

10¢

SKY

A THRILLING
PUBLICATION

SEPT.

FIGHTERS

SALUTE FOR SUNNY

A Novelette of Courage

By **ARTHUR
J. BURKS**

SIX DEAD MEN

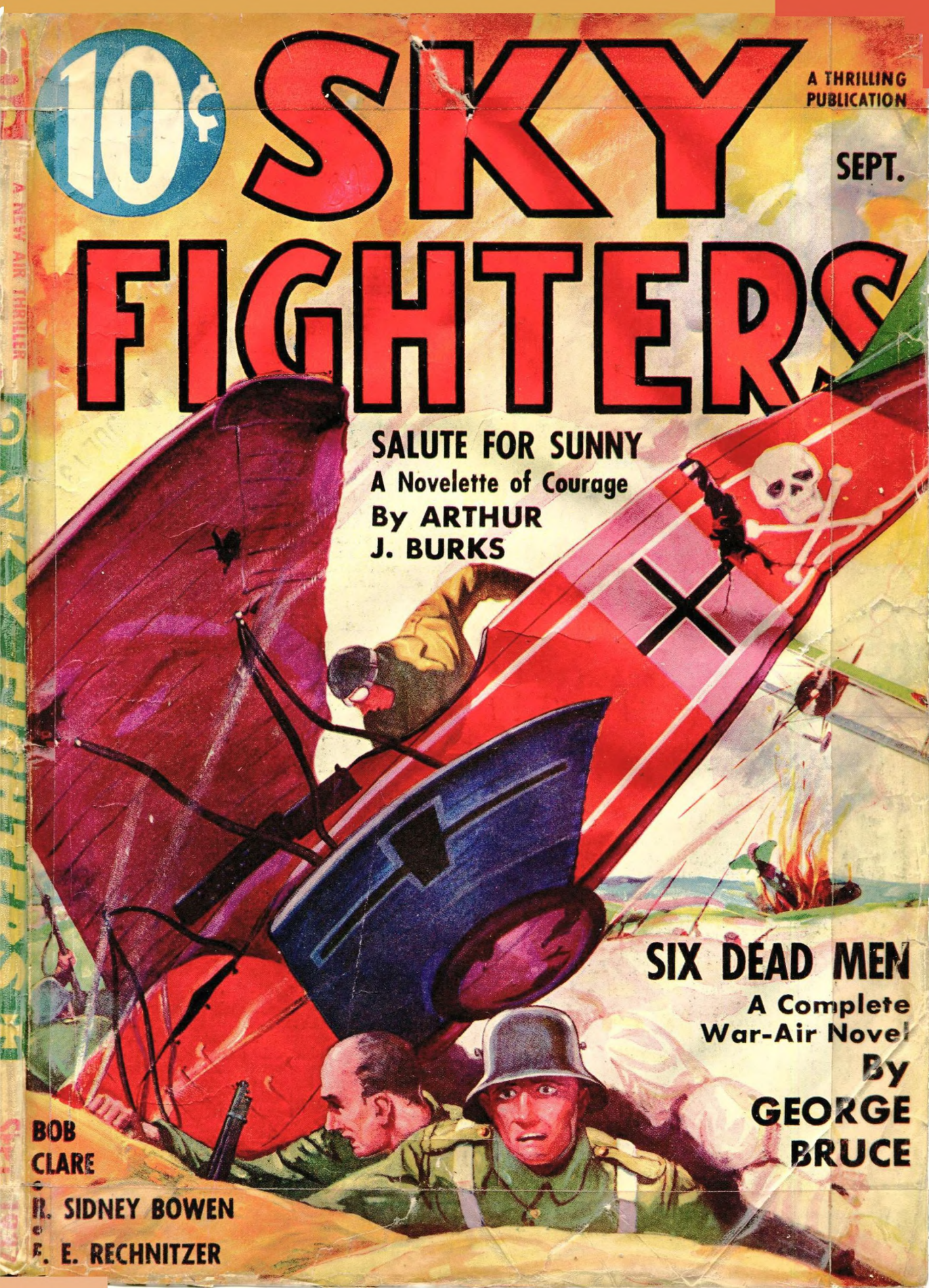
A Complete
War-Air Novel

By
**GEORGE
BRUCE**

**BOB
CLARE**

H. SIDNEY BOWEN

F. E. RECHNITZER





FOOT ITCH

ATHLETE'S FOOT

Send Coupon
Don't Pay Until Relieved

According to the Government Health Bulletin No. E-28, at least 50% of the adult population of the United States are being attacked by the disease known as Athlete's Foot.

Usually the disease starts between the toes. Little watery blisters form, and the skin cracks and peels. After a while, the itching becomes intense, and you feel as though you would like to scratch off all the skin.

BEWARE OF IT SPREADING

Often the disease travels all over the bottom of the feet. The soles of your feet become red and swollen. The skin also cracks and peels, and the itching becomes worse and worse.

Get rid of this disease as quickly as possible, because it is very contagious, and it may go to your hands or even to the under arm or crotch of the legs.

Most people who have Athlete's Foot have tried all kinds of remedies to cure it without success. Ordinary germicides,

antiseptics, salve or ointments seldom do any good.

HERE'S HOW TO TREAT IT

The germ that causes the disease is known as Tinea Trichophyton. It buries itself deep in the tissues of the skin and is very hard to kill. A test made shows it takes 20 minutes of boiling to kill the germ; so you can see why the ordinary remedies are unsuccessful.

H. F. was developed solely for the purpose of treating Athlete's Foot. It is a liquid that penetrates and dries quickly. You just paint the affected parts. It peels off the tissue of the skin where the germ breeds.

ITCHING STOPS IMMEDIATELY

As soon as you apply H. F. you will find that the itching is immediately relieved. You should paint the infected parts with H. F. night and morning until your feet are well. Usually this takes from three to ten days, although in severe cases it may take longer or in mild cases less time.

H. F. will leave the skin soft and smooth. You will marvel at the quick way it brings you relief; especially if you are one of those who have tried for years to get rid of Athlete's Foot without success.

H. F. SENT ON FREE TRIAL

Sign and mail the coupon, and a bottle of H. F. will be mailed you immediately. Don't send any money and don't pay the postman any money; don't pay anything any time unless H. F. is helping you. If it does help you, we know you will be glad to send us \$1 for the treatment at the end of ten days. That's how much faith we have in H. F. Read, sign and mail the coupon today.



GORE PRODUCTS, INC. T. F.
849 Perdido St., New Orleans, La.

Please send me immediately a complete treatment for foot trouble as described above. I agree to use it according to directions. If at the end of 10 days my feet are getting better, I will send you \$1. If I am not entirely satisfied, I will return the unused portion of the bottle to you within 15 days from the time I receive it.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY..... STATE.....

New 6-Volt TRINDL Electric ARC WELDER

PATENTS PENDING



**Works on Storage Battery
or 110 Volt Light Circuit**
A REAL WELDER

Men, here is the hottest specialty item that has come along in years. A real honest to goodness electric arc welder that does a man size job. Built sturdily of the finest materials. Requires no mechanical knowledge—any one can use it. Every demonstration should make a sale. This new Trindl Electric Arc Welder is made possible by the invention of a low voltage carbon which gets white hot from the current of an ordinary 6 volt storage battery such as in your automobile. It only uses about 20 to 25 amperes of current which is about the same current drain as 4 headlight bulbs, yet develops about 7000 degrees of heat.

**MELTS IRON AND STEEL
INSTANTLY**

The Trindl Welder is simple to use. Expert welding can be done by anyone. The Trindl Arc Welder is the only battery welder that, after a rigid test, has been approved by the Automotive Test Laboratories of America. It is ideal for making permanent fender repairs—also for broken castings, radiators, cylinders, water jackets, holes in auto bodies, hog troughs, boilers, tanks, milk cans, radios, batteries, etc. Iron, Steel, Brass, Copper and Tin can be worked on for a quick and permanent repair. The repaired part will be as strong as before.

**NEW 110 VOLT CONVERTER
MAKES FULL SIZE PROFESSIONAL UNIT**

This new converter is used on any 110 volt 60 cycle electric light socket in place of a storage battery. It is especially designed to be used with the Trindl Electric Arc Welder—**COSTS LESS THAN A GOOD BATTERY**—The combination makes a full size professional electric arc welder that everybody can use. Ideal for fender and repair shop needs. This is a sensation, not only in price but also in actual results. The converter represents the same fine construction and engineering skill as the arc welder. The complete outfit, including the transformer, is easily portable so that it can be brought right to the job.

USERS SWEAR BY IT—The price is so low that now anyone can afford to have a real welding outfit. Think of the profit you can make introducing this Trindl Welder and Converter—a simple five minute demonstration should make a sale to every interested prospect, especially when they hear the amazingly low price. Garages, radio and battery men, tanners, sheet metal workers, janitors, farmers and home-owners all need the Trindl Welder and Converter.

ACT NOW! There are big profits and a steady business waiting for you taking care of your territory for us. Don't let someone else get in before you—Send coupon Today.

TRINDL PRODUCTS
2229-SC Calumet Ave., Chicago, Ill.



FACTS

Here are just a few excerpts from the many letters of praise we have received from Trindl Electric Arc boosters.

"Please find enclosed for 12 welders by return mail for I am about sold out now. They are selling fine."—W. C. Anderson, Nebr.

"Received my Trindl Arc Welder and am both pleased and surprised."—Louis F. Glier, Ohio.

"Results are very gratifying with your welder. I am enclosing an order for 12 more Electric Arc Welders."—Nelson O. Lyster, Florida.

"I received my welder, and it is a regular repair shop in itself."—J. R. Harper, La.

"I sold 4 of your Trindl Electric Arc Welders in three minutes."—C. Gillies, Canada.

"I sold 9 welders in my first ten calls."—F. W. Stice, Iowa.

\$10.50 a day profit for you for only selling 6 Trindl Arc Welders. No matter where you turn, you will find people who will want to buy arc welders from you. Garages, shop men, radio repair men, farmers, home-owners, mechanics, janitors, all of them need Trindl Electric Arc Welders. Be the man in your territory to clean up with Trindl.

MAIL COUPON NOW!

TRINDL PRODUCTS
2229-SC Calumet Ave.
Chicago, Illinois

Yes! Rush me free particulars of how I can make big money with Trindl Electric Arc Welders and Converters. This does not obligate me in any way.

Name

Local Address.....

City

State

SKY FIGHTERS

Vol. XVII, No. 3

LIEUT. EDWARD McCRAE, Editor

September, 1937

COMPLETE WAR-AIR NOVEL

- SIX DEAD MEN**.....George Bruce 12
Olympic Sportsmanship Cements Fast Friendships that Cannot be Severed by Burning Lead Over World War Battlegrounds!

COMPLETE NOVELETTE

- SALUTE FOR SUNNY**.....Arthur J. Burks 76
Buford's Song of Life Reaches Its Crescendo in a Blazing Inferno of the War Skies!

ZOOMING STORIES

- THE COLOR BLIND ACE**.....Robert Sidney Bowen 52
Jeff Burrows Encounters a New Kind of Air Hero
- HAWK IN THE NIGHT**.....Bob Clare 62
U-Boats Make the Mediterranean Simmer
- SPADS AND SCALPELS**.....F. E. Rechnitzer 99
A Yellow Streak? Doc Lewis Shows His Real Color

SPECIAL FLYING FEATURES

- FAMOUS SKY FIGHTERS**.....Illustrations 50
Major Jimmy Doolittle, Captain Bruno Loezzer, and Others
- THE SHIPS ON THE COVER**.....Eugene M. Frandzen 59
The Fokker D7 and the Nieuport 28 C. 1
- SCRAMBLED SHIPS**.....A Test of Knowledge 60
Here Are Six More World War Crates to Unscramble
- LIBRARY OF WAR PLANES**.....Illustrations 74
Kondor E3, Sage No. 3, Dyott and Hanriot 3C2
- STUNT PILOT'S PUZZLE**.....A Brain-Teaser 93
This Looks Easy—but Just Try It!
- THE CATERPILLAR CLUB**.....Story of Two Army Flyers 95
The Thrilling Escapes of Majors Hickam and Geiger
- LEARN TO FLY**.....Lieut. Jay D. Blaufox 96
A Lesson on the Art of Night Flying
- TARMAC TALK**.....Eddie McCrae 106
Where Readers and the Editor Meet. Mail Buddies, Page 109

Join **AIRMEN OF AMERICA!** See Coupon on Page 107

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Manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes, and are submitted at the author's risk.



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*It Shows How I Train You
at Home in Your Spare Time for a*

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*Here's
Proof*



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For Four
Stores**

"I was working in a garage when I enrolled with N. R. I. In a few months I made enough to pay for the course three or four times. I am now Radio Service manager for the M-Furniture Co. for their four stores." — **JAMES E. RYAN, 1525 St. St., Fall River, Mass.**

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in

Spare Time

"My work has consisted of Radio set servicing, with some Public Address Systems work—all in my spare time. My earnings in Radio amount to about \$10 a week." — **WILLIAM MEYER, 705 Ridge Road, Hobart, Ind.**

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Tripled
By N.B.I.
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"I have been doing nicely, thanks to N. B. I. Training. My present earnings are about three times what they were before I took the Course. I consider N. B. I. Training the finest in the world." — **BERNARD COSTA, 201 Kent St., Brooklyn, N. Y.**

Clip the coupon and mail it. I will prove I can train you at home in your spare time to be a **RADIO EXPERT**. I will send you my first lesson **FREE**. Examine it, read it, see how clear and easy it is to understand—how practical I make learning Radio at home. Men without Radio or electrical experience become Radio Experts, earn more money than ever as a result of my Training.

**Many Radio Experts Make
\$30, \$50, \$75 a Week**

Radio broadcasting stations employ engineers, operators, station managers and pay up to \$5,000 a year. Spare time Radio set servicing pays as much as \$200 to \$500 a year—full time jobs with Radio jobbers, manufacturers, dealers as much as \$30, \$50, \$75 a week. Many Radio Experts operate their own full time or part time Radio sales and service businesses. Radio manufacturers and jobbers employ testers, inspectors, foremen, engineers, servicemen, paying up to \$6,000 a year. Radio operators on ships get good pay, see the world besides. Automobile, police, aviation, commercial Radio, loud speaker systems are newer fields offering good opportunities now and for the future. Television promises to open many good jobs soon. Men I have trained are holding good jobs in these branches of Radio. Read their statements. Mail the coupon.

**There's a Real Future in Radio
for Well Trained Men**

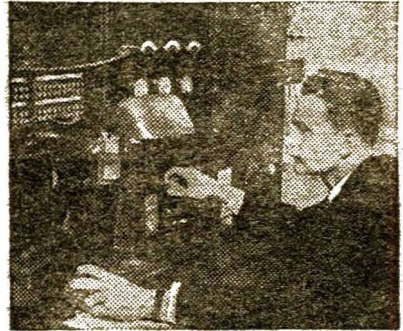
Radio already gives good jobs to more than 300,000 people. And in 1936, Radio enjoyed one of its most prosperous years. More than \$500,000,000 worth of sets, tubes, and parts were sold—an increase of more than 60% over 1935. Over a million Auto Radios were sold, a big increase over 1935. 24,000,000 homes now have one or more Radio sets, and more than 4,000,000 autos are Radio equipped. Every year millions of these sets go out of date and are replaced with newer models. More millions need servicing, new tubes, repairs, etc. A few hundred \$30, \$50, \$75 a week jobs have grown to thousands in 20 years. And Radio is still a new industry—growing fast!

**Many Make \$5, \$10, \$15 a Week Extra
in Spare Time While Learning**

Almost every neighborhood needs a good spare time serviceman. The day you enroll I start sending you Extra Money Job Sheets. They show you how to do Radio repair jobs; how to cash in quickly. Throughout your training I send you plans that made good spare time money—\$300 to \$500 a year—for hundreds of fellows. My Training is famous as "the Course that pays for itself."

I Give You Practical Experience

My Course is not all book training. I send you special Radio equipment, show you how to conduct experiments, build circuits illustrating important principles used in modern Radio receivers, broadcast stations, loud speaker installations. I show you how



to build testing apparatus for use in spare time servicing from this equipment. Read about this 50-50 method of training—how it makes learning at home interesting, quick, fascinating, practical. Mail coupon.

Money Back Agreement Protects You

I am sure I can train you successfully. I agree in writing to refund every penny you pay me if you are not satisfied with my Lessons and Instruction Service when you finish. I'll send you a copy of this agreement with my Free Book.

Find Out What Radio Offers You

Mail coupon for sample lesson and 64-page book. Both are free to anyone over 16 years old. My book points out Radio's spare time and full time opportunities and those coming in Television; tells about my training in Radio and Television; shows you letters from men I trained telling what they are doing, earning. Find out what Radio offers YOU! MAIL COUPON in an envelope, or paste it on a penny postcard—NOW!

**J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 7J09
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.**

**MAIL
COUPON
NOW!**



**GOOD FOR BOTH 64 PAGE BOOK FREE
SAMPLE LESSON FREE**

**J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 7J09,
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.**

Dear Mr. Smith: Without obligating me, send the sample lesson and your book which tells about the spare time and full time opportunities in Radio and explains your 50-50 method of training men at home in spare time to become Radio Experts. (Please write plainly.)

NAME.....AGE.....
ADDRESS.....
CITY.....STATE.....

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to BETTER PAY**



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STUDENT NOW TEACHES AVIATION
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Name

Address..... Age.....

City..... State.....

Why Trained Accountants Command

[—and how ambitious men are qualifying
by the LaSalle Problem Method]

High Salaries

GET this straight.

By "accountancy" we do not mean "bookkeeping." For accountancy begins where bookkeeping leaves off.

The skilled accountant takes the figures handed him by the bookkeeper, and *analyzes* and *interprets* them.

He knows how much the costs in the various departments should amount to, how they may be lowered.

He knows what profits should be expected from a given enterprise, how they may be increased.

He knows, in a given business, what per cent of one's working capital can safely be tied up in merchandise on hand, what per cent is safe and adequate for sales promotion. And these, by the way, are but two of *scores* of percentage-figures where-with he points the way to successful operation.

He knows the intricacies of government taxation.

He knows how to *survey* the transactions of a business over a given period; how to show in cold, hard figures the progress it has made and where it is going. He knows how to use these findings as a basis for constructive policies.

In short, the trained accountant is the *controlling engineer* of business—*one man business* cannot do without.

Small wonder that he commands a salary two to ten times as great as that of the bookkeeper. Indeed, as an independent operator (head of his own accounting firm) he may earn as much as the president of the big and influential bank in his community, or the operating manager of a great railroad.

Some Examples

Small wonder that accountancy offers the trained man such fine opportunities—opportunities well illustrated by the success of thousands of

LaSalle accountancy students.* For example—one man was a plumber, 32 years old, with only an eleventh grade education. Today he is auditor for a large bank and his income is 325 per cent larger.

Another was a drug clerk at \$30 a week. Now he heads his own very successful accounting firm with an income many times as large.

A woman bookkeeper—buried in details of a small job—is now auditor of an apartment hotel, and her salary mounted in proportion to her work.

A credit manager—earning \$200 a month—moved up quickly to \$3000, to \$5000, and then to a highly profitable accounting business of his own which nets him better than \$10,000 a year.

And What It Means to You

Why let the other fellow walk away with the better job, when right in your own home you can equip yourself for a splendid future in this profitable profession?

Are you really *determined* to get ahead? If so, you can start at once to acquire—by the LaSalle Problem Method—a thorough understanding of Higher Accountancy, master its fundamental principles, become expert in the practical application of those principles—this without losing an hour from work or a dollar of pay.

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If you are dissatisfied with your present equipment—if you recognize the opportunities that lie ahead of you through home-study training—you will do well to send at once for full particulars. The coupon will bring them to you without any obligation, also details of LaSalle's convenient payment plan.

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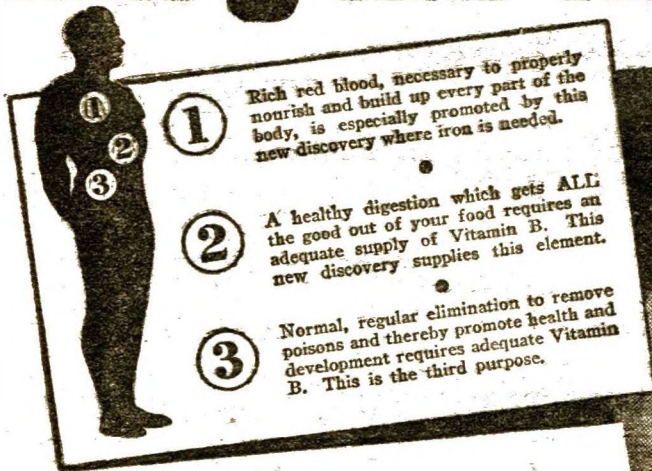
Name

Present Position

Address

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SKINNY?

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WHEN thousands of formerly skinny, run-down, friendless people have gained pounds of solid, normally good-looking flesh with this new triple-acting treatment, it's a crime for thousands of others to remain thin and unattractive. Actually, with this sensationally quick new body-builder, you may not only gain normal, flattering pounds, but also naturally clear skin, freedom from indigestion and constipation, new pep and popularity.

Doctors now know that the real reason why many find it hard to gain weight is they do not get enough Vitamin B and iron in their food. Without these vital elements you may lack appetite and not get the most body-building good out of what you eat. Now with this new discovery which combines these elements in little concentrated tablets, hosts of people have put on pounds of firm flesh, normal heftiness—in a very short time.

This amazing new product, Ironized Yeast, is made from special imported cultured ale yeast,

one of the richest known sources of Vitamin B. By a new process this special yeast is concentrated 7 times—made 7 times more powerful. Then it is combined with 3 kinds of iron, pasteurized whole yeast and other valuable ingredients in pleasant little tablets.

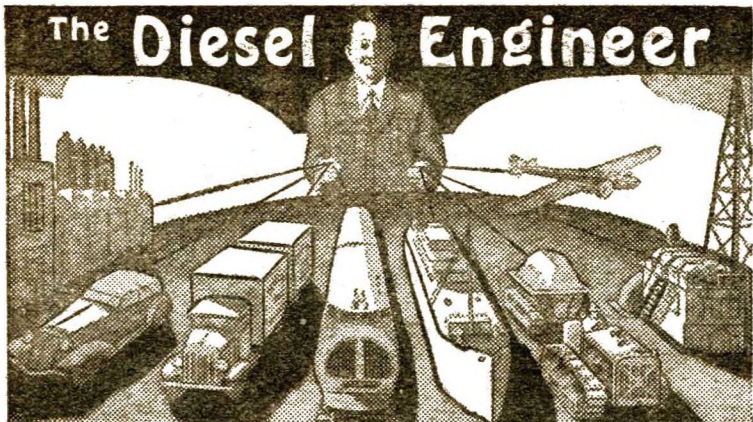
If you, too, need these vital elements to aid in building you up, get these new "7-power" Ironized Yeast tablets from your druggist today. Note how quickly they increase your appetite and help you get more benefit from the body-building foods that are so essential. Then day after day watch flat chest develop and skinny limbs round out to natural attractiveness. Soon you feel like an entirely different person, with new charm, new personality.

Money-back guarantee

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Special FREE offer!

To start thousands building up their health right away, we make this absolutely FREE offer. Purchase a package of Ironized Yeast tablets at once, cut out seal on box and mail it to us with a clipping of this paragraph. We will send you a fascinating new book on health, "New Facts About Your Body." Remember, results with very first package—of money refunded. At all druggists, Ironized Yeast Co., Inc., Dept. 779, Atlanta, Ga.



The Diesel Engineer

Is Your Job Safe?

Just as the gasoline engine changed or wiped out the jobs of thousands who depended on horse-drawn vehicles for their living—just as electricity changed the entire set-up in the fields of light and power—so now the Diesel engine is fast invading both the power and transportation fields, and threatening the present jobs of thousands of workers.

To Men Over 18—Under 40:

This offer is NOT open to boys under 18 or men over 40. But if you are WITHIN these age limits, you owe it to yourself to investigate this unusual opportunity of acquainting yourself with a NEW field and a REAL future.

2 Diesel Lessons Free

Diesel—The New, Fast-Growing Power

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Can You Learn Diesel? If you are over 18 and under 40, we want to give you the opportunity of finding out. So, without obligation on your part, we will send you 2 beginning lessons. In your own home, look them over. See how clearly all is explained—how thoroughly you grasp every point—how definitely you progress step by step—so that your knowledge of Diesel grows constantly. This simple trial may be the turning point in your life—so write to us TODAY! State age.

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COFFEE AGENCY APPLICATION

1 WRITE YOUR FULL NAME AND ADDRESS HERE!

Name.....
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2 HOW MUCH TIME CAN YOU DEVOTE TO COFFEE AGENCY?

Mark with an "X"
 FULL TIME PART TIME

[Full time pays up to \$35 to \$60 in a week. Part time, either during the day or evenings, pays up to \$22.50 in a week.]

3 STATE WHICH BONUS YOU PREFER—CASH OR FORD AUTOMOBILE?

In addition to their cash earnings, we offer our producers a cash bonus of \$500.00 or a brand-new, latest model Ford Tudor Sedan. State which you would prefer if you decide to accept our offer. Mark "X" before your choice.

\$500. CASH BONUS LATEST MODEL FORD TUDOR SEDAN.

4 CAN YOU START AT ONCE?

Mark with an "X" YES NO
If you cannot start at once, state about when you will be able to start.

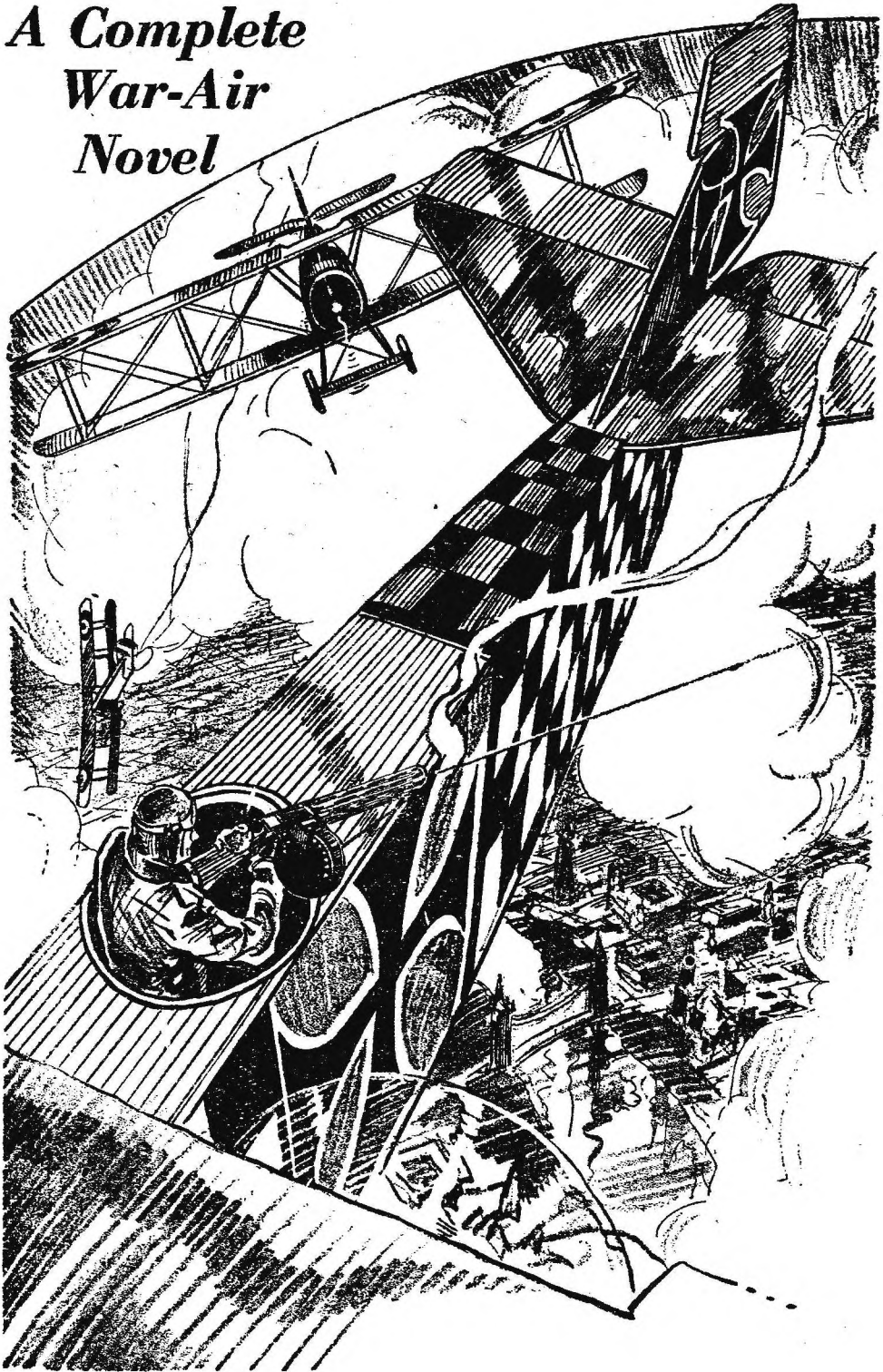
ALL APPLICATIONS WILL BE HELD STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

SEND NO MONEY

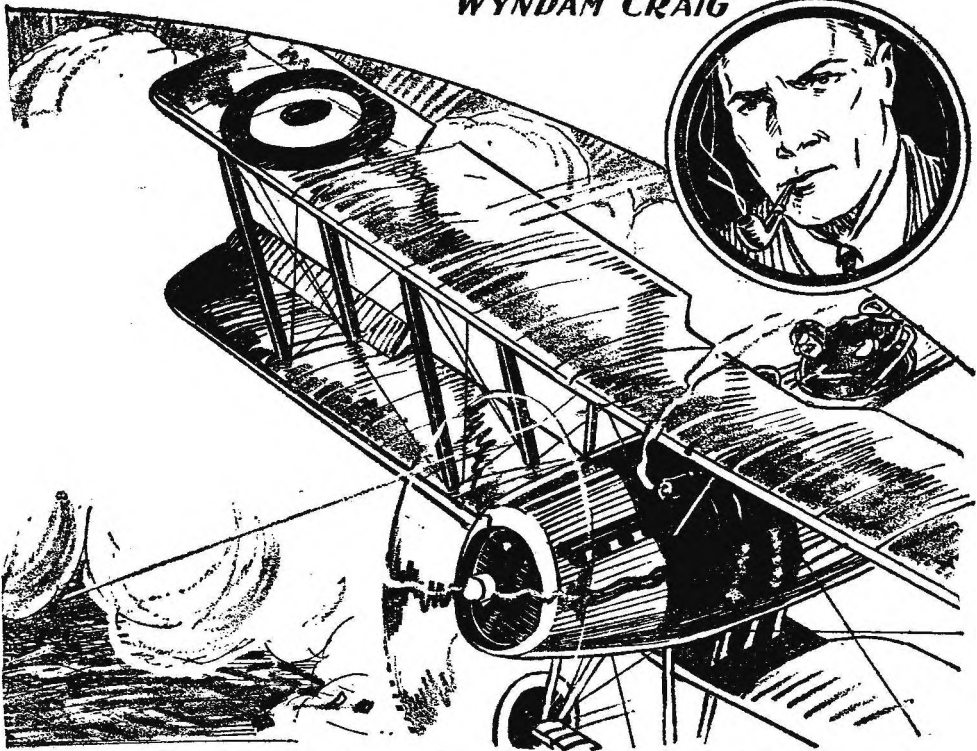
There is no money fee of any kind required with this Application. It merely tells us that you would consider running a Coffee Agency in your locality if we have an opening for you. You will be notified by return mail whether your home locality is available. Then you can decide if the money-making possibilities look good to you. No obligation on your part. Those who apply first will be given preference, so be sure to mail your Application without delay—NOW! No letter is required, just the Application. Mail at once to

ALBERT MILLS, President
4073 Monmouth Avenue Cincinnati, Ohio

*A Complete
War-Air
Novel*



WYNDAM CRAIG



The Bristol ran head-on into the lead from the Gotha's gun

Six Dead Men

*Hell's Mad Fury Inflames Men's Minds But
Olympic Sportmanship Cements Fast Friendships
That Cannot Be Severed by Burning Lead
Over World War Battlegrounds!*

By **GEORGE BRUCE**

Author of "The Flying Brats," "Bomber Buster," etc.

CHAPTER I

Amateurs' Accolade

STEVE DREW sat on the edge of his cot, his flying coat still belted about his strong young body, the chin strap of his helmet dangling on both sides of his neck.

He held a paper in his two hands. It was a *London Times* for September, 1915. Today the headlines were all optimistic. The Allies were winning the war.

But the optimistic news did not register before Steve Drew's eyes. He was staring at a modest little

headline boxed in with a black border:

DEATH OF A HERO

A sub-head, in italics danced before his eyes:

*Tragic Death of Olympic Champion
Lieutenant Vittorio Spaldi
Killed in Action*

Drew's young head lifted from the paper, and for a moment he stared out through the window. Something in his eyes suggested a sudden haunting horror. After a moment he forced his eyes to go back to the smaller print of the story.

Lieutenant Vittorio Spaldi, according to the Italian War Office, was killed in action on the 17th inst., while leading a bombing raid along the Italian-Austrian front. His death brought a distinct shock to the whole of Italy. It will be remembered that Vittorio Spaldi won for himself and his country the laurel wreath crown of Championship at the Stockholm Olympic Games of 1912 when he scored a brilliant victory in the mile run. Upon his return to his native country, he was lionized and idealized by his fellow countrymen.

When the war began he immediately asked for assignment to the air service of his country, and developed into an exceptional pilot. He led successfully raid after raid upon the Austrian Front, flying the dangerous mountain passes with complete disregard for his own safety, and fighting reckless combats which brought him, in the very first months of his war service, commendation from the King, and the Chief-of-Staff of the Italian Armies, along with the highest decorations possible to an Italian officer.

His unfortunate passing, at the height of his military and athletic fame can be nothing more than an incentive to his comrades in arms, and to his fellow countrymen, to prosecute to the bitter end, the struggle toward the Victory for which he so gladly and unselfishly gave his life.

Hail and Farewell, Spaldi, Great Champion, Great Soldier, Great Patriot!

A hard something moved in Steve Drew's throat. After a moment he placed the paper on the cot beside him, sat there, staring out through the window of his billet, eyes empty, seemingly focused on a far distant place. Then he got up, took off his

flying coat, and hung his helmet on a peg beside his cot.

HIS curling, rumped, sweat-sodden hair gleamed golden in the sunlight. He paced up and down the board flooring of the shack. His hands rammed into his trouser pockets.

There was something of great beauty and great strength about his face. High flung forehead, with blue-grey eyes set under craggy eyebrows. Thin, delicately molded, long nose. Thin lipped mouth over a jutting chin, with a cleft in the chin, and a deep furrow running upward from the upper lip to the cartilage of the nose.

Heavily muscled neck, and broad, powerful shoulders, sloping down to narrow, flat hips and flat belly, and long, graceful, greyhound-like legs, which lost none of the suggestion of power and speed, even when thrust into the cordovan field boots of an aviator.

He stood at the window and looked out over the training field. Swirls of dust, like miniature sand storms swept the field. The reek of castor oil and of raw gasoline impregnated the very tissues of the body—until after a while it went unnoticed.

He stood there for a long while, looking with half-brooding eyes on the orderly bedlam of Sandringham Field where the eaglets of the Empire were being hatched and taught to use wings.

Then, his hands still thrust in the pockets of his riding breeches, he went back to the cot and pulled his kit bag from under the bed. He opened the lid, pawed around, and brought out a stiff backed book, filled with pasted clippings. He turned the first page of the book and stared at a newspaper photograph growing yellow with age and exposure to light. A heading from

the *New York Times*, summer of 1912.

It was a group picture. A picture of a bevy of young athletes, all wearing the Olympic uniform of the United States—the red, white and blue shield. Keen faced, hard-bodied young men.

And in the very front row, looking like a school boy, was Steve Drew, very serious, almost scowling at the camera.

THE Steve Drew of Sandringham smiled a little, looking at his very young face. Almost three years ago that had been taken. Seemed like a century. Steve Drew, sprinter—hundred yards—two-twenty—competing for the United States of America, against the world!

The book dropped down on his knees. His eyes stared out the window again, became rapt with remembrance.

Summer, and a boat tying to its dock in Stockholm. A tumultuous crowd of people were staring up at the ship. People with gleaming faces and shining eyes. People, smiling, friendly, cordial, and a band on the dock, the Royal Army Band of Sweden playing the "Star Spangled Banner," and those young athletes from the United States standing rigid on the forward deck of the liner, eyes front, looking at the American Flag run up on the staff ashore, a strangled, hot, searing something in throats and chests and eyes—and the roar of welcome from the land.

Summer, and stepping ashore, seeing for the first time, the Olympic amphitheater. Immense—with its high flung tiers of seats, and its myriad flagpoles from which the colors of forty nations flew in the bracing breeze from the mountains. The hard rolled cinder track and the emerald green of grass in the field.

Streets thronged with athletes

from across the world, from Japan, Australia, China, Russia, Africa, Canada and every nation of Europe. Streets, a babbling riot of strange tongues. Latin faces, Nordic faces, Teuton faces, Slavic faces, Oriental faces. All intermingled, all laughing, and hard, clean, determined looking.

And then—after ten days of training in the great stadium, the Games!

Steve Drew's eyes were sparkling as he stared out over the top of his scrapbook. Those games! Men, going to a starting line, bodies aflame with competitive spirit, smiling and shaking hands before digging starting holes, speaking in strange tongues, but smiling and giving warm handclaps in the universal language of sport.

And then the quiet voice of the starter and the sudden crack of the gun. White, brown, red, olive bodies, leaving starting holes like catapulted missiles, driving with churning feet, flying over the cinders, faces taut, eyes starting, muscles ripping at tendon sheaths with the mighty effort of reaching a goal first—for the honor and glory of country.

That bronze plaque which was fixed over the athletes' entrance to the stadium! Just looking at it and understanding that one was a part of that symbol brought a choking sensation to the throat:

Erected To The Glory Of Sport, To
The Glory Of Clean Minds In Strong
Bodies, Which Is The Glory Of
Nations Throughout All Time, And
To The Everlasting Bonds Of
Friendship Between Peoples Of The
Earth, Cemented And Made Whole
By The Fellowship And Spirit Of
Their Sons Who In This Place Shall
Achieve Glory Through the Mere Act
Of Passing Beneath This Portal.

"—to the everlasting bonds of friendship between peoples of the earth—"

His fingers flipped the pages of the scrapbook, stopped finally at a

page containing a single photograph. His eyes looked down at the picture. It, too, was getting yellow with age—three long years, but the faces were clear.

There was a caption beneath the photo:

**OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS CROWNED
BY KING!**

Six Olympic Champions were yesterday received by the King of Sweden in his private box, and upon their heads were placed the traditional laurel wreaths of the Victors, after the Olympic custom. Along with the wreaths went the gold medals for first places. From left to right the men are: Drew, United States, Olympic sprint champion, only two time winner of the Games, who took the hundred meters and the two hundred meters for Uncle Sam; Wyndam Craig, Hundred Meter High Hurdles winner, Great Britain; Vittorio Spaldi, Italy, Olympic Champion Miler; Hans Wilhelm von Stienke, Germany, Discus Champion; Henri Petrie, France, Winner of the Olympic Marathon; Paavo Sturmi, Russian-Finland, Winner of the 5,000 meter run.

Drew stared at the six faces. Smiling faces, young faces. On the next page was another photograph of the six, a snapshot. He was in the middle of the group this time. Next to him was Spaldi. Spaldi's arm was thrown around Drew's shoulders. On Drew's left was Hans Stienke, and Stienke's arm was around Drew's neck and they were looking at each other, and their heads were thrown back, laughing. Wyndam Craig, Sturmi, the little Finn, a grin all over his face, and Henri Petrie, his mobile, dark face split with a wide grin.

Behind them was the Royal Palace of Sweden. The challenge of Youth—standing there, tremendous in the power and strength of young bodies, steadfast in the knowledge of Victory.

Ah, the six of them had been a great gang! Somehow, like had flown to like. They had been drawn together, these six, just found them-

selves at the same places at the same times. Some of them hardly able to make themselves understood in speech, but driven and bound together by an invisible something which existed between them. Six Champions! The newspaper men noticed the companionship, wrote stories about it. Diplomats nodded heads and smiled pleasant smiles and pointed out the great good and friendships which grew out of Olympic Games.

Six youths who had never seen each other before entrance to that Stadium—and who suddenly found that there was something in the world which reached outside of national boundaries. But too young to realize the significance of the discovery.

Those days! A month. A Briton, an American, a Frenchman, an Italian, a Finnish-Russian, and a German. The happiest days Steve Drew had ever known.

CHAMPIONS! All of them entitled to the Valhalla of Sport. All refined in the crucible of tortured breath, of sagging muscles, of overstrained nerves, and flying cinders. All of them with perfect bodies and keen brains and clean blood.

Stienke, in the discus ring, his supple, beautifully trained and formed body flying easily in the preliminary twirls before he unleashed the discus. Tiny muscles in his wrists and arms and back, muscles no one ever noticed, writhing and standing out as power generated in his body from fingertips to toes—and then with that graceful, tremendous lunge, his arm shooting out and the gleaming circle whipped through space to fall prodigious distances, and the voice of the thousands in the stands, sucking in breath in astonishment that such a young body could develop such amazing power.

Poetry in motion.

And Spaldi, built like a whippet, almost a child among the elder milers, striding tirelessly over the cinders, his legs running like well-oiled pistons, hanging back in the ruck until the stretch and then unleashing that mighty torrent of reserve strength—a sprint down the track that carried him past the colors of a dozen nations and brought the thousands in the stands to their feet, like one person, shrieking his name—until he raced across the finish line—victor by ten yards in the most gruelling mile ever run.

Wyndam Craig, soaring over the hurdles like a winged bird, the splendid machinery of his body timed perfectly so that one could not see the break in his stride as he mounted the hurdle. So fast that he was a blurred winged victory streaking to the finish. And when he won, standing there, waiting to shake the hand of the second place winner and the third, and every man in the race. Hardly smiling, hardly breathing, trying to efface himself, saying to the newspaper men: "I was a bit lucky you know—ran better than I knew how—and got off to a perfect start which comes once in a life time. I feel—as if I had cheated a little in beating so many superior men—but I'm jolly well glad that I won—"

And the band playing "God Save the King"—and the Union Jack going to the head of the Champion's Staff.

LATER, that same day, Drew, throwing down his bathrobe and walking over to the starting line for the final of the hundred. Looking at the great runners of eight nations who had survived the qualifications. A tight feeling in his chest, as if he could not breathe properly. His legs feeling rubbery and suddenly weak.

And then—the crack of that start-

ing gun—and a queer unconsciousness, in which nothing existed but his chest and legs. Feeling himself tearing over the ground, knowing that he had never run so fast before in his life—driven by some new power unleashed for this instant of his life.

He was hearing the pound of feet, and the crunch of cinders behind him, clenching his teeth, feeling his eyes being forced out of his head, feeling his legs become suddenly heavy, and his breath scalding hot, and his heart, ten times its normal size, crowding his chest cavity. Knowing that he was going to die—die in ten seconds—die of this terrific effort, and then feeling hands catch him just as he lifted his arms. The finish line—slender thread, looking as big as a manila cable.

And, from a far distance, hearing the "Star Spangled Banner" played, and men yelling and running, slapping him on the back, and suddenly hearing the hoarse, sweeping roar of fifty thousand voices hailing a Champion. Through eyes which saw things out of focus, watching the Stars and Stripes slowly mounting the Winner's Staff—hanging there in the breeze, beautiful; Red, White and Blue.

And suddenly sitting on the ground and crying like a baby.

There were tears in Steve Drew's eyes, and the book in his hands trembled a little, and the pictures were suddenly blurred.

Twice that had happened to him. Twice a victor. Twice a Champion!

But that hadn't meant as much as that happy band of athletic warriors who had joined common cause, and had lived through every minute of those glorious days in Stockholm. Not Three Musketeers! But Six Champions of the World!

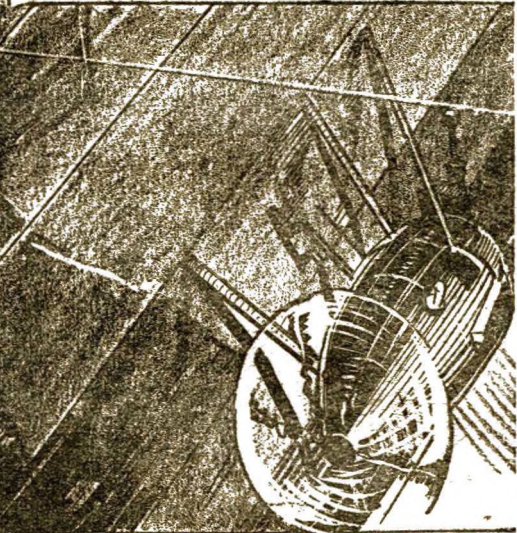
People in the streets stopping to laugh with them, to hang flowers about their necks, to shake hands



and to beg autographs. In cafes and restaurants, after the Games, the little three- and four-piece orchestras stopping regular music to play the National Anthems of the Six Champions.

Valhalla! Aye—the Six Champions walking on the clouds of a high Olympus—walking arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder—eye to eye!

And when it was done, and the Games were through, standing in a circle, hands clasped, eyes looking at each other, swearing undying



friendship—undying affection, with the muscles of hands biting into the muscles of the other hands, and all of them moist-eyed, and with heavy lumps in throats.

"Good-by, Spaldi—see you in Italy. Good-by, Stienke—stay away from those saber duels—it would be a shame to spoil your good looks. 'Bye, Craig—maybe I'll see you in Old Lunnon. 'Bye Sturmi—keep on eating fish and you'll hang that 5,000 meter record where nobody will ever be able to reach it. 'Bye Petri, be sure to give my love to all the little girls in Paris—and send me some postcards—"

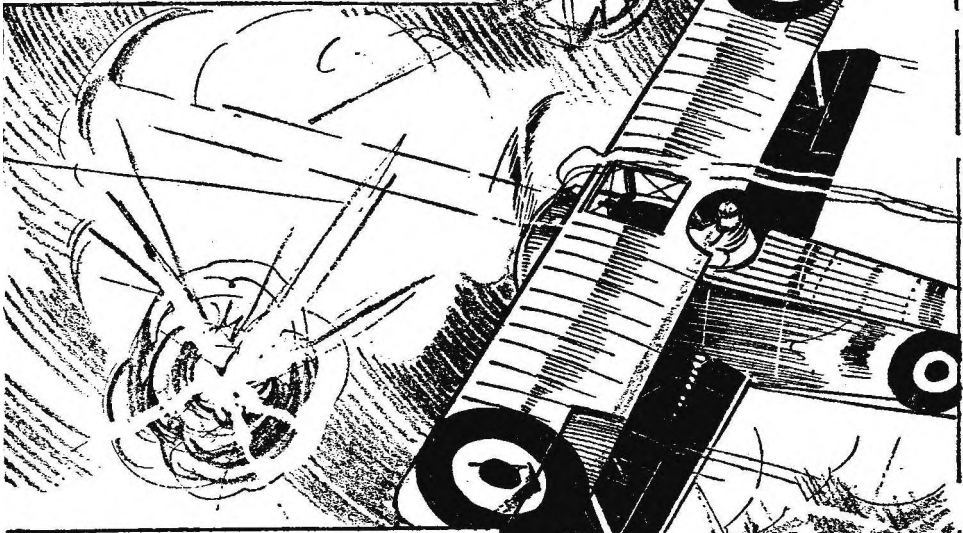
Good-by—good-by—good-by—
To all that.

“—death of a hero—tragic death of Olympic Champion—Lieutenant Vittorio Spaldi, killed in action.”

God! Spaldi! No more flashing of those lithe muscles. Never again a stretch drive that would bring thousands, shrieking, to their feet. Spaldi—nothing more than a memory—just a faded picture in a scrapbook—

Spaldi—black eyed, bubbling over with effervescence, his white teeth

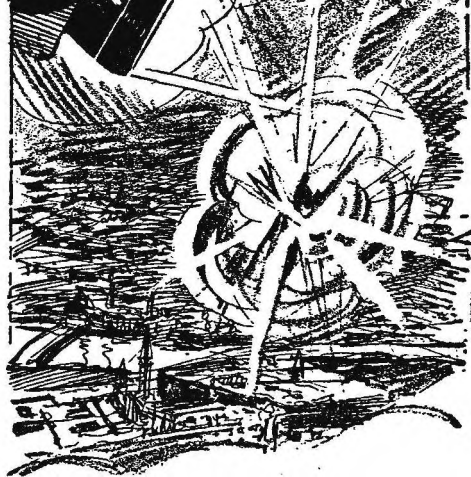
HANS STIENKE



showing when he laughed, his quick, eloquent gestures speaking for him when he had no words in a strange language—

Suddenly it seemed that Steve Drew's ears were filled with the hideous cacophony of machine-gun fire, and the bursting of grenades and the squirting and hissing of flame as it consumed living flesh. He heard the racketing roar of airplane motors, and the explosion of bombs, and the spiteful crack of a sharpshooter's rifle spitting sudden death at an unwary human.

Where was Stienke? Where Petri? Where Craig and Sturm?



The machine-gunners on top of the Zep were riddling the Camel

CHAPTER II
Buddies Again



STEVE DREW closed the scrapbook suddenly, pushed it back in the kit bag. He lit himself a cigarette.

He walked out onto the field. It seemed that Spaldi's face, smiling, marched ahead of him. Marched queerly—just a face, without a body, floating in space—Spaldi's quick smile fixed on the face, his glowing eyes suddenly like bits of china in a dull room. Hanging there—marching on and on.

And the roaring and droning of motors overhead. The roaring and droning which went on from dawn to dark at Sandringham was like a typhoon raging inside of Steve Drew's head.

A sudden touch on his elbow caused him to whirl. Something stabbed in his breast—a quick pain, and then he was yelling, and pumping a hand, and there was a face in front of him—a well remembered face, the face of Wyndam Craig, and Craig was saying:

"It's topping, seeing you here, Steve! I heard in London you were down here training. I decided I should have to run down the rumor for myself. All sorts of silly misinformation running around these days, you know. But you are here, and I'm jolly glad to see you. Looking in the pink, too. My word—think of it—Steve Drew, the professional American—an honest-to-God American Hero with the credentials to prove it, dressed up in a bloody Limey uniform, and actually serving in the British Army! It's unbelievable—"

And Drew's voice, almost hysterical with gladness, coming out of his throat, hoarsely: "Craig—Gosh! —Am I glad."

And the two of them walking off together, arm in arm, chattering.

ETERNITY comes to an end, even in Sandringham, and after a while Avros give way to Sops and Camels.

The rocky path to glory makes a whistle stop for a taste of honor, while young men have silver wings pinned to tunics.

Then the young men fly away to other nests.

So it was with Steve Drew.

He went up to London Town. He became part of a squadron assigned to the Defense of London. They gave him a Camel, a black Camel with a Clerget motor and a pair of vicious-looking Vickers machine-guns mounted in its nose. They gave him "high altitude" flying equipment, and a rudimentary training in night flying and signaling.

He went, because Wyndam Craig belonged to that outfit. He billeted with Craig.

For the first time since joining the R.A.F. he felt himself a part of something.

Craig took away much of that terrible feeling of isolation, of detachment, of not belonging, of merely being tolerated. He took away that feeling of walking alone amid a hundred thousand men dressed in similar uniforms.

Craig, his quiet eyes and sandy hair, his body in repose, sitting on the cot across the room, puffing thoughtfully on his pipe, looked curiously at Drew's open face, and said:

"Remember the dancehall just around the corner from the restaurant where we all ate in Stockholm, and how little Sturmi got up one night and did one of those wild Finnish dances, without music, and everybody laughed and applauded him no end—"

Then the voice drifted away, and

the two of them were staring over the long vale of memory, until Craig said, quite suddenly:

"Poor Spaldi! He was *such* a good chap, and such a sport!"

And Craig's head lifted suddenly and his eyes looked at Drew, almost with a challenge, but his voice was still quiet.

"I say, Steve, I don't mean to be personal, you know, but why in the blazes did you decide to mix yourself up in this God-awful mess? I should think myself lucky to be well out of it—I mean—with honor and all that rot. I'm quite sure that if I were an American I could find any number of more pleasant things to do—"

DREW was smiling, a queer inscrutable smile which sat strangely on his young face.

"Don't know," he admitted eagerly. "I went home from Stockholm. Somehow, there wasn't anything to do at home. School—all that silly business of sitting in a classroom and listening to the stuff they teach juniors. I felt like a fish out of water. I felt—crazy, isn't it—almost a stranger. I kept wondering what the old gang was doing, you and Spaldi and Stienke and Petri. I made a rotten student—just a waste of time and money—"

Craig's eyes were looking at him from under half lowered lids.

Drew flipped his cigarette out into the night, stared after it.

"Then the war broke," he said in the same quiet voice. "Somehow it seemed a release from something, escape—if you know what I mean. I had a chance to go to the University of Toronto and to take up flying with the Canucks. I grabbed the chance and did the first training work, up to solo, on Avros and Canucks there and was sent across. Over here I put in for pursuit work and they sent me to Sandringham.

"I don't know what I expected to find here in England. But until you grabbed me by the arm—I didn't find it. I was pretty lonely. I felt like a stranger butting into the private business of the next door neighbor and expecting any minute to get bawled out for it and asked to stay on my own side of the fence. Now I feel better, somehow. It's funny, what knowing just one fellow will do for a chap's morale, isn't it?"

Craig nodded and puffed thoughtfully on his pipe. After a moment he said: "It's damned funny, when a chap sits and thinks about it. About us, I mean. Here we are, you and I, together in a little clapboard billet, dressed in a uniform, trained to be killers—very efficient killers.

"And what are we trained to kill? An enemy! And whom is our enemy? Old Hans Stienke, by God! He is the personification of the enemy. It's funny. The newspapers go about calling the German a Boche, a Pig, the Hun—all the dirty names editorial minds dare to print. Probably thirty million Englishmen think of a hog or a Hun when even they think of the enemy.

"But—somehow it's different with me. To me the enemy has a face and a body and a personality—and to me—when I think of him—I think of Hans Stienke in the Stadium, whirling around, tossing that discus. It makes it rather difficult to get the proper attitude of hatred and to work oneself up to the killing point—to the desire to kill. I'm afraid—everytime I do my duty—I'll die a little inside myself, wondering if I've killed old Hans—"

"Yeah," said Drew somberly. "I've thought about that too. It would be terrible—wouldn't it? Wonder where Hans is—"

"An under-officer probably in some crack Corps," nodded Craig. "Probably parading through Belgium with his Regiment, all dressed up in field-

grey, with field glasses and a Luger at his side."

LIEUTENANT Hans Wilhelm von Stienke stood looking up at the inflated bulk of the L 48. The tightly closed collar of his double-breasted aviator's uniform threw his fair young Teuton face into sharp relief.

The short visored, flat cap of his Service was pulled down at the correct angle over his forehead, with just space enough between the visor and the bridge of the nose to permit the knuckle of his right thumb to clear with a little squeezing. His legs were garbed in field-grey whipcord and black boots.

He was a very trim, very military, very straight-backed figure. He stood with his legs spread apart and his hands clasped behind his back. His sky-blue eyes peered out from under the visor of the cap, and were filled with a sense of amazement.

It seemed that he could never look upon this Goliath of the skies without experiencing this same amazement and this same wonder. The tremendous bulk of the Zeppelin as it hung in space, belly hugging the ground, after being walked out of its hangar!

The constant procession of men appearing from the belly of the ship, and disappearing into the same space, laden down with burdens, was like a line of busy ants, laboring within an ant village.

There was an air of secrecy, of great care surrounding the loading of the L 48. The cargo going aboard her was handled gingerly, passed from hand to hand with bated breath. Strange cargo, black, pear-shaped things with vanes built into the small end of the pear. One after the other they went aboard until Stienke lost track of the total number.

And petrol was being pumped into the L 48's tanks from a portable petrol tank.

Six great propellers thrust them-

selves out stiffly from the silken covering of the ship. Six great propellers attached to six heavy duty motors. The fabric of the bag was painted with giant characters. First the number of the Zeppelin. Then the Black Maltese Crosses of the German Air, and the Red, White and Black of the National colors.

Little knots of officers stood apart from the ship, talking together in low tones, discussing a problem of navigation. Now and then one of them laughed heartily and prodded a brother officer with a finger to drive home a point.

Hans von Stienke felt very much alone, very strange. He was a very junior officer, and this was his first flying assignment in Zeppelins. For six weeks he had been here at Wilhelmshafen, virtually a prisoner behind the great stockadelike enclosure which hid the activities of the field from any but elected eyes. Six weeks of grinding study under the eyes of zealous and stern instructors.

And now, he was going flying. He—a Uhlán—flying! He looked down at the edge of his tunic, at the little black and white ribbon which proclaimed the fact that Hans von Steinke had won the coveted Iron Cross on the field of battle, and was an Immortal. At least, that is what the Regimental Commander had said when he pinned the Cross to Hans' tunic and embraced him. And that Cross—it had sent him to Wilhelms-hafen.

"You understand?" the Air Ministry official had said. "This is a great honor? Only the flower of our young officers can hope to win assignment to this Service! Here, we are striking at the heart of the enemy! Here we are carrying the war to the soil of England! Here we are striking mighty blows at the vaunted pride, prestige, and security of England!

"Quick minds, keen brains, strong, highly-trained bodies, alert nerves—

all are necessary for this most exacting of all work. But the reward in glory is more than enough! In Zeppelins, men become national heroes over night!

A single crossing and return is enough to establish a man in the hearts of his countrymen forever! You are a lucky man, von Stienke."

Of course, being an Olympic Champion might have had something to do with it, for next day the papers carried Hans von Stienke's picture on the first page, surrounded by laurel wreaths, and the words:

*German Olympic Champion, War Hero,
Elected to Zeppelin Service*

It was written, almost in the manner of a challenge to the civilian population.

Ghastly white lights illuminated every corner of the great Yard. In the glare the buildings and Zeppelin sheds stood out in stark relief. Men were white-faced and gaunt-looking—men—hurrying—always hurrying, staggering under one burden, to deliver it, and to hurry back for another staggering weight.

Here and there, in the sheds, long grey shapes of other sky raiders, were berthed until called upon to cruise again. Some of the sheds were empty. Empty with a ghastly kind of emptiness. Great yawning cavities.

Ghosts, grinning horribly, seemed to stalk in the black depths of those empty Zeppelin sheds. Tortured ghosts, bodies twisted and charred in the last agony before death. Creeping, flame-eyed ghosts with burned-out eye sockets, and blackened arms and legs.

No one at Wilhelmshafen ever spoke about those empty Zeppelin sheds, nor the ships which had once been sheltered by them. But men walked past the sheds and in spite of themselves faces went a little grey, and the muscle nerves of the

jaw twitched a little, and eyes took on a faint glitter.

A hand touched Hans von Stienke on the shoulder. He turned to find the weatherbeaten, seamed face of his commander looking down at him. The commander's eyes were narrowed above his smile. He patted Stienke on the shoulder.

"So!" he said with gruff good humor. "You are all ready for your first cruise, eh? That's good! Tonight you will see something, young lad! Something you would never see in a million years of trotting over the countryside on your little ponies.

"Hah! Hah! A Lancer—a Uhlán, is a brave sight—but what good is he with his little pig-sticking lance, with the little pennons fluttering so gayly in the breeze? Nice in a parade, young Stienke, nice to capture the fancy of the girls of the towns—but soldiers—no more than the Home Guards—bah!"

A LITTLE red crept into Hans Stienke's neck.

The commander of the L 48 laughed loudly. "A turkey-cock!" he told the other officers. "He is ready to call me down for belittling his Service! A true Uhlán! But he forgets that he is no longer a Uhlán, but a flying man. For which he should thank his good God—"

The laborers had ceased to trickle like ants into the hull of the great ship. They stood back now, in knots, in clusters, watching with wide eyes, expectantly, almost breathlessly. There was an air of suspended animation over the whole yard. Everything stopped, and suddenly all eyes were fixed on the face of the L 48's commander as he stood easily, looking at his command, his hand on the shoulder of Hans Stienke.

A whisper ran through the yard. "That's Stienke—remember—he won the discus for us at Stockholm? A

young hero—see—all ready he has the black and white ribbon!”

And then the little knot of officers walked toward the ship.

CHAPTER III

Zeppelin Over London



COMMANDER STARBRUCK kept talking to Hans Stienke. “—the lights of London glowing on the earth—and you stand there on the bridge and think that since John Paul Jones of the American Revolution, no armed foreign footstep has ever touched England—and there you are—twenty thousand feet up, the motors purring, the breeze swinging the ship as she maneuvers, and suddenly the lights on the ground go out because the alarm has been given, and the world is in utter darkness except—maybe—for the moon, high overhead, and the twinkling of more stars than you knew existed, young Stienke.

“But who cares for dousing the lights? We know where we are, and we know that the great expanse of London stretches out under us for miles—a target that cannot be missed. And we know that the so very brave Englishers are cowering in cellars and running like sheep—since the first sound of our motors—

“And there—there is a red smear far down on the earth, like a little match lighting, only no match-lighting ever gave one such a thrill, and one feels the bounce and loss of weight as the black eggs go overboard. The earth below is splashed with those matches lighting as the bombs spurt and explode in the streets of London—

“And the ship rises like a gull, lightened of its load of bombs, and one feels like Thor, in his high

heaven, looking down upon his enemies and unleashing his mighty thunderbolts which smash terrifically everything they strike, and then return magically to the hand of God.

“*Ach*—things you will know and feel tonight, young Stienke, that will live with you as long as you live—”

And the young, blue eyes of Hans von Stienke staring, almost hypnotically at the face of his commander. The craggy, worn, gouged face of the great Zeppelin commander. The face of the “*Terror of England.*” “*The Scourge of the Channel.*” “*The Right Arm of Thor the Conqueror!*” So said the German press.

And it was strange, all the while Commander Starbruck was talking, all the time the officers were going into the belly of the ship—up the gangway into the control cabins, to posts, Hans von Stienke was thinking of England.

He was wondering—about Wyndam Craig. Craig, who soared over the hurdles like a bird, and who had worn the Victor’s chaplet with him in Stockholm? Had those thunderbolts of Thor smashed Wyndam Craig out of existence? Was he one of those khaki bodies Hans von Stienke had seen lying in the fields—bodies of the *Contemptibles*—the First Hundred Thousand from England? Had those chattering machine-guns mowed him down, as they had mowed down the trees and hedges and ripening wheat?

He stood there, looking out through the glass windows of the control car. It was so strange—all of them—together—at Stockholm. And now—all of them—miles and miles apart—enemies.

A little pulse throbbed in his throat. How did such things happen? Why, he and Petri and Spaldi—and Drew, they were not enemies! They were like brothers—

His body lunged. A sudden mo-

tion underfoot. He heard the calm voice of Commander Starbruck giving stern commands, and men leaped to obey. The fabric of the big ship seemed to pulse through its whole being. It moved—the whole mighty mass. Below, on the ground, men let go the walking ropes, and the ship was rising. The mooring ropes were running in through the nose of the Zeppelin. There was the low moaning of her engines and the beat and thrashing of her propellers.

Her long length slid over the earth, passed over the stockade fence surrounding the Yard, lifted, solemnly, majestically. The boards of the control cabin pressed under Stienke's feet. Lights grew far distant, and there was the splash of wind against the sides of the control cabin. The sound one hears on an ocean liner when the wind caresses her superstructure.

UP and up, and the lights below were needle points in perfect pattern. Somewhere, far off the starboard bow, a signal light flickered, and the Zeppelin answered—"All's well."

Then the blunt nose of the grey wraith pointed out for the sea.

And Commander Starbruck was another personality. He stood there on his bridge, his face a fixed mask, his eyes, seeming never to blink, looking out through the darkness and down at the phosphorescence of the sea. The very waters seemed luminous from the heights—pale green masses of diffused light, moving restlessly.

An intense quiet fell over the ship. An intense quiet, exaggerated by the pulsation of the mighty motors which pushed the great bulk of the ship through space.

Men, standing at posts, ready, alert, speaking no word, and the tremendously strong figure of the commander, standing there, staring down at the far earth.

An eternity in darkness. Like a diver, under water until it seemed that lungs would burst, and then—faint outline ahead in the blackness, and the first smile from the commander.

"Reduce speed!"

The engines, quieting, almost to a whisper.

"Stand here beside me, Stienke!" said the commander.

The two of them stood shoulder to shoulder, looking ahead.

"Some day, when you are a commander yourself, you will know what it means to bring your ship in contact with an enemy shore, and the thrill of taking her through the night to a fixed objective. The thrill the navigator knows who finds that he has ploughed straight through a fixed course to a definite, previously determined destination.

"Of course—this is child's play—a few miles of flying across water—"

Silence again. The brooding eyes of Commander Starbruck looking down at the earth. His hand touched Stienke's wrist.

"Yarmouth," he said reflectively. "The people of Yarmouth will never again sleep soundly. Once—in the early days—we visited there—at low altitude, when they knew nothing of Zeppelins—and little about the war that was being fought. It was a rude awakening!" He shook his head. "These English, always so sure of the sanctity of the Tight Little Isles. It was a rude awakening—probably half the population killed—probably half the buildings destroyed—that's it—down there—Yarmouth—"

There was a silence.

"We stopped playing with such small game," said Starbruck. "London is such a big target. So nice of the English to put London where we can reach it so easily—almost too easily—"

Down there in the darkness a red rocket shattered into a thousand fall-

ing stars. It seemed so tiny, almost invisible.

"Ah," said Commander Starbruck, a little grim note creeping into his voice. "They spotted us—well—no need for secrecy now—full speed ahead, all engines—altitude twenty thousand—action stations—stand by—ready to fire—"

And suddenly it seemed to Hans von Stienke that this grey wraith was no longer beautiful. It was a terrible thing, hanging over the heads of people who could not defend themselves. People—like the fisherfolk he had known—like the people of Sweden. People he had laughed with, and eaten with—

The pace of the mighty ship increased. She was trembling over her length and breadth. The minutes ticked on—stretching out endlessly. And then Commander Starbruck's voice, tight, commanding.

"There — young Stienke — look down! The 'world's greatest capital,' they call it! The Mighty Metropolis of the Universe! The Richest Old Lady in Creation! Down there she lies, quivering under us—waiting for us to strike—hiding her head—hiding her treasures, with raw terror gnawing at her vitals, and not even daring to scream!"

He turned his head. His voice cracked like a whip: "Fire!"

There was a gentle shaking of the ship, and a feeling of buoyancy. The fabric of the ship lifted, soared slightly, was checked by the controls. Men made mechanical motions, stood by.

And then, far down on the earth there was a smear of orange-green colored light. Intense illuminations, tiny, almost invisible, but terrible, like miniature volcanic eruptions.

And over the steady droning of the motors the far distant sound of crashing impacts floated up into the high places.

White lines of light from hidden

searchlights prowled the skies, interlacing and crisscrossing, probing for the elusive shape of the L 48, and Commander Starbruck, his eyes seeing everything, maneuvered her behind a cloud bank, and the light rays slid over the cloud. The bombs fell through the cloud, and the vicious little blasts of light showered down upon the cowering city.

Hans Stienke stood there in the control cabin. It seemed too immense to understand—too immense for thought. His mind was filled with pictures of houses and whole streets blasted out of existence by one of those crimson fireflies. On the proving grounds he had watched the result of bomb explosions. They tore great craters in the clay and sand of the range. God—what would they do amid the houses and buildings and paving of city streets? In the narrow canyons of a great metropolitan city!

There was a buzzing roar in his ears.

London! That's where Wyndam Craig lived. London—

Suddenly a voice saying: "Good-by, Stienke, stay away from those saber duels—"

And his own voice answering, laughing: "Good-by, Craig—see you, sometime—in London—"

STEVE DREW'S body bounced erect on his cot. It seemed that the full uniform in which he slept was sodden with sweat and sticking to his body. There was a wild, jagged pulse beating hard within his chest. It was like being awakened by a bolt of lightning out of the blackness of the night—with the bolt striking one in the face. He sat for a moment, his brain drenched with the stupor of the fitful, tossing, restless sleep into which he had fallen.

Then he was on the floor, his legs staggering a little, his eyes peering

owlishly and his body performing routine gestures mechanically.

A voice spoke to him from across the room. Wyndam Craig's voice, quiet, unruffled.

"Have to hop it, Old Son! They must be raising hell—"

The wailing, screeching, whining voice of a siren rose and fell in nerve shattering waves. It seemed to move the whole universe, to shake the billet, to vibrate the earth. The oscillations of the siren got inside the body, shredded nerves to raw ends, seemed to make a man mad with the desire to escape the God-awful sound.

THEN, at short intervals came the concussion of anti-aircraft rifles, firing in methodical precision. Each time a gun banged a red smear of light illuminated the billet for a fleeting second. Just a dab of blood-red—then the dull, smashing explosion of the gun. After a moment a hundred guns were firing away at will and the impact and concussion, intermingled, rocked the field.

From the heights, answering concussion came back, as the shells burst.

Drew and Craig tumbled out of the billet and ran madly for the line before the hangar. The blare and racket of the Clerget motors in the Camels added to the din. Mechanics, like black ghosts in the semi-darkness, scurried around among the ships. Pilots in leather coats and face masks and helmets ran madly for the ships on the line, threw themselves into cockpits, fiddled with controls.

Somehow Drew was in his cockpit, forcing his body into the tight seat, checking his guns, the ammo belts, the c.c. gear, pumping air into the tanks. He felt numb—no feeling in his arms and legs, but his brain was crystal clear and his eyes saw everything. The eyes seemed like

microscopes. The brain was like a sheet of mirror glass.

A ship ruddered away from the line, scurried over the sod of the field, took wing with a rush, bored up into the blackness. After it went a second ship and a third.

And Steve Drew was flying with them. After the first thousand feet they disappeared, were swallowed up in the blackness and it was a business of every man for himself. And every man having the knowledge that in the heavens about him were dozens of lunging, invisible airplanes traveling at a hundred and twenty miles an hour, with the pilots flying blind.

Crisscrossing beams of light from the ground searchlights lit the heavens, clung lovingly to the cloud formations in the sky, transformed them into translucent masses of shimmering light—of liquid silver. The long fingers, smoking, powerful, probed between the clouds for the silver shape of the raiding Zeppelin.

Upstairs one could see the havoc the raider was creating. Fires were burning in a dozen places in the streets of London. Fires which swept hungrily over whole blocks, with the flame roaring madly across roof tops, jumping black spaces, igniting other roof tops. An umbrella-like cloud of sparks and burning embers gushed up from the great masses of flame. Terrific areas of concussion sprang up—and more and more bombs fell.

It was hell—showering down out of heaven.

The black Camel went up and up. Steve Drew sat there looking over the windscreen in front of his face. His eyes followed the moving beams of light.

The Camel shuddered with the smash of anti-aircraft bursts exploding in the black void overhead. The ground gunners didn't seem to give a damn that friendly airplanes were

aloft, climbing up to get at the raider. The ground gunners seemed to be firing in hysterical haste—and to hell with what they might hit. The sky was a falling curtain of a. a. bursts. Each burst ripping an acre-deep crimson smear out of the blackness.

Fifteen thousand feet. The Clerget sobbing and gasping for breath and the cold, night air of the heights pouring down the back of Drew's leather coat. Holding the ship in the climb, taking it up in gentle spirals, forcing the maximum climb from the laboring motor. The stench and bite of hot castor oil was in his nostrils. The choking smell of hot metal and raw gasoline. A spray of hot oil flew back in his face, to run down over the front of his flying coat.

Up and up—dizzily, blindly, watching those lights. Watching for one flicker of light upon a target which was not a cloud. Cutting the gun now and then and listening for the sound of motors—enemy motors, and hearing nothing but the wailing of wires, the keening of the wind. Seeing nothing but the intense illumination of the searchlights and the red glow of fires burning on a far distant earth. Feeling like a ghoulish prowling in everlasting darkness.

And then, sitting frozen in the seat after breaking through a low flying layer of cloud formation! A vagrant beam of light finding a hole in a cloud for a single instant, striking against something which mirrored the light, reflected it, gave it a ghostly luminosity! Staring at that one point in the whole heavens! Staring, with a trip hammer pulse suddenly beating in temples and wrists and neck!

And that was it! That was the raider! A beam of light falling for a moment on its giant vertical fin and rudder, and the round belly of its after structure.

She was turning, falling away with the wind, skidding with a great sweep, away from the city. Fleeing with empty belly, her eggs of destruction laid, and the devil's brood hatched.

Steve Drew sat there. Suddenly this was a contest between himself and that giant shape. He forced his eyes to follow it. It became a shadow. That caressing searchlight beam which had tripped and stumbled over the L48 but an instant before, came back, seized upon the silver body, clung to it grimly, even when the Zeppelin ducked behind clouds.

That searchlight pounced upon the long, rounded shape, hung on.

And Drew following the light beam up and up, found himself a thousand feet below the raider, and climbing—climbing slowly, tortuously, but climbing.

CHAPTER IV

Sacrifice for the Fatherland



AFTER five minutes he could make out shapes on the top of the great bag. Gun platforms with machine-gunners crouching, ready. The spinning propeller blades on each side of the Zeppelin were churning in mad frenzy. The wind was on her tail. She picked up speed, but she was climbing very slowly.

The light from the far-off earth glinted as it struck the glass of the Zeppelin's control cabin. Faces, ghastly in the white light were revealed for fractions of seconds, and then drew back into darkness.

Then the Camel was flying level with the Zeppelin. Her great black number was illuminated by the searchlight. It seemed enormous—"L48." And the Black Crosses, and the Imperial German Flag.

A flea attacking an elephant! A humming bird attacking a condor!

Then the Camel was above the L 48. A hundred feet up and turning slowly. There was a scene revolving in the brain of Steve Drew. A scene in which a young Lieutenant, R.A.F., got himself the Victoria Cross in just such a spot. Early in the business of Zeppelin raids. The first Zep which had been forced down on English soil. A kid, fresh from Eton or Oxford or Harrow—"Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton—" hanging over a Zep, just like this, desperate, and diving headlong into the backbone of the giant ship—smashing it, bringing it down, to enroll himself among the Immortals.

A cold chill ran through Steve Drew as he looked down. He could feel wings crumple, feel the bones of his body grind as they splintered. Could feel himself falling those thousands of feet—agony-filled feet—fluttering to the ground, trapped and imprisoned in the wreckage of a Zeppelin.

He licked his lips and fed the belts to the Vickers. The phosphorescent gleaming of the L 48 filled his ring-sight. A hundred feet above the great shape he cut loose the machine-guns. They hammered a staccato frenzy. Lances of flame leaped from the muzzles and the Camel jolted and bucked with the recoil of the two guns. He could see the faint line of tracers cutting through blackness, thudding into the bulk below him.

Flame snarled at his face. Whiplashes crackled about his ears and head. The thudding sound of slugs striking against the body of the Camel was telegraphed to his body along the longerons. The enemy machine-gunners on the top of the bag were lining him up, riddling him with short, vicious bursts.

The Camel, plunging dizzily

through the thin air, side-stepped the bulging sides of the L 48, went down and down, with Drew fighting the controls to turn the comet-like speed into climb. The thin air offered no resistance to the wings. It took centuries to pull the Camel into a climb, to send it rocketing back up at the target.

The smell of burning powder, biting, toxic, was crammed into Drew's nostrils. It was like a savage drug. It inflamed his blood, unloosed torrents of berserk rage. The desire to get in close to this great thing, to stomp up on it, to rend, splinter, crash, rioted within him. His eyes were slits and gleaming. His young face was like a demoniac mask, fixed in grinning lines.

He drove the Camel mercilessly, the motor staggered, continued to hit.

The air was icy, and he didn't feel it. His lungs were starving for oxygen and he didn't know it.

He saw objects falling from the Zeppelin, falling heavily from an open hatch in her belly. He pressed on and on, driving the Camel up. The Zeppelin was climbing and her speed was increased.

He closed in, framed the bulk in his sights, his thumb was poised on the trips.

HANS VON STEINKE stood motionless in the control room of the L 48. His eyes were fixed on the face of his commander. Starbruck stood there, a graven image, his eyes cold, his body calm, his voice emotionless.

That black dragon fly buzzed back and forth around the great ship. There was a queer kind of paralysis gripping Hans Stienke. He could feel nothing, sense nothing. He was cold. He was looking at death. Death—from a dragon fly! The gnat striking down the eagle!

It was in the cold voice of the commander as he gave orders. It

was in the mechanical obedience of the crew as the orders were carried out with flawless precision. Death was in the intense vibrations shaking the fabric of the L 48. It was in the whining of overtaxed motors.

The Second-in-Command stood at Commander Starbruck's shoulder.

"Release remaining bombs!" said Starbruck's voice.

"All gone, sir!" answered the Second in equally flat tones.

"I want the ship lightened!" snapped Starbruck. "We need more altitude! That fool out there is just about at his ceiling. Another thousand feet or so and we're away."

"Yes, sir." The Second disappeared. There was the sound of things moving within the belly of the ship. There was a feeling of added buoyancy. The Second returned. "Spare fuel jettisoned, sir," he reported in that colorless voice. "Everything movable overboard."

Starbruck stood at the windows staring at that black winged shape harassing the flanks of his ship. There was the sudden sound of machine-guns chattering—Vickers machine-guns. From somewhere aloft, over the labored droning of the Zeppelin's motors came a screeching scream and a black something, inert, plunged over the side of the big ship, fell, gyrating crazily through bottomless space. A black manlike dummy!

NOT a muscle moved in the face of the L 48's commander.

The screech of a diving Clerget filled the control cabin, coming from overhead, falling like a meteor, and mixed with the motor screech was the rabid chatter of those Vickers again. The black winged airplane, ripped downward, was in view for one instant. A thousand feet below it whirled, climbed back, grabbing hungrily for altitude—to get back to the attack.

"Instruments — kits — everything over the side," said Starbruck in that coldly calm voice.

The Second disappeared again. After a moment the altimeter needle moved sluggishly upward. Gained a hundred feet—two hundred—hung motionless.

The commander's eyes looked at the instrument inscrutably. "Not enough," he said suddenly.

And there was a moment of pregnant intensity in the control cabin. A brittle horror. A fragile terror.

"Muster the crew!" commanded Starbruck.

The Second's face was coldly impersonal. "Yes, sir," he said in the same voice. He did a clicking about-face, marched out of the cabin.

Something dripped steadily upon the raw soul fibres of Hans von Stienke. His eyes, in hypnotic helplessness, clung to Starbruck's face. His body was dead. That dripping thing was like molten drops of lead falling on a surface as sensitive as an eyeball.

Visions thronged his brain. Whispered stories came back to him. Stories, always told in hushed voices, by men, who glanced over shoulders to see that they were not overheard.

"—happened on the L 36. She was caught by Defense of London 'planes. They threw everything overboard. She didn't climb enough to get out of range of the 'planes. Rosen was commanding her—remember him. Baron Rosen—ice and steel—never lifted his voice. 'Muster the crew—' he says to the Second. And they mustered the crew amidships. Into the compartment comes the commander. He looks at the men. They listened to the machine-gun fire going on outside the L 36. They know what that means. Half a dozen of those little Camel devils outside, firing incendiaries at the bag. They stand there, hands hanging, faces white.

"'Everything is overboard, men,'

says Rosen in that icy voice. 'It isn't enough—we *must* lighten ship.'

"And they stand there, looking at him, and he turns to his Second. 'Break open the hatch,' he orders.

"And the Second, with two or three others, opens the hatch in the bottom of her belly, and there is black emptiness outside. They stand there, like dead men and stare. All lined up, all rigid, all kind of crazy—like when a man gets religion—"

"'You understand?' says Rosen. 'We must lighten ship—'

"And suddenly, the first man in the line marches himself forward, stands at the edge of that trapdoor, salutes Rosen—and without even looking down—steps through—out into emptiness—without a sound!

"Eighteen other men stepped through after the first.

"So Rosen brought his L 36 home. He lightened her. He got highest honors—so did the next-of-kin of the men who stepped overboard. He was a great Zeppelin commander—that Rosen—all ice and steel, no nerves, a great man in a pinch—"

Sweat trickled down the middle of Hans Stienke's back. He found himself walking aft. Outside, the crackle of machine-gun fire sounded afresh—that and the screech of wings and wires. Faces were crowded into the central compartment.

COMMANDER STARBRUCK was standing there. It was a nightmare, but the kind of a nightmare that paralyzes and prevents one from fleeing the horrible things. No sound, no word. Just Starbruck standing in front of his command—his eyes looking at them. White faces. Inert arms hanging beside bodies. The throb and pound of the motors. The flashing of lights and the racket of machine-gun fire.

A hand seemed clamped about Hans Stienke's throat. He was standing at the head of the men. He was

the Junior Officer aboard. He looked at the floor at his feet. He was one step from the hatch built into the floor of the compartment. The hand was slowly closing off the air, strangling him, crushing his throat, but he stood there, staring at his commander.

"Break open the hatch!" commanded Starbruck.

The men stood fast, like statues. The Second unfastened the fitting, threw the hatch up.

Starbruck's eyes brushed over Hans Stienke's young face. An unseeing, impersonal glance, containing no recognition.

A tremendous surge moved the ship, seemed to catch her up, to fling her bodily.

The choked voice of a control man forward blubbered. "Updraft—she's moving—"

They stood there. The voice came from the control room again. "She's up five hundred and climbing!" They still stood there. Faces like bleached skulls.

"Up a hundred—and moving—speed eighty knots—"

Another eternity of torture, and the same voice. "Up five hundred! Altitude twenty-one thousand feet! Speed eighty-three knots."

The commander's voice was almost casual.

"Close the hatch," he ordered.

The eyes watched that lid go down, saw it bolted into place.

"Stations."

They drifted out of the central compartment. It seemed to Stienke that he would have to crawl on his hands and knees, that no life was left in his legs. His shoulder banged against the compartment way and he nearly fell on his face with the impact.

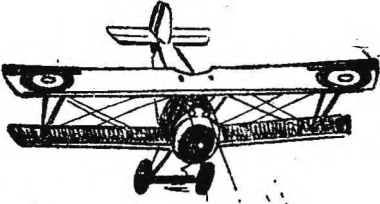
A crazy, insane, screeching voice galloped through his brain.

"He closed the hatch—so you won't drop in on Wyndam Craig in London Town. Imagine—dropping

in on him!" And the crazy voice chattered and laughed.

He was suddenly looking at the face of Commander Starbruck. The commander was standing close to the forward windows of the control cabin. Sweat was running off his chin. His hands were shaking even as he gripped the support rail. The muscles in his jaws stood out in ridges. A hard lump in his throat moved.

He was looking down—at a black dragonfly making frantic efforts to climb up and up—and not being able to make it. But trying, until loggy,



controls and heavy wings refused to be directed, and the black shape fell away in a right spin, bored down and down, out of sight.

After a moment the commander looked at Hans Stienke.

"Well, how do you like it, young Stienke?" he asked, a husky undertone in his voice. "Was I right? Did I not say you would hear, and see, and feel things in Zeppelins—tonight—which would do you all the rest of your life?"

The frozen grin on Stienke's face was fixed. He nodded his head. He did not dare to speak.

The droning of the motors went on and on, and the rush of the wind against the sides of the ship.

After a while there was a glow on the sea below the control cabin. And after another eternity there was the Yard and the hangar-sheds—and the stepping to earth on feet that could not feel, with bodies and brains, too numbed, too shocked, to realize that the cruise was finished.

CHAPTER V

Two Have Died!



YOUNG Steve Drew sat on the edge of his cot in the billet at Westham and sipped hot coffee. His face was blue. His eyes were bloodshot. His teeth were still clicking like castanets.

His gestures were jerky and uncertain. Half a dozen times he slopped coffee out of the cup over the front of his shirt. His cheeks seemed sucked in between his teeth and his eyes lurked in suddenly dug caverns in his skull.

Wyndam Craig sat across from him, sipping from another mug.

Drew's voice was rasping and there was a suggestion of hysteria.

"I nearly had it—I tell you!" he told Craig for the tenth time. "My God—I was as close—as this! I picked it out in a searchlight beam, followed it up. I got in position over it a couple of times and gave it hell when I dived.

"Go out and look at my bus. It's like a sieve. Those guys could shoot! Listen, once when I went down—going like a bat out of hell, a little tongue of fire broke out on the side of the bag—right where I was shooting. I kept looking at it while the Camel dived to hell and gone.

"I was remembering what a burning Zeppelin looked like—and thinking that I was going to be in the same sky with one—that I was going to get a V.C. or something for bringing this one down—she was the L 48—I saw it on her side, painted in big letters and figures—but—damn it—the wind or something came along and blew out that little flame! But she was burning—I tell you—I saw it with my own eyes—"

He glared at Craig, as if daring him to dispute the fact that he had almost fired the L 48.

Craig sipped quietly from his mug and looked at Drew with steady eyes.

"Too bad, Old Man. Of all the bloody luck! Imagine, having the blighter bagged, and then to lose him like that—the wind—blowing out the fire. Damn! How did she get away finally?"

DREW glared again. "The same damned wind!" he said bitterly. "It started to blow like hell at the twenty thousand foot level, blew in a kind of an updraft. Got in under that big rubber cow and sent her ballooning! I stayed with her, going up—until the 'bus couldn't take it anymore, went into a stall spin, and I kept spinning until I got below the ten thousand foot level. I thought she was going to spin her wings off—that she'd never come out."

"I know how it feels!" sympathized Craig. "I spun down once from eight thousand to one thousand—and I died exactly one million times to the foot on the way down. It's a nasty sensation—"

There was a brief silence in the billet—silence and the sucking sound of the two of them inhaling scalding coffee.

"You know—" blurted Drew suddenly. "I had the damndest feeling out there, chasing that Zep. I—kind of had the feeling that Hans Stienke was aboard her. Now why in the hell should I feel like that?"

Craig shrugged. "Quite impossible, of course," he smiled. "Old Hans is probably all bedded down in a cushy billet in Belgium, making eyes at the girls or something. He belongs to the aristocracy of the German Army—Uhlan or something like that—wasn't he?"

"Don't know!" grunted Drew absently. "But I know how I felt—alone with that Zep."

"I wonder just where Hans is?"

mused Craig. "Not in Zeppelins, of course. He wouldn't like a messy business like that."

"And Petrie—and Sturmi?" asked Drew, his eyes suddenly moody with remembrance. "Gee—just thinking about it—somewhere in this business—somewhere on that map—all of us—killing and getting killed—hardly knowing why. What was that line on the plaque over the entrance to the Stadium?"

—to the everlasting bonds of friendship between peoples of the earth, cemented and made whole by the spirit and fellowship of their sons who in this place shall achieve glory!

A bitter laugh escaped him. "'Friendship—fellowship of their sons—' Three years ago, that was—wasn't it—and here we are, killing like a bunch of wild animals! All six of us—all wild animals. The clean bodies and minds they wrote poetry about then—trained to murder and destruction.

"Somewhere—all six of us—or five of us now—Spaldi is gone—doing something we don't want to do. My God—I don't want to kill Hans Stienke—any more than he wants to kill you or me or Petrie. Yet—I'll kill him if I have to—because—Why, Craig—why will I kill him? How did we get into this, anyway?"

Craig's eyes were suddenly haggard looking. "I don't know, Old Man," he said in a low tone. "I often sit down and try to puzzle it out. All I know—I went back to school—Oxford—and the sky was blue, and everything beautiful—and then—I was here—in uniform—and everyone was marching. It does sound rather silly, doesn't it? Whole nations of people clawing at each others throats—and we're a part of 'em—and sitting here, asking each other—why?"

"Aw, let's stop it!" begged Drew. "In a minute we'll both go crazy—only I wish someone would give

me the answer. It'd help a lot if a guy knew why he was fighting—"

"I wonder where Petrie really is?" mused Craig, smilingly. "It's a little worse on the French you know. The whole blasted war is being fought on their front steps—"

"Yeah," said Drew with a sudden smile. "I wonder where the little monkey is. I'll bet he's a sight, in those long French overcoats and those funny *kepis*, lugging a rifle around. Hell, he couldn't scare anybody. I wonder if he's grown one of those beards the Frogs grow. That sure would fix him up just right—Petrie in a beard!"

They went to bed.

THE wheel horses on the Number One gun stopped suddenly, sucking air noisily into dry throats. The breathing had the sound of dry sobbing. The caved-in flanks of the horses rose and fell in fluttering cadence. The horses were skinny, bones rubbing through hides. Their eyes were sunken far into their heads. Their mouths were white with the lips drawn away from yellow teeth.

They stood there, eyes glazed over with exertion and near starvation. Their legs trembled like the legs of a human afflicted with palsy. After a moment the near wheel horse harnessed to the gun, exhaled with a gusty, sighing sound and collapsed into the two feet of mud on the ground. Collapsed and began to sink into the muck.

A cold, weary, insistent rain beat down out of grey skies. A rain which had been going on for days.

The wheels of the limber were hub deep in the mud.

Beside the wheels, emaciated gunners, tired to the point of death, numbed to the point of senselessness, from days and nights of constant exhausting labor, leaned against the gun carriage and panted. They were

too tired for words. Too tired for a single unnecessary motion. They were plastered over with slime and mud, and the water ran off their sodden clothes in rivulets. Ran down the matted tangles of beard which grew on the faces of all them, dripped down necks, dripped from fingers, from noses, from eyelids.

They lay against the limber—staring sightlessly at the desolated terrain.

Hands were lacerated and blistered to the stinging flesh from the task of grabbing hold of wheel spokes and heaving the gun carriage forward through the mud. Every foot of progress throughout twenty-four hours had been made in that manner. One spoke at a time, forward, through the sea of mud. One spoke at a time—with the horses straining, breaking hearts, and the men heaving at the wheel spokes. One spoke—one spoke—forward—not even knowing where.

The bearded face of a young lieutenant peered down at a water-drenched map. He was trying to shield the map from the rain, but the water trickled off the edges of the paper. He was as thoroughly covered with mud as any of the men in the battery. He lifted his head, studied the landmarks, consulted the map again, nodded his head. Behind him four caissons and three more guns were bogged down in the muck.

He grinned at the men: "*Voilà!*" he called. "We are here—"

They lifted heads, looked at him with eyes that did not change expression. Lowered heads again, closed eyes.

A sergeant, a tremendous man, with Sandowlike shoulders, came up beside the young lieutenant. His uniform hung to him like a burlap sack. There was the suggestion of wasted flesh under the uniform—flesh, stripped from the powerful frame. His eyes were feverish and

his face bony and sunken under the mud.

"So," he said, and his voice was a racked whisper. "At last!"

White teeth showed under the black beard on the young lieutenant's face. He nodded. "*Le Ferme du Vache Rouge*," he said with a theatrical gesture which took in the drenched landscape. "*Alors!* But look over there—the chateau, itself!"

The bloodshot eyes of the sergeant followed the pointing finger.

Indistinct, through the rain, was a shell-blasted hovel with a broken roof. The windows were gutted and blackened, the chimney was tumbled down. The walls of the farm house sagged outward, ready to fall down. There was a great manure pile in the front yard. Around the manure pile and around the whole field surrounding the blasted and half-burned house, the earth was cratered and pock-marked by shells.

"Hm!" grunted the sergeant. "The Boche has registered on this point before—and not so long ago. Those shell holes are not so old—"

"A week maybe," nodded the lieutenant. "But a week in this business is as good as a lifetime. We will give Monsieur le Boche a very unpleasant surprise. He will not expect a French battery to be within miles of this place. When we open—ah—that will be something!"

"When we open!" growled the sergeant. He was looking at the half-dead horses of the battery, and at the half-dead men. "Wading around in this for four days, asking questions—'please, sir, can you direct me to the Farm of the Red Cow?' And getting laughed at and stared at for crazy people. What a war!"

"But the only one we have!" laughed the lieutenant.

He walked back to the gun carriages. He looked at the men. Suddenly he laughed, leaned up against

the barrel of the gun, and laughed and the rain fell into his open mouth. The men lifted heads and looked at his face, and glanced at each other. They had seen young officers go mad before—and they laughed just like this, mouths open and eyes glaring. But—somehow, it was not a mad laugh, this laugh from the young lieutenant.

"Ow!" he howled. "Marchant! If your *bebe* could see her papa—in the mud—with mud in his ears, and plastered on his nose, and in his hair—"

PPRIVATE MARCHANT'S face relaxed under the mud mask, his teeth gleamed white, and he was grinning—and in a moment he was laughing—leaning against the wheel hub and howling.

"And you—Saulniers!" hooted the young lieutenant. "You—with your little mustache, and the silk underdrawers you wore when you were mobilized, and the fond mama who accompanied you and carried a plum cake in her hands! If she could see you now—with the mud oozing out of your pants legs—"

And Private Saulniers was suddenly laughing, and the scum of fatigue cleared from his eyes, and his body straightened a little.

And the young lieutenant continued to laugh, with the tears running out of his eyes, and with his back braced against the ugly, tarpaulined muzzle of the .75. And after a while the whole battery was howling, and making fun of each other.

Only the horses stood with hanging heads and destroyed bodies. Horses have no sense of humor. They merely work—and die.

The big sergeant, grinned, looked at another sergeant from the second gun crew.

"There is one for you!" he said proudly, jerking his head toward the suffused face of the little lieutenant.

ant. "An officer in a million. The men are dying on their feet, and that Lieutenant Petrie—jollies them into life again, and will get more work out of them. Just a lot of dead husks they were a minute ago and he tickles them with thoughts of sweethearts and wives and mothers—and makes them forget they are standing in two feet of mud—and are apt to be wiped out any second. *Tiens!*"

"If there were more officers like this Petrie—war would be almost a pleasure. Look at those guns—four days of rain—and every one of them ready for action, gleaming, beautiful—because he keeps them that way. The horses may break their hearts and die. The men may stagger and fall down—hell may roll over the battery — but those guns — like jewels—"

"Dig in, men," said Lieutenant Petrie, his voice almost singing. "Four days it took us to get here—and now—we dig in—and let it rain. I have a bottle of cognac in my kit for the first gun to be in position and ready to fire. And—I don't hold out on you—there is another bottle for each gun—when the trailers are set—"

Somehow those mud-plastered, half-dead men made legs and arms move. Somehow they grunted, ran the long snouts of the .75s on a line drawn by Lieutenant Petrie. Somehow they spaded the trailers into the muck, made them secure. The horses, unharnessed were being led away from the guns and caissons.

"Good—" exulted Lieutenant Petrie. "Like being home—almost. It is done—"

There was a sudden low moaning sound. Immediately behind the battery a geyser of mud splashed high into the air, and a flash of flame blinded all of them. The mud fell, *thocking* back to earth, splashed over them.

"Damn!" said Petrie. "The Boche is methodical. He shells certain points at certain times by the clock. He doesn't even know we are here. We don't even exist. He shoots up this place because he shoots it up every day. Well—take cover my lads—it will be over—"

This time there was no screech of shell. There was merely a terrific impact and a burst of black smoke from the midst of the newly-placed battery. There was an instant's vision of crazy forms blatted upward in swirling, grotesque postures, arms and legs sprawling. There was the sudden, squirting smell of high explosive, and the rip and screech of shell fragments.

There was the almost human scream of dying horses and the splash of blood and the writhing of the mud, and queer, crimson pools forming on the semi-liquid mud for an instant before being absorbed into the stuff.

AND then a black cloud of smoke drifted away. When it was gone, men were moaning, thrown about, sinking into the mud.

"God—" screeched the sergeant out of a bloody mouth. "A direct hit—God—" he stared dumbly at something which flopped at his right side—a shapeless, clublike, bleeding stump. It took him a long time to understand that it had been an arm—his arm.

The horses were sprawled around, some of them with legs kicking convulsively—guttured—ripped open by shell fragments.

Then there was a silence—and the smell of the shell burst.

Lieutenant Petrie, his body hurled up against a wheel of a gun carriage tried to grin. "They do it—every day—at the exact minute—" he said. "Tomorrow—we will know better—"

His head sank down on his chest.

There was a crimson smear through the mud of his tunic. He looked at it curiously. He looked up at the agonized face of the sergeant.

"The cognac—for the men—in my kit—get it—"

Swirling bubbles of red froth whistled up from his chest, out of his mouth. His eyes remained open—stared at the pouring rain and the ruin of *Le Ferme du Vache Rouge*, but they saw nothing.

* * * * *

Le Temps, amid a profusion of like notices, reported:

Henri Jean Marie Petrie, Lieutenant of Artillery, Killed in Action at *Le Ferme du Vache Rouge*. Lieutenant Petrie was a distinguished artillery officer, and was breveted Captain on the day of his death. He died gloriously for France. It was not the first time he glorified France during his young life. He will be remembered for having been crowned an Olympic Champion at Stockholm in 1912, when he carried the Tricolor to victory in the mile race.

"good-by, Petrie, be sure to give my love to all the little girls in Paris—and send me some post-cards—"

CHAPTER VI

Corpse, King, Conquerors



GERMAN litter parties roamed the fields before Lemberg with an almost picnic air. They laughed and talked among themselves and puffed on cigarettes. There was a completely disinterested air about them. A litter, folded, was carried over the shoulder of the biggest of one party. They were dressed in field grey. They wore Red Cross brassards on left arms.

The field over which they passed was green. Here and there it was a rust-green, as if the earth had been corroded by a strange wetness.

As far as the eye could see, the

field was littered with bodies. Bodies dressed in the sacklike uniforms of the Russian Army. White faces were turned up to the sky. Arms and legs outflung. The long, clumsy-looking rifles and the clumsier looking bayonets lay under bodies or thrown aside, where nerveless hands had dropped them.

A hot sun gleamed down on the field.

Other litter parties ranged the open. Here and there a man got down on his knees, peered at a white face, probed for a heart beat, shook his head, climbed back to his feet and plodded on.

The big litter bearer with the first party grunted, and squinted over the field with experienced eye. "Not much use looking for living ones—after three days," he grunted to his corporal.

The corporal frowned out of the heights of his authority and superiority. "Sometimes they live for a week—longer!" he growled.

"Sure—but they're so lousy with maggots and disease and gangrene that it doesn't pay to lug 'em in—"

"Yes, that's right," agreed the corporal grudgingly.

"These Russians!" growled the litter bearer. "They die like cows. Just run in against machine-guns—no artillery support—half the time no ammunition. Hell, it's a wonder they don't murder their officers and refuse to do stupid things like that. Imagine—charging a hundred machine-guns—in the open with nothing but the bayonet—"

"They're hell when they get in close though!" said the corporal. "These Russians are as brave as lions—they don't give a damn about dying!"

The party stopped, stared. Ten yards ahead there lay a windrow of bodies, cut down like ranks of wheat by a scythe. The bodies lay in rows, face down, most of them still clutch-

ing bayoneted rifles. A whole company—struck down in stride.

There was a little croaking sound in the voice of the litter bearer. "God!" he said, and a shudder shook his body. "They died here—like—like—flies—" He turned his head, looked back at the way they had come. His eyes rested for a moment on a little copse of trees. He nodded.

"The Maxims were back there, under cover. They had this ground under a cross fire. This company came charging over the ground and the machine-gunners held off until it was pointblank range—until they couldn't miss. Then they just traversed the whole line of advancing Russians—"

"They're not Russians—can't you read uniforms!" growled the corporal. "They're Finns—from Finland—"

"Hell—is Finland in the war, too?" asked the litter bearer.

"Stupid! Finland is a Russian Province—way up north—on the Baltic—I think—"

"Well, here's a husky looking bunch of lads that'll never see Finland again. God—all gone—like drawing a breath—them machine-guns are sure hell. Me for the Red Cross unit every time—"

They took a step forward. Suddenly the corporal stopped, looked at the chest of a man on the ground. The blouse was ripped open, as if by clutching fingers. There was the dull gleam of a gold medal against the bare flesh.

The corporal stepped over to the body, knelt beside it, worked on the stiff fingers.

"What's he got?" asked the litter bearer eagerly. "Looks like a gold medal—"

"It is a gold medal!" said the corporal suddenly. He ripped the golden disk away from the thin golden chain around the dead neck, stood up with the medal in his hands. He

wiped away the encrusted blood, read the inscription aloud.

"—Olympiad—Stockholm—5000 meters—Champion—"

He looked at the litter bearer and rubbed some more on the medal with his thumb. A name appeared, graven into the golden disk.

"—Sturmi—" read the corporal, a puzzled look in his eyes. "Seems I heard that name before—somewhere—"

"This gang must have done some looting somewhere, before they came here," said the litter bearer.

"Looting?"

"Sure! Where would a buck private—a Finlander—get himself a gold medal like that. Hell—them Olympic champions are big people. Like presidents and kings and things. This fellow must have stole it somewhere—kept it around his neck—it's gold—isn't it?"

"Sure it's gold—maybe you're right. No Finn private would have one of these things. Last thing he did was grab for it too—"

The corporal stood there with the golden disk in his hands. "Well, it'll make a nice little souvenir for the girl—I promised to bring her something special."

A growl came up in the throat of the litter bearer. "Hey—" he began.

"Oh—all right!" growled the corporal. "You'll get your share, whatever it is—"

They plodded on, leaving the windrow of bodies behind them to stare at the sun.

"—good-by, Sturmi—good-by—keep on eating fish and you'll hang that 5,000 meter record where nobody will ever be able to reach it—"

SPRING, 1917. The April sun of England calling out the fresh green of young grass. Spring in England. Song of a thousand poets.

On the emerald sod of the Defense of London flying-field at

Wembley, two squadrons of Bristol fighters were drawn up in perfect line, gleaming, polished, groomed to perfection. They were new ships. They were practically untried ships.

The Air Ministry glowed at mention or discussion of the Bristol. Four years—to develop an airplane which could offer serious challenge to the brain and uncanny abilities of Anthony Fokker. Four years to find something that would run the Fokker planes out of the sky on the Western Front.

And here they were, drawn up in line for a formal inspection.

Sleek, black, lithe-lined ships. Even standing in repose they seemed tremendously fast. Flat, wicked-looking, streamlined wings. Cowled-in motors. Absence of extraneous flying wires. Like thoroughbreds parading to the barrier before a race.

The only two squadrons of Bristols owned by Great Britain, and for testing under combat conditions, turned over to the Defense of London Squadrons One and Two.

The mechanics and ground men were standing two by two in front of each ship, rigidly at attention. The pilots, twenty paces in front, standing in single lines, by squadrons, equally at attention.

In front of the pilots of One Squadron stood Flight Captain Stephen Drew. In front of the pilots of Two Squadron stood Flight Captain Wyndam Craig.

They wore the uniform of the R.F.C. (Long since, the haphazardly organized Royal Air Force had been transformed into the crack R.F.C. under a single administrative head.) Spread over the left breast of the two tunics were twin rows of bright-colored ribbons.

Wyndam Craig's face was serious, lined. It seemed that his body stooped a little at the shoulders as if from carrying a heavy burden too far. But Steve Drew stood there,

young, erect, almost challenging. His face was still unlined—but there was a curious something about his eyes. They were like the eyes of an old, old man peering out of a young face. Eyes which had seen everything in life. Eyes gluttoned and surfeited with hectic, uncertain existence.

From the entrance gates to the field came the thin, brazen tones of a trumpet. There was an invisible stirring over the field, an involuntary turning of eyes in motionless heads.

A band crashed into action, played "God Save the King."

A great black Daimler saloon car swung slowly in through the gates, rolled majestically over the field, came to a stop in the exact center of the line of pilots and men. The rear door of the car was emblazoned with the Royal Arms of England.

A footman sprang to the ground, saluted, threw open the door of the tonneau. A little man, in field uniform, a beard covering his lower face, his body almost wasted to a skeleton, the shoulders stooped, stepped out of the car. He stood for a moment, facing the squadrons, lifted his hand, with an air of diffidence, saluted the formation.

HE stood while an important-looking officer with a general's insignia upon his shoulders stepped out of the car and took charge of the ceremonies.

Flight Captain Drew and Flight Captain Craig saluted, marched ten paces forward, waited.

George V smiled at them. His eyes were kindly, sad, haggard. He came over to them, shook hands with each, talked to them. Then they formed into an inspection party, marched down the line of ships and men. The King shook hands with each of the pilots and with each of the men. He noticed the decorations the men wore, asked polite questions

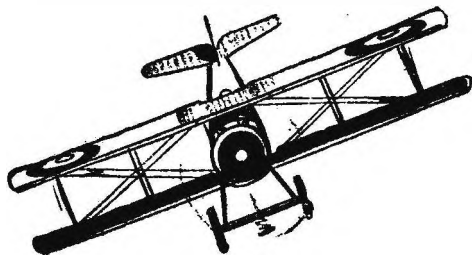
concerning them. When he passed he left a warm feeling behind him.

He looked at the new ships curiously, asked questions. He even climbed into the cockpit of the first ship on the line, touched the controls, and the men tried to hide grins of pleasure.

Then, the King was standing again, in front of the formation, facing the two young flight captains. He glanced at the general. The general cleared his throat, stepped forward a pace, made sure that he was the center of observation, and bellowed:

"Attention to orders!"

He read in a bull voice: "His Gracious Majesty desiring to recognize the outstanding and heroic con-



duct of two of his loyal officers of the Royal Air Force, is pleased to decorate the person of Flight Commander Stephen Drew, and Flight Commander Wyndam Craig with the Military Order of the British Empire.

"Flight Captain Drew, front and center—*March!*"

Steve Drew, head high, shoulders back, marched into the presence of His Most Gracious Majesty of Great Britain. The general handed the King an important-looking leather case. The King opened the lid. The spring sun touched jewels set in enamel and caused them to glitter with a living fire.

"Bow your head!" whispered the general.

Drew's head lowered slowly. The King's hands spread a ribbon about his neck. The King's voice, very

low, said: "I create thee Knight of the British Empire, in Honor and in Justice."

He shook Drew's hand. He smiled, that slow, sad, kindly smile.

"Does it seem strange to you—an American, to find yourself a Knight of the British Empire, Captain Drew?" he asked.

Drew's tight mouth smiled a little. "Yes, Sire," he answered quietly.

"Wear it in honor," said the King. "It is around a worthy neck."

"Thank you, Sire."

The King's voice was suddenly wistful, anxious. He looked at Steve Drew's young face. "America—do you think she will be long—now?"

DREW'S voice was quiet, but a surge of color flooded into his face. "Not long now, Sire. When we move, we move rapidly. We'll be in this thing up to our necks—"

"God grant that it be soon," said the King. "God grant that they send us more men—like—you."

He shook Drew's hand again, almost convulsively.

The general's voice bellowed again. "Flight Captain Wyndam Craig—front and center—*March!*"

Craig stepped forward, and received the same accolade. The two of them marched back to their places at the head of their squadrons, the jewels of the Order glittering in the middle of their chests.

A sergeant-mechanic stepped from the ranks, and his hoarse voice roared up and down the line: "Three cheers for His Majesty, the King!"

And the two squadrons roared the cheers in unison, and the King saluted, again, diffidently, went back to his car and was driven from the field, while the band played "God Save the King" a second time.

The formation was dismissed—but not before it gave the same three cheers for the young commanding officers.

CHAPTER VII

Gotha Patrol

RAIG sat in his chair, his feet cocked up on a table, his pipe in his mouth, a little smile on his face. His quiet voice said to Drew: "Well, Sir Knight—you met the King—but I forgot—you met the King before—when you got the Cross—"

"I'm sorry for him," said Drew strangely. "He looks like a man who is living in hell. I'd be living in hell too. The hell would froth and boil every morning—when the newspapers came out with the Roll of Honor—fellows killed in France the day or week before—and I saw their faces—and got to thinking that the best blood—the youth—the muscle—the sinew of the nation was rotting over there in France.

"It must make the head of a nation writhe and squirm. I'd hate to be King of England and have to face the fathers and mothers of those boys who have died—the hundreds of thousands of them—and to explain—why they died—why they were never coming home—"

Craig's eyes were suddenly veiled. "I shouldn't like that, either," he said. "Much rather be here, with nothing but a bunch of flying lunatics to handle, and just worrying whether or not a fellow is overdrawn at Cox's or whether he can write another check before payday."

"The higher you go, the worse it gets—he can be King—"

There was a silence during which Craig puffed at his pipe.

"It seems such a long time, doesn't it?" he asked of Drew suddenly. "It seems as if this war has been going on forever—that one has no memories before the war, and no thought of what will happen after it. It seems that we've been together, al-

most living in the same body—"

"Yeah," nodded Drew. "Sometimes—I get to thinking what would happen—if we—we got separated—or something—"

His hands tightened a little. He looked across at Craig. Craig's eyes looked back at him. There was something tremendous in the way they looked at each other.

"I couldn't think about such a thing," said Craig at last. "It would—rather—jitter me. Why—I couldn't imagine the bloody war, without you in it—right there in your little bunk—who would I have to talk to—"

"Let's cut it out?" grinned Drew wryly, with a tight little laugh. "I guess that's one of the things a fellow shouldn't discuss. Only—it's been swell—being together—ever since Sandringham."

"The best ever," growled Craig. "It's like looking down a long, long corridor one has walked through. One would be afraid to walk through the corridor by himself. It would give him goose-pimples. Like being alone in a haunted house—"

"Yeah," nodded Drew.

"Well, good night, Sir Knight," smiled Craig.

"Go bag your head!" laughed Drew.

He sat there, staring out the window. He was on duty. He was in command of Wembley for the night.

A TIGHT-FACED officer sat at the head of a council table. His head was square, seemed carved out of a wooden block. The features of his face seemed gouged out of the same hard wood. His eyes were like flint, and his fists, as he pounded the table to emphasize a point were like clubs. The ribbons of many decorations were sewn to his tunic. His sword and his General-Staff helmet rested on the table in front of him.

Twenty or thirty younger officers,

grave-faced, silent, sat around the table and listened to him.

One of them was Major Hans von Stienke of his Imperial Majesty Air Forces.

There were lines in Hans Stienke's face, which had not been there at Stockholm. The shoulder muscles still bulged under the tight-fitting aviator's tunic, but his eyes were tired and weary-looking. He sat quietly, his eyes fixed on the staff officer's face, his hands, fingers intertwined lazily, lying on the desk. The ribbons of a dozen decorations were on his tunic, also. Among the ribbons was *Pour le Merite*, the highest decoration possible to a Prussian officer, and usually given from the hand of the Kaiser himself.

"SO!" thundered the staff officer. "The time for softness, for regard, for niceties has passed. It now becomes a war of survival, a struggle to the death. It cannot longer be a war of soldier against soldier, of combatant against combatant. We must understand that!

"We must harden ourselves to the realization that all laws, all treaties are in the discard. It is a war to destruction. When a nation, attacked as we are attacked, is backed to the wall, and faces extermination with defeat—then that nation has the right to use any weapon it can lay to hand to preserve its liberty and freedom, and to guarantee its victory."

He glared at the officers facing him, and his fists pounded on the table as if to drive his words into the brains of them all by brute force.

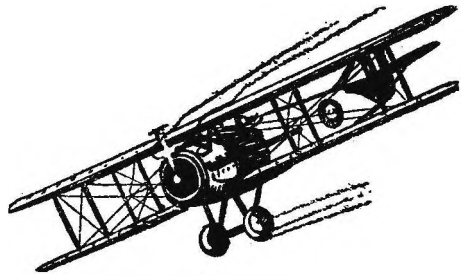
"Once we had England on her knees, and remember this, the backbone of the Allied resistance is England. She is the rock on which they build their strength. If it had not been for England we would have swept those French swine into the

sea long ago—in the first month of the war. And—England depends for her strength on her civilian population.

"The factories of Manchester. The docks of Liverpool. The lathes of the munitions factories. Hordes of civilian Englishmen, working triple shifts each day to provide the sinews of war for the Army in the field. They are the strength of the British—and the war has hardly touched them since the Zeppelins went into the discard."

His glaring eyes swirled. They looked slowly about the room. His thick forefinger stabbed at them individually.

"So—we must treat those civilian workers like soldiers, for they are more important, actually, than the



armed forces. We must bring terror and death and disease down upon them. We must make them mad, disorganized by fear.

"We must bring the war—and its bed fellows—death—famine—disease—home to them—right into the pubs, the factories and the homes of England. We must break the back of English civilian morale. We must shatter the British calm!"

And again his glaring eyes held them hypnotically.

"And we must do it quickly, and finally," he told them with heavy emphasis. "Before that accursed United States can get into the war—before it can throw its strength to the Allies. Crush England—break the morale of her people at home—

and we shall march to Paris in a month. We will have the French on their knees, crying hysterically for peace as they did in 'Seventy-one. We shall do that the instant we cause the English civilian population to understand the horror they have missed. When the dead pile up in the streets of her cities—when the cries and lamentations of wives and sisters and mothers rise to the heavens—then will the Fatherland gain the victory!"

Beads of sweat rolled over his face. His voice was suddenly hoarse. His eyes swirling with passion.

"Hate—hate—and hate!" he bel-lowed at them. "Kill—kill—and kill!"

He was silent. His body suddenly relaxed. He smiled at them.

"You gentlemen will be the force out of which the German victory will come. You gentlemen—all of you. You will carry the war to England, as we carried it in the early days. You will cause English faces to blanch—only this time, not with heavy, im-possible, cumbersome Zeppelins, al-though they were a good weapon when we had none better. You will strike like the wind, and as swift. You—and the new Gothas.

"Swarming wings of the Father-land swooping down out of night skies over Liverpool, Manchester,

London. Carrying more bombs than a host of Zeppelins could have car-ried. Maneuvering at express train speed. And this time, the bombs will not only burn, or burst. This time the horror will not be over when the impact of the explosion is done. Oh, no—this time—the horror will remain long after the concussion of the bombing has echoed out of existence."

He looked at them savagely again. "We have learned much about effec-tive weapons for use against popu-lations since 1914," he growled. "High explosives and shrapnel are pleasant bouquets—compared to what we now have."

His eyes were glittering again. Suddenly he got to his feet.

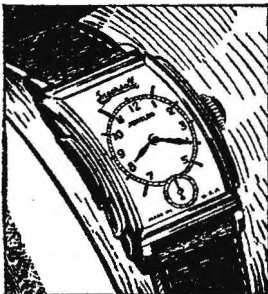
"So—" he flung at them. "I have come personally, as your chief, to proclaim the new duty and service you are privileged to render your country. I look at you, and I am proud of you—proud that I am of the same blood. You will not falter nor fail, for the fate of the Father-land will ride on your wings. You will go—you will strike—you will gain the victory."

He stopped again, walked around the table, came to Hans von Stienke. His hand fell on Stienke's shoulder.

"And you, my son, will command," he said softly. "I look at you, and

[Turn Page]

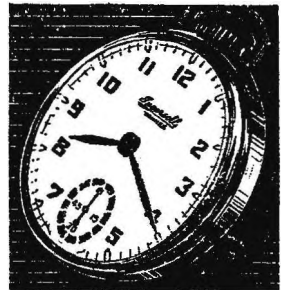
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I marvel, for I am used to the council of greybeards, and the experience and commanding personality of elders.

"But more and more this becomes a young man's war. The greybeard thinks too slowly, is too cautious. If twenty-year-olds had been in command in '14, we should have won the war in three weeks. Twenty-year-olds have imagination, daring. They dare to be brave.

"You, who learned to fly in the night, over England, in the early days, under men like Starbruck—you are the commanders for this offensive. Lead it well—strike hard—do your duty—"

He took up his helmet and his sword. The men at the table came to their feet like images propelled by strong springs. They saluted.

The door closed after the staff officer.

STEVE DREW sat in the darkened operations office of the flying field at Wembley. He leaned back in his chair, his eyes brooding, and the sudden shrilling of the telephone at his elbow snatched his recumbent body into instant activity. His feet hit the floor the moment his hands took up the phone.

A clear, incisive, unhurried voice snapped in his ear out of the receiver: "Steve—this is OBS 14—Gotha formation, flying high passing over this point, heading inland. Sounds like the biggest show they've ever put on. Must be a million of 'em—better shake it a little—"

"Thanks," grunted Drew. "Get a line on their course?"

"Heading for London from the south—well—good luck—"

Drew's hand reached out, as if in familiar gesture, closed a switch over his desk. A flood of light sprang up in the hangars across the field. At the same instant the screaming voice of an alarm siren split the

night. The shriek rose and fell with ear-piercing harshness.

At the same instant, around a circle encompassing London, lights flashed before the faces of sleepy artillery officers commanding anti-aircraft posts.

Men galloped over the sod of Wembley, heading for the line. Fast working ground crews pushed the black Bristols out of the hangars, rolled them onto a line, twisted props, started motors, warmed them. Pilots raced across the field, ripped out of sleep by the summons of that siren, pulling garments on over their bodies as they ran. Some of them were in pajamas, with leather flying coats over the pajamas, and helmets dangling from wrists.

Wyndam Craig trotted into the operations office, found Drew putting on his leather coat and squashing his helmet over his head.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Gothas!" explained Drew tersely. "Fourteen said they were in force. Coming this way. Ready?"

"Sure—let's go—"

They trotted out on the field, side by side. At the line each of them stood for a moment, looking over his own squadron. Each of them took a step toward his own ship. Each of them halted, took the step back, and grinned a little.

"Well, good luck, old man!" said Craig. "Happy hunting."

"Sure—same to you," grinned Drew. "We'll circle to the northwest, intercept 'em—give 'em hell—"

"Righto!"

They darted toward the vicious-looking Bristols, threw themselves into cockpits. Drew looked up and down the line at One Squadron. He lifted his arm in signal, brought it down sharply. He poured the throttle to his own ship, whirled it away from the line, and sent it hurtling down field, into the wind, snatched it off the earth, took it up and up,

Behind him streamed One Squadron, with Two Squadron sweeping an arc into the west.

When the last ship was off the ground the lights of the field were suddenly extinguished, and the ships were flying through a black void.

Drew was thinking. Not like the old days when one went hunting for a great ghost, hundreds of feet long and as slow as a slug. Gothas—now! Fast, usually escorted by Fokkers. Able to maneuver at top speed. Hard hitting things, painted black to make them more difficult to see. Great ships, manned by crews of five and six with machine-guns protecting every inch of the giant wings and body.

The Bristols snarled upward, climbing fast. The star-strewn sky was overhead. There was a quarter moon and it was bright in a cloudless sky. So bright that it flooded the heights with liquid silver. The earth below was a black smear, excepting where that moonlight struck upon something which reflected it.

The Bristols went to the twenty thousand foot level, began cruising in the cold, thin air of the heights. Drew's head looked over the sides of his cockpit, scanning space, looking for a fleeting shadow, for the glimmering of light on black wings, for the firefly exhaust flare of a B.M.W.

Back and forth, crisscrossing, interlacing in space, and still no move or sign from the ground batteries nor from the masked searchlights.

Ten minutes, twenty, trying to calculate how long it would take the Gotha formation to cover the short miles from the coast at an average speed of a hundred miles an hour. Still calculating.

And suddenly, a scurrying bank of black shapes a thousand feet below. Staring at them! Trying to be sure this was no trick of the imagination. And seeing those little exhaust spurts. Seeing the dim outline

of great wings. Taking a sharp, stinging breath. Feeling hot suddenly, and with pulses pounding. Looking around to see that One Squadron was in position.

And then—from overhead, a comet diving down on the middle of that welter of black wings. Streaking gashes of flame from the nose of the comet cutting sharp incisions into the black of the night.

"Craig!" said a voice in Steve Drew's brain. "Craig—in behind 'em—givin' 'em hell."

He opened the throttle of his own Bristol, wide. He went rocketing down through that thousand feet with the speed of the Bristol building up until it seemed the wings would rip themselves from the fuselage.

CHAPTER VIII

Brothers of Doom



REATH smashed back into Drew's nostrils. The scream of struts rising higher and higher until it was like the siren on the field, and the blare of the motor a continuous whining fury that tore at consciousness and seemed to dynamite the senses.

Black shapes in front of him. His thumb went down on the trips of the machine-guns. The muzzles squirted flame in front of his face and the quick stench of burning powder was driven into his brain.

Flame snarled back at him. Flame spurting from the gunner's cockpits of the big bombers.

Under him, a sudden avalanche of white light flooded the heavens as the searchlight batteries cut in. Mixed with the white light was the ruck and smear of exploding shell from the Archie batteries. The shrapnel and h.e. crashed wickedly in space through which friend and

enemy ship flew. Great concussive impacts threw the ships about.

Drew had his eyes fixed on the leading ship in the Gotha formation. He went over it once, machine-gunning it as he dived. He whirled the Bristol under the big wings of the Gotha, leaped back a thousand feet in space carried by his own momentum, poised his ship for the second attack.

And suddenly, straight through a blinding beam of white light, a black Bristol hurtled at that point ship of the Gotha formation. It was flying like a great bat. Streaks of flame whirled crazily from its exhaust stacks. Its twin guns were hammering.

In the white light a German gunner stood up in his seat, put a knee on the seat for support, leveled his parabellum, looked over the sights, and a spurting sheet of orange-green flame burst from the muzzle of the gun.

It was pointblank range. Fifty feet.

The black Bristol ran headlong into the stream of lead from the Gotha's gun. It seemed to falter, to shake its head under the punishment. It zoomed wildly, shook its wings, seemed to dive again to the attack.

And then a fearful gush of flame roared from its middle. A great puff of intense white heat, and splinters flew from it, and it rolled over and over on its wings, and fell, plunging, still spinning, and burning like a torch.

In the middle of the flame there was a white spot. The face of the pilot, trapped in the cockpit, embraced by the gushing flame from shattered, exploded tanks.

Drew looked down, his body suddenly ice cold, numbed. A moment before there had been a series of white numbers on the black fuselage of that burning Bristol. Cryptic numbers to identify it.

"Two—one—W." Just that. But the 2 meant Second Squadron. The 1, meant the first ship of the Second Squadron — the squadron leader's ship. And the W, meant Wembley, the base of that ship. Strung together it read: Squadron Leader's Ship of the Second Squadron of Wembley!

And to Drew that meant—Wyn-dam Craig—going down—his flesh boiling, his white face, with vacant eyes, turned up toward the stars—toward the young moon. Down, through the crisscrossing of ground searchlights—through the smash and sear and impact of Archie shells.

Craig—gone—

And Steve Drew went berserk. He had no thought. His body was dead. His brain was dead. He merely pointed the nose of his Bristol for that black bulk at the head of the Gotha procession, and kept his eyes fixed on the cockpit out of which that murderous burst of flame had transfixed Craig's Bristol.

He flew squarely into the center of the red smear. He didn't even hear the crackling, staccato rip of slugs through his own wings, around his own head. He was not conscious of the terrific speed of the Bristol.

FIFTY feet from the cockpit of the Gotha he cut in his guns, and held them fixed on the target as they spewed flame.

He roared up toward the Gotha, rolled crazily upside down under its long fuselage, from inverted position, he riddled the belly of the Gotha with another murderous burst. No gunner could survive such a hail of Vickers lead.

He stared as the Gotha staggered, seemed to be suddenly out of breath, trembling.

After a moment, the tremendous shape above him was spinning in a slow, flat spin, almost like a crazy dance.

Drew stood off, deliberately throttling his ship to keep pace with the falling hulk, and smashed burst after burst of slugs through its helpless outline. Tight-mouthed, eyes narrowed to slits—he held off, and like hacking at a dead body—continued to riddle the falling monster.

It made a crazy landing in a field. The bombs failed to explode.

Drew, hardly looking at where he was going, pancaked his Bristol into the same field, snatched a Webley automatic from a holster at his side, jumped out of his cockpit, and stalked across the uneven surface of the field, pistol in hand, toward the grounded plane.

HANS STIENKE moaned a little and tried to move his shattered body. The crushed-together longerons of his cockpit imprisoned him. Floods of pain swept over him, exploding red fury in his brain.

He closed his eyes. He wondered how long it took a man to die. He wondered when the ship would begin to burn—end it—in one terrible instant of agony. Was it true that if one inhaled flame he died instantly?

Then he opened his eyes. There was a gaunt, hell-faced figure standing over him. A figure in the moonlight. A face, like a waxen mask, with hell swirling in the eyes, and a pistol grasped stiffly in the right hand.

Hans Stienke closed his eyes and opened them again. But it was crazy! Impossible. Just another of those visions, hallucination—like before—like flying before on many dark nights.

But the figure did not move—and the face did not change.

After a moment Stienke forced his throat to move. He said: "Hello, Steve—was that you—back there—"

For a moment the pistol in Steve Drew's hand wavered. His eyes stared, seemed forced far back into

his brain. Then his voice leaped out of his throat—a croaking cry—

"Stienke—my God—Hans—you—"

Stienke's blood-smeared, white face moved in a grin. "Me," he said. "Didn't I say—I come—to England—sometime—drop in to see Craig?"

There was a stillness. Hell was screeching in the heights and the a.a. bursts were gutting the heavens and the searchlights probed like a surgeon's fingers.

"That—was Craig—who burned—just before I—got you—" said Steve Drew's voice. "We've been together—all the time—since the beginning—"

Stienke's eyes closed. He seemed fighting for breath.

"Craig," he said, suddenly. "It had to be—maybe—everytime—in the night like this—I think of him—and you—wondering—where—"

"Yeah," said Drew. "Me too—"

"Not much—like Stockholm—is it—" said Stienke. "Hail—the Victor! Here—you—are the only Victor—only room on the Champion's Platform for one. But no laurel wreath this time—something—better—Cross for your breast—I know—I—had many crosses—"

A PATROL squad stopped suddenly, dismounted from bicycles, rushed forward. There was a babble of voices for an instant, then a voice, saying, "Easy now, sir. We'll take care of him—there you are, sir. A bloody Hun, ain't he—no offense, sir—"

And then a lone figure, walking by itself through the night, down one of the box-hedge-bordered roads of rural England. Walking alone, eyes staring strangely straight ahead.

And the sergeant in charge of the patrol saying to his men, "Well, strike me pink if I ever seen the like. 'Ere 'e comes—a captain in the R.F.C. walking along the road carryin' a bloody Hun murderer in 'is

arms, and cryin' as if 'is 'eart would break, and treatin' the bloody murderin' Boche like a baby. Dead—too he was—dead—and the captain, 'e was mutterin' something about: '—erected to the glory of friendship between nations.' Balmly if you ask me—says I—"

* * * * *

The adjutant thrust his head inside the door, looked at Drew's face.

"They've brought Captain Craig in, sir," he said in a low voice. "I thought perhaps—you might want to look at him—for the last time. You were billet mates—since the beginning—"

Drew's eyes looked at the young face of the adjutant.

"I don't want to see him," he said harshly. "I've seen him—going over the hurdles like a bird—I want to remember him—like that. Carry on."

"Yes, sir," said the adjutant. "And—Major von Stienke, sir. They're being—buried, sir—together. Both—Champions—you know. Full military honors—would you like—"

"No," said Drew quietly. "I've got a picture of him, too, I want to keep. Spinning in that discus circle at Stockholm—the muscles of his body under the skin—like one of those Greek statues you see.

"I said—good-by to them both—once—when the six of us separated—back in Stockholm. I'll let that good-by—do for this."

"Thank you, sir," said the adjutant huskily. "Perhaps—I understand, sir—I'm so terribly sorry—"

Drew's eyes were looking out the window.

THE colonel in an American uniform shook hands with Drew and motioned him to a seat. The colonel was trying not to be condescending because of his rank. He was trying to be bluffly friendly.

"Sit down, Drew—sit down!" he

boomed. "Say—this is a treat. Well, I'll bet you're glad we're here, and that you can finally get together with your own kind, eh. This Limey Army is all right, ain't it—but not like the good old United States Army.

Drew looked at him steadily. His face did not change.

The colonel ruffled some papers on his desk. "You'll probably be glad to get a command in your own service. We're going to show these people over here how we Americans do things.

"We'll wind up this war in short order. That's it—good old efficiency and every man in the right place, and all playing the game together.

"You're going to France, Drew. I took the matter up with the R.F.C. authorities, and while they're sorry to lose you, they understand that after all you are an American—and belong with your own kind. I made that very clear—believe me—"

"Thank you," said Drew strangely. "I suppose you did."

"Getting a major's leaf, too," said the colonel. "Look pretty young to me, to be a major. Lot of responsibility for a kid like you—but I guess you know your stuff. You got a record all right, my boy. The U.S.A. is proud of you."

Drew got to his feet. His face was grey. "Thank you, when you have orders, I shall be glad to carry them out." He marched himself out of the room.

The colonel stared. "Well, what do you think of that young pup?" he demanded of his adjutant. "Damned near insulting, I'd call it. Well, we'll whip him into line. Give him proper regard for authority—major or no major—"

"He looks like a bad bargain to me, sir," said the adjutant. "He has a look in his eyes—like a man—going to the electric chair or some—"

thing—like a dead man—all dead inside—just walking around.”

“Really,” said the colonel. “I did not notice. Well—I suppose all those fier fier fellows get that way sooner or later. They’re a special brand of lunatics, so they tell me—”

“Yes, sir,” said the adjutant.

“Oh, hell—make out his transfer papers anyhow,” decided the colonel. “Public Relations is very keen to get him back into our service. Seems the fellow—Drew I mean—was in the Olympics or something—jumped higher—or fell farther—or some idiotic thing, than anybody else—and became a champion of something or other. Major Clarke is very anxious

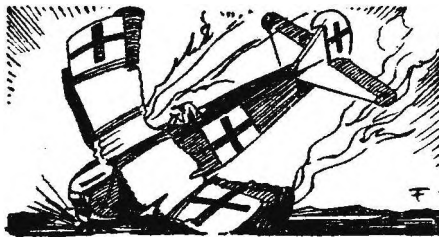
to get to talk with him. Says it will be a wonderful story for the people back home.

“Hell—who ever heard of winning a war on newspaper stories—about a hurdle jumper or something. Damned silly, I’d say—but get him anyhow. The major wants him—and we have to humor the major, I suppose—”

“Yes, sir,” said the adjutant.

He went into the next room, and striking a pose dictated to a male stenographer.

“Request for the transfer of Flight Captain Stephen Drew, R.F.C., to the Expeditionary Forces of the United States of America.”



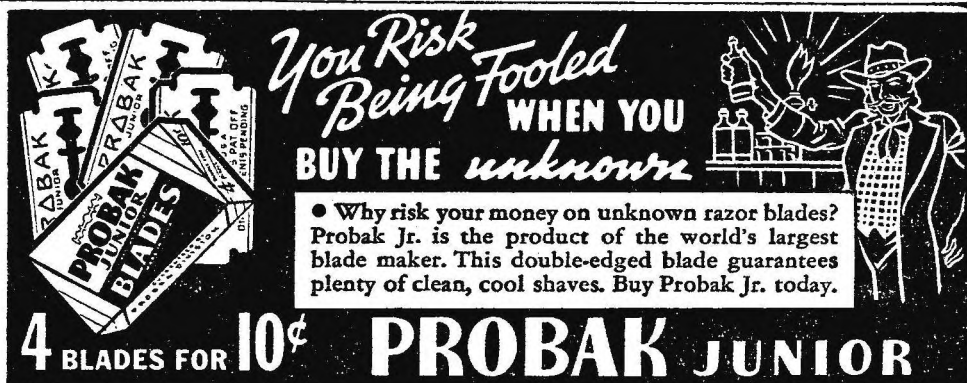
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By ROBERT SIDNEY BOWEN

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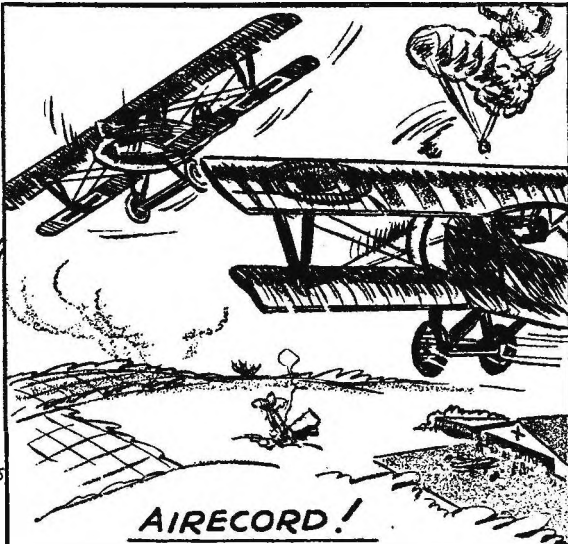
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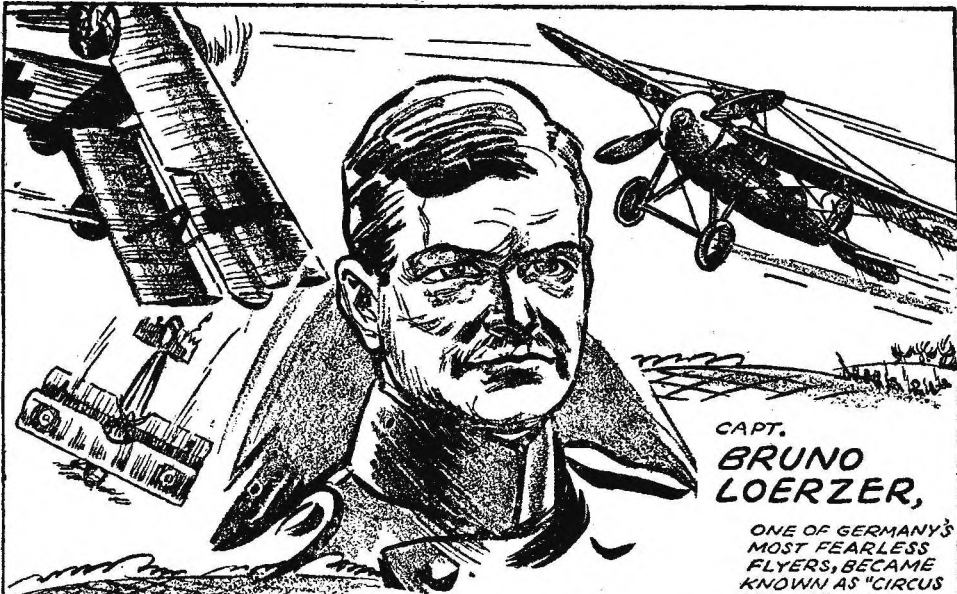
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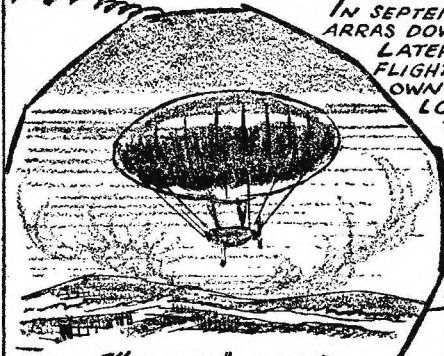
— WHILE ENEMY AVIATORS DESTROYED ONLY 289 AMERICAN SHIPS AND 49 BALLOONS.



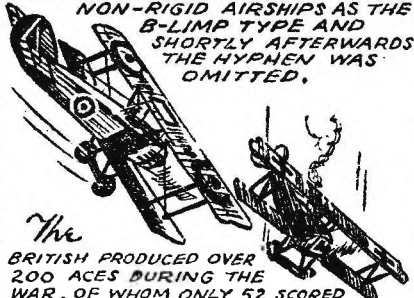
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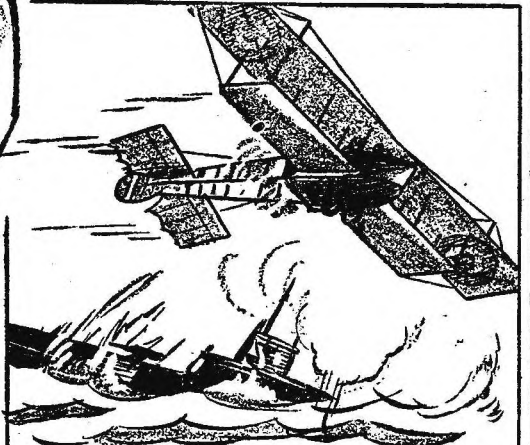


"THE WORD 'BLIMP' ENTERED OUR LANGUAGE DURING THE WORLD WAR WHEN THE BRITISH FIRST CLASSIFIED THEIR NON-RIGID AIRSHIPS AS THE B-LIMP TYPE AND SHORTLY AFTERWARDS THE HYPHEN WAS OMITTED."



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FLIGHT SUB-LIEUTENANT VINEY AND AN OBSERVER ON MAY 15TH, 1916, ATTACKED TWO SUBMARINES AND ONE OF THE 65 LB. BOMBS WHICH THEY DROPPED BLEW ONE SUBMARINE IN HALF.

The COLOR BLIND ACE

*Jeff Burrows Encounters a
New Kind of Air Hero in
the Crucible of War!*

By **ROBERT SIDNEY
BOWEN**

*Author of "Hellion's Wings,"
"Ship for Ship," etc.*

MAJOR LAWSON, C.O. of the 96th Yank Pursuits, leaned against the side of the Camel's fuselage and grinned at the wind-bronzed, square-jawed pilot in the pit.

"Like old times to be on the same drome with you, kid," he said. "How'd you manage to work the transfer to Ninety-Six, anyway?"

Jeff Burrows, veteran Yank Hun smacker, with service all the way back to the French Flying Corps before America entered the war, gestured with one hand, and winked an eye.

"Easy," he grunted. "I once covered up for General Harkness in a Paris brawl. I just went to him and said I wanted to get back in harness with you. You said that von Kritz was in front of this sector?"



Von Kritz had leaped
out was running
toward the woods

The C.O.'s face went serious as he nodded.

"Yes. And he's a hundred per cent better than he was when we used to tangle with him."

Burrows snorted and reached for the throttle.

"He used to be too yellow to mix it up close," he grunted. "And that kind never change. See you later."

Nodding to the waiting grease-balls to jerk the chocks, Burrows rammied the throttle wide open and sent his Bentley-powered ship rocketing across the small field. With the nonchalant ease of a man born to the stick he lifted the plane clear, nosed it skyward, and prop clawed up to seven thousand feet. There he leveled off and headed straight for the shell-pocked strip of No Man's Land.

PRESENTLY, when he crossed over into German territory, gunners on the ground began whamming their usual "greeting" at him. He stuck his head over the side and grinned down. Straightening up he sucked in air, and broke into song. It was perfect to be back with Lawson, his old flying mate of French Flying Corps days. Sort of—

Burrows cut off the last of the thought, stiffened a bit in the seat, and peered hard off his left wings. About a mile or so away a lone plane was cutting through the air toward the American lines. Veteran skyman that he was, Burrows needed only one snap glance at the blurred silhouette to spot it instantly as a Fokker. He kicked left rudder and slammed the stick over.

"Just where the hell do you think you're going?" he grunted. "What a break if you should be von Kritz, so soon!"

Shoving the nose down a shade to gain extra speed, he went ripping down across the sky toward the lone Fokker. Presently, he was close

enough to make out the skull and cross bones insignia of von Kritz' *Staffel*. However, the insignia was done in white against an all black background. Von Kritz' personal insignia was in red against a white background.

Jerking back the loading handles of his twin Vickers, Jeff Burrows shrugged.

"No such luck," he murmured. "However, a little practice won't hurt us any."

He shoved the nose down a shade more, and jabbed both trigger trips. The twin Vickers yammered savagely and slugs tore across the sky to chew their way through the top center section of the Fokker. Had Burrows waited another few seconds, and roared in closer, he could have drilled the helmeted pilot right through the head.

That, however, was one of the many things that made Burrows an ace to Yanks and Germans alike. He had yet to nail a victim who didn't know he was being nailed. It was his custom to let go a challenging burst first.

A moment later he checked his fire and stared in amazement at the Fokker. It was twisting and turning all over the sky as though a dozen invisible ropes attached to it were being jerked this way and that. Suddenly the Fokker spun around on one wingtip too fast. The nose dropped like a brick, and in the next split second the plane was in a power spin.

Three hundred feet lower it came out of the spin, was righted wobbly fashion, and went zigzagging crazily eastward. A dozen times during the dizzy exhibition, of how not to get away from an attacking enemy, Burrows could have closed in and flamed the Fokker earthward in nothing flat. As the Fokker streaked east, he snapped out of it and went roaring down again.

"A greenhorn, of course," he grunted. "And doesn't know what the hell it's all about. However—greenhorns can get good *in time!*"

Lining up the Fokker again, he drilled a long burst through the tail section. The German plane swung around in a dime turn, its nose came up, and Spandau guns spat their hate Burrows' way.

"Trying to be tough, eh?" he growled. "Okay."

Whipping into a lightninglike half roll he cut around and charged in at the Fokker from the side. His thumbs resting lightly on the trigger trips started to stiffen, then relaxed almost immediately. A disgusted curse slid off Burrows' lips. The pilot of the Fokker, was standing half up in the cockpit, frantically hammering a clenched fist against the Spandaus loading handles. A blind man could tell from the pilot's wild actions that both guns were hopelessly jammed.

"You would!" Burrows growled. "Now, instead, I've got to herd you back home."

Pulling his thumbs down from the trigger trips he started to circle in close to the Fokker, and motion its pilot to fly west. As he did, a yell of surprise burst from his lips. A second Fokker was piling down, and its insignia was a red skull and crossbones against a white background. Von Kritz, after all!

FOR a second Burrows hesitated. He could flame the jammed-gun Fokker down, but he'd have to give up the idea of herding the pilot back home. The oncoming German ace would never let him get away with that. Burrows laughed harshly and waved a hand at the first Fokker pilot.

"Some other day, dope!" he belted. "Got more important business just now!"

Cutting to the right, he hauled up

the nose and went thundering straight toward his old rival of French Flying Corps days. However, he had hardly prop-clawed upward three hundred feet, when von Kritz pulled out of his dive, cut sharply around and went tearing hell for leather eastward. Burrows' eyes blazed.

"The same as always!" he roared defiantly. "Once yellow, always yellow. Recognized my old markings didn't you? And you're not having any."

Flattening out, the Yank swung around, searched the air for sight of the first Fokker. With von Kritz too yellow, he'd have to finish the first job and herd the other Fokker back to the Yank side of the lines. However, while he had gone prop-clawing up to give battle to von Kritz, the other German had not taken time out for a nap. On the contrary, he had whipped around eastward and was now just a tiny dot a good three or four miles away.

For over an hour Burrows drifted about in the air above German ground hoping that von Kritz would change his mind, and return for an aerial argument. Finally, a little sore at himself, for missing up on two chances, and twice as sore at von Kritz for showing yellow, Burrows cut back across the American lines and coasted down to a landing on 96's field.

Major Lawson was running over as he taxied up the line.

"What luck, Jeff?" he grinned expectantly.

"Zero, minus!" Burrows growled, and related his experience in a few unprintable sentences.

The C.O. frowned, looked puzzled.

"That's damn funny!" he muttered. "He's been in front of us for three months, but this is the first time I've heard of his running out of a fight. More than once he's tackled three of us, alone."

Burrows snorted and legged out of the pit.

"Not von Kritz," he muttered. "You must be thinking of two other guys. One of these days I'll catch him when he can't go scooting home. And that day's going to be soon, too."

"Maybe it wasn't von Kritz," Lawson murmured as they walked toward the mess. "That Hun has nerve, Jeff. I've seen him prove it more than once."

"Nuts!" was the other's comment. "It's still two other guys you have in mind. But, I'll get him cold, yet. Just watch my prop smoke."

BURROWS meant what he said. Every day for a week he flew the regular patrols, and solo patrols in between, searching for von Kritz. Even when a 96 patrol met von Kritz and some of his pilots, the German ace would pull out of the fight and go roaring eastward rather than cross guns with Burrows. Without question it appeared to be one of the biggest shows of fear and cowardliness ever seen on the Western Front.

Yet, strangely enough, the German would, and did, give battle to any other member of 96. In fact, Burrows almost caught him off guard one day when the German was dog-fighting Major Lawson, and two other 96 pilots. Only by some whirlwind flying was the German ace able to corkscrew out of the scrap and go hell bent eastward before Burrows could close in for a telling burst.

Bright and early on the morning of the eighth day after his first meeting with von Kritz, Burrows was on the tarmac warming up his engine for a quick look-see buzz over the lines before the regular dawn patrol. He turned at the sound of footsteps behind. It was Major Lawson.

"Why waste gas, Jeff?" the C.O.

grunted as he pulled up. "Even if you do spot him, he'll only clear out as usual. Damned if I can understand that bird's actions."

Burrows stared toward the faint light on the eastern horizon.

"You mean he's in love with his own yellow hide," he grunted. "I'm bound to wind up between him and his home drome one of these days."

"If the war lasts long enough," the C.O. echoed. "So help me, it's the damnest—"

Lawson cut himself off short as a squadron office orderly came panting up.

"Wing on the wire, sir!" the non-com gasped. "Urgent, sir!"

The C.O. started for the office, took a step and stopped.

"Better wait a bit, Jeff," he said to Burrows. "It may be urgent at that."

About fifteen seconds after the C. O. disappeared through the door, the alarm siren mounted atop the squadron office blared forth its eerie note. Sleepy-eyed pilots and mechanics started pouring out of the hutment and tents. Burrows joined them as they gathered about Major Lawson who had come bounding back out of the squadron office.

"Get set for a squadron patrol in ten minutes!" the C.O. barked. "Wing just called. Hun infantry are trying a surprise attack on the line in front of us. Von Kritz's outfit and two others are supporting the infantry from the air. We're to drive them back. Never mind troop strafing. Our line is strong enough to beat back an attack as long as we keep the air clear. Okay, to your ships!"

The next ten minutes saw a mad scramble of activity on the tarmac, but when Major Lawson slowly taxied out to take off, every one of the seventeen other pilots was ready to follow right after him. One by one they streaked up into the air, gathered into line formation at two

thousand feet and went prop-clawing eastward.

Face set, eyes brittle, Burrows hunched forward over the stick and strained his eyes through the thin fog that was fast disappearing before the dawn sun. Straight ahead, No Man's Land was continually belching oily gobs of smoke skyward.

Burrows bunched one fist and rapped it sharply against the wide open throttle. Eight days ago it had been a spur of the moment desire to meet von Kritz and slap him down. But today that desire had become a burning obsession.

IN less time than it takes to tell it they were practically on top of the Yank second line of defense. At that point a red "attack" very-light arced out from the cockpit of Major Lawson's ship as he slid over the "hump" and down into a roaring power dive.

A wild roar bursting from his lips, Burrows shoved his own nose down, and ruddered a bit until he was headed straight for a green and black Fokker zooming upward after having laid one of its twenty pound eggs on a Yank machine-gun nest. A split second too late, the German saw Burrows roaring down. Still the German had spunk, and he heeled over on one wing, then reversed and cut back in at lightninglike speed.

Perhaps the maneuver would have fooled the average pilot, but Jeff Burrows had been jabbing trigger trips for too many months in war-torn skies. He simply checked his fire for a moment, "waited" the Fokker pilot out, and then went down guns blazing. The German took the first burst square in the chest, and the second almost tore the head from his shoulders.

Burrows didn't see him crash. He was already roaring upward in a zoom, and raking the belly of a second Fokker with his deadly fire.

Its pilot, like the first, was dead game, and tried his best. Burrows' slugs knocked him right out of the war.

With no other German within immediate shooting range, Burrows continued upward to the peak point of the general fight, his eyes strained for a glimpse of von Kritz's red and white Fokker. Suddenly he spotted it, about three quarters of a mile off his left wings. The German and three of his pilots were trying to "box" two of 96's pilots.

"Hold 'em!" Burrows roared impulsively. "Hold 'em for just a moment, guys!"

As he spoke he banked deliberately east, scorned an easy pot shot at a Fokker directly below, and kept on going until he was well east of von Kritz's plane. Then he slapped around and went streaking toward the fight. A stiff grin stretched his lips, and there was a hard gleam in his narrowed eyes.

"Just try and wiggle out of it *this* time, punk!" he grated savagely. "You've shown yellow long enough."

So intent was he upon closing in on von Kritz, before the German realized what was what, he failed to notice the three Fokkers tearing straight down upon him from the left rear. The first inkling he had of their presence was when the Heavens seemed to explode Spandau bullets, and a spear of fire ripped across the top of his left shoulder. The compass and altimeter virtually dissolved before his eyes.

He slammed the stick over with every ounce of his strength, and practically stood up on right rudder. The Camel groaned aloud in protest, but by a miracle the wings stayed on, and the plane streaked over and down. The instant the nose started down, Burrows kicked on the rudder again, skidded madly out to the left then hauled the nose up and to the left. Too late the diving Germans

tried to follow through and "box" Burrows as he came up. They overshoot their mark and the Yank went thundering out into the clear.

The three Fokkers came out of their dive, wheeled on a dime and charged in from three different sides. Burrows' plane shook and trembled as Spandau bullets plowed into it from all angles. Cursing at the top of his voice, he whirled straight into the path of one of the onrushing Fokkers, steeled himself and pressed both trigger trips. Perhaps the German tried to bank away, or perhaps a sudden cross current of air tilted him over on one wing. Burrows' slugs caught the plane broadside and almost tore it apart in midair.

The Yank's triumph was short lived, however. As he tried to cut back toward the other two, his Camel suddenly lurched drunkenly over on one wing. The instant he moved the stick a sickening sensation formed in the pit of his stomach. The other two Germans had "clipped" one of his elevator wires, also his right aileron had jammed.

SWEAT standing out on his forehead, he fought the controls, succeeded in stopping the spin, and began to ease the nose up inch by inch. Dead ahead of him, however, was the ground. This particular section of ground was a flat, level field. Not daring to turn lest the plane flip into another spin, Burrows cursed through his teeth, cut the ignition, and eased the sluggish nose up a few more inches. Slowly the plane leveled off just as the wheels touched the ground. It bounced twice before it finally settled, three-point, and rolled forward.

For a moment, Burrows sat in the pit bitterly cursing his luck. He knew that he was a good four miles behind the German lines. As he came down he had not noticed any Ger-

man troops in the immediate vicinity, but that didn't mean there weren't.

Burrows suddenly stopped cursing, glanced upward, and started cursing again. A German plane was circling low over the field, its pilot looking down over the rim of the cockpit. The reason for Burrow's renewed cursing was the insignia on the side of the fuselage. It was a red skull and cross bones on a white background.

"You, von Kritz!" the words exploded from Burrows' lips. "Coming down to take me prisoner, just as if you'd done the works, eh? Come on then, just try it even, now!"

Snaking out his service gun Burrows sat rigid in the pit while the Fokker circled lower and lower. Presently it touched earth about sixty yards from Burrows' plane and rolled forward another ten. Finger crooked about the trigger, the Yank waited for the German to leap out and come running over. If it couldn't be a sky showdown, then it would be a ground showdown. Right! It—

The thought fled Burrows' brain and he grunted aloud. Von Kritz had leaped out the far side of his cockpit, and was running hot-foot toward some bordering woods. A few seconds later and the German was out of sight. For perhaps half a minute Burrows stared dumfounded then he practically leaped from a sitting position out of his plane.

"Some damn trick, of course!" he panted as he started running. "But the damn fool left his prop ticking over."

Legs working like piston rods he tore over to the Fokker, and hurled himself into the pit. As he rammed the throttle forward he fully expected to hear a blast of rifle fire from the woods. Not bothering for altitude he leveled off and banked around toward the west. Once he looked back, but there was no sign of von Kritz, or anybody else on the field.

Turning front again, he searched

the skies for signs of the general dog-fight. There wasn't a German plane in the air. Nor was there a Yank plane for that matter. And so, well pleased with himself for escaping, and more scornful of von Kritz than ever, Burrows winged back to the American side and hightailed southeast to 96th's field.

As he landed, half the entire squadron came running out. The C.O. was in the lead and his eyes popped as he recognized who was in the pit.

"What the hell?" he gasped.

Burrows leaped to the ground, and grinned.

"A gift from von Kritz," he chuckled. "I was shot down, and he came—"

Burrows suddenly stopped short, stared back into the cockpit. A folded sheet of paper was stuck back of a fuselage cross-bracing wire. He could see his name on it, written in a bold hand. Reaching in he took out the paper, smoothed it and stared at the pencil scrawled words inside. The letter read:

My dear Captain Burrows:

It is the code of my family to repay a humane deed in kind, though it take a

lifetime. The chance for me to repay you is mine, now.

Eight days ago, my younger brother made his first flight at the Front without telling anybody. The rash bravery of youth, of course. Fortunately he met you and his guns jammed. I arrived just in time to see you refuse to shoot him down with jammed guns. There are many of your countrymen who would not have spared his life. But you did. And since that day I have pledged myself to repay you if the opportunity ever presented itself.

It has. You are down there in that field, to become a prisoner for the remainder of the war. To a man like you, prison could be worse than death. And so, I spare you your life, and fulfill my honor pledge. When we next meet, we shall both be able to fight on even terms.

von Kritz.

P. S. Being a gentleman and a sportsman, yourself, I know that you will destroy the Fokker, just as I shall destroy the Camel.

Burrows read the scrawled note through twice, handed it to Major Lawson.

"My error," he grunted. "I must be color blind! I thought the guy was yellow, when he's really white. Give me a match, someone, and all of you stand back while I fire this crate."

IN THE NEXT ISSUE
WAR EAGLE
A Novelette of Air Courage
 By **GEORGE BRUCE**

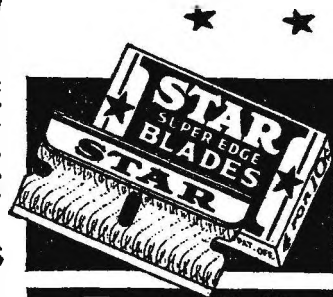


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You've caught up with shaving comfort when you ask for a package of Star Single-edge Blades! Made since 1880 by the makers of the original safety razor, Star Blades have keener, longer-lasting, uniform edges! 4 for 10¢ everywhere. Star Blade Div., Brooklyn, N. Y.

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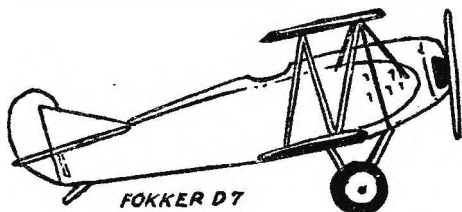
4 FOR 10¢

The Ships on the Cover

By EUGENE M. FRANDZEN

THE one type of plane most talked of when the German air service of World War times is mentioned, is the Fokker. And the outstanding plane of the Fokker line was the D7. Anthony Fokker, a Dutchman, tried to interest the Allies in his early efforts in plane building but met with such stubborn sales resistance that when war clouds formed over Europe and the German government showed it meant real business in buying Fokker planes he took up residence in Germany and promptly started to grind out fighting ships.

From the start his planes were outstanding. Those first monoplanes of his were flimsy many-wired braced things but they



had stability, a characteristic which was lacking in most other types.

First Synchronized Machine-Gun

It was on an early Fokker monoplane that the first synchronized machine-gun appeared. This gun all but blasted the Allies from the skies.

As time progressed, so did Fokker planes. He switched to biplanes. Out of these came the D7, the most dreaded plane the Allies had to contend with.

It had no interplane bracing wires. The only external bracing wires were a pair crossed under the nose on the undercarriage.

On lack of interstrut bracing there goes an interesting side story. German flyers, on seeing no wires on the Fokker D7, threw up their hands in horror and refused to fly the darned things.

"It can't be done," they said even as they saw Fokker himself putting the new D7 through a series of difficult maneuvers.

A Fine Flying Steed

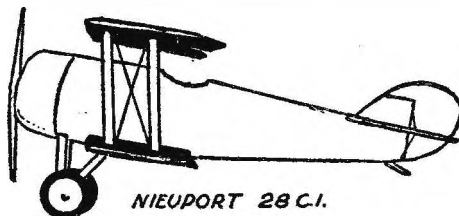
Fokker was not stumped. He yanked the D7s back into his assembly plant and had wire braces installed. Out they came again for tests. The German Aces took them up and gave them the works. They

came down grinning with appreciation for a fine steed which could outfly any German ship in the skies. After Fokker had his ship in mass production he yanked the wires off all the D7s and said, "There, without those wires which are just dummies, you'll get a couple of extra miles per hour." They believed him and the real Fokker D7 was launched to do more damage to the Allies than any other ship.

The Squadron of Death

Another trick construction stunt on the Fokker was the welding in the joints of the fuselage. They did this welding in such a manner that it was real mass production done cheaply. After the joints were welded the frame looked as though it had been in a wreck, it was so out of shape. The welders merely hammered it back into alignment in a few minutes and it was ready for the riggers. It took our own engineers nearly two years after the war was over to find out how the Germans had done the stunt.

Many German squadrons painted their ships gaudy colors, put decorations on them and even pictures. One squadron of Fokker D7s called themselves the Squadron of Death. And on the fuselage of each plane was painted a skull and crossbones. They had such faith in this death dealing ship that they flaunted their gruesome insignia in the faces of the enemy as they

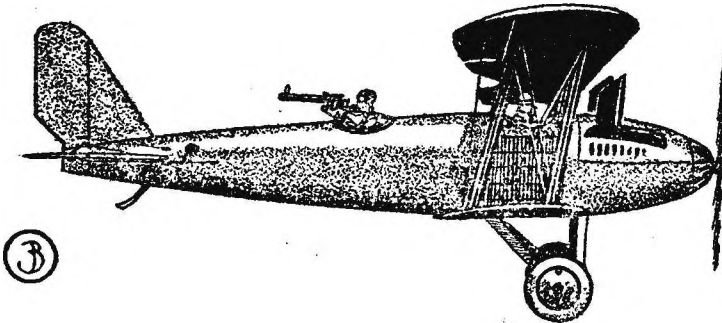
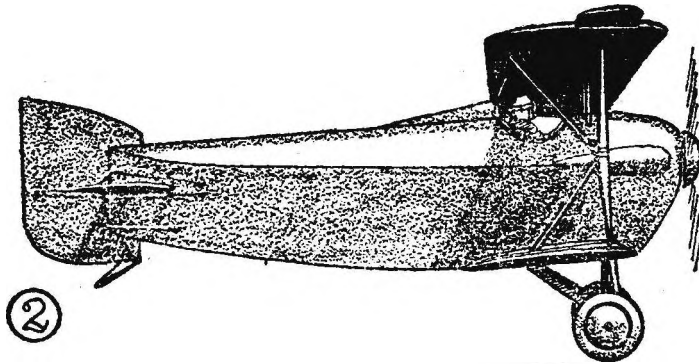
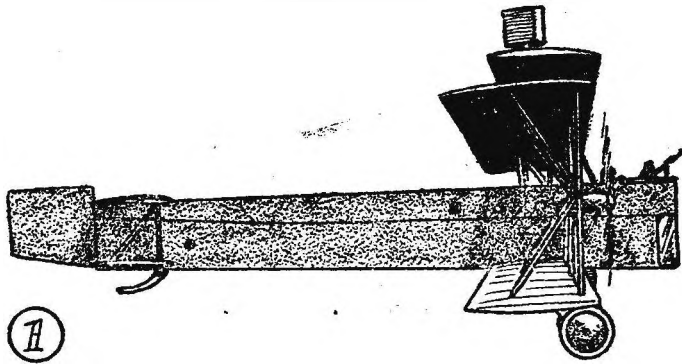


drove them out of the sky. But war is a business, and like peacetime business a competitor's product must be equalled or bettered or you go to the wall. The Allies didn't intend going to the wall. True, from behind the eight ball things looked bad, but they had arched their backs and in a very few months the Fokker D7 was fighting for its life.

On the cover two Boche pilots tangled with a single Nieuport 28 C.1. Both Fokkers had skull and crossbones insignia on
(Concluded on page 113)

Unscramble These

Six More Crates to Try Your



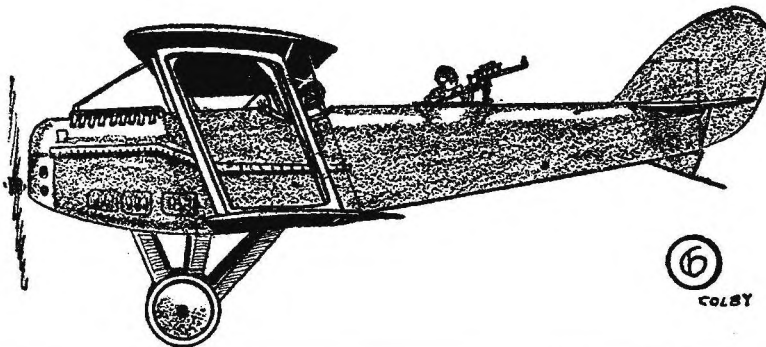
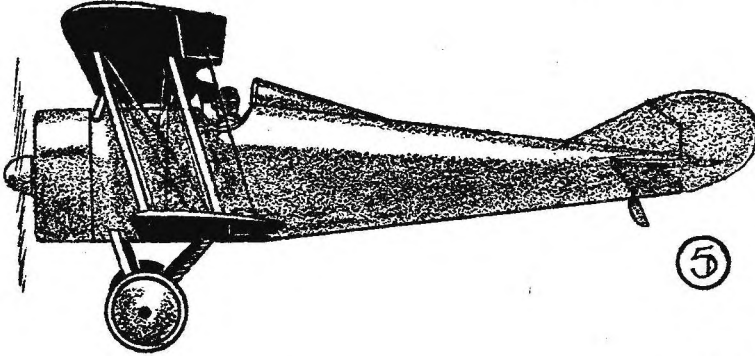
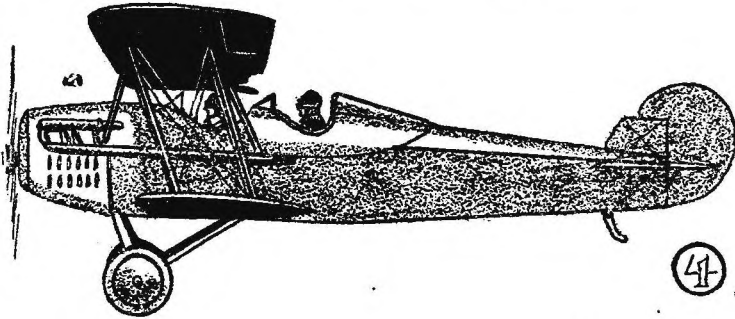
Above are pictures of six planes used in World War combat. Here are their names—but in the wrong order, with the letters scrambled:

1. SADRDANT 1-E
2. RUTCSIS 18 B
3. THOUGV E7V

4. NITMAR ROMBEB
5. TOUCS 3K RAMNIT
6. EEERPL RIFTEHG

World War Planes!

Wits on—it's Great Fun, Peelots!



Examine closely the crates pictured above.

Then: First unscramble the names of the planes—second, list the planes in the proper order.

Write your list below before referring to the answers on page 73.

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1. | 4. |
| 2. | 5. |
| 3. | 6. |

HAWK *in the* NIGHT

U-Boats Make the Mediterranean Simmer for Yank Sub-Chasers!

By **BOB CLARE**

*Author of "Hawk's Business,"
"Hawk of the Mediterranean," etc.*

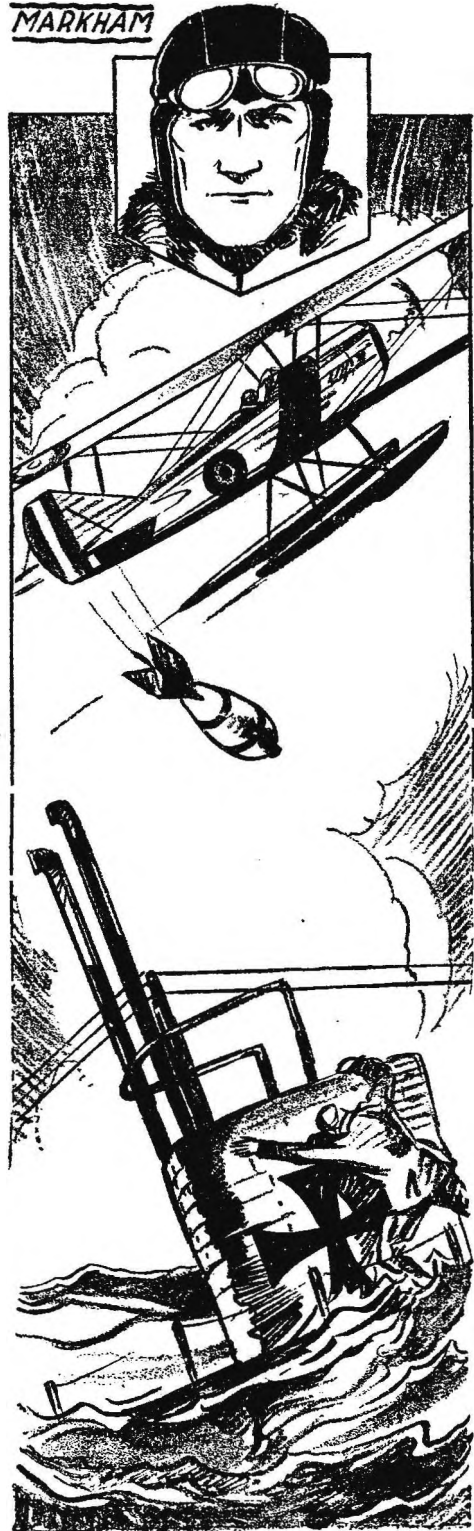
THE long room was full of cigarette smoke, and the rise and fall of conversation, and sudden laughter. Bill Markham sat with his long legs out before him and sipped a Tom Collins. A real Tom Collins, he told himself. After three weeks of Port Said, this was like getting home.

The stocky British captain with the naval aviation insignia on his uniform came back from the bar and sat down. He seemed to have been drinking a lot.

"Markham," he said, leaning across the table, "wonder what those chaps 'ud say if they found out you were the famous 'Hawk of the Mediterranean'? They'd like to know, really, old fellow. The Hawk is the biggest hero of the war to them even if his identity is a mystery."

Markham's good-natured smile vanished, and his eyes were sharp chips of grey ice.

"Shut up, Jollifer," he said. His voice was slow, drawling. "You met me officially as the Hawk, and you're one of damn few who know me that



The bomb hurtled over the U-boat

way. My biggest advantage is my mystery; and it mustn't be busted. Besides, you know I hate this damn-fool hero stuff."

It was a long speech for the taciturn Markham. He sat back and dragged at his cigarette, but his eyes didn't leave Jollifer's. The naval aviator took a drink from his glass. "But Markham old chap, think of it! The whole Med talks of your exploits. Fritz calls you the 'Black Bat of Hell' and puts a price on your head!"

Bill Markham put a big, sun-burned hand on Jollifer's arm, and his eyes bored into the Englishman's. Not a word was said, but Jollifer looked away, sank down in his chair. Markham drank his Tom Collins and looked around the room. Parts of conversations reached him above the rattle of glasses and the murmur of voices.

"Wiped out the whole bloomin' convoy, they did. Three Blue Funnel ships and a Glen liner, out o' Port Said with wheat for England. And not two hundred miles from here!"

"Blime! It's got so bad I'm harf afraid to drink water—afraid I'd swallow a blarsted U-boat! They're—

A naval aviator came across the room, slapped Jollifer on the back. "Say, old chap, what happened this afternoon? I just heard you'd got back."

Jollifer straightened in his chair. "Oh, hello, Jenkins! Want you to meet Captain Markham, R.F.C. Captain Jenkins, Markham. 'Bout this afternoon, Jenkins—somehow I lost you bally fellows at sea, and then got set down with engine trouble. Thought my goose was cooked for a bit, but I located the trouble. I got in a while back."

"Glad of it," said Jenkins heartily. "Hope you gave the mechs hell about the engine."

Jollifer frowned at his glass. "Oh, to be sure!"

Jenkins left, with a nod to Markham, who had not spoken. He had been watching the stocky naval flyer closely, and was wondering what was making Jollifer act so queerly. He didn't seem so drunk now. He sat there and twirled the points of his silly little black mustache, apparently absorbed in the conversation at the next table. The Hawk listened without seeming to.

"—and they're giving Fritz' subs plu-perfect hell. It's no sinecure, though. The Q-boats are nothing but rebuilt Italian and Greek *feluccas*. They'd stand up just about two minutes under fire from a sub's four-one deck guns."

"I DON'T quite understand what their game is," said another.

"I forgot you'd just got down here, Howard. You see, the Q-boats are rebuilt *feluccas*, coastwise brigs, anything we can get our hands on. When they're done over, they're fitted with two twelve-pounders under a false deck-house. The deck-house drops at the touch of a lever—instantly. They carry depth bombs, machine-guns, and every sort of hand weapon. Their business is to cruise all over the Med until one of Fritz' subs pops up.

"He'll pop up, say, about six thousand yards off, and fire a shell over the brig. Of course what the sub is after is food, fuel, or perhaps just information. The brig looks like a harmless Italian fishing boat. Well, as soon as that shot comes, about eight or nine men drop a boat over and row off. It's the abandon-ship gesture, see? It looks to the sub as if these men were the only ones aboard. Of course they aren't. The bally Q-boats carry a crew of thirty-five.

"Well, if the sub isn't suspicious, it comes in closer. As soon as it

comes damn close, down goes the deck-house and the brig fires with everything it's got. They don't take chances on giving the game away, and when they cut loose it usually means Davy Jones for the Fritzies."

"Gad! That sounds jolly!"

"You won't think so long, young 'un. We call the Q-boat service the 'Suicide Club' around here! Why—"

The outside door slammed suddenly as a man rushed into the room. "Is Colonel Hawkins here?"

Jollifer turned to Markham. "It's the wireless operator," he said. "Wonder what's up?"

Colonel Hawkins was there, took the folded paper. Instantly he was on his feet. His voice rang loudly in the suddenly quiet room.

"This is an SOS from Sanford, on Brig Five, men! He has been attacked by a U-boat and a sailing vessel—wants help at once. His position is roughly a hundred miles due west of Zante."

There were nine pilots in the room and they hit the floor together. Their voices were a shouted chorus.

"Let me go, sir!"

Bill Markham was on his feet too, but he didn't stop there. He went across straight to the colonel. He spoke briefly, headed for the door, was gone.

The colonel turned back to the men. "Captain Markham has gone," he said.

Jollifer, the stocky naval flyer, stood still for a moment only, and there was a strange look on his face.

"I want to tell him something before he leaves," he said to no one in particular, and then he stepped outside.

Bill Markham, the Hawk, was thinking fast as he hurried down to the bay. Sanford was an old friend; he had sailed on Sanford's brig once, on one of the toughest jobs the Hawk had ever tackled. And now the Q-boat was being attacked by a

sub and a sailing vessel! It looked bad.

It looked like a deliberate plan to break the mystery of the Q-boats. Damn! That was what was up! That was why Colonel Brown, chief of British Intelligence at Gibraltar, had sent that message. He could recall it word for word.

Proceed to Suda Bay at once. Sudden concentration of U-boats in that locality doing great damage. Suspect something big is up. Work fast.

Evidently, thought the Hawk, there is not only something big up, but there's a leak somewhere. That attack on Sanford couldn't be just a chance encounter.

AT the docks, the Hawk found his single-seater seaplane ready to go. The two mechanics in charge of it assured him it was fueled, in perfect shape. He nodded, took time in his characteristic way to inspect everything himself. Satisfied, he slipped on flying coat and helmet. The big Colt automatic at his hip was secure in its holster.

From a pocket inside the cockpit he took a big map. The flood lights gave plenty of illumination as he rapidly plotted his course. To Zante, in the Ionian Islands, was about 250 miles. Due west from there 100 miles located Sanford's brig. That would mean flying northwest by west about 275 air miles. The fact that the flight would be over the sea at night didn't enter the Hawk's mind. He was thinking of the time it would take.

As he put the map back into the cockpit and climbed long-leggedly after it, Jollifer came running up.

"I wanted to tell you to forget that rummy talk of mine tonight," said the Englishman. "You'll never hear it again. And take this with you—you're likely to need it. It's from my own stock. I keep a supply

of decent liquor in my room, y' know." From beneath his coat he took a bottle, handed it over. It was Hennessy's Three Star Cognac.

The Hawk grinned and slipped the bottle in beside the map. "Thanks, Jollifer," he said. "I reckon I might need it before I get back."

He slipped down into the familiar cockpit, fixed gloves and goggles. One of the mechs swung the big prop and the motor caught with a thunderous roar. Then the mooring lines were cast off and the seaplane moved down the lighted stretch of water. The big Isotta was beating rhythmically as the Hawk lifted the plane into the air and disappeared down the black lane of the night.

The Hawk's wrist-watch said ten-thirty as he straightened out on his course, climbing as he went. He could be himself now. He was in the plane where he belonged. He had supervised every detail of its construction, and he knew it intimately.

The Italians had built it for him up at Sesto Calende. The motor that was eating into the darkness now was an Isotta-Fraschini of the Asso 300 H.P. type. The entire plane was built around that motor. Single-seated, small, it could be handled as no Spad was ever handled. The Hawk knew, and as Bill Markham, he had made a reputation in France for handling Spads.

The seaplane had two machine-guns firing through the prop—the engine was not a pusher—and carried four specially designed bombs in a rack beneath the cockpit. German U-boats never commented on the Hawk's ability with those bombs. They didn't live long enough.

The night was clear and cool as the Hawk drove the plane with throttle wide open. The moon would not be up for some time yet. As the big prop bit into the night the Hawk's thoughts were busy. If Sanford's brig were captured, it would mean

the secrecy surrounding the Q-boats would be gone; and that meant their usefulness gone too!

The motor roared on and on, and now a pale quarter moon was riding the sky. It was, the Hawk thought idly, like a white-hulled ghost ship. Light ran quiveringly over the sea, painted the wings of the seaplane with weird color. The hands of his watch pointed to midnight. It wouldn't be long now! Any moment—

HE wiped his goggles swiftly. A boat stood out down there. He nosed the plane over into a steep dive, held the throttle wide. The wind tore at his head, shrieked through the wires. At five hundred feet he leveled off and circled watchfully.

The sea was empty except for that silent vessel. There were no riding lights on the boat; it seemed to be drifting aimlessly, helplessly. The Hawk went down swiftly. He was swearing a stream of good American profanity now—too late, dammit, too late!

The seaplane took the shining water lightly, ran in toward the *felucca*. Where was Sanford? Where was his crew? There was only that ghostly moon, and the desolate boat! Cautiously, ears strained to catch the slightest sound, the Hawk tied the seaplane up to the port side of the *felucca*. Swiftly he reached the deck and, Colt in hand, stopped in the shelter of the deck-house.

Hell! This didn't look like Sanford's brig! He had the wrong boat! He took a step forward, stopped with his foot raised. What was that? And then it came again, from below—a groan, pitifully and agonizingly weak!

The Hawk made a rapid, cautious round of the deck. There was no one. Sure of that, he started down the narrow companionway. "It's as

black as the inside of a whale!" he thought. Stale and sickening smells rose as he descended. Damn, this boat was filthy! *This* wasn't Sanford's Q-boat!

THAT eerie groan came again as he reached the foot of the companionway. Markham gripped the Colt more tightly, moved aft through the reeking darkness. The groaning sounded again, from the far end of the alleyway. The Hawk stopped at the door to the last cabin, caught the labored breathing from within, and acted with characteristic swiftness.

He pushed the door open with his foot, stepped in and quickly to one side. A match flared in his hand—and the sight that met his eyes made even his hardened nerves jump. He stared in utter unbelief. And then the match burned his fingers and went out. He swore and struck another match. Quickly he lighted the stub of a candle he saw stuck in a bottle. Then he looked again at the horrible sight across the cabin.

A man, arms outstretched, hung against the wall; hung there crucified with short knives through his hands and upper arms! His head hung limply on his chest and blood dripped with horrible steadiness to the floor. The Hawk stepped forward, raised the man's head. And then he stepped back with a sharp curse of rage. The man was Sanford. Sanford!

As swiftly and as gently as he could the Hawk pulled those devilish knives loose, eased the dying man's body down on the cabin's single bunk. Sanford was dying from loss of blood. The floor gleamed darkly with it.

The Hawk was swearing endlessly now; in every language he knew. The oaths—in sibilant Arabic, harsh German, in Italian, in French, in Spanish and in Texas cowpuncher slang—rolled ceaselessly from his

thinned lips as he worked over Sanford.

He tore the man's shirt off to bandage the wounds. Then he found the big reason for the loss of blood. Sanford had a gaping wound in the left shoulder. And even as he worked and swore he was thinking rapidly. Whoever had done this was a fiend. But why—why had it been done?

Sanford groaned, his face twisted with pain. Markham looked around the cabin. If he could just find some water! There didn't seem much chance of saving Sanford's life, but if he could be revived enough to talk—

The Hawk took the candle, searched every inch of the filthy *felucca*. There wasn't an ounce of water anywhere. There was nothing; not even a whiskey bottle. Whiskey! That was it! There was that bottle of cognac in the plane!

The Hawk lost no time in getting the cognac and returning to Sanford. He forced some of the fiery liquor down the man's throat, waited. There was no apparent reaction. He tried again, managed to get a good drink through the dying man's dry lips.

Sanford was writhing, twisting now. Suddenly he found his voice, moved his cracked lips with an effort.

"—won't talk—damn you—torture." For an instant his eyes opened, stared bloodshot and wild at the ceiling.

The Hawk tried to soothe him. "This is Bill Markham, old fellow; Markham, your friend. I'm trying to help you. Tell me what has happened." He gave Sanford more of the cognac.

The dying man's lips moved again. "Frien'," he said thickly, "Mus' be frien'." His breathing was easier. "Lousy sons tortured—refused to talk—wanted info—mation—crew

dead—" The pitifully weak voice died out, and then began again suddenly.

"Suspicious *felucca*—stopped it—sent boarding party. Thought—it Greek. Attacked party—my decks—swarming with men. U-boat under lee—of *felucca*—butchered men like—flies."

The Hawk listened with grim patience, afraid that a question would disconcert Sanford.

"*Felucca* crew Germans—spoke English—tried make me—tell about Q-boats—dirty son named—Berglund in command."

The Hawk clenched his big hands. Otto Berglund! He knew the man to be the most diabolically clever German agent worked the Med. He it was whose cunning had made the U-boat campaign there such an inhuman thing; he it was who kept the subs posted on Allied shipping, particularly in regard to hospital ships. The man boasted about it himself; his ingenuity was matched only by his great egotism.

BUT Sanford was still murmuring. "—wouldn't talk—Berglund and—sub commander tortured—me—damn fiend—von Gurnow."

The Hawk knew von Gurnow's reputation, knew him for the vilest, blackest-hearted devil that ever torpedoed a hospital ship and laughed as helpless wounded men struggled and drowned!

Sanford was weakening fast. Bill Markham gave him more of the cognac, leaned still closer to catch the sounds from those barely moving lips.

"—put knives—in me—to wall—promised come back—morning—try again—make me—talk. Didn't know—wound in shoulder. Fooled 'em—lost too much—blood—last till morning."

The Hawk reached for the cognac as Sanford's voice trailed off. Then

the dying man's hands went to his stomach with a great effort. He was twisting horribly, his features contorted with agony. His eyes opened and closed convulsively, and then they stayed open in a staring, unseeing wideness.

"Damn you!" Sanford whispered. "You've poisoned—me!" His weak voice rose in an agonizing scream. "Tortured too far—this time! Friend—you—von Gurnow!" He made an attempt to point. "Poison—you fiend! I—"

His last words were drowned in a moan as for a split second his tortured eyes stared straight at the Hawk. Then he rolled lifeless to the floor.

For a minute that was an eternity Bill Markham did not move. He had seen death in many horrible forms, but never like this. For the rest of his life Sanford's dying eyes would search his soul with their burning accusation.

Mechanically the Hawk picked up the cognac bottle. And swift thought flooded his mind with light. Jollifer had given him that cognac! Jollifer with his pretense of drunkenness, his talk of the Hawk, his queer manner with Jenkins! Jollifer who had been lost from the afternoon patrol, had been late returning! All the small things that had seemed of no importance then loomed suspiciously large now.

The Hawk's eyes narrowed to thin slits, his lips tightened to a hard line. Was Jollifer a German agent? Had he slipped from the patrol to plan this attack on Sanford? Was Jollifer the leak? It seemed plain now. When Jollifer had learned that Markham was flying to aid Sanford, he had given him the poisoned cognac! That stuff had been meant for the Hawk—and he had given it to Sanford!

And then, standing there in that filthy cabin with its blood-soaked

floor, standing there above the twisted body of poor Sanford, the Hawk swore furiously, coldly. To hell with everything now, until he got that putrid-hearted Jollifer—that devil Berglund—that inhuman gorilla von Gurnow!

The candle was flickering its life out in a pool of grease. Crazy shadows writhed in a macabre procession around the walls. The Hawk watched them for a moment, his face inscrutable, his mind working furiously.

LOTS was to be done, and not much time to do it in. Sanford had said Berglund would be coming back with the brig. That beast von Gurnow would be returning in the U-boat. The Hawk smiled a grim, tight-lipped smile at the thought.

The candle sputtered and went out. The Hawk made a search found another stub in the malodorous galley, and hurried back to the cabin where Sanford's body lay. As soon as he had lighted the candle, he went on deck. Every minute was precious now.

The moon was paler. The Hawk looked at his watch. It was four o'clock! Over the port side of the *felucca* and down to the seaplane he climbed. With extreme care he lifted one of those special bombs from its rack beneath the cockpit. It was a tough job getting back on deck with that heavy, dangerous load. Carrying the bomb as if it were a baby, he went below, back to that gruesome cabin.

The Hawk was working fast now. From the bunk he took a dirty blanket, tore it into wide strips. Quickly he knotted the ends of one strip together to form a sling. Above the cabin door he located a crack where one of the wooden beams had sagged away from the deck above. He shoved a second strip of blanket through this crack, made it fast, and secured the sling to it. A third strip

he tied to the sling and left hanging downward.

Now for the delicate part of the job. Carefully he lifted the torpedo-shaped bomb over his head and, standing on tip-toe, every inch of his tall frame stretched upward, he slipped the bomb into the blanket sling. A slip meant death. If his long fingers lost their hold, the Hawk knew that he would join Sanford instantly. But the sling was well made; the knots held.

Now for the final touch. He knotted the lower end of the hanging strip firmly to the inside handle of the door, tested it to make sure that the door could be half shut without pulling that bomb down. It was fixed, the trap was set!

The Hawk blew out the candle, slipped carefully through the door. For a moment he turned to face through the darkness the place where Sanford's body lay.

"Good-by, old man," he said.

The Hawk smiled that grim smile of his again as he turned toward the foot of the companionway. In five minutes he'd be up there in the dark sky, waiting, waiting. And when that sub showed up, when that devil Berglund hove to in Sanford's brig, he'd still wait, until von Gurnow and Berglund had had time to reach that fatal cabin. Then he'd dive and finish the job!

And then the Hawk stopped abruptly. There was a heavy bump against the starboard side of the *felucca*! What the hell! Footsteps sounded loudly across the deck. Berglund was back! Von Gurnow had arrived! The Hawk was caught in his own trap!

There was no time to return to the cabin, undo what he had done. The Hawk slipped quickly past the bottom of the companionway, stepped into the entrance to the forecabin. A light was coming down from the deck. The Hawk gripped his big

Colt automatic by the barrel and waited. He was cool, machinelike, now that the time for action had come.

The man with the flashlight reached the bottom step, turned toward that fatal cabin. And the Hawk struck—struck like the bird he was named for, suddenly and surely. The butt of the automatic smashed down on the back of the man's head. Even as the fellow fell, the Hawk had turned toward the deck.

His long legs took the steps three at a time. He was counting on the suddenness of his appearance to help him reach the plane. A quick rush, a few shots from his automatic—

Then a light blazed in his face, blinded him. He fought a tangle of arms and legs with all his great strength until a blow on the head put him out.

WHEN he came to he didn't open his eyes. He wanted to think, to figure. His nose told him he was no longer on that filthy brig where he had found Sanford. His body told him he was lying on a ship's bunk, bound hand and foot. His ears told him someone was moving around near him.

He opened his eyes and studied the man standing over him.

"Otto Berglund, at your service," said the man, smiling.

The Hawk measured the man swiftly, saw at once what gave the German his greatest advantage. Berglund did not look like a German any more than he looked like a Frenchman; or a Turk. The trim mustache and Vandyke beard lent a final touch to a face that was singularly devoid of racial characteristics. You'd believe, thought the Hawk, that the man was a dyed-in-the-wool native, no matter in what country you saw him.

"This is an unexpected pleasure," said Berglund. His English was

natural, without accent. "I've always wanted to meet the Hawk of the Mediterranean—like this!" He waved a hand to stop Bill's feigned look of bewilderment, his attempt at denial. "I know who you are. That plane out there identifies you completely."

The Hawk's voice was as drawling, as ever when he replied. "Suppose I am. What about it?"

"I've already planned that, and I'll tell you, for Otto Berglund's plans always work." His voice was heavy with egotism now. "I shall take you to Cattaro. From there it will be a quick trip straight to Berlin. After all, there is an honor attached to your capture, and a large sum of money which the Fatherland offered some time ago for you—dead or alive. I shall take you in alive. It will give Otto Berglund the prestige which is only his just due. It will be much better than to have left you to be destroyed in the nice little bomb trap you arranged for us on the *felucca*—and which I found in time, since I am cautious. I prefer there is proof of your life—and death."

The German packed a pipe carefully, lit it. The smell of the tobacco made the Hawk writhe. How he wanted a smoke! Berglund was going on:

"Captain von Gurnow, of whom you've probably heard, was to have met me back at the other boat. His plans had to be changed, and now we meet him this afternoon. You and I will transfer to his *Unterseeboot* for the trip to Cattaro." The German spy puffed at his pipe for a moment.

"The men here on this boat can carry on without me. I have picked them for that purpose. With you facing a firing squad in Berlin, I will return to direct this boat from different ports. Its disguise is perfect. As a supposed British mystery

ship, I shall see to it that it meets others; it will destroy those others until not a single one remains to hinder our submarines!"

The Hawk was about to reply when a sudden sound made him stop. He felt the boat slowing up. There were running feet, and a quick knock at the door.

A sailor entered at Berglund's guttural order.

"A shot across our bow from an armed Yankee ship," he said in German.

The Hawk's poker face did not betray his quickening thoughts as he listened. That would be one of the subchasers from the squadron recently stationed at Corfu. There was a chance yet!

BERGLUND'S rapid orders made the Hawk realize once more the German's daring cunning.

"Ask them over at once," the spy said. "Remember your English, and make a show of refueling that plane. 'Raus!'"

Berglund spun around, busied himself at a cabinet for a moment. Then he was leaning over Markham with a glass in his hand.

"Drink!" he ordered harshly. "It will put you to sleep for an hour or so!"

The Hawk studied the man's eyes for a moment. He realized it was obey or die. Berglund was holding him up in the ropes which bound him, was holding the glass to his lips. The Hawk swallowed the bitter, whitish liquid quickly, watching the German through eyes that were narrowed to thin slits. Berglund was at the door.

"Sleep, my friend. I shall fool the *Schweinehunde* of Yankees!" And then he was gone.

Berglund reached the deck to see the United States subchaser lying to a few hundred yards off to starboard. The strong boarding party

of Yankee gobs was already clambering over the low freeboard of the brig. He stepped forward to meet them.

"Oh, I say, but this is good!" The German's English was flawless. "You chaps really went into a flat spin over us, didn't you? I'm delighted; it gives us a chance to show you what kind of a boat this really is." He extended his hand.

"Cripes!" said the young Yank officer to his men. "This ain't no Greek boat. What the hell!" He took the outstretched hand, completely bewildered.

"Ever heard of the British mystery ships?" asked Berglund lightly. "Well, old fellow, you're on one. We'll show you around."

He led the way to the deck-house. He showed them how, at the pressure of a finger, the whole structure dropped down to expose the two big twelve-pounders. He showed them the hidden runway at the stern where great depth bombs lay ready to be released. He took them over the entire ship, explaining every detail.

"We simply cruise around, you know, and play the innocent coast-wise vessel," said Berglund. "We run into strange adventures sometimes. Why, only today, we picked up a poor blighter who would probably have kicked off if we hadn't come along when we did. One of our flyers, you know, out on submarine patrol duty. Got too far from his base, and ran out of petrol. He's down in my cabin now sleeping."

The German led the way to the side, pointed to the Hawk's plane, which he had tied up to the Q-boat after seizing the Hawk on the *felucca*.

"Fortunately," he went on, "we carried a supply of petrol; we're refueling the plane now." That, indeed, was what his men were doing.

"I wondered about that plane," said the Yank officer. But any suspicions he had ever had were gone now. He took his boarding party back over the side, rowed away to the subchaser.

Berglund glanced at his watch as he paced the deck importantly. *Schweinehunde!* Otto Berglund was too clever for them! But it was late. He should be nearing the rendezvous with the *Unterseeboot* of von Gurnow. If that Yankee boat would just get away!

THE subchaser was getting away fast. In the west the flaming ship of the sun was hull down on the horizon. The German headed for the companionway. He must make sure about that Hawk now.

Berglund pushed the door open hurriedly, entered the cabin. The bunk was empty!

Then a great blackness descended upon the German, and he dropped like a sack to the floor. The Hawk grinned as he threw the marlinspike into a corner.

"A little reward for your cleverness, *Herr Berglund!*" he drawled. "Reckon you never thought a guy could spit up that stuff as soon as you left! And you shouldn't have been so careless about how you tied knots."

The Hawk took the man's Luger, stepped from the cabin. Cautiously he made his way to the deck. At the head of the companionway he stopped in amazement. What was the idea in refueling his plane? What wild plan had Berglund hatched? Whatever the idea, it was going to help him out. That extra gas would come in handy.

The two German sailors were finishing their long job. They disappeared aft. The forward deck was deserted. Now—now! The Hawk ran swiftly to the side, slipped over and out of sight. Quickly he threw

off the lines holding the seaplane to the brig. He cut the switches on, stepped forward on the pontoons to whirl the big prop.

And then yells and running steps sounded from the deck above him. The Hawk knew that Berglund had revived and given the alarm. Calmly he threw his weight on the prop. The engine sputtered and died.

A bullet crashed into the wing—another. If the damn Isotta doesn't start now, thought the Hawk, it's curtains for a guy named Bill Markham! Coolly he prepared to whirl the prop again.

The prop turned over under his weight and the big motor sprang into thunderous life. As the Hawk climbed quickly into the cockpit he saw the deck of the brig alive with Germans. Bullets were smacking all over the plane as he gunned the motor for a quick take-off. He spotted Berglund raving on the deck, saw the false deck-house drop. They were going to use the twelve-pounders on the plane!

That was all the Hawk had time to see. All his attention was on the plane now. Down into the wind he went in a wall of sweeping spray. He lifted the little seaplane steeply and climbed in a tight bank. They were firing the twelve-pounders, but they might just as well have been shooting at a seagull.

The Hawk warmed his machine-guns with rapid bursts as he leveled off at five hundred feet and swept back toward the brig. The sun was sliding into the waves far to the west. In the north, the subchaser was still visible. And those keen eyes of Markham's saw something else which changed his plans suddenly. The U-boat was there, barely fifty yards from the brig, was just reaching the surface!

Then everything seemed to happen at once. As the conning tower hatch was thrown open on the sub,

a dripping figure climbed to its deck. Berglund! He had seen the U-boat coming up, and had swum from the brig. It was typical of the man to desert his crew.

MARKHAM dived, leveled off, roared in toward the sub. They heard him. The conning tower hatch was slammed down and Berglund, running on the wet deck, slipped and fell before he reached it. The Hawk's eyes were slits in his face as he grasped the bomb lever.

The long *Unterseeboot* was sliding downward, and still the figure of the German spy clung helplessly to the deck. Then the Hawk was over the sub and a bomb hurtled down. As Markham swung the seaplane into a steep bank the sound of the detonation reached him above the thunder of the engine. A hit! As he headed again for the sub, he could see the ghastly hole in the bow where the sea was already pouring hungrily in.

Berglund was standing at the conning tower, battering the steel with his hands as the seaplane passed directly above. A second bomb was on its way, and the Hawk turned to watch it. He looked away hurriedly. It had landed squarely where the German had been standing.

The U-boat was plunging sickeningly into the waves as the Hawk turned his attention to the brig. He was amazed to find that it was getting away fast, heading into the north. And then he saw something else, and a smile removed the grimness from his face. The subchaser, having evidently heard the firing and the bomb explosions was returning, was closing in on the brig.

The Hawk would have liked to save the Q-boat for further work, make that German crew surrender, but he saw it was out of the question. He swore in good American as he watched flame belch from the

twelve-pounders. The damn fools were firing at the subchaser.

It couldn't last long. It didn't. Those Yank gunners were pouring everything they had into the brig. One of the twelve-pounders spat flame once more, at a crazy angle as the brig heeled over, and then the Q-boat was gone.

The Hawk would have liked to talk to those Yanks down there; would have liked to bum a decent smoke from them. But darkness was closing down on the sea and the one thought that was stuck in his brain was the thought of the man, Jollifer. Not until he had Jollifer, had choked a confession out of his lying throat, would this job be done.

Things had happened so fast there had been no time for thought of poor Sanford, of what had happened to his body. With the first part of his work over, however, the Hawk had plenty of time to dwell on it now.

As he turned the nose of the seaplane back toward Suda Bay, his thoughts boded no good for the man who had given him that poisoned cognac.

The 300 horsepower Isotta was a rhythmic roar in the darkness as the Hawk climbed into the south. Steadily the plane ate up the night, and steadily the Hawk's mind concentrated on Jollifer.

It was late when he dropped the seaplane toward the lights at Suda Bay. He skimmed the slim breakerwater that ran out from the shoulder of the hill, taxied smoothly across the still water to the docks.

As soon as he had turned the plane over to two sleepy-eyed mechs, he was on his way to the Headquarters office. Colonel Hawkins was still at his desk, was fortunately alone. The Hawk entered without ceremony.

The colonel looked up, startled. Then he was on his feet, his eyes staring.

"Where—where did you come from? We thought you were—"

"Dead?" drawled the Hawk. "Not quite. I want to find that naval aviator, Jollifer. Right away!"

"Jollifer?" The colonel's voice was even more bewildered. "Then you haven't heard? But of course you haven't! My God! You here, and Jollifer—"

"Has he gone? Where'd he go?"

COLONEL HAWKINS waved the Hawk to a chair. "I'll tell you," he said slowly. "You remember the night you left here Jollifer took you a bottle of cognac just before you took off. He came back to his quarters to turn in, and surprised a man going through his private papers. The fellow tried to shoot Jollifer, but Jollifer shot first."

The colonel cleared his throat. "I went down there immediately. The fellow died, but before he died, he admitted being a German agent. He was one of the cooks here, an Englishman and a traitor. He had found out things about Jollifer we didn't know ourselves here—that Jollifer

was a member of British Intelligence sent here for special work in connection with the U-boat campaign.

"The last thing the man told us was that he had planned to kill Jollifer by loading his cognac with poison!" The colonel paused, stared at his desk. "When Jollifer heard that he turned as white as a sheet. Before anyone could stop him, he was racing for the docks, was off in his plane to catch you! He didn't want you to drink that stuff, Captain Markham!"

The Hawk was thinking hard and fast. A numbness which had gripped his mind was leaving, and a tremendous weight was lifting from his chest.

"Jollifer didn't come back. The dawn patrol found his wrecked plane out at sea this morning—with poor Jollifer dead in the cockpit."

Bill Markham, the Hawk, looked across at the colonel. "I'm glad—mighty glad—you told me that. I've been in a sorta storm. Tell you about Sanford's Q-boat in the morning. Right now, reckon I'll go and get parboiled."

CORRECT ANSWERS TO SCRAMBLED SHIPS

(See Pages 60-61)

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Martin Bomber | 4. Vought VE7 |
| 2. Martin K3 Scout | 5. Standard E-1 |
| 3. Curtiss 18 B | 6. Lepere Fighter |

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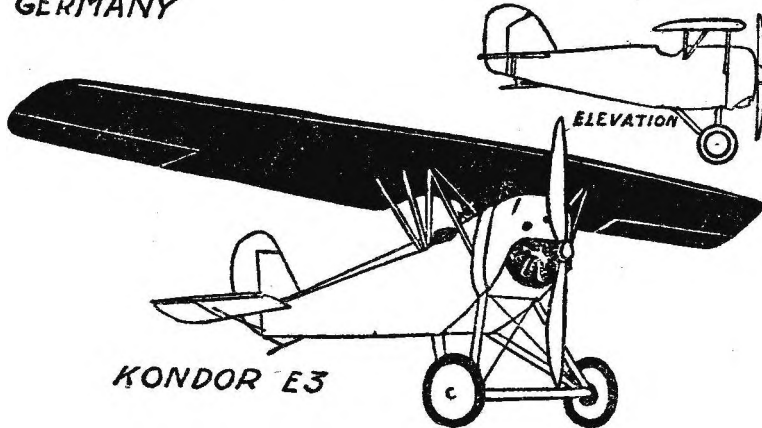


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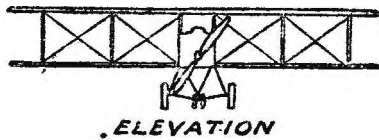
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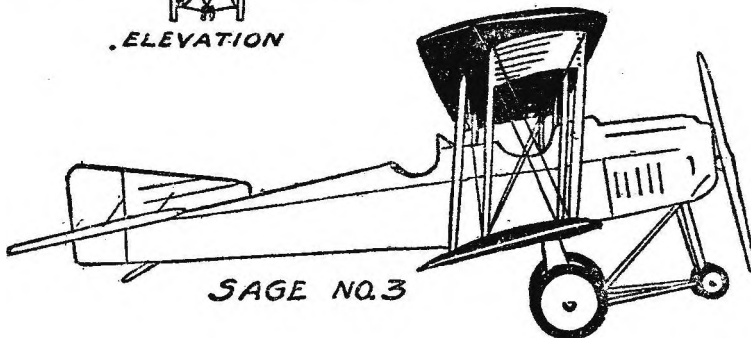
KONDOR E3

The Kondor E3 was a German single-seater monoplane which was known as a "Wireless Parasol." The wing was very sketchily braced over the fuselage by sets of small struts and had no external wires to help hold body and wing together. The wing was very thick in construction, similar to Fokker practice. It was powered by an Oberursel rotary engine of 140 h.p. Despite the fact that it was not a well-known ship it had an excellent performance. It could speed along at 120 m.p.h. and could climb to 16,500 feet in 16 minutes.



ELEVATION

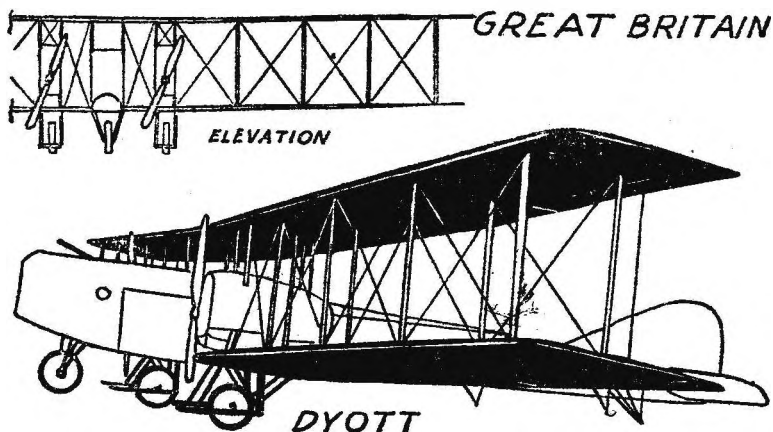
GREAT BRITAIN



SAGE NO. 3

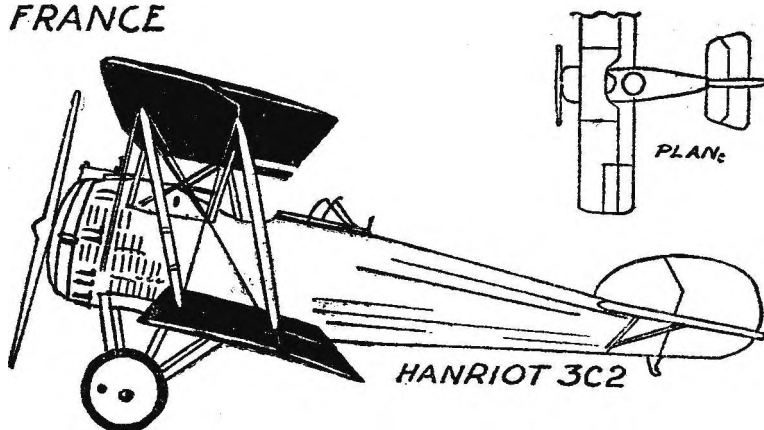
The Sage No. 3 was a British two-seater biplane manufactured by Fredk. Sage & Co. It was made primarily for training purposes in 1916. The undercarriage was of the oleo-pneumatic type. It had a pair of small wheels mounted on a front Vee under the nose and connected to the landing wheels. The engine was a 75 h.p. Rolls which gave a speed of 72 m.p.h. Dual controls were fitted. Dimensions: Span, $34\frac{1}{2}$ ft.; length, $26\frac{1}{2}$ ft.

WAR PLANES



The Dyott was a twin-engined biplane of British construction, designed before the war but not built until 1915. It was the first twin-engined machine along clear-cut late war lines. Really it was a forerunner of the Gothas but instead of pushers it used tractors. The two-widely separated undercarriage single wheels were provided with short skids on either side of the wheel. An opening in the fuselage at the nose held a machine-gun in addition to the two guns mounted above. The whole ship was very large.

FRANCE



The Hanriot 3C2 was a French two-seater which was used as a fighting scout. Mr. Hanriot, who was one of the pioneers of aviation, had already retired, but returned to design planes for the French government at the outbreak of the war. The 3C2 was a biplane with a single bay of struts at each side. The back staggered wings were of equal span. The pilot's pit was under the top wing and the observer was immediately behind. A 230 h.p. Salmson engine was installed. Dimensions: Span, 30 ft.; length, 23 ft.

Salute for Sunny

*A Novelette of
Courage*

By ARTHUR
J. BURKS

*Author of "The Black Falcon,"
"Doomed to Live," etc.*

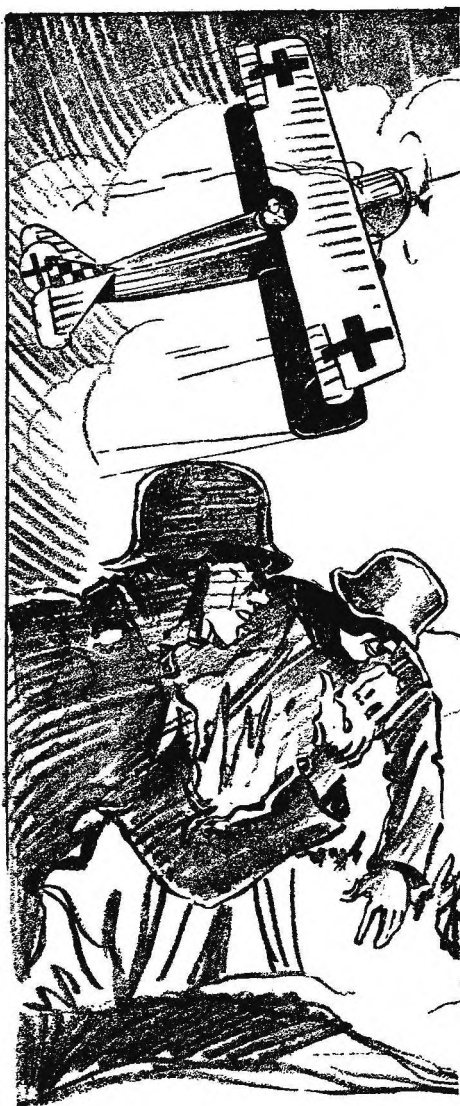
CHAPTER I

Enter Sunny

A BIG H.E. fell plumb in the middle of the tarmac and exploded with an earth-shaking sound. My men and I got a little further under the trees where we had dashed when the shooting started. Far back of the German lines, the big fellows were using heavy fire to keep Allied flyers on the ground. It had been tough, these last few days.

Headquarters had hinted that an Armistice was coming, and the ground gained would figure a lot in the dealings of the powers when they made peace. The infantry, artillery, everybody, was moving up. The flyers went ahead to show them the way and make things easier.

The Heinies didn't like that. Stubbornly, savagely, dying like rats, they



The Germans were

kept hammering at us. With not enough planes left to out-number us, they were trying to tie us to the ground with shell-fire.

Not even Headquarters could expect us to hop off in the face of the monsters that were dropping onto the tarmac.

Some fell in the woods that hid us, and sent whole trees—stripped of

Buford's Song of Life Reaches Its Crescendo



SUNNY BUFORD

sprawled out, like wheat before a sickle

leaves and branches by four years of carnage—hurtling into the sky.

I looked at my men. I was Squadron Commander, Seventh Pursuit. Only a captain, but rank somehow got lost, those last few days. I'd had a year of this business. Most of my men had anywhere from a month to six. They looked at me. There were no grins among them, I knew what

they were thinking, because I was thinking the same thing: would I live to see the Armistice? Wouldn't it be Hell if, two seconds before the last command sounded, one got a bullet through the skull, or was right where a big baby landed? That thought had all of us by the throat. If we'd known that the war was going to last another year, or hadn't been

in a Blazing Lead-Spewing Inferno!

able to guess how long it was going to last, we wouldn't have given it much thought. But you can see how it was.

"Great Scott! Watch that fool!"

The cry came from First Lieutenant Addleson, second in command of "A" Flight. I hadn't noticed anything, on account of the noise. But now I did. A Spad was diving toward the field. He must have seen the great geyser that last projectile had tossed up, but he dived down anyhow, dived fast. Then, when he appeared to have set his wheels down, he leveled off, zoomed, barrel-rolled over the field, did more stunts than a Spad was ever supposed to do, all around the tarmac.

I watched him. The fellow could fly, no doubt about that. He could fly like a fool. Like a gull. Like a master. But to stunt over a field that was being strafed! It didn't make sense, somehow, especially because, during his stunting, four more of the big ones busted practically in our faces. The tarmac was pretty much of a mess. Heinie had the range, and was trying his best to see that we didn't get into the air today.

THEN the newcomer went away, I started to shoot his landing. Two more big ones smashed into the field. Another dropped into the woods back of us, and a shell splinter crashed into the tree against which I was leaning. If it had hit my head like that you could have put a go-to-Hell cap in the hole. It made me thoughtful. Got me to thinking of that last minute death thing. I looked at my lads again, thirteen of 'em. They all looked gloomy. They were as brave as Americans always are, but their thoughts—

I jerked away from them, watching that fool come down. He seemed to be feeling his way through lanes already made in the air by the big boys, and trying to see how close he could come to the hole the last one

over had made through the acridly-odorous atmosphere. The whole place was coughy with the stuff. No gas, though. I studied the fellow's technique.

"He must have been a card in training," I thought. "Set his wheels down on old maids' homes, blew smoke down people's chimneys, flew under bridges and the like. Well, when he gets to me he'll get bawled out so lustily that his cap'll bounce on his head."

He landed his Spad. Somehow, he landed it. There were holes all over the tarmac, but he set his wheels down and somehow rolled in, through, and among the holes, right up to the end of the field, where his crate would be at least as much protected from the shell-fire as the rest of our crates were.

Then he crawled out of the Spad and looked around. I guess he must have spotted us, for he started our way. Almost in the middle of the field he stopped, calmly took out a cigarette and lighted it. I heard a big one coming, shrieking like all the bats out of Hell. I yelled at him:

"Run, you blasted fool!"

But by this time the noise the big one made was too great for him to have heard anything, except the explosion of a shell dropped right into his hair. He looked curiously at the sky toward Germany, and calmly blew some smoke. The man either didn't know what might happen to him, or—

Well, right at the last minute, almost, as though he really didn't want to do it, and thought it a lot of nonsense, he dropped on his knees, sprawled out, and hugged the ground. After the burst had come, the stuff the big lad had kicked up from the tarmac almost buried him. And then, before he even moved, I heard his laughter. High, excited, joyous. I turned and looked at my flyers. Their eyes were wide, startled, I knew what they were thinking: that some-

thing had got out of a mental ward back of the lines, to pay us a visit.

Now the guy rose, brushed the dirt off him, and came on.

I yelled at him: "If you're reporting, I'm the skipper of this outfit."

He took off his cap and waved at me, a wild-swinging wave. I saw that his hair was like fine spun gold. Even that far away I could see that he had a grin as big as a barn-door. I knew his eyes would be blue, and when he got close to me I saw that they were. On the way to me he walked slowly, looking toward Germany, as though he hoped another one would come over, and land a little closer to him this time.

He got to me, and I grabbed him and pushed him behind my tree, for I heard another one coming.

"You blasted fool!" I yelled at him. "Don't you know what one of those things would do to you if you were standing up within five blocks of it when it burst?"

I couldn't hear his answer, but I watched his face when that next one came down. I knew it was going to be close. I saw all my men sort of duck their heads as men under fire have a strange habit of doing, even when they know the stuff is going at least fifty feet above them. It crashed into the woods back of us, doing a lot of splintering.

This newcomer couldn't see it, of course, but he followed its shriek with his blue eyes, as though he could. That grin was on him, and his eyes were dancing like anything.

The sound of the explosion fooled him, for he shouted to me—and in the sudden stillness every one of my men heard him. Understand, all through the country bombs were going off, and there was always the rattle of machine-guns and musketry, but that was comparative silence—we had known it so long. Anyway, this is what I heard, and what all my men heard:

"I'm Sunny Buford, first lieutenant, reporting for duty, sir!"

"Sunny?" I repeated. "How do you spell it?"

No, it wasn't "sonny," as I'd thought. My boys were all staring at us.

"I'm Captain Nate Jethro," I said, shaking hands with him. Somehow or other I forgot about the bawling out. "Kinda wild, coming in, weren't you?" I ended lamely.

"Maybe I was, sir," he said. "But I felt so just gol-damned good that I couldn't help it. I knew when I explained that you'd understand."

NO more came over for a few minutes, and his new wingmates were crowding around, listening. I stopped him long enough to tell him what their names were, and to note their reaction to his name, "Sunny!" Good Goddammighty, a girl's nickname, maybe, but not a honest to Hell man's name! Yet it was.

"Don't mind the name," he said. "I've had it all my life. It's real, too. I've had a lot of fun out of it!"

"Fun?" I almost groaned, not thinking so much of the name, as that anybody could have any fun out of this war. "What's so funny that you could feel so good, reporting to a field, watching it being shot full of holes that have to be filled, stunting over it, where a direct hit wouldn't be out of the question at all."

"Captain," said Sunny Buford, "I'll tell you. You see, I was beginning to think I was never really going to get into this war. That would have been awful. Most of my schoolmates, and young chaps from home, have been in it from the beginning. Two of them are dead, a lot in hospitals, and all have got cited for things. But I simply didn't get here until just now, and from what I heard in Paris I got here just in time!"

"What," I asked, holding myself in, "delayed you?"

"Everything! I was supposed to be a good instructor, so they held me too long at Mather Field. When they shipped me to Kelly, I thought that now I'd make it, sure enough. But there they put me to instructing again, and it took almost an Act of Congress to get me over here at all. But anyway, I'm not going to miss out on the show, after all, even if it's only the last act. That's why I'm practically turning cartwheels. You see? You understand?"

WELL, it wasn't so hot. I looked at my men and shook my head a little at them. Then we scattered while two more big shells busted in the woods, and got back together again, knowing the thing was over for a few minutes, Germans being so methodical. Then I looked at Addleson, to see how he took it. Addleson, three days ago, had had a twin brother.

The twin was down somewhere in German territory this very minute. He'd gone down in a flamer, so hot that the rest of us, flying in the same sky, could smell him roasting. Addleson told me grimly, when we came in, that he'd heard his twin scream good-by, when he first started down—and that after that, for half a minute, he'd only heard him scream. We'd all seen him crash, and a big flower of flame blossom where he'd struck.

No, Addleson wouldn't care for the way this Buford was taking on.

Nor Lieutenant Miles Napier. Only today one of his best friends had been registered on directly by something that must have been all of six inches through, and his crate had simply fallen apart in mid-sky, at nine thousand feet. The friend's name had been Barlow—and he'd fallen apart, too. We'd all seen the parts go tumbling down to the ground.

No use going into it all in detail. Not one of my men but had seen

ghastly things happen; had their wingmates blasted to death right over, under, or beside them, and horribly, too. Some in black smoke. Some in flamers, some simply shot to Hell. All of them were thinking that if those last six or seven we had lost, had only been able to live for ten days more, they'd live for maybe fifty years on top of that. They'd marry the girls they'd left behind them, forget the French girls they'd amused themselves with, and raise dozens of kids. But they hadn't lived those ten days, and the chances that any of us would were slight.

Like I say, the Heinies were fighting stubbornly, more sullenly savage than they'd been before—at least in our sector. This strafing of the field was part of it. They didn't have enough planes to strafe from the sky; they saved those for when we went over. But this big stuff the Heinies were sending was a lot worse, I thought. Only, thank heavens, they had stopped it for a few minutes, and the lads were listening—and not grinning at all. If Sunny Buford saw the deep-sunken eyes, the desperate faces, of his new wingmates, the naked hope he saw deeply in each, he gave no sign. He seemed to be all wrapped up in himself.

"Another thing," said Sunny Buford. "I'm one of the best flyers in the service, and I haven't downed a single German. I've just got one hope left."

"What," I asked dryly, signaling the others that I thought it was safe to go back to what was left of our hutments, "is that?"

"That the war lasts long enough for me to be an ace! My pals have all done things. I've been a good instructor, three thousand miles beyond the reach even of Big Bertha. But if I started, and got my five Heinies, it would be almost as good as if I'd been here all along with you fellows, wouldn't it?"

I held myself back, to keep from shoving my hand, closed into a fist, right down his throat. Hell's bells, what I wouldn't have given, right this minute, to have his instructor's job at Kelly. I'd had it, years ago, centuries ago, and I'd been like this kid. I guess. But experience had knocked all the glory out of me. When twenty year-old kids were veterans after two weeks at the Front, you could guess what I was, with a year of it back of me. Looking back now I don't see how I managed it.

Especially those last few days.

"What did you say your name was?" said Addleson grimly. "Your first name?"

"Sunny!" said Buford. "Sunny! Queer name, isn't it? The kids at school, when I was little, used to try to tease me. But I didn't mind. I knew it was just as silly as they did. But it was mine, my mother gave it to me, so what's to be done about it? I sort of like it. It's something to live up to—and what's more, today of all days, I feel like I really fitted my name!"

"If you don't stop your chatter, Buford," I said, "your face won't fit the name, at all. My boys are not in the mood for adolescent caperings. They're grown up. If they kick the living cheeses out of you, don't come to me with your troubles."

He laughed, loudly, joyously. "They won't, you know. They never do."

By the lord Harry, they didn't. I hadn't bawled him out, though he sure rubbed my fur the wrong way. I tried to forget him. I sat down in what was left of my office, trying to get sort of relaxed, and in the right frame of mind to lead my show off the ground the minute the greaseballs got the worst of those holes on the tarmac filled. Things were as they had been with me for weeks—for those same centuries I mentioned. The hot odor of burning oil, raw gas, stinking fabric, in my nostrils. The

bite of powder from cartridges that were feeding through my Vickers at top speed. The shrill screaming of wires.

Crates exploding, or starting down in flames. Men diving, throttles full out, straight into the ground, dead over their sticks, heads—red with blood—rolling around, on the cockpit coaming. I'd known little else for those aforementioned centuries. The whole previous year had not had crammed into it the Hell that had been ours during the last week.

Into the midst of the shambles, the holocaustist, the red inferno, had come—
Sunny!

Sunny, who hoped the war would last long enough for him to become an ace. Sunny, who had been afraid he would miss it. Sunny, who hadn't been under fire until today, and would die if he didn't get shot at.

My God! Sunny!

CHAPTER II

Laughter Aloft



VARIOUS reports kept coming to us. That the Germans were on the run. That the infantry really couldn't keep up with the retreat. That we had air supremacy. That the end was only a matter of hours. That the Heinies had completely lost heart.

Those fools back at Headquarters! Whoever wrote those things up didn't really know how things were at the front. And as for the Germans having lost heart! Well, maybe; but I'm here to tell you this: never in my year of pursuit work had I run into such tough opposition, all over German territory. All the difference I could see now, from six months before, was that they didn't come over into our backyards the way they had. They sent H.E.s instead. But when we got into *their* sky!

Desperate? Maybe. Between the man who fights for glory and the man who fights grimly, because he is desperate, his country is desperate, I'll take the glory-grabber every time. He's a lead-pipe cinch. You can down him. But the desperate man has to be so filled with lead that he'll drop of his own weight, before he'll go down. He has to be dead. He is in despair, falling, thinking to himself: "My country is going to lose, and I'm dying and can't do a damn' thing about it. What is to become of us? Of my people at home?"

That sort of a mug fights like a maniac. And he has no mercy. Addleson's twin had found that out, for two men had followed him to the ground in swift-darting Fokkers, blasting away with their Spandaus.

AND when the twin was finished they'd come back into the dog-fight for more.

I was thinking of that as I lined up two flights for our next sashay over the lines. I gave Addleson "B" Flight and took "A" myself, doing some shifting around to fit Sunny Buford into things and to reorganize after the last grim scrap we'd had, a couple of hours before.

I gave the signal. Sunny Buford was to my left. I glanced at him once. He was so eager to get away that he could scarcely sit still in his pit. The fool! Seven crates started down the field, which was still a little lumpy because we couldn't take time for the greaseballs to smooth it out. If we waited too long the enemy aircraft would do too much damage to our advancing lines, or the big H.E.s would start over again.

Seven Spads roared the old familiar routine. I looked ahead and forgot Sunny Buford. I already knew he could fly. Rendezvous was at four thousand, what might be called a new low—for when we got over, we'd go right down over the heads of our

own men, to blast away at the opposition.

We rendezvoused. I let my motor full out and headed directly east, letting her travel. I tested my Vickers a little, just enough for I might need any bullets I shot away. Sometimes we had to stay longer than we were really prepared for.

We were flying wing and wing, with Buford still on my left, the other five scattered out, with plenty of interval in between. I glanced at Buford a time or two, just to make sure he knew his team flying, and he seemed to.

I studied the ground. Things were pretty nasty down there. I saw dead men in grey, and olive drab, all through the woods. We went down so close I could see 'em hanging on wires, and pinned to the jagged limbs of trees, as though jesters had hanged them there. I saw the smoke of battle ahead, and it was moving forward.

I scanned the sky, and saw the Fokkers coming. We'd wait until they opened, before we did. We had to do a few things for the infantry before we fought off the sky-Heinies. I gunned my crate ahead a bit faster. Now the thin lines of our rushing troops were under us, and I could see the clumps of men in grey down there, in hastily constructed defenses they were prepared to die to the last man rather than withdraw.

Well, the fortunes of war. We were over the center of the German front line defenses. The Germans didn't even look up at us. What were a few more machine-guns to them? I gave the signal, and our roaring noses went down. It was close work, there above those shattered trees, with Fokkers coming down as fast as they could to help out their fellows on the ground. I held my stick with my knees, and started the belts feeding into my Vickers.

The guns started chattering through the prop. I knew my wing-

mates were doing their share. I looked through my ring-sight as the bullets spattered out, and saw men in grey start falling. I had no special feeling about them. Their bullets were getting our boys, weren't they? And right when an Armistice was in the air, too! Besides, it was an old story, and—well, a guy gets calloused to it.

Sunny Buford must have been doing his stuff, too, for when I let up a bit, looking for fresh targets, I heard his Vickers yammering like mad. I was too close to the ground to look over at him. And besides, I wanted just one more ground target, to sort of get my quota, before the Fokkers stepped in and we had to go upstairs to decide who was going to do the ground-strafig here. Lord knows they'd done their share.

I squeezed out a few when I sensed, rather than saw—you can get like that—the spray of lead that had ripped into my left wing. I looked up. Yep, a Fokker was after me, with a Fokker in reserve behind him. The Germans seemed to have us outnumbered here, at least for the moment. For there was at least one, and in several places two, Heinie ships behind each of my boys.

IT had been tough before. There were holes through my crate from below, though I don't know when they had come. It didn't matter. Bullets that didn't get you were not important. Bullets that did you never knew about. So you forgot both kinds, at least while you were fighting. It was only after you got back home that you began to sweat.

Well, I zoomed out of there. I knew the rest were doing the same. I jumped right up to all of fifteen hundred feet, and squared off to hand it out to the Heinies. And in less time than it takes to tell about it, we were in a rough-and-tumble dog-fight. Our second for the day. We'd fought this same bunch before

and then, sort of by common consent, had both gone home for a breathing space and to get more ammo for a return engagement. The Germans had got enough crates and pilots somewhere to make up for those we'd downed. We'd only got—

Sunny!

Fighting was more or less automatic with me, so while I was trying to hold off my Fokker long enough to get a sock at him, I looked around for Sunny Buford. He was all tangled up with the second Fokker that had been behind me. I wondered where the one was that had been behind him, and looked around for it. God help me, it was just crashing into the woods—and the German soldiers—below, and it was a flamer, too. While coming up in a zoom—I wished then that I had seen it—Sunny Buford had knocked off the guy who had been tailing him. And he'd done a good job of it.

But he was having a time with this other Heinie. Buford was good, but he was green. The German was good, but he was a veteran. There was a vast difference. Besides, he'd just seen Sunny shoot down his pal, and he was sore. The Germans couldn't take these losses the way they'd once been able to.

They were going at it hammer and tongs. The German sat on Buford's tail, and I thought: "Well, kid, you asked for it! You got here in time, after all!"

And right then he put the Spad through the whole book—which he couldn't have done if he'd been shot up much—and first thing I knew he was sitting on the German's tail.

Just when I was getting interested, I had to take my eyes off Sunny's German, and pay some attention to my own. He was getting in some good licks on me—so that I had a flying wire out straight, and fabric all flapping, and nothing very good. Besides that one of my wings looked

like it might start buckling at almost any minute.

I got rid of my German. I simply let him fly over me, when he thought he had me going, pulled my nose up—the wing could come off and be damned to it—and filled the German's belly—the Fokker's belly, really, and the seat of the German's pants—full of the hottest lead I had. Anyway, the fellow started smoking, fell off on one wing, and then went the whole way. I'd seen 'em crash before, and knew this lad was finished, so I didn't bother watching him go down. I started looking for Sunny again.

He was going down!

Going down like a bat out of Hades, full speed, and behind him came the German he should have got by now if he were going to get him at all. And then, so help me, I noticed that Buford was leaning over his Vickers, with his hands on the trips, and that he was letting loose a few at some of the lads down there in grey. And with a German on his tail! It irritated me.

Fool!

Then another German got after me, and I had my hands full for a minute or two more—until Addleson did away with his playmate, and mooched into my show, and I let him take over.

I took a breath and looked around. Sunny Buford was coming straight up, almost, into the dog-fight, and the German who had been following him down, wasn't coming up. I didn't see how Sunny had tricked him, but he had, for the guy was hanging in the trees, figuratively speaking, by the seat of his pants, and he would never get down on his own power.

He looked dead, even from where I was.

Sunny Buford slipped right into the show again, to take on some of the extras. As he did, he whipped past me like a streak. He waved.

His mouth was open. His face was one huge grin. He was holding up two fingers! The buzzard was laughing out loud! I couldn't hear, but I knew.

Those two fingers said: "If luck is with me, they won't sign that Armistice until I've got three more!"

CHAPTER III

Two To Go



THE Germans, for the next fifteen minutes, didn't do any ground-strafting of our troops, nor did we bother theirs. The two squadrons—for my "B" Flight was in this mess, too—just about cancelled each other. It was my toughest fight to date. And I was beginning to figure out what Sunny Buford was bringing to us. Something, that was a cinch. Something we hadn't had before. We had been as desperate and dogged as the Germans. They knew an Armistice was coming, the same as we did. They wanted peace to fix new boundaries as far West as possible, same as we wanted them in the East as far as possible.

Not that the fighters cared, one way or the other. We were all puppets being maneuvered by strings stretching from Paris to us, from Berlin to the Heinies, and being pulled by our superiors. But we fought hard because it was our duty.

It wasn't *why*, you see, but *how*.

Over the eastward moving lines of olive drab and grey we were answering that question. Answering it with whirling wings, with chattering Vickers and Spandaus. Answering it with leaden hail, hot oil, raw gas.

I saw the first four lads go. It was Lieutenant Hogan, who'd been fighting in this sky for six months, and was three times an ace. He went down with two Heinies on his

tail. And right after him, like a swooping hawk, went Sunny Buford. I knew there was no use tailing those Germans down, for I'd seen Hogan's head lolling on the cockpit coaming, had seen the fan of crimson on the side of the fuselage. Hogan was dead.

Sunny Buford must have known, but he followed anyhow. Hogan crashed in, and the two Germans zoomed away from him. One of them didn't go far, for Sunny Buford was so close to him that his propeller was almost against the back of the guy's neck. It was the nearest I had ever come to seeing a man beheaded. Of course it wasn't done with a knife. Sunny Buford did it with Vickers lead. I thought I saw the man's head jump off his shoulders. Foolish, of course; too much imagination engendered by the grim desperation of the fight.

Sunny Buford looked for the second German, but the fellow didn't want any of Sunny's medicine, at least not down close to the ground, for he was slanting back up into the dog-fight, coming fast, and already trying to spear one of my lads from below.

Well, he did it. He got Lieutenant Frahm, got him good, through the belly. He must have been as surprised as Frahm, for he wasn't really trying. He was scared of Sunny Buford, coming up behind him, and had fired into the dog-fight more or less to keep himself from thinking too much about the American on his tail. A fluke *descendu*, but a kill just the same, for Frahm started down.

That put things about as even as they were. A whirling, savage dog-fight, which had already lasted longer than any I had been in. Usually they were over in a matter of seconds, because it didn't take bullets long to end arguments. This one had lasted all of ten minutes, which had seemed ages.

None of my lads was heading

home, though all should have been, because their crates were badly damaged. I noticed that, and wondered how much Buford's example had to do with it. In a way, Sunny's behavior was a challenge to the old-timers. He'd come up to us, done a lot of adolescent mouthing, and then had come into his first fight, and shot a triple before you could say Jack Robinson. It did something to us. Maybe the last little something we needed.

It changed that brooding of ours, that queer fear of death when life for all of us couldn't be over a few days away, into irritation, active and grim, against Sunny Buford. He was a glory grabber, snatching at the tag end of a war we had all but brought to an end, grabbing at what belonged to us—not that any of us cared about the glory.

MAYBE there was glory in war, but you had to see it from a distance, and after a passage of time, to believe it. I can see it now, but then it was blood, and wounds, and smells—and the ceaseless cataclysmic sounds of a world gone mad with bloodlust.

Sunny Buford flung himself into the thick of that dog-fight. He tried to be everywhere. He helped out Lieutenant Napier, when Napier was hard-pressed by two Fokkers. But Buford didn't down the German he drove away, though he tried hard. Another German came in and made Buford muff it. And Sunny couldn't get the second one. He'd gone in for harassment on a large scale. He didn't down another one, but I think the rest of my boys downed at least three they wouldn't have got if it hadn't been for Sunny, for he kept intruders off while they settled their scores.

Was the guy being noble, deliberately missing out on glory for himself, in order to give my boys a break? No, that couldn't be. Every

one of my flyers was an ace, some of them twice over, some of them three times over. A few more crates, more or less, wouldn't make any difference to them. That couldn't be the answer. Sunny had come out, I thought, to grandstand, and ended up by being the best member of our team. He brought enthusiasm, fresh vitality, to us.

And we all reacted to it, without realizing it. We fought as we had never fought before. We fought in closer. We pressed so close on the tails of our enemies that one of us, Costerman, sheared off the tail-surfaces of his Heinie with his propeller, busting his prop to do it. Costerman had to go down.

A couple of Germans went after Costerman as he slanted down, and Sunny Buford was right behind them, fighting like a fury, to keep them from killing Costerman before he could land. The landing had a good chance of killing him, anyhow. I watched the four-sided drama, when I could snap a glance at it.

Costerman went in, almost in the faces of a grim bunch of Germans in grey. I saw him catapulted from his crate, to roll over, and get to his feet.

GERMANS rose and charged, to take him prisoner. Americans charged to keep him from being taken. I didn't hear the guns chatter, of course, but all at once, where the Germans had been standing, they now were sprawled out, like wheat before the sickle. And Americans were surrounding Costerman. More than that, other Americans followed the first Americans, and kept on going, and drove the Heinies out of that point of resistance, hurling them headlong.

Costerman would be back with us, then, when we got home. But Buford had lost his two Germans. They were trying to smear the charging Americans, but they gave it up and

zoomed back into the snarling, wing-spinning dog-fight when they saw Sunny Buford after them. Sunny had got three flying Heinies, and had got them good. And he'd been instrumental in getting a lot of them down there on the ground.

The Germans seemed to gather new strength and determination from somewhere. They were taking more desperate chances, fighting at closer quarters, conserving their lead. They weren't going back until they were driven. We met them on their own terms. I didn't have a chance to see how the others were doing, but I judged they must be in about the same fix as I was.

A bunch of rats had gnawed into my struts. My old bus groaned in an agony of spirit every time I flung her about the sky, which was all the time. I held her together with prayers and oaths. The Germans were doing it, so why couldn't I?

I knew this was foolish reasoning, for just when I thought of it, both wings of a Fokker folded back over a German's cockpit—and nobody at the moment was bothering him in the slightest. His crate started down like a falling H.E., and I saw his hands projecting through the space between those imprisoning wings, trying to get himself free. I don't know why, really, unless he simply wanted to see where he was going to die.

Anyhow he went in, behind our men on the ground, with the wings still wrapped around his coffin. Right after that another one—one of my own—did much the same thing. Only one of his wings went, and all the other did was turn the ship on its side, remaining wing up, and guide it more certainly to destruction.

Again Sunny Buford kept a couple of Germans from bumping the guy that dropped with one wing gone. He just drove them away. I watched the Spad go. In it Lieutenant Cross

was sitting, watching the ground come up.

I saw him get out of that wreckage, impossible as it might seem, and stagger fifty yards west before he fell on his face. He wouldn't have staggered, or even left the wreck, if Sunny Buford hadn't taken those two Germans out. They didn't give him much chance. He had scarcely opened before they were refusing his gauge of battle. Every man jack of the Germans had singled out Sunny, noted his deadliness, and was wary of him. Maybe the Germans, too, were thinking of death before an Armistice.

We kept right at it, battling fast and furiously.

I knew I didn't have much ammo left, that my men were also about out. The Germans were in the same fix, for I saw two of them sit on the tails of Spads and accomplish absolutely nothing, but slap at the breeches of their Spandaus, as though to produce bullets where there weren't any.

Then, all at once, the German flight commander slid up toward me. He saluted, gave a hopeless signal with his right hand. I knew what he meant. We couldn't do anything with what we had left, and he wanted to call it off until both of us could come back and take up where we'd left off.

I NODDED, swung into the thick of the dog-fight, signaling my men. But between the time the German had signaled me, and I signaled my men, one more of my boys had gone down. It brought a lump to my throat to see him go, for it was Addleson.

Maybe he was better off, for I don't know how he'd have got through the years without his twin. There were plenty of men who died in the war who, if they had lived, would have wished they had died.

The war did things to them, knocked them out of normal, so they wouldn't have fitted into post-war days. I like to think that Addleson was one of these, for his going hit me right over the heart.

Then, as we tried to get into some formation for the return, with the Germans doing the same to the east of us, I saw that Napier was in a jam. He was wobbling all over the sky, fighting his stick, making tough going of it. He was heading home alone, and after one look at him, I figured his chances at about one in a hundred. But there was nothing any of us could do.

You couldn't exchange visits between planes in flight. And we had to get back and land before the H.E.s started dropping on the field again, if they hadn't already started. Fourteen of us had gone over. Ten were going back, in one flight, which I led. We'd taken a licking, in spite of the fact that we had got seven German planes, altogether, and they had got four of ours. We couldn't afford to lose those four.

I looked at Sunny Buford. His face, what I could see of it, was glorified!

The first nine of us landed. The H.E.s hadn't started dropping on us yet, and I hoped they wouldn't until Napier managed to land. It would be close. I hadn't been able to see much wrong with his crate. But I knew that Napier needed a medico. I looked to my left, beyond Buford, at Frank Kelly, Napier's bosom pal. He was looking straight to the front. His face was grey—except for a splotch of crimson on the right temple.

I felt like Hell. It was hard to think of those two. Kelly with his grey face, Buford with glory on his. They didn't jibe. They jarred. The kiwi and the veteran.

Sunny Buford had two to go for his acedom. As though anybody

care! Except Sunny Buford himself.

Well, Napier was coming in. He came in and made a Chinese landing, three-point—tail-skid, right wing-tip, one wheel. And he didn't get out of his pit when the ship stopped. The big H.E.s started about then, but that didn't keep any of us from rushing to help Napier. His crate might go up in flames at any moment.

We dragged Napier out. He was dying. He grinned at us all, a crimson grin.

"Figured you'd need the crate," he said. "Sorry I busted it up a little. It isn't so bad, not seeing the Armistice. I've had a vision. It's coming tomorrow. Wish I could hear the sudden silence!"

Then Napier went west. For a full minute all of us had our heads bowed, and didn't say anything. We didn't even hear the explosion of the H.E.s. We forgot all about them, until a splinter got another of my wingmates.

Buford didn't seem to notice any of that. We all heard what he said, as he looked down at Napier:

"What a glorious way to go! Into the sunset, with all flags flying! That's the way I'd do it if the choice were mine! He brought his crate home because his buddies needed it."

NAPIER didn't matter to Kelly now, nor did the H.E.s. He stepped into Sunny Buford with his fists flying. Buford was taken by surprise, and it showed large on his face. Kelly was a raving maniac. He slugged at Buford until he fell. He'd have jumped in his face if I hadn't grabbed him.

"Pick the fool up, Irish," I said to Kelly, "and cart him into the woods. It's getting a bit thick around here."

Greaseballs had carted most of our flying stock off the field before the biggest explosions came.

We revived Sunny Buford, back in the woods, by the simple expedient of slapping his face.

"What in the world," he said, groggily, "made him jump me? What did I do, anyhow? I paid Napier the greatest compliment I could think of—sincerely, too!"

He grinned at Kelly, as though telling him there were no hard feelings—even though he couldn't understand what was wrong with Kelly and got to his feet. He didn't offer to slug it out with Kelly. He just brushed himself off, then looked on, enthralled, while the strafing continued, furnishing more back-breaking work for our greaseballs.

Well, that night I got that order that was read 'round the world. The war would end tomorrow. Until then we were to press forward toward all objectives. I knew the Germans had one, too, bidding their men hold doggedly to what they now had. How many of us would be here when the Great Silence fell? How many would be here tomorrow noon for chow? Who, here, would care for chow, anyway?

I didn't say anything to my men, just then. I went out in the dark to think things over. I strolled around the field. I went into the hangars, where I ran into Sunny Buford.

He was pasting crosses over the almost countless bulletholes in his Spad, and I'll swear he was sort of caressing each one, as though it were a *Croix de Guerre*, of which he was extremely proud.

I told Sunny Buford first about the order. He grinned.

"Dawn flight tomorrow morning, sir?"

"Yes. Our longest. It will last until about eleven o'clock."

"I've only got two to go," said Sunny Buford. "That should give me plenty of time. Think they'll fight tomorrow; or run?"

I didn't even answer him. With us crowding deeply into German territory, would the Heinies fight!

What I thought of it I leave to anyone, when I say that I walked like a madman, all that night, around the tarmac through the hangars again and again, deeply into the woods—until dawn began redly smearing the east. And now and again I ran into the one of my flyers, doing the same thing, and we veered off from one another, as though a little ashamed, and not wanting to be recognized.

Only Buford, I'll wager, slept at all—and he probably dreamed of glory, and of winning it tomorrow, getting the two Heinies he needed.

Sunny's eyes showed that he had slept, when we all met at the deadline next morning for our last hop in this war—maybe for all eternity. Eight of us were grimly intent, and only Sunny Buford was smiling, and eagerly scanning the sky to the east, as though already he saw it dotted with enemy Fokkers, Aviatiks and Albatrosses.

I looked then, too; but none were up—and I knew they were conserving their strength, waiting for the last minute, fighting for time, desperately planning to hold their ground where they now held it.

We crawled into our crates, eight of us. One of us, Sunny, jumped in with glee. I saw Kelly's face, and it was filled with Hell-flames.

CHAPTER IV

Look Homeward



IT was, we all knew—Allies and Heinies—the time to do-or-die. In a few hours it would be over, maybe for all time. I doubted if, after an Armistice had been signed, there ever again would be shots fired—at least in my

lifetime—between the present line-up of belligerents.

We tried to behave as though this were just another day, with war's end no closer than it had been this time last year. We had to do that, you see, to keep from thinking about dying at the last minute. Even death right now would be preferable to death, at say eleven o'clock, when the end was so darned close.

Buford kept surging ahead, out of position, as though he simply could not wait. I was irritated with him, and knew that my men were, too. But there was something about his impatience that made them think, I guess. Sunny Buford pulled them out of themselves, by his sheer lack of understanding of what faced us. His face was smeared a little, where the fists of Kelly had lambasted him, but he appeared to have forgotten about that, and Kelly didn't even look at him, though Kelly was on his left.

Well, there they were, and we were right over their heads. God, I thought why couldn't everybody rest right here, on their laurels, until the trumpet's last note of the war was sounded? Why must thousands more die, for a few feet of ground? Yet I knew that we were right in grabbing all that we could. A foot of ground now, here, might make a lot of difference to future generations, and we were fighting for them as well as for ourselves.

So we prepared to do our last bit with every ounce of our power—knowing that the same thoughts must be in the minds of the numbed-with-catastrophe Germans.

They were coming up, over beyond their stubbornly fighting foot-troops. I watched them as they came, knew that each was ready to die—to the last man—to keep us out of the last bit of sky they owned on this front, the last inch of ground. Do-or-die, for them, for us.

We started slashing away at the ground troops first, keeping weather eyes on the Fokkers, Albatrosses and Aviatiks that Germany was throwing in for her last struggle against us. It was around nine o'clock. Things had held us up, and the Germans had taken advantage of our delay by readying everything they had that would fly. They outnumbered us three to one.

I looked at Sunny, knew he had counted the difference, and was enthralled at the prospect. The rest of my men merely looked grim, determined. Determined to fight to the last, and die at the end if they had to. In a couple of hours it would be over.

In a couple of hours would come—the Great Silence. And there was something about the words, the Great Silence, that had nothing to do with the moment when a million men stopped killing one another. Great Silence; death was a Great Silence, too.

We blasted down a few of the men in grey before the German sky-men started their dive. Then we forgot those men on the ground. Next time we saw them, it might be through what was left of the wreckage of our crates, or when it was safe for them all to stop firing, and merely stare around, and wonder where all the noise had gone.

We zoomed. We'd used up few bullets. What we had left, with our gas, must last us. We'd do some diving, to conserve gas. We'd do some aiming, and careful squeezing, to conserve our lead. For we'd never go back for more ammo. If what we had ran out, we'd stay and go down with some German.

WELL, here was the last, grimest, dog-fight. We went into it with exhaled breaths, preparing to inhale right afterward, and sort of hold onto it until the zero hour. We

went in with all sorts of plans on how we would conduct ourselves. And it all went flying away on the wind when the first Spandau answered the first Vickers challenge. To us, to the Germans, this was to be just another day, just another dog-fight, after all. The same as yesterday, day before yesterday, and all the endless days before that.

Blazes of glory, though we didn't think of that.

Kelly, poor devil, couldn't take it. That must have been the reason why, diving on an enemy, and getting him dead to rights, he did the only thing he thought possible, after his Vickers jammed. He kept right on going, plunging straight into the German's cockpit with his motor full out. The two crates, all welded together, went down, burning.

Maybe, in spirit at least, the two shook hands before they struck. Then I didn't give a damn. Now, looking back, I hope they did—

Anyhow, Kelly was gone, and there was nothing left to remind us of him except the bruises on the face of Sunny Buford.

We certainly went to it. Two Fokkers went down, and Sunny Buford had got one of them. A Spad went down right after that, and I didn't see who it was until he almost landed. Costerman—only this time he didn't walk away from the wreck, and the foot-troops didn't fight to see who would get him. Nobody did. The flames that finished him, down there, were too hot even for the Allies to fling themselves into.

I was sort of numb about it, even as I thought to myself: "Will Sunny get his fifth Heinie?"

I think the Heinies must have had some idea, too. They certainly knew Sunny Buford, for he'd done a lot of things to them. And Heinies had a way of knowing a lot about us. They probably knew about his desire

to finish his military career in a blaze of glory. Several of them tried to get Sunny, and gave it up when he seemed to have eyes in the back of his head. They let him go, though they tried to keep him from counting coup again, as though it were a game in which they tried to cheat Sunny out of the glory he was after—glory and the acedom indicated by five enemy crates of whatever make happened to go down under his Vickers lead.

On and on.

I looked at my watch, when it seemed to me that all our gas must have long since been gone, and our bullets—and we had been fighting through two eternities. I knew I had lost three men. I knew that I myself had shot down three Germans. I was tired, whipped, beaten, but fighting about as I always did, with all I had. I guess my spirit must have kept me going, as their spirits did the others, German and Americans alike.

It lacked five minutes of the end!

The Germans must have sensed it, too. We'd gone two miles deeper into their territory by this time, despite their best efforts. Victory rode with us, defeat was in their mouths, and those two facts outweighed the third one—that the Germans wouldn't give back until the end. Two minutes to go.

A lot could happen in two minutes. A lot did. Another of my men went down. If five minutes were left we'd all get what was coming to us. The Germans were redoubling their efforts.

And then, the last burst of lead. I knew where that last burst went, and whence it came—into Sunny Buford's cockpit, from the Spandaus of a German whose guts I spilled the next second with a single shot.

I looked down. All the others must have looked down at the same time. All except Sunny who, with wobbling wings, was heading home. Yes, we

all looked down, and we could feel the silence we couldn't hear because our motors kept raging on. But we could see. Bayonets glistening in the sun. Men standing everywhere in the woods below, not knowing where to look, or what to do. Germans wondering dully why the Americans had stopped firing. Americans wondering the same about the Germans; neither believing that the other was no longer a target.

The German flight commander swooped over me, hand at salute. I returned it. It seemed crazy that we didn't exchange hot lead. But we didn't. We should have exchanged smiles, I guess, but we didn't. There were too many dead between us, too many years of flaming Hell.

So they went, and we started home.

Our field would be all right now, for there had been an end of shooting. Well, we all—the whole three of us—got on Sunny Buford's tail and tried to help him home with our "pulling." Our wishes, our hopes. And we didn't look at one another. Once he sagged over his stick, and started a dive, and we held our breath, because it seemed to be the end. But he snapped out of that, brought the stick back, and zoomed. And we made way for him because it didn't seem that he could see us.

He staggered on a bit. He fell off on one wing, recovered, flew on—and yet on. My eyes were misty. I had lived through. So had the two with me. But Sunny—

Well, what about Sunny?

I DON'T know how he got back. I doubt if he ever knew that he had got it at practically the moment "cease firing" had echoed around the world. He was intent on just one thing. Getting home, flying back.

We let him go down first, and then we went in faster than we ever had before, got out of our crates before they stopped rolling, and hurried to have a look at Sunny Buford. Even

before we got to his crate—which he had landed without a crack-up—I could see that it had been literally shredded by Spandau lead.

I dragged him out myself. His face was bruised, still, and there was red blood trying to cover up the bruises. But aside from that, the expression on his face was—how shall I describe it? He knew he was dying, and because he was so close to the door that hides the Hereafter, he could see Heaven so clearly, and its reflection was a radiance on his face.

"I wish," he said, "that I knew what made Kelly so mad. Did I get my five, skipper?"

"Yes," I said, though I didn't know. I looked at the other two, Jameson and Prince, and they nodded. Sunny Buford had become an ace at the last minute.

Sunny sighed.

"I got into it," he said, "thank the good God! I became an ace, for my people's sake. It made Kelly mad when I said it, but he isn't here to get mad now, so I say it again: this is such a glorious, marvelous way to die, and I'm happy because it happens like this."

Then he shut his eyes.

I thought he'd gone. But he opened his eyes again. The medico wanted to do something to his back, where the bullets had gone, but Sunny smiled and told him not to waste his time—but to start home, and get ready to begin private practice.

SUNNY was glad to die as he had. I gulped, swallowed. There was something rather awesome here, if I could only understand it.

"Skipper," he said, "I've been the happiest in my life, right here—happier than any place in the world. You understand that?"

I didn't. It was impossible. But I nodded.

"Then, do me a favor, won't you?" he asked. "You'll have plenty of time, now that the end is here—"

So he knew, after all.

"Plant me, skipper," he said, "right smack dab where I am! And ask my people, will you, to leave me here? *They'll* understand, if you don't! I never want to retreat from glory!"

Damned if, that last few seconds, he didn't make the three of us left—and the greaseballs who came curiously up—feel that most of it *had* been glory, and that there had been times when our souls were quite too small to see it.

I promised.

And within the hour we did it. We had to do something. We'd have gone mad in the silence, if it hadn't been for the sound of picks and shovels, and the hammering of a casket made of his plane, and the driving of his own busted propeller into the head and foot of his grave, with his dog-tag hanging on the head one.

We were turning away when we saw the officer in grey.

"I'm Hagerman, Jethro," he said. "It's time we were friends. We might set a good example by beginning it."

The German skipper. We shook hands. He shook with each of us. But we couldn't go on with it, and he knew it. There was too much between. We had nothing to say to one another—and so he went away, seeming to travel faster with each succeeding step. It would take a long time before we could smile when we shook hands. I had told him what we were doing, and why.

We looked at Sunny's grave—but didn't look at each other—and returned to the silent hutments.

The call came at midnight: "Fly your crates back to Issoudun."

It was a laugh. We only had three.

We were out at dawn, looking,

from habit, toward German skies. For a moment we thought the war had started again—for we heard a gigantic German armada, coming straight toward us. They must have received orders like ours, perhaps they were flying the wrong way. Maybe they were crazy, were going to drop a last round of bullets on us. But that couldn't be the reason. We stood,

Now was the time for their Spandaus to start, but no bullets spewed from the noses of those crates. They came down so close I could see some of the patches on their fuselages, covering bulletholes we had made yesterday.

What the devil were they doing, anyhow?

The flight-leader waved as they

STUNT PILOT'S PUZZLE

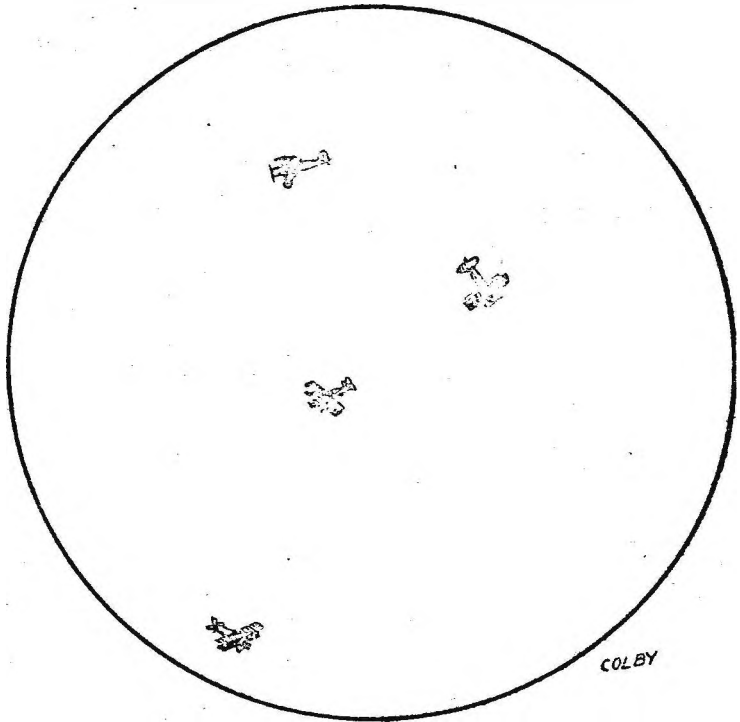
THIS TIME we have one of the craziest pilot's puzzles you ever saw. When you first look at it and read the rules you'll think it's impossible and then all of a sudden you'll think it's simple!

Here's a circle with four planes in it flying around looking for a place to light. Here's your job:

Within this circle draw three more circles. Each circle is to enclose but one ship within its border (which is outside another circle or circles), but when you get through correctly you will have four circles in all, including the outside one shown. One circle will enclose one plane, another two planes, and a circle, one will have three planes and two circles within it and the fourth one will have four planes and three circles within it.

Try this and you'll be surprised. Read over the conditions and take a whirl at it for a while. If you get cracked up after a few tries take a spin over to page 113 where you'll see it done.

Best luck!



poised for a quick duck into the woods, though oddly comforted by the familiar sound, until we could see them in the sky to the east.

They came on, Benz' roaring. There must have been twenty of them, I knew that this was the result of Hagerman's visit last night, his attempt to grab some friendship out of the world's wreckage. But why was he coming here, like this?

They kept right on. Now all their noses dipped together. They were coming down with shrieking wires.

went past us, fifty feet off the ground, heading across our field. We waved back with limp hands. It was too much of an effort to raise our hands and hold them. But our eyes watched their flight.

And right over the grave of Sunny Buford every last one of them, as though all had been moved by a single string in the hand of one prompter, waggled their wings. The salute wasn't for us; the wave had been. No, the salute was for Sunny Buford, and his parade to glory.

They had hated him yesterday, today they appreciated his hardy warring against them.

So they saluted with dipping wings, and banked right, a great fan of mighty ships, and headed east for Berlin—or somewhere we might or might not ever see. My men and I exchanged glances. There were tears among us we couldn't exactly explain.

"Hell," I said, "let's roll. The greaseballs will strike camp, put what they can into trucks—"

I stopped it there. I didn't care whether they struck camp or not. What did we care what happened to the junk we had left? We were heading out for Issoudun. It was a little pathetic, I think, our going in three-Spad formation. We got very gingerly into our riddled crates. We were afraid they might fall apart on us, though they were far better than they had been yesterday, during the last hour of the last grim fight.

I thought about the Germans, as we revved up our Hissos, and it seemed to me that you got sort of friendly with enemies, if you fought them long enough and hard enough for you to appreciate them, they to appreciate you.

We finally started down the field for the take-off, the last from this tarmac. We got into the air, unconcerned whether Fokkers were in hiding to smash into us on the climb.

We circled the field, something we seldom did—or seldom had done. We

looked down. We were leaving a lot behind us. Something of our souls, because so many had died—for me, with a year of it, so very, very many.

But when I tried I couldn't remember half their names, maybe because constant horror had anesthetized me.

At five hundred feet we cut across the field. I figured the field itself, which had known so much, rated something.

I started to dip my wings. As I did so I noticed something—both my wingmates were dipping theirs. Strange, but it was right over the grave of Sunny Buford that we did it. We didn't look at one another.

We flew away from there, taking our crates in with prayers, landing them, walking on away without looking at the poor battered wrecks. We didn't say anything, even in farewell, to one another. But because I knew what was in my own heart, I was sure what had been in the hearts of those last two wingmates of mine.

Some of the salute had been for the field we were leaving, and for those who had left it, filled with the hot blood of battle.

But I knew, and knew that *they* knew, that in our souls that salute to the tarmac of the Seventh Pursuit Squadron—by the three who were left—was mostly a salute of exalted appreciation for Sunny and the final climax of glory that was his.

5¢

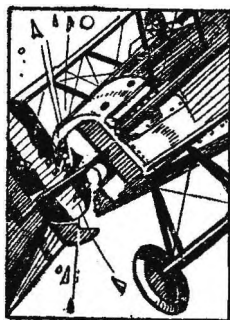
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Two World-War U. S. Army Flyers

One of a Series of True Stories of Famous Parachute Leaps—Compiled by Lieut. Jay D. Blaufox

This exploit of Major Hickam and Geiger was of the kiss and make-up variety—but the wrong kind. If it weren't for the little silken worm that has saved so many lives, these two World War flyers of the U. S. Army would not have survived to become members of the Caterpillar Club, that far-famed organization of flyers who have had narrow escapes from death.

Here's the Perilous Experience of These Two Famous Flyers

THE Martin Bombers hung high over Kelly Field one fine afternoon in May, 1926, waiting to drop their eggs upon a seemingly unsuspecting enemy. The huge planes thundered over the Field, demolished in theory every hangar and airplane in the vicinity and roared on back to their own tarmac.

High above the Bombers, stalking prey, were two flights of SE5s readying for an attack on the bombers in an effort to save their hangars from destruction. But the SE5s had dallied too long and the Bombers had put in their deadly work.

Havoc Breaks Loose

The sky suddenly rained SE5s on the Bombers and havoc broke loose as plane after plane roared at the huge carriers and machine-gun after machine-gun theoretically shot the bombers to shreds.

Students of the Air Service Technical School were receiving expert instruction in attacking enemy bombers from both Major Horace M. Hickam, and Major Harold Geiger, both World War flyers who knew their stuff.

Two pursuit groups headed by these Army officers were arranged in attack; while one attacked the other waited above for its turn.

Major Geiger, thinking that Major Hickam's flight which was below, had finished its work of attack, gave the signal which started his own flight of SE5s roaring for the Martin Bombers.

A Sky Mixup

Major Hickam's ship was evidently in Major Geiger's blind spot as the latter thundered down. Geiger tore down at the bombers without seeing Hickam and the

next thing he knew, he saw himself suddenly tear through an SE5's tail section that blasted to shreds as his propeller cut through it as though it were cardboard.

As the mad, diving plane piloted by Geiger tore on, it ripped off one of Hickam's wings and sent the ship careening. The nose of Major Hickam's plane rose almost to the vertical with the terrific impact. It then fell off onto the one wing it had left.

Hickam, taken by surprise, didn't know what struck him. He shot a quick, worried look in the direction of the other's roaring engine, realized almost as quickly what had happened, then with difficulty tried to leave his ship. He finally succeeded in rolling out over the side.

A Desperate Struggle

In the meantime, Geiger's ship swung over into a spin from which he could not right it, and with a badly smashed propeller that almost tore the engine from its bearings with the extreme vibrations, the plane's engine suddenly konked but the ship continued to spin dizzily. For a thousand feet the desperate pilot fought to release himself from the cockpit of the now out-of-control airplane. Centrifugal force pinned him in.

With a frantic shove, he managed to get his shoulders out of the cockpit; he forced his body next, then as the plane turned under, kicked himself free.

Both Major Geiger and Major Hickam landed not far from their wrecks, one a much surprised Army Pilot, the other somewhat disgusted, but both unharmed, thanks to their parachutes.

As for the ships, the Army had to junk what had once been two perfectly fine SE5s.

Learn to Fly

A Complete Course in Flying

By LIEUT. JAY D. BLAUFox

NIGHT FLYING

WELL, I hope you boys and girls of this course on Flying are about out of the fog I had you in last month and are ready to dip into some fly-by-nighting—or, I should have said, some night flying.

I'll never forget the heebie jeebies we used to get during the late World War—that is, the one we had some few years ago—when we were told that, "this night you will fly the un-sun-ripened ether and lay a few eggs on the enemy."

Our Job Was a Tough One!

Night flying in the old days was nothing compared to night flying now, you understand. We didn't have radio beacons, no million candle-power beacon lights, no

on a moonlight night above the clouds, the fairyland you used to dream about and read about in books, becomes a reality.

You Must Be Expert

But one thing you **MUST** get under your beards; before you can attempt to fly at night you must be *expert* in handling the ship by day. Of course, I know how well you can fly now so I'll just give you a few tips on night flying and we'll try a little together after we've finished the preliminary ground work.

The most important thing, you will readily appreciate, is *landing* the ship. This is somewhat different—but not very much—from landing the 'plane by day. I told you that when you land the ship normally by day, you look out about thirty to forty yards in front of you. In landing by night, *you land by the horizon*—therefore you **MUST** be able to land by looking ahead to a distance of not less than a hundred yards. Practicing daylight landings in this way will help you. **NEVER**, at ANY time, watch the ground near the ship. Do I have to explain why again?

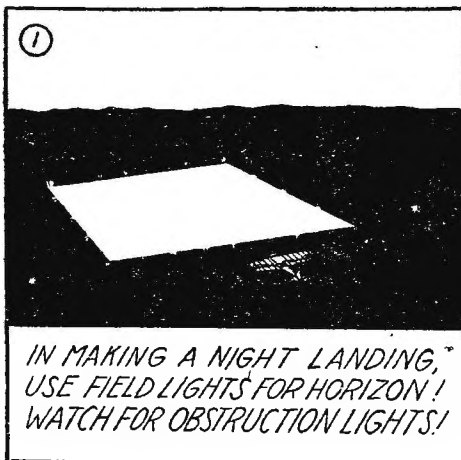
They're Only Machines

Airplanes are so well designed today that they will practically land themselves—but you must never forget they are, after all, just machines and have no intelligence, you will have to do a lot of the landing work yourself.

Most landing fields, as I just told you are lighted. Of course, there are thousands of good landing fields which are not. Get the Government book of landing field locations; it tells you whether they are lighted or not. On the lighted fields the edge of the field is skirted by red and white lights. This gives you the size and shape of the field. The large wind Tee is also lighted—to help you get the direction of the night wind. In nearly all cases where fields are lighted, they also have floodlights that turn the field into a brilliant, unmistakable landing spot.

Put a Double Watch On

Remember what I told you about watch-



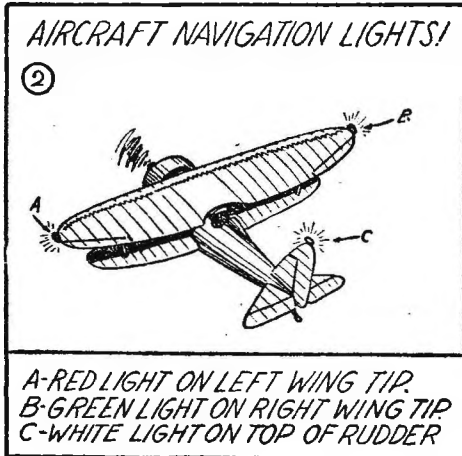
field flood lights that turned night into day when we wanted to land. **NO, SIR!** All we had were kerosene pots that looked like candles from the air. Laid out in "L" fashion—it was "your guess is as good as mine" in those days. Sometimes you came in all right—sometimes you didn't.

But now, why, it's as easy flying by night as it is by day. And at times, in nice weather, it's a lot pleasanter; no bumps, no stiff winds, air is usually calmer, and

LEARN TO FLY

ing out for obstructions when landing by day—put a double watch on when you land by night. Look out for hangars, trees, high-tension wires, if you can see the wires—if not, look for the poles that support them—water tanks and what have you. These are usually all capped with red lights. (See Fig. 1.)

If you land on a lighted field, and have no horizon to guide you or to land by, use



the line of lights which mark the farthest end of the field as your horizon line.

No Fancy Flips!

I don't have to warn you, now, do I, that you never try anything but a straight glide in a night landing. No fancy flips go here. That is, unless you want a nice metal prop wrapped around your gizzard.

Don't make "S" turns or spirals; they're not necessary and may force you to land away from the field if you make even a half turn too many.

Another thing that'll help you a lot—your instruments. Watch them carefully—particularly your altimeter, inclinometers, side-slip and air-speed indicators.

Navigation Lights

All ships equipped for night flying have what we call navigation lights. These are similar to those used on ships at sea.

Let's see how good you birds are—which wing tip carries the green light? Anybody! My, goodness look at all the hands go up. Well, let's see what the girls can do. You young lady, you answer that question. (See Fig. 2.)

What was that? The green light is on both wing tips but it's on a flying cop's plane. Holy Smokes, Lady, where've you been. Who really knows? On the right wing, that's right! And the red light is on the left wing. Who knows what's on the tail? The rudder and flippers, eh! A wise guy!

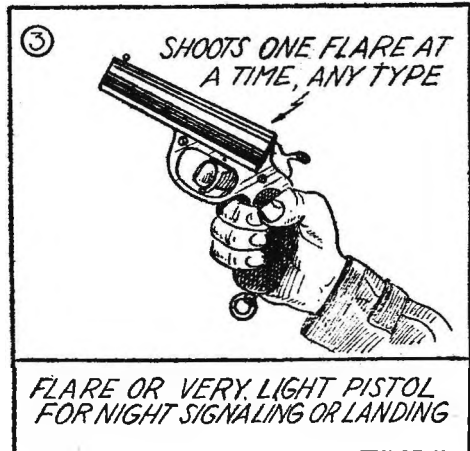
I wanted to know what color light the tail carried, Mug! I didn't ask anything about the rudder and flippers. Any more wise cracks like that and you'll go out like the three lights. Who knows what the color of the white light is on the tail? It's white, that's right. How did you guess it?

Landing Lights

Okay! Fun's fun, but we've got to get on with the lesson. The white light rides the top of the rudder and can be seen from all directions; the sides, above and from below. The same, of course, applies—the visibility, I mean—to the other lights.

Inbedded in some ships, and about two feet in from the wing tip in the leading edge of the wing, one on each, are landing lights. These are something like the headlights on an automobile. In addition, the ship often carries parachute flares. These are magnesium cartridges hung on miniature parachutes. In case of a forced landing, or a landing on an unlighted field, these are shot over the side at a height ranging between eight hundred and a thousand feet; the 'chute blasts open and the flare descends slowly at a rate of about eight feet per second lighting up the area over which you are planning to land.

These flares are shot from a flare pistol (see Fig. 3) held in the hand, or discharged electrically by remote control from a magazine or set of chambers containing the flare cartridges.



How to Shoot a Flare

Now, listen carefully—when you shoot a flare from the flare gun, you must send it VERTICALLY into the air where it will attain a height of approximately two hundred feet above the plane before it is automatically discharged and the magnesium bursts into flames. The flare will light up

an area of about a quarter of a mile in all directions.

The parachute flare is discharged as a closed projectile. It is perfectly safe, because it doesn't ignite the two-second time fuse until it is at a safe distance from the ship.

You usually send it out from a height of six to eight hundred feet from the ground, but it will work well from a thousand feet. These flares are manufactured to stay lighted as long as three minutes, having a light capacity of 300,000 candle power. You said it! That's a lot of candles to put into a small cartridge! Other types burn from one to one and a half minutes sending off 100,000 to 150,000 candle power of illumination. And that's no small light either.

The cartridges are interchangeable. The minute you shoot one flare from the pistol,



another is pushed into its place, and the gun is ready for firing again as soon as the first flare burns out.

Safety Switch

If you use the magazine that is operated electrically, a safety switch is provided on the instrument board which you use for the discharge.

You know, there are also wing tip flares at the service of the pilot, but I can't say I like them much. There's always the possibility of a fire in case of a crash.

If you plan to do a lot of night flying, have the prop painted black—that is, if the ship's your own. This will prevent the possibility of glare and reflection of light being thrown back into your eyes by the revolving prop when you land.

Be Cautious!

If you ever do have a forced landing at night, and you are forced to use your flares, shoot the first one at about a thou-

sand feet over the ground and to one side of the ship. **DON'T FLY UNDER IT—FLY TO ONE SIDE OF IT!**

Always keep it in view. You can keep it in sight only if you fly to one side of it as it drops. Then again—keep well away from it.

It's fire you know, and your wings and fabric are highly doped. (See Fig. 4.)

DON'T FORGET TO TAKE THE WIND INTO ACCOUNT! It will effect the horizontal travel of the parachute carrying the flare. After you've shot it from the pistol, you'll have to hitch it like Hades and try to beat it to the ground—turn the ship **INTO THE WIND** and land against it. But you already know that much.

Glide with Motor on

In daylight landings you were told to maneuver into position, cut the gun and lower the nose into the best gliding angle for the ship. You were told to start your glide **NEAR** the field. Now in night flying, you do none of these things. You start your straight glide at least a mile from the field and you glide *with motor on*.

This results in part glide and part flying. When you are within forty or fifty feet above the near end of the field, cut the throttle all the way down *but don't steepen the glide*.

Judge Your Height

Keep the stick in the same position as you did when the motor was cut down to half. Use the field lights nearest you to judge your height. Start to flatten out early but do so gently and gradually letting the ship settle. Then land in the regular manner.

I assume that you understand that you got the direction of the wind from the illuminated wind Tee.

If there is any danger of overshooting the field, give 'er the gun and make another round of the field.

Examination Coming!

Well, fellows and girls, that's enough for the present. The next lesson will be taken up with taking off at night. And, oh, yes! I just thought of it! Look's as though I'm slipping. I was called onto the carpet yesterday for forgetting to give you Birds and Birdesses a review examination. In fact, we've missed that for quite a number of months. It's a wonder you wouldn't remind a chap.

But I was like that, too. If I could have ducked an examination, I did. **BUT**—whether you like it or not, you're getting it next time. I'll test your knowledge with a long list of questions—so you'd better brush up on your flying studies.

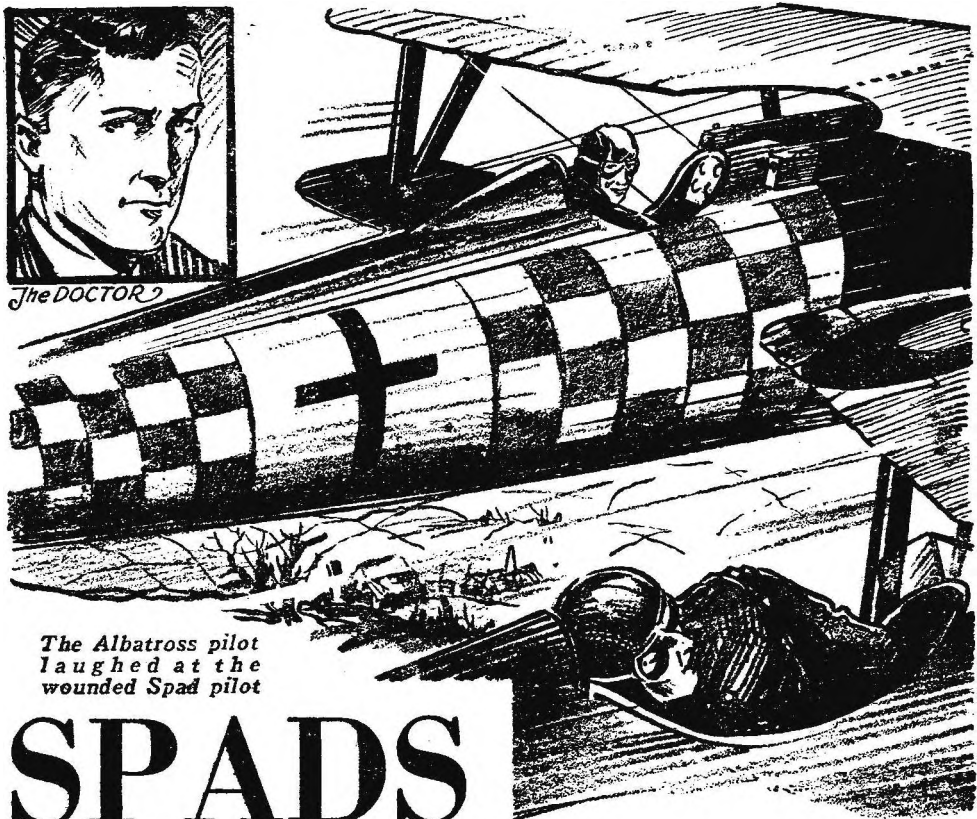
Sharpen up your pencils, and bring along some nice clean sheets of foolscap—we'll give you the works.

I'll be seeing you

*The Boys in the Squadron Had Ideas About Doc Lewis
and His Yellow Streak, But He Showed
Them His Real Color!*



The DOCTOR



*The Albatross pilot
laughed at the
wounded Spad pilot*

SPADS *and* SCALPELS

By F. E. RECHNITZER

Author of "Fate Fades an Ace," "The Sky Hawk," etc.

TOBY CARLIN hurried along the crooked lane between the tables and flopped down in the chair held out for him by Charles, the headwaiter at the Blenheim.

"Two of the usual," he grinned, "an' make them stiff. I'm celebrating. Sorry I'm late, Pat," he con-

cluded as he turned to the man who had been waiting for him for almost an hour. Toby Carlin was rather pre-occupied.

His friend grinned. "First time I ever knew you to be late. Used to call you 'Timetable' Toby back at the squadron, remember? But say, what's the celebration about,

now that Charles is back with the liquor?"

"I just got rid of the biggest yellow streak a fellow ever had, Pat," replied Toby, lifting the glass and catching the glint of the light overhead. "Boy, do I feel all right now? Took me eighteen years to get rid of that trickle of saffron that tinted my backbone. Suppose Doc Weber would have another name for that."

"Doc Weber!" interrupted Pat as he set the glass down. "You mean that pest we had in the outfit back in France. Say, why'd you have to bring that guy's name up the first time we've met in six years? Thought you'd forgotten our date."

Toby Carlin toyed with his glass for a second or so and then leaned across the table, his eyes alight.

"YOU knew Weber for a couple of days, Pat," he began. "You got transferred up north to take over a flight."

"An' that was plenty long enough," growled Pat. "Of all the fuss-pots I ever saw he took the cookies. Started right in crabbing about a mistake somebody had made in sending him to France to fly. Never forgot the old man, boy, didn't the major tell him a couple of things?"

"We all did," said Toby, soberly. "An' I guess I told him as much as anybody else."

"What's this fellow Weber got to do with all your exuberance?" asked Pat quietly.

"Well," Toby began again. "I knew him when he was at the training squadron down at Kelly. Only he wasn't squawking then. Always yelping about the boys up in Washington having the right idea by putting him through a course in flying. Said it would help him in his work when he got to France."

"What the hell did he expect it to do?" laughed Pat as he reached for the oyster fork. "I didn't think he was that dizzy."

"I used to rib him a lot every time he came down," smiled Toby. "Flying fool, he was. I used to ask him if he'd got any ideas that would help him when he got to France."

"One day he sort of floored me when he said he'd got hold of something good that morning while he was in town. That's the way he was. His answers never seemed to make sense, yet he always thought everybody understood. He wasn't a squawker then. Nice sort of a guy, even if he did use words I couldn't find in the dictionary."

"But he sure started squawking when he hit the outfit," said Pat, as he swabbed up the last bit of cocktail sauce with an oyster that looked as if it had been caught in a set of Bendix gears.

"You didn't hear the half of it, Pat," said Toby. "But they shoved him into my hut. An' what a bed mate *he* made. Started right in with his song an' dance about being over there to patch up guys, not kill them. Claimed that he had signed up to go over with the medical corps, and not to fly."

"Mm," grunted Pat as he looked down at the empty sauce glass. "Suppose he thought being an orderly would be safer. Willing to tote bedpans to keep from getting near the front. What was it the C. O. said? I just heard the last of it as I was getting into the truck to go to the station."

"What we all said," answered Toby. "Only he said it out loud, with plenty of army words to make it stick. Called him yellow. Said he'd been figuring that the war would be over before he got to France. Then when it wasn't he starts yelping about the medical corps."

"An' Weber comes right back at him and says that he's as much of a lunkhead as the birds in Washington. All they could think about was kill, kill, an' anybody that did not like to kill was yellow. Said if

the major had anything in that red-head skull of his, he'd see that Weber didn't belong with a bunch of killers."

"An' the major took it," demanded Pat incredulously.

"Like the devil he did," replied Toby, reaching for his soup spoon. "He went up in the air, an' for a second I thought he'd throw a fit. An' then he began to grin, you know that grin, you've seen it when we tried to get away with something."

"I remember," smiled Pat. "Like a dumb fox's smile."

Toby nodded and then went on. "C. O. just stepped out of the office and stuck that red nose of his right into Weber's face.

"I've seen that game worked before, Lieutenant," he snarled. "You are not taking any runout powders from this outfit. If you were a lousy pilot I might let you get away with it. But I'm not canning you, so forget it.

"You're a pilot in Ninety-six, and you're going to stay here, that is until some Hun fills your yellow carcass with lead. If you land on this side you'll get a chance to tangle with the medical corps boys, but not before. So pipe down."

"An' he didn't, I take it," grinned Pat.

"Not a bit," answered Toby. "He kept right on yelling, and squawking plenty. Didn't let it go at that, got to writing letters. He wrote to everybody in the States, from President Wilson down. Bet he wrote a letter a day to his congressman, and one every other day to Pershing."

"They didn't fall for the gag either."

Toby's face sobered. "C. O. nailed those letters as they passed through the office. Don't think a one got by."

"But was he good in the air?" demanded Pat dishing another spoonful of cheese into his minestrone. "Get any Huns?"

Toby shrugged his shoulders. "Never saw him turn in a combat report. But plenty of times I saw him fly rings around Albatrosses and tangle them up so that they high-tailed for home. I'll swear I saw plenty of his tracers go around Jerry crates, but I never saw him connect. Yes, he was one sweet pilot, never saw a better man at the stick of a Spad, but he never seemed to get up nerve to close in on a Hun for the kill.

"Mechanics liked to take care of his bus because there was never any patching to do. Fabric was as sound as the day it came from the pool."

"So," said Pat snapping a breadstick. "Say how'd we ever get on the subject of this Weber anyway? We've been together for the first time in six years an' all we've talked about is that mug."

"BECAUSE I started to talk about him, Pat," said Toby. "I want to talk about him. Wanted to tell you about him the last time we met at the convention, an' I didn't have the nerve."

"Nuts," grinned Pat. "Your record shows that you had nerve. Took the ol' sand to knock nine of those Jerry crates, an' Lord knows how many you got so far behind the lines that you couldn't get confirmations for them."

"But there's more than one kind of nerve, Pat," said Toby. "What looked like it out there was something of a different order. I didn't have sense enough to be afraid, so if you stop to analyze it I wasn't so brave. What I did today I've been trying to do for years."

"Sorry," grinned Pat. "I should have let you go on talking about Weber. I never was much when it came to arguing about the stuff that goes on inside a guy. What happened to Weber? Did the C. O. finally get sick of his bellyaching an' can him?"

"No," said Toby after a moment's hesitation. "Just when we were getting fed up with his everlasting talk about a sad mistake being made, he started on a new tack."

"Didn't get tired of trying to convince you guys that he was the victim of some screwy bookkeeping at H. Q.," said Pat. "You know funny things did happen. Lookit Sandy Ferguson—but skip it. First thing you know we'll be off the deep end again. What'd Weber pull next?"

"Began pestering us fellows to make out reports of our reactions in the air," Toby began again after he had pushed his soup plate away and began to knit spaghetti with his fork.

"**W**ANTED us to record the things we thought of in the air. Even wanted us to count the number of times we breathed at different altitudes, and count our pulses. Gave us figures he wanted us to add while we flew on patrol at sixteen thousand, and missing words to fill in sentences."

"All with a flock of Jerries on your tail, I suppose," snapped Pat. "Want you to tell him what you were thinking when tracer began to sneak through your struts?"

"Just about," said Toby. "He'd sit and write for hours at night."

"To the President?"

"No. He'd given that up. He made notes. Said he was going to write a paper when he got home. Something about the effect of altitude on—can't think of the word now, but it was a honey."

"Regular nut, eh?"

"Why, do you know," Toby went on, "I've been sitting right above him where I could look down in his cockpit while a flock of Huns were crashing down out of a cloud bank, an' there'd be Weber flying with one hand an' holding a stethoscope against his chest with the other."

"With all hell about to pop, mind you. Used to carry that stethoscope

clipped to a bracing wire in the cockpit of his Spad. He'd of had a fit if he'd known that the mechanics used it to listen for bearing knocks in the Hissos."

Toby paused while the waiter set a platter of scallopino and peas in front of him. Then he went on:

"Every now an' then he'd write a letter to Washington. C. O. showed me one that he'd waylaid. Boy, what a bunch of words. All we could make out was that somebody was suffering from an incurable disease of the brain. An' we both figured that Weber was the guy."

"He sure acted screwy while I saw him," muttered Pat. "And from what you tell me, he was. What was he pretending to be, a prof or an M. O.?"

"M. O.," replied Toby. "An' after Jerry Taylor's experience I sort of had a hunch that he was. That's when Weber and our old sawbones had their fight."

"You mean he had a falling out with Cranston," smiled Pat, reaching for the ketchup. "Never knew Cranston to be sober enough to even get in an argument. Boy, how he could lap up the cognac! Give him a quart an' he'd recommend you for light duty. Two quarts and you'd get leave to go to Paris."

"I know," said Toby. "An' we lost a couple of good men, because the M. O. was plastered. If they'd had the proper attention they'd have had a chance. I mean Robins and Husted. Taylor pretty near went the same way. He came down to the M. O.'s hut one morning saying that he had a hell of a bellyache."

"Cranston gave him a number nine and a glass of water. This guy Weber was in the hut at the time, knocked the pill out of his hand and started to raise the devil. Got Taylor up on the table and began poking around his guts. 'It's appendicitis, Doctor Cranston,' he said. He forgot that the M. O. was a captain

an' that didn't help a bit. I was on my way to the hangars an' I heard the whole thing. Boy, did big words fly!"

"'You're a young nincompoop,' snapped the doctor. 'I know what I'm doing, and I wish you'd clear out. Tired of you pestering me. Young medical squirt just out of school and trying to tell me my business. Here, Taylor, take that pill.'

"I heard Weber's voice through the partly open door. "If you take that pill, Taylor,' he was saying, 'if you take that pill you're a dead man. You've got to get to the base hospital at once.'

"Taylor got scared an' asked Weber to help him down to the office. When they came out I fell in at the other side and took Jerry's other arm. He got to the hospital in a couple of hours and Weber was right."

"Can you tie that?" said Pat softly. "Have to remember that in case my insides get cutting up."

"And what's more," Toby went on, "Chuck crashed that same afternoon, and as usual Cranston was pie-eyed. Weber took charge, fixed up a compound fracture of the right leg, and did a quick amputation of the left foot where the engine supports had folded back. They phoned back from the base an' wanted to know what brand Cranston was drinking then. Best job they'd ever had brought in from a tarmac."

"Keep on ribbing him, then?" asked Pat, looking over the dessert list. "Rum cake an' coffee, large," he said to the waiter.

"No, we sort of eased up on him," replied Toby. "An' the minute we did he started yapping about getting away from the squadron, or staying on the ground as M. O. An' then the next day when Hamilton came in with three to his credit and started to push his chest out you should have heard Weber go after him.

"Bawled him out something awful for bragging about taking the life of a fellow man. That's when Ham took a poke at him and the old row started all over again."

"But if he was a sawbones what was he doing in a Spad squadron?" demanded Pat.

"He claimed 'hat a mistake had been made," said Toby. "Said some other guy and he had been mixed up."

"An' you wouldn't believe it?" snapped Pat.

"No, we didn't," returned Toby. "We figured that he was some smart aleck M. O. that had joined up with the Air Service in the hopes that he'd get a little publicity. You know, knock down a couple of Huns an' get his name in the papers.

"Then when he went back to the States he'd be a hero and more than halfway on the road to having a good practice pushed right into his lap. You know how they worshiped heroes in those days."

"AN' you figured he got yellow when he hit the front," said Pat. "That it? Found out flyin' was a little different from fighting."

"That's just what we had doped out," said Toby. "C. O. was sure that was the way it laid. And the major didn't do a thing but tell Weber so, that day he was bawling Ham out for bragging about killing three men."

"Weber took it an' then walked to the door. He stopped there and faced us. He didn't look angry, just a little hurt. 'Major,' he said, an' his voice was as smooth as silk, 'I was never meant to be a killer, a murderer. Neither you nor the whole staff of the American Army can make me one. It's my job to save lives, an', by God, I'll do it. You can't keep me here trying to make a butcher out of me. Don't forget that.'"

"Wasn't all yellow, was he?" said

Pat as he began to fork rum cake.

"Wait till you hear the rest of it, Pat," said Toby soberly. "We went out on patrol that afternoon and Weber didn't come back."

"He took his runout powder?" exclaimed Pat, letting his fork slide to the plate.

"I saw him go down," continued Toby. "We tangled with the black and green checkered boys. You remember that outfit of Albatrosses who traveled up an' down the Front. First thing I knew they had Slim Wilson in flames. They were swarming around us like bees.

"I heard one in back of me and as I swung to get away from his guns he stopped shooting. Next thing I know he's sliding away with a flapping aileron. I caught another one slipping up on the C. O., brushed him away with a cluster of hot stuff and sent him frying.

"They got another one of us, 'Tip' I think it was, hammered him to bits. Those boys were sure pouring it in that day, getting in close and keeping it up until a Spad either burst into flames or fell apart. It was slam bang all the way.

"I got my eighth that afternoon. An' as I banked away from him I saw a Spad going down under full control, weaving in nice S turns, prop at six o'clock, no smoke, nothing wrong but a conked motor."

"An' a flip of the switch will do that very nicely," said Pat.

TOBY nodded. "Didn't see him land, though. Slipped in behind some trees and that was the last I ever saw of the crate."

"Weber?"

"Yes," said Toby slowly. "An' were the boys boiling when they got back. 'Weber,' 'Weber,' 'yellow,' 'louse,' was all you heard while we stood in the office making out our combat reports. There was one ship that nobody claimed, the one with the flapping ailerons. Guess nobody

saw it go down, so I added it to my list an' got it confirmed. That made my ninth. Never told anybody that I cheated.

"I know," smiled Pat. "I grabbed myself a couple that way. What's the difference? We were over there to knock down Jerries."

"Or get knocked down," smiled Toby. "I got mine two days later. Dawn patrol. Same checkerboard outfit. I was leading 'A' Flight that morning. First time I had a chance to lead a flight, too, an' I had to mess it up.

"Guess I was like the other birds, still so mad about Weber's ducking out on us in the middle of a scrap that I wasn't thinking straight. Glad I was the only one, though, that suffered because I let them catch us napping.

"I can see them yet." Toby half closed his eyes as he sipped his coffee. When he had set the cup down he went on: "They came down out of the early sun like a flock of buzzards, motors wide open and guns throwing lead. Scattered us like a bunch of chicks.

"Ever feel a bunch of slugs crawling up your fuselage, making your feet dance on the rudder, droning like mad hornets, cutting flying wires and tossing spruce splinters back in your face? Guess you have. Well, all that happened quicker than I can tell it. Slap bang, an' I had a slug through my shoulder.

"Didn't hurt, only made my arm feel numb and hot where the blood was trickling down. I made a dizzy pass at an Albatross and missed him by a mile. Damn pilot laughed right in my face. Then my leg was lifted right off the rudder, an' when I tried to slip my foot back in the stirrup I couldn't make it work. Talk about spots in front of your eyes. Boys, I had 'em an' they were all blazing.

"I got a pain in my innards and first thing I knew my instrument

board was spattered with bacon an' coffee. Got to thinking about Weber an' those damn fool reports right then, the ones about reactions an' that stuff. Know what kept pumping through my head as my belly felt worse an' worse?"

Pat shook his head.

"I kept thinking that I mustn't take a pill. 'Die if you do, die if you take a pill,' I kept yelling. And the tracer they were throwing at me began to look like number nines, those big black ones Cranston used to dish out about once a week."

"So that's how they got you," grinned Pat as he poured himself another cup. "Never made you tell it before."

"I know," said Toby. "But I can tell the whole business tonight, glad to get it off my chest."

"GO down on their side?" asked Pat.

"Yeah, but I don't remember it," replied Toby. "They say I was still yelling about pills when they pulled me out of the wreck. First thing I recall was a lot of buzzing, a funny light flashing in front of my eyes and then a bunch of people in white moving around me. Scared me for a minute. Thought they were angels."

"You flatter yourself," chuckled Pat. "Sorry, go ahead."

"Well, I shut my eyes an' listened," Toby went on. "The buzzing sort of stopped an' I could hear voices. 'He'll be all right now, *Doktor*,' a smooth voice was saying. 'Watch the drains carefully for the next few days and keep me informed.'

"Bring me his chart every hour.' Then the nice voice faded and I heard some strange ones, harsh and excited. 'Marvelous, *kolossal*. A proud moment of my life. Such hands and the technique he used. Perfection. You were right, *Herr Doktor* Brewer when you said that only he could do it.'"

Toby leaned back in his chair and lit a cigarette. "That got me going," he said after the second puff. I opened my eyes and then damn near passed out."

"Weber?" asked Pat.

"Yeah," murmured Toby. "There was Weber bending over me as he stripped off a pair of rubber gloves. 'I've been waiting for you to come around, Cullen,' he smiled kinda weaklike. I thought he was embarrassed. 'Take it easy for a few days and you will be well on the road to recovery. I'll have to go now.'

"I started to say something, but one of the birds in a white gown laid his hand on Weber's arm. 'You had better hurry, *Doktor* Weber. You have stayed too long now. A transfusion will be necessary.'

"I had a couple of things I wanted to say to that bird so I reached out my hand, or tried to would be better. 'Just a minute, you yellow-livered mug,' I snapped. 'I don't want you to skip outa here before I deliver the message from the boys. First one to be taken prisoner had the job, an' I'm sort of glad I got it.'

"Then I lit in. I called that bird everything I could think of that had anything to do with yellow. An' then I started in about him being crazy and finally finished up by calling him a cowardly deserter for landing behind the enemy lines to take a run-out powder."

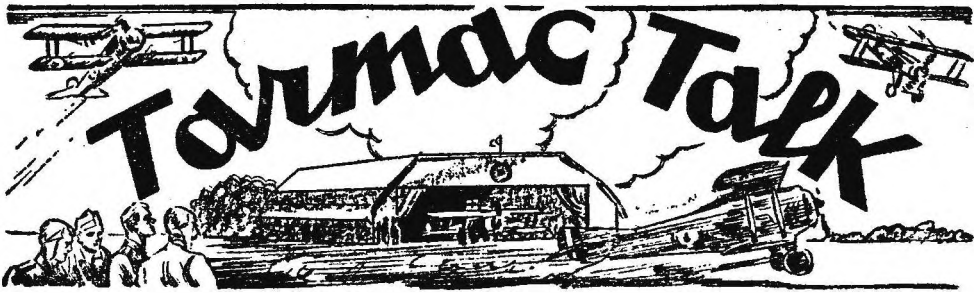
"An' he took it as usual?" said Pat.

"Never batted an eyelash," Toby continued. "But he got paler an' paler when I started in about him working with the Hun medical corps the minute he got down."

"Don't blame you," said Pat. "I'd like to have been there to help, if it hadn't meant being a prisoner. What else did you say?"

"Nothing," replied Toby. "I couldn't think of anything else and

(Continued on page 110)



HOP ABOARD! The skipper is going to take you on another trip around the world. Let's peek into the hangars here, there and everywhere and see how aviation is advancing!

First, let's look America over. Our progress is encouraging, buzzards—but there's still a lot for air-minded Americans to do before we can really call ourselves supreme in the air.

Misleading Statistics

We are told in news dispatches that the Army has a total of 902 airplanes in service. Now, that sounds like a bunch of wings—but in a way it's also a bunch of



wind! For this figure, 902, includes training planes, transports, observation jobs, and so forth. Actually, there are only 288 planes for the defense of continental United States.

And that means that we have only *one* airplane for the protection of each 10,509 square miles of territory!

So you see, you have to look at the facts behind the figures—or the figures are likely to mislead you.

However, our American planes are the best in the world and recent developments point to an increase in quantity as well as quality in the near future. So, do everything you can to boost the strengthening of our national defense! Your enthusiasm is needed, fans, to stimulate action!

We're Off!

Here we go on our tour of the world! We're roaring through the air at 200 miles per hour, and stopping off at various foreign tarmacs to see what we can see!

Here we are in New Zealand! The air defense is being augmented by three squadrons, as part of an elaborate defense plan. Nearly a million dollars is to be spent in improvement of civil aviation facilities throughout Australia. Several new air-lines have been inaugurated.

It's a long hop back to Canada, but we

make it. (Some going, eh?) Canada carried 1,159,834 pounds of mail during the last year—a new record. An aviation section at Halifax is being created in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. A new flying service between Montreal and the northern Quebec flying fields has been established.

Now Head for England

Okay, let's hop over to Great Britain, peélots. There's experimentation in liquid-cooled engines and stratosphere flying going on at a great pace. We'll hear of some marvelous discoveries soon, coming from this part of the world!

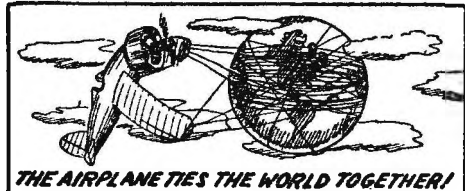
Now we'll just let our "magic carpet" (the airplane has made that old legend of the "magic carpet" come true) land us in Japan just long enough to find out that there's a new air service being inaugurated between Tokyo and Saipan, a distance of 2,562 miles—which will be covered in 36 hours.

Another New Air Service

Casually turning the engine around and making a bee-line for Czechoslovakia, where we stay for a spell even though we can hardly spell it, we congratulate the officials there on the projected air service to Belgium.

This service will reduce flying time between Brussels and Prague (about 435 miles) to 3 hours, and will consist of one round-trip daily.

In Italy, we find that the altitude record



has been broken again—this time by Col. Mario Pezzi, commander of the Military Altitude School, Montecarlo, Italy. He flew to an indicated height of 51,361 feet in a Caproni biplane powered by a 700-horsepower engine.

Well, there's the first lap of our journey over—we'll continue in another issue. And here we are back at the home tarmac, and the plane's still fresh as a daisy!

Glad to be back?

Join AIRMEN OF AMERICA!

You've seen how aviation ties the world together in a common bond of interest and activity. It's up to you to take your place among the thousands and thousands of fans who are working for aviation progress everywhere.

SKY FIGHTERS gives you the chance! Join our world-wide organization—*Airmen of America*. There's a coupon for your convenience on this page. There are no dues and no fees. All we ask is your interest in aviation.

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As a member, you're entitled to obtain, **FREE OF CHARGE**, twelve crackerjack portraits of World-War aces. Just send us three name-strips from three front covers of SKY FIGHTERS, from consecutive issues not more than a year old. Enclose six cents in stamps for mailing.

Or send two name-strips and ten cents in stamps—or just one name-strip from the cover of this issue and fifteen cents in stamps will do the trick if you're in a hurry.

Thanks, thanques and thanx to all you
(Continued on page 108)

**NATIONAL COMMANDER,
THE AIRMEN OF AMERICA,
22 WEST 48th STREET, N. Y. C.**

Please enroll me as a member of THE AIRMEN OF AMERICA. I am sincerely interested in aviation and will do my part to further its advancement. I am a regular reader of SKY FIGHTERS.

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9-37

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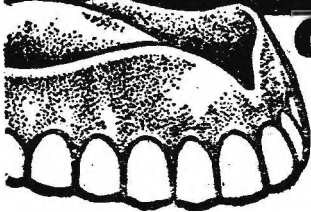
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(Continued from page 107)

peelots for your swell letters to the home tarmac! They sure help us in planning future issues of this magazine—and it's swell to know all your ideas on aviation. Keep sending those missives, epistles and whatnot along—and remember that a post-card's as good as a sealed letter. But WRITE! After every issue, let's know what you think of it! Your suggestions and comments will be carefully studied. Also—we still want your reactions on national aviation activities and problems.

First let's hear from Bob Curtis, a fan who lives at 6711 Benson St., Huntington Park, Cal. Bob had lots to say about the magazine—and here's part of it:

I'm back on the tarmac for the third time, but in a brand-new crate all covered with checks. I like checkered crates.

I know the July issue is a good one. I haven't finished it yet, but give me time. I only got it day before yesterday. The May issue was a swell one, too.

I'm not exactly in favor of modern stories, but George Bruce is the only author I'd trust with one, if you get what I mean. I thought BORN TO FLY was a swell story, and so were FLYING MONGREL and BORN RECKLESS. I haven't read his latest, NORTH SEA NIGHTMARE, but I know it will be good. Bruce stories always are.

Here's a note from Don Lindeman, 219 Buchanan St., Hoquiam, Washington:

I have been reading SKY FIGHTERS for a long time and think it's tops. I have only been a member of AIRMEN OF AMERICA a short while, so here's my first bit of correspondence as a member.

I am inclined to agree with others that AIRMEN OF AMERICA should adopt an emblem and also have different ranks for members.

Why not consider the suggestion of Joseph Conizova to have Lieut. Blaufox put his flying lessons together in a book and issue the book to members?

I'm proud to see that modernization of aviation has reached our Northwest by the work being done at our local airport. Cement runways are being laid and many modern conveniences are being installed about the hangar.

And buzzards, I'd like to hear some other members! Sling some ink this way.

Thanks, Don! Everybody—let's know what you think of this reader's ideas. And now—hearken to Chester Howell of 2854 3rd Ave., Huntington, W. Va.:

I would like to see solid scale model airplanes in SKY FIGHTERS. (This feature appears in our companion magazine, THE LONE EAGLE.—Ed.) I like Tarmac Talk, Library of War Planes and your other features. The Flying Course is a great help to a fellow that's air-minded.

Paul Cordova, 1109 State St., Peoria, Ill., says:

I'm honored by belonging to your organization. I have a plane of my own and have about 150 solo hours in the air, most of it being in Brazil, South America.

I would like very much to hear from some other fellows who are interested in South America and in the advancement of aviation in the United States.

Vincent Grady, 5423 Pine St., Philadelphia, writes:

I am a regular reader of SKY FIGHTERS and I think it is a swell magazine. The best story that I have read so far is FIGHTING MONGREL. Get Ralph Oppenheim to write some more stories like it. Another good story was SHIP FOR SHIP. Please leave out modern stories as they don't hit

the spot. I think we should have some kind of a pin.

Eric Cramp, 40 Central Rd., Ramsgate, Kent, England, sends this message from over the seas:

Have you room for an air-crazy Limey in your club?

Thanks for putting in FIGHTER'S TALLY, that swell story about two British aces.

In Ramsgate here we have our own municipal airport, which is on the Imperial Airways Continental Route. A German pilot had to land here because of the fog, and said our landing ground was better than the one at Croydon, our biggest airport. Just outside this town is one of our most important R. A. F. dromes and several spies are now in jail for attempting to get plans of it.

Doesn't Eric's letter make you think of the romance of far places? The letters above are typical of thousands received at the home tarmac. Write—and see whether we choose YOUR LETTER for quotation here. Of course, only a few of the missives can be used in this department, but we try to pick those which are most representative.

As to our next issue—be on hand, fans, for the thrill of your life when you read the swell complete novel of demon fighters—THE DEVIL'S SQUADRON, by Robert Sidney Bowen. Also, there will be a zooming, swift-moving novelette by George Bruce—WAR EAGLE. And yarns by F. E. Rechnitzer, Lieut. Scott Morgan, Kent Sagendorph and others. You'll get the next SKY FIGHTERS at all stands in the first week of September—and it's going to be a wow of an issue, with a punch in every paragraph of every story! See you then.

—EDDIE McCRAE.

MAIL BUDDIES

Here are some more members of AIRMEN OF AMERICA—all air fans. From time to time we'll list others. The figures in the parentheses are the ages of the members.

- Willard McFarland (15), Box 185, Dubois, Wyo.
- Joe Kotuder (14), 2457 So. Ridgeway, Chicago, Ill.
- Milton Hayes (15), 897 E. 169 St., New York, N. Y.
- John F. Haynes (13), 628 So. 5th, Waco, Texas.
- Sam Whinehan (15), 24 Villo Ave., Buffalo, N. Y.
- N. Yoworski (18), 12 Shawhon Ave., Carnegie, Pa.
- Helen M. Deshaw (15), 749 E. 12 Ave., Vancouver, B. C., Canada.
- Ray Nelson (15), Rt. 2, Box 207, Visalia, Cal.
- Clifford Bernard (13), Swamp Rd., Greenfield, Mass.
- Bud Jensen (17), Clear Creek, Utah.
- Joseph Phelan (16), 409 15 St., Union City, N. J.
- Raymond Earl Chace, Rock Point, Maryland.
- Gordon Stephenson, Wedmore, High St., Yardley Wood, England.
- John Vestrac (11), 5621 Ga. Ave., Washington, D. C.
- Peter Catozza (18), 2944 So. Michigan Ave., Chicago.
- Frank Smosna (17), 2944 So. Michigan Ave., Chicago.
- Giiberto Rivera (17), Box 234, Aibonito, P. R.
- Salvatore DeLillo (14), 158 School St., Yonkers, N. Y.
- Bob Erwin (12), 2966 Manchester, Cleveland, Ohio.
- Joe Ballek (16), R. R. 2, Sheridan, Wyo.
- George M. Scott (16), 3852 17 Ave. W., Vancouver, B. C., Canada.
- Paul Provost (12), 89 Bonney St., New Bedford, Mass.
- Allan Corby (15), 90 Munro St., Toronto, Canada.
- Bob Smith (16), 809 Woodward Ave., Iron Mt., Mich.



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DR. W. D. SMITH
INVENTOR

SPADS AND SCALPELS

(Continued from page 105)

besides I felt sick to my stomach, damn near vomited when he got a sickly grin on his face an' said to the guy standing at my feet, 'The shock, *Doktor*, the shock has befuddled him. He does not know what he is saying.'

"I tried to snap back at him, but I couldn't make the words come, and besides Weber had moved around in back of me where I couldn't see him. I heard him say, 'Don't move him for another hour or so,' an' then he was gone.

"I LAY there with my eyes shut. I could hear them rattling pans, and moving stuff around. I opened my eyes and there was the bird who had been standing at the foot of the table, still standing there, still scowling.

"Swine,' he said after a couple of minutes, 'Stupid swine, to curse the man who has saved your life, not once, but twice, and—'

"What are you driving at, Fritz?" I asked in a whisper. Could not talk any louder.

"He moved around the table and came to my side. "That man, *Doktor* Weber, has just saved your life. The day before yesterday he saved it again when he shot down the man who had you at his mercy. I know, for the man lies here in this hospital with a broken leg.

"He told me; *Doktor* Weber did not. He is not that kind. He never was. I knew him back at Johns Hopkins where I was taking post graduate work. It was because I recognized him that you are alive now. You should be dead.'

"I tried to get a word in edgewise, but that Jerry doctor had something to say and he was saying it. 'You are an ungrateful swine, and I know that I might be undoing all the wonderful work by telling you

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this, but I do not care. You deserve to die.'

"The Doktor has been in here for three hours working over you. You had a fragment of an explosive bullet in your heart. We were afraid to touch it ourselves and were ready to let you die when I remembered Doktor Weber had been shot down a few days ago.'

"Shot down, hell,' I managed to mumble. 'He cut the gun on purpose!'"

Toby pushed his cigarette against his saucer. "Gosh, Pat, I thought that Jerry was going to slap my face for a second. I've seen lots of people mad, but I'll swear I saw murder in that guy's eyes."

"Fool!' he growled. 'Doktor Weber is no coward. Cowards cannot take a man's heart out, cut it, pull out a splinter and then sew it up again as he has done with yours. If he had done right he would have crushed it in those strong fingers of his until the last drop of blood had squirted from your veins.

"No, fool, when I told him that you lay in here on the operating table, he insisted on being allowed to perform the operation. I knew he could do it, for I had seen him do it twice before, in the peaceful days before this damned war and all its stupidity.'

(Continued on page 112)

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(Continued from page 111)

"You mean he had my heart out in his hand?" I managed to ask.

"Yes," rasped the Jerry doctor. "And while he saved your life he risked his. Look, can you see it?"

"I could move my head just enough to get a glimpse of the floor, and the stool by the side of the table on which I lay. The stool looked as if somebody had dumped a bucket of red enamel on it, and the stuff had trickled down to smear up the floor. It was blood, and plenty of it. 'Mine?' I asked.

"No, you fool," snapped the German. "It is Doktor Weber's. They are giving him a transfusion in the next room in an effort to save his life. He was getting along so nicely, too, and then you had to come on the scene."

"But how?" I managed to mumble.

"From his legs, or stumps of what were his legs," the Jerry snarled. "His legs were crushed when his riddled Spad crashed the other day. Yes, it was riddled. The hot motor was forced back and his legs were mangled so that we amputated."

"An' you mean he sat there an' worked on me with blood from his raw stumps seeping through the bandages?" I managed to get out.

"Now you begin to show a little comprehension," the Jerry shot back, "even if you do not know the meaning of the word gratitude." He made a grab for my wrist. "The needle, quickly," he barked to an orderly. As the needle went home I passed out."

Pat whistled softly. "And?"

"And this afternoon I finally screwed up the courage to go to him an' apologize. I was too yellow to do it before, afraid he'd tell me what he'd have a right to tell me. But he didn't. Except for those artificial legs he was the same old Weber we knew back at the squadron, happier because he didn't have

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anybody trying to make a killer of him. Now he spends all his time saving lives."

"And how do you feel, now that you've got it off your chest?"

"Swell," grinned Toby. "Doc Weber did wonders to my ticker that day, from what they told me. But a few words this afternoon—well what we had to say to each other made it good as new, Pat."

"Drink?" chuckled Pat. "You look like the old boy again."

"An' how," laughed Toby Carlin.

THE SHIPS ON THE COVER

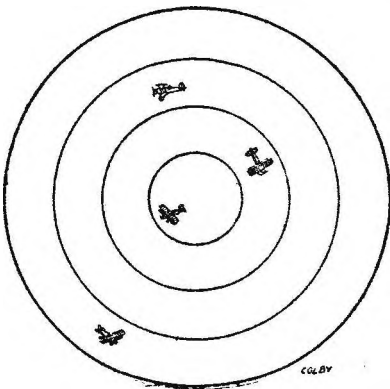
(Concluded from page 59)

their flat fuselages. But it's superior ships and superior flying that chalks up the score.

The first Fokker staggered in its tracks as the guns of the Nieuport blasted slugs into it. A puff of black smoke and down it went. The other German pilot stubbornly attacked the Nieuport which proceeded to fly rings around him and chop his ship to pieces. German ground troops fired their rifles up at the wraithlike Nieuport. Then the Fokker gave a sudden lurch, nosed down in a sickening power dive. German ground troops, who had admiringly noted the skull and crossbones, now gasped in horror as the ship went out of control and smashed them into the sides of their own trenches. The Fokker D7 had been equalled!

It had reached its peak. The Allies threw equally fine planes into the skies—but few surpassed the blunt-nosed awkward product of the Dutch inventor, Anthony Fokker.

ANSWER TO PUZZLE ON PAGE 93



COLBY

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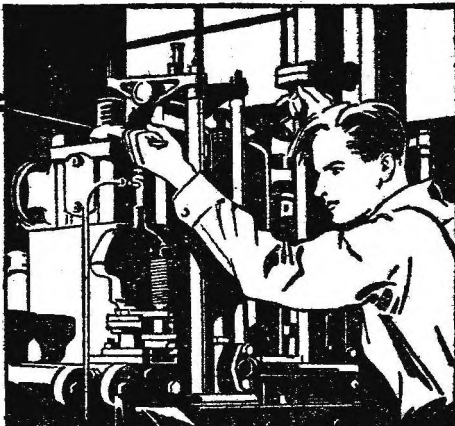
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20x4.50-21	2.25	1.05	30x3.75	1.00	0.55
20x4.75-21	2.40	1.10	30x4.00	1.05	0.60
20x4.75-20	2.30	1.05	30x4.25	1.10	0.65
20x5.00-19	2.55	1.25	30x4.50	1.15	0.70
20x5.00-20	2.55	1.25	30x4.75	1.20	0.75
20x5.00-21	2.65	1.35	30x5.00	1.25	0.80
20x5.25-18	2.90	1.50	30x5.25	1.30	0.85
20x5.25-19	2.95	1.55	30x5.50	1.35	0.90
20x5.25-20	2.95	1.55	30x5.75	1.40	0.95
20x5.25-21	3.25	1.65	30x6.00	1.45	1.00
20x5.50-17	3.25	1.65	30x6.25	1.50	1.05
20x5.50-18	3.35	1.70	30x6.50	1.55	1.10
20x5.50-19	3.35	1.70	30x6.75	1.60	1.15
20x5.50-20	3.40	1.75	30x7.00	1.65	1.20
20x5.50-21	3.40	1.75	30x7.25	1.70	1.25
20x5.75-18	3.55	1.85	30x7.50	1.75	1.30
20x5.75-19	3.55	1.85	30x7.75	1.80	1.35
20x5.75-20	3.55	1.85	30x8.00	1.85	1.40
20x5.75-21	3.55	1.85	30x8.25	1.90	1.45
20x6.00-17	3.75	1.95	30x8.50	1.95	1.50
20x6.00-18	3.75	1.95	30x8.75	2.00	1.55
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20x6.00-21	3.75	1.95	30x9.50	2.15	1.70
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20x6.25-19	3.95	2.10	30x10.00	2.25	1.80
20x6.25-20	3.95	2.10	30x10.25	2.30	1.85
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20x6.75-18	4.35	2.40	30x12.00	2.65	2.20
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20x7.00-18	4.55	2.55	30x13.25	2.90	2.45
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20x7.00-20	4.55	2.55	30x13.75	3.00	2.55
20x7.00-21	4.55	2.55	30x14.00	3.05	2.60
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20x7.25-20	4.75	2.70	30x14.75	3.20	2.75
20x7.25-21	4.75	2.70	30x15.00	3.25	2.80
20x7.50-17	4.95	2.85	30x15.25	3.30	2.85
20x7.50-18	4.95	2.85	30x15.50	3.35	2.90
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20x7.75-19	5.15	3.00	30x16.75	3.60	3.15
20x7.75-20	5.15	3.00	30x17.00	3.65	3.20
20x7.75-21	5.15	3.00	30x17.25	3.70	3.25
20x8.00-17	5.35	3.15	30x17.50	3.75	3.30
20x8.00-18	5.35	3.15	30x17.75	3.80	3.35
20x8.00-19	5.35	3.15	30x18.00	3.85	3.40
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20x8.25-19	5.55	3.30	30x19.00	4.05	3.60
20x8.25-20	5.55	3.30	30x19.25	4.10	3.65
20x8.25-21	5.55	3.30	30x19.50	4.15	3.70
20x8.50-17	5.75	3.45	30x19.75	4.20	3.75
20x8.50-18	5.75	3.45	30x20.00	4.25	3.80
20x8.50-19	5.75	3.45	30x20.25	4.30	3.85
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20x11.75-18	8.35	5.40	30x34.50	7.15	6.70
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20x11.75-20	8.35	5.40	30x35.00	7.25	6.80
20x11.75-21	8.35	5.40	30x35.25	7.30	6.85
20x12.00-17	8.55	5.55	30x35.50	7.35	6.90
20x12.00-18	8.55	5.55	30x35.75	7.40	6.95
20x12.00-19	8.55	5.55	30x36.00	7.45	7.00
20x12.00-20	8.55	5.55	30x36.25	7.50	7.05
20x12.00-21	8.55	5.55	30x36.50	7.55	7.10
20x12.25-18	8.75	5.70	30x36.75	7.60	7.15
20x12.25-19	8.75	5.70	30x37.00	7.65	7.20
20x12.25-20	8.75	5.70	30x37.25	7.70	7.25
20x12.25-21	8.75	5.70	30x37.50	7.75	7.30
20x12.50-17	8.95	5.85	30x37.75	7.80	7.35
20x12.50-18	8.95	5.85	30x38.00	7.85	7.40
20x12.50-19	8.95	5.85	30x38.25	7.90	7.45
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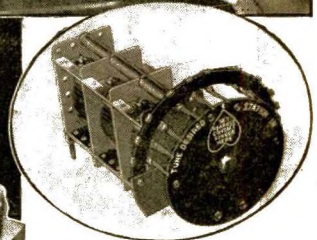
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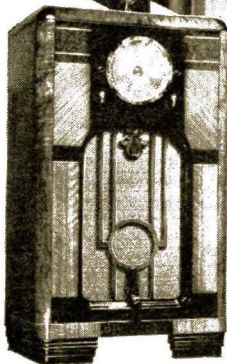
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A Light Smoke

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