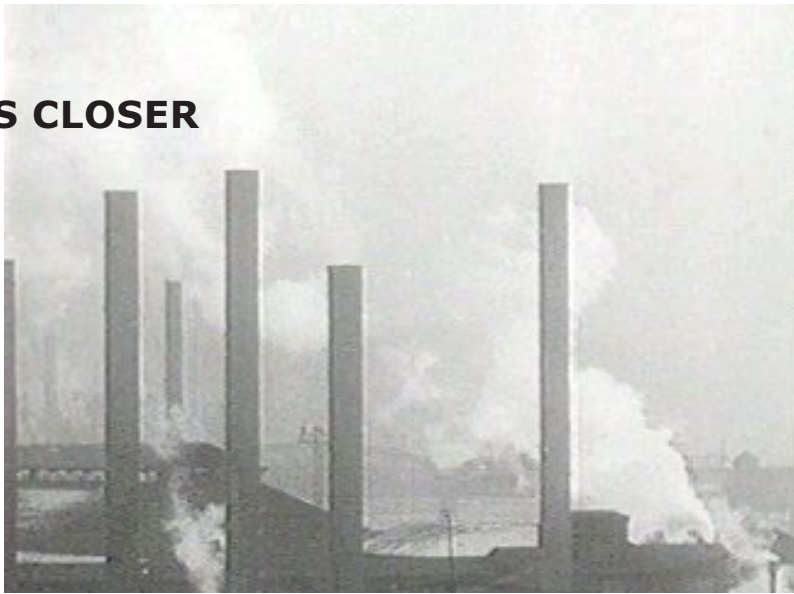


WAR DRAWS CLOSER



Europe was engulfed in war and torn by tearful persecution, the United States was at peace but revving up for war.

The nation will expect all individuals and all groups to play their full parts without stint, without selfishness, and without doubt that our democracy will triumphantly survive. I repeat the words of the signers of the Declaration of Independence...“With firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, and fortunes and our sacred honor.”

(cont)

One year to the day after Hitler’s invasion of Denmark and less than a month after Lend-Lease, on April 9, 1941, an agreement was signed by the Danish Minister at Washington D.C., Henrick de Kauffman, acting on behalf of the King of Denmark, and the American Secretary of State, Cordell Hull. The document stated that the United States accepted responsibility for the defense of Greenland. In effect, the agreement granted America the right to establish airfields and naval installations in Greenland for its defense and the American continent. Greenland is not an insignificant piece of property. It is huge, containing a land mass of 840,000 square miles. It strategically lays athwart the shortest air route between the U.S. and Europe, and seemed invaluable for any allied buildup. It flanked the “Great Circle” shipping route between Britain and North America.

On this very same date, U.S. Marines landed by ship

on Greenland. The frozen sea-lanes were re-opened. The Danish island asked for armed protection, and she began receiving the very best.

The first major task that confronted the party, however, was to make a survey on the habitable portion of Greenland. For almost a month, a difficult search across deep fiords and the seas, constantly dodging icebergs, U.S forces did survey for a site in the south which would be capable of measuring up to any standard for a base. A discovery of what became the site was largely a matter of luck, after native Greenlanders gave the U.S. a tip. They described the area as a "flat place, level, big," some 500 miles south of the Arctic Circle and forty miles inland called Narsarssuaq. Throughout late Spring and Summertime, troops were supported by a buildup of the secretive site.

Greenland was a novel U.S. venture. Greenland was a totally raw land with no telephones, telegraph systems or any other type of modern development. The harbors were uncharted. American participants found out that before runways and hangars and barracks and fuel-storage tanks could be built, they had to make roads. No roads existed. Moreover, they had to race against time since the nasty winter weather approached.

The first army troop ships sailed up the fiords in June. The following month specialists of the Air Corps Weather Service, Air Transport Command and the Army Airways Communication System (AACS) departed Brooklyn and joined a ship convoy off Nova Scotia and proceeded through the North Atlantic to primitive Narsarssuaq. A great day dawned on August 21 when a tiny radio named "Bluie West One" went on the air, secretly signifying the birth of Greenland as a patrol and ferrying route and meteorological station for the allies.

In the beginning of June, the United States and Iceland concluded a similar understanding. Although

Iceland was on a much slower and simpler scale, American troops—a task force of Marines followed by the Army—relieved British and Canadian troops.

Iceland, some 1800 miles from U.S. shores, is geographically closer to Greenland than to Europe itself. On May 27, 1941, the very first convoys under British and Canadian escort sailed from Halifax to England along the Icelandic route, and in four days the first Lend-Lease ship reached Britain.

Being on the high-seas in the German war zone of blockade was dangerous business in early 1941. The U-boat was a menace. The cruiser, the **Hipper**, and pocket battleship **Admiral Scheer**, sister-ship of the **Deutschland**, alone destroyed or captured 16 convoy ships during March 15-16, 1941. The latter had just come up from a world cruise to the Indian Ocean and had finished sending seventeen allied vessels to the bottom of the sea.

The significance of Iceland was that for the first time U.S. ground forces came into the so-called established German war-zone of blockade. And, although since the twenty-fifth of March, the naval blockades of Britain had closed to within 3 miles of Greenland, neither naval side shot at each other, yet—Americans were sent there “to defend.” Respecting the war-zone, no British or allied vessels were accorded North Atlantic Convoy protection on personal orders of President Roosevelt.

Unbelievable as it may sound, Roosevelt hoped to avoid war by not giving Hitler any excuse to declare war. Oddly enough, from the other perspective, Hitler forbade attacks on any U.S. vessel by any Deutsche Kriegsmarine warship, as the German Navy is called, unless the Americans fired the first shot—this remark is