



WINGS OF THE BRAVE

by HAROLD F. CRUICKSHANK

This wasn't the ordinary flame of Spandau Fire menacing the American Sky Devil's tail—but the fearsome blaze of the Baron Von Ryter's world-famous battle insignia!

FLAME SEEMED TO LANCE DOWN out of nowhere on the scudding Spad of Captain Bill Dawe, the American Sky Devil. Not the ordinary flame of Spandau fire, but the flame of the the Baron von Ryter's fearsome battle insignia—the painted, luminous torches.

"Von Ryter!" Dawe gasped. "Back here on this front and in cahoots with that phoney mob at the Chateau!"

Bill had cruised this spot around that well preserved Chateau for some time. In spite of the "Hands Off" orders posted by both the Allies and the Germans, Bill was sure that the Chateau Mon Dieu was, in reality, a Devil's Chateau. He had so expressed himself at H.Q. But the French, particularly, refused to believe that the chateau home of their beloved Countess de la Mailette was anything but bona fide. The eccentric old lady had appealed to France, to both belligerent sides, in fact, for protection. She did not wish to leave her home. And because of her great aid to France, and her sympathetic treatment of German wounded, Allies and Germans both had guaranteed her safety and the preservation of her estate.

But the Sky Devil had known that this arrangement was drawn up in the early stages of the war. Hell! A lot of water and blood had flowed under the war bridges since that time. He had been definitely convinced that the Chateau was a phoney, and today he was more than convinced. The sight of von Ryter's ship was sufficient to brand, in Dawe's mind, that Chateau as a treacherous enemy hornets' nest.

Now those flaming torches on the Hun *rittmeister's* ship seemed terribly real. And in spite of the acute angle of his dive, the Sky Devil gunned his ship with another notch of throttle. Von Ryter had a reputation in these French skies, and in others. It had been von Ryter who made the greatest stand against the modification of such battle equipment as *flammenwerfer*, gas, submarines, and all other hellishness. He fought the war as a war, and not as some picnic-lunch battle.

His keen eyes were now pouring hot glances at the flagrant painted insignia of the Sky Devil's ship—two devils rampant. That ship suddenly whorled up into a terrific zoom over the back of the diving torch ship. Von Ryter was staggered at the suddenness of the move. He overshot badly. Bill gasped. His moment had come at last and his thumb coiled about the Vickers trips.

But from the cockpit of the Fokker below, a flare sooshed up into the hazy atmosphere, to break in

a fiery red burst. A bank of thin drab cloud strata immediately cracked wide open, to pour out three fast flying Fokkers. Bill Dawe was taken aback. He found himself faced by three of von Ryter's most skilled flyers, members of the baron's personal *flugstaffel* and they came tearing in with Spandaus throwing a sleeting hail of lead.

A murderous tattoo of lead was ripping through the Spad's fabric and woodwork. Crouched over the stick Bill mustered all his courage now. He was heading right into those six red eyes of death. He figured that he must play all his guts against the guts of those Huns.

But now it was time to strike! He tensed himself, sooshed the Spad over into the tightest of Immelmanns; at the same time tramping down on his trigger trips. As he came out of the last turn, his tracer stream was finding a boche ship, and her pilot. Hard lead tore on through Prussian flying leathers and then into a gas tank.

Horrible black-red flame whorled the Fokker into a greedy maw.

Climbing back into his position of vantage above, von Ryter saw! His thin lips were sucked in as his face blanched with cold hatred. Those three pilots of his should have wiped out that *Himmelteuffell* He had warned them as to the identity of that lone *Amerikaner* flyer. But now the damage was done. It was time for von Ryter to again take a hand. He touched his stick forward and came down like a plummet.

Harassed by four guns to his two, the Sky Devil played his grim game with caution now. He realized that he must cut down still another ship before he could get clear. But the Germans too were very cautious. They were smart, matching his every maneuver.

Now pressing his throttle lever all along its quadrant, Bill raced hard to eastward. He was baiting in the two Huns. Then all at once he backsticked hard, throwing the Spad into a roaring loop. A plane shot by beneath him. Dawe was up on the bit in a flash. But from his back there came the sudden murderous stammer of sky guns. Bill felt his crate stagger under the thresh of hard hitting lead.

In the tenseness of the moment, the two secondary Huns had made good their escape.

Now, in grandiose fashion, as he loved to make his kills, the nefarious baron was whorling down in a mad, colorful spin. He figured that his lieutenants in the mess would later talk in glowing terms of his

spectacular climactic stroke. Then with awe-inspiring suddenness he kicked out level.

Dawe turned in the pit to stare almost directly into the two fiery eyes of the baron's Spandaus. He was conscious of the spot he was on. But he wasn't going out sitting still. By God, no! He thundered over in a loop, to rake von Ryter's ship with a short burst from close in. But the Spad had suddenly taken the bit between her teeth. Something had happened to the control cabling. Dawe gasped as he felt her yaw off beneath him.

He was hurtling down towards the woods beyond the Chateau and he was forced to let the silver ship go, hoping that he could side-slip her onto something soft at the psychological moment.

Long streaks of red flame lanced down on him. But he seemed to ignore them. He had always rated this Chateau phoney. Now, by George, he was being forced to land in its immediate vicinity—within range of the one spot he had hoped to make a search of.

Would fate block him now? Must he wash out completely? Such thoughts were harrowing, and not modified by the scream of his ship as she headed for those trees. But Bill fought her hard now. She was almost kissing the uppermost fronds of the timber, when he smacked her hard over left. She roared on in as he unbuckled his belt—to bounce hard on the turf of a small clearing. Bill Dawe was out before he hit the turf—out in the maw of utter oblivion.

VOICES! . . . The Sky Devil had almost fully regained his sensibility. He started. One of those voices he heard was feminine. His pulses were pounding hard. Now his eyes stared widely in complete astonishment. He was lying on a couch in the large main chamber of the Chateau Mon Dieu. The very last thing he wanted . . . And now those voices were drawing closer.

Bill's mind quickly flashed to thoughts of the old Countess. But that feminine voice he could now hear was not that of an elderly person. It spoke of vibrant youth. Of course, there was the Countess' daughter . . . But this girl was conversing in German. Then Dawe heard his own *nom de guerre*, in German: "*Die Himmelteufel!*"

"Quiet now, Carletta," a male voice cautioned. "We must first see if he has recovered. *Kommen*—quietly . . ."

Bill lay very still, almost breathless as he felt the warm breath of the woman on his face.

"He still sleeps, Franz," she called. "You are sure he is *die Himmelteufel?*"

"*Ach*, so! Did I not engage him in combat—see his ship?"

"Von Ryter!" Bill told himself. He had been right. This Chateau was the nest he had reported it to be! Small wonder that Allied troops, both sky and land, had been mysteriously snuffed out. Here at the head of affairs at the phoney Cheateau, was one of the master minds of the German High Command—von Ryter!

"Then what will you do, Franz?" the girl asked softly.

"*Ach*—was? It has been said of the North American Indian that there is but one good Indian—a dead one," von Ryter smirked. "There is one good and safe *Himmelteufel*—a dead one."

"*Jawohl*—but a great pity, Franz," Bill heard the girl whisper. "But is that necessary? Why not let me carry out a deception? He has never met the Countess who is now dead; nor her daughter interned at Berlin. I could pose as the daughter and perhaps gain some very valuable information."

"*Mein Gott*, Carletta," the baron cut in. "You are clever. But it is dangerous. If one mistake is made, it would be our undoing. We are almost ready to smash through the French and American lines. With this man alive—I should not feel safe. But your scheme has soundness of reasoning. Try it, but be careful."

The girl seemed to hesitate, but she suddenly swung on her companion.

"I know he is dangerous, Franz," she breathed. "But I would rather he wasn't killed in cold blood. I am tired of the ruthless murders in our special service. If I fail in my scheme, you will not kill him in—"

"*Ach*, *nein*, Carletta! When I spoke of his extermination, I thought of the gas chambers. You forget that we have here the supply of battle gas for our coming assault. It would be easy to take him to one of the chambers, turn on a jet of chlorine . . . *Pouff!* In a moment or so he would be gone! But, carry on for a moment, I have work."

Bill squirmed inwardly. Von Ryter had spoken of his extermination as one might speak of exterminating a mangy rat colony. Bill had picked up a lot of information from that whispered conversation. There was a lot more, of a most valuable kind. To be picked up. He wanted to live. He must live.

As von Ryter's footsteps receded, the girl, Carletta, moved in close to the couch. Bill could scent the perfume with which she had treated her hair.

Now her breath was fanning his face again.

He suddenly became unlimbered. His strong arms

leaped out. A hand was clapped over Carletta's mouth, while Bill hooked his free arm in a strangle hold about her throat.

He came up off the couch, forcing her back . . . back until with a shudder, she swooned away in his arms.

Softly he lowered her to the floor, snatched a small revolver from a pocket of her dress, then whisked linen from occasional tables with which to tie her up. He darted to the door and snapped the lock tight before slipping a gag gently between her gleaming teeth.

"Sorry, sister," he breathed. "I never thought I'd have to manhandle a beauty like you, but—*c'est la guerre!* You asked for it."

THE SKY DEVIL'S BLOOD was on a rampage as he began his search of the heavy oaken desk in the room. Now his eyes clamped on a large blueprint. His brows flickered up. Here was the plan of an intricate tunnel and corridor system leading westward and south from the Chateau.

A sharp hiss escaped Dawe as he followed the tracings of pipe lines, leading from the gas supply tanks around the Chateau underground, to points directly in front of the French and American trench systems.

Footsteps! Bill snatched at the plan and rammed it down into his shirt blouse. He sprang to a window and jerked it open but cursed as he was confronted by formidable iron bars.

He turned. Von Ryter was calling—hammering on the door. Bill's glance fastened on the fire irons at the large stone fireplace. He raced in, scooped up a heavy wrought-iron poker and dashed back to the window.

Using the stone masonry outside as a fulcrum, he heaved with all his force, hoping to spring the outside bar, but instead his poker bent. He reversed it. Von Ryter was bellowing for help now, and heavy boots were pounding up.

Dawe had strained his back with his heaving. His whole body was a mass of cold sweat as he again arranged the poker. Now he heaved up with his shoulder, putting everything he had into it.

The door was giving. Bill's knees almost sagged beneath him. But at last he was springing that bar. Blood vessels standing out on his forehead, he gave it the last ounce of his strength. And as the door crashed inward, he was half way through the aperture.

A luger pistol blasted, the bullet fanning Bill's face. He struggled forward and then leaped as his body squeezed through. Another shot missed him as he dived for a patch of shrubbery.

Shakily pushing himself to his feet, he staggered on, to push deep into the big timber. He was free. But as his big rugged form staggered on, he wondered for how long. He had the key to one of the most fiendish and tremendous drives of the whole war, a drive which if not blocked, would be too disastrous for thought.

He was grateful for the dusk which swooped down on the woods.

"It's all up to you now, son," he told himself. "See if you can hang on and make it!"

The Germans had slipped over a masterpiece of strategy on the Allies. There was no doubt in Bill's mind that the aged Countess had died from natural causes. Her daughter had been spirited away from the Chateau, and Carletta, the clever Hun agent, now impersonated her, establishing feminine contact with the French by wire whenever the occasion arose.

As he gave thought to this matter, Bill suddenly caught the roar of a sky motor. A ship was taking off from the secret drome at the Chateau grounds. A thin smile crossed his face. If only he could get through, out of this tight, that drome wouldn't last long, by God!

DEEP IN THE DARK fastness of the wood, the Sky Devil traced with a small pencil flash he had fished from a secret groove in his boot, the elaborate blueprint he had taken from Von Ryter's desk.

Bill knew pretty well the history of this old Chateau which was of Napoleonic origin. He knew that its cellars would be connected with those old Napoleonic tunnels through which the Germans had tunneled, mined and counter-mined throughout the whole of the war.

The little beam of light was now following the marking of an old creek bed. A pathway down to the main tunnel entrance. He saw the tracings of pipelines which would convey battle gas deep under no-man's-land, terminating right in front of the Allies defensive system.

Shrugging his broad shoulders in a gesture of finality, he began to make a smaller tracing of this intricate system on a fragment of the blueprint paper. Then he ground the big sheet into the turf, made a few shorthand notes and stuffed the little paper deep into a pocket.

He was ready now to begin the most venturesome and courageous exploit of his entire hellion career. He had a good command of German, which would be a big help, but it did not lessen the audacity of his plan.

But he realized that everyone at the Chateau

would be out searching for him. He must get German military clothes, for he was going down into those corridors of doom. . . . And there would be clothes in some of the rooms at the Chateau—some of Von Ryter's, most probably.

Inside ten minutes, Dawe was squeezing himself between the bars of the window through which he had so recently made his escape. The big mansion was now wrapped in eerie quiet, save for the monotonous ticking of heavy clocks.

He moved on to the hall, and reached the foot of a staircase. Here he paused to listen. But no sound reached him.

Softly he climbed the wide staircase, reaching the first landing, where he paused, breathlessly. A light was forcing rays under the door of a room along the corridor.

His small captured gun in hand, Bill moved on. His hand was on the doorknob. He bent in close to listen, but no sound came from the chamber.

Ready for immediate emergency, he turned the knob and pushed his way into the lighted room. But he recoiled in semi-horror, for on a high four-poster bed was the form of an elderly woman. She was dead—lying in state.

"The countess!" Bill gasped. "Dead! Well, thank heaven I know. . . . It will make it easier to blast this phoney dump to ruins—when I get out!"

He backed softly away and down the corridor. Soon he entered a room which was obviously Von Ryter's. Here in a splendid wardrobe he found the clothes he wanted, and in a few moments was ready to emerge, a tall, Prussian officer. As he cocked his peaked cap down jauntily over one eyebrow, he shot a glance at himself in the wardrobe mirror. A cold, mirthless smile crossed his drawn features. He was playing with hot flame, he knew.

Down in the main hall, he started at the click of heels. A door sentry drew smartly to attention and saluted as Bill, head down, drove muttering past, on into the night. . . . That flame had begun to singe.

OUTSIDE, he quickly oriented his position and made for the creek bed through the shrubbery. He was on the path to the shaft now. Once a sentry loomed up and identified him by these stolen clothes, Bill knew he would be in real tight. As he approached the shaft head, two sentries drew smartly to attention. Their heels clicked as they presented arms. Head down, Bill strode forward, but a bayonet flashed before his face.

"*Verfluchte Kerl!*" he snarled at the soldier. "Have you taken leave of your senses? Stand aside."

But the man refused to budge. Dawe realized that he had the strictest orders about password and so forth, and he was carrying them out to the letter. He now flinched inwardly as he felt a bayonet press against his spine between the shoulder blades.

Like a streak his right boot shot out. He drove a smashing blow to the forward sentry's jaw as he scooped the man's legs out from under him. He dived in headlong as a rifle exploded.

Whirling in his tracks, Bill jerked up his captured gun and poured a shot into the rear sentry who pitched headlong across the prone form of his mate.

Bill could spare no more time. He ducked for the sloping plankway of the shaft and hurried on down. At a fork in the corridor he was at a loss to know which branch to take, but chose the right hand corridor. And now he was pushing forward, along a deserted tube, infested with rats, foul with the stench of stale gas fumes, and dripping wet.

He seemed to have walked a couple of miles before the whirr of machinery reached him, and then the muffled sound of voice. This old corridor merged with the main tunnel ahead someplace.

Cautiously Bill pushed on. Then he heard the unmistakable whirr of elevator machinery. Equipment was being rushed aloft to pill box emplacements—guns, ammunition, concrete. . . .

The Sky Devil had his life in his hands now. He debated his next move carefully, then shrugged. Pulling down the peak of his cap, he turned and pushed through a narrow connecting gap between the corridor and the tunnel. He strode briskly past a group of lounging engineers, and headed for the platform of a heavy freight elevator.

His pulses were hammering fiercely now. There were many eyes watching him down that main tube of activity. But Bill snapped an order to the operator.

"*Herauf! Schnell!*" he snapped. . . . "You heard me, *ker!* Up! There are some last minute adjustments to make. . . ." The man stared bewilderedly and shot a sly glance out towards the engineers.

Bill stepped cautiously to his side and rammed the barrel of his small gun into the man's ribs, under cover.

"*Herauf!*" he jerked.

With a gulp of despair, the operator jerked the cord. They were rushing up—up to the landing platform in the clear.

The man turned, but Bill snatched him back and

instructed him to put the elevator out of running commission.

"And now you will guide me out to no-man's-land," he snarled. "No tricks, else I blow you apart."

The German's knees sagged. Once he started to make a break for it, but quickly changed his mind. He started off along a roofed-in trench and at last drew to a halt.

"There," he gasped. "That is the outlet! *Du lieber Gott!*"

But Dawe wasn't satisfied.

"Right! Out you go," he ordered. "*Schnell!* Over with you. I'm taking you along."

A Maxim suddenly stuttered from a point close in. Dawe ducked, grabbed the man and pushed him ahead. He knew that by telephone, a gun crew had been warned topside.

Still pushing the German ahead, Bill scrambled into the wretched wastes of no-man's-land and commenced a trip he would remember for many a day.

The next hour was a nightmare. Every available German gun on the front was raking the dismal shambles with a terrific barrage fire. The Sky Devil had lost his companion at one terrific detonation which hurled them apart.

He was now going on alone, nearing the American lines, staggering, hurtling, his body bruised and tortured by concussion.

HE NOW CLIMBED OUT of the cover of a shell crater and stumbled toward the Yank wire entanglement. A furious blast of air threshed his form. He pitched forward and crashed his head hard against a barbed wire stanchion. A myriad lights danced before his vision, then winked out as he was swallowed into complete oblivion. . . .

"So! . . . You are awake, huh?"

The rasping voice seemed to snatch Bill Dawe back to full sensibility. He blinked about him amazedly.

"And you will tell me, I suppose, that you are a member of British Intelligence, or some such story?" the voice barked again.

Bill stared up at a big infantry major.

"I'm telling you I'm Captain Bill Dawe of American Air Service on special duty," he snapped. "I must get out—back to Headquarters at once."

"Rats! I once had the pleasure of meeting Dawe," returned the major, nonchalantly lighting a cigar.

"That yarn doesn't go over, Heinie. Anyhow, my men frisked you and found on you the plan of our entire defensive system."

"Yeah? Well, get this, Major Hell-Fire Ramplin," Bill snorted. "Yes, I know you. You met me all right, and

I see you haven't changed much. Because my face got all bunged up when I wrapped it round a stanchion—because it's bandaged, you don't recognize me. But I'm Dawe—the Sky Devil. Now I can't afford to lose any more time. . . . I—"

The major leaned back and laughed. This was Dawe's moment. He catapulted forward and struck hard with a dynamite right. Ramplin's teeth bit clean through his new cigar as that hard fist connected with his jaw. With a low groan he toppled back and went out.

An orderly bounded in from another dugout chamber.

"Here, what the hell's goin' on?" he called. But Dawe was tearing for the exit steps. A shot narrowly missed him as the orderly scooped up the fallen major's Colt. Bill hurricaned up and almost crashed into the P.C. sentry out in the trench. He wasn't stopping for any explanations now. A shot whined past his head as he reached the neck of a communication trench.

Now he turned and dived for cover. He didn't know what this trench would lead to, but he did know it led out.

In a night of hell's designing, he stumbled through the shambles of the battered old trench, almost spent.

All hell seemed to have broken loose now, as Allied guns of every calibre replied in murderous fashion to the roar of German artillery.

Then Dawe reached the main trench which fronted Regimental P.C. He sagged to his knees as a sentry challenged him.

"Okay—buddy," he called. "Take me to your colonel. . . ."

"Heinie deserter, huh?" clipped the man.

"Right—first time—mebbe," Bill drawled. The man snapped an order and together they moved down the broad dugout steps.

"Well, I'll be a—uh—" Colonel Beveridge had taken a moment before recognition was established. Now he came at Bill with hand outstretched.

"Of all the cock-eyed looking scarecrows I ever saw," he blustered. "What next, Bill—what next?"

But Bill was quickly pouring out his story. Beveridge at once contacted Ramplin by phone, and the Sky Devil grinned as he heard the battalion commander, forward, get hell without any adulteration.

Beveridge now commenced to burn wires through to the rear. He was smashing through a congested service, cursing this operator, or that officer until at last he contacted the General Officer Commanding division.

"I can't help it, sir," he snapped. "Sorry to have got you out of bed, but he's here—Dawe—D A W E—the Sky Devil. Important news. Get it. . . . Contact the French. We'll have to evacuate here while the German zone is completely smashed. And then our assault. . . ."

Dawe had never heard so many important, poignant phrases clipped off all in one breath before. Now he strode in to take over the phone and contact his young deputy flight leader, Lieutenant Chuck Verne at 120th American Pursuit Squadron.

"Yeh, I know I'm lucky, Chuck," he called. "But I made it. Have the Brood stand by. But get through to Bomber Squadrons and have them ready for formation shoot one hour before dawn. Rush a car up as close as you can get to the neck of Broadway Trench. I'll be waiting. . . . Good bye!"

BILL SWUNG ROUND on Beveridge whose face was purple as he swore bitterly and continuously.

"Blasted nincompoops! You told them weeks ago that the Chateau Mon Dieu was phoney, Bill," the old grizzly snorted. "I heard you. I was at the Allied conference when you brought it up. By God! The indifference of those executive brass hats nearly cost us the damn war. . . . Well, we'll be in time to avert disaster now—thanks to you. You're going now, eh?"

Bill nodded and moved in to grip Beveridge by the hand.

For a long moment they faced each other, as big men sometimes do—speechless. Then Dawe turned and swung off to the dugout steps.

ACTION! Seldom was more hellish action witnessed than this below the scudding Brood of the Sky Devil as Bill Dawe led them eastward. French and American engineers and tunnelers were touching off counter mines, blasting in the German earthworks. Every single gun within range was blasting thunder and lightning at the mad welter of a fierce inferno. . . . The Sky Devil smiled grimly as he turned to face the Chateau area. At his back came the ponderous Handley Page bombers loaded for bear.

At the Chateau, in the chamber from which Dawe had escaped, von Ryter swung round on the woman, Carletta, and a tall Prussian aide.

"*Dumbkopfs*," he snarled. "You, Carletta—You

failed me. You let him escape, when I had warned you that he was the most dangerous enemy we had to contend with." The baron's cheek muscles were twitching sharply.

"*Ach*, so, Franz," the girl breathed. "I am sorry. But he was too clever. But all is lost. Your famous plans are smashed. There is nothing left but escape. Come. . . . Cars await us. We must get back and face the music."

"Escape! . . . Music! . . . All lost. . . !" The baron almost burst a blood vessel.

"*Du lieber Gott!*" he snarled. "It is well that I did not acquaint you with all my plans. At a touch of a button, my chief of engineer staff can blow up the entire American trench system. He can—" He broke off as an earth quaking detonation shook the big Chateau like jelly.

"There. . . . It is done," he gasped.

The telephone purred. He leaped in and snatched off the receiver. In a moment his jaw dropped. His face was strained and pale.

"*Du—lieber—Gott!*" he croaked.

"Was, Franz?" Carletta asked.

"That was not—our shoot," was the faint reply. "All is lost. The *verdammte* Allies found our main mines and blew them all in. They must have evacuated their front line systems. . . ."

At another purr of the phone the other *offizier* darted in and took the call. In a flash he spun around on his chief.

"Quick, her *excellenz*," he gasped. "They come—a large flotilla of enemy ships. They—"

"*Die Himmelteuffel!*" von Ryter hissed. . . . Then a slow meaning smile fluttered about his mouth corners.

"There is only one thing left for me," he breathed. "I must have that final meeting with *der Himmelteuffel*. It had to come. . . . You, Carletta, will leave at once."

He spun round on his aide and ordered him to have the Fokkers ready to take off at once, then as the *offizier* retreated, he stepped toward the quivering girl, taking her into his arms.

"You go now, Carletta. . . . Goodbye. Remember, it was all for the Fatherland." He kissed her and spun clear. Snatching up a Luger pistol, he headed out into the open, toward his secret drome.

Heavy bombs were smashing the masonry of the Chateau under the Sky Devil's direction. The Brood, under Lieutenant Chuck Verne, was leading the escort ships into terrific battle against the crack fighters of von Ryter's personal *flugstaffel*.

And now, as the flaming wreckage of the shambles

below fascinated him, the Sky Devil dived in for a closer look.

He became suddenly conscious of the patter of lead on his Spad's fuselage, though. Instinctively he rolled off, then came back in a tight zoom.

His brows went up as he glimpsed the phosphorescent insignia of those deadly torches. Von Ryter had searched long for this silver devil ship. Finding it, he had plummeted down. He knew that alone, he must make short work of this grim assignment. He had played the game of warfare grimly and had lost, in the main. But here below was his most bitter sky enemy.

BUT the Sky Devil had whipped up in that wing-tearing zoom. Von Ryter gasped, for he was in power, and overshot badly. But he managed to pull up and over, releasing a short burst with his Spandaus.

The Sky Devil rocked hard against the cockpit rim. For a long moment he toppled on the fringes of a swoon, then suddenly snapped up his head. He was hit hard in the left shoulder, but he had regained his senses. He kicked the ship into a mad, whorling spin.

Down . . . He seemed to be driving right into the heart of his grim handiwork at the Chateau wreckage, with von Ryter following in like a mad comet.

Murderous Spandaus lanced the creeping dawn with flame, when suddenly that devil ship sooshed up in a wide roaring loop.

Too late, von Ryter tried to pull up, to roll, to do anything, but his back was full of shocking lead before he could move. The Sky Devil had tripped his Vickers as he came into the dive. . . .

The torch ship of von Ryter screamed down to plunge its prop boss into the mass of hellish wreckage below—the chateau, in which the schemes of the nefarious baron had been calculated.

Head out to catch the reviving blast of his slipstream, the Sky Devil hurled his bus up. He snatched up his flare pistol and fired an all-out signal to his Brood. They came down on his flanks like a flock of monster tumbler pigeons. Together they purred along to westward, in the rear of the victorious bombers already in sight of their dromes.

The Sky Devil had added another glorious victory to his record; another wound to his many battle scars.

