



As We See It

By DAN PATRICK

Scanning the six pages of casualties in the Victory Magazine which is part of this issue, one is struck with the realization that here are the boys who won't come home.

Nearly a thousand strong they tell a silent story and preach an eloquent sermon which we well might heed if we are to be spared future diocesan casualty lists.

In a small measure we can set to the tragedy which has clouded the homes from which these men came. They marched off to the wars in the full bloom of youth and left behind a steady trail of letters. Then came the agonizing silence and finally that telegram:

"The War Department . . . The Navy Department regrets to inform you . . ."

And outside of their memories, that's about all the families of these men have. Their sons answered the call to battle and a crumpled—perhaps tear-stained—telegram is all that came back.

It is hard to realize that the final resting places of these heroes are scattered all over the world.

Some met death on the beaches of Normandy. Others died in the Battle of the Bulge. The bitter and bloody Italian campaign, climaxed by the costly stand at Anzio, added some gold stars to our diocesan service flag. Even before that sudden death struck in North Africa and Sicily.

Across the world, they also died and were buried — on Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Salpan, the Philippines, Okinawa and Iwo Jima to mention just a few.

Then there were the airmen and the men of the sea. Many went out on missions of war and never returned. Most of them by now are officially "presumed to be dead." God alone knows the location of their final resting places.

There is a movement afoot to bring home the bodies of these men and their more than 250,000 comrades who gave their lives to pay the price of victory.

Of course, it is only natural for a grieving mother or wife to want her soldier's body in the family cemetery.

But, before reaching a decision, there are certain considerations to be taken into account. In the first place, the government either must move all bodies or none. The job can't be done piecemeal.

At the risk of stirring up a controversy, we are of the opinion that the bodies of our fallen heroes should rest where they fell primarily because that's the way they would want it.

The other day we were talking to a veteran of Pacific air battles. He had just returned from a tour of duty which took him to Saipan where he saw the military cemetery.

It was an impressive sight, he said. The area embracing the cemetery is under the constant and careful watch of a military detail. Said the veteran:

"If only the relatives of those fallen men could see this cemetery at Saipan. They wouldn't want their sons brought home. It would be almost like disturbing their peace as they slept with the comrades who had fallen with them."

After the last war, the government ran excursions to Europe to bring the relatives of the fallen soldiers to the graves of their loved ones. Perhaps that would be the answer to the problem of today where relatives are brought to the last remains instead of the remains being brought to the relatives.

There is one other factor for these relatives to consider.

When fighting men go into battle, they make out wills, giving directions as to the disposal of personal effects among other things.

One question the men are asked runs like this: "If you are killed in action where do you want to be buried?"

And, according to our informants, the overwhelming majority answer:

"Where I fall."

The men, it seems, want to sleep with their comrades. United in the perils of war in life, they want to remain united in the peace of death.

It was perhaps that sentiment which induced Mrs. Patton to decide on the burial of her husband with the men of his Third Army. We think it's the proper sentiment.

It would be rash, indeed, to dismiss the agonies which sear the souls of those left behind.

We know several mothers and fathers who wait and pray for some shred of information about circumstances surrounding the deaths of their sons. They only know they are buried in some far-distant land.

But bringing their bodies home won't answer those questions. It will only serve to reopen the wounds of grief which time has partially healed. True, it will bring some consolation.

But, we wonder, if such consolation is worth the price entailed. Isn't real and true consolation for those left behind found in the teachings of our Faith which will reunite those heroes and their families in the bliss of a heavenly eternity?

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Little-Known Facts for Catholics

By M. J. MURRAY

Washington

Russia to Vie for Trade; Rise in Market Activity

By Tom Rogers

Washington — EXCLUSIVE — partly by explained by the following:

About two weeks ago, James (Scotty) Reston of the New York Times, scored a 24 hour world beat on the results of the Moscow Conference. One of the highest State Department officials complained bitterly because Reston turned in such a job.

He would be equally annoyed if he knew the source.

The last of that old sea dog, beloved Admiral William F. Hallsey, is not yet. Emory Land, who resigned last Friday afternoon as head of the Maritime Commission, has privately urged the man of the Midway as his successor. By the time you read this, Hallsey may have assented.

The alert CIO-PAC's latest move is aimed at high school periodicals, college periodicals, and farm and industrial youth organizations. Insiders are wondering if Sanford Griffith, a major in intelligence in the last war but for undisclosed reasons not accepted in this present war, has had anything to do with it. Griffith took an intense interest in Catholic periodicals about two years ago.

One of the leading economic students, just back from abroad states that the Russians prefer that the six billion they are asking for be delivered in the shape of machine tools. In view of the manner in which they have stripped factories in the territories they occupy, they will probably make a bid for world trade supremacy in years to come.

This is probably the reason scores of their best scientists have been sent into the huge area behind the Urals — to see if the reported mineral resources are as great as earlier reports hinted.

Add those resources to the cheap labor — slave labor in spots — and you'll find the British Empire finished and the United States the only rival of the Soviets. If the Soviet Union stays together — and gets some efficiency — we are in for the trade battle of all time. Most observers feel we can meet it, not with cheap prices, but the last pace of improvements.

The financial front: the fear of inflation is a justified one. But the rise of market activity

Clarifying Issues Asked of UNO Meet

By J. J. Gilbert

Washington — There is earnest hope in many quarters that there will be a great deal of plain speaking at the first meeting of the United Nations general assembly which opens in London this week. In this way, it is felt, the organization can render a greatly needed service cutting through the mass of confusion and the habit of blinding issues that have grown up in recent years.

Suppose someone were to ask: "Whatever became of the Four Freedoms?" or "Whatever became of those tiny Baltic States that used to border the Soviet Union?" or even "Just what do we mean by a democracy?" It is easy to see that these questions could cause more than a little embarrassment. One doubts that they would get a clear or early answer.

Why should this be? Why should that which was a battle-cry in the early, hard-pressed days of the war cause us confusion now? Why should we continue to prattle about the "great democracies" of the world working together, and yet fear to define the term "democracy"? Whom do we and that takes in all the most powerful of the United Nations hope to deceive by sticking our heads in the sand?

Just on the eve of the London UNO meeting there has become available in this country testimony of a man who lived in Lithuania during the Soviet occupation of 1940-41. This man, a Lithuanian, was deported to Germany by the Nazis in 1944 and thus professes not to know anything about the second communist occupation of his country. He believes, however, that the position of religion is no better now than it was in the first Soviet occupation of 1940-41.

It should be of interest to those who insist that Soviet Russia guarantees religious freedom under its constitution, that this man has put the religious situation in a very forceful way. He admits that the constitution of "Soviet Lithuania" does contain a provision guaranteeing religious freedom. At the same time, he points out, the constitution is "merely a copy of the constitutions of the other Soviet republics;" it guarantees freedom of anti-religion propaganda, and, as it works out, religion gets no encouragement from the regime, while anti-religion does.

"Indeed, religious freedom under the Soviet regime," he says, "may be compared to a plant which has freedom to grow under the most adverse conditions — set out in a cold climate, blown about by cold winds, getting no sunlight, never having the ground watered or fertilized. Since the plant does not wither away immediately, it is said to have 'freedom to exist.' But the question is: How long can it remain alive?"

Again, this man testifies, when there was a wave of church property confiscation, closure of monasteries and convents, abolition of the oath in courts of law, elimination of religious teaching from the schools, a Lithuanian Bishop in that thoroughly Catholic country — inquired of a Soviet official regarding the fate of seminaries. The official replied that the Bishop's concern was a waste of time since he said when the theological students should have completed their studies, there would be no work for them to do.

These facts only suggest a problem that is extraordinarily vast and complex. But they do make it clear that we cannot go on ignoring ourselves in the esteem of others and our own. We've got to make things mean what they say, or there is no use saying them. We've got to recognize the fact that all countries are not democracies — even though they all have constitutions. We must appreciate, too, that a country doesn't have religious freedom just because it says it has in its constitution. We've got to stand for liberty and freedom of small nations, not just talk about it.

Mr. Gen. Alexander Georgievich Kotikov, Soviet governor of the Prussian Province of Saxony, gave American correspondents a neatly-turned phrase, but apparently with little logic, when he dealt with confessional schools and churches during a recent interview. It was part of a tour a small group of American correspondents were permitted to make in the Soviet-occupied part of Germany. The interview took place in Halle, where, after being vague about a number of things — including the communist work of denazification and the removal of German machinery to Russia — the Soviet official said flatly that the authorities had abolished the confessional schools. But, he hastened to add, the churches are not interfered with.

"I am not very much interested in the churches," the Soviet General was quoted as saying. "They don't make guns."

Was the General trying to convey the impression that confessional schools do? (N.C.W.C. News Service)

Feast Days

- Sunday, Jan. 13 — Octave of the Feast of the Epiphany
- Monday, Jan. 14 — St. Hilary of Poitiers
- Tuesday, Jan. 15 — St. Paul the Hermit
- Wednesday, Jan. 16 — St. Honoratus
- Thursday, Jan. 17 — St. Anthony
- Friday, Jan. 18 — St. Peter's Chair in Rome