

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1942.

DES MOINES TRIBUNE

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'Swam Among Sharks' to Save 33 Men As Cargo Ship Sank

Yanks Blast New Jap Air Base Again

WASHINGTON, D. C. (AP)—American air forces in the south Pacific were reported by the navy Monday to be continuing their heavy bombardment of the new Japanese air base at Munda, on New Georgia island in the central Solomon.

A navy communique said Sunday's ground action on Guadalcanal island was limited to routine patrol activity. A lone Japanese plane dropped three bombs in the vicinity of Henderson air field on Guadalcanal.

The Sunday attack on the Munda air field, as reported Monday, apparently was the fourth heavy aerial assault made on the enemy base, constructed as a buffer and an offensive threat to the American air field on Guadalcanal.

The Munda positions were first attacked on Dec. 9, according to navy communique.

Meanwhile, fate of a damaged Japanese destroyer, sunk last week which sought to straggle the enemy's forces on Guadalcanal, remained hidden. At least one of 13 Japanese destroyers was sunk and from four to seven others were known to have been hit by American planes and ships.

of seasoned United States pilots and one of the R.A.F.'s most famous fighter squadrons, was in action again Monday, dive-bombing and strafing the foe.

Some 200 fighter bombers took off with orders to stalk the German vehicles of "thin-skinned variety." They found their quarry and before noon the line of retreat was dotted with flaming and burned out Nazi armor.

of Libya, although Axis propaganda "announced" a retreat.

If the Allies actually hold El Agheila, they have reached the high tide of Gen. Sir Archibald P. Wavell's strategy in February, 1941.

Africa--

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The Pursuit

Resuming its Libyan drive after a three-week lull, the Eighth army drove straight into Rommel's fortifiers flank Sunday, and the British said the enemy was put to flight at "little cost" to Gen. Sir Bernard L. Montgomery's attacking units.

Allied fighter-bombers, operating on an unprecedented scale, were employed to harass the enemy," the communique asserted. "Axis air activity was totally ineffective in preventing these strong rearguard action. In a few instances



In Tunisia above, Allies have repulsed Axis attacks at the flank around Medjer el Bab, while in Libya to the right, Field Marshal Rommel has given up his El Agheila defense line and is in retreat to the west. Allied bombers plastered Tunis, Bizerte and Sousse.

problem for the British and Americans was to get weapons and equipment to the front lines. No major Allied attack can be expected, he added, until the transportation problem is solved.

The Nazi high command reported Monday that German planes in Tunisia destroyed several Allied tanks and downed 12 planes in combats over all North Africa battle areas. Heavy new Nazi raids were reported against Boue in Algeria.

The Berlin radio reported that Axis forces had advanced Sunday southwest of Tobourba, which is 20 miles west of Tunis, driving British and American units out of two localities. Ten Allied tanks were captured and 15 destroyed, the broadcast said.

A spokesman at the French army headquarters of Gen. Henri Honoré Giraud said 282 out of 300 troops on the train between Sfax and Sousse were killed, wounded or captured when a mine exploded on the tracks and French troops hidden at the side opened fire with machine guns.

The coaches piled one on the other when the mine exploded and only 18 Germans escaped the murderous

The Battle In Africa

Merle Elias See, the 21-year-old gunner, has made no reference to his experiences in his communications to his parents. Mr. See said his Frank See of 3848 East Punglas ave.

The sailor may have planned to bring the news when he returns home on a four-day voyage which, his parents hope, will include the holidays. His shipmate, Daniel R. (Pop) Kenny, a veteran of 20 years at sea, preceded him with word of the exploits, however.

Shipmate Tells Of Merle See

A Des Moines navy gunner's heroic rescue of 33 men, from shark-infested waters—and his part in a previous rescue of "quite a few"—was disclosed to his parents here in a letter from the sailor's veteran shipmate.

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Plans NYA War Task

WASHINGTON, D. C. (AP)—Manpower Chief Paul V. McNutt will ask congress to merge the national youth administration into the general war worker training program of the war manpower commission.

McNutt so told a press conference Monday, adding that he intended to ask that statutes limiting NYA training to persons in their twenties be repealed so that its appropriation could be used to train war workers of all ages. NYA recently became a unit of WMC.

Senator Byrd (Dem., Va.) and others in congress have criticized the NYA, saying it used 12,520 supervisors and clerical workers to train 53,665 young persons for industrial work.

College Plan.

McNutt further told reporters: 1. The WMC, army and navy have worked out a program for use of college-trained men for special

hundreds of sharks, uprighted the lifeboat, and 33 men were saved," Kenny wrote See's parents.

"I reported it all to the United States naval intelligence," Kenny continued, "and as I have more than 30 years sea service, I trust and believe something will come of it."

"I am old enough, and proud, to have had your very fine son call me 'Pop' for over five months," Kenny told See's parents.

East High Grad.

See, a graduate of East High school in 1935, entered the navy on Jan. 5, 1942.

He finished his "best training" last March and immediately volunteered for sea service with a gun crew aboard a merchant ship.

He has been at sea since May 2 and was on duty with the merchant marine when his rescue feats were accomplished.

Employed.

Before enlisting in the navy, See was employed by the Gilhe-Book Tractor and Equipment Co. in Des Moines as a repairman.

Much of his swimming

Lifeboats.

"We were sunk in the black of night," wrote Kenny, "and all lifeboats were missing."

"Merle aided in the righting of a couple of capsized lifeboats, which saved quite a few men, although 11 were lost, including three gunners."

That incident was merely a warmup for what was to follow, See's shipmate indicates.

"Impossible."

The telltale trail of a torpedo must have barely disappeared in the vicinity of another ship, when the Des Moines gunner again went into action. The occupants of another capsized lifeboat were struggling in the water, surrounded by sharks.

See, volunteering to attempt their rescue, was told by the ship's second officer that such an accomplishment was impossible.

"The hell it is," the gunner replied, according to Kenny.

"He calmly swam among

Memorial to Heroes

Destroyers Named for Naval Officers

WASHINGTON, D. C. (U.P.)—Three new destroyers under construction were being named in honor of high ranking naval officers who were killed in a close range engagement with Japanese surface units off Guadalcanal in the early morning of Nov. 13, 1942.

"They are: The Norman Scott, building at Bath Iron Works, Bath, Me.; Callaghan, Bethlehem Steel Co., San Pedro, Cal.; Cassin Young, Bethlehem Steel Co., San Pedro.

That the sailor, upon his arrival here, he informed that one gunner, the ship's baker, the crew and the engine room "delegates" had been saved after spending eight days in a lifeboat.

Urges More Planes For Bombing Japan

CHUNGKING, CHINA (U.P.)—H. H. Kung, Chinese finance minister, urged Monday that the United States send more long-range bombers to China for mass raids on Japan.

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