They Were Expendable

By W. L. White

By W. L. WHITE

Kelly's crippled craft puts in at Cuyo Island, seasick Army men stagger on deck and No. 32 boat comes in. Lieutenant Bulkeley finds General MacArthur good fellow. Little Arthur plays with cook's monkey while No. 41 hides from enemy bombers. All craft at rendezvous.

CHAPTER 14

"At four o'clock in the morning, my engines suddenly stopped," recalled Lieutenant Kelly. "I knew the strainers were clogged with wax and rust, and it would take half an hour to clean them which I explained to the Admiral, who was watching the other three boats disappear over the horizon.

"What time will we get to the rendezvous?

"I made a fast mental calculation. 'About 8:30, sir.'

"Dawn, as we both knew, would come at seven, and with it—if the mainland had seen that island signal fire—Japanese planes, looking for us.

"That's an hour and a half later than I like to be out," said the Admiral. Our plans, of course, called for running only at night, and laying up by day in the Cuyo Island group with a general rendezvous in a harbor of one of the central islands for our start at sunset.

"There are 30 or 40 islands in the Cuyo group, and just before dawn we began to make out the first ones—tiny mounds on the horizon ahead and around us. The flagship had the only detailed chart of them; all I had was a large-sized map of the Philippines, and on this the Cuyos looked like a cluster of some 40-odd flyspecks.

"When the Admiral asked how in the world we—without navigation instruments or chart—expected to make a proper landfall on the particular flyspeck that we all had selected as rendezvous, I explained we had provided for that; I knew its general location, and from Bulkeley's chart I had drawn a pencil sketch of this island. But again he was skeptical.

"It was 8 o'clock into planes as yet! before we saw what we thought might be the right one; as we drew nearer, the Admiral agreed that the hills and cove were exactly like my sketch, but when we entered the cove, it was empty. We circled the island—no sign of the other three boats.

"'My God,' said the Admiral, 'what's happened to the General? We arrive, limping in, late, and the others aren't here! Where can they be?'

"I had an idea where they would be, and I explained. Bulkeley, I was sure, would take no chances with women and a child aboard. Of course he'd seen the Japanese signal fire the night before. Planes might be out spotting us for destroyers, and as soon as dawn broke, Bulkeley undoubtedly had made for the nearest of those other Cuyos—picking one from his chart (we'd never been here before) which was surrounded by reefs and water so shallow that no destroyer could venture within gun range or even within sight. There—he would—wait all day, if not until dusk, at least until he thought the danger of spotting planes was past, before coming to join us here. That was my theory, and I stuck to it because it was the best one we had—the Admiral's was much more pessimistic.

"So at 8:37 we dropped a hook in the cove and I sent two men ashore with semaphore flags to climb the island's single five-hundred-foot hill and stand continuous watch for the other three boats, of course, but particularly for Japs.

"Then we got to work gassing the ship, and it was a job. Drum by drum, we poured that 100 octane gasoline into her tanks, and it took all morning. As soon as we had entered the calm water of the cove, the Army, which had been down in the cabin all night and miserably seasick, began stirring and soon showed definite signs of life—emerging into the sunlight, straightening their uniforms, and even mentioning the subject of breakfast, which wasn't unusual, considering the food that had gone overside during the night.

"We had breakfast aboard, of course, but just now it was out of the question. The ship had to be fueled at once, because no one knew when a dive bomber might chase us out of the cove. But since we feared an explosion from our highly volatile airplane gasoline, all electricity on the ship had to be turned off while we were pouring. As a result, the Army got its breakfast about noon, and then there was time to look around. The island was intensely green—a few hills sloping abruptly into the sea—and our lookouts signaled down from the summit that on the other side lived nine families of natives. These had climbed the hill to gape at the Americans, and told them that the day before they had seen a big ship going south. A warship? They didn't know, but we were uneasy. The water here was deep, and a cruiser could come in fairly close.

"At 5:30, when we figured any spotting planes would have had to head back for home, I was about to pull our lookouts from the hill and get under way when they wigwagged down that they saw a ship—apparently friendly, maybe an MTB. I picked it up with my binoculars and presently made out the 32 boat, which soon tied up alongside us.

"It was this boat, remember, which had been repaired after its explosion. The cook had been blown into Sisiman Cove. During the night its struts started coming loose, so they could use only one or two of their three engines, and they, like us, had lost touch with the other boats in the night. But instead of falling far behind the flagship, they had somehow managed, in the darkness, to get out in front of it.

"In the first gray light of dawn, their stern lookout reported a strange ship gaining on them. Looked like a Jap destroyer. Now an MTB in good condition can outrun any warship afloat. But the 32 boat was hobbling on two engines, so although he was running full throttle, its commander wasn't surprised that the strange craft kept gaining. In order to lighten his boat and pull away, he dumped six hundred gallons of gasoline in drums over the side, but still the enemy was closing on him. There seemed nothing to do now but fight before the destroyer opened with its three-inch guns. They readied two torpedoes and turned dauntlessly for the attack, to discover just in time that the strange pursuing craft was the 41 boat—their own flagship with General MacArthur aboard.

"So here they were loaded down to the water line with seasick and puzzled generals. Just at this point there was a rising roar from seaward, and the 41 boat came around the point, Bulkeley and General MacArthur's party."

"We'd lost sight of you a few hours before dawn," said Bulkeley, "when you stopped to clean your strainers. I went on ahead because I wanted to get as deep as possible into the Cuyo Islands before sunrise.

"In the sky pinkened I headed for the nearest and best—it was one of the prearranged crosses on the map. It wasn't much of an island—only a quarter of a mile wide—but it had plenty of shallow water to keep off Jap destroyers. We hid in the cove and stayed aboard, although we posted one lookout on the islands opposite shore. It was an untouched tropic desert islet right out of a movie travelogue. Palm trees waved lazily over a snowy white beach. The cove had a coral bottom and the water was clear as an emerald. The place was inhabited by one lone dog—a very thin one—although there were four deserted huts, to which people came once a year to collect cocoanuts.

"Lying at anchor, some of the crew picked off a little sleep as we rolled gently in the sunshine. Presently the General came on deck; he was a fine figure in his camel's hair coat and gold hat, frowning a little as he squinted in the sunshine at the water and white sand. Then Mrs. MacArthur and the little boy and his Chinese amah came up to sit in wicker chairs in the sunshine. It was too bad little Arthur couldn't have played on the beach, but I told the General no one should go ashore. Because if dive bombers came over and spotted us, we would have to get the hell out of that cove quick, leaving even the lookout behind, and out into open water where we could dodge and twist. So little Arthur played with General Tojo, a dignified dog who wasn't on our passenger list. He was the cook's monkey (the cook's duties also included supervising the motors and running a machine gun as well as his electric hot plate) and so Tojo more or less had the run of the ship. While Mrs. MacArthur sunned herself, the General got his exercise by pacing our little deck.

"I figured the morning would be the dangerous time for bombers, if they knew we had slipped out, so by 2 o'clock I felt it was safe to get under way, and we threaded down through the little shoal channels between the islands, which would defy a destroyer or cruiser to follow, approaching the last one, which was our general rendezvous. In the distance I could see the other two boats also heading for it, and when we arrived, Kelly in the 34 boat was already there and waiting.

"Then there was the problem of what to do about the 32 boat, which had dumped most of its gas at dawn, and couldn't proceed much farther at high speed.

"This was a rendezvous not only for our four MTB's, but also for General MacArthur's second means of escape—a submarine. It had all been carefully worked out, and the submarine would bob up in this cove tomorrow. Had we been attacked or broken down, the General could have left us here, and continued his trip on down to Australia by submarine.

"Even now the General was considering taking the submarine instead. The afternoon trip had been rough, and I had to admit the General frankly that I thought the night trip would be rougher, because we would head away from the islands into the open sea. Seasickness may be a joke to sailors, but it isn't to landsmen."

"I will never forget how you looked when you pulled up alongside of us in the cove," said Kelly. "There was General MacArthur sitting on a wicker chair, soaking wet; beside him Mrs. MacArthur, also soaking wet, but smiling bravely; and then the Chinese amah holding little Arthur MacArthur, both soaking wet and very seasick. You could see the Little Corporal was most unhappy but wouldn't admit it, and his jaw was set—just at the exact angle of his father's.

Next Chapter: Through an angry sea.

WISHING WELL

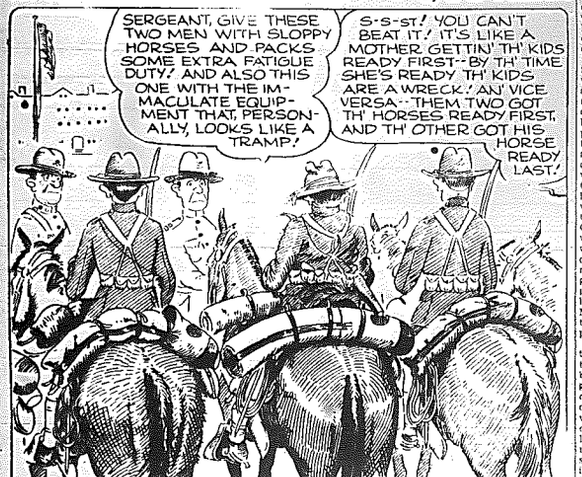
Registered U. S. Patent Office.

2	7	5	3	8	4	6	2	7	8	3	7	6
S	Y	S	I	T	B	A	A	O	R	U	F	
5	8	4	6	2	7	3	8	7	4	6	8	2
E	Y	E	U	V	R	R	F	E	A	S	O	E
6	3	7	5	8	4	2	7	6	8	3	5	4
S	I	Y	E	R	U	Y	E	O	A	T	A	T
7	4	2	8	5	3	7	8	4	2	7	6	3
S	Y	O	V	D	A	I	N	R	E	T	M	E B
2	5	3	7	4	2	6	5	3	8	4	7	6
R	O	L	P	E	M	R	C	E	I	E	T	R M
8	4	2	6	5	3	8	4	7	6	2	8	3
W	U	O	O	T	L	J	R	O	N	N	O	I
5	2	8	3	6	4	7	6	2	3	5	4	7 7
O	E	E	E	B	N	V	Y	Y	S	R	S	E

HERE is a pleasant little game that will give you a message every day. It is a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is six or more, subtract four. If the number is less than six, add three. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner of the rectangle and check every one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



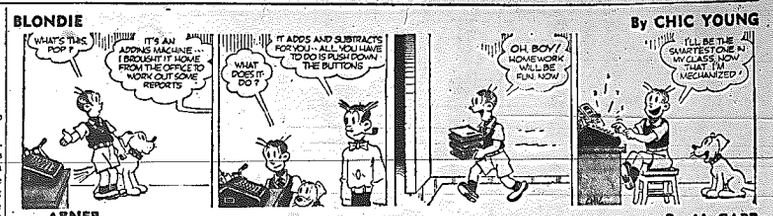
OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE

Today's News Today
Why Wait 'Til Tomorrow?
The Charlotte News

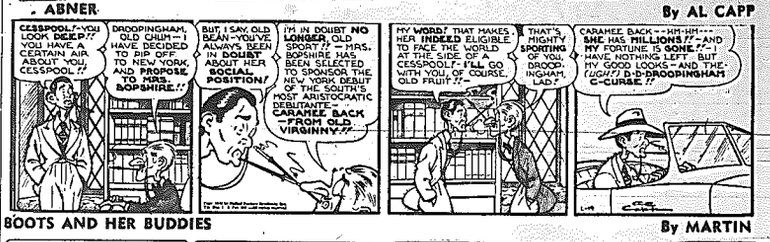
BLONDIE

By CHIC YOUNG



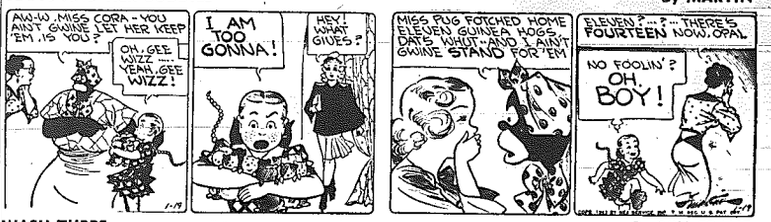
ABNER

By AL CAPP



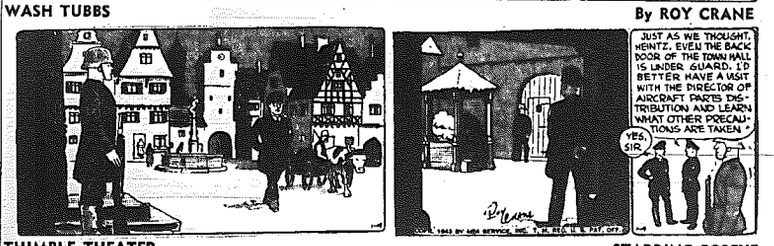
BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

By MARTIN



WASH TUBBS

By ROY CRANE



THIMBLE THEATER

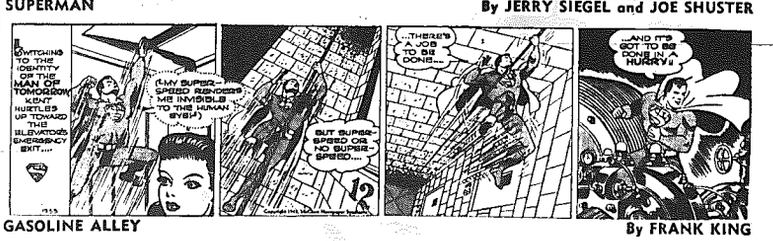
STARRING POPEYE

RED RYDER

By FRED HARMAN

SUPERMAN

By JERRY SIEGEL and JOE SHUSTER



GASOLINE ALLEY

By FRANK KING

TERRY AND THE PIRATES

By MILTON CANIFF