They Were Expendable

By W. L. White

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Lieutenant Kelly Prefers 42-Mile Hike Across Cebu to Chance Refuge in Uplands Camp; Small U. S. Force Could Have Stopped Invaders; Good Job of Scorched Earth. U. S. Planes Arrive at Dawn of Second Day, Three Days Too Late. Everybody Is "Swell" to Americans. Everything Cracking Up.

CHAPTER 22

"The invasion of Cebu was on a penny-ante scale—we could have stopped them if we'd had anything at all," said Lieutenant Kelly. "They had a destroyer, two transports, and a couple of interisland steamers not a hundred feet long. This gang lay off the channel entrance for a while, and presently they loaded about a thousand infantry into the two steamers (five hundred in each), which set out in column through the channel. The leading boat had a little 3-inch gun on its bow, and every now and then it would bang away toward the city.

"I watched them tie up at about ten o'clock in the morning at the only remaining dock and disembark. Meanwhile the three seaplanes (yes, the same ones) were flying over the city, dropping leaflets in English telling the Philippines to surrender, 'We are your friend,' and offering a substantial reward for any American, dead or alive, and a handsome reward for any American officer or his body. Nice boys. Meanwhile two Zero fighters were strafing the automobiles trying to get out on the road.

"Then we got reports on the progress of the street fighting, which we could also hear from the house. The general had apparently pulled out—maybe to fortify Camp X—but the colonel was staying behind with his soldiers to hold out as long as he could. He had less than a thousand Filipino troops, and less than a hundred rounds of ammunition per man. But they would fight until this was expended. At two o'clock they seemed to be holding their own, and when I shoved off at about 2:30 o'clock, half the town was in flames—it was the second city in the islands—and all the warehouses were blown up. The Japs later hollered around about the typical American vandalism, but it was one of the best jobs I saw the army do.

"Meanwhile I had been asking the Army what was so good about Camp X. Well, it was way up in the hills, they said. It would take days of walking over footpaths, because all the roads into it were blown up.

"'But won't the Japs come after you?'

"'Oh, they'd never do that—it's too hard to get to.'

"What about equipment and guns? Well, they had a radio station, food for several months, a few hundred troops and a few rifles. The more I heard about Camp X, the more distrustful I got, and meanwhile a report came in that the Japs had landed at Toledo. I looked at my map — it was the standard map the Army used for operations, put out by the Standard Oil Company with all their filling stations marked—and saw that a good road led directly from Toledo to Camp X. So I asked the Army why the Japs wouldn't use it.

"'Oh, we're going to blow that up, just like the other.'

"But the whole Camp X plan looked busy to me. I was for last-ditch resistance, but here I was, a lone sailor with no trigger finger (the wound had healed but the joint wouldn't bend any more, so it would be no use in this kind of fighting).

"So I started off by myself for the other coast, hoping I could get out to some other island where the Japs hadn't come yet. I joined up with some civilians who were going the same way—they were plantation owners and could speak the dialect. It was a forty-two mile hike over steep trails which crossed five mountain ranges. We carried a few cans of corned beef, and at night would sleep in native huts with pigs and chickens under us and flies over us, and we would get the natives to cook us rice and corn, and buy chickens which they would roast for us. We used banana leaves for plates, and pieces of bark for forks.

"The second day we heard planes at dawn and all scrambled back out of sight in the hut—peering up through the palms. It was three bombers in formation at about fifteen hundred feet.

"Somebody said, pointing, 'Why, look—they're ours!' But I could hardly believe it—even when I saw the stars on their wings, even when I heard the faraway rumble of their bomba dropping on the Japs in Cebu. They were the first American bombers we had seen since before the start of the war. Then we heard some more planes—looked up, and again they were American, a new type with a split tail I'd never seen before but which I learned later were B-25's, and now I realized that here was our big American offensive—the one which we thought had popped out on us the morning after we sunk the cruiser. Here it was at last—three days too late—Because in the meantime Bataan had fallen, and Cebu, and all they could do now was pester the Japs and sink a few empty transports. I was sore as hell.

"Because we little guys—the ones who are expended—never get to see the broad picture of the war, never find out the reasons back of the moves or failure to move. We only see our part—look up through the palm trees at the seamy side of it, so when something poops out, and help doesn't come, and everything goes to hell, we can only hope help didn't come in time for some sensible reason like bad weather conditions in Australia. We hope, but at the time we can't be sure, and we get mad.

"That afternoon we bumped into a bunch of troops; they had come from Camp X. It seemed that at 3 o'clock in the morning a sentry heard a noise, called out 'Halt!' and was answered by Jap tank fire. Somebody hadn't gotten around to blowing up that road from Toledo. So now impregnable Camp X was no more, all American forces on the island were routed, and everything was going to pot.

"Finally we hit a little native village on the coast and started looking for boats, but the mayor said there were none—the native troops had used them to evacuate that day. But they were swell to us—always out in the country they were swell to us—ignorant, maybe, but nice and kind as they could be... I remember on the trail we overtook a ramshackle cart and a few natives, and an old native woman gave the cart driver hell for not putting the baggage in his cart—said we Americans were fighting for their people and they should help us.

"The driver tried to pile it on, but it broke his cart down. He wouldn't take any money—just said he was sorry he couldn't help us more. In those days in the jungle I learned more about how nice the simple Filipino people are than I'd learned in months in Manila; I also learned the more Americanized they are, the louster they are.

"Leaving this village, we kept on down the road to an even tinier one on the coast—still looking for boats. We found a military headquarters and a Filipino third lieutenant—just a kid—in command of twenty native troops, no machine guns and almost no ammunition. Ten miles of hard-surfaced road connected it with a town where the Japs had landed. He said a Jap tank had come up the road the first day but had turned around and gone back. Why hadn't he blown up the bridges? No dynamite. What was he going to do if the Jap tanks came again? What could he do, he asked, but evacuate? I noticed they had all their gear packed into a bus, and that under their uniforms they wore their civilian clothing. And I couldn't blame them. But they helped us comb the place for boats, and we finally located enough bancas to carry us, and shoved off at dusk.

"We arrived at the next island soaking wet but thankful, and glad we were hailed on the beach by native volunteer guards with home-made rifles, instead of the Japs.

Next chapter: Bulkeley goes to Australia.

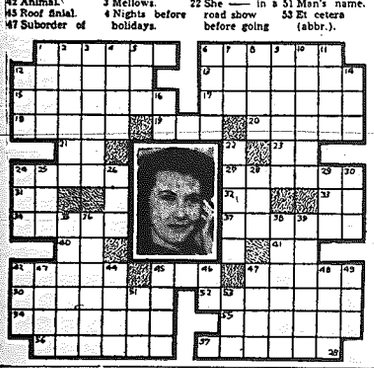
(Continued Tomorrow)

SCREEN ACTRESS

Answer to Previous Puzzle

HORIZONTAL
1,6 Pictured movie actress
12 Reach
13 Those who merit.
15 Moistens.
17 Steamship
18 Foreign agents.
19 Swedish weight.
20 Pertaining to Switzerland
21 Names (abbr.).
23 Half-em.
24 Glority
26 Incline.
31 Sloth.
32 Symbol for tantalum.
33 Hawaiian bird.
34 Drops of eye fluid.
37 Itinerant.
40 Mother
41 Symbol for erbium.
42 Animal.
43 Roof finial.
47 Suborder of Charadriformes (zoo.).
50 Devices for opening.
52 Swerve.
54 Altar screen.
55 Loving.
56 Green sunfish.
57 She is a —— actress.

VERTICAL
1 Snare.
2 Type of fur.
3 Mellows.
4 Nights before holidays.
5 Siamese measure.
6 Direction
7 Rodent.
8 Angers
9 Chewer.
10 Old French measure.
11 Very (Fr.)
12 Paid notices.
14 Seniors (abbr.).
16 Therefore.
22 She —— in a road show before going to Hollywood.
24 Flying mammal
25 Falsehood.
26 Call for help at sea.
28 Swiss river
29 Age.
30 Negative word.
35 Unit of electrical current.
36 Showered.
38 Line anew.
39 Long, arched gallery.
42 High, craggy hill.
43 One who mimics.
44 Predict (Scot.).
45 Existence
46 Fish.
47 Affirm
48 Solar disk (Egypt).
49 Ever (poet.).
51 Man's name.
53 Et cetera (abbr.).



OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS

BLONDIE

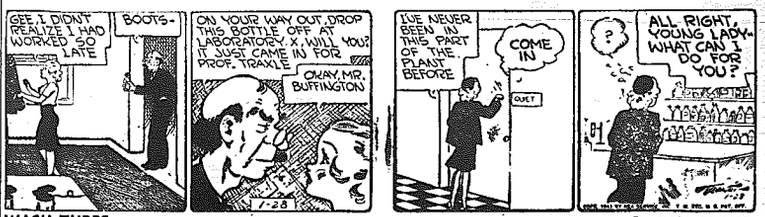
By CHIC YOUNG

LI'L ABNER

By AL CAPP

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

By MARTIN

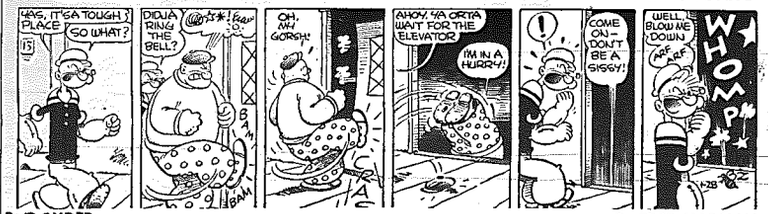


WASH TUBBS

By ROY CRANE

THIMBLE THEATER

STARRING POPEYE



RIDER

By FRED HARMAN

SUPERMAN

By JERRY SIEGEL and JOE SHUSTER

GASOLINE ALLEY

By FRANK KING

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE

HOW PEP CAME TO PATTY

BY BUD HILL