"The President of the United States is dead."

INSTALLMENT SEVEN

THE STORY SO FAR: In an effort to substantiate rumors that 200,000 foreign troops were in Mexico preparatory for an attack upon the United States, Intelligence Officer Benning went to Mexico City. Here he joined the staff of the unsuspecting Van Hassek, leader of the foreign forces, and gained the confidence of two other officers, Fincke and Bravot. Discovering that foreign troops were poised for an invasion of the U. S., Benning returned to Washington to report to Colonel Flagwill, acting chief of Military Intelligence. Flagwill stated that forces were also reported massing in the Mediterranean and the Far East. That night Fort Houston, Texas, was heavily bombed. Reports that an enemy bombing squadron was approaching Washington threw the city into panic. Now continue with the story.

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CHAPTER VII—Continued.

Hysteria was spreading. Thousands were fleeing the city in taxicabs and private cars. Cavalry was ordered into the city from Fort Myer to help police clear masses of people who flooded the parks despite frantic radio warnings that crowding up was dangerous.

Benning dismissed all thought of trying again tonight for the Van Hassek spies.

A finger of light leaped into the air across the Potomac. Benning went tense as he saw the restless movement into the skies of that ominous beam.

Another bolt of light shot up, the sky filled with those long pennants rising from the Sperry drums, driven upwards with the intensity of the thousand million candlepower. The bark of a cannon crept across the river. It told Benning that the lights had picked up an enemy craft within their six thousand yards' range of observation. Other cannon barked. The three-inch guns were driving at the skies.

Grimly he lifted his wrist close to his eyes and strained at the luminous dial of his wrist watch.

Thirty racking seconds ticked by. Forty. Benning braced himself, wet his lips, his hand was stricken by an ague. Through the crackle of artillery he caught the ominous roar of motors in the sky. At this instant bombs were plummeting downward, he reckoned, released three thousand yards or more to the southwest of Washington while the planes flashed toward the city.

A vivid yellowish sheet of light winked over the city, low against the earth. In the next instant came the clap of thunder as the mighty detonation smote the city. Benning felt the earth reel under his heels, his ears rang with the reverberation. Another crash, a third, fourth, fifth. The titanic wrath of the bombers smothered all sound of the anti-aircraft in a bedlam of volcanic fury that filled all existence. Two more crashes, separated by short intervals of time.

Silence came swiftly, a hush that yielded no sound for several seconds. Then, as his ears recovered, Benning caught the shrill roar of motors overhead, the sharp staccato of machine-gun fire. Near-by, the crews of the .50 caliber anti-aircraft machine guns were peppering away inanely. A few rounds of futile bursts and they ceased fire. Now came the sound of excited masses of people.

Benning headed into Fifteenth Street. People were running this way and that on the heels of hysterical, unbridled terror. Others were massed in stricken silence gaping into the skies. Taxicabs and automobiles sped crazily in all directions. Benning saw pedestrians bowled over by wheeled vehicles, left floundering on the pavement. Scattered policemen were trying to stem the tide of panic. Sirens screeched as ambulances and police cars raced into the targeted area.

It was a few minutes before midnight when Benning turned into Pennsylvania Avenue. There was no such thing as a taxicab in the present disorder. He walked rapidly on past the White House, intent on reaching Munitions by twelve. Bayoneted sentries paced placidly back and forth in front of the President's official mansion. The place loomed solemn and tomblike in the vague light of a quarter moon, the somber mass of its gray walls unbroken by a single lighted window.

But Benning, as he hurried on, knew that behind those screened windows grave conferences would carry through the night as the heads of government charted the desperate course of an unready nation plunged suddenly into war.

On reaching Colonel Flagwill's office, Benning found the G-2 chief engrossed in the verbal report of an air service staff colonel. As near as could be judged, the attack on Washington had been made by a single bomber squadron of seven planes. The bombers had been accompanied by a squadron of pursuit ships. The anti-aircraft reported no hits, and was setting up now to cover the city as best it could against the return trip of the invaders.

"It'll not be very long now before they're back over the city for a second fling at us," the air officer predicted, speaking in a calm voice. "No report yet of damage to important buildings, but one bomb came pretty flush into a crowded street and we have a preliminary report of heavy casualties."

"No word of any other squadrons headed this way, Colonel?" Flagwill asked.

"None. We'd have picked them up if any more were coming tonight. But what puzzles us is how these bombers expect to get back into Mexico without refueling. Especially since the bombs dropped sounded like heavy ones, probably a thousand pounds or more."

"I'll want all details as rapidly as you get them," Flagwill instructed. "By the way, have our planes taken off for Texas yet?"

"Yes, sir. We've notified Operations. Our Third Wing will have one attack and two pursuit squadrons at San Antonio before daybreak, all ready for business. Other forces will report there as rapidly as possible."

The telephone buzzed, a summons for Flagwill to conference with the Chief of Staff. Flagwill gathered up his notes and turned to Benning.

"You'd better come along, Captain. There may be some questions on Mexico City for you to answer."

Briefly, as they marched down the long corridor to the staff chief's conference room, Benning sketched in his own observations of the bombing of Washington, emphasizing the panic in the streets, the chaos and disorder that followed.

The floor under them reeled with the impact of a sudden terrific explosion in the distance. Flagwill's expression did not change, there was no hesitation in his gait.

"Here the birds are back again," he muttered. He shook his head despairingly. "We've been pounding the public by radio all evening not to bunch up, but I'm afraid people will have to learn by costly experience. God, but I hope no persistent gas is dropped! I doubt if there are a dozen gas masks in all Washington."

Another savage detonation filled the night. As its vibrations waned, there came the uninterrupted click of typewriters and telegraph instruments as messages went hurtling across the country from the War Department mobilizing the country's armed forces.

General Hague's conference room was filling with generals and colonels, all self-possessed, but with the effects of fatigue and strain in their faces after long days without rest. They were promptly in the room where they stood until the four-starred head of the Army, now in uniform, came in. General Hague was grave and lined, but his shoulders were erect and his gray eyes burned with a level vitality.

"Gentlemen," he proceeded at once, "I've gone over the situation in detail with the President. First I'll give you a brief summary of available enemy information—"

"Three enemy columns are reliably reported at our Texas border and it is a reasonable assumption that they will bridgehead the Rio Grande tonight ready to attack at daybreak. Likely enough the main body will strike from Laredo with the objective of San Antonio. Two other columns are likely to strike from Brownsville and Eagle Pass.

"You are familiar with the bombing of San Antonio, Galveston, New Orleans, and Houston tonight. We hope to give those cities the protection of our air forces, beginning tomorrow, but we are at the mercy of night raiders for the time being. I needn't tell you that nothing can save San Antonio and the occupation of our great oil and sulphur belts. It looks pretty hopeless for our troops.

"The President has given us carte blanche. We are mobilizing our entire Regular Army and National Guard. This—"

An aide-de-camp, face bloodless and eyes starting from their sockets, burst into the room. General Hague glared sharply at the interruption, then stiffened as he caught the stark tragedy that was written in the officer's face.

"Please, sir, will the General take the telephone?" the aide stammered in a rasping whisper. "It's—important."

The Chief of Staff took the receiver of the portable telephone that was handed him by the aide.

"Yes, General Hague speaking," he said.

There followed a stifling silence. General Hague sat with the receiver glued to his ear. Into the leaden silence of the room came the faint metallic squeak of an excited voice. The assembled officers saw their chief stiffen as if an electric current had been driven through his body.

General Hague stared dazedly across the room for several moments. His hand that held the telephone instrument descended in a slow limp arc to the table. The aide took the telephone and removed it to an adjoining desk.

"Gentlemen," General Hague focused his eyes, looked about among them, waited for control of his voice, then spoke firmly, "Gentlemen, by the ill fortune of circumstance, the enemy targeted upon the White House with a heavy bomb. The President of the United States is dead."

From out in the night came the screeching of sirens. The shrill screeches rose above an indescribable rumble of sound, the frenzied cries, and excited shouts of a terrorized populace. The bombers had raced on back into the south. The fretful bark of the anti-aircraft guns was stilled.

"Gentlemen," General Hague's voice broke the stricken tension of the room, "we will proceed with our business."

The head of the Army resumed his chair and fumbled with trembling fingers among his notes to pick up the shattered thread of his observations. The others sat down to a funereal stolidity.

"Getting back to the enemy intentions," General Hague resumed, his voice dry and hoarse, "we must now consider only his immediate objectives. We cannot now deny him possession of the world's largest oil fields lying in that region generally north of Beaumont. At the same time he gains the vast sulphur belt north and east of Galveston. We may reasonably expect, therefore, that Van Hassek will drive on to establish his army on some such east-and-west line as Fort Worth—Dallas—Shreveport.

"Yes, gentlemen, we'll take an awful beating in Texas for the time being. Lack of ammunition for all weapons will be a serious problem. Our lack of anti-aircraft guns will bring us horrible losses. The country will be in an uproar for days to come—until the people get educated to this terrible new reality of their existence.

"But all of this merely increases our own responsibilities. We must do the insuperable, we must achieve the impossible, we must face this crisis with patience and keep before us the protection of our country against later serious attack which I fear is inevitable. Gentlemen, let us remember this—"

General Hague rose to his feet and the muscles of his jaw hardened. He looked about among them again and his voice crackled as he concluded.

"No matter what force may come against us, no matter what may be our initial reverses, our country has the basic character and the resources in manpower to make us invincible. In the bitter end of whatever storms may lie ahead, the forces, or coalition of forces, that dare attack the United States, will find the mighty vengeance of our massed valor. That's all for the present, gentlemen."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

NEXT WEEK
Another Absorbing Installment

GRASSROOTS

by WRIGHT A. PATTERSON

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

WE SHALL BECOME WORLD'S FINANCIERS

ENGLAND WAS the greatest of the creditor nations for generations, in fact, for centuries. To maintain that plan, England was forced to finance debtor nations. She did it by supplying the funds for development of those nations. She developed their resources, she built railroads, she provided shipping facilities. Large quantities of English money were invested in many countries of the world. Such funds were provided not so much by the English government, as by the English people as individuals, with the government back of them to minimize their chance of loss.

That will be America's job when the present world conflict is over. It was our job after the close of World War No. 1, but we did not do it effectively. We did not know how. It is a problem our financial leaders must study now if America is to achieve that world dominance which is her destiny.

• • •

SOUND ADVICE

The AMERICAN BANKERS magazine says every man or corporation or institution that in any way depends upon public patronage for support should never permit any issue of its hometown newspaper to go to press without containing a mention of his or its name and business. To that it adds:

"The man who does not advertise his business does an injustice to himself and his town.

"The man who insists on sharing the business that comes to town, but refuses to advertise his own, is not a valuable addition to any town.

"The life and snap of a town depend upon wide-awake, liberal advertising men."

The wise business man will follow the advice of the Bankers magazine.

• • •

DIVIDE—AND GET FIFTY CENTS A YEAR

A WOMAN CLERK in one of the retail stores rides the same suburban train I take each morning. She is married and every day tells me of the small wages, $25 a week, her husband receives, all because others are paid such unwarranted salaries, from $25,000 to as much as $200,000 a year. I became rather "fed up" on her daily complaint and looked up a few figures.

"How much do you think your husband should be paid?" I asked.

"He could have at least $100 a week if they would divide up the unwarranted salaries paid in this country," she said.

"Would you place the limit at say $10,000 a year?" I inquired.

"That would be too low," she replied. "Many people are worth more than that."

Then I pulled out my figures.

"Do you know," I asked, "that if all salaries of more than $10,000 a year were divided between people of the United States it would mean less than 50 cents for each one of us each year?"

She refused to believe it, though it is true, but I have heard nothing more about the salary her husband is entitled to.

• • •

IS THIS DEMOCRACY

A CONTRACT the C. I. O. was demanding one of the big aviation plants must sign, or else—, provides that the company cannot discharge any member of the union because he is a communist; it must pay a maximum wage scale of $1.15 an hour; compel all employees to join the union; collect all initiation fees, dues and fines for the union; pay for time off for sickness; grant two-week vacations with full pay; pay any member of the union the difference between his earnings as an employee and his pay as a soldier during his period of conscription.

That plant is working exclusively on defense orders and NLRB supports the union's demands. Is America still a democracy?

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'M' DAY DEMAND

WE ARE NEARING that much-talked-of "M Day" when all of our man power and resources may be mobilized in that "all out" conflict which is now engulfing the world. When it comes there will be no question of profits, hours, or wages. It will settle all present difficulties with a demand for production, for work.

• • •

SACRIFICES

UP TO THE present time, the only Americans who have made any real sacrifice in the cause of preparedness are those who have given up good jobs or lives of ease to go into the armed forces of the nation for a wage of $21 a month, and the families of those men.

• • •

BLESSINGS HERE

WE AMERICANS represent one-sixteenth of the people of all the world. We consume and enjoy just about 50 per cent of such luxuries and conveniences as automobiles, telephones, radios, bathtubs and many other things. We represent, under normal world conditions, just about 50 per cent of all the purchasing power of the world. In the face of such facts there are people who would change our democracy, our way of life, to some one of the totalitarianisms of Europe.

For you to make

Pattern 6893

PLEASANT dreams are assured when sheets and pillow cases are embroidered with these lovely flower motifs. The designs and the crocheted edging will be found pleasant and easy to do, even by the beginner.

• • •

Pattern 6893 contains a transfer pattern of a motif 7½ by 19½ inches; 2 motifs 7½ by 12½ inches; directions for edging; illustrations of stitches; materials needed. Send your order to:

Sewing Circle Needlecraft Dept.
82 Eighth Ave. New York
Enclose 15 cents in coins for Pattern No.....
Name .....
Address .....

Kool-Aid
MAKES 20 FROZEN SUCKERS!
KOOL-AID 5¢

Outlook Is Virtue

One's outlook is a part of his virtue.—Amos Bronson Alcott.

If you bake at home, use
FLEISCHMANN'S FRESH YEAST
Good Housekeeping Bureau
RICHER in VITAMINS
The Household Favorite of Four Generations!
FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST
All the benefits of fresh yeast
High vitamin values.
Vitamin A-3100 Units (Int.)
Vitamin B1-150 Units (Int.)
Vitamin D-400 Units (Int.)
Vitamin G-40-50 Units (Sh.-Bour.)
With Cereal or Tapioca Flour and added Vitamin A
Take two cakes daily

Saving Habit

The habit of saving is itself an education; it fosters every virtue, teaches self-denial, cultivates the sense of order, trains to forethought, and so broadens the mind.

Our Existence

Rome endured as long as there were Romans. America will endure as long as we remain American in spirit and in thought.—David Starr Jordan.

SPECIAL— BIG 11-OUNCE BOTTLE OF
HINDS
HONEY & ALMOND CREAM
Regular $1 size
limited time only—
49¢

Appreciate Life

Be glad of life because it gives you the chance to love and to work and to play and to look up at the stars.—Henry Van Dyke.

Indifference Slays

Affection can withstand very severe storms of vigor, but not a long polar frost of indifference.—Sir Walter Scott.

THE SMOKE'S THE THING!
THAT'S GOOD NEWS ABOUT LESS NICOTINE IN THE SMOKE OF CAMELS. I LIKE THAT EXTRA MILDNESS
AND CAMELS TASTE SO GOOD—SO COOL, FLAVORFUL. WITH CAMELS, I DON'T GET TIRED OF SMOKING
THE SMOKE OF SLOWER-BURNING CAMELS CONTAINS
28% LESS NICOTINE
than the average of the 4 other largest-selling cigarettes tested—less than any of them—according to independent scientific tests of the smoke itself.
CAMEL
THE CIGARETTE OF COSTLIER TOBACCOS