BLUE BOOK

MAGAZINE for JULY, 1946 ★ 25 CENTS

THIS IS OUR LAND—VII
The Great Waterway
Painted by
HERBERT MORTON STOOPS

TRAIL OF THE CROSSE
A complete novel
by ALLAN BOSWORTH

MY NEPHEW NORVELL
by NELSON BOND

BOY COMES OF AGE
by JOEL REEVE

JEDBURGH MISSION HAMISH

The story of this thrill-crammed OSS adventure behind the enemy lines in France begins on page 86

I—SILVER STAR. By direction of the President, under the provisions of AR 600-45, 22 September 1943, as amended, the Silver Star is awarded to:

First Lieutenant *Robert M. Anstett* (Army Serial No. 01057948), Coast Artillery Corps, United States Army, for gallantry in action from 12 June 1944 to 25 September 1944. First Lieutenant *Anstett* parachuted into France in civilian clothes with two team mates, as an organizer and director of French resistance groups in the Department of Indre. Despite constant enemy activities, he arranged for the safe delivery by parachute of approximately fifty plane loads of equipment with which approximately 3,000 men were armed. He distinguished himself in leading his forces in road ambushes against enemy convoys, in continually cutting the Paris-Limoges railway line, in blowing bridges on main and secondary highways, and in securing and reporting to London highly valuable intelligence information. Entered military service from New York.

* * * * *

BY COMMAND OF GENERAL EISENHOWER:
R. B. LORD,
Major General, GSC, Deputy Chief of Staff.

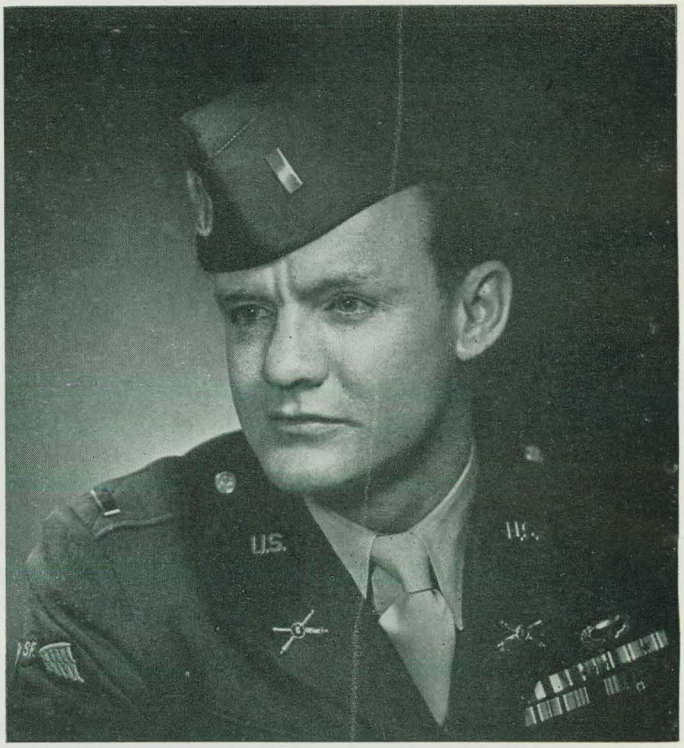

Photo by John Howard Riley

Above: Lieutenant Robert Anstett. At left, Victory parade of the Maquis after the liberation of Châteauroux. At right, group at the farmhouse command post during the final phase of the Jedburgh Mission Hamish.

Lt. Anstett behind the enemy lines in France—and seemingly quite happy about it.

Sgt. Waters operating the secret radio to London from behind the enemy lines in France.

Sgt. Lee Waters of Sandusky, Ohio, received the Silver Star for his work with Mission Hamish.

Readers' Comment*

Four Against the World and Emily Post

IT has happened here! All my life my mother's been preaching against the bad manners of bringing reading matter to the table—her remarks directed against Pop, who's been having BLUE BOOK *with his meals ever since I can remember. Then, about four months ago, my brother Jim and myself decided on a little look-see into Pop's obnoxious hobby, and doggone if we weren't immediately converted into hopeless* BLUE BOOK *addicts! That made three down, and one to go, and, just today, the last of the unbelievers—*Mom herself—*plops down at the supper-table with a* BLUE BOOK *clutched firmly in her lovely hands, a look of animation and adventure in her soft brown eyes. United we sit—four against the world and Emily Post. Maybe it "aint etiquette," but it sure is a lot of fun.*

Jerry B. Ford.

Harrowing Experiences, Too?

HAVING read your magazine BLUE BOOK *for ten years, I believe I am competent to judge its quality.*

I have read many other types of semi-slicks, slick and pulp magazines. All have fallen by the wayside but BLUE BOOK. *Why? Well,* BLUE *hasn't one type of story, but a variety. Science, fiction, murder mystery, true articles and every type one finds in all of the other magazines combined.*

I have noticed the changing pattern of BLUE BOOK *and have always enjoyed its style. Now I have a suggestion to make as a reader: And I am certain that there are many* BLUE BOOK *fans who will back me up. Ask them about this, and you will see its popularity. Alternate your special feature "My Most Amusing Experience" with a feature titled "My Most Harrowing Experience." I am quite positive that there are many of us who have had harrowing experiences in the past worth telling about.*

Continue the good work with your magazine and I'll continue to read it for another decade and more.

Anthony J. Taray.

*The Editors of BLUE BOOK are glad to receive letters of constructive criticism and suggestions; and for the ones we publish each month we will pay the writers ten dollars each.

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BLUE BOOK

July, 1946 MAGAZINE Vol. 83, No. 3

Two Complete Novels

Ten Short Stories

Stories of Fact and Experience

Special Features

Except for articles and stories of Real Experience, all stories and novels printed herein are fiction and are intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or to actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

DONALD KENNICOTT, *Editor*

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JEDBURGH MISSION

THE softly lit London restaurant was alive with the hum of conversation; in the background an orchestra was playing; waiters bustled about bearing steaming dishes of what was known as the best food in London. Outside, on this June night of 1944 the darkened streets kept the Londoner ever-mindful of the threat of German raids; but here in this famous café, twenty-six-year-old Bob Anstett, a former fledgling Jackson Heights, N.Y., lawyer, now a member of the Office of Strategic Services, could for just these few hours forget that tomorow night he would be plunging from an airplane down into the darkness of enemy-occupied France. Looking about him at this socialite gathering—at the very next table sat Winston Churchill's daughter—Anstett could put from his mind what his colonel had said to him and the other men who would make up the Jedburgh Missions: "If any of you comes back from this alive, I won't be able to think of a medal high enough to give you!"

It had been in the summer of 1943 that the one-hundred-sixty-five pound Anstett, a graduate of Lafayette College recently commissioned after O.C.S. and now acting as aide to the commanding general at Camp Edwards, Mass., had first heard that the United States Government was seeking "volunteers for hazardous missions with guerrillas behind the lines." Receiving permission from his general, he put in his name. Several months later, when he had practically forgotten about it, he was suddenly ordered to Washington, where he joined one hundred and fifty other officers combed from Army installations in every part of the U. S.

It was then that Anstett found that he had been selected for duty with the famous Office of Strategic Services, that carefully chosen and highly trained group of men who, under the leadership of General William J. ("Wild Bill") Donovan, were to make new history in wartime sabotage and intelligence.

For two months the group, representing the finest and bravest available in the Army, were intensively trained and rigorously screened. They were told dispassionately by their instructors that their work would involve less than a fifty-fifty chance of survival. Gradually, through numerous aptitude and psychological tests, their number was reduced. Then on December 13, 1943, with the top fifty, Anstett was shipped to England.

Now it was that he learned momentous news—he was a member of the "Jedburghs," the legendary and highly successful secret international teams whose dangerous and heroic achievements with the European underground was to be hailed by the Supreme Allied Commander thus: "The disruption of enemy rail communications, the harassing of German road moves, and the continual and

HAMISH *and* EXPERIENCE

Some of the most exciting of all OSS operations were the exploits of the so-called Jedburgh teams of Allied officers who parachuted to the aid of the Maquis in France. Herewith the adventures of "Mission Hamish," commanded by Lt. Robert Anstett.

by Lt. Comdr. RICHARD M. KELLY, USNR

increasing strain placed upon the German war economy throughout occupied Europe by these organized forces of resistance played a very considerable part in our complete and final victory."

Born out of a Joint Chiefs of Staff desire to harness the resistance forces of occupied Europe to the main Allied military effort, the Jeds were a joint American, British, French, Belgian, Dutch effort. The final training, which took place at a huge secluded English country manor called Milton Hall, was probably the most extraordinary and unique of that given to any Allied soldiers in World War II. Each Jed team was made up of an American or British officer, an American or British radio-man, and an officer of the country where the team was scheduled to operate. Most Jeds were used in France. American participation was handled by OSS; the British sponsorship was under the comparable secret operations department of His Majesty's Government.

The Jeds' training consisted of weapons—American, British, French and German; instructions in living off the country, scouting, code, cipher, radio sending and receiving. They were taught about German police methods, and heard lectures by a survivor of the Gestapo brutality. It impressed them that there was only one such person available. Guerrilla tactics of surprise, hit and run were drilled into them. All forms of sabotage, and a thorough briefing on intelligence were stressed. In short, they were given every available bit of information that would qualify them to train, lead and direct the underground forces with maximum effectiveness.

The greatest care was given to the formation of the Jed teams. For weeks, various members would "court" each other. Complete confidence in the ability, courage and loyalty of every member was vital to a successful team. Anstett had to find the man in company with whom he would risk his life. A weakness, a lack of compatibility, a betrayal under German torture would mean death. Small wonder that the selection or mating period was called "courting," or that once a team was mutually agreed upon, that its confirmation by the Commanding Officer at Milton Hall was called a "marriage." These daring young officers were choosing partners for their Jedburgh missions with a great deal more care and less emotion than many of them would probably apply to their brides.

During the training period, Anstett had been impressed with Lt. Lucien Blanchère, a slim young French officer, and was delighted when they agreed to parachute into France together. Blanchère was a former schoolteacher and graduate of the University of Strasbourg. He spoke not only French and English but German, and all German dialects. As for their radio-man —Anstett had met a Sergeant Lee Wa-

ters when they were opposing pitchers in an officer-versus-enlisted men baseball game. He was an excellent radio operator, and in all respects a good companion. So was formed Jed team "Hamish."

D Day came, and with it a tremendous disappointment. Why were they not already in France? Then, several days later, Anstett was called from a training problem to the office of the C.O. to hear the momentous and almost unbelievable message: "Your mission is ready!"

He rushed to break the news to Lucien; the young Frenchman's face glowed with happiness—he was going back to fight for his France. Their turn had finally come—all three gathered their vital gear and were rushed to London for the final briefing.

It was here that Anstett learned for the first time what his destination was to be. They were to drop into the Département of Indre near the town of Châteauroux in the middle of occupied France. They would be 190 miles south of Paris, and roughly 350 miles behind the German battle lines in Normandy.

The Paris-Limoges railway ran through their area, and their principal mission was to cut it and keep it cut. In addition, they were to recruit, organize, arm, train and lead French underground forces in harassing attacks against all roads, bridges, transportation and communications. Other directives were to furnish London with all possible intelligence on German troop movements, and prepare their underground forces for an all-out effort when the word came. It was a big job, but they were well prepared and eager to tackle it. Their reception was to be handled by another Jed team that had gone in a week before.

THE final hours in London were busy ones and carefully supervised. From the moment they had received their final briefing on the details of the mission, they were guarded day and night by security officers who never left them—even on the evening of their final farewell dinner in the exclusive London restaurant.

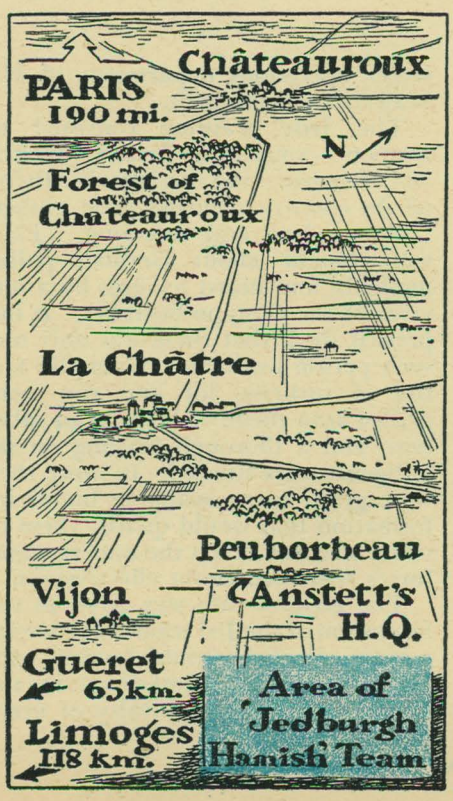
It was just twenty-eight hours after that dinner that Anstett, a bulky armed figure in the darkness, stood before his commander, ready for the start of the mission.

"We had made a final check of our identification papers, the password, our radio, codes and personal gear. They asked us if we wanted to take any 'sleeping pills.' These were quick-acting poison capsules supplied to agents. If captured by the Germans, they assured one of a quick death without torture. All of us refused to take any—we intended to stay alive as long as we could.

"We took off in a B-24 at 10:29 on the night of June 12—just six days after the invasion. I really think the plane-ride was the worst part of our operation. Our route took us over Saint Nazaire, and we touched off a terrific anti-aircraft barrage. All of us were worried about German night fighters, because ours was a solo flight. I remember just sitting there with that stuff bursting all around us. My greatest fear was that we might all be killed before we had a chance to get started. Fortunately we came through the flak okay, and were soon preparing for our jump.

"Lucien had begged for the chance to go first because he was a Frenchman, so I consented. Sgt. Waters was to go next, and I was to be the last. The pilot found the signal fires all right, and after circling for a minute we started our run. We were all pretty nervous when the dispatcher started dropping the packages. We didn't have much time, as both our supplies and the three of us were to go out on the one run.

"Lucien and Waters were there one minute, and had vanished the next. Then I was plunging into the darkness myself. My 'chute had a slight malfunction, and I dropped very fast. The first thing I noticed after the 'chute opened were the fires dead ahead of me at eye-level. I barely had time to get my feet set when I crashed into the ground. I knew then that we had jumped at about three hundred feet. Fortunately I was all right; above all, I had a great feeling of elation at knowing that at last I was in France.



"I had landed in a wheatfield, and after getting out of my harness I headed toward the fires, where I could hear shouting in French. When the voices were about fifty yards from me, I shouted the password in French: *'Does Grandfather like milk?'* Back through the smoky air came the answering shout: *'Yes, only when he's in the woods!'* Then the question, *'Who are you?'* When they heard I was an American, they went wild with joy, and after a dozen embraces I was led to the fires, where I met the local underground leaders and Jed team 'Hugh,' who had arranged for our reception.

"MY first concern was for my men, and I was shocked to find that my radio-man had nearly been killed in the drop. He had got caught in a spin which had almost collapsed his 'chute, and had hit the ground while still spinning. Both his legs and ankles were badly sprained, and he was terribly shaken up. This near-tragedy could have ruined our mission from the start, as we would have been in a bad way without contact with London.

"Once Lee was taken care of, I had a chance for a real talk with the members of Hugh and the local leaders, who were now busy directing the gathering of all our supplies. To my great surprise, the containers were quickly packed into a big truck which the underground had on hand. I was amazed at this degree of organization, and began to think we should be able to do a really big job with such a start. The other Jeds gave me the dope on the Département of Indre, which we were to split between us.

"We all sat down for chow then, and the air was filled with *'Vive la France; vive l'Amerique; vive la victoire!'* The underground leaders were greatly impressed with my credentials, which were signed by both General Eisenhower and General Koenig, head of the French resistance. We had one day's rest, and then made the preparations for the trip to our area of operations. I was pretty worried about Sgt. Waters, because it was very evident that he would not be able to walk for some time—in fact, he still walks with a limp today. Early on our first morning we had seen our first Germans, when one of their planes came hedge-hopping over the dropping area; but since every sign of the drop had been removed, we were not too worried, although we knew now that our arrival had been marked by them.

"The trip to our part of Indre was accomplished in an old car. I was amazed at the casualness with which the Maquis seemed to cruise along over these roads in broad daylight. I was slightly apprehensive all during

the ride—especially after we ran straight through a German convoy at a crossroads, passing within fifty yards of an armed German truck. Our French escorts were so calm about this meeting that I was not aware of it until we suddenly burst into high speed. The Germans evidently were as surprised as I, because they did not follow us.

"We finally arrived at the farmhouse which was serving as headquarters of the leaders of my Maquis. Here I met Robert, the local chief. He was a tall, clean-cut young Frenchman of twenty-four who had been working in the underground for four years. He had about three hundred men, but only fifty of these were armed. Their spirit was wonderful, however, and our arrival seemed to give them a tremendous lift. The first news I heard of their activities was disconcerting. Just the week before, they had celebrated D Day by attacking the local German garrison. This battle had lasted all day, and they had used not only every type of weapon that they had—which would tell the Germans of their potential striking force—but had also used up most of their available ammunition. This was serious, as I discovered we were in no position to counter a German attack. I immediately wired London for a supply drop.

"The first night, I organized a squad of five men and we went out to blow the Paris-Limoges railroad. This proved to be a cinch. There was a road running along by the railroad. We just drove down this road and stopped every few hundred yards and blew the tracks. We made twenty-four cuts that night and the same number the next two nights. The Germans would come out and fix it in the daytime, and we would blow it again at night. After the first three nights I didn't go out any more myself, but organized a special group which had no other assignment. From the time that we entered the region until we left, not a single German train got through on that railroad, and we never lost a man while accomplishing it—though there were plenty of close calls.

"I grinned and said: 'Well, Mac, how do you feel?' 'Good Lord,' he said, 'are you an American?'"

"WITH my primary mission in hand—the interruption of the railroad—I next made a study of the problems confronting us: The German concentrations in my area were altogether too big to be comforting. At Châteauroux, about a half-hour's drive to our north, was an airfield where they were training Stuka pilots. A large German force serviced the field and the anti-aircraft installations around it. They had an additional three thousand mixed troops billeted in the town itself. I knew that our poorly armed three hundred could offer but slim opposition to these forces, particularly with the air strength which the Germans could throw against us.

"The population as a whole was against the Germans, but there were plenty of Gestapo agents and Vichy sympathizers whose presence made the existence of the underground extremely perilous. I immediately had Robert tighten up on his security regulations. Another serious factor was the Nazi propaganda to the effect that we were all bandits and terrorists, which very cleverly aimed at splitting the country people from the Maquis forces. This propaganda was particularly aimed at British and American parachutists. To combat this, and to enlist recruits, I planned a number of trips to the small Maquis camps in the area, to show them that an Allied team had actually come to fight with them and for them. Finally I realized that our greatest need was for supplies and a training program to instruct these expected volunteers in the weapons we hoped they would use against the Germans.

"The first drop came a few days after my arrival, and started us off in grand style with the Maquis. Four planes came over; and when Robert saw the tons of weapons and ammo that were in the containers, he wanted to take on the whole German army. Lucien set up a training program, and as the planes came streaming over—four every forty-eight hours—recruits joined up by the hundreds.

"Our mission was billeted in a small out-of-the-way farming settlement called Peuborbeau. We all slept

in separate houses to cut down the chances of a total loss in case of a betrayal. Several times we had some bad scares when German patrols were reported in the area. Each time we took to the fields, because we never knew whether or not the reports were true. On these occasions my radio operator would have to be carried to a hiding-place, and we spent many hours crouching in the bushes with our weapons ready, but fortunately we never had to use them.

"WHILE Sgt. Waters kept himself busy handling radio traffic and trying to get himself into shape, Lucien developed our training program, teaching the French how to use the weapons we were receiving from London, and I devoted most of my time to building our organization, arranging for the reception of our supply drops and planning additional sabotage operations.

"The railroad-cutting was proceeding very well, so I next turned my attention to blowing bridges and interrupting road traffic. Our first targets were a couple of small culverts which we blew without interference. The ease with which these first small operations were accomplished made a great impression on the French, and I soon had a large group learning how to handle explosives and undertake operations on their own.

"The reaction of the Germans to our railroad and road activities was prompt and emphatic. Seven hundred specially trained anti-Maquis Austrian troops moved into La Chatre, which was less than five miles from our headquarters. These troops started the usual terrorizing of the population, and we had to be continually on the alert, for their heavily armed patrols were constantly sweeping the countryside on the hunt for us.

"This new threat made our position extremely precarious, for our forces were in no way able to stand up to a determined German attack. And I was therefore chiefly concerned about building our own intelligence set-up which could warn us of the German movements in time for us to keep ahead of them.

"While I was pondering over this difficulty one day, Robert brought me two men who I immediately discovered held the principal answer to the problem. They were telephone workers, and came to our camp to offer their services. After their security had been thoroughly checked, we explained that we had to stop the German communication system for the Département, and needed some sort of quick system ourselves.

"One of the two looked at the other. 'That's simple,' he said. 'You cut; I repair!'

"Their system was really as simple as that, and it was also completely effective. Their telephone company was of course controlled by the Germans, and used by them for all their local communications. One of them took the job of traveling around in his official car and cutting the lines. He would report the breaks (which he had 'discovered') to his partner, who would then take his time about repairing them. Their perfect knowledge of the telephone installations made it possible for them always to keep the line cut in strategic places without arousing German suspicion. From the time they started their unique campaign under the very noses of their German supervisors, the enemy's telephones were kept continuously out of operation.

"On the positive side they were just as helpful. Not content with depriving the Germans of communication, they stole wires and telephones and set up a complete system for us. This enabled us to keep a pretty accurate check on German moves from our various hidden outposts, so that we were always able to withdraw and disperse when an enemy force came after us.

"In addition to using the regular French telephone system, the Germans had also set up a separate military telephone line which served all their units in France. My French telephone allies reported to me that there was a small guarded cement building in Châteauroux which was the nerve-center for this military system. They also produced five telephone workers' caps, so I immediately planned a sabotage operation to destroy this vital objective. To lead this mission I selected Pacqueton, the commander of our Second Battalion, veteran of four years in the underground, a nineteen-year-old whose courage, ability and leadership were outstanding among the Maquis in our area. He selected four of his best men, and together we made an elaborate plan, prepared the charges and rehearsed the operation.

"Because of the danger in moving about the roads at night with the increased German guards and patrols, it was decided to make the attempt in broad daylight. High noon was chosen as the best time, in the hope that complete surprise could be effected. The disguised men coolly drove into the city and approached the sub station as if on official business. The explosives were carried in their 'repair kits.' Fortunately, there was only one guard outside at the time, and while one of the group diverted his attention, the rest rushed into the building and began to place their charges of plastic explosive.

"They had originally planned to set them strategically so as to blast the equipment. But suddenly the man outside signaled an alarm—he had spotted more Germans approaching. Hastily the men piled their charges together, set the fuses and took off in their car. As they were pulling away from the surprised German, the blast went off and leveled the building, completely wrecking the installation.

"While these activities were going, we kept receiving additional drops, the organization of which kept me going nearly twenty-four hours a day. The dropping grounds at which Robert had previously received an occasional container or two had been in use for several years. They were inadequate for our mass drops, and I was also concerned about their security, so I set up five new pinpoints. The Maquis manning these fields became so expert, and our distribution system so effective, that arms which hit the ground at two o'clock in the morning were cleaned, inspected, loaded and in the hands of a proud Maquisard by ten the same morning.

"On the Fourth of July we learned that a large German truck loaded with butter had broken down in La Châtre. This was a tempting proposition, and immediately we set about taking advantage of it. A relief truck had already been dispatched by the Germans to pick up the butter, and a squad of our men was sent to ambush it. The ambush was a complete success, the truck captured and the driver killed. Then Pacqueton took a squad and immediately infiltrated into the town itself—the stronghold of the seven hundred German troops who had been sent to exterminate us.

"They loitered around, calmly observing the repair of the truck by a work crew. The job finished, the crew gathered up their tools and walked off to headquarters to report the truck repaired. The drivers approached, and in a flash Pacqueton and his men jumped the truck and stabbed the drivers, throwing their bodies into the rear. The men scrambled for cover in the back; Pacqueton and another chap took their places in the front, and casually started the vehicle. They rolled calmly out of the town through the German-patrolled streets, receiving only a cursory glance or two from the troops who assumed that this was the repaired truck on its way again.

"IT was the type of exploit that appealed to the French, who loved to show up the hated Germans, and every face was beaming as the truck finally rolled into our headquarters with its fifteen tons of butter. This was my special present for Fourth of July, they informed me; and believe me, I had never seen so much butter in my life. Since I've been back in the States, I have often thought of all that butter! We gave it away to the people from whom the Germans had

taken it. Naturally this *coup* made the Germans mad as hell. They broadcast that underground bandits had stolen the butter which they had been 'sending to the relief of the starving people of Paris.' This gave the French a laugh, because we knew mighty well it was scheduled to go to the German Army.

"Several days after this exploit one of our agents reported that an old man who knew a great deal about our organization had been seen going into the house of the Gestapo official in the near-by town of Gueret. This treachery caused us to move our headquarters immediately from Peuborbeau to Vijon, where we set up again. Two days later some of our men caught the traitor; he confessed and was quickly shot.

"TO celebrate Bastille Day, I called for an extra-heavy supply drop, and my headquarters came through gloriously with seven plane-loads. The Maquis were hilarious, and I had more difficulty than ever keeping them in line. After four years of suffering the arrogance of the Germans without means of striking back, they were overwhelmingly anxious to get even. I knew very well, however, that they were still no match for the specially trained German troops, and my orders were to build up my forces for the time when we could catch the Germans on the run. At the moment I realized that the odds were still all against us, as was soon emphasized.

"On Sunday the sixteenth of July we sent a couple of trucks back to Peuborbeau to pick up some extra supplies which we had been forced to leave behind when we retreated to Vijon. On their way back, about two miles from our new headquarters, our trucks ran headlong into a German light-armored car, which immediately opened up on them. Our men replied with machine-guns, and after a fifteen-minute exchange both sides withdrew, leaving one of our loaded trucks damaged and the other completely destroyed.

"This engagement could not have caught us at a worse time. It was Sunday afternoon, and the men were celebrating the success of our big drop. Many of their wives and sweethearts from the near-by towns were visiting them in the woods, and in spite of my intense concern for our situation, I couldn't help being amused at the sight of a large number of frightened screaming French girls rushing out of the woods, followed by their menfolk hastily strapping on their ammunition belts and carrying their weapons. War and Germans were never able to curb the French seriously at their lovemaking.

"We badly needed the supplies on that second truck that had not been

"One took the job of traveling around and cutting the lines. . . . The enemy's telephones were kept continuously out of operation."

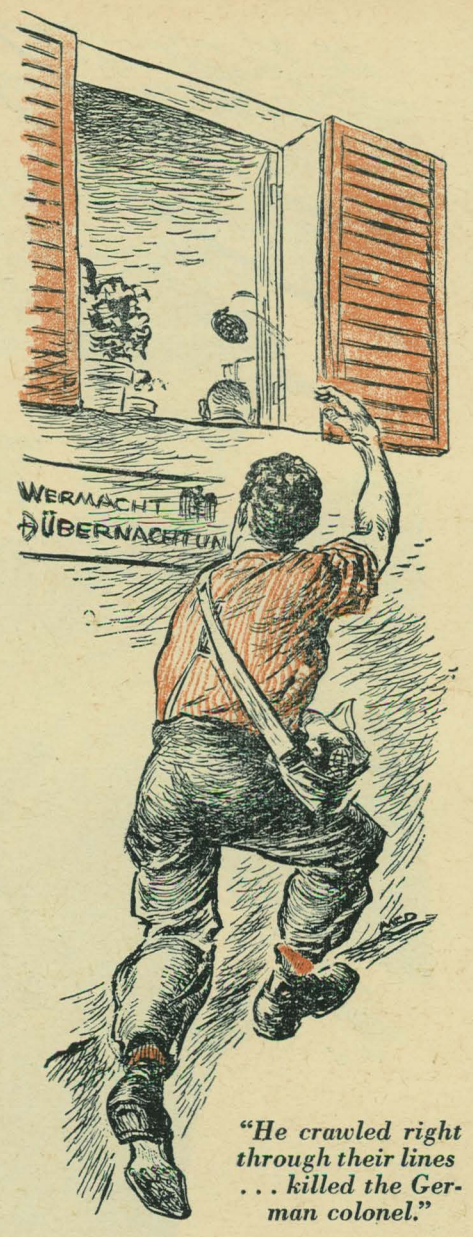
destroyed, so I hastily ordered out a vehicle with Challou, our master mechanic, to bring the damaged truck back. Menwhile, our leaders got their men together, and I dispatched two sections of sixty men to reinforce the perimeter defenses around our camp. Challou drove up to the damaged truck and was bending over the engine when a German column consisting of nine armored cars, three truckloads of soldiers, a 37-mm. cannon and several 20-mm. pieces came barreling down the road and opened up on him. He and several of those with him were immediately killed, but fortunately our supporting sections, which had been ordered to hold at all costs, were able to stem the German rush.

"I REALIZED the situation was critical: the Germans not only had superior firepower and better-trained troops, but also outnumbered us. The only thing in our favor was that it was now about two in the afternoon, and I believed that if we could hold them off until nightfall, we might be able to withdraw under cover of darkness.

"We immediately set up defenses on all roads in our area and rushed every available man up to hold our lines. By two-thirty we had five hundred men in position with about the same number of Germans opposing them. Our men dug in and held their ground very well, and we were finally able to check the German advance about a mile from our camp.

"While this fighting,—our first real pitched battle with German troops,—was going on, a little Spanish Maquisard heard that the Germans had set up a command post in a house of a small village about three hundred yards behind their lines. Taking three grenades, he crawled slowly right through their lines and worked his way to the house from which the German offensive was being directed. Carefully biding his time between couriers, he eluded the sentries, tossed his three grenades through the windows of the house and raced off. This courageous act, one of the bravest things I ever heard of, killed the German colonel in charge of the column, and his executive officer. It also seriously disrupted the German drive, and we managed to hold them off until darkness, when they withdrew in the direction of Châteauroux.

"While the battle was going on, we had been preparing furiously to move out ourselves, and all that night we retreated to a new position in the thickly wooded country about eight kilometers north of Vijon. Our losses in the battle were fifteen killed and three wounded. We didn't get the details on the German casualties, which must have been as much or more; but it was announced in the newspaper



"He crawled right through their lines . . . killed the German colonel."

and over the radio at Châteauroux that we were to be exterminated for killing the commander of the force. A price of one million francs was put on every member of Jed team Hamish—dead or alive.

"For the next few days all of us lived in a state of suspension—one hour we would feel comparatively safe; the next, as though the trap were ready to spring. As I had expected, the Nazis came back in force to Vijon the very day after we had left, but we had apparently melted away, and they could find no trace of us.

"They kept searching the area intensively with light observation planes and small patrols. They were out after us—and this time, we all knew, they meant to get us. There was scarcely an hour of the day when an alarm wasn't sounded and we would have to take cover. I canceled all supply drops and suspended all activities. If they ever spotted us, there would be an all-out attack; and at this stage of the game it was only common sense to face the fact that this would mean capture, with torture and death, for most of us.

"For five days we sweated it out, and then my intelligence brought me the most discouraging news I had had to date. Two full German divisions, recently transferred from the Eastern front, had just completed a mop-up of the Maquis in the Département of Creuse immediately to my south. Now, London had warned me that in the event of an all-out German attack, I was to retreat south to the Creuse, where there was a large Allied military mission and a strong Maquis. The Creuse was mountainous country which lent itself to Maquis operations much more than Indre, which was quite open and very flat.

"I was pretty sure that these two divisions would come after us next. If we did retreat southward to the mountains, we stood no chance of getting any help. Furthermore, the Germans were probably anticipating a retreat to the south. I resolved to fool them—I would head north, meanwhile dispersing our men into the smallest possible units and trying to avoid any contact, however minor, with German forces, since the one thought that London had drummed into us was: 'Conserve your strength!'

"Accordingly we moved north to the vicinity of Beddes, where we spread our Maquis over an area of about thirty square miles. We had received some wonderful walkie-talkie radios in our last drop; and these plus the help of our telephone men, enabled us to keep constant contact with all our units. Our intelligence coverage was really remarkable for such a wide area.

"At Beddes we established liaison with another Maquis of twelve hundred men from the Département of Cher to the north. They had no link with London, so we radioed for another Jedburgh team to take over their direction.

"AT this point we were all tense; the men were extremely jumpy, and I found myself hard put to it to keep from getting the same way. Then an incident happened that gave us all a little chuckle.

"I had with me a group of Communist Maquis whom I knew very little about. To try them out, I dispatched a squad on an operation to destroy a German grenade factory. I was sitting outside our chateau several days later when I saw the group returning. The leaders came up to report—they had been unsuccessful in their attack on the factory, but had managed to kill thirty-three Germans without loss to themselves.

"I was congratulating them on what I considered a pretty good show, when

I noticed a little cluster of my men talking excitedly over at the left. In their midst stood a little fellow in the battered remnants of an U. S. Army Air Corps uniform. He was gesturing wildly, and from what I could hear of the conversation was attempting to say something in atrocious French. My curiosity was aroused; more than that, my suspicions. Behind the lines, any newcomer was suspect; but now in our extremely dangerous situation, this fellow might well mean our betrayal and death.

"I walked over to the group. The little fellow looked up at me hopefully. Since I was dressed in civilian clothes because we were on the run, he had no clue to my nationality, and desperately he started to jabber his would-be French. I could understand just enough to know that he was trying to say that he was an American pilot; I could see from his appearance that he had been badly shaken up. Evidently he had bailed out over our territory, and had been rescued by my group.

"I casually laid my hand on his shoulder, grinned and said: 'Well, Mac, how do you feel?'

"Never have I seen such an expression of amazement. His voice was weak with relief. 'Good Lord,' he said, 'are you an American?'

"HAD it not been for the shape he was in, he would have presented a ludicrous picture; but as it was I could feel nothing but sympathy for him. I had one of our doctors fix him up, and then I asked him what he would like for dinner.

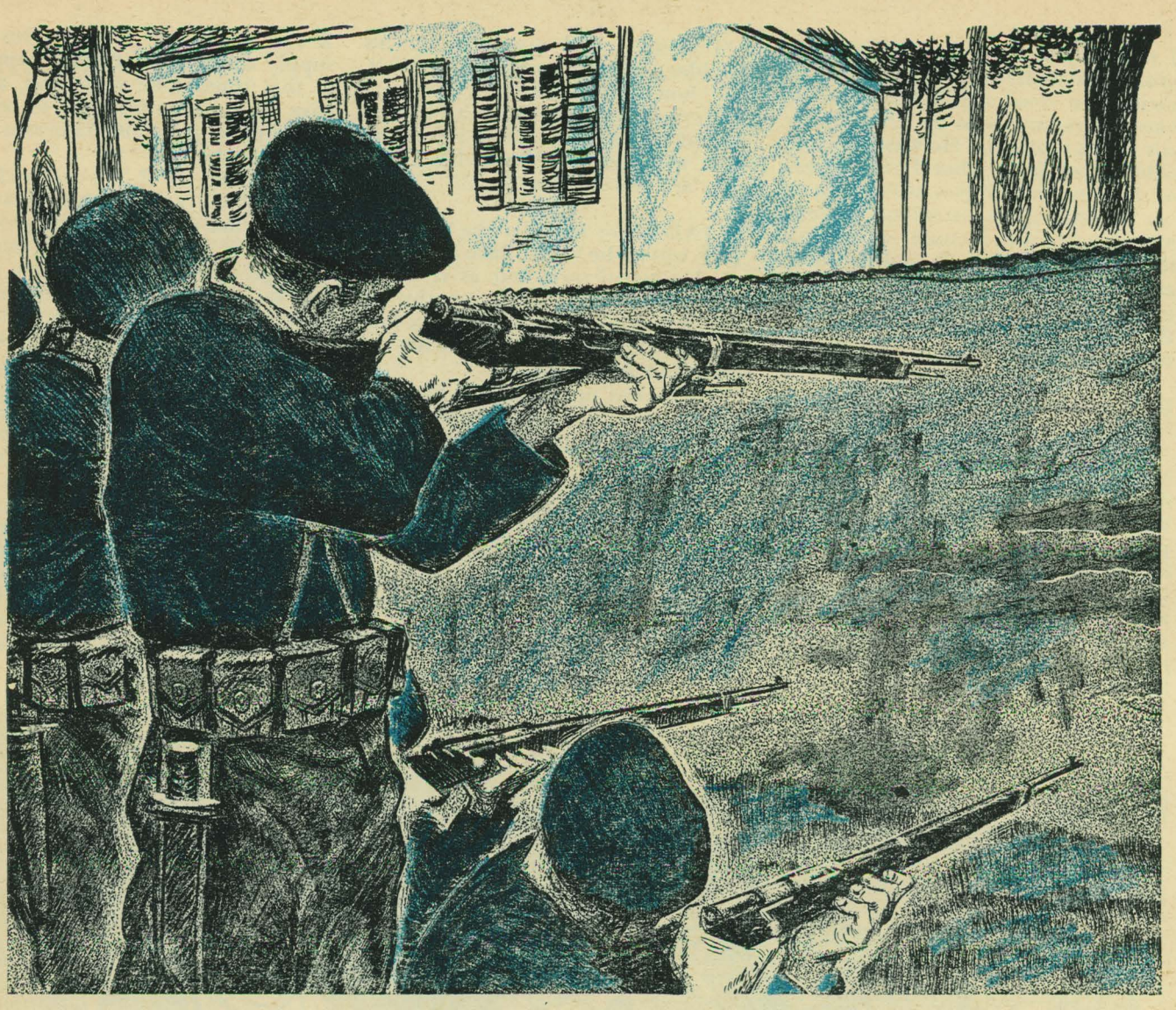
"He looked up at me and laughed. 'A nice thick steak with French fried potatoes, red wine—and champagne for dessert!'

"I said 'Okay!' and three-quarters of an hour later the pilot, whose name was Albert Debecker, sat down to just that meal. He couldn't believe it, ate every bit ravenously, and between mouthfuls told me that he had been operating his P-51 in support of Patton from an advanced airfield in France where the only chow had been K and ten-in-one rations. Our food supply situation at Beddes happened at that time to be very good, and it gave me great satisfaction to be able to surprise a fellow-American with such a feast.

"He asked me if he could radio his friends back at the base about the chow he had discovered, and promised me that if I would let him send the message, the whole squadron would bail out in short order! Several days later we picked up a B-24 pilot, and sent him and the grateful Debecker north to the American lines with some guides.

"On the fifth of August a courier brought us news that a detachment of French Mélice, the Vichy militia whom the Maquis hated even more than the Germans, were proceeding from Mont Lucan to Châteauroux to pick up some gasoline. I was very anxious to get that gas for our own trucks. I dispatched ambush parties to points along every possible road that the Mélice party could take and then sat back and waited.

"In broad daylight Jacques boldly sought out the leading French collaborator and shot him down."



Illustrated by John McDermott

"Sure enough, they came down on one of our ambushes, but unfortunately our information underestimated their strength, because now our section of thirty found themselves attacking eighty Mélice. These Vichyites were very tough customers when fighting the Maquis, because they knew that capture meant death, which was what they themselves meted out to any Maquis they caught. They were prepared to fight to the death—and fight they did.

"Our men found it impossible to capture the gas trucks, so they blasted them with bazookas and then withdrew after killing nineteen Mélice, including the wife of the leader, who was riding in the cab of the first truck. This failure was rotten luck for us, particularly since the survivors had got away, and I knew that the Mélice, being French, would be harder to avoid than the Germans. My fears in this respect were to be justified sooner than I realized then.

"The next night, August 6, we received the new Jed team that was to take over the Maquis in the Département of Cher. This turned out to be a grim task. One of the team members, an American sergeant radio-man, a good friend of both Waters and myself, was killed in the drop. A piece of a container broke as it left the plane and then hit his 'chute, causing it to deflate. He dropped to his death. The other two men on the team had misfortunes on the drop too. The French officer landed all right, but on landing whipped out his forty-five and in his excitement accidentally shot himself in the foot. The English officer, in charge of the team, had badly sprained his legs when he hit the ground.

"The next day we held funeral services for our friend in a small village church. While the services were going on, a courier rushed in to report that five German trucks were headed for one of our near-by camps. We cut the ceremonies short and rushed out to set up an ambush which was very successful—twenty-two German dead, with no casualties for us.

"Several nights later a suspicious character, a twenty-one-year-old Frenchman, was picked up outside my headquarters. He was interrogated and finally admitted that he was a Mélice agent and had been sent to capture or assassinate 'the American officer.' He implicated nine others in his confession, and they were all quickly picked up, tried before the Maquis military court and sentenced to be shot for treason.

"The executions caused considerable interest around the countryside, and quite a few people came to witness them. The young Frenchman asked to see me, and I had a talk of several hours with him before he went to his death. He asked me a good deal about the United States, our system of government and the kind of people we were, and then he admitted to me that he was sorry and realized now that he had made a mistake. He was particularly sorry that he was going to be shot on the charge of treason, and asked me if he might command his own firing-squad,

to show the crowd that he was a real Frenchman and could die bravely.

"I asked the Maquis leaders what they thought of this and recommended that he be granted his request. They agreed, and I went outside to witness one of the most extraordinary spectacles I will ever see.

"IT was midsummer, and the prisoner was stripped to the waist. He was led over to a building off the village square and given the traditional glass of wine and last cigarette which the custom of French justice decrees for doomed men.

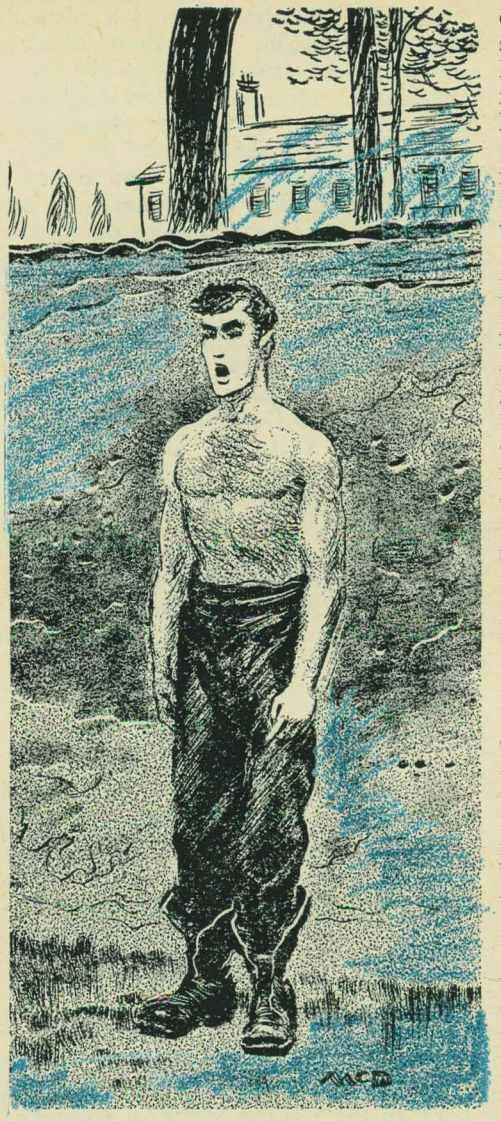
"Calmly he drank his wine and smoked his last cigarette. Then he called the firing-squad to attention. 'Aim at the heart!' he said, pointing to the left side of his chest. Then he made a little speech in which he admitted his crime and asked the forgiveness of his people.

"He took up his position against the wall, looked straight at his twelve executioners and then, without a tremor in his voice, slowly gave the commands: 'Ready! Aim! Fire!' The bullets ripped into his body, and he fell dead, a brave but misguided man who had been a victim of Nazi propaganda. The crowd was hushed, their last token of respect. . . .

"That same day the other nine Mélice spies were shot in another camp.

"General Patton was rocketing across France at this time, and I began receiving reports that the Germans were getting jittery. My radio was also coming through with warnings that something big was to be expected soon and we should be ready for an all-out effort on German communications. The night before, August 14th, we received word of the Allied invasion of southern France, which was to take place the next morning. Immediately we intensified our railroad-cutting activities and set up roadblocks all over our area.

"Our forces were now built up to approximately two thousand well-armed men, and I felt that we would be ready for the big push when the orders came or the local situation should develop. Our main target was the Châteauroux airfield, and I made elaborate plans for its capture. We were greatly helped in these preparations by two German deserters from the airfield who gave us details of the installations and defenses. Another character who was very helpful in this regard was a fabulous Maquisard named Jacques. He had been a member of the local underworld, and with the organization of our group had readily shifted over to the underground. Jacques outfitted himself with false papers attesting to the fact that he was a member of the French Mélice. He had a high-speed motorcar with two Bren guns—kept constantly loaded—protruding from the roof for fore-and-aft firing.



"Without a tremor in his voice he gave the commands: 'Ready! Aim! Fire!'"

"In this car and with three buddies, Jacques put his experience at eluding the authorities to good use. He performed some truly incredible exploits. He was first brought to my attention when, several days after our big battle at Vijon, he raced into Châteauroux, forced his way into the hospital and spirited away one of our Maquis boys who had been wounded and captured by the Germans.

"Jacques had a fierce hatred of collaborators. It was he who was driven into the town in broad daylight and in best American underworld fashion boldly sought out the leading French collaborator and shot him down in the street. His real *tour de force,* however, was the assassination of the Gestapo chief at Châteauroux. He had heard that this German was dining at a certain restaurant. He walked into the café, inquired of a waiter where the German was, walked over to the man's table and calmly shot him four times as he sat there. Later that day he learned that the man had not died but was in the town hospital. Obtaining entry to the patient's room with his false papers, he marched up to the bed and stabbed the man dead with his knife, then walked out of the hospital.

"Jacques and his cronies kept us pretty well posted on German moves in Châteauroux. I was just about ready for our projected attack on the airfield when I received word on August 20th that the German garrison was starting to move out. This was our signal for all-out warfare—the climax of our whole mission. I gave orders for an all-out attack. We were thoroughly ready and for the next seven days we really went to town.

"The whole operation was directed from my command post in a farmhouse about fifteen miles south of Châteauroux. Our telephone radio and courier system blanketed the entire area, and we had ambush parties deployed along every possible road or held in reserve to strike at our direction. Our tactics were simple but effective. Each section, consisting of from thirty to fifty men armed with bazookas and machine-guns, automatic weapons and grenades, would prepare an ambush, the length of which would be determined by the amount of ammunition allotted to each man for each particular operation.

"The first German column of two thousand men started moving out at two o'clock in the morning of August 21st. Unfortunately they headed north, away from our main strength, but we hit them with every available man and it took them twenty-four hours to move less than fifty miles. This column was motorized and very well armed, but our pressing tactics cost them about half their transport and over three hundred killed before they managed to leave the Département.

"THE following afternoon we had word that a second column was heading south in the direction of La Châtre. This would take them within a few miles of our main camp. First reports put this column at one hundred and fifty cyclists but they turned out to be one thousand strong. Our first ambush position was betrayed to the Germans by a man whom we later apprehended and shot. The Germans streamed steadily down the road toward our hidden men and then stopped about two hundred and fifty yards away to bring heavy fire down on our ambush. We lost nineteen men because of that betrayal, but the survivors managed to escape and join the others at the next lower ambush, where they got their revenge.

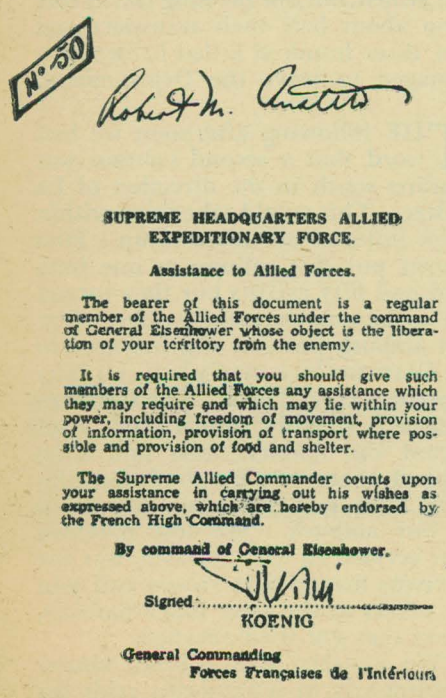
"We attacked that column almost continuously in hit-and-run raids for

three days, the time it took them to go fifty-eight miles. We chased them completely off all main roads, killed over three hundred of them, wounded many more and so demoralized them that few ever got back to Germany.

"For that six-day period which was climaxed by the liberation of Châteauroux on August 27th, we killed over seven hundred Germans and destroyed more than a hundred vehicles. Considering that they outnumbered us two to one and had superior firepower, I felt that those Maquis did an outstanding job. Our losses were only thirty killed and a few wounded.

"When we entered Châteauroux the population went wild with joy at their liberation. Wine and champagne flowed freely and we were hailed as conquering heroes. I was in the middle of a victory drink with some of my leaders when the chief of neighboring Maquis asked me to go to London to see if we could get the help of two armored divisions from General Eisenhower to trap the estimated two hundred thousand Germans who were still in western France and were expected through our area on their way back to Germany. We had a plane due that same night to pick up another Air Corps pilot who had crashed in our area, and I agreed to return to Allied headquarters and make the request.

"Within a few hours after I had been directing an all-out fight to the death with a large part of a German division, I was back in England in the comparatively quiet refuge of OSS headquarters. . . . It was a very strange feeling. I understand our request was immediately sent up to SHAEF, but as all available troops were already committed, it was rejected.



NAME OF BEARER.

N° 50

Robert M. Anstett

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

Assistance to Allied Forces.

The bearer of this document is a regular member of the Allied Forces under the command of General Eisenhower whose object is the liberation of your territory from the enemy.

It is required that you should give such members of the Allied Forces any assistance which they may require and which may lie within your power, including freedom of movement, provision of information, provision of transport where possible and provision of food and shelter.

The Supreme Allied Commander counts upon your assistance in carrying out his wishes as expressed above, which are hereby endorsed by the French High Command.

By command of General Eisenhower.

Signed: KOENIG

General Commanding
Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur

"I was anxious to get back to my men, and I finally wangled a plane-ride to Limoges and then drove through the German lines to our Département. Here I found an interesting situation: Nineteen thousand German troops, harassed by the Maquis, including my group, had agreed to give up if they could march to a spot where a large American force would take their surrender.

"The German commander was afraid that if his men gave up to the Maquis or FFI, as they were also called, they would be slaughtered. Knowing how many of my own men felt about the Germans, I could appreciate his attitude. The surrender was finally agreed to, and though we didn't bag the whole two hundred thousand, we at least helped several other Jed teams and some American officers to catch nineteen thousand in addition to those we killed on our own.

"This surrender cleaned up Indre, which was never actually liberated by an Allied force other than the part played by Jedburgh Missions, and the Maquis. Our final action ended on a note of tragedy when Albert, the leader of our railroad sabotage group which had kept the Paris-Limoges railroad cut every night since our arrival, was killed—ironically enough, when he went forward to tell his troops to break off the battle with elements of the already surrendered German force."

Several days later Jed team Hamish returned to London by way of Paris, and from London, Anstett was shipped back to the United States in November, 1944. Several months of training and preparation, and he was in the air bound for China and another parachute operation that he recalls with a shake of his head. Sitting reminiscing in the law office of Kenyon and Kenyon in New York City, he says: "China was pretty bad—give me *la belle France* any time!"

As to what happened to his colleagues in the French underground, Anstett has but sketchy information. Robert is now editing a newspaper in Châteauroux, but Jacques, the underground assassin—"The last time I saw him was shortly after the liberation. He was in jail for robbing a jewelry-store, so I knew he had reconverted and was back in business at the old stand."

WHAT the Supreme Command thought of the work one Lieutenant Robert Anstett accomplished during those summer months of 1944 is well stated in his citation for the Silver Star which we reprint, along with his portrait, on the inside front cover of this issue.

As we went to press, Lieutenant Anstett was informed by the War Department that he had also been given a "mention in despatches" by the British Government. And the French Government has gratefully awarded him the Croix de Guerre with Palm. Sgt. Lee Waters of Sandusky, Ohio, also received the Silver Star for his heroism on Mission Hamish.

Quiz Answers

To "Contraptions of Yesteryear," —page 31

1. SELF-HEATING BATHTUB: In the days before central heating, this bathtub—heated through the round oven under the seat—was a much-valued device.

2. BUSTLE: The well-known silhouette of the ladies of the Eighties was not based on purely natural lines, but accentuated with the help of this contraption, which was advertised much as our beauty aids are today.

3. STREET LOCOMOTIVE: The American inventor Matheson constructed a tramway-steam-locomotive, the head of which was thus disguised in order not to frighten the horses.

4. RESPIRATOR VEIL: A medical suggestion for protecting the respiratory organs against cold winds, made by the director of a London hospital. The lining was stiffened with thin wire.

5. RAILWAY TRAVELER'S OVERCOAT: During the days of early railway traveling, this garment, worn over the ordinary overcoat, served well against any unexpected rigors.

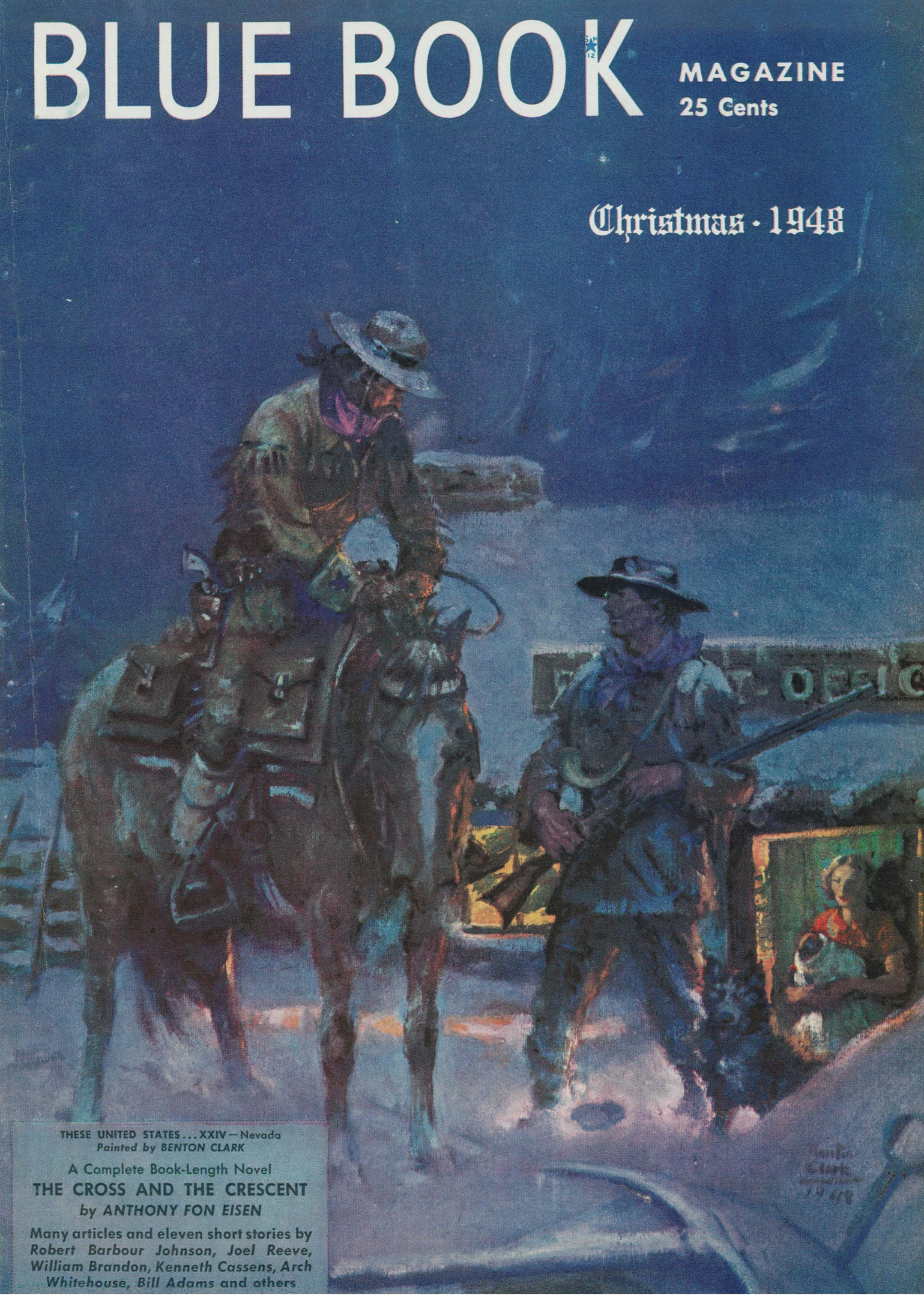
"Is There Fame in a Name?" —page 66

(1) Ring Lardner
(2) Gouverneur Morris
(3) Rockwell Kent
(4) Zane Grey
(5) Boise Penrose
(6) Hoot Gibson
(7) Cass Gilbert
(8) Jo Davidson
(9) Champ Clark
(10) Kit Carson
(11) Cotton Mather
(12) Harlan Stone
(13) Lafcadio Hearn
(14) Burgess Meredith
(15) O. Henry
(16) Booker T. Washington
(17) Cesar Romero
(18) Hannibal Hamlin
(19) Omar Bradley
(20) Marc Mitscher
(21) Jay Gould
(22) Salmon Chase
(23) Ethan Allen
(24) Whitelaw Reid
(25) Deems Taylor

BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

25 Cents

Christmas · 1948



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by ANTHONY FON EISEN

Many articles and eleven short stories by *Robert Barbour Johnson, Joel Reeve, William Brandon, Kenneth Cassens, Arch Whitehouse, Bill Adams* and others

Readers' Comment

As the Shadows Close In

I AM a British reader, due to die very soon of a mighty painful kidney trouble, and it is not easy to get enthusiastic over anything now. But I feel it would be ungrateful of me to cross that borderland from the living into the dead, if I did not say how much forgetfulness of pain and anxiety copies of BLUE BOOK Magazine have kindly given to me. Forwarded to me on occasion by an understanding American lady, BLUE BOOK has come to mean to myself a never-failing source of interest, of amusement and education. Veteran of 1916-18 and spending much time with the gallant Doughboys—fine fighters and great comrades—I have read "Close Combat" with deep interest, and feel that the G.I.'s are worthy sons of grand fathers. Today, as the shadows close in and the last "fall in" draws near, I find a BLUE BOOK Magazine, a cup of tea and, when lucky, a cigarette means luxury itself.

So thanks a million,

Walter Andrews.

Statement of the Ownership, Management, Circulation, Etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, as Amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946

of BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE, published monthly at Dayton, Ohio, for October 1, 1948.

State of New York, County of New York, ss.

Before me, a Notary in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared John D. Hartman, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Treasurer of McCall Corporation, Publisher of Blue Book Magazine, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (section 527, Postal Laws and Regulations), printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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2. That the owner is: McCall Corporation, Wilmington, Delaware. Names and addresses of stockholders holding one per cent or more of the capital stock of McCall Corporation are: Atwell & Company, c/o United States Trust Company, 45 Wall Street, New York, N. Y.; Oliver B. Capen, c/o Chase National Bank, Personal Trust Division, 11 Broad Street, New York 15, N. Y.; Hamilton Gibson, c/o First National Bank, Trust Department, Orlando, Florida; Kelly & Company, c/o Guaranty Trust Company of New York, 140 Broadway, New York 15, N. Y.; Mansell & Company, 45 & 47 Wall Street, New York, N. Y.; Salkeld & Company, c/o Bankers Trust Company, Church Street Annex, P. O. Box 704, New York, N. Y.; Robert Cade Wilson, c/o Irving Trust Company, Custodies Department, One Wall Street, New York 15, N. Y.

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4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity ther than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

John D. Hartman, Treasurer.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 9th day of September, 1948. Frank J. O'Leary, Notary Public. State of New York, Residing in Queens County. Queens Co. Clk's. No. 3034. Reg. No. 102-0-0 N. Y. County Clk's. No. 192, Reg. No. 211-C00. (My commission expires March 30, 1950.)

BLUE BOOK

December, 1948 **MAGAZINE** **Vol. 88, No. 2**

A Complete Book-Length Novel

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Stories of Fact and Experience

Special Features

Except for articles and stories of Real Experience, all stories and novels printed herein are fiction and are intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or to actual events. If the name of any living person is used it is a coincidence

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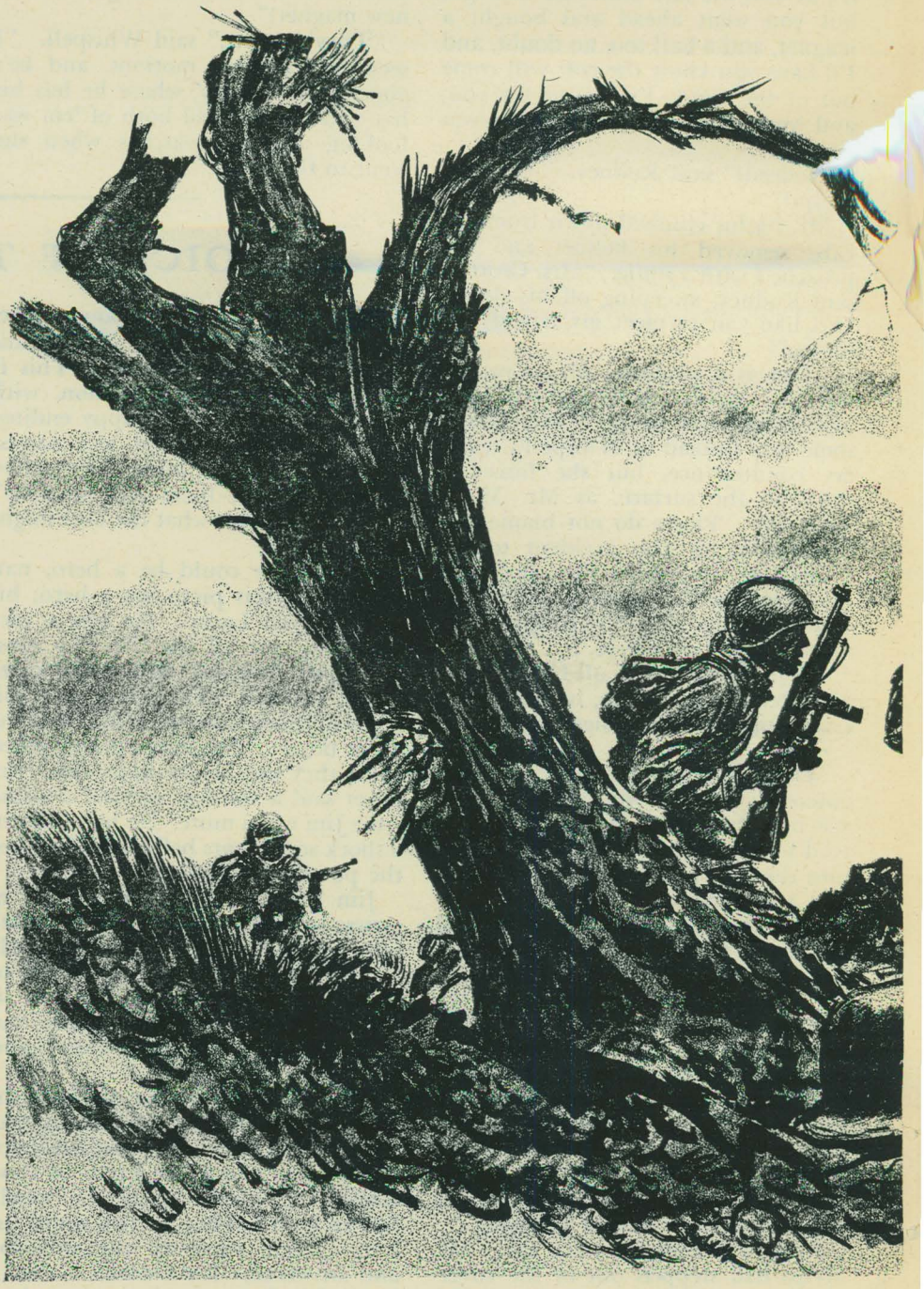
Secret Agents



"Heavily armed and with charcoal-blacked faces, we moved out just

SHORTLY after midnight on the fateful morning of January 22, 1944, a United States Navy PT boat heading north through the calm waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea cut its motors, swung sharply toward the blacked-out shore, and on silent engines crept cautiously into Anzio harbor.

Aboard as passengers were Major (then Captain) Steve Rossetti, U. S. Army, Captain Chrusz, three American sergeants and three Italian OSS agents. Although Rossetti and the Germans didn't know it, a few miles seaward of them was a mighty convoy of over two hundred fifty ships carrying the Sixth Corps of General Mark Clark's Fifth Army. Ahead of them on the darkened beach lay 129 days of the fiercest and bloodiest combat, in which Rossetti's OSS detachment was to play a prominent part; and Rossetti himself was to win a generous share of the highest American and British decorations.

A native of Charlestown, Massachusetts, where he lived in the shadow of the Bunker Hill monument, there was little in Rossetti's typical American background to suggest his outstanding OSS career. After graduation from Boston English High School and the Bentley School of Accounting, he had worked for a few years as a salesman for an artist-supply house. In 1941, at the age of twenty-two, he entered the Army as a private. Rising quickly to Staff Sergeant, he next attended OCS and wound up as an infantry company commander in the 80th Infantry Division. At this point he volunteered for "especially hazardous duty with the OSS." Later he was to be all too frequently reminded that in his particular case this qualification was certainly fulfilled!

After a six-weeks OSS introductory course at a secret school near Washington, he was shipped to Algiers, where he underwent further rigorous training in clandestine intelligence work. His first mission, and incidentally the first American ground infiltration of intelligence agents in Italy, came with General Eisenhower's Salerno landing in August of 1943. Up to the fall of Rome some ten months later, Rossetti was personally to make eighty-five such dangerous agent infiltrations through the German lines. Most of these were far more perilous than his first effort, but the initial mission was an exciting introduction to the work ahead.

"We landed with three agents just behind the first wave of the Fifth Army assault force," he recalls. "The beaches in our sector were quiet, and the troops were digging in. We immediately pushed inland ahead of the American patrols and headed toward Naples, the objective of our agents. It was my first time in Italy, as well as the first time behind enemy lines for all of us, and we were naturally a little jumpy. A few miles from the shore we ran

at Anzio

HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME IS TOLD THE NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN STORY OF THE SECRET INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS UNDER MAJOR ROSSETTI AND CAPTAIN CHRUSZ WHICH AIDED THE 129-DAY DEFENSE OF THIS HISTORIC BEACHHEAD.

by RICHARD M. KELLY
Lieutenant Commander, U. S. N. R.

before dawn behind a heavy barrage of artillery and smoke shells."

into several groups of Fascists, who fired at us. We returned their fire—our first shots of the war against the enemy—and they quickly dispersed.

"Our immediate objective was Avellino, which by a strange coincidence was the birthplace of my father. Here we spotted our first German troops, and because we were dressed in American uniforms, our agents thought they had better strike off for Naples on their own. Accordingly we dispatched them about eighteen miles from Naples, and started back through the fields for the American lines. Our trip to Avellino had taken us only a day and a half; but on the way back, we ran into some serious trouble that was to keep us traveling four days and nights.

"By now the German ring around the Allied beachhead was drawn tight. Traveling only at night, and hiding out in the fields during the day, we successfully penetrated the German rear areas. Here we were spotted by ten Germans, who opened fire on us. We took off through some woods and managed eventually to shake them. The next morning, after crawling for several hours, we finally penetrated the jittery American outposts.

"At first they were very suspicious of us, having never heard of OSS, but finally we were identified at the Corps level. This was the first American ground infiltration of agents in the Italian campaign. Our men made their way successfully into Naples, where they set up radios and for several weeks sent through much valuable information to the advancing Allied forces."

AFTER the fall of Naples, Rossetti moved north with the OSS Fifth Army detachment, which located itself at General Clark's headquarters in Venafro, just behind the stalemate at the Cassino front. Here for several months he completed a number of dangerous infiltration missions. Then came an order, which to many officers in his perilous duty, would have been a welcome respite. "Return to rear headquarters to take over a transportation job." Rossetti's reaction was typical of his quick-spirited temperament. He offered some outspoken suggestions as to what a superior officer could do with his assorted vehicles—a speech that was rewarded with confinement to quarters for six weeks!

It was against such a background that Captain Rossetti received an order one afternoon at an OSS holding area near Naples. He was to pack all his gear and report at a certain OSS villa in Naples early that evening.

As Rossetti tells it: "I was completely fed up with sitting around, and as I packed my gear, I felt sure that I was being shipped back to Africa for reassignment. The villa to which I reported was something. It was run by Joe Savoldi, the ex-Notre Dame football star and wrestler, and it was

"Someone started shooting. The enemy returned our fire, but our automatic weapons were too much for them."

conducted on a very elaborate scale. I arrived just before dinner. First we had cocktails and then sat down to a sumptuous meal. Present were Captain John Chrusz of OSS, three OSS Army sergeants whom I knew, and three Italian agents.

"I noticed that all the OSS personnel were dressed for combat and wearing sidearms. For the first time I picked up the idea that I wasn't going to Africa at all, but was to be part of a mission. From all the attention they gave us, I gathered that it was to be a very important one. There was a distinct 'last supper' idea about the whole thing that was hardly reassuring. At the time, however, I was so disgusted with inaction that the idea of going on any mission appealed to me very strongly.

"I gathered from the conversation that we were to land these agents somewhere up north, and that a Navy PT was to take us behind the lines. Then we were to escort the men as close to Rome as possible. This sounded very interesting, and I ventured to ask how we were to get back. It seemed like a fair question to me, but the only answer I got was that American troops would be at the spot. Captain John Chrusz was to be in charge of the infiltration party, and I was to handle the administrative end of things.

"Not wanting to appear too ignorant, I didn't ask anything more until we boarded the PT at Naples and headed north. Then for the first time Chrusz told me that we were on our way to Anzio. He assured me, 'American troops will be there soon,' which was the first indication I had that something big was in the wind.

"This was my first trip on a PT, and the ride was quick, uneventful and pleasant. Once a flight of German bombers did pass close overhead on their way south to blast Naples, and for a few moments we thought that they had spotted us, but nothing happened, and we continued northward. Our actual landing was made at Nettuno. The Navy skipper did a slick job. He cut his motors well offshore, and we glided silently right into the pitch-black harbor and pulled up beside a rocky pier that extended out from the shore. There wasn't a sound from the town, and our party slipped ashore and quickly entered one of the many beautiful but deserted villas on the waterfront. We rested there until two in the morning, when we took off and headed inland. So far we hadn't seen or heard a thing. It was unbelievably quiet.

"However, shortly after we left the coast, sounds of a terrific racket echoed back from the waterfront. It was only then that Chrusz told me that the Navy was blasting the beaches, and that the whole of the Sixth Corps was making a major amphibious landing behind us.

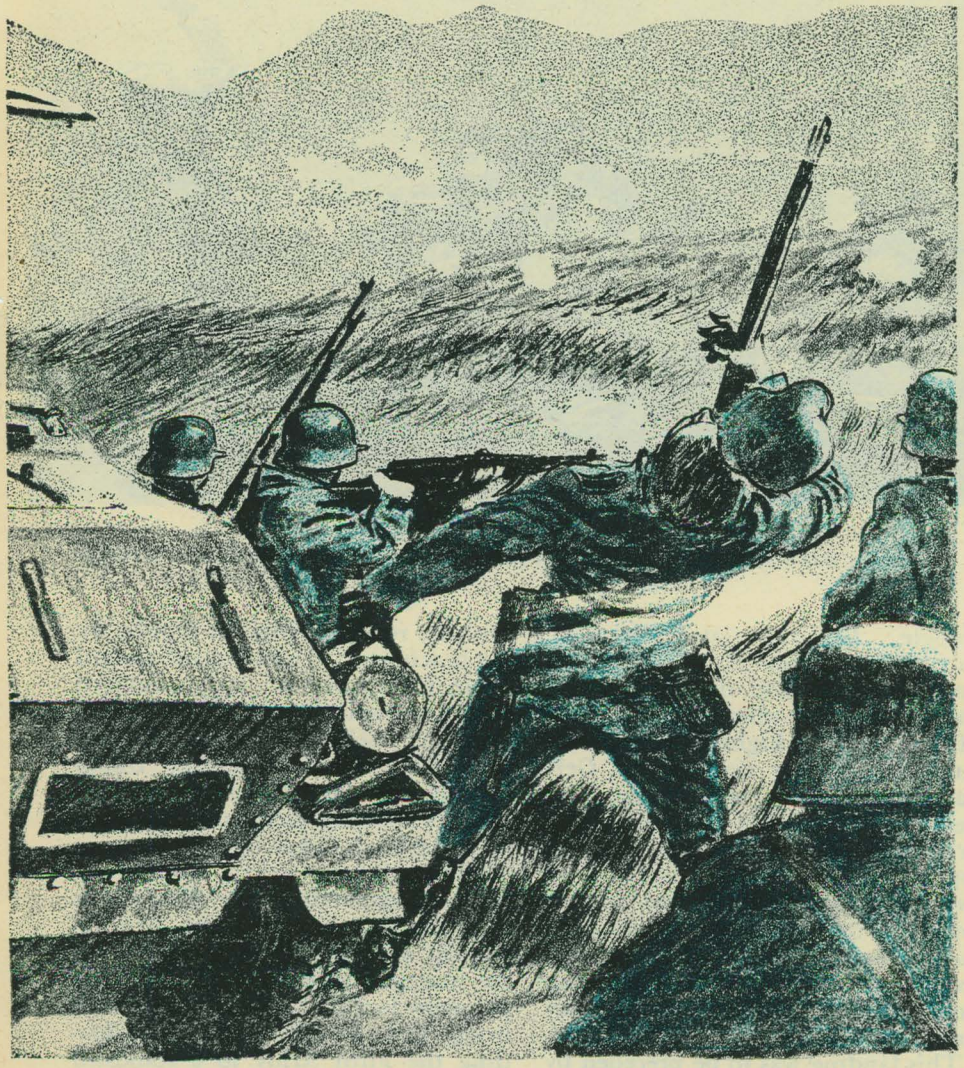
"The five Americans in our party of eight were all dressed in Army uniforms, with helmets and sidearms. Our agents were in civilian clothes, with their radio concealed in a violin case. Around dawn we contacted some Italian farmers, who quite naturally were terribly frightened at the sight of us. We questioned them, and were advised that German patrols used the roads constantly, and so after a brief rest and a little food, we took to the fields. At eight that morning we spotted disorganized German units streaming down the roads toward the beachhead. We kept well off the highways and headed rapidly inland. By noon we were ten miles from Anzio; already the roads were crowded with regular German army units rushing toward the town.

"We spent that second night ashore in the fields, as we were afraid to seek shelter in any of the houses. This whole area had been built up by the Fascists, and we had been warned that the population was in large measure strongly Fascist in their sympathies. It was freezing cold out in the open, and after vainly trying to get a little rest from catnaps, we took off again for Rome about three A.M. Before dawn that day we passed through the outskirts of Cisterna and pushed about six miles beyond it toward Rome.

"All the next day we proceeded very cautiously, as the area was getting thick with German troops. Around four o'clock our agents asked that we let them proceed alone, as they felt that in view of the circumstances they could make out better without an escort of uniformed Americans. We agreed, and dispatched them on their way after taking them more than halfway to Rome.

"For the rest of this second day we lay low in the fields, spotting German troop identifications on the highways. Around nine that night we started

Illustrated by John McDermott



back, trying to keep the road about a hundred yards to our right. Again it was freezing cold and pitch-black. We must have blundered too close to the road, because at one point a truck stopped near us, and a German jumped out shouting a challenge. We made no reply, and I ordered our party of five to spread out and lie on the ground about fifteen yards apart. It was well that I did, for immediately several other German vehicles pulled up, and a detachment of troops disembarked and started toward us. I was anxious to keep our group together for mutual protection, as the area was now crawling with Germans, and our best chance of getting back to the Allied lines seemed to be by sticking together.

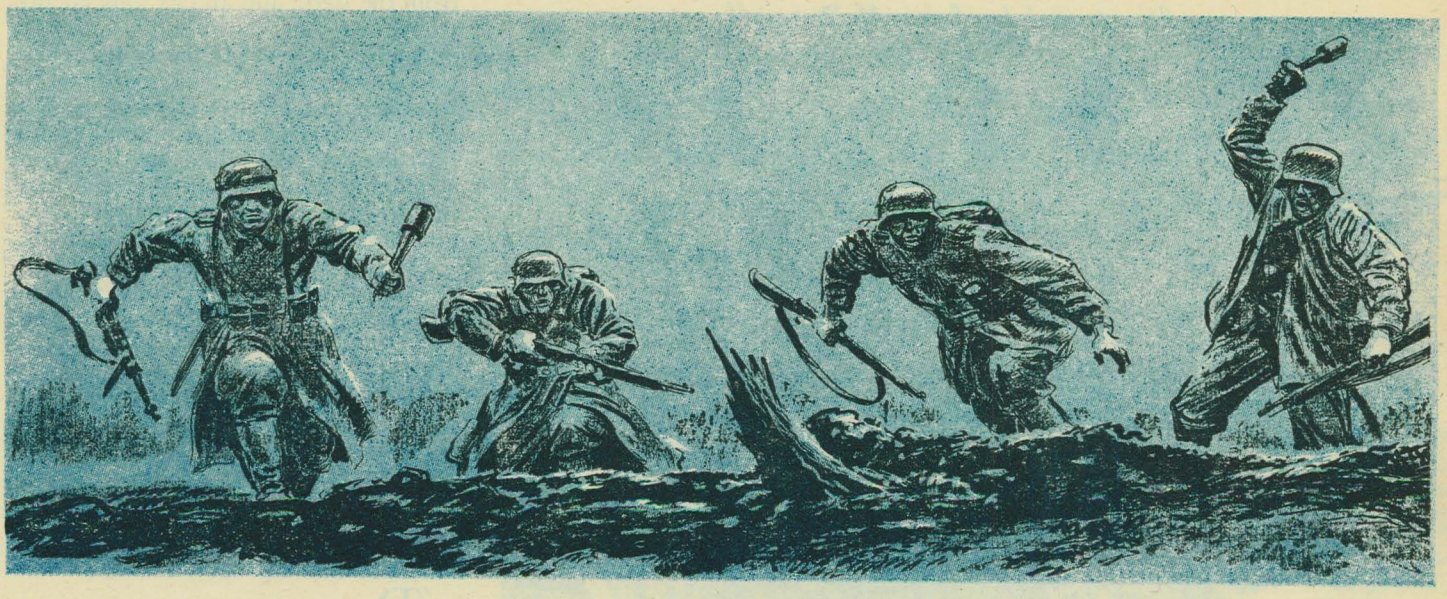
"I whispered orders that as soon as the enemy troops came close, everyone was to open up with as much noise as possible to give the impression we were a strong force. For a few seconds we lay there on the frozen soil as the shouting Germans closed in on us. Then someone off to my right started shooting. Immediately all five of us opened up with automatic weapons and poured a heavy fire at the Germans, who were by this time only twenty-five yards from us. The enemy returned our fire, but our automatic weapons were too much for them. Swearing and shouting, they pulled back to their trucks and quickly drove off down the road. In this brief exchange I shot off three clips with my Thompson, and the rest of the boys were equally busy. None of us had been hit, and just as soon as the German trucks disappeared, we started running as fast as we could—making certain this time that we kept well away from the road.

"We ran for about two miles; and then as dawn was approaching, we hid up in a barn about two miles east of Cisterna. All of us were cold, hungry and exhausted after three nights and two days on the move. The hay in the loft of that barn looked pretty good to us. Soon, however, we realized that we had made a stupid mistake. There was a German-occupied farmhouse about twenty-five yards from the barn, and all day long enemy troops were in and out of the house and barn. Several times we had close calls as squads of Germans stopped in the barn just a few feet from us, but fortunately none of them climbed up into the loft. We had anything but a relaxing time of it until eleven that night, when we finally managed to slip out of the barn into the frozen fields.

"We traveled by compass toward Nettuno, the tiny port right next to Anzio, in front of which we expected to find American troops. As we progressed toward the front lines, we heard more and more evidence of heavy fighting. The artillery on both sides was going strong, and there was lots of air activity. At four A.M. I called a halt, because I knew it would be suicide to try to cross the American lines at night.

"Daylight came; we could see the dust from the beachhead, and all of us realized that the most dangerous part of our mission was at hand. Somehow we had to pass through the German lines and into the American lines without being wiped out. Our infantry training stood us in good stead. Arranging the men in single file, I gave the order to worm our way forward on our bellies. It took us about three hours to cover one mile. On the way we crossed several dirt roads, darting across one at a time. We carefully avoided all farmhouses, as we knew by now that the Germans usually occupied them. Finally around nine o'clock as we edged our way over a slight rise, I spotted some newly turned-over dirt in an open field about a hundred yards ahead of us. From the construction and field of fire, I figured they must be advance American outposts, although there wasn't a sign of a soldier anywhere. From that we knew we were at the front, probably in no man's land. Keeping low, we crept forward very slowly through the bare open field, feeling as conspicuous as giants every inch of the way. About fifty yards from the nearest foxhole, we stopped and called out: 'We're American troops.' There wasn't a sound in reply.

"We waited for five minutes and then pulled ourselves forward another ten yards. Here we stopped again and called out, 'American troops!' Again there was no answer, although by now we felt sure that the occupants of the foxholes must be Americans. Had they been Germans, we wouldn't have been alive. Germans or Americans, though, there was nothing we could do, as they obviously could see us and could easily eliminate us in a second. After another wait of three minutes or so, we moved forward another ten yards, and then a voice suddenly called out—in unmistakable and very welcome English: 'Who are you?'



"Nights were the worst. All night long wild, tough young Nazis, scream-

"'American troops,'" we yelled. The voice replied immediately: 'Come ahead.'

"We jumped to our feet, raced toward the American foxholes and dived into them. All five of us made it safely.

"When I rolled over, I found myself looking up the barrel of a Thompson being held by an American sergeant who commanded the squad manning this outpost. He began to question us; and speaking for the group, I tried to tell him who we were. The sergeant wouldn't believe us. He had never heard of OSS and doubted our whole story. He told us that his position was only 125 yards from the German outposts. What made him particularly hard to convince was the fact that his company had not been able to get a patrol through the German lines at that point for the past twenty-four hours.

"All that day this sergeant kept us under guard at his outpost, and when dark came took us to his platoon leader. This officer and his company commander, to whom he directed us, both refused to accept our story. It was not until we had passed through the battalion and divisional CP's and reached the Sixth Corps HQ that we found someone who knew of OSS and our mission. The Corps G-2 was very interested in our report, and when we told him that we had planted three agents in Rome, he immediately wanted to know if it would be possible for us to set up a radio at the beachhead to pick up the Rome messages. We assured him we would make every effort to set up a station to service Sixth Corps; then we took off for some badly needed rest."

WHILE Rossetti and his OSS party were infiltrating their agents and dodging Germans behind the enemy lines, the situation on the beachhead was fast developing into a decisive struggle. General (later Marshal) Alexander, commanding the Allied forces in Italy, had decided on the Anzio operation when his American Fifth and British Eighth Armies, after battling their way through the German Winter Line, were stopped by the heavily fortified and naturally formidable Gustav Line guarding the approaches to Rome. Anxious to avoid another difficult and bloody mountain campaign, the Allied commander ordered Fifth Army to take Sixth Corps and make an amphibious landing at Anzio and Nettuno, tiny ports thirty miles southwest of Rome.

This landing was to be preceded by an all-out attack by a reinforced Fifth Army on the Cassino front, to commit all German reserves in defense of the Gustav Line. With the Germans busy on the Cassino front, it was expected that the threat to the enemy's communication lines would force him to withdraw in the south, thereby permitting the Fifth Army to drive forward, link up with Sixth Corps at Anzio and sweep on to Rome. It was not anticipated that the Germans would be able to deal with the serious threat of Sixth Corps in their rear without committing troops from the Gustav Line. This proved to be one of the major tragic miscalculations of World War II.

Sixth Corps, with an initial striking force made up of the U. S. Third Division, the British First Division, attached armor, two parachute battalions, Commandos, Rangers and other supporting troops, had met almost no German opposition in seizing its initial beachhead the first day. Almost no enemy forces were in the immediate landing area, and most of the troops landed without firing a shot. By the end of D Day, however, the Germans had twenty thousand troops near by, ready to close in rapidly on the beachhead. Units started toward Anzio from northern Italy, southern France, Austria, Yugoslavia and even Germany itself. By D plus 2 there were forty thousand enemy troops surrounding the Allied forces; and by January 30, when General Lucas, commanding Sixth Corps, opened his main offensive thrust, General Von Mackensen, commanding the Fourteenth German Army opposing him, had numerical superiority. The answer to the strategic success of Anzio is in the poignant fact that none of these Nazi troops had come from the forces battling the Fifth Army to a standstill on the southern front.

During the first week of Anzio, Sixth Corps pushed slowly inland against stiffening German resistance. Meanwhile the U.S. 45th Infantry and 1st Armored Divisions were landed as reinforcements for the Allied offensive of January 30 and February 1. This attack, although it brought the Allied penetration up to fourteen miles from the coast at its high point, fell short of its first objectives—the capture of Cisterna and Campoleone. It was now evident that the Germans had massed a force to drive Sixth Corps into the sea. On urgent orders from General Clark, Sixth Corps attempted to consolidate the positions already won, and went over to the defensive to await the all-out German attack. This onslaught was not long in coming.

SEVERAL days before the Germans let go with their drive, under personal orders from Hitler to eliminate the beachhead regardless of the cost, the tiny OSS detachment at Anzio under Captain Rossetti received their precious communication equipment from OSS headquarters at Caserta. This gave them direct receiving contact

ing and yelling, would come at us in seemingly never-ending waves."

with the agents who had by this time successfully established themselves in Rome, and opened up a valuable intelligence source at a critical time.

First information received from the agents gave the identification of German units already at the beachhead and of others moving through Rome to take part in the offensive. Then on the second day came a crucial message—the Germans were to attack a certain sector on February 7. On receipt of this message, Corps shifted its troops to meet this assault, which was finally repulsed after heavy losses by both sides.

ROSSETTI's unit was billeted in the medieval Barbarini Castle, unfortunately located right on the beach, which was the favorite target of German artillery and air attacks. In common with everyone else on the beachhead, they were under constant shellfire and subject to frequent bombings. Their position was particularly dangerous, because the enemy was concentrating his efforts on blasting the shipping and supply dumps in the harbor area. Because of the constant bombardment, the upstairs rooms of the castle were seldom used. Most of the time, and always at night, all hands stayed in the cellar for such protection as it offered.

From February 3 to February 12 the Germans battered Sixth Corps, slowly pushing them back and seizing strategic positions from which they could launch their knockout blow. In spite of terrific punishment, the combined British and American force had managed at heroic sacrifice to prevent a breakthrough, and made the Germans pay dearly for every inch of ground. During a comparative lull between this early offensive stage and the all-out attack which came during February 16 to 20, Rossetti received a radio message of such importance that he rushed to Corps Headquarters, where he found General Lucas and his staff at lunch. As he tells it:

"The message warned us that Hitler had ordered an all-out air attack of one thousand planes to blast us off the beachhead. I knew it was pretty hot stuff, so I insisted on going right into the mess and personally handing it to the G-2. He stopped eating and read it. Then he passed it to General Lucas. All of the officers were right in the middle of their meal, but when the General read our message, he immediately got up from the table, and together with his whole staff left the mess. As a result of this message, the Fifteenth Air Force blasted every German airfield within bombing range to break up preparations for such a mass attack. They must have been successful, because although Nazi planes were over every day and night weather permitted, the one-thousand-plane raid never materialized.

"Meanwhile the tempo of the German attack grew in ferocity. Our lines were being pushed back steadily, and many officers were openly predicting that it was just a matter of hours before the Nazis would crack through and drive us into the sea. Every able-bodied man on the beachhead was thrown into the fight. The Germans were attacking in force all along the line in support of their major drive through our center. In such circumstances it was completely useless to try to infiltrate intelligence agents, so except for monitoring our radio, there wasn't much intelligence work for us to do.

"Like everyone else, we were taking a twenty-four-hour beating from the German artillery and air attacks. There wasn't a square inch of the whole area that was not under shellfire. We decided at this point to go to Corps and tell them we figured we would go up to the front line and lend a hand. Their attitude was frank—they thought we were just asking for trouble, but when we assured them that a radio operator was staying behind to handle all messages, they gave us their blessing. We reported to the intelligence officer of a British brigade which was being badly chewed up. He informed us we were just plain crazy to volunteer for front-line duty, but he was mighty glad for even half-a-dozen extra men. We were sent to an infantry company headquarters, where we spent several days as combat troops, working in a little intelligence detail by interviewing a few Italian civilians who occasionally came through our lines. The whole time we were under .88 shellfire, and the losses on both sides were terrific.

"THE situation of this unit was typical of that time in the last-ditch battle. The company commander had little control over his men. All communication lines were out, and it was every squad for itself. The only contact the commander had with his troops was when he managed to get a runner through to a platoon commander, or visited his sections himself.

"Nights were the worst. All night long the Germans would attack. Wild, tough young Nazis, screaming and yelling at the top of their voices, would come at us in seemingly never-ending waves. During such attacks, all the company's officers and ourselves would take up positions trying to hold them back. It was pitch-black, and we would fire at every sound.

"During the few days that we stayed up there I developed a tremendous admiration for the fighting qualities of the English. It was during the very worst part of the battle, which reached its peak on February 19 and

"When I was close enough to touch him, I saw that he had the look of death."

20, that we were with them, and they certainly proved themselves to be rugged soldiers. The same thing was true of every Allied unit, British and American, in that bloody fight. We were pushed back about a mile in three days, but a break-through never came. Elsewhere on the front, the pressure was even heavier than in our sector but somehow the final Allied defense lines held. Then at just the crucial moment the American First Armored Division made a surprise counterattack which rolled back the Germans for about a mile, and the heaviest German effort to smash the beachhead was finally checked.

"We returned to our headquarters in the castle and kept ourselves busy screening Italian refugees, some of whom had pretty good information. However, most of them were inclined to exaggerate in an effort to be helpful, and the radio remained our most lucrative intelligence source.

"Then suddenly, without warning, the vital Rome messages stopped. We kept on listening at the scheduled hours, but there was no further contact. We did not find out the reason for some weeks. It was a very tough break, but just the kind of thing that occasionally happens in intelligence work. This team which we had landed had set themselves up very nicely in Rome, and were tapping very profitable enemy sources. But with the Allied forces only thirty miles from Rome, the heartened Italian patriots in the Eternal City became more active. One day some of them threw a grenade at a German unit, causing a few casualties. The German reaction was unbelievably savage. Over three hundred Roman citizens were picked off the streets and massacred. The radio operator of our agent team had the misfortune to be one of the victims selected at random.

"This bad break, plus the quieting down of the heavy Anzio fighting, made the use of ground agents imperative to serve Sixth Corps' intelligence needs. Captain Chrusz returned to OSS headquarters in Caserta to line up some agents. He sent me three members of the highly trained Italian San Marco group which had joined the OSS. These men were expert saboteurs as well as excellent soldiers and intelligence agents. They were familiar with military things, and knew the German Army well, having served with the Nazis, whom they despised, prior to the Italian armistice.

"The three were known as John, Lai and Bennie. Fortunately they needed little additional training, and a few days after their arrival I checked with Corps on intelligence priorities, and received a thorough briefing, complete with maps of the roads in the German rear as well as all known enemy positions. The first mission for these agents was to get behind the front and as close to Rome as possible. On the way they were to spot all German positions, troop activity, large-caliber gun locations and any other military information on the state of the enemy that they could discover.

"Because the right flank of the beachhead, which was manned by the SSF, or Special Service Force—a crack Canadian and American outfit—was fairly quiet, we decided to attempt our first infiltration at that point. It was about the middle of March. We dressed our three agents in civilian clothes purchased from Italian refugees, briefed them carefully, rehearsed their cover stories and moved up to the front the morning before we took them through. All day we studied the terrain we would have to

cross that night, taking special care to select a route well away from the dangerous stone farmhouse which we knew to be occupied at night by the enemy.

"Just after dark we crept out into no-man's land and headed toward the German lines. Twice while passing through the enemy's outposts we must have made too much noise, because they sent up flares. Those who heard the flares going off had time to hit the dirt, but the rest obeyed instructions and froze in their last position, not moving a muscle. Those flares were as bright as daylight and seemed to last an eternity. Fortunately we were not spotted either time, and drew no enemy fire. We left our three agents just in front of the main German positions, and then made our way by compass back to within a hundred yards of the SSF lines, where we lay down to wait for dawn. Several times we heard German patrols but managed to avoid them. The worst of it was the long cold night and the constant tension. Finally morning came, and we slipped through our lines to safety. The SSF had been expecting us, as we came back through the same sector from which we had departed twelve long cold hours before.

"Four and a half days later two of these agents returned. With them they brought information which gave Corps a beautiful picture of a large sector behind the German front. Their interrogation, which lasted over eight hours, was the first accurate intelligence Sixth Corps had received on the German position except for what had been picked up from prisoners and the occasional unreliable refugee. Their story was an interesting one. Posing as refugees, they had first contacted troops of the Fascist San Marco Division, who helped them through the forward areas into the rear. Then the three of them had circled around the beachhead and proceeded to Albano, not far from Rome. On the way they made careful note of German gun emplacements along the highways, troop concentration areas, unit identifications and other vital military data. At Albano, Bennie decided to push on to Rome; but John and Lai, believing the information already obtained was too good to hold, had started back. Their return, by the same route they had gone through the lines, went off without a slip. At night they had worked their way well out into no-man's land, and at dawn had identified themselves to the SSF and made it to safety.

"Corps was so pleased with the results of this first mission, which gave them several immediate artillery targets, that they requested another mission as soon as possible. The next job, a solo effort by John, was one he suggested himself. Confident that many of the Fascist soldiers were fed up with the war and hated the Germans, he wanted to contact these troops and try to effect their surrender. Corps approved this mission, provided that the Italians deserted only in dribs and drabs. They most certainly did not want any large number of the Fascist soldiers to surrender, as then the enemy commander would have replaced the division with German troops. What was now a relatively quiet sector would then become just as hot as the rest of the front.

"I decided to infiltrate John," recalls Rossetti, "during a dawn attack on enemy positions by an SSF Company. The purpose of this attack was to take prisoners. Heavily armed and with charcoal-blacked faces, we moved out just before dawn behind a heavy barrage of artillery and smoke-shells. Our little force pushed rapidly across no-man's land and penetrated about half a mile into the German lines. Here the SSF killed a number of the enemy and rounded up surprised prisoners in foxholes and farmhouses. During the height of the attack, when all was confusion, I swung to the right with my agent and left him directly in front of the Italian San Marco positions. Then I hurried back to join the SSF in their return.

"German artillery retaliated heavily during our withdrawal but not a single SSF soldier was killed. Both the raid and the infiltration were highly successful. Twenty-eight Germans were bagged. As a matter of fact, Axis Sally came on the radio that night and remarked that something would have to be done about the SSF. Nothing was, and these crack troops continued to strike terror among the Germans with their aggressive patrols and sudden raids.

"John made his way into the Fascist lines without any difficulty, and soon found some ready dissidents among the private soldiers. He steered clear of the non-coms and officers, as these positions were presumably given only to die-hard Fascists. After spending two days spreading discontent, John pushed on to Littoria and Valmontone, two German strong-points. On the way he spotted several tank positions, some supply dumps and an enemy troop rest area. Corps put its artillery and naval gunfire on these excellent targets shortly after his return. The first night John was on this mission, twelve Italians deserted to the SSF, and from then on they trickled through singly and in small groups. Through fear of the Germans, who had an officer with every Fascist company, there was no wholesale move to surrender. However, these Italians gave much valuable information.

"The next mission was undertaken by Lai to spot large-caliber German guns, which were causing high casualties and making life on the beachhead completely miserable and highly precarious for everyone. We had had our own share of enemy shells. One night, as we were all asleep in the cellar of our castle, we were awakened by a tremendous crash. As I rolled out of my sleeping bag, I began to choke. The air was thick with the dust of centuries-old plaster and a sharp odor of gas. The castle had been hit hundreds of times before, but this was something different. At first we thought it must be a gas shell, and kept clear of the room where the shell had landed. Later the gas cleared away, and we plowed our way inside to see a 160-mm. shell which had come through a window, crashed through two floors and buried itself two and a half feet into the cellar floor. By some miracle this four-foot monster had not exploded. The place where it hit was only three feet from the spot where two of my sergeants had been sleeping. Had this huge shell not been a dud, all of us would have been blasted into eternity, as many were every night.

"This German shelling was by far the worst ordeal of the beachhead. To avoid it, everybody went underground as much as possible. But there was no getting away from a direct hit, and much of the work had to go on in spite of the constant peril. The rear was even more dangerous than the front lines. The shipping in the harbor, the supply dumps, the hospitals were all blasted continually. Our castle, right on the water's edge, received more than its share.

"My instructions to Lai were very explicit. He was to come back in two days. Most particularly, he was not to try to cross over into our lines until daylight. Corps gave us six suspected locations for large enemy guns, and asked to have Lai check these, and also to report on any other possible targets. We took him out and left him at the Italian outposts without incident. Two days later I went back to the SSF sector to meet him. He didn't show up. I waited all that day, then went back to the castle, planning to return early the next morning.

"At five A.M. just before we shoved off from the castle for the front, I received a phone call from Corps. The message was ominous. The officer told me that there was someone lying out in no-man's land in front of the SSF positions, screaming with pain and calling for Captain Rossetti. We knew it must be Lai, and left immediately.

"Dawn was just breaking when we reached the forward outposts. The SSF soldiers, who had had no information about an agent's coming back at night, had naturally assumed that the

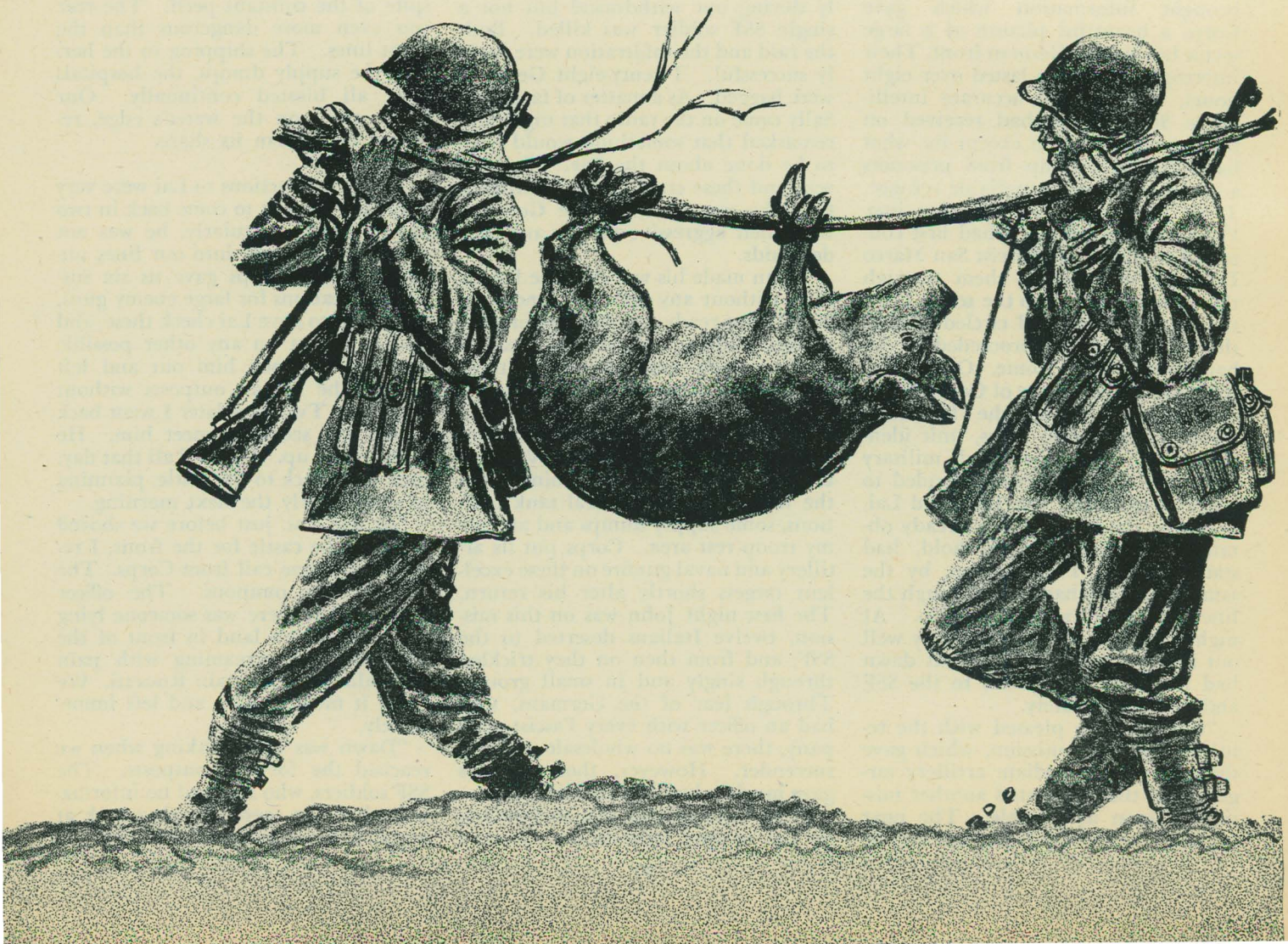
noise they heard was an enemy patrol and fired. They now indicated to the best of their knowledge the direction from which the cries for Captain Rossetti had been coming. Cautiously we peered out into no-man's land, but couldn't see a thing. There hadn't been a sound from the spot for about half an hour, and I was pretty worried. Sergeant Michelini, Sergeant Silva and myself spread out at intervals of about fifteen yards and started out on our bellies. It was ticklish business. The terrain was absolutely flat and offered not the slightest bit of cover. We knew we were well within range of hostile small-arms fire, and could easily be observed by an alert enemy. The only thing in our favor was that both sides knew it was suicide to be caught out in the middle during daylight. The enemy certainly wouldn't expect to see us.

"It took us about thirty minutes to go a hundred yards—and then we spotted him. It was Lai, lying motionless on his side in the center of some matted grass about six inches high. The three of us saw him about the same time and inched our way over to him. When I was close enough to touch him, I noticed that he had the look of death on his face. I spoke to him and told him that we had come to take care of him, and that he would be okay now. His sunken eyes brightened as he recognized me. Immediately he started to give me intelligence on the location of some big guns. We were all pretty excited because of our completely exposed position, and I told him to shut up until we got back. I asked him where he had been hit. He pointed to his right leg. Then I asked him why he hadn't waited until morning as he had been instructed. He replied that the information he had was too important to wait.

"Michelini and Silva then took him by the shoulders and we started back to our lines. They dragged him a few feet at a time, and every time they moved him he groaned. It seemed as if that trip back took all day. Actually it took us three-quarters of an hour to get to the nearest SSF foxhole. During the time we had been out in no-man's land, nearly two hours, not a shot had been fired at us—why, I'll never know. The foxhole was beside a farmhouse, and we carried Lai through the house and then lifted him into our jeep hidden behind the house. As we put him in the jeep he passed out. We made a quick run to the rear, as for several miles we were under artillery observation, and normally there was no movement in the forward areas during the day.

"We carried Lai into the operating tent of an American evacuation hospital a few miles behind the front lines and laid him on the table. As we put him down, he regained consciousness. I assured him that the American doctors and nurses would take good care of him, and that I would be back to see him soon. When I said this, he became very excited and shaking his head weakly, he said: 'No! No, I must give you my information!' I tried everything I could to get him to rest, but he would have none of it. By now the nurses had cut off his trouser leg and were starting to dress his ugly wound. Three .45 slugs had pierced his leg just above the knee. It was not a pretty sight.

"The nurses seeing that he would not lie still unless I listened to him, told me it would be better if I did what he wanted me to do. So they gave him some opiates, and I took out my maps of the German sector he had visited. Then in a very weak and frequently fading voice, this young Italian soldier began to give me some terrific information. He had spotted the exact location of four batteries of large-caliber enemy artillery. All were beautifully camouflaged, and well hidden from either ground or air observation. They were spread out over a distance of about two and a half miles,



and secreted respectively in a house, a grove of trees, a grain silo and a factory.

"Lai was lying on the field operating table with a small pillow under his head. I had my map out, and putting my head next to his, I held the map up in front of his face. Carefully following his directions, I traced out the course of his travels behind the German lines. With precise accuracy, he outlined the location of each battery, describing it so well that I could picture the exact set-up at each position. Several times during this dramatic recital, Lai fainted away. Each time I packed up my maps and started to leave the tent, but each time he called on some hidden reserve, and coming to again, would call for me and make such a fuss that the nurses would ask me to come back. In spite of his great loss of blood, intense pain and very weak condition, he refused to let them do a thing for him until he had told me his story.

"All the nurses and doctors were tremendously impressed by him. They did everything possible to make him comfortable, and were grateful that I kept his attention while they prepared him for the operation. He, in turn, looked at the nurses as if they were angels. They were probably the first American women he had ever seen.

"Finally he completed his detailed account on the location of the four enemy batteries. Then, too weak to speak further, he consented to my leaving, but only after I had promised to be back soon for some additional information.

"After receiving assurances from the doctors that they would give Lai every possible attention, I jumped into my jeep and raced to Corps headquarters. Lai's information caused a sensation at the G-2 section. His facts were checked immediately against air photographs, and every detail of the terrain as he had outlined it dovetailed perfectly. Corps at once transmitted these fat targets to the U. S. Navy cruiser *Brooklyn* and a British cruiser. (At Anzio the Navy took care of long-range firing.) For several hours that day both blasted these German guns. We never learned whether or not they were all knocked out, but this we did know—there was no more shelling from that particular section of the beachhead.

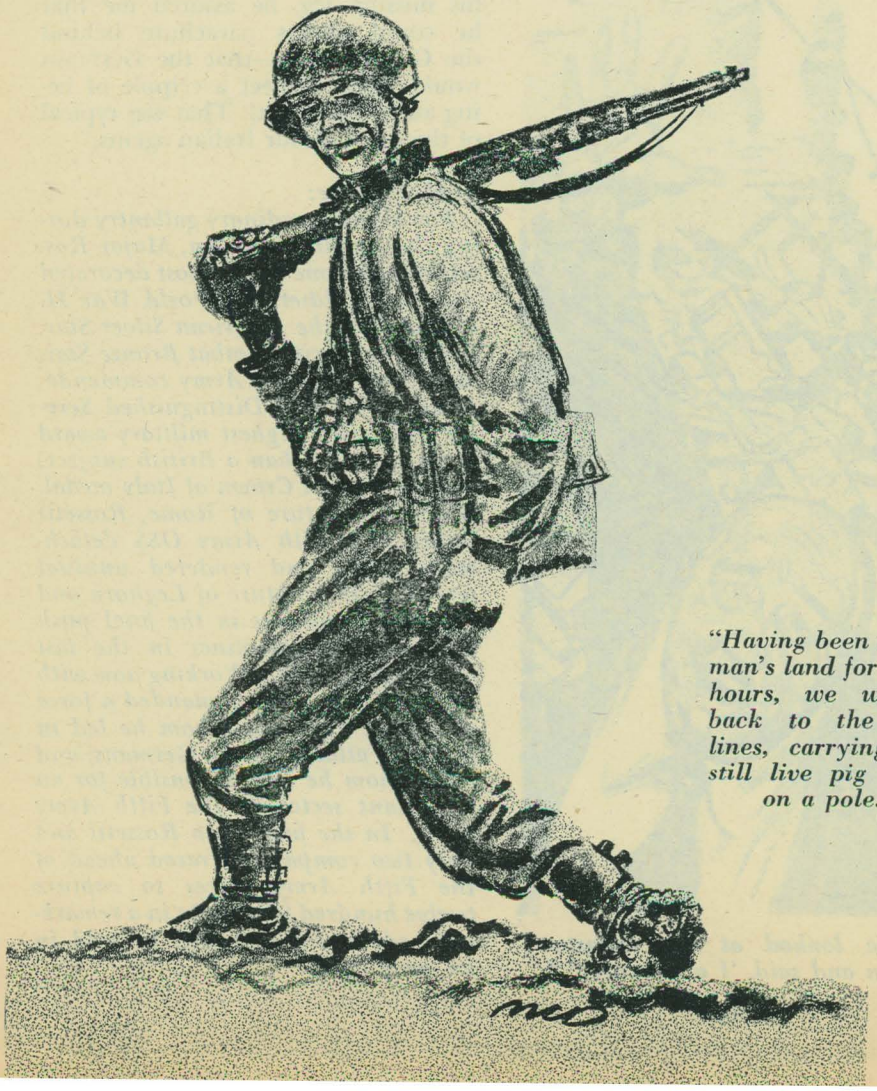
"The next day I went back to the hospital, but Lai was still unconscious, and I learned that the doctors had been forced to take off his leg. Every day I visited him in the hospital. He would say hello, tell me that he felt fine, and then ask me if I had brought my maps. Then he would start poring over the map and give me additional information on enemy troop activity, defensive positions and other valuable data. He was in good spirits, and when I told him the cruisers had knocked out the guns he had spotted, he was overjoyed.

"Six days later Lai was evacuated from the beachhead and sent to an Italian military hospital near Naples, where he eventually recovered. For his heroic exploit he received the American Silver Star from Sixth Corps. As far as I knew, he was the first Italian national ever to receive this prized award for extraordinary heroism.

"Following Lai's misfortune, we received from OSS rear a group of young Italian boys as agents. I was doubtful of the value of these youngsters, and my doubts were confirmed when three of them fell into the hands of the Germans on their first mission. One managed to get away and informed me that his companions had told the Germans all about us—where we were located and what we were doing. Thanking God for this warning, we immediately moved out of our castle. Within a few hours it was subjected to an intensive shelling and air bombardment which almost demolished it. For three days we lived in caves while Jerry threw everything he had at our headquarters. When the shelling died down, we moved back.

"During the latter part of March and all of April, Anzio was a relatively quiet front, save for the constant shelling. The enemy made a practice of occupying his forward positions during the night, then pulling back during the daytime. One day early in April, after a long lull, Corps agreed to our trying a daylight patrol. Dan De Luce, an AP war correspondent who wanted some excitement, came along. Six of us shoved off from an SSF Company command post at first light. The SSF troops told us they hadn't seen a thing for the past few days. When we reached their advance foxholes, we were surprised to find out they had nearly fired at us. No one had told them we were coming up, and they had taken us for a German patrol on its way back to the enemy's lines. Our steel helmets, which looked so much like the German type, had helped to confuse them. Fortunately they had decided to make us prisoner, and had waited until we came up before shooting.

"Moving out into no-man's land in a cautious crouch, we headed toward a farmhouse about two hundred yards inside the last known German positions. About fifty yards from the farmhouse, Sgt. Silva, who occupied the point in our patrol, called a halt. He had spotted movement in the



"Having been in no-man's land for eight hours, we walked back to the SSF lines, carrying the still live pig slung on a pole."

house. We pulled back to avoid an ambush, and circled around the building to come at it from another direction. Again movement was spotted. This time a woman was seen. We called out to her, and after a few minutes she replied, asking us if we were Germans. We told her we were Americans, and asked her to come out and speak to us as we were fearful of a trap.

"She finally came out and told us that she hadn't seen any Germans in the area for the past two days. She also related that a number of other farmers had moved back to their houses without interference from the Jerries. We bartered with this woman for some fresh food, which we would pick up later, and then pushed on. This patrol took us a mile and a half beyond the SSF positions without encountering a single enemy soldier although we did come across some positions which had been occupied the night before. We destroyed these and started back, after gathering information from a number of farmers.

"We reached the first farmhouse without incident and purchased a live seventy-five-pound pig, some cheese and vegetables. Then, having been in no-man's land for eight hours, we walked back to the SSF lines, carrying the still live pig slung on a pole. Our bold return caused a sensation among the front-line troops, who had thought the Germans were breathing down their throats day and night. That night we had barbecued pork, and boy, did it taste good! Two days later Corps acted on the information discovered on this patrol, and the SSF moved forward a mile and a half in that sector without opposition. Later we undertook other daytime patrols to spot enemy positions, and similar patrols were activated by other units along the front. That particular patrol, however, remained the beachhead record for both length and depth of penetration.

"Around the middle of May, the Fifth and Eighth Armies, which had resumed their attack on the southern front, finally cracked through the Gustav Line and broke the Cassino stalemate. Meanwhile all was preparation on the beachhead for the offensive to break through and link up with the southern forces for the sweep on Rome. Our part in the break-through was to accompany the forward troops, give them such intelligence assistance as we could, and to pick up various OSS agents heading south from Rome.

"I attached myself to the American Third Division troops, whose immediate objective was Cisterna. That first night of the break-through I came closest to being killed of all my 129 days at Anzio. Dan De Luce and I were following the advance scouts along the main road toward Cisterna. It was pitch-black, and the thundering of both German and Allied artillery was tremendous. We were about a mile and a half from Cisterna and moving very carefully, when suddenly we were sprayed by a German machine pistol or burp gun. Both Dan and I hit the ground, and I opened up with my Thompson. We knew that the Germans could be no more than twenty-five to fifty yards from us. By a freak turn of luck neither of us had been hit by the hail of bullets. There was no further fire. We pulled back a bit and later learned that the scouts whom we had been following had been swallowed up by the enemy. After that close one, Dan and I decided that we didn't feel like taking Cisterna by ourselves! We waited for the regular troops to come up and do the job, which they did, but only after a bloody and bitter fight.

"We continued to push ahead with the beachhead forces as they joined up with the Fifth Army and raced for Rome. Our little group entered the Italian capital on the morning of June 6th. We were among the first Allied units actually to enter the city. Although there was still scattered firing from enemy troops, we were given a tremendous ovation.

"He looked at the devastation and said, 'I am ruined!'"

"Our reactions on getting back to civilization after living like animals under constant shellfire for over four months are hard to describe. Seeing the comfort and beauty of Rome, we could hardly believe that a war was going on—certainly not war as we had lived it through that winter. One of the things that impressed us most was eating our first meal since January above ground, and without fear of being hit any moment by shrapnel.

"I reported to Fifth Army headquarters and was sent back to Naples for a badly needed rest. As far as I know, I was on Anzio longer than any other American—129 days; and I was also one of the very few who hadn't been given any relief during the whole period. On the way back to Naples I stopped off at Anzio to take another look at the beachhead and our castle. While I was there, the owner of the castle appeared. He looked at the devastation and said: 'I am ruined!' He had spent the winter living in comfort in Rome, and I had little pity for him. I merely said: 'Things were a lot better in Rome this winter.'

"When I reached Naples, one of the first things I did was to look up my boy Lai and see how he was doing. I found him hobbling around on crutches and very anxious to get back into action. When I told him that he had done enough and couldn't do any more work for us because of his missing leg, he assured me that he could always parachute behind the German lines—that the Germans would never suspect a cripple of being an Allied agent! That was typical of the spirit of our Italian agents."

Author's Note:

For his extraordinary gallantry during the Italian campaign, Major Rossetti became one of the most decorated American soldiers of World War II. He received the American Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Combat Bronze Star, two Corps and one Army commendations, the British Distinguished Service Order (the highest military award given to other than a British subject) and the Italian Crown of Italy medal. After the capture of Rome, Rossetti joined the Fifth Army OSS detachment again and rendered unusual service in the capture of Leghorn and Florence as well as in the final push through the Apennines in the last campaign of 1945. Working now with the 4th Corps, he commanded a force of Italian Partisans, whom he led in frequent attacks on the Germans, and with whom he was responsible for an important sector of the Fifth Army front. In the final push Rossetti and only two companions raced ahead of the Fifth Army forces to capture twelve hundred S.S. troops in a remarkable adventure that will be told in an early issue.

Who's Who *in this* Issue

Benton Clark

I WAS born in Coshocton, Ohio—and studied art in New York and Chicago. In these two cities have spent most of my art life—with the exception of time spent in California working for the movies in the art department of MGM.

Have worked for most of the leading magazines such as *Saturday Evening Post, Redbook, Cosmopolitan, Good Housekeeping, McCall's* and others, when illustrating demanded more of an artist than dress-designing and photography. Now, of course, I am adding BLUE BOOK to my list.

I formerly did my work on my farm in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Now I have studios in Ohio (in the beautiful Walhonding Valley) and in New York City.

I inherited my love for horses and Western life from my father, Archie Clark, who was a noted horseman from Ohio. My mother was a country school teacher who rode side-saddle to and fro to her school.

Am married and have one son.

Charles B. Falls

CHARLES B. FALLS was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

He is entirely self-taught, having attended the Chicago Art Institute for one night!

He started his artistic career on the Chicago *Tribune*. After his arrival in New York City he worked in a shop for two years designing book covers. He resigned from this position and became a free-lance artist and has remained a free lance ever since. His studio is now located at his home in Falls Village, Connecticut.

He has made war posters, posters for theaters and billboards, has illustrated many books, magazine stories, and made newspaper and advertising drawings. He has made designs for silks, carpets and furniture, and has made lithographs, etchings and woodcuts.

Also he has painted murals for the American Radiator Building in New York City, the General Electric Exhibit at the Century of Progress in Chicago, the State Office Building in Albany, New York, the Ford Motor Company at the San Diego Exposition in California, for General Mills in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Players Club in New York City and for many private homes. He has also designed stage sets and costumes for Broadway productions.

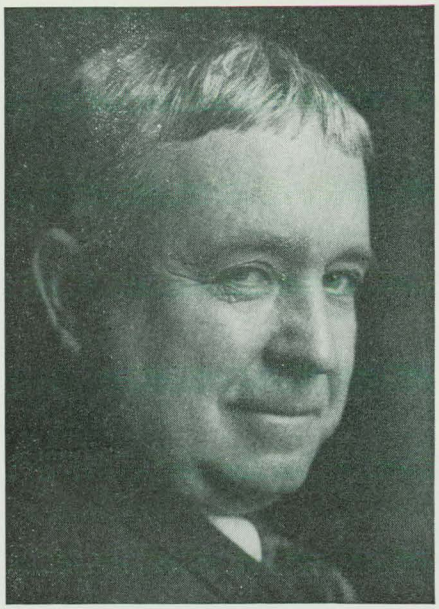


Photo by Robert Davis

Charles B. Falls

Liam O'Flaherty

LIAM O'FLAHERTY has been described as looking like a refined and virile gangster, for there is something unfettered and lawless about his manner.

He was born in 1896 in the Aran Islands, educated in the Jesuit College, and later at University College, Dublin.

He joined the Irish Guards at the beginning of the first World War. After a year he was shell-shocked and returned to Ireland, where he took part in the Irish Revolution.

When life grew too calm in Ireland, Mr. O'Flaherty shipped to South America, chopped logs in Canada, and engaged himself in some mysterious business in Asia Minor at the time when the Turks were driving out the Greeks. He visited America, where he was always cheerful and utterly penniless, earning his living by working in restaurants and print-shops, or soapboxing for the Labor party, for he is

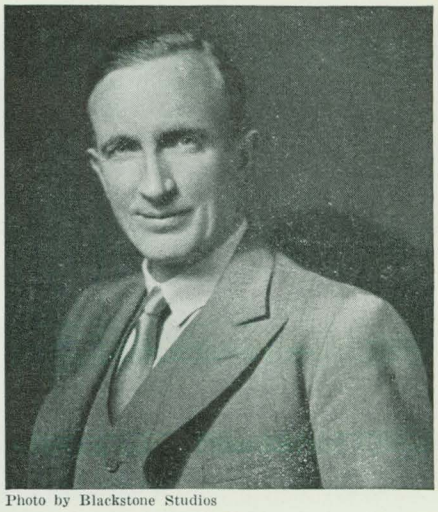


Photo by Blackstone Studios

Liam O'Flaherty

an excellent and moving speaker whose voice has the record of reaching six blocks in quiet Dublin. While he was employed in a Hartford tire factory, he began to work out his first short stories.

About 1924 Mr. O'Flaherty went to London and wrote his first novel, "The Neighbor's Wife." Other books, in rapid succession, have won recognition in England, France, Russia, and America.

Major Stephen O. Rossetti, whose story is told in "Secret Agents at Anzio." His citation as Honorary Companion of the Distinguished Service Order reads in part: "For gallant and distinguished services in the presence of the enemy between 27th January 1944 and 20th October 1944, in Italy. . . . Major Rossetti's leadership, coolness, and resourcefulness contributed materially to the success of intelligence operations which helped the advance of the Sixth Corps and the Fifth Army across the Italian peninsula."

BLUE BOOK

MAGAZINE

MAY, 1949

25 Cents

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A complete book-length novel

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Readers' Comment

A Norwegian in Trouble

FIRST if my grammar is bad forgive me, but I read your language perfect.

It is now more than thirty year since I laid my hands or to be moore correct my eyes on your magazine, back in 1916 during World War I, up on a small African river. In a hot and dirty beer joint my eyes caught something blue—a torn and dirty BLUE BOOK; and when I went out yours magazine vent with me.

Torpeded by a German U boat off the coast of Norway couple weeks before Hitler took a turn with our country, I have since stopped in shore after thirty and some years at sea.

The war over and then the BLUE BOOK was in the bookshops. I have them all up till August 1948, but now they tell me that it was the last one because Norway haven't any more dollars to spend on American magazine. Can you gentlemen tell me wath to do? It's hard on a reader of BLUE BOOK for thirty years to have to say good-by to your magazine.

Thank you for all the happy moments I have had with your help.

K. B. Pehrson.

Second to Sears Roebuck

SO you think you've got a magazine slanted to the male taste, do you? You should stand by your favorite newsstand and see who buys the most copies of BLUE BOOK—men or women. And don't think those women are all buying them for their husbands either.

At our house, BLUE BOOK is second in popularity only to the Sears Roebuck Catalogue. It gives my husband the escape reading he needs after a day of money-grubbing on his job. It gives our two boys reading with lots of high adventure, without being trashy; and the older girls and I read it as a relief from the mushy, undigestible tripe that is smeared through every so-called woman's magazine these days.

So, for our two-bits worth, you can just keep BLUE BOOK as is, cover and all. We like it. (Mrs.) Olga Addison.

A Pleasant Family Picture

FOR a while the arrival of BLUE BOOK in our midst caused clever maneuvering in an effort to be the "first reader." But my wife solved the problem: she elected me to read out loud the stories most interesting to our family group. Now when BLUE BOOK arrives, I relax in a comfortable position and read the story or stories selected by the majority, after which BLUE BOOK is all mine to read as I please.

My family's criticism and bouquet to BLUE BOOK: Most of your stories are good, some very good, and a few we thumb through with no interest. Naturally, the stories we do not like may appeal to hundreds of readers, such as your stories of ancient times. I'd balk at giving such stories a second glance, although my wife seems to enjoy them. Adding another posy to the bouquet: no advertisements to snitch time and space.

Ferrell J. Olaveson.

BLUE BOOK

May, 1949 **MAGAZINE** Vol. 89, No. 1

A Complete Book-Length Novel

Eleven Short Stories

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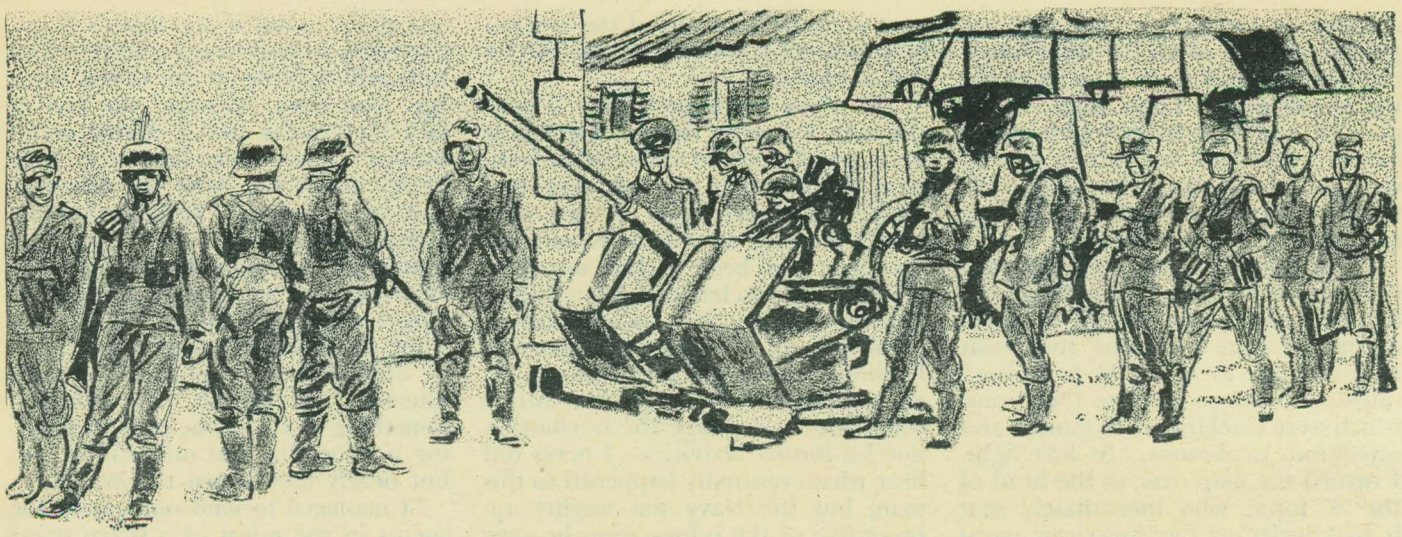
Illustrated by
JOHN McDERMOTT

"I started to explain, but all I could think of was that there probably wasn't another American soldier within thirty-five miles."

ONE of the most successful operations of Major General William J. Donovan's Office of Strategic Services in World War II was its participation in the secret warfare of the Mediterranean theater. Among the most active units in OSS-MEDTO was the Fourth Corps section of the OSS unit attached to the American Fifth Army. Commanded by twenty-seven-year-old Major Steve Rossetti, whose exciting adventures on the Anzio beachhead were covered in a recent BLUE BOOK article, this detachment played a significant and extremely active part in the final months of the Italian campaign.

With the June 6th capture of Rome, the American Fifth and British Eighth armies pursued the stubbornly resisting Germans up the Italian peninsula. Leghorn, big Italian naval base and major west coast Italian port, was a prime objective of the American troops. Its capture would give the Allies a good harbor and sea supply point near to the front, thereby greatly improving the difficult supply situation. The retreating Germans, well aware of Leghorn's potential value, had conducted widespread demolitions and made strenuous efforts to block the harbor.



Secret Warfare

The amazing story of Major Stephen Rossetti of the OSS, who carried out many hazardous missions behind the enemy lines, and bluffed thirteen hundred of them into surrendering to him alone.

by RICHARD M. KELLY, U.S.N.R.

Rossetti was attached to the Fifth Army special intelligence "S" force—mobilized to move into Leghorn with the first troops. He and his small detachment were assigned several Intelligence targets, principally the addresses of OSS agents and the location of a few known German agents. As he recalls it:

"We moved up with a company of the Japanese-American 442nd Regiment. Those tough little fellows were generally conceded by both the Americans and the Germans to be the best fighters in the Fifth Army. Just south of Leghorn we were held up for a day while the engineers rebuilt a temporary bridge which a group of American OSS men had sneaked ashore and blasted six weeks earlier. It took a whole battalion a full day to make it passable for even foot soldiers, and another couple of days to repair it sufficiently for vehicles. As I watched the engineers toiling away, I didn't dare tell them that it was some of our outfit who had caused them all the work.

"After we crossed the bridge, we had but minor difficulty in sweeping into Leghorn itself. Once inside the city, however, we found the air full of flying bullets. The Partisans were attempting to settle scores with local Fascists and the few Germans who had not been able to escape with the main enemy forces. The years of Fascism and the long German occupation had kept the lid on these people for a long time. Usually in the brief interval between the withdrawal of the Nazis and the time it took for our MP's to reëstablish order, many personal enemies were liquidated.

"We were inside the city proper about seven-thirty in the morning, and I immediately started to visit the various houses on my target list. Unfortunately they were all located close to the waterfront. The Germans had evacuated everyone from this section, and all of the houses were ominously posted 'MINEN.' We moved as carefully as we could and were lucky enough not to set off any mines, but in another respect we were not so fortunate. None of my contacts could be found. Disappointed, I started next on my list of secondary targets. Here we had more luck.

"ONE of the names given me by OSS was the father of an Italian who worked for OSS in Rome. I asked the local Partisans about him, and they told me that he was under heavy suspicion as a German collaborator. This was hard to believe, as the man in question had been recommended very highly as an Intelligence source by his son. At any event, I was now very interested in finding him. It wasn't until after dark that night that he finally did show up at his house. I gave him the letter from his son, which asked the father to give us all the help he could. The father, a man of about sixty-five, seemed very glad to see us, and asked immediately for help to get him to Rome. I told him that this was not immediately possible, and then questioned him about the suspicious reports I had received from the local Partisans. At this he grew very excited and told me that he would give me some very important intelligence which would show he was friendly to the Allies.

"THEN with the typically Italian flair for the dramatic, he ushered me out into the back yard. While I held a flashlight, he began to dig. In a few minutes he uncovered an old cognac bottle which he picked up and broke against the garden wall. From the shattered bottle he extracted a map which he told me was very secret and very important to the Americans. Back inside the house, he laid out the map on a table and by lantern light showed me that it was

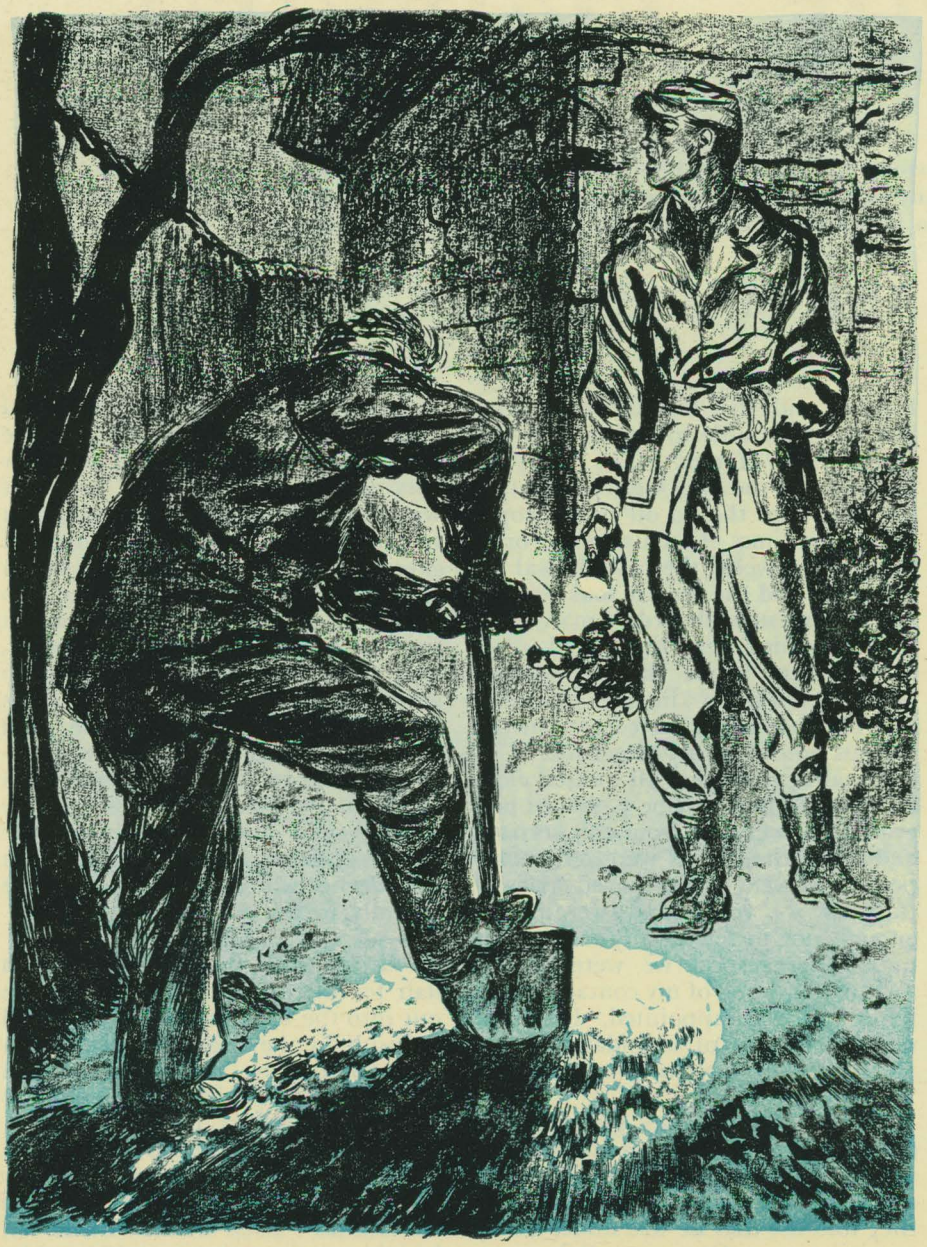
a sketch of Leghorn harbor with the precise location of all the ships which the Germans had sunk to deny us the use of the port. These ships, he explained, had been loaded with salt in Sardinia and sunk at Leghorn around the time of the Anzio landings. His map also gave the location of a large number of German mines.

"I thanked him for this information, which I recognized to be of the highest importance, should it prove to be accurate. I spent the night in his house, as it would have been suicide to venture out into the streets, which were crackling with gunfire and mysterious explosions. At first light, I turned the map over to the head of the 'S' force, who immediately sent it by courier to the American naval unit, attached to the Fifth Army. That same day the Navy had a unit out in the harbor checking the information. It proved to be 100 per cent accurate, and was of the greatest help in quickly clearing the harbor for Allied traffic.

"To show my appreciation, I gave the man a pass to Rome. He left at once, and I went on about other business, feeling that the incident had worked out very well. A few days later I received word from Rome that the man had been picked up there and confessed to having been a former German agent. His coöperation in turning over the German charts of Leghorn harbor had been merely an attempt to buy his way into Allied confidence and escape the retribution due his former activities. I never did hear what eventually happened to this man, but the Navy was mighty appreciative of the information he gave us.

"Following the capture of Leghorn, I was given the job of infiltrating three agents through Florence, which was about to fall to the Eighth Army. Partisans, Indian troops and Germans were still fighting in the streets when Sgt. Lou Silva, 'George,' my Italian jack-of-all-trades, and I started across historic Ponte Vecchio, the only bridge across the Arno the Germans had left standing. This famous old bridge, which could carry only foot traffic, is lined with shops. All were deserted, and we entered one which almost cost us our lives. There were a lot of necklaces lying around, but we didn't touch any of them. Shortly afterward a British MP touched something in that same shop, detonating a mine that not only killed him but nearly blew down the bridge.

"I managed to send out one of the agents in the midst of a sharp street battle, but as the things were too hot for comfort in the city itself, I decided to go downstream a bit, where I thought the remaining two agents would have a better chance of getting through. The Arno at this point was about waist-deep, and the five of us had waded almost over to the German side when the agents told me they thought they were O.K. As I turned to start back, I was shocked to see a party of six German soldiers crossing the river from the north to cut us off about 250 yards downstream. It was broad daylight. There was nothing for us to do but make a run for it. The water slowed us down considerably, and the Germans began shooting at us. Their bullets kicked up the water around us, but we made it to our jeep before they could encircle us, and beat it back to the safety of the British lines. Our two agents had disappeared into the bushes on the German side of the river, and we heard later that they had got through.



"He ushered me into the back yard and began to dig."

"AFTER the Eighth Army took Florence, they moved over to the Adriatic front, and the Fifth Army took over the central and western line. Just beyond Florence lay the deep and rugged barrier of the Apennines. For some time my partner in crime and C.O., Major Jim Abrignani, had been getting vague reports of Partisan activity in these mountains to the north of our lines. Now that the Germans were stiffening up as they pulled back to the high ground, the Fifth Army became vitally interested in having our OSS detachment investigate these reported Partisans. So one fine August morning I headed north with my faithful and very capable Sgt. Lou Silva, and my Italian aide, George. Our mission was twofold: First I was to pick up one of our agents who had sent us word that he was on his way to our lines; and secondly, I was to attempt to establish contact with the reported Partisan forces. As we drove forward to the farthermost American outposts, I nev-

er dreamed that I was starting out on an adventure that would culminate in my directing a force of twenty-seven hundred Partisans, and more tough action than I ever care to have again.

"We spent that first night at an advanced outpost, where we left the jeep. After vainly trying to gather some dope on the enemy up forward, we started out on foot shortly after dawn. To our intense surprise we walked all that morning without encountering a single German. The countryside was almost completely deserted. Finally we ran into an old shepherd who could give us no information, but did guide us to the town of Pracchia, where I was to meet the agent.

"We spent the night in that town, but I could get no accurate information on either the Germans or the agent. I did, however, send back an Italian courier with a message to the officer commanding the advance American positions telling him that I had traveled six miles straight north without encountering a single German soldier. At dawn, moving very carefully, we started north again. About an hour later we spotted a uniformed figure coming down the road toward us. We were sure it must be a German, and jumped into the bushes. As the figure drew closer, we were surprised to recognize that he was wearing British battle dress. George challenged him in Italian. He stopped and seemed about ready to run. At that we all jumped out on the road and covered him with our pistols. As we closed in, I was amazed to see that it was not a man, but a young and very pretty girl of about nineteen.

"In the conversation that followed we learned that she was a member of a Partisan band located in the mountains eleven miles farther north. Her band was just two miles behind the German lines. She had left her group early that morning, and was on her way south to find her sweetheart, who had been a member of an American mission that had been active there some weeks before. From her remarks I assumed it must have been an OSS mission, so I was very anxious to link up with this band. Reluctantly she agreed to lead me back to them. We went forward all the rest of that day, spending the night in a farmhouse just outside a German occupied town. The next day we circled the town and joined the Partisans.

"There were about 750 poorly armed and poorly dressed men in the band. I stayed two days with them to get an estimate of their potential. Their leader told me they had been hiding out in the mountains for two years and could not continue without some assistance from the Allies. They had kept themselves going by an occasional attack on a German supply convoy. In spite of their condition, they seemed eager enough to fight; and when I left them I promised I would be back with arms and supplies which would enable them to render a big service to the American army.

"German patrols came out after us. We could hear movement all around."

"Our trip back was uneventful, but on my return I was ordered to the hospital, where I spent two weeks recovering from a breakdown. As soon as I was on my feet, I received permission to go north again and organize this unit into a fighting force. Fifth Army, which now realized it was soon to be faced with another winter campaign in the mountains, promised the necessary supplies and gave whole-hearted encouragement to the project.

"Lou, George, a Navy radio operator and myself made a rather unimpressive appearance with our one-jeep task force. We had two frying-pans, one pot, a case of ten-in-one rations, a radio, our sleeping-bags, guns and ammunition. I set up our supply base at an advanced position just inside the American lines, which had now moved forward fifteen miles and were in contact with the enemy. Here I left the radio operator and the jeep, with instructions to maintain contact with our headquarters under Major Abrignani, who was to send up supplies. To carry the supplies through the German lines over perilous mountain trails, we recruited fifty mule-skinners from the Partisan ranks and rounded up fifty Italian mules. Half of these came from Fifth Army, and the rest were recruited around the countryside. Soon we had a steady stream of supplies arriving at the mountain hamlet, which the Partisans had taken over as their headquarters.

"We were a few miles behind the main German lines, and quite secure

"As we closed in, I was amazed to see that it was not a man, but a young girl."

against anything but an all-out attack in strength. Our village was on a mountain top which could be reached only by a long exposed narrow road. Our outposts kept this road guarded twenty-four hours a day. As soon as the arms and supplies began arriving, I undertook to reorganize the unit and start training the willing Partisans. They learned very quickly. In a few days they were undertaking small patrol actions to cut German communication lines. Shortly afterward we began nightly attacks on German road convoys. These latter were highly successful, and a lot of fun.

"OSS had supplied us with some highly effective three-pronged steel tire-bursters. These were so destructive to German vehicles that anyone caught in possession of them would be immediately executed. Our men would take up positions along the road at night, and when a column of German trucks came by, they would wait for the first few to pass and then sprinkle the road with the truck-stoppers. When the tires on a few trucks blew, the column would stop, and the swearing Germans would get out to repair the damage. That was our signal to open up with everything we had. The enemy troops could not tell from what direction they were being hit, nor by how many, as we always made as much noise as possible.

"After a few minutes of firing, the Germans would give up their efforts to fight back and try their best to escape down the road to safety. Then the Partisans would rush out from their cover, unload the trucks and send them crashing over the mountainside to destruction. Other times they would run them together and set them on fire, to give the Germans a major job of clearing the highway the next day. The most successful night we had gave us a total of seventeen trucks destroyed. The booty from these raids helped considerably to increase the effectiveness of our growing units.

"As was expected, these actions produced a sharp reaction from the enemy. Mixed German and Fascist detachments attacked us repeatedly, but with little effect. We had the exposed road leading to our main positions completely dominated by automatic fire, and the enemy never had the stomach to take the heavy casualties he would have had to suffer to drive us from our mountain-top position.

"After spending about a month with this first unit, commanded by a man named Amando, I returned to Florence to make arrangements for the arming of other mountain bands who had sent envoys requesting our help. On several trips to sectors farther along the mountain front, I contacted three other bands and arranged for their supply by the same mule-team method. The administration of these widely scattered forces, strung out over an area of about forty miles, was altogether too much for one officer, so my headquarters sent up five additional American officers and twenty-five Italian-speaking American soldiers to take over part of the work. Each officer, with five enlisted men, was assigned to a band.

"Our stream of supplies had had another interesting and unexpected result. The number of the Partisan bands increased by leaps and bounds. American weapons, American clothes, food and cigarettes were a tremendous

attraction. This last development soon became a problem of major proportions. Winter was coming on with its early snows in the Apennines. The major operation of supplying the bands became increasingly difficult. We had increased our mule corps to over two hundred, but by November the heavy snows blocked the mountain trails, and the situation of our Partisans became critical.

"RECOGNIZING the problem, Fifth Army asked if we could have the Partisans pull back toward the American front lines and take up positions more or less in No Man's Land. The front was static along the winter line save for patrols, and an area of about a mile and a half separated the German and American outposts. Fourth Corps, which was in command of the whole western sector of the Fifth Army front, was very impressed with the capabilities of the Partisans, because in the mountains they were more than a match for the Germans. Furthermore, the Allied forces in Italy were critically short of manpower. This made our Partisan brigade a welcome addition to Corps strength.

"Accordingly, we moved our formations back to positions where we had direct supply contact with the American front-line troops. During the whole month of November the Partisans engaged in constant patrol and harassment operations. By December, however, weather conditions grew so severe that the Partisans, who saw that the American and Brazilian troops were being relieved at regular intervals, advised me that they could not take it any longer without relief. I couldn't blame them. For the majority it was their third winter in the mountains. Few were equipped to withstand the freezing cold. It was bad enough for us Americans with our unlimited supply of warm clothing.

"Around Christmas 1944, twenty-five hundred of the Partisans were withdrawn from their advanced positions and given a rest in a rear area. Shortly afterward, in conjunction with the Bulge attack on the Western Front, the Germans struck in the very sector where we had been bolstering the American defenses. The enemy made quite a penetration, and a division of the Eighth Army was brought over to retake the ground and reëstablish the line.

"This setback brought a hurry-up call to reëquip our Partisans and get them back into the fight. The Partisans were willing, and went back into their exposed positions well ahead of the Fourth Corps lines. Shortly afterward Amando's group undertook a major battle which resulted in the capture of Mt. Belvedere. This lofty peak dominated an important sector of the mountain lines. One thousand Partisans participated in this attack, which kicked off one morning at four A.M. Every man knew the ground perfectly, and by nightfall they had moved halfway to the summit. Renewing the attack at dawn, they took the heights against furious German opposition by noon the next day.

"All that day the Germans counter-attacked in strength, but the Partisans held on. Meantime we had sent repeated calls to Corps for support, as we knew we could not hold that exposed position without assistance. Corps must have had other plans at the moment, for we received no assistance, and that night the Partisans withdrew after inflicting very heavy casualties on the enemy. It took the Tenth Mountain Division several days to take that same position some weeks later. In this battle the Partisans suffered two hundred casualties, and we estimated the Germans lost about twice that number.

"During these months of constant action the Partisans naturally took some prisoners. When they were able to do so, they always turned them over to Fourth Corps for Intelligence interrogation. Frequently, however, when the prisoners were taken behind the German lines, this was not possible. In such cases the Partisans had a system which amused me very much. They had learned it from the Germans themselves, who practised it on the Russian front. They would strip the German soldier of all his clothes except his shoes, give him a compass bearing for Berlin and tell him to get going. They had heard that the Germans were doing the same thing to captured Russians and giving them a compass bearing for Moscow. This stunt always gave the Partisans a great laugh, but there was nothing funny about it for the unfortunate Germans.

"Late in February I won my first Purple Heart. The action was one that very nearly meant curtains for Sgt. Lou Silva, George and myself. Our mission for this particular night was the infiltration of three agents. We had planned to leave our agents just in front of the most forward German positions, but in the dark we unknowingly by-passed an advanced enemy outpost. They must have heard us and sent back word to their main front, because suddenly our little party of six came under a very heavy concentration of automatic fire.

"We hugged the frozen snow-covered ground as flares lighted up the whole sector. The barrage continued for five minutes. Luckily none of us was hit, but immediately afterward the German patrols came out after us. We could hear them crawling all around us on their bellies, whispering commands as they searched the whole area. I was scared stiff, and half frozen from lying motionless in the freezing cold. Several times I nearly pulled my icy trigger finger when it seemed that a puffing German was going to crawl right into me. But miraculously they didn't spot us.

"We stayed there, hardly daring to breathe, for about fifteen minutes, until the enemy movement around us died down. Then I whispered to our agents. They realized that we were well within the German lines and agreed to take off on their own. We waited a few minutes more, and then George, Lou and I started back toward the American lines on our hands and knees. We had crawled about twenty yards when I heard movement just ahead of us. I figured we had been trapped, and decided to shoot our way out. All of us immediately opened fire in the direction of the sounds off to our left, hoping to blast our way through to the safety of our lines.

"Seconds after our shots rang out, we were fired on from the direction in which we were firing. At the same time the whole of the main German line to our rear began pouring steel at us. I yelled, 'Let's get out of here!' The three of us fired off our clips at the Germans just ahead of us and were gratified to hear an answering groan. It was less than ten yards away. Then we took off. We ran for ten yards, then hit the ground to fire. Flares were going up from the German lines, and the whole sector was in an uproar.

"WE could hear movement all around us. The second time we got up to run, I was hit in the leg and immediately knocked down again. I must have screamed when I was hit, because Lou, who was just ahead of me, called out, 'Are you hit?' I replied, 'Yes, but keep going.' I knew we had to get out of there. I scrambled to my feet, and although I felt a little weak at first, I was able to keep running.

"Fortunately, the terrain in this sector was thick with bushes, which helped to save us. Lou and I finally made it to the Brazilian lines, where we gave the password and were let through to safety. George had become separated from us in the excitement, and for an hour I thought we had lost him, but he too finally came through.

"The Brazilians took me to a first-aid station, where one of their doctors dug a carbine bullet out of my leg. My paratroop boots had helped to stop the bullet from a deep penetration, and after two days in the hospital, I was up and around again. This happened about mid-February;

and several weeks later I had another narrow escape in an action which, while giving me another Purple Heart, won Silver Stars for one of my American officers and one of our Partisan leaders.

"Due to the severe shortage of Allied troops, three anti-aircraft battalions had been converted to infantry and were holding down a sector of the Fourth Corps front. These units had taken no German prisoners for over two weeks, and our detachment was asked to bag a few Germans for Intelligence purposes. The snow was too deep to penetrate the German lines with agents, so we planned a small attack. To do the job we selected a sub detachment of 125 Partisans who were led by OSS Lieutenant Siedner from Chicago and a Partisan leader named Filippo. We split this group into two striking forces of fifty men each and kept the remaining twenty-five as a mobile reserve. Contact between the two striking forces and the reserve was to be maintained in our customary manner by the use of walkie-talkies. Conversation over these circuits was always carried on in a Sicilian dialect which we could safely assume to be unintelligible both to Germans and to Italians from the northern part of the country.

"Our objective was a small group of ten houses occupied by a detachment of Germans guarding the entrance to an isolated mountain pass. The houses were in two groups, separated by about a hundred yards. We decided to infiltrate to the rear of the German position, hoping to take the rear group of houses first, then storm the remainder on our way back to American lines.

"THE night of the attack was bitterly cold. We prepared our men and moved them into jumping-off position at three-thirty A.M. At four A.M. our two assault forces moved out and headed toward our objective. Our plan worked beautifully. Siedner was leading one group and I the other. Both of our units managed to sneak undetected around the forward enemy positions and surround the rear group of enemy houses without alerting the Jerries.

"According to plan, Partisans from each group stationed themselves with ready hand-grenades at each window. Lou Silva and I were moving cautiously toward the door of one house when a shot rang out from one of the other houses which was being surrounded by a squad of Siedner's group. A German sentry had belatedly spotted some of Siedner's men. This was the signal for everyone to let go with all they had. Grenades crashed through the windows of all the houses, and heavy firing broke out all over the area as the Partisan blitz hit the stunned Germans. Our surprise had been almost complete.

"As the first shots broke out, the Partisans around my particular house flung their grenades through the windows. Immediately afterward Lou Silva kicked open the door. As the door swung open, both Lou and I flung ourselves across the threshold, hitting the floor as our Tommy guns sprayed the dark interior. There was no answering fire, and as the smoke cleared away, we found three Germans inside. One had been killed while trying to get out of bed, and the other two were lying wounded on the floor. Both were calling out 'Surrender.'

"While we were taking this house, the other four houses in the first group had also been taken. All told, we had captured nine Germans, including a first lieutenant. Four of the enemy had been killed against one Partisan killed and only three wounded. After the prisoners were rounded up, we detailed some Partisans under an American sergeant to escort them back to our reserve force, while we prepared to assault the remaining houses. The Germans in these had been thoroughly aroused by our first attack and were wildly firing off mortars, machine guns and rifles. From the random nature of their firing it seemed that they still didn't know exactly where we were. By the time we began our second attack, the sun had come up. None of us felt any too comfortable about our situation in the middle of German positions in broad daylight.

"Siedner and I assigned twenty men to each of the five remaining houses. When our plans were set, we started up the slope in a frontal assault—anxious to wind it up and get out of there as quickly as possible. As we started up the hill, a Partisan friend of mine, just in front of me, was hit in the stomach and fell to the ground. I bent over to speak to him and suddenly I felt as if I had been hit on the back of the neck by a baseball bat. That was the last thing I remembered as I passed out, falling on top of my wounded friend.

"When I regained consciousness, Lou Silva was bending over me. The first thing I noticed was that everything was quiet—a marked contrast to the tremendous racket which was going on when I was hit. Lou and I were all alone, and I was surprised to find that I was still lying across my Partisan friend, who was groaning but still unconscious.

"I asked Lou what had happened. He replied that I had reached the end of my line. I took off my glove and felt the back of my head, which was hurting terribly. It was warm and sticky with blood. Lou then told me that he thought we had taken the objective, as there had been no more firing for the past few minutes. He added that I had been out for twenty minutes. I rolled myself off my wounded Partisan friend and got to my feet. At first I felt pretty weak and dizzy. As I stood up, a couple of Partisans ran up to us. I told them I was all right and asked where Siedner was. They pointed to one of the houses, and I started up to meet him, after directing them to pick up the wounded Partisan and hurry him to the hospital.

"From Lt. Siedner and the others I learned what had happened. Word had quickly spread among the Partisans that the 'Picolo Majore,' as they called me, had been killed. This had inflamed them, and they had attacked the Germans with a spirited charge to avenge my supposed death. The five remaining houses had been taken in a swift bloody fight. So aroused were the Partisans that all nineteen of the German defenders had been killed.

"I FOUND Siedner in a house with three dead Germans. He was bending over Filippo, who had been shot and badly wounded in the leg. Siedner told me that he and Filippo had entered this house together. A German in the loft had raised his gun to shoot down Siedner, who didn't see him. Filippo had thrown himself on top of Siedner, knocking them both to the ground, where Filippo took the German bullet in his leg. By this heroic act he undoubtedly saved Siedner's life. A GI rushed into the house immediately afterward and had shot down the German in the loft. When this man dropped dead, the GI left the house to lend a hand elsewhere, assuming it to be free of Germans. Siedner had stayed to look after Filippo. From Filippo and the GI's I learned the incredible story of what had happened next.

"Siedner was bending over Filippo, who was lying in the dark on the floor near the door, when two other Germans, who had up to this time been hiding in another room of the house, made a rush for him. Siedner had put down his Tommy gun to give aid to the Partisan leader. Now rising up to meet this unexpected assault, he grappled with the two Germans. For five grim minutes the three of them battled silently in a violent hand-to-hand death-struggle. Though of slight build—he weighed only 140 pounds—Siedner was hard as nails and had plenty of guts. His only weapon was his combat knife, but with it he killed those two Germans single-handed. Filippo, helpless on the floor, had watched the whole thing. An American sergeant had seen the final phase of the furious fight, but had been unable to lend a hand or fire at the remaining German

because he was afraid of hitting Siedner.

"It was now an hour and a half since we had opened our attack. Having accomplished our objective, we regrouped our force and raced for our lines, which we reached about seven A.M. In addition to the ten wounded Partisans, we also took back an Italian family, whom we had found in the settlement.

"I went immediately to a first-aid station with the rest of our wounded. The doctor took some small fragments of shrapnel out of my neck. Again I had been very fortunate. My pile jacket had helped to soften the blow, and my wounds were only superficial.

"For their extraordinary heroism in this action, both Siedner and Filippo received well-deserved Silver Stars.

"In addition to the prisoners taken in this highly successful operation, we were able, because of it, to develop a very valuable secret passage through the German lines. We learned of this passage from the Italian family we had taken back with us. They told us of a hidden trail through the mountains which was freely used by black marketeers. We warned the CIC, who picked up quite a few of these enterprising gentlemen. From then on we passed an average of five agents a week through the German lines by this route.

"For the next six weeks we were quite active, sending through agents and directing Partisan patrol actions, as Fifth Army prepared for its final spring offensive. During these busy days we gathered a good deal of information for Fourth Corps and made plans for our own participation in the big drive which everyone hoped would wind up the war in Italy. Our assignment was to push up Route 12 toward Modena ahead of the American 92nd Division. This was highly satisfactory to our Partisans, most of whom came from Modena and the surrounding Po Valley towns. Their enthusiasm for the final push was so great that I almost felt sorry for the Germans who were blocking the way.

"For our final offensive we molded our Partisans into a hard-hitting infantry force of 850 experienced men. This group was split into three battalions, two for the attack and one for a reserve. Assisting me in the handling of this force was Captain Roland Knox, a very competent officer who had distinguished himself earlier by his work among the French Maquis, and five American non-coms. By April first we were deep in the work of preparation. Our mule teams worked overtime moving quantities of ammunition and food into position for the opening attack. This was to be directed against a very strong German position on a

"The hard-pressed Partisans raised a cheer; soon the packages cascaded down."

"I knew we had to get out of there. I scrambled to my feet."

mountain which overlooked and controlled our access to Route 12. There was every indication from our scouts and informers that we were in for a stiff battle.

"In order to get into position for this assault, we had to move our entire force and all our supplies across an undefended mountain. We made this move at night, and by dawn had established ourselves along a two-mile front at the foot of the German-held mountain. Using extreme caution, we had advanced well forward of the American lines to within a half a mile of the unsuspecting and well-entrenched enemy without being detected. Our position, however, was definitely dangerous. The situation in this particular sector was such that the Germans held the high ground on both our right and left flanks as well as their positions directly ahead of us. In moving up, we had established ourselves well inside a valley which was dominated by the Germans. Once we started our attack, it would be very difficult and costly for us to retreat. Our salvation lay in capturing the mountain position dead ahead of us which would open up Route 12 and force a general enemy withdrawal.

"We stayed hidden in our positions all the next day and the night that followed. Meantime our patrols carefully checked the enemy defenses. On other sectors of the front, the British Eighth Army had jumped off and was battling its way forward toward the Po, while the main attack of the American Fifth Army was hammering its way toward Bologna. Ours was to be the opening blast of the general offensive on the Fourth Corps front.

"On dawn of the second day our two attacking battalions jumped off. Just before the attack the long-range artillery of the 92nd Division opened up. Firing at extreme range, their shells were not too effective, but it did give the enemy the impression that we were staging a big attack, and was very helpful in that respect. Our opening assault caught the Germans by surprise, but they quickly recovered and resisted fiercely. Their positions at the top of the mountain gave them every advantage, but our Partisans were not to be denied, and after an hour and a half we had swept up the hill and captured the forward edge of the summit. Here we were stopped cold.

"At the top of the mountain was an exposed plateau which extended back about 250 yards to a group of heavy stone shepherd's shacks. Here the Germans had established their main defenses, well supported by artillery and machine guns. We had already expended a large part of our ammunition in the hot fighting which had brought us to the summit. After several efforts to sweep across the plateau were beaten back, I knew that we couldn't hope to crack the German defenses without additional supplies. I also realized that we could not expect to be resupplied overland during the daytime, as the Germans controlled our line of supply from their positions on the surrounding peaks. While not yet desperate, I recognized that our situation called for drastic measures.

"To ward off the repeated German counter-attacks, I committed our reserve battalion. At the same time I dispatched a carrier pigeon to our rear base with an urgent request for an air resupply of ammunition. Prior to departure from our base, I had made arrangements to have the pigeon loft checked every hour. When things began to look particularly bad at eleven that morning, I sent off the

first pigeon. Nothing happened, and at two-thirty that afternoon I released my second bird. This message was considerably stronger than my first, as it was now obvious to all of us that we were in real danger of running out of ammunition and being overwhelmed by the enemy.

"I never did learn what happened to the first pigeon, but later I heard what took place when the second bird was discovered at the pigeon loft. The sergeant in charge of the pigeons had checked the loft faithfully every hour on the hour for twenty hours without results, when he finally spotted my message. Quickly he turned it over to my buddy, Captain Bill DeSalvo of Long Island, New York. From the vehemence of my language, Bill appreciated immediately that we must be in serious trouble. Racing to the nearest airfield, he commandeered a squadron of eight A-20's which were about to take off on a bombing mission. Without taking the time to clear with higher authority, he ordered the bombs unloaded and began to reload the planes with parachute packs of ammo for us. While all this was going on, an Air Force colonel came into the picture and wanted to know how come. It took some fast talking on Bill's part, but with the help of my very urgent message, he won the argument. I am still thanking God that he did.

"Our ammunition and our spirits were both dangerously low by seven that night when those A-20's began to circle overhead. At the sight of them, the hard-pressed Partisans raised a great cheer, and soon the precious packages came cascading down to us. That air drop gave us a tremendous boost. Now we had enough food and ammunition, and I was no longer fearful that we would be beaten back down the mountain. All that night we held on, defeating every German effort to dislodge us. The next morning we attacked again, but the enemy was too strongly entrenched and at noon I sent back another pigeon. This message, directed to Fourth Corps, asked for air support.

"At five-thirty, the afternoon of the second day, four A-20's came over to bomb and strafe the German positions. We were only two hundred yards from them at some points, so for safety, I ordered our Partisans to pull back down the hill. Those planes did a beautiful job. When they left, our entire force rushed back up the hill and launched an immediate attack across the plateau toward the now wrecked and burning shepherd's shacks. The Germans laid down a heavy fire at our advancing wave and quite a few of our boys never made it to the shacks. We did get there, however. After twenty minutes of fierce hand-to-hand combat, during which the Partisans routed them out of the stone shacks, the last resistance was wiped out and the position was ours. Not a single German was taken prisoner. We later estimated their force to have been about 250. Of this number about half escaped and the rest were killed. We lost seventy-five killed and nearly as many again wounded."

For his heroism and inspiring leadership in this critical attack Major Rossetti was awarded the Silver Star. Although he was the officer in command, he raced across the plateau with the first wave of Partisans, paying no heed to the heavy enemy fire. Coming to a shack, he ran around to the rear and leaped up onto the thatched roof. Then kicking a hole through the roof, he sprayed the interior of the hut with his Tommy gun. When the hole in the roof was big enough, Rossetti jumped down inside, followed by several Partisans. The five Germans who had been defending this particular shack were all killed. This demonstration of courage and leadership helped to inspire the Partisans and aided materially in the success of the attack.

Major Rossetti continues his account: "Following this victory, we rested that night, caring for our wounded, sending back the dead and obtaining an overland resupply of ammunition. The next morning we took off up Route 12. The Germans were in full retreat. We had several sharp fire fights with their rear guards, but by that afternoon we closed in on Pavullo, a city of about five thousand people, and the home of about 150 of our Partisans. As we neared the city, the Partisans inside the town attacked the Germans, and with their help we soon took the place.

"Our triumphal entry into Pavullo was really something. I put the Partisans who came from there at the head of our column and the whole town turned out to give us a terrific reception. They made me the honorary mayor and gave me the keys to both the jail and the town hall. On all sides there was wild rejoicing. The people thronged the streets; cheers and shouts rang out on all sides; our line of march was strewn with flowers as women and girls broke into our smiling ranks to embrace their relatives and greet us.

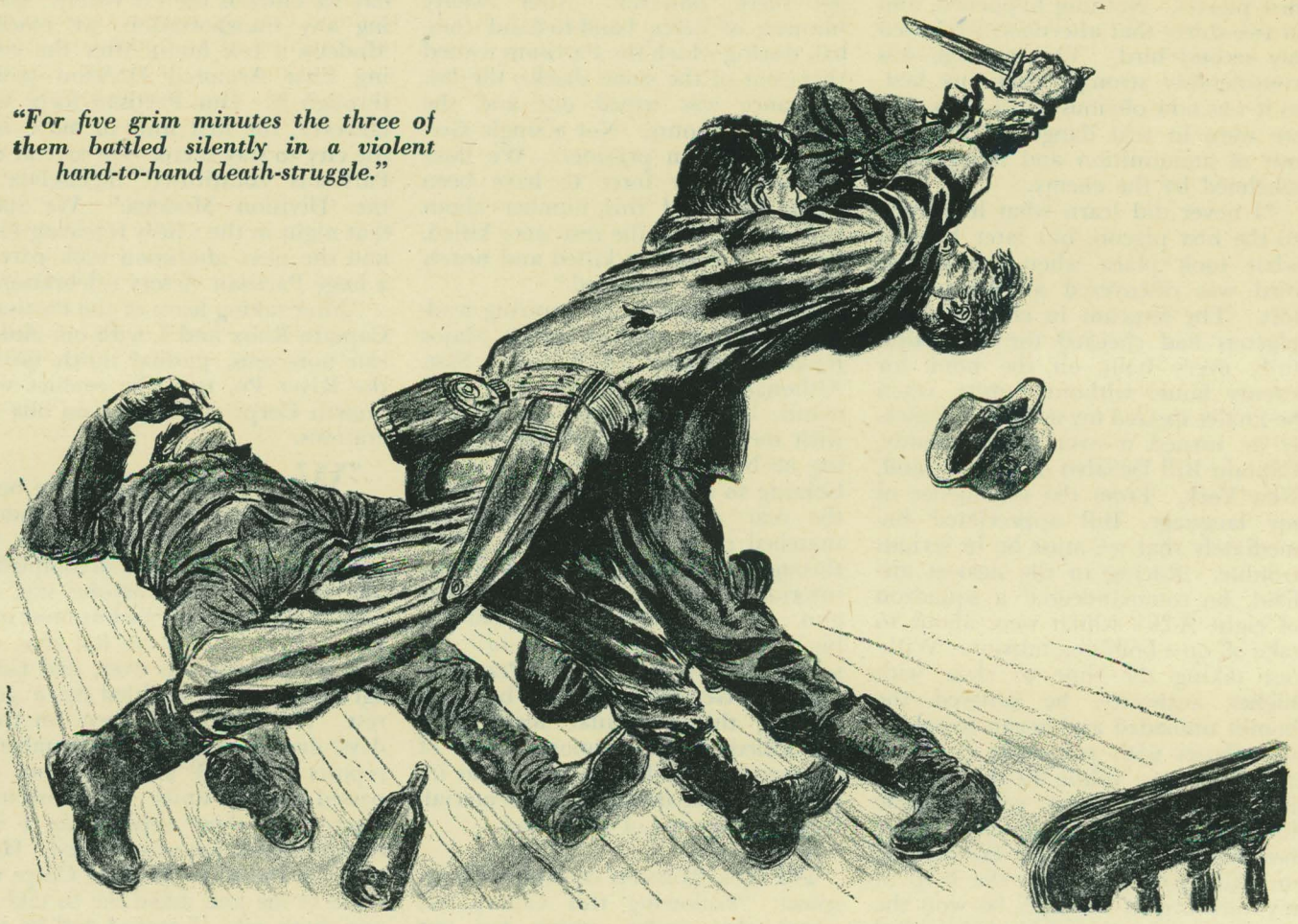
"We spent that night in Pavullo, reveling in the unusual luxury of beds and good food. Early the next morning we started north toward Modena, where most of the Partisans lived. It was impossible to hold them back. They walked for twenty-four hours straight, and at dawn the next day we entered the Po Valley. Lacking any transportation, we reached Modena a few hours after the rushing First Armored Division passed through it. Our Partisan force was, however, the first unit to move into the city to stay there. On arrival our Partisans constituted themselves as the 'Division Modena.' We spent that night in the wildly rejoicing town and the next afternoon took part in a huge Partisan victory celebration.

"After taking leave of the Partisans, Captain Knox and I, with our American non-coms, pushed north toward the River Po, to make contact with Fourth Corps and report on our operations.

"We caught up with Corp headquarters the next day and made a full report of our activities for the past ten days. We had accomplished our mission, and everyone was not only very glad to see us but most complimentary. All of us felt that our part of the war was over, and Corps agreed we were entitled to a good rest. We stayed with them for three days, during which time a number of reports came in about various bypassed German units. I had but mild interest in these reports, as I was convinced our job was finished. However, on the third day, the Corps G-2 came to me and asked me to take on one more job. I agreed and he told me that the 34th Division had just advised him that a large group of SS troops was reported in the vicinity of a town called Nozza, some thirty-five miles from the nearest American troops. The G-2 asked me to investigate the report, as our forces were particularly anxious to bag every last SS man in Italy.

"Anticipating that this would be but a routine investigation, Captain Knox, Sergeant Silva and myself took off in our jeep. I hadn't the remotest idea that in a few hours I would be right in the middle of the most dangerous and exciting adventure that I ever experienced. Sometimes when I think of it now I still get the shakes.

"We drove about twenty miles to a small town called Sabbio, just south of Lake Garda. Here we met a band of 125 Partisans, who told us that a large force of SS troops was just up the road. In the distance I heard artillery fire which told me it was the SS force firing across the southern tip of Lake Garda to keep the road north to Switzerland clear for their escape. A small force of eighty-five Wehrmacht troops constituted the rear guard for the main body of SS. The Partisan leader was anxious to attack this group. We encouraged him and helped him plan his strategy. After an hour-and-a-half skirmish, the Germans indicated that they had had



"For five grim minutes the three of them battled silently in a violent hand-to-hand death-struggle."

enough and would surrender to an American officer. I agreed to talk to their C.O., a lieutenant.

"After a brief parley in which I promised him that his men would be treated as regular POW's and given safe escort to a prisoner cage, he agreed to surrender. Then I queried him about the rest of the German force. He told me that they numbered about thirteen hundred and were fully equipped with their own vehicles and artillery. When I asked him if he thought this SS force would be willing to surrender too, he volunteered to go forward and speak to his commanding officer about it. I readily gave him permission and he started off with a German soldier. I told the Partisans to stay behind with the eighty-five Germans. Then Captain Knox, Sergeant Silva and I began to walk slowly up the road toward the main SS force. We were all pretty excited about the idea of taking the surrender of thirteen hundred SS troopers, particularly since the lieutenant had told us that this force had been Mussolini's personal bodyguard.

"About forty minutes later we received a shock which brought us back to the grim realities of the situation. The young lieutenant came hurrying down the road toward us in a state of great agitation. At first we were surprised to see that he was alone. Our surprise turned to sharp concern when he came close enough for us to notice that his uniform had been stripped of its insignia. Quickly he told us that his commanding officer had been so enraged at his suggestion of a mass surrender that he had stripped his uniform of its insignia and shot dead the German soldier who had gone back with him.

"This was a terrific shock to all of us. What we had thought would be an easy assignment now seemed to be full of danger. At first I was all for getting out of there on the double, arguing that we had somehow managed to stay alive this late in the war and I for one didn't hanker to be shot down like a dog because some lousy SS was upset about Hitler's losing the war. Lou Silva took an opposite view and suggested that we go forward and talk to the Nazi commander under a white flag. Finally I consented.

"Before leaving, however, I asked Captain Knox to take the jeep and drive as fast as possible to the nearest American troops, which we estimated to be some thirty-five miles farther south. Knox didn't want to leave us, but I was anxious to have some American forces know the details about this SS outfit and incidentally to be aware that we had gone forward to contact them under a flag of truce. After Knox took off I talked a little more with the German lieutenant. He told me that his C.O. was very stubborn and had a nasty temper. This I could readily believe. He added that while most of the regular German soldiers felt that the war was lost, many of the SS were such fanatics that they were prepared to fight to the death.

"It was with mixed emotions that I started forward with Lou Silva, who carried a white handkerchief aloft on his carbine. In my earlier surrender talk with the German lieutenant I had made numerous references to the main body of 'my troops' which I assured him were just down the road. This had served the purpose with him as he was not very anxious to do any more fighting. The fanatical SS with their tough commander would probably take a lot more convincing. I was beginning to formulate some fantastic details about my phantom force when my reveries were abruptly stopped by a harsh command to halt. We had come to the first SS outpost.

"We halted and I called out for their 'commandant.' The SS troopers kept us standing in the middle of the road for about fifteen minutes. I was rapidly getting more nervous as we knew from many experiences that these boys didn't always play by the rules. Then I spotted a six-foot-four

SS major coming toward me. He was spotlessly attired in full-dress uniform and had a staff of six other German officers with him. I am only five and a half feet tall myself and this huge Nazi towered over me as he stationed himself arrogantly a few feet away. We saluted and then he addressed me in guttural German. I couldn't talk German and he couldn't talk English or Italian so we finally tried schoolboy French at which neither of us was very good.

"I STARTED in to explain why I had come to ask his honorable surrender, stressing that I commanded three full infantry battalions supported by eighty-five tanks. As I spoke these terrific lies, all I could think was that except for Silva and myself there probably wasn't a single American soldier within thirty-five miles. The poorly armed Partisans a mile or two down the road were hardly enough to watch the eighty-five German prisoners we had taken earlier. It was when I thought of these prisoners that I added the eighty-five tanks. The three infantry battalions did not seem to faze the German, but he raised his eyebrows at the extraordinary number of tanks. Sensing his distrust and spurred on by the thought that he might at any minute shoot us down as he had the German soldier a few minutes before, I hastened to explain that we were a very special task force. Once started, I became a convincing liar. The Nazi officer seemed satisfied with this explanation, and I thought we were making progress, when without warning his adjutant, a surly-looking captain, shouted in perfect English: 'Don't do it! Don't surrender! This American is a fake.'

"I took a quick look at the source of this startling interruption and turned back to the major. Before he could develop the point, I shifted the conversation to the dramatic events then taking place in Germany, pointing out that his chief, Himmler, was already in contact with the Allies. He hadn't heard this, and neither had I, for that matter; but it interested him greatly and I began to play it for all it was worth. Their communications with Germany were irregular, so I spun an elaborate story emphasizing that German soldiers everywhere were surrendering to General Eisenhower rather than to the Russians because the Americans treated them better. Eisenhower fascinated him. He asked me how a general of German background could command the American forces. I assured him that he was the best man available.

"By this time we had been talking for over an hour, and there still wasn't the slightest hint of surrender. All the time he glared down at me, his arms on his hips and his whole manner completely menacing. While we were still talking, Captain Knox drove up in the jeep. He spoke very good German and our conversation improved, even if the general atmosphere continued to deteriorate.

"Finally I became convinced that our cause was hopeless and began to concentrate on getting out of the situation alive. Slowly I started to back up. Down the road I could see several hundred SS troopers who were eying the tense conference with an ominous interest. I could also see a number of anticraft guns and machine guns all in position for action. The several German officers were talking among themselves. When I was about fifteen feet from the glowering major, I made my final pitch: 'We came forward only to save you from further unnecessary bloodshed. Now I return to my troops and prepare for the attack!'

"Luckily at that moment a flight of American bombers came overhead. The German anti-aircraft gunners snapped into their positions. Suddenly, without any warning, the SS major spoke. 'I will surrender my entire command!'

"This was so totally unexpected that I nearly fell over. The other German officers began to plead with him but he silenced them with a curt order. The nearby SS troopers overheard the decision and several of them broke into tears. Quickly we rushed into the details of the capitulation. It was now late in the afternoon and I was very apprehensive about having thirteen hundred armed SS troopers on my hands after dark.

"The Germans had their own vehicles and I suggested that they use them to drive to the American headquarters. They asked if they could keep their arms to protect themselves from the Italian Partisans. To this I readily agreed as the three of us Americans had no way to disarm them had we so desired.

"Once he had given his word, the SS major lived up to it. Some of his men wanted to make a break for the hills, but he ordered them into the trucks and like a band of wooden soldiers they meekly obeyed. Their whole column included eighty-five trucks, four *Volkswagen* and twelve civilian cars. In addition they had eight anti-aircraft guns and four anti-tank guns. Putting our jeep, with Lou Silva at the wheel in the rear, Knox and I got into the major's car to lead the column. We started off at dusk and headed for Brescia some thirty-five miles away. The ride that followed was one I will never forget.

"It was soon dark and I ordered all vehicles to turn on their headlights. Every so often I would hear the crack of German burp guns and rifles as my thirteen hundred prisoners exchanged shots with Partisans who probably assumed that we were a German column rushing up to oppose the American advance. Under the circumstances I was not anxious to stop and make explanations. Frequently the SS major asked me where 'my troops' were and I always responded that I was taking him farther back to a place where he and his men could meet a high-ranking American officer and get better care than was possible from a 'special force.'

"Two hours after starting we pulled up at the temporary POW cage in Brescia. There the officer in charge wouldn't believe me when I reported that three of us had thirteen hundred SS troopers outside, all fully armed and riding in their own vehicles. As a matter of fact, I myself still find it hard to believe!"

Major Rossetti's final decoration for the war, a Bronze Star awarded by the Fourth Corps of the American Fifth Army for this last exploit, carried the following citation:

"MAJOR STEPHEN O. ROSSETTI, 01295088, Infantry, United States Army. For heroic achievement in action on 29 April 1945. While on a mission of organizing Partisans in the area of Pavone, Italy, Major Rossetti with another officer and enlisted man was informed of a German force of approximately fifteen hundred SS troops in the vicinity of Nozza. Without hesitation Major Rossetti organized a small Partisan band and moved toward the enemy. At Sabbio, he and his command surprised and captured a German officer and eighty-five men.

"Leaving the Partisans with the German prisoners of war, Major Rossetti, accompanied by the other officer and enlisted man and with the German officer as a guide, proceeded to Nozza where he convinced the German SS Commander that a strong American Force was close at hand, whereas the area was in fact almost completely devoid of any Allied troops. The SS Commander was particularly obstreperous, as SS are wont to be; nevertheless he surrendered and disarmed his command under the perseverant threats boldly made by Major Rossetti. Major Rossetti loaded the enemy force into their own vehicles and brought them safely back to Brescia where they were turned over to an American prisoner-of-war cage. This action of Major Rossetti resulted in the surrender of 1,275 German officers and men, 105 vehicles and fifteen guns. The courage and disregard for personal safety displayed by Major Rossetti are exemplary and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the Armed Forces of the United States. Entered military service from Charlestown, Massachusetts."

BLUE BOOK

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Readers' Comment*

High Adventure on Slick Paper!

Since you welcome constructive criticism, here goes: My time for reading is limited, and I prefer fiction in the moments that I can spare. BLUE BOOK *was recommended to me by a friend. I had often taken a copy out of a magazine rack, only to put it back without buying it. The cover attracted me, as no doubt it has attracted countless others. But I imagine that many others did not purchase it for the same reason I didn't. Like myself, they were unfavorably impressed with the newspaper stock composing the body of the magazine.*

But for the urging of a friend, I would have lost many of the pleasures locked in the newsprint pages. Stories of such high standards deserve a better medium. Sir, I'm positive that on slick paper, the magazine would be a natural selection to those who never read it. Or couldn't you at least use 50-50 slick paper and newsprint?

John Krill.

We're Proud of This One:

In March the Indiana State Legislature passed the following resolution:

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

WHEREAS, the BLUE BOOK Magazine by means of a front and back cover design painted by the distinguished artist, Herbert Morton Stoops, has depicted the capture of Vincennes in 1779 by George Rogers Clark, for its hundreds of thousands of readers throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, this glorious episode, leading to the establishment of the Wabash River post as the first capital of the great Northwest Territory, is one in which all Indiana finds a thrill of pride: Therefore

Be It Resolved By The Senate Of The General Assembly Of The State Of Indiana, The House Of Representatives Concurring:

That the Eighty-fifth General Assembly does hereby express to Donald Kennicott, editor of BLUE BOOK Magazine and Herbert Morton Stoops, the artist, Indiana's appreciation and gratitude for this fine mark of historical distinction accorded our pioneer forefathers.

*The Editors of BLUE BOOK are glad to receive letters of constructive criticism and suggestions; and for the ones we publish each month we will pay the writers ten dollars each.

Letters should not be longer than two hundred words; no letters can be returned and all will become property of McCall Corporation. They should be addressed: Editor of Letters Blue Book Magazine, 230 Park Ave., New York 17, New York.

BLUE BOOK

June, 1947 **MAGAZINE** Vol. 85, No. 2

Two Complete Novels

Short Stories

Stories of Fact and Experience

Special Features

Except for articles and stories of Real Experience, all stories and novels printed herein are fiction and are intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or to actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence

DONALD KENNICOTT, *Editor*

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had had a tot of hot rum, hoisted the boat to her davits.

"Here you are, Captain," said Clegg, and handed a sextant to the lost vessel's skipper.

"Thank you, Mister. Thank you, indeed! When we get home my wife will be writing to thank you too for saving her cat, which I persuaded her to let me take to sea to bring us good luck. You've saved my crew and me, and saved us our flag too, as well as my wife's cat and my sextant. How shall I ever be able to repay you?" said the schooner's skipper.

And young Will Clegg said quietly, having downed his rum, "Why, that's all right. A fellow does his job." And he went below to his cabin, and standing naked he looked at his ship pictures and laughed as he rubbed his cold hide dry with a towel.

WHAT Clegg said later, when he received from William McKinley, President of the United States, a big gold medal "In recognition of gallantry at sea," no one ever knew. But the last time we met he showed me the medal.

"You should have seen my girl's eyes when she saw it! It was the first time ever she'd heard about that schooner. As soon as I've my master's ticket, she's going to marry me," said he.

But Clegg never married that girl, or any other. It was an old saying amongst us sailors of the old days of sail that, "The sea always takes the best." He was one of the very best.

And what of *Balclutha?*

Long afterward, when—thanks to the ditch at Panama—steamers had taken the sea from us sailormen, the *Balclutha* was sold and her name changed. Her new owners, the Alaska packers, named her *Star of Holland.* For a few years she sailed between San Francisco and the salmon canneries up North: then she was sold again when steam took that trade too. *Pacific Queen,* her new owner named her. I saw her a few years ago, disconsolate by a San Francisco wharf; a sign at the head of her gangway stated that admission for the public was twenty-five cents.

Now, sold once again, *Balclutha* is to be a "gambling ship" over at Sausalito on the other side of San Francisco Bay. Men in soft shirts and fine shoes, with rings on their fingers, and money in their pockets—women in low-necked dresses, with painted fingernails and carmined lips, perfumed and powdered, will tread where long ago young Will Clegg trod, and will gamble for dollars. No one will know that a ghost passes among them—a ghost with a smile on his lips, who when living, playing a man's game, was king among gamblers. Only *Balclutha* will know.

The Burma Mission

THE room was full of chattering diplomats and military figures. It was Washington of 1943—a typical smart cocktail party attended by Captain and Mrs. Sherman B. Joost.

"Pete" Joost sat talking politely to a Government official. His mind was not on the conversation but on his own problem: For months now he had been detailed to this cocktail-party routine, carrying out his assignment as an officer attached to the foreign liaison division of the War Department. He knew the work was important—probably the softest job in the service; but what he wanted was action—action overseas.

He spotted an old friend of his wife's, and over a drink discussed his plight. The man promised to see what he could do. That promise was the introduction to some of the most exciting war years experienced by any living American. For a few weeks later the thirty-one-year-old Princeton graduate was ordered to report to the mysterious Office of Strategic Services for a secret mission in Afghanistan.

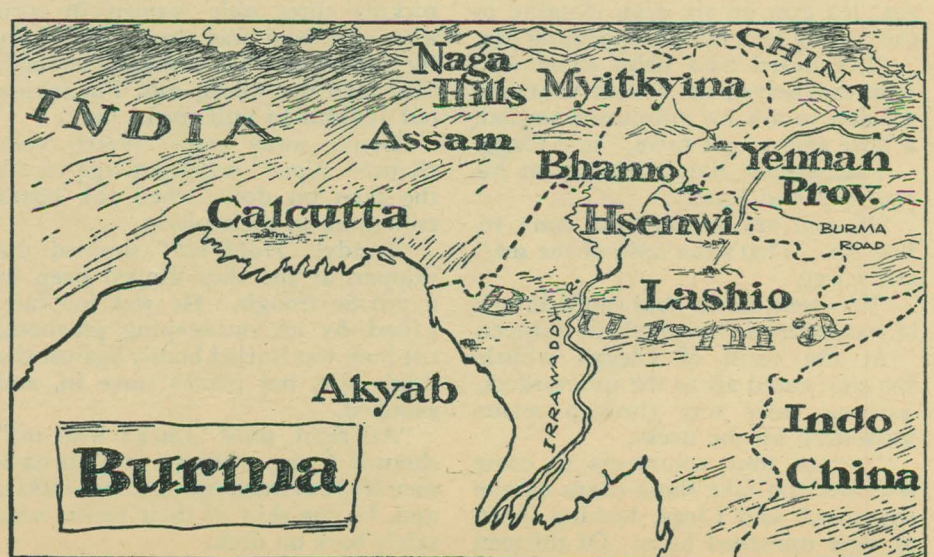
"You will report," said his OSS commander, "to a Colonel Eifler at 101 Detachment in northern Assam."

"Yes sir," answered the amazed Joost, "but where is northern Assam?"

It was April of 1943 when young Captain Joost headed west from Washington on a tedious sixty-five day trip to Karachi, India. On arrival he discovered to his chagrin that none of the port authorities had ever heard of Colonel Eifler, of OSS, or even of northern Assam. They suggested that he try going to Delhi.

It took Joost all of three weeks to locate and reach the base among the tea plantations of northern Assam. Two months after leaving Washington, he pulled up at an overseer's cottage—headquarters of the Office of Strategic Services, CBI. Here he found a tiny detachment of six American officers and ten enlisted men with a group of natives—the nucleus of what was to develop into one of the most famous units in the secret files of OSS.

Here too he met the amazing Colonel Eifler—one of the truly unbelievable individuals of the many spectacular characters who served in the wartime secret service of the United States. In short order, Eifler banished all prospects of Joost's mission to Afghanistan. As commander of the



The colorful story of OSS Major Sherman Joost, who organized a unit of wild Kachins and fought a very successful war in the jungle.

by

LT. COMDR. RICHARD M. KELLY

Illustrated by John McDermott

fledgling OSS establishment in the China-Burma-India Theater, the redoubtable Colonel needed every man he could wangle from whatever source. With hardly time to get his bearings, Captain Joost was plunged into the busy routine of 101 Detachment. His first assignment involved the training of Anglo-Burmese OSS agents whom Eifler had recruited for intelligence work behind the Japanese lines in Burma.

These alert operatives were taught the rudiments of operational intelligence, radio communications, weapons and demolitions. Then they would be infiltrated either by parachute or overland to begin their highly important missions. American personnel to accompany these natives were also given similar training, with heavy emphasis on survival in the jungle. Though Joost did not realize it at the time, some of the lessons learned during this period, were later to play an important part in saving his life.

The military situation in Burma and the nature of the country made vital the part that these OSS agents were beginning to play in the Allied strategy. When Joost arrived at 101, the Japs were not only supreme in Burma but were massing heavy forces for an invasion of India. In 1942 General Stilwell and the British had been chased across Burma and given what "Vinegar Joe" aptly termed "a hell of a beating." With only a handful of American troops, Stilwell in the following months had trained two Chinese divisions with which he now hoped to drive the Japs out of northern Burma and reopen the overland life-line to China.

To the south, the British 14th Army under General Slim was holding the Japs on the threshold of India at Akyab. Stilwell's ambitious plans required dependable information on the jungle-hidden Japanese. The nature of the terrain was such that air observation was completely inadequate for this vital purpose. Also Stilwell with his untested Chinese

"Up to number six everything went like clockwork. Then number seven cracked up after hitting a small hummock."

"A minute and a half later, Railton again came tearing through the

forces was facing some of Tojo's finest troops; and at that time the Japanese were reputed to be unbeatable as jungle fighters. Success of the Allied plan required harassment of the Japanese behind their own lines. This guerrilla warfare and the securing of intelligence were the two assignments given to Detachment 101. Their fulfillment was to make history—a history in which Pete Joost was to play a leading part. . . .

After a month of working with the Anglo-Burmese, Pete Joost was transferred to the dangerous and trying detail of dispatching air drops to the agents, both native and American, already in the field. These tricky flights, on which many C-47's were lost, kept Joost busy until the end of 1943.

FOLLOWING the Quebec Conference, at which Lord Louis Mountbatten was made chief of the Southeast Asia Command (splitting the theater between him and Stilwell), and major plans were decided for an Allied offensive, General Donovan arrived to inspect 101 Detachment. It was on this trip that General Donovan made his spectacular and daring trip with Eifler in the latter's tiny plane to visit the OSS men behind the Japanese lines. The Chief's dramatic appearance in the secret jungle camp gave the men of 101 a tremendous boost.

For Captain Joost, General Donovan's arrival meant something very special—an exciting new assignment to join the fabulous Army Air Force Colonel Philip "Flip" Cochran, Commanding Officer of the newly formed First Air Commando Force. This was a crack glider unit destined to spearhead a top-secret aërial invasion of north central Burma. Like most Americans, Joost had heard of Cochran, more for his prominence in Milton Caniff's cartoon strip "Terry and the Pirates" than for his very great achievements with the Air Force in North Africa. Cochran had charge of the air side of Major General Ord Wingate's invasion—the greatest Allied glider operation of the war up to that time.

Starting in January, 1944, Captain Joost worked feverishly with Colonel Cochran, perfecting details for the great air operation. The gliders, fighters, bombers and transports participating in the operation were all supplied by the American Air Force. The two divisions of troops were all British, and included big black West Africans, wiry little Gurkhas, tall powerful Sikhs, rugged Kachins, and British Tommies.

All these troops had to be trained for glider operations, and the ranking officers had to be convinced of the feasibility of glider tactics. Joost and Cochran participated in many demonstrations, including a spectacular night rehearsal in which fifteen fully loaded gliders made a night landing in a typical Indian rice paddy. Lord Louis Mountbatten and his staff witnessed this demonstration, which was carried off perfectly, although the glider pilots had never seen the paddy before. The fifteen big gliders, each with twelve fully armed soldiers, landed silently and without a hitch. Then as a clincher, Cochran had several loaded gliders whisked aloft by the C-47's. The tow-ropes of these gliders were hung between two poles which carried marking lights. Then while the big brass gazed in amazed disbelief, the C-47's, each trailing a big hook on a reel, came over at a throttled-down speed of ninety miles an hour, and jerked the gliders aloft. Mountbatten's comment was typical: "The most impressive sight I have ever seen." The big glider landing was given the final green light.

The historic take-off from Hailakandi in India on March 8, 1944, was a moment of high drama, as recalled by Captain Joost: "The plan was to land two divisions, one at each of the two selected paddies which were called Broadway and Piccadilly. Commanding the two divisions was Major General Ord Wingate,* youthful, bearded Britisher who had led a British column overland through the Burmese jungle some months before. Lord Louis, Col. Cochran, Wingate and many other officers were waiting for the take-off, which was scheduled for six P.M. The fully loaded gliders were strung out down the field for a mile and a half. Each C-47 was to pull two gliders.

"The planes were warming up," Joost relates, "when a last-minute reconnaissance plane flew in with new photographs of the two landing-grounds. Fifteen minutes before the first plane was scheduled to take off, the pictures were rushed to the commanding officers, with whom I was

*Killed in an airplane crash March 24, 1944. Only now as we go to press (April, 1947), the newspapers report the discovery of his body.

enclosure and dashed by us, clearing the corpses with a mighty leap."

standing. The pictures showed huge teak logs strewn all over the Piccadilly paddy. It didn't seem possible that it could be just a coincidence. Had the Japs got wind of our top-secret invasion plans? As I looked at the pictures I knew it would have been suicide to attempt to glide-land a division of troops on that paddy. Fortunately, Broadway was still free of obstacles. We all looked at Wingate. Would he call off the whole operation, which had been approved by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, and into which had gone months of planning and tremendous preparations? Wingate just stood there calmly combing his flowing beard, studying the pictures and listening to the comments of Cochran and the other experts. Then he made his decision. 'We'll land both divisions at Broadway.'

"AS soon as the order was given, I raced to my glider, which was number one on the third plane. I was carrying a ninety-pound pack filled with jungle kit, K rations, extra clothes and extra ammo. In addition I carried a fully loaded tommy-gun, a carbine, a .45, and a sack of grenades. None of us had any idea how long we would be in the jungle or what we would come up against, so we went prepared for a long stay and lots of action. I wedged myself into the last seat in the glider, and strapped myself in. We were so closely packed, and loaded with so much gear that movement was impossible. Save for the American pilot and co-pilot, I was the only other white man aboard. My companions were all West African blacks and Kachins. There [illegible] solutely no conversation a[illegible] plane. We took off easi[illegible] and soon were riding in [illegible] about seventy-five yar[illegible] plane. I could see [illegible] riding nicely slightly h[illegible] tle to our rear.

"It was about six-f[illegible] left Hailakandi, an[illegible] cut loose at eigh[illegible] was fairly brigh[illegible] planes ahead of [illegible] denly the colu[illegible] nal. We had [illegible] oad-way. Below me I could see the paddy. I knew it was a hundred yards wide and about six hundred long—small enough, but from the air it looked positively tiny. Our C-47 started down and then zoomed up as the pilot evidently changed his mind. We circled once, and then as we turned back toward the paddy, I watched our glider pilot release the tow-rope, and without a sound we headed toward the ground.

"The landing was fine, and the second we came to a stop, I was out of the glider. The field was deathly still; not a sound could be heard anywhere. It was an eerie sensation. Everyone jumped out quickly and pushed our glider over to the side of the field to make way for those to follow. The timing called for a landing every two minutes. We had barely cleared our glider when *swish,* in came another, and then another and another. Ours had been the third to land; and up to number six, everything went like clockwork. Then number seven cracked up after hitting a small hummock in the middle of the field. The impact split the glider, and the soldiers were spilled [illegible]ut onto the field. Before we could [illegible] enough men together to move [illegible] wrecked glider, another six or [illegible]en came crashing into it and made [illegible]ad mess.

"Save for this unfortunate acci[illegible]nt, which cost us about ninety killed [illegible]d the same number injured, the [illegible]ding went off perfectly. That first [illegible]ght 125 gliders landed approximate[illegible]y fifteen hundred troops. In spite of [illegible]he casualties, both Cochran and Wingate were reported to be very pleased. They figured that they would have lost a great many more to the Japs and sickness in the jungle had they attempted to move in overland.

"Immediately after the landing, the British officers in charge set up a perimeter defense. We were a hundred miles behind the Jap lines, and the nearest Japs were figured to be just fifteen miles away. We later learned that they were completely unaware of the fact that a large enemy force had dropped in on them. I stayed awake that first night, but save for those on guard, most of the troops slept.

"The next day things really began to happen at our aërial beachhead. C-47's came in with engineers, bulldozers and all sorts of equipment to build an airfield and a base. With them also came thousands of more troops to form the several offensive columns which were to take off through the jungle to strike at the Japs. With the daylight air activity, all secrecy of the operation was naturally blown, and the Jap bombers soon came over to blast the field. The British flew in heavy antiaircraft de-

fenses, and though the Japs were very persistent in their bombing countermeasures, their damage was limited. We could not understand why we didn't draw an immediate attack from Japanese troops, and it wasn't until sometime later that we learned the reason. At the very same time that the Wingate thrust was being launched at the Jap rear, the Japanese had opened an all-out offensive at Akyab to break through into India. Five days after the landing, however, a force of five hundred Japs moved into position about eight miles from our new base. Brigadier Calvert, a dashing commander who had been middleweight boxing champion of the British Army, took out a force of three hundred Gurkhas to intercept them. After a stealthy night approach, they crashed into the Jap camp at dawn and practically exterminated them.

"ONE of the most startling things in the build-up of the two divisions and all their supplies was the large number of cattle flown in for the native troops. I'll never forget the surprise of the American Air Force crew-men when these cows were put aboard their planes. Each animal had a smiling black man stati[oned] at its rear to intercept with his [hands] any unscheduled droppings. [I] don't think these Air Corps boys [ever] got over that one. . . .

"My assignment, once the land[ing] was completed and the field secure[d] was to join up with a British colu[mn] called Dah Force. This group of se[v]enty-five men was under the comman[d] of a British Lt. Colonel, and was made up of twenty-five British Tommies and fifty Kachins. There was also an Anglo-Burmese officer, two other British officers and myself, a lone American. Our mission was to strike out two hundred odd miles across Burma for the Chinese border, where we were to join up with some reported Chinese guerrillas. In addition to this we were to attack Japanese traffic on the Bhamo-Myitkyina road, and recruit Kachin tribesmen, once we reached their territory on our way to China.

"On the sixth day after landing, our little group set out early in the morning. Before leaving, I left most of my extra gear at the airfield; and it wasn't long before I began to discard most everything but my jungle essentials, weapons and ammo.

"The six-weeks march that followed was a nightmare. I was in no shape for any extensive hiking, certainly not for tramping through the jungle and trying to keep up with the untiring Kachins. We had barely moved out when we discovered that we were being chased by the Japs, and from the second day they were constantly after us. Our rear guards, among whom I unfortunately almost always found myself, had numerous skirmishes with these Japs, whom they reported to be about two hundred in number. We were constantly forced to detour to avoid Jap concentrations, as we didn't want battle, and were in no shape for it.

"Our usual procedure on approaching a village was to fan out and then burst in on the natives. First we would grab the head man and try to find out the situation about the Japs. Then we would dig up some food, take a few hostages to guard against treachery, and push on. Nights were usually spent in villages after we had elaborately booby-trapped the trails in every direction.

"For the most part the jungle was quiet, save for colonies of howling monkeys. We didn't see many wild animals save for an occasional wild elephant; but we saw plenty evidence of tigers, who frequently attacked our pack-animals at night. In the morning we would find the half-eaten mule, usually dragged several hundred yards from our camp. Unfortunately, we never got a shot at these tigers.

"One of the strangest parts of this terrible march was the amazing per[formance] our very British colonel

"Col. Jhao. He was an amazing character."

would put on in every little village. Immediately after our arrival he would have the chief call all the natives together for a speech. Then after the Union Jack was run up on the main pole, he would through an interpreter deliver an impassioned speech about how the British were back, they had nothing to worry about, everything was all right and Burma was rapidly being liberated. Almost without fail in the middle of this rousing speech of assurance a little native would rush up with news that the Jap forces were pushing up the trail, hot on our tails. Immediately, the speech would be broken off, the Union Jack would be hoisted down, and our whole column would go tearing out the other end of the village. I never could figure out the sense of this peculiar performance, and I can't imagine what the Burmese thought of it.

"Crossing the Bhamo-Myitkyina road, we had to dodge between Japanese trucks. Our men were keen to attack a few of them, but the Colonel decided against it. We lost three of our mules in this crossing. They broke away from their guides and ran off with most of our radio equipment and some other important luggage. Once across this road we were in Kachin country, and we managed to recruit an additional fifty men.

"Here I was initiated into some of the Kachin fighting tactics, and I quickly came to understand why both the British and the Japs had never been able to exert any real control over these fiercely independent hill people. Favorite defensive and jungle ambush weapon of the Kachins was the use of *pungyis*. These were eight- or nine-inch bamboo stakes, sharpened to pin-points and hardened in fire. Originally developed as a primitive method of catching wild pigs and other animals, they were adapted to jungle warfare with results as effective as they were not pretty to behold.

"The Kachins would plant these *pungyis* by the thousands for ten yards on either side of the trails leading to their villages, and along a stretch of about a hundred and fifty yards. They would be firmly set about four inches apart at an angle pointed toward the trail. Being bamboo, they matched the foliage perfectly and were almost impossible to see. After preparing a trap, the Kachins would set up a roadblock and lie in wait for a Jap column. Lying quietly until the leading Japs were just a few feet from them, they would open fire. The surviving Japs would throw themselves to the side of the trail to avoid the fire, and become hopelessly impaled on the hundreds of razor-sharp wooden spikes. Once so caught, it was almost impossible to extricate oneself, as every movement would only bring new and bloody

wounds. Following the ambush, the Kachins would either finish off their victims with gunfire, or just leave them to die.

"About the middle of May, when we were still a day's march from the old abandoned British fort at Nahpaw, on the Chinese border, which was our destination, we were heavily attacked by a strong force of Japs at nine in the evening. We decided to push ahead, and marched all that night, arriving at the fort at six next morning.

"Tired from our forced march on the end of an exhausting six-weeks chase, we were all delighted to reach our major objective where we hoped to meet up with the Chinese guerrillas, who we understood were in league with Chiang Kai-shek's famed secret service chief, Ti Li. The fort was situated on the top of a big hill that looked over into the Chinese province of Yennan. It was an ancient brick and wood structure and hadn't been occupied for many years. A fifteen-foot stockade with two massive doors at each end of the enclosure surrounded the main building, and a number of small cubicles which were ranged around it. These looked like separate quarters for the men. The area inside the stockade was about seventy-five by fifty yards. Two small villages, one Kachin and one Chinese, were at the foot of the hill. It was a very poor defensive position, for heavy undergrowth came up the hill almost to the edge of the stockade, which in itself didn't look very substantial. The hilltop was completely exposed, and would have been a perfect set-up for mortaring.

"SHORTLY after our arrival we met the Chinese guerrilla leader, and after a conference in which we outlined our plans, he agreed to help us. This development made us all feel good, and we unpacked for a long-needed rest. Unfortunately it was very short-lived. The Colonel went down to the villages to check on the local situation, and most of the rest of us prepared to turn in after posting guards. Along about ten-thirty our attention was directed to a trail which led down the opposite mountain from China. Long columns of men were headed in our direction! The natives informed us that these were Japanese troops, though they were dressed in Chinese clothes. By one-thirty we had counted twelve hundred of them, and began to get really worried. They were still three or four miles away, but evidently coming toward us.

"We sent a worried message to the Colonel in the village, but he sent back word not to worry and to hang on, as he was bringing up reinforcements. This didn't make much sense to the rest of us, but we immediately

"Miraculously it proved to be a big firecracker, not a grenade."

set up gun positions both inside and outside the stockade and grimly awaited developments. Along toward dusk our Colonel returned bringing with him three very young Kachin boys. These were the 'reinforcements' he had promised! We were all mad as hell, and his weak promise that more would be up later hardly reassured us. More did come up later, but they weren't reinforcements.

"After the Colonel arrived, I left the main building of the fort to take care of a British captain who was suffering from a very severe case of malaria. I helped him into one of the smaller cubicles, and was just making him as comfortable as possible when an uproar of rifle and machine-gun shots broke out. I shook my companion, who woke up, and together we peeked outside. It was not quite dark, and we couldn't see a thing, though there were bullets kicking up all around us. We had just stepped outside and were standing in the shadows of our cubicle when one of the stockade doors, about fifteen yards to our left, burst open, and a crowd of armed men started to rush inside the stockade. Mike and I opened up on them with our tommy-guns and piled them up in the half-opened gateway. For fifteen seconds there was dead silence, and then we cautiously went over to the gate to look at the corpses. We turned them over, and they looked like Chinese to us, but we hadn't seen many Japs and it was hard to tell.

"While we were still standing in the shadow of the stockade, the gate at the other side of the stockade broke open and a lone figure came racing through, followed at a distance of about ten yards by a shouting crowd of thirty or forty men. The lone figure headed straight for our gate; and as he sped by, we recognized him as Captain Railton, the other junior British officer with Dah Force. The crowd chasing him were definitely Japs. There wasn't any doubt about that. Mike and I were too astounded to make a move. We just stood there and looked at each other in disbelief. Then it dawned on me that they had not shot him because they wanted to take him alive.

"A minute and a half later, Railton again came tearing through the far gate, raced through the enclosure and dashed by us out our gate, clearing the corpses with a mighty leap. The same crowd of Japs were still hot on his trail, and we were glad to note his lead was still about ten yards. Railton had run around the outside of the stockade and cut through it a second time. The runners passed within five yards of us each time, but so intent were they all on the chase that no one noticed us standing quietly in the shadows. I was too surprised to say anything, but Mike turned to me and said: 'Bet he does it again.'

"Sure enough, a few seconds later Railton repeated his amazing performance and still keeping his distance, disappeared out the gate a third time. Mike and I gave the pursuing Japs a burst with our tommy-guns, then rushed across the enclosure and out the far gate before the Japs could return our fire. Outside, it was pitch black, and the racket from small arms was terrific. Not knowing what else to do, we started down the trail toward the villages. We had only covered about forty yards when a bullet kicked up the dirt at Mike's feet, and then another landed just ahead of me. I recognized the distinctive report of an American carbine and called out. It was our Colonel sitting there all alone on the trail, popping at anything he heard coming down.

"HE seemed glad to see us. He said: 'Think we ought to retreat, don't you?' We both thought it was a damn' good idea, considering everything. The Colonel then blew a whistle, and after a few minutes about twenty-five survivors grouped themselves around us and we started down the trail. Just before starting out, I happened to look up and on a rise above us saw a lone figure light some-

thing and throw it down. It landed about ten feet from me and exploded. Miraculously it proved to be a big firecracker and not a grenade, which would have wiped us out. I found out later that both the Japs and Chinese frequently used firecrackers in battle!

"On our way down to the villages we were twice ambushed, once by the Chinese guerrillas, and the second time by some Kachins. This second ambush was a mess, as several of our men were caught on *pungyis* and badly wounded. By the time we arrived in the comparative safety of the village, all but the three British officers and myself were wounded.

"The Colonel sent me to a jungle hide-out with the wounded, all of whom suffered severely from both hunger and their festering wounds until we finally received an emergency air drop a week later. Captain Railton turned up three days after the Japanese capture of the fort with an amazing story. As he rounded the stockade the third time after passing us, he was tripped and fell off a small embankment. Evidently our fire had momentarily distracted the pursuing Japs, who didn't seem to have seen him fall. As he hit the ground, a hand was flung over his mouth and another hand pulled him close to the ground. Then a voice whispered into his ear in English: 'Keep quiet, Sahib.' All that night the two of them lay there, while the Japanese celebrated their victory in the fort, drinking British rum. Just before dawn they had managed to slip away, and only then did he discover that his rescuer who had tripped him up and then held him still was an ex-member of the Indian Colonial army who had been a refugee from the Japs. Learning that there were some British troops in the area he had been attempting to get near to the fort to join us, and while lying there had watched Railton being chased by the Japs.

"AS soon as the twenty-odd survivors were able to move, the Colonel decided to proceed to Myitkyina, which was now under assault by General Stilwell's forces. I had had enough of Dah Force, and after a conference with the new Chinese guerrilla leader, decided to cast my lot with him for a while. I say new leader, because his predecessor had been killed in the fighting at the fort. He had been among the first group that had burst inside the stockade that Mike and I had unfortunately mowed down. Far from being upset at the fate of his predecessor, Col. Jhao, as he was called, seemed quite pleased at his promotion, and he was delighted to have me come along. Two wonderful Kachins came along with me. One of them, my bodyguard, was invaluable. Unlike most of the Kachins, who were small and wiry, this fellow was six feet and quite heavy. He was most devoted to me, and I was mighty glad to have him around.

"My principal difficulty in the month I spent with these guerrillas was my inability to speak the language or to know what was going on most of the time. This was quite dangerous, for we were in action almost continuously, either fighting off the Japs who came after us almost every day, or in frequent night attacks on Japanese columns and garrisons. I solved this problem at first by sticking very close to Col. Jhao. He was an amazing character. He always rode a big white mule, which was fitted out with a gaudy cushion. Another colorful touch was a pork-pie felt hat which he always wore campus fashion with turned-up brim. Whenever he moved, I figured there was good reason for me to move too, and it was usually right.

"Finally I got around the language difficulty. The colonel's secretary, a Mr. Hsee, who was a very well-educated Chinese, kept trying to communicate with me. Finally he tried something which seemed like Portuguese, a language I had learned in Brazil. It turned out to be Latin, which I had taken at Princeton and had always considered a complete waste of time. Mr. Hsee had learned Latin at a French monastery in China, and under the pressure of necessity we both managed to recall enough to get along quite well together.

"Because of the constant Japanese pressure against this band, which numbered about eight hundred, and not wanting to be caught by the Japs, my Kachins built us a secret hide-out which we could use as a place of refuge in the event of a successful mop-up. They cut a path through an impenetrable bamboo thicket and built a small shack beside a jungle stream. Then they replaced the bamboo stalks in such a way that it was impossible to tell that anyone had cut a trail through. We stocked this hide-out with some vital supplies, and it gave us a real feeling of assurance; but fortunately we were never forced to retreat to it.

"During my stay here in the Simapa Valley, a shot-down British pilot was brought in by the Chinese. He had escape panels with him, and we laid them out in a rice paddy where the rescue planes spotted them. Just as a plane started to land, it came under very heavy ground fire from Jap troops in the next paddy. This was our first indication that enemy troops had entered our area. The rescue plane managed to get away, and the pilot and I headed back up the trail to rejoin the guerrillas. Suddenly just around a bend ahead of us we heard a great commotion in the usually quiet jungle, and barely had time to jump off the path into some bushes when a Jap column started passing less than five yards from us.

"THEY were the biggest and best-equipped Japs I had ever seen. It was an artillery regiment, complete with all their guns and supplies. It took over two hours to pass our hide-out, and several times they called a halt right in front of us, giving me a pretty bad time. The worst moment came when a whole company of them were stopped just a few feet from us. I was staring at them, not daring to move a muscle, when I chanced to glance at my British friend. To my horror, he seemed completely unconcerned, and drew a cigarette out of his tunic pocket. I thought he was going to light it, but was afraid to whisper a word of caution. To my relief he just put it in his mouth and made no move to light up. Finally the last of them disappeared down the trail toward the front, and we were able to relax.

"My experience with the guerrillas convinced me that they were really interested in killing Japs, and the very determined efforts the enemy were making to wipe out the band proved to me it was accomplishing real results. The Colonel was anxious for increased supplies, and I volunteered to go to General Stilwell and see if I could secure some additional support. The nearest Allied troops were the forces besieging Myitkyina, about seventy-five miles to the southwest. It took me eight days to reach the Myitkyina air-strip. The trip took me through the Japanese lines, but the most dangerous phases were in crossing the line of the attacking Chinese. From the air-strip I was flown by light plane back to the General's headquarters.

"After four months in the jungle, during which I had lost thirty-five pounds and all my clothes save for a tattered pair of shorts and had grown a bushy beard, I did not present a very trim appearance to meet the theater commander. But the General didn't go in for formalities, and when he heard where I had come from, he saw me immediately. He was interested in the work of the guerrillas, but said he could not supply them as he was having enough trouble with the two Chinese divisions he now had. Then he asked me if I knew Colonel Peers of OSS. When I said that I knew him very well, he told me the Colonel would be there that night, and he wanted me to see him about organizing some Kachins to work behind the Jap lines in the Bhamo area.

"This idea appealed to me very much, as I had seen enough of the Kachins in action to know that there

were no better jungle fighters. Colonel Peers was surprised to see me and quite concerned about my condition. I was suffering from worms, dysentery and malaria, and he insisted that before taking up my new assignment for General Stilwell, I return to Calcutta for treatment in the base hospital. Peers, one of the finest officers I ever met in the service, had succeeded to the command of 101 Detachment, which had by now been built up to a very sizable organization and was playing a very important part in the whole Burma campaign. . . .

"After a wonderful week in the hospital, where I at least got rid of my worms, I headed back for a final briefing from General Stilwell. He told me that I could recruit up to ten thousand Kachins, and he would guarantee every type of support in the line of the needed arms and supplies. My directives were to secure intelligence, harass the Japs and spearhead the advance of Stilwell's troops. My territory was all of North Burma to the east of the Irrawaddy River and up to the Chinese border. This vast zone was called Area One.

"Our assignment with regard to Myitkyina was more specific: In addition to supplying intelligence and conducting raids behind the Jap lines, we were asked to set up road-blocks to cut off all retreat to the east and south of the besieged city, and if possible to intercept any straggling Japs who might be coming down from the north.

"Stilwell's two Chinese divisions and a small British column called Morris Force were slowly closing in on the two thousand-odd Japs who were under siege in the city. The strategic airfield about four miles outside the town had been captured by the Kachin-guided Merrill's Marauders at the end of May. After that initial success, the Japs had begun an amazing defense against the vastly superior Allied forces.

"Peers and I flew by light plane from the Myitkyina air-strip to my new headquarters at Kwitu, eight miles northeast of Myitkyina. Here I met Lt. Danny Mudrinich, Lt. Jake Esterline and three hundred youthful Kachins, who had moved down from another OSS area about sixty miles to the north under Navy Commander Dr. Jim Luce.

"We immediately set up road-blocks as directed, and soon began to have very gratifying results. The Kachins prepared their ambushes with *pungyis* along both sides of the trails and carefully set up hidden machine-guns. The Japs would blunder along, usually at night and in small detachments. In almost every case they would be wiped out to a man. We never counted a Jap as dead unless the Kachins brought in his right ear, and it was

"The Kachins retaliated by dropping mortar shells ahead of the rafts."

"An artillery regiment—it took two hours to pass our hide-out. The

a rare patrol which didn't bring in its share of bloody tallies carefully wrapped in bamboo leaves.

"OUR intelligence operation also worked very well. We managed to smuggle a number of operatives in and out of the besieged city. Invariably on returning they brought back valuable targets for our bombers. We also managed to contact a number of Indians, Burmese and Shans who worked for various Jap garrisons, divisional headquarters and civil administrators. These sources would report to us by courier, and were responsible for a great deal of valuable data on enemy troop movements and unit identifications.

"We maintained daily liaison with the British Morris Force, which had come up from the south as part of Wingate's very successful glider invasion. Wingate himself had been tragically killed in a plane crash shortly after I had left with Dah Force. After four months in the jungle, fighting most of the time, Morris Force was a badly beaten-up unit. At one time during the Myitkyina fight, they were down from their original one thousand, to fifty effectives. Their sad state was brought home very vividly to us by a young British Lieutenant Grimwood, who used to walk the six miles to our camp to obtain daily intelligence summaries. It was only after a week, that we discovered Grimwood had a bullet and an open wound in his hip. He had had absolutely no medical care, and yet every day he had hiked twelve miles with never a murmur. We managed to get him flown out to General Seagrave's famous field hospital, and later he returned to join our unit.

"Good as was the hunting along the trails, our greatest success came from picking off Japs who attempted to escape south by riding improvised rafts down the swift and swollen Irrawaddy. When we realized what was happening, we set up 'duck blinds' about a mile apart along a nine-mile stretch of the river north of Myitkyina. The Japs would come floating along, eight or ten to a raft, and our men would have a field-day hitting them with machine and Bren guns. This worked very well for a while. Then the Japs caught on, and they began to build their rafts high up in the water. At the first burst they would topple off, giving us the impression we'd picked them off. But a few seconds later they would come up under the raft. The Kachins retaliated by dropping mortar shells just ahead of the rafts, and the concussion of the underwater explosion was more than effective. Though we couldn't get the ears to prove it, I am sure that we killed more than three hundred escaping Japs on the river in addition to a similar number confirmed from our ambushes.

"About two weeks before the town was due to fall, we informed headquarters that we were moving our three companies south about eighty miles to Sima, where we hoped to catch any retreating Japs who had managed to flee the captured town. Our particular goal was the fantastic Jap colonel who was responsible for the terrific Nip resistance. Later we discovered that he had accomplished the seemingly impossible defense by keeping his men hopped up with opium. Temporarily effective, it was an expedient that left them in awful shape, as we were to discover a week after we arrived at Sima, and the first of the approximately five hundred Jap survivors came through.

"In the next few weeks we bagged over four hundred more Japs, all without casualties to our own forces. We didn't lose a man in the fighting around Myitkyina, either. The Japs would come down along the Namtu River bank in groups of five or six. Our patrols would wait in well-hidden positions until about fifty Nips were assembled and starting to build their rafts. Then the Kachins would open up and massacre them. Any that survived a first ambushing would usually be caught later on. Most of the Japs were in such terrible shape that they put up very little fight.

"JUST before leaving Kwitu, Lt. Joe Lazarsky, a wonderful young first lieutenant from Hazelton, Penna., had joined us and been put in command of our first company. I was with Joe and his Kachins when we finally caught up with the famous Jap colonel and the last batch from the Myitkyina garrison. The natives had been giving us dozens of tips on a large force of Japs heading south, but all of them

worst moment came when they were stopped just a few feet from us."

so far had turned out to be false. Finally we confirmed the intelligence that a force of a hundred was moving quite slowly toward Sima. Unfortunately, we had been badly hit by malaria and had only fifty Kachins for the ambush. With these men we fixed up a nice trap and waited. When the Japs came along, we let them get very close. Then we opened up with automatic weapons. We killed about twenty-five and took one prisoner. The rest fanned out, and we watched them reassemble in a small village.

"The prisoner told us that he had been carrying the litter of the wounded colonel. Heartened by this piece of good news, we surrounded the tiny village with our few men and set up some two-inch mortars at a range of seventy-five yards. All but a few of the Japs had gone into the various *bashas,* with about half of them in the main *basha.* Joe dropped his first shells right onto this big *basha.* They went right through the roof and exploded inside, setting the place on fire. A few Nips came out and were immediately picked off by the Kachins. Then Joe turned his mortars on the other huts with similar results. Only twenty of the enemy survived this attack, and they were hit twice again farther down the trail. Later we learned that no more than fifty of the five hundred Japs who had escaped from Myitkyina ever reached Bhamo.

"During this mop-up period at Sima we had a pretty bad time due to sickness and a severe shortage of supplies. Malaria hit almost everyone, and a long stretch of bad weather—it was the height of the monsoon period—made it impossible for the planes to get through for a drop. As this was our only source of supply, we really began to feel the pinch. At one time out of the three hundred Kachins and twelve Americans, we had only fifteen well men. In spite of this we kept all our road-blocks manned, and maintained our twenty-four-hour schedule of intelligence patrols.

"Best thing to happen at Sima was the arrival of Kachin Captain Lazum Tang, a very able and experienced soldier whom I had met in Dah Force. With him he brought two Subadars, a Burma Rifle rank similar to sergeant-major. Both these latter were named Labang La, though they were not related. These men gave a tremendous impetus to our recruiting. This was now the main consideration, as there were about seven thousand Japs in Bhamo, and without vastly increased forces there wasn't very much we could accomplish.

"Along about this time a delegation of Kachins visited us from Sinlumkabar, capital of the Kachin hills, twelve miles from Bhamo. These Kachins told us that there were several thousand Kachins, all veterans of the Burma Rifles, waiting in the area to revolt against the Japs. All they needed were the weapons. These men had been instructed by the British to return to their villages during the disastrous retreat across Burma in 1942. The colonial-minded British, however, had collected all but their most ancient weapons. Up to this time, the bulk of our Kachins had been youngsters ranging from thirteen to twenty, with a few up to fifty. I realized that the Kachins in the Bhamo area were much more advanced than those we had recruited farther north. With their splendid training in the Burma Rifles, they would make excellent soldiers. The delegation assured us that in the past two years the Kachins had hidden their rice and precious salt from the Japs. They had also picked up a few Japanese weapons and gained some more from Wingate's first and second expeditions, which had sent columns through their territory.

"Accordingly I sent Lazarsky and Lazum with a few men and a radio down to a village eight miles from Sinlumkabar. It happened to be Lazum's native village. Meanwhile I made the long hike up to Myitkyina to see General Stilwell and try to straighten out our supply situation, which was the key to our expansion now that we had lined up the Kachins.

"General Stilwell was glad to see me and very congratulatory about the success of our work at Myitkyina and Sima. He promised me all the supplies I needed, and told me that he wanted us to do the same kind of a job at Bhamo, which was the next objective of his Chinese divisions. I told him that if we received the necessary supplies, we would capture and hold Sinlumkabar and then commence harassing operations against the Japs in

the Bhamo area. After that we would cut south toward Lashio and cut off escape routes for the Bhamo garrison. Stilwell's force was to drive south to take the city and push on to Lashio, Burma road terminus, and major objective of the North Burma campaign. Headquarters of 101 doubted that we could either take or hold Sinlumkabar, but I was very anxious to capture it, not only for its strategic advantage but also for its great prestige value as the Washington of the Kachin hills.

"After a short stay at Stilwell's headquarters, I parachuted back behind the Jap lines with a Burmese radioman. We landed on October fourth at a village just outside Sinlumkabar. I was forced to parachute, my first jump, because one of my legs had begun to atrophy. It was giving me a lot of trouble.

"ON landing, I immediately conferred with Lazum, Lazarsky and several Kachin chiefs. I was delighted to learn that they had lined up one thousand Kachins who were all set to go as soon as they received the arms. Luckily we had a break in the weather, and in response to our radioed request, fifteen planeloads dropped to us the very next day.

"Right after receiving and distributing these arms to the fantastically happy Kachins, who gave every evidence of knowing how to use them, we had another lucky break: A very coöperative Jap lieutenant and two soldiers came up to our village searching for a work elephant which had broken away. The Kachins had killed one of the Japs, but made prisoners of the officer and the remaining soldier. With a little persuasion, this officer gave us much very valuable information on the identity of all the Jap units in that part of Burma. We also learned that the Jap strength in Bhamo was actually seven thousand, and from both him and the Kachins we discovered that a force of about four hundred Japs came up from Bhamo to Sinlumkabar every few days, stayed in the Kachin capital for three or four days and then left again.

"On the seventh we heard that four hundred Japs had just left Sinlumkabar for Bhamo. By now we had one thousand eager Kachins under arms. Wasting no time, we quickly moved into the city before the Jap relief force could take over. As there wasn't a single Jap in the town, our triumphal entry was unopposed, but the thousand or so natives greeted us vociferously. Immediately we set up defensive positions and stationed guards. For our headquarters we took over the building of the British commissioner, a very fine modern structure, with comforts which were really appreciated by all of us after so many weeks in the disease-ridden jungles.

"That first night Lazum, Lazarsky and I had quite a celebration of our bloodless but very significant victory. After a number of toasts drunk with *laku,* the native liquor, we turned in dead tired and quite happy. . . .

"The next day was perfect for flying, and true to his promise, Stilwell sent over twenty planeloads. The chutes came down on the football field, and with the supplies we were able to arm another one thousand men. Sinlumkabar was situated on the top of a big hill. Off to one side, you could look over into China, and on the other you could look down on Bhamo, only twelve miles away. This great air drop was the first indication that the Japs in Bhamo had of our capture of the city. We expected an immediate reaction, and were not disappointed.

"That very night a battalion of Japs headed off the main trail from Bhamo. We had anticipated such a move and had set a beautiful trap for them. Our mortars were zeroed in on the trail, and our Bren and machine-guns were set up for a perfect cross-fire. In addition the Kachins, of course, had both sides of the path covered with the deadly *pungyis.*

"THERE were about four hundred Japs in the column. The Kachins waited until they were well into the ambush, then as we gave the word, everything let loose. Over a hundred were killed and the same number wounded. The survivors fled back to Bhamo. We didn't lose a man. The next night another Jap column tried to move into the town from the northwest, with about the same results.

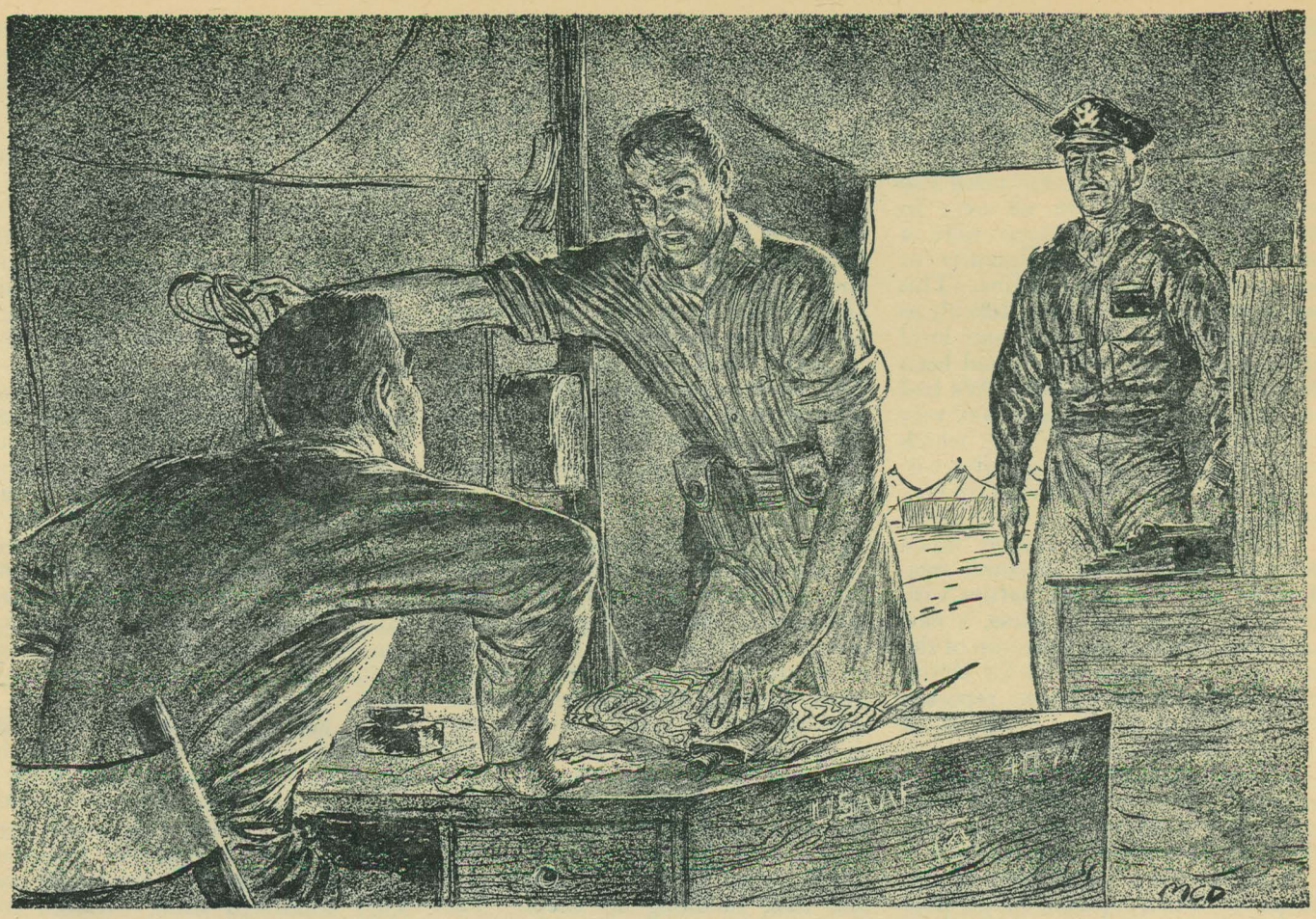
"Then the Japs tried different tactics. They sent a number of Shans, Indians and Burmese up to spy on us. The Kachins spotted these people quickly, and we arranged for them to get information that we had a well-armed force of fifteen thousand and were preparing to move on Bhamo. This dope was immediately passed on to the Japs, who became pretty worried and stopped their attacks on Sinlumkabar. We then began a series of nightly raids on the outlying villages around Bhamo with good results.

"Our arrival caused a great intensification of Japanese secret police activity in all the surrounding villages. About a week after capturing the Kachin stronghold, a crafty Kachin agent of great dependability came up to us with exciting news; He reported that the whole Jap G-2 staff from Bhamo and all the top officials of the secret police were scheduled to hold an important meeting at noon the next day in a small village midway between us and Bhamo. We immediately radioed Stilwell to send over P-51's to blast the place, specifying the nature of the prize target, and stressing that unless the planes came at exactly noon, they had better forget it entirely. We sent our Kachin agent back into the village, with orders to report on developments, then to withdraw at ten minutes of twelve to a point of vantage.

"We had had varied luck with the air force on previous targets requiring split-second timing. The next day at noon we were all anxiously lined up to see what would develop. By ten minutes to twelve the tension was terrific and by five minutes to, we were really sweating it out. As the second hand moved slowly toward twelve, many of us felt that another golden opportunity had been lost; but just at the stroke of twelve, six beautiful P-51's, flying very low, swooped down over Sinlumkabar, coming silently from our rear, and dived toward the town at the foot of our mountain. Each of them dropped two bombs squarely onto the cluster of *bashas,* and then circling, they worked over the flaming wreckage with machine-guns. It was a beautiful sight and made a tremendous impression on the Kachins. We were particularly delighted, because everyone attending that meeting was a deadly enemy who had come to plot our destruction. Later our agent reported that sixty Japs, including the colonel in charge of G-2 and many high secret police officials, had been killed. After this convincing demonstration, many of the chiefs who had been working for the Japs had a change of heart and came up to join us. We put most of them in the jail and continued to expand our own forces.

"Most every day now we received heavy supply drops, and headquarters also began to drop personnel to assist in leading the four thousand Kachins whom we had under arms within two weeks after taking Sinlumkabar.

"STARTING in October, until our victorious wind-up in February, American strength with the Kachins in Area One grew to 130. It was these wonderful officers and GI's who were chiefly responsible for our success. Among them were: Major Newell Brown from Franklin, New Hampshire, who became my executive officer; Doctor Franklin, our chief medic; Lieutenants Freudenberg, Pamplin and Fitzhugh, who was given a field promotion from sergeant; Sergeant Leander P. Jones of Stamford, Connecticut, who operated our large and busy radio station; and many others. All of them proved amazingly adaptable to the rugged jungle life. In all things they had to prove themselves as able and brave as the Kachins, because these proud tribesmen would have



"While I was raging at the Colonel, a General wandered in and listened to my story."

fought under no one less. It was a very high standard, and nothing ever made me as proud of Americans as to see how these ordinary GI's from all parts of the country and all walks of life rose to their exacting responsibilities and did a terrific job.

"We also received a number of splendid British recruits, most of them jungle-wise Wingate veterans who were invaluable. One of the most amazing of these Britishers was Captain Simon Reed. He dropped in to see us at Sinlumkabar. As we ran up to help him out of his harness, we were surprised to see that he was wearing a monocle. We never did learn whether or not he wore it as he jumped, but we only ever saw him without it. In spite of this fancy appendage, Reed was as rugged an officer as we had. Later we found out that the monocle was not an affectation—Reed had suffered an eye injury during the London blitz.

"Our headquarters stayed at Sinlumkabar until after Christmas, when Bhamo fell. Much of my time was occupied with setting up a civilian administration to take care of the Kachin population. We opened the bazaars again, and to keep things moving instituted an OPA price-control system. This was very necessary, as many vital items like salt, which is often more valuable than silver, was in very short supply. Our price-control system worked very well, and the area soon began to get back to normal after the rigors of the Japanese occupation.

"Another problem gave us a lot more trouble than the Japs: Marauding bands of Chinese guerrillas would cross over the border into Kachin territory to ravish the women and loot the villages. Our efforts to keep them away brought on some bloody incidents. The Kachins hated the Chinese much worse than the Japs. We were anxious for our new forces to push on south toward Lashio ahead of Stilwell's forces, but the Kachins were loath to leave their homeland unprotected from the Chinese, their mortal enemies. We had several big battles with these irregular Chinese forces, but finally won our point and kept the Kachin lands inviolate. General Stilwell backed us up in this to the hilt.

"WE were anxious to capture Bhamo with our Kachin forces, but Stilwell wanted his Chinese divisions to have the honor. We assisted in the fighting and intelligence coverage of the campaign very much the same way as we had at Myitkyina. Late in the fall I dispatched three battalions of a thousand men each to the south and southwest of the city to block Japanese escape routes. The first battalion under Lazarsky and the second under Mudrinich established themselves at Mongwi, which I planned to make our next base. The third under Freudenberg took up positions along the Bhamo-Lashio road. This battalion came in for some very hot fighting as the road was the last real escape route for the Japs and was very heavily guarded. Our Kachins were in almost constant action and we took some casualties, though as usual the percentages were tremendously in our favor.

"Christmas at Sinlumkabar was a festive occasion. We rigged up a strange-looking Christmas tree and prepared presents for all the cute little Kachin children. High point was midnight Mass celebrated by Father Stuart, the fabulous Irish missionary who played the principal part in lining up Kachin support for OSS. Many of the Kachins were Christians, and when the children sang the familiar Christmas hymns in their native language, there wasn't a dry eye among the forty Americans present. It was the most moving and most impressive Christmas I have ever experienced.

"After we moved to Mongwi, we were contacted by the American Mars Task Force, a brigade of Texans, whom Stilwell had sent down to cut the Bhamo-Wanting Road. We supplied them with intelligence and afforded them a screen of Kachins as

they pushed through the jungle. Unfortunately they were ordered into a valley which made them wide open to attack, and they suffered severe casualties. They did, however, kill a lot of Japs. . . .

"Around Mongwi we recruited two more battalions. Here we were in Shan country. The Shans were a peaceful people and frequently at odds with the warlike Kachins. This made our operations more difficult as we could not count on the same local support from the natives as had been the case in the Kachin hills. We had one break—the terrain here was very flat, with lots of paddy fields which made excellent dropping grounds. Our rain of vital supplies kept up very satisfactorily.

"From Mongwi we moved down closer to Lashio to the Hsenwei area. Here we had several big battles with the Japs. After one of these, a new battalion commander, a veteran of the last war who amazed us by his ability to keep up with the Kachins, reported one hundred Japs killed. We added the hundred to our toll, which now numbered over 3500. Our Kachin casualties, most of which came from bombing and strafing from our own Air force, were less than a hundred.

"Lazarsky led a night patrol of two companies into a Japanese motor pool near Hsenwei. By now we had armed a number of Kachins with bazookas, which they liked very much. Slipping in undetected, Joe and his men blasted most of the precious vehicles and made their escape unharmed. This was typical Lazarsky.

"We were now nearing Lashio, and our Kachin force had grown to 6500. We had nine battalions, all well-equipped and tested fighters. I was anxious to take Lashio, and went up to General Dan Sultan's headquarters to get permission. (Sultan had taken over command from Stilwell.) He turned me over to his chief of staff, General Cannon. I explained that since the Kachins had led the whole advance south from Myitkyina—a distance of over 250 miles—I wanted them to have the honor of capturing Lashio, the last big Jap base in northern Burma and goal of the long and bloody campaign to reopen the Burma road.

"GENERAL CANNON'S eye twinkled as he listened to my appeal. He pointed out that at Lashio the Kachins would come under Jap heavy artillery, and would be sure to have heavy casualties. I agreed that I did not want this to happen. He suggested that our Area One forces capture the airfield and the railroad station, two major objectives, and leave the reduction of the city to the two Chinese divisions. I finally agreed that his proposal was wiser, and flew back to our base to complete the arrangement for our climactic push.

"Our next big battle was at Imailong, a key point on the Namtu-Lashio road, which was very vital to the Japs. All nine battalions were committed in this fight. There were about one thousand Japs in the town and other large forces in the vicinity. We encircled three-quarters of the town and after plastering it with 4.2 mortars, which were terribly effective, made an assault and took the city as the Japs were driven back. We were in possession of the city by four in the afternoon, but at five I decided we would be wiser to pull back two miles for the night.

"IT was a lucky decision. During the night the Japs moved back into the town and took over again without opposition. Another Jap force came out to encircle our main force. They evidently thought we were still in the town, because after taking up positions halfway between us and the outskirts, they commenced an attack. We watched the two Jap forces battle each other all night, and then at five the next morning, following a heavy mortar barrage, we made an assault which rolled back the startled Japs and took Imailong for keeps. The Japs lost several hundred in this engagement, to our eighteen killed and twenty wounded.

"After this important victory, the front was stabilized a few miles from Lashio for a few days, a time we utilized to complete preparations for our final assault on the airfield and railroad station. Major Brown took four battalions across the river and cut to the southeast of Lashio. Two other battalions circled to the east of the Jap base and I kept three in Imailong. All our battalions, numbering 750 men apiece, were linked up with walkie-talkies. The day before the attack I took a light plane down to Brown's headquarters to synchronize our final plans. Just after I returned to Imailong, we received a very heavy attack from our own Air Force. During the bombing Colonel Peers flew in and barely escaped cracking up. We had been protesting these attacks for weeks to no avail. Naturally we were furious, as was Peers; he took off for one Chinese divisional headquarters and I took off for the other at Namtu, to raise hell.

"At Namtu, I met an American Colonel, acting as Air Corps liaison officer, who was ordering the attacks. He had been getting all American OSS reports of our positions and was disregarding them in favor of Chinese agents, who reported our positions as Jap strongholds. Dressed in filthy shorts and sneakers, I was raging at the Colonel when a General wandered in. He listened to my story and agreed to investigate. The attacks stopped.

"On my return to Imailong, we launched our attack on the airfield and railroad station from three sides. The going was tough but the Kachins and their American commanders fought magnificently against the suicidal Japs and in three days of fierce fighting we captured both objectives. The next day the Chinese infantry passed through us and opened their all-out attack on Lashio which fell a few days later.

"This ended our active participation in the Burma campaign. I managed to persuade the Air Force to fly four thousand of my Kachins back to Bhamo, from where we marched in triumph back up to Sinlumkabar for a two-week victory celebration. Two of the battalions stayed in the south and participated in the final South Burma campaign which resulted in the capture of Mandalay and then Rangoon, as the gallant British 14th Army routed the Japs along the coast.

"In March we disbanded our Kachins after paying them off and giving them decorations. Many of them were also rewarded with hunting rifles and shotguns, which they prized very highly. Our final tally of Japs during the eight-months campaign was 5,011 confirmed dead, with an unknown additional number of uncounted dead and a much higher number wounded.

"The Area One Kachins led by OSS had provided a fighting screen ahead of the regular troops in the 250-mile advance through the jungles and furnished nearly one hundred per cent of the strategic and tactical intelligence for both the ground and air commanders. Total Kachin casualties from all of 101 amounted to seventy Kachins and fifteen Americans. None of the Americans attached to my command lost their lives, chiefly due to the wonderful devotion of the Kachins."

MAJOR JOOST returned to the United States in April 1945. For his extraordinary exploits as commanding officer of Area One in North Burma he received the Combat Legion of Merit with an inspiring citation. It is well to note that during all of his eight months as chief of Area One, his health grew progressively worse but he resisted all efforts to be relieved until the campaign ended. During the final months, at the express command of Colonel Peers he was under the constant care of a doctor, but never left his beloved Kachins and British and American subordinates until the final victory at Lashio.

Married and the father of two children, Joost is now living in Great Neck, Long Island, and working in New York as a marine-insurance underwriter.

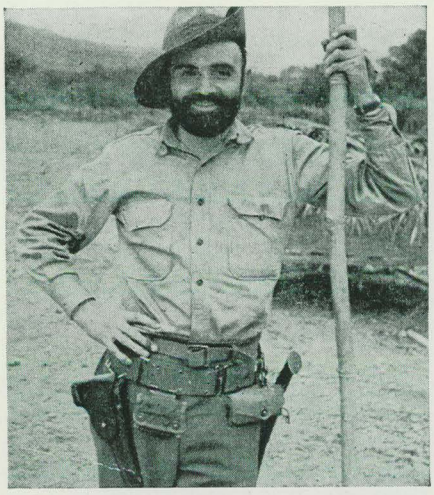
The BURMA MISSION

Some of the fighting men whose exploits are described in the stirring story of OSS adventure which begins on page 74.

Capt. Lazarsky and Capt. Simon Reed

Major Joost and Lazum Tang

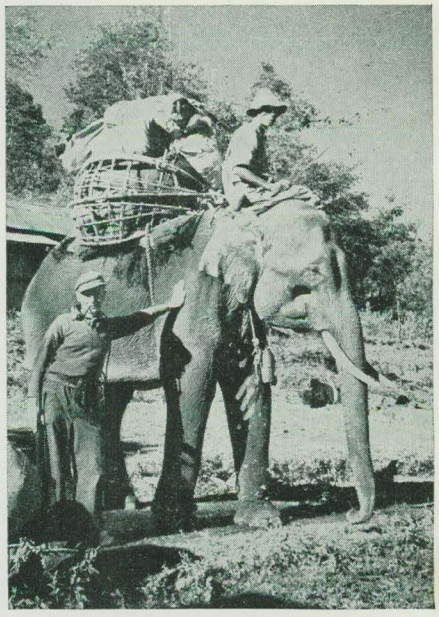
Captain Hiram Pamplin



Father James Stuart

At right: Captured Japanese work elephant.

At left: O.S.S. Kachin party crossing Shweli River.



Major Lazum Tang in center with two of his subadars

Major Lazum Tang and Captain Lazarsky