Italians Contemplate Allied Threat Of Stepped-Up Campaign Against Them; Tunisia Battle Climaxes African Drive

(EDITOR'S NOTE: When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of Western Newspaper Union's news analysts and not necessarily of this newspaper.)
Released by Western Newspaper Union.



The liberated French supplied the refreshments and a toast was raised to an American alliance when a lieutenant with the Yankee invasion forces brought word to the Foreign Legion barracks in Saï, Morocco, that the troops there were no longer prisoners. Thus ended another phase of the Allies' North African campaign.

TUNISIA:

Allied Wedge

Axis forces in Tunisia stood with their backs to the sea as Lieut. Gen. K. A. N. Anderson's British first army thrust a wedge between enemy strongholds in Tunisia by capturing the town of Djedeida, which controls road and rail communications between Tunis and the Bizerte naval base.

Thus by severing communications between Tunis and Bizerte, the Allies virtually had isolated the Axis positions, leaving only a coastal road open.

The German-controlled Paris radio said that fighting was taking place in the Mateur region and indicated that the British are preparing for a general offensive by deploying forces in that sector.

Axis forces fell back, following futile counterattacks, within the semicircular defense line around Tunis and Bizerte. According to the Morocco radio, Allied paratroopers attacked Axis positions near Mateur and other Allied forces stabbed at the defenders of Tunis.

Defeat of the Axis in Tunisia would leave Allied troops free to move south into Tripolitania and attack Marshal Erwin Rommel's Africa corps from the rear while General Montgomery's British eighth army attacked from the east.

That such plans were contemplated was indicated by the fact that for four straight days General Montgomery's headquarters had "nothing to report." It looked as though Montgomery was delaying an assault on Rommel at El Agheila and merely holding off until the trap was sprung.

TRAGEDY:

Strikes Boston

Not since the 1903 Iroquois theater fire in Chicago had so many people been burned or suffocated to death as perished in the disaster which struck the Coconut Grove night club that Saturday night in Boston. An incomplete toll by the police first set the number of dead at 477 with the belief that it might rise above 500. At the time this count was made 212 persons were receiving hospital treatment for their burns and injuries.

As hysterical parents and friends were engaged in the difficult task of identifying the bodies of those killed, Stanley Tomaszewski, a 16-year-old high school boy and part-time employee of the club, told his story of how the blaze began. He said that after a patron had unscrewed a light bulb he attempted to replace it and when he lighted a match to see better, the flame ignited some of the decorations. Swiftly the flames spread and the 750 patrons rushed frantically for the exits. Many were killed as they were trampled beneath rioting hundreds seeking escape. Only about 100 of the total 750 in the building escaped unhurt.

Many of the persons killed were servicemen and football fans celebrating college victories of that afternoon: Buck Jones, well-known western star of the movies, was among the persons who had packed the smart club.

As all available medical help was rushed to the scene, the Red Cross released supplies of blood plasma which was used in extreme cases in efforts to keep the death toll down.

FIGHTING DOLLARS:

Tops in Financing

When President Roosevelt launched the nine billion dollar "Victory Loan" drive by purchasing a \$1,000 bond from Secretary of Treasury Henry Morgenthau he set in motion the greatest financing program in all history.

This money is needed by the government to meet obligations stemming from the war effort and the President urged that everyone turn his idle money into "fighting dollars" by buying some of these bonds. Pointing out that while over 23 million Americans were already buying war bonds through payroll deduction plans, there still were many who could get in on this newest plan of building up government income.

While the new borrowing campaign is being handled largely by the nation's banks, all wage earners and corporations are being urged to buy these latest securities of all types. Beginning at \$500 the bonds are available to all investors and it is hoped that half the amount needed will be raised outside banks.

AIR STRENGTH:

Asia Evidence

Heavy United Nations air raids were raining destruction on Jap bases and supply centers in Burma, Thailand and Indo-China as the growing strength of this arm of activity against the enemy became increasingly evident.

This most recent surge of air strength began with a terrific pounding of Jap railway yards at Mandalay and reached its apex when a U. S. group of bombers and fighters shot down at least 23 planes in one day during operations against the great Pearl river base in China.

In that raid tons of explosives were dropped on the Pearl river estuary, sinking two medium sized freighters and upwards of 100 barges. In addition many docks and warehouses were set ablaze.

SUICIDE FLEET:

Scuttled by French

So that France "might at least be spared the supreme shame of seeing her ships become the ships of the enemy," French sailors destroyed 60-odd ships at Toulon, removing the last visible asset of the Vichy government.

The words were those of Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Fighting French. The sentiment was that of all the Allied nations.

Word of the suicide of France's home fleet disclosed that many French officers and dynamite crews went down with their vessels in wild dawn battles with German boarding parties attempting to halt the scuttling of the vessels.

Warships now littering the bottom of Toulon harbor include three battleships, four heavy and three light cruisers, one seaplane tender, 25 destroyers and 23 submarines. Two submarines escaped and a third struck a mine dropped by a Nazi plane as it attempted to flee.

London sources accepted the scuttling as evidence that Adm. Jean Darlan has been secretly playing the Allied game. Fighting French sources said that Adm. Jean Abrial, new Vichy naval secretary, undoubtedly gave Adm. de la Borde orders to scuttle the ships.

In the heaviest raid of the war on Italy, hundreds of British bombers smashed the city of Turin with four-ton bombs, probably knocking it out of the Italian war effort.

As if foreshadowing Prime Minister Churchill's warning to the Italian people, the bombing destroyed great areas of the city. The super block-busters and fire from 100,000 incendiaries pulverized huge sections of the city. Turin is Italy's biggest industrial city, the home of the Fiat engine works, the Caproni bomber planes and many other important factories.

RUSSIA:

An Answer

On the cold steppes before Stalingrad and in the blustery valleys of the Caucasus, the Russian armies gave an answer to a question that military experts had been asking ever since Hitler's troops had driven deep into Soviet territory. It was the question: "Has Hitler destroyed the Russian army?" And the answer was an emphatic "No."

This year's Russian winter offensive began first in Stalingrad itself, where the Germans had been fought to a standstill. Then it spread quickly as Soviet forces struck simultaneously from the north and south knifing through Nazi defenses on both flanks and thrusting spearheads far across the Don river. Three hundred thousand German troops were thus encircled. These were the bulk of the enemy detachments laying siege to Stalingrad. As the first week of the offensive ended, Russian reports credited their army with taking a toll of 250,000 Axis soldiers killed, wounded or captured.

Also in the Caucasus to the south and around Leningrad in the north the Russian might began to tell. Even Berlin admitted that the Russians were "counterattacking."

Rural America's Future Prosperity or Hard Times All Depends on Action of Farmers During Present Period

400 Per Cent Increase in Income Over '29 Causes Boom Danger to Arise

WILL THIS WAR PRODUCE A LAND BOOM ON AMERICAN FARMS?

This question concerns not only agricultural economists, but everyone who lives on or near a farm. Its answer will largely determine future prosperity or hard times for rural America.

Every previous war has brought its own land boom that left a wreckage of deflation behind. Under ordinary circumstances and with an ordinary war, the current situation would be ripe for history to repeat itself. The elements for a first-class boom are present. But from Pearl Harbor down to the moment, farm real estate values have defied precedent by remaining below pre-World War I levels.

Meanwhile agricultural income has zoomed to record highs, production has reached unheard-of peaks and the 1943 outlook promises further expansion.

Farm economists are frankly puzzled over the trend of land prices but they unanimously hope it continues. They credit the good sense of farmers themselves with the fact that farm real estate prices have risen so slightly thus far. They point out that while the danger of a boom exists, farmers themselves have the power to head it off.

Production Picture Brilliant.

As the 1942 crop year ends, farm conditions never appeared more promising. More than 15 billion dollars will flow into farmers' pockets from this year's bumper harvest. The biggest previous figure was 14½ billion dollars in 1919. This year's farm total is nearly four times the low-ebb depression income of 4½ billion dollars in 1932. When operating costs, including taxes, interest, wages for labor, machinery and other items are deducted this year, farmers should have a spendable income of from four to five billion dollars for living, savings and investment. Farm families will have an average of \$438 more to spend this year than last.

The production picture is equally brilliant.

For example, the 1942 corn crop is reckoned at 3,132,000,000 bushels—a record exceeded only by 1920 and then by a slight margin. The crop ordinarily runs between 2 and 2½ billion bushels, but dipped down to 1½ billion in the drought



ADMIRAL LABORDE Was given orders.

More bread for doughboys means a bigger wheat producing job for American farm land.

years of 1934 and 1936. Despite the huge 1942 crop, corn commands a high price.

The wheat yield this year will be the largest since the miracle crop of 1915 and the market price is the highest since 1929.

Hogs have returned to their traditional role of "mortgage lifter." They are more numerous than ever and worth more per pound. The \$5 hog of a few years ago has been replaced by the \$15 hog. In excess of a 100 million hog crop was figured for this year and even more production is expected for 1943.

Beef prices are the highest since 1920. It is estimated that on January 1, 1943, cattle and calves will number about 77 million head—or more than a three million increase for each of the last two years. The 1942 calf crop is probably the highest on record, totaling 32 million head. Sheep and lamb marketings have established records and the average price is the best in 20 years.

Niagara of Milk. A Niagara of milk, exceeding 120 billion pounds, will have cascaded into dairy pails throughout the United States by the end of this year.



More, and Still More

Every productive acre of farm land will be called on to yield more food for Uncle Sam's expanding armed forces in 1943 and to meet Lend-Lease demands. As a result the value of farm land as an investment will be enhanced. (Above) U. S. Army Quartermaster Corps receives and allocates food shipments for troops. (Right) Rising demand for dairy products spurs activities in creamery and bottling plants and helps boost farm income to record highs.



Ordinarily whenever an industry does as well as farming has done, there is a tendency to speculate. Those already in the business seek to expand their operations. Others seek to get in on the bonanza. And soon a spiraling boom is born.

A survey of the rural real estate market recently revealed that farms are selling in increasing numbers, but no unusual price advances are yet noticeable.

The Farm Credit corporation and insurance companies have been leaders in liquidating their farm holdings. It is estimated that the FCA has disposed of more than 25,000 farms since 1938. Some insurance companies report they have sold more than 90 per cent of the farms they acquired during the depression. In recent months thousands of Midwest farms have changed hands in individual farm auction sales.

Analysis of the transactions revealed that 60 per cent of the buyers were farmers, half of whom were tenants. Of the tenants, most were former landholders who had lost out during the depression, when 2,100,000 farms were foreclosed. With farm income on the rise, these tenants are getting back on their feet and able to make down payments on farms of their own.

Of the 40 per cent non-farmer buyers, a large group represented city dwellers approaching retirement age who have bought farms in order to live reasonably on their pensions and income from savings.

How long this paradoxical situation of high farm income and low farm real estate values will continue, economists do not care to predict. But they point out three factors which at present make the farm picture of World War II different from that of World War I:

A Different Farm Picture.

1. Today's farmers would rather get out of debt than into it. Hence they are not bidding up the farm real estate market by seeking additional land. Instead they are paying off mortgages and investing their surplus funds in War Bonds. They are making needed repairs on buildings and building up their land's productivity by the adequate use of fertilizers and by other soil conservation measures.

2. The hangover aftermath of World War I's land speculation spree is still fresh in the memory of most farmers. Farmers are hedging on the future by "plowing back" present earnings into their present holdings without attempting any expansion.

3. The present farm labor shortage and the rationing of farm machinery are effective deterrents to the urge to acquire more land.

Let's look first at the debt situation. The extent to which farmers

are using their expanded income to get out of hock was disclosed by A. G. Black, head of the Farm Credit administration, who recently pointed out that a large percentage of farm mortgages are now being paid off ahead of schedule. The nation's farm mortgage debt has been reduced to 6½ billion dollars—the lowest figure in 25 years. There are fewer foreclosures and other distress transfers than at any time in the past 20 years.

"Farmers realize more than ever before that a healthy, liquid financial condition is the safest goal these days," said a recent statement of the Middle West Soil Improvement committee. "Such a goal means getting debts out of the way. It means building up the blood strains of livestock and eliminating the non-producers. It means making needed repairs on the house and barn. It means paying particular attention to the fertility level of the soil."

Long-Run Earning Power.

"This last is of particular importance, for the real value of land is dependent on its long-run earning power. Thus any investment in a soil-building program that will pay dividends in years to come is an important contribution to a farm's future productivity."

"In wartime as in peace, the farmer can obtain valuable information from his county agent or agronomist at the state agricultural experiment station in developing his soil improvement plan. Such a program should include the raising of legumes to provide necessary nitrogen, the commercial supply of which is now largely required by munitions factories. It should include regular crop rotation and the use of sufficient quantities of fertilizer containing phosphorus and potash to encourage plant growth.

"It should include pasture improvement. By means of such a program, the soil's future fertility level can be assured and its immediate output of foods and fibers for war and civilian needs increased."

Most farmers instinctively fear a repetition of the World War I land boom. Their hindsight has taught them many valuable lessons from the bitter experience of the 1920s and early 30s. If they profit by that hindsight, they can escape the headache of a land collapse.

World War I was a story of agricultural upsurge. Farm income rose from 6 billions in 1914 to 14½ billions in 1919. High prices and a ready market for agricultural products, plus easy credit facilities, encouraged farmers to bid up land prices. Farms were bought on speculation with the expectation of a quick sale at a profit. Land values were inflated from an average of \$40 per acre in 1914 to \$70 in 1920. Within those six years farm real estate rose in total value from 39½ billion dollars to 66 billions.

The sequel was a crash that still reverberates. Land prices fell from an average of \$70 per acre to \$28. More than a third of the nation's six million farms were foreclosed by the end of the depression. All farm land and buildings declined from 66 billions to 31 billions. Even today farm real estate is worth only 36 billion dollars—less than it was before World War I.



WHO'S NEWS This Week

By Lemuel F. Parton

Consolidated Features.—WNU Release.

NEW YORK.—Maj. Gen. George S. Patton, tagged as a two-gun general, so tough he chews cactus, is exultant, vociferous and omnipresent in French Morocco as the commander of the United States forces there.

Introducing Two Gun Patton, Tank Herding Champion

The general, who earned his two-gun title, as it will be explained later, was educated in the Classical School for Boys at Pasadena, Calif., before he went to West Point. There he may have learned of Hannibal's elephants. At any rate, he was out early as a tank specialist, commanded the first tank brigade in the First World War, was severely wounded and lavishly decorated, and thereafter became the champion tank-herder of the U.S.A. He is now commander of the first armored corps. He was in command of the landing and mopping up operations on the African Atlantic coast.

At 57, he is bull-voiced, hard, muscular and fit, his two guns still in his belt, and with nothing written off but his hair. That the Pasadena lotus-land of the Rose Bowl and the dolce far niente should turn out from a classical school the toughest, rootin'-tootin' general of our high command is something to put down in the book.

As to the two guns, Colonel Patton, with General Pershing's punitive expedition into Mexico, was chasing Villa's men through the chapparal. He caught up with Candelario Cervantes and a band of exceedingly tough hombres. It came down to a close-range shooting match, with the colonel backed up against a wall, whamming away at the mounted Cervantes troop, with two .45-caliber revolvers. He emptied them both, and as he started to reload, bullets came so close that they hemstitched his silhouette on the wall. He got both guns working and dropped Cervantes. He rode happily back to headquarters.

He was the first officer assigned to the tank corps in the First World War, and organized and commanded the 304th brigade. On September 25, 1918, at Bogais, he led six American and two French companies into action—with 22 tanks. He was wounded. For this and other such exploits, he was awarded the Distinguished Service cross, two citations, the Silver Star, the Purple Heart, the Congressional Medal of Honor and the World War medal.

In the post-war years, he continued as a tank specialist, and in December, 1940, was giving his thundering herd a workout in Abbeville, Ga. A year later, his "hell on wheels" Second Armored division was the leading attention-getter around Fort Oglethorpe, Ga. They had only 75-mm. field artillery guns then, but it is noted in dispatches from North Africa that the general is all set up with a lot of new 105-mm. self-propelled guns, and that one of them blew a hole in Fort Lyautey big enough to let his men through to capture the fort.

PIERRE PUCHEU, one of the roughest and toughest of Hitler's me-too men of Vichy, was the loudest in defamation of America and

War Makes More Queer Bedfellows Than Do Politics

Yanks came right over to Africa he fled, to string with a winner in his customary manner. As chief of the Vichy Gestapo, he had charge of shooting hostages. It would appear that, in Africa, he might embarrass even our state department, necessarily hospitable to all comers in a wartime emergency. The Fighting French naturally find M. Pucheu hard to take.

He is a synthetic strong man, big and husky, who built himself up with tough talk and a pair of out-size rubber-tired spectacles which make him look ogreish.

His participation in the inside job which delivered France, roped and hog-tied to Germany, began in 1923 when he became foreign relations officer for the Comite des Forges, the steel and munitions cartel organized two years previously, to betray France and fatten Germany from that day to this. Flandin, in-and-out in big-time French politics and on the receiving end of every big smear of his time, including the Stavisky scandal, was a co-conspirator with Pucheu from the first, and fled with him to Africa—a noisome two-some and a double-threat.