



# RETURN OF THE SKY DEVIL

by HAROLD F. CRUICKSHANK

*Years drop from a natural born fighter pilot, and "no combat" rules are forgotten as he sheds his role of instructor to zoom through war-torn skies on a self-appointed mission of revenge!*

**H**IGH IN THE SKY above the drome of the 71st Squadron, R.A.F., five Hurricanes cavorted in a peaceful English sky. Through strong glasses, a flight lieutenant watched the young eaglets he had trained—Flight Lieutenant Bill Dawson; but better known as the “Sky Devil.” The Sky Devil, however, was grounded. Only recently was he back from hospital, following an operations flight during which he had rescued from the enemy, his son—who had gone barging off hunting bandits alone.

The meeting, after many years, had been strange, though it was logical that Pilot Officer Bill Dawe should have found his way to the R.A.F., since he had inherited his dad’s fighting spirit. And the pulling of some strings had enabled the elder Bill Dawe—who chose to be called Dawson—to get back into the game he loved. In World War I he had met and defeated the cream of Hun war pilots, but not without cost, for even as he gazed longingly up at the flight, there danced on his cheek a livid, jagged scar.

In Germany they spoke of him still as “*Die Himmelteufel!*” Goering himself knew of him only too well. And tonight, though neither the Sky Devil himself, nor Squadron Leader Church, C.O. of the 71st could guess it, in Naziland a price had been placed on his head. Through their spies it had been discovered that the *Himmelteufel* was grounded, was employed solely as a finisher instructor. But he was no less dangerous because of this. He must be destroyed. Those men of the English 71st Squadron he taught were like eagles—swift, efficient, ruthless. . . .

Flight Lieutenant Dawson, the Sky Devil, heaved a deep sigh. That ever-increasing longing to be able to take this most recent group of finishers and make of them a fighting Brood such as he had commanded in the past war had become an obsession. But arguments got him nowhere. In the Sky Devil’s case the “no combat” rules prevailed.

“I have my orders, Dawson,” “Barker” Church had said firmly. “You have yours. Get on with your job and forget combat work. Blast it all man, I know what goes on under that tough breast-bone of yours, but there’s nothing I can do about it. Surely you quite understand?”

“I’m—afraid—I do, sir,” Dawson had told the C.O. “Thanks, anyhow. I’ll try to forget and to—to, well, to carry on. I won’t let you down.”

NOW AS THE C.O., from a window in Operations, watched the Sky Devil’s tall, broad-shouldered form

stride to the hangar which housed the instruction officer’s pet—his “doctored” Defiant—a slow smile crept about his mouth corners.

“You simply can’t keep a fighter-pilot like that down,” he mused. And in his heart he knew that it might not be long before the Sky Devil again broke out and cut a blazing swath through the battle skies. It was inevitable. . . .

Bill Dawson sat alone in a small pub, sipping a mild beer and listening to some A.R.P workers tell of their adventures. Raids had been fewer of late, but the Sky Devil knew that the Nazis were not done with their vile, indiscriminate bombings. He admired this civilian defense organization which was always in there doing its bit, no matter how flaming the night, no matter how great the cost.

A wheezy gramophone scratched out a tune which was familiar to Bill—a tune of the old war days, a tune which had often stimulated those khaki-clad infantrymen to go on—on—in the flame-racked, shrapnel-blasted night.

But suddenly a shocking detonation obliterated all other sounds. The little pub rocked on its foundations. . . .

*Kar-r-rumph! Kar-r-rumph!* A window crashed in, pieces of heavy glass whistling devilishly as they splattered the barroom mirrors. An A.R.P. oldster tottered toward the Sky Devil, a hand clapped to his throat, a hand already smeared with the blood of a cut jugular.

Bill caught him and held him up for a moment, then slowly laid him down, but the man was dying before his back touched the tile floor. He forced a grin as he held up a quivering thumb.

The Sky Devil’s eyes misted, then grew cold and hard. He laid the dying man’s arms across the slowly heaving breast, then got to his feet as an A.R.P. policeman dashed in.

“It’s the drome of the Seventy-first, the Jerry’s after,” the policeman called out. “Come in without warnin’, they did, the blighters! Blimey! There’ll be a bloody awful mess to clean up at the station. Best squadron o’ fighter pilots in the south of England, too!”

The Sky Devil was quivering in every muscle. The 71st had been found at last! He must get back quickly. Young Bill was there. And not only Bill, but Church, and all the other grand chaps.

He stepped outside, and for a moment paused to listen to the fiendish whine and blast of ack-acks. The sky was a blazing inferno of darting lights and bursting

shells, and the Sky Devil's veins swelled with the racing red blood of desire for battle.

He sprang aboard his motorcycle and gave its starter a kick. Crouched over his handle-bars, he gave her the gun, and raced through the night to his station.

The Sky Devil found Barker Church out barking orders to scurrying first aid men and mechanics. Already the 71st's widespread drome was a flaming, tangled mess, and the raid was by no means over.

A PAIR OF JUNKERS screamed down in the face of terrific ack-ack fire, to blast at still another row of camouflaged hangars.

Church yelled to Bill Dawson, and together they leaped into a narrow shell trench. A bomb struck close in, a five-hundred-pounder which seemed to blast the entire station out by its roots.

When the screaming fragments of shell-casing had whistled by, the Sky Devil pulled himself topside again.

Church thundered a call to him, but Dawson didn't seem to hear. In a mad flare of light he glimpsed scurrying groundmen and pilots near the newly blasted hangar. There was the devil to pay there—men to be hauled from the burning wreckage of planes, nervy sons who had scrambled out in the hope of being able to nose up their Hurricanes to intercept.

Flight Lieutenant Dawson hurled himself into and out of a dry bomb crater, and fetched up with a stretcher party rolling a badly smashed young eagle onto the canvas. Dawson quivered as he recognized young Pilot Officer Terry Jenson, a Canuck who had come over with young Bill Dawe.

A pilot sergeant bellowed a warning and dived flat as a stick of H.E. and incendiaries screamed down to erupt in a quadrangle of administrative and mess buildings. As the Sky Devil dragged himself to his feet he realized that the Nazis were playing for keeps. They had stolen over in a circuitous route, with motors cut, to wipe this squadron out of existence. It was a grim compliment to the squadron.

They had not fully completed their ruthless task. Another relay would come, though now night fighters and hundreds of anti-aircraft guns would be waiting.

Bill Dawson cast an anxious eye toward his own hangar, which housed his converted Defiant. They mustn't get Hangar Number 13, nor its trim fighting occupant.

He darted over and found his sergeant, Sergeant "Bat" Hennedy, a soldier of the old war school standing by with a squadron fire-fighting unit.

"Sure I was beginning to think, sir, of you as bein' . . . What a night it is to be sure! And you'll be wantin' the ship, sir?"

"Yes, Hennedy. Don't know what I can do, but I must get her up. Put her out for me, and get her snoring."

Hennedy chuckled. He had been a greaseball in the last war, at a drome which neighbored that of the Sky

Devil's Brood. He was the Sky Devil's lone link with the old days when youngsters, with eight hours' solo only, rocketed up in patched things of bamboo, aluminum and doped fabric to match twin Vickers with the Lanz and Maxims of the enemy.

The Sky Devil's mind was made up. He was going to scramble, but first, he was going to so advise Squadron Leader Church. If Church objected, as object he surely would, Bill Dawson intended to go, anyhow.

THERE WERE FEW, if any Hurricanes available for action now. There might be three or four in the east branch of the large flying field, but usually this branch was where the ships came for servicing. It was doubtful if any of these were ready for action.

Dawson darted across to where he had last seen Church. But he never saw Church alive again.

A number of pilots and the squadron leader were starting for the service hangars when a fast Nazi dive bomber came in on them in an almost vertical, screaming dive of death, Machine-guns carried the death message.

The Sky Devil fetched up short, aghast at what he saw—men toppling, flinging themselves forward or backward in grotesque shapes; men standing still, frozen one moment, suddenly to crumple to the ground.

And Church was one of these!

The Sky Devil darted in and rolled the prone form of his commanding officer over, but Church was dead. Slowly he got to his feet. Slightly wounded, or unhit pilot officers grouped about him. He tolled them off. There were seven, including his son, young Bill.

"He's gone, boys," Flight Lieutenant Dawson intoned. "Your 'Barker's' dead. I don't need to tell you what a swell guy he was. Now it looks as if I'm senior officer. You'll have to take orders from me for the time being. So—take cover. Stand by. Do nothing until you receive further word from me. There's plenty of work to be done here. It'll probably help you if you lend a hand. I've got to contact Headquarters. Carry on."

Hazarding guesses, they watched the tall flight

lieutenant weave through the rubble to what had been Operations Office. And they failed to hear the Merlin as Sergeant Bat Hennedy's crew warmed her up at the Number 13 hangar, then wheeled her out—a trim, bluntly pugnacious hush-hush ship, the Sky Devil's converted Defiant.

Nor did they see that grim, gangling man dart across the torn field to hop aboard.

The Sky Devil took but a moment or so to test his motor and controls. A wave of his hand told Sergeant Hennedy that his pilot was satisfied. The Defiant's tail came up, the chocks flew, and the deadly fighter shot forward, to cock her nose up into the battle sky.

Alone, above the reach of blasting ack-ack bursts, Flight Lieutenant Dawson shook off the last of the shock which had numbed him. He was satisfied that the *Luftwaffe* was not through with their grim mission. Right now another relay of Junkers or Dorniers might be winging in to complete the destruction of the 71st's field.

Bill Dawson wanted to get the identity of the Nazi *Staffel*. Once this was established, he would decide on a plan of avenging action. He was a fighting man in whose soul there was no room for themes that prated against vengeance. "An eye for an eye" policy was and always had been his battle policy; and he asked and gave no quarter.

HE HATED WAR; he loved peace. He had never been happier than when at the controls of a bush sky freighter with some trim little outpost nurse, or doctor or priest as his passengers. But if the Fates decreed that war was to be his lot, then there was only one thing for it—take the scabbard off the bayonet, and sink it deep into the enemy's vitals!

A mad splash of anti-aircraft fire plastered the sky high above a small industrial town off his port beam. Bandits were up! That little town was about to get another going over, and the Sky Devil was impelled to streak in and lend a hand to whatever formation of R.A.F. night fighters would be doing interceptor duty.

Something clicked sharply in his consciousness. He knew the town, knew that most of its war production machinery had been moved. The Nazis were not going to fool him. It was only by such a ruse that the recent attackers of his station coasted in, without warning, to blast the 71st field.

He climbed to almost twenty thousand feet, and in the clear sky sea he cruised in a wide circle ever alert, ever weaving over the stick. Suddenly he spotted the flash of an exhaust stack. Another and another.

He cut around in a flat turn and clapped a set of glasses to his eyes. Slowly his thin lips compressed as he picked out two bombers, with a small fighter escort riding above and behind them. They were going away from the direction of the battered 71st field, but still the Sky Devil was not fooled.

He was thinking of that handful of pilots left below, and of his riggers under tough Sergeant Bat Hennedy. Young Bill was down there, too. Not that he mattered any more than any of the other P.O.s.

Bill Dawson switched on his radio and in code sent down his warning. He climbed almost to ceiling and applied oxygen. Suddenly he spotted a change of direction in the Nazi raider flight. He had no means of knowing if his warning message had been received. There hadn't been time for formalities of two-way radio routine.

He dipped his nose and went forward to action. He had a surprise in the wings of his Defiant.

Shucking the oxygen set, he bent lower over the stick until he felt it graze his middle. His feet worked rhythmically on the rudder controls and his broad shoulders went into that deathly cobralike weave.

The Nazi flight were closer to the drome than Dawson liked. Soon one of those Dorniers would wing over and trip its deadly sticks.

All at once an inferno of ack-ack fire blasted the sky lane forward, and above. Bill Dawson swore bitterly. He had hoped against such a display, for he now had to run that gauntlet. Should he take time to call off that shoot? The answer was "No!" It was bad policy to enter into any radio controversy with anti-aircraft battery commanders with the enemy right at hand. He would have to go it in his own way—taking his chance now against fierce odds.

A Dornier zoomed, then winged over. She was half a mile off the Sky Devil's port quarter. The scar on Dawson's face began its dance of death as, with every nerve fibre vibrant, he throttled in and lanced the sky. . . .

BELOW, close to a deep, narrow shell trench, into which Wing Commander Harcourt had ordered the remainder of 71st personnel, the commander fumed and swore as he watched the play of searchlights topside, and the mad hurricane barrage of anti-aircraft H.E. He had had only the briefest report of the shoot on the drome of the 71st from Flight Lieutenant Dawson, to whom he had hurriedly given over acting command. He, himself, had raced down

from Headquarters, only to discover that Dawson was missing.

It was no easy job for Harcourt, who had once commanded the 71st, to stand by, knowing that Church, once his second-in-command had got his, and to realize that the Nazi bandits were coming in again—to finish their devastation.

He clapped his binoculars to his eyes and muttered something under his breath. The ack-acks seemed to be missing by miles. Then he glimpsed the grim silhouette of a Dornier 215 winging over.

“Look out below!” he called, and dropped down to cover, but still he cocked his head at the sky, watching, waiting, timing.

Suddenly as a flare of flame burst from the portside Daimler-Benz motor of the big bomber a heavy sweat broke out on Harcourt’s body. The bomber was in a desperate dive, her bomb doors open. Missiles screamed earthward as her bomb-aimer let go.

Detonations shook the already churned-up field. Fragments of flying bomb casing whined over the shell trench, causing Harcourt reluctantly to duck. But quickly he jerked up his head and chuckled softly. The bombs had missed the east branch hangars by a wide margin, and the staggering 215 was attempting to zoom.

Then came the sharp stutter of machine-guns—Brownings in action. A pilot officer climbed up alongside the wing commander and in his excitement clutched the tall chief’s arm.

“What the devil!” Harcourt exploded.

“That—that’s Dad!” the youngster gasped. “Dad in his Defiant. Look, sir! He’s got him—blown off the conservatory roof with his hush-hush forward armament. Dad!”

Wing Commander Harcourt snorted, and swung sharply.

“What the devil are you getting at, old chap? You’re talking in riddles. What . . . Look, by gad! Here comes a Jerry chute. Good—work! We’ll pick the bounder up for immediate questioning.”

The Sky Devil shook his head as if to clear the blood and sweat from his eyes under his shattered goggles. He was in a tight spot now, for the M.E. 110 were converging on him like mad hornets. He writhed his Defiant out of a zigzagged scurry, and half-rolled her off, to bring his after-gun turret into play.

Flight Lieutenant Dawson was suddenly strangely happy—happy to be alone in action, action of vengeance. “Too old,” they had said. At times he had

agreed with them, but he also knew that there were times when his wide battle experience could be of use. This was such a time. He had taken his chance with death in order to direct his fire so accurately that he would force a bail-out on the part of the first 215s crew. That was what he wanted—*Staffel* identity.

DAWSON wanted to shake these Messers. There was another bomber rounding into action. He must get her so that none escaped, but a wall of ack-ack fire cut him off. And to venture to run that gauntlet would be sure suicide.

He switched on his radio, and sparked in to anti-aircraft control.

“Cut your fire. . . . Seventy-first calling anti-aircraft. . . . Are you getting me? Over.”

“Ack-ack getting you. . . . Identify yourself. . . . Fire continuing. Over to you.”

“Flight Lieutenant Dawson Seventy-first. Hurry with your cut-off. Over.”

“Cutting fire. Two minutes. Contact us at that time. Listening out.”

Bill Dawson grinned. Almost instantly the mad inferno ahead subsided, but in that same lull there came a staggering shock to his ship’s after parts. He swung in his seat to look into the mad red eyes of a dozen flaming Madsens.

Now he recalled all the fighting skill of years ago. Now came his big test. Could he shake off the deathly menacing shapes converging on him from three quarters?

There was only one way—a power dive that would cause the Nazi fighters to overshoot. If he could stay awake in such a dive, then come into the tightest zoom of his life, he had a chance.

He braced himself, and hunched forward over the stick. A sheet of lead cut through his cockpit hood and he felt a pluck at the leather of his helmet. But still his fierce grin held. He was into it now, a murderous, suicidal four hundred plus, vertical.

His chest tightened, breast-bone squeezing his lungs. A million lights danced into his consciousness, then suddenly all was deathly black, deathly still. There was no feeling, no sense of life; nothing but a black void.

At nine thousand feet, the Sky Devil came out of the blackout. His body began to quiver, but his taut grip on the stick saved him. It reassured him to feel that he still controlled this screaming, modern engine of the war skies.

Quickly he eased back on the stick. He felt his Defiant momentarily stagger, but as he gave her a notch or two of throttle, the Merlin took over.

Four grim shapes, with cannon and machine-guns blazing, streaked on down, as the Sky Devil brought his ship over in the loop, and now his moment had come. Thumb quivering on the button, he would test the full power of the armament he had suggested to Headquarters—four Brownings, four 27 mm. cannon.

He had a black streak in his sight, and tripped his guns. A Messerschmitt broke apart in a spatter of flaming pieces of steel and fabric.

The Sky Devil winged over and caught another Hun ship attempting to zoom. Her guns were in action, some of her slugs chipping the Defiant when Dawson let her have a glancing burst which set her engine housing afire.

But now he gave his Merlin full gun and turned his attention elsewhere. Another 215 was circling about for position. Desperate now, the Hun air crew were going to attempt a semi-dive-bombing attack.

ALMOST BEFORE the first bomb blasted, dead on the east branch target, the Defiant nosed down, Messerschmitt escorts drove frantically in on the Defiant's tail in an effort to blast her from the skies, but that hunched form over the stick had but one thought in mind—to avenge, to kill! And if he, too, must go, it was the best way of dying that he knew.

A sudden burst of Madsen fire shattered the Defiant's instrument panel into a thousand pieces. The Sky Devil winced as flying glass, sharp aluminum, or steel slit his right cheek.

"Too close," he breathed.

The 215 loomed up large in his sights and he touched off his deadly barrage. He held his ship in the dive, as defiant now as his beloved ship.

He drove on down, in full dive, in full fire power until he watched that half-unloaded raider plunge her ungainly snout, along with engine nacelles, deep into the ground, only to come up in a geyser of wreckage as her remaining bomb fuses detonated. . . .

The impact of lead against his Defiant's fuselage brought Bill Dawson back to the realization that he still had a fight on his hands. He swore bitterly, as he jockeyed his ship in a maze of aerobatics.

"Am I the only cock-eyed night fighter in Britain!" he boomed.

His whole body shook with this surge of bitterness. Angry, he became reckless and whirled his plane over

to meet the onrushing Nazi escorts. It was almost his undoing, and only in the nick of time was he able to slip her off, and get clear, but he could tell by the way the Defiant was behaving that she had taken a cannon burst in her starboard wing surface.

There was nothing left now except to get out of this mess the best way possible. He switched on his radio, got a frightful pandemonium of noise, and found that it had been damaged. Instead of picking up the radio operator at the 71st field, he picked up some gallyhooting anti-aircraft operator in a south station.

He gave up his attempt to make contact below. He would, if he could possibly shake off the *Luftwaffe* hornets, have to take his chance on a landing without aid from below.

He made a flat turn left, and ran into a Messer interceptor whose fire only missed his body by scant inches. He zoomed then, and attempted a loop. He almost stalled his Merlin, and came out of it sloppily.

Now the Merlin began to cough. There was a nasty thick stench of smoke in the cockpit. He hated the thought of bailing out. In the last war there was no chance of bailing, and so far, in this war, he had had no occasion to jump.

He thought of his Defiant. He hated to let her plummet to earth, destroying all the good work he had put in on her. She was his ship, a ship which the authorities had refused to accept as the regulation Defiant. But the Sky Devil didn't mind that. He had done things to his old 1918 Spad, too, which didn't fit in with Headquarters' plans and specifications.

HIS MIND was made up. He was taking this ship on down intact. Henneidy would be on the job. Or would he! That 215 had unloaded one savage hit on the east branch field!

The Sky Devil glanced sharply at the luminous dial of his wrist-watch. The two minutes cut-off allowed by the ack-ack control was long since past. Why wasn't there a recurrence of fire action? Bill Dawson swerved in his seat, to discover that he was no longer menaced by the *Luftwaffe* patrol.

He chuckled. Something had happened. He turned his ship into wind, and then he saw milling ships in the gathering gray dawn.

"Hurricanes!" he shouted. "I wonder—"

His heart leaped fiercely. He was impelled to barge in and lend a hand, but instead he broke into a paroxysm of coughing. The smoke was becoming thicker. He must get down!

He slid back his damaged hood a few inches, hoping to clear the cockpit, but feared the updraft might bring about a fire. Suddenly he thought of his oxygen set, and applied it. And now, sure that he would not suffocate, he set the Defiant's nose down.

Below, Sergeant Hennedy blasted orders at a ground crew.

"Let go a flare, ye cuckoo!" he bellowed at a man. "There's divil another bomber topside. Don't ye see the chief's staggerin' in to land, wit' a smokin' oil line? Touch her off. Quick now!"

The lone flare sputtered, and Bill Dawson grinned. He gave left rudder a sharp tap and came in, narrowly missing the lip of a huge bomb crater.

As his tires were ready to kiss turf he could not hear Bat Hennedy's warning yell that he was going to hit part of the Dornier wreckage. The Defiant's undercarriage struck part of a 215 engine nacelle. She bounced high, slewed and rolled onto her back—and the lights went out for the Sky Devil. . . .

A bright flicker of light greeted Flight Lieutenant Dawson as he came out of the fog. He blinked owlishly, and until the fog cleared he imagined he was in some strange afterworld, with ghost shapes watching his every move. Then a voice called to him—Wing Commander Harcourt's voice.

"Well, you're back, Dawson. Congratulations."

"Thanks, sir."

Dawson's voice was weak. His breathing was thick. But he felt himself grow stronger each moment.

"You're a lucky chap, Dawson," the Wing Commander intoned. "For several reasons. First, you're lucky that I don't intend to court-martial you. Second, how you got that battered, crazy crate of yours down is a miracle."

Dawson grinned, then spotted his son. He raised himself on an elbow, and winced a bit.

"How's Bill?" he called. "You got nicked again, eh?"

"Little bit, Dad. I managed to clip the bandit that hit me. My first Messer Hundred and Ten."

"You mean you—it was our Hurricane shoot that saved my bacon? Thanks, Bill. And thanks to you other boys."

"Don't thank us, Dad," young Bill clipped. "All thanks are due Bat Hennedy. He who put the final touches on those Hurries and routed us out to go get you out of it."

"We have already questioned a Nazi navigator, Dawson," Harcourt said. "He was a pretty scared bandit, old chap. You must have scared the daylight

out of him. He's from S.S. Hundred and Fourteenth Squadron, and we have location of his field."

The Sky Devil glanced swiftly about him, tolling off the names of the pilot officers to himself. Grand young fighter pilots, all of them, a new, a modern Sky Devil's Brood.

He lifted a questioning gaze to Harcourt, which brought a smile of understanding from the tall young wing commander.

"Where do we—I—go from this point, sir?" he asked.

"Just carry on, Dawson. It will be some time before we reorganize the Seventy-first. You'll be fit, so the M.O. says, after a few days' convalescence. Then you'll take over acting command, for the purposes of reorganizing—cleaning up, and so forth. Unless, of course, you have some better idea I can forward to Headquarters. Have you?"

The Sky Devil started sharply. "I—I have, sir. Right here in this room is something I've had in mind a long time. Why not let me fly—sometimes—with these boys I've trained, instead of letting them go up in a scramble all alone? I promise to behave." The Sky Devil smiled softly, and looked off into space. Harcourt, too, was smiling. He cleared his throat and said: . . .

"What you have in mind, I imagine, is to build up a new, modern Brood of the Sky Devil, so that you can go barging, at will, over to the German Hundred and Fourteenth Staffel. That your idea?"

The Sky Devil shook his head.

"No, sir. My idea, as it was in the past war, is to do all I can, sanely, and soberly, to bring a war to a successful conclusion—for us. Naturally, in company with a bomber squadron, we might pay a call on the *Luftwaffe* Hundred and Fourteenth. But I can see, from my recent experience, that this war demands a coolness of head and an accuracy of operation that has no room for sheer recklessness. I am prepared to so conduct myself, and direct the operations of such a Brood as you have suggested. Look at these youngsters—Hanson, Martin, Calway, Pierce, Tanner, Montreith—and—Dawe."

EACH PILOT OFFICER in turn, as his name was called, sharply sprang to attention, as if answering a new roll call, a roll call which had awakened every ounce of interest and yearning they possessed.

"Give me command of these boys, sir, and I promise you I—we'll become a credit to the R—A—F. We'll—"

That was all for the Sky Devil. His eyes blinked strangely and he slipped back on his pillows.

Young Bill darted in, but the medical officer beat him to it, and took him by the arm.

“That’s all, gentlemen. Don’t worry. He’ll, be as right as rain after the effects of the opiate I administered wears away. Out you go now.”

Harcourt tapped young Bill on the shoulder. He was looking at the scar on the boy’s face, a scar that danced now in his excitement.

“I’m putting forward that recommendation at once, Dawe. Can’t say what will come of it, y’know,

but I want you boys to keep hoping, as I hope. The Sky Devil’s Brood. By gad! I’ve heard my Father speak of the old Brood, the Nineteen-eighteen Brood.”

Young Bill felt the hand on his shoulder quiver, and he felt suddenly terribly proud and just a bit embarrassed.

They walked out into the gathering daylight—out to meet the signs of the Nazi plunderers. But they looked across where Sergeant Bat Hennedy and his crew were already at work on that Dornier 215 wreckage—grim and certain sign of the power of the Sky Devil.

