

Devildog Doom

By Donald E. Keyhoe

Featuring Cyclone Bill Garrity and the Devildog Squadron

Four squadrons had been wiped out by the unknown menace that struck from above, and in the smoldering ruins of those Allied dromes not a man was left alive. Now in the air before Cyclone Bill Garrity's eyes four Spads had vanished, and only smoke and fiery fragments showed where the fearful man-made lightning had taken its toll. The drome of the 81st lay directly in the path of this weird, flashing doom from the skies—and the Devildogs would be next!

CHAPTER I THE DEATH FLASH

NIGHT, oppressive and sultry, shrouded the drome of the famous Devildogs. "Cyclone Bill" Garrity paused at the door of the Operations shack, staring into the sky with puzzled eyes. The stars were shining and there was not a cloud in the heavens. Yet suddenly the night seemed ominous.

Then he gave a snort of self-derision. This was a fine way for the leader of the hard-boiled Devildog flock to act. He probably needed a drink—that and a scrap of some kind. With a well-placed kick he banged open the office door. As he strode into the shack, Hick Jones grinned across a battered desk at him.

"I thought as how I recognized yore gentle rap," the Texan drawled.

Garrity stopped short and stared at his second-in-command. Hick's homely countenance was a peculiar bluish color.

"What's the matter with you?" he demanded. "Are you sick?"

"Naw, it's th' light," said Hick. "Th' blame thing's gone plumb loco."

Garrity looked up at the electric bulb suspended from the rafters. It was glowing with a queer purple brilliance.

"Too much juice on the line," he snapped. "Call that bunch of idiots down at the power-shack."

"Can't," said Hick. "Th' phones dead. Th' bird on th' switchboard says it's on th' fritz. I sent an orderly down tuh see about th' lights, but he must've died or somethin'."

Suddenly the purplish light faded and the bulb gave off its normal glow. Not three seconds later the telephone jangled shrilly. Garrity reached for the instrument.

"Thought you said it was dead," he growled at Hick. Then he stiffened to alert attention, as an excited voice sounded in the receiver.

"Garrity? This is General Haines—Corps. H.Q. What's wrong? I've been trying to get you for twenty minutes."

"Something happened to the switchboard here," said Garrity.

"Never mind. Get this quick! Get all your ships ready to take off on instant notice. Have every man at your field ready to evacuate on a split second! There'll be no time to move anything—"

A dull rumbling sounded in the receiver, almost drowning the general's voice. Garrity listened anxiously for several seconds. Suddenly the general gave a cry which crackled above the roar in the receiver.

"Garrity, for God's sake raise the 56th and warn them—"

The rest was lost in a deafening, ceaseless storm of sound. Garrity flung down the phone and whirled to Hick Jones. As he did, he noticed that the electric light above was once more a brilliant purple.

"Turn on the siren!" he ordered swiftly. "Get the ships out—everyone on the line!"

Hick leaped for the siren switch. Garrity dashed for the telephone switchboard cubby at the other end of the Operations office.

“Try to get the 56th!” he snapped at the startled operator.

“Every line on the board has gone dead, sir,” he said breathlessly. “Things have been queer for the last half-hour.”

“Keep trying!” Garrity flung at him as he ran out onto the field.

THE alarm siren was shrieking. Men were pouring from their wooden barracks, pilots running from huts and the mess. Garrity hurried toward the wireless shack. As he jerked open the door he almost knocked down the wireless operator, who was dashing out.

“Something’s wrong down at the 56th, major,” the man exclaimed. “I got a ‘Danger’ flash from there, and then the phones started crackling like hell. The air’s full of it—worse than any static—”

“Call them again!” peremptorily rapped Garrity.

The operator swung back to his set, “It won’t be any use, sir, but I’ll try.”

Garrity stepped toward the door and hailed a passing mechanic. “Have my ship started, Johnson. And tell Lieutenants Flanagan and Lane to be ready to take off with me.”

The mechanic raced toward the hangars. Garrity turned back toward the operator. Then he stopped, staring upward. The electric light was burning with a blinding, violet glare. It flashed out just as the operator reached for his sending-switch.

Instantly a jagged blue-green arc shot from the switch to the operator’s hand. A second arc hissed and crackled into his body from the massed instruments before him. The man gave a gasping cry. The odor of scorching flesh filled the shack. Then the flaming arc vanished. The operator sagged over his smoking instruments.

Garrity had leaped back as the first flame shot out. Horrified, he now lit a match and bent over the inert figure.

“Dead!” he said huskily.

He turned as two men ran into the shack. He recognized Lucky Lane and Pug Flanagan.

“What’s happened? We saw a flash—” began Lucky hastily. He broke off as he saw the operator’s body.

“He was killed by a shock,” muttered Garrity. “I can’t figure it out—there isn’t enough current

on that line to kill anybody, unless he had a weak heart.”

“Poor devil,” said Pug Flanagan, throatily.

“We can’t help him now,” said Garrity. His big voice was oddly hushed. He swung about in the semi-gloom. “Come on, you two. We’ve got a job.”

When they reached the line, three ships were being warmed up. As Garrity put on his flying-suit, he gave Hick Jones swift orders.

“Put a guard on that wireless shack. There must be a short circuit of some kind—the operator was just electrocuted.”

Hick started. “My Gawd, what next? Young Swenson just got knocked out down tuh th’ power-shack, an’ all th’ lights are burned out.”

Garrity swore. “There’s something damned funny about this business,” he muttered. “Keep your eyes open while we’re gone. From the way Haines talked, anything might happen.”

“Yuh shore sound cheerful,” grunted Hick.

“I’m taking Lane and Flanagan down to the 56th. Keep trying to get Corps on the phone and find what’s up. Be ready to clear this place like a bat out of hell if anything happens.”

GARRITY jumped into his ship and taxied out by the light of the smoking flares. Lucky Lane and Pug Flanagan followed close behind. The three battle-scarred Spads thundered into the sky.

Climbing steeply, Garrity headed into the southeast. Well off to his left rose and fell the endless flare of Front artillery, rockets and star-shells. Above, the stars shone brightly.

The three ships droned onward. After a few minutes Cyclone Garrity sat up and peered ahead. Beyond the forest which bordered the field of the 56th an ominous glow lifted into the sky. He sent the Spad hurtling down on a long power glide.

A cloud of smoke hung over the isolated drome as the three Devildogs swept low. Garrity rasped an oath. The hangars and huts had completely vanished in ruin. Then he stared in sudden amazement. Vast craters had been gouged in the section of the field where the buildings had been located.

Heaps of wreckage smoldered at the bottom of each deep hole.

By the fitful light he could see numerous bodies beyond the peculiar craters. There was no

sign of life, nor was there a single structure left. Nothing but stark ruin and death.

Garrity swore harshly. There was but one answer. The Germans had perfected some new kind of bomb, some terrible explosive. No long-range gun could have hit so accurately, again and again.

He jerked about in his pit as Lucky Lane sheered alongside his ship. Lucky was pointing away from the gutted, flame-swept part of the field. Garrity saw a car emerging from the woods to the west. He dropped low over it, then fishtailed down to a careful landing as he recognized an official army car. Lucky and Pug Flanagan landed and taxied up close to his ship.

The car stopped abruptly. A tall officer leaped to the ground. Garrity recognized General Haines.

"Garrity!" the general exclaimed, "Good God, how did you ever escape all this?"

"We just got here," the Devildog leader said quickly. "We came as fast as we could, though I didn't know what was up."

"We've lost four whole squadrons—just like this one," groaned Haines, "We don't even know what happened to them."

"It must have been an air raid with some new kind of bombs," muttered Garrity, "But four squadrons—good Lord!"

"It can't be an air raid," said the general in a crushed voice. "Whatever it was, it moved too fast for any plane. It began about an hour ago. The wireless operator at Corps heard a queer hissing in his phones. It got louder until it was a roar that drowned everything. He used his directional antennae and found the sound was coming from Germany.

"We tried to call the front-line dromes and observation posts to check up on it. But all the communications were dead in the south of the sector. Then a French pilot came rushing in. He had just flown back from a bat patrol. He said the 53rd was in flames. I sent a Headquarters pilot to check up. He came back almost out of his mind. He said three dromes were wiped out—not a man left alive that he could see. All of this in less than twenty minutes!"

The general stared dully across the stricken field. "That was when I told you to warn the 56th," he went on. "I knew they were next up the line. After I warned you, I sent all three

Headquarters pilots this way, in case you failed to get here in time. They've vanished, too."

Garrity's jaw set fiercely.

"By God, while we're standing here my outfit may be getting wiped out the same way! Why in Hades didn't you order me to evacuate first when you called about the 56th?"

Haines turned pale. "I did tell you to move out! I told you right after the order about the 56th. I thought you had already sent your men back to a rear-line field."

"I never heard the damned order!" raged Garrity. He turned and dashed for his ship. "By the eternal living God, if anything's happened to my men, you'll pay for this, general or no general!"

Lucky Lane and Pug Flanagan leaped into their pits as they saw their leader vault into his Spad.

"Wait!" shouted Haines frantically. "You've got to take a mission! You and the 81st are the only outfits left—"

"Mission hell!" rasped Cyclone Garrity. "Get out of my way if you want to live!"

He gunned his idling engine. The Spad sprang forward. Haines jumped wildly to one side. Lucky Lane and Pug Flanagan charged past the sputtering general at full speed. The trio scorched up in a crazy chandelle and raced back toward the Devildog drome.

CHAPTER II BLACK RAIDERS

CYCLONE GARRITY hunched his huge body down in the Spad's cockpit, a bitter snarl on his lips. Even now, his flock of mad Marines, the wildest crew on the Western Front, might be blotted out by that same mysterious doom which had stricken those four other Yankee squadrons.

A sudden blaze far off to his left made him jerk about. A geyser of fire was spouting up at least twenty miles away. Garrity made a hurried calculation. It must be the new ammunition dump north of Colombey-les-Belles.

Abruptly a terrific flash of light ripped through the sky to the north of the burning dump. Garrity's eyes leaped from the dump to this new blaze. He groaned as he saw a second dump burst into flames. The drome of the 81st lay directly in

the path of this weird flashing doom from the skies. And the Devildogs would be next!

He drove his big fist against the throttle to force the last bit of speed from his roaring Hispano. The Spad drilled on at a furious pace. Garrity bent over the stick, glaring ahead, a haunted look in his eyes. Haines had been right! No plane could move as fast as that shifting flame-pillar which had seemingly started both of those fierce conflagrations. It was at least eight miles between those two burning dumps—but there had been less than three minutes before the second fire had leaped out. A plane would have to be flying at 200 miles an hour to cover that gap so quickly.

Suddenly a beam of brilliant white light stabbed down from the sky, sweeping the drome of the 81st!

Cyclone Garrity gave a cry of amazement. That vivid beam was more powerful than any searchlight he had ever seen. The ground beneath was as bright as day under the brilliant rays. But the light seemed to come from nowhere. His straining eyes could see no sign of the plane he knew must be carrying it.

He looked down hastily. The 81st had been moving out. Lorries filled with men were hurrying toward the highway to the rear. Only a few planes remained on the ground. He saw the rest of the squadron climbing into the west. They had obviously just taken off.

From a wood back of the field archie batteries crashed into action. Searchlights flickered up, their beams feeble and wan compared with that blinding beam from the heavens.

The remaining pilots on the ground were dashing for their ships. The planes which had already taken off whirled back at furious speed, climbing madly.

The brilliant white beam swiftly vanished. Garrity pulled around in a sharp renversement as the archie batteries began to fire a scattered barrage. Pug and Lucky whipped into position behind him.

The next second Garrity's hand went tight upon the stick. He stared open-mouthed as three of the probing searchlights from the woods flashed over something in the sky.

FLYING at incredible speed, an enormous dead-black plane was swooping down toward the Yankee drome! But for the brief silhouette effect of the waving lights beneath, he would not have seen it. Those dead-black wings would reflect no light, and to the gunners on the ground the huge raider would be practically invisible.

He snarled an oath. Here was the explanation of the burning dromes. The Germans had built a super-speed ship for dropping some new and powerful bomb. But this time they had made a mistake.

He clenched his trips and rattled out a vicious burst. From both sides the Vickers of Pug and Lucky blazed swift answer. He bent over his controls to plunge his Spad into a head-long dive.

Suddenly there was a terrific, grinding roar. The Spad shook, and he felt a tingling electric shock run through his body. Then his jaw dropped in stupefaction at what he saw.

Like a bolt of lightning, a colossal spear of purple flame was streaking from the black plane to the ground!

Blazing debris hurtled skyward. Hangars and shops vanished like houses of cards in a hurricane of raging fire. In a crimson cataract, fiery wreckage catapulted into the air, falling back to spread ruin in every direction.

The taxiing planes had utterly disappeared. A yawning crater showed where they had been but a moment before. A second, awful flash of doom blasted into the Yankee drome. Two loaded lorries were lost in a pillar of violet flame. Hurling bodies were tossed for a hundred feet. As the crashing purple rays died out, Garrity saw a third lorry tumbling into a huge smoking pit where the road had been.

The black raider suddenly zoomed. As it shot upward at terrific speed, its brilliant searchlight beam flared into the sky, straight to the zenith. The beam flashed across a horde of darting ships. Against a dozen speedy, black-winged fighters, the Spads of the 81st were battling fiercely.

Whirling out of the fight, a lone Spad screeched down at the zooming raider. Instantly, two of the racing black-winged ships dived in mad pursuit. The Spad's wing crumpled under a frightful hail of lead. Two more ships of the 81st tore out of the melee above. One of the black

fighters spun down in flames under a furious burst.

Garrity had plunged toward the big raider. As he kicked about to rake the monster's tail, a stream of tracer crackled past his ears. He whipped around. Three more of the fast black fighters were rocketing down the sky. Two of them were crossing their guns at the tail of his darting ship. He twisted clear with a savage flick of controls. The Vickers hammered two lanes of death into the nearest German. The black ship slipped onto one wing and fell like a rock.

THE huge raider was streaking straight north. Something cold clutched at Garrity's heart. The Devildog drome lay north. With a blistering curse he cut loose his guns and poured a battering fusillade into the big ship's tail. One burst—and then the raider was out of range, flying faster than any ship he had ever seen.

Vainly he held his trips down and tried to pound in a long-range shot. Then he gave a yell of exultation. The huge ship had banked sharply to avoid a blazing plane that roared down from above. At the same time two Spads thundered in from the other side, guns spouting. Devildog Spads! Lucky Lane and Pug Flanagan were still in the scrap!

A black fighter charged venomously onto Pug's tail. The big Irishman jerked about in a lightning renversement. The two pilots' guns flamed for one fateful second, muzzle pointed to muzzle. Then the Boche lolled over the side of his cockpit.

Garrity was within a hundred yards of the huge raider. Weirdly helmeted faces peered at him through glass ports in the enormous cabin. With a curse he poured a murderous burst into the windows.

But the rain of slugs fell in vain on the heavy glass. He rasped another oath as he realized that it was bullet-proof. Guns were flaming from tiny, armored turrets in the top of the cabin. Slashing lead zigzagged up his wing toward the pit. He kicked free and dived under the ship.

The big plane rolled into a hasty turn. He smiled grimly as he saw that he had almost collided with a peculiar device under the bottom of the cabin. He stared back at it. It was like a gigantic megaphone, of some glistening material.

From the larger end of it protruded a hollowed tube of gleaming metal. The whole device was drawn up into a horizontal, cone-shaped cavity.

Garrity's eyes narrowed. So this was the means by which they projected their mysterious flaming death! Perhaps if he could blast it loose....

He whipped back in a dizzy split. A blinding light suddenly stabbed into his face. He zoomed, expecting to feel the Spad crash into the huge raider at any instant. Gradually his sight came back. Bullets were tearing into his wings. He rolled. A black fighter was raking him obliquely. He drove in savagely and cut down the Boche with a single burst. The German slumped over his controls.

Garrity spun around toward the twisting raider. The brilliant light was flashing rapidly. Suddenly the nearest black fighters scattered. The projector device whirled out of its niche and swiftly pointed toward the swarming Spads of the 81st.

The leading Spads sheered away madly as their frightened pilots saw death before them. An icy chill went down Garrity's spine as he saw a bluish glow fill the raider's cabin.

Again came that awful flash like a vivid lightning streak. Again the air shook with a crackling roar like thunder. Then the flame was gone.

Garrity drew a gasping breath. Four Spads had vanished! Only buffeted smoke and fiery fragments showed where that fearful man-made lightning had taken its awful toll,

WITH a hoarse cry he banked his riddled ship and charged in at the raider. A black fighter crossed his path, the pilot skidding to throw his guns on the plunging Spad. Cyclone Garrity shot him dead with one furious stab of his Vickers, and roared on. His eyes were glued to the shifting projector beneath the black raider's floor. His hand went taut on the trips. The Vickers burst into a vengeful snarl.

The deadly projector whirled toward him. He kicked away and dived steeply, pulling up in a screaming vertical zoom. Straight upward the Vickers hurled their fury into the bottom of the banking raider.

Spandaus were raking him from both sides as the escort fighters raced across the battle-swept sky, but he held on grimly. The raider dipped into

a frantic reverse turn. A gigantic wing flashed down toward him. Then he saw the projector swing limply from a mass of tangled cables in the floor.

He kicked off as the Spad was about to stall. The raider was pivoting, banking to flee toward the east. His first triumph died swiftly. That hell-ship had to be shot down! It would be easy enough for them to repair that projector and return to finish the frightful slaughter they had begun.

He held his fire, charging through a horde of battling ships after the big plane. The black fighters were struggling furiously to hold back the Yanks while the raider escaped. With their swifter speed, they were taking a bloody toll.

A Devildog Spad loomed before Garrity, two Boche striking from right and left into the careening ship. The Devildog leader gave a harsh growl as one of the Germans raced in to deal a final stroke of death. His grim eyes caught the darting black plane in the Vickers' sights. With a crooked grin he watched his tracers cut redly up the tail of the Boche. A tiny touch of forward stick, and the blasting guns battered the German into soulless flesh.

A narrow, red light beam flickered back and forth from the fleeing raider. Instantly the black fighters spun around to escape from the melee. Garrity and the Devildog on his left caught the other Boche of the pair which had been attacking, and sent him down to a rending crash.

A Spad fell off, blazing, as the last of the enemy escort ships raced out of the fight. Garrity looked around anxiously. By the lurid glow of the flaming Spad he saw Lucky Lane flying close to him, and five ships of the 81st strung out in pursuit of the black raider. The rest of the squadron was missing.

Garrity's eyes filmed. Pug Flanagan was gone. The big Irishman had gone down some time during the fight. Perhaps he had been one of the four who had died before that mysterious purple lightning.

Garrity's rugged face hardened. His eyes tightened to ugly slits as he stared ahead. The Germans were escaping. There was no chance of keeping up with those strangely swifter ships. But somewhere those murdering rats would have to land.

He looked at the compass. They were flying slightly south of east, about 97 degrees. It might be a trick, of course. The Boche might change their course as soon as they had out-distanced their pursuers. But there was a chance that they were streaking straight for their base.

CHAPTER III AT THE HIDDEN BASE

THE Boche ships were but blurred shapes as the two groups sped across the Front. Garrity could see the big raider dimly, as he pulled up to a higher altitude. It showed for a moment as a star-shell burst above No-Man's-Land. Nearby he saw the smaller escort ships.

Then, to his surprise, the raider perceptibly slowed. The escort spread out slightly. Garrity watched narrowly between the flare of rockets and star-shells from below. A trap of course—a trick to let them get close enough and then blast them down. The devils might have repaired the projector.

He edged in to take the lead on the little formation of Yanks. Firing a white rocket, he waited till its brief glow showed his ship underneath. He wagged his wings in a hasty signal to throttle down. All but one man obeyed. The lone Spad charged on recklessly. He saw it flit toward the Boche formation; then it was lost in the gloom as the Front fell behind.

Suddenly there was a frantic cross-fire of crimson tracers a mile ahead. A plane went whirling down in a mantle of orange fire. The darkness fell again.

"Poor devil!" muttered Garrity.

The minutes passed. He cast a quick look at the luminous hands of his wrist watch. His ship and Lucky's had been in the air for more than an hour. Their tanks were almost half-empty. The Spads of the 81st were probably better off. But if they kept on much longer, none of them would have enough gas to return.

He laughed without any feeling of mirth. What difference did it make if none of them returned, so long as that death-ship was wiped out with its diabolical crew?

The moon had risen above the Vosges Mountains. The Rhine slipped to the rear. A gloomy expanse of forest lay ahead. Garrity

frowned. They were going into the heart of the Black Forest.

He started as a long finger of light shot out ahead of the huge raider. What was coming now?

The light dipped swiftly several times, then began to sweep in wide circles. A minute passed. From the Black Mountains, at a point directly in line with the German ships, came an answering flash of light.

Garrity's blood began to flow more swiftly through his veins. They had found the monster's base! In a few more minutes they would win or lose.

The Boche were descending steeply, keeping the lead. Cyclone Garrity searched the sky above them. Was the little formation of Yanks being led under some massed force of Germans? If so, the ships were invisible.

The flash of light which had answered the raider's signal abruptly grew into a wide fan-shaped beam which spread across a flat stretch of ground. Other lights went on swiftly, while Garrity watched with startled eyes. In a few seconds a strange scene lay revealed.

IN THE heart of the forest a circular area more than a mile in diameter had been cleared of all trees and growth. In the exact center was a cluster of buildings, two of which were huge hangars. From the middle of another building rose a gigantic mast, fully 800 feet high. Pivoted to swing on a vertical axis at the top of this mast was what appeared to be an enormous antenna, with twisted strips of metal instead of wires.

Around the edge of the circular area, just inside the surrounding trees, were great concentric rings of the same kind of shining metal. The outside ring was fully a mile in diameter. It was supported by poles at intervals of 200 feet. The second ring was smaller in diameter, but was raised higher on its supporting poles. There were three rings, the third being at least 150 feet in the air. All three were aglow with a luminous light which shimmered eerily until the powerful searchlights of the hidden base absorbed the glow in their brighter rays.

The black raider dived for the long runway which became visible on the south of the massed buildings. A green signal light winked rapidly from the central structure as the huge ship

approached. Garrity gritted his teeth. Once the monster was on the ground, his pitiful little flight would never be able to destroy it. At least a dozen gun-towers overlooked the field and the buildings in the base.

The Yank ships would have to fly through a sea of lead for even a chance shot at the raider.

In sudden rage he rammed his Spad into a vertical dive. He might get enough speed for one smashing burst. The black fighters were racing madly behind the raider as the big ship plunged above the strange concentric rings. One of them swam into Garrity's sights as he pulled the groaning Spad out of its headlong dive. He snatched at his trips and poured a withering fire into the fleeing Boche. The black plane went up crookedly on its tail and whipped sidewise. Garrity switched his crackling tracer blasts toward a second escort ship. The harassed Boche snapped about wildly. There was a madman's ferocity in his terrific attack. Garrity met him with a slashing torrent of Vickers lead. The two planes spun like battling hawks, not 500 feet above the fringing trees at the edge of the base.

A crashing burst tore through the cowl before the big Devildog's eyes. He rasped a sulphurous oath and raked the black ship's tail. Again the maddened Boche drove in. Compass glass and flying splinters filled the cockpit of the Spad. Garrity caught the smell of leaking gasoline. A cracked strut sagged.

Garrity slammed into a wrenching Immelmann. Back he flung with pounding guns—but the Boche was gone, racing frantically after the rest of the escort ships.

Two more of the black fighters had been forced into savage battles with Spads of the 81st. A third was zig-zagging crazily, with Lucky Lane's Vickers gouging into its tail and wings.

On the tail of his fleeing quarry Cyclone Garrity drove his riddled ship. His lips were twisted into an ugly grin. Five more seconds—if his Spad hung together that long—and there would be one less Boche butcher to fly for the Fatherland!

TWO hundred yards beyond, the shimmering metal bands loomed into view as Garrity trained his guns on the darting German. As he stared

ahead, he noted that the signal light had changed to red.

He tripped his guns for a swift kill. The first chattering burst ripped through the edge of the black ship's wing as the Boche wildly went into a bank.

Suddenly Garrity's eyes bulged. His tracer streams were stopping dead in space! It was as though a heavy glass wall—

"My God!" he cried hoarsely and jerked the stick back with all his his might.

With stunning force, the truth flashed into his brain.

An invisible electric wall surrounded the hidden base!

Before his horrified eyes the black ship struck and smashed to bits. The smoking wreck hung in space for one startling second, then fell. In a desperate Immelmann, Garrity whirled his quivering Spad away from the unseen wall. Almost beneath him as he whipped about, he saw the outer metal band, lit with a sinister glow.

The wreckage of the black ship was slithering down with a hideous scraping sound. It fell several yards outside of the first concentric band, and was quickly a mass of flame.

The vicious hammering of Vickers guns made Garrity plunge back toward the fatal wall. Trapped between the last two Spads of the 81st, a lone Boche was being forced toward the invisible barrier. Garrity hurled his ship downward, frenziedly trying to warn the diving Yanks.

A hundred feet from the invisible wall, the cornered Boche spun back into a leaden hail. The nose of his ship swerved sharply. With a deafening roar, the black plane crashed head-on into the first of the charging Spads.

Locked in one solid mass, the two ships pitched to the ground.

The second Spad turned quickly—and thundered straight into the invisible barrier!

Filled with agony, Garrity helplessly watched the battered engine drive crushingly back to the pit where the pilot sat. He closed his eyes for a second. When he opened them, his ship and that of Lucky Lane were the only ones in the sky.

He turned his faltering Spad. The cracked strut sagged and gave way. The wing began to drop. He hastily signaled Lucky to head west. There was one chance that Lucky might reach the Allied

front and give a warning of this new and frightful menace.

Leaking gas blew back into Garrity's face as he leaned out and looked for a place to land. He smiled grimly. That meant fire when he crashed. And crash he certainly was going to do, for there was no place in that forest where he could land.

He took off his goggles and threw them away. Just then a shifting beam of light crossed his settling ship. He nosed down quickly. There was no telling what those devils were up to now. They might be ready to finish him with that weird flashing death which had already taken a thousand lives that night.

A small open space between some trees became visible in the glow of the light from the base. Garrity grinned wryly. At least they were helping him to pick out a spot to crack up!

The engine sputtered and choked into silence. The Spad's ring wing raked through the top of a tree. Garrity kicked out of the sudden skid and hauled the stick back as the ground flashed up. There was a jolt as the left wing crashed against a trunk and sheered off. The Spad wheeled dizzily. Another jolt and the nose dug into the soft earth. Garrity's hand was on his belt. As the broken fuselage flopped onto its back, he opened the belt and was catapulted into a mass of undergrowth.

CHAPTER IV TRAPPED!

GARRITY had hardly rolled to a stop when he heard a series of smashing sounds not a hundred yards away. He jumped to his feet. His wrecked ship was already on fire. He retreated quickly as the flames leaped up.

Suddenly he caught sight of a figure moving through the trees. He snapped open the flap of his holster and raised his pistol. Then he lowered it with an exclamation, as he saw Lucky Lane's face peering at him.

"Good Lord, I hoped you were clear," he groaned. "How did they get you down?"

"Get me?" said Lucky. "Nobody got me. You think I'd beat it and leave you here?"

"You idiot!" snapped Cyclone Garrity. "You can't do me any good—and you might have broken your fool neck landing in this forest."

But there was a gleam in his eyes which belied his gruff tone. Lucky saw it and managed a shaky grin.

"The Spad won't be much good to anybody," he admitted. "I took off both wings and knocked down half a dozen trees—"

He stopped abruptly. A siren was sending forth a piercing shriek from the direction of the base.

"We've got to move—and move fast!" snapped Garrity. "They'll be searching for us—and we're going to be somewhere else."

He led the way through the woods, discarding his flying-suit as it began to hamper his movements. Lucky followed his example. From back of them the siren again rose in a weird call, this time sending forth short, broken signals.

"Here's a creek," Garrity muttered as they came out into a small clearing. "We'll follow it a little way so-they won't be able to spot our trail."

"What are you going to do?" asked Lucky as they waded into the creek.

"Try to dope out some way to get inside that base and blow the place to hell," said Cyclone Bill grimly. "I know we haven't a chance in a million—but it's the only thing we can do."

"I saw a knoll near here when I was picking a spot to crack up," said Lucky. "We ought to be able to see something from there."

They left the creek and pushed through the dark woods. After several minutes they came out into a partially cleared patch of ground. A fringe of trees stood between them and the base. They stole as close as they dared and peered through the trees.

A hundred feet away was a high wire fence. Garrity's face darkened as he saw the insulators on each pole and the wires stretched at close intervals in addition to the netting.

"They've got that fence charged," he said harshly. "One touch and you'd be dead. Even if we could get over that, there's still that damned invisible wall."

"There must be a gate," Lucky said practically. "We might—"

He broke off, flattening himself to the ground as Garrity jerked him downward. A searchlight beam was slowly moving around the edge of the circular base. They lay like logs until it had passed. Then Garrity lifted his head and stared across the open area.

"They've got a bunch of men working on that big ship. When they get it fixed, they'll head for the Allied Front again. If we don't find some way to stop them, they'll wipe out every squadron on the Western Front. Come on!"

"Where to?" said Lucky, as they started back into the woods.

"We're going to work along parallel with this fence. Your idea about the gate is the only thing we can try. They'll have it guarded, but there's a wild chance we might get by some-how."

THEY pushed on through the underbrush, making their way by the slanting moonlight which filtered through the trees. In a few minutes they found themselves on the bank of a precipitous, deep ravine. The ravine ran straight to the fence, where a narrow fill had been made.

"We can't get through there," growled Cyclone Bill. "We'll have to cut back and cross this gully somewhere."

They turned north and finally found a spot where the sides of the ravine were less precipitous. Crossing to the other side, they hurriedly started eastward again. But in a few minutes the trees thinned out. They found themselves at the side of a road.

Suddenly there came the sound of voices. Garrity and Lucky Lane stood still and listened tensely. Then Garrity saw a chain across the road and two Boche sentries beyond it, two hundred feet away. He drew back into the shadows and turned to Lucky.

"Here's a break! If we can grab those two birds, we can get into their uniforms. We may be able to get close enough to the gate of the base to pull a fast one,"

"O.K.," whispered Lucky.

They stole back into the edge of the woods and then began to work their way toward the two sentries. As they neared the road again, Garrity signaled Lucky to crawl straight ahead, while he closed in front a different angle.

The two Boche were leaning on their Mausers as he reached the last row of trees by the road. He lifted his pistol and stepped forward on tiptoe. He was within thirty feet of the two men when a twig cracked under his foot. The sentries jumped around in alarm. Garrity sprang like a panther.

Not a half-second later Lucky dashed out of the bushes back of the startled Germans.

Clumsily the first Boche snatched up his rifle, Garrity's pistol butt crashed against the man's head. The second Boche whirled to fire at Lucky Lane. Lucky's pistol barked. The sentry slipped to the ground with a groan and lay motionless.

"I had to shoot," Lucky gasped. "I couldn't get to him fast enough."

"It's done now," snapped Garrity. "Maybe they didn't hear it at the base, if it's far enough away. Come on, drag that other bird into the bushes and take off his uniform."

They hastily stripped the two men. Then Garrity swore. Neither of the sentries was anywhere near his size. It was impossible for him to get into either uniform.

"I'll have to try it alone, major," said Lucky Lane.

"I've got to get in there," rasped Garrity. "By God, you'll have to make out I'm a prisoner until we get to the gate—"

He stopped and listened intently. The roar of a high-powered car sounded from down the road, away from the base.

"Get into one of those uniforms, quick!" he ordered. "When the car stops at the chain, find out who's in it. Tell them you're the only sentry on this post tonight, if they ask questions. I'll be here in the shadows."

Lucky had hardly completed his hurried change when the lights of a car flashed around a bend in the road. With a screeching of brakes, the car slid to a stop before the chain.

"Let us through, blockhead!" bawled a fierce voice.

"But, *Herr Oberst*," protested Lucky, "the password—"

"Give him the password, *Leutnant Schwar*," ordered the German who had first spoken. Garrity, peering from the shadows at the side of the road, saw that the speaker was a German officer in cloak and spiked helmet.

"*Ich dien*," snapped the stocky *Leutnant* who was the other occupant of the rear seat. "Now drop the chain, fool, and let us through."

LUCKY was fumbling with the fastening. Suddenly the *Leutnant* leaned out and stared at him.

"Since when has it been necessary to give the password here, *Dumkopf*?"

"Only tonight, *Herr Leutnant*," mumbled Lucky. "There has been some kind of trouble—"

"It is probably because of the raid which we just heard about," grunted the cloaked Boche. "Let us hope the *verdammte* Americans have been killed. I will feel better when I hear that the last one of their squadrons has been destroyed."

"Even if they followed clear to the base, they could do no harm, *Herr von Norden*."

"I am not so sure," growled the cloaked German. "Now that this man Speyer has made one slip, I am sure I was right in the first place. He is a scientist, a clever man—but probably, like all scientists, a poor soldier." "Wait till you meet him, *mein colonel*. He has the brain of a devil. His plan is perfect."

"Was perfect!" growled von Norden. "Something failed, or he would not have had to rush back to the base. I will take charge of the next flight myself—Speyer or no Speyer!"

Garrity was listening feverishly, a mad plan leaping into his mind. He gave a quick look at Lucky Lane, who was still yanking at the chain, then darted toward the back of the car. Suddenly the chauffeur whipped around toward the two officers in the rear.

"There is some trick, *Herr Oberst*! This man is not trying to unfasten the chain. And there is blood on the road—"

The *Leutnant* gave an oath and jumped out, his Luger halfway out of its holster. He gave a choked cry as his eyes fell on Garrity, who was dashing toward the car. Their two guns blazed at once. The *Leutnant* staggered back and slumped.

The chauffeur ducked low, firing wildly. A bullet grazed Garrity's helmet. He threw himself to one side.

With a groan the chauffeur pitched over the back of his seat as Lucky Lane drilled him through the head. Garrity covered the crouching *Oberst* and harshly ordered him out of the car. Silently, his eyes blazing with hate, the German obeyed. Garrity searched him quickly.

"No gun, *mein Freund*?" he said ironically. "But then so far behind the lines—"

The Prussian's eyes were fixed on his Marine Corps uniform. As von Norden saw the pilot's

wings and gold major's leaves Garrity wore, he uttered a strangled curse.

"*Teufelhund!* And a major! There is only one flying *Teufelhund* major! You are this pig they call Cyclone Garrity!"

"Shut up and get out of that uniform!" snapped Garrity.

White with rage, the big Prussian obeyed.

"Keep this bird covered," Cyclone Bill ordered Lucky Lane. "As soon as I get into this outfit, we'll tie him up and leave him in the woods."

"You will end up before a firing squad," said the German venomously. He was a ludicrous figure, stripped of his uniform. "You will make some mistake and they will guess the truth. Then you will die!"

"Ah, so there isn't anyone in there who would know the difference between us!" said Garrity with a satisfied grin. "Thanks—that's just what I wanted to know."

VON NORDEN swore as he realized his mistake. Cyclone Bill fastened the German's uniform about him and tossed the cloak into the car. As he pulled the spiked helmet over his head, he turned toward Lucky, keeping his gun trained on the German.

"Drag that chauffeur's body out of the car. Search his pockets and take everything he's got. Put it in your own pockets and take his cap. The two uniforms are the same and you can pass for my driver."

As Lucky climbed into the front seat of the car, the sputtering exhaust of motorcycles sounded from the direction of the base. Garrity started. The big Prussian laughed fiercely.

"Fools, you are already trapped! They have heard the shots—"

Cyclone Bill cut him short with a snarl. "Get into my uniform!" he rasped.

The Prussian hastily donned Garrity's discarded Marine Corps uniform. Lucky Lane had hauled the chauffeur's body out of the car and onto the road. Garrity stared down the road.

"Take the driver's Luger!" he ordered swiftly. "Throw your Colt down by him. Give me the *Leutnant's* gun—"

Around the bend in the road raced half a dozen motorcycles with side-cars." For the fraction of a

second Garrity's eye flitted from the big Prussian before him toward the speeding Boche.

With a vicious swing the German struck out at the hand in which Garrity held his service Colt .45. The gun went spinning to the road. Another terrific punch almost sent Garrity down. Then the huge Devildog leader recovered and came in like a hurricane. A savage uppercut drove through the Prussian's guard and sent him staggering backward. Garrity leaped in and pounded a sledgelike fist against the German's jaw. Another battering right, straight to the chin, and von Norden crashed sprawling against the hub of the car. His head struck solidly and he collapsed, blood coursing from a gash above his ear.

Breathless, Garrity whirled as the first of the Boche raced up to the chain barricade.

"Keep still and let me talk!" he threw at Lucky in a fierce aside. Then he turned toward a staring *Leutnant* who had jumped from the first side-car.

"You are a little late," he said ironically, in smooth German. "But for good luck, this damned pig and the spy there on the ground would have killed us all."

The rest of the Boche drew up as he finished. Armed Germans clustered around, gaping. The *Leutnant* in charge gave a gasp as he saw the Marine Corps uniform von Norden had been forced to put on.

"*Gott!*" he exclaimed, "He is one of the *verfluchte* Devildog swine."

"*Ja,*" said Garrity. "And that rat there on the ground—" he pointed toward the dead chauffeur—"is undoubtedly another American, for when he killed the *Leutnant*, he swore in English."

The officer in charge uttered a cry as one of his men turned over the body of the dead *Leutnant*.

"It is Schwartz! But he was at Headquarters, in Strasbourg—" he broke off, with a sudden stiffening to attention as he looked more closely at Garrity's uniform. He saluted hastily. "I beg your pardon, *Herr* Colonel. I did not at first see your rank."

"There is no time for words," snapped Garrity, "I have a mission at the base. *Herr* Speyer is probably expecting me—I am Colonel von Norden."

“The message just came, *Herr* Colonel. Communications were disturbed for a while. There was more trouble.”

“Trouble?” barked Garrity. “What has happened?”

It was a good opportunity to discover the situation at the base before he was put to a more severe test when he met Speyer.

“THE big plane was forced to return, as you probably know from the messages to Headquarters,” the officer answered. “Several Americans followed across the lines. *Herr* Speyer slowed his speed to lead them into the invisible wall. But at the last moment two of them turned, after killing some of our escort pilots. They landed in the forest. This hulking swine you just overcame must be one of them,” and he kicked venomously at the unconscious Prussian colonel. “You are probably right, *Herr Leutnant*. And I would not be surprised if the American in our uniform was a spy who intended to try to get into the base.”

The *Leutnant* looked sharply toward the chain across the road.

“The sentries!” he exclaimed. “There should be two of them here.”

Garrity tensed. He decided to play a bold hand.

“Probably these two American pigs have killed them. When we slowed for the chain, that devil dressed in German uniform stepped up as though to challenge us. Then Otto, my driver, saw blood on the road back of the chain. He whispered this to *Leutnant* Schwartz. *Der Leutnant* leaned over the front seat quickly to look at the road. This spy posing as the sentry at once drew his pistol and fired. Schwartz was wounded—you can see his blood there on the top of the front seat—but he lived long enough to spring from the car and shoot down the dirty *Hund*. Otto and I jumped out. We were trying to revive poor Schwartz when this big *Teufelhund* leaped out of the bushes with a pistol in his hand. He held us prisoner for several minutes, trying to force us to tell the truth about the base. When he saw your cycles coming around the bend, he started to kill the two of us so that he could escape. Fortunately I caught him off guard.”

The *Leutnant* smiled wolfishly. “I saw the last of the fight, *Herr* Colonel. It was magnificent.”

Garrity looked at his bruised knuckles and smiled coolly. Then he reached into the car and took out von Norden’s cloak. He threw it about him carelessly and patted his spiked helmet more firmly into place.

“I am ready to go,” he said crisply. “Have your men drop the chain. Otto, take the wheel. *Herr Leutnant*, you will ride back with me. Your men can take care of the bodies—”

A groan from the unconscious von Norden cut him short. He stiffened, and under his cloak his hand went to the butt of the Luger he had picked up. Silently he cursed himself for not killing the Boche.

“The big *schwein* is still alive!” said the *Leutnant*. “We will take him in to the base. *Herr* Speyer has a special treatment for spies and captives who try to penetrate the base—if they are not killed by touching the charged fence.”

“I do not want his dirty carcass in here,” said Garrity in a curt voice. “Let one of your men tumble him into a side-car, when they have finished here.”

The *Leutnant* gave an order. Von Norden was roughly dragged to one side of the road, still moaning. The chain was let down and under Lucky’s touch the big car shot forward.

“Make haste, Otto!” Garrity barked.

As he settled himself back, his foot touched against something on the floor. He saw that it was a dispatch case. Carelessly he picked it up and held it on his lap. Then, under cover of the big cloak, he began to feel through the pockets of his stolen uniform. In one he found a wallet; in another a folded paper. He put them back, thrust his Luger into his belt and turned to the *Leutnant*, who was sitting primly beside him,

“It is unfortunate the big plane was damaged,” he growled. “How long will it take to have it ready, to fly again?”

“It will be ready within an hour, *Herr* Colonel. It was only the beam-projector. One of the Americans managed to shoot away the control cables and break the power leads. But he paid for it with his life. Von Blohm, *Kapitan* of the guard pilots, shot him dead the very next moment.”

Garrity hid a grin. “Von Blohm is to be congratulated. But he should have killed the American pig before he had a chance to wreck the projector.”

CHAPTER V
 "TEUFELHUND!"

THE car abruptly slackened its speed. A high wire gate barred the road a hundred yards beyond. A search-light illuminated the roadway directly in front of it. The *Leutnant* stepped out onto the running board of the car and sent a hail into the darkness beyond the light. The wire gate swung open.

The car moved on between two wire barriers. Germans with machine guns lined both sides of the little lane which led to a second, larger entrance. A burly *Unteroffizier* stepped forward as the car stopped again. He peered into the rear seat.

"It is *Herr* Colonel von Norden—on business of the Supreme Command," said the *Leutnant* hastily, "Open the gate—quickly."

The *Unteroffizier* hastily saluted. Then an embarrassed look crossed his stolid face.

"It is only a matter of form, *Herr* Colonel—but we are ordered to request the word of the night from everyone."

"*Ich dien*," snapped Garrity. "Hurry, *Dummkopf*—you are wasting valuable time."

The *Unteroffizier* ran toward the big gate, which Garrity saw led under the first gleaming metal band that encircled the base. He gave a shouted order. A bell clanged from farther on.

"It takes several moments to switch off the current of the invisible wall," said the *Leutnant* apologetically, "There is a small control room for that purpose beyond the third conductor band, in addition to the main control room."

The gate suddenly slid back into a recess. Lucky drove through. Garrity held his breath as they passed under the third large metal ring, a hundred and fifty feet above them. They were inside the base at last!

The road led straight toward the central building from which the gigantic mast towered into the sky. At the left of the structure were the two huge hangars he had seen from outside of the invisible wall. Several of the sinister little black fighting planes which had escorted the big raider were being prepared for their next mission. And under the glow of the spotlights he saw with a quick thrill the black death-ship itself.

A score of German mechanics and engineers were working around the big raider. Rising above the hangars were the small steel towers supporting the gun-platforms that Garrity had seen during the fight by the fatal wall. Germans leaned over the railings of the platforms and watched the work beneath.

AS THE car swung in toward the entrance of the central building, Garrity saw other gun platforms on similar towers on the right of the structure and toward the front. Grimly he also noted the machine-gun pits located farther back, and the archie batteries visible halfway between the buildings and the outer rim of the base.

The *Leutnant* followed his gaze. He smiled.

"It seems foolish to keep the guns here, now that the invisible wall has proved itself so perfectly, does it not, *Herr* Colonel?"

Garrity forced a sour grin, "Yes, but it is better to be prepared, in case anything should happen."

Lucky Lane brought the car to a halt. Garrity climbed out, the *Leutnant* following.

"Drive over by the hangars. Otto," Garrity ordered haughtily. "Perhaps you can be of some help there."

Lucky's eyes caught his for a brief flash, and Garrity knew that his mad-cap Devildog would be ready to act at the first opportunity. Lucky saluted stiffly and drove off.

"Now, take me to *Herr* Speyer at once," Cyclone Bill rapped.

As he followed the German into the building, past the sentries at the door, he surreptitiously took out the folded paper he had felt in one of the pockets of von Norden's uniform. He glanced at it furtively; then his heart leaped.

It was an order from the German Supreme Command, giving von Norden authority over *Herr* Gustav Speyer, at Base Z.

The *Leutnant* led the way up a circular flight of stairs which ended in a room on the top floor of the building. Large windows opened on all sides, so that a view of the base could be had in any direction. The room was in the center of the huge steel legs of the triangular skeleton mast which rose above the structure. Through the roof of the room ran numerous thick cables, which he guessed to be connected with the odd-looking antennae he had seen at the top of the mast.

The room itself was almost filled with switchboards, instrument panels and other electrical apparatus. Two men were standing at one side, near a telephone switchboard. One was an arrogant-looking *Hauptmann*. As Garrity's glance fell on the second man, he could hardly repress a start. He had seen that cruel, unsmiling face somewhere before. Those darting, close-set eyes and that beaklike nose struck a familiar spot in his memory. Then as the man turned squarely toward him, an ugly scowl making his thin lips thinner still, he remembered.

It was Gustav Spaight, who had once been a famous research engineer for an American power corporation. Spaight, a German engineer, had come to America in 1913 and within a year had caused a fierce wrangling between scientists over some complicated theory of electrical waves. Garrity remembered easily, for all this had come out during the nation-wide scandal when it was found that Spaight was serving under another name as the official electrocutioner at Sing Sing prison. Pictures of Spaight had been in all of the newspapers.

Looking again at that cruel face, Garrity could well believe the stories that the man had derived a ghoulish, sadistic pleasure in throwing the death-switch on condemned criminals until it had become a mania with him. The man had disappeared before the World War. He had been thought dead. But there was no doubt in Garrity's mind. Spaight and Speyer were one and the same.

SPEYER'S first scowl changed to a thin smile which Garrity could see covered a fierce resentment. It was obvious that Speyer knew what was coming and was bitterly hostile.

"*Herr Speyer*," said the *Leutnant*, who had guided Garrity, "this is Colonel von Norden—he has had a most regrettable—"

"There's no time to talk of that now," cut in Garrity gruffly. "You may go, *Herr Leutnant*."

The young Boche saluted like an automaton and withdrew. Garrity handed Speyer his purloined order.

"I would like to talk with you alone, *Herr Speyer*," he said in an imperious voice. The *Hauptmann* was looking at him keenly.

"Very well, *mein colonel*," said Speyer coldly. He turned to the *Hauptmann*. "Von Blohm, we

will be ready to take off again in half an hour or less. Check over all of the electric fighters. Have the pilots get into their safety-suits. Then report to me here with them."

Von Blohm went out and down the stairs. Speyer closed the door and faced Garrity. There was a look of lurking passion in his eyes.

"So you have come to supersede me, *Herr Colonel*," he said thickly. "After the years I have prepared for this great moment. After all my dreams of fame—when I would show them that Speyer was not the fool they all thought. And now—"

"Enough of this," snapped Garrity in a harsh voice. "Show me your present plan and tell me exactly how far you have gone."

Speyer glared at him with his close-set eyes. "You think I will tell you everything, and then you will go ahead and finish my work. You will take the credit, and Gustav Speyer will be forgotten."

He whirled suddenly toward a narrow section of the wall which was not hidden by switchboards and apparatus. His long fingers touched at the side of a panel. A small hidden door sprang back. Within the niche thus disclosed was a gleaming copper switch, on the handle of which was secured a square piece of iron. Above the iron was an electro-magnet which in turn was connected to a set of gears and a brass clock.

"I have foreseen something like this," Speyer said fiercely. "But no one will take the fruit of my labor from me. A click of that switch and this whole base will be blown to the skies! It will take but a touch of my fingers, *Herr Colonel*."

"You are making a mistake," said Garrity in a hasty tone. "I have not come to take credit for your work. I am not going to supersede you—I am simply going with you on the next flight. My instructions are to check over the military phases of your plan and to accompany you on the mission."

Speyer's tense expression began to change, but there was still suspicion in his eyes.

"I warn you, I can still wreck this base—even when we have taken off," he growled. "So do not try to trick me."

"I do not know enough of your complicated apparatus to carry out the mission, even if I cared to," snapped Garrity. "Now we must make haste,

or the Allies may find some way to wreck this marvelous plant of yours.”

“They could send a thousand planes against it and we could laugh at them,” boasted Speyer. “The invisible force-wall would even stop a shell from a railway gun.”

“But there is still danger,” insisted Garrity. “When you switch off the current to let our ships in and out, some lurking Allied planes might dive inside and bomb the base.”

Speyer shook his ugly head. “We always turn on the floodlights and search the sky, to be sure there are none near. And if there were a risk, I would even switch on the power if it meant sacrificing one of our own men—rather than let one of the ac-cursed Allies through.”

Garrity managed a grim smile. “It would be unfortunate, but with such great stakes you could not do anything else. And now, tell me quickly where we will strike next. You have already destroyed most of the American squadrons in the first sector, *hein?*”

“All but the *verfluchte Teufelhund* squadron,” snarled Speyer. “It was one of their pilots who wrecked the projector. But we will make them pay. We strike their base first of all.”

A HOT flame burned back of Garrity’s eyes, but he masked it with lowered lids. “Good,” he grunted. “And then?”

“Here is the map—the most important American ammunition dumps in that sector are already gone. And the Devildogs are our only obstacle. Unless they have rushed new squadrons in from their other sector, we will soon be free to work without interference. First we will wreck their dumps and their railheads, then their Headquarters. From there to the concentration camps and on north to the next sector. We will have time to wipe out most of the French squadrons before dawn. After that it will be easy to pick what we choose. The ship is armored enough to turn any stray bullets or shrapnel that might come our way. But there is no likelihood of their hitting us—the electric motors give us so much speed their gunners cannot come anywhere near us,”

Garrity’s eyes flickered. Electric motors! So that was the secret of the raiding formation’s high speed. Using the power transmitted by the

enormous antennae on top of the mast, not only the raider but the black fighter escort ships were driven by electric motors. No wonder the planes had not been heard! There would be no sound of engines, nor even the beat of the propellers when the raiders slowed the motors in gliding to an attack. And the Germans could cruise as long as they wished, for they would not have to return for fuel.

“How many escort planes have you left?” Garrity asked quickly.

“Only five of the electric ships,” muttered Speyer. “But I have just sent a wireless message to our Staffel commanders on this Front, so we shall have help if we need it.”

He jerked around as there came a rap at the door. “Come in,” he snapped.

It was the *Leutnant* who had brought Garrity to the control room. “The chief engineer reports that the plane is ready to go,” he said eagerly,

“Tell him to set the switches for taking over the remote control,” ordered Speyer. “Then go below and take your post. And this time keep the power transmitter aligned on us to the fraction of a degree. We shall need every volt of power.”

The *Leutnant* vanished. Speyer went to a cabinet in one corner and took out two odd-looking suits which appeared to be made of some peculiar cloth heavily covered with asbestos. At the tops were round hoods with small openings for mouth and nostrils and two large colored glass lenses for goggles. Speyer handed one of the suits to Garrity.

“Here is the chief engineer’s safety-suit, *Herr* Colonel. It is the only one that would fit you. I will order him to remain at the dynamo room tonight and take the second engineer in the ship, for it would not be safe for him to go without a suit. Even in the little fighters, the static charge which accumulates on the ships during a long flight near the big projector plane is enough to kill a man when he steps to the ground. Only last night a mechanic was electrocuted when he became careless in discharging a plane that had just landed.”

THERE was a peculiar look in Speyer’s eyes as he mentioned the mechanic’s death. The pupils of his eyes enlarged and his lips drew back in a curious mirthless grin. Garrity remembered again

the stories of the man's sadistic mania for electrocuting men.

He put on the suit, which was lined with rubberized fabric. Carelessly he stuck his Luger in the belt. As he drew down the hood and fastened the straps, he heard sounds of steps. He stared through the yellowish lenses and saw several pilots attired in safety-suits coming through the doorway.

The leader raised his hood and strode toward Speyer. Garrity recognized von Blohm.

"Everything is ready," the Prussian flyer said curtly. "My men are here for the orders."

"Look at the map on the table," Speyer answered gruffly as he drew on his suit. "Make a note of the objectives—then tell your men."

"*Der Teufelhund Jagdstaffel*," growled von Blohm as he bent over the map. "The swine! I will be glad when I see them burned to a crisp. They have brought down more German ships and pilots than any other Allied squadron. The accursed devils seem to have hell's own luck."

Cyclone Garrity's eyes narrowed behind the lenses of his hood. This was one night when the Devildogs needed all of hell's luck and heaven's, too!

Speyer was working swiftly among his banks of switches. Red and green lights winked on and off as he plugged in connections and adjusted the rheostats. From underneath there came a whirring sound.

A distant bell jangled for a moment. Speyer glanced out of the window. After a second he turned to von Blohm.

"Are you ready?" he demanded. "Or does it take all night for your men to memorize a simple course like that?"

Von Blohm straightened to make an angry retort. Garrity cut him short. In the last few seconds he had begun to feel a terrific tension, as though something were about to break and wreck his well-laid plan.

"Take your men and get to your ships," he directed the angry Prussian.

Von Blohm hesitated, then started to leave. Several of his men went on out. Suddenly there was a commotion on the stairs. Von Blohm gave a cry of astonishment.

"*Teufelhund!*" he shouted.

CHAPTER VI HOODED PILOTS

GARRITY went rigid. They had caught Lucky! He slid toward the secret niche where the destruction switch was hidden. If it came to the worst.... Then a frightful thought leaped into his brain. Lucky was not in Marine uniform! Von Blohm could not have known!

Too late he snatched at the gun in his belt. Half a dozen armed Heinies were in the doorway, their pistols drawn. And behind them, pale under the blood which had run down the side of his face, was von Norden, in Garrity's Marine uniform.

"What does this mean?" rasped Speyer.

"It means there is a spy in this room!" roared von Norden. "I am Colonel von Norden, and my car was held up by two damned Americans at the sentry-chain up the road."

Speyer's eyes dilated wildly as he stared from Garrity to von Norden from under his uplifted hood.

"It's a trick," barked Garrity. "Call the *Leutnant* who arrived during the fight—"

Von Norden smiled fiercely. "You fool! I have already found a man who knows me. A *Korporal*—"

"Another spy, *Herr Speyer*," growled Garrity. He was within three feet of the secret niche. The game was up. His chance to win and still live was gone. But that damned black raider would not cruise through Allied skies again!

"My dispatch case!" suddenly bawled the Prussian colonel. He pointed to where Garrity had dropped it on a table. "Ask this lying fiend to name its contents!"

The armed Germans pressed forward. Speyer glared at Cyclone Garrity. With a lightning movement Garrity spun and drove his fist against the spot where Speyer's fingers had touched the panel. The door of the niche slid back.

A terrified scream burst from Speyer's throat as Garrity's hand flashed toward the switch.

Like a branding iron, something searing hot cut across Cyclone Bill's arm. Numbed to the elbow, Garrity's arm fell at his side. Before he could thrust his other hand into the niche, the Germans were on him. Struggling, cursing, he was dragged into the center of the room. Speyer closed the

secret door and turned, his face drained of blood by fear,

“So it is the truth!” he shrieked. “You are a spy. *Gott im Himmel*, and I was about to let you go on board the big ship!”

He faced von Norden tremblingly. “I had no way of knowing, *Herr* Colonel. Even now I do not understand.”

Von Norden explained in a few brief words: “I understand, *Herr* Speyer, that you have an unusual way of putting spies to death,” he ended viciously. “I would like to see this pig Garrity dead before we leave. It is not safe with him here—and alive.”

Speyer’s jaw fell, “Garrity!” he said hoarsely. “You are sure this is Garrity?”

“There can be no mistake! And there is another of his murderous flock here—the one who pretended to be his chauffeur. You had better search for him quickly.”

Speyer whirled and gave the Germans an order. They rushed down the stairs, leaving von Blohm and one of his hooded pilots covering Garrity with their Lugers. Speyer turned on Garrity with a gloating look in his close-set eyes.

“So you like to play a part, *hein*? Very well, I shall let you play a great one.”

He glanced at von Blohm.

“You know where the death-chair is located, just underneath here. You and your pilot take him there. Strap him into the chair, after you take off the asbestos suit. I will follow as soon as I set the remote control relays for the projector.”

JUST then the telephone switchboard buzzer sounded fiercely. Speyer snatched at the phone. In a moment he dropped it, muttering.

“We shall have to hurry, *Herr* Colonel. The High Command is angry because we have not taken off yet.”

Von Norden frowned. Then he beckoned to von Blohm.

“Give me your gun. I will help strap this hulking dog into the death-chair, while you get everyone ready on the field. Besides, I intend to strip my uniform off the swine’s back. I shall need it tonight, in case by some ill luck we are forced down in Allied territory. With this damned *Teufelhund* rag, I would be shot as a spy.”

Speyer stared at him. “Then you are going in the big ship?” he said nervously,

“I shall be in command,” von Norden replied haughtily. “I have details of a new plan for the attack on the next sector, there in my dispatch case. When we are in the air I will explain them to you,”

Speyer flushed darkly. Garrity waited tensely. Would the enraged scientist carry out his former threat and blow up the base? Or had that near approach to extinction been enough for him? Apparently so, for Speyer at last nodded glumly.

“In that case, *mein* colonel, you had better also take the safety-suit the prisoner is wearing. It is the only one that will fit you.”

At gunpoint Garrity was shoved down the stairway to the next landing. Von Blohm opened the door and then handed the colonel his gun. He had let his hood drop over his face, but his lips showed in a mocking smile as he threw a last jibe at Garrity.

“You will not have long to wait in hell. Major Garrity! We shall soon send the rest of your dirty flock to join you!”

Garrity did not answer. Von Blohm hurried on down the stairs. The other pilot shut the door, prodding Garrity into the room with his Luger. In spite of himself, Cyclone Garrity felt a shiver go over him as he saw the grim death-chair before him. Speyer had built a replica of a death-house chair, with its electrodes, its straps, and even the black cap to hide the face of the doomed man. Along the wall was a list of names and dates. Garrity’s eyes tightened to slits. Other poor devils had gone before him in this hideous chair. Then he thought of Lucky Lane. They would catch Lucky—and he would be the next to sit in the death-chair!

SUDDENLY his eyes dilated. At one end of the room, near the screen which hid the control switches for the chair, was an operating table, and beyond it a cabinet of surgical knives. Speyer even carried out the knife-thrust that made sure of death after electrocution!

“Take off that suit, *Schwein!*” von Norden ordered brusquely, as Garrity halted beside the chair. Then he motioned to the other man. “Keep him covered carefully while I get rid of this uniform.”

He laid his Luger on a small stand well out of Garrity's reach. Instantly the hooded pilot whipped about and jammed his Luger into the Prussian's ribs.

"Make a sound and I'll blow out your guts!" he said fiercely.

At the sound of that voice, Cyclone Garrity gave a hoarse exclamation of amazement.

"Lucky! For God's sake, how did you pull this?"

"One of von Blohm's pilots got suspicious when he saw me behind a ship in a hangar. I had to slug him. When they all started putting on those suits, I waited till no one was looking and got into one, too. Then von Blohm herded us upstairs—you know the rest."

"We're still in a hot spot," said Garrity, "We've got to tie this bird and gag him. Use my belt. Get him back of that screen—in case anybody happens to look in here."

Lucky was unceremoniously hustling von Norden toward the screen as Garrity spoke. The Prussian's face was blotched purple and white with fear and rage. Garrity stopped to pick up the German's pistol. He heard a choked cry. As he spun around, he saw Lucky trip over a leg of the switchboard behind the screen. The German was leaping for the cabinet of knives. There was a tinkle of glass as the Boche's big fist drove through the glass and grasped a knife.

Like a tiger, Garrity launched himself on the German as the gleaming knife struck down toward Lucky Lane. He dared not fire, for the shot would bring Germans by the score. Cursing hoarsely, he hurled his pistol when he saw he could not reach the spot in time. It hit squarely against von Norden's descending arm. The knife fell clattering to the floor.

Garrity dived after his gun, but he was too late. Von Norden's hand closed on the butt. Lucky Lane was on his knees, gasping as though breathless.

Garrity's fingers clutched the knife as the German seized the Luger. Desperately he ripped it upward. There was a hissing moan and the Prussian collapsed. The knife had gashed his heart.

Cyclone Bill flung a glance at the door, his mind swirling. He bent over and hurriedly dragged the body of the German to the death-

chair. Lucky Lane got to his feet and came after him, breathing heavily.

"He knew I wouldn't dare fire on account of the noise," Lucky said in a hoarse voice. "He shoved me over that switchboard and then kicked me in the stomach—"

"It's all right now," said Garrity hastily. "Help me get him in this chair and strap him tight."

"But what the hell—he's already dead—"

"Do what I say," rasped Garrity. "Speyer will be here any second!"

Suddenly there was a clatter of feet on the steps outside. Garrity heard a guttural Boche voice.

"*Herr Speyer!* A recognition signal—from an Allied two-seater plane beyond the force-wall! *Der Kapitän* says it is one of our agents from the Allied lines!"

Speyer's answer was inaudible. There was an indistinct reply from the unseen messenger, then the clatter of feet again.

GARRITY and Lucky Lane were working feverishly. Jerking off von Norden's left boot, Cyclone Bill ripped open one breeches leg and secured a curved electrode. The second electrode he fastened in place on the dead man's head. Lucky Lane was busily tying the broad straps which held the limp body from slipping down in the chair.

Garrity unbuttoned the dead man's blouse and wadded most of von Norden's shirt over the knife wound. He quickly buttoned the blouse, wiped the oozing blood from the slit in the left side and yanked the black cap over the dead Prussian's face.

He had just finished hiding the blood-stained knife and wiping the crimson smear from his hands when he heard someone at the door. He pulled the asbestos hood over his head and was yanking at the straps of the chair when Speyer came in. He jerked around, imitating von Norden's imperious accents.

"We are fools to delay our mission for this! Get it over with and let us be gone!"

Speyer started toward the switch-board behind the screen at the front of the chair. Then he stopped, leering out from his lifted hood.

"Raise the black cap," he said with a ghoulis smile. "I wish to see his face—"

“Kill him and have it over!” rasped Garrity. “Otherwise he will die by firing squad when we come back!”

Speyer scowled and went behind screen. “Say your prayers, fool,” he said with a hideous laugh, “unless you are frightened to death.”

He stared out from behind the screen for a second, then dodged from view. Garrity took a deep breath, and a cold perspiration broke out on his body as he waited. Suddenly there came an ominous sawing sound, a whirring that made his blood turn icy. The dead body of the German leaped against the straps. Garrity looked away, gritting his teeth. The man was dead—but the horror of it was still there. He turned on Speyer grimly as the current went off.

“Enough!” he snarled. “Get out to your ship!”

“But he may not be dead—”

The door burst open with startling force. Garrity wheeled, his hand on his pistol. A white-faced man in the uniform of the American army stood there, panting.

“*Herr Speyer*—the *verfluchte* Devildogs—they are on their way to the base—you may run into them as you leave.”

Speyer grated out a curse. “How do you know this?”

“From another agent—he told me that one of the Devildog pilots, a huge Irishman, was forced down in the fight this evening, but not hurt. He remembered the course you were taking when you turned back to the base. He commandeered a motorcycle and raced to his drome. They are coming with bombs—with every plane they could get into the air—”

Cyclone Garrity felt a wild thrill go through him. Then he started. The Devildogs would run into the invisible wall!

“We must take off before they can get near the base!” he exclaimed. “*Herr Speyer*, there is no time to lose!”

“If we wait till they reach the wall—”

“Do as I order!” bawled Garrity with all the harshness of a high-ranking Prussian.

SPEYER yanked his hood over his head and ran out of the room. Garrity peremptorily motioned the white-faced spy to follow. Then he strode out with Lucky at his side. Suddenly he halted.

“My dispatch case!” he said. “I must have the maps!”

He flung up the stairs to the control room. Speyer, at the bottom of the steps, started to follow. Garrity reached the room and ran madly to the secret niche. The door flashed open. He set the hands of the clock with almost shaking fingers, then closed the door. As Speyer entered, breathing fast, he was opening the dispatch case. He snapped it shut instantly and hurried toward the door.

“I was afraid you might accidentally bump against one of the relays,” mumbled Speyer. “If there is the slightest thing wrong with even one relay, the power might fail us at a critical time.”

“I touched nothing, simpleton,” snapped Garrity. “Do you think I am a numbskull?”

They went through a side passage and onto the field. It was brightly lit. At least three hundred Germans were gathered there, most of them mechanics and engineers for the plant. The huge black raider was pointed into the wind, its propellers moving slowly under the power of the silent electric motors. Back of it, five black fighters waited. Off to the side, nearer the central building, was the Bristol two-seater in which the spy and his pilot had arrived. Mechanics had just completed refueling it. As Garrity stepped out of the door, the engine was started again.

Garrity gripped Lucky Lane by the shoulder as Speyer hurried toward his chief engineer for a last order.

“Edge over toward that Bristol. Watch me! We may have to—”

“*Herr Colonel!*” shouted a frantic voice. “The other spy—the American—he is pretending to be one of our pilots!”

Von Blohm was dashing across the field, yelling a wild warning. At his heels were several hooded pilots. Garrity threw a swift look at Lucky. Lucky was within ten yards of the idling Bristol. He gave Lucky a quick nod and then whirled to meet the Germans.

“I’ll handle this,” he thundered. “Lift your hoods, all of you.”

They hastily complied. He stared at them, then pointed toward the big raider.

“Check up on the pilots in there!”

All but von Blohm scattered quickly. Garrity strode for the Bristol, his gun raised as though to

cover Lucky Lane. Suddenly a hand snatched at his hood and jerked it up. Von Blohm's furious eyes glared at him.

"That voice—I knew it was not the same!" the Prussian raged.

His Luger was out of its holster. Two shots crashed, one a fraction of a second before the other. Von Blohm sagged to the ground, screaming.

"*Der Teufelhund!* It is Garrity—escaping—"

CHAPTER VII THE INVISIBLE WALL

GARRITY flung himself into the front pit of the Bristol just as Lucky Lane tumbled headlong into the rear. There was a rattle of shots.

"The force-wall!" someone shouted. "Shut them inside!"

The Bristol charged forward, all but mowing down a score of Boche in its path. From the nearest Germans came a spatter of pistol fire. Then Garrity sent the ship roaring into a crazy chandelle across the top of the raider.

They were free—but it meant nothing, and he knew it. For they were shut in by the invisible wall! Up till that moment he had thought it existed only to hold out foes. Now he knew they were trapped by that weird unseen wall that was like a granite mountain.

Searchlights flashed up at them, brilliantly, blazing. From the gun-towers by the hangars erupted a fierce hail of Maxim lead. Garrity tripped his guns and raked the nearest gunners. They melted into heaps. Across the crowded drome he plunged, chopping a bloody lane straight to the black raider. There was a chance he might hit some vital part.

Two of the black fighters streaked up at him. A venomous fire thudded through the Bristol's wings. Then he heard the rear-guns snarl into action under Lucky's touch. One of the black fighters slithered down in flames. Frightened Germans ran from underneath the spinning wreck.

Then the great raider was racing across the drome. It lifted into the air and swung around grimly. He saw the death-projector swing out of its streamlined recess. Speyer was coming to blast them down!

A whipping light sprayed the western sky for a second. Garrity gave a choking cry. Under that shifting beam he saw a swarm of ships—Spads—his Devildogs! Coming to their doom—heading down toward the deadly invisible wall to crash and die!

With a strangled curse he flipped back at the huge death-ship. If it was crashed from the skies, the remote control might by a miracle end the power of the force-wall. There was only one way—to take it with him in one last terrific smash.

A black fighter came down at them from a thousand feet. Garrity hunched low and slammed the Bristol's nose up in a screeching climb, jerking his nose guns onto the darting black ship for one murderous burst. The fighter lurched and then plunged on, with Spandaus belching flame and death.

Frenziedly Cyclone Bill stared at the charging Spads. Not half a mile from the invisible wall!

"Oh, God!" he groaned in agony.

With a violent upward twist he drove straight into the plummeting fighter and raked it from tip to tip. The crumpled black wings were not a yard from his tail as he dove madly into the clear.

Directly before him was the black raider. It banked savagely as he glared down his trips. The swinging projector lanced through the sky, jerked up to center its frightful doom upon them. Lucky was pouring a hellish rain of steel into the armored monster, but in vain.

WITH a sob of fury Cyclone Bill slammed his stick hard down. The nose of the raider swam up as he plunged into that deadly dive. Then with a tremendous, dizzy roll, the great ship rocked from under him and he ripped on past!

There was one awful second, when he knew that he had failed. He zoomed, staring up at the probing death fang that strove to follow his frantic banks.

Then—*crash!* A colossal spout of red ruin hurtled up from the base below. Flaming wreckage streaked past the Bristol's wings. The two-seater pitched in a veritable storm of fire. Dazedly Cyclone Bill looked down. The gigantic mast was crashing to earth in a broken mass of steel frames. Below, there was not a sign of what had been the buildings of the base. It was like

looking into the depths of hell itself. Garrity drew a long breath. In that frightful tension he had completely forgotten the time-bomb he had set.

A sinister shadow flashed before his eyes. The black raider, its engines robbed of their power, was dropping on top of him. He ruddered out madly. The nose of the raider slewed toward him. He saw a great, jagged hole torn in the right side where some of the upflung debris had crashed through.

Through that jagged aperture he saw the face of Speyer, glaring down a flaming Spandau barrel. Garrity pulled the Bristol about in a snarling split as the bullets pierced his wings. The smoking Vickers before him drummed out a maddened chant.

Speyer wildly threw up one hand. The Spandau fell from his grasp. He reeled forward and then pitched headlong through the hole in the raider's side. Over and over he tumbled, till he was lost to sight in the billowing fires below.

The black raider dipped sluggishly and rolled onto its side. Like some great bird of evil returning to the Hades from which it flew, it dived into the middle of the flaming base and was gone.

Cyclone Bill lifted the Bristol in a climbing turn. Pulling off his hood, he watched the soaring Devildog Spads that circled about him. Suddenly one of the Spads sheered in until their wings were almost touching. A huge figure loomed up from the pit of the Spad. A massive, tousled head became, visible. And by the fierce glare of the burning base Cyclone Bill saw the joy-swept, grinning countenance of Pug Flanagan.

The huge Irishman raised a mighty, ham like hand in a wild salute. Then it plunged into the cockpit. A Very star burned in the sky above, then another.

A score of Devildogs closed in, half falling out of their pits to stare at the riddled Bristol. Cyclone Garrity grinned and waggled his wings. The yells of twenty Devildogs rose in a joyous din above the engines' drone.

Cyclone Bill turned and looked back at Lucky Lane.

"Let's go home!" he said.

And with Cyclone Bill at the head, the Devildog squadron roared up steeply into the night.