ATTACK ON AMERICA

BY GENERAL ARED WHITE

W. N. U. Release.

THE STORY SO FAR: More than 200,000 foreign troops which had been secretly transported to Mexico, suddenly invaded the United States. Intelligence Officer Benning had discovered their plans while a spy in Mexico City where he had gained the confidence of Fincke and Bravot, two enemy officers, but his warning had gone unheeded. The President was killed when Washington was bombed. General Brill, commander of the U. S. army in Texas, was opposed by greatly superior forces led by Van Hassek. In spite of Brill's desperate resistance, Van Hassek's troops pushed relentlessly forward. Returning to Washington, Benning met Fincke, who had come there to do espionage work but continued to pose as a friend. A week later he saw Fincke enter a restaurant. Now continue with the story.

INSTALLMENT TWELVE

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CHAPTER XII—Continued

Benning waited for several moments to regain complete composure and went over to a seat at the Fincke table. The Austrian looked up and brightened slightly.

"Thought I might find you here, Bromlitz," Fincke muttered. "I want to ask you a few questions if I can talk to you as one friend to another."

"I suppose, Major," Benning said with a mischievous grin, "you are to be addressed as lieutenant colonel hereafter."

Fincke glared and demanded: "I'm in no mood for being kidded, Bromlitz. Or did you know Boggio gave me the double-cross?"

"I've been busy with my own affairs," Benning answered. "For all I know Boggio is back in Mexico City."

"Not yet, but he'll be flying south tomorrow while here I am stuck right in Washington for three days more until the big boat sails. What's eating at me now is I may get double-crossed out of the cruise if Boggio hops up to New York to see Bravot."

Benning said crisply, "All right, Fincke, out with your grievance."

Fincke said at once, leaning across the table: "Boggio was up here in Washington on another job when he horned in on mine. Said he wanted to check my plans from the air corps angle. What does he do but grab off all my calculations for fights, steals my triangles, and pilfers all my technical data, then he sent me out of town at the last minute on a goose chase so he can put my plans across himself! That gives him all the glory for the White House, and now off to Mexico he goes to get a general's crescent."

"I've got it figured out, Bromlitz, you're in on the big show, aren't you?"

"There are some things we're not expected to talk about too much, Fincke," Benning shot back. "Why did you ask me that question?"

"I thought maybe if you are going aboard we might work together, Bromlitz."

"If you're sincere in that, let's make sure we're talking about the same thing. When do you sail and from where?"

The Van Hassek spy weighed this dangerous question.

"I see no harm in saying that, Bromlitz," he responded shortly. "Not so long as we don't say where we're going or what for, which mustn't be repeated to anybody under any circumstances. Does it mean anything if I tell you Pier Twenty, at four Wednesday afternoon?"

Several tables distant, directly behind Fincke, Benning had observed Lieutenant Jones. The lieutenant's eyes had let Benning know that he had a matter of urgency to discuss. Benning lighted a cigarette and got up.

"Suppose we meet here on Wednesday morning at eight o'clock," Benning proposed. "We might just as well travel together to the pier."

"Right," Fincke agreed. "Glad to tie up with somebody I can trust."

When Benning passed out of the hotel into the street, Lieutenant Jones promptly joined him. Jones had his private car at the curb and ushered Benning inside.

"Sorry I couldn't get to you sooner, sir," Jones reported. "Your man Boggio came out of the Pujol apartment at six-thirty. The girl friend was with him. Outside they were joined by a man who apparently is Boggio's bodyguard. I followed them to the depot where Boggio and the other fellow took the seven o'clock train for New York. The girl returned home. I didn't have a chance to get word to you sooner, Captain."

Benning studied his watch and made a rapid calculation. The hour was a few minutes short of eight o'clock.

"Drive me at once to the airport, Jones," he directed. "I've still time to meet Boggio when he steps off his train at the Pennsylvania Station. Please let Colonel Flagwill know I've developed a very interesting trail."

CHAPTER XIII

Lieutenant Jones turned on his radio as the car got in motion toward the airport. General Hague was just coming on the air, introduced to the nation by the Secretary of War. Without preliminary the Chief of Staff began speaking, his voice clear and calm.

"I will speak very frankly to the country," he said. "I will give you general facts it is important for you to understand. First, our inability to prevent invasion is no fault of the Army. The Army is your army, limited by you through legislation and appropriations. The fact that it is scattered in small posts throughout the country, instead of being concentrated in combat divisions for proper training, is no fault of the War Department.

"I speak without bitterness or blame, but it is important that you face the future with belief in your potential armed forces.

"Briefly, our armies must be assembled slowly from scattered garrisons. Initially our actions must be limited by immediate lack of ammunition reserves and armaments. If we cannot supply adequate anti-aircraft protection to our important cities, deeply as our hearts bleed for them, it is because we have insufficient anti-aircraft.

"But I want to say to you what I said the other night to my associates of the staff. Whatever violence lies ahead, this country will master it. Let our foes mark these words. The United States is unconquerable. Its resources and manpower, its determination and courage, are equal to any conceivable emergency. Whatever reverses may lie ahead of us in the immediate future will only temper our spirit of resistance. Inevitably that day will come when the foes of the United States will meet the mighty vengeance of our massed valor!"

Benning, as they reached the airport, instructed: "Get G-2 on the telephone at Governor's Island at once, Jones. I'd like to have two good Intelligence men from First Corps Area meet me at the Pennsylvania Hotel. One of them to be Lieutenant Crane, if he's available."

On disembarking at Newark shortly before ten o'clock, Benning took a cab into the city and drove direct to the Pennsylvania Hotel where he found Lieutenant Crane waiting. Crane, a short, chunky young officer with a pleasant, alert face, accepted terse instructions with a crisp "Very good, sir." With him was Sergeant Adams, Intelligence police, a seasoned and dependable non-commissioned officer. Both wore business suits.

"The Boggio henchman gave a cry of pain."

Benning crossed over to the station as the train from Washington pulled in. Boggio and his henchman got off as soon as the train stopped and hurried out to catch a cab. Benning followed them alone in a second cab while Crane and his sergeant trailed from a discreet distance.

Boggio stopped near the McAlpin Hotel to let out his henchman and drove on the stone's throw to the Empire State Building, where he paid his fare, dismissed the cab, and went inside to be whirred up in an express elevator. Benning waited several minutes until the identical cage returned to the lobby.

"Pardon, I just missed a friend, an Italian in a blue suit and white felt hat," Benning said to the operator. "Did he go to the roof with you?"

"Forty-fifth floor," the operator informed.

Benning shot up to the forty-fifth floor and walked cautiously down the hall. A brief reconnoissance told him there was a light in but one of the offices. He read the legend on the door, "Andes Gold Mining and Milling Company, Inc."

Without pressing his luck any further, he returned to the street.

He had crossed the street, meaning to keep the Empire State under observation against Boggio's return to the street, when his way was barred by the stubby man who had accompanied Boggio from Washington. The fellow's face was bellicose, his hand thrust suggestively in his pocket.

"You was just up pretty high in the big building, wasn't you?" the fellow growled close to Benning's ear.

"What of it?" Benning asked.

"Supposing I told you I was up to the forty-fifth to see a friend named Palacio Quatres about buying a pair of silver sabers?"

The man's hostility relaxed somewhat as he heard the Van Hassek words of secret identification. But after searching Benning's face, he shook his head.

"You may be all right, but we're playing no chance," he decided. "What you say to a little jump up to the forty-fifth with me just to make sure?"

"If you insist," Benning said indifferently.

Benning, as they returned across the street, did not risk looking about for Crane and the sergeant. With expert eye he watched his own chance of attack. His prompt capitulation had the effect of throwing his captor slightly off guard. As they passed the entrance of a gown shop, Benning seized the fellow's gun arm and drove him into the dark entrance of the shop. The impact crashed the heavy glass door, the two went sprawling inside through a jagged aperture of broken glass.

The Boggio henchman gave a cry of pain as the glass tore into his body, but floundered into battle with a surge of frantic strength that shook his arm free of Benning's grip. Benning regained his hold before the spy could bring a pistol into play. They had staggered to their feet in the uncertain battle over the weapon when Crane and Adams dashed up. A sharp tap of the sergeant's service pistol promptly ended the fray.

"Keep a watch outside, Adams," Benning instructed.

With Crane's help he bound the prisoner's arms. A watchman in tan uniform, attracted by the crash of glass, rushed in with drawn pistol. Crane promptly dismissed the watchman on the mission of notifying the owner of the shop of his broken door.

They were getting their prisoner, still in a daze, on his feet when Sergeant Adams hurried in from the street.

"Your Italian just came down, sir," he reported to Benning. "He's now getting into a cab."

"Follow him!" Benning promptly instructed. "Follow him as long as he stays in New York. If he attempts to leave the city, arrest him. You don't need to be gentle if he gives you any trouble, Sergeant."

"Yes'r," said Adams.

Benning instructed Crane to take the prisoner to Governor's Island, there to be held in close arrest. Crane was next to report to Benning at the near-by McAlpin. Benning walked to that hotel and called Colonel Flagwill on the telephone. Flagwill was tied up in conference with General Hague, and an hour passed before he responded on the telephone. Benning reported events in pertinent detail.

There were several moments of silence as Flagwill's mind searched through Benning's disclosures, then he burst into excited enthusiasm.

"That sounds like the real quill, Benning—sounds like the trail we've all been looking for!

"I'll instruct Colonel Wallace at once to give you whatever you want from corps area, Benning. Have you decided on any plan of attack?"

"Tonight, sir," Benning replied, "I thought I'd keep entirely away from the Empire State. In the morning I intend to go up to the forty-fifth alone and give the Andes Gold Mining and Milling Company the once-over."

Benning was having a late breakfast at his hotel the next morning, after a busy night plotting moves, when Crane came in, his face glum and heavy with tragedy.

"Your Italian got Adams last night," Crane said at once, sinking heavily into a chair at Benning's table.

"Adams, when we brought him to hospital, told me Boggio got suspicious when his henchman failed to join him outside Empire State. He had the cab drive him under the Hudson and headed to the Newark airport. Adams followed closely. Boggio slipped behind a hangar to observe his rear, and as Adams came up, shot without warning. He had a plane waiting at the airport which took off immediately."

"Sorry," Benning said glumly.

"We put out a warning at once," Crane went on. "Our intercepts picked up the engines of the plane over Lexington at two this morning. It was traveling high and fast and must have been Boggio's plane. Our estimates give small hope that pursuit aviation can pick him up in Texas, but we've put heat on the air corps to make a try."

The public radio in the dining-room was buzzing with war bulletins. Van Hassek's attack had jumped off at daybreak, but at eight o'clock had made small progress against the Second Division. Europe was in a turmoil, expecting war to break at any hour in France and Belgium. Unconfirmed reports came through London of an immense troop concentration on the Chinese coast, another report of a Coalition fleet mobilizing in Mediterranean waters.

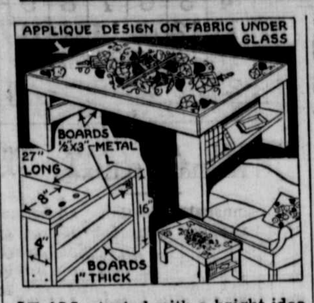
Enemy bombing had centered on only two cities last night—Galveston and San Antonio. Fort Sam Houston had been heavily pounded and many of its installations destroyed. Hastily formed defenses seemed important.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

NEXT WEEK
Another Absorbing Installment

NEW IDEAS for Home-makers

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS



IT ALL started with a bright idea for making a simple, painted coffee table from odds and ends of lumber. The sketch at the lower left gives the dimensions. The two end sections were made first; the top and sides of these being screwed together with 1-inch metal angles. A shelf was then nailed in and a ½ by 3-inch board nailed across the back of it. Two boards for the top of the table were then screwed to the end sections.

Now the needle-lady comes in. The table was to be painted putty color and then waxed. She bought a yard of slightly darker tan sateen and appliqued a design of bright blue and red morning glories and green leaves on it with stems and tendrils in green outline stitch. This was placed over the table top and tacked around the edge. A piece of window glass was then cut to fit and ½ by 3-inch pieces were screwed to the sides.

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NOTE: This graceful morning glory design is so attractive that Mrs. Spears has arranged to furnish transfer patterns to be used in stamping fabric for a table and matching cushion. The pattern is for both cushion and table top. If you are interested in husband and wife projects in homemaking you will be fascinated with the Book 7 in the series of booklets available with these weekly sketches. Book 7 contains directions for more than 30 things to make and a full description of other numbers in the series. The pattern is 15 cents and the booklets are 10 cents each. Order direct from:

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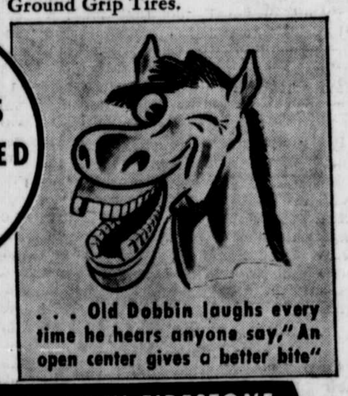

. . . Old Dobbin laughs every time he hears anyone say, "An open center gives a better bite"

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