

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

Final



Grand Scale North Africa Battle Looms

BY WES GALLAGHER ALLIED HEADQUARTERS IN NORTH AFRICA (AP)—A battle rivaling the struggle at Stalingrad in bitterness and intensity—with Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and Col. Gen. Jürgen Von Arnim threatened by the same fate as their Nazi counterparts in Russia—appeared in the air today as the British Eighth Army made exploratory stabs at Rommel's forces in the Mareth Line.

This is the conclusion reached by some military observers in close touch with the African fighting. They agree that Rommel's failure to cripple the Eighth Army in his west-end attacks was a serious blow and declare his heavy losses in men and material mean that the Axis has reached the peak in Tunisia and is now on the down grade. After four months of fighting these facts were becoming evident.

With the Royal Navy controlling the sea and Allied air forces holding the whip hand in the air no Dunkerque is possible for the Axis and the only alternative is that Rommel and Von Arnim fight to the finish in the manner of the Nazi army trapped before Stalingrad.

3—Despite his violent struggles, Rommel is still in an exposed strategic position, facing the experienced British-American First Army on his flank ever ready to slice his slender thread of communications south from Bizerte to the Mareth line.

4—Tunisia must be cleaned up quickly or the whole Allied Mediterranean timetable to attack Europe is likely to be thrown off schedule.

5—Some observers give that Axis strength is certain to dwindle from this period onward the death struggles are certain to be bloody and violent right down to the Tunisian beaches. It is certain that the Germans will fight with all their might at Stalingrad and that the Allies are going to suffer heavy casualties in clearing Africa of the foe.

6—Hitler's back now on every side, the German generals can only fight for time to keep the Allies from coupling the Burma, India, and it is considered certain that Hitler has given orders to hold Africa right up to the last company. This is borne out in the appearance of the German Army's latest tanks, planes and equipment on this front.

It is self evident, however, that the Germans are growing weaker.

Great Ruin Heaped on Germany By RAF Attacks

Pictures Show Devastation

LONDON — (AP) — The RAF's ceaseless bombing offensive, now showing German Europe with fire and explosives at the rate of more than 10,000 tons a month, has already wrecked more than 2,000 German factories and more than 1,000,000 German homes.

Declaring that photographic reconnaissance showed that the raid on Essen, home of the Krupp arsenal, on the night of March 5-6 "probably was the heaviest blow struck at German war industry in the whole of the bomber offensive."

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MESSAGE AT SEA—International code flags are hoisted by a Coast Guardsman aboard a cutter somewhere at sea to communicate with other vessels of a foreign-bound merchant convoy. Use of the radio is barred because of the submarine menace.

Deferment Plan Fails

Farm Worker Measure Beaten in House

WASHINGTON — (AP) — The Senate rejected 49 to 32 today a proposal for the so-called "unit system" by which the draft deferment of farm workers and apparently cleared the way for early passage of another measure directing the deferment of workers employed "substantially full time" on farms.

It would have preserved, however, the so-called "unit system" by which the amount of farm work actually done is taken into account in determining whether deferment should be granted.

JOHNSON PLAN Rejection of this left before the Senate a proposal offered by Senator Johnson, Democrat, Colorado, which would erase the "unit system" and liberalize the deferments for those engaged in producing or harvesting commodities held by the Secretary of Agriculture to be essential to the war effort.

Overtime Pay Not Affected WASHINGTON — The War Labor Board said today that an employer's obligation to pay or not pay overtime rates is not affected by the Executive order establishing a minimum wartime work week of 40 hours.

Board approval is not required in order to pay overtime rates after 40 hours the board said, providing such payment is in accordance with provisions of the wage-hour act, any similar Federal, State or local law, a collective bargaining agreement or by the past practice of the employer.

GOP Committee For Ruml Plan

Steering Group Gives Unanimous Support; Predict Proposal Can Pass

WASHINGTON — (AP) — The House Republican Steering Committee laid plans today to align the party's strength behind the Ruml plan to abate a year's income taxes and put the nation's 44,000,000 taxpayers on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Republican Leader Martin of Massachusetts, reported the Committee supported the Ruml plan unanimously, and predictions were made freely by Republicans that sufficient strength can be mustered to pass the "step a year" tax proposal in the House.

Martin, in whose office the Steering Committee met, said an overwhelmingly majority of his party's 208 members would vote for the Ruml plan and the Committee arranged for a party caucus Monday to mobilize for the floor battle on the abatement issue.

However, it was not expected that the plan would pass.

See GOP GROUP on page 8

Encirclement of City All But Complete

Remains Left Only Narrow Corridor Of Retreat Toward Smolensk

MOSCOW — (AP) — Red Army troops all but completed the encirclement of Vyazma today and left the Germans only a narrow corridor for retreat toward Smolensk from that stronghold 125 miles west of Moscow.

The pincers about Vyazma was tightened by the capture of Isakova, fifteen miles southeast of the city on the Vyazma-Kaluga railway, the Russians said.

Advancing ward along a wide front west of Gzhatsk, the Soviet forces were pushing forward with the utmost speed, said observers said the Germans were falling back upon prepared positions around various settlements, digging in their tanks in pill-boxes and utilizing streams and forests as defense lines.

ALL DAY FIGHT Red Star said a fight raged all day at one important water barrier in the Vyazma sector, but that Army forces broke the Nazi defenses at two points, captured several strongly fortified settlements, and forced the Germans to retreat.

Another sector in which Red Army troops were pressing heavily upon the invaders was south of Lake Inza, where the Government newspaper Inveter said.

Investigations announced that Marshal Semon Timoshenko's forces driving along the highway from Demyshev had taken Staro-Ramensk and were now within 20 miles of the city.

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Trap On Rommel Sealed By French

French Forces in Contact With Other Troops in Mareth Line Area

By ASSOCIATED PRESS Secretary of War Stimson said today that Fighting French troops had made contact with other French legions in a flanking movement around the southern end of the Mareth line.

Stimson said General Le Clerc's Fighting French columns, who had driven more than 120 miles across the desert from Lake Chad in the heart of Equatorial Africa, closed the ring around the Mareth line.

Stimson's statement was linked with the statement that Allied forces in the Tunisian battle front "had much the better of the fighting last week," but he said that losses on both sides had been substantial.

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Chinese and American Pillars Receive Wins

WILLIAMS FIELD, Ariz. — (AP) — The United States Army today, for the first time since the outbreak of the war, received a large class of American pilots received their wings.

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More Coffee For Us All

Rations To Go Back to Pound Each 5 Weeks

WASHINGTON — (AP) — Coffee rations will go back to one pound for five weeks beginning March 22.

Price Administrator Francis Bessie announced the increase today, saying the increase would be in effect from March 22 to April 15.

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Freshmen Meet President How's Henry, F. R. Asks, When Mrs. Luce, Others Leave Mansion

WASHINGTON — (AP) — How's Henry, F. R. Asks, When Mrs. Luce, Others Leave Mansion

Abundant Life Will Follow Post War Trials, Says Planning Board

By CHARLES MOLONY WASHINGTON — (AP) — The National Resources Planning Board called on the country today to steel itself for a continuance of wartime restrictions for at least another year.

Kenney Arrives In Washington

WASHINGTON — (AP) — Gen. George C. Kenney, commander of the Allied Air Forces in the South Pacific, has arrived in Washington at the head of a mission of seven officers serving under Gen. Douglas MacArthur.