

ATTACK ON AMERICA

BY GENERAL ARRED WHITE
W. H. U. Release

THE STORY SO FAR: Colonel Flagwill, acting assistant chief of U. S. Intelligence department G-2, estimated there were 200,000 European troops in Mexico poised for an attack on the United States. Both he and the President were powerless to act because Con-

CHAPTER IV—Continued.

By the end of a week, Benning had gained something of Fincke's confidence together with a knowledge of the workings of Van Hassek's headquarters at the palace. He had adopted the habit of going for a walk each evening with the Austrian, usually to the Alameda.

Benning had learned that the Austrian was an artilleryman, on temporary detail at headquarters because of knowledge of the United States.

"But at headquarters, Fincke," Benning prompted, "life is not too active. Isn't it your experience that once headquarters gets its claws on an officer he's sunk?"

The Austrian responded with a grunt of contempt.

"I'm an artilleryman, not a staff officer," he snapped. "My battery of seventy-sevens is at Jolisco for target practice and I'm in Mexico City only until the show opens!"

Benning laughed and said, "But with your fluency in English, your chief isn't likely to part company with you when our troops head into the United States."

"I've Colonel Bravot's word for it!" Fincke said hotly. "Yes, and I'll remind him of it as soon as he returns from Washington, which ought to be any day now."

Benning prolonged the promenade with Fincke, stopping from time to time at the bar of the Gonzales near the park for Scotch-and-soda. Once the Fincke artilleryist enthusiasm was aroused, the Austrian needed little urging to talk.

At first he boasted of his own guns, then branched off into the subject of Van Hassek's superiority in artillery. He painted a picture of well trained regiments splendidly equipped with the best armament.

"What a wonderful show, Bromlitz!" Fincke exclaimed after he had elaborated the weapons in detail. "Particularly when we pound their artillery to pieces with our superior ranges. Himmelkreuz! They will be helpless in counter-battery."

"Not too fast, Fincke," Benning cautioned. "We mustn't forget their tremendous manpower once they get them equipped."

"But a million men can crush the Americans before they can get themselves ready!"

"A million men, perhaps, but how can we ever expect to get a million men mobilized in Mexico without rousing the Americans finally to action?"

Fincke stopped in his tracks and his blue eyes looked gravely at Benning through their thick lenses. The Austrian lowered his voice.

"That is not mere surmise, Bromlitz. This I will tell you in the deepest confidence. One day in General Van Hassek's office I glimpsed his little map of the United States and on it are red arrows pointing in from the south, the east, and the west. I had only a glimpse before he returned the map to his desk, but I caught figures enough to convince me of a million men."

Benning managed an indifferent smile and decided to close this dangerous subject.

"With a million men, Fincke, a great deal might be done," he said, and added, with a glance at his wrist watch, "but it's getting late and what do you say to some dinner?"

The two went to a Mexican cabaret on Avenida Hidalgo, a favorite spot of officers of the new regime.

Benning ordered dinner and picked at his meal. Apparently he was mildly entertained by the show about him. Actually he was only vaguely conscious of his surroundings. His mind was busy with Fincke's disclosures, with a piecing together of the things Van Hassek had told him.

Benning made his decision. There was the air corps yet to check, and some verification of Fincke's disclosures. That should not be difficult. But only Van Hassek would know the broader plan of attack on the United States and Benning knew now that he must find some way to tap the Van Hassek brain, at any cost. A glance at the Van Hassek operation map might answer all questions. In some way he meant to get his eyes on that map.

His thoughts were interrupted by the action of Fincke in springing abruptly to his feet. A dark, erect man in Mexican uniform paused at their table to acknowledge the Austrian's greetings.

"My colonel, I am overjoyed to see you back in Mexico!" the Austrian exclaimed. He turned to Benning, who got to his feet. "I wish, my colonel, to present our new officer, Major Bromlitz, who has reported to us from Europe in your absence. Major, our chief of service, Colonel Bravot."

The Frenchman searched Benning with a quizzical glint as if trying to associate him with some vague memory. In a moment his black eyes cleared and he passed on with a stiff bow.

Benning's memory had clicked instantly on seeing the colonel. Bravot, his chief of service, unmistakably was Sergeant Gajous, the masquer-

INSTALLMENT THREE

gress and the general public failed to realize the significance of the troops. To obtain more definite proof, Captain Benning, American intelligence officer, went to Mexico City where he posed as a staff member. Here he accepted as a staff member, former American army officer who had been captured in Paris after turning

trader in American uniform on whose trail he had been camping at San Antonio.

Benning had little more than settled down at his allotment of American newspapers the next morning than Van Hassek's majordomo, Captain Schreff, came in with a summons.

"Excellency directs that you report to him immediately," Schreff muttered.

Benning promptly went down the tiled corridor to the Van Hassek suite. He had spent the night on pins and needles, knowing that once the Bravot memory clicked the jig was up with him. What did this summons mean? However, he kept his faith in his masquerade.

Since leaving Bordeaux he had effected those slight changes in appearance that are the most effective masquerade. The Atlantic sun and wind had given his face a deep tan, and he had cultivated a thin mustache cut at a rakish angle. At San Antonio his hair had been rather full, now it was cropped close at the sides and the length of his head increased by a bristling pompadour.

His new Mexican uniform, cut wide at the shoulders, gave his torso a different appearance from that of the civilian clothes he had worn in Texas.

There was a catlike animation in Van Hassek's one straight eye that



Kissed him ardently—

puzzled Benning. The peculiar smile on the general's thick lips was equally baffling.

"Sit down, Bromlitz, I want to talk to you," Van Hassek invited. "Tell me, are you very much in love?"

Benning blinked at the amazing query, then smiled back with a shake of his head.

"There was a young lady in Luxembourg, eh?"

Benning's mind instantly picked up the Van Hassek purport and he confessed, "Yes, Excellency."

"Her name?"

"Mademoiselle Lucette Ducos."

"And you promised you would bring her to Mexico City with your first month's pay, Bromlitz?"

"Usually, in such cases," Benning evaded, "one attempts to make parting as painless as possible."

Van Hassek chuckled. "But sometimes such promises come home to roost, Bromlitz. He pushed his call button and Schreff came in. Van Hassek granted instructions.

Schreff left the room to return in a moment with a young woman. Ignoring Van Hassek she rushed up to Benning and threw her arms around his neck and kissed him ardently on the mouth.

"Chere!" she exclaimed. "Oh, but Henri, I couldn't wait for you to send for me! My uncle gave me a ticket to Vera Cruz and here I am!"

Benning coldly received the caress. He saw that she was French, undoubtedly the French operative, Lucette Ducos, who had been Bromlitz' undoing. She was small, trim, and had a doll-like face, but with an intelligence in her large blue eyes that set her apart from the doll variety.

A glance gave Benning his appraisal. A girl to turn any man's head, and he understood at once Bromlitz' mad infatuation for the girl. He felt a stir of revolt at the thought of an ally from the French secret service, but promptly remembered that he had a role to play.

"You shouldn't have come here this way, Lucette," he coolly told her. "I've a man's role to play here and it's no place for a woman."

Van Hassek came from behind his desk to intervene. He took the French girl's elbows in his chubby hands and his voice was ingratiating.

NEXT WEEK

Another Absorbing Installment

traitor to the United States. After a brief interview with Van Hassek, leader of the foreign armed forces in Mexico, Benning was accepted as a staff member. Here he strove to gain the confidence of Fincke, an enemy officer. Now continue with the story.

"Mademoiselle, now that your identity has been established to our satisfaction, you're welcome in Mexico. If your Heinie doesn't treat you as he should, my little cabbage, just you come back and report the facts to me!"

Mademoiselle threw her arms gratefully about Van Hassek's flabby red neck and kissed him on his cheek. Then she turned to Benning, linked her arm in his and gleefully took him out of the room. In the street Benning called a taxicab and drove to the Alameda, where he picked out a seat under a shady cypress.

"What is it you want here, mademoiselle?" he bluntly demanded.

"Information," she replied crisply. "Naturally, my government sent me."

"I should have guessed they had something like this in mind," he complained. "But why do you wish yourself off on me?"

"There are excellent reasons," she answered, regarding him with a level smile. "For one thing we are both after the same information and ought to be able to help each other."

Benning had decided that inevitably he must accept the French girl as an associate, since he was already in the palm of her hand if by caprice or stupidity she betrayed his masquerade.

"I'll be glad to give you advantage of anything I may learn," he told her. "But of course we must work separately."

"As you please," she agreed, and said with unabashed frankness, "but at least we'll have to live together."

Benning demanded, "Why do you propose that?"

"For two reasons. First, Van Hassek thinks I'm your mistress and I want him to continue thinking that, for the time being, at least."

"Your second reason?"

"That," she said, looking at him again with her level smile, "is the important one to you, Bromlitz escaped from Vincennes three days after you sailed for Vera Cruz."

Benning sat glaring while his mind swept to an estimate of that calamity.

"Don't blame my government," Mlle. Ducos spoke up at once. "It was wholly the fault of a stupid secretary from your embassy who was sent to the fort to interview Bromlitz. An hour after he left, a guard found your secretary bound in Bromlitz' cell. Bromlitz had escaped in the secretary's clothes and spectacles."

"You've no doubt Bromlitz will make his way to Mexico?"

Mlle. Ducos smiled unconcernedly. "Not the least. But now that we understand each other, monsieur, let's find a place to live. Tonight I'd like to have you take me to the Avenida Hidalgo to dine and dance."

On reporting at the palace next morning, Benning was steered by a new determination. He meant to play whatever risks were necessary promptly to close his mission in Mexico. With Colonel Bravot on the job, Bromlitz at large, and the French operative on his hands he knew he skated now on very thin ice.

With Mlle. Ducos he had struck a bargain. She was to keep strictly away from headquarters. He promised her any pertinent information he picked up and allotted her the task of checking on the air service. Also she was to keep on the alert for any cancellation of military leaves to Mexico City, which would be a significant development.

They set up together in an inexpensive suite on Jesus Maria. When they were alone in their apartment, Mlle. Ducos' attitude was one of a purely professional associate. But when they were together in public during evenings that followed, she kept up the ruse of a romantic attachment.

They had gone to the Avenida Hidalgo for dinner one evening when the French girl's covert flirtation with a bald-headed Italian officer in a colonel's uniform brought from Benning a sharp rebuke.

"Doesn't it strike you a bit inconsistent, mademoiselle," he charged, "for you to pose as my fiancée and at the same time flirt outrageously behind my back while we're dancing together? We agreed that you were to limit yourself at present to finding out about Van Hassek's air service."

She looked up at him and smiled as they danced, then put her lips close to his ear and spoke in a low voice.

"Would it interest you, monsieur, to know that I have learned most of what we wish to know? Van Hassek's air bases are located in Tamulipulas, and he has a total of more than a thousand planes, with more coming by ship in the near future. Colonel Boggio, if you will take the trouble to study his insignia, is an officer of the air service."

(TO BE CONTINUED)



LOS ANGELES. — My traveling companion, Mr. Clarence Budington Kelland, the victim of 100,000 miles of sporting torture and observation in a drawing room we always share, can also carry his output of thorns. He isn't 100 per cent rose leaves.

Passing through El Paso, Texas, recently, the famous Arizona novelist asked me to name the qualities a champion needs beyond mere physical ability to do things — to do things physically better than others who may still move on beyond him in other walks of life.

True champions are not carved from brawn and bone—not even from speed and stamina. They must have something more.

Many competitors may be bigger, faster and stronger than the field they face—and yet not quite arrive at the top, while others with less to work with may carry the banner of stardom well beyond their set barriers.

"Of course," remarked Mr. Kelland, "he must have ability. But ability—plus what else?"

The Top Ingredients

First of all I should say there must be a love of the game he plays—the love of the thing he is doing.

The star football player must love football as a game beyond any other reward. This goes for baseball, golf, and every other sport.

It must bring to him the ambition to excel—through practice, through hard work, through condition, through greater concentration.

Davey O'Brien at 150 pounds and Charlie O'Rourke of Boston college were far better football players than most entries who range from 200 to 250, and who are just as fast. Frank Hinkey, "the disembodied ghost" at 150 pounds, is still a football tradition.

The next two features are natural knack and mental poise. These are born in the athlete, not acquired.

All the scientists and all the chemistry in the world can't supply knack and mental poise from the outside. They might wreck nations, but they can't give man those two things.

For example, Bobby Jones happened to be born with the knack for great golf. He was also born with the ability to concentrate, and later he forced himself to take a harder beating, on the mental and psychological side, than anyone else in his game. He was willing to suffer more in order to win.

As Don Marquis once wrote, "You must suffer to be strong."

There is no easy road to the top of the hill of fame in sport. There are no paved boulevards of indolence and pleasant dreams. Those who arrive must earn the ascent by hard work.

And there is no substitute for hard work. The genius can have his on and off day. But Tommy Harmon, for example, was out there taking aim for 55 or 60 minutes of every game. And don't forget Tommy Harmon, always the marked man, took more than his share of punishment. But he was in shape to carry this burden. Condition is one of the great words from any dictionary.

Color and Spirit

"What about two other major factors?" Mr. Kelland asked. "I mean color and spirit."

"What is color?" I asked the bronzed son of Arizona.

"Color," replied Mr. Kelland, "is that peculiar and intangible quality that catches the public imagination—the fancy of the mob. I mean the thing possessed by Babe Ruth, Bobby Jones and Jack Dempsey—the three most colorful athletes of all time."

"Color is something no one can explain. But the crowd knows it. It is never the same in two people. But it always has the same result. And the crowd finds it first of all. The crowd knows that they like it, but they don't know what it is."

"It is something with a direct human appeal. It doesn't mean speed, it doesn't mean power, it doesn't mean skill or stamina. It is something that goes even farther than charm."

"What about spirit?" I asked my tormentor from 10,000 yesterdays.

"Spirit," remarked Mr. Kelland, "is the cold fire of competition on the day you deliver the goods. It is a combination of enthusiasm and determination, plus confidence."

To me spirit is a burning flame that never fades or dies.

Spirit is also something beyond explaining, although it can be expanded or developed under proper encouragement. But the germ must always be there.

Spirit is a blood brother of inspiration. What inspiration is to the true poet, spirit is to the athlete. Minus spirit—the true spirit of competition against all odds—the greatest physical specimen is just a hulk. Without spirit the best athlete is little better than a tractor laboring under a heavy load.

HOW TO SEW

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the sketch shows how the two pieces of the slip cover were made.

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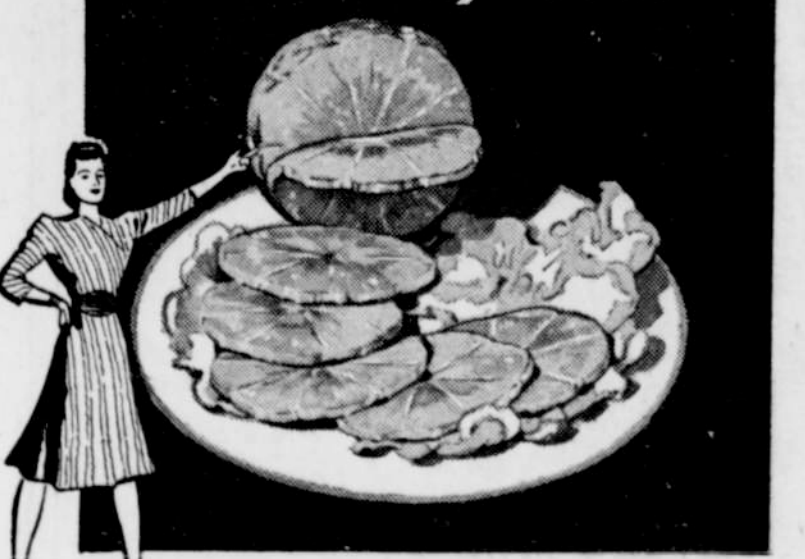
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