



a
**PHINEAS
PINKHAM**
howl

PRIDE OF THE PINKHAMS

written and illustrated by **JOE ARCHIBALD**

One Phineas “Carbuncle” Pinkham to a squadron would be enough in any man’s war—according to Major Rufus Garrity. But somebody back at Wing thought differently when he assigned Lieutenant Monk Flanagan, late of the Hippodrome Vaudeville Circuit, to the Ninth Pursuit!

ANOTHER DAY HAD PACKED UP and walked out on the Ninth Pursuit Squadron, located south of Bar-le-Duc. In its stead night had moved in, bringing with it a brace of spurless war birds to the old rooster’s (Major Rufus Garrity’s) brood. They were a trifle late for mess, since the camion in which they had been riding had gotten stuck in the mud. And such mud! Those who have wallowed in it for the sake of La Belle France and the Democrats will testify to its

clinging, gooey superiority over all other brands of mud.

Lieutenant Phineas “Carbuncle” Pinkham looked up from a book which had been written for no other reason than to make life miserable for the reader’s fellow men, and stared at the newcomers. His widened eyes, however, wasted as little time on one of them as did the orbs of his fellow buzzards, for the subject was a normal individual, nothing more. But the other!

Captain Howell, who controlled the destinies of A flight, blinked and wondered if he had lost count of

his drinks. Bump Gillis swore softly and plucked at Phineas' sleeve.

"Cripes!" he gasped. "He's even worse lookin' than you are. The Wing musta shaved a baboon an' sent it up. Look—"

The cynosure of all eyes was indeed a picture, but not for a child's book. He was squat and barrel-chested, with a head the size of a milk-fed squash. His eyes were almost hidden beneath two tufts of black hair and the nose that separated them showed evidence of having at one time or two stopped the onslaught of a family of battering rams. The space between said proboscis and his mouth was almost as long as the lip of a horse and his chin sloped down too abruptly toward his Adam's apple.

"Hello, guys," he greeted the old-timers. "How's the war? Kinda tough, huh? Well, I just come to make it easier for ya."

A chorus of ejaculations and gasps arose from the veteran Spad-jockeys. Phineas gulped and indignation began to scrawl lines all over his face.

"A fresh guy, huh?" he finally uttered. "Well, he's come to the right place to git cooked!" So saying, he rose to his feet and shuffled over to the upstart. A door opened and Sir Rufus stamped out. Something glued his boots to the floor as his glance traveled all over the stranger, from north to south and east to west. Involuntarily he brushed his hand over his eyes as he saw the man hold out a big paw to Phineas.

"Hello, Frog Face," the man said to the volcano from Boonetown. "Think I'm gonna like it here." Phineas Pinkham, of all men, seemed a little stunned as he grasped the extended hand. Suddenly he yelped and jumped back. A little wriggly thing fell to the floor and the buzzards of the Ninth stared at it, throats paralyzed. It was a snake, a live one, and no mistake. Major Rufus Garrity almost fainted. A booming laugh shook the rafters.

"Hee! Haw!" followed up the newcomer. "Meet Lieutenant Monk Flanagan, once known as Perfesser Merlin the Great of the Hipperdrome Vodyville Circuit." Having announced himself in this manner, he reached into the collar of Phineas Pinkham's tunic, and pulled out a squealing white rat.

WOE, heavy and ironic, secured a strangle hold on the C.O. of the Ninth and tightened its grip. For week upon week he had been trying to figure out the reason for Phineas Pinkham's presence in the universe, and now here was another crackpot, living proof that the

mold had not been destroyed after the Boonetown flyer was designed. It was a dirty trick. Major Rufus began to seethe from the crown of his head to his toenails. He leaped forward just as Phineas squared off like John L. Sullivan and dared Professor Merlin to do likewise.

"Sit down, Pinkham, you fish-faced whoozle!" he bellowed. "And you—you laughing hyena," he thrust right into Monk Flanagan's face. "Get into Wings before I drag you in. Another wise guy, eh? Well, I'll order G.H.Q. to put a wire fence around this place and send up a carload of peanuts. It's a zoo now. Get!"

"Glad to meetcha," grinned Monk. "I—"

"The big stiff!" put in Phineas. "Let me at him. I ain't goin' to take no guff from that ape. I—"

The Old Man whirled and Phineas jumped over the mess table. Monk Flanagan roared.

"Phineas Pinkham, huh?" he repeated. "Seems to me I've heard the name before some place. Was—"

"Ah, cripes!" groaned Bump Gillis and held his head in his hands.

"I'll tell you just once more, dammit!" yipped Sir Rufus. "Get into Wings, you missing link!"

"Sure," grinned Monk good-naturedly, hastening to obey. "Sure. Don't git excited."

The door closed behind the C.O. and the buzzards left out in the big room sat as if petrified and looked toward Phineas.

"I'll git that mug!" declared the Boonetown miracle-worker threateningly. "He'll wish he joined the Y.M.C.A., the lug! Stealin' my stuff, huh? A 'vodyville' actor, yeah? I'll—"

"The King is dead!" quoth Bump Gillis solemnly. "Long live the King!"

"Like hell!" erupted Phineas. "But I'll crown 'im, awright. ya fathead!" And he sputtered like an egg in a frying pan of hot fat as he evacuated the house.

Ten minutes later he returned to find Monk Flanagan hogging the spotlight, all the buzzards grouped about him, getting a load of magic. Monk looked up and grinned.

"You're just in time to see me thread needles in my mouth," he told the indignant Carbuncle. "It's a swell trick an'—"

"Sure," said Phineas. "I ain't sore now. Ya see, I can't stand snakes an'—"

"Haw!" interrupted the flying actor. "That was good, huh?"

"Have a cigar," proffered the Boonetown flyer. Howell and company turned their heads as Monk Flanagan accepted the weed.

"I'll do the trick smokin' the cigar," he announced. "It'll make it harder." Silence reigned as Monk shoved the smoke between his teeth and lighted it. Phineas slumped into a chair nonchalantly and whistled softly. Monk removed the cigar from his mouth and put in three needles and some thread. The lighted weed went back into place.

MONK'S mouth worked diligently as he puffed at the cigar. Phineas was getting ready to laugh. Suddenly the new pilot removed the cigar from his mouth and tossed it from him. It landed plumb in Phineas' lap and snapped like a firecracker. Fighting a shower of sparks, Phineas swore and backed away. The Ninth Pursuit went into spasms.

In the next moment a wild yell sent them scattering, for Lieutenant Pinkham threw a fist and used Monk Flanagan's right optic for a landing field. Monk coughed up needles and thread and spun on his ear, finally pancaking under the table. Bump Gillis howled and yanked one of the needles out of his chin.

"Git up, ya bum!" ordered Phineas, cooling off his fist.

"Oh, so ya wanna fight, huh?" roared Monk and, rising to his feet, he leaped through space and merged his big head with Phineas' diaphragm.

"Oof!" groaned the Boonetown buzzard. "F-f-foul! Why, ya dirty—" Before Monk could get his head up and out of danger, a big wad of knuckles came up from the floor and there followed a sound like a baseball getting smacked for a home run. Doing a lot of funny things standing up. Monk Flanagan staggered backwards until he hit the door of Wings with a crash. An angry howl came from within and then Major Rufus yanked the door inward and barged out, only to fall over the prostrate Monk, driving a loose nail into the floor with his jaw.

Phineas took one look and ran out to the safety of the wide open spaces. Bump was close behind him. Ground-men gulped as they watched the pilots fight for the right of way out of the big stone house. What a war!

"I ain't even started with the fathead," growled Phineas, once he and Bump had reached their hut. "Wait'll t'morrer. He'll git enough of the *guerre* in one day to scare him out of his union suit. Jus' wait!"

"Haw-w! Haw-w!" laughed Bump Gillis, thoroughly enjoying himself. "When an im-m-movable body meets an irr-irr-irresistible force, what happens, huh? Both go to the dry cleaners! Well, it's okay with me. At last we get a break. Both of you bums'll kill each other off. Whoo-pee-e-e-e-e!"

"Go to hell, ya cluck!" snapped Phineas.

An hour passed and another was pretty well shot when Phineas glanced sidewise at the prone figure of his hutmate and tiptoed to the door. He looked out. Major Rufus was nowhere to be seen. With a fiendish grin Lieutenant Pinkham stole out and trudged toward the hangars.

At dawn the grinning face of Phineas looked upon Lieutenant Monk Flanagan as he gulped his steaming Java. The southern boundary of the latter's right peeper was puffed up and colored a gorgeous shade of blackish purple.

"Ya got to do more than pick rats outa the Boche's necks, ya ugly ape," was the irrepressible Boonetown joker's greeting. "Maybe after today when von Hokum gits through with ya, ya'll wish ya'd stuck to ham actin'!"

"You an' me ain't finished yet, Frog Face," glowered Monk. "The world ain't big enough fer both of us, an' a fortune teller told me oncet I would live a hundred years. I got a long life line an'—"

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" scoffed Phineas. "I had a rabbit oncet what had four feet an' he was stewed an' et up ten years ago. See ya between a couple of tracers!" And Phineas walked out, leaving Monk Flanagan against the ropes for the present.

Pilots trickled out toward the Spads which were chanting out their anxiety to get away and up to where hated Mercedes hummed. Lieutenant Monk Flanagan, climbing aboard his ship, was unaware of certain huge black letters splashed on the top wing of his new ship. And how was he to know that one side of his fuselage bore crude script to the effect that one von Hokum was a fat-headed weenie?

Other pilots saw and got the drift, however. Howell cursed and shook a gloved fist at Phineas, who sat in his Spad with his homely face split into a wide grin. The Old Man did not come near the patrol, but stood in the doorway of the big house, weighing his chances of getting over the Swiss border by sundown.

WHY waste time in saying that the Spads left the tarmac? They usually did if the pilots had any intention of going anywhere. So let's pick them up again as they soared over a sea of coal hods under which were Jerry heads attached to Jerry torsos—for how long, of course, we cannot tell you.

Howell and his flight were looking for trouble, and in a war it is not hard to find. Von Holke, steaming hot and bristling with mortification and anger over the return of Phineas from the grave for the third time, led

a flight of Fokkers out of a big cloud bank and spotted the buses of the Ninth Pursuit in jig time. His Teutonic visage manufactured a mirthless smirk as he gave the signal for the attack. Down below, Howell was not asleep or crocheting a sweater for the Red Cross, by any means. His eagle eye had perceived those hostile wasps spitting out of the scud and he acted accordingly.

At the signal, A flight fell out of formation and scattered. Every man for himself, mused Phineas, and the devil take the caboose, which he hoped would be Monk Flanagan.

Von Holke smashed a burst at a Spad, ruddered around and looked over another pair. He ignored them and burned a path toward another corner of the scrap. There he saw the ship he was seeking. Insults, more insults, mocked him from its fabric. A fat-headed weenie, was he? Damn that upstart, *Leutnant* Pinkham! Fingers squeezing fire out of the snouts of his guns, he fell upon the offending Spad's back and stitched a lot of holes between the pit and the fin.

Phineas rocketing out of the way of a burning Fokker, saw Monk Flanagan flying like a wild man. There was von Holke trying to line him up, guns hammering without a lull. The Boonetown flyer cut in, punched holes in von Holke's wings and almost seared the kraut's eyebrows with tracers. The Fokker immediately twisted around, leaving Flanagan alone, and attempted to get at its tormentor. But Phineas was leaping away in great strides toward a spot where Howell was biting off more than he could chew.

This situation handled to his satisfaction, Phineas looked around again and, sure enough, there was Flanagan gunning for dear life to the fringe of the fight with von Holke glued to his tail. The Boonetown jokesmith jammed in full throttle and cut across von Holke's line of flight, his tail assembly just missing a kiss from the Boche prop by inches.

Scared into momentary paralysis, von Holke forgot to continue firing and Monk Flanagan slipped away, unobserved. Recovering, the Junker pilot pulled himself together, swore in gutturals and looked around for pickings. He saw too many Spads. Fokkers were clearing out, and it seemed only sensible that von Holke should climb up toward the ceiling in a flock of spirals to lose himself in the clouds.

With the light of anticipation in his eyes, Phineas climbed out of his pit on the drome of the Ninth and looked around for Monk Flanagan. He discovered the newly baptized war bird standing by a riddled Spad, scratching his head.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" said Phineas. "I bet y'were scairt an' I guess were figgerin' that that fortune teller was a cock-eyed liar a lot of times upstairs. Haw-w-w-w-w!"

Monk Flanagan grinned. "Lotsa fun, huh, kid? What a *guerre!* When do we go up agin? Just as soon's our tanks is filled?"

Phineas swayed on his heels, gulped and pulled himself together. There was no answer to that one. Bump Gillis nudged Phineas in passing and gave him a horse laugh.

"Say," said Monk in afterthought, "thanks for helpin' me out. Was I gittin' my pants dusted! Boy, I—" Phineas thought quickly. He had to. At last Greek had met Greek, but they would never get friendly enough to open a restaurant together.

"That's okay," he acknowledged the appreciation. "What ya say we call bygones gone, huh? I'll take ya into Barley Duck an' show ya the ropes t'night."

"Sure," agreed Monk. "Sure. Know any dames?"

SO THAT night after mess Lieutenants Phineas Pinkham and Monk Flanagan took off from the drome in search of gaiety and what not. After calls upon three estaminets they sauntered forth to give the mam'selles a treat. A dark-eyed little edition of pulchritude stopped briefly as they turned a corner. Phineas lifted his hat but her smile was not for him.

"Bum sewer, maddymoisselle," chortled Monk. "Comprenez vooze?"

"*Oui, oui, m'sieu,*" the damsel replied in dulcet tones.

"Vooley-voo a walk with mwa?" horned in Phineas, winking at the girl. "I—"

The French girl shrugged and turned her back on the Boonetown flyer. Monk grinned in enjoyment and crooked an arm. "Scrag the elbow, babee," he invited. "Le's have cone-yac, nester paw?"

"*Oui, oui,*" she consented and accepted the proffered arm of the erstwhile Professor Merlin.

"Tough break, Frog Face," Monk flung back as he taxied away. "But I'm hell with the women. Oh reserve!"

"I hope ya break a leg," yipped Phineas and stamped along in the opposite direction. A few minutes later he was on his way to the drome, having discovered nothing else to do in Bar-le-Duc.

Lieutenant Monk Flanagan returned to his landing field some three hours later, looking as if he had tried to beat up three trench mortars and a tank single-handed. His nice new uniform was a wreck. Both eyes were now black and he limped on each leg. He

staggered into Phineas' hut and almost fell on a bunk which was already occupied by Bump Gillis.

"Ya know what?" he gasped. "I was callin' on the lady an' three doughs come in an' jumped me. Said a orsifer had sent 'em to teach a guy a lesson what didn't know enough to keep away from his dame. Three doughs! D'ya hear? Lookit me! Look at my new uneyform! If I ever find out who that orfiser is. I'll kill 'im—even if he's Pershin'. Cripes!"

"That's tough," sympathized Phineas and laughed at the wall. "Well, I think I know what the guy is an' he's always in Barley Duck on Saturday nights. We'll git 'im, Monk, huh?"

"Sure," answered the wreck and stumbled out. "Th-thanks!"

"Hm-m-m!" muttered Bump speculatively when Monk was out of hearing. "Sure you know the officer, huh?"

Phineas grinned and began to undress. "It sure is great to have a dame who savvies team work, huh? An' do you know where there's three doughs in France who wouldn't jump at the chancet of puttin' the slug on a second looie? If there is, you'll have to dig 'em up with a spade. Well, if a guy gits ahead of yours truly, he sure has to git up before he goes to bed. Haw-w-w-w-w! Wasn't them the blackest eyes ya ever saw? I—"

A dull thump outside made the hut shiver. Bump leaped out of his bunk and headed for the tarmac. Phineas, in his union suit, followed at his heels. Groundmen were picking up their boots and laying them down in rapid succession on their way to the ammo shed. Overhead came a significant hum.

"What's up?" yipped Phineas as he overtook a grease monkey.

"A Boche flew over an' dropped somethin'. It went right through the roof of the ammo shed."

AN EXCITED crowd milled about the shack and everybody tried to get inside at the same time. A bellowing roar opened up a hole in the ranks and through it plowed Major Rufus Garrity. Out of the door of the shed came an armorer, endeavoring to walk with his legs crossed. One hand pawed at a bump on his head as big as a doorknob, and the vacuous expression on his physiognomy betrayed the fact that his brain mechanism, cerebrum, cerebellum and medulla oblongata were all out of whack. He stumbled against a pilot, back-pedalled and bowed low.

"Pardon me, Mrs. Vandergould," he said. "Sorry to've stepped on your bunion. It was a swell party until

the roof fell in. Ah, there's my limmerzine comin'." It was the meat wagon clattering across the tarmac.

"Goofy as a loon," declared Bump Gillis. "Cripes! If that iron roof hadn't of broke the speed of that—" The Old Man walked into the shack, swearing, and picked up something heavy from the floor. Hastily he tore the canvas bag apart and reached inside. He came out of the shed holding a piece of paper in one hand and an empty ammo drum in the other.

"No wonder," he growled at the gathering, "that that guy is half a nitwit!" He swore and ripped open the message.

"It's for Pinkham," he exploded. "Cripes!" And his eyes swept the group.

"Here I am," spoke up Phineas. "I bet I know who it's from. Von Hokum!"

The Old Man snarled and, crumpling the paper into a ball, threw it at the Boontown wonder. "You fathead! On account of you we almost have an armorer washed out. I know what I'll do with you. I'll prefer charges against you. Fraternizing with the enemy! That's something, you crackpot! You and that kraut have been writing more letters to each other than a couple of sweethearts. I—" His eyes chanced to light upon the scrambled personage of Monk Flanagan. "My God!" he roared at the man. "What hit you—a train? Fightin' again, eh? Well—"

"Nossir!" protested Monk. "Me an' Pinkham went to Barley Duck, sir. I met a dame an'—"

"Pinkham, was it!" thundered the Old Man. "P—"

"Nossir," answered Monk. "He left me before it happened. Three doughs beat me up. I—"

"There," exclaimed Phineas indignantly, "you're wrong again, sir. You allus blame me. Well, I giss I'll read the letter. Listen!"

The C.O. was in no mood to listen. Threatening to drink some poison and end it all, he ploughed through the gathering once more and headed for solitary.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" guffawed Phineas. "Listen. The krauts says, 'You was lucky today again, *verdammt* upstart, *Leutnant* Pinkham. But another day comes und yet more days when yet more than lucky horseshoes in your pocket you must have to escape the great von Holke. *Ja.*' That's all he says this time, guys," and Carbuncle indulged in another roar of laughter. "Giss the Von is gittin' writer's cramps. Haw-w-w!"

"Von Holke, huh?" said Monk Flanagan. "I bet some guys up at the pool that I'd git the bum an' send 'em a hunk of wing an' maybe some tail feathers from his Tripe. So when ya see me after him, lay off! Understand?"

“Wha-a-a-a-a?” stuttered Phineas.

“Well, look here, you ape! That bird is my meat an’ I don’t want no mugs like you buttin’ in, see? I been workin’ on von Hokum now for plenty of weeks and—”

“Sure,” cut in Captain Howell, “and what’ve you done? Maybe Monk can get rid of the Jerry quicker. He won’t write him mash notes but will maybe get real mad at him, eh, buzzards?”

“Haw-w-w-w-w!” The guffaw was from Bump Gillis.

“You’re a lot of nice fellers, ain’tcha?” scoffed Phineas Pinkham. “Well, if Monk fights the Von like he did today, von Holke will die of old age with a big white beard. Huh! To hell with ya!” And Phineas ignored them and walked away.

AS HE trudged across the tarmac, vague misgivings seized the Boonetown flyer. His reputation was at stake. He would have to lay low this newcomer or leave the spotlight, and then the war would be a flop so far as he was concerned. Phineas dared not harbor the thought that Monk Flanagan might get von Holke. It would be the last straw.

With reluctance he admitted that this fledgling on the drome was his superior when it came to magic, but there were tricks in the back of Phineas’ own head that had not been culled from books. All through the night he dreamed of horseshoes, von Holke and Monk Flanagan.

Next day Howell and his flight took a jaunt over the lines just before noon and ran into a flight of Albatross ships. Phineas was attempting to outsmart a Jerry in one corner of the melee when he became conscious of a crawling sensation in the neighborhood of his stomach. He dug his fingers into the offending sector of his carcass, and the wasted motion almost cost the U.S. Treasury ten thousand dollars. Albatross lead ripped away a hunk of dashboard and Phineas went into a panicky zoom, his stick rammed right into his torso.

He went up and over, then found himself looking at the back of a kraut’s neck. A moment of self-restraint to trip the Vickers, and then Phineas indulged in a howl and squirmed in his seat. Something came out of his flying coat collar, something wriggly, with tiny feet that clawed at his neck and almost made him swoon. Leaving his Spad to fly almost by itself, the heretofore intrepid flyer made a grab for the thing, but it dodged his clutch and hopped to his chin. One more frantic grab and Phineas captured the squirming thing. It was a lizard, and as he held it up, it blinked defiantly into his face.

And then Phineas remembered. Monk Flanagan

had come up to his ship just before the take-off, to exchange a few words with him. The bum! And now he was back there on the drome laughing. Phineas shoved the animal into his pocket, buttoned the flap, and looked around him. The fight was over.

Lieutenant Pinkham got out of his pit back on the field and looked about belligerently. Howell shoved up his goggles and walked toward him. The flight leader’s face was anything but kind.

“What were you doin’ up there, you big stiff?” he yelled at Phineas. “Let us hold the bag, eh? You almost washed out two Spads doin’ tricks. Well, let me tell you something—”

“Yeah?” snapped Carbuncle, the unrestrained. “Let me do the ‘telling.’” And he reached into his pocket and pulled out the lizard. “Look at that damn thing. Monk planted it on me an’ it crawled all over me. I almost got killed an’—where is that ape?”

Howell’s anger fled before an onslaught of mirth. Roaring with laughter, he staggered for the support of a Spad.

“Haw-w-w-w-w! Haw-w-w-w-w!” contributed Bump Gillis. “An’ ya can’t slug the guy because he’s beat up to the limit now. Well, how does it feel to be a guinea pig, huh? The shoe’s on the other foot now, huh, ya big bum?”

“We’ll see whose face lasts laugh—*er*—laughs—*er*—” The outraged Phineas was stammering. “I’ll show ya, bums!”

From the lee of a hangar Monk Flanagan watched the Boonetown flyer stamp toward his hut. The latest addition to the Ninth Pursuit forgot his two black eyes; in fact, he felt very well indeed.

IN THE afternoon Monk spent an hour with the medicos and they worked wonders on his eyes. They assured him that in a day or so he would be able to fly. This news reached the lily-pad-like ears of Phineas and provoked hasty plotting.

Boonetown’s addition to the war did not join in mess at the drome that night. Instead he took a ride out in the wide open spaces on his bicycle and returned hours later under a blanket of darkness with a bag slung over one shoulder, and the erratic course of his means of locomotion testified to the fact that he was not carrying a load of hen feathers.

The mysterious burden was placed in a hangar in the care of Sergeant Casey, whose pockets at the moment were very empty of currency. Phineas corrected the impoverished condition of the

groundman, thereby acquiring a staunch and trap-lipped ally in skullduggery or whatever it was that he had up his sleeve. At the door of his cubicle the jokesmith was informed by Bump Gillis that Major Rufus Garrity desired his presence immediately—and not for a friendly tea.

The Old Man was pacing the floor when his pet aversion bearded his den.

“Oh, so you’re here, are you?” he growled. “The next time you leave this drome without my permission you won’t be working here any more. Where’ve you been, you fish-faced—”

“Out gittin’ some air,” replied Phineas nonchalantly. “The grub is getting terrible here, anyways. I had dinner at a Frog’s house an’ it was swell. Anyways, this drome ain’t big enough for me an’ that ape Flanagan. I want a transfer an’—”

“Oh, you do, do you?” bellowed the Old Man, doing a war dance. “I wish to hell I could give it to you. But you stay here and like it! I s’pose two mugs like you and Flanagan make me happy as a schoolgirl, eh? But you’ll take my orders, both of you, and I hope the Jerries have good luck when they bump into you. Get to bed, you lunkhead! Tomorrow you’ll see plenty of action. The Jerries are moving up. Von Holke and every ship in Germany will be over the lines, and you and Flanagan won’t get time to do any tricks. Get out of here, and I’ve warned you for the six hundredth and last time.”

“Sure,” agreed Phineas as he caught a squirming motion on the part of the C.O. “Sure,” and he did not dally. Just as, his feet hit the tarmac, he heard a terrific roar and knew that a lizard was exploring Major Rufus’ empennage and would soon make an exit via the C.O.’s neckband. And the little crawling thing belonged to Monk Flanagan. Oh, well! And Phineas began to run.

Lieutenant Phineas Carbuncle Pinkham did not go to bed. Working by candlelight, he and Sergeant Casey made some alterations on a Spad which would never have passed inspection in any air force. Halfway between the pit and the tail assembly they inserted a boxlike contraption in the fuselage, and had no end of difficulty in arranging the control wires so that they would not be fouled to any great extent.

“Well, there she is, Loot!” exclaimed Casey when the job was done. “I’m glad it isn’t me what’s flyin’ the thing. If you git off the ground, you’re lucky.”

THE new day dawned without a blemish. It promised to be a great flying day. Already guns were pounding in the distance. Jerry was getting ready to

work overtime. Howell’s Spads were warming up to the spirit of the occasion. Hissos howled while the pilots swigged their coffee.

With his vision cleared sufficiently to permit him to climb upstairs with the rest, Monk Flanagan grinned at his arch enemy as he wrapped a muffler about his thick neck.

“Today is when I git von Holke, Frog Face,” he informed Phineas tauntingly. “An’ I ain’t goin’ to do it with mirrors.”

“If ya do, ya mug,” snapped Carbuncle, Esquire, “I’ll come home leadin’ the Kaiser with a daisy chain. Don’t git in my way, ya baboon, as when I shoot, I don’t know my own strength.”

“Words, just words,” remarked Monk disdainfully.

“Awright, bums, let’s go!” yelled Captain Howell. “C’mon!”

The Old Man stood, legs wide apart, and watched the battle wagons jump away. However, one did not jump. It crawled along sluggishly and acted as if an anchor were hitched to it. This Spad belonged to Phineas Pinkham.

Slowly it accelerated speed and finally tore across the field, but the wheels gave no indication of desiring to leave the ground. Major Rufus was ready to give a flock of orders to gaping groundmen when the Spad at last rose listlessly. He shut his eyes, then looked again. Carbuncle’s ship was just clearing the branches of a tree with almost nothing to spare.

“Cripes!” groaned Sergeant Casey with relief and wiped sweat from his Hibernian brow.

Advance notices from G.H.Q. had not been exaggerated. The Four Horsemen indeed were riding wild all over the landscape when A flight reached the ozone over the Yankee trenches. Downstairs, machine guns were clattering. Jerry shells were kicking big hunks of France into the air. Thoroughly engrossed in keeping his Spad on even keel, Phineas was barely conscious of all the fuss. It seemed that Howell would never stop climbing, and A flight had grabbed all of fifteen thousand feet when their trucks were above the Heinie dugouts.

There is a rule in aerial combat about watching your flight leader. That day Phineas took exception to the rule. For hours one night he had wrestled with a problem involving the speed of airplanes against that of falling objects and had come to a solutibn which to his way of thinking was near enough to being correct.

A cumulus ceiling rolled beneath the high-flying Yanks. Phineas looked down through one great rift and his eyes bulged under his goggles. Howell might

have seen them, too, but Lieutenant Pinkham had his own ideas that day. Directly he dropped out of the formation and spun down through the cloudbank. Those Fokkers were von Holke's crowd, and they were back-sticking. Fine!

"The damn fool!" shouted Howell as he gave the signal. "He's spoiled a swell ambush. The dirty—"

Phineas swooped down, leveled out a thousand feet over and slightly ahead of the onrushing Tripes, then yanked a cord violently. A part of the Spad's blind spot fell away and a flock of heavy objects, semi-circular in shape, rained down. *Hauptmann* von Holke saw them coming and went into a momentary panic. He tried to skid out of his chosen path and gestured frantically to his wellborn buzzards to do likewise.

The Fokkers, however, had been clawing for the roof too fast. The sky literally rained horseshoes. One slammed down and smacked the knuckles of a Heinie hand which was on a Fokker stick. The owner howled with pain and let his ship go its way alone just long enough to side-swipe another Fokker. Above the steady Mercedes chant came an awful roar—a motor turning over minus prop.

ALL this, dear readers, happened in much less time than it takes to relate. Horseshoes! Horseshoes! Horseshoes! Dozens of them! And where was von Holke? Something had conked him on the top of his head so that according to him all kinds of lights were flashing oh and off in the sky. His Tripe staggered all over the heavens, seemingly unable to make up its mind just what to do.

Captain Howell and A flight came down and started mopping up the addled Junker pilots led by von Holke.

Phineas swooped down and grew dizzy attempting to follow von Holke's course. Suddenly his head cleared with a bang and he almost stood up in the pit as he saw a Spad whistle down from nowhere and smash lead at the king Fokker. Monk Flanagan! That lousy bum! He fell back into his seat and threw his Spad into a reckless headlong dive which carried his ship by Monk's just as his competitor shot more grief into the dizzy triplane.

"You ape!" howled Phineas. "Ya dirty, double-crossin'—"

In the Fokker's pit von Holke shook his head like a savage bull and opened his eyes. His head was one great big ache and his helmet was tightening up on him to make room for the igloo which one of Phineas'

horseshoes had built atop his close-cropped pate. Cursing and howling at the *verdammt* Yank who had tricked him once more, von Holke tried to sideslip out of the way of the pair of Spads which had driven him downstairs.

Now it is very well known among aviators that two hundred feet is not sufficient height in which to stunt a plane. Von Holke tumbled to the fact just as his left wing tip wiped out a bird's nest in the branches of a tall tree. Immediately the Fokker started doing tricks and the German pilot strove mightily to get it down on the ground right side up.

The falling Tripe hit one side with a splintering, thudding report before turning over and hugging the side of an old barn. Half a dozen doughs ran to the wreck and pulled a raging, punch-drunk von Holke from his cockpit.

Monk Flanagan picked out the nearest level spot in the vicinity to land. Phineas was not far behind him and, after almost ditching his Spad in landing, he jumped from the pit and ran as fast as his legs could carry him in Monk's wake. In no time the two bitter rivals were sitting on the prone form of the proud von Holke.

"It was me who shot him down, Frog Face!" insisted Monk, while Heinie shells burst all around them. "Didn' ya see me git him with that last burst?"

"You're cockeyed an' a liar!" retorted Phineas, pushing von Holke's face into the dirt. "Do ya see any bullet holes in this kraut? An' ya didn't bust up his ship. It was me that conked him. With a horseshoe! Look-it the bump on his dome!"

A Yankee officer came running up, gesturing wildly at the agitators. "Hey," he yelled, "you're going to get the Spads all blown up and yourselves, too, if you don't get to hell out of here. You're right in the middle of a scrap. I'll take charge of the kraut."

"I giss it'd be a good idea," opined Phineas. "Awright, but if this Heinie gets away, you'll be a private quicker'n you can blink. This is von Holke, and Phineas Pinkham brought him down. I—"

"Like hell you did!" howled Monk. "I'll punch you in the nose, ya—"

SUDDENLY there came to the ears of the militant pair a low rumbling sound like a herd of buffalo trying to beat a flock of Sioux Indians to the tape. In the distance, on the brow of a hill, a long blurred line of khaki was visible.

"The counter-attack," yelled the infantry officer. "Beat it, you bums!"

Blam! Phineas rocked back on his heels as a huge blob of fire appeared right where he had left his ship. Monk Flanagan stared. One Spad had absolutely vanished from the war, and it was Lieutenant Pinkham's ship.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" howled the Boonetown flyer. "Now I gotta stay. Git goin', Monk, or else I will have to tell the Old Man you exposed your ship to German shells an' did it on purpose. Ya see—"

"I'll git square with you for this, ya bum!" bellowed Monk as he started on the run for his ship.

But Phineas was not lending his ear. He allowed his captive to get to his feet and prodded him none too gently toward a dugout a hundred yards away.

"Well, von Hokum," he declared, "it was your own fault. Ya give me the idea about them horseshoes. Haw-w-w-w-w-w!"

"*Schwein!*" growled the Jerry. "If maybe it takes a hundtret years yet, still I vill get efen. *Ja. Ach Himmel!*" And he held his throbbing head in both hands as he was shoved into the dugout.

In due time Phineas Pinkham strutted the tarmac of the Ninth Pursuit like the cock of the walk. *Hauptmann* von Holke had admitted himself that the *verdammt*, horseshoe had bopped him aplenty; and had relieved him of his wits just long enough to allow his Fokker to carry him down into the area of conflict occupied by the driving doughboys.

Monk Flanagan swallowed his bitter pill and swore revenge. He put a lot of ants in a bunk in the hut where Phineas kept his extra shirt, only to find out later that he had picked the wrong bunk. And Bump Gillis immediately sought Monk out to cauliflower one of his ears. The man who had tried to usurp Phineas' throne was indeed in the doldrums.

Seeking some measure of satisfaction, he asked Lieutenant Pinkham to keep a certain promise and that was to take him to Barley Duck and to point out a certain officer who had hired three doughs to beat him up several days ago.

"Sure," agreed Phineas. "This is Sat'day night. He'll be in the Red Cow estaminet. When I see him. I'll nod an' you kin slug him."

So to Bar-le-Duc repaired Phineas and Monk, apparently the best of friends, but Major Garrity's brood took it all with a grain of salt. Gaiety reigned in the estaminet that night. Phineas stood leaning against the bar. Monk Flanagan, boiling over, sat at a table near the door, fists clenched. Once he had squared accounts here, he thought savagely, he would start a new offensive against Phineas Pinkham.

The representatives of three armies came, drank and left. Still Phineas made no sign. At length a tall officer in the uniform of a French officer entered. Phineas bowed and saluted perfunctorily. One eyelid dropped in Monk's direction significantly. Lieutenant Flanagan immediately rose to his feet and confronted the newcomer. One of his-fists shot out and landed on the man's chin. *Whack!* Monk Flanagan turned a cartwheel and fetched up against a trio of British officers.

"Ho, hum!" Phineas yawned and slid out of the door.

THREE hours later Lieutenant Phineas Carbuncle Pinkham himself stood looking into the irate orbs of Sir Rufus.

"So you helped Flanagan out, did you?" howled the major. "I suppose you didn't know that you sicked him onto the heavyweight boxing champion of Europe!" I suppose you—"

"Ain't a guy got a right to bow to a Frog orfiser?" interrupted Phineas indignantly. "When Carpentier came in, well—"

"And you've got a dame in Bar-le-Duc, haven't you, you crackpot?" followed up Garrity. "Maybe it was she who smiled at Monk that time, eh? I see it all now, you fathead! Well, Flanagan is under arrest for assaulting a French officer, two British colonels and wrecking an estaminet. And, as usual, I can't do a damn thing about it, seeing that you've got G.H. \Q. eating out of your hand. Some day I'll get you, Pinkham. And when I do—"

"This drome ain't big enough for me an' that vodyville wise guy," reiterated Phineas. "It'll be lots more peaceful around here if that bum goes to ferryin' crates or to Blois. He'll make a bum outa me, will he? Well—"

The Old Man pawed at his face for several moments, then looked up with a glaze over his eyes. "I give up," he groaned. "Get to hell out of here!"

"Sure," grinned Phineas. "An' here's a cigar, sir, an' I give you my word it ain't my brand." He turned and walked out. On the tarmac he stopped to jeer at one or two of his fellows.

"Well, who lasts—*er*—laughs lasts—now—huh? I giss—"

Bang! The noise came from Wings. Phineas gulped and swore indignantly. "An' I stole that cigar from Flanagan's hut! The dirty bum! The double-crossin' fathead! Wait'll—" He swallowed the rest of his speech and started on the run for his hut.