

They Were Expendable

By W. L. White

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Lieutenant Kelly goes into action again. Lieutenant Bulkeley leads crew against luckless Jap landing barges. Narrow escape from enemy shore batteries. Enemy trap almost snared Lt. S. Sprad, but Lieutenant Bulkeley adds another sinking in the near-traffic.

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"As we got closer, sure enough, it was another landing boat, this time apparently the coast of Bataan, and we opened up on her with everything we had from the hundred yards away."

"But their return fire was curiously light and spasmodic. So we fired about ten yards. Their fire had stopped, but their boat was still in the water. Curiously, our bullets would hit the tracers, bounce off and ricochet one hundred feet into the air, but still it kept going. Suddenly a tracer hit the fuel tank—up they went in a blaze, the motor stopped and now the boat was only drifting. But even we were pulled alongside, those Japs, nifty devils, gave her hard rudder and tried to ram us. So Bulkeley tossed in a couple of hand grenades from about twenty feet away, and that took the light out of them. We went alongside, and Bulkeley jumped aboard—into about a foot of water, blood and oil, for she was sinking fast. We'd been firing almost diagonally down through her sides and bottom."

"She was empty except for three Jap—must have discharged her landing party and been headed home. One was dead, two were wounded, and one of these two was a Jap officer."

"Bulkeley had his 45 in his hand when he jumped aboard, and immediately this Jap officer went to his knees and began to call, 'Me surrender!—Me surrender!'"

"He was talking fast," said Bulkeley a little grimly, "and he had his hands stuck up very high and stiff, and that ought to stop the myth about how Japs are too noble ever to surrender. I put a line around his shoulders and we hoisted him aboard the 34 boat."

"Then I began rummaging around in that stodge for papers, brief cases, and knapsacks. I collected, among other things, the muster list of the landing party and their operations plan, before the boat sank beneath me—and pulled me into his boat as the barge sank."

"One of our men was standing guard over the Jap captain with a 45, and the captain was kneeling with his eyes closed, waiting for what he was sure would be the final shot. He would hardly believe it wasn't coming even when we fired the oil out of his eyes and looked at his head wound. When he found we weren't going to shoot him, he got a little surly. The soldier asked for a cigarette, but when I offered the Jap captain one, he shook his head. Proudly he didn't speak English, but when he got him back to base, Intelligence found he spoke plenty, but wouldn't tell them anything."

By J. R. WILLIAMS

"A queer thing had happened to us," said Kelly, "we wouldn't have had any more than ten minutes before we were pumping steel, having every Jap in the water. Now we were sorry for these two, they were so abject, sitting there on the deck—little half-plat—these youngest boys in our crew looked liked full-grown man beside their own eyes and yet they had to take a look. People had been scared of these guys? It seemed impossible! But they could handle two of them in a fight. There they were, avoiding our eyes and yet they had to hand it to them—they'd put up a damned good fight, and our crew were very much impressed by how much a few men can do if they're willing to die. The little private we sat there puffing the cigarette had five holes in him."

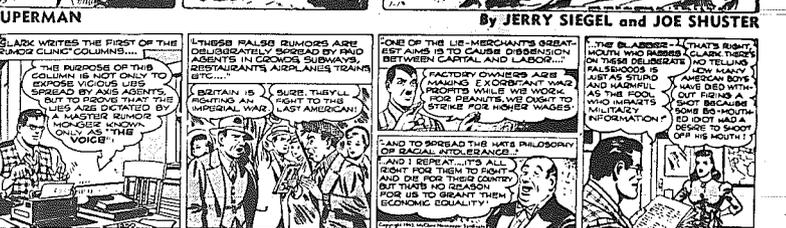
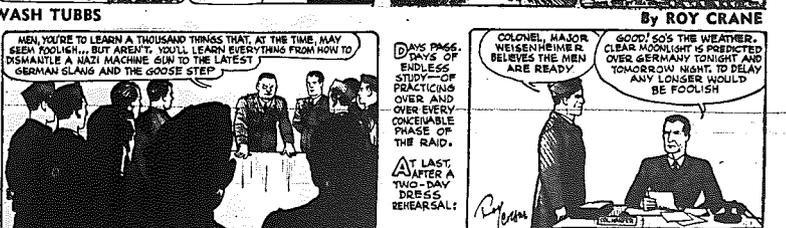
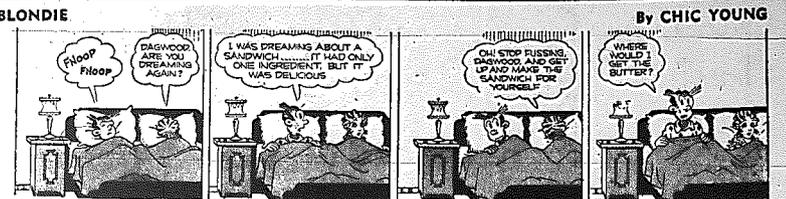
"Quite a few officers were waiting for us on the dock; they'd watched our fight from an observation post on Bataan but couldn't make out from the tracers what was going on or how it came out. We had quite a time leading Chandler and the Japs into the ambulance, because the forecastle was slippery with blood. It soaked into the sneakers we were wearing until we could hardly stand up, and by the time the Japs were loaded, it was all over our hands and pants."

"The ambulance doctor, glancing at them, said he thought the Jap officer would pull through, but there wasn't much chance for the little private puffing the cigarette. Matter of fact, he had a way to the field hospital at Little Baguio."

"You never know when you're going to run into something," said Bulkeley. "A couple of nights later, we were sitting at boat on our patrol off the West Coast of Bataan. When we began to get near to Bataan Point, the intruder to Subic, we cut it down to one engine, to make the best possible showing before 10 o'clock. I spotted a Jap ship which seemed to be lying low, near shore. We called general quarters and began stalking up on her—still using only one engine until we got within about 500 yards. Then we gave everything the gun and roared in—just almost into a trap. Because the Japs had prepared a little welcome for us, and this ship was seemingly the bait to a trap—they had floating in the water which might foul our propellers and leave us a dead target for the rest of the night. It was in time, and now we saw they were trying to unball the trap—because they'd get under way."

"At a thousand yards we fired the first torpedo, and it lit hardly but the water before the Jap ship opened up on us with a pom-pom. The Japs had been playing pom-pom, waiting for us. But what the hell—we wanted to be sure we'd scored the hit from that trap, so we went right on in, ahead of our own torpedo, and let her have another at four hundred yards. Then I gave hard rudder and as we turned ahead of her, we started her deck with the 50's, and every man on board picked up a rifle and began pumping at her—but for the hell of it—and the Japs were dishing it right back, but not for many seconds. Because all of a sudden—Bam! It was our first torpedo striking home, and pieces were wrecking the water all around us. The explosion gave us our first clear look at her. She was—had been until then—a modern, streamlined 6,000-ton auxiliary aircraft carrier. Pretty expensive bait for any trap."

"But the Japs weren't through with us. A battery of about half a dozen 4-inch guns opened up on us from the shore—the flashes, we could see they were pumping it at us fast as they could, and they certainly took our minds off our other troubles. So with big splash all around, we executed that naval maneuver technically known as getting the hell out of there as quickly as possible, avoiding those damned wire nets, and trying to figure out where the Japs would place their anti-aircraft shots, to make sure we wouldn't be under them—giving her every ounce of fire we could shift into those six thousand horses, until we were out of range. I think the Japs were getting tired of us, and risked exposing that ship to rid themselves of a nuisance."



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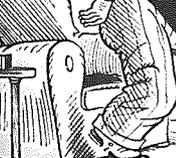
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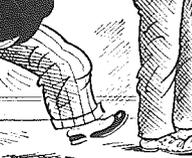
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CHAPTER 8

"That afternoon Bulkeley came over to tell me the story of the engagement. When he was through, Kelly," he said, "we need you."

"Let's get ahead of that doctor," I said, "and you tell him that this time it worked. The hole in my finger was still almost three inches long and about an inch wide, with some of the tendon exposed. But in a month it was healed, except that I can't move my fingertips. I had to promise them faithfully I would show up every other day for treatment, but the point of it was I got out of that place."

"Two days later I took the 34 boat out on my first patrol from Corridor up about Bataan toward Subic. Bay-Bulkeley, who as squadron commander rode all boats on patrol, of course was with me. It was a calm night—and chilly. Sweaters were comfortable over our khakis, although in that time we wore only shorts or trunks. The rest of the men were huddled black as natives, but I was still pale from the hospital."

"Everything was going well. In fact it was monotonous. But when we were about 25 miles up the coast, hell suddenly started popping. Our own batteries were shooting, and Bulkeley explained me that was the main excitement these days—keep from being sunk by