

# THRILLING MAY ADVENTURES



10¢

A THRILLING  
PUBLICATION

## CAIRO TANK TROUBLE

A Novelet of  
Sabotage and Intrigue  
By E. HOFFMANN PRICE

## TOO OLD FOR COMBAT

An Air War Novelet  
By RALPH OPPENHEIM

BUY WAR BONDS  
AND STAMPS  
FOR VICTORY!



# PRAISE THE LORD

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## "I TALKED WITH GOD"

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and as a result of that little talk with God a strange Power came into my life. For I discovered that when a man finds the dynamic, invisible Power which is God, that man possesses a priceless heritage. Failure, fear, confusion go out of the life, and in the place of these things, there comes a sweet assurance that the Power which created the universe is at the disposal of all. And life takes on a brighter hue when the fact is fully known that at any hour of the day or night the amazing Power of Almighty God can be thrown against any and all undesirable circumstances—and they disappear.

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**DR. FRANK B. ROBINSON**  
Founder "Psychiana"  
Moscow, Idaho

which has a beautiful pipe-organ in it, and I have several other holdings too. Now something very definite happened in my life, and it is this very definite thing I want you to know about. It can happen to you too.

If you will send me your name and address now, I'll send you two FREE booklets which tell you what happened to me when I talked with God. You will learn from these two booklets where I talked with

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# THRILLING ADVENTURES

Vol. XLV, No. 1

EVERY STORY BRAND NEW

May, 1943



*A Novelet of Sabotage and Intrigue*

## CAIRO TANK TROUBLE

By E. HOFFMANN PRICE

When spare parts for British army tanks in Egypt go astray, Mike Rayne sets out on an exciting quest that leads him right into the clutches of the enemy 13

*An Exciting Action Novelet*

### TOO OLD FOR COMBAT

Ralph Oppenheim

Squadron Leader Steve Banton tangles with jungle perils and Jap pilots before settling the question of his best friend's age! . . . . . 38

*Thrilling Short Stories and Features*

### THE REDS AND THE BLUES

Byron W. Dalrymple

A swastika brings plenty of bad news to the Nazis . . . . . 30

### THE DOUGHBOY

Sam Merwin, Jr.

He's the forgotten man of World War Two . . . . . 52

### THE FANGS OF YAK

Harold F. Cruickshank

The son of a wolf father and collie mother fights the wild packs . . . . . 56

### SAILORS WITHOUT UNIFORMS

Special Feature

True stories of the Merchant Marine in action . . . . . 65

### HOW TO WRITE A MOVIE

Jack Kofoed

Hetherington and O'Brien are plunged into North African turmoil . . . . . 68

### RIVER OF WRATH

Henry Kuttner

An American in the Ecuadorian jungles rescues a kidnaped grandee . . . . . 78

### THE GLOBE TROTTER

A Department

Join our world-wide club! Coupon on page 96 . . . . . 10

Also see "To the Ends of the Earth," on page 37

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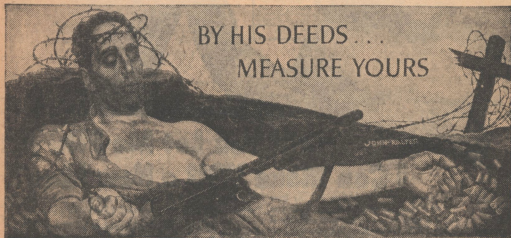
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IT is not pleasant to have your peaceful life upset by wartime needs and restrictions and activities.... It is not pleasant to die, either.... Between you who live at home and the men who die at the front there is a direct connection.... By your actions, definitely, a certain number of these men will die or they will come through alive. If you do everything you can to hasten victory and do every bit of it as fast as you can... then, sure as fate you will save the lives of some men who will otherwise die because you let the war last too long.... Think it over. Till the war is won you cannot, in fairness to them, complain or waste or shirk. Instead, you will apply every last ounce of your effort to getting this thing done.... In the name of God and your fellow man, that is your job.



The civilian war organization needs your help. The Government has formed the Citizens Service Corps as part of local Defense Councils. If such a group is at work in your community, cooperate with it to the limit of your ability. If none exists, help to organize one. A free booklet telling you what to do and how to do it will be sent to you at no charge if you will write to this magazine. This is your war. Help win it. Choose what you will do—now!

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# The GLOBE TROTTER



IF WE are one of the one-hundred-and-thirty million average Americans who are following the war news avidly with each morning and evening newspaper, Tunis is one of the places that shares interest with Guadalcanal, New Guinea and other areas where American soldiers and marines are fighting. Tunis may well be the jumping-off place for the invasion of Europe which will give Hitler and his Axis the final crushing blow.

Just what will our soldier-boys have to tell about this fascinating place when they return? Some of the facts gathered by your Globe-Trotter some years ago may help to serve as a basis for more up-to-the-minute changes when Johnny comes marching home.

The first journey we made to Tunis was over a route which I fervently hope will be reversed by Eisenhower, Montgomery, Alexander, Le Clerc, and their cohorts. Visiting in the wine-growing sections of Italy down near the lower end of the boot, an American wine-buyer, who was with me, suggested that we might go over to Sicily, and from there to Malta and finally to Tunis.

We were touring Italy in a Renault car which already had taken us from Paris southward, and which, in Italy, at least, had been asked to do some of the things we've come to expect of a jeep. Particularly when the rainy weather caught up with us. Don't ask the doughboys about the rainy weather, they will probably want to forget it.

## A Makeshift Ferry

The journey to Sicily from the boot of Italy was made over rather a primitive ferry, which consisted of two flat-boats lashed together, and boards placed over them to accommodate the car. I was skeptical about this means of locomotion and talked it over with the skipper.

"Signor," I asked, "do you think we'll make it?"

"Si," he replied, with a broad smile. "Only once have I lost a car. The ropes holding the flat-boats together, they broke."

A study of the ropes holding our flat-boats together indicated they might break easily, too. But luck stayed with us. This primitive

method of transport at that time can be explained in a curious way.

At one time Sicily and Naples were known as the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and their commerce was carried on between the island and the mainland port by boats that ran directly from Siracusa to Naples.

From Sicily we took a much more substantial vessel for the trip of about one hundred miles to Tunisia. It is not far—an easy overnight trip. So if our Commandos and Rangers and supporting units decide to go out exploring some night, they may well wind up on Italian soil.

## Tunisia Has Vineyards

On the way to Tunisia, I was talking with my wine-buying friend, and naturally our conversation turned to vineyards.

"What are your plans after we reach Tunis?" I asked.

"To buy more wine," he replied.

Mention of wine in connection with Tunis may be news to many persons, but the Italians have had rather a large settlement in the African protectorate for some time. Nearly sixty percent of the approximately 70,000 acres of vineyards are operated by them. This explains one of the reasons why the Germans were able to hold on to this area, and draw recruits from Mussolini's citizens.

My own interest in Tunisia, however, was not entirely connected with wine. The background of the country fascinated me. As a jumping-off place for invasions of Europe, the place interested me, even then. You see, people have been invading Europe from Tunis for something like three thousand years. Berlin papers, please copy.

## Tunis Once Was "Ifriqua"

The original name of Tunis, given to it by the Berber tribesmen was "Ifriqua," and the early Romans latinized this to "Africa" which name has now been applied to the entire continent, of course. Any schoolboy knows of the importance of Carthage and Phoenicia in the good old days, and how the Carthaginian conquerors, Hannibal and Hasdrubal roared out of their African strongholds, and invaded





Spain, France and Italy. Their early day elephant squadrons are the forerunners of our modern tanks!

Carthage occupied the area on the point of the Mediterranean still known as Cape Carthage. It had a historic life of about fifteen hundred and fifty years, from its founding in 850 B.C., to its destruction in 698.

One thing about Tunis and its neighborhood surprised me, and will probably interest fellow globe-trotters as well. The city is situated ten miles from the Gulf of Carthage. The original builders wanted to get out of range of shell-fire from enemy vessels. Ten miles seemed like a long way from a man-of-war in the good old days. In those days battleships had no sixteen and twenty-inch guns, and carrier-based dive bombers.

The original port of Tunis was at a small town on the Gulf of Carthage called La Goletta. One thing you learn about Africa, almost as soon as you come in sight of the place, is the fact that the Arabs, Bedouins and other native tribes do not waste any flowery language when it comes to naming a place. La Goletta received its name because trading schooners came there to do business with the natives, and the words mean simply "the schooner."

#### Lake Trip Is Picturesque

Our ship steamed up to La Goletta, and then was shunted into the canal which connects the waterfront city with the Lake of Tunis. The journey up this lake to Tunis itself supplied a fascinating half hour. The passenger list on any one of these Mediterranean steamers is always a colorful one, for you are likely to have Greek traders, picturesquely dressed women from the Levant, Mohammedans returning from pilgrimages to Mecca, and countless other gayly-garbed travelers.

(Continued on page 88)

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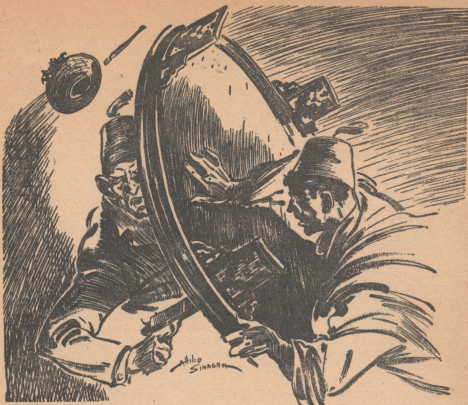
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Then, as the weapon jammed, Rayne knocked the Egyptian off balance with the table

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## CHAPTER I

### *A Fight in an Alley*

**M**IKE RAYNE, civilian specialist, was beginning to wonder if it wouldn't be a real break to get out in the desert after Rommel. He was tired of sweating here under the floodlights. He was weary of trying to invent ways of mating up parts from

three different models of tanks. The result had to be one mongrel tank that could roll, and dish it out, and take it for a while.

Here the greasy concrete floor quivered from the impact hammers which straightened plates, ripped and warped by those roaring 88s. Hissing torches welded cuts, and built up tractor treads. Here, just as much as the desert gap be-

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A NOVELET OF SABOTAGE AND INTRIGUE

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tween the Qattara Depression and el Alamein, was the front.

And Rayne, who had left the factory in Detroit to go to Egypt to supervise tank repair, had been doing it the hard way. His crew had to recondition damaged parts, while Rayne robbed what he could from hopeless wrecks. There was nothing else to do. For the *Iron King*, loaded with spare replacements, had been torpedoed in the Red Sea.

A stooped, thin man with silver eagles on his shirt stalked through the shop. He halted, cocked his head.

"Rayne! You working yet?" he bel-lowed. "When the simmering blazes do you sleep? How many hours do you think a man can stand in this furnace?"

Rayne's swarthy face twisted. He gestured at the line-up.

"All right, Colonel. Take over for me, will you?"

Colonel Mitchell made a gesture, palms up.

"Enough's enough. Don't you work your crews overtime?"

"Won't do. If they get groggy things might happen."

The colonel snorted with disgust.

"I know why. They can't use a micrometer, they can't pour a bearing, they can't balance a crankshaft. Especially the ones which ought to go to the scrap-heap instead of back into service. That's so, isn't it?"

"Sure. Simple enough."

"All right," the colonel went on, "and if you don't ease up, you'll drop dead. Get out of this place, right now."

Mike Rayne was tired, more tired than he had ever been in his life before. Lines of weariness had cut into his young face, injected his eyes with blood and furrowed his brow. But he wouldn't quit. His square jaw set itself. He felt inclined to argue.

"Aw, nuts!" he said. "Don't you realize Rommel's advancing?"

**E**VEN as he spoke the shop had a tendency to spin. He put his hand to his wet brow and managed to control the dizziness. Colonel Mitchell caught the gesture. His manner grew triumphant.

"Ah, ha, you see that?" cried the colonel. "What did I say? You need time off. I'll wager you haven't even seen your grandmother. I'm putting you out."

To emphasize his remarks, Mitchell caught Rayne by the shoulder, whirled him about and hustled him toward the far-off entrance. Mitchell's hand was far more powerful than it looked. Effortlessly he managed the weary man.

"You follow instructions," he told Rayne. "Get yourself a bit of shut-eye, see your grandmother, or go out and get drunk. Do something." At the door he halted the young mechanic. "Trust your crew," he said. "You trained 'em. Now give 'em their heads. They depend too much on you. If it weren't for that, you could go to the front. But you're too valuable to lose. So you must take care of yourself, boy. Understand?"

Rayne sighed. The old chap with the silver eagles was right, no doubt about it.

"You win, Colonel. I'm going."

Not until he left the shower, did Rayne realize the colonel's order. His clean whites, which accentuated the swarthiness of his face, the keenness of his deep-set eyes and the darkness of his brows. He still did not feel any too steady on his feet. His head was giddy from long sustained tension.

Maybe he ought to see his grandmother, out in the Salahiya Quarter, as the colonel had suggested. The old lady was past eighty. However, going to bat for Cairo had been a mania with Rayne since he had come back to Egypt. Though born in Denver, he had spent his boyhood in Cairo, with his grandmother.

On the Detroit payrolls, he was listed as Mike Rayne, and not Mikhail Matar. An American, he once told his parents, ought to have an all-American name, so he had translated it. Though "Rain," he figured, had a bit more class if you spelled it "Rayne."

The paving billowed a little under his feet. He knew that he could drink arrak by the bottle and not feel the blistering stuff. He understood now why the survivors of a torpedoed transport, after several weeks in an open boat, had that blank look, why they could not say much.

Rayne was exhausted. Exhaustion parts the thin veil which separates a man's every-day knowledge from the hidden knowledge which comes to him in hunches. To Rayne, the lights and the voices, the café laughter and the whine of "rebeks" and the crying of flutes car-



Rayne spun in an arc, showering coals and ashes as he whirled

ried a shocking message. Most of the town felt Rommel did not want to bomb Cairo.

Rayne knew Rommel wanted to blast the British and American armored forces. Rommel wanted to shoot the R.A.F. and the U. S. Air Force from the sky. But he wanted to keep Cairo intact for the Nazis. Rommel could plan this way because at least half of Egypt hated the British, and believed that Hitler would bring a bright new day to the Nile.

Rayne could have gone to the Continental Roof, where Hekmet did the Egyptian version of a strip tease. Also there were the cafés on the Ezbekiyah, crowded with officers. Instead, Rayne drifted toward the Muski Quarter, the town he knew from boyhood days.

He had lived in the States too long not to notice the smells. But for all his crinkled nostrils, it was like meeting an old friend, a friend who was making a deadly mistake. A woman's voice, and the plucked strings of an *oudh* tugged at his heart. Such things brushed back some fifteen years. Mike Rayne became Mikhail Matar again, an American thinking in Arabic.

Robed figures flitted about shadowy alleys like the unburied dead. "Effendis" strutted in European clothes, and tarbooshes rakishly cocked. At times, he heard English and American voices. These began to sound foreign.

He stepped into a loquanda where much arrak and only a little coffee was sold. No one gave him a second look; he belonged. But when two men in civilian clothes entered, Kassim's customers eyed them. Kassim, sharp-eyed and greasy, went into his tourist bait routine.

"Nix, we want a drink," growled the two men.

**T**HEY were seamen. Rayne knew that. They needed the anise flavored brandy to turn the Red Sea jitters out of their rugged frames. U-boats did slip past Aden. Submarines still plied off Mozambique and Madagascar.

"Talk about horseshoes," the red-haired sailor said, after a snort to welcome the "arrak" home. "That *Iron King*. Torpedoed, she's abandoned. Gosh knows what happened to her crew, but she settles on a reef and hanged if she's not towed in."

"Says who?"

"I talked to a guy at Suez, that's who. Cargo all okay."

Rayne almost choked on his "arrak." The *Iron King*, leaving New York some six weeks ahead of him, had been loaded with spare parts. And these men had sighted her, limping homeward after emergency repairs at the southern end of the Suez Canal. Then why had not her cargo reached the shops?

The seamen's speech, already thick, was becoming more so. Rayne left his bench in the corner and sat down with them.

"What ship you on?"

Where they had been dishing out news for all to hear, they now froze up. "Who wants to know?"

The other put in his bit. "Beat it, mug," he said. "Shove off before we wrap a table around your head."

That a customer, so much at home in Kassim's, spoke English with an American accent, aroused their suspicions. This was no place for Rayne to explain himself. Particularly he did not wish to debate matters with a couple of drunks who belatedly remembered their orders against mentioning ships by name. He shrugged, and went back to his own table, where he called for more liquor.

"That buzzard likes the stuff," the red-headed seaman muttered, his voice carrying much further than he had intended.

This remark solidified Rayne's suspicions. Fellow Americans were mistaking him for an "effendi."

Kassim, meanwhile, directed a sharper scrutiny at Rayne. Apparently, the encounter had made him wonder. Rayne, realizing he was getting nowhere, headed for the street.

Decidedly he had a hunch. Heavy cargo could not be dumped into the Canal. Nor could it be buried in the desert. But it might be sidetracked and hidden in Cairo's many warehouses. That would be simple enough. If hidden, with the records altered, the spare parts could remain out of service for several months. That would be sufficient to cripple the defending army. Replacements might take weeks to arrive.

A good hunch. But Rayne needed more details. No matter who he told, the *pasha* responsible would block investigation. The official clique, barring a few honorable exceptions, had for the last



century been Egypt's worst enemies. No wonder the *fellahin* were not worried about Rommel. Nazis would be a treat in a land looted by native officials.

Rayne stepped into the darkness of an archway across the street. His wits were sharpening now. He was having one of those brief stretches of alertness which alternated with periods of intolerable sleepiness.

His legs were tired. His feet burned. He squatted in the archway, easily and readily as any native. Then, hearing a mumbling and gurgling, he realized that he was not alone in the gloom. The varnish odor and the incoherent words told him that someone was polishing off what remained of a bottle of Greek "mastika."

"Have one, brother," the drunk sputtered, and passed him the flask of resin-flavored brandy.

Rayne thanked him and pretended to take a pull. Meanwhile, the sailors, after making unsteady silhouettes in the doorway of Kassim's place, reeled down the murky street.

"That's hot music," one said, thickly.

"In some other dive, a girl was singing.

"*Zabbiyat il unsi ilaya. . .*"

"Koochie dance."

**P**ROBABLY he was right. The song ceased. The little kettle drums began to mutter. A sistra jangled metallicly. Voices raised raucous shouts of "Ya sitti! Kamaan!"

The seamen were in no shape to barge into a native café which featured dancing girls. Just the wrong quip, and they would get their throats sliced, or they would be slugged.

Rayne also wanted to know what ship had brought them in. That thin hunch needed building up. So, still holding the mastika bottle by the neck, he set out after them.

Though the Muski is not such a bad place if you knew the answers, it is not for two drunks in civilian clothes. Nor can it even be called healthy for a handful of hard-boiled men in uniform.

Ahead flickered a yellow light. Rayne knew it marked the dive where the drums pounded, where Christians and renegade Moslems swilled arrak and cheered as a dancer shook her torso.

Then Rayne saw business was picking up. From a cross alley, dark figures sud-

denly blended with the silhouettes of the seamen. A wrathful growl sounded, followed by the pop of a hard fist, and the sinister gleam of steel.

## CHAPTER II

### *Into Moslem Byways*



**ALTHOUGH** outnumbered by assailants, the seamen defended themselves stoutly. So far as Rayne could tell, the attack had been launched utterly without justification. Regardless of that, he would have intervened, anyway. What now drove him on was the conviction some

other reason than robbery, vengeance for breach of custom had instigated the attack. As Rayne dashed forward he felt this fight embodied all of the hidden fires that he had sensed in his walk through modern Cairo.

The town was ignoring the war. It had ignored it to a degree which had shocked Rayne. Though the eight-sided Ezbekiyah had not been festooned with neons, it might as well have been. Pompous-looking *pashas*, rolling by in long, sleek cars only conceded to Rommel's air force the flattery of blue headlights. In side streets, marriage processions still wound heedlessly along, torches flaring. Until this evening Rayne had not suspected the true state of affairs.

Too many merchants of Cairo had figurative welcome signs for Rommel on their doorstep. That made things bad for sailors on shore leave.

Rayne, with a bottle clutched by the neck, fairly swooped toward the battle. Excitement brought out his last reserve of energy as he swung the bottle.

"*Ruh, ya kilab,*" Rayne yelled, and cracked down on a felt skullcap.

A police whistle shrilled.

For a time there was no sound in the darkness other than heavy blows and the other noises of furious combat. The sailors continued to swing their fists recklessly, letting go at every head they saw.

After his first shout and efficient use of the liquor receptacle, Rayne had intervened no more in the battle. He had an excellent reason for this. A chance wallop from one of the seamen had laid



him down in the Egyptian mud, stunned and breathless.

The men from the ship continued to use their fists with effect. Soon their assailants began to dodge away. One of the seamen now had opportunity to speak to his companion who, likewise, had backed up against a wall.

"That feller who helped us out with the bottle," growled the sailor. "He ain't no pansy. What d'ye say, friend? Shall we check out of here like he did? The cops is on the way."

"Aye, aye, shipmate," responded his companion. "Let's shove off quick."

And they merged into the shadows just as the police rushed into the street from another direction.

Rayne, still groggy from the punch, was unable to get away either. In addition to the blow a kick from a hard shoe, had nearly knocked him unconscious. The police approached, flashing lights upon the scene.

The scattering thugs distracted them. By the time they collared one prisoner, and given the others up as a bad job, Rayne had crawled painfully into the angle of a wall. A flashlight played on the arena.

One of the khaki-clad policemen seemed surprised.

"*Wallah*, this was the grandfather of battles," he said. "One of these dogs has a crushed skull. Doubtless he sings in Paradise at this very moment."

"Infidels did this thing," a groggy ruffian mumbled through shattered teeth to a policeman. "Allah knows we were innocent."

"Silence, thou father of thieves," snapped the policeman.

One of the officers flashed a light into the alley. He saw Rayne. So did the man with the thickened mouth.

"There's one of those sons of pigs," he cried. "They wore Feringhi clothes."

One man lay dead, one badly gouged, one in need of some dental work. And there in the angle rested Rayne, just recovering from his bruises. Thus he seemed to be an ideal candidate for a scapegoat. Spectators came flocking out of houses, although thus far no one had emerged from Kassim's place.

**A**SSEMBLED policemen held a conference in Arabic.

"*Wallah*, this fellow wears Feringhi

clothes, still he doesn't look like one of them," they said.

"He's an unbelieving dog," muttered the man with the broken teeth. "He stole my purse."

"But he's not one of the men who were beaten up by the infidel," muttered a policeman. "Who can he be?"

They hoisted Rayne to his feet.

"The peace upon you, but ruffians knocked me down," he gasped, with difficulty. "They kicked me in the stomach. Allah, first I am booted assunder, and with the father of all boots, and now they accuse me."

"By the prophet, a true believer," the cops exclaimed. "Which way did the infidels run?"

Things looked better for Rayne.

"Allah knows all things, but it seemed that way," he answered, pointing in a wrong direction.

Then Kassim waddled out.

"O Men, what is this thing?" he puffed. "Who makes these riots?"

"Wisdom is with God."

Kassim squinted at Rayne. "This fellow lies like Iblis, the condemned. He is a friend of the Feringhi. He sat at their table."

"Let us take them all to jail," decided the policemen.

Well, things could be worse. Though Grandma would shudder, bailing her grandson out of jail, Rayne figured he could live it down. But a real wallop knocked the relief out of him.

From the doorway opposite Kassim's lurched a man who reeked with *mastika*. "There's the eater-of-filth who stole my bottle," he bawled, as he stumbled and wove through mud and offal. "O True Believers, make him return my bottle."

That fatal bottle! It had killed a man and Rayne's fingerprints, whether sharp or blurred, were nevertheless on the glass neck. This looked like it would be something from which Grandmother could not extricate him. The old lady's influence did not carry weight enough with the *pashas*.

Rayne made a lunge. He tripped one policeman and cold caulked another. The uniformed men had barely hit the dirt when he was darting into the darkest of the Muski, and he thanked Allah that he knew where to go.

The effects of the kick and the punch had worn off and he moved easily,

lightly upon his feet. After him followed the police and various idlers, like a pack of hunting dogs, raising their voices in wild yells. But this did not bother Rayne. He thanked his stars for the training of his youth and a thorough knowledge of the furtive alleys of the city.

He went through murky passageways, around the corners of wooden shops, past shadowy buildings, twisting and turning, but holding to a general direction. Pedestrians whom he met were careful to draw back and give him room. For this was the East where a man's business is his own, and they knew not what crime he had committed or what weapons he carried.

Rayne headed for the more lawless sections of Cairo, knowing that in such a section on general principles, all men aid a fugitive from the law.

In a few minutes by skill and quick wit the sounds of pursuit had died out and he had lost the howling pack. Then he swung around another corner and halted, leaning against the side of a building in the dark. He was breathless but calm. For a few minutes he waited, regaining his wind.

Then he sauntered off as if nothing had happened. And as he strolled along, he was thinking hard.

**R**AYNE was not old, but he had not become a master mechanic by having folks pat him on the head.

Battered and half asleep, he began to reckon the score. Kassim and his *loqanda* were off color. That the ambush had occurred so near the place proved nothing. But it was odd, during the riot, no one had come out of Kassim's to get a look until the police had arrived. And then that effort to connect Rayne with the seamen, when Kassim knew well that he, Rayne, had been rebuffed as a prying foreigner.

His last waking thought was, "When I can think straight, when I'm not so dopey, I'll get to the bottom of this."

Again weariness seeped through him and he longed for rest. His course now took a definite direction. He turned his steps toward a ruined mosque with which he was acquainted and soon stopped before the wide steps of the deserted building. Further along was a coppersmith's bazaar but not a light

showed either there or here.

Rayne slipped down along the structure out of sight. Halting before a door he cast a quick glance up and down the narrow lane. No one was near. In a minute or two he was inside the mosque. It was pitch dark inside but he managed to find a clean corner which would do for a bed. In a minute or two he was settled down and composed for sleep. He had a last waking thought.

"Tomorrow, when I'm not so tired and dopey, I'll find out what became of those missing tank parts," he said to himself.

Rayne passed the night undisturbed in the mosque. At dawn, awakened by the *muezzin's* call to prayer from another mosque nearby, he crawled further into the crumbling masonry and caught up with some more sleep. After the bedlam of the tank shop, the sounds of the market failed to disturb him.

Not until mid-afternoon came had he rested enough to notice the discomfort of his rocky bunk. This told him how correct had been Colonel Mitchell's diagnosis, and how near Rayne had skirted utter collapse.

He plunged his head into a nearby fountain. His hat was gone, and in Egypt, running around bare-headed is a worse breach of etiquette than roaming about without pants. So Rayne lost no time in buying a tarboosh. Then he got out of that quarter of Cairo.

Near Khan el Khallili, where caravans from the Soudan used to unload gum and leather and ostrich plumes, he found a *loqanda*. Here he ordered sour milk, cucumbers, and a flat cake of bread. Borrowing an Arabic newspaper from the proprietor, he read an account of the previous night's fray as he sipped his coffee.

The two sailors, Walt Kearney and Robert Irwin, were in jail. They had been held in connection with the death of Zahir-ud-Din Mohammed, a resident of the Kordofan Bazaar. In addition to this, one Abu Najeeb, who had been severely cut by broken glass, was in the Ismailia Emergency Hospital. Kassim, restaurant proprietor, stated that the two sailors had come in with a bottle of *mastika*, and had left in a quarrelsome mood. Therefore, the street fight had not surprised him, Kassim informed the police.

Since every paper in Egypt is govern-

ment controlled, this was official. It bothered Rayne. According to that version, the actual owner of the bottle, despite his loud protests to the police, did not and never had existed. Neither could the seizure of the bottle by Rayne matter much to the police since Rayne, likewise, had no official existence. All of which seemed odd to say the least.

"Kassim, is a liar," Rayne told himself. "Kearney and Irwin didn't have a bottle, and he knows they didn't."

The only reason Kassim could have for building up a case against two seamen would be that he had some good motive for covering up the fact that a gang had jumped the sailors at the first alley beyond his place. But why cover that up?

Rayne had two guesses: first, the Garden was a deadfall; or, the men had during their brief visit said or done something which made their disappearance necessary to Kassim. What made Rayne want to follow through was the fact the two seamen might know more about the *Iron King* and her cargo than they had let on.

Still puzzled, Rayne left the restaurant. His chief needs were suitable garments in which to carry on his investigations.

Wandering from shop to shop, he bought sandals here, baggy trousers there, and elsewhere, a jacket. In a ruined house he made a quick change. Then he resumed his tour of the bazaars. When it was done, Rayne had become a lemonade and cigarette peddler, raucously offering his wares to the shoppers who crowded the narrow street.

The customers he really wanted were in jail. The official smoke screen and the distortion of facts told Rayne anyone trying to get in touch with Kearney and Irwin would be blocked by miles of red tape.

Whoever, consul or otherwise, tried to investigate would surely run into a yarn about the prisoners having just been shifted to such and such station. So Rayne asked no questions. He settled down to patient guessing.

At each station, he gave the man at the desk free lemonade and a pack of cigarettes; there was similar bakshesh for the jailer. This detail settled, he was allowed to peddle his wares to the prisoners.

## CHAPTER III

### *The Toils of the Law*



IT WAS near sunset when he found the two sailors in the tank with half a dozen natives.

Rayne pretended a lofty scorn of the seamen. "Have these two infidel pigs any money?" he asked the natives, in Arabic.

"Ya Allah, they have," was the answer. "We tried to rob them, and they kicked us breathless."

Kearney and Irwin indeed looked as though they had been battling for their rights. So did their cellmates.

"Then stand back, little brothers, and the blessing of Allah upon you," said Rayne. "I speak their language a little, they will think I am a friend. Watch me loot them."

"God give you strength," came the pious wish, and the natives edged as far away as they could.

Rayne addressed the sailors in dragon-English.

"Lemonade, Mister," he inquired. "Cool and freshing. Fine Egypt made cigarettes, cheap."

"Go jump in the lake, you greasy swab."

The other seaman nudged his companion.

"Bob, don't you remember this guy? Only he was wearing white man's clothes then."

For a few moments Rayne continued his patter. He displayed his jug, his greasy little cups, the packages in his basket.

Then, in Americanese, "Dish out a bit of small change and keep on cussing me out. I told the others I was out to give you a rooking."

Red-haired Kearney offered a *piastre*. Rayne babbled for more.

"Who are you, anyway?" asked Kearney.

"Army Intelligence. You fellows are buried so deep no consul will ever find you, but maybe I can give you a break. You're wanted for murder."

Both sailors started; their faces changed. "Cut it out, brother."

"Gospel truth," Rayne insisted. "It's not in any English or French paper in



town, just in the Arabic papers. The whole yarn is phoney. Dig up some more dough, and take some cigarettes. Keep up the game, and growl at me a little."

They wrangled and bartered. Rayne winked at the interested native prisoners, elaborated his gestures.

"Wait until this unbelieving fool gives me a one-pound note and wants his change," he smirked.

Meanwhile Kearney and Irwin carried on. "How come we went to that dump, Kassim's? A dragon-man or something met us on the train and said he'd show us around reasonable. In Suez, a black fellow gave us cards, be sure and go to Kassim's and was it a washout when we got there. That's what we were sore about, no girls, nothing but that *arrak*."

"Do you remember the dragoman's license number?"

They did not. Tourists should, but never take their guide's number. Rayne went on, as he palmed a pound note and slipped it to Kearney.

"When I start walking out, wave this folding money, call me back, and buy something. I'll take the money and run out on you, and you yell and raise the roof, like I'd robbed you. Get it?"

They did. "All right," Rayne continued. "Now what were you fellows talking about before I came into Kassim's?"

"About the cargo of the *Iron King*, how lucky it was they salvaged all those spare parts for tanks. We were in port when she was being loaded, back home. We knew what she had."

"I'll do my best to get you fellows out," Rayne promised. "Do you know any more about the cargo?"

"No, how would we? Except it landed at Suez."

"Okay. Go into your dance."

The act was good. The prisoners got several packs of cigarettes, and Rayne made off with a pound Egyptian, worth close to five American dollars. The cursing was an inspiration. And the native prisoners howled with glee.

**M**IKE RAYNE grinned at the sergeant, tossed him a piece of silver, and went on. The sergeant caught the backsheesh on the fly, and thought it was a grand joke.

That night, Rayne sat in a restaurant, eating an egg plant and mutton stew. He mopped the gravy with a flap of leathery bread, and wished that he had time to take the interurban train to Grandma's house. But for the time, he was too busy piecing together the information Irwin and Kearney had given him. Though it did not seem important, actually it was dynamite.

First, runners in Suez handed out cards to merchant marine sailors with shore leave to Cairo. Second, a dragon-man met them in Cairo to guide them to the spot, and apparently, managed to get them moderately drunk on the way. Third, two men who discussed the cargo of the *Iron King* had narrowly missed being murdered. And fourth, after escaping from ambush, they had been jailed on false testimony largely concocted by Kassim.

Rayne did not know whether to tell Colonel Mitchell, or carry on alone. The colonel, in his official capacity, would have to confer with whatever officer handled much matters. Then that man would confer with the British, who in turn would have to take it up with some of Egypt's swarm of *pashas*. These tricky scoundrels would decide it was

[Turn page]





consular business, and the merry-go-round would keep whirling.

Meanwhile, Rommel was kicking up sand in the wrong direction.

"A short circuit," Rayne told himself, "may blow some fuses, but it is also the shortest distance between two points."

**T**O SAVE time and avoid lengthy explanations, he had been forced to tell the sailors he was Army Intelligence, and they had accepted it. Rayne hated the deception but there had been no other way. Now he figured it might be wise to make that harmless lie a temporary truth.

Rayne hurried away from the jail and turned his steps back in the direction of the place where he had left his clothes. He nearly dropped his lemonade peddling kit when he approached the place where he had made the change.

A crowd had gathered and the police were bringing out of hiding the shoes and suit which Rayne had concealed.

who had shed a white suit in favor of native dress.

Once more, he was tempted to phone or see Colonel Mitchell, but he ended by resisting the temptation, simply because an officer could not take part in any free and easy snooping fest. Whether he liked it or not, Rayne had to play the hand out himself.

Then the game began to have a thrill. As he ate, that night, he chatted with fellow diners and got their ideas on the mad infidel. They were betting a hundred to one the fellow would be nailed before dawn. His way of eating or drinking would betray him, even if his speech did not.

While they admitted that infidels might learn Arabic at school, none could speak it convincingly. Rayne, after belching in the fashion prescribed by the Egyptian *Emily Post*, wagged his head and agreed. "By Allah, brother, that is verily the essence of truth," he said.

He rented a cubicle in the old cara-

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Lieutenant Barry Gordon and his crew of engineers face grim South Pacific perils in **RULER OF MANY**, by Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, next issue!

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Now it turned out in his haste, he had not performed the task as well as he should have done.

The hat, lost in the alley brawl, must have started the search. Rayne raised his voice, adding to the chatter, but got no customers. Then he edged into the crowd. Whether the police had found the wallet he had buried under a loose slab, was not certain. But if they had, Rayne's identity would soon be disclosed by cards and papers.

As nearly as he could gather, however, an American cigarette, in the side pocket of his coat, along with the stamped corner of an envelope mailed from the States, told them what brand of infidel was on the loose.

"Now he's trying to disguise himself as a true believer," a policeman told one of the spectators.

Rayne sold some lemonade. The policemen helped themselves, sans payment. Rayne, though still shaky, left the corner with increased confidence. However, he realized that from now on, the police would be going from one shop to the next to pick up the trail of a man

vanersai, and spread out the palm leaf mat he had picked up near the restaurant. From now on, this was his address in the Muski. Having a visible means of support, his chances were not the worst in the world.

In spite of having gone native, Rayne dared not risk entering Kassim's place. But he prowled about, waiting for dragomans to bring customers from the merchant marine. With the ever increasing flow of ships from the States, there would be more and more American seamen.

These seamen did not have to be indiscreet. Just a casual remark, harmless in itself, was enough. But it could be dangerous when fitted into other equally trifling bits contributed by sailors from a different ship. A man can hardly help but let his hair down after making a safe landing. While Rayne had always known the peril of unguarded remarks concerning a ship about to sail from the States, he now realized, from the past night's mishaps, the enemy could make good use of facts pertaining to a safe arrival in port.

## CHAPTER IV

## Into Enemy Clutches



FROM his lurking place across the narrow street, Rayne saw and heard three Americans who trailed after their dragoman. The guide's leathery face was plain for a moment as he stood under the light in Kassim's doorway. He turned to bow and gesture, and to go into his patter, "This way, gents," he told the Americans. "Famous rendezvous. The real Cairo. Boss spiks good Inglees, like me."

The man's number also showed for an instant. Rayne would not forget either. The Americans filed in. But they came out before long and the dragoman followed them, wailing.

"You wait, I show some other place," he promised. "Kassim uncle just die. No more business tonight."

"How about us going to the funeral?"

"Do they have grub and fireworks?" another quipped.

"You're thinking of the Chinese" said a third. Then, to the dragoman, "Shake it up, Abdul!"

"Name is Selim," the guide corrected. "Poverty struck son of one time pasha." "Aw, nuts, it's Abdul, do you get it?"

The three went on, everyone offering an idea as to the next place. "Kassim's looked like a funeral anyway. Hey, take us to a juke joint, we want to dance."

Rayne did not follow them. Just why Kassim was turning down customers was worth finding out.

He headed Nile-ward for perhaps a hundred yards, then swung into a yard-wide alley. It opened into a dark and odorous court which opened into another passageway. This was Cairene town planning, at its craziest.

Above him, he heard the voices of people lounging on the flat roofs. The scent of 'Ajami tobacco drifted down to blend with rubbish reek. He met no pedestrians, and presently, he had doubled back, reaching the rear of Kassim's place.

In the dark, he found the wicket, which was latched, not locked. Patiently silently, he worked the door open, then closed it after him. Once in the gloom of the court, he made a slow

circuit of the wall. It was lined with storage sheds and packing crates were heaped in corners. Liquor cases, saved up for fuel, he surmised, to stretch the charcoal supply.

Above him, *mashrabiye*hs bellied out, projecting from the second floor and overhanging the court. In these screened bay windows one could get the river breeze almost as readily as on the roof. But at the moment, lack of either light or voices told him the occupants of the building were elsewhere.

Rayne could barely distinguish muffled speech from somewhere in front. In view of Kassim's having turned customers away, that conversation was worth hearing.

The door ahead was apparently bolted from the inside. Rayne headed for the corner of the court, stacked up some empty cases, and from that footing, pulled himself up. He doubted the carved latticework of the nearest *mashrabiye*h would offer a toe-hold strong enough to support his weight. Then there was the matter of noise. So he tried another approach.

An upward leap, risky because of his narrow footing, gave him a precarious grasp of the parapet which guarded the flat roof.

For a moment, he doubted that he could make it. Worse yet, there was the chance that he would lose his hold and drop down into the court, making enough noise to alarm Kassim. But he made it. Skylined, he was at the mercy of any neighbors who might be looking.

When he had cleared the parapet, he crept across the roof to the head of the stairs which led to the lower floor. Echoes distorted the words, otherwise, he could have halted midway to listen. Not until he had reached the edge of the patch of light which wavered on the lower stair treads, was he able to understand what was being said. From that distance, also he got a partial view of the back room.

**K**ASSIM was conferring with two men. One, wearing European clothes and a tarboosh, had an oversized diamond in his necktie. Heavily-jeweled rings flashed on his lean brown hand. The other, in native dress, was familiar, which puzzled Rayne for an instant. Then he realized that this was the jailer,

now in civilian clothes.

Kassim was protesting to the bejeweled dignitary.

"Your Excellency, I couldn't leave my post to call on you," Kassim said. "I had to send a messenger." He made a helpless gesture. "Really, Daoud Pasha, this was no time for etiquette."

"Etiquette!" The *pasha* snorted. "You fool, you son of several pigs, I'm not thinking of ceremony. But if Army Intelligence is watching you, it is not helpful to have me come here to be included in their suspicion."

Kassim gulped, turned to the jailer for moral support, and got only a blank look.

"Excellency, we have only Musa's word for it the accursed lemonade peddler is connected with the British or American Army," Kassim assured the official.

Musa, the jailer flared up.

"So you think I can't understand Inglesi? I speak better than you. No, I was not so near, but I can't be mistaken. That's what he said to the sailors."

Daoud Pasha went wild.

"Satan blacken you, Musa. And you waited till now to tell us."

"I didn't know it was important. Not till I began thinking a while, after I was off duty. Anyway, what if the officers or the sailors do find them and get them released?"

From this it grew clear Musa did not know the score any better than Rayne did. Under ordinary circumstances, neither Kassim nor the *pasha* would have enlightened him. As it was, the *pasha*, believing himself in a tight corner, wanted to impress Kassim's friend with the importance of being vigilant in the future.

"Listen, Musa," he said. "Foreigners are swallowing Egypt, piecemeal. First the British, and now the Americans. For what they call defending the country, they'll take an even stronger hold. Kassim and I are patriots, you understand? Egypt for the Egyptians. Despite all that it takes you hours to decide you ought to tell Kassim about an Intelligence officer finding those sailors in jail!"

Musa, seeing how worried Daoud Pasha was, forgot his deference to the man's rank.

"What happens to your excellency is none of my business!" he snapped, inso-

lently. "I had Kassim in mind. Allah! What have you ever done for me? None of this makes sense anyway. The British are bad, but no worse than the Germans. They pretend to be friends but only a fool would believe that."

As Rayne now saw it, Musa, knowing the sailors had gotten into a serious riot outside of Kassim's place, had been worried only by the thought that his friend might run into trouble with Army Intelligence. However, Daoud Pasha's hasty drive in response to a restaurant keeper's summons convinced Rayne that his original hunch had been right. The anti-British *pasha* must have been conspiring with Kassim to obstruct the defense of Egypt.

Daoud probably was, according to his lights, a patriot, and neither a Quisling nor a traitor. But Rayne's job at the moment was to trail the missing spare parts, regardless of the *pasha's* being or not being a Nazi agent.

"Only a fool would believe those Germans," Musa repeated, enjoying the spectacle of a badly-worried *pasha*.

But Daoud was frightened and jittery. He had been pushed too far by an insolent jailer. He cursed, drew an automatic pistol from his pocket, and fired.

Kassim, however, bounded toward him. This deflected the *pasha's* aim. Musa, panic-stricken, did not wait for the outcome. Though there was a door leading to the front and another to the rear, both were barred. With a yell, he leaped over a bench, and darted toward the stairway.

Meanwhile, the *pasha* dropped the pistol as Kassim, wrenched his wrist. "Excellency, Musa means no harm," he shouted. Then, shouldering the hot-headed official aside, Kassim darted after his friend, calling, "Wait, Musa! Wait!"

Rayne, cramped from squatting on the stairs, could not move rapidly enough to race Musa to the roof. The way was narrow, and even as he hoped that the jailer would be blinded by panic, Kassim's shouts took effect.

The frightened man, thinking he had two enemies now, leaped to his left, colliding with Rayne.

**J**UST then Kassim charged into the tangle. The stairs were steep and narrow. Rayne's efforts to disengage



himself failed. He was still kicking and struggling when the three thumped down a dozen treads and crashed against the low table in the center of the floor.

Rayne doubled Musa with a boot to the stomach. He disentangled himself from Kassim and tried for the pistol which the *pasha* had dropped, but Daoud, apart from the three-cornered *mêlée*, had kept his wits. He snatched the weapon.

"Hold it, you fools!" he cried. "We've got a spy here!"

Rayne, failing to get the *pasha's* pistol, seized the table, which was knee high, and a little over a yard in diameter. The silver and ivory inlay deflected Daoud Pasha's hasty shot.

Then, as the weapon jammed, Rayne straight-armed the table, knocking the Egyptian off balance.

One more move, and he would break for the roof. He had plenty to tell Colonel Mitchel. Moreover, stealth had no further use, now that Daoud knew a spy had tuned in. He whirled, and from the corner of his eye, caught a glimpse of Kassim, who had regained his feet.

Rayne's ankle turned. A splash of coffee dregs made him slip, and for an instant, he floundered. Kassim, for all his fat, was agile enough to use the brass tray he had picked from the floor. It rang like a temple bell as it smashed down on Rayne's head, knocking him face forward to the floor, too nearly out for either flight or fight.

## CHAPTER V

### Torture by Fire



THE disturbance had not alarmed the quarter. The stone walls muffled the sharp crack of the small bore pistol. Kassim's waiters had apparently gone home when the proprietor closed the *loqanda*, since no one had come from the

front. Once Rayne's wrists were lashed together with a length of cord, Kassim and the *pasha* yanked him to his feet.

Musa had by now regained his breath sufficiently to gasp, "By Allah—that—is—the Intelligence—officer."

Daoud, despite his bleeding and battered face, was amiable enough.

"You did very well, stopping him," he said to Musa, who presumably was supposed to forget the attempt to shoot him down. "I'll speak to the chief of police in your favor."

That, Daoud assumed, would fix it up. *Pashas* had not changed much since the days when arbitrary floggings and capital punishment were a routine privilege they exercised freely.

"Your excellency," Kassim said, "we must get this fellow out of here before his superiors search the place."

It was not clear to Rayne why they had not already cut his throat. As his captors marched him, blindfolded, down through a maze of alleys, he reasoned that it is usually easier and safer to let a man go to the execution scene under his own power.

If there were any spectators on the nearby roofs, or in the over-hanging *mashrabiyyeh* windows, they would see nothing significant in the group which filed through the darkness below.

Rayne was sure that even if he had been one of a group of Intelligence officers, it would have been impossible to trail him. At least twice during the march, the party entered and passed through a building, and emerged in the labyrinth at its rear.

Odors finally helped Rayne to orient himself. When he caught the tang of the spice bazaar, and the reek of the saddlemakers quarter, he knew where he was. These landmarks were scarcely out of nose range when his captors prodded him over a threshold and removed the blindfold.

By the light of an oil lamp, Rayne saw that he was in the reception room of a long unoccupied house. Dust coated the floor, and the worn upholstery of a low platform which ran along one wall.

"There is a well in the courtyard," said Daoud Pasha. "It is about your size."

"Nobody is stopping you," retorted Rayne, hoping that his voice did not betray his dismay. "Or are you waiting on my account?"

"There is a way out, if you are reasonable," cut in Kassim. Musa stood to one side. His eyes were narrow and glittering. He seemed to be wavering between hatred of Daoud Pasha, and loyalty to his friend Kassim.

"What was the purpose of your spy-



ing?" the *pasha* asked Rayne. "Do you realize you are wanted for murder? Not even your superior can protect you from that."

A good deal more could be found in that idea than the *pasha* himself realized. While Rayne may have intervened to help two fellow-Americans fight off a treacherous attack, he would nevertheless have to face the local laws. Certainly he had no legal defense for his invasion of Kassim's quarters. But what heartened him was that Daoud Pasha was temporizing instead of using that ready gun.

Rayne's mind raced as Daoud Pasha's intent eyes bored into him.

"This buzzard must believe I have something on him, he's trying to blackmail me by using what he's got on me," he thought to himself.

"You aren't too sure what my superior can or can't do, are you?" Rayne retorted to the *pasha*. "Otherwise you'd give me what you tried to give Musa."

"You've not told me why you were spying," Daoud Pasha persisted.

"Those sailors were led by an unlicensed dragoman to Kassim's place," Rayne retorted. "They were ambushed on the way out because they knew too much about something you are interested in. Naturally, I reported that. But if you're sure they won't be released from jail until you've covered your tracks, you have not a thing in the world to worry about."

**W**ITH an oily smile, the Egyptian official stared at Rayne.

"Army Intelligence won't find you so easily," the *pasha* countered.

"Maybe not." Rayne shrugged. He tried to force himself to believe, rather than hope he could find a loophole in the *pasha's* defenses. Then he staked it all on a bluff: "They don't have to find me. What is one man, more or less, in this whole show? As long as they find the tractor parts you sidetracked, you'll get what will run your friend Rommel the full width of Africa and push him into the ocean."

The Egyptian official was not poker-faced. The thought of Army Intelligence on his trail cracked his resistance. His snort of derision did not sound sincere. So Rayne hammered away. Though his hands were tied, he had, for a mo-

ment at least, won the initiative.

"Official Egypt may be pretty rotten, but there are some sound spots. Maybe you've got your reasons to be anti-British but a lot of your people don't agree that the Nazis are a blessing. There's a well waiting for me out in back, but do you know what's waiting for you?"

Daoud Pasha's laugh was forced.

"You are almost threatening me. Very well, if your superiors know where the spare parts are, why haven't they seized them? I never heard of that American game called poker. So—I am calling your hand."

The *pasha's* confidence had returned. He stalked grandly out of the room, and into the court, where he called, "Ali! Marouf!"

Two men answered.

"Aywah, *effendi*!"

A low-voiced consultation followed. Rayne was not able to get a word of what passed between Daoud and the two he had called. That they were at hand, awaiting summons, seemed significant. They must have been there all evening, for Daoud Pasha had not taken time, since Rayne's capture, to order henchmen to appear at a rendezvous. A thrill of realization buoyed him up and out of the depression which the ominous conference in the court had induced.

The *pasha* remained in a huddle with Marouf and Ali. They were planning the first step toward murder and its concealment. Their having been on hand indicated that the warehouse which contained the sidetracked tank parts must be near.

This was a quarter devoted largely to the *wakkalas* which in the old days had received goods hauled by camel caravans out of the Soudan. So, despite the growing menace, Rayne felt that he had gained a point.

He realized that this might be wishful thinking on his part, yet he could not deny the logic. Daoud Pasha, worried and caught off guard, would inevitably take a prisoner to a place associated in his mind with concealment.

When Daoud returned, two lean and wiry Arabs followed him. One had a copper brazier and goatskin bellows. The other had iron tongs. These household implements implied that Marouf and Ali cooked their meals somewhere in the rear; that they kept day and night

watch, taking turns.

Instead of going to their homes or to *loqandas* to eat, and thus laying themselves open to native curiosity, the two watchmen never stirred from the supposedly abandoned *wakkala* and the house which abutted it.

But their faces told Rayne that they were not preparing to cook coffee or grill mutton.

"If you had given your superiors any real information, they would have raided Kassim's place, and then this place," said Daoud Pasha. "I am giving you just one chance to keep from being buried in a dry well."

"Thanks," Rayne retorted, ironically. "Allah will reward you."

"You must convince your superiors that you have so far discovered nothing, but that you have a clue. Which perhaps you have."

"Turn me loose and I'll tell them just that," said Rayne.

Daoud Pasha scowled.

"You will not be so witty when Ali and Marouf set to work." He turned to his men. "Get busy, now!"

## CHAPTER VI

### *A Desperate Chance*



THE Arabs squatted by the brazier. One slopped a bit of kerosene from the lamp bowl, and struck a match. The other pumped the bellows, first gently, so as not to extinguish the yellow flame which rose

from the charcoal. Then, as the black chunks began to glow, he increased the force of the air blast.

Sparks showered. The glare presently overwhelmed the murky light of the lamp. Tongues of blue flame rose from the incandescent heap in whose center the tongs were thrust.

"You'll write your message," Daoud Pasha said to Mike Rayne, raising his voice above the evil hissing and creaking of the bellows. "Either now, or after we've cooled some iron on your hide. You will say you have gone to Alexandria to watch a suspect."

Once he had written a message to throw his imaginary superiors off the trail, Rayne knew he would be murdered.

His hands were tied behind him. Furthermore the odds were five to one, and then there was the *pasha's* ready pistol. The machine shop beyond the Nile seemed a long way off, now. So also did his grandmother's house in the Zeitoun Quarter.

Rayne regretted a tactical error on his part.

He had gone too far in convincing Daoud Pasha that he, Rayne, had been playing a lone hand. Though the *pasha* could hardly suspect Rayne of being certain the missing tank parts were only a few yards away, the earlier bluff, teaming up with circumstance, had shaped itself into a trap. The *pasha* believed Rayne could disappear without any danger of being traced.

"Let me think this over for a minute," Daoud Pasha said, and moved back toward the bench.

Ali gleamed with sweat as he pumped the bellows. Marouf took the tongs from the heap of glowing coals. The metal shot out white sparks. Waves of heat billowed toward Rayne. The small room had become stifling. Daoud Pasha and Kassim stood there, eyeing him. Musa, somewhat apart, was blank faced, perhaps in his mind already enjoying the promotion and pay which the hot tempered official had, after relenting, promised him.

Marouf approached, slowly, bringing the iron nearer.

"*Effendi*, we ought to tie him first," he suggested.

"*Wallah!*" the *pasha* exclaimed, as though he had forgotten such trifles. "Of course."

Part of the build up—the preliminary terror to crack the victim's will. Rayne knew this, and also he had no chance against such odds. Yet he resisted when they seized him.

He writhed and kicked and twisted until booting and sheer weight won out for the Egyptians. Four men did the job, while Daoud Pasha stood by, polishing his rings on his coat sleeve. Not until the men had lashed him to a bench, did Rayne appear to wilt. To Daoud Pasha the beating and mauling had been enough to crack any man's spirit, even without threats of the red hot iron.

"Wait, *effendi!*" Rayne howled, as though in abject terror. "Don't let him touch me. I'll write it. Untie me. Let

me sit up and give me a drink."

Rayne made his act good. His life depended on it and, besides, he did not need to pretend fear. So he babbled with terror. The *pasha* nodded. Ali and Marouf removed the bonds, and yanked Rayne upright. The act ticked like clockwork. The *pasha* looked pleased. Then Rayne went on with the desperate plan he had conceived.

"My hands and wrists are numb. How can I write?"

"Try and see." Daoud Pasha took a pen and notebook from his pocket. "And no trickery, no codes either."

"Who is going to deliver the message?"

"A detail I shall handle," the *pasha* reassured him.

Rayne took the pen and paper. Then, for a moment, he wondered if his hysteria had been convincing for the official had drawn his pistol and stepped back a little.

**C**LOSING his eyes as if dazed, Rayne fumbled, opened them and gazed blankly about. He rose, mopped his forehead with his sleeve. Then like some half animated dummy, laid the pen and paper on the bench. The Egyptians regarded him with contempt. Apparently terror had cracked him more completely than they had expected.

Rayne took off his jacket, and muttered about the heat. Then, after dropping it on the floor, he decided to pick it up out of the dirt.

Now that their task of intimidation had ended, the Arabs had moved away from the blistering heat of the brazier. Daoud Pasha lowered his pistol. In another instant he might even have pocketed it, but Rayne was not gambling on that possibility. He preferred that weapon to be within sight and reach.

Clutching the jacket Rayne went into action. Leaping forward he seized the glowing brazier before a man of the group sensed what he meant to do.

The coat muffled his hands. There was the stench of burning wool. Then, despite the penetrating heat, Rayne spun in an arc, showering red coals and ashes as he whirled.

A fiery cascade showered the barefooted Arabs. It sifted down into their loose garments. Glowing fragments peppered Daoud Pasha's face and hands.

He was not a good shot, and the startling counter-attack made him jerk the trigger. The bullet went wild.

Rayne let go the hot brazier. It hurtled straight for Kassim, who yelled and bounded to one side. This maneuver knocked the *pasha* off balance.

The floor became carpeted with red hot flame. Rayne, making the most of the confusion, snatched the tongs. He ignored the howling Arabs, whose every step brought their bare feet down on chunks of glowing coal. They danced about like fleas on a stove lid. Rayne darted for Daoud Pasha who, trying to scramble to his feet, tried at the same time to shoot.

He made a bad job of both. Rayne smashed down on his wrist with the hot tongs, knocking the pistol from his grasp. Next Rayne jumped back to face Kassim, who was drawing a knife.

The restaurant keeper did not like the still glowing jaws of the tongs. He hesitated, bounded for the door.

In the courtyard, the Arabs screeched and shed their smoldering garments. Rayne charged for Kassim, combining escape with vengeance. Out of the side of his eye, he saw Musa, the jailer, lunge for the *pasha's* pistol. Already the room was roaring with fire. The lamp, kicked over, had spilled its oil on the floor.

It was Musa's move for the pistol which saved Kassim. As the fat man raced down the alley, Rayne halted and spun about to heave his tongs at the man with the gun.

Too late!

"O son of many pigs," shouted Musa. "This is my day." Then the weapon commenced to explode.

But Musa did not fire at Rayne. He was pouring lead into the official who, perhaps an hour previous, had tried to cut him down. Daoud Pasha dropped.

"Stop it, you fool!" Rayne yelled.

Musa straightened up, eyes blazing. "There are too many *pashas* like him. I was afraid until now. Then I saw you, and by Allah, I am your protector."

"Give me that gun," Rayne demanded, walking back. Without waiting for obedience, he twisted the weapon from the man's hand. "Now turn in a fire alarm."

The blaze did not yet bar him from the court. So Rayne, pistol in hand, raced through the room to the rear. By the light which reached into the paved space,



he saw Ali and Marouf clambering over the wall. And beyond the further archway, Rayne learned his suspicions had been well grounded.

**H**E WAS looking into a barnlike warehouse loaded with crates and cases. The stencilling on the nearest told the story: they had been consigned to the S. S. *Iron King*.

So long as the *wakkala* did not go up in smoke, the shipload of spare parts would after all help roll Rommel back into the desert.

Rayne retraced his steps. His first act was to examine Daoud Pasha's wounds. They were not serious. Next, Rayne dragged the man out of the blazing room. That done, he raced to a telephone. It was about time to speak to Colonel Mitchell.

A fire company was on the job before Rayne got in touch with the colonel. "There are two American sailors in the Saiyida Zaynab jail," Rayne told the officer. "They were framed. While I was trying to help them, I located the missing spare parts."

"What?"

"Yes, sir. Near the Soudan Bazaar. You can't miss the place. There's a fire, half the town's turned out, and Daoud Pasha was shot up by some native who had a grudge against him."

"I'll be blasted," the colonel exclaimed. Then asked and received the remaining details. "I thought you were going to see your grandmother?"

"That's where I'm going now, Colonel," Rayne replied. "If you think that you will be able to spare me for another day."

## COMING NEXT ISSUE

WINGS OVER PENANG, an Exciting Complete Novelet of the  
Straits Settlements, by CHARLES STODDARD

For quick, smooth shaving you're all set  
With thrifty, keen-edged Thin Gillette,  
The longest-lasting low-priced blade!  
Your face feels fit and looks top-grade!



Produced By The Maker  
Of The Famous Gillette  
Blue Blade



Easy Way To Get Even More Shaves With Every Gillette Blade



1. WASH FACE thoroughly with hot water and soap to soften beard and eliminate accumulated grit that dulls shaving edges



2. APPLY LATHER or Brushless Shaving Cream while face is wet. If lather is used, dip your brush in water frequently



3. TWO EDGES double blade life. Marks indicated above identify edges, enabling you to give both equal use and get extra shaves



4. CLEAN BLADE in run by loosening handle, then rinsing in hot water and shaking. Wiping the blade is likely to damage the edges





"They were going to blow up the Americans," shouted young Thomas

# THE REDS AND THE BLUES

By **BYRON W. DALRYMPLE**

*A swastika brings plenty of bad news to the Nazis  
when parachutists attempt to invade Ulster!*

**T**HE neat sign by Mr. Patrick Heenan's rickety gate read:  
KERRY BLUE TERRIERS  
FOR SALE  
Ireland's Oldest Dog

A short way down the winding road leading to Shankill there was another gate and another sign. The two seemed to be glaring at each other

across the intervening space of bleak countryside.

This second sign proclaimed:

RED IRISH TERRIERS FOR SALE  
IRELAND'S BEST DOG

Beneath this legend the owner's name was inscribed in bold letters:

**MR. CONNEL McGUIGAN**

Patrick Heenan utterly despised Mr. McGuigan, but contemptuously ignored him. Though possessed of a short temper, a sharp tongue, and sixty-odd years of experience in the use of both, Patrick was—by his own oft-repeated statement—a man of peace.

Just now he was in an irritable mood. He sat in a rocker before the window which overlooked his few rough acres, scanned the rural morning edition of the Belfast paper, and muttered to himself. His black and uncertain mood was, however, in no way related to his neighbor, Mr. McGuigan.

No, it was caused by something far more important. Patrick had directed many a harsh word toward various races, creeds, and individuals during his lifetime. But, always, he had staunchly ignored Americans.

He could do so no longer. Time for a great decision was at hand. The entire front page of the paper was devoted to the recently arrived A.E.F.

Though Patrick Heenan had no way of divining it, his career of peace was drawing swiftly to a close. The past was about to attack his flank; the future was to bar retreat toward further neutrality.

**R**EADING of the A.E.F., a great uneasiness gripped him. He wished that he might go to the tavern in nearby Shankill, speak his mind, and gather a few opinions. But he knew that he would be unwelcome. For Patrick had been in local disrepute ever since the outbreak of the war. The stigma of the traitor was upon him.

He turned the page with a jerk which tore the paper. He glanced at the first column head.

#### UNIDENTIFIED PLANES OVER ULSTER LAST NIGHT

His thoughts darted backward, stabbing at the past. It had all begun at the tavern when, following the Allied Declaration, the question of British protection for Ireland had arisen.

"I would as soon," Patrick had boomed, "give bed and board to the pig-headed Prussians, as to have a

swarm of blasted Limeys cluttering up the Irish countryside!"

A certain blond-headed young stranger, one Casey Kilgallen, vacationing at Shankill, had listened with obvious satisfaction. From that day forward he had pressed his friendship diligently upon Patrick.

But this attachment had ended suddenly. Mr. Connel McGuigan had made a mysterious trip to Belfast. Shortly after, Belfast intelligence men had picked Casey Kilgallen up, listed his true name as Gerhardt Wollf, his residence as Muenster—to which place he had been shipped with dispatch.

Patrick threw the paper to the floor. He placed his knotty hands upon his knees, and stared out the window. He was in no mood to tolerate the scene which met his gaze. He snorted violently through his long, thin nose—a nose which looked like a cartographer's caricature of the rocky promontory to the north of Donegal.

"Come, Thomas," he barked in his booming brogue, "we'll be taking a walk down through the pasture at once." He rose abruptly. Without glancing at Thomas, he crossed to a wall cabinet flanking the peat stove.

Heenan's grandson stared at him in surprise.

"Why are you taking your bird gun, Grandfather?" Thomas questioned in his twelve-year-old treble.

His freckle-mottled face was screwed into a puzzled expression. His tousled red thatch was, as usual, standing on end.

At sight of the gun, Mr. O'Shaugnessy V, Patrick's favorite Kerry Blue, bounded stiff-legged across the room, emitting a series of staccato barks.

"Be still." Patrick raised his arm like a flail. O'Shaugnessy ducked and scampered to the door. There he waited, grinning dog-fashion, his stumpy tail in constant motion.

Patrick Heenan bent his gaze upon his grandson. The old man's eyes were blue as the waters of Donegal, and they could be as chill at times.

"Don't ask questions, boy," he said. "See what you see, and hear what you hear, and be still therewith."

Then he relented somewhat. After

all, the lad's parents were dead, killed by the first bomb to drop on Dublin.

It was the lad's red hair and freckled face that irritated Patrick. The Heenan's had always been "Black Irish." Patrick's own hair was still black and curly, despite his years.

"It might be we'd run upon a hare in the pasture." This Patrick, knew, was a poor explanation. There had not been a hare in the pasture for months.

**P**LAIN truth was that Patrick had seen his neighbor, Mr. Connel McGuigan, searching furtively along behind the five-foot stone wall at the foot of the pasture. This wall formed the common boundary dividing their properties. Mr. McGuigan had had the audacity to climb atop it, and to crouch there a moment, as though pondering trespass.

"Come," Patrick Heenan said.

Once outside, Patrick motioned for Thomas to take O'Shaugnessy and skirt the pasture to the right. He himself started straight down toward the point where Mr. Connel McGuigan's head bobbed slowly along behind the stone wall.

Their appearance had set up a commotion in the kennel behind the house. O'Shaugnessy listened intently to the other less-privileged dogs. He whined uneasily. Then, convinced that he would be allowed no company from that source, he set out down the pasture at a fast clip. The light in his hazel eyes, and the determination of his direction, seemed to suggest some secret rendezvous.

Quietly approaching the wall, Patrick straightened to his full six-foot height. There was no need to conceal himself. For, as he could now see, Mr. Connel McGuigan was at that moment down on his knees behind the wall, muttering and cursing.

Evidently Connel had found what he sought—a small, irregular hole beneath the old wall. Taking off his battered hat, and bracing himself upon widespread hands so that his elbows bulged outward like the forelegs of some immense bulldog, Connel laid his fiery-bearded face upon the soggy ground. His stocky buttocks were thrust upward, as though pointing the

north star, pulling his britches tight, while he strained to peer through the hole.

The rage and curiosity dancing in his large, bright eyes—which were a faded robin's-egg shade of blue—changed to startled certainty. His matted brows, like daubs of rust upon his forehead, shot upward. He found himself face to face with O'Shaugnessy.

The dog was down in the fore, his head poked so far into the darkened aperture that his hazel eyes shone like twin fires. His rump extended upward, almost on a plumb line with the wall; and at its top his stumpy tail worked furiously, as though running a bellows which pumped short, sharp barks into Mr. Connel McGuigan's face.

Connel leaped up, grabbing a rock as he moved. He found himself staring straight into the maw of Patrick's bird gun.

Thomas came running. "What is it, Grandfather?"

Patrick Heenan did not shift his icy gaze.

"Take O'Shaugnessy and go to the house, boy." Heenan's tone demanded instant obedience.

"Yes, sir."

"Now," Patrick began, as soon as Thomas had caught up the dog and departed, "you blight upon the good name of Ireland, you—"

"Mister Heenan!" The rock, originally intended for O'Shaugnessy, fell from Connel's hand. He stabbed a shaking finger toward the hole beneath the wall. "You'll mend it immediately! This morning my Lady Erin presented me with a litter of four—" His voice rose to a howl. "—and every one of 'em mottled with your blasted Kerry blue!"

**S**CORNFULLY Patrick Heenan snorted.

"High time your confounded dogs had some worthwhile blood. The hole's as much on your side as mine. If 'tis fixed, you'll do so yourself, Mister McGuigan."

"Mister Heenan, my fixin' of it will wait till Kingdom Come. But one more trip through it for your bloody O'Shaugnessy will be 'is last!"

A squint came to Patrick's eyes. His gun lifted a bit. The contours of his rugged face were severe as the North Ireland coastline.

"Mr. McGuigan, I am a peaceful man. But that would not keep me from blastin' your shanty head from your shoulders, should you be laying a hand to O'Shaugnessy. Good day, sir." He swung on his heel.

"Spy! Traitor!" Connel seethed. "One of these days I'll go to the authorities. 'Tis not safe having your kind about, now that the Americans are here. I'll—"

His voice choked. He wheeled heavily about and stamped back through the mud of his fields.

Young Thomas met Patrick Heenan at the edge of the orchard. There was a studied look of innocence upon the lad's freckled face.

"Where's O'Shaugnessy?" asked Patrick Heenan.

Thomas scuffed his toe in the dirt. "I locked him in the kennel. I think O'Shaugnessy gets lonesome for other dogs."

"You were listening, you red-thatched scamp. You're afraid that blithering McGuigan will kill the dog." He snorted with contempt.

Thomas looked up with pleading eyes. "But Grandfather, that's what makes O'Shaugnessy run off—not havin' the company of his likes."

"Let the dog out, boy."

Thomas brightened. "Are you going to mend the hole, Grandfather?"

"Mend the hole? Take orders from that—that— Let O'Shaugnessy free. D'ye hear me?"

"Yes, sir."

Therewith Patrick strode to the house to put up his gun. This done, he started for the village.

Patrick had often remarked that nothing—nothing at all—would surprise him, the way the world was going. But when, just at dusk, he entered his yard again, he thought it strange that Thomas should be standing there as though on guard. And when he listened to the news which the lad came running to tell, he was more than surprised. He was amazed.

"That man," Thomas blurted. "That Casey Kilgallen." His blue eyes were wide with fright. His freckles stood

out like raw welts against the paleness of his face.

"Who?" Patrick brushed past the boy and strode to the house.

Kilgallen, that is, Gerhardt Wolff, dropped the Belfast paper, which he had been scanning, and leaped to his feet as Patrick entered. His gray eyes were entirely unpleasant. His right hand dropped down to the holster which was belted over his uniform.

"You!" Patrick barked. "How did you get here?"

Wolff retrieved the fallen paper. He smiled crookedly, pointing to the column head:

#### UNIDENTIFIED PLANES OVER ULSTER LAST NIGHT

Then it was that Patrick Heenan saw the rumpled parachute on the floor behind the peat stove.

"Nice to see you again, Patrick," Wolff said, holding his teeth tightly together. "Close the door and the shutters, get a light going. Also hunt me up something to eat. I'm starv-ing."

**A** GLINT of anger sparkled in the Ulsterman's eye.

"Don't order me about," Heenan shouted. "Bad cess to you, you sneak-in' scapegrace. And take your hand off that gun before you know how it feels to have an Ulsterman bloody your nose."

Wolff dropped into a chair, smiling broadly.

"You're a cantankerous one, Patrick, but my friend, none the less. Eh?"

Patrick Heenan did not answer. Scowling, he turned to Thomas. "You had your supper, boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then to bed with you. Run now. It's nigh dark."

"Yes, sir."

"Now," Heenan said, once Thomas was gone, "what brings you, sausage-head?"

He moved about the room, brought bread and meat, flung it upon the table. He closed the door and the shutters, struck a light, found glasses and a bottle of Long Tom Irish Whiskey.



Wolff waited until Patrick was seated before he spoke.

"Perhaps you know where the Americans are quartered?"

"Perhaps I do."

"Perhaps you would like to see their barracks blown sky-high?"

"Perhaps I would."

"Then it's done," Wolff said quickly, leaning forward. He looked steadily at Heenan, his gray eyes hard, the muscles along his clamped jaw pulled tight. "I am not alone."

"So?"

Wolff arose, took a flashlight from his pocket. He stepped to the door, opened it, flashed the light three times. Presently five German parachutists moved up through the darkness and entered the room.

Patrick Heenan stared at them, open-mouthed.

Wolff patted his gun. "No tricks, Patrick, my friend." He nipped off his words.

Patrick Heenan arose, produced another bottle of whiskey, fetched chairs and glasses.

"Drink hearty," he said. "To the Americans!"

The five newcomers seated themselves, sat stiff and silent, like wooden men. Expressionless, they poured the whiskey; then, looking to their leader, they raised their glasses in synchronized motion, and gulped together.

Wolff turned to Heenan. He laughed with a brittle sound. "Easy enough, eh? You know where the secret barracks are. My men are experts at demolition, and this is a nice secluded spot. I knew you'd not fail me, my friend." He poured himself three fingers of Long Tom.

Thomas appeared at the bedroom door, clad in his long nightshirt. "Grandfather."

"Confound it, boy, get back to bed!"

"But Grandfather."

Patrick arose, mumbling. He moved to the bedroom door, took Thomas by the hand, led him back to bed. "In with you."

**D**IGGING under his pillow, Thomas brought forth a toy pistol.

"Look, Grandfather. One of the Americans gave it to me."

"Dang them," Patrick said. "Makin' up to the kiddies."

"But Grandfather—those others—they killed my mother and father. And now they're going to kill the Americans."

"Perhaps they are," growled Patrick Heenan.

He left Thomas and joined the others, pausing on his way to fetch more whiskey. One of the Germans moved. O'Shaugnessy growled.

"Ah, Patrick, that's a great dog," said Wolff, and was immediately annoyed at himself. For Heenan launched into a lengthy speech, attempting to prove his Kerry Blues were, of all dogs, absolutely the oldest and best.

The five parachutists were getting talkative. They joked among themselves, pouring drink after drink. Patrick continued his enthusiastic monologue.

Wolff was becoming bored and irritable. Would Heenan never cease? He tossed off three long swallows of whiskey. Patrick Heenan did likewise—but resumed his dissertation immediately after.

Wolff interrupted with sarcasm.

"If your O'Shaugnessy is that pure a breed, he must be true Aryan." He had some difficulty with his words.

Patrick Heenan's face flared red.

"That's an insult to the dog, you sneakin' spy."

The whiskey mingled with sudden rage in Wolff's brain.

"Keep a civil tongue in your head, Heenan. If I say the dog's true Aryan, then that's how it is. Understand?" He bored Heenan with a chill gray gaze, but he had trouble focusing his eyes.

Patrick Heenan snorted.

"Perhaps the dog should be wearin' a swastika to prove your point." There was contempt in his voice.

Wolff came to his feet.

"Perhaps he should." He moved

unsteadily across the room, grabbed O'Shaugnessy up roughly. The dog snapped at him.

Patrick Heenan stood up. "Be after leavin' him alone."

"Sit down, before I knock you down." Wolff's words rang with menace.

The others, hearing anger in those voices, dropped hands to their guns, all of them together, their minds functioning like a single machine.

Patrick Heenan sat down, muttering and glaring.

Wolff fumbled drunkenly inside his uniform, brought forth a swastika-marked signal flag about the size of a handkerchief. Quite as drunkenly, he tied it about the neck of the growling, struggling terrier before releasing him.

"Enough foolishness," said Wolff, stepping back. He looked at his watch. He spoke in German to his men.

They arose, spread their coats upon the floor. They all stretched out at once.

nessy. His shotgun was balanced in his other hand. He dropped the dog, flung up his gun no more than a foot from Wolff's head.

The sleeping Germans stumbled foggily upright, fumbling for their guns. Out of the darkness behind McGuigan there was a flash and a roar. A charge of birdshot burst among the Germans.

They scattered, yelling, flinging their hands high.

"Don't move!" Connel McGuigan ground out. The lamplight upon his red beard made him look like some swaggering pirate. "If you do so much as twitch a finger I'll drape your bally intestines the length of this room, Mr. Casey Kilgallen!"



## *To Create a New Shangri La—*

Barry Gordon and his crew of Army engineers penetrate the jungle depths of Tawi Tawi—and find that building an airbase calls for bayonets as well as shovels when Nazi fifth columnists inflame the natives in **RULER OF MANY**, a smashing action novelet by Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson packed with battle thrills!

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

"Now," Wolff said to Patrick Heenan, "while they get a little sleep, you and I will discuss the information you are about to give me." He pulled up a chair and sat down.

**I**T WAS warm outside and the room had grown hot and stuffy. Wolff mopped his brow. Heenan did likewise. Then he arose and opened the door to a crack.

The effect of the whiskey lulled the others quickly enough into a sound sleep.

They were as quickly, though somewhat more rudely, awakened.

An hour later, with a shout, Mr. Connel McGuigan kicked the front door the remainder of the way open. Beneath his left arm, he held O'Shaug-

Now, from behind him, others crowded in. They came from the village, twenty or more men.

The German parachutists stared at them in a dazed fashion. Then with typical Teutonic stoicism, they accepted the situation. One or two of them even sat down on chairs. Others stood up stolidly. Young Thomas made his appearance, clad in a night-shirt.

Wolff glared at the villagers for a moment as if he meant to do something about all this. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"It is the fortune of war," he declared.

He flung himself into a chair, snatched up a glass and tossed off the fiery whiskey. Then he continued to

glare at the Ulster men.

The villagers continued to watch the Nazis warily. There was no need to disarm the Germans as the parachutists had piled their weapons in the corner, before going to sleep.

This done, silence descended upon the room. All eyes were turned contemptuously upon Patrick Heenan.

"It's shot you'll be for your fine actions, Patrick Heenan," said Connel McGuigan. "When your blasted O'Shaugnessy came traipsing over to-night, I was ready for him. Still in all, I had no heart for killing a dog. But when I found that bloody Hitler thing about 'is neck, I hurried to the village and told the boys."

"It's truth," interrupted Mr. O'Flaherty, an obese hulk of a man who kept 'bar at the Shankill Tavern. "We'd been warned that perhaps parachutists had been dropped last night. We knew rightly enough where to come. That we did."

Young Thomas had shoved through to his grandfather's side, the tail of his long nightshirt dragging.

"They were going to blow up the Americans," he shouted. His words ran altogether. He was determined to get them out before he could be stopped. "—and my Grandfather set to talking of dogs—and—made this Casey so mad that 'e tied the thing on O'Shaugnessy. And Grandfather opened the door, 'cause he knew O'Shaugnessy would run to visit Lady Erin, and—and—everything."

He was breathless, but grinning with pride. His freckles seemed all squeezed into one ruddy blot about his mouth and eyes.

"Is this true, Mr. Heenan?" asked Mr. O'Flaherty."

Patrick Heenan swept a defiant glance around him.

"It's true," he roared. "But for myself I'd not have troubled to explain to you, you thick-headed shanty. If 'twas in cahoots with the Germans I'd been, why would I be deckin' out a galavantin' dog with a bloody Hitler flag? Can you answer me that, you pig-sty son?"

**S**OMETHING had changed. The silence now was of a different sort. All eyes turned upon Connel McGuigan.

He was greatly taken aback. He scuffed his boot toe upon the floor and looked down at it, shifting nervously about for a long moment.

"I was thinking, Mr. Heenan," he said finally. "I've a friend who raises West Highland Whites. I was thinking, too, about my Lady Erin's red-and-blue pups which your O'Shaugnessy sired. Would it be at all possible, d'ye think, Mr. Heenan, to commemorate this night by breeding—ah, you and me working together—a sort of red-white-and-blue dog?"

Several of the village men raised hands to their faces to conceal their smiles.

Patrick began to scuff his boot, too.

"Mr. McGuigan," he ventured awkwardly, his face coloring, "how did those pups look to you?"

Connel did not look up. "Not bad, Mr. Heenan. I must admit it. Not bad at all."

Patrick Heenan shifted, looked up. Then his head jerked erect. Thomas was directly before him.

"Don't stand there grinning like a red-headed idiot, boy," he bellowed. "Get to bed with you!"



"THAT'S FOR ME FOR ENERGY"





# To the Ends OF THE EARTH

## True Adventures on All War Fronts



**JAP CHAPS:** The bitter struggle for Guadalcanal has its full share of odd occurrences that seem inevitably to go hand in hand with death in battle. Everyone knows that Japs are trained not to be taken prisoner. But when the Nips have lived in America, they sometimes get their philosophies scrambled — like the machine-gunner who burst from concealment, hands high, as an American patrol drew near.

"To h — with Tojo!" he shouted, in good American. "I'm from New York."

A bit grimmer is the story of the Jap who, being worsted in a hand-to-hand encounter with a Marine sergeant, suddenly spoke in cultured accents.

"Hey, take it easy, will you?" he begged. "I went to Ohio State."

"I'll be darned," said the Marine. "I'm a Michigan man myself." With which he spitted the Jap neatly on the end of his bayonet.

### "SCREWBALL'S" LUCK STILL GOOD:

Pilot Officer George Frederick Beurling, beloved 20-year-old Canadian-born "Screwball" of the R.A.F., was thought to have lost the luck which carried him to 29 victories over Nazi and Italian planes attacking Malta in a few weeks when he was wounded in the heel during a dogfight and forced to bail out.

This belief of his mates was intensified when, a few days later, a four-engined bomber which was carrying him back to blighty plunged into the sea off Gibraltar while carrying 32 passengers. Beurling was one of the 6 who managed to escape, and it was thought at first that his leg was broken.

"But it wasn't," he says cheerfully. "It's going to be all right. And I'm still here, aren't I? That's good enough luck for me in this war."

### HOW IT FEELS:

Flight Lieutenant Clive Robertson "Killer" Caldwell, leading ace of the R.A.A.F. with more than twenty planes to his credit, paints a graphic picture of what it's like "up there" when the going is heavy.

"Sometimes, in a tight spot," he says, "you think you'll never get out of it, and you know fear, and your tongue sticks to the roof of your mouth. But you do get out of it and back on the ground. Then the itch begins again, and you can hardly wait to get up in the air again and have another go."

Caldwell, who bears scars in his leg, shoulder and back from Nazi bullets, wears the D.F.C. and Bar and the Polish Cross of Valour.

On one occasion, over Libya, he shot down five Huns in a single afternoon.

### THE PANIC WAS ON:

According to an eyewitness account, the early phases of the El Alamein battle were pretty confused, and one battalion of a Royal Tank Regiment fell captive to the Nazis when their fuel supply was cut off. They didn't stay captive long — every time a shell burst near their prison convoy, they faked a panic so convincingly that the Germans, wondering why the traditionally stolid Tommies should be so terrified, got the jitters themselves and soon lost control of the situation. Result — dead Nazis, free Royal Tankers.

### HE'S GENERAL KO TODAY:

It was at Changsha that fighting China won its first major victory over the Nips, sending a major Jap offensive reeling back to its base bleeding and broken. And it was Colonel Ko Hsien-tsai's regiment that smashed the spearhead of that drive at Graveyard Hill a mile south of the city. Eleven times the Japs attacked the hill, a key position, in force. Eleven times they were repulsed.

As the Nips moved forward for the last time, Colonel Ko had his buglers sound the charge, and led his men in a rush to meet the attackers head on.

In the course of this victorious charge, Colonel Ko himself killed a Japanese colonel in hand-to-hand combat and captured a major.

### WISE INVESTORS:

Italian prisoners in Britain recently approached the commandant of their internment camp and asked to be allowed to put part of their pay (they receive wages for work in the fields) into British war bonds. Startled, the commandant reminded them that such money might well be responsible for bombs dropped on their own homeland.

"We still want to put our money into British War Savings," said the Italian spokesman, "because, well, at any rate the money will be safe."







Upon the air sounded the crack of a high-powered rifle

# TOO OLD FOR COMBAT

By **RALPH OPPENHEIM**

*Squadron Leader Steve Banton tangles with grim jungle perils and a flock of Jap Zeros in the air before settling the question of his best friend's age!*

## CHAPTER I

### *Banton's Perilous Mission*

**O**VERHEAD, the sky was a blazing hot blue. Below, the land was a dazzling tropic green. The lone, sleek Airacobra arrowing at ten thousand feet was a tiny winged shape whose camouflage war-

paint blended with both sky and earth.

Captain Steve Banton, young commander of the 12th U. S. Fighters based in Assam, India, hunched forward in the Airacobra's glass-hooded pit, his keen eyes peering from his flight-tanned face, searching the monotony of bright green below.

Jungle-land. The tropic reaches of

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## AN EXCITING ACTION NOVELET

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Burma, most of it a No Man's Land still claimed by a ruthless nature and by wild roving beasts.

"But there are some human beasts in it too!" Steve Banton muttered under the thunder of the 1100 horsepower Allison engine. "Somewhere must be that Jap base, where those new diabolical dive-bombers are nested up."

His eyes went to slits, almost desperate slits. He was wishing he had his loyal, fearless squadron behind him, to strafe that Jap base. But that would not be possible unless his present mission—one of pure reconnaissance—succeeded. He might have entrusted this mission to any one of the flyers under his command. But it was fraught with peril. So he had naturally decided to do it himself. Steve Banton was that kind of a C.O.

He banked the roaring Airacobra a little, his eyes still searching that green jungle-maze below. It seemed strange. Flying over jungle made one feel jumpy. Maybe more jumpy than flying a land-plane out over open, uncharted seas. Yet Banton told himself it was not as if he had come out unequipped to find his way over some treacherous green maze.

Even now, he was remembering the sound of a firm, vibrant voice giving final instructions.

"If you watch the jungle, Steve, you'll see tell-tale signs that should help you," the voice had said. "So long as you see what looks like a patternless green maze, you can be sure it isn't the Jap base. When you notice anything orderly, or even of slightly different hue, be on your guard. . . ."

**T**HE voice had gone on, giving more but equally expert advice. The speaker was a man who knew the jungle better than most experienced mariners could ever know the sea. He was Malcolm Pierce, the famous explorer and hunter. Steve Banton's best friend. He was Lieutenant Malcolm Pierce, now, of the U. S. Air Forces.

A look of mingled bitterness and guilt clouded the hard face of Steve Banton. He knew if he succeeded in his mission, it would be partly due to all the careful coaching Pierce had

given him. And yet, when he returned from the mission—

"A fine way I'll be repaying him!" Banton muttered.

Back in Banton's headquarters in India were papers he had already filled out. They needed only his signature. Once signed, they would end the army flying career of Malcolm Pierce. That report would cause him to be transferred from the Air Forces to some less-rigorous branch.

A tough thing to have to do to your best friend who had tried to give you a helping hand!

Their friendship had begun back in the States, when Steve Banton, a little younger but even then a veteran flyer, had been in commercial aviation. He had met Malcolm Pierce through mutual friends. The two, both men of action in their respective careers, had found a warm bond in their equal love of adventure. Malcolm Pierce had wanted to take up flying, with the idea of combining it—as explorers like the late Martin Johnson—with his work. Banton had taken him aloft, taught him the rudiments. Then the war had come.

Steve Banton had gone directly, and without red tape, into the Air Forces. Soon he became a squadron leader. After some red tape, Malcolm Pierce had followed suit. Soon he blossomed out as a rookie with a lieutenant's wings and commission. He even managed to get into Banton's outfit, much to Banton's surprise and pleasure. As yet Pierce hadn't really tasted action, and that, thought Banton now, was fortunate, mighty fortunate.

Not that there was anything wrong about Pierce's flying. He knew his plane, knew his squadron tactics, and performed efficiently. But still, technically speaking, peace-time flying wasn't war-time flying. Flying in actual combat required far more. . . .

The thing had come out casually. Down in a canteen in Assam, Banton had met a former mutual friend, a Major of Ordinance with a desk-job, due to his age. The major had expressed surprise and unbelief when he learned that Malcolm Pierce was a fighter pilot.

"Must be another man!" he insisted. "Why, Pierce is far too old. He was

in my class at college."

When the major mentioned Pierce's age, Banton had been thunderstruck. Pierce had lied by more than ten years to get into the Air Forces under the very maximum age limit. Banton himself had never dreamed Pierce was that old. The man did not look it, did not act it. But—Steve Banton knew only too well—if there was one thing that would bring out a man's age and chalk it up against him, it was combat flying.

Young pilots were needed for punishing fighting jobs. Flying at speed sometimes over four hundred miles an hour, men had to have strong nerves and tough stomachs. Only young men had such things. Pulling out of breakneck dives brought on "black-outs"—unconsciousness unless one had young stamina. Indeed, if our country wished to match the Japs, swift reflexes, the ability to act with lightning speed was essential. Only young men had these qualities.

Yes, it was tough. At first Banton lacked the heart to take action. Nevertheless his conscience dictated against letting Malcolm Pierce face the rigors of combat flying. Then came the last straw.

From United Nations' Command the orders had come to Fighter Squadron 12: "Imperative to find base of new-type enemy dive-bombers, since Intelligence believe they are planning some surprise attack tomorrow."

They had been appearing with increasing regularity, those new Jap dive-bombers. Furthermore they were demons on wings. American troops, like the British, had felt their ruthless fury. That they were some new improvement on the Mitsubishi 98-1, that they operated somewhere out of the Burma jungle, was all that was known about them. That—and the wake of death and destruction they always left when they struck!

**A** FEW had been shot down. Yet either by the "hari-kiri" of their flyers or by fate, they had been too wrecked or burned for the Allied experts to see what made them tick.

Now finding out their secret was secondary to ferreting out their base, thwarting whatever surprise attack

they were preparing. Many squadrons had tried to find that base. Reconnaissance and bomber squadrons had tried it. None had succeeded. One of the reasons seemed to be that no American flyer could risk sufficient time to search. An excellent aircraft-detecting network was uncovered by the Japs, and always they sent up flocks of fighters to interrupt and doom these mass hunts.

When the order came from H.Q., Steve Banton had no intention of leading his outfit on any such futile venture. But he thought perhaps one plane, one little Airacobra, might fly undetected over the jungle, and somehow locate the base. Then could come bombers, knowing exactly where to go and getting there before the enemy fighters could stop them.

"It's my job, Steve."

Malcolm Pierce, tall and straight and without a gray hair in his full dark head, spoke those words when Banton, who always took the whole squadron into his confidence, told of his idea.

"How so?" inquired Banton.

"It's just my job," Pierce had said. "I admit I haven't had a chance to show any flying mettle. But I do know something about the jungle, though I've never been in this particular one. I'm sure my knowledge of the jungle will lead me to that base."

It was pathetic, that eager speech from the man Banton knew was too old for combat flying. Banton found it difficult to tell him, still withholding the real issue, that with all his jungle knowledge he was still a little too inexperienced for such a flight. It was tough seeing the disappointment loom into his face.

"I'm the one man for this job," Pierce had insisted.

Again Banton had argued.

Then sportsman that he was, Pierce accepted the fact he was being refused. At once he had put at the disposal of Steve, who had announced he himself was going, all his knowledge of the jungle.

"Thanks, pal," said Banton. "If I can't get through with all that, I'm a keewee. Meanwhile, I want you to take a leave—the usual furlough before combat."



He knew Pierce felt depressed and hoped the leave would cheer him. Pierce had gone off reluctantly to a nearby Indian town. That had been five days ago. Last night Steve Banton, his face grim, had made out those papers that would doom Pierce's flying career.

Abruptly, in the hooded office of his roaring Airacobra, Steve Banton saw something which made him stiffen to attention. All through his musings, his alert instincts had continued to give themselves to the job of flying and watching the jungle maze as it swept along below.

In his ears again rang the words Pierce had uttered before the take-off.

"... When you see anything that looks orderly, or even of slightly different hue..."

That was what Malcolm Pierce had said. Otherwise Steven Banton would not have noted an ever-so-slight change in the green maze under the plane.

The green was there, the tangle was there. But the tree-tops did look just a little neater, a little less dazzling.

Eyes narrowed, Banton eased the stick forward. The slender Airacobra circled in the blazing sky. A quick look was all he needed. Then, even if the maneuver betrayed him, he might have time to use his radio. Banton's heart pounded as his plane glided downward, throttle low.

By heavens! there was a camouflaged clearing below! He could catch the glint of wings.

A snaking wraith of smoke seemed to chalk the plexiglass window beside him. Hail rattled against the dural flanks of his ship. Instinctively, he treadled the rudder—zig-zagging in descent. More smoky wraiths zipped past. He jerked his head to look up and back through the glazed faring of the hood, and his blood went cold.

Four streamlined winged shapes were converging upon him from the blinding eye of the sun. He recognized them as Mitsubishi Zeros. Already they had gotten too close. He could see their blunt noses, their transparent propeller arcs, even the slant-eyed Nipponese faces behind the windshields. He also could see too the armament which made them such

deadly fighters — the big-winking .37 mm. cannon in the propeller hub, the two .20 mm. cannon in the wings and—flaming smaller but in more rapid fire, the two synchronized 50 caliber machine-guns.

**D**ESPERATELY they were throwing everything they had down upon him. Already the air around his plane was dense with flying, screaming lead. Barking shells coughed out shrapnel that looked like flying mud.

He swore, again treadling rudder, trying to throw off that growing storm. Recklessly, he still held the Airacobra in its descent. Before trying to face such odds he must radio the location of the base and finish his mission.

Downward he dived. Below him, the camouflaged clearing took shape. Wings, hidden behind dispersed brush grew plainer.

An oath of despair suddenly burst from Steve Banton's lips.

Zeros! Down on that field. Little fighters only. This was not the dive-bomber base. He could see all of the field now, and he knew no dive-bombers were nested on that tiny drome.

Captain Steve Banton had been tricked.

## CHAPTER II

### *Fight for Life*



**A BATTERING** hail of Japanese machine-gun bullets ripped through the nose of the Airacobra. He could hear them tearing things to shreds. He felt thankful Airacobras do not have their engines in the nose, but in the fuselage behind the pilot, otherwise his engine would have been junk instead of still throbbing on all cylinders behind him.

With desperate intensity he jiggled his controls. In his mind was a frenzied resolve. He had to match these Zeros, go on and look for the base again—finish his mission. Before long those Japanese dive-bombers would be

taking off for their surprise attack...

His Airacobra arced out of its descent. It pulled straight up with an angry roar, hanging on its three-bladed prop. Steve Banton was showing the Nipponese what kind of combat flying an American could do. He was pressing his stick-trips. All six machine-guns were vomiting streams of tracer. Whenever he got a chance, he also yanked a dashboard trigger, and the .37 cannon in his propeller hub chunked out deadly shells.

This sudden offensive threw the four Zeros out of formation. They split apart. All except one. It did not move fast enough. Banton's cannon-shells caught it full on—smashing the engine nacelle and turning the front of it into blurred wreckage. Banton's machine-guns finished the work. Scattered remnants of the Jap fighter dropped out of the sky.

Wildly Banton reached for altitude now. His mind clung to one hope, to get away, to carry out his mission. But the other three Zeros rallied. They came down with deadly intent. He met the first with a burst of machine-gun fire, shearing off its wings. There was a flash of a rising sun symbol on one of the fragments and then the plane disappeared.

The surviving Japs looped away out of danger. Then they reversed and came back, motors thundering, guns spitting flame. It was now Banton's turn to loop and dodge. As he waggled the controls a chill of fear almost stopped his heart. New gunfire sounded from below. More Zeros were taking off from that airfield.

The sky minutes ago so vast and empty, suddenly changed into a prison of criss-cross tracer and cannon shells. In it Steve Banton flung his Airacobra through every maneuver at his command—half-rolls, side-slips, loops, and fake spins. Furiously he struggled against this box which kept getting tighter and tighter. His hard face had grown savage, almost wolfish.

His eyes sparkled with hate. He fired sparingly, making each burst take full toll.

Another Zero went down. It flared like a flung torch, dribbling oily black smoke behind. Soon, still another crashed into a squadron-mate, and the

two skittered earthward in deathly embrace.

But like the many heads of mythical Hydra fresh Zeros always replaced the ones Steve Banton shot down. Already the fight had been carried far beyond the little airfield. Steve Banton lost all sense of direction. Boxed in the sky like a trapped animal, he fought for life.

Again his guns chattered, and a Zero corkscrewed away. But at the same instant his own plane trembled under a fusillade of Jap lead. The bullets found the Allison engine behind him and rocker arms jumped free. Smoke gushed out quick as a flash, Banton reached for the ignition key as the Airacobra stalled and mushed. He felt heat sear the back of his neck. Only the slipstream fanning the first of the orange tongues away from his own body, saved him then.

He sideslipped, trying to blow out the growing flames. But the fire spread with a crackling roar. Oil sprayed out in liquid sparks that stung like angry hornets. And still the Zeros closed in, merciless, smashing more lead into the burning crate. At any instant the gas-tank—despite its self-sealing rubber cover—would blow.

**S**TEVE BANTON emitted a deep breath. Then he pounded the special pin which, in one move, released all his safety-straps. His other hand yanked the port cabin door open. The plane continued to sideslip in that direction. Then as the flames rose up to engulf him, he half-leaped, half-rolled out of the door, into space.

His fingers hooked itself into the rip-cord ring of his chute. But he delayed pulling the release. Dizzily, he tumbled down, a lost speck in a sky, while his Airacobra blew itself to the four winds. Banton's lungs gagged, unconsciousness threatened, but stubbornly he kept waiting. For he had heard how Japs make sport of shooting parachuting pilots—spotting them by the big spread of the silk.

Only when he knew the earth must be getting too close for safety, did he finally jerk the rip-cord. The little pilot chute whipped out, caught the

air. A jolt jarred his body. Then the big silk umbrella blossomed out above him.

Hanging on to the straps while floating down, he tried to get his bearings. The Zeros had raced on out of sight. The Japs had not seen him, having been satisfied when they finished his plane. Beneath him tangled jungle trees came rushing up, like green waves of an unknown sea. He tugged at the shroud-lines, trying to steer where the trees were thinnest in this area. A minute later, his feet scraped jutting branches as he plummeted through foliage, and the chute was caught above him. For a moment it ripped, threatened to give way. Then it caught again and he was left dangling in the air, several feet above the ground.

He got out his knife and worked at the straps, and at last sprawled down, free.

For the first moment he had only one emotion, relief at having firm earth under his feet once more. Then he took a personal inventory.

"No damage done," he muttered aloud.

Banton's own voice startled him. It had an empty sound. Looking around, he saw tangled twisted greenery, matted foliage and he realized, with apprehension, he was alone, lost in a jungle.

In every direction stretched a green maze of jungle. Thick withes of monster size, fallen trees, rotting trunks, thorny brush and tangled undergrowth encompassed him on all sides. The trees were bound together by a network of vines. Far overhead the matting of leaves, like the high arches of a cathedral, formed a screen through which the bright sun never penetrated. The air was still, hot and humid. From the branches above, water dripped.

At first the jungle seemed lifeless. But after a time Banton became aware of life for this tropical forest generated destructive life like a giant incubator. In it were wild beasts, reptiles and other beasts. It was alive with insects—every kind of pest that flew, crawled, sucked or stung. For several minutes he stood still, listening and getting his bearings.

**F**OLIAGE rustled. In a tree he caught the beat of myriad colored wings.

"I must get out of here," Banton muttered to himself.

As he spoke he moved aside a branch. From it dropped a myriad of small black specks. Horror stricken, Banton hastily brushed them off. They were driver ants, one of the most venomous of tropical pests.

He chose another route and started away from the place where he had landed with the parachute. There was a squeak. A small animal dove for cover into a hole. He pushed on. Sounds came to his ears, animal noises, chirps, peculiar caws, and in the distance, the faint squall of such as are made by angry cats, only heavier and more menacing.

Banton moved forward, occasionally glancing upward in an effort to see the sun. He had no sure way to judge direction for, down in this damp and stifling gloom, shadows did not show. His wrist-watch had been smashed by the fall.

To find his way out of this place and to get into touch with his squadron was of the utmost importance. Despite his mishap Banton had never lost the purpose of his mission, which was to locate that secret Japanese base. These other dangers were subservient to that.

"Must get back," he said again. "Need another plane to try again. Next time I'll dodge the Zeros, by gosh! Those dive-bombers must be found and stopped."

He stumbled onward, guessing at his direction, trying to fool himself into believing he was not lost. An opening appeared. With relief he pushed through it.

This was better. At least, now, he knew the direction in which he was going.

Overhead blazed the sun, bathing him in sweat. He struggled for a time with a giant type of grass, pushing aside great stems, the edges of which had a razorlike sharpness. He also kept a wary eye out for poisonous snakes. To be bitten here would mean disaster, certain death.

The rays of the sun caused him to pant heavily. Soon he began to dis-

card various parts of his apparel. He threw away his flying coat and helmet. In a short time he was stripped down to his undershirt and trousers. The heat had become almost unbearable. Insects began to hover around his perspiring face, having a Roman holiday. But Banton tried to ignore their bites and stings. They were preferable to the hammer blows of the sun.

The jungle, with its primitive vastness, grew upon him in the sweating heat. Nearby might be the Japs and Banton kept on the alert. He jumped as a bright-colored bird cawed loudly. He recoiled as a wedge-headed snake wriggled past his feet through the underbrush. A jungle-shaking roar caused him to stop as if petrified.

No man had more courage than Steve Banton, but he was scared now. Danger—not from human enemies he knew and could fight—lurked near. Even the feel of his side-arm Colt automatic still in its holster, failed to reassure him. He took a deep breath and stumbled on.

As he emerged from the grass into another clearing, a second roar, closer now, made his hair stand on end. As if in a nightmare, across the open space, he saw the foliage move. A sleek head with green eyes, the big muscular body undulated into view. Then he realized the beast he faced was a tiger.

The striped beast moved toward him. It stopped and poised itself like a monstrous cat at the sight of a bird. Its white fangs showed as it hissed at him silently. Then it braced itself for the spring.

In desperation, Banton drew out his Colt and fired wildly, almost blindly. His bullets smashed into the beast, but to his horror they only seemed to enrage the animal. The tiger's scream of agony and rage shook the trees. It gathered itself together and sprang. Banton saw its body rise, its immense claws outstretched.

Just before it left the ground, there came an interruption.

UPON the air sounded the flat crack of a high-powered rifle and the thud of a striking bullet. As the tiger launched itself into space it seemed to wince and falter. In the

air the cat lost its grace and somersaulted grotesquely. The ground shook as its heavy body fell a short distance away from Banton. There it lay, a dead, sprawling weight, head lolling to one side, green eyes going glassy.

A tall figure, gripping a hunting rifle, stepped out from the brush. It was a white man and at first Steve Banton stared at him without recognition. The tall man wore a pith helmet, a mesh-cloth shirt, shorts, and he carried a small knapsack and a canteen strapped to his lean frame.

With a tight smile and a casual glance at the dead tiger, he spoke to Banton.

"Had a hard time picking up your trail, Steve—Captain Banton," he said. "I was hoping I'd run into you hereabouts."

"Pierce!" There were both unbelief and wild gratitude in Banton's voice. "Malcolm Pierce! How in the name of heaven did you get here?"

"Put on this citronella before the mosquitoes eat you alive," suggested Malcolm Pierce. He helped rub the oily liquid on Banton's bare arms and shoulders.

"You sent me on leave, remember?" explained Pierce. "I decided to enjoy my leave with a taste of the old hunting and exploring. So I got this equipment and started from India with elephants and a guide. When I reached the border of Burma, I left them and came on foot. I managed to find a base in this jungle, but it turned out to be a fighter base, equipped with Zeros. I recalled that you intended to come on the mission, and thought perhaps you would meet trouble from this base. I was right. Saw you bail out, even. But had to pick up your trail, and luckily I came in the well-known nick."

"Well, I'll be a blistered!" Banton was still staring at this man who he had learned was too old for combat flying, who he had to have transferred. "It's the screwiest thing I ever heard of, but am I glad to see you. Listen, if you know how to get home from here, let's go. I must set out again as soon as I can."

A grim look overspread the face of Malcolm Pierce.



"Want to be intercepted by Zeros again?" Pierce's voice was almost mocking. But his dark eyes remained intent. "No, Steve. I have a hunch that spotting the base by air, and getting back to tell of it, is impossible even for a flyer as good as yourself. It's the true reason why I started this safari. Right now we are beyond the Zero base. Why not continue?"

"You mean look for the dive-bomber base on foot?" Banton was incredulous. "But that's impossible in this big cockeyed jungle."

"It's far less impossible than doing it by air. I think I can find it. Of course, if you don't feel you're up to looking for it with me, I'll hobble on alone."

That was enough to make Banton bristle. Also he discovered he had new confidence in this explorer and hunter who was his best friend.

"I'm crazy enough to believe we can find it," Banton said. "Come on. Let's go. It's your party but I'm in on it."

"I've already decided on the general direction of the search," Malcolm Pierce said, leading the way. "Let me walk ahead and find a decent trail. You just follow."

"Don't worry, I'll be right behind you."

### CHAPTER III

#### *A Gamble with Death*



SOON Captain Steve Banton began to realize what a vain-glorious boast those words had almost been. Banton had called Pierce too old to fly. Yet Malcolm Pierce at once set a pace with which the younger

man had to strain every muscle to equal.

In addition to this Pierce carried in one of his hands a long jungle knife which he frequently used to cut away brush and intercepting vines. His strokes were frequent and apparently tireless. Even this did not seem much to impede him so much as the cut branches bothered Banton. Often despite care, Banton got tangled up in trailing vines beneath his feet and

fell. These tumbles were heavy and jarred him badly.

Once in a while, however, Pierce halted to listen to jungle sounds. Banton was grateful for these pauses, as he was breathless and soaking with perspiration. Yet the heat did not seem to affect the older man. He seemed almost as cool as if he were sitting on the front porch of a club in Rangoon, sipping a refreshing drink out of a tall frosted glass.

Banton noted with admiration the alertness of Pierce, here in the jungle. He seemed to interpret correctly every sound that came to their ears and to know, as if by instinct just where they were at all times, just the correct direction to take. His eyes were never still. There was a wrinkle of concentration upon his brow as he weighed and calculated the potentialities of the green wilderness about them.

"What goes on?" Banton demanded at last. "What do you think you'll find when you stare about like that?"

"You might call it jungle-detecting," explained Pierce. "I'm looking for certain signs." He peered at Steve Banton then. "But say, you look sort of done-in. Here, you'd better take this pith helmet for awhile. The sun, when it comes through the trees, is pretty punishing."

Banton flushed. "An old man like you thinking I can't take it," he nearly retorted.

Presently, however, the green of the forest began to turn into a sickening blur.

"Well, all right," said Banton. "I'll wear it for awhile if it pleases you." He put it on.

By now his legs felt like lead. He had been scratched in a hundred places by thorny underbrush, and his body ached from exertion. "Well, I was in a hectic sky fight," he told himself, in excuse.

But how about Pierce, who had been in this punishing jungle since last night? As if to emphasize the point, Pierce happened to speak just at this moment.

"Better take some of this water," he said to Banton in sympathetic tones. "I've put a little quinine in it. Drink sparingly, or you'll feel worse instead

of better." He himself did not drink at all.

Time became an eternity, a monotonous, gruelling punishment of aching feet, blinding sunlight, scratching brush. Steve Banton felt as though he had been put through a clothes' wringer. He believed he could not go on much longer. "Say, the whole idea of this is beginning to seem screwier than ever. We're still lost in jungle and—"

"Quiet!" Malcolm Pierce had stopped now, his tall body tense. He looked around. "Do you notice it?" he demanded in a low voice.

"Notice what?" husked Banton.

"The absence of animal life," whispered Pierce. "I spotted plenty of tracks, leading away from here. The jungle seems almost dead."

He was right, Banton realized then. No more birds flitted in and out of the bushes. Almost all movement in the foliage seemed to have stopped. "So what?"

"Animals have an aversion to armies," said Pierce, watching the shadows. "They avoid all things military which imply hosts of army men."

A fleeting hope brought renewed life to Banton.

"You mean we may be near the Jap base?" he asked.

"We'll see," said Pierce. "But we must go quietly now." He became at once furtive and swift, and Banton had even more trouble following him. They struck off to the right for a while. Then Pierce shook his head. "Not this way."

They tried the left. Suddenly Pierce gave a low exclamation. He was pointing at grass more matted than the rest, at broken brush.

"Men have been here. Of course I can't be sure but it looks encouraging."

**T**HAT was when Steve Banton, the aviator, had a contribution to make to this strange mission. His trained ears picked up a faint throbbing sound.

"Engines," he whispered. "Revving engines." Pierce, still somewhat inexperienced in such matters, looked bewildered. "There are planes on the ground near here. That direction,

from the sound," Banton pointed.

"Good," said Pierce. "That will save us time. But we must be careful not to make a sound."

Pierce gripped his rifle. Banton, excitement sustaining his ebbing strength now, put a hand on his Colt. He managed to emulate Pierce's noiseless progress through the brush.

Minutes more. Both halted, behind banyan trees. Halted and stared with awed eyes.

The field had been beautifully camouflaged. The Japs really had an artistic flair for deceit. The way they had scarcely disturbed the outer aspect of the jungle, yet had built a mighty airfield, proved amazing. Huts and hangars were all topped by jungle-growth. However, no vast apron could be seen. The planes were dispersed on little fields of their own, and the runway, coated with concrete, had been deceptively painted.

"In spite of all I said before you took off in the plane," whispered Malcolm Pierce, "it might have been impossible to spot this base from the air."

"And even if I had reached here and spotted it, they probably would have stopped me from reporting back," Banton added. For now he saw the anti-aircraft defenses, and they were awe-inspiring. Tin ears were located in several places; flak guns and pom-poms were almost as numerous as the trees. Mustard-colored Jap sentries in helmets or monkey-caps were a moving stream, with bayonet-tipped rifles. "Yeah, lucky we did come on foot. With all their paraphernalia and lookout stuff, they never thought two guys would creep up on them out of the jungles."

His gleaming eyes were focusing on the dispersed planes. Great-winged, streamlined planes, even now being made ready by Jap mechanics, even now being "bombed up" with huge demolition eggs.

"They're starting to get ready for the surprise raid wherever it will be," whispered Pierce.

As the older man spoke Banton realized the afternoon sun was beginning to sink. Soon dusk would mantle the jungle. The raid must have been planned for the coming darkness.

"Well, the next move is up to you, Captain," murmured Malcolm Pierce. "I brought you here, I'll leave the rest in your capable, military hands."

Banton smiled mirthlessly. One thing he'd almost rather die than do would be to go back on foot. Besides, it did not look as though there was enough margin of time.

The mantle of responsibility which Malcolm Pierce had handed back to him did not seem burdensome, for he was once more in his own element, dealing with the kind of enemies he knew. His eyes had settled upon one of those dispersed dive-bombers. His grin tightened. The twin engines of the dive-bomber were both revving.

"The United Nations' Command would like to see what makes these hell-ships tick, and so would I. We're still unspotted. If we make a rush for it, we may make out all right." He looked at Pierce, an old doubt creeping through him. "But maybe you'd better not try it, feller. You've been through a lot and this will be touch and go while it lasts."

Malcolm Pierce's answer was a cold smile.

"Better start moving, Captain," he muttered. "There's not much daylight left."

"All right then, here's some action," announced Steve Banton, a chance of fighting had brought renewed energy. He leaped through the brush, still in that pith helmet, and now it was Pierce who followed behind.

The little gang of Japs at the dive-bomber did not see the two intruders until the Americans were practically upon them. Steve Banton led the way. His Colt was out, blazing. The shots almost drowned in the din of motors. A Jap soldier flung his rifle into the air and pitched headlong. A mechanic, with a "hara-kiri" look in his eyes, defied the Colt and tried to leap at Banton. But the Jap was not a tiger, and Banton calmly clipped him across the visor-cap with the heavy Colt and sent him sprawling.

**M**EANWHILE, however, an officer with red *tai-i* bands was lifting an automatic, pointing it at the busy Steve Banton. The Jap's slant-eyes gleamed death, his finger tight-

ened on the trigger.

Crack! Malcolm Pierce's hunting rifle spouted flame and the Jap, his trigger unpulled, pitched forward, a neat hole between his slant-eyes.

Another bullet dropped a Nip soldier who was trying to swing his rifle at the hunter. Pierce, cool as ever, ran on to join Banton, who let out a yell. "Quick, more are coming," cried the aviator. "They know there's trouble here and are popping out like ants."

He led the way through the path they had cleared of human obstacles. The door of the big dive-bomber was open, and Banton almost pushed Pierce into it towards the rear. Then he scrambled into the front office, where he found familiar-enough dep-controls, despite all the Japanese characters on the instrument panel.

Through the windows he saw a swarm of Jap soldiers charging to the dispersal clearing, leveling rifles. Next he saw those same soldiers falling like ten-pins, as behind him sounded a deafening chatter. Malcolm Pierce, who had learned gunnery at Randolph, was squirting fifty-caliber bullets out of the turret with twin machine-guns.

Grinning, Banton opened the twin throttles then—and the engines, Kinsei engines he decided they were, roared like Niagara. The dive-bomber began to move. Japs scurried from its path as it turned and rolled toward the concrete runway. And Banton, who could fly anything with wings, was getting up flying speed, despite the plane's heaviness. The tail lifted, a big twin-tail. The solid feeling of even, smooth concrete ceased. They were in the air!

But Jap wrath was on their trail as they climbed. Scores of ground-guns were spitting angry flame. Now the Nips seemed well aware that enemies flew in this ship of the Rising Sun. Banton cursed as the bullets came zipping up, as flak shells began to burst. He slammed the throttles home, steepened the angle of the climb to a thunderous zoom into the waning daylight of the sky.

They were getting clear of it then. At the same instant Steve Banton's eyes were taking in a war-map framed below the instrument panel. The



words on it were Japanese, but the landmarks were familiar. He gasped into intercom phones he had found and clamped on.

"There's a red circle over the main Assam airports," he yelled to Pierce. "That's the place the Japs intended to raid. Try to use the radio, Pierce! Tell our base where this dive-bomb nest is, in case we get into trouble."

"The radio's no go—locked wavelength," returned the explorer. "Besides which—" his voice was again slightly mocking, "don't you see what's happening below? Those monkeys are getting ready to set out now. Look."

Banton, who had sent the dive-bomber just beyond the flak area, looked back at the field. He saw Malcolm Pierce had been right. There was a feverish rush of activity on that base which even the camouflage could not hide. Dive-bombers had been started, were even beginning to roll. Crews were climbing into others.

Grim indecision gripped Steve Banton then. His intention had been to fly Pierce in this stolen Jap ship safely back to India. It's Jap Rising Sun insignia should enable it to get through the lurking Nip patrols. But now that plan must be abandoned.

Before they could get back, even warn the United Nations command to expect the attack, the whole mass of new dive-bombers would be on their way, for an all-out attack on Assam. Too vividly, Steve could picture the wholesale destruction, the rain of death to his own countrymen and their British allies.

Captain Steve Banton decided to gamble with death.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Spoils from the Enemy*



WITH a slight movement of the controls, Banton brought the Japanese plane over on its left wing and threw it into a wide bank, starting back in the direction from which they had come.

Under the transparent shield of the window, below his

feet, again he caught sight of the camouflaged huts and disguised hangars, with their netting of deceptive colors. All he had to do now was to go rocketing down and pull the bomb releases.

Then just in time he thought of the elderly Malcolm Pierce, and hesitated.

Pierce was too old to dive. His body had been weakened by age, his muscles had grown loose with advancing years. Banton remembered the strain and twist of his own training and what the punishment had done to him, a young and vigorous man. What would it do to Pierce? Kill him perhaps. Rupture him. Then he would expire later, in dreadful agony.

To bomb the field would require an almost vertical dive, if they expected to escape the flak shells and the machine-gun cross-fire. Anything less drastic would be far too slow, sheer suicide in the face of the withering fire the Japanese would unleash upon them. Pulling out of a vertical dive from this height would equal eight or ten gravities, at least, a tremendous strain upon an untaped human being. It would seal the doom of Malcolm Pierce.

So Banton did not dive. Instead he continued to circle the field, high up beyond gun range, uncertain and irresolute.

"Well?" came the cool voice of Malcolm Pierce through the earphones. "What are you waiting for? You know what this dive-bomber can do, and it's bombed up to do it."

Bitterness twisted Banton's features. Yes, he knew what it could do all right. If combat flying was punishing stuff, dive-bombing was torture itself. A man too old for combat flying could not stand it.

So Banton continued to circle the field.

"Hurry, will you, Steve?" Malcolm shouted at last. "They'll be taking off, and then it will be too late. Hang it man, I can understand your not being quite able to take the jungle, but I never thought a flying job would scare you to death."

"What!" Banton roared. "Scare me?"

He turned and looked back at Malcolm Pierce, who had ducked out of



the turret. He saw the dark keen eyes, the cool face, the lithe body, and he thought of this man going tirelessly through the jungle which had, indeed, almost broken him, Steve Banton, down. Again he revised his opinion of Pierce.

"Hold on, feller," he yelled at the top of his voice. "Here goes everything!"

Swinging the big plane into position, he sent it into a thunderous, plummeting power dive.

He had chivvied plenty of fast buses in his day, but never had he been in a plane that dived like this. It was a blood-curdling, nerve shaking thrill, the speed of it. The plane responded as if alive, whistling down at the field like a projectile, so fast the base seemed to jump into their faces, so fast the flak guns never had a chance to cut loose.

Steve Banton clung tightly to the wheel, ready with the bomb-releases. Six eggs this winged monster carried, all big ones, too.

"Hold on, Malcolm Pierce!"

Banton thought he yelled that, but his own voice gagged in his throat. He had the dep-wheel back then, horsing on it. Just then his eyesight faded. Centrifugal force seemed to crush his skin against his bones. Blood rushed to his head and his ears roared. It was the awful "black-out" moment. Then it passed as he continued to hold back the control. The whistling dive-bomber arced up from the field with a sickening, lurching lift.

As it arced, Banton, fighting the dizziness, kicked off two bombs.

*B-r-room! B-r-room!*

Two gaping craters magically appeared and threw rubble into the air. Several dive-bombers leaped into fragments. It had been nice work. But now, as they zoomed through the continued spew of flak, Banton turned around anxiously.

**M**ALCOLM PIERCE was standing calmly in the turret, spraying tracers downwards to add to the work his own contribution.

Steve Banton laughed aloud then, and down he went once more. The Jap guns went crazy now, every one of them hurling shells in rapid suc-

cession. The air became alive with bursts. But through that inferno plunged two Yankee men of action, with the bond of high courageous adventure between them, neither too old for air combat.

*B-room!*

The third bomb ripped the neat concrete runway to cracking pieces. The fourth shattered more dive-bombers. The fifth tore away another mask of camouflage foliage and paved the way for the sixth. It dropped from a plane now battered and shredded by Jap fire, a plane that only by a miracle was still flying.

It dropped straight and true on a big petrol tank that the blown-away camouflage had revealed.

A tremendous explosion and a volcano of flames.

The very jungle seemed to erupt. The lurid flare of ignited petrol spread out in a ghastly, livid sheet, engulfing the shambles that was left of the base. The Japs who flew these new dive-bombers had learned that, in the hands of two reckless Yanks, one such bomber could indeed become a Frankenstein-monster, destroying its masters.

"No more mystery now," Steve Banton said, with husky elation. "These dive-bombers are not new. They are a one-wing adaptation of our own navy 'Hell-Divers.' The Japs stole the idea as usual. But the trimmings the little monkeys added may come in handy for our designers to know about."

Malcolm Pierce did not answer him. He turned round in sudden anxiety. Had those punishing dives knocked Pierce out? Luckily no ground-fire had ripped into the cabin itself. He saw Malcolm Pierce, cool and alert as ever, calmly working the turret guns, and he saw the reason why.

The Zeros were here. They must have been notified from the base before it was destroyed, and though their base was far away on foot, it was not much distance for planes that could fly four hundred miles an hour. The Zeros were swarming like hornets around the dive-bomber, undecieved by its Rising Sun insignia.

Two of the Zeros were going down. Malcolm Pierce was an expert marks-

man, on ground or in the air. Two more followed because there was a forward cannon on the dive-bomber which Steve Banton used efficiently. Steve Banton was using his wearied muscles to cut through the Zeros, to keep fighting the way back toward home, with the panel-map as his guide.

But the Zeros meant business, and now they closed in anew. The dive-bomber lurched.

"Feller, it looks like we're not going much further," yelled Steve Banton.

"I think we are," came the cool voice of Malcolm Pierce.

And he was right, as usual. He was right, because the sky turning to dusk seemed to open up, and out of it slanted a whole flock of Airacobras, striking at the Zeros with all the fury and results of the snake for which they were named.

"Our outfit," exulted Banton. "By gosh, they must have been sent out looking for the base. They got this far. Now I hope they won't take us for a Jap and shoot us down."

"They won't," said Malcolm Pierce. "Though this radio is feeble and locked, I've managed to get on their wave. Your deputy Squadron Leader knows who we are."

And the Airacobras did, too. They carefully avoided shooting at the one precious dive-bomber. They concen-

trated on the Zeros. They concentrated so well that more and more of those Jap fighters were becoming the digit for which they had been named.

Then a strange spectacle was staged in the dusky sky over the jungle reaches. A battered Jap dive-bomber led the fighters of Squadron 12 homewards, the said dive-bomber being booty for the United Nations.

**A** JOYOUS, relieved Steve Banton spoke casually through the intercom phone. "You know, Pierce, some chair-warming major told me the funniest thing," he said. "The major said you were too old for air combat."

Then he looked around at Malcolm Pierce. He saw Pierce's lithe frame stiffen, saw worry and guilt in the cool, firm eyes. He thought of the papers back in his headquarters recommending transfer to some less-rigorous branch than flying. He thought of how pleasurable it was going to be to tear those papers to bits.

"Imagine a United States officer fibbing like that, saying you are too old for combat," jeered Banton, who was weary from his exertions. Yet it restored his own vigor to note the light of relief and look of vigor his words brought to Malcolm Pierce, hunter and explorer. "I wish I felt as young as you. What a pukka pilot I'd be then!"

*THE ARMY'S MADE  
YOU SMOOTHER!*

*IT'S NOT JUST  
THE ARMY. IT'S  
STAR BLADES!*



4 for 10¢





Riflemen

# THE DOUGHBOY

**T**HE doughboy, leading performer in the popular imagination during World War One, is at present suffering from a severe case of publicity malnutrition. Aviators and the men of the Armored Forces, winging their way to victory through the clouds or dashing

and crashing through obstacles on the ground, have hogged the publicity releases since Pearl Harbor like the two boarding-house lodgers with the longest arms.

Yet, as has been repeatedly shown in the seesaw Libyan and Egyptian campaigns, where flyers and tankmen composed a large proportion of the troops engaged on both sides, planes and armored troops are incapable of making a conquest stick. For that you need today, as always in the history of war between men, the man who fights on his feet.

The German break-through at Sedan in 1940 would have been quickly sealed by the French had not the Nazis had ready the scores of divisions of infantry which poured through the gap opened by tank and Stuka. The initial setback suffered by the Anglo-American attack on Tunis and Bizerte was brought about by the lack of sufficient infantry to hold the early gains made by American General Sherman and British Valentine tanks.

Yes, and it was infantry who wore down the Nazi positions at El Alamein and, in ten days of the fiercest sort of fighting, cleared the minefields from the path of the waiting monsters which broke Rommel's back. In short, the unpublicized doughboy is still the king of battlers.

## A 97-Year-Old Name

The American infantryman did not acquire his odd nickname from his fondness for sinkers in 1917 as most people believe.

The term "doughboy" has been used to describe the slogging foot soldier for 97 years in Army circles.

It was some wit in tough old linsey-woolsey Zachary Taylor's army, engaged in 1846 in the foot-wearing task of driving Santa Anna's Mexicans out of their home grounds, who coined the name.

The infantry, plodding along the dusty roads from Matamoras to Monterrey, acquired a coat of the native soil that hid their blue uniforms.

The wit remarked on their involuntary semblance to the rural residences by the roadside which were built of the same material. So he christened them "adobes," pronounced "dobies," and "doughboys" they became. Doughboys they have been ever since.

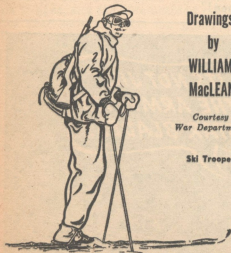
## Work Specialized

Their current eclipse in the popular mind is remarkable, not only because of

Drawings  
by  
**WILLIAM  
MacLEAN**

Courtesy  
War Department

Ski Trooper




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# THE UNITED STATES HAS STREAMLINED

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# HE'S THE FORGOTTEN MAN OF WORLD WAR TWO

the importance of the infantryman's job and the fact that 60% of every division is infantry, but because the "foot" soldier's work has become so highly specialized and varied that he's a far cry from the rifle-toting man-at-arms of World War One.

It isn't generally known, for instance, that the current most glamorous soldier of them all, the paratrooper, is recruited from and officially a member of the infantry.

The doughboy may also be an airborne infantryman, a ski trooper, a walkie-talkie operator, an anti-tank gunner, a mortarman, a machine-gunner or the driver of a jeep, truck or command car.

None of these jobs is exactly dull. In fact, most people don't consider the soldiers who operate such weapons or vehicles as doughboys at all. But they are, and they're proud of it. In action, they fight on the ground.

## *No Stepchild*

No longer is the foot soldier the stepchild of the Army in the matter of uniforms. His G. I. clothing is varied, smart and well-tailored. In addition to his winter olive drab and summer khaki, he may wear the tricky equipment of the paratrooper, the heavy white or green outfit of a ski soldier or the shorts required in far-flung tropic or desert climes.

His weapons are even more varied. The old Springfield 1903 bolt-action has given way to the "filling station"—the Garand semi-automatic rifle—as his basic weapon. Every infantryman must know how to operate this and the Colt .45 automatic pistol, which latter is carried by the heavy weapons' men. The pistol, incidentally, is soon to be replaced by the new light Winchester automatic carbine, which all non-Garand bearers up to the rank of major will sport.

To these basic weapons are added the

heavy Browning automatic rifle which is the deadliest in the world of its type. And today the infantry platoon is well sprinkled with Reising and Thompson sub-machine guns, improved versions of the "typewriters" on which the gangsters of the prohibition era wrote their bloody histories in the nineteen-twenties.

## *Heavy Weapons*

But small arms only begin the roster of infantry weapons. In the heavy weapons category are listed both air and water-cooled Browning machine guns. These weapons, supreme in their category, are in two calibers, .30 and .50. The latter is extremely effective against light tanks.

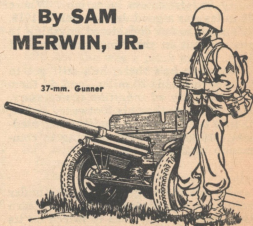
To smoke out enemy pillboxes and other strong points, our foot soldier must also master the intricacies of the .60 and .80-millimeter mortars, which have been



Parachute Trooper

## By SAM MERWIN, JR.

37-mm. Gunner



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# INFANTRY OUTFITS—INFANTRY DUTIES!

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vastly improved over the erratic Stokes mortar of 1918. Elevation gauges and the addition of a fin to the shell increase accuracy in the modern trench mortar.

The old-type projectile was simply a potato-masher which tumbled end over end in its progress and was apt to land almost anywhere.

Thanks to the changes since, the blasted soldier of the Bruce Bairns-father World War One cartoon would no longer have to ask, when informed he'd been almost buried alive by a mortar whether it was "ours or theirs."

The heaviest weapon used at present by the infantryman is the .37 millimeter anti-tank gun, which is extremely effective against light and medium tanks up to a range of a thousand yards. But if tank armor continues to thicken, we may find our doughboy operating specially mounted .75s.

Even more radical is the infantry's

At Camp Wolters, Texas, recently, a group of infantrymen under full pack was going through an obstacle course. The leader grabbed a rope, swung out over a mudhole and landed kerplunk in the ooze.

One by one the others followed, each landing with a thunk in the muck and coming out spattered with mire from helmets to shoes.

Then and only then did they learn that they weren't supposed to fall in the mud at all—the leader had slipped.

### *The Toughening Process*

This toughening process is paying dividends in North Africa today and will pay more on many fronts before victory is won. Don't think the modern infantryman is soft. He's anything but.

The infantry of today is organized in squads of twelve rather than the eight that prevailed from the founding



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*Tanks and planes may pave the way—  
but it takes the fighting foot soldier  
to make their victories stick!*

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methods of transportation into battle. The foot soldier's feet are carefully guarded against breakdown. He rides into combat in trucks for greater mobility and freshness in action. Where 20 miles was a good day's march in 1918, 200 miles is not considered anything to shout about in the American Army of 1943.

But once he's there, he's still got to be able to do his 20 miles—and do them day after day *ad infinitum* if necessary. He's no softer than his footwear father, thanks to better diet, conditioning, medical care and repeated training in commando tactics.

### *General Mud*

In this training, the men are under actual fire a good deal of the time, learn that an army really has to march on its belly in the face of the enemy. But bullets are only one of their worries. General Mud is present, too—in quantity.

of the Continental Army until the triangular division was adopted a few years ago.

Two squads, each commanded by a corporal, make up a section, which is led by a sergeant. Two sections make up a platoon, officered by a lieutenant or first sergeant.

Four platoons, three armed with rifles and submachine-guns and one with machine-guns of heavier caliber, make up a company, commanded by a captain. Thus the modern company counts off to a bit more than 200 officers and men. This unit, while smaller than the similar unit of World War One, has vastly increased fire power thanks to its automatic and semi-automatic weapons, is much more maneuverable.

### *Today's Regiment*

Three such companies and a heavy weapons' company, which carries trench mortars, heavy machine-guns and anti-tank guns, comprise a battalion, headed

by a major. And three battalions with further special troops, make up a regiment.

Thus the regiment of today, totalling about 3,000 officers and men, is also smaller than its World War One counterpart. But its strength is such that it could hold its own against a brigade of the older troops.

The modern triangular division has three infantry regiments instead of the four listed on the rosters of old-type square divisions. The brigade has vanished from our newly-organized field armies and the jump from regiment to division is direct.

In 1918, the American division totalled almost 30,000 men, made about four of war-depleted French and German divisions. This was found to be an unwieldy unit to feed and transport in action. So, after the war, its strength was cut to 20,000, later to 19,400.

### *The Top Spot*

The triangular division contains 600 officers and 14,500 men for a total of about 15,000. Of this total, almost two-thirds are infantry. So the doughboy still holds down the top spot in the largest single force of men which operates as a single tactical unit.

You'll find the doughboy everywhere. He may come down from the sky by means of a parachute, or he may appear from the belly of a huge transport plane.

He may slalom down a snow-covered mountain side on skis, or he may be up front with the armored divisions—yes, there is a regiment of infantry which moves behind armor in every major tank unit.

His variety is rapidly approaching the infinite, thanks to the variety of new machines of destruction which scientists of all countries are developing at break-neck speed. Today, to be a good infantryman, a soldier must be a sort of all-around specialist—and this goes for every army in the

world which is making any effort to keep up with the parade of battle in World War Two. The day of the rifleman and nothing else is gone forever.

### *Doughboys of the Future*

Already, in German infantry regiments, the heavy weapons sections include field guns of four or six-inch caliber, depending on the task assigned to the unit. Such artillery, frequently on self-propelled mounts, has fought with great effectiveness from Sedan to Stalingrad.

That peculiarly American development, the tank destroyer, is really a part of the infantry, will undoubtedly be incorporated in it before the last shot in this war is fired.

It seems probable that the doughboy will operate more and more behind armor—thus increasing his already great mobility and his fire proof qualities. Individual armor would make him more unwieldy than a knight in the days of yore when mounted men had to be hoisted into the saddle with a derrick.

So don't be surprised if, to the layman, the infantry regiment of the future looks a lot like the tank regiment of today. It will move more on caterpillar treads than on wheels, thus ensuring ability to go across country when roads are not available. And the infantrymen inside these vehicles will have protection against and opposition to ground-strafting airplanes.

But he's still the doughboy—the lineal descendant of those dust-covered foot soldiers of old Rough and Ready himself who drove the men of Santa Anna from the Rio Grande to Monterrey, then routed them at Buena Vista. And he'll do a lot of marching and routing in this war—until the enemy says uncle!

Walkie-Talkie  
Radio Operator



Airborne Infantryman



Yak sunk his deadly fangs into the cougar king's throat as they stood claw to claw

# THE FANGS OF YAK

By **HAROLD F. CRUICKSHANK**

*The son of a wolf father and collie mother fights the wild packs with the fierce loyalty of his heritage!*

**A** MERCILESS blizzard wind whirled down through the canyon, and out across an open space, just missing the corner of a small cabin tucked in amongst a grove of poplars.

To the lee side of the cabin, a long dark half-wolf shape was stretched. He was Yak, son of a black wolf sire and

mongrel collie mother. For most of the two years of his life he had lived here at the habitat of the man creatures.

When he had first come, a two-months'-old whelping, whose thirst for adventure had dropped a hind paw, into the open jaws of a steel trap, there had been only the one man creature, the one who had extracted the paw from the trap.

Tal Carter was the man. And he had paid for his first adventure with young Yak. The back of his right hand showed a few scars he would carry for life—the mark of the fangs of Yak who had fought fiercely against Carter at the trap.

The other occupant of the cabin was Mary Carter. Yak had been afraid of her. He hadn't encountered her until his growth had reached near maturity and instinctively he had been afraid.

Then had come the strange, woolly creatures whose voice sounds he didn't understand. What he was made to understand by the man, though, was that the sheep were to be considered friendly creatures. This was a hard lesson, one delivered with the means of a birch club when Yak's fangs were dripping blood from a torn sheep jugular.

Since that awful day, when the man had crept up on him, to strike him, Yak's respect for the man had intensified. The man creature had power, power in his hands and power in his voice. He had taught Yak patiently to patrol the sheep band when they were out near cougar country, and twice Yak had stood off a creeping pair of mountain lions.

Once he and the band had been lost for three days and nights, hemmed in by a blizzard even more severe than the present one. Only Yak, son of the black wolf, could have withstood the torture of such hunger. Only the lesson he had learned from the man creature restrained the urge to keep his fangs from the throat of a wether, or ewe when his belly gnawed fiercely with its hunger pangs.

**I**NDOORS, Tal Carter looked across the table at the winsome face of his young wife. Mary was bearing up bravely under the strain of, at times, near privation. Together they trapped the draws and creeks; now taking a fox, now a weasel, now a coyote.

Mary was busy sewing together a number of soft pelts Tal had cured for her and suddenly, when she looked up and saw that her husband was watching her, she blushed prettily. These small garments were not for her, but for young Larry Carter, soon to pay them a visit.

Tal got to his feet and strode up close to his wife's elk-hide chair.

"You're doing swell, hon," he said

huskily. "It was a crime to bring you up here, from the comforts of a good cattle ranch. I—"

She cut him short. Her father had objected to her marrying a sheepman, but Mary had been struck with this wild country on her first visit with Tal, with whom she had gone to school in the West.

"I'm enjoying it, Tal, honestly," she said softly. "True it's had its bad moments; we've been short of some things, but in the spring, your lamb crop will be big. You've made arrangements to have your wool shipped. We'll have a son, Tal—a son born to this great, magnificent country. That means a lot. That's a grand start for any boy or girl. I'm happy. You're shouldering the major share of the burden—out alone, often day and night. Don't worry, Tal. You—"

"Ou-u-u-u-u-u-u—"

Mary started. Her lips quivered, and her large eyes widened.

"Wolf call, honey," Tal said. "Don't look so scared. It means the snow's let up. It'll grow fine, and cold. I'll get out and take a look at the sheep. Might have to feed them from now on for a time. They—"

A deep half snarl, half growl clipped off Tal's words. It came from Yak, out of doors. Then suddenly, for the first time since the wolf-dog had grown to maturity, he raised his muzzle and poured out a terrible wail—a call of utter majesty of defiance and challenge.

"O-o-o-o-o-o-o — ou-u-u-u — Wah! Wah!"

His deathly call terminated in two gruff barks, domestic dog sounds, or like the staccato wild barks of a dog fox.

Tal Carter let himself quietly out of the cabin. He stole softly up on Yak, and thrilled at the magnificence of the big black creature now stretched to his full strength and standing height.

"Good boy, Yak," he called softly. "Watch 'em, boy. Watch—"

Every muscle in Yak's body rippled. Every nerve fibre was a-tingle as he sniffed and caught the tang of a wild wolf pack.

"Get 'em!"

This was a command! Yak stretched forward in full leap, and struck off to the northeast along an old deer trail which led off through the cottonwoods, but suddenly he came back on his



haunches at a long, shrill whistle. It was the signal of the man creature to halt.

**Y**AK whimpered softly. He shuffled forward a foot or so on his rump, but settled himself rigidly now in this position.

Mary was at her husband's side. Tal pointed off along the deer trail.

"You can't see him, Mary, but he's still there—frozen like a statue. Would sit there all night on guard. Now listen and watch, and remember that the urge to go in and mix it with a wolf is eating his heart out."

Tal poured out two short, shrill, whistled notes. Instantly snow was kicked up and the black one came bounding back.

Tal spoke to him and held out a hand, but Yak seemed not to hear, nor see. He whirled and took up the same position he had been in when the commands to return reached him at the cottonwoods. His head was high, grandly high, but he was silent, with not a fibre twitching, nor a muscle moving.

"The grandest creature in the whole of the Bitter Roots, Mary," Tal breathed. "If anything happened to him, I— But shucks, he'll take care of himself. Like him?"

"Wonderful, Tal." Mary shivered a little with the cold. "But I do wish he were a bit more friendly. He never seems to understand what I say to him, or else he doesn't care. Why?"

"Because I raised him, trained him from a whelping, honey, before you came to me. But don't worry. Yak'll stand by you, although he'll do it without any show of affection. Better hop in now. It's growing a bit colder. I must get to bed soon. Now that the wolf pack is out and hungry, I'll have to be on my fox-line at daybreak. This heavy snow has brought temporary famine to the wild creatures. I expect to find some of their sign at my trap sets."

Tal kissed his wife's cheek and moved off to the corrals, but still Yak did not move. In his nostrils was the tang of his wild half-brothers, and by their tang tonight he knew they were hungry, and bold, and it sent the blood pounding through his strong veins with a compelling urge for battle.

It had never been understood by Yak that the man who rescued him from that

steel trap's jaws was the same man who had placed the trap. He only knew that the man creature had befriended him, and had treated him kindly ever since, and here at the corrals were creatures which, although he hated their scent, were his charges; helpless creatures at times, scarcely able to walk in their own power where the snow might be drifted. They exasperated him, and many times caused him to bare his fangs and snap threateningly close to their heels. But they were his to protect, for they were a part of the man creature.

Now the tang of the wild wolves in the electric night faded, and Yak gradually subsided to full length on the snow. He curled a forepaw inward and de-iced it between the pads.

The man creature came back to the cabin and spoke to him, but Yak did not stir, nor wag his tail. His long, strong jaw had sunk to his stretched legs and he blinked into the gathering cold of the winter night.

The cracking of frosted cabin logs failed to wake Tal Carter. It was Mary who first caught the sound of battle out of doors. She shook Tal more than once before she brought him out of his sound sleep. He was not fully conscious of what was going on for a moment, but suddenly the sharp snarl of Yak helped shake the cobwebs of sleep from his brain. He bounded from his bed and quickly poured himself into some clothing. Snatching his rifle he leaped to the door and flung it open.

**T**HE crisp night was clear. The drum of sheep hoofs on the packed snow in the corral was like the dull drumfire of panic.

Tal's heart began to pound fiercely. Then he glimpsed a half dozen battling forms—gray wolves from the hills, leaping, darting, snapping at the lone, huge form of Yak.

The man raised his carbine and was ready to pull, when Yak leaped, with a snarl, striking savagely at the throat of a lean she-wolf. The big hybrid sank his terrible fangs and almost in the same instant sideswiped, tearing a great hole in the throat.

He whirled at another attack. He was down, lashing furiously beneath a maze of wolf shapes when Tal Carter pulled his trigger, firing over the heads of the

battlers. With the suddenness of the shot itself, and with nearly as much velocity as that of the bullet, the small pack whipped clear of Yak's struggling form and bounded to cover.

Mary Carter, fully clad in parka and mittens, came up with her husband. But he moved quickly forward to Yak's side. The young wife involuntarily shot a hand to her breast. Yak was down, struggling to rise. Timorously Mary crept forward.

"What is it, Tal dear?" she asked. "Is he—"

"You should have stayed indoors," Tal said shortly. Then, "Sorry, hon, but you shouldn't have come out. There's been the devil to pay. Five ewes killed. I got a glimpse of the corral, where Yak has killed a big dog-wolf. I'm afraid we'll have to carry him in. He's lost half one ear and from the way he's struggling, he's as close to being hamstrung as it's possible without it being so. You'd better get some water heated and the first aid kit handy. I'll bring him in. Hurry now."

Mary sped to the cabin, and Tal crouched in low over the half-wolf.

"Good boy," he called softly. "You did a grand job, but the price was high, huh? Too many of 'em, Yak boy."

Tal was gently stroking the big one's good ear, but Yak had never before stood for this sort of gentle handling. He had always accepted his master's good attentions with stoic reserve. But now he suddenly flicked one of the mittened man hands with his tongue and made a small throat sound.

Tal was obliged to half drag, half carry the one hundred and fifty pound form of Yak to the cabin. Yak peeled back his lips as the woman came toward him, but he did not growl.

Tal deftly washed and applied antiseptic to Yak's wounds—his horrible ear wound and a slash along the off side. When it came to turning him over to examine the more serious damage, the bad slash near the nigh hamstring, Yak growled in protest.

Softly the man spoke to him, taking plenty of time with his approach, stroking, cajoling. Suddenly Tal looked up at his wife.

"Better sterilize a needle, hon. I'm going to do a bit of stitching. There's a chance we can save the old feller, though

I have my doubts. The cord is badly severed, but not completely. He's young yet. We can hope."

Yak, the big one, had to be securely tied before Tal and his wife could go ahead with further surgical work. But at last the job was done, and Yak made comfortable in a corner of the cabin. Tal sent Mary to bed, but he watched the big one until the dawn.

**N**OW and then Yak dozed off, only to start forward with a throaty snarl as out of the hinterland there came the long hunger wail of a wolf leader, or the close-in dismal, blood-chilling call of Ah-Hoo, the great horned owl.

Tal offered Yak food as he himself breakfasted, but the big one grinned, and lay back on his moosehide bed.

Out of doors, with the aid of a lantern, Tal Carter made a survey of the damage done. Five ewes and a wether had been killed. He dragged the carcasses clear of the corral and walked among his band, feeding, calling to the sheep until they no longer bounded from him.

At last they settled down to feed, and Tal moved along his trapline, snow-shoeing hurriedly from one ravaged set to another.

A red fox was the total catch, and Tal grinned bitterly up at the far peaks whose very austereness mocked him. But when he returned to his cabin, he was whistling cheerfully, though not completely fooling his wife, who had learned to know his every mood.

It was well that they understood the moods of the wild country, especially the seasonal moods. Frost, drifts, flood, fire—all these were the moods of the gods of the wilderness, which gods respected none save the courageous.

To compensate for the bad moods were the periods of peace and security; the good things, such as creeks abounding with fish; game in the brush and timber country; soft weather with glorious dawns and sunsets; lush pasturage for the sheep.

Tal Carter never altogether forgot the good side of the hinterland even when Nature buffeted him hardest.

He made a swift examination of Yak, and quizzed Mary, but Mary shrugged gently.

"He hasn't stirred much, Tal. But strangely enough when I started hum-

ming a soft song about an hour ago, he seemed to show some sign of interest.

Tal smiled softly and winked.

"I don't wonder at that, honey," he said. "Remember? It was your voice that first attracted me."

He stooped and lifted Yak's head and the big one stirred, to flick him with his tongue. Tal was satisfied the big one would pull through.

Yak regained his strength and the normal use of his injured limb just shortly before the lambing season, but almost at once he began to show signs of a restlessness never before manifested. The man watched him at dusk especially. Every now and then the big half-wolf would bound to a rise of land and stretch himself to his full height, sniffing sharply into wind, or cocking his good ear as if straining his hearing to catch sounds which did not register at all in Tal Carter's consciousness.

Then one night he was absent the whole of the night.

Tal became worried.

"Haven't you any idea what it means, Tal?" Mary Carter asked one evening.

Tal seemed not to hear her, but suddenly he started forward.

"I've got it, honey! Should have thought of it before, when I've watched him, so often, on his hillocks, sniffing and listening. It's the call of the hinterland—the call of his kind. This is the wolf mating season, and I'm afraid some sleek young silver-gray she-wolf has stolen our Yak. He—"

Mary started. "You mean he'll never come back to us, Tal?"

The man was silent for a long moment. He wasn't thoroughly familiar with the lives and habits of the wolf creatures.

"I—I don't know whether they mate for life or not, Mary. I think they do. But don't worry. Yak is only half wolf, with a strain of collie. Let's hope that the domestic blood in his veins will bring him back . . . Uh—how long now, Mary, before I have to go get old Mrs. Singing Timber?"

Mary lowered her eyes and her cheeks flushed.

"Weeks, yet, Tal dear. Well, at least three weeks. And you'll be so busy then with the ewes."

**A** DEEP sigh shook her, for she knew that soon Tal would be work-

ing day and night. She had learned to know that no creature is so apparently stupid or helpless during the birth of its young as the ewe. There would be still-borns to deliver, dead ones to skin, and their skins to fix about the bodies of orphans, or lambs whose mothers had rejected them.

Actually, Tal required her help, but that would not be possible this season. He would have to rely on the Indian trapper, Singing Timber.

They were at lunch when both heard a running sound at the corrals. Tal started from his chair, but subsided in his seat again and smiled.

"It's Yak, honey," he said. "He's back. But let's not make a fuss of him. We won't let on we've known he was away."

Mary frowned. She wasn't with full understanding.

It was the most unaccountable quirk of Nature that Tal Carter knew—this fact that in most countries where sheep were raised, the weather showed its sternest side during the lambing season. There was no exception here in the foothills country.

Not only were the blizzards most biting, but they came on the heels of a winter during which, for the most part, Tal had had to feed his ewes dry fodder. He had hoped that occasionally there would be a chinook wind in the lower levels—a wind that would clear pasturage that in spite of the winter still carried grass containing not only the vitamin content these brood ewes required, but sustaining nutriment for the rams and wethers.

Carter's forehead was wrinkled plenty. He had enough to worry him besides another threat. The long winter had not only precluded all possibility of pasturing his sheep band, but it had brought a wave of famine to the wild ones, chief of which were the wolf creatures whose mating season was over and whose sleek she-wolves required food as never before.

Day and night Tal cruised his range, now making wolf sets in place of mink and fox sets. But the wild ones were alert, cute. His baits failed to lure them to their death. They could tang only too strongly the seductive scent of the sheep—game that was easily killed when the opportunity came.

More than once Carter came across the



big tracks of mountain lions, the deadliest sheep killers in all the wilds. He realized well that if Acheeta, the cougar king, and his mate, or kind, ever made a raid, they would ruthlessly cut down ewe after ewe—far more than ever they required for food. Once their fangs sank into game throat or spinal cord the lust for killing seemed insatiable.

Tal tried not to carry these grim thoughts to the cabin with him, but his mind was easily read by his wife.

"Have you seen Yak?" Mary queried as Tal came in for his supper at dusk.

He started and his frown deepened.

"No," he told her. "I'd held on to a faith in him, the hope that he would return, but—" He shrugged and poured water into a wash bowl.

Mary served supper in silence. She, too, was gravely worried, but she told herself more than once that nothing mattered more than keeping Tal and herself happy. Her happiness would come with the arrival of her child. It should be Tal's happiness, too, but—alone—he brooded too much over weather, his sheep and the threat to them.

**B**Y SOME strange freak of which Nature is utterly capable, water began to tinkle from the cabin eaves in the night. Mary heard it, for she slept fitfully. She awakened Tal. He heard the murmur of the strong breeze in the cottonwoods.

"Chinook, hon!" he said excitedly. "I'll be able to get the brood band out yet."

He exhaled deeply and for almost an hour lay awake listening to the sounds which marked a welcome break in the winter. It might take a day or so of action on the part of this chinook to clear some of the grass levels, but—

Absorbed with calculations, he fell asleep. But Mary lay awake, listening to the soft rustle of timorous small creatures in the straw of the roof poles above—field mice and their young. . . .

Two mornings later, along a trail he had broken for them, Tal Carter led his ewes to a sign of grass. Their elated voice sounds as they trotted along in the sunlight was like a tone of spring in the grim wilderness.

Throughout the day Tal herded the band, though there was no chance of straying far through the deep snow

drifts which surrounded the meager wind-blown pasturage. He was, however, afraid of a raid by cougar or wolf.

The following day, and the next, he watched his band graze. Sun-dogs flanking the sun in the southwest warned him of possible change.

He was sitting eating his dry lunch when suddenly a movement of the grazing band arrested his attention. He slowly raised his head, then froze, keen eyes looking off to the northeast. His heart quickened its beat when all at once he saw, trotting from behind a hogback, the magnificent form of Yak at whose flank ran a lean young she-wolf.

Without moving his body, Tal whistled—the two-note call to which Yak had seldom failed to respond. The call was heard. It stopped the big one in his tracks. Tal called again, but although Yak shuffled forward a pace or two, he did not come.

Fierce resentment surged through Carter. He reached cautiously for his carbine and read his sight adjustment. With two carefully placed shots he could take them both. The thought prompted such climatic action and he slowly, deliberately raised the rifle to his shoulder and found a spot for his foresight just behind Yak's off shoulder.

But a shudder rippled through the man as his fingers hovered over the trigger. He lowered the Winchester and drew his lips together in a fine line. Killing Yak would be like killing a human being of whom he'd been fond, just because that person had disappointed him.

"Curse you, Yak," he breathed. "I can't do it, now. But I know you've got to feed your girl friend, and I haven't seen a deer track inside of ten miles for weeks. Sooner or later you'll break, you'll forget, and when and if you do I'll have to kill you, feller."

The following day, to his amazement as he led the band to the pasture in a nasty northeasterly wind, Tal started as he felt and heard the sheep suddenly rush up on his heels. He looked back to see Yak slinking along behind.

"Yak!" he called. "Come around, feller."

He waved direction with his left arm, and the big one broke into the deep snow, making a wide circle around the sheep.

"Now get along ahead," Tal ordered,



and the big half wolf heeded as if he had never been absent from herding duties.

**T**HROUGHOUT the day when the weather gods threatened, Tal watched Yak. The big one dozed, but now and then he started up, got to his pads and moved several times around the grazing band.

It was growing close to dusk when Tal, darting a glance back toward the cabin, caught a prearranged signal from Mary. A small cloth was waving from a corner of the cabin. It was the signal for Tal to hurry off for Singing Timber's squaw.

For a long moment the realization of this stunned him. He scarcely knew what to do and was inclined to step out in all directions at once. There was the sheep band. He must get them into the corrals, and yet there might not be time.

He spotted Yak, and with him came a hope. But could he trust the big one now!

He felt the whip of an increasing intensity of coolness in the freshening wind. Weather was about to break. Swiftly he calculated the time it would take him to reach the cabin, talk with Mary, get his pack pony saddled, reach Singing Timber's cabin across the range, and return.

It would be pitch-dark at best before he could possibly return, assuming that all went well. He turned to the sheep band and frowned. There was nothing for it but to take a chance on Yak. He must leave the black one in charge.

"Watch 'em, boy!" he called.

Yak lifted a forepaw, wolf fashion, and cocked his one-eared head on one side. He made no voice sound, nor did he move a muscle as he watched the man creature move off. But now he lowered his paw and commenced a trotted sentry patrol about the band. Back and forth and around the band he moved endlessly.

Now and then he paused and whipped himself to a rise of land, to sniff into wind. His hackles suddenly rose and he chopped stiff-leggedly forward a pace or so as he caught the dread, hated tang of cougar!

Acheeta it was, Acheeta the big mountain lion king and his mate that came stalking down on the sheep band—hungry, famished in fact, for they had tasted little more than an occasional rodent in

the past several days.

Acheeta it was that sent the sheep band rushing into a drift with his blood-chilling half scream, half snarl, which rang and echoed in the craglands above.

It was at this scream that Yak, the big hybrid wolf-dog, sprang to action. Faithful demonstration of loyalty that it was, it was an error of judgment on Yak's part, for coming in from another direction, on silent pads, her belly almost scraping the snow, was Achee-an, Acheeta's mate.

She struck with swift deliberate fang strokes—not at a back, as was her custom, but at the throat of a terror-stricken ewe. And she continued to strike—one victim after another, while beyond, out of sight, two great fighting forces of the hinterland, Yak and Acheeta, met in combat.

Both had similar styles of attack. They leaped and struck, and leaped back. But Acheeta had the advantage of his retractile, fierce claws with which he spared no part of Yak's flanks as the big one struck again and again.

The tang of blood was on the young night air. A lone lean she-wolf wrinkled her nose, a nose which previous to the blood-letting had been curled by the inviting tang of the sheep band. She was Nai-eeen, the young mate of Yak. She bellied in close, and quivered as she watched the big kings of battle strike and slash.

**I**T WAS not until she glimpsed the slinking form of Achee-an creeping up at Yak's back that she leaped to give battle.

Nai-eeen fought silently. She had greater speed than any of the other combatants, and twice in swift flashes of her fangs did she save Yak from certain death.

It was she who at last gave Yak the opportunity to sink his deadly fangs through the tough hide of Acheeta's throat in that grim moment when the half wolf forced the cougar king to stand claw to claw at almost full height.

They swayed back and forth, Acheeta now shifting a rear paw to slash up and down with raking rowels of claws. Achee-an had been nearly hamstrung by a lightning dual stroke of Yak and his mate. She was down licking a serious wound when Yak, with Nai-eeen support-

ing, gave Acheeta the coup de grâce.

The black one's domestic dog blood now surged through his veins. He snarled in horribly guttural throat sounds as his strong fangs burrowed on through to the jugular.

So intent were he and Nai-een at their task they did not hear the gliding shape of the wounded she at their backs. It was Nai-een at which the artful Achee-an struck. Her heavier weight drove the she-wolf down into the snow, a set of fangs at her spinal cord. Nai-een jerked convulsively but a time or two before she stretched in death. But Achee-an struck again, almost disemboweling the she-wolf.

Yak whirled, a horrible snarl cloyed in his throat. He drove terrifically at the she-cougar, but even as she died beneath Yak's terrible fangs, she raked him with swift choppy slashes of her nigh side battery of rear claws.

Hackles up, blood dripping steadily from his wounds, Yak moved to his fallen mate and sniffed. The tang of death struck him and he hoisted his muzzle to pour out a high-pitched wail—the wail of death. Then slowly he subsided to the snow, his muzzle almost touching his dead mate's flank.

Down-trail, at the corrals, where Tal Carter had just arrived with Singing Timber and his squaw, the men turned to each other.

"Death, much, up there," Singing Timber grunted.

Tal was frozen with misgiving. It took a sharp word from the squaw to snap him out of it. He led her to the cabin where, on her bed, Mary smiled up into his amazed eyes.

"All right, honey?" he asked. She nodded and squeezed his hand.

"I'll be all right now, Tal. You'd better get the sheep corraled." She turned and smiled at the squaw who was tugging a capacious parka over her head. "Thank you for coming, Mrs. Singing Timber," she called.

The squaw chuckled. "Me not Missus," she grunted. "Me One Flower—call Maggie."

Mary bit sharply at her under-lip and nodded to Tal.

"You'd better go now, dear," she breathed. "We—can manage."

"Luck, honey," Tal said as he backed to the door.

LESS than half an hour later Tal Carter was staring down at the heavy forms of nine of his ewes—dead ewes. There was no sign of Yak, and in the darkness he could not identify the tracks of the killer or killers. But in his heart he not only condemned Yak but sentenced him—to death.

He spoke softly to the huddled sheep. He called to them. Grabbing an old ewe by the neck he dragged her on to the trail, then led on in the biting wind toward the corrals. The old ewe blatted and chopped stiffly forward, then broke into a trot, the others following.

The night was grim for Tal Carter. His band of ewes had been terribly frightened. He was fortunate, however, in having Singing Timber with him. Although the old Indian hated sheep, he understood them better than did Tal.

Throughout the balance of the night they watched over the band, Tal administering oil and other medicaments at Singing Timber's prompting.

Fourteen lambs were born; two still-borns were delivered. The men worked silently but efficiently.

When the first grays of dawn sent their grim half-light down on the small foothills ranchhouse, Tal was startled from a near doze by the opening and closing of the cabin door.

Maggie, the squaw, shuffled to the small lambing stable. She grinned a toothless grin as she beckoned to Tal.

"You come now. Heap big man chil'. Make quiet. Yo' squaw sleep."

Tal entered the cabin as silently as he could. The squaw lifted a white blanket from a large Indian basket and Tal looked down on his son, "Larry"—a wrinkled face and chubby hands. A different little child than he had expected. But he hadn't had a great deal of experience viewing new-born babies.

He looked across at Mary. Her face was strangely composed; very white. He shot a swift glance of query at the grinning Indian woman.

"Is she—uh—"

"She fine. Sleep. You go now. Breakfast ver' queer. . . ."

Outside, Tal paused on his way to the corral as he caught the dismal pack wail of a wolf leader. Deep bitterness struck at his soul again. He moved in to the stable and picked up his carbine.

The sheep were resting. There was no

further danger. Singing Timber was dozing.

Tal withdrew and started swiftly along the trail to the scene of the grim night's tragedy.

"Curse you, Yak," he swore. "I heard you call. You'll be leading your pack in to feast on those ewes. Like thunder you will! I'm going to kill you on sight!"

He neared the pasturage and made sure there was a cartridge in the breech of his carbine. Now he advanced cautiously, but save for the bodies of the dead sheep, the zone was deserted.

Tal moved up on the tracks leading off from the scene of the killing. He had just topped a low hogback when he started. An object had moved. He froze a moment, then glimpsed the form of Yak.

"Down, feeding," Tal breathed. "Well, here goes. I—"

**H**E WAS lifting the carbine to his shoulder when a dark object just off left in the foreground arrested his attention. He half turned and started walking. Shortly he fetched up with the stretched-out form of the badly mauled and dead she-cougar. And then he glimpsed the biggest mountain lion carcass he had ever seen.

"Acheeta!" he gasped.

He turned and looked into the yellow-green eyes of Yak. The black one stirred and Tal saw the dead form of the young she-wolf. Quickly the scene of the grim tragedy was reset for him. Yak, the big one, had fought by the side of his new mate who from the look of her wounds had undoubtedly been slain by a cougar.

"Yak—boy!" the man breathed. "Yak! You stuck to your job, son."

Tal Carter shook in every nerve fibre. He reached out a hand toward Yak's

good ear, but there was no response from the big one as the ear was gently stroked and pulled.

Tal examined Yak for wounds, and found the big one had suffered heavily.

"Come, boy," he called, but Yak seemed not to pay any heed.

Instead, he half turned his head and lowered his muzzle again until it was almost buried beneath the dead form of his mate.

It required the work of both Tal and Singing Timber later to rope and tie Yak in order to get him back to a small outbuilding, so that his grievous wounds could be bathed and cared for.

"Him live mebbeso," Singing Timber observed. "But him not again much good. You see hees eyes? No more he see. Cougar claws. Unh—bad."

Tal Carter sniffed sharply. He had not noticed Yak's eyes before. He passed a hand sharply across them now, but there was no reaction.

Singing Timber moved out and for many moments Tal looked down in silence at the big one.

"Never mind, pardner," he breathed. "You can stay on here for all time. You won't need your eyes to find the food you'll get. Too bad you won't see the kid that's going to pull that lone ear, though."

The man moved slowly out, but his pace quickened as he started for the cabin. Out of all the night's wilderness tragedy had come a great happiness, too. The boy, Larry; and Mary were all right.

Yak would recover. The lamb crop would be saved! Mary would be glad. But above it all, young Larry would get his first glimpse of the foothills grandeur as the spring sun drenched the country with beauty and—with peace.



*Blackjack Smith, Yankee ace, didn't have to wait until he got to China to join the Flying Tigers—because adventure met him on the way in*

## WINGS OVER PENANG

By CHARLES STODDARD

*A Cloud-Busting Complete Novelet Coming Next Issue!*



# SAILORS WITHOUT UNIFORMS

*The Merchant Marine in Action*

**E**VERY hour of every day on the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian and Arctic Oceans, on the Caribbean, Mediterranean, Red, White, Black and Coral seas, the merchant sailors of the United Nations are writing new chapters in an unparalleled epic of heroic seamanship as they risk dive bombers, torpedoes and the shells of surface raiders to deliver the sinews of war to the widely spread battle fronts against the Axis.

Many of them have had ships shot out from under them, have endured the anguish of wounds long untended, the horrors of long hours or days or even weeks in icy or shark-infested waters. Almost without exception and entirely without compulsion save that of wanting to do their utmost to ensure final Axis defeat, without public honor or reward save for an occasional medal these men have gone right back to sea as soon as they were fit.

In order that their courage and tenacity under circumstances almost unbelievable may receive a fraction of the recognition it deserves, **THRILLING ADVENTURES** hereby presents a department called "Sailors Without Uniforms"—a department devoted to these iron men of the sea and their heroism.

—THE EDITOR.

## A MERCHANT MARINE HERO GOES DOWN WITH HIS SHIP

**A**N AMERICAN merchant ship, carrying 299 persons aboard, including survivors of six other sinkings as passengers, was torpedoed off the coast of South America with the loss of 135 lives. This loss would have been far greater but for the heroism of two seamen, one of whom failed to survive.

The vessel was struck by two torpedoes and sank in about ten minutes. Rare courage was shown by F. J. Mills of Detroit, who had his mates hold his ankles while he went over the side of a lifeboat and managed to patch a 21-by-40-inch hole in the bottom of a blast-damaged lifeboat.

Another hero, who gave his life so that others could get away from the sinking ship was unidentified. He remained on the slanting deck to crank a lifeboat down its davits to safety. There was no chance to rescue him as the boat went down too fast and he was sucked under the sea by its downdraught.

The boat he launched was the only one that stayed right side up. It carried 70 men, and they were able to right another lifeboat which had capsized and thus save 34 more. These 104 survivors were picked up some days later by an American ship which brought them back to home shores. Little hope was held out for any of the men they were forced to leave behind them.

But seaman Mills and his gallant helpers, who were left swimming in the water, didn't give up so easily. They swam to another lifeboat which was swamped and pretty well stove in. A few of their mates were clinging to it, but Mills persuaded them to let go.

Taking the canvas off an emergency food bundle, he got the emergency tool kit from the swamped lifeboat and boarded the wreck with two comrades. They held his legs while he hung by the heels and patched up the hole with the canvas. He had to fasten



it a nail at a time, then come up for air. Finally the hole was repaired, and the men in the water swarmed aboard and set to work bailing. The boat gradually rose higher in the water, and 60 men were thus saved from certain death by drowning. Using damaged oars and bailing every hour of the day and night in regular

watches, they rowed for the coast of South America.

It took then eight days, and two of them, both injured at the time of the wreck, died after landing. The others came through all right. They reached the friendly shore just three days after their more readily rescued mates.

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## A MERCHANTMAN DISHES IT OUT—AND HOW!

**W**HEN man bites dog, it's news. But when a United States merchant vessel sinks an armed enemy raider, it's headlines. Fifteen survivors of an unnamed American cargo ship landed recently on the eastern shore of South America with one of the most amazing sea epics of the war on their salt-encrusted lips.

Two Nazi commerce raiders bore down on the vessel in the early afternoon, and the engagement lasted twenty minutes. Ensign D. C. Willet, of Sacramento, California, who survived the fight, but has since been reported missing, was in charge of the gun crew and directed all his fire on the smaller of the two attacking ships.

It took exactly fifteen minutes to put the Nazi out of action and leave her in a sinking condition. But the larger raider was blasting the American ship with heavy guns, and one of its shells exploded in the magazine, blasting the freighter's seams wide open. Other shells from the sea vulture knocked out the forward gun and destroyed all but one of the lifeboats.

Captain Paul Buck, of Newburyport, Massachusetts, the skipper, maneuvered his sinking ship so that the after gun could bear on the remaining raider, and Chief Mate Richard Moczowski, of Richmond, California, continued to direct the crew although he had received two serious wounds. Both men are among the missing.

When the magazine exploded, all but five shells were consumed by the blast, and most of the after gun crew killed or wounded. Ensign Willet took over and manned the gun himself, putting all five of those precious shells where they would do the most good.

When Captain Buck was finally forced to abandon ship, the smaller raider was ablaze from stem to stern and her larger sister was down by the bow. The Navy account

of the abandonment of the ship and the long voyage home follows:

On the rapidly sinking merchantman, all the able-bodied men were assisting the wounded to liferafts and floating wreckage. Due to the high wind and sea, many survivors in the water were unable to reach the one sound lifeboat. Steward Stilson was one of the last to leap overboard. After swimming ten minutes, he sighted the undamaged lifeboat, gauged its course and exerted every effort to intercept it, which he barely succeeded in doing.

In command of the lifeboat was Second Assistant Engineer Cronk, whose alert and cool-headed actions were credited by other survivors as having been the major factor in their successful voyage of thirty-one days to land.

Several men in the boat were wounded, some seriously. Steward Stilson attended to them as well as possible, and Cronk set a course for the coast of South America. During the next few days, the condition of the wounded men deteriorated. The shrapnel wounds seemed particularly prone to infection, and several of the more seriously injured died.

With only the most rudimentary navigational instruments aboard, directing the boat's course became a fine art. Several times they ran into heavy squalls, and the exhausted men bailed until their arms were numb. Rain was welcome, however, as it replenished their precious supply of water.

Finally, after twenty-six days, the men sighted a butterfly and two moths, and they knew land was near. The color of the water changed from dark blue to light green.

On the thirty-first day, there is a brief log entry: "Hurrah! Sighted land, 4 a.m." The fifteen haggard men staggered ashore at a small village on the South American coast and were sped to the nearest hospital.

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## PANAMANIAN SHIP SUNK—PUTS UP THREE-DAY FIGHT

**A** MEDIUM-SIZED merchant ship of Panamanian registry was torpedoed and sunk in the North Atlantic on a Sunday afternoon, but not before its officers, crew, and armed guard fought a three-day running

battle with an almost continuous accompaniment of gunfire. Forty survivors, who spent four perilous days at sea in liferafts and rowboats, were picked up by a neutral vessel and landed at an Allied port.

The vessel, part of a convoy, had just passed through several days of turbulent North Atlantic weather. The sky turned bright and the seas calm—an unusual condition in those waters—and then a pack of submarines struck.

For three days, there was a constant battle between submarines with their deadly torpedoes and the convoy. The air was charged with smoke from gunfire and spray from depth charges. On the fourth day, the Panamanian merchant ship was struck squarely amidships by a torpedo, and immediately began to list.

The captain ordered the men to abandon ship when he saw the vessel was doomed. She sank shortly afterward.

One of the lifeboats was crushed to splinters. One of the liferafts capsized. Two attacking submarines surfaced, and upset one of the lifeboats. The captain of the sunken vessel was taken aboard the submarine, a prisoner. He made his identity as captain known only when the Nazis were on the point of taking the second mate in his place. Before he left his crew, he named the men who were to be in charge of the lifeboats and liferaft.

The survivors braved three days in open waters, using sails made out of flags. They finally attracted the notice of a passing merchantman, a neutral, which took them to an Allied port of call. Thirteen men were lost in the action.

## BOMBED, TORPEDOED AND AFIRE, U. S. BUILT TANKER MAKES MALTA

**T**HE American-built tanker *Ohio*, manned by a British crew, has written a new epic of high courage and dogged resourcefulness in getting a valuable cargo through to Malta.

Her exploits formed part of the great convoy operations in the current Mediterranean push. Commander Anthony Kimmins, who gave details of the operations, singled out the *Ohio* for special mention, even though, he said, it seemed invidious to draw attention to any single vessel when all the convoy had to pass through a blazing sea and air battle.

"She had been uppermost in our thoughts from the moment we sailed," said Commander Kimmins. "For she was a tanker carrying the most important and most dangerous cargo of all, and was so very conspicuous from the air, with her funnel right aft. Her name was *Ohio*, an American-built ship manned by a British crew and skippered by a very great man called Captain Mason.

"It was obvious she would be a special target for the enemy, and sure enough, she was hit by a torpedo. She was forced to stop and later, as we went alongside in the destroyer *Ashanti*, another merchantman was blazing not far off. It was that night when things were not looking too good.

"Admiral Burrough, commanding the convoy's escort of cruisers and destroyers, hailed her from our bridge.

"I have got to go on with the rest of the convoy. Make the shore route if you can and slip across to Malta. They need you badly."

"The reply was instantaneous.

"Don't worry, sir. We will do our best—good luck."

"By next morning, by some superhuman effort, they got the engines going and caught up with the rest of the convoy despite having lost their compass and having to steer from aft.

"The *Ohio's* next bit of trouble came when a Stuka which was attacking us was hit fair and square and crashed straight into her. For the rest of the forenoon, she was picked out for special attention, and time and time again she completely disappeared amongst clouds of water from bursting bombs. But again and again she came through.

"Then, at last, one bomb hit her. She was set on fire, but after a terrific fight managed to get the flames under control. Her engines were partly wrecked, but she just managed to make two knots and plodded on. The destroyers were left to look after her, but later she was hit again, and her engines were finally put out of action.

"The destroyers then took her in tow, but the tow parted. During the night, with the help of minesweepers from Malta, they got her a further twenty miles. All the next day, she was again bombed continuously, and towing became impossible. That night she reached Malta.

"If ever there was an example of dogged perseverance against all odds, this was it. Any one of those hundreds of bombs in the right place, and she would have gone up in a sheet of flame.

"Admiral Burrough's last signal to the *Ohio* was short and to the point.

"I'm proud to have met you."

**More Stories of SAILORS WITHOUT UNIFORMS Next Issue**



They slipped through the cars, edging toward the gate

# HOW TO WRITE A MOVIE

By JACK KOFOED

*Reality and make-believe merge when Hetherington and O'Brien are plunged into North African turmoil and war!*

**T**HE men were sitting in the Gezira Sporting Club in Cairo. Officers of many nations were there—English with their proud regimental caps and badges; Scots in green and red tweed trousers, or checkered kilts; Yugoslav airmen, wearing R.A.F. stripes and their own shoulder tabs; jaunty, slouch-

hatted Australians, Free Frenchmen, Greeks, South Africans, Poles.

"Funny about this place," said Hetherington, of British Intelligence. "There's a bit of a rough war going on out there in the desert, but you would never believe it from this point. Luncheon and bridge, horse races, golf, cricket. I went out with the

tanks against Rommel and his Nazis, but"—he shrugged—"this is like a bally cinema."

"We always get back to the movies one way or another, don't we?" O'Brien, with the United States Military Mission to North Africa, grinned. "Well, why not? You worked for Gaumont-British, I for Twentieth Century-Fox. Even a war can't make a fellow forget a business he's been in for a long time. I was a writer. Even now I think in terms of action and dialogue."

The Englishman lit a cigarette.

"I was a technician," he said. "Color processes and all that sort of thing. You writing chaps amaze me. How in the world do you figure out those incredible stories that finally appear on the screen?"

O'Brien watched a slim girl cross the big room of the Gezira Club to the bar.

"I saw her at the Deck Club last night," he said, to Hetherington. "She's a singer—a good one, too. But she is also a story germ."

"I don't quite know what you mean," said Hetherington, puzzled.

"I'll tell you," said O'Brien. "The writing habit is a pernicious one. A fellow never gets over it. After listening to the lady sing last night I went back to my room in Shepherd's Hotel and began to write a story about her. She had given me an idea. That's why I say she is a story germ."

**H**ETHERINGTON signaled a waiter to bring some drinks.

"I have nothing to do for an hour or more," he said. "I'd like to see how a story is built. Tell me this one you wrote about the girl at the Deck Club."

O'Brien snuggled back in his comfortable seat and stretched his long legs.

"It's not quite as simple as that. I took this girl, and I made the scene of her adventure Miami Beach, because I like Miami Beach better than any place I've ever been. There was a big, handsome blond fellow with her, so I made him the principal male character. I have two interesting people against a charming background. That's enough to start a story with, isn't it?"

"I suppose so," said Hetherington. "But then what do you do?"

"Having no idea of what's going to happen," said O'Brien, "I place my people in an unusual situation and see what occurs from there on out."

**T**HE circle of the spotlight held the girl in its center like a moth fluttering against a lamp. Her hair was as black as the inside of a coal miner's pocket, her eyes were an Irish blue, and her figure in the revealing evening gown was something for a man to break his heart over. She was singing, "I Don't Want to Walk Without You, Baby."

Two men, sitting at a ringside table, looked at her.

"If we weren't down here to knock a guy off," one said to the other, "I'd go for that slice of chicken. She's got class."

"Too much for you," said his companion, "and don't be so loose with your lip about knockin' people off. Some of these customers might have big ears."

"Ah, nuts. Puttin' Phil Adams under the sod is just a matter of form."

"Let's talk about somethin' else," said the other man.

He was a thin man, with the blue hint of a beard showing under his closely shaved skin, and he was a bit too nervous to be talking about killings that way.

"Hey, waiter!" he called. "What's the name of the broad who's yodelin'?"

"Look, buddy," the waiter said. "She ain't no broad, and in the Club Palladium we don't like our dames spoke of that way. She is what Winchell calls a society thrush. Her name is Jiff Valandigham, and she is out of Palm Beach where, if at least one of your ancestors didn't come over in the Mayflower, they won't even sell you a hot dog. What did you say was the name of that guy you are goin' to plough under?"

"Read the papers, Mushy," said the man who was not nervous. "You've been around long enough not to ask questions."

The waiter grinned.

"Okay, pal," he said. "Somebody's



number is always comin' up. So long as it ain't mine, I don't worry."

TWO British tank officers sat in their quarters in Tobruk, stripped to the waist, and picked crawling things out of the seams of their shirts. They were young men, tanned almost black by the sun. The enemy was dropping desultory shells into the other end of the town, but the officers were so used to it they did not even notice the explosions.

"I was just thinking, Auchterlonie," one of them said, "that perhaps the Americans don't have such a jolly bad idea, at that—about ice in their highballs, I mean. One gets used to the sun and the shooting and the vermin, but I haven't had a cold drink in six months, and I would almost give my commission for one."

The other man tossed his shirt on the cot, and lit a cigarette.

"I imagine Adams might be having one just about now," he said.

"Queer duck, that Adams. What does it mean, I wonder, him getting sent to fight for the heavyweight championship, when we are right in the middle of this business?"

"Propaganda, I imagine," said Auchterlonie. "Hands across the sea, and all that sort of thing."

"Lucky beggar. But I say, did you ever think—"

"Of course, I did. Everyone here has at one time or another. No one knew just what to make of Adams. Didn't quite trust him. I know I didn't. Not that there was anything fishy about him, you know, but . . . Well, it's a frightful thing to say a man might be a spy, but—"

"Exactly my feeling," agreed the junior officer. "Wrong, no doubt, unquestionably wrong. He was always on friendly terms with the brass hats. Still, Tobruk is no pleasure resort at best, and I feel better with him out of it."

An orderly appeared at the door. "The colonel's compliments, sir, and he wants you right h'away. H'antaher reconnaissance, I imagine, sir."

Auchterlonie rose, yawning.

"Adams," he said, "is probably making love to some pretty American girl at this very moment. It would be

nice—but I wouldn't trade places with him."

JIFF" VALLANDIGHAM sat on the edge of the Rooney Plaza pool, kicking her attractive legs until the water frothed about them. Jiff was only her nickname. When a little girl she would always say, "in a jiffy" when ordered to do something, and then ignore the command entirely. So, after a while, everyone called her Jiff.

Miami Beach's sun was dazzling against the blue-green ripple of the pool. Jiff swung her wet legs up on the tile and faced the row of cabanas so the glare would not be in her eyes. This turning movement brought a young man into the orbit of her vision. He was stretched out in a deck chair, but whether he was dozing, or wide awake, Jiff could not tell, because he wore enormous black sunglasses.

He was, she guessed, about six feet two inches tall. His hair was a wavy blond, his chest was deep, and his stomach muscles ridged like an old-fashioned washboard.

Hal Stanley, the *Daily Observer* columnist, was eating lunch under an umbrella three cabanas away. Jiff strolled over and sat down.

"Who's Prince Charming?" she asked.

Stanley speared a bit of pompano, and said:

"Don't you ever look at the front page?"

"Only if it has stuff about me on it. Come on. Give. Who is he?"

"A little observation and deduction, then. His face and arms are tanned. His body isn't. What does that tell you?"

"He doesn't go in swimming."

"Well—yes. There's a white scar on his leg. Can you figure that out?"

Jiff considered the young giant carefully.

"He might have bumped into something in the dark, something hard."

"Darned hard," said Stanley, "machine-gun bullets. That's Phil Adams, the English prizefighter. He fought with Wavell in Africa, and he's here to box Killer Harrison at Borden Stadium."

Miss Vallandigham shrugged her shoulders.

"An English prizefighter!" she exclaimed. "I'll bet he drops his aitches, and eats fish and chips, and finishes each bout on the flat of his back."

"You'd lose. He graduated from Oxford and is an expert in Egyptology. He's the heavyweight champion of England, not the horizontal kind, either, and he won the D.S.O. for gallantry in action."

Jiff considered this seriously as she watched the big man, motionless in his chair. She had left Palm Beach to sing in a Miami night-club because she was bored with the routine of life. She was fed up with the men she knew, too. All they seemed to think of was gambling at Hialeah in the afternoon, and at the Royal Palm, or the Bali, at night. This fellow promised to be different.

"He sounds interesting," said Jiff. "I'd like to meet him."

"Why not?" Stanley turned and called, "Phil, I'd like you to meet Miss Vallandigham."

The big man sat up and took off his glasses. He was much handsomer than he had any right to be without them.

"How j'do," he said. "Didn't I hear you sing at the Palladium Club the other night?"

"You did, if you were there," Jiff answered. "That's where I work. How did you like my singing?"

"Not very much," said Phil Adams. "Your high notes are pretty bad."

Jiff Vallandigham rose, very beautiful, and very angry.

"I hope Killer Harrison knocks your head off," she said.

"So do a lot of other people," said Phil Adams.

**T**HE agent in charge of the local office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation had called his men in for a morning meeting. He leaned back in his chair and chose his words carefully.

"The director phoned me last night," he said, "and told me to keep careful watch on this Englishman, Adams, who is to fight Harrison. He didn't say why—he just said watch. There seems to be something mys-

terious about Adams, though no one is able to put his finger on it. His family connections are perfect. His father, a brigade commander in the British army, was killed in Crete.

"Phil won the heavyweight championship of England five years after graduating from Oxford, and holds a captain's commission in the British army. He has won all sorts of honors in action. It seems the War Office figured he could do more good as a sort of emissary of good will in America than he could by fighting in Africa. That's why he's here."

"Then he doesn't figure to be a Fifth Columnist or spy or saboteur or something?" one of the agents asked.

"It hardly seems likely, with his background."

"Any enemies who might do him harm?"

"No personal ones, I imagine," said the agent in charge. "Adams has never been in the United States before and, so far as the records go, has no enemies. Of course, agents of enemy governments might—"

"Then we haven't any specific thing to look for?"

"No. All the director said was to keep close tabs on Adams. If he had known more, or wanted us to know more, he would have told me. Doran—Bartlett—Hitchcock—you'll divide the days keeping tabs on Phil Adams. I want to know everything he does."

"I can tell you one thing," said Doran. "He met Jiff Vallandigham at the Roney pool this afternoon and told her she was a punk singer. But it all wound up by him promising to go to the Club Palladium to hear her again tonight."

"That's rather queer for a fighter who's training to meet the heavyweight champion of the world, isn't it?" asked the agent in charge.

Doran chuckled.

"That Jiff girl," he said, "could make the Hunchback of Notre Dame think he is Clark Gable. Boy, I hope my shift comes when that Adams guy has dates with her. I'll learn something. . . ."

Jiff saw Phil as he came into the Palladium, because she was watching for him. He was so tall and good looking he couldn't be missed any-

where, and the head waiter gave him a ringside table.

He seemed quiet and just the least bit tense—not frightened, but as though he expected something to happen, and was ready for it.

"Tonight," she said, "I'll show you that I'm not as bad a singer as you thought I was."

Adams fumbled with a packet of matches that lay on the table. His big hands were quite steady.

"Jiff," he said, "you must do something for me—something important, and it has nothing to do with singing."

"What then?"

"Do you see two men at a table directly behind me?"

"Yes," said Jiff. "One of them looks like Gargantua's brother, and the other is thin and needs a shave."

"Exactly," said Phil Adams. "They intend to kill me!"

**J**IFF'S fingers tightened around each other, but she said nothing, and her expression did not change. She was actress enough for that.

"Good girl," said the Englishman. "I'm sorry I said your high notes were bad."

"They are," said Jiff. "But you haven't anything to be bothered about. There is an F. B. I. man at the next table. I know him quite well. His name is Doran. All we have to do—"

Phil's hand rested on hers for a moment. His eyes held an enigmatic look.

"No," he said, "I'll take care of this myself."

The floor show had started. The master of ceremonies was digging up one gag after another that would have made Joe Miller turn over in his grave.

"Look," said the soldier-prize-fighter. "In a minute or two, leave as though you were getting ready for your act. Somehow or other I'll get out of here and meet you at my car parked in the lot behind the club. You'll know it. It's a Rolls-Royce."

Jiff's heart was in her throat. She didn't know what all this meant. The mystery of it wrapped her like a wet cloak. Yet she knew that no matter

what happened she would go to the ends of the earth, or risk death for Phil Adams. There was no sensible reason to explain why she would. It was emotion, not logic. She had just fallen quickly and impossibly in love. He was in desperate trouble and needed her. That was enough.

"Are we going to run away?" she asked.

"Yes," he said. "We're going to run away."

"But, what about your fight with Killer Harrison?"

"To fight Harrison," he said, "I'll have to be alive. There is never any use in crossing a bridge until one comes to it, is there? But, go on now. Hurry."

Jiff rose, smiling. No one would have imagined such a dramatic interlude had come into her life. She was just a pretty girl bidding her partner of the moment *adieu*.

"I'll see you when I'm through," she said in a voice that carried over the low comedy of the master of ceremonies.

The thin man with the bluish beard followed her with his eyes as she walked away. . . .

The waiter called Mushy strolled over to the table where the two killers sat.

"That Adams is going to take it on the lam," he muttered. "Keep your eyes open, because he'll be hightailin' it any second now."

"Okay," said the nervous man. We'll catch up with him before he gets too far."

The waiter fiddled with the glasses on the tray.

"Because you're cuttin' me in on this," he said, "and I'm going to help you, I'd like to know something."

"What?"

"Why are you laying the guy out? He looks pretty regular to me."

"We don't know," said the nervous man. "Personally I never saw Phil Adams in my life till we got orders to put him under the daisies. But that's where he'll be tonight. . . ."

**J**IFF lurked in the entrance behind the bandstand that led to the dressing-rooms, and watched Phil Adams. He seemed perfectly at ease.

There was no nervousness in his manner. He didn't smoke and he didn't drink, but just sat watching the dance team of Marco and Marie cavorting on the floor.

What was this all about, she wondered. Nothing seemed to fit. Phil seemed a soldier and a fighter, but maybe he wasn't either of these. Maybe he wasn't anything he pretended to be. People wanted to kill him.

But what was behind it all did not matter to Jiff, really, because she was madly in love with the big blond fellow. Whatever happened to him, she would share. Of that much she was sure.

The dancers whirled off the floor in a burst of applause. Phil rose and strolled toward the little alcove where the cigarette girl lurked with her wares. Then, with three long steps, he cut to the right where Jiff was waiting, seized her arm, and they ran toward the exit behind the dressing rooms.

The girl caught a glimpse of the two killers rising, and then they were out in the starlit night, with a whisper of a soft wind in the palms.

Adams looked around, seemingly startled for a moment.

"They must have figured this thing out," he whispered. "They have stolen my car. Now we can't get away."

He pulled Jiff back into the shadows cast by the extension of the building.

"Tell me what all this is about, Phil," she whispered. "I don't care what you are. I'm with you, anyway."

She could feel the tenseness of his arm against her.

"Ssh!" he said. "There they come."

A yellow oblong of light was scissored out of the darkness of the walls. Two men came out. They had their right hands in the side pockets of their coats. Jiff felt herself shrinking. The men shut the door hurriedly, and then it was only starlight and mystery again.

There came the faint shuffle of feet on the grass.

"You wait there by the door," one of the men said, "and conk that F.B.I. man on the head. We don't want no Johnny Laws sticking their

noses in our business. Them two ain't got a chance of getting out of this parking lot. There are buildings on three sides, and they've gotta go by the entrance. I sent Mushy out there with a tommy gun. He'll mow 'em down the minute he sees 'em."

Jiff shrank closer to Adams. Their only chance to live lay with Doran. The door opened, and he stepped through. A blackjack crashed on his skull, and he fell face down in the grass!

"Let's get goin'," said the man with the bluish beard.

"You gonna knock off Jiff, too?" his partner asked.

"What do you think?"

"Yeah. It's a pity, though. She could be awful cuddly."

Phil's hand urged Jiff into motion. They slipped down through the cars, edging toward the gate. There was a light before the sentry-box house, where the attendant stayed.

Jiff gasped. Under the light was Mushy, and he held a tommy gun in his hands. Behind them the two killers were closing in!

"There isn't a chance for us," the girl whispered.

The fighter took her in his arms and kissed her.

"No, I'm afraid not," he said. "This is the end."

**H**ETHERINGTON drew a long breath and looked at the slim girl, who was sitting at the Gezira Club's bar, talking with an Australian infantry captain.

"She'd be jolly well surprised if she knew what an idea she has given you," he said. "But, go on with the story. It fascinates me. Our people in Miami Beach were in a horrible predicament when you paused. How did you get them out of it?"

O'Brien lit a cigarette. "Well," he said, "that wasn't so tough—"

Jiff and Phil Adams were behind a car only a few feet from Mushy. Perhaps he heard them move. It might be that he had cat's eyes that see in the dark. Some men do. Anyway, he swung toward them.

"Don't be afraid," he whispered. "Them lugs think I'm with them. I'm



not. Stay where you are. I'll take care of 'em."

He slipped out of the range of light and hid behind another car.

"Don't trust him," Jiff whispered. "He'll kill you."

"Lie down on the grass here," whispered Phil. "If there's a bit of shooting we'll be caught in the cross fire."

They crouched, waiting, their hearts hammering.

Mush's voice sounded cautiously:

"Where are you guys?"

"Here," answered the blue-bearded man. "You got 'em penned?"

"Sure. What are you afraid of? They haven't any roscoes on 'em. Come out into the light."

The men, holding their guns ready, stepped forward. Adams reached up and opened the door of the car beside which they were crouched.

"Get in," he whispered. "I've got an idea."

Jiff slipped in, and Phil Adams followed her. He felt for keys in the ignition, and found them.

"There's no use me stalling any more," Mush said. "I'm an F.B.I. agent, and I've been working in this layout for quite some time. Throw down those rods, and get your hands up. I've got you covered."

The blue-bearded man fired at the sound of the voice. Mush squeezed his trigger, and the blue-bearded man was dead before he hit the ground. The other threw down his automatic, yammering with fear. Mush moved forward to handcuff him.

"Now!" said Adams, stamping on the accelerator.

The motor roared into life, he shifted gears with expert swiftness, and the big car shot through the entrance into the street.

"Hey!" yelled Mush, but he could not turn and fire at the tires without risking an attack from the remaining one of the would-be killers.

As they raced along the darkened streets of Miami Beach, Jiff snuggled close to Phil.

"That was quick work, darling," she said, "but you didn't really have to do it, did you? As it turned out, there wasn't anything to be afraid of from Mush."

"No?" He grinned. "The F.B.I.

can give me more headaches than all the thugs in town."

"But that F.B.I. man who pretended to be a waiter saved our lives."

Adams, hunched over the wheel of the flying car, grinned.

"Mushy isn't an F.B.I. man," he said. "He is one of the killers hired by the Gestapo!"

**T**HEY drove in silence for awhile.

"Where are we going?" Jiff asked then.

"I don't know. I had better keep under cover for a day or so, until I figure what will be the best move to make."

"My house in Palm Beach!" the girl exclaimed. "There isn't a soul there. It would be ideal."

"Why not?"

They sped up the dark ocean drive, only the parking lights glittering in the velvet night. Through Hollywood, Dania, Fort Lauderdale, before Jiff Vallengham spoke again.

"Phil," she said, "as long as I am sharing your danger, don't you think I should know what this is all about?"

"Yes," he said. "I suppose you should. I can't tell you everything, but I can tell you enough to let you see what you are in for." He reached into the glove compartment and brought out a gun, chuckling with pleasure at the feel of the butt against his palm. "I had hoped there would be one."

"Tell me," said Jiff.

Adams relaxed against the seat cushions.

"First of all, I'm not really Phil Adams," he said. "Phil was my twin brother, a much more brilliant person than I. He was with British Intelligence on the staff at Tobruk for a while. But they had a job for him to do in America. It was quite a ticklish one. Apparently they thought it best to send him over in an unofficial capacity—as heavyweight champion of Great Britain, for example."

"We met in Cairo, and he told me all about it." German counter espionage had somehow got wind something was up, and they set the Gestapo on Phil's trail. That very night they killed him. So I became Phil Adams and carried on in his place. I'm still

Phil Adams. Think of me that way."

"But if the pretended F.B.I. man was a Gestapo agent, the two who tried to kill you represented someone else," said Jiff.

The big man nodded.

"Phil was in Spain during the Civil War," he said. "To gain information, he joined the Falangists. They found out about him and—well, death is the unalterable rule in such cases. These men were probably hired to do the job by Falangists, who found out I had taken over Phil's job."

"And the F.B.I.?"

"That I can't tell you at the moment," said Adams. "But I've simply got to keep under cover for the next couple of days."

"What about the fight?" Jeff asked.

"Under other conditions I would go through with it. Not now. It's impossible. I'm sorry I must spoil what might be some good sport, but there is too much at stake. I have no choice."

They drove in silence after that, past Boca Raton, and into West Palm Beach. Jiff Vallandigham indicated the way to her house, a beautiful place set among palms and bougainvillea. The driveway was dark as pitch.

"My place has been closed ever since I've been in Miami Beach," Jiff whispered. "The servants have gone, so this is an ideal hideout."

Adams parked the car and dropped the revolver into his coat pocket. They crossed the lawn and entered the *patio*, where a fountain tinkled in the moonlight. The night was so peaceful that the thought of war and murder and the predicament they were in seemed utterly incredible.

**S**UDDENLY Jiff stood stock-still, and grasped Phil's arm. Her heart was beating like a trip-hammer. She did not speak, but pointed. A light was burning in one of the rooms of a wing that had been hidden from them until they crossed the *patio*!

"Whoever is in there is probably after me," said Phil Adams.

"It might be a burglar, you know."

"That isn't a flashlight. It seems to come from a floor lamp. Didn't you have the electricity turned off when

you moved to Miami Beach?"

Jiff snapped her fingers. "I knew there was something I'd forgotten." She was quite cool. Probably the series of events had inured her to excitement. "There's only one thing to do. That is to go in and see who it is."

They went softly around to a side door, opened it quietly, and entered a dark hall. Since the carpeting was thick underfoot they made no sound. Step by step, they advanced toward the open door from which the light shone.

Phil gripped his pistol tightly, ready for any contingency. Another three feet forward, and they were at the door. Sitting under an ornate floor lamp, reading a magazine was Hal Stanley, the columnist of the *Daily Observer*!

He looked up. "Hello, folks," he said casually. "It took you a long time to get here."

"What does this mean?" Jiff asked in amazement.

"Nothing particularly mysterious," Hal answered. "My paper is interested in the Harrison-Adams fight. They've smelled something strange about it for the past week. Too little training. Too many mysterious errands. So they asked me to check up."

"Well, I had a date with a doll in Fort Lauderdale, but I paid the cigarette girl at the Palladium to phone me if anything happened, since I knew Phil was going there. She told me a couple of guys had chased you and knocked out that F.B.I. man, Doran, when he followed. It seemed to me that with such things going on you'd probably be looking for a hideout, and where could you find a better one than this? So, I beat you to it and came here first."

He reached for the ash-tray and crushed out his cigarette.

"A regular Sherlock Holmes, aren't you?" said Jiff.

Adams brushed by her and jammed the gun into Stanley's midriff.

"Not quite," he said. "Frisk him, Jiff. Don't ask any questions. Hurry."

The girl did as she was told, but found no weapons.

"I—I don't understand," she said weakly.

"I didn't either," said Adams, "until Stanley reached for that ash-tray. See that gold wrist-band he's wearing. That bears the identification disc of the Spanish Falangists. He is in their pay, and he isn't here alone. You can wager on that."

The newspaperman shrugged.

"Check," he agreed. "I was in Spain for one of the news services during the Civil War, and made some pleasant and profitable contacts. My friends tied up with Germany, and I came to Miami to keep a finger on Fifth Column activities in South America, but I was assigned to watch you when you arrived."

"You're a pretty shrewd fellow, Adams, and I figured those bunglers at the Palladium would mess up things somehow or other so I brought my men here. There are five of them outside, and they were quiet as mice when you came in. You haven't any more chance to live through this affair than your brother had in his adventure. My only regret is that Miss Vallandigham must suffer the same fate."

"You're bluffing, Stanley," Phil said grimly. "You're here alone, and you're trying to talk your way out of trouble."

**T**HE columnist's voice was quite gentle when he said:

"No, I'm not. You ought to know I wouldn't try to take you by myself. It is absolutely necessary that you be prevented from accomplishing your mission, and the only way to do that is to kill you—and Jiff, too, because she knows too much."

Phil Adams did not take his eyes from the columnist's face, or move his gun from its close proximity to his enemy's body.

"Since you seem to know so many things," he said, "you might be able to clear up one point that puzzled me all the time I was driving up here. Why did the Gestapo man, who was posing as a waiter at the Palladium, shoot the killers who were after me. According to you, they were Falangists and should have been working together."

"Money, of course—and a little jealousy. There is a hundred-thou-

sand-dollar reward for the man who knocks you off. In addition to doing my duty, I intend to get that dough myself. A hundred grand is an awful lot of sugar."

"Maybe you won't live to spend it."

"Oh, yes, I will. The car you escaped in and the gun you found in the glove compartment were planted for you. The gun, by the way, isn't loaded."

"If you have an idea you could hold me hostage against my men you're wrong."

"Start those men shooting, and you'll have the police here in no time."

"Stop your fooling," said Stanley. "You aren't armed. Why should they shoot. Now your time is up, Phil. Because I'm a sentimentalist I'll give you a minute to kiss Jiff good-by. Then you're going to be as dead as two people ever were in this world!"

Hetherington drew a long breath and put down his glass. The pretty girl at the Gezira Club bar had strolled off with her Australian.

"You certainly worked out a pretty yarn, with practically nothing to start on," he said. "But now you've got your people in a hopeless sort of mess. The house is surrounded by killers, and Phil is unarmed. It looks as though his mission has failed, and he and his girl are practically dead ducks. I mean to say, it just isn't possible to get them out of such a hole, is it?"

"Sure," said O'Brien. "I got them into the jam, and I'll get them out of it. That's what a fellow who writes motion pictures for a living in peace times has to be able to do."

"Well, for heaven's sake go on. How did Phil Adams and Jiff Vallandigham escape?"

O'Brien yawned.

"It was really quite simple. You see, when Phil found out Jiff had forgotten to have the electricity turned off, he knew instantly that she had also forgotten to disconnect the telephone. So he knocked Hal Stanley out with a punch on the jaw and called the police."

"The roughnecks were still waiting

(Concluded on page 97)



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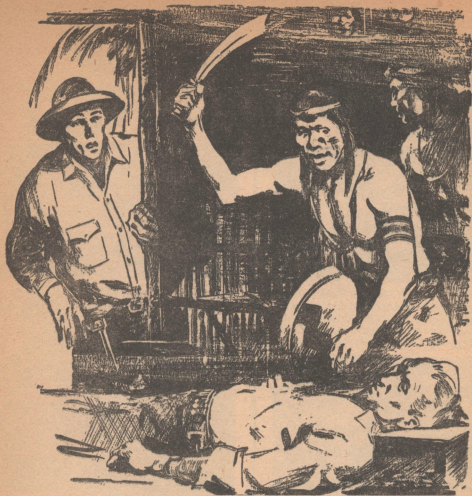
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Scott interrupted the head hunter just in time!

# RIVER OF WRATH

By HENRY KUTTNER

*In the heart of the Ecuadorean jungles, an American  
rescues a kidnaped grandee—and finds his own lost self!*

MEL SCOTT sat bareheaded under the blazing Ecuadorean sun and watched the Aguarica River sliding down in roiling brown tumult. The water didn't look inviting. Still, it would be nice to jump in and go floating past Iquitos,

toward the Amazon and Para. But Scott knew that if he found himself in Para again, he'd still feel the need for solitude that had brought him drifting—flotsam against the current—into the jungle. Somehow, in South America, wreckage always drifts up-

stream, to lose itself in steamy backwaters where gin and warm sunlight are the only realities.

Well, they were pleasant realities. A man didn't have to think and remember. Remember the innumerable reasons why Mel Scott, twenty-eight, American, was a beachcomber and a bum. What difference! When he ran short of money, there were always jobs to be had and, luckily, Scott's hard physique hadn't yet suffered.

So he sat there beside Jaime Gomez, the half-breed guide, and wondered whether Gomez looked more like a snake or a cayman. A combination, maybe. A hybrid.

Gomez scratched his unshaven cheek and reached for the bottle beside them.

"I am glad to meet one here who is *sympatico*," he remarked, rather thickly. "Imagine working for those two—they are tyrants. Weeks and weeks I have been without a drink.

"Senor Carradine tells me that I must not drink. I am always told that. When I have drink, I am happy, but I am no longer a guide. *Por Dios*, I did not want to come up here anyway."

"Why'd you come, then?" Scott asked, recapturing the bottle.

Gomez shrugged heavy shoulders. "Ah, they paid me well. And they are fools. After we go up the Yasuni, I shall take one of the canoes and go down river. I am Jaime Gomez, and I look after Jaime's skin. The Yasuni country is *malo*."

"Straight as a corkscrew, aren't you?" Scott observed, not much interested. "You'd leave those tenderfeet up in the jungle, with that tribe of head-hunters—"

"They no longer are head-hunters. It is just talk. Besides, Senor Carradine knows his way around the forest, and the senorita is a devil-woman. On the boat, I had a bottle of gin. She said, 'Give it to me.' 'No,' I said, and showed her my teeth. Ah-h! She kicked me in the stomach and took the bottle and threw it over the rail. That is not ladylike."

Gomez managed to look injured and villainous at the same time.

"A senorita, eh?" Scott said. "That's no country for a woman."

"It is a country for devils," Gomez agreed. "Still, I am a business man.

I have half my pay, and it is not worth risking my neck to get the other half. So!"

"So you're going to run out. A punk trick, Senor Gomez."

THE half-breed's shallow black eyes narrowed. He glared at Scott. "You are not so *sympatico* as I had thought. Perhaps you intend to tell Senorita Lola of my intentions?"

"Hadn't thought of that," Scott admitted. "Still, I dunno. It's none of my business. What a buzzard you are, Gomez!"

Gomez turned purple. "And you are—" He explained, in wide detail, just what Scott was.

The American's lips hardened. "Let it go at that," he said quietly.

Gomez was unwilling. He launched into a string of insults. Scott stood up and turned away. The half-breed clutched at Scott's leg.

"Run to your kennel, dog," he requested. "Yet—*hola*—not so fast! I have yet more to say."

"You've said about enough," Scott grunted, and kicked out, freeing his leg from the half-breed's grip.

Gomez howled and bounded to his feet. He slapped Scott across the mouth, and instinctively Mel Scott slammed his fist against Gomez' jaw.

The half-breed screamed in fury. He tore out a knife, sharp-bladed and gleaming, and charged, teeth bared. He was dangerous now, and Scott, despite the gin had sense enough to know it.

He jumped to the left, swinging his body around and, as Gomez swerved, Scott brought up his fist in a tremendous uppercut that landed solidly on flesh and bone. The half-breed's knife ripped along Scott's arm—a flesh wound, but a painful one.

Gomez went reeling back to where a ramshackle pier jutted out into the river. He toppled on the edge for a moment, then went over, landing with a solid thump on a heap of stones ten feet below. Instantly he started to scream furious accusations.

"You have killed me, dog of a Yanqui! You shall die for this, if there is justice in the world. Give me my knife so I may slit your throat!"

Scott grinned and picked up the

fallen weapon. Behind him, someone said:

"Put that down!"

He turned. Up the bank was a slim figure in tropical whites, a girl with the creamy, cameo face of Castile. Beside her stood a well-built, handsome man who might have doubled for a movie star. He was gnawing on a briar pipe and rubbing his bronzed jaw doubtfully.

The girl held a revolver—and she knew how to hold it. Scott hesitated as he looked up, suddenly conscious of his grimy, unshaved appearance.

"Drop that knife!" the girl repeated sharply. "You've done enough to Gomez, you—you tramp!"

Scott let the weapon fall into the mud.

"He isn't hurt. Did you see what happened?"

"He wouldn't have drawn the knife on you if you hadn't given him gin in the first place," she said illogically. "Andy, see what happened to Gomez."

Her companion scrambled down to the pier and investigated.

"Broken leg," he said at last. "Simple fracture—but we'll need another guide, Lola."

"I am a poor man!" Gomez burst out. "I cannot afford to lose the money you promised me. You must pay me nevertheless!"

"All right, Gomez," Lola said. "I guess that's fair. But by rights you ought to pay him"—she glared at Scott—"though I'd be surprised if you've got more than a peso in those filthy clothes of yours."

Scott shrugged. "A good guess, senorita. But you're a fool if you pay Gomez any more. He was planning to desert when you got up the Yasuni a bit."

"It is a lie!" Gomez shrieked, and Lola's eyes narrowed scornfully.

"I see. You wouldn't be trying to get the job for yourself, would you?"

"Not with you for boss," Scott said. "Sorry about Gomez, but I did you a good turn, if you only knew it. You can get an honest guide now."

**T**HE man—Carradine, Scott decided—stood biting his lips and squinting up at Lola.

"It won't be easy to find one here,"

he observed. "We're 'way up country."

"We'll find one," she said, with cold fury in her voice, and turned on her heel. "I'll send help down for Gomez. We won't be stopped now that we've come this far!"

Scott grunted. The knife wound in his arm was painful, and, with a glance at Carradine and Gomez, he followed the girl. Not far. At the ramshackle structure that housed Ben Florian, the local trader, he turned in to get iodine and more gin, signing the usual chit.

Despite the appearance of Florian's place, the man himself was comparatively wealthy. Fat and sleepy, he sat in a corner and invited Scott to help himself.

Scott did. After a while the stinging of his arm ceased, and he went out to lie in the shade and gulp gin. He was feeling sleepy and miserable. Sight of the two whites had made him realize somewhat too vividly his own position.

Well, so what!

He drank more gin and went to sleep. . . .

Firelight gleamed in Scott's eyes when he awoke. He groaned, massaging his temples, and then sat bolt upright, staring. Where the devil was he?

Around the fire squatted a dozen natives, blinking silently into the flames. The black shadow of the jungle hemmed in the camp, save to the left, where the river gurgled and rushed. A tropical full moon glared down.

Scott shook his head, which ached, and tried to understand. Attracted by his movement, a figure came to stand above him—Lola. Behind her Carradine appeared, chewing his pipe-bit.

"So you're awake," the girl said. "Here! Drink this!"

She thrust a tin cup into Scott's shaking hand, and he smelled the aroma of strong coffee. As he hesitated, Lola made an impatient gesture.

"Drink it, I said! I want your head clear while we talk."

Silently Scott gulped the scalding liquid. It had been laced with brandy, and he felt better, though trip-hammers were pounding inside his skull.

A little surge of resentment mounted within him.

"Okay," he grunted, getting unsteadily to his feet. "Now spill it. How'd I get here?"

"By canoe."

"You—kidnaped me, eh? Nice going, lady."

"My name," she said, "is Miss Alvarez, or Senorita Alvarez, as you prefer. You signed a contract to act as my guide up the Yasuni."

"Yeah? I signed nothing."

A gleam of malice showed in the dark eyes. "You were not—er—quite yourself, perhaps, but you signed. You see, Senor Scott, we needed a guide. You were recommended, and there were no others. I did not wish to delay, so after you broke Gomez' leg, I felt it would be only just for you to take his place."

"Sorry," Scott said coldly. "If you'll let me have a canoe, I'll go down river in the morning. I'm not a native you can kick around, Senorita Alvarez."

Lola smiled. "We can spare no canoes. And if you go back to the settlement, you will run into trouble. The—*calabozo* there is rather unsanitary."

SCOTT knew that it was a pest-hole, verminous and deadly. But—

"You can't hold me on that contract!" he snapped.

Lola showed him a sheaf of papers.

"See these chits? You signed plenty of IOUs around the settlement, and I bought them up. You owe me—let's see—in American money, about three hundred dollars. If you go back to town, you'll find yourself under arrest. I made sure of that. It wasn't hard to bribe officials."

Scott showed his teeth. "Listen, lady—"

"No, you must listen to me. You will act as our guide, or you will regret it. Very much!"

She turned and went toward the fire. Carradine grinned wryly and offered Scott a cigarette.

"Better not argue with Lola," he advised. "She's used to having her own way. She's been bossing the Alvarez Empire for years."

"Good Lord!" Scott said blankly. "Is she that Alvarez?"

"Si. Have you not heard that her father, Don Enrique, is supposed to be lost in the Ecuadorian jungle?"

Don Enrique Alvarez, the South American grandee, whose vast rubber and mineral empire stretched through the land! Naturally Scott knew of the man, and he had heard of Lola Alvarez, Don Enrique's capable, iron-willed daughter. Months ago, there had been a rumor that the old grandee had been lost somewhere in the finger of Peru that juts between Colombia and Ecuador. But now—

"A native brought Lola news—that Don Enrique had made his way to the upper Yasuni, and was the captive of a tribe there. I do not believe it myself. But Lola was determined to find her father, so—well, she is my fiancée." Carradine shrugged wryly.

Scott stared at the man. He couldn't quite make him out. Especially he couldn't understand why Carradine was talking so frankly, and on equal terms, with a guide. Caste lines were rigidly observed in Ecuador. Still, the younger generation was more free-and-easy than, say, Don Enrique himself would have been.

"It's head-hunters' country up river," Scott said shortly.

"I know. Still—"

Carradine shrugged again, and wandered off as Lola called to him. Left alone, Scott stared around.

He was trapped. If he went down river, granted he could steal a canoe, he would still be faced with the prospect of being clapped into the verminous, fever-breeding jail at the fork. And the settlement was the gateway to the Yasuni, the only entrance and exit. The jungle was an impassable wall in every other direction.

He walked down to the river. The canoes were moored to the bank, but they were empty. Supplies and weapons, Scott discovered, were stacked inside a small tent, guarded by an armed native.

Without a gun, or without food, he could not hope to escape down river without being forced to pause at the settlement. South of the fork was a two-hundred-mile stretch of nothing,



where a traveler had to carry his own supplies, or else shoot *capabari* and small game.

Yes, he was trapped.

Scott flashed a furious glance at the unheeding girl, and went off to get dinner. There was still some left. By the time he had finished, the camp was quiet.

MEL SCOTT rolled up in his blankets, where a surprise awaited him. There was a bottle of gin under him. Someone had concealed the liquor in his makeshift bed.

Who? And why? Questions leaped into Scott's mind. Someone wanted to keep him full of liquor, that was obvious.

The answer to the problem might be interesting. Scott shoved the bottle down beside him and lay silent, considering. If he played along, he might find out. . . .

In the morning he rinsed his mouth out with the gin, poured a good deal of it on the ground, and took care to walk unsteadily when he appeared for breakfast. He saw a glint of concealed satisfaction in Carradine's eyes.

Lola gave him a tongue-lashing, which he took quietly. The party continued up river, and that night Scott found another bottle of gin in his blankets.

Not until a week later did Scott admit to himself why he had stuck with the party. To run out would have put him in a class with the renegade guide, Gomez. Moreover, there was danger up the Yasuni. Not even Lola Alvarez would have dared to venture there alone. With Carradine, she was safer, but Scott didn't trust Carradine.

He knew now that Lola's fiancé was the one who secretly supplied him with gin, which Scott didn't drink, though he pretended to have done so. Carefully, unobtrusively, the American asked questions. The vague answers he got were unsatisfying. Carradine seemed to be playing some subtle, secret game.

Scott had his chance at escape one night, when the sentry over the supply tent fell asleep. He didn't take that chance. Instead, he glanced over

to where Lola Alvarez was sleeping, looking fragile and helpless in the moonlight. A deceptive appearance, he knew. But somehow he could not desert, leaving Lola at the mercy of a man whose motives were definitely suspicious.

He cursed himself for a fool; yet that didn't alter matters. Lola Alvarez despised him for a beachcomber. He dared not tell her that he hadn't touched liquor since his abduction. She trusted Carradine too completely to believe in any accusations against the man.

No, he had to wait. And, perhaps later, he could find out. . . .

On they went, into the unknown. Caymans and huge anaconda slipped through the humid river; monkeys screamed and howled in the green palisades of the forest. The drums beat on endlessly. The porters, peaceful Yumbo Indians, grew more and more fearful, casting terrified glances into the jungle that hemmed them in.

"Tomorrow we come to the edge of the Antipas country," one of them told Scott. Lola overheard.

"The Antipas? They're—"

"Head-hunters," Scott said grimly. "Jivaros. I've been in this neck of the woods before, *senorita*." He glanced at the girl's white face. "They're not too dangerous," he went on, after a pause. "If you can bluff them and keep them bluffed, they'll be good. They worship guns, almost—poisoned arrows are their weapons. But they know what rifles are, and they're scared stiff of 'em. So we'll be safe enough, I figure."

LOLA glanced at him sharply, and Scott realized that he had forgotten to maintain his pose of being full of gin. With a grunt he turned back to watching the smooth green jungle walls sliding past as the Yumbos poled diligently. In the other canoe, Carradine waved encouragingly.

There was hard poling that day, and Scott was exhausted when they made camp that evening. The woods were curiously silent. The distant drumming had died. There was no sign of the Antipas head-hunters.

Nevertheless, after making camp

near the river, the whites pushed on, following a well-marked trail. When it widened into a clearing, Scott paused and pointed to the hut built there.

"That's the fetish-house," he said. "They must have a village farther on."

Carradine grunted. "Nobody's home here, anyway. We'll leave our calling cards."

He put down, within the hut, some of the gifts and trinkets he had carried with him—cheap jewelry as well as keen-bladed *machetes* of gleaming steel, and a few trade-guns, which could be counted on to fall apart after a score of shots. But all this meant wealth to the Jivaros.

Lola scowled. "We'd better go on."

Carradine shook his head. "Dangerous. We've got to move slowly now. Ungucha told me it was wisest to leave gifts first, and let the natives start palavering."

Ungucha was the leader of the Yumbos, a stocky, broad-shouldered fellow with one side of his face an unsightly mass of healed knife scars.

The girl stared into the green depths of the jungle, but finally nodded.

"I suppose you're right."

With a glance around, Carradine turned and led the way back. Scott went last, and his keen ears caught a stir of movement, too near the ground to be monkey or paroquet. But he knew there was no real danger—the Jivaros were too inquisitive to use their blow-guns without finding out all there was to know about the intruders.

Scott slid into plainer view on his belt the revolver that had been given him. The Jivaros knew what guns meant!

That night, hidden in shadows cast by the brilliantly golden full moon, Scott listened to the talk around the fire. Toward the river, the Yumbos were roasting and gorging on capabara, but it was Lola and Carradine who interested Scott just then. The girl was excited, and showed it.

Once or twice she looked toward Scott, but he huddled motionless under a tree, avoiding her eyes. He sensed that the blow-up was due soon, and he had no idea what it might in-

volve. Meanwhile, he was still playing possum. He would learn more that way.

"How long will it be?" he heard her ask.

Carradine lit his pipe before answering. "Before the Antipas come into camp, you mean? I don't know, Lola. I've been talking to Ungucha—he knows their lingo—and according to him, we're due for a visit any time. Tonight, perhaps."

"We may get news of my Father," she asked.

"That's probable. There aren't many of the Antipas on the river, and I think this is one of their biggest villages. Ungucha said it's the sacred one. I should think Don Enrique would be brought here—if he's with the Indians at all."

SCOTT nodded silently. That was true. There were few permanent Antipas villages, since the natives followed the game, and moved with the rainy season.

There was more gin in his blankets that night. Scott sniffed the liquor thoughtfully, then tasted it. The gin sharpness was dulled. Holding the bottle to the light, Scott discovered a slight sediment. Poison?

Not likely. But a drug, perhaps—sleeping powders. There were soporifics in the medical kit. Scott grinned tightly and went to sleep. Later, he would dispose of the gin, but not by drinking it!

The next morning Scott stayed in his blankets, pretending sleep. Through slitted eyelids he saw Lola and Carradine watching him, and detected a look of satisfaction on the man's face. Lola looked tense and tired. The strain of waiting was telling on her.

At sundown an Antipas native came out of the jungle and approached the fire. Scott rolled over so that he could watch. Ungucha, the Yumbo, was summoned, and went to meet the Indian. After a brief palaver, Ungucha beckoned.

Lola and Carradine joined the group. The Yumbos watched, furtive fear in their appearance. Scott could not, at the distance, hear what was being said, but presently Ungucha

went to a tent with Lola and brought out trade goods.

The Antipas, a short, stocky man with a coil of glossy black hair atop his head, and filed, blackened teeth, nodded approvingly. There was more conversation, and then the native, bearing his booty, slipped back into the jungle and was gone.

Scott waited. He listened. And, an hour or so later, the head-hunter reappeared. Carradine jumped up, made a restraining gesture toward the girl, and joined the Indian at the forest's edge.

He waved, followed the Antipas into the moonlit darkness and, after a few moments, reappeared, carrying a woven bag. There was hesitancy in his manner.

Lola ran to meet him. She was apparently insisting on something. Carradine shook his head. The girl snatched the bag, withdrew a round object the size of an orange—and gave a choking gasp. Carradine caught her as she fell.

Scott emerged from his blankets. He took pains to walk unsteadily as he went toward the couple. Carradine turned up a surprised face.

"Oh, Scott. Get some ammonia."

Lola stirred, her long lashes fluttering. Her eyes sprang open.

"Father!" she said, in her own tongue. "His—his head!"

Scott picked up the round object—the shrunken head of a white man. The features were perfectly preserved and the thing still had a grayish Van Dyke, as well as a little scar on one cheek. Scott had seen newspaper photographs of Don Enrique, and immediately saw the resemblance.

He turned the head in his hands. The incision from the crown to the base of the skull was scarcely noticeable, and the lifelike expression of the face was startling. Scott frowned. Some elusive memory was ringing a note of warning in his mind.

"Get some ammonia!" Carradine repeated sharply. "Did you hear me?"

"Sure," Scott said.

He put down the head and went to a tent. The memory was clear in his mind now, and so was much else that had been puzzling him for days. The mystery of the gin, for instance.

For the first time in many months

he had something urgent to do. At least one life depended on the speed with which he did it. He left the tent by sliding under the canvas at the back, and made for the shadows at the jungle's edge, moving fast. Some distance away Ungucha was standing, a bronze statue in the moonlight, but the native apparently did not notice him.

Scott found the trail by which the Antipas had emerged and followed it, one hand on his revolver. Moonlight filtered down wanly from the tangle of *liana* and leaves overhead. Presently it showed the outlines of the temple hut.

Beyond it Scott moved more warily. Once he paused to lift a green leaf from the trail. Under it several sharp-pointed thorns, smeared with a greenish paste, were visible. And once he detoured to avoid a branch that had been tied back.

A HOWLER monkey screamed in the distance. Scott took his gun out of its holster. The trail turned sharply and ended in a clearing where a dozen crude huts stood.

Scott made no attempt at concealment. He walked straight for the largest. Eyes watched, he knew, and his back crawled with the expectation of a poisoned arrow. But the Antipas feared firearms. And Scott was bluffing. It was madness for a single white man to enter a Jivaro village, unless he had plenty of support. Knowing that, the Indians would believe that the rest of the party was following Scott.

He dared not seem to hurry, though he knew that every second was precious now. The largest hut loomed up before him, the fetish-hut where a captive white man would be kept. He pushed aside the reed curtain and blinked into the smoky torchlight inside. Grinning heads stared at him from the walls; pots of *giamanchi* sent out their alcoholic odor.

Two figures in the center of the hut made a dramatic tableau as Scott entered. A crouching Antipas with *machete* lifted over a prone victim on a pallet, looked up with a scowl. It was the same scarred and hideous native who had visited the river camp a short while ago, and Scott saw that he had



followed the Indian none too soon. For the man's intention was obvious. Scott had interrupted him just in time to prevent another head from joining the temple's collection.

The man on the pallet was Don Enrique Alvarez, unconscious, his gray Van Dyke pointed at the smoky ceiling. He had been drugged, perhaps with the stupefying *giamanchi*.

The Antipas snarled a furious syllable and threw his *machete* with vicious accuracy. Scott hurled himself aside, firing from the hip. The sharp blade cut his shoulder as it whizzed past. But the bullet had missed too. It struck a shrunken head, smashing it.

The Antipas had seized a long tube and had it at his lips. Still off balance, Scott fired again. The native screamed and crashed back against the make-shift wall, collapsing amid a rain of heads, his eye obliterated by the well-aimed bullet. The blow-gun clattered down.

Scott felt sweat dripping clammy down his face. Death had been close, and was still pacing at his heels.

Hastily he stooped, threw Don Enrique's limp body across his shoulders, and turned. There was a sudden movement at the door. Scott plunged through, his gun ready, but there was only a shadow fleeing across the clearing and vanishing into a hut.

**A** FIRE was smoldering not far away. Scott detoured close to it, and dug out a handful of cartridges. He tossed these into the embers, then raced toward the jungle. At a movement behind him he fired back, and the explosion was deafening in the heavy, hot silence.

The Antipas, he saw, were gathering. They were still hesitant, but they were coming toward him, armed with blow-guns and *machetes*.

Then the fire exploded in a staccato rattle of overheated cartridges.

There was confusion among the Indians, caught apparently between two fires. They broke and scattered, and Scott took advantage of the respite to plunge into the shielding gloom of the jungle. Breathing hard, handicapped by his burden, he raced along the path, his eyes alert for signs of

poisoned-thorn traps. They would, he knew, be somewhere about, placed there as protection from hostile night-prowlers from other tribes.

Something dark and shapeless rose up at his feet, steel gleaming. Instinctively Scott leaped high, trying to avoid the attackers. But, carrying Don Enrique across his shoulders as he was, that was impossible. He felt a searing pain lash up his arm, and then the three were in a tangled, writhing knot on the trail. The gun flew from Scott's hand and vanished into the jungle darkness.

As the *machete* darted forward, Scott seized it by the blade, twisting savagely. The pain was sickening. But he held on grimly, yanking the native toward him. At the last moment the man tried to get free, but he was too late. Scott's arm crooked about his neck. There was an instant of silent, desperate struggle, and then the Indian went limp as his spine snapped audibly.

A ray of filtered moonlight fell across the contorted face. This was no Antipas head-hunter. It was Ungucha, the Yumbo!

Simultaneously with the recognition, a bullet thudded into a tree, uncomfortably close. Scott scooped up Don Enrique's body and beat a hasty retreat. At a fallen log he paused to glance around. It was a poor hiding-place, but the best available.

Another shot cracked as he dropped Don Enrique behind the log and crouched at his side. From this point he could see back along the trail. Standing over the dead Ungucha was the tall figure of Carradine. He moved aside and was lost in the shadow.

"Listen, Carradine!" Scott called. "The Antipas are following me. If we don't get back to camp pronto, it'll be just too bad."

Carradine laughed harshly. "So you weren't taking that gin I hid in your blankets, eh? You're smart—too smart."

Scott chewed his lip. The longer they delayed here, the less chance there would be. If only he had a weapon—

Carradine was moving softly in the underbrush.



"Lucky Ungucha saw you slipping out of camp," he called. "That gave me a chance to make sure you wouldn't get back. What tipped you off, anyway?"

"The head," Scott said. "That wasn't a Jivaro head. They sew up the slit with coarse fiber. The fakes they make in Panama are sewed with fine thread. You can't see the incision unless you look for it."

**T**HERE was a low laugh.

"I see. Well, I had that head specially made to resemble Don Enrique. The Panama man knows his business."

Scott grunted. "Too bad for you that Lola insisted on coming up here to find her father. You wanted to marry her and get her dough, eh? Only—what was the catch? Did Don Enrique object?"

"Very much. He threatened to disinherit Lola if she married me. Lola didn't care—"

"But you did," Scott finished.

The rustling in the underbrush was growing louder. Only this time it was behind Scott. The Antipas were closing in.

"So you brought this head up with you and pretended you got it from that Jivaro priest, eh?" Scott said. "It was legal proof of Don Enrique's death. And you paid the native to kill Lola's father. I suppose I was given that drugged gin so I wouldn't see too much."

"Yes," Carradine said. "And now I will kill you both—you and Don Enrique. It isn't far back to camp. The Jivaros won't attack me. I have two guns, and plenty of ammunition."

Scott shifted his position uneasily. "You can't—" He broke off, his lips tightening. When he resumed, his voice was sharp with strain. "Carradine! I lost my gun when Ungucha tackled me. You can't murder us in cold blood!"

"I thought I saw your gun knocked out of your hand, but I wasn't sure," Carradine said. "Now"—he chuckled—"I can finish quickly."

He stepped out into the trail, in clear view. After a moment of tense expectancy, he moved forward, revolver in hand.

Scott's gaze went probing along the narrow trail. With a little grunt he sprang up and began to race back toward the Antipas village. Behind him, Carradine shouted. A bullet clipped leaves above Scott.

Carradine's feet pounded on hard-packed dirt as he sprang in pursuit. Scott leaped aside and turned in time to see a quick, flashing movement—a limber branch that whipped back and struck Carradine across the face.

In the filtered moonlight, blood showed on the white killer's cheek. He took a few more steps, halted, and shook his head.

Scott slipped back into darkness.

"That was an Antipas death-trap, Carradine," he said quietly. "The poison works pretty fast."

Carradine didn't answer. He stood swaying. Abruptly his face was contorted with agony.

But it was fear, not pain, for the incredibly swift-acting Jivaro poison is painless. For perhaps a minute Carradine was motionless, his eyes glassy and bulging. Then, quietly, he slipped down and lay in a still huddle upon the trail.

Before his body had stopped moving, Scott raced to Carradine's side. His hand found no heartbeat. The Jivaro poison works fast.

Scott snatched up Carradine's guns and fled back to Don Enrique, who still lay behind the deadfall. Shouldering the limp, emaciated form, he sent bullets crashing into the underbrush. Someone cried out sharply, and there were soft, hurried movements. The Antipas were retreating.

**S**COTT plodded along the trail, heart pounding, anticipating anything. But the Jivaros were wary of firearms. Also, there was something else to occupy their attention.

Scott blundered into the clearing at last, carrying his burden awkwardly. Lola sprang to her feet, her black eyes opening enormously with amazed disbelief as she recognized the limp figure he carried. Beyond her, the Yumbo porters burst into shrill gabblings.

The girl ran forward unsteadily.

"Padre!" she faltered, and touched the sleeve on the limp arm with timid

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fingers as if unable to believe what she saw. "But I thought—"

"Yeah," said Scott tonelessly, "Don Enrique's okay—just drugged. We're getting out of here, quick, before the Antipas attack. Now get your stuff. We can't wait to take the tents."

The girl did not seem to hear him.

"Padre!" she murmured again, and then, lifting a bewildered stare to Scott's face, "but where is—"

"Carradine?" His lips tightened as he looked down into her shocked face, white as cream, the dark eyes enormous. "He's dead," he told her with deliberate brutality, knowing that this time he must be cruel to be kind.

As he had hoped, the piling of shock upon shock proved too much for her. She stared up an instant longer, seeing the truth in his eyes, then slipped to the ground.

Scott grunted and put down Don Enrique beside her. Then he whirled to the knot of Yumbos by the fire and his voice ripped out staccato commands. They recognized the note of urgency, hesitated a moment, then leaped to obey.

Canoes were hastily pushed into the

river. The Yumbos scurried about, hurriedly loading equipment. Scott detailed a few of them to stand guard with their rifles.

But there would be time, he knew. The Jivaros were—delayed. A hasty glance behind him as he had fled along the trail told him that. He had seen the Antipas clustering about the bodies of Ungucha and Carradine, and had seen the flash of a *machete* in the moonlight.

To the Jivaros, the head of a white man was a valuable prize.

Scott shivered. The canoes were ready. He turned toward the river that would take them back to civilization. By the time Lola regained consciousness they would be safe.

And this time, he thought, he would not halt at the Aguarica's mouth. Somehow, he didn't feel like a beach-comber now. He would take Lola and her father back to Para, and then—then . . .

Well—Scott shrugged—anything might happen.

He stepped into the waiting canoe. In the jungle, muffled drums were beating once more.

# THE GLOBE TROTTER

(Continued from page 11)

On the port side of the ship we could see remains of the great Roman aqueduct which originally carried water fifty miles from the Mount Huthna to old Carthage. The arches still stand. They reminded me of a great temple after attack by bombers. Later on, while in Tunis, we journeyed up to the end of the viaduct in the mountains, and spent a pleasant afternoon picnicking in the shadows of the huge Water Temple on the slopes of Zaghwah.

Perhaps the most astonishing feature of this water-works is the fact that the same spring which supplied water to the Romans two thousand years ago, is still flowing into a new, modern conduit. Today it carries fresh water to the more modern cities and villages in the neighborhood.

The city of Tunis contains hundreds of interesting sights. In reality Tunis is two cities. Like most African port communities, Europeans who erected the piers and warehouses have left the colorful native town undisturbed, and have built a modern town nearby for themselves.

The old native town is a picturesque collection of flat-roofed, sun-baked buildings, running up the sides of two hill ranges, the Bir-Kassa and the Ras-Tabia. The newer city occupies the ground on the level plain leading to the lake itself. As one comes up the lake, the first dwellings to be seen are those of the new European section. Generally these are a disappointment to travelers who expect a vista of mosques, minarets, burnoosed natives and veiled women.

Streets in the European town remind one of a new suburban development, with neatly squared blocks, carefully paved avenues, and tree-lined parkways. The old mysticism of the Near East is lost. Travelers can see much the same thing while walking down the Champs-Elysees in Paris, or along the Routeden-Roi or Rotten Row in London.

## *Native Town Is Interesting*

But the native town is another matter. I am glad I saw it. My wine-buyer was heading south to the vineyard districts outside of Tunis and near Gromballia and Suk-el-Arba. I had seen enough grapes in Italy, and was anxious to get much more intriguing local color onto my camera plates and into my notebook.

I paid a courtesy call to the American consulate, and was greeted pleasantly. One of the young fellows, newly arrived in Tunis, was almost as hepped up about the prospect of a visit to the old city as I was. He proved to be a good companion.

Since the European city was a modern one, we decided to use modern means of transportation to get out of it. A taxi was handy, and while it was a vintage that has probably been turned into scrap long ago, it did manage to run us out the Avenue de France to the great French Gate, or La Porte de France.

Along both sides of this boulevard there were any number of interesting spots to be seen. My friend pointed out a beautiful

building inside a large expanse of gardens that might well have been an African Versailles.

"This is the Residency," my companion remarked. "We've made arrangements for a visit there late this afternoon."

## *Residency Is Magnificent*

The Residency is the home of the French Resident or Governor, or was at the time France was still exercising suzerainty over the Protectorate of Tunis. Facing the Avenue de France, which also answers to two other names, Avenue de la Marine and Avenue Jules-Ferry, we also had opportunity to study the Cathedral, the Casino Theatre, and the many hotels and cafés which give Tunis an authentic French touch. There is not much difference between sidewalk canopies and tables on the corner of Avenue Jules-Ferry and Avenue de Carthage, and those on the Boulevard Haussmann under the shadow of the Paris Opera House.

But at the French Gate. *Voila!* There was the entrance to a new world. It reminded me of the helmet of Janus. Looking in one direction, toward the port city of Tunis, we had the present and the future. Looking toward the old Mohammedan city we had the contented, slow-moving past.

Here at the Gate it is possible to take a tram car which will run you around the old city, but we felt as though a baboushka and felt slippers would be more in keeping, as well as a black, yellow, or red-striped robe. Old Tunis was one place to explore on foot, and at leisurely pace.

## *Mosque Presents Dangers*

The native town has three separate sections, and each one provided us with its own type of interest. Our destination was the Djama-Zitouna, or the Mosque of the Olive Tree. This is situated in the center of the native section of the city, which is known as the Medina. Naturally only Mohammedans are permitted in the Mosque, and not feeling inclined to start an international incident which might have been settled with an Arab knife before the American Consulate got wind of the activity, we were glad to study the Zitouna from the outside.

"Where are the *suks*?" I asked my companion.

"Around in back of the mosque," he replied.

Most of you adventure-story readers have heard of Oriental bazaars and market places, but I think the *suks* of Tunis are unique in this respect. This is one section you may be sure will not be changed by the invasion of modern means of transportation, or improved methods of building. The *suks* have undergone little change since the days of the Hafside dynasty back in the thirteen- and fourteen-hundreds.

The *suks* consist of a number of narrow, winding streets. They are cobbled underfoot, or merely hard, sun-dried mud. Overhead loom arches which may be finely carved, or



merely rough wooden planks. The passages through the *suks* are so narrow even a mule with a couple of panniers might well provide a serious traffic hazard. For this reason, the usual means of locomotion is shank's mare.

### Guild System In Tunis

The little shops in the *suks* area are operated on an Oriental version of the guild system, which has passed through nearly six hundred years without change. If a man happens to be a leather-worker, he works in a shop that has housed leather-workers for six centuries; the weavers, grocers, metal-workers, all have their own special quarters in the *suks*.

The afternoon passed rapidly in wandering through these queer surroundings. At last we turned our steps back through the Bab-Souika where descendants of the early Semitic settlers still hold forth. There are about 25,000 of them still in this section.

But we were due back at the Residency for the meeting with the Resident-General and again the demands of custom and courtesy tightened their hold upon us. We had to turn our backs upon the ease, dignity and solemnity of the Past, to swing into the quickened pace of the Present.

Nevertheless my companion and myself planned other visits to the native section. We wanted to see the Kasba and Mahrez mosques, and meet the colorful natives of Tunis.

Times have changed, but I still feel the chief alterations after the war will take place in the modern city. To my mind, the Zitouna, the Kasba, the Mahrez and other mosques, and the *suks* sheltered in their shadow, will continue along their easy-going path long after armored divisions and roar-

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ing airplanes have returned to peaceful pursuits.

But now let us bring our Magic Carpet down in the familiar surroundings of our editorial office, and turn to other matters at hand.

**A Few Words from Our Authors**

First of all, let us hear what our authors have to say about their stories in the current issue. They have turned out a really wonderful job, this time, on their long stories. In them they develop characters you'll want to meet, situations that will thrill you, and strange places and strange perils. Letters of how the authors did it, therefore, are bound to be interesting.

E. Hoffmann Price, our first author, tells his story behind the story of **CAIRO TANK TROUBLE**, as follows.

Dear Globe Trotter:

Judging from the direction Rommel began moving, not long after I sent you **CAIRO TANK TROUBLE**, Mike Rayne's overtime and his worrying about the repair department behind the lines got results. Now that matters are looking up in Africa once more, I am beginning to wonder whether I am a prophet or an optimist. I wrote that year when Rommel and a lot of others expected a week-end in Cairo, a la Nazi.

Since sending in my manuscript, the big doings in Africa should answer the question people used to ask: "Why in hell don't the British fight?" I don't hear that query any more.

To fight, one has to have weapons. And after plenty of applause for Montgomery and his Eighth Army, we get back to our hero, Mike Rayne, who represents the boys tuning up and repairing the weapons.

More than that, Rayne is a type of American who receives little notice in fiction. We have a good many citizens, native born or naturalized, of Syrian, Turkish, Armenian, Egyptian ancestry. I know quite a few of them. While they do not request any ballyhoo, they are entitled to some.

Aside from the younger generation, doing their stuff in the old-timers are seeing an expression of some of us whose folks came to this country a century or two ago. The local Armenians, for instance, are digging into their jeans, and digging deep for the U. S. O. and similar voluntary efforts.

Perhaps, being comparative newcomers, they appreciate this country a lot more than those who have been here long enough to take things for granted. Hence our hero from the Near East, instead of the customary "typical" American.

Mike Rayne is, of course, an imaginary character. But I borrowed the name, Mikhail Matar, from a fellow who used to give me Arabic lessons. Mikhail—"Mike"—is not, by any means, an Irish specialty or monopoly.

The hard liquors, *arrak* and *mostika*, which are mentioned in the yarn, are not a treat to the average citizen. On the other hand, they are tasty enough when one gets used to them. And they're really good with *hors d'oeuvres*—better than cocktails, if you ask me.

My story does not imply there is, or was, a fifth column in Egypt. Neither should one conclude that every pansy is a scoundrel, though a good many of them were adventurers from Albania, who came to Egypt to rule and plunder the land.

Egypt for centuries was part of the former Turkish Empire. Then, a little over a century ago, one of the viceroys made himself semi-independent, giving the Sultan a sort of courtesy allegiance, and paying a token tribute. This first step toward independence was taken by Mehmet Ali, who started out in Albania as a cigarette vendor. Dissatisfied with the tobacco business, he joined the Turkish Army, and finally became the first khedive. The present king is a descendant of Mehmet Ali. How is that for a success story?

Napoleon invaded Egypt, setting up a strong French influence. That led to British intervention. And in spite of the cry, "Egypt for the Egyptians," the British have, I believe, done far more good for the country than otherwise. The day of the plundering and looting pasha is long past. As a matter of fact, foreigners have for centuries ruled Egypt: Arabs, Turks, Albanians.

Anti-British sentiment seemed to arise from differences in religion, and the inevitable difference in customs. Thus, while usually an oppressor, the imported

pasha was also a true believer; whereas the British, being infidels, were inevitably wrong, no matter what they did! No one gave them credit for checking the extortions of the pashas, and getting the country somewhat out of debt.

In recent years, both Hitler and Mussolini have tried to muscle in; they've made lavish promises to King Farouk (and all other Moslem rulers) setting themselves up as "protectors of Islam." There is no doubt that the young king faced a confusing problem. There is also no doubt that many an Egyptian honestly believed Axis intervention would push the British out of the picture and bring a new day to Egypt. After a glance at what the Axis has done in other countries, you can bet that ousting the British would have brought a new deal to Egypt—yeah, but what kind of deal?

Pardon the historical and political note; but I want to clarify the status of our villain, Daoud Pasha. While misguided and actually working against the best interests of his country, he certainly was not a traitor to Egypt. Though if his schemes had succeeded, and Kommel had barged into Cairo, the pasha would quickly have learned that he had backed the wrong horse.

A final word about our hero: without repair shops working overtime behind the lines, a mechanized army couldn't carry on for a week. The boys who make the tanks—the boys who repair them—the crews that drive them into action—they're a team, not individual groups. Now let's fill 'em up, and drink another one to General Montgomery and the VIII Army—AND THAT'S A TEAM, huh?

Best wishes, Globe Trotter; and if you wonder at the Redwood City date-line, let me remind you you're conserving tires out here. Yours sincerely,

E. Hoffmann Price.

Thanks for the introduction to Mike Rayne, Mr. Price, and we'll also drink a toast to Eisenhower and Le Clerc and the boys with them. Our next letter from author Ralph Oppenheim, refers chiefly to a soldier named Joe. We've already heard a lot about this particular Joe, but we expect to hear a good many more nice things about him in the months to come. Now, Ralph Oppenheim, tell us about it:

Dear Globe Trotter:

My story, TOO OLD FOR COMBAT, derives partly from a flying pal who knew what it was like to have an engine conk over a treacherous jungle; but it derives, in particular, from a true story about a Yank soldier named Joe.

Joe—another soldier who knows him told me—looks as if he's made of leather and steel, with a strength and agility that puts younger men to shame. He is fifty-nine. Too old for combat? If any person nursed that suspicion, they were made figuratively to eat it because of an epic of heroism that lasted twenty days.

Together with a hundred-odd companions, Joe was among those who were suddenly trapped by the fall of Burma. Logic dictated that they surrender, for the only escape from the Japs would be through uncharted jungle land—140 miles of it between the trapped men and the frontiers of India.

For Joe there was no alternative. He argued, coaxed, and commanded his companions into this seemingly impossible trek. Because they knew him, they went with him trustingly. For twenty days, Joe led the way—across swamps, through crocodile-infested rivers through twisted jungle growth alive with danger, both of wild animals and Japs. The men, all of them younger than Joe, often broke down; their blistered feet rebelled, their bodies cried for rest. Joe tended them; he was at once their guide, their doctor, their leader. And where they tired, he seemed indefatigable, never complaining, never himself resting, for in all rest periods he had to aid the exhausted, soothe harassed nerves.

And thanks to Joe, they made it! They emerged—on the twentieth day—from the jungle to the Indian frontier town of Imphal. They were safe, and Joe was safe from anyone dreaming that he might be too old for combat.

This is the fact behind my story—and though the yarn concerns a flyer instead of a foot soldier, it shows that a man who can coolly stand up to the perils of the jungle can certainly "take" anything the treacherous Japs can dish out.

As I said, I learned about Joe first-hand. But I'm sure you've heard of him if you read the newspaper

[Turn page]

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headlines or listen to the radio. His name really is Joe. His friends call him "Uncle Joe."

He is General Joseph Stillwell, who led his staff of American and Chinese officers out of Burma in that memorable jungle trek last May.

Yours,

Ralph Oppenheim.

You're entirely right about the fellows who won't admit they're "Too Old for Combat," Mr. Oppenheim. And we're just as proud of the old-timers like Joseph Stillwell as we are about the youngsters who are coming up through the ranks. That's one nice thing about our Democracy.

## Our Readers Speak

There is quite a bit of variety in the mail bag this month, and we're glad to see that it includes not only letters from the members of our Armed Forces who are enjoying THRILLING ADVENTURES, but also from the Merchant Seamen who are such an important part of the transportation scheme where our soldiers and supplies are concerned.

Our first letter comes from Private Jesse L. Brown, who's down in Florida where the balmy Gulf Stream breezes blow.

Dear Globe Trotter:

I wish to be enrolled in your Globe Trotter Club. Please send me a membership card. I have traveled quite a bit.

Pvt. Jesse L. Brown.

Venice, Florida.

Thanks for your note, Private Brown. We gladly welcome you to our club!

Our next letter takes us from the strands of Florida to the five boroughs of New York City. It is from one of the gentler sex.

Dear Globe Trotter:

I've heard so much about your club and the lovely letters people have been receiving as a result of membership, that I can hardly deprive myself of the privilege of joining.

I am 5 ft. 4 in., brown eyes, black hair and 17 years old.

I'd be glad to tell those who are interested all about the places I've seen along the Eastern Coast of the United States.

Please mail me my membership card, as soon as possible, so that I can proudly call myself a member.

Claire Abolofa.

1561 Fulton Ave., Bronx, New York.

Glad to have you as a member of the Globe Trotters Club, Miss Abolofa, and here's hop-

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ing you make many friends among the members. Our spotlight next moves up to New England, as we pick up a letter from Joseph Thibodeau. Joe has done quite a bit in the way of rubbing elbows with the great outdoors, but let him tell you about it.

Dear Globe Trotter:

Just a few lines to let you know that I received my membership card in your wonderful club.

I would like you to, get me fellow members who I could write to. Doesn't make any difference if it's boy or girl. I would like somebody about 18 or 19 years of age.

In all my travel in this country and Canada I've fished and hunted extensively.

I would like to hear from somebody who likes the outdoor life.

I'm somewhat of a mixture of a hunter and fisherman, archer and wood-carver, pipe collector, adventure novel reader. Would like somebody with the same taste.

Joseph Thibodeau.

245 Baker St., Gardner, Mass.

You ought to find a good many hunters and fishermen among our Globe Trotter members, Joe. Right now, however, I guess the best of them are hunting for Nazis and fishing for Japs.

Our old friend Jay B. Le Compte is back with several comments on his favorite stories in the November issue of **THRILLING ADVENTURES**. His opinions are always novel, and on the literary side, so we are glad to pass them along.

Dear Globe Trotter:

I promised to give you my opinion on two or three stories in the November issue, and I have made several attempts to sharpen my shamsir sufficiently. Failing in that, I put the opinion in parable form, as a real Persian story-teller would do.

PERSIAN DAZE.

"Subhan Allah," said Old Shaykh Ibrahim as we handed him the Rand McNallys. "Goodness gracious! Now I may be able to find out what those fellows

[Turn page]

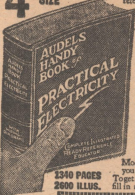
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mean in 'Guns for the Soviet' and 'Yellow Pestilence.' "Of course, Palmer's dictionary will keep me from knocking the tar out of Bandar Shahpur and other Persian names. Perhaps these maps will enable me to locate that mythical African railroad."

### NORWAY KNIGHTS.

"Faun brenne dig!" screamed the Valkyrie. "The Devil scorch ye! I am no houri and I am in no hurry. I can wait a while before putting the finger on a new bridegroom. I want to look around and find a right guy. That fellow Hawk the Mild looks fairly good, but I think I'd prefer a baresark with a little more pep, like Harek."

So there you have it. These words are spelled after the fashion of the countries concerned.

Yours very truly,

Jay B. LeCompte.

2587 Antoinette Avenue, Detroit, Mich.

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Thanks a lot for the kind words, Jay. We're glad to have them. Now, before we close up the mail bag, there's a request from a member of our Merchant Marine, and we are more than glad to give this worthy activity the attention it so well deserves. One of the main purposes of our Globe Trotters Club is to prevent our members from being lonesome when they are in strange ports. Here is a little tip to Merchant Mariners from one of your fellows. Speak up, George Kastl.

Dear Globe Trotter:

I am a Merchant Seaman and I have read THRILLING ADVENTURES ever since I was 14 years old, and I have enjoyed it very much.

The article I have sent you was written because I did not like the way Merchant Seamen were treated when they tried to get into the U. S. O. Canteen, at Forty-fourth Street. They wouldn't even let them in if they wore uniforms.

This was written so that the Merchant Seamen who read your magazine may know where to go to enjoy



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The fact that you are interested in joining the club is evidence of your loyalty to **THRILLING ADVENTURES**, and to the ideals of the organization. We hope that you will continue this interest in our magazine, and we will be glad to see your letters and comments for inclusion in the *Globe Trotter* Department.

## OUR NEXT ISSUE

For our next group of features in **THRILLING ADVENTURES**, we have lined up something we believe is just the sort of thing our readers like. With the United Nations swinging to the offensive all over the world, we are all waiting for the day when the British Army will again be in the Malay States, moving down on Singapore.

Charles Stoddard, author of the Thunder Jim Wade stories and other featured material appearing in **THRILLING ADVENTURES** in the past, has taken this Malay background, and the incidents surrounding the fall of Singapore as the background for his new novelet, "Wings Over Penang."

It is one of the most unusual war-background stories we have seen in a long time, and we think you're going to like Blackjack Smith, the Yankee ace on the way to China to join the Flying Tigers. Before getting there, he finds plenty to do right in the Straits Settlements. He goes up against a tricky Jap Fifth Column set-up, and he manages to punch his way out of trouble in a truly American manner.

The *Globe Trotter*,  
**THRILLING ADVENTURES**,  
10 East 40th Street,  
New York City.

I wish to be enrolled as a member of the *Globe Trotters' Club*. I am interested in adventure and will endeavor to answer all questions asked me by other members, regarding the places with which I am familiar.

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You're going to like "Wings Over Penang," featured novelet in the next issue of **THRILLING ADVENTURES**.

As a companion feature, we have another one of your old favorite authors. He is another fellow who knows his war and his action characters. It is none other than Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson. Major Wheeler-Nicholson calls his story, "Ruler of Many." This is a story that moves a few hundred miles east of Singapore for its locale, and presents the fascinating story of Lieutenant Barry Gordon, the commander of an Army engineering unit which has been put ashore in one of the island groups of the Southwest Pacific to build an advanced air-field.

The Germans have some ideas of their own about how the native population in this area ought to be handled, and one of their agents is behind a good deal of the skulduggery that interferes with Lieutenant Gordon's progress. You will be thrilled by the way in which the American engineers come through in next month's co-featured novelet, "Ruler of Many" by Major Wheeler-Nicholson.

That about closes the diary for this month, except that we want to again remind you that we like to have your messages, whether they come in letter form, or on a post card. Address them to The Editor, **THRILLING ADVENTURES**, 10 East Fortieth Street, New York, N. Y. Tell us what you think about our featured stories, and the other short stories and articles in each issue. And in the meantime, don't forget we have a war to win. Do your part with regular purchases of War Bonds and Stamps.

—THE GLOBE TROTTER.

## HOW TO WRITE A MOVIE

(Concluded from page 76)

when the John Laws descended on them. Then Phil and Jiff went into a clinch in a close-up, while the musical background swelled to a crescendo. You see, it isn't so hard to write a motion picture even when you only start with the germ of an idea!"

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Hetherington rose to his feet. "It sounds pretty easy. Now, there's a nice little blond girl over there. Maybe I can work out a story around her!"

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Correspondence                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Illustrating | <input type="checkbox"/> Good English         | <input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Management                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Cost Accounting         | <input type="checkbox"/> High School          | <input type="checkbox"/> Shorthand and Sign Lettering                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cartoning <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Service | <input type="checkbox"/> C. P. Accounting        | <input type="checkbox"/> Managing Men at Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management                           |

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- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Dressmaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Home Dressmaking                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Tea Room and Cafeteria |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foods and Cookery    | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Dressmaking and Designing | <input type="checkbox"/> Management, Catering   |

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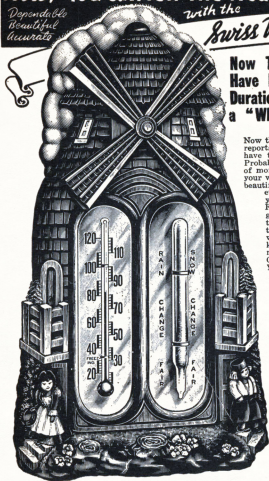
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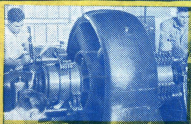
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