

URQUHART SAFE
London, Sept. 29.—(U.P.)—The war office announced tonight that Major-Gen. R. E. Urquhart, commander of the British 1st airborne division which fought the battle of Arnhem now is safe contrary to an earlier belief that he was in German hands.

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MEDFORD PILOT KEEPS OLD HAT IN HECTIC TIME

Lt. Robert Wilcox in Crash
Landing of B-26; Rescued
By PT-Boat Unharmed.

A 12th AAF Mediterranean B-26 Marauder Bomber Base: The co-pilot's old straw hat tumbled from his head—the silver B-26 bomber lurched crazily, dropped hundreds of feet, finally slowly straightened out and resumed its course over the German-held railroad bridge in northern Italy that was the day's target. One engine, however, was no longer operating—

German flak had punctured the cowl and lodged in the motor, causing such vibration that the pilot had to feather his prop in order to prevent the engine being torn from its frame.

With little perceptible loss of speed, the sturdy ship completed the bomb run and broke sharply to the left with the rest of the formation, heading out again toward the Ligurian Sea, off the coast of Italy. First Lieutenant Valentine Krug, the pilot, Ridgewood, New York, experienced a mounting uneasiness and a premonition that the worst was yet to come. He checked the altimeter—they were losing about 200 feet a minute, but that was normal with only one engine, he knew they would continue to lose until down to about 3000 feet, then he should be able to maintain that altitude until they reached their base. They were then about 100 miles out over water.

Other Engine Quits
Lieutenant Robert Wilcox of Rt. No. 2, Medford, Ore., the

co-pilot, shouted and pointed vigorously out the right window. As Krug leaned over the right engine choked, burped and quit. Immediately, Krug gave the order to prepare for ditching (landing in water) and the gunners and other crew members tossed out all the heavy equipment that could be crammed through the windows and then took their positions just to the rear of the pilot's compartment to brace themselves against the shock of hitting the water at a speed in excess of 140 miles per hour.

During the same few seconds that the crew was coming forward, Lt. Krug and Wilcox were busy making their own preparations for crash landing. Lt. Krug saw a British PT boat a few hundred yards away and headed his ship in that direction, intending to set down as close to it as possible.

There was a slight jolt as the tail hit the water, then a tearing violent crash as the forward part of the plane struck the water. Altho he had braced himself, Krug was dazed by the tremendous force of the impact, but he managed to pull himself halfway through the escape hatch over his head—as the cool spray of the water drenched his face, he felt a vigorous shove in the seat of his pants and he popped out into the water.

Wilcox In Trouble
Recovering quickly, he looked for Wilcox, who, he found, was having trouble inflating his Mae West. Technical Sergeant Leslie Pike, Reading, Mass., a third crew member, after deliberately removing his heavy shoes, had plunged in to assist Wilcox—they each helped him to inflate his life jacket.

Krug, feeling an uncontrollable inclination to float head downward in the water, investigated, and discovered that he still had his parachute harness on, and that the buoyancy of the rubber seat cushion was responsible for his inverted position. Stripping off the harness, he, Wilcox and Pike struck out after the other crew members toward the British ship.

After all were on board, they checked and discovered that all were uninjured. The inevitable cup of tea, warm, dry clothes, and smokes revived them enough so that in a few minutes they were laughing hysterically at the discovery that during all the excitement of crash and rescue, Lt. Wilcox's battered straw hat had remained on his head.

EAGLE PT. PILOT AIDS KNOCK OUT OF YAP ISLAND

Headquarters, 13th AAF, Southwest Pacific—In a whirlwind bombing campaign, 13th AAF Liberators virtually have knocked out Yap island, once one of the strongest Jap bases guarding the Philippines.

Fierce ground and aerial resistance met the Liberators June 22, when they carried out the first land-based bomber strike at the Caroline islands fortress, only 800 miles east of the Philippines.

Now Neutralized
Now, say two veteran Oregon Liberator pilots, Yap has been completely neutralized. Captain Thomas H. Shearin of Eagle Point, and First Lt. Joseph L. Bridges of Gaston, flew in the initial attack on Yap and have piloted B-24s to the island in numerous missions since then.

The Jap garrison lacks the power to hit back when the bombers make their daily call. "We haven't seen a Zero over Yap for weeks," Bridges said. "Ground batteries still send up flak, but it's only token resistance."

In the opening phases of the battle of Yap, Lt. Bridges added, the Liberators were attacked by 20 or 25 eager Zeros each day. Hanging on for 45 minutes or more, the Zeros dropped phosphorous bombs on the 13th "heavies" while flak barrages forced the bombers to weave dangerously through the sky.

Accurate gunnery soon discouraged the Jap fighters while pin-point bombing wrecked their reserves on the ground. The Liberators are credited with shooting down 77 Zeros, with 61 more probably destroyed or damaged. Bombs that hit revetments

and taxiways destroyed at least 24 Zeros on the ground.

Airstrip Destroyed
"Yap's airstrip is so full of holes it cannot be used," Capt. Shearin said. "Only a few buildings remain standing in Yap town. And more important, we've completely destroyed the

two radio stations and the power plant."

The flight to Yap, more than 2,000 miles over water, is one of the longest, regularly-scheduled missions carried out by any air force in the world.

Capt. Shearin, son of Mr. and Mrs. William H. Shearin of

Friday, Sept. 29, 1944

MEDFORD MAIL TRIBUNE—FIVE

Eagle Point, attended Los Angeles City college before joining the army in April, 1942. He has been overseas with the 13th AAF since November, 1943, and has participated in the veteran air force's campaigns that neu-

tralized Jap strongholds in the Solomons, southwest and central Pacific.

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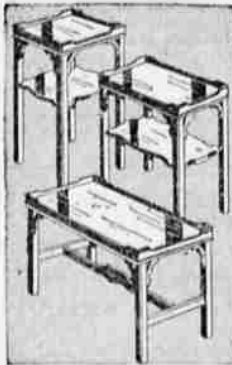
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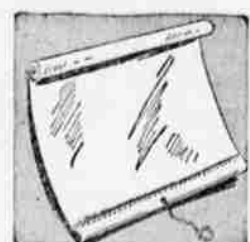
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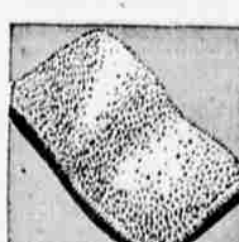
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