

# Duck Soup for Elmer



*She is carryin' a tray which has got grab and a big glass of milk on same.*

By JOE ARCHIBALD

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*Ritzmeister von Gluck was making things so tough on the tarmac where Elmer of the Air Corps parked his Spad that G.H.Q. threatened to move the whole drome back. But there was a very special reason why Elmer didn't want that to happen—a reason named Gwendolyn. Now don't get us wrong—Gwendolyn was no lady!*

A airdrome in France as usual.

The best one.

DEAR PETE:

Since I have been going to school for the censhures in my spare time, the same of which is not much, your billy doo sounded more lowbrow than ever and maybe I ought to send you the grammar and the dictionary I got, but on second thoughts I guess even Hoodiny could not make a silk suitcase out of a elephant's ear. Cadawalder Simms, the old buzzard of a C.O., invited me into the operation' shack and says, "Well, Hubbard, you sure have improved in your studies, and if you want any help, jus say so." Then he harumphs and sticks out his chest and says some thing about how he was a major it English oncet and was also a road scholar.

"Well," I says to him, "I would no' brag about it as I would rather be corporal in a Yankee outfit and let the engineers build the roads as that is what they was hired for," He calls me a lot of names which of course I can't repeat as I am a orfiser and a gentleman, and says, "Get out before you are kicked out."

"Sure, teacher, I'll go," I tossed at him, and am I sore? "Maybe you are mad because I didn't bring a apple with me." Well, he threw a brick at me which he used for a paper weight, and when I get time, I am going to have him broke.

Pokey Cook and me got hysterics over your missile in which you tell about the big battle you saw, and Pokey says he did not know that the U.S. was giving away telescopes to the ordinary A.E.F. cooks. Of course it is all in fun, Pete, as you would know if you met Pokey, and that reminds me of another hair raisin' adventure I have went through for the Democrats, not that they thanked me none.

It all happened when the Heinies pushed the Yanks back a mile or maybe three in the G—.— sector (censhured) about two weeks ago. Not that it meant anything, as the brass hats wanted to get back there anyways as it is around where there is a lot of swell Frog barrooms. The Kaiser, of course, thinks it is all over but the binge in Paree, and he takes a lot of Vons and Fokkers from one place and puts them in another, the same of which is in our neighborhood and is not going to do us no good.

No matter what happens in the gare, the air corpse always is holding the bag, Pete, and this is why. The Vons who came in are called the Red Harvesters and they are as well- known all over the gare as Smith Bros. are in the U. S. They are even a quicker cure for a cough if a guy wants to go out and thumb his nose at them.

The Kraut who is the leader is called Ritzmaster von Gluck, and compared to him, Richthofen was as tough as a nursemaid wheeling a go-cart if you get what I mean. He has only got maybe ninety or a hundred Alleyed ships, and if he keeps it up he'll be a ace, hey, Pete?

Well, that's always the way. If I shut my eyes and pointed to the place on the map of the world where I wanted to go, I'd pick the crater of a volcano like Vesooivus or worst. Most of the bums when they heard the glad tidings started runnin' to fortune tellers and writing letters home, saying for the folks not to wait up too long as they most likely will not be back.

NO SOONER has the Ritzmaster moved to our street when the Old Man calls us in like we was a football team and says the only way to do anything is to score early and then hold the opposite side for the rest of the game. I'd like to know, Pete, how they pick C.O.s for the air corpse, and I guess they do it by asking a blind man to take names out of a hat.

We got maybe twelve Spads, two of same being about as useful as kites. and we're goin' over to wipe out the Ritzmaster's hangout. That is a master stroke, like sicking a snail onto a police dog, hey, Pete? Well, Cadawalder Simms is the boss, and early the next A.M. before the sun was even stretching, we was out on the field, shaking hands all around before climbing into the sky buggies.

Pokey looks at me and says, "Well. I've seen about everything except Venus de Milo and she's got both arms busted off so I guess I didn't miss much." And then he ties a daisy to one of his struts and climbs in. That is a hell of a kind of morals for a squadron, hey, Pete?

We was all flying high up above the Kraut trenches sooner than we wanted to be when who comes along but the Ritzmaster with his Harvesters, the same of which is not things to cut corn with but are Fokkers painted redder than fire trucks, and he has maybe forty guys with him and that is taking a chance, hey? They been using a big cloud for a hangar and are on top of us before you can say, "Fish cakes!"

A lot of Spandows are opening up and the noise is like a hundred riveters working near us some place. Right in front of me my top wing was getting plenty of ventilation and out of the corner of my eye, as I was flyin' towards home, I seen a Spad going into spasms like a snooty dame who has just had a mouse dropped down her back.

In no time at all we know why the Ritzmaster's bunch of Vons is called the Harvesters, and everybody is thinking about how man more years he'd like to live if they can duck the Heinie slugs. It ain't a fight Pete. It's a race, and the experts who built the Spads say they can do a hundred and fifteen miles each and every hour, but if I didn't kick a hundred and fifty out of the one I was in, then you are the general of the Swiss Army. Well, I shudder as I think of that patrol so I will skip over same. We landed with what we got left and I got out of my ship and headed for Googins.

"You are a great flight leader," I says, "just like little Lord Fawntleroy was a six-day bike rider. Maybe if I used my influence, I could get you a hammock to sleep in while you are leading us upstairs."

"I will report you to the Old Man," he yips. "I will see that you are taught how to act with a superior orfiser, you fresh bum!"

"I am bustin' out cryin', I am so scairt," I told him. "And if you report me, Pokey Cook and me will get you alone when the gare is aver and slug you all the way home."

"You and Pokey Cook ?" he throws at me. "Huh, look around and see if you can find him. It looks like it's just too bad, Hubbard. I saw him sliding down toward the Kraut lines too fast to be just playing." And he walks off and leaves me flat, Pete, and did I turn white all over? You could of knocked me over with a spanner wrench by just showin' it to me. I been coming back from the Rhine- land so fast myself that I forgot all about Pokey.

Well, I says to myself, Pokey Thust of read it in the cards yesterday and. that is why he picked the daisy, the same of which I mentioned before. I keep watching the skies until noon, Pete, but Pokey don't show up and I guess maybe it is all over, so I say to myself, "Sailor gare!" which is a expression all the Frogs use when they hear bad news. When the day is all done, the Ritzmaster has piled up a score like the New York Giants would hang up against the Rumford Junction Bearcats. And the big Von by all reports has got his hundred and second, hundred and third, and hundred and fourth Alleyed ships. At mess we got it between the eyes from the old walrus.

"WELL," he says, "I heard from G.H.Q., and he says by the way the air corpse is clicking the Germans ought to be in Barcelona—" the same of which is Spain, Pete—"in the next two or three days. The Boche have come up another mile on the ground and unless something is done about the Ritzmaster, the drome'll have to be pulled up and moved back in a hurry as the Germans will be sniping at us from behind rocks before we know it. The Alleyed counterattack is held up because von Cluck or whatever his name is has been strafing troops and hogging all the scies so that the sparrers don't dare to even take off from their nests in the trees!"

All of a sudden I get a awful jolt as I have thought of a very serious matter. I drown out Googins, who is just going to say something, the same of which I know wouldn't have no sense to it anyways.

“We got to get von Cluck and the Harvesters,” I says. “This drome ain’t going to be moved, as me and poor old Pokey has been—”

“Shut up, Hubbard!” growled the C.O. “Who asked you to open your big yawp? I’m running this outfit and if I see fit to have the place moved, moved it will be. You’re just a lieutenant in the air corpse and shut up while a major and a captain are around.” The spirit of the Alleys, hey, Pete?

Well, I walked right out of the place, Pete, and went over to FI— (censured as usual) to get drunk. I felt like a lot of cabbage without corned beef when I got to the estaminet, as Pokey ain’t there, and I am in a awful mood whilst I am bending the old elbow over the bar. One or two buzzards come in and they made a crack about what the Ritzmaster done to our outfit and so I up and poked both of them before they could raise a arm, and then the lights went out.

Maybe three or four hours later I woke up and I am propped up against a garbage can some place and am I covered all over with onion skins, spud peelings, etc.! So you see how I missed Pokey. If he was there, the barroom would of looked like a bomb hit same, and I almost busted out cryin’ like a high school dame at the pretty pass I come to.

All that night the bunk under me shook like it was caught near the Artic Circle with no clothes on. All the guns of the Alleys and Heinies was going off all at once and the same time, and a halfwit like you could figure out what a nice time we was going to have with the Vons next day. All the time I expected to look up and see a squarehead with a coal bucket over his dome peek in and say, “Raws mit you to a prison camp !“

I also think of Gwendolyn, but it is not the dame you think but something I have named after her, but I will not tell you what until I get along into the epistol more. I even got out of bed and went out of the hut in my union suit and down a hill to a old upturned ammo case, the same of which me and Pokey had took to a clump of bushes a day or more before. Gwendolyn was sittin’ pretty so I breathed easy once more and went back to bed but not to sleep.

Well, to make a long story shorter, we got up in the morning as usual and watched B flight take off. Maybe thirty minutes later they was back again—that is, all you could expect to be back—and the flight leader says he wants to resign his commission and become a private in the trenches

as you can duck bullets there once in a while. He was standing on one foot and tryin’ to paste back a eyebrow that was almost sliced off by a Kraut bullet. The Spad he got back in looked like it must of been rented out to a army of starving beavers and the groundhogs wouldn’t dare to wheel it in the hangar as it might fall apart.

Now you can see with half a eye that we got to merge with six or seven more squadrons if we want to lick the Ritzmaster. But the old buzzard, Simms, just makes crazy passes at the air and jumps up and down and swears until his voice begins to squeak like a rusty hinge, but even then you could hear him acrost the Alps if you was there, Pete. It takes until noon to get another flight organized and it is Googins, me and etcetery. I go down and give Gwendolyn the once-over, whisper some words into her ear, and then I says a prayer and took off in a Spad that by rights should of been crossed off the U. S. books.

WELL, when we got upstairs over where a million guys was running around on the carpet, we seen six Camels running away from a lot of Tripes. We do the same thing as von Cluck is still around with a swarm of Vons and it looks like he never goes down and must get gassed up on the moon or Jupiter or some other planets. Googins every once in a while shows he’s got part of a brain. When we come down, he asks the Old Man, “Has the Alleys run out of ships?” It goes over big, and the C.O. says to Googins, “How would you like to go to Blois ?“ And Googins is there with the reparty and says, “Can I depend on same ?“

A murder is maybe saved by a big car coming on to the field and out of it jumped a pair of brass hats with uniforms that show wear from parking on shay longs, the same of which is Frog couches, Pete. I have spelt it wrong but it’ll have to pass as I have threw all my books away. Let the censures look it up, hey, Pete?

Well, after a while we find out that we can expect to start moving out almost any day, and that night the old buzzard has almost made up his mind to do it anyways. He’s for going right over to the Channel and dumpin’ all the Spads, pilots, greaseballs, etcetery into same and then desert the U. S. Air Corpse.

He don’t show up for mess, and a orderly tells me he is in his quarters talking to himself and

drinking eggnogs and takin' one aspirin tablet after another. Well, I got to take the cow by both horns and also ears, so I crashed in on him and you should of seen him, Pete! He looked like the worst half of the firm of Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hide, but that is too deep for you, so just forget about it.

"Sir," I says, having to be polite, "I got something to tell you and it is important to the morals of the air corpse."

"Well, say it before I lose control of myself," he bellers. "Whatever it is, it don't mean anything." I hold onto my temper, Pete, and opened up fast.

"If we move the drome now," I says, "the squadron won't have no roast duck for Thanksgiving! We got to do something about von Cluck and—"

Now he just groans and tears at his hair—can you imagine, Pete? "Roast duck !" he hollers. "R—what in hell? Have you gone as goofy as you look, Hubbard? Duck! Of all the—"

"Sure," I says. "A Frog hick give me Gwendolyn and twelve eggs before he lit out for southern France with his family and a pair of mules. That means we'll have twelve ducks by Thanksgiving and—"

The C.O. backs away like I was a book salesman, and I figger he was looking for something to hit me with if I got violent.

"If we move out, Gwendolyn'll be scared away and the eggs will spoil, and if you think the other bums here don't want roast duck when Thanksgiving comes around, you're just crazy !" I says and I am not making no mincemeat with any words. "When I tell them the good news, you'll see them go out and lick hell out of the Ritzmaster if you will only ask for maybe a couple of more Spads."

"Get out of here and look out for squirrels !" he says to me, Pete. "In the morning I will send you out to have your head x-rayed. Not that there was ever anything in it. Roast duck! You halfwitted lunkhead!"

"Awright," I says quick, "but wait and see what happens to the Vons tomorrow! I am tellin' the bums tonight about Gwendolyn."

WELL, Pete, I broke the news to Googins and the bunch, and before I was through with them they was licking their chops and got a faraway

look in their eyes. It was just like holding a bag of catnip up to a alley cat just out of reach. I told them that if Gwendolyn was disturbed, we wouldn't ever have no roast duck and'll most likely be eating some kind of hash on Thanksgiving like you sling out to the doughs, Pete. They are wise that in maybe two or three more months they won't be much live stock with feathers on left in France, and even now they is only a rooster or two, same of which are tougher than a landlord's heart.

Well, Napoleon was right, as a army thinks of its stomach first, and they all follered me down to where Gwendolyn was sitting on the eggs. They even talked baby talk to her and tossed her some bread crumbs and she says quack-quack and snuggles down harder on the eggs. Wait'll you hear what happened the next day! I will tell you.

Me and Googins and the rest was whistlin' tunes and having fun like horses as we went to the Spads once more, and the Old Man looked at us and his tonsils almost showed as his big mouth opened to the limit. I went up close to him and says, "Well, maybe you'll believe what I say hereafter, hey?" He just swears and walked away like he had forgot and left his brain some place.

When we got over to - where the Yanks was trying to get ready for a push, what do we see but two Heinie Rumplers and three or four Fokkers? The Tripes are not the Harvesters and what we do to them is something that cannot be printed in a kid's Mother Goose book. The Rumplers tried to get back to where they belonged, Pete, but they had about as much chanct of doing same as you or me have of becoming war nurses. They was both kicked goggle-eyed just as the Ritzmaster von Cluck and all his red Tripes come to the picnic.

Googins was going to signal for a get-away when what do we all see but a flight of Yankee two-seaters over our domes and still some more Alleyed ships coming out of a cloud on the other side of the sky. Well, for onct it looked like old home week in the air corpse, and I guess maybe you don't think we turned a lot of them red Tripes black and blue.

The Ritzmaster himself took a shot at me, Pete, from a dizzy angle, and even then he just missed my carcass by a nit's whisker. It is no use to describe the awful malestorm (that is wrong but I have not got the dictionary). There is Tripes, Spads, D.H.s and Camels all in a mess and

throwing nickel-plated slugs all over the place, and some of them even hit where they was headed for and of courst it was just too bad.

I got a second to look downstairs and I seen a lot of guys running for some place and I hoped it wasn't the Germans running in the direction of Gwendolyn. A lot of guns also was going off and I bet myself right there that I would be deaf as a cobblestone for the rest of my life, if I still have some when the fight is over. Every time I seen a ship in front of me it was the Ritzmaster's, and I was beginning to think he was six or eight sets of twins.

This is how everything was happening. I would see a Alleyed ship go down, then three Tripes, then another Alleyed ship and two or four more Tripes. Before long the Ritzmaster tumbled that he bit off too much to hold in his face and he started to get where it is more healthy.

And then I pulled a awful error. I seen von Cluck's tail maybe two hundred yards ahead of me and I says here is duck soup and a medal so I chased him, but what do you think? I have forgot all the rest of the Alleys that are going home to crow. The first thin.g you, know my Hisso lays down on me and it is hell that they always do that when you are over Germany, Pete. Well, that is what I get for being so tempestous and I say to myself there goes the chanct of eating duck for Thanksgiving. It'll probably be boot leather soup instead in a Kraut klink some place and was that a pretty kettle of pickerel, hey, Pete?

I slid down and with me come a pair of the Ritzmaster's Harvesters. They got scythes painted on the sides of their Tripes and over the handles there is a little skull and crossbones. So you can see these here Krauts don't wear no Buster Brown collars and halfway socks, hey, Pete.

The two chaperones pick me out a place to light on, the same of which is as soft as the top of a man hole cover, and I lost both wheels and skidded along like I was riding a sled until the Spad's belly wore through to my pants. Then it slewed around and I got a whack on the dome from a piece of prop that bedded me down for a hour or two.

WHEN I woke up, I was laying right in the bottom of a truck, and there was a lot of Heinie doughs sitting all around me. I thought of Gwendolyn before anything else and ast a Kraut

will he see that I get some writing paper to send a billy doo back to my pals as I want them to see that Gwendolyn gets her chow on time. They give me a look and tapped their coal hods and laughed good and loud. If I had of been feeling better, I would of slammed them one and turned the truck upside down, but there is a big bump on my head and it is shooting out aches clear down to my insteps.

Pretty soon I got up and took a look around, and what do I see up ahead but a big Frog mansion, the same of which is called a shattow, and I seen two or three Tripes circling over the roof so I know I have come to a Heinie air corpse squadron. In front of the big shack I was pushed out and a lot of orfisers come out. They was all flyers, Pete, and one had a piece of glass over one eye and looked like he was the boss. He introduced himself and I a I m o s t swooned again. It was the Ritzmaster hisself, and I am right smack in the middle of the Harvesters.

"Wee gates!" he says with a twist to his face. "It is goot that you coom und visit us, Loitnant."

"Yeah ?" I come back and I can be nasty, hey, Pete? "You didn't do so good upstairs today, did you, von Cluck? Ha! I guess you know now there is lots of slips between a beer stein and the gullet, ja?"

He don't like that none, Pete, and must of been swearing in Kraut because he got as red as one of them Tripes and yipped at a little square-head with spectacles all over his face. I guess he must be a waiter or something as he had a cap on his head with the visor tore off. With a lot of motions he showed me inside the shattow and two Krauts with guns follered me in. I knew where I was going, Pete, and it is to a hair obust—that is, the staffel commander—and they always ask a prisoner to give away all the Alleyed secrets.

Well, I am finally shoved toward a big Kraut with a head like a ammo case and he is also wearing a monocle. I should think the snooty Krauts would be born with only one eye as that is all they ever seem to use.

"Well, Amerikaner," he snaps a turtle, "how many ships the leys have got, ja?"

"Maybe a hundred thousand," I says nasty. "There is six boats coming acrost the Channel loaded to the funnels tops with new ones, and each and every one has got eight machine guns on it. It is too bad, hair obust, as you will soon be

back in Berlin trying to scrape up money to pay for the gare. Outside of that I don't know a thing as I fell off a cow's back when I was two years old and broke my cerebrum.'

I am getting ready to be shot but he just waved his flipper and says something in Kraut, and is he sore, Pete? I was turning around to go out when what come in the door but a old gray-headed dame with glasses and a shawl over her head. She was carrying a tray that had got grub and a big glass of milk on same. She was so awful homely, Pete, that I couldn't believe it, and I look at her clost as I passed by and she almost dropped the tray.

Well, right then and there I almost got delirious and seen spots in front of my eyes, as what do you think? She is Pokey Cook, the damfool! Come clost to that, hey, and say nothing about tying it! Well, by a awful effort I got myself organized and walked out with the Krauts. After I was all out of breath from climbing stairs, they took me to a room and locked me in. Then I sat down and began wonderin' if I been knocked looney.

Pokey Cook a waiter for a Kraut C.O.! Well, now I know that anything is possible and that even you might become a admiral or worst before the gare is over. I was layin' there on the cot counting my fingers and givin' myself insanity tests when in comes Pokey hisseif, but he says to me very low, "Keep your And then he laid went out again. squareheads right so that is why.

HOURS later I was brought down to a dining room as big as Frink's old barn back home and I ate mess with all the Harvesters. All through the meal they kep' insultin' me in Kraut and hockin' the Kaiser maybe a thousand times. The Ritzmaster made some dirty remarks but I kept my mouth shut, and did I get even with the bum later? But that is crossin' a river before the bridge is built.

I was sitting there when all of a suddent I looked at a big painting on the wall. It was a big picture of Napoleon, Pete, and I seen something that almost made me holler right out loud like a fool. The eyes of the damn thing was moving as it looked at me, and one of them winked. Well, I says I am nutty now and no mistake, and whatever happens to me will be for the best as I would not like to have to live on acorns like the

squirrels do. I didn't dare to look at the picture again and so was glad when the party broke up.

Along toward midnight another crazy thing happens. There is a fireplace in the room and all of a sudden I feel a draft and the damn thing swung around and there stood Pokey with his skirt on!

"Sh-h-h!" he says. Just as if I could open my mouth, hey, Pete? He led me out through the hole where the fireplace was and then pushes a button and we was in a hallway as dark as Pittsburg at midnight.

"Listen, you old bum," whispers Pokey, "I got forced down while a big Kraut push was going on and I run to this shatto-w and hid. They was a couple of Frogs here when I come in but they got scairt when the Heinies' guns got in range and lit out. But before they left, they showed me a lot of things, Elmer. The old Frog what owned this big shack has got a cellar full of barrels of black powder, as he was all ready to blow up the place so the Krauts couldn't make a beer garden out of it.

"Well, this tunnel leads to the cellar and have I got a scheme! I dressed up like a old dame and I am chambermaid and waitress for the hair obust. So you thought maybe I was laid away among the daisies, huh? Haw, I seen you getting insulted downstairs and I almost had a fit when you looked at Napoleon. That was me that winked. The old Frog fixed that too and there's a machine gun right behind the picture. I could of kilt half of the Ritz- master's bums if I wanted to but I got a better idea. And who comes along but old Elmer hisseif? Boy! It's a small world, huh? Say, is Gwendolyn—"

"Oh, she's okay," I says, "but we got to wreck this joint or she'll be duck soup for some Heinies. The Y a n k s are getting pushed back and—"

"Come on," says Pokey, speaking low, "and keep your hand hooked into my shirt or you'll do a dive. And it won't help the Heinies none if they miss you, as they will never find this tunnel in a million years. That Frog had brains, huh? But he up and kicked off before he—here's the place."

It was a big dark cellar, Pete, and full of barrels. There was two candles burning, and on the floor some long fuses and a little auger. I says to Pokey, "Is they any coneyac there?" And he grins and pulls out a bottle from some place. I

took half of it and says to Pokey, "Where is the German army?"

"If you ever want to eat them roast ducks, you fathead," he says, "get busy and bore a hole in one of them barrels. I already got two of them fixed up. There's a iron door that we can open up and push them through."

Then he told me while we was working fast that all the Ritzmaster's hangars was at the bottom of a hill sloping down from the back of the shattow the same of which is where we was. I caught on quick like always, and I guess Pokey has found out he's got some brains at last. I bored a hole in a barrel and rammed in a fuse and Pokey looks at it and fixed it to the right length as he had figured just about how long it'd take for the barrel to roll down to where the Tripes was stowed away.

AFTER everything was fixed, we sipped some more coneyac and Pokey says, "After we push them three barrels through we are going to blow up the whole works, and them Vons upstairs'll think something hit them maybe, hey?" I just looked at him and says, "You damfool, how are we going to get out ourselves?"

Well, Pokey pointed toward one corner of the cellar and says, "There is a tunnel there that leads out to a dry well, the same of which is out of sight of the Ritzmaster's field and we can stay there for maybe two or three weeks without being found." He says, "I got grub and stuff already put there," so if you think you've read something just because you've read the Arabian Nights, you are crazy, Pete. Them stories was just nursery rimes and All Barber and Sinbad the Gob was just a pair of dumb eggs.

"This ought to fix it okay with Gwendolyn," says Pokey while we was waiting. "If she hatches out all of them eggs, we'll have some farm, hey, Elmer? I was thinking we could even put in a pig and a couple of cows if we could borrow or steal them. Then we could have bacon and calf's liver and butter and cheese and—"

Well, I am not so sure Pokey is not batty, too, but I just let him talk and yes him as that is the only way you can handle the bum. I was wondering about whether the Harvesters had found out I escaped and is it a panic, hey, Pete? After a while Pokey gets up and says, "Wait here,

as I am going to look through Napoleon and see if there's many Vons in the big room."

When he come back he says the room is full of Krauts and they're drinking plenty of vin blank, the same of which is Frog for white mule, Pete. The Ritzmaster is there hisself and is well oiled. I guess they thought was tucked nice and comfy in bed like one of the three bears and they should worry.

We sat and talked about Gwendolyn and the old hippercrit of a CO. for maybe another hour or two and then Pokey says he has to go up the hair obust's room and take him glass of medicine. I asked him why not arsenic but Pokey says to shut up as the old ramrod will get blowed up anyways as soon as he can get back. So Pokey pulls on his wig and his specks and goes out.

Well, I am full of pins and needles all the time he's gone as I'm afraid at the crucial moment the damfool will lose his wig or say some awful bum French and get caught, but I come back and says everything is the berries and to help him get the iron door open. There was a lot of t grass outside, he says, and noboi will get wise until the fireworks start.

The door made a awful squeak sound as we pulled it inward and I would of fell over if a firefly hadbumped against me. But Pokey says everything squeaks all over the shattow and the Vons is used to it. Well, I looked out through the grass ai what did I see maybe five hundred yards away but the hangars of t Ritzmaster's red battle buggies! They was right in a row and duck soup.

Well, me and Pokey got a barrel, lit the fuse and then pushed it down the hill. We got back in quick and pulled the iron door almost shut, only leaving a crack to peak through. The barrel rolled down fast and then I seen a Heinie or two jump out from no place and they started hollering bloody murder. They made a dive for the barrel but it didn't stop. One of the Krauts spun into the air and the barrel rolled over the other one. Then it slammed into the first hangar and blew up.

It was a awful mess. Pieces of Tripe was raining all over the place and I couldn't hear a thing. A siren started squawking and me and Pokey had to move fast or else the Vons upstairs would have too much time to get their pants on. We rolled out two more barrels with the fuses lit, and then Pokey touched a match to something on the floor of the cellar. All of France was colored

red and all over the place we could hear Himmels and aches and Gotts. Pokey grabbed me and pulled me after him, as he says in just sixty seconds the whole works is going up.

THEY know now where them barrels come from!“ he hollers as we run with our heads down through the tunnel to the well. “But—” He didn’t say no more as we heard another blood-curdling boom down by the hangars, then another one right on top of it.

“Powder puffs for the Harvesters, hey?“ yelled Pokey and then there come the worst explosion since the Maine was blowed up. A big wind come through the tunnel and kicked me and Pokey into a pile of arms and legs, and the whole of Europe seemed to of been tore apart. -

What seemed an hour later, but before the noise stopped, Pokey picked hisself up, unloaded a lot of dirt from his mouth and then crawled along toward the well. I done likewise and my dome was spinning and I was so weak I could not of pulled a wing off a flea with both hands. All at once the ground fell away from me and I pancaked onto something soft, the same of which was Pokey. We was in the old well but didn’t know it for maybe a hour as it took all that time to snap out of the awful harrerin’ hollowcost.

“Cripes !“ says Pokey after a while. “It was even worse than I figgered. I guess maybe I could of used a longer fuse, Elmer.”

“I bet you didn’t use any,” I tosses at him. “It is a miracle we wasn’t buried alive, you damfool.”

“Well,” he says, “that shattow is a heap of wood, stone and Vons, and if they is any Tripes left, they must of parked them over in Switzerland. They was all in the hangars when I looked out of the hair obust’s window. and they was lots of petrol to be spilled out of them and that foreign gas don’t exactly put out a fire, hey? Well, I bet we eat roast duck for Thanksgiving now and—”

“We ain’t home yet, you fathead,” I says, “we’re still maybe ten miles from the backs of the Krauts in the trenches and—”

“That’s right. I never thought of that,” says Pokey. I could of slammed him one, Pete, as I might of known he would do something only half right. It looked like we had to live like a pair of worms until the gare is over. We had bread and

cheese and plenty of coneyac stored in the well, but that is a hell of a way to live, hey, Pete? I could see myself coming out of the place with longer whiskers than Rip Van Winkle’s when the Heinies throw away their guns and I am sore.

“Well, this is better than digging ditches in a Kraut klink, ain’t it ?“ says Pokey.

“Yeah ?“ I come back. “Gwendolyn will be in duck heaven before we see the light of day. A lot of roast duck we get! I might of known your brains woujd give out before you finished this here job.”

We called each other names for a long time and then got out of breath, so we listened to the sounds coming through the wooden well cover and the branches that was over same. It was a cinch that we had ruined the Ritzmaster’s outfit, and I was wondering if he was still wearing his glass eyeshade.

I took a bite out of a hunk of bread when what do you think happened? There was a crash over our heads and somebody fell right on top of us. After him come some rotten boards and a lot of branches. After a mad scramble me and Pokey got him under us and choked off his windpipe. The fire outside gives us enough light to see who it was and it was no other than the Ritzmaster von Cluck!

His eyes was still kind of glazed, and when we left go of his Adam’s apple he looked at us like a goof and asked who blew up the gare. Pokey climbed up the side of the well and pushed some of the branches in place and I took a Luger from the Ritzmaster’s hand, the same of which he don’t remember having, Pete. He was a mess where pieces of rock, etcetery, had fell on him and there was a big splinter through his ear where a earring goes on a dame.

“Ach Himmel!“ he says and then catches on. “So! Amerikaner Schwein!“ Bop! I lammed him one in the nose and he sighed and fell over. I gagged him with a piece of Pokey’s apron and sat down to wait. Well, Pete, me and Pokey stayed in that well for another twenty-four hours and I was never so sick of a place in all my life, and that includes the glue factory I worked in for two months back in Rumford Junction. Finally I got desperate and tried to think up a idea as Pokey’s brain of courst has quit work now for maybe six months again or even more.



AND then I heard some Krauts talking right over our heads, and one says Gott all of a sudden and they started pulling branches away. Pokey squealed and climbed up to the opening of the tunnel we come out of and wriggled in. I follered him fast and just pulled my boots through when I heard the Heinies drop into the well.

Well, there was one chanct in a hundred, and did me and Pokey take it, Pete? I ask you! I picked a big rock out of the dirt on the side of the tunnel mouth and leaned out and smacked one of the Vons right on the coal hod. Then I dove on top of the other that was helping the Ritzmaster up and then Pokey was in and there was some fight. That is Pokey's first, last and middle name.

The well was crowded like a Boston subway train, but Pokey was getting in some short jabs that are poison in any language. Well, we was climbing out of the well just twenty wrinutes later, dressed up like two Heinie doughs, and the Ritzmaster was walking down the hill between us. He knew enough not to make a yip as we was loaded down with hardware made in Germany. I looked back once but I didn't see nothing but a lot of smoke still coming up from what was left of the Harvesters' outfit.

We went through woods, the same of which must of been a mile thick, and then come out into a road and waited until something come down it that had four wheels. Soon a truck come and we told the Ritzmaster to stop same or we would reduce him to something you could put in a urn. He was much brighter than ordinary Heinie privates and knew that we was not having horse play with cap pistols,

The truck stopped and there ws two Heinies driving same. We shoved the Von in the back of it, the same of which was full of canned goods or something, and then we climbed in behind him. In two minutes the drivers was laying in a ditch and Pokey was turning the truck around.

Well, we drove right through the whole Heinie army, the same of which was like walking backwards and we found out why. The Yanks was having a big push, Pete, and no foolin'. Shells was busting around us all over and soon we drove the truck into a town and got out and under the bus to keep out of the way of scrap iron. Before you could say ham on rye, what comes into the pkce but most of the A.E.F., and me and Pokey

was taken prisoners with about ten thousand Krauts.

Well, it took us most of the day to make the brass hats believe we was us and then not until we took a couple over to where the truck was. They pulled the Ritzmaster from out of the heap of canned goods and so then they told the doughs to stop stickin' bayonets into us.

When me and Pokey got back to the drome we run quick to see Gwendolyn and is she still sittin' pretty? Even though we did blow up a whole Kraut staffel, the Old Man gets mad and we finally come in to see hint He asked us is a duck more important than the C.O. and Pokey says to him, "What do you think?" The old buzzard sputtered and swore some more, but he knew that we could have the Eyeful Tower if we asked G.H.Q. for it and that he couldn't break us no quicker than he could a crowbar between his teeth. That is the spirit of the Alleys, Pete. Me and Pokey brought in the Ritzmaster and blowed up all his Tripes and all we got from the old walrus was tough looks. Well, if he gets any roast duck it'll cost him bowkoop francs, the old hippercrit!

Two days before I am writing this billy doo, Gwendolyn come walkin' up to the hut, quack-quacking like a fool, and we all run down to where there was twelve little ducks tumbling over each other. I guess we won't have no binge on Thanksgiving, hey, Pete 7 If you can get hold of a good bargain in cracked corn, I wisht you would let me know, as you can't fatten ducks on swill like pigs.

Yours very truly,  
2d LIEUTENANT ELMER HUBBARD,  
U. S. Air Corpse.

P. S. Instead of asking for medals we wrote G.H.Q. to let us move up to where they is a canal so the ducks can get a swim. As yet we have got no reply.