



*It was a big anniversary for Major Garrity, and Phineas Pinkham wanted to wish him a happy birthday. Well, it wasn't entirely Phineas' fault that what he wished him was a—*

# SCRAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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**M**AJOR RUFUS GARRITY, C.O. of the turbulent Ninth Pursuit Squadron, should never have allowed the exact date of his birth to leak out. If the Old Man had been psychic and could have foreseen what dire events were to take place as a result of a birthday celebration, he would have wished never to have been born.

However, two days prior to the great event, a package came through the mails to Major Rufus. His fond relatives had remembered their contribution to

the Allied cause. On the package were scrawled great words of greeting—"Happy Birthday, April 10th." And who had focused his sharp optics on said package as it was being borne across the field but Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham, Boonetown, Iowa's flying delegate to the big fuss!

"Oh, boys!" chortled Phineas as he hied himself to round up his mates. He was no time in gathering a group of them in the lee of a hangar.

"In two days the old termater'll be on the shady side of forty," he announced to the assemblage. "We've

got to fete him fittin' an' proper to show how much we love the lantern-jawed bum."

"My idea would be to drop the matter at once," Bump Gillis declared. "It's poison any way you look at it. With you runnin' the works, Carbuncle Pinkham, it'll be the klink for somebody, an' I don't like klinks. I move we just chip in, buy him a nice bottle opener an' forgit it."

"There's the Scotch for ya," Phineas growled.

"I think it's a good idea," Howell agreed, glaring at Gillis. "How much do we all ante, Pinkham?"

"Only for the liquid refreshments do I collect argent," Phineas grinned. "I've got my own idea about gittin' the meat course for the binge. Only tender Frog cacklers is good enough for the Old Man. Well, I'll call a meetin' later an' discuss matters further. Meetin's adjourned. Haw-w-w-w-w!"

Major Garrity, innocent of it all, sat in his sanctum, conversing with an itinerant brass hat. The colonel and Major Garrity were discussing the proposed German push. A strange lethargy behind the Jerry lines had been sowing the seed of suspicion in the bosom of G.H.Q. for a month.

"There's one chance to get the information we seek, Garrity," the colonel said in an undertone. "We've got a man planted there. It's a good thing he was sent over there three months ago as there isn't an Allied plane, an individual or an animal bigger than a cockroach that could ooze through the lines now. If that information comes through as we hope, we'll be ready. Otherwise, I figure the Huns have a chance of grabbing back some valuable Frog soil. Well, we'll wish the bird luck, major, eh?"

"Plenty," averred Sir Rufus. "Hope nothin' happens. If the reports are true that the Kaiser is pulling Austrian troops from the Italian front and Jerry divisions from Galicia, then we've got a fight on our hands. Glad you dropped in, colonel."

A FLIGHT, grumbling as usual, tumbled out at dawn for the early patrol. Phineas' homely countenance beamed as if it had been greased with lard as he gulped his coffee.

"I bet it'll only be a waste of time," he said of the prospective flight. "We haven't seen a Heinie crate for a week. Von Schnoutz must have all his bums warming up in the bull pen. Well, I've got errands to do, anyway, so it's all right with me if—"

"You leave the formation this morning," Howell cracked, "and you'll find out what will happen, you spotted hyena!"

"Oh, I wouldn't leave you, captain," Phineas countered, assuming an innocent mien. "Banish the thought! But of course anything is liable to happen over which I have no control."

The six Spads followed the usual routine and got off the ground. Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham sat in his cockpit and studied the terrain as the formation skimmed for the lines. In the pocket of his flying coat was a little bag of corn meal pilfered from the squadron larder. In the other pocket reposed the handle of a small sledge hammer.

Howell and his slaves cruised over the somnolent area all slashed up with trenches. Here and there a cloud hung lazily, but up in the higher strata there was nothing but atmosphere.

"An' that loud-mouthed von Snootz keeps sayin' what he'll do to me, huh?" Phineas grinned scornfully. "But how can a guy shoot a moose if he stays in a duck blind an' plays solitaire? The gare is gittin' to be very boring."

Howell could see no use in wasting more time. He banked toward the drome and expected everyone to follow him. There are a lot of things in life that never come up to expectations, and Phineas Pinkham was an example of them all. Howell looked back and saw the Pinkham ship still circling. Suddenly it fell off on a wing and started for the carpet.

"If you think I'm goin' to chase you and coax you back, you fathead," the flight leader yelled into the backwash, "to hell with you! Wait until Garrity gets you this time."

Lieutenant Pinkham went down a thousand feet and looked over the landscape. There was a Frog farm below and it looked comparatively prosperous.

"A happy huntin' ground," the Boonetown flyer chirped, and wing-slapped down.

A fair landing field soon presented itself. Anything short of a stone quarry or a sea of boiling lava had possibilities for an emergency drome, as far as Phineas Pinkham was concerned. The Spad lurched to a stop in a Frog cow pasture. Phineas got out of the pit and surveyed the situation. Over by a fence a pair of brown hens were meandering along, aimlessly pecking at the ground.

"Poor things," exclaimed Phineas and began to reconnoitre. "They look starved. Well, cheer up, biddies, as your troubles are most over." He reached into his pocket and grabbed up a handful of crushed corn. Ten feet from the foraging poultry he let some of the corn trickle to the ground. One of the fowls instinctively

turned and trotted over. Phineas likewise turned and walked away, the corn still trickling from his closed fist. Not until he was behind a clump of bushes did he stop. Then he took out the hammer handle.

"Cut-cut-cut-ca-da-cut!" enthused the feathered creatures as they followed the trail of plenty. Finally they had gorged the corn up to the point where the trail ended on Phineas' insteps.

*Wham! Kerslap!*

"Well, the Old Man has got to have a party." The slayer appeased his conscience and picked up his catch. "But this ain't enough. I must look around."

The defunct hens were duly deposited in the Spad and Phineas set forth to add to his collection. His wanderings were futile up to a certain point. He came to a tree and his eagle eyes caught a movement in the branches.

"Oh, boys!" he exclaimed. "I bet it's no less than a partridge. Well—" He whirled the hammer handle around his head and let it drive. The missile hit true, and out of the tree tumbled a bird. As the hunter picked it up, he heard shouts. Hastily he tucked the fowl under his coat and looked around. A gang of doughs were swarming over the crest of a hill. They were waving rifles over their heads and shouting lustily.

"I don't like the looks of this," Phineas observed. "I bet they were chasin' it an' winged it and it lit in the tree. Well, *garcons*, let me see you catch me, as what a chance! I won every race in the last Elks' picnic back in Boonetown."

Without delay, Phineas legged it to his Spad. He hastily tossed his third fowl into the pit and climbed in after it.

"Well, we'll each have a taste, anyways. What a party! Adoo, bums, better luck next time. There's as good birds left in the sea—er—or good fish left in the bushes as was ever caught."

The Spad rocketed away just as the gesticulating doughs tumbled over the pasture fence.

"Haw-w-w-w!" guffawed the miscreant. "Now for Barley Duck. I have more business there."

Down on the ground, a shavetail jumped up and down and yelled like an Indian brave on the warpath.

"Talk louder. I can't hear ya," Phineas yelled as he gunned for altitude.

It was long after noon when the Pinkham Spad glided onto the field of the Ninth Pursuit. He did not get out of the pit. Sergeant Casey and three pilots ambled over.

"You hit?" the former wanted to know. Bump Gillis and the other buzzards waited hopefully for the answer.

"Nope," replied Phineas. "You git me a burlap sack or somethin' like it. I've got a surprise here an' don't want the Old Man to see it. Don't stand there gawping. I am an officer and you obey my orders, compree?"

"I s'pose so," grumbled Casey and went off to snag a sack.

A few moments later, a greaseball skirted the hangar and got around to the kitchen of the farmhouse without being observed. He deposited the bag on the floor and growled at the mess sergeant.

"Pinkham sent 'em in. Says to frickersee 'em." He turned and walked away in a hurry.

Phineas did not wait to be sent for. He walked in on Major Garrity and saluted smartly.

"Oh, don't think that'll help you," the C.O. roared. "You dizzy-lookin' cluck! Deliberately faded away from formation again, eh? You know how many times? I'll tell you." He riffled some papers.

"I will save you the trouble," Phineas said. "I kept count. It's only seventeen times. I didn't like the sound of my Hisso an' did not take a chance. Seein' as how short of crates we are. I says I will go down and see what's wrong an'—"

Major Garrity reached down. From the birthday package he had opened up he extracted an orange that was very much mildewed. He showed it to Phineas.

"I give you three strides for the door, you ape!" he yipped. "Then I let this fly."

"That is against the rules," yelled Phineas as he swiveled. "Y-you can't—you're an officer and no gentleman if you—awright, I'm goin'."

*Splosh!* The orange missed Phineas but it merged with the businesslike countenance of the Ordnance officer who was about to enter.

"Ah—er—sorry," spluttered Garrity. "Sorry, Wilkes, I—I—oh-h-h-h, that homely—"

*"Haw-w-w-w-w-w-w!"*

ANOTHER DAY and a fraction elapsed. Major Rufus Garrity was enjoying the tag end of his birthday. Privately, of course.

"Birthdays!" he exploded as he ambled out of his sanctum. "Bah! Glad nobody remembered it. Lot of rot—er—where are the pilots?" It was past their usual mess time. A mess attendant was standing around with an innocent expression on his face.





"G-giss they ain't hungry, sir," he stammered. "They were kickin' about the cookin' yesterday, too, an'—"

"Oh, is that so? Well, let me tell that bunch of—"

The door burst open. Phineas was in the van, carrying a bundle in his arm.

"Ha-a-ppy bir-r-rthda-a-a-ay to yoo-o-ohoo! Haw-w!"

The Old Man's mouth opened wide. "Wha-a-at?" he gasped. "What is this? Ah—er—well, well! Ha! Nice of you, fellows. You got me, eh?"

"Now just sit down," Phineas said to him. "The party'll start at once." He clapped his hands together. "Come, come, *garcon!*" he yelled at the mess attendant! "Service, veet!"

When the man obeyed, Phineas unwrapped his parcel. A big birthday cake was revealed.

"It was baked by Babette, my dame," the flyer announced. "And she put on the candles an'—"

Major Garrity was overwhelmed. He even shoved out his hand to Phineas. Around the festive board the pilots sat and eyed Phineas, then the cake. Bump Gillis' tongue went to his cheek.

"Pinkham," stammered the Old Man, "this is too much. F-fancy I've misjudged you, ha! Well, we'll forget that little matter of running out of formation an'—an'—"

The mess attendant came in, bearing a tray loaded up with fricasseed fowl. The aroma seeped into the major's nostrils and he sniffed wholeheartedly.

"By gad!" he enthused. "Chicken! My favorite dish." "That ain't all," interposed the grinning Phineas. "Just look at the cake. Now blow out the candles and—" The Old Man took a deep breath. His lungs filled to

bursting, and he took aim. "Ho-o-o-o-o-of!" The candles flickered. Everybody held their breath. Bump Gillis looked at Phineas and did not like what he saw, so pushed back his chair.

Wh-o-o-o-o-o-oosh! The Old Man tried to get back. From the top of every candle shot a hissing stripe of fire. Chairs scraped the floor.

"B-by cr-r-r-ripes!" howled Garrity and pawed at his eyebrows. He slipped and fell. His face plopped right into the icing of the birthday cake.

"W-well, adoo," cried Phineas. "I did not think it'd be this bad. I got a letter to write an'—"

"P-Pligham!" Garrity yelped as he pawed half the cake from his face and spat out a candle. "Cub back, you big hobly—"

"You fathead!" yipped Bump. "What did ya do?"

"I just put powder in the ends of them candles. I didn't think the old terma—er—Old Man would stick his face so close. It was only a little fun an'—"

"My Gawd, I knew it!" moaned Howell. "You cluck!"

Major Garrity was finally calmed down. A mess attendant handed him a towel. When his face was wiped clean of icing, he growled and sat down in his chair to soothe his spleen with chicken.

"Well, I'm glad you've got a sense of humor at last," the incurable humorist grinned and unwrapped another parcel. "I've got a swell present for you. It's a scarf." He held it up.

Howell threw his hands over his eyes. "It blinds me!" he yelled.

The C.O. looked at the scarf and blinked. It was a long spread of silk of red and orange hue.

"Me wear that, you fresh baboon?" he stormed.

"I'm a cockeyed whirling dervish if I do. Do I look like a guy who'd wear that? You think my name's Gertrude, huh? Pinkham, hide that thing before it sets fire to somethin'. Bah!" He wolfed at the chicken again as laughter rang in Phineas Pinkham's ears.

"It ain't the gift," the donor said indignantly. "It's the thoughts behind it. Awright, I'll keep it!" He shoved the scarf into his pocket just as a commotion took place outside the door. Then the door opened and into the mess room barged

two brass hats, a shavetail and three timid buck privates.

"There he is!" yelped the shavetail, pointing to Phineas. "That guy with the freckles."

Phineas arose with dignity. "You pagin' me?" he chuckled. "This is a private party an' nobody asked you bums to—er—officers—"

"Garrity," boomed one brass hat, "these men trailed that pigeon yesterday that was carrying a message over from Germany. It was wounded and landed in a tree. When they started for it, this flyer of yours knocked it off."

"A—a pigeon?" screeched Garrity. He looked down at his plate that was cluttered up with bones. He passed a hand over his brow and looked at Phineas.

"Aw, I didn't know it was a pigeon," Phineas alibied. "I did not have time to examine it. I had to snag it quick an' dust got in my eyes so—"

"What're you going to do about this, Garrity?" one of the officers blazed. "You realize what this means? You ate it up, eh? The most vital message in the war was tied to that bird. Wh-where's the kitchen? Maybe we'll find—"

Everybody stampeded toward the rear of the farmhouse. The mess attendant said that there was nothing tied to the bird. The place was turned upside down but nothing was brought to light.

"There," growled Phineas. "Blame me as usual. I bet it wasn't on there at all."

Major Rufus Garrity felt weak in the knees as he dragged himself back into the big room. On either side of him a brass hat stalked along, uttering dire threats.

"Let me be!" he groaned. "Arrest Pinkham—who cares? A hell of a birthday!"

"Nobody'll ever get a chance to corner that information again," an officer ripped out. "We're sunk. There isn't a ship that can land behind those lines. Wait until G.H.Q. hears of this one, Garrity! You're as good as busted right now."

Sir Rufus admitted this fact to himself. Soon the irate party embarked in their limousine and headed out of the drome. Over in one corner of the room stood Phineas Pinkham, thinking

desperately of a way out. His brow was damp. He pulled out the riotous-colored scarf and wiped off the sweat. His eyes glued themselves to the gaudy cloth. Then something snapped somewhere between his ears. He walked over to the orderly room and found Major Garrity sitting there, steeped in gloom and holding a wishbone in his hand.

"Let's break it an' make a wish," proposed the flyer, grinning. "Haw-w-w-w! Well, I have an idea."

Major Garrity made as if to leap at Phineas, then sighed and slumped into his seat again.



"Nobody can land behind the lines, nope," the intrepid pilot continued, "but they can git smacked down."

"Wha-a-a-at?" gasped the C.O. from deep down in his throat.

"I will ask you now for permission to go over to the Jerry back porch an' knock over some milk bottles. I've got a way to—"

"Sure," said the Old Man dismally, "go ahead."

"I go over at sunrise," Phineas said with a magnificent sweep of his arm. "A Pinkham once more shoulders the white man's burden."

"Oh, shut up," groaned the major. "Get out an' leave me alone!"

DURING the remainder of the night the C.O.'s pain in the neck acted very strangely. He gathered himself some straw and piled it close to his hut. After dampening it slightly with water, he went into the Nissen hut whose walls were rocking with the nocturnal wheezes of Lieutenant Bump Gillis. There Phineas collected several things from his trunk and tied them into a bundle. Having placed the bundle in a convenient nook, he went out to a hangar and had a talk with Sergeant Casey.

"I know you have some slow-burnin' fuse," began the pilot-extraordinary. "It's been here ever since the time the doughs blasted out stumps to widen the field. Fork it over."

The desired article was found. Phineas chose three long pieces which were in working order. Five minutes later, he was out behind the farmhouse, tearing away a length of tin gutter. Then back he went to the rear of his hut once more. He touched a match to one of the fuses and pulled out his watch. As the powder sputtered along the fuse, he kept an eye on the minute hand. It was a strange ritual, indeed, but then it was a Pinkham performing.

Close to midnight, Phineas went out to the hangar and fastened the piece of gutter along the fuselage right above the bottom wing. Among his materials was a small packing box in which he had cut a hole big enough to admit one end of the gutter. This apparatus was made fast, and then the inventor of strange things ran a fuse into it. He could then call it a day—almost. There was something to be attached to the nose of the Spad. A string led from it and wriggled to the pit.

"Well, I got it timed right," decided the flyer cryptically. "If I meet a Hun on time, well—guess I'll hit the hay. I can't wait until termorrer. Oh, boy!"

Early in the morning Major Garrity, who had tossed restlessly on his pallet all night, dreaming about doing guard duty in the front-line trenches, jumped clear of his bed and got to a window. A Spad was tearing across the field. The Old Man tumbled downstairs and outdoors, yelling at the top of his lungs. Sergeant Casey and two groundmen were gathered to his bosom.

"Who let him have that ship?" thundered the C.O.

"W-why, you did, sir," Casey jerked out. "Las' night. Pinkham—er—the lieutenant told me you did, an' I wouldn't believe him so I asked Cap'n Howell an' he said you did. I—g-guess y-you wasn't yourself las' night, sir, er—"

Garrity bristled. "Who asked you? I—well—" He gulped and spun on his heel. "I'm glad I wasn't," he snapped as he retreated to solitude. "Maybe he'll get bumped off."

Over into German ozone scooted Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham, the exponent of all varieties of trickery and skullduggery. And this time there was more than just atmosphere in his slice of firmament. Two Jerry ships spotted the Pinkham Spad. One of the keen-eyed krauts was none other than the *Rittmeister* von Schnoutz, who felt that he had been sent by a power greater than any on earth to smack down the Yankee trickster.

"*Himmel! Das ist von oopstart! Der Tag, ja!* This time I shooldt him all *der* vay by Berlin *und* drop him *unter den Lindens. Gott mit uns!*" The *Rittmeister* threw his ship at the Spad, Spandaus chattering like a Black Forest filled with squirrels.

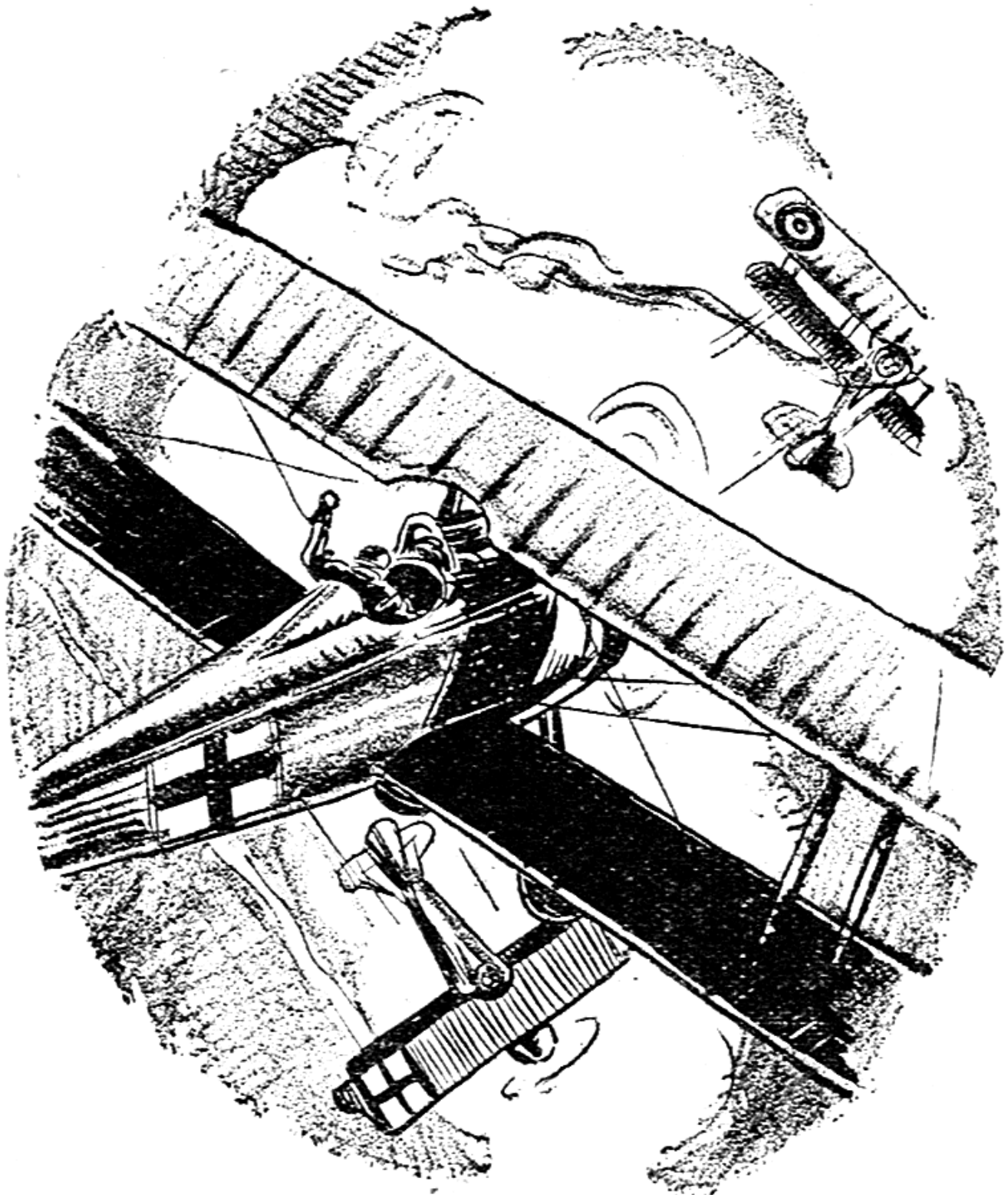
In the Allied plane Phineas Pinkham waited. His customary grin was cold as he waited for the impact of Jerry slugs.

"If he only misses my carcass the first burst, everything in the bag," the miracle worker thrust out through clenched bicuspid.

The burst spattered against his engine hood. Von Schnoutz zoomed over. Down went Phineas in a breathtaking slide. Abruptly he felt a surge of elation course through his being. Smoke was oozing out of the box close to the snout of his ship. It began to billow forth in clouds. Von Schnoutz let out a wild, rude, exultant yell. From the motor bays of the Spad poured telltale smoke. Then in the smoke appeared a sheet of flame—orange and red almost obscured by the smoke, fluttering, ominous. It was a deadly tongue of destruction.

"*Hoch der Kaiser! Der last of Pingham!*" yelled the *Rittmeister*, and swept over the burning ship and up





to waggle his wings at his flying mate. The other Von answered and lifted both hands high above his head. Down went von Schnoutz to escort the doomed man into the dirt from which he came.

And what of Phineas? Down he went toward a big forest. The wheels of his Spad hit on bumpy turf. Smoke was choking him.

"Cripes!" he gasped. "Maybe I overdid it. Well, I

got to slip in there an'—" Trees loomed up bigger and bigger as the Spad rolled toward the woods. Two trees seemed to widen to give him room.

*Crash!* The wings washed out as Phineas switched off. The Spad sideswiped another tree and kicked over on its side. Phineas shook himself, found that nothing on his torso was out of whack, and tumbled from the pit. Working feverishly, he snatched at the bundle

which hung loosely from the side of the pit. He tossed it farther into the woods, then reached into his pocket. His fingers closed over a Mills bomb. He pulled the pin with his teeth and heaved it into the pit of the Spad. *Wha-a-am!* Pieces of the plane flew in every direction.

Face pressed flat against the ground, the Boonetown wizard heard parts sing by over his head. Then he looked up. The Spad was ablaze. Over the top of the trees skimmed the undercarriage of von Schnoutz's plane. Phineas got up, ran to the bag, and pulled some strange-looking objects out of it—an old leather coat and a pair of boots, a plaster of paris ashtray fashioned into a grinning skull. Over it Phineas had glued strips of heavy cloth the night before.

Drawing as close to the burning ship as he could, the amazing Yank tossed the objects onto the ground. The underbrush, once afire, would reach the things and char them right.

"Well, it looks good," chuckled the plotter, and started to run. He snatched up the bag en route and plunged into the thick woods.

Half an hour later, *Rittmeister* von Schnoutz was standing in the burned area of the woods where the Spad had blown up. He kicked at a fragment of leather, a partly burned boot, then turned his head away when a Heinie pointed to a blackened thing half-buried by burned leaves.

"*Ach du Lieber*, efen Pingham shouldt be too badt he gets this, *ja*," said the *Rittmeister*. "*Ach*, by *der* stomach yedt I gedt *der* sickness. I go vay."

"You are *der* hero, *Herr Rittmeister*," the other Von beamed. "At last Pingham he iss noddings. Ve shouldt go *und* spreadt *der* vord! I salute you, *Herr Rittmeister*."

"Noddings vas it," von Schnoutz said modestly, yet the front of his tunic bulged and bulged and a button snapped. "Only *der Tag, ja!*"

THE NEWS SPREAD faster than the rumor of a scandal in a four-by-six country town. It reached every Jerry drome by nightfall, penetrated to every Hun division crouching in readiness for the big push. Steins were being drained all over the kraut area. Von Schnoutz was the hero of the war.

Over the lines skimmed three Jerry scouts. One dropped the message over the drome of the Ninth Pursuit just as the last rays of the sun were reluctantly leaving the edge of the horizon. Sergeant Casey brought it into the French farmhouse. His face was very grave. "A Jerry dropped it, sir," he said, handing the note to Captain Howell. "D'ya mind if I stay an'

find out what it is? If it's Pinkham, well—er—he borrowed five francs from me last—"

Howell ripped the message open. He sighed and looked at his fellows. "Yep, it's Carbuncle. They burnt him to a chip. The dirty Huns! I—" He stopped and swallowed a big lump that had blocked up his throat. "I—I'll t-tell the Old Man."

Major Garrity stared at the wall after hearing the message. He did not burst out crying, by a long shot.

"Listen, Howell," he said after a moment, "that bum has come back too many times when we thought he was out there holdin' a lily in his fist. We'll be walkin' around sniffing when he comes in, I bet, and we'll get the horse laugh. Ha, I'll save my blubbering until I get more proof."

Howell left with heavy tread. "The big lug," he grumbled. "Imagine him! Well, I'll get a transfer. I won't fry for the stone-hearted bum any more. Poor Phineas!"

Poor Phineas, indeed! The subject of this maudlin sympathy was poor enough in looks as he walked out of the woods next morning. He wore a faded old coat that reached to his knees. Frayed trousers and shabby boots showed beneath it. An old slouch hat covered shaggy white hair. In some strange manner the resourceful Pinkham heir had changed over night into a hook-nosed, wrinkled old man with a long beard. He looked like the grandfather of Rip Van Winkle when that famous gentleman of fiction wakened from a twenty-year snooze.

"Well," he remarked as he leaned on a stick, "I giss I'll go out an' mingle with the great unwashed. I can git a whiff of the Jerry infantry clear from here, ugh!" He tottered along feebly down a hill and soon came upon a group of Hun soldiers hunched around a fire. One yelled at him. Phineas did not answer. He trotted over, however, and eyed them close.

"*Wie Gehts?*" one laughed. "*Was ist los mit?*"

Phineas cupped a hand to his ear. "Eh?"

The German roared at him.

"Eh-h?" quavered the masquerader.

The soldiers eyed each other and shook their heads. One stabbed at his ears and looked wise. Phineas walked on, mentally checking the markings on the Jerry soldiers' uniforms. No doubt they would clip them off before the drive started, in the event of being taken prisoner.

"It's a good thing I burned myself up," Phineas grinned with satisfaction. "I would be gittin' chased by all the Jerry armies and no disguise would be perfect if I didn't kill myself. Am I smart? I am!"



A mile away the reconnoiterer spotted signs of feverish activity. He had carefully picked the spot to crash. A long line of men streamed into one side of the town and out at the other side. Guns and trucks rumbled along behind them. Phineas tottered over the last mile and into town. He hunched himself down beside an old watering trough and surveyed the passing legions with eagle eyes. Once an officer came up and nudged him.

"Was ist?"

"Eh-h?" squeaked Phineas. The Prussian growled impatiently and shoved him over on his ear before stalking away. Boots passed by, thousands of boots. Phineas got up apparently with difficulty and went to what was left of a house. He leaned against the door jamb. An old woman was peering out at the passing Krauts. An infant clutched at her voluminous skirts.

"Peegs! *Boches chiens!*"

"Oh, boys! A pal!" chortled Phineas, and tottered in through the door. He was immediately followed by three Heinies—two *Unteroffiziers* and another bundled up in flying leather, with a heavy leather casque fitted to his cube-shaped head.

"What ees you want, *oui?*" the old woman snapped at the Jerries. "*Mon Dieu—sacré—*"

"Voose are welcome to pot luck *avec* noose," Phineas butted in with senile voice, turning his back on the Krauts. He placed a long forefinger hastily to his lip as the old woman started to show indignation.

"*Ja, danke schön.*" They sat down and talked rapidly in German. Above the outlandish gibberish Phineas caught the names of Pinkham and von Schnoutz. The word must be spreading fast.

"Vooley voose a drink?" the intrepid Yank shot at the trio of weary Huns and pointed toward the cellar with one shaking hand. He doubled up the other and touched it to his lips. The Krauts caught on. As Phineas headed for the stairs, he looked out of the window. One hundred yards to the rear of the house squatted a Jerry Hannover.

Acting very feeble, Phineas walked down into the cellar. He lighted a stub of candle which was stuck to the top of a barrel by a gob of tallow. Beside it was a bung starter. The Jerries, throats parched, threw caution to the winds. They crowded together and bent forward to breathe the deliciously musty odor of aged wine into their nostrils.

Phineas seized the bung starter. *Kerwhop! Plunk!* Two Jerries bit the dust. The third yelled "*Himmel!*" and tried to smear the Boonetown masquerader. His last thought

for many hours was how such a doddering old man could pack such a wallop in his left hand.

Fifteen minutes later a man oozed out of the cellar, clad in the bulky garb of a Prussian aerial observer. He had a scarf wrapped about the lower part of his jaw. The old woman looked at this figure sharply. Phineas gave her the signal for a soft pedal.

"I'm a Yank," he muttered. "*Merci* for the teamwork. Adoo. You're famous, like Joan of Arc." He hustled out the back way.

Walking in a very casual fashion, Phineas passed a group of five Jerries who were busily engaged in fixing a sick machine gun. He waved and headed for the Hannover. Two men stood close to it, but there was nobody in the pit. Evidently the pilot had business of his own in another part of the town.

"Well, here goes!" chuckled the unquenchable Yank. "I'll give them the signal." He flipped a hand toward the nose of the ship as he drew near. "Konta-a-a-kt!" he said gruffly, and climbed into the cockpit. He fooled with the controls, then switched on. The prop sang. Phineas jammed in the throttle. The Hannover shook like a bowl of jelly, then catapulted forward.

"*Ach, Himmel!*" A Kraut dough flopped flat in the dirt, and the right wheels of the two-seater bounced over his mid-section. The other Heinie dived clear and skidded head first into a blackberry bush.

A gesticulating figure tore out of a house and shook his fist at Phineas. Two more staggered into the open. One of them had a miniature igloo adorning his noggin, while the other was clad only in his underwear.

"Gedt him!" the Hannover pilot bawled. "*Der Yangkee!*"

A machine gun began to chatter as Phineas hurled the Hannover toward the roof. Marching Huns keeled over as the two-seater zoomed over their ranks with little to spare.

"Pingham!" howled the wearer of long underwear. "*Donnervetter*, he laughs at me *und* tells me so, *ja!* Bah, *der* Air Forze iss—"

TOWARD THE YANKEE LINES sped Phineas Pinkham, urging the Hannover to show some pep. Frantic Boche phoned all the way down the line. Archie batteries got word and jumped to the scrapiron tossers. One very efficient battery spotted a Hannover and gave it a terrific lambasting. It was cuffed around with such ruthlessness that it gave up the ghost and spun down into a Jerry communication trench.

"Bah!" the pilot groaned as they dragged him

out. "Through *mit der* var ist Fritz Marshmuller. The *Dumkopfs* shooldt at their own planes vunce. *Der* revolution it cooms, I bedt you. *Ach*, vere iss it poor liddle Rudy Beerbohm *der* obserfer, *hein?*"

As they dug the missing Jerry out of a three-foot mud hole, Phineas was getting a great start for democratic headquarters. But two miles from the tape, three Halberstadts pinged in to look him over. Great plans had been made for the Jerry push. Every pilot of every Jerry plane headed for the Yankee lines had to give the secret signal. A Halberstadt waggled its wings. Phineas answered with a wave of his hand. Apparently that was not enough. *Br-r-r-r-r-r-t!*

"It's a cinch I don't belong to their lodge," grinned the Boonetown flyer, and tried to coax more speed out of the Hannover power plant.

Tracers flicked through his struts. A businesslike slug whanged into his engine and made it cough bronchially. Three more strides of a hundred feet each, and steam belched out of the radiator. Air speed slackened. Phineas, with the Halberstadts blazing at him from behind, nosed down and pointed his prop boss at a spot very much cluttered up with the war. The Hannover hit, bounced over a pillbox, skidded down an incline and nosed into a shell hole. Phineas extricated himself from the wrecked crate and climbed to the rim of the pit. Bullets sliced by his head. He ducked and scrambled to the other side.

"Right between the lines," he grinned. "Who owns me?" Until dark the errant flyer from Allied soil remained where he was; then he crawled out and wriggled across the muddy terrain toward a trench. Suddenly flares lighted up the area. Machine guns went crazy. From one side came a line of Krauts, bayonets bared. From the other came a wave of khaki. A terrific mix-up followed. They walked all over Phineas. Then the Boche gave way and scurried back to their ditch. Phineas dug himself out of the mud. Somebody whanged him over the head with a gun. When he woke up, he was in a Yankee dugout, and three officers were grinning down at him.

"You were lucky, Pinkham," said one. "You were in a Jerry ship an' crawling to the Boche when we walloped you. That's why we made the raid."

"Fightin' over me again, huh?" interposed the irrepressible Yank wath a broad grin. "Haw-w-w-w-w! Well, I lost my way an'—hey, I got to git to Pershin'. I've got a description of all the new Hun shock troops. Git me to Pershin'—"

They did not bother the Commander-in-Chief,

but they did herd Phineas Pinkham to Division Headquarters, from whence they relayed the information gleaned by the Boonetown pilot. Ten minutes later the Yank was warmed up with rum and shipped back in a truck to the home drome.

Major Rufus Garrity got the news far in advance of the Pinkham arrival, which was far into the night.

"I told you, Howell," he tossed at the leader of A Flight, "you can't kill that bum any more than you can stab a turtle in the back with a dry straw. Hah, that homely fathead! But I don't see how he did it. I don't see why he had that dizzy-looking contraption on the Spad."

"Hello, bums!" the returned wanderer grinned when he stalked into the farmhouse. He peeled off his German livery with great gusto. "Well, it's a good thing the old turt—er—C.O.— didn't appreciate his birthday present. I did it with the orange and red scarf as it makes swell-lookin' flames. The smoke I made with damp straw and some dry stuff mixed up in it. The fuse in the tin gutter set it goin' as I timed it to about twelve minutes an' the smoke started pourin' out when von Schnoutz jumped me. Did I fool him! Well, everybody is happy at G.H.Q. as they have got the new Krauts identified. If you don't mind, I won't stay up as it is away past my bedtime. Adoo, bums! Cheer up, major, I will git Babette to bake you another cake next year. Kin ya wait? Haw-w-w-w!"

"Don't look at me like that," the Old Man shot at Captain Howell. "I'm tryin' to figure it out, too."

Over on the Jerry side, von Schnoutz was huddled in the corner of his hut. He was holding his aching head in his hands.

"*Ach du lieber*," he groaned. "Crazy am I vedt, or iss id I haff caught me *der* nightmare? I see *der* oopstardt burn oop, *ja*, *und* yedt he iss nodd. Ah-h-h-h!" He picked up a snapshot which had been found in the old coat left behind by Phineas Pinkham in the old woman's house behind the Jerry lines. It was a picture of the Boonetown wonder, holding up a big pickerel. On the face of the snapshot had been scrawled hurriedly in pencil:

*"I know where there is a bigger fish, also with a bigger Schnoutz! I will snag him some day, and stuff him to hang up. Haw-w-w-w!"*

*Yours in a hurry,  
Herr Lewinant Pinkham."*

"*Ach, Gott!*" moaned the *Rittmeister*. "Some day I gedt you. *Ja*, some day yedt, Pingham!"