Every man flattened himself but the Lieutenant who sat immobile and immune until the blast faded away. Then he completed his instructions with nerveless calm.

The N. C. O's. got to their feet and the squads lined up five yards apart. A hand signal passed from man to man. At the front end of the line a few men jumped through the hedge row and ran crouching along the other side. Each squad leader was followed by what was left of his men.

The peace of Normandy was blasted by a heavy volley of rifle fire. The staccato notes of machine guns added to the awful din. Shells from the 88's crashed all around, throwing dirt and jagged fragments of steel in all directions. The running men heard the muffled pop of mortar shells set off in the distance. Two dropped to the ground and lay lifeless, but no one stopped. Mortar shells came down with the rain, shattering helmets and flesh and strewing pieces of things over the soggy ground. Medics followed in the rear of the attackers. They paused to lean down and turn over certain muddy heaps... and then shoved on.

Now the 88's and mortars which were bursting in back of the men ceased abruptly. The Americans were so close to the Jerries that long range fire from the Germans would have hit their own men. Fierce firing from the small arms mounted steadily. The Americans piled into the opposite hedge row, firing wildly through it at the retreating Jerries. Then all was quiet again except for the clicking of equipment and the gutteral groans of the wounded and dying. There was a final round of small arms fire. The Jerries had disappeared. The rain drizzled on.

The men sat down exhausted, wiping the sweat and rain from their dirty faces, and panting heavily for breath. Someone started to dig a fresh slit trench in the mud by the newly captured hedge row. One by one the others loosened their shovels from their water-soaked belts. After a few minutes the lull was broken by the deadly whistle.

"Here they come again. Dig faster." z-z-z-z-Z-Z-Z-Z-z-z-z-z-z-z-
"Oh, brother, this one's mine!" WHAM-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-

The Hand Of Fate
MURIEL HOLLAND

Anita Colby ripped open the yellow envelope in her hand and devoured its message in one hasty glance. "Jan!" she screamed. "Jan! You'll never guess what!"

Her roommate emerged from the depths of a wardrobe trunk long enough for a curious "What's up?"

A second time Anita scanned the words, then fell back on the bed with a groan. "What do I do now? Oh—wait till you hear."

"Your bank account's overdrawn again," Jan stated, and she leaned over the trunk once again.

"No, nothing so simple as that."

"Bill got shore-leave and married a geisha girl."

"I don't see how you can joke at a time like this. What'll I ever do?" and Anita rolled over and buried her head under a pillow.

The odor of moth balls filled the small
room as Jan shook them out of a sweater. She folded it, placed it on the mounting pile of brightly colored sweaters, then sat down next to Anita. "If it's that bad you'd better tell me," she said. "C'mon—give."

The dramatic effect of the announcement was smothered in the pillow. "Bill isn't in Japan anymore—he's on his way home. Bill will be here Saturday in time for the dance."

"For the Homecoming dance? Nita!" cried Jan. "But you already have a date with—"

"With Don Hartman. What'll I ever do?" wailed Anita for the third time as she pulled herself limply to a sitting position. "Of course I've been wanting him to come home, but why did it have to be this week-end? It always turns out so beautifully for them." She shot a bitter look at the "Back Home for Keeps" pictures tacked on the wall.

Jan shook her head. "It wouldn't be so bad if he didn't think you were practically engaged. Your double life sure gets you into some of the worst messes," she said.

"I know it."

"Not that I'm one to say 'I told you so,'" she continued, "But I told you so. You should be glad there's only one of them coming home."

Anita shuddered. She caught sight of the clock on the desk, its hands pointing to three minutes after four o'clock. "Say, I'm late for class," she exclaimed. "I've already cut twice so I guess I'd better go this time. Try to think of something!"

The latter she called over her shoulder as she dashed out the door.

Jan sighed and shrugged her shoulders.

The only ideas that came to her she promptly rejected. She couldn't break the date with Don because that would blackball her for future dating in his fraternity. Neither could she tell Bill she was sick and then go to the dance with Don since Bill would certainly hear of it.

She simply had to go to the dance; especially since she had braved the fierce chow dog at the gate and two cases of measles inside the dressmaker's house to have a new formal fitted. That same formal was hanging in a cellophane bag in the closet now like a soft pink shadow.

The afternoon sunlight shone warmly into the room where Anita was trying to concentrate on The Merchant of Venice. Some how or other the casket story kept getting confused with the dance. That Portia didn't realize what a lucky girl she was to have her father and Fate decide her future for her. "It's a good thing I didn't take Don's pin last Saturday," she remarked suddenly.

"It certainly is," said Jan tartly from the other side of the room. "That's one time you showed some sense. Some day these fellows are all going to get together, and then watch the fur fly!"

Suddenly Anita felt hot and uncomfortable all over. "Think I'll go down and have a coke or something—I don't feel very good. Coming with me?" she asked.

"No thanks—I'm going to wash my hair."

Armed with towel, shampoo, comb, and brush Jan went down the hall and into the bathroom, whistling an off-key tune. Still whistling, fifteen minutes later she returned her head done up in a blue towel like a maharajah. The whistle died on her lips as she entered the room.

Anita lay across the bed, the covers in a rumpled heap around her, crying noise-
lessly. "What on earth is the matter with you?" asked Jan.

Anita lifted her head long enough to gulp "I won't get to go to the dance after all! And I won't get to see Bill, either. Oh, I wish I were dead!"
All Jan could say was "Why not?"
"I've got the measles," sobbed Anita.

Winged Suicide

JACK DEMLOW

With every flight you become more convinced that a combat mission in this ship is nothing short of suicide. This suicide ship is the Army Air Forces' CG-4A Cargo Glider, commonly referred to as the "Whisper Ship," "Flying Coffin," "G-Bird," or "One-way Johnnie." Just looking at the glider, crouched in its own grotesque manner on the runway, makes you say to yourself, "How will it ever stay in one piece during the flight—not to speak of the landing shock?" Approaching the ship, you can not help noticing the flimsy fabric, the wooden skids beneath the repulsive, stubby nose, and the celluloid window enclosing the pilot's compartment.

Stepping into the cargo compartment of the "G-Bird," you may pull the fabric door open with a sudden jerk, in which case the door falls off its hinges and is blown feebly down the runway by the prop-wash of the two ship. (The tow ship is the transport plane to which the glider is connected by means of a stout nylon tow-line.) Then, too, you may lose your balance, and placing your hand against the side of the ship to prevent your falling, much to your surprise, you will continue to fall accompanied by a ripping sound caused by your hand plunging with little resistance through the frail fabric of the ship's covering. Should neither of these accidents befall you, you will pass through the cargo compartment and take your place in the pilot's seat, see no armor plate, no bullet proof glass nor any inter-phone communication equipment. At this time, you will realize that you are to fly the most vulnerable ship in the air. You also will realize if anything should go wrong during the mission—having no radio contact whatsoever with the two ship—your only alternative would be to "cut-off" or release your glider from the tow-line, and then pray that you will land in friendly territory.

While you are in the pilot's compartment, your eyes may fall upon a huge sheathed, machete strapped to the flimsy braces of the compartment. Upon questioning, you will find that this is a piece of emergency equipment needed in the event that the pilot of your tow ship decides to release the glider prematurely. In this case, the three hundred and fifty foot tow rope snaps back towards the glider and sometimes entwines itself about the landing gear. To attempt a landing with the remainder of the rope dangling from your ship would be sure suicide as the rope undoubtedly would catch the tree tops and send you crashing earthward with no control over the ship. In this emergency, your co-pilot is to climb out on the landing gear and cut the rope with the machete, while the pilot continues to fly the glider and at the same time selects the field for an emergency landing.