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THE AMERICAN EAGLE



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AIRCRAFT PLANS

THE AMERICAN EAGLE

NOVEMBER 1942

10¢

SUMMER
ISSUE

A THRILLING
PUBLICATION

42

50

ANZAC WINGS
A Full Book-Length War-Air
Novel Featuring the
World's Greatest Sky Fighter

PRUSSIAN PATSIES

An Ambrose
Holley Howl

By
**JOE
ARCHIBALD**



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UNITED STATES
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BONDS
AND STAMPS

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Yes, the coupon below entitles you to one or two of these nationally advertised Push-Button Fountain Pens for only 69¢ (two for \$1.25)... and for prompt action your name will be imprinted on your pens without charge! This is the one advertising bargain you can't pass up! If you don't have a fountain pen now, this is your chance to get a life service pen for only 69¢ and get your name in gold letters on it free. But you must act promptly. The supply, due to the national emergency, is definitely limited. Don't wait—clip the coupon and mail it today sure.

SEND NO MONEY... Just Mail the Coupon Today... Pay Postman On Guarantee of 100% Satisfaction or Your Money Back!

Will you accept this friendly challenge? Will you send for this amazing value fountain pen on ten days' trial? Are you willing to be convinced that a guarantee-for-life fountain pen need not be expensive? Then clip the coupon and mail it today. Send No Money! When your fountain pen arrives, deposit 69¢ for each pen you order (2 for \$1.25), plus postage charges. Then inspect your pen carefully. See how more easily it fills, how wonderfully neat it writes. Read the guarantee of life service that accompanies every pen. See your name imprinted in gold on your pen or pens. Then, if you don't agree you've made a fountain pen discovery that may save you a great many dollars, if you aren't so proud of your pen you want to show it to everyone, if you aren't 100% satisfied in every way, simply return the pen within ten days and get Your Money Back for the asking! Remember, this is an advertising offer only. Don't expect to get this amazing pen value with your name imprinted free, for long. You must act right away. Clip the coupon... send for your beautiful, guaranteed-for-life, push-button fountain pen right now. The price is only 69¢ each, C.O.D. (2 for \$1.25).

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10-DAY TRIAL COUPON

Send two (2) brand-new Push Button Fountain Pens with names imprinted as checked below. On arrival I deposit \$1.25 plus postage with postman on understanding these pens are backed by a guarantee of life service... also, I may return pens for any reason within 10 days and get my money back.

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More Now Make \$30 \$40 \$50 a Week than Ever Before

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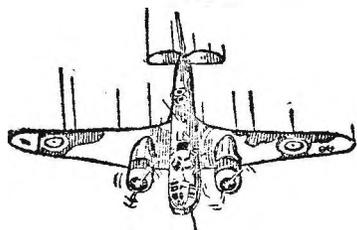
THE AMERICAN EAGLE



Vol. XXIV, No. 3

BRUCE MCALESTER, Editor

Summer, 1942



A Full-Length War-Air Action Novel

ANZAC WINGS

By LIEUT. SCOTT MORGAN

Hot on the trail of a fiendish Jap plot for the invasion of Australia, John Masters, the world's greatest sky fighter, faces the gravest peril of his battling career!

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Join Our Nation-wide Club for the Air-Minded!

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SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY



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(Do you have instrument.....)

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Street

City State

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City _____ State _____

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ABSOLUTELY NOT! THE ATLAS DYNAMIC TENSION SYSTEM MAKES MUSCLES GROW FAST!

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I can broaden your shoulders, strengthen your back, develop your whole muscular system **INSIDE** and **OUTSIDE!** I can add inches to your chest, give you a vise-like grip, make those legs of yours lithe and powerful. I can shoot new strength into your old backbone, exercise those inner organs, help you cram your body so full of pep, vigor and red-blooded vitality that you won't feel there's even "standing room" left for weakness and that lazy feeling! Before I get through with you I'll have your whole frame "measured" to a nice, new, beautiful suit of muscle!

What's My Secret?

"Dynamic Tension!" That's the ticket! The *identical natural* method that I myself developed to change my body from the scrawny, skinny-chested weakling I was at 17 to my present super-man physique! Thousands of other fellows are becoming marvelous physical specimens — *my way*. I give you no *gadgets* or *contraptions* to fool with. When you have learned to develop your strength through "Dynamic Tension" you can laugh at *artificial* muscle-makers. You simply utilize the **DORMANT** muscle-power in your own

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FREE BOOK "Everlasting Health and Strength"

In it I talk to you in straight-from-the-shoulder language. Packed with inspirational pictures of myself and pupils — fellows who became **NEW MEN** in strength, my way. Let me show you what I helped **THEM** do. See what I can do for **YOU!** For a real thrill, send for this book **today.** **AT ONCE, CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 77-W, 115 East 23rd Street, New York City.**



CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 77-W, 115 East 23rd Street, New York, N. Y.

I want the proof that your system of "Dynamic Tension" will help make a New Man of me — give me a healthy, husky body and big muscular development. Send me your free book, "Everlasting Health and Strength."

Name (Please print or write plainly.)

Address

City State.....

Around the Hangar



A Department

for Readers

YOU'RE looking good, everybody. We bet it is because you are getting more exercise lately and have to cut down on the sugar. There will be no lobbying before this session as enough mail is stacked up here in the briefing room to bend the backs of a battalion of letter carriers.

Oswald will not be with us as he is working on a substitute for rubber. He told us it would be a pushover if he could get the formula that made his mother-in-law's tongue.

Peter Starin of 138 Madison Ave., Clifton, N. J., starts off by climbing Lieut. Morgan's gaunt frame but he does not use spurs.

How 'bout a few World War I stories by Lieut. Scott Morgan?

Gee, but those Joe Archibald stories are solid and I do mean it.

One of the many reasons why I would very much like to have Masters in War I is because I've read all about what he has done with some of the modern ships against the Heimites. And gosh, I'd certainly like to see what that guy could do in a Spad against a bunch of Fokkers, so how about it, Mr. Morgan and some of you first World War fans! If he won't do it let's bombard him with mail, okay, pals?

Whew! I'm all fagged out from that little spiel, and please publish this letter, it might arouse some of my first World War pals who sit back and agree with the fellows who ask for first World War stories but never do anything about it. Maybe now you will.

A die-hard aren't you, Pete? We wish Joe's dome was as solid as his yarns. Don't praise him too much, please. He goes for it like a bear goes for honey. Give him cigars and flattery and he don't need groceries.

We'll see how your campaign works, Pete.

Johnny Dibrell brings up the Vichy Viper again. To date LeCommer has not made a peep out of him and we don't believe he ever will. Johnny left no address with us and maybe he is traveling about in a trailer. Anyway Johnny gets the gun:

The other day I got hold of a recent issue of THE AMERICAN EAGLE. That jerk Jean LeCommer, Gestapo agent or whatever he is, is probably pushing up daisies now, if the G-2 got hold of him. He sure can sling a line. I've got a brother in the army and two cousins, flyers in the Navy Air Corps, and I will tell them to tell Adolph he is slipping when they get hold of him.

I am vastly interested in your mag but if I were you I'd slow down Johnny Masters or there won't be any Germans left for the R. A. F. to look after. Joe Archibald must be off his beam, or he would translate his lingo.

List me as a pen pal, please. I am fifteen, intend to become fighter pilot, and know that a two-second burst from any Browning will down an Me, a DO-24 or a Stuka.

You come from a fighting family, Johnny and you better know how to use your dukes

as we showed Joe Archibald what you said about him.

The writer of the Ambrose and Muley stories is far from the pink of perfection as three of his fingers are in bad shape. He spotted the remains of a fifteen center at the curb in Rockefeller Center last Friday and only about three cents worth had been smoked out of it. The trouble was that a mounted cop's horse stepped on Joe's flipper when he sniped.

Wm. Fessler, also no address available (What goes?) hands us a two-second burst that bounces off the greenhouse. Complains Bill:

Enclosed you will find the name-strip from R A F ACES, AMERICAN EAGLE and SKY FIGHTERS



and a self-addressed envelope for which please send me a set of World War Aces.

I only have one measly bone to pick, but there's plenty on it. I buy every kind of air fiction mag that comes through this way, but I still have to wait about two or three weeks between issues before one comes out again. I'm willing to buy as many as I can read between those two or three weeks, but what happens? I have to wait. I know a couple of other fellows who are in the same boat. How about it?

I'm glad you are not picking Morgan's bones as there is nothing on them but fabric, Bill. It is nice to know you can't get enough of THE AMERICAN EAGLE. Hitler's going to get enough of the bird.

At last, a guy who has an address. George Blattner, 3715 Watson Rd., St. Louis, Mo., contributes a neat bit of machine writing. Look it over, you citizens who write with an orange stick and with your flying gloves on!

I've just finished reading FLIGHT OVER LISBON. It was swell. What has become of R-47? Is she dead? I sure hope Lieut. Scott Morgan has exterminated her. As I said before, Morgan's stories are swell, but why not put Masters in World War I? He must be getting a few gray hairs by

(Continued on page 10)

Increased production means more jobs for MACHINISTS

—and **MORE PAY** for men who know their work

This home-study course gives you the practical facts on modern machines, up-to-date methods, you need to advance in machine shop work. Take advantage of the other man's experience as found in books, to solve your problems, increase your efficiency, with



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WITHIN the covers of these six books are to be found all the facts that you will want to increase your practical knowledge of machine shop work and to give you the ability to handle all kinds of jobs swiftly, smoothly, correctly. Each of the six volumes contains a complete record of

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FRED COLVIN AND FRANK STANLEY, well-known authors of many intensely practical books for machine shop men, have had years of experience, not only in on-the-job practice themselves, but also in keeping abreast of latest methods from one end of the metal-working industry to the other, through their editorial contacts with leading shops throughout the country.

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- complete guide for everybody, from shop executives to apprentices, interested in the operation of machines used in turning and boring practices
- essential principles and major problems involved in turning and boring operations
- description of all important varieties of machines, both manual and automatic, and methods of operating them
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- practical information on grinding machines and abrasive wheels, showing what they do, how to operate them, and how to make best use of them on various types of work
- preferred methods of leading shops, on speeds, feeds, precision grinding, automatic machines, special work, etc.
- training in the various operations performed in drilling and surfacing materials in the machine shop
- valuable data, methods, suggestions, and illustrations from accepted practice, showing plainly how to handle the cutting of materials, the care of tools, methods of production, etc.
- exact, descriptive data on all aspects of gear cutting practice, useful in shops of any size
- essentials of selecting machines, setting up work, and handling operations in reaming, tapping, planing, shaping, slotting, milling, and broaching.

work as it is done today in America's most progressive and efficient shops. The books answer your questions on methods and machines—tell what you need to know about the operation of machines of all types and sizes for the whole range of metal cutting, forming, and finishing operations—show by text, diagram and illustration the essential points of setting up work.

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Let us send you these fact-packed books for 10 days' free examination, with no obligation to buy the books unless you want them. Remember that, if you decide to keep the books the special library price represents a saving of \$2.00 on the price of the books if you were to buy them separately. Furthermore, you may have the privilege of paying in small monthly installments, while you use the books. Send the coupon today.



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Name

Address..... Position

City and State..... Company.....

TH-7-43

AROUND THE HANGAR

(Continued from page 8)

now. Either put him back where he belongs or give him a pension.

Joe Archibald is quite a story teller. Why not give him more room? I am looking forward to the next issue containing PRUSSIAN PATSIERS.

Please enroll me as a member in the club and list me as a pen pal. I will answer all letters. Enclosed is a self-addressed stamped envelope. Send me a membership card.

Also I have enclosed three name-strips for the portraits of World War Aces. Please send the pictures in the same envelope with the membership card.

Yours till Horace chews up the hangar.

We will inquire about Master's thorn-in-his-side. Maybe the doll went to a beauty parlor to slick up as you know how long it takes them to get the curls set.

Joe again. Look, he's getting all we intend to pay him now so it is no use building him up. Does he pay you to boost him? We will investigate that little screwball and if we get anything on him we will pasture him out with Horace. Horace is doing fine thank you. The flight surgeons want him to convalesce a little more before they try out an antidote for typhus on him.

Getting along at a fast pace like the plane output, we turn the spotlight on John Delman, 592 Amboy Avenue, Perth Amboy, N. J. John wants lessons in Kraut.

I'm enclosing my coupon for membership in the club and a self-addressed envelope for my membership card. I'm also enclosing a name-strip from THE AMERICAN EAGLE, SKY FIGHTERS and RAF ACES for the set of portraits of twelve famous World War Aces.

Couldn't you please have another World War I story in with the regular stories of American Eagle and Ambrose Hooley stories. Every time a person writes to have more World War I stories you say that the majority of American Eagles like modern air stories. Why don't you have a vote on that (if you did not have it already) and the majority wins? If the majority votes for modern stories, modern stories it is. If you are collecting the votes put me down for World War I stories.

Say, why couldn't you have a page explaining the meaning of German and French words? For instance, what does himmelkreuzdonnerwetter mean? Maybe some readers understand these words, but it's all German to me.

But all in all, THE AMERICAN EAGLE magazine is a pretty good book. Tell Lieut. Scott Morgan and Joe Archibald to keep up the good work.

I am thirteen, have never been in a plane as passenger or pilot, have brown hair, steel-gray eyes, and weigh 105 pounds. List me as a pen pal and member of the club. When I grow up I expect to become a pilot in a pursuit squadron for the United States of America.

That long Heinie word *himmelkreuzdonnerwetter* is a very bad swear word and Krauts yelp it when a slug nicks them or if they see concentric circles in front of their eyes. We will not contribute to the delinquency of a minor by informing you of its true meaning. It means "*****" like you see in the comic strips, Johnny.

Going on to the next flimsy, we find another character who must be homeless as E. Sudok did not inform us as to the place where he takes off his galoshes before he enters. Ed says:

I have just finished reading your magazine and I think it is tops. Being a new fan of THE

AMERICAN EAGLE, I have no criticism for your mag. Lt. Morgan's story was great. Ambrose and Muley had me in stitches from Paris to the bridge near Neufchateau. Keep up your good work. Enclosed you will find self-addressed envelope for membership card, and please list me as a pen pal. I promise to answer all letters. Keep 'em flying to keep 'em running. You know who!

A perfect review from a new convert. You said it, Ed.

From 102-25 85th Road, Richmond Hill, N. Y., a customer with a nice sample of handwriting, gives out with this one. Farrel Grehan wants new kinds of models and not the ones that pose for hosiery. But let's come right out with it, Farrel:

I have just finished reading the February issue of THE AMERICAN EAGLE. I liked EXILED WINGS, but I prefer your short stories much more because Masters is too good. Even the Lone Ranger gets shot once in a while.

Your World War I plans are the tops and that Spad hit the jackpot! When you run out of World War I planes or wish to break the monotony, how about plans of famous planes such as Kelly and Macready's Straus continental Fokker, U. S. Army flyers, round the world Douglas, Coste and Bel-lontes, "Question Mark," Lindbergh's "Spirit of St. Louis," and many others. What say, fellows, think it's a good idea?

Enclosed please find application for membership and six name-strips for my membership card case and for those twelve pictures of World War Aces.

Sure, the Lone Ranger gets in a jam once in a while but you do not see him stay in it, do you? If the author of Masters killed the golden goose how would he have eggs for breakfast? Your suggestion for model planes is an excellent one. You will be hearing from us.

Flannelmouth is all red in the face and is gnashing his teeth. He tells us another Nazi has crashed the gate. And if you think Flannelmouth was not justified in throwing the fit, listen to this letter that came in from one Fritz Duval, Gen. Del., Texarkana, Texas. We wonder at the nerve of the hybrid. We leave it up to the readers. Hold your noses and look!

I must admit Jean LeCommer was wrong about John Masters belonging in the gutter because the gutter is too good for such a person.

And how does this superhuman John Masters outfly and outshoot the Germans who have superior men and planes?

Germany has the largest and best trained army and air force in the world. This spring fur will fly from the Russian Bear when this great military machine is put into action.

If you have the courage to, print this letter and let the misled public know the truth about your trashy magazine.

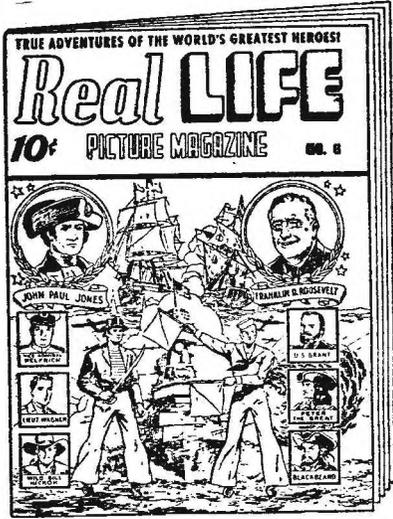
And if some one does not like my opinion, let them speak up.

Is that name on the level? Fritz for Germany and Duval for Vichy? I doubt it because you wouldn't have the nerve to tell the location of your bund, would you, pal? We are waiting for the fur to fly but we think it will come right from under Hitler's prop boss! Open the windows, Flannelmouth.

Now that we have the air a little cleaner, let's go on to this letter from Earl Lech,

(Continued on page 88)

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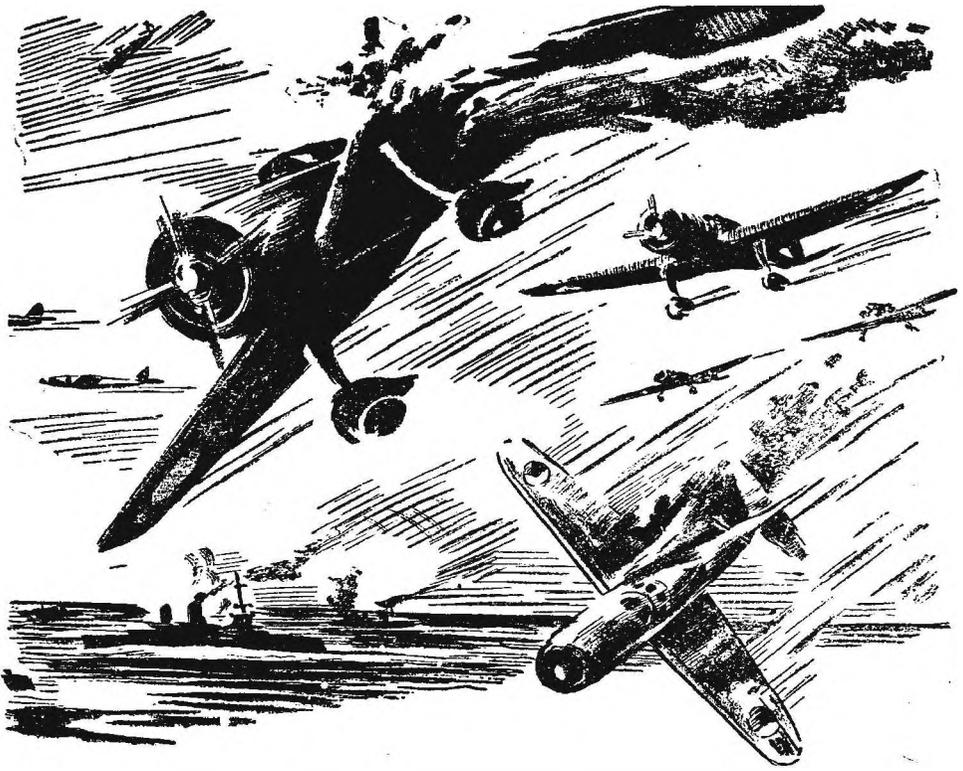
Present Position.....

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Masters tore into the Karigane even as the Jap cruiser below blew up (CHAPTER I???)



ANZAC WINGS

By **LIEUT. SCOTT MORGAN**

Hot on the trail of a fiendish Jap plot for the invasion of Australia, John Masters, the world's greatest sky fighter, faces the gravest peril of his battling career!

CHAPTER I *Man of Iron*

THE Yanks of the 9th Armored Division, 17th Regiment were on their way, but they didn't know where. Only the two staff officers riding at the head of the column knew their destination was Anson Bay, somewhere behind the jungle-matted mountains.

The Yanks had reached Port Dar-

win, Australia, after a perilous convoy journey from San Francisco. They had hoped their destination would be the Philippines and were bitterly disappointed to find themselves "down under," instead of aiding General MacArthur's hard-pressed fighters up north, at Bataan.

But during the three days they'd been unloading their tanks at Port Darwin, they had begun to suspect action with the Japs might not be so

A COMPLETE FULL-LENGTH AIR ACTION NOVEL

far away after all. For the slinking yellow hordes of the Mikado were stretching their blood-smeared tentacles all over the South Pacific. Even as the last tank, the final crate of supplies had been lowered to the docks, the saffron-skinned pilots of Nippon were bombing the islands just north of Australia.

Before dawn that morning the Yanks had started rolling out of Darwin. They were headed south. And being good soldiers, anxious to tangle with the Japs, they squawked plenty because they were headed in the wrong direction. But the racket of the tanks forced them to keep their thoughts to themselves. It was not until about noon, when they pulled off the four-laned highway into the welcome shade of a eucalyptus grove, that the men found an opportunity to express their pent-up feelings.

One of the worst grippers of the lot was First Class Sergeant Paddy Kernan. Kernan was sore, physically and mentally, as he crawled out and stood leaning against the tracks of his newly painted K-4. Muttered curses dripped from his lips as he rubbed the bruises on his arms and hips.

"A fine job I did, transferring to this outfit," he complained, while he gingerly felt a raw spot on his shoulder where flesh had come in sudden contact with unyielding metal. "After reading all this blitz stuff and hooey about Panzers, I figured the tanks would be in action first."

"Beefing again, Kernan?" Lieutenant Judd Lawson said as he came around the corner of the tank and offered the sergeant a smoke.

"Aren't you, too, Lieutenant?" Kernan asked with a forced grin. "Where we heading for, anyway—Little America?"

The officer glanced over his shoulder as he lit his cigarette.

"Mum's the word, Sergeant," he said quietly. "But I just heard Colonel Ritter say something about Anson Bay to the major."

"An' where might that be?" Sergeant Kernan growled. "Next door to the Bay of Whales, I suppose, an' me without my red flannels."

"It's over to the west, Sergeant," the lieutenant said as he eyed a pair of

aborigines who had just emerged from the brush and were surveying the tanks in awe. The natives were as black as coal.

"But west of where, Lieutenant? You're taking in a lot of territory," Kernan persisted.

"Directly west of here," replied the officer. "H.Q.'s sort of got a hunch the Japs might try to pull a fast one and land on two sides of Port Darwin. Darwin's a mighty important place right now, with all these war supplies from England and the States pouring in."

"You really think we might get a shot at the yellow monkeys, then?" the sergeant asked hopefully. "Lieutenant, lookit, them black devils! They don't know what to make of these tanks. Hey, Sambo, look out! That thing will bite."

The native backed away and glanced at his companion, then turned to Sergeant Kernan.

"You savvy this fella?" he said, pointing to the tank against which the two Yanks were leaning.

"It's a tank," the sergeant chuckled.

"I savvy what him bin now," the native grinned back. "Him tank for sheep dip. Many tanks, many sheep belonga you fella."

"Maybe he's right at that, Lieutenant," Kernan said. "Soldiers are sort of like sheep, ain't they? Say, Lieutenant. How do these natives get all those designs on their chests? That's not tattooing, is it?"

THE sergeant indicated the ugly scars making a weird pattern across the chests of the two aborigines.

"I was asking our M.O. about that the other day," the officer told him. "Said they open up their flesh and pack the wound with charcoal. It heals with the charcoal inside and leaves those welts."

"Queer way to carry a supply of fuel," Kernan observed as he beckoned the natives closer. "What's your name?"

"Ponto," grinned the first.

"And yours?" the sergeant asked the other.

"Him no savvy that," the first native answered quickly. "Me, I bin belonga jail one time. I savvy everything.

Name belonga him Paddy."

"Paddy!" exploded the sergeant. "Can you tie that, Lieutenant? An Irish—what is it you call these fellows?"

"Aborigines," the lieutenant grinned.

"An' Irish aborigine. Well, that calls for a celebration."

Kernan pulled a couple of packs of cigarettes from his blouse pocket and held them out to the natives.

"Can no help it, boss," said the native. "Blurry sorry, no got trade."

"Trade?" exclaimed the sergeant. "Who said anything about tradin'? It's a present, from one Irishman to another. Here, take 'em. One for each of you. Savvy?"

The native shook his head.

"No savvy. White fella all time make trade, no savvy give."

"Here," Kernan growled, forcing the packs into their hands. "No trade. Give."

The perplexed blacks took the cigarettes and began to fumble with the cellophane covers. After much effort on their part, while the two Americans looked on in amusement, they finally managed to extract a smoke apiece.

"Light?" the sergeant chuckled as he struck a match and held it out.

The natives took deep drags, coughed and then began to laugh.

"I think you're making a mistake, Kernan," the lieutenant said quietly. "The other fellows won't thank you for this. Natives will be crawling all over them for free smokes."

"Better'n havin' them crawlin' over our frames for a free meal, Lieutenant. I read one time there was cannibals down in these parts. Believe me, I ain't hankering to give them their first taste of Irish stew!"

"What name belonga you?" asked Ponto.

"Paddy," said the sergeant uncertainly.

"Paddy!" shrieked the native. "You same as him. You belonga same family, maybe brothers."

"The Lord forbid," Kernan groaned as he looked down on Ponto's companion.

"You belong," Ponto grinned. "You Paddy, him Paddy. We savvy!"

"Looks like you've sold your birth-right for a mess of cigarettes, Ser-



geant," chuckled Lieutenant Lawson. "Hey, look! There's the major leaving us."

Sergeant Kernan frowned as he watched the staff car crawl through the brush and head for the road.

"Gosh, I wish he was goin' along. He's a swell guy. If you don't mind my sayin' so, Lieutenant, I think the colonel's something of a sourpuss. He's not regular like Major Wright."

"You did plenty of beefing yesterday, when he made you fellows spray the tanks with this dark green paint," the lieutenant replied, as he watched the car swing up on the road and head back toward Port Darwin.

"That wasn't his fault," grumbled the sergeant. "Colonel Ritter's orders. You didn't see the colonel out in the hot sun with us like the major was. If it wasn't for the major, we wouldn't have known it was stuff that would blend with trees, so the Japs couldn't spot us from the air."

"Good stuff, too. Notice how those tanks over there are practically invisible from here. You'll forget what I said about the colonel, won't you?"

LIEUTENANT LAWSON shook his head.

"Don't see how I can, Sergeant," he said.

"But I didn't mean it that way," Kernan pleaded. "Please! The colonel

will break me if he hears what I said. Honest, Lieutenant, it was a slip of the tongue."

"Don't get excited, Sergeant," the lieutenant said soberly. "You just expressed the sentiments of every guy in the outfit, including me."

"Then you don't like him, either!" Kernan gasped with relief.

"None of us do," Lieutenant Lawson replied. "We got a tough break when Colonel MacKnight got a promotion and a staff job in Washington. But why they had to wish Colonel Ritter on us, I don't know. He's too much of an old-time soldier to suit most of us. Discipline and routine is all he thinks about. When it comes to men, he's got about as much feeling as one of our Diesels."

CHAPTER II

The Bell Tolls



MESS call sounded five minutes later.

"That's the music I've been waiting for," Kernan said, starting away from the treads. "Suppose we'll get rolling right after chow?"

As he started for the line-up after grabbing up his mess kit, the two natives fell in after him.

"Hey, you, Ponto an' Paddy—scram! Scram! Do you hear me? No more, *fini*, beat it!"

"No savvy this fella scram." Ponto grinned. "We savvy you bin pukka fella. We like you. We belonga you."

Paddy Kernan made another attempt to steer them in another direction.

"Oh, Lieutenant!" he called. "Give me a hand, will you? This guy Ponto thinks I'm his friend's brother just because we got the same name— Come on, you mugs, scram! Beat it!"

The officer stopped and watched his sergeant's frantic efforts to get the minds of the two aborigines untracked.

"That's a tactical problem for you to work out, Sergeant. Ever think of liquidating them with the tank?"

"You got something there, Lieutenant!" Kernan exclaimed. "Have I your permission?"

"Certainly," the officer chuckled. "I'll make it an order, Sergeant. Move our tank up a bit. Might have to make a turn to do it."

Sergeant Kernan made a dive for the tank and slammed the door in the faces of the two puzzled natives. He kicked the starter and woke up the nine-cylinder Guiberson. He had the gears meshed and yanked the right-hand handle back. The tank spun around and headed for the astonished natives.

"This'll head you back into the bush," Kernan growled, as he eased into a higher speed. "Nudge you with this, an' you'll keep right on going. Give you a scare you won't forget. Calling me his brother! Me an abor— Now where in thunder did they duck to?"

The sergeant stopped one tank and swung completely around. But the two natives had disappeared. With a shrug and a smile of triumph, he swung his machine back and headed for the tank line.

When he had stopped the motor, he crawled up through the turret and emerged from the hot machine to be greeted by a cheer from every man in the outfit. At first he could not comprehend. But as the cheers died away and the laughing men pointed, Sergeant Paddy Kernan turned slowly to find Ponto and Paddy standing behind him.

"You bin make good ride for us." Ponto grinned from his perch on top of the tank. "You pukka fella. Me belonga you all the same like Paddy belonga you. You go, we go. Me savvy this thing now."

Kernan threw up his hands in disgust and clambered off the tank. And while he ate his chow, his two new-found friends sat at a respectful distance and watched their white hero.

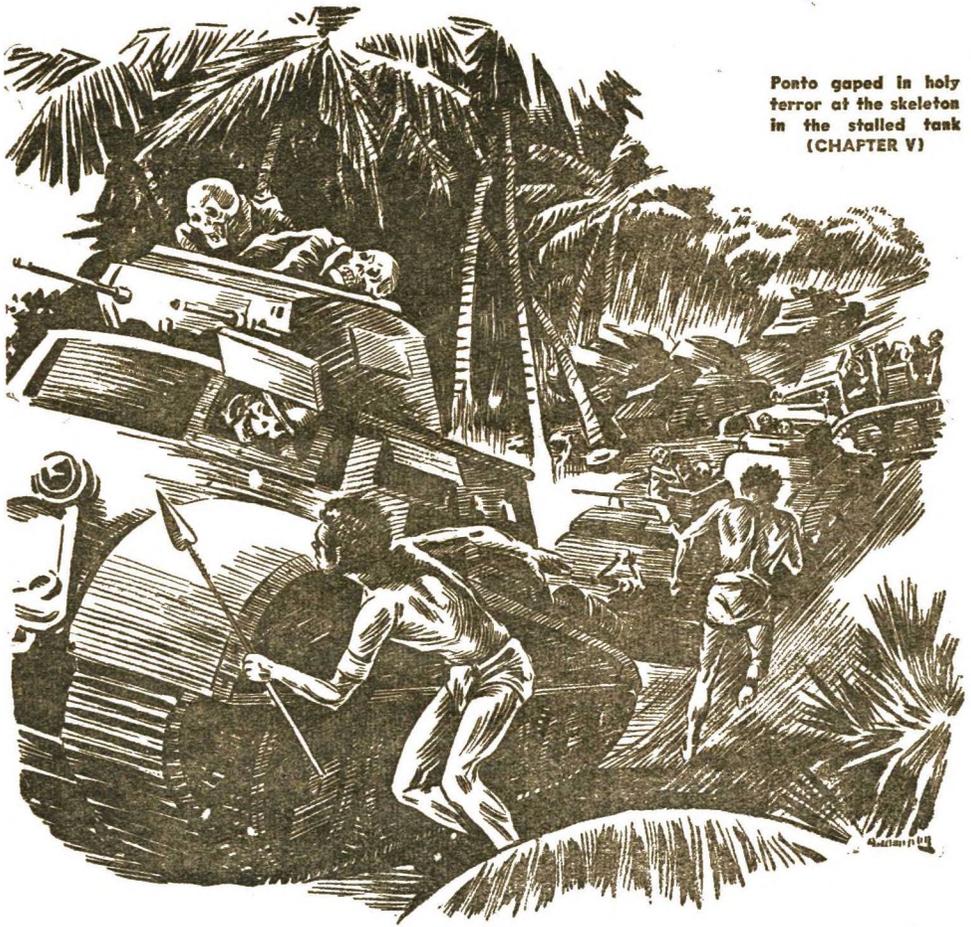
"Don't see why they picked on me," he grumbled to the lieutenant as they made their way back to the tank.

"I warned you," the officer said. "You started it by trying to be a Boy Scout."

"But do you suppose they'll stick with me?" moaned Paddy. "They won't do me any good, I can see that."

"Maybe they'll try to ride," Lieutenant Lawson said. "But I'll bet they

Ponto gaped in holy
terror at the skeleton
in the stalled tank
(CHAPTER V)



drop off or get thrown off the first time we cross one of these dry river beds. Let's get in, Kernan. Here comes the colonel."

They slipped into the tank and yanked down the hatch as Colonel Ritter blustered up.

Kernan watched through the port, saw the officer cut the two astonished natives with an eucalyptus switch and chase them into the brush. Coming back, he stopped to glare through the forward port.

"If I catch you fooling with natives again, I'll have you up for orders, Sergeant. Understand?"

"Yes, sir," Sergeant Kernan replied meekly.

"This is war, not a picnic," the colonel growled. "You'll find that out soon enough. Then again, you may not."

Kernan reached for the starter.

"What do you suppose he meant by that, Lieutenant? I mean that 'may not' crack."

"He may have been referring to your intelligence," Lieutenant Lawson grinned as he nodded to the crew to take their posts.

Before Kernan could make a reply, Lawson crawled up to his perch in the turret and clamped his rubber-padded earphones to his head.

While Ponto and Paddy watched from the brush, the tank column moved cross-country toward a notch in the green hills.

ALL through the hot, blistering afternoon the tanks lumbered on. The sun was far ahead of them now. Soon the shadows of night would be creeping over the eastern horizon.

Beads of perspiration streamed down over Sergeant Kernan's sun-

burned face, as he held his tank in the gridded tracks made by the machine ahead of him. Somebody nudged his shoulder. He turned his head to see the lieutenant slipping into the seat beside him.

"Want me to spell you, Sergeant?" the officer asked. "We're pulling into the cut now. It'll be shady. Give you a chance to cool off."

"I don't think I'll ever be cool again," groaned the sergeant. "I been sitting here wishin' I was at the Bay of Whales. Man, just think of all that ice goin' to waste down there! Always too much or too little in this world, ain't there? Right now there's too much of these Japs and Nazis, an' an awful lot of heat. Bet there'll be ten pounds of melted grease on this cushion when I get up."

The trees closed in. The trail grew narrower. Here and there, the lead tanks were forced to throw their weight against the green lush jungle guarding the path.

"Swell spot for the Japs to hide, hey, Lieutenant?" Kernan shouted above the engine's roar as the forest grew more dense. "Them yellow-faced rats could hide in there an' we'd never see 'em. If we did, we'd think they were monkeys."

"No danger of ambush along here," the lieutenant said as he watched a column of misty water tumble over a shelf in the mountain to their right. "Colonel's up front. He'd spot them. He may be a tough guy but I'll give him credit, he's always in the lead."

"Maybe," grumbled Kernan. "But I was thinkin' back there, thinkin' about how he was just like one of these Nazi officers I been readin' about. You know, stiff-necked, tough an' thinkin' of nothing but duty."

"Now your imagination's running away with you, Sergeant," the officer grinned. "Get your mind off the colonel and have a look at that waterfall. Isn't it a beaut? Must be two hundred feet high."

"Yeah," growled Kernan. "But that spray blowing across the trail is going to make things awful slippery. Hope we get stuck right in the middle of it. Cool this rambling Turkish bath off a bit. See, it's blowing right across the road. Get your overshoes on an' your

umbrellas up, boys. We're gonna have a shower."

Kernan watched the tanks ahead of him amble through the swirling mist from the waterfall and emerge like glistening pachyderms.

"Washing a lot of that dust off," he said over his shoulder to the lieutenant, as their own tank waddled through the churned mud along the forest road. "Wish we could've stayed in there a while."

Presently Lieutenant Lawson held up his hand.

"Watch it, Sergeant," he said. "Looks like they're stopping up front."

"I see them," Kernan replied slowly. "I was listening to that bell up ahead. Do you hear it, Lieutenant?"

The officer nodded.

"Must be coming from the colonel's transmitter. Know whether any of them brought a bell along?"

The sergeant shook his head, yawning.

"I'm getting tired, Lieutenant. Aren't we going to bivouac pretty soon? Bell makes a pretty sound, don't it? Like a country church bell— Say, maybe the colonel's picked up a broadcast an' is letting us in on it."

Suddenly Lawson shouted in alarm.

"Look out!" he ordered. "You're going to pile up on K-Eight. They're stopped— Look, they're sliding off the path. Stop, Sergeant!"

But Paddy Kernan paid no attention to the frantic command. He sat staring straight ahead, as if hypnotized by the steady tolling of a distant bell.

Then K-4, with Sergeant Kernan sitting rigid at the controls, hit the left-hand treads of the tank in front, crawled up at a crazy angle, stalled and came to a stop. The sergeant didn't move when the tank right behind him came in with a solid thud. Any other time he would have poured forth a stream of invectives at the driver clumsy enough even to scratch his beloved K-4.

THE tanks were still huddled there like frightened sheep as night dropped its velvet cloak over the steaming jungle. The only sound heard above the distant roar of the

waterfall was a frantic rustling in the undergrowth along the trail, and occasionally the tolling of the distant bell.

Back in Port Darwin, a radio operator sat at his dials, calling steadily for the column led by Colonel Ritter to answer, while harried-looking officers clustered behind his chair.

But the only sound to crash through the static frying in the speaker on the table was the metallic song of a bell.

Men checked and re-checked their maps but nowhere could they spot a village, not even a native village which might boast a church.

"Try again, Holcombe," Major Wright said anxiously.

"It's no use, Major," the weary operator replied. "I've tried every channel. This one's the one assigned to the column, and all I can raise is that darn bell. The colonel's transmitter must be open."

"Hadn't we better investigate?" suggested one of the officers.

Major Wright hesitated.

"If it were anyone but Colonel Ritter, I'd say 'yes'. But you know, gentlemen, the colonel has his own ideas. One of the last things he told me, before he left, was to the effect that he might not communicate with us before he reached Anson Bay. This bell may be a sudden inspiration, a means of letting us know that everything is all right."

"And it might be letting us know that everything is all wrong," interposed a captain. "We can't afford to let anything happen to that column. Not with the confounded Japs getting closer every hour."

Bong—bong—bong.

The steady tongue of the mysterious bell frayed their taut nerves to the breaking point.

* * * * *

While the officers hovered over the radio, Ponto and Paddy silently followed the marks left by Sergeant Paddy Kernan's tank. When the first tolling of the bell reached their ears, they halted, shivering in the dew-drenched moonlight as they listened. Paddy grabbed his companion's arm and pointed back in the direction from which the two had come.

But Ponto shook his head.

"Me savvy bell mean bad medicine," he agreed. "Me savvy this Yank fella Paddy in trouble maybe. We go. We belonga to him now. Maybe need help."

By the light of the moon the two aborigines followed the spore of the tank column, and the sound of the bell.

CHAPTER III

Dive Bomber



BRIGHT sunshine streamed through the scattering clouds and began to distill the puddles of water which dotted the secret drome, deep in the matted jungles of Borneo. A flood of song poured from feathered throats, almost as if in thanksgiving over the passing of the squall.

Scattered along the edge of the little airfield, well concealed by camouflaged netting, nestled a flock of grim-nosed Brewster Buffaloes. Close by, its motor just coming to a stop after a quick warm-up, was a single glistening Curtiss SB2C-1 scout bomber bearing the insignia of the U. S. Navy.

Although the Anzac pilots of the Royal Australian Air Force were anxious over the sudden threat to their island continent, the two Yankee pilots sitting with them in the shelter of the small thatched briefing room were equally eager for things to break. For days there had been rumors of a gigantic Jap convoy approaching Macassar Strait from the Celebes Sea.

Such a move could mean but one thing: a deeper Jap penetration into the Southwest Pacific. Balikpapan, the Dutch naval base at Surabaya, then the establishment of enemy bases and troops on Timor, to be followed by raids on Australia and finally an attempt at invasion—that was the Mikado's time-table.

Of the two Yanks in the briefing room, the more concerned was John Masters, known wherever the Axis was trying to rip open the seams of a peace-loving world as the American Eagle. Masters realized the importance of stopping the Japs as they attempted to sneak through the Macas-

sar Strait. The famous flying ace was there to help teach the yellow-faced, yellow-livered Nipponese a lesson they would never forget.

Masters realized his duty lay here. Yet his heart was with his countrymen, who were holding the snarling Japs at bay up on Bataan under MacArthur's inspiring leadership.

"Sit down, John," Phil Warren, his companion-in-arms, pleaded with him for the tenth time. "Take a load off your feet. You'll need every bit of energy you've got left."

Masters kicked at an anthill and walked over to his pal of many perilous battles. The ruthless hordes trying to enslave the world had long run up against a stone wall when they tangled with the American Eagle and his inseparable friend.

"I don't see why they asked me to take this detail, Phil," Masters said slowly. "Those guys up north need me."

"Us, you mean." Warren grinned tensely. "You keep forgetting me, John. I'm still aching to slip a few slugs under the skin of these yellow-bellies."

There came a welcome interruption.

"Here, here!" chorused the Australians sitting near them, as they watched water come to a boil in a billy. "We'll have a cup of tea and then have a go at them."

"Don't mention anything to eat or drink around this bird," Masters chuckled as he jerked his thumb toward Warren. "Nothing will take his mind off the war quicker than that."

"Righto," smiled the Australian wing commander as he poured a handful of black tea leaves into the gurgling billy. "From now on, crumpets, nice fat mutton chops and such are taboo. Remember men, you mustn't even mention chocolate cake or steak."

"Shut up!" groaned Warren. "I'll show you a few tricks about eating if we get down to your country."

"Maybe," the wing commander said. "There may not be any left after the other Yanks get through. I mean, if they love food as you seem to."

At the mention of Yanks, Masters' head came up with a start.

"Did the convoy get through all right?" he asked quickly.

"Rath-er," a young Australian replied. "Got in the day before we toddled off for this godforsaken hole. Nice little flock of tanks they brought along. We'll all feel better, now that they are going to help guard our shores."

"Thank God they arrived," Masters breathed. "I've been worrying about them. Afraid they might get the same dose we're waiting to give the Mikado's monkeys."

"You didn't mention anything about them to me," Warren interrupted as he sipped gratefully at the hot tea.

"Old rule of mine," Masters declared. "The less brains that know a secret, the fewer tongues will wag."

"Sounds like an old Japanese proverb." Warren grinned. "Better look out or they'll be taking you for a Tenth Columnist. They're twice—"

THE blaring cough of the loud-speaker in the corner of the make-shift briefing room broke in just then.

"There it is!" exclaimed the wing commander. "Listen."

"Calling Readiness—calling Readiness—" rasped the speaker.

"Turn that volume up," the wing commander ordered.

"Calling Readiness—"

"That's the call for all of us," Masters said under his breath. "B-Seventeens and everything."

"Enemy convoy supported by cruisers and destroyers sighted in Q-Seven-b area. Have already been contacted by Double Dike Flight—Readiness proceed as planned."

"Here we go, lads," the wing commander shouted as he threw his tin cup in a corner and grabbed up his flying kit. He stopped and faced Masters.

"You can depend on us to keep the Japs off, while you pick out the biggest and what you think the most important ship. We've got two and a half hours to mess them up before dark. Cheerio!"

The men scattered across the field like boys running to see their schoolhouse burn down. Then with a roar they hit the air over Borneo and headed for the wide expanse of the Macassar Strait.

Action was not long in forthcoming. Masters, flying about two thousand

feet below the Brewsters, spotted the Jap convoy by a column of smoke rising from a ship already potted by the Dutch bombers that had arrived first on the scene.

"See the Stars and Stripes yet, John?" Warren shouted excitedly from the gunner's cockpit.

Masters nodded. He had seen American cruisers and destroyers skirting the tree-fringed shore, steaming at full blast to avenge Pearl Harbor, hoping to get in a lick or two before the air boys laid eggs all over the place.

"And there comes a flock of B-Seventeens!" Warren exclaimed and pointed toward the west, where the big four-motored flying fortresses were curving up from another secret jungle field. "Boy, is this going to be a show or isn't it!"

"Bet you a hamburger we get called away," Masters growled. "Just when I begin to enjoy myself, something happens and we get sent off on one of those wild goose chases."

"Not this time," Warren chuckled. "But if there's a hamburger at stake, I'll take your bet. No, sir, this time we have fun. We'll out-pearl Pearl Harbor."

"Keep your eyes eyes open for subs down there," Masters cautioned him. "Doesn't seem reasonable that they'd try to come through without a submarine screen."

"I got my eyes open," Warren snapped back. "But there's so much to see, I don't know where to look first. Holy smoke! Lookit them ships out there. Must be a hundred or more."

"Be less before we get through," Masters said grimly as he watched the Jap convoy zigzagging through the

strait. "I'm looking for the biggest one to dump this single egg of ours on."

"That's something I can't figure out," Phil Warren said over the intercom while he scanned the water fifteen thousand feet below. "How come you didn't pick out one of the B-Seventeens? They carry a nice nest of eggs."

"This bomb's an experimental job," Masters replied. "Wouldn't trust it to anybody but us. Only a five-hundred-pound bomb. But if she's got what they think she has, it's curtains for the boat she smacks. We're to pick out a cruiser if we can an' see what happens."

"Dive bombing?"

"Yep." Masters grinned as he caught the inflection in Warren's words. "Keep your mouth shut or you might lose your stomach. You'd be in an awful fix if you had no place to pack grub, wouldn't you?"

"Nuts!" Warren growled apprehensively. "I don't mind the dive, but I hate that swoosh when you come out."

"Forget the swoosh an' watch our tail," Masters shot back. "I think they've got air support with them, although I can't spot an aircraft carrier."

THE formation of Dutch, Australian and Yankee ships converged quickly over the strait and hurtled through the late afternoon skies toward the convoy. Below them Dutch and American destroyers were leaving a feathery wake, as they sought to get there in time to get in a lick or two. Flanked on either side by the grim little destroyers were the still grimmer cruisers, some carrying the Stars

[Turn page]

NO FINER DRINK FROM POLE TO POLE

BETTER TASTE...

PEPSI-COLA

REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

...BIGGER DRINK

Purity... in the big big bottle — that's Pepsi-Cola!

and Stripes Masters and Warren loved so well.

John Masters sat tensed behind the controls of his Curtiss, his eyes narrowed as he scanned the zigzagging convoy below. He had already picked out a nice fat Jap cruiser of the *Haguro* class as his target. But before getting into position, he wanted to make certain there was no aircraft carrier in the vicinity.

"You all set back there?" he called over the intercom. "I'm taking that cruiser with the slanted fore-funnel. Looks like a ten-thousand tonner to me."

"Get it over with," Warren retorted. "I'm as ready as I'll ever be for one of these things. Never could stand roller coasters when I was a kid."

Masters banked high over the cruiser as Jap flak began to feel for him with black woolly balls of smoke that spat flame and hot steel. He waited a moment to calculate the wind and the movement of the string of ships below him. Then he pulled his nose up.

"Here we go!" he shouted. "Keep your fingers crossed!"

His feet hit the rudder and he peeled away into a dive with his wing flaps down.

Down, down the Curtiss dive bomber roared, with Masters changing the direction of the spiral now and then to throw the Jap gunners off their range, keep them from guessing from which point of the compass he was going to make his final dive. Masters knew the closer he got, the larger the cruiser would loom in his sights, the better chance he had of planting the big five-hundred pounder where he wanted it.

The Japs were throwing plenty of ack-ack at the Curtiss weaving its way through the skies. Guns of every caliber were plastering the air around the hurtling ship. Some were close, but with the exception of a couple of machine-gun slugs, none came close enough.

"How you doing?" Masters called to Warren.

"Okay! But tracer's thick as fire-flies at a strawberry festival back here," Warren answered.

"Be ready for your swoosh." Mas-

ters smiled grimly as he steadied the rudder at twenty-five hundred feet. "We're going in."

Through a blasting hail of slugs, Masters dived straight down on the cruiser, watching every detail of the big battlewagon grow into focus. He waited until the altimeter needle unwound to 1,500, then grabbed for the bomb release.

The most dangerous split second of his mission had come. When he made the pull-out, the belly of the bomber would be exposed to the raking fire of the Jap gunners, not only on the cruiser but from the ships on either side.

The muscles of Masters' jaws tensed as he yanked the release. The fork was already down to allow the bomb to clear the prop. He felt the jerk as the release mechanism propelled the bomb into the air still further, to make certain it did not come in contact with the whirling propeller.

Masters' pull-out was made at about five hundred feet. It seemed as if he was being forced right through the seat. Kicking rudder frantically, he struggled to get away from the line of flight the bomb was taking. It was as though the blood was being torn from his heart and brain as gravity got in its licks. He fought to hold that black curtain of unconsciousness from dropping over his eyes.

Up, up the SB2C-1 roared, clawing for a ceiling which would place it well out of harm's way.

"Watch and see where the bomb strikes!" Masters yelled as his breath came back. "Phil! Do you hear me? Are you all right?"

"I'm all right," Warren answered weakly. "Just give me a chance to get my esophagus untangled from my vena cava. Boy, what a swoosh that was! My stomach must still be around my hips, from the way it feels."

THEN it came, a terrific roar. The Curtiss lifted as the crest of air swirled upward, grabbing at its wings as if trying to twist them away from their roots.

Masters threw the ship into a bank, shouted lustily as he looked down at the geyser of flame and smoke enveloping the Jap cruiser.

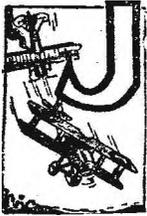
"We nailed her—right between the funnels! Busted her right in half, Powerful medicine in that little pill. That's one that will make them feel 'so sorry' for Pearl Harbor some day—an' it's just the beginning!"

"Look out!" Warren shouted from the rear cockpit. Between bursts from his guns, Masters heard him say something about a flock of Nipponese Kariganes.

With a muffled curse, Masters tried to roll away. But no matter where he looked, the sky was full of blistering tracer, clawing, ripping at his wings, seeking to avenge the destruction of the cruiser now slipping in two shattered sections beneath the waters of Macassar Strait.

CHAPTER IV

The Knell of Doom



JOHN MASTERS took the situation in at a glance, as he leveled out and went into a tight bank. His sights caught hold of a stub-nosed Jap two-seater turning in front of him. His thumb hit the button automatically. His guns opened up and coughed slugs squarely into a circle filled with Japanese hieroglyphics, painted on the fuselage directly in front of the pilot's perch.

In a flash the painted circle was gone. In its place a mass of flame mushroomed into existence to spew forth the spume of black smoke that curled back over its length. With a roar the Karigane exploded, tossing its two occupants into the air without a chance to use their chutes.

"Lot of Jap silk went to waste that time, John!" Phil Warren shouted as he swung his own guns to follow a banking Jap.

Then with front and rear guns stuttering, Masters flung his plane in weaving flight through the Karigane Mark 11s. He caught one on the rebound as it came out of a roll and sent it hurtling into the strait, where a column of smoke and steam marked the resting place of the first victim.

With a moment's respite, as the Japs sought to group themselves for

another shot at the Curtiss, Masters began to call his companions in the other planes.

"Readiness! Readiness!" he called frantically. "Readiness—over!"

"Readiness," came the reply through the tracer-scorching air.

"Readiness," Masters ordered. "Take your flight north. There must be a carrier just below the horizon. Keep interceptors away at all costs. Watch for torpedo jobs. Our own vessels are swinging into action."

"Righto," came the cheery voice of the Anzac wing commander in one of the Brewsters. "Pukka job you did on that cruiser!"

Masters had no opportunity to reply. The Japs had reformed and were coming down on him again. Their guns split the air with feathery tracings of smoke. Slugs rattled against his metal wings and bored on through toward the waters far below.

Through the hail of bullets, Masters fought doggedly to get close to the B-17s plastering the scurrying transports with deadly precision. Already two of the troopships had been sent to their doom. A third was ablaze, throwing a twisting column of smoke into the air.

With the Brewsters streaking toward the north, to fend off any attack thrown on the ambushers by flights from the unseen carrier, Masters wanted to be close to the big bombers. The more guns brought into play, the more chance there was of knocking down Kariganes.

With the fourteen-cylinder, 1,700-horsepower Cyclone roaring and his three-bladed propeller screaming defiance, John Masters fought his way through the desperate Japs, weaving and turning to allow Phil Warren to bring his guns into action at every opportunity.

Like eagles gone berserk, the two Americans clawed and tore at the planes from Nippon. Two more went down and three were limping back toward the Jap carrier, only to be knocked off like clay pigeons by the Anzacs in their Brewsters.

And while in the middle of twisting turns, Masters caught quick glimpses of the action going on below. The Dutch and American naval vessels

had opened fire as they closed in on the harried convoy. Shells falling short tossed great spumes of water into the late afternoon air, to turn the spray blood red in the slanting rays of the lowering sun.

Shells hitting their targets sent debris cartwheeling into the air, drawing flame and smoke from the fiery interior of the dodging ships. Already the water was covered by struggling dots, dots indicating Japs on their way to the soldier's heaven of which they had dreamed since boyhood.

"Look at them pour it to those Japs!" Warren yelled as he reloaded his guns. "What a show! Worth a swoosh any day."

MASTERS nodded grimly as he swept up and over in a half roll, to come down on a Karigane splashing slugs into the fuselage of a B-17. His guns broke out in a roar of hate. His bullets, blazing gimlets of death, swept through the sky and tied onto the Jap plane, battering the fuselage and smashing the face of the observer into a frothy pulp.

A moment later Masters' bullets smashed into the Jap's oil tank. A spray of oily film drifted back to cover the wings of the Eagle's ship.

Then a torrent of lead lashed out of the skies at John Masters as the sons of Nippon sought to avenge the death of their companions. They came at him like a swarm of angry hawks, while the pilot of the stricken Karigane dropped into space and popped his chute.

Two of the flying fortresses banked to let their gunners hose the Kariganes with tracer, open a way out of the web of death for the Eagle.

"Boy, was that neatly done!" Warren yelled as the Curtiss broke into the clear for a moment and started a bank to the left. "Hey, look, John! There's an Me one-ten. See it coming out of the east?"

"I see it," the Eagle muttered as he twisted out of the line of fire from a murderous Jap. "Notice too that the Japs are swinging between us and that B-Seventeen, trying to head us off."

The Japs, as Masters had said, were suddenly trying new tactics. They

had centered their attention entirely on the Yankee ship, leaving the B-17s, which had completed their mission, to return to their secret base. Every bit of fire power the Nipponese could muster was being directed at the Curtiss SB2C-1. A veritable curtain of flame was being thrown across the path of the Eagle's ship, even though Warren made one of the Japs pay dearly for closing in.

"Hang on!" Masters yelled over the intercom. "We'll show these babies a trick or two."

"Gonna swoosh?" Warren yelled as his guns stopped.

For answer Masters lifted his nose, threw the stick over as he kicked rudder. The Curtiss twisted crazily as if it had been harpooned by a Jap slug. Then with motor full on, it went into a mad spin.

The Japs threw a burst at what they thought was a doomed plane. Then they swung north in an effort to turn back the Brewsters.

Down, down the Curtiss twisted, its yellow wings flashing in the last rays of the sun sinking behind the jungles of Borneo. The dark blue waters of Macassar Strait swirled like a gargantuan pinwheel through the wind-shield.

Masters held in the spin, his eyes narrowed as they followed the quivering altimeter needle. With his other hand he twisted the dial of his wireless, hoping to catch some clue to the strange Messerschmitt holding its course due south, high overhead.

At first he caught but one single silvery note, and passed on to another frequency. But he heard no voice. As he spun the dial again, he reached the frequency on which he had heard the original sound. Once again it vibrated musically in his ears.

Masters frowned as the bell sent out its silvery call. The sound was clear, musical, yet there was something sinister in its persistence. Masters centralized the controls, brought the ship out of its spin and leveled off.

"Listen to this, Phil," he said as he jacked the intercom in. He waited a moment and then spoke again. "What do you make of that?"

"Sounds like the chimes they played right after the Aunt Sally's Flapjack

Program," Warren muttered. "Boy, wouldn't I like to have a stack of hot-cakes! Lots of butter an' some good old maple syrup— Maybe it's a church bell, John."

Masters shook his head.

"That bell sounds as if it were made of silver. Keeps banking away on that one note— A call of some kind."

"Hey!" yelled Warren. "Maybe it's got something to do with that Me One-ten up there. Beam of some kind, maybe to lead them to their destination."

"Hang on, we're going to find out," Masters declared as he poured the soup to the cylinders. "Haul in your sails."

"Oh-h-h!" Warren moaned as the nose of the Curtiss went down. "What good would flapjacks do me now!"

THE yellow wings quivered as the Eagle held in the power dive. Then with both hands on the stick, he hauled back into a stomach ripping zoom, clawing at the dusk-tinted ceiling above the speeding Messerschmitt.

And through it all the bell continued to toll.

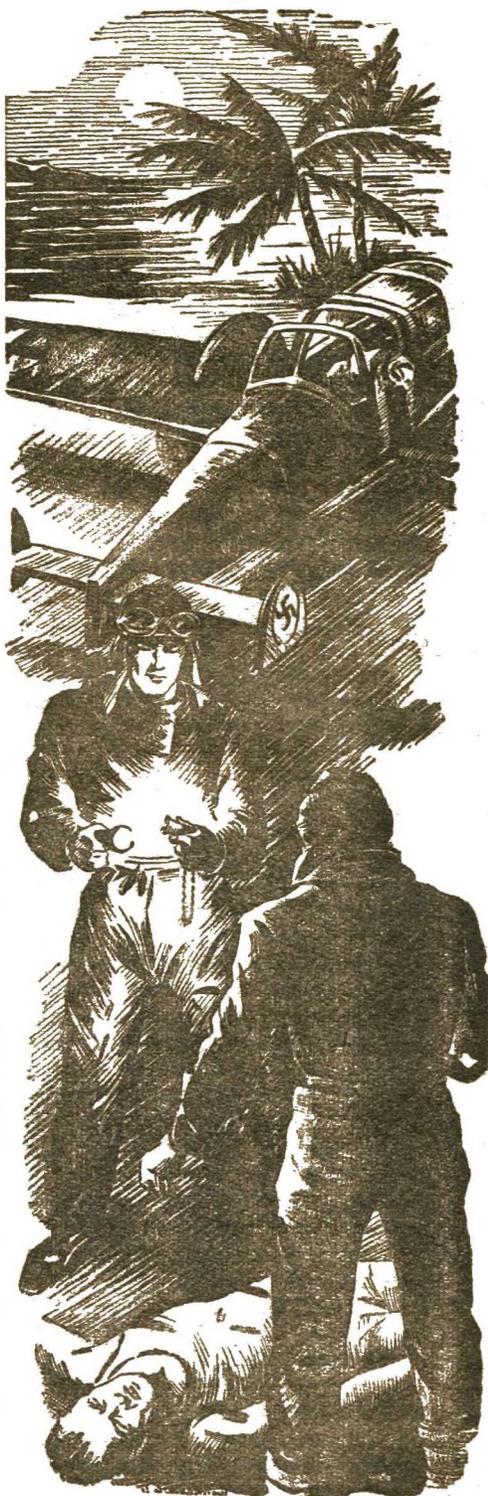
Bong—bong—bong. It sent its monotonous call into the gathering dusk, as Masters leveled out at the top of the zoom and took up a position right behind the twin-engined Messerschmitt.

He wouldn't have been puzzled if only a note or two had been flung out on the air. But when the bell kept on, the sound seemed to hide a menace, perhaps a challenge. Masters watched the Messerschmitt swing toward the palm-fringed shore. Its wings were bathed in red by the last rays of the setting sun.

As the Eagle started to close in, to keep the ship in sight when it became dark, the German craft suddenly banked. The guns in the rear cockpit opened up, hosing the Curtiss with fire.

"The dirty so-and-so!" Warren yelled as he brought his guns into action. "Trying to pull a Pearl Harbor on us, are you?"

Masters, his mind on the strange persistent bell, curled into a bank to allow Warren an opportunity to trade slugs, while he tried to catch a closer



In the flashlight's dim glow, Masters examined the dead Nazi's enigmatic trinket
(CHAPTER V)

view of this mysterious craft bent on a lonely mission.

Guns crashed and bullets streaked through the twilight as the two ships circled each other. But the oncoming darkness over the jungle shores closed in too swiftly for a glimpse of the man at the controls.

Bong—bong—bong. The bell continued to toll. It sounded almost as if it might be coming from the other plane. And as the moon crept over the eastern horizon, the bell appeared to assume a more menacing note. Masters listened while he circled the Messerschmitt, hoping to catch the sound of a voice, something by which he could snatch some clue as to the bell's meaning.

Warren couldn't hear the sound now and was therefore concentrating his attention on knocking down the Me 110. He had but one thought: sending another Jap to perdition, adding one more victory to help even the Pearl Harbor score.

"You asleep up there, John?" Warren demanded as he waited for the Eagle to bring the Curtiss around. "Looks like you could have nailed him. Thinking about that bell, eh? Get this thing over with an' maybe we could hear that old dinner bell."

A grim smile flashed across Masters' face as he followed the blur of the Messerschmitt. Then he kicked rudder suddenly to allow Warren a full burst from the starboard side.

The chatter of the rear guns told him Warren was wide awake. A moment later a cry of triumph and a quick bank revealed the Messerschmitt heading for the beach far below, barely visible in the mounting moonlight.

As the Me 110 went down, Masters throttled back and began to follow.

"Hey!" Warren roared. "What are you figuring on?"

"Landing and finding out who he is," was Masters terse reply as he S-turned through the night. "Beach looks plenty wide at this point. Should be room enough for a couple of us. I want to find out who he is and whether he's got anything to do with this bell."

"Is it still ringing?" Warren snorted.

"Yes," Masters replied as he prepared to release a flare.

"Chances are it'll be the wrong number and somebody will say, 'Excuse it, please!' That's just like a Jap would say it. They must have picked it up from listening to our telephone girls."

Masters did not reply. He released the flare and waited for the searing white glow to light up the beach.

"Well, I'll be smacked with a wet corncob!" Warren exploded. "You're deliberately lighting things up so that guy can make a pretty landing. Why, oh, why didn't Mrs. Warren's little boy know enough to choose nice playmates? You hear a silly bell an' you go haywire!"

MASTERS summoned his reserves of patience.

"But silly bells don't sound so silly out here in the moonlight, not over Macassar Strait. I'll double that hamburger bet if this guy hasn't got something to do with this bell. I got a hunch an' I'm playing it for all it's worth."

"Which might be a skinful of lead," Warren snapped. "If you like playing hunches so much, why didn't you take up the bangtails? You could have played hunches until the seat of your pants wore out. Listen, guy, we might be stepping right into something. You know as well as I do that Jap convoy is heading for Balikpapan. What'll happen to us?"

"It isn't what happens to us that counts, Phil," Masters replied soberly as he watched the Messerschmitt set down to a wobbly landing and come to a stop. "It's what might happen to the good old U.S.A. and the rest of our allies. We're just little bolts trying to hold the thing together."

"If you ask me, I'd say we were nuts," Warren grumbled as they neared the beach.

Masters said nothing. And as he wheeled in over the sand in preparation for a landing, the bell kept tolling through his earphones. Even as his wheels touched the beach, the bell kept on. It did not stop until the Eagle switched off and crawled out on the yellow wing.

"Get your gun out and come on,

Phil," he said over his shoulder as he started for the Messerschmitt, poised there on the moonlit beach like a giant moth. "We'll have a look."

"I know what these looks mean," Warren retorted a bit sadly. "Trouble an' lots of it. But you're the boss."

CHAPTER V

The Column of Death



UTOMATICS in hand, the two Yanks moved across the beach toward the Messerschmitt.

"You keep me covered," Masters said quietly as they crept up to a wing. "I'll have a look in the cockpit. Rear

office seems to be empty."

"Wasn't empty up there," Warren growled. "Somebody was tossing plenty of stuff."

Masters crawled up on the wing and looked into the pilot's compartment.

"Phil!" he called. "Come up here. There's a wounded man in here."

Warren crawled up beside Masters. Between the two of them, they managed to get the groaning man out of the cockpit and slide him gently to the sand.

"*Ach, Himmel! Lieber Gott!*" the man cried weakly as they made him as comfortable as possible.

"He's a Nazi!" Warren exclaimed.

"Quiet!" Masters cautioned. "Let me do the talking."

"*Was ist's, mein Freund?*" Masters said softly as he bent low over the wounded Nazi.

"*Ach!*" the man half choked. "I follow the bell. I am on the *Akagi, nicht wahr?*"

"*Ja,*" Masters said steadily, trying to hold the dying man's attention.

"I have a bell," the man whispered. "You will give me orders when I go to find the true bell."

The word "bell" set Masters' nerves to tingling. The tolling of a silvery bell didn't make sense to the Eagle, especially in wartime. But here was the key to open the first lock of the riddle upon which he had stumbled. Knowing the Nazis, their foul methods and their ruthless surprise attacks

—an example so ably followed and executed by Hitler's newest ally, Japan—the Eagle wasn't missing a trick, even the apparently innocent tolling of a bell.

"You have a bell, *mein Freund?*" he asked.

"*Jawohl,*" whispered the German.

He retched and then tried to speak. But before he could utter another word, his muscles twitched, his body jerked spasmodically and he died with his bleeding head resting on the Eagle's arm.

Masters laid the dead man's head on the sand and got up as Warren came back from the Messerschmitt.

"There's a guy in the rear cockpit," Warren said. "I found something there and hauled him halfway out. Anyway, he's a good Jap."

"A good Jap?" Masters' brows rose.

"Yeah, a dead one. How's our Nazi pal making out? Tell you who was ringing the dinner bell?"

"Help get his uniform off," Masters ordered a bit brusquely. "He said he had a bell."

"Creeping crickets! You're not taking this bell gag seriously, John?"

"Very seriously, Phil. They're getting ready to pull a fast one, if they haven't pulled it already. That bell is some sort of signal—perhaps for a massacre. Bells have been used before, you know."

"I still think it's a gag," Warren said as they slid the dead Nazi out of his flying suit, being very careful not to get blood on his own uniform. "Husky piece of beef, isn't he?"

Masters looked annoyed.

"Get the flashlight out of the Curtiss, will you, Phil?" he asked. "I'm going over this chap with a fine comb. I want to find out what he meant by having a bell. Hm-m—it may be a tattoo."

By the time Warren came back with the flashlight, Masters had most of the dead man's clothes off and folded neatly in a pile on the beach.

Shading the light from the sea with his hand, Masters let the light travel slowly across the corpse, now clad only in a thin union suit. When the dim ray came to the man's neck, it stopped. Masters reached out and slid his fingers under a thin silver

chain and pulled slowly.

Both Yanks whistled as a silver bell, about the size of a thimble, came into view from under the neckband of the German's underwear.

"By gosh!" Warren breathed. "Don't tell me that little thing was what we heard."

MASTERS unclasped the chain and shook the bell gently. A silvery tinkle sounded when the tiny clapper struck against the side of the bell.

"Might have been amplified," Masters said as he turned the bell over in his fingers. "Look at this. See that tiny dragon engraved there? Got a figure six etched into its body. Don't you get it, Phil? This guy was part of a scheme—a scheme being run by the Dragon outfit in Japan.

"You've heard of them, Phil. The Black Dragon Society. They're even stronger than the Emperor or the Army. Old Mitsuru Tayama is their boss."

"But this guy was a Nazi," Phil said after a moment. "They wouldn't let a white man into that outfit."

"This may be an organization affiliated with the Black Dragons," Masters said, reaching for the Nazi's wallet.

He thumbed through the cards and papers a moment, then studied the face of the man who an hour before had been one of Hitler's blind and fanatic followers.

"So our friend was *Hauptmann von Ulrich*," the Eagle said slowly. "And he was looking for the true bell. Well, *Hauptmann*, I'll not only continue the search, I'll find the true bell and its purpose."

"Meaning?" Warren asked hesitantly.

"This chap's next stop was the *Akagi*," Masters declared soberly.

"That's where I'm going."

"An' what's this *Akagi*?"

"One of the Nippos' nice little airplane carriers."

"Good Lord!" Warren exploded, catching on immediately. "You'll never get away with it, John."

"Why not?" Masters grinned. "I can put on the *Hauptmann's* uniform. This pretty little gadget seems to be

the password. I'll be *Hauptmann von Ulrich* for a few hours while I find out more about this bell business."

"But what about me?" Warren demanded. "They must know this guy took off with a Jap gunner. I've been accused of looking like a lot of things—but never like a Jap, thank heaven!"

"You're heading south," Masters said. "You've got enough fuel to reach the naval base at Surabaya. You can refuel there and go on to Port Darwin. They'll be waiting for a report on that bomb we unloaded on that Jap cruiser. You can wire Washington the little egg was powerful medicine."

"An' leave you out here hunting for a Jap airplane carrier by yourself? Nothing doing!"

"Oh, you'll help me find her," Masters chuckled. "And you'll have the privilege of having a little battle with me and then pretend that you're crippled. Set me up right with them, you know."

"Won't have to do much pretending." Warren managed a grin. "Then what are you going to do?"

"Land on the *Akagi* an' see what's cooking."

"Nice prospect, I must say," Warren growled. "You don't think you're gonna fool them with that Jap corpse in there, do you?"

"I'm taking that along for a little build-up," Masters said. "It'll be very nice, as they say, for me to take all the pains of bringing one of their dead heroes back to them. And listen, Phil. When you get to Darwin, you start getting nosy."

"If you hear anything that ties up with this bell business, start yelping into a mike. The Japs will hear you, an' if I'm within half a mile of a radio, I'll hear about it too. Get the idea? We'll work from both ends."

"Got any idea where the *Akagi* is?" Warren asked after a long moment.

"No," Masters replied. "But ten to one, our Nazi friend's got a chart up in the cockpit. Can't imagine him making a blind search for a speck on the sea. We'll have a look and then we'll check his fuel. After that I'll change my clothes and become *Herr von Ulrich*, late of the *Fuehrer's* bums."

Masters found the map as he expected. And on the map was a tiny red cross.

"That's the place," Masters said, pointing to the spot. "There's where von Ulrich was headed in quest of the bell. Now we'll make our plans and be ready to hop off at dawn."

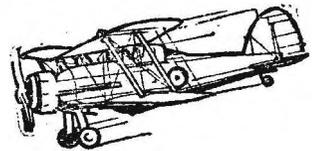
"Okay, brother," agreed Warren. "But I sure hope it isn't *your* funeral!"

WHILE John Masters and Phil Warren made their plans on the narrow strip of beach along Macassar Strait, Ponto and Paddy, gripped by fear and almost afraid to talk, were making their way along the jungle trail trampled by the lumber-

who bore the same name as his black companion was in danger. A white man who had offered kindness instead of a blow or a harsh command might need his help. Certainly Ponto was afraid of the bell that tolled through the night. He too had heard the rumors and legends of a god who would appear some day, to summon the natives to their rightful heritage.

That bell, musical as it was, had but one meaning to Ponto and Paddy as they moved noiselessly between the towering trees. But there was a loyalty under the welled black skins of these two aborigines, a stoutness of heart that kept them forging ahead in the face of the unseen and the unknown. Perhaps this god of which

*John Masters Roars into Rapid-Fire Action
When the Mysterious Element U-235
Is Loosed to Wreak Havoc in the
Pacific Theatre of War!*

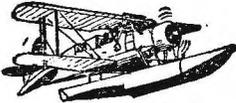


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ing tanks of the 9th Armored Division, 17th Regiment.

Only Ponto's insistence kept them on the move. Now and then, as the note of the distant bell reverberated along the twisting walls of the jungle canyon, Paddy wanted to turn back. He had heard legends of a bell that would sound the call to battle, a battle which would return Australia to the native aborigines.

But Paddy had seen what happened to men who tried to buck constituted authority. The things he had seen made enough impression on even his undeveloped mind to keep him from wanting any of the same medicine.

But the thing that kept Ponto tracking the tanks was the memory of a strange sort of white man. A man

their fathers and grandfathers had spoken had already struck, for the bell had stopped.

Then, just as dawn awakened through the thick interlaced foliage of the jungle, Ponto and Paddy caught up with the tanks and the supply trucks. Even from a distance, they felt certain the god who lived up there in the hills somewhere had struck.

For the tanks and trucks were still. Some were standing by themselves in the narrow road. Others had slithered into trees or crashed into the machine ahead of them.

A few were turned over at the side of the twisting road.

"No savvy this business," Ponto muttered as they stood shivering,

waiting for it to become lighter.

Paddy said nothing. He clutched his *womera* tightly, a spear already set in the notch of the stick, ready to sell his life dearly if necessary.

Then as it grew lighter Ponto motioned to his companion to follow. They reached the nearest truck and stopped in their tracks as if caught in a trap. Paddy started to flee, but Ponto grabbed his moaning companion by the arm and held tight.

Ponto now knew that the god had come down from the hills, to strike at the white men who had entered his valley with their war machines. For in place of the two men Ponto had seen on the truck a few hours before there now sat two skeletons, staring into space as if looking for some grim signpost along the road that had led straight to death.

It was the same wherever they looked. The white men had become skeletons. Not a shred of flesh was left on their bones.

"Me no savvy," Ponto muttered, sweating, as he made his way gingerly between the tanks through whose ports grinned fleshless heads. "This god blurry strong."

When he looked around he saw that Paddy was gone. The sight of those leering skulls had been too much for the frightened aborigine. Gods or no gods he had gotten out, determined to put as much distance between himself and that ghostly spectacle as possible.

But Ponto was made of tougher stuff. He had traveled far to see his friend, the smiling Yank who had given him not just one cigarette but a whole package. And more wonderful yet, the white man had demanded nothing in return. Ponto had come this far to find his friend and he would fulfill his purpose, whatever the cost.

But when he located the tank with the K-4 painted on its metal hide, it was but grim repetition of what he had seen before. Ponto walked around to the front and looked through the port. A frown puckered his weathered face as he stared at the skeleton peering out from under the heavy crash helmet. He shook his head and closed his eyes for one brief moment.

Death in the jungle was an old story to Ponto. But never before had he seen or heard of a death that struck down men by the score, stripping the very flesh from their bones. He glanced over his shoulder at the thick jungle, trembling for fear this powerful god was waiting there to strike him down in turn.

"Me savvy this fella scam now," Ponto said with chattering teeth.

He turned and sped down the road in the direction his companion Paddy had taken. Behind him, the silent men of the 9th Armored Division, 17th Regiment, seemed to grin as the fateful bell began to toll again from its lair somewhere in the jungle-clad hills.

CHAPTER VI

On the Akagi



RESSED in the uniform of the dead *Hauptmann* von Ulrich, John Masters tooled his Messerschmitt 110 along the 15,000-foot level high over the Java Sea. Sitting 5,000 feet above him

and a little to the rear was Phil Warren in the Curtiss SB2C-1 scout bomber.

As the sun crept out of the east, the Eagle picked up a string of palm-fringed atolls far ahead.

"The *Akagi* should be nosing around about there," he murmured to himself as he checked the map.

He wagged his wings and looked up at the scout bomber and saw Warren answer his signal. He glanced at the fuel gauge, then swept his eyes over the instruments until they rested on the tag that informed him, in German, that the Me 110 was equipped with an arrester gear.

"Glad of that," Masters smiled. "Hate to go piling off the deep end before I even got started on this bell business."

Satisfied that the ship was functioning smoothly, he settled back and began searching the sea for a glimpse of the long flight deck of the Japanese aircraft carrier.

About half an hour later, Masters spotted it steaming slowly across the

blue water toward Macassar Strait. He held a steady course for a few minutes and then waggled his wings for the second time. He waited a moment and then eased the throttles back, waiting for Phil Warren to come hurtling out of the sky.

Warren made it look like a surprise attack, throwing a nice burst from his guns just to the left of the Messerschmitt. Masters ruddered to the right in a climbing turn and half rolled behind his brash sidekick, sending a quick burst just under the tail of the Curtiss.

Warren zoomed and Masters tore right on down, as the scout bomber completed a loop with its guns wasting lead all over the sky. From down below it must have looked like a real battle, as the two ships streaked around each other with guns crackling.

When they hit the 10,000-foot level, Masters threw a long burst close to the Curtiss. The two-seater wobbled frantically as if it had been badly hit. Phil Warren waved quickly and eased the yellow-winged job into a spin. A nice rich mixture pouring from his exhausts to make a black scarf in the morning heavens.

"Nice show," Masters grinned as he watched the SB2C-1 recover for a moment and then fall into another spin. He followed Warren down, saw that the Yank was cleverly inching toward one of the atolls and guessed his purpose.

Leveling out, Masters cut in the direction of the *Akagi*. As he did, he spotted two destroyers and a cruiser hanging just below the horizon. Circling at about 3,000 feet over the carrier, the Eagle casually called the *Akagi* and asked for permission to land, informing them he was *Hauptmann von Ulrich*.

Masters watched the big ship swing around and then flash a green light. The decks were clear of planes and a Jap officer was hurrying to his station with the signaling paddles. As the Eagle came around he lowered the arrester gear, took a quick glance at the instruments and then rested his hand on the throttles. The deck down there, looked more like a tennis court than a landing area.

Masters made the final turn into the wind. Close to the ramp, the signal officer was giving him the "all right" flag to come on in. The Eagle straightened into the groove. Once over the ramp, he kept his eyes glued to the wig-wagging officer. He held off, waiting for the heaving deck to reach for his wheels.

The Eagle felt his wheels contact. Then a cross-cable grabbed the hook. The Messerschmitt strained forward and came to a stop.

John Masters crawled from the plane and leaped to the deck as a squat Japanese naval officer hurried up.

"You are *Hauptmann von Ulrich*," the Jap said in perfect German.

"*Ja, Herr Admiral!*" Masters clicked his heels, bowed stiffly from the waist and saluted. "I must apologize for being late."

"We expected you last night," the Jap replied slowly. "I was informed that you had taken off. Were you forced to return to the *Yura*?"

"I think my friend, whom I just disposed of, was responsible." Masters smiled. "Did he fall into the sea near here? I did not follow him as I was anxious to contact you."

"He fell behind the islands," the Jap grinned. "The sharks must be playing with him by now."

MASTERS chuckled. Not because of what the Jap had said, but because he knew Warren was streaking across the Java Sea toward the Dutch naval station at Surabaya.

"Do you speak English?" the Jap asked eagerly.

"Yes. Why, if I may inquire?"

"I also speak English," the Jap said, grinning. "Perhaps not so well as German. But I would like to talk in that language."

"Indeed?" Masters murmured politely.

"So I will be prepared for the day when America will belong to our Emperor." The Jap grinned wolfishly. "The day is not far off when we will have a final accounting with the United States."

"Ah, yes," Masters breathed. "The day is not far away. I pray that I may live to see it. Not only see it, Admiral, but have a part in it. On

that day Japan will be put in the place where she belongs."

"It will be glorious," hissed the Jap.

"For us," Masters smiled enigmatically and bowed.

Suddenly the Jap straightened. The grin left his face. His eyes narrowed to slanting slits.

"You have a bell, I hope, *Herr von Ulrich*?"

Masters glanced around him. He saw the crew busily engaged in lifting the dead Jap gunner out of the *Messerschmitt*. The *Eagle* had made certain to strap the corpse in.

He turned back to the officer.

"Is it wise to reveal the bell here, *Herr Admiral*? I was given to understand I must exercise caution."

"You are right," the Jap said soberly. "Come, we will go to my quarters."

The naval officer led the way past the landing deck and guided Masters to his cabin just behind the bridge.

"Now," said the Jap as he poured a Scotch and soda and set it before the *Eagle*. "Show me the bell."

Masters unloosened his collar and noticed the Jap was following suit. The two tiny silver bells tinkled musically.

"Success!" the Jap cried, lifting his glass.

"Victory!" Masters responded whole-heartedly.

"Now," the officer said as he set his glass down, "please be so kind as to inform me why you did not arrive last night."

Masters put his glass down and looked the Jap straight in the face.

"I was attacked by an American plane. I tried to slip through while the convoy was being engaged. But this American plane broke away and came after me."

The *Eagle* hesitated and glanced over his shoulder. Then he took a step forward and leaned toward the Nipponese.

"Have you ever heard of this pilot they call the American *Eagle*?" he whispered.

"You mean it was he?" the Jap exclaimed. "What happened? Was it the same plane that you shot down just now?"

Masters nodded.

"Last night he forced me down on the beach south of Balikpapan. I did not dare continue, for fear he would follow and disclose your position."

"You were wise," the Jap murmured. "Did he land also?"

"Yes," Masters lied skilfully. "That is what leads me to believe it was the *Eagle*. Any other pilot would have hurried back to his base and reported a victory. We exchanged shots around midnight, and I am certain my bullets struck home. Whether the *Eagle* was the man I got last night, or the pilot I shot down this morning, I do not know."

The admiral shrugged his shoulders.

"What difference does it make, *Herr von Ulrich*? Liquidating these dogs is the important thing. I, myself, will sign your report. The name of Admiral Togo Nagara carries weight in the organization, I can assure you it will mean honor for you."

Masters smiled, but not at the officer's bit of braggadocio. For the Jap had finally revealed a piece of information vital to the success of his scheme. And that was the man's name.

"When do I go on to find the true bell, Admiral Nagara?" Masters asked, fighting to keep his voice casual. "I hope my little adventure has not retarded our plans to any great extent."

"At dawn tomorrow, *Herr von Ulrich*."

THE admiral grinned wickedly.

"Our plan has already begun to function. And with far greater success than we ever expected. A report from Number One reached me during the night."

The admiral paused, gulped down the remainder of his drink and leaned toward the *Eagle*.

"Last night we destroyed the American tank column moving on Anson Bay. Every single man is dead! As far as we know, American headquarters at Port Darwin suspects something has happened to the column, but as yet has no details. When they find the column, I can assure you these little 'details' will be quite a shock to them."

"But could they not move another column up?" Masters queried, as he

sipped his drink and watched Admiral Nagara over the rim of his glass. He strove to conceal his anxiety over the bad news.

Admiral Nagara poured himself another drink and shook his head.

"The road will be blocked by tanks and supply trucks for a few days. There is another column on the way to Van Diemen Gulf, which we will have to take our chances with. We are hoping that column will be split and some of the machines ordered back to Anson Bay. But by the time they reach there, our operations will be under way and a pincers movement begun to cut off Port Darwin."

Masters got up and walked over to the map tacked to the wall of the admiral's quarters. He studied it a moment and felt a bit ill, as he saw the setup as planned by the slinking sons of Nippon.

By now the enemy had plenty of practice at putting troops ashore. To the east, a landing in force either at Chambers or Finke Bay would place them in a position from which they could strike west and meet the forces from Anson Bay.

If what Admiral Nagara said was true—and Masters had every reason to believe that it was—the approaches by the way of Anson Bay to the west were wide open, forced asunder by some dastardly trick at which the wily little admiral had only hinted."

"You see, *Herr Hauptmann*," Nagara smirked as he poured himself a third stiff drink, "with Port Darwin in our hands, the northern half of Australia will be ours. The rest will be easy. Australia will fall. Then the United States itself will begin to feel the weight of our iron heel. Californians will have a most difficult time enjoying the weather of which they brag so much.

"In fact, it has already been decided that when we occupy California, civilians will be allowed out only after sunrise, and will be required to go inside an hour after sunset!"

Masters shook his head.

"If they get wind of that possibility, you may have a difficult time on your hands, *Herr Admiral*. They have become almost a clan unto themselves. Californians will fight to the last

woman and child for the right to dwell in freedom."

"Bah!" snorted Nagara. "You are trying to make a joke, *Herr von Ulrich*. They will get their bellyful of sun, all right, but it will be the Rising Sun. Come, we will have lunch and another drink."

But the Eagle's blood was still boiling.

After a typical Japanese meal, with fish and rice the main course and a few more Scotch and sodas for the admiral, John Masters returned to the swaggering little Jap's quarters.

As they entered the door, a radio-man stepped up and handed the admiral a message. Nagara swayed gently as he read it. Then he slowly folded it and looked at the Eagle with narrowed eyes. For a desperate moment, Masters felt his heart sink into his boots with the sickening fear that his ruse had been detected.

"It is a pity," the Jap said a bit thickly. "A pity."

"What is?" Masters demanded softly.

His muscles tensed. He was ready to take the Jap with him if the man made a single move.

"That you should be sent down there to help organize the natives when they come over to our side."

MASTERS let his breath out very slowly as he relaxed, but his eyes continued to hold the Jap's.

"Do you not think I will be able to lead them?" he asked, hoping to get the admiral started again on the Jap's secret plan.

"Of course, of course," grinned Nagara. "But I do not think Number One realized he was robbing the air force of such a wonderful pilot. Of course you will be able to organize and lead these filthy aborigines! Your African experience was the reason for the choice. That is why you were made a member of the Dragons and given the honor of carrying a bell."

"But I don't understand," Masters said. "Why is it a pity?"

The Jap swayed forward and held out his hand. Ready for a trick, Masters took it. It felt like the tentacles of a dead octopus.

"You have killed the American

Eagle," Admiral Nagara told him. "Papers found by the body of a man on the beach below Balikpapan, by one of our landing parties, indicate that the swine is an American named John Masters. The man you shot down this morning must have been his companion. I understand there is a friend who is always with him.

"To get one would have been honor enough. But both of them! *Herr* von Ulrich, if you do nothing else, you have relieved us of two we feared more than anything else. When we heard the cursed Americans were in Australia, we were afraid these two might be with them. But you have erased that fear."

As the admiral spoke, an officer entered the cabin and gave him the ship's position. Nagara marked it on his chart and then turned to Masters. "I fear I have had a bit too much to drink, *Herr* von Ulrich. If you will pardon me, I will take a short nap. If you are weary, and I suspect you are, there is a cabin just behind this one. You may rest there if you care to. Otherwise, you may go out on deck, ask one of the officers to show you about the *Akagi*."

Masters was tired what with the continued strain. But while there was work to be done, all thought of sleep or rest was driven from his mind. His big problem now was to get away from the *Akagi* and warn of the invasion in time.

"I think I will go outside." The Eagle smiled as he took a quick glance at the chart. He saw that the *Akagi's* course would take it into the Banda Sea.

The admiral noticed his glance and grinned as he took off his coat.

"You are getting anxious, are you not? I expect to contact the convoy tonight. Since Number One has been successful in liquidating the tank column heading for Anson Bay, our plans have been modified. When the convoy splits, our stronger forces will head east, as we do not expect much in the way of opposition from Anson Bay. Perhaps a few Americans, who by this time must be pretty badly frightened. They will be more frightened the day after tomorrow when we strike at dusk."

"Do you know how Number One smashed the tank column, *Herr* Admiral?" Masters asked cautiously.

"Do you?" demanded Nagara.

Masters hesitated. Then he frankly answered in the negative.

Nagara grinned.

"That is Number One's secret, all right. I think Number Two, his assistant, knows. He must, for I understand much depends on his success in putting the plan into operation from Port Darwin. Only those two know. Perhaps when Number One learns of your good work, before you even reached Australia, you may rise in rank and become Number Three. Now, if you will pardon me, *Herr* von Ulrich."

The admiral bowed and staggered over to a couch along the wall. Masters glanced at the Jap as the man threw himself down on the cushions. Then the Eagle left the cabin, doubly determined to find a way to escape from the *Akagi* before night had fallen.

CHAPTER VII

Masters at Bay



HE sun was sinking behind the Java Sea when John Masters came back to the admiral's office and found him pouring an eye-opener.

"So glad," beamed the Jap. "I must drink another toast to celebrate the death of this white devil they call the Eagle."

Masters watched Nagara toss the slug of Scotch away. For the past hour a desperate scheme to get away early had been formulating in his mind. He watched the officer pour another drink while he tried to decide whether the risk was worth it. He knew he was scheduled to leave the *Akagi* at dawn anyway. But dawn was twelve hours away. Twelve long hours in which much might happen and much might be done.

As Nagara held a glass toward Masters and invited the Eagle to join in the toast, the phone rang. The admiral grabbed up the instrument connecting him with the bridge, listened,

a moment and then made a dash for the short-wave radio receiver on a shelf just over his desk. He snapped the switch and gave the dials a twirl, turning to Masters while the tubes warmed up.

"You may be interested in this, Herr von Ulrich. The *Tai-i* on the bridge says somebody from Port Darwin is on the air."

Just then the speaker broke into life. Masters heard Warren's frantic voice.

"SB-two-c-one calling Auk Flight . . . SB-two-c-one calling Auk Flight . . . Listen, Auk! Devil to pay . . . Tank column wiped out . . . Natives report tanks manned by skeletons . . . Not an American left . . . Auk Flight, we need you! . . . Natives are heading for jungle . . . Uprising feared . . . We need help at once . . . Will keep repeating . . . Will keep repeating every hour until . . . Will repeat."

Admiral Nagara lifted his glass. His lips twisted into a sneer.

"The Americans are frightened. Perhaps they wish now they had remained at home and minded their own business."

"Don't you think I'd better take off?" Masters said, hoping desperately the admiral would agree. "Number One may need me."

"You never would find him," Nagara grinned. "I have orders not to give you the marked map until morning."

"But this Number Two man," Masters protested, trying to hide the pleading in his voice. "You said he was at Port Darwin."

"He is," the Jap snapped back. "But I do not know who he is, or where you could find him. Come, Herr von Ulrich. Let us change the subject and talk of more interesting things until it is time to eat."

Nagara reached behind him and turned off the radio.

"What do you think of my ship, and the planes?" he asked.

Masters hesitated. There was nothing else to do but make an attempt to carry out the plan he had decided on. Every hour was another lost mile in the race to save civilization. On his shoulders rested the hopes of the nations who still believed in freedom and justice.

"I was disappointed in your planes," Masters told the Jap very deliberately. "Especially your machine-gun sights. They are obsolete, not modern like our latest automatic sights, such as I have on my Messerschmitt."

"Automatic machine-gun sights?" the admiral said craftily.

Masters nodded.

"I used mine to shoot down the American plane this morning. You yourself saw how easily I accomplished it. Would you like to see how the thing works?"

A sly grin slipped across Nagara's face. Masters knew the admiral was rising to the bait, ready for an opportunity to spy a bit on his Axis partners.

"I should like very much to do so," the Jap said blandly.

"Come along, then." Masters grinned. "Warm outside, isn't it? Guess I won't need my helmet."

He would like very much to have had that helmet and the attached ear-phones. But he knew he had better make every move as casual as possible. So he left the helmet on the chair and followed the admiral from the cabin.

The Messerschmitt stood in the shelter of the landing deck, with its tail held to the deck by clamps.

"After I start the motors, have a couple of your men hold the tail up in flying position, *Tai-sho*, please."

"Ah, you have been learning Japanese this afternoon, Herr von Ulrich! You know the word for admiral. But why should the motors be started and the tail lifted?"

"Sights are worked by a set of gears driven by a flexible shaft attached to the engine," Masters explained.

NAGARA nodded and gave the order. When the motors were started, Masters stalled for time. He wanted the cylinders warmed up before he put his plan into operation. He took the Jap around to the nose of the Messerschmitt, pointing to the four gun ports as he went into a long-winded dissertation on deflection and air speed. He added a bit about muzzle velocity to confuse the issue.

Finally the Eagle got up on the wing and motioned for the admiral to follow.

"You stand there and look over my shoulder," Masters said. "I will fire a burst or two to show you how the sight works."

Then the Eagle slipped into the pilot's seat and waited for Nagara to look over his shoulder.

"Signal for them to lift the tail," he shouted. "That's good. Now, have them move the plane forward about a yard. I'm afraid I'll hit that signal post."

As the men lifted the ship and drew it forward, Masters' eyes swept the dials. Pressure was up, temperature correct.

"Where is the sight?" the admiral demanded. "I do not see it."

"Right here, *Tai-sho*," Masters said as he swept his hand to the throttles and opened them wide.

At the same instant that the propeller blast poured back along the fuselage, the Eagle kicked rudder, throwing the four Jap mechanics to one side as if they had been ten pins.

"Stop—stop!" shrieked Nagara as he clung to the side of the cowlings. "You are taking off— Stop!"

"Hang on, Admiral!"

Masters smiled grimly as he headed for the bow of the carrier. It was a cross-wind take-off, not the easiest maneuver from the heaving decks of a carrier.

"Stop!" Nagara bellowed.

"Too late now, old boy!" Masters yelled over his shoulder to the Jap who clung to the edge of the cockpit. "Here we go! Either we make it or the sharks get a free meal."

The Messerschmitt hit the end of the runway and lurched off. For one dread moment, Masters thought the plane was going to drop into the sea. But just as the waves reached for the landing gear, the two propellers took hold and the thundering Daimler-Benz engines bore the ship up into the gathering night.

"Go back! I command you to return!" screeched the admiral, as he sought to get a footing on the wing while he clung desperately with his stubby fingers.

Masters laughed harshly over his shoulder.

"You folks have a proverb, my yellow friend. 'He who digs grave for

another falls into it himself!' That's what you and your country have done. You're heading for a nice wet grave, pal—unless you want a trip to Australia to meet this Number One guy."

"Who are you?" yelled the Jap as he got his floundering feet back on the wing.

"Who do you think?" Masters grinned as a pair of searchlights broke out from the deck of the carrier and picked them up.

"The Eagle!" gasped the admiral. "You are not *Herr von Ulrich*!"

"Now you're getting smart, *Tai-sho*. Von Ulrich was trying to dig a grave for some Americans. Now he's trying it out to see how it fits. Won't find it as flexible as water, I'm afraid."

"Go back! Go back or I will shoot you!" the admiral screamed.

And when Masters glanced over his shoulder, he saw that Nagara had managed to get his left elbow over the side of the cockpit. This not only gave him a better hold, it protected him against the propeller blast. To make matters worse, the Jap had a short automatic clutched in his right fist—with the muzzle aiming straight for the Eagle's head.

"Go back!" the admiral shouted. "Planes are taking off and will be after us in a moment."

"Do you think they'd chance a shot?" Masters shouted back.

"Yes!" cried Nagara as the searchlights picked them up again. In the dazzling beam the Jap's face was contorted with a mixture of fury and fright.

"Can you fly a plane?" Masters snapped. "I mean, if you shot me, this crate would spin in unless you knew how to handle it."

"It would make no difference!" the admiral yelled. "It is an honor to die for one's emperor. The honor would be doubled if in dying I rid him of you."

MASTERS shrugged his shoulders.

"You win, *Tai-sho*. Didn't expect you to have a gun. I'll go back."

"That is more sensible!" the admiral shouted, but his face streamed with sweat.

Masters turned back toward the

Akagi and put his nose down. But the admiral failed to notice for a moment that the *Eagle* had failed to throttle back.

The Messerschmitt hurtled toward the *Akagi* as the searchlights held it in their relentless grip. From the now lighted decks, Masters saw a flight of white Nakajimas pouring across the steel tarmac and leaping into the night.

"We gotta get down in a hurry, *Tai-sho!*" Masters shouted. "If we don't, they'll start hosing us."

"Hurry—hur—"

The admiral's voice was lost in a wild scream as Masters kicked rudder and threw the Messerschmitt into a half roll. The sudden maneuver tore *Nagara* loose from his perch and sent him cart-wheeling into the night.

CHAPTER VIII

Secret Strategy



SEARCHLIGHT trying to impale the *Eagle*'s Messerschmitt picked up instead the whirling body of Admiral Togo *Nagara*. The Jap was still screaming as he turned end over end, heading fatally for the wide deck of the

Akagi.

"He wanted to go back an' I guess he's going," Masters snorted as he pulled around in a climbing turn, just in time to escape a burst from a Nakajima. "An' you're going with him, Nippo!"

The guns in the nose of the Me-110 opened up and sent a quartet of blazing sprays, cutting squarely into the banking Jap like a hot knife through butter. The Nakajima staggered and then exploded in a mass of flaming débris.

A searchlight reached for the *Eagle*, missed and caught a Nakajima instead. It lost that, too, for Masters pulverized his second Jap with a well-aimed burst from his guns.

These pop-guns sure have a punch to them if they're handled right," Masters chuckled grimly.

He fainted at another Jap, who suddenly remembered he'd forgotten something in his cabin on the *Akagi*.

The other sons of Nippon scattered. The searchlights swung aimlessly around the sky, trying to find the Messerschmitt, and then gave up. For Masters had slipped into the darkness and was on his way across the seas to Port Darwin.

When he felt he was safely away from the bloodthirsty Nakajimas, the *Eagle* picked up the mike and started to call Darwin.

"Warren . . . Warren . . . Auk calling . . . Auk calling . . . Have escaped . . . Heading for Darwin in Messerschmitt marked A for 'Albert' . . . T for 'Tommy' . . . Send out word . . . Will be in about midnight . . . Cannot hear you . . . Cannot hear you . . . Have no phones . . . Flying Messerschmitt marked A for 'Albert' . . . T for 'Tommy'."

Masters repeated the call every fifteen minutes for an hour, checking the frequency each time to make sure his message was crackling out on the same channel used by Warren.

Through the night he hurtled, watching for Melville Island to creep over the horizon. Now and then, as the long hours dragged by, he felt the silver bell fastened around his neck. The *Eagle* wondered just what could be behind the gaudy little trinket and the engraved dragon. And he wondered what Warren had meant by tanks manned by skeletons.

"I'll soon find out," he murmured as he watched the beacon on Cape Van Diemen blink its welcome.

A short time later he roared over Melville, then Darwin, where he banked low to let the watchers swing their searchlights over the side of the Messerschmitt. As the beams winked out, the boundary lights of an air-drome came on. Masters throttled back and grooved his way through the night to set down on the R.A.A.F. field.

"That you, John?" The voice of Phil Warren welcomed him eagerly as he jumped from the wing and rubbed his tired eyes.

"Yeah," Masters said cautiously after a moment. "But don't be too friendly, Phil. There's a Fifth Columnist around these parts. Got to trap him, and soon at that. Pretend you're not quite sure about me—you

know, suspicious that I'm not the man I claim to be. There's another bell around here I've got to find."

"I think you're too late," Warren said slowly.

"Why?" Masters demanded.

"Colonel Ritter's taken it on the lam."

"Who is Colonel Ritter?"

"Only the guy who led the tank column into the trap," Warren growled.

"He's the only one that's missing."

"You've been there?" Masters asked.

Warren nodded somberly.

"Pretty gruesome. Nothing but skeletons sitting in those tanks and trucks. The general and I flew up this afternoon. Landed on a level spot the other side of the ridge and walked in. Ponto led us."

"Who found them?" Masters persisted. "How did you know where they were if the men are all dead?"

"These two natives came back with the news. Warren said, motioning to two black figures who blended with the shadows. "Ponto, you tell this man how you found the tanks, and why you were following them."

MASTERS listened while Ponto struggled to explain his part in the grim affair.

"Doesn't seem possible," Masters muttered. "Sure they haven't substituted skeletons for the personnel of the column? Be easy to do, you know. they'll do anything in an attempt to scare us."

Warren nodded.

"They've already succeeded. We tried to keep it quiet, but everybody in Darwin knows about it. An' what's more, they know the skeletons are those of the men who went out."

"How about the other column, the one heading east?" Masters asked.

"You know about that?" Warren exclaimed.

"Learned about it from the Japs," Masters explained briefly.

"Well, that column's okay, only it's being split and half of them are coming back. They're going to try and get through to Anson Bay."

"They've got to stay where they are!" Masters exclaimed. "The Japs are going to strike hardest to the east, figuring we intend to split our forces."

"But that'll leave Anson Bay wide open. How are we going to stop them there?" Warren demanded, alarmed now.

"We'll find a way," the Eagle said quickly. "I don't know just how, but we'll do it. That is, if everybody pulls together and there aren't too many Fifth Columnists around. Come on, take me to the general and we'll see about this other column."

"Okay," Warren said. "Okay, Ponto and Paddy. We might need you."

Ponto reached out and touched Masters' arm.

"Me savvy you blurry good fella," the native said. "Paddy, him savvy, too. You make us feelum strong inside. We savvy too that big corroboree be held by an' by tomorrow night. Everybody bin go. Big god who ring bell an' gottem only legs bin make-um corroboree. Can no help it, boss, but we bin go, too."

"Ponto," Masters whispered as he grabbed the arm of the native. "You take me to corroboree tomorrow night. Take me to the god who rings the bell."

"You no afraid?" Ponto asked. "Maybe kill white man like this fella Paddy in tank get killed. Paddy blurry fine fella."

"You don't understand, Ponto," Masters said eagerly. "It wasn't a god that killed your friend. It was one of these yellow devils. Savvy? Japanese! They'd like to kill all your friends and make slaves of you and your family—Well, I've got to go. Perhaps I can save you, too, Ponto."

Ponto shook his head as they neared the hangar.

"This yellow fella stop longa time this country allasame. Him Japs all over. Him very bad, no savvy how to be good."

"Don't you see, Ponto?" Masters said patiently. "That's why I've got to go. If I don't, the Japs will have Australia. This bell ringer makes bad medicine, Ponto. You go with us, and then take us to this corroboree."

Ponto hesitated and then went into consultation with his friend Paddy.

"We take you," he finally said.

"Good!" Masters exclaimed. "Now we're getting somewhere. We'll beat them yet."

"But what's a corroboree, John?" Warren asked as they put the two natives into the car. "Anything like a barbecue?" A hopeful note crept into his voice.

"Sometimes," Masters grinned without humor as he kicked the starter. "Only instead of beef, they cook long pig."

"You mean—cannibals?" Warren said quickly, losing all trace of an appetite.

Masters nodded and swung the car out on the road leading to Allied Headquarters in Port Darwin.

"An' don't forget, Phil," he cautioned quietly. "Pretend you're not quite sure of me, while I'm inside talking to the chief. If it gets to the right ears, our Fifth Column rats might try to contact me."

"Not many officers around H.Q.," Phil Warren returned. "Most of them are in the field, training troops. Only one I saw much of is Major Wright. He's going around darn near in tears, because they won't let him go out and clean up the gang that murdered our boys.

"He was like a father to them, they say. He's packing a gun an' swears he'll blow Colonel Ritter's head off if he sees him."

"Good," muttered Masters. "We need a few guys with hate in their hearts right now. Been too darn much complacency on all sides so far. But this skeleton business is going to bounce back like a bloody boomerang."

TWO hours later, Masters was ready to leave the office of Allied Headquarters. For more than an hour he had been arguing with American, British and Australian commanders to let him take full charge of operations in the Anson Bay sector.

"If you will have the planes at this spot," he said, pointing to the map, "and order those three tankers into Anson Bay tomorrow, I'll take care of the rest.

"I'll stop long enough to visit this bell ringer and then I'll be at the point of contact. If you will keep the other tank column at Chambers Bay, I'll see to it that the Japs get a hot reception at Anson. Split that column and they may meet the same fate as the others."

The general at the head of the table spread his hands in front of him in a gesture of despair.

"If it were anybody but you, Masters, I'd say he was crazy. The water is too deep even to block an aircraft carrier. For the life of me, I can't imagine how three tankers will stop the enemy. But I'll see that your orders are carried out to the letter. The rest of the time—well, I'll be praying."

"Very good, sir." Masters smiled tightly. "I'll see that your prayers are answered. Don't forget, General—the Lord helps those who help themselves."

Then he closed the door and left the staff huddled around the conference table, preparing to put his plan into effect.

CHAPTER IX

Number Two



COON found a half-dozen tanks of the 9th Armored Division, 17th Regiment, parked in precisely the same grove of eucalyptus the doomed column had stopped at a few days before. Ponto and Paddy kept chattering that this

was the place where they had met Sergeant Paddy Kernan, and later on had been chased by the officer with the stick.

"That would be Colonel Ritter," Major Wright said to Masters. "He seemed a cold-blooded and ruthless individual, but I never suspected his connection with the enemy."

While the major was talking, Masters was absent-mindedly watching the antics of a monkey mascot owned by one of the tank crew. It was dodging about the men as they ate their lunch under a tree, playfully trying to steal various articles of equipment. Suddenly it grabbed the hat from a corporal's head and made a rush for the nearest tank.

"Curse that monkey!" yelped the corporal as he snatched up a bottle and threw it at the animal, which now sat chattering on top of a turret.

The bottle smashed against the turret and its contents trickled down over

the side in a dark blotch.

The monkey ducked to the other side of the turret, where it waited a moment to let the storm pass. Then it came back, shrilling in anger as it proceeded to tear the corporal's hat to bits.

"Boy, is Jocko mad," Phil Warren grinned. "Wonder he doesn't have a fit of apoplexy and pass out. Monkeys do that once in a while, you know."

Warren's statement was uncannily prophetic. The little beast ceased its mad chatter and its eyes grew blank. It slumped from its perch and fell limply to the sun-baked ground.

"A bad omen," breathed Major Wright as he turned a pale face on the Eagle. "Death has struck before we even reached the jungle."

"But at least we know what caused it," Warren said as he watched a trooper walk over, pick up his pet, examine it a moment and then lay it ruefully in the shade of a bush.

"You might as well have hit it with that bottle," the soldier snarled at the corporal. "Scared the little tyke plumb to death, you did!"

"I'm sorry, buddy," the corporal said slowly. "I only meant to scare it into dropping my cap. I didn't mean to kill it. Kinda liked the little devil, even if he was always in mischief."

Major Wright feared more serious trouble.

"You should not have brought these tanks," he told Masters, jerking his thumb toward the column. "If anything happens to the rest, these tanks would be all we have left. What would they say back home if the whole Ninth Division were wiped out?"

"They're not going to play any tricks on the other column," the Eagle declared after a moment.

"How do you know?" the major asked quickly.

"Got it straight from Headquarters," Masters said grimly. "Those lads are going to have a chance to fight for their lives. That's the way Number One planned it."

The major gave Masters a queer look. He glanced toward Phil Warren and shrugged his shoulders. Warren tossed a quick wink over the major's shoulder, to inform the Eagle he had been carrying out the orders.

Major Wright looked as if he wanted to carry the conversation still further. But the men were warming up their motors, preparatory to continuing their journey into the canyon of death. And from the looks on their faces, they were none too pleased over the prospect.

"I'll ride with you," Masters said to the major. "Tank travel is all right, but it has its limitations in the number of square inches of skin a fellow has to bruise."

"That's fine," smiled the major. "I'll order my driver, Sergeant Mason, to ride with the supply truck. How about you, Warren? Will you ride with us?"

Warren looked at the little jeep and shook his head.

"When it comes to tanks and jeeps, it's the same difference, as far as I'm concerned. One tears your skin off and the other rips your innards out. Skin is easy to repair, but not your insides. I'll take a tank."

Warren winked at Masters, then headed back for one of the tanks at the front of the little column.

Masters crawled into the jeep and the major meshed the gears. The little scout car moved on toward the notch in the hills, with the tanks strung out behind at regular intervals.

WHEN they entered the jungle trail presently, Major Wright sped up for a while and then slowed down, as the spray from the waterfall made the going slippery.

"By the way," Masters said as they eased around a bend in the canyon. "Has anything been done about getting the tanks off the trail up ahead? Understand it's pretty narrow."

"I think we will get by," the major said slowly. "A detail of Australians is leaving Darwin tomorrow to take care of the tanks and the skeletons. Couldn't ask our men to do it, you know. Too jumpy."

The car moved on toward the roar of the waterfall. Then as they neared the sound, Major Wright halted the jeep.

"I've got a couple of ponchos here. Better put them on. Spray pours over the trail like rain."

Masters started. He was on the

verge of asking a question but changed his mind. He took the poncho from the major and slipped it over his head. They drove on.

At any other time, the majestic column of water, spilling over the cliff and sending its gossamer-like spray over the trail, would have been a thrilling sight to the Eagle. But at the moment, his mind was crowded with thoughts far separated from the beauties of nature.

As they came around another bend in the trail, Masters' keen ears picked up the silvery note of a bell boring through the rushing sound of water. The vibration sent a shiver coursing through his veins. He'd heard that bell before on a night which seemed ages ago—on the same evening, in fact, that the column of brave Americans had rumbled to their death.

"Do you hear a bell?" Masters asked the major.

Major Wright nodded. Then he pointed ahead.

"There they are. I'll drive closer, then we'll take off our ponchos and go up on foot to have a look. You'll want to examine them more closely before the others arrive, I expect."

"I'd like to," Masters said.

His eyes narrowed as he studied the jumble of tanks up ahead. They looked like a group of young elephants which had gone berserk and fallen asleep from exhaustion.

The major brought the jeep to a halt. He got out and began to slip off his wet poncho.

"Good thing you brought these along, Major," Masters handed the officer the sheet of rubber. "You must know this trail pretty well to come prepared this way."

"There they are," Wright said, ignoring the implied question. "Let's have a look."

Just then the note of the bell sounded again along the canyon walls. Masters grabbed the major's arm and cocked his head to listen.

"The bell," he whispered, watching the other man's eyes. "The bell! Do you hear it?"

"Are you looking for the bell?" Major Wright asked steadily.

"I have come a long way to find that bell," Masters replied slowly. "There

are others who found it before me."

"Who, for instance?" the major asked intently.

"Number Two," Masters said softly without taking his eyes off the major's face.

"Do you know any other numbers?" the major queried in a flat voice.

"Number Six." Masters smiled slowly. "And Number Four. Number Four is on the *Akagi*."

"Do you have a bell, *Herr Hauptmann*?"

The major stiffened as Masters pulled the chain into view and exposed the silver bell.

"And you, Number Two?" the Eagle said, fighting to hide the loathing in his voice. "Do you have a bell?"

The major already had his bell out. He shook it. The bell tinkled as had the Jap admiral's.

"Come," smiled the major. "I will show you what I have done. It is a secret only Number One knows beside myself. By the way, what happened to the Eagle?"

"Have you not heard from the *Akagi* that the Eagle is dead?" Masters said calmly.

"Number One transmits to Number Four," the major replied. "I would not dare risk communicating with the others. I know, as long as the bell sounds, that the plan is in operation."

As they approached the nearest tank Masters stiffened. He was not staring at the hideous mask of death staring at him from an open port. It was the color of the tanks.

"You dirty, low-down Nazi rat!" he rasped as he lunged suddenly at the surprised major. "Now I see how you pulled this!"

CHAPTER X

On the Trail



THE Nazi Fifth Columnist whirled with a gun in his hand. His eyes were wide open with fear as he pressed the trigger and tried to dodge the Eagle's hurtling figure. The gun blazed in his hand as he stumbled.

Flame singed Masters' head. But he bored right in, hands reaching for the

gun. The two men went down, rolling halfway down the bank toward the edge of the little mountain stream.

"You are not *Hauptman* von Ulrich!" the Nazi gasped as they brought up hard against a rock and struggled for possession of the gun. "You are the Eagle! You have tricked me!"

"Right, you filthy swine," Masters growled. "I've tricked you. But it's a different sort of trick from the one you played on these poor lads!"

And while they fought, the Nazi for success in a nefarious plot, Masters for freedom and justice, the bell sent three silvery notes reverberating through the canyon.

"Where is the bell?" Masters rasped. "Tell me, or I'll kill you! Tell me, do you hear?"

"I will not!" the Nazi Fifth Columnist panted. He squirmed and kicked in Masters' grasp. "You will never find the—"

A muffled shot interrupted him. Then he relaxed in the Eagle's arms.

Masters clung tight for a moment, suspecting a ruse. But a trickle of blood wending its glistening way from the Nazi's mouth told him the slimy Fifth Columnist was beyond all betrayal. With a curse, Masters tore the bell from the dead man's neck and hurled it in the stream.

The Eagle threw the body away from him and leaped to his feet.

"Good grief!" he moaned. "The tanks! I've got to stop them!"

There was no time to examine the tanks and their ghastly crews now. Masters was certain that he knew the secret of how they had died. But unless he could reach the others, they too must perish.

Without another glance at the dead Nazi, Masters leaped for the little scout car, kicked the motor into life and turned the jeep. Then shifting from gear to gear, he had the car in high and tearing down the jungle trail with throttle wide open.

"I've got to stop them!" he muttered as a bump threw him into the air, almost dislodging him from his seat. "They don't know they're driving into certain death. Curse those filthy swine! They're inhuman to pull a stunt like this."

The jeep skidded on the wet trail.

Masters straightened out with inward relief. He had never been so glad to find slippery driving as he was now. The motor under the hood pounded the jeep around a curve, with the Eagle holding on for dear life. He cursed the roar of the waterfall for it smothered the rattle of the tanks. Around another curve and then down the straightaway he drove, with life or death as the stake.

Masters wore no poncho as he steered blindly through the swirling mists. Wet clothes meant nothing to him. But he was glad they did to the Nazi who lay dead back there beside the tanks.

COMING through the curtain of moisture blown across the trail by the wind, Masters clamped down harder, clung tighter to the wheel and began to blow the horn. He yelled at the top of his lungs, hoping against hope the lead tank driver would hear him, before death began to reach into the tanks with his cold and merciless tentacles.

The Eagle hit a curve at full speed, jammed on his brakes and came to a halt hard against the nose of the leading tank.

"Of all the fool drivers!" swore the tank skipper as he peered through the port. "You take the cake, Mister!"

"Which gives you the chance to eat short cake again, my friend," Masters said in vast relief as Phil Warren came running up.

"What's the excitement, John?" Warren panted. "Where's the major?"

"Dead." Masters scowled. "He was this Number Two I was telling you about. He caused the death of all those men. You'd have been next if he hadn't been afraid of getting his uniform wet."

Warren shook his head confusedly. "What's wet uniforms got to do with this? Say, are you certain?"

Masters leaned against the tank to get his breath while the men gathered around him. In the crowd he spotted the soldier who had lost his pet.

"Your Jocko's going to get a medal, buddy," he said after a minute. "If that monkey hadn't died, you chaps would soon be like your pals up ahead."

"Come on, John, give!" Warren demanded. "Don't hold back on us. How did that monkey save us?"

"Remember that patch of wet on the tank turret where that bottle hit which was aimed at the monkey?"

They nodded their heads.

"The monkey came back and sat right over the spot," Masters went on. Then he paused. "I hate to tell you chaps this—but every one of these tanks has been painted with chlorocyanide."

There was a chorus of astonished whistles.

"So that's why that Major Wright insisted that we paint the tanks a different shade of green before we started into the jungle! Claimed it would be better camouflage. The dirty rat!"

The sergeant who had spoken turned around and spat in disgust.

Masters nodded soberly.

"It's perfectly harmless—as long as it's dry. But a little water, and this paint mixed with chlorocyanide gives off a deadly gas. You don't know it, of course, but that traitor did. There's a waterfall up ahead. The wind drives the spray right across the road.

The tanks drove through the mist, the gas was released and it drifted through the open ports. The men died almost at once."

"But, John," Warren persisted. "They're skeletons! Did the gas eat the flesh off their bones?"

Masters shook his head.

"I don't think so, Phil. I don't know whether they planned that angle, or whether it was an accident that made things look so gruesome. Wait until

we reach the tanks. Perhaps I can show you then."

He turned to the others.

"Get the idea of how Jocko saved you boys? When he came back, the spilled contents of that pop bottle were releasing this gas. Jocko got a lungful of this stuff, which being colorless we didn't see. In a few moments the sun dried the spot out.

"But how did you catch on?" demanded Phil Warren.

"Just a minute, Phil." Masters faced the tank men. "You fellows better go back. May have to back up until you find a place to turn."

"Where'll we go?" asked a young lieutenant. "Back to Port Darwin? We're looking for a chance to get even. My men are spoiling to tear some Japs apart."

"Got a map?" Masters asked. As he was handed one he yelled for Ponto. "Ponto," he said, pointing to a spot on the map, "you savvy this place?"

"Me savvy, boss," the native grinned as he pointed to the southwest.

"Does Paddy savvy, too?"

THE aborigine spoke to his companion and then turned to Masters.

"Paddy savvy."

"Good," Masters nodded. "You tell Paddy to go with these men. He must lead them to this place very quick. Savvy?"

The native nodded eagerly and passed the order on to Paddy.

"You an' me go to corroboree tonight, boss. Bell calls—you hear-um?"

"I hear it," Masters muttered. "I'm going to stop it forever!"

[Turn page]



"Okay, you men," he said, turning to the tank crews. "Better get going before the wind shifts and brings some spray this way. Ground's damp just around the bend. This chap will lead you. When you get there, wait. I'll be along shortly. We'll give 'em the marbles they deserve yet. Good luck!"

He watched the tanks begin to back up and herded Ponto and Warren into the jeep.

"We're heading into it, fellows," the Eagle said. "We're really looking for the bell, but not for the same reason the others were."

When they reached the spot in the trail where the spray played over the road, Warren leaned over toward his best friend.

"What was that crack you made about wet uniforms, John?"

"That Major Wright broke out a couple of ponchos long before we reached here," Masters recalled as he tooled the jeep through a pool of water. "Tipped me off that he knew all about this place. Although you said that you and the general were the only ones who had come up to look things over, remember? There was only one way for him to know about that waterfall—and that was to be in on the plan."

"Then this jeep isn't painted with that stuff," Warren said, as they finally drew up to the jungle tomb of the chlorocyanide-gassed Americans.

Masters nodded.

"That's why he did the leading. Guess your little rumor-mongering had its effect, too. I think that Nazi rat figured I was Number Six. That's why he suggested I go with him."

"But why should he go along?" asked Warren as they got out.

"On his way to help this Number One guy," Masters pointed to the tanks. "See, they're a different color. Just a shade or two off the green with which the others were painted. Moisture did that. Exactly the same shade the splashed pop left on the tank turret. That's where I got my first clue."

Suddenly Warren grasped Masters arm. A look of revulsion flashed over his face.

"My gosh, John! Look! What's that?"

"Ants," Masters smiled. "Flesh-eating ants. See how skeletons got in the tanks?"

"Is that—"

Warren swallowed as he stared at the heaving mass of crawling insects. He followed the long line of red they made as they disappeared into the jungle.

Masters' voice was grim.

"What's left of a Fifth Columnist who called himself Number Two is under that pile of ants, Phil. In a few hours there will be only a skeleton."

Warren turned his head away from the gruesome sight.

"There's one thing you haven't explained, John," he said after a bit. "What about this Colonel Ritter?"

"That's why I'm stopping here for a couple of minutes, Ponto!" Masters called. "Come here."

The native gave the tanks a wide berth as he walked to the head of the column where Masters and Warren had pulled up.

"Ponto, you savvy fella with stick? The man who struck you?"

"I savvy, boss," the native grinned ruefully as he rubbed his back. "I savvy blurry much."

"You savvy which car or tank he rode in?"

"Yes, boss. Me watch-um that fella go in that one."

He pointed to a car where a skeleton sagged over the wheel.

"Good," Masters said, motioning to the native. "You savvy tracks make-um by this fella with stick?"

PONTO hurried up beside the car and stooped to examine the ground.

"Trail's old, John," Warren said. "Couldn't expect him to pick it up now."

"One of these guys could pick up a track on a concrete floor a week after it was made," Masters declared as he watched the black. "Best trackers in the world."

"Me savvy tracks him bin make blurry lie," the native said as he straightened. "Fella with stick no make-um tracks. Yellow fella make-um. Yellow fella carry big thing away. No like track when this fella bin come."

Masters nodded.

"Suspected as much when I discovered Major Wright was really Number Two," he said. "By removing the colonel's body they were dragging a red herring across the trail. Everybody figured Colonel Ritter was the villain in the piece. I've got a hunch we'll find what's left of Colonel Ritter when we find the bell."

"That fool thing!" Warren said angrily as they listened to the sound of the bell from the crooked canyon. "What's the idea of the whole thing, anyway?"

"From what I can gather, there's a legend in these parts about a god who will call the natives together by means of a silver bell," the Eagle explained. "Some slippery Jap or Nazi saw the possibilities and is taking advantage of the legend. Smashing this tank column sets the deal up so only the enemy can win. You see—"

The short-wave radio in the jeep interrupted him.

"Darwin calling West Tanks . . . Calling West Tanks . . . Urgent . . . Urgent . . . Arrest Major Wright . . . Arrest Major Wright. He is an impostor. Body of real Major Wright has been picked up in San Francisco Bay . . . Identified by fingerprints . . . Arrest Major Wright . . . Is Fifth Columnist . . . Urgent . . . Urgent . . . Report."

Masters grabbed the hand microphone.

"West Tanks reporting! West Tanks reporting. Have discovered truth about Nazi, posing as Major Wright and disposed of same. Situation well in hand. Tanks heading for new rendezvous. Will report later . . . J. M. signing off."

The Eagle put the mike back on the hook and began to crawl back into the jeep.

"Come on, you fellows. We're going hunting for a silver bell."

Ponto shook his head.

"You no savvy tracks. Track make-um so far. Now you walk-um to bell."

"Okay, Ponto," Masters said as he climbed out again. "From the sound of that bell, we haven't got far to walk. Give you a chance to work up an appetite, Phil," he added wryly.

CHAPTER XI

Shadow and Substance



FOR once in his life John Masters was mistaken. The bell was not close at hand. Each time they reached a sharp bend in the dark trail over which Ponto was leading them, the bell sounded clearer. Yet for some inexplicable

reason it always seemed farther away.

They stopped to rest for a spell against the bole of a century-old jungle giant.

"This bell's driving me nuts, John," Warren complained out of the shadows. "Every time I hear it, I think it's on the mountainside just ahead. Then when we get there, the canyon does a right or left turn and the bell seems to jump ahead a mile."

"I think I can figure that angle, Phil," Masters said slowly. "This Number One guy seems to be pretty keen. Must have discovered that this winding canyon possesses strange acoustics. The way I dope it out, there must be a pretty solid ledge about halfway up the mountain.

"Number One has placed the bell at the head of the canyon, in such a position that when it rings, the sound waves bounce from ledge to ledge. What we've been listening to is really an echo."

"But what's the big idea?" Warren demanded.

"Just a bit of hokum," Masters said. "A person not in the know would hear the bell. If he was nosey, he might search for it. He'd draw a blank. But a little while later, he'd hear it further up the canyon. Chances are the natives think it is the voice of the god who is leading them to the meeting place."

"You blurry right, boss," Ponto broke in. "Bell bin along this place longa time. God, him carry bell an' run ahead to corroborore."

As the three men got up to continue their quest, Warren turned to the Eagle.

"What's the matter, John? I've never seen you gloomy before—especially with the prospect of a battle in the offing!"

"I can't help it, Phil," Masters growled. "I'm just thinking of the tough years lying ahead of us. We're going to take it on the chin plenty, until folks back home get over the idea that we're just waiting for the spot and time to jump the Japs and clean them up, once and for all. Americans are a bit overconfident because we've never lost a war. They fail to realize the Japs haven't, either."

"You don't think we're going to lose this one, do you?" Warren retorted in utter disbelief.

Masters hesitated.

"I've still got faith, Phil. But until the brass hats back home wake up to the fact that this is streamlined war—and unless you have air supremacy, you get your teeth kicked out—we're going to be pushed all over the map by these yellow devils and their black-hearted allies."

"Don't worry, they'll wake up," Warren said confidently.

"I'm sure they will," Masters agreed. "But not until the housewives stop worrying as to whether they'll have a couple of pounds of sugar or a couple of cakes of soap in the cupboard. Our first line of defense, the workers, must stop sitting down and arguing about getting another dollar a day.

"Suppose MacArthur's men struck tonight and demanded an extra twenty-five cents a day, or some regiment quit fighting because they discovered a guy in their ranks who in peacetime belonged to the wrong union? Be in a devil of a fix!

"For the life of me, I can't see much difference between a worker, a housewife or a soldier—except for the fact that one stands a good chance of getting his brains knocked out before he collects his pay check every month.

"Why, confound it, General MacArthur and his men are working the clock around! Don't hear them squealing for time and a half overtime, do you? They know there's a war on. But the guys back home don't seem to have got wise to that fact yet."

"You're just about in the mood to get up on a soap box in Union Square or Columbus Circle in New York, aren't you?" But there was an underlying seriousness in Warren's eyes.

"Darn tootin', Phil. Or in front of a microphone," Masters snorted. "We need a flock of Paul Reveres riding the streets of Washington, galloping through every city, village and hamlet of America, telling people to wake up before it's too late.

"The Japs may be headed for Australia now, but it's the Hawaiian Islands and our West Coast that they're after. And would they break us on the wheel if they ever succeeded! What's happening in Poland, Greece and Yugoslavia today under the heel of the filthy Huns would be a Sunday School picnic.

"If there were only some way by which I could yell, 'Wake up! The enemy is ready to strike!' into every home in America, into every factory, into the ear of every brass hat and Congressman!"

"You'd scare 'em half to death," Warren said. "And I'd take over when your voice gave out."

"Swell! But the other half would rise up and send the rats of Nippon scurrying back to their sewage-littered little islands, where they belong. Come on, we'll start the ball rolling by smashing Number One!"

TWO hours later, Ponto, who was in the lead, halted. From a distance a low murmur came drifting to their ears, punctuated now and then by a roaring sound that set the blood to curdling in their veins.

"What's that, John?" he asked as the sound rose in a crescendo and died away.

"A flock of bullroarers going off at once," Masters said over his shoulder.

"An' what's a bullroarer?" Warren demanded suspiciously. "Are they vicious?"

"Nothing but a gadget the aborigines like to play with," Masters told him. "A piece of flat wood tied to a string or bit of hide. Remember when you were a kid and bored a hole in your ruler, then whirled it around on a piece of string?

"That's all they are, Phil. Get a bunch of them going at once, and you think all the beasts of the jungle are headed your way with healthy appetites. Notice the bell isn't ringing? Things must be about to start."

Ponto cautioned them to silence and guided them into a narrow and tortuous trail until they finally came out on a little ledge. Below them they could hear the scuffle of feet, the movement of thousands of bodies and the low murmur of awed and expectant voices. Somewhere in the background a drum throbbed faintly.

"What's this meeting for, Ponto?" Masters asked. "You savvy?"

"Me savvy what my Father tell me longa time ago," Ponto said. "Only me bin longa time in white jail, learn much. Me savvy everything an' think he bin blurry liar about god with no body, only gold legs that shine in dark."

"What's this god supposed to do?" Masters asked as he looked down into the well of darkness from which the chorus of murmured voices rose.

"Me savvy him bin come to make-um black people free," Ponto declared after a moment's hesitation. "Him bin make-um tracks with gold legs an' bin lead us in war against white man. Him bin make-um palaver like bell."

Masters nodded thoughtfully. This was not the first time an enemy had thought to play on the superstitions of an ignorant people, in an effort to swing the balance of power. His mind flashed back to Khyber Pass and R-47, who had pretended to be a goddess, and to the gleaming sword of Tamerlane in the Caucasus.

But a god without a body was something new; a god with legs of gold intrigued him. Masters bit his lip and waited for the act to commence.

He hadn't long to wait. He was hardly conscious of the fact that the drum had changed its rhythm to the measured four-four time of a weird march.

"Look, boss!" Ponto gasped as he reached for Masters' arm and clutched it with trembling fingers. "Me no savvy this. Me bin think maybe my Father no bin blurry liar."

Masters stared into the darkness, unmindful of the frightened voice of the aborigine, or the trembling fingers on his arm. Faintly he heard the awed voices rise below him and then die away in silence.

There, not thirty feet away from him, a gleaming skelton was walking

out before the natives assembled in the natural amphitheater below. Where the skeleton came from Masters did not know. The thing had suddenly materialized before his eyes, almost as if it had grown into being out of the very darkness itself.

"Some sort of luminous paint?" Warren whispered excitedly.

Masters shook his head.

"Luminous paint would have been visible all the time. It wouldn't have grown from utter black to phosphorescent light the way this has done."

The Eagle was about to say something else when a voice seemed to emanate from the hideous, gleaming skull.

"What is it saying, Ponto?" Masters whispered. "Catch every word if you can. And don't be frightened. It's only a trick of some sort. You'll savvy pretty soon."

PONTO listened as the fiery skeleton moved around before the startled natives. He shivered and leaned closer to the Eagle.

"Him say him bin make-um quick tracks from land of dead to tell people to follow the bell god. Him say he bin one time big chief in land the white man take from us—"

"Go on, Ponto," Masters persisted. "What else?"

"Him say god with voice of bell an' no body come to lead us into war against white man," Ponto translated in a quivering whisper. "Look, boss, look! Him bin go back to dark."

Even as Ponto spoke, the skeleton slowly faded and then disappeared entirely. Below them, the crowd of aborigines broke into an excited murmur over the words they believed had come from the mouth of a fiery skeleton. But as the tempo of the unseen drum picked up, the blacks grew silent and waited, waited to see if the words of the skeleton had been true.

They had heard their fathers and grandfathers speak of a god who had no body, only a pair of shiny legs. They had heard of a day that god would return to lead them back to their own. Now that day had come. Even as they waited, the god was on his way to visit them.

Masters listened to the pulsating

crowd just below him. A slow smile crept across his taut features as he waited for Number One to pull his next phony trick out of the bag. The Eagle longed to go into action at once, but he forced himself to wait for developments, in order to expose the trickery to the gullible natives.

Then the bell rang again.

"Hey!" Warren whispered. "Look at this next act. The man's improving. How in thunder is he pulling this one?"

While they watched in honest astonishment, a pair of legs came slowly into view before the staring eyes of the gaping natives. The legs grew in brilliance until they seemed to be white fire leaping from a blue background.

The bell pealed once more and then was silent.

"My Father no bin blurry liar!" Ponto moaned softly. "This god, he bin come back!"

"Quiet, Ponto," Masters cautioned. "Two to one he's going to speak, so you'll have to tell me what he says."

"All right, boss," whimpered the frightened aborigine. "But me no feel-um strong inside now! That fella bin blurry big god— Look, boss, he walk with no body!"

"Shut up and listen," Masters snapped as he watched the legs move around in front of the now silent natives.

Then to the astonishment of the tense throng, the legs appeared to walk around an unseen ring in the air, until they were pointed toward the invisible tree branches above. There they paused, moving and waving in a fantastic rhythm which seemed to keep time with the low throb of the drum.

"Take a look at those thick legs, Phil. If they don't belong to a Jap, I'll eat them with chile sauce," Masters declared disgustedly.

"Maybe you're right," Warren muttered. "But how does he do it? If you ask me, I'd say it was darned spooky. Hate to wake up some night and see them walking around on my ceiling!"

"Hundred ways of doing it," Masters growled. "Listen—he's speaking. It's the same voice the skeleton used. Poor devils down there are so scared,

they don't notice it. Ponto, what do the legs say?"

Ponto, alternately listening and shivering, turned to the Eagle.

"Him say him come like we waited. Him say white man bad, must leave country. Him say yella fella hear how bad white man is an' come to help. Him say yellow fella come tomorrow night to help kill all white man in country—"

A roar drowned out Ponto's next word. The legs danced and pivoted before the frenzied natives, kicking right and left as if lashing at some loathsome, unseen thing.

Masters got to his knees and put his hand on Ponto's trembling shoulders.

"Give me your womerah, quick! I've got to stop this guy before he works any more of his filthy tricks on these poor devils."

"No can, boss!" No can help it," whimpered the native. "Him blurry big god. Him kill us. You savvy this, you scram!"

WITHOUT a word Masters ripped the eighteen-inch stick of wood from Ponto's fingers. The natives used the weapon as a lever to hurl their spears. Quickly he fitted the notched end of the spear to the loop.

Then getting lightly to his feet, the Eagle stood poised above the now almost hysterical natives. His arm came back, then shot forward with every ounce of power at his command. The spear disappeared in the dark, heading straight for the blackness a foot above the dancing legs.

Suddenly the legs stopped. A wild shriek broke above the murmur of the milling natives. Then the fiery legs collapsed, quivered in the darkness and straightened out.

"Quick!" Masters cried. "Follow me! Throw the beam of your flashlight on those legs, Phil. Ponto, you tell your people we are friends come to save them from this yellow fella. Make 'em savvy, or we'll all be dead!"

As they reached the side of the still-gleaming legs, Masters snatched the flashlight from Warren's hand and held it with the beam thrown downward.

"See, Ponto? Tell them this man is

human, just as they are. He's not really human—he's a slinking Jap who wants to lead them to their death. Quick, hold up your hands for silence! I'll show them how the trick is worked."

"I savvy now, boss!" Ponto exclaimed as Warren held the light on him so the natives could see his up-raised hands. "Them legs no bin god. They bin blurry liar!"

Masters turned quickly to Warren.

"Phil, light that pile of stuff over there. Looks as if this Number One guy was going to have a fire after his performance. I want these fellows to see this."

Gradually the crowd quieted down and moved closer to the ledge on which the three men stood. Their up-turned faces gleamed as the flame took hold of the dry brush.

Masters looked grim as he dropped to his knees beside the Jap, writhing on the ground as he tried to pull the bloody spear from his chest.

"You're through, Number One," the Eagle told him. "You've pulled your last bit of mumbo-jumbo. You're on your way to meet Number Two, an' Number Four. Ask Admiral Nagara if his stolen Scotch and soda come to a boil down there."

"You must be the Eagle," the dying man gasped. "I was afraid you would come. But when I heard that you were dead— You are not a ghost, are you?"

"Playing around with this stuff so much, you're beginning to believe it yourself, aren't you?" Masters said as he picked up a shaded globe to which a set of wires was attached. "Just the way I figured it. Black light. All right to pull on natives—but not on a white man."

The Jap's eyes gleamed hatefully. He twisted then, kicked his stubby legs and lay still.

"That's the end of Number One," Masters said as he got to his feet. "We may have missed a couple of numbers but I think we hit bingo just the same."

"But what's the build-up?" Warren demanded as he stared at the dead Jap. "I don't get it."

"You listen while I try to explain it to Ponto," Masters said. "He'll try to tell the natives how this yellow devil

almost tricked them. Understand, Ponto? It's up to you to put it across. We'll get right down here in front, where they can all see us, and where we can have some shadow for the demonstration."

Stooping over the dead Jap, the Eagle ran the palms of his hands over the dull yellow skin. They came away with a coating of grease.

"See," Masters explained, holding the black bulb and its shade out to Ponto. "This is what the white man calls black light. I light it, savvy, but we cannot see it."

He threw a switch on the handle but there was no illumination.

"But when I hold my hand here in the shadow, it is visible. That is because I rubbed my hands on the yellow man's legs. He had them covered with vaseline, in which some finely pulverized mineral rock had been mixed. This looks like sheelite.

"I turn the light off, my hands do not glow. I turn it on, they gleam like fire again. Look, Ponto. I will rub my hands against yours. Now they also glow when the light is turned on them— Tell your people that, Ponto."

AS PONTO explained the seeming miracle to the astonished natives, building it up as "strong medicine" concocted by the American, Phil Warren stepped up to Masters' side.

"How's that fading business done?"

"Little rheostat here by the switch," Masters explained. "He walked out in the dark and began to increase the juice from this portable battery. His legs with the mineral on them became fluorescent and grew in brilliance as the power became stronger."

"But the skeleton?"

"Gosh, that reminds me! Must be around here. Ah, there it is. Covered with vaseline and scheelite, too."

"Look! It's got an identification tag on the right wrist!"

Warren knelt and glanced at the metal tag.

"You called it, John. It's Colonel Ritter. The dirty rats! They'd stoop to using the bones of a dead man. Well—we'll bury it before we pull out of here."

While Warren buried the skeleton of Colonel Ritter, Masters showed

Ponto how to work the light trick. He left the natives shrieking with laughter as Ponto gathered up more of the mineral-impregnated grease and put on a performance that far surpassed that of Number One.

As Warren finished Masters came back.

"Had a powerful short-wave outfit back there in the cave, Phil. That's finished, too."

"How about the bell that started all this?" Warren asked as he got to his feet.

"Phonograph record hooked up to an amplifier." Masters grinned. "Everything's smashed including the loudspeaker. I sort of wondered who would sit around tapping a bell."

Warren shook his head in bewilderment.

"You hear a phonograph record of a bell up north in Macassar Strait, so you get one of your hunches—and look what happens! Well, I suppose this cleans things up."

"Not by a darn sight!" Masters exclaimed as he tossed Ponto the jar in which Number One had kept his strange make-up. "Number One may be dead, but he's got a well-oiled machine rolling. We've got to stop that before we're through. We've got a job to do before the Japs pull into Anson Bay tomorrow night."

Leaving the natives to daub themselves with grease and shriek with laughter as they came into the black light's invisible beam, Masters and his two companions hurried down the trail, heading back for the place where they had left the jeep.

CHAPTER XII

Flaming Victory



IT WAS mid-morning before they reached Anson Bay. The sun beat like a blast furnace on the plates of the three oil tankers anchored in the harbor.

Three ship captains, together with their first engineers, sat in the tiny lounge of the *S.S. Yeats*. Their faces were lined with disappointment.

"Orders are orders, Mr. Masters,"

Captain Young of the tanker *Talon* said slowly as he glanced at his companions. "I think I'm speaking for the rest when I say that I hate to scuttle my ship, even to beat these Japs. Seems too much like a Nazi trick. They're *always* scuttling."

"I know how you feel, gentlemen," Masters replied patiently. "But all that stands between Australia and these yellow fiends is your three ships. I hate to have you do it, but these are orders. You think you can carry out my plans?" he asked, turning to the engineers.

"You say we have about eight hours?" one of them asked. "Be quite a bit of drilling to do. But I'll guarantee to have my plates ripped up."

"And you fellows?" Masters asked the other two engineers.

"The same for us, sir," they chorused.

"Then we'll come ashore to watch the show," added the engineer of the *Talon*.

"Good."

Masters smiled as the *Yeats'* wireless officer came in.

"Did you send out the flash that an enemy sub has chased you into Anson Bay?"

"Yes, sir," grinned the radioman. "Put plenty of juice behind it, too."

Masters got up with the feeling of things to come.

"Well, we're all set from this end," he declared. "I want to tell you men that I was plenty relieved when I saw your ships anchored out here this morning. Good luck! See you ashore this afternoon. And don't forget to anchor in the positions I marked on the chart. I want you right off the beach. That's where they'll head for."

"Very well, sir," the captain of the *Talon* said grimly. "You can count on us doing our part."

"And us, sir," the rest joined in.

They began to leave in preparation for returning to their own vessels.

* * * * *

It was the longest eight hours John Masters had ever spent in his life. So much was at stake. Everything depended on his desperate scheme to stop the yellow horde from Japan. Behind him on the small plateau, a squadron of Anzac fighter planes

waited to try their wings and guns against the invaders. With them was a squadron of medium bombers, whose pilots still wondered at the strange orders they had received from the mysterious American of whom they had heard so much.

As the sun was lowering behind the Timor Sea, Phil Warren came and crouched beside the Eagle. He sat there for a moment before he discovered the three tankers had disappeared.

"What did they do, sail again?"

pound fragmentation stuff?"

"You'll see," Masters said. "Hey! There's a Jap reconnaissance job up there, having a last look before the show starts. Poor guy, he won't see a thing."

"Going to have fireworks, too," Warren said as he spotted rockets set up in their cradles in the bushes lining the beach.

"Plenty," Masters said shortly. "They'll be coming in around that point. Confound it, this waiting's driving me nuts!"

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"They're down under," Masters said grimly. "Gosh, but I hated to tell those men they had to scuttle their own ships. I think they'd liked to have slit my throat, at first."

Warren shook his head.

"The dizziest flock of orders has been flyin' around today," he said. "An' you're responsible for every one of them. Say, what's the idea of telling the medium bombers to drop their stuff *between* the Jap landing parties as they come ashore—not try to hit them? An' what's the idea of loading the bombers up with twenty-five

"Look at me," the irrepressible Warren grinned. "I haven't had a meal since lunch yesterday. I'm taking it!"

EVEN as he spoke the setting sun slipped into the sea. Darkness dropped over the quiet harbor.

"I'm going to warm up my motor," Masters said. "Got my plane hidden up the beach. In a little while, you and I are going 'swooshing', as you say."

"On an empty stomach too," Phil Warren moaned as he got up and

followed the Eagle.

An hour slipped by. Then another. The silver sickle of the moon began to lift over the jungle to the east of Anson Bay. Nerves became taut as minutes dragged by. Men longed for a smoke but dared not strike so much as a match.

Suddenly dark shadows loomed up out on the bay. The men on the beach strained forward, eager for their first contact with the enemy.

"Steady," Masters cautioned as he moved over to the rocket rack. "We'll be at them in a few minutes. They're beginning to unload. Got to wait. They'll smell the oil but think it's the tanker we reported sunk."

Another hour went by before the bay was filled with dark blotches, moving stealthily toward the beach gleaming in the pale moonlight.

"Sure this will hit the spot I want?" Masters asked the ship's officer who stood by the rockets.

"Yes, sir," the officer replied tensely. "They'll hit the water right where you want them."

"Okay. Steady, then," Masters said as he fought to hide the excitement in his voice. "Get ready."

There was silence on the beach. The men hardly dared breathe as the strain mounted to explosive tension.

"Now!" Masters said sharply.

The officer struck a match and held it to a fuse until it caught. Quickly he moved the match to another fuse until that one too sputtered. Then before he had the fifth rocket fuse lit, the first one shot out across the bay with a roaring hiss, followed a split second later by the second.

One after the other the rockets streaked into the night, shedding a shower of sparks to mark their course.

Without waiting to see the result, Masters yelled to Phil Warren and dashed for the Wirraway standing on the beach. He was in the forward cockpit and opening the throttle as Warren scrambled into the gunner's position.

There was no need for flares for the take-off. Anson Bay was a seething sea of flame. The rockets had ignited the oil-covered surface like a Roman holiday.

"My gosh!" Warren yelled into the

intercom. "Looks like a preview of Hades, doesn't it?"

Masters swung into a climbing turn and looked over the side. As far as he could see, there were only a few of the landing boats in sight, and they were scurrying to get away from the roaring flames.

"Those tankers are doing their bit," the Eagle called to Warren. "Worth the effort of having the plates torn up to make sure the oil would escape. Got a couple of tons of gasoline floating around out there, too. Ah! Here come the Anzacs!"

The Winged Aussies hurtled down across the bay, dropping twenty-five pound fragmentation bombs wherever a Jap boat was visible. The exploding bombs sent geysers of flaming oil into the night and let them cascade over an escaping landing boat.

One by one the boats were engulfed in the sea of flame. A few close by the transports attempted a frantic return. But another dose of twenty-five pounders finished them off.

The waters of Anson Bay boiled and bubbled that night, cutting off all approaches to the shore. And in the flames, arrogant Jap ambitions turned to bitter ashes as boat after boat drifted out of the holocaust, their charred crews sprawled grotesquely in the laps of Nipponese angels. War and blood lust were earthbound things which would trouble them no more.

BUT in the sky Nakajimas now raged, striving desperately to avenge the legions lost on the flaming waters below. And while Masters and Warren battled gleefully, with Anzac wings on every side throwing lead whenever a target presented itself against the blood-red sky, three big Australian bombers slipped away into the shadows and caught the *Akagi* with a full salvo of 500-pounders.

The big aircraft carrier sank reeling into the Timor Sea, leaving no flight deck for returning *Nakajimas*, which already had their yellow bellies full of Anzac wings and Aussie lead.

As the last of the Japs winged their way into the night, to finally drop like exhausted vultures into an unfriendly sea, Masters signaled for the Anzacs

to form up and fly back to shore.

"What a battle!" Phil Warren chuckled. "But for the life of me, I couldn't tell whether we knocked any down."

"I didn't try," Masters said over the intercom. "I was satisfied just to herd those rats in front of the Anzacs. And did they go to it!"

There were patches of the bay which still burned. Here and there floated a boat, but that was all. The transports which had not already been bombed went scurrying for the open sea under forced draft, empty hulks for an empty cause.

"Come Hades, high water or cross-eyed Hirohito, there'll be Anzac wings here to greet them," John Masters grinned as he led his flock of happy warriors back to Port Darwin.

Word was already filtering through that the main column of Yankee tanks cooperating with the Aussies had stopped the eastern invasion cold. And when the fighting forces of the United Nations were finally marshalled, the Eagle knew, Democracy's legions would storm the Japanese Empire with a fury that would make Pearl Harbor and Singapore look like a Sunday School picnic.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

John Masters Battles Above the United States and Alaska to Foil a Dastardly Axis Plot in

WEST COAST PATROL

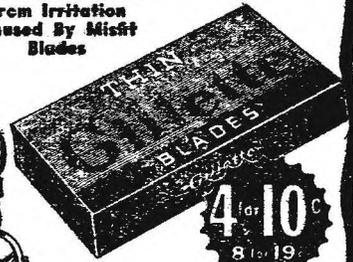
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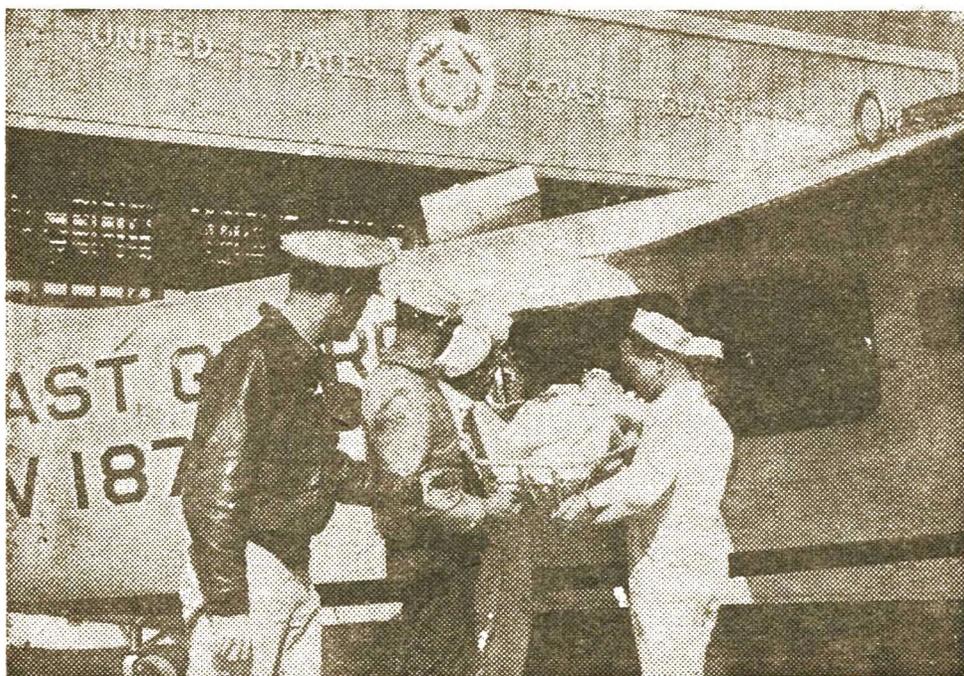
By **SAM MERWIN, JR.**

Steady progress has marked the amazing growth of our Coast Guard air branch from its humble beginning in 1920!

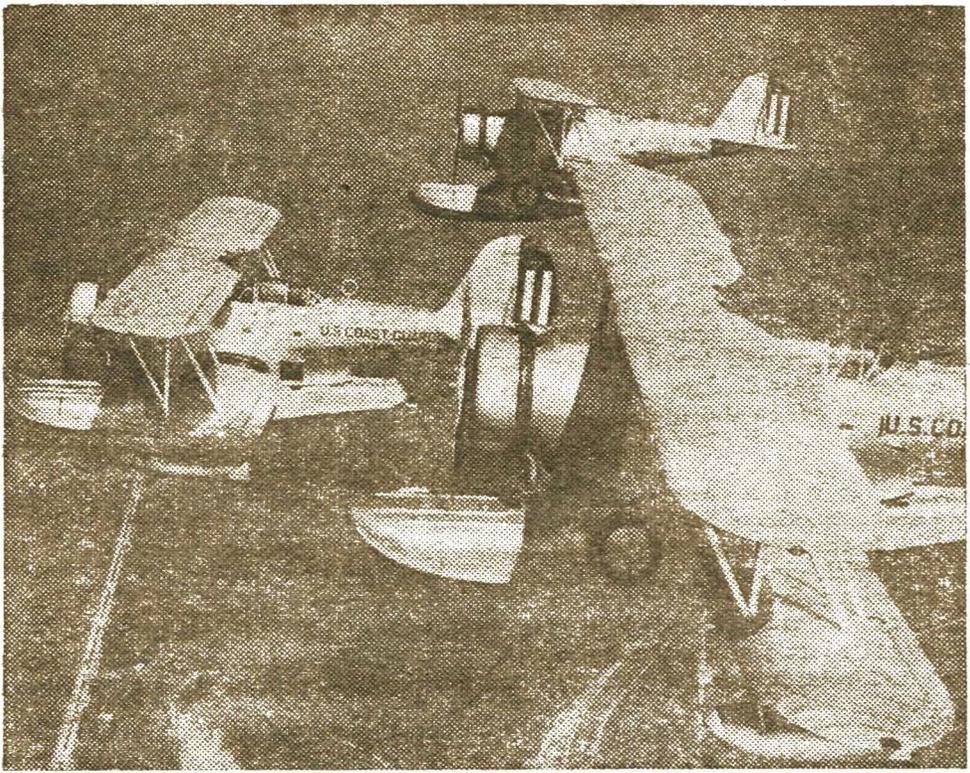
WHEN the United States Navy swallowed the Coast Guard for the duration, it acquired a highly trained and highly efficient extra air force which is now doing invaluable work around the entire rim of the continent. Never glamorized like the Army and Navy flyers, this compactly integrated and thoroughly specialized corps knows more about spotting trouble at sea and doing something about it than the other three services combined.

They haven't been patrolling our offshore waters merely since the awakening to the Axis threat to our security; they've been at it, in foul weather and fair, for over fifteen years. And they're entirely accustomed to working in coordination with necessarily slower surface vessels.

The conception of using planes to supplement cutters in the multifarious lines of the Coast Guard duty originated shortly before our entrance into World War I in 1916. It was given



Official U. S. Coast Guard Photograph
A stretcher case at the Elizabeth City, N. C., air station



Official U. S. Coast Guard Photograph
Formation of Grumman Amphibians

impetus during that conflict when numerous members joined the Naval Air Service, and the first station—a flapping tent hangar in Morehead City, N. C.—was set up in 1920.

Despite the obvious need for such a service, Congress, after its inevitable fashion, couldn't see it and did not allot funds for a Coast Guard aviation arm until six years later. And this first grant was a niggardly \$152,000 which allowed the setting up of two tiny fields at Gloucester and Cape May and the purchase of all of five small planes.

A Remarkable Growth

However, once under way, the service snowballed steadily until, at the time of its induction into the Navy, the original quota of planes had multiplied many times, and the two antique airfields had become ten modern skyports covering the two oceans, the Gulf and the Great Lakes.

None of these stations is situated on the ocean itself—lest, in heavy weather, when most emergencies occur

—high seas prevent the planes from taking off or landing. Instead, a sheltered body of water is selected to do duty as a base. Water is necessary, because virtually all Coast Guard planes are amphibious by the very nature of their requirements.

A typical layout includes a concrete ramp from hangars to water, mooring buoys, guiding lights and other facilities needed for the handling of sea-planes. Each air station is a self-sustaining unit, has equipment for maintenance and repairs, and barracks for flyers and ground crews.

Behind these stations is the fine network of Coast Guard Air Service which keep ships and planes informed of each other's movements while they are hundreds of miles offshore. And at Elizabeth City, North Carolina, and San Diego, California, big repair shops for the overhaul of planes are maintained.

What It Takes to Make Pilots

It isn't easy to be a Coast Guard pilot. In the first place, a young man

desirous of serving his country in this way must attend the Coast Guard Academy at New London, Connecticut, for four years and graduate as an ensign. With this behind him, he is assigned to three years of sea duty.

Only when this hitch is completed may he apply for his wings. If he is deemed potential flying stuff, he then goes to a Coast Guard Air Station for basic training. And after this, he goes through the regular Navy wringer at Pensacola, Florida, toughest pilot-training school in the world.

A young man who has gone successfully through this rigorous course of training is a first-class flyer. More important, thanks to his three years at sea, he is thoroughly equipped to cooperate with surface vessels because he understands their limitations in times of stress. And constant emergency calls while on duty make him a seasoned veteran within a couple of years.

The country is at present divided into eighteen Coast Guard districts. A district may span territory equal in area to a couple of full-blown states. Its equipment will average half a dozen sea-going cutters, scores of smaller patrol craft and upward of twenty life-boat stations. Along with this goes the complex network of navigational aids, including lighthouses, lightships, and the supply vessels and other plants required for their operation.

Thus, the pilots have their work cut out for them, especially when it is remembered that the Coast Guard covers such far-away waters as the Alaskan Arctic and the berg-laden seas east of Greenland. The use of planes for patrol duty has vastly extended the area of the Coast Guard patrol, speeded up direct communications immeasurably.

An Enviably Record

Here is a list of what the Coast Guard Air Force did in 1940:

Warned 1466 persons of impending danger.

Warned 259 vessels of impending danger.

Assisted 223 persons in sickness or peril.

Transported 113 emergency medical cases to hospitals.

Transported 12 persons from disabled vessels.

Located 76 disabled vessels.

Reported 9 navigation obstructions.

Located 2 smuggling vessels.

Assisted other government departments 192 times.

Located 725 illicit distilleries.

Identified 29,322 vessels.

Made 4,801 flights.

Cruised 1,258,344 miles.

Covered an area of 9,307,066 miles (three times that of the United States of America.)

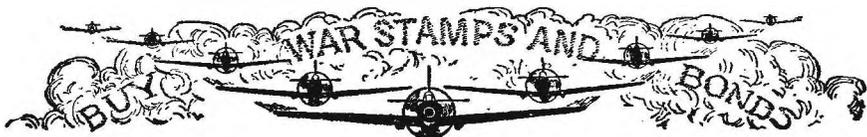
Flew 13,231 hours.

That should give you an idea. In those trite official words are buried hurricanes, shipwrecks and unrecorded heroism in emergency transportation of all kinds. It is a record to be proud of.

But since the outbreak of war, the Coast Guard flyers have begun the compilation of a record which will make that one just listed above read like the doings of a scrawny child. With Axis submarines preying on shipping off either Coast, the services of this magnificent and specialized group of heroes has been a life saver to our Naval Air Service in its vast offshore patrol operations.

Peace or war, they'll be winging over the waters to give protection to all friendly souls at sea and bring destruction on enemy forces. Keep 'em flying!

Read Our Companion Magazine Dedicated to Our Fighting Fleet —
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The pilot makes us jump before the wheels touch ground

Prussian Patsies

By **JOE ARCHIBALD**

When Ambrose Hooley becomes an autograph hound, he and Muley Spink find themselves thrown to the dogs!

EVERYTHING I, Muley Spink, am about to relate to you, happened all because me and Ambrose Hooley should have been famous character actors and not lieutenants in the U. S. Air Corps in 1917. Also because we should never have tried to help some Salvation Army lassies dole out doughnuts in Commercy one night.

Living in a Nisson with Ambrose is fun and as comfy as exploring the inside of a volcano crater while you are carryin' a quart jar of TNT. Ambrose was born with one ear caulflowered and with a mouse under his left eye, and he always said it was the doctor's fault, but I have heard about heredity the same as the next guy. When Ambrose is not fighting or in trouble he

gets morose and is a subject for a nogginologist.

One day we are about to take off on a patrol to fight the Heinies with Bug-eye Boomer, and it is the first time I ever saw Ambrose jittery.

"This is just like all other fights," I says to him as I fasten my helmet strap. "What happens as you look scairt and that is unusual, like finding a doorknob under a hen."

"You forget there is a big show put on for the A.E.F. who are stoppin' over in Commercy this evenin'," Ambrose says. "Elsie Janice will star. It would be just my luck to git killed today and not git to meet her. I want her autograft. I have a collection of them. I got one from the axe murderer in Detroit before they snuffed her out, Muley. I got one from a French actress in the Folies Bergere an'—"

Well, we go up and meet some Albs that are not out just to air the fresh paint that is on them, and I wonder who told Ambrose he could get killed at any time, as what the little tomato does to three of the Krauts should have not been fair under any law. I see him smack one Alb down and then he shoots the wheel off another and the wheel falls down and hits another Alb pilot right on the pate and down he goes, too. I never saw a better triple play anywhere. Bugeye Boomer is in good shape, too, and if I do say so myself, I had the best day of the guerre. When we were finished, we knew that Heinie circus would never be billed anywhere again.

Maybe we were all in fine fettle because of the things that Gothas had been doing to Allied dumps, billets, bridges and other things of vital importance to the longevity of the Democrats in the world. For three weeks now, Gothas had been coming over at night, and they never went back. The big crates always pointed themselves at what they wanted to wash out and dove right into it. Chaumont sent some officers to see Major Bagby, and the C.O. said that it looked like there was no fighting against citizens who wanted to commit suicide and that it was a terrible threat to the cause.

"To me," the C.O. had said to the

brigadier and the colonel, "it looks like the Kraut Air Force has rounded up Junkers with incurable diseases or dementia praecox or other things and have showed how to serve the Fatherland. The Germans won't stop at nothin'. What do you want me to do, sir? Suicide squadrons try to get killed and all that will save the A.E.F. supplies, etc., is fake dumps to fool the suicides away from the real ones. Oh, what will they think of next?"

"I bet it is something they feed the Krauts," Ambrose said. "There is a Dr. Ja...ell in Germany. Why didn't Uncle Willie think of something like that?"

"Don't mention *him*," I gulped at the time. "Please, Ambrose."

COMMERCY is a place where they manufacture things out of iron and where they make socks. There is a big chateau on the banks of the Meuse there where Voltaire once lived and entertained royalty. A big chunk was bitten out of the castle by a pair of Kraut bombs early in the guerre and the Frogs, of course, had no time to restore it. It is where the A.E.F. road show is going to do their bit for Allied morale.

"Maybe there is a chorus with the show," Ambrose says as he shines up his boots. "I wisht I'd got wounded a little in the show we just put on, as dames get maternal instincts when that happens, Muley."

"You would have had to have all of your face shot off," I says. "All that would want to mother you is a wolf. Now don't you start nothing in Commercy."

Me and Ambrose go into town and stop at a buvette or two and finally end up in a café where there is part of the Allied actors' guild grouped about a table. One big fat citizen in uniform is doing laps around the table and every once in awhile he stops and shakes his noggin and looks at his comrades.

"We can't cut out that skit," the boss of the Thespians says. "It is the scene where Elsie Janice looks her prettiest an' she cements better relations with the French by it. It is just like that pair to get measles at this

time. Where can we hire some actors?"

I grab hold of Ambrose Hooley and try to stop him, but he walks over to the big fat Thespian and says is there anything a brave flyer can do for him?

"I was an end man in a couple of Elks' Minstrels back home and I was a panic," Ambrose says. "I also played Uncle Tom for the Baptist Church fair. Of courst, I am out of practice and all but—"

"Er—thanks, Lieutenant. Why, thanks. Your face would not matter as you can wear a white beard and dark glasses. You see you will play Joan of Arc's father." Then the A.E.F.'s Tony Pastor points at me and says there is no reason in the world why I couldn't be Joan's mother. He asks can I act and if I have a falsetto voice.

"Yes," I sniff. "Also eeth. But I am not with the little ape as we bumped into each other comin' around the corner. I never saw him before in my whole life."

"Listen, Muley," Ambrose says sotto voice and nudges me. "Don't be like that as we will be right in the cast with the pretty dolls."

"You stop leadin' me into trouble as I want to stay out of a cast, a plaster one. I know where there is a doll I can hobnob with this evenin', anyway."

"Bagby might find out who borrowed his new Sam Browne belt, too," Ambrose says. "You know how things get around in a air squadron. Of courst, I wouldn't snitch on nobody, but there is always somebody to make a slip of the tongue."

SO I am blackmailed into acting for the U. S. and their Allies. The fat officer tells us what time to be in the dressing room in the chateau and I says I would feel better if I was being asked to go over to Germany and steal the Potsdam silver.

"It is stage fright, Muley," Ambrose says. "You will git over it."

I wish you could have seen the show. When Ambrose gets his cue, he comes out of the wings and steps on his beard. Somebody laughs and yelps it is Lieutenant Hooley. Ha-ha-ha!

"That was the C.O.," Ambrose

hisses at me. "I never saw no beard this long. Listen to them laugh. Well, we will show them." Ambrose goes over and embraces his daughter, who is Joan of Arc, alias Elsie Janice, and then he lets out a howl as a jagged edge of the old tin suit jabs him in the ribs. Miss Janice tries to cover up and yelps. "*Adieu, mon Pere.* I go to save France. My horse waits without."

"Without what?" Ambrose says, and I try to cover him this time and put on my best falsetto, but it breaks. The Allied audience is in convulsions as Joan of Arc keeps walkin' toward the door and Ambrose has his sleeve caught in her sword.

"Oh," Ambrose says before Miss Janice slips through the wings, "gimmie your autograft, huh? I am collecting—"

Somebody rings the curtain down and it hits me right on the dome, and as I pancake over the footlights, I see everybody falling all over the place with convulsions. I hear Bugeye Boomer, who is in the front row, yelling for an encore. Then the boss of the road show chases Ambrose right out from backstage and halfway into Commercy and Elsie Janice is not far behind him, and she is taking swipes at the little tomato with the tin sword. It takes the audience an hour to finally calm the sweetheart of the A.E.F. down and while it is going on, I make my escape.

I am passing the mouth of an alley in Commercy two hours later when somebody hisses at me.

"Muley. I am in here," Ambrose says and I go into the alley and see him sitting on an old canned goods box with a bottle held between his knees. It is not cognac but liniment.

"She threw her helmet at me and didn't miss," Ambrose says. "I got a knot on my dome so big my hat won't fit no more. Well, what do they expect from actors who work for nothin'?"

"We are laughing stocks," I says.

"I know what we will do," Ambrose says and I should have started running right then and there. "They are christenin' a new Salvation Army shack in Commercy, Muley. There is three dames in it who are not bad-lookin' after dark and they will be

swamped with work as I bet a thousand A.E.F. doughs will try and get doughnuts there tonight. Sniff the air, Muley. You can smell them now. Let's go and offer to help. We can vindicate ourselves."

We walk into the Salvation Army shack and Ambrose says his piece.

"Good evenin', Mam'selles. We are U. S. aviators who are the answers if you have been prayin'. We wish to help you."

"Oh, lovely," one of the lassies says. "Aren't we lucky, girls? Now we open up in just fifteen minutes. There is the powdered sugar right there to dip the hot ones in when we tell you."

JUST as the door flies open, six officers come in. That is the way with brass hats as they have to be fed first. One is a brigadier and he rubs his mitts together and licks his chops.

"Oh, boy, doughnuts!" he says.

"Here are six big fat ones," Ambrose says and douses the sinkers in the bowl of powdered sugar at his elbow. Then he hands them to the brass hats. Three of them cram them into their mouths like they had not been fed for weeks. When the brigadier swallows his first sinker he gets a funny look on his face and his mouth forms a big round O like the first one in Ohio. He points a big fat finger at Ambrose just as the other two officers slap hands over their mouths.

"Whoo-oo—'ig—wum-Oo—"

"It is baby talk," Ambrose says. "Why, Brigadier, I—"

A dame grabs up the bowl of sugar and samples it.

"Oh, you fools, this is alum," she yips. "I bet you switched it on purpose."

"Huh? Why, we did not, did we, Muley?"

I start for the back door. So does Ambrose, but a big officer grabs him from behind and slows him up. Ambrose whirls quick and slams the brass hat and I remember hearing a sound like it once before. It was when Ty Cobb smacked a two and nothing pitch over the fence in Detroit. We hear M.P.s blowing their whistles all the way out of Commercy.

"This is what we get into helping

christen a Salvation Army shack," I toss out between gulps from breath. "You could get pinched for speeding in a telephone booth. They are not far behind us, Ambrose Hooley. You can hear them just as plain. Oh, what'll we do?"

"Look, Muley. There is a Frog drivin' a wagon and it looks like a swill cart. We will climb in that big box and drop the cover down on us. Who would believe we would hide in a swill wagon?"

"I would," I snap. *Phew-w-w-w!* It is an ill wind, ain't it, Ambrose. But I hope it will do us good."

We climb into the swill cart and bang the cover down. It is awful inside the box, and I say they should furnish aviators gas masks like they do doughs. We count off eighteen hundred seconds and Ambrose tells me he thinks the coast is clear.

"I hope it is the coast of Spain," I says. "What a mess we are in." We climb out of the swill wagon and no sooner start toward some woods when we hear the A.E.F. cops not fifty feet away.

"We got just one chanct, Muley," Ambrose says. "Flop over there near the woods and act like we was dead. Hold your breath."

I say it is silly, but we do. Six big doughs come upon us and they stop near enough for us to hear them breathe.

"Ugh," a dough wearing a brassard says. "Stiffs, Eddie. "Smell 'em."

"Yeah. Somebody missed 'em when they buried some others. Well, I ain't no undertaker an' I'm gettin' away from here. I wonder where them fresh aviators went?"

We count off nine hundred seconds more and give the doughs a chance to get out of sight.

"Was that a panic, Muley? We was sure lucky to get into the swill wagon," Ambrose says.

SOMETIMES a citizen gets beside himself and forgets not to walk in where angels would fear to tread. I hit Ambrose Hooley right on the nose and then I am almost as good as a stiff the next twenty minutes. When Ambrose hits you it is like somebody sawed off

the top of your dome and poured starch into you and then put the cap back on.

"Where am I?" I say.

"You got hysterics, Muley, and I had to knock you loose from them," Ambrose tells me. "Well, we might as well go and get court-martialed. Only a thousand witnesses can testify against us in court."

"I'm turning state's evidence," I say.

Me and Ambrose walk right into the Operations Office on the drome of the Ninety-third and give ourselves up. With Major Bagby is one of the officers who is still trying to change his mouth from the shape of an O to a dash.

"Don't say it," I says. "We deny nothin'. Not even sinkin' the battleship Kitchener was on."

"I am in this terrible mess because a Salvation Army doll was cockeyed," Ambrose says. "Well, say somethin', Major."

Bagby has a funny look in his eye like you see in a cat's while it is cuffing a mouse around. There is a map in front of the C.O. and an ash-tray loaded with cigar butts, so me and Ambrose know there has been a conference.

"Ah, look here, General," the C.O. says. "You said nobody would be expected to volunteer for that job, huh? You wouldn't ask nobody who had a future ahead of him? Well, here's two frowsy aviators without none. Let's tell them about the Gotha that smacked all h— out of the supply dump near Luneville."

"Hold onto your seat, Muley," Ambrose says. "I smell a plot worst than the swill cart."

"We pulled a Heinie out of the wreck of the Gotha or near it. Don't tell me how he got loose. I think he jumped just before it hit and he got hung up in a tree. The explosion blew his clothes right off. Bring the prisoner in, Boomer."

Bugeye does. The Kraut looks like any Junker as he has his dome shaved and a scar over one eye. You have to be cut in at least three places to graduate from the Kraut West Point.

"Why do a lot of you Jerries want

to commit suicide?" Bagby asks.

"Vhy? *Der doktor's* tell us which haff der bad hearts, *ja*. I haff in mein der leaky valve an' I go off like der vill-uf-der-visp any minute, *ja*. So ve become *der suicide staffel undt* help safe der Faterland."

"Hah," Bagby says. "What suckers. Lok, *Herr* von Schmutz, the medico who examined you said you got a heart like an oak stump. Look, fat-head, you jumped out of a Gotha and got hooked in a tree and you had your clothes blown off when the dump went up. So you got a weak heart? Why are you alive now?"

"*Ja?* You tell der truth? *Ja*, after vhat I go through, der heart does not stop? *Himmel!* An' mein brudder ist ofer there mit der suicide squadron. Mein Rudy. *Donnervetter*. *Ach! Idt ist der last straw.*"

"Point out where the outfit is and we will try to stop this dastardly attempt to murder your pals under false pretenses," Bagby says and looks at us.

"I get it," Ambrose says.

"Yeah?" the C.O. grins while the Junker takes a squint at the map. "You want to be actors so bad, have I an idea!"

The Kraut shows us just where the Gotha outfit is. He tells Bagby the Krauts have been using old Gothas that have only about one trip left in them. We can see that the Gothas that are ready for senility do more to wash up the Allies than new ones.

"Dere ist the place. Dere!" Von Schmutz growls. "Oh, safe *mein* Rudy. Safe all der utters, *mein freunds*. Nort uf Metz is der place. By Metzzerwiese. I write der letter for my *kamerads undt* dey vill know *mein* writing undt *mein* family seal. Somebody vill giff—"

"Me and Muley Spink," Ambrose says. "Well, what is the plot, Major?"

"Come back in an hour and I'll have your instructions," Major Bagby snarls.

"Keep us in separate huts," I yelp. "Or I will kill this runt. It is a h— of a war when you can't even git a court-martial."

AN HOUR later we get the general idea of how we are going west.

They have got a captured Kraut two-place Junkers to take us over in. Me and Ambrose Hooley are to be peasants again, husband and wife and we will be dropped down on Kraut real estate not far from the Gotha outfit.

We will be *Herr* and *Fraulein* Schnicklegooper who was a couple that brought up two orphans named Heinrich and Rudy von Schmutz. We are Rudy's long lost uncle and aunt, and Ambrose even gets the von Schmutz family seal to make it all look good. The Boche prisoner told the C.O. that his folks were killed in an avalanche in the Tyrol when he was only three years old.

Von Schmutz says that his real aunt and uncle went to America just after he and Rudy were old enough to be put into Heidelberg and that they had never been heard from since. A lawyer in Munich was handling their dough.

"I read the Arabian Nights oncet, Muley," Ambrose says. "I thought it was nuts. Compared to this, all of them lies about Arabia are gospel."

"The pilot will drop you and leave you there," Major Bagby says.

"Without nothing to come back in?" I say, nasty. "Bagby, that is like dropping a guy down into a well in a bucket and then cutting the rope. I guess you realize what they do to spies. Did Nathan Hale ever have grandchildren? No! You would ask your best friend to take the census of the leper colonies, wouldn't you?"

"Don't talk like that to me, Spink!"

"What can I lose if I git even nastier?" I ask the Old Man. I have him there, but what good does it do?

We take off one night at dusk. Ambrose has the letter that von Schmutz wrote to his brother Rudy which will expose what the Heinie brass hats are doing to make young squareheads commit Harry Carey. He is also carrying the family seal. Ambrose gets into the rear pit of the Junkers. As usual, like a poor relation at a Thanksgivin' dinner, I git the wing.

Bugeye Boomer laughs at us as we climb aboard. He has an Almanac for a Bible and he leads the other fresh pilots in a song which is "Abide With Me." That is the pals you get in an air corps. Well, the Junkers starts

perking and the prop wash nearly takes Ambrose Hooley's beard off. I nearly fall off when the crate starts across the field and I managed to grab a strut and I look like a streamer until we get to a thousand feet.

AMBROSE is sitting in the observer's office like he is only at a busy meeting of some executives and he waves at me. The tomato is a worse optimist than even Polly and Anna who are dames who can see the bright side of a tar barrel. Ambrose Hooley, if he was to be guillotined at six A.M., would set his alarm clock for eight. Over Alsace Lorraine, the Junkers goes low toward the ground and the pilot makes us both jump before his wheels hit. When we pick ourselves up, we are bruises all over.

"This is a gare for you, Muley," Ambrose says. "Chaumont would hit you over the coco with a sledge-hammer and then ask you to recite a poem by Longfellow from memory. Wait until I git the map out."

"These corsets are killin' me," I snap. "Why wasn't you the dame instead of me? Put your beard on, Ambrose, before somebody comes along. And don't forget to forget we are Muley Spink and Ambrose Hooley. From now on one little slip will hand us over to a frin' squad. Look, I will start my new voice now. I am Rudy's Aunt Brunhilde and you are Uncle Hans."

"Before we start out getting picked up by the Heinies on purpose," Ambrose says, "I will look over some of the mail I picked up, Muley. It was on the table in our hut before we left. Here's one for you. From a dame in Split Rock, Indiana."

"Oh," I howl and grab the letters out of Ambrose's hand. I dig into the soil of Alsace Lorraine like a woodchuck and bury the letters. "You don't have your birth certificate with you by any chance, do you? Oh, you fat-head!"

"I forgot," Ambrose says. "Well, wife, le's gedt going undt find Rudy, *hein*? Before he gets put in a Gotha, huh? This is the nuttiest thing anybody was ever told to do in any war. Of course, spies dress up all kinds of

ways. It is thrillin' huh, Muley?"

"I am all aglow with the spirit of the thing, you chimp. On our way back, if we are playin' harps, let's stop at Chaumont and haunt the brass hats. Awright, look at the map and memorize where we are goin' and then throw it away." I pull my shawl around my dome and shift my corset a little. It must be awful to be a dame.

"Let's go," Ambrose says. "Harumph. Lean over more as you are not a Vassar freshman, Muley."

"I got a strait-jacket on," I remind the tomato. "You are supposed to be seventy if you are a day and you just jumped a four-foot fence. There is too many things to remember, Ambrose. We'll git caught."

"Awright, but not before we put the Kaiser's suckers wise to the quack doctors in the German army," Ambrose says. "What is two lives against thousands?"

"When one is mine, plenty," I snap. "Don't nothin' scare you?"

WE TRY to look like we are full of arthritis and worse as we plod across Alsace Lorraine. We each carry a cane and I wish mine was a Vickers. Pretty soon we come to where there are Krauts on night patrol and they are sitting by a fire toasting a rabbit they killed somewhere.

"*Wie gehts,*" Ambrose says in a voice as cracked as his brain. "We are old an' haff traveled far. All der way from Amerika, *mein freunds*. Ve look for der nephews, Heinrich undt Rudy von Schmutz."

"Jar," I says. "We speak half German an' half U. S. because we spent the same number of years in both der places. I hope you understandt yedt."

"*Ja*. I wast in Milwaukee vunce," a Kraut soldier says. "Vhy didn't I stood there, *hein?* Schmutz, *ist?* Von Schmutz is der name. *Ja*, ofer by Metzerrwiese on der Gotha drome. *Ach, Gott!* All der vay from Amerika undt you vill findt them mid der days numbered, old voman."

"Ve vill go on, Hans," I says, putting on the fake voice. "At last ve find der bummers—liddle Heinrich undt Rudy, *hein?*"

"Come on," Ambrose says and spits through his beard. "How ist der feets, Brunhilde?"

"Numb from der soles up," I says. "*Himmel undt Donnervetter*, Hans."

We walk to the edge of a Heinie airdrome, and there is two rickety Gothas out on the field and Boche ackemmas fiddling with them. The flugmotors are going and they sound like they have been tampered with by sabotage experts.

"What wrecks!" Ambrose says. "The things are patched up and held together with balin' wire. I bet they are ready to go out somewheres, Muley. Maybe Rudy is one of the crews. We should hurry."

"This does not make no sense," I gulp. "We are savin' some Heinies but will git shot ourselves. If they refuse to go up after you show them the letter, if you git a chance to, which I doubt, the Herr Obusts will know we caused it. Here comes three Boche doughs so start actin', Ambrose."

"*Handen hoch!*" a big Dutchy yelps. "*Was ist los?*"

"We are," I says in my falsetto. Please ist Rudy von Schmutz here, *hein?* We are his aunt and uncle an'—"

"He ist ready to go ofer der lines," the Boche says and three others come up and point bayonets at our livers. Two officers come up behind them and I hear Ambrose suck in his breath which means his brain give birth to an idea. I can tell every time.

Ambrose fishes inside his coat and takes out a handkerchief which is blue and has polka dots. Something falls to the ground and a Heinie officer pounces on it.

"*Ach!* So idt ist der relatives of *Leutnant* von Schmutz, *ja?* Carrying der letter addressed to a Yangkee flyer, *ja?* From a *Herr* William Hooley of der U. S. A. So! How ist you get *Leutnant* Ambrose Hooley's mail, bummer? *Seize der spies!*"

I ALMOST faint. I try to get my hands on Ambrose's throat.

"Uncle Willie again, huh?" I choke out. "So he has us behind the eight-ball again. Oh, you homely tomatater We are lost. We—"

"Awright," Ambrose says and bangs a *Herr Oberst* right in the nose. "We risked our lives to come over and help save healthy ones from being made to commit suicide as that is how human the Allies are. Why, it is an outrage, telling the flower of German youth that they have bum tickers and incurable diseases. You beasts, you!"

"You would stop at nothin'. How horrible, Muley! Puttin' them Heinies in Gothas that are passay an' puttin' bombs in same to blow them up along with the dumps. Oh, that is a horrible way to die, ain't it? Puttin' them in oi' wrecks of Gothas—"

"Don't remind them," I gulp and grab at Ambrose Hooley's arm. "They might—"

"Hah!" a Boche officer says nastier than a day in March after a thaw. "*So idt ist, hein?* Spies gedt shot but maybe we giff you a chance for der lifes, *Schweinhundes!* Maybe der bombs vill nodt go off when der Gotha piloted by *Leutnant* Rudy von Schmutz hits der ammunition dump by Pagny, *hein?* *Ho-ho!* Idt ist der joke.

"*Raus mit, mein freundes.* We take der spies undt pudt them in der Gotha, *ja!* First ve vill search them for other papers, *hein?* They come to safe der poor flyers. Bah! To safe der Allied supplies ist what! Der brafe flyers who vill die for der Faterland tonight vill haff der fun takin' der *Amerikanischer* spies along mit. Idt ist der inspiration!"

Two Boche have to hold me up while I am being searched as at the moment I could not have pulled a wing off a moth with both hands after taking a physical culture course. I says to myself there goes the letter that Rudy's brother wrote. My last breaths will be used, I tells myself, to put a curse on Uncle Willie.

The Heinies find nothing more on Ambrose. I know then that the little tomato dropped the letter from Uncle Willie on purpose. The *Herr Oberst* reads the letter and says that William Hooley has invented a gadget that will make an army fifty percent more efficient to say nothing of getting firemen to fires ahead of their usual time. It is something to take the place of buttons on uniforms and flying

clothes. The Kraut officer looks at the rough sketch Willie has sent Ambrose, and laughs.

"Ha," the Kraut says. "*Der dumkopf* who writes to der spy calls der invention the Kerzipper. Idt ist crazy. Vell, der time is vasting so bring der spies ofer to the Gothas."

"See what you did, Ambrose," I almost sob. "You should have owned up you had that other letter on you. Now we—"

"Oh, shut up," Ambrose says. "You give up too easy. I wanted to git in the Gotha as half a loaf is better than none. When I git in anything with a wing on it, there is a chance of me gettin' back home. Leave everything to me."

"I wisht I could make a will and had four cobras in a box for you," I says.

THERE is four Junkers already to climb aboard the Gotha when the *Herr Oberst* and the Heinie doughs march us up close.

"For Gott undt Faterland," said the Prussian brass hat to one of the Boche pilots. "*Leutnant* von Schmutz, tonight you kill two birds mit a stone. We have captured the spies who are dressed up like der peasants, *ja.* You take them for der ride mit you in der Gotha."

"Gut!" says Rudy von Schmutz. "*Deutschland under alles.* I am ready to die like mein brudder Heinrich. Dying vill be sweeter taking along mit der spies, *Herr Oberst. Ja wohl!*"

"All is lost," Ambrose says. "I bet it is no use beggin' for my life, huh? Not from bums who would cut fingers off little children with dull scissors, no. We will die like men, won't we, Muley?"

"I wish we was still actin'," I gulp. We are pushed and hauled into the alimentary canal of the frowsy Gotha and sit on the catwalk. Rudy von Schmutz sits close to us with a Luger in his mits. It is like standing guard over stiffs in a morgue, but Krauts are thorough. The flugmotors turn over faster and they make sounds like two buzz-saws that have got loose from a sawmill and are cutting through a truck loaded with gravel.

The whole crate shakes like it is a cherub caught at the North Pole without even a diaper on.

"This is a suicide without bombs on it," I says. "All it needs is silver handles and pall bearers, Ambrose."

The Gotha leaves the ground and the wings start flapping and making noises like loose blinds on a haunted house. Ambrose takes off a glove and then starts shaking it.

"The letter from Heinrich is in the thumb," the halfwit says. "Also the family seal of the von Schmutzes. Rudy, your brudder is alive an' kick-in', an' you will be surprised at what. Here is his letter. Read it, sucker."

"What? From Heinrich? He ist dead, *dumkopf!*" the Jerry pilot says. "But idt ist his handwriting mit der date on it. Undt der seal he has put on. *Gott!* He writes me that he has der heart of der oak undt is feeling fine. He says he bets what I haff got ist not tubergalosis but a mild case of der bronchitis yedt. Idt ist der fake the medical reports of *Herr Doktor Klopz.*"

"*Himmel*, I begin to see. *Gott undt Ach du lieber. Der Schwein!* I bet you all of us ist not incurables. I go undt show idt to all der crew. First der pilot for idt is back ofer der Gotha drome undt chateau ve vill go undt loose der bomben."

"We are saved, Muley!" Ambrose says. "Didn't I always say leave things to me?"

"Sure. Now I see a light of hope like when you are caught in the bottom of an active volcano crater and somebody throws you a rope made of paper machay. Shut up!"

"You was always a pessimist," Ambrose says. "Wait until the other bums see that letter. Oh, boy!"

Well, what happens later is an epic of the first world *guerre*. The Gotha crew has all smelled the rodent and the pilot, needled on by Rudy von Schmutz, turns the Gotha around.

"Tell them to forget it," I yelp. "This wreck is only good for so many minutes."

"They must warn the other incurables who are still left there," Ambrose says. "Rudy is tying the letter to a spanner and putting it on a little

'chute. Hang on, Muley, as we are to see fireworks. Oh, what would I do without Uncle Willie."

I have no feeling in my throat so I cannot answer Ambrose Hooley. The Gotha gets back over the field and goes down low until its wheels are nearly knocking stork nests off the chimneys of the chateau. Then the Heinie at the toggles goes to work and the bombs go down and makes a mess out of the chateau for somebody to clear up. Rudy von Schmutz drops the 'chute over the barracks where the Kaiser's Patsies are housed up, then tells the pilot to go for the Allied lines at once.

"It is about time," I gulp. "If any Kraut battle-wagons git telephoned, we are sunk. If a searchlight beam grazes this heap, it'll fall apart. Ambrose, I see no hope."

"*Ach*," a little Heinie says as he comes down the catwalk from the rear gun. "Undt all the time I think I haff der corona thrombosis of der heart. I am through mit der Junkers. Ist it true you haff der real cow meat in der *Amerikanischer* army, *hein?* Undt to-bacco what ist nodt made from old corn stalks?"

"We even git pigs feet on Sundays," I says.

"Imagine the thing Willie invented," Ambrose says. "I bet this time he will make a million."

"The Kerzipper?" I snort. "He will use the first one on his strait-jacket, Ambrose. Listen. That is not a flock of crows I heard. Things are chasin' us and guess what? You go back to that gun, you fresh runt, as nobody can use one like you. I am takin' off this skirt and my corsets an' make a parachute an' it will not hold the two of us. We say 'adoo' here, Ambrose."

"We'll make it," Ambrose says. "Let me at that Boche Betsy!"

SPANDAU slugs started pinging at the Gotha and even when a burst misses, the Kraut egg crate sheds vital parts. I bet the jalopy is only makin' twenty miles an hour when we get over Metz. Albs go about a hundred when they are not diving, so you see what chance we had. Then I see a Heinie pursuit ship all lit up

and not from schnapps and it lights up another target for Ambrose and the little gorilla knocks that one bow-legged, too. If Custer had only had Ambrose at the battle of the Big Horn, he would have won instead of making a last stand.

"Only one more, Muley," Ambrose says when I git close to him.

"That is the one you should of hit first, Daniel Boone," I yelp. "It just shot one of the motors loose and both ailerons. If you think we are not losing altitude—here, look at this. It is a bird's nest with four spotted eggs in it. Have you seen the Meuse yet?"

"Oh, you are tough, huh?" Ambrose says and then shoots the third Alb down.

"Great!" I says. "After the stable is stole you lock up the horse. We are on fire, too."

"I can smell it, Muley," Ambrose says. "By the time it gets to us, maybe we will be on the ground."

"We are now," I say, and do not say anything more for three hours.

ME, AMBROSE and two Krauts are in a hospital near the Meuse. A nurse says we landed in the river and that I was saved first as I had skirts on. She says my corsets saved me from eight busted ribs.

"How is Lieutenant Hooley?" I ask. "He was hurt bad, huh?"

"The doctors said his skull and two legs were fractured when he got here. Now he has been playing pinochle with three doctors for about an hour. They say his case was unparalleled in the history of medical science."

"He will outlive three generations of turtles," I says. "An' you know how long turtles live, sister. Did he git word to our squadron?"

She tells me that Ambrose did, and that some Handley-Pages are going over in the morning and bomb what is left of the Gotha drome. Ambrose comes in then and he is smoking a cigar with one hand and eating a corned beef sandwich with the other.

"Don't believe doctors, Muley," Ambrose says. "You know what happened to the von Schmutzes. Come on, git up and stop bein' a sissy."

I threw the pitcher of water that

was on the table near me and it hit a big brass hat who was coming into the room. The brigadier was with a party from Commercy and Bagby was in it.

"My pal is delirious," Ambrose says as he lifts up the brigadier. "What a show we put on for the Allies, Major. I bet we git good reviews from the critics in Chaumont, huh?"

"Came back in a Gotha," Bagby says. "With the suicide squadron. Why didn't the bombs blow up when you hit? How did they let you ride in the Gotha, Hooley?"

"Tell them," I say. "No matter how you lie you won't be stretchin' it. It is a good thing you got some Krauts as witnesses as nobody would believe what we went through."

Major Bagby sits and listens to Ambrose for a whole hour and when the little crackpot is finished, Major Bagby says for the nurse to make up a bed for him as he is sure a stroke is coming on. The brass hats won't believe it until the doctors wheel in two Krauts on stretchers and make them testify.

"Oh, I forgot," Bagby says. "I brought you a letter that came awhile ago."

It is from Ambrose's uncle. It says for him not to take any notice of the new invention as the demonstration proved something had to be fixed on it. It seems Uncle Willie put a sleeping bag on a human guinea pig and then pulled the Kerzipper. The citizen had to be cut loose from the cocoon and that the Kerzipper had taken a lot of the skin off the volunteer's fuselage.

"I bet that thing will be perfected some day," Ambrose says. "An' that all flying suits in the future will have it on. They laughed at Columbus once, but look how many Knights he has now."

"Well," I say, "I will be sure of livin' three more months anyway as I will be away from Ambrose that long. My tibia is supposed to be fractured in two places."

The next A.M. the X-rays showed I was as sound as a U. S. Liberty Bond. "You can leave the hospital in an hour or two," the nurse says.

The Spinks never get no breaks.



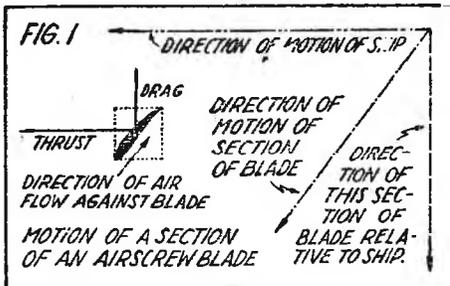
AIRSCREWS

TODAY, my flying philosophers, we're going to have a lot of propwash about propellers, as airscrews are often erroneously called. Properly an airscrew is a propeller when it is hitched onto the rear end of a pusher-type job, like the propeller of a ship, and not when it is in front, pulling the ship.

But like the automobile, the word seems here to stay, so we'll go on calling them propellers no matter where they're tacked on to the ship, although if you want to get technical with your friends, you should call an airscrew in front of the engine a tractor.

What Makes Them Work

However, we are seriously interested now in the science of airscrews, so let's see what there is to them that makes them work. There's plenty to the science, too



much for us to go into it too deeply here, but we can at least make the theory clear.

Each part of an airscrew blade, if you cut off a slice crossways, has a cross-section similar to that of the wing itself, or of any other airfoil. In fact, exactly the same shape of section has been used for both the wing and prop.

Here's the law of propellers which makes an airplane fly, and airplanes didn't fly until it was applied.

The thrust of an airscrew is obtained by reason of the fact that the chord at each part of the blade is inclined at an angle (similar to the angle of attack in a wing) to its direction of motion. Thus the thrust of an airscrew corresponds to the lift of a wing, the drag being represented by the resistance of the air to the rotary motion of the airscrew. A glimpse at Fig. 1, along with a little skull practice will make this clear.

The total drag on the airscrew blades will cause a turning motion or torque (See Fig. 2), which is exactly opposed to the torque of the engine itself, and which tends to rotate the entire ship in the direction opposite to the direction in which the propeller (there I go with that word again) is revolving.

But when the airscrew (that's better) is revolving at a steady number of revolutions per minute, then the torque of the airscrew and the torque of the engine will be exactly equal and opposite, and offset each other. This corresponds to the balance of lift and drag in the wings.

Now it would seem to anybody but an Eagle that if the action of an airscrew is the same as that of a wing, it ought to be as easy to design or make a good propeller as a wing.

That's not so, however, for reasons that get so technical that we American Eagles have a hard time explaining them unless old Bruce reduces them to simple language, such as the following:

A wing cuts through the air in a straight line, but the direction of motion of an airscrew is a figure known as a helix, or helical line, and every section of an airscrew moves on a different helix, because every section travels a different distance at each single revolution of the propeller. (See Fig. 3.)

To understand this better, imagine you are standing in front of a ten-foot propeller, and turning it slowly by hand. Now mark a spot at the tip of the blade, and another at a point on the blade one foot from its exact center. Now slowly revolve the prop once. The tip of the blade has traveled the entire circumference of a circle ten feet in diameter, or something over 31.41 feet, while the spot a foot from the hub has traveled only a little over six feet during the same time and in the same single revolution.

Forward Motion

But this is only the motion of the helix in one plane, and it has another motion—that of going forward. Let us assume then, that the prop is built with a pitch which is supposed to carry the blade through the air in one revolution a distance equal to the diameter of the prop (which would be an average propeller pitch).

Clearly then, the tip has to go forward ten feet while making its thirty-foot revolution. And just as clearly it follows that it

advances one foot for every three feet of revolution.

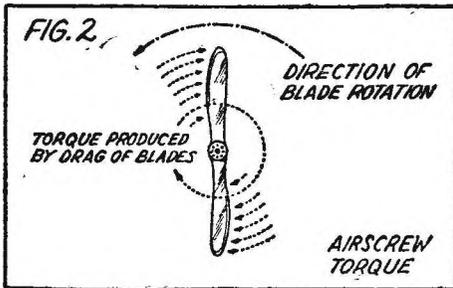
But look at the point near the hub; it has to advance ten feet with one revolution of six feet, so in order to get there at the same time the tip does, it has to go forward at a faster speed relative to the total distance traveled.

It has to go forward a foot and two-thirds for every foot of revolution instead of advancing only a foot for every three feet of revolution.

In short, every helix is different—and is screwy.

Plenty of Mathematics

And this difference constantly changes for every section of the prop from its hub to its tip. You can see then that a propeller



cannot be made with the pitch the same from hub to tip, and you can see that there is a great deal of mathematics involved in the business of designing a prop so that every point on the blade is working in perfect accord with every other point on it, instead of retarding the efficiency of the rest of it. And the mathematical problems will have to be left to the engineers, since we Eagles are flying, not making, ships.

The pitch itself can be defined as the angle which the chord of the airscrew section at any particular place makes with the horizontal plane when the airscrew is laid flat on its hub, its axis being vertical. (See Fig. 4.)

Depends on Speed

Now, let's go further into this matter of "advance per revolution." This depends entirely on the forward speed of the airplane.

For instance, if an airplane is moving at a hundred feet per second, and the prop is turning at 1200 revolutions per minute, or 20 revs per second, then the advance per revolution would be 100 divided by 20 or 5 feet per second.

But, the engine might be turning at the same 1200 rpm, while the ship would be advancing only 80 feet per second. In that case, the prop would only be advancing 80 divided by 20 or four feet per second. Or suppose the engine is on a block, or the ship in chocks and the engine turning at that same rate—then even with the engine running 1200 rpm, our advance per revolution would be zero.

The Thrust

This distance forward a propeller will advance in one revolution is called the "thrust," and as we have seen, it is variable, dependent on the speed of the machine, from zero on.

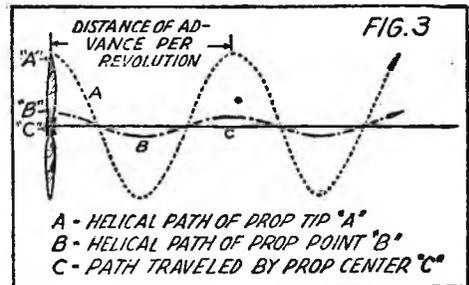
The actual thrust of a propeller has been found to be greatest when the ship is stationary, and to continually decrease as the speed of the ship increases. There is a point where this thrust would become zero; this point being reached when the ship has such a forward speed that it shoves the propeller forward at exactly the speed the propeller would thrust itself through the air.

From the above it can be seen that if you dived a fast ship with full gun at such a speed that the ship was moving faster than the propeller could cut forward, the propeller would no longer be an asset, but would actually become an obstacle to increased speed. However, you are not likely to run into such a case in practice, since the zero-thrust point is far above usual flying speeds.

High Pitch Props

Usually the airscrew that has the greatest pitch is the most efficient, but since we find that the most practical propeller for general use is one which will deliver a speed forward of about 70 percent of the pitch, it is clear that unless we can vary the revolutions of the engine per minute, it would only be possible to use high pitch props on very fast machines in which there is a large advance per revolution.

On such a machine, as racers, for example, the pitch is sometimes from fifteen to twenty feet per revolution, but on ordi-



nary machines we will usually find about half that much pitch.

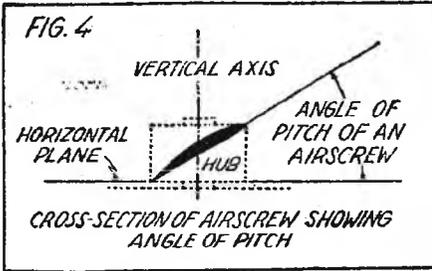
But it is not wise to depend on varying the revolutions of a motor in order to give different forward speeds. This is because most engines are built so that they give maximum performance at a certain definite number of revolutions per minute, and are decreasingly efficient as speeds vary from this.

So we have to overcome this varying efficiency in other ways. One way is to have a reduction gear between the engine shaft and the propeller. In this way the engine can run at its most efficient speed, while its

propeller can run at a totally different speed which is most efficient for itself.

Slower Propellers

This reduction gear serves another purpose, that of enabling the use of a propeller which can function best at a lower speed than the crankshaft speed. A slower pro-



PELLER IS MORE EFFICIENT BECAUSE A HIGH SPEED propeller often runs so fast that its tip is traveling at the speed of sound, about 1100

feet per second, and it has been found that at this speed the prop compresses the air around it and sets up an unnecessary drag on the ship.

Now we see that if we are to have efficiency under all conditions, we should have a propeller with one pitch for taking off and climbing in normal air pressure, and still another pitch for high, level flying in thinner air which offers less resistance, and that in theory we should have a different pitch for the propeller for every variation of air pressure and speed.

Variable Pitch Propeller

This problem has been solved by the variable pitch propeller, one whose pitch can be regulated from the cockpit while in flight. This device has been in operation successfully on such ships as require it and can afford it.

An extension of this idea which should occur to all keen-minded Eagles is a reversible pitch prop, so that it could be used as a brake.

Get on it, boys, and do your bit for aviation. —BRUCE McALESTER.

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GRASSHOPPER WINGS

By **ROBERT SIDNEY BOWEN**

Bud Link takes his little light plane into crimson skies on a forlorn chase—and proves his mettle!



AT TEN O'CLOCK on an early January morning, "Bud" Link was the happiest guy in all the world. At exactly twelve noon on that same day he was the unhappiest. His spirits had sunk below the level of his shoe soles, and in his brain there was but a seething desire to commit wholesale murder, and top it off by cutting his own throat.

Just two hours to create that change. Only one hundred and twenty minutes—but they had been spent before the Medical Examining Board, Army Air Corps, Recruiting Division. Six teeth that he had lost in a crash a few years ago, and a little something not quite perfect with his right eye, had sealed his "doom." And the medicos, too busy to cry with every applicant who didn't make it, simply told Link it was thumbs down and turned to the next applicant.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS story has been written in recognition of the fine spirit shown by over 100,000 private licensed pilots in this country. Due to their enthusiasm, light planes have won their spurs. The Air Corps is now coming to admit that the small put-put powered light planes (the Taylor Cub and the Aeronca) are not so bad for behind the line courier, observation, and H. Q. contact work. It was only recently that the mighty powers agreed to the Civilian Air Patrol.

It is my hope that this yarn may help to boost things along for light plane flyers. Happy landings!

Robert Sidney Bowen.

Numb and cold from head to foot, and with five thumbs on each hand, Link managed to finally fumble into his clothes. He put on his helmet, winked hot tears away from his eyes, and stumbled outside into the January sunlight.

There he stopped and looked slowly around as though half expecting to find that he was in a different world. Or, rather, to find that he had suddenly awakened from a crazy nightmare and that it had not happened at all.

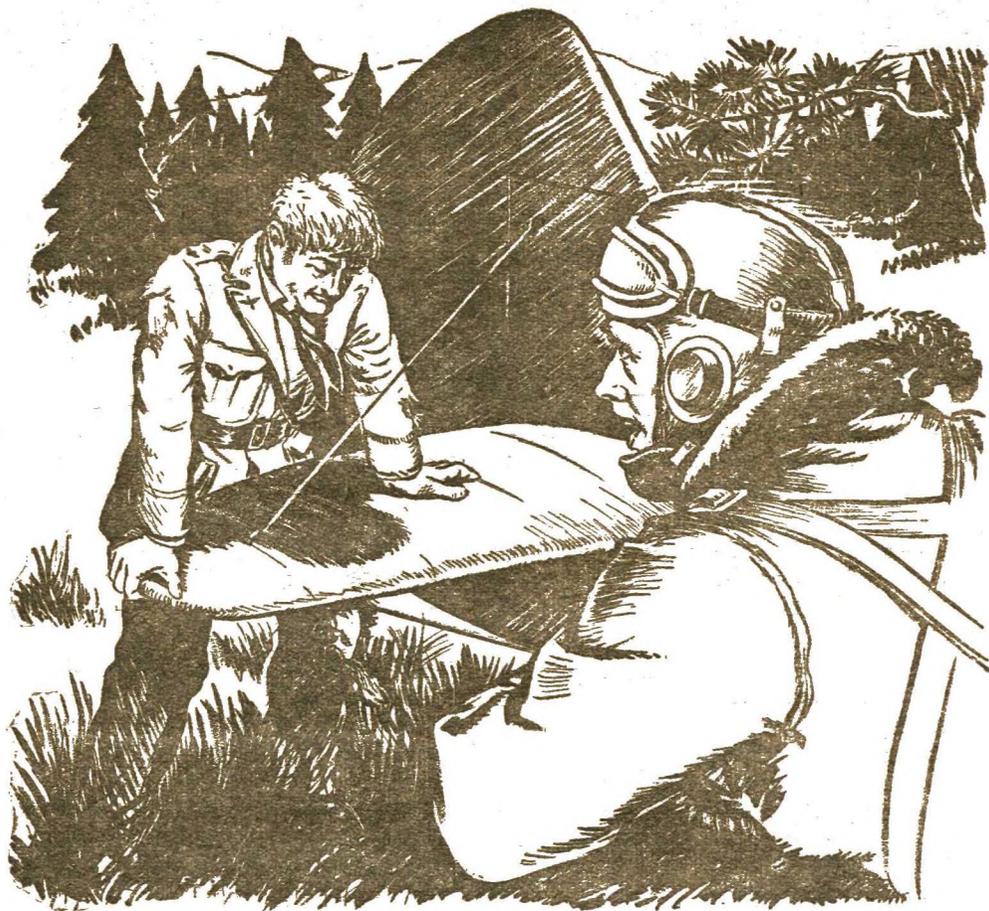
But it was not a strange world, and although the last two hours had been a nightmare, he had lived them. No, this was Baker Field, and over there, parked near Air Corps P-40s, and Airacobras, and Lockheeds, and a half dozen other types was his little sixty-five horse-powered "Grasshopper" that he had flown in that morning, so full of hope, and eagerness, and happy expectations.

"They turned me down. They don't want me. Me with five years, and almost two thousand hours."

The echo of his own voice came back to him, strained and quivering. He blinked hard, shook his head, and bunched his two fists helplessly.

When vision returned he found himself staring at the commanding colonel's office. He stared at it for a full minute, then started to slouch over toward his little light plane. But he stopped when he had taken half a dozen steps, swerved to the left and headed straight for the commandant's office.

When he reached it two things



The lost pilot staggered to the Grasshopper, elatched the tail section

barred his entrance. One was the door, and the other was the locomotive-built sergeant standing in front of it.

"What do you want, Mister?" the sergeant demanded.

"I want to see the colonel!" Link snapped. "I've just got a dirty deal. I want to put in a beef. One side, Sergeant!"

"Like that, huh?" the non-com grated. "I saw you come out over there. Thumbs down, huh? Tough. But it won't get you anything to see the colonel. Besides, he's busy."

LINK knew that he was in the wrong, but the way he felt, right or wrong had nothing to do with it. What he wanted was to explode in the colonel's face. He had a lot of things on his chest. He wanted the

colonel to hear them. He took a step closer to the sergeant.

"Look, go in and tell the colonel that Bud Link wants to see him!" he shouted. "Bud Link who runs the Link Aviation School over Freshy way. Tell him its important, the things I've got to say."

The sergeant shifted his weight and grinned crookedly.

"Plenty burnt up, aren't you?" he grunted. "Well, you're not the first. And I guess you won't be the last. Its tough, pal, but that's how it goes. Why don't you try Naval Aviation? I hear the salt water boys ain't so particular."

The sergeant chuckled, but his words poured salt in Bud Link's wounds and turned him into a fool for the moment.

"I said I wanted in!" he shouted, and charged.

The sergeant blocked him neatly but the force of the charge carried them back against the door hard. It might not have been closed tightly, or the latch might not have been a good one. Anyway, the door flew open and Link and the sergeant went tumbling head over heels inside.

A beefy, red-faced colonel seated at a desk came up straight as though he had been shot. A young second lieutenant "Keewee"—a ground officer without wings—dropped a sheaf of papers he was handing to the colonel and gasped. The colonel snapped out of his frozen trance.

"What the devil?" he roared.

The sergeant was on his feet and had Bud Link by the collar. It was not difficult for him to jerk the one hundred and thirty pounds of commercial pilot straight up.

"Sorry, sir!" the sergeant panted. "This bird wanted to see you. I said no, and he rushed me. I'll throw him out, sir, and—"

The sergeant did not finish. Instead he became the most surprised man at Baker Field. The one hundred and thirty pounds he had by the collar exploded like TNT, and the sergeant found himself sitting on the floor with white pain in both wrists. And Link, tugging his flying jacket back into place, was looking at the colonel.

"He's right, Colonel," he said. "I was all wrong to rush him. But I've got to talk to you, Colonel! Please, just give me a couple of minutes, will you? Look, you've got wings, you're a pilot. Well, so am I. Almost two thousand hours. Give me a break for just two minutes, will you? Please!"

The field commandant looked angry, but when he switched his gaze to the sergeant sitting on the floor just the faintest trace of a smile quivered at one corner of his mouth. He hesitated, scowled a bit, but finally shrugged and sat down.

"All right," he said. "I guess you earned two minutes. Who are you, and what do you want? Pick it up, Sergeant. You'll live."

Link introduced himself and got as far as saying that he ran a school for light plane flight instruction when the colonel put up a hand to stop him.

"Hold it, Link!" the field commandant said wearily. "If you're here to put in a plug for a light plane division of the Air Corps, then just skip it. That doesn't come under me. Besides, I think it's a wet idea. It's—"

"What's wrong with it?" Link demanded hotly. "There's a whole lot of work for light planes to do in this war. They proved they could give valuable service during the maneuvers held last fall, and last summer. Sure, light plane flown by civilian pilots who know every blade of grass, every rock of the terrain they fly. Look, Colonel—"

LINK stopped, shook his head, and moistened his lips.

"But, that's not why I'm here, Colonel," he said.

And then he set about pouring out all the misery in his soul. He gave the colonel his whole life's story from the cradle right up to setting the hard-boiled sergeant on the seat of his pants.

"So I've got six false teeth, and my right eye isn't absolutely perfect!" he finally finished up. "So what? So the Air Corps tosses me on the scrap heap. Nuts! I've flown every type of ship you've got here at the field. I could go out right now and take any one of them up and hold my own with any pilot you've got here. Listen, Colonel! I don't fly with my teeth. And my right eye doesn't bother me a bit."

"I know, Link," the colonel finally managed to get in. "But there has to be a certain standard set. We can't take chances. It's not the individual, Link. It's the flight, the squadron, the group, the whole Air Corps that matters. But regardless of all that, you're

wasting your time talking to me, Link. I get you *after* the Medical Board give you the okay. I know it seems tough, but—"

"Tough?" Link blazed. "It's a national crime! The Air Corps is screaming for trained pilots. Millions are being spent to set up schools to train pilots from scratch. And look at me! Look at thousands of guys like me! We're already pilots, we have been for years! We're begging on hands and knees for a chance to help. And what do we get? The brush off. Us? We're bums. We're no good. We've got false teeth. We've maybe got the little finger tip on one hand missing. Or not the standard number of eyelashes. I'm telling you, Colonel, it's—"

"Save your breath, Link!" the field commandant broke in. "I haven't got a thing to do with it."

"You could put in a word, couldn't you?" Link fumed. "You could make a few suggestions, couldn't you? You could start the ball rolling to give fellows like me a chance to prove it in a plane and not in a doctor's office. Suppose only two out of every hundred of us made the grade. Well, that's two more pilots you'd have. Two more pilots you wouldn't have to start training from scratch. And if the Air Corps ever does get a light-plane division with civilian—"

"Time's up, Link!" the colonel said curtly. "Sorry! But I'm not the man you should see. And I'm pretty busy. But thanks for dropping in, Link. Glad to have met you."

But Link stood in swirling misery up to his ears. Then the desk phone rang, a hand tapped him on the shoulder, and a grating voice spoke in his ear.

"The colonel is busy, Mister!" the sergeant said. "Outside, and make it lively!"

Link didn't even feel the steel fingers that curled about his arm. And he was hardly conscious of the fact that his feet hardly touched the floor

on the way to the door. He simply found himself out in the sunshine again with the sergeant standing very close.

"Get going, Mister, and fast!" the growl rolled into his ears. "But if you want to try that judy-jitsy stuff again, stick around outside the south gate. I go off this detail at two. It would be a pleasure to smear you, shrimp. Git!"

Just a growl that rolled into Bud Link's ears. He was too heart-sick and crushed to bother trying to figure out what it all meant. He absently pushed his helmet up off his right eye and walked slowly over toward his little Grasshopper. . . .

THREE weeks passed and a decided slump hit the Link Aviation School over Fresby way. It was partly due to weather—snow, rain, and cold, with all kinds of pea-soup fog in between. Even the crows were walking over the mountains to reach California.

Mostly, though, the slump was due to the school's owner, president, treasurer, and chief instructor. All being Bud Link. Defeat, embarrassment, and resentment burned deeply within him. And although he really did try to keep it under control it had flared up to the surface now and then—and a student, or a prospective student, had been on the receiving end. As a result Bud Link's three little Grasshoppers began to spend less and less time aloft.

On a day in February, Link was in his hangar office all by himself, and likely to remain that way for the whole day. The weather was strictly N. G. A cold wind was drifting a fine rain across the landscape, and the ceiling in most places wasn't more than two hundred feet, and threatening to drop even lower.

Link hadn't even bothered to roll open the hangar doors, or give the usual morning okay-check to his planes. He simply sat slouched in his

chair, scowling, while the electric plate heated up last night's coffee.

Presently he got up enough energy to look at his watch, and reach out and snap on the radio. Swing music filled the office for a couple of minutes, then there was a station break, and an AP flash came over.

"Here's another bit on that missing Air Corps plane," the announcer said. "It has been reliably reported, though not confirmed by Air Corps Command, that the pilot of the missing Curtiss P-Forty is a high ranking officer who was flying to the San Francisco Area on a highly important mission. Air Corps officials refuse to comment on this report.

"However, it would seem to be true in view of the fact that the Air Corps Command has asked that the civilian population lend their aid in locating this missing plane. If you live in or near the area between Denver and San Francisco and heard or saw a plane between eleven o'clock last night and one o'clock this morning please phone the information to the station to which you are listening, or get in touch with your nearest Army Air Corps Base."

The announcer paused. There was the faint crackle of paper, then he continued:

"For those who may have just tuned in, an Air Corps Curtis P-Forty fighter plane is now several hours overdue on a flight from Denver to San Francisco. It was last reported over Price, south of Salt Lake City, shortly after eleven o'clock last night. Since then no word has been received from the plane. Due to weather, radio communication was not good last night, and until the time when the craft's gas supply would be exhausted, Air Corps officials believed weather to be the reason no contact had been made with the pilot—reported to be the high ranking officer on an important mission.

"The gas deadline, however, was reached several hours ago, and due to

the weather and the wild nature of the terrain over which the plane was flying, it is almost certain that some misfortune has befallen the pilot.

"Whether he managed to make a safe landing in some out-of-the-way place, or whether he crashed, or whether he managed to bail out and is wandering around lost in that vast mountain stretch is something no one can say at the moment. We can only hope that the pilot is safe, and that as soon as the weather clears, and the hundred or more waiting Air Corps planes are able to take off, that the missing pilot will be found. Keep tuned to this station for the latest reports on this race against time and the elements. And now, a musical. . . ."

BUD LINK snapped off the set, and stared bleak-eyed out the window as his coffee boiled over.

"He's okay!" he suddenly said viciously. "He's an Air Corps pilot. Sure! He's got all his teeth, and stuff. He's perfect. Sure! He's . . . Link! Shut your blasted mouth. You need a poke in the nose. The poor devil may be dead right now!"

He swallowed hard and shut off the electric plate by punching the switch with his fist. He poured himself a cup, burned his tongue and filled the air with blue comment. He kicked back his chair and went over to the window. The ceiling was just about the same, though it may have gone up a few feet. The fine rain looked more like tendrils of fog loafing across the ground.

He shrugged, turned away, and let his eyes come to rest on the huge topographical map hung on the wall in back of his desk. Without realizing it, he did some rapid calculation—compared distances against time, and terrain, and weather information for last night. He caught himself coming to a decision, and swore softly.

"Nuts!" he muttered. "It's only a guess. I could be wrong. I probably am!"

He shrugged and had another go at the coffee that was now almost drinkable. He started to go through his morning mail, but gave it up when he realized there wasn't any. He started to turn on the radio again but decided not to, and went out into the hangar.

There he gave the three little Grasshoppers their morning check, and as usual found them in perfect shape. Moving over to the doors, he rolled them open enough to stick his head out.

"Nor rain, nor snow, nor dark of night, and all the rest of it!" he muttered, pulled in his head, and closed the doors. "Nuts!"

Back in his office, he studied the map some more. He reached the same decision, shook his head, and swore again. He tried to stop it but his hand reached out and switched on the radio. The tail end of an announcement filled the room.

"—not a word since eleven last night. And now here are the opening market reports."

Link silenced the set, pressed his two clenched fists together and stared at the telephone. He even reached for it, but checked himself.

"I could still be all wet!" he snarled. "Besides, they wouldn't want *my* help. They said so. Okay! Let them find the poor devil. An old cripple with a Grasshopper couldn't do anything. We're bums. Dead wood!"

Twenty minutes later he had the hangar doors opened and was rolling one of his Grasshoppers outside. He chocked the wheels, primed her and swung the prop. The little *put-put* caught at once, and he got around and into the cockpit in plenty of time to keep her going.

Giving her the correct feed he let her idle and warm up while he went back into his office for his chute, flying gear, and stuff. When he came out some of the local kids were gathered about the plane.

"You going up in this weather, Mr.

Link?" one of them asked, wide-eyed. "You can't see nothing!"

"I can with my left eye!" Link snarled, unthinking. "Scram! And keep out of that hangar, if you know what's good for you!"

Five minutes later he started the Grasshopper loping across the field. He cleared eventually and climbed up until the clouds were brushing the top of his wing. There he leveled off and circled his field a few times to give the *put-put* plenty of time to spring surprises if it was going to. It didn't, and after a time he banked north and kept going in that direction.

FOR the first ten minutes he flew automatically, keeping his eyes mostly fixed on the strip map thumb-tacked to the instrument panel. At the end of ten minutes, though, he gave all his attention to looking ahead and to both sides. He had reached the end of flat country, and ahead foothills rose up to disappear in the cloud layer.

Hunching forward slightly over the stick, he licked his suddenly dry lips, and kept one hand resting on the throttle. And with a safety margin of only a hundred feet or so between his wheels and the tree-tops, and sometimes half that between his wingtips and hillsides, he went weaving in and out among the foothills and right up to the mountains.

At the end of half an hour he had passed through that particular part of the range and was down among the foothills on the far side. There he changed his course to a true north-south run, and began combing every square inch of that uninviting terrain with his eyes.

He became hot and cramped in the seat. Fog mist smeared up his windows until he was forced to slide them open and take the dampness on his face and goggles. In less than a couple of minutes he had to abandon the goggles that had the eye correction in the right lens.

A whole hour passed and he was bitterly cursing himself for risking his neck. It was costing him money for gas and oil, too. He knew, now, that his figuring had been all haywire. He knew darn well that the missing pilot could not have come down in this neck of the woods.

If he had an ounce of brains in his head he would get out of these foothills, fly east the seventy miles to Bartow, and sit down until the weather lifted. If he had any brains he wouldn't even be crazy enough to turn back and wind through the mountains to his own field.

He did neither. He banked south once more and started a second trip through the foothills. He was three-quarters of the way through when suddenly he saw the battle brown and black-painted wingtip sticking out of some pines.

It was to his left and he veered over at almost gliding throttle until he was over it. It was a P-40's wing, and the rest of the plane was lower down the slope in an eye-shaped ravine. It was badly damaged, but there was not a single sign of fire.

"Killed his engine, and bailed out," he grunted, and eased his Grasshopper down lower and lower. "Knew he was lost but near the mountains, like I figured. Didn't want to chance barging into one of them. So he killed his engine and hit the silk."

Two minutes later he had seen all of that heap of P-40 that he needed to tell him that there was no dead pilot there. He lifted the Grasshopper up a hundred feet and glanced at his compass.

"Knew the range must be west of him," he muttered. "So his best bet was to start walking east. He—"

He didn't finish. Because at that moment a small ball of red fire rose up out of the ground about three miles directly ahead of him. It came out of the ground at the far end of a twisting valley. It hung in the gray air for a brief moment, then started sliding

down to wink out and disappear.

A wave of savage exultation surged through Link as he put the Grasshopper's nose down a hair, and gave the *put-put* full throttle. A second flare rose up out of the ground—this time a green one. He strained his eyes at the spot of ground and thought he saw a man's figure standing in a little clearing.

IN MINUTES later he was fifty feet over that spot and what he had seen was confirmed. There was a man down there. A man garbed in Air Corps flying gear that would be fit for the rag-bag if he ever got back to civilization. His jacket hung from his shoulders in strips, and the right leg of his pants from the knee down was missing. His left arm was hanging limp as though it had been injured. With his right he frantically waved a Very-light pistol.

Link circled, waving at the man, then climbed up to the three-hundred-foot ceiling. He looked ahead and grinned, tight-lipped.

"Always said I knew this neck of the woods like the palm of my hand!" he grunted. "And I do!"

He throttled all the way back and slid the Grasshopper down until his wheels were brushing the valley tree-tops. He wasn't more than thirty feet up, and almost hovering in the air, as he floated by to the left of the lost pilot.

"A clearing a mile and a half ahead!" he bellowed, his head out the window. "Are you okay? Can you walk it? I'll sit down there!"

The pilot on the ground nodded, and took a few running steps to show that he could still navigate. Link waved, then climbed a bit and went sliding forward toward the clearing he had seen.

It was a small clearing bordered on three sides by trees. From five thousand feet a man would swear it could be covered with a quarter. At two thousand he would probably figure it

could be made in an autogiro. At one thousand feet he would probably forget about it, unless he was crazy. Bud Link was crazy.

Throttling as much as he could he drifted about the clearing just off the tops of the trees and kept his gaze fixed on the brush- and tree-clogged floor of the valley to the west. At the end of twenty minutes he saw the running, stumbling figure of the missing pilot not a quarter of a mile away. Link flew toward him, saw the man pause long enough to wave his good arm, then circled back and went sliding down with the throttle all the way back.

He misjudged the tree-tops by a couple of feet, and had to goose the engine and lift the Grasshopper up over them. He killed the throttle the instant he was clear, slapped the Grasshopper over on wingtip and cut down.

Leveling off before the wingtip struck, he fish-tailed twice in a wind-brake, and let the Grasshopper settle gently to earth right smack-dab in the middle of the clearing. As soon as all three points were on the ground he gunned a little and taxied around and back to the edge of the clearing. There he swung around into the wind, hauled the throttle back, and climbed out.

His feet had no sooner touched the ground than the tattered and battered pilot came plunging out of the brush. He staggered up to the Grasshopper, clutched the tail section and stood swaying against it, panting for breath.

Then Link saw the ugly bleeding gash on the man's left temple. The blood had mixed with the dirt and grime that smeared his face so that he looked more like an Indian than a white man. As Link stepped closer to him the man lifted his head.

"Thought I'd be in those blasted woods for the rest of my life," he said. "Another hour and I'd have fallen over another cursed log and stayed

down for good. You shouldn't have landed here, friend. We're both stuck, now. Hey! Is that whiskey in that flask?"

"Figured you might need a shot if I found you," Link said, and passed over his flask. "But stop worrying. Wherever you get these little babies in, you can get them out. I can get you to Bartow in an hour, if that's okay."

THE pilot took a pull on the flask, choked, and sighed.

"I know I'll live now," he murmured. "Bartow? That'll be perfect. I'll get another ship there and wait for weather. And . . . Well, I'll be blowed! Isn't your name Link?"

Bud Link stiffened, blinked hard, stared, and suddenly realized that under the blood and dirt and grime was the commandant colonel of Baker Field. At first he could only grunt and nod.

"Yeah, I'm Link," he finally said. "So you were flying that ship? They didn't say who it was on the radio. I—I had a hunch it should be around these parts, so me and my Grasshopper came looking. But I—"

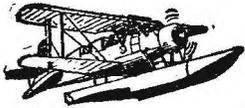
"Would you have come, if you'd known who it was, Link?" the colonel asked with a chuckle. "No, don't answer. I don't want to know. Look, Link, three weeks ago you gave me an argument about yourself and your Grasshopper jobs. Today you won it hands down. Get me out of here, and I'll start the ball rolling, as you pleaded with me to do. Yes, I'm convinced, and humbled, Link. Get me out of here, and I'll get you in the Air Corps, even if it costs me my own commission!"

"And put in a word for Grasshoppers," Link said loyally, and helped the colonel into the plane.

Ten minutes later he lifted the little Grasshopper over the bordering tree-tops, and flew toward Bartow—and a future life in the Army Air Corps.

UNITED STATES NAVY SCALE

ANSWER YOUR GOVERNMENT'S S. O. S. FOR
PLANE MODELS BY BUILDING THESE—
IT'S GREAT FUN AND A REAL SERVICE!

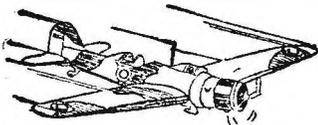


WELL, fellows, here's your real chance to do your part in America's great war effort.

You've been building model planes for your own amusement. Now you can take part in the United States Navy's scale model construction project! **THE AMERICAN EAGLE** Magazine, with its active group of young air enthusiasts in **The Lone Eagles of America**, is co-operating in the achievement of the Navy's goal of 500,000 models for the emergency.

In order that we may bring as many of the detailed plans as possible to our readers, we are presenting plans not only in this issue of **THE AMERICAN EAGLE**, but also in our companion air magazines—**SKY FIGHTERS**, **AIR WAR**, and **RAF ACES**.

In the July issue of **SKY FIGHTERS** we have assembled the complete, detailed, step-by-step procedure for building these



scale model aircraft in 44 easy-to-understand detailed figure drawings.

On the pages following, you will find a set of four complete templates of the plans necessary for constructing four different planes. The one-page and two-page templates are exact as to size and scale according to the Navy's requirements. The final assembly models have been reduced in size.

You may trace or draw these templates and mount them on heavy cardboard or make careful copies of them on thin sheet metal. Suitable size envelopes should be provided to hold the templates, otherwise important parts may be lost. Each template should be listed to avoid loss. All work must be done exactly to plans. No minor details must be left off, nor must the model builder add details other than those specified in the plans. All details to be included are in the plans. *Exactness is essential.*

On each plan is given the details of the materials required for the particular model. This material may be white pine, ash, gum, poplar or similar wood. It should be straight-grained, well-seasoned, free of sap streaks, pith or knots.

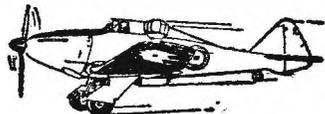
Under no circumstances must balsa be used. While it is light, it is not suitable for scale model work for the military services, and is needed in the emergency for other purposes. In more fragile parts use maple or other hard wood. Tongue depressors or applicators, usually made of birch, obtainable from any drug store, may serve where hard wood is needed.

Local high schools and model clubs in your town are cooperating with this project, and your teacher will probably be able to help you. For model builders who have had any experience in this type of work, the use of the templates will be fairly simple. The fuselage is usually the first item taken up by the model builder. This job from the first step of marking out the templates on the solid block, rough chipping, shaping and sand-papering, must be done with extreme care.

The wings must also be given careful treatment, largely because of the fact that they are much more fragile than the bulkier fuselage. The markings of the guide lines and the job of shaping down the block to form with knife or plane must be attended to rather carefully.

Planes which require engine nacelles give you an opportunity for some real whittling and carving work. In all of these rounded portions of the plane, the model builder must check with the templates. Next comes the tail assembly. The stabilizer is the first piece cut out and is slipped in the fuselage slot before being shaped down and sandpapered. Your rudder is the next thing that must be worked out.

After all of these parts have been worked out to the requirements indicated on the



templates, it is your task to assemble the plane according to the final assembly plan.*

This is an excellent chance for patriotic young Americans to serve their country! We hope that you fellows and girls will build many flying models and become keenly interested in the future of aviation. **Keep 'Em Flying!**

* Step-by-step construction plans are in our companion magazine, **SKY FIGHTERS**, July issue; or you may be able to secure a copy of the U. S. Office of Education booklet, "Scale Model Aircraft Construction Procedure," from your school or model club.

MODEL AIRCRAFT PLANS

Win Your Aircraftsman Rating! Certificates Awarded for Models

IN RECOGNITION of the patriotic work of young American model builders engaged on this project, the United States Navy will issue honor certificates. These will be awarded to boys and girls whose models pass inspection. They will award the honorary rank of "Aircraftsman."

Various ranks of Aircraftsman have been established, and the certificates awarded will indicate the rank of the model builder.

There are seven honor ranks, each one requiring particular types of completed models in order to merit the award.

They are as follows:

CADET AIRCRAFTSMAN—1 of any type of models complete.

ENSIGN AIRCRAFTSMAN—3 of any type of models completed, including a scout bomber or an observation plane.

LIEUTENANT AIRCRAFTSMAN (junior grade)—5 models completed, including one twin-engine bomber and planes from 2 nations.

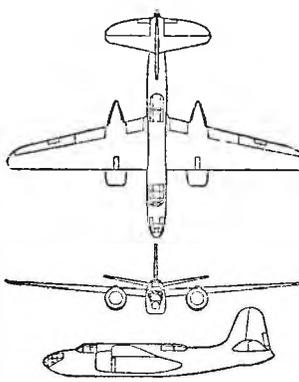
LIEUTENANT AIRCRAFTSMAN—7 models completed, including one seaplane or twin-fuselage fighter.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER AIRCRAFTSMAN—8 models completed, including a torpedo bomber or biplane and including planes from 3 nations.

COMMANDER AIRCRAFTSMAN—9 models completed, including one four-engine bomber and including planes from 4 nations.

CAPTAIN AIRCRAFTSMAN—10 models completed, including planes from 5 nations and consisting of the following types: fighter, scout, bomber, observation plane, twin-engine bomber, seaplane, biplane, twin-fuselage fighter, torpedo bomber, four-engine army bomber and four-engine patrol bomber.

The requirements for the several certificates are cumulative, and the awards will be progressive. For example, to qualify as an Ensign Aircraftsman, the model builder must first have qualified as a Cadet Aircraftsman.

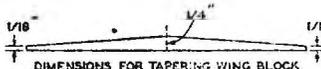


DOUGLAS A-20A

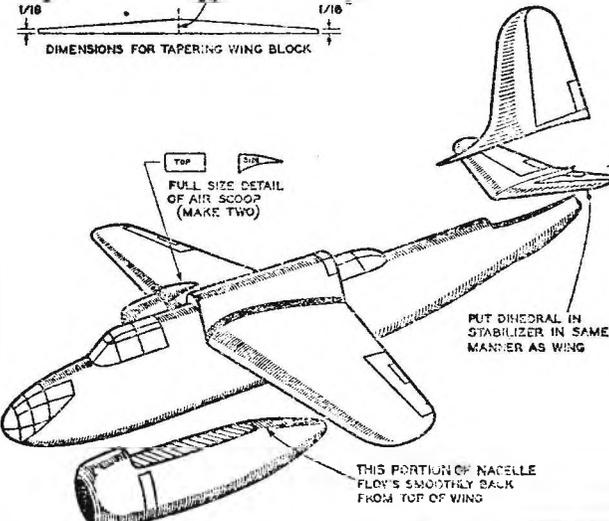
A high speed attack bomber of the U. S. Army with a crew of three. Powered by two "Cyclone" radial air-cooled engines. Has three wheel landing gear, one wheel folds up into nose of fuselage and one into each nacelle. Span 61' 4", length 47' 7".

Identification

High, mid-wing monoplane with leading edges straight and trailing edges swept forward to narrow rounded tips. Long hump-back on fuselage. Engine nacelles mounted beneath wings and extending behind trailing edge. Slight dihedral in wing, but pronounced dihedral in stabilizer-aloueter. High fin-rudder.



DIMENSIONS FOR TAPERING WING BLOCK



FULL SIZE DETAIL OF AIR SCOOP (MAKE TWO)

PUT DIHEDRAL IN STABILIZER IN SAME MANNER AS WING

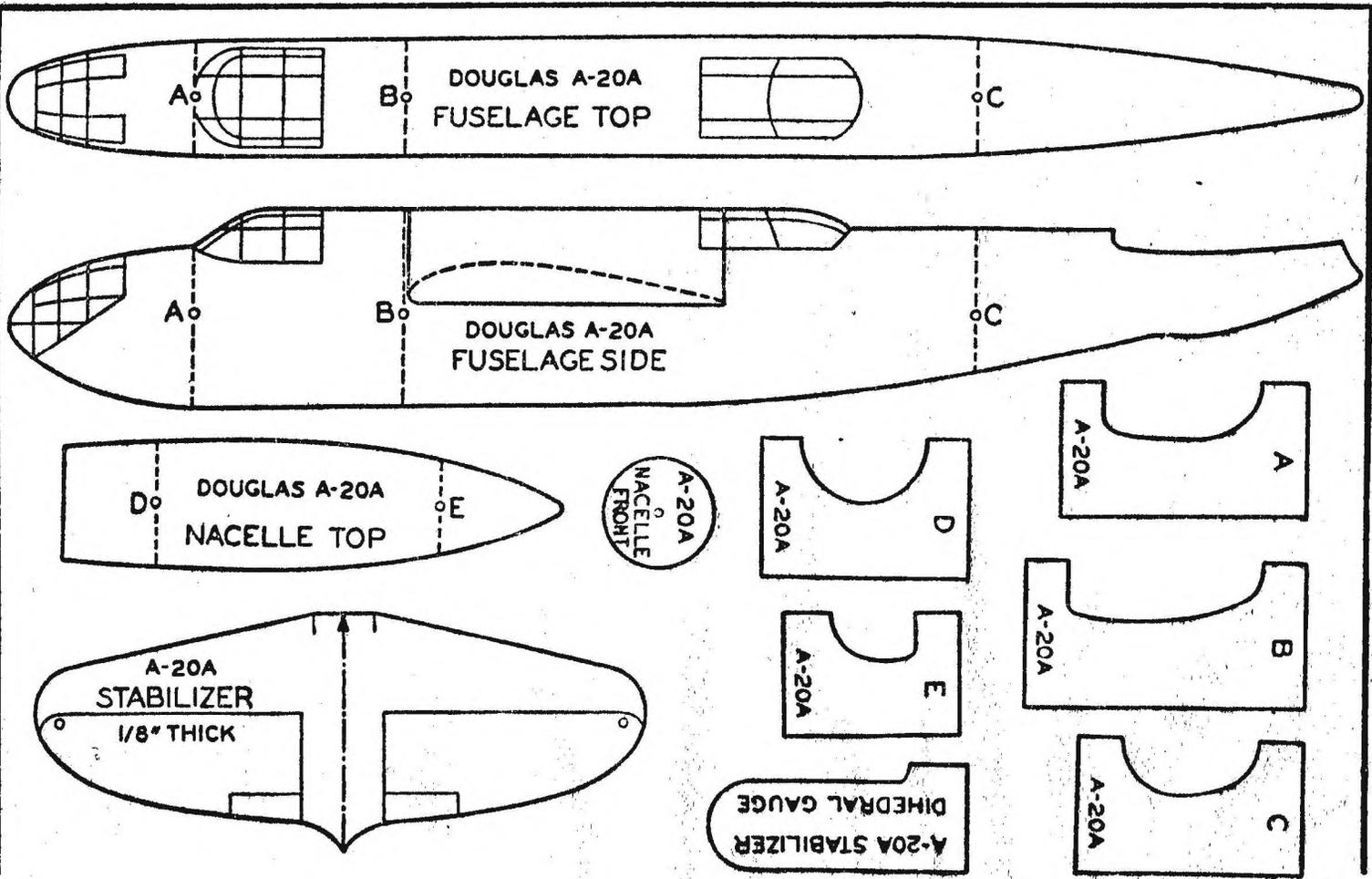
THIS PORTION OF NACELLE FLOYS SMOOTHLY BACK FROM TOP OF WING

BILL OF MATERIALS

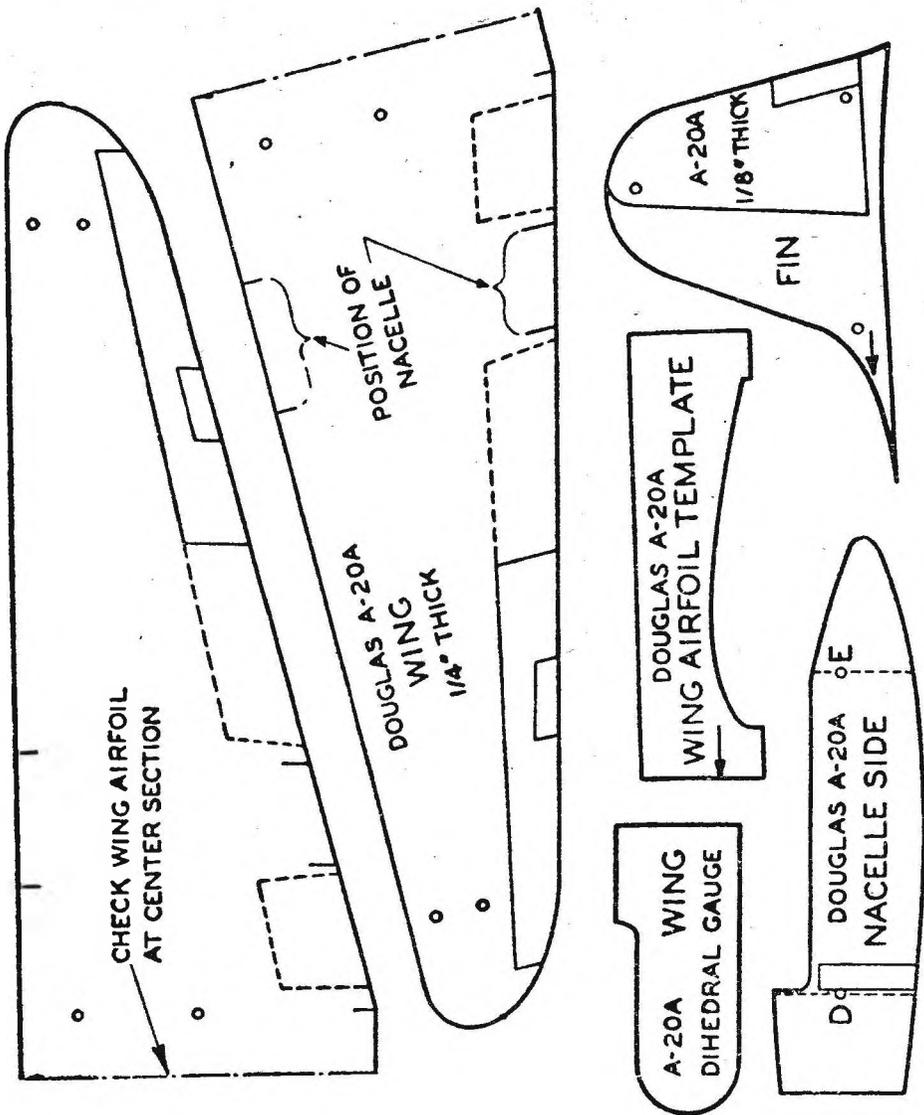
Fuselage 1/8" x 1/8" x 8"
Wing 1/8" x 2" x 10"
Tail 1/8" x 1" x 6"
Nacelles 2-1/2" x 2 1/2"
Air Scoops 1/8" thick

MODEL	DOUGLAS A-20A	MODEL
U. S. ARMY ATTACK FINAL ASSEMBLY		
SPAN 10-7/32"	SERIAL NO. A-11	DATE 2-16-42
U. S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS WASH., D. C.		

[Turn page for Douglas A-20A Template]

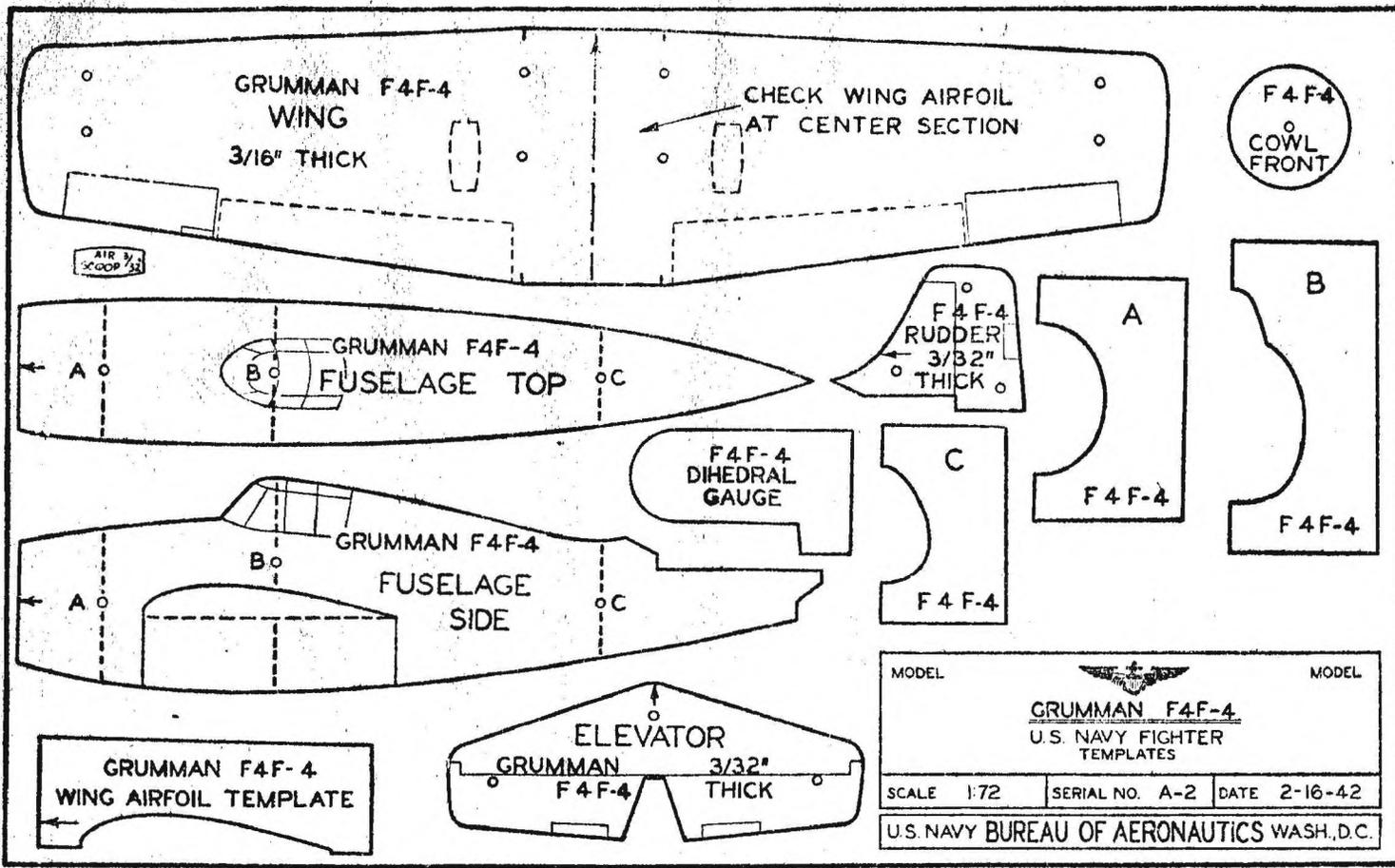


Here's one of Uncle Sam's big offensive weapons, and it's coming



MODEL	 DOUGLAS A-20A U.S. ARMY ATTACK TEMPLATES	MODEL
SCALE 1:72	SERIAL NO. A-11	DATE 2-15-42
U.S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS WASH., D.C.		

off the Douglas assembly lines in ever-increasing numbers.



Grumman's Wildcat has already had its baptism of fire with the R.A.F., and has been put through its paces by our own Bluejackets. If you don't mind going into action at about 325 miles per hour, this is your baby.

3/32" 3/16" 3/32"
DIMENSIONS FOR TAPERING WING BLOCK

CARVE THIS PART WITH CARE AS IT MUST BE OF APPROPRIATE THICKNESS TO FLOW IN WITH FIN

CONL. SEPARATION SCORED IN AIR SCOOP

V CUT TO FIT DIHEDRAL IN WING

GRUMMAN F4F-4

Commonly known as the "Wildcat", this single-place U. S. Navy fighter is built for service with the airplane carriers. It is powered by a radial engine. Span 38', Length 38' 9 1/2" (to tip of prop. hub).

Identification

Mid-wing monoplane with wings tapered to square-cut tips. Short round-tapering fuselage. Tail pieces have tapered appearance. Small air scoop beneath each wing.

BILL OF MATERIALS

Fuselage 1x1 1/2x4 1/4
Wing 7/16x1 1/2x6 1/4
Tail 3/16x1 1/2x2 3/4
Air Scoops 1/8" thick

MODEL		MODEL
GRUMMAN F4F-4		
U.S. NAVY FIGHTER		
FINAL ASSEMBLY		
SPAN 6-1/32"	SERIAL NO. A-2	DATE 2-16-42
U.S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS WASH., D.C.		

[Templates of Grumman F4F-4 on opposite page]

1/16" 3" 3/16" 1/16"
DIMENSIONS FOR TAPERING WING BLOCK

GLUE TAILWHEEL INTO HOLE IN FUSELAGE

EXHAUSTS NOTICE HUMP ON TOP OF CABIN

SPINNER SEPARATION SCORED IN RADIATOR AIR SCOOP

TOP
SIDE
EXHAUSTS FULL SIZE

SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE

Most famous single-seat fighter of the English R.A.F. Powered by a liquid-cooled Rolls-Royce inline engine. Latest Spitfires are equipped with rapid firing cannon. Span 36' 10", length 29' 11".

Identification

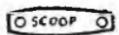
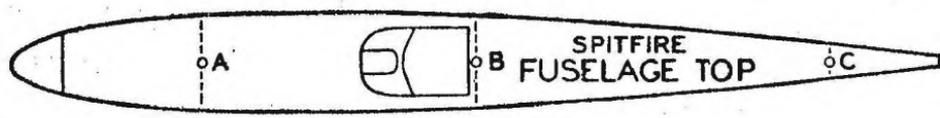
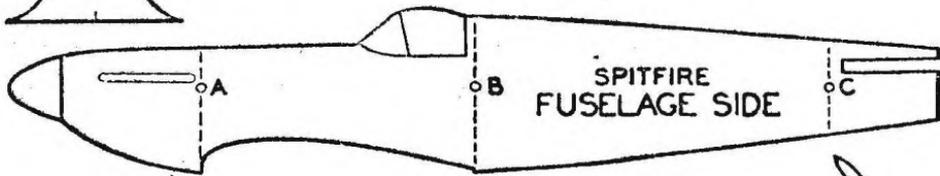
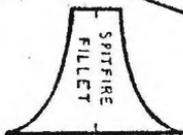
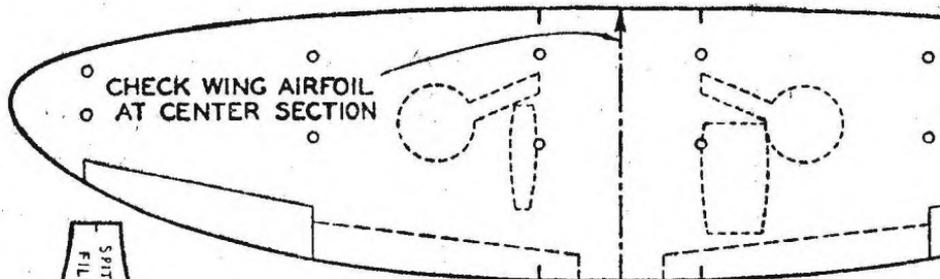
Low-wing monoplane with elliptical wings and stabilizer-elevator. Short nose with exhausts on each side. Slight hump on top of cabin. A wide radiator projects beneath right wing near fuselage and small air scoop beneath left.

BILL OF MATERIALS

Fuselage 1x1x5
Wing 7/16x1 1/2x6 1/4
Tail 3/16x1x2
Radiator and Scoop 1/8" thick

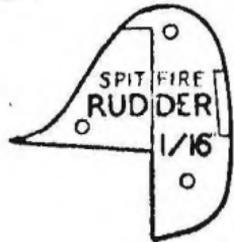
MODEL		MODEL
SPITFIRE		
BRITISH FIGHTER		
FINAL ASSEMBLY		
SPAN 6-1/8"	SERIAL NO. A-19	DATE 2-16-42
U.S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS WASH., D.C.		

[Templates of Spitfire on next page]





SPITFIRE
WING
3/16" THICK



SPITFIRE
RUDDER
1/16"



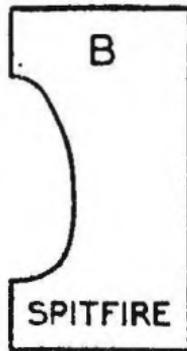
C

SPITFIRE



A

SPITFIRE



B

SPITFIRE



SPITFIRE
ELEVATOR

1/16"

MODEL



MODEL

SPITFIRE

BRITISH FIGHTER
TEMPLATES

SCALE 1:72

SERIAL NO. A-19

DATE 2-16-42

U.S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS WASH., D.C.

The Spitfires of England's Fighter Command need no introduction to most newspaper readers. They've written their reputation in machine-gun bullets on the sides of the craft of Germany's Luftwaffe.

HOW TO PACK AND SHIP YOUR MODELS

Read These Instructions Carefully!

THE collecting, packing and shipping of plane models is a task that rests jointly upon the shoulders of the model builder and the local school authorities directing the model aircraft project.

In order that labeling may be uniform, it is suggested that a piece of medical adhesive tape, size $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 1", be marked in indelible pencil with the abbreviated designation of the particular model, such as SBD-3, PBY-5, etc., and affixed in the center of the under side of the left wing looking forward.

After inspection and acceptance by local authorities, a second piece of adhesive tape may be used for the official name of the plane, its type and nationality, the name of the individual constructing the model, the school or model building club he represents, and its location.

This label should be attached to the under side of the right wing looking forward.

Acceptable Packing Methods

There are a number of acceptable methods of packing scale models. Those with extensive experience in packing models, suggest that the model be suspended in resilient material, such as excelsior lightly packed or loose, crumpled newspaper.

The carton in which the model is in-

dividually packed should be large enough to prevent the model from touching the sides. Individual packaged models will then be packed in larger containers in groups.

Each large box should contain ten models having serial numbers in sequence. For instance, planes with serial numbers A-1 to A-10 should be in one box, and planes with serial numbers A-11 to A-20 in another.

Serial numbers appear in title boxes of plan and template sheets published here-with.

Inspection

All models must be properly inspected before packing and the package must contain an inspection slip signed by the individual responsible in the local community where the models are made.

Shipping instructions are not included here, because they are available only to those authorized locally to send the models to their designated destinations. *Do not ship models other than through recognized channels arranged by local school systems or model building clubs.*

Do not write to the U. S. Navy or the U. S. Office of Education, as both of these agencies are fully engaged in the war effort. Your local directors can supply all the information necessary.

BAKU GEKI KI TYPE 99

A two-place dive-bomber used by Japanese Navy in attack on Hawaii. Radial air-cooled engine. Fixed landing gear with pants over wheels. Diving flaps hinge down from under wing to slow up plane when dive-bombing but are stowed flush with wing during level flight. Span 47", Length 35", 3".

Identification

Low-wing monoplane with elliptical wing. Fixed landing gear mounted near leading edge of wing. Fuselage has short nose and long interrupted "greenhouse". Trailing edge of elevator is straight. Leading edge of stabilizer curved back to rounded tips.

BILL OF MATERIALS

Fuselage 1x1x6
 Wing 1x1x8
 Stabilizer 1x1x2 1/2
 Landing Struts and Wheel 1x1x2 1/2
 Fin and Covers 1x1x2

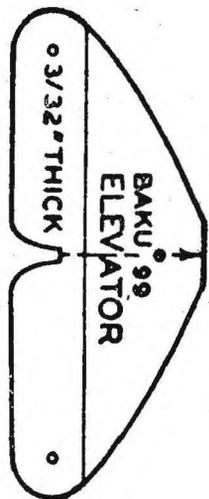
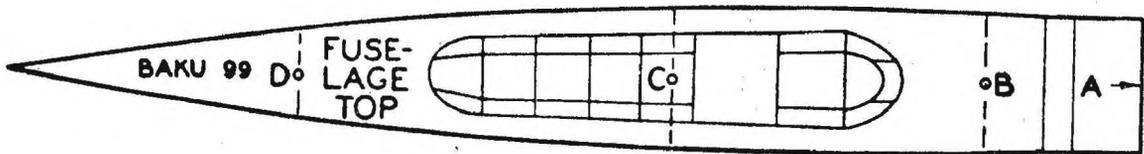
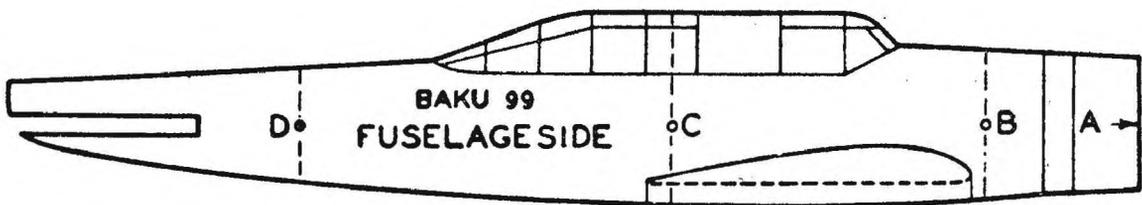
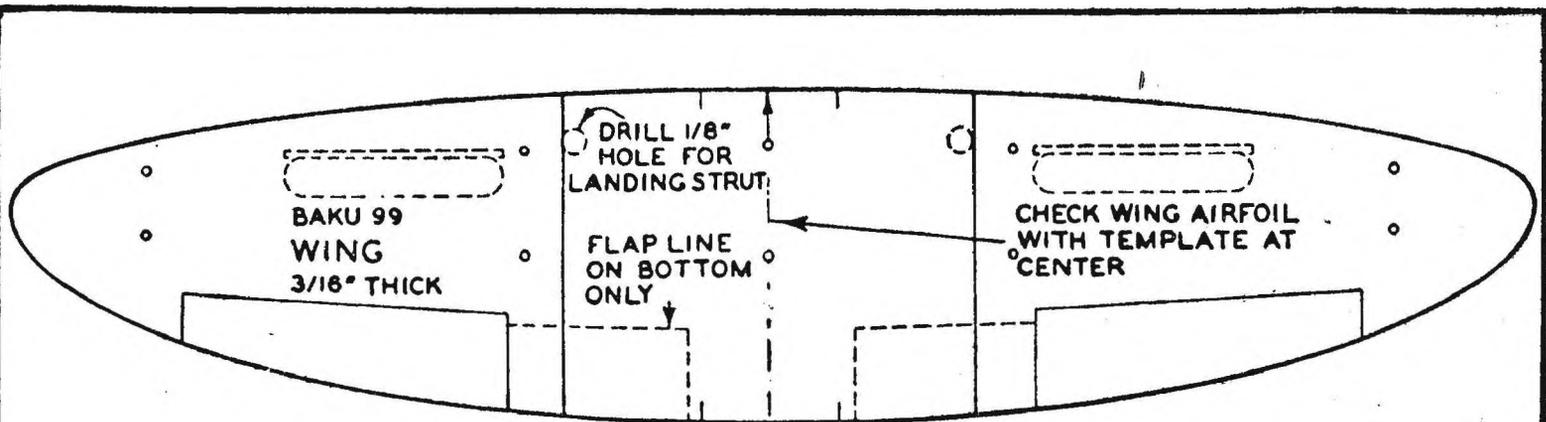
MODEL  **MODEL**

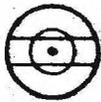
BAKU GEKI KI - 99
 JAPANESE NAVY DIVE-BOMBER
 FINAL ASSEMBLY

SPAN 7-27/32" SERIAL NO. A-17 DATE 2-16-42

U.S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS WASH., D.C.

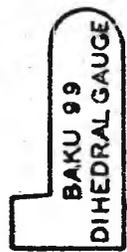
[Turn page for Template of Baku Geki Ki-99]



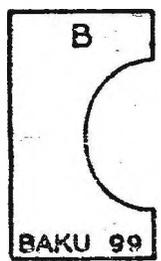


SHAPE WHEEL.
CUT ON LINES
AND GLUE PIECES TO
BOTTOM OF LANDING
STRUTS.

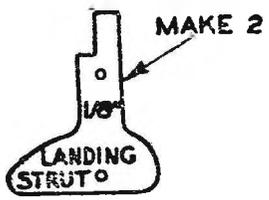
MAKE 4



BAKU 99 FLAP



TAILWHEEL
1/16" THICK



MODEL		MODEL
BAKU GEKI KI - 99 JAPANESE NAVY DIVE-BOMBER TEMPLATES		
SCALE 1:72	SERIAL NO. A-17	DATE 2-16-42
U.S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS WASH., D.C.		

at the United States in the infamous December 7th attack on Pearl Harbor

AROUND THE HANGAR

(Continued from page 10)

1925-56 Court, Cicero, Ill. Earl is satisfied with just about everything in THE AMERICAN EAGLE. Give him room:

As this is the first piece of correspondence between us, I will keep it short. I think your mag is pretty swell, and I wish you would keep things just about the way they are. Except for the Ambrose Hooley stories, I think you ought to keep the mag in this war as all the interest is centered on the present fast-stepping planes.

Stop at the canteen when you go out and get yourself a free scoop of chocolate, Earl. From 37 Stella Road, Binghamton, N. J., Leuwella Lowe, a nineteen-year-old blonde, sends us greetings and salutations, but not her picture! Remember your manners, gang, and listen to Leuwella.

To get right down to business, do you know what's wrong with your mag? Well, it doesn't have enough World War I stories in it, but otherwise it's tops with me.

Tell Joe Archibald that I don't like his stories. Reason, they are too short.

I would like to be listed as a pen pal. I would like to hear from boys in the service of Uncle Sam.

I'm blonde, nineteen. Well, I'll say so long and, by the way, tell the undertaker not to put too much wax in Oswald's wrinkles so you can sell him for a mummy!

There you are, soldiers, sailors and marines! Oswald's feelings will be hurt if we leave him that message for you, sister. Oswald is very sensitive and cries over soap operas.

We are proud as Punch to print the next letter as it depicts a happy home life and shows that housewives also go for heroes of the skies like Masters and Muley. Mrs. Etta E. Cummings, 82 Main St., South Paris, Maine, wipes her hands of the jam and tells us how much she enjoys the magazine.

I am enclosing name-strips from three of your magazines—THE AMERICAN EAGLE, AIR WAR and SKY FIGHTERS—for the set of sepia portraits of famous World War Aces. The SKY FIGHTERS name-strip is not from the cover itself, but it is from the inside page, but hope it is satisfactory. The reason I am not sending the cover strip is because the jam jar was spilled on it and spoiled it.

My husband and I read all four of the magazines on your list, and as soon as we read them we give them away for others to enjoy. I like THE AMERICAN EAGLE best because of the exciting stories about John Musters and that chap with the everlasting appetite regardless of circumstances—Phil Warren!

If necessary, I'll send another name-strip as soon as I buy my next issue of R A F ACES or SKY FIGHTERS, but all I have at hand just now are the ones I'm enclosing. I'm afraid if I wait too long I'll miss the chance of getting the set of portraits.

And THANK YOU, Mrs. Cummings. We generally take our vacation up in Maine and we will file your address as we go for shell beans and home-made apple pie. South Paris! Memories spring up, ma'am. South of Paree in the spring of 1918. Yours Truly and Oswald on a picnic with two Frog peasant girls. But we forgot, you come from Maine and would not be interested in the love life of two old aviators, would you?

There is the smell of kelp and brine on this next letter from New Zealand! It

comes from Mr. Norm Kiddle whose parents operate the Hotel Ryecroft at 26 Symonds Street, Auckland, N. Z.

Norm wants pen pals, so please, all of you, give a thought to a swell guy who is out there in range of the Nippos. Get a good look at this letter from down under and go over the top with answers to it!

I do not know if I am writing to the right quarters to inquire about a pen friend, but unfortunately your mag is no longer in circulation in New Zealand, and I cannot obtain a pen friend through the usual channels, so I am appealing to HQ. I suppose it is pretty cocky for a fledgling like me to bother you as I have only just received my membership, so I thought I would write to see if I am on the pen friend list.

Your mag was the best that came out here and I think you Yanks are lucky to have the chance of such a lot of different mag as ours down here are very few, although they do entertain us. I hope that I am not wasting your valuable time.

We know a guy from Australia in the last guerre, Norm. He gives us a boomerang for a souvenir and we carried it one day we went over the lines. We got forced down on enemy linoleum and the pilot of the Fokker threw a Luger down on us before we could cremate the Spad.

He took the Aussi skull-buster away



from us and threw it away. But it came back and hit him behind the left ear.

We returned to the drome with a Fokker and the Von tied to the top wing for which we received a medal. Amazing, what? You should hear what others say about the feat.

Well, to go on from here, hand us two or three in a row, Flannelmouth. We do not want to slight anyone this time if we can help it. Well, another dame—I mean lady. And her name is Mary C. Mascole, 75 Savings Street, Waterbury, Connecticut. And here is a long one that comes from Bernard Serio, 2552 W. Fairmont Ave., Baltimore, Maryland. And the third in this trilogy is offered for approval by Alfred (Oh My) Rodighier, 740 E. 90th St., Chicago, Ill. We read them out to you in order.

Have just finished reading the April issue of THE AMERICAN EAGLE. Gardenias and orchids to J. Archibald for his humorous and interesting stories. Lieut. Scott Morgan's stories rate "Ditto." But how about keeping John Masters in World War II. Yesterday's heroes are to be remembered and today's heroes are to be seen. Enclosed is my membership blank. How about your pen pals writing to a future aviatrix. I promise to answer all letters and exchange snapshots, hobbies, etc.—*Mary C. Mascote.*

I'm enclosing my coupon for membership in the club and also a stamped envelope for my membership card. I think you have about the best 10¢ worth of reading material money can buy, in my opinion, as I am sure is the opinion of many of your other fans. I don't see one thing wrong with John Masters or Lieut. Scott Morgan. (Is he really a Lieut. or is that just his pen title?) This is the kind of stuff that keeps up the morale of the country. There is a certain person who goes by the name of Jean Le— Well, you know who I mean. The F.B.I. is very busy getting the dangerous ones first. They're leaving the crackpots until last. I bet the only reason he is over here is because the Axis got tired of him.

I've been reading your mag for a long time and this is my first letter and I want to tell you I think you are one swell guy. Here's a hint or two: divide the stories into World War I and World War II, to make everybody happy (including me), get rid of E-47, and let Masters make mush out of small fry like Le Commer.

Well, I guess you are getting tired (so am I) of hearing me beat my gums, so please list me as a pen pal. I am 15.—*Bernard Serio.*

Although I am not a member of your club I enjoy your stories very much. I have been reading them for the past few years and have loaned many to my friends, and to my knowledge they liked them, too. But really getting down to the point, I would like to know if there is a book available which shows and gives general information of all the American planes at the present date.

I save all this information for my own use (not spy work, either). I have pictures all around my room of present-day airplanes. This just goes to show you that my hobby is collecting bits about airplanes and I hope that there is a book available showing the types of planes. Here I go in a wing-over, so being truly yours, I sign off.—*Alfred Rodighier.*

Mary, you knew something when you suggested gardenias and orchids for a certain little alleged author. Maybe a spray-gun would be more to the point as he just left the Operations shack after picking up a check and we have called the nearest civilian defense report center, to have them send out the decontamination squad. Those cigars, ugh! Mary votes for the modern stunts.

Aw, we ain't half as good as you say we are, Bernard Serio (you see, we have to say that to be modest). As long as you readers like the mag, we don't care much how they insult us. Yes, Morgan was a real loopy in the last fuss and he was taken by the Krauts and stood up against a wall. (On the level!)

But he is alive today and here is the lowdown! This guy Morgan is so thin he looks like he had a malignant growth if he carries a green pea in his pocket.

The Jerries fired at him three times and missed him every crack and the square-head in charge of the firing squad ordered the Heinie doughs to quit so as to conserve ammo. Ask Morgan sometime. If they had stood him up sideways they would have had him though. He has a chin you could hang your hat on.

Alfred, you can go to any big department
[Turn page]

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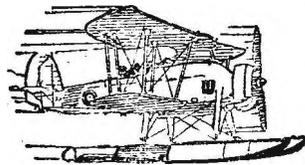
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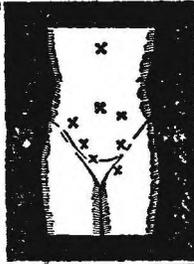
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Comes a beef from Frederic Beck, 5 Wilst Avenue, Hillsdale, N. J. We think he's right and we will go over the heads of a lot of brass hats at 10 E. 40th to satisfy this valuable reader. That is the kind of hair-pin we are, Freddy. Here is why:

What was the major idea of combining THE AMERICAN EAGLE with The Lone Eagle? What was the Lone Eagle anyway? That guy will never get in a fix that he can't be pulled out of by Lieutenant Scott Morgan. The great Morgan Imagination, yipe! What's the matter with letting Phil Warren get a little glory as he can do is come and help THE GREAT JOHN MASTERS when he gets in too deep for even Morgan to draw him out. The first time I read one of his scrapes I decided that he was out of my class about fifty years in the future. Anyhow, I did a little swapping through the Swap Column and found a couple of swell fellows with whom I correspond regularly, so I took a year's subscription. That I did, that I did! I wanted to meet more friends and make more swaps. Then the first magazine I get through the subscription, I'll be doggone but you go and spill the whole works.

The Swap Column is left out and I'm stuck. Gee whiz, the good stuff that is left is awfully punitive (and I didn't look for that in the dictionary). I like the Special Flying Features, they're swell, but honestly, I sure would like it and I'm certain a lot of other fellows would, too, if you revived the Swap Column.

I also have another suggestion—how about having the pen pals give their hobbies or interests? Hey, you know some of the females that send letters in are regular wolves. Take that Wilma Todd, per example! She picks up a Marine in Cuba, and now she wants the whole Army, Navy, Marine and the Air Corps to boot.

Worst regards to Jean LeCommer and best to you, except for cutting out that swell Swap Column.

Leave it to us, pal. Tsk-tsk, what you said about Wilmer! The gal is only patriotic and not a Veronica Lake. Wilmer wants to keep the boys happy and she should be commended to our way of thinking. You tell her you are sorry when you write to her, Freddy. The Swap Column will appear again shortly.

Such international fame we are getting must burn up our rivals and no wonder they tried to ambush our mail-carrier. Here is a special bulletin from Ronald Baynes, St. Mary's St., St. Johns, Antigua, British West Indies. Ronald expresses his gratitude to Yanks who share THE AMERICAN EAGLE Magazine with him.

I want to thank all THE AMERICAN EAGLE readers who have offered to send me their magazines when they have finished with them. Could you please tell your readers that I want pen pals all over the U.S.A. I will answer promptly any letters sent to me. I would especially like to correspond with boys and girls interested in aviation, stamp collecting, etc.

I am trying to form a branch of the club here and so far have succeeded in getting a few fellows to join. I think THE AMERICAN EAGLE is a swell magazine and so do all the chaps around here.

Great work, Ronald. You did not have a father named Bungeye Baynes, a lieutenant in the last fuss, near Amiens? If so, don't let him know we asked, as he will suspect, who introduced him to the French general's wife without telling him she had a husband. Oh, it was harmless enough as

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NORTH SEA TERROR was the best. I save covers from various aviation magazines as a hobby. I have saved thirty-five covers from your magazines. I have also read your SKY FIGHTERS, R A F ACES and AIR WAR magazines.

Please keep the Modern Air War Stories in your magazines. Keep up the stories on the Chinese War. Keep the individual air battles between one enemy and one allied air pilot on the covers.

How about a cover with Chinese and Japanese planes on it? These are just suggestions, as the Chinese pilots are just as good as our pilots on the R.A.F. Would you please rush these pictures as I am going to join the Army Air Corps soon.

We agree with you about the cockpit Confucians as they have flown rings around the Jappos when they have had the equipment. Give China half the war material that the Shintos own and the China boys would wash up the war in the Pacific in three months.

The pictures are on the way, Harold, and all the luck in the world with the air corps. And Gene Brown keeps the batting average of THE AMERICAN EAGLE soaring and no wonder we lead the league. Gene hails from Decatur, Georgia, and gets his Sears Roebuck catalogue in a Route 1 mail box. Gene gives out with all he has got for THE AMERICAN EAGLE.

I really am writing this letter to you, but intend for it to reach Oswald or any of the boys who are in charge of the department "Around the Hangar." I have read the last three issues of THE AMERICAN EAGLE, but I certainly wish to compliment you on the second best aviation book in the business, and I can tell you right now that your companion magazine, R A F ACES, is the best.

You need not worry, because there aren't but two aviation magazines that I think I will read, R A F ACES and THE AMERICAN EAGLE. I've never read any aviation books as thrilling as these. Please keep up the good work.

We will keep up the good work all right. Or somebody else will take over here and jobs are hard to get for old war veterans.

Oswald Klipspringer just came in and he said the Japs better not tangle with the natives of Australia as he saw one once in a zoo. They can kick like all get-out with their hind legs. And they can carry a Bren gun in their pouch and travel sixty miles per hour uphill. We wonder why truant officers were so lax during the days when Oswald ducked school. But let us hand you a very short one from Alex Schedin, 760 Vivian Terrace, Union, N. J.

Alex got put into an early draft age by mistake and wants to correct things before an M.P. calls at his home. Alex knocks seven years off his shoulders with this stint.

I have just finished looking over the names of the pen pals and I want to correct you. I am only eleven years old—not eighteen.

I have been reading this mag for five months, and that's long enough to find out it's swell.

Oops, our mistake, son. Maybe we wanted to hurry the biological process for Uncle Sam's sake. But you like us anyway, don't you, Alex? You bet.

A champ model builder comes to the attention of yours truly. Jack Rothwell, 117 E. Elm Street, Lansing, Mich., congratulates us on our model dept. Get a load of a real model builder:

Being a model builder from away back, and a constant reader of your mag, let me congratulate

you on your plans for building models. They are very clear and complete. I have used the center-line idea for the last three years, and sure was glad to find that your plans had them.

I must confess that I had been only interested in the later models, but thought I would try building the Nieuport 17-C. As $\frac{3}{8}$ " was kind of small, I used $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 1".

I am enclosing an enlarged photograph of my effort. I think it pretty well constructed, but would appreciate your comment upon same.

Using the same scale, I am now building the Spad 13C.

Yesterday I bought the current issue of THE AMERICAN EAGLE, but was sorry to find that you didn't have another detailed plan for a ship.

Great work, Jack. The photo did your model justice and we think you are headed for high spots in aviation. Let us know what we can do for you.

We will never forget the day that Oswald and your C.O. saved the 13th Squadron near Luneville, France, from destruction by building fifteen quick Spad models. We set them on the ground with hangars to match and a Kraut Gotha outfit dropped all their eggs on them. The only mistake was we built the model drome on a tank proving ground and it took the engineers eight weeks to smooth it out. We did not get a medal.

Speaking of model planes, Charles Cummings of Baytown, Texas, puts up quite a squawk about the stoppage of old crate plans. We wish we could put out a Siamese twins issue of this mag and please both halves of the universe. How about it, clients? Do you agree with Charlie?

I have read THE AMERICAN EAGLE since back in 1937, and as a rather old reader of your mag, I think I should be able to voice an opinion and ask a few questions. First: Why did you stop publishing World War I Planes in THE AMERICAN EAGLE? Some will say: "Didn't you know that there's another war on?" Sure, I know it, but you can get planes and plans from every other book published, so please go to printing them again.

I have made sixteen of those you published and am as proud of them as I am of my gas model, and every one that sees them says they are swell. There are a number of boys I know that were as mad as I was when you stopped them.

How about giving us a chance? Some models I would like to see you publish are Fokker E-1, D.H.2, F.E.8, Sopwith 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Strutter, R.E. 8, D.H.4, Bristol Fighter L.U.G, Halberstadt, P.E.2, and any others that one doesn't hear much about these days. Also you could tell a little about the planes, their faults and advantages.

I am also building planes for the Navy with the rest of the model club in Robert E. Lee High and have finished my first.

I got the pictures of the flyers, and thanks a lot. Well, thanks for listening to my argument and let's see those old fighters again.

Keep your Mae West on, Charlie, and we will take it up with the board. If you don't think our directors look bored, stick your face through a window of the directors' room some day.

The writing on the next offender's stationery reminds us of the first words penned by a pet chimp in the Franklin Park zoo. Anyway, Jack L. Sullivan, 1901 Kenwood St., Burbank, Cal., is responsible for this:

You guys have got Muley and Ambrose running too much competition to "Snuffy Smith," but Uncle Willie excels all. Now how about having Uncle Willie invent a portable mint or a mechanical back scratcher?

[Turn page]

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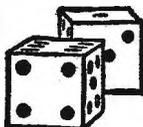
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And about Masters, you could have him some place where he is not so well known. Send him to Borneo, they would never recognize him there. And how about more World War I stories? And if you guys don't give Masters a rest or change his experiences a little you are going to disillusion me and are going to have Masters going AWOL.

If you guys have enough ink and scrap paper, how about printing this?
And I want to be a pen pal.

Now what do you think? We'll just forget about it and go on with our important business session. Comes a breezy one from Harry Thibodeau, Franklin, Mass. H for Harry dumps this one in our lap and it did not blow up.

This is the second time I have written in a month and in the first letter I forgot to tell you what I think of your mag.

I think your stories are some of the best I have ever read. Don't get me wrong, the other mags, SKY FIGHTERS, AIR WAR, and the newest one out, THE R A F ACES, have stories that will compete with yours as the authors are the same.

Since I last wrote we have entered the war and I think that THE AMERICAN EAGLE should fight on the soil of the good old U. S. A., where he belongs.

As for that Jean LeCrumb (pardon me, my pencil slipped. I meant Jean LeCommer), will you please inform me when the F.B.I. catches him.

I am also of a French descent, but please do not judge all Frenchmen by this LeCommer.

I am waiting for the next issue, as I am looking forward to being listed as a pen pal. To Wilma Todd, must your pen pals be in service? If so, I am rushing to the nearest recruiting station pronto! All joking aside, I would like as many pen pals as possible.

Warning. If this letter is not printed I'll be forced to drastic action.

I got your letter and the pictures of the World War Aces. They were better than I dared to expect.

Welcome, Harry. Of course you do not throw away a whole barrel of apples because there is one rotten one on top. Why, you'll find rats in the best regulated households. Why, Oswald even exposed a dame he was sweet on in Clair de Lune, France, one day in 1918, even though it broke his heart for a day or two. The doll worked in a grapery but Oswald found popcorn in her pockets, which told him she was keeping pigeons that knew all the quickest ways to Munich and back.

But where were we? Oh, sure. Hand me another, Frogface. This looks good. Ed Carr, 222 West Main Street, Morris, Ill., sends us a swell testimonial of the kind of morale medicine we put on the market!

I was sick a few days ago and I asked my sister to take some of my hard earned dough to buy me a mag to pass away the time. When she got back I found out she had bought THE AMERICAN EAGLE for me. I had never read your AMERICAN EAGLE before, although I have read your AIR WAR and R A F ACES for a year.

I picked up your mag and read it from cover to cover before I put it down. Let's have some more of Joe's Ambrose Hooley Howlers, and now that the U. S. is in the war, how about THE AMERICAN EAGLE giving the Japs something to worry about. All in all, I think your mag is great. I should like to become a member of "The Lone Eagles of America." I also should like to talk "dropwash" with pen pals.

Doctors don't all have degrees, Ed. We doctored up Spads in the last guerre that were given up as lost by the U. S. experts who said they would never operate. Thanks for the dandy letter, Ed.

Clifford Miskimom steps up with the following piece to speak and don't any of

you dare make faces at him. Start telling us, Cliff. First, tell them you live at 918 N. Castle St., Baltimore, Md.

Enclosed you will find fifteen cents for the World War Aces pictures. I am sending you the inside name plate because I keep my SKY FIGHTERS for my library and I wouldn't want one with half the cover missing. I thought GUNS FOR GREECE was a knockout. How about a larger column for you, Skipper?

Thanks for the plug, Cliff. At first we thought you were only a bluff. Skip that in a hurry as puns just happen onto us when we are not looking. We give you our thanks for the compliments, Cliff.

Another customer and one of our best, omits his address. And we think his name is either Larry Hapler or Larry Kaplan. Which? We get a swell send-off from Larry just the same as take a look!

I'm enclosing my coupon for membership and self-addressed envelope for my club card. I have been reading your magazine THE AMERICAN EAGLE for a short while and have just finished the April issue which I enjoyed exceptionally. Lieut. Scott Morgan is a brilliant writer, but this secret weapon business all the time is getting very monotonous. A change of this pace would be appreciated by this writer.

After catching my breath with the Eagle, a story by Joe Archibald is a vast relief. I really enjoy his humor. I enjoy reading "Around the Hangar." Don't let the other writers see this, but "Around the Hangar" is truly the best part of the magazine because of the frank, truthful way it is conducted.

Please enroll me as a pen pal and I will faithfully answer any letters coming to me. I am five

[Turn page]

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feet six and a half inches, black, wavy hair, and will exchange snapshots. You know ever since I can remember I have wanted to fly and as soon as I come of age, whether the war is still on or not, I am going to enlist in the U. S. Air Corps. Hoping to hear from you soon, I am signing off now.

There! A client appreciates our department and testifies to the frank and honest and truthful way it is run. We guess the world is worth saving after all and have regained all the faith in human nature we lost during the depression years.

We must close this mail jam session with a very nice effort from Jimmy Hill, Sunset View, Maryville, Tenn. Jimmy gets in a dig at Lieut. Morgan. Listen, Looney!

I like your mag, **THE AMERICAN EAGLE**. I'll have to be cautious at first because you might blow up.

There are only a few things wrong with it. The first is, does John Masters always have to be fighting a secret weapon? Are the Germans the only ones around here that have brains? Another is, keep John in World War II, and have him fight the Japs. You ought to be patriotic and put him in the war with Japan. I have read the latest magazines and they are pretty good. **ELIGHT FROM LISBON** was pretty good, and also **THEY HAD TO FLEE PARIS**.

Tell Mr. Morgan to keep up the good work. I have a pen pal, thanks to your book. Well, it looks like I have said enough. How is Jean LeC?

Don't get Morgan mad, Jim. You know this Summit, N. J., scribbler is a prima donna like any good author and must go into a tantrum once in a while to keep in the mood. But your suggestions are solid. It should not be much of an effort for Morgan to switch from sauerkraut to saki-yaki.

We liked your letter a lot, Jimmy.

We have got to get out of here as we are on airplane-spotting duty tonight. We sit up on a big high watertank on Captain's Island in the sound with a pair of field glasses.

Some of us are not fully awake yet. Certain people talk too much, crab too much about the way the leaders are handling the war.

Hitler knows that, and so he and Goebels are working on a sixth column. They are the do-nothings who stand by and kibitz and tell you what cards you should play. They hoard sugar and fret over a blackout that disturbs their cocktail party or a contract bridge game. The apathetic brigade who just won't believe Hitler can build planes good enough to reach our shores.

Then there's the type who won't play unless they have a pretty uniform and an insignia on their automobile. The fifth and sixth columns ruined France. Beware of them!

Why, in our town only recently, the minister of a certain church connived with a lot of fatuous parasites to get a Jap alien out of the klink and put him back in circulation. The firm he worked for is owned by the Jap government and his boss is still in durance vile and trying to answer questions he can't answer.

The Jappos would make short shrift of a

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white man suspected of fifth column activity. You have to fight an alley thug with brass knuckles. The yellow devils have got to expect to take what they dish out!
Happy landings, pilots!

—THE WING COMMANDER.

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WEST COAST PATROL

A Novel of the Pacific War

By **LIEUT. SCOTT MORGAN**

PEN PALS



Here are some new members of **THE LONE EAGLES OF AMERICA**—all air fans. Many others will be listed in the next issue. The figures in parentheses are the ages of the members.

- W. Howard Adcock (18), 511 Allen Ave., Glendale, Calif.
- Ernest Daley (19), 63 Kaufman St., Tonawanda, N. Y.
- Theodore McCafer (12), 1669 First Ave., San Diego, Calif.
- Ray J. Fritz (15), 409 Elwood St., Joliet, Ill.
- Bernard Deeter (15), 3644 Yerrue, Fresno, Calif.
- Robert Coffman (13), 719 Yale, Akron, O.
- Leonard Kenger (13), 1575 Townsend Ave., New York, N. Y.
- Edward Shapil (18), 841 N. Damen, Chicago, Ill.
- Sgt. Matthew P. Kalkowski (21), P. O. Box 863, Langley Field, Va.
- Wilbert Heuler (15), 3357 Douglas Blvd., Chicago, Ill.
- Ted Foster (10), Box 191, Route 2, Dallas, Ore.
- Thomas C. Wright (14), 177 Chittenden St., Akron, O.
- Paul Morgan (18), Marengo, Ind.
- Francis Henderlong (15), 434 S. Main St., Crown Point, Ind.
- Arlene Kimble (18), 1218 Hamlet St., Columbus, O.
- Sid Skolnick (16), 17 Beaver St., Hamden, Conn.
- Joseph Partise (14), 1458 Leland Ave., New York, N. Y.
- Bill Buchalter (17), Route No. 4, Box 1788, Modesto, Calif.
- Jimmie Bevarly (13), 5701 So. Pkway., Louisville, Ky.
- John Collura, Jr. (13), 839 N. Ridgeway Ave., Chicago, Ill.
- Frederick Lee (17), 2421 Charles St., Poughkeepsie, Pa.
- Arthur Kraft (14), 4903 Linden Ave., Apt. 1, Seattle, Wash.
- Gene Brown (15), 3 Lat Shoals Rd., Decatur, Ga.
- Merritt D. Logan (16), 919 Homer St., Omaha, Neb.
- Jack Leff (13), 107-31 Sutphin Blvd., Jamaica, N. Y.
- Max Northrop (18), Clay Center, Neb.
- Mary C. Mascole (16), 75 Savings St., Waterbury, Conn.
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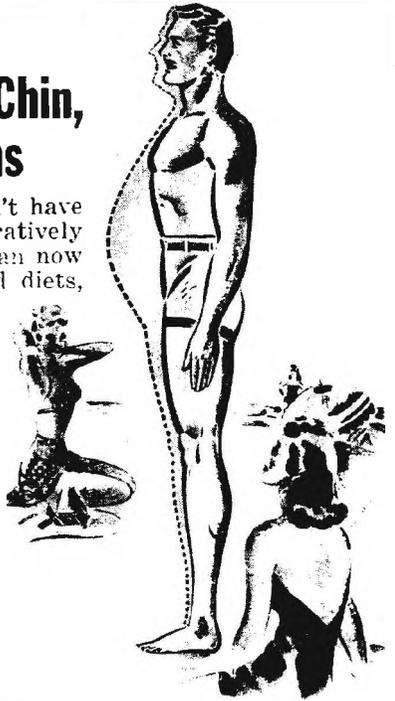
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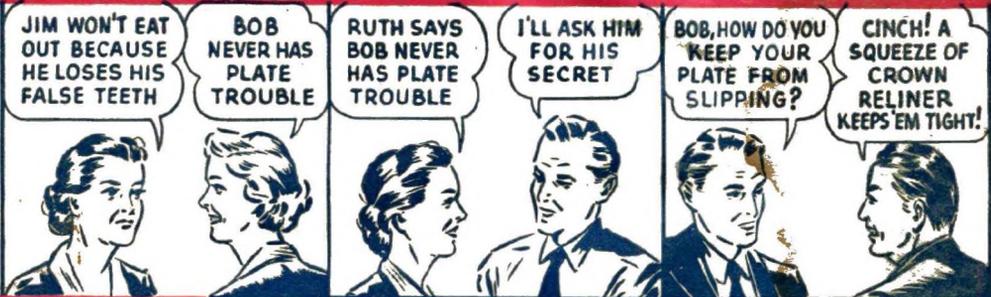
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