NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Reviewed by **CARTER FIELD**

Boost Sub Destroyer Output Rather Than Merchant Ships . . . United Allies Staging War of Nerves . . .

Bell Syndicate—WNU Features.

WASHINGTON.—While the decision has not been made, it is highly unlikely that President Roosevelt will revise upward his demands of construction of merchant ships.

The classifications, using precious steel which will be raised, are aimed at destroying submarines rather than replacing losses from submarines.

It will be noted that most of the ships sent to the bottom by submarines have not been in convoys—nor in the patrolled lanes. That is one reason for the gasoline shortage in the Eastern states. Obviously there have been no convoys of tankers bringing oil from the Gulf ports to the East.

The only important protection afforded along that long coastwise route has been by airplane spotting. It is true that this has resulted in the sinking of some undersea boats, but it has not proved very sound insurance for the tankers.

In contrast, the supply ships transporting our men and supplies to the various theaters of war, from the Arctic coast of Russia to Australia and all way stations, have suffered hardly at all.

This is the logic behind the President's present thought that it is better, for the time being, to put any surplus steel that may be available over and above the objectives already laid down into destroyers, torpedo boats, corvettes, etc., rather than into merchant ships.

One for One

One destroyer, corvette or torpedo boat may destroy a submarine which otherwise might sink a dozen merchant ships. Of the three types none uses more steel than a single merchant ship; the corvette uses considerably less, and the torpedo boat very little indeed.

There is another argument for building more submarine destroyers rather than U-boat fodder. This is that when a merchant ship is sent to the bottom there is frequently a loss of life. Nothing comparable to when a ship is lost in a naval engagement, for as a result of present war conditions frequently the majority of a crew of a warship is lost.

But too many trained seamen in the merchant service are being killed. And they are very difficult to replace. So it is quite conceivable that one corvette or destroyer might save the lives of a considerable number of merchant seamen, as well as merchant ships.

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Allies Permit News 'Leaks' To Create Confusion

During the period known as the "phony war," before Germany overran the Low Countries and Norway, and short-circuited the Maginot line, Hitler was doing to the French and British what Roosevelt and Churchill are now trying to do to Hitler.

No one knew, then, what Hitler was going to do. So Hitler utilized the time by finding out precisely what the French and British—not to mention the Belgians and Dutch, would do in every possible contingency.

Over the many months of the "phony war" Hitler thus acquired a vast amount of information as to just what to expect when "Der Tag" came.

As a matter of fact their peoples, those in Belgium and Holland, were very much divided. Many of them thought they would be able to maintain their neutrality throughout the war. It is of record that Hitler sold guns to the Dutch for gold, and then captured the guns later on.

Naturally the parallel is not exact. There is no maneuvering of an invasion force up and down a frontier, while the helpless victims on the other side, hoping to maintain peace, scramble for a defensive distribution of their forces. But the effect is very similar, from a military standpoint.

News is allowed to leak out—in fact it is broadcast—that a "very large" American expeditionary force has landed in Northern Ireland. A few days later it is announced officially that another large Canadian force has landed in Britain.

We do not know precisely how large this United States force now in the British Isles (counting Ulster as part of that category) may be. We only know it is sizable.

It is assumed by officials here that Berlin knows precisely how many United States troops are waiting there for the "second front," and what their equipment and training is. It is also assumed that Berlin knows how many Canadian troops are in Britain, and how many British troops are available.

What Berlin does not know is where this force is going to strike, or when. It might be anywhere from the North Cape, or beyond, to Murmansk, down to Italy.

Canal Zone Ready for All Comers

Panama Jungles Now a Huge Armed Camp.

By CHARLES A. SINGLER

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

OUR canal zone is one of the hottest spots in the Western hemisphere, both meteorologically and strategically, and is becoming increasingly "hotter" as the war wears on and the possibilities of an enemy thrust by land or sea, or by both, become more imminent.

The Panama Canal is not only our proudest national possession, but a vital link in the U. S. chain of defense fortifications. Little wonder, then, that the eyes of Europe, Asia and all America are turned towards this narrow but important waterway which military forethought and engineering skill provided for our nation some twenty-seven years ago.

The Canal Zone is 50 miles long and about 10 miles wide. Approximately 95 square miles of this is under water. The canal itself is about 34 miles in length and 87 feet high. Deep jungle growths crowd densely upon all sides, furnishing ideal concealment for gun emplacements.

All Is 'On the Alert.'

In these lush, steaming jungles where there seems to be no life except that of the countless strange birds and jungle animals that live by the code of tooth and claw, there are many eyes watching; all on the alert. Here brave U. S. boys are waiting for the planes to come, and somehow or other hoping that maybe they will, to relieve the deadly monotony of life in the deep jungle. Here under the concealing drapery of leaves and branches great naval rifles point forever out to sea with their silent threat to all who may come that way, unbidden. These great 16-inch coastal defense rifles out-range the guns of most battleships. Practice is constantly going on, mostly with the use of dud loads, for Uncle Sam cannot afford to waste costly ammunition or the precious rifling of these big guns on a harmless sea.

And here under the same friendly foliage, "ack-ack" guns bristle towards the sky, a hidden challenge to any air armada or lone enemy bomber which may be rash enough to venture near the canal. Jungle foliage also conceals cool hideouts for gunners—caves in which long gleaming rows of shells, some of them inscribed with loving names for the enemy, await the day or night when the call for action comes. In these caves the "day" is 24 hours long. During all this time gun crews stand on the alert, ready to pour a hot welcome into the sullen jungle skies. During the "off" periods the men repair to more comfortable barracks, completely camouflaged, to gain the needed exercise and recreation.

Underground Cities.

In the Panama Canal Zone are also secret island fortresses where underground cities, carved from sheer rock, offer a threat to the would-be invader. Switchboards have been installed, and when the time comes, if it should, tons of red hot trouble will pour from these fortresses to make the invader wish he had stayed closer to home.

Not only does the jungle shroud great naval and anti-aircraft guns, ready for instant action, but also hidden airdromes, full of planes poised for flight, ready to do their bit for Uncle Sam. It conceals keen-eyed watchers on the alert for surprise attacks and treachery. Pearl Harbor has not been forgotten.

Great forts stand at either ocean entrance to the canal, and swift naval vessels are constantly on guard. P-T boats, those swift messengers of death which accounted for more than one Jap warship in Manila bay and which got General MacArthur out of Bataan, are ready to lend their speed and their fighting power to the defense of the waterway. These deadly "mosquito boats," as they are called, carry an anti-aircraft gun that hurls a 20 mm. explosive shell which is bad medicine for attacking planes. P-Ts can also raise havoc amidst surface craft with their deadly torpedoes and blast a sub from the deep with depth charges.

Where 'Walls Have Ears.'

Unseen sentinels move about through the Panama jungle, as ubiquitous as all outdoors, popping up when least expected. No action escapes unseen; no spoken word is unheard. Here is a place where, indeed, "the walls have ears." Landmine units are on the qui vive, waiting to do their share in rendering enemy progress dangerous and slow.

Packed away in the jungle, too, there is infantry—the inevitable infantry—to which we must all pin our hopes to push the enemy back if he should succeed in gaining a foothold in this vital area. With the advent of the new trans-Isthmian highway the speedy movement of troops from one end of the canal to the other—a 48-mile run—is an accomplished fact.

Dangers Facing Us.

These are some of the things that are awaiting those who have lost their respect for territorial rights.

And now, having had a glimpse of the canal's defenses, let us consider briefly from which direction and in what form any thrust at the canal may come.

As the most strategic spot in our hemisphere, and offering an opportunity of bottling up our fleet in either ocean, it can safely be assumed that our enemies will want to smash the canal at the earliest possible date, regardless of all hazards, and will leave nothing undone to attain this objective. Their plans might take shape in the form of small raiding parties or in vast armadas of bombers and fighter planes.

Then, too, we are faced with the menace of secret bases. We must not forget the lesson of the Japmandated Marshall islands on which secret bases were built in open defiance of international treaties. The uninhabited jungles of nearby Central and South America might provide aerial hideouts for the treacherous Japs or the deceitful and ever-diligent Nazis.

With Franco "playing ball" continually with Adolf Hitler, islands such as the Spanish Canaries and the Portuguese Azores, or the many small isles that dot the Caribbean, might furnish springboards for hostile wings.

Danger From the Sea.

Airplane carriers, steaming ahead at full speed all night, or for several nights, as in the case of the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, offer serious potential dangers. Once within 500 miles of the Canal Zone they could launch their planes in the gray of the dawn. They know full well that just one big "egg" dropped in a lock, would hatch loads of trouble for Uncle Sam. We must bear in mind that without the canal in operation a 50-mile trip becomes a 13,000-mile cruise "around the Horn," either way you take it, with its terrific loss of precious time and greatly increased operating costs.

The battleship Oregon made one such emergency trip during the Spanish-American war, and arrived on the scene in time to turn the tide of battle, but we have neither the time nor the inclination for this sort of thing in this war with the Axis. Nothing must happen to the Panama canal!

Friendly but Questionable Isles.

Let us look in another direction. One thousand miles to the southwest of the Canal Zone loom the shadowy shapes of the Galapagos islands. These islands are owned by friendly Ecuador. These tiny islands, though in friendly hands, are anybody's guess these days, for Jap "fishing boats" have been known to have plied off their shores, and who knows what observations have been made and what soundings taken.

Then there is the menace of the nearby blue Caribbean, in which enemy subs are known to be prowling, and which have already taken heavy toll of our merchant shipping in these very waters, so dangerously close to the canal. Dealing with this menace is the Caribbean patrol of huge navy patrol bombers, 15-ton Consolidated flying boats with sound apparatus to detect subs, and two tons of bombs. These bombers roar out daily on dawn-to-dusk sweeps of the Caribbean and the Atlantic, and may be included as an important arm of the canal defense.

Espionage and sabotage, the long suit of the enemy, may also be listed on the debit side of the ledger in an accounting of the Canal Zone's danger potentials, and all must be dealt with in their own individual way.

An Historic Event.

The most important event in the history of the canal occurred in January, 1939, when the U. S. fleet passed from the Pacific to the Atlantic ocean, and even more dramatic was the return passage of a large portion of the fleet in early May of that year. Both transits were made without the appearance of haste, but in record time.

Contrary to the general belief, the canal does not run due east and west, but zig-zags irregularly across the isthmus. Its operation consists in helping ships, however big and bulky, to ascend three water-steps (locks) from one ocean into the huge man-made Lake Gatun, from which they descend three other water-steps into the ocean at the canal's other end. The locks are so constructed that two vessels proceeding in opposite directions may go through the canal at the same time. Big ships occupy a whole lock, and smaller ships are wedged in like sardines. Once in the locks the ship's crew is shoved aside and the canal crew takes over.

The United States has sovereignty over the entire Canal Zone. Two cities stand guard at either gateway of the canal—Balboa at the Atlantic end and Panama at the Pacific end.

The canal was constructed during Theodore Roosevelt's administration by the U. S. army, with General Goethals as engineering chief and General Gorges in charge of public health. It was opened to commercial traffic August 15, 1915, and was declared formally completed July 12, 1920, during President Wilson's administration.

For Protection of Panama Canal

Dr. Octavio Fabrega, foreign minister of the Republic of Panama, pictured (right) as he signed the agreement whereby Panama agreed to establishment of bases within the republic, for the protection of the canal by the United States. At left is Edwin C. Wilson, ambassador to Panama. The agreement, which was signed May 18, 1942, involves the use of some 40,000 acres in the republic by the U. S. armed forces.

View of a ship in the locks showing in the foreground the restricted lock gate mechanism.

Small Boats to Dodge Subs by Intracoastal Route

Repeated suggestions that the gasoline shortage in the eastern seaboard states might be partly met by use of barges in the Intracoastal Waterway have brought this sheltered route into the news, especially so since the submarine menace. Intra-coastal Waterway is a 3,500-mile route, mostly land-protected, from Boston along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts to the Rio Grande.

From Boston to New York the depth of the waterway is ample, but shelter from sea attack is limited to that provided by Cape Cod and Long Island, says the National Geographic society. From New York to Norfolk the route that will eventually take shape is by a wide, deep trans-Jersey canal from Sayreville on the Raritan to Bordentown on the Delaware, then through the industry-lined channel of the Delaware's upper tidewater to the Chesapeake and Delaware canal and into the Chesapeake bay.

GRASSROOTS

by WRIGHT A. PATTERSON

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

A LONG LINE THAT THE AXIS CAN'T BEAT

FOR FOUR LONG DAYS, 12 to 14 hour days, that line of men did not seem to grow less. Of the men in that line, three out of four had gray hair and wrinkled brows, the evidence of advancing years.

During the warm days of early spring, I had seen a number of the men now in that line occupying benches in the public square. There they had worn a look of despondency; despair and hopelessness were written upon their faces. They had reached the end of their road and were but awaiting the final summons.

The occasion was the registration of men between the ages of 45 and 65 for service to the government.

Could the Huns or the Japs or the Wops have seen that line of eager men, they would have realized how thoroughly back of the government are the men of America.

There was broadcloth and overalls, wealth and poverty, represented in that line. The one did not give way to the other; all were equally eager to reach the registration desk and report themselves as ready for service in the cause of America.

In that line were all colors—white, black, brown, red and yellow—representing all races. In it were men representing practically all nations, but all were Americans, either by birth or adoption.

In that line were men who had not worked for years. Some who were physically disabled, others who did not need to work. But on every face was expressed that willingness, that keen desire to do his part, whatever that part might be, that this country—their country—might live.

That line was America. It did not represent the glamour and adventure of war as previous registrations had done. It did represent a desire to serve.

The place was a rural community, one of America's small cities.

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A VILLAIN IS CAPTURED

AS HE WADDLED ACROSS the lawn on his little short legs, I scooped him up in a long-handled pan. Scientists would tell you he was a talpidae. To me he was a mole, against which I had sworn dire vengeance if I could catch him. For weeks he had committed depredations in my flower beds. He had burrowed under and around the tender plants, killing the young roots. Day after day I had followed the ridges made by his burrowings in the soft earth. I had stamped on these ridges with my feet, hoping he might be under my heavy heel.

Now I had him there in a pan from which he could not escape. I examined his little shovel-shaped snoot, his tiny eyes. I put my finger on his soft fur. I realized he had done only what Nature had fitted him to do. Each minute I watched his frantic efforts to climb up the side of that pan my ire lessened, and in the end I pardoned him, or rather, changed the sentence from capital punishment to exile.

I carefully carried him across to a vacant lot, a full 50 feet from my nearest flowers, and turned him loose. The next morning he was back in my flower beds, and again I have sworn dire vengeance if I catch him.

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AN IOWA FARMER AND UNION LABOR

I HAVE KNOWN JOHN NICHOLS an Iowa farmer, for some years. To me he has typified agriculture. He considers farming as a way of life, more than as a business. He does not keep a profit and loss set of books. Over the years the family—father and grandfather before him—accumulated quite a sizable tract of Iowa farmland, all paid for. John and his family live there, and they live well. The four children have had university educations. The family rides in automobiles. They take vacation trips every year. In the home they enjoy modern conveniences.

John, his two sons and the hired man work when there is work to do, and they do not count hours. He considers himself a good American, with all the privileges of American citizenship. He does not ask help or want it. He is not long at accepting advice as to how to conduct his farm, or what to raise.

I can imagine what John Nichols would say to John Lewis should Lewis propose that Nichols join the CIO farmers union which Lewis is attempting to organize. America should be thankful for the John Nichols type of farmer.

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HITLER HAS ANNOUNCED that he has seen and interpreted the handwriting on the wall, and the strange message is defeat for Germany. You can look for peace overtures before many months, which, let us hope, will not be listened to until Hitler and Germany are thoroughly licked.

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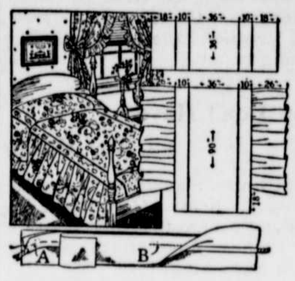
DOING WITHOUT shaving cream does not constitute an "all out" war sacrifice. We can dig up the old shaving mug of a generation ago and save money for war stamps.

NEW IDEAS *for Home-makers*

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS

EVERY kind of cotton goods from dainty chintz to bold plaid gingham is being used for bedspreads. Most of these materials are about 36 inches wide and you will need 11½ yards for a bed 54 inches wide. See diagrams for cutting dimensions.

Cut the center portions first; then the 18-inch side sections for the pillow cover; then the 10-inch strips for the pillow cover and



spread. This leaves a 26-inch-wide strip for the side ruffles of the spread. If you make your own seam welting, cover cord with bias strips basted, as at A, and stitched with the cording foot, as at B.

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NOTE: This bedspread is from BOOK 1 of the series of booklets which Mrs. Spears has prepared for our readers. This book also gives step-by-step directions for making slip covers, dressing table skirts and 12 different styles of curtains including a simple rigging for draw curtains. To get a copy of Book 1, send your order to:

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Sentinels of Health

Don't Neglect Them!

Nature designed the kidneys to do a marvelous job. Their task is to keep the flowing blood stream free of an excess of toxic impurities. The act of living—*life itself*—is constantly producing waste matter the kidneys must remove from the blood if good heath is to endure.

When the kidneys fail to function as Nature intended, there is retention of waste that may cause body-wide distress. One may suffer nagging backache, persistent headache, attacks of dizziness, getting up nights, swelling, puffiness under the eyes—feel tired, nervous, all worn out.

Frequent, scanty or burning passages are sometimes further evidence of kidney or bladder disturbance.

The recognized and proper treatment is a diuretic medicine to help the kidneys get rid of excess poisonous body waste. Use *Doan's Pills*. They have had more than forty years of public approval. Are endorsed the country over. Insist on *Doan's*. Sold at all drug stores.

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