

L.T. SUÑOCO - Monday, June 11, 1945

(from Manila)

(FLIGHT OUT OF CHINA)

Good Evening, Everybody:-

Just as fighter, bomber and reconnaissance pilots are briefed, so also are wartime travelers briefed before setting forth on certain flights. I have just made one on which I believe they give you the longest and most elaborate briefing of all. Whether it is regarded as the most hazardous, I doubt. But here is the story:

On all over-ocean jaunts an officer gives you a twenty or thirty minute talk on how to don and then automatically inflate your Mae West; how to get into the rubber life boat so you'll not all spill out into the sea; the use of the sail, hoisted up on the two paddles; how to keep from being tipped over in a storm; the use of the navigation book; transforming sea water into drinking water; the use of the rather complicated portable radio in its water-tight case; the Very pistol; the special mirror for attracting attention

of passing planes; and, with special emphasis, the comfort to be derived from reading the Scriptures as you float for days across lonely seas.

But this briefing we received went far beyond that -- in fact more than twice as far. For we were flying out of China, over enemy territory, to an island in the Pacific Ocean. A trip from deep in Asia, in Nationalist China, across regions held by the Japs, and then on out into the broad Pacific. For reasons of security I of course am not allowed to say from exactly where we took off, nor where we landed. But the briefing -- it was one that would make your hair stand on end. And when it was over, in imagination you were in a Jap prison camp. That's how detailed and vivid it was.

In a mud hut, with a thatched roof, on the edge of ~~the~~ a B-29 bomber strip that our B-29s no longer need to use -- they have fields much nearer the Japs now -- the thirty of us were called together before boarding our plane for the night flight out of China.

In our party were twelve young airmen who had been shot down by the Japs, and who, like some of Doolittle's men on that first Tokyo raid, were rescued in the nick of time by Chinese guerrillas. Another was a brawny Texan, a Major, who had been on a hazardous mission behind the enemy lines. He had been visiting spots in the coastal China areas where reports had come in from loyal Chinese, of Jap planes show down. Engineering information was what the Major had been after -- new Jap designs of motors, fuselages, instruments and so on. Also in the group was a General in command of certain air operations in India and China. He was hearing this briefing for the first time.

The flight, we were told, would be more hazardous than flying over "The Hump," because of the crossings of enemy territory as well as lofty mountains, also over a coast infested by Jap small craft, and a sea where, presumably the Mikado's submarines are still on the prowl.

The briefing officer had a pronounced Hahvahd accent that sounded strange indeed there in that uttermost corner of Chiang Kai-Shek's realm.

First he told us that we were sworn to secrecy for the period before the flight, and that until that moment no one had been told what route we were to take. He never did give us the details on that. It won't be long until the Japs are chased out of their North-south corridor. And when that time comes the briefing will be briefer.

The Lieutenant from Harvard, the briefing officer, took his job quite seriously. And so did we! The boys who had been down behind enemy lines and who had made a long overland journey, and who were still showing the signs of their experience, had no desire to repeat the experience. For the first ten minutes we were told about the mountain ranges we were to cross. By the way, a large part of China is made up of mountain ranges. We were

told about the tribes -- and when you get into the mountain fastnesses of China you discover that the people frequently are not Chinese at all. Also, we learned a lot about how to survive in the jungle. After that he jumped all the way across to the Pacific. In connection with this he gave us the usual over-ocean advice, with the final admonition that the Captain of the plane was to be in absolute command, that above all we must never hurry or we might lose our own lives and take others down with us.

And then he came to the most important part, the discourse on what to do if forced to bail out over one of the enemy-occupied sections of China. Of course, there are still large areas of that country held by the Japs. He went into great detail, showing us where this might happen. And he brought out maps on cloth that each of us was to carry in an emergency jungle vest. The vests each contained a place for a revolver, ammunition, compass, knife, a "Pointee Talkee"

book with a lot of useful sentences both in English and Chinese, plus the answers as well; also waterproof match boxes, concentrated food, mosquito repellent, Atabrine, sulpha drugs for open wounds, morphine, and a lot of other things to cheer you up as he exhibited them. By then my imagination was running riot.

He told us we must stay away from all soldiers because of the difficulty of distinguishing Chinese and Japanese from a distance. Also, never go near a town. He said a small gift would often work magic and he related the story of a fighter pilot who had bailed out. He landed in a rice paddy, walked over to the first Chinese farmer he saw and handed him his pocket knife, as a present -- whereupon he got back to his base in four days.

We were advised to carry cigarettes in waterproof packages, because they are worth their weight in gold as gifts. He said that instead of shaking two

or three out of a pack and offering one to a Chinese, the better way is to take one out and hand it to him, ceremoniously. That way it's a gift. The other way the man must take it out himself, and thereby he "loses face."

On and on he went; and not in a perfunctory manner. By the time he was through he had us captured by the Japs. And then he told us how to answer those who interrogate prisoners, thus to avoid the Nip third degree and the water torture; how we might be rescued; and so on. It included all the advice you could imagine, all but the tip to keep one bullet -- in case.

After the briefing we were allowed to talk to no one. We were marched out to the plane. With a tremendous roar of the four engines we taxied to one end of the old B-29 strip, and in a few moments we were off into the night, bound for an island in the Pacific, one of the many islands now held by our people, but not

the island from where I am broadcasting this morning.

There were three pilots on board, so the strain of the long flight would not be too great on any one man. The chief pilot came back to me after we had climbed to a great height, to our cruising level. He introduced himself, saying: "I believe we were born in the same town, Greenville, Ohio. My name is so-and-so." "Oh yes," I replied, "you must be the nephew of the Laura so-and-so that my Mother used to talk about. I guess that makes us cousins!" Whereupon he insisted that I occupy the bunk, a spare, just back of the cockpit, a bunk that on a more ordinary flight would be used by one of the co-pilots. But not on this trip. I've reached the age now where I don't turn down little opportunities of that sort. So, taking a couple of sleeping pills my wife had given me just as I was starting on this air journey round the globe, and with a cousin from Greenville, Ohio, at the controls, I slept right through the night. When I looked out in

the morning, there we were circling over a tropical island. We had crossed the mountain ranges, the Jap occupied territory, and hundreds of miles of the Pacific, and were at our destination. It was that easy. Of course, if you were to fly over Jap guns it might be different, or if a couple of engines went out.

I have told about this night flight because it isn't being done often, or hasn't been. But it is much like many of the long night bombing missions that your sons and brothers and husbands go on in this part of the world.

And now, so long, and all the way back to America, and the NBC in New York.

BORNEO

*Good Evening Everybody
Dr. Andrews June 11*
MacArthur has taken the Japs by surprise

again. In another brilliant amphibious operation, he landed a large force of Australian infantry with supporting arms on Borneo. With a task force of American and Australian men-o-war, he put ashore shock troops of the Ninth Australian Division. Many of them are veterans of Tobruk, El Alamein and New Guinea. The American warships were from the United States seventh fleet. With all these, he had a capacious umbrella of allied bombers and fighter planes.

The operation began, of course, with a sweeping bombardment from heavy ~~na~~ naval guns and bomber planes which cleared the way. They razed to the ground all Japanese installations on the beaches. The diggers pushed ashore at a quarter past nine Sunday morning. At one place, the island of Muara, in Brunei Bay, there was no resistance at all. But another force landed on the island of ~~the~~ Labuan in the same waters. There the Japs put up a fight. But the Australians had no difficulty in seizing Victoria town, Labuan town and the airdrome.

The other landing was on the mainland at Cape Pempe^{long}, opposite Mu^ara. They captured the ~~city~~^{city} of Brooketon without difficulty, advancing no fewer than four thousand yards toward Brunei City. The latest reports had them only twelve miles from Brunei itself.

Douglas MacArthur led the invasion in person. With him were Lieutenant General Sir Leslie Moreshead, commanding the first Australian Corps, Major General Frederick Woodin, commanding the Ninth Division, and our own General George Kenney, commanding officer of the far Eastern Air Forces.

The big thing ~~is~~ about this is that the state of Brunei has an abundance of oil, rubber, coal, lumber, iron and other materials. The bay is large enough to accommodate innumerable ships of all sizes.

MacArthur also reports that our operations from bases in the Philippines have already practically destroyed all Japanese shipping in the South China Sea. From now on we shall be able to cut also their overl~~and~~^{and} means of communication and routes of escape in Indo-China and Malaya. end

OKINAWA

On Okinawa, the all-out attempt of the Yanks to throw out the remnants of the Japs is going strong. Doughboys of the Seventh Division won a foothold on the southeastern rim of the Japanese defense line on the cliffs. They also captured three outposts of the western anchor of that line. They used everything they had, satchel bombs, portable flame throwers, flame-throwing tanks and grenades.

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The Japs counter-attacked fiercely half a dozen times, but were thrown back just as often.