

Collier's

May 30, 1942

Deep in the Heart-

By Quentin Reynolds

Victory!

**-AND
NON-STOP
WORK WILL
SPEED IT !**



*Let's go, everybody.
KEEP 'EM FIRING!*

Somewhere in America there may be apathy and indifference to the war effort, but a famous Collier's correspondent, looking for it, fails to get the story. He got this one instead

SHE was a little old lady no bigger than a soft whisper. Her hair was white and her cheeks were a bit faded but there was nothing faded about her eyes. They were large and blue and startlingly steady, and they told you that this was more than just another little old lady with white hair.

"Do you know how to make those Molotov cocktails?" she asked simply.

I told her that I knew a little about how to make them, and that you needed molasses and glycerin and dynamite and I told her that there were several ways of making them and that she'd better get some expert advice. Then I asked her what she wanted with Molotov cocktails in Dallas, Texas.

"Down here in Texas we're at war," she said simply, as though talking to a child. "Some of us read about how Russian women crawl up close to German tanks and then throw homemade bombs at the tanks

OldMagazineArticles.com



and destroy them. We read, too, that English women living near the coast all have what they call Molotov cocktails ready to throw at the German tanks if there is ever an invasion. Now maybe we will never see any German or Japanese tanks going down the main street of Dallas, but it is just as well to be ready. All of us, I think," she added emphatically, "should have a few of those homemade bombs on our kitchen shelves just in case."

I returned from the war zone late in January and immediately began to read of the "complacency and unawareness" that existed among the people of our country. Editorial writers, newspaper columnists, congressmen and radio commentators all sang this depressing song. It was quite disturbing to one who had confidently expected that his own countrymen were just as tough and as realistic as were the people of Britain or of Russia.

It was so disturbing that I traveled from Seattle to southern California, from Houston to Kansas City, from Chicago to Ketchum, Idaho; I stopped at twenty cities in fifteen states looking for this complacency and unawareness, looking for much-heralded public apathy toward our war effort. Did I find it? No.

I found a little old lady in Dallas, Texas, who meant it when she told of how she and her friends would throw homemade bombs at any tanks that had the temerity to pollute the soil of Texas. I found men sweating and toiling in aircraft and munition factories; I found them working as hard as men ever worked in Manchester or Moscow. I found college students studying as no students I ever saw study, intent on hurrying the day when they would be granted commissions and could get into active service. I saw Negro Pullman car porters collecting tin foil from cigarette packages; a small thing, granted, but a bit of evidence to prove that our citizens are war minded and that they are not letting MacArthur and his men do it all. Two months of traveling around America, discovering America, makes me awfully impatient with the writers and radio prophets who so smugly talk of the complacency of our fellow citizens. If they'd just get away from their desks and their microphones, stop interviewing themselves, stop talking and writing, and look and listen a while, they'd realize that there are still giants in the land.

BACK 'EM UP



BUY EXTRA BONDS

Now take Berkeley, California: I met a man who was an air warden in Berkeley. He and his mates were giving an exhibition that afternoon. They had already given several. I went along to watch. Quite a crowd of the local citizenry was on hand. The firemen and the air wardens had incendiary bombs with them; the same kind of bombs which destroyed a one-mile-square section of London on December 28, 1941.

How to Treat Incendiaries

The bombs were thrown into the middle of the street and ignited. Then the fire chief made a little speech. He told the assembled citizens how not to put out an incendiary. He tossed water on one. It had no effect. Then he showed them how to put out an incendiary. He didn't just tell them; he demonstrated with stirrup pumps and then with sand. When he was finished everyone who watched and listened knew just what to do in case of a shower of incendiaries.

"This must seem silly and elemental to you," one of the air wardens said, "after seeing so many incendiaries in London."

"Silly my eye," I said. "It's the first time I ever knew the proper way to put out an incendiary. In public buildings and in elevators all over London there are printed signs telling us what to do. But we never read them. And if we do, we forget what they say. No one actually ever demonstrated to us how to go about putting out incendiaries."

Up and down the West Coast I found civil defense precautions intelligently handled. Often there were minor con-

Deep in the Heart . . .

licts between civil and military authorities; San Francisco was one such city. But minor differences are as much a part of the American scene as is whole-wheat bread or bacon and eggs. They are not symbolic of anything except our innate love of arguing, making speeches and saying, "I told you so."

We have been at war five months. Two months after France fell six million of us were complacently sitting in London saying, "They'll never bomb us."

The enemy was only twenty minutes' flying time away but we laughed at the warnings of the military and civil authorities. When we got our baptism of night bombing on September 7, 1940, we were quite unprepared for it. It wasn't the fault of the authorities who had done everything possible to get us ready for it. We, in truth, were complacent and unaware. I found an entirely different state of mind on the West Coast of the United States.

R.A.F. pilots there, either to test new aircraft or to instruct, agreed with me that people on the West Coast were far more war-minded, far better prepared mentally and practically than were the people of London at the same stage of war.

The people of Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Hollywood are not saying, "They'll never bomb us." Soberly, intelligently they are going ahead on the assumption that sooner or later Japanese bombers will be over and the only sensible thing to do is to take out insurance to minimize possible losses.

Insurance against bombing is very inexpensive; it consists of alert, trained civilian defense organizations taking suggestions and orders, without grumbling, from military authorities who know their business.

In Hollywood, that much maligned community, picture people sitting around Dave Chasen's or Mike Romanoff's restaurant were laughing a little bit at the show put on at the Warner Brothers studio. The Brothers Warner built bomb shelters large enough to accommodate all employees should an air raid come, either by day or by night. They held a rehearsal and, of course, had cameramen stationed all over to record for posterity the rush of employees, stars, technical men and executives toward the bomb shelters. The next day the pictures duly appeared in the papers.

I didn't laugh. I thought of the lives which would have been saved in Coventry had that sad city built shelters such as those I saw in the Burbank studios. I thought of the dead I'd seen in defenseless Southampton and in unprepared Plymouth and I could only mentally congratulate the Warner Brothers for their farsightedness and thoroughness in preparing for the worst.

Deep in the Heart . . .

Other studios followed suit. The aircraft factories in the Los Angeles district have blast walls and shelters which would put the factories of Britain and Moscow to shame. Complacency? Unawareness? Maybe I'm a bum reporter but I could not find it on the West Coast.

In San Francisco I walked into the office of the Chronicle. I saw a telegram on the bulletin board in the city room. It was from the publisher of the Chronicle, now Lt. Commander Paul Smith, who works for Secretary Knox. The telegram was addressed to the staff of the Chronicle. Some of it might bear repetition here.

"Avoid being Pollyanna in heads and banners," it said in terse newspaper style. "Editorials and cartoons should strive for stark realism. Needn't be Gloomy Gus nor defeatist about ultimate outcome but war is going to be far tougher than anyone yet suspecting. Victory will exact tremendous price. Do your best to toughen our community for news ahead. Don't overplay our minor victories nor understate enemy position . . . Cost of victory in blood, sweat, toil and tears is going to be colossal. This cannot be overemphasized. You are doing a good job. Keep it up and try not to fall into weaknesses of so much of the press today, such as blind Pollyannism or on the other hand blind defeatism. To win we must not only be prepared to give all, but actually to give all. Regards. Paul."

The Truth—Even if it Hurts

I never met Lt. Commander Paul Smith but he makes a lot of sense to me. He seems to be one publisher who isn't sitting in his office interviewing himself, thinking of new ways to criticize the government and our war effort. To me he seems to be a realist who knows we're in for a tough fight and who has confidence enough in the public (that's you and me) to use his newspaper to tell us the truth. To me, Paul Smith represents the state of mind of the typical American of today. Is that complacency he is preaching? If it is, I'm nuts.

Now take College Station, Texas. I've got to be careful when I talk about Texas. During the past ten years I've worked in every country in Europe. And been everywhere, but never in Texas. I just came from spending two weeks there and I walked out of the state laughing. I was laughing at Hitler and Hirohito and at the defeatists and enemies within our own borders. I was laughing at their insolence in thinking that they could ever conquer our country. Texas affects you like that. Texas didn't wait to be stabbed in the back. During the past two years, I've met kids from Texas on British destroyers in the Channel and in the North Atlantic; flying with R.A.F. bomber groups and with

Deep in the Heart . . .

our own magnificent Eagle Squadron, No. 71, the first to go into combat; flying Curtiss-Wright P-40's in Libya, and I met them all places on the sorely beleaguered island of Malta in the Mediterranean. I'd never been in Texas before but I'd met Texans all right.

They sing a song down there, The Eyes of Texas are Upon You. Texas, putting forth her hundred-per-cent war effort intelligently, viciously, with hatred in her heart against those who would snap Uncle Sam's suspenders, has her eyes on the rest of us. If we lag in our war effort, Texas is liable to get mad and fight the war alone. Texas is like that. When I die I want to go to Texas.

Let's get back to College Station, Texas. You probably never heard of the place unless you're a football fan. There's nothing there but a college. College Station is the home of Texas A. and M., the great Texas Aggies. I doubt whether they'll have much of a football team there next fall. Those 4,500 students are too interested in learning ways and means of killing Japs and Germans to bother with football. They were just winding up spring football practice when I was there and Coach Norton was mighty pleased.

"They'll make great soldiers," he gloated, watching his tall, lean boys run to the showers. "Maybe football will help them a little."

"What kind of a team will you have next year?" I asked him.

"There's only one team that counts now," he said a little reproachfully. "That's America. A lot of our boys will have qualified for service by the fall. They're wonderful boys and they'll make great soldiers."

I sat up late with a bunch of those cadets at Texas A. and M. They are all cadets at Texas A. and M. Every one of those 4,500 boys will be in one service or another within a short time. I sat up with them and talked and listened to them and it was exciting. This is the generation that is going to win the war for us. It's a good generation. They've had their little fun with girls and with juke boxes and with a little beer on the side and with football and junior proms. But they were just killing time doing that and now they're Americans, and their country has said, "We need a little help, boys," and they're quite willing and very anxious and soon will be technically trained in the various ways of knocking the brains out of those silly Germans and Japs.

Young America is Ready

When you return from the war zone, you get asked an awful lot of fool questions. People ask you, "What is the truth about the Hess case?" They ask (as though two million Russians hadn't already proved it), "Can we trust the Russians?" They ask, "Are the British

7 Deep in the Heart . . .

one hundred per cent behind their war effort?" (As though thousands and thousands of British civilians hadn't proved that too.) But those men from Texas A. and M. didn't ask questions like that. We sat for many hours and they asked, "What weapon do the British Commandos use? How do they sneak in places and kill Germans without rousing the whole German army?" I knew the answer to that and when I told them of the knives and the beautifully effective methods used by the Commandos, their eyes glistened and their young hands clenched and you knew everything was all right with young America.

I could go on for many many thousands of words telling of my two-month quest for unawareness and complacency. But, so help me, I couldn't find it. So instead of a sensational story, all I can offer is an honest story.

I was in a gambling place in Nevada, in one of those small towns that are still "Wild West." I played a little roulette and shot a little craps and drank a little red liquor with the boss, who worked on a ranch in the fall and the summer.

"A lot of people think we don't take this war serious," the tall cowboy-gambler drawled. "Lemme tell you, mister, maybe in the beginning we didn't. Maybe England seemed a long way off and, hell, we hardly ever heard of them slap-happy Jappies. But take a look at the casualty list, friend. You'll find plenty of names on it from Nevada and Idaho and from hereabouts. That's brought England and Russia pretty close to us. We don't like our boys killed. We're pretty mad about it and from now on we're taking orders from the Boss. Whatever he says goes. We don't care what taxes he makes us pay. That dough is all going to kill Japs and Heinies, ain't it?"

It was that night I met the Negro porter. He brought me a drink and said, "Boss, ain't you low on cigarettes?"

I said, "Bring me another pack."

He brought me another pack and then picked up my old package. "Mister, you ain't got but one cigarette left in this old pack. Can I leave the cigarette here and take the tin foil outa the ol' pack?"

"Sure," I told him. "What do you want with it?"

"Well," he was a little embarrassed, "us porters got a kinda competition to see who can collect the most tin foil. So far this month I collect twenty-three pounds. The gov'ment wants tin foil so we grabs all the cigarette packages we can find. I guess they make airplanes or somethin' outa the tin foil—"

Yeah, man, these here Americans are getting mad. A little punch-drunk after two months of one-night stands I scurried to Sun Valley, Idaho, to fall down mountains for a week on skis before the snow melted. One doesn't expect a sense of war consciousness at a resort like Sun

Deep in the Heart . . .

Valley but, surprisingly, I found it. Fred Turner, deputy sheriff of Blaine County, Idaho, had organized a group of Commandos from among the citizens of near-by Ketchum and Sun Valley. The idea came from gnarled 49-year-old Spike Spackman, ex-rodeo performer and maestro of Western sports at Sun Valley. Spackman, Lou Hill, Ketchum hotel man, and Grant Walker, Union Pacific Railroad special agent at Ketchum, act as the sheriff's assistants. This small group of thirty men they organized is well armed (each man has three hundred rounds of ammunition), well equipped (the Union Pacific donated trucks, automobiles), each man is an expert skier, horseman, and accurate rifle shot. I saw them in action and I don't want any trouble with them.

Fifth Columnist Antidote

Why Commandos in Idaho? For one thing the government is sending thousands of interned Japanese to the state. For another there are many small mountain airports controlled by the U. S. Forest Service. Then, although they haven't been spotted yet, there may be fifth columnists in Idaho. The Sun Valley Commandos are ready—thirty, well-trained, very angry Americans. If nothing else, it is a symbol of how people in the West feel about things.

Where do you look for this complacency and unawareness? I can find it in the saboteurs of Congress; the obstructionist minority who spread the Bill of Rights over themselves like a protecting cloak; those little men who do all they can to wreck our national unity, those men who are just as guilty of sabotage as if they were wrecking munition or aircraft factories. I have heard whispers about them from Seattle to southern California; from New York to Nevada; from men on trains and from people in New Orleans and Kansas City and Dallas and Chicago. The people I met these past two months are getting mad at those who would disrupt our national unity, and when our citizens get mad they are apt to be very mad and very annoyed at those who do such things because wherever you go, now, you meet people who have sons or nephews or friends who are facing enemy guns and enemy torpedoes.

In the past we Americans have been divided into two classes: those who enjoy kicking labor around and those who love to throw verbal bricks at industry. Today there is no need for anyone to defend labor. The record shows how few strikes we've had in war production industry factories since December 7th. At this writing we have lost something less than one half of one per cent of our war production by strikes since we got into the war. Every time some khaki-clad lad from Mansfield, Ohio, or Waterloo, Iowa, or Eau Claire, Wisconsin, throws

Deep in the Heart . . .

a shell or a bullet at a Jap in the Philippines, it is a tribute to the American labor which sweated to produce those shells and bullets. Labor is not some nebulous intangible thing you can talk about the way you talk about the trend toward sun bathing or interest in vitamins. Labor is you and me and the man next door and millions like us; real people who are right now working their heads off to speed up production. Labor needs no defense. How about industry?

All right, I don't live with gamblers and Pullman porters and little old ladies from Dallas or college boys or Hollywood people all the time. Lately I've been sitting around with the men who make things; with what we used to call the industrialists. I know a lot of them and when they open up they give you that "off the record" tag. You can't quote them or mention their names or their companies but, believe me, I'm not talking about Boy Scout leaders. The automobile industry, which is now bearing the brunt of war production, is engaged in its biggest (and for once friendly) competition. Each company is trying to outstrip its former rivals but this time dividends and the number of automobiles sold are not the goals. When one company finds a new gadget which will turn out shells or tanks or aircraft quicker than another company, that is the triumph. Once they've found something, they may gloat for a hot moment and then quickly disperse the new information. Sit around with me and listen in to these former captains of industry. They're rather pleased with themselves. They've stolen a year's march on the Axis, they'll tell you. Typical of their attitude is the new slogan adopted by General Motors: "Victory is our business." Not a bad slogan.

Here is America's Greatness

If you sit around with the men who make things better than anyone else in the world can make them, you don't feel like throwing up your hands and saying: "Okay, Adolf, you're too tough for us." You don't feel like joining the doleful dirge of the defeatists. When you hear them talk quietly, confidently about the problems which confronted them a few months ago and of how they've overcome those problems; when you hear them talk of how magnificently labor has responded to the new and difficult conditions, you want to throw your hat in the air and tell the world what a splendid country this is you belong to.

Consider the automobile industry for a moment. Suppose you called in your neighborhood plumber and said to him, "Brother, my piano is out of tune. Tune it for me." The plumber could say with justice, "Mister, I'm a plumber. I've spent years learning my trade. I'm no piano tuner. It would take me years of training to become one."

Deep in the Heart . . .

Yet the automobile industry in less than a year has, in a manner of speaking, turned its back on plumbing and become expert in piano tuning. Today the automobile industry is making the best tanks ever made anywhere. Ninety-one per cent of all tank production is being handled by companies which a year ago were making automobiles—using the same workmen to do the job.

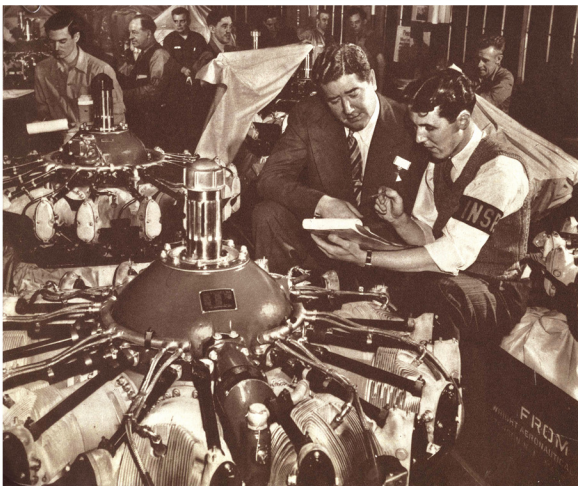
"At our plant," I heard a man say in Detroit, "we switched men from painting automobile bodies to welding in ten days. They're good welders, too."

The automobile industry tossed away and scrapped thirty-four years of mass production and started all over again. One plant ordered to make guns had to devise 3,500 operations of manufacture, create 6,000 complicated tools and procure more than 1,500 specialized machines before it could start producing. That was ten months ago. Today the plant is exactly a year ahead of scheduled production.

Consider the machine gun. The basic design of the machine gun and the process of manufacturing it had not changed since the last war. There was no reason why standard manufacturers should have changed either design or manufacturing methods. The demand was slight, the result was acceptable and there was no reason for any short cuts in manufacture. Then that comfortable old world we once knew came to an end and the automobile industry was given the job of making guns. At first they made them as they had always been made but bright young men from technical colleges and veteran foremen with years of practical experience in making things kept figuring out time-saving devices. The industry pooled its brains and if an engineer at one plant thought of something new, it would be all over the industry the next day.

Invention Marches On

Following this plan, someone thought out a conveyer system that would carry the gun barrel from machine to machine, thus obviating the need for slow hand carting. Sharp metal edges had always been filed down by hand. Someone dreamed up the idea of applying what is known in the industry as "tumbling" (rotating parts in a drum together with oil, abrasive and metal slugs) and what formerly took hours now took seconds. Someone noticed that holes in the gun barrel cover were elliptical. This meant that they had to be machined, a slow process. The inquiring soul asked if the gun would be just as effective if the holes were round. He was told that it would. Now they are made round and one machine punches ten at a time. Another punches all the holes on flat sheet steel, then rolls it instead of using tube steel.



At Wright Plant No. 1, Paterson, N. J., the author learns from Inspector Thomas Murphy how Cyclone 9 engines are produced in quantity for the Flying Fortresses

Take the matter of shells. The automobile companies are turning them out the way they used to turn out carburetors. They've streamlined the ancient business of shell making. Today manual handling is reduced to an absolute minimum. The steel bar stock is first moved from freight cars to bins by electro-magnets, and then roller conveyers carry the shell to its ultimate destination—a freight car headed toward some convoy port.

Six months ago the automobile industry couldn't spell Oerlikon. Now this marvelous gun first ordered by the British from a Swiss plant is rolling off the assembly lines of Detroit. So is the 20 mm. aircraft cannon, and tanks are crawling out of factory entrances as fast as shiny automobiles once did.

There may be something wrong with this country of ours but I couldn't find it—and I tried. Of course, there's some confusion, duplication of effort, blundering, misapplied energy but that is to be expected. Our country is now engaged in a brand-new business—the business of murder. That's all that war is. Hitler and Hirohito are professionals. We'll catch up to them soon. It won't be long. Look back over the 153 years of our country's life. Very often the country was in grave danger but always giants emerged to lead it out of peril. There are still giants in the land.

Collier's