The Washington MERRY-GO-ROUND

By DREW PEARSON

Washington, D. C.

QUIET CONFIDENCE

It brought no headlines, but Chief of Staff General Marshall made the first step toward better co-operation between Capitol Hill and the Executive Branch of the government by holding a quiet conference with key senators and representatives.

He gave them an intimate, and on the whole optimistic, progress report on the war, which left a good impression with congressional leaders. Both Republicans and Democrats were present, most of them from the military affairs committees, and also the vice president, the speakers and other leaders.

General Marshall gave the actual figures on American losses in North Africa. These must remain confidential, but they were encouragingly small. He explained that one reason for the light casualties was General Eisenhower's peace arrangement with Admiral Darlan.

General Marshall attached great importance to this, since the army, navy and civilian population in North Africa were under the influence of Admiral Darlan. Therefore he suggested to congress that it would be very helpful if there were no critical speeches of the admiral despite his Vichy connections.

Admiral Darlan had come to visit his son who was stricken with infantile paralysis, General Marshall said, then had returned to France. But when his son suffered a relapse, Darlan came back to North Africa. Thus it was pure accident, but a very fortunate one, that he was in Algiers at the time. Darlan had given the order immediately which resulted in the saving of many American lives.

General Marshall also paid high tribute to Robert Murphy, the state department's charge d'affaires in France, who spent most of his time in North Africa. It was Murphy who mapped out most of the advance political plans of the U. S. army.

General Marshall was also optimistic regarding the amount of Nazi strength being diverted from the Russian front, especially airpower. He felt that Hitler would have to take more and more planes away from Russia to protect Italy, now considered the soft spot of the Axis, and that Hitler could not lick Russia without airpower.

Another optimistic part of the war picture, the chief of staff said, was New Guinea, where he expects some real Allied progress against the Japs at Buna.

Note: Secretary of the Navy Knox is now following Marshall's cue and has invited members of the senate and house naval affairs committees to have dinner with him some evening soon. As a result of the elections, it looks as if the executive branches of the government had awakened to the fact that there was a congress.

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HITLER INFLUENCE

If Hitler moves in on Spain, he may accomplish at one blow what we have failed to do in nine months of diplomatic discussions with Argentina. He may force that South American country into a break with the Axis.

It was Argentina which principally gummed the works at Rio de Janeiro last January, when astute Sumner Welles, undersecretary of state, was trying to line up all 21 Latin-American countries behind a resolution to break relations.

There Argentina Foreign Minister Ruiz Guinazu insisted on "neutrality" and Argentina remained on the fence.

Ruiz Guinazu is a great admirer of Spain, is proud of his own Spanish blood. Furthermore, he points to Spain's "tradition of neutrality" as the best guarantee of peace.

So if the Germans now attack Spain, the Argentine government would almost be forced to come to the defense of the mother country by breaking relations with the attacking country.

Note: Resignation of Argentine War Minister Tonazzi, a friend of the United States, is regarded here as the first important rift in the Castillo government.

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COURTEOUS MRS. CORDELL HULL

Mrs. Cordell Hull was leaving the Shoreham hotel one morning when she encountered Dr. Jose Richling, former minister of Uruguay.

"Can I take you somewhere?" she offered.

"I'm going to the state department," said Richling.

"Come along, I'll take you."

"But are you going that way?"

"No, but it doesn't matter. I have nothing to do. Anyhow, I want to see how my husband works."

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CAPITAL CHAFF

¶ In spite of space shortage, a magnificent suite of offices in the state department is still reserved for the venerable "General of the Armies." Unfortunately Pershing has to spend all his time at the Walter Reed hospital.

¶ The U. S. army in North Africa will consume local fruits and vegetables, not to mention lamb and mutton, produced there in large quantities, and formerly shipped to Italy, France and Germany.

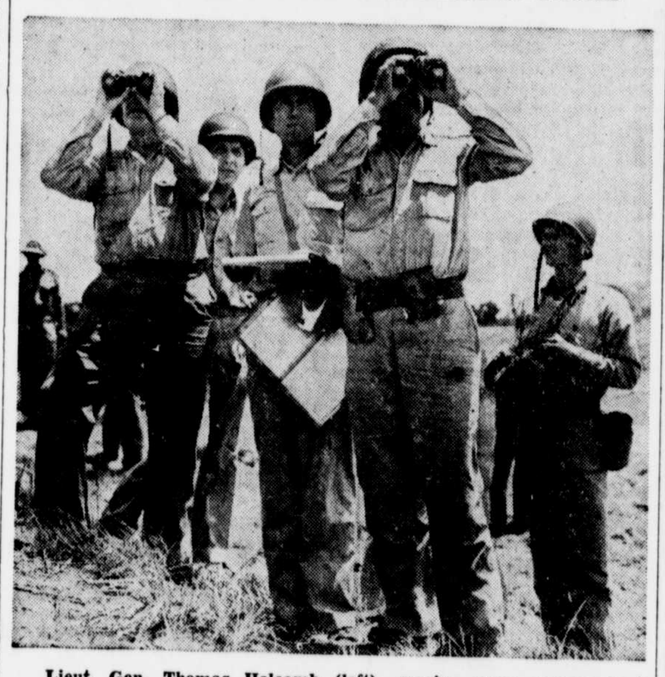
Removing Victims of Night Club Fire

Fire and rescue workers enter the smoldering ruins of the Cocoanut Grove night club in Boston to remove bodies of the dead and injured. This fire, the nation's worst since the Iroquois theater fire in Chicago in 1903, took a toll of about 500 lives. The fire was caused by a 16-year-old bus boy who lit a match so he could see to replace a ceiling light bulb. The match started an artificial palm tree burning.

Always Being Bossed by Corporals

Members of the German armistice commission in French Morocco, captured by U. S. forces who landed there during the North African operations, are shown being marched off for internment by an American corporal. Taking orders from a corporal is nothing new for them. That was Der Fuehrer's rank in the German army.

Marine Chiefs Visit Guadalcanal Island



Lieut. Gen. Thomas Holcomb (left), marine corps commandant, squints through field glasses at Guadalcanal field positions during his recent air trip to the Solomon Islands. Maj. Gen. R. J. Mitchell, marine aviation chief, who accompanied General Holcomb, and Maj. Gen. Alexander A. Vandergrift (right), commander of the ground forces in the Solomons, also trains his field glasses on a distant object.

Army Coffee Rationing Helps Civilians

More than a year ago the army quartermaster corps took steps to ration coffee. As the table top rotates, the army officers sniff and taste each sample of coffee, at the quartermaster depot, in Chicago, where 48,000 pounds of coffee is roasted daily.

Sinks French Fleet

The scuttling of the French fleet at Toulon, when the Germans stormed that great French naval base, was ordered by Admiral Jean de la Borde (above), commander-in-chief of the fleet. Sixty-three vessels, including three battleships, were in the harbor at the time, and 61 of these were believed lost. Thus were the Nazis deprived of the fleet on which Hitler had banked so heavily.

New Head of 'Spars'

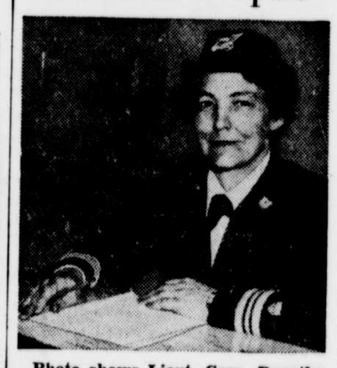


Photo shows Lieut. Com. Dorothy C. Stratton, new head of the "Spars," the new women's auxiliary reserve of the U. S. coast guard, seated at her desk in Washington. She wears the two and a half stripes of a lieutenant commander, on her union coat sleeve, and the U. S. coast guard insignia on her coat.—Soundphoto.

Testing Tank Crews

There are two big rooms in the medical research laboratory at Fort Knox, Ky. One is kept at 120 degrees above zero; the other at 30 below. Tank crews eat, sleep and work on their tanks while doctors take notes. Here a sergeant climbs up and down a ladder toting a full pack while army medics measure his reactions so crews will be better cared for in tropical climes.

'Good Neighbors'

Dr. Carlos Arroyo Del Rio (left), president of Ecuador, shown with Gen. Manuel Camacho, president of Mexico, when Dr. Del Rio arrived in the Mexican capital while en route to the United States. Later he visited President Roosevelt at the White House.

Wendell Willkie and Global Politics

By Frank Gervasi

(WNU Feature—Through special arrangement with Collier's Weekly)

Wendell Willkie's recent visit to the Middle East was the second of two memorable events during the last days of August and early September. The first, of course, was the defeat of Rommel's Afrika Korps.

This, among other things, caused stocks to rise on the Cairo Bourse.

The victory over Rommel removed an immediate threat to Egypt and at least put our side in a position to resume the initiative—as they say in treatises on war. The enemy lost a considerable quantity of men and weapons. The myth of Rommel's invincibility was destroyed in a brief hot battle which was over almost before anybody knew it had begun. It was as brief as it was hot and almost as destructive to the German war machine as a short circuit in a generator.

There's no tendency here, however, for the British to overestimate the damage done to the Afrika Korps or to underestimate Rommel's ability to recuperate.

Two Events Collide.

The two events—the victorious battle and Willkie's arrival—coincided so closely that they became confused. The newspaper boys hardly had time to cover the first event before it telescoped into the second, and they were very busy with the second. The blitz visit was crammed with statements, interviews, receptions, appearances before still and movie cameras, radio talks, calls on diplomats and kings, conferences with politicians, soldiers and more diplomats.

Short as it was, the correspondents worked harder and longer during Willkie's visit than at any time while away from the fighting front. Willkie shook up their livers.

He sassed the censors, made formal diplomatic calls in a lounge suit instead of the sacred striped pants and tail coat of tradition. He managed to impart to nearly everything he did an atmosphere of clambake. Censorship, motivated by the sheer necessity for keeping Berlin in the dark as to Willkie's views about political and military affairs in the Middle East, prevented details of his visit from becoming known. This article is an attempt to supply some of those missing details.

In any other setting, the breezy politician might have seemed a heroic figure, remarkable for his frankness and sincerity. In the Middle East, however, with its traditions of reticence, its compunctions of secrecy in political and military matters, Willkie's act didn't quite come off. He was usually out of character and seemed, most of the time, a huge and handsome bull in a store full of porcelain images. Every time he moved, you wanted to warn him that he might break something.

Willkie, Image Breaker.

He did some good but he also broke a few images. The damage occurred despite the presence in his cruise crew of Joseph Barnes, soft-spoken former newspaper man who now is an official in the Office of War Information. Joe was the conscience of the party, a small voice which kept saying: "Be careful, Wendell! Somebody might be trying to sell you a bill of goods. Watch what you say and remember this is a British battlefield and they are the bosses here."

Calls on King Farouk.

He didn't prevent Willkie, however, from calling on His Majesty King Farouk of Egypt in an ordinary suit, or from having himself photographed in a sloppy bush shirt, baggy pants and an outsize sun helmet, with German prisoners who stood rigidly at attention and regarded him with considerable coolness.

Willkie's first plunge into Middle East affairs happened in the marbled hall of the impressive headquarters of the United States forces in North Africa, formerly the home of a wealthy Egyptian family. The active and passive press, uniformed and ununiformed, male and female, American and foreign, were there about seventy strong. Even the Times of London came; so did British and American censors.

Willkie, in a summer-weight single-breasted suit, his pants belt tight around his middle, his hair rumpled, and looking very much a man of the people in his white shirt and unremarkable necktie, sat on a chair before a table set on the first landing of a staircase that swept upward behind him. There was a shaft of light on his face from an open door. He reassured us that the Yankees were doing well.

Then he turned prophet. He announced that, in his opinion, Hitler was 'way out on a limb and that the tide had turned against the enemy.

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Collecting a Living

The men who start out with the idea that the world owes them a living generally find out that the world pays its debts in the penitentiary or poorhouse. — W. G. Sumner.

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Speaking From Behind

"A man behind the times is apt to speak ill of them, on the principle that nothing looks well from behind."—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

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SNAPPY FACTS ABOUT RUBBER
In 749 war production plants, 75 per cent of 434,600 workers arrive by private automobiles. That's why war workers must have tires.
When it is understood that 54,000 communities in this country depend entirely upon highway transportation, the importance of the rubber situation will be appreciated.
There were 10.78 pounds of crude rubber in the average passenger car tire made in 1940. In 1941 the rubber content was increased to 10.85 pounds.
The overall weight of the average passenger car tire in 1940 was 21.55 pounds, while in 1941 it was 21.69 pounds.
There is a farmer in Osborne, Iowa, who still carries as a serviceable spare, a tire that came on his car as original equipment in 1917. He jacks up the wheels when the car is not in use.
Jerry Shaw
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