ATTACK ON AMERICA

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W. N. U. Release

INSTALLMENT TEN

THE STORY SO FAR: Intelligence Officer Benning's warning that 200,000 foreign troops were poised in Mexico for an attack on the United States caused grave concern in army headquarters, but the people branded the statement as "war mongering." He had just returned from Mexico City where he had acted as a spy and gained the confidence of Fincke and Bravot, two enemy officers. Suddenly four large southern cities were attacked from the air; Washington was bombed and the President killed. National forces were ordered mobilized, but they were ill equipped for immediate action. General Brill, commander of the army in Texas, reported to General Hague at Washington that he was opposed by greatly superior forces but was ordered to resist at all costs. General Mole, division commander, prepared to make the best of a desperate situation.

Now continue with the story.

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CHAPTER X—Continued

As the commanders scattered toward their station wagons and military sedans, the bright sky festered into a hideous hiss of sound. It came crashing in out of the distance. The ear could trace its course as it settled toward the earth.

An instant's silence and the ground trembled under the impact of high explosive. A geyser of muddy brown earth shot skyward, the air filled with the mighty detonation.

The departing commanders gave an anxious look at the spout of dirt, but changed neither gait nor posture. General Mole calmly touched a match to the stub of his cigar and gave several vindictive puffs.

"Well, there's the first shot," he muttered. "Sounded to me like a long-range baby — probably from twenty or thirty miles."

An observation plane radioed in the information. Van Hassek's heavy artillery had set up north of the Nueces. Mole offered no comment. There was nothing he could do about it until the enemy came within range of his howitzers. His own 105-millimeter cannons, good for fifteen miles, had yet to be molded, mounted, tested, and delivered to the Army.

As for his airplanes, there was no taking further risks over Van Hassek's moving columns. It didn't matter that the air service had sent in the crack combat groups from all three of its powerful wings. Nor that American pilots and gunners had proved themselves this morning much more than a match for the Van Hassek airmen.

The American squadrons had paid a heavy price for their swoops against Van Hassek's invaders. Into one anti-aircraft trap after another the Americans had fallen.

The first big shell fell in an empty field well back from the Second's front lines. A second shot followed quickly, and the business of long-range cannonading settled down into glum, racking routine. From a range of approximately twenty-two miles, observation reported. The Van Hassek columns were still rolling forward in a great, tortuous martial serpent whose tail reached far back across the Rio Grande into Mexico.

The ten thousand men of the division worked feverishly through the hot afternoon, deepening and extending their trenches, adjusting gun positions. They pretended indifference to the roar of Van Hassek's artillery, to the frequent spurting fountains of earth that rose hideously about them. In mid-afternoon one shell caught a full squad of men who in a flash were shreds of flesh.

A stark reminder of what was to come. But the men who saw this tragedy went stubbornly on with their work.

Out of the distance came the rumble of light American artillery.

The firing came from the Frio River, which meant that Major Randt, commanding, was potting at the head of the main attack force. The sound of Van Hassek's counter-battery assault wafted in fifteen minutes later. It rose in volume. The artillery duel went on, growing in violence, which told the whole Second Division that the intrepid Randt was forcing the Van Hassek advance guard to extend itself.

Firing broke out to the north and south on the extreme flanks. At the division command post Mole and his staff waited on these actions with tense nerves. Three o'clock was near. If Van Hassek's invaders could be delayed much longer, they would not be able to deliver their attack in force against the Second before daybreak.

General Mole and his staff made an estimate of the situation. Mole's jaded face brightened in a moment's exultation as his staff unanimously agreed with his own deduction. The Van Hassek commanders would not be able to attack now until morning. Their advanced divisions had not even started into assembly areas for battle deployment.

"That means we've delayed them one day without a fight," Mole exclaimed. "It gives us a real chance of getting through tomorrow without getting blown out of our shoes. After that—we will see what we will see. But what a hell of a pounding we're in for tonight, without any anti-aircraft and long-range artillery!"

When the hot Texas sun slipped down to the horizon through the haze in the west, a furious roar of motors swept the Second Division. The flight of enemy attack planes, flying an altitude of less than five hundred feet, struck with the sharp bite of forked lightning.

Over the 9th Infantry's sector the attack planes appeared close enough to be hit with a hand-grenade. Men gaped after the apparition, or ducked into their holes in the ground against the menace of fragmentation bombs. But there came no explosion. The enemy had not opened up with their machine guns.

"Gas!"

The warning outcry rose in volume from two thousand throats. Terror froze on men's faces. Officers barked orders, noncoms raged at their men.

Stay put! Discipline slowly but surely prevailed over the hot impulse of self-preservation. Men dove into their trenches to bury their faces in the earth, or ripped off their cotton shirts, and wound them, doused with water, about their faces. Gas—and not a gas mask in the entire regiment—only ninety in the whole division and those for demonstration purposes in training tests.

What type of gas had the Van Hassek barbarians put down? Obviously not a mustard or persistent gas. The Van Hassek infantry would not want the sector contaminated in the morning when they launched their attack to blast the Americans out of position. A noncom caught the answer as his eyes burned into tears.

"Tear gas!" he shouted.

The sector commander cursed again and trotted off to the left, imparting a show of deliberation to his gait. Gas officers were making their calculations of what appeared a new gas. Scores of men, afflicted with a lachrymation and burns that might extend over several days, would have to be evacuated to the hospital at San Antonio for treatment.

Overhead the American aviation was redoubling its efforts. The 33d Pursuit Squadron was hawking over the sector. The 77th Pursuit Squadron was patrolling to the front. That audacious attack flight of Van Hassek's had used its heels to get away

Mole's jaded face brightened.

intact. The American pilots were sharply alert against a second such surprise. Reinforcements flew up from Kelly Field.

Overhead the American aviation was redoubling its efforts. Pursuit and observation squadrons had flown in from Louisiana and Virginia. Other planes were en route from California.

At the division command post, General Mole and his staff grimly watched the fading light of day. There was a tightening of tension throughout the sectors as dusk slowly engulfed them and deepened into night. Long-range artillery pounded away laconically, tearing great craters in the Second's artillery area and hitting near the division's main line of resistance, and back in the bivouacs of the reserves. This told Mole that enemy observation planes had photographed his positions in detail—and confirmed the hint of what must be expected during the night.

Evident it was, as the enemy purpose unfolded itself, that Van Hassek did not mean to brook delay. With the preponderance of force held by his main Laredo column he had no need to wait. For that matter it hardly made sense, within the Van Hassek line of military reasoning, that the Second Division would commit the brash audacity of a serious fight in front of San Antonio. Withdrawal would be only the logical course for the Americans, and Van Hassek had no reason to expect anything more than a few holding battalions at daybreak, resistance that would roll up in a hurry and scatter before his massed assault waves.

"Bombers flying in, altitude between eight thousand and ten thousand feet!"

The warning came in from an observation plane a few minutes after nine o'clock. It merely confirmed Mole's fears. Fast on the heels of the warning came the devastating roar of a heavy bomb. The earth churned under the roar of successive explosions. A squadron of nine bombers, air service reported, using an estimated three-hundred-pound bomb which would have a fragmentation and shock effect. A second enemy squadron was reported flying in.

The warning buzzed out over the field wire to the sectors. Men were to take cover as best they could. More long-range artillery opened up. Night became another volcanic bedlam, the Second's position a raging inferno that drove men huddling into their holes to claw frantically under a maddening impulse to dig their way down, down out of it all. Attack flights roared over, released fragmentation bombs attached to parachutes—small bombs that exploded on coming to earth.

It confirmed Mole's theory that Van Hassek expected an American withdrawal. This enemy blow fell at exactly the hour the Second would be pulling out if such had been its intention.

In the 20th Infantry sector a bomb, estimated a six-hundred-pounder, fell in rear of a company position with a devastating force that reduced seventeen men to speechless, trembling impotence, though no man was wounded. Later they were reported slowly recovering their wits from the shock and were not evacuated.

Van Hassek's planes were operating without lights. American pursuit hawks buzzed about, but were ineffective in the darkness. Van Hassek's fury rose and fell intermittently, then slowly dwindled away into a mere barking of some long-range artillery that was pounding the roads into San Antonio.

The clash of musketry far out in front brought an anticlimax to the crimson hurricane. Van Hassek patrols were pressing the American outposts, seeking information of an American withdrawal that had not occurred. Half a dozen Van Hassek riflemen were gobbled up by the 9th Infantry outpost and shunted back for question.

Over the field wire, Mole's staff checked casualties at eleven o'clock. The bombardment had killed only 71 men, wounded 142. Another 80 were numbed by shock. Three had been stripped of their wits and sent back, in driveling madness, for evacuation.

Mole nodded his head approvingly at this small toll. It did not surprise him that he had lost so few men to the Van Hassek strafing. This was not Mole's first battle. In France he had learned how frugal can be the night's harvest of artillery and bombardment.

"I've been talking to Brill at San Antonio," Mole told his assembled staff when he had completed his newest estimate. "Fort Sam Houston took another air beating tonight. Our air service has been forced to abandon Kelly and Randolph Fields. Galveston got a dose of mustard gas tonight after our 69th Anti-Aircraft Regiment there shot down an enemy bomber. It's all unspeakably horrible—but my mind has had so many jolts I just can't feel things any longer.

General Mole staggered but caught himself. The light in his unquenchable eyes burned steady through the toxins of fatigue. There had been a lapse in his memory, now he picked up the gap.

"Put the Guard infantry in reserve just south of San Antonio. Also keep the mechanized cavalry out to look after our flanks. I am going to turn in for some sleep, but don't hesitate to call me if anything important develops. Otherwise call me when the enemy preparation fire puts down on us in the morning. Good night, gentlemen."

CHAPTER XI

First Lieutenant Boynton, 9th Infantry, lay sprawled on the ground, his eyes strained into the first graying light of approaching dawn. Above the thunder of the enemy artillery preparation he could feel the pounding of his heart against the drums of his ear.

Behind that curtain of fire and thunder Boynton knew the Van Hassek infantry was moving forward to the assault. From his position out in front of the American outpost line it was Boynton's job to discover the attack and fall back to the outpost with twenty riflemen of his who lay immediately behind him.

Boynton's eyes caught an instant's glimpse of infantry, men silhouetted against the sheet-lightning of artillery flashes. Not more than a hundred yards away he estimated the enemy infantrymen. He slipped the safety lock of his service automatic and lifted the weapon in front of his face. His men, long tense and ready, fitted the butts of their new semi-automatic rifles against their shoulders and waited.

Like a ship looming suddenly out of a thick fog there came into view the weaving shadows that were the flesh and blood of moving infantry. A spurt of flame leaped from the muzzle of Boynton's pistol. It released the pent-up rage of twenty Garand rifles which sent a stream of lead pouring into those shadows of the night.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

NEXT WEEK

Another Absorbing Installment

IT HELPS SOME

("The Aga Khan has been compelled to cut his racing stable down to one horse."—News item)

If you've been hard hit by the war—
If you have felt its frightful touch—
If you are getting more and more
To feel your lot is not so much;
If you're enveloped in the blues—
If daily by some blow you're hit,
Here is some rather soothing news—
The Aga Khan is feeling it!

II

If you are prone to knit your brows
And worry over what's ahead—
If you've a tendency to grouse
About the way that you've been bled;
If you're complaining of the mess—
If every broadcast makes you blue,
This thought will help a bit, I guess—
The Aga Khan is scrimping, too!

III

If Europe's war has burdened you
And made you go a little slow
In making any outlays new
Or being careless with your dough;
If you have felt war's bitter sting
And think that you've been put upon,
This item may be comforting—
All's not so well with Aga Khan.

IV

If your life isn't what it was—
If you must count your sheckels now—
If day by day the conflict does
Its best to sink you by the bow;
If you are cutting down on gas
To make each dime the limit go,
This ought to help you let it pass—
The Aga Khan is low on dough.

V

If you can't live the way you did
And must add water to the soup;
If it's been months since you were rid
Of all the cares that 'round you swoop;
If you must now economize—
If you've cut out the fresh meat course,
This fact may help your spirits rise—
The Aga Khan's on his last horse!

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HOME-GROWN STUFF

"U. S. Searches for Substitute for Rubber."—headline.

"Has any chemist ever gone deeply into New England clam chowder for the solution?" asks J. L. Collins.

• • •

"The bandits wounded the policeman in the left hand. A checkup revealed that a few of the policeman's bullets had gone wild, shattering eight bottles of liquor, fortunately of an inexpensive brand."—New York Herald Tribune.

There you go being a stern materialist again!

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FAIR QUESTION

Sometimes I think my fate is far,
Far worse than I deserve:
Why must I meet THAT other car
On every single curve?

Avery Giles.

• • •

From the sound of the names of those cities and towns taken in Africa this looks more and more like a war to make the world unsafe for proofreaders.

• • •

THERE'S A LIMIT

Tho thoroughbreds race neck and neck,
And storm-tossed ships are cast aground;
Tho cars collide in tangled wreck
And bombs explode with fearful sound;
Tho bathing beauties strut their charms
And boxers battle, toe to toe;
Tho firemen race to three alarms
And workers shovel record snow,
I yawn, I fidget and I sigh—
To me it's all an utter bore;
I say to blazes with it, and why? . . .
I've seen THIS newsreel twice before!

—Richard Armour.

• • •

PEST NO. 1,607

A plague on him
Who always snatches
My remaining
Book of matches.

—M. R. De Sena.

• • •

Ed Wynn used to say that the world was going to the dogs but that the dogs wouldn't take it, and the gag never sounded more convincing than today.

• • •

A big man in the defense program fell while skating and was injured the other day. This proves what we have always contended: There is no defense against an urge to cut a figure eight.

• • •

CALL BY DICTATORS

Join our gang and have some fun
Double-crossing every one!

—S. H. Dewhurst.

• • •

The Most Terrible Nightmare: Dreaming that Hitler is making one of his typical speeches and that you are in the front row where you can't miss a word.

• • •

Ima Dodo says that "Gone With the Wind" at 35 cents is almost as good as when it was being shown for $2.

THINGS for You TO MAKE

Pattern No. Z9266

MONDAY, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday — each tea towel boasts an industrious parrot busily pointing the way to efficient household routine. Applique Polly and outline the rest of the motif, or do these gay designs entirely in outline. Matching panholders may be made from the parrot-in-cage motif.

• • •

Z9266, 15 cents, brings this set of parrot tea towel and panholder motifs in a transfer that will stamp more than once. Send your order to:

AUNT MARTHA
Box 166-W Kansas City, Mo.
Enclose 15 cents for each pattern desired. Pattern No.....
Name .....
Address .....

HOUSEHOLD HINTS

There are two grades of bath towels: (1) those that are loosely woven and will quickly absorb water and (2) those which are of a close weave and do not dry so quickly.

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Meals with plenty of color are not only more interesting, but are invariably better balanced than colorless meals.

• • •

Matches should be kept in non-inflammable containers where children cannot reach them.

• • •

Fried mush is often served with fried chicken. To prepare the mush mold it in a loaf pan. Chill it until it is firm. Then cut it into four-inch slices and sprinkle each with flour. Brown in chicken drippings and serve around the platter of chicken.

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One reason jelly is tough is because too little sugar is used; another is overcooking.

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Pretzel crumbs make a tasty covering for small cheese balls served with salads or as appetizers. Freshen the pretzels by heating five minutes in a moderately hot oven. Cool and then roll into crumbs.

• • •

It takes less time, fewer hours of labor and, therefore, costs less to roof a house with strip shingles than with individual shingles.

• • •

One teaspoon of dissolved gelatin added to one-half pint of whipped cream will make the cream stiffer when whipped.

CLASSIFIED DEPARTMENT

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Reply in own handwriting, giving name in full, address, telephone, place and date of birth, height, and weight. State whether single or married; also whether now employed, with brief record of business experience.

An interview at the most convenient place will be arranged with the Personnel Director for those who qualify.

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Failing Community

A churchless community, a community where men have abandoned and scoffed at or ignored their religious needs, is a community on rapid down grade.—Theodore Roosevelt.

HOT? TIRED? DRINK Kool-Aid
Makes 10 BIG DRINKS 5¢ KOOL-AID

Deadly Tongue

The second most deadly instrument of destruction is the dynamite gun—the first is the human tongue.—W. G. Jordan.

DOWN IN THE MOUTH?
Cheer up! Try this time-tested laxative. Relieves constipation effectively. Money-back guarantee. At your dealer or write: H. CLARKE & SONS, INC. BALTO., MD.
15¢ RED CLOUD BERRIES
ALL VEGETABLE LAXATIVE PREPARATION

No Halfway

I hate to see a thing done by halves; if it be right, do it wholly; if it be wrong, leave it undone.—Gilpin.

SURE WAY TO KILL
Jap Beetles
Here's a spray that will kill all Japanese Beetles it hits. Dissolve one tablespoon soap flakes (Ivory, Rinso, Lux, etc.) in one gallon of water and add 4 teaspoons of Red Arrow Garden Spray. Spray thoroughly several times a week, being sure to wet both undersides and tops of leaves. Buy Red Arrow at hardware, seed, drug or grocery stores. Send post card for free "Insect Identification and Control Chart," to: Red Arrow, 109 McCormick Bldg., Baltimore, Md.
RED ARROW Garden Spray

Short on Inspiration

We give advice but we do not inspire conduct. — La Rochefoucauld.

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HANDING OUT CIGARS when the doctor says: "Well, old man, you're a father! Mother and baby are both doing well."
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NO TELLING what tomorrow's weather may be. It fools the best forecaster. But we *do* want chintz for the windows. We *do* need a carpet sweeper, a new percolator, and a new end-table in the living-room. And we *don't* want to slosh around rainy streets to hunt them. Problem: How to thwart the weather man. Simple enough! Let's sit down by the fireplace and read the advertisements. Here it's comfortable and snug. We'll take the newspaper page by page, compare prices, qualities, brand-names. Tomorrow, rain or shine, we'll head for the store that has what we want, and home again in a jiffy.

● "Buying at Home"—through the advertising columns—gives you wide selection, more time to decide, and satisfaction when you decide.

● MAKE IT ONE OF YOUR PLEASANT HABITS!