

THE SHADOW OF WINGS

By Jane Bunker Lumley

HE was surprised to find the sun still shining when he left the map-cluttered tables of the Navy Department conference room and stepped out in the brisk afternoon air. The same guards were stationed at their posts. . . . A lifetime encased in two hours. . . .

Two hours ago his Navy great-coat had been a protection against the wind sweeping down Constitution Avenue. Now it was a weight on his broad shoulders. He pulled his cap low against the paling sunlight to cover the sickness in his eyes. The maps folded inside his coat crackled ominously against his chest. There was a kind of tortured movement of his lips. There would be shouting and celebrating in the streets all about him if people knew what those maps represented. . . . the plans for the long-awaited bombing of Japan proper! But Fate had given them to him as a death warrant.

Three Navy flyers swung up the steps. He returned their salutes with the awkwardness of his new rank. A moment later he was just another uniformed figure lost in the Washington crowds.

The cap shadowed his eyes, but there was nothing to hide the thin, bitter line of his lips, or the nervousness of his long, swift strides. Lieut.-Comdr. Jon Wells Reed, U. S. N. R. . . .

Three days ago he had been one of a thousand streaming down the gangplank off the sparkling white exchange ship when it docked in New York harbor. Old men, children, white-hooded nuns, young mothers with their babies, and men walked into welcoming arms waiting on the dock. There were a few of the company officials to greet him, but no one else. He had left his heart in Japan.

"I CAN'T leave you!" he said, those months ago when the notice came through. They had found a minute together at the corner of the high, barred wire enclosure. "Noreen, I won't go!" Her dark head lowered just an instant against his shoulder, and then lifted, and her gray eyes were steady. "Yes, Jon," she whispered, "You will. You'll go back to America. You know this section of Japan as well as any native. The Army, or the Navy, can use you, Jon. I'm glad they chose you, instead of me. I would have had to go back and wait. You can go back, Jon, and act! You can help do the things that will set all of us free some day."

His arms held her so tightly, as if to press the imprint of her body against his for all the empty days ahead. "Yes," he said, less than a whisper, "Yes, Noreen. You are right." Gray eyes, like mist in the early morning, smiled steadily up at him. "I'll wait for you, Jon. I'll wait for you. . . here." Constitution Avenue blended with Pennsylvania and the Union Station Plaza lay washed in fading sunlight. He stared at the building vacantly. He had ar-

rived here yesterday, the final lap of his journey. The company officials had cut the delaying red tape and yesterday afternoon a solemn young Navy commander had sworn him in. "Congratulations!" he said. "We need men like you."

Puzzled, even bewildered at first over the new commission, it wasn't long before he understood.

"A conference tomorrow afternoon," the commander smiled. "A very interesting one. Your rank will simplify matters for the board of strategy."

From his room with a company official in one of the proud old mansions on New Hampshire Avenue he had gone directly to the afternoon conference.

There were an admiral, a commander, two captains, three high-ranking officers from the Navy Air Force, and several aides. . . . diagrams, sketches, maps, maps, and more maps. . . .

"And this particular section," the admiral pointed tersely, "is the stumbling block of the entire plan. We need definite, specific knowledge of every detail of the country." His eyes cut eagerly across Jon Reed's face. "And you're the one man who can supply it for us. You can make this important raid on the Jap home soil a complete success!"

Jon stared at the two maps the commander shoved under his hands on the gleaming mahogany conference table. His hands stiffened, flat and rigid on the crackling papers. The long awaited aerial attack on Japan! "I see." His voice was toneless.

Six faces broke into smiles. "Exactly! It's an important mission, Reed," said the admiral. You know the works in that locality? Blanket demolition of the complete area will smash the whole routine for the Jap shipping industry. But we've got to be extremely accurate, to the half mile, to strike the heart of the manufacturing center. If done perfectly, it will shorten the war by a year, at least. To say nothing," he added sharply, "of thousands of American lives."

Jon stared at the map. "Do you know that area?" the admiral demanded.

Jon laid the small map upon the large one, folded them carefully, with extreme patience, and held them together in his hands. After a long while he lifted his eyes to the admiral's.

"Yes," he said, very slowly. "Yes, I do."

And how well he did! FROM north to south, and east to west. He knew the valley and the hills, the barred wire fence and the muddy river. . . . the exact location of the portion of the shipbuilding. . . . and the mission. . . . they were all one. . . . It was here, in the center of this map, where Noreen had said:

"I'll wait for you. . . here." Here he had left his heart. He was tired. His legs ached. His head throbbed worse than the roar of bomber engines. He slowed his pace and stared around him at the giant, gleaming needle of the Washington Monument threading whitely through the dusk. He had



HE WALKED slowly by the Lincoln Memorial. His head throbbed, his mind was in a crazy whirl.

walked miles, doubling back across the city with his thoughts. He turned north to New Hampshire Avenue and his room. He pulled the shades, locked the door, drew the floor lamp over to the table and spread out the map.

It was like a geometric problem. The long, straight line of the valley, the old volcano a small triangle backed against the circle of hills, and the misshapen giant quadrilateral of the shipyards to the east—and in the center, like the key to the problem, lay the forgotten, diminutive square of the prison-mission. His pencil hovered over the mission. He saw Noreen's eyes as they had been that last second.

"I'll do my waiting. . . here." It was like an echo. He looked up from the light and stared at the shadows of the room. The pencil fell out of his fingers.

He picked it up. No one would know. No one knew the exact location of the tiny mission. He could map off the area far to the east. It would put the mission walls in the safety zone. Part of the aircraft industry would be demolished, the shipyards would be hit.

The lamplight deepened in a yellow pool on the carpet as darkness fell across the windows. The wind whispered across the night and a branch

from the corner elm scraped insistently against the glass.

The light hurt his eyes. Or was it from staring too long at the invisible heart of the map? His body ached with the tension of each thinly drawn nerve. Even his soul ached. . . . with the sickness of dishonor.

For he knew, he had known the very first instant he gazed at the map back there in the conference room where the polished table threw back the broken reflections of the Navy officers, while he walked the streets of the pulsing city, the nation's capital—he had known then and he knew now what he would do. Noreen was his wife. A wife meant more than the importance of war and strategy and nations. He would do his fighting another way—not this way.

No one would know. He picked up the pencil the last time. He began well over to the east. Slowly the pencil moved in a thin hair-like line about at the right-hand portion of the aircraft works. And then he erased it.

He stood up quickly. There was a better way. He would take the map back to the conference room, and under his direction, let another officer trace the boundary. Then afterward, the confusion of the conference room might be an excuse.

He returned to the Navy Department by the direct route, down New Hampshire to F Street and then south on 23rd. He passed the Red Cross headquarters. Directly ahead lay West Potomac Park. The Lincoln Memorial stood like a white shrine on the mound above the Reflecting Pool. He remembered, painfully, that it was Noreen's favorite Washington landmark.

Slowly he found himself passing through the colonnaded entrance. He stood for a while apart from the handful of visitors, watching the great, quiet figure seated in marble. Jon couldn't meet those eyes. A pair of gray eyes, trapped behind a barred wire enclosure, prevented him. Gray eyes. . . . or marble. . . . he simply couldn't meet them.

He stumbled outside. Traffic was light. The wind was high, chasing clouds after the moon. He leaned on the parapet of the Arlington Memorial Bridge, facing southeast across the Potomac. The night was a peculiar blend of quiet and confusion. The sounds of a city with the stillness of night's space. Somewhere a newsboy cried. . . . there were a few cars crossing, a few curious glances. . . . and everywhere a pair of gray eyes. "I'll do my waiting. . . here," he thought.

Jon looked around. He could almost touch her. Across the miles and miles of land and sea and sky. He looked back at the white Memorial on the hill, a sentinel in the night. His hands tightened on the parapet until his wrists ached. The map whispered against his chest. Gray eyes followed him. . . . Noreen's eyes.

HE climbed the Navy Department steps with a careful, deliberate effort. There were new guards at the posts. Halfway up the steps, the same three Navy flyers came down, saluted, and their eyes met. They were tired, too, Jon thought. The campaign ribbons told their story. Men such as these. . . . but the gray eyes blotted them out.

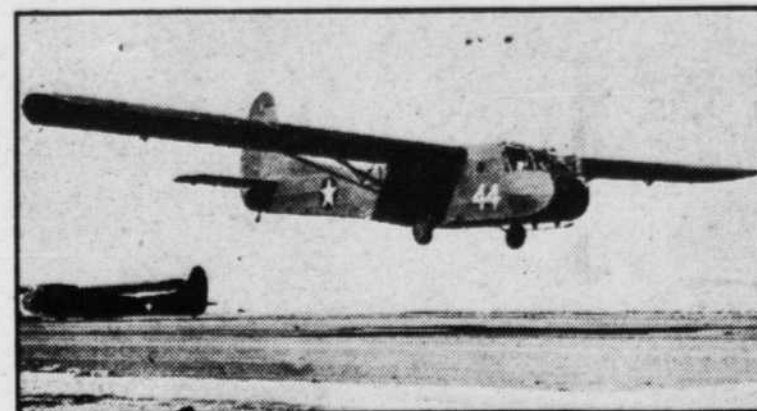
Inside he drew out the map, spread it on the table. He smoothed it straight and flat and waited for the officers to gather around him. They were staring at him, a curious mixture of expressions on their faces. He was tired. It was an effort to take out his pen. Not the pencil, but his pen. He stared at the map.

He unscrewed the cap. Then, with a bold, sure stroke, he circled the geometric puzzle, from north to south and east to west, and in its core lay his heart. . . . the little mission. . . . It, too, would be a target. "Bomb that area," he said heavily. He turned away to go.

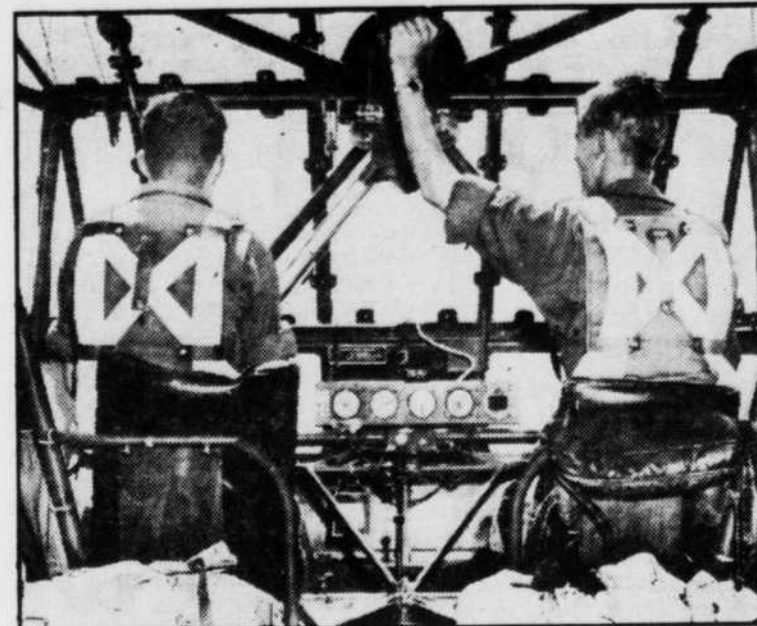
The admiral cleared his throat. His eyes glistened strangely. "Good! We can start action at once. The last obstacle was cleared up half an hour ago. Our Intelligence informs us that all internees have just been removed from that area to larger camps up north, eliminating any possible danger to them."

Jon saluted the admiral carefully. And at the same time, the gray, marble eyes in the Lincoln Memorial.

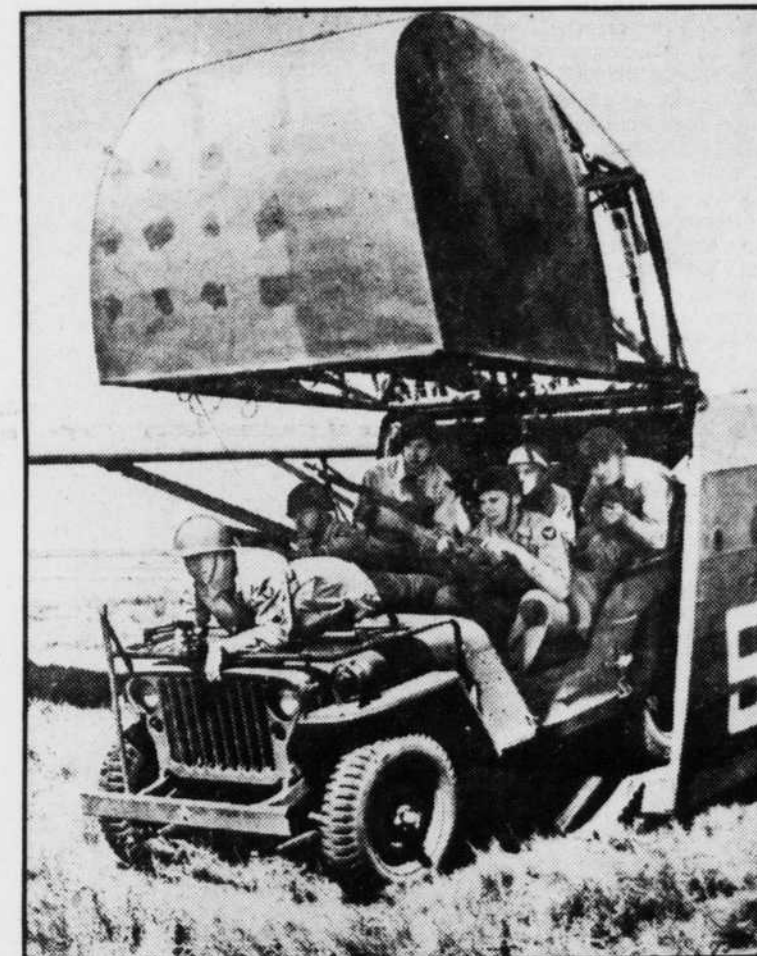
Uncle Sam's Whisper Ships



LOADED with men, jeep and combat equipment, glider soars aloft in a rehearsal for invasion.



OVER enemy territory, the signal is given to cut glider loose from the tow-plane's nylon rope.



JEEP is disgorge from interior of glider and heads for the battle front at breakneck speed.

Yesterday's Headliners

POPULAR MUSIC IN THE GREAT AMERICAN HOME—1919

KEN BROVIN'S AND KELLETTE'S HIT TUNE, "I'M FOREVER BLOWING BUBBLES," WAS THE NUMBER ONE HIT SONG IN 1919. OTHER HIT SONGS WERE "BEAUTIFUL OHIO," "AFTER YOU'VE GONE," "I'M ALWAYS CHASING RAINBOWS," "MIAMI SHORE," "FRECKLES," "PATCHES," "PEGGY," AND "HUCKLEBERRY FINN."

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INA CLAIRE IS STARRING IN "THE GOLD DIGGERS."

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HERO RETURNS

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MARCH 25, 1919, "CHRISTY" MATHEWSON IS BACK WITH THE N.Y. GIANTS AS ASSISTANT MANAGER AFTER HIS DISCHARGE FROM U.S. ARMY. IN SKETCH HE IS COACHING A YOUNG ROOKIE PITCHER, "EDDIE ROMMEL."

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in the HEADLINES... 1919

MAY 18, A SOPWITH BIPLANE POWERED WITH ROLLS-ROYCE ENGINES AND PILOTTED BY HARRY G. HAWKER AND LIEUTENANT COMMANDER M. GRIEVE FLEW 14 HOURS, 31 MINUTES, COVERING A DISTANCE OF 1100 MILES OUT OVER THE ATLANTIC BEFORE A CLOGGED OIL LINE FORCED THE PLANE TO LAND BESIDE A DANISH SHIP, THE "MARY."

JULY 23, AT CHICAGO, HOGS BROUGHT \$23.50 A HUNDREDWEIGHT ON THE FOOT IN THE STOCKYARDS, THE HIGHEST PRICE EVER KNOWN.

JULY 30, FRED HOENEMANN, A MISSOURI FARMER, APPEALED TO THE COURTS AT KANSAS CITY, AND OBTAINED A TEMPORARY INJUNCTION AGAINST THE OPERATION OF AIRPLANES OVER HIS FARM.