

# WAR BIRDS



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**TRUE FEATURE  
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**THE  
HAWK'S BROOD**

**COMPELLING NOVEL**

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AT LAST an invention that makes possible the blessing of an unlimited supply of hot water in even the humblest home. No family so poor but what they can easily afford to buy and to use the amazing new SUPER-LUX Electric Water Heater. Hardly bigger than a cake of laundry soap—yet so extremely powerful it boils cold water almost instantly. Simply drop it in—plug into house current and—ZOOM!—In a twinkling—the water is steaming, seething, boiling furiously! By actual test, boils water in 2/5 the time required by the next fastest method. Not a mere novelty or a toy but a practical, efficient, scientifically designed appliance with ample capacity to supply all the hot water needed for domestic tasks of every description. No wonder agents everywhere are simply coining money! Read below what it has meant to others; then write at once for sensational proof of what it can do for you. Mail the coupon below without delay.



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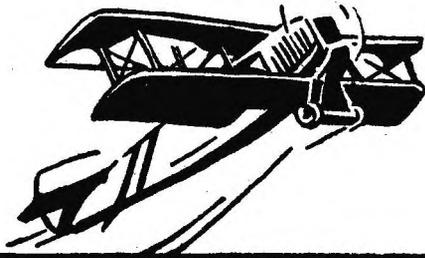
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# WAR BIRDS



Vol. 18

MAY, 1932

Whole No. 54

**HAWK'S BROOD (Complete Novel)** . . . . . Frederick C. Painton . . . . . 8  
*The crimson Ogre of War mixed a potion that would sear the souls of men, but that was before those two brothers were pitted against each other in skies of hate.*

**EAGLE-EYE (True Feature)** . . . . . William E. Barrett . . . . . 53  
*The gripping true story of Andrew McKeever, the war's greatest two-seater ace. In a clumsy two-seater he built up a score of thirty against Germany's best pursuit pilots.*

**PILOTS MUST EAT** . . . . . R. Sidney Bowen . . . . . 59  
*When Fat was hungry things were liable to happen . . . when he tried to convince that Jagdstaffel that an army travels on its stomach, all Hell broke loose.*

**DEAD MAN'S DIVE** . . . . . O. B. Myers . . . . . 67  
*It was nothing but a wind-torn white streamer, yet it meant safety until black crosses cast their sinister shadow on it.*

**THE WHITE RAVEN (Complete Novel)** . . . . . Frederick C. Davis . . . . . 78  
*On his soul was seared the brand of two countries. Son of the Eagle and Imperial puppet, he was torn two ways until he heard that mighty command: "Be True!"*

**FIGHTING ACES AND HOW THEY FOUGHT** . . . . . Carl Ogilvie . . . . . 114  
*An illustrated true feature giving you the exact maneuvers the great aces used in building up their scores of victory.*

**THE COCKPIT** . . . . . WAR BIRDS Readers . . . . . 122  
*Where the rocking chair pilots throw the slipstream.*

**THE REAPER'S HAND (Cover Design)** . . . . . Rudolph Belarski



Published monthly, and copyrighted, 1932, by the Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 100 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. George T. Delacorte, Jr., President; H. Meyer, Vice-Pres.; Margarita Delacorte, Secretary; Carson Mowre, Editor; Chicago Advertising Office, 540 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Illinois. Entered as second-class matter, February 10 1928, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published in the U. S. A. Also copyrighted in Great Britain. Yearly subscription, \$2.00, single copies, 20c. Canadian subscription, \$2.50 yearly.





# "Impossible! The Tommy Burke we know can't play a note!"

## ...AND HOW HE DID FOOL THEM

THE next number to be broadcast will be a medley of the latest dance music, played for you by a new radio pianist—Tommy Burke.

"Tommy Burke! That's a familiar name. Can that be our Tommy?" asked Joan Marston—our hostess, with a blank look of amazement.

"Don't be funny, Joan, the Tommy we know can't play a note on the piano," replied Dorothy Blake.

"I'll bet it is the Tommy we know. He always had a fantastic notion he was going to take up piano lessons," put in Harry Stevens.

"Go on, Tommy couldn't learn to play in a thousand years," jeered Dorothy.

A silence settled over us all, as the first few chords of the latest fox trot came over the air. We sat enthralled at the artistry of the pianist.

"I've got an idea," exclaimed Joan, as the number ended.

"Harry! Call up the studio and see if it's the same Tommy we know."

"All right. And if it is, maybe we can get him to come over and pep the party up."

Harry returned in a few minutes fairly bursting with excitement.

"Say, folks it's Tommy, and what's more, he said he'd be right over. Isn't that great?"

It wasn't long before Tommy arrived. With wild excitement, before he could offer an objection, he was ushered to the piano.

What a party! As

Tommy played one piece after another, some of the couples danced. Others crowded around the piano and sang.

Finally, when Tommy rose from the piano, they besieged him with questions.

"You're wonderful, Tommy, you've made the party," exclaimed Joan. "Tell us how you learned to play so well."

"That's a little secret of mine," countered Tommy teasingly.

"Why, Tommy Burke, I never heard anyone play so well. Come on and tell us about it."

Then Tommy told them his story. He explained how he had always felt out of place at parties—had never really enjoyed himself. So it occurred to him that if he could only play some instrument he'd be able to provide some sort of entertainment.

One day he chanced to see a U. S. School of Music advertisement. Skeptically, Tommy sent in the coupon.

He was amazed when the Free Demonstration Lesson came, to find it was as easy as A-B-C. That convinced him and he sent for the piano course.

Almost before Tommy knew it, he was playing real tunes and melodies. It was almost like playing a game. And did he learn? Well, they had heard for themselves.

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this simple new method which has already shown over 600,000 people how to play their favorite instruments by note. Forget that old-fashioned idea that you need special "talent." Just read the list of instruments in the panel, decide which one you want to play, and the U. S. School will do the rest. And bear in mind no matter which instrument you choose, it will only cost you on the average of a few cents a day.

### Send for Free Booklet and Demonstration Lesson

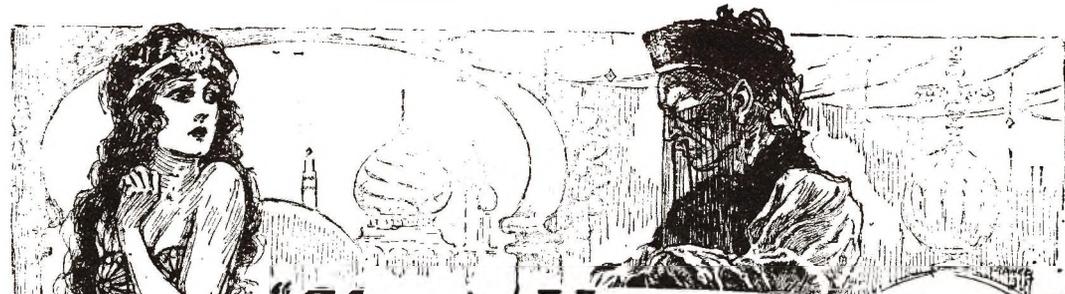
Our wonderful illustrated Free Book and our Free Demonstration Lesson explain all about this remarkable method. They prove just how anyone can learn to play his favorite instrument by note—playing real tunes from the very start. It also explains all about the amazing new *Automatic Finger Control*. Act NOW. Clip and mail this coupon today! No obligation. Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit. U. S. School of Music, 625 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.

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Please send me your free book, "How You Can Master Music in Your Own Home," with inspiring message by Dr. Frank Crane, Free Demonstration Lesson and particulars of your easy payment plan. I am interested in the following course:

Have you ..... Instrument? .....

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# "She is Yours, Master!"

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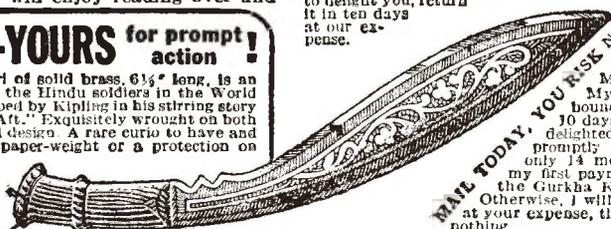
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In about ten years the Radio Industry has grown from \$2,000,000 to hundreds of millions of dollars. Over 300,000 jobs have been created by this growth, and thousands more will be created by its continued development. Many men and young men with the right training—the kind of training I give you in the N. R. I. course—have stepped into Radio at two and three times their former salaries.

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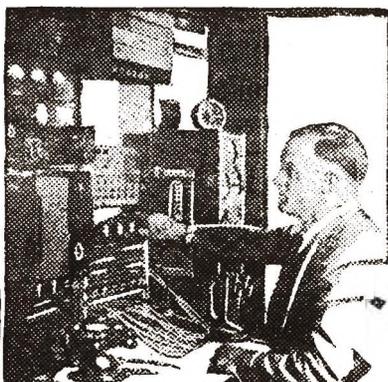
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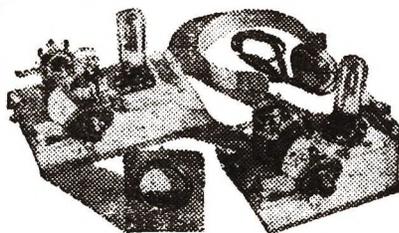
Get your copy today. It tells you where Radio's good jobs are, what they pay, tells you about my course, what others who have taken it are doing and making. Find out what Radio offers you without the slightest obligation. ACT NOW!

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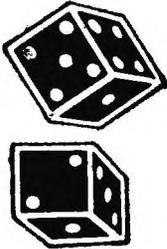
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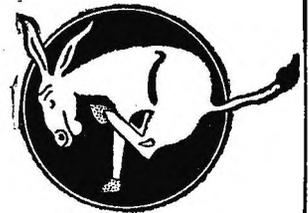
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State .....

# HAWK'S

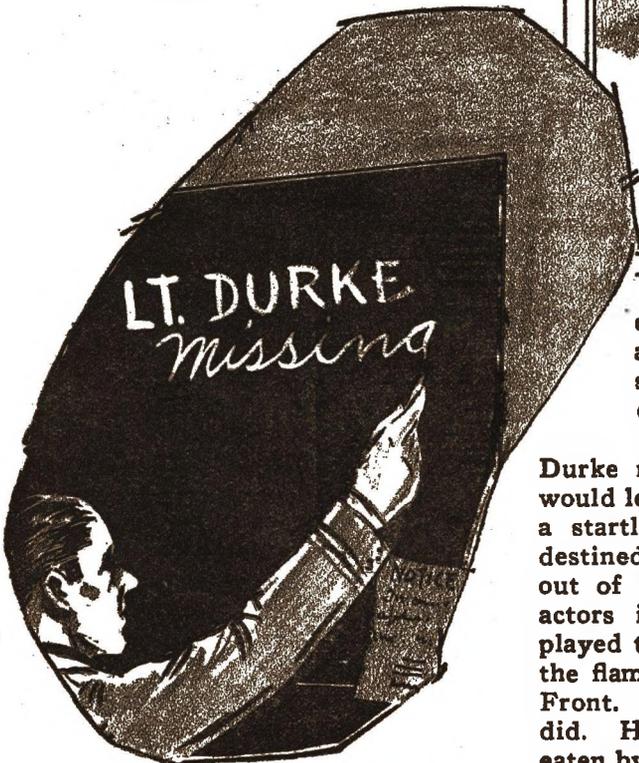
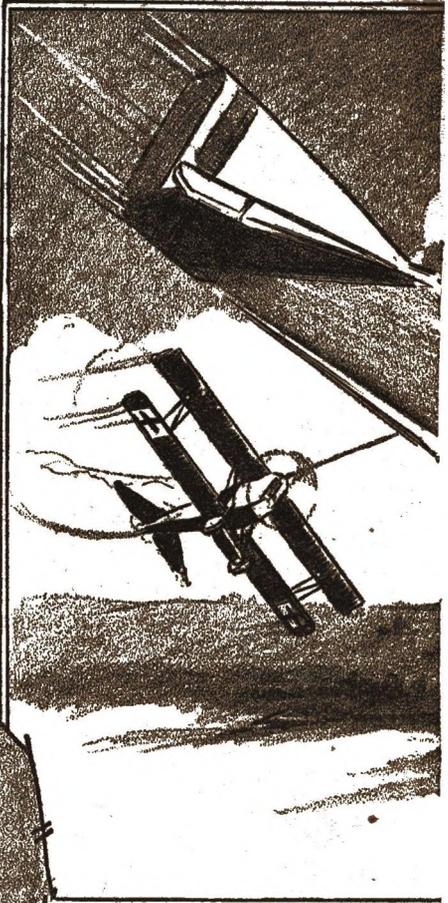
## A COMPLETE NOVEL

By  
**FREDERICK C. PAINTON**

Author of "No Hits—No Runs," etc.

While a nation watched that epochal struggle between two brothers, the crimson Ogre of War was mixing a potion that would sear the souls of heroes, the final alchemy to test the quality that men call courage.

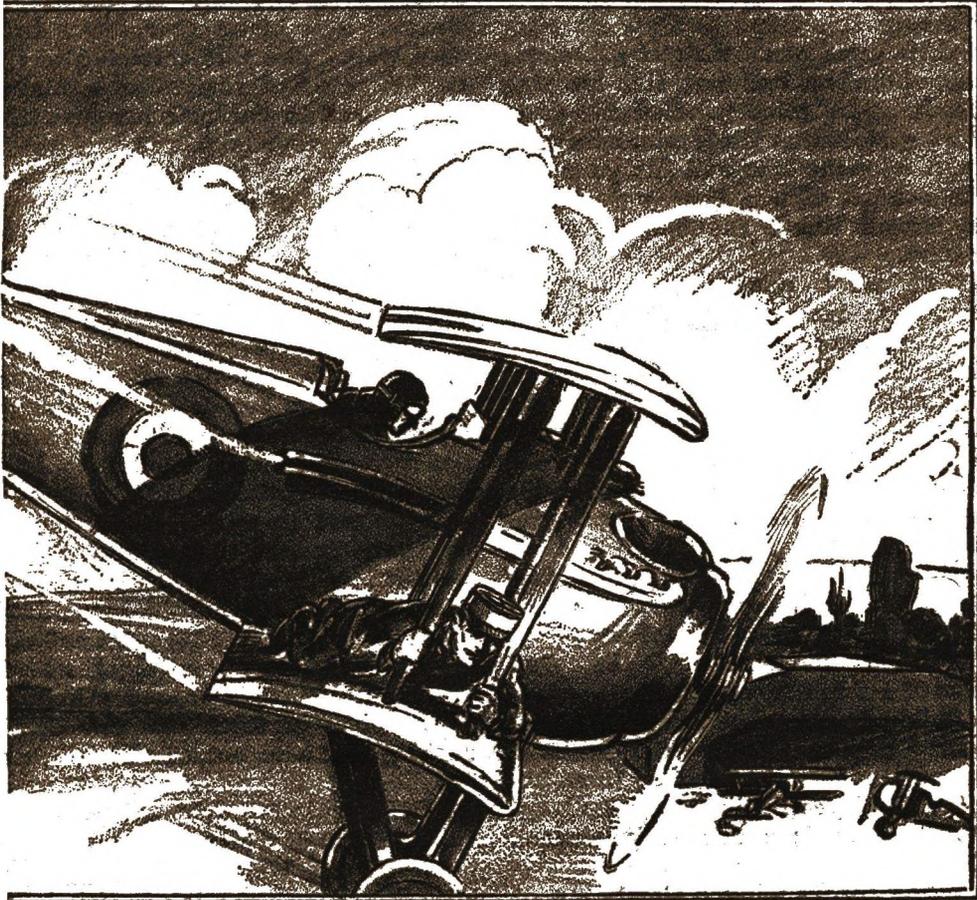
**T**WO extraordinary events occurred on April 6, 1917. The United States declared a state of war against Imperial Germany. Abner Durke, millionaire head of a great steel industry, died in the early



dawn of that momentous day and left behind him the strangest legacy ever conceived by human brain.

It is possible that Abner Durke never dreamed that his will would leave in the wake of its probate a startling chain of circumstances, destined to enmesh two boys scarcely out of their 'teens and make them actors in a bitter drama that was played to its predestined end against the flaming madness of the Western Front. But then again, he probably did. He was a strange man, acid-eaten by his conscience.

# BROOD



*The Spad with that man on the wing thundered in over the field.*

And since war was the cause of this strange will being drawn and since war furnished the setting for the events of its fulfillment, it is over the Western Front that this singular story of Greg and Bob Durke must begin.

Seventeen thousand feet above the shell-racked remains of Ploegstreat Wood a Sopwith Pup hid itself in the dazzling brilliance of the early sun.

With measured pace at three-quarter throttle, the tiny combat ship cruised to St. Omer, banked sharply

and came back. But always the molten fire of the hot sun was at the pilot's back, that peering enemy eyes below might not see him hidden there. The sun rays picked out the ship's thin staggered wings, glittered off the British cocarde, and reflected from the crossed, forked lightning bolts painted on the fuselage just below the pit. The forked lightning was the insignia of the pilot who stared so alertly into the glory of the dawn.

It was bitterly cold up there this April morning, and his congealed

breath floated smokily back along his empennage; a rim of frost hung on the edges of his Vickers mounted to shoot through the prop disk, and also on the thinner, deadlier Lewis bolted to his top wing.

About this Sopwith Pup, its pilot and its guns was a sinister grimness; the whole was ominous, like cruising death. The pilot handled his crate with a skill that made him seem one with it, made him and his guns and his combat ship a deadly projectile to launch like a thunderbolt at the enemy.

The pilot was keen-eyed, thin-mouthed; he was a lone wolf who slashed down his prey with no help from the pack.

This Sopwith Pup was from the Twenty-second British Pursuit Squadron. Its pilot was Lieutenant Gregory Durke, man-hunting for his seventeenth kill. The time was five-ten in the morning of April 6, 1917, within a few minutes of the time that Greg Durke's father was dying in New York, three thousand miles away.

Around the heights, the Pup droned its measured patrol.

Suddenly the pilot leaned forward, peered over the edge of the crashpad at the checker-board carpet there below. His eyes behind the grim goggles lightened; a thin smile curved his lips.

Three specks winged slowly out of Germany; one large, two small. It was too far away to make out the insignia. But they were enemy aircraft, a two-seater with its protecting cortege of two combat ships.

The smile flattened grimly. A gloved hand hit the throttle and the Pup howled with unleashed power. It whipped around in a bank and slammed down the sky in a vertical power dive. The air howled to the rack of the motor, the scream of the wires, the hiss of the air foils.

Lieutenant Gregory Durke stood straight up in his pit, his feet braced against the rudder bar. The slipstream clawed at the top of his hel-

met, straightening out, like a stick, the woman's silk stocking tied to his goggle elastic to wipe the lenses.

Faster and faster he fell. The scream of the wind clawing at the flat brace wires became an unearthly shriek. The motor roar was a banshee wail. The Pup trembled to the terrific speed of four miles a minute and seemed to lay back her ears like a running greyhound.

Lieutenant Gregory Durke had launched one of his famous kill-dives.

He came screaming down out of the sun, falling five thousand feet a minute. His mouth worked, as he swallowed to adjust his eardrums to the change in air pressure. His fingers poised on the Bowden stick trigger, ready to drum out death. The ring-sights of his guns never veered from the two-seater that seemed to leap across space toward him.

It jumped up at him as if thrown by a mighty arm. The white crosses outlined in black on its top wings grew in size. It could be recognized as an Aviatik now. Its pilot and observer were staring straight ahead. On each side of it droned a Fokker D-5. None of them saw this death rushing at them out of the heights.

**G**REG DURKE grinned flatly with a show of white teeth against oil-grimed lips. He pulled up his dive slightly, edged the stick to the right, held the ring-sights dead for the kill.

The pilot of the Aviatik looked up, but the sun blinded him. He held a straight, steady course. Down plunged the Pup. Three hundred feet. Two hundred. And now only a hundred feet separated him from his quarry.

Then with a swishing demoniac shriek Greg Durke struck.

His thumbs pressed the stick trip. Above the scream of brace wire, above the blating smash of motor roar came the deadly hand-clapping sound of a machine gun in action. The Vickers snout had an aura of red flame; the gun trembled; a blue haze

came back from the muzzle to slap the face of the Yank pilot.

Tracer stream spurted from the deadly muzzle like a torrent of sparks. Tracer fire leaped the intervening space faster than the eye could follow. Tracer fire blasted the Aviatik. Tracer fire flashed like white-heated rods of fire past the startled observer's face and tore the life out of him so swiftly that his bewildered soul could not stop the scream that retched from his lips even after the rain of slugs had battered the head from his body. Tracer fire sewed seams up the fuselage of the Aviatik.

The startled Fokker pilots heard a ferocious roar, saw a flashing streak of gleaming white that passed by them like a glowing meteor. A split-second later the Pup was a thousand feet below. Greg leveled off, and with the terrific impetus of the dive, zoomed like a sky rocket toward the underside of the Aviatik.

The German pilot wrenched frantically at his controls to throw the clumsy observation bus into a sharp turn. But the zooming Pup turned like a boring auger and riding its tail, pointed its nose at the white belly of the ship. At two hundred feet, screaming up the sky, the deadly Vickers spat again.

The clap-clap of death's hands; the applause of doom! The echoing grim chuckle of the devil reaching out for a life. That was Greg Durke pounding his prey with steel slugs.

The spouting muzzle cast its tracer stream as a hose casts water. It sprayed the tail assembly, and as the angled rudder of the Pup caught the slipstream, the Pup's nose rolled to the right and the tracer stream battered its way along the fuselage. It tore into the already dead observer, and made the corpse leap as if it wanted to cast itself from the pit. The slugs churned into the forward pit. The pilot screamed once, madly, awfully, and the Mercedes motor drowned his death cry in his throat. Bullets slammed into the base of his

spine and tore their way through to the base of his brain. His mouth opened, a gout of blood sloshed his instrument board.

*Racka-racka-racka!* The Vickers coughed exultantly. The turning nose of the Pup found new targets. The single Spandau machine gun mounted on the cowlings of the Aviatik twisted on its boltings at the impact of the white thread of Vickers fire. The Mercedes suddenly began to cast off rocker arms, push-rods, spark-plugs. Bullets tore it to bits. A gas line came to pieces and white gasoline spurted out and splashed against the red-hot exhaust stacks. There was a tiny flare of flame, a huge smudge of smoke that slid behind the doomed plane like the streaming glory of a woman's hair. Then as the Pup reached the top of its pull and stood there clawing at the air with spinning prop, an explosion crashed above all other noise. The Aviatik came apart in the air and vanished. One black cloud of smoke filled the air where it had been. Out of the smoke drifted a steady hail of debris.

The forked lightning of Greg Durke had struck. The famous sun-hider had made his seventeenth kill.

Greg Durke leaned back his head and laughed. In his eyes was no sign of pity for the two men so hastily dead before his chattering guns. In his eyes was no fear of the scurrying Fokkers that flailed down the sky to wreak swift revenge. The Pup fell off on one wing and because of her structural defects began to spin. But Greg caught it, let her fall a thousand feet nose on and built up enormous flying speed.



**B**ACK along his tail surfaces Greg looked, saw a black Fokker wheeling like a pouncing hawk. Greg quickly double-rolled. He grinned again as the nervous Boche overleaped the target. "Now for you," he muttered, and

made a skid turn. His eyes glanced at his gas gauge.

It hovered close to the empty peg.

"Hell!" he muttered. "Out longer than I thought. Go home and kiss a saint, Fritz, this was your lucky day."

He banked sharply to the south and droned full gun for home. He looked back once and laughed outright as he saw the two Fokkers giving cautious pursuit. They could have caught him, but they obviously did not try. They had seen the insignia and knew who was in the cockpit. "And they'll report that an enemy aircraft shot down their observation crate and they drove the E.A. home," he chuckled. "It'll look well on their report."

Three batteries of German archie blasted at him in one salvo on the way home and rocked his tail. But he held his course to save gas, got over the tarmac and his motor pooped out.

His dead-stick setdown was a perfect three-point. That was the kind of flyer Greg Durke was.

When St. John Carwood, the squadron C.O., sauntered over to greet him, Greg had hauled his six feet of brawn out of the pit and was working at a chunk of archie shell casing that was wedged in the combing of the pit not five inches from where his head had rested.

Greg was singing lustily.

"I don't want to die; I don't want to die;  
The bullets they whistle, the cannons they  
roar,  
I don't want to go up in the air any more;  
Take me o'er the sea, where Heinie he  
can't get at me;  
Oh, my, I'm too young to die,  
I want to go home."

The thin, austere face of St. John Carwood, so typically British, was frowning, yet touched with a tolerant expression, too. He stood watching Greg poke a finger through a bullet hole in the wing fabric.

"Greg," he said, plaintively.

Greg Durke turned. His tailor-made Bedford cord breeches had a wide peg at the top and gathered tightly just above the knee, so that he seemed all

powerful legs. The legs were apart in a swagger sprawl, the body tilted forward, the chin outthrust. "How-do, Skipper," he said, cheerfully, and taking the rag tied to his goggles, wiped his face. The rag revealed itself to be a woman's black silk stocking. After wiping his face he began cleaning his goggles.

"Now, look here, Greg!" Carwood burst out. "This is too damned much. I distinctly ordered you to stay on the tarmac to-day in case the Eighteenth wanted an escort for reglagé. Yet you deliberately disobeyed orders, took a bus off and you've been gone two hours."

"I got an Aviatik—blew up in the air," retorted Greg, smiling. "My seventeenth victory. That ought to redeem me."

"Redeem, hell!" exploded Carwood. Then he had to smile at the devil-may-care look on Greg's face. "You disobeyed orders. You might have cost the infantry a lot of casualties. You make a fool of me. Dammit, Greg, can't you get over being so irresponsible?"

Greg was instantly all contrition. "I'm sorry, Skipper. Honestly. But it was such a swell day and—well, I just went."

"Always the same kid," sighed Carwood. "Lad, some day you'll learn a war is fought by teamwork, not by individuals. If I didn't like you, I'd ground you for this insubordination. But being soft-hearted, I'll merely say, as usual, 'don't do it again'—but you probably will—and tell you some news."

"News! What?" asked Greg.

"America has entered the war."

"Hm! That is news," grunted Greg. "News we should have had two years ago when I decided to start fighting."

"The papers just came up," said Carwood. "In the loafing room. You'll be leaving us, I suppose?"

"Why?" Greg wanted to know. "I like it here."

"Fight under your own flag," said Carwood.

"Well, maybe. But it'll be a long time before the United States has an air force. Meantime, I'm doing very well, thank you."

"Reckless fool," laughed Carwood, and clapped him on the back. Then, more seriously, "Greg, when are you going to pay your debts? Do you realize you owe nearly two thousand pounds?"

"As much as that?" grinned Greg. "I'll have to write to Dad. He'll pay them."

"Oh, for a millionaire father," signed Carwood. "Anyway, pay them. The war office has a habit of getting nasty with young lieutenants who don't pay bills."

"I'll take care of them," promised Greg. He turned to go, then paused. "By the way, Carwood, who's getting the wing command to succeed St. Denis?"

Carwood didn't speak for a moment. "Why, I haven't picked any one yet. I rather had my eye on MacDonough."

"That careful Scot," said Greg, snorting. "Listen, Skipper, I've been with this outfit a long time. I'm ranking lieutenant. How about me? I've always had an ambition to lead, hold command. I suppose it's my Dad in me—like to be boss."

Carwood looked at him queerly. "A man, to command, has first to learn to obey, Greg, old topper," he said. "And you don't obey, not often. You're a great flyer, one of the best, but you're a lone eagle."

"Why not find out whether I can command? The fellows like me. They'd follow."

"Well, maybe I will. Run along and I'll think about it."

**G**REG strode toward the loafing room. He whistled. He was very cheerful, for he felt certain that he'd get the wing command. And he was ambitious to hold command. All in all, this was a swell day.

The loafing room was a shack that housed a pot-belly stove, card tables, a phonograph, a well-stocked bar and,

at the moment, a dozen or so pilots of the R.A.F. Greg waved an airy greeting to them and leaned over the bar.

"Good hunting to-day, peelots. Another Fritz or so bit the dust. Alfred, me lad"—this to the Cockney bar tender—"a cognac to wash the dust of battle from my fevered throat."

He took the cognac and swung on the room. "Well, here's—" he held the glass motionless and stopped speaking. Every eye in the room was fixed on him; and in every eye was curiosity, surprise and undisguised interest. Slowly Greg let his own glance go down to his clothes.

"Hm," he said, "from the way you're staring I thought I'd lost my pants. What seems to be wrong with me? Why do you stare?"

The silence and the stares continued. Then a young sub-leftenant named Haverly spoke up. "Haven't you heard, Greg?"

"Heard what?" Greg suddenly nodded. "Oh, you mean about America entering the war? Sure. Carwood just told me. I'll drink to it—"

"No," cut in Haverly. "I say, old chap, I'm sorry to break it this way. But you might as well take it straight from the shoulder. Your father's dead."

The cognac glass did not quiver, but something seemed to veil Greg's eyes.

"My father dead," he repeated slowly, after a minute. "Dead!"

Haverly came out of his chair, holding the paper. "Damned nasty to break it like this. It's in the paper. Died in his sleep, so he didn't suffer."

Greg swallowed the cognac at a gulp, filled the glass and drank again. By now he had control of himself, but his light-heartedness had suddenly fled.

"Let me see the paper," he ordered.

It was a copy of the Paris edition of the London *Daily Mail*. There, on the front page, was the remarkable story.

New York, April 6:—Abner Durke, famous figure of American finance and head of the Consolidated Steel Corporation, died early to-day of a heart attack. He was sixty-four years old. With the death of the famous industrialist there comes to light the strangest will which will ever be offered for probate in America. This will, drawn by Abner Durke more than two years ago, will dispose of his estate which is unofficially estimated at twelve millions of dollars.

Abner Durke is survived by two sons, each by a different marriage; Gregory Durke, son of his first marriage who is now in France with the British Expeditionary Forces, and Robert Durke, son by his second marriage who is now in the New York offices of the Consolidated Steel Corporation. One of these boys will inherit twelve million dollars by terms of the will, but it is not known now which one it will be. The clause which will deprive one of them from sharing in his vast estate is as follows: "The remainder of my estate after paying my funeral expenses and servants' bequests shall be awarded at the expiration of one year following my demise to that son of mine who shall, in the opinion of the person selected by me to judge, have performed the most outstanding service to the United States during that year. It is my contention that private wealth is a public responsibility, that wealth should serve the country from which it came. So that my sons, Greg and Robert, shall not become parasites, living on unearned wealth, I decree that they shall both serve their country in some capacity during the year following my death. And at the expiration of that time, the judge, selected by me, shall award the estate to him who serves best. Thus shall I know that my accumulations will be in the best hands to continue that service."

Mr. Durke's will does not specify who the judge in this strange contest shall be. The only mention is as follows. "The selected person to make this decision shall not be influenced by either of the boys or their friends; his name shall remain a secret known only to my attorney, George Carpenter. At the expiration of the year, the judge will reveal his identity and his decision."

For the boy who fails to win the judge's decision, a trust fund of fifty thousand dollars is established and he will receive the income from it for life.

Mr. Abner Durke was a West Point graduate and served two years as a second lieutenant prior to resigning to enter private business. It is believed that this military background in his early life is responsible for the strange will. It is believed he expected America to enter the war, although he died before Congress acted.

There was much more, for the death of Abner Durke was important

world news, and Greg's racing eyes read it all.

Presently he lifted his head and silently extended the newspaper to Haverly.

"Poor old Dad," he muttered. "I wish I could have been there. It's almost impossible to believe he's gone. Why, I got a letter from him only two days ago."

**H**AVERLY was bursting with curiosity. "But I say, Greg, who'll get the beans—the dinero? You should, of course; you've got sixteen victories—seventeen if you get this one confirmed—and they'll all count for America, now that she's in the war."

Apparently Greg now for the first time thought of the strange will.

"No, they won't," his headshake was abstracted. "Dad was quite a patriot. He approved of my coming in early. I always was headstrong and impetuous—like him, he said, when he was young—but to carry out the terms of that will, my service has got to be for my own country. I'll have to think about that angle."

There was a moment's silence.

"Who could the judge be?" asked Haverly.

"I don't know. Somebody at home, no doubt. Possibly old George Carpenter, Dad's attorney. Or a business associate of Dad's."

"Oh, a civilian." Haverly shook his head. "How the devil will he know what service is the best, in a war?"

Greg did not reply; he was trying to think. He wanted to be alone, but Haverly persisted. This will was so amazing he could not satisfy his curiosity.

"What kind of a chappie is your brother, this Bob? Will he compete?"

"He's a damn good kid," replied Greg. "We chummed around as kids. My mother died in childbirth and Dad married again. Bob was born when I was two years old. He's a quiet lad, totally different from me."

"But will he oppose you in getting

this money? Great Scott, Greg, twelve million dollars, two and a half million pounds—my word, it's a lot of money. If he gets it you'll be a pauper."

Greg looked up and stared at Haverly. It was a strange look as if the idea of getting nothing from his father's estate had come to him for the first time. Then he shrugged.

"I can't discuss it," he said. "Bob and I will have to talk."

"But you'll try to win it, transfer to the Americans when they get here?"

Again Greg was thoughtful. Competing for his father's money seemed a terrible thing to say—try to win his heritage. Yet there was the fact in black and white. He had to compete with Bob to win.

"Oh, yes," he said, slowly. "I'll transfer to the Americans. They'll give me a squadron to lead. I'll compete for the prize and"—he paused, his head raised and his eyes snapped—"I'll win it, too. I'll fly my wings off to get it. That's what Dad would want me to do."

He paused. "I'll cable Bob to get into the air service. That'll make it fair. I'll even get into his squadron if I can."

"With your experience you'll beat him hands down," said Haverly.

But there was no answer from any one to that statement. Every one knew a terrific rivalry had been launched. The result was in the lap of the gods and the characters of Greg and Bob Durke. They were actors in a drama; they would speak their parts, each word and action punctuated by the slam of the red-hot guns of war. This was just the first act.

## CHAPTER II

### HAWK'S BASE

TEN kilometers to the north of Bouconville, on the edge of the St. Mihiel sector, a flattened bit of clay had been made into a tarmac. In front of the canvas hangars twenty

Nieuports were drawn up in trim array. At the far corner of the field, conical olive-drab tents were grouped around a shell-shattered farmhouse. This was the home of the Third American Pursuit squadron, Captain Robert Durke, commanding.

In the farmhouse, at this moment, Captain Durke was conversing with Brigadier General Kerr Mitchen, commanding the air force of the A.E.F.

Mitchen, as usual, was biting down on a chewed cigar, pacing nervously up and down, his lean, hard face filled with concern.

"It's a damn fool way to run a war," he suddenly burst out, "but I haven't got any option in the matter. Orders are orders. And I'm passing the buck to you."

Bob Durke was standing, his six feet of height topping Mitchen by nearly a half hand. He was broad-shouldered, too, and like his brother Greg, had light brown hair and a keen, alert face. His eyes, however, were different from Greg's; they were a steel gray and cool and collected. You knew that here was a man who rarely lost his judgment or his head.

"It seems silly," he said. "Concentrating all the publicity on this one squadron. There will be other squadrons formed that will do probably as much if not more in the air. We'll be the first aid outfit over the lines, of course, but certainly not the last. Why should we hog all the publicity?"

"Right," shrugged Mitchen. "But the people of the United States were told we'd have ten thousand airplanes on the Front within a year. Here it is, March, 1918; we've been in the war almost a year, and they've yet to hear of us in the air. The idea of the government is to create a crack squadron like the Third and concentrate the public's attention on it. You're the outfit. I've handpicked every pilot you've got. I've selected you for commander because you seem to have the quality of leadership. Also because

the public is crazy about this contest of yours for twelve million——”

Bob frowned. “But listen, sir, that’s——”

“That’s good judgment,” cut in General Mitchen. “The whole country has read that freak will. They’re all nuts to know who’s going to get twelve million dollars. By God, I’d like to know myself. With your half-brother transferring to this squadron, and I arranged that one, too, the public will want to watch you two fight it out. Fine! Everybody in America will be so interested in reading about you and your brother and this squadron’s shooting down of Krauts that they’ll forget this is the only American squadron on the Front. That’s good politics. Give the public something to think about and they forget their grudge.”

“But, sir,” said Bob in his quiet voice, “my brother and I aren’t going to fight over this money. We’ll each do the best we can and the unknown judge will make his decision and Greg and I will be just as friendly as before.”

Mitchen looked at the youth queerly. “I wonder if you will,” he muttered. “Your father should have known better than leave such a will. It would make enemies out of twins. Oh, well, we’ll see. Now to get back to this squadron. Here’s the inside information.”

For the fifth time he lit the ragged cigar, puffed vigorously and then continued.

“What this squadron has got to have is victories. Plenty of them. Got to feed America the hokum, ‘American eagle sweeps air’. But,” he cautioned, “you mustn’t have any casualties either. Some, sure; you can’t help that. But not overwhelmingly so. We’ve got to make people think an American pilot is nine times better than a German. You and I know better. You’ve got a tough job on your hands to swap the Germans a life for a life. If your outfit gets all shot up, it’ll be bad for morale at home.

So you’ve got to use your head. Get victories, but get them cheap. You might just as well know that if you lose a flock of pilots, you’ll be relieved from command and probably get sent to Blois for a benzining. I’ve picked you as the best of the Kelly Field lot. You’ve shown you can use your head, and besides, I knew your father—he was an upper classman when I was a lowly plebe and he did me a good turn once—and I’m glad to do you one. But you’ve got to deliver the goods.”

Bob said nothing for a while. “Why not make Greg skipper, then?” he asked. “He’s been with the British nearly three years. He’s got thirty victories to his credit. He knows this game. He——”

“G.H.Q. won’t stand for it,” interrupted Mitchen. “The order is out that we’ll accept all transfers of Americans from British and French, but the men have to transfer as first lieutenants and serve in minor capacities until they learn American discipline and American ways of doing things. And I think Pershing’s right in saying so. The way the Frogs and Limies fly is not our way; we want discipline, teamwork, formation flying. We want results, not a lot of individual heroes. If Greg shows good stuff, fine. I’ll give him a squadron to command. But he has to serve his time before he gets it.”

**M**ITCHEN paused and stared curiously at Bob. “Why did you suggest him? After all, as skipper of the Hawk’s Outfit, the very first squadron on the lines, the one we’re going to feature in the newspapers as the crack outfit, you can get more credit toward winning that money by being commander than——”

“I wasn’t thinking of that,” said Bob, slowly. “I was just thinking of getting on with the war.”

Again General Mitchen stared at the younger man thoughtfully. Such unselfishness with twelve million dollars at stake was extraordinary.

Then Mitchen went off on another

tack. "You've been trained in our formation fighting. Stick to it. The Germans developed it, now use it and because of it they control the air. The way to lick them is with their own formation tactics. You and your men have flown with the French outfits on patrol and you saw what happened. The Jerries with formation flying gave you a good shellacking. And we don't want your pilots dying like flies."

Bob's jaw clicked. "I'll do the best I can."

"When we put the publicity spotlight on your squadron," went on Mitchen, "the Frogs will fall in line. They'll dish out Croix de Guerres with every kill. And Chaumont will come through with a D.S.C. and maybe a Medal of Honor to the ranking ace or aces. So keep the boys humping. I'll find plenty of special missions for you."

Bob nodded, lit a cigarette and inhaled. "I'll do the best I can," he repeated.

"Good enough. By the way," Mitchen studied Bob's face, "the year of grace after your father's death is up next month, isn't it? April 6?"

"Yes, sir," Bob's face was impassive, indifferent. He was annoyed by the question but he didn't let Mitchen see it.

Ever since that morning in the Steel Corporation offices when he had learned of his father's death, he had been subjected to questioning about the strange will. Publicity had beaten on him like a white heat. The freak will had taken America by storm. Newspapers commented upon its prize conditions; magazines devoted space to stories of the two lads. Pools were formed and thousands of dollars wagered on either Greg or Bob. Greg was the favorite, for somehow his British record seemed to brand him the winner. His adherents gave two to one on victory. Every one hazarded a guess as to who the mysterious judge would be.

The freak will had pursued Bob

into the army. When he had received Greg's cable and gone as a cadet to Kelly Field, the publicity spotlight had followed him. Cadets talked to him about it; officers talked about it. And now it had pursued him to France. Because of that will and Mitchen's friendship for his father, he was being made the skipper of America's first pursuit squadron.

He wished every one would forget the will, but you can't tell a general that.

"You'd better make two patrols a day," General Mitchen was saying, "so you can start making victory reports. We've stuck you on the St. Mihiel Front because it's quiet and you won't hit any of Jerry's circuses. But you'll find plenty of Fokkers out there, so go to it. Let the newspapermen come as often as they want to, with photographers. They'll probably only come once, and watch headquarters for the later developments. Give them copy, you hear me?"

"Yes, sir." Bob paused. Then, "When will Greg be here?"

"To-day, sometime," said Mitchen, casually. "I told him to try and get here by noon while I was here. I want you to make a squadron show this afternoon so as to learn the topography. Better go over about three. By the Lord Harry," he suddenly broke off, "there's a Pup motor now. That must be your half-brother coming."

He strode to the door and flung it open. High in the air from the west came the steady drone of a motor. The plane itself was a mere speck. Mitchen looked at the tarmac and suddenly laughed.

"Man, it's a regular reception committee."

Bob over his shoulder saw the same scene. The word had spread through the Third that Gregory Durke, the famous "Lightning Bolt" was coming to join the outfit, and they were there to offer him proper homage. Every one of those youngsters had been over the lines, in French patrols; some had

even exchanged shots with enemy aircraft, as had Bob himself. But none had ever shot down his man. And here was winging toward them an ace who had shot down thirty.



**T**O THESE aspirants toward acehood Greg Durke was akin to God. They had their wings still to try; here was one whose wings had never been found wanting. They were ready to worship at his shrine.

Bob Durke found his own heart hammering. A warm affection had always existed between them. And he had always looked up to Greg as the younger does to the older. He had not seen him in three years. A sudden emotion flooded him. He walked out onto the tarmac, followed by Mitchen. Willy Whitten, the kiwi adjutant, joined them.

"It must be great," he said to Bob, "to have a brother like Greg."

He spoke in awed fashion, and Bob laughed and so did Mitchen.

The Pup slid over the field at two thousand, nosed down in a roaring power dive that flattened out so low they cried out in alarm. Up the sky it zoomed, rolled out, dove, went up in a loop and rolled wing over three times to flutter down in a falling leaf, pick up flying speed and fishtail in for a set-down.

The onlookers roared their approval of this spectacular flying. The pilot cut his gun and lowered his six feet of brawn to the ground.

"God, he can fly," cried Willy Whitten whose sole ambition was to be a great ace and who would never get off the ground because he couldn't stand altitude.

Bob and Mitchen pushed through the crowd. There in the center, stripping off his goggles, burly legs widespread, lean, confident, rather dashing, was Greg. The others drew back to make room for Bob.

He pushed into the center. His

eyes danced, his heart thumped and he had a lump in his throat.

"Greg!" he cried.

His hand flew out. Greg turned and a smile broke over his own face. Their hands met and clasped tightly, "Bob, by God, it's good to see you."

Then their eyes met. And in that instant they both knew a terrible thing. In that second there arose between them the vision of twelve million dollars. The sparkle went out of Bob's eyes. The smile vanished from Greg's face. They were self-conscious, embarrassed by their inner knowledge.

And as if by telepathy, every man-jack on the tarmac knew that these two would be deadly rivals, fighting for a stake of twelve million dollars. In each mind rose the maddening question, "Which will win the money?"

Both boys avoided the subject during the endless round of introductions, the brief, pointed talk by General Mitchen when he addressed the group of pilots.

Mitchen said, "This has been selected to be the crack squadron of the A.E.F. The Hawks you are. Like hawks you must fly and fight. Everybody in America will know about it within a fortnight. You've got an advance reputation to live up to, you've got morale to sustain. You've got a leader who knows what's wanted. The rest is up to you."

They gave him a cheer and moved away. Mitchen turned to the two boys, "The eyes of America will be on you two, particularly. An unknown judge will be watching every report about you. Play the game the best you know how and I'll see you get a fair break in publicity. Good-by, and good luck."

**T**HE two brothers walked to Bob's orderly room, a strained sort of silence between them. They wanted to talk about the will and the contest and the money, but didn't know how to begin. Finally Bob said, "Greg, you take command of A and B

Flights. The orders are that flyers transferring in begin as ordinary combat pilots. But I'll need the benefit of your experience."

Greg did not speak for a minute. On his face was that peculiar look that had come there when he had asked to report to the commanding officer, and Bob had had to say that he was the man. Greg felt a little hurt; after all his experience, to be under the command of his half-brother who was a rooky, was rather a tough pill. But he shrugged now and murmured carelessly, "All right. I'll take them out this afternoon."

They sat down in the orderly room and lit cigarettes. Finally Greg said, "Bob, have you any idea who this secret judge is?"

"Not an idea," confessed Bob.

"Dammit!" Greg got up and paced restlessly. "It's not fair, Bob. Some old moss-backed sin-wrangler in America passing judgment on us when such a man couldn't know the military value of what we do to weigh it fairly. The whole thing is crazy, insane. Yet it's twelve million dollars."

"Greg!" Bob stared straight at his half-brother.

"Yes?"

"Greg, let's not let this thing embitter our lives, make us hate each other. I can see Dad's viewpoint. You know there was something hanging over him in his latter years. A conscience, I've always believed. Something he had done as a youth—maybe something he did when he was in the army. That was the reason for the will. And he wants that money used for public service. Either one of us will do that. So let's just do our jobs the best we can and let this unknown judge make a decision."

Greg was moved by the appeal. His hand flew out. "Right, kid," he muttered. "And yet I've a feeling we won't be able to keep friends. When we met out there, something came between us. Like a cloud, a shadow. I

felt it. I saw you felt it; those pilots sensed it."

He paused, turned sharply and said, "You might as well know this, Bob. I want that money. I've been brought up to money. I intend to do my best to win it. I intend, if the Jerries let me live, to be the biggest ace in the A.E.F. Roughly, there remain thirty days before the judgment is delivered. In that time I'm going to lead the A.E.F. in kills. I thought I'd tell you fairly."

Bob's face remained impassive; then he smiled.

"Fair enough," he nodded. "We should be frank. You'll probably be chosen. You always were the spectacular type; you went to war, I went into the Steel Corporation. And I'll tell you this," he added impulsively, "if you're picked for the money, I'll cheer as loudly as the rest." He held out his hand, smiled and said, "Let's shake, Greg, and stop talking about the damn thing. It's like the snake in the garden of Eden and it may poison our souls."

They meant that; but it couldn't be. Their first difference came at ten minutes to three when the splendid Nieuports, smelling of dope, polished and trim, ticked over their props on the deadline waiting for the afternoon take-off.

Bob had called the pilots together, announced Greg's appointment as wing leader and was issuing his first orders.

"This is a reconnaissance patrol to learn the topography and acquaint ourselves with our sector. There'll be plenty of chances of fighting later, so we won't hunt any now. We'll fly echelon formation and we won't break. Not under any circumstances!" he said crisply.

Greg looked up in quick protest. "I say, Bob, er-Captain Durke, after all, you know, the job is to go out there and kill Fritz. As many as we can. That's what we're here for."

A sudden tense hush fell over the waiting pilots. Here was a difference

of opinion, and they, from their glances, favored Greg's version.

"That is quite true," admitted Bob, quietly. "But the chief thing is to kill them and not get killed ourselves. I want to try out over the lines to-day our new formation-attack system. So we won't break formation, not under any conditions."

Still Greg was rebellious. "But suppose some one's motor poops out?" he demanded.

"That one will have to take his chances," replied Bob, steadily. "It is better that one man go down than that an inexperienced squadron lose others by trying to save him. My orders are to keep casualties down. I shall obey orders."

"Bunk!" snorted Greg, angrily. "Formation attacks don't work. The Boche have to break up when we jump them. The thing to do is fly and fight and death take the hindmost."

### CHAPTER III

#### PASSING THE GAFF

**B**OB bit his lip at the open contempt of Greg's tone. He could see that Greg's words were influencing these pilots, themselves worshipful of the spectacular.

"This is no time to argue," he said. "I've issued the orders."

"Which, of course, don't include me," said Greg.

"Which include every one," stated Bob.

Again a silence. Greg was thinking, "He's issuing those orders to keep me from flying alone and building up a record. He wants to tie me to his rookies."

Bob stared around, waited for Greg to reply.

"There'll be no breaking of formation. That's the order. Pits, gentlemen."

Greg shrugged and turned to his own crate. The pilots scattered. Bob had won the first thrust, but the action of the youngsters indicated that Bob had not helped his popularity with

them by stepping on Greg so openly. And Greg, buckling his safety strap, felt humiliated that a man of his record and experience should be openly called down. It was, seemingly, a small difference of opinion; it had great consequences.

Bob stepped up on the wing of his crate, legged into the cockpit, fastened his safety belt, tested his controls and examined his twin Vickers. His Rhone turned tick-tock.

He had looked forward to this moment. The first flight to enemy territory. The first patrol from Pont-a-Mousson to Rheims! His first command. But he had no joy in it now; something had happened. He wondered if his insistence on formation flying had been governed by a wish to hold Greg down. No, he would not think of it. His jaws clicked, his mouth set.

He looked up and down the line of Nieuports behind their spinning props. He glanced at the wind-pecker. Then with a forward motion of his right hand, he goosed out of line, kicked his tail around, and with full gun roared down the field. The squadron howled after him, rendezvoused, wing to fuselage, and droned for the Front on the first patrol.

That which was later to be known as the great St. Mihiel salient was early in 1918 only a rest area, where tired German and Allied divisions were sent to recuperate. Until the Yanks came, war on the ground was fought by strict rule. At certain hours of the day the German artillery shelled particular towns, trenches and wood areas. The French knew it and these spots were vacated in plenty of time. By the same token the French did the same. Thus the spirit of war was carried out but with little damage and no casualties.

The Yank divisions coming in three weeks previous for training changed all that. Several Germans washing clothes at a stream in No-Man's-Land were fired upon and some killed. The Yank artillery dumped shells on sen-

sitive points and at unexpected moments and killed many more. The Germans got sore.

Now they were retaliating. *Sturmtruppen* had been imported to raid the Yanks and put the fear of God in them. Bombing planes made life miserable for ground troops. And to protect the bombers and reglagé planes several squadron of pursuit ships had been sent for. These held the air at will.

Bob's squadron was due for plenty of trouble.

None of this, however, was realized by Bob Durke as he crouched up there in his pit, feeling the slipstream rip at his helmet top, watching the horizon line drop and fall between his wings as a ship lifts and drops to waves.

He had made several patrols with the French, but he was still green. He had no way of knowing German tricks. He knew nothing of their habit of training two or three batteries of anti-aircraft guns on a squadron and tracking it deep into German territory, then suddenly blasting as the squadron turned to fly back. To him it merely appeared that to-day was a quiet one along the Front. No archie fire disturbed him.

**D**OWN below, some twelve thousand feet, a gray, checkered carpet, touched here and there with the bright green of spring wheat, marched wheelingly under their wings. Trench systems, looking like furrows ploughed by a drunken farmer, crawled through valley, climbed over hill and skittered into woods and across streams. To these brown lines other lines fed at irregular intervals. Those lines looked harmless enough up here; it was hard to realize that a million men stood in those lines, armed with weapons to maim and kill, living in holes in the ground like moles, fearing the light of day burrowing in mud.

Bob peered down at it over the crashpad. His brain told him it was

the Front. But there was no thrill attached to seeing it. To him, then, it was just a lot more scenery. His unfolded map, pinched to the map-board, let him pick certain salient points. Over to the right were the rusted rails of the Nancy-Metz railroad that ran through No-Man's-Land. Pockmarked towns dotted along it. That was Pont-a-Mousson there. Nancy was back off his right tail surface. He checked off the Rupt de Mad, and then found the formidable fortress of Mont Sec, looking like a cone of sand built up out of a prairie. Rapidly he checked Fliry, Nonsard, Seichprey, and oriented himself to the Meuse.

Some cloudy day, hard-pressed by enemy aircraft, these guiding marks would get him home before his emptying gas tank forced him down a prisoner.

His map work completed, he settled himself against the cushions. Automatically his head rolled, examining the sky, watching small clouds, constantly on the watch-out for Germans. This was ritual pounded home by the French instructors, first at Kelly field, then at Field Six in Issoudun. Mechanically his eyes checked the oil pressure, tachometer, altimeter and gas gauge on his instrument board.

These actions were characteristic of Bob. He always tried not to overlook anything beforehand, that he might have nothing to regret later.

But his mind was not following his eyes. Though he tried not to think of the contest for millions between himself and Greg, he failed. Always the thought occurred. In thirty days twelve million dollars would go to him or Greg. A lot of money. And he knew a rift had come between him and Greg that would widen.

"It will not," he muttered aloud. "I won't have it. Greg could administer the estate splendidly. I hope he wins." He believed that, despite the little voice within that challenged his words, the competitive spirit that

wanted to play this game to a finish.

He was feeling almost happy again when he suddenly jerked straight in his pit and peered to the northwest. Planes!

He perceived six, flying in a three-ship formation at eight thousand feet. Up about twelve thousand feet were eight more. Nervously he searched the heights. And finally, as a cloud seemed to move suddenly out of position, he saw ten other ships at eighteen thousand. It was too far away to make out insignia, but Bob knew they were Boche. That was a strictly Boche formation. The lower layer always began to scrap. The second dove in and struck down what could be smashed in the first dive. And before the enemy could recover from that pounce, the top layer would come shrieking in for a kill. These tactics had enabled the Germans to hold the air.

Bob knew about that trick. A British instructor had explained it to him. But he knew more. He knew that the Boche were as helpless before his echelon formation as his outfit was before this layer trap.

His heart began to hammer but he did not change direction.

"We won't run, anyway," he muttered, and wagged his wings to signal discovery of E.A. When he saw the German crates converge toward him, he gunned his motor, nosed up slightly and did a smart vertical bank toward Rheims. The Yank squadron was about three miles inside German territory. At the moment the fact meant nothing. Later Bob would remember in terror.

Wing to wing the Nieuports banked with him and settled down to a three-quarter drone to the west. The German three-layer squadron sailed on, apparently ignoring the Yanks. But a more experienced leader would have seen a glint of sun on metal from the leading ship, a return shimmer from the ground. A signal of some sort

Then it happened.



THE air suddenly churned. Black smoke flooded around the squadron. Greasy smoke balls filled with scarlet sheets of flame crashed among the Nieuports. Coughing roars howled above motor drone. Ugly red eyes of high-explosive bursts gleamed brighter than the sun. Shells burst below, over, around and above the squadron. One sickening smash of noise as thirty archie shells blasted apart. An old German archie trick that was devastating now.

Bob was caught totally unawares. One second he was watching the German planes flicker past. The next there came a violent coughing bellow behind and below him. His tail jounced into the air. Screaming invisible things whisked past. Something smashed into the cowl and smoldered there, a red-hot piece of shell casing. He burned his hand prying it out.

Then he was falling down the air, nose down, yet falling sideways too. He was down five hundred feet before the dizzy shock of the explosion left his brain. Then he realized what had happened. One shell had burst squarely under his tail; the thing that the British instructor had called "The peelot's lullaby". His head cleared rapidly and he thought of his outfit. Must get back.

He pulled the stick back into his stomach,

The Nieuport continued to slip downward, the wind fanned his cheek. The crate was not responding to the controls.

A stricture tightened Bob's throat so he could barely breathe. Rapidly, fearfully, he wiggled the stick back and forth. Nothing happened. Then he knew.

The elevator control was cut by the shell. He could not lift. His first patrol was to be his last. He was downed.

Something burned his leg. He bent

down and saw a sharp piece of shell casing that had struck the greased wire control, cut it and gone on to pierce his boot, yet had not broken the skin. Hope surged within him. In an instant he saw what could be done. With his right hand he caught the control wire and yanked it. It was a hard pull against the wind pressure, but he hung on. At once the Nieuport lifted her nose to even flight. He yelled with joy and looked up for his outfit. But worse happened then.

The lower layer of German crates struck!

They had played an old trick, breaking a formation with archie fire. The trick had worked to the extent of loosing one Nieuport from the tight formation, and the Germans plunged downward to the kill. Bob wrenched his body that he might stare up into the blue vault of the heavens. There was his squadron banking around. None broke loose to come to his aid. He was alone—and trapped.

Around him spun the six Fokkers, with others perching high above, watchful, taking no part in this extermination, but ready if the Yank squadron should try to stage a rescue. In a slanting slip a Fokker knifed sideways onto Bob's tail. With a little jerk it came to level flight, nosed down slightly until the twin Spandaus caught the range. There was a little movement of the pilot's head; the sun glinted off his goggles. Then the Spandaus spat fire.

The clapping chuckle of guns. Green-mouthed guns vomiting hail, steel hail! Hun strafe! With a shrieking purr of noise a Fokker slipped onto Bob's right; another streaked in on the left. A box to hold him trapped. The remainder whined around him as Indians on horseback once galloped around a wagon train. He was boxed in, ringed in, cut off from all possible aid.

And in short staccato bursts the Fokker on his tail sent sheets of smoke tracer to blast him down.

Motor drone. Wire shriek. And above it the *racka-racka-racka* of machine-gun fire. Irregular bursts like the clatter of a telegraph sending instrument. The Fokker dipped, made a wheeling bank and then *whacka-whacka-whacka!*

Smoke tracer flashed by Bob's eyes like strips of white flame. Slugs pummeled at the crashpad, smashed into the longerons, glanced with vivid spots of fire off the boltings of his Vickers. Invisible fingers tore at his wing fabric that fluttered in the slipstream.

It was maddening, awful! He was being killed like a cow in a slaughter pen.

ONCE again Bob's eyes raised despairingly toward the squadron wheeling high up there! His young soul wanted to scream out, "Come and save me. I'm afraid—I want to live."

But his pallid lips pressed down on the cry. This was war. The weaker fell; the strong lived. He had made the rule that formation must not be broken. He must abide by it. In those split-seconds while the smoke tracer streaked into his crate, riddling it from tail surfaces to cowling, he had a lifetime in which to think. He had a century in which to weigh his own conduct.

"I made the rule. Better one of us should die than that the squadron should be shot to bits by these dogs," he muttered. "Greg will win the money, which is probably right."

His mouth tightened grimly, his eyes widened and he flung back his head. With a twist of the stick he flung the Nieuport on its side, almost in a vertical bank. Thus his rudder became for the moment an elevator. And as he got this position, he abruptly flung the Nieuport's nose down with a kick of his foot. Nosed her down and away. Drew those fleeting Fokkers away from his squadron. Gave his men a chance to get home.

He drew to himself the concentrated fire of the enemy that his out-

fit might escape. That was Bob Durke!

The Nieuport plunged earthward in a half-dive, half-slip. The momentary maneuver threw the pursuing Fokker off the target. The clap-clap of Spandau fire ceased. But this was only for a moment. The Fokkers tightened their trap. The tail Fokker nosed down with full gun, caught Bob's tail surfaces in his ring-sights and by a gentle lift of the stick flung smoke tracer from motor to tail assembly.

Slugs chewed at Bob's coat, at his helmet, at his crashpad. A solid sheet of slugs went between his legs and thrummed out, chewing the top off the joystick, yet not touching his hand.

The Nieuport righted itself. He flung it off again, it began to flat-spin and the centrifugal force of the heaving turns pinned him to his seat, incapable even of standing up.

This was the end.

The first had been the last. He who had come so joyously to this Front was not to see the war; he was to go down a victim of his own and the army's rule that the individual must be sacrificed for the good of the whole.

And now fear left Bob. He prepared to die. A strange, rather sweet smile curved his lips. He half-straightened in the cockpit, managing the bucking stick with one hand, clutching the broken control wire with the other. He looked back along his empennage. He saw the Fokker rock to an abrupt shift of the controls. It was less than fifty feet behind, its whirling prop seeming about to chew his tail away. He could see the grim-carved face of the pilot through the prop whorl, could see the shining teeth of the man as he spat out thin-lipped curses that he had missed this easy target. He saw the Boche throw off his goggles, wipe at his eyes with his arm, the better to send the next burst home.

Then the flickering flames spitting

from the Spandaus blotted out the German's face and death came spattering into the Nieuport. It leaped and quivered to the impact of the bullets. It staggered as wings were slashed to bits, as struts and brace wire parted with a sharp report. The German sideslipped and now the hail of slugs whanged past Bob's head. He did not move to dodge. The strange, sweet smile played on his lips; in his eyes was the exalted look of a man who peers at death and is not afraid.

The cocking handles of his Vickers were chopped to junk by a solid streak of tracer fire. The center section had grooves through the entire length. With a sharp, perceptible jerk the Fokker nosed slightly down to correct this last high burst.

Bob took a big breath! Now, this was the finish!

The smashing impact of bullets suddenly ceased to pound. Bob had never ceased to look those belching guns in the face. So he saw the Fokker suddenly howl downward in a vertical bank and above the roar of all sounds came the clapping sound of gun fire. And behind the Fokker streaked a tiny Nieuport!

A Nieuport! Not one, not two, but a dozen, aye, twenty! Wheeling, turning, zooming, diving, banking and spattering golden tracers like streams of molten fire across the heavens! Twenty Nieuports to the rescue. His outfit had come!

Madly the Germans plunged in to meet the attack.

In a split-second forty-odd planes balled themselves together in a frightful, rolling turmoil of roaring ship and spitting guns. Dogfight!

## CHAPTER IV

### NO ORDERS!

**B**OB was suddenly alone down here, slipping down the sky lanes to the carpet below. The suddenness of the fight, the ferocity of it, stunned Bob. Then the expression left his

face. Horror spread over it. His outfit, his men, were being butchered.

"No!" he suddenly yelled. "My God, go home. Break away. You disobeyed orders. Oh, you fools—fools!"

Desperately he tried to move the elevator to bring himself into a climb. But it was impossible; pulling back on the control wire would lift the nose a bit, but not enough. He was completely helpless and out of the fight.

Great sobs racked him as he saw a flaming plane, leaving a plume of smoke behind it, go tumbling down the sky. Another with the top wing off came jittering past him. A Nieuport! The pilot was standing up to work his controls, pale in the knowledge that death was reaching up from below to grab him.

Bob recognized the doomed man. Mannering, the kid of the lot. Seventeen he was, and he had lied to get in. And dying now. Dying before he had lived.

"You swine!" Bob cursed the circling Germans. "Leave them alone. They're kids, you hear? My kids! They've just begun. Give them a chance! Oh, why did you men come for me?"

*Slap-slap-slap* came the patter of gunfire to mock his agony. Downward drifted the Nieuport.

A SUDDEN change came over Bob Durke then. His eyes suddenly became glazed; his mouth set like a granite sculpturing. He ceased to be a youth seeking high adventure and became a man. He never cried again after that, but once.

Resolutely he turned his face away from that tumbling roaring fight that rolled over the sky. With infinite care he banked, tugged on the elevator control to keep even flying keel and pointed his nose south. With open gun he ran straight through a turmoil of air upheaval caused by the belching archie shells that smashed around him. His eyes were straight ahead; he was numb, flying by instinct only. And by instinct only he

found his tarmac back there in the churned soil of an old battle.

He came down daringly with full top rudder, nose in a steep dive. And with a jerk he hauled the elevator control tight and set down in the center of the field. The ship bounced two stories high, but a goose of the gun held her nose up. Set set down this time to stay. He cut the gun and climbed out.

Mechanics came running. Whitten came running, eyes wide as he surveyed the tattered wreck of the Nieuport.

"My God, what happened? Where are the others?" he cried.

In drab tones Bob told him. "They're out there fighting," he said, drearly. "We'll have to wait here—and guess what's happening."

Bob took his first drink then. He needed it to keep him from leaping out of his skin. Three shots of cognac left him cold sober. Whitten was pale.

"God!" he cried. "Are they being wiped out?"

"Shut up," cut in Bob. "Take a drink, two drinks. Go out and tell them to patch up my crate. Do something."

He himself paced the floor. He was back alive. The sentence drummed in his brain. Back alive! But what price had been taken that he might live? How many others must die that he might stand here, sopping cognac and enduring hell?

Whitten came back, silently poured a slug of liquor, drank it at a gulp; his teeth began to chatter and he complained he couldn't stop trembling.

Time went on at a snail's pace. And presently came the drone of motors. Pulsating, mingling together, defying the ear to pick out how many were throbbing. Bob thrust himself outside. Whitten stood there, mouth and nose wet, great streaks of tears running down his face.

He was looking into the sky. Bob forced himself to gaze upward. Nieuports coming in echelon formation.

There was A Flight leading. Four planes! B Flight on the right. Four planes. C on the left rear, three planes. D Flight at cover, two planes. And above the rear flight in rescue position was a single ship.

**T**WENTY-ONE had gone out! And fourteen were returning. Seven of the new squadron, the squadron that was to be the crack outfit of the Western Front, had failed to get home.

But tragedy was not yet done.

One by one the crates circled the field and set down. Number three plane in D Flight came hurtling in to the set-down. With wide open gun, it nosed straight for the ground. It never leveled off. Nose on, it struck. There came a terrific crash as if ten barrels of glass had fallen downstairs. A flicker of flame became an instant red-hot blaze. Out there one pilot lay on his funeral pyre.

The first Yank squadron had met the Germans and eight lives had paid the entry fee.

Bob went out on the field. He had been trembling convulsively, but he was not trembling now. Dispassionately he ordered the panicky mechanics to stand by the burning plane to pull out the remnants of the pilot. With harsh voice he whipped others into pulling the Nieuports into the hangars.

Then he moved on to where the fledgelings had gathered in a little horror-stricken knot. One of the men flung himself on the ground and began to scream and kick and shriek.

"The bastards!" he shrieked. "They got Johnny. I saw him—they—oh—"

Another leaned his head against a leading-wing edge and vomited over himself. Another, infected by this hysteria, began to weep.

"Miller!" Bob's voice was as harsh as a viol string. "Take Henley away and pour a drink into him. Shut up, Butler, weeping isn't going to help. All of you get to hell off this field."

He was being deliberately harsh. It worked. The harshness of his voice buttressed their moral. They turned in a close-knit mass and moved across the tarmac. There remained only Greg Durke.

"I got two of the Krauts," said Greg, palely. "And I guess somebody else got another."

Bob looked into Greg's face. His thumb jerked toward the burning plane. "Who was it?" he asked.

"Lacey in that," said Greg. "He was badly hit, trying to get home. Probably died trying to set down."

Bob nodded. "Greg!"

At that peculiar intonation of the voice, Greg looked up, surprised.

"What?"

"Who ordered those lads to break formation to save me?"

Greg laughed uneasily. "Why, I don't know as anybody really ordered them. I waggled the signal to Kilroy that I was going down and pull you out." He looked significantly at his half-brother. "You see now, don't you, that it pays to break formation. It saved your neck."

A jerk went through Bob from boots to head. His lips tightened into a straight line and his fists doubled. He was fighting for control, and evidently got it, for when he spoke his voice was low.

"You broke formation to save me?"

"Why, yes," replied Greg. "I wanted to show you that orders over the Front don't mean a thing. The idea is to kill or be killed."

Bob's teeth clicked, he took a big breath. "You knew when you started down after me that those other lads would follow you down, didn't you?"

"Why, I suppose I did."

"You know damn well you did. If you hadn't you'd never have gone down after me. You'd never have risked that whole mob of Germans, just you alone."

Greg said nothing for a minute. Then, angrily, "Say, what the hell are you getting at? I saved your hide, didn't I? You ought to be damn grate-

ful instead of glowering there like a young idiot."

Bob took a step forward, so that his taut face was inches from Greg's. "You think," he rapped, "that I'm like you. I should be so grateful for having my own life saved that I'd forget the eight kids who went out there and died that I might stand here and bow down and thank you for keeping my breath in my body."

He took a big breath. "Well, by God, I'm not grateful. I led those youngsters out there. They trusted me. I was in command. They had their orders not to break formation under any circumstances and they'd have stuck to them if you hadn't set the example you did. You caused them to die. But they'll remember that eight of their number died to save my life. They won't think into actions leading up to that; they'll just remember who died and who lived."



**F**ISTS clenched, Bob was talking swiftly now, eyes blazing. And Greg, despite his bigger size seemed drawing back.

"All my life I'll have to remember that eight lads died to give me the minutes I live. Life borrowed from them. Living the minutes of their lives. I'll have to remember that I was in command when they died. And you think I should be grateful. You think because you'd have been grateful if the thing had occurred to you that I should be, too. Phaugh!" He spat. "You come in and boast of two victories. You wanted those toward winning the legacy. You wanted to show me up."

He thrust himself at Greg, grabbed his arm in fingers of steel.

"All my life I looked upon you as a better fellow than I, Greg. You played games better, you learned quicker, you made more friends. I thought you a great man, something to adore and be proud of."

He flung back his head and laughed bitterly. "But that's gone now, Greg Durke. Gone forever. You're just a selfish, contemptible person who has murdered eight boys that you might win two victories and have the satisfaction of saving my life. Well, you've saved it, and now you'll pay the price. You're not fit to lead anything, Greg Durke. You're not fit to possess power—and nowadays money is power. You're not fit to inherit my father's money. You're not fit for anything. Three hours ago I really wanted you to win. But not now. This contest is to be a test to see which of us is the better man. I know what you are; I intend to prove myself. And I intend either to get that money or see to it that it is given to a worthy cause."

With a quick wrench Greg Durke broke loose from the hold; his hands licked out and crushed onto Bob's shoulders. "So, that's it," he gritted. "All this fol-de-rol about self-sacrifice and heroism is just a damn bad mask over the fact that you want that money. You've wanted it from the beginning. You've said you'll have it."

His angry laugh boomed out. "All right. That's a declaration of war. I intend to get it, too. You shan't have the deciding, thank God. That belongs to the mysterious judge, and he'll have to go by our records. I'll show them a record that will make you look sick. You'll get no mercy from me."

"Nor do I want any," flared Bob. "You're the type who licks himself. Meantime, by God, you disobeyed orders out there to-day. And for that you're grounded for a fortnight and you'll stay within the confines of the post." He paused. "You disobey either of those orders and I'll put you up for a general court-martial. And your British record and your influence will not enable you to beat it."

There was a silence. Then Greg nodded. "You'd like to get me court-martialed, so as to ruin my chances for a record. But you won't. I'll take

your company punishment." He turned his back on Bob. "The war isn't over yet. There's a month left before the judge will have to decide. Before that I'll be an ace and have a squadron. Maybe this one, for you're not fit to command. Think that over."

Without waiting for Bob to speak he stroke off. Bob stood watching him with tightened lips and narrowed eyes. The break had come as he had feared. War between him and Greg. Slowly he turned and walked to the orderly room to file his first report.

Bob Durke rapidly lost in popularity with his men. Not understanding his stern views about duty and obedience, they thought it a damn dirty trick for him to ground Greg after the latter had saved his life. They agreed with Greg that Bob was exercising his position to bar Greg from establishing a big record and winning the money. Furthermore, Bob's cautious patrols where he picked sure meat and avoided anything dubious did not conform with their ideas of how the Third should be led. Greg's dashing personality, his record and reckless gallantry appealed to them. He was still the hero.

**W**HEN, during the course of the following two weeks, Bob won two confirmed victories and led the squadron in kills, their sympathies were with Greg.

"He grounded you so as to get a headstart," Kilroy said. "His name is in all the papers back home and this judge will pick the one of you with the most victories. He knows it. He's a dirty rat."

Greg made no comment. He believed Kilroy was right, but a vestige of family loyalty kept him from speaking. He and Bob ignored each other now, save in official line of duty, and the breach was irrevocably widened.

The four days following his release from grounding, Greg shot down a Halberstadt and one observation balloon. Cheers greeted him that night

and a binge was thrown. The pilots were active partisans and praying for Greg to win out. So strong was their ardent support that they had practically put Bob in coventry, speaking to him only in line of duty and ignoring him on their binges. But they obeyed his orders; Bob made them do that.

In Bob himself a change had come which was remarkable. He had ceased to be a youth and was now a silent, stern man. He never smiled; his face was impassive. He directed his squadron like a machine and made them like it. He had only two friends, Willy Whitten, his kiwi, and "Sixty" Forbes, a Texas cowpuncher who stuck with him. Between Bob and Sixty was one of those rare close comradeships that spell joy and sorrow both.

Bob was drinking now, drinking to forget the sights of flaming coffins diving to earth, of wingless fuselages spearing down, of men wriggling as bullets tore into them.

But never for once had he relaxed in his purpose of preventing Greg from getting the money.

"It's not that I want it myself, Sixty," he said to the Texan. "I don't. I curse the stuff, for it has wrecked my love for Greg, and no money in the world can replace that. But father's idea was to have the money or income spent on public service. Greg, selfish, will think only of himself. I owe it to my father to see that the money is properly used."

Bob's was not the only regret over the break in the friendship between the two half-brothers. Greg felt it. That night in the Café de l'Amerique when he got quite tight, he laid his head on the bar and sobbed.

"Bob was right about me breaking formation," he cried. "I shouldn't have done it. But somehow I always do. Carwood in the R.A.F. used to complain about the same thing. Bob was right, but he could have been less nasty about reminding me."

The next day, sober, Greg retired

into his shell, and the antagonism between them was not lessened. The thought of twelve million dollars kept them apart. Greg admitted Bob was fair. When no big shows were demanded, Greg was at liberty to take one of the new Spads with which the outfit was equipped, and do his lone wolf stuff. He brought down a crate, but no one could confirm it, so the score remained four and four, with the pilots betting plenty among themselves on the outcome.

As the Front became more active and the Germans moved in the flying circuses, their *Sturmtruppen* of the air, Bob's rigid discipline tightened. His arrow formation of hitting a German *jagdstaffel* and then spreading out worked well, and the squadron total of victories arose to twenty-two. Thus Mitchen, who had been peeved at the first serious casualties, was appeased. But the pilots didn't like it. It was humdrum, like squads right in infantry, and they wanted the spectacular. But Bob did not relent.

"We're here to keep the air clean of Krauts and not have heavy losses," he said. "Those are orders and I'll stick to them."

Whitten looked at him curiously. "You believe a lot in discipline, don't you? Discipline and duty? I believe you are one of those rare animals, a patriot. You'd rather win the war than twelve million dollars. If you'd loosen up with the boys they'd like you a lot better."

Bob was lonely; this dislike of him hurt. But he did not mention it. He merely said, "Their lives are in my control. Mine is the responsibility and, disliked or not, I'll carry on."

Thus the days passed until but eleven remained before April 6, 1918, the final day.

## CHAPTER V

### TWICE OUT

ON THE morning of the eleventh day before the judgment, the Yanks launched a ground attack on

the Germans, and brought about the crisis in the conflict between Bob and Greg.

It was cold out there in the pre-dawn on the tarmac. The east slowly became streaked with dirty gray and a chill wind blew. The mecs were warming up the Spads on the deadline. All the pilots had gathered, sucking the last sweet drag of the morning cigarette, when Bob arrived among them.

"Rendezvous over the field at ten thousand meters," he said, briefly. "Two-hour patrol at eighteen thousand. The infantry is attacking. The Fourteenth Observation is out there on *replag * and photographic work. We've got to protect them and see that they stay there. We don't fight unless the Germans try to break through us to get at them. Open formation and watch me for signals. We'll not break unless we have to, and I'll signal that. Pits."

The clanging roar of the barrage to the north made him yell to be heard, and because he was in a hurry he did not see the bored looks of the men. Ceiling work was usually a nuisance. Nothing can be so monotonous as two hours of circling at high altitudes with nothing to do but watch the instrument board and the sky for E.A. But they stifled their feelings; Bob had taught them to obey.

The roar of Hispano-Suiza motors churned the air. The raw stink of burned castor oil assaulted the nostrils. One after another, the Spads got their tails up and sped down the field to soar in a climbing turn over the woods to the west. At ten thousand feet they ran into puffy clouds, and as they droned north, cut in and out of them, lost to sight most of the time.

Bob Durke fell in at point, saw his outfit snuggled in wing to fuselage about him and turned his spinning prop toward Seichprey over which they were to meet the observation crates. No thought of the coming crisis was in Bob's mind as he peered

through the disk of light that was his prop, or rolled his head on his neck to peer into the fat cloud area above. He had become an automaton, unhappy, but carrying on because that was the thing to do. Even the thought of the money had gone now. He had ceased to think of it.

He waved an arm to the commander of the observation squadron of Salmsons that cruised over Seichprey. Captain Gardiner, it was, and Gardiner waved his hand, thumbed his nose and made gestures to indicate that Bob shouldn't fail him to-day.

Fifteen minutes later the two squadrons hovered over the battle. The ground was obscured by vast clouds of smoke; a terrific thunder eddied up, even to eighteen thousand feet to vie with the roar of the Hissos. Occasionally the squadron lifted and dropped to a sudden displacement of air as a huge projectile hurled itself past.

Bob cruised at half-throttle between Pont-a-Mousson and Verdun, but never took his eyes off the observation squadron which had stretched out now to cover ten miles of front. It was monotonous work. Drone! Drone! Bank and turn. Nothing to look at but clouds. Bob had no way of knowing how the push was going. Occasionally he saw white panels laid out by an artillery regiment to signal the planes directing its fire, but that meant nothing. Smoke obscured most of it.

It was not until sixteen Fokker Tripes came hurtling out of the north that he knew the Yanks below were making progress. Then he knew that the observation squadron was raising hell with the German defenses, and the Krauts, desperate, had come to blind the eyes of the Americans.

Rapidly Bob waggled his wings; the squadron took open formation. Yet so neat was the echelon that each plane covered the other's tail and at the rear Sixty Forbes rode fifty feet above the stern of the squadron. De-

liberately Bob gunned his crate and nosed for the German circus.

He smiled grimly as the Fokkers opened up in a gigantic V, inviting combat, hoping for it, so that in the mêlée four or five might detach themselves from the dogfight and hurl themselves downward onto the observation busses.

"Not to-day, Josephine," muttered Bob.

FOR minutes on end Bob cruised alertly under the Fokker Tripes which held their high ceiling above the cloud rumbles. Then on a sudden the Fokker Tripes strung out in an echeloned single file. The leader dove like a comet, straight for Bob.

"Hah," thought Bob. "Going to try and dive through. They haven't got the guts to."

He violently waggled his wings, signaling, "attempt to dive through—circle!"

Instantly the Spads spread around underneath the diving Fokkers. The Germans came, one after another, Spandaus spitting green flame, the clap-clap of machine-gun clatter rising above the hellish din. Alertly Bob drove his crates in under, and it instantly became apparent that unless the Yank line broke the Fokkers would have to sheer off. It was clever generalship by Bob.

He pressed his stick triggers to warm the oil in his twin Vickers and watched that Fokker sizzling down at him. A collision would result unless the Boche sheered off. Bob didn't think the German had the guts to hold; his own stick was steady as a rock. Down howled the Fokker. It was upon him.

But in that instant something happened.

Greg Durke and Billy Kilroy suddenly zoomed upward, Vickers spouting red flame. Their movement left a hole in the Yank formation. With a twist of his stick the diving Boche leader stood almost on his back, wrenched around and plunged down

through the hole, and continued his vertical plunge upon the backs of the observation busses four thousand feet below. Four Tripes got through the hole before Marvin had the sense to close it.

The remaining Krauts instantly plunged upon Kilroy and Greg and milled around them like stabbing fighting cocks.

The situation had developed with incredible rapidity, but the problem it presented was instantly clear to Bob. Four Fokkers had broken through, were plunging upon the backs of the two-seaters. His squadron held tight formation, but from the arms raised and waved he knew the men wanted him to plunge to the rescue of Greg and Kilroy.

Thus the stark necessity of a decision. Bob could go down and drive off the Fokkers and keep the observation crates on the job, or he could desert them and save Greg and Kilroy. He knew what would be said if he deserted Greg; that he had wanted Greg killed to win the money himself. He saw the black looks to be cast at him. But he saw also his duty.

In that brief instant before he decided, he saw Greg dive like a falcon on a Fokker and blast it with a thirty-shot burst. Then Greg was hemmed in with a Fokker squatting on his tail. Kilroy was not to be seen among the flashing Fokkers.

His men waved, demanded a signal.

Bob's teeth clicked, his jaw set. With his arm and a downward thrust of his thumb, he gave the order. And he pushed his own stick against the fire wall and dove like a falling rocket. He was down two thousand feet, already able to see tracer fire spitting from three Salmson two-seaters before he looked up.

But a single Spad followed him.

It was Sixty Forbes—the markings told that. The rest had disobeyed, had gone to Greg and Kilroy's rescue. For a second Bob's fingers started to pull back the joystick. Then he shook his head. He and Sixty against four

Fokkers. Then so be it. He powered, standing on his rudder bar.

He cursed Greg for his disobedience. "To get one up on victories, he'd wreck a battle," he cried. Then he was down on the two-seaters and had time to curse no more.

A Fokker was zooming up at a Salmson from beneath. Upon him Bob dropped like a thrown spear. They met at ten thousand feet. The issue was quickly decided. Momentarily, without responsibility, Bob went berserk. The German foolishly essayed a vertical bank out of which he zoomed in an effort to get top position. But Bob instantly pulled up and caught the German before he had leveled off.



**S**EVEN shots. Seven slugs ripping as one into the Fokker Mercedes from Bob's guns. The engine exploded and tore away two wings. The wreckage fluttered down the sky, a pallid German in the cockpit fighting his controls, screaming as he saw the inevitable death that awaited him. Bob gave him no more than a glance to make sure he was finished; then he spiraled furiously to climb above the one Salmson that was getting all the hell. He was a minute too late. Two Fokkers converged upon it. One distracted the desperate observer's fire. The other charged in, slipped onto the tail and put in one short, savage burst. The smoke tracer tore the observer's head off and smashed on into the motor.

It caught fire at once. In an instant it was a mass of flames. The bullets had hurt the pilot, too. Bob had a fleeting vision of the man trying to lift himself out of the furiously burning pit to fling himself into the air. But the wound made him helpless. He settled back, his arms waved weakly once. Then the orange flames engulfed him and he began to burn. The wrecked Salmson went into a flat spin

out of which it dropped into blazing fragments.

Bob's lips tightened. Then a curse blistered through. "You're responsible for that, Greg," he muttered.

He hauled the stick back and shot into the maelstrom of planes. They whirled and twisted and dove. Out of nowhere came two more Spads to aid. Two Salmsons went down out of control. A Fokker collided with a Spad and they went down with dead pilots in the cockpits. Then the rest of Bob's squadron lunged into the turmoil and the two Fokkers fled.

Coldly Bob signaled formation, and then began to spiral for altitude.

The danger was not gone. The upper Fokkers had not flown back home. They had sought a twenty-thousand foot altitude where they were safe from the Spads and they circled like buzzards, watching the chance for another surprise attack.

Rapidly Bob counted up. Two Spads gone. Three Salmsons sunk. And against that there were four Fokkers sunk.

"Every time Greg disobeys men's lives pay the penalty," he thought savagely. "Well, this time he'll pay himself."

At eighteen thousand feet he signaled for the open V formation, glanced at his gas gauge and saw they had forty minutes of flying time left. Then he resumed the monotonous banking and turning that guarded the ceiling. Fifteen minutes passed. Suddenly a Spad nosed out of formation, banked sharply and sheered in alongside of Bob. Bob saw the forked lightning and cursed. It was Greg.

Greg tore off his goggles, his mouth opened and shut. Frantically he pointed downward and to the east.

"Get back," shouted Bob, and gesticulated for Greg to take his position again.

Nonetheless, he looked down. Close to the ground, etched by the sun's rays, he saw two planes. It was too far to make out their markings, but the silhouettes seemed to identify

them as Albatrosses. They were diving and zooming at the ground. Tracer fire was spitting from them into a field. Bob understood. Boche crates machine-gunning ground troops. Greg wanted Bob to send some one down to drive them off.

Bob considered. The Yank attack was making headway; that was evident.

The two German Albatrosses had probably hedge-hopped forward to aid their infantry in resistance.

Once again Bob had a problem. Should he detach a couple of Spads to drive the Krauts off, or no?

To detach two ships was to leave himself numerically smaller than the Fokkers that lurked above. They would be quick to see their opportunity and dive down to get at the dangerous observation planes. Corps had said the observation crates must stay there. They were directing gun-fire, sending wireless reports, enabling the corps commander to know what was happening.

He looked over at Greg. The latter was pointing to himself, then down, and whirling his hand to indicate he would drive off the Boche.

Bob decided. He shook his head. He raised his arm in the signal, "Formation position."

**T**O BOB'S surprise Greg waggled his head violently and still pointed downward. Bob cursed and stood up in his cockpit, leaned against the terrific wind pressure. Once again, and emphatically, he repeated the formation signal. His mouth shouted, "No, get back in position. You've done enough harm in one day."

A second later Greg's Spad vanished. It dropped down the sky like a rocket. Out of the V of Spads Kilroy's ship slipped, nosed down and screamed by Bob.

Once again it was rank disobedience.

"The bastards!" howled Bob, furiously. He cast a glance upward at the clouds. Certainly enough, the Fokker

Tripes, like a string of wild geese, were pelting down the sky. They outnumbered the Yanks by two ships. They would get through to the two-seaters unless a dogfight held them. Bob's jaws clicked. Swiftly he signalled, "Break formation. Fight."

He had no time to do more. The snarling Tripes struck. Struck like a buckshot load and scattered.

They knifed in at once. The Yanks spread out to meet them; they crashed together with a terrific roar. A solid ball of soaring, banking crates roared down the sky. All was inextricable confusion. Slamming guns, roaring ships, cursing pilots.

Bob made a pivot turn to wheel on a Tripe trying to drive through. The German saw him coming and Immelmanned.

Bob didn't chase him as he probably expected. Instead he made a skid turn, fought the flat spin that started and was there to meet the Kraut when he dropped down the sky. Bob pressed the stick trips and flung tracer stream. He wasn't sure he got the German, for the pilot abruptly climbed and kept on climbing.

"Yellow!" muttered Bob.

He found tracer fire lancing past his own head. He turned and stared back along the paneling. A Kraut was diving in. The German sideslipped, leveled off, began to throw short, savage bursts. The world was full of smoke tracer and the wings of Bob's crate were in ribbons in less than seconds.

Bob flopped into a vertical bank which threw the German off the target, but the Jerry was an old hand, fully feathered in air fighting, and his Fokker made a climbing turn out of which he fell, slamming slugs into Bob's crate.

Bob was just making a roll when something happened that made him forget the Kraut playing tag on his tail. With a shrieking howl a Tripe hissed past him; on its tail came a Spad. Sixty Forbes! Behind Sixty came another Tripe at less than

twenty yards, playing a tattoo on his Spandaus.

Bob saw, in the brief instant of vision, that the German's smoke tracer was curling through Sixty's right wing. He also saw Sixty look back, recognize the danger on his tail. Then to Bob's horror Sixty tilted his nose and drove hell-bent for the German he was pursuing.

"My God!" cried Bob. "Don't do that--no, Sixty, lay off!"

But Sixty held on. The Fokker below him had broken loose from the fight. If Sixty turned to fight off the Kraut on his tail, then the one he pursued would dive on down the sky and tear into the two-seaters. The orders had been, "No Germans to get through to the Salmsons." It might cost him his life, but he was sticking to his orders. The chase plunged down the sky.

A twist of the stick and Bob had turned his bus over. The forward speed caused the wind to strike the wings so forcibly that they wilted under the strain and brace wires parted the pistol-like reports. But the Spad stood the gaff and ripped down the sky partly upside down. Bob worked the stick to pull himself into a vertical dive. Quick as he was, as swiftly as the Spad had answered the unusual strain, the Fokker on Sixty's tail was a quarter of a mile below him, slamming short bursts into Sixty.

"Hang on, kid," yelled Bob. "I'll get him."

But the Fokker was shooting Sixty's crate out from under him. Slugs pecked at the crashpad, whined by Sixty's ears.

Bob pounded the throttle, held the stick against the fire wall so that he plunged vertical with the wings nearly laid back. He was gaining; he knew that, but would he be in time? He was standing straight up on his rudder bar, the crashpad catching him across the back. Something plucked at his arm and he looked straight up. The Tripe was after him, but too far back for anything but a lucky burst.

## CHAPTER VI

## COURT-MARTIAL MEDAL

**D**OWN the sky the five crates pelted, each gaining on the other. Three Fokkers and two Spads, alternating. Tracer fire tied them together so that they appeared to be a series of toboggans pulled by the leading Fokker.

The German lashed Sixty with smoke tracer. Bob saw him throw up an arm that suddenly dropped limply into the slipstream and hung there, swaying to the wind pressure, helplessly.

"Sheer off," screamed Bob. "Roll, lift—get away."

But Sixty did not. Instead his guns began to sparkle and his tracer stream battered at his prey. Then it was all over. The leading Tripe, feeling Sixty's slugs eating at him, tried to pull out. He flattened too quickly. The Tripe couldn't stand it. It broke up in the air, shed wings and the fuselage hurtled to earth like a thrown spear. Sixty now tried to save himself. He tried to lift. It was too late by a split-second.

The pursuing Fokker had the range and he pumped a steady stream of a hundred slugs. The hand-clapping patter of them echoed above the howling turmoil. They blasted Sixty out of his pit, shot his motor away. The Spad pulled up as if his slumping body had crooked the stick. A wing fell off, it seemed to halt its plunge. But as Bob sped past, it went into a weird inverted spin.

Bob had one fleeting glimpse of Sixty's face. Tracer stream had ripped across the skull from right to left and torn the eyes and nose away. The mouth was open, pumping out blood.

"No!" screamed Bob. "Sixty! Sixty! Pull out."

But the inverted spin carried Sixty down to the grave of a crushed cockpit. Bob gave a shudder. His eyes shut, his face screwed up, and as suddenly flattened into a terrible berserk expression.

"Ah, you bastard!" he yelled. "I'll get you."

Regardless of his already weakened wings, he spun around after the Boche who was gradually leveling off. Bob ignored the enemy on his own tail. He thought only of the one ahead. The German who had shot down Sixty was clever, a veteran. He made a climbing turn, nosed down and built up some speed for a soaring Immelman. But he had reckoned without a man who thought nothing of his plane. The German leveled off the Immelman to find tracer fire nicking his ear. He zoomed, he made a vertical bank with the intention of sliding around on Bob's tail.

The latter tricked him by making a fast skid-turn that caught the Boche unaware. The Vickers began to hammer, the Boche rolled. The Vickers pounded anew; the Boche zoomed. The slugs tore around him. He dove and he made a pivot turn and then hauled up into the beginning of a loop to roll out at the top. He snapped to level flight with slugs slapping around him.

Bob, head forward, eyes glued to the ring-sight, kept his thumbs down, and his hot guns smashed and stuttered.

The polished brass cartridges leaped into the breech, fired and spewed out on the other side to go twinkling down to earth. The web ribbon that held them streamed from Bob's undercarriage where it had caught. His guns clattered, and clattered again.

The Boche, desperately gazing back, pallid of face, along his empenage, twisted and turned and resorted to every trick he knew. The Vickers hammered and blew his ship apart under him.

Not once did Bob think of anything except the kill. He never realized as he fired that last burst at the white belly of the Tripe that his last twenty shells were running through. Instinct told him to tip his nose. He did. The tracer stream poured in molten flood

into the Fokker's pit. The Tripe lunged like a mortally hit bird, twisted over on its side in a sickening slip. Out of it plunged a body. It rolled over and over in the air, that body, its fingers groping futilely for something to halt the downward fall, its feet threshing to reach solid substance. A fat cloud rolled underneath. Headforemost the Boche dove into it and vanished from sight. His crate began a corkscrew spin and shot down after him.

Bob hunched down. "Cut his safety belt with the last burst," he muttered. "Sixty, if you can see anything, watch him hit."

He sniffed as with a cold, found his nose bleeding from the sudden loss of altitude, found his eyes blurry from tears. Sixty! The only man who had stuck by him in the outfit. Down! Dead! And Greg had killed him.

Bob's eyes suddenly blazed; his teeth ground. "By God, I'll court-martial him if it's the last thing I ever do," he shouted. "I'll—" *Wham!* A fistful of slugs smacked into the cocking handle of his Vickers and smeared off with blue sparks. The pursuing Boche had caught up.

**B**OB had no caution now. He whipped up in a straight zoom, glanced down, saw the pursuing Boche had overshot, and went into a whipstall. While the German was making a skid-turn, Bob had nosed down to get up flying speed and came in on the tail.

"Take it," he said, and pressed the trips.

The hammers fell with sickening clicks. The ejecting mechanism spat out an empty shell and the loading tag of the belt. He had run through the belt, and had no more ammo. Promptly the Boche took advantage of the interlude to whip around in a vertical bank. He was on Bob's tail instantly, but he hammered out only five slugs when his Spandaus went dead. Out of ammo! Or a jam! In either case they were helpless to harm each other.

Bob nodded grimly. He bethought himself of his gas. A glance at the gauge showed the needle below the quarter. He had roughly fifteen minutes of flying time left. And he had barely an idea of where he was. With a roaring scream the Fokker Tripe hurled itself up and past him, so close the wing-tips nearly touched.

The helmeted German in the pit grinned in a sickly fashion, as if relieved. He pointed toward his home, waved a hand and nosed away.

Bob saw the Rupt de Mad like a quick-silvered snake down below, oriented himself and looked for the dogfight. It was not there. All but two of the observation busses had departed. The sky-battle was over; everybody was out of gas or ammo.

He cocked his own nose home, drove full gun, and after a circle of the tarmac set down roughly in the center of the field. One wing sagged to the ground at the impact; he had been that close to losing it in the air.

With a word to the grease-balls to give it a thorough refitting and a top overhaul of the Hisso, he walked toward his office. On the way he met two pilots.

"Who'd we lose besides Forbes?" Bob asked grimly.

"Carruthers, Mathewson and Marvin," was the reply.

Four gone besides the losses of the observation busses! A tough day!

"Greg got both those ground-strafters," cried the other.

Bob drew himself up. The other two shrank as if expecting an onslaught. But Bob bit down on the explosive words. "You," he said to the one who had spoken, "tell Lieutenant Durke I wish to see him at once."

He went into his office. Whitten was there, but Bob spoke no word to him. He went to his box, sat down and buried his head in his grimy, greasy palms. Whitten watched him a moment, his mouth working.

"Did Sixty—go out hard?" he asked, hesitatingly.

Bob lifted his head, unafraid of the wet eyes that gleamed. "Never knew what hit him," he replied. "Oh, Whitty, he died obeying orders. He could have quit. But he wouldn't. We were outnumbered; he had two on him. I tried to get to him. I was just—a little too late. If he'd pulled up, he might have got out. But he stuck to orders."

"Stout fella," said Whitten. "A good pal—a better soldier."

"The only one I had," cried Bob. "Ah, Gođ, Whitty. He disobeyed orders once in Kelly Feld. He's never done it since. He stuck with me, when I was low. He was fine, splendid. And the rotten shame of it is he'd be here now if Greg hadn't deliberately and wilfully disobeyed orders and gone down on a couple of ground-strafters. Ah, wait'll I——"

He broke off, panting, as Greg Durke came through the door.

Greg was scowling, glaring defiance. "Well," he snapped, "what the hell's the idea of sending for me like a servant? And showing your feelings to others?"

Bob drew himself up. His fingernails bit into the palms of his hands. Whitten got up to go.

"No, Whitty," Bob said, with an effort. "Stay. I want you to hear this." Then he faced Greg. "To-day you twice violated orders. Once in zooming to an attack and leaving a hole in our formation through which the Germans dove and destroyed two observation planes. The second time you dove down on some ground-strafters and left us outnumbered by the Tripes. We've lost four men; and the observation crates lost four men. All because you, you filthy rat, had to have your fifth and sixth victories. You cost the life of the man I loved best in this world. But even if he wasn't my friend, you murdered him with your selfish desire to be an ace."

"But—" protested Greg.

"Wait'll I'm finished before you squawk." Bob was as grim as death. "Eight men died to-day because of

you. Well, you'll pay for it, pay as much as it is possible for me to make you pay. You're grounded. You're under open arrest. I'm filing specifications for a general court-martial with corps to-morrow, charging you with wilful and flagrant disobedience of orders to the detriment of our mission and——"

The field telephone jangled, breaking the thread of his voice, cutting through the tense seconds.



GREG, his face as black as a thundercloud, lurched forward. Their fists were raised. But Whitten's voice into the phone stayed their hands.

"Yes, this is the Third. Who? . . . Oh, yes, sir . . . Yes, general." There was a moment's silence while the two brothers faced toward the kiwi adjutant. Whitten was listening, amazement growing on his face.

"Yes, sir," he said, finally. "I'll convey the message. Very good, sir."

He hung up the telephone and looked first at Greg, then at Bob.

"Well?" snapped the latter.

"It was General Dickman," replied Whitten, licking his lips. "He says to convey his personal compliments to the pilot of Spad 44,598 who crashed the two Albatrosses that were ground-strafting. He said that these two enemy aircraft had stopped the infantry advance in a precarious position and but for their destruction the objective might not have been reached. He is receptive to entertaining the squadron commander's recommendation for a decoration for this flyer."

A silence that seemed thunderous followed his report.

He licked his lips again. "He said also," he went on, "that the squadron commander nearly pooped the works by letting the triplane attack through. But he conveys his thanks that the reconnaissance and battery reglagé work was done okay. Hopes you

won't be caught napping in the air again."

Greg's face lifted as if by magic. "So!" he laughed. "You're going to recommend me for a court-martial for doing something that the corps commander thinks was vital to the battle. Differences of opinion make horse races, Cautious Katy. We won through, even if we did lose eight men. Corps won't think so much of the loss of eight men if it enabled the troops to reach their objective. What do you say to that?"

Bob gazed from beneath level brows at his half-brother. "I say just what I said before. You're under open arrest; you're grounded. I'll file specifications for general court-martial. And I'll push them to the limit." His voice was level, cool.

Greg was taken aback, but only for a minute. He stared at Bob intently. "To win twelve million, you'd do that, eh? Well, go to it. And he's willing to give me a medal for what you arrest me for. You won't get to first base on those specifications. Disobedience of orders won an objective, and they'll think about that."

"I'll go through with it just the same," said Bob, stolidly. "I owe that much to Sixty."

"Desire to disgrace me and win the award is why you're doing it," sneered Greg. "That's pretty low, Bob."

He flung about and stalked out of the orderly room.

Presently Bob sat down. It was very quiet there now. The sullen thud of the guns that had beat hotly all day had died to a mutter. Whitten looked at Bob.

"He's got you licked, Skipper," he said, presently. "He'll beat the court-martial. And you'll be the laughing stock of the A.E.F. It may cost you your job."

"You mean you think I should drop the charges because his disobedience miraculously turns out to have won something?" asked Bob, looking up. "Suppose we had been licked and the Tripes had busted through and driven

off our crates. What would Dickman have said then?"

"He'd have blamed you for failure of the mission," replied Whitten. "You see, when your mission wins, you get credit only for doing your duty. When it fails, whether it was your fault or not, you get the blame. That's the penalty of command. I'm telling you, Greg has the whiphand."

"And I'm telling you that if he had won the war by his act, he disobeyed orders and cost good men their lives. I owe it to those dead lads and my duty as commander to have Greg tried. And I'll do it."

Whitten shrugged. "You'll be relieved from command for doing it," he said. "Nobody will understand your strange idealism. They'll think it's jealousy, and your desire to ruin Greg so he won't get the money."

"Let them think what they please. Let them take my command." Bob stood up, his jaws clicked. "I'll do my duty." He looked at Whitten. "I'm letting the men go to town to-night, to get the taste of those deaths out of their mouths. And I'm going, too"—his jaw clicked—"and I'm going to get stinko drunk."

He was relieved from command of the Third that night.

**I**T WAS close to midnight. Greg Durke leaned against the bar of the Café de l'Amérique. He was singing softly.

"Oh, Lulu had a baby,  
She called him Sunny Jim,  
She threw him in a sewer  
To see if he could swim.

"Oh, bang away at Lulu,  
Bang away good and strong,  
What yuh gonna do for bangin'  
When Lulu's dead and gone?"

He cursed savagely, downed his cognac and ordered another. The rest of the pilots had gone home. Greg had a motor cycle with side car and if you'd asked him he couldn't have told you why he stayed. At a table in the corner Bob Durke sprawled in a chair, head buried in his arms on the table.

Every so often Greg looked at him. But Greg didn't connect his staying with Bob's stupor.

"Out cold," Greg muttered to himself. "Well, it'll do him good. He took Sixty's death hard. He'll learn after a while not to make friends. Then your heart won't break. 'Nother cognac, *mam'selle, sivoysplait.*"

An M.P. came to the door and saluted Greg.

"Better beat it home, lieutenant. They's a general floating around the town. He's hard news for all of us."

"Thanks." Greg bought the M.P. a drink and regarded Bob thoughtfully.

"If the general should take it into his head to go up to the squadron," he muttered, "he'd make it tough for Bob."

Greg had had enough drinks to feel sorrow for Bob, to hate the feud that had grown between them. To-morrow it would be different; now, he wanted to help Bob. His eyes wandered to the stairway and he spoke rapidly to the woman behind the bar. Yes, there was a room up there. Her daughter occupied it. No, it wouldn't bother the daughter and *monsieur le capitaine* could sleep off his zigzag there.

Greg strode to the table and picked up Bob, slung him over his shoulder and carried him upstairs. There were two beds there, one occupied, but it was too dark to see much. Greg loosened Bob's tunic at the neck and stretched him out. He straightened and stood motionless a minute looking down at the recumbent figure.

"Poor kid!" he muttered. "He takes the war too seriously." A sudden sense of futility swept him. "Dammit, I wish my father hadn't owned a nickel."

He turned and went back down to the bar. "Cognac, toot sweet," he said.

Then trouble came.

He had just swallowed a part of it when the café door crashed open. General Mitchen's angry face, chin outthrust, came through, followed by

his nervous body. He stood slapping his boots with a riding crop.

"Well," he growled, "where the hell's Bob Durke?"

Greg stared speechless with amazement at the commanding officer of the air service. Of all generals floating around loose at night, Mitchen was the last he had expected. He stared, mouth agape, cognac-fumed brain trying to cope with this.

"Well, talk!" roared Mitchen. "God, have you lost your wits? I go to the orderly room at the Third and find everybody stinko except Whitten, who says Bob is here. Rush him out. I want Bob Durke, by God, and I want him right now."

His voice was an angry bellow; it carried like a fog-horn.

Greg's first instinct was to protect Bob.

"He's not here, sir," he said. "He went to Bar-le-Duc, I think."

"You're lying," snapped Mitchen. "He's here; I want him. There's a damn important mission got to be done to-night—within an hour. And I want Bob Durke. Find him—well, for crysake!"

His voice broke off sharply and Greg, startled, swung like a flash and looked toward the staircase. Up there, blouse open at the throat, Sam Browne belt unfastened and untidy hair tousled, stood Bob Durke. Or rather he staggered and groped for the railing to hold himself.

"Shumbody pagin' me?" he muttered, blearily. "Thought I heard my name."

## CHAPTER VII

### CHOICE OF GLORY

MITCHEN and Greg stared at Bob's swaying figure. But worse was to come. A girl screamed. Through the door in front of which Bob Durke was standing, and leading to the room he had just evacuated, a girl ran. A slender young girl of eighteen and pretty she was, and wearing only a flimsy nightgown. She pattered in bare feet past Bob, down

the stairs and to her mother and burst out volubly in French.

For a second, stark silence held sway, through which the clump-clump of Bob's boots could be heard descending the stairs.

Mitchen visibly swallowed and his eyes flashed contemptuously. "Cementing the Allied friendships, I see," he sneered. "Setting a splendid example to the young men under your command. Wine and women—and you lose us eight men to-day through your damn foolish tactics."

He broke off and roared, "Attention, you sot!"

Bewilderment grew in Bob's eyes. He was obviously fighting the cognac. "But—I—she——"

"No explanations, if you please," snapped Mitchen. "Your conduct is disgraceful—outrageous! I come here to-night to entrust to you a vital mission of the war and I find you this way. Phaug! You're relieved of command and placed under arrest."

Greg had listened to all this, rapidly sobering under the seriousness of the situation. At these last words he stiffened sharply. Their significance struck him like a blow. Bob, relieved of command, arrest, meant one thing: public disgrace! It might later be straightened out, but with only a few days intervening before the day to award the money, Bob would surely lose. Greg had only to hold his tongue now and he would get twelve million dollars.

He looked at Bob, crushed by this accusation, vainly trying to explain. Then at the irate General Mitchen.

Greg thrust himself forward, jaw out, demeanor cold sober.

"Sir!" he snapped. Mitchen turned. "Sir, your finding Bob in that room is solely my fault. He lost his best pal to-day, Sixty Forbes. He lost a lot of other men to-day, and while I can't assume the blame for it, the losses hit him hard. I can swear this is the first time he's ever taken more than two drinks at a time. He couldn't stand it. He went to sleep—he hasn't been

sleeping much, they tell me. And I took him up there and put him to bed. I thought the daughter was only a child. Bob's perfectly innocent, despite appearances, and I can prove it. You must be fair in this."

Mitchen heard him out in silence. The general's arms crossed on his chest and he looked upward from under grizzled brows at Greg. Bob, nearly sober now by shock, also looked at Greg; admiring astonishment was reflected in the glance.

"Hm!" muttered Mitchen. "You're honest about things, anyway. Not many men would be so frank. However, it doesn't change my mind too much. I withdraw the arrest, but the relief from command stands. Dickman raised hell to-day because it was his wireless officer who was shot down. He suggested a change in command. I'm making it. As of this moment, Lieutenant Gregory Durke, subject to written confirmation, you will assume command of the Third Squadron with rank of acting captain. Captain Bob Durke will serve under you until I make a later change."

He swung on Bob. "That's that. Now, for the war. Both of you hop in my car. I want a plane out over those lines in less than an hour to drop a French spy, and the Third is elected to be the goat for the job."

He turned on his heel and the two half-brothers followed him. Bob spoke softly to Greg near the door. "I'm glad you said that, Greg. Thanks!"

"Forget it," grunted Greg. "I'll win that money, but I don't have to play crooked to do it."

**S**EATED in the car, with the two flyers beside him, General Mitchen re-lit his cigar. "The mission's simple enough," he explained. "All it requires is a man to do night flying who can fly a Spad with a man on the wing. You pick him, Greg. We've got a Frog, Pierre Moreau, who comes from Nonsard and who's willing to take a chance and go back there and see if the Krauts are planning a drive

through the right flank. Moreau won't risk a parachute, so he's got to be landed. The landing place is Vigneulles where there's a meadow surrounded by trees. Big enough for a four-way take-off. The same flyer has got to go back Friday and pick Moreau up, if he hasn't been caught and shot."

His words were greeted with a silence broken only by the purr of the Cadillac motor.

Greg finally spoke. "Yes, sir"—dubiously—"but as I understand it, the Germans, to discourage dropping spies by airplane, have made a rule to shoot the pilot as well as the spy if caught."

"Right," said Mitchen. "That's why this is a volunteer job. It's not so risky as it sounds, though. The only chance of getting caught is motor failure. There is no credit in the job, either. The going of Moreau must be kept secret. No entry must be made in the squadron log, and, naturally, no medals or kudos. Now, who've you got who can go? Moreau's at the squadron now. He'll have to start too sweet while the moon is low."

Greg was instantly on the horns of a dilemma. He glanced sideways at Bob. There were only two men in the outfit who had had night-flying experience, Greg and Bob. And Greg knew that Bob understood this. One or the other must take this thankless perilous mission.

Through Greg's mind drummed the fact, "Ten days before the year is up. Bob's got eight victories and I have only six. If I go on this stunt I'll never catch up and will lose the money."

He'd have to order Bob to make the trip. But he couldn't do it before Mitchen.

"I'll have to wait until I get the squadron, sir," he said.

Mitchen made no comment and the rest of the ride was finished in silence. But Greg knew that Bob was thinking; it did not change his mind.

They found a small, greasy-looking

Frenchman at the orderly room with a flustered Willy Whitten. While Mitchen talked to the French spy, Greg called Bob into the orderly room.

He stood on no ceremony, now that they were alone.

"Bob, you're elected," he declared, bluntly.

Instantly, the antagonism that had died for a moment sprang alive between them.

"So," said Bob, slowly, "it's not a volunteer job, after all."

"No," assented Greg. "It's a choice between you and me. You've had your chance at command and victories. I just got mine. I'm not going to sacrifice my opportunity, nor a chance at that money, for a thankless job like this. I'm giving you an order."

"Hoping I won't come back."

"Hoping nothing. I'm not going to take the risk. If you pull it off, you'll be back in less than two hours. I'll not hold you down the way you held me down. If you get back, fly your fool head off. But you're going."

In the set of Greg's lips, in his grim eyes, Bob saw his father all over again. Ruthless! That was what old Abner Durke had been, and that was what Greg Durke was now. The Jekyll-Hyde conscience of Greg said, "You're sending him out to die." Greg fought it down. He intended to win that money.

His lips set tighter. "I gave an order," he pointed out.

Bob suddenly laughed mirthlessly, terribly.

"Smart Greg," he jeered. "I always obey orders. You know it. You know I won't complain to Mitchen. You know I'll go. But I may surprise you, Greg. I may come back. Because I've made up my mind to one thing. You'll never, never get that money."

Before Greg could make a retort, he swung about and strode from the room. Fifteen minutes later, with flashlights to mark the take-off, with

a tense Frenchman crouched on his wing, Bob Durke roared down the field and took off in a steep climbing turn that headed him for the Front.

In the orderly room, fidgeting, feeling the first worries of command, Greg Durke listened to the thrumming motor until it died into the dreary wind sough of the night and was heard no more.

"He'll come back," he said, uneasily. "It isn't much of a job."

But at three o'clock, when he was due, Bob Durke hadn't returned. Nor at five, nor at six. And when he didn't show up during that day nor the next, Greg Durke admitted he wasn't coming back. His conscience tortured him.

"I've sent him to his death," he thought. That night, drunk in the Café de l'Amérique, he sobbed out his heart on the bar. He had won twelve million dollars, but the price to his suddenly alive conscience was too big to pay.

The next day he marked Bob, "Missing in action."



THE dawn came like an explosion of light. The heating sun shone warmly down on the tarmac of the Third Aero Pursuit Squadron. The hangars were

empty; the grease-balls stood around, smoking, chewing, talking, and staring uneasily toward the thundering skyline of the north. And near the orderly room Willy Whitten, white-faced, bit his lips nervously and stared also to the north. Beside him General Mitchen paced back and forth and chewed on a dead cigar. About them all was an air of waiting, tense, grim waiting. Waiting for ships to come back out of that hell that raged up there where the hot guns slammed.

The sound of the battle came strongly to their ears. The steady, almost rhythmic, thunder beat and echoed over the valleys, surged louder, died a bit, only to rumble again.

A battle raged! The Germans were attacking; *Sturmtruppen*, artillery, shock troops, squadrons of planes, they were all there, pressing the Yanks with a savage ferocity. Their clouds of planes had driven the American squadrons out of the air. None knew, up there where no telephone wire or runner could live, what had happened. None knew back at Corps where the main German attack was coming. The Yanks were caught unprepared and fear of defeat hung over all, unless information was received.

"They ought to be back soon," growled Mitchen, savagely.

Willy Whitten nodded. He looked as if he were going to be sick. "Their two hours are nearly up. Are your replacements here, sir?"

"Down there," Mitchen gesticulated toward the living tents. "By God, if Greg fails to break through and find out, he'll have to go back until he does. We've got to find out where the hell the attack is converging. Ah, why didn't that fool Frenchman live? Why did Bob have to be shot down? We'd have had this information if they'd come back. We've got to know," he finished fiercely.

"Our balloons—the observation—"

"Shot down or driven back. There isn't—what's that? By God, here come some of Greg's men. Now we'll know." He broke off and moved restlessly to the center of the field.

Clanging motors droned, the unmistakable drum of Hispano-Suizas. The waiting men's eyes sought the north sky. Fine dots were there. They grew larger.

"One, two, three," counted Willy, pallidly. "Ah, God, there are only seven." He paused. He grabbed Mitchen's arm. "Do you hear, sir? There are only seven. There were twenty-three went out. Twenty-three," his voice was almost a scream.

"Somebody has to die," growled Mitchen. "Keep your shirt on—don't go off the conk."

"Somebody has to die," repeated Willy slowly. His face bleached; his

eyes sought the seven planes droning like gigantic bumblebees across the heavens toward them. "Somebody, yes." His voice suddenly became a retching shrill tone, unpleasant to hear. "But, by God," he screamed, "they don't all have to die to make a Roman holiday for Greg Durke. Dying to make him an ace. Damn the murdering louse," he shrilled. "He's building a reputation on blood and bones of good men. He's been a commander a week and we've lost thirty-eight men and he's made his seventh kill. Yes, men have to die, but they don't have to be murdered. Bob Durke was a leader—a——"

"Shut up!" cried Mitchen in a terrible voice. "You——"

"I won't shut up," cried Willy Whitten. Tears ran down his face. "When murder is done somebody has to accuse. Well, I accuse Greg Durke. When Bob Durke commanded the squadron, he led them. He watched over them. He pulled them out of holes. And this"—he spoke a terrible epithet—"he leads them to a staffel of Jerries and goes off to shoot down his kills and to hell with the men under him. They aren't used to that. And they're dying like flies."

Mitchen grabbed him, shook him like a rat. "I'll throw you into the jug till you can tie your beard in three braids if you don't shut up," he hissed. He paused, turned and looked at the bullet-battered crates slipping one by one down for a landing. "God, don't you think I've got any feelings?" he muttered. "I feel like a murderer, most of the time, myself." He stopped speaking as a yellow Spad screamed past him and thumped its tires on the tarmac.

ONE by one they came in, cut their motors and lurched out of pits to the ground. But the seventh did not cut his gun, nor did he climb out. He slumped in the cockpit, spitting blood, eyes starry with coming death.

"Go-g-got home," he hiccupped and belched blood against the instru-

ment board and died on the way to the hangar.

O'Reilly, his friend, lost his head. He lunged savagely at Greg.

"Ah, you rat!" he yelled, and cursed obscenely, frightfully. "You let him be killed. You could have saved him. You went off and left him."

He hit Greg a terrific punch on the jaw that sent the big fellow staggering, to slip and fall down yards away. O'Reilly sprang after him. "You went off after white meat when Cork was in a jam. I was coming to save him. And you let him go. I'll kill you."

He dropped on Greg and his fingers found Greg's throat. "You killed Cork for your lousy twelve million bucks. But you won't——"

They dragged him, cursing, off Greg, and one of his flight led him, still cursing, away. Greg got up. He saw Mitchen's eyes fastened to him.

"Well?" said Mitchen.

"He was unstrung, no charges," muttered Greg. Suddenly that strange conscience of his asserted itself. "He's right," he groaned. "I could have saved Corcoran. I didn't think the kid was so bad off. I saw a Hal that was easy pickings, so I went to get it."

He looked up defensively at Mitchen.

"We're supposed to go out there and kill," he cried. "That was the order. Drive through. Drive through Germans that swarm around up there in flocks of a dozen and fifteen. Fight through Krauts that were thicker than flies. It's every man for himself. I'd have saved Corcoran if I'd known. I didn't. We were to kill—kill—kill."

"Don't go nuts," said Mitchen, brutally. "Nobody's accusing you of anything. The main thing is, did you get through and see where the Krauts are making their main thrust?"

"Hell, no! We didn't even get as far as our old front line. Von Ricker met us over Seichprey and the Krauts arrived in droves. We tied up with two French squadrons and we all got

hell licked out of us. I shot down one of von Ricker's men."

"Eighth, eh?" asked Mitchen, drily. "Even with Bob now."

"Yes," Greg glared at him suspiciously. "Are you intimating, sir—what the hell's that?"

He broke off and swung in his tracks and peered into the polished blue of the heavens. Planes were coming up there, coming like the hammers of hell. One led the way, pursued by three. And the leading one was a Spad. That much was observable from its silhouette. The Spad was down low, too low for fighting, less than two hundred feet up. And it flew with the wings of a hurricane.

"Albatrosses chasing a Spad," jerked Greg.

"Another of your men got away, evidently," said Mitchen.

Greg shook his head. "I wish it were. But it can't be. I know they were all down. I was the last to leave—"

For a moment Mitchen froze. Then he lunged to Greg, grabbed him, eyes blazing, face contorted. "By God, today is Friday," he screamed. "It might be—oh, God—it might be Bob Durke."

He clutched Greg, stared up at the racing Spad. The Albatrosses hung on its tail, diving down at it with terrific speed. It was a split-second chance whether the Spad escaped or not. Above the howling roar of hard-pressed motors came the flat, terrible sound of machine-gun fire. The clapp-clap of Spandaus. Tracer fire lunged at the Spad. The noses of the Albatrosses spat flame. Lines of gray tracer made a V converging on the racked Spad. It did not seem it could survive, outrun this death that hung to its racing tail.

"Get up there," yelled Mitchen. "It is Bob. See, there's the Frenchman, crouching on the wing. Get up there. Drive them off. God in Heaven, man, Bob's got the facts on the Germans."

## CHAPTER VIII

## LAST TRIAL

GREG gave a yell, raced to his plane which mechanics instantly cranked. But even as he crashed down the field full gun and zoomed recklessly in a right climbing turn, it was to be seen that he would not be in time. As he went spiraling up to get altitude for a sharp swing and a dive for speed, the pursued Spad thundered over the field. The machine-gun fire was plain now.

Mitchen bit through his lip and blood flowed from it as he watched. Then he groaned in agony. The Spad suddenly banked, sideslipped for a crash but was caught and leveled off. But that second of slip was fatal. The dark black shape, clinging to the left wing near the fuselage, suddenly lost hold and dropped from the wing. It seemed to hang motionless for a second in the air and then, tumbling over and over like an acrobat turning cartwheels, the kicking body shot through the air. It struck. It bounded a half dozen feet and fell back.

A blistering curse left Mitchen's lips. "Dead!" he groaned. "The Frog's dead and now he can't tell me where the main German attack is."

Hopelessly Mitchen turned his attention to the desperate race for life that Bob Durke was making. Bob's Spad banked again and came hurtling over the field. Greg was racing after the Albatrosses. Mitchen saw Bob's crate dip its nose.

"God!" he breathed. "He can't land—he mustn't."

But he was. With a sharp throw of the stick, a kick of the rudder, full top rudder, the Spad began to shoot sideways through the air at terrific speed. It seemed as if it must flat spin; as if it must slip right into the ground, or howl into a nose spin. Yet it did not. An Albatross streaked up, and for a second or so its guns spat, and then it roared past. The other dove in and Spandau slugs flew. This burst was nearly fatal, for the Spad

staggered, recovered and dipped to the final drop. It came hurtling down on the field. It leveled sweetly enough but the wings couldn't break the down speed. Its wings struck hard. Like a crash of breaking glass the landing gear was reduced to junk. The Spad bounded upward fifty feet. The Hisso roared and kept it from nosing over. The doomed crate settled again, struck on the spreader bar and then socked onto the fuselage. It slid like a boat for a hundred feet, grinding the fuselage to bits. Then a wing dipped and it ground-looped. Another crash and it stood on its nose and the fuselage broke in two in the middle.

Mitchen came running, racing across the field. A cry of relief burst from his lips as he saw Bob Durke slowly slide out of the fragments and hop to the ground. Over them hurtled the Albatrosses, hotly pursued by Greg who was storming them with slugs.

"Look out," yelled Bob. "They know I had a spy. They want to ki—"

Along the ground, inches from Bob and Mitchen, a line of Spandau slugs stitched a seam in the dirt. The ground dimpled and leaped. They both shrank and then the Albatrosses zoomed and turned and roared away toward the Front.

Bob grabbed Mitchen's arm. "German main thrust on the left flank—Villiers and Troyon the main objectives," he yelled. "The right thrust at Pont-a-Mousson is just a feint."

Mitchen stared at him. "How do you know?"

"I flew low over the battlefield and spotted the main line of reserves and the heaviest concentration of artillery. The left, I tell you, and in force. They're going to drive to break through."

Mitchen, without another word, turned and raced to the orderly room and a telephone. Bob slowly followed him, examining a raw bullet scratch on his right arm. Before he reached

the orderly room Greg wheeled in overhead with a balking motor and came in for a deadstick set-down. He leaped out and ran toward Bob. They came together in front of the orderly room.

Greg grabbed Bob's arm and swung him, stared into his face.

"It's you," he gasped, and the unbelief in his eyes faded. "I thought you were dead. I thought I'd sent you to— How did you manage to get through?"

Bob stared into his half-brother's face, read the relief, the contrition there. His own heart gave a leap. Then he replied, "A scissors searchlight of an archie battery got us going over and a piece of casing cut my gasline. But I made Vigneulles. I fixed the line. Poor Pierre and I stole gasoline, litre by litre, till we got enough to come home. Poor devil! He was a brave man."

MITCHEN came out of the orderly room to cut off what might have been a reconciliation. "You fool!" he said to Bob. But he smiled when he said it. "Flying low over a battlefield. Tired of life?"

"It had to be done," replied Bob. "Pierre was shot through the jaw by anti-aircraft m.g. He couldn't report. Somebody had to know and bring the information. So I took a chance. The German crates were looking for trouble on our side of the lines and never suspected me back there, until it came time to come home."

"By gad," said Mitchen, "it's too bad we can't put through a report on this. You ought to get the D.S.C."

Bob shrugged. "A man doesn't fight this war for medals, sir. If they played fair with them, everybody that came to the Front would get one."

No one said anything for a moment. Then, "You stay on here for a while," Mitchen finally vouchsafed, "and I'll find you a new billet."

Bob nodded. The silence that followed was embarrassing.

Finally Mitchen looked quizzically

at them and said, "By the way, do you realize that tomorrow is April 6?"

They returned his gaze and realization came into their eyes. To-morrow was April 6. A year to a day since Abner Durke died. And to-morrow the unknown judge, from wherever he was, would announce his decision.

A change came over the two boys. He could feel the barrier that arose between them then. The momentary feeling of friendliness vanished instantly.

"It's a foolish thing to say," Mitchen continued, smiling, "but I'd like to ask you which do you think of you two will get the money?"

Perhaps the general was thinking of the millions of people who were wondering the same thing, of the thousands of dollars wagered on the outcome, of the intense, excruciating suspense that existed. Perhaps he was merely curious to learn their reactions. At all events the question was unfortunate.

Greg stared at Bob, then down at his feet and made no reply. Bob regarded the general thoughtfully.

"That money, this contest, sir," he said, "is a curse. Damn it, I wish there never had been a will."

Mitchen gulped, swallowed. Then he turned away.

"Nonetheless, I'll be curious," he said, as he walked away, "to find out who gets it. I wonder who it will be."



**T**HE pilots of the Third came out into the cold, gray light of an April dawn. One by one they clotted into a little group, waiting for Greg, their commander. Presently Bob Durke joined them. The tenseness of their gaze, the covert looks, bespoke their thoughts. This was the day when this man either lost or won twelve million dollars.

Bob felt their eyes smiling on him; and several went out of their way to

shake his hand and offer a crazy remark about, "Good luck."

It sent a lump into his throat; these lads were pulling for him, wanted him to win. He couldn't understand the change in them. Short days ago these men adored Greg; why had they changed? Their whispered remarks about Greg's failure as a leader would have given him his answer.

The suspense of the men grew as they, low-voiced, discussed the situation. Two men, each with eight victories, flying into the enemy territory on the day a judgment would be handed down. It was a situation for the gods.

Greg came striding out of the orderly room. His face was impassive, but his eyes gleamed; they all knew that he was a-quiver with excitement and suspense.

"Special orders," he barked gruffly. "Our main counter-attack is being held up east of Sergy. Half the squadron will ground-straft German infantry and break up enemy concentrations. Also machine-gun and bomb the Nonsard road where the Germans are sending up reinforcements. The other half will sit on the ceiling in top protection."

Suspense gripped every one's throat. What now? As Greg's eyes strayed to Bob, they understood.

"Captain Durke," he said formally, "you will take flights A and B and lead the ground-straft attack. C and D will come with me on topside protection."

An audible sigh vented from the group. So that was it! Bob, leading ground-strafters, would have no chance for victories. Greg sitting on top protection would have to fight off enemy aircraft sent to prevent the machine-gunning of German ground forces. Thus Greg would have a chance to take the lead in victories and get the money. It was carefully figured out. What resentment at these unfair tactics by Greg that the group felt, was stifled. At Greg's order, they turned and trotted to their Spads.

For a moment Greg and Bob were left alone. Greg expected an outburst, and was surprised when Bob said, quietly, "I'll take the wing command, sir."

Again that conscience which always sprang to life within Greg at the wrong time, stirred to protest. But he fought it down. He had just turned to climb his own crate when Willy Whitten came trotting across the field.

"A relayed cablegram from the States, sir," he called.

Greg and Bob froze. A cablegram from the States! Had, then, the decision already been made? With fingers that trembled Greg took the copied missive.

Congratulations Greg for outstanding work George Carpenter.

Greg studied it, feeling a trembling within him that would not stop.

"Anything important?" asked Bob.

Greg held out the paper and Bob read and silently handed it back.

"Does it mean that Carpenter was the judge?" he asked. "And that the decision has been made?"

Greg shook his head. "I don't know. Possibly! It may be that Carpenter has read newspaper accounts of my victories. But again it may be a hint that I'm chosen. Carpenter always liked me the better of us two."

"Yes, he did," assented Bob. There was a short silence through which the clickety-clack of idling Hissos called to them to depart for the roaring thunder to the north. A surge of emotion seized Greg.

"Damn it, Bob!" he exclaimed. "If they've made the choice already it isn't fair. I want that money but I want it on the square. Our records are equal, counting out my British service. And you should have your chance."

It was this strange mixture of selfishness and generosity that always puzzled Bob. And it puzzled him now. In his heart of hearts, considering his father and his wishes, he knew that

Greg's recklessness, his strange Jekyll-Hyde nature, made him unfit to administer the vast fortune. But when Greg said things like this Bob could not hate him.

"Let's try to forget the damned money, Greg," he said simply, "and go out there and do the job. I'd"—he hesitated—"I'd like to shake hands with you."

Their hands met and clasped tightly. Then with no further word they ran to their waiting Spads. Five minutes later Greg zoomed into the heavens in a steep climbing turn, rendezvoused at eight thousand feet and droned at three-quarter throttle toward the flame. Down below, hugging the ground in a hedge-hopping ride so as to avoid the alert eyes of high-climbing Fokkers, Bob took his two flights for the ground-strafting mission.

THE first anti-aircraft shell blasted apart near Greg's tail. He did a spinning dive. And in that instant his fiery nature took hold. To-day he was out to get two victories, to cinch the money for himself. And he forgot everything else except that.

His orders, as ceiling protection, were to fight only if necessary to keep E.A. from crashing through on the two flights on the carpet below, so close to the ground that they had no chance to maneuver. He had intended to obey them.

But when, presently, out of the north came winging four Halberstadts, Greg's eyes flashed.

"White meat!" he muttered. His hand struck the throttle. He wagged the stick to signal, "break and attack," and the next instant he roared across the sky to the attack. The Spads dropped down on the Hals like a dozen hawks, and the Hals, trying to flee, found themselves knotted in a trap of Spads. Greg had eyes only for the leader and he began to batter the crate with Vickers fire. Everything was forgotten, orders, friendship for Bob, in this desire to win.

So he did not see fourteen Fokkers crash down out of a puffy cloud and slide on the greased slides of hell toward the unprotected Spads strafing below. The Hals had deliberately lured Greg and his men away so the Fokkers could crash through.

The Germans were full of tricks like that.

Bob Durke, a hundred feet above the carpet, saw ahead on a sunken road, three companies of Germans crowded together as if about to advance. He signaled his men for single-file echelon and nosed down. His Spad howled at full gun. He slid at the startled Germans like a hurled projectile. Closer and closer they came. He could see their white faces, the frantic efforts to find shelter from this flying death. Then his ring-sights picked up this swell target.

He pressed his stick-trips and his guns hammered above the roar of his motor. A line of tracer fire beaded the ground just ahead of the German infantry.

Down he roared upon them, guns stabbing flame! Yank tracer fire! A lancing line of golden flame! A darting sliver of death that made the ground dimple and jump. And then the hurtling slugs of his Vickers struck the Germans. The line of fire stitched through them. Bullets that no steel coal-scuttle helmet could turn. Slugs that marched through bodies of *feldgrau* and cut them in two.

Over them he roared like an angel of death. Then he was past the Germans. He made his guns stop firing and hauled back on his stick and made a climbing turn that threw him around to come back and smash them again. Behind him came his men, one by one, throwing a thousand bullets into a thoroughly smashed German column.

At the precise second Bob nosed over to cut a swath through the survivors, he heard a strange clapping sound. Machine-gun fire! He looked for Maxims on the ground. He saw none. Then smoke tracer flew with

the speed of light itself past his head. Thrummed into his wings, battered at his struts! Then Bob knew.

German planes! Boche planes had broken through and were smashing at him.

A split-second in the sky can be a lifetime. Bob did not even waste the instant to turn his head to see the German Fokker slipping onto his tail. His hand jerked the stick knob into his stomach. He thought of his men. His hand flew up in the signal, "Zoom and form—fight."

It was the instinctive action of a leader. The Germans were hurtling down like hailstones. The big chance for safety lay in zooming through them. Then to fight, fight savagely for altitude in which to keep these devils off their backs. Three of Bob's Spads never obeyed his signal. Two of them, smashed by Spandau fire, burst into flames and crashed into the ground with a roar like a shell explosion. The third, nose down, kept right on going and dug a hole in the ground six feet deep in which the dead pilot and his fragments of plane were neatly gathered ready for burial.

But Bob's swift action had given the rest a breathing space. Blindly they followed him up. Planes flashed by each other; wing-tips scraped; guns belched and all was wild confusion. Then, in a fierce *mêlée*, Bob and his men charged through. Savagely they spiraled for altitude. It seemed they were through when the sky suddenly rained pelting Fokkers. Death leered at them. They were caught between two flights of Fokkers. Trapped!

## CHAPTER IX

### JUDGMENT BY SPANDAU

**D**ESPAIRINGLY, Bob's eyes turned heavenward. Where was Greg? Away to the west he saw an endless chain of planes circling around each other like children playing ring-around-a-rosy. A dogfight! Greg was there; he had been tricked,

pulled away in a feint attack and could not help now.

Bob, with the memory of Larkin, Haverty and Chromas dying down there with not a chance for their lives, suddenly cursed furiously, awfully.

He said more; wild, savage words, swallowed in the roaring drum of his beating Hisso. And then the wildly circling Fokkers forced him to action. His first thought was of his men. His first instinct was to do the unexpected.

Automatically he had turned and made a vertical dive when the second set of Fokkers rained down on him. He now had lots of speed built up; the ground was two hundred feet below. The first Fokkers that had attacked were banking in now for a second attack, catching the Yanks between two fires.

Bob raised his arm in signal, tipped his crate. Then he brought the stick back into his lap.

"Follow me, you idiots!" he prayed to his men.

His Spad lurched up the sky, went over on its back. A loop this close to the ground was suicide, impossible, yet it was the only chance because it was unexpected. With steel Spandau bullets plugging at him from three different directions Bob rode down out of the loop; behind him, tightly formed, roared the survivors of his Wing. The maneuver gave them all a few seconds respite from the battering lead. And Bob seized the interval instantly. He wheeled away to the south and began to climb as steeply as he could.

He and his men got up to eight hundred feet before the Fokkers closed in and the massacre began.

The Germans closed in tightly in a circle like Indians riding around a wagon train, and two of Bob's Spads fell with dead hands at the stick at the first impact of their savage assault.

Twelve thousand feet above the trapped Yanks Greg Durke plunged down in a vertical dive. He rode

his rudder bar, savagely throwing the death burst into his second Halberstadt victim. The Hal was making a frantic effort to escape. Its wings fluttered at the terrific speed of the plunge. But Greg hung to his prey and they roared to earth at four miles a minute.

Greg's eyes gleamed in triumph. For minutes he had been obsessed with this lust to kill. It was possible that Bob might down one enemy craft. But it was scarcely possible he could shoot down two. This Hal ahead hurtling earthward in a despairing attempt to escape would cinch the winning of the money for Greg. So the Hal was doomed.

With the ground lunging up at him the poor devil in the Hal's cockpit tried to pull out of his headlong dive. That split-second loss of fall speed spelled his doom. Greg was upon him in a flash, riding full gun. His eyes caught the black knobbed head of the German pilot in the ring-sights. His thumbs found the Vickers trips.

The smooth, blue guns poured out a molten stream of hot steel. The slugs laced the empennage, marched up the paneling, tore into the pilot and on through him into his instrument board and flattened themselves against the Mercedes.

The pilot lunged upward as his soul was torn from him and fell back. The Hal dropped slowly back into her vertical dive and plunged down to destruction. Greg howled with joy. The tenth kill! He led by two. Let Bob try to equal that. For the moment he was alone in the heavens with his joy.

Then as he thought of Bob a stark memory came to him. He had concentrated so much on this victory that he had forgotten his own flight and his mission. What of Bob?

He flattened out slowly, circled, his eyes searching the brown carpet below. And then he saw. A whirlwind of Fokkers were there, circling and darting savagely at hemmed-in Spads.

"My God!" he groaned.

His eyes told him that these trapped Spads were doomed. His gaze lifted despairingly to the heights. He saw Spads up there. His Spads, widely separated. They were giving chase to the remaining Hals and were diving on a couple of two-seaters to the west.

Leaderless, not knowing what to do, they were carrying on a personal fight and waiting to be organized. But Greg knew there was no time for organization. It would take him minutes to spiral up there, gather up the flock and dive down to a rescue. What must be done must be done now.

Greg had never attacked a group of Germans alone before. He was the sun-rider, the surprise diver. But now, as he saw what he had done, that strange conscience of his screamed, "Go down there! You're to blame. Save!"

**A** WEIRD cry burst from Greg's lips. He thrust forward the stick, kicked the rudder and his Spad dropped down the sky to Bob like a falling rock, leaving him hanging in the safety belt.

He struck the Fokker pack with the impact of a thunderbolt and his guns stormed and roared and burst a path through for him.

Bob Durke slammed his Spad around into skid-turn and with a savage ten-shot burst drove a Fokker off the tail of young Mercereau. As he zoomed to leapfrog the youngster, he saw a lone Spad battering through the Fokkers! He saw the lightning-bolt insignia.

"Greg!" he yelled hoarsely.

Greg had come. They were saved. Bob looked for the rest of the Spads. But Greg was alone, and was fighting like a human tornado. Greg spun in and out of the Fokkers and two went down in forced landings before the impact of his lead. The fury of his savage assault created confusion in the Fokker ranks. In this confusion Bob saw a chance of escape.

His wings waggled the signal for concerted rush, and the pounded Spads, desperate, seeing hope once more, roared at the Fokkers and by the very madness of their onslaught broke through. It was not until he looked back, checking over his survivors, that he saw Greg Durke.

"My God!" Bob groaned.

Greg had two Fokkers on his tail and two boxing him in. He was roaring across the sky in a hopeless dash to escape the trap.

Greg was boxed; he'd never get out of it alive without aid.

And as that realization came to Bob, he cursed. He had a stark problem before him. His military instinct of leadership told him he should abandon Greg to his fate. Better one man die than that Bob should risk his battered, worn flights against superior numbers. Greg's desertion had made this situation, cost five Yanks their lives. It would cost more lives now.

Every atom of sense in Bob told him to make good his escape. But he was remembering Greg's strange friendliness there on the tarmac before they had left. He was remembering that if Greg had created this situation he had also daringly come alone to make a rescue. Bob also thought of the money in this split-second of indecision. He recalled that Greg, leading now, probably, in victories, perhaps already chosen for the legacy, would inherit money that his father wished used worthily and not wasted. Bob's fingers tightened on the stick.

"Damn the money," he yelled furiously, and with an upward fling of his hand and a swift jerk on the stick, made a vertical bank and tore back toward the four Fokkers pounding the helpless Greg. Bob, roaring through the air at three miles a minute, gave a little groan of despair as he saw smoke tracer whanging from four Spandaus into Greg's Spad and around his head.

"Hang on, kid," muttered Bob. "We'll——"

The next instant, like a ton of thrown bricks, the compact Spad formation struck the four Fokkers. Bob howled ahead with spattering red-hot guns. He shot a lane through to Greg's side. His heart went sick as he saw that Greg's Spad was weaving, seeming already to go into a spin.

"Oh, they got him," groaned Bob. "He's hit—they got him."

For a brief instant the two Spads roared side by side. Bob waved his hand. A bloody arm came up and feebly returned the salute. Bob pointed toward home. Then he swerved and went back to pull his men out of the mess they were in.

The fight raged furiously, murderously. Three Fokkers dropped out because of ammo exhaustion; one got yellow and quit. And finally the remainder, seeing a squadron of Nieuports racing to the rescue, pulled out of the fight and ran.

Bob was glad they did. He was within fifteen minutes of an empty gas tank. And his survivors were in as bad plight.

He waved a hand up at the Nieuports. There was a two-seater Breguet amongst them. The two-seater dropped a blue rocket that burst and dripped more blue stars.

It was a signal that said, "Your mission is done—go home."

"And a good thing," muttered Bob. "Or a lot of us would have to walk. I hope Greg isn't badly hurt."

He drove full gun, his men tucked in behind him. Over Sergy he came upon Greg's crate. It was limping along, dropping into a slip, only to recover and shove along on a sputtering motor. With a rush he and the survivors fell in on each side, and thus they escorted Greg to the tarmac.

The Breguet and the Nieuports thundered overhead as top protection. Twice Bob suppressed a yell of fear as the wounded Spad dipped in a long glide that looked like the end.

"Hang on, kid," Bob prayed.

He could have cried out in admiration when they circled the tarmac and

Greg fish-tailed the Spad in for a three-point setdown.



**B**OB made a jack-rabbit landing, cut the switch and ran madly to Greg's crate.

"Greg!" Bob cried to the limp, pallid figure in the pit.

Greg's head slowly turned. "Got—her—home," he smiled weakly. "Got four victories—one day. That let's me win."

He tried to straighten but fell back; drools of scarlet came from between his clenched lips, ran down his chin. Bob cut him loose, lifted him down.

"I win, don't I, Bob?" Greg's voice came weakly. "I wanted to win—so much—just to win."

"Yes," Bob mouthed. "You win—of course you do, Greg."

"But he doesn't win," said a hoarse voice behind Bob.

Bob swung savagely. It was General Mitchen who had climbed down from the Breguet two-seater and now came to investigate.

Bob's eyes gleamed in rage.

"What do you mean?" he cried. He looked down apprehensively at Greg, and saw, thankfully, that his half-brother had fainted.

"What do you mean?" he repeated fiercely to Mitchen. "What right have you to say that Greg has lost?"

"I happen to be the judge," replied Mitchen quietly. "The only judge!"

**A**T SOUILLY the chief surgeon of Evacuation Four examined Greg. He looked up at the tense faces of Bob and General Mitchen.

"Not a chance," he said. "Lungs punctured by a tracer bullet. It's burned a big hole against the backbone. He's dying now."

There came a silence and then Mitchen said, "Well, perhaps it's just as well. His heart was set on winning. And I had already decided against him."

Bob swung on Mitchen savagely.

"How? Why?" he cried, fiercely. "How is it you are judge?"

"I told you once," replied Mitchen, "that your father and I were classmates—that is, he was an upper classman when I was a plebe. He did me a favor, kept me from being kicked out of the Point. And we were friends thereafter."

He paused, reached for a cigar, then hastily put it away. "Your father was commissioned in 1896. He served at Fort Bliss for a year, then got a chance to go into business and make some money. He resigned. He went into business. Then the war with Spain broke out about a year after he had resigned. He was in a bad position. If he took the commission instantly offered him, he would have to give up the business at a critical point. It would probably ruin his civilian career. Yet he had to make a decision; his country first, or himself first. He was selfish. He refused the commission, pleaded his family and business crisis, and made a lot of money out of the war."

Bob listened intently. He had always suspected that his father was suffering from conscience; he heard now for the first time why.

"The years passed and Abner made money, lots of it," resumed Mitchen. "We kept in touch, for I seemed to be the binder that held him to his old career in the service. He used to confess to me that the fact that he had refused to serve in the army in time of need preyed on his mind. He was always like that; selfishly impulsive, bound to do things his own way, and then his conscience nagged him." He looked down thoughtfully at the still figure being brought into a bed, the body of Greg from which life was slowly seeping.

"Greg was very like your Dad," Mitchen said. "Impulsive, reckless, doing the wrong thing, then suffering terribly from conscience afterward. Today, for instance, I saw most of that dogfight. He deliberately left

your ceiling protection to shoot down a victory so as to win this award. Then his conscience made him go to your rescue. That would be Abner all over again. Greg thought service to America could be weighed by personal victories. Leadership was the biggest service but he didn't realize that. He was not a leader; you are a natural leader. Your men followed you; his didn't. As you saw, he had to dive to your aid alone because his men didn't follow him. That cost him his life; he paid the price of not being a leader."

"Yes," said Bob. "But my father——"

"Your father suffered torment during the last years of his life. With all the money he wanted, he couldn't buy youth and the chance of service, to serve his country to make up for his desertion. So he left the will, and because I knew of his conscience, he made me the judge. And I had decided upon you. You are stable, trustworthy, willing to obey orders because you have disciplined yourself. You are a leader; men will follow you because they trust you. They liked Greg but they didn't trust him."

Revolt suddenly flamed in Bob.

"Nonetheless," he cried suddenly. "Greg gets the money. Now that he is dying because he came to save me, he shall have it. You must give it to him."

"But if I do that," protested Mitchen, "then you will have nothing. He will die and a public trust fund will be established."

"The hell with the money," cut in Bob fiercely. "Father meant well; but he did wrongly. That will, the desire of us to get that money, has created enmity between us, and now it has killed Greg. I don't want the money; let a trust fund have——"

"Shush!" hissed Mitchen. "He's getting back his senses."

Bob's voice died away suddenly. The pallid face of Greg had moved, the eyes were opened. Then as understanding came, the husky voice

muttered, "Bob, who was the judge? Who won?"

Bob poked Mitchen in the short ribs and said softly, "General Mitchen is the judge, Greg."

A second's silence.

"Yes, yes," the head moved slightly in impatience, "but who won?"

"You did," said Bob. "Greg won, didn't he, general?"

"Yes," said General Mitchen, moved despite himself by the terribly eager look in Greg's eyes.

A strange look of contentment came over Greg's face, fighting off the shadows of approaching death. "I won!" he murmured. He coughed slightly and Bob wiped away the drool of blood that came through his lips. "I won," he repeated. "Then that's all right. I wanted to win, terribly. I knew I could."

"So did I," said Bob. "The best man always wins."

The strange silence endured now for minutes. Then Greg stirred restlessly.

"Wait. Wait," he said querulously. His staring eyes glared at the wall. "Flanagan, Kilroy, Minsterman, why are you here? Why do you point accusingly at me? I had the right to win. Even if I won climbing over your dead bodies. I won."

"I know Bob was fine," he mumbled. "I neglected men, and you're coming to taunt me now. Don't rub it in. Somebody has to die."

"It's all right," soothed Bob.

"It's not all right." Greg stirred nervously. "I know Bob was finer and I nearly sent him to his death."

A coughing spell racked him; the surgeon gave him a shot of cognac to flag the drooping soul. It made Greg's voice stronger.

"General Mitchen, I'm dying, eh?" Greg tried to lift his head, could not.

"Why—" began the general, confused.

"Don't lie to me. I'm not afraid to die. I've looked at it too often. I'm dying in here, I hurt—" he nodded toward his chest.

"I'm afraid you aren't going to get well," said Mitchen, bluntly.

Greg did not flinch. "It is well to know. Then who gets this money?"

"A trust fund for public service created by your father's will."

"Then Bob won't get it?"

"No."

"I won't have it so," said Greg. "I won the legacy. It's mine to dispose of as I choose and I want Bob to have it. He deserves it. Write-write on anything: 'I leave this inheritance to Robert Durke, my beloved half-brother, whose nobility of character truly deserves it, and I die knowing the money will be spent in the interests of the people of America whom my father loved.'"

He made Mitchen write it, drank cognac to keep his voice clear. Somehow he managed to sign his name. He looked at it and muttered, "That'll fix it for you, old man. Bob, forgive me, shake my hand."

He moved his fingers slightly and Bob took the icy cold damp hand and held it. He was still holding it, three-quarters of an hour later, when Greg gave a final convulsive little shiver, as the throbbing patter of a dying heart shook his chest.

Dry-eyed, pale, Bob went out. Mitchen met him, shook hands silently and they moved out into the sunshine of a clear day.

"Greg's hasty will, of course, is not legal," said Mitchen. "You knew that, didn't you?"

"I suspected it," said Bob, indifferently. "Who cares? I don't. That money has become an evil thing. Money ruined my father's soul; it has stolen my brother's life. Why should I care who gets it?"

"You'll get it though," promised Mitchen. "You'll see that it is wisely administered and is used to help America. And that will please your father and Greg will be satisfied. The good Lord works in his own strange ways his ends to achieve."

Together they walked up the roadway in the sunshine.

# EAGLE-EYE

## Illustrated True Feature

By **W. E. BARRETT**

Author of "The Bombers," etc.

**THE AMAZING TRUE STORY OF THE WAR'S GREATEST TWO-SEATER ACE. HE FLEW A TWO-SEATER AGAINST THE ENEMY'S FASTEST PURSUITS AND BUILT UP THE INCREDIBLE SCORE OF THIRTY ENEMY AIRCRAFT.**

**I**N 1915, a slender Canadian youth from the province of Ontario went to France as a private with the Fifty-eighth Battalion of Canadian infantry. He had never been close enough to an airplane to know what one really looked like, and he was too young to dream of being a commissioned officer. Yet, within two years, that boy had become the greatest flying ace of the war in his own field and held a commission as major in the British Expeditionary Forces. The hero of this extraordinary change of fortune was Andrew McKeever.

Only in the air force are such

miracles possible. The wildest dreams of the romantic novelists were outdone in the hectic development of flying during the world war. Youth had its fling then as never before and schoolboys threw away their books to become high ranking officers in old armies and world-famous heroes overnight. Not every youth, of course, who dreamed of glory saw his dream come true. The exceptional ones were given the opportunity. Their own courage and the smile of the gods determined the rest.

McKeever had the courage and the gods were kind. When he left the in-



**THE BRISTOL FIGHTER**

Bristol Aeroplane Co., Ltd.

*This ship was considered the greatest two-seater in the war. It made its first appearance at the Front in April, 1917. In the hands of men like McKeever it became one of the most formidable combat ships on the Front. The United States purchased rights to build the Bristol but could not adapt the Liberty engine to the design.*

fantry to take training as a pilot in the fall of 1916, he was the rawest of raw flying cadets. It was all new to him and he was a bit heavy handed on the controls, even when he learned the rudiments. He did have, however, one valuable asset besides a set of steady nerves. He had a gift for the guns.

So remarkable were this youngster's scores in machine-gun and camera-gun practice that he early won for himself the name of "Hawkeye." That name stuck to him throughout his whole term of service in the air, and he justified the name. Anything that ran foul of his guns once never had another chance.

The Bristol Fighter was receiving its tryout in England when McKeever won his wings. It was not popular that early in the game. Old pilots and new made the same mistake. They sized up this new ship as they would size up any two-seater. Stability and slow, plugging worth were the standard virtues of a two-seater. The pilots of the period could not imagine a two-seater with scout qualities. It was strange, new, unorthodox—consequently, it was disapproved.

McKeever, who had been considered a little ham-handed for the Nieuports and the Pups, despite his skill with the guns, had been marked for the two-seaters. He liked the Bristol. Not being handicapped with any previous knowledge of two-seaters, he saw no reason why a two-seater should not be fast and maneuverable and tricky. To his notion, a ship like that in the proper hands might be better than a scout. He had little company in his opinion, but he won a job on the ship that he admired.

ON MAY 16, 1917, he reported for duty with the Eleventh Squadron in France. This was one of the most famous squadrons on the Front, a squadron which had once had the great Ball on its muster roll. When McKeever came out, there was a pall

of gloom over the squadron. Bloody April had been a very bad interval for Eleven, which had been mounted on the old F.E. pusher. The memory of heavy casualties still lingered, and the pilots were not cheered by the prospect of receiving Bristols in place of the F.E.s.

"Forty-eight had Bristols during April," a veteran pilot told McKeever gloomily. "They turned out to be a bloody mess. Killed as many of our chaps that flew them, by the Lord, as the Germans did. Too hard to fly. Gives the Hun a shot every time."

McKeever looked puzzled. He didn't know anything about front-line fighting, but he found it hard to imagine why an F.E. pilot should criticise a ship like the "Fighter." Later he found out. The Bristol was so far ahead of any ship of its time that the men to whom it was intrusted failed utterly to understand it. The men at the Front were making the mistake that the men in the training schools made. They were looking at the Bristol Fighter as another two-seater and applying to the handling of it an outmoded two-seater technique. They were trying to give the observer a target and leaving the shooting to him when they had a ship that gave them a prime shot, if they only thought to take it.

McKeever had never learned to give the observer first shot. He considered the observer as a chap who came along to observe and to protect the tail if the tail needed protecting. The few patrols that he made in the old pushers where the pilot had no chance to shoot did not change his ideas on the subject. When Eleven got its Bristols in June, McKeever became a marked man. He really fought in the ship.

The first Albatross D-3, victory ship of April, that came flaming down on him got a surprise. The Bristol that the German pilot had marked for its prey did nothing that Richthofen stated a Bristol would do in his famous report of April. In that re-

port the Baron had waded the Bristol aside as a mediocre ship. "It is clumsy," he wrote, "and so unstable that it is possible to get into perfect position before the pilot can maneuver to give his observer a shot." But he was overconfident.

Probably that Albatross pilot who tackled McKeever on June 21 had read the report. He came in wide open and McKeever whipped his big two-seater around with the celerity of a scout. The synchronized guns on the cowl bucked, and the eye that had sent thousands of practice rounds into the hearts of targets did not fail with a live target in the sights. One burst did the work and McKeever had won his spurs.

The next day, McKeever repeated. From then on he did not wait to be hunted. Except when he was charged with an important reconnaissance, he went out of his way to look for German ships. On June 26, he added to his score, and once more came back on the following day with a second kill.

**T**HE rookie's performance was inspiring, and the men who were veterans on F.E.s were not too proud to take this youngster's advice on Bristol tactics. In squadron discussions at mess in the old Eleventh, those pilots worked out the fighting tactics, which were passed along to other squadrons and made the Bristol Fighter the greatest two-seater in the war. Perhaps one should say that they learned to use the greatest two-seater in the war. It had been that all the time, if it were understood.

How much of the credit for the Bristol's increase in popularity belongs to McKeever is hard to say. Certainly he leaped into an early lead in destruction with this ship and was never headed. All through the summer he scored and scored heavily. On July 11, he did the hat trick and scored three victories in a day.

With less than three months of active service behind him, he became

the leader of a flight, and he was one of the first, if not the first, two-seater flight leader to borrow scout tactics by going down and strafing roads, trenches, railheads, airdromes and German trenches.

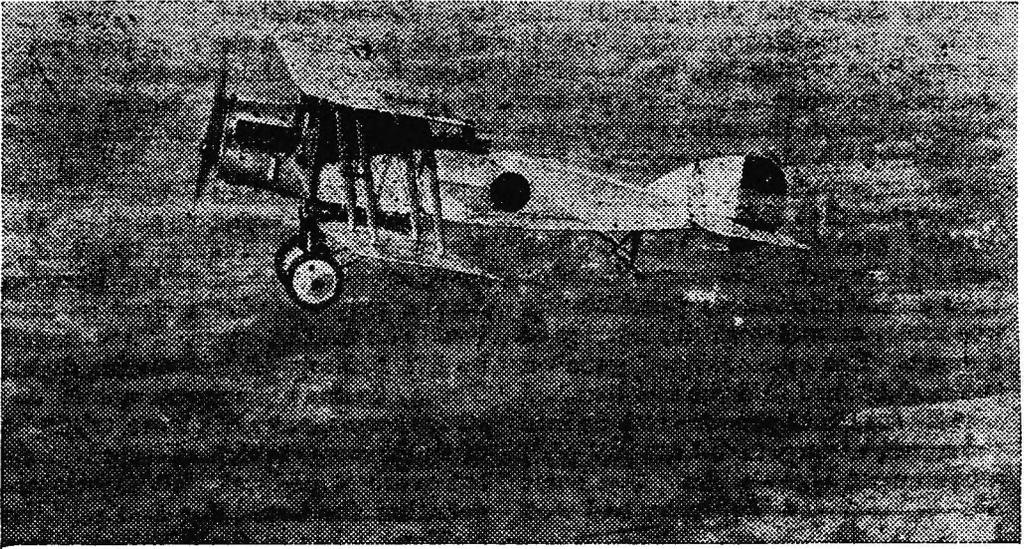
One of his raids in August of 1917 on a German airdrome behind the Ypres Front so caught the public imagination that the artist, Bertram Sandy, perpetuated the deed on canvas. The raid in question was staged by five Bristols of McKeever's flight. Three German hangars were destroyed and a score of planes. A flight of Pfalz scouts which attempted combat were wiped out, McKeever accounting for two. For this raid, he received a bar to the Military Cross which he had won in July.

His score mounted steadily throughout September. On the 28th he again did the "Hat Trick"; two scouts and a Roland two-seater going down under his guns.

His observer, Lieutenant Powell, was also piling up a score of respectable proportions. There is a point there that should be noted. Unlike the French and the Americans, the British did not give two men who shared a kill equal credit. Only one man could be credited with an enemy plane destroyed. In those cases in which the ship he piloted was the instrument of destruction for an enemy craft, he received no credit unless the German ship actually fell from a burst that he directed. It made no difference how much skill he exercised in giving his observer the chance. He rated only those that he shot down personally. Consideration of that fact makes McKeever's record all the more remarkable.

His famous combat of November 30, 1917, is a good example of how the British system of scoring worked out for him.

It was a washout day for flying due to a very low ceiling, heavy fog over the lines and a steady drizzle of rain. An urgent call came down from H.Q. It was imperative that a report be



*Bristol Aeroplane Co., Ltd.*

#### MAJOR McKEEVER ON PATROL

*This rare photograph shows McKeever in the all-white Bristol which he piloted to 30 victories over enemy airmen.*

obtained of certain German activity reported nearly forty miles back in German territory and sixty miles on a line from the drome of the Eleventh. "Get volunteers," was the crisp command. H.Q. was not certain that any airmen would return from a mission like that on such a day.

McKeever and his observer, Lieutenant Powell, volunteered. They lost the earth almost as soon as they left the drome, and McKeever flew a compass course for his objective. When his reckoning told him that he should be over the point for which he had started, he dropped down and found the earth visible from a thousand-foot altitude. Flying low and ignoring the anti-aircraft batteries, he gave Powell all the time he needed to complete his reconnaissance and then started home.

McKEEVER was climbing back toward the concealment of the clouds when there was a shattering roar ahead of him and an ammunition dump went up in flames. McKeever flew toward the explosion and was dropping down to see the extent of the damage when a leaden rain spat-

tered suddenly about his ship. He had made the fatal error of becoming so interested in the ground that he forgot the air.

A flight of Albatross scouts had let him get down low and then had sprung their trap.

McKeever had a split second to make the decision that would settle the fate of his observer and himself. He knew that he was doomed at such low altitude, against the odds that he was called upon to face. His nose came up and he zoomed straight for the German pack.

The Germans, like some British pilots, had their set ideas of how two-seaters should be flown. It was unthinkable to them that a two-seater pilot in McKeever's fix could do anything except put his nose down and leave his poor observer up in the tail to hold off the pack. As for coming head-on into attackers? *Nein*. Two-seaters should never do that.

The German mind does not untrack easily. The startled leader of the Albatross flight had only time to register one flash of the unbelievable. The *verdammter* Britisher was charging.

McKeever's guns snarled and a

burst of ten rounds went point blank into a German who was coming right into the burst. It took all of McKeever's skill to hurdle that Albatross. It burst into flame so quickly that it hurt his eyes.

A wide-eyed German who was to the left and behind the leader had only time for a slight swerve. That swerve brought him directly into the guns of the Bristol which had just hurdled a blazing ship. Hawkeye's guns flamed again and the German flipped convulsively wing over wing before going nose down.

The right-hand Albatross behind the leader had checked his dive, and his ship sprawled and yawed as an Albatross would when jerked abruptly from a dive. While the tracers were going from McKeever's gun to his second victim, Powell in the rear cockpit was lining the third Albatross in his sights. His gun spoke only a split second behind that of his pilot. The one burst did the trick. The German was too perfect a target to miss.

So fast had the action taken place that the leader's ship had not yet hit when the other two ships started down.

Only four of the German planes out of a flight of nine had dived on the two-seater; the theory being that four was more than enough. The other five had stayed above. Now they, too, were coming down, and the sole survivor of the first four was trying to keep away from this mad British two-seater that insisted on fighting when it should be running away and giving a pursuit pilot something to pursue.

Running away would be folly, even now with three foes accounted for. McKeever recognized that as fully as he recognized the odds against him. His strength lay in bold attack. He continued to go up into the grim attackers; vengeful now and alert where their comrades had been confident and reckless.

Straight through the plunging

flight went the Bristol, and McKeever held his fire. A German careened madly across his sights. For a fraction of a second the black crosses were set up for the keenest eyes in France. It was enough to seal another German's doom. A flash of fire and a puff of smoke, then a mad plunge and—nothing!

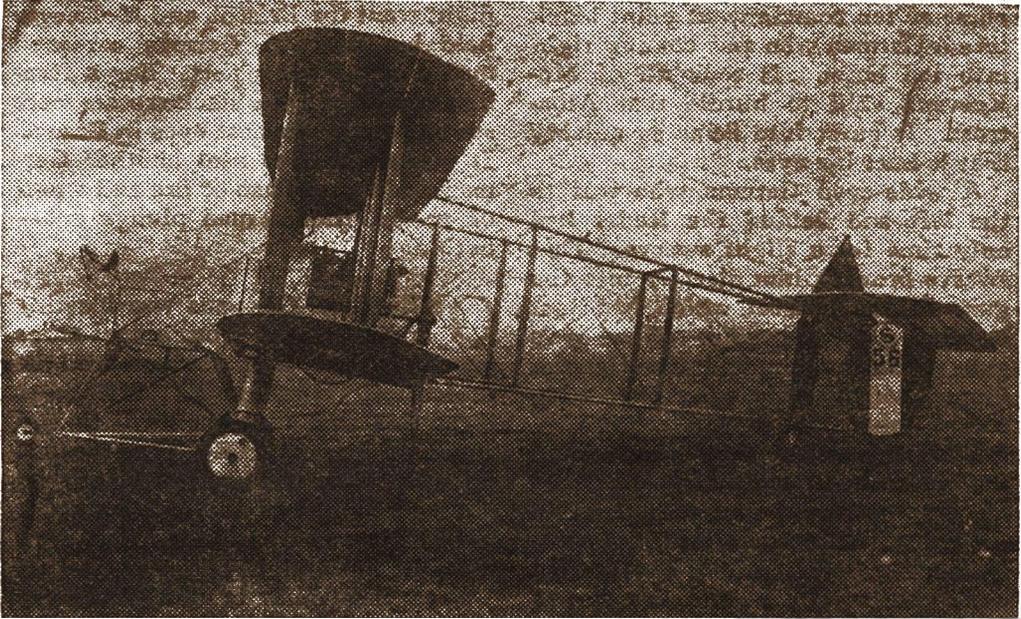
ONE of the Germans was blasting at the Bristol from a spot three quarters rear, and underneath, the theoretical blind spot. McKeever threw his ship over on its back and Powell's gun barked. The German pilot threw up one hand and clenched his fist convulsively. With his other hand he pawed frantically at his eyes. Then he was gone!

Five foes done in and still they came. A ring of flaming death surrounded the Bristol and the bullets flacked against the fuselage and the wings. One burst rang off the rear gun and Powell reeled back. He had only a flesh wound but, for the moment, he was dazed. His gun was out of action.

It couldn't last at this rate and McKeever made a bold play to shoot his way out of the death circle. Head-on, he made for the nearest ship. The German pilot was slow and McKeever caught him in the sights. His heart leaped and he pressed the trips.

Nothing happened. His gun, too, was out of action. Worse, the Germans seemed suddenly aware that their foe had no more defense. They were closing the circle, diving at the men. A gunless ship would live a matter of seconds in such a trap. McKeever whipped his nose up, threw his hands out wildly to feign a mortal wound for the benefit of those foes closest to him—and let the Bristol go.

In a tight spin he plunged downward to where the mist still hugged the ground. The startled Germans did not pursue him down. Just over the trees tops he pulled out and, disdainful of groundfire, hedge-hopped his way homeward.



Royal Air Force Official.

#### THE F. E. 2 b

*McKeever flew this ship while with the Eleventh Squadron. It was the first two-seater fighter and was a successful foe of the front-line Fokker in 1915. It was powered with a Beardmore 160 h. p. motor and was capable of 80 m.p.h. It could climb to 10,000 feet in 40 minutes. The gunner sat in the front cockpit and used a Lewis machine gun. This ship finished out the war as a night bomber.*

Out of that epic struggle, McKeever received credit for three victories. Powell was credited with two. Winning to acehood on the two-seaters was no easy thing.

McKeever's term of service, however, was nearly up. His name had been constantly in the dispatches and the air ministry was very much aware of him. He was a man of destiny, one who fitted into a place that the shifting trends of wartime airplane design had created. In January, 1918, he was recalled to England.

Already men with vision had seen the significance of the Bristol Fighter's success at the Front. The day of the single-seater pursuit ship was very nearly done. The fighting scout of the future would be a two-seater; as fast and as maneuverable as a scout but carrying danger fore and aft. The directing minds of the air force wanted to train men for that next step in aerial warfare. It wanted men as instructors who believed in the two-seater fighter, liked it and

understood it. Who better filled that set of specifications than McKeever?

So Hawkeye, now Major A. E. McKeever, D.S.O., went to England in charge of the training of Bristol pilots. His knowledge and his experience made him practically indispensable and he was not permitted again to risk his knowledge in combat.

Many Bristol pilots went to the Front during '18 with all that McKeever could give them but—with a year at their disposal—no pupil even approached the record of the master. McKeever's 30 victories in a little over six months of service in a Bristol remained the outstanding performance of the war. No other two-seater pilot, regardless of length of service, won that many victories.

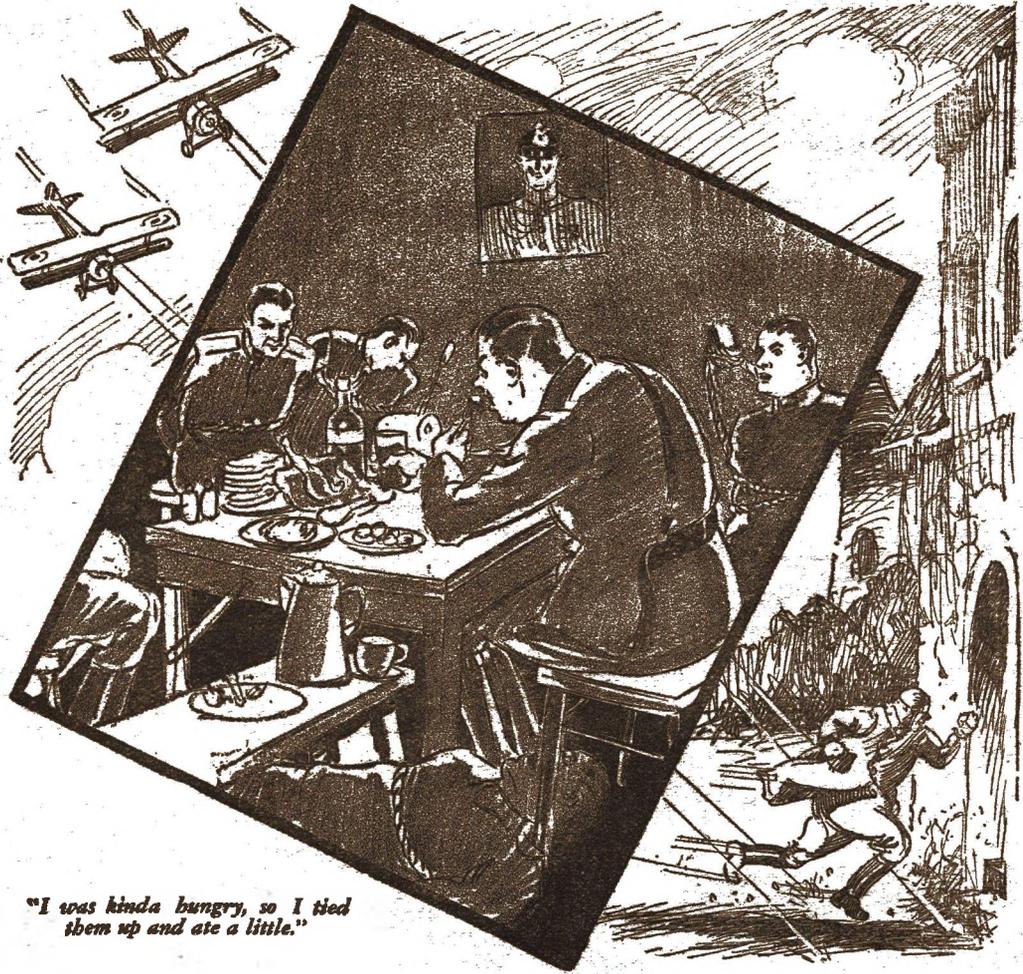
The slim private of infantry who went to the war at 18 with the infantry had become a major and the outstanding flyer of the war in his field.

The air service was a place where miracles like that happened.

# PILOTS MUST EAT

By R. SIDNEY BOWEN

Author of "The Break," etc.



*"I was kinda hungry, so I tied them up and ate a little."*

Forced landings were an old gag with Fat Powell—forced by hunger. When the Boche cornered all the food, an inner growl reminded him that a pilot, as well as the Army, travels on his stomach.

**O**FFICIALLY the outfit was known as Shock Pursuit Unit, Number 76, but unofficially it was known as "Hooper's Six Hellions." The Hooper, because that was the C.O.'s name, and the Six Hellions,

because that's just what they were—six hellions, hand-picked from the entire air service, and ready for a fight or a frolic in daylight or in darkness, it didn't matter which.

Just at present five of them and Major

Hooper were standing on the tarmac. The sixth, a pilot known as "Fat" Powell, was missing.

Hooper eyed a tall pilot pulling off his helmet and goggles.

"You think Powell's engine conked, eh?" he grunted.

The tall pilot nodded.

"Looked that way to me," he replied. "We didn't scare up a damn Hun and were just crossing back to our side when Fat dipped his nose and slid down. His prop was just ticking over. He waved us on, so I knew it wasn't anything serious. He's probably got things fixed, and is on his way here now."

"Probably," muttered Hooper grimly. "Unless he force-landed near a rolling kitchen. If he did, he won't show up until he gets his damn belly full. Hell, that bird would stop the war to eat. Well, so long as he's down on our side, it's okay. You fellows go powder your noses. The colonel's paying us a visit. Got a job for us that means action. Thank God for that. I was beginning to think that Wing had forgotten us. Okay, beat it!"

As five of the Six Hellions moved off an orderly stepped up to the C.O. and clicked his heels.

"Phone, sir," he said. "The 43rd Observation."

Hooper strode into the squadron office and picked up the dangling receiver.

"Major Hooper talking. Oh hello, Collins, how's the war up there? Huh! He did? Yeah, I know, if a Fokker doesn't get him indigestion will. Sure, I'll cut his tail feathers. Okay. 'Bye."

As the C.O. hung up he heard the sputter of a blipping Bently. Going to the door he saw a Camel settle down on the ratty uneven field like a feather coming in contact with a quilt.

"The sweetest pilot in France," murmured Hooper. "And the damndest eater in the whole world!"

He raised his voice.

"Orderly! Tell Lieutenant Powell to report to me at once."

Five minutes later one hundred and ninety-four pounds of bone and steel muscle eased in through the door.

"You want me, major?"

"Where the hell have you been?" snapped Hooper.

Fat Powell shifted his feet and ran the tip of his tongue along his bottom lip.

"Well, you see it was this way, major," he began. "The old engine was pounding a bit coming back, so I thought I'd slide down and have a look before it fell apart."

"And so you picked the drome of the 43rd!" cut in the C.O. "And between looks you bummed a meal that would kill a horse. Collins just called me up. He wants you to keep the hell away. Of course you didn't know that the 43rd had just got five hams from the Red Cross, did you?"

"Oh, did they, major?" asked Powell. Hooper snorted.

"Well, they've only got four now!" he snapped. "Collins said you ate one. Now listen, make all your forced landings on this drome, see? Lay off filling your belly elsewhere."

"Gosh, major," stammered Fat Powell. "I didn't have much before I took off, and the air was kind of keen, and you know—"

"Yes, I know," broke in Hooper. "Your same old line—pilots must eat! But cut out bumming meals at other squadrons. You're giving me the rep of starving my men to death. Now go brush your teeth, the colonel's due here in fifteen minutes."

**C**OLONEL BRANKER, commander of the 42nd Wing, fixed serious eyes on Major Hooper and his Six Hellions. "You've had some pretty tough jobs before, gentlemen," he said. "But this one is like all the others rolled into one. Now gather around this map and listen attentively."

The colonel paused while feet scuffed forward.

"Now," he continued, placing the point of his index finger on a spot on the map. "See that spearhead in our lines? Well, as you know that's the Basel Hill and swamp sector. You will note that it extends some two and three-quarter miles east of the north and south line

of the German Front. It's a spearhead only from a geographical point of view. There isn't a single soldier in that area. The hill and the swamp make it absolutely impossible for our troops to occupy it. Likewise for the Germans."

The colonel paused again, this time for emphasis.

"Now," he resumed at length, "if it were possible to occupy that spearhead with troops we could shove forward, split our attack to the north and south and outflank the German troops on either side of the spearhead. The result would be that we would then be able to straighten out the hump in our line by shoving the Germans back and putting the spearhead behind us, instead of in front of us. Unfortunately, though, that's a dream we can't make come true—not with troops anyway. A regiment would be mired in that swamp before it had advanced fifty yards. And that's why I'm here."

There was a long silence. Major Hooper eventually broke it.

"You mean us, eh, colonel?" he asked.

The senior officer nodded.

"Correct," he said. "Right near the point there is a small field, not big enough for more than six or seven planes. Seven at the most, I'm sure. And the pilots would have to be pretty damn good to get in and out of it, at that. But, seven pursuit planes working out of that spot would be worth a brigade of troops."

Major Hooper glanced at the faces of his pilots, saw the looks of grim determination and then turned to the colonel.

"We get your point, sir," he said quietly. "When do you want us to start?"

"To-day," was the instant reply. "Once you are well established at that field in the spearhead, we're going to start the drive. To be perfectly frank, G.H.Q. is considering zero hour for some time to-morrow morning. So you see there is no time to lose. You want to spend every second between now and darkness flying your equipment over there. And, by the way, although I haven't mentioned it, the job isn't going

to be simple. Once the Huns find out what you're up to, and they will, they'll make that place a hell for you. They'll try to bomb and shell you off the map. You'll have to prepare against that. There is a crumbled stone building on one edge of the field. Used to be a powerhouse, so I am told. You can use it for sleeping quarters, but you'll have to pull the planes under the bordering trees. There are no hangars. And—"

In turn the colonel looked each man square in the eye.

"And you will be entirely isolated," he said. "The only connection with the outside world will be by air. There will be just the seven of you. I freely admit that it's a wild undertaking, but it's worth the chance. G.H.Q. is counting on you. Establishing and working out of that isolated position will mean the difference between the success and failure of the drive. That's all gentlemen. Make your own plans from now on, and good luck!"



**S**ALUTING them smartly, Colonel Branker walked out of the mess. As the door closed seven grunts were lost to the echo.

"Well, men," remarked Major Hooper, signaling for an orderly, "I guess we're getting some action at last. Have a drink on me, and then we'll get to work. There's a hell of a lot to do."

Fat Powell shifted in his chair.

"How about eating first, too?" he ventured.

Hooper glared at him.

"Can it, Powell," he snapped. "What are you going to have—to drink?"

That afternoon was one of the busiest that Hooper and his Six Hellions had ever put in. The task of finding and landing on the God-forsaken spot selected by Colonel Branker was a. b. c. for them. Where the hard work came in was transporting equipment that they'd need. Such items as ammo, ammo belts, spare guns and Cooper bombs were heavy and could not be ferried over in a

single hop. Then there was also, the all-important item of gas. Once the drive started the outfit would be far removed from a supply of gas. Therefore it was necessary to take over plenty of spare drums. As only one drum could be carried in a plane, and at least fifty were needed, the troops on the ground below must have thought that an airway shuttle service had been established. The last item carried over, and the biggest individual load for Fat Powell, was food. Only perfect piloting on his part got it up and down.

The sun was still above the western rim of the world when Hooper and his hellions had everything fixed up. As the colonel had said, there was a crumbled stone building at one side of the field, and although it was more than crumbled they managed to make it tenable enough. The whole thing was a job well done, but now as every one broke out cigarettes, Major Hooper sat frowning at the eastern sky.

"You saw them too, major?" Powell asked suddenly.

The C. O. threw him a quick glance.

"The Fokkers, you mean? Yes, I saw them, and it seemed funny as hell to me. Wonder why they didn't once try to jump us? With the loads we were carrying, we'd have been in one hell of a mess."

"They were some of von Kummer's gang," spoke up a pilot named Briggs. "And those babies are ready to scrap any time!"

Major Hooper nodded reflectively.

"Yeah," he grunted. "That's what bothers me. They were on patrol all afternoon. They must have spotted us, yet they didn't start to come down once. Wonder why the hell they didn't?"

Fat Powell fixed dreamy eyes on the stores of food carted over. The old mess had been practically cleaned out.

"I've got an idea," he said slowly.

"Sure," grunted a pilot. "About eating!"

"Partly," replied Powell unruffled. "But the idea is about those Fokkers. I've got it figured out. I know why they didn't jump us."

"Well, spill it, Powell, spill it!" cracked Major Hooper. "Never mind the introductions."

"It's just this, major," said Fat in a slightly injured tone. He never hurried except in a dogfight, then he was flying lightning. "It's this," he repeated. "We've thought up the idea and done all the work. And now the Huns are figuring to cash in on it!"

"You mean," started the C.O., "to drop down and take this place?"

"Something like that, sir," nodded Fat. "There's ammo, bombs, and gas, and food here. And the Huns, holding this place, instead of us, would certainly raise hell with the drive to-morrow."

The C.O. considered a moment, then shook his head and pointed to several tripod machine guns set about the small field.

"Those things will stop them from trying to drop down here," he said. "Let them bomb and shell all they want. But seven of us behind those machine guns could stop any squadron of planes from landing."

"I thought of that too, major," said Fat. "But what's going to stop them from taking this place to-morrow while we're out strafing? We can't fly and stay here at the same time!"

Major Hooper jumped as though he'd been shot.

"My God, that is an idea!" he exclaimed. "Sure as hell, that's what they plan to do. Come on, men, get your ships twisted up. We're going back for a mechanic apiece and fly him back on the wing. They'll come, even if I damn well have to tie them on. They can handle the machine guns for us. Yeah, you've got a head as well as a stomach, Powell!"

**I**N TIGHT formation they roared off the isolated field and headed back toward the old drome. Had any one of them chanced to turn in his seat and scrutinize the eastern heavens, he would have seen a lone Fokker hell-diving for earth far behind the German lines. But no one did turn in his seat, each was too intent on flying westward with the greatest amount of speed possible.

Eventually the mecs had climbed up on the wing stubs and the flight took off again. Bending forward over the stick, Major Hooper peered ahead with anxious eyes. Little pangs of dread quivered up and down his back. He felt as though he were flying against time.

He was—and he was too late.

The Germans had not waited until the morrow. They had acted already. As Hooper started to throttle his engine and glide down to the field he checked the movement and cursed. There below him, nicely parked under the bordering trees, were seven black Fokkers. And behind each one of the tripod machine guns was the familiar uniformed figure of a German pilot.

Shouting to the mechanic on his wing to hang on, the C.O. split-arc'd clear of the ground fire. The Six Hellions followed suit and presently they were circling slowly about, out of harm's way, and glaring down at the Teutonic air-drome poachers below.

There was nothing to do but turn back toward the American lines. Unhampered by the mechanics on the wings, the C.O. would have signaled for an attempt to storm the place. But to try that now would be suicide, a needless risk of lives. Swearing like a pirate Major Hooper led them back to the old field. To make matters worse Colonel Branker's car came rolling onto the field as they taxied to the hangars.

The Wing Commander leaped from his car and rushed over to the C.O.

"What the hell are you doing here, Hooper?" he roared. "My God, man, I thought you were all set out there? Why——"

"Just a minute, sir," cut in the C.O.

While the crimson flooded his cheeks he told the whole story.

"We realized it too late, sir," he finished savagely. "And damn their hides, they beat us to it."

"But they can't have that spot, Hooper!" stormed the colonel. "My God, man, don't you realize what it means? The drive to-morrow? We've got to kick them out of there. And dammit, you've got to do it!"

The C.O. had had the same idea ever since the moment he saw the Fokkers, so the colonel's raving didn't make much difference. But there was one thing which made him hesitate to wave the flight out onto the field and take off again. That was the time of day. The sun had sunk below the horizon and the long shadows of night were creeping across France. There would be, of course, sufficient light to reach the isolated field and make a landing. But that was the idea—they couldn't make a landing. The Huns were there. To take the place in daylight would be a touch and go affair. To try to take it under cover of darkness would be an impossibility.

It took Hooper about one second to decide.

"We'll take it now, sir," he rapped out viciously. "But send over some observation planes with mechanics in the back seat, as soon as dawn comes to-morrow. We'll need the mechanics to hold the place for us while we're strafing."



**B**EFORE the colonel could make any reply Hooper leaped back in his cockpit and gunned the engine. Like seven demons bolting out of hell, Shock Pursuit Unit, Number 76, roared off to the east.

But they did not attempt to strafe the isolated field.

At two thousand feet directly above it they met three German bombers under escort. The bombers were just starting to glide down as Hooper fired a warming burst from his guns and wagged his wings. Once again the Germans were beating him to it. He knew damn well what those bombers carried. Not bombs, but six men apiece, including the pilot. In other words a ground crew of fifteen men to hold the field while the Fokkers raised hell with the American drive.

"You haven't beaten us to it yet, damn you!" yelled Major Hooper, and he flung his plane downward.

Kicking his rudder sharply he swerved one of the bombers into his sights. His guns snarled and he saw his tracers slicing through the giant craft's wings. The bomber zoomed clear and answered the fire. A quick roll and a split-arc turn brought it back into Hooper's sights. This time he did not miss. The bomber turned slowly over on its back, like a whale in the ocean. Then it suddenly nosed downward and a sheet of flame and smoke belched upward.

"One!" cried Hooper hoarsely, and took a quick glance about the sky.

In the one second allowed he saw Fat Powell's plane streak down on a second bomber. It was all over in a flash. The bomber was little more than charred framework when it crashed into the ground.

"Two!" yelled the C.O., and then went back to work.

During the next thirty seconds two Fokker pilots flamed out of the war. He whipped down on a third and was about to press the trigger releases when one of his own pilots, he thought it was Briggs, roared down past him and shot the Fokker apart. As the C.O. came up out of his dive he nearly locked wings with another Fokker.

By now night had set in, and the ground below was but a mass of blurred shadows. With a groan Hooper realized that the fight had drifted far north of the isolated field, and the scrap had spread all over the darkening sky. He could see the reflection of exhaust flames, several toward the east, but he could not tell whether the planes were German or American. Planes had been plunging earthward all around him during the fight, and the icy fingers of fear clutched his heart as he wondered if any of his brood had gone down.

The C.O. throttled his engine and tried to pierce the gloom that grew darker by the second. It was no use. He couldn't see a damn thing except the flare of exhaust flames here, and another one over there. Taking his Very light pistol out of its cockpit clamp he stuck it over the side and pulled the trigger. A ball of green fire arced outward and traced a curving

path downward through the night air. Every nerve tensed, he slowly banked his plane around in a wide circle and waited.

Presently two sets of exhaust flames came sliding up to fall into formation position behind him. He sobbed out a curse and eased around toward the west. God, two out of six!

**I**T TOOK the C.O. an hour to find the old field. He thought that the mechanics must have heard them, for a landing-T in burning oil pots was laid out. A few minutes later, though, he realized why the oil pots were out. Two of the Hellions had landed already.

As soon as he could get out of his machine he counted noses. Fat Powell and Briggs were missing.

"Any of you men see them?" the C.O. asked grimly.

"I saw Briggs, major!" spoke up a pilot. "He's gone—a flamer!"

"And Powell?" repeated the C.O.

"Hell yes, I remember!" exclaimed another pilot. "That third bomber started to slip away. One of our boys went hell bent after it. It must have been Fat! There's still gas-time for him to get back."

With a drink under his belt Hooper called the colonel and started to explain. But before he got half a dozen words out of his mouth the senior officer blew up and shouted over the wire that he would be right down. The C.O. hung up and cursed.

Colonel Branker came in like a four-alarm fire.

"Damn it, Hooper!" he blazed forth. "If I'd have known this was going to happen I'd damn well have picked another shock unit! What the devil happened anyway?"

The C.O. took a second to curb his rising wrath and then in terse, clipped sentences he told the story.

"Break me for coming back, colonel!" he finished angrily. "But only a butcher would lead two men against a place like that in the darkness!"

"Oh, I don't mean anything personal, Hooper," back-watered the colonel has-

tily. "Only I've informed G.H.Q. that we are ready for our part. I sent the word through when you went over with the last of the gasoline. I'm sure you see how it is. It would be a terrible black eye for the air service if we told G.H.Q. that we'd been driven off the place!"

Hooper thought of Powell and Briggs. He held his tongue.

"So we've got to do something," went on the colonel. "We just can't let the Germans have that spot! It's the key to the whole drive."

"Have some of our night bombers go over and blow the place off the map," suggested the C.O. for the want of something better to say.

Colonel Branker shook his head vigorously.

"Can't do that," he said decisively. "Haven't any to spare. Besides, they'd never find the spot on a night like this. And even though they were lucky they'd spoil the field for our use. No we've got to drive those Fokkers off and establish ourselves instead!"

Major Hooper glanced at his watch.

"Powell's gas-time is up," he said. "He's down somewhere, undoubtedly dead. That leaves only five of us. All right, colonel, we'll try to do the only thing possible! We'll go up just before dawn and make a run for the place and strafe our way in. If we take the place, one of us will fly back to give the signal.

"If one of us doesn't come back," he added quietly, "then you'll know that we were all out of luck."



**D**AWN was a good hour below the eastern lip of France when Hooper and four of his Hellions went out to the tarmac. Each man was on the ragged edge and ready to fight the Devil himself. Not one of them had tried to get any sleep. As a body they had sat in the mess hoping against hope that the phone would ring, and Fat Powell would be on the other end of the wire. The loss of

Briggs was bad enough. But the loss of Powell was like an engine with no ignition.

The C.O. called them together as the mechanics warmed up the ships.

"Just a few words, men," he said in a tight voice. "We'll go up to ten thousand and cross over. Then the second the light gives us a break we'll go down. If there's anything in the way, don't stop. Go right on down through it. We'll strafe in the usual follow-the-leader style, each man covering the tail of the man ahead. We've got to take that damn hunk of ground! Not for Wing, but for Briggs and Powell. We owe it to them. Come on, let's go!"

Eyes glued to the shadowy ground below, Major Hooper led his four Hellions in a wide, lazy circle ten thousand feet above the isolated field.

Finally Hooper couldn't wait any longer. He wagged his wings and shoved the nose down. First he saw the crumbled stone power-house. And then he saw the seven Fokkers pulled under the trees. A shout of joy burst from his lips. At least the Fokker pilots wouldn't have time to get into the air. Hooper and his Hellions were beating the Huns to it this time, at least.

Two thousand feet up he flattened his dive a bit and veered off slightly to the right. And then he started forward in his seat and brushed a hand across his eye. No, he wasn't crazy, he wasn't seeing things! The tripod guns were there all right but there wasn't a damn soul behind any one of them! A quick dive and they'd be able to land before a German could reach the guns!

But even as he shoved the nose down farther he saw a figure come bursting out of the power-house and run for the nearest tripod gun. Hooper kicked his rudder a bit and pressed his trigger releases. His guns snarled and bullets kicked up a cloud of dust some fifty yards ahead of the running figure. It skidded to a halt and looked up. Then as Major Hooper shortened his aim the figure spun around and raced back to

the power-house. The C.O. kicked up the dirt at his heels and then signaled for a landing on the far side of the field.

With props pointed toward the power-house the Hellions climbed out and gathered about Hooper. In each man's right hand was a service automatic.

"We caught them sleeping, by God!" breathed the C.O. "Now take it easy, men," he went on. "Spread out, keep low and pop th——"

"For God's sake, look!" suddenly burst out one of the pilots.

**E**VERY one jerked erect and looked toward the power-house. A dishevelled figure was pounding across the field toward him. There could be no mistaking who it was—none other than Fat Powell in the flesh. But he looked a wreck. His uniform was in rags and he was plastered from head to foot with mud.

"My God!" he panted as he reached them. "I lost ten years of my life. Fell asleep. I thought you were Huns. You damn near plugged me as I went for that gun!"

He could get no further. They leaped on him like the truly long lost brother that he was. A hundred questions were flung at him, the principal one being, "What the hell happened?"

"Tell you inside!" Fat yelled. "We got company. Come on, taxi me over there before the company tries to leave!"

Less than a minute later they all entered the one good room of the power-house. The first thing that greeted their eyes were seven exceptionally annoyed looking Germans pilots tied up in a corner. They were jammed together like sardines in a can.

Major Hooper cursed and laughed in the same breath.

"I give up!" he cried. "For God's sake, Powell, can the suspense! What the hell happened?"

"Well, it wasn't so much, major," Powell began. "I followed one of those bombers way the hell east, and I finally got it. But I also got a couple of slugs in my engine. It was dark as hell, but

I turned west and tried to limp back home. I'd just about got started when the damned engine popped out for good."

He paused and grinned.

"Yeah, it was an honest to God forced landing this time. Well, anyway, I thought that I could reach this place in the glide. It was the only thing to do—it's barren as hell around here. So I took the chance that maybe these birds wouldn't spot me coming in in the dark. Well, they didn't because I missed by about five hundred yards. Sat down in the swamp. It knocked me out for a bit, but when I came to I headed this way. You see, we had our stuff all here, and——"

As Powell hesitated Hooper helped him out.

"Yeah, we get you," he said. "You were hungry."

"Hungry as hell!" nodded the pilot. "Well, I still had my automatic and it was okay. When I reached here these Huns were all in this room and diving into our grub. No, there wasn't much to it, major. I caught 'em with their pants down. None of them felt like getting plugged so they trussed each other up with that rope we brought over. I finished the job and made sure everything was good and tight. Then I sat guard, and—well, I guess I fell asleep on the job. You fellows woke me up. Thank God you weren't Huns!"

"Thank God you were so damn hungry last night!" corrected Major Hooper.

He turned to one of the other pilots.

"Slide back over and tell the colonel to send the two-seaters with the mechanics," he ordered. "And tell him that we're all set and ready to save his damn bloody war."

As the pilot turned to go Fat Powell stopped him.

"And tell him to put some more food in one of those two-seaters," he said. "These damn Huns almost cleaned us out! And hell, pilots——"

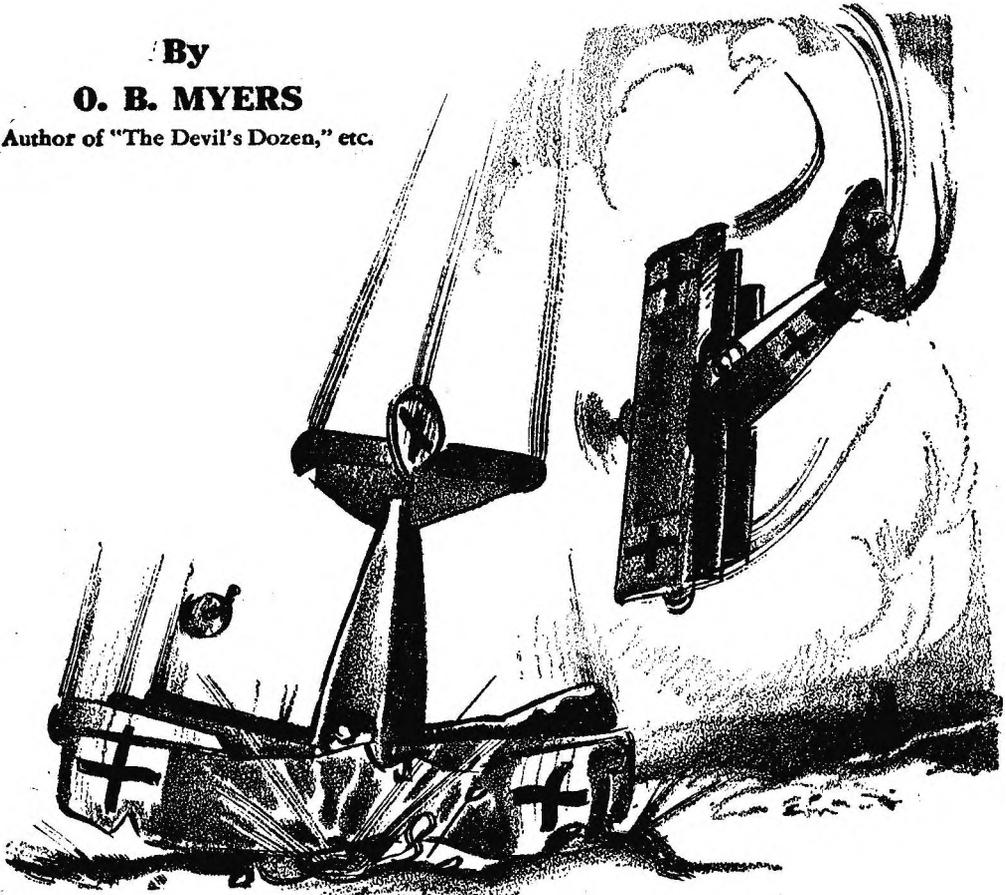
"Sure," nodded the C.O. to the waiting Hellion. "Tell him that pilots must eat. Now get going!"

# DEAD MAN'S DIVE

By

O. B. MYERS

Author of "The Devil's Dozen," etc.



*The other Fokker screamed past him as he pulled the Dead Man's Dive.*

That wind-torn streamer marked safety for two Yanks, until that trick maneuver taught Barry to distrust even the message of the white signal—when black crosses cast their sinister shadow on it.

**T**HAT balloon at Sargelles must come down before dark!" Major Crane leaned forward in his chair, and emphasized each word by pounding an angry fist on the table top. His brows were drawn together in a worried frown, his tone was harsh and uncompromising, his eye flashed fire. Plainly the commanding officer of the 19th Spads meant what he said, and not maybe.

The three flight leaders who stood

facing him shifted uneasily from one foot to the other, and looked alternately at each other with sidelong glances, and at the floor. For the third time that day they were hearing this order, which, in itself, was unusual. The crack squadron of the Yank pursuit was not accustomed to having an order repeated, even once. Their reputation had not been built on failure. Even to admit its possibility came hard.

"I didn't tell you before," resumed the

major, in edged accents, "but I may as well now. To-morrow morning at dawn an important push is starting, up that valley. An enemy balloon in the region of Sargelles would raise merry hell with our infantry, and probably be enough to cause the collapse of the drive. That's why it must come down." He leaned back, and the sting of sarcasm entered his tone. "At nine this morning Wing gave us the job. It's now after five, and as near as I can tell from your reports, not a bullet has scraped fabric yet. Every hour they call me up; what am I to tell them? That the 19th is not equal to the task? Of shooting down a single balloon? Bah! The 29th, at the other end of the field, will be laughing their heads off at us—to say nothing of the gravity of the results."

At mention of the 29th, their deadly rivals, one of the uneasy pilots flushed beet-red, and another muttered a curse of vexation. But Jim Frost, C Flight leader, tallest, broadest, and oldest of the three, straightened his shoulders, looked the C. O. in the eye, and spoke apologetically.

"We've been trying all day, sir. But that *Drachen* is being covered continually by a full squadron of Fokkers, about twenty-five. C Flight attacked at noon, but they drove us off. We lost two men, and couldn't get near the balloon. A Flight lost another at two o'clock, with no better luck. Then B Flight tried to lure the Fokkers out of the way with a single decoy, while the rest waited in the sun. But the Boche wouldn't fall for it. They're all from Kranich's circus; we could see the green crows plainly."

"Kranich!" muttered the major thoughtfully. "The best flyer the devils have got—damn them! I saw him give a stunting exhibition at Mineola once, before the war. If he was good then, what must he be like now? But Kranich or no Kranich, that balloon must be destroyed! Now, how are we going to do it?"

Neither of the others making a move to open their mouths, Jim Frost spoke again.

"Direct attack will never do it, sir. A Flight is out on the five o'clock, at the other end of the sector; we'd have only about twelve to their twenty-five. We'd only lose half our men, and never get near the balloon. Our only chance is to lure those Fokkers away by some trick, and then strike before they get wise."

"But I thought you said B Flight tried that?"

Jim Frost nodded hopelessly, and frowned, deep in thought. He was about to speak again, when suddenly the words seemed to freeze on his lips, and his eyes opened wide in astonishment. The major, too, leaned forward, gripping the edge of the table, and fastened a horrified gaze on Jim's face. One of the other pilots emitted a sharp gasp of alarm.

"My God, what's that!" cried the major.

For the past several minutes there had been audible from overhead the rising and falling drone of a couple of motors, to which familiar sound the four men in the room had paid scant attention. Now, however, the drone had risen abruptly to a roar, increased immeasurably in volume; had in an instant become an ear-shattering thunder, so close above the roof that it seemed literally to be in the room with them, pounding upon their eardrums, and actually shaking the papers upon the table. The plane from which it came, it was obvious, must be perilously low; must, it seemed at any moment, burst through upon them.

AS ONE man they sprang for the door. Jim, first to emerge, looked up, to see a Spad graze its wheels on the ridge-pole of the first hangar. Behind it, hard upon its heels, came another; both were so dangerously low that he had no difficulty in catching their numbers. The major, at his elbow, was swearing profusely.

"Who in hell—crazy fools, stunting right over——"

The C. O.'s words stopped as it cut off with a knife. For the first Spad

suddenly seemed to go mad. Its headlong rush was interrupted by the most grotesque maneuver the major had ever seen. Its tail came up, over, and up some more, until, without apparently changing position, the ship hung nose down, but motionless. It was in the attitude of a vertical dive, not fifty feet above the hangar roof, yet it was not diving. The second Spad passed beneath it; an exclamation of horror burst from the major's lips. But instead of plunging headfirst into the hangar, as he fully expected, the Spad above dipped briefly into level flight, and was in the next moment curving off beyond the road, with motor cut to land. It took several moments for the C. O. to get his breath.

"Well, I'll be fried! That's the first time I ever saw—say, Frost, who is in that ship?"

Jim, to whose face some of the color had returned, smiled faintly as he replied.

"It's Ed Starke, major. And the other one is Barry McCue. They're at it again, trying to prove who is the crack stunt artist of the outfit. That argument between them will never be settled, I guess, till one of them is dead."

"Well, damn their hides. I'll give them both tickets to Blois, if they pull their exhibitions right over my headquarters roof! Scared me out of five years' growth, they did."

Since the major already stood six feet three in his stocking feet, reflected Jim, the loss would probably not be serious. He watched the first Spad land, and taxi toward the hangars; Barry McCue was rolling his wheels in the middle of the field. Without waiting to come to a stop, he blurted his gun, and shot at headlong speed across the tarmac. His ship slewed recklessly to a stop alongside that of Ed Starke, and Jim could see that the argument in the air was being followed by an argument on the ground.

"Look here, Frost, what kind of a contortion was that that Starke pulled? I swear I never saw anything like it; I

thought he was coming down right on top of my head!"

"That's a trick stunt of his own, major. The 'Dead Man's Dive,' he calls it. Although the ship is in a diving position, it isn't moving downward."

"How does he do it—magic?"

"No; in fact, he's quite willing to tell you, any time. He's explained it to everybody in the squadron, but no one else seems to be able to master it. When worked right, it gives you a free shot at anybody on your tail. But every time I try it, I fall into a spin. I'd never dare start it as low as he did."

"It looks like a good stunt," admitted the C. O., "but you can tell Starke for me to practice it elsewhere than over my head. If he and McCue would give the Boche the benefit of their maneuvers, instead of this field, they'd be a damned sight more good to us. Come along now; we're losing time. We've got to figure out some way of getting at that blasted balloon."

The major turned away toward the door, but Jim did not follow immediately. The other two flight leaders entered; the major turned.

"Frost!" he called. "I said come on!"

But Jim still stood like a statue, his eyes riveted on an empty spot in the sky, his brow creased in thought. The major was just about to shout again, angrily, when Jim spun on his heel, took a few steps, and seized him by the arm.

"Major!" he blurted excitedly. "Your words gave me an idea! We were just trying to think of some way to decoy Kranich's Fokkers out of position, weren't we?"

The C. O. nodded, puzzled, but did not interrupt.

"Well, how does this sound?" And for perhaps half a minute Jim spoke eagerly, in a low tone, into the major's ear.

"By God!" exclaimed the C. O., when Jim paused. "That might work. Get them in here right away, and we'll talk about it."



**T**HREE minutes later the same group of flight leaders was clustered around the major's table, with the addition of two new figures. Ed Starke,

short, chunky, and grim-featured, lolled at ease without removing either helmet or goggles; his hard-bitten jaw was that of a man who would rather fight than eat, which index to his character was not denied by his fearless gray eyes. Barry McCue was plainly much younger; after a nervous glance about him, he stood stiffly erect, helmet in hand, his boyish face betraying a slight uneasiness. The C. O., he guessed, was about to bawl them out for stunting over the drome, and the first words he heard sustained this expectation.

"You buzzards," began the C. O., "seem to be fond of staging mimic battles between yourselves, to see who is the better man. What I want to ask you is: how would you like to have it out once and for all, where the whole squadron could be watching?"

Barry, surprised, could not speak for a moment.

"I'll fly him ragged any time, major," drawled Ed Starke.

"You mean you'll try!" retorted Barry. "Why, I was almost on your tail there, to-day, when——"

"But you didn't stay," murmured Ed, with a maddening smile.

"Hold your tongues," interrupted the major, "until you hear what I'm saying. You both know about the balloon at Sargelles. We've been trying to dope out some way of tricking those Jerries into leaving it unguarded. Jim Frost has suggested that if they were to see a Fokker and a Spad in close combat, with the Spad apparently getting the upper hand, they might be lured into coming to the rescue of a comrade in distress. But the scrap must not look like a fake, or it will never fool them; Kranich's men are wise devils. The 29th has one of those green-cowled Fokkers on the other end of the field,

that they brought down intact three days ago. Get the idea?"

The two rivals not only grasped the idea; simultaneously they stepped forward, and spoke in the same breath, eagerly.

"I'll do it, major!"

"I didn't ask you yet," growled the C. O. "Maybe you haven't considered the risks. If the thing works, you'll find yourselves in the middle of about two dozen Fokkers, and the man in the Spad will be in for a hot time. And if those Boche guess the trick, the one in the Fokker will be in for a hotter time still; Kranich's crowd won't take kindly to being fooled."

"In that case," said Ed Starke calmly, "I'll fly the Fokker."

"The Spad," retorted Barry instantly, "is supposed to be getting the upper hand, you said. So I'd better take the Spad."

Ed snorted in disgust, but the major was speaking again.

"Make your combat just as real as you want; the harder you fight, the better. Do a lot of shooting, but be damned sure you miss. The rest of us will be up in the sun, watching; we'll tell you afterwards who is the better flyer. The minute the Boche leave the balloon and come for you, we'll come down. There will be enough of us to make a scrap out of it until somebody gets a crack at the bag; then it will be every man for himself. As soon as the balloon goes down, beat it for home—understand?"

Every one in the room nodded his agreement.

"Now Starke, you're willing to fly the Fokker?"

"Any time," answered Ed evenly.

"All right: But before you start, tie a white rag on your tailskid. That will identify you, so that we can tell you from the other Fokkers once the mix-up begins."

"No need for that, major," objected Ed immediately. "It might identify me to the Boche, too. And I'll take my chances of attack by the Spads any day."

"Don't be so sure, Starke; there's such a thing as over-confidence, you know. There's enough danger in this thing, without risking being shot down by your own friends. Do as I say."

Ed Starke opened his mouth to remonstrate further, but then closed it again. A direct order was not to be disputed, though from his sullen expression it was evident that he considered it unnecessary. It was, perhaps, the color of the marking which displeased him.

"THERE'S no time to lose," the major was saying rapidly. "Frost, you see that B and C Flights are notified and ready. McCue, make sure your ship is gassed, and your belts full. Starke, you start across the field; I'll call Bardwell at the 29th right away, and tell him we want to borrow that Fokker. Fly it over here, and we'll get it fixed up as quickly as possible. We ought to leave the ground in"—he glanced at his watch—"not less than twenty minutes."

A chorus of shouted and eager assent went up, and the hurrying pilots trod on each others' heels as they went through the door. Outside they separated, one trotting toward the barracks, two toward the hangars; Ed Starke, alone, set off at a run in the direction of the hangars and quarters of the 29th, on the opposite side of the field. Inside, Major Crane sat still and thoughtful at his table, after making one brief telephone call. His brow was deeply furrowed, and his head shook sadly from side to side.

"By God!" he muttered to himself. "I ought not to let them do it. But that balloon——"

It was several minutes before he rose, reached for his own helmet and goggles, and himself emerged onto the busy tarmac.

A quarter of an hour later a dozen Spads were drawn up on the deadline, and the air quivered with the throttled thunder of many exhausts. Barry McCue, standing beside his cockpit, felt the quiver travel up and down his spine,

and tensed his muscles to resist. The suspense of waiting oppressed him; why couldn't they get started? Ed certainly took long enough to fasten a bit of rag to a tailskid. He looked down at the end of the line, where idled a ship different from all the others. After five minutes of fussing around the tail, Ed was now fussing some more inside the cockpit.

He saw the major stride over impatiently and ask a question, though he could not hear the words. He saw Ed nod, almost leisurely, and without waiting to see more, Barry threw his leg over the fairing and let himself slide down into the cockpit. By the time he had his belt fastened the major was shouting into his ear.

"He'll be over Gorette, at three thousand! Come in from the west, and dive on him. Let the wind carry you toward Sargelles. We'll be there, but you won't see us. Watch yourself, now, good luck!"

Barry grinned tensely, and saw a cloud of dust arise behind the major's head. Ed, in the Fokker, was taking off. The square-nosed, alien ship rolled swiftly across the turf, and rose smoothly before passing the middle of the field. It curved smoothly upward in a graceful chandelle, and droned into a steep climb. Ed certainly knew how to handle a plane, even one whose cockpit was strange to him, thought Barry. But his lips tightened; he'd show Ed to-day who was the better flyer. The whole squadron would be watching; it was his chance to prove that he, Barry McCue, was the crack pilot of the premier outfit in the sector. Had he taken more than a casual glance at the major's face, he could have guessed that his commanding officer was worried less about the outcome of the rivalry between himself and Ed, than about what was going to happen when twenty-five angry Boche awoke to the fact that they had been tricked.

Barry's fingers crooked around the throttle, and pulled it quickly open. The Spad, trembling like an eager steed, moved forward, gaining speed. Barry

ruddered toward the center of the field, and waited until the stick no longer felt limp in his hand. Then he tugged sharply. With roaring exhausts the Spad soared into the air, in a wheeling climb which was the exact duplicate of Ed's chandelle. Back across the hangar roofs he shot, in a stiff zoom. His eyes were to the front, and hence did not see the major, below, shaking a fist angrily at the hair-raising folly of his take-off.

Ed's Fokker was already a speck in the distance; Barry sheered off toward the western end of the sector, and watched his altimeter needle. Two thousand, three thousand, thirty-five hundred. Here he leveled off and checked his position. When he reached the lines he banked widely left, and swung in a wide circle until he was pointed across the ridges, toward Sargelles. The sun was over his left shoulder; his test against Ed, he reflected, would begin with the advantage of position on his side. And would end, he resolved, the same way.



**F**AR ahead, but drawing rapidly closer, Barry picked out the wooded ridge on the other side of which lay the valley of Sargelles.

Against the near slope he could make out a whitish blur which was the village of Gorette; in direct line beyond it the balloon was a grayish blot against the sky. His eyes lifted slowly—yes, there they were. Straight above the balloon the sky was speckled with pinpricks, in two large groups, which looked like two swarms of bees. Those were the Fokkers. For the moment he saw nothing of Ed's lone ship, and as he drew nearer he studied the formation of the enemy.

Circling at about five thousand, he estimated, and there were at least twenty-five of them. He had counted fourteen in one group, and his eyes were traveling over the other, when suddenly a faint shadow flitted across his cowl, and a distant crackling penetrated the ear-filling roar of his motor.

His head twisted sharply, and in an instant of shock he saw, coming from behind and above, a leering, black nose from which spat long, stabbing threads of gray. His heart jerked painfully; but then in the next instant he realized that the hissing tracers were passing well above his head, and at the same time caught a momentary flash of white from the tailskid of the onrushing foe. It was Ed, who, instead of waiting to be attacked, had crossed him by seizing the offensive in the beginning.

Damn it, why hadn't he watched for this, instead of wasting his vigilance on the distant Boche? Now the first advantage of position was Ed's; he might have known that devil would overlook no bets. Barry's hand brought the stick over against his right knee, and his foot drove viciously against the rudder. Without an instant's pause his Spad rotated upon its own fuselage as an axis, like a boomerang in full flight, until it completed a full roll. He shot a glance over his shoulder, and gasped in surprise. Instead of following up, Ed had curved away in a gentle glide, as if disdaining to retain the advantage he had procured at the start. This evidence of supreme confidence was all that was needed to touch off Barry's wrath.

"Damn you, play with me, will you!"

His wing-tip went down, and he curved into a plunge. But before he could straighten out, Ed was gone. A terrific zoom carried the Fokker up and up, into the blind spot covered by Barry's upper wing. Barry followed hotly, coaxing the last inch of lift out of his laboring motor. But still that black-crossed tail, with its fluttering marker, kept tantalizingly out of reach. Remembering the major's instructions, Barry loosed a sizzling burst, which raked the sky behind Ed's rudder. Then, on the verge of a stall, he saw the Fokker's wing-tip drop, and just in time thrust his own stick forward. He dodged Ed's whirling lunge by a matter of feet, and both went into a tight and endless spiral.

In furious and unrelenting struggle

the two fought on, while the minutes passed. The breeze from the west was drifting them slowly but surely nearer and nearer to the Sargelles ridge, but for this Barry had no thought. He was thinking only of the major and his comrades watching from a distance, to see which should gain the upper hand in this mock battle, and that result was, to Barry, more important than anything else. Twice Ed almost got on his tail, and only by superhuman efforts did Barry get free. Once he whirled into position behind Ed's rudder, but Ed crossed him by zooming instead of diving, and the fraction of a second lost in correcting his first move, coupled with the superior lifting power of the Fokker's thick wings, cost him the momentary advantage.

But Ed's dive, to regain speed, again left Barry on top. They were circling warily now, fencing for a thrust. Barry, looking down, calculated his position and speed to a nicety. A half-vrille, and a sharp pull-up; if done swiftly enough, it would place him on the other's tail, and there he would stay. He gripped the stick, lightly, but firmly, and the muscles along the back of his legs tensed in readiness. Ed was still in a vertical bank. Now!

**B**ARRY'S kick sent the horizon spinning like a top; it halted abruptly as his other foot corrected. Back came the stick, and he could see the broad side of a green-cowled Fokker sliding into his sights. He pressed a short burst out of his triggers, stopped it as his target slid too close. It was, after all, Ed Starke in that cockpit, and not a German, he reminded himself with a jerk. But what was Ed doing?

For a brief instant Ed, instead of wheeling to avoid his attack, held the bank, and Barry saw that he was twisted about in his seat to stare upward. Ed's left arm was over the rim of his cowl, gesticulating furiously. Then in the twinkling of an eye Ed was gone, as he threw his plane into a slip. Like a flash Barry remembered, and on the instant the sky seemed to tremble with

the rush of many wings and the roar of many motors. The Boche had come! Fooled by the fake combat, they had plunged to the rescue; the ruse had worked.

Barry's momentary knowledge of the success of the trick was drowned in the realization of his own peril. One swift look showed him a sky black with oncoming planes. From before, from behind, from all sides they converged upon him. And from every whirling propeller spat twin threads of tracer gray, to lace the air about his cockpit with hissing death. Those tracers, he knew, were aimed to kill. No longer was he playing a game of maneuvers with a comrade. Now he was pitting his skill against two dozen of the Boche's best, his only hope being to defend himself from annihilation until the other Spads should come to his assistance.

He hurled his plane into a twisting half-loop, but was careful not to let it stall at the top. He slid into the beginning of a spiral, to find himself flying through what seemed like a solid screen of tracer streaks. He hastily reversed his bank, but the fire was just as thick on his right hand as on his left. He plunged, and pulled up in a tremendous zoom, but still there were more above him, who dipped to rain steel across his path. To attempt to dodge the fire of any one was futile, since there were still a score to head him off. To run or dive was suicide, since it only uncovered his tail to direct attack. His only chance lay in perpetual and ceaseless maneuver, making of himself a constantly shifting target—and trusting to the blind gods of luck.

His contortions became grotesque, yet flowed one into another with the smoothness of perfect instinct. He emerged from a reversement to feel the bite of bullets passing through his tail surfaces. Yet he made not the natural error of diving, but pulled sharply up instead, and the fearful twitching of the rudder bar under his feet stopped. He swept around in a vertical spiral; when he felt the pound and smash of steel against his undercarriage, stick and rudder

crossed together, and he was dropping in a sideslip. The stream of tracers slipped along his top wing, and off into space.

He came out of the slip to yank into a desperate chandelle, and when no guns belched in his very ear was surprised to find himself for the moment free of attackers. He threw a look above his head, and realized the reason. The Spads had come. There were more planes than ever now, and the air about him was a mad whirl of confusion. Friend and foe were inextricably mingled in one insane struggle. The roar of exhausts was deafening, yet was rent by the shrill shriek of wires and the staccato hammer of a multitude of guns. The sky was a network of flying, hissing steel, through which darted in all directions the half-seen forms of plunging Spads and wheeling Fokkers. A battle royal, in which there could be thought of neither attack nor defense. Only lunge, and wheel, and lunge again, fire when the opportunity offered, and pray that the enemy missed you just once oftener than you missed him.

Barry gulped a deep breath of awe, and saw three Fokkers hurtling down toward him, closely pursued by a single Spad. He whipped his stick over, and came around on a wing-tip; the three were passing directly before his sights. He peered closely; no, none of the three carried a white streamer on its tailskid. His fingers jammed the triggers down. The first burst was wide, but Barry's stick slammed into the corner of his cockpit, and as the bottom of everything seemed to drop out from under him he saw his tracer blast creeping closer and closer to a black-crossed tail. He fastened his gaze there, aware that the other two were pulling up. His guns chattered and shook, venomously, savagely. His tracers tasted fabric now, bit their way hungrily up the length of dark-hued fuselage. Nearer and nearer to the cockpit, and to the gas tank, they clawed their way. His hand pressed his stick, coolly, carefully.

He jerked aside in time to keep from flying into a cloud of smoke and fragments, and felt his wings sag and groan

with the abruptness of his tug on the stick. He eased off, allowing his terrific speed to carry him into a zoom, and swept a hasty glance about him. The monstrous melee had been going on for several minutes now, and was beginning to spread out. Here and there Spad and Fokker were engaged in single duels, wheeling tightly about one another, sparring for the fatal opening. Here were two Spads, spiralling back to back, while about them darted five or six foes, firing, zooming away, and returning to fire again. Above and to his right Barry saw one Spad keeping three foes busy, by virtue of lightning attacks, one after the other, and his admiration increased when he caught the number on the Spad's fuselage. That was the major himself, and even as Barry looked one of the Fokkers turned over, and began with slow but unmistakable finality to spin, belly up, toward the earth.



**S**UDDENLY Barry thought of Ed. Where, in all this mess, was Ed? Quickly Barry's eyes leaped from one Fokker to another, escaping none, but nowhere could he find the telltale white rag. What had happened? Had Ed's marking betrayed him to the Boche, and brought him only the reward of death for his intrepid adventure? Or had some comrade, in the hectic fury of battle, failed to recognize the clue to his identity, and shot him down, unwarned, as an enemy? Barry's heart jerked in dismay at the thought, and he peered frantically in all directions.

He did not see a sign of Ed, but he saw something else. Just beyond the ridge, beneath his lower wing, he saw a tremendous burst of flame and smoke which seemed to swell and hang in one spot, and the meaning hit him instantly. Some one had found and seized the opportunity to dive on the balloon, which now was naught but a fiery mass of burning fabric. That blazing holocaust was the signal for the end; the mission,

then, had succeeded, and nothing remained but to break off the unequal conflict and streak for home. He himself was in the clear; yet something made him hesitate. Was Ed all right? And if so, where the devil was he?

From a mix-up overhead two Spads dove suddenly, obeying the major's orders at sight of the blazing balloon. A cluster of Fokkers plunged in pursuit, but not quite quickly enough; already they were being out-distanced. Barry, watching, saw one of the Fokkers pull abruptly aside, and come rushing toward him. Instinctively he turned to meet the attack head-on; his own tracers crossed those of the foe. The Fokker zoomed sharply, to keep its altitude, and passed directly above Barry's head. He looked up, to find himself gazing full at the dark-hued belly, and his eyes fastened themselves on the tailskid. There fluttered the merest wisp of white!

Not a yard of waving streamer, but a tiny fragment of fabric, half the size of a handkerchief. Yet Barry let out a yell of joy as he guessed the explanation. That was Ed, there was no doubt about that. The howling gale of the slipstream must have torn his frail banner to bits, leaving naught but the shred which now remained. That was why he had been unable to locate Ed before; what was left was too small to be seen, except from very close. But Ed, at least, was safe; that he was not even scratched was evident from the way he was handling that Fokker.

Round above Barry's head he whirled on a wing-tip, and with a quick flirt pointed his square nose down, straight for the flat side of Barry's cockpit. Barry, knowing it to be Ed, did not bother to start a turn, but raised a hand to wave it across his cowl in greeting. One swing his arm made, and then stopped in mid-air. What the hell! Ed was shooting at him—and those tracers were coming uncomfortably close. What was the idea?

Instinctively Barry threw his Spad into a bank. The fire from the Fokker ceased, but its blunt nose swung to

follow his turn. Barry, looking back, saw the round top of a helmeted head between the twin guns on the cowl, and again he saw those guns spit out a short burst. The hissing tracers sliced the air above his head.

"What the hell, Ed," he muttered, as if the other could hear his words, "the show's over. Cut it out, and let's go home. We've done our stuff for today. How do you know one of us hasn't got a bullet through a spar, that will let go in the middle of a maneuver? Haven't you had enough, that you—hey!"

A sharp cry tore through Barry's teeth. Far from sensing Barry's wish, Ed was apparently eager for more fight. The test of their skill, to him, was not yet finished. Now that the larger mission was successfully concluded, he evidently wanted to take up their personal rivalry where it had been dropped with the arrival of the Boche. For Ed's Fokker was tearing in upon Barry's flank, and had just loosed a stream of bullets which ripped a swathe of fabric from the center section of the Spad, and caromed wickedly off the cowl.

**B**ARRY suddenly became angry. He had emerged alive from one of the fiercest battles of his career, and had no desire to play at mock warfare for some time to come. All he wanted was to get down, where he could feel the good ground beneath his feet, and thank his lucky stars that he was not a corpse. But Ed, his appetite for battle still strong, would not let him.

"You crazy fool!" yelled Barry, into the wind. "Don't you know when you've had enough? If you don't, by God, I'll show you!"

He whipped his Spad into a wing-over, and charged back at the Fokker which persecuted him. The blunt nose swerved aside, but Barry curved in, as if his intent was to ram. Hastily the Fokker veered away, and down; Barry's stick slammed against the side of his cockpit as he lunged in pursuit. The other went into a dive, and Barry dove after. Habit made his fingers curl about the

triggers; just in time he reminded himself that that was Ed in that ship, and not a Boche, as he caught a tiny flutter of white from the tailskid. But even had he fired, his bullets would have found thin air. For the Fokker rose into a zoom, and immediately went into a half-roll which momentarily threw Barry off the trail. He wheeled on a wing-tip, and rushed to regain his position.

"I'll give you all the combat you want!" he grated through clenched teeth. "I'll show you, once and for all time, who is the better man, and then maybe you'll lay off me!"

But try as he would, he could not again bring that black-crossed tail within reach of his sights. Like a dragonfly with a human brain that Fokker darted and wheeled and lunged across the sky, eluding Barry's every effort to catch it unaware. It spiraled, fell into a vertical slip, and jerked out so abruptly that Barry, following close, felt his wings wrench under the strain. He eased off on the stick the barest trifle, but the movement cost him the slight advantage which had been his. Now they were on even terms, whirling round about each other as if both tied to an invisible pivot in the sky, and losing altitude with every turn.

"The hell with you, Ed Starke!" gasped Barry, as the sweat poured down his cheeks. "You won't get out of this without admitting that you're beaten—take that!"

He kicked right rudder hard, and caught the spin with a lightning movement of his stick. But, peering through his sights, his eyes met empty air. The Fokker which should have been there was not; for a moment, in truth, he could not even find it. What Ed had done, in that instant while the Spad spun, or how he did it, Barry could not guess. But he became suddenly aware that the Fokker was behind him, and his awareness was startled into angry dismay when a shower of tracers slashed the fabric of his lower wing.

Now, instead of attacking, he was on the defensive; Ed's Fokker was on his

tail. Cursing anew, he bent every effort to reverse their positions, putting his Spad through every maneuver he had ever been taught, and some that he had invented himself, in swift succession. But in vain; twist and wheel and spin as he would, the leering blunt nose was always on his tail when he snatched a look to the rear. And the guns behind that nose vomited savagely, not once but often. The searing tracers hummed angrily past Barry's very ears, and flicked shining dents in his motor cowling; he ground his teeth in helpless rage. If Ed was shooting to miss, he was certainly shaving his margin mighty fine.



**L**OWER and lower dropped the fighters, until Barry, looking over-side, saw that a scant fifty feet separated him from the ground. No longer was there room for a complex maneuver; he was reduced to essing frantically from side to side as he raced toward the south. And still the Fokker clung doggedly to his tail, unsatisfied, and still the bullets slashed the air about his head. The end was in sight; it was impossible to continue longer. He was going to be forced to admit defeat, or be driven headlong into the earth. Yet his fighting nature revolted at the very thought of defeat, even by a comrade, and he resolved upon one last trick.

The Dead Man's Dive, Ed's own stunt! Unknown to Ed, Barry had practiced it, until he had it perfect. From some one else, it might come as a complete surprise to Ed; or enough of a surprise to give Barry the few seconds he needed to escape. He took one look behind, and his fingers tensed on the stick.

Kick! The horizon went crazy, and then disappeared completely. Barry was hanging in his strap, looking down a flat field. He saw the Fokker shoot past, beneath him, and then he started to drop. But his stick came instantly into his belly, and he curved out to graze the bushes with his wheels.

He twisted his head over his shoulder. Ed's Fokker had begun the same maneuver, Ed's own pet stunt. Up and over went the tail. But what was wrong? The Fokker was not hanging there, as it should if the thing were done properly. It was moving too fast, much too fast and moving downward. It was diving, diving toward the ground. Barry's mouth flew open, but before the cry could pass his lips it was all over. Head first, with motor roaring wide, the Fokker plunged into the ground, and disintegrated in a cloud of dirt and flying splinters.

Barry's blood froze with horror. What had he done? Ed was dead; Ed had killed himself, doing his own stunt. No, he himself had killed Ed. It was his fault; he should never have permitted this last wasted combat to start. Ed should have known better, but so should he. Ed, perhaps, had been wounded. Or maybe a Fokker was unable to execute the maneuver which a Spad did with difficulty. Whatever the reason, there lay Ed's ship, a hopeless, shattered wreck.

He jammed his throttle shut, and swooped in a swift glide. The field was large enough, and fairly smooth; in a matter of seconds his wheels were rolling. He leaped to the ground and broke into a run toward the mangled heap of struts and canvas.

"Ed!" he cried, without knowing that he spoke. "Ed! Ed!"

His trembling fingers tore aside the crumpled fabric over what had been the cockpit, and seized the collar of a leather coat. Hastily, and yet gently, he dragged a limp form out into the open, rolled it onto its back, and lifted the splintered goggles from the half-open eyes. He started back in amazement.

The face was that of a complete stranger, and the collar of the tunic, showing under the jacket, was slate-gray in color!

So intent had he been on what he was doing that he had never heard the sound of another motor, throttled to land. But now, as he turned, he saw a Fokker roll to a stop in the center of the field, and a figure leap out and

run toward him. Even before the other lifted his goggles, he knew from the gait that it was Ed Starke, but his incredulous relief did not lessen his astonishment.

"Ed!" he cried, seizing the other by the arm to see if he was real. "Where were you—I thought—what——"

Ed laughed aloud at his stammering confusion, and calmly lighted two cigarettes before explaining.

"The first thing I saw when those Boche arrived was that their leader was marked by a white pennon on his tailskid. I had half expected something like that, and had fixed my own rag so that one pull at the end of the string, in my cockpit, would untie the knot and let it loose. I could see that there was sure to be trouble with a real Boche marked that way in the middle of the scrap, so I pulled the string, let my own marker go, and then jumped on the Jerry. I didn't get him, but my second burst shot away the pennon on his tail, and that was good enough."

"But then—" stuttered Barry.

"Then," proceeded Ed, "all the Spads seemed to be damned busy, so I sneaked over and knocked off the balloon. By the time I got back in the neighborhood, the battle was over; you seemed to be the only one still scrapping. I hustled over, just in time to see you crash him."

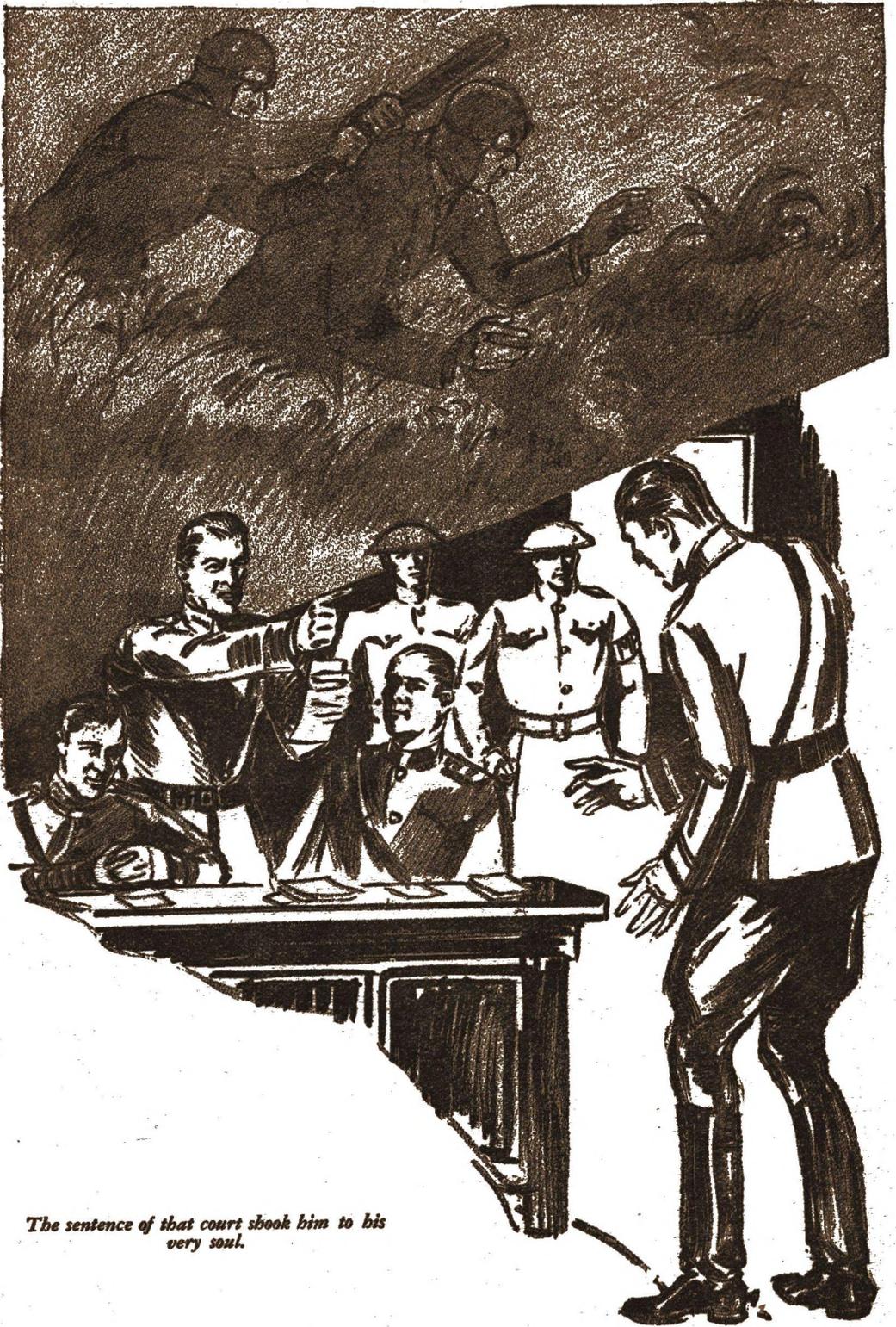
With a nod of his head he indicated the washed-out Fokker. Briefly Barry detailed his account of the last combat.

"But Ed," he finished, "you take the palm for flying. Never again will I give you any arguments on that score. Any man who can shoot a rag off a tailskid wins the prize, and that's that."

"Horse-whiskers," retorted Ed. "I'll hand that pal, right back to a bird who can out-manuever the Boche's best, and crash him to the ground without firing a shot. That's real flying! You know who that is, don't you?"

Barry looked down at the still figure, and shook his head.

"Well, who would be leading Kranich's outfit of Fokkers? It's Kranich himself, of course!"



*The sentence of that court shook him to his very soul.*



# The **WHITE RAVEN**

**A  
Complete  
Novel**

**By  
FREDERICK  
C. DAVIS**

With two hearts and divided loyalty, Paul Harvey, U. S. Air Corps, played the part of an Imperial puppet on the stage of war—for the Fatherland expected Wilhelm Hartvig's son to do no less than obey the command: "Be True!"

**P**AUL HARVEY gazed at the blunt, powerful signature flourished beneath the Imperial command on his table and his blood rushed hot. It had come!

By Command: Colonel Nikolai, Chief of the Intelligence Service of the Great General Staff of the German Army:

*Herr Paul Hartvig, subject of His Imperial Majesty, Wilhelm II, Kaiser of Germany, Emperor of Prussia, is ordered to present himself at Room 113, 16 Blanche Street, Stamford, Conn., at precisely 8 p. m. o'clock, May 5, 1917.*

*Destroy these orders immediately!*

Hartvig. It was the first time, during his years in the United States—years spent at Yale, then in designing houses in southern Connecticut—that he had seen his real name in print. Breathless, he raised his eyes to the window of his office, to the name lettered on the pane in gold, "Paul Harvey, Architect." No, he was no longer that. This moment he had become transformed into Paul Hartvig, subject of the Imperial Crown of Germany, agent in the intelligence service of the Great General Staff of the German Army, a secret enemy of the United States.

He peered at the man who had brought him this command.

That man was standing rigidly, silently beside the desk, with eyes sharp as bayonet points fixed on Paul Harvey. A few moments ago Harvey had been bent over his draughting-board, working with square and ruler and pencil, finishing a day of intent work and a plan. This man, small, pudgy, looking very ordinary and not at all German, had entered with a snap and thrust a starchy envelope, sealed with red wax into Harvey's hand. Now he was waiting.

"Destroy it!" the courier demanded.

Harvey obeyed immediately and without question. He lighted a match, crumpled the heavy paper into a wad, and ignited it. He dropped it into an ash-tray and watched while it flared and crumbled into a black ash. As the last flame flickered out, the man who had brought the command turned sharply, clicked out of the door and strode away.

Harvey glanced at his watch. It was ten minutes past seven. He could make the drive to Stamford in half an hour.

He gazed at the fluff of ash in the tray and marveled that in a few moments it could have wrought such a tremendous change within him.

He stepped briskly, with a new verve, into the lavatory in a rear corner of his office, and washed his hands. Drying them, he gazed at his image in the mirror. He saw a clean-cut face, healthful, young. The eyes were a clear blue, the hair light brown. There was nothing Teutonic in his features. He had lived in the United States for eight years, and no one had ever suspected him of being a German. It was as though Nature had deftly fashioned his face to mask his destiny as a secret agent of the German intelligence bureau.

Destiny. It was nothing else. The receipt of his call was an event which Paul Harvey had long awaited. He had known, as long as he could remember, that some day it would come to him when his services were needed. As a child he had been trained by his Father, a captain in the intelligence service of Germany, for the secret work which he would enter in a few moments, "at precisely 8 p.m. o'clock, May 5, 1917." So the receipt of the command had occasioned him no surprise, only a breath-quickenning satisfaction arising from his realization that at last his destiny was his.

It was four years since he had seen his Father in Haarlem, Holland. Wilhelm Hartvig was, it seemed to the people of the town, merely a maker of chocolate. None but the powers at 70 Koniggratzer Strasse, Berlin, Headquarters of the German intelligence, knew of his real work, that he had devoted his life to the secret service of Germany. Paul knew, of course, and he had kept the secret like a true patriot—for was he not himself, even as a boy, devoted to an ideal of the same service?

During that last visit overseas, Wilhelm Hartvig, had whispered of impending war; now the war was raging, and Paul's moment was at hand.

He found the street and the address in Stamford without trouble, and parked his car. The building was in a manu-

facturing district, dark and lonesome. Harvey climbed the stairs rapidly and located Room 113. On its door was lettered "Synthetic Chemicals, Inc." He knocked and waited; but no quick response came.

He felt that he was being scrutinized from some unseen point. After a moment a key rattled, and the door opened. Paul stepped into an ordinary office, while the door was closed behind him by a lean, emaciated young man, who did not speak. The young man disappeared through another door into an inner office, and spoke gutturally to some one inside, then stepped back for Harvey to pass.

**T**HROUGH the door Paul strode, and suddenly stopped, rooted to the floor, eyes widened, breath locked within his lungs, overwhelmed by surprise. Near a desk in the inner office an old man was standing, supporting himself on a cane, a man obviously ill and weak. His blue eyes were peering at Paul proudly. The painful lines in his pinkish face disappeared as he smiled.

"Father!" Paul Harvey blurted.

He rushed forward impulsively and flung his arms around the old man. Wilhelm Hartvig embraced his son crushingly, breathing hard. When Paul broke away it was to stare unbelievably into his Father's face, and stammer.

"Father! I didn't know—I had no idea! Why, I'm so surprised I can hardly talk! Why didn't you let me know you were here? Why didn't you write me that you were leaving Haarlem? How long have you been in America? How could you come without telling me? I—I can hardly believe it's you!"

The old man nodded and chuckled. "I surprised you, Paul! I could not let you know, my boy. Of course, I wanted to write you, but you know—the demands of our work. You are looking fine, Paul! So young, so strong, so fine! Sit down, my boy, let me look at you. It is good to see you again, very good!"

Paul Harvey laughed with a kind of crazy joy. In his eyes shone a deep

admiration and respect for his Father. His gladness dimmed in a moment, when he saw the old man settle painfully into a chair, and sigh.

"You're not well, Father!" he exclaimed. "Your trip has tired you out. You shouldn't have let yourself become so excited! What is it? What is the matter?"

"My heart—but it is nothing! What if I do not feel well? It is part of my work, my life-work, to come here. Organizing—that is why I am here, Paul, organizing our agents. It is highly necessary, Paul. Our Kaiser needs us now more than ever. He needs you, Paul, needs young, strong, fine, intelligent men like you. It will not be long now, Paul, before the United States enters the war against Germany."

"I know," Paul Harvey said.

"It is only a question of weeks until the United States becomes our enemy. Ah, the work ahead of us! Tremendous! Splendid! I am happy that my son is perfectly fit to carry on my work. I am proud that I can offer my son to the service of my country. You will distinguish yourself, Paul. You will make a name for yourself. Aren't you happy, Paul, that your opportunity has come?"

"I am delighted," Paul Harvey said. "I can never hope to equal the marvelous work you are doing, Father, but nothing could make me happier than working, with everything I've got, for you."

"Ah, it was always so!" Wilhelm Hartvig exclaimed proudly. "You have always been a fine son, Paul. You are a true Hartvig, a true German, loyal, patriotic." The old man drew from his pocket a silver cigar-case, with a golden crest embossed upon it. "Our motto, Paul—'Be true.' You are true, my boy. We must talk, Paul. There is much planning to be done."

They sat close beside the desk and talked. The Father, almost exhausted, worn, his life nearly spent in undying service to his country. The son, everlastingly admiring his Father, filled with the fire of his Father's ideals.

It was past midnight when Wilhelm

Hartvig leaned back in his chair weakly.

"We have discussed everything. You have your instructions. Immediately the United States declares war on Germany, you are to enlist in the army air corps.

"You will come back here to-morrow night to receive instructions, in codes, as to where you will find information when at the Front, as to how you will report to other secret agents behind the Allied lines. I will not be here when you return, Paul. I must go on elsewhere, until my work is done. It is very late, my boy. You must go. Good-by."

The old man tottered up, supporting himself on his cane. He embraced Paul again, his eyes glistening with tears. Reluctantly Paul went to the door; he left at last, unwillingly, only because he realized that his Father sadly needed rest. A little dazed, he walked down the dark steps to the street, oppressed by the thought that perhaps he would never again see his Father alive.

**A**PRIL 6, 1917. Newspapers throughout the length and breadth of the land screamed their news in black headlines.

#### CONGRESS DECLARES WAR ON GERMANY!

On the day following the entrance of the United States into the World War, Paul Harvey enlisted in the almost non-existent air corps of the United States Army. The only thought that filled Paul Harvey's mind was of service and allegiance to his Father's ideals.

He was standing alone in his bare office, ready to turn his back forever on the trivialities of the past, when the door opened swiftly, and a young man burst excitedly toward him. Harvey knew him as Dick Armstrong, son of David Armstrong, the banker, a typical young American, clean-cut, well-liked, wholesome. His face glowed with eagerness as he blurted, "Harvey—excuse me for exploding on you like this, but I had to! You've enlisted in the air corps. I think that's fine, wonderful! I want to enlist. I'd like

nothing better than to go with you. I want you to help me. Will you help me to talk my Mother into letting me go?"

There was nothing in Paul Harvey's gaze to betray the fact that he was a German looking upon an enemy. Nothing in his face betrayed the scorn he felt, deep within himself, for Dick Armstrong. Armstrong seemed callow, boyish. He wanted to become a combat pilot! This stripling! What could America hope for in the war, with such juvenile and untrained fighters at her call? Laughable as it seemed to Paul Harvey, he showed only sympathy.

"Sure I'll help you, Dick, I'd be glad to," he answered. "What can I do?"

"Well, you see, Mother—you know how mothers are. She doesn't want me to enlist yet. You know—she's afraid, that's natural. She wants me to wait to be drafted, and then get into some unit that's not quite so dangerous as—well, flying. I can't do that. I've got to get into it. It's got to be the air corps for me. I thought maybe if you talked with her——"



**I**T AMUSED Harvey to think that he might possibly influence Dick Armstrong's mother to allow him to enlist. To think that Dick Armstrong felt his enlistment

was of any consequence in any attempt to combat the power that was Germany—it was very amusing.

"Sure I'll talk with her," Paul Harvey said.

They passed out the door together. Harvey was scarcely listening to Dick Armstrong's chatter then. When the lock clicked behind him, when he turned away from the door and walked off, it meant that the last playful chapter of his life was closed. Henceforth, the grim, secret work of espionage!

"Your family doesn't know me very well," Harvey said as he strode along with Dick Armstrong. "Do you think your Mother will listen to me?"

"Dad thinks a lot of you, Harvey. He's spoken of you in a very complimen-

tary way lots of times at home. Caroline thinks it was splendid of you to enlist right away. Mother—you know, she just needs talking to, that's all. I know you'll help. I'll certainly never forget it if you can make her change her mind."

Still talking excitedly, Dick Armstrong led Harvey to the Armstrong home, an old Colonial mansion surrounded by expansive grounds. Dick dragged Harvey into the great living-room by the arm. Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong were there, and their daughter Caroline. The Mother was obviously upset; no doubt she had been protesting against Dick's enlistment, for her eyes glistened with tears.

Pitiful, thought Paul Harvey. Did this woman have none of the staunch, sacrificing patriotism of the German Mother? America could expect little if this was to be the response of her women to the call of war. But, completely hiding his true feelings, Harvey greeted her sympathetically.

He took Caroline's hand. She was a very pretty girl, physically strong, impulsive, yet feminine and alluring. Harvey had danced with her often at the Country Club on Saturday nights and thought her a typical, irresponsible American girl.

He talked with Mrs. Armstrong quietly, still secretly amused at what he was doing. What righteous horror they would have shown if they had learned, at that moment, he was a German spy! Yet he was trying to induce this woman to allow her son to go to war against his own country! It gratified Paul Harvey to know how completely he had taken every one in.

Mrs. Armstrong listened at first tearfully, then dry-eyed, as though a determination had formed in her mind, and she had braced herself against the inexorable. Harvey and Dick and Caroline and Mr. Armstrong rained arguments upon her; and at last she tossed her head proudly and smiled.

"If Dick must go," she said, "I want him to go now."

Paul Harvey could have laughed out-

right. Dick Armstrong whooped hilariously; Caroline squealed; her father slapped his thigh triumphantly. Dick grabbed his coat, to rush off to the recruiting station at once, but they blocked the way and dragged him back. Dinner had been announced during the hubbub. The Armstrongs would hear of nothing except that Paul Harvey must dine with them.

And no one suspected the real cause of Paul Harvey's constant smile.

**T**HEIR departure was a moment for excitement and dread, laughter and tears. They drove to the Union Depot all together, in Banker Armstrong's fat limousine, Mrs. Armstrong fighting back her tears, Caroline chattering about going overseas herself, the father pompously proud, Dick eagerly thinking only of what lay ahead, and assuring them that he would come home without a scratch. Paul Harvey was excited, his face flushed; and he wondered what Wilhelm Hartvig of the German Intelligence Service would think if he had been able to witness this moment!

The train's couplings clashed; it was starting. Mrs. Armstrong clutched Dick close. Caroline squealed and hugged him. His father patted his shoulder and said he was sure they would be proud of Dick. They shook Paul Harvey's hand and wished him luck. Caroline said good-by to him last, and her farewell was unexpected, overwhelming.

She threw her arms around Paul Harvey's shoulders and kissed his lips, a long, clinging kiss. It startled Harvey, disconcerted him. One instant he thought that this was merely an explosion of a wild impulse; the next he felt an electrical communion between them. Still startled he watched Caroline as she whirled and dashed away, without looking back.

"Say, I never saw her do that before!" Dick Armstrong exclaimed.

The train was crawling. They stuck their heads out the window. Clustered on the platform were the Armstrongs, fluttering handkerchiefs, waving. Good-by, Dick. Good-by, Paul! Good luck!

Good-by! Good-by! It kept up until the train was far down the track, until the figures on the platform were mere dots. Good-by, Good-by!

At Brooks Field, Texas, they talked of the war and heard of the war and dreamt of the war; and they learned that war was a serious business.

As the process of turning groundlings into eagles went on, Paul Harvey was rather amazed at the change taking place in Dick Armstrong. Dick lost some of his callow look; he became bronzed and solid of flesh. He was still excitable and eager, but he often talked gravely of what lay ahead. Meanwhile Paul Harvey took the training with self-disciplined strictness, making himself letter-perfect, for this training in the United States Army was part of his training for service to Germany.

The momentous day came when they were transferred from Brooks to Kelly. Theory abandoned for actual flight! The thrill of it was like wine to Harvey and Armstrong.

Paul Harvey did not doubt that he could make the grade. But he began to hope that Dick Armstrong would fail. Dick had kept close to him, sought his company, his advice constantly. He knew that Dick Armstrong felt a strong, sincere friendship for him. It confused Harvey to think of that. Worse, he was growing to like Dick, an enemy. It would be much easier, he felt, if Dick failed in his flight tests, and they were separated.

## CHAPTER II

### DOUBLE ALLEGIANCE

**T**HERE came a day when two letters arrived at Kelly for Paul Harvey. When they were put into his hands he glanced at the handwriting of the addresses, and tucked the envelopes into his pocket. One of the letters was from his Father, postmarked New York. The other, he felt sure, was from Caroline, the first he had received from her. He drifted off, seeking a spot where he could be alone, to read them both.

The field was active. Planes were

roaring on the line, and one was droning overhead; a cadet was taking an instruction flight. Walking in front of the hangars, Harvey selected an empty bench, and perched on it. He studied the two envelopes carefully before he opened one of them. He chose to read, first, his Father's.

My Son,

I am inexpressibly proud of you, Paul. You have made me a very happy man. There is nothing more I can say to you, except that I think of you constantly, knowing you will always uphold the motto which is part of us: "Be true."  
Your Father.

Paul Harvey's eyes stung as he studied the writing. It was wavering and uncertain, not like the firm man he had once known. Wilhelm Hartvig was ill, very ill. Perhaps he could not live much longer. The thought made Paul Harvey wince. All the more reason why Paul Harvey must keep those words ever highest in his mind! "Be true."

He steeled himself against any appeal that might be in Caroline's letter as he opened it.

Paul, dear—

I have never thanked you enough for helping Dick to get Mother's consent to enlist, but you must know how grateful I am. I think you are both doing a wonderful thing. I am so glad that you are with Dick. I'm sure he needs you, and I'm glad that he asked you to help him. We are all so happy to have come to know you better, for we all admire you so much.

War seems to change so many things, doesn't it, Paul? It makes conventions seem so silly. Do you know what I mean? I kissed you when you went away because I wanted to kiss you. You seemed so fine and strong and I loved you. Yes, I loved you. It must have been that, Paul. Perhaps you are laughing at me for being so foolish, for telling you this. Please don't. I wanted you to know—and I want you to come back.  
Good-night,  
Caroline.

P. S. Somehow, some way, I'm going to go across, too. If I do, I know I will see you and Dick over there. I know.  
C.

"Perhaps you are laughing at me—"  
Paul Harvey was not laughing. He was too startled, too dismayed; nothing but confusion filled him. Perhaps he was all the more confused because this letter of Caroline's had brought up, from deep within his being, some warm response he had not known was lurking there,

because it had destroyed completely the defense he had erected in his mind against Caroline. For the moment he was upset, bewildered, at Caroline and at himself.

Everything else was lost to him. He did not hear the roar of a motor overhead, deafening to other ears—a roar growing swiftly louder. He did not hear the startled shouts, the warnings. He did not look up to see that a training ship was hurtling through the air, directly at the side of the hangar where he was sitting, an engine of death plunging upon him out of control!

Dick Armstrong had been hunting for Harvey. He had seen Harvey perched on the bench, and had begun to walk in that direction. The roar of the plane had alarmed him. He had seen it swooping, wavering down. He had broken into a run the instant he had realized it was inevitable that the crate must crash against the hangar. Even then, as he ran, the scream of the crash-siren was rising to a blood-chilling pitch.

Paul Harvey jerked up suddenly. He heard his name yelled, saw Dick Armstrong throwing himself upon him. Armstrong snatched at his arm, yanked him away. Harvey sprang at the same time; they sprawled together on the ground, past the corner of the hangar.

The terrific crash that followed seemed to rock the very heavens. Instinctively they leaped up and raced away; but now it was over.

The plane had crashed against the side of the hangar at the spot where Harvey had been sitting, had turned into a mass of flame, red-hearted, spewing fumes into the air.

Paul Harvey looked, chilled through. He heard Dick Armstrong saying something, but he did not know what it was. During the frantic moments following the crash he neither moved nor spoke. He knew that a cadet had died in that wreck. He knew that he had escaped death himself by the margin of a second. Rigidly he looked down at himself, and saw that he had Caroline's letter still clamped in one hand. Very care-

fully, his fingers trembling, he tucked it into his tunic pocket.

Paul Harvey found it hard to thank Dick Armstrong.

"You almost got yourself killed, going after me like that," Harvey said.

Armstrong grinned. "What of it?" he asked. "From what I've heard, we've all got it coming sometime, anyway. I couldn't have done anything else, Paul. You mean a hell of a lot to me."

Harvey's throat grew tight. "All I can say is—thanks, Dick," and he said it sincerely.

"What for?"

"For saving my life."

"Aw, hell!" Armstrong exclaimed. "Forget it!"

Paul Harvey wagged his head, very solemn. "I'm not likely to forget it," he said.

**FRANCE!** It loomed like a whirling dream. Wings won, a torturous trip made on a plowing transport through submarine-infested waters, then Issoudun. French adjutants snapping commands. Cranky crates—Nieuports, Spads. Deaths on the field, flyers murdered by ships that spun and would not come out. The war-machine inexorably operating, feeding men and planes into the fires.

The breathless day when their call came. "Harvey, Paul; Armstrong, Richard; released from further training." Going to the Front! Facing the man who would command them, a man with a horribly gaunt, scarred face—Captain Wade, C.O. of the Twentieth. Hearts pounding, pulses hammering. Good-byes to the instructors. Wishes of good-luck from the pilots left behind. Going "up"

It was still like a dream. In his bleak operations office, Captain Wade lined up his new men and talked to them, his scarred face twitching, seeming even more gaunt. He talked to them as though they were children, as though, so far, they knew nothing of the real war that was being fought. When they straggled out, his mere words had changed them. Now they were existing

in a starkly real world, torn by strife, where Death reigned supreme.



**H**ARVEY was perched on his cot, thinking anew of those two potent words—"Be true"—Those men in *feld-grau* across the lines, fighting this squadron, were his countrymen! It was Paul Harvey's mission to fight against these men of the Twentieth, secretly, Armstrong among them. He kept telling himself that the blood in his veins was pure German, that nothing else mattered. Over and over he told himself that.

Startled by a shuffling of feet outside his door, Paul looked up. A decrepit old Frenchman, carrying a wicker basket filled with wine-bottles, was peering in at him. Peering with one widened eye, for the other socket was hollow and ghastly. He grinned toothlessly, a few yellow stubs gleaming, and ambled in.

"Wine, *m'sieu*?" he cackled. "Very good wine, very cheap?"

Paul Harvey peered at him intently. A cold rush went through his veins. Instantly his mind was overswept by a recollection of his instructions from an officer of the intelligence service of the Great General Staff of the German office, instructions repeated over and over to him in that dim office in Stamford, months ago, while the city slept. He asked a question quietly.

"Have you any Nineteen-eleven Le Chateau Sauterne?"

"*Je ne parle pas* English, *m'sieu*. Wine? Very good wine, very cheap?"

Harvey repeated. "Have you any Nineteen-eleven Le Chateau Sauterne?"

The Frenchman's one eye gleamed. His toothless, imbecilic grin vanished.

"*Oui, m'sieu!*" he exclaimed. "*Voila!*"

He probed into the bottom of his basket, and pulled a dusty bottle up in one gnarled hand and extended it to Harvey. Harvey took it quietly, tensely, and thrust a folding of paper francs toward the wine-vender. The old man cackled again, and shuffled again, call-

ing again, "Wine? Very good wine?"

Harvey listened carefully. He closed the door of his room and listened again. He took from his pocket a jackknife, pried up the cork-puller, and twisted the steel spiral into the neck of the bottle of wine. When the cork popped out he very carefully ran the sharp edge of his blade across its bottom, and pried carefully. A moment later he thrust the bored cork into the bottle, and peered down at the tightly curled bit of paper that had been hidden within it.

Tiny lettering, in code. Mentally he deciphered the few words, his blood racing.

Report midnight to-night, estaminet.

Grimly Harvey touched a match to the paper and dropped it flaming to the floor; he crushed it out. His hour!

Darkness blanketed the field of the Twentieth. In the depths of the night the big guns unceasingly rumbled. In the sky above No-Man's-Land starshells burst into radiance, tailed downward, flickered out. No lights were visible on the flying base, but inside the mess a few sleepless men were talking in low tones. Within the clapboard billet other men were sleeping and it was quiet.

Half an hour until midnight.

Paul Harvey peered at his watch. He was feverish, his pulse was hammering. It was time for him to go, time for him to report to another German intelligence agent at work behind the Allied line. The old scarecrow of a Frenchman? He did not know. He paced back and forth across his room agitatedly; then, suddenly, he pulled into his Sidcot and stepped into the bare hallway.

The door next his opened, and Dick Armstrong's voice asked, "Anything wrong, Paul?"

"No, nothing's wrong," Harvey answered nervously, turning.

"I heard you walking," Armstrong said, standing in the doorway and yawning. "Going somewhere?"

"For a walk. I thought——"

"I'll go with you!" Armstrong said immediately.

"No—no!" Paul Harvey blurted. He cursed himself for his jumping nerves. "I want to be alone, Dick, if you don't mind."

"Sure, I don't mind," Armstrong answered, smiling.

Harvey turned quickly, and tramped away. Damn, why was he so upset? All these years of preparation, and now he was acting like a fool, so nervous that some one was sure to notice it! He had to control himself, above all else! Without knowing exactly what was disturbing him, he fought to smother it.

ONCE in the cool night wind Paul felt more composed as he trudged away. A mile down the road a black hut crouched at the roadside, its windows blanketed. Harvey's breath came fast as he pushed inside. The estaminet was empty, except for the old Cyclops of a Frenchman, huddled in a rocker beside a smoking tin stove. Harvey peered at him intently, and the Frenchman answered with a toothless grin.

"No business to-night?" Harvey asked, peering around.

The old man shrugged. Suddenly he jerked from his chair and hobbled across the room, into a doorway. He signaled Harvey after him. The room beyond was dark. A match scratched; the old man lighted a candle. In the gleaming yellow light he straightened, peering.

"One and seven, G and W," said Paul Harvey.

"X Thirteen," the old man said in a whisper. "Comrade!"

Their hands clasped. Amazing strength came through the fingers of the estaminet-keeper. Under Harvey's eyes the years seemed to drop from him. His face became stronger, grimmer, the one glittering eye keen. The imbecilic softness vanished like magic. Harvey trembled a little. This man was a brother in the German intelligence, working under an uncanny disguise, amid great danger. Admirable!

"Comrade! Talk quietly! Say nothing above a whisper! It is fine—you look like an American! And still you

are the son of Wilhelm Hartvig, the great Hartvig!"

Paul Harvey jerked.

"I know!" exclaimed X Thirteen breathlessly. "Your Father has himself informed me! He is in Germany again now, working for the Fatherland until his last breath! For so many years I have worked under him. A stupendous man, devoted, loyal, brave, a fine Chief! You are like him, I can see it in your eyes!" The German agent listened intently. "You are not afraid, *hein*, of being found out?"

"Certainly not!" Paul Harvey asserted.

X Thirteen chuckled behind his craggy teeth. "Said like your Father! The cause is great! Danger means nothing! *Deutschland uber Alles!* Comrade! We cannot spend much time together now. We must work very carefully. Listen to every word while I instruct you.

"You must work on your own, but you must come to me for instructions. You will know when I have orders for you; I will come to your billet and offer you Le Chateau 1911. Afterward you will report to me when you can do so without being seen. Otherwise you work alone, doing everything possible to aid the Fatherland, everything possible to drive the Twentieth Squadron out of the sky, every man!"

Harvey grew pale. "Yes," he said sibilantly.

"Listen! Next your field is a wood. Through the wood runs a trail; you will find it easily. It leads to a clearing, and beyond. In the clearing is hidden a box of carrier pigeons, put there for your use, to carry information across the lines. You will locate them by finding a tree on the edge of the clearing with its bark scarred as if by a bullet, the birds are hidden in the bushes beneath.

"You will learn of orders that reach your squadron. You will send information to our offices across the lines at every opportunity, especially when an air attack is to be made on us! You understand? We are depending on you! Your work is of the utmost importance!"

"I understand, perfectly."

"Now you must go. Bless you, comrade, in the name of your Father, the tremendous Hartvig!"

Again a startling transformation took place before Harvey's incredulous eyes. The old man became decrepit, French, weak, his expression that of a near-idiot. He shuffled uncertainly toward the door, and Harvey followed him. At the bar, Harvey drank a glass of wine and still marveling, left.

It made him breathless. His preparations were all finished! Now he faced the actual work, even as Wilhelm Hartvig had worked throughout the years. Work "of utmost importance"! To send information across the lines. To do "everything possible to drive the Twentieth out of the sky, every man!" To send pigeons, carrying the information across No-Man's-Land! The mere thought of it filled Harvey again with the hot fervor that his Father had kindled within him.

When he reached the mess of the Twentieth, it was dark and deserted. He walked quietly down the hallway of the billet, and into his room. Quickly he began to undress, nervous, elated. He jerked visibly as a voice called through the thin wall.

"Feel better, Paul?"

"Much better!" Paul Harvey answered.

### CHAPTER III

#### FATE'S BROKEN STRING

**W**AR in the air! The Twentieth in the midst of it! Taking check flights, preparing to patrol! Spads howling on the field, snarling through the air! Pilots preparing for battle in the sky, above the reek and chaos of No-Man's-Land.

First patrol! Gray ships moving off the ground in a bending line, sweeping upward over the hill, driving above the trenches! Captain Wade flew point on that patrol; behind him, in positions two and three, winged Paul Harvey and Dick Armstrong. Pale, tense, they followed their commander through fuming air, with Spads weaving in formation be-

hind them. Trenches and barbed wire below, shell-pits, wrecked planes, nations clashing! When they came back, they were older men.

Patrols again. At dawn, with a cold mist flowing over the field. At noon, when a blistering sun glared down, and made the stagnant water in the craters below shine like molten metal. At dusk, when the sky turned slate and darkness brought a hush. Spads weaving and shuttling.

The first enemy attack! It came on a patrol made at dawn the third day the Twentieth flew. Out of the sky came snarling blue-black Fokkers, their Spandaus spitting flame. Even odds and a terrific fight. Machine guns clashing, motors screaming, planes whipping and wheeling like frantically fighting dragonflies. Flame in the sky, planes going down. A Fokker and a Spad. The E. A. dropped by Captain Wade, the Spad knocked into oblivion by a savage Spandau attack. When the patrol came back, pale and trembling pilots climbed exhaustedly out of their pits, stunned by the knowledge that one of their number had died.

It was strainedly quiet in the mess that night. A chair at the table was vacant. Captain Wade peered at the pale faces of his men and his jaw clamped. He said nothing as he watched the pilots pecking at their food, trying to appear cheerful; but at last his control broke!

"Snap out of it, you sons!" and he crashed his red fist to the table. "Quit acting like pallbearers! Is it any surprise to you that somebody's been killed? No! You knew it was coming! For God's sake, take the kinks out of your spines! I'll not have it, by Heaven! You're not a bunch of old women. You're men, flyers, fighters. Then show it!"

Somebody stammered, "Sure, but we're just a little—upset——"

"I know," Wade snapped. "I went through it myself. You've got to go through it. You'll see your best friend killed, and you'll thank God it wasn't you. But, by Heaven, you've got to

buck out of it! If you don't I'll clamp down on you until you won't know what the hell is going on, or care!"

"You're right, Cap," somebody said. "Sure, you're right."

"I'm right!" Wade declared. "You're here to fight, and you can't let yourself break. You can't let yourself think of who's got knocked down. All you can let yourself think of is getting the next Jerry."

"It's funny," Dick Armstrong said. "I don't hate the Germans—not exactly."

Captain Wade shrugged. "You're a better fighter for it, Armstrong. You can keep a clear head. Hate the Germans? No. They're men, same as we are, aren't they? They're fighting for their country, same as we are, aren't they? We don't know why the hell we're fighting, neither do they. We're simply here to fight, and we fight. Hate the Germans? No. I don't. I think they're damned fine fighters. But what difference does it make how you feel about 'em? You've got to knock 'em down and keep on knocking 'em down. C'est la guerre."

Paul Harvey listened to Captain Wade's words as if in a spell. He was dismayed, and a little ashamed. Could he say what his commander had just said—a man who had fought longer and harder than any other man with the squadron—that he didn't hate the enemy? He didn't quite know. He wanted to hate these Americans and yet he didn't quite know.

"Hate 'em," said Wade. "Look at my mug. They did that to me. Their machine-gun bullets turned my face into a nightmare. And still I don't hate 'em. Huh! Pass me that bottle."

Harvey was playing with his food when the door opened and a muddy courier hurried in. The messenger thrust a despatch at Captain Wade, and the captain stamped his book. For a moment Wade squinted at the paper; then he cleared his throat and talked while every man listened.

"Important detail," the captain said crisply. "Dawn to-morrow, special

patrol. Bomber coming here to-night. We're to use it to destroy a concentration of artillery behind Noyes. Some of you men are chalked for dawn patrol. You'll fly this detail. I'll give you final instructions before we hop. Now, forget it!"

**A** GAIN darkness hushed the field. Still the artillery rumbled and starshells flashed. In the air of the Twentieth's billet was a tension, tightened by thought of the attack to be launched at dawn. And of all the pilots on the field, Paul Harvey was thinking of it most grimly, most intently.

Dawn was not far away. It was dark everywhere. Very quietly Harvey rose from his cot and pulled into his uniform. Treading silently, he passed down the black corridor to the door, and went outside. He kept to the shadows as he hurried away, knowing that he must not let the guard at the hangars see him. Once in the shadow of the wood he groped his way to the narrow trail, and followed it into the deeper darkness.

When the bright patch of moonlight in the clearing appeared before him he paused, listening. He stepped forward without confusion; he knew exactly the spot to go to. He had already, while evidently only walking through the woods, located the hidden cage of pigeons. He stepped to the marked tree, and groped into the bushes, and caught hold of the covered cage.

The birds chattered quietly as he closed his hand over one of them and drew it out. From his pocket he took a tightly rolled bit of tissue paper, and thrust it into the quill tied to one leg of the bird. He had written his message in code, in tiny letters, a warning of the attack to be made on the German artillery concentration at dawn. Stepping back quickly, he tossed the bird into the air.

Its wings fluttered like silver in the moonlight as it whirled; and then, like a living dart, it disappeared upward, flashing in the direction of No-Man's-Land.

Rapidly Harvey replaced the cage,

and trotted away. He breathed quickly, with suppressed excitement! He had sent his first information across the lines. He had warned his countrymen of danger! Wilhelm Hartvig would hear of it, and he would be proud. And it was only the beginning, only the beginning of the service Paul Harvey had dreamed of all his life.

Like a ghost in the moonlight he moved back to the billet. He slipped inside, and back to his room.

Quiet. Minutes ticking by. Dawn approaching.

Then footsteps down the corridor. The adjutant, passing from room to room, was awakening those chalked for the dawn detail. A muttering of voices arose; shoes scraped across the floor. Some one loudly yawned. The adjutant opened Harvey's door, peered in, saw that he was awake, and went on. Harvey rose grimly, and reached for his helmet and goggles.

He was among those selected to make the attack.

Pilots came down the corridor, pulling on helmets and goggles. Out of the room next Harvey's stepped Dick Armstrong, his eyes afire. He walked beside Harvey quietly as they stepped outside and crossed the road toward the field.

On the field a motor snorted and coughed into the warming. Another followed, and another. Flame spurted from the exhaust stacks of the Spads drawn to the line. The ground crew were moving about like phantoms in the murk. Pilots moved toward the crates, peering into the blankness hanging above No-Man's-Land, shivering with the chill.

Armstrong paused and his hand sought Harvey's.

"Luck, Paul," he said, gripping Harvey's fingers hard.

Harvey's answer was lost in the roar of the motors. Luck? This was not to be a matter of luck. This was war, a matter of grim planning, of secret intrigue. It was not luck that the men across the lines knew that the Spad attack was coming.

Out of the gloom Captain Wade

came striding, looking neither right nor left. As he climbed to his controls there was a grim intensity in his movements.



**A** MOMENT later, Wade climbed out again and signaled his pilots to gather around him. While the motors idled he talked in a low, rasping tone.

"I'll lead you to the artillery. You follow me, that's all. The bomber will fly behind the V. We're going deep. Watch your tails. That's all."

He paused, as though wanting to say something more, but he strode away choppily. There was something odd about the captain this morning; every man noticed it. Some premonition, some foreboding of death? They could not let themselves think of that. They climbed back into their pits. Paul Harvey peered through his windshield into the sky beyond, a tight grin on his lips.

A tense moment of waiting.

Then a green Very ball sliced through the gloom. Motors howled higher. Ack emmas darted about, pulling chocks. The crates began to move. They swept forward, rushing, driving into the take-off. A V forming, and the Caudron lumbering behind. Then up! Driving through the chill mist, climbing toward the trenches and No-Man's-Land.

They droned high, in close formation. Paul Harvey breathed hard. These Americans were fondly supposing that they were going to surprise the Germans. It was they who were going to be surprised. Paul Harvey had seen to that.

Captain Wade was leading his formation straight toward the objective, hunched down in his pit, motionless as a statue. Opposite Harvey, Dick Armstrong was swiveling his head like an owl's, scanning the brightening sky, hunting for any enemy aircraft that might be on the wing. He would soon

find plenty; Paul Harvey silently promised him that.

Suddenly a red ball flashed from Wade's Very pistol. He pointed swiftly toward the slate sky above his right wing. The eyes of every pilot turned upward, Harvey's quickest of all. Yes, there were German planes above! A V formation swinging, driving lower! Fokkers, nine of them! Outnumbering the Spads by two, leaving those two free to stop the rush of the Caudron!

Paul Harvey smiled tightly. His pigeon had got across. The enemy planes had been waiting for the attacking Spads to appear. Wilhelm Hartvig must surely hear of this. He would be proud of his son.

Paul Harvey's tight smile endured, but it covered the anguish that was pinching him. In spite of himself, he did not want Dick Armstrong to go down. In spite of himself he felt a frenzy of anxiety for Armstrong, a craving to help him through. Paul Harvey had performed his service; that was enough. It would hurt if he lost this friend he had made. But it was done now.

A brace of Spandaus blazed. Glowing tracer threads spun downward among the Spads. Instantly Captain Wade fired his Very pistol again in the signal that ordered the formation to break; and like leaves sucked into a whirlwind, the Spads scattered. One instant two smooth formations were droning toward each other; the next the sky was churning with a confusion of attacks and counter-attacks.

Paul Harvey dashed aside, rolling. He threw his Spad into a sharp zoom and, peering upside, saw a Fokker wheeling after him. His blood chilled as he threw one arm over the cowling, and glanced around quickly to make sure that he was not seen. Then, swiftly, he gave his signal, a gesture that should mean, to the German in the Fokker, that he was a countryman. For a torturous second Harvey was uncertain that the signal had been read. He breathed again when he saw the German pilot wave understandingly, and howled on.

He Immelmanned, and the Fokker followed him. The Spandaus sputtered, but the tracers showed that the burst flew wide. Harvey plunged down again, jaws clamped, grim, peering over the cowlings. All around and above him machine guns were clattering, motors were howling, men were flying their utmost in defense of their lives—and he was reeling through a sham fight.

He was bewildered that he felt a sense of shame because of it. It was not right. Yet he was a German; he was serving his country in his secret way; it was all important above everything else. Wilhelm Hartvig would never have suffered a qualm. Thinking of that, Paul Harvey flew on, automatically counterfeiting the moves of a real fight.

THE tattooing of the blazing machine-guns raised to a heart-chilling ferocity. Flame flashed in the sky below, a plane was going down, engulfed in fire! A Spad, knocked into the depths of oblivion! A Fokker was staggering low, leaning on one wing, sliding down into a spin. The Caudron was attempting to battle its way through, but two blue-black ships were stabbing at it viciously. It could never reach its mark. Not now. Victory, victory in the name of Hartvig!

It lasted for long, agonizing minutes, that battle in the sky. How and when it ended no man could be quite sure. The Fokkers had herded the Spads back toward the lines. Archies were making a hell of the air below. Superior numbers had overwhelmed the Spads, driven them out of the sky. In a moment it was over—blue-black Fokkers howling toward their base, Spads limping across the sky above No-Man's-Land.

Five—and seven had gone up. The Caudron, also, was down.

In straggling formation the Spads headed back for the field of the Twentieth. Dazed men handled the controls. They staggered their crates down to the field, crates pitted with black holes, scarred by Spandau bullets. Four pilots crawled exhaustedly over the

cowlings of their ships; one stayed limply in his seat, coughing blood. Those who could stand peered at each other like strangers or ghosts.

Paul Harvey's stomach ached with nausea. He cursed himself for that. He must not be so chicken-hearted! This was expected of him! This was the game of war and espionage! The Allies did the same thing. They had spies behind the German line. It was no worse.

"You alright, Paul?"

Harvey jerked around. Dick Armstrong was tugging at his sleeve, wide-eyed, breathing hard.

"Sure, I'm alright," Harvey answered breathlessly. "You didn't get hit, Dick, did you?"

"No—no. I'm damn glad you're all right, Paul. Wallace got it, you know. Tim Wallace. And Captain Wade. I—I can hardly believe that. He's been up longer than any of us, had more fighting experience, and yet he went down, and we stayed up. God, they must have known we were coming, the way they hit us!"

Paul Harvey paused. He peered into the operations office, through the opened door.

A muddy staff-car shot past the rear of the operations hut, swung onto the corner of the field, and creaked to a stop. An officer climbed from its rear seat and marched erectly to the door of the squadron office. Seeing that the room was empty he made a sharp turn and glared at the two men standing near, Harvey and Armstrong.

"Where is Captain Wade?" he demanded.

Armstrong answered hesitantly, "Captain Wade will—will not be back, major."

The major's black eyebrows beetled down. "Was he dropped?" he asked bluntly.

"Yes, sir," Armstrong said.

"The devil! Step inside here, both of you."

They strode into the office uncertainly. The major closed the door behind them and faced them sternly. His face grew dark with a heavy frown.

"Major Ursus Buxton," he announced himself. "Your names?" As he heard them, he nodded. "Wade spoke of you both. You are both very promising men. I—I'm damned sorry that Wade is not coming back. What happened?"

Armstrong answered in a burst. "They hit us all of a sudden, sir, nine Fokkers! We didn't have a chance of getting through. The Caudron went down, and two Spads, Wallace and Captain Wade. It's lucky more of us didn't get it. God, it was awful, the way they came down at us! They must have known we were coming!"

"Exactly!" the major snapped. "The bomber didn't get through? Nine Fokkers came at you? Yes, they must have known you were coming. They must have been waiting for you. Who knew of those orders before you hopped? Anybody?"

"The whole squadron, major," Armstrong answered. "Captain Wade read us the detail at mess last night."

#### CHAPTER IV

##### WEIGHTED WINGS

**MAJOR BUXTON** smacked his hands together smartly. He strode across the room and back agitatedly. Stopping abruptly, he peered at Armstrong and Harvey.

"You know all the men in this squadron, you two. I'm going to ask you a question in strict confidence. I think I can trust you both. Can you think of any man of the Twentieth who might be a spy?"

Paul Harvey's heart stopped still, then spurted into a heavy beat. His expression did not flicker, but his nerves snapped, his muscles tightened. He waited for Armstrong to answer, and the answer came rushingly.

"No, certainly not, major! I know every man in this squadron—well. Some of them came all the way through training with us. It's out of the question, sir. None of them could be a spy."

"None of them, indeed!" the major growled. "One of them is a spy. One of them must have sent information

across to the enemy about the attack on the artillery. I don't care what you think. I know from what you've told me, that there's a German intelligence man on this field, and I'm going to find him if it's the last thing I do! I'll see to it that he's found. You—both of you—you're to say absolutely nothing to any other man on this field about the matter, understand?"

They nodded dazedly.

"I'm going to put our intelligence to work on this case. Remember, you keep absolutely silent about what I've just said to you. For the time being I'll remain on this field and act as squadron commander until Wade's successor is appointed."

He sat down abruptly, and reached for the telephone. He was calling for an officer at D. H. Q. as Harvey and Armstrong left the room.

"He's crazy, Paul, that's all. Nobody on this field is a spy."

"Of course not," Harvey answered tightly.

But the dismay that filled Paul Harvey would not leave him. Each time he thought of those two Spads hurtling down in flames, each time he pictured that swooping formation of Fokkers, a cold shudder passed through him.

Sitting in the mess he thought it over. Through a window he saw a motorcycle spurt past, and swerve to a stop near the operations hut. The muddy courier ducked inside the hut, and a moment later hurried out again. That man had brought another order to the squadron, an order of which, perhaps, the German officers across the line must be informed. Harvey's pulse quickened, and quickened again when he saw Major Buxton striding toward the mess.

The major strode in, and singled Harvey out. A dull dread filled him when the major asked him to come into the operations office. He following the acting commander jauntily, smothering his uneasiness. Once inside, and with the door closed, Buxton faced him and spoke quietly.

"I want to talk to you, Harvey," Buxton said, "because Captain Wade

once mentioned you to me as one of his most promising men."

**H**ARVEY perched on the bunk, near the table. Near the telephone lay the communication that had just been delivered to Buxton by messenger. He lighted a cigarette, his eyes straying to it. He glimpsed a few words.

—Troops moving up through Lanes beginning at dawn to-morrow—

The major was talking. "I have put the intelligence unit to work. This is not just another spy-scare. I'm convinced that a spy is actually working on this field. You must realize how tremendously important it is that the spy be found. Unless he is, and quickly, it means the death of more men, a terrific handicap to our operations. I want you to tell me confidentially, Harvey, if you have any suspicions."

Harvey forced himself to appear at ease. "I've been thinking about it, major," he said. "I can't believe that any man here is a spy."

A quick glance toward the communication, covered by his hand as he pushed his helmet back. A few more words snatched swiftly.

—Patrol while the troops are moving up—

"See here, Harvey!" the major was going on. "I realize that the men on this field are your friends. Naturally, you don't want to say anything against any of them. But this is far more important than the matter of a mere friendship. Regardless of your feelings, Harvey, if you have any suspicions, I order you to tell me about them!"

—Careful not to attract the attention of the enemy flyers, but be prepared for an attack—

"Yes," Harvey was answering, "I realize that a friendship should not stand in the way. But I'm answering you frankly now, major. I have no suspicions of any one."

"Very well!" the major snapped. "Naturally, Harvey, you won't tell any one that I've questioned you.

We've got to work carefully, very carefully. That's all."

Harvey rose, drawing deeply on his cigarette, and stepped outside.

The words of the despatch echoed through Harvey's mind. Troops moving up through Lanes at dawn to-morrow! But Harvey could not send the warning yet. Not until it was dark; not until the chance of his being seen was least.

Hours passed with torturous slowness. The day ended with a fog sifting out of the sky, blanketing the earth. Overhead clouds massed, blotting up the setting sun. When darkness came it was thick and oppressive.

At last the mess was deserted. At last the flyers had gone off to their quarters and to bed. Paul Harvey sat tensely in his room, waiting. A shock of impatience went through him as the door opened, and Dick Armstrong came in, still dressed. Armstrong perched on Harvey's cot and scowled at the floor.

"I feel funny as hell, Paul," he said. "As though something's going to happen."

"Better get some sleep, Dick," Harvey suggested.

"I couldn't sleep, yet. I'm nervous as an old woman. How about getting a little fresh air? How about a walk?"

Harvey wagged his head. "I'm turning in," he said. "Patrol at dawn and I'm fagged."

"I suppose you're right," Armstrong answered smiling. "Good-night."

He rose, and stepped out of the room. Harvey sat still, listening to Armstrong's movements through the partition. After a while a cot creaked. Still Harvey waited, his nerves hot. At last he rose, quietly, and stepped into the hallway. He walked silently to the door, and eased out.

The thick blackness of the night was a reassurance to him. He could scarcely see the ground at his feet as he started walking quickly along the road. As he moved into the wood the night seemed so deep that the distance swallowed up the growling of the big guns.

He paused, listening, then went on. It was a little lighter in the clearing, but it was still very dark. He found the marked tree, and stooped, and reached for the cage of birds. A soft chattering answered when he moved the cage and drew it out. He was reaching inside when his movements suddenly froze and he listened with every nerve snapping.

A noise behind him! A rustling of leaves—footfalls! Some one was coming into the clearing!

Like a flash, silently as a ghost, Harvey dropped the cage and darted into the deeper shadow beyond. Completely hidden, scarcely breathing, he huddled down and listened as the sounds came closer.

Suddenly came a new burst of noise, a whipping of twigs and a rush. A voice commanded sharply, "Halt!" A light flashed and went out. A guttural grunt followed, scraping heels, a thump as of something falling. Then the light flashed again, and through the leaves, Paul Harvey could see two men moving, throwing the beam of a flashlight at something on the ground.

"Got him!" a voice growled.

Heart pounding, Harvey sheltered himself, and saw no more. He heard a protesting voice, and more grumbled commands. Then the crunching heels began moving away, across the clearing and along the trail.

He groped his way around the edge of the clearing, to the trail where it went on. Running quietly, he darted to the black stretch of road, and turned toward the shacks of the Twentieth. He sprinted with all the speed he could summon, and reached the door of the billet. As he stopped he saw a flashing of light near the hangars, and knew that the men who had come from the clearing were heading for the operations office.

He darted across the road. A chink of light was shining through a crack in the blind over one of the office windows. Harvey quieted his breathing as best he could, and made a daring move. He knocked at the door and, glancing

quickly over his shoulder at the approaching light, pushed in.

Major Buxton was hunched at the table, studying a map by the flickering light of a candle. He stared up, frowning, as Harvey entered.

"Anything on your mind?" the major demanded.

"Not exactly," Harvey answered, fumbling for a cigarette. "I've been thinking about this spy business, major, and I couldn't sleep. You know, it's a terrific strain on the nerves to think that a spy might be on this field. If I can do anything to help——"

A sharp knock sounded on the door, and Harvey paused. Immediately the door opened, and a uniformed man marched in, carrying a flashlight in one hand. On his sleeve was the black band of the military police. Grim-faced he spoke quickly to the major.

"I think we've found your spy, sir!"

Another uniformed man was pushing a third through the doorway. Harvey's breath jerked and his eyes widened when he saw that third man. Dick Armstrong! Armstrong was breathing hard, and his face was a furious red. He peered indignantly at the service automatic leveled at him in the hand of the second M.P. and forced a nervous laugh.

The major snapped erect. "Armstrong?" he said sharply.

"I don't know who this guy is, but we grabbed him out by the clearing," the first M.P. said. "There's a box of carrier pigeons, too, outside."

**T**HROUGH the opened door came a chattering of birds. One of the M.P.s stepped out and came back with the cage, the pigeons fluttering excitedly inside it. Major Buxton's eyes widened and went hard. Paul Harvey dropped his cigarette without knowing it. Dick Armstrong laughed again and blurted, "I don't know what this is all about!"

"It's simple enough, sir," the M.P. addressed the major. "We were looking around the field, the two of us. We saw this officer going along the trail, heading

for the clearing. We caught up with him and tried to stop him, and the first thing we knew we had a fight on our hands. I guess we caught him red-handed, sir, trying to send information across."

The major glared at Dick Armstrong. "By God! What've you to say for yourself, sir?"

Armstrong wiped a hand dazedly across his face. "I don't know what it's all about," he said again. "I just went out for a walk, sir, that's all. I couldn't sleep. I was in the clearing when these two men jumped on me. I didn't know what——"

"You resisted them?" the major demanded.

"What would you expect me to do, when two men jumped on me in the dark? I didn't know who they were. This spy talk had me on edge. Naturally I tried to break away from them. I don't know anything about that box of pigeons. I never saw it before. I hardly know——"

"The way I figure it, sir," the M.P. interrupted, "this officer went out to send information across. He was just getting a pigeon ready when he heard us coming, and then he tried to beat it. We caught him red-handed, sir, that's plain."

Armstrong tried another laugh. "If anybody thinks I'm a spy, he's crazy."

The major snorted. "Your explanation of your actions doesn't quite ring true, lieutenant. You were merely taking a walk, indeed! How can you prove that? How can you prove you didn't go out there to send a pigeon across the lines?"

Armstrong blurted, "That—that's funny, asking me for proof! How can I prove I was just taking a walk? I wasn't trying to hide what I was doing, if that means anything. I spoke to Private Watson as I went past the hangars. He's on guard. I wouldn't be so damned brazen about it if I was a spy trying to send information across. Anyway, Paul can tell you, I talked about taking a walk a little while ago and——"

Paul Harvey jerked his astounded stare away from Armstrong's face.

"That's true, major. He asked me to go walking with him, but I begged off. He told me he couldn't sleep. It's the most natural thing in the world, sir, what he did. We've all done it plenty of times. The trail to the clearing is the only place to walk, except in the mud and——"

"Naturally you would support Armstrong in what he says!" the major interrupted. "You're his friend, aren't you?"

"Certainly!" Paul Harvey snapped. "That's why I'm so sure you've made a mistake, sir, that these M.P.s have grabbed the wrong man. Dick couldn't possibly be a spy. It's ridiculous to think——"

"Ridiculous, yes, it is," the major snorted. "It's bowled me over. Armstrong is one of the last men I would have suspected, I admit it. But damn it, I can't overlook this evidence! He slipped out there in the darkness, didn't he? That cage of pigeons was found in the clearing with him, wasn't it? How did it get there if he wasn't using it?"

Harvey managed to blurt, "I don't know, sir. But I know that Dick had no idea it was there——"

The major gestured impatiently and glared at Armstrong. "Lieutenant, I want to be fair and open-minded. This is a mighty serious business. We all know what happens to spies. It's not a pleasant thing to think of, by God! I am more than willing to listen to anything you have to say in defense of yourself. I hope to Heaven that you're innocent."

"I—I am innocent, sir," Dick Armstrong said quietly. "I know this is a serious business. I know that some mistake has been made. This seems like some kind of a crazy dream, sir. I'm an American; my family goes back to Colonial times—Armstrongs fought in the American Revolution and the Civil War and the Spanish-American War, my own father. It's just a little preposterous to think that I could be a spy, sir."

"Your record and your family," the major answered, "will be looked into

carefully, Armstrong. Your pedigree is scarcely any defense at this moment. I am waiting for you to explain how that cage of pigeons got into the clearing with you."

"I don't know, sir," Armstrong answered. "I've already told you what I was doing. This is a bigger surprise to me than it can be to any one else."

**T**HE major's blunt fingers drummed on the table-top. "Have you anything else to say, Armstrong?"

Armstrong looked puzzled, and wagged his head. "No, sir," he said. "I haven't."

Major Buxton sighed. "Very well, then, Armstrong. You are under arrest. You will be obliged to face court-martial on a charge of being a German secret agent. I haven't any alternative in this matter, much as it upsets me. You will be taken by these military police to Lanes and held prisoner until——"

Paul Harvey's nervous tension tightened to the breaking-point. "Wait a minute!" he exploded. "You can't do that! There's no sense in it—arresting Dick as a spy! If it wasn't so damned serious it would be laughable. I know Dick; I know him better than any other man living, probably better than his own family. I know he's not——"

The major nodded wearily. "Naturally you'd say something like that, Harvey. You've got to expect me to discount what you say because you are Armstrong's closest friend. I'm simply forced to conclude that he's been clever enough to pull the wool over your eyes. I'm sorry, sorry for both of you.

"Take the lieutenant to divisional, gentlemen."

The M.P.s grasped Armstrong's arms. He looked puzzled, dismayed. Paul Harvey snarled with sudden rage.

"I tell you you're crazy! I tell you you've got no proof against him, no proof that he was using——"

"That's enough, Harvey!" the major snapped. "The matter of Armstrong's innocence or guilt is a matter for the court-martial to decide. Gentlemen, take Lieutenant Armstrong away."

The M. P.s tugged at him. Armstrong took several steps toward the door, still overwhelmed and bewildered; then he paused, and looked back at Paul Harvey. Harvey's face was a wrathful red, his fists were clenched. An excruciating agony rose in him as Armstrong extended his hand.

"Well, so long, Paul. I'll be seeing you—I guess."

His hand crushed Harvey's fervently. The M.P.s tugged him through the door, into the darkness. Harvey stood rigid, staring out into the night, listening to the grinding and whirring of the staff-car's motor as it started. The car backed around and began to take him away.

Suddenly Harvey whirled at the major.

"Are you crazy?" he snapped. "Are you out of your mind? Arresting Armstrong—why, it's—it's—— God, what's the matter with you? All you have to do is look at him, to know he couldn't——"

"If you have anything to say, you will say it to the court-martial, lieutenant!" the major interrupted sharply. "Until the court-martial meets there is nothing to be done. I'm sorry!"

He shrugged.

"The damnedest part of it is," he said more quietly, "I'd made up my mind about Wade's successor. I was going to appoint him to-morrow—Armstrong. I was going to make Armstrong commander of the Twentieth."

During the days and nights that followed, four words rang and reechoed through Paul Harvey's mind. "They can't convict him." He repeated them to himself countless times. He made the assertion over and over to the pilots who talked of Dick Armstrong in the mess. He must have mumbled the words in his sleep. "They can't convict him."

How could they? What proof did they have that Armstrong had known about those pigeons? He had been found out there, and the birds had been found out there, and that was all the evidence they had. No court-martial would take a man's life with only such circumstantial evidence to act upon. Especially as there had been no results from Armstrong's "treachery". The Allied

push had gone through and the lines had advanced, with no undue opposition. Nor could they overlook Armstrong's character, his family, his record.

## CHAPTER V - COURT OF WAR

THE day of the court-martial came. When Harvey entered the room in which the trial was to be held, that thought was still drilling through his mind.

Dick Armstrong entered, an older officer of the air corps at his side. His eyes went to Paul Harvey's, and he smiled. Harvey nodded confidently, and sat back. Sight of Armstrong had given him reassurance.

The court-martial declared itself to be sitting. The preliminary ceremonies were hurried through. Eyes centered on Dick Armstrong as he stood, rigid and pale, staring at a patch of cold sunlight on the wall. Colonel Kenton of the general staff, knuckling his mustache, growlingly read the charges brought against Armstrong, read them without inflection, blurring the words together, as though they were of no importance.

"Your plea, lieutenant?" he drawled.

"Not guilty," Dick Armstrong answered, very clearly.

The court-martial would, then, hear the evidence. Paul Harvey could scarcely restrain his impatience as the trial progressed.

As Major Tinsley assumed the cross-examination, Harvey listened to every syllable, every inflection. Dick Armstrong's answers rang clear and firm. Any one could see in his bearing and face that he could not possibly be guilty, so Paul Harvey thought.

It would end now in a moment, Harvey thought, as Major Tinsley finished his questioning, his summation. The officers at the table scraped their chairs back, leaned toward each other, and talked in dignified whispers. The room was very silent for long moments, until they straightened again, and Colonel Kenton rose, noisily clearing his throat.

"This court-martial," he announced, "has decided upon a verdict. Rise, Lieutenant Armstrong!"

He rose and stood very straight.

"The charge brought against you is a very serious one, lieutenant," Colonel Kenton said lumberingly. "Because of its gravity we have wished to give you every opportunity to prove your alleged innocence.

"Our investigation of your character and antecedents has been thorough. We find nothing to criticize. Your family and your character have been of the best.

But the other evidence offered this court-martial far outweighs it in importance. We have learned that you were taken prisoner, lieutenant, under damning circumstances. You were found off your field, after midnight, with a box of carrier pigeons which had been smuggled across the lines. This court has no alternative but to believe that the pigeons were hidden there by you, for your use, in sending information to the enemy.

"That being plain, we are obliged to render, lieutenant, a verdict finding you guilty of the charge of aiding the enemy."

Paul Harvey jerked to his feet.

"You can't do that!"

An M.P. rushed for him, dragged him into his chair. He struggled to get up again, dazedly. The officers of the court-martial glared at him. Colonel Kenton barked, "Be silent, lieutenant!"

Paul Harvey sat rigid, staring at Dick Armstrong. Armstrong had turned; a taut smile had formed on his lips. Harvey was too stunned to speak again, too stunned to move.

"In pronouncing a sentence upon you, Lieutenant Armstrong," Colonel Kenton drawled on, "we have taken into consideration your record. It is good, but it is not outstanding. It has evidently been built up as a blind to cover your real operations as a spy for the enemy. Therefore it can scarcely be taken into consideration. Again, we have no alternative but to pronounce upon you a sentence of death.

"The sentence of death will be executed upon you, Lieutenant Armstrong, in the prescribed military manner immediately confirmation of your sentence reaches us from Washington.

"Gentlemen, this court-martial is dismissed."

A KIND of madness filled Paul. In his quarters on the field of the Twentieth he paced the floor, sometimes laughing in a savage burst. He could think of nothing except Dick Armstrong, prisoner of war, waiting for a sentence of death to be executed upon him. A sentence of death for a military crime committed by the man he thought was his best friend.

It was not only that that inflamed Harvey with a desperate wrath. He recalled vividly, clearly, that moment on the field at Kelly. He was living now only because Dick Armstrong had risked his own life to pull him out of danger.

What was the matter with him? Was he going crazy? He was acting like a fool, forgetting himself! Was it, after all, his fault that Dick Armstrong had been arrested? It was not! He had to control himself, to let matters take their course. He bore allegiance only to the ideals of Wilhelm Hartvig. He could never be unfaithful to the motto branded on his soul, "Be true."

Then it was to be. It was to be that Dick Armstrong must die before the guns of a firing-squad.

PAUL HARVEY was perched at a table in the mess hall, fumbling with a hand of cards, absently playing poker, when the whirr of a staff-car neared the shack. In a moment the door of the mess opened, and Major Buxton strode in. The major peered frowningly through the smoky air.

"Attention, gentlemen!"

Chairs scraped back, and the flyers came to their feet. The major's eyes went to Paul Harvey's, and he gestured Harvey to stand beside him. After Harvey responded, puzzledly, he cleared his throat officiously and spoke again.

"Gentlemen, I have been acting as

your squadron commander since the death of Captain Wade. The arrangement was only temporary, and staff affairs demand my presence at divisional. A new squadron commander has been selected from among your number.

"Lieutenant Harvey, you are the man chosen as the new leader of the Twentieth. I congratulate you, Captain Harvey."

Major Buxton's hand grasped Harvey's and crushed it. Harvey uttered a startled, incredulous laugh. The men of the Twentieth came toward him, slapped his shoulder, wrung his hand, congratulated him, told him they were glad to have him as their commander. He mumbled his thanks, still bewildered.

"Come with me into the operations office, captain," the major said.

As Buxton strode out of the mess, Paul Harvey followed. The cold night air fanned his hot forehead and helped him to compose himself. Once inside the room that had been Captain Wade's, the major sat with him at the table and talked of orders and discipline and morale. Paul Harvey listened and nodded, saying nothing. And at last the major rose.

"You realize, Harvey, that your responsibilities are heavy. The Twentieth is looking to you now for leadership. You are responsible for the performances of your pilots, responsible for the whole squadron, and for every man personally. What the Twentieth does from now on will depend largely on you. You can handle it, Harvey. I know you can. The squadron will be able to function smoothly, must function smoothly, for highly important plans are being formed, and this squadron will play a responsible part in them."

"Yes," Harvey said.

"We have been careful in our selection of a new commander for the Twentieth for that reason," the major continued. "I am frank to say that at first your friendship with Armstrong made us uneasy. But we are convinced now that you had no connection with Armstrong's operations, that he had completely deceived you."

Harvey might have laughed bitterly

at that; but his expression did not change.

"We investigated your record, and your past," Buxton went on, "and we became reassured. You lived abroad when a boy, and you traveled some throughout Europe, and you have Dutch blood in you—but you are American-born, and loyal. Your record since your enlistment is of the best. I congratulate you again, Harvey and I wish you luck."

"Thank you," Harvey said shortly.

"Good night."

The major strode out of the office. The whirr of his staff-car reached Harvey's ears and blended away in the distant rumble of the night. Harvey strode across the room and back, his eyes afire. He chuckled, and his chuckle exploded into a harsh laugh. This was wonderful! This was really delicious! He, of all men, appointed commanding officer of the Twentieth!

They had investigated him, indeed! He was "American born and loyal"! They did not even suspect that his birth-certificate, on file in New York City, was forged! "Dutch blood" indeed! They did not dream that the blood in his veins was pure German! They were convinced that Harvey had had no connection with "Armstrong's operations." It was rich! Paul Harvey laughed again. How easy it was to fool these Americans!

## CHAPTER VI

### BE TRUE—TO YOURSELF!

**W**HAT a tribute to the shrewd, painstaking work of Wilhelm Hartvig of the German Intelligence Service! How cunningly he had planned, how perfectly he had made the arrangements so many years ago!

Wilhelm Hartvig could chuckle when he heard of this!

Paul Harvey strode across his office and back, smiling tightly.

Suddenly the door swung open, and he paused. His eyes widened into a startled stare at the person who had come in. A girl, a girl in uniform,

was gazing at him with surprised delight. She burst away from the door and rushed toward him.

"Paul!"

She flung her arms around his neck impulsively and hugged him. She kissed him hotly, and stood back, laughing with a sort of delirious gladness. Paul Harvey tried to speak, but his tight throat would not let a word come through.

"Paul, why don't you say something!"

"Caroline, I—I don't know what to say! You've—knocked me off my feet!"

He gazed at her in amazement. Her uniform bore the Red Cross; it was muddied and spotted, as though it had seen hard service. Her face was delightfully dirty. How she had changed!

She was laughing and crying at the same time, blurting out incoherent sentences.

"I—I'm so happy to see you Paul! I told you I'd find you when I came across, didn't I? You didn't answer my letter, Paul. Why didn't you? I don't care, I've found you now."

"I have it here," Harvey said gently. He slipped one hand into a pocket of his tunic, and showed her the letter, the envelope soiled, its corners broken, the whole thing crumpled.

She passed a hand painfully across her face, and her smile faded. It was as though she were exhausted, as though some terrific strain threatened to overwhelm her.

"What are you doing here?" Harvey asked her quickly. "I never thought you'd really come across! How did you find me? Why didn't you let me know that you were around here?"

"I—I found out that you were here only a little while ago," she answered breathlessly. "I haven't been across long, Paul. As soon as I heard, I had to come here. I've got to talk to you, Paul. About Dick."

Harvey jerked.

"They won't let me see him, Paul," Caroline said, pathetically.

"You can't let yourself go to pieces!"

Harvey exclaimed. "You're worn out. Sit down. You've got to control yourself, Caroline. It's all right, of course it's all right."

She lowered herself stiffly to the chair beside the table, and her chin came up determinedly.

"I'm not going to go to pieces about it," she told him. "That wouldn't do any good. I know that it's all a mistake and it will come out all right. I know you'll do everything you can to help, Paul. Tell me about it, everything about it."

Harvey gestured angrily. "It was wrong, all of it was wrong! They had no proof against him. He was a victim of circumstances, that was all. They found him out in the woods at night, and they happened to find a box of carrier pigeons near him. They couldn't think straight. It's the spy-scare. Everybody's afraid of spies; it's a kind of hysteria."

"You know he didn't do it, Paul," Caroline said.

Harvey's jaw-muscles tightened into knots. "I know he didn't do it," he told her.

"They're keeping him—they're waiting for a confirmation to come from Washington, aren't they, Paul?"

"Yes."

She asked strainedly, "When will it come?"

His fists clenched and his nails dug into his palms. "I don't know. Any day——"

"Then they'll——" Her voice rose in spite of herself, and she broke off.

"You've got to control yourself, Caroline!"

She nodded quickly. "It won't be very soon, will it? There's a little time. We've got to do something to help him. If you know he didn't do it, can't you talk with them, make them believe he didn't——"

"I have talked with them. They won't listen. They keep saying that I've got to have some new evidence before anything can be done. That's hopeless. I'm afraid there isn't anything to find."

"There must be something that can be done!" Caroline insisted. "I wish I

knew what to do. I'd do anything for Dick. But I—I can't. There isn't anybody that can help him, Paul, but you."

The color drained from Harvey's face.

"You're the best friend he's ever had, Paul. He wrote us such wonderful things about you. He thinks more of you than any one else in the world. I think you've meant more to him even than Dad and Mother."

"Oh, no!" Harvey blurted painfully.

"I think it's true, Paul. That's why I want you to help him, because there's nobody else who could do so much for him. You've got to do everything possible, Paul. If—if it happens, it will be terrible. It would kill Mother if——" She broke off abruptly. "But I don't need to ask it of you. I know you'll do everything possible to help Dick."

Harvey jerked up and strode across the room. "Yes, of course!" he exclaimed. "Of course I will!"

She rose and came toward him. "I—I can't stay any longer, Paul. I've got to take my ambulance back to Lanes. You can reach me at the hospital if you want me. I've got to go. Good-by, Paul."

"Good-by," he said.

She closed her tiny hands over his. He peered down at her tensely. Her eyes were pleading into his. His arm went around her suddenly; he drew her close to him, and kissed her. When he let her go, she backed away, trying to smile. Suddenly she turned, and ran out the door.

In a moment the clattering of an engine sounded on the road, and a creaking ambulance began to draw away.

Paul Harvey stood motionless a long moment. He tendoned his hands together behind him and strode across the office. Staring at the floor he paced back and forth, his face growing deathly pale, then crimson. Every word that Caroline had uttered to him rang through his mind again and again.

"You're the best friend he's ever had, Paul. I know you'll do everything possible to help. . . ."

Across the office and back he strode, across and back, across and back.

CAPTAIN HARVEY, commander of the Twentieth Squadron. His pilots, talking among themselves, said that the new responsibilities had changed him. His eyes were always filled with a fervent, determined light. His mouth set in a firm, hard line. He spoke to them in crisp, ringing syllables. He moved about briskly, with a sense of power. Paul Harvey was going to make a damn good commander.

He was alone, and it was late, two nights after he had been appointed to his command. He was sitting hunched in his chair, staring at the top of his table, seeing nothing. His candle was guttering low, filling the room with a flickering light. His body ached, his mind was numb; he was exhausted.

Wearily he rose, and automatically began to slip out of his clothes. With his Sidcot half off he paused. He was too tired even for that. He puffed out his candle, stretched out on his cot, and pulled a blanket over him. He had not slept for two nights, but now exhaustion was weighing him down.

After a while he slept, a troubled, restless sleep. He turned and squirmed on the cot, in the darkness. It grew later, and his restlessness increased. Awake again, but with his eyes still closed he lay, feeling a presence there in the room. Slowly he lifted his lids and looked.

The room was black, but he could see a figure standing at the foot of his cot, a man, old, his face pallid, supporting his weight on a cane. Harvey jerked up, staring widely. He could see that figure as clearly as though it were bathed in the light of a full moon, but the windows were covered. A startled word broke through his lips.

"Father!"

The figure at the foot of his bed smiled wanly. Harvey could see the glow in the old blue eyes, the softness of the smile. He came to his feet slowly, scarcely breathing, as though held back by some power greater than himself. He knew his Father was going to speak

to him, and he strained to hear the coming words.

"Good-by, my boy. Remember always—'Be true.'" Then it was gone.

Paul Harvey stood very still, probing the darkness with his eyes. He was very cold. He stumbled toward his table, fumbled for a match and struck it. He ignited the wick of his candle, and looked around. The room was empty. The door was hooked on the inside. It was very still.

As Paul Harvey stood, peering at the spot where he had seen his Father, a new strength seemed to flow through his veins. A new light came into his eyes. A realization possessed him with profound certainty.

He knew that at that moment, somewhere far across the lines, Wilhelm Hartvig had died.

"Be true."

The words still echoed in his mind. He crossed the room slowly, still chilled, a little dazed. He felt himself possessed by some power he had never known before.

"Be true."

Those two words. Words he had heard and remembered all his life. The insignia of faith and loyalty. The creed of the Hartvigs, to be true.

Paul Harvey had been true. He was convinced of that. He would always be true. But now the words were filled with a new meaning. Now they were a force clarifying Paul Harvey's mind. Now he was finding himself, here, alone in that room near the lines, with his Father's presence near him.

Be true—to yourself! That was the real meaning!

It was plain now. Wilhelm Hartvig had always been true to himself. His service to Germany, to the cause, had only been a part of that. His loyalty, his patriotism, only a part of the greater faithfulness. That had been his teaching to his son—honesty, loyalty, devotion to his ideals!

A new fire possessed Paul Harvey. What was he? A German? An American? What did it matter? His loyalty flowed to a much greater thing than any nation could be, to a thing much finer

than any political cause. Everything else seemed petty and trivial compared with the ideals that were part of him. Idealism expressed in two simple words. "Be true!"

"I thank God!" Paul Harvey exclaimed aloud. "Now I know!"



THE following day faded into an overcast twilight, with sullen clouds hanging low. Mist steamed off the field of the Twentieth as the cold night wind began to blow.

A rumbling shook the earth, and a screeching of a tinny phonograph came through the clapboard walls of the mess. In the operations office, Captain Harvey was sitting at his table, very erect, his eyes fixed on empty space.

Slow feet shuffled through the gravel outside. The door opened slowly. An unkempt figure came into the candle-light; the old "Frenchman" showing his imbecilic, toothless grin, ogled Harvey with his one gleaming eye. He tottered in, carrying his wicker basket filled with wine-bottles, gibbering, "Wine, *m'sieu*? Very good wine, very cheap?"

Harvey's gaze burned at him.

"Le Chateau, *m'sieu*?"

The old scarecrow lifted a bottle from his basket and held it toward Harvey so that its label was visible. Le Chateau 1911! The signal to report to X 13 for further orders! Harvey's jaw clamped. Suddenly he jerked out of his chair and strode past the stooping figure and slammed out of the door.

A fierce light came into the one eye of X 13. Never dropping his role for an instant, he replaced the bottle of wine in his basket, and shuffled back to the door. As he ambled outside, he peered across the field in search of Harvey, but the darkness covered everything from sight. He tottered on, weakly stooped, his basket swinging on his arm.

Harvey saw the hunched figure pass out of the light of the doorway and disappear. He was filled with a fury that he could not himself explain. He trudged back into his operations office,

and sank into his chair, and glanced at his watch. It was still early. X 13 would not expect him before midnight. There was time, time for him to try to think.

Minutes ticked past, an hour, and Harvey scarcely moved. He rose quietly and began pacing the room again, slowly. His pace quickened. He clasped his hands tightly behind his back. His face became grimly set. Another hour crawled past and another. Midnight.

Paul Harvey stepped outside. There was no ray of light anywhere in heaven or on earth. He rounded the hut, and began walking along the road, following it automatically. For a mile he trudged, at a regular, even stride, until he saw the vague form of the estaminet looming out of the night beside the road.

He pushed through the door and closed it behind him. Again the pungent room was empty, except for the old man hunched in his rocker beside the fuming stove. The "Frenchman" tottered up, grinning idiotically, and shuffled behind the bar. He passed Harvey a glass of whisky, and Harvey gulped it down. When the old man moved again, it was toward the rear room.

Harvey followed him. The door closed. A match struck. A candle flared. In the yellow light X 13 faced Harvey. He transformed as if by magic, losing his years, becoming erect and firm. His solitary eye shone keenly. Alertly he listened, peering around.

"What do you want?" Harvey demanded stiffly.

X 13's gnarled hand reached out and tapped Harvey's shoulder. "Excellent work, comrade! You are succeeding admirably! You are commander of your squadron now, *hein*? If those Yankee officers only knew what they had done! How I laughed when I heard it! Excellent, excellent!"

"What do you want?" Harvey demanded again.

"You are right. We must not waste time!" X 13 exclaimed. "We must talk fast, and work fast. We must be most careful. We have been handicapped, comrade, by the loss of our pigeons. We have no means now of sending in-

formation across the lines. I know about Lieutenant Armstrong. Excellent, yes. Now they will never suspect you. It is good, another enemy eliminated! But look!"

The German secret agent turned to a dark corner of the room and lifted a case that had once held wine. From it he took another small, wooden box, and opened it. Harvey peered at its contents, frowning. Turnbuckles—many of them—the kind used on Allied planes.

"Wooden!" exclaimed X 13. "They look like the real thing, *hein?* Perfect! But wooden! These were dropped over the lines only last night by parachute! You are to use them, take them to your field, and watch your chance, and substitute them for the turnbuckles on the planes. You know what will happen then, comrade! In flight, while the Yankee planes are flying, these turnbuckles will split. The planes will tear apart and fall. They will be even more effective than machine-gun bullets! They will help wipe the Twentieth out of the sky!"

Harvey's hands hardened into fists.

"AND this, comrade!" X 13's knotted hand crept inside his blouse. He brought out a folded paper, and handed it to Harvey. Harvey took it slowly, and glanced at it. It was apparently an order issued by divisional, the same paper, the same typing, in all respects the same. He peered again into X 13's hideous face.

"A very clever counterfeit, comrade, orders for an American squadron really written by a German officer! You will take these orders with you and use them. They tell you to fly a patrol, every plane on your field, far beyond Lanes. It is for the purpose of clearing the field of the Twentieth at a crucial moment, to-morrow at dawn. Then, while your planes are far away, a formation of our planes will sweep across the lines, Gotha bombers among them, and destroy the railheads and ammunition depots behind Lanes! At dawn to-morrow, comrade! At dawn the attack is coming!"

Harvey was staring at the secret agent's one eye fixedly.

X 13 pushed the box of turnbuckles toward him. "Take them down; hide them and use them! You must not stay here too long! Go now. To-night you will have time to put some of these——"

Paul Harvey's clenched fist swung upward. It cracked against the box and drove it out of X 13's grasp. It dropped to the floor and its contents spilled. Instantly X 13's face grew hard and his single eye flared.

"Comrade!"

"Don't call me that!"

X 13 drew up stiffly. Harvey took a stiff step toward him, face a wrathful red.

"You ask me to take those turnbuckles and put them on the planes of my men! You ask me to murder deliberately the men of my own squadron! Those men are under my command. I am responsible for them. They are my friends. I'll roast in Hell before I'll do that to them!"

X 13 snapped, "What is the matter with you? Have you gone crazy? Do you realize what you are doing, turning traitor to——"

Harvey laughed bitterly. "I am not turning traitor to anything. I never did anything truer in my life than what I am doing at this minute!"

"I sent information across the lines because it was expected of me, because it was my duty to do it, as I saw it then. It's not my job to kill the men who look to me as their commander. I'm expected to lead them, not to destroy them! Those Yankee officers, as you call them, have trusted me with the command of a squadron and by God I'm not going to fail them!"

"What! Does loyalty to Germany mean nothing?"

"Loyalty to Germany means nothing to me. Loyalty to America means nothing to me. I have no country to be loyal to. I have never been loyal to anything but the idealism of my Father. His loyalty was to Germany; mine is to him. It has never been anything else, and it never will be. Wilhelm Hartvig

never failed a trust, and neither will I. You don't understand! You're a blind, scheming, murderous maniac who—"

X 13 had drawn back. His one eye was glaring fiendishly. His misshapen fingers were slipping into a ragged pocket. Harvey saw the quick movement that followed, saw the glint of reflected light as the gun in X 13's hand flashed up.

He struck out sharply. His blow glanced off the chin of the German agent at the instant X 13 pulled the trigger. A spitting report sounded flatly in the room and a bullet snapped into the wood of the opposite wall.

Swiftly the German agent sprang back, whipping up the gun again. Harvey pressed in upon him swiftly and sure of every move. He clutched the German's wrist with one hand and closed his fingers crushingly. A fist caught him in the face, and he wrenched back blindly, but he clung to that wrist. An instant later the weight of X 13 was thrown against him, and he staggered back, and thudded to the floor. The German's strength was appalling, the power of a maniac. They rolled over, trying to wrench apart, and the gun whipped up. Harvey thrust it back again and suddenly it spouted flame, and the walls shook with a second hollow report.

The form of X 13 stiffened in Harvey's grasp, then went lax. He jerked back, staring. The flickering light of the candle showed him X 13 spilling over on the floor, gasping, clutching at his side. A spurt of red was dashing from a hole in the German's side, where the bullet had entered. He was dropping back, his strength ebbing from him.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE HIGHER COMMAND

**H**ARVEY jerked up swiftly, staring around. Except for the spasmodic panting of the German, the room was silent. Through the board walls came a shout, far away. The shots had been heard! He moved toward the door, then stopped, peering down.

He saw, lying near the base of the

wall, the forged orders that X 13 had given him. He snatched up the paper, then whirled back. Another call came from outside. Whoever had heard the shot was running toward the estaminet. Harvey knew he could not go out the door without being seen. Some other way, then—the window!

He stepped across X 13, and pried at the small window. It was nailed down. Swiftly he caught up a wooden case and crashed it against the panes. Glass splintered and wood cracked, two more swift blows, and the way was opened. Harvey ducked through, and paused only an instant to learn if any one was very near. Thank God the night was black!

He sped away, keeping to the grass, and scrambled over a stone wall. Running over the soft earth behind it, he hastened toward the shacks of the Twentieth. There he stopped.

Back near the estaminet were spots of light, the headlamps of a car, and another swinging as if in a man's hand. He saw some one disappear into the estaminet, and saw the car pass without slowing. Hurrying again, he dodged around the corner of the hut, and pushed through the door of his office.

He paused, staring at the faked orders in his hand; then he thrust them into his pocket. Behind his hut the motor of the staff-car was whirring. It lurched off the road, and creaked to a stop near Harvey's door.

The door opened. Major Ursus Buxton strode in, his black eyebrows beetling, and nodded to Harvey curtly. Harvey was slumped in his chair behind the table, striving to control his rapid breathing. As casually as he could, he asked, "You look worried, major. What's it about?"

"Worried—yes, captain!" the major answered. "Damn worried. We're finding ourselves in a tight place. I've come here to see you because we're going to make a desperate effort to advance, and the Twentieth has got to play an important part in the move."

The major perched on the bunk, still scowling. "We're going to let loose a

barrage sometime to-morrow morning. Zero hour not decided upon yet, but you'll be informed of it. We will make an attempt to advance under the barrage, and at the time your planes will fly under it. Ticklish business, Harvey. You will probably take off about ten minutes before the zero hour for the barrage. In any case, all schedules and patrols are to be abandoned until the orders come through. I came here to tell you that personally, because it's so damned all-important, captain."

"I understand," Harvey said.

"Let there be no mistake about it," the major asserted. "All your planes and all your men are to remain on this field and await those orders. Until those orders come, you are to stay down. Understood?"

"Perfectly."

The major was about to resume when a scampering of feet sounded outside the door. It was pushed open suddenly, and two M.P.s came in, blinking in the flight, breathless. Major Buxton jerked up, his frown growing deeper, as the men turned to him.

"What's the trouble now?"

"Something damn funny just happened, major!" the foremost M.P. exclaimed. "That old Frenchman up at the estaminet just got killed."

"Well?" Buxton demanded. "Does staff have to become excited about some old scarecrow who——"

"Yeah, but we found these things all around him! They're wooden turnbuckles, sir!"

Paul Harvey came slowly to his feet, his blood racing. The major took the turnbuckle from the extended hand of the M.P., examined it closely, dug into it with his thumbnail. He exploded suddenly, "By God!"

"It happened just a minute ago, major! We were up the road, the two of us, and we heard a couple of shots, and went to see what was wrong. We found that old Frenchman dead, back in the rear room, and the guy who killed him'd just got away through the window. We saw this car coming to the field, so we hurried over."

"BY GOD!" Buxton exclaimed again. "This means something! I don't know how those turnbuckles got there, or anything else about it, except one thing, and I know that damned well—that old Frenchman was a spy!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped the M.P. "That's the way I figured it, sir!"

Buxton glared at Paul Harvey. "Without a doubt, that's true, captain!" he declared. "That Frenchman was a spy and none of us suspected it! Of course! Operating close to a flying field! See here!" to the M.P. "Did you see the man who killed him? Did he get away?"

"He got away clean, sir."

"He couldn't have got far. By God, maybe he came to this flying field! Harvey, we can't waste a second! Post a guard around the field! See that no man enters or leaves it! Start a check of your pilots and mechanics immediately, every man. Every son-Jack of them has got to be able to account for himself, or he'll be arrested so fast he won't know what happened. Call your men into the mess, captain."

Two hours later a bedraggled major and a very tired squadron commander emerged from the mess of the Twentieth. They crossed the road and walked into the operations room. Major Buxton sighed deeply and shrugged.

"At least we have satisfied ourselves on that one point, captain. Nobody on this field had any connection with the shooting of that Frenchman. They've all been able to account for themselves."

Harvey nodded.

"In fact," Buxton went on, "the man who killed the Frenchman may be one of our intelligence men. Several are working around here, under disguise, and one of them may have discovered the turnbuckles and learned that the old man was a spy. He probably took for cover in order to preserve his disguise. That's only guesswork, but if I'm right, the report will come through to intelligence very soon."

"There is, however, one thing I'm perfectly sure of, captain."

"Yes?"

"Lieutenant Armstrong was working hand-in-glove with that spy. Those turnbuckles were certainly intended for his use."

Harvey went pale. "I don't believe that, major!"

"It clinches the case against Armstrong—no doubt of it, captain!" the major declared. "It proves that the verdict of the court-martial was just."

He strode toward the door and paused. Frowning, he added, "I know Armstrong was your friend, captain, and I'm sorry. I know how you must feel, but—" He shrugged. "I'm blunt as hell, and I don't know how to break the news to you. I'll simply have to tell you that—"

He glanced at his watch. "Confirmation of Armstrong's sentence has just come through from Washington. He will be executed within six hours."

Within six hours! Paul Harvey sat stiffly at his table. He was alone now, but Major Buxton's words were repeating themselves over and over in his mind.

Harvey's mind churned with recollections. Remembered scenes and sentences flashed across his consciousness. Caroline's plea to him.

"You're the best friend he's ever had, Paul. . . ."

Then an image of the hideous face of X 13—the one ghastly eye, the gaping toothless mouth—the plan told in a rushing breath.

"The destruction of the supply lines will be complete! At dawn—at dawn the attack is coming. . . ."

Then Major Buxton's officious drawl.

"We're hard pressed to hold our ground. We're going to let loose a barrage. Until those orders come, you are to stay down. So damned all-important. . . ."



**H**ARVEY strode to his door swiftly, jerked it open and stared across the field. It was still very dark, but dawn was not far away now. Dawn, when the German attack would come sweeping across the

lines. Dawn, when the might of the forces across the lines would strike devastatingly at Lanes. An attack that no man this side of the lines knew of, except Paul Harvey.

He stood very erect. His face grew hard and square. His eyes gleamed with a firm determination. He peered at his wrist-watch and calculated his time. It would not be long, now.

He strode outside briskly, and along the row of tents. He paused outside one of them and barked, "Sergeant Murphy!"

A yawning answer came from the darkness inside. The flaps of the tent rustled, and a head poked out. The sergeant mechanic of the Twentieth blinked at his commander puzzledly.

"Get the planes on the line, sergeant," Harvey ordered with a snap. "Get every plane on the line, every one. Get them warmed. We're taking off before dawn."

"Yes, sir!"

Harvey turned and strode back. He passed his operations hut and crossed the road and slammed into the billet. Striding heavily down the hallway of the billet, he shouted.

"Wake up, you sons! Get on your feet, every one of you! Get the sleep out of your eyes! Every man in the mess, right now!"

Mutterings came from the rooms. Doors opened and heavy-eyed men peered out. Harvey kept marching up and down outside the doors, shouting until he was sure every man was awake. Then he turned and strode back into the mess, and lighted a candle. Standing in the gleam of the flame, he waited.

His pilots came through the door, straggling, some shivering in gaudy pajamas, some pulling robes around them, some bare-footed, all of them tired and bewildered. Harvey waited until every man was present, until they were ready for his word.

"Every man of this squadron is going into the air just before dawn," he told them briskly. "Nobody is excused. Every plane is going to hit the air. There's an attack coming across the

lines toward Lanes at dawn—bombers. The enemy is going to try to blow up the railhead and the ammo dump. They've got to be stopped.

"Get ready to hop right away. Get ready to find all hell bursting loose on you as soon as you hit the enemy formation. Get ready to drop the Gothas in spite of everything. Those are orders. Dismiss!"

He turned and strode out of the room. Just outside the door of his operations office he paused, peering across the field. It was a little lighter now. He could faintly see the Spads moving up to the line, the ground-crew rolling the planes from the hangars and chocking them. A grim satisfaction came into his eyes as he turned and entered his office.

He sat behind his table stiffly. He cleared the table before him, and dipped a pen into a bottle of ink, and spread clean sheets of paper. He thought swiftly a moment, then began to write, his pen leaping

To: Major Buxton, Colonel Kenton and all officers of the staff at D.H.Q.  
From: the Commanding Officer, Twentieth Pursuit Squadron, Clichy.  
Concerning: Himself.

I am known as Paul Harvey. My real name is Hartvig. Since my enlistment in the air corps of the U.S. Army I have been functioning as a secret agent for the German Government.

I am German-born. The birth-certificate bearing my Americanized name on file in New York City is a forgery. My father was Captain Wilhelm Hartvig of the intelligence service of the German Government. For many years before the outbreak of the war he lived in Haarlem, Holland, in the guise of a manufacturer of chocolate.

My call to the service came to me from Colonel Nikolai, Chief of the German Intelligence, on May 5, 1917. I reported to Room 113, 16 Blanche St., Stamford, Conn., at 8 p.m., that date, and received instructions to enlist in the Air Corps of the U. S. Army.

Once reaching Clichy, I received a code message from the estaminet-keeper, known as Papa Lazere, to report. He was X 13, a German agent. My designation was One and Seven, G and W. X 13 disclosed to me the existence of the cage of carrier pigeons hidden in the clearing in the woods. I made use of a pigeon by sending across the lines information concerning the intended attack on the Germany artillery, during which Captain Wade was killed.

My second attempt to use the pigeons was frustrated. I had intended to send information across the lines concerning the movement of troops through Lanes. That night I was almost surprised liberating the pigeons. Lieutenant Armstrong was apprehended and arrested in my

stead. He knew absolutely nothing of my operations.

Every word of this statement is the absolute truth. As documentary proof I attach a forged order given me by X 13 before his death. I killed X 13, but the circumstances are not important here. I attach also a copy of the code used between X 13 and myself. I beseech you to investigate my statements and to prove their truth, and to liberate Lieutenant Armstrong from an unjust sentence.

Paul Hartvig.

While Harvey wrote, a blasting of motors came from the field. The metallic chorus rose in a roar, ever louder, as the Hissos of the Spads on the line went into action and warmed. As Harvey scrawled his signature to the confession, he listened intently, a tight smile forming on his lips.

He pulled the forged order from his pocket and pinned it to the sheet. He noted down rapidly the code system he had memorized. That done, he folded the documents in an envelope, sealed them, and addressed them to Major Buxton.

He paused, while the motors of the field kept howling, and began to write rapidly again.

Dear Dick,

I have done the only thing I could do. Perhaps you will hate me when you learn the truth. I would not blame you for that, but I hope you will not. It is very hard for me to write it, but I must—to you and Caroline both.

Good-by,

Paul.

Without rereading what he had written, he rose, stuffing the sheet into a second envelope, and sealed it. He scrawled Armstrong's name on it, and held both envelopes tightly in his hand as he strode toward the door. Pulling it open, he peered across the field, saw the glow that heralded the coming sun. Dawn would be shining within a few moments.

An officer came hurrying through the gloom—Major Buxton. Jerking, Harvey saw that a staff-car, the noise of its motor lost in the roar of the Hissos, had drawn to a stop near his hut. The major strode in, scowling heavily.

"What the devil are you doing, Harvey?" he snapped. "You have your orders to remain on this field!"

Harvey nodded. "I remember, major," he said.

"God's sake, captain!" the major blurted. "I told you that your barrage patrol is of the highest importance! I told you that you must wait for orders from divisional. I told you we are counting on you to the limit!"

"I remember it all," Harvey said.

"I've come here with your orders! The zero hour is set for ten o'clock, hours from now! You're to hold yourself ready for it! What the devil do you mean, sir, going off on patrol?"

"I have my own orders, sir," Harvey answered flatly. "They're far more important than any orders you may be bringing me."

"Orders?" Buxton snapped. "From whom?"

"From myself," Harvey answered.

The major sputtered. "What's the matter with you, Harvey? Don't you understand? You're to wait for the zero hour! Unless you do that our attack will be knocked into a cocked hat! God, man, are you trying to wreck——"

"Listen, major," Harvey said slowly. "Divisional's orders are important, yes, but I'm acting on information that's far more important. An attack is coming across at Lanes, sir, at any moment—bombers. That attack has got to be stopped. Unless it is, Lanes will be wiped off the map. We are flying, sir, to stop that attack."

"I know of no such attack!" the major blurted. "No word of it] has come to divisional! How do you know of it, captain—if there is going to be any such attack?"

Harvey sighed. "That doesn't matter now, major. I'm going up to stop that attack, and everything else can go to hell, you and your orders included. That's final, sir."

Major Buxton's face turned an apoplectic purple. "By God, this is a serious matter, captain, deliberately overriding my orders! That's insubordination, sir—mutiny! I command you to abandon your crazy notion about any attack you think might be

coming. I order you to wait and execute the orders I am bringing you."

"This squadron is flying immediately, major," Harvey countered. "Nothing you can say will stop us."

"Nothing, indeed!" Buxton raged. "I'll see to that! You'll stay down, Harvey, or you'll face arrest. You'll obey me or, by God, I'll jerk you up for court-martial! This is far too important, sir. You'll be court-martialed and broken, I tell you!"

Paul Harvey laughed. "I am sorry sir. Even that won't stop me."

"By God, sir, you're under arrest this instant!"

Harvey laughed again. Suddenly he grew serious. He raised his hand and proffered to Major Buxton the two envelopes. The major, still blinking furiously, took them.

"I think these will explain matters, major," Harvey said swiftly.

He turned and strode through the door, and broke into a run toward the line of Spads. Behind him he heard Major Buxton roar.

"Come back here, captain! I order you to come back!"

Harvey sprinted ahead.

The shine in the eastern sky was brightened with every moment. It would not be long before the rim of the sun would begin to gleam above the ragged horizon.

Harvey's Spad was placed to fly point. He legged over the cowlings quickly, and glanced at his dials. He peered up and down the spread of wings on the line. The pit of every Spad was occupied. Every pilot was waiting for his signal. He grasped his Very pistol, and peered back.

Major Buxton was running toward him wildly, shouting.

Harvey shot a green ball from the pistol. Instantly the ack emmas darted about, pulling the chocks away from the wheels of the Spads. The crates began to move across the sticky ground, gathering speed, driving into the take-off. The line of gray wings bent as the Spads howled into the thinning mist, their tails lifting.

Major Buxton jerked to a stop, staring, whipped by the terrific backblast of the slashing props. He peered confusedly at the planes sweeping away, and stared down at the two envelopes in his hand. He saw that one of them was addressed to him. Bewilderedly he stuck his thumb beneath its flap and opened it and began to read.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WHITEWASHED SHADOWS

PAUL HARVEY hunched low in the pit of his Spad, and peered back. Behind him his V formation was wavering, and every Spad of the Twentieth was behind him. Over in the east the sky was still brighter.

The chaos of No-Man's-Land lay below, then slid past. Trenches moved tailward. The Spads were winging into German air now, driving deep. Paul Harvey was scanning the sky through half-closed eyes. His heart was pounding furiously; he was bathed in a cold sweat; he was breathing rapidly; but he was full of an overwhelming sense of sureness.

Then, flashing black wings against the sky!

Harvey saw them and peered intently. At a slightly higher altitude two formations of enemy crates were winging. Fokkers, droning toward the Allied line! Behind each formation was a Gotha, a great lumbering fortress of the air, escorted by two pursuits. Instantly Harvey swung his Very pistol again, and fired a red ball into the air.

As swiftly he signaled an attack. He swung the nose of his Spad upward and climbed, while his formation spread and followed him. The Fokker formations were droning straight ahead, and Harvey was leading his men into the air directly in front of them. When he leveled he was flying with the formations visible through his bleary windshield. Hunched low, peering along his Vickers, he drove straight on.

His lips lifted tensely; his teeth clenched and his jaw-muscles bunched. He waited deliberately, while the dis-

tance between the Spads and the Fokkers disappeared swiftly, and his thumbs trembled on his Bowden trips.

Then, a burst! His Vickers kicked open, and his tracers sparked out, spinning past the leader of the foremost Jerry formation. The shots acted like a signal, throwing the sky into a blazing turmoil. The blue-black pursuits wavered, scattering, spreading to block the way across the sky. The two Gothas came lumbering on, never veering.

Machine guns tattooed. Motors howled. Ships spun and whirled, singling off. Harvey pulled sharply on his stick and shot into a zoom that pulled him high above the Gothas. A Fokker whirled to follow him, and he Immelmanned. Swiftly he rolled, and stabbed again with his guns, sending smoking tracers toward the Fokkers. Instantly they reeled into a swift combat, snarling like fighting eagles.

Harvey yelled as he sideslipped, then spun around toward the Fokker. His Vickers kicked again as he thrust a savage burst across the sky toward the Fokker. His bullets stitched through the black tail of the Jerry crate, and he leaped high in a zoom, whirling again to throw himself down on its back. He plunged like a gray bolt of lightning, still-huddled behind his sight-rings.

Another terrific burst. Tracers weaving across the air again, threading at the Fokker. The line of Harvey's bullets swept into the tail of the Jerry ship. Its fabric ripped and its tail assembly burst with an explosion of splinters. As the Fokker nosed down, Harvey leaped for its back, hunched to send a destroying burst on its back. The Jerry pilot was struggling to tear away, but he was going down. With deadly certainty Harvey aimed and loosed his guns.

His Vickers lanced sharply through the body of the Fokker. The Jerry pilot leaped half out of his pit with the terrific jerk his muscles gave when they felt the torture of the biting bullets. The black ship leaned weakly on one wing, and its nose dropped. Down! Spinning! Harvey plunged after it, cold

to the marrow, watching it drill down toward No-Man's-Land.

Then, swiftly, he pulled level and peered around. The sky was a fury of snarling motors and blasting machine guns. Black planes and gray were reeling, spinning, whipping over and over. The two Gothas were lumbering on. Around one of them two Spads were rolling, fighting off its advance; but the other was plowing ahead unhampered.

Harvey slapped a new drum onto his Vickers, an operation requiring only a second, then whipped around. He darted swiftly toward the foremost Gotha, his Hisso blasting at its limit. As he rushed for its tail, the Maxim in its rear pit opened and flung a withering blast toward him.

His Vickers opened, and his tracers pelted toward the Gotha. As he flung away, the Maxim in the rear pit of the great bomber followed him with blazing slugs. Holes popped through Harvey's wings, raked toward his tail assembly. His cowling splintered, and darts of wood stung into his face. He felt a sharp blow on his shoulder, where one of the slugs had furrowed his flesh, but he ignored that. Dropping his nose again, he roared around the Gotha in a tight circle.

**T**WO guns blasted at Paul Harvey, one from the fore pit of the bomber, one from the rear. It was a flying fortress, that ship; it could reach every inch of the sky around it with its guns. The tremor of impacting slugs vibrated through Harvey's ship as he whirled. He felt a jarring through the floorboards, and felt a numb pinch in his thigh. Peering down an instant, he saw a flow of red seeping from his leg. Then, again he whirled and dived, and roared at the Gotha's broad belly.

Through the bottom port another gun opened at him, blazing out a long burst. A smashing of slugs hit across Harvey's shoulders, and in an instant his dials turned into a shapeless mass. Gasping with the sudden, burning pain that filled him, he pulled up again, and leaped ahead of the Gotha, and whirled.

With the big ship lumbering straight for him, he kicked open his Vickers again. The Maxim in the nose of the bomber played at him with a lash of lead. Harvey saw one of his struts crack and bend where a bullet hit it; he felt the pinging of the charge passing through his tail and raking forward. But he did not shift aside. He plunged straight for the nose of the Gotha, his Vickers still open.

He gasped as he felt a hard thumping across his chest, and felt a new stab of pain flash through his body. He gripped himself grimly and played his rudders to swing the line of fire directly across the control pit of the Gotha. He saw his tracers whisk across the pilot, the observer, the gunner.

He pulled high, peering down through a film of red. The men in the fore-pit of the Gotha had dropped. The gun was silent now. But the rear Maxim was still blazing! Harvey whipped around, still staring, ignoring the slugs raining around him. The Gotha's nose was dropping. It was going down, plunging toward the mud!

It spilled over awkwardly, and lurched into a spin. As he watched it, Harvey's lips closed tightly to retrain a warm bubbling within his mouth. He'd got that Gotha, kept it from Lanes, and he cared about nothing else. For a long moment he watched it spin and plunge and then, wearily, he dressed his ship and looked around.

The other Gotha was being dragged down. Three Fokkers were struggling through the air, one in flames, two spinning out of control. A Spad was staggering low, driving into the mud. Harvey smiled tightly. The attack was broken. The force of the Fokkers was scattered. No Jerry planes were going to reach Lanes this morning!

He floated through the air, watching. He was flying automatically, his body flaming with pain. He was peering through a deepening red cloud.

Then his eyes fluttered. His hand loosened on the stick. His Spad's nose eased down. The gray ship began to spiral, loosely, waveringly, driving

down. Lower and lower it staggered, dropping toward a spreading field behind the German lines.



IN AN office at divisional headquarters, Lieutenant Richard Armstrong stood, rigidly facing a desk in the corner. Major Buxton sat behind the desk, talking seriously.

His eyes shifted from Armstrong to the girl standing at one side, a girl wearing the uniform of the Red Cross. Both of them were listening intently to what he was saying.

"There is no doubt of it, lieutenant. We have investigated this matter very carefully. Every word written in this communication is absolutely true. There is hardly anything more I can say, except that I—don't quite understand it all, even so. You are confused by it all, and so am I.

"I have talked with various men of the Twentieth. They told me of the attack led by Harvey, the morning he went down. He fought the German flyers, Armstrong—fought them to the end. That is what I can't quite understand. This man was undoubtedly a German spy, and fought against the German air attack that morning, fought as though he belonged heart and soul to our cause. And, then, too, he killed that Frenchman, known as X 13." Major Buxton shrugged. "No, I don't quite understand.

"But—there is nothing more to be done about it, lieutenant. Of course, the verdict of the court-martial against you is set aside. You will, of course, report back to your field immediately, for service. The Twentieth needs a commander, and you are the man to command it. Your rank becomes that of captain immediately. This, in a measure, will perhaps atone for the injustice we have done you. I think that is all, lieutenant."

Dick Armstrong peered again at the note he was holding, the note signed "Paul." His hand closed gently over Caroline's arm, and they strode from the office. Neither of them spoke, as they

climbed into the battered ambulance that was waiting outside.

Caroline drove slowly along the road leading to Clichy, and the base of the Twentieth. They peered ahead, dry-eyed. At last it was Armstrong who broke the silence.

"I don't believe it," he said. "I'll never believe it."

Day and night the thunder of war shook the heavens, and rocked the earth. Every hour the big guns flashed, hurling destruction through the air. In the trenches men crawled, men in khaki and *feld-grau*, pushed by orders, fighting across a narrow strip of mud. And the lines began to move. Toward the north they crawled, bulging, wavering, driven by a tremendous man-power, the Allied Army advancing.

The Big Push was on. The end was in sight.

Chaos and turmoil reigned behind the German lines. The gray-green forces were in retreat, being swept back by overwhelming power driving out of the Allied lines. Day and night it continued, while talk of defeat ran up and down the lines, while worn men whispered of an impending Armistice, and prayed for peace.

Through a pitchy night an ambulance crawled over a swampy road behind the breaking German Line. It was laden with wounded taken from a hospital evacuated during the retreat. It slogged laboriously on its way, until at last it crossed the line into Belgium, until at last it snorted to a stop in front of a mossy church at Givet, on the Aisne.

Men labored to unload the wounded from the ambulance, to carry them on litters to beds hastily improvised in the hard wooden pews. By the light of candles doctors worked, sometimes turning away from a casualty with a hopeless shrug of the shoulders, sometimes bending tensely and working feverishly over a man in whom the spark of life still glowed. All the while, through the air, buzzed the talk of an Armistice.

In a few days the church was trans-

mutated into a hospital, and the men were lying on cots, attended by harried nurses. Sometimes, through the narrow lanes between the cots, German officers trudged, glancing at the tags identifying each man. It was one day when the noise of battle was hushed, when there came a lull in the thunder of the war, that a German *Unterleutnant* paused to peer at one of the tags and emit a guttural exclamation.

He trotted out of the church excitedly, and a few minutes later came hurrying back with a superior officer. Together they peered at the tag. The *Oberleutnant* bent close, scanning the haggard face of the man in the cot. The man peered at him vacantly.

"You know the name," the *Oberleutnant* asked, "of Colonel Nikolai?"

The man on the cot stirred uneasily, as though the name aroused some spark of light in the haze that filled his brain. His lips mumbled almost without volition.

"One and Seven, G and W."

"Gott!" the *Oberleutnant* exclaimed, straightening. "It is as I thought! This is the son of the great Wilhelm Hartvig! He is Paul Hartvig, of our intelligence service!"

**T**HE *Oberleutnant* shouted and brought nurses and doctors on the run. He commanded them to attend to this patient immediately. He ordered them to do everything possible to hasten his recovery, to bring him back to health. He ordered this man to be removed to better quarters so that he might stand a better chance of living.

Paul Harvey heard the words dimly. Weak as he was, he felt a grim humor possess him. These men did not know of what he had done. They only knew that he was the son of Wilhelm Hartvig. He allowed them to do anything they wished to him, and said nothing. For, within his mind, there was a grim resolution forming, a decision to learn whether or not he could ever feel again that it was worth while to go on living.

He thought of Dick Armstrong and

Caroline. It was like trying to remember something far, far back in the past. To-day was separated from those days by a long period of darkness and pain, the period that Harvey had spent in the hospitals, after having been brought in from that field behind the German lines, more nearly dead than alive. He wondered about Dick and Caroline.

Now arms had been dropped, and the war was over. Paul Harvey mended rapidly, building back into health almost by the sheer power of his will.

These German officers believed that he had been discovered operating as a spy for Germany, and that he had been shot down while trying to escape across the Lines. Harvey did not disillusion them. He did not care what they thought, but he was glad of the liberty he was allowed. These men were not his countrymen; this chaotic nation was not his. He belonged in America. He was going to permit no petty fears to keep that from him. He was going back.

**T**HE day came when he stepped from a steamer onto a pier in the Hudson, New York City. His mind was still filled with a question concerning Dick and Caroline Armstrong. He did not know what they would think of him, but he was not afraid to face them again. If for nothing else, to beg their forgiveness. That much he must do. Then, if they hated him, he could go away again, lose himself in some nowhere, to live the life of a pariah.

Hours later he stepped onto the station platform of the little Connecticut town, the same station from which, that day long ago, he and Dick Armstrong had left for Brooks. He walked slowly along the main street, marveling that so few changes had taken place. There, almost just as he had left it, was his office, still empty. The name "Paul Harvey," was still lettered on the window. It pinched his heart, and he strode on, grimly.

He walked through the gate of the Armstrong home, along the path, to the door. His heart was pounding furiously.

He reached a trembling hand out to grasp the knob. An instant before he could touch it, it turned, and the door swung open. A girl came to a stop just inside, her eyes widening, her one hand rising stiffly toward her throat as she stared.

"Paul!"

He stood rigid, his eyes stinging, scarcely daring to breathe. The very beauty of Caroline's face struck him like a sharp blow. He watched her step back, slowly, and half-turn, as though she did not know what to do. She called, choking, "Dick—Dick!" then turned to stare at Paul again.

Heavier footfalls came toward the door. Dick Armstrong stopped just behind his sister, his face flashing pale. There was a scar across his cheek, and his temples were gray. He thrust himself past Caroline, gasping, limping a little. And then, suddenly, Caroline broke from the spell of surprise and flung her arms around Paul Harvey's shoulders. She crushed him close and cried softly, "Paul, Paul!"

Harvey tried to say something, but his throat was too tight. He felt his hand crushed in Dick Armstrong's. He looked down into Caroline's tear-filled eyes. It was all like a dream, suddenly; it was so far removed from Harvey's expectations that he was overwhelmed. He saw Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong hurry toward him and, in a whirl, allowed himself to be pulled into the house.

There was crazy, excited talk, and laughter, and exclamations, and Caroline speaking through stifled sobs. He tried to talk, but they would not let him. He did not even hear what they were saying to him. He studied Dick's amazed eyes, and Caroline's soft ones, and still could not believe that they could be happy to see him again.

"You know—you know what I did!" he managed to blurt. "You know I was a ——"

"Don't—don't talk about that, Paul!" Dick Armstrong ejaculated. "That's all over. The war's all over; it doesn't matter any more. I never believed it. Even if you told me it was true, I wouldn't believe it!" He laughed jerkily. "God, it's good to see you again, Paul!"

"It's true," Paul Harvey said. "I came just to—beg you to forgive me for——"

"Forget it!" Dick Armstrong said, the same words he had uttered that day at Kelly, the day the training plane had plunged into the side of the hangar where Harvey had been sitting. "You're back. That's all that counts. You've got to stay with us, Paul!"

"Stay with us, of course!" boomed Dick's father.

"Of course!" exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong. "As long as you like! Stay just as though this were your own home, Paul."

Caroline was clinging to his arm and gazing up at him. His hand closed warmly over hers. She laughed a little, and clung closer.

"I never was so happy before, Paul," she told him in a rush of breath. "Never!"

An incalculably long time ago, a starchy sheet of paper had been placed in Paul Harvey's hand, a paper carrying a blunt, inexorable message—"By Command, Colonel Nikolai, Chief of the Intelligence Service of the Great General Staff of the German Army—" So long ago that to-day seemed like a day in another life.

Now, for the first time since that moment, Paul Harvey's heart opened and laughter came out.



# FIGHTING ACES AND HOW THEY FOUGHT

## TRUE FEATURE

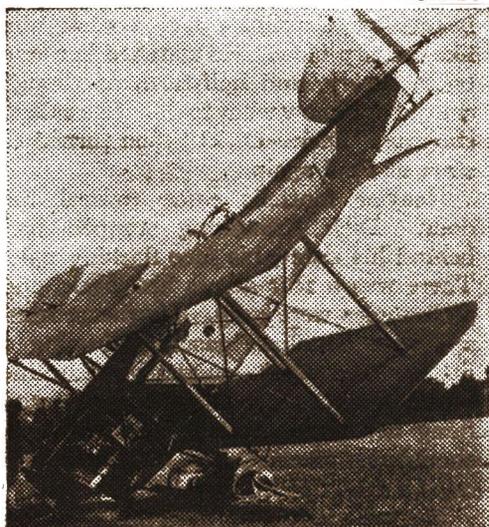
By **CARL OGILVIE**

Author of "Lone Warrior," etc:

A TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE EXACT  
MANEUVERS USED BY THE  
GREAT ACES IN BUILDING UP  
THEIR SCORES.

**S**IX hundred and seventy-five pilots!  
That's the number of Winged Heroes  
who won the coveted honorary title  
of Ace, during the World War. For the  
first time in history thousands of young  
men went into battle flying on wings of

Signal Corps Photo



Signal Corps Photo

### THE VICTOR AND THE VANQUISHED

*Frank Luke, second American Ace, standing beside the remains of a German plane he has just shot down.*

fate. Men of all nations and from every conceivable walk of life, fought and braved death every minute they were in the air. They were men of unbelievable courage, self-confidence, a high sense of duty. Patriotic fire burned deeply within their stout hearts. They were willing—yes, ready—to die for their country. Six hundred and seventy-five proved their metal behind roaring motors and machine guns erupting leaden hail. And that's a surprising and commendable record for the new "baby branch" of military service.

In four years of fighting, there were approximately one hundred thousand aviators in service either at the Front or in training. Thousands of planes were destroyed. Countless ships were sent down out of control. The flower of young manhood went winging to doom. Some escaped with wounds; others were mangled and crushed beyond recognition. Many went the way of the most dreaded death of all—in flames. Day raids, night bombing expeditions, mighty formations snarling and tearing at one another in furious dogfights. It was all part of a new kind of warfare. War in the sky. War for aerial supremacy. The fight of the ages.

The American pilots were strikingly the most colorful and adventurous. Many of them fought under two flags. Some fought several years with the Royal Flying Corps and the Lafayette Escadrille, and later requested transfers to the American Air Force. Our air force was only at the Front seven months. But the American aces, regardless of French, British or American service totaled 105 at the close of hostilities. One hundred and five pilots fought and won their way to Acedom! Not a bad record compared with the other air forces that saw nearly four full years of fighting. England has a list of 190 aces; France, 155; Germany, 167; Italy, 41; Belgium, 8; Austria, 5; Russia, 3; Roumania, 1.

The American pilots did themselves proud. They were a pain in the neck to the Huns. At the close of the war there

were 767 Yankee pilots and 481 observers at the Front. At training fields in the United States, England, France and Italy were 12,000 physically fit young men working at fever pitch to win their silver wings. Our pilots put in close to 70,000 flying hours over the front-line trenches. About 500 American winged fighters were killed in action and training. The list includes pilots, observers, bombers, balloonists and twenty-eight naval birdmen.

But the American aces avenged the deaths of their buddies. They destroyed aerial equipment alone that ran into millions of dollars. They bombed munition dumps, railway centers, concentration camps, factories with remarkable success. They shot down some 800 enemy planes, 73 enemy balloons, and ran up a staggering death toll of nearly 1,000 enemy airmen. For every one American airman killed, the Yanks killed two.

The most thrilling accounts of the World War are the battles of our war birdmen. Here man met man, often in single duels to the death. Here man, plane, motor and machine gun became a fierce, speeding, fighting unit whose duty was to destroy or be destroyed. The aces seldom fought as cogs in a vast military machine; they fought as individual fighters. The air forces didn't train their men to be heroes. They were trained to fight, to kill or be killed. Heroism was achieved with no thought of heroics, but by an involuntary act requiring exceptional courage in the face of devastating danger. The life of a pursuit pilot was figured to be just seven minutes in the air. When a pilot took off he knew he voluntarily signed his own death warrant. Some of them lived to laugh at Fate, thumb their noses at Death. No two aces fought alike. How each, in his particular way, won everlasting fame is an absorbing story.

**A**LBERT BALL was the first pilot to employ acrobatics in the World War. He was a scrapper and a natural born birdman. Acrobatics put him in with the headliners. His unusual tac-

tics won for him five victories in a single day.

Ball was finicky about his planes. They had to be right, and have the right feel in the air. He was one of the few British pilots who flew a French-made Nieuport. He liked the ship's lightning-like response to the controls. He fought with a verve and dash that was amazing.

Possessing an uncanny instinct for flying, Ball's attention centered on his gunnery. An enemy plane could only be shot down by bullets hitting one of three vulnerable spots—the pilot's body, his gas tank, or his motor. Machine guns must be accurately aimed to pour leaden destruction and death into the desired spot. It was Ball's habit to take tin cans aloft with him. When returning from a patrol he would toss the cans overside. Then he would drive on them, firing his synchronized machine guns as he went. It takes a mighty fine shot to handle a plane and hit a tumbling tin can. Try it some time. Your local undertaker will be elated.

This smiling British lad of twenty credited many of his successes to his pert little Nieuport and single-seater Bristol which could turn quicker than the German Fokkers. His Bristol mounted two guns that fired through the prop, and one on the upper wing. He made it a fast rule to dive on anything that smelled of sauerkraut. He fought with a blind fury. No matter how damaged his plane was he gave battle until there were no more Huns in the sky. Seven times he was forced down with his plane looking like army stew.

Ball won fame for being the first pilot to use acrobatics in aerial combats. His favorite tactic was a series of loops. It was impossible for the German pilots to train their guns on him. With each loop he lost altitude. When near the ground he would zoom straight for the nearest pursuing foe. He got many a Kraut when they thought they had him as good as buried.

Ball's challenging Lieutenant Immelman of the German Air Force to a duel is now a legend. It was a duel of the ages. But neither was able to maneuver into an

advantageous position over the other. It ended in a draw.

**I**MMELMAN wasn't an unusually skillful acrobatic artist. But he is famous for his stunt maneuver, the Immelman Turn.

Immelman was a dangerous foe. He lurked in the clouds, shot from ambush. He was a Fokker monoplane pilot and a mighty good one. He preyed mostly upon slow moving B.E. observation planes, planes that the pilot had to swing around in order to permit his observer to shoot at the attacking sniper. That bird had a sense of humor. It made him laugh to see the B.E.s trying to get away. Cold meat. No danger.

After a dive from his place of concealment in the clouds, Immelman took no chances of an observer's guns tagging him. He dove down, zoomed directly for the blind spot of the two-seaters. In this position he could play tag with no fear of ever being "It." The observer's guns, unable to train on him, were silenced.

Immelman would stand his Fokker on its tail and rake the enemy plane's belly with a curious snakelike swaying of the nose of his ship. Venomous lead spewed the reconnaissance ship. Then he would slip off in a vertical bank. A fast climbing turn and he was gone.

In a tight position he would zoom, rolling as he climbed. At near stalling point Immelman would roll over, hang upside down, then cut down in a tight arc. And he would be going back in the exact opposite direction from whence he had come. For a quick change in direction it was the speediest maneuver ever developed. And that's saying something. Chance and safety-first methods made Immelman a perfect pilot. His famous turn was more than once his life preserver.

The layman, in most cases, knows only of Immelman as the German who developed a new kind of turn. Lufbery created a far more hazardous and efficient maneuver. Yet few know of the Lufbery Circle, commonly used by most military air forces to-day.

This American, who became an ace with the French before America got into the war, created this particular maneuver as a special tactic against ground forces. For a quick thrust at a machine-gun nest or trenches, railways, motor trains, etc., this tactic has no equal. A quick angular dive, a furious burst of lead and a quick banking climb. It also is most efficient in keeping planes off your tail.

**THE LUFBERY CIRCLE** is not a circle such as the squirrel-cage maneuver. It can best be described as a large V with its top closed. To shake an arduous enemy off your tail, or to dive to the trenches, the maneuver is done something in this manner.

A stiff left bank, the nose is lowered sharply and the plane goes diving down and in the general opposite direction from whence the pilot was flying before the dive. At the bottom of the V twin machine guns burst into fury. The ground objects are racked with bullets as the pilot zigzags the ship to right and left. A violent zoom and climbing roll pulls the pilot swiftly up out of danger.

Several German pilots won wooden crosses instead of iron ones by Lufbery's skill in maneuvering his plane in this odd three-cornered "circle." Lufbery, at the instant of hearing the *flac, flac, flac* of lead through fabric, would swerve off sharply, and go diving down. When directly below the enemy plane he was in position to zoom swiftly, climb high, bank and attack from the rear. With fight in his eyes and a lust for blood, he was ready to give battle.

He was more nearly a part of his plane than any other pilot. And if he shot, it was a victory.

Another favorite stunt or pastime for Lufbery was to go to the aid of Allied pilots in distress. He would come head-on, zoom suddenly in front of the luckless pilot, and compel him to dive. Thus he forced him out of the fight and danger. Then Lufbery would roll at the top of his zoom. His Vickers machine guns would flash and Mr. Hun was a corpse and no longer a pilot.

A pilot with whom Lufbery served

during the latter months of the war was Captain Eddie Rickenbacker. In the short time he was at the Front with 94 Squadron, "Rick" became America's first ranking Ace. He might easily have won the title "Man Killer." But to pilots under his command he was a man saver. And in wartime that means something too. Ninety-four could sacrifice victories and glory, but never a pilot's life. "Rickenbacker believed it was his job to take a flight over, accomplish its mission and bring his flight back intact, his men alive.

Eddie took a tip from the destroyer convoy that accompanied General Pershing to France. He studied the zigzag course of the navy boats in the submarine zone. He noticed the up and down movement of the speeding destroyers lunging through the trough and rolling over the crest of the swells.

**WHEN RICKENBACKER** became C.O. of 94 Squadron his outfit became noted for its unusual formation flying tactics. His pilots followed their leader as he set a freakish zigzag course from right to left, followed him as he rose and dove. This method reduced the possibility of surprise attacks to a minimum. It was most a difficult patrol to follow, much harder for the Germans to get into a favorable position to attack.

But alone in the air, Rickenbacker fought differently. He took bigger chances to win victories. But no one can ever call him rash or reckless. He developed a simple method of attack that was considered sure fire—safe-and-sane tactics.

He imitated the fighting tactics of Lufbery and Richthofen. Added courage to the German's; good judgment to Lufbery's. He gained the upper ceiling, waited to attack. He came down in the sun. This was always his favorite position—the sun over his left shoulder. Rickenbacker depended upon surprise, then one carefully calculated and perfectly maneuvered thrust for victory. If he missed, he followed the example of two of the greatest aces of the war, Fonck and the German Baron. He

lived to fight another day. Time and again he retired with a plane like Swiss cheese. But he was never wounded.

**FONCK**, who probably inspired Rick-enbacker to aedon more than any other ace, was the exact opposite to the Yankee pilot. Small instead of large, younger, temperamental instead of cool-headed, vain rather than unassuming, and an individualist instead of a co-operative fighter. Fonck preferred to do things his own way. And did them. He could fight better so. He was a human fighting machine and no foolin'. He could outfly, outshoot and maneuver better than any French aviator of his time. He was also superior to the German pilots—126 of them. Seventy-five of his victories were confirmed.

As a lone fighter Fonck was superb. His favorite tactic was to fly high up in the upper strata at 24,000 feet. Here few pilots would be encountered. The rarefied air claimed too heavy a toll on the physical system. Brains grew sluggish, muscles slow to respond, eyes bleary. He waited for victims to come below—usually Albatrosses who could wiggle up to 18,000 feet.

Fonck would go down, a hurtling, roaring machine of destruction. Rarely did he have to return for the second thrust. His victims were going down shrouded in death or flames. For Fonck, dressing his ship skillfully, waited until the very last minute before firing. His machine guns were deadly. It was the suddenness of his attack, the masterful handling of his ship and his unerring aim that won for him his astonishing success of shooting down six enemy planes in one day. The extraordinary qualities of his remarkable flying skill, his marksmanship, and his exceptional cool-headedness in the face of danger can be briefly told. Two hours flying. Six victories. Only fifty-six bullets.

Here the rare science and unbelievably accurate sharpshooting of Fonck told. A quick dive. A short burst. A plane down. Another burst. Another plane. Two within ten seconds. Tie that.

You often read of a pilot putting his plane into a sideslip. It is something of an aerial skid. The pilot pushes the joystick over to one side in neutral and holds it there. The rudder bar is held straight. One wing tilts upward, the other goes down. As long as the pilot holds his controls set the plane will skid, or slide off on the lower wing. René Dorme, a meticulous stickler for science in military aviation, developed the side wing-slip. He was a marvelous shot, but was first and last a devotee and student of tactics. To this bright, cheerful little Frenchman a machine gun was an instrument of death. A plane, one's lifesaver.

The French called him "The Unpuncturable" because he never once permitted Hun bullets to find their mark. In fact, only two German bullets ever found their way into the fabric of his plane! That's flying!

Dorme's famous sideslip was the result of a near tragedy in the air. He accidentally collided in midair with a Boche plane and came out alive. That's more flying, mixed with luck.

On that occasion Dorme was tail man of a flight over Hunland. Off to the right and below he saw a scout Albatross. His position in the formation prevented signaling its leader. He wanted to get that lone Boche flying so indolently below. He cut from the formation and went down in a steep dive.

René, thrilled in anticipation of downing an easy one, set his controls, held his plane true to the Hun's tail. 100 yards. Now only 50. Time to begin firing. He reached for his machine-gun trips.

The French pilot didn't know where it came from. He hardly knew what was happening. A silver, sharklike Albatross darted out of the clouds. It came directly between him and his unsuspecting victim. Neither saw the other.

Crack! Crash! The sound of a terrific impact hushed roaring motors. The sound of wooden struts splintering, cables snapping, fabric ripping to shreds, filled the air. And all was blackness for Dorme.

His Nieuport went off on its nose. Like a plummet it dropped with its unconscious pilot for a sheer mile. Badly shaken, Dorme fought his way back to consciousness. He wrestled with his controls, found them sluggish, almost impossible to manage. His left wing was badly mangled. In an effort to raise the sinking wing, Dorme maneuvered automatically. The Nieuport responded, and went off in a giddy, skidding sideslip.

The Frenchman studied the plane's actions; calculated the great speed with which the plane skidded. Then he was aware the ground was reaching up to meet him. He saw he was over the German trenches.

Mustering his returning strength he fought with his damaged plane, righted it, kept its nose up. In a long glide he soared over No-Man's-Land and crashed behind his own lines.

After that he became the sideslipping Frog. He sideslipped into over half a hundred victories. He had the advantage with his sideslip. The Huns never could figure out which way he would slip. Right or left. René knew which way they would slip—into a grave.

Strange that Dorme's death should be as deep a mystery as that of the illustrious ace, Guynemer. Both their deaths remain unsolved mysteries.

But how differently Guynemer fought. He fought eight to ten aerial duels every flying day. He would attack any number of enemy planes any time, come "Flaming Onions" and Spandaus. Guynemer battled with the ferocity of a madman. And he was a young man slowly dying of tuberculosis. He was a marvelous pilot, a splendid shot. But he lacked caution. He was reckless. It's great grandstand stuff, but hard on the life stream.

**G**UYNEMER dove time and again right into the very path of leaden death to get an opponent. Seven times he was shot down, his plane a tattered mass of torn fabric and broken struts. More than once he landed with the surface of his plane and his place in his

Nieuport made into a sieve by bullets. Yet somehow he miraculously escaped being wounded.

Unlike Dorme, who depended first upon his plane, Guynemer relied upon his brilliant shooting. A rushing attack and chortling machine guns, and it was all over for the Boche excepting the military funeral. Guynemer believed the results of a duel was decided within the first fifteen to twenty seconds. He explained it this way.

"That's why I dive straight at my opponent and hold my course. I never alter it. And I fire until the very last fraction of a second."

Next to Guynemer in victories, ranks Captain Charles Nungesser. Like his comrade-in-arms, Nungesser was a thunderbolt of fury. A good shot and also foolishly reckless.

Seventeen times this French daredevil was wounded. He had an amazing constitution for absorbing enemy lead. He was a connoisseur of bullets. And somehow he lived to celebrate Armistice Day. At the time of his death, with Coli, in their ill-fated attempt to cross the Atlantic from east to west, he carried more metal in his body than medals on his chest.

**N**UNGESSER was a "Banker's Hours" flyer. From nine in the morning until three in the afternoon he flew steadily, tirelessly, hunting Huns. Nothing mattered to him—physical, mental, or nervous strain, not even wounds—as long as he got his Huns.

Most of his wounds can be attributed to his love of and insatiable belief in the whip-stall. With a furious zoom he would come up underneath an enemy ship. His machine guns would fitfully hammer away like power-driven riveting machines. He would hold his plane, nose up, until at the peak of its zoom it stalled. With no flying speed he would whip out and nose down.

That was the moment some sausage eater would come roaring in at full speed. The Germans could fly circles around the Nieuport as Nungesser struggled to gun up flying speed and get away. By

that time his body would be damned near riddled.

But you could depend upon Nungesser to bring his plane down despite hell and hot lead. And he gave many a Hun a pain in the neck. He could kill but wouldn't be killed.

**L**IEUTENANT FRANK BAYLIES was every bit as excellent a pilot and as reckless a fighter as Nungesser, but he preferred mushrooms instead of bullets. Occasionally, at a binge, he would get shot. But *vin rouge* is more appetizing than *le dam lead*.

Baylies was one pilot who combined natural aptitude, science, marksmanship and a lust for fighting. He fought like a madman. A spiralling, dizzy, zooming, brilliant, flashing fury.

Formation flying was not Baylies' style. He went in on his own. He had a peculiar Yankee directness in his fighting. He went after his man, kept after him until he got him. That was the only way he knew how to fight. He utilized the figure-eight maneuver. It was good for a quick getaway, a surprise turn and swift attack.

The Cigognes were dumfounded by his methods. They watched his wild downward dash of attack, his trick twisting, turning and banking. Always he came in close, so close it seemed he would crash his opponent. Then his guns would flash. Another German would harken to the call of the Pearly Gates. A short burst at point-blank range was Baylies' ace tactic. And, boy, it worked!

Captain Heruteaux, a stout friend of Baylies', was a different type of fighter. He firmly maintained, "A pilot is no better than the plane he flies—if as good."

Only when he flew, knowing for a certainty that his plane and guns were in super-excellent order, did Heruteaux feel equal to anything the Huns could send up. Several hours before daylight every morning, Heruteaux could be found in the hangars checking over his Nieuport with meticulous care. He tested flying and landing wires, ailerons and long-

erons, control cables. Carefully he went over every part of the ship himself. He filled his own ammunition belts, loaded his machine guns himself. He even worked on his own motor, freed sticky valves, changed spark plugs, timed its revvs. He was the Lindbergh of the French Air Force. He left nothing to chance or careless mecs.

**H**ERUTEAUX did most of his flying before the perfection of the deadly synchronized machine gun. Darts, brickbats, clubs, wrenches, anything throwable was used as a weapon. He often took pot-shots with his service pistol. Heruteaux laid no claim to marksmanship. Yet he brought down an enemy plane with a single bullet.

When caught in a tight corner of the sky, his method of getting away with a whole skin was rather amusing. He would first bow, then shake his fist at the nearest German. His open contempt for his enemy would inflame them. Most of them would answer by shaking a clenched fist at the Frenchman. And that was what Heruteaux was waiting for.

At that instant his trim little Nieuport flashed into an unexpected maneuver. Usually a crisscross dive and *Herr Hun* was fighting desperately for his life. Don't laugh, flying was serious business even in those days. Peculiar tactics. But they worked for Heruteaux, who helped to gray the temples of the Kaiser.

How different a fighter was Reservist Lieutenant Werner Voss, the most likeable of all German pilots. His fearlessness and tactics made him the nearest competitor to Manfred von Richthofen. Voss was a spectacular flyer. A great fighter. A "Flying Checkerboard Hellcat." He'd tackle anything on wing. Overwhelming numbers meant nothing; one or a dozen made no difference to him. It was fight. A scrap meant victories to him.

Voss' best executed maneuver was barrel rolling. He could use it equally well for attack and escape. It was difficult to follow his rolling plane, and impossible to send bullets to a vital spot.

**A** YOUNG AMERICAN pilot, who was about the same age as Voss, was Lieutenant David Putnam. He won his way to fame and undying glory by shooting down five enemy planes in one day.

Putnam was complete master of his plane; his marksmanship was only fair. But that Brookline, Massachusetts, youth had a sense of tactics. Methods of attack and feinting were a sixth sense. Like Voss, one of his favorite tactics in a hot dogfight was the barrel roll. Often this acrobatic was followed with a wingover. The sudden zoom after a dive fooled many a Hun pilot. It completely changed the complexion of those five that one day.

Seeing him coming down after a roll they naturally thought he was attacking. The sudden zoom of the wingover tricked them. They thought he had changed his mind, or got cold feet. But that's how Putnam caught them cold turkey. He snapped out of the zoom, heeled off on one wing, went down at them as they came up. He caught them out of position, with no chance to defend themselves. And you guessed it—they were through.

Numbers meant nothing but a fast, thrilling battle to Putnam. Like a porpoise diving into the sea, Putnam would snap his tail up. His Spad would go down with full open motor right into the midst of German formations. Sometimes the Huns would hesitate to attack. They were crafty. Surely no plane,

bearing the tricolor *cocarde* of France, was so rash as to dive into their formation alone. It must be a trick.

But Putnam was alone. And what a fight he could put up. One against six, eight, or a dozen. The more the merrier for Putnam. And while the Huns hesitated, Putnam's guns were working full blast. By the time the Boche swept upon him, like a pack of hungry wolves, one or two of their number had been shot down or withdrawn.

Putnam would roll through the rain of Spandau bullets and tracers. Slipping into a wingover, he would come in close. With a precision and regularity beyond all belief, one by one, like falling leaves, Fokkers would fall out of the sky.

Putnam put on some of the wildest dogfights that ever took place over Hunsland. Was this pilot a superman? No. He was Dave Putnam. A man's man, a scrapper of the first water, or first clouds. He got twelve official vouchers of victories before he went to the airman's Valhalla.

When one pauses to recollect that pilots only had sufficient gasoline to patrol two hours at a time, and that dogfights rarely lasted more than a minute or two, one suddenly realizes how swiftly pilots lived in a short span of hours—minutes—seconds.

Believe me, sixty seconds with an enemy on your tail, blazing away with a brace of life extinguishers, is a mighty long, long time. A lifetime!

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MAY 3rd



**This is the place where the WAR BIRDS gang and the editor get together every month to spin the vocal prop and decide that everything and everybody is all wrong.**

**E**VENING, mugs. I ain't got hardly a gripe to-night. In fact I'm practically serene, and you got no idea how nice it makes you feel to be serene. If I had the time to spare from running this war I'd write you mugs a piece on the beauty of serenity—you got no idea what an educated man the old Sarge is.

Like what I been trying to intimate there hasn't been hardly a thing to upset me the last few days. Of course there has been a few but nothing to destroy the equilibrium of such an enormous mind as mine. I didn't hardly get perturbed when the Glue Sisters and the Prince of Zanzibar plotted agin me. Them non-entities poured a good grade of glue in my coneyac—er, my coffee.

Anybody with a digestive system like what I got ought to be able to handle such trifles as that, but I guess I wasn't up to form or something. Anyway, the front of my stomach got stuck to my backbone and now no matter how much I eat I feel like I'm starving to death all the time. I'm having an internal war with myself and even you mugs know there is nothing so devastating as an internal war.

My stomach knows there's something in it but on account of that dang glue my nerves tells me I'm hungry. Then, not believing my stomach and listening to my nerves I go out and eat another batch until I'm almost foundered. Between thinking I'm hungry and knowing I'm not and them being certain that I am why I am practically either hungry

or full—who started this, anyway.

Even that little thing wasn't enough to destroy the sensitive balance of my finely attuned soul—I shrugged it off and you got no idea what a shrugger I am. No, it was the cure them nitwits suggested for me that almost made me get a mad on. In all seriousness, they told me to drink a quart of benzine and then swallow a match. The hypothesis (hot dog) was that the Glue Sisters' goat would then be led out and butt me, lighting that match, and then the glue would melt and I wouldn't be hungry or think I was, or something, no more.

On account of the nationally known medical education what I got I knew right away them nitwits was foolin' and only plotting to cause me no little discomfort. I knew that if I wasn't going to be hungry when I was or stuffed when I was, or vice versa, I'd have to figure out something myself. In fact I was going to have to call up that giant intellectual ability what I got.

It nearly killed me but I did it. I didn't swallow no benzine nor get near no goats—I was too smart for that. I just swallowed the match and stood by a stove and let the heat ignite it. I'm practically useless around the mid-section and I can't tell whether I'm hungry or whether I'm starving to death, but no nitwits like the Glue Sisters and the Prince of Zanzibar can ever upset me much. It takes a major dilemma to get agoin', as they say in the parlance.

Now comes it a mug from Baltimore.  
Says him:

3734 Edmondson Ave.,  
Baltimore, Md.

Dear Brigadier: I am sending you a few of those lovely (?) coupons. These are all I have at present, and sending them to you saves me the trouble of throwing them in the trash.

Don't get a swelled head because I called you Brigadier. I did that so you would comply with my request for a Dict. and your picture. I want your picture to prove a theory about evolution. All kidding aside you have a great mag. I also think WAR BIRDS'S brother mag, WAR ACES, is a nifty rag. If you don't send me Dict. and your picture you'll wake up with your hands crossed and a lily under your schnozzle.

Well, may all your landings be 3 pointers—(two wheels and a nose). George Steinacker.

I guess you ain't acquainted with the facts, George. I am a full-blown General and as such am too big to notice insults from bucks. I noticed that evolution crack too. I'll keep you in mind. Orates a Canuck with a gripe on. Tsck, Tsck, H. J., don't get upset, it makes you old.

3072 Dickson St.,  
Montreal Que.,  
Canada.

Howdy Sarge: I've been waiting a long time to take a crack at you so here goes. What's the idea of this I don't like stuff. If you put that in the next issue, I'll knock you for a row. And say, have you got any photos of wartime planes you could send me. And here you Castor oil smelling grease-ball, here's your coupon and I want that mug of yours also that Dict. And you Big Kiwi if you don't put WAR BIRDS on the stands twice a month I'll knock you for a row of latrines.

So hurry along those photos and Dict.  
H. J. Howe.

Float your eye down to the bottom of the next page. Fill that coupon out and get yourself an actual photograph of a wartime plane to paste in your album. Here's a Down-Easter with a idea. I'll let the rest of you mugs answer his letter. Write in and tell me what you think. Get WAR ACES for June if you want an album that will knock your eye out.

145 Winslow Rd.,  
Waban, Mass.

Dear Sarge: Here is my second coupon for another picture of your map and a dict. Say, how many of these coups do you have to send in to become an ace? That was a swell idea from Hamilton, Ont., on having a club in WAR BIRDS. We will have to get the gang together and ram this idea down your throat.

I see where you have taken no action on having another War Planes Album.

That true feature "The Zep Conqueror" was

great; keep those stories up. The Hash Hinkle was right there with the best of them.

Don't forget, gang, to write in and help put this "War Birds Club" over the Sarge's head.  
Happy landings,  
Joe McCarthy.

No meeting would be complete unless I had a gal get up and say a nice word for me. Here's practically the nicest one yet. Says her:

183 Balby Road,  
Doncaster,  
Yorkshire, England.

Dear Mr. Editor: In this letter I am writing to thank you for the good selection of stories you manage to collect for your mag, WAR BIRDS.

When you receive this note you will, no doubt be surprised to find that even in far off England, there are those who appreciate your good taste.

Planes have always been an interesting subject to me. I have been up in a few different types . . . Bombers, Amphibians, pleasure and long distance ones. My ambition is to pilot one myself.

You have some "keen" letters from some of your readers and I thought I should like to add one to the number too.

Of course in England we get your mag—rather late but the reading's there just the same, so it doesn't matter much.

If you ever receive this letter, I should like you to reply to it . . . that is if you aren't too busy. I don't want to cause you any inconvenience.  
Good-bye Mr. Editor.

Yours Appreciatively, (Miss) Ellaline José.

Now I am serene, Miss José. In fact I'm serener.

Here's a fellow from Clocktown with an idea:

Route 26,  
Waltham, Mass.

Dear Old Ed.: Couldn't say Sarge if I tried, even if I do like your mag, and read it from cover to cover. I can't give you the razz on paper but am pretty good at it verbally.

Complaint No. 1, or rather suggestion No. 1 for improvement of WAR BIRDS Mag.—publish it twice a month or run it with your other mag, fifteen days apart.

While I read W. B. at least twice I also buy and read all other air mags. I can get between issues, it's not right.

No. 2—Why not publish a book, mag. style, with pictures of planes, their names, and other facts including some one thing that shows what an air pilot thinks of them. Happy landings,  
E. Bickford.

Thanks for saving me until you see me personally, Bickford. That might not be a bad idea about publishing that book with a lot of pictures and the dope on all the different air services. Let's hear what the rest of you mugs think about it. I might get big hearted again. Here's a joiner what wants a club; and right from Olympia, too:

Olympia, Washington,

Dear Sarge: That club idea mentioned by Joe Reed is O. K. by me. Let's have it. If you think otherwise you can expect a neat little straffing from me and the rest of the WAR BIRDS acs. Make your decision and make it snappy.

I expect to receive a snap of that mug of yours and the dict.

Don't expect any coupons from me as I don't aim to spoil the mag. by cutting it out. Don't get nasty with me because I've got a pair of Vickers that need warming up.

See you later Sarge, in the meantime try a safety-razor instead. Until next time,  
Holger E. Lindgren.

I'll make it snappy, Holger, but I got to have more letters from you eggs telling me you want this club before I start. There's practically nobody any snappier than the Sarge, if you know what I mean. Comes it a lad from the Bronx:

343 East 240th Street,  
New York, New York.

Dear Mug: Just a few words to tell you what a good mag you've got. The only bum part about it is, its full of junk and besides I don't like your mug. If you have any more shaving cream please put it all over your pan so we can stop laughing. I'll like to have one of your dict. and mug to shoot at on a rifle range I got.

And by the way if that nice little boy Joe McCarthy of 145 Winslow Road, Mass., wants a lend of the mag. containing the story of Roaul Lufbery he can have it and he can keep the picture of Lufbery too.

I hope you get hit in a vital spot. Inclosed is one of your lousy coupons.

Yours till the Swede strangles you,  
John J. Cunningham.

You're just too complimentary for words, Mr. Cunningham. I don't know what I'd do without you. Ah, hah, a lonesome Canuck. He craves to talk with some of the fair sex. Write him, you gals, he may be nice. Says him:

125 Maple Avenue.

Quebec City, Que., Can.

Dear Ed.: I just bought my first issue of WAR BIRDS and I enjoyed it very much. From now on you can count on me as a regular subscriber.

There is only one fault I can find (and I'm pretty good at that!), and that's because there are no pages in the mag. where you can find a pen pal. Please put me down for correspondence with a girl "under twenty" and "over fifteen!"

Yours sincerely till the pet mice dies,  
I remain, Raymond Thorn.

I'll speak to Petey, Raymond; he practically knows everything. Here's another album saver, I'll have to do something for you birds, you're getting mighty frequent:

Mill St., ext.  
Tarentum, Pa.

Dear Sir: I like the mag. WAR BIRDS very much. I buy so many of them that I could start a paper factory when I'm through with them.

The true stories of this mag. are making a great hit with the readers who like true stories and I am one of them.

I have a album of wartime planes and waiting for more if you have any to spare send them along to me, will you Sarge.

I hope the coupon will bring me a dict. and the picture of your mug. Yours truly,  
Lee Bishop.

Besides the pictures that appear in WAR BIRDS regularly you better get a copy of the June issue of WAR ACES, Lee. It has pictures of dogfights, Aces, and about everything you want.

Don't forget. If you fill out this coupon, you get free without charge an actual picture of a wartime plane. One year's subscription brings you a full set of eight. Be here early for the next big meeting. Scat!

The Editor, WAR BIRDS, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York

I like these stories in this May issue:.....

.....

I do not like:.....

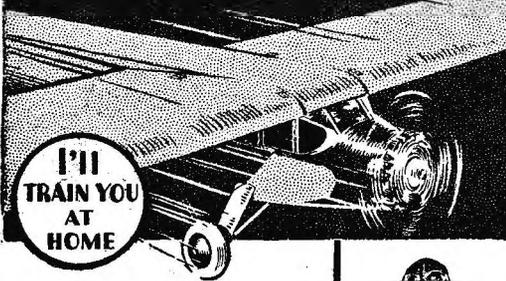
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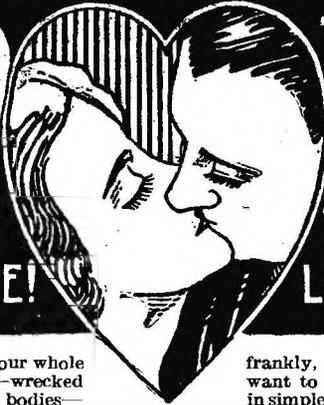
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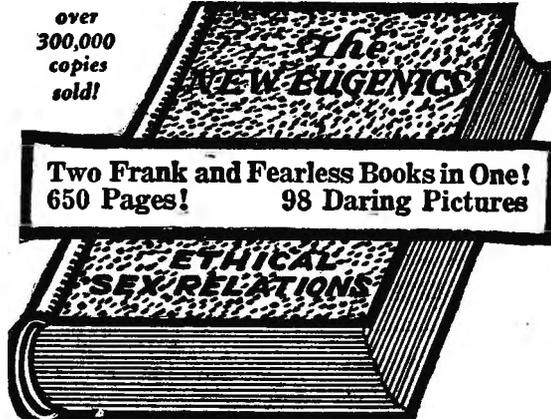
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Customer gets signed certificate of guarantee protecting him, backed by a national organization. Very few business men are so foolish as to turn down a proposition guaranteed to pay ten for one, with proof from leading concerns of the world that it does pay.

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Made by E. H. Walker—Georgia—made one sale to a business, Georgia, organization, and that sale got him four more sales within a few hours. Met another salesman and they other salesman bought him out! That's the kind of proposition this is. Leaves 14 Year Job After Making \$120 in Spare Time 1st 5 Days



Here's Sidney Rosenblatt—Illinois—This man cleaned up \$100 in 2 1/2 days after getting our sample. He had cleaned up \$200 in 2 1/2 days after getting our sample. This is the best and easiest proposition we ever become acquainted with. Will specialize on this line.

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\$4920 in 12 months  
California runs the best agent. Eddie Foyer starts out April 1st and by July 1st he has 410 \$15 sales to his credit. Multiply 410 by \$15 and you've got something to show you the money in this proposition.

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\$105 Profit on 1 Sub-Agent Sale  
Besides his own profit—\$1,260.00 clear in 23 days—Friedman, Wisconsin, gets a \$105 bonus on a single sale made by one of his sub-agents! It's all in selling the right thing, boys!



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This is a business with a future to it. Enormous repeat business. Tremendous profits from sub-agents—your sub-agents have more margin than total profit on 99 out of 100 other specialties. You get profit on all mail order business from your territory. Every customer is a prospect for two or three times the initial amount on your second call. Every customer recommends others to you. If you get ready to quit, you have an established route that can be sold like any other business. An opportunity to make \$5,000 to \$10,000, a year is worth while. Just a limited number of openings. Hurry, boys—they won't be left long now!

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