

Dec 28 1942

MARSHFIELD, WISCONSIN, MONDAY, DE

AFRICA CORPS AT MISURATA

Rommel Must Make Stand
There or Continue Re-
treat to Tripoli

YANKS SMASH SHIPPING

Allied Headquarters, North Africa—(AP)—German detachments have been routed by Allied patrols along the Medjez-el-Bab and Tebourba road and shelled and forced to retire from a farm in the same area west of Tunis, an Allied communique reported today.

Casualties were inflicted on the German detachment and several prisoners were captured, the communique said.

Heavy rains which left roads a quagmire had stopped at last, as these and other patrol actions enlivened the front.

London—(AP)—Marsahl Erwin Rommel's retreating African Corps was rapidly approaching Misurata today and there it must decide either to make a stand or give up all Mussolini's Tripolitanian and join the Axis forces in Tunisia where pelting rains kept Allied and Axis armies at a standstill.

Gen. Sir Bernard L. Montgomery reported in a Cairo communique that his British Eighth Army had engaged Rommel's rear-guard in the region of Wadi el Chebir, 40 miles west of Sirte and only about 15 miles east of Buerat el Hsun. The Libyan shore bends northward there toward Misurata and forms a huge hump in the coastline.

Flanking marshlands and hills in the immediate stretch ahead gave Marshal Rommel his most advantageous position to stop and fight since his defeated Army pulled up stakes at El Agheila, 220 miles east of Buerat el Hsun.

Two-Way Drive Looms

If Rommel abandons the Misurata positions, he has no place to stop short of Tripoli and even there he perhaps can make no prolonged stand.

Although he might save men and material and strengthen the Axis forces in Tunisia by quickly abandoning his Libyan positions, military commentators pointed out that the Eighth Army and its powerful air force would be at his heels and ready to join the British First Army in a two-way drive upon Tunis and Bizerte.

The only ground action reported from the Allied Side in Tunisia was from French forces guarding the southern flank. The French claimed an important advance south of Pont-du-Fahs, a-

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The WAR Today

BY DEWITT MACKENZIE

New Delhi, Dec. 27 (Delayed)—Looking back from nine months to the black days when the sprawling sub-continent of India was unprepared to defend itself against a Japanese invasion it's good to be able to report with certainty that this great empire's



Sgt. Leander Merkel

LOCAL SOLDIER DIES IN ACTION

Staff Sgt. Leander Merkel
Killed in Southwest
Pacific Dec. 7

Another Marshfield soldier, Staff Sgt. Leander (Lee) Merkel, 29, has been killed in action on the New Guinea battlefield. He died on Dec. 7, the anniversary of the treacherous Jap attack on Pearl Harbor, according to a War Department telegram received by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Merkel, 714 W. Blodgett street, late Saturday afternoon.

Sgt. Merkel is the sixth local man to be reported killed or missing in action by the War Department since Dec. 13. All but one have been casualties in the Southwest Pacific area.

Requiem High Mass

A Requiem High Mass for Staff Sgt. Merkel will be held at 9 a. m. tomorrow at St. John's Catholic Church, the Rev. Augustine Frisch officiating.

The soldier was born in Marshfield Feb. 19, 1913, and received his education at St. John's Catholic School. A former member of the Marshfield Fire Department, Staff Sgt. Merkel was also a member of the Knights of Columbus and St. John's Holy Name Society. He was employed as a garage mechanic at the time he enlisted and was inducted into the Army of the United States with a National Guard Company here in October, 1940.

Motor Mechanic

He was trained at Camp Livingston, La., and attended a motor mechanics school in Georgia before being transferred to Fort Ord, Calif. He went overseas in April of this year.

Besides his parents, he is survived by four brothers and two sisters: Pvt. Clarence Merkel, somewhere in North Africa, according to a telegram received today; Melvin, Duluth; Efc. James Merkel, Camp McCoy; and Margaret and Joan, at home. Another brother, Jerome formerly a member of Company C was killed in a motorcycle accident on May 27, 1936.

HOL INAY DEATHS IN

DE GAULLE TO VISIT STATES

Leader of Fighting French
Expected to Consult
Roosevelt

WILL ALSO SEE GIRAUD

BY BELMAN MORIN

London—(AP)—Gen. Charles de Gaulle will visit Washington soon to lay the blueprint of a new French Government before President Roosevelt, then proceed to North Africa to see Gen. Henri Giraud, successor to Admiral Jean Darlan, well-informed quarters said today.

The creation of a new French Government, centered probably at Algiers, based on the repudiation to the armistice with Germany and Vichy's dissolution of the French Republic, was said to be among the aims of the Fighting French leader.

De Gaulle is described as "very anxious" to unite all diverse French elements and bring about a general mobilization of the fighting forces of North Africa and other parts of the French empire.

May Leave Soon

His plan coincides with the report that Albert Lebrun, President of the Republic until the armistice, has escaped to Switzerland, a report that has been denied in Vichy, however.

It is understood that a number of members of the Chamber of Deputies also are residing in North Africa, where they might be recalled to service.

Although the departure of De Gaulle for Washington has not yet been scheduled, reliable informants said they believed the program for conferences with President Roosevelt and other American authorities already had been set and that the Fighting French leader might leave England soon.

The position of De Gaulle in the blueprint he will carry has not been set.

See—DE GAULLE—Page 2

OCONTO MAN TELLS OF KILLING COUPLE

Oscar Mayer Pleads Guilty
to Murder of Wife and
Infant Girl

Oconto—(AP)—Oscar Mayer, 39, pleaded guilty today on a charge of slaying his wife, Olga, and their infant daughter and was bound over to Circuit Court after he waived preliminary examination. He was brought before Justice Joseph Fisher on a first degree murder charge.

Dist. Atty. Harold W. Krueger said he would try to arrange to arraign Mayer in Circuit Court Tuesday morning.

Krueger said Mayer told him he went to his mother-in-law's farm the night of Oct. 23, intending to shoot his brother-in-law, whom he blamed for marital difficulties.

Wickard All Canne

REDS CLOSING HUGE PINCERS

45-Mile Gap Separates Red
Armies Closing Around
Stalingrad

CAUCASUS ENDANGERED

BY EDDY GILMORE

Moscow—(AP)—Russian troops advancing southward in the middle Don sector were reported only 45 miles from those striking southwestward from Stalingrad today, and thus a second Russian trap threatened German forces in the Stalingrad area.

Should these two huge forces join somewhere on the lower Don—and the mid-day Soviet communique reported they were moving forward—the strong German forces at Kotelnikowski in the upper Caucasus also would be in great peril.

The capture of Birlukov by the Red forces southwest of Stalingrad and the seizure of Solonetzky northeast of Birlukov by the armies of the middle Don brought the two massive forces near a junction.

Fight Four Offensives

Birlukov, in the southeast corner of the Don elbow, is about 22 miles northeast of Tsimlyansk, where the Germans first crossed the Don last summer and developed their attack along the Novoro-isk-Stalingrad railway up past Kotelnikowski to Stalingrad.

Solonetzky is northeast of Birlukov and it was the capture of this village which put at least the advance forces of the two armies 45 miles apart.

The Russian armies, engaged in four winter offensives, were pursuing every advantage night and day while Russian dispatches pictured the Germans as wasting hundreds of lives in fruitless counterattacks at some points and abandoning great stores of equipment in their haste to retreat at others.

The Russians had captured Tatsinskaya, 50 miles east of Likhaya on the Stalingrad-Likhaya railway, and in that position they were only 90 miles from Rostov.

Russians Nearer Rostov

(The British radio reported that the Russians were within 80 miles of Rostov.)

By capture of Tatsinskaya the Russians were in control of virtually all the 229-mile railway between Stalingrad and Likhaya, and were close to large coal fields in the

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