

WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS

**Red Army Launches 'Bloodiest Drive' To Break Strong Nazi Defense Lines; Indian Tribes Aid in Arawe Offensive; Government Relinquishes Rail Control**

(EDITOR'S NOTE: When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of Western Newspaper Union's news analysis and not necessarily of this newspaper.)  
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**Home to Yanks**—Protected overhead by sandbags and shell cases, this dugout on Italian battlefield is home, sweet home to these Yanks.

**RUSSIA: Baltic Drive**

Massing 250,000 men along a 250-mile stretch, the Russians launched a new offensive below Leningrad in the north, 70 miles from the Latvian border. In the initial fighting, the Reds cut across a railroad supply line, and also pushed toward the big Nazi base of Novgorod.

To the south, Gen. Nicholas Vatin's First Ukrainian army drove 40 miles within prewar Poland, while in the province of White Russia, the Reds gained in heavy fighting over the frozen wastes of the vast Pripiet marshes. On the southern front, stiff German defenses prevented a break-through to the Black sea Rumanian region.

**Polish Boundary**

Following Russia's suggestion that discussions for settlement of the Polish boundary dispute be based upon the so-called "Curzon line" awarding the provinces of White Russia and the western Ukraine to the Soviet Union, the Polish government-in-exile answered by asking that the U. S. and Britain mediate the question.

Russia took none too kindly to the idea, claiming that by asking the U. S. and Britain to intervene the Poles rejected the "Curzon line" as a basis for negotiation. Violently opposed to the present Polish government-in-exile the Russians declared discussions with the present Polish government-in-exile were virtually impossible unless it was revised, with Communists included in a new setup.

**Peace Talks**

Russia's unofficial report that two prominent British statesmen had met with German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop in Spain to discuss a separate peace were vigorously denied in London.

In London, it was pointed out that the Von Ribbentrop story apparently was an amplification of a rumor that has been widely spread since the Churchill-Ellen conferences in Egypt, but was not taken seriously by other sources.

**SOUTHWEST PACIFIC: Surprise Promised**

Made up of Indians from 20 tribes trained in jungle warfare in Panama, units of Lieut. Gen. Walter Krueger's Sixth army plowed forward at Arawe in southwestern New Britain, as U. S. bombers continued hammering the big Jap supply base of Rabaul, to the northeast.

Although U. S. advances on New Britain were slow, they were definitely containing Jap forces that might be employed in the more vital area to the east. Speaking from Southwest Pacific headquarters, Rear Adm. Robert B. Carney said: "Rabaul and Kavieng are next on our list, but our method of taking them won't be in accordance with any familiar pattern. . . . Just how we will do it will be something the enemy least expects. . . ."

Indicative of the scale of U. S. air attacks on the big base of Rabaul which acts as a feeder point for Jap barges supplying the New Britain, New Guinea and Solomons area, the Tokyo radio admitted the sinking of several ships in the harbor after a raid of 200 American planes.

**RAILROADS: Back to Owners**

Following the termination of strike threats with the settlement of the unions' wage disputes, the war department returned the railroads to private ownership.

The action was taken after 1,150,000 members of the non-operating unions were granted wage boosts of from 9 to 11 cents an hour, with extra payments for time over 40 hours making up part of the increase. Employees receiving less than 47 cents an hour will get the 11-cent raise, with those over 57 cents granted 9 cents.

Previously, 350,000 members of the operating unions had been awarded a 9-cents-an-hour boost.

**EUROPE: Road to Rome**

From their positions on the mountain slopes, U. S. and French troops looked down on the defenses of the Nazi stronghold of Cassino, guarding the long road to Rome. From Cassino, the broad plain running northward lends itself to armored warfare instead of the tedious, uphill mountain fighting of recent months.

As U. S. and French forces bore down on the tangled barbed wire, concrete emplacements and deep gun pits making up the Nazi defense system around Cassino, swirling rain and snow held up the British Eighth army's advance on the other end of the front.

Across the Adriatic in Yugoslavia, guerrillas of Josif ("Tito") Broz continued to harass German troop movements throughout the country, considered as a possible invasion site.

**POLITICS: Strange Letter**

Grumpy old Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes was brought into the case of the mysterious letter, produced by C. Nelson Sparks and allegedly written by Harry Hopkins, and purporting to show that the latter as the President's No. 1 adviser is in close contact with Republican Wendell Willkie.

Sen. William Langer (N. D.) displayed photostatic copies of letters allegedly written by one of Ickes'



Left to right: Ickes and Hopkins

deputies to Sparks, claiming that the secretary of the interior was in possession of Hopkins' original letter to a prospective Democratic senatorial candidate in Texas, promising him support from Willkie forces in the primary election.

Ickes' alleged involvement in the case came as a government attorney branded the Hopkins letter a forgery. Following Senator Langer's action, Ickes suspended his deputy and said: "I don't know who will ultimately turn out to be the villain. . . . but it will not be I."

**CONGRESS: Shun Labor Draft**

Legislation for a labor draft, requested by President Roosevelt in his annual message to congress, was given the cold shoulder by the house military committee, which pigeon-holed the bill despite the senate's consideration of the measure.

Had the request for a labor draft been made after Pearl Harbor or in the midst of walkouts which prompted enactment of the Smith-Connally antistrike law, congressional circles say it might have passed. With war production at a record high, however, only serious strike threats could force enactment of the legislation, it was added.

**Discharge Pay**

Declaring that with the possible enrollment of 15 to 20 million men and women in the services discharge pay amounting to \$1,000 per person would cost the government from 15 to 20 billion dollars, Representative Dewey Short (Mo.) argued for house acceptance of its military affairs committee's bill providing mustering-out payments of \$300.

In one effort to boost payments to discharged vets, Representative William Lemke (N. D.) proposed increasing the maximum disbursement to \$700. Previously, the senate had passed a bill providing mustering-out payments ranging from \$500 for vets with 18 months' or more service overseas, to \$200 for less than a year's service at home.

**WHEAT MOVEMENT: Cars for Canada**

War Food Administrator Marvin Jones' order to the Office of Defense Transportation to furnish 200 freight cars daily to bring in Canadian wheat was sharply criticized by Sen. Clyde Reed (Kan.), who contended the rolling stock was needed to move domestic grain from clogged elevators.

Countering Senator Reed's criticism, Jones said he was merely acting to relieve the tight feed situation in the U. S., what with grain inventories as of January 1 about 500,000 bushels below last year. By diverting 200 cars daily to Canadian shipments, the WFA expects to import 40,000,000 bushels of wheat by May 1, and a total of 95,000,000 bushels in the first 6 months of 1944.

Although Senator Marvin Jones said the diversion of 200 cars would actually represent 250 cars, Jones disputed the figure, placing it at 6,000 cars.



Sen. Reed

**EARTHQUAKE: City Ruined**

Famous for its fruits and wines, the picturesque city of San Juan, situated high up in the Andes mountains of Argentina, lay in ruins following 4 earthquakes inside of 12 hours.

Panicked as the earth rumbled and shook, thousands of people rushed screaming from swaying buildings, only to be struck by chunks of falling masonry. Estimates of the dead were placed as high as 5,000, and of the injured at about 13,000.

Although the quakes were felt across the whole continent from Chile on the Pacific to Argentina on the Atlantic, San Juan with its 30,000 population was the most important city hit. Bravely, its survivors telegraphed Argentine President Gen. Pedro Ramirez for a \$37,500,000 loan for reconstruction, and conscription of 50,000 workers to help harvest the district's fruit crop.

**SOLDIERS' FARE: Stocks Needed**

If cold-storage warehouses throughout the U. S. are bulging with food, it's because the army must have record supplies on hand for troops, Brig. Gen. J. E. Barzyski of the quartermaster department said.

For every soldier overseas, the army must hold 272 days of food in reserve, General Barzyski declared. There must be 15 days' supply in transit to depots; 65 days' supply in ports and depots; 30 days' supply afloat; 92 days' minimum overseas supply; 45 days' overseas operating stocks, and 25 days' extra supply to cover losses from enemy action.

In addition, General Barzyski said, the army must have 90 days' food supply on hand for U. S. camps. Because a whole year's supply of such non-perishable foods as canned corn, etc., must be bought during the short period of production, stocks on hand will be large at completion of the harvest.

**AIR LINE RECORDS**

With the completion of the 50,000th coast-to-coast flight, United Air lines planes have established what is believed to be a new record for long distance air transport operation. The company pioneered in transcontinental flying, the first trip being made in a two-passenger Boeing 40-A mail plane July 2, 1927. The passengers rode in a box-like compartment in those days. Crossing the country took 34 hours, at about 105 miles per hour, compared with present 200-mile-per-hour speed.

**Washington Digest National Service Act Is Answer to War Disputes**

'Too Many Cooks' Root of Labor Disputes; Pressure Groups, Individuals Unwilling To Lay Aside Financial Desires.



By BAUKHAGE  
News Analyst and Commentator.

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Why did the President order the army to take over the railroads? You can get seven reasons from seven different presidential advisors. I won't repeat them. I will name three.

First, the epitome of those the politically minded probably gave; it will be a good thing for 1944. That is the sum total of a number of conclusions of the master minds who are advising concerning the political campaign which is ahead of us.

There are two other reasons which in Washington offer (aside from the threat, real or fancied, to the war effort). These officials let the political stream flow over them. They are more interested in getting the particular job assigned to them done than figuring out its political effects. Needless to say, they belong to that large, conscientious army which most people outside of Washington forget exists, an army of people wise or unwise in their judgments but beholden to no political party for their positions.

These are the two probable reasons they offered; first: The roads were seized as a threat against other industrialists who might make trouble in accepting terms of future labor wage decisions, such demands for increases which can't be easily dodged (perhaps just demands, perhaps not, depending on who holds the scales).

The second reason offered is this: Simply because many of the President's present labor advisors have had little or no experience in labor relations, in the methods of labor leaders.

**Misunderstanding**

There are a number of signs which might point to reason one as the one which turned the scales, but, like most of the other motivating forces in many of the recent labor decisions, they spring from the same soil as does reason two: misunderstanding of the methods of labor leaders.

You will recall that William Green, A. F. of L. chieftain, when he made what since seems to have been an ill-starred attack on the Marshall statement that threats of strikes might prolong the war, stated flatly that the railroad unions had never intended to strike.

That statement isn't questioned in spite of the angry denials of the railroad union leaders. It is what you heard in every railroad office from every old time councilor and advisor in Washington before the roads were taken over.

Unfortunately, the whole situation is reminiscent of the conversation concerning the dog. The dog growled. The owner said, "Don't be frightened, I know he won't bite you." "But," replied his friend, "does the dog know it?"

You see the friend had no understanding of dogs. If you had slipped into the White House on a certain day not long before the deadline for the strike call of the so-called recalcitrant unions (enginemen and firemen, and conductors) had been reached, you too might have been alarmed. The union representatives (I am told) were making a noise very much like a dog that is going to bite.

Now the old timers were used to the noise. But the two gentlemen upon whom the President leans for advice in matters of stabilization involving wage and price boosts, Messrs. Byrnes and Vinson, were not accustomed to the sound. They did not know that a labor leader's bark is often worse than his bite.

(There never was the faintest possibility of an actual walkout on the nation's railroads." — William Green.)

Messrs. Byrnes and Vinson believed what they heard and it was plenty. That experience, I think I can say, is authentic. The labor leaders emphatically and enthusiastically threatened, Messrs. Vinson and Byrnes took the warning growl for a real threat. Others of the President's council were convinced that there was excuse enough to do something which they thought would be advantageous for political reasons.

And so finally, the man with the long cigarette holder, just back from the world battlefronts where "so-much-per-hour-per-day" wasn't the argument, but "so-many-lives-per-hour" was, where world maps were being re-drawn, where America's attitude and action was about to rewrite history, became a little impatient.

**The Action Date**

"We have come to the action date," said the President, "we have been talking here since Sunday. If you can't take action by agreement, I will have to take action by myself."

He took it and he took the railroads. To say that Washington was not surprised would be to misjudge Washington.

The root of the whole trouble in this and all the labor disputes has been that there were too many cooks. The trouble with the confusing statements which come out of Washington is that there are too many cooks. And yet, we have that paradox that when there are too many people handling war problems, the only cure so far has been to substitute too few—to pass the buck to one man—the President. The answer to that is that one man simply cannot do it all.

The war is too far away from us. We cannot lay aside our personal and natural desire to make as much money out of it as the next fellow.

This has gone on from the beginning—employer, making his profits, essential labor demanding and getting his high wages, the farmer, his incentive, and then those who follow after, shouting, "you did it for them, do it for me!"

Not one group is blameless, only those who have been unable to bring pressure, hesitated to do so. And, for the most part, each group sincerely believing that it was getting no more than its just due, in the many of the profiteers, the chiselers.

The solution? At this writing, a National Service Act that will order who does what and for how much—just as it is in the army.

**An Abiding Peace—Common Sense Treatment**

Books on the postwar world can almost be described as the only commodity of which there is now surplus production, but this is one — "Towards an Abiding Peace"—that can be taken seriously. R. M. MacIver, professor in Columbia university, for one thing writes a clear, simple unprofessorial language, saying what he means directly and without qualifications.

He is for a world order but is too practical to believe you can have it by just writing a world constitution. He wants a temporary peace which in a way carries on from the war alliance, and then a second stage in which we move to real international control. Furthermore, he thinks that sooner or later our present enemies must be taken in unless we are going to let the third World war slowly fester.

An international order is an international order to Mr. MacIver.

There are no weasel words. Mr. MacIver has worked out his plans in some detail. There is a lot of common sense in "Towards an Abiding Peace"—on a subject on which a good deal of pretentious philosophizing is being done.

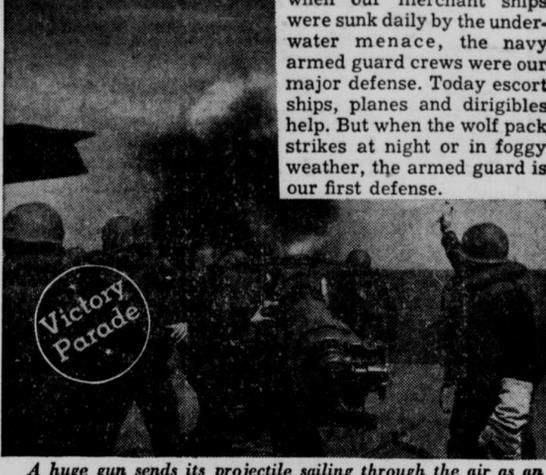
**Bond-Selling Plan**

Rep. Richard P. Gale of Minnesota has a plan for increasing bond sales to individual citizens—the sales which it is most important to make. He thinks it is a cheap and easy way for the government to increase sales and interest in sales on the part of the average man. Senator Guffey offered a similar plan.

Periodically, at intervals not greater than three months, he would have the treasury make a drawing. And the person holding the winning number—he would be a bondholder, of course, would get a prize of from a hundred to 25 thousand dollars. It wouldn't be a lottery because nobody could lose—you would have your bond for the money you invested and your bond would be your ticket.

**Navy Armed Guard Battles Gangsters of the Sea**

German U-boat warfare, once dreaded by Allied seamen, is now being crushed. But in those critical days when our merchant ships were sunk daily by the underwater menace, the navy armed guard crews were our major defense. Today escort ships, planes and dirigibles help. But when the wolf pack strikes at night or in foggy weather, the armed guard is our first defense.



A huge gun sends its projectile sailing through the air as an armed guard crew practices to make our sea lanes safe.



Front view of the same drill. Weeks of this training result in instant accurate fire when a U-boat is spotted.



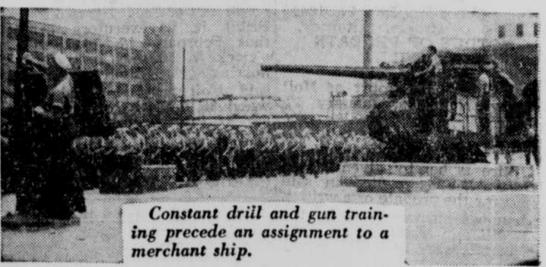
Neatness and efficiency are apparent in this crew as they report for duty aboard a merchant ship. Right: Men are quickly assigned to their posts and this lookout is soon scanning the sea for signs of an enemy periscope.



Above: Every round of ammunition must be accounted for by the crew's commander. Left: He charts his position.



A gunner pours a stream of lead from his anti-aircraft gun. Steps around the gun enable him to elevate and depress it easily. Tubes on outside of steel guard are spare gun barrels.



Constant drill and gun training precede an assignment to a merchant ship.

**PEOPLE IN THE NEWS . . .**

**Good Reader**  
Somewhere in the South Pacific, a native kept one ear cocked while marines argued over the height of the Empire State building. Finally, the native piped up: "No one right," he said. "Empire State building 1,250 feet high."  
"How do you know?" the marines asked.  
"Just good reader," the native answered.

**X-Ray Tells Secret**  
When 3 playmates brought 10-year-old Johnny Wilm of Springfield, Ill., home with a wound in his abdomen, they said he had fallen on a pile of cinders.  
But when little Johnny's fever failed to subside X-rays showed a bullet lodged near his spine. Then, he confessed having been shot by one of his playmates during a "Com-mando" raid.

**BRIEFS . . . by Baukhage**

Nicaragua and Costa Rica are rapidly expanding their balsa crops to keep up with current war demands and in anticipation of wood's important role in postwar aviation.

Stamp out turnover—stay on the job—and finish the job! That should be every American's creed.

All honorably discharged members of the armed forces—both men and women—will be assisted in every way possible to find a job to their liking, according to Paul V. McNutt, chairman of the War Manpower commission.