

By Sgt. BILL REED
YANK Staff Correspondent

Two GIs tell how B-29s bombed the Imperial capital, beginning a concentrated campaign to soften up the industry of Japan and pave the way for invasion.

A B-29 BASE, SAIPAN — With dozens of other Saipan-based Superfortresses, we visited Tokyo in the first B-29 raid ever made against the Japanese capital and the first strike since Jimmy Doolittle led his carrier-based B-25s there more than 2½ years ago. Our mission, aimed principally at the Nakajima aircraft plant, was the first in what will be a continuing campaign to destroy Japan's industrial production.

The flight of our Superfortress, the *Sureshot*, was SOP from beginning to end. As we rolled past Capt. Clement J. (Doc) Maloney of Los Angeles, Calif., the flight surgeon, and turned into the wind before taking off, he yelled out: "See you tonight." Since he put it that way, we believed him. A half-dozen engineers, some of those who had spent months building the strips, waved as we sped down their runway.

Soon after the take-off, the plane's commander, Maj. Walter F. Todd of Ogden, Utah, yelled a challenge to the flight engineer, 2d Lt. Milan P. Kissinger of Elkhart Lake, Wis. "Kiss," he shouted, "I'll give you a dollar for every gallon over a thousand we land with." "That's pretty safe for you," Kissinger answered, but he broke out his slide rule and charts to try to win the bet.

We hadn't been out an hour before the lead ship signaled *Sureshot* to take over, making us lead ship in the second task force. "We should get a crack at the target before anyone else in our outfit," said Maj. Crocker Snow of Boston, Mass., an operations officer who was subbing as co-pilot for 1st Lt. Calvin B. Miller of El Dorado, Kans., busy on another assignment in the ship.

1st Lt. "Deecee" Decesare of Providence, R. I.,

the navigator, looked like a college student cramming for final exams. His desk was littered with maps, rulers and compasses, and scattered about was a small library of books on flight navigation.

The gunners' compartment during the early part of the trip had none of the activity of the flight deck. Sgt. Howard Vincent of Denver, Colo., and Sgt. Vincent Caponero of White Plains, N. Y., calmly smoked and chewed gum, while Sgt. Lee R. McCurry of Cliffside, N. C., radio specialist, bent studiously over his instruments. To him a B-29 trip was just another 12 or 13 hours spent in a small, windowless room.

After we had traveled at about 500 feet for several hours, Maj. Todd decided it was time to "pressurize" the ship and climb above the clouds. He crawled back to shoot the breeze with crew members and shook hands all around. "I'll be seeing you," he said as he returned to his office. Decesare shot a flare from his Very pistol as a signal for the formation to begin climbing. Orders were passed around to get into flak suits, helmets and oxygen masks. Vincent, fully equipped and wearing a Mae West, looked like a lanky penguin.

Lt. Kissinger gave the "no smoking" signal and began to transfer fuel from one tank to another so the plane would keep perfectly balanced. *Sureshot* vibrated slightly and shell cases rattled to the bottom of the turret as gunners tested their weapons. Leaving his post to crawl down to the

bomb bay, 2d Lt. Roman C. (Pooch) Pucinski of Chicago, Ill., the bombardier, pulled inch-long safety cotterpins from the bombs. "As long as these are in place," he said, "the bombs won't go off. I never remove them until we're pretty sure we'll hit pay dirt. We're sure this morning."

Pilot, bombardier and engineer debated the minimum time necessary to keep the bomb bays open; it was no idle chatter, for open bays slow a plane and make it necessary to use extra gas.

The gunners talked of good-luck charms. Vincent had a picture of his wife Charlotte tucked between the covers of his gunner's check list, and another man exhibited a pair of baby booties. Caponero patted his flak suit: "This is luck enough for me."

While we were still under the clouds, we hit frequent rain squalls, and after each one a rainbow appeared up in front of us. We reached our highest altitude shortly after approaching Japan.

Symmetrical Mount Fujiyama, famed in Japanese folklore, played an important part in the mission: it was our IP (initial point), visible above the clouds long before any other part of the island. Twenty minutes later, Japan itself slid into view, yellowish brown and looking wrinkled and parched from our altitude. The terrain seemed to be mountainous rock, with a few roads and streams furrowing the foothills.

Cpl. Norval G. (Nibs) Oliver of Portland,



to YO

Oreg., the radio operator, had picked up a musical program from a Tokyo station. As we hit Honshu, the program was suddenly interrupted by a series of excited announcements followed by a signal repeated many times.

Just as *Sureshot* turned at Fujiyama, a Jap fighter appeared and flew directly at our nose until it was almost within range of the bombardier's guns, then zigzagged out of the way.

After we passed over Fujiyama and turned right toward Tokyo, the hills gave way to rice paddies and small villages. Ahead of us, the first formation of six Superfortresses reached the target, dropping their bombs just three minutes before we did. Now we were over Tokyo itself with its clustered buildings. The other planes in our formation closed tightly around us as we ap-

proached the Imperial City's factory section. Their bombardiers' eyes were fixed on *Sureshot*; when we dropped our load, the others would, too.

His feet astride braces in his compartment, Lt. Pucinski strained to discover an opening in the clouds below. If it didn't come soon, he would be forced to drop his bombs blindly. Suddenly there was a break, revealing a cluster of buildings in south Tokyo's industrial area.

"Bombs away," Pucinski shouted, and our bomb load whistled toward the target. It took only about 45 seconds for the bombs to reach the ground, but that was long enough for clouds to obscure the view. A minute later, when we could see Tokyo once more, there were three neat columns of smoke and a large fire.

By this time fighters were on our tail. A group

of four tried to climb up to us but we lost them in a cloud. Two pairs of fighters got a little higher but not high enough, and several single planes made feeble, fluttering attempts to intercept us. But except for one that frisked just beyond range of the tail gunner, Pvt. Louis Syniec of Rome, N. Y., none gained enough altitude to meet us at our own level. Nor did they come close enough to make good target practice.

Bursts of flak spouted at us regularly through the feathery, shifting clouds that often concealed the city, but most of the bursts were west of our formation. As we left the city and skirted Tokyo Bay, visibility was perfect and we could clearly see the buildings down below. Not far to our left was the moat-enclosed Imperial Palace and on its right the Yasakuni Shrine, where men who die for the Emperor gain immortality in the eyes of his subjects. But we weren't too interested in the Emperor or his immortal sons; we had dropped our bombs and wanted to get back home.

We made Saipan with 1,400 gallons of gas still in the tanks—enough to win a nice little nest egg for Lt. Kissinger.

Lynn Delivers Her Child

By Cpl. KNOX BURGER
YANK Field Correspondent

SAIPAN—It was early morning and getting light fast. The crew made conversation as we stood around the *Lucky Lynn*, the B-29 that was to take us to Tokyo. Our pilot, Capt. Leonard Cox of Tulsa, Okla., recalled that the Japs had executed airmen for "bombing civilians" after the Doolittle raid on Tokyo in 1942.

"Can't we tell them we're sorry?" asked S/Sgt. Frank Crane, a little plaintively. Crane, a gunner, is from Oshkosh, Wis. He's the one Catholic on the crew and he carries a rosary.

"Better check us out on those beads, Frank," someone said as we climbed into the plane. We had heard so many conflicting reports about Tokyo's strength that no one knew what to expect.

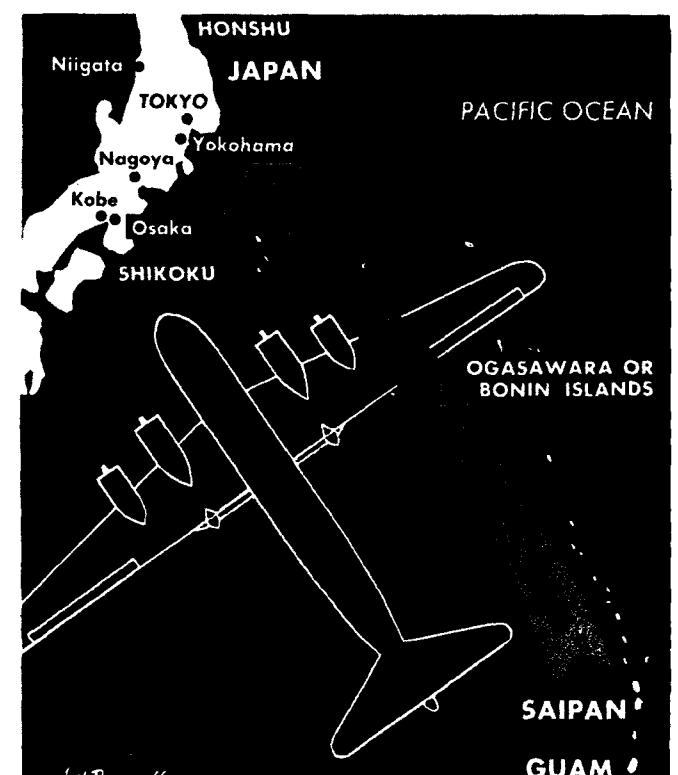
Shortly afterward, we started to taxi out to the runway. Ours was the first squadron to take off. The *Lynn* was carrying a lot of weight and for 10 seconds or so it was hard to tell whether we were off the ground or not.

A gang of engineers just beyond the end of the runway looked up as we went over. I don't know just how far above them we were, but I noticed their knees were bent a little as they waved and they looked ready to dive into a nearby ditch.

Then the land dropped away and we were over coral shoals, flying 50 feet above water. Capt. Cox, who holds the DSC and the DFC for services rendered with the Eighth Air Force in 1942 and 1943, expressed relief at getting airborne.

"Habba habba habba," he said happily to no one in particular. "Chop chop chop chop-chop." It was the only nonsense he permitted himself; for the rest of the flight he was all business.

I crawled back to where the three waist gunners were sitting. Crane was watching the other



ships in the formation. S/Sgt. George Wright of Tyler, Tex., held up "Crime and Punishment." "This is a hell of a thing to be reading on the way to Tokyo," he said. Wright is part Indian and used to be a tankman. Sgt. Larry Beecroft, who is 28 and looks like an Esquire undergraduate, was reading Steinbeck's "Pastures of Heaven." Someone brought a box of food back to the waist. Crane and Beecroft bitched because all the turkey sandwiches had been eaten.

Back in the tail, Sgt. Bill Stovall, a Regular Army GI from San Francisco, Calif., test-fired his guns. His 20-mm jammed, and when he came forward to get a screwdriver I went back to his position. The tail gunner on a B-29 has to be able to keep himself happy or else he'll go nuts. It's like being alone in a small box for maybe 15 hours at a clip. There was a harmonica back there, a girl's picture and a pair of panties.

Time passed. By 1030 hours we had started chain smoking back in the waist. An hour later the captain told us to put on our flak suits. In a few minutes the interphone crackled again. "Navigator to all gunners. We've sighted Japan."

Far ahead, jutting out of the clouds, was a beautiful snow-covered mountain. We recognized it from the pictures on captured postage stamps and currency—Fujiyama. There was an excited interphone exchange as we approached the IP.

"If this stuff gets thicker, we may have to drop the bombs blind."

"Open the cowl flaps." The ship shuddered and slowed down a little.

"Hansen, keep your eyes straight ahead." Lt. Al Hansen of Missouri Valley, Iowa, is the Lynn's bombardier.

"Better not point the guns that way. They'll ice up." We were more than five miles high.

"Boy, that's rugged country down there." And it was. We were passing over a mass of steep, coppery mountains. Rivers and roads wound through the ravines.

"You should be able to see a town underneath us now, Hansen," said the navigator, Lt. Jack Ehrenberg of Passaic, N. J., who had been in England with Capt. Cox.

"Flak at 8 o'clock, low." A cindery, innocent-looking puff, thousands of feet below us.

"Fighter, at 3, low." The Zero looked small.

The target was hazy, but free of clouds as we went in for the run. There were a few flak-bursts, level, but far away at 3 o'clock.

Then, up ahead, we saw two sticks of bombs fall ladder-like from the lead plane, *Dauntless Dottie*, piloted by Maj. Robert K. Morgan, who flew the famous *Memphis Belle* over Europe.

Almost simultaneously, Lt. Hansen's casual Mid-Western voice said: "Bombs away." The Lynn had delivered her child. Lifting a little, she seemed to gain speed. The first planes to bomb Tokyo since Doolittle were on their way home.

Our wing ship, the *Little Gem*, began to edge over closer to us. A line of flak bursts, which had been walking up on her from behind, passed harmlessly to one side. The almost-nude woman painted on her fuselage blushed in the noon sun.

Far below us, two fighters circled for altitude. At that distance the fighters and flak looked as though they were fighting somebody else's war. A few minutes later the Zeros were sitting up there, waiting for the next squadron. As we pulled away, we passed over fighter fields from which tiny planes were taking off.



Special Delivery, one of the first B-29s to reach Saipan. The ground crew relaxes in the shade of the wing.

Then came the well-ordered, drab-looking Tokyo business district. The tail gunner described the columns of smoke rising from the target area. There was a leak on the interphone, and we could hear, very faintly, one voice after another saying, "Bombs away," as the ships behind us went over the target.

The radio operator, Sgt. Mel Griffith of St. Louis, Mo., picked up a message from another ship whose crew could see a B-29 going down. Stovall stopped talking. Interphones were silent.

Then, unaccountably we heard swing music. It sounded very far away and after a while an American announcer's practiced voice came in. It was Thanksgiving back home and the announcer was saying something about giving thanks.

Building the Base

SAIPAN—It was the flyers who took their B-29s over Tokyo, but they could never have done the job without the aviation engineers. Within five months of their D-plus-five landing on Saipan, the engineers transformed the Japanese Aslito airfield into a great base capable of accommodating the heavy Superfortresses.

They filled craters, cleared canefields, ran dozers, moved four million cubic yards of rock and coral, and performed countless other unglamorous jobs. For two weeks they were har-

assed by snipers and air raids. Once they were under bombardment from nearby Tinian.

"That bombardment gave me the worst scare I ever had," said Sgt. James F. Breathers of Sallisaw, Okla., who built airstrips in the Gilberts and Marshalls before he came to Saipan. "The all-clear had just sounded after an air raid, and we were changing shifts at about 2300 hours, with all the lights on the field turned on. Just as I was climbing on my bulldozer to start the night's work, the bombardment began. It didn't take me two seconds to climb down and start digging."

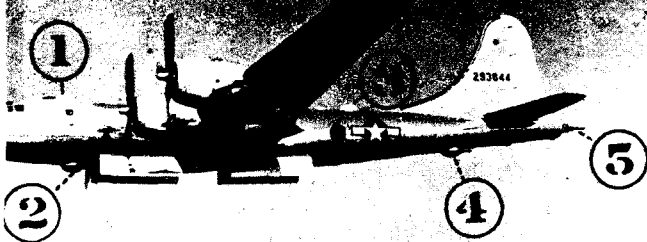
It was also in those early days that 1st Lt. Henry E. McCoy of Sisterville, W. Va., used his jeep to kill a Jap sniper. McCoy spotted two snipers running from a burning American plane but his carbine jammed. He gave chase in his jeep and knocked down one of the Japs, who got up and ran in another direction. McCoy whirled the jeep around, hit the sniper again and killed him.

One night a Jap air raid set fire to thousands of gallons of Jap aviation gasoline captured with the strip. Cpl. Loren I. Low, a Chinese-American soldier from Portland, Oreg., and Sgt. Andrew Hughes of Hartford, Conn., jumped on two 20-ton bulldozers, dropped their blades and buried the flaming drums with earth and coral. Low and Hughes won Silver Stars.

After the first two weeks, the working day was changed from two 12-hour to three 8-hour shifts, "the first time we had such an easy work sched-

THE B-29's SUPER FIREPOWER

The five multiple-gun turrets (shown at right) of the B-29 can be electrically aimed and controlled from one point, as in a warship. Turret No. 1 mounts four .50-caliber MGs. Turret No. 5 mounts two .50-caliber MGs and a 20-mm cannon. The three other turrets are armed with two .50-caliber MGs each.





Aviation engineers ripped out four million cubic yards of coral and rock to build this B-29 base on Saipan.

ule in a combat zone," according to Sgt. William F. Youngblood of Carthage, Tex.

But if the work schedule was easier, the work was harder. "We never had to handle coral much before," said Sgt. Leonard R. Salmons of Crum, W. Va. "We had to put a coral base in by layers between one and three feet deep. It's the only way you can make a base solid enough for B-29s."

Several large coral quarries were developed about five miles from the field, and a "haul road"—a three-lane, black-topped highway connecting them with the base—was laid out in three days.

"Nobody—not even a general—could travel that road unless he was hauling coral," said S/Sgt. John E. Baldore of Connellsville, Pa. "Our trucks were on it night and day. It cut travel time from five hours to 15 minutes."

But the coral raised hell with the equipment. "It ruined our tires faster than we could fix them," said S/Sgt. Frank M. McLean of Medford, Mass., who is in charge of equipment maintenance. "It broke the blades on our dozers and we couldn't get any spare parts."

THE first B-29, piloted by Brig. Gen. Haywood S. Hansell Jr. of San Antonio, Tex., arrived a few days early. It came skimming in across the new airstrip and made a perfect landing.

The next day was a holiday for the engineers,

the first since they'd landed on Saipan. There were fresh vegetables and turkey for chow, and three bottles of beer per man. Tokyo Rose, on the Jap radio, said the Imperial Air Force was waiting until all the B-29s had arrived before wiping them out.

Since the engineers couldn't be spared from the airfield to build living quarters, the service groups and crews had to do the job themselves. The COs of the first two service groups that arrived were Col. Lyman P. Phillips of Dixon, Calif., who looks and acts very much like Wallace Beery, and Col. Horace W. Shelmire of Wayne, Pa., who sports a dapper mustache waxed at the ends and carries a rugged-looking pistol in a shoulder holster.

"For the first month or two you couldn't tell the officers from the men," Col. Phillips said. "If a man knew how to use a hammer or a saw, he went to work and used it. If he didn't, he used a shovel, regardless of what kind of brass he had on his collar. There was too much work to do for anybody to wear a shirt, anyhow."

While service crews built living quarters, more B-29s arrived. They came in groups of fours and fives from San Francisco via the Hawaiian and Marshall Islands to Saipan, and Tokyo Rose talked cheerfully about the promised visit of the Jap air force. She gave the Americans three

weeks to evacuate Saipan and escape destruction.

Several nights after the "deadline," nine Jap planes arrived. Three were shot down by ack-ack and the others were driven away, jettisoning their bombs in the sea. Four men were killed when a flaming plane plunged into their tent, and a few C-54s were strafed. Next day Radio Tokyo reported that the entire garrison force had been annihilated and the airfield left in flames.

Single Jap planes that attempted follow-up raids were shot down or driven away. The ack-ack crews were disappointed. The sergeant in charge of one crew had been waiting for three years to get a shot at the Japs.

"We've been nursing these babies for a long while," he said. "We almost got a crack at Betty the other night. Two alerts sounded, and on the second we were told that one friendly and one unfriendly plane were coming our way. A few minutes later we heard the roar of a plane's motor about 300 yards to the south, but the sky was so cloudy we couldn't see anything at first. Then we saw a plane blinking its lights. We didn't know whether the damn thing was a Jap or not, so we couldn't fire. We found out later that the plane had dropped flares on the beach, but the ack-ack fire from a gun on another part of the island forced him to jettison his load."

As soon as the Superfortresses arrived, the ground crews went to work on them. A favorite expression among the pilots is: "Every time you land a B-29, she needs a maintenance job, so when you get her in the air, keep her there."

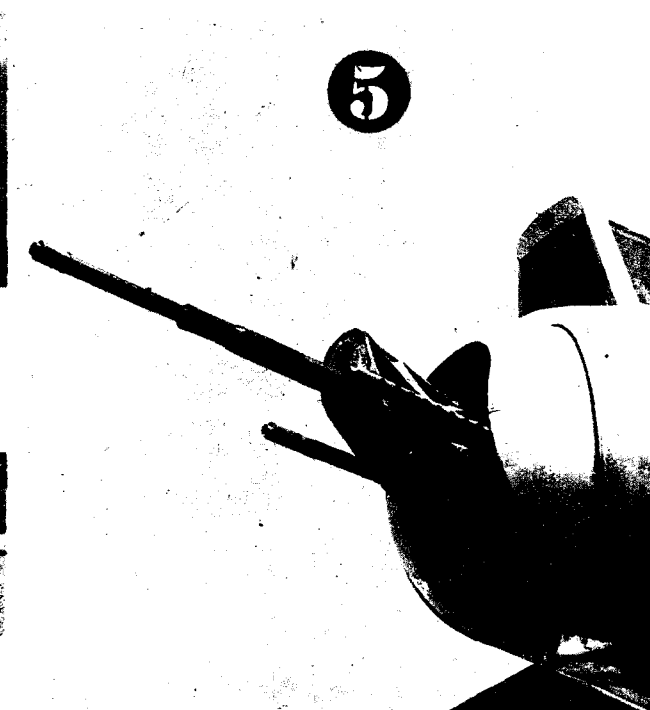
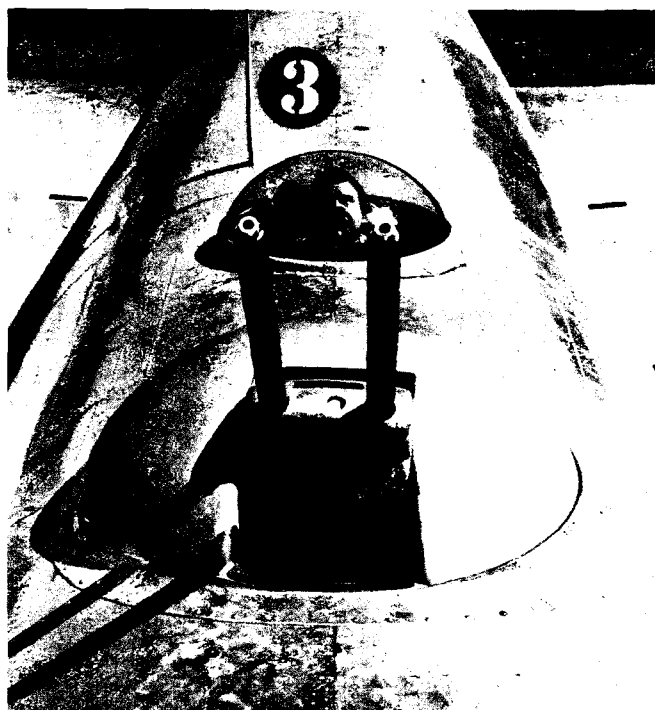
Among the first ground crews to reach Saipan was the one belonging to *Special Delivery*. Boss of the crew is M/Sgt. William Ray of Mebane, N. C. Before Pearl Harbor, Ray flew as a navigator off the coast of Newfoundland in the first American antisubmarine patrol group. Later he was grounded because of his eyes and served as ground-crew chief for a group in Britain and Africa. In December 1943 he returned to the States and later was assigned to the B-29s.

Like most ground-crew chiefs, Ray thinks his ship is the best in the business. "I haven't had any trouble at all with *Special Delivery*," he said. "She'll go anywhere they want to take her and she'll come back, too, as far as her engines are concerned. All *Special Delivery* needs is a little taking-care-of, and my boys'll see that she gets plenty of that."

Soon after the B-29s arrived at Saipan, practice missions were flown over Truk, and then came the first flight over Tokyo itself—not a bombing but a photo reconnaissance. This was an essential preliminary, repeated several times, to the high-altitude precision-bombing campaign planned for the Superfortresses.

When the crew of the *Tokyo Rose*, the B-29 that did the pioneer photo-recon work, was decorated one night, just before the first bombing, S/Sgt. William F. Walthousen of Amsterdam, N. Y., eyed them a little enviously. "They ought to give the engineers credit for letting them take off," he said. Walthousen, in charge of a platoon of construction workers, spoke for all the GIs who had worked on undramatic but important jobs. He spoke for the men who had laid the groundwork on Saipan so that the B-29s could ruin the groundwork in Tokyo.

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Yanks at Home Abroad

War Without Slogans

PACIFIC FLEET HEADQUARTERS—Although the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea was one of America's major naval victories, it failed to produce a slogan such as the immortal "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead" or "Don't give up the ship." The Navy men who took part in this battle were masters of understatement.

Ens. Jess L. Curtright is a good example. His Wildcat fighter was downed by ack-ack as he strafed a Jap cruiser. Curtright made a water landing among the Jap warships and was a one-man target for a Jap destroyer's guns until the enemy force—four battlewagons, eight heavy cruisers and 10 destroyers—passed out of range. Shortly afterward, a two-motored Jap plane made four strafing runs on him. The 22-year-old Tacoma (Wash.) flyer dived "so deep my ears hurt" as bullets hit the water around him.

"Then," Curtright said, "the Jap broke off the encounter."

The Jap force that sailed past Curtright continued south and engaged a group of American escort carriers, never intended to meet capital ships in surface battles. The baby flat-tops launched planes against their attackers and fled, but the speedier and more powerful Jap force pursued them. Great geysers of water erupted around the flat-tops as the Japs closed in for the kill, their 8- and 16-inch guns blazing.

"Won't be long now," drawled a gunner's mate aboard one of the out-gunned carriers. "We're sucking them in to 40-mm range."

Determined aerial attacks by the escort carriers' planes forced the Japs to turn and run.

"Dammit," said a signalman as the Japs steamed north, "they got away from us."

Rear Adm. Thomas L. Sprague, commander of the escort carriers, has a message for Adm. William F. Halsey Jr. next time they meet. Adm. Halsey, who took his warships north to engage a Jap carrier group, lured out the Jap force that attacked Adm. Sprague's baby flat-tops and then found himself too far away to give Sprague immediate support.

"I'm going to tell Halsey," Adm. Sprague said, "that when he picks a fight that way, he ought to come on outside the saloon door and give me a hand."

—Sgt. LARRY McMANUS
YANK Staff Correspondent



Reading clockwise, it's T-5 Hosea Crawford, Pfc. Robert Hines, Cpl. Emmett Barnhart and T-5 Fred Williams giving out with some four-part harmony.

Hebrides Harmony

NEW HEBRIDES—They're corny in one respect. That's because each program is supposed to be a radio broadcast and an old corn can serves as the microphone. But the Harmony Four knows the business of singing Negro spirituals.

The quartet is composed of Cpl. Emmett K. Barnhart of Atlanta, Ga.; T-5s Fred Williams of New York City and Hosea Crawford of Logan, W. Va., and Pfc. Robert Heinz of Alexandria, Va., members of a QM trucking outfit.

They met back at Camp Rucker, Ala., more than

2½ years ago and did a little "barracks singing." They stuck together in Kansas and California, and their singing improved constantly. In their 19 months here, they've been in demand at rec halls and chapels on the island.

Now they've even started writing their own spirituals. Some of them have appropriate titles, considering that they were written on this rainy, forlorn island—titles like "It Keeps on Raining" and "Oh, Lord, Come and See About Me."

"We hope to stick together after the war," said Barnhart, "and make us some money on the radio."

—Cpl. JAMES GOBLE
YANK Staff Correspondent

Front-Line Edisons

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY IN ITALY—When it comes to making something take the place of something else—and in Italy that is often—men of the 34th (Red Ball) Division are experts.

Pfc. Michael Kochis, an infantryman, was faced with the problem of throwing a communications line across a swollen mountain stream. The stream was too wide for Kochis to peg the wire across by handpower. Kochis tied the wire to a rifle grenade, fixed the grenade pin so it would not explode and shot it across the stream.

Cpl. Harold Winkleman of an artillery outfit had to do message-center work in a farmhouse ripped by shellfire. Winkleman could stand the rain dripping through on him only so long. Now he has festooned the message-center ceiling with shelter halves. It looks like an Arabian Nights dive, but it's dry.

Another artilleryman, S/Sgt. Vernon McKnight, used ordinary white paper tags to identify his battalion telephone wires. Then the rains came and the tags fell to pieces. Unflurried, McKnight now tags his wires with metal cut-outs from old coffee tins and the rain does no harm.

Pfc. Alfred Seay worked with his father on a New Mexico ranch and never dreamed of using his harness-stitching abilities in the Army. Now in his spare time he makes watch bands, repairs shoe tops and turns out wallets with a selection of home-made awls and thread waxed with beeswax from Italian hives.

Sleeping bags are always a happy luxury, but Cpl. Alois Schreck has improved the original issue. Schreck's special bag has legs cut in the bottom and slits for arm holes. When he gets a night call to work his telephone switchboard, he does it from his bed.

The prize conversion, however, is that of Pvt. George F. Curth. Curth had no thought of becoming a doctor of any kind, but on the Fifth Army front he found himself acting as a midwife. When an Italian peasant woman was delivered of a baby near the battlefield, Curth helped officiate. His fee, happily contributed by the proud father of a boy, was a slug of seven-year-old whisky.

—YANK Field Correspondent

Chowhound

DULAG, LEYTE, THE PHILIPPINES — Back in the States, the 23 war dogs of the 96th Infantry Division enjoyed a special diet of two pounds of horsemeat and dried meal a day, but in combat they had to share their masters' C rations.

Most of the dogs took what was left—usually the meat and vegetable hash—and got fat and slick on it. But T-5 Andrew E. Chamley of San Bruno, Calif., had a dog with a mind of his own—Blackie, a Labrador retriever. Blackie held out for meat and beans, and, like a henpecked husband, Chamley had to give up his favorite rations to the dog and scrounge elsewhere for himself.

—Sgt. BARRETT MCGURN
YANK Staff Correspondent

Secret Weapon

PANAMA—Smack in the middle of some of the Canal Zone's most vital military installations is the secret weapon protecting the Big Ditch. That weapon is the only four-leaf clover farm in the world. Planes fly so low the leaves almost wave in the prop wash.

After years of experimentation, Charles T. Daniels—a U. S. citizen who has spent 26 years in

the Canal Zone as a telephone engineer for the Government—developed the four-leaf clover plant into a \$25,000-a-year commercial venture.

A dozen Panamanian girls pick, sort and press 75,000 clovers a week. The good-luck charms are shipped to an agent in New York and eventually turn up in calendars, greeting cards and doodads.

Thousands of Allied fighting men carry Panama-grown clovers, and Daniels has received many letters telling about narrow escapes attributed to the lucky leaves. And Daniels says that not one of the ships carrying his four-leaf clover shipments to Britain during the Battle of the Atlantic was sunk on the way over.

—Cpl. RICHARD DOUGLASS
YANK Staff Correspondent



RECOGNITION. When Wac Pvt. Lois Maughans saw a recent YANK, she looked twice at the cover. Sure enough, it was a picture of her husband trying on a coat in France. Here Lois imitates hubby's pose.

Tourist's Heaven

OSTENDE, BELGIUM—Neither bombs nor military occupation deter the natives of this Belgian city from hopeful pursuit of their pre-war livelihood—the tourist business.

Before the Germans reserved the tourist concession for themselves by sweeping down from Holland in 1940, Ostende was Continental terminus for several steamer lines from England. American travelers also favored it, for they could fan out from its gates over Belgium and Holland. Travel-agency buildings of ultra-modern architecture lined the quay.

Today Ostende is open for business again, and its shopkeepers don't care whether customers are dressed in civvies or ODs. Their counters are jammed with tourist gadgets—cheap handkerchiefs, paperweights, paper knives, flimsy vases, statues, synthetic-leather wallets—all stamped "Souvenir of Ostende."

There are no language difficulties to bother the rare front-line GI who may filter back here for some shopping. Before the war, shopkeepers spoke English, Flemish, French and Dutch. They added German during the occupation. Now they are learning American.

Shops have been converted from the days of German traffic to deal with United Nations' tastes. Tiny metal American and British flags sit beside French and Belgian ensigns. Scarves with U. S. Army, RAF and other Allied military insignia clutter the windows. Bookstores feature biographies of Churchill and Roosevelt.

Prices are sky-high, but no coupons are required for out-of-this-world items like silk stockings and other smart feminine luxuries. You can buy perfumes, lipsticks and real leather goods, too, but they are expensive. One woman shopkeeper gave her reason for high prices without batting an eyelash: "Of course everything is high. We have nothing but black-market goods to sell. That is the way it is." And she shrugged her plump shoulders, muscular from making change.

—TOM BERNARD Sp(X)lc
YANK Staff Correspondent