

## *To the Azores*

At midnight we took off for our first over-water hop of 8½ hours, flying to Santa Maria in the historic Azores. We practiced adjusting our Mae West belts which are self-inflating by means of a cartridge similar to the Sparklet used in charged water bottles.

On our plane were seven good-looking young Lieutenants who had just come from Okinawa and were enroute to a deployment centre in France to instruct our G.I.s in Europe on Pacific warfare. These boys were decorated with the Purple Heart and various ribbons for meritorious action under fire.

It was a perfect moonlight night, the air was calm, and the sea was mirrorlike. Indeed, the ride to the Azores at 7,000 feet was more comfortable than a Super-Chief ride across America.

Near the end of this 8½ hour flight, we sighted Ponta Delgada. It is about 8 a.m. E.W.T. and approximately noon Sunday, Azores time. The beautiful sunshine lit the lovely farms of the Azores beneath us. I wished that I could be put down to spend a few days in the charming environment.

There are three main islands in the Azores; we deplaned at Santa Maria, an island 150 miles from Ponta Delgada, and were met by a Lieutenant, a Belgian by birth; he heard last spring his parents had been killed by rocket bombs.

Again we were treated royally: at each stop a Lieutenant or a Captain would come aboard the plane and call for Messrs. Hanes and Berlin. We were the first passengers to deplane and were taken immediately to the officers' quarters where we were served good meals. The War Department had seen to it that we were properly cared for.

Santa Maria has a beautiful airport built by Pan-American engineers. We were told that the British had refused to let Americans land at Ponta Delgada, therefore the Santa Maria airport was constructed by our people and will no doubt in the future be used as a Pan American base.

Here there are some 2,500 Army personnel. I counted on the ground 40 big transport planes, four-motor jobs such as we were in, with propellers spinning, arriving and departing to Europe and home. This airdrome is 5½ hours flying time from Casablanca.

Again we saw G.I.s going home all excited. They were all carrying German pistols, camera, binoculars and other loot—this war is exactly like the last war in that soldiers and sailors inevitably are souvenir-collectors.

Seated alongside us at breakfast were some Egyptian delegates—in flowing robes—returning from the San Francisco conference. There were also Chinese, Indians—a conglomeration of nationalities—all being conveyed by this most efficient Army Transport Command to and from various ports. At each one of these ports the hotel was called Hotel de Gink, the name given to airport hotels.

### *Take-off for France*

The temperature at Santa Maria is enjoyable—semi-tropical, never too warm and never cold. After staying on the ground about an hour, we then took off for an eight hours' over-water flight to France.

We left at about 9 a.m. Sunday, our time. Incidentally, last night there was only about 3½ hours of darkness. Again we flew over a calm, beautiful sea in gorgeous sunshine, flying at 7,000 feet, our engine functioning perfectly.

A beautiful over-water hop, our first land call was Brest, France. It gave me a thrill because in 1917, as a young Naval Officer, I was making monthly troop-carrying trips to this port of debarkation.

We flew over Brest at 3:45 p.m. I could easily discern the main street, Rue de Siam. Apparently there was not a great