

# French Fight With Allies In Italy

MANY KILLED, INJURED IN TRAIN WRECK



This is the wreck of two crack trains of the Atlantic Coast Line Railway near Buie, N. C. More than seventy were killed and scores of others were injured in the double wreck. Railway officials blamed a broken rail for derailment of a Florida-bound train. A Northbound train crashed into the other. (AP Wirephoto)

## Death Toll Is Now Up To 70 In Coast Line's Big Wreck

## More Bodies Believed In Twisted Car

Track Still Blocked Despite Determined Efforts of Wreckers

Lumberton, Dec. 17 — (AP) — The toll of known dead in the southeast's worst railroad disaster rose to 70 today as wreckers worked with little success to pry apart four telescoped passenger cars that still blocked the Atlantic Coast Line's double track main line from New York to Florida.

The body of an unidentified civilian was recovered from the wreckage early today. Red Cross and railroad officials here reported eight more bodies were believed to be in a section of one of the cars that had not been entered.

The four steel cars, stacked one on the other, were so jammed together that they were little bigger than one car is normally. The wrecking trains were able to move the pyramided coaches only six feet all night.

The double pile-up of the two crack lines produced a death list just short of that in the wreck of the Congressional Limited in Philadelphia last September, when 39 persons lost their lives.

The southeastern seaboard's worst previous railroad wreck occurred at Rockmart, Ga., in 1926, when 20 were killed. The biggest wreck toll in the nation's railroad history is 115 killed at Nashville, Tenn., July 9, 1918.

Workers toiled throughout the night and continued today in twelve-degree weather to clear the tracks and remove the dead. Enough of the mass of telescoped cars and twisted rails was expected to be moved today to permit resumption of normal traffic.

Some civilian dead were still unidentified. Witnesses said a few victims were so dismembered it would be difficult to establish identity.

Names of the soldier dead were withheld pending notification of kin.

A broken rail, Coast Line officials said, caused the first wreck, the derailment of three coaches on the Florida-bound Tamiami west coast Champion.

One person, First Lieutenant Roy A. Griffin, a student chaplain at Howard University, was killed in this wreck.

The list of injured in the wreck included only one from North Carolina—Wilmington, M. Stowell, of Camp Davis.

This was at 12:50 a. m., Thursday. Som 635 minutes later the northbound Tamiami east coast Champion plowed into the coaches of the first train.

One railroad official said an automatic warning device on the pa-

## Revenue Bill Postponed; To Block Security Tax

Washington, Dec. 17 — (AP) — Senate leaders all but slapped a "don't open until New Year's" label today on the new \$2,284,000,000 tax bill. The hasty final blessing given the measure by the Senate Finance Committee yesterday apparently came too late to permit its enactment by Christmas. Majority Leader Barkley anticipates a congressional recess from the middle of next week until about January 4, precluding early action on the bill.

Finance Chairman George, Georgia Democrat, said legislative draftsmen could not possibly whip the measure and its accompanying report into shape before Monday or Tuesday and indicated he would agree to postponement if special legislation could be worked out to cover an anticipated freeze on the social security tax rate.

Upon insistence of Senator Vandenberg, Michigan Republican, the committee wrote in a provision delaying through 1944 a project automatic increase in social security taxes. Unless the Vandenberg proviso is adopted in the tax bill, or in other legislation, social security tax rates, now one percent each on employers and employees, rise to two percent January 1.

Senator Thomas, Utah Democrat, acting chairman in the absence of Senator Reynolds, North Carolina Democrat, said the committee would be called upon to examine the army's organization with a view to eliminating a repetition of the "hump" that developed in the promotion line after the last war.

"The Army should be placed on a basis where promotions will be made on merit and not along on seniority," Thomas told a reporter. He also said provision should be made for retention in higher ranks of officers promoted over their seniors because of unusual ability.

The measure offered would bar Senate consideration of presidential nominations for permanent promotions, all of which must be submitted for confirmation.

Action has been postponed indefinitely on 11 such promotions. The list includes presidential recommendations for promotion to permanent posts of Major General Stilwell, Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr., Lt. Gen. Somervell and Lt. Gen. Joseph T. McNarney.

ail track did not operate when the southbound train's three cars were derailed because the cars did not fit completely on the second track and consequently failed to set off the signal.

**WEATHER**  
FOR NORTH CAROLINA  
Fair and continued cold tonight; lowest temperature to-night, 10 to 15 in interior and 15 to 22 in extreme east portion. Saturday fair and slightly warmer.

## Promotions In Army To Be On Merit

Washington, Dec. 17 — (AP) — Post-war reorganization of the Army on a merit promotion basis was passed by members today as the Senate Military Committee received legislation which would halt all permanent advancements in officers' ranks during the war.

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# RAF Out To Destroy Berlin

## Capital Of Germany To Be Levelled

Terrific Damage Is Done in Latest Raid On Great Nazi City

London, Dec. 17 — (AP) — Stricken Berlin heaved up fields of flame and smoke again last night and hundreds of giant black RAF bombers loosed thunderous explosives on the Nazi nerve center for the 41st time this year.

Stockholm dispatches said the capital city was burning again today after a two-week respite, the flames from her gutted buildings "reddening the sky." Japanese communication was irregular and the capital's transport was reported paralyzed from streets choked with debris.

The sixth raid on the capital in a month was launched from Britain just after American Liberators and Flying Fortresses returned in twilight from the daylight raid on northwest Germany. The Eighth Air Force did not specify the Americans' targets. The Germans said they were over Heligoland bay, and "dropped a great number of high explosives and incendiary bombs on residential quarters in a number of localities in northwestern Germany."

It acknowledged particularly heavy damage to Bremen itself, the big U-boat base, which the Americans battered also on November 26 and 29.

The degree of the Berlin assault—more than 1,500 lone tons of bombs—and the determination with which it was pressed home despite the loss of 30 left no doubt that RAF intends to finish the job of leveling what remains of the capital city's acres of factories, government buildings, financial institutions and warehouses.

## Reds Firmly In Command West Of Kiev

Moscow, Dec. 17 — (AP) — General Nikolai Vatutin's first Ukrainian army appeared to have firmly established the upper hand west of Kiev today after more than five weeks of desperate fighting against heavy German infantry counter attacks.

Russians dislodged the enemy from several settlements on the Teteriv river sector, 3 miles west of the Ukraine capital for the second successive day yesterday. The Russian communiqué said, enabling Vatutin's columns to resume their drive northwest of Radomyshl.

Nazi Marshal Fritz von Manstein's hold on the important stronghold, lying between the Korosten-Kiev and Bhitomir-Kiev main highways is now seriously threatened, dispatches from the front indicate.

Meanwhile, General Ivan Konev's second Ukraine army, 200 miles to the south, pressed its attack below captured Chernyakh toward the rail junction of Smela and repulsed fierce German counterattacks.

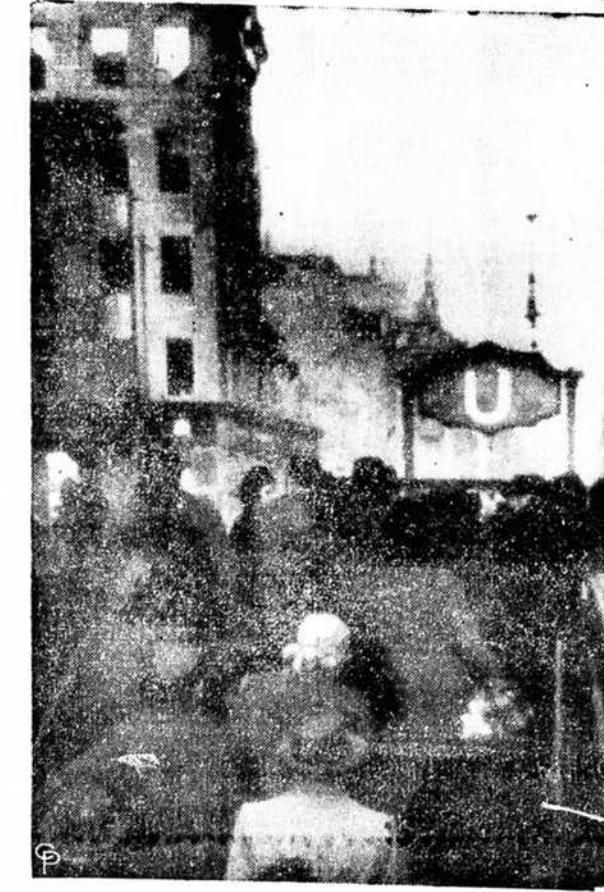
In these twin drives of Smela and Korogozod, Soviet troops killed 900 Germans, captured a number of villages and picked up considerable stores of abandoned war materials, the Russian bulletin said.

**6 SHOPPING DAYS LEFT**

I see a present for a tall, dark, handsome man

Buy Christmas Seals

## BERLIN RESIDENTS LEAVE SHELTER



THE ALL CLEAR has sounded and Berlin residents wearily climb the stairs from an underground shelter to the street. Before their eyes are shattered buildings and wrecked streets, the handiwork of the RAF bombardiers. Exclusive radiophoto from Stockholm. (International)

## Americans Now Strongly Rooted In New Britain

### Churchill Much Improved; Acting Premier Probable

London, Dec. 17 — (AP) — General improvement in Prime Minister Churchill's condition has been maintained, a bulletin from his bedside announced this afternoon.

"There has been no spread in the pneumonia, and improvement in the prime minister's general condition has been maintained," said the bulletin, issued at No. 10 Downing street.

Churchill, suffering from his second attack of pneumonia in ten months, undoubtedly will require a long period for recuperation, and consequently it is expected Britain's war cabinet may name an acting leader to serve in his absence.

### Cotton Mixed Around Close

New York, Dec. 17 — (AP) — Cotton futures rose to ten cents a bale higher by five cents lower. Noon prices were five cents a bale higher to five cent lower.

The newspaper carrier boys of the Henderson Daily Dispatch in the city and vicinity plan to make double collection from subscribers on their routes this week-end, collecting for the week ending December 25 as well as the current week. This is being done in order that the boys may have Christmas day as a holiday.

Your co-operation will enable the young men who deliver your papers to have a more enjoyable Christmas season and will be greatly appreciated by the carrier organization.

## Sharp Gains Scored By Fight Unit

Presence of French Causes Sensation For Italian People

Allied Headquarters, Algiers, Dec. 17 — (AP) — French troops, entering the war on the European mainland for the first time since 1918, have scored outstanding successes against the Germans in mountain fighting in central Italy. It was announced today.

The French have been in forward positions alongside British and American soldiers for some time, but their presence has been noted only in today's communiqué from Allied headquarters.

They are thought to have fought at night in the mountains, but since then have been completely possessed with American uniforms, guns and materials.

Soon after moving up to the battlefield, the French participated in a series of local attacks, capturing several important German hilltop positions, and taking a number of prisoners, who expressed surprise at finding the French in action.

The French forces had been trained in North Africa under the direction of General Henri Girard in their use of American arms.

Their presence created a sensation among the Italian people and the quick successes of the French soldiers contrasted sharply with the abortive efforts recently of the first Italian militia to be sent into the Allied lines.

Announcement of the participation of the French coincided with an aerial assault for the second successive day on German communications and supply lines in the Alpine region of northern Italy, where heavy bombers wrecked rail facilities at Padua and Dogna.

Ground fighting by both the Fifth and Eighth Armies was continued largely to consolidating previous gains and to bitter local battles and for strategic advantages.

General Mark W. Clark's Allied troops on the western end of the battlefield assaulted the German bastion of San Pietro, which guards the road to Neme, and the attacking infantry ran into a series of concrete pillboxes and other strong points, resulting in fierce hand-to-hand fighting.

Other heavy skirmishes were reported west of Filigiano, where two more hills were taken. Further south a serious German counter-attack was broken off in the mountains. Headquarters said the Fifth Army also took a "number of hills" farther inland.

The Germans intensified their efforts to hold off the relentless Eighth Army on the Adriatic end of the line, throwing more and more tanks and flame throwers into the struggle, but New Zealanders and Canadians beat off every Nazi attempt to break their hold on the Ossola-Crema highway, which had been cut in three places the previous day.

## Roosevelt Is Now Back At White House

Washington, Dec. 17 — (AP) — President Roosevelt returned to the White House today five weeks and a day after departing for historic military and diplomatic conferences in the Middle East.

His safe arrival in this country after the long trip abroad was announced yesterday afternoon. Today's announcement said he had reached the executive residence.

## Slight Gains For Stocks

New York, Dec. 17 — (AP) — Prices generally displayed further moderate improvement in today's stock market.

Schenley and National Distillers managed to hold modest improvement, while American Distilling, Hiram Walker and Canada Dry retreated. In front of increases were U. S. Steel, Chrysler, Goodyear, Westinghouse and Texas Company. Occasional declines included General Motors, American Telephone and General Electric.

Most commodities were lower. Bonds were narrow.