



MIKE GOUNARIDES

General Eisenhower, SHAPE chief, and aide "Tony" Biddle, who deals directly with representatives of the 12 North Atlantic Pact powers

General Ike's MIRACLE MAN

By WILLIAM ATTWOOD and SEYMOUR FREIDIN

Collier's Bureau Team

Diplomat, soldier, administrator, socialite, linguist, prize fighter and international charmer, Anthony Joseph Drexel Biddle, Jr., helps shape SHAPE. He's Eisenhower's strong right hand

Paris

IT WAS only 9:00 A.M., but one corridor of the Hotel Astoria, home base of the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers in Europe, was already crowded. Two Norwegian captains were arguing over a sheaf of staff directives; a Belgian colonel was pacing up and down and looking at his watch; nearby, a swarthy naval officer stood in a doorway and exchanged Italian pleasantries with burly, good-natured Lieutenant Colonel Vernon Walters, an American.

Across the corridor came the sound of clacking typewriters and the voice of the Dutch receptionist repeating a new arrival's name in guttural French.

Two phones were ringing. Lieutenant Colonel Ed Bechtold of the U.S. Army picked one up, spoke a few words, set it back on its cradle and sighed.

"Organized chaos," he murmured. "That's the only way to describe this office."

An American major waiting, like the others, to talk to SHAPE's Executive for Military Representatives, leaned forward expectantly.

"Any chance of seeing the boss this morning?" he asked.

Just then a door swung open and the boss, a lithe, smoothly groomed brigadier general named Anthony Joseph Drexel Biddle, Jr., emerged, his

arm draped around the shoulders of a diminutive French colonel. Both were smiling warmly.

"*Mon cher colonel*," the general was saying. "I'm so glad you were able to come in. And you will remember me to your charming wife, won't you?"

Before the Frenchman could burble a reply, the Belgian had grabbed Biddle's hand in both of his. "General Beedle!" he exclaimed, "permit me to congratulate you on your promotion!" He beamed at Biddle—who had been promoted from colonel just a few days before—as though a great wrong had at last been rectified.

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Biddle's smile broadened, "Ah, merci, merci, mon colonel, vous êtes très gentil."

Bechtold handed him a slip of paper. "Thanks, Ed," he said and nodded to the impatient American major. "Hello, Sam, I'm awfully sorry to keep you waiting. Be right with you, old man." He shook hands with the Norwegians, invited the Italian naval officer into his office and paused as he spotted the two reporters at the entrance.

"Bill—Si. Gee, it's nice to see you again. Are you free for lunch? Wonderful. I'll see you then."

The door closed softly behind him. Mrs. Rebecca Broussard, one of the two American secretaries in the outer office, looked up from her typewriter with unfeigned admiration. "That man," she said, "is absolutely unbelievable."

You don't have to be in SHAPE headquarters very long to learn that Mrs. Broussard's opinion is generally shared by everyone who has been exposed to the famous Biddle charm. And that includes just about all the 269 members of SHAPE's international staff, from General Dwight D. Eisenhower down to the MP at the door of the bustling headquarters building.

For Biddle, whose job is unique even in such an unorthodox headquarters as SHAPE, is in contact with more people from more different countries than any American in uniform today. As Eisenhower's Executive for National Military Representatives, he serves as a combination trouble shooter, diplomat and efficiency expert between SHAPE and the 12 governments which have joined the North Atlantic Pact and are pooling their forces under General Ike's command.

Despite his uniform, Biddle doesn't represent or speak for the United States. "I'm sort of an international fella," he tells visitors, "the way Trygve Lie is over at the UN. My relations with the American military representatives here are no different from my relations with the Luxembourgier."

As an example of how Biddle's office operates, just suppose the Danish government decides to transfer two tank regiments to Eisenhower's command. The decision will be transmitted from Copenhagen to Lieutenant Colonel V. L. U. Gyth, Denmark's National Military Representative (NMR) at SHAPE.

Without Biddle's office to go to, Colonel Gyth would have to run around to the various staff sections of the headquarters responsible for fitting new troops into the joint command. He'd have to find out about supplies, training and a dozen other logistical details—often from officers who might not even understand what he was saying.

Under the present setup, he just goes to Biddle's office with his information; in jig time the news is transmitted to the right people, and Colonel Gyth has received the answers requested by his government. "If we're stumped," said Colonel Bechtold, "we just shop for a solution till we find it."

Multiply the Danish officer's problem by 10 (Portugal and Iceland have no permanent representative at SHAPE) and you get an idea of the confusion that would exist without Biddle's staff to untangle the lines, and without Biddle's personality to smooth ruffled tempers. You also begin to see why the corridor is so crowded at 9:00 A.M. and why the atmosphere, as Colonel Bechtold muttered, can sometimes be likened to organized chaos.

Fortunately, the man who presides over this chaos is a tough-minded executive under his velvety exterior. People who have met him only briefly sometimes go away with the impression that he's a professional charmer, long on poise but short on brains. Later, if they see him in action, they realize that it's a mistake ever to underestimate him.

Summary of a Successful Career

At fifty-four, he can already look back on a career studded with success and variety—as a businessman, as a diplomat and as a soldier in two world wars. In the course of his career he's also managed to be voted one of America's 10-best-dressed men, to win France's court tennis championship, and to get married three times and have four children, the last only a few months ago. (He's also the grandfather of four.)

The charm which strangers tend to mistake for affectation comes as naturally to Biddle as a Southerner's drawl. "He just enjoys being nice to people," said his secretary, Miss Mary MacElvane, who had previously served two years with Biddle in the Pentagon. "He's always been that way. Generals and privates get the same treatment—and they all go away happy."

Biddle's present job typifies the international spirit that has permeated SHAPE since the headquarters opened for business last winter. The man Americans call "Tony" and most of the Allies know as "General Beedle" is now regarded as the engineer who keeps all the tricky international gears meshing smoothly. He thinks it's the most interesting job he's ever had.

"I also think it's one of the toughest and most important," he told us during a lull in the day's chaos. "A lot depends on making SHAPE work efficiently. Personally, the hardest thing I have

to do is put myself in the other fella's shoes all the time. When a Norwegian comes into my office, I've got to try and *think* like a Norwegian."

If any American is qualified for this sort of assignment, Biddle should be; during World War II he was United States Ambassador and Minister to eight governments-in-exile in London—and used to run himself ragged keeping all his diplomatic appointments. "It was pretty hectic," he admits. "Lunch with the Poles, tea with the Greeks, cocktails with the Yugoslavs and so on." The British had eight different people doing his job.

Today, as Ike's go-between to 12 governments at SHAPE, he doesn't have to cover so much territory. The National Military Representatives, including the American, come to him. And, as Miss MacElvane says, they usually go away happy.

"I've been here only a couple of weeks," we were told by Colonel Andreas Wettre of Norway, "but Biddle makes me feel I've known him for years."

Lieutenant Colonel Francesco Sforza of Italy admitted he'd been dubious about how so many nationalities could work together in one headquarters. "But Tony Biddle proved to me it could be done," he said.

"SHAPE would be at least six weeks behind schedule if not for him," added France's Major André Loheac. "Sometimes I think we never would have got going at all."

With different accents but with the same sincerity, the Danish, Dutch, British, Belgian and American NMRs agree that Biddle's appointment was the best thing that had happened to SHAPE since General Eisenhower was put in charge.

Ike's able chief of staff, Lieutenant General Alfred M. Gruenther, feels the same way. "Tony's one of the most valuable men on the staff," he told us. "He's able to say 'no' in such a way that it sounds like a compliment."

One reason Biddle gets along so well with his polyglot associates is that he knows the psychology of Europeans as do few American soldiers or diplomats. His knowledge is based on years of experience on the Continent under especially trying conditions. "In one year of tragedy," he told us, "you get to know a people better than if you live with them for 20 years in peacetime."

The years that Biddle served in Europe—from 1934 to 1948—were mostly tragic ones. As America's envoy to Poland in 1939, he led an embassy caravan that accompanied the Polish government on its desperate trek to the Romanian border, while the Nazis and their Russian partners were closing in on both sides. (Continued on page 57)

Charmer Biddle borrows guest's umbrella for use as pointer during a talk on SHAPE given at Paris lunch held by an American women's group

ROBERT CAPA



Married in 1946, General Biddle and his attractive wife live, with the two children, Anthony III and Margaret, Jr., near Eisenhowers

ROBERT CAPA



The BERMUDA SHORTS

By AL HINE

The other house guest that week end was a model, and she was so sophisticated that most of the time Ted Morrow didn't even know what she was trying to say

TED MORROW cleared his throat slightly as he came into the living room, and Helen Boyer looked up from the frame on which she was hooking a rug.

"Heaven preserve us!" she cried. "Gracious heaven preserve us! Look at him, Jeff! Whatever has the boy got on?"

Her husband came in from the pantry, balancing three coffee cups.

"The aurora borealis?" Jeff suggested. "Or sunrise over the Grand Canyon? Effective, but it will take a little getting used to."

"They're very colorful," said Mary Lee Tate, the baby sitter, doubtfully but helpfully.

"Funny man," six-year-old Kristi Boyer said from the floor.

"Fuddy mad," echoed Michael, her four-year-old brother.

"They're Bermuda shorts," Ted said defensively. "That's what they are."

"Bermuda shorts, darling," said Linda Urban, his fellow week-end guest, "are really rather long. And usually monotone. And smart."

"Well, I got these in Bermuda, anyway," Ted said. "Last winter. This is the first time I ever wore them."

"I'd call them Hollywood trunks," Helen Boyer said. "Anyway, you can say they're colorful."

"That's what I did say," Mary Lee Tate said. "I think I like them."

The baby sitter's unemphatic approval seemed the kindest, least contrived speech Ted had heard in some time.

"Trunks, shorts—what's the difference," Jeff said. "You want some more coffee, Ted?"

Ted mumbled, "No, thanks," and settled uncomfortably on the sofa next to Linda. A fine week end it was turning out to be. A casual invitation from the Boyers at a cocktail party, a beautiful break in the midsummer monotony of Manhattan, and everything went wrong with it. The varicolored shorts which had appealed to him in the store window had confounded him in the living room of his new friends and in front of Linda, the most beautiful girl he was likely to meet in a long time. Mary Lee was a beautiful girl, too, he realized with a start watching the grace with which she was helping the Boyer children build a block house. And, remembering her sympathetic speech, he felt even worse and more on the defensive.

THE feeling had been going on ever since he had arrived at the Boyers', the night before. Or even earlier. He had felt defensive in Grand Central when he had accidentally knocked over the bags of the girl who was standing next to him waiting for the 4:30. He had felt even more defensive when he had got off at Westport-Saugatuck and found that the girl was his fellow guest at the Boyers', that her name was Linda, and that he was supposed to know her by reputation.

For Helen Boyer had cooed: "And this is Linda Urban, the Florentine Blouse ads. Linda—Ted Morrow. He's in publishing."

Helen and Jeff Boyer lived in a beautifully remodeled barn in lower Connecticut and devoted their spare time to getting their bachelor and maiden friends married. Jeff designed furniture, and Helen helped Jeff. They were considered a charming couple, and they were generally pardoned for trying to make over their single friends in their own image.

Ted, only six months a New Yorker, only recently removed from the Y.M.C.A. to a two-by-four apartment of his own, was their most recent acquisition.

He was an acceptable-appearing young man and he had once helped Helen and Jeff steer an incapacitated friend home from a disharmonious brawl somewhere in Beekman Place. He was single and he didn't eat with his fingers. He was invited to the Boyers' for the week end.

So, at the Westport station, Ted smiled at Linda (Continued on page 62)

"But really," Ted said to Mary Lee, "what you're missing is the difference between family life in the city and in the suburbs—" "Come along, professor," Linda said

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