

FLIGHT TEAM FLIGHT!

written and illustrated by
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“Crashity—spiff! Crashity—spiff! Kill the bums who eat roas’ biff!” So sang Sergeant Casey’s grease monkey cheering section on that sunny day when Major Garrity led his hardy Ninth Pursuit eleven against Captain Hardleigh-Bryte and his lambasting Limeys. But meanwhile the Vons had put over a spinner that reversed the field so you could see into the basements of laundries in China. And if it hadn’t been for Pinkham’s timely lateral, the Allies might have ended up horizontal.

HOLD THAT LINE! Hold that line! Hold that line!” Uncle Sam’s All-American team in not-so-sunny France heard nothing but that cry from the Chaumont coaching staff in the fall of 1917 while

the Potsdam varsity hammered at their forward wall. Three thousand miles away, across the Big Pond, the same cry was being tossed out of the throats of sons and daughters of all the alma mummies from the Golden Gate to Hoboken. It was touchdown time

where the home fires burned. It was keep-your-head-down time in the trenches in the land of *vin blanc* and snails.

In the backfield of the Allies' warring machine Major Rufus Garrity's aerial experts were girding their loins to make a few passes at the Von offensive. For two weeks they had made passes at the Krauts with little success and three of the Spads hurled into enemy territory had been grounded as prettily as the Huns pleased, never to return. Without warning the Heinies had taken time out and the board of U. S. strategy at Chaumont went into a huddle to ask one another what in the devil to expect next from the wiener makers. Signal snitchers reported that the Krauts were ready to uncork a big surprise, that they had christened a new high explosive shell with puma sweat and were ready to send the spinner at the Allied lines to see what it could do.

While Chaumont brass hats waited with fingers stuffed into their ears, life on the drome of the turbulent Ninth Pursuit Squadron savored of raccoon coats, chrysanthemums, and ticket scalpers. The pigskin fever had hit the squadron and football was the ruling passion when the Spads were not upstairs. Twelve miles away, a limey squadron, irked by certain remarks from an ex-footballer from Boonetown, Iowa, to the effect that the British rugby was a sissy's pastime, had challenged the Ninth to a game, American style. For three weeks the Limey pilots had been practicing under the tutelage of a Yankee top-kick who claimed he had once scored a touchdown for Weakfish Normal against Purdue.

Nor had the Ninth been wasting any time. Oblivious of the fact that the Krauts were manufacturing more mayhem, Garrity's buzzards went through scrimmage on the Yankee tarmac.

One crisp October day Major Rufus Garrity came out and eyed the play, then made some very caustic comments about the Yankee squad. "Hmph," he grunted, "you need a better fullback in there. Goomer could not bust through a Vassal' daisy chain. Huh, call yourself a tackle, Gillis? Bah, when I played for Hurry-Up Yost at Michigan in '92, we played football! Pinkham, you're terrible."

"Oh yeah? When I was with the Boonetown High School, I was called the Iowa Hurricane!" Phineas retorted. "I invented more trick plays than—"

Garrity immediately took charge of the Ninth's football team and chased Sergeant Casey, temporary coach, to the hangar. "Where'd you ever play football, Howell?" he yipped.

"Yale 1912," the leader of "A" Flight replied, watching Phineas Pinkham pick up their scuffed, cheap-leather football and fool with the lacings.

"Yeah?" Bump Gillis exclaimed. "I was a tackle—Notre Dame 1913."

"What college has a stadium named after you, Pinkham?" snorted the Old Man stripping off his tunic.

"International-By-Mail University—any year," the unquenchable scion of the Pinkhams retorted, dropping the football. "I made three touchdowns one day against the Harvards, but they did not count as I forgot to mail the letter, haw-w-w-w-w! You're a great fullback, huh, Major? Show us, as I am all atwitter. Here kick it! I bet it won't go as far as the ammo shack."

Major Garrity set his jaw, took ten running steps and let the pigskin have it. The ball hardly left the ground. The Old Man howled bloody murder and picked up his right foot and tried to run with it. Phineas picked up the ball, hastily unloosed the lacings and dropped a good-sized rock to the ground. It was an innocent looking pigskin when Garrity demanded to see it.

"Aw ya kicked the ground, Major," the sleight-of-hand professor laughed. "Haw-w-w, ya—"

"That rock wasn't there when I came out here," the C.O. bellowed. "Somebody—by cr-r-ripes—" He charged Lieutenant Pinkham and chased him all the way to the Nisson hut where Phineas and Bump Gillis holed up together when off duty. The workout for that day ended then and there.

PHINEAS was still barricaded in his hut two hours later when Howell, Gillis, and two other pilots demanded admittance. The Boonetown pilot opened the door a crack breathed deeply, and let them in.

"We've got to get the C.O. for a ball carrier," said the captain of "A" Flight. "You see him run after you? He's fast an' shifty, Carbuncle. You got to apologize as we have our next two months' pay on the line with the Limeys."

"We could lick 'em with anvils tied to our feet," Phineas declared, with a broad grin. "I scouted 'em yesterday. They've got a guy who has a whiskbroom to brush off anybody that gets tackled. The back they have asks who wants to carry the ball next and the one who does just says 'Rawth-er, ol' thing!' An' if they bump into each other, they bow an' chirp, 'Sorry, ol' chap. Jolly game, eh what?' I tell you, Bump, it's gonna be murder."

“Well, I have bet fifty smackers on us,” his hutmate said, “an’ that ain’t hay. I got to be sure. I’m not takin’ no chances, as they’re not as dumb as they look. They couldn’t be!”

“We’ve only got four more days to practice,” Phineas said thoughtfully. “That is, if the Krauts don’t shoot none of our team down. I’ll tell you what! We will tell Garrity he can be a halfback if he keeps the best players we’ve got grounded until after—”

“You tell him,” Howell interrupted. “We’ll be right behind you.”

Phineas Pinkham went over to the Operations Shack and put his cards on the table. He came out with a scorched empennage and a good mind to quit the Ninth Pursuit’s football squad.

“Well?” Howell wanted to know. “Did you—er—?”

“He’s a triple threat any place,” the team’s spokesman snapped. “Boys, what a kicker! We can’t lose—if the Krauts don’t shoot some of us in the A.M. We are goin’ over every day as often as he says so until we locate where the Heinie high explosive shells are stored. That is football for ya, huh! Er—what’s that? Did you hear anythin’?”

“It’s the ackemma cheerin’ section,” Howell said. “Not so bad, huh? Listen.”

*Crashity—crack! Crashity—crack!
We are the boys who break your back!
Knock ’em down
Mow ’em down
Wash ’em down with co-o-ony-ack!
Crashity—spiff! Crashity—Spiff!
Kill the bums that eat roas’ biff!”*

Phineas shook his head dolefully. “I’m changin’ the name of the team from the Ninth Pursuit Maroons to the Ninth Pursuit Morons. That’d be a lowbrow cheerin’ section even where I come from. Haw-w-w-w!”

After mess that night Major Rufus Garrity announced in correct military fashion that the Ninth Pursuit would do a little flying for the democrats at dawn and that they would keep on flying until told to stop.

“‘A’ Flight will take off at dawn and patrol the Mont Sec salient,” he rumbled. “‘B’ Flight at six o’clock will meet three D.H. Nines over Vaubecourt and escort them over the German lines to bomb a Boche narrow gauge railway near Metz. That is all, gentlemen—with the exception that Major Rufus Garrity will play fullback against the British Lions on Saturday. That is all.”

“Rah! rah! rah!” yipped Phineas Pinkham. “I’ve got a swell trick play. We will have an infantry band

from Barley Duck with our cheerin’ section, an’ when a Limey happens to get loose with the ball, we will have it play ‘*God Save the King!*’ The Limey’ll stop an’ stand at attention and we’ll sneak up an’ flatten him, haw-w-w-w! I got another one where I slide the ball under Bump’s shirt, and the ol’ termater—the C.O. here—slides around the end like he has the ball an’—”

“Well, goodnight,” Captain Howell broke in with a yawn.

“Yeah, and I gotta write a letter,” sighed Bump Gillis, getting up. “Er—what’d you just say, Carbuncle?”

“Awright, awright! See whose brains win the game,” Phineas said indignantly. “I’ve a good mind to quit the team. Ya needn’t try to coax me back, either!”

“Make a note of that,” Garrity bit out. “Casey plays right half.”

“Is that so?” yelped the triple-threat man from Boonetown. “What’ll ya play with if I don’t play, huh? It’s my football—the only one in France as far as we know. Them Limeys have been practicin’ with loaves of bread. Awright, it’s Casey at halfback. Don’t forget the dough we have bet, boys. I will be in the cheerin’ section hopin’ you break a leg or three. Adoo!”

“Now look here, Pinkham,” Garrity began soothingly. “Ha—er—we were only kiddin’. Why we wouldn’t know what to do without you in there makin’ touchdowns.”

“Haw-w-w-w!” Phineas laughed. “Never mind the soft soap, as you will have me lookin’ like a shavin’ brush ad. Awright, I will play—if you can’t get along without me.”

The C.O. went out with his dental assembly emulating a rock crusher. For the first time since he had donned the uniform he wished the Boche luck against Lieutenant Pinkham when the new day broke.

COWS were still sleeping in Frog barns, Roosters were only beginning to lubricate their crowing pipes, and the sun was nowhere near ready for passing out heat when the members of “A” Flight, Ninth Pursuit Squadron, tumbled out of their cots and grabbed at flying leather. Phineas Pinkham pawed sleep out of his big, bleached-blue blinkers as he nibbled at burnt toast in the mess shack. Then he hurried out to watch grease monkeys warm up his sky chariot a few seconds before Glad Tidings Goomer bolted out onto the tarmac a couple of steps ahead of a chair, an assortment of crockery, and a general chunk out of a captured Fokker prop. From the safety of an apple tree, Glad Tidings yelled for the C.O.

“Now what’s the matter?” Phineas yipped. “That was only a substitute for coffee he fed you bums. It’s called Bus-turn an’ I brought it from Boonetown. Real coffee is never given to football players. You’d oughta know that. Tsk! Tsk! Why—er—I fergot. I dumped that Bustum out the other day an’ put somethin’ in that can—er—I got to stop gettin’ so absent-minded. I know—it was snuff! I was goin’ to kill bugs an’—”

Major Garrity appeared on the tarmac in his skivvies a few minutes later. He brandished a gun, threatened to shoot Gillis and Howell if they did not let Pinkham up. The captain of “A” Flight dropped the spanner wrench he was aiming at the Pinkham cranium, gagged, and spat out some of the terrible taste in his mouth. Then he got off Phineas. Bump Gillis reluctantly let go of the culprit’s air tubes and promised to take up where he had left off at the first opportunity.

Phineas gulped, then guffawed. “Haw-w-w! Now I ain’t sorry.”

And so, with their morale a bit shot, the Ninth Pursuit took to the ozone and winged toward the Boche backyard where Heinies were chuckling over a shell that would make Gibraltar groggy if it nudged the big rock. In a Boche pow-wow den near Metz, *Herr Oberst, Kapitans*, and better, decided upon the time and place to test out their new hell lozenge. At the same time, word trickled to them from Intelligence at Wilhelmstrasse that the Limey and Yankee squadrons near Bar-le-Due were to spend an afternoon carrying and kicking around an inflated piece of pig’s epidermis.

“Feetsball, *hein?* Vunce I see idt *der verdammt* Yangkees blay *mit* idt by Amerika. *Der Yales und der* Brincetons was *ist*. *Der Dumkopf’s* game *ist das*. *Einen* blayer he shtardts runnink *und der* rest fight *mit* him, *und der* vhistle blows, *und den* zomebody giffs idt *der wasser wagon* by *der field und* once again already yet they run *mit der* ball or kick *der* ball odder t’row *der* ‘ball away. *Ach*, sooch *ein* bizziness! Ho! ho!

“*Und* now *der* vord idt gets sent by *der* Baron von Schnoutz’s Staffel, *ja?* He strafes *der verdammt* Yangkee *mit der* beefeacters vwhile they kick idt *der* ball. *Ach*, *Gott*, *das ist der Dumkopf* bizziness, *hein?* Alzo much komical. Now, *mein Herrs*, in fife minoots *der* gun fires *der* shell ofer *der* Meuse. Vhen *der* Allies see idt *der* hole *und* add oop vun t’ousandt times, dey ask idt *der* Kaiser shouldt sendt *der* agent *mit der* demands he hass *und* ve all go home. *Ach*, ve Chermans!” His chest swelled with pride of his race.

THE Ninth Pursuit pigskin outfit almost lost a halfback on their early sky tiff. A Boche observation post buzzed a Heinie outfit when Garrity’s flies were spotted against the ceiling. A circus of Potsdam aerial marvels dusted off their Albs and pushed them upstairs to hit a certain sky shelf at approximately the same time as Captain Howell, Lieutenant Pinkham, et al, were perched upon it.

A fight had to ensue, and it was a whale of a battle while it lasted. Phineas Pinkham tried an end sweep when he saw that the Heinie roving center was too much for him, and he rocketed down the sidelines, his Spad zigzagging like a snake-hipped broken field runner. He reversed his field and was stopped cold by Boche blockers over the Meuse. Time was out for Lieutenant Pinkham. His Spaa limped off the sky grid, ready for the showers, but no cheers came from anywhere.

“That’s all for today,” the corn-belt pilot finally gulped, wondering how long his Hisso would hold together. “It looks like Garrity will have to do all the ball carryin’ against the Limeys, as Howell wasn’t doin’ so good when I saw him last.” The Pinkham Spad then went into a fit over Allied trenches close to the Meuse and the Boonetown pilot almost melted in his seat when he heard the terrific screech that nearly split his eardrums. It sounded as if every demon out of Satan’s stable were riding his tail. Then he saw it heading for a spot on the carpet below.

BLA-A-A-AM!! BR-R-R-R-RO-O-O-OM!!

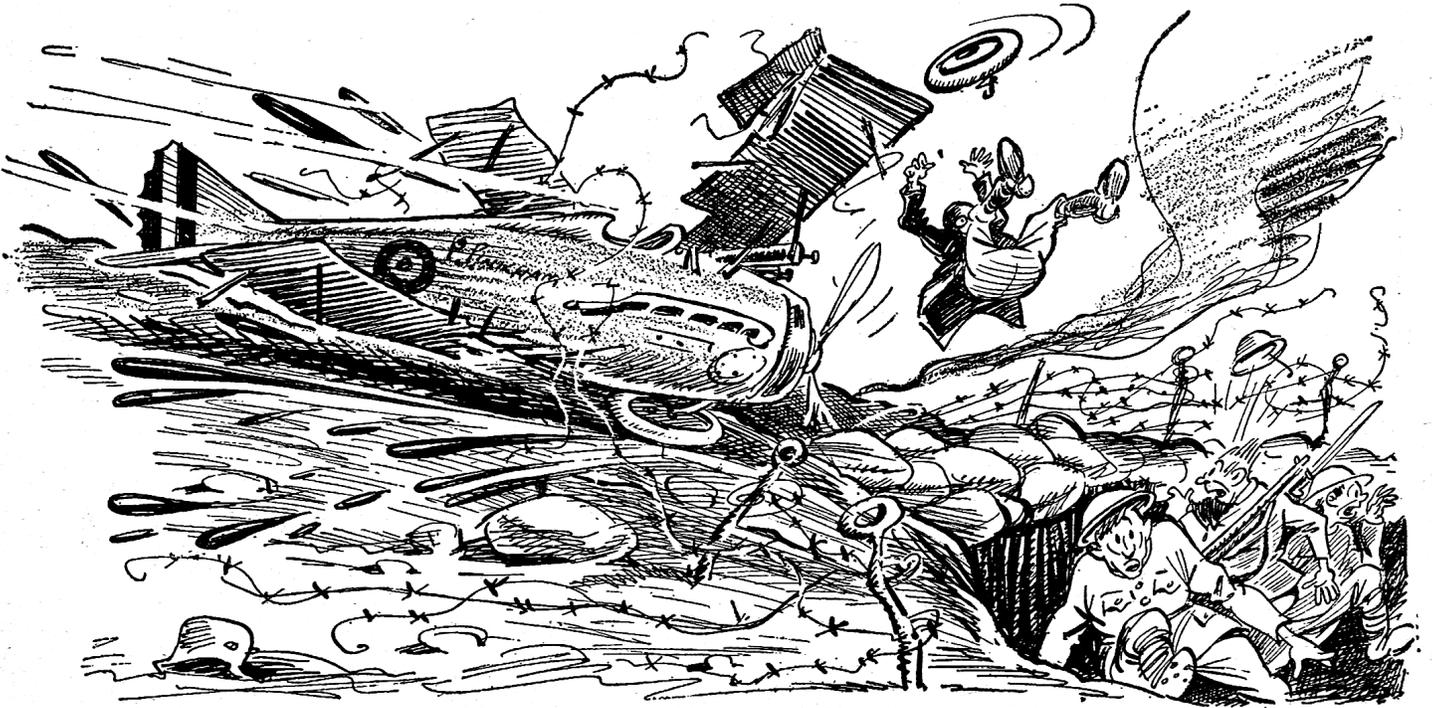
The addled Yank had seen Kraut ordnance break up before. He had once seen a “Jack Johnson” wipe out a Frog supply dump with a single wallop—but compared to this baby which had just torn a chunk out of *la belle* France, that “J. J.” had only been a peanut shell. Sweat globules as big as hail rattled down into the Spad’s pit as Phineas fought his crate down to terra firma.

Yankee doughs took one look and howled: “Here comes a Spad, too. It must’ve got knocked cock-eyed by that shell’s slipstream. What else, will they toss at us? Lo-o-o-ok o-o-out!”

Cr-rash! Ker-splat!

Phineas arrived in a tangle of barbed-wire, a shower of mud, and a rapidly disintegrating Spad. The whole works slid into a trench, and it took doughs an hour to get things untangled.

Lieutenant Pinkham opened his eyes in a dugout filled with doughs, struggled up, and waved his arms: “Ho-o-old that li-i-i-ne, bums! I’ll git there for the last quarter. Who’s ahead? They are? Forty-one to nothin’?”



Haw-w-w-w! Don't be downhearted, boys, as Phineas Pinkham Merriwell is rushin' to the Bowl."

"That's right, Lieutenant, that's right," said a medico. "The bowl's right here. Filled with coneyac, Lieutenant. Just drink it up and—"

"Hey, where am I?" yipped the patient. "What day is it? If it's Saturday, get me outa here as we play—ah—er—lift up the blankets, will ya, as I'm sure I am shy a leg."

"Don't worry," cracked a dough. "That's just the way it feels when ya git wrapped up in barbed wire, Lootenant!"

Phineas downed the bowl of Frog liquid dynamite and it jolted his gold-bricking brain cells to feverish activity. He blinked and began to take notice of his surroundings. He poked his hand through the opening in a box beside him and pulled out a grenade.

"Put that back, ya dope," a shavetail yelled. "It's a Mills bomb!"

"Did ya think I thought it was a persimmon?" the flyer snorted. "I know all about 'em. You just pull out the pin with your teeth before you toss it, as it won't go off unless you do. Like this—"

"Grab it!" yipped a dough frantically. Four others made a dive for the dugout steps and flattened themselves like so many bear rugs. Somebody grabbed the grenade out of Phineas Pinkham's hand, leaped outside, and heaved it.

BLOOEY! Sand bags went up. Mud scattered everybody inside the dugout.

"Get that fatheaded aviator t'hell outa here!" roared an officer. "Get him to the rear an' load him in a mechanical bug. Shoot him, or anythin'—but get him out of here!"

"Awright," the culprit bridled. "I been thrown out of better trenches than this." He dropped something into the pocket of his trench coat and followed three doughs out of the dugout and down a trench to where another ditch branched off. By the time he reached the back area he knew how it must feel to be a worm.

Meanwhile, doughs near the Meuse looked at the hole the Heinie shell had left and lost their appetities. One scratched his head and looked at a shavetail. "Six of them hit in the same place an' ya could see into the basements of laundries in China. The brass hats better think up somethin' to stop 'em, don't ya think?"

"Yeah," agreed the lieutenant. "I wonder if I could get a transfer to a Y.M.C.A. hut?"

Chaumont got bad news and a dozen worry trenches appeared on the brows of the brainy brass hats. One took pencil and paper and began to figure out the cost of such a shell as the Heinie had tossed, and he gleefully announced that the taxpapers across the Rhine could not possibly give backing to more than two hundred such loads of hell whoopee.

"Smart boy," snorted a brigadier. "If two hundred of those shells busted up around the lines, there wouldn't be anythin' left of the A.E.F. but their dogtags. The U.S. Treasury will go bankrupt payin' insurance an'—oh-h-h-h, think of something bright for a change!"

"The airplanes have got to spot that supply, somehow. Bomb every ammo dump across the lines," declared another worried war lord. "We've got to stop 'em from droppin' any more of those shells. That was only a test to see if the gun would stand it and—well, don't just stand there! Think of something."

"I'm thinking of a nice rock garden in Ashtabula, Ohio," one promptly announced. "I bet I never see those Sweet Williams reach their full growth. Of course, I could resign—"

THE Ninth Pursuit had crossed Phineas off the roster by dawn. A sub halfback was being groomed for his position—Glad Tidings Groomer. The mess attendant proved a drawback. It took him three steps to get both big dogs off the ground. Glad Tidings could run the century in two minutes flat but his bellows were such that he generally finished that way. Garrity stormed around the Operations Shack heaping insults on the head of the absent Boonetown Spad pusher.

"Yeah, he would get killed at a time like this. He'd do it to spite us, the flap-eared baboon. I know him! He's got that football hid somewheres so we couldn't steal it and—"

"Bawn matting, bums!" chortled a familiar voice outside the door. "Boonetown's all-American football team is back again. I been lookin' at how the other half of the A.E.F. lives. I had to leave the Spad, as I couldn't get to a 'phone to call a garage for a wrecker. Well, it's too bad for the Limeys now, huh?"

The Old Man was about to insult Phineas as usual when the telephone bell rang. He grabbed at

it, listened for awhile, his ears wiggling and his jaw hardening until it could have withstood the punch of a pile driver.

"The shell hit, huh? Made a big hole, huh? Well, what's the Air Force supposed to do—fill it up? Sure we're tryin' to locate the source of supply. Did you think we just came over here to help the Frogs stamp juice out of grapes to make *vin blanc*? What?

I'm impertinent, am I? Y-You will? Ha! Ha! I'm laughing, sir. If you've got a brother-in-law who wants this job—"

The Wing hung up on Garrity. The Major slammed down the receiver and then sat down to work out a trick off-tackle sneak that he wanted to spring on the Limeys.

"That shell, huh?" Phineas Pinkham began. "Boys, it kissed me on the way over. It hit just ahead of me an' it was no peach pit, haw-w-w-w! I wish we had inventors on our side."

AND then the day of the big game arrived with Chaumont half scared to death and all the Intelligence officers of the Allied cause and all the crews of observation crates trying to get a gander at the Kraut shell supply. The Ninth Pursuit

squad went to the Limey drome near Marlincourt in a camion and Major Garrity left five Spad pushers back at the drome on the *alerte* just in case a couple of Boche should sneak over the lines.

Phineas Pinkham was a sight for sore eyes. He had on a flying helmet reinforced by heavy strips of leather. His football pants were contrived out of an old pair of dungarees padded with the insides of fleece-lined flying boots. On the front of his sleeveless



knitted sweater he had stitched a flaming red “P,” and his shoes, cleated with bits of leather, had been flying boots at one time. They had been cut down to the laces at the insteps. As for stockings, Phineas had slyly appropriated a pair of female silk hose from Babette. These he had daubed up with painted white stripes. -

On the way over, the football marvel from Boonetown, Iowa, whispered to his hutmate, Bump Gillis: “Did you git what I told ya to, Bump? It was wrapped up in a newspaper—that old flatiron, ya know. Boys, we’ll have fun when a Limey kicks off. Just leave it in the buggy here until I git time to sneak over after it. I’ll leave the laces in the football loose. Haw-w-w-w!”

THE Britishers looked like a formidable aggregation when play got under way. A leading Limey ace, Captain Hardleigh-Bryte, was in at fullback. He weighed two hundred pounds.

Major Rufus Garrity won the toss and said that he would kick off. “I’m for it,” Phineas chirped. “I been waitin’ for ya to do that ever since—”

“Righto! Let’s get on with it,” broke in the Limey C.O. who was playing center for the Lions. “Pip! Pip! On your jolly toes, ol’ chappies.” Groundhogs and nonccombatants sent up a deafening cry when Garrity kicked the football down the field. Not three hundred yards away was the Limey tarmac with four Bristols waiting on the line—just in case. The Limey quarterback missed the ball and chased it far back of his goalposts. Phineas Pinkham chased him into an adjoining Frog sheep pasture and finally dumped him into a brook.

“I say, ol’ boy, a bit rough, what?”

“It’s not a quiltin’ bee we’re havin’,” Phineas sniffed. “And you’re only supposed to use *one* field to play in. We will have to get a taxi back to the twenty-yard line, haw-w-w-w!” After a conference, the Ninth let the Limeys put the ball on their goal line for first down. Hardleigh-Bryte took the pigskin and tried to run the Ninth’s end. Rufus Garrity nailed him at the line of scrimmage and the other ten Yanks piled on top of them. When the heap was untangled, first aid had to be given both ball carrier and tackler.

“You fatheads!” Garrity howled. “Whose side are you on? Pinkham, I saw you jump on me with both feet. I’ll knock—”

“Stop him!” yipped Phineas. “A Limey is runnin’ with the ball. Oh, the crackpot! He’s over for a touchdown. It wasn’t fair. Time was out an’—”

“Bit of a poor sport, eh what?” a Limey Bristol flyer remarked. “I jolly well heard no blarsted time-out signal. Six to nothing, ol’ chappies. Pip! Pip! American game, eh what? Pippin’ an’ all that, Haw! Haw! Haw!”

“Awright,” clipped Phineas, “jus’ kick off to us now, you weak-chinned spot of tea. Jus’ kick off to us!”

The Limeys then proceeded to do just that, and Major Rufus Garrity, his dander up, took the ball and went through the Limeys like water through a sieve. Phineas and Bump each scored four touchdowns before the half was over. The Major added three and the Limey footballers were staggering around in circles with their tongues dragging on the tarmac.

“Seventy to six,” yipped Lieutenant Pinkham. “Haw-w-w-w!”

The Limeys came back after a rest and limped over to where the ball was resting in the middle of the field.

“Are you ready, ol’ chaps?” Hardleigh-Bryte tossed out to his battered eleven.

“Ready, blarst it!” hollered a Limey quarter. “I fancy we have to carry on. I know jolly well I have lost a kidney.”

“Pip! Pip!” yipped a Limey ace and he took a healthy kick at the scuffed pigskin.

“OW-W-W-W-W-W-W! YE-E-O-OW-W-W-W!”

Captain Hardleigh-Bryte sat down, picked up his singing right, foot. “Haw-w-w-w-w!” guffawed the scion of the Pinkhams.

And just then a flock of Mercedes power plants drowned out the cheering sections!

“Boche!” yipped Garrity. “Run for the crates! Oh-h-h-h, I bet they’re over at Barley Duck, too—run!” “Yeah,” Phineas yipped, “Flight, team, Flight! Haw-w!”

Phineas Pinkham instinctively picked up the pigskin and legged it toward the Bristol tarmac. Machine guns began to spit and sputter. Bristols were already rolling across the field. An Archie battery began to spray the oncoming Krauts with a shower of white pompoms saturated with chunks of old iron. Phineas followed a Limey pilot to a Bristol and hopped into the observer’s pit. He suddenly saw that he still had the weighted football and dropped it into the bottom of the Bristol’s business office.

The Limey pilot now looked around, yelling for his observer, as ackemmas ripped the chocks away from the wheels.

“Ya got an observer, ya fathead!” his Yankee companion ripped out. “Hurry up, Limey, or do you want to git some tea before— Hey, hurry up! Those Heinies—oh-h-h, you cheerio bum, will you goose

that Bristol or do I—? Well, it's about time. We'll get one of those bums, Alfie ol' thing. Just git Phineas upstairs!"

The Bristols were in a spot. The Krauts had the jump on them as completely as a rabbit has the jump on a rheumatic turtle. Spandaus played merry hell with the two-seaters of Johnny Bull as they crawled upstairs. On the ground, the Limey C.O. was crawling into a dugout and pulling Rufus Garrity in with him.

"I'll jolly well have that bucktoothed leftenant of yours put under arrest, Garrity," Major Cheddersby threatened the Yankee squadron commander. "He put somethin' in that ball and grounded my best ace! The King will jolly well hear of this!" he grunted, as he wiggled into the shelter.

"Oh, shut up!" Garrity exploded. "Half the Heinie air force is overhead peltin' hell out of us—an' you talk football. But we showed you beefeaters who invented that game, all right, all right. See that forty-yard run I made, ol' windsock?"

FIVE MINUTES later the prop chant died to a whisper. The C.O.'s crawled out of the dugout and took an inventory of the Bristol tarmac. It was filled with as many holes as a hobo's shirt and the wings of two Bristol fighters looked like so many practically punched-out meal tickets. An ambulance, looking for casualties, was weaving around like a drunk going through a dark neighborhood.

"Well, we beat you birds," chuckled Garrity. "Ha! Ha! But I'll bet you three pounds we'll get our pants dusted for this."

"Raw-w-wther! Bit of a mess, eh what? The blinkin' Boche kicked us for a lot of goals, too. What, ol' tomato?"

Now twelve miles from the scene of the epic pigskin battle Phineas Pinkham was fighting like a cornered leopard, trying to hold off three Heinie Fokkers while the Bristol pilot strove to keep the crate up with only part of an empennage. When three other Boche sky buggies moved in and began to warm up, the Limey said to hell with it and signalled for a fair catch. The Bristol hit on the bias near a hamlet fairly crawling with Teuton brass hats and a good-sized chunk of replacements for von Hindenburg's forward wall.

"Well, we're tackled behind the line of scrimmage," observed Phineas philosophically, climbing out of the pit. "Wee gates, you Boche bums!"

"Ho! Ho!" chuckled an *Herr Oberst*, "a feetballer, *ja?* *Herr Leutnant* Pingham, *ach Himmel! Das ist der pat*

by *der* back vhat gifts us yedt from *der* Kaiser. Coom oudt—*und mach schnell!* You I mean idt, Beefeater!"

"Keep your bally shirts on, you filthy swine," the Limey snapped promptly, getting a bat in the ear for his tone of voice.

The Krauts were hustling the captives away when Phineas Pinkham balked. "I got to get me the football, as it has to go to the trophy room at Chaumont," the Boonetown trickster said. "Haw-w-w-w, when that Limey kicked off the last time—what a panic, huh?"

The Boche, gleefully triumphant, allowed *Leutnant* Pinkham to take his football with him to the emergency hoosegow near Boche headquarters. It was a senile stable reminiscent of the rather recent tenancy of cows and pigs. The Boche tossed the captives inside and barred the door. Just as Phineas and the Limey settled down to contemplate their stalemate position in the scheme of things, the rumble of heavy trucks began to make the territory quake.

"Blarst it!" wailed the Limey pilot. "A jolly ol' kettle of fish an' chips, eh what, Pinkham?"

"Oh, I been in places like this before," said the Boonetown pilot airily. "It's one thing to catch an eel an' another to hold it." Absently he unfastened the laces of the football and plunged a big hand inside. Out came the ballast he and Bump Gillis had buried in its depths. The Bristol jockey jumped a foot when the Yank let out a scared yip. He saw that the miracle man had a hand grenade in his fist. Its wrappings—an old piece of yellowed newspaper—were settling to the floor at Phineas' makeshift gridiron puppies.

"Uh—er—I'll kill Bump Gillis for this. It's that grenade I took from a Yankee dugout. He picked up the wrong—it was a flatiron I had wrapoed up in the other. An' your big ace kicked this—ohh-h-h-h, I am sick! Have you an aspirin, ol' bean, ol' halibut?"

"It is attempted murder, Leftenant Pinkham!" the Limey said severely. "I will report it to Brigade. The red tabs will hear of this. I'll blarsted well—"

"Just go out an' send them a telegram," the intrepid Yank snorted, wiping the dew of fright from his freckled pan. "The Boche will take you to a Western Union office an—oh, shut up, Alfie. It is a mistake as—er—now is it? Look out that window, Beefeater, an' what is it you see? A dozen trucks with commissary signs on the sides—right over by them railroad tracks. Haw-w-w-w!"

"I jolly well do not see anything to laugh at, Leftenant."

"Limeys are dumb," Phineas sighed. "Look at the big Heinie boiler over there. It's our out, ol' cabbage! The

Krauts are cheats, as they are no more chow wagons than I am a shiek of Arabia. It is something they are carryin' that they have got to camouflage and it may be—say, you saw me toss a forward pass in the second period, didn' ya? Well, I will lay this right in the back of that truck there from here an' see what happens."

"Aw-w-w-wk!" gulped the Britisher. "Leftenant, you are balmy. It'll blow us—"

Phineas took aim, pulled the pin out of the grenade with his enormous teeth, counted three, then flung it into the open maw of a big Boche truck. Then he yelled: "Duck!" and dragged his fellow prisoner to the floor with him.

BOO-O-ONG! KER—WHA-A-A-AM! SCRE-E-E-E WHA-A-A-A-AM!

Pieces of a Heinie truck went sky high. Another one in the line did an adagio dance and followed the first toward the ceiling. High explosive shells that bade fair to beggar Kraut taxpayers went up in a mighty detonation of fire and smoke.

Phineas Pinkham felt the stable spin off its moorings and ventured to look up once to see the roof sail away like Sinbad's rug. Heinie coal scuttles rolled over the terra firma and the Yank saw a Boche flying through the air with the greatest of ease. A *Herr Oberst* sailed into what was left of the stable and lapsed into a coma on top of the prisoners.

BOO-O-O-OM! KERWHA-A-A-AM! BLOO-O-OEY!

Phineas thought it would never stop. His fan-like ears were collecting dried mud like a steam shovel. Finally the last truck split wide open like an over-inflated balloon and six high explosive shells arched out over the Boche landscape.

WHA-A-AM! BLAMITY BLA-A-A-AM! BO-O-O-O-O-O-M.

"Fawncy!" breathed the pop-eyed Limey as he wiggled a foot.

"As for them bein' commissary wagons, I would say it was a hell of a mess," muttered Phineas, heaving the *Herr Oberst* off his angel bones. "And now I am gittin' into this Heinie's hat an' coat an' boots while the other Hair Obusts are pickin' up their marbles, if any. We have got to find a Kraut boiler that still runs. Hurry up an' help me skin this beer-guzzler down to his panties. Don't just sit there!" He coughed as burning cordite fumes together with other terrible smells began to creep into his air hose.

BY NOW, those Boche who still had a brain left had forgotten all about the Yank and Limey prisoners.

Those who could navigate were getting as far from the place as they could while their bellows were in working order.

"We sure tagged them shells, huh?" grinned the Yank. "Here, help me git his boots off, Alfie. Uh—er—look, Krauts are comin'. Git a rock—find a gun—never mind, haw-w-w! Look at their glimmers. They're gazin' into the next world. What a panic!"

The Heinies stumbled on through the ruins of the stable like a regiment of Draculas looking for an anemia cure. Phineas, now dressed in an *Herr Oberst's* regalia, picked up a Luger and prodded it into the Bristol pilot's ribs. "*Mach Schnell! Raus mit, verdammt schwein.* I will march you right to a Kraut jolopi. Comprenny, Leftenant?"

"Ah—er—haw! Jolly well do, ol' chap!" said the Limey, picking a splinter out of his seat. "Carry on an' God Save the King!"

"An' how about Uncle Sam, huh?" growled the Yank. "That's like you Limeys. *En avant, mon ami*, as it is toot sweet we will have to *allez* out of *...* Haw-w-w-w! We will go right through the lines an' make a touchdown. Rah! Rah! Quite a game, football, huh? Ah—er—wait! There's an Hair Obust comin' an he don't look gaga. Er—*Excellenz, der brizoner Ich haben yedt*," Phineas said and saluted. "*Ach du lieber, sooch ein mess, ya?*"

"*Ja, Herr Oberst. Donnervetter! Und das Pingham?*"

"*Kaput!*" replied Phineas, prodding the Luger into the Limey's ribs. "*Raus mit! Vowart marsh Schwein!*"

The resourceful Yank now came to a Heinie limousine with a big black eagle painted on the door. All around the shellacked area Boche were either brushing cobwebs out of their brain cells or were wrapped in slumber either permanent or temporary. One suddenly set up a terrific howl. "Pingham!" he roared. "See, here *ist der* feetsball helmet *und* shoes *und*—eferbody ha-a-a-alp! *Das Pingham!*"

"Git in there," said Phineas, "we can't wait for no tea to boil, Limey. If it don't start, we will be remembered every Memorial Day back home, haw-w-w-w! Pip! Pip! an' all that, what ol' radish?" The Boonetown trickster, covered with goose pimples and his heart battering his teeth, stepped on the starter. *Whir-r-r-r!* The spark caught the gas and valves and pistons sang a sweet aria. "Adoo—I hope!" Phineas flung out to the Boche who were legging it across the disheveled yard. The Heinie buggy leaped away, hitting on all eight cylinders, and washed out three of the Kaiser's easy marks who were staggering along the road dotting I's

in the ozone before their eyes. Straight ahead toward the Hindenburg Line sped the fugitives with Krupp slugs hitting the ground just an inch or so behind the hot Teuton tire treads.

“Are you ther-r-r-aw-w-w?” Phineas tossed at his companion. “Haw-w-w-w! We’ll go through the right side of the line if we don’t get any interference, huh? I hope the Kraut tackle has got paralysis. As for the Prussian guard, haw-w-w-w! Hang on, Alfie, as it is no cricket match we are playin’!”

IN CHAUMONT an hour after a Spandau gun had ended the football match, the brass hats were boiling like a vat of soap fat. In Brigade, British red tabs were hovering on the verge of apoplexy.

“Gad!” raved a Brigadier. “Football! The Bristol squadron plays football while the blarsted Boche put on a raid—and our best ace laid up! I jolly well cawn’t believe it. Strike me bloomin’ pink! Cheddersby will find himself in mufti, Mr. Whistle-brooke! Playin’ football! A bit of all right, I don’t think, what ol’ thing?”

Meanwhile, Major Rufus Garrity walked the floor of the Operations Shack back at the Ninth chewing the ends of his mustache and rubbing a sore spot on his undercarriage where Hardleigh-Bryte had viciously tackled him. The Adjutant, the C.O., and six brass hats from the Wing were grouped about gnawing at their knuckles. Lieutenant Gillis and Captain Howell were in their huts getting things in order in case they had to pack their trunks in a hurry.

“Well, Carbuncle took the best way out,” Captain Howell remarked. “He got into a Bristol with the football under his arm. I bet he’s down some place on the Heinie goal line, don’t you? It was his idea, the crackpot! Kept tormenting the Limeys until they challenged us to a game. Well, I—what was that? Did you feel the floor shake? Listen to that rumble of guns an’—there’s a big push on! The Heinions have started tossin’ those shells!”

Everybody on the airdrome of the Ninth ran out into the open. Garrity and the brass hats froze on the tarmac and looked at one another.

“Hold that line!” the Major muttered. “Hold that li—er—ha! ha! It looks like a Heinie offense, eh? Got the ball and are hitting outside—er—I mean it looks like a big push, eh, gentlemen?”

“We heard you, Major,” sniffed a brigadier. “We didn’t think it was a strike at the Krupp Works. Football on the brain, have you? Well, you’ll get

a chance to alibi to the head coach—er—I mean Pershing. You mention football again and I’ll—” Suddenly the to-do of noise abated. Brass hats opened their eyes wide and let their jaws sag.

“Stopped ’em cold,” yipped Garrity. “They can’t gain an inch against—er—they’re held up somewhere. Ha! Ha! Well, let’s go in and have a drink until the next half opens—er—until we get the score—er—blast it! I’ll kill that Pinkham when—”

“The Boche have saved you the trouble, I imagine, Major,” a brass hat tossed out. “One less flyer we have to bust. All right, you said drink. Where is it? I’ll get boiled to the ears.”

THREE HOURS later the big news hits the Allied brain centers. A Kraut limousine, splattered with enough Boche lead to sink a mud scow, was captured near Fleury by Yankee doughs and there was an *Herr Oberst* in it that turned out to be Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham. The other passenger was a Limey Bristol pilot who had to be slapped back to sanity in a base hospital. Pinkham, the report had it, was still in the pink. The Boonetown pilot gave out the word that after a single wingback play he had tossed a pass that had wrecked the Hindenburg six-three-two defense. He had blown up every new high explosive shell between Potsdam and the Meuse. He now was asking for a rest—wanted Major Garrity, the coach of the Ninth Pursuit, to send in a substitute.

“Now what do you think he blew that ammo up with, huh?” Bump Gillis wondered. “All he had was a football with him. He tossed it—er—I just thought of somethin’. Ow-w-w!” The Scot ran to the Pinkham hut, grabbed up something wrapped in newspaper and saw that it was a rusty old flatiron. Bump thereupon passed out. Ten minutes later he came to after being soused with a pail of water.

“I got the wrong thing to load that football with,” he gasped. “I bet I know what that Limey kicked his foot against. If that thing had—er—aw-w-w-wk!”

“He’s out ag’in,” Howell roared. “Get a medico!”

MAJOR RUFUS GARRITY and the members of the Ninth waited until the wee small hours for the return of their halfback who had made one of the longest runs with a football in pigskin history. When dawn was beginning to crack, a Yankee limousine rolled onto the drome. Ackemmas, pilots, grease monkeys, and brass hats tumbled out to send up a cheer for the returning hero. Over near “A” Flight’s hangar, Casey

was leading a cheering section: “*Crashity crack, crashity crack! Wash ’em down with coneyac! Biffity biff—!*”

Phineas, wearing a Kraut’s long coat, stepped out of the U.S. jalopi and strode into the Frog farmhouse. “Hello, bums!” he grinned. “I have washed up the Heinie triple threat and they’ll not make no passes at us with them Krupp pigskins. That Limey run interference for me an’ I went through ’em like I used to against Boonetown’s deadly rival, Waterloo Seminary. Do I git my letter? Haw-w-w-w! Hello, Bump, you blind bum! Er—I’ll talk to you later, you crackpot. It was a grenade I had in the football, haw-w-w-w!”

“Football, huh?” gulped Garrity. “What’ll those wise Alecks at Chaumont say now? Nice work, Lieutenant. Ha! Ha! What has the Hindenburg line got now, eh? The Yankee forward wall ought to wash ’em out when the big game comes around. Ever play football, sir?” the C.O. yipped at the brigadier.

“Me? Listen, Rufus, they called me Typhoon Twombly at Rutgers. One day we were playin’ Michigan an’—”

“Huh!” Garrity cut in. “I remember you now. You took off your nose-guard and hopped me over the dome with it when I tried to tackle you. I always swore I’d get hunk, you big piece of cheese!” And there came a resounding BOP! as the Major let one go.

“Well, they always said they would die for dear ol’ Rutgers,” chortled Phineas. “Le’s see if they mean it. Boys, what a day!”

From outside came the cheers of

“*Crashity-crack! Crashity-crack!* Sergeant Casey’s rooters:

Knock ’em down,

Mow ’em down,

Wash ’em down with Coneyac!

Sink ’em, sink ’em—with Phineas Pinkham!

Raw—raw-w-w-w-w !

Raw-w-w-w-w !”