

## Normandy Invasion

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mined, even pointed, attacks unnecessarily, or for the thrill-value! The second day of our operations we were amused and self-laudatory over a radio interception of a German broadcast which, after identifying us as the Devil Ship because of our tactics and successes against important installations and concentrations of troops and supplies of various sorts, threatened us with sure destruction. Of course, we laughed, recalling previous threats from their news sources to "get us."

About that time of evening when dusk is finally enveloped in darkness one is rather inclined to an almost universal lethargy. This second evening we were shaken from our pathetic attention to duty by a terrific explosion. A JU88 had sneaked in and released a 1000 pound aerial bomb that nearly tore our heads off. The AA gunners poured everything they had into the receding tail of the audacious rascal. This was a very busy night and we were accredited two enemy planes; suffering a near-miss from the aerial bomb, an ineffectual strafing of our fan-tail and collecting souvenir-shrapnel from the bomb explosion, effected our second day's tally.

Immediately preceding and thru out the extended operations involving our ship, ARKANSAS, there was an incredible procession of troop and equipment-gorged craft pushing in toward the invasion beaches. These people did the biggest, most tiring task of all, in my estimation. Undoubtedly they will share heroically in the final tallying of accounts with those of the infantry and the paratroops and engineers who forced the initial footholds and held, tenaciously, against the Supermen.

The picture of this stupendous show will be completed over a definite period of course. Individual points of view have been before the public eyes and ears these past weeks and it isn't too difficult to grasp the composite picturization and correlate them in somewhat more orderly fashion than I have done in this particular record.

As large as this phase seems, it was, in actuality, a small bit of the sphere allotted to the American jurisdiction of the interallied strategic position. While there were in the Texas group, of which the Arkansas was a unit, a total of four destroyers, two American and two British; two British cruisers, HMS Bellona and HMS Glasgow; two splendid French cruisers, Montcalm and the Georges Leygues and this was but one group under the American command of Admiral Kirk. This makes no mention of the tremendous Armada used in securing and exploiting an equally others which I haven't identified vast English-Canadian incision in

the enemy's hitherto invulnerable Atlantic Wall.

There are incidents that happened among the crew which are especially worthy of record. To make an illustration or to elucidate in a play-by-play manner on the many varied exploits seems beyond my means so I am compelled to present a very general picture. It will be fairly easy to take some note of the amazing hardihood and stamina of the wounded personnel of the amphibious forces, both army and navy, who were brought aboard during the first day's fighting for treatment and temporary hospitalization.

In the early hours of the assault it was exceedingly difficult to furnish some casualties with more than the most general sort of treatment due to the fury of enemy resistance on the beaches. Hospital ships and even regular line units were necessarily impressed into the effort to care for the casualties and we received our share of wounded aboard that day.

The forbearance and personal conduct of the wounded was, without exception, exemplary of the highest traditions in any Service. I was deeply impressed by the utter disregard shown by several over their wounds—serious wounds.

We had one surgeon; of our three ship's doctors. Dr. Dostal is the practicing surgeon. He performed magic in an improvised surgery which was set up on the third deck; the surgery, being in its normal location on the second deck, too vulnerable to enemy shell fire and bomb penetration.

Much has been written by novelists in fictitious accounts of human endurance. Frankly, it has also been a bit difficult for me to credit some of the accounts coming from our various war theaters. It's rather pointless, in some cases, to ask a man to believe of others a heroic conduct in terrible circumstances when he has not seen, in his experience, such nerve and grim humor! I have had reason to regret my cynicism. I have seen human qualities in helpless young men that take one out of this world. They point to a principal reason why these Americans are able to take the vounted Herrenvolk, that so-called Nordic-Superman! This talk one hears of the "game spirit" is no fable! America, as a nation, can survive anything if she will match the courage and fortitude of these unfortunate youngsters for whom I could see nothing but pitiful and unnecessary handicaps of a permanent nature.

Visualize this boy: a young soldier of 20 years, who had sustained an arm amputation by shell-fire, and multiple, grievous body wounds from shrapnel. Tied in a Stokes stretcher generally in use in the navy, he was quiet and calm, but not from morphine. He attempted to assist in the removal of his gory clothing and talked dispassionately

cheerful, of the tremendous effort his company was putting forth to clear the area assigned them on the beach near by.

He learned that I was a musician and engaged me in conversation while we were preparing him for the operating table. (Incidentally, he had to wait for his turn, too.) He commented that he was a "musician" and was especially sold on the saxophone, having played it professionally. I glanced at the bloody stump that had been his arm and shook my head. He grinned and

said he guessed instead of fiddling he'd just have to be contented to dance.

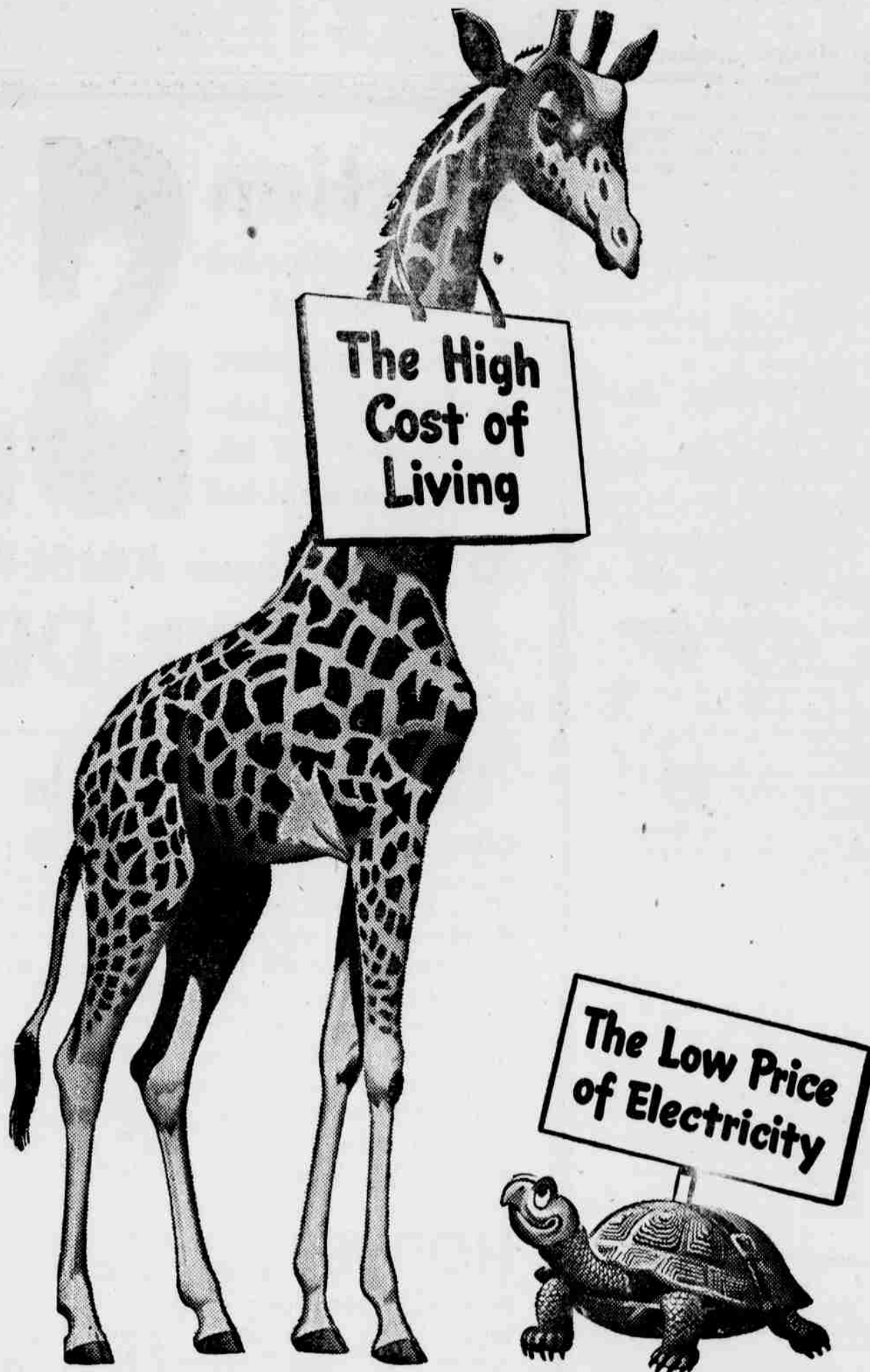
We had casualties ahead of him and others coming along after him. His delay was 20 minutes, or so, but he didn't seem to mind. His was not the worst case, nor the slightest, but his attitude was indicative of the stuff in these kids who are going after Hitler's vaunted hosts with real confidence in their hearts. I'm grateful for that short, off-the-record, undirected chat we had.

## HEKE FROM HERMISTON

Frank Young, former-extensive grain grower of the lower Gooseberry section, was here Monday from Hermiston looking after business matters.

Mrs. C. C. Dunham left Tuesday morning for San Diego, Calif. to join her husband, Ph. M. 1/c, who is stationed there temporarily. She expects to be gone several weeks.

Ray Drake went to Pendleton Wednesday for a major surgical operation. He expects to be away from home two weeks.



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