



The Hero on the Cover

Richard Lewis Harris is his name. Artist C. C. Beall painted him from life in the act of doing the thing that won him the Distinguished Service Cross. Harris is 23, comes from Upper East Side of New York

YOUR children won't study what happened on Hill 523. It was a local action. Even in Bizerte, which smiles under the bony nose of 523, it is almost forgotten already. But Richard Harris won't forget it. Ever. Nor will the Germans who faced his tommy gun and his knuckle knife. At least, those who lived, won't.

It was April 30, 1943. A dark night. The battalion C.O. told Lieutenant Harris that Hill 523 must be taken now and held—held at all costs. GHQ wanted it held because it commanded a fine view of Bizerte, and a heavy-weapons group like Harris' could raise merry hell with the evacuating Germans. So it must be taken—and held.

About 800 men shuffled down the road in the darkness. Harris and the C.O. and other officers led the men up the rocky back slopes of 523, through the chatter of machine guns and the dry cough of mortars, to the top. In a sense, it wasn't too tough to take. Then the C.O. ordered a phone line strung back from the top, along a bottom road, to the American lines. It was done.

At dawn, the Germans in the valley below and in front began to lob shells on the road behind the hill, and Harris knew that things wouldn't be easy because retreat had already been cut off.

The Nazis were coldly mechanical. They came out of a wind-waved wheat field in groups of thirty and plodded up Hill 523 on the left flank. Their artillery blinded the defenders on top, and then ceased fire just as the Germans reached the summit. That's when the tommy guns and knuckle knives were used. When that attack died, the Germans below would wait a while, start new artillery preparation, and send a party up the right slope. Later, two parties would labor up both flanks simultaneously.

The C.O. was using the phone and begging for American artillery support. It came. The shells rippled over the hill and clumped down into the wheat, and the yellow became stained with gelatinous red. The C.O. crouched behind a rock and pinged rifle shots at the Germans. He made a mistake, though. He peeped over the same rock too often. Harris saw him lean backward, saw the perfect circle drilled in the middle of his forehead.

Harris took over. He counted his men. He had forty-five. Old 523 was being held "at all costs." He picked up the phone and asked for tank support in a hurry. "Fifteen practically on the way," a voice said. Harris looked back and saw six U.S. M-4s round the bend in parade formation—one behind the other. The Germans picked off the first, waited for it to stagger out of line, then picked off the second. They got four, before the Americans broke formation and ganged up on the Nazi antitank gun. The M-4s got the tank gun.

At 4 P.M., there were 25 men left out of 800. At 6 P.M., the Germans listened to the ragged fire coming from Hill 523 and they grew confident. They washed the entire hilltop with mortar fire and cut Harris' phone line. The sun was bloody

behind the hill. Harris decided to wander around to a third, very rocky side of the hill—just in case. And "just in case" was waiting for him. He saw thirty Germans climbing slowly, painfully, up to the top. Their rifles were slung across their backs. He stood up, aimed his tommy gun down, and yelled, "Surrender!"

The leading German looked up in surprise, then smiled. He pointed at Harris and nodded: "Ja! Surrender!" He turned and spoke to the man behind him.

That man dropped to one knee, unslung his rifle, and drew a bead on Harris. The American dropped behind a boulder, aimed his gun through a crotch, and sprayed the bewildered Germans below. About fifteen were killed outright. Perhaps seven more were left to die. Two or three slipped and fell and plunged to the bottom.

Harris went back and counted his men. It was 7 P.M. and there were nineteen.

They dug slit trenches and sat in them. A corporal reported that eighty Nazis were coming up with grenades.

Halfway up, in the deepening purple, they yelled, "Surrender!"

The nineteen roared, "Go to hell!"

Too Close for Safety

They got out of the slits and poured tommy-gun fire down. They were still waiting for the American Army to come up that back road and rescue them. When it got dark, they knew they had lost Hill 523, because now the Nazis could sneak up from all sides and overwhelm them.

Harris said: "Okay, fellas. Leave, two at a time, and the rest of us will cover your withdrawal. Get back to our lines and wait for orders."

They went. In the blackness, they slipped back down the gully and up the road. After a while, there were two left—Harris and a mortar gunner.

Harris ordered the gunner to leave. "I'll cover you," the lieutenant said.

"Oh, no," the gunner said. "You leave." "Leave!" barked Harris. "That's an order!"

"When two men are alone on a hill," said the gunner, "nobody gives orders."

Just then, there was a soft irregular sound, and a big potato-masher grenade landed at their feet. Without a word, both fell backward into their slit trenches. A moment later, Hill 523 trembled, rocks caromed off the hillside, and dust hung in the dark.

Then the gunner sat up, black with dirt, and said, "After thinking it over, you're right. I'll leave."

Harris covered him. Then he fired off all the ammunition and tossed all the grenades he could find and wandered back down to the road, last man off Hill 523.

The next morning Major General Terry Allen came up and hung a Distinguished Service Cross on his chest and promoted him to captain. At that very moment, the division was moving forward and took Bizerte from the Germans without even bothering to look at Hill 523, which was small potatoes to begin with. ★★★

YOU'D NEVER

BY AMY PO

Hollywood discovers how
and still keep that slim

YOU wouldn't call it the greatest problem facing the nation today, but it's important to 2,000,000 or more American women who are pregnant at the moment—and to their husbands. The question is: Can a woman keep her figure in spite of bearing children? Or must she ever after go around looking like a sack of potatoes?

Hollywood, where the stars have done their bit to increase the birth rate, is cheerful on the subject—and with reason. Look at the line-up of recent movie-actress mothers. They've all emerged intact as to figure and career, and with children to exhibit along with any Academy Awards that may come their way. There are Alice Faye, Joan Blondell, Lana Turner. There are Joan Bennett, Rosalind Russell, Margaret Sullavan and Brenda Joyce. There are Gene Tierney, Cobina Wright, Jr., Veronica Lake. Mammamas all, and nothing bigger than a 25-inch waistline in the whole crowd. Betty Grable is expecting a child in April, and it's a safe bet that she too will snap right back to slender shapeliness.

It sounds irritatingly simple to a non-movie mother. You see an actress in a

Cheryl, daughter of Lana Turner and Privat
old, but her mama is back on the M-G-M lot

