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Gas Price Increase Is Asked Following Ration Reductions

'A' Coupon Value Cut In Half, Pleasure Driving Ban Lifted, Effective Monday

Washington, March 18.—(AP)—Dealers plea for price increases, driver plea for more coupons and official plea for revival of car-sharing plans channeled today in the wake of yesterday's order cutting the "A" book holder's weekly gasoline ration roughly from about three to one and one-half gallons and lifting the pleasure driving ban, effective Monday.

Nazi Trouble Spots



55 ELITE TROOPS have been ordered into the Savoie Mountains in the French Alps, to combat French patriot armies. Three Axis planes were shot down near Thonon by French guerrillas. Radio Algiers reports a general strike in Tunisia factories and riots in Lyons and Nimes because of German imposed labor decrees. (International)

Eisenhower Orders Shift

General Patton Heads U. S. Forces in West Tunisia, Replacing General Fredenall

Allied Headquarters in North Africa, March 18.—(AP)—General Dwight D. Eisenhower replaced Major General Lloyd E. Fredenall today with Lieutenant General George S. Patton, armored force specialist, as commander of United States troops in the western Tunisian sector.

General Patton, called "Blond and Glib" as one of the most effective commanders of the Army, is regarded here as the outstanding American armored force executive since the death of Major General Aina R. Chaffin, in August, 1941.

(The dispatch did not bring out immediately the new assignment of General Fredenall, who was in command of American troops in West Tunisia at the time of the axis breakthrough in mid-February and had subsequently allied counter-offensives.)

Bank Officers Are Indicted After Closing

Shelby, March 18.—(AP)—U. S. Commissioner John P. Mull issued warrants today for three officials and one former official of the Bank of Black Mountain which was closed after State Banking Commissioner Gurney P. Hood announced shortage of approximately \$25,000 was discovered.

Those named in the warrant were: William Henry Powles, cashier; James Barrett Dobson, assistant cashier; Paul Miles, bookkeeper; and Robert Edgar Fere, a former loan officer, now in the Army.

District Attorney Labor (Candler) recommended a bond of \$100,000 for Powles and \$5,000 each for the three others.

Raleigh, March 18.—(AP)—Governor Broughton today appointed R. R. Williams, Asheville attorney, to assist State Banking Commissioner Gurney P. Hood in prosecuting persons responsible for the failure of the Bank of Black Mountain.

The governor made the appointment after conferring by telephone with the solicitor, and said he had ordered a vigorous prosecution of all persons involved.

Climaxing 30-Mile Drive In Tunisia

Yanks Capture Gafsa

Allied Bombers Smash At Rabaul

392 Bombs Are Dropped On Jap Base

Fires and Explosions Are Touched Off; Tojo Tells Japanese Situation Is Serious

(By The Associated Press) General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters today reported a mauling assault on the big Japanese base at Rabaul, New Britain, in which B-24s plastered the airfield with 392 bombs, while other United Nations aircraft rained a heavy outburst at the Kai Iomias between Australia and New Guinea.

The attack on Rabaul, just before dark yesterday, fanned out many fires and explosions and further crippled Japan's aerial striking power in the southwest Pacific.

Meanwhile, a Tokyo broadcast quoted Premier Tojo as warning Japan that "the war situation is becoming more serious"—a confession underlined by Secretary Knox's statement in New York last night that Japan has lost 1,877,000 tons of shipping, or one-third of her tonnage at the beginning of the war.

"The victory by victory is just begun," Knox said. "We have reached the point where the conduct of the struggle will be determined not only by our own resources but by the Japanese conduct to the end of the war."

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FORMER BUNDISTS LOSE CITIZENSHIP

New York, March 18.—(AP)—Federal Judge John Rehnold today cancelled the citizenship of Fritz Kuhn, former national leader of the German American Bund, and ten other former members.

They were former founders of 29 recently lost in denaturalization proceedings, were permitted to re-enter their American citizenship under Judge Rehnold's decision, in which he denounced the German American Bund as an un-American organization.

Babson Asks Farm Relief

Shortage of Labor and Equipment Poses Serious Threat To Food Production

By ROGER W. BABSON Copyright—1942—Publishers Financial Bureau, Inc. Babson Park, Mass., March 18.—Frustrated by the drive for victory gardens and as spring draws closer my thought and those of countless others turn naturally to the production of food. Food and has been successful in increasing their productive acreage. What can we do, we can do here. Hence, I advise all who can to have a small subsistence garden this year. Plant your seed orders now, but don't overbuy.

Economies of Farming I have to concern over the amateur gardeners. He will do a good job on his little home tract. In the course of the summer he will make a good many whole-ome vegetables.

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TO ACCOMPANY WALLACE ON LATIN-AMERICAN TOUR



VICE PRESIDENT HENRY A. WALLACE will be accompanied on his tour of seven Latin-American countries by, left to right: Laurence Duggan, adviser on political relations for the State Department; James D. McCran and Hector Lazo, assistant director in charge of the Office of Exports. Wallace, shown seated, is to arrive at San Jose, Costa Rica, on March 19, and will conclude the tour at Bogota, Col. (International)

Crop Report Due Friday

Analysis Is Expected To Show Seriousness Of Food Production Problem for 1943

Washington, March 18.—(AP)—The federal crop reporting board said estimates for the 1943 crop are in a report tomorrow which should give the country an idea of just how serious the food production problem is and how much more citizens may have to reduce their consumption.

The estimates will be based on reports from approximately 300,000 farmers in all parts of the country who have had some experience in setting crop reports.

The report will be released at a time when many farmers are still in the grip of a crop slump in loss of production due to labor and machinery shortages, and reported through the satisfaction of government agricultural price controls.

Food production in 1942 set by Secretary of Agriculture Wickard and called for a 12 per cent increase in the production of livestock, dairy and poultry products and the same total crop increase as in 1942. The crop goals call, however, for larger acreages of some commodities and smaller acreages of others.

The 1942 crop averages reached a record level. Mr. Wickard did not ask for a further increase in total crops because he said the 1942 acreage reached the limit that is possible with the labor, machinery, fertilizer and other production resources available.

A District survey made by agricultural agents several weeks ago indicated that year's crop averages might drop from 10 to 20 per cent below last year's.

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Patterson Appeals For Service Law

Three Raids Made On Kiska

Washington, March 18.—(AP)—Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson appealed today for passage enactment of a civilian service draft law to "mitigate the loss of life on the fighting front" and permit "a more equitable distribution of burdens" at home.

Adoption of the Austin-Wadsworth bill to draft men and women into war production jobs, he told the Senate today, will be "a good thing for the United States and good for the world."

Describing the war as "a fight for existence which is far from won," Patterson said the United States is the only one of the principal belligerents without a system of universal war service.

"It is demarcate to tap a man on the shoulder and send him to fight the Japanese in a New Guinea jungle," he added, "but it is indelicate to draft a man or a woman to load shells, work on an airplane or stay in a trench."

"It would be possible," he emphasized, "for some men, I do not choose to say." He continued: "I firmly believe that not until there is imposed on every man and woman the equal obligation to render service in the war effort, will the country make the all out war effort which is necessary and of which we are capable."

Meanwhile broad revision of legislation to draft civilians for war industry appeared imminent today as the House and Senate worked on the bill to amend the law to draft civilians for war industry.

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Undersecretary Of War Urges Draft Of Civilian Men And Women for Jobs

U.S. Warned Of War Toll

Washington, March 18.—(AP)—Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson today warned that the United States is the only one of the principal belligerents without a system of universal war service.

"It is demarcate to tap a man on the shoulder and send him to fight the Japanese in a New Guinea jungle," he added, "but it is indelicate to draft a man or a woman to load shells, work on an airplane or stay in a trench."

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Mareth Line Offensive Under Way

Strategic Nazi-Held Airbase Recaptured On Central Front; Other News of War

(By The Associated Press) Allied headquarters announced today that American troops had recaptured the strategic German-held airbase at Gafsa in central Tunisia, climaxing a 30-mile drive, while on the southern front a Berlin broadcast said General Sir E. L. Montgomery's British eighth army was storming the Mareth line with four tank and infantry divisions.

A bulletin from General Dwight D. Eisenhower's headquarters said allied positions were improved in the northern sector of the 60-mile long Mareth line front "both during the nights of March 16-17 and during yesterday."

This was the first authoritative allied statement tending to confirm German reports that the British eighth army had launched a grand assault against the "little Maginot" defense line in southern Tunisia.

"In the south, our patrols were active, inflicting losses on the enemy," the war bulletin said. "The command reported that American troops encountered little opposition in their recapture of Gafsa."

Front line developments said U. S. troops, supported by mobile French detachments, were pushing the axis position at Gafsa twelve miles away on a road leading to the Gulf of Gabes and the Mareth line.

A British broadcast said Lieutenant General Anderson's first army troops struck out in two counter attacks in the northern sector yesterday, making "some headway" against axis forces which had overrun French positions north of Tunisia.

German military quarters forecast an increase in the intensity of the British attacks which Berlin said were limited to 1920 aircraft Tuesday night.

In Russia, Soviet dispatches reported that a gigantic tank battle, fought under skies alive with Nazi and Red army bombers and fighter planes, was raging in the Donets river valley below Kharkov today as the Germans stepped up the fury of their counter-offensive.

Despite the capture of the German airbase, Soviet correspondents reported the Red army was presently holding their lines, repulsing blow after blow, and met off six waves of tank counter attacks on an important sector 22 miles southwest of the city.

Soviet light bomber planes, known as "tank busters" because of their armor-piercing cannon, were reported inflicting great losses on German tanks.

On the central front, the Soviet midday communiqué reported the capture of 32 more towns and villages south of Bely as the Red armies drove rough-shod over strong German defenses in their offensive against the Nazi citadel at Smolensk, 230 miles west of Moscow.

Russian vanguards were reported only 40 miles from Smolensk, with Soviet columns converging on the base from the north, south and east.

To the north, in the Lake Itchen region, Marshal Timoshenko's army was reported striking closer to the Nazi stronghold at Staraya Russa and the Berlin radio acknowledged that Russian tanks, infantry and air borne troops had made a "small breach in the German line."

LEND-LEASE TREATY SIGNED WITH MEXICO

Washington, March 18.—(AP)—Mexican Ambassador Francisco Castillo Najera and Secretary of State Hull today signed a new lend-lease agreement.

The new treaty, terms of which are confidential, supersedes the agreement between Mexico and the United States, signed March 27, 1942.

WEATHER

FOR NORTH CAROLINA. Possible light rain and drizzle east portion this afternoon and in south portion tonight.