

THE BIG JOB

BASIC MAGNESIUM NEWS LETTER

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OCTOBER, 1918:--It's the fighting 18th Infantry, First Division, AEF, driving forward near Exermont up in the Argonne--and stopped. Stopped by a hill studded with death-spitting German machine guns. Those men of the 18th have cleaned out hill after hill like this one in their onward smash to the Meuse. It's dirty business, all of it.

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The main body of the 18th burrows into foxholes and waits. A detail, they know, is crawling forward to rout out the enemy's machine gun nests. Suddenly the tension breaks. The men in the foxholes (after the uncanny manner of soldiers) sense, rather than know, that the machine gunners have been taken care of. The regiment rises and moves forward once more.

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Back at the regimental post of command a husky six-foot-and-a-yard-wide soldier reports. His name is Harry Atkinson. He has 123 German prisoners with him. They are the machine gunners from the hill. He has captured them single-handed. How did he do it? Let him tell: "Why, it was easy. They were hungry--and I surrounded 'em."

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Uncle Sam didn't think so. His Congress voted Harry Atkinson the Congressional Medal of Honor--for bravery in action beyond the call of duty. Other allied governments did likewise.

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SPRING, 1942: The place is the Bataan peninsula. General Douglas MacArthur's men are writing a new American epic in blood and sweat. A lone American plane tackles a flock of Zeros. They are too many for the single Yank eagle. The American plane, badly hit, flutters to earth. The pilot bails out--but the Japs strafe him as he dangles helplessly from his chute. Ground Japs punish him after he reaches the



HARRY ATKINSON, McNeil employee, handles the first incendiary bomb made from magnesium produced at BMI. The accompanying record of events will explain to you why he is pleased.

ground. He is terribly--almost mortally wounded. Weeks later his relatives in the United States learn that he is in a West Coast hospital with an arm and a leg gone, and with part of his other foot shot away.

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OCTOBER, 1942:--It's midnight on the BMI project in the heart of Nevada's desert. "Toot! Toot!"

That's Harry Atkinson, Casey Jones of the graveyard shift, whistling the big Diesel locomotive to a switch. There he is--21 years to the day after capturing those 123 Germans, helping to win another war. Legionnaire, father, locomotive engineer--shunting boxcars in the dark so Uncle Sam can have plenty of magnesium for incendiary bombs. Harry has more than a patriotic interest in getting magnesium fire bombs

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into Tokio-bound American planes. "Toot!" Toot!" Gangway for materials for Uncle's No. 1 war project! A Medal of Honor Man is at the throttle!

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Not long ago a modern miracle of electro-chemistry produced the first metallic magnesium in the world's largest plant. This first production at BMI gave the whole project a lift--including Harry Atkinson.

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Last week there arrived here at BMI from a western factory, an incendiary bomb--the first one made from Magnesium produced here--the first one in a stream of them that is going to flow in a blast of flame from Basic to Berlin and Tokio.

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Well, we naturally telephoned Harry Atkinson to tell him about it. Woke him up, in fact, after he'd had only three hours sleep. He hustled right out from Vegas to the plant. He wanted to see that first incendiary bomb and maybe handle it.

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Harry Atkinson picked up that first incendiary bomb. Is it any wonder he was glad to feel the weight of it in his hand? Or that he smiled a little?

No. It isn't any wonder at all. Because that boy pilot who left a leg and an arm in Bataan--that lad who is on his back in the Army West Coast hospital--that young hero is Harry Atkinson's son--his only son--and HIS name is Harry Atkinson, too.

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Harry, the elder, fondled the magnesium bomb. We don't know what he thought, but we do know what he said.

"Head for the cellar, you yellow-bellied badgers," said Harry Atkinson. "Here they come."

THINGS HUMMING AROUND HERE

Rapid fire developments are taking place around these parts. The plant is progressing satisfactorily--and the community is really growing up.

Shipments of chlorine for war needs have reached up into the thousands of tons.

More than 250 parents met the other night to organize a Parent-Teachers Association in the school district. That includes the townsite, the trailer camp, and Pittman.

BOY SCOUTS ORGANIZE

At least one Boy Scout Troop is organized, with the Legion as sponsor. More troops will probably follow.

One of the tunnel kilns in the preparation plant is sending pellets to the chlorinators. And preparation is keeping well ahead of the needs of the metals units.

LIBRARY STARTED

A temporary building has been moved to a site near the school, and will be used as a library. Anybody having books to donate is requested to deliver them to Miss Janet Scott at the BMI technical library in the Basic Administration building. Several experienced women have volunteered to act as Townsite librarians. Martie Parke, community service officer of the Legion post is moving spirit of the library.

HALLOWE'N PARTY

The kids are going to be busy on Hallowe'n. Assisted by the Legion Post and the USO, the newly organized Student Council at the Basic School will stage two parties on Hallowe'n, Saturday, October 31. The first will be for boys and girls from the First to the Sixth grades inclusive. There will be a parade in costume up Water street, and a blowout with contests and movies (furnished by the USO) in the school auditorium. When the first party is over--about 8 o'clock--there will be a costume shindig, with movies, contests, and dancing for boys and girls from the Seventh to the Twelfth grades, inclusive. Admission to the first party will be 10 cents--to the second, 25 cents.

LANDSCAPING, STORES, SCHOOL

Work will begin at once on the job of landscaping Basic Townsite. More than four million square feet of lawn will be put in at once. William Norman of Phoenix is the landscaper. McNeil is doing the work. First lawn will be at the hospital.

Work on store buildings in the business district will be pushed so that groceries and drygoods will be on sale before gasoline rationing begins.

Plans have been completed for a six-room addition to the school--needed because of an enrollment of nearly 1100 students. DPC has authorized construction and work will start very soon.

SPECIAL NOTICE

P-T-A MEETING

For All Parents

of

School Students

School Auditorium

Monday, Oct. 28 - 7 p.m.

Election of Officers