



THE STARS AND STRIPES

Daily Newspaper of U.S. Armed Forces

in the European Theater of Operations



Vol. 3 No. 206

New York, N.Y.—London, England

Friday, July 2, 1943

U.S. Makes Five Landings in Pacific

Fighting Indian Wouldn't Quit Guns

Ball Turret Gunner, Feet Frozen, Beat Off Attackers

A U.S. BOMBER STATION, England, July 1—There's a Flying Fortress crew here that thinks "there oughta be a medal" for their Oklahoma Indian gunner—because when enemy fighters jumped their ship he broke off treatment for frozen feet and crawled back on hands and knees to man the twin guns in his ball turret.

There, in the plexiglass globe protecting the Fort's belly, with bare feet and no jacket, he fired so much lead that one of the two .50 caliber burned out. Only then, with the enemy driven off and the ship safe from attack, did he go back to the radio room to resume treatment for his feet.

It was on the return from Kiel, June 13, that S/Sgt. Floyd L. ("Chief") Thompson performed the deed that stirred his crewmates' admiration. Thompson, a Cherokee from Durant, Okla., was in the ball turret of the Fort piloted by Capt. John R. Miller.

No one aboard knew that his electrically-heated suit had short-circuited and that he was hanging below the ship in sub-zero temperatures with his feet badly frozen. Only when the bomber



'Chief' Thompson

seemed to be out of danger from the fierce enemy opposition met at Kiel did Thompson tell his mates over the intercom what had happened.

A couple of the crew helped him from the turret and took him to the compara-

Braved Below-Zero Cold Without Protection

tive warmth of the radio room. 2/Lt. William Prochaska, of Cleveland, the bombardier, and T/Sgt. Rex J. Neely, of Osceola, Ind., took his shoes off and rubbed his feet to restore circulation. Before they had been working very long, a shout of "Fighters attacking" came over the phone.

Prochaska told Thompson to stay where he was, and then went to the nearest gun. When he looked over a minute later, the ball turret hatch was closing over the Indian's head. Thompson had crawled back to his guns, leaving his jacket in the radio room and also his earphones—so he wouldn't be able to receive order to quit his post.

Safe at their base, the crew agreed that "the Chief oughta get a medal." Besides Capt. Miller, Lt. Prochaska and Sgt. Neely, the crew also included 2/Lt. James B. Stapleton, Chicago; 2/Lt. Collis P. Haynes, Houston, Tex.; T/Sgt. Carl H. Cameron, Morristown, Tenn.; S/Sgt. Arlie G. Arneson, Seattle, Wash.; S/Sgt. Guy Tice, Red Granite, Wis.; and S/Sgt. William A. Whitcomb, Eaton Rapids, Mich.

Fierce Battles Rage At Two Jap Bases As Pincer Move Opens

Sea, Air, Land Forces Strike in Coordinated Offensive Across 700-Mile Arc From New Guinea to Solomon Islands

Five swift coordinated attacks by American forces in the island chain north of Australia yesterday indicated the beginning of a vast pincer movement to expel the Japanese from the South Pacific.

Sea, air and land forces were engaged in fierce battles after landings on two Jap-occupied islands but two other bases were taken without opposition. Of the fifth attack there was only a terse Navy Department announcement that a landing had been made.

The American operations were making "satisfactory progress," and were proceeding on schedule, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson declared in Washington last night.

The five points, stretching from New Guinea to the Solomons, are:

NASSAU BAY, in New Guinea, 15 miles south of Salamaua; no details announced other than that a landing had been effected.

TROBRIAND ISLANDS, north of the eastern tip of New Guinea; unopposed landing.

WOODLARK ISLAND, northeast of the eastern tip of New Guinea; unopposed landing.

NEW GEORGIA ISLAND, about 250 miles northwest of Guadalcanal; fierce fighting after U.S. landing.

RENDOVA ISLAND, half a dozen miles south of New Georgia; battle continuing after U.S. landing; only point at which Japanese high command admits fighting.

In that order, the seized islands form a 700-mile arc between the easternmost land of New Guinea and Guadalcanal, first major stepping stone won back last February.

500 Miles From Rabaul

Bases on Nassau Bay, Woodlark and Trobriand will bring the Allies within 500 miles of Rabaul, Jap bastion on New Britain and the center of all Jap defense positions in the battle area.

Fierce fighting was reported on the Solomon Island of New Georgia, on which the Japanese have built the Munda airport, biggest field in the area.

Battles on the ground and in the air continued on Rendova, where the new

Axis Is Shifting Mobile Forces to 'Invasion Points'

Statement by Stimson Confirms Mass of Invasion Fears

Germany and Italy are shifting mobile forces to points where Axis leaders apparently believe invasion is most likely to take place, Secretary of War Stimson revealed in Washington yesterday.

His statement, presumably based on the best Allied intelligence, apparently confirmed the mounting mass of evidence that the Axis "jitters" over invasion now have put Germany and Italy actively on the defensive throughout the whole "fortress" of Europe.

Reports of a new uprising of Yugoslav guerrillas, sabotage in Belgium and Alsace, widespread police raids in Italy to choke off black market operations—all these were added to the "jitters" picture during the day, a day that saw Germany finally admit her U-boat war was a failure in June.

Air Losses Replaced

Secretary Stimson said he was not worried about heavy British and U.S. bomber losses in raids over enemy territory, because heavy as they are they are being replaced.

"Our total air strength over Europe is steadily increasing," he said.

Stimson said the increasing number of German fighters and anti-aircraft defenses concentrated against the Allied raiders was evidence that the Germans are being hit hard in their industrial areas.

A drop of more than two-thirds in German U-boat successes in June as compared with May was admitted in figures broadcast by Berlin radio. Twenty Allied merchant ships totalling 107,000 (Continued on page 4)

Martinique Asks For U.S. Envoy

WASHINGTON, July 1 (AP)—Secretary of State Cordell Hull said today that the United States had received a dispatch from the authorities on Martinique requesting the reopening of discussions concerning the status of the French Caribbean colony.

Hull was asked at a press conference whether the U.S. government had received from Adm. Robert, Vichy Governor of Martinique, a request for the dispatch of an American envoy to the island to fix terms for the change of French authority there.

He replied that the Navy had received a dispatch from the Martinique authorities, and that it was being given "appropriate consideration." He added that so far as the State department was concerned there was not much he could say on Martinique beyond what he had told Adm. Robert when the United States broke off diplomatic relations with him.

Wilhelmshaven U-Boat Base Out of Action From U.S. Raids

American and British bombers, smashing at Wilhelmshaven by day and night, reports actually eliminated that key German North Sea port as a naval base. The German U-boat base and shipyard, last pounded by Eighth Air Force Flying Fortresses on June 11, is now have been battered to pieces and the

U.S. Fleet Now Most Powerful

Since Pearl Harbor Naval Miracle Has Come About Sec. Knox Declares

HOLLYWOOD, July 1 (AP)—Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox told a Hollywood Bowl audience last night that America, in the short time since Pearl Harbor, had wrought a miracle and had at present the most powerful fleet in the world in actual commission.

By the end of 1943 Col. Knox declared the American fleet will have increased 60 per cent in tonnage and 100 per cent in number over that of 1942. The sweep of Japanese arms had been halted, Col. Knox declared, and the Japs had been on the defensive for months and were digging in in a frantic effort to preserve and hold the fruits of their early victories.

Col. Knox said that in close cooperation with the British fleet, American sailors and fliers were successfully challenging Hitler's underwater fleet.

Battleship Gneisenau Now Used as a Training Ship

STOCKHOLM, July 1 (AP)—The German battleship Gneisenau, which was badly damaged by Allied bomb attacks in 1942, is now berthed in the Baltic port of Gdynia and is being used as a training ship for German marines in AA gunnery, reliable reports from Europe said.

Between 65 and 95 feet is missing from the bows of the cruiser, these reports said. The Germans took off the damaged bow, intending to repair the vessel with a new one but the cruiser was hit so badly that they gave up their plans as experts said they could build a new cruiser in the time it would take to repair the warship.

New Air Raid Warning System Planned in ETO

Air raid sirens throughout the British Isles in the future may be used only in event of immediate danger and then only in localities where bombing or machine-gunning are imminent, it was suggested yesterday, following the disclosure in the House of Commons that a new warning system is to be put into operation. Mechanical details of the plan were not revealed.

The present system of sounding the sirens whenever raiders are in the area has been criticized because it causes needless stoppages of work.

unusable because its submarine pens arsenal blown up, Stockholm heard. Submarines have been dispersed to the mouth of the River Weser.

This newest report, disclosed just as the RAF and USAAF were totaling up the results of their biggest bombing month in the air war over Europe, came as both air forces were taking a breather in preparation for new blows at enemy-occupied Europe.

Eighth Air Force Headquarters meanwhile announced that American planes shot down 271 enemy planes during June, probably destroyed 84, and damaged 178, in comparison with a loss of 82 bombers in seven raids.

Attack on Convoy Yesterday's only air activity of any size occurred off the Dutch coast near the Hook of Holland, when a force of RAF Typhoon bombers escorted by fighters attacked an enemy convoy. No sinkings were claimed, but four fighters protecting the convoy were lost and four RAF planes are missing.

Eighth Air Force headquarters, reviewing June operations, announced that American Fortresses which smashed Germany's second largest synthetic rubber plant at Huls June 22, in their first penetration of the Ruhr, "unloaded the greatest weight of bombs ever dropped on a target by American planes."

Thus June for the Eighth Air Force was a month of at least three superlatives: (1) first bombing of the Ruhr, (2) greatest weight of bombs in one raid, and (3) largest aerial battle in which American planes have ever participated (the melee at Kiel June 13).

The review disclosed that the American forces now have adopted completely the strategy of two-pronged attacks to confuse the enemy and divide his defense.

71 Candidates Get Commissions As Fourth OCS Class Graduates

AMERICAN SCHOOL CENTER, England, July 1—Seventy-one soldiers were commissioned second lieutenants here today during graduation exercises for the fourth class of officer candidates trained in the ETO.

Diplomas were presented to the new officers by Col. William A. Ganoe, chief of the history bureau, ETO, who represented Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers, ETO Commander. The oath of acceptance was administered by Col. Ralph Pulsifer, adjutant general.

Candidate Jules F. Pratte, of St. Mary's, Mo., with an average of 94.17, received the highest grade in the class. He also was judged the best disciplined soldier because he received only six demerits during the 12-week course.

fields along Italy's invasion coast and satellite islands has so chipped away enemy resistance, it was disclosed yesterday, that American bombers have been able to pound Palermo and four Sicilian airdromes for four hours virtually without any fighter opposition.

This unexpected development, as much of a surprise to the pilots on the scene as to observers farther removed, was announced yesterday by Gen. Eisenhower's headquarters in North Africa in telling of new raids to knock out Sicily's air defenses and cripple transportation in the Italian "toe."

Flying Fortresses of the North African strategic air force failed to meet a single enemy fighter in their attack on Palermo Wednesday. Pilots said flak was also comparatively light. Seven direct hits were scored on the Palermo airfield and others were observed on a military storage depot and on barracks.

Enemy A.A. Hits Own Plane Similar lack of opposition was reported by other Fortress crews who hit Boca di Falco airfield in Sicily on Wednesday, and Mitchells and Marauders which struck at Sciacca and Borizzo with fighter escort. Only at Milo airdrome, the mediums' third target, was ack-ack really heavy, and in this instance it was so inaccurate that the gunners shot down one of their own Messerschmitt pilots.

Many enemy planes were destroyed or damaged and many fires were left blazing on the fields. In all the day's operations two enemy aircraft were shot down—a figure confirming the scarcity of Axis fighters. Two Allied aircraft were lost.

Messina, the Sicilian terminal of the rail ferry connecting with Italy across the Sicilian Straits, was pounded Tuesday night for the second time in 24 hours by RAF Wellingtons. The bombers also dumped explosives along roads south of San Giovanni and started a large fire.

The graduation exercise was presided over by Col. Walter G. Layman, commander of the school center, who addressed the group and introduced the visiting officers. The local vicar read the invocation, and the post chaplain, Edward J. Fleischer, the benediction.

When the class began the course, there were 81 students. One man withdrew because of physical reasons and nine others failed to complete the course.

The graduating class was entertained on Wednesday by another group of candidates who will graduate in about six weeks, and on Tuesday held a smoker for one of their instructors, Capt. Edward P. Masso, of Syracuse, N.Y., winner of the Silver Star during the Tunisia campaign.

Bombers Batter Mediterranean Islands at Will

U.S. Formations Hit Axis' Airfields With Almost No Opposition

U.S. formations blasted Axis airfields along Italy's invasion coast and satellite islands has so chipped away enemy resistance, it was disclosed yesterday, that American bombers have been able to pound Palermo and four Sicilian airdromes for four hours virtually without any fighter opposition.

This unexpected development, as much of a surprise to the pilots on the scene as to observers farther removed, was announced yesterday by Gen. Eisenhower's headquarters in North Africa in telling of new raids to knock out Sicily's air defenses and cripple transportation in the Italian "toe."

Flying Fortresses of the North African strategic air force failed to meet a single enemy fighter in their attack on Palermo Wednesday. Pilots said flak was also comparatively light. Seven direct hits were scored on the Palermo airfield and others were observed on a military storage depot and on barracks.

Enemy A.A. Hits Own Plane Similar lack of opposition was reported by other Fortress crews who hit Boca di Falco airfield in Sicily on Wednesday, and Mitchells and Marauders which struck at Sciacca and Borizzo with fighter escort. Only at Milo airdrome, the mediums' third target, was ack-ack really heavy, and in this instance it was so inaccurate that the gunners shot down one of their own Messerschmitt pilots.

Many enemy planes were destroyed or damaged and many fires were left blazing on the fields. In all the day's operations two enemy aircraft were shot down—a figure confirming the scarcity of Axis fighters. Two Allied aircraft were lost.

Messina, the Sicilian terminal of the rail ferry connecting with Italy across the Sicilian Straits, was pounded Tuesday night for the second time in 24 hours by RAF Wellingtons. The bombers also dumped explosives along roads south of San Giovanni and started a large fire.

Map on Page 2

A map of the Pacific area in which American troops have made landings on Japanese island bases, possibly in preparation for the long-awaited assault on main enemy bastions and defense lines, is printed on page 2.

offensive began Wednesday afternoon. At intervals 110 Jap planes attacked an American landing party at New Georgia. Sixty-five enemy aircraft were destroyed, the Navy Department announced. During the raid, the U.S. transport McCawley was sunk by a submarine. All troops were rescued.

The offensive against the heart of Japan's defenses was viewed in informed quarters in Washington last night as the spark that might touch off another momentous and possibly decisive naval engagement.

Washington observers pointed out that the Jap fleet could not much longer avoid another open test of sea power if it hoped to stem the drive.

Although the objectives of the far-flung attack have not been revealed, it may be directed against Rabaul in drives from the southwest and southeast.

News of the first success in the offensive (Continued on page 4)

Fort Gunner Gets DFC For Bravery on 25 Ops

A U.S. BOMBER STATION, England, July 1—T/Sgt. Denis Keleman, of Cumberland, Ky., a B17 gunner, was awarded the DFC for "great courage and skill" in 25 missions over enemy occupied Europe. Sgt. Keleman already holds the Air Medal and three Oak Leaf Chesters.

Pay-As-You-Go Plan in Effect WASHINGTON, July 1 (AP)—Pay-as-you-go income tax deductions went into effect for all wage and salary earners today as the U.S. Government embarked on a new fiscal year that will cost the unprecedented sum of \$109,000,000,000.

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 Sect., S.O.S., of the U.S. Armed Forces in the European Theater of Operations and Africa. Printed by The Times Publishing Company, Ltd., at Printing House Square, London, E.C.4 (Telephone: Central 2000). Contents passed by the U.S. Army and Navy censors: subscription, 16 shillings per year plus postage, ETO Edition. Entered as second class matter Mar. 15, 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. Harchar 1/Lt. J. C. Wilkinson STAFF News Editor: 2/Lt. Robert Moore City Editor: M/Sgt. Bud Hutton Photo and Makeup: T/Sgt. Ben F. Price Sports: S/Sgt. Mark Senigo Navy: Yeoman Tom Bernard, USNR Vol. 3, No. 206, July 2, 1943

War on Many Fronts

Those who last summer prattled about a "second front" will soon be unable to count the active war zones on the fingers of both hands, for the list is growing impressive.

Just by way of review there is the Eastern front and the very active Mediterranean front... that's two. Then there is the Western front, for certainly with half the German air force operating against the combined effort of the RAF and USAAF to blast German industry out of the war this front must be included in any list regardless of land fighting.

Then there is India, where war will continue to gain momentum until the Japs are rolled out of Burma and China. And speaking of China... there we have a brave and powerful ally, supported by only a small but courageous American air force, holding hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers at bay.

Then there is the Asiatic-Pacific theater. Any GI Joe on Attu will tell you his theater is active. Kiska is the only island still held by the Japs and their position on Kiska is a desperate one.

In the South Pacific the stalemate existing since the conquest of Guadalcanal has been broken by a two-pronged drive designed to knock the Japs out of their outer line of South Sea island defenses. The initiative in the South Pacific has been in our possession for several months, bought and paid for in sweat and blood supplied by U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. Day by day the value of this initiative will grow more apparent as we decide where and when the next blow will be delivered in a campaign aimed at driving the Japanese out of the entire Pacific theater.

1943 will long be remembered as the year in which the Axis Powers met defeat in every theater of war... and the number now active is seven.

Academic Credits

When GI Joe is discharged from service after cessation of hostilities and decides to complete his education before seeking civilian employment, it will be possible for him to obtain academic credit for the education experiences he gained while in military service.

That is the latest word from the War Department, and it is good news for ex-students serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Under the new educational program now in operation in the American Army, the Registrar of the United States Armed Forces Institute will have a record of the correspondence courses completed by all GIs. Those who complete a training course at a training school will also have it officially recorded, and if a GI takes a special examination the results will be sent to the Institute for record.

For enlisted men not taking advantage of Institute educational services there is an opportunity to take an educational maturity test, a survey of general knowledge designed to discover what has been learned during the period of military service that may be of value in school work.

The tests to measure "educational maturity" will be administered upon request, and the results placed on record at the United States Armed Forces Institute for later certification to universities and colleges as evidence of educational maturity. This evidence will serve as the basis for assignment of academic credits.

The entire program is designed to assist the soldier along the educational path toward a goal of his own selection. It will eliminate unnecessary delay in the procurement of a degree, and will shorten the time required to complete the course of study interrupted by war service.

Hash Marks

If you don't believe mules are balky, ask John Chamberlin, of Cincinnati. His mule took to a railroad embankment to escape high waters during a flood and has steadfastly resisted all efforts to remove him. The mule steadfastly refused to walk the track, only means of escape; so officials had to build an embankment for the mule to stand on so trains could pass. Chamberlin says he hopes to get his mule back in the barn eventually.

A sailor and marine made the long trek from Londonderry to Belfast to attend the first anniversary of the opening of the Red Cross club there. A pretty elaborate program was under way and the lads were enjoying themselves so that they nearly forgot their train. The sailor suddenly figured a way out. Walking over to a general who was present, he said, "Sir, may we use your car? We have no way



to get to the station to catch our train back to camp." To their surprise the general replied, "Certainly, and I will not only send my driver—my aide will accompany you." When the aide returned with the report that the sailor and marine had made the train safely, the general smiled and commented, "The Navy has done a great job of delivering soldiers—I didn't want to miss this chance of getting the Navy to its destination."

Excitement on the home front: Charlie Scholl, of Oneonta, N.Y., rigged up an elaborate shotgun trap to blast chicken thieves. The next morning he absent-mindedly opened the door of his henhouse, got a load of buckshot in his leg.

We see by the papers that some children in a picture show back home were overcome by fumes. We think we've seen the same picture.

Lt. Col. John L. Gaylord, executive officer at Fort Riley, was satisfied with his telephone number, 326—until the WAACS moved in. Then enlisted men



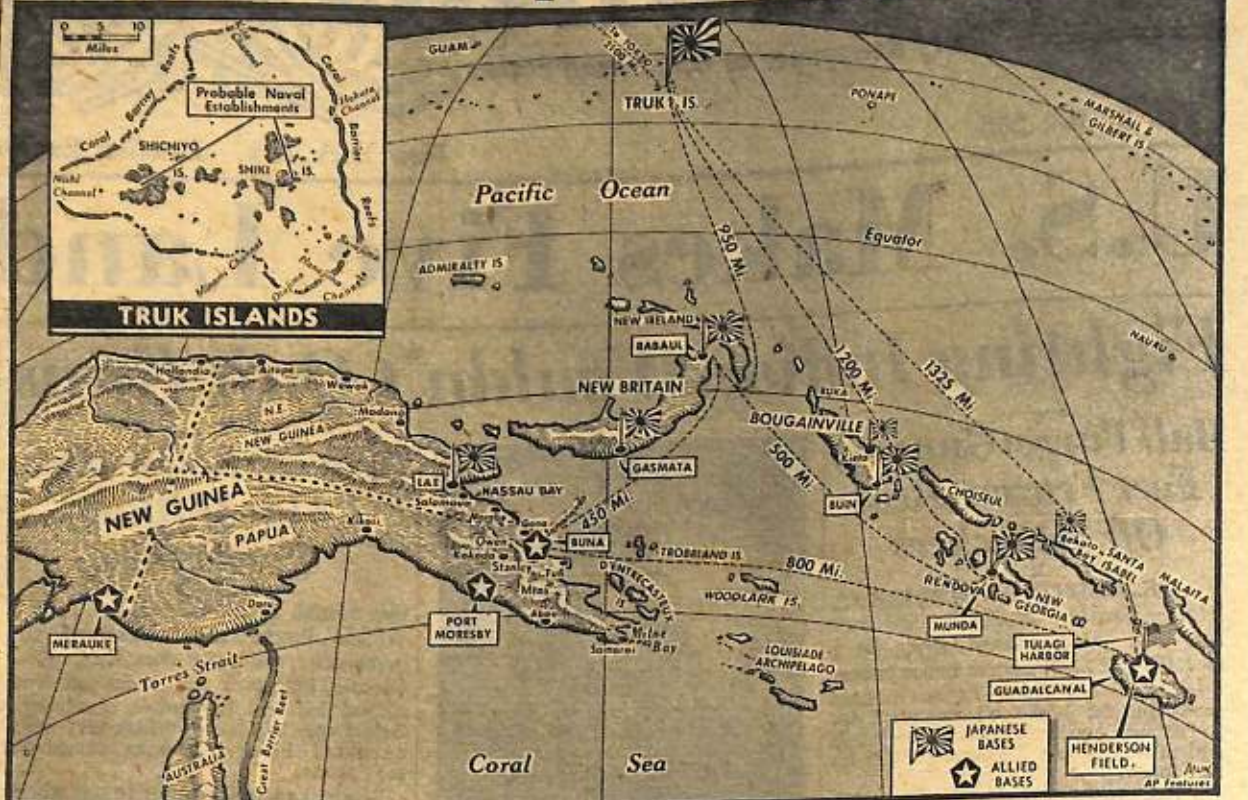
began calling him at all hours of the night, seeking dates with the Waacs, whose number was 226. The colonel made a strategic withdrawal—to a new number.

Fun on the home front: In Coldwater, Mich., City Patrolman Frank Pavka, complaining that his service revolver had too easy a trigger pull, jerked the gun from the holster to demonstrate to fellow officers. There was an explosion. A bullet from Pavka's gun split a new door casing in the police station and imbedded itself in the door of the council chambers across the hall. Muttered Pavka, in a trembling voice, "You see what I mean?" J. C. W.



"He tries everything! Says there's no tellin' where we might be sent!"

South Seas Ripe for a Showdown



Landings May Open Vast Offensive in South Pacific

The South Seas seem ripe for a showdown.

Comparatively quiet since February when the Japs were blasted off Guadalcanal, American landings Wednesday on Rendova which were followed by a series of swift stabs at New Georgia, Trobriand, Woodlark and Nassau Bay may herald the launching of a vast Allied offensive designed to liquidate the enemy in the vital southwest Pacific.

The full dress nature of the campaign was revealed with the announcement that Gen. Douglas MacArthur is directing the entire operation.

Although the objectives of the far-flung assault have not been disclosed, they appear to be pointed toward Rabaul—the center of all Jap defense positions in the south and southwest Pacific areas. If the anticipated pincer movement is successful, the Pacific will probably collapse.

With the fall of Rabaul the Japs would have to fall back on their great naval bastion of Truk in the Caroline Islands.

That position, 1,000 miles to the north, would also be endangered by the Allied advance, as well as the Jap supply lines through the China Sea between Japan and Japanese conquests in the southwest Pacific.

Previous to the Rendova landing there had been little land and only routine aerial activity. Heavy and medium bombers pounded Jap bases but there had been nothing like the big push which now seems near.

Japanese failures to hold and reinforce their stations on Guadalcanal proved that strong defenses, especially with bomber support, are victorious in island warfare. Allied island landings will provide additional bases for attack from the air.

While the landings and subsequent drives against Jap positions seem to be part of a pattern designed to pick the islands off one by one, the long-range plans may provide for a war of attrition.

Among Allied leaders strong support is given the attrition method—cutting advance Jap island bases off from their supply bases by naval and aerial action and starving them out for lack of replacements and material. This is a slower,

invasion but much less costly in manpower.

Because the Japanese conform to their military pattern and refuse to concede losses of territory and men, they may be

expected to let go with another giant push.

Their counter-attack pattern, judging from their autumn attempts to win back Guadalcanal, is this: Heavy aerial bombing followed by daredevil dashes by destroyers carrying reinforcements and supplies, immediately followed by large naval concentrations and masses of occupation troops.

Source of the naval strength such attacks require is the mysterious Truk Islands, mandated to Japan by the League of Nations after World War I. Military observers give some credence to the belief that no white man has seen or visited Truk in the past 20 years and come back to report his observations.

In any case the chances of an enemy fleet breaking through the treacherous coral reefs encircling Truk or of forcing the six channels into the inner islands is slim.

Nearest Allied air bases are 1,400 or more miles away on New Guinea and Guadalcanal and the route to Truk through and over thousands of Jap-owned, Jap-mandated and Jap-held islands and oceans is too dangerous.

If the present Allied twin drives—through the Solomons and against Lae, New Guinea—are successful they would bracket Rabaul as the last barrier to a frontal assault on the mysteries of Truk.

Soldiers Convert Garage Into Theater British Blankets And Yank Ingenuity Kill Acoustical Banshee

By Charles W. White Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

A U.S. ARMY STATION HOSPITAL, N.I., July 1—Five non-coms and a Pfc made a storage garage into a model theater here, and in doing the job killed the acoustical banshee that has plagued entertainment huts all over the British Isles.

They applied a lot of other fancy new ideas, although none of them had engineering experience, and Thursday evening, June 17, at the dedication of their playhouse they had the pleasure of seeing their ideas work.

Here are their names first, because they deserve to have them mentioned first: Sgt. Bill Webster, Buffalo, N.Y.; T/4 Calvin Daigle, New Orleans, La.; T/4 Harold Potter, Faulkton, N.D.; T/5 Jerome Loberg, St. Paul, Minn.; Cpl. Harry Harfield, St. Paul, Minn.; and Pfc Mike Moritz, Bertha, Mass.

They're classed as Special Services, movie operator, electrician and carpenters respectively, but the fact is they're all operators, electricians and carpenters, as well as fix-it-as-you-go inventors.

Everybody has had the annoying experience of sitting in an entertainment hut and straining to hear as chairs squeaked, feet shuffled and voices from the stage went astray in the rafters. All the shush-shushing and angry glances in the world won't stop this kind of annoyance, but good acoustical construction will—and that's where the Big Idea came in at this theater, which the boys have named "The Green Hut."

Voices Carry 80 Feet

The answer? Blankets. Not a new idea, but one rarely used in ETO. Plain, common, worse than garden variety British issue blankets, 44 of them. Who thought it up? Neither Bill Webster nor any of the others know. Maybe it was just sort of a dream, but in rehearsals for the all-GI show this week you could hear perfectly 80 feet from the stage, despite all kinds of manufactured scraping and interference. At a pre-opening show, actors' voices were heard clearly from the stage, with 300 in the chairs and customers moving in and out all the time.

These blankets, it seems, absorb floor and sidewall noises. Covering the top of the stage and extending along the rafters to the hut entrance, they somehow help to carry the actors' voices, too. "Don't know why," Sgt. Webster said. "Funny, ain't it. But it works pretty good."

This gang also has solved some ventilation and fire hazard problems. In the first place, they built their hut plenty big—big enough for scores to staff. In its garage days, it was just a large corrugated sheet metal tube over a concrete floor. A small door in front, and his crew went to work and cut windows all along the sides, with curtain blackouts that admit air. They enlarged the front door, opened a 12 by 16 foot stage. The rail back of the stage rests in the slots, so in case of trouble a small girl could lift it with one hand and skip right out.

Sgt. Webster wryly admits that this fire prevention stuff really was started more or less under duress. Col. Thos. H. Lanman, MC, of Cambridge, Mass., ex-Harvard medico and CO of the unit, marched in during the first week's activities and said "Say, what the hell; you've got to have fire protection here—" or words to that effect. He ordered large exits cut in the side walls, right and left center.

"Well, it turned out all the better," one of the home talent engineers laughed. "With those doors in, everybody can smoke during shows!"

Thus they solved acoustical, ventilation and safety problems. The next business was the stage, which they hammered and sawed themselves. It's 22 feet wide and 16 feet deep, 18 feet high to the apex of the roof, but with those trusty blankets up there, only about 12 feet. Plenty of room, though. The boys used 36 British 75-watt lights in the apron, 11 above, two in each dressing room and two in the rear corridor. They're fixing a switch and rheostat outfit so that red, white and blue lights can be used in the apron—enough lighting effect to play Siegfried if they could find a nurse fat enough for Brunhilde.

Here however, our American Model Builder got stuck. Curtains and wings for this business are made of green burlap and several esoteric kinds of cloth, and that takes sewing, and sewing, you will admit, is tough.

'Hemstitch Girls' Get Busy

At this juncture up stepped Miss Jean Napier, of Atlanta, Ga., and Miss Miriam Spaulding, of Lowell, Mass., American Red Cross attendants at the hospital, with their crew of "hemstitch girls," all volunteer Irishwomen who are in the habit of visiting the wards twice weekly to help guys with their needle problems.

A ten by fourteen movie screen was set up, but with the first audience it became obvious to operator Daigle that there was going to be too much help from below. So a new elevated projection cage is being constructed "to keep the boys from fooling around." It is right at the front entrance, giving larger projections. The shows are complete with sound equipment lent by the Red Cross.

Sgt. Webster here stole an idea from ENSA, with, of course, a few U.S. improvements. He's fixing floodlight proscenium, using a box like the old-type loud-reflectors and using vari-colored cellophane in front for color filters; no glass needed.

