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Sky Suspicion

By **ROBERT
SIDNEY BOWEN**



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WINGS OF THE BEAST

A FULL BOOK-LENGTH WAR-AIR NOVEL

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FIGHTING ACE

Vol. XVIII, No. 2

BRUCE McALESTER, Editor

April, 1939

A Full Book-Length War-Air Novel

WINGS OF THE BEAST

By LIEUT. SCOTT MORGAN
(Profusely Illustrated)

The World's Greatest Sky Fighter Smashes into Action Against a Deadly Threat to the Allied Cause When Jungle Savagery Joins the Holocaust of War in the Service of the Hun! Follow John Masters on the Exciting Trail of Grim Sky Treachery

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Join THE LONE EAGLES OF AMERICA! Coupon on Page 110

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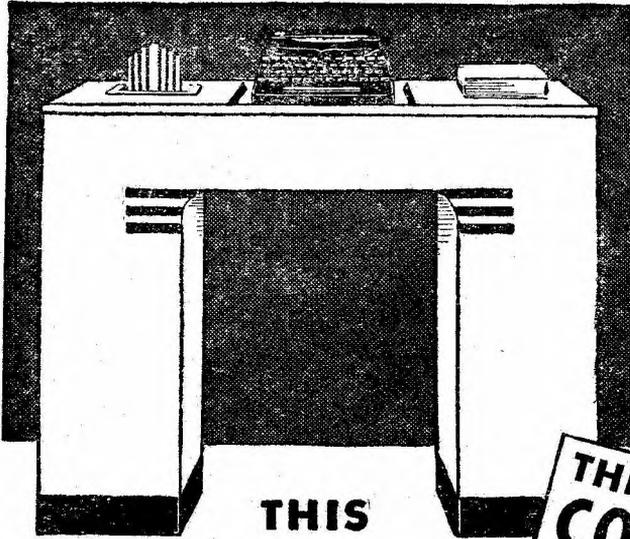
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Address

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 How easy it is to pay for this combination. Just imagine! Terms as low as 10c a day to get this combination at once. You will never miss 10c a day. Become immediately the possessor of this amazing combination. You assume no obligations by sending the coupon.

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To help you even further, you get free with this special offer a 19-page booklet, prepared by experts, to teach you quickly how to typewrite by the touch method. When you buy a Noiseless you get this free Remington Rand gift that increases the pleasure of using your Remington Noiseless Portable. Remember, the touch typing book is sent free while this offer holds.

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The Remington Noiseless Portable is light in weight, easily carried about. With this offer Remington supplies a sturdy, beautiful carrying case which rivals the most attractive luggage you can buy.

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Address

City State

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See
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TYPEWRITERS

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Here's where you can exchange something you have but don't want for something someone else has that you do want. This is a **FREE** service.

For example, if you have a camera and don't use it, and would like to have a stamp album, write: "Have Eastman camera, No. 1, Jr., make, 3 years old, good condition, will exchange for stamp album with 3,000 stamps, 25 countries—John Smith, 49 Park Street, Albany, N. Y."

Limit your request to 25 words. No goods for sale listed, nor requests concerning firearms or any illegal articles.

Type or hand-print clearly, in submitting announcements. **THE LONE EAGLE** will not be responsible for losses sustained. Make very plain just what you have and just what you want to "swap" it for. Enclose a clipping of this announcement with your request.

Have portable typewriter, one year old, in excellent condition. Want photo enlarger, camera, or what have you? Alan Gold, 1170 E. 8th Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Want electric motors for my typewriter. George W. Wildrick, Addison, N. Y.

Have a catcher's glove, first baseman's glove and fielder's mitt to exchange for a set of boxing gloves, or golf clubs. Joseph Monday, 518½ N. Osage Street, Ponca City, Okla.

Send me 100 United States stamps and receive 100 different good foreign. George Gibbons, P. O. Box 378, Monclair, N. J.

Have new six power temple field glasses, new 26-power marine spy glass, for what? J. Walker, 8 Avenue, 27th Street, Moline, Ill.

I have famous formula for luminous ink! I have other formulae and book matches. Send list of wanted formulae, maybe I have them. I want United States coins, or? Joe Johnson, 1730 A Locust, Long Beach, California.

Have collection of 420 mint and used British colonies. Will exchange for good U. S. collection. Lewis Eisner, 938 Morris Park Avenue, New York, N. Y.

I have a mandolin with case in good condition, for trumpet, cornet or anything else you have. John Ziegler, Hill and Gillam Avenue, Langhorne, Pa.

Trade 5 x 7 plate camera, tripod, frames, etc. Want light plane parts, motor, or? Write Bob Davies 1001 Walnut, Grand Forks, N. D.

I would like foreign stamps in exchange for my United States commemoratives of 1935-1937 issue, commemoratives of 1934, Mother's Day. Offers wanted. Carlton Mack, 235 Cumberland Ave., Buffalo, N. Y.

Have 16mm. 1937 model moving picture machine and film. Send me your list. Charles Hickey, 6144 Cedar Avenue, Philadelphia, Penna.

Offering electric binoculars, camera, stamps, books, in exchange for enlarger of 16mm. motor driven projector. Merle Crabb, Box 113, Berryburg, Penna.

Write for details. I have United States stamps, books, airplane kits, moulds, etc. Want United States first day and cacheted covers. Ed Hayes, No. 3251 Asbury, Ocean City, N. J.

A complete Spanish or Hawaiian outfit with case. Want bike or? Morris Emanuel, 625 Wales Avenue, Bronx, New York.

Have many different first day and airmail covers. What do you need? Want souvenir envelopes carried during Historical or Trans-Atlantic flights. Joseph H. Spiegelberg, 519 Ralph Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y.

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YOUR OPPORTUNITY

WIN



AN AUTOMOBILE

or \$1500.00 in Cash

Count the Beans

Like Puzzles? Here's A Good One

Can you count all the beans correctly in the Bean Jar pictured here? You probably think you have good eyesight. Here's a test. Can you make a perfect count of the Beans in the jar? Try it.



HERE'S a regular old-fashioned "Count the Beans" Contest. Looks easy, doesn't it? But say—just try it yourself. It takes real cleverness to count the Beans correctly. Be careful, be accurate, be sure you count correctly. You must have sharp, clever eyes to count them all without making a mistake. Very few people are able to make a perfect count. Can you do it?

How Many Beans Are There in The Bean Jar Pictured Above?

Count them. That's all you have to do. It's lots of fun. Try it. The whole family will enjoy it, too. When you think you have them counted correctly, send in your answer on the Coupon below.

Count the Beans and send in your solution on the Answer Coupon and for doing so you will receive at once, **ABSOLUTELY FREE**, a colored Map of the World, showing U. S., Europe and other countries, and get a wonderful opportunity to win an **AUTOMOBILE** or **\$1,500.00 IN CASH**.

Second Prize Winner Gets \$500.00 in Cash; 3rd, \$400.00; 4th, \$300.00; and Many Other Cash Prizes. Duplicate Prizes in Case of Ties

SEND NOW! Just Your Answer to the Puzzle Above. HURRY! DON'T DELAY! ACT QUICK!

C. L. SMITH, Mgr. 549 West Randolph St., CHICAGO, ILL.

ANSWER COUPON

**C. L. SMITH, Manager 34
549 West Randolph St., Chicago, Ill.**

Herewith my answer to your Bean Puzzle:

My Answer
(Number of Beans in Jar)

My Name

Street

City State

Send Me the Free Map.



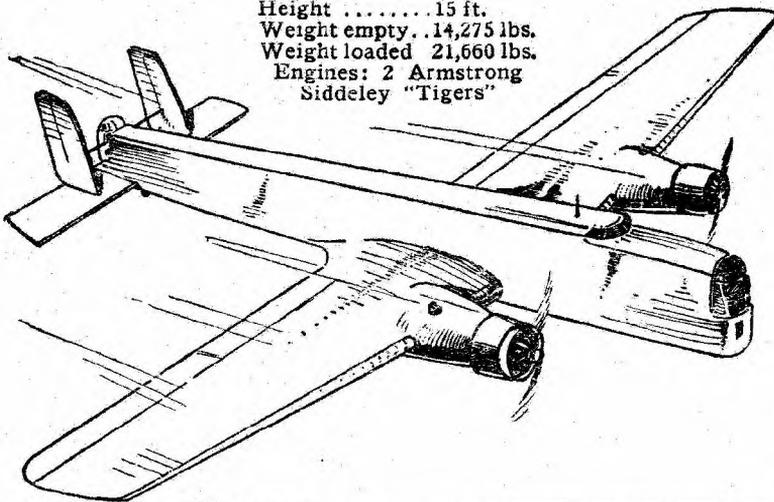
The Ship of the Month

GREAT BRITAIN'S Royal Air Force is now using an Armstrong Whitworth "Whitley" two-engine bomber. This big ship is a mid-wing cantilever monoplane. It has a boxlike fuselage built in three sections. The wings carry "Frise" type ailerons and hydraulically operated split trailing edge flaps extending from ailerons to fuselage. The monoplane type tail unit has twin fins and rudders.

A normal crew has five members. A gun turret is built in the nose, pilot's compartment in front of wings, then wireless operator. A passage through the spar frame has catwalks to the rear fuselage with a walkway to the rear gun position in extreme tail. Aft of the trailing edge of the wing is a third gun position, a retracting cupola in the floor of the fuselage. A speed of 215 m.p.h. is maintained at 15,000 feet.

SPECIFICATIONS

Wing area1137 sq. ft.
Span84 ft.
Length69 ft. 3 in.
Height15 ft.
Weight empty . .14,275 lbs.
Weight loaded 21,660 lbs.
Engines: 2 Armstrong
Siddeley "Tigers"

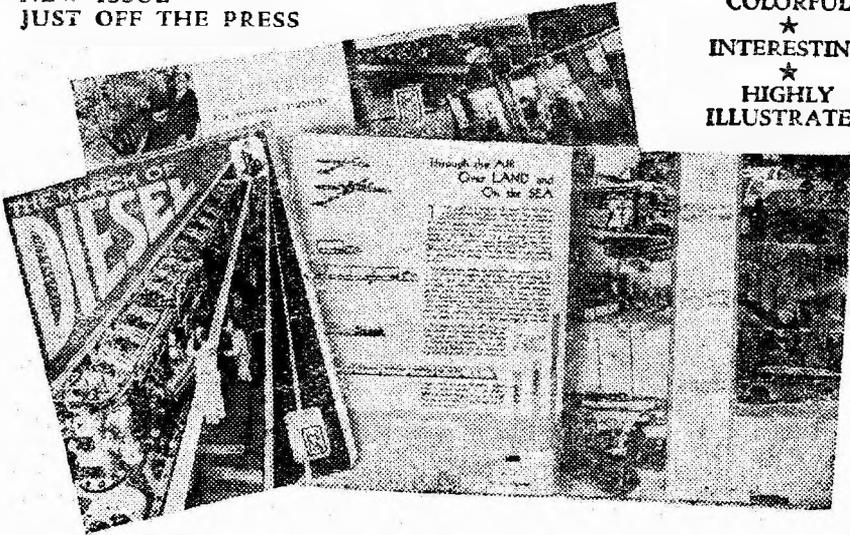


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let and information on your
Diesel courses.

NAME _____ AGE _____

STREET ADDRESS
OR RURAL ROUTE _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ m-34-t

Send this coupon to nearest address shown above

THE STORY OF THE COVER

THE Herr Rittmeister screamed an epithet at his Oberleutnant; he cursed him from one end of the line of Albatross planes standing on the apron, right up to the Jagdstaffel office.

"Keep that rotten baboon away from me or I'll skin you both alive!" he shrieked. His face was florid with anger; the saliva drooled from his mouth in frothy shoots. His feet stamped across the German mud, splattering it up onto his baggy gray britches.

For weeks he told the Oberleutnant to keep his pet away from him. For some unaccountable reason the baboon had taken a liking to the Rittmeister and dogged his footsteps whenever he saw him. One morning, in the heat of a council of war held with his commanders, the baboon stepped over the window sill into the room, climbed up on the table, stepped across the maps to where the Rittmeister was sitting and affectionately put his arms around the infuriated officer's shoulder.

The next second, his cold, damp nose was pressed against the officer's cheek as the man screamed to get him off. The other officers found it difficult to contain themselves; their laughter rose.

And now, while he was inspecting the line of Albatrosses that waited to set off on an important mission, engines revving in readiness, the baboon had tried to climb onto the shoulders of the commanding officer and the result was the threat to "skin him alive."

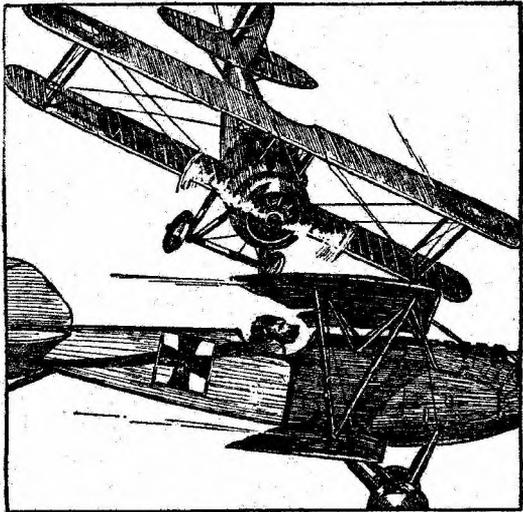
The Baboon Takes Off!

Frightened, the animal jumped onto a wing of a waiting Albatross left alone with an idling motor—its pilot having stepped back to the hangars for his goggles.

With the agility he was noted for, the baboon hopped into the cockpit to get away from the irate officer. As the Rittmeister reached the ship and was about to step around the front of it to put finis to the baboon's existence with a well aimed Luger, the engine suddenly roared into life; the catapulting wing knocked the Rittmeister onto his differential, sending him sprawling in the mud, and tore for a hangar with full engine on. Ackemmas standing in front of the hangar grabbed their hats and made a mad dash for safety, Luger bullets tore the air about the madly careening plane.

The runaway Albatross suddenly ground-looped away from the hangar and went tearing down the field and into the air with the baboon at the controls.

Ten minutes later, Mercedes rolling over in unabated rhythm, the Albatross riding



high over the lines, a French Nieuport with an American pilot at the controls came upon the strange sight. The Yank peered out across his Vicker's guns and wondered if he had not had too much cognac.

He blinked his eyes; rubbed them in an effort to wipe out the peculiar features of the Albatross pilot. He thought he saw a baboon—he fired a burst.

There was no answering burst. Just a crazy jumping up and down in the Albatross cockpit of the strange looking pilot. Was this a trick—or a decoy?

A well directed shot from the Vickers and the American saw the baboon rear, scream in pain, as blood appeared at the animal's shoulder. It was no trick. The pilot was no pilot—but actually a baboon!

He was sorry now that he had hit the animal. He left him to his fate.

The Planes on the Cover

The French Nieuport 28 C.1 was one of the finest jobs brought out near the end of the War. Powered by a Gnome Monosoupape the rotary engine delivered 160 horsepower. Owing to the plane's excellent streamlining, it was fast and highly maneuverable. This ship was used extensively by American pilots. Although they usually bore two Vickers guns on most assemblies, the ship on the cover, like many others of the same type, carries four guns.

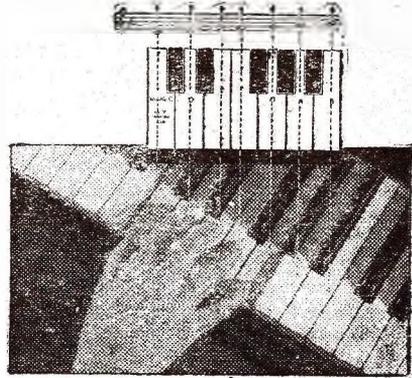
The Albatross D3 was a predecessor to the Albatross D5 and D5A. Driven by a 160 horsepower Mercedes, the plane could attain a speed of almost 100 miles an hour. This plane was brought out some time in 1917 and proved one of the slickest single-seaters the German Air Corps had up to that time sent over the lines. It was built by the Albatross Werke of Johannisthal.



"Thar's Gold in Them Thar Hill-Billy Songs" Craze for mountain music, "swing" and other popular forms has brought fame and fortune to many who started playing for the fun of it. Thousands have discovered unexpected pleasure and profit in music, thanks to unique method that makes it amazingly easy to learn.

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Known as the "print-and-picture" method, this simplified instruction by mail shows you exactly which notes to strike. Follow the charts and you can't go wrong. You start playing real tunes almost at once.



How Romance Started First It was, "I love to hear you play"; then, "I love you." Many have found music the key to popularity, friendships and romance. The girl who plays some musical instrument is always in demand, never lonesome and neglected. Make this charming accomplishment yours!



Surprised Friends A Bronx, New York, pupil* writes: "My friends are greatly surprised at the different pieces I can already play. I am very happy to have chosen your method of learning."

Wouldn't Take \$1,000 "The lessons are so simple," writes* S. E. A., Kansas City, Mo., "that anyone can understand them. I have learned to play by note in a little more than a month. I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for my course."



* Actual pupils' names on request. Pictures by professional models.

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Would you like to know more about this amazingly easy way to learn music at home without a teacher? How it starts you playing real tunes with the very first lessons, eliminating the tedious study and practice of old-fashioned methods? How it makes everything so clear that you need no previous knowledge of music, no special talent? Would you like proof that you, too, like thousands of others, can quickly learn to play your favorite instrument? Just mail the coupon, checking the instrument you like best and you will receive a Free Demonstration Lesson and fascinating booklet by return mail. No cost or obligation. (Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit.) U. S. School of Music, 2944 Brunswick Bldg., New York City, N. Y. (Our Forty-first Year—Established 1898.)

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2944 Brunswick Bldg., New York, N. Y.

Without cost or obligation to me, please send me your free illustrated Booklet and Demonstration Lesson, showing how I can learn at home to play the instrument checked below. (Do you have instrument?)

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|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|---------------|
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| Plain | Hawaiian | Trumpet | Drums and | Voice Culture |
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and never rush?"



"Yes, Mr. Moore,
Yes, Mr. Moore,
That's the reason many thousands
choose our brand..."



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at a price that gets a hand!"



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You'll be delighted with the fine,
mellow flavor that slow distilling
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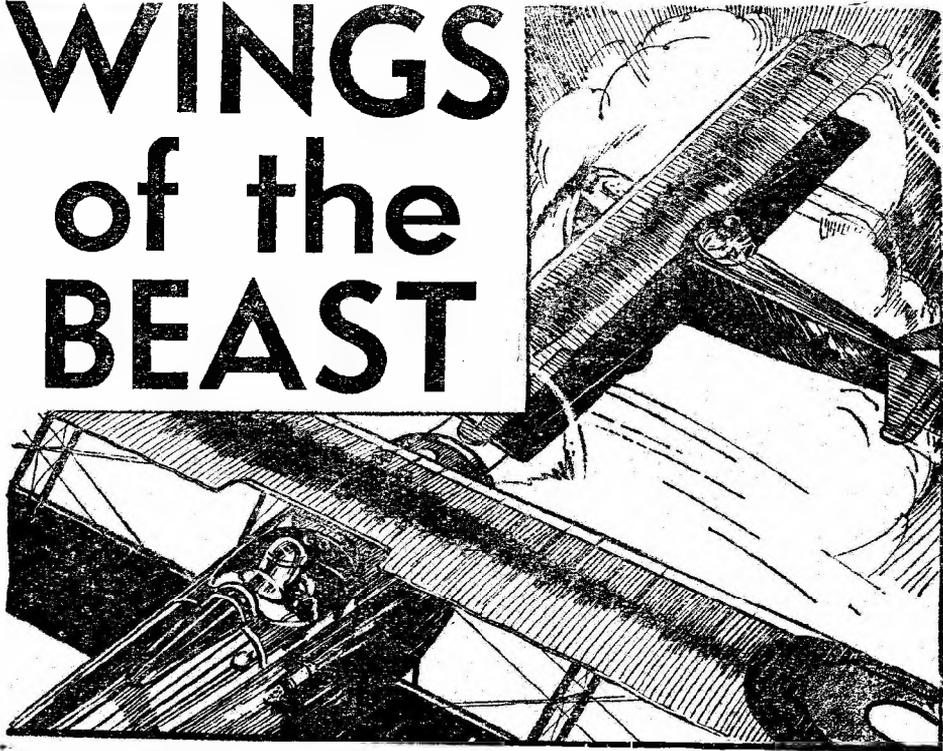
Mattingly & Moore

Long on Quality — Short on Price!

*A blend of straight whiskies—90 proof—every drop is whiskey.
Frankfort Distilleries, Incorporated, Louisville and Baltimore.*



WINGS of the BEAST



Masters' thumbs contracted on the Bowden trips (Chapter I)

*The World's Greatest Sky Fighter Smashes into Action
Against a Deadly Threat to the Allied Cause!*

By **LIEUT. SCOTT MORGAN**

Author of "Thunder from the East," "Satan's Armada," etc.

CHAPTER I

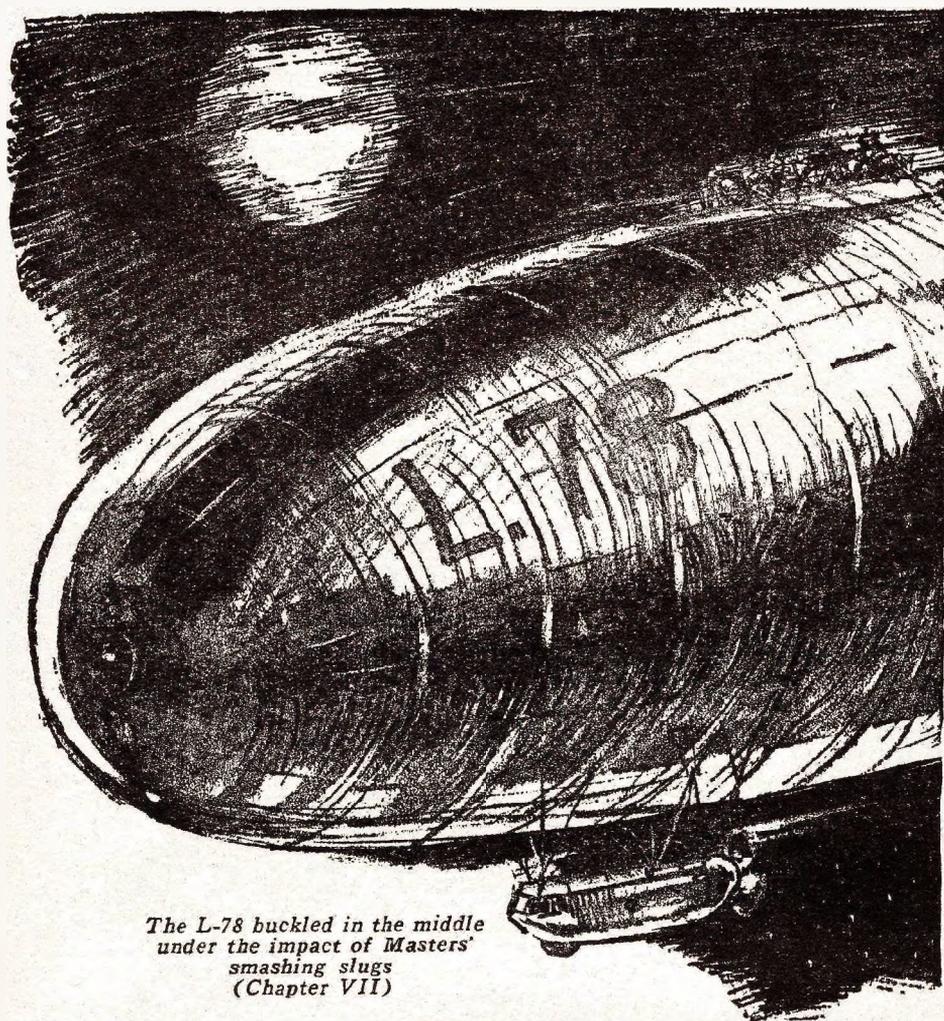
High Battle

JOHN MASTERS tipped the siphon toward the glass and looked across the table at his friend, Phil Warren.

"What'll it be, Phil?" he asked with a twinkle in his blue eyes. "Want me to fill it up or just give it a splash?"

"Half a splash, Masters," grinned Warren in reply. "Give it a fast push or you'll take the edge off."

A FULL BOOK-LENGTH WAR-AIR NOVEL



*The L-78 buckled in the middle
under the impact of Masters'
smashing slugs
(Chapter VII)*

As Masters gave the plunger a stab, sending a hissing stream into the amber liquor, Pierre Viaud, the third member of the triumvirate, held his own glass to the light and for a moment watched the bubbles rise to the surface and break.

"You Yankees," he grinned. "You take your liquor fast and hard. You do not like to sit and talk over a drink the way we continentals do. You pour it out of the bottle and down your throats."

"Don't have the time," smiled War-

ren, taking the glass from Masters' hand.

"But now you do," replied Viaud, whose father was General Viaud of the French Intelligence Service. "We three have two weeks' leave ahead of us."

"And I know one guy who deserves it," said Warren as he sipped the drink. His keen eyes studied the tired face of the young American standing by the table. "When did you have a leave of absence last, John?" he asked.

Jungle Savagery Joins the Holocaust



Masters shrugged his shoulders. "Not much time for pleasure in this man's war. Huns won't let a fellow rest a minute. Always cooking up some new devilment to keep us worried."

"But everything is quiet now, John," said Viaud slowly. "There is no activity across the lines at present. The enemy seems satisfied to try merely to consolidate their positions

in order to keep our troops from advancing any further."

A queer smile drifted across Masters' drawn face. He set down his glass.

"That's just the trouble, Pierre. When things seem quiet I always get

of War in the Service of the Hun!

suspicious. I'm telling you fellows, we'll not see Paris."

Warren laughed. "I know three girls who are going to be mighty disappointed, then. One of them's my sister, Eve. Fill 'em up again, John. We'll drink to a swell vacation in Paris. I've got a grand dinner ordered for the six of us at the Continental."

But Warren's laugh was a little forced. He leaned toward Masters.

"Is it that dizzy rumor about planes half the size of a Fokker, John? Is that what's eating you?"

Masters nodded. "I've got to admit that it is, Phil. I can't get them out of my mind. I know it's just a rumor supposed to have been sent over by one of our secret operators on the other side of the lines. I've tried to check from all angles, but I haven't found a thing."

"I knew you were working on something, Masters," said Viaud. "You have been sneaking over the lines by yourself for the past few days. No? And it was not for the purpose of checking your plane, as you said."

MASTERS grinned and looked at the lamp on the desk of the hut shared by the three of them at their secret flying field. His eyes squinted as he stared at the light.

"Right, Pierre. I didn't want to worry you chaps. Knew you were planning on this leave. So I had a go at it on my own."

"Did Colonel Tremaine give you any dope on those supposed ships?" asked Warren.

"Haven't heard from the colonel for five days," said Masters. "That's what worries me. He usually keeps in pretty close touch with me over this little wireless telephone set I installed. The British sent me one for my plane and one for my hut. Clever little gadgets, aren't they?"

Warren was about to speak when suddenly the wireless at the back of

the desk began to rasp through the set of earphones lying on the blotter pad. Masters promptly grabbed for the phones with one hand, while with the other he readied pencil on paper.

His two companions had leaped to their feet and now stood leaning over his shoulder staring at the sheet of white paper on which the Lone Eagle had already begun to write.

"There goes our leave," Warren whispered hoarsely.

"And a good dinner," groaned Viaud.

"*Calling John Masters . . . Colonel Tremaine calling Masters. Are you there, John?*" The words crackled out of the set.

"Go ahead, Colonel," said Masters quietly. "This is Masters. What's up?"

"There's hell to pay, John," Tremaine's voice rasped through the phones and the words appeared on the paper under Masters' flying fingers so the others who could not hear could read. "They've raided the back areas four nights in a row and hit their objectives every time. It's uncanny the way they come over high and let their bombs go. Our supply dump at Villers is gone. Our camp at Bras, where we were concentrating our men for the new push, is in ruins and the men demoralized."

"And the other two targets?" interrupted Masters.

"Our ammunition depot at the Tissot railhead went up night before last, and last night they smashed down on Brigade Headquarters. Maps, plans for the coming attack, went up in smoke before we could get them out."

Masters looked over his shoulder at the two men standing behind him and shook his head. Then he turned to the "mike."

"Got any idea of how they're doing it?"

"No," barked Tremaine. "Neither has General Viaud. A few more raids

and we'll be licked. They're smashing everything, and nobody's seen a single plane. Can't even hear them. I'm sorry, John, but your leave has been canceled."

Masters smiled as he leaned toward the mike. "I canceled that leave myself, Colonel. Canceled it the minute this set began to buzz. Where are you now?"

"Down at temporary G.H.Q.," replied Tremaine. "Sitting here waiting to see where they're going to strike tonight."

"Why didn't you call me before?" demanded Masters.

There was a moment's hesitation. Then the earphones buzzed again. "I knew you had been looking forward to your well earned leave, John. I kept hoping that our defense squadrons could cope with the situation. But they're helpless against this thing. You'll have to take over."

"We'll be right down," said Masters, glancing at the disappointed faces of Warren and Viaud. "Phil and Pierre are here with me."

"Another thing, John," Tremaine broke in. "Our spotters down on the Mediterranean report that two more Zeps came across last night and headed north toward Germany."

Masters whistled softly. "Haven't heard or seen any of those for a long time," he growled into the mike. "We figured that the others had slipped through to take supplies down to the Hun colonies. If I get a chance, I'll have a look into those Zeps and see what they're doing down there, as soon as I finish up with this, that is . . ."

HIS VOICE was drowned out by the scream of a siren. It split the night into a thousand nerve-tingling echoes. A frown crossed his sun-tanned brow as he lifted his head from the mike and listened. His blue eyes narrowed as they sought those of his companions.

"Air raid warning down at Eighty

Two," he crisped. "Get going. Be with you in a jiffy."

Warren and Viaud tore from the hut. Masters bent close to the mike and shouted above the din:

"Warning siren popping down the road at Eighty Two! Might be those new bombers. I'll have a look and then go on to G.H.Q. to see you. Signing off. . . . See you in an hour or so."

He threw the switch, grabbed his helmet and rushed out of the hut into the moonlit night. Three Spads were already puffing on the line as their Hissos warmed up.

"Hit the ceiling," he yelled to Viaud and Warren as he raced past their ships. "If it's this bunch of bombers they fly high."

Pouring himself into the narrow cockpit of his Spad, Masters' keen eyes scanned the sable curtain of darkness while he snapped his safety belt on. Searchlights were criss-crossed in the skies trying to pick out the approaching raiders. Archies were crackling, stippling the night with golden flashes.

The Lone Eagle's eyes dropped to scan the little field with its tiny hutments and single hangar. His fingers snapped.

"That's it," he cried. "They're after this. They know I'm using this field."

"Get going," he yelled, waving frantically to the other two. "They'll nail us if we stay on the ground."

Warren and Viaud caught the import of his frantic signals and gunned their Hissos. Masters' hand hit the throttle and his ship leaped forward after the others. The minute he felt his trucks leave the oil-soaked sod, he threw the stick over, kicked on rudder, and hurled the ship into a climbing turn.

He was halfway around when his Spad tried to yank the stick out of his steady hands. The wings wobbled frantically, as if trying to swing toward the ground. And while he fought the controls, Masters heard

an ear-splitting screaming sound followed a second later by a thunderous crash. The night was torn to shreds by a terrific explosion. A fountain of fire mushroomed into the night, followed immediately by a second explosion.

As he brought the ship around in level flight he sucked the cool night air between his clenched teeth. Sparks were raining around him and he knew those sparks were all that was left of the little hut where he had been sitting a few moments ago, discussing the long awaited leave with his two companions.

A second later a bomb tore through the roof of the little hangar where their Spads had been housed. It too went up in a geyser of flame and smoke. A direct hit, the dream of every airman. Yet, as Masters held the stick back, climbing madly to reach the upper levels, he could see no signs of enemy planes.

"Sitting high," he muttered. He glanced over his shoulder at the two bright spots below. "Perfect hits. Not a bomb wasted."

Suddenly he strained forward against the belt. There, just to his left, a searchlight cleaved the night with its silvery beam. And in one wavering moment, while the knife of light cut the night, Masters' keen eyes caught a glimpse of something hurtling earthward. Then it was gone, slipping into the pall of dark, heading toward the field.

"If that was one of the bombs it sure was a honey," he mused. He saw another object flash into view for one split second and disappear. He looked toward the field, and saw what he expected to see. Two gigantic fans of flame leaping toward the stars! Once again the enemy had struck with unerring aim.

Cursing savagely, Masters clawed for the ceiling. To left and right he caught glimpses of the flame-tipped exhaust stacks of his two companions.

He watched his altimeter needle crawl upward. Seven thousand—ten thousand—eleven thousand, five hundred. . . .

And then, as it crept toward the twelve thousand foot mark, he glanced over the side in time to see a dim shadow whirl by and disappear in the darkness. His eyes narrowed, following it. He threw the ship into a bank and tried to keep behind it.

He leveled out. The thing was gone. He started to swing back on his course, only to throw his ship over in a half roll, as the searing beam of a searchlight revealed a plane speeding toward him. For one wild nerve-tingling second he expected to feel his flesh skewered by hot slugs.

BUT to his amazement there was no fire of Spandaus. The ship slid under him and continued on its way, heading straight for the flame-lit skies over the burning field.

Now he was around. His Spad was leveling out behind the other ship. The other ship was some distance ahead. He slammed the throttle home. His Hiss roared as the ship leaped ahead, rocketing along behind the silhouette outlined in the red sky.

Then, long before he expected it, he was on top of the strange crate, and found himself forced to pull up in a zoom to keep from crashing into it. As he flashed overhead, he looked over the side and found himself staring into a pair of bright, beady eyes as the pilot of the other plane glanced his way for a second and then looked ahead.

"Well, I'll be—"

Masters kicked rudder. His nose dropped out of the stall in a wing-over. His guns leveled on the strange ship hurtling toward his secret field. He caught the outline in his sights. His thumbs poised over the 'trips as he took in every detail of the lone ship.

Suddenly a light of understanding

flashed into his eyes. His thumbs touched the Bowdens, ready to pour a twin stream of lead into the flashing Hun. The thumbs contracted, and hot lead chattered menacingly at the German plane. The enemy ship staggered slightly and then righted itself. Suddenly Masters' thumbs relaxed.

"It's one of the little crates," he muttered. "One of the mysterious crates we've been getting rumors about. No wonder I almost ran into it. Thought it was still some distance away, fooled by its size. Sure looks like a Fokker that hasn't grown up.

Once again the enemy pilot turned and looked at him. The Hun hardly seemed human as he turned a misshapen face toward Masters. The Lone Eagle felt a shudder of revulsion course through his frame as he stared back at the pilot of the black-crossed crate.

"First Hun I ever saw in the air with a heavy beard," Masters muttered. "That guy sure carries a swell crop of spinach."

He stared at the long nose of the Hun, hardly believing his eyes. He wasn't quite sure whether it was part of a mask, or really the pilot's nose. As he banked to get closer, he saw those strange beady eyes light up as they fell on the cocardes painted on his upper wing. He saw the Hun's lips curl back in an angry snarl, and in a flash the ship skidded around in a sloppy turn and came boring straight at him.

Masters forgot all about his guns as he concentrated every effort on getting his Spad out of the little Fokker's path. The ship was almost on him now, curling, slithering through space, its stubby nose centered on the American ship.

Sweat poured from Masters' face as he dug his feet harder into the rudder stirrups. His hands felt clammy as they yanked back on the stick, dragging the laboring Spad upward. He felt the blast of the other

ship's slipstream as it passed under him. His heart hit the roof of his mouth as he felt a dull thud pass through his fuselage.

He waited, hardly daring to breathe, waited for his ship to buckle in mid air. But when the Spad whipped out of the stall and answered the controls, Masters knew that no damage had been done.

"Must have hit my tail-skid," he sighed. "But I sure thought I was a goner. Damn fool was trying to ram me sure as shooting. He could have blazed away at me if he'd wanted to. Never fired a shot."

PUZZLED, the Lone Eagle curled into a steep bank. Once more the tiny Fokker was skidding toward him. But this time the Lone Eagle was ready.

"That guy can't fly for a damn," he growled as he watched the awkward turn. "Tried to get away with it by scaring me to death. Almost did, too."

But despite the fact that he was disdainful of the other's flying ability, Masters was wary about getting too close. They were right over the field now, and by the glow of the conflagration below, Masters studied the speedy little single seater again. It was a Fokker in miniature, even down to the wing extensions.

"Must be a dwarf pilot," he growled again, as he raised his eyes to find the Hun's beady orbs glaring at him. "Full grown man couldn't fly a ship that size, not unless it had a very powerful motor."

The strange ship began to waver, almost as if its pilot was not sure about the next move. It passed across the fire, started to turn as if the pilot was staring at something below, and then straightened out, heading into the heavy shadows behind the fire.

"Not this time you don't," cried Masters. "You're not laying your damned eggs anywhere else. You've

done enough damage for one night. I'm going to drop you now, drop you so's we can have a look at that crate."

He eased in behind the ship, leveled off, picked up one of the small wings in his sights and opened with his Vickers.

"Just to warn you, Fritz."

He saw his tracer eat a hole in the top wing of the Hun crate. But the pilot did not even turn to see where this shower of sparks was coming from. Masters kicked his rudder gently. Once again his guns blazed. Once again a hole appeared in the little ship that looked like an undergrown Fokker. And once again the pilot kept flying straight ahead, much to the Lone Eagle's bewilderment.

MASTERS saw that in a few seconds the ship would be lost in the darkness. He had to nail it in the next burst if he was going to prevent the Hun from carrying on and laying more of those hellishly destructive bombs far behind the lines. His thumbs hit the trips hard, just as the Fokker began to skid into an uncertain turn. The blazing tracers rippled through the air.

But as he tried to hold the wavering flight of the ship in his sights, Masters got the surprise of his life. For a full second he thought he was seeing things. A twin line of tracer was hosing down from his left and catching the tiny ship full in its blazing meshes. The little ship staggered under the impact.

His keen eyes followed the sparkling tracers and to his astonishment he saw that they emanated from a pair of hot Spandaus. It was unbelievable. But there it was, happening before his very eyes. One black-crossed ship shooting down another of the Kaiser's aerial cohorts.

The other and normal-sized Fokker flashed over the stricken plane. By the light of the mounting blaze below, Masters saw a weird insignia painted on the side of the hurtling

crate. It was just a glimpse, but enough to make out the face of a snarling gorilla, fangs bared, dripping foam as if in rage.

"That's a new one," muttered the Lone Eagle.

He raised his eyes and looked into the face of the pilot. A shudder ran through his frame. There was not much to choose between the face painted on the side of the Fokker and that of the pilot in the cockpit. For the face of the Hun was an evil one, cruelty written in every line.

A pair of bloodshot eyes glared down at him through glinting goggles. Thin lips curled back in an angry snarl, revealing teeth jagged and yellow.

Masters banked, seeking to bring his guns to bear on this strange Fokker. But in a flash it was gone, lost in the shadows.

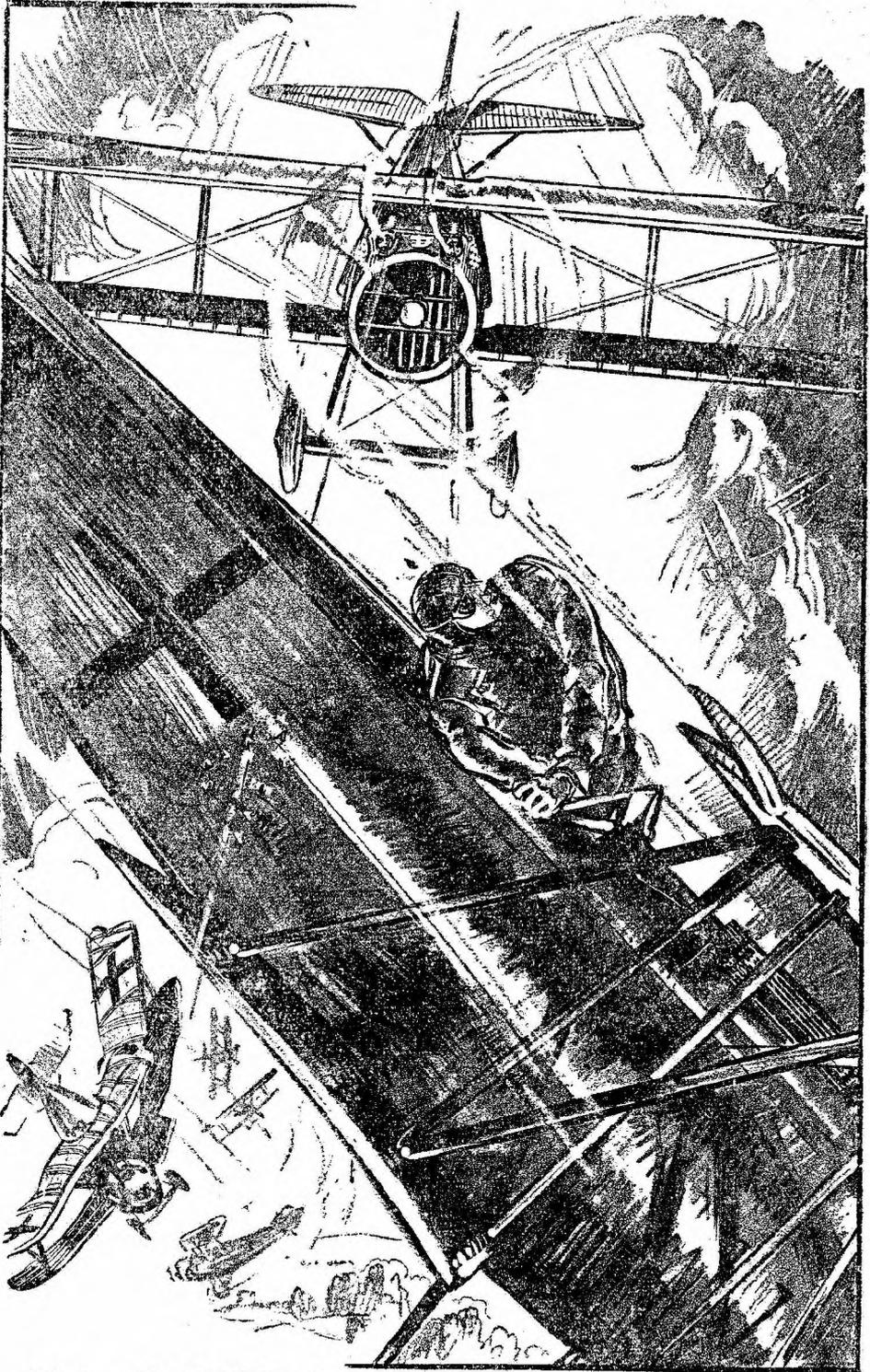
Masters turned to look for the little crate. And to his amazement he saw the two wings fold back against the little fuselage. They hit with a crash and seemed to collapse, curving over the doomed pilot, covering him completely.

And even before the amazed Lone Eagle was able to release the pressure on the trips, the little ship was plummeting earthward, leaving a thin skein of smoke behind it.

Masters tried to follow it down, but the speed of the doomed ship was too great. He soon lost it in the dark at the rim of the eerie glow cast by the fierce blaze on the field.

Throttling back and putting his ship into a spiral, Masters cork-screwed his way toward the field, followed closely by his two companions. His mind still raced with the thoughts of the weird battle through which he had just gone. His mind's eye still carried a picture of the bearded pilot flying that little ship, and of the pilot of the big crate who had so ruthlessly shot down one of his own.

"Like to get a peek at that guy in the little ship," he muttered as War-



The Lone Eagle's Vickers blasted the Hun pilot's face away. (Chapter III)

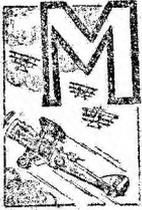
ren and Viaud wove along behind him.

Crash!

The roar sounded above the throb of his throttled motor. He looked over the side in time to see a fountain of flame wedge the darkness apart. And he knew that he'd never see the pilot of the mysterious little crate.

CHAPTER II

The Terror Strikes Again



MASTERS set his Spad down at the far end of the field and waited for Warren and Viaud to come in. As they landed, he crawled from his ship and hurried toward them.

"Either one of you get a good look at that crate?" he asked as he took his helmet off and stood running his fingers through his hair.

"One of the small one's we've been hearing about, wasn't it?" snapped Warren. "Pierre and I got there just as that Fokker was pumping lead into it. Didn't get a good look. Look what's happened to our field."

"Looks as if they were after us," muttered Viaud grimly. "A few minutes more in that office and we would never have gone on leave."

But Masters had no time for thoughts of leave. He had erased that completely from his mind. All he thought of now was the queer little planes with their grotesque pilots, to say nothing of the weird ship with the sinister insignia.

"Come on," he growled. "I'm going over to have a look at the spot where that crate landed. Might be a bomb lying around that failed to go off."

The three of them hurried across the field, dodging through weaving arms of smoke. Wood still crackled and sputtered in the glowing inferno where the hangar had stood a few minutes before. Tiny flames licked upward, still hungry, from the pile

of glowing embers which had been their hut.

Masters shook his head as he brushed a spark off his sleeve. "Direct hits, every one of them. The only wasted bombs are those in the ship I shot down. It's uncanny."

"It's hell," snapped Warren as he stumbled over a twisted girder. "Don't see how a ship as small as the one shot down could carry a bomb big enough to do all this damage."

While Warren rattled on, Masters walked straight ahead. In his mind's eye he could still see that queer thing flashing through the beam of the searchlight. And then the three stopped, slightly bewildered as they stared into a gaping crater.

"There's where it smashed in," said Masters. "But we're not going to find much to go on here."

Sliding into the crater, Masters snapped on the small but powerful flashlight he always carried. He quickly played the beam around the crater. Here and there he could see a tiny sliver, a small fragment of the Hun plane.

Spattered against the stones he saw gruesome relics, tiny chunks of bloody flesh, all that was left of the pilot who had died that awful death. Masters passed by these grim souvenirs hurriedly, and not without a shudder. He hated to think that his hand had been the cause of a living man becoming these scattered shreds of dead flesh.

Suddenly he was conscious that Viaud and Warren were shouting at him. It was then that he first heard the roar of a motor. He extinguished the light in his fist as he flung himself flat against the side of the crater. Already a pair of Spandaus were making the night hideous with their chatter. Slugs kicked up the dirt around him.

The enemy ship zoomed. Masters could hear it curling around in a tight bank. He saw the sparks sputtering through the night and knew a

parachute flare was on its way down. He barely had time to throw himself to the other side of the crater as the Fokker bored in again, spattering the ground around him with lead.

"It's the ugly guy with the gorilla head painted on his fuselage," thought Masters as the ship roared close and then banked.

BUT of the corner of his eye he saw a streamer of white flutter to the ground and bounce close to the hole in which he crouched. The next second the Fokker was gone.

Masters listened to the receding sound of the motor and then crawled from the crater. His eager fingers found the white streamers and the message attached to the weighted end. He tore it open and by the light of his electric torch, read:

Mind your own business, John Masters. If you fail to heed my warning your fate will be the same as that of the pilot in whose grave you are now cringing.

The Master of the Night Raiders.

Masters cursed softly as he jumped to his feet, just in time to see Pierre come up with a length of twisted metal in his hands.

"What's that?" he asked eagerly. "Where'd you pick it up?"

"I found it over there," said Warren, jerking his head toward the shadows. "While you were down there, Pierre and I scouted around a bit."

"Looks like an undercarriage strut," said Masters slowly. "Heavy for a ship that size. Built to take quite a shock."

"Ought to be a piece of the wheel around here somewhere," answered Viaud. "Let us look again."

"Just a minute," said Masters. "What's this?" He pulled a feathery green thing from a welded V joint and held it in the light. "Any spruce trees around here?"

Warren shook his head. "There isn't a Christmas tree within miles. Must have caught it up on the take

off. Brushed the trees because of the heavy load of bombs."

"That's what I'm thinking," replied Masters as he slid the tiny spray of green into his pocket. "Come on, let's have a look and see if there isn't more of this crate around here."

The three men combed the field carefully with their lights. Here and there, scattered in all directions, were tiny bits of the plane. It wasn't until they had reached the far side of the field that Masters' light picked up the dull green of a section of tire. He snatched it from the ground and called the others. They stood looking at the arc of torn rubber in the Lone Eagle's hands.

"Regulation size wheel," muttered Masters as he laid the bit of rubber on the ground and with a stick continued the curve. "The circumference is the same as that used on a D-VII."

"Doesn't make sense," said Warren. "I'll swear the ship was half the size of a Fokker. Yet the undercarriage is for a regular sized ship."

Masters nodded. His eyes were studying a smudge of reddish brown clay smeared on the rubber. He rubbed his fingers through it, felt of its consistency, and then smeared it on the cuff of his flying suit.

"Might want to match that sometime," he said with a slow smile. "Come on, let's go down and see Colonel Tremaine. He's waiting for us."

As they hurried to their planes Masters told them of the mysterious warning. He let them read the scrawled message.

Half an hour later, John Masters and his two companions were in the conference room of temporary General Headquarters. On the table, before Colonel Tremaine, head of Yankee Air Intelligence and old General Viaud, Pierre's father, lay the piece of twisted tubing from the undercarriage of the fallen plane, and the explosion-tattered bit of tire.

"And this is all you've got?" said

Tremaine trying to hide his disappointment.

"That, a sprig of spruce, and a challenge," replied Masters, his eyes roving to the map on the wall. "This ship took off from a clay field that is either surrounded by spruce trees or has them along one side. I'm going to find that field if I have to cover every spruce tree on the other side of the lines."

"We've got to locate this thing in a hurry, John," said Tremaine after a moment's silence. "They struck twice tonight."

"You mean another bunch came over while the others were strafing our field?" demanded Masters.

"Just that, John," answered Tremaine. "They came over and tore our supply dump at Esernay to bits. Five bombs went off and every one was a direct hit."

"That's the glare I saw in the sky to the south then," muttered Masters. "Don't suppose anybody saw them this time either?"

BOTH Tremaine and Viaud shook their heads.

"They have the help of the moon to spot their objectives," said Viaud. "We have only our searchlights and they seem to be blind."

"I know," said Masters. "We were in the air while they bombed our secret field. I couldn't spot them either, not until this one bird came down to my level. I got him, as I have already told you. But I think I caught a glimpse of one of the bombs."

"You what?" shouted Tremaine.

"I saw one of the bombs," replied Masters. "I'm sure I caught it passing through the beam of a searchlight. It was a big one."

"But how could they carry a big bomb on one of those small planes?" demanded Viaud.

"Not sure that they do," replied Masters. "Small planes might be spotters. You see, they may be figuring that a small ship is hard to pick

up at night, and they may use them merely to guide the bombs."

Tremaine whistled softly. "Then you think there might be some tie up between these small ships and the bombers. Wireless control or something like that?"

"Possibly," said Masters.

"But the small one must have been carrying a heavy bomb," broke in Viaud "or else it would not have been demolished so completely when it crashed."

"I know," said Masters. "That's an angle I'm trying to figure out."

As he spoke the telephone rang and Colonel Tremaine snatched the instrument from the desk. He listened intently, trying now and then without much success to get a word in. It was only when he mentioned that Masters had started to work on the puzzle that he managed to get whole sentences into the mouthpiece. At last he placed the phone back in its cradle and swung around to face Masters.

"You can guess who that was, can't you, John?" he said as he brushed the back of his hand across his damp forehead.

"General Pershing," calmly replied Masters.

"Right," snapped Tremaine. "He wants action and fast. He's coming out from Paris right away. On his way now."

Masters shook his head slowly.

"Wish he'd stay in Paris until this thing blows over," he said meaningly. "These birds are striking too close for comfort. H.Q.'s no place for him now."

Startlingly before Masters' words were out of his mouth, his prophecy came true! A thunderous crash rocked the building, sending plaster showering down over the heads of the five men.

"There they are!" shouted Colonel Tremaine, leaping to his feet.

Another detonation made the walls buckle. Windows were sucked out-

ward as the air rushed back into the vacuum caused by the explosion. The floor under their feet heaved as they rushed to the door through the blinding smoke and dust. The lights had been extinguished, but they were guided by the glare of the burning wings at the south end of the building.

As they reached the outside, Masters shouted for them to run across the spacious lawn and make for the trees across the road. Behind him he heard another crash and saw the roof of the old chateau heave skyward and then tumble back into the burning inferno.

"See anything of them?" shouted Tremaine above the din of the crackling flames.

Masters shook his head. He was staring at the face of the moon, hoping to catch the silhouette of a Hun plane against its bright surface.

"Watch the searchlights," he commanded. "Keep your eyes about half way down the beam. Might catch a glimpse of one of the bombs."

And even while they watched, another of the mysterious bombs smacked into the burning building. A geyser of flame shot upward, carrying with it a whirling mass of blazing timbers. The five men gasped as the fiery mass tumbled back to earth,

partly covering the three Spads standing close to the edge of the road.

A moan escaped Masters as he saw the taut fabric catch fire. It was too late to do anything now. The ships were already blazing.

"Damn it!" he swore. "I wanted to go over and have a look around tonight."

His muttered words were drowned by a nerve-wracking explosion. The twisting mass of flaming debris fountained toward the stars, and then cascaded to earth, sending the five men scurrying deeper into the grove of trees to escape being engulfed.

"Powerful bombs," shouted Tremaine, looking up at the determined face of the Lone Eagle. "And they don't waste a one. Notice how every one goes right into the target?"

"Yeah," growled Masters, "I'm noticing."

As he turned to scan the moon, now gleaming dimly through the veil of heavy smoke, Pierre Viaud grasped his arm with a startled cry.

"Look, John! Look! The second beam from the left!"

Masters looked, and saw nothing but the funneling ray of light trying to pick up the raiders.

"What was it, Pierre?" he shouted.

[Turn Page]

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Pierre shrugged his shoulder as he brushed a spark off Masters' shoulder.

"I do not know, John. I thought I saw something flash through that beam. But it may have been a rafter thrown up by the explosion. It went through so fast I did not catch more than a glimpse of it."

One more explosion tore the night into a thousand blazing shreds. Then, as suddenly as they had appeared to shower the chateau with destruction, the enemy raiders disappeared, still flying high, still unseen by the dumfounded watchers on the ground. Behind them they left a blazing pile. A target on which every missile had made a bull's eye.

And in that fiery furnace, now no doubt consumed beyond recognition, lay two of the clues picked up by the Lone Eagle. All he had left now was a smudge of mud on his sleeve and a green sprig of spruce in his pocket.

Taking the spray of green out, he stood looking at it by the flickering light of the burning building.

"I'm going to find them, Colonel," he shouted. "I'm getting another ship at the pool and I'm going out to locate where those ships are starting from. If I can find the hangout of these queer little jobs I think I can spot the others."

"How about us?" demanded Warren. "Our leave is all shot to the devil, so you might as well let us in on some of the fun."

Masters thought a moment. He wanted to work this out alone. He felt that he would stand a far better chance of locating the lair of these mysterious raiders if he crossed the lines by himself. Three ships would attract too much attention. Then he got an idea.

"Listen, you two," he said slowly. "I've been thinking about those Zeps. We had no trouble of this sort until those Zeps were reported coming across the Mediterranean. You go

down and keep a steady patrol on the north shore. The minute you hear of a Zep, get word through to me and try to bring it down."

"Working on a hunch?" asked Warren, studying the Lone Eagle's face. "Or are you just trying to get us out of the way?"

Masters forced a laugh. "You fellows ought to jump at the chance. It's just as good as a leave. Swell sunshine, nice beaches. And dames? Well, they say the pick of France is down there this time of the year."

Pierre Viaud nodded his head in confirmation.

Warren knew from past experience that it was useless to argue. He held out his hand. "Good luck, Buddy," he grinned. "You always did take the hard job. We'll bring you back a Zep if we have to tow it."

CHAPTER III

Sky Trap



HE first streak of dawn in the eastern skies found the Lone Eagle bobbing through the wispy cloud scud deep over Hunland. His Hisso purred with a rhythmic pean of power and his prop threw scintillating darts of light into the clean morning air, as he leveled off at eight thousand and scanned the terrain below. Banking from side to side, he studied every grove of trees within the range of his vision.

His one purpose that morning was to discover the spot from which the mysterious little replica of a Fokker had taken off the night before. He realized that he would have to locate the hidden airdrome before he could start the gigantic task placed upon his shoulders. He must find the lair of these terrible night bombers who dropped their steel-sheathed eggs with unerring aim before he could even make a move to circumvent their dastardly work.

Suddenly he strained forward and banked his ship to get the rising sun on his back. Far below, his keen eyes had spotted a dense grove of spruce trees. The carpet of green seemed to stretch for miles toward the east. And what interested him most was a long straight cleft right through the middle of the trees.

His photographic eye took in every detail. He glanced from the smudge on his sleeve to a spot at the end of the narrow clearing in the spruce.

"I wonder," he muttered to himself as he shoved the stick forward and pulled the throttle halfway back on the quadrant. "Sure would make a runway for night take-offs. Trees would shield it from cross winds. Use it anytime."

Masters circled over the forest studying the long clearing from every angle. One thing in particular interested him, and that was a damp spot about halfway down the long path. He glanced at the smudge on his sleeve and then at the spot.

"Can't tell for sure, flying at this altitude," he mused. "But there's one way to make certain and that's to get a sample." He cut the gun and threw the ship into its normal gliding angle.

As he slid down the long airy trail, his eyes traveled slowly up that long strip, gleaming amongst the green of the clustered spruces. The runway appeared to end in the trees, just under a slight rise in the ground. But there was no tell-tale sign of wheel tracks. Nothing to indicate that the long clearing had ever been used by an airplane.

The Lone Eagle swung in over the cleft in the forest, expecting any moment to hear the crackle of tracers zooming past his ears, and the angry clatter of Maxims on the ground. But nothing like that happened. He glided closer and closer to his objective.

Despite his keen scrutiny, he saw no living thing, nor sign that any

one had been near that long gash through the green since it had been cut.

Now his ship was sliding across the stiff tops of the trees. He reached the clearing, threw stick and rudder together and went into a steep sideslip. His trucks cleared the trees at the edge of the clearing by a scant foot or so. A short distance ahead lay the damp spot he wanted to investigate.

Quick as a flash he leveled his wings, stuck the nose of the Spad down. His fingers dropped to the throttle, as the long clearing began to unravel under his speeding trucks. Slowly he eased the throttle forward. The Spad leaped ahead, tail up, nose down a point or two. His feet tensed in the rudder. A grim smile played around his lips.

"Some folks will be disappointed when I don't set down," he grinned. "But I'm not stepping into a trap in broad daylight."

HE held the Spad steady, feeling for the ground. In a moment his tires kissed the dewy sod. He felt, and heard, the trucks rattling under him. It was then that he kicked the throttle over to full speed. The little ship jerked ahead like an unleashed whippet, surging along the runway with a thunderous roar.

The damp spot raced toward him, became a blur and disappeared under the lower wings. He felt the ship lurch and held tight. The trucks squashed through the clay, hit solid ground and bounced.

"That ought to give me the sample I wanted," the Lone Eagle laughed, as he held the ship to its course, picking up flying speed, until at last he almost reached the end.

Then he yanked the stick back, pulled the hurtling ship up into a zoom, a zoom that cleared the tops of the spruce trees, a zoom that hurled him right into the middle of a flock of converging Fokkers! Before he

could level out, his ship was being plastered from all sides by snarling slugs. Gray bars of slithering smoke hemmed him in from every direction. His ship was involved in a host of whirring propeller blades, roaring Mercedes and raging Spandaus.

There he was, one against eight, and if he were to avoid death's bloody scythe, he must fight. If the Allies were to be saved from this terrible menace of the skies, his nerve, his Vickers and his mottled Spad would have to battle as they had never battled before.

The stick went over. His left foot smashed down on the rudder. The Spad heeled over in a tight bank amid a blasting rain of fire and steel.

Masters straightened out, dropped the nose of his ship slightly and tore into a black-crossed ship cutting across his path. The Fokker avoided his burst, skidding away to the right. Masters eased the pressure on the trips and yanked his ship into a stomach-lifting zoom.

He hit the ceiling, leveled out and glanced over the side. They came charging up at him like the hounds of hell, Spandaus snarling their bitter challenge. They spread out in a wide fan, and thundered at him from all sides, guns clacking, throwing long lines of filmy tracer.

THE Lone Eagle eyed them coolly.

They had numbers. But he had gained the advantage and he had the will to fight. He eased the ship around while he sat hunched over his Aldis sight. His fingers caressed the Bowdens for a second and then pressed hard.

Under the steady pressure of his thumbs the Vickers in front of him jerked convulsively on their mountings. Their avid feed blocks sucked up the bronze-coated slugs from the belts and tossed empty cases out into the slipstream. A devastating double thread of tracer bullets hissed across the sky, sang their vicious song of

hate and plunged into a banking Fokker.

The tanned skin along Masters' lean jaws grew taut as the Fokker wavered in mid-air and then fell off on one wing. For one breath-taking moment it hung there, poised in the sky like a wounded heron, and then with a sickening lurch it faded away, tumbling wing over wing, weaving a gossamer scarf of oily smoke in the cool morning air.

Masters pulled back behind the wind shield and touched the rudder. The nose of the plunging Spad moved upward and centered on a bright green job with streamers fluttering from the V struts.

"The leader," growled Masters. "That's the guy I want."

His eyes narrowed as they fell on the insignia painted in red on the side of the fuselage. A gruesome, distorted face was painted there. A wild thing, not human, but the face of the angry gorilla, crude lips split in an angry snarl, fangs dripping red-flecked foam!

"That," the Lone Eagle thought, "is perhaps the master of the night raiders. Looks as if he might be the father of the runt that flew the little crate last night. Or the model for that thing on the side."

He tried to get a shot at the green job and its leering pilot, but just as he was about to open up he was forced off his course by the hissing of a double line of gray coming from a pair of Spandaus behind him.

Steel whined around his head as he was forced to give way. A strut splintered and threw a clear white sliver of spruce back into the slipstream. A flying wire snapped, lashed out like a striking rattler and then curled up against the fuselage.

But despite this storm of lethal death, Masters' eyes never left the green Fokker and its horrible insignia. His strong lean fingers poised over the Bowdens, ready to send a cluster of smoking lead at the Hun

who was almost as homely as the face he had painted on the side of his ship.

He kept after it, following every move with the persistence of a weasel following a hare across the snow of winter. Right and left, the two ships moved almost as one. Behind him guns roared and slugs tore into his ship.

Now Masters had the weird green ship in his sights. His fingers tensed on the Bowdens. Burst after burst of molten hate poured from the muzzle cups, curved through space and played across the black-crossed wings. The evil-faced Hun fought to escape the mesh of tracer but to no avail. Masters had him! An aileron tore loose on the right wing, fluttering madly in the raging torrent of wind.

"I've got him," shouted Masters. He kicked on rudder, trying to bring his sights to bear again on the ship with the bloody-lipped gorilla painted on its side. He wanted that Fokker. He wanted to smash that evil-colored ship with its loathsome insignia to the ground. He wanted to grind that hateful face leering at him over the cowling into a bloody froth.

But before he could achieve his purpose the other six Fokkers poured in on him. He failed to see the leader of the *Staffel* go limping down to safety, its hideous insignia snarling worse than ever as the green fabric puckered.

The air around him was a maelstrom of churning props and raging motors. A tornado of lead lashed the wings of his ship as it staggered into a climbing turn.

His lips closed in a tight line as a whining slug plucked at his sleeve, tearing the cloth just above the smear of clay he had put there the night before.

"Another inch and I'd have lost it," he growled. "I'm going to get back so's I can match it, an' all the Huns in creation can't stop me."

His feet pressed harder into the rudder stirrups. His hands nursed the Spad out of the half roll and into a smooth turn. As he came around, he threw a quick glance down at the long runaway nestling in the thick spruce forest, hoping that he might see one of the queer little ships rising to join the battle. But no tiny ship met his anxious gaze.

Masters came out of the turn with both guns blazing. A Fokker flashed across his ring-sights, and went down, twisting and turning as if to escape the vicious bullets from his raging guns. Webs of gray united the five remaining Fokkers with the lone Spad and then flickered off to bury themselves in a rosy tinted cloud.

ANOTHER note in the cacophony of hate hit Masters' keen ears. His eyes raised from the sights and swept the skies over his shoulder. He saw them.

"Pfalzes," he murmured as he scanned the formation. "But not a single one of the little crates in the crowd."

He drew the cool morning air between his teeth with a sibilant hiss. He summed up the situation in a split second. The Fokkers were in the rear, and about level with his ship. The onrushing Pfalzes were above, hosing down like vultures dropping on a bit of carrion. A tight bank was out of order now. His Spad would have to be thrown around as it had never been thrown before.

Slamming the throttle up against the last notch he yanked the stick back. The battered Spad clawed for the ceiling.

Behind him he heard the steady drilling of Spandaus.

Clack, clack, clack—clack, clack.

The terrible chatter smacked against his eardrums as the Five Fokkers unleashed a futile burst at the zooming ship. They seemed to dislike the idea of another outfit

stepping in to take their victim away.

Throttle wide open, Hissio thundering, the Spad screamed through the air like an angry kingfisher. Up and up she went, with the Lone Eagle holding the stick back against his stomach. Then she went over like a whale breaching in an oily calm. Masters' head snapped back against the pad as he watched earth and sky change places. Now the earth was hanging above him like a green roof. His struts trembled, the wing fabric puckered along the outer bay.

For a split second he hung there, with Fokkers and Pfalzes milling around below trying to raise their noses so as to point their Spandaus in his direction. Some were converging so as to be on the spot when Masters came out of the loop and hit the slipstream where he had commenced that screaming swing.

MASTERS smiled grimly as he watched a Pfalz and a Fokker trying to out-manuever each other in order to be in the right place at the right time.

But instead of completing the loop, the Lone Eagle slammed the stick forward and came hurtling down from the heights on his back. He held the ship in that position with a steady hand, the hand of the expert he was. With his trucks pointed toward the cloud scud he came swishing down out of the mottled skies, straight at a spot behind the two ships which were fighting for the chance to send in the death thrust.

Before they realized what he had done, or where he had gone, Masters was on them like a streak of lightning. His Vickers broke out with their angry challenge and twin streams of lacy smoke curved from their hot muzzles. For a second they connected with the Pfalz. Then they moved on, leaving the Pfalz to shed its gayly striped upper wing and drift earthward like a crumpled leaf in an autumn gale.

With a quick movement of his wrist Masters swung his ship around, and brought his guns to bear on the black helmet of the panic-stricken Hun in the Fokker. Again the Vickers chattered. Again those hellish gray lines connected and the face of the pilot, gleaming white with fear as he looked back over his shoulder, became a mask of red froth.

The Hun jerked against the belt, turned and laid the pulpy red thing which had been his face against the instrument board as if he were going to sleep instead of dying. The uncontrolled Fokker bucked around the heavens for a moment and then headed earthward in its last dive.

A Fokker crossed Masters' path. There were only four of them left now. He jammed the trips. The left hand gun took up the song of hate, but the right hand Vickers coughed twice and then was still. Masters saw the reason. A single slug from a Hun Spandau had sheared the belt, and there wasn't a chance of repairing the damage.

With only the one gun working Masters let a Pfalz chase him through the formation. The slugs snapped around him, but he held to his course. Now and then he let the Spad wabble just enough to throw the Huns in back of him off their aim.

He rolled, reversed his course, and a Pfalz appeared through his whirling prop. A single stream of tracer snaked from his gun and held the weaving fuselage in its relentless grip. It swung across the Pfalz and then caught the scintillating prop.

The cords stood out in the backs of his hands as he held the ship steady and poured lead into the Hun. His leg muscles were like bands of steel as he held the rudder on an angle that brought him around with the wheeling Hun.

Then his gun stopped.

He punched the cocking handle automatically, knowing full well that his belt was empty, his store of lead

had run dry. A sobbing curse poured from his lips and then turned to a shout of triumph as splinters began to shower from the prop of the Pfalz. His last cluster of slugs had done their work, and well. The prop ceased its mad whirl, came to a halt with the frayed end uppermost. The ship wavered drunkenly and then slipped away from the scene of the battle.

But his triumph was short-lived. A Hun had slipped in behind him, and before he could swing away a double line of gray was boring its way through his ship. He heard metal rasp on metal. His nostrils caught the acrid scent of hot oil, and he looked down to see the hot thick stuff spattering his boots. A jet of steam hissed from his radiator, followed by a tiny geyser of hot water.

He tried to turn back and head west, but the Huns, seeing that his mad Yankee was flying a crippled ship, closed in, forming a funnel of tracer which had its apex on the Spad.

Slugs rattled and bounced on the Spad. The Lone Eagle's feet danced on the rudder bars under the impact of bronze-coated bullets against the post. Slugs tore through the floor boards as Huns zoomed under the Spad and unleashed their leaden venom.

The motor began to labor as it grew hotter and hotter. A screeching sound came from up front. The needle on the rev indicator began to drop toward zero. The whirl of the prop got slower and slower. The ship began to settle despite every effort of the Lone Eagle to keep it in normal flight.

Knowing that he could not make his own side of the lines, Masters reached for the switch, cut the gun, and then threw his ship into a giddy spin. The Huns tried to follow him down a way, but soon gave up, fearful that they might tear their wings off if they poured after the mad American.



The animal hurled the cone straight at the Lone Eagle's face. (Chapter IV)

Masters' keen eyes soon picked up a spot just south of the spruce forest. He caught a glimpse of it as it whirled in front of his stilled prop. He held his ship in the spin to the last minute, then straightened it out and cut for the clearing.

Fishtailing in over the trees to lose flying speed, Masters leveled out, held the stick steady until he felt the wheels kiss the sod. His left hand flipped the snap on his safety belt. And none too soon. For the right wheel crashed against a low stump, swinging the ship into a ground loop and over on its nose.

Masters threw himself clear, rolled through the tall grass and came to his feet. His trusty Spad lay there in the waving grass, turned over on its back, one wheel turning idly as if making a last struggle to move the doomed ship.

Masters shrugged his shoulders. A grim smile flickered across his face.

"Guess they wanted me to make a closer investigation," he muttered as he started for the crackup.

CHAPTER IV

The Dispatch Case



LEAPING onto the crumpled lower wing, Masters reached the still turning wheel. He stopped it, then ran his forefinger through the mud clinging to the rubber, and smeared it on his sleeve alongside the streak he had put there the night before.

"Same color," he muttered. "Exact match."

He rubbed it between his sensitive fingers and nodded. It was of the same texture as that found on the fragment of tire.

"That's the spot," he thought. "Pilot hit that muddy place on the take-off. Slowed him up and he brushed the tree tops, pulling that sprig of spruce loose with his undercarriage.

Can't be mistaken. Guess I'll have a look at what's at the head of that runway."

Leaving the crash, Masters hurried toward the forest of spruce and was soon lost among the stiff green branches. His step was noiseless on the thick carpet of dry needles as he worked his way toward the long clearing sliced through the trees.

It took him almost three hours to reach the spot where the spruce forest was bisected by the mysterious runway. Once there, he dropped to his knees and crept forward, every nerve alert for the sound of Huns. At the very edge of the runway, he lowered himself to the ground and lay sprawled out, completely hidden by seedlings which had sprung up within the past few years.

He lay there for quite some time, studying the lay of the land and paying particular attention to the head of the clearing. He must have held his post for more than an hour, yet in that time he saw no sign of an enemy. The spot seemed to be deserted.

"Nothing to be gained by snicking around here," he muttered as he got to his feet. "I'm going to have a look around up at the other end. Like to see if there is anything at the base of that knoll."

Cautiously he made his way east, heading for the other end of the runway which he was certain had been used by the little planes the night before. Now and then he stopped to peer through the green branches, but there was nothing to be seen or heard. There was a stillness of death about the spot, something sinister.

He had almost reached the foot of the knoll when a cone—a pine cone—slapped against his chest. It hit and bounced, much to the Lone Eagle's surprise. He stopped in his tracks, every muscle tense, nerves tingling. He knew that cone had not dropped from a tree—it had been thrown.

As he stood there another cone hit the ground at his feet. He looked up quickly, certain that the cone had come from a tall spruce. But there was nothing to be seen. More curious than ever, Masters slipped through the dense branches and took up a position under the larger of the trees and waited, keeping his eyes peeled.

Suddenly another cone hit him a stinging blow on the cheek. Whirling with a soft curse on his lips, Masters was just in time to see a dwarfish figure leap behind a clump of bushes.

"What kind of game is this, anyway?" he growled as he made his way cautiously toward the bushes. "Guy doesn't seem to mean me any harm, whoever he is."

But when he reached the bush there was nothing there. The little figure had disappeared. Shaking his head, Masters soon gave up the search and made his way back toward the tree at the head of the runway. Just as he reached it he heard a sound that caused him to stop in his tracks and strain his ears. Human voices were coming toward him.

Without waiting to see who they were, Masters grabbed for the lower branches of the tree and swung himself up. In a few seconds he had lost himself amongst the feathery branches. He clung to his perch, hardly daring to breathe as the voices drew closer. "Maybe I can get a look at these dwarfs," he muttered softly.

But instead of dwarfs, a couple of full grown men appeared, men dressed in the gray of the Kaiser. And one of the strangers was the evil-faced pilot who had flown the green Fokker. So he had landed safely.

"I had the dispatch case right on my desk," snarled the man who had a face more like a beast than a man. "He took it and was out the window before I could make a move. I did not even know he was in the room."

"You did not have time to open it then?" asked the other.

"No. *Dummkopf!*" exploded the ugly man. "I was talking on the telephone when the dispatch rider arrived. We must catch him. That case contains our secret code. It is only by means of that code that I can know when the L78 will arrive."

MASTERS' heart hammered at the words. He knew now there was some mysterious connection between the arrival of those Zeppelins and the bombings. He was certain that the tiny ships had taken off from this runway before him. And only that day he had met this evil-faced Hun flying over the spruce forest, apparently protecting it. And this man, whose yellow fangs flashed as he cursed the loss of a dispatch case, had just mentioned the Zeps.

"If I could only get my hands on that case," the Lone Eagle thought. "Perhaps I could nail one of those Zeps and get some idea of what this is all about." He listened. The tall man below was still cursing.

"We must find him, you understand." It seemed that every other word was followed by an oath. "Who let him escape?"

"I do not know, *Exzellenz*," muttered the other. "But I will investigate at once. I will have all the men out to search the forest. We could ask for help if necessary."

"You fool!" snarled the pilot who carried the ugly leering face of a gorilla on the fuselage of his plane. "For all we know this one they call the Lone Eagle may be around. If he saw troops searching the woods he might investigate and stumble across the dispatch case. No, it must be done quietly. He will come back when it is meal time."

"And without the case," said the other soberly. "You know how they are."

The tall one nodded. "But I think he will drop it around here. We must search quietly, so as not to arouse his suspicions. I think there is a—"

Masters lost the words as the two men moved away. He waited a few moments and then started to descend only to be brought up sharp by a strange sound.

"Now what?" he muttered as he nestled into a crotch of the tree and looked around him. A cone struck the tree close to his head. A low chattering reached his surprised ears. It came from the tree next to him, the branches of which were interlaced with those in which he hid. Then he saw the branches of the other tree sway. A second later the branch just below his feet gave and then jerked upward as a squat hairy body landed, and clung there swinging.

"Well I'll be—"

AMAZEMENT was written all over the Lone Eagle's face as he stared at a pair of eyes glaring up at him from under bushy eyebrows. The creature was a baboon!

"A squadron mascot," was Masters' first thought.

For a moment or two, Masters and the grim-faced animal sat trying to outstare each other. Masters was silent, but the baboon kept up a continual grumbling and muttering. Then, with lightninglike speed, the baboon tore a cone from the tip of a branch and hurled it full in Masters' face.

"So you're the guy that's feeling playful around here," laughed Masters. "Well, get going, I don't want to play. Beat it."

As he made a move toward the big monkey, it shifted its position. Its mouth snapped open, revealing a set of gleaming fangs. An angry line of chatter poured from the gaping mouth.

But the Lone Eagle was not paying the slightest attention to the angry chatter or the mouthful of wicked teeth. As the baboon changed its position Masters saw that it hugged something close to its chest

with a long hairy left arm. The object caused the American's eyes to bulge.

"The dispatch case," he whispered. "They were talking about this baboon escaping. And the monk swiped the dispatch case as he went."

Masters' mind raced with excitement. He wanted that dispatch case. Just a short time ago the cruel-faced Hun had mentioned that the code for the arrival of the Zeps was in that case. What the stupid baboon held clutched against him might mean the downfall of the Allies.

"Drop it," he said softly, "Be a nice boy and drop it."

But the baboon only crouched lower and snarled.

Masters eased himself down to the next branch, but the baboon followed suit, dropping easily to a swaying limb, where it sat and grimaced.

Masters now could see that there was nothing to be gained by trying to get close to the animal. There would have to be another way of getting that dispatch case.

The two of them, man and baboon, sat and stared at each other some more. The animal stopped its chattering and suddenly grabbed for another cone. It let fly, but this time Masters caught it in full flight.

"So it's play you're looking for," he grinned, as he hurled the cone back at the baboon.

It caught it and sent it flying back to the Lone Eagle, and then danced wildly on the swaying branch. Its shrill voice rose, as if it were laughing with delight over Masters' willingness to play.

"Shut up," growled Masters. "They'll hear you." And to quiet the beast Masters threw the cone back. As the baboon snatched the thing out of the air, an idea flashed into the Lone Eagle's mind. "Might work. Give it a try."

Snatching his helmet from his head, Masters rolled it up in a ball,

wound the chin strap tight and then buckled it.

"Here you are," he said steadily. "Catch." He threw it gently to the animal and it tossed the helmet back at once. Back and forth the leather helmet went through the branches. And each time it was Masters' turn he threw it harder. And in a few minutes the game was fast and furious.

The baboon danced and gibbered on the swaying branch as it hurled the helmet back. Masters was grim-faced as he played the game. For he knew that the destiny of the Allies was hanging in the balance. He must have that secret code at all costs.

Suddenly the break came. The thing that Masters had planned happened. The baboon in its excitement threw the leather dispatch case instead of the helmet. And in doing so it realized it had made an error. To rectify it, it threw the helmet too.

As Masters reached out for the case the helmet struck him squarely between the eyes. For a moment he was blinded. He felt the dispatch case brush his outstretched fingers and go through the branches. With a curse of dismay he fell back, clutched madly at a branch, lost his balance and fell. Only the limber branches of the spruce saved him from a nasty fall, and as he struck the bottom branch he grasped it long enough to break the impact before dropping to the ground right on top of the baboon.

They were both surprised. Masters had not seen the beast slither through the branches after the dispatch case. And the baboon had not seen him fall. For a second the case was hidden by a snarling heap of fur as the Lone Eagle sprawled on the animal, knocking it flat.

The animal tried to turn in order to sink its fangs in the Lone Eagle's arms. But the American grabbed

first, twining his long steely fingers in the fur at the base of the animal's skull. He held fast, braced himself and then straightened up with the writhing, snarling animal held fast. Then he heaved, sending the surprised baboon flying through the air and into the middle of a clump of bushes.

Like a flash, Masters scatched up the case and tore it open. A sob of disappointment escaped his lips. The only thing in the case was a small cardboard box, well flattened, containing a jumbled mass of oddly cut cardboard. Masters recognized the pieces at once as being the numerous parts of a jig-saw puzzle, such as the German Red Cross was distributing through the hospitals.

MEANWHILE the baboon had picked itself up and was coming at him. Its red eyes were glued to the dispatch case, its tail was held high, weaving slightly as if challenging this strange two-legged creature to mortal combat.

"Here take it," growled the Lone Eagle hurling the open dispatch case at the angry animal. "It's not worth fighting for." He started to throw the box containing the jig-saw puzzle but stayed his arm. He opened it, poured the cardboard fragments into his pocket, and then shied the box at the angry baboon.

The animal seized the box in his free hand and began to tear it to shreds with his glistening teeth. The pieces fluttered to the ground, in sodden flakes as Masters turned and hurried away.

"I've got to get back and tip Warren and Viaud off," he said to himself as he made his way through the trees. "Those Zeps crossing the coast of the Mediterranean mean a lot more than I thought they did."

Still racking his brain over what the connection might be between the Zeppelins flying north across the Mediterranean sea and the myste-

rious little bombers that were working destruction every night behind the Allied lines, Masters hurried toward the southeast. He knew that there was a Hun *Staffel* quartered on a field in that direction. It had been there for months. In fact he had shot down a few of the Pfalzes belonging to that outfit.

He dropped his hands to his pocket and as they encountered the bits of cardboard he cursed softly.

"Damn that baboon," he growled. "He opened that case and lost the code before I found him. But where did he get this puzzle?"

His only satisfaction was the knowledge that the code was lost to the evil-faced Hun too.

CHAPTER V

Tight Spot



STIFF wind was blowing across the country from west to east when Masters finally reached the edge of the little German flying field. Ranked in a long line before the fluttering canvas hangars stood a flock of Pfalzes, their motors churning over slowly, waiting for the evening patrol to start.

Masters stood in the thick underbrush and looked at the machines. There, in one of those gayly-painted crates was an avenue of escape. If he could reach one of those machines he might gain his own side of the lines, and in so doing manage to get word of the Zeps to Warren and Viaud.

As he stood there, coveting the machine nearest him, he heard a branch crack behind him. He whirled, arms up, ready to defend himself, and then relaxed. For crouching there in the fringe of bushes, tail up, teeth clicking angrily, was the baboon.

"So you've been following me?"

said Masters with a chuckle. "Still sore, eh?"

The baboon curled its lips back. It began to dance up and down, chattering its queer doggerel of the jungle. Slowly, but cautiously, it began to circle the spot where Masters stood. Turning with it to keep his eyes on the angry beast.

"Maybe you can help me at that, big boy." Masters smiled as he glanced quickly from the baboon to the nearest Pfalz. "We'll see."

Snatching up a slender branch, the Lone Eagle quickly stripped it of twigs and soon had a limber switch in his hand. He swished it through the air. A grin spread across his face as he saw the animal stop and cower in its tracks.

Now the tables had turned. Instead of the baboon circling Masters, it was he who was moving slowly around the quailing beast.

"So they've been beating you, have they?" he muttered as he finally reached a position where the animal was between himself and the row of hangars. "That helps matters a lot."

He moved forward, the long switch upraised. The animal glowered as it watched him move closer. Its gleaming fangs dripped with rage and fear. The hair on the back of its neck stood up, bristling and stiff. Masters cut the air with the switch. He saw the animal begin to tremble. Its long tongue flashed out, licking the froth from its long tapered muzzle. Once again he swung and the switch burned the air just above the baboon's head.

That was too much for the beast. He fled, heading toward the hangars, screaming and chattering in mortal fear lest that whip bite through its hairy hide.

Masters waited. He saw the baboon pass between the line of ships and the nearest hangar. Then it slid to a stop as the Germans saw it. Panic-stricken it turned back. Then, recalling the man with the whip hid-



"Hurry," shouted Masters as he beat off the frantic baboons. (Chapter VIII)

ing in the bushes, it swung to the right, grasped the nearest guy wire and went hand over hand to the top of the second hangar.

It clawed its way upward until it reached the arched peak and sat there, hunched up, gibbering madly at the laughing Huns, who all ran to the spot and stood clustered below the beast.

The minute the animal had reached the top of the hangar, Masters broke from the bushes and trotted out on the field as if he too were going to join in the fun. But instead of taking a straight course he angled toward the nearest Pfalz. As he passed in front of it he kicked the chocks away from the wheels.

He came around the stubby wing tip. The set-up couldn't have been more opportune. The crowd of Huns, officers, pilots and mechanics, were gathered around the front of the

hangar, amusing themselves by throwing stones at the frightened baboon and then ducking as the animal flung them back.

"Glad he likes that game," Masters thought as he ducked under the wings and climbed into the narrow cockpit.

No one noticed him while he snapped on the safety belt. Not until he kicked the throttle did the heads of the Germans turn. And then he could not resist the temptation of raising his hand in a gesture of mockery as he swung the Pfalz across the field and into the wind. He could see the puzzled baboon dancing madly on the billowing roof of the hangar as he lifted the machine off the ground and into the air.

"That squares us for the code, old fellow," he laughed as he looked down at the upturned face of the

excited animal. "You sure did cooperate that time."

Roaring above the last hangar, he glanced over his shoulder and saw the Hun pilots rushing toward their machines. There was one frustrated pilot left standing on the ground and he shook his fist in rage.

Banking toward the west, Masters set his course for the sun which was already dipping close to the distant horizon. The purple shadows on the ground had lengthened and another day was about to pass into history.

He had covered little more than five miles when the first tracer began to crackle around his head. But, to his utter surprise, he found that they were coming from Fokkers! And among them, thundering down on him out of the sunset, was the green Fokker with the weird gorilla head painted on its fuselage!

"It's you again," snarled Masters as he whirled to meet the challenge of the Hun. Come on then. I'll give you another dose of lead."

BUT the ugly pilot wasn't asking for lead just then. His leering eyes had spotted the baboon sitting on the roof of the hangar below, the baboon who was now wondering why the throwing game he loved so well had stopped. The Hun pilot evaded Masters' burst of tracer with a quick bank and then stuck his nose down at the field below in a wailing power dive.

"So that's it," grinned Masters. "You're wasting your time, my lad. I've already had a look at that dispatch case and your precious code isn't there."

A vicious burst from the guns of another Fokker made him tear his eyes away from the green job, which was just leveling out over the hangars and going into a tight turn. Another cluster of lead smashed in at him from the left as two of the Pfalz jobs reached his level.

But Masters was ready for them.

The little ship in which he flew curved easily to the left, dropped its nose and poured an angry stream of lead into the foremost of the black-crossed crates. The ship staggered under the impact, tried to turn away only to have the snarling lines of lead gnaw their way along the fuselage and into the cockpit.

The pilot crumpled, cut almost in two by the battering slugs. The ship bucked, shot skyward toward the deepening blue and then hurtled earthward trailing a shower of sparks.

There was no time to see the ship go down. The Lone Eagle had to throw his ship from one bank to another in order to escape the vengeful lead thrown at him from all sides. Fokkers and Pfalzes were funneling at him, from north, east, south and west. Bronze-coated bullets smashed their way through the monocoque fuselage and battered away at his instrument board. Glass flew in all directions as the tachometer dial was drilled by half a dozen slugs. The German letters were punctuated by black holes through which acrid smoke poured from the still burning tracer.

Masters lashed back with his guns, sending Hun-made lead snarling into Hun ships. He refused to give an inch. His course was west, and west he was going. For there was work to be done.

A Fokker overshot him, curled up in a half roll to come down on him again. He saw it. Up came the pointed nose of the little Pfalz. Up at the hanging Fokker went a twin stream of flaming slugs. The Lone Eagle hosed it from nose to flippers, and then relaxed the pressure on the trips.

Smoke wafted back from the muzzles of the hot Spandaus as he saw the Fokker waver, then go into a dive. As it kicked over with top wings almost parallel with the ground, the pilot was snapped from

the cockpit like a stone from a catapult. Over and over the German went, arms and legs outstretched, spinning like a pinwheel in his last long flight.

"Poor devil," Masters had time enough to mutter before he flipped his ship into a tight turn to escape a withering burst from a Pfalz. "Hell of a way to go out."

Once again Hun slugs were rattling along the three-ply of his rounded fuselage. Slugs sawed their way through the taut fabric of his left wing, leaving ragged tatters streaming back from the trailing edge.

He clenched his teeth and dug his feet harder into the rudder stirrups. His head bent low to the ring-sight fastened between the two smoking Spandaus. A Pfalz slipped across the ring and then disappeared in the gathering gloom before he could fire more than three rounds. But in banking after it he caught another black-crossed ship just starting into a turn ahead of him.

He held grimly to his course. He swept the formation with the keenest eyes on the Western Front as he pressed the gun controls. He heard the Spandaus chatter their hateful song, and as he turned he saw the scintillating tracers eating their way into the Hun ship.

"Down you go, Fritz," he shouted into the slipstream.

The Hun crate keeled over, began to cockscrew toward the shadowed earth as Masters ducked his head and looked over his shoulder. For there, droning just over his waving hair was a blistering swarm of hot lead. Slithering tracers smashed through his upper wing leaving a curving pattern of tiny black holes. A slug whined past his ears and splashed against the compass. The glass flew into a thousand sparkling bits and the fluid covered him from the knees down. He threw his stick forward to win free from the pound-

ing, blood-crazed Pfalz behind him.

A red-nosed Pfalz flashed into view in front of his prop, throwing lead in two connecting streams. For a split second lead smacked into his cowling and ricocheted into the blue heavens, leaving dents on the Spandau casing.

The Lone Eagle jerked the stick back with a curse of despair as another stream of lead hosed his ship from wing tip to wing tip. The Mercedes growled and flung the prop in a mad arc as the Lone Eagle fought to win clear and make the safety of his own lines.

Fabric puckered and then ribbons of frayed linen streamed out in the wind like feathers falling from a wounded bird.

The Fokkers and Pfalzes climbed around him and over him as their pilots saw victory in their grasp. Spandaus danced wickedly on gun mountings and spewed their hate at this man who had stolen one of their ships.

Desperate, the Lone Eagle went into a tight bank. The air vibrated with beating props. High in the sunset heavens Masters was fighting for his life. Never had a Pfalz been tossed around the blood-red skies of France as this one, with the Lone Eagle at its controls. He was living up to his name and reputation—the Lone Eagle, the world's greatest sky fighter.

The sky was alive with whirling shadows as the sun sank lower and lower in the west. Crouched low, taut and tense behind his controls, the Lone Eagle yanked the Pfalz into a half roll and tried to go into a spin. But a ship directly under him forced him back into level flight to avoid a mid-air collision.

As he threw his stolen ship into a turn his keen calculating eyes narrowed. They picked out a single Fokker with a streamer fluttering from its struts and an evil red gorilla's face painted on the side. That

Fokker was heading straight at him now, both its guns tipped with flame.

"Found that his monkey friend disposed of the dispatch case," thought Masters grimly. "Thinks I've got it and has come back up to help stop me."

The Lone Eagle slashed his stick over, ducked under the wings of a wheeling Pfalz, came roaring up in a climbing turn that placed him almost alongside the leader of the Fokker outfit.

The last rays of the setting sun caught the ugly face of the Hun, turning it almost as red as the insignia painted on the side of his ship.

Masters pointed first to the gorilla's face on the fuselage and then at the Hun. He nodded and grinned.

"Not a bit of difference," he shouted.

The Hun apparently understood the gesture if not the words. His lips drew back in a snarl revealing his yellowed fangs.

Despite the hail of lead lashing the air around him Masters grinned. He had achieved his purpose. The leader of the Fokkers was mad with rage and that was what he wanted. It was easier fighting against a man in that condition than it was against one who was cool and collected. The Huns had already learned that to their sorrow, in the few minutes they had been trying to batter down the stolen Pfalz.

The Fokker with the leering face painted on its side flashed over in a turn. With a flick of his wrist Masters avoided it, swept by and then yanked his ship around. His heart pounded in time with the beat of his guns as they woke up. The tracers glowed like sparks in the dusk.

He saw them splash off the fuselage of the other ship and begin to creep toward the cockpit as he lifted the nose of his ship a trifle to correct his aim.

Methodically, with all the cold precision of a machine, the Lone Eagle kept his plane swinging around after the Fokker. He seemed to be a part of the little Pfalz as he moved the control in unison.

With a roar, as if stung by the buzzing tracers, the Fokker whirled madly through the formation with the flame-spitting Pfalz close behind it. Ships scattered in all directions, becoming blurred shadows as the light of day faded and night began to draw her black curtain tight from horizon to horizon.

Ahead of him Masters could see the blue-tipped exhaust stacks of the Fokker as the flame wavered back along the fuselage.

He saw the black silhouette of the Fokker loom against the last faint glow of the dying day as it banked around. His fingers jammed against the trips until his thumb nails went white. The Fokker wavered, then side-slipped away in the dark.

Masters threw his ship in a bank and circled. A frown creased his forehead as his eyes tried to pierce the darkness.

"Maybe I got him, maybe I didn't," he thought. "Thought I was pumping that last burst right into his elevators. Well, if I missed this time, we'll probably meet again. And then—"

Turning his ship, Masters headed the nose into the west, setting his course by the evening star.

CHAPTER VI

The Puzzle



IT WAS late when Masters finally set the Pfalz down on the airdrome at Le Bourget. For those on the ground it was a startling experience. But as soon as he had convinced the guard that he was really an American who had stolen a plane from the Germans, he

set off to find Colonel Tremaine and General Viaud. He was still a little put out over his delay at Le Bourget when he reached the crooked little street in back of the *Place de la Concorde* and trotted up the well worn steps of the dilapidated house that masked the Headquarters of American Air Intelligence.

He was well known there. The sentry inside the door snapped to attention, and allowed the Lone Eagle to pass on down the dimly lighted hallway toward the green door at the end.

Masters pushed the door open and stepped into the conference room.

Tremaine leaped to his feet with a cry of relief. He grasped the Lone Eagle's arm and walked with him to the table where General Pershing, General Viaud and two other officers of the French Intelligence service were seated.

"They've just bombed Contrie," said Tremaine as he held a match to the damp stub of his cigar with fingers that shook with excitement.

Masters whistled softly. "They seem to be concentrating on American supply depots, don't they?"

"But it will be our turn next," snapped one of the French officers sitting at Viaud's side.

General Pershing nodded. "He's right, John. Just as soon as they find out our concentrations are a bluff to allow the French to prepare their offensive in secret, they're going to start blowing up every French supply depot in France."

A grim smile played across the Lone Eagle's drawn face.

"Thought there was something funny about the way those supplies were being piled up at the depots. I was watching them one day and discovered that most of the shells were old things, dug up at the Front and unloaded. The same way with the boxes of supplies. Most of them were empty."

"I know," said Pershing after a

moment's hesitation. "The real supplies have been going to the French. That's why we've got to stop this thing before they discover our ruse. Don't you see, you've got to move heaven and earth to upset their scheme before they upset ours."

"Did you find out anything, John?" asked Tremaine.

MASTERS started to speak but General Pershing laid his hand on his arm.

"You're hungry, aren't you, Masters?"

The Lone Eagle smiled faintly. "Could do with a drink too. Funny, I expected to be having dinner and drinks at Maxim's in Paris tonight."

"I know," replied the general as he rang for an orderly. "When this thing is all over I'll buy you the best meal you ever ate."

"You mean this thing I'm working on or the war?" asked Masters with a twinkle in his tired blue eyes.

Pershing grinned. "I won't keep you waiting that long, John. Bring some sandwiches and some Scotch and soda," he said to the orderly who had just popped in the door.

Masters recounted what he had discovered while waiting for the sandwiches. And while he talked he spilled the cardboard bits of the jig-saw puzzle from his pockets onto the table and began to put them together. The fact that he was doing something with his hands seemed to rest his weary brain.

"So you see," he said looking up from the picture that was beginning to form on the polished top of the table. "I'm sure I found the runway from which these little planes are taking off. And I'm certain that these mysterious Zeps that have been reported crossing the Mediterranean have something to do with this. That's all. I failed to get the code. All I got from that damned baboon was a little help in stealing a plane and this jig-saw puzzle."

"Describe this pilot again," said one of the Frenchmen eagerly. "The one who flew the Fokker with the gorilla painted on the side."

The sandwiches were placed in front of him, and between mouthfuls Masters tried to paint a word picture of the evil-faced Hun.

"Looked like a big ape himself," he said as he set the glass of Scotch and soda back on the table. "Ugliest man I ever laid eyes on."

"Von Schober," cried the Frenchman banging his fist on the table. "No doubt of it. That gorilla face painted on his ship and that baboon hanging around his field, makes me certain of it."

"You mean von Schober, the spy who escaped from the United States about a year ago?" exclaimed Pershing, reaching for the button at his side.

The French officer nodded. "I worked with him before the war. He was the greatest trainer of simians I ever saw."

"You mean you worked in a circus," grinned Pershing. "To look at you now one would never think that you had ever helped train animals."

The Frenchman grinned and looked at General Viaud. "It was the General's fault, I assure you. I joined the act here in Paris and in doing so I was able to spend a whole year in Germany, where I did a little espionage in conjunction with my animal work."

Pershing had pressed the button and in response the orderly appeared again. "Get me the files on von Schober, Stevens. Quickly."

"So this ugly guy is a monkey trainer," said Masters absent-mindedly pushing the last bit of cardboard into place. "Maybe this jigsaw puzzle is his. Got a lot of animals on it."

The others leaned forward and looked at the picture Masters had formed out of the odd shaped bits of cardboard.

"Whole farmyard full," smiled Masters as he brushed a crumb or two from his uniform. "Horses, cows, pigs, ducks, geese, everything you'd find on a farm. You know, that's what I'm going to have when this thing is over. A farm where I can live the simple life. Not a bad picture, is it?"

"I'd say it was a pretty ugly picture," Pershing's voice broke in. "I don't mean the one you've just put together. I mean this one."

HE tossed a photograph on the table in front of Masters. "That your friend?"

Masters picked the photo up with an exclamation of surprise. "That's the guy. What a mug to be carrying around," he muttered as he studied the harsh, cruel features.

"Von Schober is behind all this," said the Frenchman excitedly. "It is he who is engineering these bombing raids. You said you saw him by the secret runway, did you not?"

"He was looking for this baboon I was telling you about," replied Masters, laying the photo back in front of General Pershing. "The beast had swiped the dispatch case containing the code. That baboon sure could throw. Wonder if this von Schober takes him along to throw those bombs. His aim's good enough."

"Von Schober could do anything with apes, gorillas, baboons," snapped the Frenchman. "It was uncanny the things he could make them do. I could not understand it, for he was cruel to them. He had a big gorilla in a cage in Germany. One of the ugliest brutes I ever saw. Von Schober kept talking about what a sight it would be to have a clever boxer and this gorilla in the same cage. He is a bad one, this von Schober. He has no feeling for either man or beast."

Just then the talk was interrupted by the entrance of an orderly.

"Our wireless sergeant just picked

this up. Can't make head nor tail of it. He said to bring it to you, General," he reported, saluting.

He laid a square of paper in front of General Pershing and at a nod from the general walked from the room. The general adjusted his glasses, picked the piece of paper up and studied it intently while the others waited.

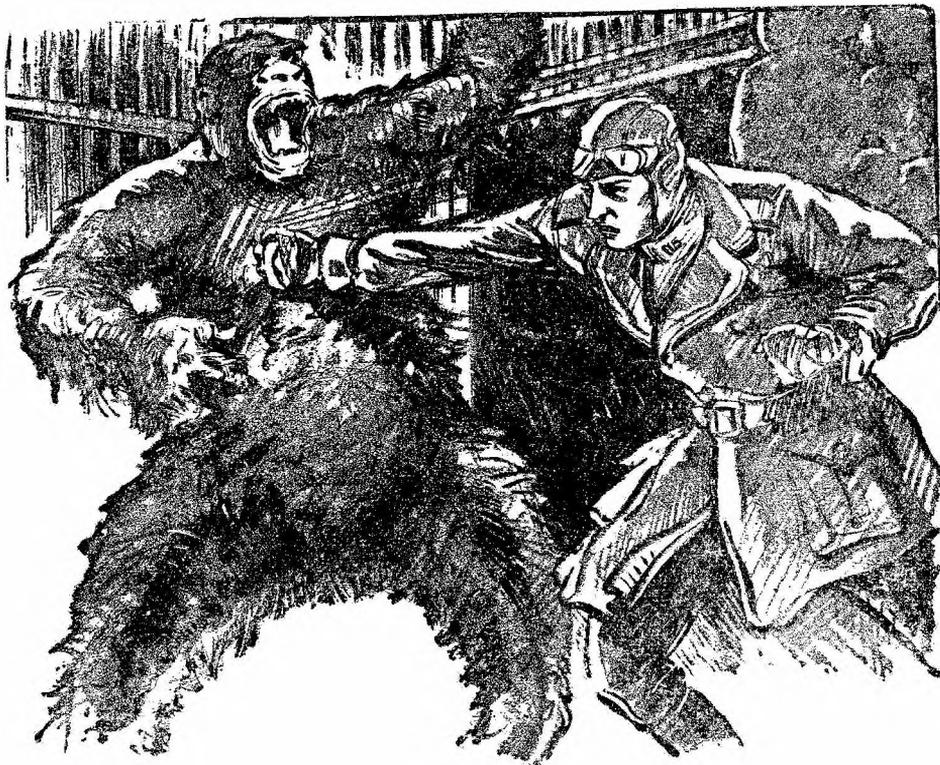
"Here's a new one," said the Com-

ing pushed the instrument toward him.

"It's for you, John," said the general. "Sounds like Warren."

Masters picked up the instrument and continued to fool with the paper while he listened.

"We've been making patrols all day down here, John," came the tired voice of Phil Warren. "There isn't a thing doing. Nobody's heard or



Masters smashed his fist into the gorilla's body. (Chapter XI)

mander in Chief of the A.E.F. after a few moments. "Listen to this and see if you make anything out of it. 'Twelve GH Calling. Twelve GH calling. *Schwein . . . Schwein . . . Schwein.* Twelve GH calling—*Schwein . . . Schwein . . .*'"

Masters had copied the message on a scrap of paper and sat staring at it as the telephone rang. He paid no attention to the insistent buzzing and did not look up until General Persh-

seen any Zeps lately. There's a fussy old English dowager who has been making passes at Pierre so much that he's afraid to stay on the ground. He wants to fly all the time. And when he's in the air she's after me. Maybe she isn't a Zep, but she's fat enough to look like an overgrown blimp. Let us come back, will you, John? We're fed up. Hey, are you listening?"

"Just a minute, Phil," said Mas-

ters as he scribbled furiously. "Hold everything. Don't let go of that wire. I'll be back shortly. Understand?"

"All right," grumbled Warren at the other end of the wire. "You're just figuring out some other excuse to keep us down here. We'll go nuts. Okay, I'll hold the wire."

"Look!" gasped Masters as he dropped the phone on the table. "This message! It's the L78 calling. L is the twelfth letter in the alphabet. G is the seventh and H is the eighth. Get it?"

"But what does *schwein* mean?" demanded Pershing. "The Commander of the L78 isn't just having some fun with us is he? Wouldn't go to all that trouble to call us pigs."

Masters slumped back in his chair and scratched his head. The phone at his elbow began to squeak.

"Hold your horses," rasped Masters. "I'll be with you in a second."

As he pushed the phone away his eyes fell on the jig-saw puzzle. His eyes lighted as he bent over the farmyard scene.

"Good Lord!" he shouted. "I must have got the code after all. *This puzzle is the code!*"

"It leaves us all pretty puzzled," broke in Tremaine with a grim smile.

MASTERS' fingers trembled as he carefully took from the assembled puzzle the bit of cardboard on which the picture of a pig was printed in colors. He turned it over and over, studying it from every angle. Then he put it back in place, noting just how it fit into the picture.

"It's got me," he said after a few minutes. "I'm sure that pig's got something to do with the message."

Then the phone began to sing again. Masters grabbed it up impatiently.

"Shut up, Phil! I'm working on something important. I'll be with you in—"

"But that will be too late," pleaded

Warren over the wire. "Here she comes into the hotel lobby. I can see she's looking for me."

"Who?" demanded Masters.

"The blimp I was telling you about," yelled Warren.

"Tear her apart and throw the pieces out the window," snapped Masters.

He laid the phone back on the table. His eyes opened wide as they looked down at the puzzle. "Tear her apart," he murmured over and over. "Tear apart. Say, maybe that's the answer."

Grabbing up the picture of the pig, he began to tear the bit of cardboard apart, layer by layer. "You do the same with the other pieces," he ordered, forgetting entirely that he had snapped a command at distinguished superiors.

The six men sat around the table tearing the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle apart. Bit by bit the thin gray paper fell to the table top and curled.

"*Nom de Dieu!*" ejaculated the French officer at Viaud's side. "He is right. Look!"

The men leaned across the table and stared at the bit of cardboard held in the excited French officer's fingers.

A smile of triumph slid across the Lone Eagle's face.

"We're on the right track. I'll have this pig peeled down in a jiffy. The one he's got is the goose. That says 22-2."

"And what may that mean?" asked General Pershing, trying to hide his excitement.

"I think it means the twenty-second day at two o'clock in the morning. This is only the twelfth. Ah, here we are. Take a look at this."

Masters laid the bit of cardboard on the table. "There you are. 14-3 it says." He looked at the faces clustered over the message. "Tomorrow is the thirteenth. At three o'clock on the morning of the four-

teenth the L 78 will cross the coast."

"And why three in the morning," demanded Pershing, a stickler for detail.

"Only time they'd dare, sir," said Masters calmly. "Wouldn't risk trying it in the day time."

By this time the others had torn their bits of puzzle to pieces and had them spread out on the table. Every piece carried a date.

"Not bad," grinned Masters. "A code wrapped up in an almost perfect disguise. In fact I came close to throwing this whole thing in that baboon's ugly face. That's how much I thought of it. Still don't know what made me put the pieces in my pocket. A hunch, maybe."

Masters snatched up the phone. "Listen Phil--are you there?" he called into the mouthpiece.

"She's got me, John," came a wail over the wire. "She's got me. Dragging me off to dinner or something. Thinks I'm talking to a girl."

"Phil!" cried Masters in exasperation. "You've got to shake her. We've got a job on our hands. I'm coming down right away-- Hey, are you listening?"

The only sound to reach the Lone Eagle's ears was the waspish voice of a woman and then the sound died away.

Masters slammed the phone back on the cradle with an oath. "Damn these women. Because a guy's got a pair of wings on his chest they think he's an angel in disguise."

"Then you think it best to go down to the coast?" asked Tremaine.

Masters nodded. "At three o'clock on the morning on the fourteenth I'll be waiting for the L 78. I'm going to knock that Zep down if it's the last thing I do. We've got to find out what's in back of all this even if I have to go to Africa."

"I know we can depend on you, Masters," said General Pershing. "But I'm afraid you have a tough assignment. Good luck."

Masters started for the door, stopped and faced the men around the table with a grin playing across his face.

"Guess my toughest job will be to locate a couple of guys that are being chased by women," he said as he reached for the door knob. "I'll be back. And I'll bring Warren and Viaud along, even if I have to torpedo the blimp Warren was yelling about. See you later."

CHAPTER VII

The L 78



RISEING, the moon threw a golden bridge across the Mediterranean as Masters circled to gain altitude over the tossing waves. Behind him lay Nice, and to his left Monaco. The lights of Monte Carlo gleamed like a necklace, tossing glinting jewels into the water.

In Monte Carlo people were gambling, gambling with chips that could be exchanged for gold. But high up there in the star-lit skies Masters was ready to gamble too, with something far more precious than chips. He was ready to gamble, and the stake would be either his life or victory for the Allies.

An on either side of him flew the two men, his inseparable companions, Phil Warren and Pierre Viaud. They too were ready to toss their lives into the spinning wheel of fate in order that victory might fall to the Allies.

Up and up they climbed until it seemed they were reaching for the very stars. At ten thousand Masters circled toward the west.

The Lone Eagle felt certain that he was on the right tack. Fishermen along the shore had answered his questions willingly and told him of hearing motors high over the Island of St. Marguerite on one or two oc-

casions. And just before he had taken off, the sergeant in charge of the coast wireless station had informed him of a message he had intercepted from a French destroyer far out at sea.

The message had stated that strange motors had been heard, but no aircraft seen. And the course of the mysterious aircraft, as given by the destroyer, had coincided with the reports of the fishermen.

Masters crouched low behind the windshield and looked at his watch. "Ten to three," he mused. "Checking with the position given by the destroyer ought to put the L 78 over the coast just about on schedule."

He was still climbing. The luminous altimeter needle said fifteen thousand now and it was getting plenty cold.

HIS eyes ached as he stared south where the distant coast of Africa lay hidden behind the horizon. He watched the stars, hoping to see one of them blotted out for a second by a moving object.

Suddenly he strained forward in his seat. The safety belt grew tighter around his waist as he leaned over the side to stare into the night. He thought he had caught a glint of silver tossed up at him by something that reflected the moon's rays. Kicking on the throttle he urged the little Spad forward, winging further and further out over the moon-bathed sea. And soon his keen eyes made out the long and breath-taking silhouette of a Zeppelin.

Banking swiftly, he clawed for every bit of ceiling he could get. Now he was above that ominous-shaped thing streaking through the night, driven by half a dozen whirling props.

Careful not to pass between the Zep and the moon, Masters banked, followed closely by Warren and Viaud. And soon he was hovering over the massive liner of the air.

"It's the L 78 all right," he muttered as he barely made out the letter and figures on the bow of the speeding craft. "I'll crimp their game this time."

Whether it was he who had allowed his ship to pass across the face of the moon or one of his companions, Masters never knew. But he did know in the next instant that his well-planned idea of making a surprise attack had failed. Some bright-eyed Hun riding in the rear gunner's post at the very stern of the big aircraft had spotted Masters or one of the others. He did not hold his fire, as the Lone Eagle had, but let drive with his twin Parabellums.

The battle was on.

Fishermen, French and Italian, riding the waves in their bouncing cockleshells, forgot their nets and lines as they stood on deck gazing up into the skies where the invisible battle was going on over their heads.

Like droning dragon-flies Masters and his companions went down on the big hulk, motors roaring, guns spitting fire. Long lines of tracer flashed up at them from every angle as the surprised Huns opened up. The L 78 was well protected, being equipped with guns all around. Every gondola spewed forth its livid hate as pale-faced Germans crouched behind their guns.

And the men behind those guns were cool, well-trained. They fired in short bursts and only when they had a target. Almost at the first exchange of shots Masters saw a cluster of scintillating tracers bounce off Phil Warren's Spad. A second later Warren sent a Very light curving into the night, the signal that he had been crippled. That left two Spads against the gigantic L 78.

While Viaud cut around to the nose of the big ship, drawing fire from practically every gun along the port side, Masters banked and slipped behind and above the Zep. He held his fire, going into a weaving twist-

ing flight, hoping that the gunners nestled just behind the big rudder would get a jam in one of their Parabellums or have to change belts.

Tracers flickered through the night like stars on a drunken spree. Some Hun in one of the rear gondolas was using a one-pounder, sending great chunks of hissing fire slithering past the Lone Eagle at regular intervals.

"Have to watch that bird," muttered Masters, as he kept S-turning to avoid the gushing tracer. "Wonder where Pierre is."

He banked and came around in a curling dive, teinting an attack and then zooming. Looking over the side he peered into the night looking for Pierre. But there was no Spad harassing the bow of the Zep.

"They got him," he moaned. "They've nailed Pierre. He went down in the dark without my seeing him."

There was no use trying to spot Pierre below, for the waters of the Mediterranean were more than three miles away. Even if Pierre had landed full in that brilliant path of moonlight the altitude was much too high for even a man with Masters' keen eyesight to see him.

The Lone Eagle felt sick at heart as he circled the L78. And then his heartache turned to rage. He banked and came hurtling back toward the big gas bag. His Vickers began to spew their leaden death toward the hulking ship. His tracers curled through the night, vying with the moonbeams as they slithered through the dark.

Hatred of this lumbering craft gleamed in his slitted eyes as he hurled himself at the L78, whose crew was answering his challenge with a blistering hail of fire.

MASTERS cursed as the big Zep changed its course. He saw that its commander was making a desperate effort to reach the shelter of a bank

of clouds drifting across the moonlit sky.

His head bent low behind the cowling, just his gleaming eyes peering over the edge, Masters swept on through the night, throwing his clattering slugs across the Zep's path. Just a quarter of a mile now and the towering bank of clouds would engulf this big silvery envelope that held the key to the riddle, although Masters was still puzzled how a Zeppelin flying over the Mediterranean could have anything to do with bombings in France.

His Spad looked like an insect of the night alongside of the big Zep as it sped toward the cloud bank. He banked and skidded from side to side to avoid the fountains of fire pouring from every spot capable of holding a gun. He turned to fire, but his right hand gun stopped, after two sputtering rounds. He cut away, yanked open the feed block and hammered a thick rimmed cartridge over the side. A second's frantic work and the feed block was back, the lid was down and he was punching the cocking handles.

But when he turned to renew the attack the L78 was gone, hidden somewhere in that billowing mass that looked like a pile of spun gold in the moonlight.

His wings carded scattered wisps of mist as he yanked the stick back and coaxed every rev out of the straining Hiss. Slowly but surely the Spad clawed its way toward the glistening summit of the bank of golden mist.

Once above the cloud he went into a slow turn, which widened like a spring unwinding. His eyes watched the top of that cloud intently. He was determined that the L78 was going to spill its sinister secret before he was through that night.

As he made his slow circles over the towering mass of vapor, his mind raced, trying to find a place in the puzzle for the L78 and its excur-

sions over the Mediterranean. But somehow the thing refused to fit. It just didn't make sense.

His trucks skimmed through a knob of swirling mist. The prop picked it up, churned it and then tossed it over the cowling and into the cockpit where Masters sat hunched. It was cold, clammy; it made him shiver. He slapped his hands on the cowling trying to beat some warmth into his body.

Suddenly the big cloud appeared to be boiling at one side. Masters guessed the cause, and sent his Spad careening into a bank. His fist hit the cocking handles, his thumbs the trips. His guns fired three rounds a piece and he was satisfied they would answer when called on, despite the cold. He swept around a billowing mass of mist just in time to see the silvery nose of the L78 poke its way out into the moonlight.

WITH a cry of triumph Masters jammed his stick forward, sent his ship down the long chute. To all appearances it was almost like coasting. The cloud seemed like a gargantuan snowdrift floating along there in the night.

Timing his dive to perfection, Masters' blazing tracers hit the Zep right at the stern gunner's platform and then battered the fabric to shreds all along the gleaming top.

The L78 seemed to stagger as the slugs from the Spad cut control wires right and left. The right hand elevator sagged and then hung limp as the bullet-frayed wires flapped in the wind. There was no answering challenge from those rear gunners now. They were through. One of them hung limp over the edge, his stiffening fingers still clutching his gun. The other was trying to make his way toward the forward part of the ship.

Now the L78 was moving along like a horse with the blind staggers. One elevator out of commission and

the other one functioning normally sort of gave the big bag a corkscrew movement.

"I've got it now," growled Masters. "Couple more bursts and she'll go down."

He bent low over his sights, preparing to rake the ship from one end to the other. It was crippled now, a burst or two would finish it forever. His fingers found the trips. His guns started to yammer as he went into the dive.

But as his Aldis sight began to follow the long spine of the L78, a fountain of fire gushed up at him from a gunner's platform amidship. Lead splashed all around him, boring through his prop, smashing against his motor. There were four guns mounted on that platform and for one brief second all four guns found their target.

There was a crash like the falling of an oak. Splinters flew in all directions, some burying themselves in the bullet riddled wings, and quivering there like arrows. The whirling arc of the prop disappeared. The motor began to bounce on the mountings as Masters reached for the throttle with a choked curse.

He was going down.

Cursing in frustration Masters put his nose down, watched the air speed indicator creep up along the dial. Then, totally disregarding the fact that a longeron or strut might crack under the strain, Masters yanked the stick back, curling upward for one last zoom.

The Zep commander saw the ship hurtling up at him out of the well of darkness and shouted for the quartermaster to throw the wheel over. The L78 tried to answer the command, but, weakened by the gnawing slugs, it began to buckle in the middle.

It worked out just as the Lone Eagle had hoped. He saw human beings spilling from the big bag as it began to tear apart. A grim smile

played around his lips. Even in the face of almost certain death Masters could smile. He had accomplished his purpose. The L78 was through. At least one of his companions had reached shore safely, and he could carry on.

Letting his ship stall at the top of the zoom, Masters held the stick in neutral. The crippled Spad picked up its gliding angle and started for the dim lights twinkling along the distant horizon.

"Never make it," he muttered as the needle on the altimeter started its journey back to zero. "I'm going into the drink."

Behind him he saw the L78 settling toward the waves. Now the bow had ripped loose and was drifting north in drunken flight, dropping toward the waters of the Mediterranean almost as fast as he.

DOWN and down he went into the black well of night. He banked gently, easing his ship over so as to have the full benefit of that gleaming carpet of light thrown across the sea by the moon.

His hand was steady on the stick. His nerves were cool and still. Facing death was nothing new to the Lone Eagle.

"Looks as if I'm going to be shark bait instead of Hun bait," he growled. "All depends on my fuel tank how long I stay up. Ought to be empty enough to give me some buoyancy, maybe a couple of hours."

The ship settled lower and lower. He looked around him, hoping to see a stray fishing vessel homeward bound with its night haul. To his right he saw a flicker of flame. It glowed for a moment and then broke into a seething flare as the dull report of an explosion reached his ears. And when he looked he saw the bow of the L78 resting on the water, its dural skeleton lighted by the crackling flame.

The glare of the L78 was just

what he needed. It lighted the sea far and wide, offering him a perfect landing flare as he prepared to set down.

The water, now like a sea of living blood, reached for him in the glare of the mounting flames. He leveled off, watched the roll of the waves, and then as his trucks were about to wet themselves, he pulled his nose up and squashed in. The Spad pancaked. Its trucks hit the water hard. The tail splashed in and the water began to lap at the taut fabric of the bullet-riddled fuselage.

Masters unsnapped his safety belt, and crawled out on the almost submerged wing, dug his toes through the fabric and prepared to cling there until either death or help came to take him off his precarious perch.

There was a gleam of satisfaction in his tired eyes as he watched the girders buckle in the bow of the L78. Somewhere off there in the dark the stern of the ill-fated ship must be wallowing in the sea, sinking slowly as the huge envelope became saturated with water.

As he watched the distant fire, his eyes suddenly began to focus on a group of tiny black dots bouncing in the water.

"Must be Huns," he thought. "Hope they don't try crawling on here with me. Old bus will go down plenty fast if they do."

For a while he lost the bobbing things in the water. All that was left of the conflagration was a ring of fire where a pool of oil and gasoline still burned. And soon that too was gone. The only light was the path of shimmering gold sprinkled by the drifting moon.

Masters had begun to relax. He lay on the center section, trying to keep some balance in the sinking Spad.

Something splashed just to his right. He shuddered as he thought of the sharks cruising under the surface of those waters, waiting pa-

tiently for him to lose his perch and slide into their ugly, tooth-rimmed maws.

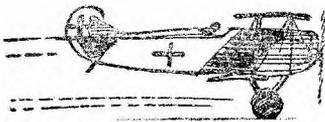
"Have to wait, big boys." he said grimly as he heard the slap of something hitting the water. "I'm sticking as long as—"

His words were lost in a choking gasp. He fought to keep from crying out in alarm. His blood was running cold through his veins as he tried to pull back.

"Good God!" he muttered. "What now?"

Something cold and clammy had him fast by the wrist. He could feel bony fingers creeping along his flesh, tugging at him, trying to pull him into the water. It seemed as if death were tired of waiting and had come to toss his carcass to the sharks.

Masters fought desperately to free himself of those cold talons. As fast as he tore himself loose from one set, another had him by the



other wrist. A strange whimpering sounded in the darkness behind him. The Spad began to rock.

Lashing out with his free hand, the Lone Eagle felt his knuckles drive into wet soggy flesh. The thing in front of him slid back with a cry. To his right he heard another sound. He looked and saw a shadowy figure crawling out of the water and across the slanting surface of the partly submerged wing.

Sliding from the center section, Masters was in his water-filled cockpit. He struggled and sputtered, and soon came up with the steel joy stick clutched in his hand. He was prepared to fight for his life against these weird things that came up out of the sea, reaching for him with chill fingers.

CHAPTER VIII

Terrible Odds



PHIL WARREN had crashed on the beach, but was able to walk away from the crumpled wreck. His first thought was of Masters and Viaud and the possibility that they, too, had suffered a similar or worse fate. He stood there staring out across the Mediterranean. His keen ears could barely make out the stuttering of the one-pounder on the L 78.

Suddenly he thought he heard the sigh of the wind through flying wires. Then a splash far out in the water. He waited a second and then called, but there was no answer.

"There's a plane down out there," he thought. "And whoever was flying it needs help." He marked the spot by a hump-backed dune along the shore and then started down the beach on the run.

He came to a trim little wharf, which evidently belonged to a hotel. Tied to the float was a speed boat. It only took him a second to smash the padlock with a rock. Without waiting to see whether he could start it, he gave the craft a shove and leaped aboard.

He fussed and fumed for about a quarter of an hour before he got a cough out of the motor. But once he had that, the rest was easy. The sturdy little engine under the hatch broke out in a deep-throated roar. He grabbed at the wheel, circled around the dock, leaving a moon-lit wake curling behind him.

Setting his course for the open sea, Warren held her steady for a couple of miles and then began to circle toward the left. He kept his eyes on the shore, watching for that hump-backed dune to loom along the beach.

"There it is," he said at last. He throttled the motor and began to work

his way toward the beach. Now and then he stood up and cupped his hands, sending a hail reverberating over the waves.

He was about to give up his search when the L 78 caught fire. And as he turned to watch the glow of the flames his eyes caught sight of something bobbing on the surface. He knew at once that it was a plane. Kicking the throttle on to full speed he sent the little boat skipping over the waves, and in a few minutes reached the partly submerged Spad.

His heart thumped anxiously as he slid up to the wreck and saw a figure crumpled across the top wing. He slammed the painter through a rib, tied it and leaped lightly to the wing and wormed his way toward the center section.

"Hey," he called softly. "Is it you, John?"

He reached the unconscious form and rolled it over. It was Pierre. Blood streamed from the pale face of the unconscious Frenchman and dripped onto the sodden wing as Warren began to slide his friend toward the boat.

While he struggled, he kept listening for the sound of a motor. One more plane was still missing and that was the mottled Spad flown by the Lone Eagle.

"Pierre," he called breathlessly. "Wake up, Pierre. They've nailed Masters. He's down, too."

But Pierre did not hear. He was out clean. The blow he had received when he set down had numbed his brain completely.

Warren finally managed to roll the unconscious form of Viaud into the boat. He propped him up with a couple of the seat cushions and then leaped to the wheel. He threw the clutch in, fed the motor gas and started for the spot where the L 78 was still burning.

"He'll be close to that somewhere," he said to himself as he scanned the flame-lighted waves. "He knocked it down and he won't be far away."

Back and forth in widening circles Warren drove the speed boat, searching for the Spad Masters had flown.

"We've got to find him," he sobbed. "Can't let him die out there by himself. If Pierre was only able to help. Four eyes'd be better than two."

He was far out now. But there was no sign of Masters.

MASTERS was kneeling on the center section of his Spad, fighting for his life. He slashed right and left with the joy stick, bringing it down on cringing flesh and bone.

"Where'd they come from?" he sobbed. "The sea's full of baboons. They're swimming in all directions, hundreds of them."

He flailed away at another squat figure that tried to crawl up on the plane. He felt the stick drive into the long skull, and felt sick as it bit deep into bone.

In front of him, in back of him, and to either side, he fought against the hairy creatures who popped up out of the night and tried to climb aboard. Their panic-stricken chatter sounded on all sides, making a horrible, nerve-wracking din in the dark.

Masters struck out at one beast and kicked another. He lashed out with his clubbed left fist, smashing at the long tapered head of another as it clutched at his leg and whined.

As fast as one dropped back into the sea with a despairing whimper, another tried to crawl up and take its place. A couple were clinging to the rudder, fighting madly to keep from being pulled off by others. They came up over the ends of the wings, over the broken stub of the propeller—hairy, sodden things, gibbering in mad fright as they fought for life.

"It's like murder," groaned Masters, fighting the nausea that ground at his stomach. "But I've got to do it. I've got to. It's my life against theirs."

His hands were scratched and bleeding where tooth and nail had taken their toll. His uniform was ripped to

shreds, and the top of the plane was slippery with blood.

In a moment's respite he sank back and gasped for air. He closed his eyes for a moment, trying to shield them from the horrible sight. And when he opened them, the Spad was drifting through the long scintillating path of moonlight. And there, hunched at the tip of the tilted right hand wing sat one of the baboons. Its head was side-ward to the Lone Eagle, as the animal was apparently listening to something far out over the water.

Masters caught sight of the head, silhouetted in the moonlight, with a start. That queer-shaped head, those bulging eyebrows, and that long snout were familiar to him. For a second he was puzzled. Then an exclamation of incredulity exploded from his lips. He shook his head to make sure that he was awake and then looked again.

"It can't be," the Lone Eagle choked. "It's impossible."

But there it was. He knew now where he had seen a head like that before. The pilot of the little plane had looked like that, almost exactly like the baboon sitting out there on the wing tip, head now cocked to one side listening.

Before Masters could give the thing further thought other baboons were trying to crawl to what they thought was safety on the sinking Spad.

Masters fought desperately. At least half a dozen of the baboons were trying to claw their way to where he stood, with the water creeping toward his knees.

"She's going," he gasped. "Couple of minutes and I'm through, and swell company to go west in."

He turned with a wild curse and struck out at a big baboon. "Get off," he shrieked. He felt the ship rock gently and then begin to settle. Once again he cried out and struck at the big baboon. He started a third swing, but stopped the blow before it reached the dodging monkey. He stood tensed, listening.

"My brain's playing tricks," he muttered. "This thing has driven me nuts."

But the baboon had moved out of range and was listening, too. Its lips stuck out in a grotesque pucker as it faced north and began to jabber excitedly.

"There must be something," Masters breathed excitedly. "He's listening, too."

A FAINT hail reached his ears. He heard his name called.

"I'm over here!" he yelled. "Hurry! For God's sake, hurry!"

His cry caused the baboons to go into a sort of simian hysteria. They clambered madly, fighting and tearing at each other to get their feet on the sinking raft. Masters shuddered as he felt the water creep over his knees, then his thighs, until it was finally lapping around his waist.

"Hurry!" he cried in desperation. "This way, I'm over here."

Now he could hear the throb of the motor and the lap of the water against the bows of a boat. Once again he heard a cry, and he answered it.

The water reached his chest. He threw the stick at the nearest of the whimpering baboons and let himself slide off the submerged wing. He took a deep breath and dove, deep into the depths of the Mediterranean. He wanted plenty of space between himself and those panic-stricken baboons before he came to the surface. He did not want them to take him for a haven of safety and climb over his body.

His lungs were almost bursting when he came up and shook the water out of his eyes. He gasped for air while he rolled over on his back and floated. To his left he heard the murmur of the throttled motor.

"This way," he cried. A sigh of relief poured from his lips as he heard the boat move his way.

He waited, just moving his aching arms enough to keep afloat. Then the boat loomed over him. He saw a figure

leaning over the side. He reached for the outstretched arms and felt himself being pulled aboard.

"Thank God, you're safe, John," he heard somebody say. And it seemed that the voice was miles away. He dropped his head back on a seat cushion and sucked at the air.

"Get out of here," he managed to gasp at last. "They'll be trying to get on board. Hundreds of 'em. Get going."

As the motor opened up, he relaxed. He was glad to get away from the awful spot. In his mind's eye he could see those long arms reaching for him, feel those bony fingers tearing at his clothes, and the searing fire of long, white fangs as they reached for his flesh. It didn't seem real. It was a nightmare he'd never forget.

When Warren had set his course for shore he came back, looked at Viaud who was beginning to come to, and then bent over Masters.

"You must have smacked in pretty hard, John," he said. "You're a wreck. clothes ripped to bits and your hands all messed up. How far'd you fall?"

Masters shook his head. "I didn't fall. I made a good landing. It was those damned baboons trying to get on the plane with me. Hundreds of them, Phil. It was awful."

Warren bent closer. "You sure you're all right. Didn't get banged on the old noggin?"

Masters smiled grimly. He reached for Warren's arm and pulled him closer.

"Listen, Phil. I'm sane. I didn't get whacked on the head. And what's more, I know something important. I learned part of their secret."

"Good for you, big boy!" exclaimed Warren, pushing a seat cushion behind the Lone Eagle's wet head. "What did you learn?"

"The L 78 was carrying baboons," said Masters. "No, I'm serious. The damned ship was loaded with them."

"What for?" said Warren, not paying much attention to what he thought

was the ravings of a partly conscious man.

"To make pilots of them," said Masters.

"What!" exploded Warren. "Now, take it easy, John. You're dreaming about that baboon you got the code from. Just relax and try to forget baboons."

"But I mean it, Phil," pleaded Masters. "This von Schober must be training them to fly. I know it. I caught on tonight when I saw a big baboon sitting on my wing tip with his head turned sideways."

"Take it easy," said Warren softly. He tried to push Masters' head back on the cushion.

"It's the truth, Phil!" cried Masters in exasperation. "Those baboons are just about the size to fly those small crates. There were hundreds on the L 78. Why else would they be bringing baboons up from German East Africa. Honest, Phil, I'm serious."

Warren shook his head as he patted Masters' shoulder.

"I've got to take the wheel now, John. I'll have you and Pierre in the hospital in a jiffy. Just relax and forget about baboons."

Masters tried to relax. But he did not forget the beasts. He was certain that he had the key to the sinister secret of the Huns.

CHAPTER IX

Simian Pilots



JOHN MASTERS was back in Paris again with Phil Warren. Pierre Viaud had been left in the hospital at Nice with a broken arm. And as the Lone Eagle stood before General Pershing, General Viaud and Colonel Tremaine making his report, he caught the incredulous looks passing between the three men.

"I know what you're thinking," he cried. "You think I was knocked

daffy in that crash. Well, I wasn't I'm sane I tell you, sane as any of you. They're training baboons to fly. It's this fellow von Schober."

"But it's impossible, Masters," said Pershing, with a sympathetic note in his voice. He studied the haggard face in front of him, watched those blue eyes, hoping to catch a sign that the Lone Eagle knew what he was talking about.

"I know it sounds screwy," said Masters. "I wouldn't believe it myself. But look at these hands. Every one of those cuts and scratches was made by one of those frantic baboons. If it wasn't for those, you might convince me that I'd had a bad dream or taken a drink too many."

Tremaine shook his head. He, too, could not bring himself to believe this story of the Lone Eagle's. For the first time he found himself doubting the veracity of the lad he loved as a son.

"I tell you I saw a baboon flying one of those little planes the other night, Masters went on. "I shot it down, but the load of bombs it was carrying exploded. That's why we didn't get onto the fact that it was a baboon. I just thought it was some homely kid enlisted in the German Air Service."

THE phone rang. Tremaine reached for it. He paled as he listened.

"The Germans are coming over. Our new anti-aircraft listeners have picked up the sound of their motors. They're headed for the French supply depot at Varennes."

A grim smile played across the Lone Eagle's drawn features.

"I suppose you'll believe me if I knock one of these crates down. Well then, that's just what I'm going to do. I'm going to settle this thing tonight. You'll have your proof."

With that he saluted his C.I.C. and rushed from the room, leaving the others sitting around the table shaking their heads.

"You know," said Warren after a

moment. "He's got me half convinced. Crazy as it may sound, I'm going with him. If he is nuts, he needs somebody to watch him."

With that Warren left the room and hurried after Masters.

Masters wasted no time once he was in the air. He held his nose up, and pushed the Spad at the stars under full throttle. Far ahead toward the east he could see the searchlights groping against the star-jeweled curtain of the night. Their long silver fingers felt of the darkness, trying to locate those sinister bombers who winged their way over each night and laid their hellish eggs so perfectly on their chosen targets.

The Lone Eagle was weary. Every bone and muscle ached from the ordeal through which he had gone. Yet, despite all this he carried on, fighting to wrest victory from the grasp of the Hun. Fighting to beat this evil-faced von Schober at his own game.

Searchlights picked him up, held him until the ground crews had spotted the red, white and blue co-cardes on the lower wings. Then they fell away to continue their ineffectual weaving through the sky.

The cold became bitter as the Lone Eagle pulled his Spad past the twelve thousand-foot mark. Overhead the stars twinkled in the inky bowl of the heavens.

Masters swung south and headed for Varennes just as the first geyser of flame turned night into day. He cursed softly as he scanned the skies, hoping for some sight of this sinister armada of tiny planes. He wanted to assure himself that the Germans had managed to train baboons to fly. He did not blame the others for not believing him.

Watching the flaming orb of the moon, hoping to catch sight of one of those little ships flashing across its face, Masters went into a turn, putting his ship between Varennes and the lines. There was a possibility that he might catch one of the bombers sneak-

ing home after laying its eggs, or one creeping through the night to unload death and destruction on the Allies.

While in the middle of the turn, Masters looked down to see the second bomb let go. Flame mushroomed into the night. The stars became dim as the orange glow of the burning supply dump mounted higher and higher. But despite his scrutiny of the skies around him he could not locate the bombers.

Suddenly the wings of his Spad rocked as if a tornado were trying to suck the machine down into the blazing inferno. Masters' hand tightened on the stick. He brought the ship back on an even keel just in time to see a pair of short, stubby wings flash under his tail.

"One of the little crates," he cried.

BEFORE the words were out of his mouth the flames from below glinted on banking wings as the tiny black-crossed ship slid around in a sloppy turn. He knew what was coming. He had seen a little ship make just such a turn a few nights before.

"There he comes," the Lone Eagle muttered, as the little ship completed the turn and began to bore through the flame-lit night straight at the hub of his own whirling propeller. "Thank God, they haven't been able to teach those monks how to shoot."

He sat tensed in his cockpit. The two ships whirled straight at each other like two comets run amuck. His fingers hit the trips. Lead spewed from his guns, but the little ship came on, despite the fact that tracers were bouncing against its nose.

Masters held his ship steady, pouring a long burst into the onrushing ship.

Suddenly the plane disappeared in a ball of searing flame. The skies were torn to shreds by a terrific explosion. Long tongues of flame shot in all directions as Masters felt his own plane lifted upward. Bits of metal and wood poured past him like shrapnel. He felt

pieces hit his Spad as he fought to bring it back under control.

He neutralized the controls, poked into a dive and then eased back on the stick. He kicked on throttle and looked around him. Where the little ship had been a cloud was drifting, wafted on by the night breeze.

Masters shook his head in amazement. The little plane had literally disappeared in a puff of smoke before his eyes. It reminded him of a trick he had seen an old Chinese magician do years before, when a lad had disappeared in a cloud of smoke. He glanced below and saw a shower of sparks raining to earth, all that was left of the little ship.

"That's one baboon I can't use to prove my point," he muttered. "If it was a baboon."

As he lifted his eyes from the shower of sparks his keen eyes caught a glimpse of something hurtling through the night some distance away. He swung his ship and tried to follow it, but it was gone. It looked like some huge projectile, arcing at the burning dump far below. He watched the dump and a few moments later saw a flare of flame billowing upward.

"That was a bomb, all right," he thought. "They must each carry a single bomb about the length of the fuselage."

He glimpsed a dim shadow looming up in front of him. It rushed at him out of the night like a meteor. He was in the middle of a turn, and had barely time to straighten out before the thing rushed past his wing tip, missing it by less than a yard.

"Phew!" breathed Masters, as he dug his foot into the rudder stirrups. "This is getting to be too much of a good thing. Those babies don't mind crashing right into a fellow if they get half a chance. Either that or they don't know any better."

He watched the little ship skid around. His heart pounded as he waited for it to straighten out. Now it came thundering toward him just

as the other two had done. The leaping flames from below turned the whirling prop of the little ship into a burnished disk, that grew larger and larger as it came straight at the Spad.

"I'm having myself a look at this one," Masters snarled, as he held steady.

The little ship came on, its tiny wings bathed in fiery red as it ate up the space between the two ships.

Masters waited, every muscle and nerve tense. Then at the last minute he zoomed, kicked rudder as the little ship roared under him and came down in a space-consuming dive. His added speed gave him impetus. He caught up with the little ship just as it started into one of those now familiar turns.

SWINGING with the ship he looked into the other cockpit.

A shudder passed through his body as he looked into a pair of beady eyes, eyes for all the world like those that had glared at him in the moonlight far out on the Mediterranean. He saw that long snout turn his way. He saw those lips curling back in an angry snarl. Now he knew that he had not been dreaming. He knew that the pilot of this little plane was a baboon.

"Seems impossible," he muttered. "Baboons flying planes. I've heard drill sergeants say men drilled like a bunch of monkeys. Now I suppose flying instructors will be saying cadets make turns like baboons."

The little ship finally managed to get around the turn after a series of jerks. It leveled out and came at Masters again.

The Lone Eagle's thumbs fell to the trips, but he raised them at once.

"Not while you're so close, big boy," he grinned. "Once is enough. Your pal almost blew me to Kingdom Come a couple of minutes ago. I'll have a shot at you from the rear, and at a distance."

Throwing the ship over in a bank, Masters started to curl around in a

climbing turn. He felt the rush of wind as the little ship passed under him. But when he leveled out and looked for his target it was gone.

He searched the skies vainly, but the Hun ship seemed to have been swallowed by the shadows, or by one of those high, towering columns of smoke from the exploding dump. The blaze was raging now from one end of the dump to the other. Once again the Huns had done their work well.

Masters looked at the scene below. It seemed as if Hades had suddenly been transplanted to the earth. He bit his lips and shook his head. Despite every effort on his part the enemy was getting through, blasting every objective to bits.

He looked above him, his keen eyes slitted as they tried to pierce the shadows. A new thought began to filter into his mind.

"Wonder if these little crates are just decoys," he mused. "Figure on us getting all excited over them, while the real bombers sneak over high up and empty their racks."

He puzzled over the question for a moment or two and then threw his stick over with a curse.

"Only one way to find out about these little crates and their baboon pilots," he growled. "That's to go to that runway and wait for them to come home. That'll give me the story. Not getting anywhere fooling around here. First thing I know one of them will sneak up and ram me for keeps."

The Spad headed west through the night, sticking its nose right at that spot in the distance where the spruce forest hid the answer to the secret of von Schober.

And the Lone Eagle, crouched behind the windshield did not know that Phil Warren was flying above and behind him, watching every move. All the young American could think of was those little ships that looked like Fokkers and the strange jungle people who had learned to fly them.

CHAPTER X

The Secret

UTTING his motor, Masters began to spiral toward the ground. In the moonlight he could make out a clearing at the foot of the long runway. He headed for that, and soon was silently side-slipping to the ground. He set the Spad down, hardly making a sound. And just as soon as it had stopped rolling, he jumped out.

"Not bad," he muttered. "She's in the shadows. Won't be noticed by them when they come in for a landing."

Slipping around to the nose of the machine, he turned the prop to suck gas into the cylinders and then felt for the dead center of the compression stroke. When he had found it he left the prop in that position, ready for a quick swing in case he needed to get off in a hurry.

"Now to watch for these little crates and their baboon pilots," he said to himself as he ducked into the bushes fringing the clearing.

He waited, but no little ship came in for a landing. The night was slipping by, but as yet he had a very important piece to fit into the puzzle. Another hour slipped by. He shook his head and got to his feet.

"Those little crates would sure be out of gas by now," he muttered. "Must have landed somewhere else."

He glanced into the sky. A short time after he had landed, a plane had circled the forest, and then had cut back toward the west. Not knowing that Warren had followed him, he wondered whether his own ship had been spotted from the air.

"Might as well go up that knoll," he decided. "This von Schober came from there."

With no more sound than an Indian following a warm trail, Masters made his way toward the east, work-

ing his way cautiously from shadow to shadow. At last he stopped. His keen ears caught a rustling in the bushes. A twig cracked. He stood frozen in his tracks, his eyes trying to pierce the shadows.

Suddenly he heard a sound that made his blood run cold. It was the same angry chatter that had tormented him a night or so ago. The fierce snarling of a frenzied baboon. The sound circled him. The frantic gibbering grew louder.

"Shut up!" Masters commanded in a desperate effort to quiet the beast. But the baboon raged through the brush, making jerky leaps as it circled the Lone Eagle.

"Sounds like the devil that swiped the dispatch case. More than likely found his way back home."

In the next instant Masters knew that the horrible mouthings of the animal had been heard by others. He heard the crash of running feet in the bushes. He turned to escape and found himself faced by a shadowy figure and felt the point of a bayonet pressing against his belt. At the harsh command he lifted his hands above his head.

"Damn that baboon," he growled, as he swung at the command and started to march toward the base of the little knoll. Behind him he heard the beast still chattering, and thought he caught a note of triumph.

At the foot of the knoll, Masters was led through a twisting path among the trees. To his left he thought his keen eyes spotted a set of doors built into the side of the hill, doors similar to those found on a hangar. Then he found himself face to face with a smaller door, a door which opened silently to allow him to enter.

"Phew!" exclaimed the Lone Eagle, as he stepped through. "Smells like a circus."

"You think so?" snarled a voice at his side. "Well, perhaps you are right. We are having a sort of circus

with our enemies. But I do not think they are enjoying it. Are they?"

MASTERS looked into the other's evil face. He had seen that man before, seen him flying and seen the same face in a picture handed to him back in France.

"I've come to play ringmaster in your circus, von Schober," said Masters steadily. "I like to snap a whip. And believe me I'm going to snap one this time. Your little note didn't scare me a bit, you see."

"I did not think it would," growled von Schober. "I have been waiting for you. I put my watchdog out there on purpose tonight. Oh, yes, I brought him back. I gave him a good hiding and left him outside to watch for you. Evidently he still blames his troubles on you, John Masters."

Masters smiled. "You know me, then?"

"Who else could you be," snarled von Schober. "Who else would steal a plane as you did the other day. Then there is the burning of the L 78. Their wireless man gave us the full report as it was falling. So you see, I knew you were working on this thing despite my warning, and expected to find you trying to sneak in here one of these nights to learn our little secret."

Masters shook his head as they came out into a dimly lighted cavern. On all sides, lining the walls, tier upon tier, were cages. And in each cage was a baboon.

"Your allies," smiled Masters. "Very fitting. Your choice is good, but they do not seem to be particular, do they?"

A harsh laugh rattled from von Schober's cruel lips.

"Have your little jest, my friend. There is little left of the night, and I can assure you that by dawn you will be dead, you will be pulled apart, limb by limb, until you will look like a heap of meat on a butcher's counter."

"Got a couple of hours, then," said Masters, without a trace of fear. "A lot can happen in that time. But tell me, von Schober, how do you manage to teach these baboons to fly?"

"So you know that I am doing the impossible," said von Schober, proudly.

"Sure," said Masters, eyeing the three Huns who stood by with guns on the alert. "I know the whole setup. You guessed it. I shot down the L 78. You sure lost a flock of pilots that night. A lot of baboons in that shipment would make far better pilots than a lot of Germans I've met in the air. Not mentioning any names, of course, but I know one bird I knocked down two days in a row. Had his gang with him, too."

Von Schober's face went livid with rage. His wide lips curled back revealing those jagged yellow teeth. "So it was you?"

"Right you are," grinned Masters. "Had a lot more trouble knocking down one of your baboons tonight. That guy seemed to have brains."

Von Schober trembled with anger. He raised his fists and then dropped them. A cruel smile spread across his ugly features.

"I will give you an opportunity to pit your wits against one of my pets, before the night is past. But come, you asked to see my training methods."

Turning to the guards he cautioned them to watch the Lone Eagle closely.

They turned into a corridor and soon came out into another good sized room.

"These underground caverns, just recently discovered," von Schober was saying, "make ideal quarters for my work, do they not?"

"You'll get closer to hell than this," Masters said.

"I've heard that you were boastful," grinned the Hun. "All you Americans are, for that matter. You'll sing a different tune, I'm afraid, when I hand you over to Samson. Here we are."

Before Masters was a steel framework, and on top of it were six small planes.

"My training ships," smiled von Schober. "Hans, get a few of our new pilots out."

A German leaped to the cages and released half a dozen gibbering baboons. They dropped to the floor and sat facing von Schober, looking first at him and then at the planes perched on top of the steel framework.

"All right, in with you," ordered the Hun, cracking a riding whip against his polished boot.

Like a group of schoolboys the baboons swarmed over the steel tubing and into the ships. The man called Hans went from plane to plane, starting the miniature motors and strapping the baboons to their seats. Soon all six motors were purring.

Masters studied the little planes. They seemed to have been built to scale and were exact replicas of Fokker D VII's. But his trained eyes revealed the fact that they were poorly built, and, judging from their frail construction, could not last for more than a few flights.

He looked up at the grinning baboons. Each one was leaning over the cowling and staring intently at the floor.

VON SCHOBER reached for a switch, snapped out the lights as guards closed in on his prisoner. The only light now was the flare from the exhaust stacks of the motors, and a dull glow like moonlight on the floor under the planes.

"Ordinarily we send them up at ten minute intervals," said von Schober. "But these are training ships. They learn their lessons here and then go out to fly."

Masters looked up at the wagging wings. Each ship had been released, except for a heavy steel tube working on a universal joint between the wheels.

"That gives them the ability to

work the controls," von Schober explained. "You see, there is a wind tunnel in front of the planes and they have to use stick and rudder to keep on an even keel. They keep them there, too, for they know a beating is in store should they allow a wing to drop enough to let the ship fall on its side."

"And then what?" demanded Masters.

"Watch that lighted spot on the floor, as they are doing," said von Schober. "You will see a replica of their next objective."

As the patch of light that looked like moonlight wavered along the floor, Masters was suddenly amazed to see a miniature village appear, twinkling lights and all. His lips parted, then snapped shut.

Von Schober laughed. "You were about to say that it was the ammunition depot at Le Manet, as it looks from 15,000 feet, were you not, my friend. Well, it is. That is how it will look in the moonlight to my small pilots tonight. Watch!"

The baboons chattered excitedly as they leaned over the side and watched the model of the village and the ammunition dump creep along the floor.

Then, to Masters' astonishment, the plane nearest to the model dipped its nose. Its wings folded back as it began to slide down a chute right on top of the model.

But before it struck the ground, a set of springs caught at the trucks and eased the impact. The baboon jerked forward, and then sat up and jabbered excitedly.

"Nice work, nice work," grinned von Schober. "You shall have half a dozen eggs for that. Put him back in his cage and let the others give their demonstration, Hans."

Hans took the excited baboon by the hand, helped him out of the tiny cockpit, then taking the eggs from a box, he gave them to the animal, which ran to its cage with an awkward, rolling gait.

Masters' eyes narrowed as he turned to von Schober.

"I wondered now you taught them to land," he said. "But I see the poor little devils only make one landing. You load a high power bomb under the little planes, send the baboons over to dive right into the objective, thinking that they are going to make an easy landing and get something to eat for their troubles. Instead, they are blown to bits."

Von Schober laughed. "Clever, is it not?"

"No," snarled Masters. "It puts you a step lower in the scale than they. It's a typical Hun trick. Those bombs are all set to explode before the poor beasts take off. In case one makes a bum flight and tries to land he blows up. I know. I fired on one tonight and hit the bomb. Damn near went west with it."

"Perhaps you will wish that you had," said von Schober, an ominous ring in his voice. "In fact, I'm sure you will."

"I suppose you train them to try and crash into Allied planes if they see one?" sneered Masters. "What do they get for that. A banana?"

"You guessed it," von Schober retorted. "Look, I will show you."

CLICKING another switch, von Schober pointed to the white screen in front of the five planes.

"Watch."

A British Camel suddenly appeared on the screen, twisting and turning as if to dodge some unseen object flying ahead of it. Each of the five baboons concentrated on the image on the screen. Their bony fingers moved the little joy sticks, and the tiny Fokkers appeared to be following every move of the ship with the cocardes on its wings.

"They are rather awful on turns," admitted von Schober. "But see that fellow nearest us. He will get that ship."

The screen brought the Camel

nearer and nearer to the little Fokker. Suddenly it seemed to melt right into the whirling prop of the little ship. The baboon chattered with glee, as if it enjoyed the game and the reward to come after.

Von Schober reached into a basket, tossed the smirking baboon a banana.

"I'll have to let the others slide down on that model," he said, as the baboon crawled from its perch and made for one of the cages, hugging its reward close to its hairy chest.

Masters was forced to watch the other three baboons simulate a diving attack on the tiny model of the dump at Le Manet. When it was over each animal received its reward and hustled to its cage.

"You have noticed, I suppose," grinned von Schober, "that I only send them out on nights when the wind is east to west or vice versa. That is to eliminate any danger of them drifting off their course. Clever, no?"

Masters shook his head slowly. Now he had the whole picture. He knew how the Germans had been hitting their objectives every time. This fiend was doing his work well, using his inhuman skill in training these poor dumb beasts to help the Huns in beating the Allies.

"I don't suppose you would care to see the shop where I build these little ships," said von Schober. "It's over in that big cave to the left. My store of bombs is just to the right of that. But why should you be interested in a detail like that? I have something more important to show you. And besides it is almost dawn."

"What are you going to do for pilots now?" asked Masters, stalling for time. "I must have ruined a bunch of them for you the other night."

"I have enough," replied von Schober. "I only use five or six on a single raid. I have at least fifty left. And besides, the L 92 is leaving in a few days to pick up another shipment. I don't mind telling you that one of

these nights I'm going to send my little pilots out by the dozens. They'll strike every important depot along the Front. It will be a night of terror for your Allies. I am starting them on a training course for that raid tomorrow. Now come. We are wasting time."

Prodded by the guards who suddenly had grown tense, Masters was led down a dimly lighted corridor. They stopped at a door, painted red and with a danger warning painted on its panels.

"In here, my friend," laughed von Schober. "I want you to meet Samson. He has been my faithful friend for years."

AS Masters stepped into the room, he could not repress a gasp. For there, leering through the steel bars of a big cage, was the living image of the insignia von Schober carried on his Fokker!

A roar beat against the stone walls of the cavern. The beast threw out his chest and began to beat it with his big fists. The sound boomed out like a giant drum.

"How do you like him?" grinned von Schober. "He is five foot eight, and weighs a lot more than you, my friend, a lot more. Notice his long, powerful arms."

Masters was noticing, all right. He couldn't take his eyes from the vicious beast, now trying to shake the steel bars of his cage. He saw the gleaming white fangs, the huge muscles, flexing under the coat of grayish-brown hair. He saw those stubby fingers curled around steel bars as if trying to squeeze juice from them.

"I've brought you a playmate, Samson," said von Schober, walking close to the cage. "You'll like him. I've promised you one for years, and now you shall have him."

Von Schober turned to Masters with a cruel leer wrinkling his ugly face.

"Now, my friend, you will have time for a little reflection. You see the

cage is divided into two parts. You will be in one and my pet Samson in the other. And then the bars between you will slowly rise. They are heavy, and it will take, I presume, about fifteen minutes. So you see, you will have a quarter of an hour before Samson's arms close around you in loving embrace. Enter, please."

Masters started forward, then swung, catching von Schober alongside the jaw. The Hun stumbled backward and fell to the floor. The bars of the cage rattled. The huge ape shook them wildly as the guards struggled with the Lone Eagle, forcing him closer and closer to the sliding door.

"In with him," snarled von Schober, picking himself up. "For that I should throw you right in to Samson. But I think I shall enjoy watching you squirm while the dividing gate slowly rises."

Masters cursed and struggled, but the heavy guards were too much for him. And before he knew it he lay sprawled on the floor of the cage, while he heard the door clang shut behind him.

"Now," grinned von Schober. "I shall sit here and have a quiet smoke while Samson waits for you. I've always wanted to see what a man could do against a gorilla. I think I know, but I just wish to make certain. You know how it is when you are puzzled. You have been puzzled about how we carried out our bombing raids. Now you know. There is a great deal of satisfaction in being absolutely certain about a thing, my friend. And in a few moments I shall be certain."

Von Schober pressed a button. Machinery began to whirl overhead. Heavy cables began to wind up on an unseen drum and the steel door dividing the two sections of the cage began to rise in well oiled guides.

Up and up, inch by inch, the steel bars went. The gigantic gorilla was already clawing at the bottom of the bars trying to raise them by force so as to get at the Lone Eagle.

"I think he is angry because you struck me," grinned von Schober. "That is too bad. I was in hopes he would play with you for a while."

Masters turned to the Hun. His face was livid with hate.

"You're the lousiest specimen of a German I've ever bumped up against, von Schober. You wouldn't be man enough to fight me on even terms. Just like your bombing raids. You get some poor dumb creatures to do your dirty work for you."

The gate was up four inches now.

Masters took out his handkerchief, wrapped it tightly around his right fist, and then tore a piece off his shirt and proceeded to do the same with his left hand.

The German tilted back in his chair and laughed.

"You do not expect to fight Samson, do you?"

Masters eyed him through the bars. The Lone Eagle was coldly calm now.

"I never give up," he said steadily. "I never have, and I'm not doing so at this time."

The gate squeaked.

The bars were up five inches now.

Masters tried to estimate how far they would have to be up before the gorilla could get through to him. What would happen then?

CHAPTER XI

Man Against Beast



WHILE the bars of the cage were slowly rising to allow Samson to reach the Lone Eagle with his terrible arms, a flock of Yankee ships, led by Phil Warren, were pouring across No Man's Land.

Warren had seen Masters land near the secret runway and had guessed his purpose. He knew that Masters would never rest until he had learned the grim secret. He had heard the Lone Eagle speak of the wooded knoll at the head of the long runway, and felt

that his friend would head in that direction.

"It may be a wild goose chase, fellows," Warren had said to the pilots huddled together against the chill of early dawn. "But I've got a hunch that we might be able to help him. If we offer enough distraction to the Huns he might have a clear road to get at this thing. Get me?"

The pilots nodded, anxious to get started, anything to relieve the tension they all felt. It was not cold alone that made them shiver.

"Good," Warren went on. "We'll split as we reach that spruce forest I pointed out on the map. You Bristol pilots drop your eggs on the southern section, and we Spads will spatter our twenty-pounders along the north side. But whatever you do, don't drop a single bomb on that knoll. I think he'll be working around there. Now let's get going. I want to be across the lines by the time it gets light."

In a few minutes the squadron of Bristol fighters roared across the field and hit the air. Right after them, with Warren flying in the lead, went the Spads.

Soon they were merely black specks against the rosy glow of a new day.

Back in the evil-smelling cavern under the spruce-mantled knoll, the gate between the two cages was lifting slowly. The gorilla tore at it, roaring with rage, struggling to squeeze himself through the opening.

"Samson is in good voice tonight, is he not?" said von Schober cruelly, as he blew a smoke ring toward the light hanging from the ceiling.

Masters felt of the makeshift bandages on his fists. He had learned that trick from an old sourdough in the Yukon. A handkerchief or any bit of rag, wound skilfully, would protect a human fist without unduly softening it.

The gate slid up another inch. Masters stood at ease, breathing quietly, but watching every move made by the huge beast tearing at the partition. It

wouldn't be long before Samson was through.

Suddenly the beast stopped its frantic pawing of the lifting bars. It stepped back to the middle of the cage, lifted its cruel face toward the rocky ceiling and stood listening.

"Now what?" gasped von Schober, letting the front legs of the chair drop back to the floor with a bang.

"Hear 'em?" smiled Masters. "He does."

A harsh curse lashed out from the German's evil mouth. Even there in the depths of the cavern the faint drone of motors could be heard. Nearer and nearer, they came thundering through the dawn.

"Looks as if you're going to have company, von Schober," grinned Masters. "You've been so solicitous for my comfort and well being that you seem to have forgotten that others might know about this place."

A bomb crashed somewhere outside.

"They must be stopped," cried von Schober, leaping to his feet. "I must get my plane out and warn *Staffel* Twelve!"

The Hun dashed for the door. He stopped, looked back at the rising grille.

"You take care of our friend, Samson. I will take care of the others."

And as the door slammed behind von Schober the gate between the two cages lifted.

THE Lone Eagle waited for the gorilla to make the first move, left arm out, left foot advanced. He was ready, ready for one last terrible fight before he died.

As the gate clicked upward, Samson forgot about the buzzing wings overhead and looked at Masters. His thick lips curled back in a beastly snarl. His pink tongue flicked out as he curled his stubby fingers and started toward the Lone Eagle.

As the beast approached, Masters raised himself on his toes and began to circle. His eyes never left those of

the gorilla. He waited for the rush, for the outstretched arms to encircle him.

Then, with an ear-splitting roar, Samson rushed. His long arms were flung out, until it seemed that they reached from one side of the cage to the other.

Outside, another bomb hit with a crash. Then another.

The sound disconcerted the beast for a split second. It seemed to pause in its terrifying rush. A bewildered look flashed across its ugly face—a look which grew even more bewildered as this man in front of him sidestepped and then brought his left swishing through the air to land right on his stomach.

A rush of fetid air gushed from between the gorilla's lips. It tried to grasp the Lone Eagle but missed.

Quick as lightning, his eyes watching those long arms now, Masters ducked behind Samson and swung again. This time his right was buried deep in the grayish-brown hair on the gorilla's right side. The beast gasped with pain and astonishment, shuffled around awkwardly to make another grab at this two-legged thing that seemed to have no fear.

Masters danced back. Once again he was in position. Once again Samson tried a rush. And this time Masters ducked low just in time to slip under those horrible arms. And as he ducked his fist crashed into the gorilla just below the breast bone.

He knew something about gorillas. He knew the animal lacked the protection a man had in that spot. He knew that a gorilla had but thirteen ribs where a man had fourteen. Nerve centers lay there, exposed between those ribs. Nerves which when struck could cause temporary paralysis.

A moan, partly of pain and partly of frustration escaped the animal's lips. It opened its mouth in an attempt to roar, but could only gasp and swallow.

It bent almost double as Masters

stepped back. Its fangs gnashed in rage. Here was something new. An animal which would not stand still. A thing fast as the wind of the jungle, swift as the lightning on the mountains towering over the veldt. It could not be grasped long enough to crush.

It was out in front one moment and the next it was behind, lashing out with those strange rag-wrapped clubs.

Masters was never still for a second now. To the right and left he danced, always watching those huge, hairy arms. Once again he stepped in as Samson moved forward, ungainly, terrible, but wide open. Masters caught the opening. He planned his blows—it was his only hope, for the gorilla, in main strength, far surpassed him.

His left lashed out and once again landed in that unprotected area below the breastbone. His right swung in a sweeping arc as Samson raised his head to howl with pain. His knuckles rasped across the gorilla's throat, almost tearing the flesh open at the animal's Adam's apple. The beast coughed and swallowed as if it were eating dried cacti. It stumbled forward, made one more futile attempt to wrap its arms around the Lone Eagle. Its long jaw stuck out unwittingly, making a perfect target.

Letting one of those wicked arms brush over his bent head, Masters brought his right up with every ounce of weight and power he had at his command.

The Lone Eagle felt his knuckles crash against that jaw, and was thankful that they had not struck those gnashing fangs.

Samson grunted. His reaction to the numbing pain was to rush at the man, blindly, furiously, but Masters only side-stepped and swung another right to the huge beast's sagging jaw. A third time he belted his right home and then swung his left with all his weight, catching the animal behind one of its small, hairy ears. It fell

forward and lay outstretched on the floor of the cage.*

As Masters stepped back the terrible tension under which he had been laboring began to take hold of his body. His knees seemed to be turning to jelly. He fought to control his nerves. His breath came in long, sobbing gasps. How long the battle had lasted he did not know. He had been oblivious to everything, even to the bombing which was still going on up above.

JUMPING over the unconscious brute Masters ran to the door. It was locked by a big padlock on the outside. He felt in his pockets and all he could find was a single cartridge. That was all. "I've got to get out," he panted. "Got to get von Schober before this beast comes to."

His sweeping, desperate glance fell upon a nail half pulled from a board in the floor just at the corner of the cage. He looked from the nail to the cartridge in his hand, and then to the padlock. He reached through the bars, and to his delight he found that the bullet would go into the keyhole of the big, old-fashioned lock.

He jammed it in, so that it rested at an angle. Then he reached for the nail.

Behind him he heard Samson stirring. Sweat poured from his face as he yanked at the nail. He tore the flesh on his already badly crippled hands, but he persisted and the nail finally came loose.

"Now," he gasped, as he tore one of his shoes off and held it by the toe. "We'll see. If this fails I'm licked."

Holding the point of the nail against the cartridge, pressing hard

* Feeling that some of the readers might question the ability of a man to knock out a gorilla, the Editors would like to refer readers to an article in the Connecticut *Nutmeg*, by Gene Tunney, retired Heavyweight Champion of the World. In this article Mr. Tunney states it as his firm conviction that a well trained and skilful boxer could put the great Gargantua of circus fame to rout.

He bases his opinion on the fact that a gorilla's muscles and bone structure are not suited to withstand the murderous blows of even a good heavy-weight boxer. Mr. Tunney also calls attention to the fact that a gorilla is a sluggish thinker, having only one idea in mind, and that the grasp of his opponent in his great arms.

so as to push the padlock tight against one of the steel bars, he brought the heel of his shoe down on the head. The padlock jumped out of his grasp as the cartridge let go inside. His fingers stung as the lead spattered around inside. A puff of smoke made him cough. But he didn't mind. He could feel that the lock was shot to pieces. He gave it a quick yank and it came away from the chain.

In a flash, Masters had the door open and was outside. He swung it to with a crash, just as Samson was struggling off the floor. He hoped that the beast was still too dazed to shake the bars and thus swing the unlocked door open.

HE rushed along the winding corridor. He passed through the big cavern where von Schober trained the baboons. And, in going through the next door, he ran into a surprised sentry.

He let fly with his fists, still wrapped in rags. The Hun went down with a choking sob. Even as he fell Masters snatched the rifle from his relaxing hands.

"Now I'm set," he panted. "Set for Samson or anybody."

He stopped. Just across the big cavern was a door. A door with a sign warning people to keep away because of danger of explosives.

"The bombs," he thought.

Swinging around, Masters made for the door. He was through it in a minute. And there by the light of a single lamp swaying from the ceiling he saw stack upon stack of bombs. His quick eyes surveyed the scene. There was another door at the end of a passageway. He rushed to that, opened it and to his surprise found that it twisted to a path leading to the forest.

Shutting the door, Masters rushed back to the bomb room. Working fast, he began to unscrew the safety devices on the detonators, letting the tiny propellers fall to the floor. When he had about half a dozen of the bombs

ready to let go at the slightest impact, he ran back to the door, threw it open and knelt at the entrance.

"Lord knows what's going to happen now," he muttered softly. "I may be on my way to Kingdom Come in a second, but it's the only way. Those birds are wasting their bombs on the woods instead of the knoll."

He brought the rifle to his shoulder and squinted along the barrel. The sights centered on the nose of a bomb right in the middle of the central rack. Then they rested steadily on the naked detonator.

"Well, here goes," he breathed, as he squeezed the trigger.

The rifle kicked back. Flame spat from its muzzle.

Just what happened next Masters was never quite sure. He felt himself lifted and thrown backward as if shot from a cannon. A sheet of flame seemed to be chasing after him, and when he stopped rolling he looked up in time to see the crest of the knoll bulge slightly and then settle back. Spruce trees cracked and bent, as they slid down the slope.

Another muffled explosion reached the Lone Eagle's aching ears, and once again the contour of the hill changed. Smoke began to curl upward from hundreds of fissures on the side of the knoll. The wind began to carry the smoke down across the long runway.

Scrambling to his feet as another explosion tore at the ground, the Lone Eagle started down the clearing toward the spot where he had left his plane.

Above him he could hear the Spads and Bristols circling over the spot where hell seemed to have erupted. And then the staccato chatter of Spandaus reached his ears. Black-crossed ships were thundering down out of the dawn on those Allied ships.

Finding his Spad intact, Masters ran to the prop. gave it a quick pull through and ducked under the wing, scrambling into the cockpit as the

ship began to move. He warmed the Hisso up as he taxied across the field to get into the wind, and then leaped into the air to join the fray.

Fokkers and Pfalz were milling around the Allied ships as Masters climbed. He saw a Spad go down, trailing a plume of black smoke. A second later a Fokker went down to keep it company. His eyes scanned the whirling planes, looking for just one ship. Von Schober had said that he was going to drive those bombers away. He must be up there with that hellish insignia painted on his green fuselage.

Barging into the fight, Masters scattered ships to the right and left with his blazing guns. He passed Warren, recognized his markings and waved.

"Good old Phil," he cried.

Warren signaled and pointed to a green Fokker circling the fringe of the battle. The Lone Eagle spotted it, motioned that he wanted that ship for his own, and went into a screaming bank.

"Von Schober's going to get his answer in a minute."

With a thunderous roar, Masters swept past the green Fokker. He saw the hideous gorilla head painted on the side. That was his ship, the ship he wanted. He half rolled, caught a position alongside of the green job and then throttled back to keep pace with von Schober's ship.

He noticed that von Schober seemed to be occupied with something on the other side of his cockpit, and for the moment was paying no attention to the Spad.

"I'll wake him up," grinned Masters, as he touched the trips.

Von Schober looked up with a start. He thought the battling ships were some distance away and had not noticed this gray Spad sweep up alongside of him. Then, as he recognized the features of the man in the Spad, his evil face went gray. His wicked mouth flew open in the shock of surprise.

The Lone Eagle pointed to the gorilla insignia and shook his head meaningly.

Von Schober, not only taken completely by surprise, but panic-stricken at seeing the man he had surely thought dead, tried to swing away. But Masters, expecting the move, had already banked and was pouring a burst into the green Fokker. He saw his slugs obliterate the grinning head of the gorilla. The fabric fluttered black and empty alongside of the cockpit.

VON SCHOBER threw one look toward Masters and then slumped forward against his safety belt. Blood trickled from his mouth and ran in a crooked line over his chin. The ugly features relaxed in death.

But despite the fact that von Schober had paid the penalty for his dastardly work, the Fokker still held its course, flying straight on into the rising sun.

As Masters looked he saw a head pop up over the fuselage from the other side of the cockpit.

"One of the baboons!" he cried in surprise, as the animal looked down at the dead form of the man who had treated his comrades of the jungle so cruelly, and then at Masters. There was a wistful look in the beast's dog-like face, as it crawled over the body of von Schober and then down on the lower wing nearest Masters.

"Poor devil," muttered Masters. "That bus is going to crash in a minute. Must have hopped on as von Schober took off."

He watched the baboon claw its way to the V struts, and then climb to the top wing, digging its claws through the fabric of the doomed ship before every step. At last it reached the extension on the top wing, where it clung, looking first as Masters and then back to the dead man in the cockpit.

Masters eased his ship over. The baboon straightened up and began to

eye the distance between the two planes.

"I believe the little devil wants to board me," smiled Masters. "Why not. One of his brothers, maybe this fellow himself, handed me the code. I owe him something."

He touched his rudder. His Spad slid closer to the Fokker with the dead man at the controls. He saw the baboon tense itself, as the distance lessened.

"I said I'd bring a baboon back," the Lone Eagle laughed, "and it sure looks as if I'm going to keep my promise."

A LITTLE more rudder and there was only a couple of feet between his wings and the Fokker's. The baboon curled up, and then unwound. It came across the narrow space with arms and legs outstretched. He saw them grasp convulsively at his outer strut and the bracing wires. For one wild second he thought the wind

would tear the beast away before he could throttle back. But it held fast, clinging to the strut with arms, fingers, teeth and legs.

As Masters banked away from the Spad, and started west to join Warren and the others, who had driven off the Huns and were on their way home, the Fokker reared up, stalled, fell off on one wing and went into a swift spin with motor full on.

The baboon glanced at Masters in apparent wonder at the strange action of the ship it had just left. It looked over the leading edge at the wild gyrations of the Fokker. It followed every swing until the green ship finally dug into the ground, spreading flame and debris in all directions.

Then it pulled itself back and looked at the Lone Eagle.

The Lone Eagle grinned. "Maybe I'll take you along, fellow," he said, "when Phil, Pierre and I dine at Maxims. We'll all take turns at feeding you bananas."

A SINISTER MYSTERY OF HUN U-BOATS

IN

VULTURES OF DOOM

*A Complete Book-Length Novel Featuring JOHN MASTERS
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World War Model Planes

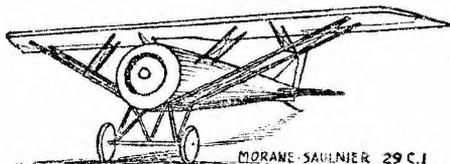
A Department of Accurate Brand-New Plans

HOW TO BUILD THE MORANE-SAULNIER 29 C.1

THE Morane-Saulnier 29 C.1 will be an interesting one for model builders to construct. It is simple in line and mass. The fuselage can be constructed as though it was a series of hoops, all cross sections being absolutely round. This is where a lathe would come in mighty handy. Even a roughly constructed

poor landing. Another Morane-Saulnier of identical construction even to the smallest detail was designated as the 27 C.1. The only difference was that the 27 C.1 carried only one machine gun while the 29 C.1 carried two.

Struts L, M, N and O are hidden when looking at the side view or elevation plans but from the front view and the small perspective drawing you can readily visualize the construction.



gadget to hold the two ends of the fuselage block that would allow it to be turned by hand would help tremendously. We'll give you some dope on this hunch later on in the article.

One of the early Morane-Saulniers had the distinction of having the first machine gun mounted so that it shot through the propeller. It was not synchronized to fire through the gaps between the blades but the blades were protected with metal plates so that when a stray bullet smacked it the bullet would be deflected.

A French aviator, Roland Garros, invented this clever arrangement, and went out and raised the devil with the German airmen, but Garros had the misfortune to be shot down behind German lines and the secret was out.

In no time Anthony Fokker was commissioned by the Boche big wings to improve on Garros' invention. This he did in short order and the synchronized machine gun came into being. It is interesting to note that Garros picked the Morane-Saulnier from all the available French scout planes for his experiment.

The Morane-Saulnier 29 C.1 is called a parasol monoplane in that the wing is raised above the fuselage by bracing members. The bracing is similar to numerous planes of modern times. The tricky undercarriage bracing came in mighty handy when additional strength was needed for a

SPECIFICATIONS

Span 26 ft. 7 in.
Overall length 17 ft. 5 in.
Chord of wing 3 ft. 9 in.

Engine:

160 horse power Monocoupape Gnome

GENERAL HINTS ON CONSTRUCTION

For the strongest possible construction of the wing we would advise you to make it in one piece. If that seems too much of a problem or your supply of wood is limited you can construct the wing in two pieces and join in the center with a good glue joint.

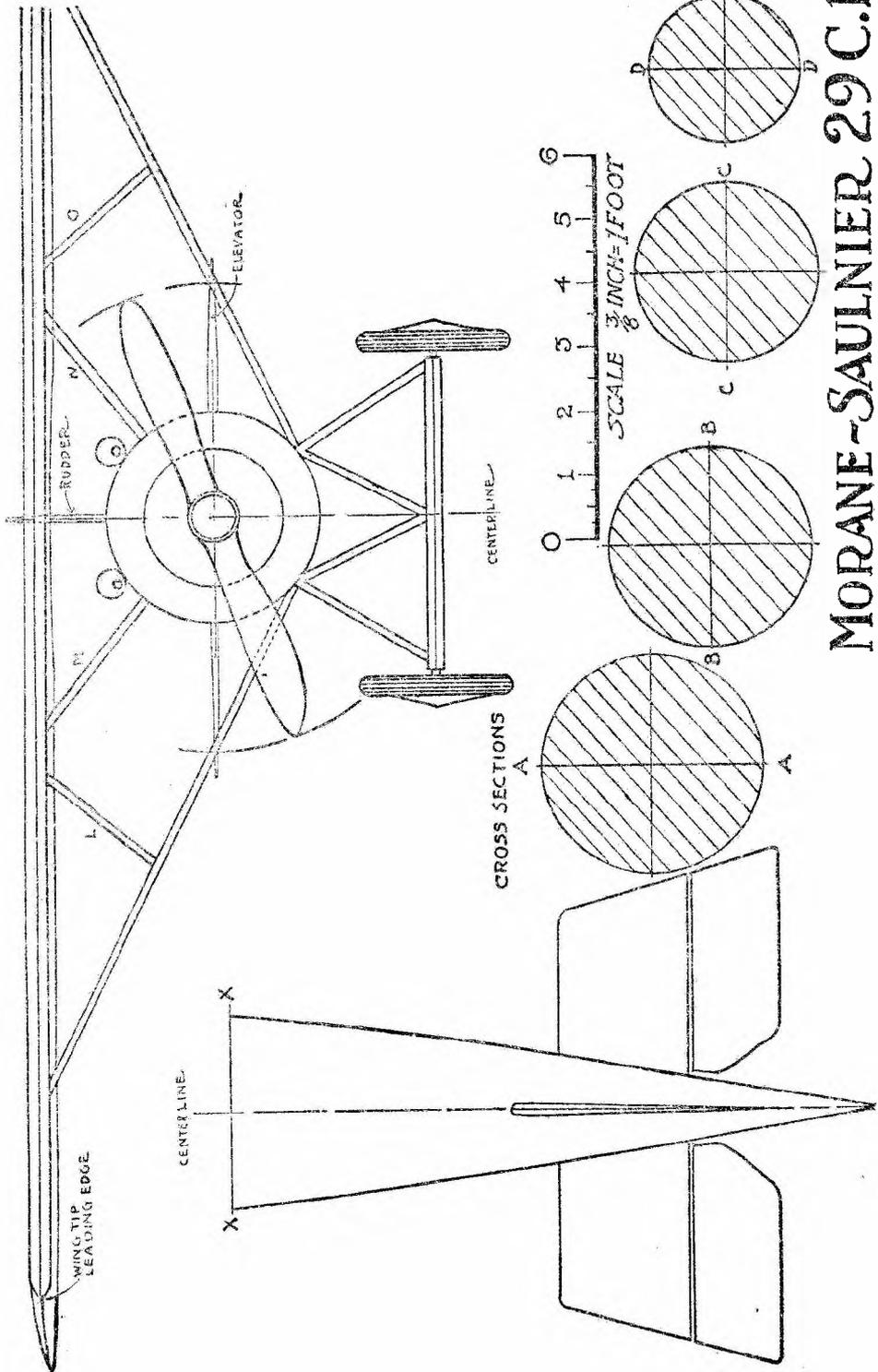
Make the fuselage and nose construction in one piece, getting all cross sections as round as possible.

The long bracing struts running from the bottom of the fuselage far out to the outer part of the wings should be very broad and flat. Struts L, M, N and O should be slightly smaller in all dimensions. The undercarriage struts are about the same weight as these struts.

Tail assembly should be constructed separately and cemented to the job after wing and fuselage have been carefully joined together.

The hardest part of your job will be to get all the struts their proper lengths and in exact relation to each other. To do this successfully it will be necessary to make them in series, making all slightly longer than necessary. Take each group of equal struts and sand all ends at one end of group. Lay that end on table and tap until they are all flush. Without removing your hand turn them around and sand the other ends to the exact length desired.

In this way you get absolutely correct measurements and there is no reason that your job shouldn't look perfectly true from any angle when completed. [Turn to p. 72]



MORANE-SAULNIER 29 C.1

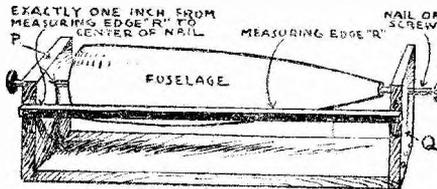
WING

If you make the wing in one piece measure from the extreme forward point at the center of wing to an imaginary line drawn from one trailing edge wing tip to the other. Allow about a quarter of an inch extra for sanding the finished edges. You now have a piece of balsa or soft pine in the shape of an oblong. Carefully draw or trace on this block the exact wing shape and cut out, leaving an eighth of an inch extra all around. Now shape your wing for curve from leading edge to trailing edge. When you are satisfied it is okay, lay a sanding block on the edge of a table and rub wing edges against sand paper, holding wing firmly and at same angle through all movements. It is better to rub wing against sand block than to rub sand block against wing. You will get a straighter edge.

Finally give a round edge to leading edge by cupping a piece of sandpaper around balsa and rubbing gently back and forth. Ailerons can be indicated by drawing on wood with blunt point or by actually cutting out ailerons and fitting them back with thin tin hinges or pins. That part is up to you.

FUSELAGE

In making the fuselage you have a problem of getting all outer edges at a given cross section equidistant from an imaginary line running through the center of the block of wood you are working with. You can't get in to the center of the block to



measure from, so you have to establish a measuring line parallel to the center line of the block. Sounds complicated, but don't be scared. Look at the small drawing in the text.

Notice that you can measure in to the block from the string of wood fastened to the ends of the braces P and Q. A couple of nails or screws centered through braces P and Q will hold the roughly shaped fuselage in position and still allow you to keep revolving it as you do your shaping. You can take a sharp razor blade and pull it toward you along the length of the block and slowly get the fuselage into a general round shape. Note in the drawing of the book-endlike holding gadget that the measuring brace "R" is exactly one inch from the center screws or nails. Now look at drawing cross section "C"; you will note that the outer edge is one half inch from the center.

So if you cut down your fuselage block at this point till it is exactly one half inch from the measuring edge "R" your fuselage will be the right thickness. Now take another cross section, cross section "A." You will find this one measures a little over five-eighths of an inch from the center to the outside edge. That leaves you three-eighths of an inch to measure back from measuring edge "R."

We think that now you can readily see that this simple device is a mechanical help in keeping your fuselage lined up and at the same time getting it approximately round. Your block of wood should be a half an inch or more longer than the finished fuselage at each end so that you can cut off the waste at either end after the job is finished.

You will find that the screws or nails will become loose as you work on the fuselage. Tighten them from time to time, trying not to get the job out of line. Of course as you work back to the rear end of the job it will be too thin to shape on the braces. Shape this part after removing finished fuselage from braces.

In making future models you will find this bracing contraption will help you to shape a round nose that you want to fit on a model that has more or less square body.

ASSEMBLY

Jack up the wing until it is exactly level, looking at it from in front. Tilt the trailing edge down in back until it has the right angle when looking at it from the side. This can be done by laying blocks of wood or books under either end of wing. Now do the same stunt with fuselage, getting it in its correct location in relation to the wing. Tie or clamp the fuselage in position so that it cannot move. Take your big struts and cement to lower part of fuselage and to wings. Now fit in the four pairs of struts marked L, M, N and O and cement into position. Anchor undercarriage into place by cementing struts into place in the same manner in which you did the wing to the fuselage. Now you are ready to cement on the tail. This will be simple after you have licked the wing and the undercarriage.

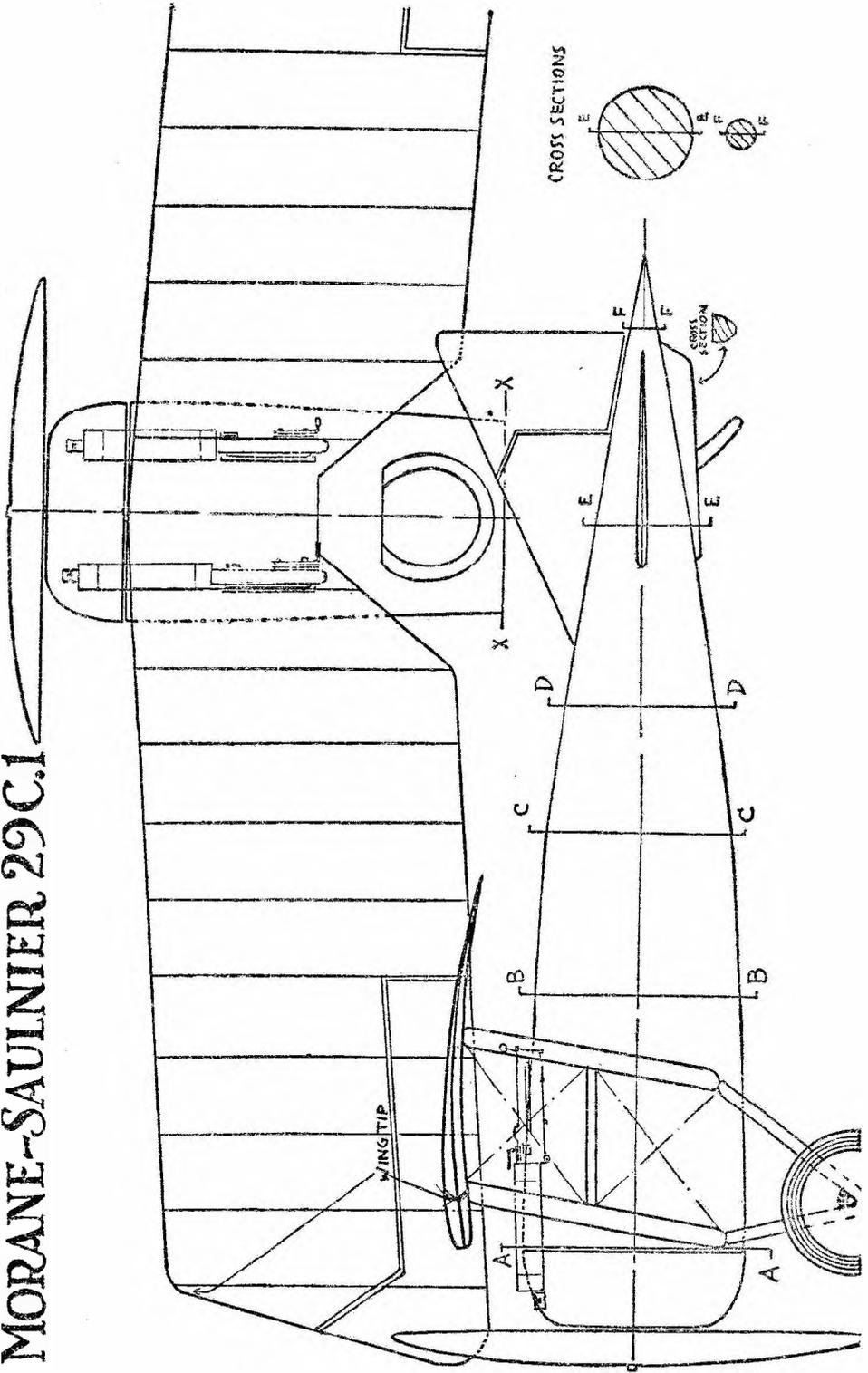
PAINTING

Painting will follow the same procedure as in former models. For you newcomers we'll suggest that you use plenty of liquid wood filler before painting. This keeps the paint from sinking in and losing its luster.

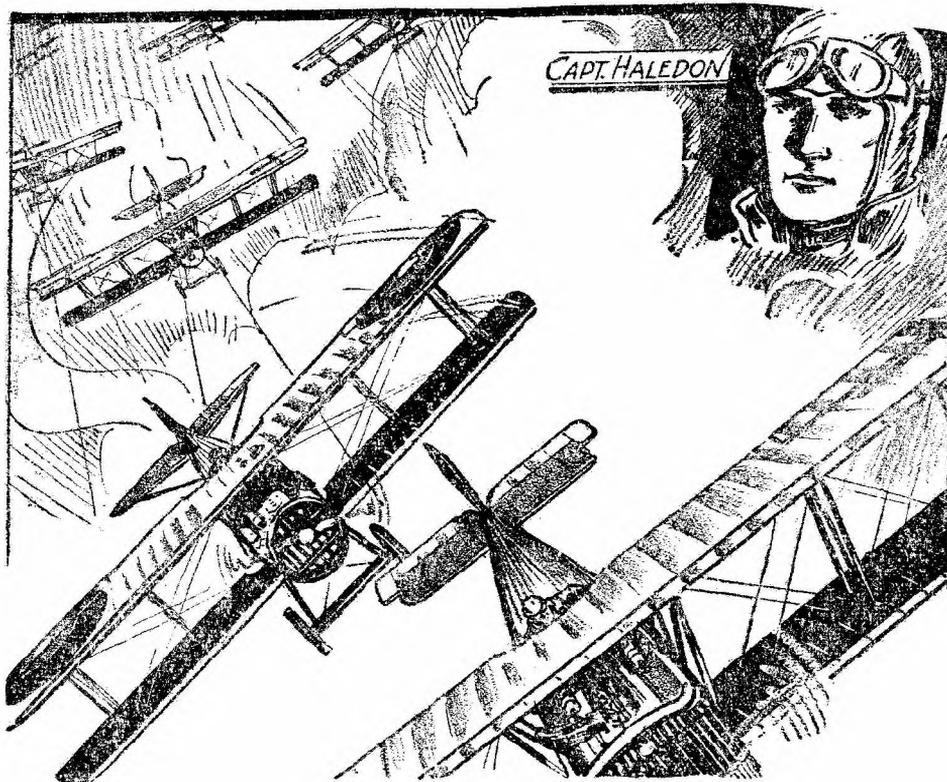
As far as we know this is the first time any plans have ever appeared for model makers for the Moraine-Saulnier 29 C.1. We hope you like them and that you'll get out a swell job.

Next Issue: How to Build the FOKKER TRIPLANE DR. 1.

MORANE-SAULNIER 29C.1



PFALZ HOPE



Down roared the Vee-wedge of Pfalz ships

Here's How Hunch Haledon Was Cannonaded into Triple-Barreled Action on the Ace Route!

By ARCH WHITEHOUSE

Author of "Wings of the Lancer," "The Hun Hunter," etc.

"BUMP" MCGUIRE was sentry on the four-to-six trick that night and Bump "thought" he had heard something but was not sure. Bump was being cagy. They weren't playing any more tricks on him after that Hallowe'en ghost business nearly a year before. Since they'd pulled that one on him down at Le Mans Bump was not call-

ing out the guard unless at least one brigade of the Prussian Guard started drilling on the field. And he wasn't waking up Captain Haledon for something he "might" have heard. Not any. Every man in the squadron knew "Hunch" Haledon too well for that.

If anybody was going to have hunches the captain was going to at-

tend to that little thing for C Flight of Squadron 84 himself.

Sleepy guards see strange things in the dawn after a night of pacing around the Besseneau hangars. They hear all sorts of things, for the wind makes the guy-wires whistle and the girders creak and the canvas flap. They try to stay awake, but by 6 a. m. they're so tired that the only reason they don't go to sleep is that they're afraid someone will come along and shoot them.

They couldn't blame Bump McGuire for that Pfalz.

Still, there it was by the dawn's early light, when Corporal Purvis came around. And "Tubby" Sprigg, for one, swears to this day that the engine was still warm when he first put his hand on it, just to make sure he wasn't seeing things.

Bright and shiny, it stood out there in the middle of the field. A brand new German Pfalz, with straight-sided crosses, double-N struts and a 180 Mercedes that had not had its paint burned off. A beaut from prop to rudder.

The corporal spotted it first when he was marching Pat Grimes around to relieve Bump. They were doing guard duty with sidearms then, or the corporal would have taken a shot at it from prone position. As it was, all he could do was to draw his Colt and yell at Bump.

"Here — by Post Three, Corp!" Bump yelled in reply. "Time for relief, ain't it?"

"What's that out there, McGuire?" the corporal bellowed.

BUMP saw it, struggled to get his gun out of his hip holster, and almost shot his foot off. The report echoed across the field and the guard turned out.

Someone fired four shots at the Pfalz, but it never moved.

"What the hell's all the racket?" demanded Captain Haledon, coming out of nowhere.

Haledon never did sleep late, anyway. And he had plenty to keep him awake. C Flight was no dose of bromide in any war. The first shot had brought him out of his hut at a canter.

"There's a Jerry plane out there, Captain," the corporal barked. "What about it?"

"*What* about it?" demanded Haledon. "When did it land? Where's the pilot, and what's it doing there anyway?"

One question at a time was usually all the corporal could handle. Two made him dizzy. Four left him speechless with his Colt hanging by the trigger guard from his horny forefinger.

Captain Haledon led the way gingerly out toward the plane. He deployed to one side to be out of the line of fire, in case someone started firing.

From an angle they could see the curved cut out of the cockpit, but no pilot.

"The damn thing's empty!" he barked. "The guy got away. Where were you, Corporal?"

"I just seen it," the corporal mumbled. "McGuire was on guard duty and didn't see it at all till just now. Then he tried to shoot it."

Haledon grabbed the corporal's gun and moved forward cautiously. The rest of the guard padded as cautiously behind him.

The Pfalz was empty. Not a soul in the cockpit even after Haledon had gingerly tiptoed to the dew-dripping plane to peep over the edge of the combing.

But—

Yes, there was something there. Hunch Haledon's hand caught it as he reached up to peer in. A string looped around the handle of a hand pressure pump hung over the edge of the leather combing. Haledon's fingers followed the cord until it reached a card hanging outside. He drew the card up to the dim morning light and

there in bold Teutonic script was written:

Presented to
CAPTAIN HALEDON
No. 84 Squadron
American Air Service

In Token of Our Appreciation of His Good Will and Continued Efforts to Get a Hun. Such Persistence Should Be Suitably Rewarded.

From the Pilot Officers
Jagdstaffel 15 German Air Service

Haledon had to read it twice before he fully sensed the biting sarcasm of the message. Then with a stifled oath he ripped the card from the string, folded it once and shoved it under his arm.

"What's that mean, Captain?" the corporal asked. "Does it mean they give it to yer?"

"Shut up!" growled Haledon. "Put those guns away and roll this thing into my hangar. We'll see who has persistence. Get your backs into it!"

The guard detail, jaws hanging like wet tailboards, blinked from the corporal down, then hoisted the kidney tail of the Pfalz and began the slow march toward the hangar. Haledon stalked on in front, internally boiling and creating enough B.T.U.s to fire a decent sized donkey engine.

It wasn't his fault that he had not scored in the two months he had been on the Front. It was not his fault he had been made a captain in three weeks. Such a break would have been different, too, if he'd been anyone else. But he was Hunch Haledon, of the Back Bay Haledons, and he couldn't help that, either.

He had not been a football star at Yale, but he had given Marty Trinkler, the welterweight champion, a thorough trouncing on the dance floor of the Vanity Casino the night the United States had declared war on Germany. You can't duck publicity on a thing like that.

Hunch Haledon had never made a homer in the ninth with three on base, either, but he had risked his

life in his father's munitions factory. He had hurled himself on a bomb tossed near a magazine and had managed to chew the burning fuse away before it could ignite the detonator and blow half of Fall River into Narraganset Bay. More publicity Hunch Haledon didn't want.

The result, of course, was inevitable. He'd been a marked man from the day he signed up with the Air Service. Hunch Haledon had been news the minute he went solo, flash news the minute he put up his bars and front page news the day the old *Carmania* warped out of her pier.

"I'm not so good," Haledon had tried to explain, the day he sailed. "Plenty of the boys here have better flying school records than mine. Hell, I had more than fifteen hours of dual before I went solo. Plenty of them pulled a three-pointer with less than ten."

But the papers had only intimated that Hunch was being modest. Wait until he got to the Front. The world would hear from him.

"Don't make it too tough for me," Haledon had pleaded. "I'm just lucky—and play my hunches."

And naturally the papers ate that one up. Young Haledon had already shown plenty. Just wait until he started playing them on Heinie.

HALEDON was remembering this as he strode toward the hangar. He was still reflecting bitterly on it when they shoved the German Pfalz into the corner where Hank Blain's Spad had stood the day before. Hank's Spad, a flamer, had been traded for a brand new Pfalz! That griped Haledon. He ordered a special guard placed on the Pfalz, then hurried to the mess hall.

The gang was trickling in, weary and war-worn. The major was at the head of the top table playing with a soft-boiled egg.

"That's what we get for decorat-

ing our ships up," he said sourly. "Why do I have to be a marked man in this damned war?"

The major left his spoon in the egg-shell, stared at the card a minute, then glanced up at Haledon questioningly.

"A Pfalz!" barked Haledon. "A brand new Jerry Pfalz left out on our field—for me! How it got there, no one knows. None of the guard saw it land. But there it was when dawn came."

"And so Skipper Haledon of C Flight has got a Hun at last!" said "Brick" Bradshaw of A Flight.

THE major was quick, but not quick enough. Bradshaw felt a 9-point-2 explode on his chin and he wound up under the engine crate that was subbing as a serving table.

"Haledon! Captain Haledon!" the major said, raising. "Save your efforts in that manner for the enemy. Now let's get this straight. I understand you to say that a brand new German Pfalz has been presented to you, left on our field. It carried this very neat presentation card?"

"Yes, sir," said Haledon, rubbing his knuckles.

"Amazing! Extraordinary!" The major sat down abruptly, reaching for his egg spoon. "Could it be a joke?"

From the rumble of muffled conversation that came from the other tables, the red-faced Haledon knew that if it were a joke, it was on him.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" the major finally asked, his egg spoon held halfway between his ruddy face and the table. "You've got to do something about it, you know."

"I'll do something," Haledon promised grimly. Then turning to the orderly he growled: "Get me some breakfast."

He sat there, his arms folded on the table, directing blazing glances at the others. They ignored his de-

fiant gaze and displayed amazing interest in oatmeal which was being sweetened with marmalade. They all knew Hunch Haledon. He was daring them to make one crack.

But he knew what they were thinking, too. What was the use in ignoring facts? He knew they had expected much of him, and that as far as getting Huns was concerned, he had let them down. He had been a good leader. He had kept them out of trouble. He had enabled every other member of C Flight to get Huns. And until Hank Blain had gone down yesterday, he had not lost a man.

None of the others could say that. The leaders got the Huns and the kids went West. Pot-hunters, glory-chasers, grandstanders, they were getting the squadron a licking.

His stomach muscles constricted as his breakfast was placed before him. Even the coffee nauseated him. He wasn't hungry, but he had to go through the motions, to play his part. The others were wandering up to the top table in twos and threes to read the scourging presentation card. He could tell by the flickering muscles at the upper part of their jaws, the efforts they were making to keep from laughing aloud.

He dared them to laugh!

But outside, they were laughing. He knew it. He could hear them.

One by one everybody left the mess. The major got up, folded his glasses and carefully put them away in his breast pocket beneath a row of ribbons, none of which indicated that he had ever fired a shot or drawn a sabre in anger. His footsteps resounded along the floor. There were no other footsteps. Hunch Haledon was alone. Alone with his soul and, as George Eliot has said, the human soul is hospitable, and will entertain conflicting sentiments and contradictory opinions with much impartiality.

"Two strikes on me to start," he

muttered as he played with the oatmeal. "I came out here like any other American to do my bit as best I could. What the hell do they want me to do—turn out to be a Billy Bishop in two weeks?"

He dreaded derision. He knew what it could do. So far he had held his flight together—until Hank Blain went. If they should lose confidence in him now, no telling how many more might go. That was the worst of it.

"I could turn in my captaincy and let someone else take the streamers," he thought glumly. "Then I could devote my time to getting Huns. I'll get Huns, if that's what they want—damn them!"

There were footsteps again, but Haledon stared ahead at the blank wall. Just the orderly coming in to clear up, probably. Well, he could wait. Nothing to go out for, anyway. Only to get the gibes and rattling of Brick Bradford and his mob.

A CHAIR rasped on the floor next to him and someone sat down—lightly. Haledon turned his head further away and stared at the wall at the typewritten details on "Advice to Pilots on Being Taken Prisoner." Cheerful stuff that.

There were more footsteps and the clatter of another breakfast. More rancid coffee smell, that made Haledon sick. The orderly's footsteps clunked down the mess hall floor, and the door creaked and crashed.

Outside the six ships of B Flight took off on another patrol, to engage the Pfalz of *Jagdstaffel* 15.

"Can I go with you this afternoon, Captain?" a voice beside Haledon asked.

"You can go to hell, for all I care," rasped Haledon, without turning.

"Yes, sir," the voice replied. "But before I do, I'd like to get a Hun, like the one you got. I saw it out there in the hangar. They told me it was yours."

Haledon started to turn angrily, but checked himself. The voice was new, strange, youthful. He had never heard it before.

"I just came up, you know," the voice was going on. "Just reported to the major. He sent me in here for my breakfast. Told me you were in here. I'm to be in your flight. A replacement."

"That's too bad," Haledon growled, working hard to maintain his aloofness.

"Oh no," the voice said. "I'm delighted. I always wanted to get with you. I'd read all about you long before I came over. Now, here I am! I never thought I'd have this luck."

"My God! What is this?" Haledon ranted, finally turning around.

"Just me. I'm Second Lieutenant Worth. They call me 'Sonny' Worth. That is, my sister has always called me Sonny and somehow, it has stuck. My real name is Gerard Langdon Worth, but I guess Sonny is better, eh?"

"It sure is," growled Haledon. "How old are you? I'll bet you lied to get in."

"Maybe. But you won't give me away, will you?"

Haledon stared at the youngster. He was brand new. Pathetically new. New blouse, new bar, new belt, new boots and new breeches.

"What the hell were your parents thinking of to let you come over here?" Haledon growled. "Don't they know there's a war on?"

"No. . . . Er, you see, they're both dead. Just Sis and I left, and she couldn't come."

The pangs of remorse were sharper shafted than the bitterness that had consumed Haledon minutes before.

"Sorry," he mumbled. "Pretty crude of me. Please forget it."

"That's all right. Gee, it's great to get a good start, like this, isn't it?"

"I hope so. And you're assigned to C Flight? Let's see your book."

The youth, his eyes agleam, his

hair a turbulent thatch of reddish gold, flipped open his breast pocket and drew out his log-book. Haledon, glad to evade those eyes, studied the test marks with interest.

"Damn good, according to this. You certainly can shoot, if this means anything. I hope you can fly."

"Of course I can," answered the youth, amazed at the question. "You come up with me, and I'll show you."

IT was Haledon's turn to be startled now. He stared at young Worth for several minutes, then handed back the book. He bit his lip once, turned away and his mind went back to the Pfalz.

"I'll do it," the lad said suddenly.

"What?"

"What you're thinking about. You want me to go up and dog-fight you, don't you? You think I can't fly, eh? That's fair enough. I don't blame you. If I were Captain Haledon, I'd want to know what my replacements can do, too."

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute!" said Haledon. "Let me think. I'm getting a hunch."

The youngster returned to his toast and coffee. For minutes the C Flight skipper tormented himself with an idea.

"Look here," he said finally, "how would you like to fly my Spad?"

"Fly your Spad? You mean it? The one with the hunched-up bulldog on the side? You mean it, Captain?"

"Sure! That bulldog business was the major's idea. It meant something to him. Something about a Yale bulldog. A fighting insignia, I guess he meant it to be. I don't know."

Haledon's mind was clicking like the rocker arms of a 230 Hisso now. He was planning to play the biggest hunch of his career. If only the kid would go for it. His book read well enough. . . .

"I won't crack it up for you, Cap-

tain," young Worth was saying for the third time. That brought Haledon out of his reverie.

"I'm not afraid of that, kid. I'm not afraid of you. Come on, gulp that java down and let's go. Where's your stuff?"

"I'm in your shack. The middle cubicle. My stuff has been put in there, anyway."

"Okay! Come on, let's get going." Haledon glanced out the windows. "Now look here. We're doing this on our own. Say nothing to anyone. Just get your helmet and goggles, a Sidcot suit if you have one, or a short flying jacket. That's all you'll need."

"I understand." But the youngster was a little puzzled. "You don't want anyone to know?"

"I'm going to try something new in starting replacements. If it works, okay. If not, we can forget about it. See?"

"I see," young Worth said thoughtfully. "But I can fly your Spad?"

"That's right. You fly my Spad and I—I'll fly the Pfalz."

Young Worth stood stockstill in his tracks. "You mean, you'll fly that German plane and dog-fight with me?"

"Sure. It will make it more realistic for you. It will give you a good idea of what the Pfalz can do in the air—without taking any chances."

"But suppose some other Yanks see you in the air. Won't they think you're a—"

"No. If I'm flying with you like this, they'll realize what we're doing, and if they do come down on me, you can signal them off. Understand?"

"Let's go," said Worth with an air of resignation. "I'll leave it to you. I guess you're taking the chances, not me."

He stopped, just as they were entering the door of the shack.

"Captain Haledon," he said, "just

what does it feel like to be an ace?"

Hunch Haledon laughed shortly. "I wouldn't know, Worth. But we'll find out—sometime today."

Ten minutes later Haledon and his new replacement appeared through a slit in C Flight's Besseneau. They had evaded a meeting with the major by taking a circuitous route past the cookhouse, past the sick-bay, and making a quick dash across the driveway that separated the hangars from the living quarters.

ORDERS were given quietly to the Flight sergeant and Haledon's Spad was wheeled out. The Hisso was started and warmed up while the skipper inspected and checked the Pfalz. The stick was ungainly and the controls heavier than those of his own Spad, but beyond that, it appeared normal. An armorer-sergeant was consulted on the Fokker gun-gear, and Haledon was shown how the gun was loaded, stop-pages cleared and the position of the lever which set the gear in action.

"Is she fueled?" Haledon asked.

"Fueled? Yes, sir. Why?"

"I'm going to fly her. Run her out."

"But you can't fly her with those markings. Wait until we paint them out."

"No. I'm flying her as she is. Leave them on."

"But you're taking an awful chance, sir," remonstrated the Flight sergeant meekly.

"Sure, I know. I'm likely to be shot down by my own men, or if I am shot down in Germany, I can be stuck up against a wall and given a bandage for my eyes. But I've got a hunch, Sergeant. I've got a hunch."

He went out to young Worth and told him to particularly take notice of the white flippers on his tail—just in case.

"We might as well play safe," he said. "In case we should run into

any other Pfalzes. This Pfalz has two white flippers, which is its own especial marking. Remember that, along with everything else they have taught you. Now buzz off and I'll meet you at fifteen hundred over the field in a few minutes. After that, follow me."

The kid took the Spad off in grand style. A neat pick-up of the engine, a steady lifting of the tail and a straight run full into the wind. He hoiked beautifully over the stone wall, made a climbing turn that could not be improved upon, then settled into a steady, careful climb for altitude.

"He'll do," Haledon murmured.

In five minutes a blustering major fumed and stamped onto the tarmac of C Flight's hangar, screaming his orders to Hunch Haledon who was thumping the wheels of a German Pfalz off the uneven turf of the field. But uselessly.

The Pfalz climbed well and Haledon had no trouble in discovering all her quirks in a few circuits of the field. He caught up with the kid at fifteen hundred, then gave a signal to fly east toward Guyencourt where the line twisted around the canal at Berry-au-Bac.

"He'll wonder what this is all about, I suppose," reflected Hunch Haledon, "but it wouldn't do to tell him too much. He'd think I was nuts. I guess I am."

Together they climbed as they headed into the early morning sun. The captain signaled young Worth in closer and he came up and stuffed his wing tip just above and behind the two white flippers. Haledon nodded and pointed east again.

Haledon checked everything ahead. He spotted B Flight's Spads doing a routine show well north of Guyencourt and so turned slightly south-east toward Apremont and the Foret d'Argonne. It was in that sheltered corner of the forest south of the Retourne River that the Pfalz pilots

of *Jadstaffel* 15 lived in the comparative lap of luxury.

Haledon forgot the kid while he fumed about the trick that had been played on him. He wondered how they had placed that Pfalz there without anyone hearing or seeing it. He wondered how they knew *his* name in spite of all the publicity he had received; wondered how they knew he had failed to get Huns. True, his ship had been carefully marked, at the major's orders, but that did not sufficiently explain things.

What, he mused, was the Worth kid thinking by now. Did he realize what was up? What direction they were flying, or just what was in Haledon's mind?

He decided to play his luck for a few more miles and hoped that young Worth had not spotted the Yank balloon lines below, nor the tracery of trenches that made a black lace embroidery design out of Bermicourt and ran toward the Suippe. He hoped. . . .

A WHITE BLOB of smoke blossomed in front of them and Hunch Haledon turned to evade it. Young Worth should be wondering plenty now.

Bong!

A black blob this time. Fritz was getting worried, too.

Bong! Bong!

A white blob, then a black one.

Haledon turned, nodded to Worth, and gave the signal to open up and start the dog-fighting business.

The kid drew away and Haledon shot in deeper toward the green carpet of the Argonne. He turned once and let the kid come down on him. The Spad hurtled at the Pfalz, held the line and Haledon could see Worth, his head glued to the rubber eye-piece of the Aldis sight.

"That's the stuff!" Haledon muttered. "Now try me again!"

The Spad cleared and went up

again. Haledon eased around and worked his way further east. The kid came down once more and Haledon put the Pfalz into a tight spiral. The kid missed and went out wide, and Haledon smiled.

"You came in too fast. Don't hang on to that sight too long. You'll fly through someone that way. It gets 'em down, but you never get over it."

The kid came in again and he was hot. There was no mistaking that. Haledon was thankful Worth was not pressing his triggers.

He hoiked again and flew into a splutter of white and black blobs. All around them Archie bursts were decorating the blue sky with bulbous rosettes of smoke.

"Any minute, now!" Haledon muttered, watching the sky like a hawk.

The kid came at him, swished over his plane with inches to spare and Hunch Haledon zoomed up, let her fall off, and kicked her into a spin. The Pfalz went down, with the kid following Haledon down, according to plan. The Worth kid was certainly sticking to the rules.

"Come on, you Jerry mutts!" breathed Haledon. "Where are you? Does nothing work in this game? I've tried careful maneuvers, smashing attacks, long range gunnery and mass smashes, but nothing works for me. I just can't get Huns."

Then it all blew up in his face!

He looked back and saw the kid still following him down—with a Vee-wedge of green Pfalz ships dead behind him.

"Holy Moses!" he gasped. "It worked!"

He neutralized everything, then hoiked hard as he pulled out. The Pfalz whipped out of it and stood on her tail. The kid followed him around but a little gingerly, so that Haledon was able to continue the curl and with an extra burst of throttle, whanged her into a roll at the top of a loop and came out, his

nose dead on an amazed Pfalz leader.

Hunch Haledon pressed the double aluminum triggers in the oval handle of the Jerry joy stick. The two Spandau guns opened sluggishly, then warmed up to a raging bellow.

The leader took the first burst full amidships and collapsed under a terrible welter of lead. A quick press on his left pedal and he drew the double guns of the Pfalz across the face of the formation. They spoke, chattered and screamed.

The Pfalz formation nosed down—after the Spad which was circling tight below. Haledon started the first ten words of the only prayer he knew and watched the kid continue the game.

The Spad, below, jerked hard in a flat turn and the five Pfalzes, hampered by a tight formation, swept past him with a roar. Haledon bore after them, the throttle all the way up the quadrant.

His guns chattered again, and another took the full force of the burst and waggled its tail assembly away. Something swished past him in flames, and Haledon recognized the markings of the leader.

He spotted it clear and then something yellow, with a bulldog insignia on the side, slashed across his sights and poured a burst into a sub-leader.

“GET out of there!” roared Haledon. “You keep *playing* at dogfight.”

But the kid had scored and the thrill of victory was in him. He was in and out like a bobbin, taking snapshots at everything—unless it had white flippers. The sub-leader, a black-helmeted giant, was trying to raise himself clear of a burning cockpit. He twisted in his seat, clawed his way to the back of the fuselage dome and hung there for several seconds. The stricken Pfalz rolled over gently, and the black giant fell away, clutching and clawing at nothing.

“What a finish!” gasped Haledon. “Well, it’s either them or us. Here goes!”

The white-flipped Pfalz bashed into two more with forking bursts of fire. The Spad came across from nowhere again and tried to get in a shot, but Haledon hipped Worth out and finished his own job. Two more Pfalz ships took a wicked beating, lost all control and smashed into each other.

“Poor devils!” Haledon muttered. “They can’t figure who is who. They try to concentrate on the Spad and find a Pfalz slapping it to them and they haven’t figured out which is which. Still, all’s fair in love and . . . teaching our young Mr. Worth.”

Only two were left now, floundering about over the Argonne. Haledon knew he and Worth had to work fast. He slammed at one Pfalz that was trying to bring its nose around. His burst took out most of the center-section struts. A wing flapped up like a huge lid, folded over and left the fuselage with a naked look. Young Worth raged in and threw a burst at it but Haledon was greedy by now. He edged him out, nosed down and poured slugs at the wavering Jerry.

As he screwed out of the dive to find the last enemy, there was a sepulchral creak below and the Pfalz broke in two and dropped away, throwing wings, struts and chunks of painted plywood in all directions.

“Now then, Mr. Worth! To one side, while an ace finishes his job!”

The kid waved to him from off his wing tip and Haledon nodded. Then he pointed at the lone Hun and Sonny Worth took up the signal.

Haledon rammed the throttle up, flew on straight while the kid in the bulldog-marked Spad nosed down at the retreating Jerry. The heavy-nosed Spad caught him in a few seconds and young Worth eased back on the stick and rammed two jetting bursts up at the Pfalz.

The Jerry seeing two forks of tracer prodding up from somewhere under his wheels, instinctively jerked back on the stick. The Pfalz went up, stood on its tail, wavered an instant and gave Haledon his perfect shot.

He was calm, icy calm, as he wheeled his own Pfalz into position. A black blob belched out off his flippers, but he never flinched. He drew the perfect bead and pressed the two aluminum triggers.

"Such persistence should be suitably rewarded," he muttered.

The Pfalz in front of him took two sprays of death and slid through the wing-root connections. The white panels with their black crosses dangled lonesome like a giant, gasping gull, then gave up the ghost and fluttered away, flipping edge over edge toward the green patch of spongy green below.

The stripped fuselage with its cargo of death swirled as the elevators tried bravely to steady the dive. With a final growl of defeat the Mercedes took the aerial bit, snarled into full control and took the fabric and spruce coffin to its destiny.

"That's all, Mr. Worth," muttered Hunch Haledon. "You've had your first lesson. Now let's try getting back."

When they had joined forces again Haledon was repeating to himself:

"Five and one. Five for me and one for you, Mr. Worth. Mr. Sonny Worth, eh? It should be spelled S-u-n-n-y, kid. You certainly brought some sunshine into my life."

Then his eyes narrowed into slits. He peered ahead—and gulped. He glanced back hopelessly, wondering if young Worth would be equal to the occasion.

"Stick with me, kid," he breathed as he nosed down and shot for the battered fortress of Brimont.

Ahead hung three winged wedges of woe. Two flights of Spads. Above them, a flight of silver Nieuports.

"Sit over me kid! Don't let them get at me."

He twisted in his seat and turned to look for young Worth. But he was nowhere to be seen!

"What the—" he croaked. "Where the—"

Then a shadow passed across the instruments of his cockpit. He looked up. There not six feet above his head dangled the knock-kneed undercarriage of his own Spad.

The kid had "sat over" him with a vengeance.

"Cripes!" muttered Hunch Haledon. But he grinned just the same.

THE Spads came up, deployed carefully and split up. The planes of A and B Flights. What the devil were they up to?

He glanced back under the tail-skid of the Spad sitting above him and saw the Nieuports in perfect formation directly behind him. A Flight with Brick Bradshaw up front, was on his right now; in tight. B, with goggle-eyed "Buster" Breck in the lead, was on his left.

They were waving! Or were they signals to go in and get him?

No. They were waving!

Then it all came to Haledon with a surge of blistering realization. They had come to bring him in—in triumph.

"Good old Bradshaw! Good old Breck! You can't beat good old Eighty-four!"

The armada roared on through a white-blobbed avenue set up by the gunners below. Behind, a few desultory blacks added to the decorations. They crossed the line, young Worth still maintaining his brood-hen devotion over the Pfalz.

"I had a hunch," muttered Haledon, "but I didn't think it would work out this way. I wonder. . . ." The lids of his eyes grew to a narrow line. "I wonder now," he said. "I wonder if this was a plant. I wonder. . . ."

Back at the field a blustering major was sprawled out over a map-strewn deal table, blubbering into a telephone.

"But I tell you, Colonel," he was saying, "it worked! Yes, it worked! We just got confirmation on the fight from Number One Hundred and Nine Balloon Company. Haledon got five and the new man one. Now what about that decoration we were talking about?"

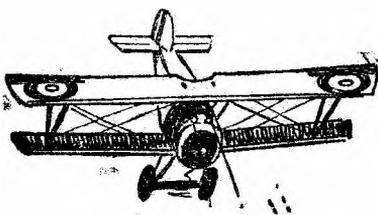
There was a short pause which gave the major a chance to let his features relax, then twist their lines upward into a broad, wholesome meaningful grin.

"Splendid, sir," he said. "Splendid!

Yes, we'll get the Pflaz back to the Wing Repair Depot this afternoon. Thanks for lending it to me. I had an idea it would work. The rest of the boys are bringing him in now. Yes, here they come now. . . . Glorious!"

The major rammed the telephone back on its prongs and sat back to watch the Pflaz come in. He spluttered a minute when he saw a mob of mechanics shooting off Very lights in a greeting, but there was nothing he could do about it now. After all, they had an ace in 84 Squadron!

"It was a dirty trick to play on a man," reflected the major, "but all's fair in love and war!"



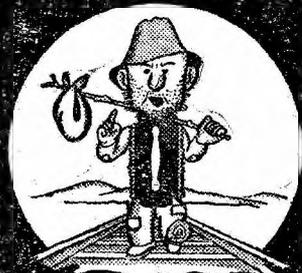
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THE ANSWER TO THE MODERN
HORROR WEAPONS OF WAR

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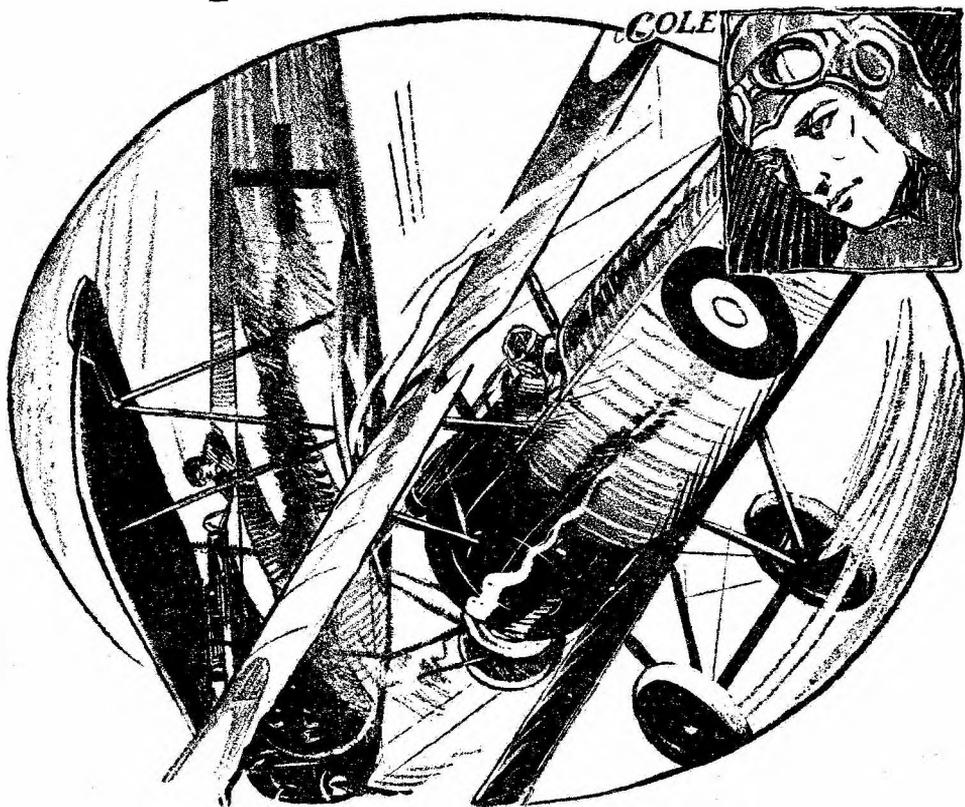
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Young Cole Plays Hide-and-Seek With Fate While Air Intelligence Puts Him to a Test!

By **ROBERT SIDNEY BOWEN**

Author of "Three-Man Patrol," "The Color-Blind Ace," etc.

CLICKING his heels together, and snapping his hand up in a smart salute, the wing dispatch rider held out the yellow-tinted official envelope.

"From Colonel Manders, sir," he said.

Major Harmon, C.O. of the 16th Yank Pursuits, known also as Harmon's Hellions, returned the salute,

took the envelope, and dismissed the dispatch rider with a nod. Ripping open the envelope he pulled out the sheet inside and stared at the typed words. He read a few of them and then his brows went up in a look of mild surprise. A few more and his eyes tightened in speculative concern. When he had finished the communication he handed it over to "Jeff"

Sparks, "A" Flight leader, who stood beside him on the tarmac.

"Well, there's one thing about this war," he grunted. "It doesn't get too damn boring. Something popping every day. Have a look at this from the colonel."

Sparks took the communication. It read:

To: Major Harmon
From: Colonel Manders
Subject: 2nd Lt. Frederick Cole.

This flying officer assigned to your unit yesterday for active duty is under suspicion by Intelligence of possessing enemy affiliations and sympathies.

It is believed that he was born of German parentage although this fact has not been definitely established as yet. It is known, however, that prior to our entry in the war he received considerable mail from Germany, and several Germans who have since returned to their own country, were among his friends.

Therefore you are to maintain a strict observance of this officer and if you detect any attempt on his part to communicate with the enemy in any way whatever, you are to place him under close arrest and inform me immediately.

This officer had the highest score in aerial gun marksmanship during his regular training period. I mention this so that you may judge his actions accordingly.

Colonel Manders
C.O. 42nd Wing
U.S.A.A.S., A.E.F.

Making a queer sound in his throat, Jeff Sparks handed the communication back.

"The big bugs are spy-crazy, if you ask me," he grunted, and glanced down the tarmac at a lean straw-haired youth working on his Bentley Camel. "True, the kid has the hair of a Hun, but that's as far as it goes."

"Check," the C.O. nodded. "Still you know how dizzy this damn war can be at times. Birds that look like spies aren't. And those that don't look like 'em have got wireless sets hidden under their hats. You took Cole up last evening for a short look-see patrol. How'd he act?"

"Like any greenhorn," the "A" Flight leader replied. "Scared as hell at his first Archie, but with enough guts to keep on tagging along. Of course I kept clear of any Hun ships. They all rate that much of a break. But today I'm going to have a look at him in action. In fact, I'm taking 'A' out on the usual morning show in a few minutes."

"Fair enough," the C.O. said, and heeled out his cigarette. "I'll be waiting to hear what you have to say when you get back. Luck."

It was fifteen minutes before Jeff Sparks raised his hand in signal to the five ships in V formation on the ground behind him, and then shoved the stick forward. Taking off with the bored nonchalance of a veteran pilot, he "lifted" the Camel up to seven thousand feet, took a look back to see that the others were in place, and then winged around and headed for No Man's Land and Germany-controlled air beyond.

On the way, he glanced back now and then to take a peek at the new replacement under suspicion by Intelligence. Green though he was, young Cole was flying every bit as well as the next man. And to a war eagle like Sparks that's what counted most.

"Nuts to Intelligence!" he growled into the smooth roar of his Bentley. "Those crummy bums have to stir up a lot of prop-wash now and then for fear they won't get any publicity out of this mess. Why, hell, they—"

He stopped short and forgot all about how crummy Intelligence was. Dead ahead of him and a couple of miles behind the German lines were ten things that occupied his entire attention immediately. They were ten Fokkers led by the black-and-white striped plane of von Khole, Germany's deadliest ace in that sector. Von Khole had been very much of a thorn in the side of 16, and in the side of Jeff Sparks in particular.

Five times the "A" Flight leader had crossed props with the Hun ace. Four times it had been a draw, and the fifth time von Khole had come close to shooting the pants right off Sparks. In fact, if a couple of 16th's pilots hadn't piled down into the scrap, and as a result scared the German off, von Khole might have succeeded in doing just that little thing.

"My old pal, von Khole, eh?" Sparks said grimly. "Fair enough! I've got a hunch that six is going to be a lucky number for me."

Signaling to the rest of the flight for more speed and altitude, he led the way up to the same level as that of the enemy planes, and then maneuvered southward to rob the Germans of the advantage of the sun at their back should they attack, instead of waiting to be attacked.

But Sparks knew that they would attack because, while von Khole was all kinds of a German bum, he had what it took to fly combat planes. Thus, by the time Sparks had led his flight halfway through the maneuver, the Hun pilots rammed their throttles wide open and came tearing in, hell for leather.

Kicking left rudder hard, Sparks lined up the striped plane in his sights, and let go with both guns. Had von Khole continued his roaring charge, he would never have enjoyed another slug of schnapps in this world. However, he banked in a wing-screaming maneuver that came close to taking both of them clean off, whipped out from under Spark's blasting fire and went scooting away into the clear.

A curse in his throat, the Yank "A" Flight leader heeled around on wing tip and started in savage pursuit. But that was all; he just started. Two other Fokker pilots decided that he might just as well be turned into cold meat for them as for their commander. And they came plowing in, guns blazing. For the next couple

of seconds Sparks had all he could do to slam-bang his way through a web of tracers' smoke and hissing bullets that tried to slap down and envelop him, plane and all.

One of the pair of Fokker pilots paid with his life for his foolishness, and the other had one hell of a tough job limping down to a ground-loop landing in the middle of No Man's Land. Sparks didn't take a second look at either plane. No sooner had they started down, than he pulled out to the rim of the fight and took a look around for von Khole's plane. He spotted the German ace, and also something else that brought a grunt of surprise to his lips. It was young Cole slamming in on the German like nobody's business.

"Boy!" Sparks shouted aloud. "If he clips von Khole in his very first scrap, will I write a razz letter to Intelligence H.Q.! And how, I'll love to!"

ENGINE roaring full out, the Yank replacement had piled in so close to the German's ship that he could have reached out and smacked him on the nose with his fist. But he didn't; neither did he fire either of his guns. From where Sparks flew he thought he saw the suspected replacement raise his free hand in some sort of signal, and then careen away to the right.

"Well, I'll be damned!" Sparks choked. "He must be a—"

The rest of that remark was never finished. Cole's guns had suddenly started hammering, and a Fokker heeled over on wing tip and headed out of control toward the ground. Yet, as Sparks watched, he wondered if Cole had tried to miss the Fokker and had come too close. He had gone in at the enemy plane from a crazy angle, and if he had missed it could not be held against him. Yet—

Sparks snapped out of his thought trance and started back to work

again. However, there wasn't any more work to do. With three of their comrades in a heap of flames on the ground, the German survivors obviously decided that they weren't so hot that morning, and called all bets off. A red Very light arced out from the pit of von Khole's striped plane, and the others promptly made themselves scarce toward the east. For half a moment Sparks was tempted to give the signal to chase. But on second thought he changed his mind. The dizzy actions of the young replacement hadn't jelled with him so good. So he signaled to head for 16th's drome.

THE C.O. listened silently right through to the end of Sparks's report. Then he scowled and pensively rubbed the stubble growth on his chin.

"If he did signal to von Khole," he presently grunted, "we're suckers to give him a second opportunity. Yet, if he actually did nail that Fokker with trick shooting, and meant to do it, it's a cinch he's not doing any cheering for the Kaiser's gang. Damned if I know what to say. Got any suggestions?"

"One that's bound to work, I think," Sparks said promptly. "Maybe you've forgotten, but it's my turn to challenge von Khole to a personal show. So how about this? I'll drop von Khole my challenge, then I'll tell the kid that I want him to find out if he likes the way my ship is rigged. You know—I'll say that he didn't seem to be getting the maneuverability that he should out of the way his job's rigged. I'll tell him to test flight it over to Issy and back. Of course, I'll have arranged for von Khole to meet me this side of Issy. And—"

"Are you crazy?" the C.O. broke in angrily. "Suppose the kid is all right, and von Khole slaps him down in flames? Why, damn your eyes,

we'd be no less than a couple of murderers. A greenhorn sent up against von Khole in a solo scrap? Hell, no!"

"Now, wait, wait!" Sparks barked. "Of course I'm not that dumb. And I'm not that kind of a louse. I'm going to slide over in the clouds right after him and see what happens. If von Khole goes to work on him, then I'll go to work on von Khole, and signal the kid to clear out. But if they start signaling, and tossing kisses at each other—well, then I'll go to work on the kid. Okay?"

"Sure," Harmon nodded. "Why the devil didn't you say that in the first place? And you know something?"

"What?" Sparks demanded as his commanding officer, and closest friend in France, hesitated.

"I hope both our fears are all wet," Harmon grunted. "My idea of nothing at all is a lousy spy who'll eat and drink with the guys he's planning to push under."

"He's my idea of less than nothing," Sparks agreed savagely.

Some five hours later Sparks stood on the tarmac and watched young Cole take off in his own ship and climb slowly up for altitude. A strange, eerie sensation was stealing through him and he didn't like it at all. Somehow, he had half a hunch that the replacement was wise to the real motive for the test flight.

Yet damned if Sparks could decide whether grim amusement or sullen hatred had burned in the youngster's eyes while he listened to his instructions. At any rate, Cole hadn't said a word. He had simply nodded quietly, saluted, and gone down the tarmac to make his flight leader's ship ready for flight. And now, he was on his way east to—what?

Sparks finished the thought with a curse, waited until the replacement had slid up into some low-hanging clouds, then signaled to a waiting

mechanic and leaped into the pit of a spare ship. Three minutes later he yanked it off the field, and without wasting time getting altitude, headed on a bee-line course toward the southern end of the sector. Then when he was a mile or so over on the German side he started climbing up through the clouds and around toward the north. The instant the Camel's nose poked up through the top of the layer, he flattened off, eased back the throttle a bit and let the plane more or less mush forward, practically all of it hidden in the milky crest of the cloud layer.

Ten minutes later he saw the flash of wings in the sun, and in the next second was able to make out the black-and-white stripes of von Khole's plane. Snapping his eyes westward, he peered hard at the cloud crest, breath clamped in his lungs, and his heart pounding against his ribs like a trip-hammer gone haywire. And then, suddenly, he saw it. His own plane zoomed up through the cloud crest and leveled off in the general direction of the half-Allied and half-German war village of Issy. Snapping his eyes back to von Khole's plane, he saw the Fokker suddenly streak forward and up for attack position advantage.

"Now for it!" Sparks breathed, and started to close in on von Khole's rear. "Now for it. And am I hoping!"

For several breathless seconds the young Yank fledgling obviously didn't see the German Fokker swooping down toward him. But the instant the air trembled with Spandaus yammering, the greenhorn was right up on his toes. In a whirlwind maneuver that even brought a gasp of admiration from the veteran Sparks, the fledgling practically turned his ship inside out, made von Khole's marksmanship a total loss, and then went whanging down to get in a few shots of his own.

Sparks saw the tiny muzzle flash

of a single shot from one of the kid's guns. But that was all. Guns had jammed, or else the fledgling had recognized who was in the pit of the Fokker. But at any rate the greenhorn didn't continue firing. Instead, he whizzed by von Khole's plane like a comet in high gear, stuck out his free hand and pointed toward the ground. Then up, around, and down he came on the German's tail. Then, and then only his guns crackled in earnest, but Sparks saw the tracers skipping by wide of von Khole's plane, and knew that the fledgling couldn't get to first base with that kind of shooting. And then when von Khole started to go to town, started to give the greenhorn a good taste of made-in-Germany bullets, Sparks made up his mind.

"Okay, kid!" he shouted in the roar of his engine and went zooming up to join in the scrap. "That's good enough for me. Now, I'll help you take the tramp."

BUT even as the last word raced off Sparks' lips, the greenhorn suddenly cut away from von Khole's twisting ship and came piling down alongside Sparks' ship. Across the few feet of space Sparks saw the set features of the kid's face, the mad glint in his eyes, and also the savage gesture for him to get the hell out and stay the hell out. Sparks grinned and waved one hand.

"Check, youngster!" he shouted. "You knew we wanted to find out, and now you're damn well going to show us, eh? Let's go, then!"

Of course the fledgling didn't hear any part of it, but he certainly went to town as he tore away from Sparks' wings. Von Khole, seeing two enemy ships instead of one in the sky, tried with all the tricks he knew to pull out and head for home. In fact, in all of their previous meetings, Sparks had never seen the German ace fly as he was flying now. But there was

something more than just a pilot in the pit of the fledgling's plane. There was a fighting Yank eagle gone completely wild.

A dozen times Sparks swore that the greenhorn was going to crash straight into the Fokker and carry them both down to a burning hell. But each time the fledgling pulled away in the nick of time. Pulled away while von Khole had another attack of "nerves" and went into another mad dive for the ground. And all the time not a single shot ripped out from the greenhorn's guns.

"Is he rubbing it in?" Sparks cried. "He's going to force that bum to land. Right! Damned if he isn't showing me how he can get his man the hard way. Intelligence, you lugs, are you going to hear about this, and how!"

EXACTLY eight minutes later the German ace was so completely jammed with the jitters that he was about ready to pile out of his pit and jump the rest of the way to the ground. Being shot at is bad enough any day in the week, but when some crazy fool lets his guns slide and, instead, practically parts your hair with his wing tips and nicks your wings with his prop tips and more or less rolls his wheels up the back of your neck, and comes within a hair's breadth of turning your ship into a load of falling junk a dozen times each minute, it's too much for even an ace of aces.

And so von Khole finally took the hint. He cut his throttle and went sliding down to a scared man's landing in a small field some half a mile in back of the American lines. Hardly had his wheels stopped rolling, than the fledgling wind-braked his own plane to a quick landing, leaped out and ran over to his prisoner, service automatic in his hand and ready for business. Two minutes

later, Sparks was out of his ship and had joined the kid.

"Well, are you satisfied, Captain Sparks?" Cole asked before the "A" Flight leader could open his mouth.

"You were wise, eh?" Sparks grunted. "I'm sorry, Cole. But we received a dispatch from Wing, and—"

"I suspected as much," the kid broke in, "That sort of thing's been happening ever since I joined up."

"But I saw you wave to this German this morning!" Sparks said. "You passed up a chance to wing him. And it looked like you nailed the other Fokker by mistake."

"It wasn't a mistake in either case," the fledgling said. "The mistake I made was requesting assignment to Harmon's Hellions. I mean, I didn't know he was in front of Sixteen. Captain Sparks, this is my brother, Karl. He chose the Fatherland, and I chose my own country, America. When Karl went back to Germany he took our real family name. I kept the American one."

"Then you didn't know until—"

"Not until I recognized Karl in the air this morning," Cole said. "I—well, I couldn't shoot down my own brother. But when you sent me over alone, I guessed what was in your mind. You certainly made it tough, sir. But, then, I always was better than Karl in most things. May I ask you a favor, sir?"

"Shoot, Cole. Anything, and consider it granted."

"I'm a little tired of Intelligence men sitting on my neck," the fledgling said. "Now that I've removed the only thing German I just could not kill, you can take my word that I'll concentrate on all the rest. Will you please write Intelligence H.Q. to that effect?"

"A pleasure!" Sparks grinned broadly. "In fact, Cole, you and I will compose that letter together. It'll be a masterpiece, and how!"

TEST YOUR AIR-WAR KNOWLEDGE! COME ON

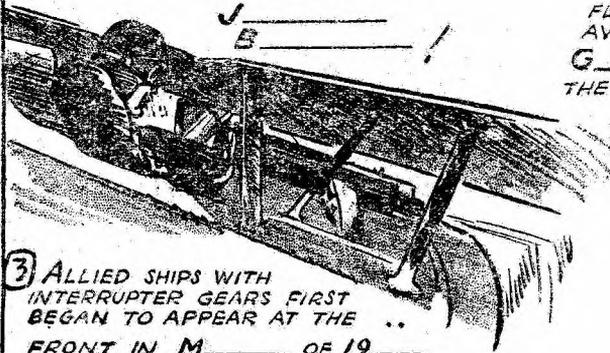
Sky Writers



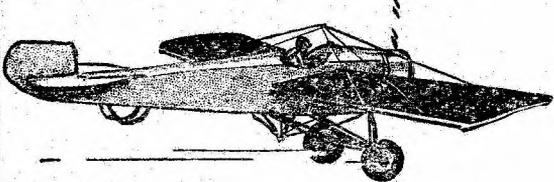
① THE NOTED CANADIAN ACE, CAPT. W.G. CLAXTON, WAS SHOT DOWN BY THE GERMAN FLIER LIEUT. J _____

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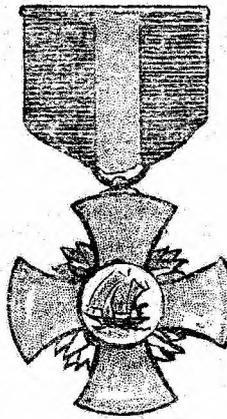
② CAPT. R _____ F _____ SHOT DOWN THE GERMAN FLIER CAPT. WISEMAN TO AVENGE THE DEATH OF G _____ G _____ THE FAMOUS FRENCH ACE !



③ ALLIED SHIPS WITH INTERRUPTER GEARS FIRST BEGAN TO APPEAR AT THE FRONT IN M _____ OF 19 _____

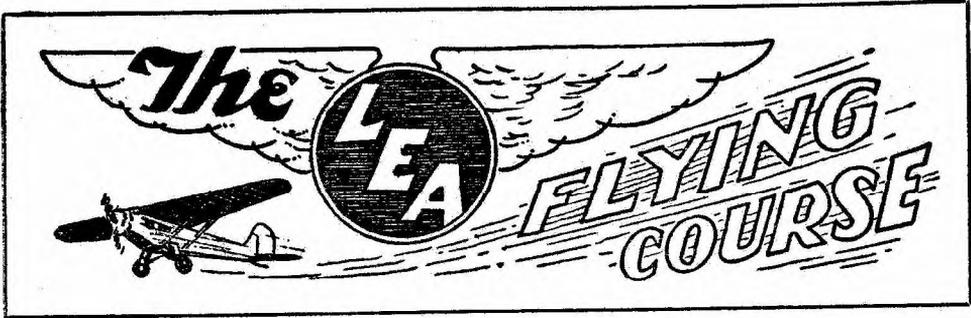


④ THE ABOVE WORLD WAR PLANE IS THE N _____ C _____ 11.



⑤ THE ABOVE IS A SKETCH OF THE N _____ C _____ DECORATION !

The answers are on Page 112—if you MUST look!



MILITARY FLYING

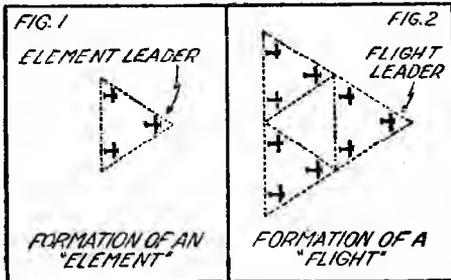
WELL, my winged friends, you've learned a little about flying and about the ship. I said, a little! There's plenty more to learn, and you may be sure you will never learn it all.

Because the Lone Eagle himself was somewhat of a War Flyer, it might be a good time right here to tell you a little about military flying, but again, you can't learn it all.

There are three main types of flying, each with its distinct problems. The sim-

ferent things, and the names mixed up, but today you're going to get some clear idea of the organization of fighting units. So, lock your safety belts and here we go.

The smallest military unit is the "Element." It consists of three ships, usually in triangular formation. The "Element Leader" is the man whose ship takes the leading position in the triangle, gives or relays its orders, and is responsible for its conduct, etc., such as a corporal handling a squad on the ground. Figure 1 is an Element.



The Flight Unit

Now the next larger unit is a "Flight." It consists of two or three Elements. You will see that in the case of three Elements, the flight itself becomes a large triangle made of the three smaller ones which still retain their positions relative to each other. Also, the Element Leader in the first Element of the Flight is called the Flight Leader. He is in charge of the whole Flight, while the Element Leaders have charge of their own Elements in the Flight. See Figure 2.

Next above comes the Squadron. It will either have two or three Flights composing it. The leader of the whole squadron is the "Squadron Commander" and he then has charge of say two Flights, each consisting of three Elements, each consisting of three planes, or eighteen ships. When the Squadron Commander has charge, he also is Leader of the first of the two flights that go to make up the Squadron. See Figure 3.

The position of the second Flight in relation to the first Flight in simple formation would be not less than thirty plane lengths to the rear and at least fifteen wing-spreads to the side.

The next larger grouping is the "Group," as shown in Figure 4. The Group may have anywhere from two to four Squadrons in it. The man in charge is the "Group Commander," and he has a lot of men and a lot of money in equipment under his command. If each of his four Squadrons contains two Flights, he is in charge of seventy-two ships, including his own. Three-Flight Squadrons would make it a hundred-and-eight ships.

plest, of course, is private flying, that is, hedge hopping for the fun of it.

And then there's transport flying, which is a precise, highly scientific job that takes a lot of training and responsibility, using high-priced equipment and aids, and has to do with the safety and rapid transit of the public.

The Defense of a Nation

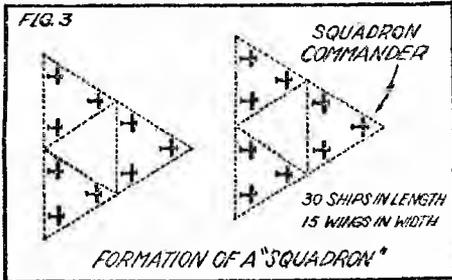
And then there's the branch that carries the glory of the defense of one's country—the military branch of the game.

The three branches of military flying are Pursuit, Bombardment and Attack. These are the main ones; the others are secondary, such as observation, photography and many others. But the three fighting arms are the ones that carry the load.

As aviation has advanced it has become increasingly evident that the day of the lone aerial bandit is fading into the day when fighting jobs are done in groups. And because of the necessary control of these groups, they have been standardized for more effective action. You've probably heard these groups called a lot of dif-

Formation of a Group

Now we're getting a lot of ships, and we've got to dispose of them properly to keep them from getting in our hair like mosquitoes. The Flight being the big triangular formation of nine ships, that ma-



nevers as a unit, the Group Commander's Squadron of two Flights becomes Squadron No. 1, because the Group Commander's ship is the front ship of the front Element of the Front Squadron, etc. (Quite a different setup from the situation in the trenches where the big boys telephone up from the rear and tell you what to do, isn't it? In the air, the bigger they are the farther up front they are. Up to a certain limit!)

All right. The Group Commander's Flight leads the first Squadron, and the Second Flight in the Squadron is to the left and rear of him.

Then the First Flight in Squadron 2 is to his right and to the rear of the Second Flight of the First Squadron.

The third Squadron is disposed the same as Squadron 2, but to the rear of it.

Now comes the decoration. Squadron 4 is broken up into Elements. Remember those little three-ship units back on the first page? Well, these Elements are placed to kind of make a frame around the whole Group Formation.

A Formidable Unit

And there's the layout of your Group, a formidable mess of fighting machine if you

wanted to attack it. There's a lot of manpower. Around a hundred men whose training cost the government fully ten thousand dollars per man, and as many ships that cost plenty more than a million dollars. There are literally millions of dollars tied up in such a unit.

There is a bigger unit in the organization, but you're lucky when you see a whole Group. The bigger unit is called a "Wing," is under command of a "Wing Commander," who is really way up there in the Air Force. He will be in command of two or three such Groups as mentioned.

Now, whether you noticed it or not, the arrangement of a Group when it is flown as a unit brings out a problem which, in the Army where rank and responsibility are of supreme importance, has to be taken care of beforehand.

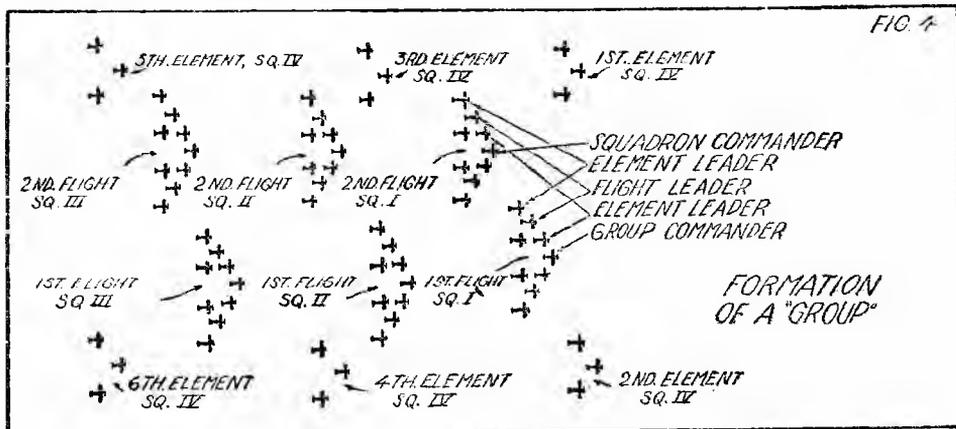
It reminds you of the politicians' wives in Washington who squabble over who's going to sit where when they throw a feed for a foreign politician. It has to be arranged in terms of the importance, and importance in the Army is at least interpreted in terms of rank.

Proper Placement

So, with the big boys sitting up at the head of the table, so to speak, how are we going to arrange the minor leaders? The Group Commander, by taking charge has replaced first the Element Leader who would have had charge of the first three ships had they been alone.

But the Element Leader had already been replaced by the Flight Leader when the Element became one of the three which made a Flight. And then when the two Flights had been formed into a Squadron, the Squadron Commander had superseded the Flight Leader. And now the Group Commander has taken over the position. It is a matter of greater military importance than it sounds, this business of putting those deposed men in their proper places.

All right. Here's their disposal and the (Concluded on Page 113)



Fightin' Fools



Vickers guns raked the enemy with lead

*When Faced with Death, Larry Blake Learns that there
Are Two Kinds of Gentlemen Fighters!*

By HAL WHITE

Author of "Fly High and Die," "Spad Bad Boy," etc.

IT was one of those battles in which the pilots on both sides fought in a bitter frenzy of hate. No quarter was asked, given nor expected. If you went down, you stayed down. Every man knew that, and every man went at the enemy with a berserk fury that was like the savage roll and tumble of fighting jungle tigers.

Even the attack of the double flight of Pfalzes had seemed more sudden than usual. The Americans had been scouting far behind the German lines in a futile search for the hidden German battery of heavy guns that was smashing everything in Allied territory.

There had been nothing more ominous in sight than a fleecy bank of

cumulus cloud above them in the afternoon sky. They had been watching that cumulus, too, always suspicious of what such cloud banks might contain.

But when the ten enemy ships came from behind that screen they dropped the thousand feet to the American crates with the speed of a cougar springing from a rocky ledge onto the back of a deer.

With this difference, the Americans were not helpless. They had steel claws and teeth, and they used them, while the roar of their motors and the racketing of their Vickers guns, was a defiant challenge that filled the heavens with noise.

The German ships were red. But they could have been any other color and they would have looked the same to Captain Peter Cranston and his men. Because for days now the men of his flight, and of every other flight in the sector, had been seeing red whenever they looked at anything German. And each day, as they searched in vain for the hidden Boche battery, and the huge guns continued to smash and destroy, their eyes grew more bloodshot and the red more brilliant.

The slim, quiet Cranston drove his crate like a man possessed of devils. He was everywhere in the same breath.

BIG HANK STEVENS rode with shoulders hunched, and snarled into the slipstream.

Dade Parker, handsome as a Greek god, owned a smile that captured the hearts of both men and women. The smile was still there, as he rode his pitching Camel, but the German pilots who looked back and saw it through the blur of Parker's prop got no pleasure out of it. For now it was the smile of a man who would kill a German with the same eagerness he would kiss a pretty woman.

Larry Blake sat behind his gun

trips, his face a hard, graven mask of hate. For today he fought with hatred not only for the Germans but for one of his own team mates. That man was Dave Kirtland, a replacement. Kirtland had announced, upon his arrival:

"I'm from Wyoming, gents, an' honin' to saw the horns of some of these Heinie sidewinders!"

Kirtland was giving a good account of himself in this fight, and Blake didn't like it. For the 43rd Pursuit Squadron was a swanky outfit—fighters from hell, but gentlemen every one of them. And here was this roughneck, Kirtland, badly-uniformed, rough-mannered, uneducated, from the sticks, winning himself a place among the officers and gentlemen of the 43rd! The thought lashed the snobbish Blake to fury. Rough-necks had no right to be good at anything!

Blake herded a Pfalz pilot out of the mêlée and engaged him in a savage little private war, off to one side. The Hun lost, but there was no armistice. He had been climbing. Suddenly he was going down—as nearly straight down as a Pfalz can fall—with his limp body flopping loosely in the cockpit and blood running from his mouth.

That made Blake feel better. He hoped Kirtland had seen that. He turned in time to see Captain Cranston drop like a thunderbolt onto a German who was circling with left wing down. The wing stayed down, the ship going into a sideslip and from that into a wild, ungoverned dive that ended in a pillar of fire and smoke on the ground a mile below.

Kirtland had seen both those victories, and his grey-blue eyes gleamed with admiration and the light of battle. His lean body tensed in the cockpit, and his wide, humorous mouth drawled determined words into the roar of his big Clerget:

"Time I got me one o' them German gents, too!"

He slapped his throttle across the arc, and went screeching after a Hun who was gnawing at Dade Parker's tail with machine gun slugs. Parker went up in a graceful loop, intending to come down behind his pursuer and make a sieve of him.

But in that moment of the loop when a ship hangs almost motionless in air, upside down, another red crate whipped in from one side with Spandaus beating out a chorus of death. Parker's Camel came out of the loop, but Parker was dead in his cockpit, his body cut almost in two by the wicked Spandau bullets from that second red ship.

The Camel swooped down on the inside of the loop, but it did not level off. It pointed its spinning prop at the ground and kept right on going, end over end, wing over wing, five thousand feet to the carpet. Parker's safety belt had been cut by the slugs, and his body was thrown clear, falling like a plummet to reach the ground ahead of the ship.

They all saw that and they went wild. For smiling, handsome Dave Parker had been a favorite. They all saw him die, but it was Dave Kirtland who moved fastest, who beat Blake and the others to it.

The tall westerner, his bronzed face swept of color and his lips flat against his teeth, whirled his Camel and went after the German who had downed Parker. The Hun pilot saw him coming and jockeyed for position with a swift, expert wingover.

The kiwi shoved his stick to the firewall, went down like a roller-coaster wagon, then pulled the crate into a zoom that centered the black-crossed ship in his ring-sights. Tracers streaked from his guns to knock splinters from the German's struts. The Hun writhed like a belly-bitten hound, and laid his ship on a wing-tip to escape the punishment.

But the hot muzzles of the Yank's guns followed the maneuver, and curled hair flew from the coaming of the German's cockpit and back into his face. Something harder than curled hair hit him a moment later, almost lifting his head from his shoulders.

His big body sagged forward and to the right, carrying the stick with it, and the Pfalz howled down the sky lanes, with one wing pointed toward heaven and the other toward hell.

TWO Germans ganged Kirtland then, compelling him to do a wild dance to escape. A slug ripped his boot, and another his helmet, and his plane was riddled.

Then Hank Stevens roared in, with Cranston alongside. They, too, were under fire, with Spandau slugs shredding their wings, but so savagely did they attack that Kirtland's opponents ducked the hail of lead and ruderer away.

The fight had been moving toward the American lines, and shortly after that it ended. Germans and Yanks, by mutual consent, winged for home. None of the surviving Americans was badly wounded, but there was blood over everything, from superficial wounds. And their planes were so badly shot up that their progress through the air was a sort of blind stagger. The Germans were worse off, one of their ships being compelled to make a crash landing before they had gone a mile from the fight.

Kirtland looked across at Blake and grinned, but Blake only glared and turned away his head. Blake, officer and gentleman, was boiling. For a week he had been baiting Kirtland, goading him with thinly veiled insults, trying to get him to ask for a transfer. But Kirtland refused to lose his temper.

For a week, too, Blake had been

telling Cranston and the others that a damned roughneck didn't belong with this hand-picked outfit. But the Westerner had gone right on making a place for himself that neither Blake nor anyone else could take away from him.

Blake had been badly brought up. All his life he had been taught to scorn people who were not of his social standing. Anybody who could not shine in a drawing room and pick the right fork at a formal dinner was contemptible, in his eyes. And Kirtland—well, Kirtland didn't even bother with a fork, usually. He used his knife.

Major Knowles was on the tarmac, waiting anxiously, when the four ships wobbled in to a landing.

"Where's Parker?" he asked. There was suffering in his eyes, for he had loved the boy, as had all the others.

Captain Cranston drew an unsteady hand across his lips, and jerked his head in the direction of enemy territory. "Gone," he said.

In the major's lean, kindly face the lines of worry and strain seemed to deepen. He looked at the four ships, bullet-riddled, ailerons flapping, flying wires snapped by slugs. He looked at the blood on the faces and on the flying coats of his men, and he said, half to himself:

"You've been through hell." Then he added, wearily, "Did you find any trace of that battery?"

Cranston, lighting a cigarette, shook his head.

"What happened?"

"A double flight of Pfalzes jumped us, seven miles behind the lines."

The major nodded, staring absently at the mechanics clustered around the smashed crates.

"I've just had word from Wing," he said. "Those guns have been busy again today. They blasted a battery of '155' howitzers loose from its trail spades, destroyed all four guns, killed twenty-two men."

Cranston and the others looked at him, wordless.

"And that's not the worst of it," the major went on. "They concentrated on the railhead at Ville en Terre and blew the whole thing—rails, trains, men, everything—to Kingdom Come."

"Ville en Terre is ten miles behind the lines!" Cranston muttered the words in amazement.

"Ten miles." The major ran his fingers through his graying hair. "And those guns must be at least that far on the other side. God knows what they're using to have such a range, and to do so much damage—sixteen-inch naval guns, maybe.

"Anyway, Wing puts it squarely up to the squadrons on this front to find that battery and destroy it. We've got to do it, boys—somehow."

* * * * *

THAT night the pilots of the 43rd barged into the village and to the estaminet with the intention of taking on liquor. They wanted to forget Dade Parker, a clot of lifeless flesh out there near the wreck of his plane.

And they wanted to forget, for a few hours at least, that infernal German battery.

Blake was with them, and Kirtland, and Blake's eyes were scornful as he looked at the Westerner. It was true that Kirtland did not match up with the others. His uniform was cheap and badly tailored, and his legs were slightly bowed. He walked with the rolling stride of a man used to high heels and rough ground. And his grammar was terrible.

But his tall, muscular body had a catamount grace, and the gray-blue eyes were fearless and alive. The others had accepted him for what he was—a man and a fighter. All but Larry Blake.

Cranston sensed trouble brewing,

and drew Blake aside as they entered the estaminet.

"Listen, my fine fellow," he said, "I can see that you're all set to stir up a row with Kirtland. Don't do it. He may not be like the rest of us in some ways, but he's a scrapper from hell, and that's what counts up here.

"More than that, he's a fine chap, personally, which you'd find out if you weren't so blinded by your own damned conceit. That's plain talk, Larry, but I mean it. If you can't be friendly with Kirtland, at least lay off him. If you don't, he may knock you loose from your ears."

"You think so?" There was cold fury in Blake's eyes and in his voice. "Maybe you think he'll beat me in the air, too."

"He might. He made a good start today."

"That was an accident. I'll be an ace before he gets his second e. a."

Cranston grinned and laid a friendly hand on Blake's shoulder. "That's the spiirt, Larry. Concentrate your venom on the Hun, and don't go stirring up a feud in our outfit. If you do, young feller me lad, I'll boot you around the tarmac so hard you can button your swanky pants around your neck. That's a promise."

But there was trouble coming, and neither Cranston nor anyone else could stop it. It began soon enough. Kirtland, alone for the moment, was standing at the bar in bantering conversation with the pretty barmaid, when an enlisted man of an infantry regiment entered. He braced up to the bar at a respectful distance from the officer and ordered cognac.

"Crave to cut the trail dust outa my tubes," he announced to the girl. "How about a shot?"

Kirtland caught that broad Western twang, and said:

"Yuh ain't from Wyoming, by any chance, buddy?"

The doughboy grinned. "She's my home range."

"Yip-e-e!" Kirtland slapped the man on the back with a force that knocked his steel helmet over one eye. "This is on me, feller."

They had a drink together, and another, talking shoulder to shoulder at the bar. When the infantryman had gone, Kirtland threw some franc notes on the counter, picked up the bottle of cognac and strode over to the large table where Cranston, Blake, Stevens and some of the others were sitting. There was an empty chair, and he sat down, plumping the cognac bottle on the table.

"My treat," he drawled. "Drink up, gents."

CRANSTON filled his glass, passed the bottle to Hank Stevens, who helped himself.

"Jest met up with a jasper from the tumbleweed country," Kirtland grinned. "Shore seemed like old times tuh—"

"We noticed," Blake cut in coldly. The bottle had come to him, but he ignored it. "Quite a family reunion. Why didn't you invite your enlisted man friend to sit in with us?"

"Quit it, Larry!" Cranston snapped.

But Blake was one of those men who get ugly when they have liquor in them. He turned his glass upside down on the table with a clink that sounded sharply in the sudden silence.

"Have it your way," he snarled, and got to his feet. "I'm leaving."

Dave Kirtland was on his feet, too, now. The puzzled, hurt look that had been in his eyes was gone, and a dangerous, steely glint showed there.

"Then you're not drinkin' with me?" he asked quietly.

"Not now, nor ever. You cheap —!" The word he used was a fighting word in any language, and the men in that room gasped as they heard it.

"Wait!" The Westerner's bronzed face was pale, but he held himself

rigidly in control. "You ain't quite yoreself, mister, or yuh never woulda said that. I'm askin' that you take it back."

Blake laughed harshly.

"Here's your apology," he snapped, and his hand smacked against Kirtland's cheek.

The others at the table came to their feet then, but they made no move to interfere. Blake had something coming to him, and they hoped he'd get it.

"Yo're takin' on too much steer, Blake." Kirtland spoke quietly, but his eyes were blazing.

Blake struck then with his clenched fist. The Westerner caught the blow in his raised palm, and his own big knuckles jarred against Blake's jaw.

BLAKE staggered. Then he tore in with everything he had, which was considerable. He was blocky and powerful; not as tall as Kirtland, but more heavily built.

The two men traded punches that crunched with a sickening sound against flesh and bone, in the smoke-filled air. Blake was a wolverine—short, hard, vicious. Kirtland a panther—tall, muscular, swift as lightning.

Blake rushed in recklessly. Several times he bored through Kirtland's guard and rocked the Westerner with smashing blows that drew blood on the tall man's lips.

But, in his fury, he left himself wide open, and soon he took a punch over the heart that sent him backward with heels dragging the boards. He tore in again, and steely knuckles grazed his cheek, spilled him headlong over a table in a crash of glass and splintered wood.

The bearded, white-aproned French proprietor danced frantically on the edge of the crowd, wrung his hands. But there were too many big American shoulders between him and the fighters for him to get to them.

And then Blake, rushing, ran smack into a whizzing left that came up from Kirtland's boot-tops to connect with his chin. He did a back somersault, landed on his shoulders and slid.

He lay for a moment, blinking at the rafters, his face a smear of blood. Then, before anyone could reach him, he rolled over, tried to get up. He could get no further than hands and knees, and so, with red dripping from his face to the floor, he started to crawl toward Kirtland.

The watching crowd exclaimed with appreciation for that gritty play. Kirtland's bloody lips parted in a grin of real admiration, and it was the big Westerner himself who lifted the half-conscious Blake into a chair and bathed his face with a wet towel that someone brought.

When Blake had been revived with a stiff shot of cognac he looked up at Dave Kirtland, standing beside him. Kirtland laid a hand on his shoulder and spoke in low tones:

"Hell, Blake, no use our lockin' horns this way. S'posin' we—"

Blake shrugged off the friendly touch, and Kirtland had his answer in the hate-brimmed eyes that stared into his. He straightened, sighed deeply.

"All right, mister," he muttered, turning away, "we'll play her as she lies."

* * * * *

An eager youngster named Bill Merritt came up from Pool the next morning to take Dade Parker's place. That afternoon "A" Flight went on another hunt for the hidden German battery and ran smack into a seven-crate flight of Pfalzes.

The five Americans went in with Vickers pounding, motors howling for the kill. They went in for blood, and got it. Hank Stevens ripped lungs and liver out of a Boche pilot with almost his first burst, and the

Pfalz hit the grass roots head on, with motor wide open.

The fight spread out, became a mile-wide, mile-high ball of furious combat. Kirtland shook three Huns from his tail as a dog shakes water, and went up in a climbing *vrille* to engage a German who was intent on letting out Merritt's brains.

He caught the red Pfalz in his ring-sights, lost it as the German side-slipped, then picked it up again and drove a burst into the tail assembly.

The German pilot jumped as though he had sat on a hornet, shot a startled glance at Kirtland, and rudered into the clear. Kirtland followed. The German did a back flip, red wings flashing in the sun, and Spandau slugs whined past Kirtland's nose.

Kirtland put a wing down, came around in a vertical bank, caught the Hun just coming out of his dive. His Vickers guns blasted like a riveting machine, and those rivets nailed the German to the firewall of his cockpit. The dive steepened, became a spin. And a dead pilot cannot pull out of a spin—

Blake saw that, and immediately went berserk. The hated roughneck, in less than ten days, was even with him—two ships apiece. He threw caution to the winds, struck at his throttle with a clenched fist, and risked losing his wings in a shrieking Immelmann.

Eyes aflame behind his goggles, rage in his heart, he saw nothing, heard nothing but the flash and crash of his guns as he drove lead at a circling Pfalz.

The Pfalz flipped up a red tail and dived. Blake followed grimly. He did not see two other red tails go up, two other red noses come sniffing hungrily for his blood. The gray Camel shuddered with the impact of Spandau lead, and still he held to his course, unheeding.

Not until a tracer bullet spanged the motor cowling, glaring at him with a warning white eye, did he turn his head. And then it was too late. They had him in a crossfire, raking him from propboss to tailskid with a hail of slugs.

He banked grimly, found clear air for a moment, lost it as quickly. Lost it, knew he was gone, braced himself for the agonizing shock of bullets, even while feet and hands still worked desperately at the controls.

And then, abruptly, he realized that the hail of death had stopped, and he looked back, new hope in the eyes behind the oil-smearing goggles. Someone had saved him.

Someone, yes. And that someone was Kirtland, riding the haunches of those two Pfalzes as a cougar rides a steer. Snarling, ripping, clawing with Vickers bursts that left the Pfalz pilots with but one thought—to get out, and get out fast!

One of them made it, got away. The other took a burst through the motor banks that sent black smoke wisping into the horrified face of the man in the cockpit. The smoke thickened, blossomed into flame that rolled back along the fuselage.

Out of the smoke lifted two gloved hands, desperate, imploring, fingers opening and closing spasmodically. Then the smoke trail lengthened, became a long black slide tipped with a hot swirl of red.

BLAKE leaned into the slipstream and drew a breath of clean air. He looked up at the blue arch of the sky as though he had never seen it before. God, it was good to be alive!

But when the five ships landed later on the home tarmac, and the pilots legged out of their cockpits, he had to force himself to approach Kirtland, and his voice was harsh when he spoke:

"Thanks, Kirtland," he said shortly. "You got me out of a bad spot."

Kirtland's eyes lighted. "Ferget it, buddy," he drawled. "Glad I happened along. We—"

He broke off and his half-extended hand dropped to his side as Blake turned away abruptly. He forced a grin as the other pilots swarmed around him with congratulations, but his eyes were steely with anger.

In his hutment, Larry Blake sat on his cot and smoked savagely. Kirtland had three enemy ships to his two, now. Worse than that, he owed his life to the Westerner—to that roughneck! That was the bitterest cup of all to swallow.

And then big Hank Stevens, his hutment mate, came in, and Stevens started right in on him.

WHAT the hell's the matter with you, Larry? I saw how you treated Kirtland, just now; we all saw it. It was beastly!"

Blake bristled. "Listen, Hank—" he began.

"Listen, nothing! You listen! I know how you feel about 'officers and gentlemen,' and I share your feeling, to a certain extent. I like polish in a man as well as you do. But—"

"You can't stand there—"

"Shut up! I'm talking. You don't know a gentleman when you see one. Dave Kirtland is a gentleman, or he would have knocked your teeth down your throat when you refused his hand out there.

"And I'll tell you something that's a damned sight more important in this war than the kind of dressed-up lounge lizards you call gentlemen. That something is men—honest-to-God he-men! Men like Dave Kirtland, like all those 'roughnecks,' as you call them, whose bayonets are between us and those German coal-scuttle helmets over the way!"

"Look here, Hank—"

"And as for you, *Mister* Blake—well, if you don't get wise to yourself we're going to conclude that

you're a damned rotter! Put that in your pipe and smoke it!"

Stevens slammed out without giving Blake time to reply.

That night the hidden German guns tore another American battery and its personnel to fragments, and ripped a Red Cross unit, nurses, doctors and wounded men, to bloody shreds.

That was the last straw. Squadrons near and far took to the air with a grim determination to find that battery, or die trying. Some of the pilots died trying, but none of them found the battery.

The sound and flash ranging sections of corps artillery had located the hidden guns somewhere in the vicinity of Aaronville, about ten miles behind the German lines. But in that hilly, broken, wooded area the battery lurked undiscovered.

Kirtland began to go on long, lone prowls over Aaronville, circling high, sweeping the ground with powerful glasses. He was about to give up in despair when late one afternoon he found something.

The sun had set, and the blue haze of approaching darkness was in the air. Suddenly, nearly four miles beneath his circling wings, he saw a wink of flame—another, another, and a fourth.

Seconds later he heard, above the drumming of his motor, the deep, thunderous roar of the firing. He marked the general location on his map, and sped, grinning, for home. It was a bit too early for what he intended, and he was almost out of gasoline. "I couldn't spot the exact location of them drygulchers," he explained to the major. "Too near dark, an' I was roostin' too high. An' we can't send bombers to drop their eggs all over a forty-acre lot."

"Then what—?"

"Major, with your permission, I'm goin' to land near there and do a little gumshoe work, on foot."

"I'll go with you," Hank Stevens said eagerly. But Kirtland shook his head.

"Nope, fellers," he said, "This is a job for a lone range dick an' not a posse."

The major nodded. He knew that Kirtland was right, but he knew, too, that the tall pilot had one chance in a hundred of coming back alive. He held out his hand. "Good luck, old man," he said quietly.

Circling again over Aaronville, Kirtland looked down and saw no lights, no sign of life. The night was fine, with stars and a crescent moon. Enough light, but not too much.

HE CUT the motor and slipped quietly earthward, landing in a field a mile south of the ruined town. The battery, he figured, was about half a mile south of the village. He left the plane in the field, and headed north.

He wriggled through a fence on the edge of the field, stumbled through a gully, and crawled like a stalking lynx up a grass-grown hill, his hand close to his old, cedar-butted six-gun.

At the top he lay flat in the tall, dry grass, looking down a long, gentle slope to a gulch with a much steeper hill, almost a cliff, on the other side. Then his nerves tightened, and he gave a low exclamation. He had caught the faint gleam of a light against that steep hillside.

He crawled down the long slope to the gulch below, and lay looking up at the steep, rocky side of the hill where he had seen the light. There it was again, as though a curtain had moved slightly in the breeze.

And then he understood. The German battery was caverned in that hillside! He knew, too, that it would be next to impossible for bombers to hit so steep and narrow a target. And the Allied artillery could not reach it without moving their guns into the

front-line trenches. The place was a regular Gibraltar!

Kirtland thought a while. Then, smiling grimly, he began to crawl upward toward that camouflaged gun cavern. A buzz of voices sent him flat on his stomach again, and he lay staring, unable to believe his eyes. For the flexible raffia that covered the broad opening, making it look like a part of the hillside, was rolling upward like a theater curtain.

Higher and higher it went, until the interior of the gun position was revealed like a stage when the curtain rises. The opening, he judged, was about a hundred yards in length, and some thirty feet in height. Flashlights shimmered bluely on the great tubes of four 16-inch rifles.

Men moved about, ammunition carriers clanked, immense shells were slammed home with hollow, chucking sounds. The gunners swung onto their seats, officers snapped out firing instructions, and the black snouts of the big guns moved, up, down, to the right or left, like lions sniffing out their prey in the distance.

Kirtland knew that neither guns nor bombs could destroy that battery. He knew that he had to do something. But what? One lone Yank against that powerful outfit! He laughed bitterly, there in the dark, at his own insanity.

But, crazy or not, he had to try. Circling far out, away from observation, he climbed the rocky hillside and then edged back, on a level with the battery floor, until he crouched near the opening. Lying flat, he risked a peek around the base of the heavy wooden upright at one side.

The light inside was dim; only the faint glow of the tiny bulbs on the gun-sights, and the occasional wink of a flash. The gun muzzles stopped their motion, became rigid on the distant target, whatever it was.

A guttural command snapped out. Kirtland jerked back, clapped his

hands over his ears and opened his mouth. He was just in time. With a blinding flash and a rending roar the gun nearest him fired.

The others followed in order. The earth shook beneath Kirtland's prone body, and his senses reeled. Great shells howled through the night with a sound like freight trains crossing a bridge.

Kirtland lay dazed for a moment. Then, risking discovery, he writhed forward on his stomach until half his body was beyond the opening. Suddenly his muscles tensed, and he rolled on his left side, six-gun free in his right hand. He had seen what he hoped to see. A flashlight played for an instant on a row of shells behind the first gun, then lifted to throw its round glow on a fuse rack above.

The light moved away then, but Kirtland lay with his lips flat against his teeth in a hard grin. Fuses! Give him that light again and he could set off one of those things with the sure, deadly aim of a man who could clip a rattler's head at twenty yards.

One fuse alone, set off apart from its shell, might do something. But the explosion of a rack of them would surely start something. Kirtland waited. He had time to think of what would probably happen to him if his plan worked.

There was a flash again. It played on the fat, round bulk of the shells. Then it lifted, framing the dull copper gleam of the fuses in its beam. A hand reached to the rack.

Kirtland's arm came up swiftly, and his revolver beat a crashing tattoo of six rapid, blurring shots. The fuses went off like a bunch of cannon crackers, and the huge shells followed instantly, one after another.

Kirtland heard and saw only the first of those giant explosions. It hurled him backward, blinded, stunned, unconscious, his limp body rolling

(Continued on page 104)

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(Continued from page 103)
down the rocky slope while those frightful bursts spread from shell to shell, from gun to gun, with shattering, volcanic power.

The whole long face of the hill erupted in smoke and flame, while stones and debris rained around the American as he rolled. But he was cut cold, and knew nothing of all that—

A long time later Kirtland opened his eyes. Slowly, his gaze going to the shattered hillside, he recalled where he was. Slowly, too, he realized that he was hurt. His face, caked with dust and powder-smoke and blood, felt stiff as a mask, and there was a warm wetness of blood along his ribs.

All around him were huge rocks, sent hurtling down the slope by the explosions. By some miracle none of them had crushed him. He sat up, felt himself all over, decided that no bones were broken.

And then he heard guttural German voices near at hand, and his faculties returned with a rush. He flattened and began to crawl toward the gully. But he was too late. A German loomed above him, Luger gleaming in the starlight.

Instinctively Kirtland's hand went to his holster, but it was empty. He cursed fiercely, gripped a stone the size of a baseball, and hurled it.

The German yelled and his Luger spat flame, the bullet grazing Kirtland's cheek. Before the man could fire again, another shot rang out from behind Kirtland, and the big Heinie's knees buckled. More shots cracked, and Kirtland ducked behind a rock to escape the slugs.

Someone joined him there, crouching beside him.

"Can you travel, Kirtland?"

Kirtland stared, and his lips widened in a grin.

"Blake! What the—?"

"Don't get any wrong ideas."

Blake's cold tones wiped the grin from Kirtland's lips. "I'm saving your life, if I can, because you saved mine. Now, come on. We're going. Take this." He thrust an automatic into Kirtland's hand.

The two wriggled away among the rocks, heading for the field where their planes waited. The Germans—there were perhaps a dozen—followed grimly, their bullets humming close.

When they got through the first gulch and onto the long, gentle slope of the hill, the two men jumped to their feet and ran, crouching low. They were hard targets in the dark, but a bullet seared Kirtland's side, and another drilled Blake's left arm.

"You hit?" Kirtland jerked out, but Blake did not answer. They gained the crest of the hill and dived, staggering and stumbling, down the other side. They could see the field now, and a faint silver glint of moonlight on the wings of their planes out there.

Through the second gully they scrambled, Kirtland weak, reeling with loss of blood, Blake's breath hissing between his teeth as he half dragged his companion up the steep south bank of the gulch and to the fence that bordered the field.

There they stopped to reload their automatics with fresh clips, and to spang swift, jolting shots that dropped two of their pursuers.

THEN, out in the field, a great wave of flame sprang up, and near it another. Blake gave a cry of despair. Sneaking Huns out there had set their planes afire, cut off their escape!

"Well, damn you, I tried, anyway!" Blake exclaimed bitterly. A hail of bullets punctuated his sentence.

Kirtland glanced around swiftly, gripped Blake's arm.

"Come on—into that shellhole! We're fightin' it out!" He wriggled under the fence, Blake close behind,

and they tumbled together into a huge old crater left by an exploding shell.

The blazing planes lighted the field with a weird glare, revealing crouching Germans who stalked their prey like timber wolves. Shoulder to shoulder the two Americans went to work on them.

Blake fought silently, but Kirtland cursed steadily, the heavy automatic bucking in his hand. A Luger slug burned along Blake's jaw. Another furrowed Kirtland's bare head, stunning him for a moment and throwing him violently against Blake.

Blake put his arm around Kirtland's shoulders, supporting him until the reeling dizziness passed. Then Kirtland was up again, wiping the blood from his eyes, grinning at Blake.

Crash and noise, the blended smell of sweat, powder smoke, wet earth, blood. And suddenly a change came over Larry Blake. The tight, cold knot of hatred in his breast was gone, and a strange sense of exultation, of warm friendliness for this man beside him, flooded him. They were fighting men, together, shoulder to shoulder in a common cause, and nothing else mattered!

And then, above the roar of the firing, the whine of motors cut sharply. Motors revving wide open. American motors. Camels, their wings flashing in the light from the burning planes as they came screaming in single file out of the night sky.

From the throats of the two men in the shellhole burst a delighted yell that was drowned in the wild clamor of Vickers guns as the diving ships raked the field and the enemy with a bitter sleet of lead. The Huns tried to flee, rolled like shot rabbits as flying slugs caught them in mid-stride.

But a few stayed, hidden. And
(Concluded on page 112)

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Around the Hangar



A Department

for Readers

PEELOTS—this is aviation's biggest year! Get ready for thrills in the air news!

All Washington—in fact the whole country—is buzzing with conflicting reports and opinions concerning America's air policy. Come right into the hangar, fellows, and let's talk it over—and when you've formed your own ideas, write and tell me what they are.

Our air-minded President has advocated



the strengthening of our sky forces up to a total of over 13,000 planes. Many aviation authorities are all for the President's plan—while others are opposing him hammer and tongs.

The planes we now have, they maintain, are enough to defend our coastlines. To build many more would be wasteful because planes become obsolete at so rapid a pace that it's a regular shell game: Now it's here, now it's gone! Today's plane is tomorrow's contribution to the junk heap.

We've Got to Decide

This is no time to hem and haw however. It's a time to act! So we have to make up our minds in a hurry—and stick to our decision. The argument advanced in favor of going ahead with an intensive building program is that the United States is fourth or fifth—according to who does the estimating—among the powers of the world with respect to military planes, when we should be first.

The recent revelations concerning the air power of countries the world over have been shocking. I'll give you the figures—but remember this: Figures never lie, but liars sometimes figure! And these figures, devoted as they are *solely* to the *number* of planes, leave out one very important factor—the *quality* of the planes concerned. U. S. A. doesn't need to blush on

that account, for we're up on top in the efficiency and modernity of our craft.

Well—figures say that Germany is two and one half times as strong in the air as we; Italy, one and a half times as strong; Great Britain, one and a quarter times as strong. That's according to one estimate. Another estimate—this time one made by our own army—presents the following information:

The British Empire has 4,000 fighting planes; France, 3,000; Russia, 4,700; Germany, 3,000; Italy, 3,200; Japan, 2,000.

But the latest bombshell is the following bit of news:

Germany is producing 500 planes a month—Italy, 200 planes per month and going up—Great Britain, 250 planes a month—Soviet Russia's figures are secret, but hundreds of thousands of youths are receiving air training. France is at present behind Italy in production, but is making strenuous efforts to remedy the deficiency.

In the face of a world armed to the teeth, what is the best policy for Uncle Sam? You name it!

Training of Pilots

President Roosevelt is said to be in favor of increasing our army force from its present 2,000 up to 10,000 planes—and



our navy has already been authorized to build up a fleet of 3,000. Large military orders will call for top speed operation of our military aircraft factories and a consequent increase in production.

In addition, according to a plan formulated by the Civil Aeronautics Authority, there is a proposal to train 20,000 college students annually as air pilots. An even larger number of mechanics will be schooled.

I don't think there will be much opposition to this plan of training pilots. Super-

vised by army, navy and civilian flyers, with every care taken for safety, thousands of ambitious lads will get a good course in aeronautics that is sure to serve them well. We'll build up a vast reservoir of trained flyers in case of emergency. This study of aviation will be undertaken by students as a branch of vocational training. It's a great idea—don't you think so?

Air-minded youths the country over are shouting "Whoopie!" They see a chance to spread their wings and fly—and are naturally enthusiastic. It's a great thing for them—and for our country. Let's hope there's no hitch in the proceedings. Maybe, one of these days, commencement exercises with caps and gowns and all the trimmings will be held at airports, and the matriculating students allowed to fly off to their homes with diplomas tucked under their arms!

This new pilot-training plan will incidentally popularize the airplane more than ever as a private flying machine. With thousands of persons knowing how to fly when they leave college, civil aviation will be in for a tremendous boom. Which is all to the good and will help the prosperity of the nation.

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Meanwhile, kiwis, while waiting for your big chance, study the flying lessons printed in THE LONE EAGLE—they'll give you a good groundwork—and also try your hand at building the swell model planes we're giving you in every issue.

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Letters to the Editor

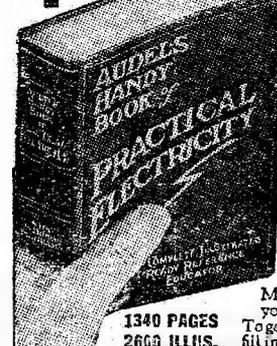
Thanks, everybody, for your swell letters—and keep them rolling in. Remember that I want your views and opinions regarding THE LONE EAGLE—plus your viewpoint on national air defense problems and anything interesting you may have to say about aviation or your own air experiences.

Letters, postcards, membership coupons—they're all welcome. We want to hear from each and every one of you—and we're especially grateful to regular correspondents who send us word of their activities several times a year. Their letters are always interesting.

Let's look at some of the epistles re-
(Continued on Page 108)

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10c AT ALL STANDS

(Continued from page 107)
cently received. We start off with a note from Cecil Anderson, Trout Run, Pa.:

After reading your last issue I think I should write you again. I've been a member of your club for over a year and this is my second letter.

I guess there isn't a magazine on the market I haven't read, but I have found that THE LONG EAGLE is the book for me. I think the flying course is excellent and, of course, the Hangar is tops with me too.

Quite some time ago, I read one of George Bruce's stories called "THE FIGHTING MONGREL." One minute I held my sides laughing and the next I felt like crying. It certainly was swell.

I especially like the letters from pen pals and I would like to hear from Hawaii, Texas, Alaska, and from across the sea, and I'll be glad to answer all letters from anywhere.

Oh! I almost forgot. I think the members of this club should have a means of identification. May I suggest a pair of bronze wings similar to those that head the Around the Hangar department?

I'll land on your tarmac again soon I hope.

Thanks for your letter, Cecil—but please write more frequently in the future. Now let's turn our attention overseas to the mis-sive from First Class Aircraftsman James Somerville, Hut 16, R. A. F., Peterboro, Northants, Eng.:

Thanks for my membership card and your letter. The squadron is now at the Armament Training Station in Yorkshire, where the flying pupils now work with live ammo and eggs for the first time since they started flying. It is a bit of a thrill for them when they take off with their first load of bombs or their first belts of ammo in their guns. Though this is the first time they have dropped live bombs they are doing quite well as we have only been here a week and have only

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had three days flying, with four direction application, with the given wind, shift and direction, and we have had three direct groups on the center of the target.

Now tell the Lone Eagles to beat that one, even if it is the Royal Air Force of Great Britain.

Okay, James! Now, we'll fly back home again for a word from Edmond Rose, Metairie, La.:

I am a constant reader of THE LONE EAGLE and SKY FIGHTERS. Looking over some old issues, I noticed that the Lone Eagle formerly had a pet parrot who was attached to him. I thought the parrot would be in other stories but I notice he is not in recent issues. I hope you will have the parrot in the next issue.

Anybody else missing John Masters' pet? If so, let me know. We'll restore him to a place in our novels. And now we steer to Columbus, O., for a chat with Dick Harbold, of 924 Linwood Ave.:

I have just finished reading "PILOTS OF DEATH," and I thought it was wonderful, it sounded just like the real McCoy and no fake stuff. Port Columbus is just about a 10 minute drive from my home here in Columbus. Ohio, and I go out there often to look at the planes coming in and going out, watching beginners learn to fly with smiles on their faces.

A friend of mine that went to the same high school that I did just received his Pilot's license out at the Port and he was acclaimed the youngest pilot in the State of Ohio; he is really the one that got me interested in flying. I went out there with him a couple of times and it was swell. Please enroll me as a member as I have sent in my clipping to that effect. Well, my guns are jammed and there are two Heinies on my tail, so I'd better get to work!

Next letter's from Richard Brooks, Glasco, Kansas:

This is the first letter I've written you since joining your organization in 1934, so I hope it rates better than being thrown in the waste basket.

I have always been interested in aviation and I hope to become a transport pilot sometime in the future.

Judging from the stories I have read so far in THE LONE EAGLE I would advise you to keep John Masters in the war. Be sure and continue those Ambrose Hooley stories, too.

I would like to be listed as a pen pal and would like to write to other members. Your companion magazine SKY FIGHTERS is certainly good too. Keep up the good work.

Vincent Holcombe of Richmond Hill, N. Y., has this to say:

That story, "PILOTS OF DEATH," featuring the great World War pilot John Masters, was wonderful. I hope you will keep up the good old World War novels and have none of this modern stuff.

I hope I will get a job in Uncle Sam's air corps. Please have some more plans of ships in the magazine, I am a model builder. Have never been up, but my dad promises to take me in a plane one of these days.

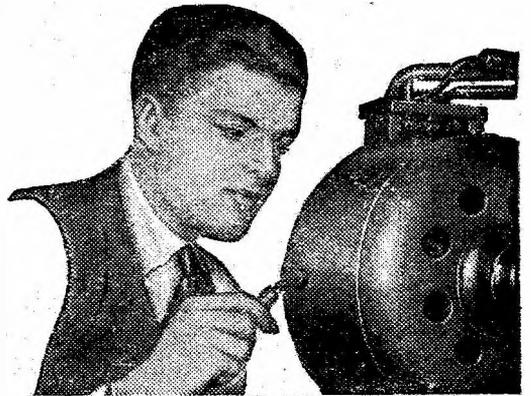
Well, one of those Boches is pumping slugs in my gas tank, and I guess I'll have to land.

Again we skip across the ocean, to visit with Allan Blake, Hut C. 9, No. 1, T. Wing, R. A. F., St. Athans, S. Wales, England:

Comrades of this vast organization, here I am, just one little cog in a vast piece of machinery, waiting to hear from all and any who may care to write to me.

Before asking you to write, I suppose I must make my letter interesting enough to warrant my friends sending me all the letters I expect. My

(Continued on page 110)



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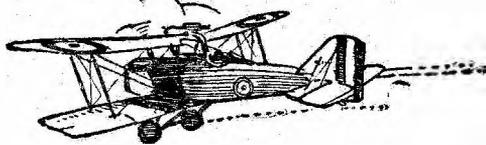
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SKY FIGHTERS

A THRILLING PUBLICATION

10c At All Stands

(Continued from page 109)

offer in return is a long and interesting letter to all who write, discussing anything you may wish. I promise to furnish a large photograph of myself in Royal Air Force uniform to all who send me one of themselves. Also I am willing to send a photo of any aeroplane or airship in the world upon request, having a collection of nearly 1,000 on hand. I will also answer any question regarding the life and the planes in the English R. A. F. Hoping you all are striving as hard as I am to make this movement more widely known, I must leave you, but please don't forget which way to splash that ink, and soon.

My instructor is calling me to go down for a flip in my training kite, as we call all ships here. It is a MILES MAGISTER.

Now hearken to a girl—Marion Kluter, of Cleveland, O.:

I am sending in my coupon to join the L. E. A. and to tell you how much I enjoy your mag., especially the John Masters series. Most men don't approve of girls in aviation, but truthfully I'm just as interested in the progress of aviation as any man can be.
Your L. E. A. flying course is really tops and will sure be a great help to me when I enroll for ground flying next year.

We're headed for Australia now—and here's William Osborne, our welcoming committee of Clarke St., Kennington, Bendigo, Victoria, Australia:

I have been reading THE LONE EAGLE and SKY FIGHTERS for about 12 months now, and I want to say that they stand superior to all other magazine that I have read. I like the Ambrose Hookey yarns, and think that "SATAN'S ARMADA" was the best full-length novel I've ever read.
Would you please admit me to membership in

LONE EAGLES OF AMERICA, 22 WEST 48th STREET, NEW YORK CITY.

Gentlemen:
Please enroll me as a member of the LONE EAGLES OF AMERICA. I am interested in flying, and hereby pledge myself to work for the advancement of aviation.

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(Print legibly)

Street.....

City and State..... Age.....

Do you want to be listed as a Pen Pal?
State whether you are a pilot, can fly, have ridden as passenger, or intend to become a

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Date.....

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THE LONE EAGLES OF AMERICA and also, list me as a Pen Pal. My favorite sports are tennis and fishing, and my hobby—stamp collecting.

Fellows, the next issue of THE LONE EAGLE will be chock-full of thrills! It's an ace number—opening with VULTURES OF DOOM, a complete book-length novel of U-Boat menace featuring John Masters. This grand yarn will make your heart do a Vrille in excitement. For humor fans, there will be an Ambrose Hooley howl, GOOSE STEPBROTHERS. For model builders, the Fokker Triplane Dr. 1. And for everybody interested in current history—THE ANSWER TO THE MODERN HORROR WEAPONS OF WAR, by Arch Whitehouse, a timely feature that will arouse lots of comment. Just wait and see.

While waiting for the June issue of THE LONE EAGLE, don't neglect to obtain the May issue of SKY FIGHTERS. WINGS FROM HELL, the novel of spy activities by Robert Sidney Bowen which will appear in our companion magazine, packs many a thrill. So long—and don't forget those letters!

—BRUCE McALESTER.

P. S. See THE SWAP COLUMN, Page 8.

PEN PALS



Here are some new members of THE LONE EAGLES OF AMERICA—all air fans. Many others will be listed in the next issue. The figures in the parentheses are the ages of the members.

- James Lackway (17), 752 Carroll St., St. Paul, Minnesota.
- Joseph Daly (14), 596 Manhattan Ave., New York City.
- Jean Seymour (18), 4906 Woodland Ave., Kansas City, Missouri.
- George Friend, Jr. (14), 224 E. Boston, Youngstown, Ohio.
- John Astor (20), 4022 1/2 W. Harrison St., Chicago, Ill.
- Jack Sadler (16), 708 Dougherty Place, Flint, Michigan.
- Bill Osborne (18), Clarke St., Kennington, Bendigo, Victoria, Australia.
- Howard Littlelike (15), Fillmore, Utah.
- Richard Lemke (17), 1840 Irving Pk. Rd., Chicago, Ill.
- Charles Bruna, Jr. (24), 310 E. 70th St., New York City, N. Y.
- J. Somerville, Hut 16, No. 3 Squadron, Royal Air Force, Peterboro, Northants, England.
- Marion Kluter (16 1/2), 8016 Priele Ave., Cleveland, O.
- Thomas H. Willis (21), 21 Main St., Southington, Connecticut.
- Phill E. T. Krimmer (29), 2443 N. 22th St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- A. C. Blake, Hut C. 9, No. 1 Squadron, Royal Air Force, St. Athan, Mr. Barry, Glamorgan, South Wales.
- S. Raymond Kinsella (37), Woodlawn & Warren Rd., St. Louis, Missouri.
- R. Martin, 33 Warrington St., Plaistow, London E. 13, England.
- Harold Davis (20), 89 Inglis St., Sydney, Australia.
- Bernard Lowenbach (14), 2920 W. Highland Blvd., Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- Burtis Woolfitt (13), 113 E. Hamilton, Flint, Michigan.
- Calvin Schriver (13), Box 562, Paris, Arkansas.
- Eugene Lewis (15), 201 Lee St., Biloxi, Mississippi.
- Richard Smith (14), R. F. D. No. 1, Pitcairn, Penna.
- Otto Werner (14), Box 336, Aitkin, Minnesota.
- Darrell Fifield (14), 3400—1st St., Des Moines, Iowa.
- Phil Hanna (12), 4309 Los Feliz, Los Angeles, Calif.

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STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933, of The Lone Eagle, published bi-monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1933.
State of New York)
County of New York) ss.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared N. L. Pines, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Publisher of The Lone Eagle, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are:

Publisher, Better Publications, Inc., 22 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y.; Editor, Bruce McAlester, 22 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y.; Managing Editor, None; Business Manager, H. L. Herbert, 22 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Better Publications, Inc., 22 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y.; N. L. Pines, 22 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company, but also, in case where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

N. L. PINES, Publisher.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 3rd day of October, 1933. Eugene Wechsler, Notary Public.
My commission expires March 30, 1939.

FIGHTIN' FOOLS

(Concluded from page 105)

when Blake and Kirtland, too eager, showed themselves half out of their hole, Mauser bullets came speeding to drop them, side by side, unconscious, onto the muddy bottom of their shelter—

* * * * *

Side by side they were when they came to, blinking dazedly in the light of a hospital ward. Kirtland stared up at a pretty, blue-eyed nurse who was taking his pulse. She smiled at him, noted something on a chart, and turned to take Blake's wrist in her cool fingers.

Kirtland turned his head, and the eyes of the two men met. Blake winked solemnly, and Kirtland grinned.

The nurse dropped Blake's wrist. "You two are doing beautifully," she said, and showed white, even teeth in an impartial smile at both men.

Then she moved away with a swish of starched linen.

The two were silent a moment. Then Blake spoke:

"Nice, huh, Dave?"

Kirtland's eyes glowed.

"Yeah, Larry. Mebbe—mebbe she's got a friend."

A slow grin widened Larry Blake's mouth, but his dark eyes were wet.

"Mebbe she has, feller. It shore ain't gonna do no harm to ask."

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 91

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Julius Buckler | 3. May, 1917 |
| 2. Rene Fonck, to avenge George Guynemer | 4. Nieuport II 5. Navy Cross |

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