

SEA GULLIBLE

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a
PHINEAS
PINKHAM
howl

Phineas goes down to the sea in ships—A Spad and a Short. The Boonetown Bamboozler wanted to knock off work and go fishing. But fishing in the Short proved short, and instead of knocking off work he knocked off a submarine.

LIEUTENANT PHINEAS PINKHAM walked jauntily into the Frog farmhouse which housed the Operations office of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron, tossed a package of cigarettes to Bump Gillis, his hutmate, and continued on his way to beard the lion in his den.

"I hope he has been fed well today," he grinned, swinging open the sacred portals. "Uh—good afternoon, sir. What're the chances of rain *ce apres* midday?"

Major Rufus Garrity pulled his facial muscles all

out of shape, swore roundly, and leaped up from his chair.

"I would say, you homely hybrid," he ripped out, "that they are maybe ten million times better than your chances of getting two weeks leave. I hope I make myself clear!"

"It is a caution how you read my mind," Phineas said blandly. "Well—good day. I will try again, sir. You can see how much I need a change. I am all run down. I stuck my finger with a pin this a.m. and no red corpuscles fell out. I must see a medico as—"

"Tell him to start in on your skull and work down," the Old Man snapped. "He'll have found the trouble before he gets to your tonsils. Get out of here!"

"I never have thought you especially funny," retorted the object of the Major's wrath, walking out with his nose in the air.

"Well, where are you going?" Captain Howell of "A" Flight chirped as Phineas joined the little group of pilots at the mess table. "Nice, Baden-Baden, or Monte Carlo? Ha ha!"

"I'll be leavin' in about two weeks," the pilot from Boonetown, Iowa, snapped. "If any of you bums would like to lay a franc or two in advance that says I won't—well—"

"I'll start with ten," Bump Gillis cut in fast. "Here!"

"I've got twenty."

"Make it fifteen for me."

"Odds of five to one is my terms," Phineas announced.

"Is it a bargain?" The trio nodded assent.

"Let's see now," he calculated, "that'll make two hundred an' twenty-five francs to defray my expenses. Well, addoo for now, bums, and *merci* very much. Haw-w-w-w! You will never learn!"

As Bump Gillis reached the door of the farmhouse the burning cigarette that hung loosely from his lips hissed like a python with three heads. The Scot let out a yelp and went over backwards, chair and all. When he got to his hands and knees the end of his nose was a mite broiled.

"Just a li'l black powder," explained Phineas. "Now I bet you'll stop bummin' smokes, you nickel nurser."

"I ain't goin' to stand it much longer," Lieutenant Gillis raved. "You will push me too far, you—"

"Let's get him now," Captain Howell suggested. "We—"

"I wouldn't git up too fast if I was you," the squadron jokester cautioned his flight leader. "That is swell glue on the seat of that chair. Well, adoo, bums!" He sallied out, humming a scrap of the *Marsellaise*. "If they had any brains," he chuckled as he headed for

the Gillis-Pinkham hut, "they'd cut them odds down. Haw-w-w-w-w-w!"

In his cubicle, Phineas dug down into his trunk and pulled out a pasteboard box. Removing the cover, he took an inventory of several round objects that had all the identification marks of onions.

"Boy! Them trick factories sure can fool guys," he grinned as he picked a bogus onion from the box. He looked out of the window. Twenty yards away a contented Frog cow, evidently strayed from a neighboring farm, was nibbling succulent grass roots under an apple tree. Several moments passed. The cow

raised her head and sniffed at the ozone. Phineas had never seen a funnier expression on Major Rufus Garrity's face than that which appeared on the bovine countenance. The animal stopped moving its jaws as if its cud had abruptly gone sour. Suddenly it mooed and started to run, describing a wide Immelmann over the landscape.

"I giss they'll do," the Pinkham scion mused as he got himself ready for the last patrol. He knew it was to be a boring one. Since knocking off von Bountz, Phineas had found the war in the air in a state of stagnation. "It looks like they are barren of barons," he commented, pulling on his coat. "Well, I'll go over for the ride anyway, haw-w-w-w-w!"

None of the pilots spoke to Phineas as he came out to the line of Spads. When Captain Howell stooped to pick up a glove he had dropped, the master of tricks observed that part of the cane seat of a chair was still sticking to him. Bump Gillis' prop boss carried an application of gooey salve.

"Awright, awright, stay mad!" Phineas piped up in a rich falsetto voice. He daintily placed a hand on his hip. "See if I care! I will not give you that peachy dress pattern I promised you—so there!"

"Gimme that wrench!" Bump Gillis exploded to a mechanic.

Pinkham ducked. The spanner whizzed by his head.



Major Garrity zoomed three feet into the air as it came for his undercarriage. The wrench skimmed under his boot soles with but the thickness of a cigarette paper to spare.

"Who did that?" he bellowed. "Who tried to kill me? Stop right there! I—"

"I ain't tellin'," Phineas said as he legged into his Spad. "But it wasn't me, Howell, Wilson, or Brooks. So you can just guess!"

"Ah—er. It slipped," Lieutenant Gillis said weakly. "I was tightenin' a nut—an'—"

THE C.O. was still swearing when "A" Flight arrived back at the field. One look at the crates convinced him that they had met up with something worse than floating balls of cotton in the scraposphere. "Didn't anything miss you?" he yelled at Howell. "Huh?" the Flight Leader was irritable. "Not unless it was you, Major."

Then Phineas came up, dragging an aileron. "I claim a record," he said. "I landed a Spad without a tonsil clicking, without an empennage or rudderbar. Three struts are gone an'—"

"Shut up!"

"The krauts have rounded up all of Richthofen's relatives and have taught 'em how to fly," Captain Howell declared. "I bet there were seven barons in that flight of Albatross crates."

"It's all on account of me," grinned Phineas. "Huh—er—I wish you would reconsider about my furlough, Major, as—er excuse me. I ain't myself!" He yanked off his helmet and was kneading it into a ball as he hastened to his hut.

"It's a swell idea," he chuckled once inside the cubicle. He plumbed the depths of his trunk and came forth with a big box of makeup. From it he produced a strange object which he spread out on the back of his hand. A casual observer would have sworn that the pilot from Iowa had given his hand quite a gash.

"I don't know how the bums do it!" he enthused. "They could make an egg that a robin would sit on for a year. I'm glad I had my hair cut short. This bogus scar will go swell pasted on the side of my head."

Having applied the amazing bit of makeup, Phineas wrapped a piece of cloth around his head to keep it secure until the glue had dried. But everything was not complete. The miracle man reached for his flying helmet and laid it on the table. A few moments later a shot rang out. Phineas was examining the bullet slice in the leather when a groundman stuck his head

in through the door. "I was passin' by," he said. "I hoped—ah—er—wondered if you'd shot yourself, sir."

"Carry on!" Phineas yipped. "Otherwise I will have you put under arrest for insultin' an officer. You hoped! It's awful the lack of respect around here for officers." When he was alone again, the schemer did a bit of soliloquizing. "I'll just bide my time, that's it. Let's see—two hundred an' twenty-five francs—huh—well—hmm!" When Bump Gillis ambled in and flopped down on his cot, Phineas was flipping the pages of a book. "This is a travel advertisement folder," he explained. "It's a fancy job. Show's pictures all in color, of the Channel scenery, the coast of Holland and Germany. I think I'll travel when—"

"My Gawd, what ails your dome?" Bump Gillis tossed out testily.

"Haw-w-w-vv!" said his hut-mate. "It's my hair. I just washed it an' can't do a thing with it. Why—er—here comes company! It's some brass hats. Somethin' always happens to spoil a guy's appetite. Right at mess time they show up. I bet they are Scotch generals."

The brass hats were still in the Frog farmhouse when the pilots trickled in to the Squadron festive board. Garrity squinted at the bandage on Phineas Pink-ham's head and immediately blasted out a query as to what was the idea.

"Oh, I just got nicked upstairs," Phineas responded carelessly. "I don't think it's much. Haw-w-w-w!"

"Damn' grave situation," a Colonel was concluding, though no one seemed to be paying much attention. "That U-boat is sinking everything that comes across the Channel. Nothing can stop it, Garrity. There's a skull and crossbones painted on the conning tower. The allies call that tin fish commander 'Kapitan Poison.'"

"It makes no sense to me," Phineas proffered his opinion. "Worryin' about submarines on an airdrome. I bet you would end it all if you was a lumber king and the bottom fell out of the herring industry. Haw-w-w!"

"Major!" the Colonel spouted from a purpling face. "What—spt-t-t-t—who—by gad, sir, that fresh, impudent—what kind of discipline is this? Didn't you ever tell him that there's such a thing as a superior officer?"

Sir Rufus groaned. "Yes, Colonel," he sighed, "a million times, no less. But he just won't believe it. Now you were saying—?"

"That sub," the Colonel growled. "The Allied navy will have to do something. Two days ago it sunk a ship

carrying eight British pilots bound for this front. Has that anything to do with the Air Force, eh what? Lucky they were all saved—”

“I knew it was too good to be true,” Phineas moaned and dug a fork into a mound of chipped beef and cream. “I have never seen a poison that did not have an antidote,” he thrust at the brass hats. “Now if we only had a Pinkham in the Navy—”

“Why the h—didn’t we?” Major Garrity yelled. “Instead of—Lieutenant Pinkham, you leave the mess!”

“*Merci beaucoup*,” the Boonetown volunteer chirped. “I generally do, haw-w-w-w-w! It’s not fit even for stomachs lined with zinc. If you will excuse me, gentlemen?” He pushed back his chair cheerfully.

“Put him under arrest, Garrity,” the brass hats howled in unison. “We’ll prefer charges! We’ll—”

“It’s been done before,” the Old Man assured them dismissively. “By generals in three armies. But you can see he is still with us. I wish you luck, though.”

PHINEAS strolled across the field to his hut. He did not stay there long. Almost immediately he was back at the farmhouse leaning against the sill of a window which was open a bit from the bottom. By sleight of hand he tossed something through the aperture, then legged it to the back of the house. A mess attendant who was dumping swill into a G.I. can looked at the sore thumb of the squadron sourly.

“Huh,” exclaimed lieutenant in flight, “I thought I heard a Gotha comin’. D’ja hear it, Goomer?”

“Naw, I didn’t hear nothin’,” replied Glad Tidings Goomer, the sad-eyed mess attendant. Then he sniffed the air. “Cripes—a gas attack!” he hooted and dived under the back steps. From inside the farmhouse came a smattering of curses. A most disreputable odor began to seep out through the kitchen.

“Ugh!” Phineas gulped. “It’s even worse than I thought.” He gripped his nose and kept on the run. From the shelter of a gnarled apple tree he peered out across the field. The brass hats were piling into their car, service caps planked close to their faces. Pilots, with Garrity in the lead, were scrambling out of the place yanking on gas masks. The siren screamed. Phineas grinned with a surge of satisfaction. He ambled nonchalantly toward the Wing. Old Man Garrity ripped off his mask.

“You—!”

“It’s probably only a skunk an’ its family movin’ up toward the lines,” the incurable joker suggested. “Haw-

w-w-w-w! I never saw such scared old dames. The wind is just right, isn’t it?”

“Did you do that, you ape?” the C.O. screeched apoplectically. “What did you do, eh? By-y cr-r-r-ripes, Pinkham, I—”

“You can’t prove nothin’ on me,” Phineas yipped. “I wasn’t there. You threw me out yourself. You better stop breathin’. For all I know that may be real gas the Jerries—”

“Jumpin’ Jehosophat!” Garrity held his breath while he clamped the mask back in place.

Not until midnight did the Ninth Pursuit Squadron again function with any degree of efficiency. The Old Man unmasked and sniffed the air cautiously.

“It’s all over,” he hollered then. “All right, men!”

Phineas ambled into the farmhouse munching a piece of pastry about that time. “I found out what it was two hours ago,” he informed everyone quite innocently. “It was Sergeant Casey changin’ his socks. Haw-w-w-w-w!” He doubled up to duck the chair the Major reached for. Just then Casey himself appeared and stuck out a hand that had been well snared by a rat trap.

“I put my hand in a tin can where I keep nuts an’ bolts,” he complained loudly. “An’ that’s what happens. It’s some fresh groundman an’ nobody should get a leaf of absence ‘til the guy owns up. I’m gittin’ sick an’ tired of—”

“Haw-w-w-w-w-w!” interjected the Pinkham guffaw. “Somebody is a copy cat around here.”

“I think you’re a liar,” Bump Gillis shouted. “I’ve seen that trap before in your—”

Again the door was pushed open. The ordnance officer appeared on the threshold. At first he could not be recognized. He appeared to have been whitewashed from the scalp down, the process having been halted around his belt line.

“I open my door and a pail of this stuff conks me,” he gurgled. “A joke is a joke, but this is a new outfit I’ve got on. I demand—”

Major Rufus Garrity passed a hand over his eyes and struggled up from his chair. “Gentlemen,” he moaned, “I wish you’d all go an’ leave me. I want to be alone.”

The next morning the Squadron C.O. announced to Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham that he was about to arrange a two-week leave in Paris for the heir of Boonetown’s noted family.

“I know when I’m licked,” the Old Man cracked. “I got enough.”

Captain Howell and Lieutenant Bump Gillis hurried to the Operations office when the news had spread.

"You can't give that bum a leave," they chorused. "It'll cost us—"

"Who the h— told you fatheads what I could do and what I couldn't do? Get out or I'll have your wings to pin to my butterfly collection." The C.O. emphasized his words by throwing a bottle of ink against the wall. Phineas poked his head in through the door as the two long-faced pilots headed out.

"I hate trains, Major," he began. "Could I fly to Paree this time? It wastes time on trains an' them Frog pullmans are—"

Garrity looked for the ink bottle and found he had already thrown it. Speechlessly, he jumped up and down as if he had stepped into an ant hill without any shoes on.

"Well, I asked just in case," Phineas hastened to say, and vanished hurriedly.

In his hut the prospective traveler once more poured over the pages of the booklet containing pictures of the various places one could visit if time and money were available. Phineas had both. But he had no idea of going to Paris. He had already been there.

"Say, it's a long time since I went fishin'," he mused. "I feel just like doin' that for two weeks. Now let's see, how far is it to Dunkirk? That's on the North Sea. Maybe I might even get to see a submarine—" As he spoke Phineas was removing the bandage from his head. He got up and went to the mirror to observe the scar.

"Boy!" he chuckled. "I feel like my dome ought to ache, it looks so real! Haw-w-w-w! Well, I must start an' do my stuff if I don't want to ride on a Frog train. I won't be responsible for my actions from now on."

Bump Gillis and Howell walked in, deposited a heap of francs on the Pinkham cot.

"Why, how do you do?" Phineas greeted them. "What can I do for you? Your names, please?"

"H-Huh?" The pilots exchanged glances. Howell spotted the scar on the Pinkham cranium and his jaw dropped.

"Look, Bump! He got a worse wallop than we thought," the Captain exclaimed. "Why—he—"

"How did I git here?" was Phineas' next remark. "What's the idea of shanghaiin' me? Where's the captain of this boat?"

"Carbuncle," Bump Gillis forced out, "I'm your

pal—Bump Gillis. Remember?"

Phineas shook his head. "I was mindin' my own business when it happened," he said. "Look, is this my name?" He pointed to an address on an envelope.

"No, that's me," Bump said. "Ah—er—Captain, we got to get out of here an' tell—"

"So you're the Captain of this ship!" Phineas yipped. "Well, you put me ashore this minute!"

Howell and Bump ran to tell Garrity. The Old Man appeared at the Pinkham cubicle a little later and entered cautiously. "It's only me, the Major," he said. "How are you, Pinkham? That's quite a wallop you got. Why didn't you tell us? Ha, just thought—er—the pilots here said you weren't feeling so good an'—"

"Huh?" Phineas shot out. "Why, I never felt better. I haven't even seen those fatheads all evenin'."

"Wha-a-a-a-t?" yapped Howell, "D'ya mean to sit there an'—all right, what's your name?"

"Pinkham, you crackpot!" retorted Phineas. "What is this, Major?"

"Kid me, will you?" the Old Man snapped at Bump and his fellow offender. "You don't go into Bar-Le-Duc tomorrow for that!"

PHINEAS' leave was assured the next morning. With the coveted paper in his pcket, he sauntered around the drome in fine spirits. Sergeant Casey met him in front of "B" Flight's hangar and wished him luck in Paris.

"Why, I don't know you!" Phineas said. "Can't I just walk down to the drugstore without panhandlers accostin' me? Do you know who I am?" Casey, having heard of Lieutenant Pinkham's strange behavior the night before, shook his head and edged away.

"I am the guy whom you think you are, haw-w-w-w-w-w!" was the amazing response.

The Old Man heard about that, too. "Somebody's nuts!" he bawled and ran to his quarters. He decided not to come out for three hours.

Meanwhile the Boonetown marvel was getting ready for his vacation. He crammed several articles necessary to the practice of skullduggery into the pockets of his trench coat. Then he picked up the travel booklet that he had been perusing for days and placed it in an inside pocket.

"You never can tell. I might visit them places," he grinned as he went out.

Phineas had timed everything well. He knew that there would be a couple of Spads ticking over. An hour ago the mechs had been working on them and testing

them out. He knew the squadron car was waiting for him, too. So he walked across the field and threw his bag into the back seat.

"Wait a second," he called to the driver and strode toward a Spad. Casey was a few feet away, his ear cocked for alien sounds in the doctored Hisso's throat. He eyed Phineas askance.

"Well," exclaimed Lieutenant Pinkham, "How are you, Casey?"

"I got an idea why you're puttin' on an act, Lootenant. If you think you can git that crate—" Casey growled. "The Old Man said he'd bust me if ya ever got another Spad without his permission."

"Why," chuckled Phineas, "I only come to say goodbye, Sarge. Why—you don't think—"

"Ha, ha," the flight non-com laughed shakily. "Sorry, sir." He held out his hand.

How it was done, Casey never knew. But he did know that when he tried to get to his feet, there were handcuffs on his wrists. Alongside of him was a little book the cover of which bore an illustration of two jui-jitsu performers. And Phineas Pinkham was jumping the Spad over the tops of trees at the north end of the field when Garrity and twenty more men reached the scene.

"I said he was nuts!" Howell shouted. "Why, he put his bag in the car an'—I bet he thinks he's on patrol."

"Ya didn't ask me," Casey growled. "But I'll tell ya what I think. He didn't want to ride in them trains. He put on an act to steal a crate an' when ya see him again, he'll claim he don't even remember it."

"Oh, that double-crossin' cluck!" exploded the Old Man. "I'll have him in Leavenworth—you see!"

"Sure, then I'll believe it!" Bump Gillis drawled disdainfully. "I still think he's nuts and he don't need a scar on his dome to convince me. He'll always have an alibi as long as we got dome specialists. To h— with him!"

"He wasn't too nutty to take them francs of ours with him," Howell spat out. "What a time he'll have in Paree!"

"Oh yeah? Ha ha!" Bump Gillis ankled away. "The last thing he showed me that didn't blow up in my pan was a travel book. On the Channel ports!"

An hour later word came to Major Garrity from an airdrome near Soissons that a goofy pilot had landed a Spad and had gassed up. Said he had been grazed by a Boche slug and had lost his way. Couldn't remember his name.

"It looked like your flyer, Pinkham, to me," the

Soissons' officer said to Major Garrity of the Ninth.

"It was!" the Old Man shot back. "Stand by for a report from him in Stockholm. He's going swimming at one of the Channel beach resorts. G'bye!" He hung up.

"They're all nuts at that drome," the Major at the other end of the wire growled.

Phineas Pinkham, skimming high over the roofs of Arras, was thoroughly enjoying his leave. Over Douai he almost ran into a pair of Boche Fokker D 7's and had to make a wide detour. It delayed his arrival at Dunkirk by half an hour. Phineas had intended to take his time and pick a nice landing field but the Fokkers had planted some slugs in his Hisso. The lead poisoning had been slow to cramp the Spad's giblets but over the Channel port it went to work with a vengeance. Three members of the R.N.A.S. sat in front of their barracks and watched Phineas Pinkham's crate miss the lighthouse marking the entrance channel to the roadstead of Dunkirk's harbor, and come slicing down toward the sand banks.

"He'll jolly well rip up a lot of sand when he hits," a flyer commented. "Fancy a Yankee Spad coming here, what?"

"I think we'd best start over to pick up the remains," the other Limey pilot said and called to a non-com.

It took the better part of an hour to locate the visitor. Finally Phineas was found clinging to the anchor chain of one of the boats that dotted the harbor.

"It's about time," he gargled. "Is this Limey hospitality? I skidded over them sand banks an' landed in the drink. I been swimmin' a lot. Are you admirals or just coxswains? Why you've got wings! Haw-w-w-w-w! Then the funny lookin' things over there are the birds you fly."

"I'll jolly well like to have you in one when we patrol the Channel," a Limey bridled. "Say, my good fellow, haven't I seen your face some other place?"

"I don't think so," was the fresh response. "It's always been in the same place—on top of my neck. Haw-w-w-w-w! You're talkin' to Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham. I am on a vacation and come up here to fish."

The Limey pilots got their heads together. "We could toss the impertinent beggar overside an' not a soul would be the wiser, Alf," suggested one.

"You tempt me, Ronny," the other said, "but I fancy we had better take the chap to the barracks."

HALF an hour later the R.N.A.S. officers wished that they had succumbed to the urge to drown Phineas Pinkham. Commander Hamson informed them, after Phineas had been in their midst for four hours, that they would be transferred to the Dardanelles as soon as he could arrange it.

"Blarst it!" he yelled. "I would rather have had a visit from Kapitan Poison!" As he spoke he sipped his tea. "Aw-w-w-wk!" Floating on the surface of the delectable brew was a shiny black beetle. The Commander's stomach protested vehemently.

"Aw, don't let that spoil your tea, haw-w-w-w-w!" Phineas guffawed. "It's only one of my licorice bugs. It gits 'em all the first time. Haw-w-w-w!"

"Get the blighter out of here or I'll jolly well—" The Commander dumped his tea out of a window, swore, and left the mess.

"He has no sense of humor," Phineas grinned. "How's the fishin' around here?"

"Priceless," a Limey hurried to say. "Rather guess you'd like to turn in, old chap—if you're starting out in the morning."

Lieutenant Pinkham nodded. When he was being guided aloft, Commander Hamson returned to the mess room.

"Tomorrow," he chuckled savagely to a pair of pilots, "we'll give the Leftenant a taste of rough water. You'll take him up in a Short, Danning, and accidentally have a forced landing. Where it's the roughest, mind you! Would say off Furnes, what?"

"Righto!" was the response. "We'll have no end of comedy. Pip pip!"

Early the next morning Phineas Pinkham came down to mess carrying a big coil of heavy fishing line, a box of hooks, and several funny looking things that looked like rosettes.

"It's swell bait," he grinned. "Red flannel never fails to make a fish bite. It's lucky that shirt was there as—"

A Limey officer choked on his tea, spat out a mouthful of toast. "My heavy weather shirt, you—" he yowled. "Blarst it, I hope you jolly well drown!"

The Limeys lost no time in leading Phineas down to a quay where a trio of seaplanes were moored. They were short N2B seaplanes, the official two-seaters of the Royal Naval Air Service.

"And you can really fly them bugs?" chuckled Phineas as an idea immediately began to spread out feelers in his brain. "I bet you have fun ridin' up the canals, haw-w-w-w-w!"

"How about a ride, Yank?" one of the pilots

suggested.

"Boys," replied the willing subject of their experiment, "I am reckless with my life so the answer is *oui*. Does it walk like a duck until you get out in the open?" As he made the query, Phineas climbed into the pilot's pit. "I want to listen to the power plant," he explained. "Tell the flunkey on the pontoon to spin the prop. I bet I can fly this thing, as there ain't nothin' with wings—"

A British pilot got into the observer's pit when the prop began to suck spark. The N2B was released from its moorings and swung about to face the open water. Phineas gave the crate the gun, forgot he was not in a Spad, and almost turned a complete somersault in the drink. The observer leaned forward and yelled at him.

"Relax!" the Yank hollered, grinning, and taxied cut through the roadstead. He zigzagged through a cluster of Allied shipping, missed by a whisker a motor launch filled with Naval officers, then began to describe figure eights on the surface like a fancy ice skater. The Limey climbed out of his observer's pit and jumped into the water. Phineas did not even know he was gone until several minutes later. When he turned and saw the vacant pit, he bared his buck teeth in an expansive grin.

"An' I been talkin' to myself all this time, haw-w-w-w-w-w!"

Phineas headed for the open sea. He got the N2B into the air, gave the Sunbeam engine plenty of gun, and skimmed over Dunkirk. After he had taken a look at the town, he banked widely and headed for the Channel.

"I bet you could fish out of these things," he enthused. "Boys, what a vacation!"

Wires buzzed across France. Insulation smoldered as the Limey Commander reported to Yank authorities that a fresh pilot from the U.S.A. had stolen a Short seaplane. Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham! The Boonetown wonder man was taking an aerial squint of Ostend about the time Major Rufus Garrity received the glad tidings.

"Well, that'll certainly wash him up," he yowled. "You'll never see that fathead again, When the court martial gets through with him—"

Phineas, however, did not seem to be at all perturbed as he flew out over rough water. Three miles off shore he set the N2B down and was a little surprised at the cuffing it got by a choppy sea as he climbed out of the pit to the wing. There he sat and yanked the fishing tackle from his pocket. After tying a

hunk of red flannel to a hook, the errant Yank dropped to a pontoon and threw the line, weighted with a chunk of lead, far out over the water. Hooking an arm around a strut, he settled down to deep sea fishing. The skipper of a Channel steamer spied him, ordered a boat lowered. But when it came up close to Phineas he waved his would-be rescuers back.

"G'wan, git out of here! Do ya want to scare the fish?" he yelped. "It's funny a guy can't—"

The boat returned to the mother ship. The crew reported the incident to a Royal Navy officer. "By gad!" the officer cracked. "Fishing! With a war going on! Fancy—the blarsted idiot. I'll look into this!"

Two hours later something struck at the Pinkham line, almost hauled Phineas right out into the brine.

"Eureka!" he yelled, bracing his feet, and hanging tight to the strut. "It's at least a swordfish. Well, now I will settle down to fight it—" About then he became aware that the N2B was skimming over the surface of the water. "Must be a whale, haw-w-w-w-w! Gosh, I wish I had a harpoon!"

THE YANK from Boonetown, Iowa, twisted his heavy line around a strut and secured it fast. A shadow moved across the surface of the water. Phineas heard sounds like small rocks being tossed against the Short's wings. He looked up, saw a Jerry Brandenburg taking pot shots at him. He hugged the ship's nose and swore. Suddenly he saw white water ahead. Something broke the surface. It looked like a pole being thrust up through the water. Phineas' eyes bulged like an inflated toy balloon. The sleek hogback of a Jerry sub broke water while he stared. On the

conning tower of the U-boat was a skull and crossbones.

"Oh cripes!" he groaned. "It's Kapiton Poison." In a fever of anxiety he felt in his pockets for a knife but found none. He uttered a squeak and attempted to get to the pit of the seaplane. Somebody yelled at him. He looked over his shoulder and saw Jerries pouring out of the sub's hatch. Three of them skidded across the sub's dripping deck to tear the canvas loose from a gun.

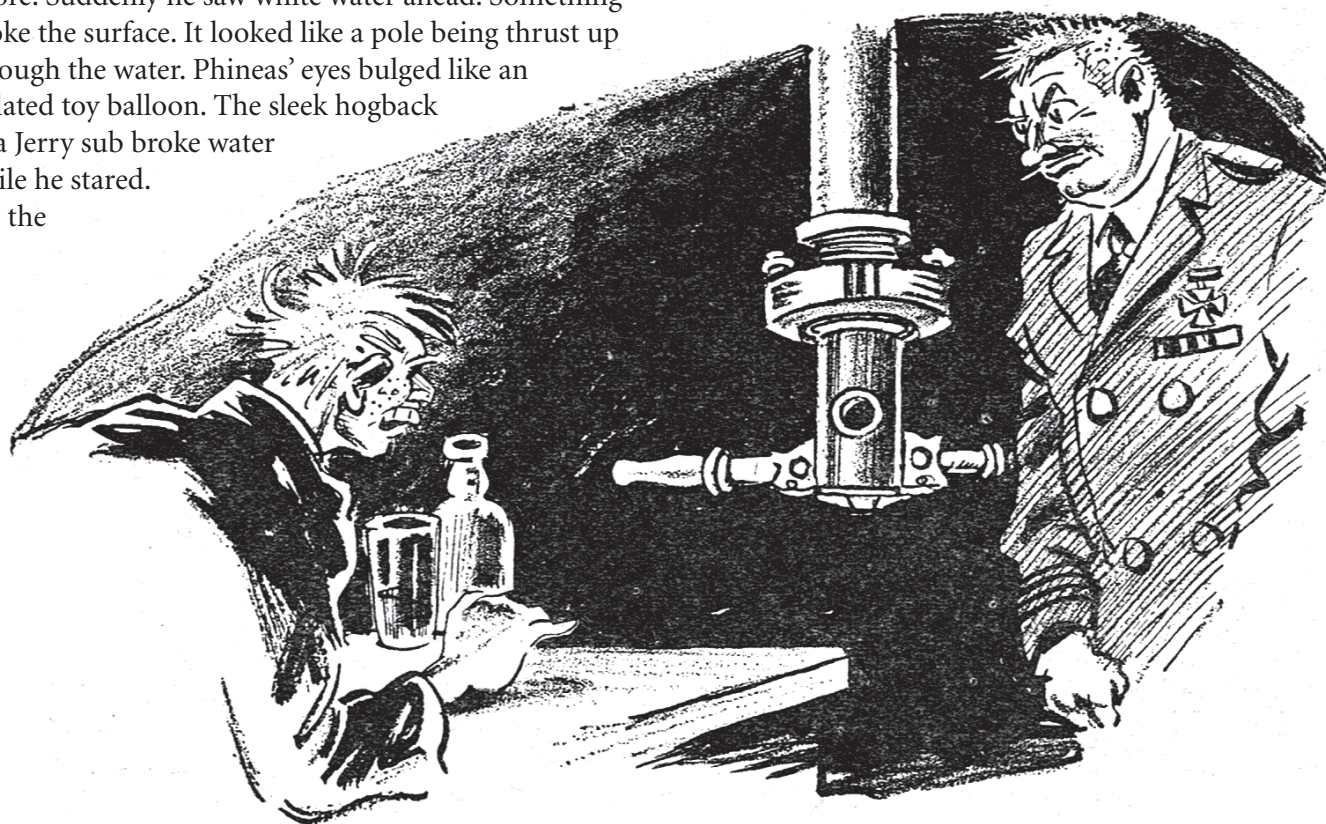
"I quit!" Phineas hollered. "Kamerad! Uncle! Enough!" The U-boat maneuvered close to him. A Heinie yelled, "Yoomp!" and brandished a Luger.

Phineas complied as a pontoon point nudged into the side of the tin fish. Three Krauts grabbed him and dragged him to the hatchway. They pushed him down an iron ladder into the U-boat's control room where a bull-necked Jerry with a black mustache awaited him. Kapitan Poison was munching on a liverwurst sandwich and was looking quite hale and hearty.

"Zo?" he chortled. "*Der vlyer he eooms chasink der tin fish yedt midt der hook mit lines, ho ho! Dumkopf!*"

"You don't look like you passed more than five grades," Phineas countered. "Well, where do I bunk?"

"*Ach, idt ist nodt too much to eadt yedt ve haff,*" Herr Kapitan guttured. "Maybe *idt ist* insteadt you gedt *der* fish, *der* fish gedts you, *nein?*" He whirled and shot out an order.



As Phineas was letting the U-boat's commander's words sink in, the sub began to submerge. The Yank's ears told him so. His brain began clicking too. Phineas had heard that the smell of chlorine gas to U-boat occupants was like the taste of Paris green to potato bugs. He put his hand into his pocket and pulled out an "onion." In one corner of the control room there was a narrow passageway leading to the batteries below.

"*Donnervetter!*" the Kapitan yelled as he squinted through the periscope. "*Der Allied ship yedt. Der Q-boat!*"

Phineas tossed the "onion." It was a good shot. Several seconds later the inside of the tin fish was permeated with a most obnoxious odor. Kapitan Poison's face became as green as a bullfrog's back.

"*Ach—Himmel!*" he gulped. *Oop vunce! Gott!*" Krauts came running out of the crew's quarters. They came from the engine room, from the torpedo room. The hogback of the U-boat broke the surface to meet a shell that was tossed from the Q-boat.

Blam! The pig boat shivered.

"Down again—*ach!*" Kapitan Poison brushed Phineas out of his way in scrambling to cram a wad of oily waste against his face.

"Make up your minds, make up your minds!" complained the Yank. "Otherwise we'll git the bends. My eardrums are already deflated, haw!"

Blam! The sound of an exploding shell was deadened this time. A fat little Jerry came up close to Kapitan Poison and handed him something.

"*Das ist der trick,*" he said, saluting. "I find idt *der* onion skin. Budt *der* onion idt *ist nein*. Smell vunce!"

Kapitan Poison sniffed at it, howled above the drumming of the Diesels, and grabbed at Phineas Pinkham, his unwilling passenger.

"Zo! *Der trick ist das?*" he roared. "*Gott in Himmel, Herr Leutnant* Pingham of *der* Yangkee Air Vorce! Eferybody look vunce! Ve haff captured *der Leutnant*. *Ach*, ve Chermans! Ho ho!"

"Awright," Phineas said, a little down-hearted. "What comes next?"

The Kapitan and his immediate inferior went into a huddle. After awhile they began to chuckle.

"It means no good to me," moaned their captive. "Well, I giss there's times when you can't win."

"Oop ve go," the U-boat commander said to Phineas. "*Und der* bath you gedt by *der* conning tower, *ja*. Ve yoost cruise yedt mid *der* periscope yoost above *und* your head also, *nein?*"

"You said so," cracked Phineas, thinking fast as usual.

Again the submersible broke water. Jerries pushed and kicked Phineas Pinkham up the iron ladder to the hatchway. Out in the open the Yank looked around for friends. The wastes were bare of anything but sea gulls. Kapitan Poison supervised the lashing of *Leutnant* Pinkham to the conning tower. When that was done to his satisfaction, he called off his hirelings and led them down into the control room once more. The hatch slammed shut and *Herr* Pinkham steeled himself for that which was to come.

THE SUBMARINE began to submerge. White water seethed around the Pinkham cranium. He swallowed enough of it to make a salt brick inside his stomach, coughed up as much as he could, and clamped his teeth shut. A snaky bunch of kelp twisted around his neck as he struggled loose from his bonds. Phineas thanked his stars that he had included the great Houdini's book in his library of trickery. A hand came loose, another. He held onto the periscope shaft with one, dug into his pocket of his tunic with the other. Down in the control room, *Herr* Kapitan Poison was chuckling over the game he had bagged. He ordered pilsner and more liverwurst sandwiches. After guzzling the beer, he took a squint through the periscope.

"*Ach,*" he gloated, "*der* coast of Belgium vunce. I see idt Blankenberg already yedt. In fimpf minute ve coom oop *und* see how *ist* idt *das* Pingham likes idt *der* bath. Ho ho!" He turned away and wolfed a chunk of bread and liverwurst.

Head bobbing along the surface of the choppy water, Phineas tore another colored page from a travel book and pasted it over the all-seeing eye of the periscope. Then he hung on and waited. That ship with the smoke curling from its funnels had come up fast. It could not be more than a mile away now. If it was an Allied tub, the well-doused Yank mused, he was partly saved. He raised an arm above the water and waved. The ship was swerving from its course now.

"Boys," Phineas enthused, "if only *Herr* Poison keeps on thinkin' we're close to the coast instead of way out. Haw-w-w-w!"

Herr Kapitan, down below, squinted into the periscope after a prodigious swig of *schnapps*. "*Gut!*" he chuckled. "Ve coom oop *und* go into Zebrugge."

He snapped orders and the boat lifted its blunt snout a bit. Phineas slithered down from the conning tower, crouched against its wet steely sides. The

mysterious ship was only a half mile away when the hatch cover of the sub began to lift. A Jerry poked his head out, swept the wastes with his eyes and let out a loud yell. But Phineas Pinkham was up on the tower before he could slam down the hatch. He grabbed the Heinie around the head and pulled him into the clear.

Blam! A shell hit close to the U-boat. Phineas slammed the Kraut on the nose and relieved him of his gun. With the Luger, the miracle man from U.S.A. poked the periscope's eye out just as Kapitan Poison himself thrust his head and shoulders above the hatch. *Blam!* The tin fish shook as if seized with ague. The shell bit a hunk out of its stern as Phineas conked Kapitan Poison on the noggin.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" he chortled. "It is the worm that is backfiring."

Wham! Bang! A shell bit a hole in the forward end of the sub and wiped away the mounted gun as if it had been but a spot of grease. Again Kapitan Poison got his head out through the hatch.

"*Kamerad!*" he yipped and waved a white flag. "*Ach, Leutnant*, don't idt idt me again vunce. I moost wave *der* flag, *nein?*"

"I'll spare you," Phineas assured him. "Haw-w-w-w-w!"

Boats were being lowered from the Allied Q-boat.

"Look, Kapitan Poison, at my antidote. It is pretty pictures out of a book. I just pasted 'em over the periscope's eye and—haw-w-w! Maybe idt ist you drink idt too much *der* snopps, eh?"

"*Ach*, Goot, sooch a business. Pictures—*Himmel!*" the U-boat Commander groaned. "*Dumkopf* I am yedt. I look at *der* vater *und* it should half mooted. *Ach*, I don't see idt yedt—bummer I am. *Der* ship idt sneaks oop *und*—"

"Aw don't feel so bad," Phineas comforted him, leaning against the conning tower. "I've licked as big Heiniess as you before. It was some fishin' trip, eh Cap'n? Haw-w-w-w-w!"

The Allied tars landed, took Kapitan Poison and his crew into custody. Back on the Q-boat a British captain brought Phineas Pinkham to his cabin.

"Jolly well done, old chap," he exulted. "Have a jigger of brandy, eh what?"

"I'll have four," replied Phineas, depositing his feet on the skipper's mess tale. "An' would you mind lookin' to see if I've got fins on me someplace? Haw-w-w-w-w! I'm awful sick of water."

"Everybody's been looking for you, Pinkham," the British officer went on, grinning. "Going to court

martial you. Stealing a British seaplane and all that."

"What—again?" drawled the culprit. "Where're we headin'?"

"Dunkirk," replied the Britisher. "Adoo, then," yipped Lieutenant Pinkham. "Just give me a small boat with water an' provisions. I should make the Canary Isles by sundown."

"I've wirelessly the British Admiralty," the officer said, pouring Phineas another snort. "He'll relay the word to Admiral Simms of your Navy, Leftenant. Looks like you'll get a pot of medals for this. Ha, I've heard of you, Pinkham—what you've done in the air. Now it's on the water. Ever think of trying the trenches?"

"It's too confining there," Phineas replied. "Haw-w-w-w-w!"

Two hours later, on the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron, near Bar-Le-Duc, Major Rufus Garrity came out of the Operations office and looked at his pilots. They were gathered around the mess table.

"They've got Pinkham," he said.

"Well, he couldn't last the way he was goin'," Bump Gillis sighed. "Gosh it'll be dead around here but I can catch up on my sleep. That's somethin'."

"Too bad, yeah," agreed Howell. "Maybe the poor guy was really goofy."

"But," Garrity informed them, dropping into his chair like a limp rag, "He captured Kapitan Poison and his U-boat. Went fishin' in the North Sea in a Limey seaplane. Hooked the sub. Said to tell us he did it with a picture book. Anybody here want a drink?"

"I need a bottle of it," Captain Howell exploded. "How long do you think the Kaiser will be safe from that speckled crackpot?"

"I would hate to be in his shoes," the Major gulped and sent Glad Tidings Goomer, mess attendant, upstairs for four bottles of brandy.

Messages of congratulations came in from every point of the war compass, but the members of the Ninth got to the point where they could not even answer the 'phone. When the Wing Commander arrived, he was unrecognized. The personnel of the Ninth were boiled right to their scalps.