

WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS

Nazis Pour Troops Into Anzio Region As Battle for Italy Grows in Ferocity; Senate Studies 'White-Collar' Income; Aussie-U. S. Forces Join in New Guinea

(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.)
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Italy—First great armored battle of Italy raged near Anzio, where Nazis strove to knock out Allied beachhead.

ITALY:

Major Battle
For the first time in the Italian campaign, major Allied and German armored forces met on level ground to slug it out, as the great battle for the Anzio beachhead below Rome raged.

To the southeast, bloody mountain fighting continued, with the entrenched Nazis stubbornly resisting advancing U. S. and French soldiers, crawling through fierce machine-gun and mortar fire to root enemy units out of deeply dug defenses.

Determined to fight a major battle in Italy far below the Po river valley in the north, the Nazis poured thousands of troops in the Anzio region, and action rose in tempo after the enemy carefully probed Allied lines for weak points.

Crowded into an area about 30 miles long and 12 miles inland, Allied forces swung into the attacking enemy at close quarters, while their air forces roamed over German positions and communication lines, blasting troop concentrations and supply deliveries.

MEAT PRODUCTION:

Record Levels
Keeping well in line with government predictions of record meat production for 1944, January slaughter of hogs, cattle and sheep set all-time marks for the month.

Partly because of liquidations due to concern over the overall feed situation for the year, 1,141,061 cattle were butchered in January, along with 7,839,352 hogs and 1,932,987 sheep.

Although the government estimated that meat production would rise 8 per cent in 1944 to a record 25,000,000,000 pounds, civilian allocations were set at the 1943 level of 131 pounds of meat per person for the year, with the services, lend-lease and other U. S. agencies obtaining the increased output. Only if the latter's needs were cut, could civilians expect more meat, it was said.

DEMobilIZATION:

Congressional Plan
Adequate financing of industry to switch to civilian production, and orderly disposal of war material to prevent upsetting the markets, were proposed by the senate's economic policy and planning committee for postwar America.

The committee's recommendations were embodied in a bill sponsored by Senators George (Ga.) and Murray (Mont.), calling for government purchase of all raw materials or processed goods or extension of advances, partial payments or loans upon contract cancellations.

Regarding the nation's \$15,000,000,000 investment in war plants, the committee proposed their sale to private interests, but not if their use should over-expand production. The number of aircraft, aluminum, rubber, magnesium, ship, steel and pipeline plants retained for postwar defense output should depend upon the scope of such a program, the committee declared.

Precaution should be taken against flooding the markets with war goods and depressing prices and production generally, the committee said, and opportunity should be sought to sell such material abroad. Organization of a demobilization board to carry out the program was recommended.

CIVILIAN TIRES:

More Later

Because requirements for military, bus and truck tires are expected to lessen later in the year, Rubber Director Bradley Dewey predicted an increase in supply for civilians after July 1.

Because of the restrictions on driving through gas rationing and the greater care being given to tires, the expected total supply of 18 or 24 million tires for 1944 should be sufficient to meet essential needs, Dewey said. Overall production for the year, however, is 6,000,000 below earlier estimates.

Although the synthetic rubber program utilizing alcohol and petroleum should hit peak production at a rate of 1,000,000 tons annually by August, the shortages of manufacturing equipment and high tenacity rayon cord for heavy duty tires is slowing up the whole tire program, Dewey said.

Up to July 1, there will be monthly production of 1,000,000 tires, with 750,000 available for rationing and 250,000 kept in reserve, Dewey reported.

RUSSIA:

Reduce Threat

Russian forces whittled down the Germans' toehold in the lower Ukraine and sought to remove the threat of an enemy encirclement drive in that sector in major action along the 800-mile eastern front.

Stiffening German defenses slowed the Reds' push in the Baltic, with the enemy bitterly holding the threshold into Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Chewing deeply into Nazi lines before these states, however, the Russ forced the Germans to withdraw in many places to prevent entrapment from the rear.

Down at the southern end of the long front, strong Russian forces were beating the Germans back from the lower Ukraine, where they have been holding a long lick of territory at the back of the Red armies surging into prewar Poland. By rolling up the Nazi lines here, the Russ were removing the threat of a possible German thrust at the rear of General Vatutin's armies.

RECONSTRUCTION:

Lumber Needed

Some idea of the tremendous demand for lumber for postwar reconstruction can be obtained from Great Britain's inquiries for 5,000,000 board feet in the first year after the war for rebuilding damaged towns, Dr. Wilson Compton of the National Lumber Manufacturers association told the fifty-fourth annual convention of the Illinois Lumber and Material Dealers association. Normally, Britain buys 250,000,000 board feet yearly.

Although only 7,000,000,000 board feet of lumber are to be allocated for civilian use in 1944 for farm construction, war housing and repair and maintenance work, the supply may be cut still further by increased demands for boxing, crating and dunnage.

Each soldier requires 300 feet of lumber for packaging and other similar uses when shipped overseas, Dr. Compton said, and an additional 50 feet a month for supplies.

Exploiting war conditions by unscrupulously upgrading lumber is injurious to the whole trade in the long run, Dr. Compton said.

STRIKES:

Up in '43

Although 3,750 strikes were staged in 1943 involving 1,900,000 workers, their short duration resulted in only a loss of .07 of working time, the U. S. labor department reported.

Nevertheless, strikers were out an average of 7.1 days in 1943, compared with 5 days in 1942, when



there were 2,968 walkouts. In 1941, each striker lost 9.8 days, and 4,288 walkouts were staged. In the prewar year 1939, the average striker stayed out 15.2 days.

In 1943, four coal strikes involving 400,000 miners resulted in 8,500,000 idle man days, or an average of 20 days per worker. About 20,000 industrial disputes were settled by U. S. agencies in 1943 without work stoppages, 16,000 by the department of labor, and 3,955 by the War Labor board.

Who's News This Week

By Delos Wheeler Lovelace

Consolidated Features.—WNU Release.

NEW YORK.—Incentives to American girls and women to join the U. S. Cadet Nurse corps are less numerous than the blessings which will follow them on the battle fields of the world and in hard-pressed, under-staffed civilian hospitals. Still, they are numerous enough: free education in a well-paid profession, a shortened training period, living expenses, spending money while training, a distinctive insignia, uniforms. But Lucile Petry, director of the corps, seeking 27,000 more recruits, offers still another inducement. The prospects for marriage in the nursing profession are, she points out, excellent.

USCNC Chief Has Inducement That Should Fill Ranks

This corner agrees after viewing the fetching new uniform. The petite, erect, gray-haired, fresh-as-a-daisy Miss Petry is even prettier in uniform than in civilian dress. On leave of absence as dean of Cornell University New York Hospital School of Nursing, she has been helping the government since 1941. She was named director of the nurse corps immediately after its creation in 1943. Before Cornell she taught and supervised at the University of Minnesota.

Earlier there was an immense amount of study. Graduating with honors from the University of Delaware in 1924, she entered Johns Hopkins Hospital School of Nursing. After graduation there she was awarded a scholarship and took a master's at Teachers' college, Columbia university.

Daughter of a small town school principal who believed that children should accept responsibility, Miss Petry worked in a dry goods store, a canning factory and a broker's office while still "the little Petry girl."

IF Lieut. Gen. Omar Bradley runs true to form his maps of coastal France are being worn thin. He will lead invading American ground troops in the coming big push, and he tries to know as much of the battle terrain as the enemy, more if possible. Usually he hops into a jeep and looks the country over, then studies its maps far into the night. Since he can't very well tool a jeep through Nazi defenses beyond the channel the maps must do double duty.

Not Out for Victory Through Needless Blood Sacrifices

Fifty-one, Bradley is a Missourian who has made his way in the army against the handicap of a singular modesty. Before this war started he was notable as one of the army's crack rifle shots, one of its best mathematicians, probably the best commandant ever in charge of the Officers' Candidate school at Ft. Benning, and a tactician who usually did a little better in maneuvers than his opponent. When he took over in General Patton's wake in North Africa only the army found his name a familiar one. His score at Gafsa, Hill 609, Mateur and Bizerte turned the international spotlight on him.

Bradley's military books are dog-eared from much reading but for fun he likes detective stories. He likes also to talk with his soldiers. And above all he dislikes the records of such generals as that Frenchman who, in the last great war, was said to butcher his divisions to gain a victory.

We've Another Old Sea Dog Who Is Roosevelt. An Adroit Diplomat

William A. Glassford Jr. is a vice admiral in the navy, and it is common practice to look upon all our admirals as bluff old sea-dogs but among them is included a handful of deft diplomats. The vice admiral is one of these for all that he can seem bluff enough at times. He seemed so a few months before we got into the war. Speaking then before a Shanghai audience of American business men, he declared bluntly that Britain was on the edge of a licking and our turn would come next.

Marine Sergeant Who Was King Of 12,000 Natives on Voodoo Isle

Yank Was Believed Reincarnation of Faustin I.

By ROBERT H. MYERS
Released by Western Newspaper Union.

(Through courtesy of THE LEATHERNECK, the magazine of the U. S. Marines.)

ONE dark, gloomy night in the year 1848, on the tiny tropical voodoo isle of La Gonave, black King Faustin I suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. Years crept by and King Faustin I was never heard from again, but a legend was born that some day a descendant of his name would return to rule this West Indies island.

Some three score and ten years later, in 1920, a creaky sailboat lurched across the choppy waters of the channel from Port au Prince and scraped up on the sands of La Gonave. Bounding out was a strange collection of occupants; chattering black natives, bawling cattle—and Gunnery Sergeant Wirkus of the United States marines—whose first name was Faustin.

Thus was forged a link in one of the strangest stories that ever came out of this storied, superstition-bound island. For Faustin E. Wirkus, a blue-eyed, square-chinned Yankee from the state of Pennsylvania, who had never heard of King Faustin I or about his mysterious disappearance from La Gonave, and most certainly was no descendant of the ebony emperor, eventually was crowned King Faustin II and reigned virtually singlehanded over the 12,000 natives for nearly five years—between 1921 and 1925.

He's Asked About "Queen."

He became famous as the "White King of La Gonave," and as he goes about more commonplace duties in the marine corps today, he still gets numerous inquiries about his years in Haiti; about the broad and beaming native woman, Queen Ti Memenne, who had chosen him to rule the island.

Queen Ti Memenne, of course, was not really a queen, nor was Wirkus truly a king, because La Gonave was merely a province of Haiti and under the administration of the Haitian republic and its president. But the stormy little country had been the scene of a bloody uprising a few years before, starting in 1915. Marines had been sent in to settle it, and a picked number had remained to train and run the native Gendarmerie.

Gunnery Sergeant Wirkus was one of these men, and by congressional permission, was on detached duty with the Gendarmerie and held the rank of lieutenant in the force. Assigned to La Gonave, he was officially a subdistrict commander.

Today Wirkus is a warrant officer, in charge of the marine aviation detachment at Chapel Hill, N. C. But to go back to those years of yesterday—

Soon after enlisting, he landed in Haiti with the first outfits of marines that went down to settle the trouble in that country. His was the old Twenty-second company, led by Capt. Alexander S. Williams, and his battalion commander was a man later destined for world fame, Gen. Smedley Butler.

Five Years of Bushfighting.
Off and on for five years, the marines were busy bushfighting the treacherous "cacos," knife-wielding natives whose tactics were bloody if

not successful. Wirkus engaged in many scraps—he killed seven cacos in one bitter engagement—and gradually gained recognition as an efficient and straight-shooting non-com.

Once in Port au Prince he took a handful of native gendarmerie and broke up a secret voodoo ceremony and captured the ringleaders. This he accomplished with not a man injured. Voodoo meetings were often hotbeds of trouble.

During these years Wirkus kept hearing tales about the island of La Gonave, 40 miles north of Port au Prince and about 300 square miles in area. Voodooism was rampant on the island, and fearsome were some of the tales. A white man, so it was whispered, was not safe on La Gonave. No one wanted that outpost duty. Ghosts and spooks, they said, haunted the place.

But Wirkus made one visit to the island and decided he wanted it as a sub-district command. He scoffed at voodoo scare tales—and still does—and figured it would be a good place as a one-man job. Hunting and fishing were good, the climate was no barrier, and Wirkus was ambitious to make a name for himself as the key man in running the subdistrict. It was his responsibility to regulate travel and traffic, prevent smuggling, exercise control over the prison, enforce harbor and docking regulations, sanitation requirements, and see that lands were properly allotted and taxes paid.

Natives Suspicious.
When Wirkus arrived on brooding La Gonave, he found the natives suspicious of all white men, which was hardly surprising. For years they had been exploited and cheated. Their lot was a poor one, to say the least. Wirkus set out to correct these conditions, and behind his success was a genuine affection for the native population. As sequester, or administrator, he not only handled his official duties, but went out of his way to help the people. He showed them better ways to till their lands, for the main industry was agriculture. He repaired their antique equipment and modernized it where possible.

Mothers were astonished but grateful when he came to their aid in bringing up their offspring. They didn't know it, but he bought a book, "The Care and Feeding of Children," to help him with such problems. He surveyed the lands and divided, eliminating bitter disputes, and he reduced taxes for some and boosted it for others, many of whom had enjoyed favoritism from corrupt local representatives of the Haitian government.

It took a full year for Wirkus to gain the trust and friendship of the islanders, and particularly Queen Ti Memenne. The "queen" was the leading figure in a group of matriarchal societies which dominated affairs of business and society on La Gonave. During his early months there, Wirkus had made it a point to humor the fat and friendly queen, and she soon began to accept his advice and help.

Summons From Queen.
One day Wirkus received a summons from his newly built home on the coast. Messengers from the queen delivered it. They were very solemn. The message asked that Wirkus hasten inland and up into the back mountain country to the queen's village of whitewashed mud huts. The queen very urgently wanted to see the young American, who was then not quite 25.

Wondering what it could be about, Wirkus accepted and started off on horseback. The trails up the mountain were crowded with natives, all heading for the queen's village. When he finally reached the village he was ushered, still somewhat mys-



Warrant Officer Faustin Wirkus as he looks today.

teriously, into a dwelling especially reserved for him. It was late afternoon and the queen's emissaries informed him that his presence would not be wanted before Queen Ti Memenne until late that night. Already drums were slowly beating in the village center. Still wondering what it was all about, he calmly undressed and went to sleep.

Khaki-Clad Monarch.
Later the marine sergeant, dressed in his usual khaki and puttees, entered the queen's house, stepping into a tiny room. Squating in close array on the floor were members of the inner court. Ti Memenne, barefoot and dressed in a gaily colored robe, sat at the front in regal fashion, her black face shadowy in the sputtering, vague rays of candles. Queen Ti Memenne must have been in her forties or more, and, while a friendly woman, she had a way of commanding and getting respect.

The marine found out why he had been summoned before the queen. He was to be crowned "King Faustin II."

"At first I thought it was just a way they had of telling me they liked me, but later it developed that Ti Memenne and her people were in earnest about the matter. They had discussed the thing for days, and had agreed to name me as their 'white king.'"

The ceremony, weird in many ways, lasted nearly three hours. Outside the drums rolled and pounded, all but drowning out the bleating of a young goat scared to the tip of his tail, which was brought into the royal chamber and offered up as a blood sacrifice.

Wirkus was seated on a small, short-legged chair, and at the queen's command, an attendant came from the next room bearing a heavy, ornate crown.

"I now crown you 'King Faustin II,'" proclaimed Queen Ti Memenne, and she placed the crown—the same crown, so it was said, that once had adorned the head of King Faustin I—on Wirkus!

"Two huge blacks then picked me up and carried me outside. As soon as I appeared the drums beat out the king's salute—four ruffles and three taps. I knew that this was no empty honor they were paying me."

"White King of La Gonave."
Thus was crowned "The White King of La Gonave," a title that was to bring Wirkus, the marine, fame in many countries. William B. Seabrook made him the featured romantic character of his book, "MAGIC ISLE," and later Mr. Wirkus himself wrote a book which he called "The White King of La Gonave."

With the fame, however, also came envy and jealousy from certain quarters. Haiti's president a few years later, Louis Borno, hardly relished the popularity of La Gonave's subdistrict commander, or the thought that a "king," official or unofficial, was in charge of one of his provinces. So eventually Wirkus was transferred to another West Indies station.

Before that happened, though, the adventure-loving leatherneck proved himself a good and kindly administrator. The natives greeted him with "Bon soir, Roi," or "Good evening, King," and he was forever amused at the intense interest the natives took in his everyday affairs. Often they stood around his home, just to watch him dress.

As "King," of course, he had no more authority than he had before. In the eyes of his marine associates in the Gendarmerie, he was still merely subdistrict commander. He received no pay for his kingly title, and his stay on the island was as routine as before. To him, it was just a high compliment.

In 1925 Wirkus was transferred to another station in the West Indies. It was a sad occasion when "The White King of La Gonave" bade his people goodby. The natives lined the shores and cheered as Queen Ti Memenne gravely prophesied: "Some day you will come back and rule the island of La Gonave."

