

ENEMY HELD NEAR KHARKOV Crack Troops Fought To Standstill SOVIET PROGRESS IN CENTRE

LONDON, March 11. The Germans are trying to smash their way into Kharkov in the Donetz Basin with heavy panzer thrusts from the south and west, but so far the Russians have thrown back all attacks, at the same time exacting a heavy toll from the enemy in men and machines.

Although the position appears more favorable than for some time past—Reuter's Moscow correspondent says that the Red Army for 12 hours fought Hitler's crack divisions to a standstill—it is emphasized that the great German counter-offensive has not yet been broken.

Reuter's Moscow correspondent reports that the Red Army is menacing Smolensk. Soviet forces advancing from Byeloi are now bearing down against Nikitinka, and Russian spearheads from Sychevka and Gherk move another leap nearer Viazma. They are only 10 miles away, and are converging on the town on a 20-mile front.

German defences have been pierced at several places on the River Rugra, which flows north-east of Yznia, continues the correspondent. Advancing on a great combined arc, they have already reduced by one-third the enemy quadrangle which threatened Moscow.

Enemy Efforts Foiled

"Red Star" states that the Germans are trying to penetrate into Kharkov from the west and south by powers with Panzer fists. They are trying to break down Russian resistance at all costs. The Russians have thrown back all attacks and inflicted huge losses. Russian guns and planes have destroyed every bridge and pointed the Germans back to build across the upper Donetz.

The Berlin news agency states: "The Russians are stalling all efforts to stem our assault against Kharkov. Our battleplanes and tank-borne planes batter and trench for trench against the front. Long range bombers raided troop transport trains and cut off routes to railroads leading to the front."

Huge Enemy Force Massed

The German counter-offensive aiming to retake the key city of Kharkov, which has been retaken, are employing 200,000 men, half of whom are reported to be fresh from the west, and backed up by considerable armor.

The Germans gained important successes in the early stages, but General Golitski is bringing in every possible tank and anti-tank rifle. The Germans are fruitlessly doing their utmost to break through to the north, which is their nearest port, only 20 miles from Kharkov. The main German concentration is south of Kharkov, and a heavy thrust on also being made against the Kharkov-Sumy railway.

The German counter-offensive against the Russian armored spearheads on their strong front lines has caused the sudden change in the main force from rapidly moving to a standstill. The spearheads, however, put up a stubborn resistance, holding on to their positions to take up positions before Kharkov.

FRENCH DRIVE IN TUNISIA Storm Town On Way To Gafsa GERMANS AGAIN STOPPED

LONDON, March 11. French forces in the central sector of the Tunisia battle front stormed and captured the important mining centre of Metlaoui, on the railway and about half-way between Tozeur and Gafsa, states today's Algerian communique. They are now 24 miles from Gafsa, which was raided by Allied medium bombers.

In the northern sector, continues the communique, the Germans launched another attack yesterday west of Sedjenane, and once more could not make any headway against the 1st Army.

The main Allied air attack was made on two enemy airfields near Tunisi, which were completely plastered their targets, but also shot down eight enemy fighters.

A correspondent reports that the guns of the 8th Army are harassing the Alriktrakon RAP fighter-bombers, operating over the southern battlefield, set enemy trucks on fire and set up tanks and armored cars.

Rain and sandstorms are hampering operations. Reuter's Tunisia correspondent says that the 1st Army has broken through the German thrust which was begun on Tuesday in the Sedjenane area. Patrols of the 8th Army are probing what remains of Rommel's forces withdrawing into positions around the Marech British guns at the week-end.

Some of the British gunners fired for 20 hours without pause. The 8th Army correspondent of the British Press says that, although there is a comparative lull in the central sector, British patrols are scoring successes. A patrol sent out to recover two 105 mm. howitzers which the Germans had abandoned, surprised an outpost and killed 12 and took 12 prisoners before setting the guns ablaze. The enemy tried to withdraw near the Tamera-Jebel Abou road, and it was surrounded and destroyed.

The High Command report, stated that the northern sector consisted of Italian divisions and from Berber. The German force left behind unprotected when he withdrew his armored forces in the direction of the north.

The German radio says that the 8th Army yesterday put out strong force against German and Italian positions on the Marech line. The Germans who attacked the 8th Army included some from Russia, where they had a bad time, and certainly have copious supplies.

"We have plenty of tanks, and provided the defended localities hold firm, we will smash the enemy," cause him to be crippled, and give him a very bloody nose. It will then be our turn to attack him. The enemy has been crippled, will be unable to stand up against our attack and we will smash right through him."



ASTOUNDING FIGURES OF RAF BLOWS Commons Hears Account Of Damage In Germany

LONDON, March 11. Some of the details of the pulverising attacks on Germany by the RAF Bomber Command were given by the Secretary for Air (Sir Archibald Sinclair) in introducing the Air Estimates in the House of Commons today.

The devastation is comparable only with that in the famous 1,000 bomber raid on Cologne," said Sir Archibald Sinclair. "My figures of the damage are conservative, being based solely on photographs, and photographs don't tell the whole story."

WILHELMHAVEN.—One hundred and eighteen acres devastated, including the total destruction of 600 acres.

DUNSDORF.—Three hundred and eighty acres.

KARLSRUHE.—Two hundred and sixty acres.

Sir Archibald Sinclair said that the RAF had lost 171. We formed a force of special tank destroyer and fighter bomber squadrons, not only supporting troops in action, but also in the air.

Under the current reorganisation plans 47 per cent of the saloon operators on our coast will be replaced by a Transport Command, which would be responsible for the organisation and control of strategic air routes for all overseas ferrying, and for squadron movements and between overseas theatres.

The RAF in the past four months had destroyed hundreds of locomotives, the shortage of which in Germany and occupied territory was "our bombs," he said, "have improved and will continue to improve. Despite the bad weather, the number of bombers which flew in January was only one-third of those which flew in February, and the number of bombs dropped was only one-third of those dropped in February."

He said that the RAF had destroyed 2,000 factories, and rendered homeless more than 1,000,000 people. The RAF had also destroyed 1,000,000 tons of shipping.

New weapons were now being used in order to increase the effectiveness of our air patrols and gain time. This is the very opportunity we want. We are equipped with everything we need and our morale is high on the top line.

There must be no withdrawal, and, of course, no surrender. "We have plenty of tanks, and provided the defended localities hold firm, we will smash the enemy," cause him to be crippled, and give him a very bloody nose.

It will then be our turn to attack him. The enemy has been crippled, will be unable to stand up against our attack and we will smash right through him."

APPEAL TO MR. CURTIN Fear Of General Coal Strike

CANBERRA, March 11. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Padden) is likely to move the adjournment of the House of Representatives when it meets tomorrow to discuss the collapse of coal production in New South Wales following the rapid extension of secondary strikes.

From 18 mines idle on Tuesday, the dislocation had extended to 27 mines today. There is every indication that the industry is drifting into a general strike. According to statements made in the House of Representatives, the Government has not been able to secure the necessary coal to run the non-essential services of the Government.

It was learned tonight that the Federal session next Wednesday afternoon may come to Canberra tomorrow to make a personal appeal to Mr. Padden. While the Prime Minister is in Canberra, the Government will have to operate on a reduced scale.

Union officials say that the rank and file are getting out of the strike. They will probably tell Mr. Curtin that only his personal intervention can prevent another flare up in the coal fields.

The Labor Party is alarmed at the probable electoral repercussions of the coal strike. The Government is attempting to finish the Federal session next Wednesday afternoon but the Opposition members say that Parliament must not be allowed to go into recess with the threat of a general strike.

Mr. Curtin said in the House of Representatives today that legal proceedings were pending against the New South Wales coal miners who were calling upon men to fight and on hundreds of them to go to the front.

Mr. Curtin was replying to questions by Mr. Harrison (UAP, NSW), Mr. Hutchinson (UAP, Vic.), Mr. Morgan (NSW), and Mr. James (Lab, NSW).

Mr. Harrison asked whether in the event of a coal strike the Government would be prepared to take any steps to compel the men to return to work.

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SENATE STAND ON TAX BILL Clash With House On Welfare

CANBERRA, March 11. A clash between the Curtin Government and the Senate on the Welfare Bill was averted today when the House of Representatives agreed to accept the Senate's objection to the interlocking of the National Welfare Fund Bill with the Income Tax Rates Bill.

The Welfare Bill developed dramatically tonight when the Senate carried an amendment on party lines proposing the alteration of the Rates Bill.

As passed by the House of Representatives, the Rates Bill provides that the new tax rates apply to the meeting with the National Welfare Fund Bill.

It was moved by Senator Spicer (UAP, Vic.) that the Senate amend the Welfare Bill to accept the Senate's amendment to the Rates Bill.

The Cabinet met after the Senate's decision and decided to accept the Senate's amendment to the Rates Bill.

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LABOR REBUFFS COMMUNISTS Co-operation Motion Rejected

After a two-hour debate, during which feeling ran very high, the State ALP Council last night set its face against co-operation with the Communist Party.

The discussion arose on a request by the State ALP president (Mr. S. W. O'Flaherty) for a direction as to how he should vote when the Federal ALP executive meets to discuss a request by the Communist Party of Australia for a conference with the Federal ALP to reach a basis for co-operation between the two parties.

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ATTACKS ON SHIPPING Further Japanese Losses

SOMEWHERE IN AUSTRALIA, March 11.—In the Aratura and Bantia Seas and on the north coast of New Guinea seven Japanese ships were attacked by our bombers yesterday and one was probably destroyed. Another severely damaged.

A 7,000-ton Japanese cargo ship off Beaufort Bay, in the South Celebes, was directly hit by a heavy bomb from a Liberator and was left burning fiercely and probably a total loss.

Flying Force planes which attacked shipping and shore installations in a dawn raid on Westak, off the north-west coast of New Guinea, scored several near hits with 1,000-lb bombs on two medium-sized cargo ships in the harbor. One of them, of 5,000 tons, received severe damage, and heavy smoke was pouring from its hull when our bombers left the area.

Reports continue to come in of the aftermath of the Bismarck Sea battle. The debris of the battleship, which was drifting north of the Bismarck Islands, where floating rafts and lifeboats containing dead enemy troops and seamen were sighted yesterday.

The communique follows:— SOUTH-WESTERN SECTOR.—Tashiro, Iwo, Iwo, Iwo, Iwo, Iwo. Our medium units bombed the town and harbor, hitting the jetty and causing a number of fires. An enemy coastal vessel was strafed near Regala, Serimat Islands.

Banda Sea.—Barrore Island.—One of our heavy reconnaissance units bombed two enemy cargo ships north of the island.

Shipping.—One of our heavy reconnaissance units bombed a 7,000-ton enemy merchant ship, scoring a direct hit with a heavy bomb. The ship was afloat and was probably a total loss.

NORTH-EASTERN SECTOR.—New Britain.—Cape Gloucester.—One of our heavy units bombed the aerodrome.

New Guinea.—Wewak.—Our heavy bombers attacked shipping and shore installations at dawn, scoring several near hits with 1,000-lb bombs on two medium-sized cargo vessels in the harbor. One of them was destroyed by a direct hit, and heavy smoke was pouring from its hull when our bombers left the area.

Heavy clouds obscured complete observation. Bomb dropping direct hit. Later in the morning one of our heavy bombers strafed the aerodrome and scored a direct hit. During the attack heavy AA fire was encountered, but there was no attempt at interception.

Trial Island.—Our fighters intercepted and shot down an enemy medium bomber on reconnaissance.

Japanese Raid On Guadalcanal.— WASHINGTON, March 10.—A.P.—A Navy communique says: "During Sunday night, Japanese planes bombed Guadalcanal. There were no casualties. On Tuesday morning our fighters shot down several Japanese bombers on Guadalcanal. Bombs dropped on Kaiti, Bitaia, Munda, and Vila. Results were not observed. All US planes started large fires. All US positions returned."

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GOERING SAID TO BE DUNKIRK ATTEMPT BY ROMMEL EXPECTED

Visit Probably Of Political Nature. NEW YORK, March 11.—A.P.—The Berlin correspondent of the New York Times, in a dispatch, says that Goering has been in Rome since Saturday, on a mission to the Italian high command. As he has done so before, it would be normal to do so again, especially when the Axis is organising a European front in preparation for British and American attacks.

Palermo Bombed Again. CAIRO, March 10.—A.P.—An air communique states that medium bombers on Monday night attacked Palermo. Bombs were also observed at Agrigento and Lagata, which was attacked. All planes are safe.

Berlin radio alleges that five persons were killed and 60 wounded when an explosion completely destroyed a large hotel which the British Armed Forces used as headquarters in Cyprus.—A.P.—

COAL LOSS 100,000 TONS THIS WEEK

Summons For 16 Striking Miners. SYDNEY, March 11. Despite appeals by their leaders, striking miners at 27 collieries in the Broken Hill district were to work today. About 9,146 men were involved in the stoppages, and 28,436 tons of coal was lost to production in the district during the four working days this week.

Members of the central council of the Miners' Federation will address meetings on the South Coast to try to induce the men to return to work.

Sixteen coal miners who are on strike in the Broken Hill district were today summoned to appear before Mr. Justice Drake-Brockman in the Commonwealth Industrial Court on Saturday to answer charges of having incited competitors to strike.

Mr. Justice Drake-Brockman, in a submission by officials of the central executive of the Coal Miners' Federation, said that he proposed the hearing until March 27 to allow time for a defence to be prepared. My background will not require much further evidence. The general secretary of the Miners' Federation (Mr. C. Grant) tonight, "I was born in Australia, and I have worked all my life in coal mines with men who know what hard work is. It is an inquiry into my background will help to solve the coal problem, the Government should not hesitate to act."

NEW HOSPITAL SHIP Special Design For Service In Tropics

CANBERRA, March 11. The new military hospital ship Australia II, has been ordered by the Minister for the Army (Mr. Forde) announced today. It was a motor ship of 2,000 tons, fully equipped, and especially adapted for service in the tropics with adequate ventilation and refrigeration.

It would accommodate 250 patients, as well as medical and nursing staff. Mr. Forde said the ship would be painted white and carry three red crosses illuminated at night, as well as the hull number, which was painted white and carried in a green band five feet wide in accordance with the Geneva Convention.

The vessel had operating "X-ray" and a portable X-ray machine. Rapid embarkation and disembarkation could be carried out through two water-tight doors opening from the main ward deck.

Three red crosses illuminated at night were on the side of the hull, which was painted white and carried in a green band five feet wide in accordance with the Geneva Convention.

