



SKYWAY ROBBERY

written and illustrated by JOE ARCHIBALD

a
PHINEAS
PINKHAM
howl

You can't blame a fellow for wanting to make his mark. But over on the Heinie side of the Big-Fuss fence, marks were scarce. Yes, and when Phineas staged that "Bank Night of Germany" and hit the jack plot—they were even scarcer!

WE READ EVERY DAY how the financial phenaglers manipulate the currency of all the countries of this confused cosmos.

And we learn that the dollar has a habit of shrinking like an eight-buck woolen suit caught out in a cloudburst. In short, deflation and sterilization of the precious metal that caused a cross-country covered-wagon derby in '49 have the economists economizing and the average citizen resorting to headache pills.

And speaking of tampering with the treasury coupons, how many citizens today know what Phineas

Pinkham, of Boonetown, Iowa, did to the German mark in 1918?

It all began when Lieutenant Pinkham took Frog leave from "A" Flight early one morning as Captain Howell led his five Spads out over the lines to see if they could get a crack at the Jerry circus that had recently moved into the sector. It was a staffel of Boche that, in Major Rufus Garrity's opinion, must have been weaned on leopard milk; for they had flown rings around everything that the Allies had to offer in the way of topside transport.

The Heinie that cracked the whip in this three-ring

improved Fokker circus was named Hans von Fitz—and he had given the Ninth Pursuit Squadron a lot of them. Yes, skullduggery was afoot just across the Meuse, and it was not dragging a ball and chain. It was moving fast. Allied experts were sure that Kaiser Bill was going to stake everything, even to his wooden horse, on a poke at the Yankee forward wall near St. Mihiel. Ammo was coming up quicker than quick and was being dumped in a likely spot. It was von Fitz who was covering the ceiling above the Boche trucks that were hauling the hell brew, and he was doing a bang-up job.

As he dropped his Spad through a hole in the fleecy ceiling above Fresnes en Woevre, Phineas wondered how Babette had liked the bon-bons he had sent her via Glad Tidings Goomer the previous night. He also wondered if Bump Gillis was thinking of wearing his new flying boots into Bar-le-Duc that night.

In fact, Phineas was thinking about everything but Boche crates—until he almost tripped over one. It was an Albatros observation bus, and there was an untidy aerial hanging down from it.

A wheel of the Pinkham Spad caressed the Boche observer on the scalp and he was still asleep in the pit when the jokester's crate came arching back to poke Vickers lead into the business office of the said Teuton snoopship. Three hard punches to the Alb's kidneys made it pirouette lazily, then it turned over like a tired hobo in a hayloft and headed for the carpet.

But Phineas broke off his chuckle when he suddenly saw spots before his eyes and he couldn't brush them away. Von Fitz was coming! And Phineas Pinkham wished he had stuck to Captain Howell and the good old "A" Flight bunch.

He turned tail, then brought the stick as far back as it would go. The Spad climbed into the sun until Phineas thought he was being braised. Then the Hisso quit—and Phineas dropped two thousand feet quicker than a monkey drops a hot chestnut. He fell right onto the necks of the aerial marvels of von Fitz's circus which was spearing up through the celestial whipped cream.

Nevertheless, the plunging Spad addled their wits just long enough for Phineas to get a thousand feet nearer to the Frog real estate.

Miraculously, the Hisso then sucked gas again and revved over, whereupon Phineas went down in a long slide with von Fitz and his Fokkers roaring after him. Spandau lead began to reach the Yankee ship when its pilot extraordinary was just five hundred feet over Vaubecourt.

Then Phineas made a landing with one aileron dangling like a hangnail and his rudder post undulating like an angle worm. It was not even an up-to-snuff Pinkham landing, and before Phineas crawled out of the pit he had to get some of the Hisso out of his lap. Moreover, he was covered with enough oil to preserve all the sardines off the coast of Brittany.

"Ya big bums!" he howled in protest as von Fitz and his Fokkers swung back toward Germany with shrapnel blooms bursting all around around them. "I'll git hunk for this, ya beer-swiggung dopes. An' boys, when I do, ya'll—Ow, my head!"

Gingerly Phineas fingered the contours of a knot that had been put on his cranium when he'd collided with a hard chunk of longeron, and he was sure he would not be able to wear a flying helmet for at least a year.

Disconsolately, he sat down and looked out across the landscape. But soon a big wide grin split his freckled face in half.

"Why, I am not far from Barley Duck," he beamed. "I will walk in there an' git me a ride. An' I will see Babette so she can fix up this bump on my dome. Haw-w-w. I bet she'll give me a big hug for them bon-bons. Well, here goes!"

Phineas limped into the Frog town and headed straight for the menage of his weakness. He knocked lustily on the door and yipped: "Yoo hoo, mawn cherry! Here is your big strong mans! Let me in, as I have been wounded in battle, an'—"

Babette opened the door—just long enough to put another igloo on the Pinkham pate with a rung off a chair. "Peeg!" she screeched. "*Ze Alexandair who ees smart, n'est ce pas? Soap in ze bon-bons, Oui? Chien! Vache!* Take zis! An' zat! An' zose! Ba-ah!"

Phineas did not stop to argue. He fled the region and limped toward the nearest Frog pharmacy where he bought liniment enough to take the kinks out of a senile elephant. He sat down on the curb and rubbed his more-hilly-than-ever scalp while he tried to figure things out.

It did not take him long.

Glad Tidings Goomer had turned like the proverbial worm and had loaded those sweetmeats he'd sent to Babette—in order to get hunk for many past indignities suffered at the hands of the scion of the Pinkhams. Having arrived at this conclusion, Phineas got up and started for the outskirts of Bar-le-Duc.

"When I git through with that mess monkey," he yipped, "he'll wish his pa had never met his ma. Fool with a Pinkham, huh? Well, here I come, Goomer."

ON THE DROME of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron, three big brass hats were congratulating Major Rufus Garrity on the apparent efficiency of his airdrome. The men were from Chaumont and they were giving the Old Man a lift up after a letdown. They had told him that it was up to his outfit to smear the Heinie shell pantry in back of Thiauourt. A Spad with Cooper bombs could get where slower D.H.'s could not get, they had pointed out.

"Great outfit!" one of them, a Brigadier, boomed. "Great spirit you've got here, Garrity! Morale at its peak, *yessir!* This kind of an outfit could break the back of Kraut offensive. The Kaiser is getting ready for a desperate drive. Got to put a crimp in it, Garrity, before it gets started."

The Major beamed with pride. He had not heard Phineas Pinkham come into the big room outside the Operations Office. A Colonel's booming voice had drowned out Captain Howell's threat to break the erring Lieutenant Pinkham for leaving formation without orders, so Garrity was not aware of the miracle man's return until he heard yelps of anguish from Glad Tidings Goomer. The C.O. flung open the door, looked out with the brass hats squinting over his shoulder goggle-eyed. Glad Tidings was walking around in a circle, his nose dripping red and one eye rapidly closing up for the day.

"Load my bon-bons with soap, will ya?" Phineas yipped. "Thought you was funny, huh? I—"

He did not finish—for just then Bump Gillis hurled himself at Phineas and popped the Iowa incorrigible right on the beezer. "My ifew boots, ya big fathead!" bellowed Bump. "Glued 'em to the floor with that iron cement, huh? Stand up an' fight like a man! Put up your dukes, as it was me that put soap in Babette's chocolates. Ha! Ha! I bet that Frog dame—"

"Why, you double-crossin' bum!" erupted the source of all the Ninth's misery. "I will knock you bowlegged!"

"Oh, yeah? You an' what—" *Bop!* Bump back-pedalled—right into the Captain of "A" Flight.

"Step on my corn, will ya, Gillis?" yelled Howell. "I think I will take a punch at ya myself—ow-w-w-w!"

The free-for-all was on. One of the Colonels, freezing up, sarcastically thundered: "*Wonderful* morale, Major Garrity! Stop that fight this instant!"

"Suppose you try," the Old Man grumbled. "It'll be somethin' just to watch you."

"Stop—all of you!" barked a pudgy brass hat authoritatively, and he walked into the melee—to

come staggering back when a flying fist missed Phineas Pinkham and hit him right on the chin. The brass hat sat down abruptly near Major Garrity and mumbled something about getting the life belts on and letting the women and children off first.

"This is an outrage, Garrity!" the Brigadier exploded. And he reached down to help his brother officer get to his feet. Thereupon a bunch of knuckles landed on his prop boss and the Colonel hollered at him: "Hit me, will ya? I'll—"

It was quite a mixup and misunderstanding all around. When the combatants had fought themselves out, Phineas was sitting in a chair testing three of his extra prominent front teeth. Bump Gillis had a mouse under each eye. And Howell's nose was as red as a Turk's fez.

"They want to fight, ha-a-ah?" stormed the Brigadier as he strode out of the farmhouse. "Tell 'em they'll get it, Garrity! I'll report this disgraceful affair! I'll have this whole squadron in a sling before night."

THE OLD MAN put Lieutenant Pinkham on the carpet when the place had been cleared of Chaumont coaches. He wanted to know why Phineas had run out on "A" Flight.

He got a glib answer.

"It was because I saw a Heinie crate takin' pictures," the culprit retorted, "and I went out to knock it off. The rest of these bums let me do all the fightin', an' they wasn't even around when the circus unloaded. I fought von Fitz an' nine Fokkers single-handed, an' if we had any ackemmas around here that ever saw a Hisso before, I would have—I want to make a complaint, as I think Casey is tryin' to assassinate me. Every time I go up—"

"And you shot down the camera crate, I suppose," Garrity snorted with elaborate sarcasm.

"Sure I did," Phineas said.

"I knocked it for a row of Chaumont swivel chairs. One burst, an'—"

Major Rufus Garrity thereupon called Phineas Pinkham a liar, as he had heard of no sky fight over the lines that morning.

"Ya didn't see Napoleon get licked at Waterloo either, did ya?" the doubted hero countered. "Does that make Wellington a liar? Why, I will show you what was once a Spad over by Barley Duck and the holes in the wings were not made by moths. Of all the—"

"You are grounded until I can prove you are a liar,"

Garrity thundered. "If you dare to leave the limits of this drome, you will get shot!"

"Awright," Phineas grinned affably. "Who is goin' to lick von Fitz, as there is not a pilot in 'A' Flight left who can see out of two eyes. Haw-w-w-w-w!"

There was a stir outside as the roar of a motorcycle drowned out the fitful, throaty whine of a Hisso getting its throat tested. A pilot came into the farmhouse a few seconds later and announced that a dough had come in with a Heinie flyer. Garrity and the buzzards crowded out in a hurry to see a tall, sad-faced Teuton climbing out of the power-bike's bathtub attachment as if he had been inoculated with rheumatism in every joint. The Boche limped into the headquarters of the Ninth and plopped into a chair.

"I found him sittin' aside of the road near Vaubecourt," the dough explained. "He was holdin' a broken prop in his arms an' singin' a lullaby to it. He cried when I wouldn't let him bring it along. Is he batty!"

"Wee gates," Phineas grinned at the disabled Jerry. "I bet you are the bum I knocked down this A.M.? Where's the other squarehead, huh?"

"Hein?" groaned the Alb chauffeur.

"Your pal—your sidekick! The guy that was with you!" Phineas tried to explain, using gestures aplenty.

"Hans *ist kaput!*" wailed the Kraut. "Nefer I t'ink I would be gettingk by *der* earth down *mit alles* arms *und* legks. Ofer *und* ofer I was goingk yedt, *und* I fall by *der* voods. *Der* Shpadt it cooms—whoof righdt oudt from *der* sky quick *und—*"

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" Phineas brayed and looked at Major Garrity. "Look vunce, Fritz. I am *Herr Leutnant* Pinkham und I shot you down. Remember? I got the other Kraut when the Spad wheel conked him on the dome, an'—"

"Ja! Ja!" the Heinie admitted sadly. "*Das ist gericht. Herr Leutnant* Pingham, *hein?* Now zo badt I don't feel. *Der* var *ist* ofer for Gottfried Splotz. Ho! Ho!"

"Where's your manners?" Phineas glowered at the pilots gathered around. "This is a prisoner of war, and you don't even offer him a crumb. Coom vunce, Gottfried. Haw-w-w-w, you almost got fried, didn't ya? I'll order you some grub, comprenny?"

"*Danke sehoen,*" Splotz said eagerly, and he dived at the plate of food that Glad Tidings Goomer brought from the kitchen. He gulped it down, barely using his teeth, as if he had been starved since the battle of the Somme. Phineas got a hunch and grabbed Goomer by the arm.

"Bring some coneyac, Glad Tidings—veet!" he hissed. "Two quarts—as I have eot an idea."

WHEN SPLOTZ was dined and wine into a state of mellow bliss, Phineas Pinkham gave him the well-known fourth degree when he saw that the Kraut's eyes were as bright as a Rhodes scholar. "This von Fitz—he is a big Ace, huh? I bet you wish—?"

Gottfried Splotz banged a fist down on the table. "*Ein Junker, ja! Besser* as us he t'ingks he iss yedt. Dey t'ink dey run yedt *der* var, *ja*. Gottfried Splotz, he *ist der* common Cherman only, *und* I'm glad dot I fight *nie mehr* for der Kaiser yedt, *nein! Drei* mont's *ist* now *und* I fly *mit* no marks in payment. Alzo odder staff els vhat don't *haben der* blue Junker blood. *Donnervetter!* Odder Chermans same like me *ist* get worser mad vunce!"

"Go on, go on," Phineas prodded him gently. "It's a shame the way you have been treated by them stuck-up bums. They're getting short of *argent* in Potsdam, huh?"

"*Argent?*" questioned Gottfried bibulously. "*Argent?* Dot iss vot—?"

"Dough . . . money . . . pay!" Phineas elucidated. "Von Fitz *und* his staffel—dey get idt *der* marks before eferybody yedt. *Der* marks *ist* coomingk from—" The Alb pilot's head dropped—jerked upright again. "All *der* flyers vait undtil *der* Vild Boar staffel gets idt *der* moneys first, *ja*. Zoon *der* soldiers *ist* tired from hailing no pay, *und—*"

Von Splotz's head dropped again, and this time he started to snore loudly.

"Well, I guess I'm grounded, huh?" Phineas gloatingly mocked. "I guess I did not start somethin' in this *guerre* this A.M.! With me around they could fire all the Intelligence bums an' save money. The Krauts are gettin' their pay docked, huh? Well, maybe they will stop trying so hard now. Haw-w-w-w!"

"Somebody will get a chance to find out tonight," the Old Man said darkly. "I'll be expecting two volunteers to go over and try to knock off that shell dump in back of Thiaucourt." He looked around at his men. "Don't all come running at once, will you?"

"Oh, you needn't look further," Phineas said quickly. "I am not one to even hesitate. Who'll go with me?"

"I am a little deaf tonight," a pilot said and edged away.

"Er—ah—excuse me," Bump Gillis gulped. "I just happened to think I've got a date in—"

"What a bunch of sissies!" Phineas snorted. "There is one way that is fair to pick the bum who is going to help me blow up the dump!" And the pilot from Boonetown, Iowa, sat down at a table and tore the flyleaf out of a book. He made eleven pieces of it and wrote a name on each of the slips. Then he put them in his flying skimmer and shook them up. "Awright, you great big patriots, you! He-e-ey, Goomer!"

Glad Tidings came reluctantly and Phineas asked him to draw a slip out of the hat. The mess monkey did and the name on it read: "Bump Gillis."

"Haw-w-w-w! You're elected, Bump— an' are you fortunate!" Phineas laughed. "Better luck next time, fellers!" He dumped the other slips of paper into the cold fireplace and put on his service cap. Lieutenant Bump Gillis choked out something and said he was going to his hut first to write a letter or two.

"I bet they'll be proud of Bump back home if he is killed," Phineas encouraged him. "Maybe they will even name a street after him back there in—where'd you come from, Bump? Haw-w-w-w!"

The Scotchman from the State of Maine, U.S.A., questioned the ancestry of the pride of the Iowa Pinkhams and strode out of the farmhouse.

CROSS off five hours and we find dusk sneaking up on the drome of the Ninth. Everybody on the tarmac gathered around a couple of Spads and wished Phineas Pinkham and Bump Gillis the best of luck. Even Major Rufus Garrity looked touched and offered to shake hands with Lieutenant Pinkham.

"I don't trust even my C.O.," the Boonetown trickster declined as he climbed into the pit. "I bet he would break my fingers so I could not trip the Vickers. Haw-w-w-w-w!"

The Old Man ripped a spanner wrench out of the fingers of a grease-ball and was winding up to throw it at Phineas when Glad Tidings Goomer came running up. The mess monkey had one fist doubled up and he seemed breathless with excitement. He went up to the Pinkham Spad and opened up his fist.

"Look, Lieutenant!" he said excitedly. "You made some sort of a mistake an' writ Lieutenant Gillis' name on all them slips, an'—"

Major Garrity and three of the pilots anticipated a riot, and they blanketed a howling Bump Gillis before he could pull a gun. The C.O. sat on the Scot and told him he could stay on the ground if he wanted to. But Lieutenant Gillis could not see it that way.

"I'm goin' with him. An' you just kiss that freckled

baboon good-bye, as he won't be comin' back," Bump frothed. "Even if them Heinies don't kill him, I will do it on the way back. The blankety-blank, dog-eared so-and-so bum, I'll—!"

"It is awful when a guy has no sense of humor," Phineas sighed. "Well, let's get goin' before the bombs spoil. Adoo, bums! An' Casey, you can have that new camera of mine if I don't come back. There's a film in it of Babette an' me. Get it developed an' send it to my folks, as it is maybe my last wish. Contact!"

"Th-thanks, Lootenant," Sergeant Casey said as he jumped to the stirrup of the Pinkham battle wagon. "I sure had my eye on that camera. I guess I had ya wrong, Lootenant. An'—happy landin's!"

"What a liar you are!" Phineas cracked back. "Haw-w-w-w-w!"

The Spads got off, drilled toward German acreage. Beyond the Meuse, in the attic over Thiaucourt, Phineas and Bump dropped low and took a gander at some Boche trucks that were moving along a partly camouflaged road. Anti-aircraft began to bang away and pieces of ancient cookstoves and discarded anvils began to rattle against the wings of the Allied crates.

The Ninth Pursuit buzzards could not expect to circle a Heinie ammo dump for long without plenty of opposition. Defense was the keynote of the cards stacked at Jerry divisional headquarters.

Three Fokkers came out of the dusk eating up space like a trio of pooches that had backed into a clump of spiny cactus. Phineas looked across the sky and saw Bump Gillis back-sticking for all he was worth, and then the ground beneath them coughed up a big gob of fire! And another! Bump was getting rid of the eggs-on which he had been setting.

But Phineas forgot all about that when a Fokker almost rode him piggyback and he side-slipped down to graze another Kraut's empennage with a wing tip. The Spad got out of hand for several seconds after that, and the scion of the Pinkhams aged ten years in thirty seconds while trying to convince the crate that it was going to stay up in the ozone.

More Heinie lead pinged at him. Tracers came so close that he could taste the phosphorus. And then the Boonetown miracle man cut his own bombs loose and looked for a way out.

With the roar of the scrambled T.N.T. eggs numbing his eardrums, Phineas nosed down and hedgehopped across two miles of real estate before his top wing finally folded up. He grabbed at the only flat ground that seemed available and dumped the Spad onto it. It was

like a man throwing a bottle out of a ten-story window and not letting go of the bottle.

Phineas Pinkham and Yankee Spad parted company near a line of trees. And it was Lieutenant Gillis who picked up the Iowa patriot and slapped him out of a partial coma.

"Bawn sore!" trilled Phineas, endeavoring to focus his eyes on his rescuer. "Fancy meetin' you here, Bump. How'd you get—?"

"I picked this place out first," Bump cut in sharply. "I was hopin' you'd hit a rock quarry, but I never have any luck. Come on! Let's get out of here, as this is no U.S. possession. I can smell limburger."

"Where's *your* buggy?" Phineas wanted to know. "We couldn't fix mine in a thousand—"

"Why, it's over there. All I've got to do is fix a couple wires," Bump told him. "But I wonder how *you'll* get back? Ha! Ha! Them Heinie klinks are no Waldorfs, you flap-eared crackpot. I said I'd get hunk! Send me a postcard—"

"You just try an' leave me!" Phineas warned him. "I will slug you so hard, you tight-fisted—" He paused. "Hey, listen, Bump!"

There was a crackling in the nearby underbrush in the gloom. And Phineas and his hutmate made out the figure of a Heinie coming directly toward them. Finally they discerned a face with a droopy mustache and a shiny button nose. It was a Kraut dough with a huge coal scuttle helmet about four sizes too big for him.

Phineas yanked out a gun and yipped: "*Handen hoch*, you big—"

"Shoot, you sap," Bump yipped, "Shoot before—"

The Heinie stopped, reached toward his belt. Phineas frantically pressed the trigger of his weapon and there came a squishing sound. Then drops of water sprayed off the Kraut's pan.

"A—a water pistol! Oh, you—you—" Bump's voice failed him and he ended in a squeak. "We're dead men, you halfwit!"

But the Kraut did not pull a gun. Instead he took a bottle of *schnapps* from under his coat and guzzled a long drag. Then he caught his breath, chuckled gleefully. "*Kamerads!*" he yipped and came on.

"Goot efenin," Phineas greeted him, taking a good look at the Jerry's pan. "Bump, he's scalded! This Boche dough is oiled up worse than—er—cr-r-ipes! Why, it's Herman Bingheimer from—Herman, look vunce! I'm Phineas Pinkham. Remember me? Haw-w-w-w-w! At the Odd Fellers' picnic four years ago we put washin' soda in the beer! Herman, how *ist* it?"

"*Ach*, Phinyush, by golly. *Herr Leutnant* Pingham, *der deffil* they call you by *der* flyink corps, *ja*. *Donnervetter!*"

The Yank and the Kraut clinched hands while Bump Gillis pawed worry dew off his brow. "He's a Kraut just the same," Bump protested. "An' I'm gonna slug him! There's other Heinie bums around, an'—"

"*Ja*, *ein* Cherman I am," Herman admitted. "But I really don't vant I shouldt fight by *der* Kaisher, *nein!* Cooms I ofer from Boonetown to see *mein Grossmutter—und* rightd away I am pooshed into *der* army. *Ach*, *mein fader's* delicatessen *ist* ruined already yedt if dey find oudt I fight *mit* Chermans against *der* Yangkees. Phinyush—*hic—hic—*Phinyush! Shave me, *mein* pal—ol' pal of mine, *ja?* I choin idt *der Amerikaner* army. *Und* loogk, Phinyush all *der* marksh here are yoursh if you gedt me by *der Amerikaner* lines!" And Herman Bingheimer began to pull huge bundles of German marks from his pockets. Soon there was a small mound of them on the ground at his feet. He stood swaying over them and looking cross-eyed at the two Yanks.

Phineas picked up a bundle of the German legal tender and pulled off a paper band. "Where'd you get it, Herman?" he asked weakly.

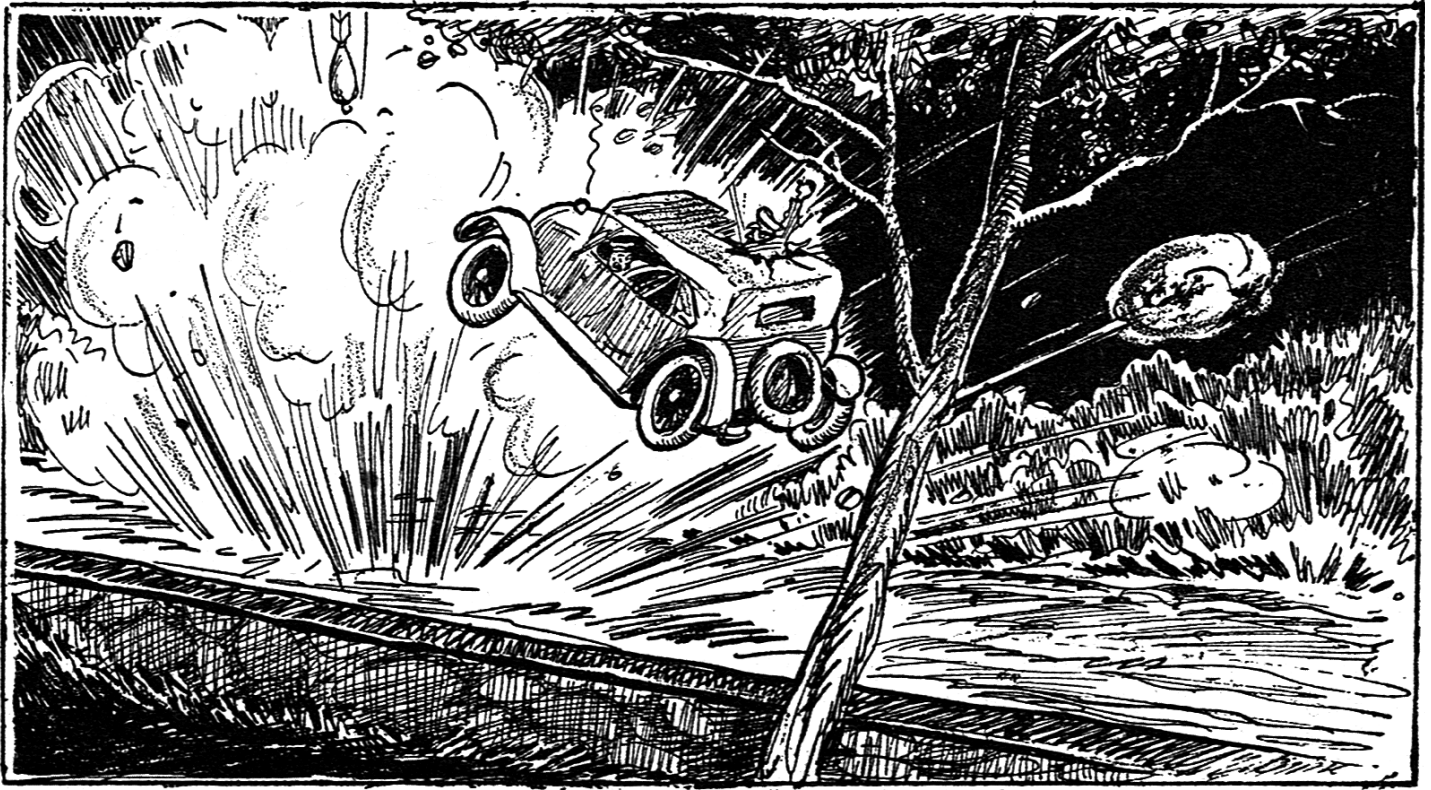
HERMAN opened up and explained, shocked almost sober by his meeting with Phineas Pinkham from 'way back in Iowa, U.S.A. It seemed he had been driving a Boche boiler that was bringing two big Jerry brass hats to von Fitz's squadron. They were the Kaiser's paymasters and had been loaded down with the marks. But all of a sudden "some *Dumkopf*" had dropped bombs out of the sky.

A couple of the said eggs had hit the road right in front of the official Potsdam jalopi. Herman had plummeted into a ditch—and upon waking up had found that both Boche *Herr Obersts*, having been massaged with Cooper bomb fragments, were as defunct as last year's cabbages.

"*Ja*, Phinyus," Herman chortled, "I excaped *mit der* marks. *Und* nefer did I see so many marks! I hear vun *Herr Oberst* say it vas *der* last of *der* marks *der* flyers vould gedt if *der* Chermans don't vin pretty soon yedt. For *drei* mont's von Fitz *und* his flyers ain't got it paid yedt, *und* they said they vould quit unless—"

"That's enough, Herman," Phineas beamed on his old pal. "Bump, we will make paupers out of them Von bums and they'll walk out. Haw-w-w! Now where *ist der* dead *Herr Obersts*, Herman, huh?"

"Joost vun mile from here, Phinyus," Bingheimer replied. "But first I know where *ist* a place we could



drink *schnapps*. Joost you *und* me *und der* feller *mit der* funny faze *mit* you. Yes, *mit* all *der* marks here, ve could—”

“Herman, you are no brighter than ever,” Phineas said. “Here we are in U.S. flying suits—an’ you want us to—I got it! We’ll get dressed up like the paymasters. Haw-w-w-w! The jalopi was bombed, huh? Well, the Krauts will expect the two Heinie brass hats to be banged up some, which gives me a good idea. Come on, Herman. We will go down in history—”

“Aw nuts!” Bump Gillis growled. “It’s a hole in the ground we will go down into. This Kraut is trappin’ us, ya dumb egg! Slug him an’ let’s get out of here.”

“Shut up, or I’ll slug you!” Phineas countered. “Herman is my pal—and that is more than I can say of you, you nickel-nurser!”

“Adoo,” Bump said with some dignity, “I am takin’ my Spad—er—”

Abruptly, a twanging sound not made by a harp filled Bump’s ears, and he blurted: “Bullets! I think I will go along with you, as what can I lose—except my life? But if I ever get out of this, I will resign.”

In a very short time, Phineas, Bump, and Herman reached the spot where the Cooper bombs had washed up the Heinie buggy. Herman and his old pal stripped the uniforms off the Jerry officers, and the pilot from Boonetown announced that he and Herman would

wear the Kraut *Herr Oberst* suits. Bump was to don Herman’s ordinary Boche-dough scenery.

“What for?” Bump yipped. “I am an officer, ain’t I? I will be no flunkey for—!”

“With half the Boche army ready to jump us any minute, you stand there arguin’,” Phineas complained. “Ya heard those shots near your Spad. Will you do as I say—or do I have to bat you one?”

“You just wait!” Bump snorted. “If we ever get back to—”

“NOW, Herman will do the talkin’, as ’ he is a real Heinie,” Phineas said when the clothes changing had been completed. “I will wrap up most of my face so they will not recognize me at the staffel. An’ that way, I won’t be able to talk, which is good. Ha! Ha! You just sit in the boiler outside, Bump, and if anybody tries to talk to you, act natural an’ they will know you are dumb, Bump. Haw-w-w-w-w! Meanwhile, Herman an’ me will have to bat you around a little so the Krauts will think we are real *Herr Obersts*. But don’t mind us—for we “won’t really mean it, of course.”

“Ja,” Herman grinned, “like they poosh me *und* bang me *mit der* Luger on *der* helmet. *Mein* ears still ring already yedt.”

“If you crack me, you Heinie slob,” Bump growled threateningly, “I’ll put you among the sweet peas.

Carbuncle, you mean you're goin' right into a Heinie airdrome? Von Fitz's—?"

"Don't be so scairt," Phineas snorted. "Anybody would think we was takin' a chance. Say, Herman, hide most of them marks in that old stump over there. Now let's get this car out of the ditch, as it will still run. Climb into the driver's seat, Bump—er—we will call you Herman. *Mach Schnell, Dumkopf!*"

"*Ja, raus mit!*" Herman Bingheimer said, feeling his oats in an officer's uniform, "or idt giffs *der* kick by *der* slats!"

"I quit!" raved Bump.

Then out of the woods near the road came a patrol of Boche, whereupon Bump quickly hopped into the German gas buggy and looked around for the starter. Of course, Herman had to have a few words with the Heinie *Unter-Offizier* in charge of the patrol. But soon the Kaiser's boys moved on.

"*Ach*, it is good to be *der Offizier*," Herman sighed happily as he climbed into the car with Phineas. "*Und* now, Phinyus, how is eferybody back by Boonetown, *hein?*"

Bump backed the car out of the ditch and put the gas pedal down to the floorboards.

"Not so fast, lame brain!" Phineas yelled. "An' stop drivin' over ploughed ground."

"I'm in a hurry," Bump hollered back. "I can't wait to git shot."

"*Dumkopf!*" Herman growled. "Stop idt, or *der* neck I wring yedt! How duz dot sound, Phinyus? Like *der* real *Herr Oberst?*"

"Swell!" Phineas beamed. "Keep insultin' him."

Bump ground his teeth until the enamel began to flake off, and he very nearly hopped a fence when the Heinie airdrome hove into view in the gathering dusk. "Listen, will ya, Carbuncle," he pleaded. "We only got about a minute to change our minds. We can't git away with this."

Kenvha-a-ang! Herman bopped Bump's coal scuttle skypiece with a Luger and told the buzzard of the Ninth to remember he was only a frowsy Boche private.

"I'll kill him before this is over," Bump snarled, driving on toward the Boche drome where grim looking hangars housed the latest model Fokkers that had been shipped out of the Rhineland. In front of a long, low house with a thatched roof, he braked the car—and prayed.

His Excellency, *Herr Oberst* von Izeberg, leader of Staffel 7, Imperial German Air Force, lifted his

eyebrows to the hairline on his bullet-shaped head when the supposed Heinie officers were ushered in. He looked at the bandage covering most of the Pinkham map, took a swift gander at Herman Bingheimer, who also had as many wrappings over his head as a mummy, then barked: "*Was ist? Der bomb idt has hitted you, ja?*"

"Veil, it vas not bieces uf bopcorn," Herman retorted. "*Der Yangkee bummers drop idt der bombs und hits us on der button, Excellenz. Ofer by—*"

"*Und der marks, Herr von Stahl?*" the Staffel 7 boss tossed out. "*Vhere ist idt der marks?*"

"*Ach, Himmel!*" Herman mourned. "Oop in *der* sky—poof dey go! *Herr Hauptmann Sprudelsalz*, he ist by *der* back seat uf *der* car und *der* bomb hidts all *der* marks—joost in liddle bieces yedt, und—"

VON IZEBERG got up and did four laps around his desk. Then he stabbed a finger into Herman's chest. "More excuses, *hein?* Vunce more again *der* excuses. *Mein* brafe chentlemen fight for noddingsks you t'ink vhen *der* var profiteers by Berlin eats idt *der* zucklingk pigs. Do you t'ink ve are mens or mouses, von Stahl? *Ach du lieber—!*"

"*Gerieht, Excellenz!*" snapped a voice from the doorway, and Phineas Pinkham shivered when he turned and looked. It was von Fitz squinting through a monocle. The ends of his blond upper lip foliage were waxed and stood out like needles.

"*Mein* flyers don't go oop undtil *der* pay ist coom." cracked the newcomer. "Alvays idt *ist* bromises ve gedt, *Herr Oberst*. Noddingsks else—*nein—nein!*"

"Can I pay you from oudt *mein* own pocket, *Herr Baron?*" von Izeberg exploded. "*Himmel!*" And the maddened staffel Commander tore a field telephone loose from its moorings with such vehemence that a wire snapped. Swearing, he whirled on Herman: "Von Stahl, you tell idt to *der High Kommand*, alzo *der* Kaiser, dot if dere be no moneys, den dere be no flyink uf *der* Fokkers. Tell dem alzo *der* food ist for *schwein*. *Bah! Und* vunce more ba-a-ah! *Ach*, away, von Stahl, und alzo *der Offizier mit*. Coom back vhen *der ist mit* you *der* marks!"

"*Ja wohl!*" Herman mumbled, and he nudged Phineas. Then together they emulated ramrods, about-faced, and stamped out of the Staffel Headquarters.

Bump Gillis was slumped down in the Boche limousine, his coat collar pulled up around the bridge of his nose. "It's about time ya come out!" he snapped.

But Herman knew how to handle such insolence.

He clouted Bump over the coal hod with his Luger. "Keep idt *der* civil tongue by *der* headt, *Dumkopf!*" he clipped.

"Ya dirty—" Bump began, then trapped his lips when three Jerry pilots filed by. They saluted Phineas and Herman and kept on going.

"Is this a panic?" Phineas chuckled. "Drive on, Bump—er—*raus mit, Dumkopf!* Stop!"

"Make up your mind, ya buck-toothed crackp—"

"Look, Herman," Phineas suddenly yipped. "Across the field there! It's a shell dump. I'll shellac it! An' it'll be like killin' two birds with one stone—breakin' the Kaiser's credit at the banks an' blowin' up—"

"The two birds will be you an' Herman," Bump broke in. "I'm drivin' to my Spad. Maybe they didn't find it."

"Awright," Phineas said, to Bump's surprise. "But wait a few minutes, Herman will go with you after he talks to the Hair Obust for me just once more."

"*Was ist, Phinyus?*" Herman gulped. "I feel idt *der* coldness by *der* feets." Without answering, Phineas got out of the ear and walked Herman back into Staffel Headquarters where von Izeberg and von Fitz were still swearing fluently. Herman cleared his throat when the Staffel boss roared, "Vot now?"

"*Mein Freund* here, he knows where *ist* idt *der* Yangkee hospital filled up *mit* cordite to fool us yedt, *und* zo idt *ist* bad *der* chentlemen of *der* Flyink Corps vill nodt fly. No moonlight *ist* tonight *und*—"

Von Izeberg looked at von Fitz and licked his lips. "Ach, Herr Baron, *der* sport *ist* vhat you like, *hein?* You go ofer *mit* *der* new Fokker *und*—"

"*Nein!*" stormed the Baron. "I vill nodt fly, *und* no brafе chentlemans vill I ledt fly. All ofer *der* front, *der* Kaiser's ships vill stay by *der* groundt til ve gedt *der* marks. Ach, *Himmel*, only *der* Pingham *machen* me fly, *und* he stays by *der* hole like *der* field mices vhen I coom by *der* Pursuidt sector."

"Why, ya big bu—er—" Phineas blatted through his face wrappings.

"*Mein Freund* here *ist* *der* flyer, *und* he says he vould take idt *der* Fokker ofer *der* lines," Herman cut in fast.

"He talks komical *mit* *der* faze bandaged oop. Ha! Ha! Herr Hauptmann von Pabst he *ist*, *und*—"

"Ach *Himmel!*" von Fitz tossed out. "Der von Pabst vhat flied by Austria, *hein?* Ach, *der* bleasure *ist* *das!* Yes, you fly *mit* me *und* drop idt *der* bombs by *der* Yangkee hosbital! Zo *der* Allies haff *der* Red Cross by *der* roofs where *ist* *der* ammoonition. Ho! Ho! Ve trick dem back!"

"*Ja wohl!*" came from under Phineas's bandages.

"*Gut!*" chuckled the phoney von Stahl. "I ride by Metz yedt *und* zee *der* chenereal aboutt *der* pay. *Auf Wiedersehen, Herr P—er—von Pabst!*"

"The same to you," Phineas mumbled. Von Fitz then showed him to his quarters, said something the Yank did not understand, and went out. Phineas sensed that the Kraut wanted him to rest awhile, and when he was alone he found a handy bottle of *vin blanc* on the Baron's table. A healthy swig took the ice out of the Pinkham spine, and three more drags at the bottle made Phineas feel at home.

"Haw-w-w," he chuckled, "I've made paupers out of the Vons. Next I'll blow up the shell dump and knock off von Fitz. Then I'll take home that new Fokker and let Casey and the ackemmas see how it ticks. What more can a bum do? As for Herman an' Bump, they ought to make the Yankee lines somehow. But in them Boche suits—well, I'd rather be me. Haw-w-w!"

Phineas then took a sheaf of nine or ten marks from his pocket and tore it in half. He put one part in his pocket and hid the other part in von Fitz's trunk. Next he got paper and pencil and wrote a note which he put in his pocket before stretching out on the Baron's cot. Yes, he had to have his joke.

ON THE DROME of the Ninth, Major Rufus Garrity and his buzzards had crossed Phineas and Bump off the books. Sergeant Casey heard about it and meandered to the Pinkham hut for Phineas' camera. He sat down and opened one end of the thing. KERWHACK! A hard rubber ball on springs whanged him between the eyes. And five minutes later he made his way to the noncoms' quarters hoping that Phineas had died a lingering death. "Even when he's dead, we ain't safe," Casey wailed to a greaseball. "Oh, if I could git my mitts on that ape, I'd—is my eye black?"

Back to Phineas, who was studying a small vial he had taken from his pocket. The label read:

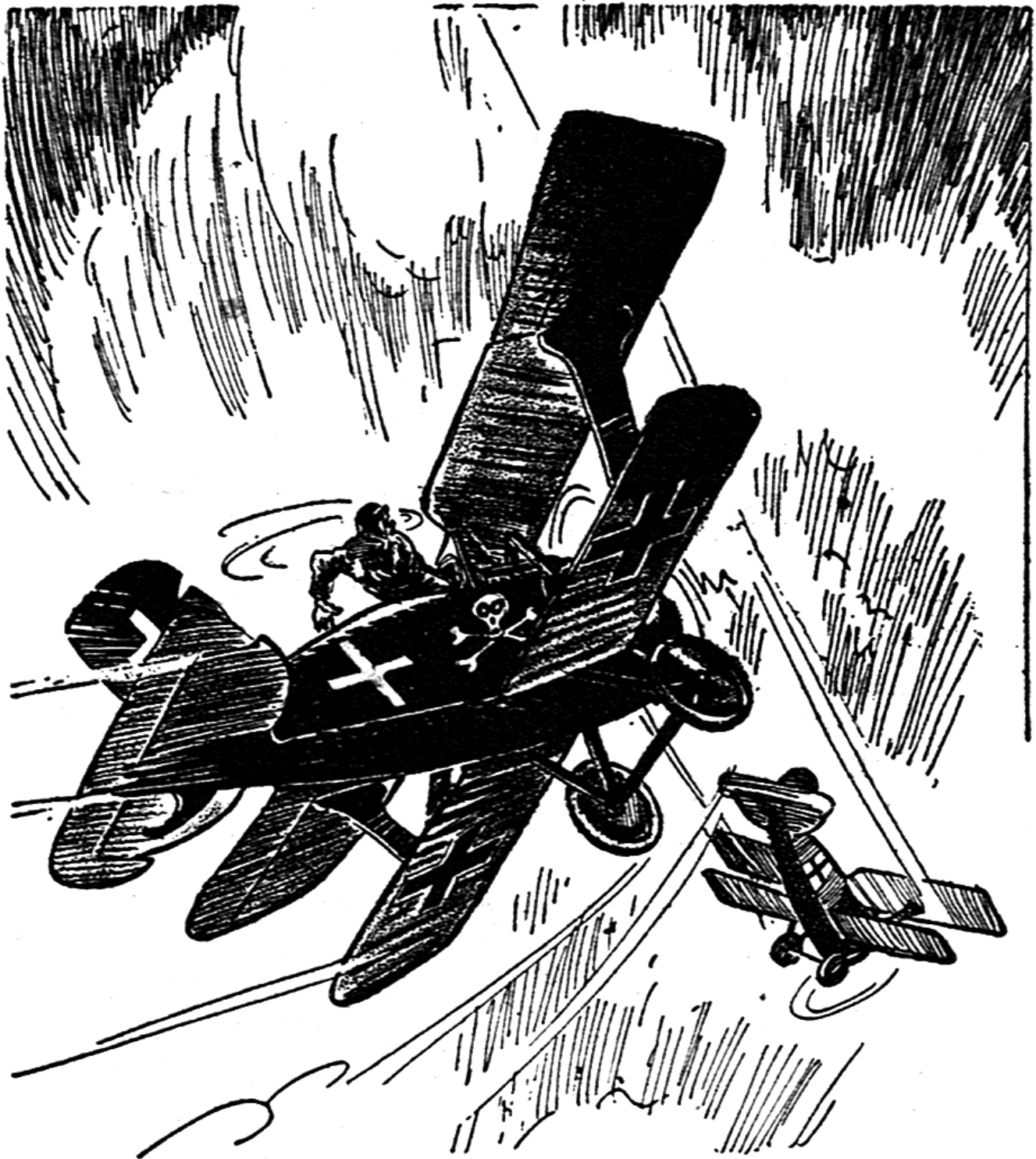
KITCH'S ITCHEROO

Harmless but Hilarious

Price 10¢

Accompanying small print promised that three drops in a glass of water would bring out a rash similar to the hives ten minutes after swallowing.

Phineas dropped ten drops into the half-empty bottle of *vin blanc* and waited for von Pitz to return. The Baron came in twenty minutes later and tossed Phineas a flying coat and helmet he'd borrowed from



one of his comrades. "Now ve go for *der sport*, Herr Pabst, *hein*?"

"Ja!" Phineas muttered and handed the bottle to the Heinie. Von Fitz poured himself a glass of the stuff and downed it at a gulp.

"*Deutschland uber Alles!*" he guttured, smacking his lips.

Outside, two Fokkers were roaring on the line, and

in five minutes Phineas and the Von were in them waiting for the Kaiser's grease monkeys to pull away the chocks.

"*Kontakt!*" yipped von Fitz, and he waved to Phineas, who gestured back and chuckled under his breath: "Adoo, ya bum! If they put you in jail right now, you could scratch your way out. Haw-w-w!"

The Fokkers went up and started circling.

But watchers on the Heinie drome gaped when the Baron's ship suddenly began to do tricks in the night sky that a playful rabbit could not match on the ground. In his pit, von Fitz was having one—trying to reach every portion of his outraged epidermis with his fingernails at once. Itching from his scalp to his insteps, he now tore his safety belt loose so he could squirm the better. He looked like a snake with cramps.

"*Himmel—was ist?*" he screamed. Then the Fokker, stick threshing, did a loop and a barrel roll simultaneously and in the fall that followed, one wing-tip kissed a hangar. Shaken loose, von Fitz hurtled out of his cockpit and plummeted down through the roof of Staffel Headquarters right into *Herr Oberst* von Izeberg's lap.

Outside, the Heinie drome abruptly sounded like a woman's sewing circle invaded by rodents. *Herr Oberst* von Izeberg dumped von Fitz onto the floor and dashed out.

BLAM! BLO-O-O-EY! BLA-A-ANG! CRA-A-A-SH! Flames and smoke spewed out of the nearby ammo dump. Shells took off and zig-zagged through the area like angry bumble bees. Von Izeberg crawled under a house and put a fingertip in each ear.

Phineas zoomed over the drome, after washing up the dump, and dropped a note tied around a big dry inkwell he had found in the Baron's quarters. It grazed an ackemma's dome and five minutes later the little Teuton staggered into headquarters and put it on His Excellency's desk. Half of the house had been chewed away by a shell running amok and *Herr Oberst* von Izeberg was still crouched down with his fingers rammed in his ears. Somebody tapped him on the shoulder and said it was all over. He immediately collapsed and remained in a comatose state until dawn.

When he finally came to, his eyes fell upon the object that had been placed on his desk. The Heinie Staffel boss unwrapped the bottle and opened up the paper package that had been attached to it. A few torn pieces of Teuton legal tender fell out in the process. Goggle-eyed, he read:

Dear Krauts: I enjoyed my visit with you, and now here's half the dough you and your squareheads are worth. Of course, it was really von Fitz who stole your lucre—an' a look into his trunk will prove it. Haw-w-w-w! But I also held out a coupla marks to buy schnapps with when the A.E.F. gets Under-them-Lindens. For more information, just write me,

—Lieutenant Pinkham
24 Locust Street
Boonetown, Iowa, U.S.A.

"*Ach, nein,*" groaned the *Herr Oberst*, "it giffs dreams yedt. He steals *der* payroll of *der* Cherman army—blows oop *der* shells *und* has *der* new Fokker yedt—*ach, Himmel!* In *der* morning I will be by *der* trenches *mit der* gun—Private Otto Izeberg! *Ach du Lieber!*"

PHINEAS, his cup of joy overflowing, had little trouble getting over the lines, but Allied anti-aircraft gave him a terrible kicking around above Vaubecourt. Scrap iron taken from the junk yards of the U.S. bit into his Fokker and washed away half the tail.

"Cripes!" the returning hero yipped as he went down. "Some day I will take a crate off maybe and won't walk back." But Phineas' troubles had not even begun when he set the bus down. Doughs ganged up and rushed him to a Yankee divisional headquarters. Papers indicating that he was one Otto von Kowlich of Staffel 7 were found in his flying suit and he was accused of impersonating Lieutenant Pinkham. Also, he was threatened with being shot as a spy.

"Listen, bums!" he yelped after taking the bandages off his face. "Am I a Kraut? Listen to this lingo of mine: 'Tell it to Sweeney! Let George do it! Hot dog!' Now what do you think?"

"You can't kid me," a Captain said. "I called up the Ninth Pursuit Squadron and the C.O. said the real Pinkham is dead. And anyhow I knew a Kraut spy once who could name all the players on the teams of both U.S. Major Leagues. Lock 'im up!"

"You'll git busted for this!" Phineas yipped. "I'll—"

THREE HOURS LATER, in the improvised klink—a dugout guarded by five tough looking doughs—Phineas was introduced to company. A couple of bedraggled Boche were brought in who were boiled to the ears.

"Here's two more," an M.P. said as he shoved them in. "An' if I get one more, ya can have a game of whist."

"Go fry an eagle!" Phineas tossed out.

"Listen, Herman," one of the new prisoners said, "ya had the lasht bockle firsh. Anyways, ya can' have no more after drivin' that car in the Y.M.SheA. hut Y-you're—*hic*—drunk! How many marksh lef' huh?"

Phineas sat up straight, peered at his new klink mates. He recognized Herman and let out a yell. "Why, you two fatheads," he chuckled, "it is Phineas over here. Remember me?"

"Wha-a-a?" Bump Gillis gulped. "Herman, we're shot an' kilt. If we shee Phineas, we're dead caush

he'sh dead. Nishe here in heaven, ain't it? Oh-h-h, keep home firsh burnin' and I'll be yearnnin' forsha day when I can go ho-o-ome! Where'sh the bockle, Herm—"

"You're a disgrace to the U.S.A.," Phineas said severely. "Did you take them Kaiser bills—they marks from where we—?"

"Got two millionsh lef,'" Herman explained. "Open bank shomeplace. Bingheimer an' Gillish—shirty pershent intresh—*hic*. Fo-o-or I wash born at Bi-i-ngen, fair Bi-i-ngen onsha Rhine!"

Meanwhile, in Divisional Headquarters, three U.S. officers were examining a small kit bag they had filched from Phineas' person. A Major reached in and pulled out what seemed to be a very voracious spider. Its legs wriggled, its eyes gleamed—and the brass hat let out a yelp and fell over backwards in his chair.

Two round objects rolled out of the bag and fell to the floor where they made popping sounds. Then a shavetail's hair stood up straight from his scalp when he saw what he was sure was a human hand slide out of the mouth of the bag. Anyhow, everybody dived

for the door when immediately after a horrible odor permeated the place.

"That guy is Pinkham!" the Major hollered. "Let 'im loose!"

Phineas was threatening to sue the government for false arrest, defamation of character, and assault on his person when Major Rufus Garrity arrived from Bar-le-Duc. The Old Man got his heroes out of duranceville and hustled them back to the Ninth Pursuit Squadron.

And no sooner had Phineas and Bump got back to the drome when they clashed together in a rip-roaring fist fight over the ownership of a million Jerry marks.

Nobody bothered to stop them. And a certain brigadier, who had seen the two in action a couple of nights before, took out his wallet and extracted from same a ten-dollar note.

"In this scrap, I take Gillis," he said to the Old Man.

"How'd you get to be a brigadier?" the C.O. snorted. "I'll cover it and add another five! That's it, Pinkham, that wallop softened him up. Use your right this time! Did I tell you Pershing called up? Ow-w-w! It's all over, General. Pay me!"