

SERIAL STORY

CONSCRIPT'S WIFE

BY BETTY WALLACE

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YESTERDAY, Martha goes to the Country Club party with Paul, a gay, whirlwind evening with Paul's friends. After the dance, they go to a night club and it is there when Martha awakens her. It is Bill, calling from camp. He has been trying to reach her all night.

MARTHA TELLS A LIE

CHAPTER XIV

As her husband's voice went on in her ear, Martha Marshall sat down groggily on the chair by the phone table.

"Where were you last night?" he was asking again.

She looked at the little electric clock which had come from the store where Bill used to work. It was 9:30! Nine-thirty on Sunday morning, and Bill was asking her what kept her out last night.

"Where were you?" he shouted again. "Martha, are you there?"

"I'm here." Never afterward could she explain the impulse which made her take a deep breath and say, quickly, "Why, Bill, I—I was out with the girls last night. You know, I—I joined their bowling club."

"Bowling?" he repeated. "Bowling until after midnight? You must be a glutton for punishment!"

She hated herself. "I'm sorry I missed your call," she said meekly. "Was it so something important? Did you get leave?"

"Important! Sure it was important! I wanted to talk to you. Most of the guys go into town on Saturday nights and have themselves a time. And me, I'm stuck out here, thinking of you."

SHE had been dancing at the country club—going from one man's arms to another's—laughing, enjoying herself—while Bill moped in an Army camp.

"Oh, I'm so sorry I wasn't here!"

"Well, you can't stay home every night," he said. "As far as leave is concerned, I've got a fat chance! With only a year to train us, the brass hats aren't handing out any leaves to speak of."

She had hoped that he might come home for a few days. But they weren't to have even that.

"I wish you'd come up here again," Bill said. "How about next week? Do you think you could?"

She hesitated. Much as she wanted to go, it had been a grueling drive and she'd been late the following morning. "I—I hate to ask Paul for his car again," she said at last. "Besides, he said he wouldn't lend it to me."

"Said he wouldn't lend it to you?" Bill was incredulous. "What got into him? Did you smash a fender going home?"

"No. He thought it was too long a drive for me. I was late next morning."

"Why don't you ask him to drive you down, then? It's not too far for him, I hope! I'd like to see the old prune, anyway."

"All right," she said slowly. "I'll ask him."

"That's swell. I'll be seeing you next Sunday."

"Yes."

"In case I forgot to mention it—" he began, softly. Martha knew what was coming. She finished it for him, "I love you, darling."

SHE sat there, after she had hung up, wishing bitterly that she hadn't lied to Bill. He wouldn't have minded her going to a dance with Paul. There'd been no need to lie.

Their silly little joke, hers and Bill's, was like a reproach to her. "In case I forgot to mention it—" was a phrase that always brought back the time Bill carried her over the threshold into their new home. He had glimpsed the red leather chair which he had insisted on buying in defiance of all the laws of good interior decoration, and he had dropped her unceremoniously. "The chair! See, it does fit in, see?"

Martha had managed to keep herself from falling by grabbing his shoulders. "You dumb oaf! Is this the way you carry in your bride?"

Bill had grinned, sheepishly. "In case I forgot to mention it, I love you, darling. But you've got to admit, that's a wonderful chair. It adds distinction and class to the whole room!"

She went back to bed. But not to sleep. Why had she lied to Bill? Why?

PAUL was delighted when she asked him to drive her to the camp. She had known he would be. "Now you won't have to leave on Saturday, to make it," he said. "Sunday morning at about 7 will put us there plenty early."

They reached camp soon after 10, and again, Bill was waiting. He shook hands with Paul and said pitifully, "You look pale, fellow."

"It's the night life," Paul retorted. Martha prayed he wouldn't refer to last Saturday night.

"He means night work," she put in hastily. "The plant's about 3000 orders behind."

Bill asked, "Want to take a look around the camp, Paul?"

"Not especially," was the honest reply. "Give me a bird's-eye view of what they've been doing to you, and let's get out of here. I suppose you'd appreciate a decent meal? I'll even pay for it."

THE drive into town from camp, with Paul behind the wheel and Bill squeezed into the space next to the door, was different

from the other time she'd spent with Bill. Now Paul was asking questions about the training.

Bill explained, "The brass hats figure they can't give the conscripts any fancy training. You can't make anti-aircraft gunners, anti-tank gunners, tank corpsmen, even horse wranglers for the cavalry, in a year. So we're the infantry, boy. The good old infantry, the right arm of the army. We're the kindergarten class in soldiering."

"They're teaching us a lot of tough exercises to harden us up. Then we march, learn how to care for the rifles, and the right way to hit a mud puddle. Then there's drills, the manual of arms—oh, lots of higher learning. We're getting battalion training pretty soon. That's harder. Camouflage, scouting, patrol—Am I boring you, Mr. Elliott?"

"No, indeed, Mr. Marshall," grinned Paul. "But I think Martha's yawning."

It was a gay Sunday. After a huge dinner in a good restaurant, they explored the town. It was full of soldiers. About 5 o'clock they found a cheerful little joint where Bill and Paul drank cold beer, and where a juke box ground out dance music. Martha danced with Bill, and then with Paul, and then with a couple of soldiers who had somehow crashed the party. "We're lonesome," they explained. "We're very lonesome."

Bill vetoed a movie. "That's all we do nights, see movies. I bet I've seen every one they're running in town."

Yes, a gay and jolly visit. And yet, saying goodbye to Bill, Martha couldn't help the little feeling that something had been missing from their hours together. Some tenderness, some intimate oneness; a joy in being together that had been theirs that other Sunday.

Bill whispered, against her hair, as he held her close in a last farewell, "I enjoyed seeing Paul, honey. But next time, try to make it by yourself. After all, darling, two's company—especially when it's a darned long time between Sundays!"

(To Be Continued)

WHAT'S THE HURRY?

KANSAS CITY, (AP)—Phillip Salzman, Austrian maître d'hôtel, finds American slang extremely puzzling.

University of Kansas girls planning a sorority "rushing" party, said it would be "some-time next month."

"Now I ask you," asked Salzman, spreading hands wide in dismay, "what's so rushing about that?"

DOUBLE RESCUE

CLEVELAND (AP)—A six-man fire rescue squad needed some of its own medicine today.

The squad answered a call to an east side home and worked four hours on five persons overcome by carbon monoxide fumes. Then the rescuers became ill.

A second squad and a doctor were summoned. Two hours later all had been revived.

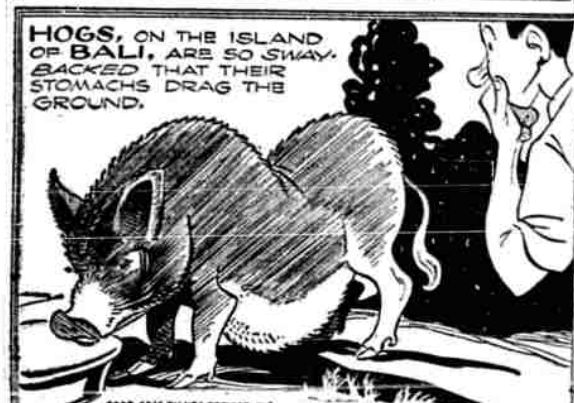
EQUATOR SQUADRON?

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Neptune has joined the United States navy.

He is Richard L. Neptune, 19, Akron, O., an enrollee in a CCC camp at Pinedale, Wyo.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



HOGS, ON THE ISLAND OF BALI, ARE SO SWEET, SACKED THAT THEIR STOMACHS DRAG THE GROUND.

WE'LL MARCH ACROSS THE MARCH IN MARCH!

THERE IS ENOUGH AIR IN THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE TO ALLOW EACH PERSON ABOUT THREE MILLION TONS.

ANSWER: "We will proceed across the frontier during the month of March." Look up the word "march" in the dictionary.

ROYAL RULER

HORIZONTAL
1 Most famous queen of last century.
12 Neither.
13 Data.
14 Mink.
15 Woden.
16 Curdles.
20 Unless.
22 Mesh of lace.
23 Revoked.
25 Gender.
26 South Carolina (abbr.).
27 Confined.
30 Preposition.
31 Wandering.
34 Sparse.
35 To respond to a stimulus.
36 Soft broom.
38 Veteran.
39 Green gem.
42 Like.
43 Before.
44 Whirlwind.
45 Hairy.
47 Volumes (abbr.).

Answer to Previous Puzzle

ROBERT D. WARDLE
TREND GEE REACH
GAD LOVES NILL
CAT WEIL PA DAB
EN BRILLIANT TR
N DEY ASS DIE A
EBON G GLAV
REIT BE GLIE
AM FIT UP SR
LULLS WEALY
SAYE MALE
REI ALMONDS OST
A CONFEDERATE

VERTICAL

48 Frozen desserts.
50 Opera melodies.
52 Valley.
53 Booth.
54 Far away.
58 She was Queen of Great Britain and — of India.
59 She was also sovereign of — or slow to change by disposition.

15 She ruled over — years.
17 Edicts.
18 Penny.
19 Bastes.
21 Chair.
23 Leavers.
24 Renders judgment.
27 Logger's boot.
29 Egyptian god.
32 Animal pest.
33 Fortification.
36 Form of "I".
37 Papa.
40 Iron, tin, etc.
41 Not as tight.
43 Loom bar.
45 Assistance.
46 An asteroid.
47 Wise men.
49 Machine part.
51 Idant.
54 Morindin dye.
55 Note in scale.
56 Indefinite article.
57 Road (abbr.).

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OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



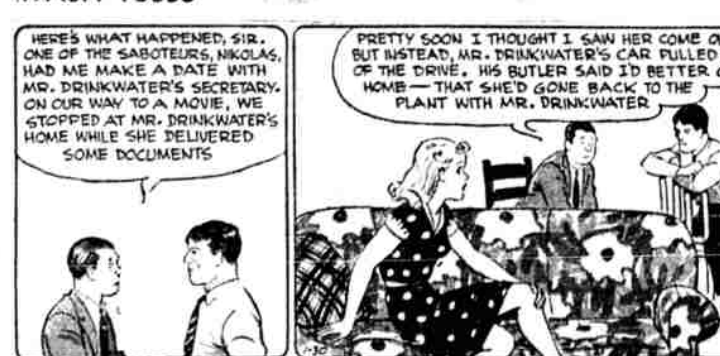
LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



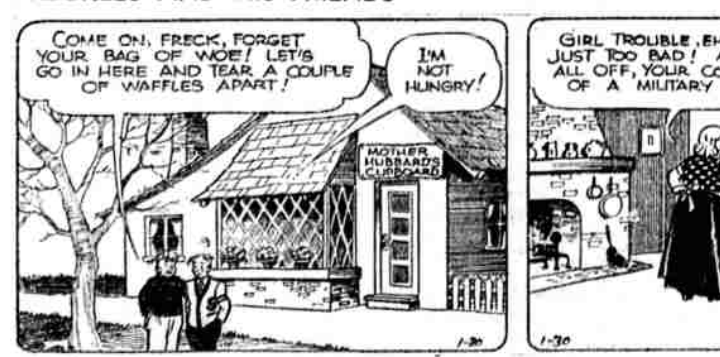
BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



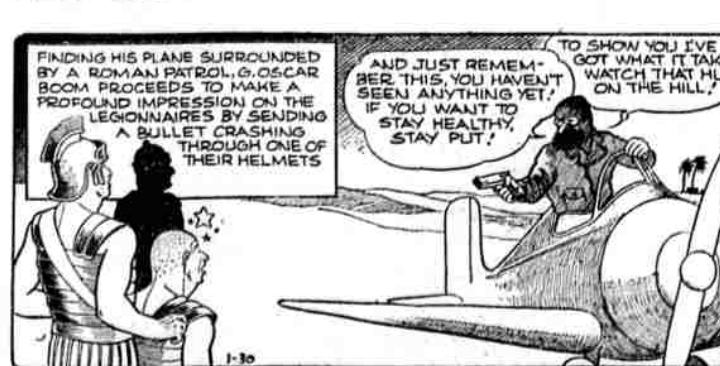
WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY MARTIN



BY CRANE



BY BLOSSER



BY V. T. HAMLIN

