

Reds Capture Kharkov, Vital Nazi Base

Bombs Sever Rail Contact With Naples

Road South to Reggio And Two Lines North Are Disrupted

The port of Naples, where the Italians expect the Allied invasion to begin, was cut off yesterday from all railroad connection with the rest of Italy.

A devastating night-and-day aerial attack on the important rail junction of Salerno, 30 miles south of Naples, cut the final link Sunday after American Marauders fought a 35-minute running battle with nearly 100 Luftwaffe fighters and shot down a record bag of 33.

Mustang Invaders, escorting the daylight raiders to their target, set up a long-distance record for their type of single-engine fighter-bomber, flying nearly 400 miles round trip from bases on Sicily. Only five Allied planes were lost in all the day's operations.

Three Rail Lines Smashed

The latest attacks cut the railroad leading south from Naples to Reggio after the two main lines running north and northeast of the big port had been wrecked in previous raids. The toll of

Huge Reinforcements Arrive for Next Jump

ALLIED HQ, Aug. 23 (UP)—Big reinforcements are coming into the Mediterranean in large convoys ready for the next jump into Europe.

New weapons tested in the Sicilian campaign have turned out excellently, the Army High Command agrees. This applies to the new anti-tank guns, lighter than the famous six-pounders which helped the Eighth Army in the desert; the amphibian vehicles, both large and small, and to secret naval devices used in the landings.

The air forces also are receiving the latest fighters and fighter-bombers, including the Mustang Invader and some Spitfires scarce even in Britain.

enemy planes brought to 109 the Axis losses in four days of heavy aerial fighting.

The attacks came a few hours after RAF Liberators and Halifaxes from Middle East bases bombed a freight yard at Crotona, in southern Italy. Yesterday's Cairo communique said poor visibility prevented accurate observation of the Crotona bombing, but explosions were caused and fires were started, some near a chemical factory.

The new raids, bringing the war ever nearer to Italy's harassed civilian population, increased the troubles of Marshal Badoglio's government, according to Algiers radio. Swiss newspapers heard the Marshal was becoming increasingly unpopular. Separatist movements under which Venice and Piedmont would set themselves up as separate states, breaking up the union achieved in the last century, were said to be gaining strength.

Frontier reports said a fear of Communist interference was rising, and travellers reaching the Swiss border reported that Turin police had arrested a large number of supposed Communists

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'Stop Nazis Entering Italy,' Appeal to Saboteurs Says

Algiers radio last night broadcast an important appeal to the Italians, telling them to do all in their power to stop more Germans pouring into Italy, particularly by sabotage in Bologna, through which a large proportion of the German troops and supplies are passing. They were given details of where to find their objectives.

"You can force the Germans to evacuate Italy," the appeal concluded. "Time is running short."

Just Another Axis Feeler

ALLIED HQ, Aug. 23 (UP)—The report, broadcast yesterday by Axis-controlled "Radio Liberation," that considerable Allied forces landed in Italy and Crete Saturday, was categorically denied at headquarters today. "Just another Axis feeler," was how the report was described.

Nazis Using Rocket Gun Fighters

Shuttle Raid Crews Return from Africa Report Desperate Enemy Attacks With Bombs and New Type Guns

By Richard Wilbur
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

A USAAF BOMBER STATION, England, Aug. 23—The Germans are using a type of rocket gun, slung beneath two-engined fighters, against Flying Fortresses, American airmen returning to this base from the initial U.S. shuttle raid to Africa revealed today.

The airmen, who stormed across the heart of Germany to shatter the Messerschmitt plant at Regensburg and fly on across the Alps, came back to their base wearing red fezzes and lugging musette bags filled with tropical fruits.

Their reports to intelligence officers told of unusually determined fighter attacks by planes firing a projectile about the size of an indoor baseball from a device like a rocket gun, and also of Luftwaffe interceptors armed with 37mm. cannon instead of the usual 20mm.

The rockets, fired from beneath twin-engined Messerschmitt 110s and 210s, arched at the Forts with about 30 in a string, and exploded in a brilliant flash "like a Fourth of July rocket," crewmen explained.

There also were repeated stories of enemy fighters once more attempting to drop bombs on the bombers.

The sited versions of the crews' stories further substantiated the belief that the Luftwaffe is running dangerously short of fighter defense and is turning to every possible expedient to stop the massed Allied raids by day and night. It was obvious from the intelligence reports that the Germans had used virtually every type of combat plane they own against the

Fortress formation which pounded Regensburg last Tuesday.

All the crews told of bitter battles, some of them lasting for more than four hours, with relays of Nazi fighter planes; and of enemy pilots so determined—"they all acted as if they lived in Hamburg"—that several times they would have hurled their ships head-on into the Forts except for evasive tactics by the American pilots.

The story of the crew of Torchy II was typical. They came back in an unnamed Fortress, once known as the Lively Lady, because the Torchy II had an engine, all the instruments on the right side and the right elevator knocked out by FW190 and Me109 attacks.

"Those German fighters were mad about something. They all fought as if they lived in Hamburg," said Maj. William W. Veal, of New Rochelle, N.Y., squadron commander, who alternated in piloting the Torchy II with 1/Lt. Sam Barr, of Leland, Miss. Maj. Veal started out Torchy II's version of the shuttle story: "Trouble started 30 miles out of Ant-



Maj. John C. Egan with Oak Leaf on his fez he brought from Africa.

werp. We had two series of attacks. The first was a normal attack and about 30 or 40 fighters came in three at a time. "I think the first one would have rammed us head on if we hadn't dived," Lt. Barr said.

"They were pretty unpleasant about the second attack. They came in at about 13 or 14 at a time."

The rotation gear of the top turret went out of commission during the first attack, T/Sgt. E. Cliff, of Mellette, S.D., top turret gunner, said, and didn't operate

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Quebec Expects Invasion of Italy

Signal for Attack May Be Given from There; FDR Sees Knox

QUEBEC, Aug. 23 (UP)—Allied landing operations in the Mediterranean, accompanied by terrific air and sea bombardments of Naples, Taranto and Brindisi, are believed here to be imminent and may even be announced as a climax to the Roosevelt-Churchill conference.

There is an atmosphere of expectancy in Quebec. With the arrival of Col. Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy, the heads of all the American armed services were present, and it was widely expected the signal for the attack on Italy may be given from here.

Although Italy would be the main target, the next Allied offensive in the Mediterranean, it is felt, would also involve the Allied forces in the Middle East in a drive against Crete and Greece.

While Mr. Churchill and Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King toured Quebec today, President Roosevelt conferred with Col. Knox and T. V. Soong, Chinese Foreign Secretary.

Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State, who left Washington for an unknown destination today, also may arrive.

RAF Hammers Ruhr Again; Marauders Bomb 21st Airfield

Allied light air forces hammered against the invasion coastline of Nazi Europe again yesterday, after 48 hours of unceasing attack which included a deep foray by RAF night bombers to the chemical works at Leverkusen, six miles north of Cologne, in the Ruhr.

The RAF night blow was preceded by a Marauder attack at dusk on the Beaumont le Roger airdrome in France, in which the mediums of Eighth Air Support Command ran into their heaviest fighter opposition yet.

Escorting Spitfires and the B26s fought off bitter assaults by more than 100 enemy fighters to hit the enemy 'drome the second time in a week.

B26 gunners shot down three enemy planes, Spitfires another six. One medium bomber and eight fighters were reported missing. Beaumont le Roger is the 21st enemy airfield hit by Eighth Air Support's attack arm.

S/Sgt. John L. Dorton, of Akron, Ohio, tail gunner on the Marauder Honey Chile, piloted by 1/Lt. Robert B. Spencer, of Glenrose, Tex., claimed destruction of a FW190 which was attacking a bomber in his element. "It was swinging off from an attack on one of the ships near me," Sgt. Dorton said, "and he came in low from the rear. I gave him the works. Others saw him crash."

The RAF bombing of Leverkusen, along with mine-laying operations in enemy waters and night-fighter intrusions to Nazi air centers in France and Belgium, cost five heavy bombers. Two enemy fighters were shot down, the Air Ministry claimed.

Pravda declared "England was saved from invasion by the Soviet Union."

The Lights Begin to Go On

CAIRO, Aug. 23 (AP)—The blackout restrictions have been partially lifted in Cairo. Electric lights gleamed along the main roads for the first time in four years, emphasizing the fact of Allied air superiority, since Crete is still held by the enemy.

Portia Hit Target—Then the Sea

By 2/Lt. Arthur R. Moore

Navigator of the Fortress Pregnant Portia

A U.S. BOMBER STATION, England, Aug. 23—The Germans threw everything they had at us on that Regensburg raid last week. But we knocked down four of their fighters and bombed hell out of their Messerschmitt plant. So, even though the ship never got to Africa and we came down in the Mediterranean and had to spend 21 hours floating around in a dinghy, I guess you could still call it a successful mission.

What a trip it was though! For actual long-time fighting I don't think I could ever see an equal.

We started battling it out with the Germans the moment we hit the European coast and at Antwerp the fighters started coming in. For the next four and a half hours it was the same old "hell." Fighters, flak and everything imaginable. Our ship hit its first real trouble about ten minutes before we reached the target.

Somehow one of our life rafts was shot out of its housing and it lodged back on the vertical stabilizer crammed part way into a big 20mm. cannon hole that had been shot through that stabilizer before. The raft flopped around and wound itself about the elevator and before you know it the whole ship was vibrating as though it would fall apart. It shimmied so badly we soon had to drop out of formation—

and there were the fighters coming at us in bunches. The pilot, 1/Lt. John Keely, and the co-pilot, Harry Coomes, worked like Trojans and they did a marvellous job of keeping the ship under control. I can't see how they did it.

When we pulled out of the formation, everybody forgot fighters for a moment and concentrated on trying to free that raft from our tail. S/Sgt. Douglas Dinford, of Texas, tried to rope it from the waist gun window. Somebody else tried to shoot it off, but it was stuck and stayed on right through the rest of the flight.

We gave up that raft removing business and went back to fighting. Ted Rouse, the bombardier, got our first Nazi fighter. It was a Focke Wulf coming straight and level. He asked for it and got it. Ted gave him a couple of bursts and he blew up right there in front of our nose. I personally shot the next one. He was one of those twin-engine Messerschmitt 210s and he didn't blow up; just made a beeline for the ground and hit it real hard.

Meanwhile, the vibrations all over the plane were getting terrific. John Keely had T/Sgt. Ledger Pontius, the engineer, check everything over and over again.

Then we hit the target and I mean we hit it. Smoke and stuff were coming up about 20,000 feet. We blew that Nazi plant so high I think parts of it floated on up to heaven and

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Soviets Race Far Beyond Rail Center

Worst News for Reich From Eastern Front Since Stalingrad

Kharkov, chief Nazi base in southern Russia, fell to the Red Army yesterday.

A Berlin statement by DNB (German news agency) said German troops left the city during the night according to plan "after destroying all military installations and without being subjected to enemy pressure," but a Moscow announcement last night revealed that the city was captured by the Russians in fierce fighting.

It was the third Russian victory on the Eastern front within three weeks, coming soon after the recapture of Orel and Byelgorod on Aug. 5.

Kharkov was the hinge on which the German lines in southern Russia swung. A key railroad center, its six railroads radiated to all points in the south. In peace time it was a clearing center for the agricultural and mineral products of the Ukraine.

'Worst News' For Germany

Its capture, achieved by a giant enveloping movement which swept Russian columns nearly a hundred miles in the city's rear, brings the Red Army within 120 miles of the Dnieper. A thrust to this line probably would force the Germans to withdraw from the Donetz basin, the Kuban and the Crimea.

Some Allied sources considered the annihilation of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad. There was little doubt the Nazi high command had poured thousands of men into the line to hold it.

Though represented by Berlin as an "evacuation," the withdrawal plainly was part of a general retreat in the south. The Germans, now deprived of their last major defense position short of the Dnieper River, continued to fight stubbornly west of the city, however, and Moscow reported some heights and villages changing hands several times.

Advances Continue

In spite of the Germans' strong use of guns, mortars, automatic weapons and disabled tanks sunk into the ground as pillboxes, the Russians claimed their advances were continuing and said one strong point after another was being taken. Moscow said German losses were unprecedented and claimed one regiment had been reduced to 75 men.

Yesterday's victory marked the fourth time the great industrial city, with a peacetime population of 400,000, had changed hands.

The Germans took it first Oct. 29, 1941. When the first Russian winter offensive began two months later the Red Army drove wedges into German positions all around the city, but it remained impregnable. The Red Army finally retook it last Feb. 16 only to lose it to a German counter-offensive March 15.

Moscow announced the victory last night in an order of the day from Marshal Stalin. It said the ten divisions engaged would be known as the Kharkov divisions and the victory would be celebrated in Moscow by 25 artillery salvos from 224 guns.

Berlin radio broke the news slowly to the home front. It sent it out in Morse code for distribution through the official news agency to all German newspapers.

New Air Chief in CBI Sees Increased Aid to China

NEW DELHI, India, Aug. 23 (AP)—A promise of increased American air troops and equipment to put weight behind aid to China was given today by Maj. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer, new air officer of the China-Burma-India theater.

Gen. Stratemeyer, former chief of the Army Air Staff, has immediate command of the Tenth Air Force in India, Air Service Command and a school for training Chinese and American pilots to be set up in western India.

Red Cross Chief Here

Norman H. Davis, chairman of the American National Red Cross, and G. Stewart Brown, vice-chairman, in charge of public relations, have arrived in London for a two-week tour of ETO Red Cross facilities. Tomorrow they will tour London clubs, and later visit field installations.

THE STARS AND STRIPES

Daily Newspaper of the U.S. Armed Forces in the European Theater of Operations. The Stars and Stripes is edited and published daily except Sunday by and under auspices of the Director of Special Service Division, S.O.S., War Dept., Brig. Gen. F. H. Osborn, and Col. Theodore Arter, Chief of Special Service Section, S.O.S., for the U.S. Army Forces in the European Theater of Operations. Printed by The Times Publishing Company, Ltd., at Printing House Square, London, E.C.4 (Telephone: Central 2000). Contents owned by the U.S. Army and Navy censors; subscription, 26 shillings per year plus postage. ETO Edition. Entered as second class matter Mar. 18, 1943, at the post office, New York, N.Y., under the Act of Mar. 3, 1879.

EDITORIAL BOARD Editor: Maj. E. M. Llewellyn Associate Editors: Capt. H. A. Harebar 1/Lt. J. C. Wilkinson STAFF News Editor: 2/Lt. Robert Moore City Editor: M/Sgt. Bud Hutton Magazine Editor: T/Sgt. Ben. F. Price Sports: S/Sgt. Mark Senigo Navy: Yeoman Tom Bernard, USNR Vol. 3, No. 251, August 24, 1943

Kharkov in the Harvest

For the fourth time this war Kharkov has fallen, and for the second time the Red Army has swept triumphantly back into the ruins of this once thriving Russian city. But this time there is a real possibility the Russians will hold it, for the capture came only after a long hard struggle in which the Red Army moved slowly ahead like a powerful steam roller, smashing all resistance that did not move back before the crushing advance.

Kharkov has been serving lately, as it served in the past, more than anything else as a great physical barrier. This barrier has now been removed from the path of the Russian armies and a great Russian victory has been won. The very size of this victory is a measure of the importance of Allied strategy, for the success at Kharkov resulted in part from the Allies striking maximum blows together to make certain that Axis reserves in men, guns, tanks and planes could not be used in counter-attacks that would cost the fruits of hard won victories.

Globular war as planned by Allied leaders has resulted this year in vigorous, coordinated action and the fruits of coordinated action are dropping like over-ripe plums into our eager hands. As the globular strategy develops new victories will not be followed by quick defeats as happened so often in the past.

Thus Kharkov, important road and rail center, is in Russian hands because we have done our part to collect the harvest of victory in Europe.

Herrenvolk

Many of us from the land of liberty and free speech now realize a serious mistake was made after the last war in under-estimating the latent danger in the German belief in Herrenvolk, or the master race theory. Germans apply this term to themselves on the ground that racially they are superior to all other peoples. They refer to Americans as "a mongrel breed" and even to the British on the same ground, for the British are a mixture of Celts, Latins, Teutons, French and many other races. The Germans, however, if you believe the Germans, are the thoroughbreds, unpolluted, and destined to "rule the world."

After the last great war, Allied governments, concerned with their own internal problems, allowed the German nation to revive the doctrine of "Herrenvolk." Hitler, the rising politician, made it a plank in his political platform. But the idea is not new.

On the matter of Herrenvolk, Bismarck, Kaiser Wilhelm and Adolf Hitler have all seen eye to eye, for all believed the Germans were the master race, invincible on the field of battle and destined to govern "Inferior Peoples."

Kaiser Bill expressed the idea in a personal sort of way in his 1914 proclamation to the German armies when he said: "Germans, remember you are the Chosen People. The spirit of the Lord has descended upon me, because I am the Emperor of the Germans. I am the instrument of the Most High. I am His sword. His representative. Woe and death to those who do not believe in my mission. Let them perish... all the enemies of the German people. God demands their destruction. God, who through my lips commands you to execute His will."

This proclamation by the Kaiser contains the same tone as a Hitler address, and could be accepted only by a people taught for generations to believe they were supermen and that martial force is the basis of all political virtues.

Without strict control for a period of many years, a people so indoctrinated could easily revert to type, and believe again in "Germany, Germany over everyone, over everyone in the world."

What is true of Germany is equally true of Japan, so this time we must see to it that such dangerous theories are utterly destroyed, never to rise again.

Hash Marks

Living conditions must really be crowded back home. James Wade of New York was injured seriously when he rolled over in bed—and fell out of a three-story window.

Incidental information. Roseland dance hall hostesses declare Marines are



the worst dancers; sailors are the best. Somewhere in between come about eight million soldiers.

Cheer up, boys, even Hollywood is optimistic about the war. A big film now under way is titled "Appointment in Berlin." Nobody knows the plot, but all the big-time commentators are making guesses as to the day Allied troops march Unter den Linden. Hendrik Willem Van Loon is the most confirmed optimist—he's offering even money the Nazis will be on their knees come late autumn.

The Nazis are nice, playful little lads. Back in the days when they used to invade countries, the troops carried foreign language manuals covering simple everyday questions and answers about food, directions, &c. But this wasn't enough for the supermen; they also had items like this, "Mr. Mayor, where is the city treasury?" and "Mr. Mayor, you're about to be shot."

And then there was the wolf who knew all the ankles.

Here's the most delightful bit of verse we've run across lately. It was passed on to us by a Pfc who prefers to remain anonymous: I drink to your health when I'm with you, I drink to your health when alone; I've drunk to your health so doggone much, I've almost ruined my own.

A Hartford, Conn., woman went all the way to New Bedford, Mass., to claim

Nazis Using Rocket Gun Fighters

Shuttle Raid Airmen Describe Desperate Air Battles

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again until after Torchy II had passed the target.

"But I could fire to the rear by leaning back and pushing my feet against the oxygen bottles," he said, "so I got quite a bit of shooting in."

Black cannon balls were rocketed from somewhere underneath two Messerschmitts that attacked them, said 1/Lt. Joseph Armanini, of Santa Cruz, Cal. "They must have been fired under compression or by some kind of rocket system," he said. "They were slung out from under the ship, I don't know exactly where. None of them hit us, but we saw them end in a brilliant flash, like a Fourth of July rocket. They'd come about 30 in a string."

"Not connected exactly," Maj. Veal said, "but damn close together."

These shells were about the size of a 12-inch indoor baseball, according to S/Sgt. Max Russ, of San Antonio, Tex., ball turret gunner.

Nearly Out of Gas

Flying south of the target, the plane was out of oxygen, nearly out of ammunition, low on gasoline, "and we sweated out the Alps," crew members recalled. Over Innsbruck, in the Austrian Tyrol, where his father was born, Lt. Aramini said he took a picture. The Torchy II flew "on the sea" crossing the Mediterranean, and the crew saw five or six planes ditched, they said.

Apparently because of increasing difficulty in preventing Fortress raids, German fighters are using a new system, Maj. Veal said. "They're moving fighters into central Germany from other districts, in a sort of fluid defense, instead of the sector defense as in a basketball game that they used to use," he said. "Many of the planes also have additional tanks of gas under the wings."

On the way to the raid German cities looked deserted, with no movement of any kind in them, as if there has been a complete stoppage of activity because of raid damage, Maj. Veal said.

The major had some special words to



Associated Press Photo

Wearing red fezes and carrying Arabian knives, Sgt. Jas. M. Johnson, Holdenville, Okla.; Sgt. Donald Gallison, Eldorado, Ill.; Lt. August Gasper, Oakland, Cal.; Lt. F. Murphy, Ax, Ga., and Lt. Glenn Graham, Freedom, Pa., arrived at the home base in England yesterday from Africa, where the Fort crew landed after the Aug. 22 raid on Regensburg, Germany.

say about the gunners on Torchy II. "The gunners deserve all the credit," he said. "They do all the shooting. The cabins are heated, but it's cold where the gunners are. I don't see how they do it."

It was the eleventh mission for members of the Torchy II's crew. Others in the crew are: 2/Lt. Howard D. Bassett, Saratoga Springs, N.Y., navigator; T/Sgt. Michael J. Hanowich, Detroit, radio operator; S/Sgt. William Ohl, Mineral Ridge, Ohio, left waist gunner; S/Sgt. Clifford T. Miner, Baraboo, Wis., right waist gunner, and S/Sgt. James T. Hiten, Lexington, Ky., tail gunner.

"It was plenty of hell," said 1/Lt. Robert Wolff, of Palos Verde, Cal., pilot of the Fort, Wolf Pack, describing the trip from Antwerp to Regensburg. "The fighters came up like mosquitos from fields all along the way." "And," added the navigator of the Phartzac, 1/Lt. Donald Serout, of Keene, N.H., "they stayed with us for about an hour and a half."

The flyers agreed that the shuttle service, flying straight on to North Africa,

was much easier than fighting back to Britain.

On their arrival, the men sat down on the desert and ate their emergency rations out of mess kits, slept two nights in their planes, and swam in the Mediterranean.

The souvenirs they showed up with tonight ranged from curved Arabian knives to wallets containing Allied money—and a line of new dialect. Favorite saying at the moment is "Ali, Ali, Salome!" Why, nobody knows.

1/Lt. Norman Scott, pilot from Los Angeles, said, "It was the toughest thing I've ever seen. Our plane knocked down eight fighters on our way to the target. You ought to see our ship. We are in the market for a new one now. The bombing was beautiful; it had to be after the time we'd had getting there."

The airmen were jubilant when shown reconnaissance pictures of the results of their bombings, which reveal one of the best examples yet of precision daylight bombing. The large plant was almost completely destroyed.

Portia's End: Ten on a Five-Man Raft

(Continued from page 1)

God, no doubt, sent them right back to hell.

S/Sgt. Robert Banner, the ball turret gunner, got our next Nazi fighter as we were leaving the target. It was one of those big Junker 88s, and he made another of those one-stop trips to the ground after Banner gave him a few beautiful bursts.

Then, with everything else in the world happening to us, our oxygen started to get low. It was like adding insult to injury. Sgt. Pontius wasn't worried about oxygen, because just as someone said something about it over the inner phone, Pontius hit another Me210. It was a beautiful job. First he knocked out one engine of that fighter, then the other, and it blew to smithereens right under our ship.

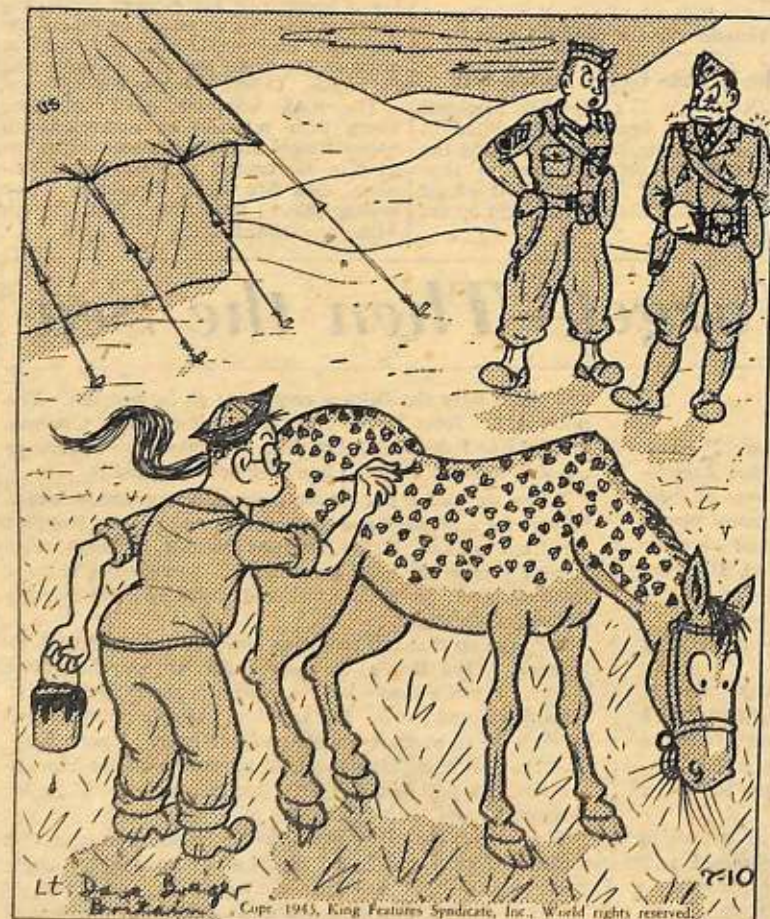
We could see the Alps in the distance



a house she had bought and took all her furniture with her. But when she arrived, all she found was the cellar and a toppled-over chimney. The police department assigned detectives to the case. They walked down the road a mile and ran smack into the missing house. A guy named Fernandez claimed ownership and was moving the house out to his farm to be remodelled into a hen house.

J. C. W.

PRIVATE BREGER



"His theory is that by covering him with painted flies the real ones will look elsewhere!"

by this time. Since we expected our tail to flop off any minute we looked longingly at those mountains and prayed like we'd never prayed before.

The oxygen was getting dangerously low, and S/Sgt. Ray Shepherd, one of the waist gunners, was firing so fast and furious that his mask kept flopping off and S/Sgt. Doug Binford kept putting it on for him. At this time, John Keely did a little figuring, and in one of those simple but heroic gestures, he took up an emergency oxygen cylinder for himself, allowing the full supply that he was using to go to the nose of the ship for me and Ted Rouse.

Boy, when we reached the Alps at last I was sweating. A .30 caliber bullet had just pierced my ammunition can and lodged itself in my sleeve a fraction of an inch from my arm. It had missed the middle of Ted Rouse's head by inches.

You know, those fighters were so desperate they followed us part of the way in from the Alps—what was left of them. During the hot action I can't remember looking out without seeing a bunch of them falling out of the sky at once like big dirty drops of rain. I can't remember how many of them jumped us. But the worst was still in store for us. There was the big Mediterranean to cross yet and all that hot flying had been eating up gas.

When we let down to 13,000 feet at the Alps our last bit of oxygen finally gave out, but then we figured maybe we could stay down and so we sat back.

Raft Stuck For Good

But only for a moment. When we hit the Italian coast, John Keely turned the ship over to Harry Coomes and Ted Rouse went up to help Harry. John went back to try again to dislodge that damn raft. He gave it up quickly though. That raft was on the stabilizer to stay.

We were all alone now, flying 1,000 feet off the water, when the gas situation started getting serious. About 30 miles off the coast of Corsica the red light on the panel board started blinking like a Broadway cigarette sign. Then one engine sputtered and went dead. That's when we all started sweating it out again. T/Sgt. Sam Rochester, radio gunner, got to work sending distress signals despite a shot away antenna.

Then another engine sputtered and went dead. Then a third. There we were, ten men, and only a five-man life raft. Sweating isn't the word for what we started doing then.

As we expected, in a matter of seconds the fourth and last engine went dead, and we all huddled in the radio compartment and prepared for the crash. But it never came.

John Keely and Harry Coomes maneuvered so beautifully, and got the cross wind just right, that the landing we made in the water was better than many I've

seen made on land. S/Sgt. Edward Osborn, tail gunner, put ten boxes of K rations on the radio table before we landed, and we came down so gently that not one of them fell off.

Water was seeping in and there was the problem of only one dinghy for all of us. But we got out right quickly, took what we thought necessary and started surveying the situation. Finally, five of us got into the dinghy and the other five just hung on outside. We were a hard bunch, with knives and everything else ready in case any of those Italian water sharks came snooping.

Anyway, the Portia went down and that was when we really got lonely. Darkness was coming on, too. When it did get dark we all got in that little dinghy somehow, half in, half out, and Pontius, that rascal, started singing "Ten Men in a Tub."

What a night that was. At one time a dark, huge-looking object came toward us and we thought surely we were goners.

When trails of daylight finally came up over the horizon we were all half dead. At one time a group of bombers came over, but we saw they were enemies and, thank heaven, they didn't sight us.

Spirits Rose With Sun

When the sun did come up our spirits rose again, and we took stock of ourselves. During the night everything we had, even the stuff in our pockets, had floated away. The raft was half submerged, so we went back to the old game of half in and half out and there we stayed. At 11 o'clock the little automatic transmitter we had went out, and that is when we started praying in earnest.

Harry Coomes got out his rosary, and we all prayed as praying was never done before. Incidentally, the following Sunday we attended church en masse.

Anyway, as the afternoon came on, a B26 sighted us, and stayed right over us until one of those British air-sea rescue launches came out and picked us up. We thought we were hard as nails. After all, we were combat men. But right then we felt like 90-year-old men.

Those British boys on the launch were so swell it gave us new life. Whoever that B26 pilot is, I want him to know that the crew of the Pregnant Portia thinks he is a great guy. And I want to say, too, that the British are tops—every one of them. They made us feel like our old selves in no time, even giving us their clothes to keep us warm.

The crew is: 1/Lt. John Keely, Richmond Hill, N.Y.; 2/Lt. Harry Coomes, Louisville, Ky.; 2/Lt. Arthur Moore, Dallas, Tex.; 2/Lt. Theodore Rouse, Colorado Springs, Col.; T/Sgt. Ledger Pontius, Howe, Ind.; T/Sgt. Sam Rochester, Brooklyn; S/Sgt. Robert Bunker, White Cloud, Kan.; S/Sgt. Edward Osborn, Oyster Bay, L.I.; S/Sgt. Douglas Binford, Montgomery, Tex.; and S/Sgt. Raymond Shepherd, Salt Lake City, Utah.

