



Standing before the court-martial board, Dan Moore could not control his bitter anger

## Fools Fly High

Start now this magnificent story of the airmen whose skill and crazy daring was to conquer the mysteries of the sky

By LOUIS C. GOLDSMITH

**B**OTH of them are competent airmen, well fitted to instruct the cadets at the Army training school. But there the similarity stops, for **LIEUTENANT DAN MOORE** is big and reckless and ingenuously friendly, and **CAPTAIN ALVIN NAGEL** is a suave, graceful man, with a calculating intelligence. Both men are gamblers, but Moore never counts the odds, and it is that quality in the big man, along with his magnificent war record, that Alvin Nagel envies and hates. In those years immediately after World War I a flyer was expected to be a madman.

So, finally, Nagel challenges Moore to a test of courage. Together they go up in a plane and kick into a tailspin; they plummet

toward earth, until Nagel finally weakens and pulls the plane out of the spin. His vivid imagination has played him traitor; and afterward, when he has recovered from his terrible fear, he is even more determined to have revenge on the imperturbable Moore.

**N**AGEL goes about it with characteristic cleverness. He dares Moore to take crazy risks; regularly he wins Moore's salary in card games. A genius with cards, Nagel has never before stooped to sharper's tricks, but he does so now. Finally he sees a chance to get Dan Moore into serious trouble. **LIEUTENANT BUNNY BEST** has been ordered out to rescue the survivors of a crash, and Moore remarks to Nagel that he doubts Best's flying judgment. Later Moore discovers that Nagel has reported this to the commanding officer, **MAJOR ANTAI**, and apparently to Best himself.

Temporarily Dan Moore is acting as solo check pilot, and right now he has an unpleasant job to do. He suspects that **CADET JULIAN HOYT** is timing his maneuvers by sneaking a

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look at the tachometer, an unforgivable sin in Army flying; and if that's true, the cadet is finished. The situation is particularly difficult for Moore because he has just met Hoyt's sister, THERESA, and the girl's charm and lively interest in flying have strongly attracted him.

ON THE test flight Hoyt does cheat, using instruments, and Dan Moore is forced to report that to Major Antai at an officers' meeting. During that meeting Antai reprimands Moore for his criticism of Lieutenant Best's flying judgment, pointing out that the remark could have a dangerous effect. Also the major makes reference to the army reorganization bill, which is going to throw a number of officers out of the service. But Moore, confident because of his fine record, has paid no attention to the posted list of dismissed men.

After the officers' meeting CAPTAIN PATRICK, a war buddy of Moore's, reveals to him that Nagel has been using a marked deck in the poker games. Dan is furious, but Capt'n Pat convinces him that the smart thing to do is to work Nagel's own trick in the next game. While they are discussing this, they hear the thunder of a plane—Best returning from his rescue mission.

That's the night of the Cadet Solo Ball, and when Dan and Capt'n Pat reach the landing field, they find there an excited group of cadets with their girls. And they find tragedy. Best, attempting a foolishly daring landing, has cracked up; flames are geysering from his plane. As Dan Moore rushes to rescue the pilot, he is tortured by the thought that his criticism of Best's flying might have driven the man to take this risk. Nagel suddenly appears, wildly triumphant, proclaiming Moore's responsibility for the disaster. Then, before the cadets and their girls, Moore's anger breaks: He knocks down Captain Nagel. . . .

## CHAPTER VIII

### GIVE US A CRACKUP SONG

THE guard had been called out. Major Antai had the cadets assembled at one end of their recreation room. Their girls, who had come for the Solo Ball, were in the mess room where they had been dining when the crash occurred. Mrs. Antai, and Mrs. Lant, the official chaperon, were with them, probably trying to explain this thing, trying to lessen its horror.

The commanding officer talked in his mild, dry voice, facing these young men

who would some day be army pilots—if they could take things like this crash impersonally.

The cadets were all standing; all of them but Cadet Tracy, who sat in one of the lounge chairs, both hands clutched to his face, rocking a little in his chair. Jensen, the cadet commander, stood in the forefront, his square, bony face expressionless.

Captain Patrick and Lieutenant Dan Moore stood beside the major. Antai knew that these two war pilots had the entire confidence of the young men. They were his moral support. Their presence would help to quiet the cadets.

Lieutenant Moore had pulled on a leather flying coat. Nobody there could know the agony that each movement cost him. His arms and shoulders were raw where the seared skin had pulled off.

"These are things," the major said, "that happen in flying. They were commonplace during the war, but in the future they will happen less often. You boys are flying in the future. Remember that and forget this."

The cadets shifted uneasily but when Cadet Jensen spoke he seemed to voice their feelings. "Don't worry about us, sir. Anyway, I'm not going to have bad dreams over it."

Some of that tense strain left the room. They were smiling, in a nervous, uncertain manner.

Dan Moore had to clench his teeth against the sickness that was in him. Those smiles were forced bravado now. But how long would it be before they hardened into a natural expression of indifference? How long before these fresh, wholesome kids lost their regard for human life and built for themselves a protective shell of cynicism, a sneer for death and suffering? And what did that do to a man? What had it done to him?

But that was a part of it, to avoid an inward searching, an urge to break through the shell and touch life—the simple, commonplace emotions of normal living.

The major was speaking again. "Fortu-

nately, Lieutenant Moore was able to get the pilot's safety belt loosened and drag him clear of the fire. He has some broken bones, but the report is he'll live—providing he didn't breathe any of the flames."

CADET TRACY dropped his hands from his face; a sudden, jerky movement: "Yes, he'll live," he said, voice high and thin. He moved toward the officers like a man walking in his sleep.

Captain Patrick stepped to the door. "Corporal!" he spoke sharply.

"He'll live, all right, damn his soul! But what about those two in the rear cockpit? I saw them . . ." he choked, sobbing and laughing.

Captain Patrick came inside, a non-com of the guard with him. "Cadet Tracy is ill," he snapped. "Take him to the hospital immediately!"

"I saw them," Tracy shouted, dragged away by the corporal. "I saw their feet kicking against the fabric—trying to get out. I saw—"

Lieutenant Moore spoke loudly to drown out the hysterical voice: "It was a crack-up, men," he said. "Look at me! I've cracked 'em up from hell to breakfast."

Tracy's voice came faintly from outside: "They breathed the flames, all right . . ."

It couldn't stop here. They had all heard that voice. The major was looking at Moore, commanding him to go on. Moore saw their faces, grotesque, distorted as though they were a mirage flickering in the heat waves.

Dan's voice lowered. "I've cracked them up, but I'm here, men. And I'm still whole."

They were listening.

Cadet Lambert interrupted: "Heck, Capt'n Dan, we're not babies. We knew airplanes cracked up and burned up. And you're not foolin' us with the coat. We saw you go into that fire and we know you got burns an' should be in the hospital right now."

"Thanks, Lambert. But it goes deeper than just laughing it off. I know, believe

me. When it's Lights Out you'll be lying in your blankets and then all of a sudden you'll be in that plane, hoping to clear the fence and telephone line. Then you'll be in the flames, wondering how it feels to breathe them."

Moore paused. "Not only that, but pretty soon it won't have to be dark; you won't have to be in bed; to see and feel it. The thought of it'll come when you're flying. Well, then you're through, all washed up. If a Benzine Board doesn't kick you out of flying something else will—a bad crackup."

"So here's the cure. I wouldn't lie to you in this and you know it. A man's brain can stand only so much. At that point nature cuts the switches. You may move after that; you may walk and talk but it'll be automatic stuff. Upstairs here," he tapped his head, "it's all a blank."

"It's happened to me in a couple of bad crackups. It's happened to other pilots I've talked with. It's—well, ask Pat here. An engine jerked out of his plane, dive bombing."

"That's right," Capt'n Pat affirmed. "The last thing I remembered of that day and for a week after, was getting the key to the ammunition shed. Don't remember flying at all."

"So," Moore picked it up, "you don't need to wonder how it feels burning up alive. You won't be there—only your carcass." He grinned. His voice crackled with sarcasm. "An' the way most of you fly I'd say you're too wet to burn. My personal opinion is you're the dumbest bunch of cadets it's been my misfortune to instruct."

"Aw, not the dumbest, Capt'n Dan!" The cadet was laughing. And it was unforced laughter. "Give us a break!"

Moore grunted.

"You, Hartwell . . . I'll give you a break when you learn to tighten up on your verticals. And you, Munson; you can't do stall wingovers for sour owl spit. Get on that piano stool, Jackson. Lord knows you're no good in a cockpit. Give us *Dapper Dan, the Railroad Man*. Naw,

give us a crackup song. And remember, you sons, it's a good landing if you can walk away from it."

*The young cadet went a-stunting,  
And as 'neath the wreckage he lay . . ."*

DAN MOORE sucked the cool night air into his lungs. I'll always hate that song! The finest gang of fellows in the world. A hundred and nineteen—a hundred eighteen, now that Tracy's washed up. Please don't hang onto my arm, Major. I can walk all right."

"I'll go with him to the hospital, suh," Pat insisted.

"I want to thank you for what you did in there, Lieutenant," the major said, in precise, parade-ground voice. "I'm sorry you struck Nagel, a superior officer."

"You saw it?"

"And too many others saw it," the major said. "Officers, cadets, mechanics—and those girls. Nagel will have to be transferred to another post. The hell of it is, this thing tonight might have saved you."

"We better get on to the hospital, Major," Pat broke in hurriedly. "Dan's pretty badly scorched, suh."

"Very well. I'm sorry, Lieutenant. You'll have to consider yourself under arrest in quarters—in hospital. Good night, gentlemen."

The boots clumped hollowly on the boardwalk leading to officers' row.

## CHAPTER IX

### HOSPITAL LANDING

LIEUTENANT MOORE lay on the high, narrow bed in an officer's ward of the post hospital. Prent, his wardmaster, had fixed pillows so that he could sit up without putting weight on tender shoulders. They had taken the paraffin-oil bandages off and he could move his arms. There was some pain left but it was the good, healthy-feeling pain of wounds that were almost healed.

Capt'n Pat moved restlessly about the small room. From his oil-splattered face

Dan knew he'd been flying a rotary-engined plane. He had stopped by on his way to quarters.

"I may be wrong," Pat concluded his arguments, "but I just got a hunch that Nagel didn't tell Bunny Best what you said about his flying. I told the major that and I think maybe he's got the same idea. Anyway, nobody's allowed to visit Best."

Moore fingered the coarse white hospital sheet. "How is Best, Pat? Be honest, fella."

Pat sat down. "Well, his lungs ain't burned, Dan. Only something seems wrong with his head, even though they can't find any skull injuries."

"He's still raving?"

"Yeah. But none of it makes sense. It stands to reason, Dan, that if Nagel told him and if he came back here that night because of what you said—well, that's what he'd be ravin' about."

"I don't know, Pat. He got an awful jolt; enough to scramble a man's brains."

Pat jerked to his feet and stood over his friend. "Now look here, Dan, you're makin' a lot of somethin' about nothin'. Can't you see what Nagel's doin' to you? He says you caused that crackup and, by Harry, he's got you talked into thinkin' the same thing."

Moore's jaw was stubborn. "You know how flyers are, Pat. If you started a story around camp that I couldn't do an outside loop, I'd probably try one, even though any fool knows they're impossible. Well, that's what I did to Best."

Pat shrugged resignation. "All right. If you wanta help Nagel crucify you." Anger twisted his chubby face. "And that's not all Nagel's done to you. Remember the bet he made you wouldn't run your car through that fruit stand?"

Moore grinned. "I won more than enough for the damages."

"Yeah. But you spent the night in jail. That ain't helpin' your army files."

"Don't be a fool, Pat. Things like that don't get on our records. Everybody knows it takes a fool to fly. They make allow-



ances for us looking for a little outside excitement—just so we don't hurt anybody."

MOORE was puzzled by the soberness of Pat's face. "You mean they *used* to make allowances, Dan." He turned away, with an abrupt movement; walked to the door and back.

"Things are changed in the Air Service, Dan. Used to be all they asked for was good flyin' and fightin'. Now—I don't know—seems like they talk more about careful flying and good formation work an' navigation—things we used to laugh about, over a bottle of good lickin'."

Moore chuckled at Pat's tone. "Hasn't it always been so? Haven't the brass-collared kiwis always preached it to us? But the flyers know it's all bunk." He bent sidewise to get a cigarette from his table. "Who was one of the best men we had overseas?" he demanded, through the tobacco smoke.

Pat grinned. "You weren't any slouch at it yourself, Dan."

Moore waved this aside. "I'm talkin' about topnotchers. I'm talking about Eddy Rickenbacker, for instance. The flyin' fool. That's what a lot of us called him." Moore leveled his finger. "Was he careful? Was he all those things you've mentioned? Lord, no! It was a red-letter day when Eddy made a three-point landing and nobody ever gave him any medals on navigation. But could he knock 'em down!" Moore settled back on the pillows. "There's your answer," he concluded.

Pat seemed suddenly anxious to get away from this subject. He agreed with Dan's contentions. And yet . . . well things were changing.

He sat down on one of the visitors' chairs. "Nagel got that deck of marked cards back," he told Moore. "Remember he came into my room that night just before the crackup? Musta took 'em then."

"But I'm getting four more marked decks from the same outfit, in Chicago. I talked to Frank, downtown at the pool-hall. He knew how to get ahold of them."

"Better forget it, Pat. I've an idea Nagel could take you with your own deck. How's everything else?"

"Just so-so. Tracy resigned. Rest of the cadets are gettin' along all right. Say, Dan, would you mind talkin' to young Hoyt?"

"Does he know he's up for Benzine?"

"Yeah. But he don't blame either of us for gettin' kicked out, Dan. Funny thing is he didn't know he was cheating. I'll swear it. He thought usin' instruments was a good idea."

Moore wanted to ask about Hoyt's sister. He'd never forget that look she had given him the night of the crash. "Sure, I'll be glad to talk to Hoyt," he told Pat.

HE LAY back with his eyes half-closed, when Pat had gone. But his eyes came wide open as a Liberty pounded the air above the hospital. It backfired on closed throttle.

Moore waited tensely in the following silence. "Blast that throttle," he muttered.

Prent, the wardmaster, shoved his good-natured face in the open doorway. "You-all needin' somethin', Capt'n Dan?" he inquired in undiluted Cracker drawl.

"Take a look, Prent. See if that D. H. landed all right."

Prent came back into the room. "Hit looked all right to me, Capt'n. Lawd, suh, you-all been landin' ever ship come in this whole week."

Moore relaxed, grinning. Prent made a fuss over his pillows and over filling his water glass. He left the room but returned almost immediately.

"Company, suh," he told Moore. His manner indicated something unusual about this company.

Cadet Julian Hoyt and his sister stood in the open doorway.

Moore's startled glance changed to truculence because of the girl's presence. She seemed to understand this. She moved quickly to the bedside, her gray eyes meeting his steadily.

"Don't order me out," she begged, "until I've had a chance to apologize."

Young Hoyt was beside her. "You see, sir, she didn't understand, that night."

"Not only then," the girl's voice showed anger at herself, "but I didn't understand anything that happened that day. And yet I passed judgment on you."

Moore's first annoyance melted under the girl's sincerity. He smiled. "All of this is a bit confusing. But won't you sit down?"

"No," Theresa Hoyt said. "I've apologized. I'll leave now."

"Why leave? Perhaps I should apologize for knocking him down in front of you. Let's forget it and be friends."

"Would you expect that? After you had my brother dismissed from the cadet training?"

"Now, sis! Captain Moore simply did his duty. You promised me you wouldn't—"

"All right. I won't. But why is it any crime to use an instrument in flying?"

Moore's smile acknowledged her persistence. "I'll tell you why," he said. "It's because you can't depend on them. In this one case, your brother depended on his tachometer as an indication of airspeed. In other words, if you dive the engine hasn't any load to pull, so it speeds up. So you turn that reasoning around and say that if the engine speeds up, more revolutions per minute show on the tachometer, then you must be in a dive."

**J**ULIAN HOYT had sat down, campaign hat with its white cadet band crushed between skinny legs, his body bent forward, face alight with eagerness. "And what's wrong with that reasoning, sir?"

Moore smiled at this eagerness. "Because you get to depending on it. You get so that when your tachometer speeds up you want to pull the stick back, to get out of the dive."

"Yes. That's right, sir."

"Well, then you get into thick weather, depending on that. You can't see the ground. Your tack r.p.m.'s. increase. You pull back on the stick. But the devil of it is, my boy, you're just as apt to be in a

tailspin. And in that case the harder you pull on the stick the worse the spin gets. So you crash."

A quick spasm crossed the girl's face. She controlled it, smiling uncertainly. "You've thought about those things, haven't you? I've wondered."

Moore squinted at her. "You mean about instruments?"

She shook her head.

"No. About crashing. About getting killed—yourself."

"I'm human," he said. "But I don't let it bother me. A man can't in this business."

"No," she admitted. "You wouldn't."

"Don't pay any attention to her," Julian advised. "What you didn't mention about that tachometer business is, there's other instruments. You've got to use all of them at once."

Moore nodded absently. He was thinking of what the girl had said about him not being afraid of death. There was nothing complimentary intended; no flattery for his courage. If anything it was the reverse.

"There's inclinometers and airspeed meters," Hoyt continued, "and there's that Sperry turn indicator."

Moore gestured impatiently. "They'll all fail you. That turn indicator works like one of those fancy spinning tops that balance themselves on a string. Well, an airplane isn't a string. I've upset those instruments time and again till they didn't know left from right or upside down."

The boy made a quick gesture.

"But if you could just keep your ship exactly level and straight, sir—then you'd have it."

Moore waved this aside. "I'm not going into all the details. I'm just telling you that you've got to see the ground—the horizon to fly. Take my word for it. I've been flying quite a few hours."

"That's just it," Hoyt agreed. "A man'd have to be good at flying before he could hope to do it."

"Do what?"

"Why, fly by instruments, sir."

## CHAPTER X

## YOU CAN'T HELP FLYING

MOORE examined the two faces that were studying him with such intent, vital eagerness. This persistence should make him angry. Instead he felt an amused sympathy, as a grown person does for children who persist in the impossible.

"Trick," he said, unconsciously using her nickname, "you two are the most persistently stubborn people I've ever met. Now let's forget this foolishness about instruments. You're lucky, Hoyt, to be getting out of this flying business. It really isn't a business. Just a form of insanity."

Both pairs of eyes met his, incredulously. "But I'm going to keep on flying, sir!" Hoyt exclaimed. "Just the same as you are. We can't help it, Lieutenant."

It seemed to Dan that his case was a little different.

"You see," Hoyt explained, "I—we have a little money our folks left us. A good jewelry store. My father was a watchmaker." Hoyt laughed. "An Irish watchmaker, if you can imagine that. He taught me the trade."

"Then you two children go back to it. Forget this foolishness."

Trick Hoyt spoke with asperity. "You talk as though we were infants. And you were a million years old. I'm eighteen and Red's almost twenty."

"We've got some ideas, sir. They may be nutty. But I'm going to learn how to fly well enough to test them out. And so—well, the way things are, we thought you might be interested."

Dan was vaguely uneasy. He couldn't help these two youngsters. Yet he felt sorry for the boy and a little responsible. He was the one who had figured out Hoyt's amazing progress in flying, his being ready to solo after five hours of dual instruction.

Hoyt was talking: "Five hundred dollars for an OX Jenny, new, still in the crates. And down at Ellington they've got two hangars full of Thomas Morse scouts. Some guy bought up the whole lot of them

at fifteen dollars each. He only wants a hundred and fifty, as is and where they are.

"And in San Diego . . . well, sir, a fella can pick up these wartime ships for almost nothing. So it wouldn't cost so much to get together a whole flight of planes."

"Wait a minute, Hoyt. There's no flying outside the Army. Maybe a few tramp barnstormers, but they're living from hand to mouth. Fly a passenger, get a square meal."

"You mean fly a passenger, get drunk."

"Drinking goes with flying, Hoyt. Fill your ship with gasoline and yourself with booze. That's what keeps 'em in the air. That's why I'm telling you two—stay away from it."

"You're no booze hound."

"I drink my share or more. Be practical, Hoyt. You get ten dollars for every passenger. But there's darned few ground-lubbers with nerve enough to take a ride."

"What about exhibitions?"

"All washed up. Last one I saw was about nineteen thirteen. Barney Oldfield and—I think it was a flyer named Johnson. They packed a county fairground. The main feature was Barney, in a four-wheel drive Fiat, racing the airplane around a mile track. But that was before people knew what airplanes looked alike. That's all done for."

HOYT had been waiting impatiently for him to finish. "I think you're wrong, Lieutenant. Remember what they called a well-known flight of planes during the war?"

"You mean a circus?"

"That's right. And that's where you would come in. You're an ace. Well maybe we could find some more famous flyers. Anyway, we'd get a half-dozen or more planes together and go around the country showing people how it was done over there."

Moore's eyes took on a distant look. "Dog fights, eh? Make a sort of picture for them—a story. Here comes the enemy, here we go out to fight him down."

"That's it," eagerly, "you get the idea. And bombs—flour in paper bags—set off a little dynamite on the ground when they hit. Maybe get somebody to walk out on a wing, hang onto a strut. And parachutes, too."

Moore lay back on the pillows, chuckling. "Hoyt, you've got an imagination, all right. Not so crazy as it sounds, either. Magazines 're full of stories about the big brave war aces—I'd spell it a different way. But there's no doubt it'd have pull. I'll bet somebody does cash in on it."

Hoyt was on his feet. "And you're the fella, Lieutenant."

"Now look here, Hoyt—"

"Yes, sir. You're not going to stop flying just because that darned reorganization kicks you out of the army. We'll—what's the matter, sir?"

"Out . . . of . . . the . . . Army!"

"What's the—Lieutenant, didn't you—you didn't know about it!"

Moore took a deep, shaky breath. So Pat, old well-meaning Pat, had kept the news from him as long as he could. They all knew about it. All but him. He hadn't read the reorganization bill. So his name *was* on the list. He was going to be kicked out of the Army—out of flying.

He held himself quiet, as the full weight of it struck in. It was so plain to him, now that he knew. The way they had all avoided talking about that reorganization. The embarrassed silences when he'd expressed sympathy for the other officers who were let out.

But why was it being done? He wasn't old. He wasn't twenty-five yet. There were years of flying in him, providing he didn't crack up. Perhaps that was it. They were afraid of his recklessness. Of course! Pat had said as much, telling of the change in Air Service policy.

He'd said more. That about Nagel—about their bet, when he ran his car through the front end of a store. And there was that tailspin test of nerve, when he and Nagel spun down from four thousand and Nagel had lost his nerve at the last moment and pulled out.

That was why Nagel was trying to force onto him the blame for Lieutenant Best's crackup. Nagel had been hating him all this time, planning revenge, at the same time pretending friendliness.

HE WAS aware, dimly, that Hoyt and his sister were staring at him, with something akin to horror in their expressions.

Theresa Hoyt stepped swiftly forward, laid a slender hand over his. There were tears in her eyes.

This wouldn't do. He'd have to cover up some way or other. This girl was staring into his mind.

"Dan . . . Dan Moore!" Her voice choked. She bent, and he felt the softness of her lips on his forehead. "Just don't think of it," she begged. "We'll fly. Of course we'll fly. And in a better way, Dan Moore."

With this strange promise, she left. He was alone—terribly alone.

His hand moved up to his temple. He examined, curiously, the dampness on his fingers. A woman had kissed him and cried over him, as though he were a baby.

What was this, anyway? He couldn't fly. Well, he hated flying. He'd hated it ever since the war. So what the hell? He was getting out, while his record was still clean as a hound's tooth, so far as flying went.

Pat was right about Nagel. He'd been lying to him all these months, with his pretended friendliness. Lying to him and cheating him in cards and letting him win the money back in wild bets, like that crashing his car into the fruit store. That was to smear his service record and get him kicked out.

And Nagel was lying about Best. They'd have the proof of that when Best's mind cleared. He wasn't responsible for that crash; for those men killed and burned up. Best would clear that.

Moore relaxed a little in the bed. Sure, Best would clear him of responsibility for that crash. And that was the only blot on his flying record.



"Jest stopped by tuh tell you-all, Capt'n Dan." Prent, the wardmaster, stood just inside the door in the attitude of an old woman gossiping over the fence. "Bunny—I mean, Lieutenant Best, he jest kicked the bucket, suh. Made a mighty big floppin' aroun' about doin' it, suh."

Moore sat straight up in bed, ignoring the pain of his burns. "He—did he regain his senses? Did he talk rationally before he died?"

"Law' no, suh. He jest up an' started floppin'. Nex' thin' he's daid. Capt'n Dan, d'you-all think I could evah learn tuh fly, suh?"

## CHAPTER XI

### TRAIN TO NOWHERE

DAN took his two suitcases from the colored boy and tossed him a quarter. The Pullman porter recognized him immediately. Dan and Pat and other officers had made a number of holiday trips on the Fort Meyer train. He remembered the last one. He'd been feeling high. He'd paid this man five dollars for a pint of moonshine, giving him a twenty dollar bill and telling him to keep the change for a tip.

"Aft'noon, Capt'n suh. You let me carry them baggages, suh."

Moore winced at the title. "I've got lower three," he said, extending his ticket.

The porter brushed the seat with his whiskbroom and went off for some comfort pillows, giving Moore the impression that he was the only worthwhile man in that car.

Moore sat down and stared at the other seat. He wished the train would pull out and leave the little Florida town behind; leave behind the shame of that military trial he had faced for striking Nagel.

He saw the court, as it had fronted him, in an impassive row behind the long table. It was a general court, all of the officers ranking him; colonels, lieutenant colonels, majors and captains, who took their places amid the tinkling, chilly rattle of sabers.

He, Lieutenant Moore, had struck a

superior officer, before witnesses, including persons of civilian status. And these men were here to judge him for that act.

The judge advocate was a slender, gray-haired little man with a brain as sharp as his hard blue eyes. He was like a small terrier in his handling of the prosecution. He was a calvary officer and made little effort to hide his dislike of the Air Service; of men like Lieutenant Moore who had no understanding nor respect for military traditions.

Moore's plea in abatement, claiming justifying provocation, was ruled inadmissible, but not until examination had brought out the remarks he made about Lieutenant Best's flying ability and the crash resulting in the death of four men.

Nagel calmly denied what Moore charged him with saying the night of the crash, and Moore was unable to remember, under sharp questioning of the judge advocate, the exact words used by Nagel. When the time came for this testimony he didn't care to remember them. What difference did the words make? It was the intention behind them.

Moore's sullen defiance increased. At the end, facing those nine men who represented all the dignity and justice of the military, he refused the right allowed him to make a final statement.

Bitterly he tendered his resignation, tossed his lieutenant's commission into their faces. The resignation was refused, but Moore was granted an indefinite leave of absence. As for the court-martial decision, it might not be announced for months, since the case must be reviewed by various Army officials. Whatever the decision was, Moore was finished because of the reorganization. But the trial had stripped him of honor.

"ORANGES, bananas, chewing gum . . ." Moore jerked to his feet and stood facing Theresa Hoyt. Actually she did have a small basket of oranges.

"They're awfully good," she said, with a kind of wistful defiance in her face and voice, motioning toward the fruit.

"Yes." He cleared his throat, searching for words. "Yes, I remember I thought so, too, when I first came down here. You get tired of them, though." He stood uncertainly, trying to read her intentions, trying to be casual.

She sat down in the other chair, still with that air of daring him to object, yet pleading with him not to. "I don't think I ever would." She bit into one of the skins, revealing beautifully even teeth whose whiteness contrasted sharply with the golden color of the orange.

Her eyes examined him gravely over the fruit. "I mean, get tired of them," she explained, starting to peel it.

"You're . . . traveling north?" The commonplace words came mechanically from his tongue. It seemed that he was speaking them over a dead distance that they both refused to recognize.

"Yes. Red and I. Traveling north." She tilted her head and dropped a segment of the fruit in her mouth. "Now you," she commanded, "open up."

For a moment he failed to understand. He smiled then self-consciously and opened his mouth.

"Good?" she inquired.

He was chuckling, tasting the orange. "Good in a lot of ways, Trick. I was sitting here feeling sorry for myself."

"And running away from that farewell dinner the other officers are giving you."

"They'll understand. I left a note for Pat."

"Of course," she agreed. "They'll understand. I hate farewells, anyway. Don't you? Where are you going?"

"Chicago. Newspaper work."

Her eyes dropped away from his. "Fine! That's just fine."

"I did a little of that work in high school and college." He added, "I only got in two years of college before . . . the war came along."

A pause followed. He said, impulsively, without intending to play on words: "You're a funny little trick."

She acknowledged this with a small smile. "I'm Scotch and Irish. A person's

bound to be queer with that mixture in them. And besides I'm a sort of tomboy. I'd always rather play baseball than with dolls."

She talked in a quick, nervous way, trying to put him at ease, trying to cover that specter of his past. "We were all that way. My grandmother used to turn windlass for grandad. He was a miner. In a small way." She motioned upward with her hands. "You know, they have to get the ore out of the hole—the shaft."

Moore nodded.

"Once she baked dried apple pies and sold them to the other miners so she could hire a man to do assessment work. Grandad had gotten mauled by a bear, a grizzly. I lived with Granny when she was very old. She always told me that a woman should know how to bake pies and stick by their men. . . . Here comes Red."

Young Hoyt had entered the coach, was coming down the aisle.

The train started moving. "And can you?" he asked. The question didn't seem trivial to him.

"Yes," she said. "I can bake good apple pies."

JULIAN HOYT approached diffidently. "Good evening, sir," he greeted. It seemed that he felt the need of explaining his presence. "We just happened to be going—"

"To Chicago," his sister broke in.

He seemed surprised.

"We might as well," she said carelessly. "It's not much further around. Lieutenant Moore is going to Chicago, too, Red."

"Oh. Well, that's fine. We'll have a chance to talk."

Moore looked at the brother and sister, a thought edging into his mind. "Say, where do you two live?"

Hoyt grinned and sat down. "In Idaho. In Craig Point, Idaho. Bet you've never heard of it before."

"No-o. That is, not the city." He brightened. "But I knew a man from Boise, Idaho. He transferred to our outfit from the 116th Engineers."

"Yes, sir. That regiment was made up from the Idaho national guard, sir."

"Let's drop the army stuff," Moore suggested. "You call me Dan; I'll call you Red." His eyes questioned the girl.

"All my friends call me Trick," she prompted.

Moore found it pleasant, listening to their talk about Craig Point, where it was a problem to keep salt grass from encroaching on the lawns, where thousands of wild horses had been shipped out to the Allies.

He asked them about gun fights and Indians and they met this question with blank looks and then laughter.

"It's not quite that wild," Trick said.

There was no talk about the Army or flying. Several times Red approached the latter subject, only to be hurriedly detoured by his sister.

It wasn't until the next afternoon that Red Hoyt broached the subject. "I've got something to show you, Dan," he said.

He and his sister exchanged glances. "I think I'll wander through the cars," she decided. "If I only had a nice lace handkerchief to drop I might bring me back a man."

They went to the Hoyts' section and Red pulled an old suitcase from under the seats. "I was afraid to check it," he explained. "They might get wrecked worse than they are."

**H**E OPENED the case with a certain air of reverence and removed a cloth wrapping from an old turn-and-bank indicator.

Moore's face tightened. He started to speak, but Hoyt interrupted hurriedly. "They're not government property. They've all been written off as useless."

"What good are they, then?"

"Don't you remember me telling you? I'm a watchmaker."

"You think you can repair them?"

"I can try. I'm going to try. Of course I'll have to build up my own laboratory. Pressure and vacuum and all that, for testing."

There was a disapproving silence.

"You don't want to see the rest of them?" Hoyt asked, a wistful note in his voice.

"Nope. No, I don't want to see the rest of them."

Hoyt closed the suitcase and strapped it. His mouth tightened a little.

"Sit down," Moore said. He continued. "Apparently you don't take my word for it that instrument flying is impossible."

Hoyt clasped his hands between knees, sitting on the seat's edge. "I don't say that it is, or isn't," he said defensively. "But I want to find out. I've heard of pilots flying when they couldn't see the ground."

"For a short time, perhaps. Not longer than five minutes. You can hear a lot of high stories about flying, Red."

"Yeah. I know. Barracks flying."

Moore examined Hoyt's thin, freckled face. It was the face of a dreamer, of an idealist. "Hoyt," he said, slowly, "I think you and your sister are two of the nicest youngsters I've ever met. And two of the most stubborn. Can't you get this flying bug out of your system?"

Hoyt spoke slowly. "I—we don't want to. What if the Wright brothers had done that? Why, the same year they flew there was a scientific article published that proved flying was absolutely impossible."

Moore took a deep breath. "There's no use in me going over the reasons why instrument flying can't be done. But look. You know about the semi-circular canal in our ears, that gives us a sense of balance? That little organ is so sensitive that it would be impossible for man to reproduce it. And yet it fails us in flying. When we can't see the horizon, we don't know whether we're right-side-up or not."

"Here's another thing," Moore continued, taking a different angle. "Are you aware that even birds can't fly without seeing the ground or horizon?"

Hoyt looked startled. This statement seemed to put him at a loss for a moment. Then he grinned into Moore's earnest face. "They can't loop, either. But we can—you can."

MOORE sat back in the seat and for a thoughtful time watched the passing landscape. He spoke, still with his eyes turned away. "You and your sister can very well ruin yourselves with this thing, Hoyt. You can spend every cent your folks left you. You may even kill yourself." His eyes met Julian Hoyt's. "Does your sister realize that?"

Hoyt nodded soberly. "Yes. We've talked that all over. She's just as much in favor of it as I am."

"Does she realize that it'll take months, perhaps years?"

"Yes."

Moore jerked around impatiently. "Damn it all, what good'll it do? Just granting you do learn to fly without seeing the ground?"

Hoyt wet his lips. "That's the only thing that keeps aviation from being worthwhile; keeps it from being a commercial success."

"It *is* worthwhile. Right now! Given a chance it'd be one of the finest weapons in the world. You've read what General Mitchell has to say about airplanes and battleships. That man knows more about what he's talking about than all the gold-braid admirals in the navy!"

Hoyt spoke slowly. "If the airplane is to be used only as a war weapon, it would be better if it never had been developed. If it is a good weapon for protection it'll be just as good for destruction. It'll be worse than poison gas. What about bombing cities?"

Moore shrugged. "Give me a few good men in Spads and I'll shoot down all the bombers they can put in the air."

Hoyt's voice was eager. "I know you can. You've done it, as everybody in this country knows. That's why we need you."

"Oh." Dan Moore leaned back in the seat. "I've wondered about that, just a little. How you and Trick happened to be on this same train. You've still got that goofy circus idea in mind. You still want to start a flying show and use my name to put it over."

Trick Hoyt had come back. She sat

down by her brother. "Red might get another man. There's more than one famous war pilot in this country."

"Then you'd better look him up. I'm through with flying. Through—washed up. D'you understand?"

"It's not only your name," Hoyt said, simply. "It's because I trust you. And you're the natural man for the job."

"Not me," Moore shook his head. "I'm no Wright, nor Alexander Bell, nor—I've no desire to have my statue in the parks. And besides I'm through with flying. And besides I'm thirsty and I know a man who knows a man who may know where I can get a drink."

Moore stood up. "Goodbye, youngsters. You'll soon forget this."

Trick Hoyt's face was white, so that the small dabs of rouge stood out on her cheeks, and her eyes seemed enormous. "He won't forget it. I won't let him. Dan Moore, haven't you any imagination at all? Can you see any farther ahead than your nose?"

Moore bowed. "My vision is perfect. Absolutely perfect. The flight surgeon told me so, on my last 609."

Trick's eyes blazed as she stood up, facing him. "You're a fool, Dan Moore, if you think you can give up flying. Just a fool!" Her eyes brimmed with angry tears. "Yes, by heck, and I'll prove it to you. I'll—oh, go away! Go on and get yourself drunk."

## CHAPTER XII

### DON'T CALL ME EDITOR

WHICH the ex-lieutenant proceeded to do, in a mild, comfortable way. And while he was doing this he got into a small-time poker game in the smoking car. And during the game a cotton broker said something that planted a seed in the flyer's mind.

It was just a chance remark.

"There's money in these small country newspapers, I tell you. The right man—a fellow with brains who'll stick—can make a fortune outta them."

The next morning Dan Moore had a half pint of moonshine left. While shaving he placed this with what he'd had the night before and the results were gratifying. It was too late for breakfast and too early for lunch. But such trifles didn't bother a man who was going to edit and own a country newspaper—and make a fortune.

The porter told him that the next town had a population of about five thousand and that there was another smaller town just across the river. That suited Dan's purpose exactly. After he'd gotten established in the first town he'd start another paper across the river.

He sent the porter for his baggage and suggested that he might find another pint of moonshine while he was at it. There was a small delay in his destiny while the train pulled in and stopped, but Dan Moore was in a mood to forgive the railroad company.

A man in bib overalls and an old overseas cap took the suitcases from the porter and said, aggressively, to Moore: "You wanna go to a hotel."

It seemed a good idea. Moore got into a Ford touring car and tried to find a place in the seat where the springs didn't prod through the covering.

The hotel was old but at one time it must have been grand enough to live up to its name. It was the Palace Hotel, and his bathroom had the biggest tub he'd ever seen. But there was no stopper for it. He plugged it with a face towel and started the water running.

He took a pull of the moonshine. The trouble with small town newspapers, he decided, was that they didn't try out new ideas and didn't have enough features. Always the same old thing.

He'd fix that.

He took a look to see if the tub was filled. It wasn't. And what water there was in it was snuff-colored and looked gravy thick. He took another drink from the pint bottle and tucked it into his hip pocket and left, without bothering to shut off the water.

HE FOUND the office of the *Selma Bugle* on a side street. It was a narrow building wedged in between a plumbing shop and a garage. The first sight of it was so depressing that Moore went back to the cafe on the corner and got some ham and eggs and coffee. The girl who waited on him told him that the *Selma Bugle* was the only paper in town and that it was a weekly.

He found that it wasn't so bad, after he'd gotten past the small show-window display of funeral and birthday cards, covered with fly specks and gray with dust. There was a comfortable smell of printers ink and the regular clank of a press came from the rear regions.

A deserted, railed-in space spread to his right and to the left was a door marked *Editor's Office*. A typewriter clicked fitfully inside.

He knocked and waited. He knocked louder and again waited. He opened the door and stepped in.

A stocky young man in shirtsleeves glanced up over and past him. His face was a little bloated, and it had the redness of high blood pressure. Thick-lensed glasses gave his eyes the appearance of being unusually large. His forefingers continued punching at the keyboard.

Moore stood silently, not wishing to disturb this inspired writing. The young man was bald-headed, or well on the way toward that condition. A fat-bodied fly spiraled down and made a landing on the smooth surface.

The young man jerked the sheet from his typewriter, cocked one leg over the carriage and scanned the writing. "Splendid!" he approved. "Excellent! Mr. Dawson, this is undoubtedly the finest piece of editorial writing you've done since—well, since the last time you were drunk."

Dan cleared his throat, not wishing to eavesdrop.

The young man glanced up. "Listen to this," he commanded: "During my five years of incarceration in this beauteous little stink hole of Selma there have been many things—" He stopped reading, shook



his head. "No," he decided, "you don't know these slab-sided, puritanical, narrow-minded—no, you wouldn't appreciate the beauties of this."

He sighed and, wadding the masterpiece, tossed it into the wastebasket. He took a half-burned cigarette from its ear perch and lighted it. "Now sir," he asked, "what can I do for you?"

Dan met his grin. "Nothing," he said.

"Oh, come now! A stranger in our midst." He pointed a quick, accusing finger. "Don't deny it, my good fellow. You *are* a stranger. You don't want me to write up your wife's tea party. You're not here to raise hell because this illustrious sheet carried no fitting obituary for your deceased grandpappy."

He got up and extended his hand. "My name, sir, is Dawson; Thomas D. Dawson, the D. standing for Dewey, since I arrived on this earth just as Admiral Dewey was—well, charging San Juan hill, or whatever the admiral was doing at that moment. And now, let us quaff a little rum."

**D**AN pulled his own bottle out. "Quaff some of mine," he suggested. "Where's the editor?"

Thomas Dewey Dawson choked a little on the moon. "Goes down like a roll of sandpaper," he commented. "And what makes you think I'm not the editor?"

Moore chuckled, not bothering to answer the question. Dawson laughed with him, without annoyance. He dropped his grand manner. "You looking for a job?"

"Is there one?" Moore took the bottle and a short drink.

"Nope. Come on, sit down. I liked the cut of your jib on first sight. I'm not as drunk as you think."

Moore sat down.

"Lookin' for something in the front or back?"

"I don't know. I've had a little experience in writing."

"Writing! Hell, what's that got to do with a newspaper—a paper like this?" He went to an old-fashioned closed bookcase and came back with two glasses and a gal-

lon jug half-full of a coppery colored liquid. He poured drinks. "On the level, that stuff of yours'd kill a goat."

Moore took a sip. It wasn't bad moon, despite its metallic edge.

Dawson had been examining him through the thick-lensed spectacles. They gave him the appearance of a fish staring through the glass tank of an aquarium. "You're not a newspaper man," he decided. "You look too prosperous. You look funny. What's the matter with your face?"

"Same face I was born with."

"Like hell. Look in that mirror."

Moore looked in the fly-marked glass, dangling from a nail on one side of the bookcase. There wasn't anything wrong with his face except that it was burned to a dark mahogany by sun and propeller blast. Then he saw what Dawson meant.

But Dawson had already forgotten about this. "You've come to the right man about a job," he assured Moore. I know everything about everything in this town and in the other town, across the river. That's Alcova."

He straightened suddenly. "Old Tallow could give you a job!" He relaxed, shaking his head. "No. Nope, you're a friend of mine. While I have a spear or sword to hand I shall protect you from old Tallow."

Moore sat down and emptied his glass. "Who's old Tallow?"

"Bert Tallerand. Owns the Alcova *News*, across the river. In fact, he owns Alcova." Dawson chuckled. "Plus a white elephant." He threw his head back with laughter. "Plus a white elephant," he repeated.

Dan wasn't interested in animals. "What about this job?"

"It's a paper job. Same's I got here. Only my boss is a gent. Name's Lyons. Only he's got a political bug, just like old Tallow. State senator. That's why my boss is away now; kissin' babies. No, you don't want to work for Tallow."

"Why not?"

"Why not! Didn't the last man work six months on his paper and end up owing him money? Didn't that—say, listen. He got one of our town painters to paint his

house. By the time the job was finished, old Tallow owned the painter's scaffolding and ladders. No kidding. I'll tell you some more, too."

**D**AWSON filled the glasses in preparation. Moore took small sips of his. He wanted to stay feeling just as he was. This Dawson would give him the whole layout around here and Dawson was the kind of good company he liked to hear yarn.

He looked about the small office and wondered why he'd ever thought it depressing. This certainly had it over the army life where every man was labeled in rank and degree; where every thought and action was prescribed. He leaned back in his chair, appreciating this new-found freedom.

"I'll tell you about the time his chief of police arrested one of our town boys," Dawson promised, serving more shine. "That night we had a lynching mob and a jail delivery. All of 'em from this town. Bibbs—Bibbs owns the garage next door—Bibbs and I were the jail delivery. Bibbs has an old Packard he uses for snakin' in wrecked cars. . . ."

It was a grand, heart-warming yarn and between lines was another story of the feud between the two small towns. It took Dawson a long time to tell, with suitable gestures, how a hoax lynch mob, formed of Selma men armed with shotguns, made an uproar in front of the Alcova city hall while Bibbs, with his wrecking car, jerked the bar grating from the jail-house window and Tom Dawson carried the Selma boy off in triumph.

There were other stories and it was already past sundown. Moore didn't mind that at all.

"But the best one yet," Dawson assured him, "is about Tallow's white elephant. Only," he added regretfully, "it was a stranger that pulled that one. An airplane pilot."

Moore had been pouring himself a drink. His head jerked up. "What did you say?" he demanded.

Dawson raised his voice so Moore would understand. "An airplane pilot," he shouted. "He walked away with five hundred dollars worth of clothes and stuff, an' owing a month's hotel and feed bill that Tallow had guaranteed payment for. He said it cost ten thousand dollars. And maybe it did. But old Tallow couldn't sell it for a load of broom straw."

"Sell what?" Moore asked.

"The airplane," Dawson again shouted to make it clear. "And Jess's cows licked some paint off of it. So old Tallow had to lease Jess's pasture an' build a shed. And they say old Tallow goes out there of nights and looks at that airplane an' chews nails and cusses. He can't sell it, an' the old skinflint can't bring himself to burn up something that cost him so many dollars."

**I'M AN airplane pilot,"** Moore said. He hadn't intended to say it. The words seemed to come out by themselves.

"So every week since then my boss has run a For Sale ad in our paper. Will take a dollar and a half or a sack of hog feed for a ten-thousand-dollar airplane! An' old Tallow threatened to sue him. What'd you say?"

Again the words came of their own volition. "I'm an airplane pilot."

Dawson looked deeply hurt at having his new friend lie to him.

"Yes, I am," Moore insisted. "Honest to Pete, Tom."

Dawson took a drink in heavy silence.

Moore looked at his hands; looked desperately around the room for some means of proving his story. He remembered about his face. "Look here," he said, "that's why you thought my eyes looked funny. It's these white patches around them, where my goggles kept the wind and sun out."

Dawson removed his spectacles and wiped them carefully on a piece of newspaper. He put them on again and stared owlishly at the markings.

Moore felt this was one of the most critical moments in his life. He couldn't let good old Tom think he'd deceived him.

"Where's a broom?" he asked. "Where's a stick of some kind?"

He saw a yard ruler. He broke it over his knee and laid one piece crossways in front of his feet. "That's the rudder bar," he explained. "This other piece—it's the joy-stick."

Tom's face relaxed with returning confidence. "They do have joy-sticks," he affirmed. "I read that."

"Now, look. I'm goin' to take off. See, my engine's already started."

Tom nodded acceptance of that fact.

Moore pushed the yardstick in his hand forward. "I get the tail up, see. Now I got flyin' speed. I bring her back. Just a little jerk. Then I level off."

"Why?"

"To pick up flyin' speed."

"You already got it. You said you had."

Moore frowned. "Gimme a drink," he ordered. He saw this was going to be more than a routine flight.

Tom had a drink with him. "Look here, Dan. Long's you're goin' to fly, why can't I fly with you?"

"Sure. Sure, you can, Tom. Put your chair right back here. That'll be the rear cockpit."

They took off, doing just plain straight flying till Dan got the feel of this ship. No use taking chances, especially with good old Tom back there.

**B**UT Tom was a daring fellow. He wanted to loop-the-loop. They stopped in the middle of the loop to have a drink. Then something fumbled along the wall outside and the door opened and a tall, cadaverous looking gentleman fell into the room.

He picked himself up and frowned back at the treacherous door.

"Is everybody drunk tonight, Al?" Tom wanted to know. "This is Al Bibbs," he explained to Moore. "Al and me was the ones that made the jail delivery. Or did I tell you about that?"

Al held his finger to his lips. "Sh-h-h!" he cautioned. "It's against the law."

"This is Dan Moore. He's the best air-

plane pilot in the world. Whass against the law?"

Al scratched his head. "Tamperin' with the United Staches mail," he decided.

Al's full first name, he explained with dignity and some difficulty, was Abiathar, after his uncle. Unfortunately Al couldn't fly with them because this was only a two-place ship and Dan refused to fly at night with a man out on a wing. He knew of a case . . .

"But it ain't night," Tom pointed out.

"Thass moonlight," Al said. "Itch night and itch been night for days and days. And anyway, nobody can fly at night because—nobody can fly at night." Al looked at Dan with a mixture of triumph and suspicion.

Tom's first doubts returned. He got hurriedly from the rear cockpit of the plane. He'd been flying with a man who didn't know how to fly!

"Thass all right," he said patronizingly. "Thass all right, Dan. Anyway, you're a good gent an' I like yuh. You hear that?" he challenged Bibbs. "I like him, even if he can't fly."

All the good humor left the room. "Think I can't fly, huh?" Moore said. "You just take me over to that airplane across the river an' I'll show you."

Bibbs hiccupped. "Sure I'll take you over," he said belligerently. "Sure I will."

Moore sobered a little. "You got to have gasoline. Gas an' oil an' water."

"I'll get that. I got it already. In my wreckin' car. You can't come here an' make a foola us. You're—Tom, he's jus' smart aleck from Chicago."

But Tom sided with Moore. "Like hell! You looka his eyes."

"He don't have to lookut my eyes. I'll show him. Come on. I'll show him."

**M**OORE took deep breaths of the spring air. The moonlight glinted dully over the tarnished brass frame of the windshield as they charged through the main street of town in intermediate gear. They were on the bridge before Al remembered to shift into high.

There was a moonpath of silver across the water. Moore knew that the cool air should smell of growing things, but his mouth felt as though he'd been chewing tin, and all he could smell was that moonshine.

He wasn't so very drunk, he told himself. He'd flown lots of times in worse shape than this. But not at night, taking off a cow pasture.

They skirted the town of Alcova, white and dead looking in the moonlight.

The gate into the pasture was locked. Al swung crossways to the main road and surged back against it. The wood splintered and he continued backing up till they reached the airplane shed.

The doors to the shed were padlocked, too. Al got a pinch bar from his wrecker. Silently and methodically he prized the hasp loose.

Moore's admiration for Bibbs increased

by the minute. He knew now who had been back of that fake lynch mob and the jail delivery.

The plane was a "Canuck," an OX5 Curtis with single ailerons. They wheeled it out into the moonlight. Dan made a quick trip around the wings, thumping the struts, testing the landing and flying wires.

Al Bibbs approached from the other side and confronted him. He was swaying a little as he stood. "Well," he demanded, pronouncing his words carefully, "well, wha's you say now?" The moonlight etched every line of his face, to show the leering triumph.

Moore grinned. "Throw some gas in and get her started. I'll show you some flying, partner."

Bibbs' mouth and eyes opened wide in drunken astonishment. "Why," he exclaimed, in a wondering voice, "you" even crazier'n I am!"

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

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# With Sword in Hand



He could kill one or two, perhaps, but sooner or later they would come

Stand straight, Hollander. Stand alone on your homeland, waiting for the destroyers; and remember that a man sometimes finds victory in the moment of defeat

By CHARLES MARQUIS WARREN

Author of "Appointment in October," "Bugles Are for Soldiers," etc.

IN THE ensuing lull the sergeant-major's voice echoed down the trench with a flat stabilizing ring. "*Koest! Down! Everyone down but section look-outs. They'll be coming back. Koest!*"

Finding himself alone in his traverse of the trench, Kees Elst, private, Seventh Amsterdam Rifles, did not at once obey the sergeant-major's voice. He remained rigid on the firing step, claspings his bayoneted rifle, eyes gazing over the parapet, and there was in him an unfamiliar, singing disregard for danger.

The last ten minutes had plucked much of the youth from Kees Elst's eyes, much of the fear from his chest, and now he stood very straight and tall, his heart kicking proudly inside him.

Through the mists of smoke he watched them—what was left of them—paddle back across the *laag water* and climb out of their rubber boats and disappear behind the rise in ground which was nearly as high and solid as this one, where the Amsterdam Rifles had intrenched.

He felt like shouting.