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ROMMEL FLEES TOWARD KASSERINE PASS

CHURCHILL BACKS DETENTION OF GANDHI

SOVIETS DRIVE TOWARD DNIEPER

RED ARMY TROOPS are racing against time to reach the Dnieper River and the three railroad centers of Kremenchug, Dnepropetrovsk, and Zaporozhe (A) before the frozen waterway melts. Farther north, they overran Gomyel (B). A triple drive by other Soviet soldiers threatened to encircle city of Orel (C), anchor in Nazi defense line. (*International*)

Gandhi Held Responsible For Actions

Prime Minister Says Reasons for Arrest Have Not Changed; Gandhi Improved

New Delhi, Feb. 24—(AP)—Prime Minister Churchill, in a message to Tej Bahadur Sapru, an Indian nationalist leader, said today that responsibility for Mohandas K. Gandhi's fast must rest entirely with Gandhi himself.

His message said:

"The government of India decided last August that Mr. Gandhi and other leaders of the Congress party should be detained for reasons which have been fully explained and are well understood.

"The reasons for that decision have not ceased to exist and his majesty's government impose the determination of the government of India not to be deterred from their duty to guard the peoples of India and of the United Nations by Mr. Gandhi's attempt to secure his unconditional release by fasting.

"The first duty of the government of India and his majesty's government is to defend the soul of India from invasion, by which it is still menaced, and to enable India to play her part in the general cause of the United Nations.

"There can be no justification for discriminating between Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders. The responsibility therefore rests entirely with Mr. Gandhi himself."

The general condition of Gandhi, in the 14th day of his scheduled 21-day fast, showed slight improvement today. The impasse of trend in the condition between Gandhi and the Indian government ended in failure.

Flying Fortresses Bomb Jap Cruiser In Rabaul Harbor

Three 500-Pounders Hit Warship; Cargo Ship Bombed and Waterfront Raked

Allied Headquarters in Australia, Feb. 21—(AP)—Dodging through intense anti-aircraft fire, Flying Fortress crews of General Douglas MacArthur's command dropped three 500-pound bombs on a Japanese cruiser in Rabaul harbor in New Britain yesterday and scored hits within 25 feet of a 7,000 ton cargo vessel, an Allied communique said today.

After the successful attack on the Japanese warship, the Fortresses bombed the waterfront, starting fires, and strafed two ships from a low altitude.

In Portuguese Timor, heavy bombers attacked an airdrome and shot down two of ten Japanese fighters which attempted to intercept, the communique said. One other enemy plane was listed as probably destroyed.

Giving no rest to the Japanese ground forces at Lae, New Guinea, and in the areas to the northeast, Allied bombers strafed the town and nearby villages in night and day attacks. Other aircraft forced the Japanese to withdraw from other vital bases beyond Midas in a series of low level attacks.

Further southeast along the New Guinea coast, Allied planes maintained an eight-hour shuttle attack on four Japanese-occupied towns in the Wau river area and forced several supply barges ashore, the communique said.

Flying Preacher

CADET HAROLD C. RENEGAR, of Fort Worth, Tex., is a licensed Baptist minister. He was called to a Dallas church a short time ago for a ministerial post, but he had already been committed as a cadet. "The idea of killing," he says, "isn't appealing, but I like to consider it in the light of American lives I might help save." (*International*)

Fliers Like Her

DIOSA COSTELLO, fiery Cuban bombshell of the nightclubs, is a favorite of the fliers at the Del Valle Army Base, Austin, Tex. They picked her as the type bombshell they would like to see painted on them by the enemy. (*International*)

Allied Tanks Reinforce Foot Troops

Nazi Marshal Tries Stand Three Miles From Gap; Russia Reports Nazi Rally

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's armored columns were reported to be in full retreat toward the Kasserine Gap in central Tunisia today and British, French, and American and British troops, reinforced by British tanks, were pursuing the Axis from Thala.

Raked by pursuing bombers from hundreds of allied planes, the Nazis were now reported at Sbeitla, a stand only five miles from the mouth of the Kasserine Gap.

This indicated a retreat of at least 14 miles from the high water mark of the Axis only one day.

Dispatches from allied headquarters said the Germans were apparently keeping their tank near the mouth of the Kasserine Pass to cover retreat against onrushing American and British armored forces.

American troops driving down the Hatab river were said to have captured 300 axis prisoners and enough small arms to equip an entire battalion.

About [illegible] available American and British planes were used into the attack against the retreating troops, delivering the heaviest blows of the Tunisian campaign.

Front line reports said Rommel began his retreat last night after allied troops, bolstered by strong aerial support, rallied and checked the Nazis all-out effort to reach the Tebessa-Le Kef road, which would have allowed the Nazis to split the British and French forces in Northern Tunisia.

The hasty withdrawal followed three days of furious battle, and U. S. troops and their British allies absorbed the full shock of Rommel's powerful armored offensive and inflicted severe losses on the enemy.

One infantry and armored attack were in contact with the enemy throughout the day." General Eisenhower said, "including heavy casualties, taking many prisoners and causing some mechanized enemy units to yield."

Dispatches said the eighth army was actually attempting to "strangle" a crucial assault on the important Mareth line in southern Tunisia.

On the Soviet front, Red army headquarters noted for the first time in weeks that Hitler's badly mauled invasion armies were attempting a rally in the Donets basin north of Stalino, and Moscow reports said the Germans had rushed 22 divisions from France, Belgium, Norway and Germany to the eastern front in the last 24 hours.

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Draft Of Older Men Demanded In Senate

Wheeler Plans Bill To Exempt Fathers, Furlough of Troops Is Applauded

Washington, Feb. 24—(AP)—Congressional applause for the Army's decision to furlough troop units to help farmers with their harvests was accompanied today by demands for the drafting of older men into the armed forces to do away with the need of taking fathers.

Senator Wheeler (Montana) Democrat, introduced today for immediate reference a bill providing for the selective service act to exempt fathers with their families from Army service.

This would go much further than legislation sponsored in the House by Representative Kilday of Texas who proposed to set up a zone of occupations under which fathers would be deferred until all able bachelors and childless married men had been drafted.

Wheeler declared the drafting of fathers, and the breaking up of homes when there are "many physically fit men above 38 who can be used" would be "a distinct disservice to the country."

Warren, and Chairman Smith (South Carolina Democrat) of the Senate agriculture committee agreed that drafting of single and childless married men between 38 and 45 would have to be resorted to meet the Army goal of 5,200,000 men by December 31.

Both said Lieutenant General Joseph T. McNarney, deputy chief of staff, convinced them at an executive session that the Army could use that force "especially since we are fighting all over the world and trying to extend the four freedoms to everybody on the face of the globe."

Rent Control Violations Reported

Raleigh, Feb. 24—(AP)—T. S. Johnson, state OPA director, said violation of rent control regulations by some hotels, rooming houses and tourist homes in eight North Carolina areas had been reported.

The reported violators, Johnson said, were in Durham, Fayetteville, Wilmington, Elizabeth City, New Bern, Jacksonville, Goldsboro and Henderson.

Johnson said some hotels were "charging double rates for single occupancy of rooms in many cases" and that they had failed to post their rate notices in each room.

Black Marts Flourish

Cowhide Shipments From Uninspected Slaughter Houses Cited as Proof

New York, Feb. 24—(AP)—Substantial proof that black markets in meat are flourishing throughout the country was found today in a canners council report that cowhide shipments from uninspected slaughter houses have increased over 75 per cent in recent months.

How many of these unavailable hides come from black market slaughters cannot be definitely estimated, but experts said just the tremendous increase of inspectly slipped skins indicates that the slaughtering can account for only a portion of this diversion of hides and beef—from regular packing house channels.

Actual figures show that "movement into weight of uninspected hides" jumped from 125,000 in December 1941 to 230,000 in December, 1942.

Hide industry authorities say that OPA has control over all of the hides from cattle slaughtered in the channels, and that ceiling prices were placed on meat processed by packers. Control of meat is placed on the price of beef on the hoof.

Wickard Asks Clear Mandate For Program

Washington, Feb. 24—(AP)—Secretary of Agriculture Wickard asked Congress today for a "clear mandate from the people" to proceed with his announced 1943 farm program when plans, along lines intended to keep farm prices without causing serious inflationary consequences.

That statement, which had been delivered to the House agriculture committee from manuscript, at the request of Chairman Marcantonio (American Labor, New York), who had asked Wickard to appear before the House agriculture committee.

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37 Orphans Die In Fire

Cavan, Eire, Feb. 24—(AP)—Thirty-seven orphan girls, ranging in age from four to 13, were burned to death in a fire that destroyed the Cavan province orphanage early today.

Eight bodies were recovered from the ruins.

The death toll [illegible].

The blaze began in a laundry and spread quickly, trapping the children in a dormitory.

MahonDefends Dummy Guns

Washington, Feb. 24—(AP)—Stoutly defending the War department's action in mounting dummy guns atop congressional office buildings, Representative Mahon, Texas Democrat, said on the House floor today that "Congress need no protection. It needs only to prosecute a more effective policy for victory and the peace to follow."

A member of the House subcommittee on military appropriations, Mahon took the floor to answer what he called "attacks on the war department" following disclosure yesterday that the guns atop the House office building are made of wood and manned by "sleepy soldiers."

Asserting such attacks are "unwise," he added that "thinking in terms of all Americans at home, I say, not from bombs but from brainstorms, bickering, backbiting and bungling, O Lord, deliver us.

"I do not want the War department to withhold guns from men who are fighting and dying in the battle zone in order to protect the House office building or officials in Washington. Washington is threatened not with bombs from without, but with bombs from within."

The wooden gun disclosure was made by Representative Codey, North Carolina Democrat, who said yesterday he was determined to do something about it.

WEATHER

FOR NORTH CAROLINA: Colder tonight and early Thursday.

Train Wreck Injuries 57

Pennsylvania's Crack 'Cavalier' Rammed by Switch Engine at Wilmington

Wilmington, Del., Feb. 24—(AP)—The Pennsylvania railroad's crack passenger train, "The Cavalier," heavily crowded and stopped for a signal, was rammed from the rear by a speeding switch engine and two passenger coaches early early today and 57 passengers and crewmen were injured, six seriously.

Most of the injured were Navy enlisted men.

The crash [illegible] over a [illegible] mile area, [illegible] seven windows and lights in [illegible] coaches, derailed one car and [illegible] the southbound traffic tracks of the railroad's main line for [illegible].

Scores [illegible] stumbling in the aisles [illegible] to get off at the Wilmington station, a quarter mile away, were [illegible] back to the train.

Seven [illegible] and scores of police and [illegible] injured to Wilmington's three main hospitals, [illegible] were immediately overcrowded [illegible] a general call was sent out for [illegible].

All but [illegible] were quickly released after being treated for lacerations [illegible].

The train [illegible] from Philadelphia [illegible] Va. The railroad [illegible] two coaches [illegible] the rear of the [illegible] engine were [illegible] and were almost [illegible] telescoped into the train.

MANSFIELD MILLS STRIKE IS ENDED

Lumberton, Feb. 24—(AP)—Employees of the Mansfield Mill were back at their jobs today after more than 100 went out at the end of the first shift yesterday in protest of what a mill spokesman said was a pay increase from 1 cent to 2 cents an hour, given generally to all the employees.

Food Supply Parley Looms

Washington, Feb. 24—(AP)—A United Nations conference to discuss plans for a post-war international food supply program—designed to prevent famines or surpluses and insure profits for growers—appeared in the offing today.

President Roosevelt, in a part of his press conference, said such a session was under consideration but emphasized that no definite decision had been reached concerning it.

The conference would consider questions of information and agreement among world producers and exporters of specific food items, he said, adding that the proposed session would be of an exploratory nature.

Press conference questions concerning Joseph Stalin's statement that Russia was carrying the whole weight of the war because of the lack of a second front in Europe produced no direct reply from the President, who said he had not read the declaration.

FURIOUS BOMBINGS IN SOUTH PACIFIC

Washington, Feb. 24—(AP)—Furious bombing of an Axis and enemy position in the South Pacific was reported by the Navy today in telling of a Japanese air raid on a United States base on Samoa island and five United States aerial attacks on Japanese bases.

Major Bills Are Debated

Revenue Measure And Ninth Month Up in Legislature; Committees Meet

Raleigh, Feb. 24—(AP)—Two major bills, one to raise $155,000,000 in revenue and the other to set up a statewide nine-month school term, were debated in the legislature today. And in the hours the assembly was not in session, committees worked industriously to report on a multitude of bills, most of which were local.

[illegible]

Senate Passes Revenue Bill On Second Reading, 45 To 0

Raleigh, Feb. 24—(AP)—By 45 to 0, the senate passed the $155,000,000 revenue bill today on second reading. Senator Johnson of Duplin said it was the first time he could remember in his long experience that the money raising bill had not met with some opposition in the senate.

The lack of any [illegible] started the senators, he [illegible] everyone seemed agreed that some [illegible] that made it [illegible] would be made to reduce the sales tax.

On motion of Senator O'Berry of Wayne, the senate [illegible] committee which handled the record

[illegible]

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SABATH FINDS FDR NOT KEEN ON RACE

[illegible]

COMMITTEE APPROVES LEND-LEASE MEASURE

Washington, Feb. 24—(AP)—The House foreign affairs committee unanimously approved today a resolution extending for one year the lease-lend method of supplying first aid to the nations which it was part 1941.

The action was announced by a committee attaché who said there was no amendment to the resolution [illegible] the life of the act until July 1944.

[illegible]

(Prewar civilian use.)