



The lieutenant hated them. It would have been pleasant to yell and scare them stiff

AT NEW ORLEANS a man whose passport said that he was Arthur H. Field got off the plane from Mexico City, went through the customs, and, after wiring for a reservation to Detroit, took the seat he had reserved in the St. Louis plane. At St. Louis, during the wait between planes, he heard the loud-speaker calling his name. He turned and an attendant said, "Mr. Field? Long-distance call, sir." He followed the attendant to a small office. When he closed the door, two men who had been standing behind it placed themselves on either side of him. One of them said, "It won't be necessary for you to go to Detroit."

And in New York, at a bar on lower Tenth Avenue, an oiler from a Portuguese freighter that had docked a few hours before sipped his beer and watched the clock. It was exactly nine o'clock when a stevedore opened conversation with him, and they had finished a beer together when the oiler wiped his lips with a green silk handkerchief. The stevedore said, "Looks like that might have come from Polly's in Caracas." He took the handkerchief and idly loosened a knot that had been tied in one corner of it. They decided to go to another bar.

The oiler produced a ten-dollar bill but the stevedore pushed it aside and slid some change across the bar. On the sidewalk, he said, "Bills like that are hot. Gold certificates—called in years ago. If you got any more, take 'em to a bank. Say you got them in South America—they still turn up there."

They went down a side street past dark warehouses. The oiler reached under his blouse, brought out a long manila envelope and handed it to the

stevedore. At the next corner they separated.

And in eastern Ontario dusk found a freight train laboring through hilly country. Lights went on in two ancient passenger coaches just ahead of the caboose, and a Canadian sergeant of infantry watched two privates distribute beef sandwiches and paper cups of coffee to the German prisoners of war who filled them. The prisoners had been quiet for

Advance Agent

By John August

ILLUSTRATED BY RONALD McLEOD

Beginning a powerful and vivid novel of our troubled times—a story of secret war against the stealthy invasion of America's frontiers

an hour, but supper made them cheerful and they began to sing again. The sergeant stood in the door of the second car, watching them distastefully. He didn't like the prisoners, didn't like singing, didn't like the train, didn't like this job. Well, by six tomorrow morning they would reach the concentration camp in the North Woods where he was to deliver them, and he wouldn't have to hear any more singing. Maybe he could get a couple of hours in Montreal, coming back.

The Jerries had sung "*Ach du lieber Augustin*" some fifty times this afternoon. Now they were singing "*Krambambuli*," which the sergeant didn't like any better. He had an idea that the blasted flying lieutenant halfway down the car knew that it annoyed him. But the flying lieutenant was asleep. The rest of them sang hoarsely, pounding the rhythm with their feet, "*Trink' ich mein Glas Krambambuli*—" When his own foot began to pound, the sergeant went into the other car.

The small man in prison work clothes beside the flying lieutenant muttered under cover of the song, "*Der schwein-hund Sergeant ist fort*."

The lieutenant opened his eyes and joined in, "*Kram-bim-bam-bambuli, Krambambuli!*" prodding the two in the

Connie doubled her tanned fists. "Gail, it's all wrong," she said. "He isn't up to you—you mustn't—it's a mistake you must not make"

opposite seat to make them sing also. They looked scared. The sentinel at the far end of the car was yawning—he couldn't see the nearer one, but neither could be as tired as the lieutenant. The chorus began again, "*Krambambuli, das ist der Tietel, Des Trankes der sich bei uns bewahrt . . .*" The lieutenant said softly but commandingly, "*Nun, wenn die beiden uns nicht ansehen.*" He had instructed the little man to watch one sentinel and the big man opposite to watch the other, and all of them were scared—they assumed they would be blamed and punished. "*Achtung!*" he muttered warningly. The sentinel he could see yawned and turned to gaze into the darkness outside the car. The lieutenant tensed his leg muscles.

"*Jetzt,*" the little man grunted. The lieutenant started to stand up but immediately lolled back, singing, for the big man said, a little loudly, "*Nein, ein Moment,*" and his seat mate said, "*Augenblick.*" The lieutenant saw dark woods sliding by as the train slowed to a grade, the chorus was roaring "*Krambambuli!*" and the little man's "*Also Jetzt*" was almost a wail, and the two others said, "*Gut,*" together.

The lieutenant stood up. He threw the window up, managed to get one leg through it, seesawed desperately, wriggled through and hung by his hands for a long moment while the car swayed and the wind sang in his ears, shoved hard, twisting away, and dropped into the dark.

Beyond the ditch, woods sloped upward and he ran toward them—heavily, for his head spun, his knees were crippled, and his left wrist was a fiery pain. He clung to a tree, panting, and watched the lighted cars swing out of sight around a curve. They hadn't stopped yet! He found the North Star, took a bearing on the crest of a hill, and started southward through the woods. His knees were usable.

He thought it must be about half past nine when he came up a tarred road toward a cluster of lights which a road sign told him meant a town called Glen Nevis. He took to the woods again, circled to the railroad and walked warily up the track, his senses taut as a bent spring. He dodged behind a section house, heard two men inside it speaking French, wondered with swift dismay if this could be Quebec after all, assured himself that it must be Ontario. To avoid an electric light he went up an alley behind some buildings.

Suddenly a fire whistle wailed near by and he dived into some weeds back of a garage. But it was really a fire, for, lying there, he heard automobiles drive up, a series of shouted orders, finally a truck rumbling down the road with its siren going. Someone at the front of the garage said, "One-one, that's down at the four corners." The weeds made as good a place as any to do some necessary thinking in, and he had had this much luck, that his knees were not sprained nor his wrist broken. A clock struck ten, the big front door of the garage rolled down, and the light went out. Someone went whistling down the road, and in another minute the lieutenant had the rear window open and was inside the garage.

FIVE minutes later he was out again. He was wearing a mechanic's brown grease suit, his cheeks and hands were daubed with oil, his uniform was rolled up under his arm, and he had three dollars and fifty cents in Canadian money and a road map. He had won the first round!

He thrust the uniform into an empty freight car at the crossing and walked up the single street of Glen Nevis. A milk truck lumbered by and he hailed it but it did not stop. Some men came out of a soda fountain and then were suddenly running toward a lighted corner, where soldiers were getting out of an automobile and two Royal Canadian policemen were talking to them. The lieutenant kept on walking toward them and heard excited questions and confused answers. A sergeant ordered the soldiers back into the automobile and it went east, up the road. The policemen mounted their motorcycles and took off down the southern fork.

"What's up, Mac?" a latecomer asked a man who was turning away.

"They think maybe a Jerry went through town. A prisoner. They were taking him to camp and he got out a window."

They glanced without curiosity at the lieutenant, who said, "He won't get very far," and went on.

A bus labeled "Gordon" was parked at the curb, ready for its last trip. He took a seat, two other passengers got in, and it lumbered off. Almost at once the driver was shaking him awake, saying that this was Gordon, the end of the trip, and Gordon could not be far from Glen Nevis, for the fare was only twenty cents. It was a small place and had been shut up for the night. A sign said "Rooms" at a dingy second floor, but all rooming (Continued on page 29)

Long Voyage to War

By Frank Gervasi

ILLUSTRATED BY HARDIE GRAMATKY

If you want to get from England to Egypt today you go around the Cape of Good Hope. From Cape Town, Frank Gervasi cables this vivid story of the first leg of the trip—through mine fields and (you hope) past submarines. It's also the story of Britannia's fight to rule the waves

OUR ship was an old hooker with a scrofulous black hull and bluntly utilitarian superstructure, daubed brown. Her bridge sagged and she looked her thirty sea-weary years. She was headed for the scrap pile when the war came and she, with hundreds like her, was mobilized for the Battle of the Atlantic. I asked the first mate what she'd do in the way of speed. He said she'd average nine knots. He smiled. He knew what I was thinking. The kind of long-range German submarines that lay between us and Cape Town could do fifteen knots on the surface and nine submerged. That's fast enough to catch convoy stragglers or lone oldsters that run Capeward and beyond to Australia and New Zealand with goods from the mills of Manchester for Brisbane's shops and Auckland's stores or with tools of war for fronts in the Middle East.

"But don't worry," the officer said, flicking imaginary dust from his lapel. "We've an extra quarter knot up our sleeve."

That was his way of saying only luck and seamanship would see us through without the protection that speed would give us. The extra quarter knot was as much good as an extra mile an hour would be to an airplane when fifty were needed.

"This ship," he said, "was built in 1911. She'd have been junked if only the numskulls in the government had listened to Churchill—"

If they had, there wouldn't be the tragic Battle of the Atlantic—a battle that must be won before any other, for it's that particular struggle that will decide whether the guns, tanks and airplanes from democracy's arsenal will reach the hands of the soldiers at the battle fronts. It's a battle for the maintenance of the transport lanes, without which production would be futile. Seven or eight years ago Churchill pleaded for the construction of fast cruisers and destroyers to sweep the seas of enemy submarines and raiders in wartime. But they didn't listen and this is what has happened.

Lacking warships, the British converted their newer merchant ships into armed vessels mounting six-inch guns



Now we were on our own, and the crew manned the four-incher

and carrying depth charges and anti-aircraft guns. They've done their duty competently. But unarmored hulls, which are as effective as cigar-box wood against the enemy's shells, torpedoes and bombs, make them no match for the enemy's warships. A baker's dozen have gone down since war began. Some have died fighting like the Rawalpindi and Jervis Bay, but many of them have been ambushed and killed before they could aim their guns.

Most of these armed merchantmen are modern ships of ten thousand to seventeen thousand tons built since 1925. They were designed for the Mediterranean service to India via Gibraltar and Suez, or the Cape run to Australia and New Zealand, carrying freight and passengers on Royal Mail schedules calling for speeds up to seventeen knots with as much as five knots reserve. They're great ships, such ships as only England seems able to build. These are vessels that should be delivering

Britain's goods at high speed and instead they're carrying a large share of the burden of fighting because a few lack-vision men refused to listen to a wise old seaman named Churchill.

The burden of the supremely important job of transports has fallen upon the slow old three- to five-thousand tonners that plow the seas laboriously in convoys, fall behind in heavy weather and are sniped by submarines.

But Britain Delivers the Goods

Most of the 4,000,000 tons of shipping that Britain has lost since the outbreak of hostilities consist of ships too slow to keep up with their escorts. Great vessels like the Empress of Britain and the Lancastria have gone down, too, but they're the exception rather than the rule. Most of the dead soldiers in the Battle of the Atlantic were ships such as ours.

Her name does not matter and, more-

All the passengers were ordered to boat stations for lifeboat drill. They gave us life preservers. I looked skeptical, and the boat mate said, "They blinkin' well ain't much good"

over, to print it would be to betray a friend to the enemy. It's just as well the Germans should not know what steamer ran the gantlet 6,000 miles to the Cape. They might lay for her on the way back. Anyhow, she might have been any old tramp as she lay glued to the dockside by a sulphurous fog in Liverpool harbor while coal thundered into her bunkers and cargo came over-side.

Her deck machinery moved with noisy senility. Hooks pivoted rheumatically on the Samson posts. Cones of steam spat into the Mersey mist from leaky gaskets on the winches. Blocks complained with rust.

On the packing cases, drums and barrels that plunged into the hatches in rope-net slings were visibly stenciled the words: "Britain Delivers the Goods." I leaned over the forward rail of the boat deck, watching the organized confusion of loading and wondering what a Broadway bookie would lay we would deliver the goods. If mines didn't get us and if we missed torpedoes and bombs there'd be raiders and against them we carried a four-incher which poked a futile finger from our poop.

At nightfall, our ports blackened, we moved to midriver and took our place at the head of the convoy. The night before we sailed there was a full moon blurred by the lifting mist. I could barely see the outlines of the taller buildings and the long black shadows of the docks. I heard Liverpool's sirens roll across the Mersey like the distant cries of a woman in labor, rising, falling, growing in volume. From the boat deck, where fat lifeboats were swung outward ready to be released, I saw blue bursts of bombs and heard their complemently

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