THE WAR · WEEK — Commentary on Current Events

Portugal Grants Anti-Submarine Bases In Azores To Great Britain

The announcement that Portugal has granted Great Britain anti-submarine bases in the Azores is a development not only of immense immediate advantage to the Allies but one which carries political and strategic implications of world-wide significance, says The New York Times. The immediate advantage lies in the fact that this move deals what may prove to be a knockout blow against the German submarine, the last weapon on which Hitler still relies.

Protection For Convoys

For the new "anti-submarine bases" in the Azores include both harbor and airfield facilites which will permit the stationing of British naval and air forces—and, possibly through reverse lend-lease, of American forces as well—at an approximate midway point on the sea lanes between Newfoundland on the one side and England and North Africa on the other. This should permit the routing of Atlantic convoys in such manner that they will be at all times under the protection not only of Allied naval forces but also of a continuous air patrol, which has proved to be the most deadly destroyer of the U-boat packs. It should provide the greatest possible security for the Allied communication lines and in doing so further facilitate the opening of another front in Europe.

Germany's Reaction

The further effects of this Portuguese move will depend largely on Germany's reaction to it. Portugal acted in conformity with her 570-year-old alliance with Great Britain, which pledged both nations to be "friends to friends, enemies to enemies, and to uphold each other mutually by land and by sea against all men that may live or die." At the same time, in agreement with Great Britain, Portugal will continue to maintain neutrality "on the European Continent." Berlin's first pronouncements are dictated by caution, but Hitler has never yet taken a reverse like this lying down, and Portugal is preparing for all eventualities.

Allied Diplomacy Triumphs

This raises interesting possibilities. For, barring some hit and run attacks by submarines, Germany has no way of getting at Portugal except through Spain. And Spain and Portugal are obligated by what amounts to a mutual assistance pact to aid each other in case of attack by a third Power. Spain was informed of the negotiations preceding Portugal's action and raised no objections. Spain herself has switched from a pro-Axis "non-belligerency" to a vigilant neutrality," and if Germany should attempt to attack Portugal through her she would be obligated to fight against Germany. There arises, therefore, the possibility of a new front in Europe in quite a different place than anticipated heretofore. Even aside from such a development, the Portuguese move would have been impossible without Spain's new orientation, and this new orientation and the result it has produced mark a new Allied diplomacy.

May End Neutrality

In one respect, of course, the Portuguese move is another indication of how far the balance of power has swung in favor of the Allies. But it would be foolish to assume that Portugal and Spain are merely hopping on the Allied bandwagon. Certainly Portugal and possibly Spain are exposing themselves to a risk which must be judged in proportion to their resources. And Portugal for one has declared that she is assuming this risk because "our dignity and our interests may require that we end our neutrality.."

Example To Little Nations

In that respect Portugal is setting an example for other "little" nations, notably Turkey and Ireland. But the Portuguese move has also set a legal precedent of considerable bearing on the British alliances with Russia and Turkey. Turkey is neutral in the entire war and Russia in the war in Asia, but both have bases much desired by the Allies in both theatres of war. Whether and when they will follow Portugal's example must be left for them to decide. Contrary to Hitler's practice, Great Britain did not press Portugal to yield the bases until the time was ripe for it and the step was clearly in Portugal's own interest. It may be expected that a like policy will be pursued in other cases. But as far as the Allies are concerned any legal doubts about the propriety of a Russian grant of Siberian bases in view of her neutrality pact with Japan, for instance, have now been dissipated.

Attack On The Tirpitz

It takes brave men to carry out what the British Admiralty elects to call "a very gallant enterprise." None braver have come out of this war than the crews that piloted their midget submarines down Alten Fjord to torpedo that giant Tirpitz. They had to thread their way through a fifty-mile gauntlet of floating ice and hidden fire before they could even loose their weapons. But because their nerves were steady and their sight sure the pride of the German Navy now lies crippled in a slick of her own oil.

These midget submarines are not supposed to have an operational range of more than 300 miles. As the British ships were cruising more than a thousand miles from home bases, presumbably they were transported part way to their destination in some manner. With the Tirpitz as their first victim they will certainly raise the hazard of all ships anchored in supposedly safe harbors.

For the Germans the Tirpitz may represent an irreplaceable loss. She was the one ship which could lead a fleet against our naval power with any hope of success. Refitting her in Alten Fjord should prove a difficult task. Until she can fight again the German High Seas Fleet will probably remain in hiding.

OTTAWA REPORTS

That 150,000 Farm Workers Are Needed for Essential Industries During Off-Season

In past years farm workers have worked during the fall and winter months at the cutting of wood fuel, in coal mines, in base metal mines and in fish-packing industries. This year their help is more urgently needed, not only in these industries, but in other essential industries.

The war has caused a shortage of the manpower usually available for such work—the workers have gone to fight or to work full-time in war factories. Other important industries have also suffered through a shortage of manpower and they, too, are looking to the man on the land to come to their aid.

Farm production still retains its priority place, however. Farmers are expected to remain with their farms as long as they are needed and those who must remain on the land for year-round work are not being called upon to leave it.

In an endeavor to use every available working man where most needed and especially to ensure that urgently needed fuel wood is brought in, the Director of National Selective Service has announced a campaign to secure the services of those farmers who can be spared during the next few months Agreements between the Dominion and the Provinces for farm labor recruitment provide that Provincial Field organizations will assist the Dominion in locating farmers for other essential industries during their off-season. All the Provincial organizations have agreed to co-operate with Selective Service in the present campaign. In addition, several hundred local Farm Production committees, organized by the Provinces, have undertaken to give their assistance in securing the farm labor.

Altogether more than 150,000 farmers are being sought for essential industries throughout Canada.

It has been pointed out by the Department of Labor that workers in agriculture who have secured postponement of military training through their occupation, will be allowed to continue with their postponement if they accept approved essential employment during the slack season.

So far this shifting of labor to where it is urgently needed has yielded valuable results. In one instance this year, the moving of 4,000 Ontario farmers to the prairies for four or five weeks meant that the full harvest labor requirements of the Prairie Provinces were met and the Western crops were saved.

Minister of Labor Mitchell in announcing that any of these men who now wished to return to Ontario from Manitoba or Saskatchewan could do so, said, "The response of the Ontario farmers was excellent. Our information is that all of the Western crop will be saved, with none being lost by reason of any labor shortage."

With the harvest now safely garnered, the next urgent need is preparation for the winter months, and Canada is depending on her farmers to help bring in the fuel.

KILLING THE BUDWORM

The budworm is a little creature and can easily be killed if the proper means is found. Unchecked it can destroy forests. Mankind, which has already in many instances set one of nature's creatures to the job of destroying another, has yet to find and put the enemy of the budworm to work.

—Port Arthur News-Chronicle.

Germans Must Not Be Underestimated

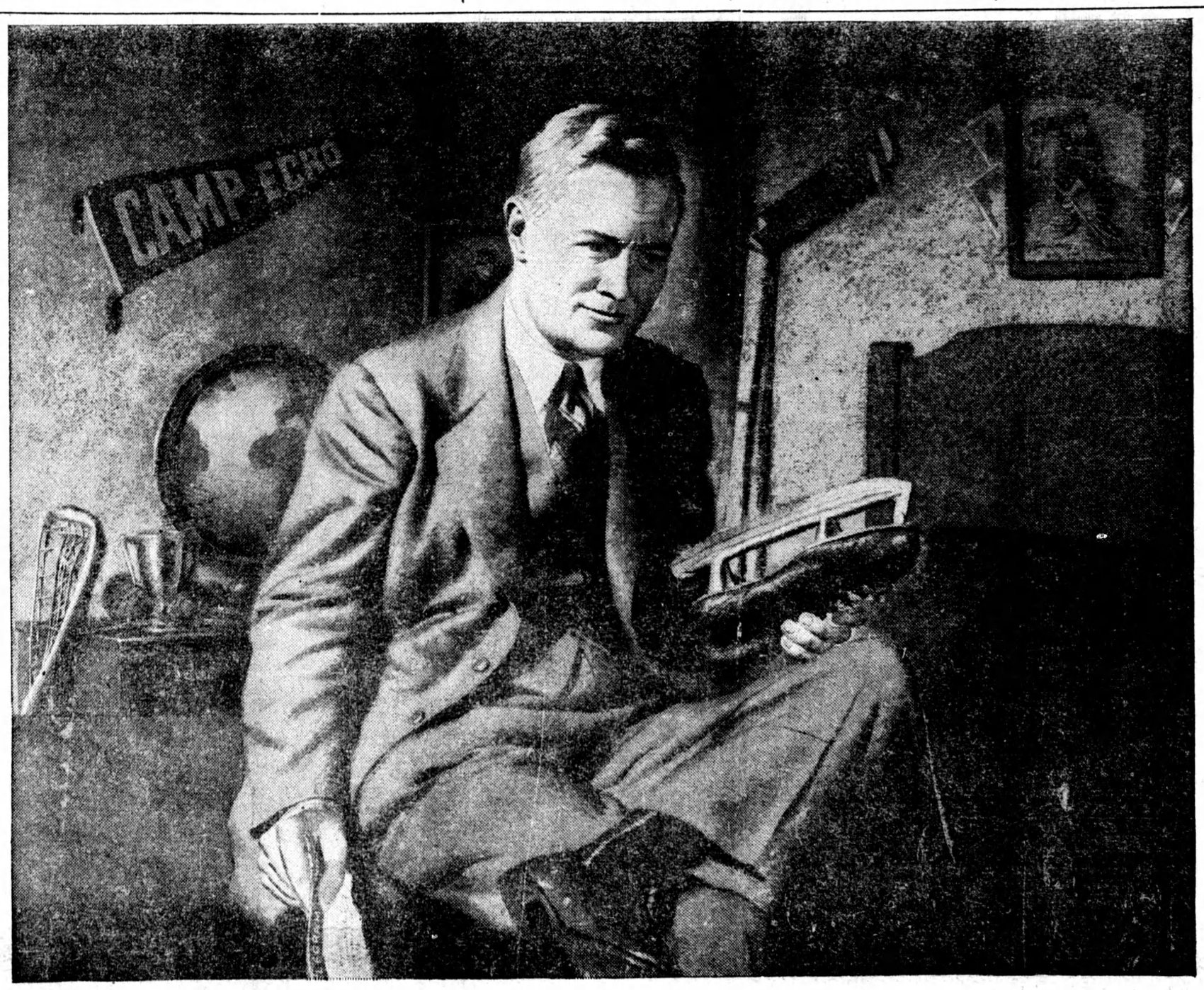
Gen. Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, commander of the British Eighth Army, in an interview warned that the Germans must not be underestimated and said that it was a great mistake for anyone to do so.

Montgomery, whose Eighth Army marched approximately 100 miles in the first seven days of the invasion of Italy, cautioned against attaching decisive importance to the Italian armistice in considering the factors in the present Allied campaign on this peninsula.

"The Italians ceased to be a fighting factor by the end of July when we were still engaged in Sicily," he said.

He said the Germans were conducting a skilful withdrawal from the southern extremity of Italy, making continual use of demolitions and mines, and that the Eighth Army had been hiking on foot in pursuit.

"The Germans facing the Eighth Army are experienced, well-trained troops and have been conducting a fighting retreat. The Germans can't be underestimated. It's a great mistake to do so," he declared.



"WHAT A SHOT THE KID HAD!"

"It's quiet in here. Guess I'll sit and think awhile. Lord how he loved those skates. And what a wonder he was on 'em!

REGRET TO INFORM YOU HEAD-QUARTERS OVERSEAS ADVISES...

"Guess being good with a hockey stick must have come in handy to him, learning how to handle a bayonet properly. He was quick as a flash. What a shot the kid had!

YOUR SON SERIOUSLY WOUNDED WHILE ON ACTIVE DUTY...

"It's a pity wars can't be fought by us older ones, with most of our living behind us. But it seems only kids can take it . . . kids with fire in their veins and springs for muscles and steel for bones . . . like Johnny.

BE ASSURED HE IS RECEIVING BEST MEDICAL ATTENTION...

"Oh, Johnny, come home again! Come home running, shouting, tramping in and out of the house with muddy feet and clothes awry. Come home, Johnny, shouting, laughing, heedless, turning the house topsy turvy in your endless quests for lost sweaters and misplaced mittens. But come home to us, Johnny, come home . . .

HOPE TO RELIEVE YOUR ANXIETY SOON AS POSSIBLE... LETTER FOLLOWS.

"If prayers will do it, you'll be back, Johnny. But we're not stopping with prayers alone, boy. We're working for it, buying with every last cent we can scrape together the Victory Bonds that put weapons in your hands and sound ships under you and good food in you and dressings and drugs to care for your wounds.

"This is our pledge to you, lad: that when you sit again at our table and look into our eyes you'll know we did not fail you, that we gave everything we had, just as we gave you."

THE HOUSE OF SEAGRAM