

RENO IS THE least war-like spot left in these United States. Of this I am convinced after a month hereabouts and on the nearby wondrous Nevada desert. Except for the fact that Reno is surrounded by Army camps and maneuvering troops, it is far removed from the general war picture. True there is rationing, though there is such an abundance of everything that rationing at least of foods isn't even noticed. I've consumed some of the best steaks, potatoes, thick cream. The streets are filled with cars, and so are the roads around town. Everyone is growing a Victory garden; even Lloyd Root, the popular Sheriff (who ought to be Governor), has 5,000 tomato plants; the super-markets are jammed with people purchasing fresh vegetables and fruit at prices unheard of in the East. The main east-west and north-south highways are crowded with heavily-laden Diesel-burning trucks and trailers, and cars containing soldiers on furlough—or so they say, with wives-of-a-lifetime and wives-of-the-moment in tow. The servant problem scarcely exists, as there are enough trained Piute Indians, Chinese girls and checked-over-Japanese to more than fill the bill. It has been a cold wet spring, so streams, irrigation ditches, sluices and lakes are full of water, and the farmlands never looked more prosperous. Cattle and sheep clutter the range; cows, chickens and ducks every nearby farm.

Fifteen hundred and some odd single men have been deducted by the draft; and over 1,000 married men are expected to go to war before fall. This is a large percentage to a little town whose normal population is about 18,000. Reno has given liberally to the War Savings Drives, the Red Cross Drives, the USO and so on. Today it provides entertainment for the thousands of officers and men and their wives and girl friends who are in their midst. On Saturday night, the night spots resemble New Year's Eve in San Francisco; MP's and SP's patrol the streets club in hand. All day long airplanes hum over the little city and most of the night they drone overhead too.

Yet with all this Reno seems to be far far away from the actual conflict. Few persons listen hourly to battle-front news. KOH, the well-run local Blue Network Chain station, pipes in the news every three or four hours from all corners of the earth, but even Pearson and Winchell must be requested on a Sunday eve.

The bars, gaming tables, restaurants and tea rooms are crowded all day and all night. Money flows in a constant stream, as it used to flow in the good old days when the silver and gold mines were working at top speed. But this new money comes from soldiers, their families and friends, defense workers and the divorce colony (whose business has trebled since the war). Astounding as it may seem in the middle of our most serious conflict, there are still many people who pay more attention to their own domestic reverses than to those of their nation.

HOTELS, APARTMENTS, guest houses (kindly cognomen for boarding houses) and dude ranches are doing the biggest business ever. Rooms must be reserved weeks in advance, for even a 'look-in.' In a manner Reno is experiencing the same type of a boom as Washington, D. C. Many divorcees and divorcons must share accommodations—some willingly and wishfully and—some wistfully!

Have spent much of my time this

#### I Predict

1. Continuation of the Pan-American-Alcan Highway across the Soviet, down through Manchukuo and China to India, so that after the war it will be possible to motor to any part of the European continent, as easily as to the other Americas—and to reach London by automobile with two short, twenty-mile ferry-hauls (Bering Sea and English Channel), by bus, trailer or private car.

2. Military Training of all seventeen-eighteen-year-old youths, after the war is over; and a standing Army of 3,000,000 officers and men.

3. Forced 'retirement' of many Army and Navy officers in the higher ranking brackets, who have hampered the Commander-in-Chief's prosecution of the war. This to include at least five Generals, three Admirals.

past fortnight visiting these establishments. Of them two of the top-notchers are more than twenty miles from Reno. They are the Tumbling D-W, operated by the gracious Dorie Woods from Miami Beach; and the Washoe Pines, which demure Deborah Hull is still running. Both are extremely popular with the Park Avenue sets and their counterparts in other cities. The Tumbling D-W has been done over

exquisitely since I was last there. It resembles a Kentucky stock-farm outside, with its high white fences, its paddocks filled with prize stallions. And inside, a sort of modern Swedish or even Tyrolean farmhouse. There is a United-Nations-front in the kitchen, what with chefs representing five of the Allied nations. The food is *delicious*; the guests at this moment—almost evenly divided among men and women, are most attractive. It was here that Tucky Astor stayed as well as a long list of other Social Registerites. Dorothy Schiff Backer who owns the *N. Y. Eve Post* and other Eastern dailies is there now with her two pretty youngsters, and her French governess. Svelte Sydney Logan of RKO is also at D-W 'resting.'

Three miles or so away, across the Carson City Highway lies the always popular Washoe Pines. This is a log-cabin type of ranch, set back in the High Sierra pines, facing big Washoe Lake, the Virginia City hills, and the desert, and surrounded by many of Reno's larger farms and ranches. It has been described in this column often before, and was used by Max Miller for a setting in his book "Reno."

One evening after a huge dinner of double lamb chops, fresh garden vegetables, a simply delicious salad and a bowl of peaches and cream, a crowd of us drove into Carson City, the state capital. We descended upon Ken Johnson's up-to-date little Senator Bar. Ken, now a Republican state Senator, has been married to the same lovely lady for thirteen lucky years, proving it can 'take'—even in Nevada! There are two Ken Johnsons in this area—the other a wheel horse of the local Democratic party—and both of them A-1 guys.

Nearer town lies the Lazy Bar-A Ranch—nine miles out.

And within the five mile circle of Reno, the Del Monte, with its individual whitewashed cabins, its private swimming pool, its fire-placed game room; the Palomino taken over by the Maharaja of Indore and his entourage; the Lone Star, so comfortably operated by my dear good friends the J. L. Hashes; Shangri-La which Mrs. Shaw operates as a combination ranch-and-guest-house, and at which Middle-Western aristocracy prevails; the Alamo which June Prescott is operating still, though Lyle is in Berkeley running a country-club for defense workers; and their pretty daughter has just returned from Hollywood, where Louis Schur wanted her to stay and

become a great actress.

Shirley Platt is home from school, and Sam and Antoinette are jubilant. Shirley is a most grownup-looking young lady; she could pass easily for eighteen. One Thousand Plumas Street has been completely renovated this year, and the change is even more striking. Sam now has a den, the walls of which are covered with the autographed photographs of more than 100 of the world's great musical-artists who have played for him in Reno.

UP TO DEAR old Judge Bartlett's rambling house on Court Street, for a delightful two hours with one of the finest friends in the world. Judgie, now doing a thriving legal business (in matrimonial problems) looks about the same as he has looked for the past twenty years. For twenty-five years he was Reno's principal divorce judge, but it never embittered him against the world. Prior to that he was in Congress. He is a serious student of world affairs; and as such, advanced the theory to me that the European end of this war, will be over *within the next thirty days*; and the Japanese war within a year and a half! His theory is based on the fact that hunger and starvation will force the Axis to quit, at the same time as the devastating bombings! He believes Italy may fold sooner!

TO DINNER WITH Nora and Pat O'Brien at 'Top of th' Morning,' on the edge of town. This is that extraordinary ranch, which used to be a cluster of chicken coops, and which they and their four kiddies built over into one of the most attractive artists' homes in the West. Nora was dressed in a long, fashionable black velvet gown; Pat in his mining togs. Dinner consisted of spare ribs *à la* Korean and wild rice. Hi-Spotter who is on a buttermilk-no-pork diet fell off for the night and enjoyed the forbidden porker to the limit! Pat, in addition to his other attributes, is a Buddhist archbishop! He recently was asked to perform the burial ceremonies for a dead Jap, and did so. Over 250 Japs, Chinese, Koreans and Manchukuoans attended and a barbecue was served at the same time. Pat says the Buddhist faith teaches happiness - in - death, not sorrow. That is perhaps why only four prisoners out of 1,500 Jap soldiers were taken in Attu. The proportion has been the same elsewhere.

THE CIVIL AIR Patrol is doing a great job in Reno. It is used primarily as a subsidiary of the Army Air Force.  
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and death, between an aimless ramble and a pilgrimage . . .

DEEP IN THE heart of taxes I went to bed and dreamt of the budget of 1950. I cannot remember who my dream secretary of the treasury was. But one memory is clear. It was a woman. Fat bonuses for babies, the freedom of the city for parents with more than four, a five-day week of thirty hours, no cooking on Sunday, and two months' paid vacation for working mothers, free beer on Fridays for husbands engaged in housewifery, reduction of the withholding tax from 95% to 90%!

Seriously, to learn that the patient people of Britain have now been paying income tax for one hundred years does not cause surprise. But I admit

### HIGH SPOTS

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Its members are constantly on call twenty-four hours a day. All of them have *donated* their own *private planes* to the government. Their main function here is to be on the alert for crashes, forest fires, aid to remote places, possible enemy parachutists and lost planes. Because their craft are so small they are able to get into and out of places that the average commercial or service plane couldn't possibly approach. Some planes are radio-equipped; but those that are not, take carrier-pigeons along with them! In the weeks I have been out here on this trip I have come in contact with many of the pilots, and I have the highest respect for them. It is never too early, too late, too hot nor too cold; and the weather is never too bad for them. They are veritably the modern Minute-Men-and-Women; and incidentally one of their *best* pilots, is a young married woman. Some weeks ago when a plane carrying high ranking Army officers was lost hereabouts, the Army Air Force, after four days of search, asked the Civil Air Patrol's help. In less than twenty-four hours the wreckage was found! My hat is off to the Civil Air Patrol—and incidentally girls, they are the lads who wear the snappy scarlet tabs on the shoulders of their khaki uniforms!

OF THE MANY food substitutes on the market, which Paul Walters and I have tested in our bungalow kitchenette this past month, may I recommend the following: 'Rationmix,' a coffee substitute, made of chick-peas, barley and figs, and put out by Alexander Balart Co., of San Francisco.

that in these days, when taxes on bachelors are still occasionally debated over there, it came as news to me to learn that in 1842 six dollars a year was being paid for the privilege of powdering one's hair, and that bachelors were charged higher tax rates than married men for their male servants.

Thus, for one servant a married master paid \$6.00, but a bachelor was charged \$11.

There was also a sliding scale for dogs, ranging from \$5.25 for greyhounds to \$2.00 for other dogs. And while \$4.12 covered the tax on eight windows, \$230 had to be paid on mansions where 180 winked in the sunlight.

I hope that Mr. Morgenthau doesn't get hold of an old almanac from which these facts were taken. It might give him ideas!

Mixed one third, to two thirds coffee, you can stretch coffee quite a ways. Of all the *ersatz* coffee-stretchers this is the best and the natural coffee taste is not adulterated.

NOTE TO ALL Dude Ranch and Guest House operators: These are days for extreme caution, as the enemy is getting desperate. He (or she) will take all kinds of chances. The securing of information to his benefit is done by all kinds of people, other than Germans, Italians and Japanese. All branches of intelligence are at work everywhere—many of them undercover. Each operative carries identification. If you suspect a guest, you have a perfect right to ask for his identification. If you suspect a locality as the headquarters of a 'gang' of saboteurs draft-dodgers, or enemy agents you should tell your nearest FBI agent. If you think anyone is taking photographs of 'military objectives'—no matter how far inland, you should call the nearest Military or Naval Intelligence unit. If you notice attractive (and unattractive) women picking up military or naval personnel in bars you should notify the FBI. Reno is no different from any other town, with military establishments nearby. A decade ago Eastern gangsters used it, the Lake Tahoe resorts, and the intervening ranches as their headquarters. Modern gangsters not only are in the black market racket, but also are in with saboteurs, draft-dodgers, and the enemy. Modern gangsters have their 'molls'—and they seldom pick unattractive women. *Check on every guest you take in*, and you won't be left holding the bag. For Uncle Sam will accuse you 'of harboring an enemy alien,' if you stub your toe.



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