

# P.D.Q.-BOAT

*written and illustrated by*

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*Old Lady Fate had put through a mixed grill order, and it looked like the Krauts would bring home the bacon. Allied marine moguls got their ships mixed, Garrity got his signals mixed, and Goomer got his bottles mixed. All of which boiled down to the fact that Phineas was on the spot—only the M.P.'s didn't know which spot.*

**P**HINEAS PINKHAM, ex-colonel of the A.E.F., sat in a lazily rocking Spad in the scraposphere high above Verdun and wondered why any patriot from the U.S.A. would be crazy enough to swap a bucket seat in a battle bus for a swivel chair in a war office. The trickster from Boonetown, Iowa, still tasted brass in

his mouth, and his homely face became even more warped as he reviewed his brief career as an armchair jockey at Wing headquarters.

"It was no use tryin' to make a silk sock out of a fish net," he soliloquized as he kept his eyes peeled for flying Dutchmen. "It sure feels good to be flyin' with Howell and the other bums again."

Deeds of extraordinary valor had made Phineas Pinkham a colonel. But one potent punch to the proud proboscis of a brigadier had amended that over zealous act on the part of the high cockalorums of the A.E.F. Everybody on the jittery front from the Channel to the Italian border breathed easier.

Lieutenant Pinkham had not forgotten a certain von Spieler. He was one Von whom Phineas had not been able to wash up completely and the Heinie's name was written on the intrepid Yank's books under the heading of "Unfinished Business."

"Von Spieler is one fathead I'm going to get if I have to keep on lookin' for him after the *guerre* is all over," Phineas muttered as he stuck to the circling flight rebelliously. "He is flies in my soup, that big hunk of limburger! I'll—ugh, there's a Boche!"

YES, Phineas was right. Eight Albatross scouts went slicing through the ether below Major Garrity's quintet of aerial headliners. Captain Howell, leader of "A" Flight, spotted them through a big hole in the fleecy ceiling and waved a flipper. Immediately thereafter he fell off on one wing. Bump Gillis swallowed his gum and did likewise. Lieutenant Pinkham, a length of heavy cord tied around his instep, jerked the stick to the left and let out a howl . . .

"Hit 'em when they ain't lookin'!" the jokemaster yipped. "Then they're a pushover afterwards. Take that—and that—and that!" Phineas had never been a sky nimrod, however. Only one burst from his gun reached the Albatross he had singled out and that

shot merely caressed the empennage of the twisting, stunting Kraut battle wagon.

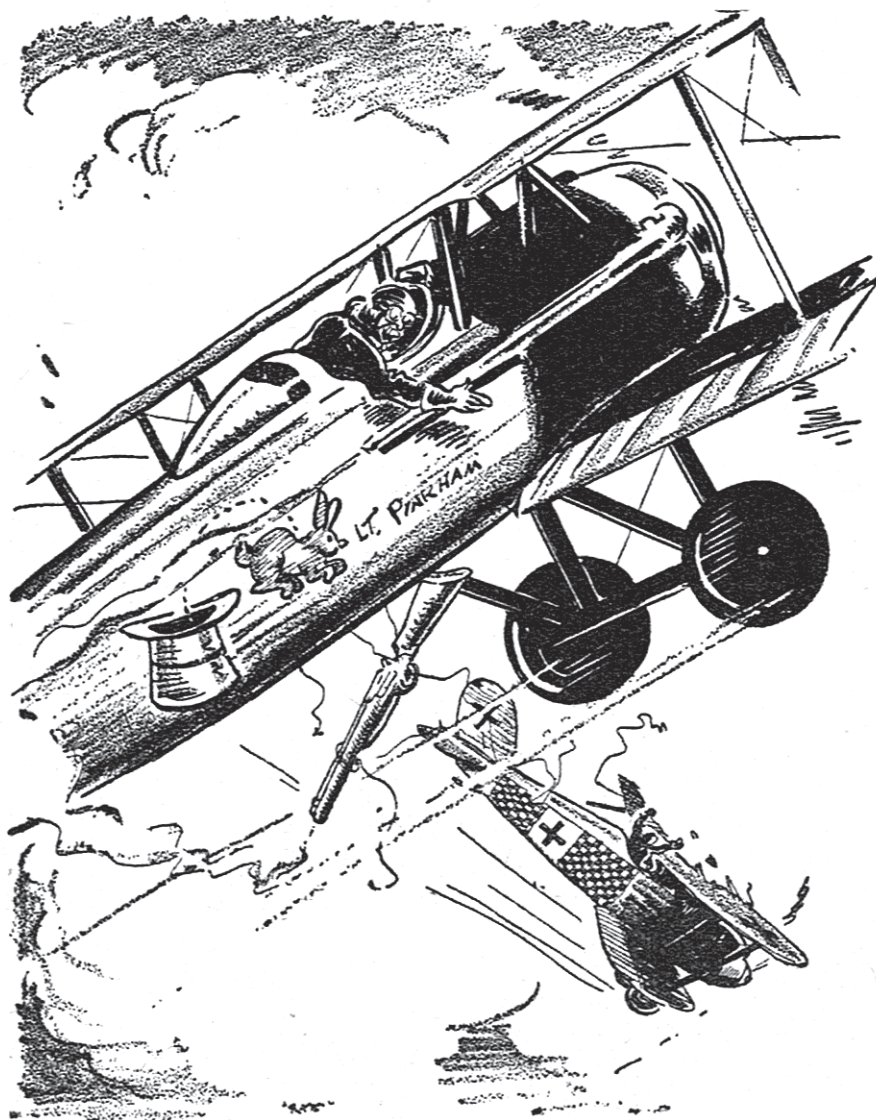
The Boche that Howell had picked on was going down to the linoleum with a wing and a half, no rudder post, and very little future ahead of him. Bump Gillis, whose forebears had mopped up many a scone in the suburbs of Dundee, had made his shots count. The lineal Scot was no spendthrift even with the

taxpayers' money. His first burst burned a Heinie pilot's pants and his second knocked a Mercedes engine deader than a sardine in a tin kimono.

In less time than Phineas could say "smelt" the warring busses were strewn all over the firmament and one persistent Boche buzzard was sticking to the Pinkham wake as if he were on the end of a tow rope. Phineas' scalp twitched and threatened to creep right out from under his helmet and fall into his lap. He had a sneaky suspicion that no ordinary Boche was glued to his precious neck and he had to do something about it. Spandau lead was

getting hotter and closer with each beat of the Hisso up ahead. Von Spieler! It had to be the big bologna eater. The intrepid Yank cropped the nose of his Spad in a hurry after a quick glance around. He had seen the Heinie's bugged eyes and a flash of white teeth that told him the Von was getting set to let a haymaker loose. Phineas jerked his foot viciously. *Bla-a-a-am! Bo-o-o-o-om!*

The Spad shivered and did a two-step. The Boonetown trickster checked the plane's momentary fit and shot a glance around. But the Albatross





was wobbling and steaming like a Christmas plum pudding. A wing was fighting to keep a strangle hold on a splintered strut, and in the pit a Von was threshing around in a vain attempt to unwind a wire that had broken loose and encircled his neck like an affectionate python.

"Buckshot, haw-w-w-w-!" yipped Phineas. "That shotgun under the good ol' Spad fooled the bum. Well, I—well, what is that bum, Gillis, doin' pointin' like that, huh? It was April Fool's day last week—" Phineas could not figure it out.

Another Garrity bus sliced by and the pilot also stabbed a finger at Phineas' Spad just after a burst of Spandau lead sideswiped the concentric circle that adorned it. Mystified, the master of practical jokes raised himself in his pit and twisted his head around. Smoke was streaming out from under his air chariot and his speckled war map became the color of the inside of a grapefruit.

"Aw nuts," he wailed, "that shotgun set my Spad on fire! I might just as well throw a rock in the ocean and not let go. Oh well, down with Phineas Pinkham. If I can duck the Heinies who are left—"

But before he got out of the area of Spandau skullduggery, Phineas took a fine banging around. Oil spurted into his mouth and lubricated his tonsils. The steel arrow of an altimeter imbedded itself in his nose and a big piece of wing fabric slapped against his face like a hot towel after a shave. He was only three hundred feet up when he ripped the piece of cloth from in front of his vision. Next he engaged in a tug-of-war with the stick, managing to get the Spad's nose up just enough to keep it from ploughing up a field for a Frog peasant.

In his whole career of crashing Spads, Phineas could not recall when he had hit the ground harder. A wing went flying and one wheel snapped off. The Spad remains spun around in a dizzy circle before it came to rest.

A dozen Yank doughs surrounded the wreck. Various expressions of amazement masked their faces as the pilot they thought was extinct climbed out of the crumpled cockpit and staggered toward them.

"Who owns this merry-go-round?" Phineas inquired deliriously, his eyes crossed. "I knew it wasn't safe! Where's the owner? I will git my lawyer to sue the bum. I . . . it . . . he . . . huh—where am I?"

"You should be having a spade patting you down," a private volunteered awesomely. "You fell harder than Joe Beckett when he was tagged by Carpentier. What're you made of, huh?"

"Haw-w-w-w," chuckled Phineas, feeling of his bones, "did I git here in that wreck?"

"Naw, ya come on a street car," sniffed another Yank.

"They just tossed ya off for not payin' your fare." "My man, I'm an officer I'll have you know," Phineas bristled. "Have care or I will have you tossed into a klink. Don't anybody teach you discipline? Take his name, sergeant!"

"Ha! ha! You take it! It's Wachislawski!"

"Oh, you want to git broke, too, huh?" Phineas said indignantly. "Awright, I'll—why look! What's that over in the field there? Why, it's a Heinie! Gimme that motor bike. Let me through here—it's the Kraut I bopped. It is von Spieler, haw-w-w-w!"

A few moments later loose-jawed doughs watched Phineas ride the mechanical bug across a pasture pocked with hummocks. They saw him ditch it near a fence which he leaped in one hop.

"There is only one shavetail like that one," a dough said. "It is that crackpot, Phineas Pinkham. Come on let's git a look at the Heinie."

WHEN he reached the crumpled Albatross, Phineas found that the pit of the bus had been bashed in and that the Von was held as tightly as if he had been wrapped in a cocoon. The irate Teuton physiognomy that glared up at him, however, did not belong to von Spieler. Phineas was disappointed. But he was comforted when he saw the big hooked nose well inoculated with buckshot.

"Wee gates!" he greeted the vanquished Kraut. "Meet the winner, haw-w-w-w! What's your name, *mein* Froind?"

"Bah!" growled the fallen Heinie. "By you'selv you shouldt find oudt already, Yangkee *Schwein!*"

"What's in a name anyways, as ol' Bill Shakespeare said?" the Yankee pilot grinned. Phineas then began to help the Boche extricate himself. He yanked and pulled and hauled and finally got his captive into the clear, tattered and torn. The Von's right pant leg was ripped wide open and a big portion of his skivvies showed. On the silken cloth was an embroidered coat of arms that tickled the Pinkham risibilities.

"Boys, you're a Boche swell huh?" Phineas shot out. "The family crest on your panties, huh? I would sew up them flyin' trousers, if I were you, before you come to our drome or the bums'll call you a sissy. Haw-w-w-w! I bet you're mighty important where you come from. Well, let's *allez*, as Goomer hates to have the

chops git cold. Stir your stumps, von X, or I'll have to bat you one."

CONJECTURES were flying thick and fast on the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron. Major Rufus Garrity stood in the doorway of the Frog farmhouse, his avid eyes fixed on the strip of road that was visible beyond the hangar that housed "B" Flight's Spads. Howell's assurance that he had seen Phineas Pinkham walk away from the crack-up failed to pierce the shroud of gloom that was wrapped about the Old Man like an Indian blanket.

"Yeah," Bump Gillis said, "maybe when he got a little ways from the crate he sneezed an' fell apart. When I seen the crackp—er—him goin' down, he was droppin' faster than the thermometers at the Poles. Huh, you can take a pitcher to the well once too—"

"You can't make apple sauce without mashing up some apples," Howell paraphrased Bump's axiom to arrive at the same conclusion—namely that Phineas was no more. "Huh, I know how you feel, sir."

Garrity stiffened and let loose. "Oh yeah? You ever own a shotgun like that one he stole? The big, spotted-faced brother of a zebra! It was worth at least a couple of hundred bucks and used to belong to the Prince of Wales. I won it from a red tab in—oh, if I ever get hold of Pinkham!"

"I shudder to think of you grave-robbin'," Bump Gillis said. "Well, I must go and see Babette and break the news to—er—listen! Do you hear what I hear? It's—it's—spirits—"

A voice came from the deepening gloom, a very familiar voice that froze everybody on the drome so that it looked like a petrified forest. "Hurry up, ya Heinie bum! Didn't I tell you once to get the lead out of your dogs as I am hungry? Oh, you want to try an escape, huh? Why you—!"

"That is Pinkham!" howled Major Garrity. "If he didn't bring back that shotgun, I'll skin the fresh ape alive! I'll—"

But nobody heard the Old Man. Bump Gillis, Howell, Goomer, and a dozen others were running. Sergeant Casey and a flock of groundmen joined them in the stampede. Finally they came upon Phineas Pinkham and his captive. The prodigal son of the Ninth was in the middle of a Frog pond and he was in the act of putting the Boche pilot to sleep with a whistling left hook when Bump Gillis yelled at him.

"Haw-w-w-w!" guffawed Phineas jubilantly. "The bum resisted me an' I had to soak him. Boys, I—"

"You don't look sunburnt to me," Howell yipped. "Where did you get the Kraut?"

"Where do you think?" Phineas countered as he dragged his prize to the bank. "At a punchboard? What's for mess tonight, Goomer? I—er—ah—kerche-e-e-ew!" When the Von was able to navigate, his captor went on his way, with a flock of wondering squadron mates at his heels. Old Man Garrity stood in the doorway of headquarters, arms akimbo, a bonfire blazing in each eye.

"Bon swar," trilled Phineas airily. "I have brought company for dinner, so tell Goomer it's all right to use the good silver, sir. The Von is bashful and will not talk."

"Where's that shotgun, Pinkham?" Garrity ground out on an inflection that was rising to a bellow. "Who told you to take tha: gun and put it on your Spad, huh? If you've lost it, you—"

"Nothin' is lost when you know where it is," Phineas told the CO., quite unabashed. "Like the guy said on the ship when he dropped the compass overboard. Anyhow, it is behind the lines some place, Major, haw-w-w-w! Here I come back from the dead an' you ask for a shotgun! That is a pal for you."

"Look here, you half-baked, dog-eared—"

"You forget who you're talkin' to," the culprit sniffed. "I am a colonel, your superior—er—haw—well, I was one. Anyways, I am an officer and I know my rights. If you will just let me pass, sir, I will make my report."

The Old Man let Phineas pass. Then he whirled suddenly and planted a boot against the Pinkham empennage. Major Garrity let out a warwhoop promptly and limped to a chair where he raised up the foot and hung on as if he were afraid it would drop off. Phineas grinned complacently and removed a big wrench from his back pocket.

"It is a caution the foresight the Pinkhams have always had," he observed blandly. "Where will I put the Von, Major?"

WHILE Phineas was eating and the Old Man fumed and ground his teeth, the pilot of the Ninth strove to make the Kraut prisoner open up. But the grounded hireling of Kaiser Bill remained as mute as a clam with lockjaw.

"He's a high mucky-muck," Phineas contributed between gulps of stew. "I bet when we find out who he is, we'll be some surprised. When I knock 'em down, it is not small fry. It is the little ones I toss back, haw-w-

w-w-w!” Hey, Goomer, what did you make this slum out of—old mules? Huh, it’s as awful as what ordinary doughs must eat. Come on, Heinie, tell the bums who ya are as how can we notify your folks? I bet he swallowed his tag an’ maybe we should cut him open.”

“*Ach Gott!*” groaned the captive. “*Nein, nein—*”

“Goomer,” Phineas said solemnly, “git a bread knife an’ a bottle of grog to knock him out with. Once I had an uncle who operated on himself for gall stones while he was huntin’ and it was a hundred miles to a doctor. He just used a razor an’ a boy scout knife an’ sewed himself up with—”

“Vait—vait,” pleaded the Kraut. “*Himmel! Mein name ist—*”

The door opened. Three brass hats came in. One eyed Glad Tidings Goomer who was coming out of the kitchen with a huge carving knife. They took a look at the buckshot wounds on the Von’s bugle and at the pasty veil that shrouded his Teuton face.

“Torturing prisoners, that it, Garrity?” barked a big colonel. “Well, I’ll report this damnable—”

“Aw somethin’ always has to spoil my fun,” complained Phineas. Grumbling under his breath, he dished into his stew again.

“*Ja, ja,*” sputtered the Von. “*Cudt me oben ist vhat dhey say yedt. Mit der breadt knife, mein Freund,*” he added. “You safe me, *hein!*”

“He’s nuts,” Garrity rumbled. “We were just kidding the squarehead. Well, if you gentlemen have something on your minds—”

“Haw-w-w-w-w!” Lieutenant Pinkham exploded. “Only dandruff,” he added in an undertone. “I bet they’ve come to tell us some more boats have been sunk in the Channel. If they were in China right now, they would start worryin’ about the tidal waves in—”

“What did you say?” cracked a brass hat. “If what I think you said—”

“Huh?” grunted Phineas innocently. “Why I was savin’ to Lieutenant Gillis here that it’s a caution the latest styles in Paris. Look at this skypiece in the magazine. Haw-w-w-w!”

Major Rufus Garrity led the sputtering brass hats into the Operations Office. Twenty minutes later he led them out again. When the door had closed behind them, the Old Man told the flying officers of the Ninth Pursuit that Chaumont and other places were worrying about the morale of the Allies. The sea pirate had struck again. Count von Kluckmer, the rampageous Raider of Rugenwalde, had sunk a Limey boat in the Channel. It had been loaded to the

gunwales with British red tabs and an assortment of lesser officers returning to France from leave. The raider had let a few, who had not been taken aboard his mystery tub, get away in open boats.

“Raising hell, that Kraut,” Garrity stormed. “They can’t tag him. He apparently has one of those fake-front Q-boats. One day it’s got one funnel, and next day it’s got two funnels. One week he’s been spotted on a boat painted white, then they report having seen him on one all plastered with camouflage. Got ‘em on the run, the big squarehead. No boat is safe crossing the Channel. The colonel told me a Limey sub sank a packet last night that looked like his—and what do you think?”

“Somebody got wet,” Phineas guessed promptly.

“Shut up!” thundered the Major. “It was a Frog boat out of Bordeaux,” he explained to the pilots. “Pinkham, one more smart crack and—” Garrity grabbed up a platter, thought better of it and put it down again. He told the pilots that the Heinie sea rover had a collection of flags of every country in the world and that he had sunk over a half million tons of Allied shipping.

“Somebody should let the Navy know about it.” Phineas declared. “Haw-w-w-w! Well, if that’s all, I have a date with Babette in Barley Duck. Adoo for awhile, bums. He can’t sink us—von Kluckmer.”

“Vhat?” The prisoner looked up quizzically.

“Who was speakin’ to you, you Heidelberg bum,” Phineas tossed at the Kraut pilot who was wolfing stew at the mess table. “Uh—er—eat hearty, *mein* Froind. The chow they give you in the A.E.F. klinks is not filly mig-nons. *Bon sour.*”

AS PHINEAS went out he felt something stir in his always active gray matter. It was a small edition of an idea that grew to mammoth proportions with each step he took across the tarmac. Even if he was right about what he was thinking, what good would it do him, he asked himself. Still, Phineas mused, he would keep his idea to himself. His thoughts began to be monopolized by Babette. He must buy her a bauble to please her big flashing dark eyes before he dared to knock on the portals of her bailiwick. For Phineas had been neglecting Babette of late and he knew that a woman scorned holds more fury than Satan’s operations shack. Therefore, upon his arrival in Bar-Le-Duc, the miracle man from Boonetown, Iowa, sought to pick up a trinket in a Frog shop. The merchant of the establishment was about to close his

shop when Phineas entered. All kinds of cajolery failed to change the vender's mind. In broken English he told the would-be customer that he had a wife who would beat out his brains if he dared to be late two nights in succession.

"*Demain*," yipped the merchant, "you come *ici* an' *je suis ici*."

"It's a fine business man you are," Phineas sniffed disgustedly. "Awright, if you don't want my argent, I will tell the Chamber of Commerce that—"

He strode away indignantly and headed for the domicile of his light of love. He knocked on the door. It opened and a feminine head was thrust out into the night. Babette was in fine voice.

"So—you, *oui*? Hah, *j'ai attendez pour vous* an- now *vous* are *ici*, I say what ees thees I t'eenk of you. *Voila!* Whan you air ze colonel, Babette she *n'est pas* ze ver' swell dame *pour vous*, *non*? Bah! Un soldat he tells to me thees theeng. Colonel Peenkham he ees wan ladies' man, *oui*. You have come to see Babette whan zey mak' you bust! Peeg! *Chien—vache—chat!* *Voila, sacre bleu!* Play ze double-cross *avec mois*, *n'est ce pas*? Bah, Pheenyas, *vous etes*—"

Phineas stammered, choked, stuttered "Bong soor," and about-faced. As he walked down the street his ears rang. "Dames, huh!" he muttered. "I don't understand 'em. If I'd hava brought a present—"

Just at this time, Fate stood in a narrow darkened street and tapped two doughs on the shoulder. She pointed her finger at a tall, gangly figure that was treading the pavement. The doughs licked their chops as they gazed upon the oncoming Phineas Pinkham.

"Here comes an orfiser, Spike," said one. "Maybe we kin git us a franc or two. He looks like a dumb cluck. Git out them watches."

Phineas paused as a dough saluted. The private lost no time. "Sir—er—beg pardon, sir. We—er—thought ya'd like ta buy a little trinket or two we picked up on the battlefield, sir. Uh—er—they look like swell watches, sir. One is solid silver, or I never made three straight passes with—er—look at 'em, sir. Me an' me friend is broke an'—"

"Why—er—how dare you—er—nice watches, aren't they?" Phineas observed. "Why one must be solid gold. How much for the whole three?"

"Ten francs, sir," the spokesman said, "It's givin' 'em away."

"It's a bargain," Phineas said promptly. "Here's the *argent*."

The salesmen moved away with alacrity, mumbling

thanks into their wake. The one called Spike commented on the dumbness of some officers all the way to a lowly *buvette* on the edge of town.

But on arrival at the *buvette*, Spike had to admit his error in judgment. Outside in the gutter into which he and his crony had been forcibly cast he held the banknote up to the light coming from the doorway. On the square bit of paper were words that told Spike that if he saved up a hundred of the coupons he would get a catcher's mitt from a Bayonne, New Jersey, soap company.

BUT what of Phineas Pinkham? Pleased with his purchase, he left Bar-Le-Duc in high spirits. On the way to the Ninth he began to speculate as to the identity of the Von he had knocked down hours before. A huge hunch seized him and an inner voice told him that he was about to have a rendezvous with Destiny. At the same time he deplored the fact that the great Rugenwalde raider, von Kluckmer, was inclined toward the sea rather than the ozone; for Phineas knew that the Von of the drink was wanted more in Allied precincts than any other operator for the Kaiser in the wide world. His chances of hooking him were less than that of a celluloid squirrel snatching a chestnut out of a fire. A hunter lolling in a gondola on a canal in Venice cannot expect to get a bead on a moose in the Maine woods.

"Well, I'll have to forget about him," the ambitious Yank sighed and confined his thoughts to the bargain he had made.

Then during the last quarter of a mile Phineas began a series of sneezes. When he stepped into the Ninth's operations shack, his eyes were glassy and his big buck teeth were clicking out a minstrel tune.

"It can't be nothin' less than double pneumonia," Bump Gillis howled sympathetically. "Quick, he looks delirious. Git some aspirin. Somebody hurry. Oh-h-h-h-h!"

"Boys," the patient groaned, "git me to my deathbed in my hut as that is how I feel. It was all that Von's fault. Gittin' me into that Frog p-p-p-pond. W-W-Where's B-b-b-b-b—?"

Howell and Gillis and three pilots get Phineas to his cubicle and put him to bed. Glad Tidings Goomer came running with a little glass bottle filled with white tablets. They fed Phineas four of them and in a little while he was sleeping peacefully—too peacefully. Bump Gillis happened to glance at the glass bottle and he almost went into a ground loop.

Grabbing Howell by the arm he yelled: "Morphine!



Look. Goomer got the bottles mixed. Quick, git a medico. Git the meat wagon. Git a minister. That guy took enough dope to put out a gorilla. It's murder! Git the Old Man—"

A medico came on the jump and asked how many grains of morphine Phineas had taken. He raised the Pinkham eyelids and gulped. From the sleeping man's mouth came an unintelligible mumble.

The medico yipped: "He's not out yet. But it'll be all we can do to keep him from passing out. Talk to the guy fast an' keep slapping him. Insult him—anything. Just keep him from going unconscious."

"How would we know?" Bump clipped.

"It is a hell of a time to j-j-joke," countered Captain Howell. "Sit down and talk to him. Insult him, Bump. Keep him from droppin' off."

Insulting Phineas was the best thing Bump Gillis could do. He called the freckle-faced patriot everything in a stevedore's vocabulary and then started on the truck driver's unabridged edition. He and Howell dragged Phineas around the cubicle, made him stagger along between them, slapped the Pinkham chops, and kept up a constant chatter.

"You are a lowbrow cad, Carbuncle," Bump snorted. "You would steal a blind girl's pencils. Look at what you done to that dame in Dover. Kiddled her along, you double-crossin' weasel. Broke her heart. Said you was gonna marry her, an' then never even wrote her a line. You are lower than a beetle caught in the mud at the bottom of a coal mine. Compared to you, you fathead, a worm is as tall as a giraffe. Can you hear me, you dope?"

Shuffling and staggering along between the two, Phineas muttered, "I— will bat y-your ears—off, you b-b-bum."

"He's better," Howell trumpeted.

"Gosh, what *could* kill the goof?" grumbled the Scot, resuming his task of pushing more insults in through the Pinkham lilypad ears in the hope of seeing them turn red. He and Howell were weary and breathless by midnight when Phineas was declared

out of danger. By that time the patient was talking to himself.

"Haw-w-w-w," he raved, "wait until Goomer needs an aspirin. The Old Man'll wonder why nobody can wake him up. Haw-w-w-w-w!"

"To hell with him!" cracked Howell. "I hope he croaks. And all the time we wasted on the crackpot. I got a good mind to feed him the rest of the stuff. Cripes!"

EARLY the next morning Phineas Pinkham, a little green around the gills, emerged from his hut just in time to be taken in hand by a pair of M.P.'s who were backed up by two grim-jawed brass hats. In their

slipstream came Major Rufus Garrity, his face as hard as a teakwood stump.

"Now what did I do?" Phineas asked feebly. "What's the big idea anyway, huh?"

"Robbery," a brass hat bit out. "We found the stuff in your trench coat that you took off last night. Three watches stolen from the Frog jewelry store in Bar-Le-Duc last night. Don't tell me you weren't there, Pinkham! The Frog gave us a description of a man who—"

"Why—er—sure," the flyer from Iowa said. "I was goin' to buy a dame an earring or somethin' to put around her neck but—I bought them turnips off a dough. He—"

"Save your breath for the trial, Pinkham!" ground out an A.E.F. Intelligence officer. "We'll have quite a session at Nancy in about ten days. Judge Advocate and all. Got a few other criminals to dispose of. All right, Pinkham—"

"You crook!" yipped Bump Gillis. "Git your stuff outa my hut. Breakin' an' enterin', huh? I knew you was no good but—"

"Now let's all look at this sanely," Major Garrity cracked. "I'll be responsible for Lieutenant Pinkham. He—er—sometimes he tells the truth. He is an officer, sir, and should be given a little more consideration than just an ordinary . . . er . . . just give him a chance to find his man. You'd know him if you saw him again, Lieutenant?"

"Yessir," replied Phineas, realizing that he was ten



thousand miles from the truth. "There was two of 'em."

Major Garrity thereupon prevailed over the brass hats, and Phineas, for the moment, was free of the bastille.

"Well," Garrity trumpeted when he was alone with Phineas, "you better find those doughs. Run out an' leave me holding the sack and I'll hunt you down until my dying day. You can get into more damn messes! Why I got softhearted, I don't know. I'm even a pushover if an alley cat brushes against my boots. Get out of here and find those doughs!"

Phineas got out. Heart banging against his shins, he went to his hut to map out a plan of action. And while he cogitated dismally, Sergeant Casey was in a huddle with one of his mechs.

"The bum is right. I was in a *buvette* last night an' two doughs come in braggin' about how they put it over 'on a shavetail. Then they had a scald or two an' handed over some francs—but they wasn't francs! It was phoney dough—soap coupons. Only Pinkham would pull that, the fresh bum. But who's goin' to prove he give 'em to the doughs, huh?"

"Ha! Ha!" chortled the ackemma. "What a laugh!"

"Ha! Ha!" echoed Casey. "I been waitin' a long time to see that elephant-eared mug git into a sling an' stay there. Things look kind of rosy to me. I think I'll have me a drink on it."

NOW Phineas Pinkham had a great strain on his conscience that had nothing to do with pilfered timepieces, but he kept it to himself. The more he tried to figure out a way to clear his escutcheon of a criminal charge, the more sluggish his brain became. There seemed to be no way out. And so at dusk Phineas decided to take a long trip.

Yet, steeped in woe as he was, it was strange that he could not obliterate a certain recollection from his mind. A pair of silk skivvies with a coat of arms on them. Who was that Von? Would he ever know?

"I guess not," he answered his own question. "Well, adoo Babette. Adoo bums I am desperate an' stripes do not look good to me. It has been quite a *guerre*, but I have something to do before I flee from the law. How did that bum, Gillis, know it, though? He was readin' my mail, I bet, the tightwad!"

Thereupon, Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham hied himself on his way just as the word came in via the wires that a supply ship had been blown up by von Kluckmer and that the Limey squadrons would have to go without marmalade for two more weeks.

It certainly seemed that the Raider of Rugenwalde

had usurped the spotlight in the big fuss, had put the gold stripers of three navies at their wits' end. A survivor said that the Q-boat which had vaccinated their tub with shells had had three funnels and had been flying the Swedish flag. And a report that a Danish steamer had been shellacked by a Limey pigboat was reaching the diplomatic hotbeds just when Phineas had covered a good part of the way to his destination. The pig-boat's commander was sure that he had tagged the Kraut sea scourge. The Danes got wild and the Allied marine moguls got wilder. Orders flew thick and fast. Gold braid was ripped off. London, Washington, and Paris buzzed their professional snoopers and told them to show more stuff or expect to find themselves shaken up like hen fruit in an egg nog.

Twenty-four hours passed. Phineas Pinkham was among the missing. Messages from frazzled wires along the front reported that a free lance Spad had stopped at several airdromes to take on petrol. The pilot, however, had not answered to the description of Phineas Pinkham. One drome reported that the Spad pusher wore a mustache and goatee and that he was in the uniform of a Frog flying officer. His papers had been in order. The name of *Capitaine* Jules Le Boullion could not be questioned. There was one thing that only Phineas Pinkham knew. The real Frog flyer was locked in a root cellar outside of Crecy and he was clad only in a suit of heavy woolen underwear.

"Run out on me, huh?" Rufus Garrity fumed back on the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron. "That's gratitude! Oh, if I could get a piece of his carcass to tear at—"

"Even I would know better than to trust that crackpot," Captain Howell said. "You would have faith in an axe murderer!"

The Old Man took a swing at Howell. The Captain saw that the C.O. was wearing no tunic so he returned the punch. Right on the nose! Glad Tidings Goomer fled the mess and reached for a bottle. He thought he needed an aspirin—but the morphine he got put him to sleep right through breakfast.

JUST eighteen hours after that Phineas "Carbuncle" Pinkham flew over the rooftops of Boulogne and headed out over the English Channel at a sharp angle.

"I will be famous if I am forced down here," he chuckled and pulled off his beard and mustache, "as I will have to swim it. Haw-w-w-w-w! Well, I'll be in Dover in no time now, an' then I'll make amends. I



would like to know how that Scotch bum knew that . . . uh—why there is a ship down there. Two ships!”

He took a telescope from his pocket and focussed it on one, a single-funneled packet painted with a riot of lurid colors to fool the tin fish. Phineas began to circle like a hawk that has spotted a barnyard full of succulent fowl. His vertebrae began to buckle, and he knew why. Somewhere near were Boche!

He dived within five hundred feet of the other Channel packet and saw that it was flying an ensign made in Holland. The tub looked honest enough to Phineas Pinkham, and he started to pull back on the stick. Suddenly he changed his mind and took another peek through his telescope. On the after deck of the tub over which he was circling a line of washing was hung. One article of masculine attire drew the Pinkham glimmers like a mustard plaster draws lumbago twinges. There was a familiar looking insignia on those skivvies—a coat of arms. And Phineas recognized them even though the outlines of the fancy work were blurred. Realization caught Lieutenant Pinkham on the point of the jaw. The coat of arms of the family von Kluckmer! It was the Raider’s relative he had knocked off a few days before and it was very clear now to the Boonetown miracle man why the flying Von had emulated a tongue-tied oyster. He had been afraid that the Allied third degree artists would give him the works in an attempt to make him disclose some secrets about the Raider of Rugenwalde.

“That tags the bum!” yipped the errant flyer. “It’s von Kluckmer’s tub. Those skivvies give him away. Nobody will sink any more tubs that look like his. I will . . . er—cripes, I haven’t any bombs! This is like meetin’ a nice fat elk in the woods with nothing in my hands but a water pistol. What luck! Oh, they’ll start poking that Allied tub in a minute, too. Well, I can feed some lead to the Dutch boys when they lift them fake hatches off the guns. I will give my all to git the square-headed Captain Kidd. Here goes!

“Ow—what is shootin’ at me?” He twisted his head around and spotted a Boche crate the like of which he had never seen before. Phineas had no way of knowing that it was a Brandenburg, a very efficient two-seater Kraut seaplane that carried a Spandau and a Parabellum. He did not know that it had come out to spot pigboats and that it hugged four bombs to its chest.

The English Channel then lost its serenity with nerve-strumming suddenness. Von Kluckmer’s fake

decks began to collapse. Guns were laid bare and one let out a roar just as Phineas Pinkham started to reach for altitude. Lead from the Brandenburg Parabellum raked along the Spad’s shortribs. With an altitude of a thousand feet, Garrity’s fugitive Spad pusher winged over quickly to fool the Heinies. But they were smart Dutchmen. When Phineas straightened out, the seaplane was on his tail and burning his pin feathers. Down on the bounding main, von Kluckmer was pelting the daylights out of the Allied packet.

“Oh, you bums!” howled Phineas. “I’ll show ya. I’ll—” He ripped his strap loose and raised himself in the pit. He flung that telescope at the Brandenburg’s shimmering prop. The Kaiser’s assassins laughed at the old trick.

“Ho! Ho!” rumbled the pilot of the Brandenburg. “*Der trick vhat ist older as Christmas, nein. Das ist komical, ja,*” and he yanked the stick back and pointed his nose to the clouds.

But the heavy telescope thudded against the Brandenburg’s breast bone—and then something happened that turned the blood of the Kraut buzzards to jello. Somebody back on the Dutchman’s drome must have been a little sloppy about pinning the hell drops to the underside of the Kaiser’s sea fighter—for a bomb jerked loose under the impact. It went down and smacked von Kluckmer’s tub right between the smokestacks!

KER-W-H-A-A-A-A-A-A-AM!

“Haw-w-w-w—w-w!” Phineas howled. “What a wallop. There is a hole in that tub as big as a—gosh it’s wobblin’! Now to smite the wiener workers on the hips.”

The Yank tore for the clouds, winged over, and dropped like a hod of coal on the necks of the addled Boche Brandenburg crew.

“Only one wing on your crate, huh?” the freckled flyer howled. “You’ll wish ya had three, haw-w-w-w-w! Take that—and that!” Vickers lead ripped through the Boche crate. The Heinies began to unload their last three bombs

lest the Pinkham bullets touch them off under their own pants. One of the eggs made a big splash at the stern of the listing Boche raider. Then something broke above the surface of the Channel, and it was not a porpoise. A long streak of white suds whisked out from a tin fish and headed straight for the wallowing Boche tub.

BLOOIE!

Von Kluckmer’s raider shivered and seemed to leap

half out of the water like a fighting tuna. Several Boche dived from the deck into the briny deep.

"It's cold in that drink. I wouldn't want to be—" Phineas' words died in his larynx. There was a crash that shook half of his buck teeth loose and he saw that his Spad and the Boche Brandenburg had merged. "Y-You fatheads!" he gulped. "G-Got me, h-huh? Well, adoo everybody! Haw-w-w-w, I have cheated the U.S. jails anyway. I wish I could have—got to—Dover, though, as—I wonder—how that bum, Bump Gillis—ever found—out about—"

*Spl-l-las-s-sh!*

PHINEAS went through a prolonged baptism. When he came up to the surface he bumped his head against something hard. His fingers clutched at a floating hatch cover, and he drew himself onto it and began to empty his bellows of salt water. After awhile he found voice. Phineas always could do that.

"I bet the tide ebbed for awhile there," he gasped. "I drunk half the Channel, haw-w-w-w! Uh—er—somebody's callin' me."

The dripping Yank saw a boat coming and he waved a flipper. Fifteen minutes later he was on board the shell-nicked Limey boat with other saturated survivors. Sitting against a bulkhead was a chagrined Heinie who wore a black spade beard. Phineas grinned at him.

"I bet you're von Kluckmer, the pirate. Haw-w-w-w! It was a mistake airin' your lingerie in public. Boys, that is how I tagged your tub. Same fun, huh?"

"Ach Gott!" groaned the Raider. "Der fregles und der bick teet' yedt. Das Pinkham! Himmel, du bist einen deffil!"

Gold stripes ganged about Phineas. Red tabs and Yankee brass hats fought to shake his hand. One of the U.S. big shots wanted to know why Phineas Pinkham had been patrolling the North Sea.

“Oh, it’s a long story as my eon-science was bothering me,” the hero replied. “I have to make amends in Dover, as there is a dame I . . . er . . . well, I got framed . . . er . . . two doughs— I will not talk. I want a lawyer. Awright, git the M.P.’s . . . er . . . the Marines. Arrest me! Go ahead. But I am a Pinkham and will take it to the highest court of the land—”

"A little whoozy," concluded a red tab, shaking his head. "Fancy him even being alive, eh, what?"

A big brass hat eyed Phineas narrowly. He suggested to a junior officer that the Yank be given dry clothes and taken to his quarters. While the tub lumbered on

toward France, Phineas, a little bibulous from several long draughts of brandy, became very talkative.

“Haw-w-w-w,” he boasted, “I am only a burglar A.W.O.L. impersonating a Frog officer. Jumped bail! Well, it is only once they can shoot me. *Swe-e-e-t Ad-da-line, my-y-y-ye Ad-da—*”

An hour later Phineas was almost himself again. He asked a red tab the identity of the brass hat who had been so solicitous to him.

“He’s the Judge-Advocate General,” replied the Limey brass hat. “Rippin’ chap, eh, what?”

Phineas fainted.

While the red tab scooted for stimulant, the wires were buzzing everywhere. All over the front the news of Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham's latest contribution to the Allied cause trickled. Inevitably it had to seep into Bar-Le-Duc. It left Major Rufus Garrity and his hirelings in a limp state. The Old Man pawed gobs of sweat as big as eight balls from his brow and reached for a bottle of strong grog. He was visibly moved.

“G-Going to d-decorate t-the b-bum,” he sputtered to Howell and the other Spad nurses. “Navy cross. D.S.M. Smacked von Kluckmer in English Channel—knocked off a Boche seaplane—run right into it. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!”

“Take his gun,” Howell gulped. “Git the bottle away—”

"I could not lift a daisy with both hands," Bump Gillis choked out. "What in hell was he doin' over—?"

FORTY-EIGHT hours later Phineas arrived at the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron accompanied by none other than the Judge-Advocate General who had come over from England to open court in Nancy.

"H'lo bums . . . er, gentlemen" Phineas greeted his mates. "It is an awful let-down talkin' to you after hobnobbin' with Admiral Sims an' General Pershin' an'—well, sir, I did not jump bail. How are ya, Major?"

The members of the Ninth Pursuit were as articulate as the classroom of a deaf and dumb school. "It was von Kluckmer's brother I shot down that day," the prodigal grinned. "I spotted a coat of arms on his skivvies. When I saw that pair on the clothesline of the Q-boat, I says to myself, 'Pinkham, ol' man, I know now why the Von would not talk!' Bump Gillis, you come clean! How did you know about that. dame in Dover, huh?"

"I—er—didn't. I was—just kiddin', Carbuncle," Bump forced out. "I made it up to stop you from passin' out when—"



"Haw-w-w-w!" enthused Phineas. "When the *guerre* is over, Bump, you get yourself a glass doorknob and go tell fortunes. I did two-time a dame there and that is why I was on my way to Dover. Boys, what a *guerre*! Has anybody got an aspirin?"

"Right, Lootenant," Glad Tidings Goonier yipped and ran into the kitchen.

He came back with a little glass bottle and it went

the rounds. Everybody seemed in need of a small white tablet. Twenty minutes later Glad Tidings shoved his head out through the kitchen door and wondered why everything had become so quiet. A symphony of heavy, deep breathing twanged in his ears. The sad-eyed mess attendant gulped and looked at the glass bottle. Then he ran to his quarters to get a few belongings before going A.W.O.L.