

DECEMBER

WAR BIRDS

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

10¢

WINGS FOR A KING

by

LT. SEYMOUR POND

ALSO

W. E. BARRETT

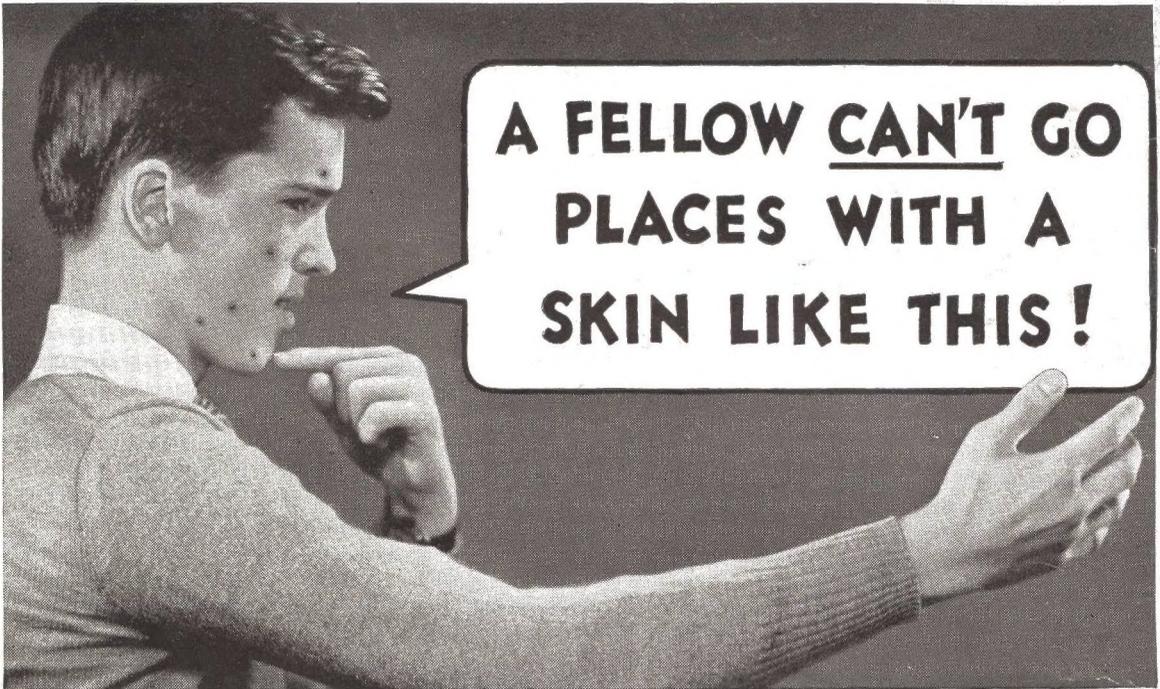
O. B. MYERS

ALLAN BOSWORTH

DARRELL JORDAN

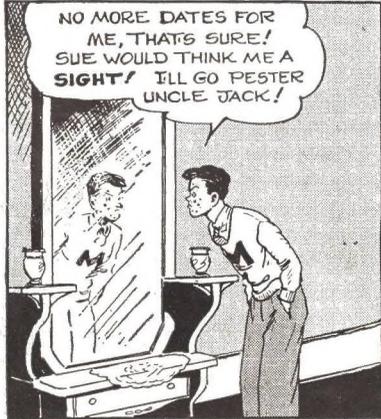
JAMES P. HUGHES





**A FELLOW CAN'T GO
PLACES WITH A
SKIN LIKE THIS!**

**But Pete
is soon
pimple-
free and
“out
stepping”**



**Don't let adolescent
pimples make a hermit
out of YOU!**

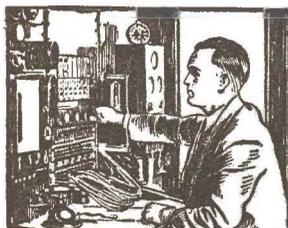
Between the ages of 13 and 25, important glands develop. This causes disturbances throughout the body. Waste poisons get into the blood and irritate the skin, making it break out in pimples.

But you can clear skin irritants out of your blood—with Fleischmann's Yeast. Then the pimples disappear! Eat 3 cakes of Fleischmann's Yeast a day, before meals, until skin clears.



—clears the skin
**by clearing skin irritants
out of the blood**

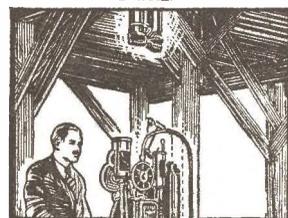
Learn at Home to Make More Money



Broadcasting Stations employ managers, engineers, operators, installation and maintenance men for jobs paying up to \$5,000 a year.



Set servicing pays many N. R. I. men \$200 to \$1,000 a year for their spare time. Full time men make as much as \$30, \$50, \$75 a week.



Making, installing and servicing Loud Speaker Apparatus is another growing money-making field for Radio trained men.

Some Other Jobs N.R.I. Trains Men For

- Broadcast Engineer.
- Operator in Broadcast Station.
- Aircraft Radio Operator.
- Operator of Airway Beacons.
- Government Radio Operator.
- Radio Operator on Ships.
- Serviceman on Loud Speaker Systems.
- Installation Engineer on Loud Speaker Systems.
- Sales Manager for Retail Stores.
- Service Manager for Retail Stores.
- Auto Radio Installation and Serviceman.
- Television Broadcast Operator.
- Television Engineer.
- Set Servicing Expert.

I'll train You Quickly for
Radio's GOOD spare time
and full time Jobs . . .

Mail Coupon for FREE Information

Why slave your life away in a no-future job? Why skimp, why scrape, trying to pay your bills? I'll train you quickly for a live-wire field with a future — RADIO. \$30, \$50, \$75 a week—that's week extra money—that's what many of my students make in their spare time while learning. My free book tells you about Radio's spare time and full time opportunities—about my tested training—about my students and graduates—what they are doing and making. Get this book. Be a Radio Expert. The Radio field is big enough to absorb many more properly trained men.

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Spare time and full time Radio Service. Installing, Operating, Maintaining Broadcast, Aviation Radio, Commercial, Ship and Television stations, a Radio service business of your own—I'll train you for these and other opportunities in the manufacture, sale and service of Radio, Loud Speaker and Television apparatus. My FREE book tells you about the many money-making opportunities in Radio. Get a copy. Mail Coupon today.

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I'm so sure you will be satisfied with my training that I agree in writing to refund every penny of your money if you are not entirely satisfied with my Lesson and Instruction Service when you finish.

Find Out What Radio Offers You

Act today. Mail the coupon. My 64-page book will be sent free to any ambitious fellow over 15 years of age. It tells about Radio's opportunities—explains the eighteen star features of my Course—shows letters of what others are doing and making. There is no obligation. Mail the coupon in an envelope or paste on 1 cent post card.

J. E. SMITH, President
National Radio Institute,
Department SNF,
Washington, D. C.

Here's Proof

MADE UP TO \$400 A MONTH



"I was working in a garage with no future in sight. My wife and I decided to put aside enough to pay for your Course. We have not regretted it. I have made as high as \$400 a month in Radio."—E. G. WOLFE, 1202 Eden St., Elkhart, Indiana.

\$10 to \$25 WEEKLY IN SPARE TIME

"I am making from \$10 to \$25 a week in spare time, while still holding my regular job as a machinist. I have earned enough to pay for your Course many times over. Only a trained man can service sets nowadays. I owe my success to N. R. I."



—WILLIAM F. RUPP, R.F.D. No. 1, Conshohocken, Penna.

CHIEF OPERATOR AT BROADCASTING STATION



"When I had completed the first twenty lessons, I had obtained my license as a Radio Broadcast Operator and immediately joined Station WMPC where I am now Chief Operator. I do not hesitate to recommend N. R. I. Training to anyone."

—HOLLIS F. HAYES, 85 Madison St., Lapeer, Michigan.

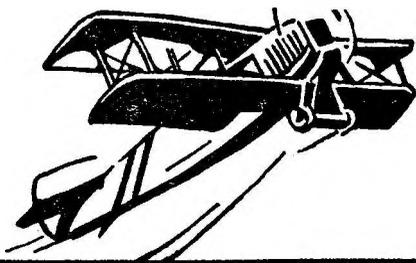
MAIL THIS NOW
for FREE 64 page book

ACT TODAY

Dear Mr. Smith: Without obligation send me your free book about spare time and full time Radio opportunities, and how I can train for them (Please write plainly)

J. E. SMITH, President
National Radio Institute,
Washington, D. C.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____
STATE _____



WAR BIRDS



Vol. 31

December, 1935

Whole No. 88

TWO BIG HIGH SKY NOVELS

- FLYING FURIES** James Perley Hughes 6
 He wagered his life with Death that he could carry his secret into those black skies. Before that bet was paid the Devil bought many a chip.
- WINGS FOR A KING** Lieut. S. G. Pond 72
 Crossing hot guns with black-crossed crates on the front was one thing, but riding the dreadnought that carried the King was something else again.

AMAZING TRUE FEATURES

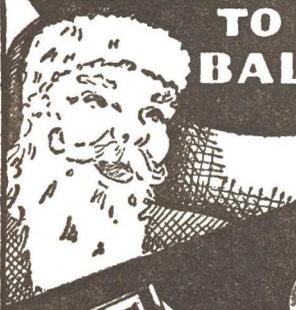
- THE FOKKERS** W. E. Barrett 44
 A novel-length true feature giving you for the first time the complete story of the Fokkers and the men who flew them, from the first ship to the last.
- ONE HOUR OF WAR** W. E. Brownstone 107
 Captain Castrancane was the first Italian Pilot captured in the war.

THRILLING SHORT STORIES

- BOMBS FOR BREAKFAST** O. B. Myers 25
 Bouquets of hate blossom into wreaths for dead men's wings when two try a forbidden flight.
- NO SURVIVORS** Allan R. Bosworth 35
 Mystery ships and cold seas were the decoys that took Spike and Jerry into the waters where ships came back with no survivors.
- WARRIOR WINGS** Darrell Jordan 60
 He came down with that wing-stopping message "Too old to fly"—but there was many a high-sky trick for old war dogs.
- THE FLYING MONGOL** Arthur J. Burks 95
 When a Tartar Prince takes to the clouds, anything can happen and usually does.

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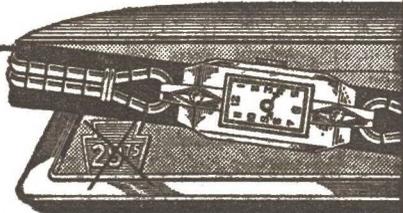
17 Jewel WALTHAM Outfit

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KM-4 . . . Famous **WALTHAM** — now offered at a specially low price. Handsomely engraved. 12 size white lifetime case; factory guaranteed, accurate and dependable 17 Jewel **WALTHAM** movement; complete with engraved knife and chain to match. All for \$19.75 — Only \$1.88 a month.



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28x4.50-21	2.10	28x5	2.30
28x4.75-19	2.10	28x5 1/2	2.40
28x4.75-20	2.20	28x5 3/4	2.55
28x5.00-19	2.25	28x6	2.65
28x5.00-20	2.35	28x6 1/2	2.75
28x5.25-19	2.40	28x6 3/4	2.85
28x5.25-20	2.50	28x7	2.95
28x5.50-19	2.55	28x7 1/2	3.05
28x5.50-20	2.65	28x8	3.15
28x5.75-19	2.75	28x8 1/2	3.25
28x5.75-20	2.85	28x9	3.35
28x6.00-19	2.95	28x9 1/2	3.45
28x6.00-20	3.05	28x10	3.55
28x6.25-19	3.15	28x10 1/2	3.65
28x6.25-20	3.25	28x11	3.75
28x6.50-19	3.35	28x11 1/2	3.85
28x6.50-20	3.45	28x12	3.95
28x6.75-19	3.55	28x12 1/2	4.05
28x6.75-20	3.65	28x13	4.15
28x7.00-19	3.75	28x13 1/2	4.25
28x7.00-20	3.85	28x14	4.35
28x7.25-19	3.95	28x14 1/2	4.45
28x7.25-20	4.05	28x15	4.55
28x7.50-19	4.15	28x15 1/2	4.65
28x7.50-20	4.25	28x16	4.75
28x7.75-19	4.35	28x16 1/2	4.85
28x7.75-20	4.45	28x17	4.95
28x8.00-19	4.55	28x17 1/2	5.05
28x8.00-20	4.65	28x18	5.15
28x8.25-19	4.75	28x18 1/2	5.25
28x8.25-20	4.85	28x19	5.35
28x8.50-19	4.95	28x19 1/2	5.45
28x8.50-20	5.05	28x20	5.55
28x8.75-19	5.15	28x20 1/2	5.65
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28x9.00-19	5.35	28x21 1/2	5.85
28x9.00-20	5.45	28x22	5.95
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28x13.00-20	8.65	28x38	9.15
28x13.25-19	8.75	28x38 1/2	9.25
28x13.25-20	8.85	28x39	9.35
28x13.50-19	8.95	28x39 1/2	9.45
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28x22.00-20	15.85	28x74	16.35
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28x24.00-19	17.35	28x81 1/2	17.85
28x24.00-20	17.45	28x82	17.95
28x24.25-19	17.55	28x82 1/2	18.05
28x24.25-20	17.65	28x83	18.15
28x24.50-19	17.75	28x83 1/2	18.25
28x24.50-20	17.85	28x84	18.35
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28x24.75-20	18.05	28x85	18.55
28x25.00-19	18.15	28x85 1/2	18.65
28x25.00-20	18.25	28x86	18.75
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28x25.25-20	18.45	28x87	18.95
28x25.50-19	18.55	28x87 1/2	19.05
28x25.50-20	18.65	28x88	19.15
28x25.75-19	18.75	28x88 1/2	19.25
28x25.75-20	18.85	28x89	19.35
28x26.00-19	18.95	28x89 1/2	19.45
28x26.00-20	19.05	28x90	19.55
28x26.25-19	19.15	28x90 1/2	19.65
28x26.25-20	19.25	28x91	19.75
28x26.50-19	19.35	28x91 1/2	19.85
28x26.50-20	19.45	28x92	19.95
28x26.75-19	19.55	28x92 1/2	20.05
28x26.75-20	19.65	28x93	20.15
28x27.00-19	19.75	28x93 1/2	20.25
28x27.00-20	19.85	28x94	20.35
28x27.25-19	19.95	28x94 1/2	20.45
28x27.25-20	20.05	28x95	20.55
28x27.50-19	20.15	28x95 1/2	20.65
28x27.50-20	20.25	28x96	20.75
28x27.75-19	20.35	28x96 1/2	20.85
28x27.75-20	20.45	28x97	20.95
28x28.00-19	20.55	28x97 1/2	21.05
28x28.00-20	20.65	28x98	21.15
28x28.25-19	20.75	28x98 1/2	21.25
28x28.25-20	20.85	28x99	21.35
28x28.50-19	20.95	28x99 1/2	21.45
28x28.50-20	21.05	28x100	21.55
28x28.75-19	21.15	28x100 1/2	21.65
28x28.75-20	21.25	28x101	21.75
28x29.00-19	21.35	28x101 1/2	21.85
28x29.00-20	21.45	28x102	21.95
28x29.25-19	21.55	28x102 1/2	22.05
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28x29.50-20	21.85</		

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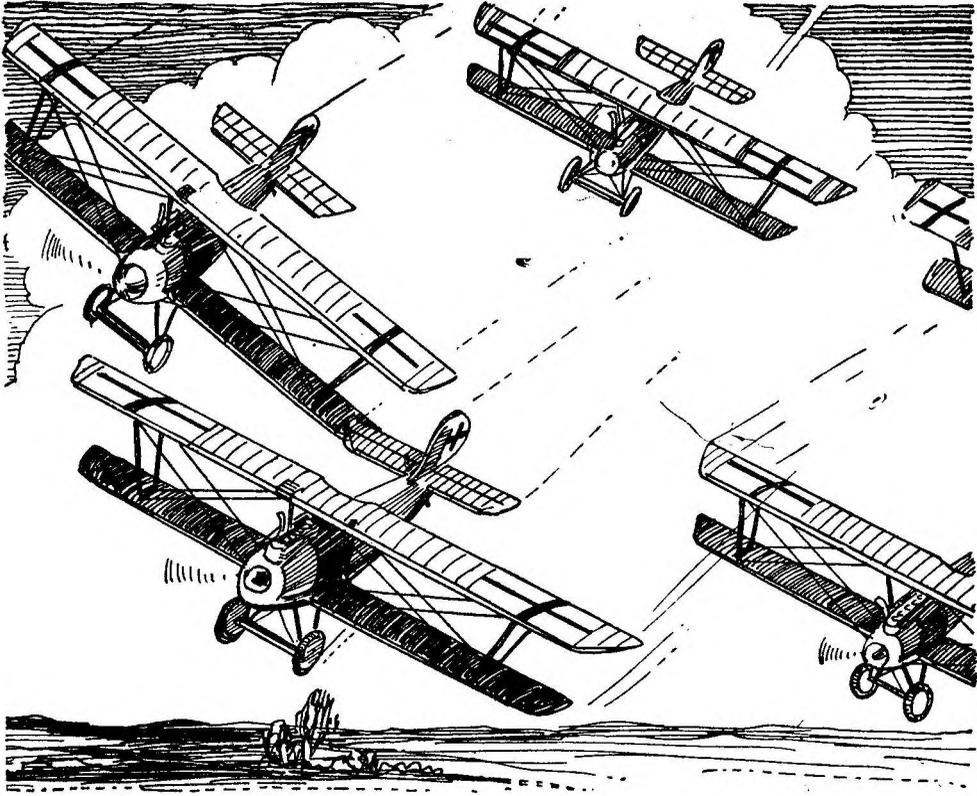
FLYING FURIES

By

JAMES PERLEY HUGHES



The Pfalz piqued down as he hung there on the door—crucified.



The Price Of The Secret He Carried On His Wings Was Death. Through Flaming Skies And The Greatest Odds A Man Ever Faced, He Won His Bargain With Fate

GROWING tenseness galled Dick Warburton as he led his newly acquired flight toward the lines. He had taken command only a few hours before, but already he knew his pilots hated him. He had been sent to fill the place of a popular commander, who had been killed in action. More than that, he had received instructions to tame the roughest and most unruly crew in the A.E.F.

Now he was at their head, thundering toward No Man's Land. As they sighted the trenches, he saw a small formation of Pfalz pursuit ships cruising along the lines. A glance through his glasses and he recognized the Boche quartet. Each ship bore

the Skull and Bones of the Death's Head squadron. Dick had heard of this *escadre*. Its commander, Hermann Schleichtweg, was regarded as the high priest of Frightfulness among German birdmen.

Warburton veered in the enemy's direction and signalled the alerte. Hardly had his wings stopped wagging than Gene Dolin and Jim Carter, the men riding just behind him, lunged forward.

"Get back," Dick yelled, pantomiming his words.

Neither pilot heeded his gestured command. Instead, they gunned their Spads to greater speed. Warburton threw his own throttle forward. The formation was break-

ing up in spite of his orders. As his own tail lifted, he saw Dolin and Carter strike at the Pfalz flying in the rear guard position. A second later, two more men had joined them. Miller and Spence. They had quit their posts in spite of Warburton's signals. Now the combined blasts of their guns were ripping the German to pieces.

Fighting with a speed and savagery that crumpled the German up, they crowded in. Flames sprang from the Pfalz fuselage, but the Americans did not cease their fire.

"No need for that. He's dead," Dick growled.

BUT the four continued to lash the blazing wreck, following it to the grass tops. Then they zoomed and struck at a second Hun. With swift precision they cut him off from his companions and then methodically tore him to bits. Warburton could see that the man was a green pilot, helpless in the hands of four seasoned fighters. Before the remaining Boche could come to his aid, he was tumbling to his death. Once more the four followed the shattered pilot down, scourging his lifeless body.

"Hun stuff. Not our game," Warburton rasped.

Then he caught sight of the rippling streamers of a squadron commander and knew that Hermann Schleichtweg was leading the patrol. He had heard stories of the man's ruthless savagery and tricky ways, but he charged at him with all the speed his Hisso could develop.

The German nosed around to meet his attack, but as Dick peered through his sights, he saw Dolin and Carter strike down on his tail.

"Get away. He's my meat," Warburton pantomimed, but the men paid no attention.

Next Miller and Spence barged in.

"Get away. Get away," Dick waved his arms frantically.

Then he saw Schleichtweg staring at him.

The man saluted and gestured to his guns. The American nodded. A challenge to a duel had been given and accepted. Once more Dick signalled to his followers. He saw Dolin and Carter exchange glances. Next they beckoned to Miller and Spence. A wave of their hands and they backsticked to a higher level.

Dick gunned his Spad as his companions darted away. He could see Schleichtweg bending low in his cockpit. Flickers came from the Pfalz cowl. The Spad bored in, its Brownings chattering. The German dodged, trying every trick in his ken to find an opening, but Warburton met his rushes with blazing guns.

The battle quickened, reaching a speed where both were forcing their planes. Dick felt a sense of elation steal over him as the combat progressed. With each exchange, he was gaining an advantage and his guns throbbed steadily. Then he saw Schleichtweg gesture to the left. Warburton looked away to see four swiftly moving Spads hammering a single Pfalz to pieces. The man was scudding for the carpet, his hands raised in a gesture of surrender.

"Let him go," Dick bellowed. "He's trying to—"

His words stopped as he felt, rather than saw, the sardonic laughter that came from Gene Dolin's lips. As the Boche pilot raised his hands, Dolin and Carter bored in. Their cowl guns flashed and the pilot fell forward, riddled as he tried to surrender. "Murder—that's all. Plain murder," Dick muttered.

He spun to resume his combat with Hermann Schleichtweg, but the Death's Head leader was scudding into the German back area. Spots of red showed upon Warburton's cheek, but they were not the flush of victory. Shame gripped, shame for the men he commanded. He signalled them to reform and led them back to the airdrome.

A crowd of mechanics and squadron attaches greeted them at their landing. Word

of the combat had been telephoned and a cheer marked their arrival.

"Tough luck you didn't get Schleichtweg," Al King, the flight adjutant, said to Gene Dolin.

"We'd have burned him up if it hadn't been for—"

The rest of Dolin's words were mumbled, but his eyes flicked toward Dick Warburton.

"How about that baby, who tried to surrender?" King asked. "The front line O.P.'s said—"

"We gave him the works, the hot damned yellow belly," Dolin broke in.

Dick glanced at the pilot. A crooked smile held his lips and he glared defiantly when their eyes met. Then Dolin turned and swaggered toward the barracks. Warburton summoned Sergeant Cassidy, the non-com in charge of the riggers and machinists, and ordered an immediate servicing of all ships. Temporary repairs must be made so that the flight could take to the air without more than a minute's warning.

"The boys are sure living up to their pledge," the sergeant said, when Dick had finished giving orders.

"Pledge?"

"Yeah—they had a meeting and swore they'd get the guys that knocked off Captain Norton. They're a tough gang of joystickers, but they naturally loved that skipper. They damn near went crazy when he was sent west."

Warburton nodded. He was beginning to understand.

HE called a messenger and sent out an order for the pilots to assemble in the mess hall. A few minutes later he was talking to them, soberly, earnestly, hoping to make them see the plans he had in mind.

"I called you here, fellows," he told them, "to give you an idea of what we're going to do. I didn't have a chance this morning before the hop off."

"Teacher's outlining the day's lesson," he heard Gene Dolin mutter.

"First I want to say," Dick went on, ignoring the words, "that I am proud to take the place of so able a fighter as Captain Norton. He was a great pilot and his name deserves more reverence than what it received this morning."

"Just what do you mean by that?" Jim Carter shoved back his chair.

"Several things. That show you fellows put on, for instance. If you thought you were making Captain Norton rest any easier in his grave, then—"

"Just a minute, captain," Gene Dolin broke in, "did you know Charlie Norton?"

"No, but—"

"Listen, skipper—he was the whitest man who ever held a stick. We know you're an ace, a polo star and a lot of other swell things, but—Charlie Norton was our pal and Hermann Schleichtweg and his mob burned him alive when he hadn't a chance."

"How do you mean?"

"They threw an inflammatory bomb into his crate after his engine had conked."

"A rotten, Hunnish trick, I'll admit," Dick answered, "but I can't see that it excuses what you fellows did today."

"No? Well, we think it does," Dolin shot back.

Dick Warburton turned to the pilot. He smiled as he looked into the man's face. It was a friendly, inviting smile, but his eyes were darkly serious.

"I'm sorry, but I differ with you, Dolin. As I'm skipper, we'll do as I say."

"Yeah?"

"Yes. And that's all right now. Dismissed until the evening patrol."

Dick turned and left the mess hall, crossing the field to where the riggers were going over his ship. As he neared, Sergeant Cassidy hurried to meet him.

"You'd better have a look here, captain," the man said in a whisper. "There are a lot of holes in your bus that were not made by Spandaus."

Warburton grinned and slapped the non-com on the shoulder.

"Don't be so suspicious, sarge," he laughed, "In that dog-fight this morning, lead was flying so loose that anyone was liable to step into it. Don't worry, sarge. I can look after myself."

Secret Mission

HERMANN SCHLEICHTWEG flew back alone to the Death's Head airdrome. His deeply lined face was brick red with anger. He had taken a trio of cub pilots out for a Cook's tour of the lines and had been jumped on by a flight of Americans who fought like winged furies.

Schleichtweg resented this onslaught for more than one reason. The cubs were hand picked pilots he hoped to train to take the places of men now flying in his formation. Hauptmann Hermann was no gentleman. He knew he never could be, in spite of the Imperial commission he held. He hated aristocrats as only a peasant can hate. He wanted none of them.

Circling over his airdrome, he looked down to see a number of officers playing tennis. He recognized them without the sight of any face.

"Gentlemen," the word came through his tightly held teeth like escaping steam. "Champagne and cake instead of blood and iron. Just wait. I'll show them that they burn as brightly as any peasant when they do go in flames."

He brought his badly mauled Pfalz down and stamped into the orderly room. On his desk he saw the daily report of the Imperial Intelligence Corps. He glanced over it hurriedly. His eyes centered on a paragraph and a frown furrowed its way between his sparse blond brows as he read:

Captain Richard Warburton has been assigned to command the American 218th Independent Unit. Warburton is the knightly,

gentleman sportsman type and was once noted as an international polo star.

A sour smile came to the squadron leader's lips. Then he glanced out the window at the tennis players. He poured out a glass of *schnaps* and tossed it down his throat, his lips widening.

"Gentlemen may be gentlemen," he mumbled, "but I shall hunt these American pig-dogs with blooded hounds and shall not count my losses."

He took up the Intelligence bulletin again. A report from the chemical warfare division intrigued him. A new type of poison bomb had been tested on the eastern front and had slaughtered Cossacks by the hundred. The *hauptmann's* blue eyes narrowed and he reached for the field telephone. In another minute he had the chief of the chemical warfare unit whose base was not far away.

"Have you any of those new No. 116BX bombs, Herr Oberst?" he inquired.

"A few for experimental purposes."

Schleichtweg smiled into the transmitter.

"I should be glad to aid you, colonel. We have a lot of wild dogs down here and—"

"*Ganz gute*—I'll send you some," was the enthusiastic interruption. "Wild dogs will be splendid. We tried them on sheep, but the gas spoils the mutton. Wild dogs are excellent."

"*Danke schoen*—thanks awfully. I'll send my orderly after them."

Hauptmann Hermann took another glass of *schnaps* and stared out the window. His choler revived as he watched the graceful ease with which Eric von Unworth played. Von Unworth was a *freiherr*, a baron. More than that, he came from Bonn and had been a polo player.

"Two dogs with a single shot," chuckled Hermann to his third glass of brandy.

He waited until his orderly had returned from the Chemical Warfare depot before he summoned Eric von Unworth into his office. The young baron's well-

groomed cleanliness only added to Hermann's rancor. He glowered as the pilot saluted smartly.

"You sent for me, Herr Hauptmann?"

"Yes. I have a special mission."

"Thanks, my captain, for remembering me."

Animation brightened the young German's eyes as he leaned forward to hear his chief's instructions.

"You used to play polo, didn't you?" Schleichtweg asked.

"Yes, sir. At Bonn."

"Ever meet Richard Warburton—an American?"

"Why, yes. He was No. 1 for the winning four at London. Of course I didn't know him personally, but—"

"That is good, because you are going to kill him," the squadron leader broke in.

"When do I hop, sir?"

"At once and remember—this is a special mission. Say nothing to anyone."

Eric von Unworth hurried to his quarters to don his flying suit. He found Julius von Schmaltz, his room-mate, waiting for him.

"What was it?" the young man asked.

"Secret mission. Can't tell."

"Then it must be something ghastly, if Herr Hauptmann originated it."

Baron Eric did not answer. He sat down and wrote a letter, handing it to von Schmaltz after tightly sealing the flap.

"Don't open it unless—something happens," he said.

"But, Eric—"

"Please—I can tell you nothing."

Slipping on his helmet, von Unworth went out onto the field. His Pfalz was out, warming for the hop off. Behind it were

The Baron Challenges For Combat

Baron von Unworth's hand was raised in snappy salute.

"To fight with Captain Warburton would be an honor," he said.

"You're going to kill him, not fight with him."

"But, Herr Hauptmann—"

"You are going over with these," the commander pointed to the bombs he had just received. "You will drop them on Warburton's airdrome."

"But, Herr Hauptmann,—"

"They killed three of our recruits this morning. They hunted them down like wild dogs."

"In fair battle, sir, while—"

"*Achtung!* Attention!" rasped the *hauptmann*. "You will follow orders."

Baron Eric von Unworth stiffened, his hands held tightly to his sides. He saw the gloating in Hermann Schleichtweg's eyes and he sensed the motive that prompted his selection for this ghastly mission.

other ships, their props idling. He saw Hauptmann Schleichtweg waiting to give him his final instructions.

"Your bombs have been loaded," the squadron leader informed him. "Remember—it's the 218th Independent Unit at Le Meux. Get low enough to insure success. Then come back and report results."

"*Ja wohl, Herr Hauptmann.*"

Bitterness sounded in his words, but Schleichtweg ignored the tone. He watched the young baron enter his pit and give the Pfalz the gun. Then he laughed, silently.

But no laughter came to Eric von Unworth. He glanced down at the bombs as he flew towards the line. They were marked 116BX. His eyes narrowed. He had read the Intelligence reports on those bombs. They were the last word in Frightfulness. Because of their ghastly effects, even the high priests of *Schrecklichkeit* had been loath to try them on the Western front.

"And he sent me against a man I've met and known," the young baron muttered.

Next came memories of Dick Warburton. Von Unworth had only met him in one of those perfunctory introductions that marked each of the international matches. He remembered the American as a gallant, fearless player, but a sportsman at all times.

"If I could only fight him, it would be all right," Eric kept thinking, "but—I've had my orders and—"

He was almost over the airdrome. He reached into an inside pocket for his map case. Next he took a wrench from the tool case on his right. A glance below. He was over the airdrome now— He could see men and machines upon the tarmac. Faces were looking up at him. He waved his hand as though in friendly greeting. Then his youthful face tightened. He reached down to the floor of the cubby and took up a heavy object. For a moment he held it uncertainly. Then he tossed it over the side.

ALTHOUGH Dick Warburton apparently paid no attention to Sergeant Cassidy's warning, the presence of Browning machine gun bullets in his Spad caused him moments of sober reflection. He knew they were not there by chance, but questioning would do no good. He must find another method of combating the enemies in his own command.

No patrols were scheduled until late afternoon and Dick put in the day inspecting the hangars, machine shops and armory. He saw nothing of the pilots. Most of them were playing poker in Gene Dolin's room.

Afternoon came and the Spads were wheeled out for the dusk patrol. As the pilots appeared, Warburton again felt the tension he had noted that morning. He watched Dolin and Carter examining his Spad. He wondered if they were looking at the marks left by Browning bullets. He

sauntered in their direction as though without purpose.

"Somebody did some careless shooting this morning," he told them, "Did you notice those Browning holes back of the tank?"

"Yeah. Carter was just showing them to me."

Dolin's eyes met Warburton's squarely.

"The boys ought to be more careful," Dick spoke almost casually. "They might have knocked me off—by mistake."

"They'll be careful in the future, don't worry." Dolin's eyes again met Dick's.

Warburton grinned. Hard as flint and tough as leather. In the future the bullets would hit their target. Dolin knew what he was talking about.

The hour for the take-off neared and Warburton donned his flying suit. Then he heard the drone of a motor overhead.

"Look, skipper. It's one of Schleichtweg's gang," Al King, the flight adjutant, called.

Field glasses were raised and focussed on the enemy ship. A bellow of warning and men scattered for the bomb proofs. The German had tossed a heavy object over the edge of his cockpit. Warburton did not move, but continued to stare into the sky.

"Let him get it. It'll save us a lot of grief," he heard Harry Spence bawl.

Warburton winced. They all hated him.

The missile thrown from the Pfalz was tumbling, end over end. No bomb did that. Next it struck. An orderly rushed out to pick it up. In another moment he was running to Warburton, a monkey wrench in his hand. Between its jaws was a sheet of paper.

As Dick opened the letter, pilots and mechanics swarmed around him. He glanced at the hastily scrawled lines and handed the letter to Jim Carter, who stood at his right.

"What does it say?" half a dozen voices asked.

A hard smile thinned Carter's lips.

"Baron von Unworth of the Death's Head squadron challenges the skipper to a duel."

A buzz of excitement and eyes were fixed upon the new commander.

"I've met that fellow," Dick told his men. "He used to ride for Bonn in the International polo matches."

"Old college chum, huh?" Gene Dolin sneered.

"No, but—" a glance at the circling Pfalz—"but I rather enjoy the prospect of fighting him. He's a sport."

Conflicting glances flicked around the circle. Then Tom Miller, one of the veterans of the outfit, edged forward.

"I wouldn't do it, if I were you," he said. "Remember what these birds did to Charlie Norton."

"This fellow's all right," Dick answered.

"But, skipper, they—"

"Aw let him go," Gene Dolin growled. "Cripes, they're doing us a favor."

Warburton did not hear these words. He had hurried to where his already warmed ship was standing and climbed into the pit.

"Hold the patrol until I get down," he called to Miller.

"O. K., captain."

Flying Gas

THE Hisso roared and the Spad slid into the air. Gene Dolin and Jim Carter watched it climb. Warburton did not level off until he was even with the Pfalz. Then he nosed toward it. Next the men on the ground saw American and Boche raise their hands in formal salutes.

A swelling roar as both engines were sauced to the limit, leaping at each other like spurred charges. Neither pilot fired, although they were shooting through the air like meteors.

"They must think we're a lot of damned canteen workers, putting on a show like that," Gene Dolin rapped.

"Aw dry up," Jim Carter rumbled. "Give him a break. He ain't got long to live."

The two ships neared each other at tremendous speed, skimming just beneath the low hanging clouds that marked the ceiling. Both bent low, their eyes on the ring sights. Dick steadied the Spad as he neared his foe and unleashed his guns. Von Unworth wormed out of line and then cut in, his Spandus chattering. Warburton dodged in turn and the two swept by each other with a roar of motors.

"Get you next time," Dick yelled, waving his hand.

A flash of teeth and the young baron grinned. Then he waved in reply.

Down on the ground, Gene Dolin swore and then spat derisively.

"Those birds are just putting on a show—acting," he grouched. "Throwing kisses and waving handkerchiefs like a pair of hot damned Chautauqua hounds."

"Shut your trap and give the guy a break," Jim Carter snapped.

Spad and Pfalz had straightened and were lunging at full speed again. The clatter of their machine guns could be heard distinctly. Several of the pilots had field glasses and were following the combat with tensing interest.

"Say those boys are sure fighting," Tom Miller yelled to where Gene Dolin stood.

"Oh, yeah? It looks more—"

He stopped as a savage burst rang out and the Pfalz half staggered. A bullet had bitten into Eric von Unworth's arm.

"—more like shadow boxing than anything else," Gene finished when the young baron brought his nose up again.

The battle mounted in speed and ferocity. The two ships clung together, each pilot trying for the killing shot. Dick Warburton felt a hot streak rake his scalp and he was stunned for a moment. He reeled in his cubby.

"Didn't I tell you?" Jim Carter yelled, when the Spad went into a spin.

"It's a break for us," Dolin growled in answer.

Dick was falling, but Eric von Unworth made no attempt to follow him down. He cruised in a circle, watching his adversary. The American shook his head, clearing it. Then he pulled out of the spin and zoomed.

Once more the two ships raged at each other, their cowl guns jabbering. Warburton realized he was fighting a man of unusual skill and ability. The German knew every phase of aerial combat and would be hard to maneuver into position for a killing shot. Dick nursed his stick, darting right, then left. A feint that drew Baron Eric into a wing pivot and the American had his opportunity. He kicked the rudder and the tail whanged around. The Brownings clattered, their whipping streams crashing into the Boche's dark cowl. Strips of fabric peeled. Then the prop began to slow. Another blast and the Pfalz wobbled drunkenly.

Dick released his grip on the trip. The young baron was gesturing to him.

He wheeled and swept up to where he could see more plainly. The German pointed to his engine. It was dead. Next he held up his hands and shook his head. Warburton's brow puckered. Von Unworth was telling he was out of the battle, but at the same time declaring he would not surrender. Dick watched the German swing around, looking over the edge of his pit as though hunting a landing place.

Next he straightened and glanced toward the American. A stiff and formal salute. Then his hand waved in farewell.

"Say what the—"

Dick's words froze. Eric von Unworth had stood his Pfalz upon its nose and was dropping toward earth at meteor speed. The American watched, expecting to see him pull up, but the descent continued, unchecked.

"Gosh, I—"

A crash as the Pfalz struck. Then came

an explosion that was more than the detonation of a gasolene tank.

"Bombs," was the word Dick's lips formed.

He saw a squad of mechanics and infantry guards rush toward the ruined Pfalz. As they neared it, a silvery haze spread over the ground. Then men stopped suddenly. Some turned and ran, their hands to their faces. Others reeled and fell.

"Gas. Poison gas," Warburton muttered.

He fired a burst to attract the attention of the pilots below, then pantomimed a warning. Instead of answering, the men on the ground pointed into the sky, waving frantically. He could not understand their gestures.

Then the sound of many Spandaus cut through the roar of his motor. He looked around. A full flight of Death's Head planes were dropping out of the clouds above him. Hauptmann Schleichtweg was at their head, his cowl guns blazing.

DICK WARBURTON nosed up to meet the German attack. Safety awaited him below, but he did not consider it. He shoved his throttle to the limit, weaving in and out among his adversaries. His guns clattered until the belts were empty. He whirled away, working rapidly to fit fresh webs into the loading blocks. He spun to strike again, but realized that with six darting Pfalz firing at him, he could not hope to survive.

He darted to one side as Hermann Schleichtweg lunged at him. As he spun, he saw a Boche riding to protect the *hauptmann's* tail. The pilot was in the cross wires of Dick's sights and he tripped his guns. The German sank forward, clawing at his chest. In another moment, his ship was tumbling.

The American whirled to strike again, but a gesture from Schleichtweg brought four Pfalz thundering down. Dick nosed up, trying to avoid them and at the same time battle with the Hun commander. Bullets tore into his wings, his fuselage, his

cowl. In just another moment, they would be in the cockpit.

But as he faced what he felt sure would be his final moments, Warburton heard a fresh clatter of guns from off to the left. He glanced around to see five Spads charging into the fight, Jim Carter at their head. Dick struck at the circle of enemies girding him, breaking through to join his comrades. But as he swung around, three Pfalz attacked. He tried to shake them off, but one was shooting at him constantly. Then he saw Jim Carter hurtle through the scrum. The man's guns flashed, sending the nearest of the Germans into the death spin. But as he lashed the Hun, the two remaining Pfalz turned their Spandaus on him.

"Look out, Jim," Warburton yelled.

He kicked his rudder, trying to aid his companion, but the Germans held their guns on the newcomer, raking his Spad from end to end. Jim reeled in his cockpit, struggling to retain control. His ship lurched and bucked. Another crash and he sagged forward, falling against the stick. The tail flew up and a puff of smoke came from the *empenage*. Next he began falling, the Spad in flames.

"Gees—he saved my bacon and then—"

Dick saw Gene Dolin come raging through the mêlée. He had not seen the falling torch that had been Jim Carter and

his trim airplane. Gene was looking for his buddy, but could not find him.

The battle mounted, but Dolin did not give up the search. He signalled, but no answer came to his wildly wagging wings. Then the Pfalz under Schleichtweg veered suddenly and scudded for Hun territory. A short pursuit and Warburton summoned his men to resume formation. He led them back to their airdrome to find it in a turmoil. Hands pointed to where Eric von Unworth had fallen. Meaningless words were bellowed as the pilots slid to the ground.

"Where's Jim—he isn't here." Gene Dolin had rushed to where Warburton had alighted and gripped him by the shoulder.

"I'm sorry," Dick looked into the man's distended eyes, "but Jim—"

"He went down in flames, Gene," Tom Miller broke in, "right after he saved the skipper from three Boche, who—"

"Down in flames?" Dolin faced Dick with eyes ablaze. "Down in flames after saving you?"

"That's right. I'm sorry that—"

"A he-man like him gets knocked off to save you?" Gene's grip of Warburton's shoulder tightened. "Can you beat that— Jim Carter cracks up to let a louse live! Cripes what a world, what a—"

Hysterical laughter shook him. His wide mouth opened and he bellowed like a man gone mad.

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"I'm sorry, Dolin. It was a game thing, but—"

"Gees—don't you say anything more or I'll spill your guts all over this lot. Jim Carter gone—saving you—you of all things — Cripes what a laugh — what a howl!"

"Look here, Dolin," Dick shot back, "I'm not going to stand for—"

"Not going to stand for what?" the pilot snapped his gun from its holster.

A shot cracked out, but Warburton had stepped to one side. Dolin shifted his gun, but Dick's fist hooked to his jaw before he could fire a second time. The blow was perfectly timed and placed. The pilot went down in a heap, his gun falling beside him.

"Guard house, skipper?" Al King, the adjutant, had summoned several infantrymen.

"No—take him to his room. I've got to look after this gas."

Panic had gripped the airdrome, as the drifting mist felled men who had escaped when von Unworth first crashed. Relief workers were afraid to go into it. Warburton hurried across the field. The silver haze was dotted with forms that reeled, then fell. Stretcher bearers paused on the edge of the stricken area, afraid to go further.

"Cripes—the only thing that'll save this whole outfit is a change in the wind," he heard a man say, "and you can't make the wind blow."

"Oh, yes, you can," Dick yelled, as he started for the hangars on the run.

A shout and he summoned both pilots and ground crews. Four men were detailed to each Spad. One by one the machines were wheeled to the field where Eric von Unworth had fallen. A line was formed in the face of the slowly drifting gas. Anchor ropes were fixed to the wings while the wheels were chocked with pegs. Tails were lifted high and then the engines started. The Spads tugged at their moorings, but a hurricane swept over the field,

driving the gas before it. Stretcher bearers rushed forward to pick up still writhing forms.

"Well, that's that. Now for the real trouble."

The Death's Heads Strike

NIGHT had come when Dick Warburton mounted to the room where Gene Dolin was quartered. He opened the door without knocking. Three men were seated about a table in whose center was a bottle of Three Star.

"You sure got your guts coming here," Dolin barked.

"A man needs guts in this outfit," Dick answered, dragging up a chair.

He poured himself a drink, tossed it down and filled his glass a second time. Then he faced Gene Dolin.

"Now tell me what the hell's the matter with you."

"O.K., skipper. Well—to begin with, I think you're a louse."

"Swell—go on from there."

"All right. In the first place, Charlie Norton was the whitest K.O. any flock of flyers ever had. Now you come along, you and your gentlemanly rules of fighting and all this knightly bull."

"What's wrong with it?"

"Everything, against these Death's Heads. Look at what they did to this outfit today with gas. Killed a dozen swell ginks and made two dozen more invalids for life. That baron bird comes over and you fall for his challenge stuff like a sap."

"But he killed himself," Warburton pointed out.

"Sure—when he couldn't pull out of that dive."

Gene Dolin's voice was growing harsher with each word. He glanced at Miller and Spence and their eyelids flicked approval. They were willing to back him to the last word. Dick Warburton caught the ex-

change. He was beginning to understand the hatred which gripped these men. They had resented him from the beginning. Each act, each word, each gesture had been twisted to fit their preconceived ideas and the result was a growing animosity that soon would end in murder.

"I think you're wrong about von Unworth," he said with a glance around the table. "While I've met him, I can't say that I knew him, but I'm pretty sure he wouldn't do a trick like that."

"Another of those knightly heroes of the air?" scoffed Gene Dolin.

"Frankly, I think he was."

"Razzberry! He was a dirty Hun."

"And you're as much to blame as he was," Tom Miller added.

"Seeing anything goes in this room." Harry Spence carried on. "We want to tell you that as flight commander, you don't perk with this outfit."

"What do you want me to do, resign or ask for a transfer?" Dick asked without sign of rancor.

"You can suit yourself about that," Spence replied.

Dick Warburton finished his drink with deliberation. Then he lighted a cigarette. A few reflective puffs and he arose from his chair. A grin widened his lips.

"I guess I understand you fellows, now," he said, "so it would be a good idea if you understood me."

"Spill it," rapped Dolin.

"O.K. It won't take long. I'm skipper of this outfit and I'm going to stay skipper until I get knocked off. I may be a rah-rah boy and a louse, but I'm going to lead you birds where angels are scared to fly and I'm going to make you like it.

"This morning I found some Browning bullets in my hack. I'm not going to ask who fired them, but you'd better make the next ones connect."

"Oh, yeah?" Dolin snarled.

"I'm making it plain, You fellows think

I'm soft. Stick around and I'll show you what hard is."

"You show us?" Dolin asked.

"I surely will. Tomorrow we'll—"

Dick stopped as they heard the moan of a diving plane. He rushed to the window and threw it open. They recognized the rhythmic beat of a Pfalz.

They looked out the window to catch a glimpse of a red exhaust. The ship was sweeping over the landing field. Next it zoomed with a roar. Warburton saw a magnesium parachute burst into flame and start gliding to death. It settled slowly and finally struck the field.

AN orderly rushed out and stamped out the light. Then he picked up something and started for the barracks.

"Captain," he called, "Captain Warburton."

"Up in Gene Dolin's room. Come on up," Dick yelled.

"A message cylinder addressed to you, sir," the orderly announced a few moments later.

Dick opened the tin container and spread out the paper.

"This ought to interest you gentlemen," he said, handing the message to Gene Dolin.

The pilot's dark eyes squinted as he read:

Baron Eric von Unworth took the poison bombs under protest. He had no recourse but suicide. Their explosion was not intended. Captain Hermann Schleichtweg was to blame and no one else. Von Schmaltz

"Horse feathers!" growled the pilot, "I suppose this is from another old college chum."

Dick Warburton flushed and took the paper.

"Chum or not," he rapped, "this flight is going over there tomorrow and blast hell out of Hermann Schleichtweg. You men think you're hard boiled. You'll think

you're been stewed in cylinder oil by the time you get back."

He strode through the door.

Hauptmann Hermann Schleichtweg stared at a letter he had just received from Grand Headquarters. His *schnaps* reddened face was purple. Someone in his squadron had bared the truth of Eric von Unworth's mission and death. The *hauptmann* was given three days in which to make adequate explanation of his use of the new No. 116BX bombs against the Americans. The letter was filled with H.E. No threat was made, but Schleichtweg understood those smoothly flowing sentences. They purred as they condemned men to death and torment.

"Gentleman! he rasped, "Tennis players—I—"

The captain half started from his chair. It must have been one of the three survivors of the match he had seen just before he sent von Unworth on his last sortie. Which one? Julius von Schmaltz, of course. He was Baron Eric's room-mate.

Schleichtweg stared out the window. It would soon be morning. No use going to bed. The orderly from Grand Headquarters had routed him out to deliver this doom filled missive. He took another drink of *schnaps*. Then he called a messenger and sent him to Julius von Schmaltz's room. Although he was fresh from his bed, the pilot was sleek and well-groomed when he entered the room a few minutes later. His tidy appearance at that early morning hour only added to the squadron leader's rancor.

"You sent for me, sir?"

"*Ja wohl*—you took out your plane last night. Where did you go?"

"Across the lines, Herr Hauptmann."

"You lie. You flew to Grand Headquarters and reported that I had forced Eric von Unworth to use 116BX bombs," Schleichtweg bellowed.

"You are mistaken, Herr Hauptmann."

The squadron leader leaped from his chair.

"Listen, Herr Leutnant, you may be a gentleman, but you're a poor liar. Your face is red—red with shame."

"Shame for you," von Schmaltz shot back.

"Shame for—" Schleichtweg's protruding eyes blazed. "I'll show you what—"

He paused; a telephone on his desk buzzed angrily. He snatched up the instrument and held it to his ear.

"What? Americans coming in my direction?" he grated in amazement. "*Ganz gute—danke shoen.*"

He slammed the telephone down and belated a command that rang across the landing field. Orderlies were sent scurrying to each pilot's room, summoning them to action. As the first men trooped across the field, Schleichtweg turned to Julius von Schmaltz.

"My fine gentleman," he said, "we are going to stop those damned Americans. Pray, meantime, that you meet death in battle. It will be the easier."

THEY strode across the field and climbed into their ships. A minute more and they were in the air.

But as they nosed up onto the gray sky, an avalanche swept down and the air was bright with dancing lines of tracer. Dick Warburton was leading a raid upon Hermann Schleichtweg's airdrome.

Hauptmann Schleichtweg gunned his Pfalz as he shot into the center of the down charging Americans. He had reason to die and he didn't flinch from death in battle.

"Gentlemen have no copyright on that," he growled through tightly clenched teeth.

Dick Warburton caught a glimpse of the *hauptmann's* streamered plane and angled off to meet him. He knew that Schleichtweg's death at his hands would be the one thing that would break the hatred which gripped his pilots. But the Pfalz outnumbered

bered the Spads and they had not been caught unawares. Flight by flight, they swept up. Warburton saw Dolin attacked by three planes at once and he barged in, ripping into the tail of the black craft nearest him. He saw his tracer tear away the elevating gear and the Hun fell off.

A snarl appeared on Dolin's face. Warburton had saved him and he resented it bitterly. He wanted nothing better than to see Dick killed.

Secret of the 116 BX Bombs

THE impact of the American charge had carried the ships through the succeeding layers of Pfalz. They were between Schleichtweg and his airdrome. A signal and Warburton's pilots followed him down. Bombs dropped. Crashing detonations. The machine shops were struck and collapsed. Flames shot up. Great holes were torn in the landing field.

The flight swept off to one side and then turned back, sowing more bombs. Savage yells came from the Americans. It was a raid of which they had dreamed. They saw Warburton drop still lower and unload H.E. atop the Death Head barracks.

Then with a roar, the Pfalz came down. M el e held, a mixed fight in which darting planes were so mingled that it was difficult to tell friend from enemy.

Dick Warburton saw Hermann Schleichtweg come hurtling through the scrum. Several Pfalz flanked him on either side. A signal from the German leader and they attacked the American flight chief. Two ships dropped down, completely cutting him off from his companions.

Dick remembered how Dolin, Carter, Miller and Spence had cut off German pilots and riddled them at will. He was facing the same fate.

Then he saw Gene Dolin charge through the m el e. He gunned in Dick's direction,

blasting one Boche until he plunged out of line and went tumbling to his doom.

For the moment Gene and Dick were fighting, tip to tip, lunging their way through the ring Schleichtweg had formed. The Boche veered off and the two rejoined their comrades. Warburton waved his thanks, but Dolin paid no attention.

In spite of superior numbers, Hauptmann Schleichtweg's men were being beaten. The speed with which the Spads overwhelmed his men threw the German leader into blazing fury. He saw red as he hurled his ship against Warburton a second time and called upon his pilots to help him.

Ship after ship struck at Dick. His plane was raked, but he fought back savagely. He had told his men he would take them into a battle that would test their spirit and he would not retreat until threatened with shortage of ammunition or gasoline.

In spite of the increasing pressure, he concentrated his attack on Hermann Schleichtweg.

"If I can get him—that'll be enough," Dick growled.

But as he worked through the press, other Boche came down to scourge him. He could not wait long. They would soon get him.

Once more he saw Gene Dolin winging near and he beckoned to him. The man gave no sign of seeing his signal, but swept around behind.

"He'll keep them off my tail," the American thought.

He was in a position where he could get a shot at Hermann Schleichtweg's streamered ship. He concentrated every thought, every movement upon destroying the German leader.

This was his chance. A slight touch on the stick. Then a blast from behind that raked the Spad from end to end.

Warburton felt the control jerk in his hand. He kicked on the rudder, but the bar was dead.

The engine sputtered, then stopped.

"Well—it's come," Dick thought.

A second later he was shooting toward earth, completely out of control. He twisted around to see Gene Dolin racing after him. The man waved, almost jocularly, then made a meaningless gesture. Dick was falling to his death, yet Gene made light of it.

He labored with his stick again. The elevators had been ripped to pieces, but the ailerons caught. He hauled back as far as he could and the nose edged up. The rudder was completely out of commission. He fought to get the tail down when the earth swept up to meet him. Trees loomed ahead, but he scraped over them. Then he went into a *panne*.

Dick glanced up to see how the battle in the air was going. The Spads were streaking for home. He saw Gene Dolin's ship at the head of the V. So that was it. Dolin had been behind him when his controls were shot away.

Once more he edged the nose up. He could see men on motorcycles and in an automobile rushing to the field where he must land. Then he sighted Hermann Schleichtweg's Pfalz coming down.

Dick tipped forward a little and un-snapped his straps as he hauled back. The wheels struck with a force that all but threw him out. A wild leap and the Spad landed again. A dizzy rush across the field and he crashed into a fence. In another moment he was out of the cubby, his pistol in hand. A shot into the gasoline tank. Then another. Flames leaped up to run along body and wings. The little ship was blazing.

Then Dick turned, his hands held aloft. Infantrymen were rushing toward him, but Hermann Schleichtweg had leaped from his Pfalz before its wheels stopped rolling. He charged at Dick Warburton, a Luger in his hand.

"Go ahead and shoot," the American defied.

The *hauptmann* stopped. He glanced at

his burning airdrome. Then he gestured to the infantry to take charge of the prisoner. "Why don't you shoot?" Dick asked.

"Vy nod? Vait und see."

HAUPTMANN H E R M A N N SCHLEICHTWEG stalked about the ruins of his airdrome. With disgrace and degradation facing him, his rage mounted. Two men were responsible for this. Dick Warburton, commander of the American flight, and Julius von Schmaltz. Both were in his hands.

A messenger appeared with the announcement that Wing headquarters was on the line. A curse and Schleichtweg hurried to answer.

"I grounded?" he asked, when the speaker at the other end paused.

"Yes. You will order your pilots to report to Herr Oberst von Schornhorst," the voice answered. "More than that, unless you can satisfactorily explain the use of those No. 116BX bombs, you will be put under arrest."

Hermann Schleichtweg replaced the telephone. Then he took a bottle of *schnaps* from his desk and drank deeply.

The color flowed back into his cheeks, then deepened. More drinks. Next he stamped to the door to bawl an order sending his ships to Colonel von Schornhorst. Only a squad of infantry and a few mechanics remained. Schleichtweg waited until both planes and men had departed. Then he called a hard faced infantry sergeant.

"Have you got a half dozen men on whom you can depend?" he demanded.

"They keep shut or I kill them."

"*Ganz gute.*"

Hermann Schleichtweg was working himself into a fury. He knew his trick of forcing Eric von Unworth to use 116BX bombs had been discovered. The youthful baron had many friends in high places. His family was of the old nobility.

"Gentlemen!" rasped the *hauptmann*, as the cholera swelled. "Even this *verdammt*

Yankee is a gentleman. To hell with all of them."

He opened a fresh bottle of *schnaps*. Another drink and he again summoned the infantry sergeant.

"You saved that rolling door off Hangar No. 2, didn't you?"

"*Ja wohl Herr Hauptmann.*"

"Very well. Now bring the prisoners into my office."

A salute and the sergeant departed. A few minutes later he returned, escorting Dick Warburton and Julius von Schmaltz. Hermann Schleichtweg was swaying in his chair.

"You speak English, not so?" he asked of the young German officer.

"Yes, sir."

"Dot ist goot. Dese swine don't need everything to hear."

He turned his red rimmed eyes on Dick Warburton.

"So you the man are who drive my pilot to suicide?" he sneered.

"Von Unworth killed himself because you tricked him," Dick answered.

The red rimmed eyes flicked to Julius von Schmaltz.

"Then you told him I have von Unworth tricked?"

The young nobleman flushed, then stiffened.

"In fairness to Baron Eric, I dropped a note saying that he had nothing to do with using those 116BX bombs."

Schleichtweg poured himself a heavy drink. Then he passed the bottle to the infantry sergeant.

"Take some—the rest is for your men."

Hauptmann Hermann's head nodded several times as he considered his prisoners. Both von Unworth and von Schmaltz had communicated with the enemy. Next he wondered how word had reached Grand Headquarters. He turned to stare at Dick Warburton.

"And you communicated with my men also?" he asked.

"No—the only communication I have had with German officers was a note I tied to the leg of a pigeon, which had been captured with a spy."

"Und dot note said?"

"That you were the man who used the 116BX bombs."

Blazing wrath came into the *hauptmann's* bloodshot eyes. He kicked back his chair and he sprang to his feet.

"Py Gott," he swore, "I said I would you crucify. I did not it then mean, *aber* now—I mean nothing else. I shall nail you to der hangar door, nail you fast und den— Goodbye."

"I don't believe I'd do that, if I were you."

"For why—because you are a gentleman, not so?"

"That had nothing to do with it," Warburton pointed out, "You are drunk."

A bellow of inebriated laughter from the *hauptmann*. Another bottle of *schnaps* for the infantrymen. They swallowed it in huge gulps.

"And now," Schleichtweg finished his own drink, "we shall see how gentlemans die, not so?"

"At your pleasure," Dick Warburton smiled.

"You laugh at me, *hein?*" the *hauptmann* roared. "All right. *Achtung!*"

Crucifixion

THE infantrymen snapped to attention. An order and they pressed around the prisoners. Next they filed out onto the landing field, while Hermann Schleichtweg lurched behind, trying desperately to stride like a Uhlán on parade.

"Get nails—long nails—a hammer," he bawled, as they neared the hangar door, now leaning against a tree.

A soldier rushed away. He returned a moment later with a handful of spikes and a heavy hammer.

Hermann Schleichtweg glanced from

Dick Warburton to Julius von Schmaltz.

"I hope you don't think all of us are like him," the young German was saying to the American.

"Of course not. There are swine in both armies."

"You and I, unfortunately, have fallen into their hands," von Schmaltz replied. "But I hope—"

"Take him—take him first!" bellowed Hermann Schleichtweg. "Nail him high and let him wriggle."

The infantry seized the young German officer roughly and stripped off his flying suit. Next they removed his boots. He made no resistance, but looked at Dick Warburton, smiling faintly.

"I hope he don't get a groan out of me," he said.

MORE bellowed commands from Hauptmann Schleichtweg. The soldiers got boards and built a rude scaffolding. Then Julius von Schmaltz was raised and his right arm outstretched.

"*Herr Hauptmann, ich kann nicht—* captain, I can't do it," one of the infantrymen threw down the hammer and nails.

"I'll show you," Schleichtweg snatched up the hammer.

"Goodbye, my friend," Julius von Schmaltz called to Dick.

"Don't forget. I'm going to be up there with you in another minute."

A guttural oath from Hermann Schleichtweg. Then he raised the huge nail he held in his left hand and laid its point against von Schmaltz's palm.

A blow that drove it through the flesh and Julius von Schmaltz winced. The captain turned to the other hand, laughing savagely.

"Gentleman!" he growled, "*Ritterliche herren—*knightly gentlemen. May you all rot in hell."

But as the hammer was raised, a shout came from the orderly room. A telephoned message from Wing headquarters de-

manded Schleichtweg's immediate attention.

"Tell Herr Oberst to go to the devil," he bawled back in drunken bravado. "Tell them all to go to——"

The bellow of many engines and the sharp clatter of machine guns drowned his words.

Dick Warburton glanced up. Half a dozen Spads were coming down in a screaming dive. He sighted Gene Dolin at their head.

Then came another roaring note. A flight of Pfalz was piquing for the field. Upon their fuselages were the Skull and Bones of Death's Head squadron.

Hermann Schleichtweg looked up. Then he leaped down from the scaffolding and staggered toward his own ship. Dick Warburton scrambled up to where Julius von Schmaltz had been left hanging by one pierced hand. He gently lifted the weight from the bleeding palm and then jerked the nail free.

"I don't know how I'm going to thank you," the young German said.

"Don't try, until the war's over."

"There's my plane—take it and run for the lines."

"I'm not running," Warburton told him, "My own gang's here. They came back after me."

A note of pride came into his voice.

He watched Hermann Schleichtweg wrench his Pfalz into the air. Although drunk, he flew with astonishing precision.

As Schleichtweg mounted, Warburton saw a two seater descend, its back cubby empty. Harry Spence escorted it down, guarding the rear end. Both machines touched trucks at the same minute.

"Hop in, skipper," Spence called, throttling down.

"No—you ride in back. I want to do some hunting."

"O.K., captain."

Dick Warburton scrambled into the single seater and gave the Spad the gun. Darting through the scrum, he sought

Hauptmann Hermann. No other foe interested him. At last he found him, heading a flight of several Pfalz. Gene Dolin and Tom Miller came raging into the mêlée.

"Keep the others off. I'll take care of Schleichtweg," Warburton yelled, pantomiming his orders.

Dolin nodded his understanding. In another instant, three Spads had dropped between Schleichtweg and his comrades.

Dick zoomed up, forcing Hauptmann Hermann to swing off to the right. The Spad twisted in a vertical bank and followed. Frantic signals came from Schleichtweg's cockpit, but the Boche paid no attention. His day of glory had departed. Warburton saw this studied disregard and knew he would have no interference. He gunned

then himself, as he had done at their first meeting. Next he raised his hand to salute.

"O.K. by me."

Dick's Spad leaped like a steed that feels the spur. Hauptmann Hermann met the onslaught with a deluge of lead, but Warburton did not change his course. He bent low in his pit, while bullets shrilled overhead.

A slight touch on the stick and he had his tracer whipping into the German's cowl. The Pfalz staggered and then nosed up.

Warburton whirled and threw another drag.

He saw Schleichtweg raise his hands in token of surrender.

"Not from you. We're going through with it." Dick shook his head.

A Man Wins His Spurs

his Spad at the now rapidly fleeing German.

"Stay and take it like a man," he belted.

Fleeter of wing, the American was soon in position where his drags would reach the Pfalz. He shot a burst. Schleichtweg pulled up into a roaring Immelmann and came down firing.

Dick nosed to meet him, unleashing a burst that made the German waver. Next Hermann wheeled away, but Dick cut in and forced him to turn. He was gradually herding him toward the American lines.

Again and again Schleichtweg tried to swing back, but the darting Spad always intercepted him. The German flew with a blind abandon, but his drunkenness was not apparent in his maneuvers.

"Too bad you're not sober," Dick Warburton mumbled.

More dashes to left and right. Then Schleichtweg entirely changed his tactics. He swung around and pointed to Dick and

But Schleichtweg continued to fly, his hands in air. They were going towards the lines. Capture by the Allies offered the Hun his only chance. Dick Warburton understood the man's methods, but he held off the killing shot.

No Man's Land was beneath them next. Dick fired a short blast to attract Schleichtweg's attention. The man looked around and Warburton pointed to a temporary landing field just back of the second lines. His captive nodded.

The Pfalz veered and started its pique. The Spad followed. At last the black plane touched trucks and a moment later Dick was on the ground. As he raced to where Schleichtweg was standing, he saw the thin point of a Luger.

He dodged as a shot cracked. Next he leaped forward. Another shot, which he managed to escape. He closed in.

A wrench and he had the Luger in his hand. A twist and he grasped it by the barrel. A blow sent Hermann Schleicht-

weg reeling. Another dropped him to his knees.

A bellow for mercy, but the gun descended a third time and the Hun fell on his face.

Dick Warburton did not pause. He flung himself upon the prostrate form and the heavily butted automatic rose and fell. His mind was filled with tortures the *hauptmann* inflicted, his duplicity, his utter cruelty.

He struck until his arm was tired. Then he kept on striking.

"Hey, skipper, take a rest. That bird is deader than Caesar," a voice yelled.

Dick looked up into Gene Dolin's grinning face. Other members of the flight were landing.

"Gosh—I must have gone crazy," Warburton mumbled.

"Sure you did. That kind of Hun drives any man nuts."

That night Dick Warburton took his place at the head of the table where Charlie Norton had always sat.

"Well—here's mud in your eye, skipper," Gene Dolin toasted. "You did what you said you'd do. Now we're for you."

"I didn't mean to go hog wild," the young commander answered, "but I did and now I can understand what made you fellows—flying furies. Still—that stuff don't go from now on."

For a moment silence held the mess table. Then Gene Dolin turned to Dick, his grin completely gone.

"You're right, boss," Gene said. "So damn right, there's no argument. I'll plead guilty to trying to give you a dose of lead up there and you can put me up against a general court if you want to. I've got it coming, still—"

"Forget it," Warburton broke in. "It was you who organized that counter-attack and came back after me. If it hadn't been for you, I would have been crucified by that crazy Kraut. Not only me, but a damn fine German boy. Still, after this— Oh, let's forget it. Tomorrow we may all be dead. Bottoms up."

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1933.

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Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Helen Meyer, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Business Manager of the War Birds, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1932, embodied in Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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HELEN MEYER,

(Signature of editor, publisher, business manager, or owner.)

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 23rd day of September, 1935.

MAY KELLEY

[SEAL] Notary Public, N. Y. County of New York County Clerk's No. 89.
New York County Register's No. 7K119.
(My Commission expires March 31, 1937.)

BOMBS FOR BREAKFAST

By
O. B. MYERS



Under pressure of Shep's thumb the ancient guns awoke to life and a very surprised German slammed his car into the ditch.

Bouquets Of Hate Blossom Into Wreaths For Dead Men's Wings When Two Try A Forbidden Flight

YOU'LL never make it, back again," said the British lieutenant. He leaned against the high fuselage of the rather aged D-H 9, staring up at the faces of its occupants. "Personally, I think you're batty."

Shep Durant, in the pilot's seat, snorted faintly through his nose. He was so slight in build that the top of his head came barely above the windshield, but in his hundred and forty pounds was packed an enormous store of nervous energy. The square set of his jaw bespoke character; his light blue eyes seemed to snap at the prospect of the impossible.

Behind him, in the observer's cockpit, the other American appeared shrouded in contrasting gloom. He was tall and lank and dark complexioned, and his deep-set eyes and long features were molded into a fixed expression of hopeless pessimism. He shook his head sadly.

"I expect you're right, Lieutenant," he sighed.

"Shut up, Mungo," snapped his companion. "You're always hanging the crape, but I notice you go along. Cheer up, will you?"

A doleful "Huh!" was the only reply.

"Did General Trenchard order this mis-

sion?" asked the officer on the ground, with a trace of disbelief in his tone.

"Well, not exactly," admitted Shep. "But you heard what he said in mess last night. It's the most important objective the I.A.F. has. But it's no use going over at night in the Handley-Pages until we learn something about it. If we scatter bombs around a city of half a million inhabitants, all we do is kill a few civilians and scare hell out of a lot of women, without accomplishing any military damage at all. Somebody has to go over first and spot the Krupp works, and the railroad yards, so that the bombers will know exactly what to aim for, after dark. Well, Mungo and I just thought we'd take a crack at it."

"Let's see." The lieutenant muttered his computations aloud. "It's about 350 kilometers. That's 220 miles; at 110 miles an hour, it'll take two hours. And two hours back; that's four. But look here, this bus only holds gas for three and a half, at the most."

"Well, that's more than any of the others, isn't it?" said Shep. "Except the Handleys, of course. But you couldn't use one of them in daylight; you'd be shot down half way there. And you have to go in the daytime, else how would you see anything?"

"But I still don't see how you plan on getting back!"

The observer looked gloomier than ever; Shep fidgeted uneasily. "Well, we haven't exactly planned it all out yet, ourselves," he confessed. "But we'll make it all right; you wait."

The Britisher gaped at him in amazement. "But you're insane! Look here, you can't start off this way, with no idea of how—"

At that moment the motor started, and the blast of the exhausts drowned his words to a feeble jumble. He stepped close to the cockpits, and shouted to make himself heard.

"Holland! You'll be within fifty kilos of the Dutch border! If you learn anything of value, make for Holland, and land there. You'll be interned, of course, but perhaps you could smuggle your information through, later. Remember, Holland! You can't get back here!"

At that name Shep stared back with obvious distaste, but nodded to show that he understood. Then he gave his attention to his instrument board, and within a few short minutes the D-H took off. In the front seat Shep was leaning forward eagerly, as if looking ahead to great successes; behind him Mungo Murphy was slouched in a dejected heap. Below, on the drome of the Independent Air Force by Neufchateau, the lieutenant who filled the grotesque position of officer of the day with a night bombing outfit, wagged his head after them in wonderment.

SOME hours later his last words were being proved entirely correct. Two hundred minutes' gas would last two hundred minutes, and no more, especially in the motor of a D-H 9 which had already seen several hundred hours of active service. The expiration of this time found the lone plane somewhere north of Treves, over a hundred kilometers on the German side of the lines. It was pointed south, but the needle of the gas gauge was fluttering against the lower limit of the scale.

The country here was so far behind the actual Front that it showed no ravages of war at all; the scattered farms were untouched by shell or bomb, the fields and forests were a smooth and peaceful green. But up above, the D-H was having its troubles. Nearly an hour before two Fokkers had risen from a field near Bonn to dog its tail. One had gone down with a crippled motor some time since, but the other still hung on, trying with dogged cautiousness to place a burst in the right spot without exposing itself to a retort in kind.

It swept in from the flank, striving to get under the belly of the two-seater. At the right moment Shep banked sharply. His observer, acting with a quickness surprising in one so dull and deliberate in manner, spun his tourelle, steadied the spade grip of his twin Lewis guns, and spat a brief burst downwards. Hastily the Fokker veered off, without firing a shot, as the tracers spattered its wings. The D-H straightened out again, and the Boche strove to make up lost distance.

With an indefinite supply of fuel, it might have been possible to hold out until the lines were reached. But Shep, glancing at the gauge, bit off a curse. It was no use; their time was up. Only a cupful of gas remained. They would have to go down and land.

He leaned overside to peer downward. Most of the fields were vineyards, and unsuited for landing even had they been level. But he found a spot where a lane wandered across a bald knob of a hill; there was a ditch on one side of the road, but none on the other. If he could set his wheels down precisely enough, they might not crash.

He turned in the cockpit and gestured toward his observer. But Mungo was busy, slashing out a fistful of bullets at that stubborn Fokker. When his guns fell silent, Shep shouted something which was unintelligible in the roar of the exhausts. But he did not need to repeat, for just then the motor missed, coughed, spluttered, and then took hold again. The warning was only too plain; both knew that in another moment or two it would die completely.

Shep put the D-H into a glide. The Boche, seeing signs of trouble without knowing the cause, rushed in close. Mungo drove him off with a savage blast of fire. Shep reached for the switch; as his hand was in mid-air, the motor died of its own accord. He banked slowly, calculating his distance to that precarious patch of open ground.

The Fokker kept stabbing away, apparently feeling cheated of a more decisive victory. Mungo was busy keeping it at a safe distance, and had no time to look where they were going until he felt the wheels touch. He dropped the guns, and wheeled to look forward. The plane rolled smoothly for a hundred feet or so. Then one wheel struck a stone by the roadside, hidden in weeds. There was a splintering sound, and with a sharp lurch they stopped.

The German circled once overhead, but then used his better judgment. Instead of risking a probable smash, he flew ten miles to a training field at Bitburg to report his triumph, whence he returned to the spot by automobile within an hour. But to his disgust he found, not a D-H 9, but only the charred and smoking ribs of a D-H 9, and nothing else. Its occupants had vanished completely.

IT was the evening of the fifteenth when the inmates of the German prison camp near Sarrebourg staged their impromptu entertainment. Across the road from the stockade, on the edge of a rolling field, stood the farm which housed the Kommandant and his staff of guards, and next to it a single small hangar. Planes were not a customary item of equipment for prison camps, but the *Kapitan*, who had formerly been a pilot, had gotten hold of an old Albatross two-seater which he used for occasional joy hops, and for dispatching urgent messages.

At one end of this hangar a rude stage had been constructed of planks laid over up-ended barrels; it was very effectively lighted by two flood-lights at either side. The rest of the space was empty, the plane having been rolled outside, and the audience, made up of several hundred prisoners, simply squatted on the hard earth floor. At the corners of the stage, and all along the sides of the hangar, stood guards leaning on their bayoneted rifles; by the entrance was a group of half a dozen about a

machine gun. They enjoyed the show as much as any, but at the same time kept a sharp watch on the Yankees.

There was a sense of excitement in the air, but not the tense excitement of danger. The crowd guffawed at vaudeville jokes two years old, joined in the songs of a corporal who strummed on a borrowed guitar. Then the master of ceremonies, a sergeant from the second division, came to the front of the platform.

"Ladiee-s and gennlemen!" At this a roar of ridicule arose; he waited, grinning, while it subsided. "The last act, the big feature of the show! This will knock your eyes out. Allow me to introduce . . . where is he?—Mungo Murphy, formerly known as Mungo the Magician from the coast to coast. The man who proves the hand is quicker than the eye!"

IT was at once clear to all that Mungo was no amateur. He faced his audience as if right at home, while he ran through several simple tricks with a deck of cards. Although he kept up a constant line of patter, his face was utterly expressionless, as if his thoughts were miles away, but his motions were deft and smart, and the doughboys were properly mystified. After a time he called for a shoe; one was passed up from the audience. A few swift passes, and the shoe vanished. Mungo held up both hands, empty, and spun round and round. He even removed his tunic and stood on his head. The shoe was gone. Then he called to someone near the entrance to look under the machine gun, sixty feet from where he stood. There was the shoe. It was passed forward, and identified by its owner. The crowd murmured in pleased astonishment.

"Now, my friends," said Mungo, "watch closely."

He beckoned, and from the side Shep stepped out. Together they carried to the center of the stage two pairs of trestles, about eighteen inches high. Over these

Mungo draped blankets, after calling attention to their bare simplicity. Next he and Shep brought out and placed on the trestles, about ten feet apart, two long boxes draped in black. The nerves of the audience tightened imperceptibly, for it was plain to all that these were coffins, such as the army used to bury its dead who died behind the lines. Mungo tilted first one and then the other, and rapped bottom and sides to show that they were empty.

"Now this one on your left, you have seen that it contains nothing. We will cover it with this blanket, so that you can be sure that nothing enters it. . . . Now in the box on your right, my friends, I will ask my assistant to place himself, so."

Shep climbed into the open coffin, sat down, and then lay at full length, disappearing from view. It may have been the intense glare of the focussed floodlights, or the warmth of the crowded interior; but Shep's drawn face glistened with sweat, and in his eyes could be seen a strange, dancing gleam. Mungo, however, was imperturbable.

"You are about to witness an example of the power of the mind over matter," he stated, throwing another blanket over the coffin in which Shep lay, and carefully pulling it flat and even. "Generally, when a man enters his coffin, he never comes out again, as you well know. But when the mind of Mungo wills the impossible, the impossible happens. It is the force of the will, the dynamic power of the spirit, which religion teaches us can move mountains, and which will now, before your very eyes, move the body of a man."

For the space of a minute or so he glided back and forth across the stage, all the while keeping up a steady line of talk. His hands executed odd, jerky gestures, and his face grew taut and pale; his appearance was that of a man under a terrific mental strain.

"Now," he announced in, a louder tone, coming to a halt by the coffin on the left.

The audience leaned forward in absolute silence; even the guards craned their necks to see. "This coffin, a few moments ago, was empty, was it not? Is it empty now? Look!"

He whisked aside the blanket, and stooped to tilt the box so as to give the audience a view of its interior. But then he halted abruptly, his own eye fastened to the inside of the coffin. He muttered something between his teeth, and straightened up, replacing the blanket.

"We are too hasty," he declared. "The spirit needs time to perform its miracles. Be patient. The mind can conquer everything."

Again he used up a minute, two minutes, with an endless patter of talk. His face moved spasmodically, his limbs twitched queerly. Finally he once more took his position behind the left hand coffin. The

"*Gott im Himmel!*" he cried, in a strangled tone.

His grin changed to a grimace of horror and amazement. Mungo's glance darted to the interior. Instead of Shep, there lay the body of a German soldier, with blood oozing from a stab in the neck.

Pandemonium broke out; for a few minutes there was grave danger of a riot. With the greatest difficulty the sentries herded the American prisoners across the road and into their quarters behind the barbed wire. The Kommandant, livid with rage, held an inquiry on the spot; his only witnesses were the corpse, and Mungo Murphy.

The latter swore that he had attempted nothing more than a common conjuring trick, and backed up his statement by exhibiting the hinged bottoms of the coffins and the trap-doors in the floor, prepared in advance, by which a man could easily

Now You See It—Now You Don't

tension in the hangar increased to the breaking point.

"*Voilà!*" he cried, jerking aside the blanket.

His features sagged, his limbs seemed to collapse with fatigue. The coffin was empty. He shook his head sadly, and made a futile gesture with his hand. Boos and catcalls arose from the audience.

"Gentlemen, I am sorry. I have failed. It is impossible, tonight. I am out of practice; my assistant is new. I do not know—"

The cries of derision and disappointment increased. Mungo shrugged, and glanced appealingly toward the wings. But there was no curtain to hide his embarrassment. One of the German guards, however, who had been standing at the back corner of the stage, now advanced, wearing a skeptical grin. He pulled the blanket from the other coffin.

pass from one to the other under the stage, concealed from the audience by the blankets. Of his assistant's intentions to escape he had known nothing.

Further investigation disclosed that every guard had been inside, watching the performance, except this one, who was now dead. He, perhaps, had been peeking through a crack, and had thus fallen an easy victim to his own bayonet, which was found under the stage. Whether or not there had been a struggle could not be determined.

Mungo was returned to the stockade, with the other prisoners; the alarm was rung, and search parties sent out. But in the darkness they found nothing, and soon returned empty-handed. The hunt had to be postponed until daylight.

The Kommandant's first move in the morning was to order the plane made ready. The country hereabouts afforded

little cover, and the chances of spotting a fugitive from a low altitude seemed to him excellent. The old Albatross was faced toward the open, and the motor started up. The Kommandant himself took the controls, and with his adjutant in the rear seat lifted the old bus into the air.

He banked at once toward the south; that way lay Sierck, and the natural direction for a man seeking to reach the lines. He flew low, essing gently from right to left, and both he and his passenger raked the ground constantly with their eyes.

Suddenly a curse broke from the Kommandant's lips. His motor was sputtering, fighting as if for air. He juggled the throttle frantically, and eased the stick forward. But to no avail; with a final gasp the engine stopped dead. He glanced hastily about him. The field by the prison camp was hardly two miles behind, but due to his low altitude was far out of reach of a glide. The only open spot within reach; the only smooth stretch in sight, in fact, was an oblong field almost directly below his wheels, in the bottom of a shallow valley.

After a wide turn and a short glide, he set the Albatross down in a fair landing, and both he and the adjutant jumped to the ground. They spent several minutes examining the motor through hand-holes in the cowling, fingering the wires, and measuring the gas in the tank.

"Accursed pig of an engine," fumed the Kommandant. "It has been running perfectly, the last four or five times, too."

"Begging your pardon, *Herr Kapitän*," murmured the adjutant, "but I have cautioned you several times about using the prisoners for duty as mechanics and ground crew about the hangar."

"Bah! If they had crippled the plane, it would not fly at all. Besides, they would never damage it, when it forms their only hope of escape. Come, we can't stay here all day, imbecile."

With the adjutant at his heels, he strode off toward the road that ran along the far side of the field. It was only a few minutes before a truck, carrying supplies for the camp, came rolling along. The Kommandant hailed it, and with his companion officer climbed to the seat by the driver, and disappeared without a backward look.

The truck was hardly around the first turn before Shep burst from the screen of bushes at one corner of the field and trotted toward the deserted plane. He wasted no time fussing around the motor itself, but with the air of a man who knows exactly what he is about removed a hand-hole plate from the side of the cowling, far back, just below the location of the gas tank. Into the opening he thrust his head, so that for a few seconds he presented the absurd appearance of an ostrich hiding its head in the sand. But not for long.

He clapped the plate back in place, reached into the cockpit to set switch and throttle, and stepped to the prop. At the fourth turn the motor coughed; at the fifth it began to click over smoothly, as if nothing had ever been wrong with it. He sidled under the wing, and climbed to the pilot's cockpit. A couple of brief jerks at the throttle faced him around down the slope, and he took off without delay.

AS he banked around at a hundred meters, he let his eye travel along the uneven curves of the narrow road, below. Half way to the prison camp he found what he sought, the oblong, gray roof of the truck. It was crawling up a grade, evidently in second. For a moment he transferred his attention to the interior of the cockpit, locating the sights, the guns, and the triggers. Then, making certain that the throttle was wide open, he roared down upon that road.

Under the pressure of his thumb the ancient guns awoke to life, rattling out a volley; to Shep, accustomed to stepped-up

Vickers, they seemed painfully slow. But the bullets rained down, raising little puffs of dust from the dry surface of the ruts. At his first burst, the truck slowed down, and stopped. At his second, which sprinkled a handful of holes across the roof, three figures catapulted from the seat and dove for the ditch.

Rocketing past overhead, Shep went into a wing-over and came back with his fingers dancing on the triggers. He saw that the truck was beginning to roll backward; the driver in his haste had neglected to lock the brake before seeking cover. Shep's hail of slugs prevented anyone from righting this error now; the truck gathered speed, careening down the hill wrong end to. As Shep cocked up to return a third time, it rocked off into the ditch at an angle, and tipped over with a crash. Through the buckled roof cases and bags tumbled out; the wheels on the upper side spun helplessly in mid-air.

Shep flashed a grin, which quickly faded. He caught the flicker of crimson from the ditch, and knew that the original occupants of the plane were shooting at him with their revolvers. He had not killed them, then; but he had delayed their arrival at the camp, which after all was his only need. He dodged around in a steep bank, and headed up along the road to the north.

THE group watching by the single hangar consisted of the sergeant of the guard, half a dozen armed sentries, and the four or five American prisoners who had been chosen to act as ground crew. They had seen the Albatross circle low, and had been able to hear the sound of firing from a distance of a mile or more. The natural assumption in the minds of all was that the fugitive had been sighted, and fired on, and that now the Kommandant was returning to order out a foot party to complete the capture.

The ship neared the far edge of the

field, and without circling glided in to land. Since its nose was toward them, no one had a clear view of the cockpits. Its wheels dropped close to earth, and the sergeant uttered a gruff command. Two of the ground crew started to run out across the field, so as to be ready to hold the wing-tips while the pilot taxied. One of these two was short and stocky; the other was tall and lean and loose-jointed, and ran with a peculiar lope.

The plane landed near the middle of the open, and rolled to a stop where it was, without attempting to taxi. The two runners hastened toward it. Suddenly the tall man swerved, so that he was running close to his companion's elbow. This the watchers saw, but his words they could not hear.

"I'm sorry about this, Haines," he hissed. "But it'll save you a lot of trouble, later."

Without warning his long arm shot out. A fist like a sledge smacked against the corner of a jaw. The short man reeled, threw up his arms, and fell, rolling onto his back. He lay quite still; the tall man ran on the faster toward the plane.

"*Himmel!*" blurted the sergeant. "*Was ist das?*"

But before he could take a step, or decide on a command, the running figure had darted around the end of a wing and was leaping for the cockpit. Even as his foot touched the fuselage, there was a blast of the throttle, and the tail of the Albatross swung around toward the hangar. Then, and only then, did the watchers see that the ship was no longer occupied by the Kommandant and his adjutant.

"The Americans!" bellowed the sergeant. "Fire on them!"

There came a hasty banging of rifles. But Shep, crouching low, had the throttle wide open, and the plane was beginning to roll. The rifle fire increased in volume, as other guards joined in, but every second lengthened the range, and the bullets only

whizzed through the wings or furrowed the earth behind the tail. In another few seconds the ship soared into the air, rocking gently.

Mungo, still only half settled in the rear cockpit, leaned forward until his mouth was close to Shep's ear.

"It's eighty kilos to the lines!" he yelled. "Maybe there's not gas enough! No guns back here; what if they jump us!"

Shep turned to give him a look of sarcastic disgust.

"Aw, dry up, you damned crape-hanger!" he snorted.

IT was some ten or fifteen minutes before the Kommandant, followed by his adjutant arrived at the trot. He was nursing a flesh wound in his left arm, and was boiling with rage. When he heard what had occurred at the field in his absence, he burst into a torrent of cursing that added ten gray hairs to the sergeant's head. After ordering all prisoners under close confinement until further notice, he stamped into his office and sat down before the desk.

The adjutant, thoughtful of details, had lifted the mail-pouch from the capsized truck and carried it along. Now his superior jerked it open and dumped its contents on the desk. A long, gray envelope drew his attention; he ripped the seal and spread before him a bulletin from Fifth Army Intelligence Headquarters.

"On the afternoon of August 6th an enemy plane, identified as an American-flown D-H 9, flew over the city of Essen, circling twice above our munitions plants there. As it departed toward the lines it was attacked, and was finally forced down between Bitburg and Treves. Before it could be reached, however, its occupants set fire to the machine, and disappeared. Since these men doubtless possess valuable information concerning the disposition of our plants at Essen, it is important that they be captured before reaching the lines. All garrisons and troop commanders in the

neighborhood of Treves are therefore warned to be on the alert for two aviators, Americans, who will be trying to make their way toward the south. Their capture is vitally important to the welfare of the Fatherland."

The Kommandant ripped out an oath. "Adjutant, those two Americans who are missing; when did they arrive here?"

"With the column from Audun, sir, on the 8th. But they were not aviators; they did not even wear officers' insignia, sir."

"*Dumkopf!* Of course they're aviators; didn't you see them fly? They simply ripped off their wings and bars, the wily swine. That's who they are, damn them twice! Right in my hands for a week, and I never guessed it. But we'll stop them yet."

He grabbed savagely at the telephone, and demanded an immediate connection to Air Headquarters. When he got it, he roared out the warning of the two escaped Yanks, glossing over the manner of their departure from his post, but describing the Albatross in detail.

"Notify your front line squadrons at once! Have those devils intercepted! You can't mistake the plane; there hasn't been one like it over the front in two years. Shoot them down on sight!"

"There!" he growled, turning to the adjutant as he hung up. "They'll find things pretty hot for them, yet."

Mungo, on pins and needles in the rear cockpit of the old Albatross, felt the same way about it. They were still a long way in Germany, in a crate that would hardly do its ninety miles an hour. He knew that an alarm would precede them to the Front, and that the old Albatross itself was a dead giveaway. The absence of guns on the rear tourelle made his heart sink; they could neither fight nor run away. He realized that their chances of reaching Allied territory alive were slim indeed. But even as he shook his head in despair, his jaw set grimly, and he tightened his

belt another notch, with the air of a man who intends to fight to the last for what chances he does have.

Passing well to the east of Metz, Shep first saw the formation ahead on his left. It was considerably above his own level, and numbered at least nine. He could not recognize the planes for Fokkers at first, but he was taking no chances. Gently he eased off to the west, trying to get the last mile out of his throbbing Mercedes.

Within a minute he found Fokkers off his right wing-tip. These were below him, but were climbing rapidly, and were on a course to cut him off. Obviously they had already seen him against the white background of high clouds, and were bent on intercepting his flight.

He angled back east a bit, and dropped his nose to get maximum speed. This let his gaze travel straight ahead, over his

those on his left were swinging in almost over his head. All were swiftly gathering into a vortex, of which the lone Albatross marked the center. It was the calm before the storm, the drawing of breath before the battle.

Suddenly Shep tipped his nose up, and boldly, impudently, sent a rattling burst of tracer in the direction of the nearest Spad group. Then he wheeled sharply left, so as to come under the formation of nine high-flying Fokkers. At once the storm broke.

The Spads, seeing the old Albatross, took it for a decoy, and Shep's tactics at this moment confirmed that idea. Plainly it was trying to lead them underneath the upper crowd. But the leader of the pursuit patrol knew better. He flashed a single signal flare from his cockpit. On the instant the first group of Spads whirled to

He Was Caught In The Fokker Trap

thick center section. A gasp of dismay whistled through his tight lips. Ahead of him were three more groups, coming head-on.

All in a second he went hot and cold with joy and redoubled despair. He saw that he was flying square into a patrol of Spads, but in the same instant he realized that to Spads he wore the aspect of an enemy. In an Albatross, marked with the crosses of Germany, those Yank pursuit pilots would shoot him down without a moment's hesitation. He was ten thousand feet up, and literally surrounded by foes.

For a few moments that were like so many eternities, nothing happened. The Spads essed right, then left, and drew a little tighter. Shep gripped his stick hard, darting frantic glances to all sides. The Fokkers on his right were climbing fast;

charge the Fokkers on their own level. The second group plunged down with raving guns upon the Boches who were trying to climb. The third group mopped up the edges.

Where a moment before there had been five separate V's, and one single ship, there was now one wild mass of careening wings and belching guns. Fokkers and Spads fell all over each other, snarling and snapping like a pack of hounds, and seeming to become more and more entangled in a thickening web of lacy tracer streaks. The shriek of straining wires was punctuated by the pound of Vickers and Spandau, and the whole drowned momentarily by an ear-splitting roar as a punctured gas tank exploded in one terrific blast.

Caught in the very vortex of the inferno, Shep threw the Albatross madly from side to side, trying to dodge collision and the

equally fatal bursts of friend and foe. A Fokker was on his tail, but a Spad drove it off. Next a Spad raked him from the side, but was in turn attacked from above, and forced to side-slip. He banked hurriedly, and almost rammed a German head-on. Before the Boche could recover and circle back, a Spad was in between.

THE wings of the Albatross began to look like sieves. A strut buckled, and held together only by splinters. Flying wires trailed loose. Half the fabric was peeled from the left aileron. Cursing in despair, Shep saw an opening. He swung the stick hard over, missed a Fokker's rudder by inches, and slipped into the clear.

Ahead was Allied territory. He shook the sweat from his eyes, and looked over his shoulder, only to go cold with horror. Two Spads were swooping down upon his tail. His limbs went limp. The Albatross was no match for one, let alone two. They were lost. But what the hell was Mungo doing?

Instead of crouching low, so as to present as small a target as possible for bullets, the man in the rear cockpit was standing up at full height, with his arms calmly folded across his chest!

In such a moment a man's instincts, rather than his reason, decide his actions. Confronted with a helpless enemy, a German or a Frenchman might have made the kill, and repented later. A Britisher, imbued with sporting instincts, might well have waved a hand and departed. But Mungo knew his Americans.

The two Spads dropped into place on either flank. Neither fired, but each pilot leaned out, to wave straight ahead. Shep understood, and his heart bounded back into place. They meant to capture him and his plane intact!

It was only a few minutes later when he was motioned to land on a small advance drome near Nomeny. But it was several hours before they could convince the aston-

ished Spad pilots of their identity, and prove that they were really Americans instead of spies. So it was nearly evening when they at last reached the I. A. F. drome near Neufchateau, and told their story. While the major listened to Mungo, and made notes on a map, Shep answered some questions about the details.

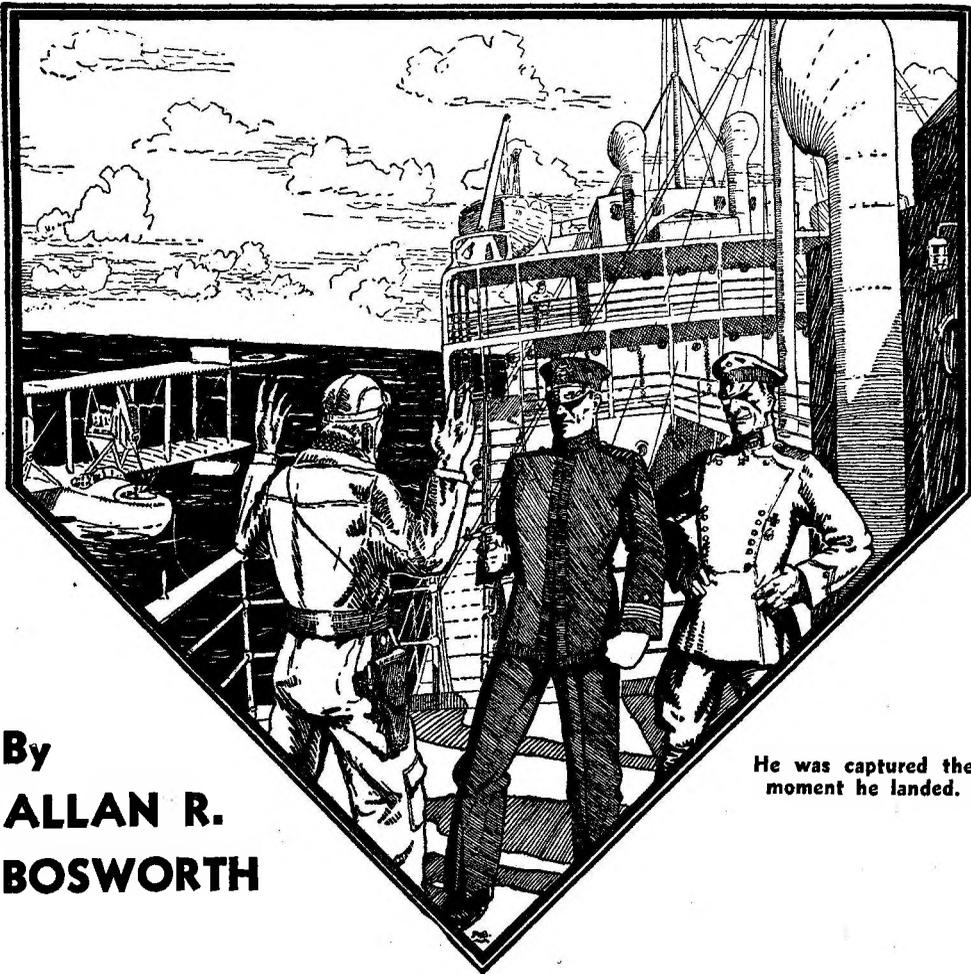
"I dropped through the bottom of the coffin, and crawled under the stage, until I came out the back of the hangar. There was this doggoned sentry, trying to peer in a hole, right by my elbow. His rifle was leaning against the wall. I took it, to keep him from raising an alarm by shooting at me as I crossed the open. But just then he turned round and saw me, and I had to let him have it, poor devil. I was afraid he'd be discovered quicker outside, so I dragged him under the stage and shoved him in the coffin I'd just left. Then I got to the ship, outside, and arranged for the forced landing."

"What the devil do you mean, *arranged* for it?"

Shep laughed. "We'd noticed that field when we marched into the camp with a prisoner column. It was the only one within miles, in that direction. All I did was to shove my head in through the cowl, and put a crimp in the gas line with my teeth, right up close to the tank. It's a copper pipe, you know. I figured that the float chamber, plus about six feet of pipe, would hold just enough gas to get them off the ground, and a couple of miles away. So I simply waited on the edge of that field until it happened. Then, after the two Jerries had walked away, I galloped out to the ship, bit the pipe back into shape again, and as soon as the gas had time to flow to the carbureter, started up the motor without any trouble. Proving that the tooth is quicker than the eye, eh, Mungo?"

"Yeah, but what if the pipe had broken?" croaked the long-faced observer, shaking his head,

NO SURVIVORS



By
**ALLAN R.
BOSWORTH**

He was captured the
moment he landed.

Cold Seas And Mystery Ships Were The Things That Drove Spike And Jerry's Wings Into The Clouds Where Ships Came Back With No Survivors

IT was a poor day for flying. A cold wind howled down over the tumbled wastes of the North Atlantic, kicking the tops off of long, greasy swells and whipping them into spray. It shrieked past the headlands of Galway Bay, on the west coast of Ireland, found a row of trim, an-

chored destroyers, and it whined in their radio antennae and moaned a dirge across their soot-rimmed stacks.

Lieutenant Jerry Cummings, leaning tensely across the table in the wardroom of the tender and watching the admiral's face, heard the wind and shivered. It

sounded like the death wail of another Allied warship, sunk without a trace—scratched off the register with the grim notation: “No survivors.”

Cummings was tall, blue-eyed and young enough to want to live. The indefinable something that Annapolis and lifting quarterdecks impart was in his bearing. Now, as the admiral cleared his throat, Cummings beckoned silently to “Spike” Kennedy, red-headed and burly chief aviation machinist’s mate who stood by the door. Spike had a right to hear what the admiral expected them to do.

The chart rustled like a dry, whispered warning of death as the admiral spread it on the table. Cummings took the bottom of the wide paper and tried hard to shut his ears against that eerie howling that drifted down the after hatch. Through the tender’s portholes he could see the dirty, sea-battered side of a destroyer, rising and falling, falling and rising, her anchor chain clanking above the wind’s travail.

“Here!” said the admiral suddenly, and in his voice was the chill steel of deck guns and armor plate. “Here is Base 77, Lieutenant. It is manned by the tanker *Ulysses*.”

“Yes, sir!”

Cummings knew all this. Hang it all, why didn’t the admiral get down to the point? Why was he hesitating to sign the death warrants of two men? After all, this was war.

“Radio communications with the *Ulysses* have been broken. We know that the British destroyer *Brampton* oiled there last week, and we know that she was torpedoed and lost with all hands shortly afterward. Or, perhaps it was before she oiled. And then another British destroyer, the *Rush*, was sunk near Base 77. Just a flash, and she was down. No survivors!”

“No, sir, no survivors!”

“Yesterday, we lost an American destroyer, the *Harkness*. We can’t raise the

Ulysses by radio, as I have said. But the base must be shifted. Apparently the Germans have located it and have submarines lying in wait for each destroyer that approaches to be oiled. They are using Base 77 for a decoy, a trap.”

“Yes, sir.”

The admiral went straight to the point. He handed an oiled envelope to Jerry Cummings.

“You will fly these orders to Captain McCullough of the *Ulysses*, refuel your plane alongside the tanker, and return. Is your ship ready?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Then you can hop at once. Goodby, Cummings, and good luck. Goodby, Kennedy.”

They gripped the hand that extended from the gold-banded sleeve. Jerry Cummings shoved the envelope into the inside pocket of his leather coat. He led the way up the ladder to the wind blustered deck.

THE two fliers were silent as they crossed the gangways that led over three destroyers and came to their seaplane, moored in the lee of the warships. Then Cummings swore in sea-going style, and Spike Kennedy added invectives picked up in far ports.

“Four hundred miles for a needle in the haystack!” the lieutenant declared. “We’ll fight a headwind most of the way, I suppose, and have a teacup of gas left when we sight the *Ulysses*—if we sight her at all. Contact!”

“Contact!”

Spike Kennedy stood on the lurching float and kicked the prop over. The engine was still warm; it burst into a full-throated roar of power. The chief petty officer made his way aft and climbed into the rear cockpit. He buckled the chinstrap of his helmet. A sailor in peacoat and watch cap cast off the mooring line.

Jerry Cummings jockeyed the seaplane around the sharp bow of the destroyer and

headed her into the wind. She lurched on the crest of a swell, skidded down into the trough, and gained speed as the tall pilot widened the throttle. She took the next swell in a dash of cold spray, roared down the slant and lifted her nose as he back-sticked.

The wind screamed in the load wires and howled around the struts as Jerry Cummings climbed in a steady slant. Now the gray, rolling sea was dropping away until it looked almost smooth, and the row of warships were toys nestling placidly on its surface. To the left was the green of Inishmore island, and beyond lay the wide western ocean.

Cummings relaxed behind the cowling and watched the sea unroll like a gray-green carpet bordered at the land's rim with snowy lace. In his mind's eye he saw another picture—a gray sea running, a gray ship going down by the head, and white-faced men struggling feebly in waters that were fast being slicked with heavy crude oil. The *Brampton*, the *Rush* and the *Harkness*—

"After all, a plane doesn't offer a U-boat much of a target!" Cummings muttered over lips blue with cold. "It's the best way. If they sent a destroyer, it might be torpedoed, too!"

A division of destroyers, cutting patterns of foam through the Atlantic around Base 77, might lay a depth bomb barrage and wipe out the submarine menace. But there were transports to be convoyed; there were merchant ships daring the danger zone daily. And the destroyer squadrons had their hands full with watch and watch at sea, with cold water breaking over their decks and drenching the men who clung to stanchions to keep from being washed overboard.

Cummings sighed. After all, was the admiral exactly sure that Base 77 itself was still there? Maybe the *unterseebootes* had destroyed the *Ulysses*, too. But those destroyers had reported they had oiled at

Base 77 before they sent the final SOS.

The tall pilot ruddered the plane straight into the northwest, still climbing. At eight thousand feet he leveled off with a grin of satisfaction. There was little wind at this level, and he could save precious fuel.

MILES and minutes, leagues and hours slipped by. The engine roared steadily. Cummings could have dropped off to sleep were it not for the cold wind that blasted his cheeks now and then. He thrust his head out into the wash of the prop occasionally, to keep awake.

Far down on the horizon to the west of the plane's course, a merchantman wallowed, with the wind whipping black smoke from her rusty stack. She seemed to be sitting on the rim where sea and sky meet, where a good puff of wind would topple her over the other side of the world.

Jerry Cummings altered his course slightly. It shouldn't be far to Base 77, now. Perhaps this freighter could put him on the right course if it became necessary. He looked over his shoulder and saw Spike Kennedy, seemingly half-asleep, his thick body slouched down into the after cockpit. The Lewis gun in its Scarff ring mount was pointing idly into the wind.

Cummings yelled and jabbed a finger toward the tramp on the gray vastness that was unrolling beneath. Spike nodded. The tall pilot turned forward again, and leaned over the pit-coaming with sudden interest.

The freighter had *two* stacks now, instead of the single one that was belching smoke a moment before!

Cummings passed a sleeve over his goggles. Yes, it was there. But it wasn't smoking. A dummy stack. He understood, now. Probably this was a Q-boat—one of the mystery ships lying in wait for a submarine to attack her.

"Good!" muttered the tall cloud cracker. "An Allied ship. If I run out of gas, maybe I can make it to her position, anyway. I'll

go down over her and let 'em know I'm around!"

He eased the stick forward. The seaplane nosed into a graceful dive, her engine throttled down to save fuel. Like a gray sea bird she slanted down over the wallowing merchant ship that apparently was a war vessel in disguise.

"They put up that stack quick!" Cummings thought. "Probably she can fold up a deckhouse in a few seconds, rig a dummy bridge and change her whole appearance."

The narrow, cluttered decks shot up at him. Now he could see men, running about like scared ants. The gay *cocardes* of the Allied powers were plain enough on his wings; they had no reason for alarm.

But now Cummings' gaze was riveted on one spot on the deck—a section just forward of what appeared to be the main hatch. There were men busy assembling something there, and that something was a plane. The tall pilot saw the wing sections, and they were devoid of insignia.

"Hey!" Spike Kennedy's leather-lunged bellow was dim in the wind and the engine's song. "Hey! She's a German raider, I'll bet—"

Swift, ragged flame suddenly ripped from the deck of the surface craft. Jerry Cummings threw the seaplane into a steep bank. A shell was screaming upward, dangerously near the sky ship; smoke and thunder rolled from the disguised tramp steamer.

Cummings gripped the bomb release lever, and then jerked his hand away. It could be that they were wrong. He threw the plane into a steep, twisting climb, watched the altimeter needle crawl to eight thousand, and then straightened out on the course to Base 77.

A jumble of thoughts whirled in his head. Perhaps this was the explanation of those missing destroyers. He had orders to deliver on board the *Ulysses*, orders that might save the tanker and several other warships from destruction. Investigation of the mystery ship could wait.

He settled down to straight flying. The fuel gauge was alarmingly low. Somewhere out there on the gray, heaving sweep of water, the *Ulysses* was supposed to be tossing. If he couldn't find her, it would be too bad.

Another shout from Spike Kennedy. The mystery ship was a speck on the horizon again, and Spike was pointing to the north and east. Cummings looked and saw another tiny dot. He kicked the rudder bar over and watched the speck grow and turn into a low, gray ship. The sun that peeped through swiftly scudding gray clouds glinted on the sheen of an oil slick on the sea. This was Base 77.

CUMMINGS closed the throttle and came down in a graceful glide, thankful for the oil that calmed the waters in the lee of the *Ulysses*. The pontoons broke surface two hundred yards from the vessel, and the seaplane lurched forward, losing headway on the low swells. He gave her gas again, and taxied up the wind.

There was something ominous and forbidding about the tanker. Cummings shoved back his goggles and looked up at her decks. Not a face at the rail, not a sign of life on board!

He gunned the engine and the roar shook the sea. The plane swept in close. Men in dungarees—three—five—seven of them suddenly appeared on deck. Then a blue clad, stocky figure with gold on his sleeve.

"If this is the kind of watch they keep, it's a wonder she wasn't torpedoed long ago!" Cummings muttered. Then he cupped a hand to his lips: "Ahoy, the *Ulysses*!"

The answer came back faintly: "Ahoy, the plane! Secure to the starboard boom!"

Cummings waved to show he understood. A pair of seamen were crawling out on the boom, and a line dangled. The tall pilot jockeyed his ship underneath and the line was made fast. He grabbed the swaying

Jacob's ladder and ascended, following the sailors to the deck. Spike Kennedy was close behind.

They stepped to the red-leaded steel plates and saluted the colors. Then Cummings turned to face the stocky man, reaching inside his leather coat for the envelope.

"Captain McCullough?" he said. "I've orders for you, sir, and I'd like to have the plane refuelled so I can—"

He checked his words abruptly. The stocky man was reaching for the envelope, an inscrutable smile on his red, weather-beaten face. Something hard bored into Cummings' ribs. He whirled. One of the seamen was jabbing a Luger into his side!

"What's the meaning of this?" demanded Cummings.

The smile widened, then vanished. Out

and entered a cabin. Cummings was quickly searched and then forced into a chair. The German skipper turned to a seaman.

"Bring Herr Leutnant Mueller!" he ordered crisply. "I would like our guest to meet him. And have the plane filled with petrol. Make haste."

Two men were still standing guard with drawn Lugers. The stocky captain opened a locker and produced brandy and glasses. He filled them and handed one to Cummings.

"It must be cold, flying today," he said. "This will help."

Cummings drank mechanically. The liquor warmed him. He set the glass down.

"What became of McCullough and the *Ulysses'* crew?" he demanded. "Was it

The Mask Of The Raider

of the corner of his eye, Cummings saw the amazed look on Spike Kennedy's face, saw his observer's hands slowly raising.

"It means Captain McCullough has been relieved!" said the stocky man in cultured English. "However, I'll take his orders. If they direct us to shift our base of operations, you may be assured we will carry them out at once. This place is getting what you Americans would call hot!"

"Captured, eh?" gasped Cummings. "I see it all, now! You guys have been carrying on, all right, oiling ships and tipping off submarines while you did it! I understand why there's—"

"Your deductions are remarkable, Lieutenant," the German smiled. "You've solved the secret, but I doubt that you will be able to pass on your information. Come with me, if you please!"

The Luger pressed harder. Cummings stepped aft, the German courteously giving him gangway. They descended a hatch

another case of no survivors—like the *Rush* and the *Brampton* and—"

"Please! We aren't quite that blood-thirsty, Lieutenant! No, the *Ulysses'* crew was taken off. You see, a submarine came out of the water suddenly by her starboard side with guns trained and torpedo tubes ready. These tankers aren't built to fight, of course. She was taken by surprise and had to surrender. Her crew was taken off and are probably in a prison camp by this time—we had more than one submarine, you know. As for the destroyers—well, this is war, Lieutenant. They were sunk rather suddenly. We saved those whom we could."

The door opened. A tall, blond young man wearing the uniform of the Imperial German navy entered. He clicked his heels and bowed stiffly.

"Leutnant Heinrich Mueller!" announced the skipper. He consulted the prisoner's pocketbook. "Lieutenant Cum-

mings, Mueller. You are going on a flight together. It is fortunate indeed that you brought your plane over, Lieutenant Cummings. Now, if you'll pardon me a moment, I'll look over these orders."

"I'll fly nowhere!" Cummings flashed in sudden rage, then he bit his lip and kept still. Perhaps there would be a chance of escape, a chance to warn Allied ships.

The German captain looked up from the orders to Captain McCullough. "You will fly together," he repeated. "I have certain information that must be transmitted to another of our ships in this vicinity, certain confidential information that is not to be trusted to the radio. You will lay a course south southeast, Lieutenant, with Herr Mueller in your observer's cockpit carrying a gun. We expect to have a couple of planes within a short time, but as you see, these orders are to move at once from Base 77. Therefore we cannot wait for those planes. You understand your orders, Mueller. It is time to go."

The tall, blond man's heels clicked again. He turned toward the door, taking a Luger from one of the seamen. The gun swung on Cummings again, and the American rose silently.

"I hope we will meet again, Lieutenant!"

Cummings turned to the captain. "I hope so—under different circumstances!" he said grimly.

THEY climbed the ladder and were out on the deck. The wind was dying. Spike Kennedy stood near the rail, under guard. Dungaree clad men were passing a hose back to the deck. The plane had been refueled.

Kennedy started aft to speak to Jerry Cummings, but a man with a gun barred the way. The red-headed chief machinist's mate shrugged his shoulders and began pacing up and down like a tiger in a cage. Mueller motioned for Cummings to climb out on the boom.

"You will land near the ship when I

order you to do so!" he said crisply. "One false move, and I will shoot. Do as you are directed, and you will be treated as a prisoner of war."

Cummings nodded sullenly. He wondered what sort of reception they would have from the mystery ship this time. He remembered that plane they were assembling on the deck more than an hour ago. The planes the German skipper mentioned must have arrived sooner than he had expected.

Mueller was struggling into a heavy flying coat and drawing a helmet over his close-cropped blond hair. Now he looked like any other flyer as he descended the swaying ladder to the plane. Cummings took his position in the forward cockpit; a seaman kicked the prop over and then made his way back to the ladder while the engine roared.

The tall German leaned forward and thrust out a long arm. The Luger's muzzle was a cold circle at the back of Cummings' neck. He opened the throttle as the line was cast off, and the plane moved forward.

Mueller was too thorough, too smart. He would have buckled the safety strap. No use trying a loop to throw him out. No use daring death to try and fly back to the Irish coast. Mueller would certainly shoot, wounding the pilot at least. In the meantime, another American destroyer might head for Base 77 to replenish her oil supply and to meet her doom. Somewhere around there, submarines were lurking.

Cummings eased the stick back against his belt, and the seaplane shot into a swift climb. He swung her in a wide circle, around from the wind and headed back over the course. His brain was whirling. The whole thing was fantastic—unbelievable. A ship captured on the high seas, used to lure warships to their death! And yet, it had happened, and it might happen again unless he could do something.

He drew a long breath and leveled the ship off at six thousand feet. The *Ulysses*

dropped astern until it was a tiny blot of streaked camouflage on the gray of the sea. Above them, clouds scurried against the blue of the sky, and it was hard to believe that Death was riding the wings of the sturdy seaplane.

HALF an hour crawled past. Now there was smoke and a stubbly blackened matchstick on the heaving Atlantic ahead of them. Mueller reached forward, and the Luger jabbed the American's neck again.

"Down!" yelled the German. "Land alongside that ship!"

Cummings nodded. He slanted the seaplane toward the vessel and watched it grow on the sea's face. He strained his eyes toward the cluttered deck.

At four thousand, a gust of wind sent the plane lurching. Cummings leveled her off thankfully and pretended to be fighting the controls. He was stalling for time, praying that something would happen. After all, those Allied *cocardes* were still on his wings; to all appearances his ship was on a mission of death and destruction.

He jerked the throttle wide. The engine's roar drowned out some shout from Mueller. And now, from alongside the mystery ship, swift wings suddenly skated across the gray water, leaving a wake of white. The plane had been assembled. It was taking the air!

Cummings saw her in one swift glance, saw the plain, unmarked wings and knew she was rising to do battle, to prevent this American ship from getting back to the Irish coast with her information. He shoved the stick away from him and sent the plane roaring down.

Mueller jerked the gun away and was yelling. Out of the corner of his eye, Cummings looked and saw the German waving both hands wildly. A grim smile flicked the corners of the tall pilot's mouth. Mueller was in a spot he had not foreseen.

Wind shrieked in the struts and whined

in the wires. The flashing prop thundered. That unmarked plane was rising swiftly in a graceful spiral—they would meet not far from the mystery ship—

Cummings looked back. Mueller swung the Luger on him and motioned for him to land. The pilot agreeably steepened the angle of dive, but he was cutting down the distance that separated him from the other ship.

Tac-a-tac-a-tac-a-tac!

Flame burst from the fixed gun on the German plane's nose. Tracer whipped up to etch the air around the diving ship with tawny, smelly smoke. Cummings tossed the straining seaplane on her ear and side-slipped out of range, but a new burst of fire leaped from the flexible gun in the observer's cockpit.

Tac-a-tac-a-tac!

A wire pinged. Slugs spat through taut fabric and caromed off the engine cowling. The German plane veered, twisting toward them, and her pilot reached for his trip trigger again.

"Land! Land! Go down, or I'll shoot!"

Mueller's scream was clear in the bedlam of roaring motors and chattering guns. Yes, he would shoot. He would take his chance of being picked from the water after the plane had crashed with Death at the controls—

Jerry Cummings gritted his teeth. Either way, he probably would die. He decided swiftly, and yanked at the Bowden wire.

The synchronized gun warmed with a clattering burst of flame. Cummings skidded the ship around in a flat bank and drove for the Germans. Tracer painted a lurid path before him, tracer was falling just short of the other plane's fuselage as it swept by. Cummings yanked the nose of his ship up a trifle and saw lead spatter the empennage of the German craft.

Tac-a-tac-a-tac-a-tac!

The Boche did a wingover and wheeled toward him. Spandau guns were spitting in concert. If only Spike Kennedy were in

that after cockpit, manning the flexible Lewis—

“Land, or I’ll shoot!”

Out of the twisted corner of his mouth, Jerry Cummings hurled his defiance:

“Shoot and be damned!”

The Luger jabbed the back of his neck. It was coming now, swift, tearing pain and black nothingness. If he could only get one direct hit on that swerving gray sea-plane—

Tac-a-tac-a-tac!

He yanked viciously at the Bowden wire. He swung the ark in a vertical bank, and lead lashed out toward the Germans—

The Luger’s pressure suddenly ceased. A machine gun slug ripped at the pit coming, another one cut a furrow across Jerry Cummings’ padded shoulder. He looked back of him swiftly.

Heinrich Mueller was sprawled grotesquely over the starboard side of his cockpit, blood trickling from his mouth, slain by his own guns!

A grim smile split Cummings’ face. Now it was one to two, and there was a chance—

Tac-a-tac-a-tac-a-tac!

The Lewis flamed. Tracer trails crossed in midair, etching grotesque patterns. Cummings jerked the stick back against his belly and climbed as he shot past the German ship.

The unmarked plane wobbled as the near-collision was averted. It was wheeling, now, ready to renew the attack. Two guns to one.

Cummings kept climbing until his ship hung on the hub of her prop and stalled. Then he kicked her into a wingover and roared down in a full power dive, straight toward the Boche craft.

One short burst of fire from the flame-rimmed snout of the Lewis. One quick glance at the German plane, her engine cowlings haired in the ring-sights. Cummings saw slugs hammering into his target—and then oil-fed blaze leaped out, and

sooty smoke boiled forth to be scattered by a screaming, dying prop.

The German plane twisted and fell. A last despairing burst of fire came from her flexible gun, and then the pilot, battling desperately with his controls, cringed from the flames that whipped back to kill him, and the observer ripped off his safety belt and made ready to leap into the sea.

A small boat was already putting out from the mystery ship. Jerry Cummings flattened out and turned. Destroyers could deal with her later. Right now, he had another task. He climbed to eight thousand feet, then loosened his safety strap and risked letting go of the controls for an instant. He reached back to tug at Mueller’s body, but it was very heavy.

“All right!” yelled the pilot. “Stay where you are! Maybe it’s better. I’ll let the crew of the *Ulysses* see what’s coming to ’em!”

He slid down into his seat again. The plane responded to his touch, and he sent her north and east, under a full gun.

FOR the second time that day, he watched the *Ulysses* take shape on the broad bosom of the Atlantic. This time, there was no mystery attached to the tanker rolling down there with the swells. Cummings cut the gun and sent the plane down in a steep slant.

The rusty, soot-rimmed stack of the captured vessel took shape, and then yawned below him. He jerked the throttle wide and grinned as the engine roared a warning. Men suddenly scurried on the red-leaded deck. They were wondering what had happened now.

Cummings banked tightly and came in low over the ship. He leaned out of the cockpit and scanned the decks.

There was Spike Kennedy, still on the topside, still under guard, his broad face turned up hopefully. He would see the dead man’s arms dangling over the pit coaming. Spike would understand.

Now was the time, when even the guards looked aloft, wondering why the plane had returned. Perhaps the mystery ship had been sunk. Perhaps Mueller had been unable to find her. Cummings saw the stocky skipper burst out of the hatch as the plane swept overhead.

Crash!

The tall pilot had but a split-second glimpse of happenings on the deck, but he almost imagined he heard Spike Kennedy's huge fist cracking into the jaw of the nearest man who held a Luger. Then, as he looked back, Cummings saw the burly chief machinist's mate take the rail in a desperate dive.

He swept the plane around in a tight bank. Men were running to the rail. Spike would have sense enough to stay under water as long as he could. Cummings grinned, poked the nose of the ship down at the deck, and yanked his Bowden wire.

Tac-a-tac-a-tac-a-tac!

Lead screamed out of the sky in a smoking shower. Some of it flattened on the steel deck, chipping off the red lead and whining viciously over the side. Some of it tore into deck gear and superstructure—and then it found the men at the rail, and a half dozen of them sprawled.

Lugers meant for Spike Kennedy whipped up in desperation, blazing at the plane as it swept above. Lugers clattered to the deck from wilted hands. Men scurried for cover.

There was Spike, breaking water twenty yards away from the ship, striking out with frantic arms as he gulped one good breath of air and then submerged again, encumbered by the heavy flying coat, the reassuring roar of Cummings' engine in his water-filled ears.

Cummings banked again, climbing a little. This time there would be no play with machine guns. The *Ulysses* was now an enemy vessel. He straightened the plane out to roar above her from stem to

stern, and he reached for the bomb release.

"No survivors!" he muttered through tightly-set teeth.

Both the 112-pound Mark I bombs the plane carried tipped and plummeted down. The plane roared on. Behind it, there was a crash, and the air rocked and was shot through with debris.

Jerry Cummings looked back. He saw the wind rolling away a cloud of smoke—and then vicious flame crackled through and roared aloft. The *Ulysses* shuddered, flame reached her storage tanks, and there was a mighty blast.

The plane banked, with hot air trying to lift up her wings. Cummings slanted her toward the water. There was a head bobbing out there now, ducking a rain of flaming oil. Spike Kennedy was still alive and going strong.

THE pontoons touched, a safe distance from the sinking ship. Cummings idled the engine and crawled back to unbuckle Heinrich Mueller's safety belt. With a mighty heave, he pushed the dead German over the side.

"Down you go with a lot of company!" he muttered. "Atta boy, Spike! Shake a leg, there, you'll be battling a lot of suction in a few minutes!"

The chief machinist's mate, blowing hard, reached out and grabbed a float. Cummings extended his hand, and Spike was soon clambering into the after cockpit, dripping brine over the crimson-stained pit coaming.

"Whew!" he gasped. "What a day! What happened over there?"

Cummings grinned. "Not much of anything, except a Boche sharpshooter took care of Mueller for me, and then I took care of him and came back to take care of you! Now we're heading for the Irish coast, and we've got just about enough juice to make it. I've got some reports to make to the admiral. One of them will be an old story to him—'No survivors!'"



By
WILLIAM E. BARRETT

**Here For The First Time In Any Publication
Is The Complete War History Of The Fokkers.
Other Ships Rose To Might And Invincibility—
Other Ships Were Carved Large In Aërial War-
fare, But Fokker Remained The Great Adversary**

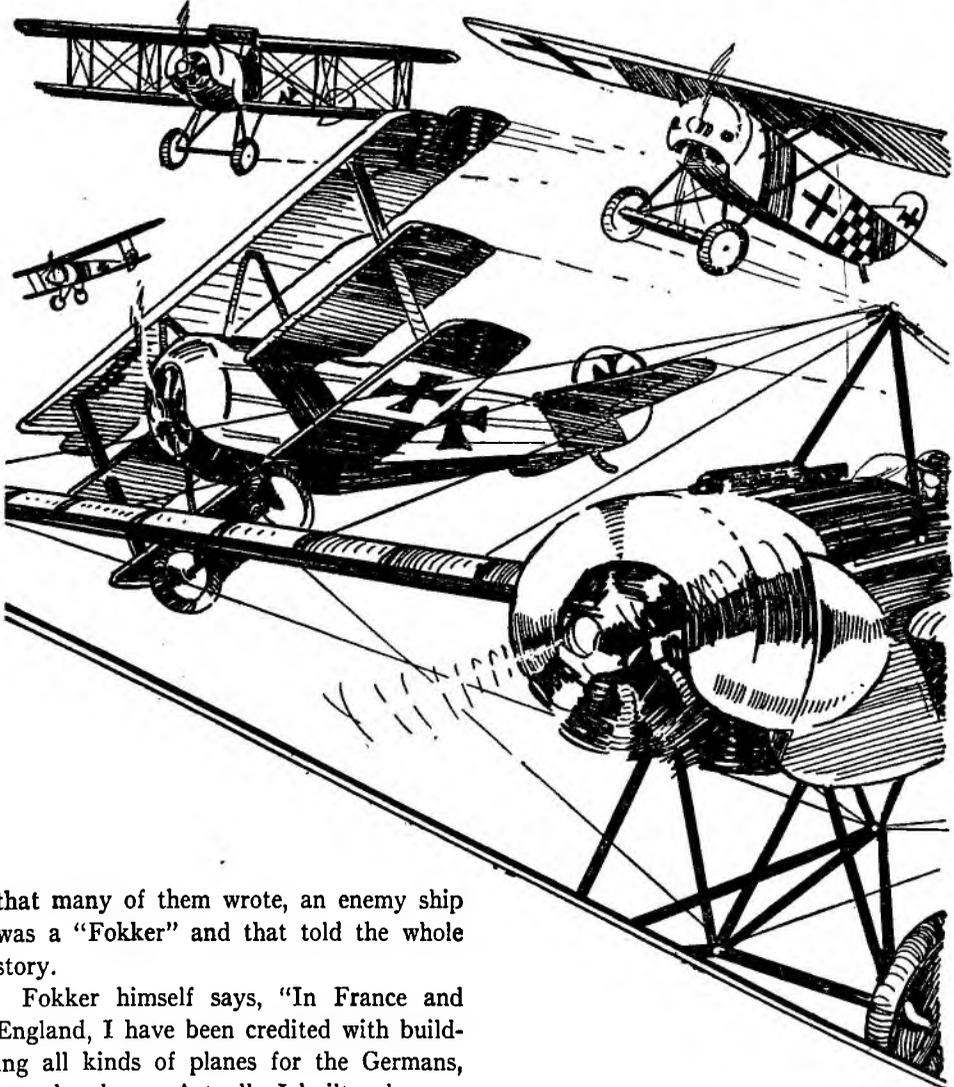
“**F**OKKERS in the sun. . . .”
Thus read the epitaphs. Through every year of war, the combat reports are dotted with that magic name—Fokker. Other ships rose to might and invincibility for their day, other names were carved large in the history of aërial warfare, other names maybe—ship for ship—were greater names; but only one name came out of the war as symbol and sign of a nation’s air armada—Fokker.

To the reading public, following the war in the daily press and the news magazines, there were no Albatrosses, no Rolands, no Halberstadts. In the picture sections of the publications that they read, Americans

French and British saw one name oft repeated until they learned that name. The name came to be associated with everything German that flew. When the Gothas descended on London, the artists of American papers had a field day. They drew pictures of monster planes swooping down on the British capital with death dealing bombs. Flaming captions hurled the graphic story at the innocent reader—**FOKKERS ATTACK LONDON.**

The airmen themselves, except for those careful few like McCudden and Guynemer who made studies of silhouettes, were not immune to the common error. In the reports that they handed in and in the books

FOKKERS



that many of them wrote, an enemy ship was a "Fokker" and that told the whole story.

Fokker himself says, "In France and England, I have been credited with building all kinds of planes for the Germans, even bombers. Actually I built only pursuit ships for Front flying."

Even Fokker stretches a point. There are things that a designer likes to forget, defeats that every human being strives to set aside when one has risen to triumph. Fokker, who has written an entertaining book on his wartime experiences (*Flying Dutchman—Henry Holt & Co.—1931*) leaves the biggest part of the Fokker war-

May we suggest to readers that they save this article for reference. It is the most complete ever printed and as such will be valuable.

time story untold. There is no reason why he should—but he chose not to remember. Here—for the first time in print

—is the story of all the Fokkers; the good and the bad and the indifferent. Look at them. They are history. . . .

First Wings

IN one week of 1914, a spark of controversy set the world ablaze. Aviation, still in its infancy, was a minor arm as the gray horde swept into Belgium and over the borders of Lorraine. Above the troops in feldgrau there flew a motley array of airplanes; Taubes mainly from the factories of Halberstadt, Rumpler, Albatross, Gotha and a half dozen more. There were no Fokkers.

The Fokkers, however, were on the way. In his little factory at Schwerin, Tony Fokker sat reading a telegram on the day that war was declared. The resources of his factory and all planes on hand, he read, were declared confiscated as a war emergency measure.

It was to laugh. The great Empire which had the Rumplers and the Albatrosses, the Halberstadts and the rest of them was bending to take note of a Dutch youth who had just passed 24 and who was heavily in debt; a youth with a pint size factory and a ship that every power in Europe had rejected.

Laugh or not—it was the truth. German officers swooped down upon Schwerin. They carried note-books and pencils and they talked in terms of hard cash. Trembling with eagerness, Tony Fokker sat down with them and figured. It did not take him long to lose the “tremble”—he never lost the ability to figure. Germany was to regret the lessons that she taught him in those first flush days of war fever; but Destiny wrote with those pencils.

For the first time in his life, Tony Fokker had an income assured him, money to finance his mad dreams—backing.

Down on the Champagne front, another dreamer buckled on his helmet and flew

out over the troops. Oswald Boelcke, whose parents had intended for a career of teaching and who had dared to dream dreams of military glory, was flying out over the troops for the first time while Fokker sharpened his pencils.

Fate had a plan for those two, but at the moment they were as far apart as two men can be. Fokker had never heard of Boelcke who qualified for his pilot's certificate the day before war was declared. On his part, Boelcke had heard of Fokker only in connection with exhibition flying. As the first man to loop the loop in Germany, Fokker was not without fame. His fame, however, was notoriety of the dare-devil, the fleeting headlines that belong to any man who risks his life spectacularly. Such fame did not satisfy Fokker and it did not interest Boelcke.

On December 9, 1914, Fate forged the first link that was to bind the destinies of the two dreamers together. One of the products of that little plant at Schwerin was delivered in the Champagne. First of the Fokkers to reach the fighting front, it was assigned to Oswald Boelcke.

The man who “built only pursuit ships for front flying” does not say anything about that first ship today, but Boelcke flew it for nearly three months as a range finder for the artillery and, although he did not like it as well as the Albatross that he used as an alternate, it didn't let him down.

A funny looking contraption with a boat-like fuselage, the 1914 Fokker—like those that came after—managed to be unique in one respect: it was the only German monoplane with swept-back wings. The seats were arranged tandem and the pilot sat in the rear cockpit. The wings, instead of following the general practice, were attached to chassis struts rather than to the fuselage. It had a span of 36 feet, was 24 feet long and stood nine feet, ten inches high. It was powered with the old style Gnome 80 engine and its perform-

ance, like that of its contemporaries, was uncertain.

Meanwhile, the German demand was for light single-seaters that would be stable enough to permit one man to fly and observe at the same time. Tony Fokker, with an order for twenty-four single seaters in his pocket, worked furiously. Other designers with greater facilities at their disposal, were ahead of him—but when Fokker wheeled a single seater out for test, it was the E-1.

The gods were good to that ship. It was mediocre by all the standards of the time, showing all too plainly the influence of the French Morane and lacking in the touch that was later to distinguish Fokker. In the normal course of events, such a ship as the E-1 would have been shuffled into the dusty files and forgotten; just one of many ships in its day that flew and did little else. But the gods wouldn't have it that way.

On the proving field, the E-1 mono stood, its wings spreading 29 feet, 6 inches. The 80 h.p. Oberursel copy of the Gnome throbbéd. Fokker himself had just demonstrated it and a test pilot of the military wing had flown it after him. The officials checked the figures on the test pilot's sheet. "Climb to 3,300 feet—7 minutes, to 6,600 feet—20 minutes. Speed at 6,000, eighty miles per hour." Eyes ran over the specifications. "Length 22 feet, 3 inches, height 9 feet, 6 inches, wing loading 7.2 pounds per square foot, weight 787 pounds empty, 1242 pounds with war load."

The inspector nodded his head. "Accepted."

That was April, 1915. Fokker pocketed his check for 24 planes and went on with the work on his new model eindecker, the E-2. At Douai drome, two airmen named Boelcke and Parschou took a look at the new single seaters assigned them. Boelcke coughed gently.

"Fokker!" he said. "I had hoped for an Albatross."

Parschou grunted gloomily. "Or a Halberstadt," he said.

So far, the Fokker was just a ship. But while Boelcke and Parschou talked on Douai drome, a Frenchman was planing down into German territory with a dead stick—and with the Frenchman rode Fokker's destiny.

The Frenchman was Roland Garros.

First Synchronized Gun

THE officers of the German military staff who were charged with the successful operation of the air force were profoundly stirred by the easy capture of the great Garros. For weeks, they had been burning midnight oil in conference with the crack designers of Germany while complaints came in from the front. Some Frenchman was firing forward through the propeller of his single seater Morane and raising hob with the flyers of the Fatherland.

"Can we do that, too?" asked the staff. The designers scratched their heads.

"We doubt it," they said. "The idea isn't practical. . . ."

And then Garros, as an act of supreme carelessness, made them a present of the invention that worried them. The crack designers of Albatross, Rumpler, A.E.G. and the rest of them were scornful. "This Frenchman," they said, "has merely fastened steel plates to the propeller. He does not fire through the propeller. Many of his shots hit it. No propeller—even with steel plates—will stand that. . . ."

Franz Schneider of L.V.G. was one of the designers who did not scoff. He had been working out a system of his own for firing forward from a single-seater. He couldn't solve the problem of timing, but he had an idea. Fame missed him by a hair's breadth.

Colonel Thomsen, German chief of staff for Air, was impatient. "This Frenchman

made his crude device work," he said, "and what works can be improved. Call in some more engineers. . . ."

Into that picture came Fokker, the 24-year-old Dutch boy who was already more prominent than any youth of his years had any business to be. Tony Fokker had never had a machine gun in his hands before and did not know how they worked, but tradition (and Tony himself) says that he took a Parabellum gun, listened to the statement of the problem and came back in 36 hours with the famous interrupter gear. That makes a fine legend. . . .

At any rate, Fokker invented the interrupter gear. With a set of gears, he hooked the firing mechanism of the gun directly to the revolving shaft of the rotary engine in the E-1. By careful computation, he worked out the timing problem and set his gears so that the gun fired once for every revolution of the propeller, the charge leaving the muzzle at a moment when neither blade was in the way.

That invention revolutionized aerial warfare and made Fokker the symbol of Germany in the air.

Sceptical at first of the gun's merits, the military authorities ordered Fokker himself to fly over the lines and demonstrate it in actual combat as he had demonstrated it against targets. Equipped with an identification card testifying that he was a lieutenant in the Imperial Air Force, Fokker flew daily for nearly two weeks on the French front before he found a foe. When he did find a Henri Farman, he dropped on its tail—and let it go.

He was no warrior, he was a Dutch subject—and he didn't want to kill anyone—so Fokker went back to his pencils and Oswald Boelcke took the Fokker eindecker E-1.

On his third flight over the lines with the Fokker, Boelcke shot a Frenchman out of the sky and a new form of aerial warfare was born.

Fokker was swamped with orders. He

had kept certain key details of his device secret and he was building the interrupter gear only for Fokker planes. The other manufacturers were desperate. The old style planes were doomed now. No flyer would want to go aloft in a ship that had to fire in a direction opposite the line of flight as long as there were ships available which had stingers on their noses.

By official order, Fokker began to make gears for other planes than his own and a new factory went up beside the constantly enlarging airplane factory.

Out on the front, Fokker E-1s were going into service. Parschou had one, so did Baldamus and Immelman. The German airmen were dreaming dreams of invincibility, but the dream was jarred by a rude reality. The E-1 had been designed before the gun-gear and it had not been designed to carry the weight nor to stand the recoil. Trouble developed with the synchronization and the performance was off. Pilots who had received the Fokkers with their obvious advantages in combat were leaving them in the hangars and going out on planes that they considered safer.

Fokker met the situation with the E-2.

The new eindecker was powered with the 100 h.p. Oberursel rather than the old 100. It had a span of 31 feet, 5 inches, length 23 feet, 10 inches, height 7 feet, 11 inches. The weight of the ship was 880 pounds empty and 1,340 pounds with war load. It was two minutes faster in reaching 3,300 feet than its predecessor and it could climb to 10,000 in a little over a half an hour.

With this ship, the real Fokker terror began.

Immelman's Contribution

ON August 11, 1915, Max Immelman, Boelcke, Wintgens, Parschou, von Althaus and a number of other Germans were having a party at the Douai drome. Immelman, a comparative new-

comer in the group, was not yet one of the destroyers. He had no victories on his score sheet, but his record as a single-seater observer was good and he enjoyed considerable distinction for his feat of dropping bombs on Paris from his Rumpler Taube. He had had a new Fokker E-2 for several days, but had not found any foes upon which to test his gun.

The party roared into the small hours and one after another of the roistering Germans toppled into bed. They were all sleeping heavily when there came a hum from the skies and a smashing detonation on the drome outside—followed by another and another. A white faced orderly dashed in.

“The Bombers! The Englishers. . .”

Sodden and sleepy, the German pilots

melman saw another eindecker. It had taken off too late to catch up with the British and it was turning back in Immelman's wake. The great Max waved and piqued for his landing. The other ship rolled in behind him and a queer apparition swung from the cockpit. There was death on the drome in the pile of smoking wreckage that had been a B.E., but Max Immelman forgot death and forgot even the thrill of victory. He leaned against his ship and laughed.

Oswald Boelcke—of the great prestige and surpassing dignity—had answered the alarm like a fireman without waiting to put on his pants. He was crossing the broad drome with his night-shirt whipping around his skinny bare legs and with his toes curling up from the bruising impact

Immelman Makes His First Kill

rolled out. Some of them made it and some of them did not. Max Immelman had gone to bed in his clothes and he was the first out. Jumping into his eindecker which the mechanics had rolled out in the face of heavy fire from the skies, he wheeled into the wind and away. Behind him dashed a wild looking apparition that yelled as it ran. . . .

Zooming for the skies, Immelman warmed his gun and lanced straight for the hindermost bomber. The Briton had had no experience with a plane that could fire in the direction of flight and he did nothing to avoid the fate that overtook him. Max Immelman bore down on the trips and a stream of death leaped from the nose of his Fokker.

The B.E. dropped like a hit bird and bounced twice upon the drome of Douai.

It was score one for the E-2 and the start of another famous career of destruction. Max Immelman had made his first kill. As he turned back to the drome, Im-

of the cinders . . . and under his breath he was swearing softly.

Boelcke had wanted that first kill with the new Fokker.

Shortly after that, Immelman and Boelcke parted. Immelman, with Wintgens and Leffers and Hohendorf went down on the British front; Boelcke, Parschou, von Althaus stayed on the French front. Flying singly rather than in groups, the Fokkers created the illusion of being more numerous than they actually were and the terrific advantage of synchronized front fire made them all but invincible. By the end of 1915, both Boelcke and Immelman were aces and the others were close behind them in the tally sheets.

Allied engineers were working day and night to solve the problem of equipping Allied planes with a front firing gun. The year 1916 was nearly over before they found the answer and, in the meantime, they adopted many other stratagems; such as the Nieuport top mounting for the Lewis

gun and the British pusher-type gun buses.

At the request of Max Immelman, Fokker built a special eindecker model called the E-3. This was equipped with THREE machine guns—all synchronized to fire through the prop. With this murderous armament capable of spraying 1,800 shots a minute into the foe, Immelman planned destruction on a grand scale. The load was too great, however, and he crashed on his first takeoff with the new ship. Unhurt, he went back to Fokker and the design was rebuilt.

In the new E-3, Immelman scored two victories and probably no other airman in the war ever flew a ship equipped with three synchronized guns. The design, however, was tricky, and after a second crash that nearly proved fatal, Immelman abandoned the E-3 and Fokker built no more of them.

The multiple gun idea, however, appealed to the little Dutchman. When he produced the E-4 late in 1915, he equipped it with two guns synchronized for front fire. Although this ship had more power (160 h.p. Oberursel) than any of the previous eindeckers and a much higher rate of performance, the guns caused trouble. Shortly after the model appeared, Fokker switched back to the one gun and the idea of two synchronized guns as standard equipment did not materialize until the Albatross D-1 appeared in the fall of 1916.

One gun, however, was enough at the time that the E-4 appeared. The Fokker was riding the wave of invincibility. Boelcke and Immelman had received the Pour le Merite and the other German airmen were running up scores. The press in England and France thundered against the outrage of German supremacy in the air. A red-faced member of the British parliament shouted that the youth of England were being sent into the air to become "Fokker fodder." The phrase became a byword and while the Fokker name was resounding around the world, Tony Fok-

ker was banking more money than he had ever seen before. The Dutch youth who had been penniless and in debt during the greater part of 1914 was able to buy a half interest in the Junkers plant in 1915 for three million marks.

It was the peak. Every airplane plant in Germany was pouring royalties into the Fokker coffers for the use of the interrupter gear, every fighter on the front was clamoring for planes of Fokker manufacture—every foe spoke of the German planes as Fokkers regardless of style or type.

Then came the turn.

The French were pouring out Nieuports with Lewis guns mounted on the top center-section and the British were putting squadrons of tough British pushers on the front; grim ships with Lewis guns on their noses. Slowly but surely, these new ships took over the front. The Fokker E-4, best of the eindecker line, was not carrying its pilots to glory. The cloak of eindecker invincibility was wearing thin. Fokker pilots no longer swooped to the easy kills—they fought.

JUNE, 1916, was the climax. Baron von Gerstoff, commander of No. 1 squadron, went down in flames over the Ancre. Boelcke, untouched heretofore, was shot down out of control by a French Nieuport and barely escaped with his life. Then—Max Immelman was killed in combat with an F.E.

It was the end for the eindecker. Other manufacturers had turned long ago from the monoplane and were turning out biplanes that handled easier even if they did not outperform the Fokker. Boelcke, wise and far-seeing in the needs of the air force, had gone to Fokker some weeks before the Immelman tragedy to discuss the possibility of a Fokker biplane supplanting the mono. Fokker, gifted with vision himself, had one already in the preliminary stages of construction.

When Immelman died, the Fokker D-1

was already on its way to the front and a new chapter of Fokker history was in the making.

Part II—The Biplanes

FOKKER had pinned his faith too long to the eindecker and when he brought the D-1 out in the summer of 1916, he was rushed by the knowledge that Halberstadt was ahead of him and that there was a new Albatross on the way. Nevertheless, he built a ship that got the nod from the inspectors and an order for 25 on immediate shipment. The first of the 25 went to Boelcke.

Trim enough in design, the D-1 was slightly inferior to the E-4 in performance; a fact which Fokker hoped would be offset by greater sturdiness and ease of handling. It was equipped with the Mercedes 120 h.p. engine, the first Fokker-built plane which did not employ a rotary engine. It weighed 1,020 pounds empty and 1,475 with war load. Its span was 29 feet, 10 inches, it was 18 feet, 10 inches long and stood 7 feet 5 inches.

When the D-1 came up, Boelcke was busy and hurried. He was trying out the new Halberstadt and liked it. He had already scored two victories with the ship, but he was engaged in a serious debate with Headquarters. Because of Immelman's death, the Staff wanted to retire Boelcke. They feared the effect that his death would have on the morale of the air force and they were unwilling to risk it. Boelcke, on his part, felt that it would be a greater blow to morale to have him withdraw. Busy as he was, he took the D-1 over the lines. Shortly afterwards he saw Fokker and shook his head regretfully.

"It is a nice design, Fokker," he said, "but you do not build to the Mercedes. The rotary is your engine. This is a nice ship, but the picture is changed. We no longer care if the pilot of the einsitzer is

a good observer or not; his job is to kill. We do not need the stable ship, we need the maneuverable one. . . ."

Fokker's genius consisted in part of taking criticism or suggestion from any source that he respected. He stopped work on the D-1 and, with slight modifications, produced the D-2. In effect, it was the same design adapted to take the 100 h.p. Oberursel. With those modifications, he knocked off minutes off the climb and gained much in maneuverability. He was proud of it and regretful that Boelcke had gone for a tour of the quiet fronts under orders without having a chance to try it out.

There were others to try it out and it was flown successfully by Wintgens, Frankl, Mulzer and Hohendorf for a few weeks. For once, however, the breaks were going against Fokker. The German Air Force, fat with victory, did not know how to meet the savage attacks of foes who had been trained lean on adversity. The big drive against Verdun had failed and now the British were driving on the Somme with an air force that was sweeping the Germans out of the skies. A new ship introduced at this period would have had to have extraordinary qualities. The Fokker D-2 did not have them.

The low state of German airmen and German ships was shown by a memo from General von Beulow which appears in his collected papers. "The beginning and the first few weeks of the Somme battle," he said, "were marked by a complete inferiority of our own air forces. The enemy's aeroplanes enjoyed complete freedom in carrying out distant reconnaissances."

Coming of the Albatross

A FEW short months had made the difference. The name "Fokker" was no longer magic. No longer did the English and French press cry out and there was no more talk of "Fokker fodder." The

tide had turned. With the shaking up of the Air Force staff, Boelcke came back from his enforced tour under new orders. He was to organize a super-squadron of single seater fighters which could be moved about the front to any sector that needed bolstering.

Excitement ran high in the airplane factories. To have the prestige and the profit of supplying this super-squadron would "make" any company. It was the big chance of the war. As his bid for a contract, Fokker entered the D-3.

This was the best Fokker up to that time. Powered with the Oberursel 160, it climbed to 10,000 in 12½ minutes and was capable of 100 m.p.h. at that level. It had a span of 29' 11", was 20' 10" long, stood 7' 7", weighed 995 pounds empty and 1,560 pounds with war load. Strangely enough, this was the first Fokker plane to be equipped with ailerons. Previous to this, Fokker had relied upon wing warping for lateral control even in his biplanes. Fast, maneuverable and capable of good climb, the D-3 in Fokker's estimation, was a standout for the Boelcke squadron.

And the Albatross D-1 won the contract.

It was a bitter blow to Tony Fokker. The young Hollander who had trembled with excitement at the thought of selling any planes at all to the German government just two short years before was humiliated now that he could not supply the best squadrons. Nothing less than a place at the top satisfied him. His D-3 was bought and his D-3 was flown, but his orders not only were smaller than those of Albatross, but his prestige was hurt. The German stars were winning their victories now on other ships.

They were winning them, too. Boelcke's cubs broke out their first day on the Albatross with a victory a piece and under their smashing attack the foes that had triumphed over Fokker were humbled. In that group of cubs were Richtofen, Boehme, Max Muller, Reimann and Little

Immelman. Some of them, including Manfred von Richtofen, had trained at the Fokker school, but they were Albatross pilots now and the thought goaded Fokker on to new efforts.

He got the first shipment of the new 160 Mercedes and he built the D-4. This ship had a span of 32 feet, length 21 feet, height 8 feet. It weighed 1,332 pounds empty and 1850 loaded. It climbed to 10,000 in a trifle over 12 minutes and did a little better than a hundred miles an hour at that level. For a while, it seemed as though he were headed back to the heights. The military inspectors liked his ship and an order was placed for the Boelcke jagdstaffel.

Fokker had dreams of supplanting Albatross after giving them only a few short months of dominance. He didn't quite make the grade. His ship probably held its own with the Albatross D-2, but the D-3 was in the offing and the Fokker was used only as an alternate and change-off ship in the crack staffels.

GERMAN dominance on the front was manifest again in early spring 1917. The British pushers which had been too good for the Fokkers that they were built to combat were not good enough to stand against the Albatross. As competitors the French were no better off. And the Allies had not yet developed a suitable interrupter gear. It was the German harvest time, but the lesser staffels which were flying the Fokkers and Rolands and Halbertstadts were complaining. They had ships superior to the foes that they were called upon to meet, but they wanted Albatrosses.

It was 1915 all over again only Fokker wasn't in the leading rôle.

The Fokker bankroll was still healthy. He stepped out and bought the Oberursel firm out of the profits of past triumphs and went into the struggle all over again. His early 1917 ship was the D-5. He was back in the rotaries again with an improved Oberursel 100 and he had a lighter, more

maneuverable ship than any produced heretofore. The D-5 weighed 800 pounds empty and 1,245 with war load. It had a span of 28' 10", was 20 feet long and stood 7' 7". It was slow on climb, but faster than its predecessors and was built for fast work at close quarters.

Albatross beat that one with the D-3.

It was small comfort to Fokker, except in a financial sense, that his ship was considered a good one and ordered in satisfactory quantities for use on the Italian and Balkan fronts. The bitter fact remained that von Richtofen, who was fast becoming a national idol since the death of Boelcke, had flown Albatrosses almost exclusively through all of his meteoric career and that the race of super-aces that were coming up with the red ace were also associated with the Walfische.

Bloody April

"**B**LOODY April" (1917) saw the break-up of German competition. Most of the fighting took place on the British front and the British pilots were still fighting in the planes of early 1916. Bound to a grim offensive, the Britons carried the fight into German territory with their old crocks and the Albatross squadrons had a field day. Five Britons fell to every German and the Fokker was all but forgotten in the wave of enthusiasm for Albatross.

So far had the mighty Fokker fallen that his orders for planes of his own design were cut almost to the vanishing point and his factory ordered to produce training planes of A.E.G. design.

The man had enemies in Germany that he had made during the days when he rode the crest and those enemies enjoyed themselves now. "The rocket goes up with a loud noise and much fire," they said, "but it comes down a burned stick. This Dutchman is too young and too imprudent. . . ."

Fokker could not answer that in the only way it could be answered satisfactorily, so he stayed at Schwerin and built A.E.G. trainers. Back in his mind, however, there was a new dream and the pencil was again busy.

It promised to be a long war.

Part III—The Come-Back

NO one of course, except Anthony Fokker himself, knows what his thoughts were during those long months when the Fokker was an "also ran" on the fighting front. It is quite probable, however, that he went back over the things that he had done and extracted all that could be learned from his experiences. Fokker had always been eager to learn and there had been a lifetime of experience crowded into those first war years that he had had no time to digest while he was cock of the walk. Defeat brought reflection.

Having found Fame so fleeting a thing, Fokker had time now to analyze the reasons for the fame that came to him. Egoist though he was, he must have realized in those days that the Fokker ships had never been great. The enemies of Fokker had said that he was too young and to a certain extent they were right. His youth had been a load on his genius, but the war years had aged him and he could see his accomplishments for what they were.

His greatest achievement had been the interrupter gear—yet he had prided himself on being an airplane designer.

Looking back, he could see the eindecker as nothing but a flying gun. So like the French Morane was it that German gunners used to fire at it. Why then was the Morane just an ordinary ship and the Fokker a great one? Because of something that had nothing whatever to do with aircraft design—because of a gun. . . .

And what had he done with biplanes?

He had pushed them out fast to win competitions. Good ships? Certainly—but not the best ships for the job that was to be done. He had done with them what one does with a peace time ship. He had tried to put all-round flying qualities into them—balance. He had overlooked the fact that the airplane as an offensive weapon was unbalanced and had to be unbalanced; a weapon with emphasis on one quality above all others.

Albatross had taught him that with ships that would not maneuver with his, but which were murderous weapons in the air because of the power that was in them for the quick swooping kill and zooming recovery.

In his solitude at Schwerin, Fokker planned a ship that would do one thing superlatively well, do it as no ship on the front would do it . . . and if he had to throw away other desirable qualities, he'd throw them away.

Already the Albatross was being stopped cold on the western front. Bloody April had passed and with it had gone the great moment of Prussian invincibility in the air. The British were smashing even the great Jagdstaffeln 2 and 11 in combat now; smashing them with the roaring, zooming S.E.5, the tricky Camel and the superb Bristol. . . . Pretty soon, Germany would want a new ship to bring back the lost laurels of the air force; a ship with one quality.

Fokker decided that the prized ingredient of the new ship would be—maneuverability.

The Fokker biplanes had been planes of relatively great span and the greater the span, the greater will be the difference in speed between the two sides of a turning plane. To obtain mastery in a dogfight, a plane had to turn fast. Still, there was the problem of supporting surface if a ship is to be fast enough and if it is to climb with its foes. The greater the surface, the greater the span—unless—

Fokker's answer was the DR-1. . . . The Fokker triplane.

The Fokker Triplane

THE triplane design gave him a large surface area with short span and it permitted him to offer a plane that was a smaller target, a faster turning ship than any available and one that had greater lift at low speeds. . . .

As his own contribution to triplane design, Fokker introduced the idea of the cantilever wing. Photographs of the triplane show a connecting interplane strut, but the triplane was flown successfully without this member and the strut was added later as a concession to conservatives in the military headquarters. Another Fokker touch was the streamlined casing on the wheel axle; an aerofoil surface that constituted actually a fourth surface.

Drawing on his own factory, Fokker equipped this ship with the 110 Oberursel and laid it down for test. (Span 22' 2", length 19', height 9', weight (empty) 825, weight (loaded) 1255). When the test returns were in, it was shown that the triplane had climbed to 10,000 feet in six minutes and 7 seconds, had made 125 miles an hour at that altitude and was a revelation in the ease with which it performed all the standard tricks of combat.

The German government forgot its prejudices and placed an order for immediate delivery.

Von Richtofen's famous jagdstaffel eleven was at the height of power despite the harder going that the summer of 1918 had brought to Germany's airmen. It was time to re-equip and Von Richtofen had been trying out a new Albatross and a Halberstadt. A few planes from a new factory were coming up, too—Pfalz scouts. The triplane, however, was viewed askance. It was radical. . . .

So a youngster named Werner Voss of

the Boelcke Jagdstaffel took the new plane up on the Ypres front and knocked over 22 Britons in 21 days.

The triplane was a sensation after that. Von Richtofen took it as his special pet and led his famous circus out over the Somme. Voss had flown the tripe in August on the Ypres front; Von Richtofen took his triplane into action for the first time on September 2, 1917. The first combat was hardly a test.

A logy old R.E.8 was loafing over the lines when Richtofen swooped down. The observer hardly looked at him, never touched the gun. The British had been using the Sopwith triplane for some time and no one along the Somme had ever seen a German tripe. Before Lieutenants Madge and Kember of the 6th Squadron, RFC knew that there was a foe in the air, they were shot down. The red Baron spent only twenty rounds on this victory and he went

His next effort was the Fokker D-6. Looking like no other ship on either side of the line and incorporating features that no other designer had yet dreamed of, the D-6 was years ahead of its time.

By employing the cantilever wing construction principle that was proving so successful in the triplane, Fokker produced a biplane from which all struts and guy wires were eliminated. The top wing was built closely above the fuselage like the wing of a parasol monoplane and the bottom plane was narrower with reduced span. The fuselage was of welded steel.

In other words, the D-6 was an earlier D-7—and Germany was not yet ready for so radical a departure.

Powered with the Oberursel 110, the D-6 climbed to 10,000 feet in a trifle over nine minutes and made about 130 miles per hour at that level. It had a span of 25' 5", was 19' 6" long, weighed 865

The Origin Of The Famous D-7

home pleased with the new ship. He took the swift victory for an omen and he was not forgetting that a few months back he had been shot down himself in an Albacross.

It was the change in luck. Next day he shot down a Camel.

The change of luck applied, too, to Tony Fokker. As the fame of the triplane spread, his lost prestige came back to him. Men who had been polite and distant were fawning on him now, but Fokker was not fooled. The triplane, he knew, would have its day and then—like the eindecker—it would be whipped. When that day came, he was going to be ready with something better.

In other words, he was going to do what he knew that the British and French designers were doing—he was going to build a ship to whip the triplane before anyone else did.

pounds empty and 1,283 pounds with war load.

The inspectors came, looked, grunted and walked around. Beards were stroked. The ship was too different. It couldn't be good. Phlegmatically, the inspectors watched Fokker do the book with his new pride. The ship would do things, they admitted, but still it wasn't orthodox, it wasn't right.

"It should have struts," they said. "In fact, it must have struts."

Fokker shrugged. It made no difference to him. He equipped the ship with "N" struts. The Military Committee admitted that it looked more like an airplane now, but it just wouldn't do. There were certain standards of design and Fokker was too young to violate them with impunity. It was too bad and a damned shame, but Germany didn't want the D-6.

As a compromise, the Army placed a

small order for this plane to be shipped to the Italian front. It made little difference what happened in Italy and it was only fair that Fokker should get back the cost of his development work.

And so the ship that might have been a deadly weapon in France was shunted out of the picture.

Fokker took it philosophically. The triplane was still the pride and joy of the German Air Service and Fokker had devised several improvements that would make it still more formidable. He had a new model out and Von Richtofen had made a special trip to the factory to try it. So tickled was he with its performance that Fokker presented him with it as a personal gift from maker to ace.

Once more, however, Fokker's position was insecure and he had no warning. With a curtness that took his breath away, the Staff refused to okay the new triplane. The design, they said, had exhausted its usefulness. There was a new Albatross and . . .

Fokker knew that the new Albatross was not a better plane than his tripe; but it was not for a long time that he learned the secret of German coolness. An English firm had sent him a letter via Holland which offered him inducements to desert the German cause. The letter had been intercepted and Fokker was suspected of treating with the enemy.

Only one of the new Fokker tripe reached the front and that one was a gift. In it Manfred von Richtofen, German ace of aces, died.

Beginning of the End

GERMANY was mustering all of her resources now for a final drive to end the war. The United States had thrown its weight with the Allies and with fresh troops flowing into France to back up the war worn British and French, Germany's one hope was to get the war

over quickly, to make the Allied position so untenable that they would sue for an adjusted peace. To that end, it was shaping a mighty army and planning to back it with the greatest air fleet that had ever flown.

There were millions to be made by the airplane manufacturers and the spirit of competition was bitter. No one factory could expect to stack the cards with the stakes so high, but several of them banded together with certain German officials to make it hard for the "foreign competition." This time, they swore, the Dutchman would not cut any melons.

So—on top of the D-6 and triplane rejection, the Military Board announced a competitive competition for contracts. Each maker was to submit a ship or ships and these would be flown by experienced front line pilots who would vote for the ship that pleased them best. This plan, of course, put temptation in the way of the pilots and there were attempts at bribery; but the front line flyers knew that mere money would do them little good if they went into the big drive with inferior ships.

Fokker did not worry about bribery nor the integrity of the German pilots. He was concerned with the spot onto which he had been maneuvered. He had fired and missed with his two current designs and every other aircraft factory had new models ready for the test. There was no time to build a new Fokker from scratch and he had no chance with models previously rejected. In fact, it was doubtful if he would be allowed to enter those models had he wished.

Surrounded, then, by suspicion, distrust and jealousy, he threw himself into a day and night drive of his own. With the D-6 as the skeleton upon which to build, he drew and figured and built until his body caved. Sleeping a few hours, he came back to the job. He ate in snatches and he slept hardly at all; but out of his brain fag and his sweat came the D-7.

The world knows that ship, hailed by many as the finest pursuit job of the war. To the competition at Johannisthal, it brought the new idea of welded tubular steel fuselage, radical radiator design, a device of a threaded eyebolt on the inner struts for changing the angle of incidence on the top plane, an abnormally deep wing section, wireless wing design and aerofoil-shaped casing for the wheel axle.

No other ship in the competition offered so many new features and the Fokker got word of mouth advertising before it was flown. The competition noted that Fokker had abandoned rotary engine construction. (The D-6 had failed to pass with the rotary and he took no chances with his in his original plans. He simply built the D-6 over for the 160 Mercedes and added improvements as he went.)

The curious who walked around the D-7 saw an awkward looking ship with N struts; a ship with a span of 29 feet, 4 inches, length of 23 feet and standing 9 feet 8 inches. The heaviest Fokker to date, it weighed 1,515 pounds empty and 1,995 loaded.

Fagged out and a little worried over details of construction that he had had no time to shape off to satisfaction, Fokker sought out Bruno Loerzer, the circus master, the man who was sweeping an invincible swath in the wake of the dead Rich-tofen.

"I have the greatest plane in this competition," he said bluntly. "Not one of these other crocks belong in the same air. But, as it stands, it takes a master to get the right performance out of it. Later, when I have had time to work on it, a cadet will be able to make it perform miracles. Now . . . ?"

He shrugged. Loerzer looked at him out of deep-set eyes. A great ace, Loerzer had pride. He liked the beer and the boulevards and the ladies—but he liked also to believe that he could hold his own in any competition. He had lived hard.

"If your plane has anything, I will find out," he said.

Fokker turned away. "It has everything," he said.

That challenge of Fokker's to Loerzer was the best bit of strategy in the competition. The Circus Master took the D-7 aloft and after he had done everything in it that any plane would do, the other manufacturers were white. Loerzer came down and there was a glint of admiration in his eyes.

"I want that ship," he said.

He completed the strategy by strolling to the group of pilots who were waiting to take ships aloft. "Be careful of that Fokker," he said. "It will do anything for a man who knows his stuff, but it takes a lot of flying. . . ."

OTHER ships were cracked up in the competition, but not the Fokker. Flying that ship became a point of pride. The pilots fought for the chance to prove that they could fly it and Fokker, who knew that it wasn't yet finished and that without the challenge to Loerzer it might have been barred as unsafe, almost wept with relief.

There were Albatross, Pfalz, Rumplers, Halberstadts, A.E.G.s; good ships, all of them, the last word in German design and German engineering. But Fokker feared none of them. He had feared only his own ship. Knowing that the design was fundamentally sound, he had fretted over the details which he could ultimately perfect but which could trip him now.

They didn't trip him, thanks to Bruno Loerzer. When the competition was ended, General Falkenheim called him over. "How soon can you deliver 400 planes like that?"

Fokker was rocked to his heels. He had never had a bigger order than sixty—and this was victory. It was some time before he realized how great that victory was to be. With her back to the wall, Germany

had to economize in every way possible. Efficiency in production, distribution and servicing had to be developed to a fine point. And the Fokker was more than a fine ship—it was the perfect ship for the new program.

For the first time since the German Air Force was organized, a pursuit ship was accepted as THE standard ship for the whole service. The other designs with which German manufacturers had striven for contracts were summarily scrapped. Hereafter, with the exception of those ships already in service or contracted for, the German Air Force would fly chaser planes of Fokker design.

And the ultimate triumph of the little Dutchman came when the Albatross plant was ordered to build Fokker D-7s and pay royalty to the erstwhile rival. A.E.G. and the others found themselves compelled to follow suit as soon as their contracts ran out—except, of course, in cases where contracts for two-seaters existed. No two-seater had been standardized.

After the D-7s

THAT was February, 1918, and the front saw a sudden deluge of new Fokkers. Contrary to precedent, Richtofen did not take the first of the new ships into action. Bruno Loerzer, newly appointed to the command of Jagdgeschwader No. 3, was the first to introduce the D-7. Under him were Fritz Loerzer, commanding Staffel 26; Karl Bolle, commanding No. 2 (the Boelcke); Hermann Goering at the head of Staffel 27, and Bongartz with Staffel 36.

To that wrecking crew went the D-7 and to the hunting ground of the Loerzer pack came the Yanks.

Eddie Rickenbacker wrote a book called "Fighting the Flying Circus" when the war was over. The circus he fought was the Loerzer and the ships that he fought were D-7s. So did history repeat itself.

The British pilots who crossed to France

in 1915 called every ship a Fokker—the Yanks who crossed to France in 1918 did the same thing. The Yanks were more nearly right. D-7s were pouring from the factories.

The long promised German offensive was meeting the fresh troops from across the ocean and Paris seemed far away. Above the desperate army fought a no less desperate air force. Richtofen, who clung to the triplane because he believed in it, because it served him well and because his ships were good, was killed. Reinhard stepped into his shoes as staffel leader and the war went on.

A mad Bavarian named Udet who had been a good pilot in an Albatross became a great one in a D-7. His victories mounted unbelievably, but close behind him came two more who were fresh and young and unknown; Rumeys and Kroll. The old order had passed with Richtofen and Fokker's prophesy was being fulfilled.

"A cadet will be able to make it perform miracles."

The drive slowed. The army was folding. New ships were appearing across the line; Spads and Snipes and Dolphins. New tricks in warfare were being tried. The British had a line of armored attack planes for straffing troops.

Although Fokker had split with Junkers, the Junkers attack plane came out late in the summer; a low wing monoplane with duralumin sheathing and armor plate. Fokker had cooperated in the design of that before he split with Herr Junkers. But he was busy with other designs of his own.

He foresaw the fact that even the D-7 would be overmatched and his new problem was to design a plane that would still be standard, still preserve the vitally necessary principle of interchangeable parts—but which would stack up against the new Allied ships.

His answer was the D-8.

This plane was powered again with the

Oberursel rotary from the plant that Fokker owned. It marked the comeback of the monoplane design and it was an immediate sensation. To Ernst Udet and his Blue Tails went the distinction of taking the ship into battle and the British bore the brunt of it. The design provided its own camouflage and it was almost impossible to see it in the sun.

The amazed British called it "The Flying Razor," and for the short span of its life on the front, it cut a wide swath.

Still fighting the inevitable, the Germans were reaching out for greater standardization. By command, Fokker designed a two-seater that followed D-7 practice and which provided the same advantage in servicing that his pursuit ships did; repair part interchangeability. Coincident with the two-seater came the D-9 biplane.

It was their destiny that they must perish with a lost cause. The German Em-

pire folded in November and, as a last sad gesture, Goering flew the old Richtofen Circus deep into Germany until plane after plane came down without gasoline. They lay where they landed—undefeated and surrendered.

Fokker alone, of all Germany, won the war. Escaping to Holland with a huge fleet of planes and with most of his money, he knew the last thrill of victory in defeat when the Armistice terms were read. In specifying that all German planes must be turned over to the Allies. Article Four contained one cryptic phrase—

"In erster Linie alle Apparate D-7. . . ."

The translation of that is "Especially all machines of the D-7 type." There were no planes of a D-7 type but Fokkers, thus—as aerial combat started, so did it end. All foes were Fokkers in the beginning and no other name was remembered in the end.

They were the great adversary.

THE PULL UP

IF you're fond of thrills, picture yourself hanging on the top of a loop with no belt, and just saving yourself from a last long dive, minus parachute, by grasping your center-section struts with your hands and crooking your toes under any old projection in the cockpit as you were slipping out. Picture yourself thus floating earthward upside down for 7,000 feet before you could wriggle your body by sheer strength back into the cockpit. Add to this a Hun blazing away at you with a machine gun, and an exploded Very light cartridge burning merrily in the cockpit, and you have the experience of Lieutenant Wilson of an R. N. A. S. Squadron, down on the Somme in early 1917.

Lieutenant Wilson was listlessly completing an otherwise uneventful patrol in his Sopwith Pup when he was suddenly startled into action by the familiar rat-tat-tat of a machine gun behind him. Instinctively he yanked his machine up into a loop to throw off the Hun, but with insufficient speed to complete the maneuver. The result was as pictured above, and as a Hun bullet set off a Very light in the cockpit he watched it burn an ever-widening hole in the side of his machine as he struggled frantically to get back into his seat.

How he escaped the enemy bullets is a miracle, and can only be explained by the supposition that the gloating Hun left him at 2,000 feet with the certainty that he had a sure victim.

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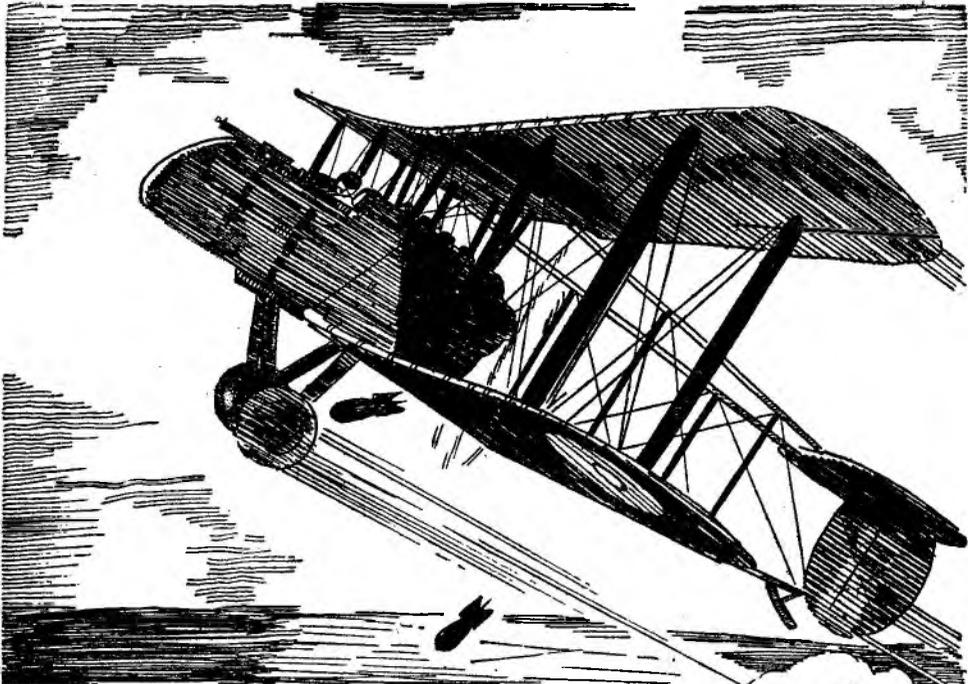
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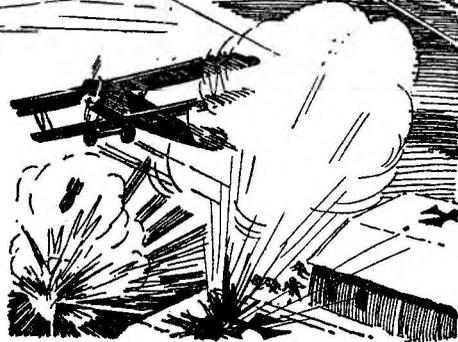
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He floundered around in the old crate until Barrett made his escape.

"Too Old To Fly," They Told Him, But When He Blasted His Home-Made Crate To The Front He Showed Them How A War Should Be Fought



WARRIOR WINGS

By

DARRELL JORDAN

MAJOR SIDNEY BARRETT thrust his numb hands inside the pocket of his flying suit and scowled at the dismal gray sky. His khaki colored Spad droned along evenly, like a faithful horse, as the pilot thought longingly of breakfast and hot coffee. Ranged

on either side of the Squadron Commander's ship flew five more Spads in V formation, the remainder of B Flight, 16th Yank Pursuit.

Barrett liked to keep his hands in, and usually flew at least one dawn patrol a week, alternating with the different flights.

But this morning all seemed peaceful; the patrol had completed their assigned territory without sighting any E. A., and Barrett smiled blissfully at the thought that there would be no combat reports to send in, and allowed his mind to dwell again on the hot breakfast awaiting him at the drome. Damn this business of rolling out of bed and into a roaring Spad. It raised the devil with a man's temper.

With a powerful drone of pulsating Hisos the flight roared into a fleecy mass of low lying vapor, to emerge a minute later in slightly ragged formation. And instantly Major Barrett and his pilots forgot all thoughts of breakfast.

For, shrieking in at breakneck speed, loomed a sizeable array of fast Pfalz scouts, presumably returning homeward from a patrol of their own. Only lightning swift reaction of war trained nerves averted a general collision. For a second the sky was filled with madly scrambling ships, pilots intent only on untangling themselves from that perilous screaming mass.

Then as danger of locking wings passed as the ships slid into open sky, the spiteful hammering of Spandaus and Vickers shattered the droning bellow of Mercedes and Hispanos into jagged bursts of sound. The Hun patrol seemed ready and willing to turn the accidental meeting into a free-for-all, and the Yanks, homeward bound with full ammo belts, were just as eager.

TRAGEDY began to strike with numbing impartiality. A Spad, hardly recovered from a near collision with the Boche leader, fell like a sodden lump of lead as a Pfalz sliced in from the side, guns glowing crimson. A pair of Spads instantly converged on the victorious Jerry and literally pounded him from the sky.

Barrett, maneuvering the single seater with the precision of long practice, squinted through the Aldis, seeking a black crossed shape in the welter of plunging shapes. A Spad darted across his line of fire, and

the S. C.'s fingers momentarily relaxed. Then as a Maltese crossed Pfalz flickered after the Spad his hand contracted on the Bowdens and a short vicious gust of fire snarled from the Vickers. The Pfalz wavered, the nose dropping. Simultaneously Barrett kicked left rudder, flipping the Spad over and down upon the reeling Hun. The Yank saw the German raise a hand slowly to his face and wipe at the oil spatters. The movement told him that the Hun was wounded or dazed; they didn't last long when they stopped to do that. Another Spad could finish the job; Barrett jerked into an Immelman.

The swift maneuver saved his life. The Boche flight leader had slashed in eagerly at the ship bearing the commander's pennons, and a deadly stream of tracer missed the cockpit by inches as Barrett zoomed where the Hun had figured a turning dive on the wounded Pfalz.

Then the Hun flight leader lunged up in grim pursuit, Spandaus flaming each time a portion of the Spad flickered momentarily into his sights. Barrett cursed, with the vivid, blistering fluency of a hard man cornered. He dug deep into his book of sky tricks, and tried them all, even inventing new ones on the spur of the moment. But for once he had met a pilot who seemed to anticipate his every move, every maneuver, almost before it started. The Pfalz, like a gayly painted shadow, clung with bulldog determination to that deadly tail position, and the Spandaus gleamed with cherry heat as an unending stream of slugs whispered through the black muzzles.

Zoom, roll, bank, dive. Immelmans, renversements, tricky, desperate scramblings that had no name; Barrett tried them all, and knew he was headed for the sky warrior's Valhalla. The Spad began to handle sloppily, and to groan and creak protests as the hand on the stick demanded the impossible. Wings, elevators and ailerons were sieved with dozens of grim little

holes, and fabric flapped threateningly. Barrett glared around, cursed again as one swift glance told him the remaining four Spads were engaged in rapid-fire action of their own. No interference could come from them—if only something would happen to distract that Boche devil's attention for just one moment, just the fraction of a second, Barrett knew he had a fighting chance.

And in that split moment when the Yank skipper's life hung by a shivering hair something did happen, something that not only attracted the Hun's attention from his prey, but brought him rigid, eyes bulging incredulously beneath the heavy goggles.

Out of nowhere, it seemed, a crazy winged shape came wallowing into the pilot's scope of vision. Like nothing he had ever seen flying before over the war gutted fields of France came popping a plane, if it could be called that, that might have been conjured from a distorted nightmare.

Two frail stubby wings projected from a cage like fuselage which consisted only of wooden spars, longerons and struts. A tiny engine pop-poped placidly from a hanging just back of the point where the wings joined the skeleton fuselage. And in front, with only a thin board seat between him and the trenches five thousand feet below, sat a gangling figure, feet planted firmly on a crude rubber bar.

For perhaps the space of two fluttering heart beats the German leader stared in bug-eyed astonishment, but that flicker of time was enough for Barrett, who hadn't seen the apparition and had no amazement to hinder his muscles, only the driving instinct of self preservation.

As the Hun zoomed wildly to avert collision with the strange craft the 16th's skipper flung the groaning Spad through a final tight loop. For a flash the Maltese marked ship loomed hugely black through the Aldis. Simultaneously twin Vickers

sang the vicious song they had been saving for minutes. Barrett raised the nose, turned the stream of tracer gushing into the cockpit of the Pfalz. And with a despairing lunge the Pfalz lurched over as suddenly stricken hands jerked the controls. Then the trim crate that a second before had been driving in so mercilessly for the kill, blossomed into a billowing mass of scarlet and swirled shrieking toward the earth.

With a shaky curse Barrett mopped the sweat from his eyes and glared around him. Three miles to the north three specks were pursuing two more specks toward Hunland. Meaning, Jerry had had a stomach full and was scooting home for breakfast while he could still live to enjoy it. Then Barrett's tired gaze fell upon the crazy shape of the intruder and he rubbed his eyes in bewilderment. Yes, it was still there. The pilot was maneuvering as close as possible to the Spad and wildly waving his free hand as he leaned precariously from his lofty perch.

STILL only half believing the evidence of his eyes Barrett motioned the other ship to drop in ahead of him. Throttling the wobbly Spad down to match the slow gait of his companion Barrett guided the other toward the 16th's drome east of Ourmette. And in that fashion, with the three surviving Spads tagging in near home, the procession rolled its trucks on the familiar tarmac.

Almost before the crate had stopped rolling the gangling pilot had extricated his lean length from the maze of wire braces and strode up to the S. C.

"Is this the drome of the 16th Pursuit Squadron? Aren't you Major Barrett, in command?"

"Yes, to both," grunted Barrett, striving for the vague recollection of this man's seamed face that he felt lay buried in the back of his mind. The fellow was at least forty years old. His tousled hair showed

unmistakable traces of gray over the temples, and sun wrinkles around the keen blue eyes were deep marked. A pronounced limp appeared in his gait, and his frail body, despite its stature, seemed hardly able to withstand the force of the brisk breeze that scuttered across the tarmac.

"And you don't remember me?" the stranger asked, regret and discouragement mingling in his voice.

"Sorry," Barrett said, then eyed the curious group crowding closer. "If you want to talk to me, better come into the office, before this gang starts asking questions."

In the little office Barrett dropped into a chair and kicked another forward for his caller. The man unbuttoned his leather

everything; no use. So here's what I did. I had a little money, I dismantled my ship—that's it outside; I built it all myself—and crated it up, brought it over. I sneaked the boxes out of Havre, had a tough time doing it, too."

"And then," demanded Barrett, leaning forward.

"I put 'er together and hopped to Le Bourget. Then—"

"But how in hell did they let you get away from Le Bourget with that thing?"

"They thought I was crazy; locked me up. But I broke loose, got fuel and started for the front. I thought if I could get to some line squadron, convince 'em I could fly, why mebbe—anyway, I heard a conversation between a couple of your pilots in Paris on leave, found out your

A Warrior That No Man Knew

jacket, disclosing a rumpled suit of civvies. He began talking abruptly.

"Major, I want to fly with you! I want to join up with your outfit!"

Barrett stared. "Man, are you crazy? Don't you know we can't pick up pilots like that? You have to enlist, be assigned to the Air Service, pass a course of training. You should have done that back home—"

He broke off as the other blurted out in swift, pleading sentences.

"I know all that—they wouldn't take me, even in the infantry. As for the Air Service—they wanted young guys! And me, who's been a flyer since the Wright Brothers started it. Why, man, I've flown with Beachey, Collier, the old masters of flying! I know more in a minute about ships that these kids outside will ever know! But I'm too old, and I've got a limp! As if I expected to walk around kicking Boches out of the sky! I've tried

drome was near Ourmette, and came on. I got balled up and wandered into that scrap; you know the rest."

"Yeah, I know the rest," Barrett got to his feet, paced restlessly back and forth in front of the scarred desk. A curious lump was persisting in swelling into his throat—he choked it down angrily. Hell! Here was a Yank, all man, too, who'd spent his savings and traveled thousands of futile dangerous miles, only to meet with final disappointment. Somehow, Barrett knew the man spoke the truth. What he had been through—it showed there in his drawn, hopeless face, radiated from his deep eyes.

"You said something about knowing me," Barrett swung around. "How come?"

"Never mind." The veteran shook his head wearily. "If you've forgotten, I'll just wait until you remember."

"Your name?" Barrett asked gently.

A moment's hesitation, and Barrett knew

the forthcoming name would be assumed.

"Linton, Dave Linton."

"Is that—oh, well, let it pass. Now about this flying; you must understand, Linton, that I can't put you on my roster. Not that I wouldn't like to. I figure you'd do to take along. Besides, whether you realize it or not, you're happening along pulled me out of a mighty tough jam up there. But such a thing as regulations that can't be broken. Of course, you've got to stay away from here, and I can't let you fly in that bird cage. I don't understand yet why our Archie didn't blast hell out of you just on general principles, you with no insignia on your ship."

"There is a few holes in the old girl's wings," Linton admitted diffidently. He rose to his feet. "Let me stick around until evening, will you, Skipper?"

"O. K.," Barrett consented, "but get that kite of yours out of sight, and if you see a staff car drive in on the tarmac you get under cover. I hate to think what would happen if a brass hat caught you here."

Linton was turning toward the door when the telephone jangled harshly. Barrett scooped up the receiver. Linton listened apprehensively to the chopped up conversation.

"Yes?" said Barrett. "Go ahead, Le Bourget. What? Is that a fact! No . . . no, I haven't. Sure . . . goodbye."

"Le Bourget is sending out an alarm for you, old-timer, phoning all squadrons," Barrett said slowly.

Linton nodded. "And you told 'em you hadn't seen me. . . I won't forget that, Major."

MAJOR BARRETT laughed stridently. Again he saw a gayly painted ship diving in relentlessly on his tail, watched the snake's tongues of tracer winking from glowing Spandaus, his back writhing in anticipation of a hail of leaden death. Hell! The score wasn't half squared yet—

A sudden screeching of brakes and the pulsing roar of a powerful motor caused both men to whirl toward the door. Linton caught a fleeting glimpse of a Cadillac touring car with the insignia of G. H. Q. on the door sliding to a standstill near the office.

"Duck!" hissed Barrett, and ran hastily from the room. Linton peered cautiously from the window and noted with relief that neither of the staff colonels seated in the tonneau seemed about to get out. Barrett stepped to the car and snapped a salute. The conversation drifted clearly inside the office.

"Listen, Barrett, and get this straight," one of the brass hats was barking hurriedly. "There's hell to pay. We just got a message from one of our agents across the lines, L-3. He's been masquerading as a grease monkey at von Luden's drome, and he's learned that the Boche have concentrated a huge supply of ammo at a cleverly camouflaged dump about three miles due east of Largonne. It's got to be destroyed, do you hear? If we can blow it up the German offensive which we know is to be launched soon in this sector will be halted until we have time enough to move in fresh troops.

"Now here's the dope: the British are giving us five Handley Page bombers for a raid on the dump, tonight. You will furnish the scout escort; squadron show. Rendezvous at 1:00, five thousand meters directly over Ourmette. Understand?"

"But there isn't a chance of a bombing formation getting by von Luden's circus," Barrett protested in a strained voice. "He's got three staffels at his drome, and it's directly in line with the dump. We can't go around—it's suicide, sir!"

"Perhaps," the colonel said slowly, "but it's got to be done. This whole damned war is suicide, anyway. We came down here personally, so there'd be no danger of a misunderstanding. Orders, Major. And here's another thing—L-3's message

was chopped off short. He'd just finished saying that the Jerries suspected him. Ten to one they nabbed him at the wireless. Now, if there was only some way to save the poor devil . . . Use your own judgment in regard to that, Major. If you can dope out anything—L-3 is a mighty valuable operative. But destruction of that dump is imperative. Goodbye and good luck!"

"Happy landings," Barrett muttered, standing and staring after the cloud of dust that marked the staff car's departure.

INSIDE the office Dave Linton stood with the blood wildly throbbing through his brain. Thoughts of service, dreams of glory raced like a delirious nightmare through his mind. But foremost of all, one fact stood out in spinning thoughts. He could speak and understand German like a native of the Fatherland. Not for nothing had he barnstormed all over the world in those faraway pre-war days!

He whirled and studied the sector map fastened to the wall. The known location of German airdromes were plainly indicated. Then, before Barrett had time to turn back into the office he wheeled and dashed through the back door. Once outside and shielded from sight of the 16th's S. C. he slowed his pace, and keeping a wary eye watching for Barrett he approached the hangars leisurely and with downcast face.

He found the hangar crew busily checking over the battered Spads, patching ragged rents in fabric, testing Vickers mechanism, filling ammo belts carefully. Linton slouched unchallenged to a distant end of the hangar, and watched under narrowed lids. Then, casually, but with deceiving swiftness he set to work. A few minutes later he clambered upon the rickety wing of the Linton Special, and reached for the prop. A grinning hangar sergeant stepped closer.

"Leaving us?" he asked.

"The Old Man told me I'd have to get

off the field," Linton growled, "too old and crippled to associate with you young guys."

He twisted the prop and the mongrel motor throbbed into noisy life. Linton dared not wait too long; each moment he expected to see Barrett's familiar figure appear in the hangar door. Yet it would be suicide to attempt a take-off with that ancient engine stone cold, and Linton had too many suicidal plans in his mind to risk cracking up at the beginning.

"Haven't got a pigeon around here, have you?" he asked the waiting sergeant. The non-com stared. "Pigeon? No; what do you want of one?"

"Just like to test this rigging," Linton said gravely, pointing to the maze of wires that held the Special together. "Way I test 'em, I just turn a bird loose inside. If he can find his way out, there must be a wire missing somewhere?"

With the sergeant's guffaw ringing in his ears Linton opened the gun and shot the crate wobbling across the tarmac. He was dimly aware that suddenly voices were shouting at him, that tiny figures on the ground were running to and fro, wildly waving arms and motioning him down. So Barrett had come on the scene just a few seconds too late! For a moment Linton feared pursuit, then as he swung toward the Allied back areas he noticed that no ships were taking off. Probably Barrett figured he was heading for some other squadron and was glad to have him off his hands. Grinning contentedly, Linton swung the Special in a wide circle and not until several miles separated him from the drome of the 16th did he turn the ancient crate's nose toward the line. He was glad now that he had filled his tank with some of Uncle Sam's fuel.

Linton crossed the lines high, as high as he could jockey the old pusher. Not until the tipsy wings yawed and the home built motor coughed in protest did he level

off and sally across the war pocked terrain below. He gazed down in awe at the gigantic slashes that marked the zigzag lines of trenches. Now he was looking at the marks of war, the war he had traveled five thousand miles to get into.

Either Archie failed entirely to see him, or else the gunners disdained to waste ammo on that crazy winged shape. At any rate, neither white nor black smoke puffs sought him out. Just as well, too, he knew, for a burst wouldn't have to be too close to send his frail craft hurtling to destruction.

THE map in Major Barrett's office, and the red dotted mark betraying the position of von Luden's drome was fresh in Linton's mind as he shot the protesting Special down in a shallow glide straight for that smooth field that suddenly loomed beneath him. Gunners scooted for ground pits. A few scattering shots came whining, then the fusillade ceased as if the Huns wondered just what sort of apparition was dropping down on them.

Linton rolled the pusher to a halt near the single huge hangar that occupied one entire end of the field. He had his part memorized, and he resolved to play it until the final curtain fell.

Almost instantly he was surrounded by a gabbling group of Boche flyers and grease monkeys. Some of them fingered Lugers uncertainly, but curiosity rather than belligerence marked their attitude.

At once a tall, slender Boche officer wearing a hauptmann's uniform shouldered his way through the pilots who fell back respectfully at his approach. Instinctively Linton realized he was facing the famous German circus commander, Karl von Luden.

The hauptmann flung a volley of rasping German at Linton, demanding who he was, where he came from, how he happened to be flying such a museum relic of a plane. But Linton smiled foolishly, then asked

eagerly: "Is this the drome of the 16th Pursuit?"

For a moment von Luden stared incredulously, then as another barrage of guttural German brought only a puzzled shake of the head from Linton he lapsed into reluctant English.

"Dumkopf! Who are you and what are you doing here?"

Linton grinned, and hoped he looked as dumb as he was trying to. Everything depended on convincing this haughty Prussian that he was a slightly idiotic dimwit who had blundered into a mess and didn't realize his danger.

"Say, ain't this the 16th? I've been lookin' for 'em all afternoon. I built me this plane back home in Kansas, but the fool government wouldn't accept me as a pilot. Claimed I wasn't bright enough. So I sneaked up here on my own account. I can see now this ain't the same place I went to this mornin'. The head guy there kicked me out, but I thought I'd fly around awhile and try him again. Well, gents, sorry I bothered you; I'll have to be going!"

"Stand still!" barked the hauptmann, drawing a Luger. Then he turned and examined the Linton Special. A moment later he spoke in German to an oberleutnant beside him.

"It is evident that the Yankee is a fool, an idiot. Who else would fly across the lines in such a contraption as that?"

"Perhaps, perhaps not," retorted the lieutenant, "it is possible he is an Amerikaner spy."

"Nonsense," barked von Luden, "see, his ship is unarmed, so is he. He is old. And would a spy walk deliberately into our arms? Ach, nein, he is only what he claims to be: an old time pilot who has probably addled his wits by too many crashes. But we will take no chances. In a few minutes you are to take off with the spy, the one who posed as a mechanic, and fly him back to Army H. Q. We will send the dumkopf

along in his own crate. You can keep an eye on him and when he lands at H. Q. you can turn him over to Intelligence if you wish. We have no time to waste with idiots at this drome!"

"Yah, Herr hauptmann." The Lieutenant saluted and walked toward the hangars. Linton, with the same vacuous smile on his face, had heard every word. For the first time he noticed a grim faced man wearing a suit of grease stained coveralls and bound hand and foot leaning against the huge hangar. Linton's heart gave a great jump. This must be the captured Yank Intelligence officer, L-3!

A mechanic stepped to the prop of a two seater Hanover and twisted it. The Mercedes roared into instant life as two husky guards lifted the bound L-3 and deposited him in the rear cockpit. In a

One of the Huns strode over to von Luden and saluted. "We found this Amerikaner circling over the field, and dove on him from a cloud. A burst put his motor out of commission, and we thought it best to take him alive."

Von Luden nodded grimly. "You were right, Leutnant Bachman. I much prefer the Yankee alive."

Barrett, walking toward the group at the muzzles of a pair of Lugers, shot one look at Linton and stiffened. Linton realized instantly what that sudden hardening of the Yank S. C.'s mouth meant. Barrett figured him for a spy! And it did look bad, his presence here on a Boche drome, so soon after that visit of the brass hats. For a moment Linton had a sickening fear that Barrett would denounce him, but the Major merely gazed past, though the grim

The Fate Of A Nation On His Wings

moment he was securely strapped into the seat.

Von Luden turned to Linton. "You have made a slight mistake; this is not the 16th's drome. But a pilot here is about to take off for that field, so you follow him and land when he does. That is the ship over there."

Linton was about to speak when a sudden droning roar of motors filled the sky. A score of pairs of eyes gazed aloft. Roaring in toward the field came three Albatrosses, and boxed between them, with prop flopping over slowly glided a fourth ship, a Spad. The next moment the ships rolled their trucks on the tarmac and coasted to a stop. The three Boche pilots tumbled out and with drawn Lugers warily approached the pilot of the Spad who wearily legged down from the cockpit. Linton repressed a start. For the flyer in that disabled Spad was Major Barrett,

expression of his face did not alter. At least he evidently intended giving Linton the benefit of the doubt.

Linton looked away, pretended not to notice the goggled prisoner. Walking to his ancient ship he clambered to his seat and glanced over at the pilot of the Hanover. The Hun waved, motioned Linton to take off first. The next moment the Special sputtered into the air, with the Hanover close behind.

Linton's brain raced furiously. Somehow, he must rescue that condemned Yankee spy riding the rear cockpit of the Hanover. But how? His ship was unarmed, while the German two-seater carried a brace of deadly Spandaus on the cowling. Suddenly a crazy idea popped into the Yank's desperate brain. Without pausing to think of the price of failure he put it to the test.

Glaring down at the terrain below he

sought for an open space not too near to a highway. For fifteen minutes he watched, while the Hanover cruised slowly to match its speed to his. Suddenly Linton saw the spot for which he had been hoping; a long, narrow strip of fairly level ground between two patches of thin woods. Instantly the Special's engine began to pop and sputter, emitting great black belches of smoke. Linton appeared to struggle frantically with his controls, then, with the engine still sputtering and backfiring, he nosed down. Immediately the Hanover followed suit, the lieutenant remembering his instructions not to let the crazy Yankee out of his sight.

LINTON gazed around once more. The nearest road was at least a mile from the landing spot, and the intervening woods would serve to screen the planes from sight of troops trudging along the highway. Almost together the two planes set down. The Hanover rolled past fifty yards and the Boche climbed out, started toward Linton who had turned to look disgustedly at his engine.

"Was ist?" demanded the lieutenant, coming closer. Linton pointed toward the motor which was now clicking over smoothly. The Boche had covered half the intervening space when Linton settled back in his seat and cracked the throttle wide open. The Special leaped forward like a wild thing, bearing down on the German like a charging bull.

If the lieutenant had dropped to the ground instantly he might have escaped, but gamely intent only on stopping the Special he wheeled to dash back to the Hanover, leaping wildly to one side as he ran.

With the swiftness of a striking snake Linton moved the controls. The Special, already skimming the ground, drove straight at the Hun. Linton eased back the stick. Thud! For a moment the Special seemed sure to nose over, then the Yank nursed her into the air. A moment later he

had banked around and landed for the second time. A few yards away the Hun lay crumpled where the landing gear had smote him to earth. Linton bent over, jerked back with the Luger in his hand just as consciousness returned to the pilot. Face a grim mask, he marched his prisoner over to the Hanover and ordered him flat on his face. Then, with a few swift slashes of his knife Linton severed L-3's bonds.

"Nice work," the spy said coolly, rising and chafing his numbed wrists. "What's next on the program?"

"Tie this bird up," ordered Linton tersely, "and dump him in the rear cockpit. Can you fly?"

"Sure," L-3 nodded, "that's why they assigned me to von Luden's circus. I suppose H.Q. got my message about the ammo dump?"

Linton nodded. "They're sending over a flight of Handleys tonight to destroy it."

"They'll never get by von Luden," L-3 muttered, shaking his head, "that big hangar is full of ships from one end to the other. And when the bombers came over every one of 'em will be in the air. Those babies can fly, too!"

"Mebbe and mebbe not," drawled Linton. "Now you beat it back to the drome of the 16th, near Ourmette. Tell 'em Barrett was brought down while scouting near von Luden's field, but that the raid is come off just the same. Have 'em fly right over von Luden's field at the agreed time. You know the location of the dump; they'll probably want you to come over in one of the bombers, to show 'em the way."

"But what about you?" demanded L-3. "Who are you and how'd you come to be flying that museum piece around over the lines?"

"Never mind that now," snapped Linton; "as for this old museum piece, it's saved your neck once and maybe it'll save some more before the night's over!"

The two men's hands met for a moment, then the spy climbed into the Hanover and

roared into the sky. Linton watched the two-seater disappear, then settled himself for a long wait. It was already beginning to grow dusk, but not until after eleven did he plan to take off. If only some prowling Boche patrol of infantry didn't stumble on him! But apparently their landing earlier in the afternoon had passed unnoticed, for no sounds broke the silence except the intermittent grumble of the big guns from both sides of the lines.

SHORTLY after eleven Linton busied himself with certain preparations on the Special. In a few minutes later the battered old crate scooted up into the dark sky. Landing the biplane with an idling motor near the huge main hangar back at von Luden's circus field was not difficult for the oldtimer Yank who had barnstormed from one end of the United States to the other.

The long table in the squadron mess was surrounded by a score of pilots as von Luden arose to drink a toast.

"To der Vaterland!" he exclaimed, raising his glass to his lips. He drank, smashing his glass against the floor as he finished. The remainder of the standing pilots followed suit.

"Our morale, it iss gut," beamed von Luden to the tall officer seated at his right.

Major Barrett smiled grimly. "As long as the cognac holds out, eh, von Luden?"

The German flushed. "Remember this is your last night outside of prison until our brave troops have swept through to Paris, and the war is over."

Simultaneously the door banged open and Linton barged into the room.

"I lost track of your pilot," he told von Luden in the sudden hush, "lost my way and came back here."

The Yank's gaze roamed over the room, suddenly came to rest on Major Barrett. The next instant the whole room seemed to explode into action as Linton leaped forward, mouthing crazy oaths.

"This is the brass hat that kicked me out this morning," he bawled, "called me a crazy fool! A drunken idiot! I'll show him! I told him what I'd do to him if I got my hands on him!"

The fury of Linton's rush carried Barrett from his chair to the floor, where Linton fell upon him and appeared to be struggling desperately. There was a brief moment while the stunned Boche pilots seemed incapable of motion. And in that moment Linton whispered fiercely in Barrett's ear.

The next second Linton sprawled to one side as Barrett threw him off and rushed toward the door.

"He's crazy!" Barrett yelled. "He'll kill me!"

Linton had scrambled to his feet and seized a huge butcher knife from the table.

"I'll cut your throat!" he screamed, lunging after Barrett toward the door.

Pandemonium broke loose in the crowded room. Von Luden bellowed guttural commands and a dozen pilots lurched forward. But the very fact that they all moved at once added to the confusion. Barrett was already outside, running for his life. Linton slashed viciously with the ugly knife and the crowding Huns ducked. Then he, too, was on the ground and dashing after Barrett. Somewhere a whistle shrilled violently. Mechs saw a man fleeing from a wild eyed figure waving a long bladed knife.

Suddenly Barrett altered his course, leaped toward two Pfalz scouts that had shortly before returned from a bat patrol. One of them was dead, but the Mercedes in the remainder was clicking over as a grease monkey tinkered with it in the light of a flashlight.

With one flying leap the Major gained the Pfalz and scrambled into the cockpit. The motor blurted, bellowed into full motion. The Pfalz flipped around, raced down the field.

At the same instant von Luden realized he was being tricked and shrieked new orders frantically. A half dozen men dove

for the sandbagged ground pits, while others fought for possession of the remaining Pfalz. The second Mercedes stammered into life. A hail of Maxim fire rattled after the zooming shape of Barrett's Pfalz. Then the great hangar doors swung open.

It was the moment for which Linton had hoped. He had left the Special idling in the shadows, and now he sprang into his seat and glanced furtively at his watch. Time was short. Throttle wide, the Special wobbled an incredibly short distance, then leaped into the air. A dark, roaring shape loomed up. Spandaus clattered. Hot steel hissed by Linton's ears, then another shape dove screaming and twin streaks of fire lanced at the Yank's attacker. Barrett had come roaring back just in time.

LINTON glanced down at the monstrous hangar. Contrary to custom the hangar ran across the end of the field and huge doors opened at both ends, giving two entrances or exits. With a muffled string of curses Linton gunned his rickety mount straight for the hangar and its packed-in planes.

Red belches of flame darted up at him from the Maxim pits. Death whispered soft messages in his ears as he grimly held his course, for glory or oblivion. Nothing much seemed to matter now, nothing but that black, yawning hangar mouth.

The Huns never divined his suicidal purpose until too late. For like a plunging meteor, Linton, the man who was too old, and too crippled to fly in his country's service, sent his frail ship clamoring straight through that hangar door. Jet blackness enveloped him for a moment, his next target showing a lighter spot in the darkness, the far door.

Halfway through the huge hangar Linton's left hand darted under his seat, dragged something heavy over the open framework and stopped it. The next second he was zooming through the other door

and striving for altitude. Something wet and sticky ran down his side; a vast roaring filled his ears. Dimly he knew that one at least out of the hail of lead missiles had crashed through him. The roaring was growing louder. And suddenly he knew that all of it was not due to his throbbing head. For as he nursed the Special over a row of scrub trees a myriad of tiny flashes, a mighty droning bellow of deep throated Rolls-Royces and Hissos drifted down from the heavens. Then he knew, knew that the Handleys and Spads were crossing on their errand of destruction.

And at that split second a mighty gargantuan roar of sound caught Linton and his ship, and tossed them like feathers in a gale. The whole earth below seemed to split asunder in one livid red glare. The next moment the entire infernal scene was disclosed as lesser explosions added to the din, and a colossal sheet of flame mounted into the sky.

The hangar in which the ships of von Luden's famous staffel were housed was doomed. Belching flames in every direction drove back the tiny figures that strove to approach. But two Hun ships at least had escaped, for a sudden hellish clatter of Spandaus dinned in Linton's tortured ears. As though through a fog he became aware that two black crossed fighters were plunging down on him savagely, while another Pfalz bored in from the side. An instant flood of maniacal rage flooded the weary Yank's brain. If they wanted fight, let them come!

For a moment the Yank went completely berserk. He hurled the clumsy Special straight at one of those attacking shapes, intent only on coming to grips, on wiping out his enemy even if it meant instant destruction. The German sheered off in horror—straight into a dancing stream of tracer from the third Pfalz, with Barrett at the controls! And the surviving Hun wheeled to flee as his companion crashed in a livid sheet of flame. The game was over.

Barrett had to carry Linton into the squadron mess back at the 16th. They were still there when the victorious bombing escort returned.

"Cleaned up the dump completely," cried the Flight Leader, "von Luden's outfit didn't even get into the air!"

"Thanks to Linton, here," growled Barrett. "You'll have to tell them your story, too."

Linton hurried through it. "But how did you blow up the hangar?" someone demanded. Linton grinned. "I stuck a full box of T.N.T. under my seat before I left here, along with some fuse. Before I came back to von Luden's drome for the second time I cut the fuse and lighted it. Then when I flew through the hangar, I dumped it over. The Huns were too busy to notice it, and a few minutes later it was all over!"

"You mean you flew back there with a lighted bomb under you!" marveled Barrett. "What if you'd miscalculated on the length of fuse?"

Linton shrugged. "But I didn't. By the way, do you remember where we've met before?"

Barrett was staring at him, a dawning look of amazement on his face. "It . . . wasn't . . ."

Linton grinned. "Yep, I'm the bird that taught you to fly, years ago back in Texas!"

Barrett swore with feeling. "Say, if you still want to get into this man's air service, I'm going to see that you do. I've got a little pull at G.H.Q., and I'll slip you in if I have to put you in knee pants and swear you're my little brother! What we need is a few more cripples like you!"

THEY FLEW NOT IN VAIN

SINCE the Armistice nine of our World War aces have passed beyond the border into the land of perpetual "Happy Landings." Four of the nine airmen are known to the writer to have met death in the air at the controls of their planes.

Flying was their life and their doom.

They were aces—victors in five or more aerial combats with German war birds. They were expert birdmen of many years' flying experience. Fate, or probably that birdman's demon jinx, took them to their doom. They are: Captain Field E. Kindley, Captain John O. Donaldson, Lieutenant Paul F. Baer and Captain William P. Erwin.

Kindley was killed in an airplane accident at Kelly Field early in 1920.

Donaldson met his death as a contestant in the American Legion Air Races. Racing his Travel-Air Whirlwind, he crashed from an altitude of 1,800 feet at the Municipal Airport at Philadelphia, September 7, 1930. He was crushed against the motor, suffered a compound fracture of both legs, a fractured skull and every rib was broken. He died an hour and a half later.

Baer was killed during a take-off in China.

Erwin went to a watery grave when he sailed out over the Pacific Ocean in a heroic attempt to locate lost flyers of the ill-fated Dole \$25,000 prize flight from California to Hawaii.

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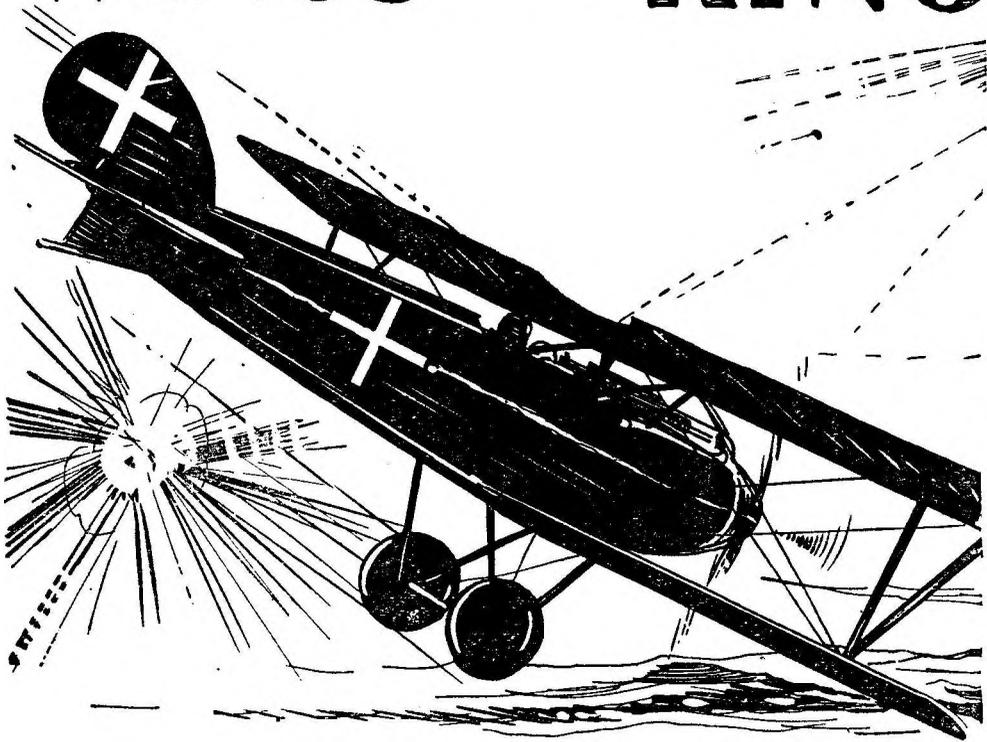
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WINGS *for a* KING



By

LIEUT. S. G. POND

Crossing Hot Guns With Black-Crossed Crates On The Front Was One Thing, But Riding The Dreadnought That Carried The King Was Something Else Again

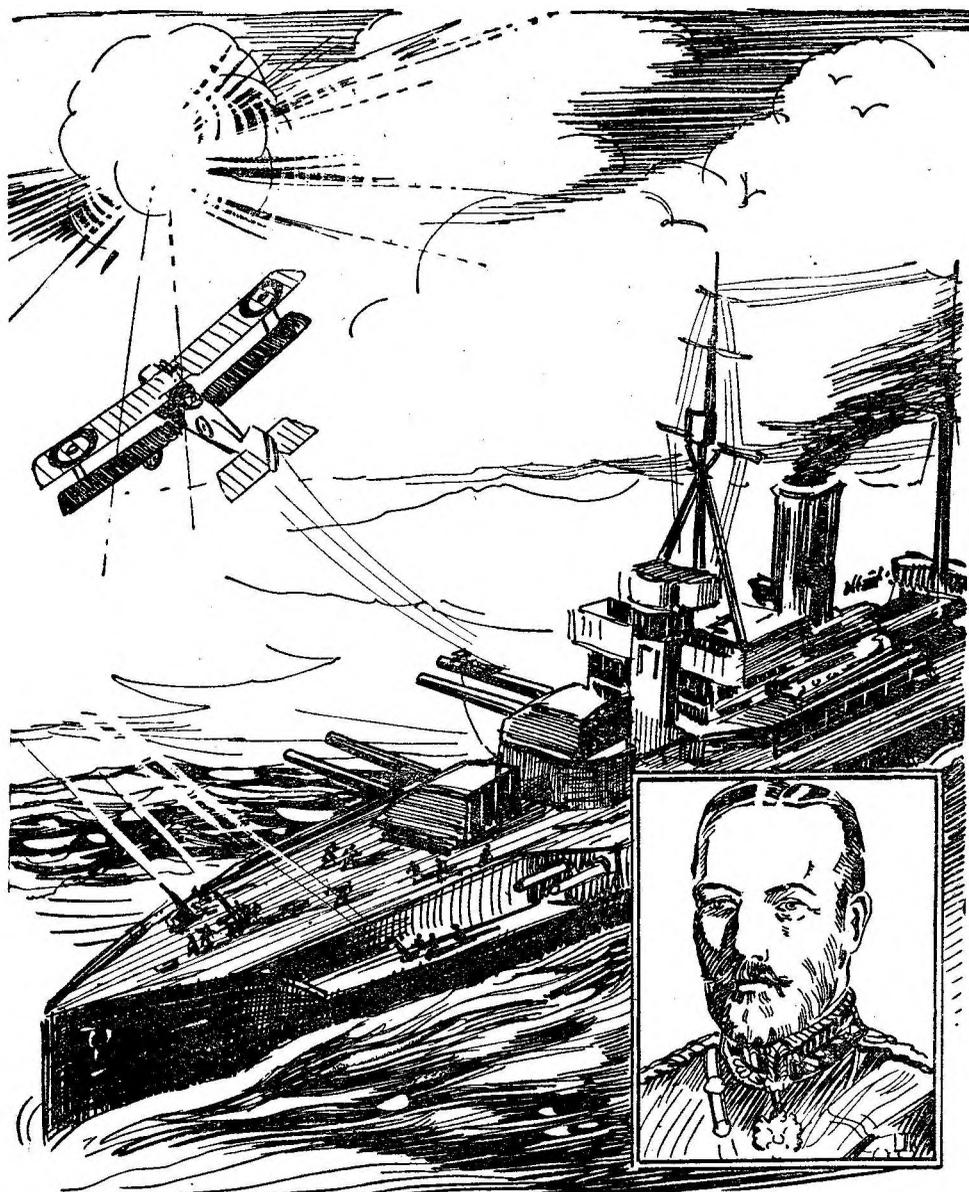
“HEINRICH!” breathed the leader of the 77th staffel incredulously. “You—back already!”

The door to flying headquarters was still swinging open as a youth in the uniform of an American artillery officer burst into the room. His face was flushed with excitement.

“J-a, Herr Hauptm-ann!” stammered the

lad breathlessly. He rushed forward to his *kommander* eagerly. “What a mission!” he gasped. “What success!” He thrust a roll of white papers onto his staffel leader’s desk. “The naval plans of the British against Heligoland for August!”

“Splendid, Heinrich!” congratulated the tall squadron leader pushing back his chair and rising to his feet. “Himmel! I didn’t



The dreadnought's catapult flung him off with terrific speed.

hear you land! You—" He grasped the precious documents anxiously, as the lad cut in with:

"No! We came in without lights. But—wait! The news!"

Behind the youthful enthusiast followed a second ofizier, this one in the German gray pilot's uniform of the 77th Naval Staffel. The first youth did not notice his mate, but continued with animated voice:

"Through Hans Adler in Buckingham Palace I caught the intelligence that King George is taking a forty-eight hour voyage onto the North Sea for—his health! His—"

"Whew!" whistled the tall Bavarian staffel leader amazedly.

"His Majesty," went on the lad hurriedly, "is actually sailing from Sheerness Saturday morning on the *H.M.S. Imperator*,

expecting to return to the royal palace Monday morning through the port of Hartlepool."

"He's expecting that, is he?" barked the stalwart staffel leader, Eric von Beulow, ironically. "Hoh! How these stupid English play right into our hands!" For a split second, however, a puzzled expression flooded the *kommander's* cold gray eyes. He stared analytically into the bright ones of the younger airman before him. "But—Heinrich, your plan was—? You mean we—we might capture the English King? At least—"

"Destroy him!" breathed the younger secret agent deeply. "Isn't this enough? What a mighty blow to the heart of the enemy!"

THE tall Bavarian leaned across his desk, spreading his hands fanwise on its glossy surface. His eyes became immense with excited enthralment. His cheeks actually paled, not with fear, but with cold, emotional hope that lay ahead.

"*Lieber Herr Gott!*" he exclaimed with the fervor of a madman. "*Ja!* That is enough! We can intercept the *Imperator!* Our seaplanes can refuel from our mother ship in the North Sea! *Glänzend!* It would be an unbelievable victory! Our whole staffel will be cited by Emperor Wilhelm, personally! And I will be made an Imperial Staff *Ofizier!*" The staffel leader's chest swelled with pride. "The name of Eric von Beulow, and the 77th Naval Staffel, will live forever in World War history!"

Exultantly the eminent North Sea ace swept up his arm, and wrist watch.

"It is now twelve-fifteen, midnight, or Friday morning. There is yet time!" he whirled toward the next desk and his orderly seated there. "Send a telegraphic communication to Kiel! Have our fastest aeroplane mother ship carrying aeroplane petrol leave at once for—for—" the staffel

leader spun on his heel again, hurrying to a large wall map.

He grabbed up a pair of steel dividers; their pointed fingers went scratching down its wide, colored surface under the lamp-light.

"We'll catch them between Heligoland and Great Yarmouth—here. That will be— Put this down: Latitude 47-58 North, and Longitude 2-30 East. Now tell them to sail at once. *Kommen Sie schnell!* Hurry!"

He swung back now to the two airmen before him.

"Heinrich!" he said. "As a reward for your superb mission I am going to put you back onto flying. You're too valuable a man to have shot as a spy now! If we are successful in this great air *coup* I shall make you an *oberleutnant!*"

The face of the youthful airman beamed with happiness.

"*Herr Hauptmann!* I will fly again? A new Albatross?"

"*Ja!*" the staffel leader faced his next man, a veteran pilot of his 77th Naval Staffel. "You, Fritz, prepare our two finest Albatross Scouts to start for this rendezvous. Take Heinrich with you. There'll be enemy aeroplanes. Take no chances with them. When you find the enemy, spare nothing! Spare no one! Bring them down flaming! Kill them all! *And*—load one Gotha bomber, our heaviest. Give her our highest explosive bombs—this is for Saturday morning. But—wait!"

The cold gray eyes of the *kommander* narrowed fiercely. A dark scowl crept over his flushed, swarthy cheeks.

"Now these English hellions! What they be doing? On such a voyage they shall be as bloodthirsty as vultures!" His chest swelled. His deep voice boomed swaggeringly: "*Schrecklich!* Never mind! We shall show them! We can be bloodthirsty, too! More so! It must work! This *must* be a victory! It is our one magnificent North Sea opportunity!"

The staffel leader leaned back over his

desk grabbing up paper and pencil. For a few split seconds he figured on distances and fuel.

"*Ja!* We can do it! And one more thing! I'll have to have some pictures of Sheerness and Hartlepool. We may need them. Tomorrow we can do the photography. By Saturday morning we, too, shall be ready for a voyage, but—not for our health!" For a moment the staffel leader stared dreamily into space. "*Himmel!*" he breathed deeply. "We shall stagger the world with this victory! The Emperor will never be so happy again! Wait!" exclaimed the *kommander*. "This is too big to be entrusted to others!"

The faces of the two men before him grew rigid. They leaned forward toward their staffel leader wonderingly.

"I—I shall do this job myself, personally! But—" he wavered, and half to himself, and half aloud to his *unter-offiziers*, said: "There can be no failures! It is best to have support. Too many planes, I have decided, though, would draw undue suspicion. I will lead alone, therefore. You Heinrich, and you Fritz, will follow a distance behind escorting our Gotha safely to the King's vessel."

The great Hun ace wiped a broad, thick hand across his flushed cheeks thoughtfully.

"The English know me now as the North Sea Terror! What will I be after this?" he chortled evilly. Then to his orderly he commanded: "Have my mechanics paint my famous black-tipped Albatross all black! This will be a day for the English to remember! Tell them to use a quick-drying, flat-toned paint. Tell them also to fit one of the other Albatross Scouts with cameras.

"All three planes must be in the finest condition to take off at dawn; tomorrow we photograph. Saturday we go on our major mission into the land of the enemy. And warn them," he added threateningly,

"that if there are any motor failures on this flight someone will be shot!"

"*Ja, Herr Hauptmann!*"

Drawing open a desk drawer the staffel leader now lifted out a flat brandy bottle. Pouring amber liquid into three glasses he passed them across the desk and stood to his feet, taking one glass. His cheeks flushed, he said to his pilots:

"*Der Tag!* To the day. To us, my brave fighters! And to the death of King George the Fifth! Drink!"

The three downed their brandy neat.

"Go now. Get sleep and rest," ordered the Sea Terror. "You will be called at dawn. Two hard days lie ahead."

As the two pilots stepped out the door and were swallowed in the night Hauptmann Eric von Beulow sank heavily into his chair. He swept his wide hand over his perspiring face. He was exhausted with the emotional strain of his plans. He realized, that up to the present time he had been unable to bring his whole staffel into the limelight.

THE 77th Naval Staffel, nevertheless, was the most vital, and the most strategic in the whole North Sea area. Located as it was, at Emden, fronting England, and protected by that impregnable citadel, Heligoland, the staffel held the one key position of the whole North Sea. Far from the main theater of war on the Western and Franco-German Fronts, however, the remainder of the war-time world had hardly recognized the stark menace so close to England's very front door.

Flying spies to the British Isles, and secret intelligence, to date, had been the most important duties of the staffel. Now, however, the Sea Terror saw a stupendous chance to bring himself and his staffel unbelievable fame. He visualized the name of Eric von Beulow staring from the front pages of all the newspapers around the world. And what could Fate, in dealing

such a strange hand, declare for the final outcome? For the final red day? Who, on this earth, could say?

The Sea Terror Strikes

TWELVE sharp-nosed S.E.5's, with twelve golden crowns as insignia on their fuselages, glinted in the morning sun on the Royal Naval Air Service airdrome at Harwich, England. From each of the wasp-like little fighting planes hurled back twin columns of purplish flame. From over the whitestone cliffs to the eastward a slight mist was rolling, but the sun was fast absorbing this. Mechanics rushed frantically from plane to plane checking fuel, oil, machine guns, and ammunition. A gigantic Hun Zeppelin, escorted by ten fleet Fokkers, was reported making toward London on a bombing raid. The twelve were out to "get" that "Zep."

On the left wing of the formation one S.E. Hispano motor was sputtering. In this bus, fighting determinedly with his faulty power plant, was First Lieutenant Gene Hull, an American who had not waited for the U. S. A. to enter the War. Hull, with kinky sandy hair, and deep blue eyes, was almost a midget—but in size only, for he bulked large in the esteem of his squadron commander, Major Hugh Blackfoot. Hull had chalked up his forty-sixth victory and was going strong. But this morning—

The R.N.A.S. black-and-white checkered flag dipped at the end of the airdrome. There came a mighty blast of power from the many 240 Horse Hispanos. Eleven of those taut-winged battle planes plunged their wheels hard into the dirt and forged ahead like suddenly-released arrows! But as that flag dipped it seemed to Hull fairly a signal for his own engine to die completely. There came a few hoarse coughs, a back-fire of coal-black smoke and carbon, and Hull found himself with wings rocking

from—the wind-rush of his departing mates!

The heart seemed to fall like lead in Hull's body. A great lump rose in his throat. He worked his throttle. He jabbed his spark handle back and forth. He cursed like a maniac. But—all to no avail. A Zep over London! It was one great event he had always longed to see! It was the one event of the few North Sea exciting things that he had always somehow missed. Why? Today it galled him more than ever. Slamming his throttle handle full ahead he tried to gun his engine clear. It barely turned over. Not a single ingenious activity availed. It was hopeless. On limping power he taxied back to the flying line.

Jumping down out of his bus he yanked out the two cushions that he needed to sit on in order to see over his cowl, and shoved them under his arm. Ordinarily Hull was the coolest man in the 55th R.N.A.S. Pursuit Squadron at Harwich; he was noted for his cool-headedness—until he "blew his top," as he termed it, then he was dynamite. His mechanic came dashing up to him in amazement. To him Hull declaimed:

"Take the — — — rattle-can! Take 'er out in the alley and set fire to 'er! Smash it. Tear it apart! Cremate it! It's no damned good 'tall! The engine! Yank it out! Put in a new one!"

While three greaseballs worked with trembling, sweaty hands over the hot engine, Hull paced ragingly up and down beside his bus. The whine of wings screamed down on a tight split-hair turn from above. Hull stared upward vindictively. It was 3040; his pal, Ernie Lang, coming back from morning patrol. In a trice the incoming S.E. had flung across the field, landed, and roared up to the line. A tall, debonair youth slipped from his plane, and shoved goggles and helmet back over his eyes.

"Hullo, there!" he called to Hull. "What *you* doing here?"

"Ask me!" sputtered Hull. "And look at this wreck! Motor failure on—the air-drome!"

"Better than fifty miles out over the North Sea!" grinned Lang. "Don't worry, Gene. It's a long war—nowheres near over! You'll—"

"A bit o' waste, sir, 'ard on 'er needle valve," explained the grimy-faced mechanic. "She'll myke 'er revs now, sir."

"There, now!" consoled Lang. "You can't expect even a Zenith needle valve to pull waste you know! What'd you miss, old fellow? You look terribly cut up."

"Just a Zep raid over London!" replied Hull tersely. "It's always—"

"Ouch! That was a sock! I don't blame—"

"Leftenant Hull!" a voice cut in at their elbows. There was something of desperation

bewildered expression etching his weathered cheeks.

"Why are you still here, Leftenant?" he demanded bluntly. There was accusation in his tones.

Hull stiffened vindictively. His cheeks flushed.

"I, I, why, sir, I had engine failure," stammered Hull with astonished expression. He suddenly felt guilty.

"Uh-h-huh, so I see," commented the major sourly. "But your motor's all right now, isn't it?"

"Y-yes, sir. It is. It was fixed."

"It seems to me you were strangely slow in getting it 'fixed'," replied the major with odd emphasis on the word fixed. "But don't you worry, Leftenant, I've plenty of tough jobs left! I've one right now!"

"Good!" snapped Hull fiercely.

"We're Here To Fight, Not To Weep!"

in the tones that made Hull whirl instantly. A squadron orderly was dashing up to him, breathless. Excitedly he said: "Major Blackfoot wants to see you two flyin' officers, sir, in 'eadquarters right off. It's urgent, sir!"

"Come on, Ernie! Sounds promising."

The two hurried off on the heels of the orderly.

"I'm done in," stated Hull's companion dolefully. "These dawn patrols on an empty stomach sure ain't my colors."

Hull burst enthusiastically into flying headquarters then. Major Hugh Blackfoot, who had made a record with the 55th on the North Sea, sat behind his desk with heavy eyebrows knitted together in a dark grimace. His big black eyes flashed fire as he faced Hull. Broad shouldered and stalwart, he stood to his six feet impatiently. For a moment the major glared analytically at Hull, his eyes narrowed, a strange

The major turned with annoyed expression to Lang, asking:

"Is *your* plane in readiness, Leftenant?"

"I—why, I've just come in off patrol, Major. She'll need going over, refueling, and all that."

"I know you've just come in off patrol! Don't look so weepish! We're here to fight, not to weep!" he jerked a thumb toward the telephone. "I've just had a special *alerte* warning from Sheerness. Three Hun Albatross Scouts are photographing Sheerness harbor. One of them is an all-black Albatross. It sounds like the Sea Terror, von Beulow, again. You two step on it now and put a stop to this Hun foolishness so close to London. We've a special reason for not wanting Sheerness photographed. Now get off! You can be there in twenty minutes!"

"Right-o, sir!" said Hull now leaning forward eagerly. He grabbed Lang by the

tunic sleeve. As they whirled out the door the C.O. hurled warningly after them:

"And if you let those blighty Huns get out of Sheerness with any photographs—don't come home!"

"Right-o," answered Hull, and the squadron door slammed behind them.

Outside, Ernie stared at his chum.

"That old crab! What was he insinuating at you? He ought to have been socked in the eye!"

"Pay no attention to him," parried Hull. There was bitterness in his tones, however. "He has his side. He's had a hard time with Wing lately, too, I've heard. They've been jumping on him. But just think!" there was a new, fresh note in Hull's eager voice. "The Sea Terror! We'll actually get a crack at him, Ernie! Just think of it! If it's him, we'll—"

"Get a chance at a sea burial in Sheerness!" finished Lang dolefully. "I've always wanted a sea burial—they're so picturesque!"

"Stop it!" chided Hull. "Think of the other side of it! A victory! What a feather in our hats that would be!"

"Yeah," admitted Lang heavily. "A victory! The Sea Terror is looking for his seventieth victory—and victim!"

"That's right! He's sixty-ninth up now, isn't he? Well, you know what Major Trenchard of the I.A.F. said, don't you? 'Overconfidence kills more men in the air services than bullets!' Put that in your hat! It's the tendency of these big fellows to get swaggerish. It takes only one bullet, you know, to kill an ace—and our combined twin Vickers spout 2400 hot shots a minute!"

"Yeah," replied Lang. "I know. But these big fellows are *good*! Did you hear how he bagged those four Bristol two-seater fighters day before yesterday over Dover? They were our newest out! That's the way von Beulow does it—four before breakfast! Sea Terror is right!"

"Listen, Big Boy!" barked Hull savage-

ly. "You sure got a sour stomach to—"

"No! An empty one only!" laughed Lang. "Don't mind me, brother. That — — — old crab, Blackfoot got to me with his sarcasm."

"I know," said Hull. He called to a mechanic at the line: "Hey! Paddy! Run like hell and get a sandwich and a hatful of java for a hungry lieutenant what's going out in a few shakes on *alerte*, will you?"

"Yes, *sir*!"

WORKING like beavers on a spring dam Hull helped Lang get his S.E. in condition for their hasty flight. In seconds only, they were prepared. As the two buses were swung around into the wind Hull saw his comrade get two fat sandwiches and a steaming cup of coffee. He hesitated on his throttle for a split second. . . . A queer thought jumped through his brain. It was queer, his missing that formation, his engine really all right after all. His pal coming in. . . . It was like fate. A strange shiver rippled through his body. There *were* some things in this world one couldn't explain away. . . . Lang waved a signal now to take off. Hull shouted for the wheel chocks to be yanked.

Throttle full ahead! In a booming roar the two S.E.'s were bounding across the R.N.A.S. airdrome. In a few moments more they were reaching across the checkered green fields of Essex. South and east they held their course. Hull looked at the watch on their dash; it read seven ten. The fresh morning air hurled back on his slipstream mingled with the pungent tang of petrol. It was a beautiful morning for—anything, thought Hull, and he felt like a fighting cock.

Cape Eastness passed under and they swung out over the lonely surface of the North Sea. The rising sun made a glinting steel armor of the "Sea." A strong westerly wind, he noted, was springing up. He allowed for wind-drift and commented in his mind that the wind would favor the

Hun in combat. As he stared across that vast North Sea he realized what daring the Hun needed to span it. Here in the lonely solitudes of the upper air and those far-reaching miles of sea, Hull felt some of his enthusiasm cooling. He found some of his ardor to have a tilt with the Hun, dampening.

He stared across to the flinging wings of his comrade. It was comforting to see those sharp-edged battle wings streaking along the airways beside him. There was real solace in having a loyal comrade like Lang—still, he felt somehow very lonely. It was the vastness of the tenantless skyways, he told himself. For a grim second his mind drifted toward the Sea Terror. Well, *Death* was always riding with them, no matter whom the enemy might be. If that day's bullet had your number on it—And Lang, well, either of them would lay down his life that the other might live.

This Hun, though, *was* a terror. No doubt he had earned his title. His fame had gone far and wide. The name of von Beulow as a war personality was fast becoming legend although little was known of his squadron. Hull found himself swallowing a strange bulge in his throat. Four Bristol Fighters downed in one morning! He clenched his teeth. This Sea Terror must be a genius with an aeroplane, and a genius as well, with a machine gun!

But what was the matter, Hull asked himself. Why these thoughts? Didn't he have forty-six victories? One had to have confidence. At the rate he was going he, too, would some day possess a reputation in victories like the Sea Terror, himself if he—didn't get knocked down before that day arrived!

The white, Sheerness cliffs rose straight ahead. Their course was "right on." Below them the wide mouth of the River Thames seethed with dotting boat life. Far out beyond the river's entrance Hull saw British naval vessels patrolling the surf-lashed coast. This, he realized, was one of the

most vital sea junctions of the wide world, the entrance to the great city of London. The thin lines of three enemy planes were already visible weaving steadily over those Sheerness activities.

Swinging out toward his comrade Hull waved a warning hand toward their antagonists. Lang acknowledged the signal. Hull bore down on his throttle and forged ahead with every ounce of power he had to intercept the enemy. Lang, he noted, followed suit immediately. Back on stick to gain better altitude and advantage! With experienced eye Hull studied the oncoming Hun buses. They were Albatross Fighters. One of them, he too, noted, was all-black. The lowest one, he judged, was the photography bus. The two remaining Albatrosses circled warily a hundred feet or so over their hard working mate.

IT was obvious to Hull that the Huns saw them coming; he could tell by their anxious turns and spirals. There was no chance at this hour for Hull to come out of the "eye" of the sun. The all-black Albatross was already circling upward to get onto equal altitude footing with the on-driving S.E.'s. Hull felt his blood run cold as the yards shortened into firing range. At the same time the feeling angered him. Why should he be apprehensive about this enemy airman? After all, he had only an airplane and machine guns like the other forty-six he had downed!

He pressed down on his Constantenescos gun controls and let go a couple of bursts on his Vickers to warm them. They chattered a deadly jibber. For a cold-blooded second Hull studied his enemies. He, too, was sure this was the work of the Sea Terror. It was his region, and all the Terror's planes were Albatrosses with black tipped wings and black empennages. The Sea Terror's own plane was singularly set off with an emerald sea dragon spitting flame, and painted just behind the seat on his fuselage.

Hull's definite mission was to down the photography bus. To Lang he swung an arm toward the photo bus signifying that they should attack it first, Lang going after it, while Hull held off the Sea Terror and his escorting mate above. Lang, however, didn't take to the idea. He shook his head vigorously in the negative, and returned the signal that they should both attack the escorts first. Hull felt his blood go hot. Did Lang have "wind up" about the Sea Terror? Hull felt himself a superior pilot to his comrade, for he possessed many more flying hours and aerial combat victories.

It was the first time Lang had deigned to dispute his judgment in the air. It galled him, but those precious seconds didn't allow for debate. They flung straight over for that all-black Albatross and his less-black mate. They had the slight advantage of height. The Sea Terror held off slightly. Allowing Lang to take the lead in the dive on the nearest Albatross Hull dove on his pal's tail, protecting it. This had been their strategic plan in many successful combats. In alternate battles they would change off, giving the other the experience and thrill of close combat. The two airmen had perfected their "combine" until it worked like magic.

THE Albatross pilot, white face pressed back suddenly against his head-rest, however, was ready. He swung up and over on a wild Immelman showing his pale gray belly and his two sleek wing pontoons to his enemies. Simultaneously, the shadow of black wings whipped past overhead! Instinctively Hull jerked his stick to him—and hard into the corner rushing up on a howling chandelle. At the same time he caught two things; he saw his pal's bullets searing along that gray belly of the Albatross, and he saw bits of linen flapping outward along his own center section region where Spandau lead was lacing perforations only a few inches above his head!

Criminy! Too close! Something crackled at his feet! Daylight gleamed in tiny dottings through his floorboards! Stick down! Over into a howling side-slip! The second escorting Hun had dove under them. Whirling off on the careening side-slip in the hopes of getting around within range of the deadly Sea Terror at his own back Hull swung out onto level flight—only to see the all-black Albatross with his fangs sunk into the back of his pal!

As Lang had broken from his attack on the photo bus, and Hull from Lang, the black ace had driven in! Had it been his wily plan, or just his opportune luck? This incredible Hun! It hadn't seemed possible to Hull—but there the Sea Terror was, hurling along on the tail of his chum! His own flying wires howling a death dirge in diving speed Hull plunged his swift little S.E. after the Sea Terror's black Albatross.

He glimpsed the emerald sea dragon on the fuselage now! It *was* the Terror! Hull clenched his teeth. This would be grim battle! If only he could shake his grip on the tail of his pal! Below them he vaguely saw the black-tipped photo bus hurtling earthward in gyrating, crazy tumble. Lang had gotten it? Hull felt his breath catch in his throat now as he saw the photo bus reel out onto safe flight. No! It had been a ruse only! A screaming of wings near at hand! Hull flung a wild stare behind!

The second escorting Hun was on his tail! But that all-black Albatross was driving like a battering ram after his pal! Behind his coal black engine of death rode one of Germany's fiercest and most deadly ace of aces—the Sea Terror! Behind Hull—Death! He was between two hells of decisions! His blood ran cold as he saw Lang now plunge his S.E. into a vertical dive. It was his worst possible maneuver, his final plunge of desperation! Fagged from his morning patrol, thought Hull. But Lang, he realized, had shot his last bolt! His back was to the wall! The Sea

Terror was slamming down for another fresh kill—his 70th victory!

Blue eyes now the glint of blued rifle steel Hull threw all precaution to the winds, and driving his throttle full ahead, fixed his vision down his ring-and-bead sights—while Death screamed for his blood at his back. Yard by yard he saw that all-black Albatross closing under his nose. Each second was a torturous century. Behind him he felt those graping Spandau muzzles boring into his own back as he knew they were boring into his pal's.

In seconds only Death would shriek hysterically along those thin sky trails for someone! Chalk white of face, the Sea Terror flung one desperate glare black over his shoulder at Hull.

"Yes! It's me, you Black Sea Devil!" screamed Hull into the roar of howling wings and now clattering machine guns.

His range had been too distant! The Sea Terror had escaped him! A flying wire snapped in front of his eyes! Lead whistled past his flying helmet! Stick back! Left foot plunged hard against rudder bar!

Sharp, driving pain seared along Hull's right calf! Something like a flaming sledge smashed against shoulder flesh and bone! Hull cried out with the pain. The Sea Terror was under him! The other escort was at his back! Both of them "had him" on point-blank range! He had let himself in for it, defending his pal. Stick into corner! Mustn't give up!

Like a madman charged with a new fury of revenge and a battle for life Hull rushed his plane around on a howling barrel roll and did a—renversement! Straight into his ring-and-bead sights hurled the black-tipped Albatross that had been at his back! Hull's fingers jammed like mad

Straight Into His Ring Sights Came The Albatross

"Get away! GET OFF!" he bellowed. There was panic in Hull's voice as those four enemy planes closed together in death lock.

Flashing wings! Spandaus clanging against the morning skies! Vickers ripping their metallic horror! Hull's fingers went white over his gun controls as he held them down. But his range was still far. He couldn't wait longer, though! Bullets were screaming everywhere now! His own—others! Then Hull felt his body quiver as he saw the head of his pal jerk backward, then huddle helplessly forward over his controls.

A stream of scarlet liquid streaked back over Lang's head-rest and ivory-tint fuselage! Fingers icy over his own gun controls Hull saw the all-black Albatross whirl down and under his nose! Those black wings cut between him and the sun!

over his gun triggers. His Vickers leapt on his engine hood, spouting liquid streams of white tracers and driving lead! Together now, the two, Albatross and S.E., shrieked upward toward the Zenith!

Those live bullets went ripping through the pale gray belly of the enemy Albatross! Hull saw the gray-uniformed body of his antagonist swing half out his pit, and on that driving instant, as he flung under him, saw the German's mouth contorted in horrible death grimace. He felt, too, his own hot blood trickling along his shoulder and down his right flying boot with sharp, stabbing pain.

The Albatross rushed toward the sea on a crackling whip-stall-and-dive, weaving, weaving in diabolical, uncontrolled flight to its doom, plunging, plunging, after the S.E. now a helpless wreck floating on those shimmering waters below.

Flinging a wild, searching glance around him Hull realized suddenly that the skies had become strangely silent. It was an eerie silence after such bloody bedlam. It was the silence of the battlefield after a charge. It was the quiet of the tomb. Settling in a long, slow spiral with only his flying wires making low moan, Hull searched those lonely skies.

Far in the enemy east he caught sight now of two thin lines of vanishing wings—the black Sea Terror and his photographic mate. The westerly wind had given them great advantage. Completely alone a great lump rose in Hull's throat. He had failed utterly! The life blood seemed to ebb from his veins. It was incredible, but it was true. In those few seconds, hell, death, and holocaust had plunged into his life.

Those photographs now were being rushed into the land of the enemy! What ill disaster might result! He knew they should have attacked the photographic bus first. It was imperative technique. But he had been helpless in those swift seconds to argue his predicament with his comrade. It was Lang's great error, and for it he had paid with his life. It was the law of air combat.

Sick at heart, his shoulder wound throbbing like a torture rack, his leg bleeding and pounding, Hull settled low over the wide Thames. A gray torpedo boat with snow-white wake boiling off behind it, was speeding to the side of his pal's wreckage. Half submerged, Hull studied it. A pool of scarlet blood marked the spot where Lang's still body lay underneath those blue waters. There was no hope now. Hovering a few seconds Hull watched the torpedo boat crew lift out the body of his old pal.

Dim, dark spots leaping before his misty eyes Hull jabbed his throttle handle full ahead and raised on his stick. His Hispano roared back into his face. There was nothing to do now but return home with his

news of—death and failure. As he soared skyward into those quiet roadways, however, one vindictive thought leaped into his flaming brain—revenge! He cursed the Sea Terror. He railed at the war that took your best pals from you. He shouted and ranted at his vile luck, and—sent out a prayer for the soul of his chum.

Outstanding in Hull's vindictive thoughts, though, was one stark vow. He would dedicate his life to one aim. To bring down that Sea Terror! From this hour on he would live for but one goal—to send his screaming Vickers bullets into the heart of that mad killer who had taken from him the best pal a man ever had!

Flying back to his drome Hull fought with the pain in his body, and the sickness in his soul. He thought of Lang and of their old superb "combine." Until today it had worked like a charm. But no more would they race through the blue heavens on their infallible deuce. Bitterness surged in his heart. From now on, his would be the "lone wolf" code. And he would, he vowed, turn himself into a wolf with no more sympathy or quarter for his life enemy than the wildest, cold-eyed timber wolf that ranged the arctic snows. It would be the Sea Terror or—himself!

The Bitter Pill

WHEN Hull opened the door to flying headquarters, he swung it back and leaned against it weakly. His diminutive frame seemed even smaller against the wide, tall door of headquarters. He saluted perfunctorily. His khaki tunic was scarlet at the shoulder. His right boot sloshed in warm, oozing liquid. Major Blackfoot stood to his feet quickly, his neck outstretched, staring.

"They got away," reported Hull briefly.

"The photographic?" fairly squeaked the major fiercely.

"The photographic bus, too," answered Hull dully.

"And I trusted you!" boomed the squadron commander savagely. He sank into his chair. "Did you do *anything*?"

"I brought down one of the escort."

"One of the escort! What were you dallying with him for? Why didn't you bring down the photographic bus?" The major hesitated a moment. Then he said somberly—"And Lieutenant L——"

"The Sea Terror got him," cut in Hull before the major could lengthen the tragedy.

"Oh, he did, hey? CRIPES!" raged the squadron leader. "This *is* failure. And I——"

"Trusted you!" finished Hull with a madman's savagery. "I know that speech by heart! *You* could have done better! *You* could have flown in two directions at once! *You*——"

"That will DO!" bellowed the major angrily. "DIS-missed!"

Hull swung out the door, turned the knob behind him, and once more leaned exhaustedly against the door. Beside him he heard the C.O. fling up a window. A shrill whistle cut the late morning air. He heard his superior officer hail the squadron ambulance, heard its siren whine dismally, and heard, more than saw it, sway up to him. Eyes dim, wishing he were dead, First Lieutenant Hull climbed onto the rear step of the ambulance and sagged onto the long leather seat. Vaguely he heard it reeling off toward the hospital shack. Still more vaguely he heard the ambulance surgeon talking:

"Why, Gene! Yuh crazy little runt! What yuh been doin'? Where yuh been? That looks a bad wound you've got there in your shoulder. It's streaming blood!"

But it was not the wounds in his body that were stabbing Hull. He could grind down on his teeth and bear these, but all those doubts, those sarcastic half-insults, those intimations, those near-accusations! "And I trusted you." The words echoed like torture gongs against his eardrums. The ambulance let him off at their hos-

pital dressing room. For the next forty-five minutes the Medical Corps had his body on the rack while the surgeons probed bits of lead out of his throbbing, flaming body, and poured caustic antiseptics over flesh now ripped open by knives as well as bullets.

WHEN Hull staggered out under the blue skies again he limped across the hospital path to the tarmac and sank onto a bench on the flying line. His body was swathed in bandages. His hot wounds were cooling with efficient dressings, and his stomach burned with the stimulating fire of brandy. As he sat, he heard the whirr of many wings reeling down over their drome. Instantly his head shot backward and up as he watched his 55th R.N.A.S. brood come swinging in from London.

One, two, three—savagely he counted them—many went out, but few came home! Up to nine, he made it. Eleven had gone out. Two had gone to the Eternal Air-drome. One after another he watched their silver wings stream across the field. In little clouds of kicked-up dust they came to rest, turned, and taxied up to the line. Mechanics rushed out to claim their machines and take toll of engine and plane damages. Healey was the first to drop from out his S.E. He swung past the line of benches where Hull was sitting. He was wiping the perspiration and battle smoke from his cheeks when—

"Heigh-ho! Hello, Hull, old man!" he greeted. "Mon! You should-a been there! It was magnificent! You should-a seen her! That great Zep as she sailed majestically from out a giant cumulus cloud right over the spires and towers of London! She was gigantic! Superb! Those Huns can build things! But we got her!" rushed on the animated youth with fervor.

"But what a rowdy scrap those Heinies handed us! Intelligence had the wrong dope, too—wrong, all wrong! There were fourteen Rumpier Scouts in the escort!

Imagine it! We bagged seven of the blighters, though—and lost only two. Two to be sure, poor Jeffries, and Watkins, but—”

The lad swung his foot up onto the bench where Hull was sitting, and commenced unloosing the leather thongs on his flying boots. The remainder of the landing brood were seething in now. There was a wild chatter of excited voices. Pilots crowded among one another shouting noisily. Young Healey, pent up with emotion, rushed on:

“And, mon! You should-a seen that monstrous Zep going down in flames! I’ve never seen a sight like it before! And all those Heinies! Why, they were leaping like frogs off a rock from the plunging death bag. SAY! Aren’t you interested?” demanded the youth as Hull stared at him with queer, far-away animosity and passive indifference. “And why weren’t you there? What happened you—”

“Shut UP!” snarled Hull. “I don’t want to hear another word! I don’t want to hear anything about it! What do you think I am—an automaton? Hey? Or, a Prussian with a heart of stone? If you— Oh, what’s the difference!” Leaping furiously to his feet Hull limped away toward the peaceful solace of his barracks room. He couldn’t stand this talk of his comrade’s successes, and of his own disappointment any longer. A Zep over London! Something he had always wanted to see, and to be in on its destruction. He was down on his luck, there was no doubt about it!

The eager young fledgling stared after Hull, mouthing strange snatches of amazement. What was the matter with this flying man?

In his barracks Hull swung down onto his cot, favoring his wounded right leg. He felt disgraced. He recalled how the C.O. had glared at him when he had returned after missing the Zep formation, and the stinging remarks burned again through his memory. Suddenly Hull’s brain began to throb angrily. Could it be possible

that the C.O. thought he was actually *trying* to miss that formation? He hadn’t figured it this way before, but now—

“You were strangely slow in getting your motor *fixed*”—that was what he had said! Why, curse him! He heard his flying mates coming toward the barracks now, chattering and carrying on with ribald shoutings about their victories. He couldn’t stand it. He got up quickly and ambled out the rear exit toward aeroplane repair. Although he felt disgraced, yet in his heart Hull knew there was no reason for it, that it was all viciously unjust, and unwarranted. For hours, though, during mid-day, and afternoon, he hung around the hangars, avoiding his comrades, avoiding speech with any man, nursing his grudge when he knew he should be resting and taking care of his harassed and shattered body.

IT was after mess that evening when Major Blackfoot called Hull to flying headquarters. Hull, limping somewhat, and with grim-set jaw, stood facing his commanding officer. It was easy to see there was no love lost now between the airman and his squadron leader. Major Blackfoot, sitting at his desk, twirled his silver whistle dangling from his shoulder epaulet, studying Hull with his cold, analytical mannerism that was driving Hull to madness. Finally he said:

“You look bad, Lieutenant. Perhaps it’s a rest you need. Up until now you made such a good record. Let’s see, it’s forty-six of the enemy you’ve downed, isn’t it?”

As if he didn’t know! thought Hull bitterly.

“Oh, something like that,” answered Hull with strained voice.

“Mm-mh-uh. Well, I’m going to give you a ‘cushy job’ for a while—sea duty, Lieutenant. It’ll give you a chance to get some sea air, and rest up, and to—to think things over. Then if—”

“I don’t want a cushy job!” flamed Hull indignantly. “I don’t need to think any-

thing over, either. Nor do I want any sea duty—I hate it! I'm no sailor! And I don't want any rest! I don't like ship duty, either! All I want is a decent chance to fly. I don't—"

"There's a lot of things all of us don't like about the war," snapped the C.O. "But there are an especial lot of things *you* don't like about it, aren't there, Lieutenant?"

Hull's face went white.

"Meaning what, sir?" he demanded fiercely.

The major coughed slightly, composedly, continuing to twirl his silver whistle. For a second his lips moved, but the words somehow failed themselves; he seemed to hesitate seeing the icy face of the diminutive airman before him, and the eyes like blued steel narrowed at him accusingly.

"I didn't call you in here for a discussion about your personality," stated the major coldly. "There are *important* things to attend to. It is my duty to inform you to pack your kit tonight and be prepared to take the lorry leaving here at nine P.M. I've had a call for two airmen. You, and Lieutenant Healey, are going aboard *His Majesty's Ship Emperor* tonight—whether you think it decent, and whether you like it or not! We're not here to choose how we shall fight this war, you know, Lieutenant."

"Very well, sir," answered Hull dully. "At least it will be a relief to get away from here for a time."

"Here are your transfer papers. You may leave."

Hull saluted stiffly. The major stood to his feet and returned the salute with perfunctory mechanism. The air was that tense it could be cut with a knife, and silent. Picking up his papers Hull swung dazedly toward the door, odd, flaming lights dancing before his eyes, bitterness surging in his weary body. Sea duty! How he hated it! He resisted the temptation to slam the door behind him, but he wanted to crash it clear off its hinges,

Outside, the cool air of evening fanned his hot cheeks. Was the major riding him, sending him away, because he had lost confidence in him? He wondered. Was it because of his losing out with that Zep formation, and then allowing the Hun photo bus to fly home with pictures of Sheerness? And the loss of his pal—did the major blame him for that, too? So it appeared. Hull cursed under his breath. A cushy job! Hell! Sea duty! Cer-imony! He seemed to forget the wounds in his body. His knuckles were clenched white, and there was only flame burning in his brain as he walked blindly up the barracks path to pack his kit for—sea duty!

West of Heligoland

THE harbor lights of Sheerness seemed mysteriously dim to Aviator Gene Hull. As his motor lorry droned along the ancient quays and the forest of ship masts he noted the soft hush of England's war-time night. The reason, he knew, was to avoid revealments of ammunition deposits, or cargo shipments to the enemy eyes roving above. Those massive Zeps, so frequently harassing the English coast, were a constant menace not to be despised.

At the end of a long dock their lorry came to a dead stop. Hull heard the lap-lap of the tides sucking at the wharf pilings with their age-old, unceasing murmur. A low, thin mist was sweeping across the great Thames. Dropping onto the wharf Hull stared into the night. A few shadowy cranes stood at the end of the wharf, their gaunt arms blotting out the dim, misted stars above. On a high platform he saw a series of immense horns revolving. These, he knew, were the "ears" of the men at the listening posts. Those gigantic horns looking like gargantuan photograph horns, were sensitive listeners catching the slightest drone of enemy aeroplane or Zeppelin motor from the high-flung heavens.

Hull's flying mate, Healey, dropped onto the dock behind him. The two men had hardly spoken during their long ride, each content to sleep through the long journey. Hull sniffed the mist-laden air. Salt smells from the deep were heavy. From behind him he heard the throb of powerful dynamos. He swung around. Only a few yards away he glimpsed the tall, iron masts of an English super-dreadnought. He thrilled at the sight of the towering battleship. Its decks, he noted, were stripped for action. Furthermore, not a single glimmer of light showed from its gloomy sides. Hull felt his flesh creep.

"Ginky place, this, eh what?" said Healey hoarsely, drawing the collar of his great coat tightly around his neck. "Gives a fella the feeling of a hide-out of ghouls, gimlets, ghosts, and what-not, no?"

"I'd call it the dock o' th' doomed, myself," admitted Hull gloomily.

"Hey, Fella! Don't say *that!* You give me the shivers. Who's doomed? Hey! What made you say that, Gene? You've given me gooseflesh! Life and death are too darned fickle these days as it is. You make me—"

"Th-is w-ay," whispered a hushed voice close at Hull's elbow.

Hull swerved back suddenly, startled. He hadn't seen nor heard anyone on that side of him. He peered through the gloom. The white hat of a young British naval officer loomed through the mists beside him. He beckoned, now, in silence, to the two air officers to follow him. Ahead, Hull saw the two lorry men carrying their kit bags of flying equipment. Down the stone dock the little party moved toward the big battleship. To the newly arrived naval chap Hull said:

"This is a spooky place. Is it always like this?"

"Well, not exactly. But you see Fritz was over today in his aeroplanes photographing the harbor and the *Imperator*. I guess staff is doubly wary tonight. You

see our aviators let the Huns get away with the pictures! I didn't see the air fight, but they say our men were outnumbered. One of our aviators was killed. It was that great German ace, the Sea Terror, von Beulow. You know?"

"Y-y-es, I know," murmured Hull dazedly.

UP a wide, clean white gangway the three officers climbed to the dreadnought. From out on the great Thames Hull caught the chug-chug of towboats and ferries feeling their way cautiously through the liquid night. Along the gun deck, past sailors sleeping in hammocks, the three came out into the open on the quarterdeck. Here Hull glimpsed the dim silhouettes of two trim S.E. 5's with pontoons swinging from catapults. Healey poked him in the side pointing toward the battle scouts.

"There's our buses, Gene."

"Yeah," replied Hull passively. "They say those pontoon jobs are pips, too; faster than the land planes. But, hell! We'll probably never even get near them on this cushy job!"

They descended then, into the officer's wardrobe, the youthful naval ensign showing Hull and his companion to their cabins.

"My name's Trenton," he introduced himself under the dim lights of the alleyway. "I've the cabin next to yours. I had charge of getting your petrol and equipment aboard. Some day I hope to be an aviator myself," he grinned good-humoredly. "I've my request in now. Well, if you need anything, just call me—any time, day or night."

"Thanks," replied Hull.

The three shook hands around. The baggage was brought in then and deposited in their cabins. Hull dropped onto his clean white berth. Healey leaned against the bulkhead, gazing into Hull's room. Hull felt completely done in. Somehow those comments of the young ensign about his

aerial engagement had taken all the spirit out of him.

"If you don't mind," said Hull apologetically. "I'm going to turn in, Healey."

"Oh, sure, old fella. You had a tough day with your aeroplanes."

"Uh-huh," rejoined Hull dourly. "Good night."

"Good night."

Healey vanished into the alleyway. Hull closed the door. The tang of the sea seemed odd, foreign to Hull; it made him realize he was in a completely different life. From far below he could hear the steady throom, throom of the dreadnought's dynamos and refrigeration machinery pumping away into the night. From outside his porthole came the faint whish of the night wind and the slap-slap of the waves against the side of the ship. The war, he thought—when would it ever end, and where? And

ship. Hull quickly leaned up on one elbow, rubbing his eyes in amazement.

"Come in!" he called.

"Breakfast am ready, sah," announced a negro voice through the slant shutters of the door.

"Right-o, and thanks," acknowledged Hull.

Leaping up onto his knees on his berth Hull hurriedly placed his face to the porthole. That heavy surge of the ship—they were under way! Through the porthole only broad, blue sea! Miles on miles of it! The land was nowhere in sight! It was a beautiful July morning.

They must have been steaming for hours, he realized, and yet he had known nothing of it, so dead tired, so all in he had been.

Swinging his feet down over his berth Hull dressed. He felt greatly refreshed. The July heat, though, was penetrating the

The King Comes Aboard

this damnable cushy job! How long would it confine him to sea duty? What would the voyage bring?

Suddenly he wondered where they were going? They must be going some place! He hadn't even thought to ask his young naval friend. He hadn't cared. But after all, he told himself, it really didn't matter anyway. Nothing ever happened on sea duty. A few weeks at the most, and he hoped to be back on real flying again. Strange wonderings wavering through his weary brain Hull undressed and tumbled back into the clean white sheets and—sweet oblivion and rest from all the worries of the war.

It was broad daylight when Hull awoke. There was an insistent tapping at his door. The atmosphere was permeated now with heavy salt air. The deck and bulkheads were throbbing with power and groaning with a steady rise and fall of the great

thick hull of the dreadnought. Drawing down the bandages on his shoulder wound which was the worst one he had, he inspected it. Healing fine! His calf wound was black and dirty looking, but he figured it would come along. He drew the clean bandages back over the wounds. Most of the swelling, and a great deal of their soreness had vanished. He brushed his tunic, and before the mirror, combed his hair. With a sardonic gesture he patted the silver wings on his chest, and—stepped out into the dining saloon.

At the breakfast table young Trenton grabbed his tunic sleeve. His eyes were wide with excitement. He dropped his fork to his plate quickly. He drew Hull to him. His lips fairly trembled with thrill as he said:

"Have you heard the news, pilot? Have you heard the BIG news?"

Taking a chair next Trenton as the latter directed, Hull stared into the animated cheeks of his young friend, wonderingly.

"Why, no, I guess not. What news?"

"The King is on board!"

"Eh-heh? Wh-wh-at? Wh-at's that?" stammered Hull unbelievably.

"Positively! But His Majesty isn't up yet." The lad looked at Hull with a frown. "Don't stare at me like that!" he complained. "Honest! It's the truth! You don't believe me!"

IT didn't seem credible. Hull swallowed something that felt like his Adam's apple. He noted, now, the regal decorations in the saloon; colored festoonings draped in the colors of the British Union Jack across all the tables, and the single, gold bedecked chair at the high admiralty table. It was not until then that Hull actually realized that Trenton *was* telling the truth.

"Well, snap my longerons!" exclaimed Hull in astonishment. "King George the Fifth! He's really here, then?"

"Absolutely! You'll have the honor of seeing His Majesty some time today, perhaps even meeting him, who knows."

"Well, what in the name of the wild seven seas is he doing out here?" demanded Hull in stupefaction.

"His Majesty had an appendicitis operation a few weeks ago, so they say," explained Trenton. "Not a soul in the world knows about it, though, or did. He's quite better now, but the doctors ordered a rest with a sea trip for him. They say he's been working too hard in Parliament lately, too. He was near a nervous breakdown. The outside world, though, will never hear of this."

"So the doctors prescribed a 'cushy job' for him, did they, my friend?" finished Hull with slight irony.

"Uh-huh."

"Funny we never heard before, though, that His Majesty would be here," ruminated Hull. "I wonder if that old sour

apple, Major Blackfoot, knew what I was headed into?"

"Listen," confided Trenton softly. "Don't kid yourself. Not a soul in this world knew His Majesty was coming on board this ship last night, excepting the secret intelligence, and Admiral Beatty. None of the men, and only a few of the officers yet know that His Majesty is here. He came aboard late in the early morning hours, dressed as a naval captain. I was up, having a cup of tea in the mess room and recognized him as he entered the wardrobe. I scalded myself on that hot tea scrambling to my feet to salute!"

"I don't wonder!" admitted Hull feelingly. "What do you know about this!"

Digging into his piece of grapefruit Hull stared wide-eyed again at the various decorations over the table set for the King. Wowie! he thought suddenly. If the Hun ever got wind of this! There would be hell to pay! He wondered for a chill moment how good the Hun's secret intelligence might be working in England.

"Say, Trenton!" commented Hull in an undertone. "If Fritzzy ever heard of this, can you imagine what could happen?"

"No!" replied the youth emphatically. "I can't, because not a soul in Merrie Old England even, knows where their King is this fair July morning. But even, and suppose they did, what good would it do them? Did you see those big sixteen inch guns up there in the main turrets? And haven't we aeroplanes, and aces to man them? And don't forget," he reminded. "You're riding on the world's finest, most modern super-dreadnought afloat—and so is His Majesty!"

"That's true," admitted Hull thoughtfully. "She *is* a beauty, too. But just the same, don't think for a minute that it's an easy matter to keep secret the whereabouts of any nation's king."

From behind Hull came Healey and two other officers, the latter from the ship's complement. A merry chatter of voices was

going on in the mess room. Hull turned to Trenton.

"I wish the messmen would hurry up and bring my breakfast. I could do with those fried eggs he promised, but I'm anxious to get up on the quarterdeck to see our S.E.'s."

"Take it easy, pilot! Take it easy!" consoled Trenton. "You won't be doing any flying on this voyage, and anyway I can tell you that your two buses are tip-top. I can vouch for it. I saw to all the work myself. They're full to the brim with petrol, oil, water, ammunition, and even maps! What's disturbing you? Sit easy, sit easy and enjoy your meal!"

Hull gained confidence from the clear black eyes of his young friend. There was efficiency and capability written into the youth's frank face and intelligent features.

"All right," laughed Hull good-naturedly. "If you say—"

His words, however, were cut off by a jolly commotion in the admiral's end of the wardrobe. Hull looked up to see a group of gold-braided officers coming in from the alleyway. Leading the party was a smartly dressed naval captain. Hull felt a catch in his throat. King George the Fifth! It was His Royal Majesty!

There came a hasty rattle of silverware and dishes, a quick shuffle of feet, and a shoving back of chairs, as the sitting group, as one man, leapt to its feet and came to a swift salute. Smiling, but face a trifle pale, His Majesty returned the salutes handsomely. He made a perfect appearing naval officer, thought Hull. For a tense moment now, the King hesitated, gazing with bright eyes at Hull. The airman felt his cheeks flush. Why—?

"You are Lieutenant Gene Hull, are you not?" questioned the King pleasantly.

"Why—why, yes, Your Majesty," answered Hull in open astonishment. "I am, sir."

The King smiled, seeing Hull's modest

amazement, and walked over to the airman.

"I have seen your pictures in our aero publications," explained His Majesty. "You have forty-six victories to your credit, have you not Lieutenant—and American?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"A perfectly admirable record! Admirable!" congratulated the King. "And you're no bigger than a pigmy!" he smiled. He reached out his hand to grip with Hull.

Hull grasped the King's hand eagerly. They gripped firmly.

"It is an honor, and a pleasure to shake your hand!" smiled Great Britain's distinguished ruler. "Your King and country are proud of you!"

"I am honored," replied Hull feelingly.

His Majesty swung now to the standing men.

"Be seated!" he commanded. "And continue your breakfasts. This is a rare treat for me, gentlemen."

"After you, Your Majesty," Hull deferred gallantly.

Walking to his chair King George took his seat while several eager hands eased his chair under him. The remainder of the group went about finishing their morning meal. Hull, still somewhat flustered, and face crimson, bit into a piece of toast when—suddenly from everywhere on that great dreadnought burst forth what seemed like a trillion bells—warning alarm bells!

Wings for a King

THE blood stood still in Hull's diminutive, thick-knit body for a chill second. He felt a mighty boom at his temples as the heavy pumpings started forward now with mad rush. His worst fears were realized! It was the Hun! He *knew* it! That piece of toast jammed in Hull's throat. Before he scarcely realized what was happening he found himself coughing in his cabin, and snatching up

his helmet and goggles from the head of his berth. In another second he was tearing madly up the steel companion ladder to the quarterdeck. As he flung up that ladder he saw Admiral Beatty tear past him and shout through a speaking tube:

"Rush a radio for more aeroplanes! Send an S.O.S. for more protection! RUSH!"

Then he darted down the wardrobe alleyway shouting:

"Your Majesty! Your Majesty! You must come below at once—to the safety compartment beneath our heavy armor plate!"

BLUE sky burst above Hull. Simultaneously he saw a long black muzzle swinging skyward from a steel platform just above his head—the *Imperator's* high-powered anti-aircraft gun! Practically worthless, thought Hull. Racing down the white deck of the great dreadnought he somehow found the jacob's ladder hanging from the catapult and his S.E. His hands burned as he scrambled up it like a madman. Already the ship's aviation crew was clearing his huge catapult.

In a trice Hull had dropped into the tiny bucket seat of his fighting scout. Vaguely he saw Healey dashing across the other side of the deck for the remaining S.E. A white-clad sailor leapt to his propeller blade.

"CONTACT!" screamed Hull as he threw forward his switch, spark, and throttle.

The seaman flipped over the shining blade with a mighty pull. Hull, forcing his booster with impetuous, trembling fingers, felt the spark crackle in the big Hispano cylinders. There was a prayer on his lips. Cer-ough! Cer-oomp! In a crashing roar the Hispano burst into full-throated power. Never was there such sweet music to Hull's tense ears! For a few split seconds he warmed his engine—had to! But the warm July morning had already warmed it partly. Dimly he saw

the catapult crew rush aft to the catapult-shooting levers.

Goggles down over eyes! Feet tense on rudder bar! Hand firm on control stick! Engine roaring now at full, top speed—roaring like a thing gone mad on its bearings—leaping, struggling to free herself! Hull waved a rushing hand downward outside his pit! The signal to shoot him.

In cannonball speed Hull shot through the blue skies. The dreadnought's catapult had flung him off her stern. The back of Hull's skull crashed against the S.E.'s leather head-rest. He sank in a low arc down over that gray stern. A few hundred feet only, he skimmed the hissing white-caps to gather flying speed.

Now, stick back! Up, up, and UP he fought with his S.E. for altitude. There came a sharp, livid flash behind him! Another, and another! His ears threatened to crack with the terrible concussion. It was the *Imperator's* crew firing their anti-aircraft gun! The Hun, Hull realized, was out for grim attack. How had they discovered the State secret? No time now—His Hispano pulling him higher and higher Hull flung a desperate stare above him, searching the heavens far and wide for the enemy.

Yes! There came a thin-edged line of wings! Just one well-placed bomb from an enemy plane, thought Hull, and alighting on a powder magazine would spell the *Imperator's*—end! The consequences staggered him. But as Hull approached the enemy icy chills raced along his spine. He saw now why the dreadnought A.A. crew were panicky. With their high-powered binoculars they had made out the black Albatross of—the Sea Terror!

Wild, untamed blood of anger leapt into Hull's heart. Blood lust boiled through his veins. Why, that yellow-livered hyena! It *would* be the Sea Terror who would fall like carrion onto such a plot as this! Those pictures they had been taking of Sheerness, and of the *Imperator*! Now he realized their importance! The awfulness of their

situation was fast gripping Hull for—staring into the enemy east he saw a giant Gotha bomber, escorted by two Albatross Fighters rushing toward them!

It was a mad race with Death! A mad race to save their King! Just one of those high explosive aerial bombs. Hull's body seemed to collapse with bitter disappointment—the *Imperator* could not hope to outspeed that onrushing Gotha! As he climbed he stared below. The dreadnought, a white, frothing wake lashing out behind it, was churning for port—but not with the speed of wings!

Desperate, Hull flung a wild stare, first at the all-black Albatross nearing him, then at the dark shadow of the lumbering Gotha. It was bitter decision. Grave danger to the King lay in both directions. For a few seconds he rushed toward the Sea Terror. His blood cried out for revenge,

he ripped. The Terror would recognize his S.E. with its royal gold crest, this he knew. He was glad. He wanted the Sea Terror to know whom he was fighting! When he came out and down, from his wild climbing turn he saw the Albatross fling over onto its back in an acrobatic feint. It was enough! Leaving the Hun at this angle Hull plunged his taut-winged little S.E. into a howling side-slip and half-roll—toward the Gotha! It was a ruse—and it worked! He saw the Sea Terror fling down on the spot where he—had been! But he was gone.

A dark shadow was rushing up under the enraged Albatross. Hull stared. It was Healey in his S.E.! Hull breathed a prayer—for his comrade, and in thanks that Healey was there to hold the black Sea Terror in that region for a few moments, long enough for him to race for the Gotha!

The Giant Gotha Was A Twisted Black Mass

for bloody combat with his old, hated and venomous enemy. But the King! He *must* be saved—no matter what the cost! That was all that counted.

Eyes rivetted on the black Albatross's undercarriage Hull studied it tensely, his eyes narrowed to thin slits of blued steel. No! there were no bombs hanging there! This was all Hull wanted to know. He felt deep relief. The Sea Terror could do only insignificant damage with his Albatross strafing the decks of the dreadnought—slaughtering some seamen at most. But that onrushing Gotha! There lay the awful, devastating menace! If it ever reached the *Imperator* it would spell the dreadnought's end, and all on board! But could he down it? If so, in time?

The Sea Terror was on him now! Stick back! Rudder bar into left corner! Up, and up, and UP on a screaming chandelle

He saw the Terror roll angrily back into an Immelman as Healey rushed under him. But dead ahead before him now was the roaring Gotha and its two 77th Staffel escorts plunging for the dreadnought! No time! Hull slammed a belt of incendiaries into his Vickers.

He would have to get that Gotha on his first burst, he told himself, or he was lost! Stick back! More altitude! He could actually see the vertical iron bars on the twin Benz engines of the great bomber glinting against the morning sun now. Straight ahead! He glimpsed the white faces of the gunners standing in their pits, waiting for him to get a little closer so they could let him have it from their Spandaus. Rudder hard down!

On the howling vertical bank Hull raced along the sides of the giant Gotha's fuselage. He saw the big Benz engines and

the fuel tanks come into his ring-and-bead sights. With screaming hail Spandau bullets were sowing a line of holes in his lower wings! Fingers tense over his gun controls! His own lacing, lashing incendiaries cut a living line of fire into the motor and fuel tank regions of his enemy! Livid, crimson flame whipped along the wide wing of the bomber! Black, smudgy smoke streaked back from the trailing edge of the huge wings!

A stalwart Hun gunner lunged half out of his pit, and with a heavy seat cushion, beat desperately at the crackling flames. He was too late. The Gotha's gas tank let go! Now a pouring rain of bullets seethed over Hull down into a barrel roll! Up onto a screaming Immelman! Back onto a lashing half-roll! His brain throbbing with dizziness Hull came up between the two black-tipped Albatross Fighters, both of whom were racing for him like madmen.

They cannonaded toward him at right angles. For a grim second Hull stared into the jaws of Death. How could they all avoid collision? Stick hard back into a corner! Reeling up on a split-hair turn Hull felt his tail strike something with a terrific, sickening impact! It was the right wing of the nearest Albatross hurling against his fuselage! It was the end! Hull knew it. He felt his whole plane jar and tremble. The hurling Albatross flung into a frantic reversement—only to rush upward from Hull and lock wings with his own mate's!

There came a horrifying CRASH! A deafening clatter of rending wings, long-erons, motors, and ripping flying wires! In unbelievable impact those two hurling Albatrosses had telescoped each other, wing to wing! Fearfully staring back at his own plane Hull ran his eyes over his S.E. He was still flying! It was incredible. There was a great gash on the upper ridge of his fuselage where the Albatross wing had gouged it—but he was still flying, and

whole! It was a miracle! Below him, twisting and whirling in madcapped gyrations he saw the two escorting Albatross Scouts plunge into the blue aqualine depths of the North Sea.

Not far distant the giant Gotha was rolling, a blackened mass of twisted steel and charred wood. In less time than it could be told Hull emerged—alone! Throttle eased back he now stared desperately toward the dreadnought. He saw the giant ship wreathed in a smoke screen thrown up from her smudge pots, a white leaping wake streaking off behind her, still racing for port. New hope surged into Hull's life. But near the *Imperator*—what was that?

A scarlet spire of flame! The red-white-and-blue cockade of the British R.N.A.S. It was Healey's S.E. just plunging under the waves! Hull's fingers gripped his controls until they were white under their strain. On almost their first round the Sea Terror had knocked down Healey! The bright, smiling and enthusiastic face of his brother airman drifted before Hull's vision as he stared, wide of eye, on the tragic scene.

FOUR Bristol fighters in one morning! Then his pal, Ernie Lang! And now it was this eager youngster barely out of flying school—Healey! And he, too—would he be next? No matter! With a madman's curse Hull slammed home his throttle. The time had come for a reckoning with this Terror of the North Sea! His blood shouting for recompense and strange, fiery lights dancing before his narrowed eyes Hull tore down those blue sky lanes after his hated antagonist.

Von Beulow was razing over the tall wicker masts of the *Imperator*, dealing flame and death to the seamen of the dreadnought. Hull could see the Hun's tracers bouncing off the deck and the ship's metal work and knew that, in between, live bullets were spreading death and suffering. With screaming speed he whirled

toward the plunging *Imperator*. Von Beulow saw the sharp-winged S.E. raging down toward him. His Spandau-flaming nose lifted toward Hull.

Not a thousand yards from the *Imperator* Hull drove his S.E. head on, straight for the mad-rushing, all black Albatross. Nose to nose they hurled at one another's throats. The venom, apparently, was mutual. As he rushed over the dark wings of the Albatross Hull bore down on his Constantesco gun controls. Flame leapt from the mad snout of his S.E. But the Sea Terror was ready! Flinging over onto his side, the black form whirled upward and back on a breath-taking split-hair turn. Hull's tracers failed the dark fuselage and seamed only the Albatross wing.

Rudder bar hard down! Stick up! Off on a careening vertical bank Hull struggled around on an acrobatic turn as he heard lead splashing against his own empennage parts. A landing wire snapped on his left wing! Hull cursed savagely. The Terror screamed up, and then down on a wide curve over Hull's back.

"Oh, no you don't! Not yet!" howled Hull savagely. "I know that pet trick—getting onto my tail!"

Rushing up and over into a vicious Immelman Hull swirled out on his nose only to come again face to face with the black snout of the Albatross—head on! With the flash of two rockets the speeding battle scouts tore at one another. Down on gun controls! Hull saw his bullets spattering over the engine cowl of the Mercedes. He was staring now, square into the red maw of the Sea Terror's jibbering Spandaus!

Something like a red hot stiletto stabbed into his right arm! Something hot and piercing struck his right ear! A bit of leather flipped off his helmet before his goggles! Longerons snapped under the seat at his right! He felt his bucket seat drop with a thump on that side.

"Cer-imony!" raged Hull. "Why, you louse-bound igorrote, you!"

UP! On a death-defying zoom, Albatross and S.E. pontoons fairly crashing one another the two antagonists flung over onto their backs! Hull let go his gun triggers. Down on stick! Off on a half-roll! Hull flung a wild look behind him. His right arm was now practically helpless, and growing more and more numb with pain. This incredible Hun! He was still coming at him! His Vickers bullets hadn't struck a vital spot yet! Another hail of lead like that one, Hull realized, would be his last.

The Sea Terror wasn't behind him now, but at his side! How did he get there so fast! Hull booted on rudder bar with the speed of light—but not a second too soon. He circled the tail of the Terror! The Terror, in turn, circled his. Here they were winding around on a light spiral like two dogs chasing each other's tails—only this circle was growing tighter and tighter! This was a new one on Hull. In another few seconds he saw he might be able to boot on rudder and plunge his Vickers bullets streaming down von Beulow's fuselage, but—the Sea Terror dove!

HULL'S natural instinct was to follow suit and dive onto his antagonist's tail, almost any air fighter would, but instantly Hull's shrewd seventh sense told him it was too easy! There was a catch in it some place. Instead, he swerved sidewise on a shrieking cartwheel—only to find himself face to face with the Terror once more! This incredible Hun! He was a genius with his plane! Spandau bullets screamed over his upper wing, then lower! Down on controls! Down on gun triggers!

The fuselage of the black Albatross raced into his gun sights for a flashing second only. His Vickers, though, were spouting lead and death! Torturous pain crashed into Hull's side! Wood crackled all around him. He was staring into the glinting steel radiator of the Mercedes now! Strips of linen whipped off his upper wing! He felt as if his whole set of right ribs had been

shot away. That Hun, he insisently drove at his right side! But did Hull see aright? He thought he saw, over the chattering jibber of his own guns, the white face of the Sea Terror jerk back over his head—rest!

Hull was becoming very weary, exhausted. He lifted his fingers off his gun controls as the black Albatross swerved past him like a black rocket. The Terror swung downward now on a weaving half-roll. Hull plunged his own stick down. The Hun was still flying under control! Hull's heart sank. He was sitting now in a thorough pool of blood.

The Hun was tearing at his throat again, this time from the side. Back on stick! He saw the black belly of the Albatross flash overhead. A plunge down on Vickers! Hull saw a wild chance! Machine guns hurling a stream of flame! Then Hull felt his feet slip from the rudder bar, felt his knees sag weakly against the sides of his pit. Somehow he held his control stick. He knew he couldn't let go of that.

Out there before him he saw, or thought he saw, the dark form of the Albatross plunging down, down, down to seaward ahead of him. But it was getting dark. Strange, that. . . . Didn't think it was night yet. . . . Funny how fast time flew. . . . That air fight, though, it had lasted a century. . . . Hull heard something new—the roar of many aeroplane motors, they sounded like Bristol Fighters. . . . He stared up with a last final effort. Yes! The sky seemed full of them! They had come out from the English coast.

"T-t-oo l-l-ate, t-too l-ate," mouthed Hull through lumps of blood coursing between his lips.

Somewhere in that dark night of his whirling brain Hull heard a cannonading splash ahead of him. That—? It was the Sea Terror? Or was it? Terrible impact struck his own bus. He felt his feet, his knees, and now his whole body plunged into icy water. For a grim second it

charged him with life. He stared up and saw a patch of blue sky, the wings wheeling, wheeling, wheeling. . . . No! It couldn't be, he told himself. Wasn't it night! Then he swallowed a surge of salt water. Somewhere he heard the throb of ship's engines and voices, voices melting, fading—

It seemed days later when Hull gripped something between his fingers. He gripped it again. What was it? Slowly he turned his head. There seemed to be a fire in his neck. He stared down. It was something warm, solid. Little by little he focused his bloodshot eyes on his hand. There was another hand in his own; yes, that was it! Somehow it was strangely comforting. His haggard head moved up now on clean white linens, while his eyes traced the distance from the hand in slow, measured move. He saw a smartly dressed naval officer sitting there before him, a captain. Then Hull's eyes widened perceptibly. It was—it *was* King George!

"Steady, son," warned the paternal voice. "Just rest. You're going to pull through in time. We couldn't lose you now, you know!"

From up on deck Hull heard the raucous shrill of whistles and the shouted orders:

"Get that spring line out! Walk it up the dock! Hurry there! We haven't got all night! Bly-me! Tyke that line! Step on it! We've not got all the bloomin' night! What—"

Vaguely Hull realized they were docking the ship. A group of officers strode into the wardrobe. One saluted and announced:

"Your Majesty, your car is here!"

The King rose slowly to his feet. Tenderly he laid his airman's hand onto his berth. Bending over Hull slightly he said:

"That was a glorious combat! And what a signal honor—bringing down that Hun ace of aces! Your King and country are deeply grateful to you, Lieutenant. And later I shall have the honor of personally decorating you with the Distinguished Flying Cross!"

**Savage Caught A Tartar When He Tried To Kidnap
Prince Ju Tuk Ju. For Though The Mongol
Had Never Flown Before, He Preferred
To Have The Plane To Himself
And To Be His Own
Pilot**



By
**ARTHUR J.
BURKS**

The great hands
lifted Savage from
the cockpit, over the
yawning space beneath. Down
he plunged, somersaulting over
and over.

THE FLYING MONGOL

"HERE they come!"
Sam Hastings, crack flyer of the new transport service which had just opened, and whose field was just outside the city of Peking, pointed in the direction of the Capital City of the Middle Kingdom.

George Hellman, his partner in the business, raised his head from a minute examination of their stock in trade—a conglomeration of airplane parts which, in the ag-

gregate, they called a "ship"—and glanced in the direction indicated by Hastings.

Across the long field came a strange procession.

The members of the party were Mongols, from Urga way!

They were heading swiftly toward the idling plane.

Now, the two partners had rooms at the Hotel des Wagons-lits, in the city, and they knew who their distinguished visitors

were, for those visitors, ten in number, had two rooms right across the hall from their own.

Hastings and Hellman were not the only flyers on this particular field.

It wasn't their field at all, and they were allowed to use it only by paying huge "squeeze" to the man who did, another American who was something of an enigma, and whose spendings in Peking far exceeded what he should have been able to make by taking twenty-dollar hops with the folks who came out to the field to be thrilled. There were ugly rumors about this third man, whispers of midnight flights, mysterious visitations to far distant towns, and to large houses in those towns, from which the owner subsequently missed hard earned money or valuable jewels.

THE third man's name was Lon Savage. A husky brute, weighing around two hundred, with a bad eye which seemed to tell the world that its owner was a chap you'd better try to get along with.

His ship was a refurbished DeHaviland with dual controls, and that it was in perfect condition proved that Savage knew his mechanics.

But the Mongols were approaching the two ships, Savage's plane having been run out of his makeshift hangar to the dead line. In the lead was Ju Tuk Ju, a real Mongolian Prince.

THE Prince had several peculiarities. His head was the biggest either Hastings or Hellman had ever seen on a man, his feet were tiny, he had money, all in silver Mex dollars, to throw at the birds, and the great skin with which he covered his body smelled to high heaven. He was something like a child, too. His greatest delight was in shooting off fireworks, and because he was a Prince, officials in Peking gave him his way, and he spent his days buying up varicolored rockets and firecrackers and shooting them

off after nightfall, wherever the fancy took him.

He was like a child delighting in new toys.

Which was probably the reason why he was approaching the landing field.

Somebody had told him about airplanes, and he was coming to have a looksee.

"If Savage inspired this visit, Hastings," said Hellman, "there's something phony about it! Don't forget that this chap is rich, and that Savage has a reputation that smells worse than Ju's furs!"

"Well, this old bus is ready to take off anyway. If it's airplane stuff we may take a hand in the game, if there's any game to it."

Ju Tuk Ju, Prince of Mongolia, his retinue following at his heels, strode on. The two planes were but a few rods apart and both were idling. Ju glanced at first one ship and then the other, scrutinizing the flyers. Savage, who had been fussing around his D.H., grinned, rubbed his hands together and beckoned to the approaching Mongols.

"This way, Your Highness!" he called.

The Prince turned to a man who walked to his right rear, a scholarly-looking Chinese, whom Hastings and Hellman knew as an accomplished linguist, and Sin Fat spoke to him briefly. Ju's face was all smiles as he turned back to face Savage.

"Leave her idling, George," said Hastings, "and let's go listen in."

Hastings and Hellman strode across the space which separated the two ships. Ju Tuk Ju was following Savage like a pleased child, and the beetle-browed pilot was explaining the workings of airplanes to him. And he was explaining properly, too. No funny business. Sin Fat interpreted as Savage talked, and Ju Tuk Ju listened with all his ears, which were large enough to catch almost anything.

"Wonder," grunted Hastings, "if Savage is trying to sell his boat to the Big Smell."

Hellman said nothing. He was thinking

Why waste time on old fashioned methods

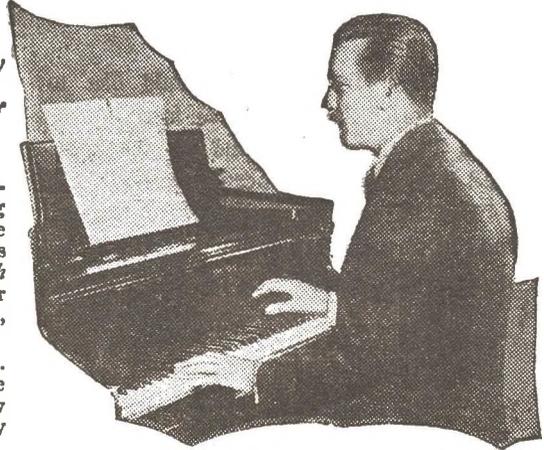
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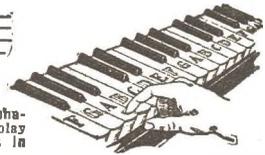
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deeply. He had seen a quick wink pass between Sin Fat and Lon Savage.

Savage climbed into the forward cockpit, continuing his rapid explanations, which Ju seemed to grasp without too much trouble.

"Perhaps His Highness would like to take a hop?" Savage said at last.

Sin Fat interpreted, and Ju shook his head in a very pronounced negative.

"But he can get in," pressed Savage, "and see how it feels to sit in the cockpit of one of these babies."

THIS, too, Sin Fat interpreted, and after a great deal of argument, Prince Ju Tuk Ju clambered into the after cockpit.

"Look!" said Hastings suddenly.

guessed correctly. Well, Sin Fat would have to look out for himself.

Hellman and Hastings could smell money almost as far as Savage could. But they liked honest money, while Savage, if rumor were correct, liked his in any style.

The two partners dove for their ship. By the time they were sure that everything was O. K., the D.H. flown by Savage was a mere speck against the horizon, going straight west from Peking.

Hellman yanked the chocks. Hastings took the stick. The ship was moving as Hellman climbed in, fastened his safety belt, and adjusted his chute pack.

Down the field went the mongrel crate of the sky-hoppers, eating up the earth. Her tail came up, wagging as though with pleasure, and at the edge, almost off the

His Face Was Set In A Mask

"There are no chocks under his trucks! Savage is up to something!"

But it was too late.

Prince Ju had just got nicely seated when the DeHaviland broke into savage cry and was off down the field, her tail off the ground in fifty yards or so. She was traveling. Prince Ju stood up in the cockpit, and started to wave frantically at his friends, who were having seven different kinds of fits as they saw their bread and butter vanishing down the field.

Hastings saw Savage reach back and thrust Ju down in his seat, just before that worthy would have fallen out of the cockpit. Then the D.H. lifted from the field in a breath-taking leap, straight away, without a pretense at circling for altitude.

Sin Fat was striving to pacify the Mongols, who were in just the right mood to flay the obese Chinese alive. Him they blamed for the predicament of their Prince, and rightly, too, if Hellman

runway, Hastings lifted her, missing the tall trees at the end of the field by scant feet.

Unlike Savage, Hastings circled the field for altitude, and to make sure that everything was as it should be, before he straightened into the west, ducked his head down into the cockpit, and gave his entire attention to the task of hurling his ship after the D.H. flown by Savage.

In the rear cockpit, his hands and feet carefully away from the controls, Hellman studied the air ahead, striving to pick up the fugitive ship. Both flyers wondered what Savage's game was. Ransom, probably. No one could tell, and one guess was as good as another. Prince Ju was worth scads of money.

"Wonder how much gas he has?" muttered Hellman to himself.

Then he leaned forward, jabbing Hastings in the back, pointed.

Dead ahead, slightly lower, but still



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tiny with distance, was the fleeing ship. Hastings had lifted his old crate to eight thousand. The D.H. was thundering along at about five thousand, swerving in not one iota from the original course.

The Western Hills had dropped behind, hiding far-flung Peking.

The dilapidated crate in which rode Hastings and Hellman crept up on Savage. He must long since have seen them, but after all, what had they against him? So far he had done nothing reprehensible, save that he had taken Prince Ju up against his will.

THE wind moaned and shrieked through struts and braces as Hastings gave her the gun. It whistled past the ears of Hellman in the after cockpit. The old buggy was protesting in every bit of her, against this sacrilege. Old enough to die, the old crate was existing on borrowed time, and if she didn't fall to pieces under the ceaseless pounding of

her engines, it would be a miracle.

But they were creeping up on Savage.

They were right above him. Hastings shoved forward on his stick. The nose of the plane dipped, went into a power dive. Hellman gripped his seat, examined the straps of his chute with nervous fingers, but Hastings held her steady, her nose aiming at the tail of the D.H.

Then he leveled her and the unearthly screaming of the wind of their dive slackened somewhat as Hastings hovered over the D.H., off to one side slightly, so that they could look into the cockpits of the DeHaviland.

The great moon face of Prince Ju was set in a look of horror. He looked up at the other ship, then looked over the side, cowered down in his seat.

He jabbed Savage in the back. Savage looked back, flung off Ju's hand, grinned up at Hastings and Hellman, and waved his hand. But Ju was not to be denied. He grabbed Savage's shoulder again,

pointed downward. Savage shook his head. Hastings drew ahead slightly, still keeping well above the D.H.

When Savage looked up again, Hastings pointed downward, emphasizing his signal by a distinct jab of the forearm, downward.

Savage shook his head.

But Prince Ju had seen the signal. "Down," the signal had said, and Hastings had been looking at Savage when he made it. Prince Ju was a man of intelligence. He understood signals.

But he misread Hastings' signal.

Two great hands, hands made powerful by fear and determination, reached over and clasped Savage about the neck. Two great arms bent inward as Prince Ju deliberately pulled Savage out of his cockpit. He must have been a man of unbelievable power, this Ju, for the safety belt which should have been holding Savage in, deterred Ju not at all. But perhaps Savage hadn't fastened it. Flyers sometimes get careless in such matters, and Savage had taken off in a great hurry.

With Savage half out on the camel back, and the left wing of the D.H. starting to fall away, Prince Ju looked up at Hastings. Hastings signaled again, motioned for Ju to put Savage back *down* in his cockpit. Hellman added his own gestures to emphasize those of Hastings.

Grinning through the fear on his face, nodding his head to show that he understood, Ju put Savage down with a vengeance—outside of the cockpit, letting him slide into the yawing space beyond the camel back. Down plunged Savage, somersaulting over and over. Hastings gasped with horror.

Did Savage have a chute? Maybe, but perhaps not; but it looked like it. He was turning over so rapidly that Hastings couldn't be sure.

Then, far below, away behind now, the white flower of Savage's chute blossomed out above the falling flyer's head, shutting

him from view, save as he swung into view on either side of the umbrella as he pendulumed back and forth.

Hellman jabbed Hastings in the back.

Prince Ju had got himself into a jam, and no mistake!

He couldn't fly, and had hurled his only salvation over the side! All he could possibly know about flying was what Savage had told him before the take-off, and Sin Fat might easily have missed his signals in the interpretation.

Hellman motioned frantically to Prince Ju. Ju nodded, looked down in the cockpit before him. He looked up at Hellman, and Hellman knew that Ju had grasped the stick. Hellman, very distinctly, made motions with his right hand which he held high above the cowling.

They daren't drop lower, for the greenhorn at the stick, and a greenhorn of Ju's intelligence, might crash them, might even do it across all the space which separated them.

Hellman could signal Ju how to manage the stick, but Ju, and Hellman, might just as well not have had any feet, for all the good they did either in this crisis.

Hastings cut his gun for a moment. The D.H. was wobbling all over the sky.

"Think you can change to that ship?" Hastings shouted.

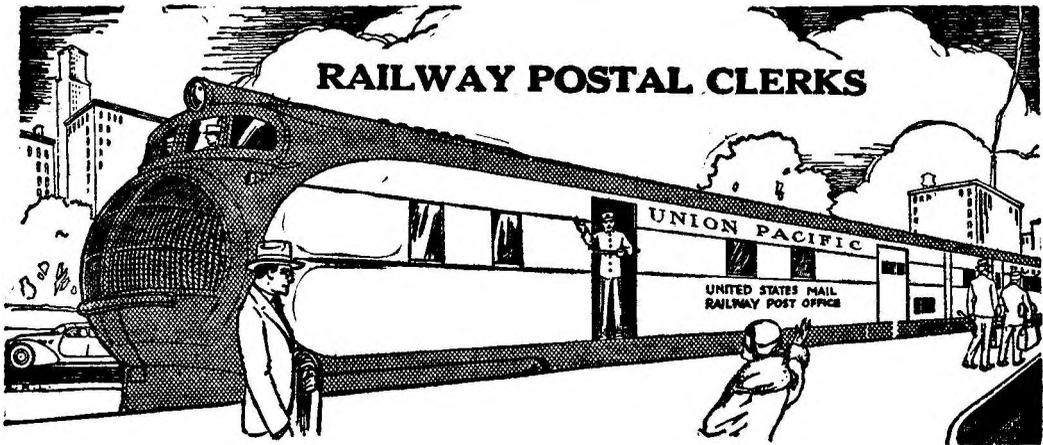
"I wouldn't try it, even with a crack flyer handling her!" replied Hellman. "What's a Mongol Prince to us, anyway?"

"Money!" retorted Hastings. "Something we need a lot of!"

"Mebbeso, but I'm not trying to change to that ship with His Highness at the stick, no, nor with anyone else at the stick. I'm a flyer, not a jumping jack!"

HOW in the name of all the wonders Ju Tuk Ju kept that ship from nosing over, or going into a tail spin, neither Hellman nor Hastings could guess. For they both felt sure that he knew absolutely nothing about planes. Beyond the Go-

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bi Desert there are few if any scattering hangars or airdromes. However, Ju Tuk Ju was getting away with it, after a fashion, though his D.H. yawed all over the place.

Hastings took a look at the altimeter.

Four thousand feet, and the D.H. right below them, wobbling all over the sky.

Hastings dared to drop lower, keeping his eyes on the ship flown, after a fashion, by Ju Tuk Ju.

Savage had landed long since, and had dropped out of sight.

Hastings, off a little to the right of the wobbling D.H., so that Hellman could keep his eyes on the antics of Ju Tuk Ju, tried to ape the movements of the ship flown by the Mongolian. It was some stunt. His ship seemed to shiver like a fat woman, doubtfully. Hellman kept his hands moving, tried to make them look like feet as he wig-wagged instructions to Ju Tuk Ju.

The Prince, wagging his wings, and

everything else that was waggable, grinned, a sort of sickly grin, nodded repeatedly, and did things with the ship. Fortunately for him, Savage's ship was a good one. It would almost have stayed up by itself.

Ticklish business, trying to fly a ship from another ship, sending signals to a man who had never even seen a ship before, who didn't think like you did, and who might cross your signals. How could he know?

The altimeter kept showing that the ground was coming up to meet both ships. A crash landing, and a demised Prince, was the least that could be expected, and the crash must come soon.

Hastings cut the gun again for a moment.

"We've been making time, George!" he shouted. "We're halfway to Kalgan!"

Hastings pointed downward, and ahead. Crawling across the ground there, almost at right angles to their course, was that great immovable, aged, stone snake that

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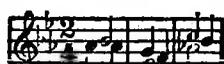


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has made China famous—the endless Great Wall.

Hellman kept up his frantic signaling, looked ahead for a safe landing place, if any place could be considered safe for a novice at the stick. However, on fairly level ground, he might have a chance. When they got into the mountains near Kalgan, there'd be no chance at all.

Then Ju's motors conked out!

Hellman couldn't hear the engines, nor could Hastings. But the prop of the D.H. became visible, and her nose dipped forward. Now things were due to happen.

WHAT a bunch of didoes that D.H. went through! It side-slipped, banked around, circled, dove, leveled off; but her blunt nose headed in the general direction of the Great Wall.

"Good grief!" thought Hellman. "With all China to land in, is His Royal Odorous Highness going to smack his ship into the Wall?"

Well, there was nothing to do but watch the ship go down, and go down it did. It spiraled, yawed, bucked like a bronco. Once Ju looked up, grinning. His fear seemed to have left him now, and he was enjoying his experience as he enjoyed his daily rockets and firecrackers back in Peking.

Down on the trail of the D.H. roared the hybrid crate of Hastings and Hellman. The hybrid nosed up, banked, came about, followed the ship down. The wind was screaming its mad song again through the wings, washing like a flood along the sides of the ship, roaring in the ears of the partners. But they had to be in at the finish.

Hastings looked back at Hellman, shook his head.

That headshake meant several things: it meant goodbye to any chances of gain, and it meant goodbye to a certain Prince out of Outer Mongolia.

But Ju Tuk Ju didn't seem to mind.

The nose of his ship headed for the Wall, and the hybrid came down on her tail to be in at the finish when the crash came.

The altimeter said fifteen hundred. Hastings got on the tail of the ship, sighted through the propeller. The nose of the D.H. seemed to be headed directly for the top of the Wall. It varied now and again as it yawed to right or left, but every time it yawed, it yawed back again.

Had Ju Tuk Ju been aiming at the top of the Great Wall, he couldn't have done better.

The altimeter said one thousand. The hybrid was shaking like a leaf. Hellman fumbled at the straps of his chute again. But the altimeter said seven hundred, and he might almost as well jump without the chute as with it.

For by this time the altimeter said four hundred, and the hybrid was all but falling to pieces, and the nose of the D.H., with but slight variations now and then, was still pointed at the top of the Wall.

Hastings made a decision. They could at least pick up the pieces. He came back on the stick, banked around, got well in rear of the D.H., and examined the ground for a place to land.

Down they whizzed. Hellman got a glimpse of the dizzily spinning D.H. as they flashed under her. Hastings' head was weaving from side to side as he looked over, striving to pick a place to land.

There was a gate through the Wall, and a road led to the gate. The only possible place to land, and it was almost impossible. Yet the two couldn't go back without making some effort in behalf of the Mongol Prince.

So they flashed down. Hastings cut the gun, side-slipped, straightened her around to land in the road which led up to the gate. He could see that the road inclined upward toward the gate, and the ship would probably nose over. Any one else

(Turn to Page 104)

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would have left the Prince to his own devices.

But not Hastings or Hellman.

The trucks touched. The hybrid bounced—

Right into the middle of a camel train that debouched, exactly at the wrong time, from the gate which went through the Wall!

NOTHING scares a camel. If an automobile runs over him he isn't bothered. He won't get out of the way for a stranger, no matter how much of a hurry the stranger may be in, no matter if he is in a ship that lands at seventy-five miles an hour.

Hastings and Hellman were in among them before Hastings could think of giving the hybrid the gun and getting away again.

So much excitement made them forget Ju Tuk Ju for a moment, and afterward they could never be sure whether or not they had heard the crash of his landing. He'd probably knocked a hole clear through the Wall.

When the hybrid plowed in among the camels there was a crash that could have been heard in Peking, three or four camels that groaned and would not be comforted, and two flyers knocked so cuckoo that they had no knowledge of the past, present, future, or anything else.

To say nothing of a hybrid ship in scattered pieces, a ship that never would fly again, except in parts, as part of some other hybrid.

A bunch of greasy Mongols dismounted from their camels, gathered in the white flyers, dumped them on top of camels that had escaped the down plunging bird of the air, and started on for Peking. Worth money, Mongols, but thrifty, every darned one of them—and these two white chaps, if they lived, owed those Mongols for three dead camels, whose integral parts might never again be re-assembled.

Hellman and Hastings awoke at about the same time in the P. U. M. C. at Peking, and both were covered with bandages which shrouded them like a pair of mummies. Hastings looked at Hellman and grinned. Hellman looked at Hastings and grinned back.

"Where were you when we tried to make a breach in the wall?" said Hastings.

"I was on the business end of the battering ram!" retorted Hellman. "Between the battering ram and the wall! Wonder what happened to Ju Tuk Ju?"

Hellman grimaced. Too bad, they hadn't seen that landing. It must have been good. Hastings caught sight of a foreign newspaper on a chair at his bedside. Idly he picked it up. Then he gasped, and his eyes bugged out like marbles as he began to read something on the first page.

"My gosh, George!" he exploded. "Listen to this! If this chap Ju Tuk Ju hasn't made every flyer in China look like a two-for-a-cent sap! Know what he did? He landed on the Great Wall without crashing the ship! Almost a perfect landing, too, according to this thing. Had maybe seven feet clearance for his wings, because of the ramparts on top of the wall, and those same ramparts kept him from breaking everything to flinders!"

"As he slowed down, according to this, which purports to be an exclusive interview with His Highness, through an interpreter named Sin Fat, the ship weaved from side to side, and the wings banged against the ramparts, finally bringing the ship to a stop."

Hastings left off reading and stared at his partner.

"Can you beat that?" gasped Hellman. "A greasy Mongol gets away with something that no regular flyer has ever had the guts to try! It'll make you and me, Hastings, the laughing stock of Peking!"

"Oh, I don't know," retorted Hastings.

(Turn to Page 106)



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"There's more to this story. Ju Tuk Ju was brought back by the same crowd that dragged us in, and got a lot of credit for saving our lives!

"He had a hunch that skill instead of sheer fool luck got him down on top of the wall, and that for this very reason he was *some* flyer! He'd landed safely, hadn't he, while we two real flyers had smacked up right, scattering ourselves and our ship all over the road between Peking and Kalgan? Certainly! Such being the case, Ju Tuk Ju regarded himself as a real aviator. So when he got back he straightway went and bought himself an airplane!"

Hastings paused, licking his chops in enjoyment. Hellman listened tensely.

"Well, go on," he said at last.

"Nothing could keep him from flying the crate. The same one he landed on the wall. Savage got it off for him, flew it back, and sold it to him for four times its actual worth."

"Yeah? Then what?"

"Well, he didn't take off in the darned thing! He started down the field with it, Hades bent for election, and finished the crate, and himself, and one Sin Fat who flew with him, among the trees at the end of the runway! His followers are desolate. They'll make him a saint, so I suppose his relatives will be satisfied."

"But where do we come in?"

"Well, we got a lot of experience," Hastings began to check off items on his bandaged fingers, "we've lost a good ship; we've learned that all Mongols smell bad; we'll owe this hospital our lives when the bill comes in; we owe our Mongol rescuers for three camels, and we haven't got a sou markee in all the wide, wide world. Now, have I forgotten anything?"

"Yes," retorted Hellman ruefully.

"And that is?"

"That camels make darned poor landing fields!"

ONE HOUR OF WAR

by
W. E. BARRETT

Captain Castrancane, The First Italian Pilot Captured In The War

MARS was a capricious god and he dealt out the hands of life and death, freedom and captivity with a careless hand. To some men he gave long careers in the muddy trenches or the flaming skies, to others he gave but short dangerous days. To Captain Castrancane he gave one blazing hour of war and not one minute more.

Castrancane was one of Italy's most daring airmen. In the days of peace, he was one of those audacious fools who took to the air in a flying packing case that was decorated with miles of wire. He learned to fly when flying was a thing self-taught and when only the strong—and the lucky—lived to see the adventure through.

In late '14 the war clouds blew across the face of Europe and Italy sat on the fence. Austria rolled into action on the Serbian Front, the Russian bear awoke to roar a challenge to Germany and her Ally—then in a twinkling, it was everybody's row. France and England and Belgium were in it and Europe blazed. Italy's spot on the fence became uncomfortable.

By nature and temperament, the Italian people were with the Allies and against anything Austrian or Teutonic; but there was the matter of a treaty. A piece of paper bound Italy to the triple alliance and Ger-



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many was calling to the "big boot" of Europe to get into the row.

Castrancane read the war news and scratched his head thoughtfully. There had been airplanes used in the Balkan war and there were a few small items tucked into the papers which told of airplanes going into action in France and Belgium. Castrancane had an idea that his country was going to do something rough and warlike before many days had gone and he saw an opportunity. His skill could be well used by a nation with such a frontier as that of Italy. Along that Alpine Front, an observer in an airplane would be well worth his salt.

With a cheerful farewell to the business of exhibition flying, Castrancane presented himself to the military authorities and placed his services at the disposal of his King. He didn't know which side of the war his country would espouse, but it made no difference. He would do his fighting for Italy and under the principle of "My country—right or wrong—my country!"

HE donned a uniform and he flew military planes. He instructed others in the art of kicking a rudder and juggling a stick. In the hours that were his own, he read the news from the fighting Fronts and dreamed of glory.

The feelings of Italy boiled over and there was little doubt of where Italy would fight. Like France, she had her lost provinces. Trent and Trieste, like Alsace and Lorraine, were lands that had changed ownership. They had once been Italian and they were known as *Italia Irredenta* (Italy unredeemed!) What a rallying cry that made. Against it, the arguments of statesmen and the language of treaties meant nothing. "Redeem the Italy that has been lost!" was the cry of the mob. Italian statesmen wavered and soldiers prepared for war.

Castrancane received his orders while the

statesmen were still arguing through the night hours. With white teeth gleaming beneath his black mustache and with the gleam of wartime excitement in his eyes, he went to the border opposite the disputed territory of Trieste. He was there, with his ship tuned to perfection, when the bugles of war sounded on May 23, 1915.

His teeth flashed whitely, once more when the news came and he shook hands with two comrades who were pledged, as he was pledged, to immediate action. The Austrians had once humbled Italy in the dust, but now the Italian Eagle would soar to the skies and her talons would not be empty.

WITH a rush and a roar, three small Italian planes left their base and pointed their noses to the Austrian border. Theirs was a mission of challenge and prophecy more than of destruction. Castrancane was now a captain and in charge of this flight. He could carry little destruction to Austria, but he could put an audacious, flaming signature to the declaration of war. With his load of tiny twenty-pound bombs he headed for the Austrian fortress of Trieste.

Just short of the border, one of the Italian machines dropped out. Despite all preparation and care, the engines of 1915 were not always dependable. With a wave of sympathy to the man who was forced to drop out of the big adventure, Captain Castrancane roared on to his goal.

Then, as he sailed serenly into Austrian skies, he got the shock of his life. Three more ships shared the blue with the Italians; ships that were specks in the distance, but that still betrayed alien ownership in every line. Castrancane had not anticipated interference from the air, and he deliberated a moment over this new factor.

This was not an authorized flight and he was not sure that he should risk combat

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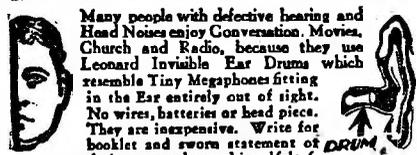
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over the enemy territory this early in the war. Still, what was he to do? He was in sight of the objective that he had set. He could gain a position above it, drop his challenging bombs and then head for home before the Austrian planes came up. That would undoubtedly mean a fight with the enemy airmen. The only alternative was to turn and go home now without dropping his bombs—or drop them promiscuously over the territory below, a town or a road or a railroad station. He could do that and be across the border before the three Austrians got within range of him.

His white teeth clicked. He was over the territory of *Italia Irredenta*. The country below might belong to Austria, but the population was mainly Italian. Those Italians should not have the bombs of their countrymen dropped on them from the sky. Neither would they see two Italian airmen fleeing from the enemy without attaining their objective!

With a signal to his comrade, Castrancane dropped his nose and raced for the Adriatic seaport of Trieste. With the Austrian ships in full cry after them, the two Italians dropped their bombs on the Austrian fortifications and turned back toward the distant border.

Castrancane had only time for one flashing smile of triumph over the consternation that his bomb raid had created, when the black crosses came down. Avenging falcons, the Austrians swooped to attack. They were two-seater Albatrosses.

The Italian ships were slow and the armament was clumsy. The guns were panned and aligned to fire past the propeller tips. Accurate aim was impossible and there was no need to stay now and fight it out against odds. Feinting his way through two attackers with consummate skill, Captain Castrancane got a clear run for the border and opened the throttle.

His companion was not so fortunate. A remarkably accurate burst of fire from the gunner of the nearest Austrian plane had

ripped through one wing and peppered along the fuselage. With inches between his cockpit and the rain of death, the pilot swerved and brought his nose back toward Austria.

Turning in his cockpit for a gesture of derision at his foes, Castrancane saw, with a thrill of horror, the predicament of his comrade.

TIME stood still for the dashing captain. He was caught in a dilemma which offered him no way out. To go back into those odds to the rescue of his comrade seemed a certain farewell to life—and the captain loved life. To forsake the man he had led on the adventure would be to bid farewell to honor. Captain Castrancane loved honor.

He turned and roared full gun to the rescue.

In that mad moment of indecision above "Italy Unredeemed," Captain Castrancane scaled heights that many men failed to reach in four years of war. He flashed a look at his wrist watch and smiled wryly. The white-toothed grin was gone now. He had been actively in the war just 48 minutes.

Like a hurtling juggernaut of the sky, Castrancane came back. He came back with flaming guns and the Austrians scattered wide in confusion.

Not for long. They were wheeling again to the attack. With a furious motion, Captain Castrancane waved for his comrade to make the break for liberty. The pilot did not hesitate. Through the hole that the confused Austrians had left, he dived for home.

And now Castrancane took the fury of the Austrian onslaught. His offensive had carried him into ambush and, recovered from their surprise, the Austrians made the most of their position.

Then it happened. A vicious burst rang against the engine and clicked into the spinning prop. The engine stuttered, missed a beat, caught again, roared on, missed again.

A glance at the prop showed that it was still functioning. It might not continue to; one could not tell. Nor, in two beats of time, could one tell what had happened to the engine. One thing Captain Castrancane could tell, however, in that one

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instant. His comrade had looked back and the fool was about to try a duplicate of the captain's rescue effort. He was not good enough for such a sortie nor were the Austrians liable to be easy victims a second time.

Only one thing would check the rescue attempt and send that foolhardy and loyal young man racing home with the protection of a long head start. He would keep on going if he thought that his leader was beyond help.

With his face grim, Captain Castrancane dropped his nose and let his ship spin uncontrolled.

Coming out of spins in 1915 was no play, but Castrancane did it at the third revolution, to find that one suspicious Austrian had followed him down to pepper him if he came out. As he came out, the others dived for him.

His engine was revving perfectly now. But he had lost altitude and position and he was hemmed by foes. There was not the slightest chance now of making his own lines. Diving out of the line of fire, he brought his ship down to a landing on Austrian soil, a minute and a quarter ahead of the Austrians who raced him down when his intention became evident.

IN that minute and a quarter he crowned his effort with one more victory. He succeeded in making a flaming pyre out of his ship and tossed his papers into the flame.

The Austrians were rolling in over the packed earth of the field on which Castrancane stood. The captain stood straight beside his flaming ship, the old white smile on his lips. Ahead of him stretched a long period of confinement in the prison camps of his enemies. He knew that it would be long because the war was in its beginning. But he was not cast down. Mars had given him all of his allotted time and he had done his best with it. A man can do no more.

The leading Austrian pilot swung down from his cockpit and strode, stiff-legged, across the turf. Castrancane's smile flashed and he looked at his wrist watch.

The minute hand quivered straight up. Captain Castrancane's name would be the first name on the "missing" list of his nation—and he had had exactly one hour of war.

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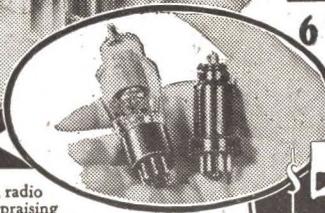
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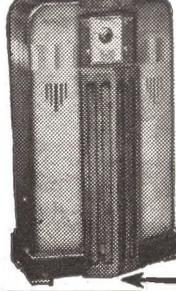
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