

Beth Carter, WAAC

BY LORETTE COOPER

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THIS STORY: Beth Carter, WAAC, has volunteered for a dangerous mission. After she has received her orders and been introduced to her commanding officer, Major Brit Jackson, they board a Flying Fortress bound for a tiny island in the Pacific.

Chapter II

THE island on which the great ship landed to refuel was nothing more than a plot of sand. High tide, Beth knew, would immerse it. "Think of it," commented Major Jackson. "What an air base in this day of modern warfare! Let Nature do her own camouflaging. We land. We refuel from buried tanks capable of keeping the sea out and the gasoline in. We take off. The tide comes up and the waves erase our wheel tracks in the sand and pack the particles anew for the next landing. The fellow who thought of this had something."

Her eyes verified enough of Major Jackson's description so that she could easily believe the rest. The major left her for a moment to talk with one of the pilots. When he returned to Beth's side, he asked, "How did you make out last night?"

"Comfortably," he laughed. "There was some doubt that you would."

"Anyone who had any doubts didn't know very much about the WAACs," she replied.

They walked along the sand. She watched the sea, and noticed that even now the island was shrinking with each successive onrush of the ocean. She tried to estimate how long this bit of sand was, and guessed two miles; yet it was so flat that an accurate estimate was impossible, and the sand was packed so tightly it could have been used as an automobile speedway just as successfully as it was being used as a landing field.

As they strolled along the peaceful shore, under a sky of brilliant blue, Beth felt strangely at peace with the world. She closed her eyes and found it easy to imagine that she was at home, enjoying a pleasant holiday with a friend whose only concerns were the everyday problems of small-town life.

"I wish we could stay here forever," Beth said, softly. Brit Jackson laughed. "You and I have work to do," he said. "Important work. This island looks peaceful enough, but you can't forget the war, no matter how much you'd like to."

"I know," Beth answered. "I'm ready, Major Jackson." They could hear the whirr of the plane's motors as it warmed up for the take-off. The crew was swarming over the big ship, checking every detail for the important flight ahead.

Steadily, they moved away from the landing place. Before long they would be alone. Beth wondered what Brit Jackson had to say. She had been too excited, too thrilled by prospects of her overseas duty, to give much thought to her assignment. Major Jackson was silent, phrasing in his mind the words he had to say.

MAJOR JACKSON smoked until his cigaret was nothing but a menace to his fingertips. Then he tore the butt apart and tossed the tobacco and the tiny rolled-up wad of paper to the wind, which was blowing freely and steadily. "It's time you knew what you were going to do, Lieutenant," Major Jackson said.

They were out of earshot of the crew now. The major stopped, and so did she, and he turned toward her. She looked at him. It was the first time she had realized how young and handsome he was. It was also the first time she had noticed his insignia. Noticing it, she was amused at how wrong she had been in jumping at conclusions. She had supposed he was an Air Corps officer, and perhaps a full 10 years older than the just-under-30 he appeared to be. Actually, he wore the crossed cannon with shell superimposed which denote the Coast Artillery Corps.

BETH noticed that Brit Jackson was scrutinizing her very closely, too; and she sensed that the view was not unpleasant to him.

"It's time you knew," he began again. "Lieutenant, you are my one-man staff, if you don't mind my calling you a man. That's what you are, for the purpose of defending the nation. You are the one-man staff of the commanding officer—I am he—of a Coast Artillery Barrage Balloon battalion. Our battalion is somewhere off there—even now I shan't tell you exactly where, and that is not because I don't trust you." He waved his hand a third of the way around the horizon. "The battalion is on an island much like this, only the island

has a little more area and considerably more contours and vegetation—and some of it stays above water even at high tide. It is a very important island already, and we hope it will be even more important as the war continues. Meanwhile it is our task—among other things—to get a balloon barrage flying so that our further operations will be protected from enemy air attack. You know, like the airplane factory at Southampton was protected."

She knew what Major Jackson referred to. She had never been with barrage balloon troops, but she had read in newspapers and magazines about the barrage over Southampton, and how it kept the Spitfire factory running almost without interruption.

"Your staff role," the major continued, "has been designed for your peculiar abilities." There was a trace of good-humored sarcasm in his voice. "I am told you women are quite intuitive. You will need all your intuition out here. You are to help men, among other things, make sure there are no leaks of information concerning our island."

"Are any leaks suspected?" "I am sorry to say there are. You needn't ask me any more. They just are—not that anything actually has slipped. We're just suspicious without being able to suspect any individual." The plane was ready to go. "We'd better get on," the major said. "You know, we're just passengers. By the way, if those Air Corps men kid us, we'll just have to take it—the Air Corps looks down on everybody, and I know how they feel. I was a flyer once myself." His face was grave. "I could still fly, if I had to—but Uncle Sam doesn't believe it. Un-

cle says my capillaries won't take combat." The Fortress took off. Hour after hour passed, until it was late afternoon. Suddenly Major Jackson shook Beth's shoulder. "Lieutenant Carter," he said, his mouth close to her ear. "A pair of Jap fighter planes has been sighted off our left wing." (To Be Continued)

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THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

The KING RANCH, IN TEXAS, IS THE LARGEST RANCH IN THE WORLD, CONTAINING MORE THAN ONE MILLION ACRES. IT IS SO LARGE THAT THERE IS A MONTH'S DIFFERENCE IN SEASONS BETWEEN THE NORTHERNMOST AND SOUTHERNMOST PORTIONS.



KWIK-KOPPER EACH POUND OF FAT ON THE HUMAN BODY REQUIRES ABOUT ONE-HALF MILE OF BLOOD VESSELS.



A RABBIT BANDICOOT IS A MARSUPIAL OF AUSTRALIA LOUISIANA MARSH BIRD CAGE FOR RABBITS

ANSWER: A marsupial of Australia . . . a long-eared, burrowing animal.

NEXT: The first emergency jump from a plane.

FORMER U. S. PRESIDENT

HORIZONTAL

16 Pictured former U. S. president

12 He was the president of the United States

13 Algerian seaport

14 Small horse

15 Sturdy tree

17 Edition in six texts in parallel columns

19 Before

20 Symbol for radon

21 Sacred Hindu literature

22 Roof finial

24 Ambary

25 Golf term

28 Noncommissioned officer

29 Summit

30 One

32 Tie securely

34 Short sleep

35 At that place

36 Encourage

Answer to Previous Puzzle

NORTH AMERICAN

ODOR BET DOTE

ETA BIC LEE

US OMIT THEED PA

REAR NORTH STIR

NET AMERICAN ONE

TEAR 2-25 TINK

TEAR 2-25 TINK

OARS MA RANCE

PITTOIL ALA REED

BOLTED RAIF

BIARE OBI ATOM

FAMOUS BOMBERS

VERTICAL

1 Girl's name

2 Bird

3 Written form of Mister

4 Anesthetic

5 Effuse

6 Ratite bird

7 Air Raid

8 Precautions (abbr.)

9 Unsuitable

11 Malgrass

12 Luckily

15 Machine part

16 Pertaining to a yellow color

21 Huge tub

23 Type of moth

25 Genus of plants

27 Algonquian Indians

28 Rowlock

31 Grab (slang)

32 Pig pen

33 Pannier

37 Foot digit

40 Applause

42 Engine

44 Afternoon parties

46 Endure

50 Ampere (abbr.)

52 Born

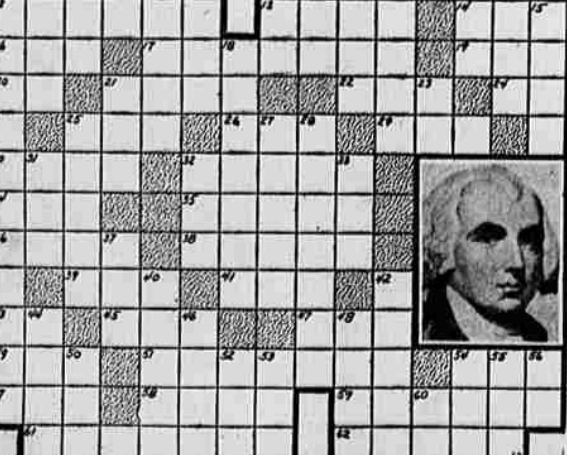

53 Tribe of Israel

54 Honey maker

55 Bitter vetch

56 Nova Scotia (abbr.)

60 Palm lily

Out Our Way

By J. R. Williams



NOW DON'T GIT UP! STAY RIGHT THERE--DON'T MOVE--JUST SALT THIS OMELET FER ME, PLEASE--I FEEL SO GUILTY TAKIN' YOU AWAY FROM YOUR GRAND-CHILDREN FER EVEN A SECOND!

WHY MOTHERS GET GRAY

Our Boarding House

With Major Hoople



YOU'RE AS LIVELY AS WARM BEER, MR. HOOPLE, BUT AT TIMES YOU HAVE A HAUNTING LONESOME LOOK--MAYBE YOU NEED COMPANIONSHIP!

NOW YOU'RE PITCHING MADGE--YOU UNDERSTAND ME LIKE THE GAS MAN READING A METER--CALL ME HANNIBAL, KID!

THAT OLD CANVAS-BACK IS IN HIS 80'S--YOU'D THINK HE'D KNOW A DUCK CALL BY NOW!

YEAH! AND SHE VOTED FOR BRYAN, BUT THE GAL IS STILL TOP HAND WITH A LASSO.

LIES, HANNIBAL NEEDS A PAL

HOLD EVERYTHING!

Red Ryder

By Fred Harmon



Sarge is jettisoning down some post-war ideas!



YOUR LOCAL SHERIFF IS TEAMED UP WITH THE INDIAN TRAIL RIDERS--I JUST CAPTURED--ARREST HIM, MARSHAL!

THAT'S A SERIOUS CHARGE, COWBOY! HOPE YOU CAN PROVE IT!



HOWDY, SHERIFF! I'VE GOT A WARRANT FOR YOUR ARREST!

IT WON'T BE TOO EASY TO PROVE IF TH' INJUN CHIEF REFUSES TO TALK--BUT COME ON!

IN A JOKIN' MOOD TIDAY? EH, MARSHAL?

Freckles and His Friends

By Blosser



YOU MEAN SHE WAS REALLY SNOOPING AROUND ROOM 103?

THAT'S JUST WHAT I MEAN!

SHE WAS TRYING TO FIND OUT WHAT EXPERIMENTS ARE BEING CONDUCTED IN THAT ROOM!



GOSH! WE PUT THAT PIECE IN OUR PAPER JUST TO STIR UP A MYSTERY! WE DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS A REAL VEILED LADY!

IT KINDA LOOKS LIKE WE BLEW THE RIGHT HORN!

YEAH--AND THE GUY WHO WAS HELPING HER MUST HAVE HEARD IT! HE GOT AWAY!!!

Wash Tubbs

By Crane



SHE'S DISAPPEARED AGAIN, STOOPI!

AT LEAST WE KNOW WHERE SHE IS--DROP TWO MORE!

BOMBS AWAY!



WHOOOM!

WHOOOM!

Boots and Her Buddies

By V. T. Hamlin



AND THIS CONTEST HAS ONLY STARTED

WE DON'T EVEN HAVE ROOM TO WORK ANYMORE

NOW SEE HERE, MOOZITS! THIS BEAUTY CONTEST HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH! I CAN'T MOVE WITHOUT BEING TACKLED BY SOME DZZY BLONDE WHO COMES IN THE CONTEST JUDGE



THINK NOTHING OF IT, BUFFIE--I'VE FIXED ALL THAT

IT'S SIMPLE

ARMY FLIERS BUFFINGTON

ARMY'S QUEEN IS FIGHTING BLONDE TO PICK BLONDE

Allep Oop

By Martin



GOT ANYTHING ON OUR LITTLE ROCKET BULLO TO HAVE YET, CHIEF?

NO, CHIEF! IT SEEMS TO HAVE VANISHED RIGHT INTO THIN AIR!

HEY, CHIEF!

HERE'S A REPORT FROM THE FOREST SERVICE THAT MIGHT BE INTERESTING

PARACHUTE SAID TO HAVE DROPPED EAST OF TAMERVILLE.



...BUT AS PLANES SEEN OR HEARD IN AREA REPORT CONSIDERED ERRONEOUS! Huh!

NO PLANES, EHP PERFECT! THAT'S OUR BABY!

COULD BE CHIEF... LET'S GET UP THESE AND HAVE A LOOK

Little Orphan Annie

By Harold Gray



ANNIE HAS TOLD ME A LITTLE ABOUT YOU, GEORGE--MAY I SEE THIS SECRET SHORT WAVE SET?

OF COURSE--RIGHT THIS WAY--

WELL, I'LL BE--! THIS IS SOMETHING! THE CONTROL STATION FOR ALL U-BOATS ON THIS COAST--

YES--YOU SEE WHY I HAD TO STOP THOSE TWO ZEALOUS ONES--



PERHAPS-- BUT HOW DO YOU HANDLE THIS MATTER?

SIMPLE--I HAVE HAD EXPERIENCE IN SUCH THINGS--SH-H--IT IS A SIGNAL--

AH-H--ONE IS NOW ENTERING THE RIVER--I SHALL TURN ON THE BEAM! KEEP ALL YOUR MEN OUT OF SIGHT!

QUICK! YOU FOLLOW ME, COMMANDER! YOU'LL SEE PLENTY!

British Overseas Airways, to maintain empire air communications, are at present operating routes extending over 40,000 miles. During this year they will fly a distance equal to more than 321 times around the world at the equator.

A trainer for bombers is essentially a platform, perched 10 feet high on a skeleton framework and moving on rubber-tired wheels. Every condition of actual flight except rough air can be duplicated by the mechanism.

The tail cone of the Flying Fortress is assembled in two sections, upper and lower shell, and every possible item of equipment is added to each half before rivets make them into one.