

ATTACK ON AMERICA

BY GENERAL ARED WHITE
W. N. U. Release

THE STORY SO FAR: More than 200,000 foreign troops secretly assembled in Mexico by Van Hasek suddenly invaded the United States. Vastly superior in numbers and equipped with the American forces which opposed them, Van Hasek's troops pushed relentlessly forward. The U. S. army was not prepared for this sudden attack, and could only retreat in the face of overwhelming force. Posing as a fellow agent, U. S. Intelligence Officer Benning accompanied foreign spies bound for the Panama Canal. He learned that their ship carried dynamite which would be exploded when they entered the canal, but was

CHAPTER XVII—Continued
Benning gave a groan and, as a brooding silence settled back over the night, hurried on. He knew now that the worst must have happened.

On reaching Mindi, Benning got a speeder to take him to Cristobal. He got a military car to spin him to Col. Cove. Reports were coming in to Naval Intelligence. The damage at Gatun Locks was undetermined. Miraflores Locks had been dynamited by an American steamer that had put in past Balboa from San Francisco. Dynamite had cascaded huge slides of rock and earth into Culebra Cut in the region of Gold Hill. Alhajuela Dam, at the storage lake on the upper Chagres, had been crippled.

When he reached Panama Department headquarters, Benning found Cove feverishly taking reports from half a dozen assistants whose ears were glued to telephones.

"What's the latest information on damage to the Canal, Colonel?" Benning inquired.

Cove tragically shook his head. "Pretty bad from all reports. My men make the guess it will take months to make any kind of repairs."

Benning asked, "May I get a code message through to Washington tonight, Colonel?"

"The wires are swamped," Cove said dubiously. "The War Department is pounding the C.G. for all details of the attack on the Canal. I'll sandwich your dispatch in at the very first chance."

Benning borrowed the Department code book and prepared a brief report of eventualities for Colonel Flagwill. Reports from over the Canal Zone kept pouring in. Suspects were being arrested in growing numbers.

It was after 3 A. M. before Cove was able to put Benning's report on the wires. He offered Benning a cot in a near-by office and sent Grimes to the barracks. Benning fretted himself to sleep at dawn and woke to a hot sun. Cove was standing over him, tense with excitement.

"Did any of our fleet get through from the Pacific yet?" Benning inquired.

The question brought an agonized grimace from the G-2 chief.

"Part of our Pacific fleet was due through the Canal next week, Benning. Now check this over for yourself. In the Atlantic, four old battleships, a few destroyer divisions, and some submarines. Proud names those battleships—New York—Arkansas—Texas—Wyoming. But they've seen their day for fighting purposes, and it'll take weeks to get some squadrons of our Pacific fleet around the Horn."

"While the matter is in my mind," Benning changed the subject, "I want to know if you'll enlist for me a man named Grimes. He was turned down in New York for flat feet, but otherwise he's really a fine physical specimen. I'm under obligations to him, since there wouldn't be a finger-nail left of me except for Grimes."

"Glad to fix him up," Cove agreed promptly.

The morning summary came in over the wires from the United States. President Tannard was closeted with Army and Navy chiefs. The country was in a fresh panic over destruction of the Canal. Eastern centers of population were in an uproar, demanding naval protection for the Atlantic coast. War census of males of military age was instituted. First draft of a million men was being planned. Volunteer enlistments, after passing the 400,000 mark, had slowed down. Another thirty days needed to fill volunteer quota of 500,000.

On the Texas front the Third Army had finally halted Van Hasek's advance after five days of desperate fighting in which American casualties were estimated at twelve thousand men.

An aide-de-camp came into the room and spoke to Cove. Cove jumped to his feet and went over to Benning.

"The commanding general wishes you to report to him immediately," he said.

Benning followed the aide to a spacious office at one end of which a grave, weary little man sat over a litter of reports and complications. As the aide announced Benning, the general looked sharply up and delivered himself in a crisp, official voice.

"I have instructions from the War Department, Major, to drop you into Mexico City. Colonel Flagwill wishes you to find out what you can about the enemy's Guaymas troops and the trouble in the Orient. You are to report to Flagwill as quickly as possible. Arrangements will be made for a plane to pick you up at a point designated by you in the vicinity of Mexico City. Your plane will take off from Albright Field in one hour. That is all."

CHAPTER XVIII

Behind him, as Benning took off from the Guatemala terminal airport on the last leg of his flight into

INSTALLMENT SEVENTEEN

parade for this sudden attack, and could only retreat in the face of overwhelming force. Posing as a fellow agent, U. S. Intelligence Officer Benning accompanied foreign spies bound for the Panama Canal. He learned that their ship carried dynamite which would be exploded when they entered the canal, but was

Mexico City, reposed the camouflaged observation plane that was to pick him up on the second night thereafter at a secret rendezvous south of Chapultepec. These final plans, as he checked them over, seemed coldly academic in detail, like the laying of a field gun for indirect fire upon an unseen human target. But Benning did not minimize the dangerous complications that lay ahead.

Midnight brought the lights of Mexico City into view. From the observer's cockpit Benning caught the toss of the pilot's arm in signal and bon voyage. His heart was pumping as he lifted himself erect and climbed out of the cockpit.

Into the starlit void he plunged, falling in a backward arc and tolling off three seconds before his hand tore at the ripcord handle of his



"It was Bromlitz."

parachute. Shortly the straps gripped at armpits and legs to tell him the parachute had fed safely out. Above the rush of air he could hear the plane roaring on its way. There came to him a moment's envy of the pilot who would flash back along the friendly route to a safe landing at Albright Field.

The moon had not yet risen, but the capital's masses were outlined in myriad light clusters, which told Benning the American air service was still too busy at home to strike at Mexico City. Through the starlight he presently caught the black earth toward which he was rushing.

He freed himself of straps, and rolled and secreted the silken chute. Half an hour's brisk walk brought him to the dark little Calle del Nogal, which told him he had landed to the north of Chapultepec. He found a sleepy cabman to drive him direct to Jesus Maria.

Benning's plan was set as he reached the street on which he had lived with Mile. Ducos.

There was a light in the little Ducos apartment when he reached there shortly after one o'clock. He walked resolutely up to the door and knocked. The immovable law of averages, he argued hopefully as he waited, dictated an occasional bit of luck in his operations.

In a moment the door opened and Benning saw the French girl's diminutive figure framed against the lighted room. But at recognizing Benning, terror flashed into her eyes and she stepped quickly back.

"But no, senior!" she exclaimed. "No such person as you mentioned lives here."

Before she could close the door, a figure strode up from behind her, a gaunt man with shaggy, unkempt beard and bloodshot, haunted eyes in which there was now the gleam of mingled terror and jealous suspicion.

The man's disheveled aspect and wasted face did not rob Benning of instant recognition. It was Bromlitz, the American renegade and murderer, the man in whose shoes Benning had masqueraded in Mexico.

A snarl told Benning that Bromlitz had recognized him. Benning sprang past the French girl to the attack, reaching Bromlitz before the man from Luxembourg could extricate himself from the shock of surprise. Benning drove his fist against the Bromlitz jaw, but did not floor him. A knife flashed from Bromlitz' belt, Benning dove in and pinned his antagonist's arms to his sides.

Bromlitz shook himself with a frenzied strength. Benning clung through one spasm of resistance after another until he felt that his own endurance could not last much longer. With a carefully co-ordinated

movement he released his hold and caught Bromlitz' knifed hand, twisted it suddenly, and tripped the fellow to the floor.

There was a howl of pain from Bromlitz' throat as the sharp blade crept through his shirt into the flesh of his breast. Benning cast the weight of his body into the lunge. There followed the rasping cry of a mortal wound. Bromlitz' strength relaxed.

Benning stood up. The French operative's face was chalky white, but her blue eyes were cold and unmoved as she observed Bromlitz in the convulsions of his last breath.

"I'm sorry this had to happen here, mademoiselle," Benning told her.

She said with calm indifference: "You've only done me a service, monsieur. Bromlitz has been very difficult of late and I did not dare let him show himself at the palace. Of course, you'll dispose of his body as soon as he is dead."

"Is Bravot now in Mexico City?" Benning interrupted.

"That needn't matter to you. You are leaving Mexico City immediately."

"Of course, as soon as I get the information I came here to get."

"Impossible! I can't play the danger of having you here now. In a few days I hope to be ready to leave for France. Nothing must interfere with my success now."

"I'll make a bargain with you, mademoiselle. I'll leave at once if you can find out when Van Hasek attacks from Guaymas. Also anything you can learn about what is going to happen in the Orient."

Her face lighted up and she gave a gasp of relief. "If that is what you want to know, I can tell you, monsieur. Van Hasek's Guaymas force will move up the Gulf within the present week to attack north with his mechanized and motorized regiments through California. Their objective is to freeze your feet out of its great bases on the Pacific coast."

Benning's brows knotted. "But such an attack doesn't make sense unless Van Hasek is to have prompt reinforcements."

"To be sure, monsieur. But Van Hasek's whole plan is working out right close to pattern. Denied its bases, a heavy part of your Navy will have to sail at once around the Horn to protect your Atlantic coast from the Mediterranean fleet. At the same time with Van Hasek's attack will come the invasion from the Orient, which is already moving east."

Benning gasped, "Do you know those things for fact?"

"I know that Van Hasek expects me in San Francisco within the next few weeks when he is to take supreme command over your Pacific coast. But by then I will be in France—if only I can learn when the attack upon my own country is to launch itself. In a few days I am to meet Van Hasek at San Antonio—in the meantime, I gather what straws I can from his man Boggio."

"Boggio, you say!"

The words drove fiercely from Benning's throat. He felt the bristling of his hair under the surge of feeling aroused by that name, for the instant lost the thread of portentous disclosure that Mile. Ducos made. Promptly he recovered his composure and attempted to cover his show with a smile.

He said, in an easier voice, "So Boggio is here in Mexico City?"

"You should learn, in this business, to conceal your feelings," Mile. Ducos said with a thin smile, and added: "But I can very well understand just how you feel on the subject of Boggio. Boggio has done nothing but boast of the bombing of the White House, ever since—"

"Mademoiselle, I can't leave Mexico until I've seen Boggio. A minute alone with him will be enough—and I'll promise to be very discreet as far as your interests are concerned."

"If your Government doesn't know already what I've just told you," she countered, "you should waste no time on Boggio now."

"I have no possible means of leaving Mexico until tomorrow night," Benning confessed. "My Government and I will be eternally grateful to you if you will add this last little service. I promise the greatest discretion in handling Boggio."

The French girl pondered his proposal, testing its play against the risks to her own obligations. Presently a smile played at the corners of her mouth and a cold glitter shone in her eyes.

"At four o'clock tomorrow afternoon, monsieur," she decided, "Boggio and I will drive together south from Chapultepec on the highway to Tacubaya. Boggio will be at the wheel and we will be alone." She extended her hand and added, "I will say good-bye to you now, monsieur, and bon voyage."
(TO BE CONTINUED)

Assortment of Frills, Jabots to Highlight Summer Fashions

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



FRILLS, frills, frills! The call for frills and jabots and cascades of sheer loveliness as costume adornment resounds throughout all fashiondom this season.

Therefore, if you like to do dainty handwork, meet opportunity at your door. Make your own frills, for, as every woman knows, nothing can add the exquisite touch as well as a bit of fine needlework, whether it be in hand-rolled hems, deft hemstitching or wee hand-run tucks.

It is almost unbelievable what a wondrous assortment of frills can be made from a yard or so of crisp, snowy organdy, exquisitely sheer handkerchief linen or other dainty fabrics.

Take a look at the collection of frilly items here illustrated. By devoting spare moments to the fascinating pastime of handrolling hems, handrunning wee tucks and so on, you can very easily fashion a wardrobe of fashionable frills. Being meticulously handmade, they will launder perfectly.

The spotlight of fashion is on sheer lingerie yokes, either in collar form or sewed into the dress as an actual yoke top. It does not take long to hand-tuck a yoke. Like the one pictured in the circle in the upper left corner, you can edge it with a ruffle of self organdy or lace. You really should have at least one big yoke collar in your collection.

A dramatic collar and cuff set, such as the girl seated is wearing, is almost indispensable when it comes to accenting a navy or black dress. Note the new low-cut "plunging" neckline of the organdy. Cut duplicates, seam the wide frill in between, then turn and press and you

will have no fraying edges. You can either hemstitch the frill or finish with a tiny rolled hem. Make the frill very full so that it will fall in sprightly ripples, as pictured. The same working directions apply to the cuffs. You can launder these collar and cuffs as often as you wish, and they will come out like new.

Simple indeed but very effective is the organdy frill worn demurely about a round snug-fitting neckline, as sketched. Emphasize the frilly effect with ruffling on the sleeves, as illustrated in the picture.

Bolero jackets take on a new look this season when they are collared with a frilled ruff, made of gleaming white organdy that goes rippling down each side of the front opening as the sketch here portrays. Try it! With scraps of the organdy left over, make yourself a scalloped collar with a wide frilled ruffle as suggested in the sketch.

Perhaps the most intriguing news of all is the frilled lingerie cascade that travels from the neckline to the hemline of the now-so-fashionable slim princess frock. The sketch in the group pictures the idea. To get best results, cut the ruffling on circular lines, and, if you finish the edge with a hand-rolled hem you will be delighted with the sheer loveliness of this cascade that falls from a sailor collar of the organdy on down to the very hemline of the dress.

Make a white organdy cascade to baste in the front of your simple basic gown. Duplicate this frill in pastel blue or pink or orchid organdy to wear "on occasion" with your afternoons dress.

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

Glen-Plaid Suit



It's a suit season and no mistake. Plaids, checks and stripes are big news, they're tailored so meticulously they have the look of perfection. Here is a model that is characteristic of the present trend, which exploits quality-kind woolsens styled in the new longer-jacket. Forstman does these Glen-Plaids in soft neutral tones, notably gray or beige with white. The skirt has grace and action because of its pleats. A suggestion of the military theme is achieved in the curved tucks at the shoulder line and in the saucy two-toned beret-type chapeau.

Wear Clothes Which Enhance Your Beauty

So you don't like slit skirts. Well, then, don't wear them. You think purple is a horrible color? All right then, don't wear it. You can't wear sailors? Then don't try. There are lots of women who adore slit skirts, look marvelous in purple and are mad about sailor hats. Leave these women to their choice and you take yours. There are enough good styles to go around, and no one woman need take it upon herself to illustrate all the current fashion trends.

It's up to each woman to select from current—and past—styles those which she likes and which look well on her—and if she wants to delve into the future that's all right, too, provided she conforms with current laws about what constitute clothes.

Nowadays fashions are really flexible. Many long-held taboos have been broken, and women are in the mood to shatter more traditions. We wear open-toed shoes in the winter and wool all the year round. If we like suits we don't confine their use to spring and fall—we wear them all winter under our fur coats. We wear chiffon in January, as well as velvet and lame; we wear sequins and lame in the afternoon instead of reserving them for evening.

Fashion changes with the times. To dress well is not a matter of aping, but of creating.

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America's 'Safety Belt'
Off New York city the Western hemisphere "safety belt" or neutrality zone, established at the inter-American conference in Panama in the fall of 1939, was set at the 60th degree of longitude, or about 750 miles out, says Pathfinder.

In general, however, the zone's width is irregular, varying anywhere from several hundred miles from the mainland at the California coast to about 1,200 miles east of Florida.

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