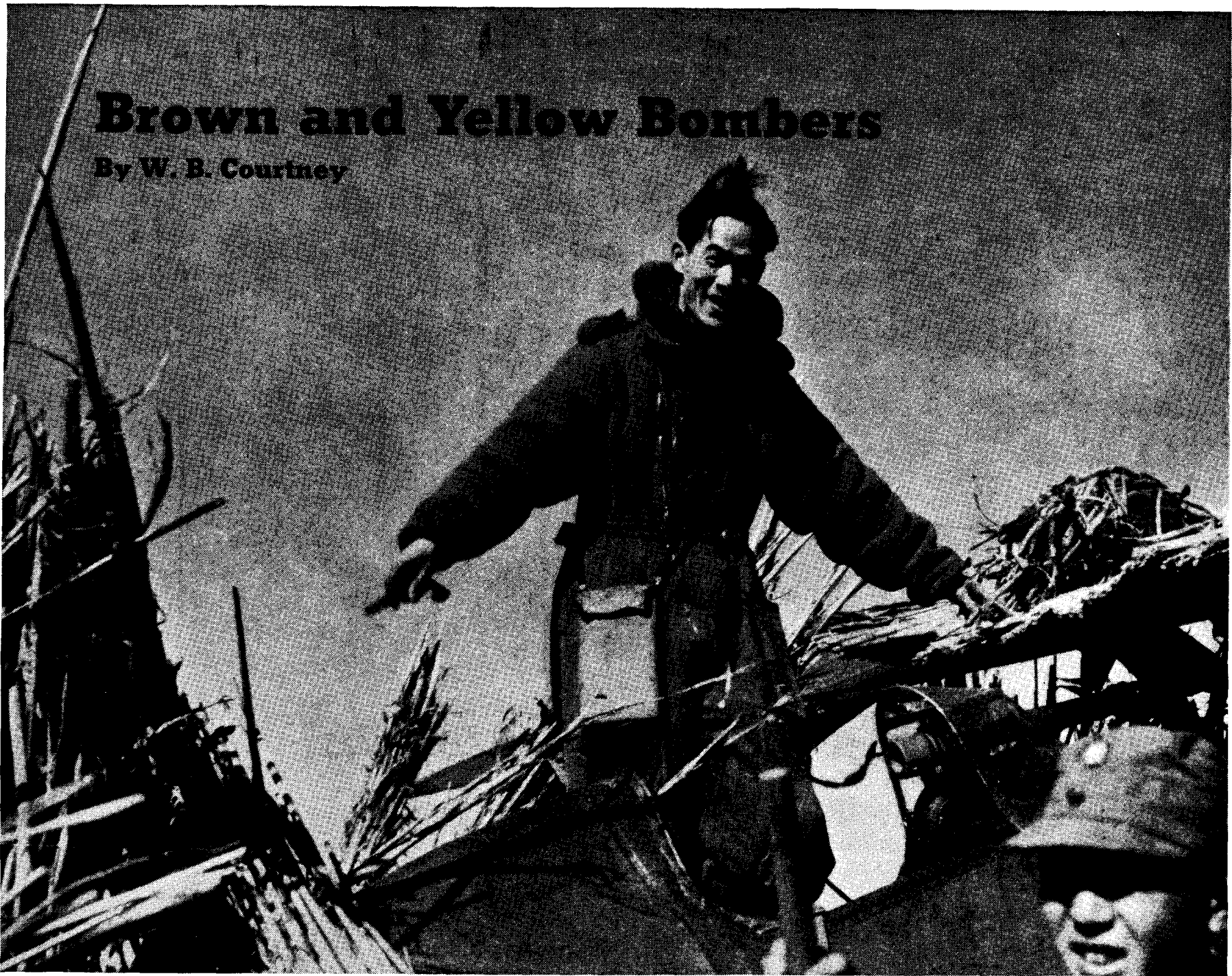


# Brown and Yellow Bombers

By W. B. Courtney



Home from a dogfight is this smiling Chinese pilot, stepping out of his fighting plane as soldiers apply reeds as camouflage

PIX

WE ARE in Hankow, in the vicious midsummer heat of the middle Yangtze Valley, and the Japanese flyers have just finished bombing Kiang An Station. The Chinese had run some tank cars, loaded with aviation gasoline, onto a siding there; and in no time flat, it seemed, the Japanese planes were overhead fingering with their incendiaries and 500-pounders for this military prize. One tank car was hit, and exploded in a flaming gust that dissolved the hundred coolies who were trying to push it to safety. A group of houses just beyond was incinerated, their inhabitants cooked. Across the rails, beside the depot, there had been a row of mangy eating stalls for third-class passengers; a small private hospital owned by the railway; a corral in which horses intended for military use were impounded. Hospitals and stalls had become, in one quivering moment, a churned mass of wood, tin, brick dust, human fragments—the usual porridge cooked by the hot, whining steel of air bombs.

The correspondents hurried to Kiang An; smoke billows, and the number of hits observed, told us this was the choicest of three zones in which the Japanese had left their calling cards. Hundreds of coolies had already run up from the near-by Yangtze bund. We pushed into the crowd, and found—the wreckage of the corral. There had not been a direct hit on it; half the horses were unharmed and standing quietly, with no sign of the shell shock that paralyzes human nervous organisms. The dead horses were gruesomely ripped and torn and disemboweled; some wounded animals, in random stages of butchery, were thrashing around.

The Oriental ring seemed less impassive than

**Can airplanes cripple a nation and destroy its morale? Can they actually win wars? Is there any real defense against this newest and most formidable military weapon? In Spain and China the answers are written for all to see. Collier's correspondent, fresh from the scene, gives you a revealing close-up**

usual. There were shaken heads and mutters. A newsreel man, who understood Chinese, told me: "They are saying, 'Oh, the poor horses!'" We looked back toward the carnage in the hole where there had been a hospital. We stared at the depot platforms, where the first-aid people were sorting out those maimed who did not seem beyond all hope. We saw, across the tracks, the emergency patrols arriving to work on the burning houses, whence you could hear the screams, the futile appeals, of the trapped wounded. There was the excitement of a great fire. There were hundreds of dead and wounded.

Tragedy, destruction, for the homes, friends and neighbors, perhaps even relatives, of those who stood now and stared at and were sorry for—the horses.

Aviation is the liveliest military topic in this age of soaring war bills. While their hands push budget pencils, the eyes and ears of experts throughout the world have been on Spain and China.

They wanted to know many things.

Come along with me for a close-up of the evidence in China. You will find it exciting. You will be plenty scared. You will see and experience something, in fact, to cover every one of the questions about air power that have become so important to war departments, and to you and your loved ones.

For example, the day and the circumstances of your arrival in Hankow, when you got an unexpected demonstration of the answer to one major question—can air power shatter civilian morale?

Getting into Hankow was touch and go in the last hectic weeks of the Japanese drive for that "Chicago of the Yangtze."

Hankow is about five hundred miles inland, a little farther from Hong Kong than from Shanghai, at the western point of a rough triangle formed with those places. You could not go from Shanghai, because that would take you through the Japanese lines. You had to go from Hong Kong. For a while there was train service; four days or more for the trip, running only at night, hiding in tunnels by day. If you were caught in an air raid you dove through a window and ran as far as you could and crouched in a rice paddy. The planes would zip down and machine-gun the cars to get what the bombs missed. Then, in midsummer, Japanese air power blasted the railway out of the picture. The Chinese army's last useful line of communication with the coast was done for.



You had to go by air, and there was only one chance—Eurasia, a company owned equally by Chinese and German capital, with scarred, hard-bitten veteran German pilots and Chinese wireless operators. Later in the month Eurasia's service was shot out of the air by Japanese pursuits; but you got through today all right, in the fast trimotor Junkers, with your blue-eyed pilots watching the sky intently, ready to scoot off at the first sight of gray planes with red circles on their wing undersides.

You land at Changsha, to fill your gas tanks to the last ounce of their capacity. The Japanese were here two hours ago; coolies with their little baskets are putting earth back into the bomb craters on the field; buildings near the water front are on fire. It's still a long way to Hankow; twenty minutes over a stretch of rough hills, then an hour across the plains that the Chinese themselves, by cutting the Yangtze dikes, turned into a huge lake to impede the Japanese

advance. Dangerous going: your pilots "pour on the coal" and fly with the wheels almost kissing the muddy waters. The radioman keeps on Hankow. If he gets warning that a raid is on, we'll turn for the back country, and circle there until we hear an "all clear" from Hankow. That's the reason for the full gas tanks.

No raid—yet. We slide onto the field at Wuchang, across from Hankow. The German pilots don't even stop their motors. The instant you and the little sack of mail are on the ground, they roar away, back for Hong Kong, out of this unhealthy territory. The Wuchang field is pock-marked from recent raids; the wreckage of a dozen Chinese planes litters its margins. You hurry down to take the ferry over to Hankow and the comparative safety of the French Concession.

The Yangtze here is broad, choppy, deep, incredibly swift with the momentum gained in the mountain-

ous gorges above. A sampan floating downstream goes by you like a speedboat. The ferry you are on is no more than a rickety, tippety, leaky old scow. In the blazing noonday it is packed to suffocation, mostly by coolies—workmen, the ragged, impoverished ninety-eight per cent of China's urban population. Just as we get aboard there is a weird, screechy outburst of whistles and horns from both sides of the river—the first alarm.

It means: Japanese planes sighted coming in the direction of Hankow over the observation posts behind the front lines. We cast off at once, and swing into the current, to race for the Hankow side. Now you see one of the most remarkable sights offered by this war.

The whole river is suddenly alive with thousands of small boats, scuttling furiously in the direction of the French and the international bunds, which adjoin. On the Hankow shore, through a lattice of cross streets, you see thousands of poor, frightened human sheep—men, women, children—running, pushing, hobbling in the same direction. A surging, rushing drove of terror, herding by water and land, toward a little patch of sanctuary. It is like a fantastic slow-motion film, seen through heat miasma, while your head reels from the din of whistles, and you grow faint with the crush and the stench of half a thousand coolies packed onto a boat that would be overloaded with a hundred. The old tub wobbles and yaws in its haste, until you feel it will trip over the loose planks in its bow, or run down some of the sampans and junks. Scores of collisions seem imminent, imprecations are screamed above the whistles of the second alarm. Yet the headlong dash is really managed with miraculous dexterity. It is every man for himself on the Yangtze that fetid noon. Thousands of faces turn anxiously upward. Paddlers forget to look where they are going. Fugitives ashore stop in their tracks. For now we hear the drone of the Japanese bombers, very high, behind a cloud bank.

They are over the airport, which you left but a few minutes ago.

You try to be elaborately calm, among all these poor murmuring folks. You uncase your field glasses, and squeeze to the rail to have a look at the planes.

#### Who's Panicky Now?

Suddenly the whole Wuchang shore behind you seems to stand on edge. There is a deafening rumble, and you are trying to brace your feet on a mass of jelly. Halfway to the sky there rises a great brief wall of dirt, stones, people, urged by peaks of gray, yellow and green smoke. Then another shock. Nearer, on the Hankow side, the plane droppings have fallen among moored junks. A top-heavy column of water and debris mounts and bursts and spreads a miniature tidal wave over the river.

You follow the Japanese raiders with your binoculars, thinking, "Of all places I should have picked out to be in during a raid, this is the last and worst—on a fumbling scow in the mid-Yangtze, with a mob of ignorant, panicky coolies!" You hear shouts behind you, a growing murmur. You think fast: "The voice of the mob—the Oriental mob! If they push about, this barge will capsize in a jiffy. One blind, hysterical rush—and I'll be in that yellow torrent, with this whole boatload on top of me. Bill, you've stuck your neck out once too often. Now you're in a fix! Here it—comes—"

You swing around and you see a jumbled circle of slant eyes fixed upon you. The interpreter is grinning. You ask him what's the matter. He says:

"Coolies talkee devil bad enough you catchee looksee him little. Then why master use eyeglass catchee looksee him big?" He adds, confidentially: "Also coolie talkee hope master be quiet. Chop-chop all time here all time there to looksee maybe make boat come bottomsides."

So you put your binoculars back in their case and sulk and swelter while the ferry is warped in and tied up and you have to stay aboard it until the raid is over and the all-clear whistle is sounded. Meanwhile, you are thinking you will tell your military friends perhaps airmen put too much faith in their ability to shatter civilian morale.

Are the Japanese good flyers?

A common notion abroad (*Continued on page 44*)



Top, fascinated spectators watching the greatest air battle of the war—the Emperor's Birthday fight over Hankow in which the Chinese, in a surprise move, engaged a large Japanese raiding force and won a decided victory. Below, Hankow civilians fighting fires after a water front bombing raid



# The Resounding Skies

By Laurence G. Blochman

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY MORSE MEYERS

## The Story Thus Far:

WHILE employed as a timekeeper by the Caribbean Fruit Company, Bill Bossert dies. His body is sent home, and an autopsy reveals that his death was caused by arsenic poisoning!

Walter Lane, a young banana expert, succeeds him. Given the job by Dave Perry, manager of the company's Caribbean division, he goes to work in the Rio Sangre district. His immediate superior is "Pinky" Hind, a hard-boiled overseer. Pinky soon makes an interesting discovery: Tattooed upon Walter Lane's left breast are a blue swastika and the figure "28"—identical with the tattooing on the body of Bill Bossert.

Informed of this by Pinky, Cecil Holliday, the district superintendent, attaches no importance to it. But not Dave Perry. "He told me he didn't know Bossert," Perry says. "He lied!"

To Muriel Monroe, Perry's attractive secretary, is given the task of investigating Walter Lane and learning what he is up to—if anything.

Muriel wastes no time. She finds Lane near the Rio Sangre. While they are chatting, a German—Adolf von Graulitz, who is supposed to be managing a coffee plantation across the river—comes out of the jungle and joins them. He arrives a few moments after someone sends a rifle bullet perilously close to Lane. And Lane gives him a frosty welcome. . . .

Just what Walter Lane is trying to accomplish has not, thus far, been divulged. It would appear, however, that he is looking into the murder of Bossert and learning what he can of the secret operations of von Graulitz and his henchmen in tropical America. Before meeting the German, he has been discussing with Hind radio propaganda being sent to the South and Central American countries from Berlin and Rome and the interference that makes it impossible to get anything other than a jumble of sound from the North American stations.

A steamer—the Bonaca—arrives. It brings a hundred thousand dollars, which Gerald Stilton, the company's agent in the Capital, is to use in bribing certain officials. A few hours after it drops anchor, Stilton and von Graulitz hold a conference, then disappear. . . . Lane and Muriel Monroe go for a swim. Muriel tries to question her companion. "You did know Bill Bossert, didn't you, Walt?" she asks. Then: "The people down here think you've been sent here to snoop."

## III

"TO SNOOP," Lane said. "By whom?"  
"By the company," Muriel said.  
"No," said Lane pensively. "I'm not a stool pigeon. But you are."

"Smile when you say that, Pardner."

"Smile? I'm laughing. Are you that much in love with Perry?"

"What's that got to do with the price of nine-hand stems, Walt?"

"Well . . ." Lane turned over on his back, gave a flip with his feet that started him toward shore. "You're an attractive girl. You could have your pick of the entire unmarried personnel down here, and probably half the married personnel, if you set your heart on it. You're loyal to your employer—that's natural. But you don't have to turn stool pigeon to keep your job—even if what they say about you is true."

"What do they say about me, Walt?"

"That you wear the managerial pants."

