

ATTACK ON AMERICA

BY GENERAL ARED WHITE
W. N. U. Release

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." Without warning, four large southern cities were attacked.

CHAPTER XI—Continued

In the swift jubilation of action Boynton caught the fall of wounded men, heard the cries of pain, and the shrill of commanders' whistles, the bark of subalterns above the bellowing artillery. Rifle flashes stabbed the graying dawn as the enemy sprawled to the ground and fired back. Boynton hugged the earth only long enough to satisfy himself that it was an attack wave, not a mere patrol, he had encountered; then he fell back, his men firing intermittently as they ran, to the shelter of fox holes in the outpost.

The outpost line, lightly held, poured lead from its semi-automatics and machine guns. When it found itself confronted by superior forces, its defenders promptly retreated to the main line of resistance which ran a ragged, irregular line of trenches and centers of resistance over a front of ten thousand yards.

Van Hassek's infantry, in waves of men that reached across the whole front, struck the main line of resistance just as visibility exposed the attack.

Colonel Hall of the 9th, observing the attack from a vantage-point, expected nothing more than that. Later, when Van Hassek's scheme of maneuver had cut a critical hole into the division's vitals, the whole force of the frontal attack would come rushing in to mop up with firepower and bayonets.

The 9th's Garand rifles, light machine guns, 37-millimeter cannon, and small mortars poured all their hot fury into the surging assault. One enemy wave after another melted into dead and wounded, but only to be replaced by living waves that poured relentlessly on.

Half an hour of furious fighting passed before Colonel Hall accepted the evidence of his own eyes.

"My God, the fools are going to penetrate our center!" he roared.

Astride the Laredo-San Antonio highway, Van Hassek's infantry drove ahead while successive waves of men melted across open terrain where there was little benefit of cover. Desperately the enemy commanders fed in reserves from their superior hordes of men out of which they could pay the red costs of their error in underestimating an enemy who had not been expected to offer serious resistance here.

What Van Hassek's infantry lost to their slower bolt-action rifles they made up by auxiliary arms, light machine guns, mortars of many calibers, light and heavy tanks, superiority of artillery. Shrapnel, mortars, and musketry now beat down on the American centers of resistance with the red convolutions of some Satanic scourge escaped from hell. Van Hassek's men burst ahead until Boynton could see the distended eyes and gaping, grimacing terror of their faces, as they bared themselves to a death against which they did not dare turn their backs.

The enemy poured on into Boynton's strong-point. Boynton became aware that the survivors of his men were breaking, stubbornly fighting with bayonets, grenades, and musketry as they fell back. Now he saw enemy tanks rolling in on his men, tanks whose steel armor deflected the regiment's ancient 37-millimeter guns that were being used until the new anti-tank guns could be reduced from paper models to actual weapons. Boynton turned to rally his men, giving to his voice the full strength of his lungs.

"Up and at 'em!" he cried. "To hell with the swine!"

His voice rose above the storm. A second time he raised his voice, then he staggered drunkenly, spun half around, and fell as consciousness snapped from his brain and his life snuffed out.

Having committed themselves to this folly of frontal attack, the Van Hassek commanders fed in reserve after reserve regardless of cost in their determination to break through with as little delay as possible. Once they succeeded in driving a wedge deep enough into the American center, they knew that the whole American sector would roll up in a chaos of defeated regiments.

But to accomplish this, Van Hassek's infantry must drive through succeeding lines. Capturing one, they faced another equally resistant. What the Americans lacked in auxiliary weapons they made up by their unshakable fighting spirit, a discipline hard as steel that put men through the terrors of battle and turned a deaf ear to impulses of flight and surrender. Even succeeding waves of tanks failed to terrorize them or drive them out of position. All the advantages of auxiliary weapons failed to avail.

One surging mass of enemy infantry engulfed the right of the 23d, and left of the 9th Infantry, late in the forenoon. Now the storm rose to new heights of desperation as Van Hassek's infantry sought to break on through.

Five hundred yards the invader progressed, swamping one strong-point after another. The Second's main line was threatened by a wedge that would force it back to

INSTALLMENT ELEVEN
from the air; Washington was bombed and the President killed. National forces were ordered mobilized, but they were ill prepared for immediate action. General Brill, area commander of the army in Texas, reported to General Hague, chief of staff at Washington, that he was being attacked by greatly superior forces. General Hague ordered him to resist the enemy's advance at all costs. Brill hastily prepared plans with the help of General Mole, division commander. Suddenly the American outpost was attacked by a strong force crossing the Rio Grande.

Now continue with the story.

subalterns. Benning had served with the 11th for nearly a year until he went to the air corps, from which service he had been snatched for military intelligence duty. Breathlessly he followed every scrap of available information on the 11th.

Benning was picking at his dinner at the Mayflower when there came a final flash on the Boll incident.

"You heard this afternoon of the gallant young officer, Captain Boll of our infantry," the broadcaster announced. "You recall that, although wounded in the cheek, he ignored his own wound and saw his men through to the Second Division south of San Antonio."

The announcer paused, his voice shook with feeling as he read a brief dispatch from San Antonio that brought the incident of Boll to tragic consummation:

"Captain Henry Boll, 11th United States Infantry, died early this evening of wounds received in action. Captain Boll collapsed a few minutes after reaching the hospital and died this evening without having regained consciousness."

For a long time Benning sat looking across the blur of somber faces in front of him, then he left his unfinished dinner and went out into the street. The soldier spirit flared into revolt within him against this soft spot of his own present duty when there was a man's role on the border.

He walked to the Shoreham to get himself in hand. Even Flagwell's assertion that the Coalition spy nest was more dangerous to the country than Van Hassek's present invasion brought him small comfort. But he finally reminded himself that he had a job to do and not until he had done it would there be hope of transfer back to the line of the Army.

Washington, the whole country, was in a state of furor. All day Benning had been shut off from the War Department with its staggering problems, black uncertainties, and crushing workload.

Official reassurance was being fed out over the radio to those sections of the country outside the immediate reach of Van Hassek's invasion. They were told there was no immediate danger of new air raids. The Army was pushing through its interception nets and extending its intelligence service to bring timely warning well in advance of any future raid.

New Orleans, Galveston, and other cities were being organized against air raids that could not be circumvented for the time being. It was a matter of avoiding crowds, of getting underground against demolition bombs and gas. People who could leave those cities were urged to take refuge in towns and hamlets until the danger could be brought under control, although tens of thousands needed no such warning and were pouring into the country with such of their effects as they could carry along.

In New York, Washington, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and other great centers of population, organization against air attacks had been feverishly undertaken. The Middle West and West were told there was no present need for alarm. However, some highly alarming, if unconfirmed, reports of a mysterious brewing of mischief in the Orient, had the coast cities on edge.

Mobilization of the four existent Regular Army and eighteen National Guard infantry divisions was reported sixty per cent complete. The Third Army was to concentrate in Texas as rapidly as possible, but the War Department refused to give out military details. No censorship of military news had been clamped down as yet and the press was printing, without restriction, whatever news it could get.

Benning ordered an elaborate dinner at the Shoreham. Though he had no appetite, he made a pretext of eating while he kept under observation those who came and went.

Before starting on his rounds, Benning had stationed Lieutenant Jones, an Intelligence assistant, on guard over the Massachusetts Avenue apartment of Mme Pujol, with whom Boggio had dined and danced on the capital. Jones' instructions were to hold Boggio under close observation and let Benning know as quickly as possible if the Italian appeared.

Seven-thirty o'clock passed, the Chief of Staff of the Army would soon be on the air in a nation-wide hookup. New dispatches came in from San Antonio.

Flash—"Bombers reported approaching New Orleans, Galveston, and Houston. The Government's intercept nets and intelligence service will give prompt advance warning if any planes fly north of Texas. Everyone is urged to remain calm."

Several persons got up from table at this news and anxiously left the room. Others kept determinedly in their seats, a few affected nonchalant composure. Into the dining-room at this moment came Fincke, his face lined in a surly scowl. He sat down at a table across the room from Benning.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Benning and Boll had been classmates at the Military Academy, had gone to the 11th Infantry together as

the enemy tanks rolling in.

had done the same thing by making a stand, the next move now was up to Van Hassek.

At the division command post, General Mole had slept through the morning preparation fire. Only by vigorously shaking him had his aide been able to rouse him out of his sleep. Dosing himself with strong coffee, Mole coolly watched the development of attack. The Van Hassek strategy had a right to suppose that the Second would hold lightly and run off to successive delaying positions.

Anxiously, Mole and his staff scanned information as it came in over the field wires and from observation planes. Van Hassek's tortuous columns still were moving up from Laredo. But no fresh movement of reserves was located in the immediate American front. Both the Brownsville and Eagle Pass columns were several hours' travel from striking range of either flank.

Casualty reports came in, roughly computed, by noon. One hundred and seven officers, most lieutenants. Nineteen hundred men. A fifth of his command gone, many of them officers and men with whom he had served through long years of peace.

But discipline held up, and a stern, stubborn fighting spirit pervaded the ranks. That word came from the commanders of infantry who had taken the brunt of the losses, it came from the artillery regiments which were still being pounded by long-range artillery.

Against odds of men and weapons there remained the valor of a manpower that could be conquered only in death, or lawful order of retreat.

CHAPTER XII

As succeeding battle reports from the Texas front poured into Washington over the radio, Captain Benning was assailed by growing restlessness at his own inaction in the face of momentous events. Throughout the day he had lolled about the cafes along Connecticut Avenue looking for the Van Hassek staff spies, Fincke and Boggio. Evening found him holding the bag.

That red welter of the 11th Infantry's retreat from Laredo had been reported in meager but graphic detail along with the heroic stand of the 5th and 12th Cavalry Regiments. Captain Boll's achievement in piloting his men through the storm of Van Hassek's air attacks had stirred the country.

Benning and Boll had been classmates at the Military Academy, had gone to the 11th Infantry together as

the enemy tanks rolling in.

had done the same thing by making a stand, the next move now was up to Van Hassek.

At the division command post, General Mole had slept through the morning preparation fire. Only by vigorously shaking him had his aide been able to rouse him out of his sleep. Dosing himself with strong coffee, Mole coolly watched the development of attack. The Van Hassek strategy had a right to suppose that the Second would hold lightly and run off to successive delaying positions.

Anxiously, Mole and his staff scanned information as it came in over the field wires and from observation planes. Van Hassek's tortuous columns still were moving up from Laredo. But no fresh movement of reserves was located in the immediate American front. Both the Brownsville and Eagle Pass columns were several hours' travel from striking range of either flank.

Casualty reports came in, roughly computed, by noon. One hundred and seven officers, most lieutenants. Nineteen hundred men. A fifth of his command gone, many of them officers and men with whom he had served through long years of peace.

But discipline held up, and a stern, stubborn fighting spirit pervaded the ranks. That word came from the commanders of infantry who had taken the brunt of the losses, it came from the artillery regiments which were still being pounded by long-range artillery.

Against odds of men and weapons there remained the valor of a manpower that could be conquered only in death, or lawful order of retreat.

CHAPTER XII

As succeeding battle reports from the Texas front poured into Washington over the radio, Captain Benning was assailed by growing restlessness at his own inaction in the face of momentous events. Throughout the day he had lolled about the cafes along Connecticut Avenue looking for the Van Hassek staff spies, Fincke and Boggio. Evening found him holding the bag.

That red welter of the 11th Infantry's retreat from Laredo had been reported in meager but graphic detail along with the heroic stand of the 5th and 12th Cavalry Regiments. Captain Boll's achievement in piloting his men through the storm of Van Hassek's air attacks had stirred the country.

Benning and Boll had been classmates at the Military Academy, had gone to the 11th Infantry together as

the enemy tanks rolling in.

had done the same thing by making a stand, the next move now was up to Van Hassek.

At the division command post, General Mole had slept through the morning preparation fire. Only by vigorously shaking him had his aide been able to rouse him out of his sleep. Dosing himself with strong coffee, Mole coolly watched the development of attack. The Van Hassek strategy had a right to suppose that the Second would hold lightly and run off to successive delaying positions.

Anxiously, Mole and his staff scanned information as it came in over the field wires and from observation planes. Van Hassek's tortuous columns still were moving up from Laredo. But no fresh movement of reserves was located in the immediate American front. Both the Brownsville and Eagle Pass columns were several hours' travel from striking range of either flank.

Casualty reports came in, roughly computed, by noon. One hundred and seven officers, most lieutenants. Nineteen hundred men. A fifth of his command gone, many of them officers and men with whom he had served through long years of peace.

But discipline held up, and a stern, stubborn fighting spirit pervaded the ranks. That word came from the commanders of infantry who had taken the brunt of the losses, it came from the artillery regiments which were still being pounded by long-range artillery.

Against odds of men and weapons there remained the valor of a manpower that could be conquered only in death, or lawful order of retreat.

CHAPTER XII

As succeeding battle reports from the Texas front poured into Washington over the radio, Captain Benning was assailed by growing restlessness at his own inaction in the face of momentous events. Throughout the day he had lolled about the cafes along Connecticut Avenue looking for the Van Hassek staff spies, Fincke and Boggio. Evening found him holding the bag.

That red welter of the 11th Infantry's retreat from Laredo had been reported in meager but graphic detail along with the heroic stand of the 5th and 12th Cavalry Regiments. Captain Boll's achievement in piloting his men through the storm of Van Hassek's air attacks had stirred the country.

Benning and Boll had been classmates at the Military Academy, had gone to the 11th Infantry together as

the enemy tanks rolling in.

had done the same thing by making a stand, the next move now was up to Van Hassek.

At the division command post, General Mole had slept through the morning preparation fire. Only by vigorously shaking him had his aide been able to rouse him out of his sleep. Dosing himself with strong coffee, Mole coolly watched the development of attack. The Van Hassek strategy had a right to suppose that the Second would hold lightly and run off to successive delaying positions.

Anxiously, Mole and his staff scanned information as it came in over the field wires and from observation planes. Van Hassek's tortuous columns still were moving up from Laredo. But no fresh movement of reserves was located in the immediate American front. Both the Brownsville and Eagle Pass columns were several hours' travel from striking range of either flank.

Casualty reports came in, roughly computed, by noon. One hundred and seven officers, most lieutenants. Nineteen hundred men. A fifth of his command gone, many of them officers and men with whom he had served through long years of peace.

But discipline held up, and a stern, stubborn fighting spirit pervaded the ranks. That word came from the commanders of infantry who had taken the brunt of the losses, it came from the artillery regiments which were still being pounded by long-range artillery.

Against odds of men and weapons there remained the valor of a manpower that could be conquered only in death, or lawful order of retreat.

CHAPTER XII

As succeeding battle reports from the Texas front poured into Washington over the radio, Captain Benning was assailed by growing restlessness at his own inaction in the face of momentous events. Throughout the day he had lolled about the cafes along Connecticut Avenue looking for the Van Hassek staff spies, Fincke and Boggio. Evening found him holding the bag.

That red welter of the 11th Infantry's retreat from Laredo had been reported in meager but graphic detail along with the heroic stand of the 5th and 12th Cavalry Regiments. Captain Boll's achievement in piloting his men through the storm of Van Hassek's air attacks had stirred the country.

Benning and Boll had been classmates at the Military Academy, had gone to the 11th Infantry together as

the enemy tanks rolling in.

had done the same thing by making a stand, the next move now was up to Van Hassek.

At the division command post, General Mole had slept through the morning preparation fire. Only by vigorously shaking him had his aide been able to rouse him out of his sleep. Dosing himself with strong coffee, Mole coolly watched the development of attack. The Van Hassek strategy had a right to suppose that the Second would hold lightly and run off to successive delaying positions.

Anxiously, Mole and his staff scanned information as it came in over the field wires and from observation planes. Van Hassek's tortuous columns still were moving up from Laredo. But no fresh movement of reserves was located in the immediate American front. Both the Brownsville and Eagle Pass columns were several hours' travel from striking range of either flank.

Casualty reports came in, roughly computed, by noon. One hundred and seven officers, most lieutenants. Nineteen hundred men. A fifth of his command gone, many of them officers and men with whom he had served through long years of peace.

But discipline held up, and a stern, stubborn fighting spirit pervaded the ranks. That word came from the commanders of infantry who had taken the brunt of the losses, it came from the artillery regiments which were still being pounded by long-range artillery.

Against odds of men and weapons there remained the valor of a manpower that could be conquered only in death, or lawful order of retreat.

CHAPTER XII

As succeeding battle reports from the Texas front poured into Washington over the radio, Captain Benning was assailed by growing restlessness at his own inaction in the face of momentous events. Throughout the day he had lolled about the cafes along Connecticut Avenue looking for the Van Hassek staff spies, Fincke and Boggio. Evening found him holding the bag.

That red welter of the 11th Infantry's retreat from Laredo had been reported in meager but graphic detail along with the heroic stand of the 5th and 12th Cavalry Regiments. Captain Boll's achievement in piloting his men through the storm of Van Hassek's air attacks had stirred the country.

Benning and Boll had been classmates at the Military Academy, had gone to the 11th Infantry together as

the enemy tanks rolling in.

had done the same thing by making a stand, the next move now was up to Van Hassek.

At the division command post, General Mole had slept through the morning preparation fire. Only by vigorously shaking him had his aide been able to rouse him out of his sleep. Dosing himself with strong coffee, Mole coolly watched the development of attack. The Van Hassek strategy had a right to suppose that the Second would hold lightly and run off to successive delaying positions.

Anxiously, Mole and his staff scanned information as it came in over the field wires and from observation planes. Van Hassek's tortuous columns still were moving up from Laredo. But no fresh movement of reserves was located in the immediate American front. Both the Brownsville and Eagle Pass columns were several hours' travel from striking range of either flank.

Casualty reports came in, roughly computed, by noon. One hundred and seven officers, most lieutenants. Nineteen hundred men. A fifth of his command gone, many of them officers and men with whom he had served through long years of peace.

But discipline held up, and a stern, stubborn fighting spirit pervaded the ranks. That word came from the commanders of infantry who had taken the brunt of the losses, it came from the artillery regiments which were still being pounded by long-range artillery.

Against odds of men and weapons there remained the valor of a manpower that could be conquered only in death, or lawful order of retreat.

CHAPTER XII

As succeeding battle reports from the Texas front poured into Washington over the radio, Captain Benning was assailed by growing restlessness at his own inaction in the face of momentous events. Throughout the day he had lolled about the cafes along Connecticut Avenue looking for the Van Hassek staff spies, Fincke and Boggio. Evening found him holding the bag.

That red welter of the 11th Infantry's retreat from Laredo had been reported in meager but graphic detail along with the heroic stand of the 5th and 12th Cavalry Regiments. Captain Boll's achievement in piloting his men through the storm of Van Hassek's air attacks had stirred the country.

Benning and Boll had been classmates at the Military Academy, had gone to the 11th Infantry together as

the enemy tanks rolling in.

had done the same thing by making a stand, the next move now was up to Van Hassek.

At the division command post, General Mole had slept through the morning preparation fire. Only by vigorously shaking him had his aide been able to rouse him out of his sleep. Dosing himself with strong coffee, Mole coolly watched the development of attack. The Van Hassek strategy had a right to suppose that the Second would hold lightly and run off to successive delaying positions.

Anxiously, Mole and his staff scanned information as it came in over the field wires and from observation planes. Van Hassek's tortuous columns still were moving up from Laredo. But no fresh movement of reserves was located in the immediate American front. Both the Brownsville and Eagle Pass columns were several hours' travel from striking range of either flank.

Casualty reports came in, roughly computed, by noon. One hundred and seven officers, most lieutenants. Nineteen hundred men. A fifth of his command gone, many of them officers and men with whom he had served through long years of peace.

But discipline held up, and a stern, stubborn fighting spirit pervaded the ranks. That word came from the commanders of infantry who had taken the brunt of the losses, it came from the artillery regiments which were still being pounded by long-range artillery.

Against odds of men and weapons there remained the valor of a manpower that could be conquered only in death, or lawful order of retreat.

CHAPTER XII

As succeeding battle reports from the Texas front poured into Washington over the radio, Captain Benning was assailed by growing restlessness at his own inaction in the face of momentous events. Throughout the day he had lolled about the cafes along Connecticut Avenue looking for the Van Hassek staff spies, Fincke and Boggio. Evening found him holding the bag.

That red welter of the 11th Infantry's retreat from Laredo had been reported in meager but graphic detail along with the heroic stand of the 5th and 12th Cavalry Regiments. Captain Boll's achievement in piloting his men through the storm of Van Hassek's air attacks had stirred the country.

Benning and Boll had been classmates at the Military Academy, had gone to the 11th Infantry together as

the enemy tanks rolling in.

had done the same thing by making a stand, the next move now was up to Van Hassek.

At the division command post, General Mole had slept through the morning preparation fire. Only by vigorously shaking him had his aide been able to rouse him out of his sleep. Dosing himself with strong coffee, Mole coolly watched the development of attack. The Van Hassek strategy had a right to suppose that the Second would hold lightly and run off to successive delaying positions.

Anxiously, Mole and his staff scanned information as it came in over the field wires and from observation planes. Van Hassek's tortuous columns still were moving up from Laredo. But no fresh movement of reserves was located in the immediate American front. Both the Brownsville and Eagle Pass columns were several hours' travel from striking range of either flank.

Casualty reports came in, roughly computed, by noon. One hundred and seven officers, most lieutenants. Nineteen hundred men. A fifth of his command gone, many of them officers and men with whom he had served through long years of peace.

But discipline held up, and a stern, stubborn fighting spirit pervaded the ranks. That word came from the commanders of infantry who had taken the brunt of the losses, it came from the artillery regiments which were still being pounded by long-range artillery.

Against odds of men and weapons there remained the valor of a manpower that could be conquered only in death, or lawful order of retreat.

CHAPTER XII

As succeeding battle reports from the Texas front poured into Washington over the radio, Captain Benning was assailed by growing restlessness at his own inaction in the face of momentous events. Throughout the day he had lolled about the cafes along Connecticut Avenue looking for the Van Hassek staff spies, Fincke and Boggio. Evening found him holding the bag.

That red welter of the 11th Infantry's retreat from Laredo had been reported in meager but graphic detail along with the heroic stand of the 5th and 12th Cavalry Regiments. Captain Boll's achievement in piloting his men through the storm of Van Hassek's air attacks had stirred the country.

Benning and Boll had been classmates at the Military Academy, had gone to the 11th Infantry together as

the enemy tanks rolling in.

had done the same thing by making a stand, the next move now was up to Van Hassek.

At the division command post, General Mole had slept through the morning preparation fire. Only by vigorously shaking him had his aide been able to rouse him out of his sleep. Dosing himself with strong coffee, Mole coolly watched the development of attack. The Van Hassek strategy had a right to suppose that the Second would hold lightly and run off to successive delaying positions.

Anxiously, Mole and his staff scanned information as it came in over the field wires and from observation planes. Van Hassek's tortuous columns still were moving up from Laredo. But no fresh movement of reserves was located in the immediate American front. Both the Brownsville and Eagle Pass columns were several hours' travel from striking range of either flank.

Casualty reports came in, roughly computed, by noon. One hundred and seven officers, most lieutenants. Nineteen hundred men. A fifth of his command gone, many of them officers and men with whom he had served through long years of peace.

But discipline held up, and a stern, stubborn fighting spirit pervaded the ranks. That word came from the commanders of infantry who had taken the brunt of the losses, it came from the artillery regiments which were still being pounded by long-range artillery.

Against odds of men and weapons there remained the valor of a manpower that could be conquered only in death, or lawful order of retreat.

CHAPTER XII

As succeeding battle reports from the Texas front poured into Washington over the radio, Captain Benning was assailed by growing restlessness at his own inaction in the face of momentous events. Throughout the day he had lolled about the cafes along Connecticut Avenue looking for the Van Hassek staff spies, Fincke and Boggio. Evening found him holding the bag.

That red welter of the 11th Infantry's retreat from Laredo had been reported in meager but graphic detail along with the heroic stand of the 5th and 12th Cavalry Regiments. Captain Boll's achievement in piloting his men through the storm of Van Hassek's air attacks had stirred the country.

Benning and Boll had been classmates at the Military Academy, had gone to the 11th Infantry together as

the enemy tanks rolling in.

had done the same thing by making a stand, the next move now was up to Van Hassek.

At the division command post, General Mole had slept through the morning preparation fire. Only by vigorously shaking him had his aide been able to rouse him out of his sleep. Dosing himself with strong coffee, Mole coolly watched the development of attack. The Van Hassek strategy had a right to suppose that the Second would hold lightly and run off to successive delaying positions.

Anxiously, Mole and his staff scanned information as it came in over the field wires and from observation planes. Van Hassek's tortuous columns still were moving up from Laredo. But no fresh movement of reserves was located in the immediate American front. Both the Brownsville and Eagle Pass columns were several hours' travel from striking range of either flank.

Casualty reports came in, roughly computed, by noon. One hundred and seven officers, most lieutenants. Nineteen hundred men. A fifth of his command gone, many of them officers and men with whom he had served through long years of peace.

But discipline held up, and a stern, stubborn fighting spirit pervaded the ranks. That word came from the commanders of infantry who had taken the brunt of the losses, it came from the artillery regiments which were still being pounded by long-range artillery.

Against odds of men and weapons there remained the valor of a manpower that could be conquered only in death, or lawful order of retreat.

CHAPTER XII

As succeeding battle reports from the Texas front poured into Washington over the radio, Captain Benning was assailed by growing restlessness at his own inaction in the face of momentous events. Throughout the day he had lolled about the cafes along Connecticut Avenue looking for the Van Hassek staff spies, Fincke and Boggio. Evening found him holding the bag.

That red welter of the 11th Infantry's retreat from Laredo had been reported in meager but graphic detail along with the heroic stand of the 5th and 12th Cavalry Regiments. Captain Boll's achievement in piloting his men through the storm of Van Hassek's air attacks had stirred the country.

Benning and Boll had been classmates at the Military Academy, had gone to the 11th Infantry together as