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10¢

FEBRUARY

BATTLE BIRDS[®]



WINGS OF THE DEATH PATROL
A NOVEL OF WAR-LASHED SKIES
by **DAVID GOODIS**

GET UP THERE AND FIGHT!
by **RAY P. SHOTWELL**
AND MANY OTHERS

EASY WAY...

Tints Hair

JET BLACK!

(ALSO 7 SHADES OF BLACK, BROWN, TITIAN AND BLONDE)

New Creme Shampoo instantly imparts lovely black color to hair that is

**STREAKED • DULL • GRAY
FADED • GRAYING • AGEING
BURNT • LIFELESS**

THIS remarkable new creme shampoo discovery, Tintz Creme Shampoo Hair Coloring, lathers and washes out dirt, grease and grime as it *instantly* gives hair a real smooth, Jet Black Tint that fairly glows with life and lustre. Don't put up with gray, faded, dull, burnt, streaked, off-color hair a minute longer. Tintz Creme Shampoo contains genuine Paraphenylene Diamine and is a real Instant Hair Coloring. The first application leaves your hair completely tinted; black, lovely, easy to manage. No waiting for results. Colors so smooth and even, experts find it difficult to detect. Won't hurt permanents. Now being specially introduced all over America by mail for only \$1.00.



LOOK YEARS YOUNGER—End your gray hair worries NOW. One application of Tintz completely tints gray, off-color hair so it will not be detected. Order today on our guarantee of "satisfaction or money back" offer.

SEND NO MONEY FOR THIS AMAZING NEW HAIR COLORING

Mail Coupon on Guarantee Results Must Delight You or No Cost

Tintz' chemists have at last perfected an amazing new hair coloring method. It is a creme shampoo containing genuine PARAPHENYLENE DIAMINE, the best hair coloring agent known to mankind! Tintz Creme Shampoo Hair Coloring *instantly* colors all gray, streaked, faded hair right in your own home to a natural-like, lasting color that matches and defies detection. Won't wash off or run off. Positively will not affect permanent waves. Leaves hair soft—easy to manage.

CHOICE OF 8 LOVELY SHADES

JET BLACK—BLACK—DARK BROWN
MED. WARM BROWN—MED. DRAB BROWN
LIGHT BROWN—AUBURN (TITIAN)—BLONDE

We want you to try Tintz Creme Shampoo Hair Coloring. We want you to take advantage of this special introductory offer and mail the coupon today. Send no more. On arrival of package, deposit only \$1 plus postage and tax with postman. **READ THE CAUTION—Use Only as Directed on**

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Send one full size tube Tintz Creme Shampoo Hair Coloring in shade checked below. On arrival I will deposit the special introductory offer price of \$1.00 plus 10% tax and postage charges with postman on guarantee I can return the empty tube for any reason within 7 days, and you will refund my \$1 and tax. (If money comes with order, Tintz pays the postage.) ☐ 3 for \$2.50 plus 10% Federal Excise Tax.

☐ Jet Black ☐ Dark Brown ☐ Med. Drab Brown ☐ Auburn (Titian)
☐ Black ☐ Med. Warm Brown ☐ Light Brown ☐ Blonde

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Print Plainly

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City State

YES- I'M CONVINCED
THAT I CAN MAKE GOOD
MONEY IN RADIO.
I'M GOING TO START
TRAINING FOR RADIO
RIGHT NOW.



NO- NOT ME.
I'M NOT GOING TO WASTE
MY TIME. SUCCESS IS
JUST A MATTER OF
LUCK AND I WASN'T
BORN LUCKY.

BILL SAID
"YES"
HE'S MAKING
GOOD MONEY
IN RADIO
NOW



THIS N.R.I. TRAINING
IS GREAT. AND THEY
SENT REAL RADIO
PARTS TO HELP
ME LEARN
QUICKLY

YOU CERTAINLY
KNOW RADIO.
MINE NEVER
SOUNDED
BETTER.

I'VE BEEN STUDYING RADIO
ONLY A FEW MONTHS AND
I'M ALREADY MAKING
GOOD MONEY IN
MY SPARE
TIME

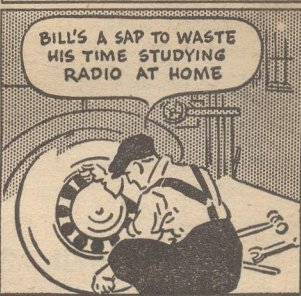
THANKS



OH BILL! I'M
SO PROUD OF
YOU. YOU'VE
GONE AHEAD
SO FAST IN
RADIO

YES! I'VE GOT A
GOOD JOB NOW AND
A REAL FUTURE.
THANKS TO
N.R.I. TRAINING

TOM SAID
"NO"
HE'S STILL
WAITING
FOR "LUCK"



BILL'S A SAP TO WASTE
HIS TIME STUDYING
RADIO AT HOME



SAME OLD GRIND --
SAME SKINNY PAY
ENVELOPE -- I'M
JUST WHERE I
WAS FIVE YEARS
AGO



GUESS I'M A
FAILURE --
LOOKS LIKE
I'LL NEVER
GET ANYWHERE

YOU'LL ALWAYS BE
A FAILURE, TOM,
UNLESS YOU DO SOME-
THING ABOUT IT.
WISHING AND WAITING
WON'T GET YOU
ANYWHERE



I will Train You at Home in Spare Time for a GOOD JOB IN RADIO

J. E. SMITH, President
National Radio Institute
Established 25 Years

Here is a quick way to more pay. Radio offers the chance to make \$5, \$10 a week extra in spare time a few months from now. There is an increasing demand for full time Radio Technicians and Radio Operators, too. Many make \$30, \$40, \$50 a week. On top of record business, the Radio Industry is getting millions and millions of dollars in Defense Orders. Clip the coupon below and mail it. Find out how I train you for these opportunities.

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Over 800 broadcasting stations in the U. S. employ thousands of Radio Technicians with average pay among the country's best paid industries. Repairing, servicing, selling home and auto Radio receivers (there are over 50,000,000 in use) gives good jobs to thousands. Many other Radio Technicians take advantage of the opportunities to have their own service or retail Radio businesses. Think of the many good pay jobs in con-

nection with Aviation, Commercial, Police Radio and Public Address Systems. N. R. I. gives you the required knowledge of Radio for these jobs. N. R. I. trains you to be ready when Television opens new jobs. Yes, Radio Technicians make good money because they use their heads as well as their hands. They must be trained. Many are getting special ratings in the Army and Navy; extra rank and pay.

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Nearly every neighborhood offers opportunities for a good part-time Radio Technician to make extra money fixing Radio sets. I give you special training to show you how to start cashing in on these opportunities early. You get Radio parts and instructions for building test equipment, for conducting experiments that give you valu-

able practical experience. You also get a modern Professional Radio Servicing Instrument. My fifty-fifty method—half working with Radio parts, half studying my lesson texts—makes learning Radio at home interesting, fascinating, practical.

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Mail the coupon below. I'll send my 64-page book FREE. It tells about my Course; the types of jobs in the different branches of Radio; shows letters from more than 100 of the men I trained so you can see what they are doing, earning. MAIL THE COUPON in an envelope or paste on a penny postal.

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National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

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10¢ BATTLE BIRDS

Vol. 4




Contents for February, 1942

No. 1


Outstanding Battle Novels

-  **WAKE UP IN HELL** Orlando Rigoni 10
On death's own brink the Hellions found Barry Dean—battered and beaten. . . . But for one glorious day of battle he lived by their code—"Fight to the last breath that's in you, and remember there's no time to die!"
-  **WINGS OF THE DEATH PATROL** . . . David Goodis 74
Two men alone in enemy skies—winging to a rendezvous of flames planned half a world away.

Daring Sky Fiction

-  **GET UP THERE AND FIGHT!** Ray P. Shotwell 31
Few wear the hero's badge, and many die unsung—but the men who count are the first in line when the orders are: "You may not be around tomorrow, but today—get up there and fight!"
-  **THUNDER OVER THE CHANNEL** . Robert Fleming 40
"Give me until midnight to come back with those plans—or blast me out of the air if I fail!"
-  **SAY IT WITH BULLETS** . . . Logan C. Claybourne 54
Mike O'Donnell was a fine fighting man—but he made one mistake. . . . He went out for a talk with a Boche—and left his guns at home!
- BOMBERS—READY!** Robert J. Hogan 62
Fire and steel held no fear for Ben Marshall—for he had to burn from his soul the brand of a coward's name.
- THE ACE FROM THE MAIN STEM**
. Dennis George Maribeaux 85
Crooked wings may spoil a man's life—but they can fly straight and fast when his country needs him!

Department For Air Fans

-  **IN THE HANGAR** With Greaseball Gabby 6
The armchair airmen give out with a couple of ground loops.

Next Issue on Sale February 20th

ALL STORIES NEW!

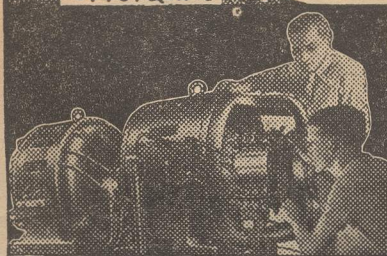


H.C. Lewis

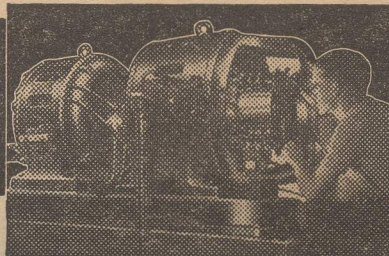
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by Actual SHOP WORK **NOT BOOKS**



FIRST--You are told and shown how to do it.



THEN--You do the job yourself.

DOES YOUR PRESENT JOB QUALIFY UNDER THESE 4 IMPORTANT RULES?

Don't be fooled by a "mere job." Does your present job offer you a permanent job and a future in good times or bad times? If it doesn't... If it is just a "job" because conditions are good today... it may not be a job when conditions slacken up again.

You should take an inventory of your prospects now—

Ask yourself these 4 important questions—
No. 1.—Does the field I'm in today offer me a permanent job and a future regardless of good or bad times?—No. 2.—Is the field I'm in a permanent one?—No. 3.—Is it growing and will it continue to grow in the years ahead?—No. 4.—Is it a field that will always exist?

If it doesn't qualify under these 4 rules, now is the time to do something about it.

Electricity is a fast growing field. It qualifies under all these rules. It offers you your opportunity—if you will get ready for it.

Here at my school in Chicago, the world's Electrical Center, you can get 12 weeks' Shop Training in **ELECTRICITY** and an extra 4 weeks' Course in **RADIO**. Here at Coyne you "Learn by Doing."

You will be trained on actual equipment and machinery and because of our method of training, you don't need previous experience or a lot of education. You do actual work on electrical machinery.

Here in my school you work on generators, motors, dynamos, you do house wiring, wind armatures and do actual work in many other branches of electricity and right now I'm including valuable instruction in Diesel, Electric Refrigeration and Air Conditioning at no extra cost. Our practical shop methods make it **easier to learn**—

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4 WEEKS
COURSE IN
RADIO
INCLUDED

I'LL FINANCE YOUR TRAINING

You can get this training first—then you can pay for it later in easy monthly payments, starting 60 days after your 12 weeks' training period is over—then you have 12 months to complete your payments. If you need part time work to help out with expenses while training in my shops, my employment department will help you get it. Then after graduation this department will give you valuable lifetime employment service.

Send the coupon today for all details. When I get it I'll send you my big free book containing dozens of pictures of students at work in

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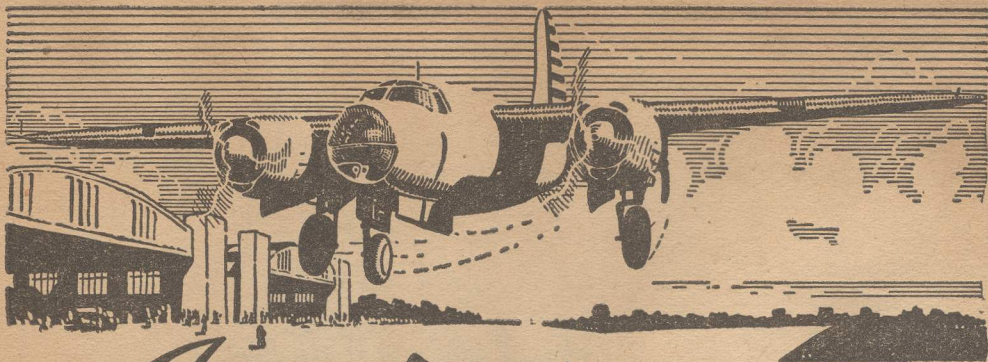


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J. Halyk, Canada



"... Coyne has first class instructors to teach you the simplest things to start with and they have the equipment to show you these things as you advance."
Ben Rickman, S. Car.





In the Hangar

WITH GREASEBALL GABBY

REJOICE, all you armchair airmen. The editors of this ol' mag have at last yielded to the overwhelming number of pleas from you readers, and have permitted this department to be expanded to a size more commensurate with its literary worth. (Editor's note: You know it was only three letters, one of 'em being from you Uncle Lud.)

So now we can all relax and settle all the aerial problems of the war in a leisurely discussion.

The first man to seize the floor is a rather blood-thirsty gent from Hazleton, Pa.

Dear Gabby:

Surprise! There is no insults in this letter. The other guys that send in letters packed with insults just want to show you they read the *Battle Birds* mag.

Please put some gruesome and horrible stories in the mag. I know you are a good author. Don't listen to those other birds who tell you to do this and that. Your section of the mag went over big with us guys here in Pennsylvania.

If you see a Blakeslee buzzin' around at the ol' hangar, won't you send it over Pennsylvania way?

Yours till butter flies,
Michael Resuta, Jr.

Yours until butter flies! *Ouch!* And in this day and age too. From the sound of that, there's probably more corn in Hazle-

ton, Pa., then in the entire state of Iowa. But corny or not, Mike, you're a buddy of ours and we love you. And as the voice of "us guys here in Pennsylvania" I think the least you're entitled to is a Blakeslee. It so happens that one just buzzed by. I snared it, and you'll have it soon.

Douglas Roysdon is a man who thinks maybe the R.A.F. is not quite so good as we seem to have it cracked up to be. Here's what he means:

Dear Gabby,

In your stories you always say something like this: "The slugs from the Brownings swept through the Nazi's cockpit." And they always kill the German instantly, but when they go into a Britisher's cockpit they only wound him.

And another thing . . . In the last World War the American and German planes were poorly built, and you say in your stories that they stay in the air for about a half-hour, trading slugs. Well, my pop was in the last war and he said that you had to fly with one hand and hold your wing on with the other, and that about twelve seconds of shooting in the right place (that must be the motor or rudder) would send it down.

I was reading "In the Hangar" when I stumbled on Paul Siebenburgen's letter, and he is right. The British sure do tear apart the Germans with one burst, but you state that it takes a lot to send a Britisher down.

And hold on a minute! If you're still

(Continued on page 8)

BILL, YOU SURE HAVE A SWELL BUILD! DID YOU TRAIN FOR A LONG TIME ?

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

Here's the Kind of MEN I Build!

Charles Atlas

an actual, untouched photo of Charles Atlas, holder of the title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."



Will You Let Me PROVE I Can Make YOU a New Man?

MEN—Meet J. G. O'Brien, of California, one of my Silver Cup Winners! Look at that strong neck—those broad, handsome, perfectly proportioned shoulders—that muscled chest and stomach. Read what he says: "Look at me NOW! 'Dynamic Tension' WORKS! I'm proud of the natural, easy way you have made me an 'Atlas Champion'!"

I was once a skinny weakling of 97 lbs. I didn't know what real health or strength were. I was afraid to fight, ashamed to be seen in a swimming suit.

Then I discovered the secret that changed me into "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man," the title I won against all comers. My secret is "Dynamic Tension." It is a natural method. Its purpose is not only to give you the powerful, rippling muscles you'd like to see in your own mirror, but also—for those whose systems are sluggish for lack of proper exercise—to help them tone up their entire body, inside and out.

ONLY 15 MINUTES A DAY

Do you want big, broad shoulders—a fine, powerful chest—biceps like steel—arms and legs rippling with muscular strength—a stomach ridged with bands of sinewy muscle—and a build you can be proud of? Then just give me the opportunity to prove that "Dynamic Tension" is what you need.

No "ifs," "ands," or "maybes." Just tell me where you want handsome, powerful muscles. Are you fat and flabby? Or skinny and gawky? Are you short-winded, peepless? Do you hold back and let others walk off with the prettiest girls, best jobs, etc.? Then write for details about "Dynamic Tension" and learn how I can make you a healthy, confident, powerful HE-MAN.

Send for FREE BOOK

Mail the coupon right now for full details and I'll send you my illustrated book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." Tells all about my "Dynamic Tension" method. Shows actual photos of men I've made into Atlas Champions. It's a valuable book! And it's FREE. Send for your copy today. Mail the coupon to me personally. CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 83P, 115 East 23rd Street, New York, N. Y.



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

Name (Please print or write plainly)

Address

City State

(Continued from page 6)

handing out Blakeslees, will you send one flying over to me?

Yours truly,
Douglas Roysdon

P.S. I wonder what a Blakeslee is?

Well, Douglas, you needn't wonder any more. Just look in tomorrow's mail. As if you didn't know that the Blakeslees to which we refer are the original drawings of the illustrations that appear in *Battle Birds*, and Fred Blakeslee is the guy who draws these black and white masterpieces.

Now here's a letter from a guy with a gripe. Did I say a gripe? Nay, half a dozen.

Dear Horseface:

I have just finished reading my copy of your Mag, and boy did I find some hot mistakes!

In the story "No Man's Wings" on page 28, column 2, it said "He cursed the speed of the Fiats." I guess they were CR-42's judging from Blakeslee's drawing at the beginning of the story. The Curtiss Hawk he was flying is much faster than Fiats. So why should he be cursing their speed?

The second mistake I noticed was in "No Man's Wings" too. On page 33, column 2, where it says "he swung the plane around, so that it faced the Arabs. The four guns of the Fiat made loud answer to the rifles of the attackers. Arabs were being mown down as . . ." Well if he was just taxiing the plane around, the tail would be down and the guns would be up at an angle, throwing bullets high above the heads of the attackers instead of mowing them down.

The third mistake was in "Swift Are the Hawks of War," page 65, column 1, where it says "it was a huge flying boat of the Focke-Wulf Kurier class." It so happens that the Focke-Wulf Kurier is not a flying boat, but just a plain, every-day four-engine bomber.

The fourth mistake was in "Swift Are the Hawks of War" on page 67, column 1, where it says "Random went on back to the tail. Scrambling into the turret, he . . ." Well, there isn't any tail turrets on the PBY's.

The fifth mistake was in "Swift Are the Hawks of War" on page 79, column 1, where it says ". . . as the prop was ripped from the pounding Wasp." The SBC-4 is powered by a Wright Cyclone engine.

Well Greasy, now that you have

caused me to lose all my wind on correcting your mag, I shall retire from the scene with a Blakeslee original for my trouble (I hope).

I remain (un)devotedly yours,
Eugene Risedorph.

P.S. I think it would be a good idea if you had model airplane plans for solid models on a special page.

Brother Risedorph, you are a splitter of hairs. What do you know about that, gang? Casting aspersions of inaccuracy on this mag! In the first place, why can't a plane be taxied with tail high, thus keeping the fire line of its guns low? And then there's the matter of the PBY. The Consolidated PBY-5, which is now being extensively used by the British, has been renamed by them the "Catalina." It was a plane such as this that spotted the *Bismarck* and enabled the British forces to close in and sink her.

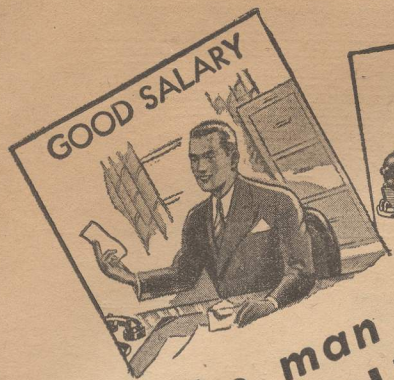
In David C. Cooke's new book, *War Wings*, which in a complete record, in both text and picture, of the fighting planes of England and the United States, can be found the complete story of the Catalina. Here are some interesting details:

In order that this patrol-bomber may be entirely independent of any base for an extended period of time . . . all facilities for extended flight and comfort of personnel are provided. These include commodious sleeping quarters, living quarters, galley complete with range and refrigerator, sound proofing, clothes lockers, toilet and washing facilities, heating and ventilating system, and even a well-equipped workshop.

Another novel feature is the installation of retractable wing floats which in flight are drawn up to form the tip of the wing. At the time of landing, the floats are let down and form, in addition to necessary flotation for the wing, an additional braking effect for slow landing. A complete telephone system is installed within the boat whereby any member of the crew may contact any other member without leaving his station.

Power is supplied by two air-cooled radial Pratt and Whitney Twin Wasp engines of 900 horse-power each at 12,000 feet, giving a top speed of 198

(Continued on page 113)



To the man who wants to enjoy
an ACCOUNTANT'S CAREER



IF you're that man, here's something that will interest you.

Not a magic formula—not a get-rich-quick scheme—but something more substantial, more practical.

Of course, you need something more than just the desire to be an accountant. You've got to pay the price—be willing to study earnestly, thoroughly.

Still, wouldn't it be worth your while to sacrifice some of your leisure in favor of interesting home study—over a comparatively brief period in your life? Always provided that the rewards were good—a salary of \$2,000 to \$10,000?

An accountant's duties are interesting, varied and of real worth to his employers. He has *standing*!

Do you feel that such things aren't for you? Well, don't be too sure. Very possibly they *can* be!

Why not, like so many before you, investigate LaSalle's modern Problem Method of training for an accountancy position?

Just suppose you were permitted to work in a large accounting house under the personal supervision of an expert accountant. Suppose, with his aid, you studied accounting principles and solved problems day by day—easy ones at first—then the more difficult ones. If you could do this—and if you could turn to him for advice as the problems became complex—soon you'd master them all.

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You cover accountancy from the basic Principles right up through Accountancy Systems and Income Tax Procedure. Then you add C. P. A. Training and prepare for the C. P. A. examinations.

As you go along, you absorb the principles of Auditing, Cost Accounting, Business Law, Statistical Control, Organization, Management and Finance.

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Position..... Age.....





The Spad smashed into the earth with the power full on.

WAKE UP

BY ORLANDO RIGONI

CHAPTER ONE

Devil's Outcasts

CAPTAIN Barry Dean slammed his Spad for the narrow tarmac of the drome near Chatel, pushed it down as though nothing mattered but that he touch earth. He was unmindful of the left wing which was half shot off at the roots, unmindful of the lift wire streaming in the slipstream, and the strut

which had slipped out from the socket.

Dust swirled about him as he cracked down and fought to keep the Spad out of a ground loop. He rolled from the bucket, hit the ground and twisted back to stare up into the sky. A great lump rose in his throat as he saw the other Spad groping blindly for the earth.

The wings of that Spad were skeletons, stripped of skin and flesh. The Hisso erupted black smoke, and the prop was screaming in a terrific spasm of vibra-



IN HELL!

**"For it's kill or get killed in this ballroom of hate,
And be sure that you do your work well;
There are no second chances in these devil dances;
You win—or you wake up in hell!"**

tion that told of a splintered blade. Dean knew that the worst part of the wreck was in the pilot's seat. He had seen the storm of Spandau slugs batter into Lieutenant Lon Horton's pit. Nothing born of flesh and blood could withstand such punishment. Horton should have been dead by now. He was hanging on, flying by instinct, but he could never make a

landing in such a condition—never!

Dean raced down the tarmac toward the spot where the Spad must crash. Lon Horton was more than a brother to him, he was his strength, his reason, his hope. He had brought courage where there had been no courage; he had brought faith where there had been no faith. He had taught Dean how to kill—and escape the

nightmares of remorse which followed.

Dean and Horton were returning from special patrol. They had been attacked by five Germans, had downed two of the enemy and then Horton had been crucified in his own pit. Dean had killed the German who had shot Horton, but that couldn't bring Horton out of this crash for which he was heading.

Dean waved his hands as he ran down the field. He cried against the sky, "Pull back! Gut the stick, Lon!"

But Lon Horton was beyond hearing, beyond doing. The Spad pulled up just a little, and then smashed into the earth with the power full on. It skidded along for fifty feet, hurled forward by the awful speed of the impact. Then it began slowly to burn.

"Oh, God!" Dean moaned. He raced for the wreck. He didn't wait for the crash-wagon which was whining out upon the field. He didn't wait for the men in their asbestos suits to dive into the flames. He rushed into the flames himself, fumbled with the safety belt of the Spad, choked on the smoke. He felt his skin bubble in the awful heat of the fire. He got Horton free, dragged him out.

The others were there by then. They batted out the flames on Dean's leather coat. Two stretcher bearers wanted to take Horton and place him on the stretcher, but Dean did the job himself.

Horton wasn't quite dead. The medico could save him, could bring back the blue eyes, the grinning lips from that bloody mass of flesh which had been Horton's face. Dean rode back to the infirmary with the ambulance. He helped get the unconscious form of Horton inside, and ordered him placed at once upon the operating table.

"Get Doctor Letts—important—emergency!" Dean screamed, and began to make preparations with skillful, trained hands.

"Doctor Letts is gone," the voice of

Major Randall, the squadron commander, said crisply from the door of the room. "There's been a bad offensive north of here and every doctor of any decent experience was called there. We have a new man coming—"

Dean spun around. "We can't wait. Don't you understand? This is a matter of life and death!"

The major came over, put his thick hand on Dean's arm.

"There's a nurse here. You'll have to operate, Dean."

"Me?"

Dean felt a cold shiver of apprehension sweep over him.

"You love him, don't you? He'll die if you don't. I know you gave up a surgical career to join the air force, but this is your job, Dean. I'll lend a hand. . . ."

His job! Dean's teeth clenched. A nauseating horror swept over him, leaving him weak and sick. His job! Sure, he had trained for surgical work, had forced himself through the long, unpleasant years of school and internment. He'd muffed his first operation. The patient had died, and Dean, blaming himself, refused to go on. Somehow he couldn't get up the nerve to tackle another major job. Everything was all right until he felt the thin thread of life pulsing under the very tips of his fingers. Then his nerve deserted him. He couldn't look at his work impersonally. He had given up in despair, had joined the air force as a means of forgetting, dealing death instead of saving life. And now they wanted him to operate upon the only man he had ever been close to.

He couldn't refuse. Horton was dying, that was evident. To save him would require more than ordinary skill, more than human nerve. Mechanically Dean changed his clothes, slipped on an apron and gloves, watched the one overworked nurse prepare the patient with the sufficient help of Major Randall,

BY THE time they had his face washed. Horton was breathing with horrible, gasping sobs. His head was battered out of shape. There was a bullet hole in his neck, but Dean merely checked the bleeding there and gave his attention to the desperate wound in Horton's head.

The nurse held the ether cone over Horton's face. The major handed Dean the instruments. Outside, members of the 45th Pursuit pressed their faces against the windows; they had all liked Horton.

Dean worked swiftly, trying not to think of Lon Horton as human. He cut the scalp away, located the fracture. This was desperate, trying work. Suddenly his eyes stared trance-like at the throbbing artery in Horton's temple. That was Horton—Lonny, with his quick smile, his ready quip—that was his life, his courage pulsing there, and that pulse was getting weaker and weaker.

Instinctively, Dean knew that God alone could save his buddy, but he refused to admit this. He tried to work faster, faster, and yet the operation was too delicate to allow speed. When he had the patch of bone cut, he knew that something was wrong. His hand trembled as he reached for an instrument. He dropped the instrument and then his nerve broke.

Dean dropped his face in his hands, turned away with sobs shaking his body. He shouldn't have tried it. He shouldn't have attempted to save Lonny. He wasn't big enough, strong enough. He staggered toward the door. The major hurried after him, put his arm about his shoulders.

"It wasn't your fault, Dean. He was too far gone."

"He was alive, and I let him die. I killed him," Dean said fiercely. Part of himself had died too, and out of the dark horror of despair, he salvaged one thought. He must have revenge!

He had scoffed at stories of other men who had made the same resolve. To him, war had been an escape from surgery,

from the life which had imprisoned him. He fought not through any motive of hate, or desire of glory. Up to now he had fought coldly, savagely, striving to drown out his own failure. Now it was different. Horton was dead. Horton wasn't here to give him advice and hope, to blast his gloom with a light-hearted quip. Horton was lying in there dead, crying for revenge against Von Koenig's devils who had killed him.

Dean shook off the major's arm. He walked on across the tarmac, and the men, respecting his feelings, let him go. Not until he was screwing his big body into the cockpit of a warming Nieuport did they realize what he was doing. Barry Dean knew they would try to stop him, and he didn't mean to be stopped. With the white apron still swathed about him, with the gauze mask dangling around his neck, with even the rubber gloves still on his hands, he stabbed the throttle up the brass, saw the rotary motor disappear into a halo of screeching metal.

He horsed the Nieuport off the chocks, saw the earth swim under his wheels like a brown river. He gutted the stick too soon, in order to avoid hitting the men running across the field. The fools, they couldn't stop him! He could see Major Randall shaking his fist at the sky, and bellowing threats of a court-martial, of a demotion when he should return from this patrol.

"But I won't return," Dean said fiercely to the altimeter which wound swiftly up the dial. Three thousand—four thousand—ten. . . .

WHEN he reached the crooked lines near Blamont, the future was still a black hole into which he hurled himself forever. He could think of no desire other than to meet the enemy, destroy him and end this farce of living in a white hot explosion of revenge.

He found no enemy and turned north.

Not until he reached the big bend in the lines at Nomedy did he find any Germans. Then they came down on him as though the time and place had been appointed. They came one by one, screaming down upon him, boxing him in with Spandau bullets, playing with him as a cat might play with a cornered mouse. He knew they meant to kill him when they had had their fill of sport. There were six of them against him.

Dean jerked the stick against his leg, rolled wildly, pulled it back and zoomed up and halfway over. He twisted out of the loop, grinning savagely to himself. Six of them! Six chances to revenge himself for Horton's death. He didn't stop to think what those odds meant; he slammed his screaming ship through the thick of the Germans as they came up out of the dive.

Dean gave no thought to the bullets. They poked through his wings like curious, invisible fingers. They played a vicious tattoo across his cowling. They buzzed through his pit, and he batted at them as though they were flies. He didn't turn his head. His eyes clung to the rings; his thumbs hung over the trips. He had the leader of the German circus in his sights, and watched the black tail grow bigger, bigger—now!

"This with Horton's respects!" he muttered. The Vickers shimmied in front of him. Death issued from the snouts, smashed into the small pit of the Fokker ahead of him.

At the death of their leader, the Germans attacked with a deadly purpose. This American must die. He must learn—

Barry Dean was past learning. He was the teacher. He showed the Germans magic. He flew into their guns, and out again without going down. He crippled a second ship, and they ripped half his empennage away. He had only partial steerage, but he worried the Nieuport around, headed back for the four remain-

ing ships. He held his trips down until his guns were smoking. He burned another ship and almost collided with it as he tried to dodge away.

Dean lost all sense of time and space. He expected to die, but not until he had used up everything he had. The odds were more even now—three to one. To one? He was less than half a pilot. Blood was running into his eyes. His plane was almost in shreds. He didn't look at the tanks, at the oil. He didn't notice that high above him six dirty, battered ships were watching his fierce fight, were peeling off to help him.

Dean felt his head go light. His motor began to miss; his guns made funny clicking noises. He was vaguely aware of the three remaining Germans, and in a haze he saw four more circling up to help finish him.

He knew it was the end. He waited for bullets to plow into his back. He waited for flames to wash back over him. He had heard that the thing to do when you were caught in a fire was to duck your head into the flames and inhale deeply. Just once. One spasm of searing, infinite pain, and it would be over....

BUT out of the fog of his battered senses, Dean was aware of ghost ships smashing into the Germans.

He caught a glimpse of a gaunt, hawk-eyed man in a muddy Nieuport which had more patches than whole cloth upon the wings. He saw two skeleton men who looked exactly alike, flew the same way, and knew each other's minds to such an extent that they set traps for unsuspecting Germans, and shot them out of the sky.

Dean had no more chance to see anything. His ship began to wobble. It fell off on a wing. He realized, vaguely, that the engine had stopped running. The Nieuport spun lazily in a flat circle and he could do nothing to stop it. Every-

thing was whirling like a giant spinwheel, and he was in the center of it.

Dean was conscious up to the moment his ship crashed, and then a blow as his head struck the edge of the cowlings brought down a blanket of oblivion upon his fevered mind.

Dean came to his senses ten minutes later. There was something hard against his teeth. It was a bottle. A gruff yet sympathetic voice told him to drink. The brandy choked him, left a trail of fire down his throat, but warmed his stomach with a jolt. The warmth spread out through his body to his arms and legs.

Dean looked up, then a shudder ran through him and he closed his eyes. He wasn't alive—he couldn't be! The face he had just looked at wasn't human. It was a warped and twisted scar of blue-veined flesh. It was a hideous mask incapable of expressing emotion. He looked again, but this time he noticed the eyes—gray, calm eyes which seemed prisoners behind the hideous face. The eyes made him forget the man's face, and he tried to talk.

Not until later did Dean learn that this was Banta, the greatest of the Horde of the Hellions next to Swat Corvy himself.

"Who—who are you?" he gasped.

"Never mind me. I don't get this masquerade—white smock, mask. You look like a surgeon out of a hospital. I'm taking you out of here. . . ."

Dean remembered his desire to die. "I don't want to go."

"Don't be a fool. You fought those Germans to a standstill. Think what that means. There's always time to die."

Banta's urgent voice aroused Dean's mind. Sure, there was always time to die—more Germans to kill. "Always time to die," Dean repeated aloud.

Banta nodded. "I should know. I must die, too, before this fight is through, but I'm borrowing time to pay them back."

Dean, looking at Banta's face knew

why Banta sought death. For one so hideous, living was a hell, a hell of seeing men cringe when they looked upon him.

"I'll try to make it. I'll try," Dean said softly, and staggered to the Spad which ticked over impatiently beyond the row of trees. His head throbbed, and his mind still spun slowly, in a circle of bewilderment. He felt the Spad lift, felt the icy wind bite at his face and drive away some of the fog.

Then the plane began to sink. Dean didn't look up, he looked down and his fogged eyes saw the ragged remnants of a farm—the Bleneau Farm, five miles east of St. Dizier. He saw the ships of the other Hellions almost hidden by the shattered orchard behind the half-wrecked house. He saw, also, the narrow runway which appeared too small for any plane to land upon, and he wondered how the Hellions managed to survive so near the front lines.

That was below as Banta shot the Spad for the grooved earth. If he had looked up, he would have seen the two ships far above, stalking the lone Spad—two gray ships from von Koenig's Staffel. They had spied Banta's Spad and recognized it for one of the Hellions who had given von Koenig's vultures so much to be revenged for. Gothas, those ships were, originally headed for a twilight bombing raid upon Soissons. But here they found more satisfying meat closer to home.

Banta hit the runway expertly, taxied his ship to the trees where two grease-smeared French mechanics took it off his hands. Dean slid from the wing, stood unsteadily. What was that roaring in his head? What was that rising crescendo of sound which seemed to encompass his whole body?

Then he saw the Hellions rushing from the farmhouse, and pointing at the sky. Dean looked up, up into the deadly shadows of the Gothas which had flattened out of their dive and were swiping low across

the farm. The Gothas had failed to see the ships hidden by the trees. In the uncertain light upon the ground, they could be sure of little. They dropped one load of bombs upon the runway. The other bombs they poured upon the barn, which was the largest object left standing.

THE Hellions reached their ships to go in pursuit of the devils who had found their hiding place, but even the Hellions must have a place from which to fly, and no plane could take off until the narrow landing strip was repaired.

Dean saw them then, inflamed with their impotent rage. Corvy was like a bull leaned-down by a winter of famine. His shock of black hair was matted and uncombed. His great chest was exposed through his open shirt, and the legs of his trousers flapped unbuttoned about his slightly bowed legs. On his huge feet he wore moccasins, which he had made himself because he could get no shoes to fit. That was Swat Corvy—profane, ungovernable, untamed by blood and sweat and death.

Corvy bellowed at the Carey twins to inspect the damage to the barn, which was also used for an infirmary. Dean, as in a dream, watched the twins run toward the ruins and marvelled at how thin they were, and how much alike.

Dean saw Three-finger Morton, silent, grave, and gray at twenty-six, trying to remove a tree from where it had been blown across the runway. He saw Lieutenant Wister, the poet of the outfit, who looked to be no more than a boy. Wister had been blown from his feet by the shock of the bombs, but he was unhurt, and sat upon the ground staring in wonder before him. Banta started down the field toward something which attracted his keen eyes. It was then Corvy became aware of Dean standing there alone.

"So they didn't kill you, eh? Why dammit, you caused this—you led those

Gothas here," Corvy said fiercely. "You—"

Dean felt the deep eyes devouring him, and he forgot his wounds, forgot his strange dress.

"That's a lie, Corvy!" Dean bit out, his fists clenching. Something about Corvy enraged him. Perhaps it was Corvy's strength, his impression of impregnability. Perhaps it was his triumph over life which Dean lacked.

At Dean's blunt insult Corvy seemed to grow in size. He barked, "You delayed Banta, didn't you? You cluttered up his ship so that he was caught napping—"

Dean felt his resentment grow. "I didn't ask to be saved. I didn't want to be saved."

"Then why the hell were you fighting like a wild man? Why were you picking on half the German air force and trying to blow them from the sky? Why didn't you just fly off to some quiet spot and smash yourself into the earth instead of coming here to jinx us?" Corvy demanded. "You're a doctor, aren't you?"

Before Dean could reply, Banta came stumbling up the torn runway with a body in his thick arms. Though his face was incapable of expression, there was a glassiness to Banta's eyes which betrayed his emotions.

"Corvy, here's Mintern. The dogs blasted him down. He's—he's dead!"

At Banta's words, a curious change came over Swat Corvy. A rush of impotent pity swept across his gaunt face. Before Dean could move, he was forced to bear the brunt of Corvy's fury. Swat Corvy struck him a vicious blow in the face that knocked him to his knees.

Blind hate and anger raged through Dean. He hadn't done anything intentionally which could have brought the Germans to bomb the farm. It had all been an accident. Dean tried to get up. His one desire was to strike back, to rend apart that impenetrable barrier be-

hind which Swat Corvy kept himself.

But dizziness overtook Dean. The blow had started the blood flowing from his head. It filled his eyes, but he could still see the huge form of the captain and he hurled himself at it.

Banta, as usual, interceded. Banta was the only one of the Hellions who dared cross Corvy.

"You can't do that, Corvy. Don't you see—he's wounded!"

Corvy stood swaying, comprehension dawning in his deep eyes. Dean collapsed. He was vaguely conscious of being carried to the barn, which was the hospital. He was vaguely conscious of the Carey twins greeting them at the door of the bombed barn, and declaring that the doctor who had been assigned to the Hellions had been killed.

Banta and Corvy bandaged Dean up, but he wasn't aware of that. It was twelve hours before he came to his senses. It was daylight. Banta, his eyes foggy with lack of sleep, was seated near him. Dean comprehended what had happened. He thanked Banta for taking care of him. He explained why he had been running away in a surgeon's uniform.

"Better get some sleep, fella," he suggested. "Have them send me in something to eat. I've got to get well enough to do a job I have in mind."

Banta hesitated. "Corvy didn't mean anything by that blow, kid. He was upset. He had a special liking for Mintern, and lost control of himself."

"Why don't you let him speak for himself?" Dean said flatly.

CHAPTER TWO

Fury Flight

DEAN was in bed in the barn for three days. The Hellions had repaired the runway and took off regularly on their patrols. Banta brought him news of their

victories, and sometimes he could hear them singing, or hear Wister giving one of his famous toasts:

"We root 'em and toot 'em and finally
shoot 'em,
And then if they won't play dead,
We force 'em up higher and feed 'em on
fire,
Or maybe we bomb 'em instead.

For it's kill or get killed in this ballroom
of hate,
And be sure that you do your work well;
There are no second chances in these devil
dances;
You win, or you wake up in hell!"

On the fourth day Dean left the hospital. Banta dug him up some clothes to replace the smock he had arrived in. Dean lounged outside the barn. The sun felt warm—it seeped into his body and relieved the stiffness of his muscles. He gazed lazily down toward the end of the field to where Swat Corvy paced back and forth like a beast caged beyond hope of escape.

Suddenly Dean saw a man crawl across the stone wall at the end of the field. It was the end near the front lines. The man almost fell, but Corvy's big hand held him erect. Dean got to his feet, curious to know who the man might be. He saw the man talking to Corvy, saw Corvy shake the man to keep him from passing out before he had finished speaking.

Then the man collapsed. Corvy picked him up as though he were a child and ran across the field with him. Dean made way for the captain.

Corvy yelled at him, "See if you can bring this man around. Work fast! We've got to bring him around, understand?"

Dean's jaw set. He nodded as he tried to keep up with Corvy. Morton and Banta joined them.

Banta gasped, "It's Grenoble!"

It was Grenoble—Milton Grenoble who had been trapped behind the German lines two weeks before with Banta. He had elected to remain behind so that Ban-

ta, who had been knocked unconscious, could ride home on Corvy's Nieuport. Grenoble had taken the hard way home, and he had made it through the German lines!

Dean threw himself into the task of bringing Grenoble around, but it wasn't easy. The Hellions watched him from a respectful distance. These men, who had no fear of death, held themselves in awe of one who could save life.

For a moment Grenoble stirred. His lips moved. Dean had to lean close to catch the words. "At Spada—von Koenig means to destroy this drome—making big—big—can be stopped. . . ."

At the same instant the blast of a Gnome engine thundered across the farm. Corvy's old Nieuport leaped from the earth and soared into the late afternoon sky. The Hellions stood uncertain of what they should do. Corvy often went up alone. Banta turned to Dean.

"What did he say? Why did Corvy flap on upstairs?"

Dean was trying to revive Grenoble from another coma without success. The man appeared to be suffering from severe shock and exhaustion. Dean could find no wound which could be a contributing factor to Grenoble's state. He must remove him to another hospital, to some place where experienced doctors could diagnose his condition and perhaps counteract it.

"He's got to be taken to St. Dizier," Dean told Banta. "He knows something important—something we should know. We still have the old squadron car here. I'll drive him to St. Dizier. You had better get the others busy putting the ships out of danger. Grenoble has tried to say something about another raid, I believe."

At Dean's elbow came the calm voice of Andruss, who was new to the Hellions and yet belonged to them because of ghastly memories of a past that wouldn't be downed.

"I'll go with you, Dean. I'll be of more

help watching Grenoble on the way across these awful roads."

DEAN had made no protest. He needed help. It was dark, now, as they bounced over the rutted road toward St. Dizier. The headlights were dimmed, and Dean had difficulty picking out the mangled ruts of the road. Instinctively his ears listened for the sound of bombs behind him. He heard nothing but the distant roar of the artillery making the night hideous with its nocturnal serenade.

At St. Dizier he drove to the big hospital which had been set up in the Chateau Dreux. Here famous surgeons wore themselves and their talents to the bone patching up the mangled refuse of war. They were very well acquainted there with shock cases, and applied what remedies they deemed proper.

Dean, with Andruss wide-eyed beside him, watched the performance and prayed that it would soon prove effective. He must get back to the Bleneau Farm. He must find out what Corvy had done on his lone flight. Surely the captain must have returned by now. There was something big in the air, and Dean felt a sudden desire to be part of it.

He no longer wanted to die, nor wanted especially to live. He wanted only to fight the Boche, to drive them back. He wanted to show Swat Corvy that he wasn't a coward, or a fool.

"A very peculiar case, but I believe he is coming out of it," a doctor muttered as he injected another shock fluid, the use of which Dean didn't understand. They learned new things every day in these base hospitals.

Dean crept close, ignoring Andruss. Grenoble stirred. His head rolled from side to side. His lips moved, and Dean's keen ears caught the words faintly.

"Spada—ghost ship—warn Corvy. There's a chance—a chance to stop von Koenig. Blast the ghost ship—on drome

near Spada—save the Hellions. . . .”

Grenoble shuddered and passed out once more. Dean jerked himself back to action. A vague sense of impending disaster had crept over him while listening to Grenoble's gasped words. There was something so urgent in Spada that it seemed to be dragging Grenoble back from the brink of death.

Dean spoke to the doctor in charge. “I'm returning to the farm, sir. Andruss will remain here, and if anything definite develops, send word with him at once to the Bleneau Farm. I'm afraid the Hellions are in for a little home-town treatment.”

Dean drove back to the farm alone. A strange excitement accelerated his pulse until it throbbed in time to the pounding engine of the car. He approached the farm warily, but upon driving up to the half-ruined house, he discovered that nothing had happened as yet.

He rolled from the car. One of the French mechanics, smoking a cigarette in the darkness, greeted him, “*Bienvenue, mon enfant!* Is not the night too beautiful for killing?”

“*Oui*, Arnaud, it is,” Dean growled, and went inside the house. He found the Hellions about the long table in the living room of the house.

It was evident that they were distraught. Even the Carey twins had no quips to banter across the table. Banta sat like a graven image at the head of the table, rolling fag after fag which he tossed away half smoked. Three-Fingered Morton, who drank little, was now evidently under the influence of the excellent white wine which had been left in the cellar of the house when the occupants had fled. Wister was pacing the shadows at the low end of the room.

Dean's eyes devoured the room, and he tensed. Of course, he could be mistaken. Corvy could be outside. He could be—

“What's all the mourning for?” he

asked shortly, hands on his hips.

They looked up at him, and as though words were superfluous, they made no reply. Dean tensed.

“Hasn't Corvy come back?” he asked.

“No,” from Banta who spat the word through his smoke.

“Is that any reason why the world should end? You men act as though Corvy was the only man worth fighting under.”

“Perhaps he was—to us.”

Dean shrugged. “To me he was a loud-mouthed, domineering tramp. That kind don't die easy. It's the good who die young—the worthy who die first. Corvy's the devil-breed—”

Morton was sitting with his back to Dean, and now he lunged up, his fist clenched. “You lie, damn you!”

Dean felt anger blind him. He wanted to strike, but Morton was drunk and there could be no satisfaction in downing a man who was scarcely able to stand. Banta relieved the situation. He rushed over, stood between them.

“Never mind, Morton. Dean hasn't had a chance to know Corvy yet.”

“Thanks, I'll pass,” Dean said flatly, “I've found out all I want to know about him.”

With that Dean spun on his heel, and because he had no other place to sleep, he went back to his bed in the barn. But he didn't sleep very easily. His mind kept repeating phrases—Spada—ghost ship—von Koenig. When he did doze off, he was troubled with weird dreams in which he was sinking in a deep morass, and Swat Corvy was pushing him down—down—down.

DEAN awoke at the crack of dawn.

Out of his jumbled mind had evolved a grim plan. He ate what he could find of emergency rations stored in the barn. He drew on the ill-fitting flying togs which Banta had supplied him from the

wardrobes of men too dead to care.

Dean went in search of his ship. His ship? He suddenly remembered he had no ship. No matter. He would use Andruss' ship. He discovered that the ships had been moved to the far end of the orchard to protect them from bombs aimed at the buildings. When he aroused Arnaud to assist him, the Frenchman protested earnestly that it would be suicide for him to fly alone in this territory.

Dean ignored Arnaud's warning. They got the Spad, which Arnaud assured Dean belonged to Andruss, and wheeled it into the clear. Dean legged into the bucket. Arnaud spun the prop and the Hisso snorted angrily. It caught on the second try. Dean warmed it briefly. He must evade the rest of the Hellions. He must not be followed, or his plan would certainly fail.

He asked Arnaud to supply him with four light demolition bombs. Then he roared down the runway, slid up into the icy sky. Up—ten thousand feet—twelve. He settled himself in the bucket, notched the Hisso up the brass, and warmed his guns with a short burst. He must be prepared for any eventuality. He marked a course upon the strip map on the panel, rectified his bearings and headed northeast, toward Spada.

Like a free spirit he roared on and on. He lost track of miles. Through rifts in the clouds he caught glimpses of the ravished earth, saw the spider web of trenches. He screwed the Spad up higher. He must be above everything.

At twenty thousand he stopped climbing. He dared go no higher, for already his head was reeling from lack of oxygen. He felt the icy wind bite against his gasping lips, and he was forced down. He must be alert—totally conscious. He had only to watch below him. Surely no craft could be above him.

At last he spotted what he was seeking. The deep curve of the St. Mihiel

Salient—the ragged channel of the River Meuse. He saw Thiaccourt, and not far beyond it he saw Spada! He must strike swiftly, every sense alert. He must strive to discover the ghost ship Grenoble had warned of in his delirium. He must destroy that ship. . . .

Dean shoved the stick against the panel and spilled the Spad. Down he screamed, like a meteor from some forgotten star. Down, with the wind whining a dirge through the wires and the struts jumping in the sockets. Down, with the motor shuddering and coughing like the bark of machine guns—No, it wasn't the motor! Little holes were crawling over his wings! Little tails of smoke were snaking down from behind him. The guttural snarl of a Mercedes motor clawed at his ears.

It couldn't be true. He must be dreaming. No one could have lived above the level he had reached. He jerked a look back, and his heart skipped. The red eyes of Spandaus were weeping death upon him—flaming, screaming death. He saw the pilot behind the tiny windscreen and noticed the oxygen mask the German wore. So he had been trapped by a watchdog with wings!

Dean kicked the bar hard, skidded flat in a wide turn, slapped the stick across the pit and verticalled back to give battle. He had no desire to die. A few days before, when he had fled from Chatel, he had hoped to die. But that was before he had met the Hellions. That was before Banta had taught him that there is always time to die. Today he must live; live to wreak vengeance upon the dread Boche; live to crush tyranny and hate and oppression.

He caught the German in his rings. He batted the trips, held them down, but discovered that he was firing at a blank space in the sky. The German had expertly zoomed up, twisted back in a tight vrille which put him upon Dean's back.

Again Barry Dean felt the bullets

smashing about him. He saw his left aileron explode into fragments of cloth and wire and wood. He fought to keep the left wing. The German was turning out of his shallow dive. Dean let the left wing go down; he kicked the bar and tried to fasten himself upon the German's tail.

The two ships writhed in a circle of death—a circle which became tighter and tighter until the two pilots were no more than a hundred feet across from each other. But Dean's Spad was slowed down by the crippled aileron, by the ribbons of skin whipping back from the wing. The Fokker crept relentlessly closer upon his tail. Dean felt the chill of certain death upon his spine and yet he dared not break that mad circle. If he broke, it would be the end. The Fokker would leap upon him before he could maneuver, and blast him into nothing.

In that moment of extremity he had no visions of his past life. He knew only

that he must live, that he must outmaneuver the master who was upon his tail. He must take one desperate chance. . . .

DEAN took that chance. He kicked the bar, fought the heavy left wing up and slid sideways into the clear. At the same time he bellied the stick. He didn't look back. He knew what was happening. The German was banking madly, rolling his ship down through the center of what had been the circle. He was waiting for Dean to zoom. Dean had no choice. He was already hurling his battered ship up. The Spandaus should snarl out their message of death; he should be in the spot about now. . . .

He was in the spot. His ship surged and rattled in the hail of cupro-jacketed lead. He froze in the bucket, felt the wasps of death sting his neck, saw them smash his panel into a heap of junk.

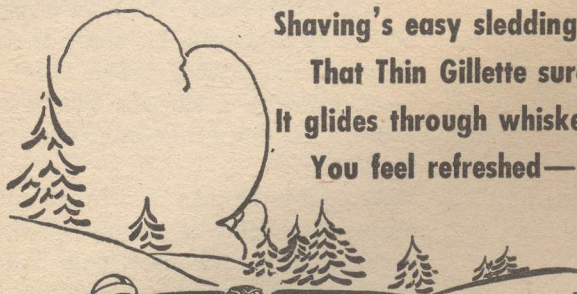
"By God—there's no more time to

Shaving's easy sledding now—

That Thin Gillette sure is a wow!

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live!" he cried into the tempest of the backwash.

But he rode the loop around, fought his ship flat and caught the German trying to slip around him. The German was too late. Fate loaned Dean one minute from the log-book of destiny—one minute in which he batted his guns, saw the white-whiskered bullets caress the Fokker, saw them smash through the tiny windscreen, strike the pilot.

Dean felt his Spad dive out of control before he released his thumbs from the trips. He had no thought of getting home. His ship was beyond saving. He fought to break the dive, brought the Spad around in a flat spin. His mind was clear, keen. He knew he was dropping too fast, and with superhuman skill and strength he worked the falling ship toward a dense growth of trees. His one chance was to break the drop, cushion his fall.

The trees leaped at him. He braced himself, turned off the petrol and cut the switch. The ship struck, spinning almost flat. Dean was thrown so hard against his safety belt that it pulled off the seat strut. He threw up an arm and caught his weight against the padding above the panel. Then branches were whipping up around him. He was turning over, falling out of the cockpit. He managed to grab a wing as he fell. The next moment he was on the ground, badly shaken but unhurt.

He was thankful to be alive. He must get away from the ship, for someone would be looking for him. Then, on a sudden impulse he took off his crash hat and his goggles. He took off his fleece-lined boots. He threw them all into the cockpit of the Spad and set it on fire. The fire would attract any searchers and give him time to get away. The boots and goggles and such things might fool them into believing he had burned with his ship.

Dean hurried through the dense woods.

He didn't know in which direction he was headed, but it made little difference. He must have time to reorganize his plans. There might still be time to reach the drome near Spada. It couldn't be very far.

He broke out of the woods at the edge of a farm. Seeing the farm buildings built along a ditch which emerged from the woods a little to his left, Dean decided to approach them and discover whether or not the farmer might be a friendly Frenchman who would help him. He crept along the ditch until he was near the house. At first he saw no one, and then he discovered a man pitching hay at the rear of the house.

Dean crept from the ditch, his hand over his service revolver which he still had with him. He slid around a shed, keeping out of sight of the house.

Then he boldly approached the Frenchman.

"*Bon jour, mon ami.* I am an American pilot who has crashed and must have help. Are you a loyal Frenchman?"

"*Viva la France!*" the man whispered, admirably disguising his shock at finding Barry Dean standing before him. Then he added with a sidelong glance at the house, "Lie down, my brave one—quickly!"

Accepting the man as a friend, and realizing that delay at complying with the order might prove disastrous, Dean fell down. Almost at once the Frenchman piled a huge fork of hay upon Dean's prostrate form. Dean tensed. What was this peasant up to? Did he mean to capture him—?

Dean's mind ceased to wonder. He heard voices in the house, low, earnest voices. One of them was that of a girl, and suddenly her clear laughter thrilled Dean with a quickening of his pulse. He lay very still. He could hear well through the loose hay, and could even see much of the yard.

THE peasant ignored him completely and continued pitching hay. Presently the door of the house opened. Dean caught his breath as a rather fleshy German officer emerged from the house, his face flushed with pleasure. Dean strained his eyes for a glimpse of the girl, and then she stepped outside.

She was lovely, lovelier than Dean had pictured her in his mind, and yet despite her quick speech and bright smile, it was a sad, golden loveliness.

The next moment this impression was shattered with a shudder of revulsion. Dean saw the fleshy German turn, saw the girl allow him to kiss her. Dean's hands clenched until the nails bit into the flesh. He closed his eyes.

When he opened them, the German was disappearing around the corner of the house. Soon there was the sound of a motor car driving off down the road in the front of the house. Dean saw the girl run her arm across her eyes. She shuddered as though shaking off a filthy garment, and her slim hand clutched her throat until it seemed she must strangle herself. Dean could almost hear the curse she flung after the departing German.

So she didn't like it! She was a patriot, sacrificing herself to the cause of France. Dean realized the good she might accomplish and he marvelled at her ability to put on such an act.

He wanted to rush out and congratulate her, but just then the old peasant came near, put the fork into the pile of hay, and said flatly, not even looking down at Dean, "I shall push this pile of hay near the cellar door. You must drop into the cellar. There is a stairway leading up into the house, but you must not use it. I shall send Babet. Perhaps she can help you escape."

Dean moved with the pile of straw. His fingers found the edge of the steps leading down into the cellar from the outside. He slid down, crawled through the door

and closed it after him. For a moment he crouched in the darkness, waiting. Not until then did he realize how swift and efficient had been the old man's help. Surely these two were more than peasants.

In the darkness Dean's mind conjured up all sorts of fears. Then, suddenly, a door in the floor of the room above opened. The girl's trim legs appeared upon the steps. The door closed and she was coming toward him with a candle held before her.

CHAPTER FIVE

Weapons of the Brave

COMING out of the blackness, the girl looked ethereal. Dean watched her, fascinated. It was as though the horror of war had been a dream, and he had awakened up into a gorgeous reality.

"You—you're beautiful," he breathed as she stood before him. Her face was like a painting, delicately carved, and yet visibly strong.

"My beauty is a weapon to destroy the enemies of France. I warn you to beware of it. I shall know if you are a spy. Now tell me what you wish," she said calmly.

Dean wanted to ask her who she was, how she had come to be posing as a peasant girl; but he knew she would rebuff him, and so he told her simply how he had come to be there.

"The Hellions are a tough lot,—undisciplined, careless, and yet worth twice their number of ace flyers. They're worth saving, *mademoiselle*," he finished.

"So you are one of the devil's sons, *mon ami*. *Mon dieu*, but they are the great ones. All of France loves them."

"Then you must help me."

"How?"

"I must get to the drome near Spada. Von Koenig is planning some infernal trick to destroy the Hellions. They have discovered the hidden drome. I helped to

reveal the drome by accident and now I must prevent its destruction. Will you help me?"

"*Oui, monsieur capitaine*, but you cannot walk to Spada in the daylight. You must remain here. Tonight, perhaps I can find a way," the girl said definitely.

"What will you do?" Dean asked hopefully.

"Who knows?" she shrugged her shoulders. "In the meantime, rest. I shall send you food. There is wine about you—the wine I get the fat Boche officers drunk on."

With that she left. The old man came later and brought food, but when Dean tried to carry on a conversation and draw the old man out, he only shook his head and remained silent.

DEAN could only guess at the passing time. Once he dared to open the outside door a crack, and discovered that it was almost dark. Then, a short time later, without the warning sound of a motor car, Dean discovered that a caller had arrived. He heard the knock on the door. The girl's puzzled welcome indicated that the caller was a stranger.

Then came the clump of boots across the floor and a guttural, cocky voice. "Is not von Koenig here? They told me he might be—"

"He's not here tonight, *mon capitaine*. Perhaps he has business," the girl suggested, and her manner neither invited nor repelled advances.

"What business could keep him from one so lovely as you, *meine Freunde*? I would dare the wrath of the Kaiser himself for one kiss from your lips."

"My kisses are for brave men." The girl's voice was a dare.

"*Ja, ja!*" the German laughed.

"What do you want with von Koenig?" she asked.

"I do not want him. He wants me. I have never met him. I was a great aerial

dare-devil before the war and so was he, but we never ran across each other. I am Hauptmann Wolrath."

"Wolrath?" the girl echoed. "So you are the one who has killed so many of the dumb English with your wonderful tricks."

"*Ja*, that is right. Now even von Koenig, who is more a devil than a man, cannot operate without me. He sent me a message asking if I could still perform my favorite trick. When I replied that I could, he demanded my presence at once. Perhaps that proves I am brave enough for one of your kisses."

"That remains to be seen. Tell me what von Koenig plans?" she asked him intimately.

There was a moment of silence, and then the man's voice saying firmly, "*Nein!*"

"Then let me walk back to Spada with you," the girl pleaded.

"*Nein*," the man repeated.

"Perhaps you would like to remain here tonight. Von Koenig can wait for you until morning."

Dean felt a rush of hate at the girl's suggestion. The space of silence following her invitation filled him with dread, and he crawled up the stairs toward the door in the floor of the room above. The door didn't fit very well, and through a crack near the one broken hinge Dean could see part of the room. He could see the girl and the German seated at the table.

As though prompted by some unnamed fear, the German said, "I am afraid that cannot be."

"May I get you a glass of wine, then?" she asked.

Wolrath didn't answer. He sat at the table with his face buried in his clawlike hands. Wolrath was a cold-blooded killer who believed in giving his victims no quarter, and now the beauty of a girl, and the fear of von Koenig had defeated him.

Dean saw the girl fetch a bottle of wine from the cupboard, and approach the

slumped form of Wolrath from the rear. She held the bottle with a strange grip, as though it were a club.

As she drew close to the man, she said in a sympathetic voice, "You are so tired, *monsieur*, you should rest—"

At the same instant she raised the bottle and brought it down in a powerful blow directly upon the German's head! Wolrath made no outcry, no sound. He merely relaxed, rolled from the chair and lay on the floor with a little trickle of blood dripping off his right ear.

Dean felt a shock of dismay at the girl's action. He could remain concealed no longer. He heaved mightily, threw the cellar door back and leaped into the room. If the girl noticed his confused haste, she ignored it.

"I am giving you your chance, *monsieur Devil*—"

"You've killed him!" Dean hissed, noticing Wolrath's slack face.

"It was more than I had hoped for. He has killed many. He dies but once. Come, we must get him into the cellar. You heard him? He is a stranger. You shall have his clothes."

DEAN dressed as they talked. He could speak German very well. He had Wolrath's papers. The only danger was that he was ignorant of what Wolrath meant when he had mentioned his favorite trick. Dean must discover Wolrath's part in von Koenig's plans.

Even before Dean left, the old man came in and carried the dead German outside. The old peasant was powerful, his strength disguised by his shabby clothes. Wolrath's body must be disposed of before any Germans arrived at the house.

As Dean listened to the girl's last minute warnings and instructions regarding the drome at Spada and the officers stationed there, he marvelled at her strength, at her cleverness, and at her cold disregard of death.

"I thank you, *mademoiselle*," he said in parting.

"*Madame*, if you please, *mon ami*. I am Madame Beaucaire."

Dean gasped. "The countess?"

"And the count—my husband is burying the dog I killed."

Dean slipped away into the night feeling very small and unworthy. The thought of the slim girl facing dangers so bravely gave him courage.

He must succeed!

CHAPTER THREE

The Brink of Hell

IT WAS simple to find the drome near Spada. It was simpler still to reach von Koenig. In fact, he was rushed to the office as von Koenig had almost despaired of his coming. When he entered the room, von Koenig leaped up, his greasy face beaming.

"*Gott danke*, you have come! This war is great stuff for two old sky tumblers like us, *nicht wahr*, *Hauptmann*? I was afraid you couldn't be found, and I didn't dare trust any other man to help me complete my trick."

Dean detected no suspicion in von Koenig's manner. Why should von Koenig suspect him? He had presented Wolrath's papers. He must act carefully, must try to discover just how much Wolrath knew of von Koenig's secret plan.

"Perhaps we should drink a toast, *Excellenz*?" Dean suggested.

"Of course—a toast. *Heinrich*!" he cried to the man outside the door. "Bring *schnapps*—*schnell*!"

They drank the toast, and as the man came to remove the bottle, he whispered something to von Koenig which Dean couldn't hear.

Dean smiled, and said softly, "You are the clever one, *Excellenz*. Who would think of such a trick but you? Are you

quite certain there will be no mistake?"

Von Koenig frowned. "That depends upon you, Herr Wolrath. I have confidence in you. I saw you perform in a moving picture one time before the war. Now our planes are better. I shall have the old Taube loaded with nitro-glycerine. It will be dangerous. There must be no attack until the drome of the Hellions is reached. Then the ship will be crashed. . . ."

Dean tensed. "Perhaps I should pilot the Taube," he suggested, groping for information.

Koenig's fattish face turned crimson. Anger stormed in his eyes. "*Lieber Gott*, must you, too, try to stop me?" he snapped. "I refuse to change my plans. I insist upon piloting that ship myself. It's my revenge upon the hell-spawned fiends who have given me so much trouble."

For a moment Dean believed he hadn't heard right. He felt a cold shiver of disbelief run through his blood. Did von Koenig really mean to sacrifice his life in one mad explosion of hate? It was incredible.

"But, *Excellenz*, think of the danger," he warned, wishing to be convinced. "No man could live—"

"*Ja, ja*, you are right, *Herr Hauptmann*—no man could live in that explosion. I shall not be there at the time, if you are half as clever as they say. As I explained, you shall fly close above me at the final moment. A rope ladder shall hang from your two-place Albatross. It is the old trick we have both done so many times. I shall grasp the ladder and ascend to your ship."

"*Ja*, and the Taube shall crash without anyone on board. *Wunderschoen, Excellenz!*"

Von Koenig's lips drew back in a snarl. "*Nein, mein Freund*, you are mistaken. There shall be someone on board. I have a surprise for you. I am sending the man I have most hated during my entire life.

Come, I'll show you who the dog is."

DEAN followed him down some stairs to a stone room under the building. The room appeared to have been carved from solid rock, and water leaked in through fissures and stood in stagnant pools upon the floor. Von Koenig flicked on a flashlight, stabbed it toward a corner of the room.

Dean looked, and almost lost control of himself. In the corner, straining at his chains until the muscles stood out like cords upon his giant arms, crouched Swat Corvy! It was unbelievable! Corvy a prisoner! Chained, like a beast. Dean remembered his hate of the captain, his desire to be revenged upon him for the grim welcome he had received at the Bleneau Farm. Corvy was on the other side of the fence now. Dean wanted to pity him, but somehow even in his present position, Corvy's very spirit forbade pity.

Corvy couldn't see Dean, and if he could he might not have recognized him in the German uniform.

"And who is this?" Dean asked slowly, showing only curiosity.

Von Koenig's lips leered. "This is the famous Swat Corvy—leader of the Hellions. He is not so fierce now, nor so deadly. I wonder if he appreciates my sending him home."

"You mean that—that he is the one who must ride the Taube down?"

"*Ja!* He can die with those other fiends who loved him so much."

"How did you get him?"

"He got word of my plan. He came to destroy the ghost ship personally. But I had a decoy ship on the field, for I expected something like that. By the time he had discovered his mistake, my whole squadron swarmed down from above and drove him into the ground. We captured him while he was still unconscious."

"Congratulations, von Koenig. You are very brave—"

Von Koenig stiffened, not sure whether the remark was an insult or a compliment. In desperation he spat at Corvy and snarled, "Sweat, you dog. Tomorrow the vultures shall gorge upon the fragments of your flesh."

Corvy spoke, and his every word had the quality of a curse. "I'm not dead yet, von Koenig. You'll pay for every insult a thousand times."

Chained as he was, Corvy had the power to send fear darting across von Koenig's fat face.

"Come, let the dog howl. After tomorrow he shall be nothing but a bad memory. He cannot get free, and I have the keys here in my pocket," Koenig said slyly.

THAT night Dean slept little. Not that he had any fear of detection, for Wolrath was dead, and so far he had run into no one who had known the German ace. Von Koenig's mad flight was to take place before dawn. He had timed it so that they would reach the Bleneau Farm at the crack of dawn when there would be just enough light to see their target and the Hellions would still be on the ground.

Why von Koenig's warped mind had contrived such a theatrical attack, Dean couldn't imagine. Perhaps to feed his ego, something to brag about to his fellow officers. Certainly it was a stunt to grasp the imagination. With Corvy as a doomed passenger, von Koenig could feast his soul

upon a very royal brand of vengeance.

It was because of Corvy that Dean couldn't sleep. How could he save the captain? Or why should he? Corvy had despised him from the first. He had wanted to strike back at Corvy. All he had to do was look out for himself, and he would have a chance to escape. He would have a chance to destroy von Koenig and then make his way home in the Albatross. He would let von Koenig grasp the rope ladder, then he would cut him loose and let him fall.

There was no way to save Corvy without exposing himself to the danger of discovery.

When the hour came to rise, there was a knock upon Dean's door. He rose, dressed hurriedly. An orderly told him that Von Koenig wished to see him in his office at once. Not knowing for sure whether or not he had been exposed, Dean reported. As he entered the room he caught the gleam of fiendish satisfaction upon von Koenig's face. Then Dean's eyes shot to the figure against the wall, and he froze.

Swat Corvy stood there, his big head back, his eyes blazing. Corvy's feet were chained together and the shackles extended up to his arms, holding his hands down before him.

Dean gritted his teeth. If Corvy did recognize him, he gave no sign. Even to save himself, Corvy would not speak.



Dean knew that here was one time where Corvy was helpless, one trap from which his strength and cunning could not save him. Dean felt a cold shiver of dread. He had wanted revenge upon Corvy, but not like this. There was nothing he could do for the doomed captain except wreak vengeance upon von Koenig after the death ship had been flung earthward.

Dean tried not to think of the rest of the Hellions. He tried not to remember how Banta had risked his life to save him. He tried to forget that it was he who had caused von Koenig to find the hidden drome. But those things wouldn't die easily. The figure of Corvy, standing against the wall, was a ghost from the past, haunting Dean.

Von Koenig's gloating voice broke through Dean's grim thoughts. "Here is the arch-devil himself. We shall send him in a blanket of flame. You know what you must do, Wolrath?"

"*Ja, ja, Excellenz.* It shall be a glorious day for the wings of *Deutschland.*"

"Six Fokkers are ready to accompany us, Wolrath. They will precede us to the Bleneau Farm to make sure the Hellions are not prepared to destroy us. It's a ticklish business, therefore more to my liking. I remember, once, there was a peculiar accident while I performed a trick similar to the one we are planning. The rope ladder fouled the controls of the ship below me and only by cutting the ladder loose could I extricate myself. We must be prepared for that."

"But how, von Koenig?"

"In the event your rope ladder fouls the Taube, you must cut it loose and I shall be forced to land the Taube gently behind the German lines. Here—here is a knife for you to have handy, *Herr Hauptmann.*"

"*Danke,*" Dean said, trying to conceal his delight at this new possibility which Koenig had unknowingly put in his path. For the moment he even forgot Corvy,

slouched against the wall. Had he looked, he might have seen the ashen pallor creeping into Corvy's face. He might have discovered the clotted blood at the back of Corvy's head. Corvy had been wounded, but he had refused treatment.

Dean knew nothing of this, thinking of his own chances for escape. He reached for the knife that von Koenig held out. Suddenly, von Koenig recoiled! His lips drew off his teeth, and his breath hissed like the rattle of a snake.

"The hand—*lieber Gott*, I've been a fool! There is no scar upon your hand! You are not Wolrath—"

FIFTEEN minutes later three figures crept through the damp fog swirling in off the Meuse. Two of those figures were in German uniform, the third in the dishevelled, ragged uniform of a Yank. Barry Dean helped to support the sagging figure with the shackled hands and feet. An officer loomed out of the gray darkness and stopped them.

"The American devil is not so brave now, *nicht wahr?* What do you intend to do, Hauptmann Wolrath?"

Dean looked at the figure of von Koenig on the other side of the sagging figure, and replied, "The operation will proceed as planned. What matter it if this Yank has lost consciousness? He will be dead very soon. Are the Fokkers prepared?"

"*Ja*, they are ready. The Taube is warmed up, *mein Herr*. The Albatross likewise. I would to God I could witness this performance."

Dean's teeth flashed in a smile. "Who knows? Perhaps God may grant your wish, *Herr Leutnant.*"

Barry Dean and von Koenig dragged their burden past the guard. They approached the line of ships. Men were swarming over the ships. Barry Dean watched the figure of von Koenig apprehensively. Could he make it? It was almost too much to ask.

Then they were at the ships. The damp fog made ghosts out of the men moving under the bluish lights. Another lieutenant approached and saluted von Koenig.

"Everything is in readiness, *Excellenz*. Gott mitt uns! Heil der Vaterland!"

Von Koenig nodded without reply.

Barry Dean snapped, "I will help strap the prisoner into the Taube. He must be fastened securely. It would be a simple thing for him to detonate the nitro. *Macht schnell!*"

He shouldered the mechanics aside. With the aid of von Koenig he managed to get the great, limp form into the rear bucket of the ship. The shackles clanked. The safety belt drew taut. Von Koenig climbed wearily into the front bucket of the Taube.

"I'll give the signal," Dean told the mechanics. "The Fokkers will not rise until we have reached at least a thousand feet. We must risk no collision with the Taube in the darkness."

"*Ganz gut, mein Herr.*" The man saluted.

Dean walked stiffly to the Albatross. He inspected the rope ladder to make sure it was all right. Then he climbed into the front bucket of the big ship, gunned the engine. He signalled the chocks out, boomed the ship down the runway, gave the engine its head and screamed up into the sky.

He jerked a look back. The Taube was swarming up in his backwash. Dean climbed in a tight circle, slowing enough so the Taube could reach a position below him. He was at a thousand feet. Now was the time!

Dean blipped his engine in a signal. He saw the Taube turn slowly, for it was a clumsy ship. Then, instead of heading south and west toward the Bleneau Farm near St. Dizier, the two ships circled back across the drome at Spada!

There was no time for delay. Dean

knew just what he must do. He headed the Albatross down. The Taube was below him. They were heading straight for the hangars and the ships on the line. A figure crawled from the front pit of the Taube. It stood upon the bucket seat, steadying itself against the top wing.

Dean swept close. The ladder grazed the tail of the Taube, brushed forward. Lean hands groped for the rungs. Then the Albatross lurched as the man leaped clear from below. The Taube nosed down, heading straight for the huddle of buildings barely visible under the blue lights!

Dean couldn't see that the maneuver had been a moment too late. He could only thank God that it was done—that the Taube with its human freight and its load of nitro was hurtling down upon the Germans who had hoped to destroy the Hellions. He couldn't see that the Fokkers were already circling up, aware that something had gone wrong.

THE next moment the very sky shuddered as the drome at Spada was blasted into ruins. Dean fought the Albatross around, headed for home with the lean figure clawing its perilous way up the rope ladder. He looked back. The lean figure was having a hard time of it. It was Swat Corvy, and weakened as he had been by wounds and torture, even his great strength was failing.

Dean prayed. He must not fail now. He remembered the bloody knife which he had plunged into von Koenig's chest. Yes, he had grasped the knife at the moment when von Koenig had discovered him to be an impostor. He had suddenly realized that he must save Swat Corvy, that Corvy was worth a dozen ordinary men. It had been a simple matter for him to remove the shackles from Corvy with the key from the German's pocket. Corvy, dressed in Koenig's uniform, had easily passed for the German in the darkness about the drome. It was von Koenig who had gone

down with the explosive-loaded ship.

But now another serious threat presented itself. Corvy was having a hard time getting up into the Albatross. The Fokkers attacked him while he still hung helpless upon the rope ladder. Dean screamed at Corvy to hurry, but Corvy couldn't hear him.

Dean fed soup to the engine, but the Albatross had no chance against the Fokkers. The darkness helped, but even that couldn't conceal Corvy's lean body dangling below the ship. Dean cursed, felt his heart tighten as the bullets snarled about Swat Corvy. Corvy was fighting his way up as Dean tried to dodge the slashing Fokkers.

Corvy was almost there when a Fokker loomed ahead of them. Dean kept his eyes on the rings, snapped the trips, poured a torrent of cupro into the black shape. The black shape smoked, glowed, burst into flame!

But there were five more like it, and those five were riddling the Albatross with bullets. Dean looked around and saw Corvy's bloody hand groping for the edge of the cowl. Dean braced the stick between his knees, leaned far back, and caught the hand. He dragged with all his might, and managed to help Corvy into the rear pit, where he fell limp upon the floor.

Then Dean headed for St. Dizier as fast as he could go. It was a hopeless race. The Fokkers were intent upon revenge. Bullets smashed through his wings, whined through his cockpit, gnawed chunks out of the cowl.

The Albatross began to buck wildly, swerve off one way and then the other. Dean could feel the bullets clawing for his back. He heard the deadly chatter of guns. He looked back. Corvy, come back from the dead, was on his knees swinging the scarf-ring Spandaus as only he could.

Even that wasn't enough. A torrent of

lead silenced those guns. Dean didn't dare turn to give fight. He must fly on, and hope for a miracle. The roar of the engines increased. The snarl of the Mercedes was like the fury of a thousand lions. But Dean could hear the higher whine of Hissos!

Out of the dawn screamed the ragged ships of the Hellions, Banta leading them!

The fight was short after that. Dean flew back to the Bleneau Farm in the Albatross, and before his eyes paraded a vision of glory: Swat Corvy, unconquerable; Madame Beucaire sacrificing herself that France might live; Banta leading the Hellions into battle. Dean was glad he was alive. Life was so full. There would always be time to die.

BACK at the Bleneau Farm Banta told Dean how Grenoble had regained consciousness but a few hours before, and had told of von Koenig's secret ship at Spada. Grenoble had told Corvy of the ship the day he had returned to the farm, just before he had collapsed. Corvy had gone out to face the danger alone and had been trapped by von Koenig.

Barry Dean operated upon Corvy in the barn which was used for an infirmary. He removed the bullets with deft, sure fingers. He had come to learn that life is a matter of chance and that skill and fear are poor partners. He bandaged Corvy's wounds, and gave him some brandy to bring him to.

Corvy grinned through his bandages. "I guess I was a little hard on you, Doctor, that first day. I—I, well, dammit, I've got a soft spot for the Hellions, and believed you had brought us a jinx when we were bombed. You're a good man with a ship, Doctor, but it's far better to save life than take it. Why don't you stick on here as our medico?"

Dean said, "I'd like that fine, Swat."

He smiled. Doctor Dean was at last where he belonged.

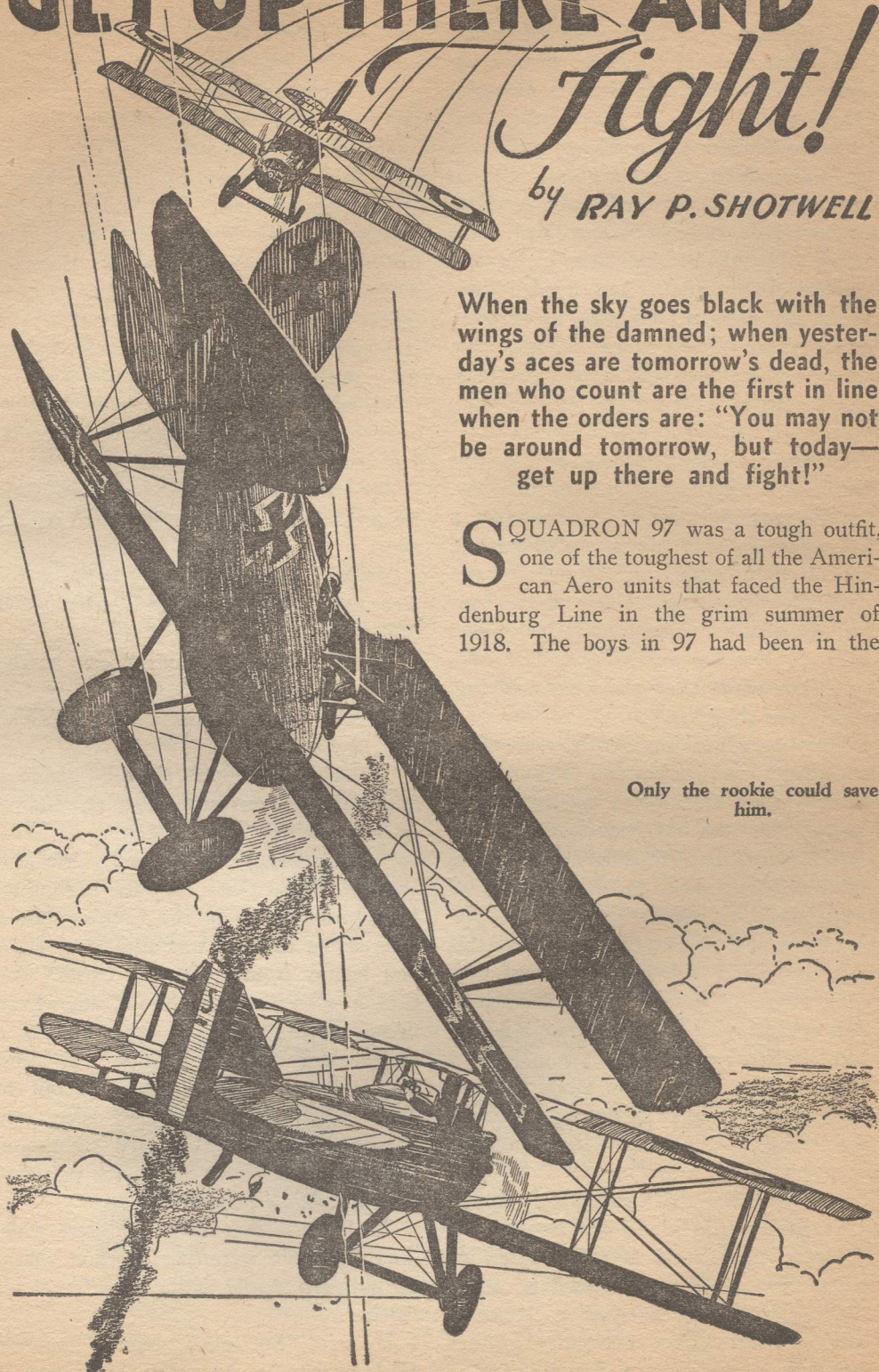
GET UP THERE AND *Fight!*

by RAY P. SHOTWELL

When the sky goes black with the wings of the damned; when yesterday's aces are tomorrow's dead, the men who count are the first in line when the orders are: "You may not be around tomorrow, but today—get up there and fight!"

SQUADRON 97 was a tough outfit, one of the toughest of all the American Aero units that faced the Hindenburg Line in the grim summer of 1918. The boys in 97 had been in the

Only the rookie could save him.



tussle from the very beginning. They had been catapulted into France, thrown up against the pick of the German Imperial Air Force.

In the beginning, a good many of them had died. Many had been sent back to the States with shattered limbs, numbed brains. But those who remained were tough. They had to be. They had drunk deeply of war, and it had flooded their veins and their nerves with its horrible intoxication. They were vicious men, fighting men. They made a compact, ferocious unit, and they drank hard, fought hard, died hard.

Seven of them were gathered at the bar in late afternoon of a hot June day. In the morning they had encountered a strong group of Fokkers, and there had been a tight battle, with 97 coming out of it slightly on top. A few of the boys had gone down. Claney and Darbin and O'Doul. Nothing was being said about it now, but while the men were drinking, they were thinking.

They were drinking silently, remembering Claney and Darbin and O'Doul. But actually these three were but symbols of many more who had been lost in recent weeks. Squadron 97 had been getting jobs thick and fast. They had been killing off many Germans. And they had been losing many of their own men. Although this fighting was in their blood, although they gloried in the hiss of lead and crash of slug against wing and the heat of a bullet-torn sky, they were beginning to feel the strain. They were remembering their dead, and they were beginning to resent the persistent bounce of orders from headquarters, orders to get up there and fight.

The grapevine that twisted from squadron to squadron along the line of the Western Front told 97 that other air units were not being pressed so hard. Other squadrons were given a chance to breathe after a hot encounter. Other squadrons were given a chance to patch

up their losses. But 97 was like a race horse that had won many races, had gained fame, and now was being used to the limit—and beyond the limit.

McGern came into the bar. He was a short, wide man, every bit of him as tough as his lantern jaw. His hair was an orange hue and his eyes cold grey. He had one of the highest victory records along the Western Front. He had a reputation as a man who liked trouble; he had spent quite a good deal of time in the guardhouse.

He looked at the men who were leaning over the bar and said, "Stall your drinks. I got something to tell you guys."

They turned and looked at him, their features almost as grim and hard as his own.

McGern said, "We're getting a replacement for Claney, Darbin and O'Doul."

"Three new guys, huh?" one of the flyers said.

"Yeah, three—minus two," McGern said.

"Whaddyuh talkin' about?" another flyer said. "You mean, they're sending us only one new man?"

"That's what I mean," McGern growled. "And that's only the beginning. I happened to be in the C.O.'s office a little while ago. I was fittin' myself a new helmet from the supply closet. The C.O. gets on the phone and I hear what's taking place. You know what kind of a replacement we're getting? A West Point smoothie who gets it all out of books. Uniform all pressed nice, you know, and hair combed just right, and table manners. And—here's the payoff—*his old man's a general!*"

The eyes of the other men were wide, but McGern's were narrow and mean. He grinned nastily at the surprise of his listeners.

He said, "So we're gonna be honored. We're gonna be playmates for the son of

a general. We ain't got enough trouble as it is. Now we gotta teach one of these good little boys how to fly an' fight." His voice rasped and grew louder. "We lose three good men when we can't afford to lose a single one, and what do they send us? I'm askin' you a sensible question—what do they send us? I'll bet—"

"All right, McGern, that's enough."

IT WAS the C.O., Major Laguirre, coming in through a side door. He was built like McGern; he wasn't as loud, but he was just as tough, and everyone knew it.

Knowing that Laguirre had heard his remarks, McGern turned to the C.O. and said, "I'll ask you, sir. Do we have a good reason to complain?"

"Soldiers never have a good reason to complain," Laguirre said.

"Look at this, sir. We lose three grade-A flyers. What are they sending us? A rookie. A know-nothing. A goodie from West Point. A general's son."

"How do you know he's a general's son?" Laguirre said quietly.

"I heard what you was sayin' while I was in the supply closet. I—"

"You've got big ears, McGern. Maybe that's what always gets you into trouble."

The flyer's wind-ravaged face was red.

He said, "Maybe you're askin' for a showdown, sir."

Laguirre measured his man. McGern

had given him a lot of trouble from the very beginning. There had even been a matter of a five-minute fist fight in the squadron office two days after Laguirre had been given command of 97. On that occasion McGern had tripped backward over a chair and banged his head against the leg of a table and gone out cold. And then he had gone to the guardhouse for a few days. Laguirre could have court-martialed him, but the major didn't do things that way. The incident was forgotten. McGern stepped into trouble now and then, and had lost privileges and gone to the guardhouse when he became downright mean. But there had never been another fistic clash.

Now Laguirre saw it coming. He saw it not only in the eyes of Lieutenant McGern. He saw it in the eyes of the men who were lined along the bar. And he reasoned that if it had to come, it might as well come now.

He said, "All right, McGern, maybe I am asking for a showdown. What's on your mind?"

"Plenty," McGern said. "Headquarters is takin' advantage of us, and you know it. They're not spreadin' the jobs around. They're givin' us too much work. We can handle so much and no more."

"You're not getting soft, are you, McGern?"

"Don't hand me that mush. We're the toughest outfit on the front, and I'm the

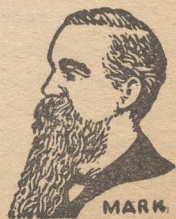
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toughest guy in 97. You can save pep-talks for the rookies. But when you argue with me, you argue straight."

"Maybe you're forgetting that I'm your superior officer," Laguirre said.

"No, I'm not forgetting it," McGern came back at him. "You're the guy who seems to be doing all the forgetting around here. Forgetting that you've got the responsibility of looking after your men, seeing that they aren't given more jobs than they can stand. But maybe the good record of 97 has gone to your head, Laguirre. Maybe you're figurin' on a promotion."

"You'll have to take that back," the C.O. said, his face pale.

"I'll take it back when you prove that I'm wrong," McGern said. "When you tell headquarters to let up on us, when you tell them to send us the right kind of replacements. I'll take it back then, and I'll be glad to."

"You'll take it back now," Laguirre said.

"You'll go to hell," McGern said. He smiled, and folded his arms across his big chest, waiting for the major to hit him.

Laguirre made the fist, and drew it back. Then he let it fall. He looked at the men, and then at McGern. If he had seen nothing more than downright meanness and arrogance on the faces of these men, he would have used his fist, and not only on McGern. That was the healthy way of stifling trouble. But there was more than meanness and arrogance. There was bitterness, the spark of rebellion. It was the first time Laguirre had ever seen it in the eyes of his flyers. And it tore at him, made a heaviness come to his throat. Without another word he turned, walked to the door and went out.

For almost half a minute there was hollow quiet.

Then one of the flyers said, "Well, whaddy know about that?"

"Here's what I know," McGern said.

"He sees that we're right. He sees that we really got somethin' to complain about. Now maybe he'll go to bat for us. Maybe he'll ask for a decent set of replacements, and—"

THE door opened again. But this time it was not Laguirre who entered the canteen bar. It was someone whom the men had never seen before, a chap about twenty-five, lean, well-built, clean-cut. His uniform was clean and pressed faultlessly; hair trimmed expertly; boots polished, gloves in one hand and new trenchcoat neatly folded across a forearm. But the cleanest thing about him were his eyes.

McGern looked up to heaven and shook his head hopelessly.

Then he said, "This is it. This is the replacement for Claney, Darbin and O'Doul."

The newcomer said, "My name is Porter." He put his hand out toward McGern.

McGern didn't take it.

He looked Porter up and down. He said, "You went to West Point, and they taught you to fly down in Texas. They sent you over here and now you're gonna win the war for the U.S.A. Is that right?"

"The first part is," Porter said. He did not smile. "We won't discuss my future plans, but since you know so much about me already, you probably also know that my father is General Porter."

"Yeah, I know that," McGern said, "and I'm wonderin' why he fixed it for you to be sent here. The proper thing to do would be to give you a desk job at his headquarters, where you won't get hurt, and—"

A fist came up against McGern's jaw, and he stepped back. But he didn't go down. It was a fairly hard punch, and it might have felled another man. To McGern it wasn't much. He braced himself against a table, saw Porter coming toward

him, eyes glaring and wild. He laughed at the newcomer, and he hefted a right, then sunk a left in Porter's ribs. The younger man doubled up, tried to throw up a guard. McGern slashed him with a left hook, then sent him to the floor with a right that banged against his jaw. Porter was trying to get up. McGern helped him, raising him by the collar. Then McGern clipped him with a short right to the jaw and knocked him unconscious.

McGern turned to the men at the bar and said, "There's your replacement. There's the tough guy who is gonna fill in for Claney, Darbin and O'Doul. There's West Point for you. I'm askin' you guys—what's this war comin' to?"

AT THREE in the morning McGern was up and out of bed, buttoning on his flying jacket. Then he was in a Spad and, with six others, he was out on early morning patrol. A mile or so past Lamorville they ran into a flock of Fokkers, and there was a breakfast party. The Boche outfit lost five, and the rest ran home.

McGern and four others came back to 97.

They made their report. Major Laguirre winced slightly as McGern told how the two other men had gone down in flames. The C.O. walked back and forth a few times, then dismissed the men. But he touched McGern's sleeve, beckoned him back into the office.

"I see that you've introduced yourself to Porter already," the C.O. said.

"What's he been doin', cryin' on your shoulder?"

"He hasn't said a word to me," Laguirre said. "He reported to my office last night, and I told him to go over to the bar and shake hands with the other flyers. When he came back to my office, I took one look at his face and knew exactly what had happened."

The C.O.'s voice had been quiet, but now it flared out and he stepped close to

McGern and said, "Now listen to me, you brainless ape. Since you're so interested in this new man, I'm going to appoint you as his personal guardian. You're going to take him up this afternoon and show him the ropes. And you're going to keep him away from enemy planes. You want a good replacement for the men we've lost—all right, you'll have to do something about it. You'll have to make a winning fighter out of Porter. You'll have to teach him everything you know!"

"Now wait a minute, Major! That's not fair. That's not—"

"That's an order!" Laguirre roared. "Now get out of here before I throw the desk at your head!"

Fuming, McGern walked out of the office. He went directly to the bar. He downed three cognacs. A few flyers were near, tried to draw him into their conversation. He wanted no part of it. He had another cognac. Then his anger faded and his eyes were narrow as he laid plans. Laguirre had told him to keep Porter away from enemy planes. If he disobeyed the order, he was liable for a court-martial. But suppose Porter took the initiative? Suppose Porter led the way to the front lines? Suppose Porter engaged the enemy and was shot down? Maybe it would prove to headquarters that Squadron 97 needed adequate replacements.

Of course, it would be a pity for young Porter, and the general would take it hard, no doubt. But the general would see to it that the fighting brothers of his dead son were given a square deal.

McGern had another drink. Then, as he walked from the canteen bar, he was smiling.

He went to his hutment to get some sleep. And as the comfort of relaxation took possession of him, he was thinking of all the good men, the tough guys who had flown for 97, and who were dead now. They might be alive yet, if they hadn't been forced to a chain of seemingly end-

less combat, calling for efforts far beyond human endurance. Well, he would prevent any more of that. Young Porter would die. But the other fellows in 97, the tough ones, would get a break that they had long been needing.

McGERN woke up in three hours and went to the mess hall. When he came out, he saw Porter walking across the tarmac, headed toward a Spad. He hurried up to the young flyer, grabbed at his shoulder. Porter turned and looked at him, unsmiling. Porter's jaw was slightly swollen on the left side.

"I'm sorry about what happened last night," McGern said. "I really am, kid. I had a little too much liquor in me and I was just aching for some kind of trouble. Whaddya say we forget about it?"

He put out his hand. Porter smiled and took it.

Then McGern said, "Have you talked to the C.O. this morning?"

"Yes, I saw him about an hour ago," Porter said. "He told me you were going to take me up for a lesson in combat technique. He said we weren't going to tackle any enemy planes. Just a practice session, sort of."

"Well, I just came from his office," McGern said, "and I don't know how this news is going to appeal to you, kid, but he's changed his mind about the practice angle. Told me to take you right out over the front lines, and if we run into any Boche, to talk turkey with them."

Porter's eyes narrowed. "The major told you that?"

"Sure," McGern said. "Like I said, I just came from his office." He didn't realize it, but he was lowering his eyes before Porter's direct, steady gaze.

Then he was saying, "And besides, he told me to let you lead the way out there. You know the maps, don't you?"

"Yes, I know the maps," Porter said. His voice was as steady as his gaze—and

just as icy. "When do we start?" he said.

McGern glanced at his watch. He shrugged. "Now's a good time," he said. "If we do run into any Boche, we won't have much trouble. About this time of day the only fish in the pond are balloons and observation planes and a few routine patrols here and there. Don't worry about it, kid."

"I'm not worrying," Porter said.

Again McGern took his eyes from Porter's steady, drilling gaze. Then he said, "You lead the way out there, see. As soon as we sight Boche, you let me get out in front. If it's a single plane, let me take him alone. And watch what I do. Watch carefully. If there are two planes, let me draw them under, and then follow me down on the attack. Clear?"

"I get it," Porter said.

"That's fine," McGern said. "You'll learn a lot out there today, kid."

"I've learned a lot already," Porter said.

And once more McGern looked into those steady blue eyes. And once more he had to look away.

For a few seconds he doubted the advisability of what he was going to do. Then he braced himself.

Thinking of Claney, Darbin, O'Doul, and others like them, he walked grimly toward his Spad. Why should he worry about Porter? What did Porter mean to him, to the other guys in 97? The general's son was an outsider. Porter might die out there today, but because of that a lot of other men in 97 would live. And they were far more valuable to the cause of the Allies than was this rookie.

The plan couldn't go wrong. If Laguirre started to ask questions and make a lot of noise, McGern would calmly reply that young Porter had defied his orders, had roared out toward the front, had ignored his signals to come back.

Hissos were banging away now, and as he warmed up his motor, McGern was

looking back toward the squadron office, hoping that Major Laguirre would not be coming out now, to check on final instructions. He turned his head to the side and saw Porter waiting for his go-away order. He smiled at the younger pilot, and then he waved toward the Western Front.

The two Spads leaped out across the tarmac, and sped into sky.

FOLLOWING McGern's instructions, Porter led the way. He shot up to 4,500 feet and moved in a straight line toward the front. Far ahead the sky was dotted with smoke and fire. Down beneath, in the fields and hills to the east of Lamorville, the Americans were advancing against a wall of iron-grey uniforms and machine guns and gas.

McGern was about sixty yards behind Porter, and slightly above him. He was looking down at the battlefield that now came nearer. He was used to the sight—the patchwork of field and hill, the landmarks that looked so small from up here, and yet represented areas of massive importance.

Then McGern pulled his eyes away from the ground, and he was peering through sky. His flight-trained eyes could see what Porter's could not.

His eyes could see German planes.

Five of them—five Albatrosses. They had about 7,000 feet, and they were not too far away. They had been using a wide formation, and now they were tightening up, forming an arrowhead, and working for more elevation. McGern knew that they had seen him and Porter, and they were going to add more height, try to hide up there, and then come roaring down in a surprise lunge that would quickly dispose of the two Spads.

Something hammered at McGern. It wasn't fear, for he was a man who did not understand fear. But he wanted to go home; he wanted to take Porter away

from this. If he were alone, he would have faced them willingly. Now, flying behind one who had never before tasted combat in the air, who knew none of the formulas, none of the tricks, he realized the evil of what he was doing to Porter. His plans faded before the looming shadow of conscience. And frantically he throttled, moved ahead fast, and came down to Porter's altitude. He caught the glance of the other flyer, then he signalled, waving him back toward home.

Porter understood that signal. But he did not respond to it. Instead, he smiled, and shook his head. He pointed up into the sky, and his smile became a wild grin. He was aiming his Spad up there. He had seen the Albatrosses—and he was only too eager to deal with them.

"The kid's out of his mind," McGern muttered, and wondered what he could do about it. There was nothing he could do. Nothing except go up there with young Porter and try to keep the Boche from filling the kid with Spandau slugs.

The two Spads continued up. And now the pilots of the five Albatrosses realized that there would be no surprise element. They would have to depend on their numerical superiority and upon their height advantage. They had about a thousand feet now, and the range was good. They tightened their arrowhead and came down, screeching like hunger-mad buzzards.

McGern rolled out, wondering what Porter was doing. As he dived, he glanced over to his left, saw that Porter was being stabbed with Boche lead. Then the rookie was twisting out of it, diving into a safe area.

"Good boy," McGern breathed. He had to look out for himself now. He worked into a whizzing loop, came up and back beyond the three Albatrosses which had been trying to force him into a death spot. He dived hard over on his left wing, and then he had Albatrosses in

front of his Lewis guns. He grabbed the trigger handles, and his teeth were clenched tightly as they always were when he ran in for the kill. He threaded a line of fire up the back of an Albatross, and cut it only when he saw a figure sag in the cockpit of the German plane.

Then he turned hard again, and glanced over to his left to see how Porter was making out.

The kid was doing all right!

TWO Albatrosses had been bothering the Spad from the rear and the right side. Porter had let them come in, and then he had doubled back on his come-down line. He had looped, then dragged himself out of the loop, jumping fast onto the neck of the nearest Albatross. His guns were spitting fire, and the German plane was wobbling, then igniting and falling.

"That kid can fly—and fight," McGern muttered. He tried to see how Porter would trade with the other Albatross. But once again he had his own troubles. Two Boche were coming down on him, pitching lead into him. He rolled out.

He dived, twisted into a loop that crossed up the two Germans and made them turn and zoom up for another try. But he wasn't going to give them the opportunity. His Hisso shrieked as he took the Spad up in a vicious climb, and then he was turning, twisting, coming down again to face the climbing ships head-on. His guns chattered, and one of the Albatrosses couldn't take it. Flame spurted from the motor, along the wings, and down through the fuselage. The other German was playing it smart, however, turning away fast, faking on a getaway dive, then looping back with enough speed and finesse to completely gain the upper hand on McGern.

The American knew that he was up against a grade-A *Staffel* flyer. He rolled out, saw that the German was following.

He dived, tried a loop. The German forced him out of it with a burst of bullets through the fuselage. The Albatross was coming closer. It was relentless. He was in an awful spot now.

He heard Spandau chatter, and he could sense the bullets nearing the cockpit of his ship.

Then suddenly the Spandau noise stopped.

Why? The German practically had him cornered. He was waiting for the sound of Spandaus, and then he heard gun chatter, but not from Spandaus. He twisted in his cockpit, stared to the left side, saw the Albatross diving away—from Porter's Spad! The rookie had finished off his own opponent, and had come over to engage the plane that was nailing McGern.

And Porter had the Albatross now—was on its tail, pitching bullets into the cockpit.

The German plane turned over on its side and went into a spin.

McGern's mouth was open, surprise in his eyes. He tried to get the expression off his face when Porter came up and flew alongside of him. But somehow he could not.

Porter was grinning at him now, waving him toward home, then taking the lead himself.

McGern followed, a bewildered and dismayed veteran, with a grinning youngster prancing in front of him.

WHEN he climbed out of his cockpit, Porter was waiting for him. The rookie was no longer grinning at McGern.

Porter said, "Take off your jacket and then put up your fists. We'll have it out right now."

"What in the—"

"Look, McGern, I'm calling you a skunk. You took me up there today in an effort to get rid of me. You told me that

Laguirre gave orders to engage the enemy. That was a downright lie, and I knew it, because Laguirre's been away from his office all day. Immediately after he spoke to me this morning he left for a special staff meeting in Troyon. He's been trying to get invited to one of those meetings for a long time. He's been trying to get the higher-ups to give this squadron an easier schedule. He told me all about it, and he told me all about you, and about the other men in this outfit.

He said that all of you were tough, and drank too much, but that beneath it you were okay; you were straight. I guess I found out differently."

"I guess you did, kid," McGern said. "I was willing to sacrifice you so that 97 would have things easier in the future. But when I saw those five Boche, I knew what a rotten scheme it was. That was when I waved you back. But you wouldn't listen."

Then Porter grinned. "Why should I?" he said. "I pulled every trick in the books trying to get to 97. I'd heard a lot about this outfit, and I promised myself that I was going to fly with you guys. And you think I'd pass up my first chance to

tangle with Boche? Regardless of what your plans were, McGern, I was only too happy to jump into action. And now I'm itching for more."

McGern said, "And I thought that Claney, Darbin and O'Doul weren't getting a good replacement."

He was walking toward the bar. He wanted a drink—bad. Porter walked by his side.

Porter said, "You mean—you'll take me in as one of the guys?"

McGern growled, "Now what do you think?"

Then he grinned and put his hand out and Porter took it.

"Wait'll the old man hears about this," Porter said.

"Huh?"

"Well, sure. How'd you think I managed to get to Squadron 97? After everything else failed, I kept pestering my dad until he used his influence to get me in. But he said he'd pull me right out again if I didn't show any stuff."

"He won't pull you out. Not if I got anything to say about it, he won't." McGern's eyes were tough and mean, and already he was looking for more trouble—any kind.

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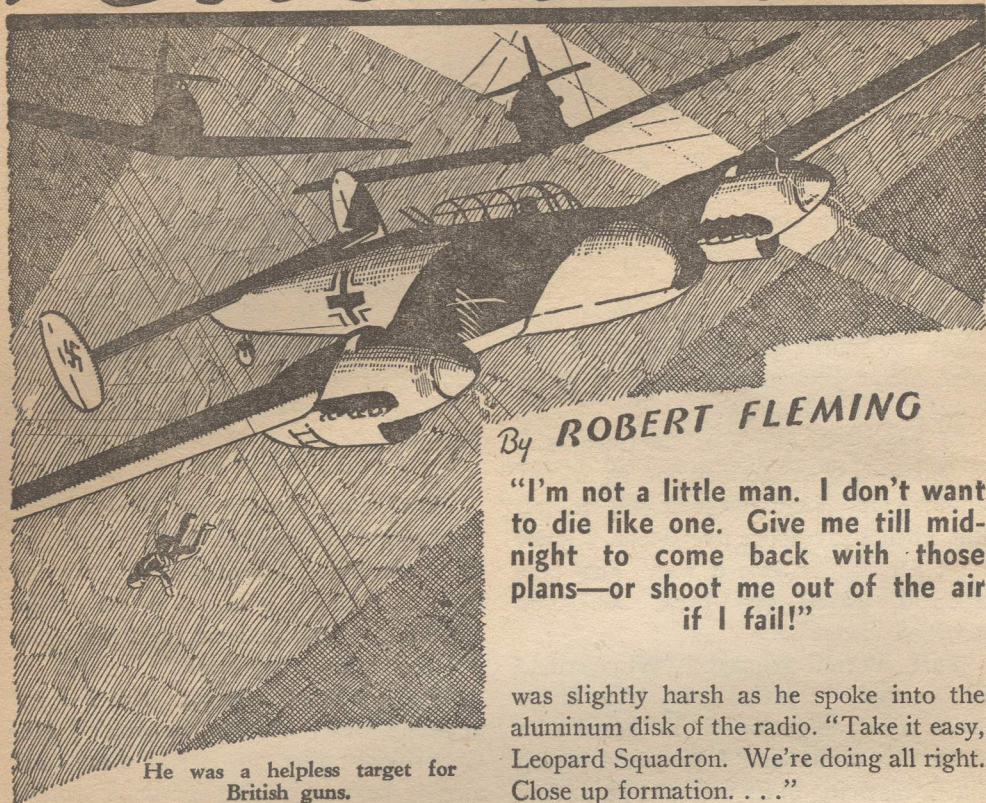
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THUNDER OVER THE *Channel*



He was a helpless target for British guns.

By **ROBERT FLEMING**

"I'm not a little man. I don't want to die like one. Give me till midnight to come back with those plans—or shoot me out of the air if I fail!"

was slightly harsh as he spoke into the aluminum disk of the radio. "Take it easy, Leopard Squadron. We're doing all right. Close up formation. . . ."

He stopped abruptly as a transmitter whined, and the voice of the ground controller broke in. "Halloh, Leopard leader! Hallock calling. Hallock calling Leopard leader. Come in. Are you receiving me?"

Kawalski, his eyes ranging the darkening sky, said, "Hello, Hallock. Leopard leader answering. Receiving you loud and clear. Loud and clear. Leopard leader over to Hallock. Over."

Hallock's voice came back over the radio a second later. "All Leopard patrol up over Dover. Fifteen thousand. Enemy bombers. Fighter craft below. Bombers above. Heading south. . . ."

Kawalski listened with only half his mind. He still had nine of his Spitfire

DEATH struck at dusk above the ghostly moors of England and ushered two Leopard Squadron pilots into the unknown fastness of the Gloryland.

The hub cannons from three green and black Messerschmitts had sent explosive shells squarely into Spitfire cockpits. There was no chance for the pilots to bail out. There was only sudden flame, and disintegration. Like flaring beacons, the two fighter planes sagged down through the dusk and into the restless waters of the Channel.

Leopard leader, Dave Kawalski, looked behind and saw that the second and third sections were flying raggedly. His voice

fighters behind him. The formation was good now, considering.

He spoke again into the aluminum disk to his war pilots. "Attention, Leopard Squadron. We're going up. Fifteen thousand. Out over the Channel. All Leopard aircraft full throttle. Full throttle!"

He pushed in the emergency throttle. The Rolls-Royce Merlin power plant responded. With almost rocket speed the Spitfire climbed for altitude. No need to tell his fellow Yanks what was expected of them. They had been firmly grounded in the British system of air tactics. They weren't as experienced as the flyers in older squadrons, but they were pilots of skill and courage. Given half a chance, they'd come through.

The eyes of Flight Lieutenant Dave Kawalski were grave with responsibility. So much depended on him when decisions required split-second timing. The Messerschmitts below had been fighting craft. He would have preferred to battle it out with them, make a clean job of it. But orders had forbidden this except under extraordinary circumstances.

Stop all bombers! That was the order for the day. Bombers could and would inflict terrific damage on the great industrial plants in the Midlands if they succeeded in breaking through the outer defenses.

Looking below in the murk of coming night, Dave could see a cloud of Messerschmitts swarming inland. His heart turned over. What kind of strategy was this? Here he was with nine powerful, fast ships capable of blasting a great many enemy planes from the air, and all he could do was to fly above them.

Pilot Jimmy Burke, flying the starboard side in Kawalski's own section, must have thought the same thing for he was frantically pointing below.

"Sorry," spoke the Leopard leader into the aluminum disk that connected him by

radio with every pilot in his flight. "Bigger game elsewhere."

Up through the thundering dark bored the Spitfires. At fifteen thousand they levelled off and flew in a wide circle above the Channel. Dave kept his eyes toward France. But there was nothing to be seen. No sign of anything.

The back of his neck tingled as the transmitter whined. New orders from the ground controller. "Proceed to twenty thousand feet."

While the ship climbed, Dave mechanically reached forward and slipped the guard off the firing button that controlled the eight Brownings mounted in the forward edge of the wings. The button was painted red. He turned its safety ring from *Safe* to the position of *Fire*. Still deliberate in every movement, he switched on the electric gun sight. A beam of orange light formed an image of a gun sight on the center of the glass windshield.

Having done this, he spoke a single word to his pilots. "Oxygen."

He turned on a valve set in the instrument panel. Oxygen poured through a hose connected to the mask covering his nose and mouth. These things attended to, he again examined the sky into which his squadron was hurtling. At twenty thousand he levelled off again to await further instructions. If he sighted the bombers he'd be entirely on his own.

No bombers, however, appeared. Ten minutes passed. Fifteen. A half-hour. It was now completely dark and impossible to see. Had the spotters at listening posts mistaken the Messerschmitts for Dorniers, Heinkels or Junkers? Or had the flight of bombers changed its course? No answer was forthcoming. There was nothing he could do but remain at a twenty-thousand-foot level and wait for orders.

They came almost as the thought crossed his mind. "Halloh, Leopard

leader. Hallock calling. Hallock calling Leopard leader. Are you receiving me?"

"Hello, Hallock. Leopard Leader Kawalski answering. Still following previous instructions. Nothing to report. Nothing. Leopard leader over to Hallock for further instructions. Over."

Again the controller's voice. "Final orders. All Leopard patrol return to ground station at once. Ground station at once."

The silence that followed was like a curt dismissal. Dave's cheeks reddened. He had lost two of his pilots and ships because of orders which forbade them to engage in retaliatory action.

He cursed feelingly, snapped crisp instructions over the radio and led them home to the camouflaged airfield. The Spitfires landed and were flagged into place. Mechanics and armorers began to swarm over them. Dave shrugged and turned to the sergeant in charge. "Not one shell used. No gun refills necessary."

"A bloody shame, Yank," said the non-com. "Carn't your gentlemen see in the dark? The 'ole bloomin' sky was filled with 'Schmitts no more'n twenty minutes ago. Even the Ack-Acks was asleep. More'n forty got through. I'm bound to say—but I'm forgettin' myself, so. Colonel Murdock requests that you report at group headquarters at once."

"Thanks," nodded Dave, plodding off through the dark.

COLONEL MURDOCK, D. S. O., A. F. C., finished signing several papers, thrust them aside and, said brusquely, "Sorry, Kawalski, over what happened upstairs just now. The system hasn't gone berserk; it was slightly upset for a particular purpose. Forty or more enemy fighting craft were allowed to get past this outer defense area in order that one of them might land safely."

"It doesn't mean a thing to me, sir."

"It will. The pilot of that German

Messerschmitt is a small cog in British Intelligence operating in conquered territories. For us, he remains merely a number. His job tonight is to take back a veteran pilot to Calais in German occupied France. Whoever goes back with him must speak German flawlessly, must not have the accent of an Englishman."

"Meaning?" asked the Leopard leader.

"To go back a little," began the Intelligence officer, "your brother, Franz—"

"Safe in America, Colonel. He was in the last war. Too old for this one. There was a price on his head. . . ."

"Your brother," said the colonel, drily, "has been in occupied France for three months as an agent in British Intelligence. . . . Surprised? . . . Your face betrays nothing. You are like Franz. I knew him in the last war. He flew to England in a German Pflaz. He was a German-trained pilot fresh from the Russian front. But by nationality he was Polish. The Germans didn't like Poles then any more than they do now. They rewarded his service and bravery with a death warrant. He escaped, came over to the American lines. A special act by the President made him an American forever. You, too, Kawalski."

"I have always regarded it as an honor, Colonel. Still do."

"The Leopard Patrol is made up of Americans. You are their leader. You are important as that leader. Voluntarily you have joined our cause. I can't with a clear conscience order you to do anything you don't want to do."

"You haven't ordered me to do anything yet—except to fly a wild goose chase through the sky in search of bombers that were not there."

Colonel Murdock nodded. "Will you accept an extremely important and dangerous mission into occupied France?"

Dave Kawalski's jaw hardened. "As a spy?"

"As a spy," repeated the colonel.

Dave examined the palms of his hands. "Will this mission be more important than what I'm doing at present?"

"Judge for yourself. The fate of England during the next thirty days may depend on the man who accepts this assignment into enemy territory and brings back whatever is given him to bring back."

For only a moment did the war pilot hesitate. Then he said, "Just what do you want me to do?"

In a low, guarded voice, Colonel Muddock explained his plans. "Lately," he finished, "heavy concentrations of bombers and fighters have been coming over our island around midnight. Up to twelve o'clock tonight, and tomorrow night, in case anything delays your return, our defense units in this area will allow all enemy planes to pass unmolested until you reach here. But after midnight I can make no promises. If you return by a German plane, you might be shot down. That is the risk."

"I'll have to take it," said Dave.

AS THE last of the Messerschmitt 110's, homeward bound, droned over group headquarters, a lone ship of the same make dropped from the upper reaches of the sky, joined the last formation and was not noticed in the dark. Dave Kawalski was on his way to occupied France.

Dressed in coarse, peasant clothes and carrying identity papers stamped by Nazi bureaus, and with a peaked cap pulled low over his eyes, he looked as he was supposed to look—like a common French laborer.

All the way across the Channel, the pilot maintained a stony silence. Only when the Messerschmitt had finished the crossing and was slanting groundward north of Calais did he speak.

"We're almost there," he said. "Get ready to leave."

Dave opened the hatch door and climbed out on the wing. The wind tore at his clothes. He crouched down, took a firm grip on the forward edge of the wing and stretched out flat.

The Daimler-Benz motors slowed to idling speed, and the plane settled gently to the ground where it bumped over uneven terrain. Dave waited a moment longer, then let go. His body hung in space for what seemed ages before his feet hit. The forward movement flung him to the ground.

He lay prone where he had fallen and watched the Messerschmitt climb back into the sky to join the other fighting planes now almost at their home base.

After making certain his arrival had not been noticed, he rose to his feet, brushed off the dirt and took a direction bearing from the stars. He knew he was not far from a road. Having determined in which direction it lay, he lost no time in finding it. Once on it, he turned south. Ahead of him now lay the port of Calais. Would he reach it safely? Would he find the men he was supposed to find?

THE TREE-LINED road was dark and surprisingly empty. No one challenged him. When he reached a cobbled street he found the city shrouded in darkness. At a pre-determined point he began to count buildings. Beyond the eighteenth building, standing back from the cobbled street, towered the ruins of what was once a brewery. There were a number of soldiers walking out from the center of the city. Dave slouched along, trying to keep in the shadows as much as possible. From overhead came the throb of motors—night-bombing Wellingtons. A salvo of shells from a hidden anti-aircraft battery climbed upward, and pieces of shrapnel began to rain to the ground. Soldiers ran for shelters.

Dave ran between two buildings, got behind them and crossed littered ground

to the brewery ruins. Hardly had he reached its shattered walls when a low-pitched voice brought him to a sudden stop. His heart pulsed heavily, but not with fear.

"*Ruhren Sie sich nicht,*" advised the voice. "Don't stir."

Dave remained perfectly quiet, doing nothing, saying nothing.

"*Ei!*" the Teutonic voice continued. "It is very late for a Frenchman to be on the street. *Wie heissen Sie?*"

"My name," said Dave, speaking the same guttural tongue, "is Emil Bourne, a former harness maker. Now I am nothing but a scavenger grubbing for goods. I thought I would perhaps find some barley in these ruins."

"Barley?" repeated the voice. "What kind?"

"Barleycorn," said Dave softly, following the ritual he had memorized.

"You mentioned no number."

"*Ach*, such a *Dummkopf* I am. It's a secret. It might be eleven."

The voice materialized into a pudgy man wearing a sweater and corduroy trousers.

"Follow me," he ordered. "But keep some distance behind."

Dave trailed his guide through twisting streets toward the waterfront, into an alley and down a dozen steps into a dank passageway redolent with the tang of fresh earth. Beyond a sharp bend he found himself in a candle-lighted excavation littered with broken furniture and mattresses.

A man jumped up from one of them—a gaunt, dark-haired man with a stubborn jaw and black, smouldering eyes set deep in their sockets.

"*Ach, Gott,*" said this man, striding forward. "Davey!"

"Franz!"

The brothers shook hands warmly.

The Frenchmen came close. They were incredibly gaunt and ragged. Franz in-

troduced them as Pierre, Victor and Andre. They did not smile. They merely nodded. Only Victor, the guide from the brewery, spoke.

"I'll stand guard for the next hour, Franz," he said.

Soundlessly he vanished.

Franz squinted hard at his brother.

"Old Murdock," he said, "must be losing his wits. He shouldn't have let you come, Davey."

"I didn't ask him to," said Dave. "He told me you were here, Franz. And I thought you were home—in America."

"*Ei!*" chuckled Franz, "can you keep the former jungle cat of the air out of a cauldron of intrigue? I thought I had my fill of the last war when it ended. *Pfui!* It's in my blood to live in the shadows."

Dave looked at his watch. "It's almost ten o'clock. Murdock's promised to keep the advanced defense units off my neck until midnight. Which means we'll have to act swiftly. Flying a German plane back to England is not going to be easy. I'll be fair game for every gun crew I pass over if I'm not back at group headquarters before twelve. That leaves me only two hours."

"You'll make it easy," said Franz. From beneath one of the mattresses he removed a flat package wrapped in oiled silk. "Negatives," he stated, "of pictures taken of all the invasion ports. They'll have to be printed in England. They also reveal underground hangars, transport barges, and points of departure when the invasion starts. Three men lost their lives and tiny cameras getting these pictures. They're precious, Davey, and if anything should happen to prevent them from reaching England—"

"Nothing will happen provided we can get hold of a plane, and if we can get it before eleven-thirty tonight. But why wasn't this job handled by the airman who flew me here from England?"

"A number of reasons. We're in touch

with these few men in the *Luftwaffe* by radio only. We never meet or contact them. Their work is dangerous enough as it is without complicating it beyond their ability to remain above suspicion. Besides, these pilots are apt to leave here on a night attack and have orders to land on some far-away field in Belgium or Holland. It's part of the system to keep pilots in ignorance of comrades lost in action. Take off your shirt and tie the package to your chest with these pieces of string."

Dave fastened the package as directed. "And where is this German plane coming from?"

"Leave that detail to me," said Franz, grimly. "I hope you can pilot a Messerschmitt. The area is lousy with them."

"I've never tried," said Dave, "but I'm familiar with the controls having examined a number that my squadron shot down. How close is the nearest field?"

"Close enough," said Franz. "But we'll cross that bridge when we get to—"

He stopped suddenly and half turned around. A section of what seemed a rough stone wall opened. Dave could hear the rush of water as an indescribable stench flowed into the room. Victor's voice came out of the dark behind the open wall section.

"On guard, Franz. Two officers, Secret Police, have discovered the cellar entrance. Somewhere in the passage right now. I think you should all come in here with me. . . ."

Franz spoke swiftly. "Our underground escape route, Davey—a branch sewer line. We'd better get out of sight."

"Listen," said Dave. "If the German Secret Police have discovered this underground retreat, they ought never be allowed to leave."

"I was thinking of the same thing," said Franz. "Think you can keep them here long enough for us to leave by the sewer and get around to the passage?"

"Don't worry about me," said Dave. Franz nodded grimly.

"Stall for time," he said. Turning to the two Frenchmen, he said, "Out of sight. Fast!" The wall opening to the sewer closed silently behind them, and Dave Kawalski found himself alone.

FROM the passageway there came the tramp of boots. Dave blew out all but one candle, and was engaged in knotting his shoe lace when two black-uniformed men came into the underground room. The man in the lead carried a riding crop with a leather strap at its tip.

"So," he said, smiling coldly, "an underground nest that is not listed with the police. Who lives here?"

"I do," said Dave. "There was no place above ground so I searched around till I found this old wine cellar."

"Unusual," said the officer, still smiling coldly. "But I was never in a wine cellar so singularly free from the odors of stale vintages. Also, there are no shelves or racks to be seen. The ground has been freshly excavated. It would be interesting to know how you disposed of so much dirt."

"You'll have to believe me, sir. This place was already dug when I first discovered it."

"So? Show me your identity papers." He examined them by the light of a candle stuck in a bottle neck. "Emil Bourne," he read. "Age twenty-seven . . . hmmm . . . harness maker . . ." A sneer curled his lips. "Another harness maker. When will you spies learn to think up something different on forged papers?"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Bah! You're wasting my time. There couldn't be two Emil Bournes, both harness makers, in this restricted area. Hold out your hands. Ummm. No signs of a leather working trade on those hands, Emil Bourne, as you choose to call your-

self. Besides," he added, slapping the leather strap of the riding crop against his boots, "Emil Bourne died several days ago—shot by a German firing squad. He refused to conform to our new order. So? Your face pales slightly. Facts can sometimes weaken even a strong man. All right. What's your nationality, British, Norwegian or Dutch?"

"I'm French. True, my hands bear no marks from working on leather. That's explainable. I've been in my country's service at the Maginot Line until my regiment was disbanded. Since then I have worked in fields, on roadways."

The eyes of the black-uniformed officer narrowed. Tiny muscles in his temples below the visor of his cap began to twitch.

"I'll give you one more chance to tell everything," he said, ominously. "Since you are not Emil Bourne, who *are* you?"

Dave Kawalski shrugged. "I've already told you."

The leather strap at the end of the riding crop lashed bitingly into the airman's cheek.

"You don't have to get tough," Dave said.

"*Ruhig!*" shouted the officer, lapsing into his own tongue. "Quiet, till you're told what to say. Now, you fool, confess!"

Dave's eyes began to smoulder.

"No," he said.

Again the lash stung his cheek.

"Stubborn, eh? Well, I know how to change that." He motioned to the second officer. "Lothar, go to work on this mute one. Soften him."

Lothar stepped forward. He was big, low-browed, brutal. He was licking his lips as he swung. His knotted fist smashed into Dave Kawalski's mouth—once, twice, three times. The third blow knocked the airman to the ground.

He got up spitting blood. Again Lothar's bludgeoning fist crashed his jaw. Dave shook his head doggedly, spread his

legs wide, and brought up a looping right that exploded under Lothar's pugnacious jaw, sending the big man staggering back. There was a queer look in Lothar's eyes. Never had anyone ever dared to strike back at him. Again he moved in and lashed out with wicked swings. Dave was under them, bent at the waist.

Abruptly he straightened and started to throw a roundhouse. At that moment he saw two things that caused him to change his mind. The thin-faced officer was unholstering an automatic. Beyond him and well behind Lothar also, was the end of the passage leading from the cellar. In this opening stood Franz, his arm outstretched, his finger pointed towards the solitary candle guttering in the bottle neck.

Dave pivoted and jumped backward. As he moved, he flung his arm wide and knocked the bottle to the ground. As the lone candle was smothered, blackness engulfed the cellar room. Two spears of flame lanced from the officer's automatic. Dave felt the sharp sting of powder burns on his face. But the bullets missed him. He flung himself toward the spot where he had seen the gun flashes.

He was too late. Someone had reached the officer ahead of him. A sharp, thin cry pierced the underground chamber. Then a heavier cry came from Lothar. Men's bodies crashed, rolled and came to a squirming stop.

Strangled sobs cut through the dark . . . a quick drumming of feet . . . then a sustained silence. Franz Kawalski's voice stabbed through the dark.

"Light the candles, Davey."

WHEN the candles were again shedding their feeble gleam on the floor, Dave Kawalski looked down on the two, black-uniformed men. Both were quite dead.

Around their throats in a circlet were thin, red lines. Above these lines were

faces that were bloated and discolored. Pierre and Andre were tucking what looked like dirty strings beneath their belts.

Franz stood with hands on hips, his deep-set eyes smouldering with a half-formed notion.

"Ach, Gott!" he sighed. German epithets came easily from his lips in moments of stress. "Two dead Secret Service police. Strangled with silken cords. Garroted. Pierre, you and Andre are the most efficient destroyers I have ever known."

Dave rubbed an aching jaw. "Better get rid of the bodies."

"That'll be simple," said Franz. "First, I must search the pockets just in case . . . *Der Teuffel!* A prize of the first rank—the Black Book belonging to the most cruel and cunning of all German agents working in this area—Captain Eric Gauss." He whistled softly as he continued his search.

"Remember, my time is limited," warned Dave.

Franz wasn't listening. He was examining a legal-sized sheet of paper taken from Gauss's inner pocket. His forehead wrinkled with concentration.

"An undated, unsigned order," he mused, "commanding the chief of operations in this area, General Albert von Haeckel, to return at once to the *Wilhelmstrasse* in Berlin. Which means that von Haeckel, poor devil, is under arrest. Now I wonder . . . Ummm! Gause must have had something on the general, but was not yet prepared to prefer charges or present proof. And he was carrying this order around until he had von Haeckel cornered. What could a high-ranking officer like von Haeckel do or not do to be liable to arrest?"

"Maybe it's written in the book," suggested Dave.

Franz thumbed through the pages of the book. "Don't see anything except names and addresses with offenses listed after them. More poor devils. Andre, you, Pierre and Victor are fortunate since your names do not appear. Ha! But look at mine. Big, bold handwriting. Dangerous character. Trouble breeder. Identification should be checked. *Verdamnte Schwein!* They'd love to shove me in their concentration camp. You'd think I was a criminal."

"You always did have a tough reputation," said Dave.



"You'd be tough, too," muttered Franz, "if you'd been knocked around the way I have." He flung his coat and shirt to the cellar floor. "Don't glare at me as if I'd lost my wits, Davey. Start unpeeling. You're going to wear Lothar's uniform. I've got an idea. And it's so wildly illogical that it might work, if we have the nerve and gall to see it through."

Dave took off his coat. "I'm still a pilot in the R. A. F., Franz. Flying is about all I'm trained for. Mine's a one-track mind. That's why I'm still worrying about a plane to cross the Channel."

"The plane will be forthcoming," promised Franz. "Espionage calls for quick thinking in an emergency. The emergency is here. Don't be squeamish, kid. There's nothing wrong in robbing a dead man of his clothes. Never let a few trees obscure the larger view of the forest."

"If we get caught wearing these uniforms . . ."

"We won't get caught," snorted Franz, pulling on the high leather boots. "They'd shoot us just as quick without the uniforms. And if I'm going to be shot, I want to die in a big way. I'm not a little man. I don't want to die like one. And I won't if I can help it. Pierre, get rid of the two Jerries now that we have their uniforms. Then dig a hole and bury our clothes. May need them later."

He found a pen in the pocket of Gauss's tunic. While he filled in the date and signed the order with the name of Germany's highest Secret Police official, the Frenchmen dragged the bodies of Lothar and Gauss through the wall opening.

Dave heard the double splash beyond the opening.

Franz seemed not to notice anything unusual in the casual disposal of the bodies. When the Frenchmen returned, he grinned at them. "The names and addresses in the Black Book ought to be of help. Later we'll go to their houses. They,

too, are working for our cause. All enemies of Eric Gauss will likely prove good companions for us to cultivate. Remain watchful and alert until I return."

"But certainly," said Pierre, gravely.

"Good," said Franz. "Okay, Davey. You and I are going to arrest the ranking officer in this area—General Albert von Haeckel."

"I needn't tell you, Franz, I'd feel a hell of a lot safer upstairs fighting an air battle with the odds against me. Your plan doesn't seem real. So many things might happen. You just don't go out and place a general under arrest. . . ."

"Keep in mind one thing," Franz pointed out. "Our uniforms and credentials place us in a group whose power is greater than that of the military service. We represent power. Failure to obey our orders is punishable by imprisonment or death."

Dave looked at his watch. "Time is going too damn fast."

"Forget about the time," said Franz.

THE MOMENT he reached the cobble street, Dave Kawalski felt the power and respect his black uniform gave him. He walked stiffly, looking straight ahead. He tried not to think of the risk he and Franz faced. Success did not seem possible.

Their boot heels clicked sharply in the night air. Down one street—another. Dave could feel the muscles in his stomach grow taut. It was all so different from sitting in the cockpit of his Spitfire, hearing and feeling the pulse of the great Rolls-Royce Merlin engine.

He didn't like the mission on which he had been sent. He belonged to the sky, to the pilots of the Leopard Squadron who looked to him for leadership. Intrigue and under-cover work was no part of his nature. With Franz it was different. Franz gloried in espionage of any sort. If there was any way to disrupt communications,

antagonize the enemy, discover their plans, Franz would always be in the very center of it.

"Here's von Haeckel's headquarters," said Franz. "Take your cue from me in everything that's said or done."

Soldiers in field grey uniforms stiffened to attention as the brothers entered the building. Heels clicked. A few guttural words from the officer on duty—then Franz Kawalski's staccato German.

"Attention! No one enters. No one leaves until I give specific orders." To the officer behind a desk—"Convey my respects to General von Haeckel. Inform him that Captain Eric Gauss demands to see him at once."

Doors opened miraculously. They passed through two rooms and into a third. General Albert von Haeckel was waiting for them. His jaw was square, clean-shaven. The hair around his temples was grey. There was an old saber scar, red and savage-looking across his right jaw. A dignified, kindly autocrat.

"Captain Eric Gauss?" His eyes were frosty.

"*Jawohl, Excellenz,*" bowed Franz. "I have the honor, General, of bringing bad news. You are being placed under arrest."

Albert von Haeckel's jaw twitched slightly. That was all. "Undoubtedly an honor to you, and your kind. Why should I be placed under arrest? Treason? Inefficiency? Or have your superiors lost their wits entirely?"

"That, of course, will develop at your trial." Franz handed the order to the old general. "Read it," he commanded.

Von Haeckel read it to the last period, shrugged, and said, "I'm sorry. But you've chosen the wrong time. Tonight I am working with invasion tactics, troop movements and transportation problems. I'll be engaged all night. Tomorrow," he added.

"Tomorrow will be too late. We must proceed to Berlin at once—by air. This

officer with me will pilot any plane assigned for our use. No excuse can be accepted. Telephone the nearest airfield. Explain to the officer in charge that we require a fast ship."

"The plan you suggest is impossible. I tell you, I'm charged with a specific task in this area. Failure to complete it on the exact hour and minute will jeopardize the Great Plan. . . ."

"I'm not here to argue," said Franz. "You know my superiors as well as I do. They never, General von Haeckel, accept excuses."

"I refuse to leave. Now get out of my headquarters. . . ."

"With your permission, *Excellenz*, I will phone the highest authority of our Secret Service. He will not like being interrupted. You know his temper. And the obvious fact that you questioned his order will not make it any easier for you once you are brought into his presence." He reached for the phone on von Haeckel's desk. This was the pay-off. He stood to win or lose by playing this last card boldly and convincingly.

Dave, standing slightly behind his brother, kept his eyes on the general's face, saw the frostiness in the eyes give way to resentment, and pass from resentment to weariness and despair.

"Enough! It will not be necessary." He spoke to an aide. "Summon Colonel Jagow." Then he told his personal orderly, "Pack a small bag. I'm leaving for Berlin at once."

"I'd suggest," said Franz, "that you take with you copies of your invasion plans, troop concentrations, and anything else the *Wilhelmstrasse* might think of interest. If you can convince them of your sincerity and loyalty, you have nothing to fear."

Von Haeckel nodded and began cramming papers and troop command orders into a dispatch case. His next in command, Colonel Fritz Jagow, strode into

the room and the general explained the situation.

Dave thought the general would never be ready. Leaden-weighted minutes dragged. Each became more dangerous than those preceding. When he looked at his watch, the minute hand had moved past the half-hour mark. In twenty-eight minutes, it would be midnight. Dave could feel the palms of his hands sprout moisture. At that moment the general's personal orderly entered with a leather valise.

General von Haeckel pushed back his chair and stood erect. Meticulously he buttoned his tunic and put on his military cap.

"I think I'm about ready," he stated.

There followed a moment or two of leave-taking to members of his staff. Franz signalled with his hand and stepped to a spot just right of the General. Dave walked to the place on the left.

Colonel Jagow looked hard at Franz, and said, "There is a military car out front to take you to the airfield. There is also a military plane waiting for you when you reach there. Is anything more necessary?"

"Nothing," said Franz coldly.

THE MILITARY machine raced swiftly to the airfield, but not swiftly enough for Dave Kawalski.

At the field, Franz permitted the general to go to the office of the *Luftwaffe* commander, a friend of his, to say goodbye. He said to Dave, "It's *your* show from now on, Dave. And for God's sake, get yourself and the prisoner to England safely. I wish I could go along and help. . . ."

"But Franz, I thought you were."

"No, kid. I'm staying here in occupied France. Sure I'm a damn fool to risk my neck by remaining here. But I've always been a fool where freedom of men is concerned. Tell Murdock to try and under-

stand old von Haeckel who, after all, is a soldier, and not a party man. Tell him also about Eric Gauss. That'll please him. Are the negatives still safe?"

"Right across my chest."

Franz placed both hands on his brother's shoulders. "You know me, Dave. The hell with sentiment. Good-by, and good luck." He withdrew his hands, backed away and vanished into the darkness.

"Damn sentiment," thought Dave Kawalski. "It's not that easy, Franz." He consulted the luminous hands of his watch. Five minutes of twelve! He knew then, that the margin of safety was no longer his. At twelve, midnight, any German plane spotted in the area he was supposed to fly over, would be shot down mercilessly.

THE ARRIVAL of a field officer gave him something else to think about. He was taken to the edge of the field. Two mechanics were standing in front of the wings of a Messerschmitt. Its Daimler-Benz motor was idling smoothly.

"Keep to the right on the take-off," suggested the officer. "When you see a light flash green, take the ship up fast. Your course then will be east to Dusseldorf. Beyond Dusseldorf you'll pick up the Rhine. Set a new course northeast. Are you acquainted with. . . .?"

Dave laughed boisterously as he headed for the cockpit.

"I could fly this course with my eyes shut," he boasted.

Still, he wasn't feeling very cheerful as he settled himself behind the controls he was only vaguely familiar with. While he was checking the instruments on the panel, von Haeckel appeared alone, and climbed into the front compartment.

"Where's Captain Gauss?" he asked, settling himself on the seat.

"Can't hear you," said Dave, leaning out the hatch opening so he could direct

the soldier who was placing valise and dispatch case into the cockpit. When this was accomplished, he closed the door, gunned the motor, heard a shouted signal from the mechanics, and he knew the moment for the take-off had come.

Without conscious fear he sent the Messerschmitt rolling down the right lane. Swiftly it gathered momentum. Dave felt the tail lift. A green light winked in the blackness ahead. He gave the motor more throttle. And suddenly the wheels were clear and the ship was climbing.

Up it rose in a long spiral. Dave snapped on the panel lights and plotted a course.

Von Haeckel, peering at the compass, said, "You're flying west. Berlin lies to the east and north."

Dave's voice was grim. "We're not going to Berlin, General."

"Ach, Gott! What nonsense is this? Where's Gauss?"

"I left him on the airfield."

"I don't believe I understand. If you're not flying to Berlin, then where are you bound for?"

"England." He held his breath as von Haeckel's automatic jammed against the black tunic of his uniform.

"Treachery!" snapped the old warrior. "It won't work. Return to the *Luftwaffe* air base at once, or I'll kill you."

"And yourself, too," Dave pointed out. "How long do you think this plane will remain in the air with a dead man at the controls?"

Von Haeckel's voice was barely audible. It was as though he was thinking to himself. "I hadn't thought of that."

During the strained silence that followed, Dave lifted the plane to a ten-thousand foot level. The sky was faintly luminous and empty. "There's worse things, General von Haeckel, than spending the duration of this conflict in England. Look around, will you, and see if you can find some parachute packs?"

"I can only find one," the general said.

"Strap it on. I'll take my chances if we crash." He paused and looked down for some guiding landmark, and could see nothing, not even the glint of water. "There won't be much time to explain, General. That order for your arrest was genuine. We merely filled in the name of the Secret Service Director, and the date. If you went to Berlin, you never would have returned to your command. Take my word for it."

All explanations died at this point as a terrific barrage of anti-aircraft shells exploded around the Messerschmitt. Dave winced, pressured left rudder, flicked the control wheel in the same direction, and heeled the ship over on its side in a screaming bank.

For a moment the ship had slid out of range. Then a lone shell screamed upward. Dave felt the hackles on the back of his neck stand up. Something told him this one was coming close.

The metal thunderbolt passed through the angle of fuselage and starboard wing, and exploded above its target with a shattering crash.

For tortured moments the German plane rocked in the vortex of the concussion. Sturdily, however, it weathered the shock, but not before hot pieces of steel and shrapnel drummed against wings and motor cowling. A smoking fragment lanced through the upper hatch cover and into the instrument panel. Glass showered to the floor.

The Messerschmitt, caught in a vacuum, fell into a sideslip. Dave let it skid down a thousand feet, revved the motor and straightened it once more.

Once more Dave changed his course. A string of flare shells popped into the sky a long way ahead and far above the fleeing Messerschmitt, bathing its fuselage and square-tipped wings with blinding light.

Dave's lips thinned to a straight line. Beyond the arc of radiance flew three

Spitfires. They had him bracketed, one on each side, and another above, maneuvering for a tail position.

There was no way to avoid their blasting guns except by a continuous series of lightning maneuvers. But wherever he turned, dived or rolled, there was one of them always waiting for him. The orange flashes from their eight machine guns became brighter as the flares settled below the zone of flight maneuvers. Tracers bit and clawed through rudder and tail sections. The Messerschmitt trembled under the drumming blast.

DAVE gave the motor full throttle and climbed steeply. He got above the Spitfires and turned sharply, as if to blow them to pieces with the hub cannon that was part of the Messerschmitt's fire power. They fell away, circled and followed him upward. There was no escape from them. They trailed him wherever he flew, matched his maneuvers with variations of their own. And only because he knew these tactics of the British flyers, was he able to escape from the traps they so cunningly set for him.

Yet this could not go on indefinitely. He wanted to shout and scream that they might know who he was. He wasn't blaming these pilots. But for the fact that he had been sent into enemy territory on an important mission, he might well have been one of these Spitfire pilots gunning for enemy planes.

He tried again to escape their traps and failed. Golden flames jetted from the forward edges of their wings. Tracers converged and stitched their seams of destruction on the Messerschmitt's after-fuselage. It vibrated dangerously under the blast, yet still held together.

Dave sent it earthward in a screaming dive.

"We'll both be killed, I suppose," said von Haeckel, calmly.

"Me, perhaps," said Dave, grimly, "but

not you. You're far too important, General. That's why I ordered you to wear the chute pack. It's out through the hatch for you. When you have fallen clear of the plane, pull the rip cord."

"*Lieber Gott!*" said von Haeckel, admiringly. "You are a soldier."

Dave Kawalski shrugged. A soldier? He was a fool just like his brother Franz. Somehow he got the hatch door open. "Go," he ordered. "*And auf Wiedersehen.*"

General von Haeckel arose from his seat. He was holding the dispatch case under his arm. A grim smile curved his lips.

"I trust," he said, bending so as to pass through the opening, "that we'll meet again some day. *Wiedersehen*, my friend."

Then he was gone.

Closing the hatch, Dave clicked off the panel lights and looked below. Far down in space a white patch of silk was blossoming. His eyes swerved ahead and discovered the inquisitive pencilling of the searchlight's beam.

He pulled the plane from its dive and flew around the beam, watching meanwhile for the trio of Spitfires. Dimly he saw them as dark blurs far off to port. They were leaving the scene of combat.

It took a few moments to guess the reason for their strange action. Then it occurred to him. The Spitfire pilots had seen the parachute open and had concluded that the Messerschmitt was damaged beyond maneuverability, and that the pilot had abandoned it. That was all right, too.

He cut the motor to idling speed and allowed the Messerschmitt to drift in a long dive groundward.

He opened the throttle only wide enough to maintain flying speed forward, then allowed the plane to glide and lose altitude. The ground was wavering beneath the landing wheels in a blur of shadows. Hedge-hopping the Messer-

schmitt across obstructions on the moor brought him steadily closer to his own field. A machine gun below and to the left blasted out. Bullets ripped through the port wing.

After he had maneuvered the plane out of the range of the gun, Dave picked a spot for landing, and pointed the ME's nose down. Its wheels hit an obstruction, bounded, settled heavily and rolled to a stop.

OUT OF the dark grated a harsh voice. "Hoi now, Jerry. You carn't do something like this. Not 'ere, anyhow. Come nearer. 'Alt."

"Listen to me," said Dave. "I'm the leader of the Leopard Squadron of Spitfires, Yanks, all of them. Never mind my uniform, or the plane I arrived in. Get in immediate touch with Ground Controller Hallock, or with Colonel Murdock of Intelligence. Tell either or both that Flight Lieutenant Dave Kawalski is down, and tell them where. You understand?"

"Yes, sir," said the Limey. "But if you'll excuse my Enfield, sir, I'll keep it pointed at your back till we reach 'ead-quarters. Carn't take chances, you know."

Dave Kawalski marched forward through the darkness feeling suddenly very tired.

This fatigue had vanished, however, sometime later as he sat beside Colonel Murdock's desk.

"The negatives you brought back," the Intelligence chief was saying, "have already been printed. For the unknown men who secured them I have only admiration and gratitude.

The colonel continued, "Regarding the peculiar circumstances surrounding the arrival of General Albert von Haeckel, there are several points I wish to impress on your mind. No reason will be given to the Press as to why he came to England. No reference will be made of the dispatch case he brought with him, or of its start-

ling contents revealing German's invasion plans. These commands of secrecy come direct from the General Staff. Clear?"

"I think I understand."

"Not quite. Within a few days, General Albert von Haeckel's name will be flashed over cables and wireless to all parts of the world. There will be rumors and contradictions—all of them false. Your name, Kawalski, will not appear. It will be rumored he came alone, of his own free will. There will be no mention of you, or our agents in Calais. There will only be silence and forgetfulness on the part of the nations you have served so courageously. That is the essence of British Intelligence. That is the core of Germany's Intelligence. It's a game played for high stakes with never a hope of reward. You may not lose, but you never win."

He stood up and held out his hand. "Good night, Kawalski. Carry on."

"Good night, sir," said Dave.

THE WIND from the Channel was on his face as he stepped out into the night. It felt cool and comforting. He lifted his eyes to the sky. A few stars were visible among high clouds. The world seemed suddenly a vast, forlorn spot of emptiness and futility.

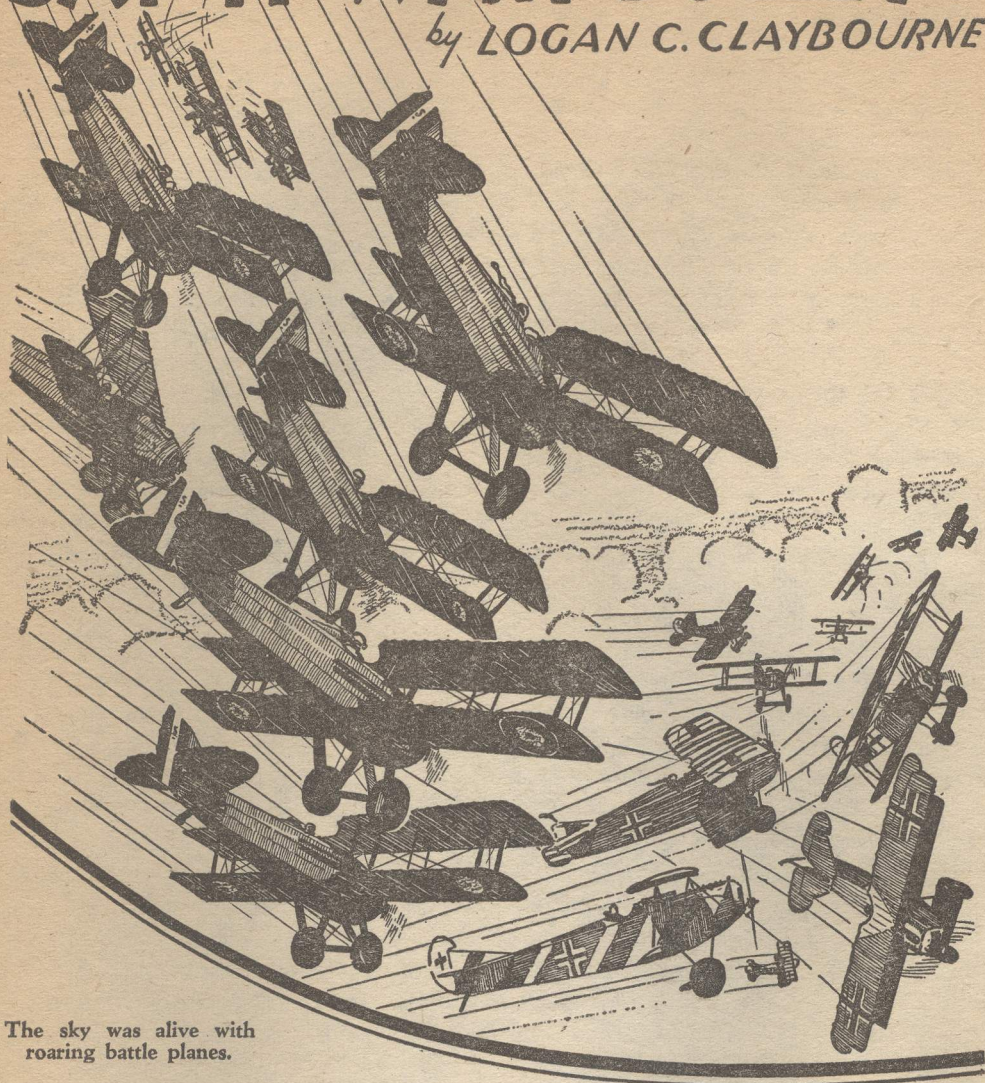
But the let-down was only momentary. His spirits lifted and soared as he visioned a squadron of Spitfires climbing into the sky to battle against impossible odds—the Leopard Squadron.

He, himself, was flying at point. A transmitter was whining. Then the clear, precise voice of the ground controller was breaking in. "Halloh, Leopard Leader! Hallock calling. Hallock calling Leopard Leader Kawalski. Are you receiving me? Answer."

"Yes," thought Dave Kawalski, striding towards the car which was waiting to take him back to his home squadron. "Receiving you loud and clear. Loud and clear."

SAY IT WITH BULLETS

by LOGAN C. CLAYBOURNE



The sky was alive with roaring battle planes.

They were good, the men of the 39th Pursuit, and the best of them all was fighting Mike O'Donnell, until the day when he forgot the first lesson every fighting man should know: "If you've got anything to talk over with a Boche—say it with bullets!"

POETS call spring the loveliest time of the year, and they have a lot of beautiful things to say about it. But spring, 1918, in France, was a time of pain and death, of mud, of the black smoke of lead and steel, of the roar of big guns. The St. Mihiel salient was a bulge where-

in wriggled hundreds of thousands of frantic Germans. And beyond that, grim and quiet and iron-eyed, were Pershing's Americans, waiting for the word that would send them forward in a final mighty effort to smash the big salient and push the Germans back.

Nine miles behind the front line trenches, slightly to the southeast of Bernecourt, the 39th Squadron, American Air Force, awaited orders for a sky attack which was to coincide with the infantry drive. The 39th was composed of veterans, men who had been flying and fighting since the very beginning of America's argument with the Kaiser.

They were good, these men of the 39th, and they knew it. Competition for high victory records was keen among them, and when they returned from a dogfight, their boasting was the healthy kind, filled with joshing and laughter and genial oaths.

Major Hiram Benward was proud of his men, particularly proud of Mike O'Donnell and Freddie Ludder. Mike had the best record in the 39th, thirteen German planes shot down. Freddie had eleven. There was keen competition between these two, and it was replete with insults and bickering and a lot of drinking; and now and then there was a good brawl. But Major Benward never interfered. It was this steady rowdyism that kept the morale of the 39th at a high peak, and morale was of utmost importance these days.

Mike was a barrel-shaped man. Wind and sun and gun smoke had painted his face a purplish-tan. His eyes were grey and his hair was a sandy shade. He wore his medals on a bulging chest, and carried himself as though he was looking for someone to get wise with him. But he was known as a guy with a heart of gold.

Freddie wasn't much taller. But he was lean. He rolled his own cigarettes, and had Arizona in his talk and his walk. He was always complaining about the weakness of the liquor served at the canteen bar, always muttering that life on the ranges of Arizona was a hundred times more tough than this Western Front setup.

And Mike, who had been a taxi driver in Chicago, would come back with the

statement that modern cowboys led the life of Riley, that they were as tame as Persian cats, and that Freddie's imagination was running away with him.

Invariably it ended up in violent debate, and other flyers of the 39th would be forced to step in between the two to prevent a fight.

THIS present waiting period had kept the flyers on the ground longer than usual, and there was more than the usual string of discussions, symposiums and arguments. On a day when he felt like drinking liquor and fighting with Mike, the lean guy from Arizona walked over to the canteen bar and had a drink. And then, as Mike entered the room, he was instantly on the alert.

But there was something the matter with Mike. Maybe he had a headache. Maybe he was sick. In any case, there was something wrong with him. He had a peaceful expression on his face.

Freddie frowned, puzzled, distrustful. Maybe Mike was going to ask for a loan. Maybe he had something up his sleeve.

And then Mike said, "You know, those Germans ain't such bad guys, after all."

Freddie said, "What?"

Usually Mike would have said something like, "If you'd clean out your ears once in awhile, you'd be able to hear."

But now his voice was calm as he said, "I was over to Bernecourt this morning. They got a mob of prisoners over there, working on the road. I was talking to a few of them."

"You ain't got no business talkin' to prisoners," Freddie said.

Mike didn't even order his double shot of cognac. He leaned over the bar and stared in the mirror thoughtfully and said, "I got to talking to a real educated Fritz. Name of Gernheim. An infantryman, but he's got the class and polish of an officer. Speaks English just like one of these guys who come from Oxford."

Freddie flipped a cognac down his throat and said, "What did Fritz have to say?"

The bartender asked Mike if he wanted a drink. He shook his head absently and then he turned, leaned backward against the bar, resting on his elbows and said, "Oh, he was telling me about his life in Germany. How, before the war, he was studying to be an engineer, and then had to give it up to go in the army. He was telling me what a tough time they're having over in Germany, and how all the young fellows were given a grade-A double-cross, being told that they'd win the war in a few months and drink French champagne for the rest of their lives. He was telling me what a lousy shame this war set-up is."

Freddie had a glass half-way to his lips. He put it down slowly and looked at Mike and said, "Say, you're not gettin' any ideas, are you, bud?"

"What kind of ideas?" Mike said absently.

Freddie bolted the drink and said, "Look, Mike. I don't lay no claim to be an educated hombre. I know cattle and I know guns and I know the Western Front. Maybe in an argument of big words this Boche friend of yours would make chopped cactus out of me. But I can tell you this. Once a man puts himself into a war, he's got only one job, and that's to fight. As soon as he starts to think too much, as soon as he starts to wonder about the reason for this and the reason for that—well, he just ain't a soldier any more. He's a politician. And politicians don't win wars. They just start 'em an' let the common man do the work."

"Maybe that's just the trouble," Mike said.

Freddie quickly ordered another drink. He downed it, oiling his vocal cords, and then his voice was more emphatic as he said, "I can see you're beginnin' to wonder about things. Wal, let me tell you, bud,

the more you wonder, the more confused you become. The way I figure this war, it boils down to one simple point—somebody got tough with us and we either had to put up our dukes or let 'em step all over us. That's all. So now we're fighting the Boche, and there's only one thing we gotta think about—that's to win the fight."

Mike said, "Why am I fighting guys like Gernheim? What did they ever do to me?"

Freddie had an answer for that, a good answer. But even as he opened his mouth to speak, he knew that Mike would scarcely be listening. The bulky guy from Chicago had an expression on his features that was more than thoughtful. In his eyes there was doubt.

"Maybe you better have a drink, bud. And maybe you better keep away from that prison camp near Bernecourt from now on." Freddie said.

Mike did not reply. Very slowly he walked out of the bar.

Freddie turned to the bartender and said, "Did you hear that, Knobby?"

Knobby said, "I heard it and I didn't like it. What's got into Mike, anyway?"

"Poison," Freddie said. "The kind of poison that goes up to a man's brain and spreads up there, and then—then—well, what's the use of talking about it? Mike'll be all right. As soon as we take our Spads over that St. Mihiel frying pan, he'll be a fighter again, and not a student of international politics. Give me another drink, Knobby."

NORTH of Bernecourt, the Americans started to press forward. They were initiating a flanking movement to draw the Germans away from the front of the salient. They were doing it slowly, carefully, so as to increase the puzzle value of their move. But actually it was not a feint. It was the beginning of a thrust that was to take on the force and momentum of a big drive. As Pershing's dough-

boys moved in wide-spread formation through the forests of France, the German scouts left their outposts, rushed back to the Boche trenches and stated excitedly that the long-awaited push had come.

The Germans wanted to retreat. A lot of these men had tasted the steel of Yank bayonets in the late days of 1917, and they were none too anxious for a repeat performance. But the German High Command was not ready to fall back in this section of the salient.

The command came through, "Resist at all costs!"

Boche and doughboys came together and a lot of Americans went down before German machine-gun fire. But in the first round of battle, the Yanks took the primary line of German trenches. And then an order came through to continue the advance, and American air squadrons were called upon to cooperate from the sky.

The 39th responded to the call.

Major Benward ordered nine of his top-ranking pilots to proceed to the battleground, to tackle any enemy planes that were making notations for German artillery, or were annoying any American observation planes.

Anxious to get into the sky, the nine pilots hurried toward their Spads. Hissos were already drumming hard and loud.

Freddie was running toward his plane. He noticed that Mike was slow about climbing into the bucket.

He hurried over to Mike's Spad and said, "Well, Chicago, here's where I make your victory record look like a rookie's first week at the front."

He waited for Mike's fast and snappy comeback. None came. Mike looked down at him and then abruptly turned away. Freddie frowned and wanted very much to say something appropriate. But no ideas formed in his mind. Instead he was remembering that on the day before, and on two days before that, Mike had used his off-time to go into Bernecourt to talk

to a German prisoner named Gernheim. And, coming back from Bernecourt, Mike had been silent, had not come near the bar, had acted as though there was a lot on his mind.

Freddie thought of the action that would take place over the salient. As he pushed his lean legs into the cockpit of his Spad, he was thinking, *This will pull Mike out of it. This will remind him that he's in a war, and not a current events club.*

He gunned the Spad, and the sound of the Hisso, responding with enthusiasm, made him forget about Mike, made him think of what was ahead. His twin Lewis guns were set and ready, pointing to the silver froth of his prop. Soon he would be seeing Fokker wings in the clouds ahead. And the sound of clattering guns would be a welcome melody to his battle-hungry senses.

It came sooner than Freddie expected.

A trio of American observation planes had run into eleven Fokkers and had decided that the vicinity was not exactly a health resort. The Yank planes had bolted for home, and the Fokkers gave chase. They were almost on top of the American observation ships when the nine Spads from the 39th appeared.

THE Spads leaped in from 5,000 feet, and they had a slight altitude lead as they rushed to the attack. The eleven Fokkers broke formation, whirled down, and then up at the Yanks, forcing them to break their attack formation.

The three observation ships scooted for home, carrying with them a valuable set of photographs and geographical notes. Two Fokkers, one of them piloted by the leader of the *Staffel*, leaped after the three American planes.

Coming out of a hairpin turn while negotiating with one of the Germans, Freddie saw the peril of the observation planes. He climbed fast, his Hisso screaming,

throttle wide open. Then he was angling down on the Fokkers. He let out a wild cowboy yell as he jumped on their backs, his Lewis guns clattering away at full rhythm. His tracers sank their heat and fury in the cockpit of a Fokker, sending it spinning down. Then Freddie was aiming at the other German.

It was the leader of the *Staffel*, and he was smart and mean and fast. He negotiated a neat roll-out and he was under Freddie, sizzling up for an under-side attack. Freddie leaned on a right wing, reversed hard and dived, cheating the Boche out of a target. The two planes went down into their own combat arena, and Freddie knew he had a job on his hands.

His altimeter showed him 3,500 feet; the sky in front showed him a Fokker whose pilot wanted to see him dead.

"The feeling's mutual, bud," Freddie muttered. He winged over on the left, then straightened as he measured the Fokker's approach. He had to chance bullets as he maneuvered for attack position, and the Fokker was giving it to him, hot and fast, from the side. He came out of the lead shower with a lot of Spandau slugs in his plane, but neither he nor his motor had been hit. He turned hard again, waited for the German to make a counterturn. When the Fokker was in the middle of it, Freddie dived. He poured Lewis fire into the Boche plane, kept pouring and watching his tracers slide up the fuselage and strike the cockpit.

Freddie watched the Fokker screech into a death-spin. Then he saw the three American observation planes making the most of their opportunity and getting away while the getting was good. It made him feel good to know that he had saved those three planes from Spandau fire, and at the same time raised his record to thirteen planes, level with Mike's present record.

But in the next moment he was won-

dering. Probably by this time Mike had accounted for one or more Fokkers. It was always that way. Leaping out of a duel, a grin of triumph on his lips, Freddie would invariably discover that Mike had done just a bit better than he had.

Freddie was expecting to see something like that as he moved toward the center of combat.

But he saw something entirely different. Mike was running away!

Mike's Spad wasn't crippled, and it wasn't trying to avoid a trap. In fact, it had been in attacking position, with guns and nose pointed at a Fokker, when suddenly it swerved away from the fight area, and started for home.

Freddie sensed a feeling of dismay. Only one thing could make Mike O'Donnell run away from a dogfight. Mike must be badly wounded.

Freddie's sorrow turned to flaming rage. He wouldn't be able to help Mike now. But at least he could avenge what the Boche had done to his rival and chum.

Freddie took his glance away from the Spad that sped toward Bernecourt, aimed his plane back toward the dogfight. He was roaring in with Lewis guns blazing, attacking a Fokker viciously at close range.

The Germans had been getting the worst of the argument, and Freddie's new attack made things doubly tough for them. In quick succession three more Fokkers were going down, one from Freddie's guns, and the other two from the concerted attack of battle-wild Yanks.

There were five Fokkers remaining, and they decided to call it a day. Four of them got away. Freddie nabbed the fifth.

Two of the Yank group had gone down in the dogfight, and now the remaining six planes, in echelon formation, roared back toward Bernecourt. And in his cockpit, Freddie was tight-lipped, picturing a bullet-torn Mike.

WHEN he reached the 39th Freddie jumped out of the idling plane, ran toward the squadron office. He was breathless when he asked, "Mike—how is he, sir?"

Benward's eyes narrowed. He said, "As far as I know, Lieutenant O'Donnell is in perfect health."

"But—he came back, sir. I mean—"

"I know what you mean," the major said, getting up from behind the map table where he had been working. "You saw O'Donnell head for home and you thought he was wounded. Well, the truth of it is that he doesn't have a scratch. And there's not a single bullet hole in his plane."

"Then—why did he run away?"

"That's what I'd like to know," the major said. "You're a good friend of his. Maybe you ought to have a talk with him. He scarcely seemed to hear my questions."

Freddie hurried to the canteen bar. He saw Mike leaning over a bottle.

"I want to talk to you," Freddie said.

"Maybe you don't have to tell me why you ran out," Freddie said. "Maybe I know. Maybe all this thinkin' and talkin'

things over with that Boche prisoner has put a bug in your brain. Maybe it's got the best of you and you don't want to fight any more."

"That's my own affair, and if you know what's good for you, you won't try to interfere."

"To think that I was actually worried about him," Freddie muttered. "Maybe it would have been better if Boche bullets had tagged you, after all."

"Clear out of here and leave me alone," Mike said, reaching for the bottle again.

Freddie said, "I got a good mind to bust you one in the eye." His fists were clenched. Then he dropped them hopelessly and said disgustedly, "Aaaah, what's the use?"

HE DIDN'T see Mike the following morning, and he knew that the guy from Chicago must be in Bernecourt, having another political discussion with Gernheim. He was thinking it might be a good idea to sidle over there and break it up with his fists, when he heard Major Benward's bark from the tarmac, and forgot everything else.

The major wanted seven planes to fly



"THE DEATH DIVERS"

THE fighting and the fury die away; the belching guns are stilled; and even the embattled armies pause in their fatal combat—to watch the sky-shattering struggle between two winged titans—a battle on which may hinge the entire result of the war. . . . And while a breathless world looks on in fearful wonderment, a steel-eyed Yank hurls his battered Spad into a wall of German lead, with only one thought—despite his wounds, despite the odds against him, he must use his wings as few men have flown before—else fall a flaming victim to the monsters who claw hungrily at the throat of civilization.

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back to the same area that had been the scene of yesterday's dogfight. A call had come through from headquarters, requesting immediate aerial aid. The Boche were hot at it, not only slamming down American observation planes, but also strafing the Yank troops that were coming up from reserve posts.

As Freddie ran toward his plane, tightening the chin-strap of his helmet, Major Benward came over and said, "Where's O'Donnell?"

Freddie wanted to tell. And then, just as he was about to blurt out the truth, he held back. He couldn't rat on Mike. Maybe there was a way to stop the guy from doing something crazy, to prevent him from diving head-first into a court-martial.

"I don't know where he is, sir," Freddie said.

Benward looked at him doubtfully. Then Benward turned away, and Freddie climbed into his Spad.

Seven Hissos blasted, and then the Spads climbing, in step-formation, moving toward the front.

Out there, where the Americans were still advancing, the Boche resistance had stiffened, was getting stronger by the moment. The presence of Fokkers was making it easier for German ground forces to hit back at the doughboys. Boche observation planes were working with deadly smoothness, sending out signals that told German artillery where to aim. Already another American air squadron had been sent to the area, but the Fokkers were coming on thick and fast, and the Yanks were in danger of being annihilated.

Freddie, leading the planes from the 39th, saw that the Germans had control of the sky. He could count nine Fokkers up there, in addition to five or six observation planes that were spread out over a wide area.

He signaled for a climb and took his group up to 8,000 feet. He fired a burst

to clear his Lewises and then pointed down.

The seven Spads went into an attack dive.

Freddie led them down. He streaked past the Fokkers and slanted toward the observation planes. That was the important meat right now. A Boche observer was pointing Spandau at him, and he worked his Lewis guns long enough to send lead through the German's chest. Then he came in close and hit the motor of the enemy plane; he didn't wait to see flame leaking out. He was going after another Boche observation ship.

He was cutting it up badly when three Fokkers pounced on him. He worked into a frantic roll-out and dived hard. The Boche hawks followed him down, and he couldn't find a way out. He looked behind him, saw that they were almost in position for a kill. And then he saw something else up there. The other six planes from the 39th were in a lot of trouble. They had too many Fokkers to contend with.

And they didn't have Mike O'Donnell.

Freddie whisked into a hard turn and managed to take a rear position. The Fokkers lanced down, peeled off and came at him again. He climbed, broke out of it, and for a moment was able to see Fokker fuselage in his sights. He worked his guns, then continued his climb. But he had missed the Fokker, and he was still facing three enemy planes.

"This looks like the end of the trail," Freddie muttered.

He made another acute turn and gambled on a loop. He was riding the crest of it, upside down, listening to the scream of his Hissos and the clatter of Spandaus that were trying to slice his path of flight. He thought for a moment that he would be able to break away, and then he saw that the Boche had cleverly angled him into a position from which they could come at him from three sides.

But at the moment when Freddie was

sure that Spandau slugs would tear him apart, there was an interruption. Another Spad roared down from nowhere. Lewis guns blasted a message of death for a German, and the Fokker nearest to Freddie was falling to earth, belching flame. The other two Germans were making a fast breakaway, anxious to leave the gun range of this wild flyer.

Freddie wondered who it was. Then the other Spad was whizzing past, going after a Fokker, and the hombre from Arizona got a clear view of Mike O'Donnell.

The Chicago barrel was leaning eagerly in his cockpit. He was tearing after the Fokker, sending lead smashing into the cockpit of the German plane, then veering hard and going after another Boche.

Freddie muttered, "And that's the hombre who said he didn't have anything against the Germans—"

He didn't have time to think more about it. He was in the thick of battle, following a wild-flying Mike. The other Americans seemed to be conscious of Mike's presence. The color of the battle was changing. Fokkers were going down, and finally there were only a few Germans left, and they were running home.

Freddie knew then that it would be a long time before he would be able to catch up on Mike's victory record. In fact, it looked as though Mike would retain high score in the 39th until the Yanks reached Berlin.

FREDDIE took off his helmet and wiped sweat and thick oil from his face as he walked into the bar. Mike was putting down a cognac.

He grinned at Freddie and said, "Well, Arizona, you seemed to be having plenty of aggravation until I came along. Whatsa matter, losing your touch?"

"I reckon I could have done well enough with those Fokkers if you hadn't butted in," Freddie said, signaling for a drink.

"Yeah, it sure looked that way," Mike said. "If I hadn't come down there to give you a hand, you'd be gettin' Taps right now. You can buy me a drink, if you want to."

Freddie took a long breath and drew himself up and prepared for an argument. Then a grin broke out over his features and he said, "All right, pardner, I'll buy you a drink. I'll buy you two drinks. I'll stake you to drinks for the rest of the week if you'll tell me what happened to make you remember that you were still fightin' a war."

"That dirty skunk Gernheim," Mike muttered, and there was enough murder in his eyes to take care of the whole German army.

"What about him?" Freddie said.

"Well, it's this way," Mike said. "I come to Bernecourt this morning to talk to Gernheim. He's been teachin' me a lot of things about history and war and so forth. Real interesting talk, see. And he's telling me that a man's a fool for fighting, no matter what country or cause he's fighting for. And then all of a sudden this Boche moves like a snake and he's got my revolver out of its holster and he's pointing it at me and calling me a fool. He says he's been waiting for this chance and now he'll be able to sneak back to his own lines and continue fighting for his beloved Kaiser. How do you like his nerve?"

"Did he get away?" Freddie said.

"Whaddya think I am, a sap?" Mike growled. "I took a swing at him as he pulled the trigger, and he missed me by an inch or so. Before he could get in another shot, I hit him on the jaw. He's probably still sleeping."

Freddie was slowly rolling a cigarette and drawling, "Wal, I guess from now on you won't be on speaking terms with Mr. Gernheim."

"Listen," Mike said, "from now on when I talk things over with any Boche—I'm using bullets!"

BOMBERS- READY!

By **ROBERT
J.
HOGAN**

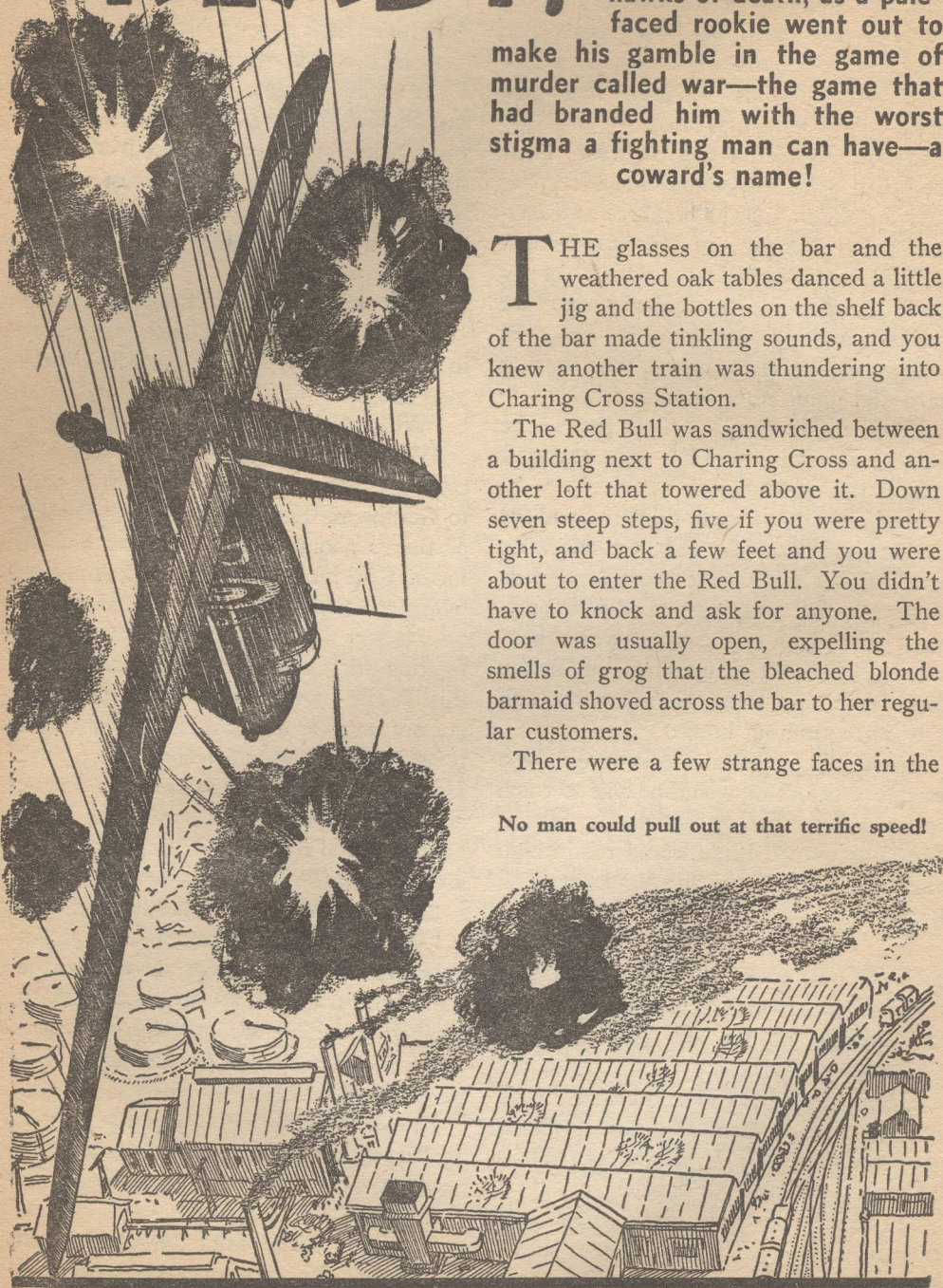
High and cruel rode the hawks of death, as a pale-faced rookie went out to make his gamble in the game of murder called war—the game that had branded him with the worst stigma a fighting man can have—a coward's name!

THE glasses on the bar and the weathered oak tables danced a little jig and the bottles on the shelf back of the bar made tinkling sounds, and you knew another train was thundering into Charing Cross Station.

The Red Bull was sandwiched between a building next to Charing Cross and another loft that towered above it. Down seven steep steps, five if you were pretty tight, and back a few feet and you were about to enter the Red Bull. You didn't have to knock and ask for anyone. The door was usually open, expelling the smells of grog that the bleached blonde barmaid shoved across the bar to her regular customers.

There were a few strange faces in the

No man could pull out at that terrific speed!



bar that night, faces above British uniforms. For the Red Bull, in the basement as it was, served better as an air raid shelter than the real thing. You could continue your drinking without a break in the Red Bull when the sirens screamed.

One of the strange faces belonged to Ben Marshall. In his new R. A. F. pilot's uniform, he sat by himself at a table for two. It wasn't that he couldn't have had company if he wished. He was an attractive youngster, tall, well set up. Even the barmaid, who was old enough to be his mother, couldn't keep her admiring glances off his even features.

A middle-aged cockney air raid warden edged over to him and stuck out his hand.

"I say, I never miss the chance to shake the 'and of one of you blinkin' R. A. F. air chaps, I don't."

Ben Marshall permitted his hand to be nearly shaken off, and tried to smile. He said "Thanks," and ordered another double Scotch. Without encouragement, the A.R.W. pulled out the other chair and sat down.

He screwed up his face and studied Ben for a moment.

"I've been watchin' you drink, sir, if you don't mind, You feelin' bad about something?"

Ben Marshall shrugged and watched the big blonde maid pour out his drink behind the bar.

"Maybe—" the cockney ventured, "maybe the blinkin' Jerries got you down, sir. Don't blame you chaps for bein' afraid of them, the bloody devils."

"Jerries?" Ben spat out the word loud enough so that everyone else in the pub turned and glanced at him. "Scared of Jerries! What for?"

"Blimy, that's the way to say it," the A.R.W. chortled, and gave him a swat on the back. "That's the way with all you R. A. F. pilots. 'Afraid of nothin', I say. Afraid of not even the devil himself."

The barmaid was coming over with his

drink. Ben took it, gulped it down, like one frantic with thirst. The chaser of water stopped his coughing, and then he called out, "Another! Make it two."

The A.R.W. leaned forward eagerly. "Blimy, you sound like was an American. I 'ope you're not gettin' homesick or—"

"Hell, no! What is there to get homesick over? My mother died before I could remember her, and my father—the less we say about him, the better. My grandparents, who brought me up, are dead and—"

Ben Marshall stopped in a final gasp, glared at the A.R.W. "Isn't that enough? Do you want to know more?" He turned to the barmaid, who was still standing beside the table. "Can't I get those two drinks I ordered, or is there a law against being an American?"

"Oh, no, sir. But mightn't you take it easy with your drinking, sir, a nice flyin' laddie like yourself? Already you've had enough Scotch to fetch you a blow between the eyes like a sledge."

Ben Marshall gulped and looked desperate.

"Let it hit me. Damn it, that's the trouble. It won't. I've been trying to get drunk for an hour."

He rose from the table, got up steadily. He threw a pound note on the bar as he passed, and strode out into the night.

Ben Marshall didn't have to look up into the skies to know that enemy bombers wouldn't be over tonight—not unless they were flying some broadcast beam and taking a chance. There was little or no fog, but there was rain, a drizzle that was more like a heavy mist.

He'd been in the blackouts before, when he had come to train and had spent a few days in London. That was before—before the orders had come assigning him to the 32nd Spitfires.

Queer how that squadron, the 32nd Spitfires, had grown into a ogre before him after he'd heard Ron Lawrence had

been assigned there too. Queer how all the punch could go out of a chap over following the movements of a man whom he had never met.

Tomorrow he would meet Ron Lawrence, and young Lawrence would surely recognize the name Marshall. It would remind young Lawrence of another Marshall, a man whose cowardice had been responsible for the death of Lawrence, senior, a hero of the old Royal Flying Corps.

Yes, tomorrow Ben Marshall would be presenting himself in the briefing room standing before the squadron leader. Then he'd be taken out and the S. L. would introduce him to the others—among them, Ron Lawrence. He'd rather take a horse whipping, rather face Messerschmitts, five to one, than that meeting in the morning.

The misty rain sprinkled lightly on him. He walked aimlessly until he came to Northumberland Avenue, then turned northwest, and from there into Trafalgar Square.

Not much going on about the Square, even though it was early. In the darkness of the blackout he could somehow feel the Nelson Column looming up in Trafalgar Square.

Ben Marshall walked around it in the dark as he had walked about the base in daylight. Plenty of sandbags about now, but still the old British lions lay as if guarding the four bracing arms of the great monument's pedestal. He stopped, half way around and stared through the thickness at the inscription on the column. He couldn't read the words but he knew them—the immortal words of Viscount Nelson spoken before the famous battle: *England expects that every man will do his duty.*

There was a great deal of worry and conviction in Marshall's mind as he repeated the words to himself. Then, as though he were dedicating himself at this moment to the great cause, he raised his

hand very stiffly in the British salute.

Marshall held that salute to Nelson and Britannia for perhaps five seconds. Then, suddenly, the Scotch sneaked up and knocked him flat on his face against an imperturbable lion.

A TRAIN roared into Charing Cross Station, and the glasses on the tables and the bar went into their dance.

Ben Marshall's head was splitting, and he could smell the sodden odor of grog. He felt the shudder of the cot under him as the express rolled to a stop in Charing Cross, and he knew where he was.

When he opened his eyes, the A. R. W. was giving him a crooked, good-natured grin and saying, "Lor' blimy, you near bashed your 'ead in when you fell against the lion's nose. I thought I 'ad a dead one on my 'ands."

Ben raised his hand to his aching head and lifted himself on his other elbow.

"You see, sir, I followed you out. I 'ope you didn't mind bein' followed. Hit was the Scotch you 'ad, sir. Enough to float one of your blessed American destroyers, sir, and knowin' how good is the Scotch that Millie pours out here in the Red Bull, I says to meself, I says, you'd better follow the lad to see 'e gets in no 'arm. And I did."

With an effort and much pain, Ben swung his feet off the cot and sat bent over, head in hands.

"Must be somethin' bad botherin' you, sir," the A.R.W. ventured kindly. "I stood in the rain watchin', beggin' your pardon, sir. I watched you talkin' to Nelson's Column, I did, and I saw you salute. And then over you went, like the statue of King Charles before a time bomb two years come next fall, and I picked you up and brought you back to the Red Bull, and that's where you are now."

"Yes, I know," Marshall said. "Thanks. Thanks very much." He ran his hand through his hair and gently

rubbed the sore spot. "What time is it? I've got to report to the—" He stopped and swallowed hard, as though there was a very bad taste in his mouth.

"It's early of the evening, yet," the A.R.W. said. "Where did you say you were goin', sir?"

"I didn't," Marshall said. He turned then and looked the A.R.W. squarely in the eye. "Look here," he said. "I don't mean to be rude. But you see, I tried to forget and I couldn't get drunk enough. I couldn't get drunk at all until someone threw that brick. Now I simply feel rotten."

"If I can 'elp you," the A.R.W. said, "I'll be glad to. Sometimes, sir, unloadin' the chest is good for the soul as they say. Beggin' your pardon, sir. I'm old enough to be your father. If it's advice you—"

Ben shook his head.

"Would you want to tell me your name?"

"I'd rather not," Ben said. "But maybe—" He glanced at the A.R.W. again—"maybe you might tell me what you would do."

"Fire away," the A.R.W. nodded.

"Suppose you had never known your father. He had been killed, trying to save his own skin, and had let another die. Your mother had died before him. Then the man your father—"

Ben stopped and stared again at the older man. "Pretty complicated," he said. "You don't know me. I might as well tell you straight."

"What you tell me won't go no farther," the A.R.W. said.

"My father was a pilot in the last war," Ben began. "I never got the story very straight. Just had to piece things together from what I heard. He was an American who went up into Canada and enlisted with the old Royal Flying Corps. Not long ago, I did the same thing.

"That war was about half over when, as I understand it, my father and another

R. F. C. pilot named Ronnie Lawrence went up to test the practicability of using parachutes for pilots. I believe Ronnie Lawrence was to do the jump. But while they were up, something happened to the ship. As nearly as I could get it, the controls locked.

"Those below could see there was a fight going on between my father and Lawrence; then a parachute burst out and down, but too late. My father, who had jumped in the parachute, was too close to the ground when it opened. He was killed. Lawrence was also killed in the plane crash. All my life I've lived in shame over that."

The A.R.W. was slow of thought, and he shook his head now.

"Blimy, but I don't see why."

"My father," Marshall said, turning his eyes away, "apparently fought with Lawrence until he got the parachute away from him. Don't you see, it was as bad as murder. My father took away his right to live by fighting him and taking the chute from him!"

A blank look crossed the weatherbeaten face of the A.R.W. He nodded solemnly.

"Oh," he said simply. "I see." He paused and then he said, "But what's worrying you about it now, sir?"

"For years," Ben said, "I've looked forward to the time when I might do something to square up for the cowardice of my father. When the war began, I went to Canada and enlisted. But what bothers me now is that I've known Captain Lawrence had a son a little older than I. I've always been afraid that some day I might have to face him. Tomorrow morning, I'm to report to the 32nd Spitfire Squadron at Hackington. Ron Lawrence, Captain Lawrence's son, is flight lieutenant there. Don't you see?"

The A.R.W. was staring down at the floor.

He nodded. "I see," he said, "but he shouldn't hold any feeling against you."

"How can he help it? How could anyone when—"

"You'd better get some sleep," the A.R.W. said, easing Marshall back on the cot. "You'll want to get to the 32nd tomorrow and show them the stuff you've got in you, sir. You'll need rest for it. Wait."

The A.R.W. stepped into the bar and in a moment returned with a glass half full of a cloudy white liquid.

"Drink it," he said.

There was soothing power in that warm drink. With his stomach galloping and his head spinning, Ben Marshall fell asleep in spite of himself.

His head ached worse than ever when the A.R.W. awoke him next morning.

"You'll want to dress," he said. "I 'ope you slept well."

Marshall stretched and felt his head. Bad, but better than the previous night. "Thanks." He began to pull on his clothes. "What time is it?"

"Early. Half past five. Millie's makin' tea and crumpets for your breakfast. I'll watch the time and see you get out of Charing Cross on the right train."

"You're being might swell to me," Marshall said.

"It's a pleasure, sir."

AN HOUR later Ben Marshall sat alone in a seat on the train, his brain spinning again. The taste in his mouth was like nothing out of a beehive.

It seemed that most of his life he had rebelled against this moment that was to come. The kids in school had taunted him about his father's cowardice.

Ben had given two kids a licking for it, and then he'd asked his grandparents about his father. They were his mother's parents. Grandfather had merely snorted, and left the room. His grandmother had taken him down beside her, had been very kind.

She had said, "Both your father and

Mr. Lawrence were killed, so there was no one left to tell exactly what happened. We'll never know, Benjamin, just what did happen."

He sat there, on the way to Hackington, trying to reason himself into a semblance of calmness and sanity. He wasn't afraid of a beating from Lawrence. That was a thought—take a good beating from Ron Lawrence and get it over with. He'd dredded this meeting for so long, it might be a good way out.

That would be it. He felt better. Maybe Ron Lawrence would walk right up to him, say, "So you're the so-and-so whose father murdered my father," and then he'd let him have it. That would feel good compared to the mental torment he had gone through for so many years.

Somehow, it never occurred to Ben Marshall that what his father had done was no fault of his. From the time he could talk and understand the spoken word, the responsibility for his father's act had been forced upon him by the other kids. He'd been over it a great many times. He knew he wouldn't blame Ron Lawrence for hating him, even for wanting to kill him. That would be up to Ron Lawrence himself. He, Ben Marshall, wouldn't raise a finger to stop Lawrence from doing anything he might care to in retaliation.

An hour and a half later, the train slowed and shuddered to a stop in Hackington station. Ben Marshall could hear planes roaring overhead. For an instant he forgot his troubles, and thrilled at the sound. Then he remembered, and the pain in his chest returned. His hands shook as he gripped his bags. He stepped from the train and a car was waiting.

A corporal saluted and took his bags. "You're Pilot Officer Marshall? We've been expecting you, sir."

Marshall answered the salute and got into the car without more than a vague, "Thanks."

It wasn't much of a drive to headquar-

ters of the 32nd Spitfires at the edge of the well-camouflaged airdrome. Again a thrill shot through Ben Marshall as he heard the roaring of the Merlin engines and saw Spitfires thundering into the air. Then came the realization that at any moment he would meet Ron Lawrence.

Roland Leeds was the squadron leader. He was a knotty man, rather slight, with movements that were quick and alert.

"Welcome, Marshall," he said. "We've been expecting you. I say, you're just in time. Noa mess should be called at any moment. Come, I'll take you to lunch and introduce you to the men."

Now it was coming. Ben Marshall's whole frame seemed to be trembling as he walked beside his new commanding officer down the path to the mess. Already the pilots were going in.

Ben eyed them. One of those would be Ron Lawrence. But which one? He'd soon find out. Pilots saluted the S. L. as they passed. They were a clean-looking lot.

THEY were in the mess now, and the S. L. was mentioning names.

The names droned on in Ben's ears, names that at the moment meant nothing to him. Campbell, Smythe, Reynolds,

Walker, Coleman, Charles, Wentworth, and so on.

They had just finished, Marshall walking beside the S. L. and shaking hands and saying, "How are you?" or "Glad to know you," when the mess door opened and a tall man walked in. He was older than Marshall, perhaps five years or so, and he had a pleasant face and manner.

The boys called out, "Hi, Ron," and he nodded back.

And then they were face to face, for the first time.

Years of fear behind this, but somehow now that he was facing Lawrence, Ben Marshall stood up well. He expected his knees to buckle. He was sure his face was crimson, but Lawrence didn't seem to think anything was wrong.

The S. L. was saying, "Ron, this is our new man, Lieutenant Ben Marshall. Marshall, your flight lieutenant, Ron Lawrence."

As simple as that. Ben's eyes were glued to that wind-battered face before him, watching for the first signs of anger. He thought the smile that had been on Ron Lawrence's did fade just a little, but he couldn't be sure even of that.

Lawrence was holding out his hand,



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looking serious, now. "Marshall, it's a pleasure to shake hands with you."

"I'm glad to know you," Ben was saying.

"There's a chair for you, Marshall, right next to mine," Lawrence said. He touched Ben's elbow and motioned him ahead. And they were eating.

Ben Marshall's head was in a daze. Could it be that Ron Lawrence didn't recognize his name? That was it, of course.

After mess, the situation became worse, no getting away from it. For Ron Lawrence said, "We're a little cramped for room at the 32nd. I hope you won't mind sharing my quarters."

The quarters were most comfortable. No one could have been of more help than Ron Lawrence in making him feel at home.

MID-AFTERNOON the signal and rush to the ready room for special call and orders came. The S.L. was waiting, and he gave the orders in his short, clipped style.

"Stukas coming across the channel. Intercept at this point if possible." He was pointing to a spot on a large map.

Outside, as they ran to their Spitfires, Lawrence said, "Don't take too much chance first time out. Remember, Stukas can't fire below. Get them in the belly if possible."

"Thanks," Ben said, and hurried to his Spitfire.

He strapped on his flap mike. Already he could hear Ron Lawrence's voice in his helmet phones.

"Testing. Okay?"

"Okay, Campbell," he heard one pilot and then, "Okay, Walker," and so it went.

Then, when his turn came, Ben Marshall said, "Okay, Marshall." He almost choked on the name.

The signal, and they were off, thundering into the air. They were broken up in three-plane V-formations, Marshall flying

left tip in Ron Lawrence's V. Out toward the Channel they headed, still climbing. Into the phones came a voice.

"Stukas at ten thousand."

"Stukas!"

Ben stared ahead. He could see the dots, but they were too small yet for him in his inexperience to recognize them as Stuka bombers.

Lawrence turned the course of his lead V straight for the Stukas. Didn't have to swerve much to meet them almost head-on. Clouds cleared enough so they could look down and see the Channel coast just as it looked on the S. L.'s map. This was the very spot the S. L. had pointed out. Lawrence was good, very good.

Fifteen Stukas altogether. They had their nerve coming over in daylight. Marshall was thinking that when Lawrence said in his flap mike, "They must have a definite objective to take such a chance."

Browning guns were ready, eight each; thumbs were poised over trigger buttons, ready to cut loose with chattering death.

Then came the scramble of Stukas and Spitfires. A Spitfire went down, then two Stukas going and then another and another, the last diving to release their single bombs.

"Get them in the belly. Can't fire below."

Marshall remembered that, but Lawrence was reminding him by radio. Marshall whipped over his Spitfire and roared at the belly of a Stuka as it tipped over and tried to dive out of the fight. A yell sounded in Ben Marshall's phones. "Look out, Marshall! Messerschmitts."

Wildly, Ben whirled and stared up and behind. A flock of ME's were tearing down from high above. Two of them hurtled after him as he tore at the belly of the Stuka. He pressed his trigger, and as the eight Brownings roared, swerved away and ceased fire.

Screaming slugs tore down in a wild cloud about the Spitfire. Frantically, Ben

Marshall kicked and lashed his controls. The Spitfire went hurtling into frantic gyrations. Then a flaming mass went hurtling past him, and a white mushroom blossomed out almost in front of him.

Savagely, he kicked to avoid cutting down the pilot or his chute. Then another Messerschmitt seemed to explode in the left wing, and to start falling, smoke pouring out of the engine.

Marshall righted his Spitfire and stared about. The Stukas, of those that were left, were racing back across the Channel. Some of the ME's were still scrambling with a few Spitfires higher up, but they broke as Marshall sighted them.

Lawrence was swinging in close and his voice cracked in the mike.

"Lucky you saw those ME's just when you did."

Then he called his pack together and they droned home with two ships missing.

"Wentworth won't be back, poor devil," Lawrence said when they had landed. The S.L. nodded silently. "I saw him go down flaming. Couldn't get out," Lawrence added.

There was silence for a moment, and then, in lighter vein, "Oh, yes, Coleman was shot down. He got out in his chute all right. I saw him landing in the Channel. A patrol boat was heading for him."

Campbell forced a laugh. "It's Coleman who's always talking about his ice cold shower in the morning. Maybe enough cold water will shut him up, what?"

"Righto!" They could laugh again.

Plenty of slugs had gone through Marshall's Spitfire. Lawrence came over to look at it. He shook his head.

"What do you carry, old boy—horse shoes or rabbits' feet?"

"I guess I was lucky," Marshall ventured.

"We'll get old Harry to fix it for you," Lawrence said. He called, and a grizzled old war dog of a mechanic came over.

"Harry, this is Lieutenant Ben Mar-

shall. He has angel wings. See if you can get his ship in condition for the next scramble."

"Righto, sir."

"Harry is the best mechanic in all England," Lawrence went on. "He kept 'em flying in World War Number One, eh, Harry?"

"That I did, sir, and your dad's ship I kept flying, too. Lieutenant Lawrence—blimy, there was a flyer, your dad, sir. But I think his colt has a shade on him, sir."

"Thanks, Harry." Ron Lawrence turned away.

Again Ben Marshall's brain was spinning. Had there been a hidden meaning, a slam against his own father in what old Harry had said? He didn't have time to think much about it.

Ron Lawrence had gone out of earshot when Harry turned from looking over the injured Spitfire and said, "Beggin' your pardon, sir, but aren't you the son of Lieutenant Marshall what was killed in the same accident with Ronnie Lawrence?"

There was pain in his chest, and a burning in his throat, and for an instant, Ben couldn't speak.

Then he managed to say, "Yes, he was my father."

Old Harry shook his head. "I was there when it happened, I was," he said. "Too bad." That was all. Then he added, "Your ship is badly shot up, sir. But I think we can 'ave her in good flying order by the time Jerry comes over again, sir."

"Thanks."

Queer that Harry should recognize the name Ben Marshall and yet Ron Lawrence would not. Might be enlightening to hear the old fellow's verdict of his father's death, but then Ben Marshall had heard that story too often already.

BACK in his quarters he was alone, for Lawrence had gone out. A million thoughts rushed through his mind. Old

Harry knew now. He'd most likely tell Ron Lawrence.

At evening mess nothing was said, but after dinner Harry came over to say that Ben's Spitfire would be good as new by morning.

When they turned in for the night, sleep would not come to Ben Marshall. He rolled and tossed. There in the other cot was the man he had hated to meet, one of the finest men he knew. Since Old Harry knew who he was, why hadn't he told Lawrence and gotten it over with?

Then Ben hit upon another plan that would clear the situation. He'd wake Ron Lawrence now and tell him who he was. He'd tell him the whole story, say he was sorry and let Lawrence do what he would.

He got up on one elbow and reached over to wake Lawrence, but just then a light flashed under the door. Then a short, clipped voice said, Wake up! "Special orders!"

It was the S.L.

"Yes, sir," Ben called, and Ron rolled over on his cot and asked, "What's up?"

Ben opened the door, and the S.L. didn't smile.

He said with tight-lipped severity, "Report at mess for coffee at once."

They pulled on flying suits and boots and shuffled through the darkness to the mess hut. Other pilots were arriving, and Squadron Leader Leeds was waiting at the door, a paper in his hand, for the last of them to come.

When they were all assembled, the S. L. began.

"Men," he said, "I'm forced to ask you to go on a suicide mission. If there are any who don't want to go along, I won't insist, and dashed if I'll blame you, either."

Silence.

"Ron Lawrence, your flight lieutenant, will have full directions. Intelligence has discovered the vulnerable part of the great munitions plant at Franken. Again and

again our Blenheims have bombed the factory, but it has a triple steel roof that seems to be bomb-proof. There is, however, a ventilator tube at the northeast corner of the plant which, if a bomb can be dropped through it, will blow up the whole works."

There was silence again while he took a deep breath.

"The entire squadron, all those who are willing, are to go over at once. You'll arrive just at dawn if you leave now. Already each of your Spitfires has been equipped with a single bomb. Any one of these bombs, if dropped into that ventilator tube, will do the work."

The S. L. paused again, then continued.

"Flight Lieutenant Ron Lawrence will lead you. The entire area is very heavily guarded with archie batteries; you know that. But one of you has to get through to the mark. Lawrence will dive first, then the next and the next, according to his length of experience here at the field." The S. L. glanced at Ben Marshall. "That leaves you at the end of the line, Marshall."

He swept his eyes over the pilots again. "Do you all understand?"

Heads nodded in agreement.

"That's all."

IT WASN'T long, perhaps eight or ten minutes, before the Spitfires, loaded down with their bomb each, were thundering through the darkness, into the air. Ron Lawrence flew just a little below and ahead and then the line stretched out in echelon formation.

Ben Marshall's brain was working normally now. All his life he'd prayed for a chance to prove that Americans have guts, that a Marshall could be brave too.

And now he was planning. They'd start at perhaps five or ten thousand feet above that factory at Franken. It would be just light enough to see the plant when they came over. There was plenty of

time to plan everything a hundred times over. And so Ben planned as they droned on into the dark sky.

It seemed hours before they saw the first streaks of dawn. They had crossed the Channel and were now well over Germany.

They flew with throttled engines at fifteen thousand, and the country below was only sparsely dotted with dwellings and towns.

Suddenly Ben Marshall sat straight up in his seat and stared ahead in the pink morning light. Ahead was a city, large enough to be Franken. And he could see dimly outlined, in spite of the camouflage of the roof, a huge factory.

They were getting nearer. Already archie was waking up to the peril, and shells were bursting all about them. The Spitfires rocked from the concussion.

But none of these things were bothering Ben Marshall. His plans were made. Once, a long time ago, Ron Lawrence's father had died because of the cowardice of Marshall, senior. Now Ron Lawrence was to dive first into this suicide hell. And Ben Marshall had a chance to save him. One chance in a thousand, perhaps, but a chance. Now was the time. He must blow up that plant, place his single bomb at the vulnerable spot before Ron Lawrence could dive.

Ben battered his throttle wide open, and the Merlin with its 1,030 horses screamed like a thing gone mad. Down he streaked, Ben Marshall with all archie batteries suddenly concentrating on him.

He kicked rudder and lashed his hand control like mad. The Spitfire zigzagged like a drunken thing as it went hurtling down. Shrapnel tore through his wings.

Down, with everything set. Didn't seem so fast. He seemed almost to be standing still with that factory and the ventilator at the northeast corner coming up at him at a terrific speed.

Down he tore until it seemed that the

wings and controls would pull apart. Once he looked back and in the blur saw the other Spitfires behind, hovering, waiting, seemingly stunned at what he had done.

Hunched over, Ben Marshall straightened out his Spitfire and steadied the aim on the target of the vent. Down he went, gathering speed. The Spitfire rocked and jolted from the archie fire and then, suddenly, the Merlin cut out cold.

But still Ben Marshall went plunging down. He had speed enough and to spare, even without his engine.

On the target. Ready to pull and release the single bomb. Then the pull-out. That would be something at this speed.

Wham! He let go the bomb and pulled up at the same time. The ship felt lighter. He could actually glide. *Have to land somewhere over there.* That was his last thought before everything blanked out.

Smothering in black, he came out of it again, quickly. The ship was climbing, almost to a stall. Behind, the earth seemed to have gone wild, as though a million small volcanoes had erupted at the same time. The factory was heaving and falling apart in sections; then, in a moment, there was no ammunition plant. It was in the air—in small pieces.

There was a small field ahead, not much more than a good-sized pasture. Ben's brain was still numb. He'd be taken a prisoner, he thought and stay to rot in some German prison camp until the end of the war.

But inside, his heart felt glad. He'd had his chance, and he'd showed them. He turned now to look for the rest of the gang. But they weren't where he had left them. They were behind him and coming in close. Ron Lawrence's ship was coming directly behind him. The propeller was just ticking over and his flaps were ready for landing.

"Flaps, that's right," Ben Marshall said aloud himself.

Then Lawrence was saying in the

phones, "Get your flaps open and set down easy. I've dropped my bomb and I'm going to try and pick you up. Maybe we can both squeeze into this one cockpit."

There weren't any Germans running to stop them at the moment. When Ben landed, Ron Lawrence rolled in beside him, smooth as a glove. It wasn't until then that Ben Marshall found he couldn't use his left arm or leg. Blood was dripping down and he was growing weaker.

"I'll carry you," he heard in his phones, and then Lawrence was running over and pulling the radio plugs off Ben's helmet, carrying him back to his own Spitfire.

Somehow they wedged themselves into the single cockpit of that Spitfire, Ron Lawrence first and then Ben Marshall on his lap.

From above came the sound of staccato fire, the rapid roar of many machine guns. Ben tried to look up, saw things in a blur, saw many planes tangling with each other.

"Blast those ME's," Lawrence yelled. Then he poured on the petrol and the Merlin engine thundered. They were sweeping into the air in a mad swirl of lead.

Spitfires of the 32nd fought like mad to keep the Messerschmitts off until Ron could rise.

Up, up they fought with ME's trying to get at them through the thundering Spitfires. Then they were flying, climbing, fighting their way out. Ben Marshall tried to sight the guns and work the gun but-ton, but things were getting hazy.

The fighting seemed to be getting more intense. Then things quieted down for Ben Marshall and there was nothing—nothing at all but peace and the quiet that unconsciousness brings.

THINGS were still very quiet when Ben returned to consciousness. There was a mumbling sound that slowly resolved itself into words.

"He's been badly shot up on the left side, arm and leg both. Same burst must

have got him. Lost a lot of blood, but with that transfusion we've just given him he should come along."

So he'd already had a transfusion! He wasn't in the Spitfire any more.

He opened his eyes and saw a doctor just leaving the room and a face looking down at him. He could see only part of the face, for a bandage almost covered the right eye and that side of the forehead. But what was left of the face belonged to Ron Lawrence. Ron was smiling.

"Why in the devil—Ron began," then he laughed. "I'm a bit hasty, perhaps, but I've been trying to figure you out, old man. Why did you go against orders and dive first instead of last?"

Ben Marshall was weak, but he had enough strength to smile and say, "I figured perhaps that might go a little towards squaring things, Lawrence."

"Squaring things?" Lawrence looked perplexed. "I don't understand."

"Between you and me," Ben said. "You couldn't know who I am, or you'd understand. I've dreaded meeting you—for years. Knew it would happen some time. Got almost too much to bear when you were so damn swell to me. You see my father was the one who—"

"Oh, that," Ron Lawrence said. "You mean you wanted to do this for me because of that mixed-up crash that our fathers were killed in?"

"You knew about me being—I mean you knew it was my father who took the chute and—"

"Of course. I knew it before you arrived at the field. Always felt I owed you sort of a debt on that score, old man."

"But my father took the chute, I understood, when—"

Don Lawrence took a long breath.

"Listen, old man. That accident has been argued in British air circles since the day it happened. You see, I've always felt it was my father's fault—that is, old Harry and I have. I still feel that I owe you a

great deal, somehow, Marshall. Of course, I was only a little shaver then, but from what Harry has told me, and from what I could remember of Dad—"

"Look," Ben Marshall broke in, holding out his good arm in remonstrance, "don't kid me. You've been swell to me up to now, but I can take the truth."

"That's what I'm trying to tell you," Lawrence went on. "You see, in the first place my old man was noted for being bull-headed. He was usually right, I judge, and he always got his own way."

"Old Harry was there and saw the accident. Your father was in the front cockpit, flying the ship, or that was the way it was supposed to be. My Dad was in the rear cockpit, going to try a jump. Old Harry saw them fighting up there. Couldn't see clearly, of course, because they were too far away. My old man was strong as an ox. Old Harry swears my father pulled yours out of the front cockpit, tried to put the harness on him and toss him overboard. But he didn't make it in time. The chute didn't have a chance to save him."

"But why—" Ben Marshall cried, his heart pounding, "why would your dad

do a thing like that when he was supposed to use the chute?"

"Don't you see how Harry and I have it figured out. My Dad was in the rear cockpit. It's our guess that he figured in the back cockpit he'd have a chance to survive the crash, but your old man wouldn't have a chance in the front."

"Then you think—"

The doctor came in the door and shook his head.

"No more talking for now, gentlemen. The patient must rest."

"Quite," Ron Lawrence said. "Oh, one thing more, Doctor. How soon will Marshall be ready to fly again?"

"About four weeks, I'd say, if he's careful," came the reply.

"Very well," Lawrence turned to Ben Marshall. "Then, for acting against orders, I'll hand out your punishment. You can't disobey orders, you know, without paying the price. As your flight lieutenant, I sentence you to be grounded for four weeks, more or less, depending on when you can leave the hospital."

Lawrence winked, and squeezed Ben Marshall's good shoulder.

"And let that be a lesson to you."

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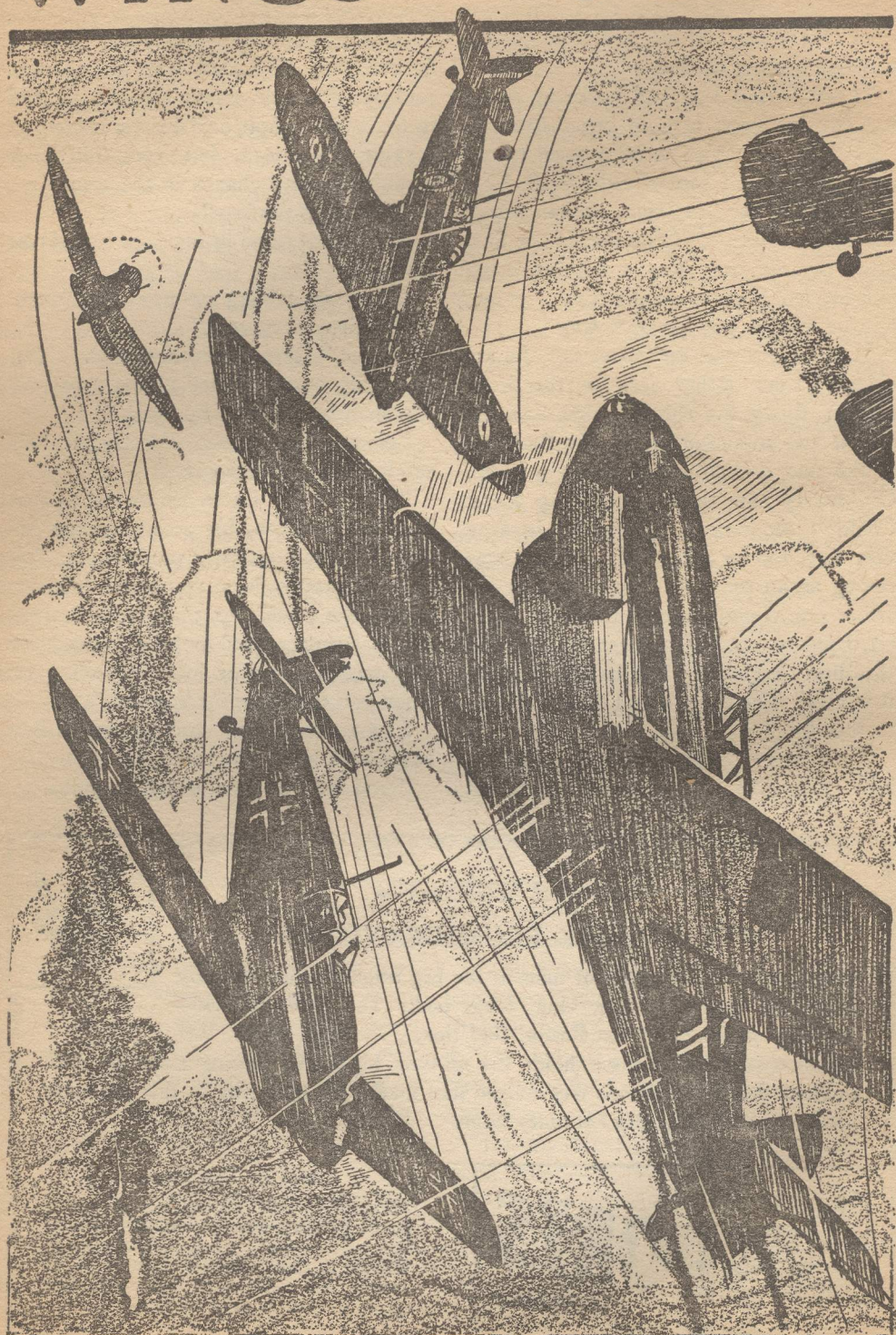
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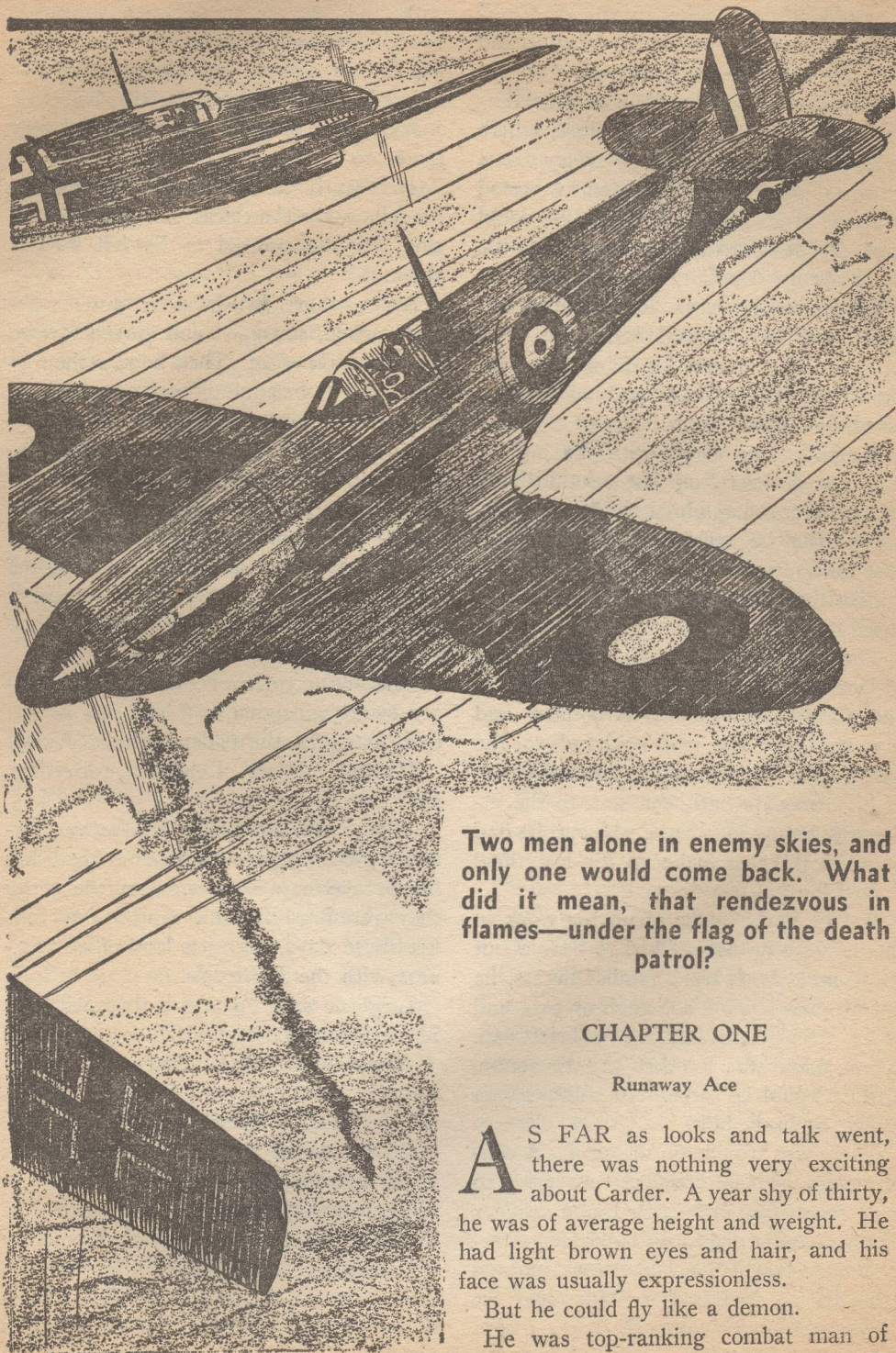
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PATROL

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Two men alone in enemy skies, and only one would come back. What did it mean, that rendezvous in flames—under the flag of the death patrol?

CHAPTER ONE

Runaway Ace

AS FAR as looks and talk went, there was nothing very exciting about Carder. A year shy of thirty, he was of average height and weight. He had light brown eyes and hair, and his face was usually expressionless.

But he could fly like a demon.

He was top-ranking combat man of

Fighter 91, an outfit situated on a stretch of meadow three miles north of Cranwell, a town about thirty miles inland from the east coast of England.

Carder had come to 91 after four very good years with Relford Airlines, where he'd been getting a good salary as a transport pilot. If he had been interested in flying from a military angle, he could have stepped into a nice spot with the U. S. Army Air Corps. But instead he had quit his job with Relford and had come over to England and joined the R. A. F. His reasons for doing this were strictly his own business, and nobody ever asked him about them.

He had come to 91 with the highest recommendations from the pilot instructors in the training school. And forty-eight hours after he arrived at the Cranwell base he was proving to Squadron Leader Axley that the recommendations were based on fact.

There had been a run-in with a group of Dorniers, escorted by Messerschmitts, and Carder had nabbed a bomber and two fighters. He had returned to the base with a Madsen slug in the fleshy part of his arm. He had been sent to the infirmary, but as soon as he was out, he had gone up there to make up for lost time.

And he was terrific.

But he never spoke about his work in the air, and he never liked to hear about it. Coming back from combat flights, he would quietly drink a Scotch or two, and retire to his quarters for a brief nap. When there was another call to action, Carder would be there. No trumpets, no glitter, no brave talk.

There was trouble on the coast. A concentration of Nazi bombers was trying to make mincemeat of the new heavy artillery that was being placed on rocks that overlooked the North Sea. Axley sent out nine Spits to see what was cooking, and the Spits came back—seven of them. Flight Lieutenant Brewster reported that the

German squadron had been met and dealt with, and that the artillery emplacements were unharmed. He also stated that Flying Officer Carder had disposed of two escort Heinkels and two Junkers bombers.

Axley was pleased, and he wanted very much to congratulate Carder. But he knew that it would not be appreciated. Somehow, the American gave the impression that he wanted to be left strictly alone.

Axley, short, brush-haired and brush-moustached, shrugged and moved toward the squadron office. Then he saw the motorcycle that was pulling up beside Hangar B, and the young man who was getting out of the side-car. The man seemed to be somewhat puzzled and very nervous. He was a little above medium height, heavy but well-proportioned. He had blond, wavy hair and blue eyes and he didn't look very happy. He was taking some papers from an inner pocket.

Axley walked toward him.

The young man recognized the squadron leader's insignia, stiffened to a salute, then extended the papers toward Axley.

"Flying Officer Leighton reporting, sir."

"From training school?" Axley muttered, glancing over the papers. He didn't like to take these novices. In an emergency they were dead pigeons. And 91 was red-hot these days, doing a land-office business with the *Luftwaffe*.

Leighton said, "I was a flyer with the Marines in the States, sir."

Axley looked up. "You're an American?"

"Yes, sir," Leighton smiled.

Axley smiled back. He extended his hand, and the Yank took it.

The squadron leader said, "We're glad to have you. And if you're a former U. S. Marine, I suppose there's no doubt about how tough you can be when the occasion demands. But as far as flying is concerned, you're in for a rum time of it,

and you might as well know that from the beginning."

"I didn't come over for a picnic, sir," Leighton said.

And then, not knowing why he asked, Axley said, "Just why did you come over?"

Leighton opened his mouth, and then closed it again, stared at the ground.

"I'm sorry," the squadron leader muttered. "It's enough that you're volunteering, that you're fighting for us. We've no right to ask a lot of foolish questions." He smiled, put an arm around Leighton's shoulder and added, "I don't suppose there's any harm in a drink?"

"I could stand one, sir."

"Good! We'll—" He broke off as he remembered some business in the squadron office that was more important than a drink. He pointed to the canteen bar, told Leighton to report to the office after he'd had a drink.

He watched the American walking toward the squat building. There was something alert and assuring about the man. Also, there was something puzzling.

LEIGHTON walked toward the canteen. Standing at the bar were most of the men who had taken part in the clean-up of the German bomber party. All but one were clustered at the middle of the bar. There was a lot of talk and kidding, a lot of laughter and drinking. But away from the bar, at a small table in the corner of the room, a man drank alone.

As Carder gazed at his Scotch and soda, a shadow fell across the glass. Carder looked up. He blinked once and then he stiffened. His right hand twisted hard. Scotch and soda leaked across the table, and there was a clink as the heavy glass hit against wood.

The man in the doorway turned at the sound and looked at Carder.

And the men at the bar were turning and watching.

Carder's voice was very low and steady. He said, "What's it all about?"

Leighton's features were rock hard. His eyes lost their softness.

He moved toward Carder and said, "That has all the makings of a foolish question. I found you sooner than I expected. But that's unimportant. The point is—I've found you."

Carder flashed a glance at the Britishers who were watching and trying to listen. His voice was very low as he said, "We won't talk here, Leighton. We'll take a walk."

"That suits me fine," Leighton said. His eyes were growing harder, colder.

The two Americans went outside, and Carder lit a cigarette, his face pale.

They walked behind Hangar C. Carder flipped his cigarette a few yards away. He put his hands behind his back. He sensed that his fingers were trembling slightly. He took a long breath and tightened his lips.

Then he looked into Leighton's eyes, and said, "You came a long way."

"It was worth it."

"What are your plans?"

"What do you think they are?"

Carder said, "You're going to take me back?"

"That's right."

"It's wrong."

"We'll see," Leighton said.

Carder started to light another cigarette. Then he threw the match away, threw the cigarette away, and said, "You'll never bring me back, Leighton. And if you open your mouth to the R.A.F., you're going to make a fool of yourself. They can't afford to lose me."

"Neither can Leavenworth."

"I'm doing a job here. If I were back there, I wouldn't be able to do anything but sit in a cell and look at a wall."

"Well, that's what you'll be doing."

"You're a stickler for justice, aren't you, Leighton?"

"Yes, especially when an innocent man has to pay for what a dirty, miserable—"

"Easy, Leighton. You won't gain anything by getting excited."

"If I wasn't excited, I wouldn't have come here. I gave up a renewal of my commission to enlist in the R.A.F. And I'm not flying a Spit for my good health. If it's the last thing I do, Carder, I'm going to bring you back to the States."

"Alive?"

"Yes, alive, and in chains if necessary." Leighton's voice was throbbing, and his hands became fists. He took a step toward Carder.

He said, "My brother is rotting away in prison, suffering for a crime he didn't commit. You're the only man alive who can prove his innocence, for the plain and simple reason that you're guilty."

"Prove it."

Leighton took another step forward. "I'll prove it when the time comes," he said. "I'll prove it before a military court. But first—I'll bring you back. I'll bring you back if I have to—" His eyes were flaming, and for an instant he was almost crazy, leaping at Carder with pumping fists.

The smaller man ducked under the first barrage and came up with a hard left that rocked Leighton. He followed it with a right to the jaw, and the blond man fell back.

Carder thought that it was enough, and steadied himself.

But Leighton was fuming. His head was down and he was rushing again. Carder had to take two hard fists in the chest and ribs in order to get in another solid right to the jaw. He sent Leighton back again, and he was setting his left for a knockout punch, when a siren screamed across the field.

Carder held himself back, unclenched his fists, and turned. The siren was blasting a call for emergency flight. Carder forgot about Leighton; he was already

moving toward the sound of the siren. Then a wild, trembling hand pulled him around; he saw a wild face, and a fist whizzing toward his jaw. He tried to get away from it, but even as he dodged there was an explosion in the vicinity of his chin. He saw bright orange stars, and then he was unconscious.

COMING out of it, Carder heard the roar of Rolls Royce motors. He rolled over and shook his head slowly. His jaw felt as though a bucket of cement had been rammed there, and had hardened. He shook his head again, and got up slowly, remembering what had happened. He called himself a few names for not being fast enough, then shrugged and ran toward the front of the hangar.

He nearly bumped into Squadron Leader Axley, who seemed to be in a big hurry.

"Where've you been, Carder? Your flight went up five minutes ago!" Axley roared.

"I was—I was—"

Axley had his eyes focused on the swollen jaw. "Wherever you were," he said, "you had a disagreement of some sort. But we can't discuss the matter now. Grab your plane and get over toward Cranwell. The Jerries have made a surprise attack on the new aircraft factory, and it's a rum party. The bandits have a lot of wing over that area and we're up against a thick stone wall. The sooner you get up there and in the fight, the happier I'll be."

Carder saluted and ran toward his Spit. It was already being revved-up by two mechanics. Carder was ignoring a proffered chute and helmet. He was in the office, pulling the glass hood over the cockpit, and then he was feeding juice to the hungry Merlin motor. Then he had the ship in the air, and as always, his veins were humming in rhythm with the melody of his motor. He was looking toward Cranwell, working the Spit into a sizzling

climb, and already his fingers were dancing near the gun button. He was forgetting about Leighton, forgetting everything but the battle ahead.

He was directly over Cranwell now; looking down, he could see that a heated tussle was taking place a few thousand feet beneath him. But he wasn't alone in the upper galleries. From the east, from the gray fog and thickness over the North Sea, another group of Nazis had come over, were poised, waiting until the Englishmen had their hands full. Then they would rip down to massacre whatever Spits were left from the initial mix-up.

There were seven single-seater Messerschmitts up here, and as soon as they saw Carder, they went into a claw formation and rushed in for a feast.

Carder kept walking toward them.

But just when he was about to be sliced by Madsen fire, he seemed to change his ideas. He rolled back, fell over on his right wing, then came up in a screeching arc that carried him behind and above the German group. He didn't wait for any subsequent moves on the part of the Nazis. He was down there with a one-second burst that tore through a German pilot.

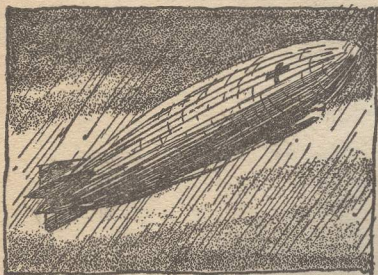
He was twisting into a wingover, and he was up again, flipping Browning lead through a Daimler-Benz engine. Bullets were cutting air on all sides of him as he did a jig in the center of the frantic Nazis. Then he was out of the circle, feinting a runaway dive, coming up for another one-man assault.

HE WAS in the dive, pumping the gun button, pushing out Browning slugs in a ferocious two-second burst. He had a Messerschmitt cockpit in his sights and he was throwing his plane to the left as he saw the German pilot sag in death.

There were four Messerschmitts remaining now, and they were intent on destroying the vicious English plane.

They had him in the center of the death trap, and they were still spreading out, still giving him plenty of room in which to commit suicide. He knew that they wanted him to dive, and he started a go-down; the Messerschmitt on the left was running over to cut him off and tear him apart with lead.

He let the German make a fairly good approach, and then at a distance of seventy yards he was looping back, his ship



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screaming as it pulled out of the dive. And he was retaining the loop, chancing fire from another German who was cutting down over his inverted right wing. The fire ripped through his wing, missing the underside of his fuselage by inches. Then he was stretching the loop, gauging his approach onto a third Messerschmitt.

The third Nazi took Carder's lead at a range of six yards. The Messerschmitt gave a big yawn, and then began to fall, aflame, in a lazy, curling dive.

Carder smiled for a moment.

Then his features were expressionless again, and he was negotiating for the next round with the three Nazis. But they seemed to have had enough of this bitter broth. They were turning hard, pushing snouts toward the east.

Carder wanted to chase them, but even more he wanted to go down and throw himself into the main stew. He flipped a glance at his instrument panel, read 15,000 feet, and then gazed down. He saw that most of the ships down there were either bright green or black. It meant that the Nazis were doing very well for themselves, that things were moving rather badly for the English. Moreover, there were splotches of fire and smoke against the gray of Cranwell. This was a sign that Nazi bombs were striking targets. Carder hoped that a few more R.A.F. squadrons would get a move on and jump into the mess.

He threw his ship into a screaming dive, went down to pitch bullets. The Spitfire lanced through air. Wind burned against the greenhouse. Carder aimed his plane directly into the congestion of Nazi aircraft. He knew that he had to make the first burst count, and count big. And then he had the Messerschmitts lined up, three of them, and a little to the left he had a Dornier bomber. It was a perfect set-up; if he measured it right, he would have a chance of getting two out of the four.

They saw him coming, and they tried to

peel off. He punched a single-second burst that went through a Messerschmitt cockpit and through the pilot. He was still diving, still pouring bullets, working another burst into the Junkers as it tried to fade to the left. He found one of the motors, moved slightly toward his right and stabbed lead through the front cockpit. The Junkers lurched and then it was in a spin, falling.

But as he maneuvered for a continuation of the dive, Carder realized that he had been too anxious. Other Nazis were leaping in above him, coming down with bouquets of lead; he was in a death spot.

A glance that took less than a second told him that there was no way to ease out of it. Already Nazi bullets were *thunking* into his fuselage. He took lead through the glass of the greenhouse, and wondered how it missed his flesh. A slug fanned his shoulder and jabbed into the instrument panel. He was working into a roll-out, figuring that it wouldn't do much good, when he glanced into his rear-view mirror and saw that he wasn't the only berry in this jam.

Another Spitfire had walked into the web, and it had somehow managed to insert itself between the attacking Messerschmitts and Carder. It was taking a lot of lead, but at the same time it was executing some clever maneuvers, and working its way out of the trouble spot. Just as it leaped toward the safer meadows, Carder saw his chance. He fainted toward the right, drew fire from the planes that were trying to cut in front of him. They missed by yards, and he knew that they would keep on missing, because now there was a gap in front of him, and he was through it, sizzling with almost a full throttle capacity.

He walked up fast, coming close to the other English plane. As he jinxed to get parallel to it, he saw that the sky to the north was well-dotted with British ships. The much-needed aid was on the way. The

German group was dragging itself from the skies above Cranwell, hot-footing it toward the North Sea.

Carder wiped sweat and grease from his face and upped his throttle, and then he was parallel to the other plane. He glanced across to the cockpit and smiled a thank-you to the pilot. And then the smile faded from his face.

The pilot was Leighton.

THERE were a lot of Englishmen at the bar, and there was much talking and drinking. The flyers had just returned from the trouble over Cranwell, and they were pleased about the way things had turned out. If aid had not been sent down from the North, they would have been sliced to bits by the numerical superiority of the German group.

As it was, they had lost heavily, but this was a minor consideration compared to the fact that although a lot of roofs in Cranwell had been struck by Nazi bombs, the aircraft factory had escaped damage.

There was no room at the bar or the tables when Leighton walked in. He was taking off his helmet, untying his silk muffler, when he heard a low, steady voice saying, "There's room here."

He glanced to the side, and saw the table in the dark corner. And he saw Carder's face in the shadows. Slowly he walked over to the table and sat down. Carder had a bottle of Scotch and a siphon of soda and two glasses.

"I've been waiting for you," Carder said. "Will you drink?"

"By myself," Leighton said.

"As you will," Carder shoved the bottles and a glass toward him.

Leighton built himself a stiff Scotch, downed it fast. He started to pour liquor again, and then he knew that Carder was watching him closely. He said, "All right, thank me and get it over with. That's what you have in mind, isn't it?"

"Sort of," Carder said. "But I won't

be thanking you, because the only reason you got me out of that jam was to prevent me from slipping away. You don't want me to die, Leighton. You want to bring me back—to talk."

"That's the general idea," Leighton said.

"All right, we understand each other. Halfway, at least," Carder said. "And aside from your motives, the fact remains that if it hadn't been for your cute little stunt over Cranwell, I'd be a corpse right now. That sort of evens up the sock in the jaw. And while we're on the subject, Leighton, I'd like to say that you're handier with Brownings than you are with your fists. You knocked me cold only because you played it the yellow way."

"You're a good one to talk about the yellow way, Carder. Any time you're ready, we'll continue with that boxing match."

Carder was about to take him up on it. Then the smaller man was fastening a steady gaze on the hard and cold blue eyes. There was something about those eyes that told Carder to be careful, to be very careful, and not to take up Leighton's proposals.

He said, "We'll postpone it for a day or so, Leighton. You might get in a lucky punch and blacken my eye. I've got a date in Cranwell tonight and I want to look pretty."

Leighton said nothing. He filled a quarter of the tumbler with Scotch, drank it, and walked away from the table. Carder watched him as he left the canteen bar.

Then Brewster was at the table, sitting down and helping himself to a drink, nodding in the direction of the door and saying, "That Leighton—where does he come from?"

"The States."

"Whiz of a flyer. He got three today."

"That's nice," Carder said.

"You know him?"

"Slightly."

Brewster said, "Well, this was his first taste of combat. And if it's any indication of what's to come, you won't be the champion of this outfit for long." He grinned good-naturedly, and then he stood up and left the table.

Carder stared at nothing. What Brewster had just said was jabbing deep at him.

He was remembering the way that Leighton had danced into the attack. He was remembering Leighton's magnificent approach and head-off and cut-in, the way Leighton had veered and twisted and poured bullets at precisely the correct instant. So Leighton was a whiz of a flyer. And Leighton would be the new top-notcher of the outfit. And Leighton might be able to ask a special favor of Squadron Leader Axley. And Axley might grant that favor. A ship would sail for the States, and a man named Carder would be on that ship. And he would be in chains.

CHAPTER TWO

One-way Flight

IT WAS a small room, and it was clean, although the plaster on the walls was in sad shape. The ceiling was slightly cracked, and the window overlooked another house that had not been so lucky. A Nazi bomb had come down and hit the roof in dead center, killing an entire family of seven.

Glenda wished for a moment that she was not in Cranwell. She gazed at the clock on the battered bureau. He would be here soon. Better get dressed and arrange her hair the way he liked it, and paint her lips.

She wasn't tall, but she was slim and graceful. Her hair was a light blonde shade that was like silver when the light hit it. And her eyes were an unusual shade of green.

She put on a dress that matched the color of her eyes. And to it she pinned a brooch that he had given her a few weeks ago. She stood before the mirror and made herself look the way he liked her to look. Then she was smiling into the mirror, nodding slowly, and the corners of her lips twisted slightly. She was lighting a cigarette when the door opened, and he came in.

He closed the door and stood there looking at her.

"What's the matter?" she said.

"What makes you think that anything's the matter?" Carder said.

She moved toward him. She smiled. "I know. You have a headache. Let me mix you a drink." She started to open the top drawer of the bureau.

"Don't mix me any drinks," Carder said, his voice thin and cold. "If I have any more to drink, you might just as well pour me right back into the bottle."

"Are you drunk?"

"I never get drunk."

"Something's on your mind."

"Plenty is on my mind."

"Tell me about it."

Carder said, "Before I tell you about it, maybe you better have a drink—a stiff one."

His face told her that he was not kidding. She took a stiff drink. She looked at the glass and then at Carder and she said, "All right—let's have it."

He said, "Leighton's brother is here."

Her mouth opened slowly, and then her eyes were widening. The little color was draining from her face as she said, "Leighton—Leighton—his brother—"

"Yeah. Give me a cigarette." He took the pack from her and lit up. The words came out with the smoke. "He traced me all the way from Kansas City to Mexico and across the Caribbean and the Atlantic and Spain. He traced me all the way to Fighter 91."

"And—"

"Well, what do you think he's here for? To pin a Rotary Club medal on me?"

"Has he seen you? Has he talked to you?"

"He's seen me and he's talked to me and he wants to take me back. Now stop trembling like a leaf and listen to me. He doesn't know that you're here, and if you just stay where you are and keep your mouth closed he'll never know."

"Card—Card, I'm scared."

"Listen to me, will you?" he said. "Even if Leighton did find you here, he couldn't get the authorities to arrest you. And besides, he doesn't know about you. Nobody knows about you—"

"Except you, Card."

"Yeah, except me."

She grabbed his shoulders. "Oh Card, you'll never tell, will you?"

"Well, what do you think?"

She put her arms around him. "I know that you'll never tell. I know that you've been—so good to me. I don't deserve it. I don't deserve—anything—"

"Stop crying," he said. He lifted her

face and said, "I don't like you when you cry."

THE tears stopped, and she smiled briefly. Then her features stiffened and she said, "If it ever comes to a show-down, I'll tell them the truth. I'm not going to let you take the rap for me." She frowned, gazed at a cracked wall for an instant and then she looked into his eyes and said, "Card, let's get away from this."

"Are you going to bring that up again?"

"I can't help it, Card. I'm afraid."

"Everyone's afraid." He pointed to the window, to the bomb-shattered roofs of Cranwell. "They're not running away."

"They haven't any reason to run away," she said. "Listen, Card, we could get on a boat and go down to Africa, far down. South Africa. It's safe down there. No bombs, no war—"

"I don't like you to talk like that," he said.

"Well, how do you expect me to talk?" she said. Her voice was hard now, and her green eyes had a stone-like polish.

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Acts of Congress of August 24, 1912, and March 3, 1933, of Battle Birds, published bi-monthly at Chicago, Illinois, for October 1, 1941. State of New York, county of New York, ss. Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Harold S. Goldsmith, who having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the Battle Birds, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Fictioneers Inc., 210 East 43rd Street, New York, N. Y. Editor, Henry Steeger, 210 East 43rd Street, New York, N. Y. Managing Editor, none. Business Manager, Harold S. Goldsmith, 210 East 43rd Street, New York, N. Y. 2. That the owner is: Fictioneers Inc., 210 East 43rd Street, New York, N. Y., Henry Steeger, 210 East 43rd Street, New York, N. Y., Harold S. Goldsmith, 210 East 43rd Street, New York, N. Y. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: none. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner, and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest, direct or indirect, in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. Harold S. Goldsmith, Business Manager. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 29th day of September, 1941. Eva M. Walker, Notary Public, New York County Clerk's No. 26, Register's No. 2-W-178. (My commission expires March 30, 1942.) [Seal]—Form 3526—Ed. 1933.

"Day after day, waiting here. Waiting for you to come back. And when I'm not waiting for you, I'm waiting for bombs to fall, afraid to go out, afraid to be seen. Don't you see? It's just as though I were in prison—prison—" She shuddered, and then her hands went up and covered her face.

He said, "All right, you'll go away. I'll put you on this boat that's going to Africa. When does it sail?"

"You'll go with me?"

"No."

"Card—please—"

"Listen, Glenda, don't try to pull me away from the R.A.F. If you don't want to stick around, okay. I'll manage to get you down to Africa. But I'm staying here."

"I won't leave you, Card."

"Even if you have to stay in Cranwell? Even if you have to risk getting beamed by a bomb?" A dim grin came to his lips.

She rested her head against his chest. She said, "I'll never leave you."

He drew away from Glenda finally. He said, "I've got to be getting back to the field."

"Card—please be careful."

That brought a laugh to his lips. It was impossible to use that word careful in connection with anything done by the R.A.F. The winged Englishmen were smart and strategic and precise. But not careful!

They smiled at each other, and then she moved toward him. At that moment he heard a sound in the hall beyond the door. An alarm clanged in his brain. He leaped for the door.

Carder opened the door then, and he saw a shadow round a corner. He went after the shadow. A door slammed. A light went out, and the hall was dark. Something loomed up in front of Carder and he threw a fist at it. But he missed, and then something shoved him in the chest and he went down, falling against a table. Then he was up and running down

the hall. Daylight from a window at the far end showed him where the electric light switch was. He put the light on. The hall was empty.

Glenda was at his side, breathing hard. She said, "What was it?"

"Somebody in a big hurry," Carder said through tight lips.

She was frightened as she said, "Somebody watching us—listening to us. Someone who knows—about me. Card, you've got to get me out of here. This isn't a hiding place any more. I—"

"Listen—" he said and he was reaching under his tunic, pulling out a revolver and examining it. Checking on the chamber, he handed it to Glenda and said, "You're staying here. Whoever that was, he'll come again. And when he does, you'll point this at him. We've got to find out who it was, although—I've got a fairly good idea."

"Leighton!"

"That's not a bad guess at all," he said. He was moving toward the stairway, and then he said, "I'll see you later."

HE HURRIED down the dark steps. Behind him there was a sob. He called himself names. He hated himself for leaving her alone like this.

He was out the front door, on a narrow street cloaked in twilight. He listened to the sound of his heels clacking on the cobblestones. And he was thinking about the mistakes that people can make, especially when they need dough. . . .

Glenda would never have played a dirty trick on the U.S.A. if she hadn't been in need of money—a lot of money. And she'd had to get her hands on it fast. Her old man was dying, and an operation would save him. It was a matter of a few thousand dollars. Maybe if she had gone to the doc and begged for awhile, she could have put the payment on an installment basis. But she was frightened and

(Continued on page 93)

THE ACE FROM THE MAIN STEM

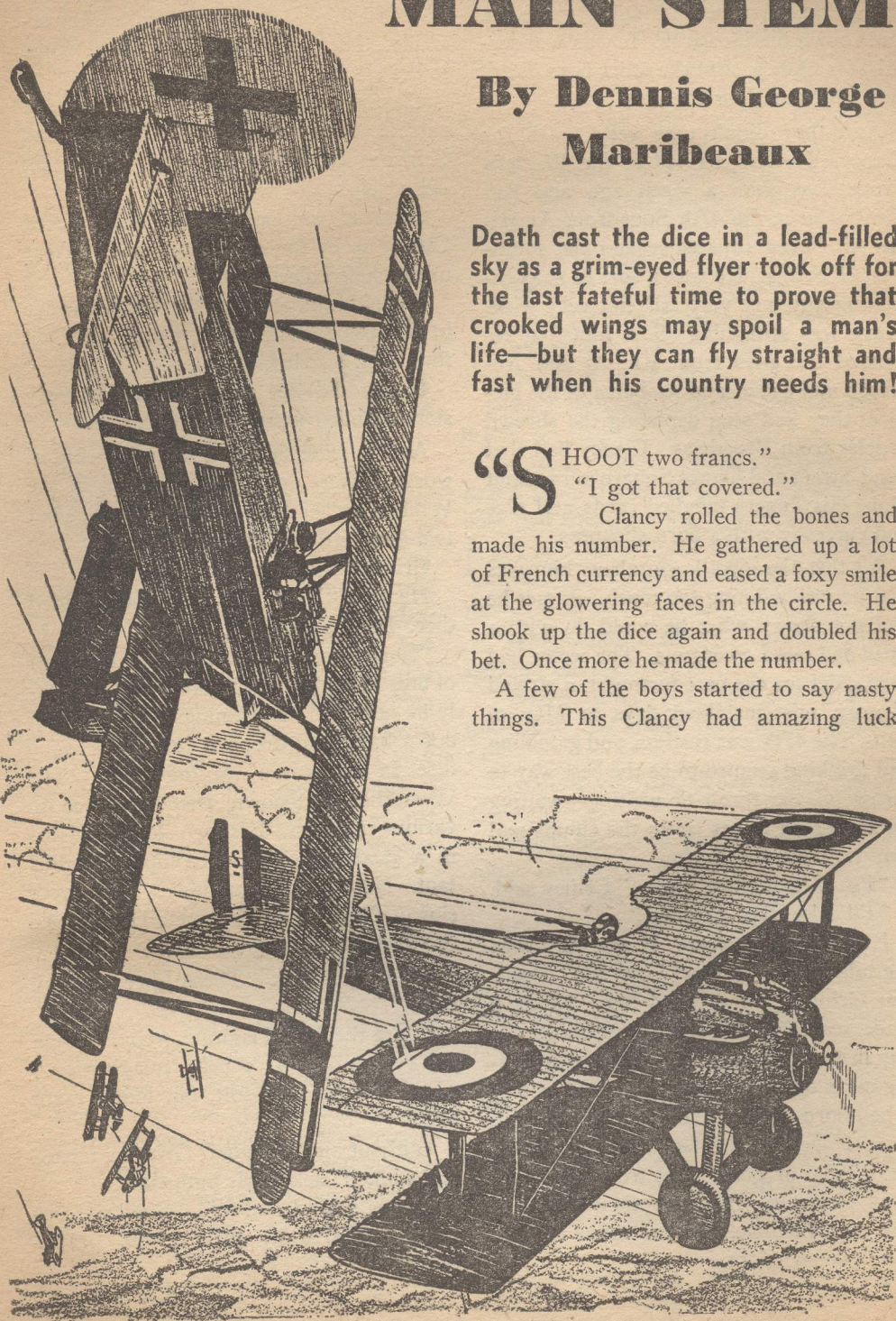
By Dennis George
Maribeaux

Death cast the dice in a lead-filled sky as a grim-eyed flyer took off for the last fateful time to prove that crooked wings may spoil a man's life—but they can fly straight and fast when his country needs him!

"SHOOT two francs."
"I got that covered."

Clancy rolled the bones and made his number. He gathered up a lot of French currency and eased a foxy smile at the glowering faces in the circle. He shook up the dice again and doubled his bet. Once more he made the number.

A few of the boys started to say nasty things. This Clancy had amazing luck



when it came to contests of chance. Last night, at blackjack, he had cleaned up. The day before, in a red-hot poker game, he had shown terrific cards. It was wonderful—for Clancy. But the other boys didn't care very much for the idea.

And they didn't care very much for Clancy. He had arrived at the Western Front, less than a week ago and had checked in at the 47th Squadron, American Air Force, situated seven miles southwest of Senlis. He was a sort of smooth-looking guy, not very tall, not very wide. There was something about him that reminded the guys from Kansas and Nebraska and Texas and Alabama of the pictures they had seen depicting the shrewd articles from Broadway. Clancy had that 42nd Street and Times Square aura about him. His fingers handled cards and dice and currency with a born slickness.

All that the guys knew about him was that he was winning too much. As yet he had not shown what he could do with a Spad and two Lewis guns. The sector had been quiet for the past fortnight, a stretch of grey, mist-curtained days in May of 1918. The 47th was restless, and gambling and drinking seemed to be the best way to throw off the throb of waiting—waiting for the order to get up in the clouds and play tag with the Boche.

"I'm shooting five francs," Clancy said.

"I'll take that, pardner."

Everyone looked up. It was Grinrow, the tall, bony guy from Colorado. Deadpan Grinrow, they called him. Never a smile, scarcely a word, the most unsociable guy in the squadron. But there was nothing mean or nasty about him. And he was a hell-born fighter once he met up with Boche. Despite the fact that they never got a hello or good-night from him, they liked Grinrow. But now they stared at him with surprise. He had never entered their games before.

He didn't bend down to join the circle. He just stood there, slightly bow-legged,

as if he had spent most of his early years on a horse. And his hands were held high up on his hips, in a sort of challenging attitude. Then he let five francs float down to the circle.

Clancy rolled the dice and made a natural. He reached out for the pile, and Grinrow stepped on his hand. Clancy let out a yelp.

Grinrow stooped down and picked Clancy up by the collar, and said, "Yo're using loaded dice."

He said it quietly, but there was murder in his voice. The other flyers were on their feet, puzzled.

Clancy did not get excited. He very slowly pulled away from Grinrow.

And then he said in a smooth string of words, "Why don't you come out of the Wild West, buddy? This is 1918. That two-gun stuff don't go around here."

Grinrow's face was rock.

He said, "I said that yo're using loaded dice. Let me see them dice."

"Sure, just as soon as I put this sheaf of bills in my pocket," Clancy said. Quickly he pocketed his winnings. Then he put out a hand and dropped two white ivory dice in Grinrow's waiting palm. The Westerner bent down, tested the dice on various numbers. His face slowly twisted in a puzzled frown. His lips stretched taut. Nobody said anything. Then, very slowly, Grinrow straightened. He dropped the dice into Clancy's palm.

"My apologies. These dice are all right."

"Sure they're all right, cowboy. Maybe you've got too much imagination." Clancy's voice was soft, but like a razor blade.

Without another word, Grinrow turned and walked back to his hutment.

Clancy smiled, and said, "Shall we continue our friendly little game, gentlemen?"

But the bankrolls of the other flyers had been depleted, and they were not anxious

for a continuance of Clancy's good luck. They muttered various weak excuses, and radiated toward their respective hutments for the afternoon siesta.

Clancy stood there, smiling softly at them as they moved away. His eyes narrowed slightly. His thin lips became thinner.

"Suckers," he said.

HE WALKED to his own hutment. He sat down on his cot, reached in his pocket and flipped his winnings onto the bed. A healthy pile of jack in any league. He grinned at the franc notes. Then he reached into his pocket again and pulled out the dice. Not two, but four dice.

One pair was loaded.

Clancy congratulated himself. His sleight-of-hand was as good today as it had ever been. And he had been one of the smoothest fancy-dice and quick-shift card men in Broadway gambling circles. That was as far as his crookedness had ever gone. He could have applied his "talents" to various phases of swindling and confidence deals, and even safe-cracking. But he looked upon all that as low-brow stuff. He did not think of himself as a crook, or even dishonest. He was just a very talented gambler, and all the other guys were suckers.

Slowly, dreamily, he rolled the dice on the bed. The smile was brushed away from his lips. He wondered what he was doing here. How come a smooth gambler from Broadway was winding up as a flyer in France? And again, as always when he was alone, he was answering the question for himself, and his eyes seemed to sink deeper into their sockets, and his cheeks were hollowed, and sorrow and despair came upon his features, then were twisted by bitterness.

"Cut it out, Clancy," he told himself.

And automatically he cut it out. He stood up, regaining his composure, and strolled out of the hutment. He went over

to the canteen bar and grabbed off a few shots of cognac, and then, as he was coming out, he almost bumped into Grinrow.

A bag of tobacco dangled from a string between the tall guy's teeth. He gave Clancy a casual eye, and then he kept the string between his teeth as he said, out of the side of his mouth, "You and I should talk."

"Yeah?" Clancy said.

"Yeah, we got things to settle." Grinrow took the string from his teeth and then expertly he was pouring tobacco into a rectangle of white paper.

Clancy watched Grinrow roll the cigarette.

He said, "Look, cowboy, maybe you heard the old one about the clumsy old bear that was snooping around a fox hole. It got its nose too near that hole, and the fox reached up with a set of teeth and nearly bit it off."

"Which means what?" Grinrow said, lighting the cigarette.

"Which means that you should be a good boy and mind your own business and—"

"And let you use loaded dice?" Grinrow said.

Clancy had been wearing his smooth smile, and now he lost it.

"You're sort of stubborn, aren't you?" he said. "I thought I proved to you—"

"You proved that you have a fast set of hands, pardner. You switched them dice when you put the money in yo're pocket."

"Did it take you all this time to think that one up?" Clancy said.

"No," Grinrow said, and then surprisingly, he smiled. "I knew it as soon as it happened. But you did it so neatly that I just couldn't bring myself to show you up."

"Your kindness overwhelms me," Clancy said. "What happens from here on?"

"From here on you stay out of all the games," Grinrow said.

He wasn't smiling any more.

"And what if I don't see things your way?" Clancy said.

"Well, you'll just keep on cheating the other men and maybe I'll step in and try to show them how you've been getting away with hidden cards and loaded dice. If I prove it to them, they'll break your neck. But I may not be able to prove it. Maybe you'll be too fast and too smart. In that case, I'll do the neck-breaking."

"You know," Clancy said, "I don't think you and I are going to get along very well."

And when the guy from Broadway hit the pillow that night, he was making big plans for the downfall of Lieutenant Grinrow. Although the plans were rather complex, having to do with certain delicate tricks of card and dice manipulating, the result would be clear and simple—the pride of Colorado would be shown up as a blundering fool.

BUT on the following day, the plans did not come off. It was all the fault of a group of men who were known as the high command of the Imperial German Army.

The Boche were attacking all along the line. They had arisen very early in the morning, and their artillery began a melody of heavy chords, and threw smoke and steel and death onto the American lines. German air squadrons followed up with a thorough bombing and strafing of strategic points in the American defense system. And then the Boche infantry started coming over.

By this time the Americans were well aware that they were in for a big day. They were forced to give up their first trench line, and they suffered heavily as they went into retreat. They tried to counter-attack early in the afternoon, and it didn't work out. There were too many Boche planes in the sky. The Fokkers and

Albatrosses were not only pitching down a lot of bullets and bombs. They were scouting and giving the German brain-trust a definite idea of what the Americans were doing—where they were weak, and where they had terrain handicap. The German ground forces acted accordingly. A lot of Americans were captured. A lot of them died.

Frantic calls were sent for American aviation. At the 47th, where most of the guys had been getting set for a session of poker, the activity was almost convulsive. These men had been aching for a red-hot air fight. And now they were racing toward their planes, eyes glistening with anticipation of what was going to happen in the clouds. The 47th was known as a mob of flying devils, tough and mean and fearless. Once they hit high air, they weren't even human.

But one of them, as he ran toward his plane, was not so eager.

Clancy was afraid.

He was afraid of getting hit with bullets, afraid of going down in flames, afraid of dying. The roar of the motors, the running pilots, headed for their steeds of battle, added to his fear and almost paralyzed him.

But he kept moving, and only when he had reached his plane did he stop. He wanted a drink. He wanted a smoke. He wanted to wait awhile, to pull himself together. He looked at his hands, saw that they were shaking.

Someone else saw it, and drawled, "Well, I'll be doggoned. The slick fox from Broadway is shaking like a leaf."

Clancy turned, saw Grinrow standing there.

"Take a walk," Clancy said.

His voice didn't sound right to him.

"Now don't tell me that you're nervous, pardner," Grinrow said, and there was a tight, mean smile on his lips. "After all, you're a very smart hombre, and there's no reason why you can't manage the Boche

just like you manage cards and dice." And then he leaned his head back and laughed. He laughed louder as he walked toward his plane.

Clancy stared after him. The guy from Broadway stopped trembling, and his eyes and lips were thin as he muttered, "Maybe you've given me an idea, Grinrow. Yeah—yeah—manage the Boche just like I manage cards and dice. Why not? Sure—why not?"

He climbed into his Spad. His fingers were steady on the controls. The tight smile was fixed upon his lips.

Then they were taking off—nine of them, the number called for by the order from Headquarters. They used a step formation as they rocketed toward the hills that fringed Senlis. Beyond those hills there was fire and mud and blood.

The American planes went up to 8,500 feet and retained that altitude until they came in sight of the battle area. The flight leader signalled, and the nine Spads formed a straight line in the sky.

Clancy, flying the number three spot, looked down and saw a war going on. Against the chocolate brown of shell-smashed earth, he could see the troop movements. He could see the snaky, blistered line that was the front. And ahead of that he could perceive the channel of carnage that was No Man's Land. Flakes of fire soared across the death area. And running into that fire, bayonets hefted, were men—men with minds and hearts—men with the blood of life in their veins. Men—just like his kid brother, who had gone across with the first regiments, whose first day of battle had been his last day on earth. His kid brother—a fine kid, a decent kid, who had wanted to be a surgeon. The kid brother never knew how Clancy made all his money. All he knew was that Clancy was sending him through school. He was so grateful that it was almost annoying. Clancy looked down at the battlefield. He thought of the kid. He

thought of the big argument that had taken place on the day the kid had enlisted.

Clancy said, "You're crazy. You'll get killed over there!"

"Maybe, but I feel that it's my duty."

"Here you're in your third year of school and you're giving it all up to become a soldier. Is anything wrong with your brain?"

And then he thought of the day the letter had come—the letter with the black border.

It wasn't fair. A lot of things weren't fair. Like Clancy himself, and other guys of his type—having a good time on Broadway while good kids, decent and kind and brave—were fighting and dying on the fields of France.

FROM 8,500 feet Clancy looked down, and muttered, "All right, kid—the Germans cut you down, and now they've got to settle with me. I'll give it all I have, kid . . . all I have . . ."

The flight leader wiggled his wings, and the nine Spads rushed down in attack formation. They broke it when they were a few hundred feet above the Boche planes. The Germans outnumbered them almost three to one, and it was necessary to start things moving on as wide an area as possible, to prevent two and three and four Boche from ganging up on a single Spad.

The Yanks' sudden attack forced the Germans to take to a frantic defense. The Fokkers and Albatrosses which had been snugly engaged in bombing and strafing and observation now found it necessary to run from Lewis lead and enter a series of battle acrobatics.

But the Spads were hungry, and they were the tough guys from the 47th, and they didn't give the Boche a chance to get set. They came in, spitting flame, and German planes began to fall from the sky. Spads were veering in close, pitching bullets, cutting out and climbing and coming down again with guns talking loud.

Clancy was doing very well for himself. It didn't take him long to figure out a scheme whereby he could get the better of German pilots. He merely had to use the right bait. And that bait was the other American planes. Clancy would drag a single Boche into battle. Then he would angle the duel toward where another Spad was having its troubles with one or more Boche. As soon as he reached that area, he would flip away, as if he was looking for another opponent. The Boche, in convenient placement for attack, would naturally leap down on the Spad that was already engaged. And then Clancy, making a fast Immelmann, would be down on the German's neck, dealing him a doze of Lewis fire.

It happened three times, and each time the German went down in flames. Clancy maneuvered for his fourth customer.

At the topmost fringe of the dogfight he found a Fokker who was willing to trade lead with him. He cut down, and the German followed. He went into a neat outside loop, then twisted hard, breaking out of it to draw the German toward the right.

And on the right another Spad was having its troubles with two Fokkers.

For an instant Clancy wanted to rush down there and help out the Spad. But the instant gave way to a stretch of seconds that carried a totally different impulse. Clancy was up here to kill Germans, to settle a private matter between himself and the Kaiser. The other Spads would have to look out for themselves. He was looking out for Clancy.

He leaped down toward the other American plane. The Fokker followed, trying to find his tail. But he was pulling out fast, streaking away toward the left, giving the Fokker a clear line of attack on the other Spad.

Clancy saw the Fokker take advantage of the opening. The German plane rushed at the American ship, and then Clancy was lunging at the Fokker.

But this time he was just a fatal bit too slow.

Spandau guns were wracking, and slugs were tearing through sky, stabbing up along the fuselage of the helpless Spad. The Spad bumped up against an invisible brick wall, then turned over and went into a spin.

Clancy stared at it as it went down. He could not believe that this had actually happened, that for once he had not been fast enough, smart enough. And because he had failed, another man had died.

The thought ripped at him, and he wondered what was happening to him now. A change was taking place. There was a maelstrom in his brain. It was as if he had been wearing a costume and mask for a long time and now it had been pulled away from him, revealing him as he really was.

And he was staring directly ahead, and his eyes were wide. Then, for some reason that he could not define, he turned toward the right. He could see a Spad, moving parallel with him. The pilot was looking at him.

It was Grinrow.

The tall guy from Colorado had seen it all. He did not seem very surprised. It was as if his eyes were saying, *You could be counted on to pull a trick like that, Clancy. You can't win out by fair means—either in a dice game or in sky battle. You're a cheat and you're yellow, and you don't deserve to live!*

Clancy's lips were trembling. He didn't know it, but he was shouting, "No—no, that isn't true! I'll prove it to you—I'll prove it! And this time I won't use sleight of hand! I won't use tricks!"

But Grinrow wasn't listening. Grinrow was suddenly in a lot of trouble. The three Fokkers that had been operating below, now came up fast and maneuvered onto the tail of the tall guy from Colorado.

Grinrow made a desperate roll-out, followed it with a tight turn. But the Fok-

kers were playing it with a fiendish arithmetical coldness, slicing in fast and cutting off escape. One of them was already on the tail of the Spad. The other two were flanking and staying wide to get him if he turned or dove.

If anything was to be done, it had to be done fast.

CLANCY pushed his Spad into a zoom, cut out of it to come down with Hisso shrieking. His face was cold and set as he grabbed the trigger handles of his Lewis guns. He hurled himself between the Boche and Grinrow. Spandau slugs tore through his wings as the German, spitting curses, tried to make a quick kill.

The fox from Broadway wasn't dying that easily.

He turned hard, following a hairpin line, and wriggled back into the arena of death. Grinrow had managed to leap out of immediate trouble, but was still in danger of being hacked to bits by the other two Fokkers.

Clancy came in again, with throttle wide open. This time, as he took bullets, he made another turn. For a space of seconds he faced the Boche, and Lewis guns chattered in ghastly harmony with the talking Spandaus. Clancy took lead in his wings and fuselage, and a slug ripped leather from his shoulder. But he was throwing fire fast, and he saw the German throw arms in the air, then bring them down to grab at a bullet-torn throat. The Fokker fell over on its side and then went down.

The two other Fokkers, in the meantime had been concentrating on Grinrow. They rushed at the Spad from both sides, offering fire. Grinrow started a loop, and broke out of it. The Fokkers kept after him as he came down.

And once again Clancy stepped into the breach.

He edged in, bringing the nearest Fokker into his sights. He knew that he would have to take as well as give in this bar-

gain, but somehow it didn't make any difference to him now. His hands were tight on his gun handles, and he was taking the fight to the German. He poured Lewis lead across thirty yards of space, watching flames leap out from the nose of the German ship.

Then there was more flame, and it came from his Spad. He scarcely noticed it. He saw the Fokker veer away from the bullet line and he twisted into a steep bank, and pitched another salvo and the German pilot slumped forward.

Automatically, Clancy was looking around, trying to see if Grinrow had managed to stay clear of the other Boche. And he saw that it wasn't working out that way. The last of the three Fokkers was finishing the work that the trio had begun. It had glued itself to Grinrow's tail, and now Spandaus were chirping, and the tall guy was frantically trying to twist away.

Clancy came in again.

Forty yards separated the Fokker from Grinrow's Spad, and into that gap of fire the Broadway guy made a sizzling entrance. Bullets crunched against his fuselage. Then there was pain in his side, and it was spreading within him. His teeth were set tight, and then his hands came away from trigger handles, and went limp over the sides of his cockpit.

And that was the way he went down. He crashed less than a mile behind the American front line trenches.

GRINROW took off his helmet and wiped sweat and oil and blood from his face. He was standing in the front office of the hospital that had once been a French Chateau.

A nurse came out of a side room, and said, "You can see him now. But—I think you ought to know—he has only a little while to live."

Grinrow walked into the room, stood beside the bed.

Clancy opened his eyes and smiled.

"Hello, cowboy. I had a feeling that you'd stop around to wish me *bon voyage*."

"Pardner, I—I—don't know what to say. If it wasn't for you, I'd have been—"

"Aw, cut it out," Clancy said. "Listen—I think I ought to tell you now about the fancy stuff with cards and dice. You know, cowboy—it's a funny thing, but I really didn't mean to cheat the other guys from their hard-earned francs. Now that I look back on it, I can see that it was nothing more than force of habit. It was as natural to me as eating and drinking."

"I reckoned it that way," Grinrow said, "because I was once fairly fast with a deck of cards myself. But what I couldn't understand was—an hombre like you—in the air force. . . ."

"Yeah, it doesn't really add up, I guess. But we'll put it this way. I was just another no-good draft-dodger until the day when I had a reason to fight. It was a good reason, and I wanted to make it a good fight. I wanted to kill as many Boche as I possibly could. It seemed that a Spad and Lewis guns would be the best bet. So I joined up with the flying guys. And yet, even though I didn't fully realize it, I was still looking for the short-cuts, the easy way. . . ."

Grinrow said, "You didn't."

"Sure I did. You saw—you saw what happened when that other Spad went down."

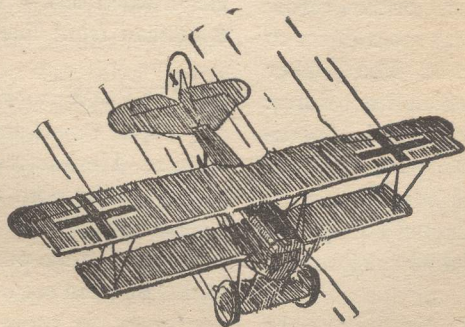
"I didn't see anything. All I know is that you went in there and fought your guts out to save me. I'll—I'll never forget it, Clancy—"

The tall guy from Colorado started to choke.

Clancy said, "Look, cowboy—I want you to do me a favor. I want you to go through the pockets of my breeches. They're hanging over a chair on the other side of the bed. You'll find a lot of franc notes in there. Take them out. Give them back to the guys. And—"

It came very fast. A sudden gasp . . . then a labored sigh. Clancy was dead.

Grinrow walked to the chair at the other side of the bed. From a side pocket of the breeches he took out a roll of franc notes. Then, from the bottom of that pocket he took out the dice—four dice. He set the numbers and tested them. Then he picked up the pair that was loaded. He opened a window and threw the loaded dice out. Then he turned and looked at the good dice. He would take them back to the 47th, and all the guys would look at the fair, genuine dice, and everyone would agree that the guy from Broadway had played a straight, clean game.



(Continued from page 84)

desperate and she didn't want her father to die. The operation had to be performed in a hurry.

At that time she had been engaged to a guy named Fred Leighton, a pilot for Relford Airlines. He wasn't a bad sort of guy, and if he had had a penny in his pocket, he would have given it to Glenda. But he liked to drink and to play the horses, and he had a habit of throwing his money away in night clubs, gambling joints, and lending it to dead beats. He was just a bit too good-natured for his own welfare. But he was a great aviator, the second best pilot at Relford.

The first was Carder, who was Leighton's best friend. Carder adored Glenda, and knew that she felt the same way about him. She was sorry that she was wearing Leighton's ring. But Carder never asked her to take that ring off her finger. He tried to keep away from her. But when they looked at each other, it was there, and they couldn't do anything about it. They didn't want to hurt Leighton.

Relford's two best pilots were sent to Washington to attend a meeting of the outstanding commercial airline aviators. The Army was asking the cooperation of these men in an effort to draw up a compact set of air defense plans. Each man was given a set of the present plans, told to study the maps and diagrams for a day or so.

And Glenda came to Washington that weekend. In the hotel lobby, while she was waiting for Leighton and Carder to take her to dinner, she entered into conversation with a tall, rather stout, bald-headed man. He was a stranger, but he was friendly, and it wouldn't hurt to tell him a few of her troubles. She told him about her sick father, and about Leighton and Carder. When she mentioned the fact that they were flyers, he asked a few questions. She nodded when he inquired as to whether they were taking part in the air defense meeting.

Then he was leaning forward slightly and saying, "You said you needed three thousand dollars?"

"Yes."

"What about ten times that much?"

She frowned, puzzled.

He cleared up the puzzle for her. With no questions asked, he would give her thirty thousand dollars in cold cash if she would give him the packet of air defense plans.

That night Leighton got very drunk. Glenda reached into his inner breast-pocket and took out the plans. On the following day she gave them to the tall, stout man and he gave her thirty thousand dollars.

Leighton was arrested and tried, and it was proven that a Nazi spy ring was now in possession of the air defense plans. Leighton was sentenced to twenty years in prison. He was in a daze. He kept saying over and over again that he must have dropped the packet somewhere. He could not remember giving it to anybody.

AFTER Leighton was behind bars, Glenda came to Carder and sobbed out the truth. The operation had been performed and it hadn't been successful. Her father was dead. Carder was the only one she could come to. He told her that he was going to hand her over to the police. But then he looked into her eyes, and he heard himself saying that he would take care of her. He would always take care of her.

It was just about then that Fred's brother came to Kansas City to make his own personal investigation. The Marine visited Carder and asked a lot of questions. Carder slipped up on one or two, and then realized that the Marine was very smart and very determined.

Carder went to Glenda and said, "If we stick around here much longer, we're going to be trapped. Leighton's brother is finding out a lot of things; it's just a ques-

tion of time before he hits on the truth. You're going to leave the country. England seems to be the best bet."

"Why England?" she said.

He wouldn't answer her then.

But two months later, when he met her in Cranwell, when he appeared before her in the uniform of an R.A.F. flying officer, he said, "We've got a debt to pay, Glenda. This is about the best we can do, for the present. Every Nazi I shoot down is another black mark erased from our record. I don't imagine we'll ever be able to clear it up entirely, but I do want you to promise me one thing—I want you to promise me that if I'm ever shot down, you won't let them honor me with a military funeral. You'll arrange for my body to be sent back to the States. I've already written a confession, saying that I was the one who gave that packet to the Nazis. I've stated in it that I stole Fred's packet, knowing that he would be blamed. And when I'm buried, you'll give that confession to Fred's brother."

"I don't want you to be in the R.A.F. I don't want you to die," she said.

"This is the least I can do," he muttered. He held her close and said, "Glenda, it's bad enough that we're fugitives from our own country. We can't allow ourselves to be fugitives from our own souls. Leighton is suffering for your crime. And you and I must suffer also. While we're at it, we might as well help the cause. God knows we've done enough to harm it."

"You can fly and fight," she said. "What can I do?"

"You can be near me, Glenda. That'll make me fight better."

She smiled up at him. But her face was very pale, and there was fear in her eyes, and despair. She wanted to marry him. She wanted to settle down and have a taste of happiness. But that was very far away. That seemed to be possible only in some other world, a planet millions of

miles distant. This world was a sphere of blood and hate, filled with the screech of bombs and the scream of frightened people. And all that one could do was to live, and fight, and hope.

AS HE motorcycled back to Fighter 91, Carder was thinking about it, trying to sweep it away from his mind. When he returned to the base, he went directly to the canteen bar and had a drink.

He was ordering a second when a voice behind him said, "Blonde, wasn't she?"

He turned fast, and faced Leighton, who was pointing at a wisp of blonde hair that had attached itself to a front button on Carder's tunic.

Carder said, "Yes, she was blonde. What about it?"

"Pretty?"

"Sort of."

"Any brains?"

"Why do you ask that?" Carder said.

"Oh, I don't know. You seem to be a fairly smart guy. You wouldn't go for a dumb girl."

Leighton ordered a drink. Carder stood off to one side and looked him up and down.

Leighton was leaning over the bar, sipping his Scotch and soda. Then he turned and said, "Am I being examined?"

"Yeah," Carder said. His eyes narrowed and he murmured, "You're pretty hard on clothes, aren't you?"

"Not usually. Why?"

"You were given this uniform only today. You've torn it already, just under the shoulder. There's quite a rip."

Leighton looked at the tear. Then he looked at Carder and said, "What of it?"

Carder shrugged. "Maybe you caught it on a nail. It looks like the kind of a rip that happens when a guy's in a big hurry—to get away from some place."

Leighton looked at the ice in his glass and said, "Tell me more. Maybe I'll learn a few things about myself."

"Sure, I'll tell you more," Carder said. "You followed me to Cranwell today." He wanted to keep his voice low and steady, but it was rising as he said, "You figured you'd find out something, didn't you? Well, just try that trick one more time and you'll find out plenty!"

"Oh, you don't have to worry, Carder. I won't make any more visits to Cranwell. You see, *I've found out all I want to know.*"

Carder's hand became a vise on the tall glass. He stared at Leighton, and then he turned his head slowly and looked at the dull-faced barman who was wiping tankards at the other end of the bar. There was nobody else in the room. He measured the distance between himself and Leighton.

The former Marine said, "I know what you're thinking, Carder. In a way, I don't blame you. After all, I know too much, and the only thing to do is to get rid of me. All right, here I am. Let's see you try something."

Before Carder realized it, his hand went down beneath his tunic and he was grabbing for his revolver. Then he remembered that he had given it to Glenda. He stared up, and Leighton was laughing at him.

He threw himself at Leighton. The thick-set blond man pushed out a fist and it cracked hard against Carder's jaw, sent him staggering back along the bar. He bounced away from the opposite wall and grabbed at a thick bottle on the bar. He heaved it at Leighton, but his aim was bad and it veered off to the side. The barman saw it coming but did not duck fast enough. The bottle made a dull sound as it caught him on the side of the head, and then he was out cold.

Carder made a rush. Leighton waited there for him, jabbed a left, and Carder was under it, trying to get his fingers around Leighton's throat. It was dirty fighting, but he couldn't think about that

now. He had to get rid of Leighton. He had to get rid of this force that would take Glenda away from him, that would put her in prison. He had fingers around Leighton's throat and he was squeezing. And then Leighton brought up a knee and it socked Carder in the abdomen. He let go the strangle grip and he doubled up, wheezing.

Leighton gave him a right uppercut that straightened him, and a left hook that knocked him halfway across the room. He went over a table and the table fell on top of him. Leighton was standing over him and grinning. Leighton reached down and pulled him up by a torn collar and measured him for a final right to the jaw.

Carder saw a chance. With everything he had, he threw a left to Leighton's stomach. It was a terrific punch and it turned Leighton around so that he was spinning like a top as he went back across the room.

Carder moved toward a table and grabbed a tankard. It was half full. He brought it to his shoulder and pegged it, and it moved on a straight line and landed in the center of Leighton's forehead. He threw up his arms and went forward, falling flat on his face.

There was murder in Carder's eyes as he moved toward the still form on the floor. He wiped a thick stream of blood from his lips and then he reached for the tankard. It was heavy, and silver-plated, and a single blow on the back of the head would settle the entire matter. Leighton would be out of the way. And the R.A.F. would certainly not imprison Flying Officer Carder, who was high-ranking pilot of Fighter 91, and who, after all, had only been trying to defend himself when the "accident" to Leighton had occurred.

Carder's fingers tightened on the handle of the tankard. His arm trembled, his whole body trembled. Then he shook his head slowly. He stood up and the tankard fell to the floor.

Slowly Carder walked out of the room.

SQUADRON Leader Axley said, "I've heard a lot about the famous Yankee temper, but I never thought it would hit this squadron so soon. You men still refuse to explain last night's friendly little meeting?"

Leighton stared at the floor. Carder looked up at the ceiling. Leighton's head was bandaged and he had a nasty bruise under his right eye. Carder had a swollen lip and the right side of his jaw looked as though it had collided with a hammer.

"Very well," Axley said, "I don't imagine there's very much I can do about this. It seems a deuced pity, however, that you had to draw an innocent barman into the battle. He's got a bump on his head that's as big as a bloody billiard ball."

"I did that, sir," Carder said.

"I didn't ask who did it," Axley clicked. "The point is, there's bad feeling between you two men and it's got to be cleared up. I'm not going to have personal animosity in this squadron, gentlemen. Now I don't want to be forced to inflict penalties, but if it's going to be necessary to—"

The telephone interrupted him. It was a call from Bombing Squadron 66. They were short two escort planes. Their schedule called for a 250-mile jaunt to Muenster, in Germany, where the Nazis had concentrated two new munition plants and a massive tank factory. British Intelligence had made a neat ferret job, and now it was up to the R.A.F. to act accordingly.

Bomber 66 was located at Ipswich, on the east coast, directly across from Holland. Even as the call was being made, five Lockheed Hudsons were being readied for the trip. Seven Spitfires had been sent over from another fighter group, and the wing commander in charge of the project felt that two more Spits would come in handy.

Axley was saying, "Two good men? All my men are good."

"We want the best. This is an extremely important flight. Send them down immediately."

The receiver clicked at the other end of the wire.

Axley sighed and reached for a report paper. Then his eyes were set on Carder and Leighton. No doubt that Carder was the best man in the squadron. And from Flight Lieutenant Brewster's report on Leighton's conduct in his first sky battle, there was little doubt that the former Marine would soon be challenging Carder's record.

The order drummed in Axley's mind. "*We want the best.*"

He looked at Carder and he looked at Leighton. They returned his gaze, and although they were silent, there was eagerness in their eyes. From Axley's end of the telephone conversation they had gathered enough to know what the project was all about.

Axley felt that maybe an errand like this might help to clear up the differences between the two Americans. Fighting against the common enemy, Nazism, they might automatically seal up the breach of bitterness that was obviously separating them.

The squadron leader said, "Rev-up your Spits. You two men are going on an excursion into Germany."

Carder was running out of the office, yelling orders to his mechanic and armor-er. Then, forgetting everything but the job at hand, he was racing to his quarters, climbing into his Irving, the fur-lined flying suit that thumbed its nose at the frigidity of high altitude work. He had his chute on and he was fastening the chin-strap of his helmet. By the time he was out on the field, his plane was roaring and ready.

Squadron Leader Axley waited until Leighton came up, and then he stood be-

tween the two flyers and rasped out flight directions. Then he said, "Cheerio!"

They were climbing into their respective offices, giving their planes a lot of juice, and taking off into a bloom of pink sunlight that came from beyond the coastal hills. Axley watched the two planes climb eagerly into the glow of morning. His lips were tight. He could not explain it to himself, but he had a feeling that only one of those planes would come back.

CHAPTER THREE

Thumbs Up!

THE five Lockheed Hudsons were using a step formation. In front and slightly to the sides the nine Spitfires were making a "bumper" design, taking directions from the flight leader in bomber one. Over the North Sea they were working at an altitude of 12,000 feet. Fifty miles from the coast of Holland they had to climb a hill to get away from the possibility of observation. They went up to 17,000 and stayed there a while. When they were flying over land again, they walked to an even 20,000.

It was cold and thick and miserable up there. Carder glanced around and saw the other Spits cutting through the soup. In the plane directly to his left he saw Leighton. He kept his eyes on the rigid figure of the former Marine and finally Leighton turned and returned his gaze.

And although their features were expressionless, there seemed to pass between them a mutual acceptance of the grim issue. Somehow this errand into Germany was unimportant, compared to the struggle which they must take up upon returning to England. It seemed to be ordained that one of them must die.

The flight leader was saying, "Spread formation. There might be prowlers around."

Carder shoved over toward the left, and

Leighton moved in ratio. Then Carder was working out of the line and he was throwing his plane into a dive, grinning ironically as he heard the flight leader saying in his earphones, "Here, number three—get back in line!"

But Carder had seen a single Henschel observation plane. It had flown out of a cloud, less than five thousand feet below, and he knew it for what it was by the uncanny clarity of its outline against the cloud. It was there for less than a string of seconds, but Carder had seen enough. It might not have sighted the English group. Then again, it might have. And if it was not yet using its radio, the only thing to do was to go down there and chop it up. If the Henschel was already radioing an alarm, it wouldn't make a difference anyway.

The Spitfire streaked down in a vicious dive. Carder saw the Henschel again, then lost it in another cloud. He heard a buzzing in his earphones as he aimed his ship toward where the Nazi observation plane had ducked into sky foam.

It was Leighton's voice, saying, "A good idea, Carder. Figuring on making a landing in Naziland and giving yourself up. But it won't work. I promised myself that I'd bring you back to the States if it was the last thing I ever did. Come out of that dive or I'll pump my Brownings!"

Carder shot a glance into his rear-view mirror and saw Leighton's Spitfire on his tail. He muttered a few curses and then edged to the side. He slowed down slightly and then he was veering hard, continuing the dive on another line. Any instant he expected to hear Leighton's guns, to feel lead banging into his head.

And then he saw the Henschel. It was out of another cloud. Leighton must have seen it at the same instant. At any rate, his guns were silent and so was his radio. Carder forgot about Leighton and concentrated on the Nazi. He ran down fast.

At ninety yards he was using his

Brownings. The observer in the Henschel was setting up guns, wheeling them around and pointing them at the approaching Spitfire. But just as his hands set on the trigger handles, a line of hot lead found a home in his throat. He slumped.

Carder moved in closer and poured another burst into the front of the Henschel. Fire seeped from a bullet-gashed fuel tank.

The Spitfire swerved away from the burning Henschel. Carder made a turn on the acute and streaked up to join the formation. Leighton was right beside him when he eased his way into the number three slot. Carder turned and looked at the other American. Leighton had a sheepish expression on his face. A dim grin came to Carder's lips.

It came off when the flight leader said, "No more of that, number three. You'll break formation only when I give the word. We're not out here for individual exhibitions."

"Aw, go take a flying jump in the river," Carder replied, only he didn't say it into his radio.

"Close formation," the flight leader was saying. "We're over Muenster. Take 17,000 and stay tight."

THE group went down and the bombardiers checked through their lenses, and reported to the flight leader. There was a sentence that stood out above all else. It was crisp and cold and it made each man tremble with anticipation.

"Objective sighted."

The figures were given, and the bombardiers checked. Then the flight lieutenant said, "We'll use 11,000 feet. Escort planes go down and clear the way. Bombers release your loads regardless of any obstacle that comes up. All right, escorts—down!"

At this signal, the Spitfires pointed noses downward and sliced through the thick gray sky. At 11,000 feet it was clear.

The Lockheed Hudsons followed. They slid out of their step formation and formed a box in the sky. Then they started to drop bombs on Muenster.

Carder looked down and saw fire. The bombs were making good. Each explosion was followed by a string of smaller fire-bursts, which meant the gasoline and oil tanks were being hit. There was one terrific splash of flame that marked the destruction of a vital point in the Nazi manufacturing center, and then the bombers were making ready for their final thrust.

The flight leader, after a brief word of praise, gave orders for the final thrust at 9,000 feet.

Once again the Spits went down to clear the sky. They were in echelon now, spreading wide to cover up the approach of the bombers. The Hudsons levelled at 9,000 and released their second and final series of bombs.

Down below, Muenster was a pond of fire and smoke.

"They'll be talking about this for a long time," the flight leader was saying. "They'll be—"

Carder waited for the finish of that sentence, but it didn't come. Something was wrong. He gazed directly ahead then and saw twelve shapes in the grey thickness—twelve Nazi fighting planes.

They were approaching with deadly speed and intent. They looked like vultures, coming on with fiendish confidence in their ability to devour a prey that was already as good as dead. As they came closer, Carder saw that they were single-seater Heinkels, the new six-gun-and-prop-cannon models that were as graceful as they were fast. And it was that 20 mm. cannon in the prop that made all the difference in the world. When one of those shells tagged a wing, it was good-by.

The flight leader knew that everyone in the group had seen the Nazis.

(Continued on page 100)

DO WE HAVE TO DIE?

A strange man in Los Angeles, known as "The Voice of Two Worlds," reveals the story of a remarkable system that often leads to almost unbelievable improvement in power of mind, achievement of brilliant business and professional success and new happiness. Many report improvement in health. Others tell of increased bodily strength, magnetic personality, courage and poise.

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BATTLE BIRDS

(Continued from page 98)

He said, "Prepare for attack," but the command sounded weak and futile to his own hearing. The Heinkels already had an altitude advantage of more than a thousand feet, and their flight momentum would add to that. Although it was a matter of fourteen English planes to twelve Nazis, the fact remained that only nine of the British planes were fighting ships.

But a run home was impossible now. There was only one thing to do, and that was to stick and fight.

At a range of four hundred yards the Nazis started down.

The British flight leader said, "Break formation and spread wide. Bombers go downstairs. Fighting planes form a blanket and prevent those Heinkels from coming down after the Hudsons. Good luck."

"We'll need it," Carder muttered to himself, and looked up. At the same time he was twisting his Spitfire into an acute turn, sliding far out to a free section of battle sky. The maneuver took him a few hundred yards away from the target area of the Heinkels, and he was sending a burst through his guns, clearing them, readying for the big show.

The Germans rushed down, throwing lead. A Spitfire coughed flame and twisted down toward the earth. The other Englishmen were breaking wide and then coming up to cut off the Nazis' approach to the descending bombers. A Heinkel went down, a Spitfire, another Heinkel. The sky was a grey slate, and it seemed that some demon of the clouds was scribbling on it with chalk of fire.

ALTHOUGH it had started in a wide area, the dogfight became more compact as the fighting went on. The Englishmen were putting up a stiff resistance, but the Nazis were making the most of

(Continued on page 102)

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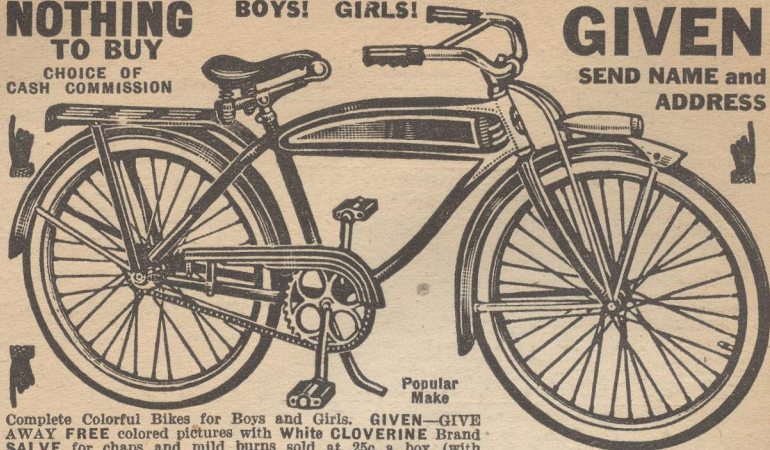


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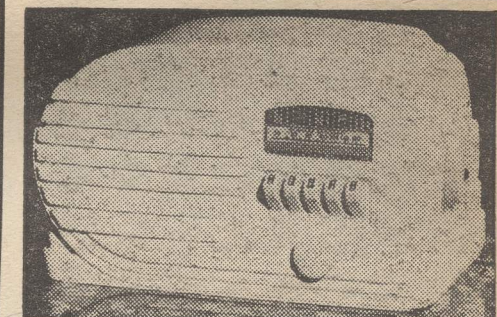
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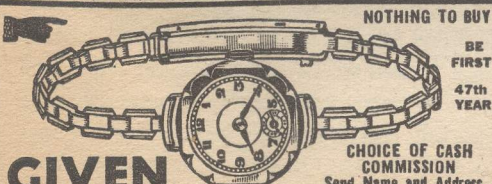
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BATTLE BIRDS

(Continued from page 100)

their numerical superiority, and they were using their prop-cannon to deadly advantage. Three minutes after the start of the battle, it was a matter of five Spitfires against nine Heinkels.

Carder was in a screw chandelle, then coming out of it with chattering Brownings. He reduced the Nazi contingent to eight as he poured a side burst into a Heinkel's cockpit. Then he was turning hard, his eyes keen and narrow, following the attempt of two Heinkels to break away from the battle.

He let the Heinkels add up a considerable lead, and then started down after them. He saw the Hudsons, about five thousand feet below, working at full throttle to get back to England. The two Heinkels were on their tails. Carder screamed down obliquely and pounced on the nearest of the Heinkels. He worked a single-second burst and saw his eight lines of fire make contact with the German's fuselage.

Carder slammed down on the other Heinkel. The German had already seen what was happening to his partner, and he flipped into a hard turn on his left wing. It was a feint at a roll-out, and instead he was coming back fast in a shrieking loop, getting wide and high and then flowing behind Carder to gain a height advantage.

Carder knew that he was bargaining with a fancy sky artist, but he knew too that he had managed to save two or three Hudsons. That was more important.

He waited for the Heinkel to make the next bid, and his wait was very short. The Heinkel started down on a blade-like line, then veered to the right. Carder made his face-off turn, and the Nazi turned again, lunging fast from the side. Carder had to take bullets, but he managed a tight wingover and faded away from the path of Madsens. The Nazi had to follow through

(Continued on page 104)

FORTUNE IN CASH PAID FOR OLD MONEY



HIS "LAST DIME," yet if that dime was of the year 1894 with a mint mark "S," Max Mehl, the Texas Money King, would have paid him \$100.00 for it. He could have been dining on steak instead of coffee and doughnuts.



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IT PAYS TO BE POSTED—the owner of a number of \$5.00 and \$10.00 notes of the Kirtland (Ohio) Safety Society Bank was about to burn them, but hearing of Max Mehl, sent them to him and it was discovered they bore the signature of Joseph Smith, the late founder of the Mormon Church. They were, therefore, of considerable value.



ONE OF THE LARGEST TRANSACTIONS in the history of coins was the purchase by B. Max Mehl, the Texas Money King, of 832 copper cents from Dr. George P. French, of Rochester, for \$50,000.00. Above is shown a newspaper picture of B. Max Mehl handing over the check. The coin illustrated is one of the pennies dated 1793. Three of these were valued at \$5,000.00.



VALUABLE COINS turn up in the most unexpected places! A ticket seller on the Brooklyn Bridge took in a half dollar for which he later received \$800.00. It pays to watch your coins!

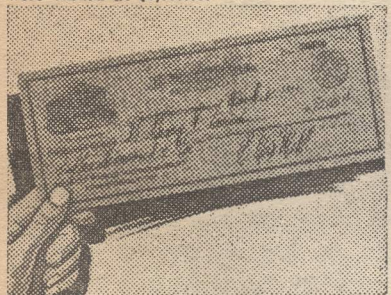


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Today or tomorrow a valuable coin may come into your possession. There are also old bills and stamps worth fortunes. Learn how to know their value. An old 10 stamp found in a basket was recently sold for \$10,000.00.

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| 30x4.60-21 | 2.40 | 1.15 |
| 28x4.75-19 | 2.45 | 1.25 |
| 28x4.75-20 | 2.50 | 1.25 |
| 30x5.00-18 | 2.85 | 1.25 |
| 30x5.00-20 | 2.85 | 1.25 |
| 30x5.25-17 | 2.90 | 1.35 |
| 30x5.25-18 | 2.90 | 1.35 |
| 30x5.25-19 | 2.95 | 1.35 |
| 30x5.25-20 | 2.95 | 1.35 |
| 31x5.25-21 | 3.25 | 1.35 |
| 5.60-17 | 3.35 | 1.40 |
| 28x5.60-18 | 3.35 | 1.40 |
| 28x5.60-19 | 3.35 | 1.45 |
| 6.00-18 | 3.75 | 1.45 |
| 6.00-17 | 3.40 | 1.40 |
| 30x5.00-18 | 3.40 | 1.40 |
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(Continued from page 102)

on the lunge, and Carder made some measurements. Then he was looping once, turning hard as the Nazi tried to move in ratio.

When the Heinkel was out of its turn, Carder took the offensive.

The Spitfire sliced down from a height advantage of a few hundred feet. At a range of seventy yards Carder made his Brownings talk. Then bullets were cutting into the cockpit of the Heinkel, putting it out of the battle.

Carder watched the Hudsons increase their lead. They were making the most of this respite which the escort Spits had arranged for them, and as they faded into the greyness of the skies to the west, Carder knew that they would get back to England. He turned and stared at the vicious dogfight still going on. The Heinkels were slowly but steadily gaining the upper hand.

They had foxed the Spitfires into a trap, were ranged above and on the outside of them. The Spitfires were huddled down beneath, waiting for the Nazis' next move.

But the Nazis had not seen Carder. As they started to go down after the Spitfires, they were not aware of the English plane that made a streaking turn and lunged at them.

Only when they heard the Brownings from above did they realize what had happened.

Carder didn't give them much time to weep over their mistake. He was firing his Brownings with deadly precision. A single-second burst accounted for the Heinkel over to the left, and then he was giving plenty of fire to another German plane, crippling it and starting on his third customer. By this time the Spitfires were out of the trouble spot and it was a fight once more.

The Heinkels, however, were discour-

aged at the way things had turned out. They seemed more than willing to call it a day. Two of them started to break away, then a third, and a fourth. And finally the last Nazi twisted from his attack-line and dived down to join the others.

THERE were four Spitfires remaining, and seeing that the Nazis were quitting, they likewise decided to leave. But just as they turned westward, one of them was seized with an impulse to throw one last burst into the enemy.

It was Leighton. He didn't know why he was doing it, but he was breaking away from the other three Spits, tearing after the Nazis. His Brownings were working, and he pitched fire into a Heinkel.


Then he realized his error. They had seen his move and they were ready for him. They were peeling off and gaining altitude. Before he could ready himself for their attack, they were down on him.

He realized then that his eagerness was a result of inexperience, that he had made a terrible mistake.

Already his plane was taking a lot of Madsen lead. He was cursing his own stupidity, and then something crossed his vision—a Spitfire! Carder's!

Carder was inserting himself between the attacking Heinkels and Leighton's plane. He was a target for Nazi lead, but he was holding his own. A Heinkel lurched and went into a death dive as Carder's bullets found a Nazi's skull.

Leighton swerved into a ripping turn and followed up on Carder's attack. The four remaining Heinkels were worried now. Leighton straightened onto the tail of a Nazi and his lips were lined in a fighting grin as he poured lead, and saw fire swishing from the nose of the Heinkel. Leighton was turning, and then his features were ice and the breath was choked back in his throat.



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BATTLE BIRDS

Carder's Spitfire was going down!

Two of the Heinkels had managed to edge him into a net of fire. They had raked his ship from nose to rudder, and now the Spitfire was a mass of flame. Leighton didn't notice that two more Spitfires had come back and were methodically destroying the Heinkels. All he saw was that Carder was doomed. He raced after the burning ship, saw Carder, slumped over the controls. Then the flaming Spitfire rolled over and started its final dive.

Leighton felt a heaviness in his throat. Carder had come back to save him.

But he still hated Carder, hated the memory of the man who had framed his brother. And even if Carder was dead, he might still be able to prove that his brother was innocent. That girl—that girl in Cranwell. He didn't know who she was. But listening in the hall he had heard enough of the conversation to know that somehow she was connected with the sell-out to the Nazi espionage agents.

As Leighton maneuvered into position beside the other two Spitfires that were now pointing toward England, he forgot about the late Flying Officer Carder. He was thinking about the voice of that girl in Cranwell. Her voice, saying that she was afraid, afraid to leave the house, afraid to be seen, that she wanted to go to Africa. And she was a blonde.

Who else had been a blonde? Who else had a voice like that?

Leighton was sprinting back through space and time. He was in the States again, talking to a blonde girl who had been engaged to Fred. She was saying how sorry she was that this terrible thing had happened to Fred. He could hear her voice again. Her name was Glenda.

TWO of the three Spitfires joined with the five Hudson bombers that were returning to Bomber Squadron 66. But Leighton whizzed on past Ipswich. The

WINGS OF THE DEATH PATROL

flight leader ordered him to come back, but he scarcely heard. With throttle at capacity he leaped toward Fighter 91.

No sooner had he made his landing than he was running for a motorcycle. Flyers and mechanics were shouting questions at him, but he ignored them. He was starting the motorcycle, pointing it toward the road that led to Cranwell.

As he entered the town, Leighton nearly collided with an ambulance that was moving slowly down a street cluttered with ashes and debris. He stopped the motorcycle, then saw another ambulance, a truck and a few fire engines. Rescue workers were staring at the wreckage.

A man with his arm in a sling walked slowly by. Leighton joined up with him and said, "When did all this happen?"

"About an hour ago," the man said. "They had it timed just right, the Jerries. Only three of them came over, didn't even use an escort. Just perched themselves over the center of town and let loose their bloody bombs."

Leighton stared at the wreckage. He said, "Many casualties?"

The man with the broken arm said slowly, "You can see for yourself."

Leighton winced as he watched the rescue squads carrying still forms from the wreckage.

Leighton climbed back on the motorcycle, started it up, tracing the course through which he had followed Carder, in the night visit to Cranwell. He continued on until he reached a narrow, smoke-filled street. An entire row of small, rickety dwellings had been demolished.

He was off the motorcycle, running down the street, counting the houses. The fifth house from the corner, that was it. The front wall was torn down. Smoke came from a heap of wreckage beyond the flattened wall. Leighton pulled off his flying rig, tied a handkerchief across the lower part of his face, and dashed into the

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heat and the wreckage. Smoke gave him trouble as he pushed his way down into the ruins, but he kept on.

Then he heard a groan. He pushed a heap of bricks from his path, and saw a mass of blonde hair beneath a section of the wall. He worked hard and fast, and then he was taking Glenda away from the smoke and wreckage, carrying her out into the street. He arranged his flying jacket to form a pillow, and he set Glenda carefully, gently upon the pavement.

She said, "Carder—" Then she opened her eyes, looked up at Leighton. Despite her pain, despite the shock and the terrible burns that covered her body, and the death that was tightening its hold on her, she recognized him. She said, "Fred's brother—"

"Yes." He knew that he could not ask her anything. She was dying. She needed prayer, not accusation.

"What—what are you doing here?" she said. And her eyes seemed to know the answer even as she said it.

He acted as if he hadn't heard. He said, "You'll be all right, Glenda. I'm going for a stretcher now. Just rest quietly and—"

"Wait—" she said, and although it was painful for her to move, she lifted an arm to restrain him.

She said, "It's no use. I know that I'm going to die. I want you to stay here with me. I want you to listen. I have something to tell you."

And she told him.

Death was approaching as she neared the finish of her story. But she was fighting hard to finish what she had to say. "—and Carder wrote a confession, telling me that I should take it back to the United States after he died. But I destroyed that paper. I wrote my own confession—the truth, just as I've told it to you. I've always kept it with me—" She pointed to a locket around her neck.

WINGS OF THE DEATH PATROL

Gently Leighton unclasped the chain. He opened the locket and took out a slip of paper that had been rolled tightly. Glenda's name was signed to the bottom of the confession.

She said, "That will give Fred his liberty. Now, tell me. Where is Carder?"

Leighton said, "He's with the squadron, Glenda. I—what should I tell him?"

A smile came to her lips. "Tell him—tell him that he won't have to worry about me any more; that everything is—straight now. And tell him that—I'm glad it's happened this way."

"I'll tell him."

"Leighton—I know you hate me for what I've done. I don't blame you. But please—don't hate Carder. He's a right guy—really he is."

"I know," Leighton said.

He looked down. Glenda was dead.

NIGHT was a big, black beast that came upon the fields bordering Muenster. In the quiet that weighted the fields there was something of mocking contrast to the fire and smoke and confusion that ruled the city. Muenster had taken a lot of punishment; her factories were still fuming, and the munitions plants were wells of death, for with every passing hour, a spark would reach bullets and shells and powder.

But in the fields beyond the German city there was quiet. And in those fields there was a prize.

A Heinkel had landed somewhere in the expanse of oil-spattered grass and weed. The landing had been almost perfect. But the wounded pilot was dying even as he brought the plane to a stop. Instinctively he shut off the motor. Then, slowly, he climbed from the cockpit, crawled a few yards and then died.

Now, in the darkness, someone moved toward that plane—a man who was weak

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BATTLE BIRDS

and tired, who had lost a lot of blood from a bullet that had grazed his scalp. Nevertheless, Carder knew he was a very lucky man. When his plane had started to burn, up there in the skies above Muenster, he had given up hope. He had slumped unconscious over the stick. Less than a thousand feet from the ground he came out of it; the heat was intense, and the pain unbearable, but he saw a slim chance to survive.

There was enough wind near the ground to drive the flame away from the cockpit. Carder managed to maneuver the plane into a semblance of a landing. It crashed, but did not nose over, and he was able to get away from it before it exploded. Then he went out cold.

When next he opened his eyes it was night. But he could see a plane silhouetted against the blackness. He moved toward it.

The pain was overwhelming as he started to crank the Heinkel. When the propeller twisted once, then went back and stopped, Carder groaned aloud. Then he went to work again.

He gunned the ship and it lumbered across the black field. He snapped on the wing lights. It was anything but smooth going, and the bouncing was torture, as he maneuvered it and gained speed.

And then the Heinkel was in the air.

Carder lifted it to 7,500 feet and took it across Germany and across Holland. He brought it out over the North Sea.

Then tubes of blue-white light appeared in the darkness far ahead, and he knew that he was nearing England, and that those lights were the coastal batteries watching for the approach of German planes. He brought the Heinkel down in a stretch of meadow near the coast.

He grinned in the darkness. He climbed from the Heinkel and then saw the figures that were running across the

(Continued on page 112)

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SONGS, POEMS wanted. Unlimited opportunity. Write today. Free examination. Radio Music Co., 6912 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood.

BATTLE BIRDS

(Continued from page 110)

meadow, toward him. There were faces lit by matches and flashlights, and the arms of many soldiers were lifting him from the ground.

IN THE canteen bar of Fighter 91, the flyers were clustered at the highly polished stretch of oak that was covered with glasses and bottles. There was a great deal of noise and laughter.

But in a dark corner of the room two men sat quietly at a table.

Leighton said, "I couldn't tell you while you were in the hospital. I had to wait until now."

Carder rolled a glass between his palms. "So—that was the way she died. And she was always asking me to take her away from Cranwell, away from the bombs—"

"She was glad that you didn't take her away," Leighton said.

"Yes, I can understand that," Carder said, his voice very low. He looked up at Leighton and added, "You'll be going back to the States now. You'll be arranging matters for Fred. I don't imagine I'll ever see you again, Leighton."

"That's where you're wrong. I'll be back. Maybe Fred will be with me. I've got a feeling that he'll go big for this combat stuff. The three of us ought to be quite a team, don't you think?"

He smiled, and the same kind of a smile came to Carder's lips.

"Let's drink on it," Carder said.

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(Continued)

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(Continued from page 8)

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across a letter by John Noonan, with
his crack about Bob Stinson. I don't
think he should get away with what
he said about some of the data he gave.

He declared that the P-36 has a
speed of 360 miles per hour. I do not
agree with him, for according to my
data which I have collected out of
magazines and papers, I find the P-36
travels only 323 miles per hour. I think
he had better look at his data again.

I think if he looks again, he might
find that the P-40 does 360 miles per
hours and not the P-36.

I think this little piece of informa-
tion deserves a Blakeslee.

Before I sign off, I would like to
have letters from other writers who wish
information on the data of planes. I
have a good collection.

If John Noonan wishes to declare my
statement wrong, I will be more than
willing to receive his letters.

Yours till the war is over and we all
get drunk,

Roland Dumas.

Well, that looks very much as though a
hot debate is shaping up. But there's one
thing you fellows want to keep in mind
when discussing the performances of
planes—the fact that speed varies with the
altitude, and consequently all published
figures are only relative. And often the
speed given for a plane will be the speed
in a power dive, not level flight. That's
something else to consider before getting
into an argument. And never forget that
the exact performance details of fighting
planes are military secrets, and even the
figures generally accepted by competent
authorities may be little more than ap-
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That's about all we have time for this
session. Until next time—keep 'em flying!

Gabby.

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1555 Milwaukee Av., Chicago

Send without obligation **FREE** impression material, catalog and information.

NAME

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

A DENTIST SUPERVISES THE MAKING OF EACH DENTAL PLATE.

FREE Impression Material—Catalog

with our New Low Prices, and information. Don't put this off. Do it today!

BEFORE

AFTER



ELSIE BOLAND OF NORTON, KANSAS,

writes: "Enclosed are two pictures. One shows how I looked before I got my teeth; the other one afterwards. Your teeth are certainly beautiful."



HARRY WILLOUGHBY, Adairville, Ky., writes: "I've received my teeth and am proud of them."

The foregoing are a few of thousands of unsolicited testimonials in our files. We don't imply that you will obtain the same results. What is IMPORTANT TO YOU is WE GUARANTEE your MONEY BACK if you are not 100% satisfied.

U.S.DENTALCO., 1555 MILWAUKEE AV. Dept. 2-87, Chicago

2⁹⁵
AND UP COMPLETE

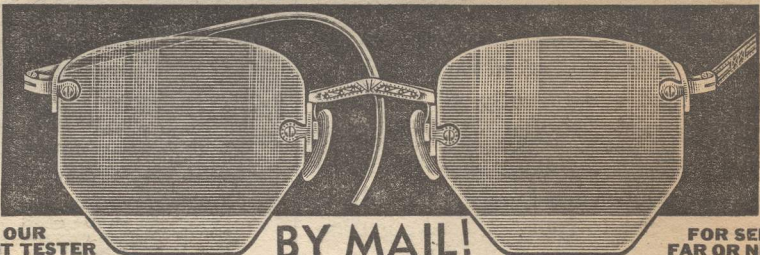
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AND INFORMATION

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TRY OUR SIGHT TESTER



BY MAIL!

FOR SEEING FAR OR NEAR!

FREE U.S.EYE-GLASSES CO., Dept. 2-87
1557 Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Send without obligation, your **FREE** catalog and information.

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PRINT NAME CLEARLY

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

GRACE YOUR FACE WITH GOOD-LOOKING GLASSES. . . Select for yourself from the many styles in our catalog the one that looks best on you. Get yours on a 16 DAYS' TRIAL. You be the sole judge. . . Wear our Glasses ON TRIAL AS LONG AS 16 DAYS with a MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE OF SATISFACTION! Then, if you are not 100% satisfied with glasses we make for you, we will refund every cent you paid us for them. **HIGH QUALITY MATERIAL,**

EXPERT WORKMANSHIP. All our lenses are genuine Toric—the frames are made of dainty engraved Rhodium or finest 1/10 - 12 Karat gold filled. Expert opticians make our glasses for you.

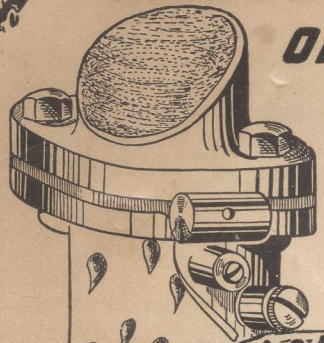
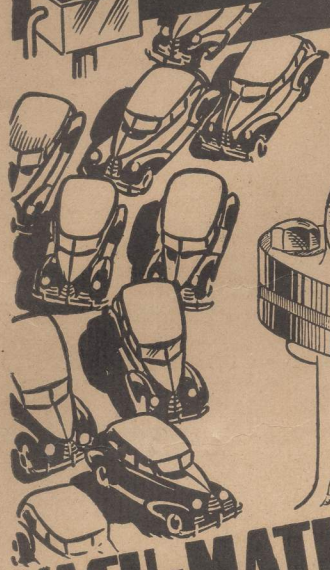
Prescriptions for Glasses Filled
BROKEN GLASSES REPAIRED—
48 Hour Service

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Calling all Cars!

A
**MYSTERIOUS DISCOVERY
SAVES UP TO 30%
ON GASOLINE!**
OR COSTS NOTHING TO TRY



*Scores
Again*

VACU-MATIC
SETS NEW COAST-TO-CHICAGO
RECORD

BOB MCKENZIE
TRANS-CONTINENTAL AUTOMOBILE CHAMPION
COAST TO COAST

Vacu-matic Carburetor Co.
7617 W. State Street
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

Dear Sirs:

Having just completed a new speed record between Los Angeles and Chicago, driving a Chevrolet equipped with a Vacu-matic carburetor control, I thought you might be interested in knowing some of the facts and the important part Vacu-matic played in the success of the run.

The distance covered was 2322 miles in thirty-nine hours and forty-two minutes, which gave officially timed with a Vacu-matic carburetor an average speed of 59.7 M.P.H. based on elapsed time and with the Vacu-matic averaged 18-1/2 miles per gallon on gasoline.

Before leaving Los Angeles, we made several test runs both with and without the Vacu-matic, and the tests proved that Vacu-matic increased my gas mileage 3-1/2 miles per gallon at the driving speed of 60 M.P.H. and also very noticeable increase in both acceleration and power.

Yours very truly,
Bob McKenzie



In addition to establishing new mileage records on cars in all sections of the country, the Vacu-matic has proven itself on thousands of road tests and on dynamometer tests which duplicate road conditions and record accurate mileage and horse power increases.

You, too, can make a road test with Vacu-matic on your car and prove its worthwhile gas savings to your entire satisfaction.

Learn all about this remarkable discovery. Get the facts NOW!

**Fits
All Cars**

Easy To Install

Vacu-matic is constructed of six parts assembled and fused into one unit, adjusted and sealed at the factory. Nothing to regulate. Any motorist can install in ten minutes. The free offer coupon will bring all the facts. Mail it today!

The Vacu-matic Co.

Wauwatosa, Wis.

Automatic Supercharge Principle

Vacu-matic is entirely different! It operates on the supercharge principle by automatically adding a charge of extra oxygen, drawn free from the outer air, into the heart of the gas mixture. It is entirely automatic and allows the motor to "breathe" at the correct time, opening and closing automatically as required to save dollars on gas costs.

Sworn Proof of Gas Savings

This certifies that I have carefully read 300 original letters received from Vacu-matic users testifying to gas savings up to 30%, many reporting added power, smoother running, and quicker pick-up. These letters are just a small part of the larger file of enthusiastic user letters that I saw at the company offices.



Signed *Marcus J. Clouty*
Notary Public

AGENTS Get Yours FREE For Introducing

Vacu-matic offers a splendid opportunity for unusual sales and profits. Every car, truck, tractor, and motorcycle owner a prospect. Valuable territories now being assigned. If you help us introduce it to a friend, you can obtain your own free. Check and mail coupon today.

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7617-613 W. State St., Wauwatosa, Wis.
Please send full particulars about VACU-MATIC, also how I may obtain one for my own car FREE.
This does not obligate me in any way.

Name

Address

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

☐ Check here if interested in Agency Proposition.

10¢ A DAY - buys a Diamond or Famous Watch

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NEW SAVINGS BOOK PLAN

Yes - only 10¢ a day on my Savings Book Plan will buy your choice of these Diamonds or Watches. It's simple - here's how you go about it . . .

WHAT YOU DO:

Send coupon below with a dollar bill and a brief note telling me who you are, your occupation, and a few other facts about yourself. Indicate the watch or diamond you want on coupon, giving number and price.

WHAT I'LL DO:

I'll open an account for you on my SAVINGS BOOK PLAN, send the watch or diamond you want for approval and

10-DAY TRIAL

If satisfied, you pay 10 monthly payments. If you are not satisfied after wearing the watch or ring for 10 days, send it back and I'll return your dollar on our

MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

A Savings Book will be sent to you to help you save your dime each day. YOU PAY MONTHLY by money order or check. Try this easy, convenient method that has helped thousands to own fine diamonds and watches without burden on the pocket-book or savings. All prices include Federal Tax.

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A postcard brings my complete 48-page catalogue and full details on my SAVINGS BOOK PLAN. No Obligation.



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A7 - Brilliant Cut Diamond Engagement Ring. 14K yellow gold.

\$1 deposit \$2.85 a month



both \$33

A84 - Bridal Set. 8 Brilliant Cut Diamonds. 14K yellow gold.

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\$3575

D122 - Man's Twin Ring. Diamond and simulated blue sapphire. 14K yellow gold.

\$1 deposit \$3.48 mo.



\$22

I157 - Man's Initial Ring. Diamond; 2 initials on black onyx. 14K yellow gold.

\$1 deposit \$2.10 a month



P122 - Ladies' 10K coral rolled gold plate KENT Watch. 7 jewels. Guaranteed. Extra link bracelet.

\$1 deposit \$1.83 a month



R154
17 JEWELS
\$33.75

M140
15 JEWELS
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Bulova Watch Features for Men and Women. Both 10K yellow rolled gold plate case. Order by number.

\$1 deposit
\$3.28 a month



T568
17 JEWELS
\$22

O567
15 JEWELS
\$22

Famous Benrus Watch Features. Both 10K yellow rolled gold plate cases. Order by number.

\$1 deposit
\$2.10 a month



\$2750

K308 - Waterproof Watch for Service Men. Sweepsecond. 17 jewels; 10K yellow rolled gold plate.

\$1 dep. \$2.65 a mo.

JIM FEENEY

L. W. Sweet, 1670 Broadway (Dept. 12B)
New York, N. Y.

Enclosed find \$1 deposit. Send me No. _____
Price \$_____. I agree to pay the balance
in 10 equal monthly payments, otherwise I'll return
selection and you will refund my dollar.

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BAYWHITE BRIDGES
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