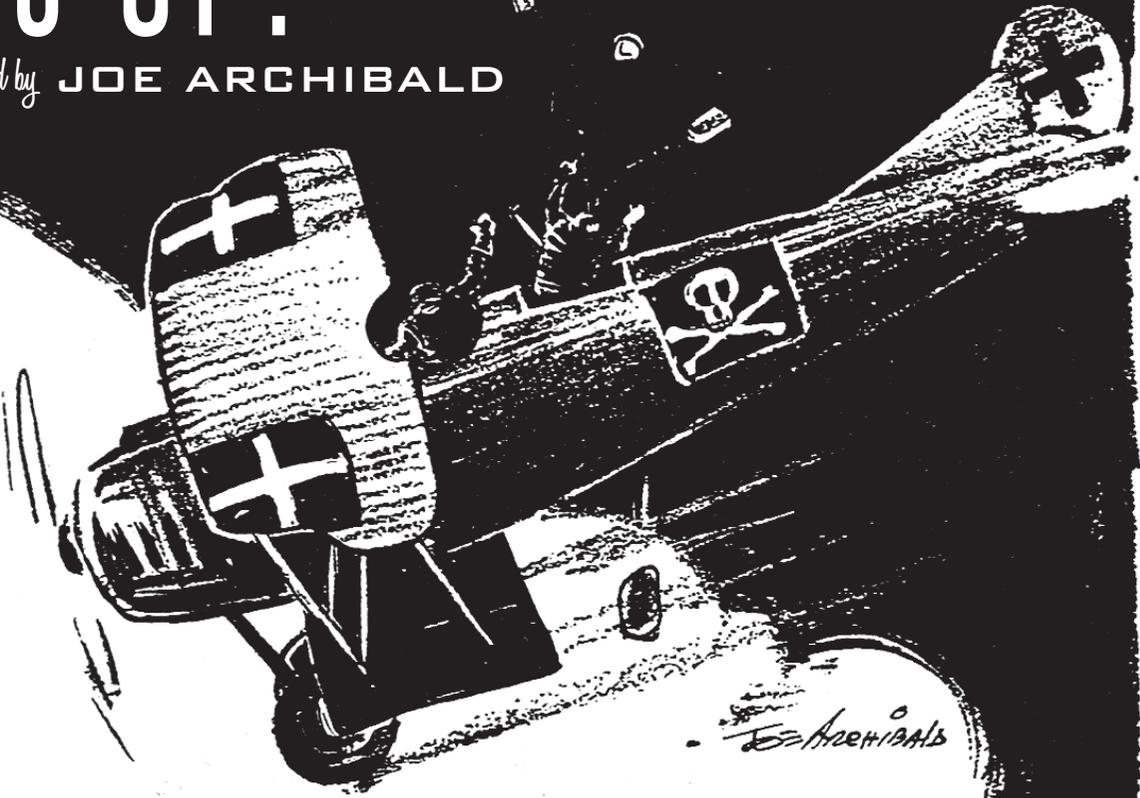


a
**PHINEAS
PINKHAM**
howl

HANS UP!

written and illustrated by **JOE ARCHIBALD**



It was a nice trip. It began with Phineas knocked out cold after a crack-up. It continued with a couple of doughboys loading him onto an ambulance bound for the hospital. And it ended with a couple of doughboys knocked out cold in an ambulance. What do you expect?

TWO THOUSAND METERS or so over Fresnes, a gang of spooks swirled about a Yankee Spad and tried to make themselves heard above the roar of the Hisso. They were hissing warnings to Phineas “Carbuncle” Pinkham, who sat in the pit of the Spad with an expression of utter self-satisfaction lighting up his freckled face.

The shades of Napoleon got close to the Pinkham war chariot and whispered frantically, “Beware, *m’sieu*, pretty cocky was I ere I got ferried over to Elba. No man is invincible.” And then came the wraith of Julius Caesar. “Take heed. On top of the world was I before Brutus slipped that pruning knife between my ribs. No man is invincible.” Spoke in turn the spirit of Achilles, the Greek, “Take care, great warrior. Once I was the toast of Troy. Now I will forever be known as ‘the heel.’ No man is invincible.”

However, Phineas Pinkham was anything but psychic, so the wraiths sighed and slipped away. But from out of another part of the sky sallied three more grim shapes. They were from the other side of the Moselle, not the River Styx—and they were three Pfalz riders who still possessed bodies and souls very much in harmony. Phineas’ head swiveled. He took one look at the trio of Boche, swore as only he could, and looked for a way out.

“W-well,” he gulped as the Spandaus began to exercise their rights, “if you walk into a leopard’s nest, you can’t expect to come out carryin’ a basket of Easter eggs, ha! Well, I’ll fight to the end.” So philosophizing, Phineas threw the Spad into a dizzy sideslip a second or two after a swarm of lead pills had peppered the top wing. He straightened out, popped a burst at a diving Pfalz, and again took a look around.

“Adoo, Babette,” he groaned, “as what a chance I’ve got! I’ll maybe see you in the sweet bye an’ bye. Take that, ya fatheaded Kraut.”

Plunk! The lights went out. A giant buzz-saw seemed to be working full-time inside the Pinkham cranium. As suddenly as it had begun, it stopped, and Phineas was surprised to find himself sitting down on a great island, floating in space. Humming birds hummed, larks sang, bees buzzed. Phineas smelled lilacs and lilies. Then he heard voices which caused him to revolve on his island. Three men stood looking down at him.

“We warned you,” said one in a sepulchral voice.

“Well, well, if it ain’t Napoleon,” exclaimed Phineas. “I see you’re still lookin’ for somethin’ inside your vest, haw-w-w!”

“Do not chide us,” spoke the second. He was wrapped in a toga. Phineas spotted the Christmas wreath he wore for a hat.

“Hail, Caesar!” he grinned. “How’s Cleo? Haw-w-w! Say, I thought you bums went West long ago. I—”

A great wind came up. It whistled in Phineas’ ear and the scene faded. In its place appeared a lot of sky. Phineas’ brain had cleared, although a sledge hammer kept tapping away at a spot just over his ear. Down below, a carpet of many colors gyrated.

“Cripes!” yelped the inimitable Yank. “Wow-w-w-w!” He knew where he was now, back in his Spad, and it was in a spin. Somehow Phineas managed to pull the crate out of it when he was but a thousand feet up. “Haw-w-w-w!” he enthused, “They didn’t git me yet.”

But Phineas did not remember landing the Spad. Perhaps that was the reason he brought it down intact. His brain churned a little again when three or four doughs surrounded him to hold him up.

“What a lucky stiff!” commented one. “Huh, by rights you oughta be—”

Another plane was landing several yards away—a Spad, also. Three others circled aloft.

“If them other guys hadn’t come along,” began another dough, “you’d—”

“S-say,” grinned Phineas, “I seen Napoleon. Ha!” He spun around a bit, then keeled over against a fence. “An’ Julius Caesar. What do ya think they said to me? The bums—”

“Nuttier than a loon,” declared one of the doughs. “Git an ambulance. Lookit where that slug creased his dome.”

“I’d like to know the way to Waterloo,” persisted Phineas. “I’ve got to meet Napoleon as he’s gittin’ ready for a big push—”

The flyer who had landed grinned and scratched his chin as though plunged in thought. “That’s Pinkham,” he informed the doughs. “No brain mechanic could straighten him out, anyway. Better take him along, though, an’ see if his cylinder head is cracked on the outside. I’ll tell his commanding officer and—well, I’ll be going.”

The Pinkham head was bound up and Phineas was loaded into an ambulance and carried toward a hospital.

“Hey, what’s the idea?” he hollered, sitting up. “I—I—” His eyes crossed suddenly. “An’ I seen a guy with a tin hat an’ a shield. An Indian had shot him in the heel with an arrow. I—say, where do you bums think you’re takin’ me, huh?”

“Smack him one, Gus,” advised one of the doughs, “if he gits any worse. I’ll be nutty, too, if he keeps it up.”

Kerwhop!

“That’s it,” yelled back the driver, “slap him again. I envy you. Gittin’ a chance to smack a looie.”

“Haw-w-w-w!” Phineas bubbled over. “It’s me that’s dishin’ it out. Ya will, will ya?” *Kerwhop!* “Well, adoo, nobody ever said a Pinkham was weak enough to git took to a hospital.” He jumped out of the ambulance and placed a thumb to his over-prominent nose.

“Shoot him!” yelled the driver, slamming on the brakes.

“The hell with him!” groaned the disabled one. “I’ve heard enough about that crackpot. Turn around and go back to where we hid that *vin rouge*. Who wants to save a aviator, anyways? We’ll report him to the colonel for assaultin’ privates!”

Phineas, as he plodded toward Souilly, craved a place to lie down to rest his weary and aching head. There was a wagon-train winding its way through the partly mauled Frog town, but Phineas sneaked into a vacant house unobserved and lay down to sleep.

BACK ON THE DROME of the Ninth, Major Rufus Garrity and a group of pilots were milling about aimlessly. The Old Man had a stiff neck from looking up at the sky. Phineas was three hours overdue. Not a word as to his fate had come over the wires.

“Too bad,” said Howell. “The big baboon! If he’d come back right now, I’d maybe kiss him and then belt him one in the teeth for runnin’ out of formation for the third time in two days.”

Major Rufus walked around in a tight circle, his teeth grinding into the stem of his pipe. “Will you tin soldiers shut your yaps?” he barked suddenly. “Snap out of it! Anybody would think no one was ever knocked off by the Boche before. Keep a lip upper stiff—er—stip offer—keep—well, look at you. Ready to bust out crying! I—er—look at me. I—er—feel the loss of Pinkham but I’m taking it like—”

“Uh-huh!” commented Gillis. “Your face sparkles all over like an open grave. You look as if somebody stole your wife an’—”

“Look here,” fumed the Old Man, “you can’t talk to me like that, Gillis. I’ll have discipline around here.”

“Listen,” exclaimed Howell suddenly.

“Wha-a-a-at?” gulped the major.

“Huh,” grinned Bump, “I thought I heard Phineas laugh after you said that about discipline. I could’ve sworn—”

“By gad!” yelled the Old Man. “I’ll—by cripes, you’ll—bah-h-h!” He spun on his heels and strode toward the big stone house where were his headquarters.

Silence gripped the drome. Strange! Why had not the members of that Spad squadron who had witnessed Phineas’ near demise reported to Garrity as they had promised? Had the members of the ambulance unit who had felt the power of Phineas’ haymakers forgotten to tell the colonel? Perhaps they had gone back to the *vin rouge* cache and gotten scalded to the tonsils.

Just after dusk, Major Garrity left the drome in the squadron car and headed for Bar-le-Duc. He had arranged a meeting with the C.O. of the Spad outfit just north of Sivry. During the past few days the Wing had impressed a certain fact upon the air squadrons of the sector. Close cooperation was the watchword. Observation ships must be kept out of the air back of the Allied lines at all costs. A big push was in the offing. A railhead was being established. Ammo and supplies were coming up. Wagon trains clogged the camouflaged roads.

The Boche camera ships must be kept out of the ozone. Every pursuit squadron was to concentrate on those two-seaters. G.H.Q. had made it quite plain that if Jerry secured pictures of that busy stretch of real estate, a lot of officers would be taken out of circulation on general principles. And the majority of these were connected with the Air Corps.

So into Bar-le-Duc that night went Major Rufus Garrity. The place was seething with activity. Brass hats were as thick as flies—and two generals honored the town by their presence.

Then a man came into town. He wore the uniform of the Yankee Flying Corps. His face was spotted, and his hair was the color of a rusty stove. Long since, his upper lip had abandoned the effort to hide a row of tombstone front teeth. The finished product wore an engaging grin on his ugly countenance as he slunk along the streets. Presently he stopped short. A trim French mam’selle was blocking his path.

“Ah, Pheenyas, *mon cher*,” she exclaimed sweetly. “Eet ees ze surprise, *non*? So we have ze drink, *n’est-ce pas*?”

“Beat it, sister,” replied the grinning flyer. “I ain’t got no time for dillydallyin’ with voose, ce swar.” The



speaker turned and headed back in the direction from which he had come.

“Peeg!” shrieked the damsel. “*Cochon!* For thees I show you, *oui!* Ze chien are you, *M’sieu* Peenkham.”

An hour passed. Then the roar of a plane’s prop thundered close to the roofs of Bar-le-Duc. Men ran into the streets. Somebody yelled “Boche!” The two

generals were hustled out of a cafe and into their car. H-r-r-r-r-r-o-o-a-a-m! The plane swooped low, the wing tips nearly scraping the eaves of buildings on either side of the street. Something dropped from it, and landed smack in the lap of a French general. He took one look at it.

“*Sacre bleu!*” he howled. “*Un chat, ugh! Il est mort.*”

“A dead cat!” snapped his companion, an American general. “Yes, a dead cat, *m’sieu*. By gad, this is an outrage.” He yelled at some M.P.’s who came running. On the way, they sprawled to the ground as the plane swooped down again. The American general swore, and the dead cat spun from his hand as he ducked his head. The extinct feline wound itself around the neck of the Frenchman.

“*Sacre!*” yelled the Frog.

Into the street bolted Major Garrity. He saw the plane zooming and caught a glimpse of the insignia. There was a pig on the side of the fuselage, a porker spotted with iron crosses and wearing a spiked helmet.

“Pinkham, you big fathead!” For a moment there was a triumphant ring to the major’s voice. Then the tune changed. He shook his fist at the disappearing plane and tossed threats into the dusk.

Out of a cafe bolted Captain Howell and Bump Gillis, as well as two other pilots from the Ninth.

“Was it Pinkham?” they yelled at the Old Man.

“Major,” cracked the big-jowled general, “you know that pilot, eh?”

Sir Rufus shivered as he saluted. “I—er—sir, I thought so,” he stuttered. “That is, I—er—thought I recognized—”

“Find out, sir,” ordered the superior officer. “And if you know him, have him put under arrest at once. That’s all. I’ll communicate with you later, sir.”

“*Un chat!*” babbled the Frog general. “*Un chat*, eh? The beeg insult ees thees thing. Ze man you find et heem I challenge to ze duel. Ah, I tell ze Marshal Foch. I tell ze President. Bah!”

Major Garrity motioned to Howell and Gillis. “Come on, we are getting out,” he said in a weak voice. “I—” He leaped out of the path of a big car skidding past. It splashed him with mud. “Look where you’re goin’, you big punkin’ heads,” he roared. “You—er—ah—cripes!” He staggered away, for the face that had turned to look at him from the rear seat of the open car was that of the Yankee general.

And in the meantime, Phineas was many miles from Bar-le-Duc. “Well, I’ll be goin’ back to the old homestead,” he grinned as he walked toward the Spad. “They got nothin’ on me, as I’ll say I slugged them doughs while I was out of my mind from gittin’ smacked by the Kraut slug, haw-w-w-w-w!”

An hour later Phineas walked up to Babette’s *ménage* in Bar-le-Duc and knocked at the door. It opened, and the face of his light of love blazed at him.

“Bum *soir*,” grinned the lover. “How’s my leetle Babette?”

Whack! Phineas tottered on his heels. “Ha!” the girl tossed at him, her hand ready to swing again. “Beat it, *oui!* You weel not deelydally, *non?* So *allez vite, comprenez?* Babette, she show you she ees not ze fool!” *Slam.*

“I’m a cock-eyed centipede,” mumbled the addled Borneo as he groped his way down the steps. “What’s got into the dame? Huh, I—”

“There he is! There he is!” The shouts came from away up the street. A whistle blew. That meant M.P.’s. Phineas, by force of habit, legged it toward the outskirts of town. Around the corner of a street came a Frenchman on a bicycle. Phineas grabbed the rear wheel, dumping the rider into the gutter.

“Sorry,” apologized the escaping Yank, “but I’m in more of a hurry than you, *mon garçon!* Adoo!” And out of town he pedaled in a sprint that would have won any six-day bicycle race in any man’s country. The M.P.’s still were half a mile behind when Phineas lifted his Spad from the ground and pointed it homeward.

“There’s dirty work afoot some place,” grunted the wonder from Boonetown, Iowa. “Well, I’ve got an alibi!”

“EVENIN’, BUMS!” he greeted several and sundry as he climbed out of his Spad. “Where’s the old handshake, huh?”

Bump Gillis spat into the dirt and said, “Huh, what’s the use? We’ll be sayin’ good-bye again in maybe five minutes.”

“So there you are!”

Phineas turned slowly. The Old Man was walking toward him slowly, measuring each step like an animal trainer in a cage. Jaw set hard as a cornerstone, the major took a handkerchief from his pocket and carefully spread it on the ground.

“Now, Mr. Stunt Flyer,” he began with a nasty sneer, “go up in the Spad and come down and let me see you pick this up the very first try.”

“Well, I’ll try anythin’ once,” replied Phineas, pulling on his helmet again. “Maybe I can’t do it the first time, but the second—well—”

“Oh, my Gawd!” moaned Garrity. “I—er—Pinkham, get into Wings. Get in there before I kick you in. I’ll show you where you get off this time, you—you—”

“I’m goin’,” cut in Phineas indignantly. “I’m goin’. But I bet I could’ve picked up that handkerchief. What’s the idea, huh? What was—” The rest of his words were drowned out as he went into the farmhouse and slammed the door behind him. Bump Gillis looked at Howell. Each shook his head, sighed and went his own way.

“Now,” barked the Old Man when they were in his office, “I suppose you weren’t in Bar-le-Duc tonight. You didn’t drop a dead cat into a general’s lap and—”

“H-huh?” gasped Phineas. Then his homely features split into a grin. “I didn’t do no such thing,” he protested, “but that don’t say it wasn’t a swell idea, haw-w-w-w! A dead cat—haw-w-w-w!”

“You’re a liar!” bellowed the major. “I saw you knocking tiles off the roofs myself. Don’t kid me, you fish-faced cluck! You were in Bar-le-Duc tonight.”

“Sure,” answered the culprit, his brain trying to absorb this strange state of affairs. “I only got there about an hour ago. I s’pose you think I got this wallop on the dome fallin’ against a bar, huh? Well, I didn’t. I—”

“That’s all, Pinkham,” ground out Sir Rufus. “I’m only wasting my time. But when I get this thing straight, I’m shipping you off to Chaumont to stand a court martial. Lie to me, huh? When I saw your ship with my own eyes and that pig you have painted on the side! Get out of here, an’ don’t kid yourself that you’re an aviator any more.”

“I will take this to the highest courts in the A.E.F.,” retorted the puzzled Pinkham scion with indignation. “I won’t stand bein’ framed. Here I am just recoverin’ from an almost mortal wound an’ you prosecute me. Somebody’s stealin’ my stuff. I’ll git the bums! Tryin’ to put me in a sling, huh, while I was out sufferin’ without no nurses around nor nothin’. That’s pals for you. Well, a Pinkham roused is maybe more dangerous than—than—”

“From now on you’ll be about as wild as a tiger lily,” snorted the major. “Get out of here!”

“Awright, awright,” snapped the injured jokesmith. “But this is one time I’m innocent. You’d better watch your step as I intend to fight to the finish.”

Wham! By inches Phineas beat through the door a dictionary which weighed over six pounds. Outside in the big room, the reception committee unloaded with everything they had. Bump Gillis, affecting the pose of an overstuffed diva, led the aria.

“To jail—to ja-a-ail, the conkin’ hero comes!”

Phineas paused. A big freckled hand strayed to the wound on his head. His eyes widened. Then he let out a wild crazy yell.

His other hand yanked out a service revolver which he brandished in the air.

“Ow-w-w-w-w! I can’t stand it. The gare’s gittin’ me. Ya-a-a-a-a-a! Guns goin’ off, shells bustin’, no sleep. Just fight an’ fight! Blood! Mud an’ blood! Ya-a-a-a-a-a! I

know how to stop it. I’ll just kill everybody. I’ll— ya-a-a-a-a!”

“Look out!” yipped Bump Gillis. “He-e-e—er-r-r-ripes!” The Scot dived through an open window.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Howell and Wilson dropped to the floor and rolled toward the door. Another buzzard crawled into the fireplace and tried to shinny up the chimney. When the Old Man barged out of his office, he saw Phineas surveying the scene with savage satisfaction. He was the only soul to be seen.

“Pinkham! You—what in the name of all the saints! An’ drop that gun! Nuts, huh? Well—”

“Haw-w-w-w-w!” It was the usual Pinkham guffaw. “Did I fool them bums? The gun had blanks in it. I wanted to see how quick I could clean out a baboon’s nest. Haw-w-w-w-w!”

With a wide grin bisecting his homely physiognomy, the bane of Squadron Nine’s existence sought his hut where he slumped on the bed. He tried to figure out who could possibly have impersonated him in Bar-le-Duc. The Mad Butcher? Hardly. That was too much of a risk for *Hauptmann* Heinz. Suddenly a thought came to Phineas.

“That squadron car I put the hornets’ nest in last week,” he thought aloud. “Them bums never could see a joke. I wonder—well, they’ll bear watchin’ and, oh, boys, if I find out!”

DAWN PATROL. Pour sleepy-eyed pilots turned irate eyes upon Phineas Pinkham as he appeared on the line, dressed for flight. Howell looked toward the big stone house, his eyes narrowed.

“Who said you were flyin’?” he questioned.

“Who said I wasn’t, huh?” retorted the Boonetown marvel, albeit his own eye was cocked toward the house wherein slept Garrity. “If you want to make sure, go wake up the old turtle. Go ahead, but look out for the dictionary.”

“Well, let’s get goin’,” barked Howell, “They can’t blame me.”

A Flight scurried over to the lines. They kept their eyes peeled for Jerry, but no sign of him spotted the early morning skies. The Yankee flight whirled high over Verdun and then gunned back toward Bar-le-Duc. Another flight of ships passed them. Phineas scanned the other Spads closely as they thundered by off his left wing.

“Well, Watson,” he chuckled, “elementary! Yep, just elementary. It’s a gift. I’ll ply my dear flight leader with

a question as soon as I arrive. Haw-w-w-w!”

Phineas plucked Captain Howell by the sleeve as the latter got out of his battle wagon back on the home field.

“It’s a pretty pass,” growled the flyer. “That outfit we passed had a fresh painted Spad in it, a new one. And we can’t even git patches for these wrecks we got. Well, if I was leadin’ a flight and was responsible for their lives and limbs, I’d have spunk enough to tell the Old Man a thing or three. I would—”

“Oh, you saw a new ship, did you ?” cracked the captain. “Well, I’ll see about it. They can’t pull that over on us. I’ll see Garrity. I sure will.”

“Good luck!” grinned Phineas.

Howell saw Major Rufus, who had just come down from his bed. He was in no mood to play marbles. The captain spilled the reason for his visit.

“Pinkham saw it!” screamed the Old Man. “Pinkham! Who told him he could go up? What? Who?”

“Who said he couldn’t?” Howell wanted to know.

“Why, damn it, Howell, I—er—that is—I—I—by cripes, don’t stand there gawkin’. I told Pinkham. That is—” He whirled on the adjutant. “Didn’t I tell you—er—no, never mind. I didn’t. Howell, get out! New ship, huh? I’ll tell the Wing.”

But the Wing told Major Garrity. It told him to stop believing everything his pilots told him. It suggested that the major stop bellyaching and brush up on the methods of running an air squadron or he would soon be taking machine guns apart and putting them together again.

It was communicated to Phineas in no gentle tones that the Thirty-Fourth Squadron had not received a new ship. “Well, that settles it,” chirped the irrepressible one, “I tear off my insignia without further delay. I’ve smelled a rat and will track it down.”

That night the Pinkham heir ducked out of A Flight again and headed for the Moselle River. Well beyond the river squatted the hangars and outbuildings of the drome of *Hauptmann* Heinz, the Mad Butcher from Hamburg. At the moment the *Staffel* leader was walking the floor of the Jerry mess hall, growling and biting his knuckles.

“Nodt yedt iss it official that *die* Pfalz ships gedt *Herr* Pingham, *nein?*” He thundered the question at Boche pilots, who browsed deep in their nose bags. “Bah, after I ged *der* trick which makes cold cuts of him by me, *ja!* *Ach*, vunce more I should go by *der Herr Oberst* und see maybe *der* report cooms, but *der Herr Oberst* drifes me oudt yet *und* swears, so! *Ach*, *Himmel*, if *die* Pfalz ships—if dot Pingham he is kaput—*ach!*”

“*Donnervetter*, Heinz!” snapped one pilot. “You growl if Leutnant Pingham liffs, *und* you growl so you find out he ain’t. *Ach*, such a business!”

A plane roared by overhead. The Boche flyers tumbled out of the shack and ran across the field. A Yankee ship swooped low, dropped something and zoomed like a flushed grouse. The Mad Butcher raced to where the little white parachute had floated to earth. He opened a tin box attached to the parachute and pulled out a paper which he devoured feverishly.

“Rudolph, Fritzie, Friedrich, Manfred!” boomed out Heinz. “Coom vunce! From the *Leutnant* Pingham, *ja!* He liffs. Alife, you hear, *hein?* Let us gedt *der* Rhine wine. Ve drink, *ja!* Vhen the Pfalz Circus hears, *die bummers!* Pingham he says he hass *der* ship painted gray *mit* crocodiles. *Ach*, he iss *der* chentleman sometimes, *hein?* Budt I vill shoodt him down, *der* oopstart! Me, *der* Mad Butcher, *ja!* Coom, ve drink to *der Tag!*”

The campaign against the encroachment of Heinie observation ships went on behind the Allied lines. German brass hats threatened and fumed. They dangled tempting offers before their winged Vikings—iron crosses, an estate in Saxony, Prussia, any place—for the German stalwarts who brought the bacon home in the form of sky snapshots.

The Mad Butcher himself led his Fokkers over as nursemaids to a pair of Albatross two-seaters, and found himself in a mess. Three Yankee flights emptied scores of ammo belts into his Circus, and the Mad Butcher went home leaving the two-seaters feeling as nude as Lady Godiva in the torrid ether. On the way, *Hauptmann* Heinz spotted a trio of Spads. One was painted gray, and on the side was a long black splotch.

“*Ach*, Pingham!” he yelled. “Better iss idt he shouldt be *der* prize, *ja!*” He reached into the pit and pulled a string. “Do your stuff, Hans, *und* it giffs you two veeks back in Frankfort, *ja!*”

Part of the fuselage in back of Heinz lifted. A man’s head appeared. Then it dropped out of sight again. The Mad Butcher gunned to the attack.

JUST THREE DAYS after the dead cat had fallen into the lap of the indignant Frog general, a motor cycle with bathtub attachment chugged onto the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron. A white-faced aviator got out in front of the big stone house, swallowed hard, and then, gathering courage, strode to the door. From inside came the sound of revelry, the vocal cords of Phineas Pinkham predominating.

The Boonetown trickster gasped as he saw the man



in the doorway. The visitor looked like that part of an advertisement which shows the subject before he had sense enough to take the peppering-up medicine.

"Haw!" guffawed Phineas. "Are ya scared as ya look? Come in, as you're among friends. What haunted house are you responsible for?"

"Never mind what I look like, ya fresh mug," clipped out the new arrival. "I'm here to admit ya got me licked. I'll own up. I was the one who flew over Bar-le-Duc. Painted my ship like yours. Got me some buck teeth and painted freckles on my face. I saw you git smacked down by the Pfalz ships. Me an' the gang over at Sivry said it was a chance to git hunk for the hornets' nest in the squadron car. So I fixed up my ship like yours an' dropped the dead cat an'—"

"I thought I'd find out," grinned Phineas. "Ha, I told the Mad Butcher I was flyin' a gray ship with a crocodile on it an'—well, I hope this'll teach ya a lesson. Ha, I bet you been gittin' smacked around pretty, huh? That pretzel-bender ain't been botherin' me at all. Haw-w-w!"

"I admit I'm licked," said the pilot from the Thirty-fourth dismally. "And if you're any kind of a guy, you'll tag that crate of yours so Heinz can spot it." Somebody handed him a stiff drink. "He almost got me yesterday," went on the culprit, after the stiffener. "How he did it I don't know. Wasn't in position for a shot at me, but a blast of lead made macaroni out of my tail assembly.

I got down, but I'm gittin' sick of bein' chased by that Kraut. Blois will look swell after this. I'm licked."

"So!" yowled the Old Man as he came into view. "I heard all of it. Tryin' to discredit the Ninth, huh? Well, I'll show that C.O. of yours. If he doesn't put you under arrest when you get back, I'll—"

"Haw-w-w!" chuckled Phineas. "I'm not one to be trifled with. I guess I didn't fix this fathead, huh? Well, he won't be under arrest as he's a sport and I'll confess I flew over Bar-le-Duc an' wasn't responsible as I can prove I was cuckoo from that slap over the ear the Heinie bullet give me. Anyway, that dead cat idea is too good to git cheated out of."

"I'm runnin' this squadron, Pinkham," roared Garry. "I'll handle this bird myself." He swept the rest of the personnel of the Ninth Pursuit with irate eyes. "No wiseacres from the Thirty-Fourth can—well, Howell?"

"Funny," said the flight leader. "I don't remember a thing the lieutenant said. My memory's been poor lately."

"Huh," said Bump Gillis, "so ya come over to borrow some sugar, did ya, lieutenant? Well, my maw always said to be neighborly."

The other pilots simply turned to what they were doing. So far as the Old Man was concerned, he might as well have been a bump on a log floating down the

Congo. He glared at his pilots, then walked over to the visiting flyer.

"You said you were licked, eh? You're nuts. It's me. I am the stepbrother around here." He whirled and stared at Phineas. "All right, Pinkham," he said. "Just convince two generals you weren't responsible for the dead cat. If you do, I'll eat one of my socks!" And waiting for no reply, the major stamped across the floor and into his sanctum. The door slammed behind him and a hinge flew off.

"Thanks," said the Thirty-four man. "Pinkham, any time you want a favor, I'm there—even if it's to poison the major."

Phineas hooked his arm through the other flyer's and drew him outside. "Begin by tellin' me about the Mad Butcher's Fokker," he said.

Over on the Jerry side, *Herr* Heinz was chuckling as he sat in the midst of his Junkers and told what a great master mind he was. "*Der* Spad I gedt it. *Der* pilot he iss so surprised yedt when Hans he shoodts it off the tail feathers, *ho-ho!* Maybe he gedts down *mit* vun piece yedt. Budt Hans he sees *der* pilot *und* it iss not Pingham. Ha, Pingham knows nodt *der* trick yedt, *nein!* To me he tells he hass *der* gray ship *mit* der crocodile so I keep away from him. *Der* vind by him iss oop. *Herr* Pingham afraid iss of *der* Mad Butcher, *ja!*"

The Junkers nodded agreement. They knew where they got off.

"Budt when Pingham cooms, I do by him *der* same. Make belief my guns jam. He coom close, *und* Hans he joomp oop *und* 'raus *mit* him! So!"

"If ve don't gedt the *Leutnant*, it giffs too badt," remarked a pilot. "*Der* High Kommand *Dumkopfs* calls uns for that ve don't gedt the camera ship through, *ja.*"

Hauptmann Heinz was about to throw out the Junker pilot who had spoken when a thought hit him between the eyes.

"Pictures *der* High Kommand vants, *ja!* *Ach*, maybe ve gedt dem, *ja*. I go *mit* to *der* *Herr* *Oberst!* Ha, Pingham shouldt look oudt. Hans, *der* best gunner, *und* *der* Mad Butcher, *der* best flyer in *der* var."

MIDNIGHT ON THE DROME of the Ninth found Sergeant Casey, lord and master of the groundmen, just dragging himself to barracks when Phineas Pinkham snagged him. Two things in life were intolerable to Casey—canned spinach and Phineas Pinkham.

"Well, Casey, I been lookin' for ya," grinned the lieutenant. "Huh, I don't know what I'd do without ya. We're goin' to make sure the Allied push is a success. Now here's what I want."

"But I ain't had enough sleep the last two days," objected Casey with a growl, "to—"

"Look how much ya'll git when the war's over," interrupted the patriot from Boonetown. "C'mon, Casey, no lip. I'm your superior."

Casey turned back to the hangar. If he got half a chance, he promised himself, he'd conk Pinkham with a hammer. He'd, claim self-defense. But nevertheless Sergeant Casey toiled until two o'clock. When Phineas called a halt, the Spad bore the Pinkham insignia. It had a boxlike contraption strapped to one side of the pit, the lower wing of the Spad lending the lion's share of support. Plenty of heavy wire was fastened around the fuselage, and double strands of it were attached to the struts.

"It's a hell of a mess if ya ask me," growled Casey, yawning, "but it's your funeral. I'll pick ya some cowslips. I'm hittin' the hay now, an' even a general couldn't stop me."

Phineas worked for another half-hour all by himself. When he finally sought his hut, he was chuckling with anticipation of what was to come. Despite his late hours, Phineas was up at six o'clock. The first patrol had been out, and Wilson, leader of C Flight, had reported the sky as scarce of Heinies as an oak tree was of apples. But that was not the thing that created the furore. The mess sergeant was running around wild, demanding that somebody bring back the iron sink which had been stolen from in back of the house. It was a new iron sink that had been sent up from Toul to be installed in the kitchen of the farmhouse.

"Who'd want it, you damfool?" Phineas tossed at the rampant mess sergeant. "Maybe you think I'm wearin' it on my watch-chain, huh? Well, I'm off, bums, as I'm filled up with suspicion. No Boche up, huh? Well, I'm a skeptic, as things is too quiet, and it means somebody is sneakin' around upstairs with their shoes off."

Sergeant Casey had seen to it that the Spad was ready for business. The miracle man from Iowa sauntered over and climbed in. From the boxlike attachment on his plane he drew some ropes which he tied to his belt. As he warmed up the Spad, Major Garrity barged out into the open.

"What's he got—a parachute?" he cracked at Casey, as he legged it toward the jump-off. "Who give him a right to wear—"

"If the stuff in that box'll hold him up," Casey grinned, "I'll tear the ammo shed down, break it up an' eat it with milk an' sugar, sir."

"You didn't answer my question, Casey," howled the major.

"I can't, because I don't know what the fathead—er—he has got in the box. I only—"

"Pinkham," yelled the trickster's C.O., "Pinkham, you—"

In answer, the Hisso roared to a crazy pitch. The Spad shot away, left the ground, came down again, bounced and was once more clear. A yell went up from the mess sergeant.

"He's got it—the iron sink. Hangin' under the Spad, major. He's got the sink!"

"Am I blind?" shouted Garrity. "Now what in hell is he going to do with a sink?"

"Maybe he wants to wash out his undercarriage," proposed Bump Gillis. "And is that a fast one, huh?"

"When I want to hear jokes, I'll tell you, you half-baked Scotch scone," yelled the major. "Pinkham's nuts, you're crazy, an' I am ready to cut out paper dolls. A sink! Cripes!"

Now *Hauptmann* Heinz, the Mad Butcher, had also gotten out of bed before breakfast. He, too, was high over the Yankee backyard. How he had sneaked over, nobody knew, but he was up high enough so that Yankee observation posts could not determine whether he was for or against democracy. When the alarm finally came into an American drome, and two pursuit ships were sent into the air, the pilots found that the German had a mile's start toward his own lines.

"Oh, what's the use?" a Yankee flight leader said between cuss words. "It looks as if they've pulled out with some pictures. A combat ship, too. Well, this is goin' to spoil the brass hats' whole day." He signaled his flight and headed back home.

"*Ach, ve haff did it, Hans, ja!*" yowled Heinz. "Ve haff fooled the *verdamm't Amerikaner, Ja?* Ha, for vunce, *Herr Leutnant* Pingham he sleeps too much. Ho! Ho! Joost fife minutes *und ve say to der Herr Oberst der estate I vill haff in Prussia. Mit plendty acres und—ach—Donnervetter! Hans!*" The Mad Butcher yanked a cord. Overhead a Spad was circling. It had come down out of a big cloud.

"Pingham!"

"Got away, did ya?" howled Phineas as he dived, "I was up before the roosters crowed, too, ya pretzel-bender. Here I come, fat-head!" He sent a burst at the Fokker, overshot, and banked around.

Heinz caught a glimpse of the box on the side of the ship as it whizzed over his leather casque. "A parachute, *hein?* Hans, ve moost ged't closer yedt. Oddervise he joomps *und ve don'dt ged't him yedt. Two birds mit vun stone, ha! Der Tag!*" He waved his arms as Phineas

gunned in. The Boonetown flyer saw him pound at his guns.

"It's a swell act," grinned the Yank as he maneuvered nearer. "Ya dirty bum! Ya asked for it, an' it'll maybe hurt ya more than it does me. Haw-w-w-w!"

Slowly the Spad was jockeyed to a position above the Fokker. Phineas leaned overside. The Mad Butcher looked up and waved his arms. He pointed toward the ground. At the same time he yanked a string—a signal to Hans. Then he saw that thing hitched to the belly of the Spad. Heinz's eyes widened. His mouth flopped open. He tried to yell something, wasted precious seconds before slipping out from under the Spad. *Rat-a-tat-tat!* Behind him, Hans's gun flamed, shooting at the blind spot. The bullets smacked against the iron sink.

"*Ach, Himmel!*" gulped *Hauptmann* Heinz. "*Der trick! Gott!*"

One side of the box tied to the Yankee ship fell away. The Spad zoomed simultaneously. Bricks, old pieces of scrap iron, stones, and other heavy debris crashed down on the Fokker. Something hit Hans on the nose, and stars appeared in the skies all around him. Something that seemed as heavy as an anvil grazed one ear and tipped him half out of his improvised pit. He hung there for a minute, then blinked his way back to reason.

Overhead, Phineas circled, waiting for the Mad Butcher to come to him. That was the idea uppermost in the mind of *Hauptmann* Heinz, but Hans had another thought. He was fed up with air fighting, with the Mad Butcher, and his stomach was upsst, too. Hans wanted to get down, and he did not care how. He had to take a poke at somebody. He threw his hand into a bunch of knuckles, leaned over and brought it down on top of *Hauptmann* Heinz's head.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" yipped Phineas. "If that ain't the funniest thing I ever saw. Haw-w-w-w! He bopped the Mad Butcher. And who'll fly the ship?"

That was what Hans wanted to know. The Fokker began to spin. Hans pulled and tugged at the Mad Butcher. "*Donnervetter, somet'ing do, Herr Hauptmann, ja!* Lissen vunce, please. Look! Ve go fast down. Do somet'ings."

Herr Heinz woke up in time to prevent a total washout. He came down right between the lines in a sector that was engaged in a lot of war. The ship bounced high, came down with a crackling sound, and slipped into a canal.

Hans, however, had parted company with the Fokker, and was draped over a lot of barbed wire by the time Phineas slid in to land.

Machine guns clattered everywhere. Shells were bursting. Grenades were flying as thick as confetti. Across the canal was the German side, and the Mad Butcher frantically pulled off his coat and boots in the shadow of a Fokker wing and splashed his way across as Phineas ran toward the remains of the Boche ship. Doughboys grabbed at the Pinkham hero as he barged forward.

“Come back, you fool,” yelled an officer.

“Sure,” howled Phineas, “when I git the bacon. Haw-w-w-w!” A bullet tore a piece out of his ear as he plunged head foremost toward the Fokker wreck. For the last twenty feet he slid over soft mud. Three infantrymen and an officer, throwing grenades as they ran, managed to get to Phineas.

“Look,” grinned the flyer. “A camera! They got pictures of the Yankee backyard. I figgered that the big squarehead was up to somethin’ like that. Well, where do we go from here?”

“Hell, if the Jerries git to us first,” growled the officer.

As luck would have it, the Heinies were getting more than they bargained for. An *Ober-Offizier* took a look around and saw that the Yanks were flanking his position, so he gave the order of every man for himself. And with the retreating Heinies went Heinz, the Mad Butcher.

“Oh, boys, what a day!” enthused Phineas. “Gimme that camera. Back there, if he ain’t filled with holes like a sieve, is a Heinie observer hangin’ on the wire! Haw-w-w-w!”

The Ninth’s rebounding bad penny checked up his Spad, found that a wheel had snapped off and demanded transportation back to the field. Instead, they took him back to Divisional Headquarters. A general was there, a heavy-jowled general who, when he caught the name “Pinkham” being bandied about, dropped his bottle.

“So!” he snapped. “Bring any dead cats, lieutenant? I’ve been waiting to get my hands on you. I—”

Phineas yawned and pointed to the Boche camera. “You carry it the rest of the way,” he suggested. “It’s too heavy. Haw-w-w!”

“Sir,” a colonel explained before the general blew up, “this man has rendered the Allies a most valuable service. He just downed the Boche who got pictures of the back area early this morning.”

“He did?” stuttered the officer. “Why—er—young man—you—er—well—”

Twenty minutes later the colonel was speaking to Major Garrity. Pilots of the Ninth watched their C.O. as he received the news. The Old Man did not say a word; he just nodded his head as if suddenly afflicted with dumbness. After a while he put down the phone, got up and looked at Bump Gillis.

“Go ask the mess sergeant something, Gillis,” he ordered solemnly. “Ask him if a sock is tenderer boiled than when it’s fried. I’m goin’ to eat one. Will you buzzards join me?”